



**MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.**—For the second straight summer, the weather was hotter and drier than usual. Even though there were some satisfactory rains, unlike last summer, extending well into May, June proved to be one of the hottest, driest Junes ever. The Central Valley, essentially rainless and warm as it is every summer, nevertheless experienced record heat as exemplified by an average 7° above normal at Sacramento. And July seemed to be another month just like its predecessor, which was very frustrating to bird observers from the entire length of the Valley. Rivers were low, some of the favorite ponds that act as oases for birds, such as Spreckels' "sugar ponds," dried up, and snow on the higher mountains melted much faster than usual, leaving Lassen Peak, among others, almost free of snow by early July. At the higher levels along coastal ranges, the Sierra Nevada, and the extreme northern mountain and plateau areas of Siskiyou County, birds were reported as nesting abundantly, with more species and individuals than usual. Certain species throughout the Region, in fact, appeared more conspicuously common than for some time: Turkey Vultures, Ravens, warblers

in the northern Sierra, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Red Crossbills in larger-than-usual flocks. A probable direct result of lowland heat and dryness were the marked up-mountain movements of many species of birds; many more than usual were noted, after breeding in the lower areas, ranging upward in late summer.

There was a definite early trend in the beginnings of fall migration of the smaller shorebirds. In spite of increasingly poor resting areas on the flats near Bay Farm Island, Alameda, and drying ponds in the interior, the numbers of these shorebirds were quite good in early July. Phalaropes showed a brief influx then, that tapered off, but began again during the second week of August.

**Loons, Grebes, Herons.**—One or 2 Common Loons, and a similar number of Arctic Loons were noted occasionally during July, still in breeding plumage: off-shore from Moss Landing (MM, RS) and from San Francisco (BDC). Evidence of breeding Western Grebes at Mendota Refuge, 30 miles west of Fresno, lies in the sighting on June 26 of 5 adults and 1 young, a small beggar that tried to climb on the back of an adult (MM). If breeders here be normal, then the area comes within the category of insufficiently reported areas. Great Blue Herons nested on the south side of the Klamath River, northern Siskiyou County, during June. One nest located in the top of a tall conifer was said to have been used for many years (MSC).

**Waterfowl.**—Nesting ducks suffered severe predation from snakes that ate the eggs, and from muskrats that reportedly ate all the young near Red Bluff (BN). Two pairs of Fulvous Tree Ducks were seen in a rice field 5 miles north of Firebaugh, Fresno Co., on June 26 (MM). A male Blue-winged Teal was noted on June 12, in Sierra Valley, Sierra Co., and possibly bred there (*vide* GMcC). Eight Lesser Scaup Ducks were located in the vicinity of the Berkeley Yacht Harbor in June, which is rather late for so many (MM). Common Mergansers had good nesting success at Boca Reservoir in Nevada County, judging

from the 60 young counted there on July 30 (GMcC); while 3 females on June 22, and 10 to 15 females on June 26 were seen resting on the Klamath River, north of Yreka (Marty Miller, *vide* MSC).

*Hawks, Eagles.*—A nest of White-tailed Kites in Sacramento County was under observation and photography (LP) from June 7 (when 4 small young were present) until June 25 (when the first of the young, all then well-feathered, flew off). A nest site near Soledad, San Benito Co., was abandoned in the spring, and the 6 to 8 kites in the Castroville-Moss Landing area are the only ones there any longer, a reduction from the 10 to 12 noted in March (GPL). A Goshawk nest near Donner Summit was noticed deserted soon after a clutch of eggs had been laid. Closer examination of the tree revealed the marks of climbing irons, obvious evidence of nest-robbing. This brings to mind that there have been recent disturbing reports of completely unscrupulous egg-collectors, particularly interested in the eggs of the larger eagles and falcons for foreign exchange or profit, causing serious field birders to be reluctant about revealing nest whereabouts at all. This is a sad state of affairs indeed, especially when these magnificent birds are being discouraged beyond the point of being reproductive at all in the face of a growing scarcity of suitable nest-sites due to the changing human land-use patterns. Another Goshawk nest proved to be successful at 7000 ft. elevation near Tioga Pass when 2 full-grown young were noted in a nest in a Lodgepole Pine (MM). Bald Eagles were successful at an established nest in Shasta County, but were not noted breeding at an old nest in Siskiyou County (Marty Miller, *vide* MSC). Ospreys were welcomed at several summer locations: 6 at Clear Lake, Lake Co., on June 18 and 19 (RS); an adult was noted feeding young in a nest on a snag along the south bank of the Klamath River, Siskiyou Co., June 26 (Marty Miller, *vide* MSC); 3 were at Boca Reservoir between July 17 and 31 (GMcC); and another was seen at Tafoe City, July 28 (GMcC). The nestlings of a pair of Sparrow Hawks in the hole of an evicted Red-shafted Flicker near Red Bluff were raised on an interesting diet of local young Brewer's Blackbirds (BN).

*Grouse, Quail, Shorebirds.*—A female Sage Grouse and her 4 partly grown young were seen, Aug. 6, 9 miles east of Sattley, in Sierra County (BCS); this species is rarely seen in the county anymore. California Quail met with varying breeding success, according to reporters. A trend toward earliness and good numbers in the northern part of the Region was noted, but mid-state birds seemed later and suffered noticeable predation in some areas. Of an expected 30 nests at Soquel, only 3 young were raised—by a single male; the rest fell prey to roaming cats, largely, although Scrub Jays were seen to snatch up the very young, too (FEH). Mountain Quail in upper Carmel Valley (GPL), and in the northern and Sierra mountains were termed successful in general (BCS, MCS). Even as the traditional "loving grounds" between Bay Farm Island and Oakport Road, Alameda, are being filled in and rapidly becoming poorer for shorebirds, good numbers of Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers were arriving in July (JWK). About 30 Black-bellied

Plovers, all but 1 in immature or winter plumage, were at the east approach to the Bay Bridge, Oakland, June 17 and 25, and may have been the same group present on May 30, without other shorebirds around until late June (MM). A Common Snipe, arriving early on July 13, at Point Pinos, Pacific Grove, may have reflected the extreme inland dryness (GPL). About 500 Wilson's Phalaropes, half still in breeding plumage, along with the more usual coastal gathering of about 1000 Northern Phalaropes at the Moss Landing Salt Ponds on July 9 was a high number—and early—for such a coastal locality (MM).

*Alcids, Roadrunners.*—Pigeon Guillemots began arriving to nest, May 31, at the Cliff House, San Francisco (FP); and about 3 nests were built beneath old buildings at Cannery Row, Monterey (GPL). The young that were in the most visible nest were almost ready to fly by July 31. An immature Marbled Murrelet was brought to Naturalist Ray Williams from Campground "A," Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Santa Cruz Co., on Aug. 18, but a search still did not disclose a nest, unfortunately (*vide* EAP). Roadrunners were judged to be very common this summer around Millerton Lake State Park (FWH).

*Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers, Flycatchers.*—Three Anna's Hummingbirds were seen repeatedly from June 12 through July at the record northern summer location of Siskiyou County, 12 miles north of Yreka (MSC). Six or 7 pairs of Costa's Hummingbirds were seen in gardens around Friant, and Friant Dam vicinity, north of Fresno, through July (FWH). By the end of July, resident male Calliope Hummingbirds at Clark Station, Sierra Co., had departed, leaving females and immatures behind (BCS). A pair of Black-throated Three-toed Woodpeckers near Yuba Pass Summit, Sierra Co., built 2 nest holes in living Aspen trees. On June 22, one of these holes and a hole of a pair of White-headed Woodpeckers had been broken up, discouraging both pairs. The Three-toed Woodpeckers left the vicinity, but the White-headed Woodpecker apparently proceeded to take over the second hole of the Three-toed Woodpeckers and were raising young in it by July 27 (BCS). Gray Flycatchers at Boca Reservoir were judged to be "commoner than before" as nesting birds (GMcC).

*Swallows, Corvids, Chickadees, Dippers.*—An investigation of a Bank Swallow colony on San Francisco Ocean Beach showed that the first week of June was the peak of the breeding season for the 100 pairs or so that accepted the hazards of the slipping sand banks until the last of the young flew on Aug. 2 (BDC, FP). By July 23, only 4 nests were found at another Bank Swallow colony at an ocean beach near Jenner (RS). A Piñon Jay was observed in company with Clark's Nutcrackers on Mt. Dana in eastern Yosemite National Park, July 6 (RS). At least 2 Mountain Chickadees were located among Sugar Pines in the Santa Lucia Mountains about 70 miles south of Carmel on June 5 (VLY), agreeing with information in Grinnell and Miller, "The Distribution of the Birds of California" for a small resident population of *Parus gambeli baileyae*. A Dipper that carried insect food into a culvert on June 10 indicated

an interesting probable nest location near Yreka (MSC).

*Waxwings, Vireos, Orioles, Cowbirds.*—A Cedar Waxwing on July 24 at El Cerrito, near Berkeley, is certainly unusually out-of-season (ALC). Starlings evidently nested in the Sacramento area, as a pair was noted flying in and out of an old woodpecker hole near Elkhorn Ferry on April 23 (GMcC); while on May 7 and 14, 3 Starlings were observed carrying food along the Sacramento River, although no nest site was found (GMcC, EAA). A Red-eyed Vireo was observed among the cottonwoods 1 mile south of Sierraville in July (Warren Hall, *vide* RS). Warbling Vireos recovered their usual population density, apparently, for their nests were found in normal numbers near Sattley, as usual there, on the terminal branches of the Lodgepole Pines from 15 to 30 feet above ground (BCS). Some reporters felt that Bullock's Orioles stayed later than usual and were successful with up to 3 broods. A male Scott's Oriole was watched near the city limits of Sonora, Tuolumne Co., at the end of May, for a surprising appearance on the Sierra western slope (JH). Interest in Brown-headed Cowbirds was high this season, because of the sighting of many young and with a variety of hosts. In Oakland, for instance, 8 young were seen at a single feeder (JW/K); the species was present as far north as above Yreka at least until July 6 (MSC); and one of the more interesting host species noted was Traill's Flycatcher at Tahoe City (GMcC).

*Fringillids.*—Black-headed Grosbeaks were considered very successful as breeders, with this season being the best in 4 years at Lafayette, Contra Costa Co. (JLF). Evening Grosbeaks also were judged more plentiful in the Sierra than in other recent years (GMcC). Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were numerous on Mt. Dana on July 6; while on nearby Echo Peak, the next day, many nestlings were seen (RS). About 30 Rosy Finches also were noted on Squaw Peak, Placer Co., on July 3, but by the end of the month there were none, probably because of blasting activities for a radar station nearby (GMcC). At least 100 Red Crossbills were concentrated around some Douglas Firs on Mt. Tamalpais, Marin Co., on July 10, as they foraged on the ground and in the trees on this year's cones (MM); while on later July dates, smaller flocks were seen in the same vicinity (RS, MM). Later in July, also, another 100 or so Red Crossbills were noted at Boca Reservoir, where the cone crop looked good (GMcC). At the Sugar Bowl, Placer Co., a Brown Towhee was carefully checked against immatures of the Green-tailed Towhees and Fox Sparrows in a chaparral area, July 16 and 17, for this is quite high and far east for the species (RS). Grasshopper Sparrows were discovered to be more widespread than believed along San Pablo Ridge when found at several places southward as far as an area just east of Tilden Regional Park, where on June 4, 2 were observed singing (MM). Brewer's Sparrows were found in some low brush resembling Sage at 9000 ft. elevation on Squaw Peak, July 3, and on July 31 were noted carrying food to young, although the nest could not be located (GMcC). An adult Black-chinned Sparrow feeding a full-sized immature on July 15 indi-

cates nesting success, even though the few pairs present were very difficult to see all summer; they were best located by song (EAP).

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