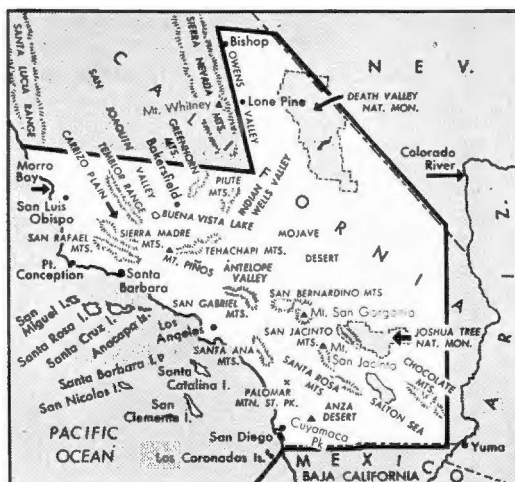


SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION.—The continued drought of the winter of 1959-60 precluded a disastrous dry summer in 1960. This prediction was



borne out during a summer season marked by holocaustal fires in the tinder-dry chaparral of the southern California ranges and in the Ponderosa Pine belt of the higher southern mountains and the Sierra Nevada. Happily these fires struck well after the peak of the nesting season (which commences in southern California even as early as January for some species). No precipitation was recorded after mid-May and except for a series of late summer thunderstorms over the eastern deserts and the higher portions of the San Bernardinos, the weather held fair and hot as it was dominated by the usual summer high pressure area over the Great Basin and deserts to the east. Santa Ana conditions prevailed during much of June and July when hot, dry desert winds swept through the passes to the north and east and paved the way for the disastrous fires of July. Temperatures during June were about normal but July brought a heat wave, which sent temperatures soaring (with a high of 112° F. reached at Reseda in the San Fernando Valley during mid-July) even in coastal areas. The largest fire of the season consumed more than 120,000 acres

of brush on the south slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains in late July, and smaller fires sprang up throughout similar areas just about as quickly as others were controlled. The thunderstorms of mid- and late August added further to the danger as more than 2000 fires of various sizes were attributed to lightning. Some relief from the hot dry weather came in late August, when storms off the Baja California coast brought higher humidity and lower temperatures to the coastal portions of the Region. The nesting season was about normal with a few interesting developments.

Loons, Grebes, Pelicans, Pelagic Birds.—Very few loons were noted in coastal waters during the summer months, and Western Grebes likewise were scarce with but a few individuals reported. Small numbers of Eared Grebes remained on the Salton Sea throughout the summer. Nesting of Pied-billed Grebes was somewhat better than last year. As expected, Brown Pelicans were rare immediately near the coast during the summer months, but their nesting colonies on the offshore islands were well-populated. Twenty-one White Pelicans were noted on Morro Bay, July 13 (J. Kittredge) but they appeared not to have established a nesting colony anywhere in the Region again this year. During a five-day circuit of the channel islands (Santa Catalina, Santa Barbara, Santa Rosa, and Santa Cruz), Aug. 20-24, G. Shumway Suffel had an excellent opportunity to census the summering pelagic species in these waters. He reported a maximum of only about 20 Sooty Shearwaters, 4 Pink-footed Shearwaters, and a fine concentration of more than 200 Manx Shearwaters. The latter species was seen in such numbers near Santa Barbara, Aug. 23. He reported at most seeing about 20 Black Petrels, but Ashy Petrels were "common" (as about 50 were seen within 20 miles of Santa Cruz Island and between Santa Barbara Island and Santa Rosa Island).

Hérons, Egrets, Ibises.—The large rookery of Snowy Egrets with lesser numbers of Black-crowned Night Herons at the mouth of the Alamo River at the south end of the Salton Sea had a successful season. The large rookery (numbering about 100 pairs) of White-faced Ibis near there likewise met with success as a large number of young were brought to flying stage. A small number (about 60) of Wood Ibis again summered in the Imperial Valley, and this group was seen near the mouth of the Alamo River on July 5 (E. A. Albertson).

Waterfowl.—What were probably early migrant Pintails increased from 27 on Aug. 20 to more than 70 on Aug. 27 at Goleta (JK). Fulvous Tree Ducks were much reduced in numbers on Ramer Lake in the Imperial Valley and they had a poor nesting season. This species is approaching the critical status in California, owing primarily to depletion of nesting habitat. The only summering scoters reported were a few single individuals along the coast near Malibu (Ed.) and two very small flocks near Santa Rosa Island, Aug. 22 (GSS).

Kites and Hawks.—Nesting of the White-tailed Kites was not as successful as hoped and a number of nests under close observation were abandoned before young could be raised. In all cases this was due to harassment by crows. Only one Bald Eagle was

found by Suffel in his circuit of the Channel Islands, and that one on Santa Barbara Island. An Osprey that was probably a migrant flew south over Mount Wilson on Aug. 23 (Leo Best).

Shorebirds.—Usual numbers of non-breeding summer shorebirds were present at suitable locations, and southbound migrants began appearing in early August. What must have been non-breeding Black Turnstones were present at Goleta, July 30 (4) (JK); Malibu Lagoon, Aug. 7 (8) (Ed.); Santa Rosa Island, Aug. 22 (20+) and Santa Cruz Island, Aug. 23 (4) (GSS). A single Wandering Tattler was at Goleta, July 28-Aug. 6 (JK); and during Aug. 20-24, 2 were at Santa Catalina Island, 4 were at Santa Rosa Island, and 6 were at Santa Cruz Island (GSS). Three Pectoral Sandpipers were at Goleta, Aug. 13 (JK). Am. Avocets and Black-necked Stilts had a successful nesting season at San Diego Bay, south end of the Salton Sea, and for the latter species, at Bolsa Chica. More than 2500 Northern Phalaropes had gathered on the salt-evaporating ponds of Upper Newport Bay by the first week of August, but only about a dozen Wilson's Phalaropes were with them. Several thousand Red Phalaropes were seen in the waters near the east end of Santa Cruz Island, Aug. 23 (GSS).

Jaegers, Gulls, Terns, Alcids.—Jaegers began appearing off our coast in mid-August, but only in very small numbers. Small numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls were present coastwide throughout the summer, and an extra-seasonal Glaucous-winged Gull was seen off Seal Beach, Aug. 24 (GSS). The Elegant Terns apparently nested for the second year at the Salt Works near South San Diego Bay; eggs and young were found, but no report was received of the success of the nesting effort. During the 1959 season it will be recalled, no young were reared because of destruction of the nests. The northward flight of Elegant Terns was somewhat later and lighter than last year. The first birds were noted at Malibu Lagoon, Aug. 8 (Ed.) but only 4 were present. On that date about 50 were counted at Point Mugu marshes and more than 200 at the mouth of the Santa Clara River, Ventura Co. Especially interesting was the second successive successful nesting of the Royal Terns in California. Some 30+ nests were found at the Salt Works near South San Diego Bay during late May and by the second week of June many young Royal Terns were flying with the adults. The Elegant Terns there had eggs in the nest during late May. Caspian and Least Terns at this excellent colony also had a very successful nesting. More than 30 pairs of Pigeon Guillemots were found nesting in a sea cave at Santa Cruz Island during early August (Don Bleitz) and a few Tufted Puffins were seen off Santa Rosa Island as well. Small numbers of Pigeon Guillemots nested on the coastal sea-cliffs near Morro Bay (Alma Stultz), but only 1 was found near Santa Barbara Island, Aug. 21 (GSS). A single Tufted Puffin was also near Santa Barbara Island, Aug. 22, and small numbers certainly must still nest on these outer Channel Islands. They were reported as having nested recently on Prince Island off Santa Rosa Island by Bleitz. Two Xantus' Murrelets were also found by Suffel off Santa Cruz Island, Aug. 23.

Swifts, Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers.—Who can

explain the roosting of Vaux's Swifts in some of the tall buildings of downtown San Diego during the summer? They were reported by John Bishop and others during May and June, but no nests were found. Migrant southbound Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds began to appear in lowlands during late July, but the mountain meadows usually frequented by the migrant Rufous during the summer were largely flowerless. Nesting of White-headed Woodpeckers, Red-shafted Flickers, Yellow-bellied (Red-breasted) Sapsuckers, and Acorn Woodpeckers was reported as good, but Williamson's Sapsuckers were difficult to find.

Flycatchers, Swallows.—For the most part, nesting success of landbirds was about as can be expected during a dry summer. Few second broods were reported and water was hard to find in the mountain areas. Two Ash-throated Flycatchers were found on a bleak, treeless islet of the Santa Barbara Islands, Aug. 21 (GSS). Dr. Leon L. Gardner of San Diego who has been following the progress of Vermilion Flycatchers at the San Diego Naval Hospital very closely for the past three years reported that as of June 1 this year 24 young Vermilions had been reared successfully in his study area. At this writing two nests were still under observation. Although various pairs of Vermilion Flycatchers had been displaced by urban development in San Diego, this bird still continues to maintain a foothold there on the Pacific coast. Purple Martins again successfully nested at Irvine Park and

near Charlton Flats in the San Gabriel Mountains.

Jays, Thrushes.—A small flock of Piñon Jays remained throughout the summer near Big Bear City in the San Bernardino Mountains. No increase was found in the number of nesting Robins within the city of Los Angeles although a steady but slow increase in their numbers has been noted in the past.

Starlings, Waxwings.—More Starlings than ever were noted in the Region during the nesting period and more than a dozen nest sites were located close to Los Angeles. For the first time they were actually recorded within sight of the Pacific Ocean as 4 adults with 2 juveniles were seen at Marineland of the Pacific on the Palos Verdes peninsula, June 10 (Howard L. Cogswell). Small flocks of Cedar Waxwings lingered very late into the nesting season, and the latest yet reported was a group of 20+ in Pasadena, June 4 (GSS).

Warblers, Tanagers.—Small flocks of migrant warblers were reported from the San Gabriel Mountains during mid-August and no nests of the singing MacGillivray's and Nashville Warblers were located in the San Bernardino Mountains near Mill Creek Canyon. Males of these species were reported by John Goodman as singing in late May, but these birds are not known to nest this far south. Small groups of Western Tanagers began appearing in the lowlands in late August near Santa Barbara.—ARNOLD SMALL, 3028 Cavendish Drive, Los Angeles 64, Calif.

