

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.—Lulled by the showery and pleasantly cool spring that lasted well into June, Californians were shocked when sudden hot



weather came. Apparently, a long finger of Continental Tropical air pushed up almost to the Oregon border, keeping a maritime High far out at sea. Daily maximum temperatures soared to well above 100° in most areas and stayed close to that figure for weeks. The 106° reached in San Francisco on June 14 was an all-time high! The Central Valley totted up a total of 21 days with a maximum above 100° in June and July, occasionally hitting as high as 117° in some areas. The result, of course, was a hotter and drier summer than ever before.

In the Sierra Nevada, this mid-June heat served to keep minimum temperatures above 40°, and helped give the breeding birds an excellent start. All observers lucky enough to spend some time at the higher elevations reported an extremely successful, yet concentrated, nesting period of all mountain species during late June and early July. By late July, dryness had hit the higher country, too, and, in effect, terminated the breeding season. With the smallest snowpack in years about gone, the streams lowered alarmingly fast, and the moist mountain meadows dried rapidly. Fortunately, the dry weather came late enough for most breeding to be finished and fledglings to be on their own. Birding was exciting while it lasted, with all species nesting at once!

Some species ranged higher than usual during the breeding season; many pairs of birds of the same species seemed to have made use of atypical habitats; or a few species that do not breed widely became more conspicuous in nesting numbers. This information along with other nesting data emerged from the excellent specific picture of breeding montane species from: near Yuba Pass (Beth Snyder), through the Lake Tahoe area (Guy McCaskie), in the high country of Yosemite Nat'l Park (Cogswell, Fitzpatrick, Seibert and Marianne Shepard) and the more southern and less-reported area in the mountains of Fresno County

near Huntington Lake (Junea Kelly). Also, the almost complete lack of conifer cones and acorns should be considered when watching birds and their travels during the coming two seasons.

The effect of the heat on nesting birds in the lowland areas was commented upon by several reporters, the consensus being that it caused many nestling casualties, egg failures, and premature departures of nestlings. Edwin O'Neill, Sacramento Wildlife Refuge biologist, mentioned Barn Swallows, Barn Owls, Western Kingbirds, Mourning Doves, Mockingbirds and House Sparrows unable to bring off full live broods; Marianne Shepard of Glen Ellen told of Black Phoebe dying in the nest, of a Lazuli Bunting shielding a dead nestling, of Cliff Swallows having trouble keeping their mud nests stuck to walls that had supported them in previous seasons, and of a hardy Western Bluebird young that managed to survive in a sun-baked pipe! Others agreed that lowland birds had a difficult time, although earlier nesting species in April and May had better luck. Mockingbirds expanded their breeding range again, this time to the Monterey Peninsula; Hooded Orioles established good footholds as breeding birds in the East Bay and Sacramento areas; Hermit Thrushes nested abundantly in the Sierra; and there were unprecedented numbers of Brown-headed Cowbirds everywhere—even at nearly 10,000 feet in elevation.

Pelagic birds and waterbirds in general were unspectacular with species breeding as usual in the usual places. The regular post-breeding flights of Heerman's Gulls, Elegant Terns and Sooty Shearwaters arrived late and in small numbers up to the end of July. In contrast, however, Wilson's and Northern Phalaropes began to reappear (many in full breeding plumage) in late June and July—almost before they had left. Western Grebes were reported summering in sizable numbers off the Sonoma coast.

Loons, Grebes, Pelicans, Pelagics.—An Arctic Loon at Bass Lake, El Dorado Co., was far inland and past migration time, June 22 (FGE, GSR). At Woodland, near Sacramento, on June 21, an adult Eared Grebe, with 3 young about two-thirds grown, was seen in an irrigation ditch (GSR)—an unusual Valley record north of the 38th parallel. Western Grebes apparently spent the summer along the middle California coast (according to these records): near the mouth of the Russian River there were 75 on June 3; 150 on June 25; and 50 to 60 on July 29 (MM). On June 28 at sea off Bolinas, Marin Co., 5 were found (WMP); a flock of 15 was just north of Pescadero Point, San Mateo Co., on July 29 (EAA). From June 1 through mid-July several nests of this grebe were observed at Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (EON). On a Navy cruise north, 50 to 90 miles at sea, Black-footed Albatrosses were frequently noted, June 3 to 5. On the return trip, June 13, about 50 were present all day, increasing to 35 when 30 miles NW of Cape Mendocino (BFK). Sooty Shearwaters did not appear near shore north of Santa Cruz, but "many thousands" were close to the Santa Cruz shore on July 26 (FEH); and 3 days later, a "heavy stream" flowed by Point Pinos, Pacific Grove, and Moss Landing (EAA, GPL). Leach's Petrels were frequently noted on Lt. King's

Navy cruise in June. The presence in summer, without signs of nesting activity, of White Pelicans at San Felipe Lake, Santa Clara Co. (AFN 15:435) (EDS), and the fact that at Point Lobos, Brown Pelicans did not even attempt to nest this year (up to 50 nests previously) (MF, *vide* EAP) add up to *no* reports of breeding pelicans in this Region. Both species were present as the following northernmost records show: 5 White Pelicans on San Pablo Bay on June 23 (GSR) and 5 Brown Pelicans on Goat Rock, south of the mouth of the Russian River, Sonoma Co., on June 25 (MM).

Herons, Waterfowl.—An adult Am. Bittern was seen with 2 partially grown young at McClusky Slough, Moss Landing, July 7 (GPL), the only breeding report in many summers, although the species must be commonly resident in some marshy spots. Two adult Canada Geese with 4 young were noted, April 24 to 27, at the Oakland Toll Bridge Plaza (LF). With a similar report of a nesting in 1959 nearby, is this a significant indication of sparse regular nesting? Four Black Brant were present in July at Carmel River Lagoon (GPL); and a flock of 30 flew over Drake's Bay, Marin Co., June 4 (GM). The 250 Surf Scoters at the mouth of the Russian River, June 25 and July 29, seem like a high summer count for this winter visitant species (MM). About 40 young Common Mergansers on Lake Tahoe in the latter half of July indicate probable nesting success (GMcC).

Hawks.—Red-shouldered Hawks nested successfully at the Jack London Ranch and in Glen Ellen, Sonoma Co., with one nest under observation since March (MS); a lone bird was seen at Woodland, June 21 (GSR), but none were found near the Santa Cruz area, where they have nested in recent years (FEH). An immature Golden Eagle was seen on Mt. Diablo, June 14 (EAP); and one was at Lafayette on July 29 (LF).

Shorebirds.—Two early Ruddy Turnstones were present on July 21 at Bay Farm Island, Alameda (JWK). About 100 Whimbrels were at McClusky Slough, July 7, an unusually good number for that date (GPL). Am. Avocets seemed quite common although not all were necessarily nesting; about 200 were noted at the Woodland Sugar ponds, June 21 (GSR), and at the salt ponds near Dumbarton Bridge, July 16; adults, a few with small chicks, were in better numbers than had been seen there at similar times in any other year (EDS). Seeing phalaropes in breeding plumage in central California is a treat, but this can be done before mid-July: 1 Wilson's was seen at Bodega Bay, Sonoma Co., on June 3, and 45 were there on June 25 (MM); the unusual number of 85 by June 21 was noted at Woodland Sugar Ponds (GSR); from 2 to 20 were observed at McClusky Slough and Carmel River Lagoon, from June 26 to 30 (GPL); some at San Felipe Lake, near Gilroy, on June 22, also were brightly plumaged (EDS); and 6 at the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza, on July 3, molted soon after (MM).

Terns, Alcids.—Four Common Terns, with Forster's Terns, were early at the Toll Bridge Plaza on July 22 (EAA). At least 100 Common Murres, unusual

for the date, were noted flying south from the Cliff House at San Francisco on July 12 (FP). At least 6 Marbled Murrelets were seen in the waters off Pescadero Point on July 29 (EAA).

Owls. Hummingbirds. Woodpeckers.—A Flamulated Owl was heard in Peregrine Meadows, Yosemite Nat'l Park on June 10 (WJF, *et al.*). Burrowing Owls nested in good numbers on the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (EO'N). A Spotted Owl perched all the afternoon of June 17 in plain sight of hundreds of visitors to Muir Woods (RM Brown, *vide* WMP); another reported from dense river bottom woods near Woodland seems incredible, June 21 (GSR). Two pairs of Black-chinned Hummingbirds were observed, unusually coastal, in an Oakland yard, July 23 (RS). Anna's Hummingbirds north of Yreka (MSC), and Calliope Hummers at Clark Station, Sierra Co. (BCS), were both more common than usual. A Nuttall's Woodpecker was seen at Soquel, July 1 (RJR). Lewis' Woodpeckers nested in the eastern wooded fringe of the Region: in a dead Jeffrey Pine west of Mono Lake, June 11, (WJF); and noisy young were in an ancient poplar near Sierraville on July 7 (BCS).

Swallows. Mockingbirds. Thrushes.—Tree Swallows nested twice in a 2-apartment bird house, House Finches using the other section (MSC). Six Cliff Swallow nests were built on the Glen Ellen Post Office, falling off three times before the birds gave up; from 26 nests on a silo only 1 or 2 broods were raised. Interestingly, 5 nests from last year were reused successfully (MS). Mockingbirds, with young out of the nest by June 12, nested in a sand dune area near Seaside, Monterey Co. (VLY); another nest in Seaside and one in Pacific Grove (both found in early June) are the first records from this new area (GPL). In another humid bayside area on Bay Farm Island, Alameda, Mockingbirds got off to an early start, when a fledgling fed on the ground, on April 11 (BDC); nesting was carried on until July 21 (JWK), indicating at least 2 successive broods. Most reporters agreed that Hermit Thrushes breeding in the Sierra were abundant, but lowland Swainson's Thrushes seemed scarce. At the height of the nesting season, Townsend's Solitaires were noted at 10,000 ft. elevation near Yosemite (HLC).

Kinglets. Waxwings. Vireos.—Only a few local Golden-crowned Kinglets were observed in the White Firs along the Harden Lake Trail, Yosemite, in contrast to abundant Ruby-crowned Kinglets singing throughout the forest (HLC). Cedar Waxwings were reported to June 4 near Three Rivers, Tulare Co. (JK). A Solitary Vireo nest was abuilding as early as April 21, at Stevens Creek, Santa Clara Co. (OA); and another in the vicinity of Lafayette, Contra Costa Co.—the first time since 1953—had unknown success (LF).

Warblers.—Warblers breeding in most areas seemed low in individual numbers (JWK), but Orange-crowned Warblers brought off good numbers of young in Contra Costa County (LF, EAP). A singing male Nashville Warbler on June 7 on Mt. Diablo was a month later than the last of a year ago (EAP). About 10 were singing at 7300 ft. on the Tuolumne Trail,

Yosemite (HLC). A singing male Parula Warbler was found foraging in the treetops on the Mills College Campus, Oakland, on June 17 (HLC). Audubon's Warblers, and 2 males and a female Hermit Warbler were singing and carrying nesting material on Mt. Tamalpais, Marin Co., June 18, 25 and July 1 (MM); 2 pair of Audubon's Warblers in similar activities in the Santa Cruz Mountains, June 12 and 14 (EDS) would indicate favorable areas this year.

Orioles. Cowbirds.—Hooded Orioles, now definitely established in the Santa Cruz and Los Gatos-Saratoga area are also breeding birds in Alameda, Courtland and Sacramento; 2 pairs were noted at Courtland but there was no direct nesting evidence on May 10, 24, or throughout the summer (BO'N, ERP); there was a nest in Washington Park, Alameda, by April 24 (JWK); a nest placed in Washington Palm trees raised 4 young in Berkeley (ASC); 2 other nests were found in Berkeley and Hayward; and a pair with young nested for the second year in downtown Sacramento, May 24 (ERP, GMcC). Observers commented upon the increase in numbers of Brown-headed Cowbirds everywhere, even at an elevation of 9550 ft. at Dana Meadows, Yosemite, July 13 (HLC).

Grosbeaks. Finches and Sparrows.—A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was carefully observed on Mt. Hermon, Santa Cruz Co., June 24 (Emma Linderoth, *vide* EDS). Black-headed Grosbeaks had outstanding nesting success. A very late Evening Grosbeak lingered until June 5 at Lafayette (LF); at Clark Station, nesting after a 2-year absence, the species was judged to be 4 times more common than usual (BCS). A Lawrence's Goldfinch finally raised her young in a Lafayette location, after first abandoning a nest to a cowbird egg (LF). A pair of Grasshopper Sparrows including a singing male was flushed in a field of tall wild oats on Mt. Diablo, June 11; one was flushed again the next day (PL, EAP)—first record there. Lark Sparrows nested commonly on the upper grassy or almost barren slopes of Mt. Diablo, utilizing low bushes or rock outcrops as song perches; one nest with 4 eggs was noted underfoot on a deer trail, June 11 (PL, EAP). Rufous-crowned and Black-chinned Sparrows seemed more common than last year on this mountain; a nest of the former with 3 young was found below the South Gate on May 12 (MS); a nest of the Black-chinned with 2 eggs incubated was located near the South Gate, June 28 (EDS, PL, EAP).

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