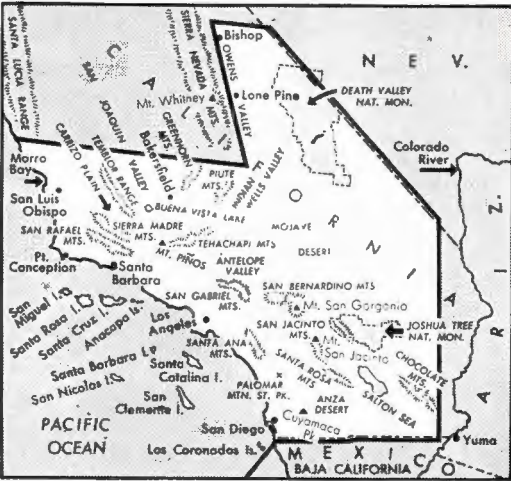


SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION.—Winter weather brought an end to the long-endured drought in southern California. Almost with excep-



tion, weather stations throughout this Region reported above normal rainfall during the period, Dec. 1-Feb. 28. For example, the Los Angeles basin received almost 20 inches of precipitation, as compared with a normal for the rainy season of about 14 inches. Some foothill areas close to Los Angeles (such as Topanga Canyon) recorded more than 30 inches. Some severe flooding occurred during the most severe storms of January and February. Snowfall above 5000 feet was excellent, and much of it lingered well into late spring. Water tables in some areas were brought back to almost normal levels, and elsewhere, lakes which had been dry for the past five years were raised to their higher banks. Baldwin Lake, in the San Bernardino Mountains has been dry for even longer than that, but was about 60 per cent full by the end of February. Similarly, Big Bear Lake nearby was brought to almost capacity during the period. Many of the local streams, normally intermittent, continued to flow well into the spring season. By mid-February the effects of this precipitation began to become apparent in the number of flowers and herbs that clothed the normally barren foothills. Grass was luxuriant, and

all this growth should provide superior cover and food for birds and mammals during the spring and summer.

Temperatures during December averaged below normal throughout southern California. Coastal and intermediate areas were below normal during about the first half of the month and above normal during the latter half. Precipitation during December was below normal except in the Colorado River valley, where it was well above. Some representative precipitation figures for the three months are given in the table. In the storm of Dec. 1-2, some mountain stations above 7000 feet received 10 to 24 inches of snow. Temperatures during January averaged above normal throughout the Region. All areas, however, endured a period of a week or ten days in the middle of the month with temperatures below normal. Precipitation was still below normal, except in the southern part, both coastal and inland. There was some new snow in the mountains on Jan. 12, but the amounts were insignificant until about Jan. 20. Between then and Jan. 25, 25 to 32 in. had accumulated in the higher resort areas. Temperatures during February were below normal except in some desert areas. The first half of the month was somewhat above normal in most areas, dropping to below normal during the latter half. With the exception of the Colorado River valley and the extreme southern part of the coast, rainfall was the heaviest in several years. Los Angeles Internat. Airport recorded the heaviest monthly rainfall in the history of the station. Storms during the first half of February were warm and most of the mountain areas got rain rather than snow. By the middle of the month the snow was mostly melted from the mountains, except in the very highest parts. However, storms during the latter half of February brought accumulations of snow up to maximum levels by about Feb. 21. At that time Mt. Baldy Notch reported depths varying from 3½ to 7 ft. On Feb. 28, Baldy Notch still had 3-6 ft. and Big Bear Lake reported an average depth of snow on the valley floor of 16 in. Much snow still remained in the higher portions of the San Gabriel, San Bernardino, and Tehachapi Mts. by the end of April.

Winter-bird populations were often contradictory. In general, sea-birding was very poor, except for phenomenal flights of Fulmars and Black-legged Kittiwakes. Coastal waters seemed almost devoid of birds (loons, grebes, cormorants, scoters, etc.) except for

PRECIPITATION IN INCHES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

	December	Departure from normal	January	Departure from normal	February	Departure from normal
Santa Maria	1.73	(-0.88)	2.01	(-0.83)	9.69	(+7.22)
L. A. Airport	0.06	(-2.55)	2.68	(+0.02)	11.07	(+8.19)
San Diego	1.45	(-1.12)	2.71	(+0.70)	3.08	(+0.93)
Los Angeles	1.44	(-1.67)	2.56	(-0.51)	11.57	(+8.24)
Bishop	0.82	(-0.07)	0.49	(-0.50)	4.96	(+3.98)
Yuma	1.43	(+0.88)	0.48	(+0.09)	0.05	(-0.31)

the omnipresent gulls. The heavy runoff of the winter rains carried much silt and fresh water far out into the sea, and possibly forced small fishes farther offshore. Waterfowl, generally, were somewhat down, and winter shorebird populations seemed far down. Wintering landbirds were inconsistent as to appearance. Some species (such as Robins, waxwings and Clark's Nutcrackers) seemed at times to have staged an invasion, while the numbers of other species seemed far below normal.

Loons through Cormorants—This winter was notable for, among other things, the great scarcity of loons along our coast. Similarly, Western Grebes were very far down in numbers. Small flocks of several dozens were noted, but no concentrations of hundreds and thousands were found. Horned Grebes and Eared Grebes also were scarce. Notable this winter season was the excellent flight of *Fulmars*! During December and January flocks of hundreds could be seen within five miles of the mainland, while throughout the rest of the winter, *Fulmars* in small flocks and singly could be seen from almost any pier or promontory along the coast. Shearwaters of other species were very scarce, however. White Pelicans were generally scarce except for a flock of about 125 at Salton Sea and an equal number at Morro Bay. Brown Pelicans continued scarce along the southern California coast. As with other fish-eating species, the cormorants seemed to have deserted our coast during the winter.

Hérons and Ibises—Snowy and Common Egrets were nowhere abundant during the winter. The best concentrations of these birds occurred at Upper Newport and Morro Bays. The *Reddish Egret*, which appeared at Upper Newport Bay, Nov. 16, was still present on Feb. 28 (GSS). Eight White-faced Ibis were found near Upper Newport Bay, Jan. 28 (GMcC); about 70 were roosting in Ramer Lake, Imperial Co., Jan. 13 (Ed., et al.); a single bird spent January and February at Carlsbad (OW); and still another was seen at the Ventura County Gun Club, Feb. 15 (Ed., et al.).

Waterfowl—The wintering population of waterfowl was down slightly from previous years. The summary for our most important wintering areas at the Salton Sea Nat'l Wildlife Refuge (BHC) is as follows:

	Park No.	Latest Noted
Canada Goose	690	March 17
Snow Goose	18,000 (up 8000)	" "
White-fronted Goose	250	Feb. 3
Am. Widgeon	15,000	March 31
Pintail	7600	" "
Green-winged Teal	1000	" "
Cinnamon Teal	25 (far down)	" 17
Shoveler	1500 (down)	" 31
Redhead	25 (far down)	Feb. 24
Canvasback	145 (far down)	Jan. 20
Lesser Scaup	6290	March 3
Bufflehead	155	Jan. 20
Common Goldeneye	135	" "
Ruddy Duck	12,660	March 31

In addition, other interesting waterfowl of note were seen in the Imperial Valley: 1 adult *Blue Goose* and 1 hybrid *Blue x Snow Goose*, Jan. 12 (L.A.A.S.); *Fulvous Tree Duck*, 6 at Ramer Lake, Jan. 12 (L.A.A.S.) and 15 there, March 3-5 (GMcC); *European Widgeon*, 1 at Ramer Lake, Jan. 30; 2, March 3, at the same place (GMcC); *Wood Duck*, 1, March 3, Ramer Lake (GMcC). Elsewhere waterfowl were down at certain favored locations and up in others. For example, at Upper Newport Bay they numbered about 17,000 as compared with a usual population of between 25,000 and 30,000. At Hansen Dam numbers were about normal; at Big Bear Lake, which was dry during much of the year, only a small flock of Canada Geese persisted; at Lake Mathews, Orange Co. the flocks numbered about 30,000 ducks and some 2500 geese. At the Ventura County Gun Clubs, numbers of ducks were excellent. Nine Whistling Swans were found on Salt Creek, Death Valley Nat'l Monument, Jan. 29 (RHW), but no others were reported from the Region. Numbers of Canada Geese were good at Hansen Dam (R & MW) and in the Morengo Valley (JDG). At the latter location, Cinnamon Teal numbered in the hundreds on Feb. 17, and there were 2 *Blue-winged Teal*. At Bonita, near Chula Vista, *Blue-winged Teal* were almost unbelievably common (for this Region); 10 males were counted, Feb. 18 (GMcC, A & JM); 2 other males were found in the San Diego River Flood Control Channel, Feb. 16 (GMcC). One of the most remarkable species to be found in this state in a long time was the *Common Teal* found by McCaskie at Bonita, Jan. 29, and thereafter seen by scores of birders; it was last seen, Feb. 24. Scoters of all species were far down—especially Surf Scoters. White-winged Scoters, while not common, were proportionally in better numbers than the Surfs. Only a very few Common Scoters were noted. Buffleheads, on the other hand, had an excellent flight as more than 150 were present on Upper Newport Bay during most of the winter and good numbers were reported elsewhere as well. An *Oldsquaw* was found near Coronado, Nov. 26 (RG); another spent most of December at the Newport Pier; and a third was seen occasionally from the Santa Monica Pier during December (Ed.). *Hooded Mergansers*, which are very rare in this Region, were found at 2 localities: a single ♀ was at Upper Newport Bay, Dec. 3 (Ed., et al.) and 8 ♀ were at Bonita from Dec. 2 to, at least, Feb. 20 (GMcC, A & JM).

Birds of Prey—Two Bald Eagles were reported from the south of Morro Bay, Jan. 30 and Feb. 4 (CFT, *vide AS*); another was reported from near San Diego late in November (LG); and 2 were at the Ventura County Gun Clubs late in January through mid-February (Ed., H & OC). Golden Eagles were reported near Cholame (4 nesting pairs) (EMcM). Others were reported by Suffel from Pasuza, Upper Newport Bay, Carrizo Plains and near the Prado Dam. Still other reports were received, indicating that this species is at least holding its own in this Region. Ferruginous Hawks were found at Los Osos, Dec. 29 (Ed., IW); Borrego Valley, Feb. 12 (R & MW); Palomar Airport, Jan. 20 (A & JM); Temecula and

the Tijuana River Valley between Feb. 10 and March 1 (GMcC). *Rough-legged Hawks* seemed to have had a good flight as 1 was at Pasuza, Dec. 23 (GSS); 1 near south end of the Salton Sea, Jan. 30 (GMcC); 1 in the Tijuana River Valley, Feb. 3-18 when it flew over the International Border into Mexico (there is no known record for this species in Mexico) and circled back (GMcC); 1 was at Ramer Lake, Feb. 12 (Ed.); another was at the Ventura County Gun Clubs, Jan. 21 to at least Feb. 24 (Ed.). Still another was found in Borrego Valley, Feb. 13 (R & MW). A *Hurlin's Hawk* was at the Ventura County Gun Clubs, Jan. 21 (Ed., H & OC) and possibly another at Playa Del Rey, Dec. 30 (RB). A *Prairie Falcon* was seen over Elkhorn Valley, Dec. 11 (Ed., et al.). A small number of reports of *Peregrine Falcons* were noted, but *Pigeon Hawks* were quite scarce. No large roosts of the *White-tailed Kites* were reported, and only small numbers were seen in the Region throughout the winter.

Shorebirds—Wintering shorebirds were somewhat reduced in numbers for most species. Continued development of the Huntington Beach Marina and adjacent areas has drastically reduced the marshes there, while development of the Goleta Marshes further reduced the available shorebird habitat. Some 2000 *Sandhill Cranes* were counted as they left their roost in Soda Lake, Dec. 11 (Ed., et al.) and 2 were found near the south end of the Salton Sea, March 3 (GMcC). Numbers of *Black-bellied Plover* were down, but *Am. Golden Plover* were found as follows: as many as 5 in Tijuana River Valley between Feb. 2 and 24 (GMcC, A & JM), and 1 near Carpinteria, Feb. 25 (GSS). More than 150 *Mountain Plover* were counted along the length of the Carrizo Plains, Dec. 11 (Ed., et al.); about a dozen were near Encinitas in December and January (B & MR); about 120 were found between Newport and Santa Ana, Jan. 28; 2 more were in Tijuana River Valley, Feb. 2 (GMcC). Wintering *Wandering Tattlers* were scarce, as were *Knots*. *Ruddy Turnstones* in very large numbers (200+) were on San Diego Bay, Feb. 24 (GMcC), while elsewhere they were scarce. As many as 50 *Knots* were found on San Diego Bay during the winter (GMcC), but elsewhere they were very scarce. Lesser *Yellowlegs* were reported from a few localities during the winter. A truly remarkable find by McCaskie was a *Ruff*, which he collected in the flood control channels near San Diego, March 30. Wintering *Am. Avocets* were present in good numbers, especially at the south end of the Salton Sea, while small numbers of *Black-necked Stilts* wintered there and larger numbers (25+) wintered at Upper Newport Bay.

Jaegers, Gulls, Terns, Alcids—Four *Pomarine* and 2 *Parasitic Jaegers* were seen off Newport Beach, Dec. 26 (Ed., et al.) and individual *Parasitics* were noted along the coast throughout the winter, but were scarce. Wintering gulls by the thousands congregated along the beaches near Will Rogers State Beach, but *Glaucous-winged* and *Mew Gulls* were down. Similarly, wintering terns were scarce. A lone *Elegant Tern* was found by McCaskie on San Diego Bay, March 31. A single *Xantus' Murrelet* was found at Newport Pier, Dec. 11 (GMcC) and 15 *Rhinoc-*

eros Auklets were seen off Newport Beach, Dec. 29 (Ed., et al.).

Doves through Hummingbirds—A *White-winged Dove* was seen in the San Luis Rey Valley, Feb. 2 (OW). Small numbers of *Ground Doves* were found near Ramer Lake, Jan. 13 (L.A.A.S.) and in the Tijuana River Valley near the end of February (GMcC). A male *Costa's Hummingbird* was very early near Covina, Jan. 24 (RSW). An apparently wintering *Allen's Hummingbird* was at Montecito, Dec. 29 and Jan. 26 (GMcC); and they and *Rufous Hummingbirds* began to arrive in some numbers by the first week in February. Another remarkable bird previously mentioned from San Diego was the *Broad-billed Hummingbird*—this bird had left by mid-March.

Woodpeckers, Flycatchers, Swallows—Unusual was the sighting of a *White-headed Woodpecker* at 2500 ft. in San Marcos Pass, Dec. 2 (EZR, fide WGA). A *Yellow-shafted Flicker* regularly came to a garden in Los Angeles throughout the winter (OA). A pair of *Vermilion Flycatchers* was found at Silver Lakes Ranch near Norco in mid-January (JL); another spent the winter at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley Nat'l Monument (RW); at least 2 were present at Covington Park, Morongo Valley throughout the period. A *Cliff Swallow* was found as early as Feb. 4 near Imperial Beach (GMcC). A large flight of swallows, mostly *Tree* with smaller numbers of *Violet-green* passed through Morro Bay, Feb. 6. One *Barn*, 1 *Rough-winged*, together with some 100 *Cliff* were at Upper Newport Bay, Feb. 28 (GSS). This early movement of swallows in large numbers was further evidenced by the flocks of thousands of mixed *White-throated Swifts* and *Violet-green*, *Tree*, *Cliff* and *Rough-winged Swallows* that moved over the Ventura County Gun Clubs, Feb. 24; most of the swallows in this group were *Trees*.

Jays through Thrashers—*Steller's Jays* were reported from numerous foothill localities all during the winter. Throughout the winter, reports were received of additional *Clark's Nutcrackers* far removed from normal mountain localities. Some other places where they appeared included *Whittier* (EBMcG); *Beverly Hills* (Ed.); *Palos Verdes* (DMF); *Santa Barbara* (WGA); *Cambria* (fide AS); *Morro Bay* (CFT); *Bonita* (GMcC). *Piñon Jays* were numerous near *Cholame* (EMcM) and a few remained near *Big Bear City*. *Sage Thrashers* were found at *Lake Mathews* in January and a single bird was at *Tijuana River Valley*, March 17 (GMcC).

Thrushes, Waxwings, Starlings, Vireos—The spectacular flight of *Robins* was one of the highlights of the Winter Season. Flocks numbering thousands descended upon gardens, lawns and parks, causing endless comment. Great flocks even reached such desert towns as *Brawley* and *El Centro* in great numbers. From *Morro Bay* to *San Diego* and as far east as *Indio*, the *Robins* were present in hordes. Small numbers of *Varied Thrushes* were seen here and there. Similarly, a few *Townsend's Solitaires* were noted away from the mountains in *Santa Barbara* (WGA) and the *Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens* (EWK). *Hermit Thrushes* had good flights, especially near *Poway* (JDK). *Mountain Bluebirds* were very

plentiful, especially in the Imperial Valley, Carrizo Plains, Newport and elsewhere in cultivated fields or high plains. The flight of Cedar Waxwings was spotty. In some areas they were remarkably abundant; in other, reporters stated that they were scarce. Starlings received great notoriety in local papers because of the increasing incursions into this Region, especially in dairy areas and agricultural lands. It is unnecessary to cite all of the locations, since they are too numerous to mention, except to say that the Starling is here in southern California to stay! Suffel saw a Solitary Vireo in Pasadena in late February.

Warblers, Icterids, Tanagers—A few Myrtle Warblers noted during the winter, but the most interesting find was a *Palm Warbler* near the south end of the Salton Sea, Jan. 14 (*IW*, et al.). The bird was found again several times thereafter, until at least March 3. The *Baltimore Oriole(s)* at Montecito lingered well into March. Another (or the same?) immature male Baltimore returned to a feeder in Santa Ana in early March (*MH*). The Wilsons found a male in North Hollywood Park, Feb. 21 and March 4, in company with 4 Bullock's Orioles. Other Bul-

lock's Orioles were reported through the winter together with a smaller number of wintering Hooded Orioles. A Western Tanager was noted at Santa Barbara, Jan. 31 (*vide WGA*).

Fringillids—Four Evening Grosbeaks were found near Los Osos Valley, Feb. 4 (*vide AS*). Slate-colored Juncos were found at a few places, and 3 reports of White-throated Sparrows were received.

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