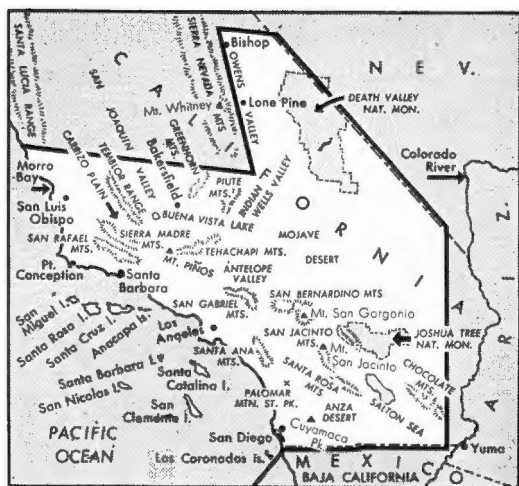


SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION.—South—ern California was actually verdant for the first time in many years this spring season. The deluges of the



winter of 1961-62 dumped an abnormal quantity of water on this Region and snow fields could still be seen in the higher San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains toward the end of May. Actually, our rains were not well dispersed, and most of the precipitation was encountered west of the deserts. For example, the eastern portion of Joshua Tree National Monument received virtually no rain throughout the winter and spring seasons, and consequently the plant forms there did not thrive. In contrast, the western portion of the Mojave and most of the Colorado desert received more than normal rainfall, and the spring wildflower displays there were excellent. Although the spring season was actually very dry, temperatures were fairly well below normal in most areas, and this reduced evaporation of surface moisture. The last of the "spring" rains ended by about the third week in

March, and thereafter very little precipitation occurred except for drizzles and dense fogs in the mountains and along the coast. Coastwise, air temperatures were somewhat below normal, fairly strong offshore winds blew during most of the latter part of April and well into May, and fog was often prevalent. Many mountain streams were running high by the end of May and much water lay in pools located in shaded canyons. One had the impression of everlasting greenery and excess of water almost everywhere. This condition prevailed well into the nesting season in most areas. In contrast with this rather inviting setting, the spring migration of landbirds left much to be desired. There were no conspicuous "flight" days, and not many areas showed great numbers of migrants at any one time. In fact, with a few exceptions, the desert oases proved to be rather barren places for birds during most of the spring. The winds in the upper Coachella Valley seemed unusually strong and prolonged during late April and early May and doubtless many of the migrants scooted northwestward with such excellent tailwinds. Only in the well-protected quiet of the Morongo Valley Oasis were any great flights of migrants noted—and these were superb! A rather interesting list of special birds was assembled by some observers afiel this season.

Loons through Cormorants—Unusual was the sighting of a Common Loon at Ramer Lake near the south end of the Salton Sea in May (*GMcC*); elsewhere, Common Loons were rarely observed. Small flights of Arctic Loons were seen near Anacapa Island, May 13. Grebes also, were somewhat scarce in southern California, and mention was previously made of the general paucity of small baitfish in coastal waters. A pelagic trip to the waters southeast of Anacapa Island on May 13 by members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society yielded a good number of pelagic birds—primarily Sooty Shearwaters. Estimates of the size of the flock averaged about 45,000 birds. In addition, 10 Pink-footed Shearwaters, 1 Manx Shearwater, 8 Black Petrels, 2 Ashy Petrels, 6 Fulmars, 1 Parasitic Jaeger and more than 200 Red Phalaropes were counted. White Pelicans continued to be fairly scarce in the Region. None were observed in migration along the south face of the San Gabriel Mountains or through San Gorgonio Pass. Only 5 were at south San Diego Bay, April 8 (*GMcC*), about 40 were seen at Ramer Lake, May 6 (*GMcC*), and about 50 more had assembled at Morro Bay by June 13 (*CFT*). Brown Pelicans had deserted coastal waters for their offshore nesting islands by mid-April. Virtually no cormorants were noted close to the mainland either during the winter or spring, but visits to their nesting islands in April and May revealed the usual number of birds in evidence.

Hérons and Ibis—White Herons were down somewhat in the Morro Bay area (*CFT*), but near the south end of the Salton Sea they were present in very good numbers (*JN*). Two more *Reddish Egrets* appeared in our Region. An adult was found together with an immature near the south end of San Diego Bay, May 5 (*GMcC*). The adult remained until at least May 16 (*EAP*) and the immature was present to at least May 24 (*GMcC*). White-faced Ibis

were present in normal numbers near the south end of the Salton Sea (JN).

Waterfowl—Most of the Black Brant on Morro Bay had departed by the end of April (JHK) and 5 were noted at south San Diego Bay as late as May 16 (EAP). No geese were seen in the Imperial Valley after mid-March and the larger flocks of Am. Widgeon, Pintail, Buffleheads, and Am. Coots departed there about March 24 (JN). Very interesting was the notation from Nowak at the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge of 2 pairs of *nesting* Pintails on that refuge. Elsewhere, most larger flocks of pond and lake ducks had departed by the third week in March, and some small rafts of scoters were still present near San Diego at the end of May (EAP).

Birds of Prey—Eleven adult California Condors were seen over the town of Simi, Ventura Co., May 13 (EMcM). No Bald Eagles were seen on Anacapa Island, May 13 (Ed.) but the reports of Golden Eagles were encouraging. The main flight of Swainson's Hawks again went unobserved and the only reports received of this species were of 10 near Yaqui Well, April 1, and a very late bird near Silver Strand, San Diego, May 5 (GMcC). A lone Prairie Falcon was seen battling fierce headwinds near Indio, April 29 (GMcC), and another was observed near 29 Palms, March 15 (*vide* JRY). No Peregrines were reported and the reports of White-tailed Kites were discouraging. A single Osprey was seen near Cholame, May 7 (EMcM), and another flew over Imperial Beach, May 18 (GMcC).

Quail, Cranes—Good coveys of Gambel's Quail (primarily family broods) were evident in lower desert areas early in May and gave evidence of successful nesting and good survival owing possibly to abundant sources of food available to them. In the higher deserts, families of quail were noted toward the end of the month (*vide* JRY). All of the wintering Sandhill Cranes on the Carizzo Plain had departed by March 4 (EMcM).

Shorebirds—The main flights of migratory shorebirds passed through the Region during the last week of April and the first week of May, and the flight might be said to have been exceptionally good. McCaskie reported that he encountered a massive "pile-up" of shorebirds in the Imperial Valley, April 29—a day on which strong northwest winds were blasting through the Coachella Valley, but only moderate breezes were blowing farther to the south. He described groupings of "thousands" of Western Sandpipers, and more than 2000 Semipalmated Plovers along the south end of the Salton Sea, together with hundreds of Wilson's Phalaropes on the ponds." In one particular field he counted more than 100 Whimbrels. There was a single Snowy Plover at the south end of the Salton Sea, April 1, and 5 there by April 29 (GMcC). McCaskie also found an Am. Golden Plover near the south end of the Salton Sea, April 29. This may represent the first record for the Imperial Valley. Earlier he had found another Am. Golden Plover in the Flood Control Channel near San Diego from April 22-27. A high count of more than 330 Ruddy Turnstones was made on San Diego Bay, May 5 (GMcC). McMillan reported

that Mountain Plovers were "unusually plentiful in west-central California throughout the winter," and had departed by March 13. Black Turnstones were very rare after mid-May, and the Wandering Tattlers had largely moved through the Region by that time. Lesser Yellowlegs were observed at Bonita, San Diego Co. (3), April 7, and another in the Flood Control Channel, April 22-27 (GMcC). A good flight of Knots was noted by McCaskie and Pugh near San Diego. A high count of more than 100 was made at San Diego Bay, May 5 (GMcC), and 15 were still present on May 24. Nineteen were found near the south end of the Salton Sea, April 29 (GMcC), and this is significant since the only other inland record for California was from Los Banos, August 2, 1949. Another Sanderling record for the Imperial Valley was established by McCaskie as he found a single bird near the south end of the Salton Sea, May 6. Pugh reported large numbers of shorebirds (primarily Willets and Marbled Godwits) on San Diego Bay well after the peak of the spring shorebird flight had passed. The flight of Red Phalaropes was one of the finest in years. More than 250 were seen near Anacapa Island and adjacent waters on May 13 (Ed., *et al.*): 50 were off Point Loma and about 150 off the Silver Strand, May 5 (GMcC). Others were reported in much smaller numbers from coastal lagoons from San Diego to Morro Bay (CFT). The flight of Northern Phalaropes was less interesting, and only small flocks were noted. Away from the Imperial Valley, Wilson's Phalaropes were poorly represented.

Jaegers, Gulls, Terns, Alcids—The spring flight of jaegers might best be described as dull. Very few Parasitic Jaegers were reported, and no Pomarines. The best find was a full-plumaged *Long-tailed Jaeger* that flew over south San Diego Bay, May 11 (GMcC). After the first week in May very few Heermann's Gulls were found close to the coast. By the same time, virtually all of the Herring and Glaucous-winged Gulls had departed for more northerly waters. The flight of Sabine's Gulls was very poor or went virtually unrecorded. Pugh found an adult near Silver Strand State Park, May 29 (which was late). The main flight of Common Terns passed through early in May, and Gull-billed Terns were virtually absent from near the south end of the Salton Sea. The tern colony at the Salt Works near the south end of San Diego Bay harbored the usual number of Caspian Terns, but no success was reported in the nesting attempts of the Royal and Elegant Terns. Some dozen or so Royals were present; about 20 Elegants were in the colony and at least 3 nests were discovered, but it was doubted that any young were reared successfully. Only at the Imperial Valley was the spring flight of Black Terns in evidence, except for 10 birds at the San Diego Salt Works, May 5 (GMcC). Only a single Pigeon Guillemot was found near Anacapa Island, May 13 (Ed.) but those nesting along the cliffs south of Morro Bay had returned by early May (AS). An oil-soaked Rhinoceros Auklet was picked up near Morro Bay, May 10 (CFT).

Doves through Hummingbirds—White-winged Doves migrated into the Imperial, Coachella, and Colorado River Valleys toward the end of April when

good flights were observed at the Salton Sea Nat'l Wildlife Refuge (JN) and in various parts of Joshua Tree National Monument (JRY). Ground Doves seemed down in the Imperial Valley (JN), but 2 *Inca Doves* were observed near the Refuge Headquarters in late April (JN). The spring migration of Vaux's Swifts went almost unrecorded this year. No massive flights were noted, and perhaps this was due to clear days through most of the inland valleys in the Region. Good Vaux's Swift flights are usually associated with overcast days when the cloud ceiling is low. Two Black Swifts were seen over Pasadena, May 16 (GSS), and a single bird was in Whitewater Canyon, May 19 (Ed., LS). There is increasing evidence that Black Swifts probably nest on the high cliffs in the San Jacinto and San Gabriel Mountains. Eight Black Swifts were seen in San Gabriel Canyon in mid-June (R & MW) and shortly thereafter the Wilsons found 2 more near Mt. Williamson in the San Gabriel Mountains. These very late sightings would indicate something more than late migrants. The spring migration of hummingbirds was just about normal.

Woodpeckers, Flycatchers, Swallows—Generally speaking, the migration of smaller landbirds left much to be desired. The coastwise migration was well-dispersed and conditions that would have led to heavy flights did not develop. In fact, most contributors commented on the general lack of small passerines. Observers afield in the desert during the latter part of April and early May were discouraged to find that not all oases harbored great flocks of migrants. Strong winds prevailed in the upper Coachella Valley during this time and observing conditions were far from favorable at such places as Thousand Palms Oasis, Indio, Mecca and Coachella. However, several visits to the oasis in Morongo Valley revealed exceptional waves of birds, the likes of which this observer has rarely witnessed in California before. On April 28-29, while sandstorms were swirling across the Coachella Valley, several visits were made to the sheltered Morongo Valley. Hundreds of migrants were feeding in the oasis and then moving out across the desert to the northwest, while others moved in from the southeast. Warblers dominated the oasis on this visit. A return visit was made by McCaskie on May 12 and he estimated there were more than 500 warblers in or near the oasis, together with more than 200 mixed flycatchers. Another visit was made by your editor on May 19 and while many warblers were still moving through, the dominant birds on this date were the flycatchers and Western Tanagers. Also on both May 12 and 19 there was a strong movement of Swainson's Thrushes, which doubtless had persisted through the intervening week. As many as 5 male and several female Vermilion Flycatchers were counted in Morongo Valley, April 28-29, May 12, and May 19. They were not reported from any other area in the Region. Cassin's Kingbirds arrived during the second week in March and a large flight of Western Kingbirds (surprisingly late) was noted at Morongo Valley, May 19 (Ed., LS). On this latter date, there was a large movement of Western Wood Pewees, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and *Empidonax* flycatchers

through Morongo Valley; this represented a continuation of the large flight witnessed there the previous week by McCaskie. A Gray Flycatcher was near Hemet Lake, April 28 (R & MW), and an *Eastern Phoebe* was at the headquarters of the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge (JN). Wauer collected a *Scissor-tailed Flycatcher* at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley Nat'l Mon., May 3. Purple Martins were present in very good numbers in Irvine and O'Neill Parks, the San Gabriel and San Jacinto Mountains and at Nojaqui Park in Santa Barbara County.

Nutcrackers, Thrashers—A single Clark's Nutcracker appeared at the campus of the University of Redlands, March 20 (JDG). McCaskie found a single Bendire's Thrasher near Clarke Mountain in eastern San Bernardino County in early June.

Thrushes, Waxwings, Starlings, Vireos—The migration of Swainson's Thrushes was good and the bulk of these birds passed through during the second week in May. There were numerous reports of very late flights of Cedar Waxwings—some even coming through during the first week in June. More and more reports were received of nesting Starlings in our Region. McMillan reported them as very common nesters in west-central California during March. They seem to be well established in the San Gabriel Valley and more were noted in the Imperial Valley and the San Bernardino Valley. Two Gray Vireos in migration near the coast at Bonita, San Diego Co. were seen on May 1 (GMcC) and another in migration was seen at Whitewater Canyon, May 19 (Ed., LS).

Warblers—Away from the Morongo Valley and Death Valley, the spring migration of warblers was light and scattered with no flights that could be called significant. Generally, the flight of warblers was somewhat late. Good movements of warblers (including all of the expected species plus a few "specials") were noted in Morongo Valley, April 28-29, May 12, and May 19. Of special interest were the following warblers: *Northern Waterthrush*—2 at Morongo Valley, May 12 (GMcC); *Myrtle Warbler*—1 at Morongo Valley, April 29 (GMcC); *Blackpoll Warbler*, *Black-and-white Warbler*, and *Am. Redstart* captured in Joshua Tree National Monument during spring (DB); and 1 male *Hooded Warbler* banded in Topanga Canyon, June 16 (DB).

Icterids, Tanagers, Fringillids—Orioles in migration were about normal and a large (?) flock of Yellow-headed Blackbirds was found in Los Osos Valley, San Luis Obispo Co., May 19 (CFT). The flight of Western Tanagers through the western edge of the deserts was nothing short of spectacular. There were hundreds in the Beaumont area in early May and on a single visit to Morongo Valley, May 19, we observed two large cottonwoods that contained no less than 200 Western Tanagers! All about us were scores of other tanagers. No fewer than 4 male *Summer Tanagers* were observed on Morongo Valley on this date, there having been at least 2 pairs there on April 28-29 (Ed.). A large breeding colony of Tricolored Blackbirds in Mission Canyon, San Diego Co. was estimated by McCaskie to contain about 2000 birds. A single Evening Grosbeak was at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley Nat'l Monument, May 4 (RHW). A *Rose-*

breasted Grosbeak was found near Blythe in company with Western Tanagers during early June (*vide DB*). Singing Grasshopper Sparrows were found near Cholame, May 6 (*EMcM*) and Mission Gorge, May 25 (*GMcC*). Few White-crowned Sparrows were noted after about May 1 and no Golden-crowned Sparrows were seen after May 11.

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