

after August showers were soon parched by dry winds and heat.

Finally, at Thanksgiving, good rains did come, soaking the soil thoroughly as showers lasted a day or two, let up briefly, and returned to wet the land again and again. This time, the vegetation sprang up green and lovely, beginning again the growing cycle that starts here in fall and reaches its peak in early spring. Snow covered the mountains, bare so long, and took up its role in this cycle of rebirth. But one factor was very definitely missing as far as birds were concerned—this was the supply of natural food in the mountain and foothill areas. Conifers did not have any cones; shrubs that did manage to form berries and other fruits were soon stripped, generally by the end of August; in the southern Sierra foothills even farm-grown apples and grapes were devoured by early August. The result was that Clark's Nutcrackers, Townsend's Solitaires and Evening Grosbeaks, principally, turned up in the lowlands hungry for anything resembling their normal foods. The Clark's Nutcrackers, in small groups, and early, were most conspicuous in the counties surrounding San Francisco Bay. From September through November, these birds, in their first invasion since 1955-56, foraged away from their usual haunts. Two reporters in the Sierra in late fall found practically no nutcrackers, normally quite common in small groups (*BCS*, *GMC*). Red Crossbills were reported missing, but few reports of these out of the ordinary have come in.

Local, but odd, was a pronounced wandering on the part of several more stationary species into Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. The park is consistently and carefully checked throughout the year by Florence Plymell. These were among the first records there this fall: White Pelicans, Golden Eagle, dowitcher, swift (sp.), White-breasted Nuthatch, Pigmy Nuthatch, Tricolored Blackbird; and among the species seldom seen in the park: Green-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, late-lingering Rufous Hummingbird, both Red-naped and Red-breasted races of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Say's Phoebe, Townsend's Solitaire, Starling, Chipping, White-throated, and Lincoln's Sparrows (*FP*). Across the Bay, at El Cerrito, it was much the same with these unusual (for there) species: Green Heron, White-breasted Nuthatch, Acorn and Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Brown Creeper, Townsend's Solitaire, and Evening Grosbeak (*ALC*).

Adding to birds "off base," there was a rash of eastern birds, particularly warblers, each reported with careful descriptions based on excellent views: 2 Eastern Kingbirds, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler, 2 Palm Warblers, 1 Ovenbird (specimen), and 2 Am. Redstarts.

Here the fall shorebird migration is usually one of the major events of the year. But a shift in the traditional feeding and loafing patterns seems to be occurring because of the drastically disturbed flats of former shorebird use in San Francisco Bay. This makes it all but impossible to judge comparative numbers of migrants. However, in the Dumbarton Bridge area, Am. Avocets and Black-necked Stilts are showing a steady increase (*EDS*). Elsewhere some of the rarer species, Am. Golden Plover, Pectoral

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.—Although there was actually some precipitation in each month of this season, drought conditions continued in the Region



until Thanksgiving. Observers were almost unanimous in commenting on hot, dry weather, windy at times. Birds of all kinds congregated at water sources, shrunken in the prevailing aridity. Such rain as did come was light, during the night, frequently, and followed by hot sunny days that tended to nullify beneficial effects. Some grasses that began to grow

(most spectacularly this season), and Baird's and Rock Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs and Ruddy Turnstones, are proving regular in small numbers.

In the vicinity of Monterey Bay, associated with heavy seas, strong onshore winds from the northwest blew at 30 to 40 m.p.h. on Oct. 7-8, Oct. 28-29, Nov. 11, and Nov. 20. These conditions produced a wonderful showing of pelagic birds: a stream of shearwaters—with the "white-bellied" ones outnumbering the commoner Sooty Shearwaters, Fulmars, jaegers, and *Skuas*, with some petrels, including a Leach's, seen from the shore and in fantastic numbers! Details follow in the report.

Loons, Grebes, Pelagic Birds—A few early migrant loons on Oct. 7 and 8 increased to good numbers by Oct. 29, more by Nov. 11, reaching thousands by Nov. 20 (*GPL*). Six young Western Grebes, still in whitish plumage, at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge by Nov. 4 suggest a local and unusually late brood (*MM*). Almost unbelievable numbers of Fulmars were noted close to shore around Pacific Grove, in comparison with the usual 2 or 3 in October and November. As early as Oct. 7 and 8, 5 were seen (*GMcC*); at least 100 were noted in Monterey Harbor on Nov. 11 (*EAA*); on Nov. 20, there were about 100 resting on the waters in this harbor, sometimes exchanging places with some of the 100 or so flying about the entrance to the harbor (a dozen fed close to the piers) and scores more along the adjacent shoreline (*GPL*); by Nov. 29 and 30 an estimated 1200 to 1500 were swimming and feeding in the kelp beds along Cannery Row, Monterey (*GPL*); 8 and 5, respectively, noted from Pt. Reyes on Dec. 2 and 3 (*EAA*). Compared with an offshore boat trip from Monterey on Aug. 27, when 1000 or so Sooty Shearwaters to 30 Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen, the Oct. 7 trip produced reversed proportions of light-bellied ones to dark. Even from the Pacific Grove shore that afternoon, a five-minute survey of pelagic birds streaming by (for at least 1½ hours) revealed: 16 New Zealand Shearwaters, 13 Sooties, 7 Pink-footed, and 3 Manx Shearwaters; 1 petrel, a Fork-tailed (*GMcC*); also Fulmars, jaegers, and *Skuas* mentioned elsewhere in this report. These species and proportions were from the roughly 25 per cent of birds close enough to be identifiable! On the next day, in similar weather, no shearwaters were seen, but about 15 Ashy Petrels and 2 or 3 Fork-tailed Petrels flew by the same shoreline spot (*GMcC*). On the unusual late date of Nov. 20, a Leach's Petrel, rarely seen from shore, was noted with other pelagics from Pacific Grove (*GPL*). Among the abundance of birds seen from the boat on Oct. 7, a Slender-billed Shearwater was recognized (*AS*, *fide GMcC*). On Aug. 8 proof that even the experienced may lose their way in dense fogs came when 8 Sooty Shearwaters were noted on the beach at San Gregorio, San Mateo Co. (*RS*); at 2 A.M. on Aug. 18 thousands of Sooties descended dazedly upon seaside communities from Capitola to Cliffside in Santa Cruz County. An emergency roundup of bird-banders resulted in banding 83 before the supply of suitable bands ran out. Interested persons succeeded in putting back many of the heavy birds after it was

found that they were healthy and could fly when brought to the sea cliffs (*fide DBH*).

Hérons, Waterfowl—A Least Bittern was found wounded, Aug. 8, in a Capitola backyard. Dead a few hours later, it is now a study skin at the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History—a possible first record for this area (*FEH*). Thousands of geese (*sp.*) low-flying in heavy fog over the northern Sacramento Valley (Red Bluff, Corning, Gerber, and Redding) awakened residents at 4:00 A.M., perhaps causing 3 power failures in the 50-mile area, according to a newspaper clipping from the *Chico Enterprise Record*, Nov. 29 (*VKC*). An excellent view of an adult Blue Goose, Nov. 4, was afforded at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (*MM & GMcC*). An unusual 50 Fulvous Tree Ducks were reported from a Gun Club 5 miles south of Los Banos, Sept. 24 to 26 (*W'A, fide RII*). Ring-necked Ducks on Manzanita Lake, Lassen Volcanic National Park, were harassed, but unharmed, by a Bald Eagle, Nov. 5 (*fide FES*). A King Eider, consistently reported from Moss Landing—Monterey since March 1959 was reported missing after Aug. 26. A different immature male, with more fully developed frontal shield and coloring, was noted at Bodega Bay on Sept. 17 (*MM & GMcC*).

Vultures, Hawks, Eagles—About 125 Turkey Vultures on Nov. 26 were milling over Princeton, Colusa Co. (*VKC*). Over 100 buteo hawks, including immature and melanistic Swainson's and 1 melanistic Red-tailed, were noted southeast of Los Banos on Sept. 20. An estimated ratio of 1 normal light-plumaged adult to 5 immature or dark birds was observed (*GSS*). Although a coastal Bald Eagle was reported 2 months earlier (*MF*), others, principally in mountain areas, were observed in November.

Rails, Shorebirds—It is doubtful that any Clapper Rails are left in Contra Costa County, as industrial development has taken over prime sites for this species (*LF*). Am. Golden Plovers were gratifyingly numerous and wide-spread: the earliest reported was at Carmel River Beach Lagoon, Monterey Co., Aug. 21 to 23 (*VLY, GPL, Elmer Higley, fide MF*); while other single birds were found on coastal lagoons and beaches throughout the season. Other sightings of special interest were: 6 at Bodega Bay, Sonoma Co., on Sept. 11 (*RS*); 9 there on Sept. 18 (*GMcC & MM*); 2 on the following day (*GM*); 2 at the Davis Sewer Plant, in the Sacramento Valley, on Sept. 30 (*GMcC*); and 6 in a grassy field near the RCA station on Point Reyes Peninsula, Oct. 21 (*MM, GMcC & EAP*)—a total of about 26 Am. Golden Plovers, discounting probable sightings of the same birds! The rather rare Pectoral Sandpipers were in very good numbers in their own habitats—grassy salt-marsh edges—with a single bird far inland at Boca Reservoir in the Sierra on Sept. 9 (*GMcC*). On Nov. 26, at Humboldt Bay, still relatively undisturbed—and largely unexplored for birds—3000 to 4000 Black-bellied Plover, together with 20,000 to 25,000 "peeps" (mostly Dunlins) and smaller numbers of Willets and Marbled Godwits was a good showing so far north and so late (*MM*). About the only locale reporting Red Phalaropes was the Monterey Bay area, but "thousands" were seen there in October and November

(GMcC, GPL).

Gulls, Terns, Alcids—Jaegers were spectacularly in sight during the offshore boat trip of Oct. 7. Even from the Pacific Grove shore in the afternoon, they were flying by at the rate of about 50 identifiable adults per hour, 90 per cent of them Pomarine (MM & GMcC). An almost incredible number of Skuas were noted the same day: 11 offshore, but 8 seen from shore! (GMcC & MM, GPL). Most observers agree that Bonaparte's and Heerman's Gulls were in good numbers on the central coastal areas. Two Common Terns were noted at Lake Tahoe on Sept. 9 and 10, an unusual inland record (GMcC). Few Elegant Terns were seen, a contrast from the hundreds of some late summers. On Aug. 19 a substantial number of alcids were feeding among the kelp between Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz: at least 1000 Common Murres, 25-30 Pigeon Guillemots, and about 50 Marbled Murrelets (MM); Common Murres also were considered abundant in Monterey Bay in October and November (GPL).

Poorwill, Swifts, Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers—A Poorwill was flushed from the south road up Mt. Diablo on the evening of Nov. 19 (MM). Five or 6 Vaux's Swifts, absent from the chimney since the end of the breeding season, apparently returned and used the same chimney from Sept. 14 through Oct. 2 (EDS). A Calliope Hummingbird "fought" with an Anna's Hummer for a week in the foothills near Springville, Tulare Co., then left on Oct. 3 (MEM); another lingerer, a male Rufous Hummingbird, claimed a feeding territory among the *Abutilons* in the Arboretum in Golden Gate Park about Oct. 19 and stayed on through the period at least until Dec. 2 (FP, V D&C, BDC). A White-headed Woodpecker was seen on 3 dates, Oct. 17, 24, and Nov. 4, out of range at Forest Bragg (RC).

Flycatchers, Nutcrackers—Two observations of Eastern Kingbirds, clearly seen, were: 1 at mid-day, Sept. 30, near Half Moon Bay (EAA); and 1 on Sept. 23 on Bay Farm Island, Alameda (ALC). Straggling Ash-throated Flycatchers were seen: on Sept. 27 at the Santa Rosa Treatment Plant (MS); and at Soquel, Santa Cruz Co., until Sept. 29 (RJR). Numbers of *Empidonax* Flycatchers passing through Glen Ellen, Sonoma Co., from Aug. 23 to Sept. 12, seemed greater than usual (MS). Now definitely established as a Black-billed Magpie 12 miles north of Yreka, a single bird was seen on Oct. 9, 11, and Nov. 28 (MSC). Clark's Nutcrackers staged a real lowland invasion from Sept. 29, when a single bird was seen in an irrigated field near Glen Ellen (MS) all through October and November. The birds have been widespread as the following reports typify: 11 in Monterey Pines on Jack's Peak near Monterey on Oct. 23 (GPL); 1 on Oct. 14 near Soquel came to water daily (FEH); at least 20 were seen feeding on Ponderosa and Knobcone Pine Seeds in Pine Flat, Mt. Hermon, in Santa Cruz County (EDS); 2 near Mallard Lake, San Francisco, on Nov. 26 (FP); 1 in Del Paso Park, north of Sacramento, on Nov. 18 (Muriel Kaminsky, *vide* ERP); and 1 in East Bay Regional Parks near Oakland on Nov. 18 (MM). Nutcrackers were absent from Clark Station, Sierra

Co., Nov. 24 to 26 (BCS); and only 1 was seen after Oct. 1 near Lake Tahoe, where flocks normally are common at this time (GMcC).

Nuthatches, Wrens—Up to 6 White-breasted Nuthatches and Pigmy Nuthatches, neither of which had been found previously in Golden Gate Park, were present there through September and October (FP). White-breasted were at El Cerrito through the season (ALC); and at least 12 Pigmy Nuthatches in planted pine seedlings at Stinson Beach on Sept. 10 (MM) also were out of their normal range. Is this an overflow expansion from normally resident areas? A Dipper was seen at 10,500 ft. elevation on Lyell Fork, Yosemite, Aug. 15 to 18 (GA). A Cañon Wren was singing half the morning of Oct. 10 12 miles north of Yreka, where not previously noted (MSC).

Thrashers, Thrushes, Pipits, Phainopepla—A Sage Thrasher was observed in the chaparral south of Carmel River mouth, Sept. 23 (RLB) and Sept. 24 (GPL). Observers from throughout the Region agree that Robins are more conspicuously abundant than ever; that, in general, Hermit Thrushes are in very good numbers again; but, that Varied Thrushes seem common in some areas and scarce in others. A Swainson's Thrush was present from Oct. 2, intermittently through Nov. 29, at a far northern location near Yreka, Siskiyou Co.—very late (MSC). Single Townsend's Solitaires were widespread in occurrence, perhaps also seeking lowland food, although 1 was seen at a 6000 ft. elevation in the southern Sierra near Springville as late as Nov. 5 (MEM). Twenty-five Water Pipits were still at an elevation of 10,453 ft. on Lassen Peak on Sept. 9 (RB). A female Phainopepla was at Springville, elev. 1200 ft., Oct. 14 and 15 (MEM).

Warblers, Tanagers—Black-throated Gray Warblers and Townsend's Warblers were considered in excellent numbers through Sonoma and Contra Costa Counties (MS, LF). A male *Black-throated Blue Warbler* was observed on Nov. 4 (part of the time on the ground) for about an hour at Carmel (GPL & RLB). A report of a *Palm Warbler*, Oct. 9, near Gazos Creek, San Mateo Co., (HM, *vide* FP); and another warbler, whose description fits this species, seen feeding with other warblers, Nov. 26, at Woods Lagoon, Santa Cruz (BK) seem like good possibilities. *Am. Redstarts* were noted: a male on Mt. Diablo, Contra Costa Co., on Sept. 11 (EAP); and a female on the west shore of Clear Lake, Sept. 23 and 24 (RS). An *Ovenbird*, found dead at the Audubon Lodge, Lake Van Norden near Donner Summit, on Aug. 12 by Bill Goodall, is now a specimen in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley. A Western Tanager lingered 3 weeks later than others at the Golden Gate Park Fuchsia Gardens—until Oct. 25 (FP).

Sparrows, Longspurs—A Vesper Sparrow was noted among other sparrows at St. Mary's Lake, near Moraga, Oct. 15 (LF). While Slate-colored Juncos were reported from November on into the winter last year, it is interesting to note that all records this fall are in October: Oct. 14 and 15 at Tahoe City (GMcC); Oct. 15 at Saratoga (EDS); at Inverness on Oct. 22 (GM); at Lafayette on Oct. 29 (LF);

and at Glen Ellen for 3 days following Oct. 30 (MS). A Brewer's Sparrow was noted among mixed shrubs, but feeding on the ground on Mt. Diablo on Sept. 12 (EAP). White-throated Sparrows, although sparsely regular, seemed unusually numerous and widespread in central California. Three *Lapland Longspurs* were observed in open country near Oak Knoll Hospital, Oakland, on Oct. 9. A single longspur was with Water Pipits near Skyline High School, Oakland, from Nov. 9 to Dec. 3 (RS). All winter marks and calls were carefully noted. A *Chestnut-collared Longspur* in winter plumage was collected near Tahoe City on Oct. 15 (GMcC) and is now a specimen in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley. An adult Snow Bunting in winter plumage was observed at close quarters on the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, near Willows, on Nov. 4 (GMcC & MM).

Corrigendum—An observation of 4 Common Terns, July 22, as printed at the bottom of page 490, *Audubon Field Notes* 15(5) should be credited to (MM), Marie Mans, not (EAA).

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