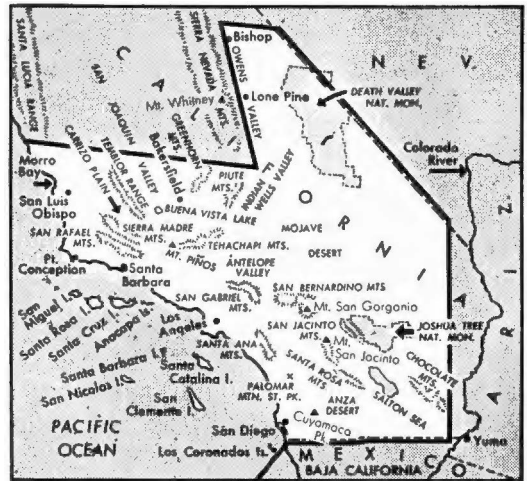


SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION.—In years past, southern California's rainy season would commence about Dec. 15 and continue through early



April. This normally produced about 15 inches of precipitation in the coastal lowlands, foothills, and interior valleys. In years past, February was the rainiest month. Although rainfall during the winter of 1961-62 was somewhat above normal, the rains were well dispersed from November to mid-April. During the winter of 1962-63, virtually no precipitation was recorded during December, very little during January, and February was much drier than normal.

While almost rainless weather persisted to the end of February, the temperatures were slightly below normal, and coastal areas experienced many foggy days. As it ultimately developed, most of the winter's rain and snow arrived during March and early April. Winter birding in southern California proved to be only mediocre, but there were a few very exciting finds. Generally, seabirds were scarce all along the coast well offshore, and the usual numbers of coastal grebes, loons, scoters, gulls, and the like seemed far down. Only in the San Diego area were wintering shorebirds present in excellent numbers. The winter waterfowl populations were slightly below normal at first in the Salton Sea area, but gradually built up numbers as the season progressed. Elsewhere, waterfowl numbers were down for most species. Numbers of wintering shorebirds, except at the San Diego marshes, were not good. Contributors were in almost universal agreement as to the status of Robins, Hermit Thrushes and Cedar Waxwings. All commented on the virtual lack of wintering Robins and Hermit Thrushes (except for the small groups of resident Robins noted throughout the year in certain foothill and suburban areas). As for Cedar Waxwings, their numbers were far down, as only a few small scattered flocks were noted and these were first seen late in the season. There seemed to be more reports of wintering summer residents such as Black-headed Grosbeaks, Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, and certain hummingbirds, as well as such normal migrants as Nashville, MacGillivray's, Black-throated Gray, and Hermit Warblers. Because of this, a number of first winter records were established for southern California. Throughout this period, the mountains were virtually devoid of snow. Generally, winter visitors were late in arriving, and after the brief storm of Feb. 9-10, some of the wintering species departed from the Region.

Loons, Grebes—Loons of all three species were very scarce along the coast until the last week in February when they began appearing in larger and larger flocks. These probably represented northbound migrants as many of the flocks could be seen flying steadily in a northbound direction. It would appear that the southbound flocks of loons were overlooked during the fall and relatively small numbers of loons actually spend the winter here. It is usually not until the latter part of February that they begin to appear in local waters in any numbers. Only at San Diego and off Venice were any large concentrations of Western Grebes noted during the winter. Both of these flocks numbered about 2000 birds, but elsewhere only small, scattered flocks were noted. Horned Grebes seemed down in numbers and the only Red-necked Grebe reported was a single bird at Bolsa Chica, Feb. 2 (FR).

Shearwaters, Cormorants, Pelicans—Procellariiformes of all species were conspicuous by their absence throughout the winter. Virtually no Sooty Shearwaters were observed and no Fulmars whatever were encountered during several mid-winter pelagic trips. Proximal to the coast, cormorants were very scarce, but on the offshore islands their numbers appeared to be normal. This might be explained by

the persistence of the "red tide" along much of the southern California coast during January and February. This caused a great kill of fish and other marine organisms and doubtless reduced the population of many coastal birds (except gulls) because of the lack of food. Small groups of White Pelicans wintered at Morro Bay, Upper Newport Bay and South San Diego Bay.

Hérons and Ibis—About 20 Snowy Egrets were present in the San Diego Flood Control Channel during most of the winter, and some 70 were at Solano Beach during this time. Lesser numbers of Common Egrets were noted there also (GMcC, EAP). An immature *Louisiana Heron* was at Imperial Beach from Dec. 9 to at least Feb. 9 (GMcC, EAP). A *Yellow-crowned Night Heron* was seen by many observers in Pilgrim Place, Claremont about March 27 (EWK). Least Bitterns were found regularly at Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary in Carlsbad and 2 others were found near San Diego (GMcC, EAP). During the winter, small groups of White-faced Ibis were found at Santa Margarita Inlet (GMcC, EAP), Upper Newport Bay (T&ZC), Salton Sea Nat'l Wildlife Refuge (RRP), Point Mugu (GSS), and Buena Vista Lagoon (GS). Numbers of White-faced Ibis in the Imperial Valley were far below normal.

Waterfowl—While wintering waterfowl were somewhat late in reaching their expected numbers in this Region, ultimate populations of most species appeared to be normal. The only report of a Whistling Swan was that of a single bird at Upper Newport Bay, Jan. 19 (GS). At the Salton Sea Nat'l Wildlife Refuge waterfowl populations reached their peak during the week of Dec. 16-22. At this time 75,000 ducks, 14,700 geese, and 5000 coots were present. In order of abundance, the species can be listed as follows: Ruddy Ducks—30,000; Am. Widgeon—18,000; Pintail—15,000; Snow Geese—13,000; Green-winged Teal—7500; and Shoveler—5000. Peak populations of Pintail and Am. Widgeon were reached much later in the year. Pintail peaked at 24,000 about Jan. 13 and there were 55,000 Am. Widgeon present during the period, Feb. 17-March 1. It was reported that waterfowl use of the refuge was up approximately 100 per cent as compared with last winter. In the Imperial Valley, the annual Midwinter Waterfowl Survey was conducted on Jan. 2-3 when the Imperial Valley-Salton Sea areas and the Colorado River Delta in Baja California were censused aerially. A total of 163,035 ducks, 21,687 geese, and 13,820 coots was tallied. By far, the majority of these birds was seen in the Imperial Valley. Canvasback numbers were very encouraging with 3700 counted as compared with 615 in 1961-62. The Canada Goose population was up 173 per cent this winter with a peak of 3000 birds. However, these encouraging statistics may be only a reflection of greater use by waterfowl of the refuge rather than an actual increase in production and survival. A number of Ross' Geese were noted among the great flocks of Snows, and a group of 3 *Blue Geese* was noted on and off throughout the winter. During the censusing of the Valley and the Salton Sea, some 80,000 Eared Grebes were counted. Elsewhere in the Region, the following

waterfowl observations were noteworthy: at Morro Bay, waterfowl numbers were down and an immature Ross' Goose was found near Laguna Lake, Dec. 1, and ultimately was shot (*AIR*); about 600 Black Brant wintered in the San Diego area, and among them a single *Am. Brant* was found, March 16-18 (*GMcC, EAP*). Twenty-three Snow Geese were seen flying over San Diego Bay, Jan. 6 (*GMcC*). At Upper Newport Bay, numbers of waterfowl were about 60 per cent of normal (usually about 25,000 including about 100 Canada Geese), and at Lake Norconian, about 3000 ducks were counted on Jan. 12, of which about 75 per cent were *Am. Widgeon*, 10 per cent Shoveler, and 5 per cent Mallards (*RF*). A flock of about 100 Canada Geese, plus a single Snow Goose, and an albino Canada Goose spent most of the winter on Chatsworth Reservoir in the San Fernando Valley. Two *European Widgeons* were found during the season; one was in the San Diego Flood Control Channel, Dec. 7 to Feb. 17 (*GMcC*) and the other was found at Ramer Lake, Imperial Valley, Feb. 23 (*R&MW*). A few Blue-winged Teal were found, but they were not as common in the Sweetwater River valley as last year, McCaskie found a teal that he presumed to be a *hybrid Common x Green-winged Teal* at Bonita, Jan. 4-Feb. 1. Buffleheads seemed very numerous at Upper Newport Bay (*BH*) where they numbered in the hundreds. Common Goldeneyes were much more numerous in the San Diego area this winter than last. About 50 birds were noted on south San Diego Bay all winter (*GMcC, EAP*). A single *Oldsquaw* was seen in the San Diego area, Dec. 23 (*vide GMcC*), and 3 others were seen at the San Diego Ferry, Jan. 25-27. Another *Oldsquaw* spent most of the winter at the Playa del Rey Yacht Harbor, a female was shot in the southern San Joaquin Valley, Dec. 8 (*GSS*), and another was at Point Mugu Gun Club early in March. An adult male *Harlequin Duck* was found by Agnes Behrens and Margaret Watson near Coronado, Dec. 23-March 18, where it was seen repeatedly to the delight of many other observers. Only in the San Diego area were scoters present in normal numbers. It was estimated that some 30,000 Surf Scoters were present on south San Diego Bay on Dec. 23 (*EAP*). Fewer White-winged Scoters than usual were noted, and the Common Scoter was rare during the past winter. Common Mergansers were up and widely reported; the highest count was 220 at Lake Cachuma, Dec. 2-March 17 (*vide Mrs. TH*). Red-breasted Mergansers were down and *Hooded Mergansers* were reported from Bonita to Sweetwater Res. (7) Dec. 23; Upper Newport Bay (1) throughout the winter; and Descanso Gardens, Jan. 28 (1) (*BMH*).

Birds of Prey—Two California Condors were seen over Ventura, Feb. 16 (*DP*). A lone Bald Eagle flew over Echo Park Lake, Dec. 30 (*BW*), and on Dec. 2, 4 Bald Eagles were seen at Lake Cachuma, where at least 2 spent the entire winter (*vide Mrs. TH*). No large winter roosts of White-tailed Kites were discovered during the season, and indeed, White-tailed Kites seemed to be scarcer than usual in many areas where formerly plentiful, and absent in other areas where formerly they were to be expected. Of course,

creeping urbanization has taken its toll of suitable habitat and no additional suitable habitat seems to be forthcoming, so we may expect a steady decline of this beautiful little hawk in California. There seemed to be a slight influx of Rough-legged Hawks during the winter, and a fair number of Ferruginous Hawks were reported. The Carrizo Plain harbored several pairs as well as a number of Prairie Falcons. A single Ferruginous Hawk was at Salton Sea Nat'l Wildlife Refuge (where they are rare) Jan. 29 (*RRP*). A small number of Pigeon Hawks was noted and Ospreys were seen near San Diego (a few). Oceanside, and Lake Cachuma.

Quail, Cranes, Rails—Numbers of California Quail were reported and may be a reflection of the good production of food plants following last year's wet winter. Numbers of Sandhill Cranes on the Carrizo Plain appeared to be about usual (1500-2000), but only early morning visits resulted in observations of the majority of the wintering flock. Large flocks of wintering shorebirds were present at Morro Bay, Bolsa Chica, Upper Newport Bay, and especially at south San Diego Bay. However, Prather at the Salton Sea Nat'l Wildlife Refuge reported shorebirds numbers far down. The rising of the Salton Sea has inundated much of the choice mud flat feeding areas for shorebirds and the delta areas of the New and Alamo Rivers are no longer so attractive to shorebirds. A *Black Rail* was flushed along the shore of Ramer Lake in the Imperial Valley, Feb. 23 (*RW*).

Shorebirds—Two *Am. Golden Plovers* were reported during the winter. One was present in the San Diego Flood Control Channel from Jan. 1-March 2; another was seen on a football field in San Diego from Dec. 13-Jan. 21 (*GMcC*). A few Ruddy Turnstones were found at Bolsa Chica and Upper Newport Bay, but a large concentration assembled on south San Diego Bay. Here, they numbered in the hundreds (*GMcC, EAP*). Small numbers of Wandering Tattlers wintered in suitable places along with Black Turnstones and Surf-birds. Most of the latter two species apparently have deserted the breakwaters at Playa del Rey, but could be found in excellent numbers at Santa Monica Pier. A few Lesser Yellowlegs were reported and 300-400 Knots wintered at south San Diego Bay. A *Ruff* was found in the Santa Ana River Flood Channel, Dec. 31 (*TC*). The number of wintering Black-necked Stilts was up, especially at the Salt Works south of San Diego. Six Red Phalaropes were seen off Newport Bay, Dec. 31 (*Ed., et al.*), but most remarkable were the wintering Wilson's Phalaropes near San Diego. Three were found at the Salt Works, Jan. 5, and 8 were present there from Jan. 19 to at least March 1 (*GMcC, EAP*). In addition, 23 Northern Phalaropes were found at the Salt Works, Dec. 23 (*EAP*), and 15 remained there until March 1 (*GMcC*).

Jaegers, Gulls, Terns, Alcids—Very few jaegers were present along our coast during the winter. Two *Glaucous Gulls* were reported: an immature at Huntington Beach Pier, Dec. 27 (*TC*); another inland at Sweetwater Reservoir, March 10 (*GMcC*). Glaucous-winged Gulls were down in numbers, and the flight of Mew Gulls to San Diego was excellent (in-

cluding 5 inland at Sweetwater Reservoir), but they were virtually absent elsewhere in any numbers. The only Black-legged Kittiwake reported was an immature at Newport Pier, Jan. 11 (GS). Small numbers of Common Terns wintered in the San Diego area and Royal Terns increased as the winter season progressed as there is a definite northward flight of Royal Terns after the breeding season. Two Elegant Terns were found at Silver Strand, Dec. 23 (EAP). Wintering alcids were very scarce; a few Rhinoceros Auklets and Ancient Murrelets were found in the waters to Santa Barbara Island, Jan. 27 (Ed., et al.).

Doves, Owls—Two White-winged Doves were found near Brawley, Feb. 22 (GMcC)—one of the very few winter records. Two Ground Doves were found in Garden Grove, Feb. 16 (TC) and a few were found in the orange groves near Corona during the latter part of the winter (NHM). About a dozen Short-eared Owls were flushed from the Carrizo Plain, Jan. 12 (Ed., et al.).

Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers, Flycatchers—More than the usual numbers of wintering Black-chinned and Costa's Hummingbirds were reported. Six Lewis' Woodpeckers were found in Happy Canyon, Santa Ynez Valley, Jan. 20, and remained until at least March 24 (Mr. & Mrs. TH). Three Western Kingbirds were found near Morro Bay, Dec. 30, and another was found along the San Diego River, March 2 (GMcC). There are virtually no winter records of this species in southern California. Similarly, a few Ash-throated Flycatchers were noted during the winter. A single Gray Flycatcher was near the Mission Ponds at San Diego, Dec. 6 (GMcC) and other unidentified *Empidonax*es were seen in small numbers during the period. A single Vermilion Flycatcher remained at Bonita until Jan. 21 (GMcC) and at least 2 others spent the winter in Covington Park environs at Morongo Valley.

Swallows, Magpies, Thrashers—A winter influx of thousands of Tree Swallows plus a few Barn Swallows appeared at the north end of the Imperial Valley, Feb. 19, and remained until at least March 1 (RRP). A single Yellow-billed Magpie was located in the San Gabriel Valley early in December and was observed there for almost a month. Six Yellow-billed Magpies were located in the Goleta Valley, somewhat south of their normal range (Mrs. TH). Two Sage Thrashers were found in the Tia Juana River Valley, March 16 (GMcC).

Thrushes, Kinglets—Almost all observers commented on the paucity of Robins and Hermit Thrushes. Except for the small number of resident Robins, none were reported. Even after the first few storms of February (when areas to the north of us were experiencing very severe weather conditions) there was no influx of Robins, which usually occurs. The population of Mountain Bluebirds on the Carrizo Plain and in the Imperial Valley, which usually is very high during the winter, was far below normal. Similarly, Western Bluebirds were scarce. Only a few Golden-crowned Kinglets were reported in the Region.

Waxwings, Starlings—The flight of Cedar Waxwings (or rather, the lack of a flight of Cedar Wax-

wings) attracted almost as much attention as the absence of Robins and Hermit Thrushes. There is little doubt that the Starlings are here to stay in southern California, and the gradual but regular increase year after year is quite discernible. In former years, the Starling could be expected only as a winter visitor. Now the nestings of this species, too numerous to list, have been so productive, and their advance from the north, so persistent, that we now have them with us the year around. They seem to prosper best in agricultural lands and near cattle pens. They are now present in great numbers in the Imperial Valley and as far southwest as San Diego. As yet, there is little evidence of displacement of more desirable species.

Vireos, Warblers—The second winter record of the *Bell's Vireo* in the United States was obtained as McCaskie collected this species at Mission Ponds, Jan. 1-4. A Solitary Vireo was found in Los Angeles about Dec. 30, another at Santa Barbara, somewhat earlier, and a third was in Presidio Park, San Diego, Feb. 2 to at least March 19 (GMcC). The number of wintering warblers was truly astonishing this year! A *Hermit Warbler* was at Point Loma, Jan. 21 (GMcC, PdeB); a *Palm Warbler* was at the mouth of the New River at the Salton Sea, Feb. 22 (GMcC); *Wilson's Warblers* were at Mission Ponds (1) Dec. 13-Feb. 2 (GMcC) and at Santa Barbara all winter (Mrs. TH); 8 *Am. Redstarts* were reported; a number of *Myrtle Warblers* were found; a *Black-throated Gray Warbler* was near Santa Barbara, Nov. 20-Dec. 22 (Mrs. TH); a *MacGillivray's Warbler* was found near Oceanside, Dec. 31; a *Nashville Warbler* was near Claremont for about 2 weeks from Feb. 16 (EWK); and a *Black-and-white Warbler* was at Santa Barbara, Feb. 28 (JK).

Blackbirds, Orioles, Tanagers—Small flocks of Tricolored Blackbirds were located at Lake Sherwood and Chatsworth Reservoir during the winter (BMH). A *Rusty Blackbird* was found near Santa Ana, Dec. 31, and remained until at least Jan. 26 (GMcC, et al.). Many wintering Bullock's and Hooded Orioles were reported—decidedly many more than usual. Two *Baltimore Orioles* were found: 1 (presumably the same bird) returned to the feeder of Mrs. Russell Kriger in Santa Barbara. It arrived Oct. 16 and remained until at least March 31 (fide Mrs. TH); another was found by McCaskie in Presidio Park, San Diego, Feb. 15. More than the usual number of Western Tanagers also were reported during this winter season. Very interesting also was the numbering of *Summer Tanagers* found during the winter. A female came to a feeder in Santa Barbara, Dec. 3-March 7; another (this a young male) came to the same feeder on Jan. 25; and still another young male arrived there on March 23 (fide Mrs. TH). In the San Diego area 2 male *Summer Tanagers* came to a feeder on Point Loma from late February to at least March 15 (fide GMcC); and 3 more were present in Presidio Park from Feb. 2 to at least March 31 (fide GMcC).

Grosbeaks and Sparrows—A Black-headed Grosbeak was located in Los Angeles on Dec. 30; another in the San Gabriel Valley, Dec. 28; and a third came

to a feeder on Point Loma from late February to at least March 15 (*vide GMcC*). A *Rose-breasted Grosbeak* appeared at the same feeder during the same period (*vide GMcC*). Pearson found 4 Red Crossbills on Mt. Pinos, Dec. 31, 70+ there Jan. 14, and 2 Feb. 2. There were no reports of others. A few Slate-colored and Gray-headed Juncos were reported. Numbers of Oregon Juncos seemed low. Until the end of January, numbers of White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows were low, but they gradually achieved normal winter populations in February. Some half-dozen White-throated Sparrows were variously reported and a *Harris' Sparrow* came to a feeder in Los Angeles, March 20 (*AL*). Four *Swamp Sparrows* were found by McCaskie, as follows: 1 at Bonita, Dec. 7; 1 along the San Diego River, Feb. 17; and 2 at the mouth of the New River at the Salton

Sea, Feb. 22. A *Lapland Longspur* was heard on Point Loma, Dec. 13 (*GMcC*).

Corrigendum—*Audubon Field Notes* Vol. 17, p. 71, l. 25, column 2 should read "and most interesting was the report of 5 (2 adults plus 3 juveniles) *Brazilian Cardinals* seen in Recreation Park."

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