



**MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.**—This spring's migration was in general described by our contributors as "dull and late." By "dull," most meant that few birds were seen on the ground at any one time (meaning that birds were having no difficulty in migrating across our Region). However, some outstanding concentrations of migrants were located near the summit of Mt. Diablo, an area which had produced similar concentrations in past years (e.g. *AFN* 14 (4): 417 ff.); the information supplied this year, however, seemed to deserve special treatment below.

The lateness of the migration was reflected more

in the tardiness of spring arrivals than in lingering of winter species. Almost without exception, species were reported 4 to 10 days later than usual, especially in respect to arrival of the bulk of the population, although many a single bird or two was located "on time." As if to make up for their tardiness, migrants seemed to pass through the Region rapidly during late April and early May. Except for the late migrating Swainson's Thrush, and Western Tanager, few migrants were found during and after the week end of May 22-23, much in contrast to the major movement which took place at this time last year.

Although the migration was late, the light winter snowfall and a warm spring quickly cleared the high central Sierra of snow, earlier this year than in several years past. The Tioga Pass road was open by May 22 this year (not until June the last two years) and on this date *Empidonax* flycatchers were found as high as 9000 feet near Tuolumne Meadows. By June 10 snow was almost absent from the area (that remaining was primarily the fast-melting remnants of some unseasonably late end-of-May, first-of-June snowfall), much in contrast to the one to two feet of snow there at the same time last year. An early nesting season and severe fire danger seem likely this year.

**Mt. Diablo**—In past springs observers have often detected large numbers of migrants in the deciduous oaks at about the two thousand foot level on Mt. Diablo (e.g. *AFN* 14(4): 417); it has been found that on these occasions migrants are generally much less in evidence at lower elevations and in surrounding areas, though not entirely absent. This spring Miss Marie Mans, who was conducting a breeding-bird census in a 15-acre dense chaparral plot (see *AFN* 15(6): 514 also 17(3): 369 Censuses #25, 14 for description), submitted some rather exceptional data. The census area was visited on week ends from mid-April to the end of May and the total bird population was calculated for each visit, as shown. The average mid-winter population of the plot was 1100 birds per 100 acres, the average breeding popu-

Date	Density	Principal Migrants
	total birds/100 acres	
April 4	700	"wintering species"
11	500	"wintering species"
25	1300	Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow
May 2	1400	Wilson's Warbler
9	1200	Nashville Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak
16	1500	<i>Empidonax</i> , Townsend's Warbler
27	600	Swainson's Thrush (only migrant species)

lation at the end of May was 500 birds per 100 acres.

Examination of these data reveals two things: density of migrants, although greatly exceeding the density of breeding birds, is not much larger than the wintering population; and during the early part of the nesting season, late April to mid-May, roughly two-thirds of the birds on the census plot were migrants. Questions arise: how do these data relate to previous years' observations, and to the spring migration as a whole?

The latter question cannot be answered with great precision, since comparable data on a daily or even on a regular basis were not received except from Yreka (MSC). Last spring, movement could be seen to take place at Yreka at the same time as in the San Francisco Bay area. This May, first arrivals, changes in bird populations, and migrants were detected at Yreka on May 2-4, 6-8, 11, 15-20, and 22-25. Thus, as was the case last year, movements occurred almost continuously throughout the month, with only one or two days between them, and, not surprisingly, most of the dates for bird concentrations at Mt. Diablo coincide with dates for movement at Yreka.

It must be emphasized that no special attempt was made to seek out migrants on Mt. Diablo. On all dates skies were clear, and at worst it became rather windy by the mid-morning—days of obvious bad weather are not chosen for censuses. Also, although all the dates are for week ends, it seems quite significant that migrants were abundant on *every* visit to the census plot from April 25 to May 16, a three-week period. It now seems difficult to speak of waves of migrants during the spring migration in this Region in view of the data presented above and that of last spring. Rather, it may be more nearly correct to speak of continuous movement throughout the spring, perhaps with greater numbers of birds moving on some days compared to others, and with minimal hindrance by the weather. A radar study is badly needed.

In comparison to previous years' observation two points must be made. Firstly, it must be admitted that in past years observers have not detected migrants on Mt. Diablo with any such regularity, but in past years most time has been spent in the oaks, where, except on May 9, Miss Mans saw practically no migrants. On the ninth, in addition to the birds in the chaparral, migrants were seen in numbers (careful estimate 5000 migrants/100 acres) in the oaks, and

were also seen for the only time in a recently burned chaparral plot adjacent to the dense chaparral. Miss Mans has emphasized in her report that, of all the available habitats, the dense chaparral gives the best shelter from the wind, perhaps explaining why it is the habitat favored by the migrants.

Secondly, the editors know of no other area in California (except isolated oases) where migrants can be found in such numbers so consistently. In this Region one speaks of good spring migration days when one-third of the total birds found are migrants; yet on the best days reported here *two-thirds* of the birds were migrants. One must emphasize that this is an interesting situation, and wait for the promised repetition of the census next spring to see whether this was but a freak observation.

**Shearwaters**—The first large return of shearwaters (mostly Sooty) occurred on March 25 at Pacific Grove (ATN, VLY, RLB), with "tens of thousands" at Rio del Mar beach, Aptos, on May 26 (Doris Kelly, *file DBH*); as in previous years, shearwaters were seen over a month earlier along the southern side of Monterey Bay than on the northern side. Fulmars remained common into March, with 200 ± seen on the 21st at Santa Cruz (Leavitt McQuesten, *file DBH*); the last were 6 seen at Pacific Grove on April 28 (RLB), 15 at Point Lobos on May 3 (JKe), and 2 on the Golden Gate Audubon Society trip to the Farallons, on May 31.

**Cormorants, Herons**—In the course of research on Bufflehead nesting in Lassen County, Anthony J. Erskine found a Double-crested Cormorant colony of some 150 birds on the south side of Mountain Meadows Reservoir (reported by State Fish and Game personnel to have been present in 1954), and adjacent to it but farther inland a colony of some 40 Great Blue Herons, among which were 2 Common Egrets building a nest.

**Ducks and Geese**—An *Emperor Goose* was at Twin Lakes, Aptos, on April 19 (RS). The Ross' Goose that wintered on the Monterey Peninsula was last seen on April 4, and the male Blue-winged Teal in the same area was last seen on May 5 with a female teal, on Roberts Lake, Seaside (GPL). Another was at Laguna de Santa Rosa on April 1 (BDP). A male Oldsquaw in winter plumage was on Roberts Lake on March 5 (RLB). Sizable concentrations of Common Scoters were at Noyo Bay, Fort Bragg, 40 on March 5 (RC) and Duncan's Landing, Sonoma Co., 15 pairs on May 26 (BDP). Among the many ducks observed in Lassen County by Erskine, the most unusual was a female *Hooded Merganser* flushed from 9 eggs in a nest box on May 13 at Mountain Meadows; this is the first-known California nest of the species.

**Condors, Hawks**—Near Porterville (Tulare Co.), between Deer Creek and the Tule River, at an elevation of 750 ft., Mrs. Mabel E. Mires on May 22 saw 9 California Condors. When, in preparation for a rise in the level of Lake Almanor, all the snags around the lake were cleared last winter, all but one of 15 Osprey nests around the lake were destroyed (R. LeDonne, *file AJE*). The pair nesting at Mountain Meadows is new this year, and may have moved

from Almanor.

**Cranes, Rails**—The last Sandhill Cranes seen at Merced Nat'l Wildlife Refuge were 80 on April 2 (*KMC, DNW*). Four downy young Am. Coot at Bay Farm Island, Alameda, on April 26, were early (*ER*).

**Shorebirds, Gulls, Alcids**—About 250 Semipalmated Plovers at Bodega Bay, April 26, are "the largest number seen there" (*BDP*). An Am. Golden Plover was at Bolinas, May 5 (*RS*). A Lesser Yellowlegs was on the rocks one mile north of Fort Bragg, with 4 Wandering Tattlers, on May 26 (*BH*); another was at Laguna de Santa Rosa, April 22 (*BDP*). A Knot at Patterson, Stanislaus Co., on May 3 provided the fifth inland record from this Region (*EOW*); 4 Knots in winter plumage were at Moss Landing on May 21 (*GPL*). Migrating Whimbrels were again reported numerous in western Merced County (*ROW*). There were numerous reports of Black-legged Kittiwakes from the Monterey area, all in immature plumage: 200-300 along shore on April 5; 100 at the Carmel River mouth on May 21-22 (*RLB*); 22 at Monterey on June 6 (*EOW*); 400-500 moving from southeast to northwest, along with Red-throated Loons, Sooty Shearwaters and Fulmars; past Point Lobos in a 25-minute period on May 3 (*JKe*); with these were also 200-250 Cassin's Auklets. On June 12 Ranger William Hill at Point Lobos found on the beach a female Horned Puffin, oiled but otherwise in good condition (*fide VLY*); the bird was probably subadult, with gonads only slightly enlarged. This is the first June record for the Region, but the nine previous records include some from July and August.

**Hummingbirds**—A single male Black-chinned Hummingbird appeared at a Yreka feeder, May 23, and remained to the end of the period (*MSC*); although not unprecedented in this area, the species must be extremely rare here, for this is the first seen in seven years by this observer. A male Costa's Hummingbird was found west of its known range in Pacific Grove, March 22; it remained for 3 or 4 days (*VLY, RLB*, photographed); this species reaches the coast in this Region only as a rare vagrant. In the interior only two males were located along Del Puerto Creek, near Patterson, this spring, and the only hummingbird nest found was of the cocoon-like construction characteristic of the Black-chinned Hummingbird (which also occurs there). Although it has occasionally been found there in the fall, a female Anna's Hummingbird seen at Crane Flats, 6200 ft., in Yosemite National Park, May 23 (*PDeB, MM, EOW*) is our only spring record for the higher Sierra. Calliope Hummingbirds were again noted in numbers in Tilden Park from April 19 to May 13, with a maximum of 15 on one day (early May—*EOW*); they were also noticed at a few other points along the coast, although not in as good numbers.

**Woodpeckers, Flycatchers, Corvids**—A single Pileated Woodpecker seen at Duncan Mills, Sonoma Co., April 26 (*BDP*) is of interest in that it is at the southwest edge of its coastal range and in the remaining forest between that of the main Coast Range and that of Marin County, where the species

has occasionally been reported in previous years. Single Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen at McCoy Meadows, May 10, and Hog Flat Reservoir, May 11, both in Lassen County (*AJE*); although the species is known to occur in this area, these observations add to our very few reports of the species north of the Lake Tahoe region. Western Kingbirds were considered late by two Central Valley observers (*VKC, BM*), not mentioned by the others. The Eastern Phoebe that wintered at Carmel was last seen on March 15 (*RLB*). Two Black-billed Magpies and an old nest were found near Mountain Meadows, May 14 (*AJE*), who reported that State Fish and Game personnel have found nests widely in the Lake Almanor region; birds were seen in the summer of 1962 near Greenville on the Feather River drainage, also in this area (*PDeB, MM, Robert O. Paxton*); these reports extend the nesting range of the species west by about 50 miles and into the same hydrographic system as the Yellow-billed Magpie, although considerable unsuitable habitat will continue to isolate the two species.

**Chestnut-backed Chickadee**—Two rather interesting reports of this species were received. The species has been expanding its range in the San Francisco Bay area and in the central Sierra for the past few years. Two birds banded at Benicia, Solano Co., began nesting in a bird house, March 12, and fledged 6 young on May 6, the family group remaining to the end of the season (*ES*, who has been at this location for forty years says this is the first nesting he has observed). When and if this population becomes firmly established, it will be desirable to take a few birds to determine whether they represent pioneers from the central coast and East Bay race, *barlowi*, or from the two north coast races, *neglectus* or *rufescens*, all of which are about equidistant from Benicia. In the Sierra, two birds seen at Potato Patch Camp, Deer Creek Canyon, Tehama Co., 3500 ft., May 10 and 17 (*BH*), represent a very important locality, about half way between the species' known range in Siskiyou County and the recently discovered colonies in the central Sierra (El Dorado to Mariposa Counties). This location is at the same low altitude characteristic of the other Sierran populations, and Mrs. Hodnette describes the birds' sides as being "somewhat duller chestnut" than the back, indicating that they were probably of the to-be-expected north coast race, *rufescens*.

**Nuthatches, Thrashers**—Red-breasted Nuthatches were last reported toward the end of April at three unusual locations (April 25, Monterey, *GPL*; April 26, Sacramento, *BK*; April 27, Inverness, *GM*), and a late bird was at Los Banos to May 19 (*ROW*); all are later than usual and perhaps remnants of last fall's invasion. Three reports of Sage Thrashers were received from the coast this season: one was collected at the Santa Rita Prison, eastern Alameda Co., March 18, and two were seen at Point Reyes, May 23-25 (*RS & JKr*); birds seen March 30 and April 10 at the San Luis Wasteway Waterfowl Management Area, Merced Co. (*ROW*) suggest search for breeding birds in suitable habitat in the foothills of the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. The species is known

to have nested at the south end of the Valley near Buena Vista Lake.

**Warblers, Tanagers, Icterids**—The Nashville Warblers which wintered in Carmel were last seen on April 15 (RLB), about the time the first migrants appear in this area. Myrtle Warblers were "common" near Sebastopol, Sonoma Co., May 15 (BDP); this date is about half a month later than departure at Berkeley, but may be normal for the Sebastopol population as there are often marked differences in arrival and departure schedules of neighboring populations of a species. The Palm Warbler that wintered in Carmel molted in February, began singing on April 26, and was last seen on May 9 (RLB). Two singing male *Blackpoll Warblers* at Point Reyes, June 6 (RS, JKr & AW) are of more than passing interest; the species is proving to be of regular though rare occurrence along the coast during fall migration and may be establishing a new route there; these records raise the question as to whether it is establishing a spring migration route along the coast as well. Two reports of Yellow-headed Blackbirds along the coast, where they do not nest, were received; a male was seen at Stinson Beach, Marin Co., April 5 (TC & ZC), and 3 females were at Monterey, May 9 (VLY, GPL); the westernmost colony of this species is at Clear Lake. A female Summer Tanager in Berkeley, early February to April 15 (Mrs. James Carson, photographs by Vi Holmen examined by PDeB), and a Western Tanager at Sacramento, Feb. 16 and 23, add to the number that wintered in our Region. Western Tanagers were in Berkeley as late as June 4.

**Fringillids**—In addition to the Blackpoll Warblers, the Point Reyes Peninsula produced two other vagrants this spring. A male Indigo Bunting was found on May 18, and a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen on May 26 (RS & JKr); both of these species have been found in the state very few times. In spite of their numbers this winter, neither Evening Grosbeaks nor Red Crossbills remained especially late this winter. Departure dates for the former ranged from April 5 (Caswell State Park, EOW), April 9 (6, Monterey, GPL), and April 16 (1 near Salinas, RLB) to May 1 (5, Chico, VKC) and May 9 (Berkeley, PDeB); a single very late bird was at Point Reyes, June 4 (RS & JKr). Red Crossbills were last seen at Sacramento on April 15 (BK). The last Pine Siskins reported from the Central Valley were at Benicia, April 10 (ES) and Stockton, April 19 (BM). Grasshopper Sparrows are not often detected in this Region, and few good winter records are available; the migration period of the species is poorly known; therefore, it is difficult to give the status of the approximately 20 seen near San Jose, April 4 (RS), an extremely early date for the species. Two Great Basin sparrows were detected on the coast this spring: a Vesper Sparrow was at Point Reyes, June 4 (RS & JKr), and a Brewer's Sparrow there on May 23 (RS & JKr, AW); another Brewer's Sparrow was banded at Benicia, April 7 (ES), the first found there in forty years' observation. An adult female Swamp Sparrow was collected from two birds seen at the mouth of Olema Creek, Tomales Bay, on April 18, the latest record from this Region (George

Ferrell, *vide* PDeB). The number of recent reports of this species suggests that it is of more than "casual" occurrence in California.

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