

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION.**—The weather feature most significant for nesting birds was the rainfall during the past winter—far sub-normal in quantity (except November) but well



distributed through March with some drizzles in April and May. Thus the growth of herbs and grasses started with an early rush and struggled through on meager moisture to a maturity of sufficient luxuriance to meet most

of the needs of early nesting species at least.

Drying out of the foothill areas was the worst in years, however, and several extensive forest fires, in both chaparral and pine areas, wreaked damage to be calculated only in coming years. The Big Tujunga fire in early August brought many refugees to Mr. & Mrs. Shearer's yard in Sunland, 3-6 miles away,—woodpeckers, flickers, ash-throated flycatchers, etc. Species of lesser powers of flight very probably perished, and the 3000+ pairs of birds which would have nested in the 3500+ acres burned by this one fire cannot help but be seriously affected for many years by the loss of so much cover.

*Water birds.*—Ken Stott, Jr., and Jordan Roux visited Los Coronados Islands on June 20 and found black petrels, Brandt's cormorants, and western gulls with eggs in some nests and young in others, and brown pelicans with young about half-grown. At the opposite corner of our region, in the Colorado River Valley near Needles, a rookery of 15 double-crested cormorant, 1 horned owl and 4 American egret nests was in operation on April 24 (Gale Monsoon)—just at the peak of the egret migration on the coast. At least 2 pairs of green herons nested at San Gabriel River Sanctuary (S.G.R.S.), and an immature was at Dominguez Lagoon, April 19 (R. Mall); but this pond, which in wetter years harbored nesting teal, ruddy ducks, grebes, rails, etc., was dry this year by July.

In the San Bernardino Mountains, too, the last few years of successively subnormal precipitation have turned Baldwin Lake into an alkaline flat. The colonies of eared grebes and yellow-headed blackbirds were absent; but the shallow end of Big Bear Lake, although of limited extent, provided the best waterfowl habitat in years. Coots, cinnamon teal, and pied-billed grebes, all with young on the water, were estimated at 500, 80, and 15, respectively, on July 26 (Cogswell). Other species present through the summer were: mallard, 1; pintail, 3; ruddy duck, 15; redhead, 20; ring-billed gull, 60+ (including a few immatures); and Caspian tern, 10. The first three have nested at Big Bear in the past and all might nest there, especially if disturbance by man could be curtailed. Two male ring-necked ducks and both sexes of canvas-backs (6 on May 25 to 1 on July 26) also summering at Big Bear were probably crippled or otherwise subnormal individuals. A duck hawk was seen stooping at ducks and shorebirds or flying over nearby pine-forested mountains on each of our three visits to Big Bear (May 24, June 29, July 26).

Elizabeth Lake in northwestern Los Angeles County was taken over as private "recreation" club grounds, but small numbers of eared grebes, mallards, and ruddy ducks (20+) persisted at least through June 22. The cinnamon teal, pintails, shovellers, and redheads present last nesting season were not in evidence.

Along the coast the gun clubs which formerly provided fresh water ponds for some nesting waterfowl and marsh birds have adopted the practice of draining their ponds soon after the hunting

season is over. At Bolsa Chica and at Playa del Rey, former haunts of grebes, stilts, rails, coots, teal, ruddies and even a few of the larger ducks, were completely dry during the early summer. A very few individuals survived on nearby lagoons, the coots and stilts producing a few young; but these tidal estuaries are gradually being dredged, filled, or narrowly channeled by dikes for mosquito control, oil well drilling, and the like. Such practices, if continued, plus the increasing use of inland ponds and coastal bays for boating and swimming will bring the virtual end of nesting marsh birds near Los Angeles. Certain species have become adapted to nesting in city park ponds, the semi-domestic mallards, of course, being most widespread, and coots and pied-billed grebes almost as much so; this year the ruddy duck joined them—some 14 adults (1 male) and 4 young at Fairmont Park, Riverside, on May 16 (Wilson).

The sandy beach nesters suffer even more from direct human interference. No snowy plovers or least terns could be found on the site of what was their largest colony at Bolsa Chica beach, inhabited this year by hundreds of squatters replete with tents and kitchen equipment. Small colonies of least terns probably nested on dry flats around Orange County estuaries (40+ adults, total, in June) and 8 adults with young too small to fly were found along the San Gabriel River one-third mile from its mouth on July 13 (C.). On the beach sands the only colonies I was able to find between Newport and Malibu were: about 30 birds (including young on the wing, July 13) near the Santa Ana River mouth, about 50 near El Segundo, and 10 at Malibu Lagoon. Miss Wilson reported 12 from Carlsbad, July 18, and I found 50, including immatures, at L.A. River mouth, August 10; but it is unknown whether either was a nesting site. The snowy plover, apparently even harder hit, nevertheless made news in the public press when one stuck to its nest among crowds of bathers on Manhattan Beach—and was captioned a "lease tern" by one photographer!

*Upland game birds.*—Some species were apparently below normal numbers, e.g., California quail in the Burbank area, probably due to ectoparasitic infestation for birds did much scratching; 2 pairs under close observation had but 2 and 4 young each (Daugherty). A brood of 16 on June 8 at Banning (W.), and many adults plus young near Elsinore on May 17 (C.) indicate better conditions there. Gambel's quail in the Havasu Lake area apparently had a good hatch, the first young being noted on April 10 (G.M.).

One species which definitely increased as a breeding bird was the band-tailed pigeon, despite a scarcity last winter. In many parts of the San Bernardino Mountains, scattered pairs and small flocks (including immatures) were tallied at 15 to 100 per day's trip from early April through July; 13 were seen in Banning on May 18 and June 1 (W.), and 20 in Alhambra on May 12 (C.), as well as the normal few in Pasadena and Altadena.

*Robin.*—Robins are gradually spreading as breeding birds in city residential and park areas; they are now regular not only in S.W. and S. Pasadena, Flintridge, and parts of Glendale, but also in Monrovia, and Griffith Park. This year they were present throughout the summer near 6th and Rossmore, Hollywood (W. R. Dawson), where 5 adults were seen on July 4, and 1 was carrying food on August 13 (Stultz). On June 2, 5 were noted at Gilman Ranch, Banning, one of them feeding young; also, one young still in down was recorded at Sylvan Park, Redlands (W.).

*Vireos and warblers.*—The Cassin's solitary vireo was scarce in coast slope canyons, averaging less than 1 per visit to suitable habitat, and a maximum of 3 at Crater Camp, Santa Monica Mountains, July 12 (Stultz). Yellow warblers were definitely down at S.G.R.S. and at Griffith Park; black-throated gray and Audubon's were apparently so in the lower pine belt, although Audubon's was numerous at higher altitudes.

*Cardinal.*—A count of 16 singing male cardinals was made on April 6 in approximately 120 acres of willow-cottonwood woodland along a 1½ mile stretch of river bed at S.G.R.S. (Cogswell). One nest which had three eggs under incubation on April 13, was robbed (by jays?) by the 26th; another nest held young on May 29, and a second brood on August 1.

*Other nesting land birds.*—Other selected breeding season reports were: white-tailed kite, May 26, pair N.E. of Exeter, Tulare County (Daugherty), 35-40 miles east of the previously recorded range in San Joaquin Valley. Screech owls, which have used a nest-box in Pasadena since 1930, this year had full-feathered young on May 8; one was out of the box on the 15th, and all four on the 18th. They are frequently seen catching moths around street lights, and one was seen once (1930) with a goldfish in its talons (Quattlebaum). Horned and barn owl young, both out of nest and loudly calling for food, were reported from the Azusa-Glendora foothill area, June 25 (C., N. Short). Of 3 pairs of burrowing owls at Redondo Beach, only 1 raised a brood successfully (Shuart). Traill's flycatchers arrived at S.G.R.S. between May 11 and 18 and increased to 6 "singing" birds in ¼ mile of river-bottom woodland by June 15; a family of young was seen out of nest on August 3 (C.). A pair of western flycatchers at the Santa Barbara Museum raised 3 broods for a new record (Rett). Tree swallows, which arrived at S.G.R.S. by February 14-15, completed nesting and left the area between June 15 and 25. Purple martins nested in ventilator holes of a Whittier theater, bringing out 2+ young on July 1 (C.); others were found at Newport Beach in April, Long Beach on June 13, and Charlton Flats through April and May. The largest colony (10-15 adults) was near Heaps Peak in the San Bernadinos, May through July. One Leconte's thrasher seen on June 29 near Cushenbury Springs, on the desert slope of the San Bernar-

dino Mountains, was in the exact area where it had been found for 6 years (Cogswell, N. Short). An estimated 100 mountain bluebirds, including young being fed out of the nest, were on a single meadow south of Baldwin Lake on July 22 (Stultz, Daugherty). Blue grosbeaks were common at S.G.R.S., with young out on August 4. 5+ singing grasshopper sparrows moved from one alfalfa field to another on the adjoining Pellissier Ranch and disappeared when their third "stand" was mowed in July. Single grasshopper sparrows were seen at Puddingstone Dam, June 7, and on Oat Mountain, near Fillmore, June 8 (C.). Old-time nesting areas of the Brewer's sparrow in upper Cuddy and Chuchupate Valleys near Mt. Piños had 2 singing birds each on June 22, and a single immature Bell's sparrow (probably *A. b. canescens*) was found at Mill Potrero N.W. of Mt. Pinos. (C.). A California Bell's sparrow (*A. b. belli*) was singing on the S.W. of Lake Elsinore on May 17; heretofore it was unrecorded in the Elsinore area although this is in the heart of its range (C.). A Savannah sparrow, of a rather pallid subspecies, seen at close range on a meadow east of Big Bear Lake on June 29 (C., N.S.) suggests a possible southward extension of the breeding range of *P. s. nevadensis*, but time did not allow search for a nest.

*Post-breeding dispersal.* — White-winged doves present from May on at Yaqui Well, western Borego Desert, San Diego County, were considerably earlier than normal for that far west (Stott, Roux), and perhaps nested there. A family of western bluebirds and 2+ house wrens in cottonwoods along the dry Mojave River 5 miles south of Victorville on June 29 (C., N.S.) probably represent an unusual dispersal to this flat, hot desert locality. Movements to higher

altitudes are indicated by a covey of California quail at 7782 ft. on So. Hawkins Peak, San Gabriel Range, July 27 (F.S. lookout); 2 black phoebes at Baldwin Lake, 6700 ft., and 2 female Scott's orioles and 2 green-backed goldfinches at 6800 ft. near Big Bear Lake on July 22 (S., D.).

*Summer visitants.*—Sooty shearwaters were found in "fair numbers" off Los Coronados Is., June 20 (S., R.), 2000 were off Santa Barbara on July 12 (W. G. Abbott) and 20-30 were seen close inshore at La Jolla, July 18 (W.). Heermann's gulls were back in flocks of 100+ by mid-June along the Santa Monica Bay shore, but as usual were practically absent from the Long Beach area for reasons unknown. The post-breeding influx of wood ibises was represented only by 57 at Calexico, July 5 (S., R.) and 12 at Del Mar, July 18 (W.).

*Rarities.*—A pair (or 2 pairs) of yellow-billed cuckoos were at S.G.R.S. and nearby San Jose Creek after an absence of several years (Comby, Cogswell). A short-eared owl competed with a marsh hawk for forage space over marshes south of Huntington Beach, July 10 (Edward Chalif)—one of the very few summer records. A pygmy owl was heard on May 17, at Charlton Flat, San Gabriel Mountains (Stultz). The greatest rarity was a goshawk on July 22 above Big Bear Park (7500 ft. altitude), San Bernardino Mts. It flew into a tree and was watched through binoculars at 30 yards by Mrs. O. M. Stultz and Mrs. C. H. Daugherty, both of whom are familiar with the species on its southernmost recorded nesting grounds in Sequoia, some 200 miles to the north.—HOWARD L. COGSWELL, *San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, 2610 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte, Calif.*