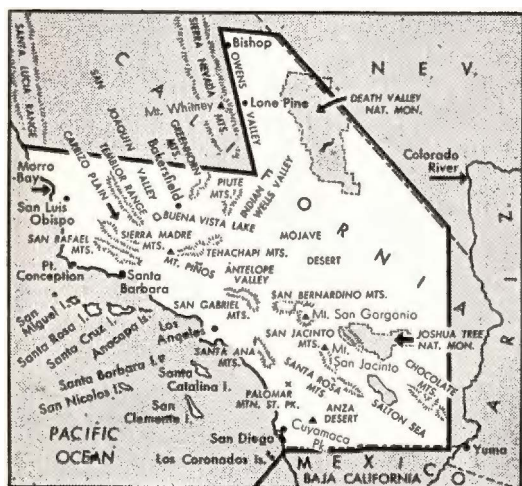


# **SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION.** November brought some of the heaviest rainfalls ever recorded in Southern California; mountain



streams went on the rampage washing away highways in some areas. In Los Angeles and San Diego the average annual rainfall had been reached by the end of November, and some areas experienced floods—most unusual in this Region. The little damage done by the heavy rainfall was probably more than offset by the raising of the water table, and the filling of many reservoirs that had been virtually empty for years. The rains stopped in early January, and the remainder of the winter season was drier than normal with hardly any precipitation during March—usually our wettest month. The early rains, however, left plenty of moisture in the soil, and a lush growth of plants abounds in the Region, giving good cover for the breeding birds and migrants during the next few months.

The only species that appeared to have a heavier

than normal flight into the Region was the Varied Thrush. Other winter visitors appeared to be in normal numbers throughout the Region. We had a small number of a variety of species that are usually considered summer visitors, but which remain within the Region during most winters. One species was added to the hypothetical list of California birds.

**Loons and Grebes**—Loons were commoner than normal in the Laguna Beach area (*JJ*). A concentration of over 200 Red-throated Loons was present in the Santa Barbara area in early January (*S.B.A.S.*); elsewhere numbers appeared to be about normal. A Red-necked Grebe, always a scarce bird in the Region, was at Playa del Rey, Los Angeles Co., on Dec. 29, and what was probably the same bird was at Malibu, Los Angeles Co., between Jan. 11 and early March (*SW, DG*). Two Horned Grebes were seen inland on Ramer Lake, Imperial Co. on Jan. 15 and Feb. 13 (*GMcC, CL*).

**Pelagic Species**—Outside of the few individuals reported on Christmas counts these species were not reported. The numbers of birds in this group fluctuate greatly from year to year, and much is yet to be learned about their status off the coast.

**Pelicans and Herons**—Small flocks of White Pelicans were found throughout the Region as is normal. A Louisiana Heron present on San Diego Bay until Jan. 13, was apparently the only individual in the Region. A Cattle Egret was present at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., between Nov. 28 and Jan. 18 (*GMcC, DC, A & JC*); up to 6 were seen in the Imperial Valley, Imperial Co., between Feb. 28 (*SW, AF*), and the end of the period (*RRP*). This species is now occurring every winter in the Region. A Wood Ibis remained near Santa Barbara until mid-December. What was probably the same individual was at the mouth of the Ventura River in early January, and at Surf, Santa Barbara Co. in mid-January; there are very few recent winter records for California, but one wintered in the same area last year. A few White-faced Ibis were found wintering along the coast in suitable areas.

**Waterfowl**—Two Whistling Swans at Point Mugu, Ventura Co. on Feb. 13 (*S.B.A.S.*), and one at the south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co. on Jan. 4 (*RRP*) were the only ones reported. Generally waterfowl populations on the Salton Sea Wildlife Refuge were down from the previous year (*RRP*). Peak populations and percent of change were as follows:

Canada Goose	5,000	(+ 6%)
Snow Goose	25,000	(+16%)
Gadwall	10	(-90%)
Pintail	40,000	(-47%)
Cinnamon Teal	470	(-61%)
Canvasback	900	(+43%)
Ruddy Duck	31,700	(+82%)
White-fronted Goose	350	(+43%)
Mallard	160	(-20%)
Am. Widgeon	43,350	(+ 1%)
Green-winged Teal	2,800	(-75%)
Shoveler	3,000	(-50%)
Leser Scaup	1,300	(+93%)
Am. Coot	4,800	(+ 6%)

A *Red-breasted Goose*, the 4th record for California, was shot near Redlands, San Bernardino Co. on Nov. 20 (EAC). A *White-fronted Goose* wintered at Santa Barbara (LC, *et al.*)—a location where it is scarce. Three *Blue Geese* were seen with the *Snow Geese* on the Salton Sea Refuge on Jan. 16 (RRP); it is normal for one or two to occur in the area each winter. About 200 *Ross' Geese* wintered on the Salton Sea Refuge (RRP); numbers have been increasing in this area in recent years. A *Ross' Goose*, outside its normal range, spent part of the winter near Cholame, San Luis Obispo Co. (S.B.A.S.). A very late, or possibly a wintering, *Fulvous Tree Duck* was at the north end of the Salton Sea on Dec. 5 (TS). Four *Blue-winged Teal* at Seal Beach, Orange Co. on Dec. 26 (TS), and one near Camp Pendleton, San Diego Co. on Feb. 15 (AF) were the only ones reported. An *European Widgeon* was at Newport, Orange Co. on Feb. 19 (TS). A *Wood Duck* was in Santa Barbara from Dec. 1 to mid-January (NM), and another was at Sandyland, Santa Barbara Co. on Jan. 22 and 23 (LC)—a scarce bird in this area. On the Salton Sea, where the *Wood Duck* is very rare, two were shot during the winter season (RRP). A *Greater Scaup* was seen inland on the Salton Sea on Feb. 19 (GMCC, CL). An *Oldsquaw* was near Santa Barbara between Dec. 29 and Jan. 4 (JP, *et al.*), and 2 spent the winter on San Diego Bay (GMCC, A & JC), a scarce but regular bird along the coast. *White-winged Scoters* were scarcer than usual along the coast. The only *Common Scoter* reported was one in Laguna Beach, Orange Co. on Feb. 12 and 13 (JJ). *Single Hooded Mergansers*, a scarce species, were seen at Santa Barbara on Jan. 2 and 3, and March 5, at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co. on Feb. 8 and 16, and near Calipatria, Imperial Co. on Feb. 19.

**Birds of Prey**—A *California Condor* was in the Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Barbara Co. on Feb. 24 (WGr), and single birds were seen over Santa Barbara on Feb. 27 and April 3 (*vide NM*); they are rarely reported along the coast nowadays. *White-tailed Kites* continue to thrive; 34 were in one roost near Santa Barbara (S.B.A.S.). An *albino Red-tailed Hawk* has taken up residence in the Santa Ynez Valley and appears to have a mate (WA). A *Swainson's Hawk* was reported to have wintered near Santa Barbara (S.B.A.S.); for years this species has been reported on Christmas counts within this Region, and this winter proved to be no exception with 4 individuals being reported. Usually their occurrence at Christmas time is not considered noteworthy by the count compilers, even though there is no substantiated record of the *Swainson's Hawk* in California between late October and late March. The report from Santa Barbara is the first for this species, outside the Christmas count period, during the winter for California; however, more conclusive evidence will have to be obtained before the species can be accepted as having wintered in California. Very few *Ferruginous Hawks* were found in the Region. A *Bald Eagle* was at Lake Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co. on Feb. 16 (WA, JH, *et al.*); one was at Lake Mathews, San Diego Co. on Feb. 5 (GMCC, CL,

JC), and one was at the south end of the Salton Sea during December and January (RRP). Two or 3 *Ospreys* wintered on Lake Cachuma (WA, JH, *et al.*); 2 were at Newport, Orange Co. on Feb. 10, and 1 was there on March 2 (*vide FR*); and 1 was at Laguna Beach, Orange Co. during December (JJ).

**Gallinaceous Birds and Cranes**—Fourteen *Mountain Quail* seen near Santa Barbara on Jan. 23 were at a low elevation (WGr); they are known to move to lower elevations during the winter. A *Sandhill Crane* was in the Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Barbara Co. in late December (RM); it is very scarce along the coast, but this area is only 50 miles from a known wintering location on the Carrizo Plain.

**Shorebirds**—A *Black Oystercatcher* was at Laguna Beach, Orange Co. between Dec. 25 and March 25 (JJ, SS); there are only 3 or 4 recent coastal records for the southern part of the Region. Between 1 and 3 *Am. Golden Plovers* were seen at Playa del Rey, Los Angeles Co., during February and March (SW, AF, DG); 8 were near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., until early January, and one was in San Diego throughout the winter (GMCC, CL, A & JC); small numbers normally winter along the coast. Three *Am. Golden Plovers* were near Westmorland, Imperial Co. on Feb. 13 and 19 (GMCC, CL, EAC); the first winter record for this area. Fair numbers (200+) of *Mountain Plovers* were present in the Imperial Valley, Imperial Co. There were a few reports of *Lesser Yellowlegs* which is normal. The *Rock Sandpiper* wintered at Playa del Rey (DG); checking the breakwaters here may prove this species winters regularly. Small numbers (15) of *Northern Phalaropes* wintered at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. (GMCC); they have been known to winter at this location previously, and may do so regularly.

**Gulls and Terns**—A *Glaucous Gull* was in Santa Barbara between Feb. 24 and March 10 (WA, NM), and another was near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., between Dec. 26 and Jan. 22 when it was collected (AC, GMCC, SS); many reports of this species along the California coast in reality are only pale *Glaucous-winged Gulls*. A *Western Gull* (yellow-legged race) was at the south end of the Salton Sea on March 5 (LS, DG); one of the very few inland records. *Mew Gulls* were reported in fair numbers from along the coast; a *Mew Gull*, found dead at the north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co. on Jan. 15 (EAC), is the first truly inland record for the Region. A *Laughing Gull* at the south end of the Salton Sea on Jan. 8 (DG, LS) provided us with the first winter record for that area, the only location where the species is regular and breeds. *Black-legged Kittiwakes* appeared to be scarcer than normal. A few *Royal Terns* were present along the coast throughout the period as is normal. An *Elegant Tern* seen at Santa Barbara on Feb. 6 (NM) provides us with the first truly winter record; the species normally arrives in San Diego during late March, and one or two remain as late as early January.

**Alcids**—A *Common Murre* was at Morro Bay on March 13 (RT). Ken Stager encountered numbers of alcids off Point Dume on March 9 (*vide SS*); he reported 100+ *Xantus' Murrelets*, 50 *Ancient Mur-*

relets, and 100 Rhinoceros Auklets. A *Horned Puffin* was caught alive at Huntington Beach, Orange Co. on Jan. 21 (TS); it died the following day and is preserved as a specimen; this is the 3rd occurrence in the Region, and one of the very few birds found alive in California.

**Doves, Owls, Hummingbirds**—Along the coast a White-winged Dove was seen near Santa Barbara on Jan. 2 (RM), and one was seen near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. on Jan. 2 and March 12 (GMcC). A pair seen at Agua Caliente, San Diego Co. on Feb. 20 (A & JC) appeared to be displaying; there is only one previous winter record for the desert area, and they do not normally arrive there until late April. One or 2 Ringed Turtle Doves in Santa Barbara during the period were a little north of their known range in Los Angeles (NM). Only a few Short-eared Owls were to be found this winter. A Saw-whet Owl was found dead near Lake Arrowhead, San Bernardino Co. on March 5 (Ken Stager, *vide* SS); their status in this area is poorly known. An albino Anna's Hummingbird was raised in a nest, along with a normal nestling near Santa Ana, Orange Co.; the albino is now in captivity in the San Diego Zoo.

**Woodpeckers**—A Yellow-shafted Flicker was near Santa Maria, Santa Barbara Co. on March 6 (T & MH); one was at Carpinteria, same county, between March 15 and 22 (TF), and one was near Ventura, Ventura Co. on March 30 (LC). One or 2 Lewis' Woodpeckers were wintering in the Santa Barbara area (WA), and about 20 were wintering near Lake Cuyamaca, San Diego Co. (GMcC, A & JC); most unusual was one on Santa Cruz Island on March 22 (RM); this is a somewhat erratic wanderer during the winter. A Williamson's Sapsucker was away from the mountains at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. on March 5 (JJ).

**Flycatchers and Swallows**—A Tropical Kingbird was at Solana Beach, San Diego Co. on Dec. 5 (T & MH), and one was near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. on Dec. 11 (GMcC, CL, DC); this species regularly wanders north along the coast in October; it would be interesting to know whether these December records are of northbound or returning southbound individuals. An Eastern Phoebe, always scarce, was near Imperial Beach on Dec. 3 and 4 (T & MH, GMcC). A Dusky Flycatcher was collected on Point Loma, San Diego Co. on Jan. 9 (GMcC, A & JC); this is the first winter record for the Region; however, the occasional *Empidonax* flycatcher is seen during the winter, and further collecting will be necessary to determine the true status of each species at this time of the year. Vermilion Flycatchers were seen at Boneta, San Diego Co. and Imperial Beach, along the coast; 2 were at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. on Feb. 27 (AF, SW), and 3 or 4 wintered in the Imperial Valley. A Cliff Swallow seen at Rialto, San Bernardino Co. on Feb. 12 (EAC) was either a wintering individual, or an exceptionally early migrant.

**Magpies, Chickadees, Verdins**—A Black-billed Magpie was seen near Newport, Orange Co. on March 27 (TS); an escaped pet is more likely in

this area than a vagrant, but the possibility of a wild bird exists. Mountain Chickadees were present in the lowlands in the Santa Barbara area (WFr), the Los Angeles Basin (SS, DG), and Point Loma, San Diego Co. (A & JC). A Verdin was present near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. for most of the period (GMcC, AC); this is the only location along the coast where they have been found, but they appear to be regular in limited numbers.

**Thrashers, Thrushes, Waxwings**—A Brown Thrasher, which was present in the fall, returned to a San Diego feeding station and remained until Jan. 5 (GMcC). A Sage Thrasher was near Imperial Beach during the period. Robins were present in about normal numbers; a concentration of 5000 in Altadena, Los Angeles Co. on Feb. 8 (SS) was the only large number reported. Varied Thrushes were present in small numbers. In normal years none are found. Fourteen were reported on Christmas counts; they were present throughout the period in Santa Barbara (S.B.A.S.); they wintered in Mill Creek Canyon, San Bernardino Co. (JDG); 4 were seen in the San Bernardino Mountains on March 11 (AF); one was in Riverside on Feb. 22 (T & MH); one was in Los Angeles on March 21 (SW); 2 were near Lake Elsinor on Feb. 19 (TS); 3 were in Irving Park, Orange Co. on Feb. 2, and 2 were there on March 25 (SW); one was at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. on Jan. 8 (GMcC & AC). Two Swainson's Thrushes were reported on Christmas counts within the Region; this is fewer than have been reported in previous years, but probably too many. During the winter season they are reported only during the Christmas count period. The latest fall record known to the editor is one freshly dead in San Diego on Dec. 13, and the earliest spring record is one mist-netted at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. on April 2. A Swainson's Thrush found between these two dates should be well-documented if we are to have an acceptable winter record for the Region and California. Three Townsend's Solitaires were in Palm Canyon, San Diego Co. on March 1 (SW), and one was on Point Loma, San Diego Co. on Feb. 3 (GMcC & JC). Five Bohemian Waxwings were reported from Santa Barbara on Dec. 4 (JY); there are very few records for the Region, but they have occurred in numbers during good flight years.

**Vireos and Warblers**—A Warbling Vireo, seen near Los Angeles on March 4 (CL), was either an extremely early migrant or a wintering individual. A *Virginia's Warbler* remained in San Diego until Jan. 13 (A & JM); the only previous winter record for California was of an individual that returned to a Pasadena feeder for 3 consecutive winters. A Nashville Warbler was at El Toro, Orange Co. on Dec. 26 (DG), one remained on Point Loma, San Diego Co. throughout the winter (A & JC), and one was near Calipatria, Imperial Co. on Jan. 15 (GMcC); a scarce but regular winter visitor. A Yellow Warbler was at the south end of the Salton Sea on Feb. 13 (GMcC); there is no substantiated winter record for California; attempts to collect this individual failed. A Black-throated Gray Warbler was at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. on Feb. 26 (GMcC), the



only report this winter. A Hermit Warbler wintered on Point Loma (GMcC, JC); the previous two species are very scarce, but regular, in California during the winter. A Palm Warbler was at Goleta, Santa Barbara Co. between Jan. 1 and 5 (JP), and on March 5 (JH); one was at El Toro on Dec. 26 (DG), and one was near Calipatria, Imperial Co. on Jan. 8 (DG); they now occur regularly in limited numbers as a wintering species to California. The only Wilson's Warbler was one near Calipatria on Jan. 15 (GMcC). As many as 3 Am. Redstarts were seen together at the south end of the Salton Sea during February and March (GMcC, CL, EAC, DG); they winter regularly at this location.

**Orioles and Tanagers**—Every year a few orioles and tanagers remain through the winter; this year was no exception with six species of orioles and two species of tanagers noted. An Orchard Oriole spent the winter in Redlands, San Bernardino Co. (JDG). Four Hooded Orioles wintered in the Santa Barbara area (S.B.A.S.). A Scott's Oriole was seen at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. on Feb. 27 (AF, SW); this species is not found each winter. A Baltimore Oriole wintered in Montecito, Santa Barbara Co. (JK); 1 was seen in Rancho Park, Los Angeles Co., on Dec. 2 (DG); one was in Fullerton, Los Angeles Co., on Jan. 18 (RT); 2 wintered in Santa Ana, Orange Co. (MH); and 1 was in San Diego during March (Mrs. Fourier); the species is now expected during the winter. Three Bullock's Orioles wintered in Santa Barbara (S.B.A.S.); a flock of up to 10 were at Rancho Park (DG); one was at Costa Mesa, Orange Co. (TS); and 1 or 2 were wintering on Point Loma, San Diego Co. (GMcC, A & JC). A *Scarlet-headed Oriole*, the 4th record for the Region, was at Rancho Park on Jan. 2 and 5 (DG); the bird was seen by only one observer; Gaines, however, is one of the most careful and competent observers in the Region. A Summer Tanager was at Rancho Park on Jan. 1 and 2, and another was near Calipatria, Imperial Co. on Jan. 8 (DG). A Western Tanager seen at Montecito on March 29 (JK) was most likely a wintering individual; up to 4 were present in San Diego to early January.

**Finches and Sparrows**—Our common wintering species were present in about normal numbers. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a feeder in San Diego between Dec. 28 and Feb. 15 (GMcC, A & JC); one is reported almost every winter now. Two Black-headed Grosbeaks were in Santa Barbara on Jan. 2 (RM), and one was seen near San Diego on

the same day. A male *Lazuli Bunting* was seen in San Diego in mid-December (Richard Banks), apparently only the second winter sighting for California. A few Pine Siskins were found in the lowlands. A Grasshopper Sparrow, a species rarely reported in the winter, was seen near Santa Barbara on Feb. 11 (NM). About half a dozen Slate-colored Juncos were found in the Region with flocks of Oregon Juncos. A Gray-headed Junco was in Pasadena, Los Angeles Co., after March 6 (SS), one was seen near Lake Cuyamaca, San Diego Co. on Feb. 5 (GMcC), and one (banded) wintered on Point Loma, San Diego Co. (A & JC); scarce but regular during the winter. Two Black-chinned Sparrows, not often found in the winter, were in Santa Barbara on Jan. 13 (NM & JK). An imm. Harris' Sparrow, very scarce, spent the winter with White-crowned Sparrows near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. (GMcC, CL, DC, JC). A White-throated Sparrow wintered in Arcadia, Los Angeles Co., (SS), and another (banded) wintered on Point Loma (A & JC). The only report of a Swamp Sparrow was one near Imperial Beach on Dec. 18 (AC); in some winters a few are present, but this was apparently not a good winter to find them in southern California. The most unusual species of the season was a *Rustic Bunting* seen with a flock of White-crowned Sparrows in Cacamonga Canyon northeast of Upland, Riverside Co. on Nov. 18 (EAC & Ted McDonald). Cardiff has previously seen this species in Korea, and noted all the field marks including the white in the tail. Cardiff is a very cautious and reliable field observer as well as being curator of birds in the San Bernardino County Museum. The bird disappeared shortly before Cardiff's wife returned with a collecting gun, and it was not found again on subsequent visits to the area. This is the first sighting of the species in North America outside of Alaska.

**Contributors**—Waldo Abbott, Arne Albertson, Eugene Cardiff, Duane Carmony, Leslie Cooke, Alan & Jean Craig, Elton Edge, Mary Erickson, W. & J. Ferry, John Flavin, Tom Follis, Alice Fries, William & June Gardner, David Gaines, J. G. Goodman, Margaret Harding, John Hildebrand, Tom and Mary Hylands, Jerry Johnson, Jewell Kriger, Cliff Lions, Nelson Metcalf, Margaret Millar, Richmond Miller, Art & Jean Morley, Joy Parkinson, Robert R. Prather, Frances Raymond, Charles & Alice Richardson, Larry Sansone, L. A. Shelton, Trudy Siptroth, Shumway Suffel, Shirley Wells, John Yak.—GUY McCASKIE, 5475 55th Street, Apt. 15, San Diego 15, Calif.