

**MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION**—Beginning in mid-January it has rained almost without ceasing in this Region. Rainfall in the San Francisco Bay



area ran about 30 percent above the average 20 inches for the winter season, and the pattern was repeated elsewhere. There were particularly severe storms in late January. The number of warblers, orioles, and tanagers wintering in favored localities such as Greenwood Park in Pacific Grove, Monterey Co. was considerably lower than in most recent years. As for winter visitors from the mountains or the north, only robins moved into the lowlands in better than average numbers. By contrast with this rather uneventful picture, there were a number of notable rarities: a Common Teal was found in Tomales Bay; Snowy Owls invaded the state for the first time since 1916-17; and a possible first state record of Crested Myna was reported, perhaps the beginning of another population explosion like that of the Starling in the past decade.

**Grebes**—Two Horned Grebes, rare away from the coast, were reported from the Central Valley location of Los Banos Waterfowl Management Area on Feb. 18 (AB).

**Fulmars, Shearwaters, Petrels**—Fulmars were

seen in numbers between 100 and 150 in Monterey Bay and off the Point Reyes Peninsula throughout the winter by several observers (AB, WR, JDRG, TC). Such numbers seem to be indicative of an average flight year. The impressive fall flights of shearwaters off the Monterey Peninsula dwindled to a few wintering Sooties and Pink-foots (AB). A Slender-billed Shearwater, unreported last fall, was collected in Monterey Bay on Dec. 18 and another was seen there at very close range on Jan. 11 (AB). The only petrels reported were 2 Blacks on Monterey Bay on Dec. 18 (AB).

Pelicans, Bitterns, Ibises—White Pelicans wintered in good numbers with as many as 400 estimated at the south end of San Francisco Bay on Dec. 28 (WA). Two Cattle Egrets near Arcata, Humboldt Co. in December and January were photographed by Stanley Harris for the Region's second record. A Least Bittern, rarely reported—particularly in the winter—was seen at the Los Banos Area on Feb. 17 (ROW). It is interesting to recall that ROW saw one in the same location last September (AFN 21: 72-73). About 80 White-faced Ibis were estimated at the Los Banos Area on Feb. 26 (WR & WU). They now apparently winter there in good numbers.

Swans—The Whistling Swan population in California this season was said to be the largest in recent years based on a state-wide census figure of 35,000 (Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game *vide* ERP). A probable *Trumpeter Swan* was carefully studied at Pescadero, San Mateo Co. on Feb. 25 (JDRG). It was later seen by many birders and was heard to give low-pitched calls by at least one of them (DDeS). A Calif. Fish & Game warden said he had seen the lone swan for three weeks prior to its "discovery" by birders. Being one of the few state records, it was observed until at least March 25 (WA).

Geese—Biweekly waterfowl population surveys by the Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game showed, in early December, the impressive geese figures of: 704,495 in the Sacramento Valley; 77,605 in the northern San Joaquin Valley; and 88,625 in the Delta Region of the Central Valley. A special Ross' Goose inventory in California during February turned up 31,400, a gain of a thousand over last year (Ed Neal, *San Francisco Examiner*, March 13). An individual of this species was found at the unusual coastal locality of Tomales Bay, Marin Co. on Dec. 30 (JDRG & RGr). Black Brant continued to migrate and winter in good numbers with as many as 500 estimated at the mouth of Tomales Bay on Dec. 31 (AC & TC). Off Limantour Spit on Point Reyes numbers built up to 6000+ on March 29. Three birds in a flock of 105 feeding in a marsh there on March 13 were wearing yellow-green plastic neck bands placed on them at the Aleutian Islands Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in the summer of 1965 (PL). Three Emperor Geese, always rare in this Region, were seen flying south off Limantour Spit, Point Reyes on Dec. 7 (PL). White-fronted Geese appeared more commonly along the coast than is normal, with as many as 55 at Inverness, Tomales Bay on Dec. 29 (PL). An adult Blue Goose, rare but regular

in the Central Valley, was found at the Los Banos Area on Feb. 26 (WR & WU).

Ducks—The waterfowl survey of early December, mentioned under geese, also showed impressive duck populations: 4,012,570 in the Sacramento Valley; 495,975 in the northern San Joaquin Valley; and 420,475 in the Delta Region. Last year at the same time heavy fog prevented a survey; however, these figures are more than double those recorded on comparable counts in 1963 and 1964. One of the rarest finds of the season was a *Common Teal* at the head of Tomales Bay in mid-December by Gerard Brady. As there are only two previous California sight records and no state specimens or photographs, many birders subsequently combed the Point Reyes-Tomales Bay area for them. The result was that Common Teal were also found in Abbott's Lagoon (ROP) and the Olema Marsh (RS), although never more than one was reported at a time. The last sighting was Jan. 7 on Tamales Bay (DDeS, ROP, *et al.*). Blue-winged Teal were reported from Woodland, Yolo Co., a pair on Feb. 22 (MK) and again along San Francisco Bay. European Widgeon were found in the coastal localities of Point Reyes and Oakland, Alameda Co., where they seem to be getting almost as regular as at the Sacramento Refuge. Barrow's Goldeneyes, Oldsquaws, Harlequin Ducks, and Common Scoters were reported in small numbers along the coast as usual. Most interesting was a report of 6 (1 male and 5 females) Barrow's Goldeneyes on the Klamath River below the Iron Gate Dam, Siskiyou Co. on March 18 (ODS); this species is not known to have nested in recent years in northern California.

Condors, Hawks, Eagles—A pair of adult California Condors was seen on the mid-winter dates of Jan. 6, 8, & 9 and on March 6 in the well-known Springville area of Tulare County (MEM). An individual was also seen over Fresno on Feb. 13 by D. M. Sellick of the California Dept. of Fish & Game. The Sacramento Audubon Society recorded 77 White-tailed Kites on their Christmas Count of Dec. 26. Thirteen were counted in the San Francisco Bay marshes of Palo Alto on Jan. 17 (TC). Rough-legged Hawks were reported more commonly than usual in the Central Valley as well as along the coast. In contrast, only 2 Ferruginous Hawks were reported, both from the Point Reyes area. The results of a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service eagle count of the entire state in January was: Golden Eagle—59 adults and 13 immatures; Bald Eagles—31 adults and 10 immatures. Two or 3 Ospreys wintered in the Point Reyes area (PL) and 1 was reported to have wintered in the Santa Cruz area (*vide* AB). The rare Prairie Falcon was reported from the Beale Air Force Base, Yuba Co. on Dec. 26 (MP). Of the 7 Peregrine Falcons reported the only one away from the coast was at Los Banos area on March 29 (HC). Reports of 5 Pigeon Hawks were about average, with the only one away from the coast also being at Los Banos Area on Dec. 14 (ROW).

Galliformes, Rails, Coots—Three Blue Grouse were heard giving their courtship hooting in the Emerald Bay area of Lake Tahoe on the early date of March 23 (KL). Six Chukars were seen at Gridley,

Colusa Co. on Dec. 21 (*BDP & GB*). They have now adapted well enough to warrant a hunting season in certain areas. The Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game estimates 3000 Turkeys wild in the state due to their efforts to establish them for hunting. They now intend to plant more than 5000 exotic non-native gamefowl this year in an effort to find additional targets for California's growing army of shotgunners! (Walt Radke, *San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle*, Dec. 25 and Feb. 19). A Clapper Rail that was found last November at Moss Landing wintered there for the first time in many years (*AB*). At Bay Farm Island on San Francisco Bay on Feb. 5, 1966 some 55 rails were counted. This winter none could be found because of the destruction of their habitat for "development" (*ER*). Am. Coots also were counted during the waterfowl population survey in December, mentioned under geese, giving the following results: 95,000 in the Sacramento Valley; 145,650 in the northern San Joaquin Valley; and 34,500 in the Delta Region.

**Shorebirds**—A good description of a Mountain Plover was left at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory for a bird seen at Limantour Estero there on Feb. 10 (Jon Winter and Leonard Epstein). The species is considered vagrant along the coast, although it winters in the Central Valley in small numbers. The unusually high number of 17 Rock Sandpipers was counted at Crescent City, Del Norte Co. on Jan. 21 (*JDRG, RGr, DDeS, & TC*). Another 6+ were found at the better-known locality of Eureka, Humboldt Co. on Feb. 26 (*RAH*). After a heavy fall migration, Red Phalaropes lingered along the coast until early January (*RS*). As many as 250 were still off Pacific Grove, Monterey Co. on Dec. 6 (*AB*). A late Northern was found with 10 Reds at Bodega Bay, Sonoma Co. on Dec. 3 (*JG#*).

**Jaegers, Gulls, Terns**—For the fifth consecutive winter a Parasitic Jaeger flew back and forth with the gulls between San Francisco Bay and the Calero Reservoir (*DDMcL*). Between 7 and 12 Pomarine Jaegers were seen regularly through the season on Monterey Bay, but no Parasitics were identified (*AB*). Five Glaucous Gulls were reported this winter—3 from the Monterey Bay area (*AB*) and 2 on San Francisco Bay (*RS*). The numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes wintering on Monterey Bay rose to a very high 1140 (95 percent adult) counted on Feb. 16 (*AB*). The very large wintering number of 201 Forster's Terns was counted on the San Francisco Bay shore of Alameda on Dec. 31 (*ER*). Two Elegant Terns were seen on the very late date of Dec. 10 at Pacific Grove after a heavy fall flight.

**Alcids**—Marbled Murrelets were scarce on Monterey Bay with a maximum of 8 on Jan. 11 (*AB*). Ancient Murrelets, however, increased in numbers there to a maximum of 72 on Jan. 26 (*AB*). The high fall numbers of Cassin's Auklets on Monterey Bay declined to a maximum during the season of 27 on Jan. 26 (*AB*). Rhinoceros Auklets, on the other hand, were found to be the most abundant bird on Monterey Bay's offshore waters, increasing in numbers to 3170 counted on Jan. 26 (*AB*).

**Pigeons, Owls**—The White-winged Dove reported

last fall (*AFN 21:75*) in the vicinity of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory remained until Dec. 4.

**Snowy Owls** reached California this season for the first fully verified "invasion" since 1916-17, though in smaller numbers than the 9 specimens and 11 other sight records of that year (Grinnell and Miller 199). This winter brought one specimen and 2 or 3 other sight records. A juvenile male picked up ill on Jan. 4 near Sacramento died of avian cholera the next day (Merton Rosen of the California Department of Fish and Game); more details are being published in the California Fish and Game quarterly. In addition, at least 2 and possibly 3 birds were observed from Jan. 31 to March 24 by numerous individuals (*RGMcC, VDaC, DDeS, RAH, JRDG*) and photographed by Stanley Harris in coastal dunes at Mad River Slough, Humboldt Co. There appeared to be an adult male and an immature female.

The Spotted Owls closely watched by rangers at Tomales Bay State Park, Marin Co., were absent this winter for the first time since approximately 1950, while *Mrs. L BK* failed to find this species in the Grizzly Peak State Park, Humboldt Co. for the first time in 4 years. While it would be rash to draw conclusions from so little evidence, the status of this rather localized owl of dense coastal and mountain forests should be watched.

**Hummingbirds**—The perils faced by hummingbirds wintering in the new habitats created by the gardens of suburban northern California were pointed up this season by a number of reports of mortality or departure of Anna's Hummingbirds during January's exceptionally heavy rains (e.g. *BK*, female dead at feeder in Sacramento, Jan. 30). The possibility of other species wintering when conditions are favorable is suggested by an Allen's Hummingbird (specimen, Jan. 1, *JW*) at the Berkeley Botanic Garden—one of the few verified northern California winter records.

**Woodpeckers**—A Pileated Woodpecker at Bon Tempe Lake, Marin Co., on March 19 (*HA*) shows that this species is holding its own at the southern limit of its coastal range. Nuttall's Woodpeckers continue to be recorded on the western slope of the Coast Ranges in Marin County in small numbers, out of their usual valley and inner foothill habitats: one on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, Jan. 1 (*VDaC*) and one in the Point Reyes National Seashore on Feb. 28 (Violet Homen, *vide VDaC*).

**Kingbirds**—A Tropical Kingbird was seen off and on throughout the winter at Pacific Grove, Monterey Co. (*AB, WR*); this appears to be the second case of wintering in northern California. A Cassin's Kingbird at South San Jose (*DDMcL*) on Feb. 8-15 was north of its usual breeding range and occasional wintering range in the inner coastal valleys, where it normally is found north only to San Benito County.

**Jays, Nutcrackers**—There were as many as 9 Gray Jays at their southernmost normal coastal locality, a feeder just east of Mendocino (*JG*). Although it was no invasion year for Clark's Nutcrackers, there was one report outside the Sierra, a single bird on Feb. 26 south of Livermore in Santa Clara County (*RS*).

**Chickadees, Creepers**—Mountain Chickadees are known to winter as high in the Sierra as there are trees. Several were observed above 9000 feet on Squaw Peak, Placer Co. on Feb. 17 (*ROP*). *KL* banded and photographed a Chestnut-backed Chickadee at Emerland Bay on Lake Tahoe, El Dorado Co. on Nov. 11, 1966. At last report the bird was still present. To our knowledge, this is the first record for an eastern drainage in the Sierra. Other Sierra localities where this species has been establishing itself in recent years, Yosemite Park, Whitehill and Pollock Pines in El Dorado County, and Potato Patch Camp in Tehama County are all on the western slope. Brown Creepers were apparently well above normal numbers in the northern Sierra and Sacramento Valley, where Christmas count numbers ran above average and birds were found outside normal habitats (*MP, EH*). Unfortunately we do not have similarly good comparative figures from the rest of the Region.

**Dipper, Mockingbirds**—A single Dipper in Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Marin Co. on Feb. 4 (*G&IP*) was outside the few known breeding areas on the north coast. A wintering Mockingbird at Richardson Grove, Humboldt Co. on Jan. 22 (*JRDG, RG, TC*) shows that this species continues to push its range northward in winter.

**Thrushes**—In contrast to Varied Thrushes, which were reported in very small numbers throughout the Region, Robins were more abundant along the coast from Humboldt County (*Mrs. LBK*) to the San Francisco Bay area than at any time since the winter of 1961-62. The roost in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park may have reached 50,000 birds (Paul Covell). Inland, the Central Valley had only slightly more Robins than normal, and in Tulare County they remained at high elevations except when driven down by snow (*MEM*). Occasional individuals at Berkeley with white rectrices (*ROP*) could possibly have been the northwestern race *caurinus*, but no specimens were taken. Until extensive banding has been undertaken, the source and dynamics of California winter Robin populations will not be clearly understood.

While our information on Western Bluebirds this season is fragmentary, they were reported scarcer around Sacramento in the past three years than formerly, with only 55 on the last three Christmas counts together as against more than 200 in good previous years alone (*AJA*). By contrast, the usual irregular flocks of Mountain Bluebirds in the Central Valley were somewhat larger than in recent years, with 30-50 on Jan. 1 near Coalinga (*WR, AB*) and 12 near Sacramento on Dec. 26 where one or 2 is normal (*BK*). Townsend's Solitaires move back early into the high country regardless of snow conditions, but a bird on March 14 at Norden, Nevada Co. at 7000 feet, with about 12 feet of snow pack on the ground seemed unusually hardy for a ground-nesting bird (*ROP*).

**Waxwings, Silky Flycatchers**—The only Bohemian Waxwings reported for the entire Region were 30 on Feb. 3 at South San Jose (*DDMcL*). Cedar Waxwings built up in the lowlands in their normal

fashion, reaching maximum levels in March (up to 5000 in the Sacramento area, *AJA*), but numbers were nowhere considered unusually large. Phainopeplas continued to winter in small numbers well up the Central Valley, with 2 males at Angel's Camp, Calaveras Co. on Jan. 7, an unusual foothill location (*RAH*). In the inner Coast Range, one male was at the Mount Hamilton observatory, Santa Clara Co. on Feb. 26 (*RS*).

**Shrikes**—Northern Shrikes were reported not only more frequently than usual this season, but from coastal locations instead of the less unexpected Central Valley. From north to south, there were single birds at Crescent City, Del Norte Co. on Jan. 21 (*TC, JRDG, RG, DDeS*); at Humboldt Bay, on Feb. 17 (*RGMcC*); at the Dumbarton Bridge, San Mateo Co. on Dec. 3 (*DDeS*), and at Alameda on Jan. 17 (*RS*). The last two observations appear to be fourth and fifth records respectively for the San Francisco Bay Region.

**Mynas**—A California Department of Agriculture biologist observed a *Crested Myna* with Starlings near Collinsville, Solano Co. on March 10 (J. Smith, *fide ERP*). While there is still no specimen or photograph of this species for California, there is the possibility that the long-stable Vancouver population spreading along the Pacific coast must be watched for. Since it is illegal to import or keep Crested Mynas, there seems little possibility that this bird was an escapee.

**Warblers**—Northern California offers marginal possibilities of survival for normally migrant warbler species. This season there were fewer such reports than in other recent years, possibly because of inclement weather. A Black-and-white Warbler at the Carmel River mouth on March 4 (*AB* & John B. Crowell) may have wintered since it is a month earlier than other occasional spring records; there were 2 midwinter records last year. A single Nashville Warbler all winter at Pacific Grove, Monterey Co. (*WR*) and a Palm Warbler at the Carmel River mouth on various occasions throughout the winter (*AB, RLB, J. Greenberg*) compare unfavorably with 4 and 6 respectively last year. Far more unusual was a male Wilson's Warbler carefully described by *DG* and *RG* 4 miles south of the Oregon border in Del Norte County on Jan. 28; the previous northernmost winter record was in Humboldt County. Audubon's Warbler, which should be by far the most abundant wintering warbler in Northern California, was considered low in numbers by observers in all parts of the Region, confirming a general impression of small numbers of northern and mountain birds moving to the lowlands this season. In Sacramento, "none of my previous years' records show such a lack of wintering Audubon's Warblers" (*BK*).

**Blackbirds and Orioles**—Yellow-headed Blackbirds wintered as usual north to Butte County, but their numbers were somewhat larger than usual, with 200 males in a roost of 10,000 Red-winged Blackbirds near Gridley on Feb. 11 (Janet Turner). There were also more than usual in the Gray Lodge Refuge, at Los Banos State Game Management Area, Merced



Co. (more than 20 on Mar. 16, Harold Cribbs, *file ROW*) and at Sacramento (*BK*). Wintering orioles were down this winter. There were only 3 Bullock's Orioles in the famous Greenwood Park at Pacific Grove, Monterey Co. from Dec. 7 to Jan. 22 (*AB*, *WR*, *RLB*). For the third straight year, a male Hooded Oriole spent the winter in the garden of *DDMcL* at South San Jose.

Flocks of 300-800 Brown-headed Cowbirds around the home of *BK* in Sacramento going to roost morning and evening from Feb. 9 to March 18, and 1500 Tricolored Blackbirds near Sacramento on March 29 (*AJA*) were unusual concentrations. It is still impossible, however, to get good estimates of total wintering Red-winged Blackbirds and Brewer's Blackbird populations in this Region; their winter roosts must total millions of birds.

**Tanagers, Grosbeaks, Crossbills**—The only wintering tanager report was a female Western Tanager at Greenwood Park in Pacific Grove on Jan. 2 (*T & ZC*, D. Greenberg, *RG*). There was no influx of any winter finch species into the lowlands this year. A single Evening Grosbeak in Pacific Grove on March 19, "the first record on the Monterey Peninsula in several years" (*WR*) and a single male in Berkeley on Mar. 20 (*ROP*) were the only reports from coastal areas, and 6 and 25 on March 6 and 29 at Chico (*EH*) the only Central Valley reports. The only report of Red Crossbills in the Region was 8 at Chico on Jan. 16 (Stephen Matteson).

**Sparrows**—A Vesper Sparrow at Sacramento Federal Wildlife Refuge, Glenn Co. on Jan. 28 (*BK*) is north of the normal San Joaquin Valley winter limits for the interior, while 2 east of Soledad, Monterey Co. on Jan. 15 (*AB*, *WR*) were the northernmost reports from coastal areas. A Sage Sparrow east of Sacramento in El Dorado County on Feb. 25 (*BK*) appears to be the fourth local winter record in about 15 years; it does not normally winter north of the San Joaquin Valley. A Gray-headed Junco killed by a shrike in a banding trap at the Hastings Reservation, Carmel Valley, Monterey Co. on Jan. 5 (Dr. John Davis) appears to be a first coastal specimen and the first coastal record outside Marin County where there have been four good sight records in recent years. Only 4 Slate-colored Juncos for the Region, all from coastal areas where our observers are concentrated (*GM*, *JRDG*, *T & ZC*, *RS*, *DDeS*), are somewhat fewer than normal, while 2 Harris' Sparrows, one at Alameda on Jan. 4 and 5 (*RS*) and another at South San Jose on Jan. 16 and 17 (*DDMcL*) were more than the usual one per winter. *DDMcL* reported on the basis of banding at South San Jose that wintering races of White-crowned Sparrows were down this year, the Puget Sound race down 30% and Gambel's race down 50%. Other observers commented less concretely on the relative scarcity of wintering sparrows. A single White-throated Sparrow at *GM*'s feeder at Inverness, Marin Co. was well below normal for this Region. A good number of reports of wintering Lincoln's Sparrows was received, including 2 on Jan. 21 (*JDRG*, *RG*, *DDeS*) at Crescent City, Del Norte

Co., well north of usual wintering areas along the coast. A Swamp Sparrow at Brady's Motel at Inverness, Marin Co. in the same spot where one was found in 1961, was observed by practically everybody and photographed by *GM*. This species, considered very rare before 1959, is now recorded somewhere in the Region each winter.

**Corrigendum**—The bird reported as a Dickcissel collected last fall on the east slope of the Sierra (*AFN* 21:75) has now been deposited in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley, where the identification was found to be erroneous.

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