

**MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.**—This winter was described as very cold and dry by a number of observers. Temperatures descended into the low



twenties in the Central Valley and even along the coast as far south as the San Francisco Peninsula, where early December rains turned into snow. There were many warm spells, however, the most noteworthy during the Christmas Count period. During the first half of the season the high Sierra received a generous supply of snow, which usually persisted under clear skies, much to the delight of skiers. These mountains are seldom birded in winter owing to their inaccessibility during the season. Despite several good soakings, most areas received far below normal rainfall; for example, on the north coast Margaret Keith reported that total rainfall was 9 inches below average by the end of the season. Despite the cold weather, there were few severe storms and a number of birds that do not normally do so spent the winter in the Region.

**Loons, Grebes.**—An immature *Yellow-billed Loon* was found by G. Brady at Inverness, Tomales Bay, Marin Co. on Dec. 1 and the identification was confirmed by others (*P.R.B.O.*, *PRL*) on Dec. 2. The bird subsequently was seen by many observers (*TC*, *RS*, *et al.*). It was seen alive on Dec. 9 and was found dead on Dec. 12 (*GM*); the specimen has been deposited in the California Academy of Sciences. This is the first fully satisfactory record for California. A second bird, considered to be an adult in winter plumage, was seen at a range of 20 feet from a boat off Pierce Point at the mouth of Tomales Bay on Jan. 1 (*RS*, *BD*). It is appropriate to men-



tion here a bird in winter plumage seen under very favorable conditions at Stinson Beach, Marin Co. on Apr. 29, 1965 and well described by Wesley J. Hennessy of New York City. It should also be noted that Oregon and Washington lack records of this species [until this season: see Northern Pacific Coast Region for record of a Yellow-billed Loon near Blaine, Wash.—Ed.], although it is a straggler south to Vancouver Island, B. C. (A.O.U. Check-list, 5th ed., 1957). An Arctic Loon was seen near Los Banos Waterfowl Management Area, Merced Co., Dec. 2-9 (M. Macias & ROW); this species is a straggler inland. Only four reports of Red-necked Grebes were received; 7 were seen on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, Jan. 1, and 2 at Rodeo Lagoon, Marin Co., March 24 (WMP). Horned Grebes wintered in unusual numbers at Folsom Lake, Placer Co., with 26 there on Feb. 6 (BK, RKL). Seventy Western Grebes, an unusually large number, were at Folsom Lake on Dec. 16 (SS).

**Albatrosses, Shearwaters, Storm Petrels, Pelicans**—A Black-footed Albatross was seen in Monterey Bay on Jan. 18 (AB). It was considered a poor winter for Fulmars and Sooty Shearwaters, with high counts of 44 Fulmars in Monterey Bay on Dec. 20 and 10 Sooty Shearwaters at Point Pinos, Monterey Co. on the same date (AB, W'R). No wintering Pink-footed Shearwaters were observed in Monterey Bay. A Fork-tailed Petrel was seen from a boat one-half mile off Point Pinos on Dec. 20 (AB). Five Ashy Petrels observed in Monterey Bay on Dec. 2 (AB, et al.) were the remnant of a very heavy fall population. The only flock of White Pelicans reported was one of 110 birds at Los Banos on March 23 (AJA).

**Hérons, Ibises**—A new colony of Great Blue Herons was discovered at Beale Air Force Base, Yolo Co., March 24 (MP); 9 nests were found in the colony on that date. Four Snowy Egrets seen at Arcata, Humboldt Co., Jan. 8-9, were considered rare for that northerly locality (RS, Dr. S. W. Harris, et al.). Two Least Bitterns were found on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count on Jan. 1. The Am. Flamingos that had been present for nearly two years at Moss Landing, Monterey Co. disappeared toward the end of the period (AB). White-faced Ibis continued to utilize refuge lands in the San Joaquin Valley; no less than 200 were observed on Dec. 6 at the new San Luis Islands Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in Merced County (AB) and 27 on Los Banos Waterfowl Management Area on March 24 (S.A.S., AJA). The species probably no longer breeds in the state, and the population at Malheur Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon is thought not to exceed 15 pairs. The nearest sizable breeding population is located at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder Co., Utah, which may well be the place of origin of the California birds.

**Swans**—Whistling Swans appeared to be more numerous than usual in coastal regions, with 125 at Bolinas Lagoon, Marin Co. on Dec. 14 (P.R.B.O.) and 225 at Bearice, near Eureka, Humboldt Co. on Jan. 26 (M&LK). At least 5 were shot from a small flock of about 12 that visited the Moss Landing—

Salinas area of Monterey County in late December (fide AB). About 1000 were present in the Yolo Bypass area, Yolo Co. on Feb. 11 (RKL). A family party of 5 Trumpeter Swans was present at Santa Rosa, Sonoma Co., Dec. 31–Jan. 14 (BDP, GLB, et al.). Two probable Trumpeters, both immature, were seen at Limantour Spit, Marin Co., Jan. 14-20 (MP, SS, DG, et al.).

**Geese, Ducks**—Black Brant were well below normal in numbers in the Pacific flyway (D. B. Marshall, pers. comm.), although 2000 were estimated at Humboldt Bay on Feb. 20 (M&LK). No southward migration was observed at Point Pinos (AB) or Point Reyes (P.R.B.O.). An adult Emperor Goose was seen at Limantour, Dec. 27-28 (P.R.B.O., PRL, SS). Three thousand Ross' Geese were observed on Merced Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Merced Co. on Dec. 6 (AB). An aerial waterfowl census of San Francisco Bay conducted by the California Department of Fish and Game in the first week of January showed a total of 244,700 birds, an increase of 100,000 over the previous winter (Monterey Peninsula Herald, Jan. 11). A ♂ Com. Teal was seen at the Arcata Sewage Oxidation Plant on Jan. 12 (RS, Dr. S. W. Harris, et al.); this was the fourth state record. Blue-winged Teal were reported from four locations, including the Palo Alto Yacht Club in Santa Clara County where two pairs were found on Jan. 11 and five pairs on March 24 (TC, WMP); the species has been found here previous winters. One bird was shot at Los Banos Waterfowl Management Area on Dec. 16 (fide ROW). Single ♂ European Widgeons were reported from five different localities, including Golden Gate Park in San Francisco where one was present from late December through Jan. 6 (TC & ZC, Glen Ellwood, et al.). No fewer than 47,000 Canvasbacks were counted on the Department of Fish and Game census of San Francisco Bay in early January; 44,000 were counted last winter. Large numbers were found in the southern part of the bay, whereas in previous years they were mainly in the northern portion. Some 80,000 scaup, 47,000 scoters (of two species) and 16,000 Ruddy Ducks were counted at the same time (Monterey Peninsula Herald, Jan. 11). Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported from four localities, including a maximum of 9 at Lake Merritt, Oakland, Alameda Co. on Jan. 6 (TC & ZC) and single males identified at the Conway Ranch, Yolo Co. on Dec. 31 (MP, E&MW) and on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count on Jan. 1. Ten Oldsquaw were also seen on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count. Harlequin Ducks were reported from three localities, with 8 birds seen at St. George's Lighthouse, Crescent City, Del Norte Co., Feb. 17 (ODS, JHH). Six Hooded Mergansers were at San Raphael, Marin Co., Jan. 20 (TC & ZC). Forty Com. Mergansers at Bass Lake, El Dorado Co. on Jan. 24 (BK, et al.) was a large number for the Region.

**Condors, Hawks, Eagles**—Three California Condors, two adults and an immature, were noted in the Springville—Yokohl Valley area on March 1 and 24 (MEM). A White-tailed Kite 100 yards from the sea at Stewart's Point, Sonoma Co. (BDP) was



northwest of its usual range. *Broad-winged Hawks*, new to the Region, provided great interest this winter. An immature bird was found in the lower Carmel Valley, Monterey Co. on Dec. 27 by Capt. E. G. Hurlbert and V. Huser; the identification was confirmed by other observers (RLB, VLY). It remained until at least Feb. 22 and was seen by many others, good photographs being obtained (AB, RLB). This was only the second California record for the species. Two birds, an adult and an immature, were found at Santa Cruz; the immature remained in the locality from Jan. 9 through March 19 (DG, RLB, VLY, *et al.*) and was photographed (DG); the adult bird was seen at the same location on Feb. 4 only by G. Shumway Suffel and Shirley Wells. The presence of 4-5 birds in the state leads one to speculate that perhaps a migrating flock drifted far west of the normal migration route and took up winter territories on arriving upon the Pacific shore. Rough-legged Hawks were more common than usual both along the coast and inland, with 16 recorded on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, Jan. 1. Only four reports of Ferruginous Hawks, all of single birds, were received; this is fewer than last year. Few reports of Golden Eagles were received, although Marin County had a remarkable concentration, including 15 on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count. Of a total of 13 Bald Eagles reported, at least 11 were immature, including 8 at Calaveras Reservoir, Santa Clara Co., Feb. 4 (TC & ZC, JG). Four Ospreys, an exceptional wintering population, were seen on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, Jan. 1. At least 7 Prairie Falcons were reported, all from Central Valley localities except for a single coastal report; this was the highest total in several years. There were four reports of Peregrine Falcons. The good fall influx of Pigeon Hawks carried over into the winter period, with at least 8 birds recorded, including 4 on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count.

**Grouse, Cranes, Rails**—Ruffed Grouse, always infrequently reported in the Region, were seen at the north edge of Prairie Creek State Park, Humboldt Co., 2 birds being noted on Dec. 4 (GMcC, AC, CL). A flock of Sandhill Cranes on the M and T Ranch near Chico, Butte Co. has increased since the winter of 1962-63 and numbered 800 on Dec. 24 (Janette Turner, *vide* EH); 1000 were observed flying northwest over Sacramento on March 3 (ERP). A Sora near Calvine Road, Sacramento on Dec. 10 (A & TM) was considered noteworthy. A small number of wintering Com. Gallinules was reported from the usual coastal locations.

**Shorebirds**—Black Oystercatchers, which rarely aggregate sufficiently to form flocks, were twice reported doing so this winter: 18 were seen at Bodega Head, Sonoma Co. on Feb. 4 (JW) and 16 at St. George's Lighthouse on Feb. 17 (ODS, JHH). Four Am. Golden Plover found in a field at Alviso, Santa Clara Co. on Feb. 4 (TC & ZC, JG) were in the same spot as a flock seen last winter. A flock of 300 Black-bellied Plover at Woodbridge, San Joaquin Co. (*vide* BK) was a large number for the location and season. Ruddy Turnstones are rarely seen in good numbers at any season so that a flock of 15

at Crescent City on Feb. 17 (ODS, JHH) was noteworthy. Winter reports of Lesser Yellowlegs are rare indeed, yet birds were reported from three localities during the period: single birds at Walton Creek, Tomales Bay on Dec. 3 (P.R.B.O., RS, DDeS, TC) and at Grey Lodge Waterfowl Management Area, Butte Co. on Feb. 3 (BK, *et al.*) and no less than 8 at the east end of the Dumbarton Bridge, Alameda Co., Feb. 18-March 10 (RS). The only Knot reported was a single bird at Bodega Head on Feb. 17 (TC & ZC, *et al.*). Rock Sandpipers were more widespread this winter than before, with reports from three localities: a single bird seen intermittently at Point Pinos, Dec. 1-Feb. 17 (AB, WR, *et al.*) was the second record from that location; 3 were seen at the north jetty on Humboldt Bay, Dec. 4 (GMcC, AC, CL); and 3 were found by Dick Douth and the Marin County Audubon Society near the Bodega Head Marine Laboratory, Feb. 4. These birds were reported subsequently by many observers, with 5 present on Feb. 28 (JW, DG); the last report was of 2 birds on March 22, 1 of which had assumed breeding plumage. (VDeC). Good numbers of wintering shorebirds at the Yolo Bypass in early December included 300 Least Sandpipers and 15,000 Dunlin (SS). An unprecedented 57 Marbled Godwits were present at the San Luis Wasteway Waterfowl Management Area, Merced Co. on Dec. 21 (ROW); winter reports of this species at that location have increased rapidly in recent years. Although the fall flight of Red Phalaropes was not very heavy, there were several reports of late birds, including 300 on Monterey Bay on Dec. 2 (G.G.A.S.) and 6 there on Feb. 1 (AB); a single bird was seen at the mouth of the Salinas River, Monterey Co. on the odd date of March 23 (WR).

**Jaegers, Gulls, Terns**—The customary small population of Pomarine Jaegers wintered in Monterey Bay with a maximum of 5 seen on Dec. 2 (G.G.A.S., AB). Glaucous Gulls, which often pose an identification problem, were more numerous this year and at least 5 different birds were reported: 2 in the Monterey Bay area, Dec. 24-March 9 (Bob Montgomery, AB, WR); 1 at Limantour Spit, Feb. 18-28 (DG, JHH & LII, JW); 2 at the Arcata oxidation ponds on March 1 (RS). All were in immature plumage. From 3 to 5 Bonaparte's Gulls were at the San Luis Wasteway, Dec. 20-Jan. 8 (ROW); the species is noteworthy in the Central Valley in winter. Black-legged Kittiwakes were especially abundant this winter in Monterey Bay in late December and again in mid-March (WR, AB); 20,000 were estimated there on Dec. 24 (WR). An early Least Tern appeared over Elkhorn Slough, Monterey Co. on March 27 (WR). A single Caspian Tern at Berkeley Aquatic Park, Alameda Co. on Dec. 4 (RS) was very late.

**Alcids**—The presence of large numbers in Monterey Bay in mid-winter appeared to be associated with schooling anchovies. A feeding movement observed at Point Pinos on Dec. 20 involved an estimated 5000 Com. Murres and 10,000 Rhinoceros Auklets (WR), while 3410 of the latter species were counted on the bay on Feb. 1 (AB). Few win-



ter reports of Marbled Murrelets were received, but 4 were recorded at the mouth of Tomales Bay on Jan. 1 (Tomales Bay Christmas Count) and 2 at Santa Cruz on Jan. 2 (DG). Ancient Murrelets peaked in Monterey Bay on Feb. 1 when 38 were seen (AB). Cassin's Auklets were more numerous on Monterey Bay this winter; 240 were counted on Feb. 1 (AB). Tufted Puffins are noteworthy anywhere on the coast and are very rarely reported in winter; this season 2 were seen at St. George's Lighthouse on Dec. 9 (ODS, JHH) and 2 near Pierce Point, Tomales Bay on Jan. 1 (Tomales Bay Christmas Count).

**Owls, Swifts**—Spotted Owls, not reported at all last winter, were found in surprisingly large numbers this winter on the Point Reyes Peninsula: 6 on the Drake's Bay Christmas Count, Dec. 27, and 4 on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, Jan. 1. Scattered observations of Short-eared Owls generally indicated average numbers present, with a concentration of 20 on Feb. 4 at Pescadero, San Mateo Co. (DDeS). Saw-whet Owls continued to be found more frequently and in larger numbers: an unusually large total of 11 (6 of them calling at one place) was discovered in Redwood Park, Oakland, Dec. 30 (RS, *et al.*). A wintering flock of nearly 100 White-throated Swifts on the Stanford University Campus, Palo Alto were believed to undergo periods of torpidity under roof tiles during prolonged cold periods, as reported in A. C. Bent's *Life Histories of North American Cuckoos, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds and Their Allies*, Part II, p. 318, 1940 (DDeS & MP).

**Woodpeckers**—"Pure" Yellow-shafted Flickers were reported from five central coast localities, with a maximum of 3 on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, Jan. 1. A Pileated Woodpecker was found at the southernmost locality of its coastal range, Muir Woods Nat'l Monument, Feb. 29 (WMP), and several more were seen only slightly to the north. The possible coastal flight of Lewis' Woodpeckers mentioned in the fall report was augmented by only two more observations: single birds seen on Willow Creek, Sonoma Co., Jan. 21 (Evelyn & Les Bowen, *vide JHH*), and near Boonville, Mendocino Co., Jan. 26 (B. McClean, *vide JHH*).

**Flycatchers, Swallows**—A *Tropical Kingbird* found on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, Jan. 1, constituted the Region's fourth known winter record. An *Empidonax* sp., believed to be a Western Flycatcher, was carefully studied in Diamond Canyon, Oakland, Jan. 20 (Ken Schulz). Concerning wintering Western Flycatchers, McCaskie and DeBenedictis state: "There are no specimen-backed winter records for Northern California, although it has been taken at that time of year in Southern California." (*Annotated Field List of Birds of Northern California*, 1966). Violet-green Swallows may have wintered on the Point Reyes Peninsula: 3 were seen on Dec. 13 (P.R.B.O., CJR) and 2 on Dec. 21 (P.R.B.O., PRL). A flock of over 50 Tree Swallows at Ft. Dick, Del Norte Co. on Feb. 17 were probably early spring migrants, as this species is not known to winter north of Sonoma County along the coast (ODS, JHH & J. Sullivan).

**Nutcrackers, Chickadees, Wrens, Thrashers**—Clark's Nutcrackers were not reported outside of their Sierran range, although a mid-February storm apparently forced one down to the low elevation of 1359 feet at Auburn, Placer Co. (M. Court, *vide BK*). A Mountain Chickadee found on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count on Jan. 1 was unusual so close to the coast (RS). House Wrens were reported to be unusually common in mid-December at Beale Air Force Base where as many as 7 apparently wintering birds were seen (MP). A Sage Thrasher was observed at the San Luis Wasteway Waterfowl Management Area on Dec. 22 (ROW); the species is known to winter sparsely just that far north in the San Joaquin Valley but is seldom reported.

**Thrushes, Gnatcatcher**—Numbers of Varied and Hermit Thrushes were believed to be about 50 percent above normal on Point Reyes this winter (P.R.B.O.). The few scattered reports from elsewhere were insufficient to give a larger picture. Mountain Bluebirds were reported to be wintering in good numbers in the Central Valley and even reached the coast: a ♂ seen on Point Reyes on Dec. 3 (RS & Peter Veitch). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen on Dec. 17 and 31 near the American River, Sacramento Co., which is quite far north for the species in the winter (RKL, *vide BK*).

**Vireos, Warblers**—A Hutton's Vireo was reported in Sacramento on March 30 (RKL, *vide BK*); the species does not normally occur in the Central Valley but is known to wander in the fall and winter. A *Solitary Vireo* found on the San Jose Christmas Count on Dec. 30 was perhaps the first winter record for the Region (TC), although this vireo has been previously reported as late as Nov. 25 and has wintered in Southern California. Startling evidence of the prolonged fall warbler migration in the Region came with the December finds of single *Prothonotary* and *Worm-eating Warblers*. The *Prothonotary Warbler* was found on Dec. 3 at the mouth of Willow Creek, Monterey Co. by Patty Echelmeyer of Denver (*vide AB*) and subsequently was seen and photographed by a number of observers until at least Dec. 7 (AB, WR, RLB, *et al.*); this is the first known report of this species in the Region. The *Worm-eating Warbler* was found dead in Carmel Highlands, Monterey Co. on Dec. 16 and was brought to Laidlaw Williams; the specimen, only the second known for the Region, is now in the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History (*vide AB*). Perhaps due to the relatively mild winter on the coast, quite a few Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers stayed north. The impressive number of 20 Orange-crowned Warblers was recorded on the Tomales Bay Christmas Count, with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory reporting the wintering population to be about 75 percent above normal. Single Wilson's Warblers were reported from Sacramento, Santa Cruz and two locations in the Point Reyes area. Myrtle Warblers were reported by several observers as being common this winter along the coast and as even outnumbering Audubon's Warbler by 25 to 1 in places near Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Single Hermit Warblers were found on both the Drake's



Bay and Tomales Bay Christmas Counts, Dec. 27 and Jan. 1, and 3 were found on the Monterey Peninsula Christmas Count, Dec. 31. A wintering immature ♂ Am. Redstart was found along the Carmel River, Monterey Co. on Dec. 2 (RS, TC, GMcC, RLB) and was seen again on Jan. 14 (MP & E. Albertson).

Orioles, Tanagers—Several species of orioles again wintered in Pacific Grove. It still seems strange that two of the species are rare easterners in California: an *Orchard Oriole*, banded in mid-August, which remained until mid-January or perhaps longer (WR & E. G. Hurlbert) and an immature ♂ *Baltimore Oriole* seen on Dec. 9 and 21 (WR). Two different ♂ Bullock's Orioles were seen there on Dec. 27 and Jan. 1 (WR). Western Tanagers also were found wintering near the coast: a ♀ on the San Jose Christmas Count, Dec. 30; a ♂ at a feeder in Santa Cruz, Jan. 19–Feb. 11 (Viola Anderson); another ♂ at Parker Hill, Sonoma Co., Feb. 9 (Evelyn Bowen & Marilyn Rice).

Finches—An immature ♂ *Dickcissel*, the fourth known record for the Region, appeared at Elgin G. Hurlbert's feeder in Pacific Grove in December with a flock of House Sparrows and remained throughout the season (*vide AB & VLY*); it was banded and photographed and was seen by many observers. Evening Grosbeak numbers built up to about 300 on March 25 in the southern Sierran foothills at Springville, Tulare Co. (MEM). Only two reports of the species reaching the coast were received, however: a pair in Sausalito, Marin Co. on Feb. 8 and 9 (Elizabeth Lennon, *vide IG*) and a flock of 10–15 in Coast Redwoods along Austin Creek, Sonoma Co. on March 20 and 22 (JHH). Red Crossbills were reported "extremely abundant" by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and over 200 were seen along Inverness Ridge on the Point Reyes Peninsula, Dec. 27 (DDeS). Two were even seen at the unusual location of Berkeley on Jan. 5 (PAO).

Sparrows—Two Sage Sparrows, seldom reported in the winter, were seen at Bass Lake, El Dorado Co. on Feb. 4 and March 30 (WA, *et al.*). Reports of 8 Slate-colored Juncos, mostly coastal, were a few more than normal. A Gray-headed Junco was found on March 17 at the R.C.A. Station on Point Reyes where the species has been seen in past winters (WMP & H. Aubrey Burns). Three *Tree Sparrows* were found along the coast this winter: 1 with Oregon Juncos at the mouth of the Klamath River, Del Norte Co., Dec. 4 (GMcC, AC & CL); 1 at a feeder in Mill Valley, Marin Co., Jan. 2–March 9 (Helen Pratt and some 65 other observers!); and 1 photographed at Santa Cruz between Jan. 10 and March 19 (DG). There are only four previously known records for the Region. A wintering Chipping Sparrow was reported feeding with Oregon Juncos at Sacramento on Feb. 4 (BK). An immature Harris' Sparrow was carefully studied at San Gregorio, San Mateo Co. on March 10 (FH); one is usually reported each winter from somewhere in the Region. Reports of 14 White-throated Sparrows, mostly along the coast, were about twice as many as usual. Lincoln's Sparrows were also found in good numbers, with a maximum of 13 on the Tomales Bay

Christmas Count. Most impressive were the reports of at least 10 wintering Swamp Sparrows, of which 5 were in the Olema marshes of Marin County between Dec. 27 and Feb. 20 (RS, CJR, TC, *et al.*) and 3 were at Santa Cruz between Jan. 1 and March 19 (DG). Have they perhaps just been overlooked previously?

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