

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION. — Generally speaking, the weather was cooler and drier than normal during the spring and summer. Slightly below average amounts of rain and snow in the winter and spring appear to have caused earlier blooming of flowers and earlier nesting of at least some landbirds. When Jon Winter arrived at the Duncan Peak Lookout, at an elevation of 7182 feet in the Sierras, on June 18, he found very little snow in the high country. He commented that nesting appeared to be early this year, particularly at higher elevations. His banding activities later showed that Oregon Juncos, for example, were about two weeks early in their nesting cycle compared to past years. Much farther south in the foothills of the Sierras, Mrs. Mabel E. Mires

concluded that: "by June 1, locally the peak of the nesting season was over at Springville, Tulare Co. and young birds were seen together with adults. It appeared to be a very successful nesting season for all species. At higher altitudes the nesting season was a little later and Oregon Juncos were observed feeding nestlings during July."



Albatrosses, Shearwaters, Storm Petrels — The exceptional numbers of Black-footed Albatrosses observed during the previous period in Monterey Bay, both offshore and inshore, continued into the present period, declining from 50 on June 4 to 22 by July 14 (AB). West of the Farallon Islands, 4 were seen on July 11 (VDAc); 3-4 were seen on several occasions from Point Lobos and Point Pinos, Monterey Co. in June and July (AB, WR, AW). A Fulmar was seen near the Farallon Islands on July 11 (VDAc); 5 were noted in Monterey Bay on July 14 (AB). At Point Pinos on July 5, 42 Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen in 25 minutes (WR); 20 were observed west of the Farallons on July 11 (VDAc). A *Pale-footed Shearwater*, the first recorded in the Region since 1966, was seen between the Farallons and San Francisco on June 24 (SS, TM). The first Ashy and Black Petrels to return to Monterey Bay were seen on July 14 and July 5, respectively (AB, WR).

Tropicbird, Pelicans, Cormorants — An adult *Red-billed Tropicbird* was observed on Monterey Bay some 12 miles northwest of Point Pinos on July 14 (AB); this constitutes the second tropicbird record for this Region. White Pelicans were unusually numerous on the San Joaquin Valley refuges, with up to 500 at Kesterson, Merced and San Luis Nat'l Wildlife Refuges, Merced Co. in June and July (U.S.F.W.S., GAS); 160 were noted at Eagle Lake, Lassen Co. on July 13 (EAP). Brown Pelicans were reported from as far north as the Smith River, Del Norte Co. where 35 were seen on Aug. 9 (JH); elsewhere, the largest flock was one of 300 birds noted at Bolinas Lagoon, Marin Co. on Aug 14 (RLeV). Nesting Double-crested Cormorants were reported from Eagle Lake, eight

nests found in July (EAP). Some young were seen in the small colony of eight nests at Jenner, Sonoma Co. (BDP). At the Farallons, 50 Double-crested, 5000 Brandt's and 3000 Pelagic Cormorants were present at the end of May when egg-laying began (P.R.B.O., JL).

Hérons — The following Great Blue Heron heronries were reported: 200-300 pairs just north of San Luis Refuge (U.S.F.W.S.), surely one of the state's largest; 10+ pairs near Waterford, Stanislaus Co. on April 17 (DMS); 17 nests at Hogan Dam, Calaveras Co. on May 11 (DMS); 50 pairs at the Audubon Canyon Ranch, Marin Co. (Helen Pratt); 19 nests at Old La Honda Road, San Mateo Co. (MP); 85 pairs on Bair Island, San Mateo Co. (C.D.F.G., BE). The species also nested on West Marin Island, Marin Co. for perhaps the first time (ABu). An adult *Little Blue Heron* was seen at San Rafael, Marin Co. on July 5 (ABu, WMP). The following Com Egret heronries were reported: 200 adults and young visible on West Marin Island, June 29 (ABu); 85 pairs at Audubon Canyon Ranch (Helen Pratt); a few pairs in the heronry north of San Luis Refuge (AB). Snowy Egret heronries included 500 adults and young visible on West Marin Island on June 29, which represented "a great increase" (ABu), and 150 pairs on Bair Island (C.D.F.G., BE). Four hundred pairs of Black-crowned Night Herons also are known to have nested on Bair Island (C.D.F.G., BE). An adult *Yellow-crowned Night Heron* reappeared for the third successive year at San Rafael, where it was noted June 30-July 27 (ABu, WMP, et al.). Single Least Bitterns were reported from Gray Lodge Waterfowl Management Area, Butte Co. in early August (*vide* EAP) and from Los Banos W.M.A., Merced Co. (G. D. Wright, *vide* ROW).

Geese, Ducks — Summering Black Brant numbered 30 at Ano Nuevo Point, San Mateo Co. on June 18, with 2 seen at the mouth of the Salinas River, Monterey Co. on July 29 (RRZ). A male Blue-winged Teal was observed at the latter place on July 2 (RRZ). Late breeding Redheads were still in flocks of 100 near Butte City, Glenn Co. on June 3 (EAP). A pair of Canvasbacks was seen at San Rafael on June 10 (ABu, WMP), and a late Com. Goldeneye was seen there on June 1 (AB). A pair of Buffleheads and 2 immatures were present at the same place on June 10, although breeding was unproven (ABu, WMP), and the species was noted at Eagle Lake in July (EAP). Three molting male Harlequin Ducks were found at Ano Nuevo State Beach on July 17 and were present to the end of the period (Fred J. Alsop, *vide* AB, WR). The female *King Eider* previously reported from Monterey Harbor, Monterey Co. was seen again on Aug. 7 (A. McCallum, *vide* AB). Very few summering scoters were reported this year. A sighting of 8 Com. Mergansers on the lower Russian River, Sonoma Co. on July 27 (BDP) suggests breeding there; 1 summered at San Luis Refuge (U.S.F.W.S., GAS).

Hawks, Eagles — White-tailed Kites again bred in low coyotebushes on Bair Island, where two nests were found on July 4 (C.D.F.G., BE); a post-breeding influx was noted at Los Banos W.M.A., increasing from 3 birds on July 17 to 26 on Aug. 12 (ROW). Nesting Red-tailed Hawks on San Luis Refuge totaled 20 pairs, and at least 1 pair of Swainson's Hawks also

nested there and raised 4 young (*U.S.F.W.S., GAS*). Another pair of the latter species was present from April 11 to at least May 11 and probably bred at Knight's Ferry, Stanislaus Co. (*MP*). A pair of Golden Eagles chose an unusual artificial site when they nested on a transmission line tower in Merced Co. (*Gull* 52(9), Sept. 1970, cover photograph). A nesting pair of Bald Eagles was reported from the northeast portion of the Region, young being seen. Single birds were seen in two other areas, also in the northeast, in July. Ospreys are regularly reported from Marin and Sonoma Counties, although nesting success is not known. Elsewhere, Ospreys are concentrated in the Redwood region and in Lassen and Modoc Counties. Although good numbers are present, their breeding success is unknown. Only one Prairie Falcon report was received and none of the Peregrine Falcon. The full extent of the plight of California's population of Peregrines was indicated by S. G. Herman (*Outdoor California* 31(1): 10, 1970) who stated that *five pairs or less* bred successfully in 1969, compared with over 100 successful pairs in the 1930's.

Grouse, Gallinules — Sage Grouse apparently had good breeding success throughout their California range this year, though the range is only marginal in the Region covered in this report (*C.D.F.C.*). Common Gallinules remained late at Crespi Pond in Pacific Grove, Monterey Co., until June 10 (*AB*).

Shorebirds — Single pairs of Black Oystercatchers with young were observed at Point Lobos Reserve (*AB*) and Bodega Head, Sonoma Co. (*BDP*). A Snowy Plover with young was seen inland at Woodland, Yolo Co. in May (*TM, JT*); the species was last reported breeding there in 1963 (*BK*). An inland migrant present at Los Banos W.M.A., July 31–Aug. 3 (*ROW*) was notable. Three Ruddy Turnstones were seen at Ano Nuevo Point on June 18 (*RRZ*) and 1 at the Davis Sewage Ponds, Yolo Co., Aug. 12–14 (*TM, SS*). The latter appears to be only the third inland record for the Region. Ano Nuevo Point again produced a large non-breeding flock of Black Turnstones, with 56 noted on June 18 (*RRZ*) and still there on July 14 (*TC & ZC*). Spotted Sandpipers were found nesting on Salinas River gravel beds, 2 pairs with young being noted on June 19 (T. D. Burleigh, *fide* *VL*Y). Grinnell and Miller (*The Distribution of the Birds of California*, p. 144, 1944) indicate the Russian River as the southernmost coastal limit. A Solitary Sandpiper was observed at Rodeo Lagoon, Marin Co. on Aug. 8 (*VDaC*). Most unusual were 2 winter-plumaged Knots at Moss Landing, Monterey Co. on June 4 (*VR*).

Skua, Gulls, Terns — A Skua was seen near the Farallons on July 11 (*VDaC*). Summering Black-legged Kittiwakes again remained in good numbers around Monterey Bay, with an observation of 200 on July 4 at Pacific Grove (*WR*). Several small colonies of Forster's Terns and 50 pairs of Caspian Terns were found nesting in the Moss Landing salt ponds on June 24 (Franklin Gress, *fide* *AB*); this constitutes the first breeding record for the latter species in Monterey County. A pair of Least Terns was seen at the same place on June 3 and 4 (*AB, VR*); at Bair Island, where breeding took place for the first time last year, 10–15 pairs reappeared this year and at least 4 broods

survived a mid-July rat invasion (*C.D.F.G., BE*). A Black Tern observed at Redwood City, San Mateo Co. on July 13 (*ABu*) was out of place.

Alcids — Estimates of alcids from Southeast Farallon are available for the first time: Com. Murres reached 6000 in late May; Pigeon Guillemots rose to 1500; Cassin's Auklets, apparently the most common bird on the island, rose from 50,000 to 80,000 by mid-May, with the egg-laying peak occurring around April 18; Tufted Puffins increased from 3 in late April to 50 at the end of May (*P.R.B.O., JL*). A feeding concentration of 4000 Cassin's Auklets was located 7 miles northwest of the Farallons on July 11 (*VDaC*); a few such concentrations have been observed. At Prairie Creek Redwood State Park, Humboldt Co., *Marbled Murrelets were heard calling in the evening*, July 8–Aug. 2; 15 were seen circling the area before heading seaward on July 23 (*MK*). At Ano Nuevo State Beach, 6 were seen on July 13 (*TC & ZC*) and 4 on July 21 (Fred J. Alsop, *fide* *AB*); at Jenner, 10 were seen just offshore on July 25 (*BDP*). An observation of an adult *Ancient Murrelet* in breeding plumage just offshore at Point Reyes on July 23 (Fred J. Alsop, *GH*) constituted the first summer record for the Region. A single Rhinoceros Auklet was seen near the Farallons on July 11 (*VDaC*) and 6 were noted in Monterey Bay on July 14 (*AB*). An adult Tufted Puffin was seen at Pacific Grove on June 29 (*WR*).

Roadrunner, Owls — The Roadrunner reported in the winter season near Los Banos on March 24 was observed constructing a nest in an orangebush, even though only 1 bird could be found. As it was also seen to be observing its own image in car bumpers and other shiny objects, the reporters suggested "false nesting" with only 1 bird actually present (Steve Vehrs & *GAS*). Another individual was seen much farther north near Oroville, Butte Co. in the Sierran foothills on July 28 (*WW, fide* *EAP*). A juvenile Screech Owl was picked up on a road near Duncan Peak on July 19, at the high elevation, for this species, of 6400 feet, which is above its normal oak habitat (*JW*). It is also interesting that 2 Screech Owls were noted on Aug. 8–9 near Foresthill, Placer Co. at the same location where Flammulated Owls were found all summer (*JW*). Eight Flammulated Owls, a large number for this species, were heard on June 18 at the Foresthill location (*JW*). To point out how little is known about the status of even the most common of our owls, some 15 Great Horned Owl nests, a surprisingly large number, were located on San Luis Refuge during the spring season (*GAS*). A Pygmy Owl nest was found in a hole in a willow tree in Alum Rock Park, San Jose, Santa Clara Co. on June 1 (Mr. & Mrs. T. B. Feltner & *TC*) and was later studied by many other observers. Six Short-eared Owls were seen in four locations, which is a large number for the summer: 3 on June 22 at Merced Refuge, Merced Co. (*GAS*), 1 on July 4 on Bair Island, San Mateo Co. (*BE, et al.*), 1 on July 5 at Concord, Contra Costa Co. (*GH*). No nests of this species were reported, however.

Goatsuckers, Swifts, Hummingbirds — Poor-wills were reported as having increased in numbers at Duncan Peak, with up to 4 heard calling on June 21 (*JW*). A nest of Lesser Nighthawks with 2 young was

found on May 19 on San Luis Refuge, and the large number of 22 was counted on Aug. 8 at Merced Refuge (GAS). Black Swifts were reported in good numbers from most of the known nesting locations, and 2 were seen flying past Southeast Farallon on June 9, a first for that location (P.R.B.O., GH). Black-chinned Hummingbirds were observed moving through or nesting at eight locations during the spring and summer, which is more than usual. At least 9 Anna's Hummingbirds were seen at Duncan Peak during July (JW). Although this species is considered rare at that high an elevation, they are known to wander after breeding, which they do very early. Calliope Hummingbirds were said to be more numerous than in past years at Duncan Peak (JW).

Woodpeckers, Flycatchers — Acorn Woodpeckers were again observed being forced out of their nesting holes by Starlings in Lafayette, Contra Costa Co. on March 21 (LDF). Oddly enough, they protect their nesting cavities vigorously against other Acorn Woodpeckers but stand by and watch Starlings take them over. The result is that they have been noticeably reduced in numbers in that locality. Williamson's Sapsuckers were found to be more common than usual in Yosemite Nat'l Park on July 3-4, with 4 males and a nesting pair seen from a road (GH). A Say's Phoebe was found out of habitat at Duncan Peak on Aug. 10 (JW). Likewise, 3 Traill's Flycatchers were found together in pines and hemlock, with no willows in sight, in Yosemite on July 4 (GH). A Western Flycatcher was heard on Aug. 4 at Duncan Peak, a high elevation for the species (DDeS, fide JW).

Swallows, Thrashers, Vireos — Purple Martins were reported nesting under roof tiles of old buildings in downtown Sacramento as they have for decades (BK). It was only the editors' unawareness of this that made the Oroville report in last year's nesting season account seem unusual. On Aug. 2, 2 were seen sitting on lamp posts under a freeway in Sacramento (BK)! A Brown Thrasher was found at Rodeo Lagoon on June 1-2 (RS) for only the ninth known record for this Region. A Sage Thrasher was found on Southeast Farallon in June (P.R.B.O., GH); this species is still considered vagrant along the coast. Emphasizing the amount of overlap of the nesting season with the spring migration in this Region is the report of a brood of Hutton's Vireos fledged by April 1 in Pacific Grove (VLY). A Red-eyed Vireo was carefully studied in Arcata, Humboldt Co. on June 8 (RG); this is a new coastal location but at a time of the year that corresponds with many past reports.

Warblers — Because of the early spring and lack of late spring snows, warblers in the Sierras seemed to breed early and successfully. Nashville and Hermit Warblers were recorded as up in numbers at the 6000-7000 foot level in the northern Sierras near Duncan Peak (JW) and, in the case of the Nashville Warbler, also in the southern Sierras near Springville (MEM). By the end of July at Duncan Peak, juvenal warblers of all species were found to be well advanced from their prebasic molt into first winter plumage, indicating an early breeding season (DDeS). At the same time, however, just-fledged juvenal Audubon's

Warblers were captured along with some breeding condition adults, indicating that Audubon's Warblers raised two broods in the Sierras (DDeS). Black-throated Gray Warblers also may have raised two broods in the Sierras, as indicated by an Aug. 6 sighting of a male feeding 3 fledglings near Emigrant Gap, Nevada Co. (BK). The cool dry summer in the Sierras corresponded to a cold early summer along the coast where conditions may not have been as good for warblers. Orange-crowned Warblers, for example, raised only one brood in Lafayette where two are normal (LDF). The early nesting season may have been responsible for an immature Hermit Warbler captured at Palomarin Ranch on June 19 (P.R.B.O., BS). Some of the more interesting finds of the season included a male Magnolia Warbler banded and photographed at Palomarin Ranch on June 2 (P.R.B.O.), a female Chestnut-sided Warbler seen well a half mile north of Palomarin Ranch on June 3 (P.R.B.O., BS, et al.), and a singing male Townsend's Warbler seen near the top of Yosemite Falls on June 13 (RS).

Warblers on Southeast Farallon — The Farallon Islands produced the usual display of "eastern" warblers during the period, but in somewhat smaller numbers than last year. Individual Black-and-white Warblers were captured on June 3, 5 and 6. There are now 14 spring records for Southeast Farallon. Two Tennessee Warblers were captured on June 5 and 2 more on June 6, with another seen on July 7; there are now 13 spring records for the island. Individual Magnolia Warblers were captured on June 5, 6, 14 and 16; this brings the total of spring Magnolias found on Southeast Farallon to 19. A Chestnut-sided Warbler was captured on June 7; there are now five spring records for the island. A Bay-breasted Warbler was captured on the following day; this makes four spring records for the island. A Blackpoll Warbler was seen on June 6, and a different individual was captured on June 8; this raises the total to 13 spring records for the island. An Ovenbird was captured on June 2; 3 were captured out of 4 present on June 6; 1 was captured out of 2 present on June 7; 1 was seen on June 14; 1 was captured on June 22; and 1 was captured on July 7. This brings the number of spring Ovenbirds on the Farallons to the amazing total of 36, far more than that for many typical western warblers such as Nashville, Black-throated Gray and Hermit Warblers and Yellow-breasted Chat. A female Hooded Warbler was seen on June 6, and another female was captured on June 20; this makes a total of 3 spring Hooded Warblers for the island. Finally, individual Am. Redstarts were seen on June 20 and 22, and 1 was captured on July 7; this makes 17 spring Am. Redstarts recorded on the island. In addition to the vagrants, a few western warblers were found during the period. As is normal, Yellow Warblers and Yellowthroats predominated. Individual Yellow Warblers were captured on June 3, 6, 8 and 25, with different individuals seen on June 7 and 27. An Audubon's Warbler was captured on June 22. A Townsend's Warbler remained from the late May flight, being observed until June 5. A MacGillivray's

Warbler was captured on June 6; and another was seen on June 15. Individual Yellowthroats were captured on June 3, 7, 20, 29 and 22 and on July 7. A Wilson's Warbler remained from the late May flight, being seen until June 1; 3 were seen and 2 of them were captured on June 6. (All of the above records on Southeast Farallon should be credited to *DDeS, P.R.B.O., et al.*).

Orioles, Tanager — Baltimore Orioles were recorded on Southeast Farallon on June 4 and 7 (*P.R.B.O.*). An adult female Western Tanager banded on Point Reyes on June 25 had a great deal of fat (*P.R.B.O., BS*); was it simply a non-breeder or a very early migrant?

Finches — At least 4 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found this season: 2 adult males and 1 possible hybrid (Rose-breasted X Black-headed) were banded and photographed on Southeast Farallon on June 6 (*P.R.B.O., DDeS, GH*); 1 adult male was seen at Lake Lagunitas, Marin Co. on July 15 (I. Troxell & C. Hellman, *fide WMP*); and 1 adult male was observed in Portola Valley, San Mateo Co. on July 25-25 (Dr. Regnery, *fide DDeS*). Blue Grosbeaks were reported as common in every bit of remaining riparian habitat in the Sacramento area, although the habitat is not surviving as well as the birds (*RLeV, DMS, BK*). Five adult male *Indigo Buntings*, an amazing number, were reported: 1 banded on Southeast Farallon on June 3 (*P.R.B.O.*), 1 seen at Marina, Monterey Co. on July 10 (*VLY, fide AB*), 2 noted in Robinson Canyon, Monterey Co. on July 18 (Fred J. Alsop, *fide AB*), and 1 observed with many Lazuli Buntings at the Yolo Bypass, Yolo Co. on Aug. 14 (*TM & SS*). After the fall and winter coastal invasion, Red Crossbills were found to be up in numbers at Duncan Peak (*JW*).

Sparrows — A Vesper Sparrow, uncommon along the coast, was seen on Bair Island on July 21 (William Anderson & *BE*). A *Cassin's Sparrow* was banded and photographed on Southeast Farallon on June 4 (*P.R.B.O., LCB*) for the third report of this species for the Region, all on Southeast Farallon. Immature Sage Sparrows were seen on July 18 near Healdsburg, Sonoma Co., at the northern known limits of the species' coastal range (*BDP*). A *Clay-colored Sparrow* was found on Southeast Farallon on June 7 (*P.R.B.O., GH*). Although there are a number of fall records of the species, all but one of them on the Farallons, there are only two previous spring or summer reports. Two singing male Black-chinned Sparrows were found on June 4 at Lake Pillsbury, Lake Co., which is the northernmost location reported for this species in the Region (*EAP*).

Addendum — The following important record was omitted by the editors in last fall's report: a Lark Bunting was banded and observed on Southeast Farallon from Sept. 10 to 24, 1969 (*P.R.B.O., FS*). There are only 10 previous records of the species in this Region.

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