

**SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION.**—A moderately late spring coupled with wet and cold weather as late as the end of April resulted in a

comparatively late nesting for many species of small land birds. Desert flowers were blooming from early April until early May and some even through mid-June. Many of the migrant land birds of the higher latitudes and alti-



tudes lingered in these desert areas taking advantage of the insect forage available there. June was a month of below-normal temperatures and normal precipitation. July and August were, as expected, dry and warm. Despite the absence of usual summer thunder-storms in the southern Sierras and other

mountain areas there was a relatively low fire incidence during most of the summer. Late in the summer a few small fires developed in the San Gabriel Mountains and the Santa Ana Mountains. A great fire which devoured more than one hundred

thousand acres of oak and chaparral near Santa Barbara early in September was one of the worst forest fires in California history, as much of the badly-needed watershed for Santa Barbara County was destroyed. Included in this area was much of the territory used by California Condors for foraging.

Spring and summer in the mountain areas were delayed from three weeks to a month later than last year (which was early). Mountain-nesting species in general began nesting operations about one to two weeks later than normal. Flowering of mountain meadows was at its peak in the southern Sierra and Southland mountains during the latter part of July, and during this time these meadows abounded with swarms of southbound Rufous Hummingbirds. The nesting of most species was generally successful and many of the mountain-nesting species such as

Oregon Juncos, Mountain Chickadees, and Am. Robins raised two and in a few cases even three broods of young. Quail and Rock Partridges were especially successful in raising large broods, with the latter species adapting very well wherever introduced into suitable habitat.

*Grebes, Ibises, Herons.*—A small number of Western Grebes remained in southern California coastal waters throughout the summer; particularly at Malibu, Bolsa Chica, and San Diego. Nine Eared Grebes were on San Diego Bay as late as June 18 and a single straggler remained to July 2. A single White-faced Glossy Ibis was at the ponds near China Lake in mid-August (Donald W. Moore) and the first Wood Ibises began arriving at the Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary near Carlsbad in mid-July. About 40 had arrived by the end of the month. Wood Ibises began infiltrating into the Imperial and Colorado River valleys at about the same time. On August 20 a dead Least Bittern was found at the Carlsbad sanctuary (Mrs. Boyd Robinson).

*Ducks.*—Large flocks of Pintails started to arrive at the ponds near China Lake in late August and smaller flocks could be seen in other suitable areas in southern California at this time. Ruddy Ducks and Cinnamon Teal bred in small numbers wherever there was water and food available. An increasing problem in California has been crop losses due to duck, goose, and coot depredation during the fall and winter. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California State Department of Fish & Game have been actively engaged in research on the problem for a number of years. The problem has been brought about by the restriction of the wintering grounds of waterfowl caused by the reclamation of the land for agriculture. The shrinkage of the waterfowl habitat in California has resulted in the birds seeking agricultural lands for feeding and resting. Up to 1954 California rice farmers had reclaimed 485,000 acres of marshland for rice alone. Rice crops, prior to draining, are perhaps the most ideal of duck attractions. To offset this problem federal and state governments have acquired land to be used as waterfowl feeding areas. To date in California, the state has eight areas with a total of 45,000 acres while the federal waterfowl areas in California total 172,000 acres. Some of the additional measures that have been used to offset or obviate waterfowl depredation have been the use of bombs, rockets, lights, and noisemakers to frighten the birds from their feeding areas on agricultural land. Supplementary feeding of bulk grain on the federal and state areas has been attempted in an effort to increase the amount of waterfowl food available and hold the ducks, coots, and geese off the agricultural lands. Special widgeon depredation controls have been granted by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Imperial Valley for the past few years in an attempt to cope with this situation. The special post-season shooting last winter in the Imperial Valley accounted for 4000 out of an estimated population of 40,000 widgeon. The harassment by hunters, who were allowed to hunt only over agricultural lands, did serve in large measure to keep the birds off the crop lands and cut down the damage done. Coopera-

tion among sportsmen's groups, conservationists, farmers, and government agencies is urgent for the solution of this problem. A single Lesser Scaup remained on San Diego Bay until June 25 (Burt L. Manroe). A small number of Surf Scoters and Red-breasted Mergansers summered in southern waters from Santa Barbara to San Diego.

*Kites and Hawks.*—White-tailed Kites again nested at the Audubon Center of Southern California (Mrs. Alma Stultz). A very late Sharp-shinned Hawk was near San Diego on June 12 and Peregrine Falcons were noted from downtown San Diego and near La Jolla, August 6 (BLM). A single Osprey flew over the Santa Barbara breakwater, August 17 (Waldo G. Abbott).

*Shorebirds. Terns.*—As many as two dozen broods of Am. Avocets were raised near the ponds of China Lake during the summer. A flock of several hundred Wilson's Phalaropes arrived there in mid-August together with a Solitary Sandpiper (DWM). Black-necked Stilts again nested successfully at Bolsa Chica and a few pairs nested in the marshes of Upper Newport Bay (Francis Raymond). Two Baird's Sandpipers were at the Santa Barbara Bird Refuge, August 12, and 3 Lesser Yellow-legs were at Goleta Slough, August 16 (WGA). A few Black-bellied Plover were present through the entire summer on San Diego Bay and Malibu Inlet. A small number of south-bound migrants arrived in mid-August but most had departed by the end of the month. Three Ruddy Turnstones were on San Diego Bay on June 18, and 8 birds were present on the southern arm of the Bay, July 30. A single Black Turnstone was on the south arm of San Diego Bay, June 18; fall migrants appeared at Point Loma on July 25 and gradually swelled to more than 100 birds by August 14 (BLM). Small numbers of Long-billed Curlew spent the summer along the coast from Bolsa Chica to San Diego. Royal Terns were reported as being extremely scarce near San Diego during the summer. Caspian Terns had a successful nesting near San Diego and Elegant Terns appeared there early in the summer. Two Elegant Terns were at the Caspian Tern Colony near San Diego, June 18 (BLM, E. C. Trowbridge). A single bird appeared at the Naval Training Center on July 16 and 9 more on San Diego Bay on July 17. At the Naval Training Center there was a gradual influx of from 8 birds on July 18 to 294 on Sept. 1, while on San Diego Bay their numbers had reached 150 by Sept. 1. These dates parallel last year's influx which reached 1300 near San Diego by the end of October. Twenty-three Black Terns were at the northern arm of San Diego Bay, August 23.

*Upland Game Birds. Woodpeckers.*—Quail of all species and Mourning Doves were reported as very numerous from most areas of southern California. Mountain Quail nested near the Tucker Hummingbird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon during May (Fern Zimmerman) and a few birds of this species were reported as coming into the Lower Sonoran desert near China Lake during August (DWM). Rock Partridges did well near China Lake (DWM) and they were also reported from the central Mojave Desert near Mitchell's Caverns State Park (Burgess

W. Heacock). After an absence of several years Lewis's Woodpeckers (2) were again found at Mesa Grande near Pauma Valley, San Diego County, during May (Eleanor Beemer).

*Passerine Land Birds.*—Despite the severe fire which decimated much of the virgin riparian growth at the Audubon Center of California near El Monte, Alma Stultz reported that many of the birds then engaged in nesting activities resumed when the fire had been controlled. Since then most of the nesting species have returned to the burned-over areas. There has even been a 50 per cent increase in orioles since last year. The following species have nested and raised young since the fire: Blue Grosbeaks, a pair of White-tailed Kites, a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Cardinals, California Thrashers, Brown and Spotted Towhees, Red-shafted Flickers, Mockingbirds, and Black-chinned Hummingbirds. Black-crowned Night Herons were observed fre-

quently and Mourning Doves were reported as increasing. However, very few quail were noted. There was a definite increase in Song Sparrows due possibly to the burning of the very deep, dense brush. The population of the resident birds was about the same as in previous years. A small Purple Martin colony established itself on Palomar Mountain where they were unknown previously as nesting species (EB). Extremely interesting was the report of a Clarke's Nutcracker found dead on the beach near Encinitas, August 24 (Mrs. BR). It would be difficult to explain the presence of such a montane species so far from natural habitat. A Painted Redstart was present for at least two days near Cedar Falls in the San Bernardino Mountains, July 6 and 7 (Mrs. Jean S. Sutton). An adult Harris's Sparrow visited a feeding tray in Encinitas, April 15 (Mrs. John H. Helmer).—ARNOLD SMALL, 5838 W. 88th St., Los Angeles 45, Calif.