

Southern Pacific Coast Region

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In general, species breeding in Southern California benefited from the winter's rains and the resultant lush growth of vegetation, utilizing areas unsuitable in dryer years. Highlights included nine species of terns together in Orange County and nesting Pyrrhuloxias in eastern San Bernardino County.

Abbreviations: N.E.S.S. (*north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.*); S.C.R.E. (*Santa Clara River Estuary near Ventura, Ventura Co.*); S.D.N.H.M. (*San Diego Natural History Museum*); S.E.S.S. (*south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co.*); S.F.K.R.P. (*South Fork Kern River Preserve near Weldon, Kern Co.*). As virtually all rarities in s. California are seen by many observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the

bird are included. Reports submitted without documentation are not published.

Petrels to Herons

Two Cook's Petrels together at the N.E.S.S. and another (one of the two?) along the e. shore of the Salton Sea July 15 (GMCC), with single birds reported around the N.E.S.S. through July 23 (EP, DPo, RST), marks the 3rd time this species has been found on this inland body of water.

A female or imm. *Anhinga* was reported flying over Irvine, *Orange*, July 30 (SGM); this species is an accidental straggler to California, with only 3 accepted records. Magnificent Frigatebirds were scarcer than normal, with an immature at Crystal Cove S.P./Upper Newport Bay, *Orange*, July 30 (DL, SN) being the only one seen along the coast, and single immatures at S.E.S.S., July 2 (RH) & 14 (KI) and three together at N.E.S.S., July 18 (EP) being the only ones seen around the Salton Sea.

Two pairs of Snowy Egrets nest building in a mixed rookery of Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets in Morro Bay S.P. in May (TME) provided the first evidence of breeding in *San Luis Obispo*, but the outcome is unknown. At least 3 pairs of Little Blue Herons are believed to have nested in San Diego this summer (REW); this species is now resident in this area. A Tricolored Heron on s. San Diego Bay June 3-9 (CH, REW) was somewhat unseasonal since most occurrences along the coast are in the fall and winter; one at the S.E.S.S., May 13 re-



mained through at least Aug. 19 (AH), but with no evidence of nesting this summer. An imm. Reddish Egret found on s. San Diego Bay May 9 remained through June 17 (CH, GMCC).

Ducks to Raptors

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was on Ramer L. near S.E.S.S., May 29–June 3 (AME, MSM, SFB); this species is becoming of annual occurrence around the Salton Sea, with more than a dozen records in the past 20 years. Since the N. Pintails are considered uncommon and local breeders in S. California, the presence of a female with four ducklings in Bishop, *Inyo*, July 12 (T&JH) is of interest. A pair of Blue-winged Teal with ten ducklings at Bolsa Chica June 1 (HLJ) provided the 2nd nesting record for *Orange*, and another pair was at S.C.R.E., July 2–8 (DDJ); there are less than half-a-dozen nesting records from along the coast of S. California. A male Harlequin Duck in Cayucos, *San Luis Obispo*, June 27+ (TME) was undoubtedly present locally all summer. As usual, a few Oldsquaws were present along the coast, with six reported between *San Luis Obispo* and *San Diego* during the season; one found at S.E.S.S., May 20 was still present June 9 (KCM). A Black Scoter, rare s. of Pt. Conception at any time of the year, was at Point Mugu, *Ventura*, July 12 (BL). Two Surf Scoters at N.E.S.S. through June 24 (GMCC) and another at S.E.S.S., July 15 (GMCC) were stragglers from the spring movement through this area. The White-winged Scoter found at N.E.S.S., May 6 remained through July 8 (GMCC). A Com. Merganser, casual in summer away from the Colorado R., was in Anaheim, *Orange*, July 26+ (JEP, DRW).

A pair of White-tailed Kites that built a nest near Independence in May were apparently unsuccessful in fledging young, but remained in the area into August (A&LK) to furnish the first evidence of breeding in *Inyo*; an adult with two recently fledged young at S.E.S.S., July 5 (KCM) documents this species' continued success in colonizing the Imperial Valley. A Sharp-shinned Hawk, scarce in summer, was in Wyman Canyon in the White Mts. of *Inyo* June 2 (REW). A Harris' Hawk in Riverside June 27+ (NH, MAP) was believed wild, and therefore probably associated with the influx of last fall.

Rails to Sandpipers

Of extreme interest was the presence of at least three Clapper Rails in the salt marshes of Carpinteria, *Santa Barbara*, Apr. 9+ (DZ, JEL); this species is believed to have been absent from there since 1989, and the closest populations are in *Orange* or around San Francisco Bay.



Adult Rufous-necked Stint at the Santa Maria River mouth, California, June 29, 1995. Photograph/Jaime M. Chavez.

The first returning ad. Pacific Golden-Plovers were single birds at the Santa Maria R. mouth, *Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo*, July 15 (JSR), and at S.C.R.E., July 17 (BL) & 27–29 (DDJ). A Solitary Sandpiper near Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara*, July 17 (JMC) was early. A juv. Semipalmated Sandpiper at S.C.R.E., July 20–23 (CAM) was followed by at least ten more along the coast, and another inland at S.E.S.S. by the month's end. An ad. Rufous-necked Stint photographed at the Santa Maria R. mouth June 28–29 (JMC, JSR) was the 8th to be found in S. California, and the 2nd at this location. The first Baird's Sandpipers of the fall were an adult in Irvine, *Orange*, July 29 (TEW), and single juveniles in Carlsbad, *San Diego*, and at S.E.S.S. the same day (GLR, GMCC). An early Pectoral Sandpiper was near Santa Maria July 14 (BH). An alternate-plumage Dunlin in Bolsa Chica June 28–Aug. 10 (JEP) was unexpected since the first fall migrants are not normally encountered until mid-September. An ad. Ruff in Cayucos July 24 (TME) was the only one reported.

Jaegers to Skimmers

A Pomarine Jaeger was seen along the w. shore of the Salton Sea July 16 (MAP) and ≤two were at N.E.S.S., July 22–23 (MAP, CAM, RST); this has proven to be the expected jaeger on this inland body of water in summer.

Single Franklin's Gulls in Oceano, *San Luis Obispo*, June 2 (G&JH), at Gaviota, *Santa Barbara*, June 18 (TC), and on Baldwin L. in the San Bernardino Mts., June 22 (REW) were probably late spring stragglers;

an early juvenile at N.E.S.S., July 22 (MAP, TRC) was followed by at least seven more by the end of the month (TRC, JCW). A first-year Little Gull photographed at S.E.S.S., July 24–Aug. 12 (JN, GMCC) had undoubtedly been present all summer. Four Heermann's Gulls were found far inland on the Salton Sea, with single birds at S.E.S.S., July 9 (KCM); N.E.S.S., July 22 (MAP, PAG) & July 22–Aug. 5 (WJM, GMCC); and at S.E.S.S., July 29–Aug. 5 (TRC, GMCC).

A pair of Gull-billed Terns at Bolsa Chica June 1–10 (HLJ) were the first to be found in *Orange*; elsewhere, at least ten pairs nested on s. San Diego Bay (EC) and 73 pairs successfully raised young at 2 nest sites around S.E.S.S. (KCM). The presence of an ad. Caspian Tern with a downy chick on L. Elsinor, *Riverside*, July 23 (CAM, MAP) documents nesting at that location. A Royal Tern at S.E.S.S., July 2 (MAP) was only the 4th to be reported on the Salton Sea. A Sandwich Tern attending a downy chick in the large tern/skimmer colony at Bolsa Chica June 24–July 17 (CTC) was believed mated with an Elegant Tern. The presence of what appeared to be an Elegant x Sandwich Tern hybrid in this same colony June 25 (BED, JSB) and July 4 (DRW) suggests this may not be the first time a Sandwich Tern successfully bred with an Elegant Tern; in fact a Sandwich Tern was in this same colony during the summer of 1991 (*Am. Birds* 45:1162, 1991). A Least Tern at N.E.S.S., July 16 (MAP) was the only one found inland this summer. An ad. Sooty Tern associated with the nesting terns and skimmers at Bolsa Chica June 17–Aug. 8 (LRH, JEP) was generally felt to be the same bird seen here last summer, and another was seen on the beach with Elegant Terns at Dana Point, *Orange*, July 30 (TR), bringing the total number re-



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Little Gull in first-summer plumage at the south end of the Salton Sea, California, July 24, 1995. Photograph/Jack Nash.

ported in California to six.

Four Black Skimmers on Santa Catalina I., June 28 (CDG) appear to be the first to be found on the Channel Is.; since its arrival in S. California in the early 1970's, this species has become a common breeder inland on the Salton Sea and along the coast in *San Diego* and *Orange*, and regularly occurs as far north as *Monterey* and *San Francisco Bay*.

Doves to Woodpeckers

Single White-winged Doves near Imperial Beach, *San Diego*, July 3 (BF) and in Orcutt, *Santa Barbara*, July 16–19 (RS) were along the coast where rare, especially so at this time of the year. A pair of Com. Ground-Doves present in Nipomo, *San Luis Obispo*, since March 1994 are believed to have nested this summer (PAW).

The S.F.K.R.P. held 11–14 pairs of Yellow-billed Cuckoos this summer (SAL), the lowest number since 1991, but this location continues to be the stronghold for cuckoos in California; elsewhere, one was in suitable breeding habitat near Bishop, *Inyo*, June 3 (T&JH), three birds were calling just to the south near Big Pine June 5+ (T&JH), and what was probably a wandering bird was in Tapia Park near Malibu, *Los Angeles*, July 18 (RB).

A calling N. Saw-whet Owl in the S.F.K.R.P., July 1–8 (HG) was outside this species known range and in atypical habitat. At least three calling Whip-poor-wills, a species not yet documented nesting in California, were near Heartbar Campground in

the San Bernardino Mts. all summer (SP). Although Black Swifts regularly range far from nest sites during the breeding season, a recently dead bird at S.E.S.S., July 29 (GMCC * S.D.N.H.M.) was certainly most unusual. As expected, a few Chimney Swifts remained around downtown Los Angeles all summer, with ≤ 14 counted, including a pair seen entering a building shaft during the middle of the day suggesting nesting (KLG). Anna's Hummingbirds remained far more numerous than usual in the n.e. part of the Region, as indicated by at least 18 around Hunter Mt., *Inyo*, June 24 (REW). Allen's Hummingbirds, presumably *sedentarius*, continued to expand their range southward on the coast into *Orange*, now nesting in Orange and Irvine (DRW). An Acorn Woodpecker at Tollhouse Springs in the White Mts., *Inyo*, June 4 (REW) had wandered some distance from the nearest location of normal occurrence. A pair of N. (Gilded) Flickers along the w. edge of the Lanfair Valley, *San Bernardino*, May 28 (DR, RC) were in the only area in California supporting a small population of these birds.

Flycatchers to Vireos

The presence of eight W. Wood-Pewees at various oases in e. *Kern* June 17 (MTH) illustrated the lateness of some spring migrants this year. At least 35 pairs of Willow Flycatchers successfully nested in the S.F.K.R.P. this summer (SAL), demonstrating the importance of cowbird trapping

and the resultant reduction in parasitism. Of interest was the presence of at least one pair of Gray Flycatchers at Ball Flat in the San Gabriel Mts. in June (KLG), since this species is unknown as a breeding species in these mountains. A pair of Say's Phoebe with two young in Ballinger Canyon near Cuyama May 25–26 (G&JH) documented the first breeding in *Santa Barbara* since the 1940's. A pair of Vermilion Flycatchers in New Cuyama July 14 (DoA) were close to the location of *Santa Barbara's* single previous nesting, and well to the northwest of this species' normal breeding range. At least 3 pairs of Brown-crested Flycatchers again nested in the S.F.K.R.P. (SAL), this being the n.w. extreme of this species' breeding range. A Cassin's Kingbird present in the S.F.K.R.P. through the summer (MH) was in an area where this species is virtually unknown. An E. Kingbird in the S.F.K.R.P., June 27 (DSC) appeared to be a summer wanderer. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher on the Colorado R. at the *San Bernardino/Riverside* line June 24 (MAP) was the only one reported this summer.

A California Gnatcatcher in coastal sage in Moorpark, *Ventura*, during June and July (CJ, DRW) was at least 50 mi from the known nearest population on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in *Los Angeles*, but within the species' historic range.

A pair of Red-eyed Vireos at a nest in the S.F.K.R.P., June 21 (DSC, SAL) was at the same location frequented by a pair last summer; difficulties in accessing the area precluded follow-up visits, thus the success of this first nesting in California remains unknown. Another Red-eyed Vireo near Big Pine, *Inyo*, June 7–18 (T&JH) appeared to be a late spring wanderer.

Wood Warblers

Two Lucy's Warblers at China L., July 22 (DVB) established the 3rd record for *Kern*; this species departs breeding areas early, with many on the move by the latter half of July, thus these two were probably fall migrants. As in recent years, a few N. Parulas lingered into the summer, including a singing male remaining in Redlands, *San Bernardino*, from mid-May until at least June 11 (MAP), a female accompanying this male June 10 (*fide* MAP) and a singing male at Nojoqui Falls near Solvang, *Santa Barbara*, June 25–July 16 (BH). A Chestnut-sided Warbler near Carpinteria, *Santa Barbara*, June 19 (FS) was a late spring vagrant. A male Black-throated Blue Warbler in Cuyamaca Rancho S.P., *San Diego*, June 9 (JH) was one of a very few found in California in spring, and at an unusual locality for a vagrant. Two singing Hermit Warblers on Big Pine Mt., *Santa Barbara*, July 15 (GT)

suggest nesting at this location; in S. California nesting is documented only in the San Bernardino Mts. Two male Grace's Warblers found on Clark Mt. in e. *San Bernardino* May 22 (TEW, MSM) were still present May 27 (REW), but on June 3 one of the males had been replaced by a female (MAP, SBT) and the male was still present June 14 (DN); this species expanded its breeding range northwestward into mountains of the s.w. deserts during the 1970s, so breeding could be expected at this location. A male Blackpoll Warbler in Huntington Beach, *Orange*, July 8 (BED, TEW) was certainly unexpected, but not unprecedented. Six Am. Redstarts scattered about the Region in June were late spring stragglers, but a first-year male in Huntington Beach July 1+ (BED) accompanied by a female July 4–9 (BED) appeared to be summering locally. A Worm-eating Warbler in Grapevine Canyon near Hunter Mt., *Inyo*, June 24–25 (REW) was late for a spring vagrant. A singing N. Waterthrush at Galileo Hill in e. *Kern* June 17 (MTH) was also unusually late for a spring wanderer of this species. A pair of MacGillivray's Warblers was seen carrying food to young near San Marcos Pass, *Santa Barbara*, June 12 (G& JH); nesting was first documented at this location in 1992, and established the southernmost breeding locality along the coast.

Tanagers to Finches

A female Hepatic Tanager near Rose Mine in the San Bernardino Mts., June 22 (REW) was close to an area where this species nested in the 1970s. Two territorial male Summer Tanagers along the n. flank of the San Gabriel Mts. near Valyermo, *Los Angeles*, during June and early July (KLG), and a territorial male near Big Pine through June (T&JH) were a little to the west and north of this species known breeding range, but at least 30 pairs at the S.F.K.R.P. this summer (TG) was an average number for this far western location. The presence of a female W. Tanager carrying food in the Santa Lucia Mts., *San Luis Obispo*, July 6 (TME) strongly suggested nesting in this area; breeding has yet to be documented in these mountains, though one–two birds have been present most summers in recent years.

A pair of N. Cardinals on the w. bank of the Colorado R. at the *San Bernardino/Riverside* line Apr. 15 (RL, WJM) were still present June 11 (TRC, PAG); this is probably the only place in California still supporting naturally occurring N. Cardinals. Up to three male and a female *Pyrrhuloxia* were present along the Chemuhuevi Wash s. of Needles, *San Bernardino*, May 28–July 8 (RL, JB, JEP), with the female seen on a

nest June 8 (SFB); a pair nested at this exact location in 1977 to establish the only other occurrence of breeding in California.

Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported this summer, with one at the S.F.K.R.P., June 19 (KP) and the other in Huntington Beach July 4–8 (BED). As expected, a few Indigo Buntings were present, with a single territorial male on n. Vandenberg A.F.B., *Santa Barbara*, May 29–July 14 (GL) for its 3rd summer, another in Puente Hills, *Los Angeles*, June 3–7 (LJS), one in Huntington Beach July 10–16 (DPe), and single birds at 2 locations near Big Pine June 29 (T&JH) and July 6 (T&JH); a male at S.E.S.S., July 13 (KCM) was probably an early fall migrant.

Several pairs of Brewer's Sparrows that fledged young at 3800 ft on the n. flank of the San Gabriel Mts. e. of Lancaster in June (KLG) provided the first documented nesting in *Los Angeles* since breeding locations in the San Fernando Valley were destroyed early this century. Grasshopper Sparrows evidently benefited from the extensive amount of grass this spring, a result of winter rains, since territorial birds were reported from numerous localities, including near Casitas Springs, *Ventura*, (DDJ), at 2 localities in the n.w. portion of the San Fernando Valley, *Los Angeles*, (DuA, DM), in the Puente Hills, *Los Angeles*, (LJS), in the San Joaquin Hills, *Orange*, (RAE) and in the interior near the S.F.K.R.P. (SAL).

A male Bobolink near Independence June 20–21 (A&LK) and another in Imperial Beach, *San Diego*, June 24 (HA) were probably late spring stragglers.

Up to six Lawrence's Goldfinches at Haiwee Res. in the Owens Valley, *Inyo*, May 11–23 (REW) were suspected to be nesting; breeding is undocumented in this area of California. Two Evening Grosbeaks at 6100 ft on Mt. Pinos, *Kern*, June 27 (TO) were unseasonal.

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