

# Middle Pacific Coast Region

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Abbreviations: B.S.O.L. (*Big Sur Ornithological Laboratory, Monterey*); C.B.R.C. (*California Bird Records Committee*); C.C.R.S. (*Coyote Cr. Riparian Station, Santa Clara*); C.V. (*Central Valley*); Cyn. (*Canyon*); F.I. (*Southeast Farallon I.*); H.S. (*Hayward Shoreline, Alameda*); S.F. (*San Francisco*); ph. (*photo on file with Regional Editors*). All records from F.I. and Palomar should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory.

## Loons to Pelicans

Two Pacific Loons straggled inland: Detert Res., *Lake*, June 4 (JRW) and Paicines Res., June 12+ (RMrr, †KVV), *San Benito's* first. The imm. Yellow-billed Loon at Albion R. mouth, *Mendocino*, lingered to about July 4 (D. Weibe, R. Weibe, m.ob.). Single ad. Red-necked Grebes lingered at Pt. Reyes to June 16 (ES), and returned to near Mendocino July 21 (CEV, DAE) & 26 (DT; same bird?) and Humboldt Bay July 31 (JCPo). A bird at Elk Head, *Humboldt*, June 22 (B. Critch, S. Critch) was immature.

Three Laysan Albatrosses offshore *Marin* and *Sonoma* July 21 (BDP, RS) matched last summer's high. A Parkinson's Petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) over the Pioneer Canyon 36 mi off Pt. Montara, *San Mateo*, June 7 (†DGA, PP) made a startling first North American record. This New Zealand breeder winters in the e. tropical Pacific, but was not expected n. of tropical waters; although the

waters at Pioneer Canyon were unseasonably warm, the temperature was only 12–13°C. The only previous *Procellaria* in North America was a beached White-chinned Petrel in Texas April 27, 1986, that was not identified until 1990. An Ashy Storm-Petrel netted at night on Ano Nuevo I., *San Mateo*, June 25 (GJS) raised the question whether the bird was prospecting or already nesting there.

The Region's 6th Red-footed Booby found observers 5.5 mi s. of Soquel Pt., *Santa Cruz*, July 10 (ph. †JDv, W.B. Tyler). An evening count of 7955 Brown Pelicans passing Pelican Rock, *Santa Cruz*, June 6 (DLSu) represented the largest number on record in the Region.

## Hérons to Waterfowl

Two-three Least Bitterns seen regularly at the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant demonstration wetlands from early May–mid-July (*fide* R. Jones) suggested possible breeding. This species' status in our Region remains poorly understood. We currently average one–two reports every other year. An imm. Little Blue Heron at Princeton, *San Mateo*, June 23–29 (†RSTh, †BMCK, DPo) provided just the 3rd county record.

Summering Greater White-fronted Geese included winter hold-overs at El Estero, *Monterey*, through the season (m.ob.) and Colma, *San Mateo*, June 30–July 14 (PJM). Brant were noted in





larger-than-usual numbers, with peak counts of 86 at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey*, June 26 (m.ob.) and 116 at Ano Nuevo, *San Mateo*, June 12 (BMcK). More unusual was an "Aleutian" Canada Goose in Colma June 30–July 14 (PJM), and one showing characteristics of *minima* in Santa Cruz, July 21 (PRa).

Of eight Blue-winged Teal reported during the season, two were inland. Single Harlequin Ducks were noted in *Monterey*, *Contra Costa*, and *Mendocino*, while four were at Castle Rock, *Del Norte*, June 22 (JEUH). Up to five–six Oldsquaws were at Brooks Is., *Contra Costa*, May 29, with two staying until at least Aug. 2 (SGI). Two Black Scoters in Pacifica, *San Mateo*, included a female June 8 and an ad. male June 29 (DSg).

### Raptors

A Sharp-shinned Hawk nest near Deadman Cr., *Mono* (J. Ellis), surprisingly appeared to be the first for the county. An ad. Swainson's Hawk at Crane Flat, *Tuolumne*, June 1 was a rare migrant over the mountains (ES). Continuing the huge return of Peregrine Falcons, two fledglings were produced from the first documented nest in *Santa Clara* since 1905 (†DLSu).

### Shorebirds

Reports of golden-plovers were all from *Humboldt*, where two Am. Golden-Plovers July 27–28 (GjH) and one Pacific Golden-Plover June 30 (GjH) were adults in alternate-plumage. The latter was exceptionally early. An unidentified golden-plover was at Ocean Ranch, July 20 (SMcA).

An apparent Am. Avocet x Black-necked Stilt at Elkhorn Slough, *Monterey*, July 27 (†RMrr, ELb) was the 3rd or 4th "avocstilt" reported there in the last half-dozen years (*fide* CLK). Hybridization in shorebirds is very rare and reports should be thoroughly documented. Eleven Willets at Consumes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*, July 20 (TM, BWb) represented a high number for a county with few records. Spotted Sandpipers were confirmed breeding 3 times June 17–July 12 along the Pajaro R., *Santa Cruz/Monterey*, where the March 1995 flooding evidently improved nesting habitat. An average showing of six Semipalmated Sandpipers, including two adults, spanning July 20–Aug. 12 were all coastal except for one at the Woodland Sugar Ponds, *Yolo*, July 20 (EDG) and an adult at the Hollister sewage ponds, *San Benito*, July 22 (KKV). July records of Pectoral Sandpipers are not unexpected, but during the past 5 years we've averaged less than one per season. This July seven adults were reported: four at Ocean Ranch, *Humboldt*,

July 20 (SMcA) with two remaining through July 21 (DFx, JCP), one at Salinas, *Monterey*, July 21–22 (JBo), and two at Moss Landing, *Monterey*, July 25–29 (JBo, RF, TEa). Early arriving Dunlins included alternate-plumaged individuals at Alviso, *Santa Clara*, July 24 (MMR), C.C.R.S., July 26 (GHt), and Ocean Ranch, *Humboldt*, July 27 (DFx, JCP). Two Ruffs at Ocean Ranch July 20–21 (SMcA) were followed by an ad. female July 25–27 (B. Deuel, DFX).

### Larids to Alcids

The ad. Laughing Gull on *Humboldt Bay* was last seen June 1 (LPL). The only report of Franklin's Gull was of a yearling at Honey Lake Wildlife Area, *Lassen*, June 1 (TDM, AM). As in the previous 2 years, the clutch of Heermann's Gull eggs at Ano Nuevo I. was taken by W. Gulls (GJS). An alternate-plumaged ad. Mew Gull at Santa Cruz July 7 (W.B. Tyler) was rarer than the three imm. Herring Gulls in *Santa Cruz* and *Santa Clara*.

Rare inside S.F. Bay, an ad. Arctic Tern harassed Forster's Terns at H.S., *Alameda*, June 9 (JM, JMK). One summered there last year. Up to four ad. Least Terns at Elkhorn Slough, *Monterey*, June 15–July 2 (Y. Gideon, DR, JBo) and one at Pajaro R. mouth, *Monterey/Santa Cruz*, July 3 (DLSu) suggested pioneering in an area where the species last nested in 1955. A spectacular alternate-plumaged White-winged Tern at Arcata, *Humboldt*, June 20–26 (TWL, †m.ob., ph. DR) thrilled birders. It made the first Pacific coast record s. of Alaska.

A pair of Black Skimmers again nested at H.S., June 9–July 16, raising three young (JM, JMK, JMR). The pair nesting at the 1994 nest site in Sunnyvale, *Santa Clara*, June 1 (MMR) abandoned it and re-nested at Menlo Park July 2–Aug. 14, a first breeding for *San Mateo*, before abandoning that nest also (PJM). Four sightings of single ad. skimmers at Elkhorn Slough and Pajaro R. mouth, *Monterey/Santa Cruz*, June 7–19 (Y. Gideon, DR, RC) could have been migrant stragglers or commuters from S.F. Bay between the above failed nesting attempts. *Western Birds* 27:3 (1996) has 6 papers on Black Skimmers in the Californias.

The Marbled Murrelets lingering off Big Sur R., *Monterey*, were probably all non-breeders, as all three seen to June 28 (B.S.O.L.) were in basic plumage. Two Craveris' Murrelets at Cordell Bank July 21 (BDP, RS) were rather early for that far north. Ancient Murrelets straggled into summer in *Monterey*, with up to eight at Big Sur R. mouth in mid-June (JTz, S.

Bulger, B.S.O.L.) and one at Pt. Pinos July 29 (K. Baldrige). The Cassin's Auklet nest count on Ano Nuevo I. reached 6 (GJS). Reflecting the decline of Tufted Puffin in n.w. California, there were no reports in *Humboldt*. However, a pair attended a burrow all period at Goat Rock, *Mendocino* (DT, B. Dolan, m.ob.).

### Cuckoos to Woodpeckers

Four Yellow-billed Cuckoos raised hopes of their continued survival within the Region: singles were at the Pajaro R. near Watsonville, *Santa Cruz/San Benito*, June 17 (†DLSu), Bodega Bay July 1 (A. Cassidy; window kill), Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*, July 7–20 (JTr *et al.*), and C.C.R.S., July 23–31 (AJ, †SCR, †MMR, m.ob.). All were from areas where there have been few if any recent records, and only the Cosumnes bird was considered a possible nester. There was no word on the status of the small nesting colony along the upper Sacramento R.

Lesser Nighthawks are rare and local breeders in the Inner Coast Ranges. New nest sites continued to be discovered, such as the one along the San Lorenzo R., *San Benito/Monterey*, where >25 birds observed during the period included many juveniles (KKV, RMrr, *et al.*). The Region's 2nd Whip-poor-will was an amazing singing male at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey*, June 22–25 (†J. Rowoth, †m.ob.). It was judged to be of the w. race *arizonae*. Three nesting White-throated Swifts on Bell Tract, n.w. of Hopland, June 11 (RJK, CEV) provided *Mendocino's* first confirmed breeding records.

The Region's first Gila Woodpecker in S.F., June 9–10 (DPM, †JM, m.ob.) puzzled many, as the bird is confined primarily to the lower Colorado R. in California and is generally non-migratory. However, there are 4 historical records of wanderers towards coastal s. California, and Metropulos wonders if the extensive fires in Arizona during the period contributed to the bird's far journey north. Red-breasted Sapsuckers definitely appear to be colonizing the c. coast. On the heels of the nest in *San Mateo*, *Santa Cruz* had its first at Big Cr., June 23 (DLSu) as an adult fed two fledglings 12 mi s.s.e. of the Butano Cr. nest site. The pair at Butano Cr. were again attempting to nest July 3–24 (BMcK), and additional single birds were seen in *San Mateo* at upper Butano Falls June 29 (DLSu) and Gazos Cr., July 19 (BMcK). A Black-back Woodpecker nest just n. of Mammoth L., June 20 (J. Ellis) was the first for *Mono*. Pileated Woodpecker continued their breeding range expansion in the Santa Cruz Mts. as a pair



with young at L. Elsmar June 18–July 8 (DLSu) was at *Santa Clara's* first nest. A pair of Pileated Woodpeckers at Gamecock Cyn., *Santa Cruz*, July 7 (DLSu) extended their breeding range s. to just 7 mi n. of Watsonville. This perhaps helps to explain the bird in *Monterey* last spring, and yet another there at Big Sur during mid-June (M. Wright, *fide* DR).

### Flycatchers to Vireos

An E. Phoebe at Turtle Rock June 4 (BDP, DHO) was *Napa's* 2nd and a rare spring vagrant. The juv. Cassin's Kingbird n. of Pescadero July 14 (RSTh, BMCK) was only *San Mateo's* 2nd or 3rd. The paucity of coastal records for the species is probably a reflection of their small breeding numbers within the interior of the Region. There were three vagrant E. Kingbirds coastally July 4–10. Four ad. and three juv. Purple Martins at Summit Ridge, *Santa Clara/Santa Cruz*, during the period (MiF, MMR, DLSu) furnished one of few recent breeding records for the Santa Cruz Mts.

A singing Golden-crowned Kinglet in dense redwood up the Little Sur R., June 1–8 (JDv, DR) was the first real evidence of breeding by the species in *Monterey*. Along the c. coast, its breeding range is limited to portions of the Santa Cruz Mts. The Region's 4th Wood Thrush graced the C.V. at the Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*, June 7–10 (†JTr, m.ob.). *Monterey* scored an astonishing three Gray Catbirds, all caught and banded at B.S.O.L.: June 13–18 (JBo, ph. DR, m.ob.); June 17–July 2 (†DR, SFB); July 2–18 (†K. Ritchie, †S. Bulger). Previousl, there were only 2 *Monterey* records and 5 spring Regional records. Single Brown Thrashers were at Bodega Bay June 20–22 (DN, BDP, RAR, m.ob.) and the Big Sur R. mouth June 24 (†JSc). We average less than one a spring.

A nesting pair of Cedar Waxwings at Carman Valley near Calpine, *Sierra*, June 18 (DS) appeared to provide the first breeding attempt for the Sierra Nevada. One at Pescadero June 22–July 6 (AME) was only the 2nd to summer in *San Mateo*, but the species has recently been detected breeding along the c. coast. The Red-eyed Vireo at Pescadero June 22–July 27 (NLe *et al.*) was only the Region's 2nd to summer. Three additional vagrants along the c. coast June 1–13 met the recent spring average.

### Wood Warblers

There were four single N. Parulas coastally June 1–early July, but no signs of potential nesting reported. Two Chestnut-sided Warblers in the Monterey Bay area spanning June 18–26 (RMrr, JBo,) and two

Magnolia Warblers at Elk Head, *Humboldt*, spanning June 18–25 (J. Tietz, G. Bloomfield), represented meager totals for the period. The "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler at Lakeside County Park, *Lake*, June 17 (JRW) was probably an e. vagrant rather than a late w. migrant. There appeared to be no Regional precedent for the summering imm. ♂ Townsend's Warbler at Gray Whale Ranch, *Santa Cruz*, June 15–July 3 (†DLSu). Yet another Hermit x Townsend's Warbler hybrid was found: one at Pescadero June 1 (RSTh).

The summering Black-and-white Warbler at the Big Sur R. mouth July 4–late August (JPw *et al.*) had little Regional precedent. A singing ♂ Am. Redstart at the Big Sur R. mouth June 1 (CHo, JSo, m.ob.) was joined by a female July 6 (JPw). Their nesting attempt, which failed, was the first for the state s. of *Marin*. The rarest warbler of the season was the Prothonotary Warbler, also at the Big Sur R. mouth June 23 (†DR, B.S.O.L.), the Region's 4th in spring.

Single Ovenbirds were near Pelican Rock, *Santa Cruz*, June 1 (DLSu) and at Elk Head, *Humboldt*, June 25–26 (TWL, G. Schmidt). Recent Breeding Bird Atlas coverage in *Santa Cruz* indicated MacGillivray's Warbler to be one the county's rarest breeding landbirds. However, 21 territorial birds plus two fledglings were found along the county's n. coast this summer, and a female with two fledglings were along the Pajaro R. near Murphy Crossing (DLSu). All were from areas with no recent nesting activity. An adult with two fledglings at Portola Valley, *San Mateo*, June 26 (PJM) was considered a first for the e. slope of the Santa Cruz Mts. The species is generally considered a very rare nester s. of *Marin* coastally. An ad. Com. Yellowthroat with two fledglings at the E. Palo Alto Baylands July 2 was considered the first nesting record of the species for the baylands of *Santa Clara* (PJM). Single Hooded and Canada warblers were found in *Humboldt* at Arcata Marsh June 28–29 (†GJ Hardie) and Fairhaven June 14 (GSL), respectively.

### Grosbeaks to Finches

Nineteen Rose-breasted Grosbeaks coastally met the recent average. There were at least four ♂ Indigo Buntings that presumably bred with ♀ Lazuli Buntings: Big Sur R. mouth May 26+ (B.S.O.L.); Portola Valley, *San Mateo*, June 24–July 20 (PJM); Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*, July 27–Aug. 2 (JTr); and Perazzo Meadow near the Little Truckee R., *Sierra*, July 5–Aug. 8 (†JRa, MMC, JSt). There were six additional Indigos throughout the

Region during the period. A probable direct result of all this cross-breeding were three probable ♂ Indigo x Lazuli Bunting hybrids: the Cosumnes R. Preserve May 17–Aug. 1 (P.R.B.O., JTr); the Big Sur R. mouth June 13 (B.S.O.L.); and San Gregorio, *San Mateo*, June 18 (†BMCK, PJM). Attempting the back-cross, the former was paired up with a ♀ Lazuli and fledged two Brown-headed Cowbirds.

A California Towhee at Gasquet Regional Shoreline July 19 (DFx) provided a first for *Del Norte*. Very rare coastally during spring, a Brewer's Sparrow was at Pt. Reyes June 3 (JM *et al.*). Grasshopper Sparrows were widely commented upon as having a very good nesting season. Thirty-six immatures along Lone Tree Rd., *San Benito*, June 5 (DLSh), 70 in *San Mateo* June 5–July 14 (m.ob.), a pair with young at Cosumnes R. Preserve during the Period (JML), and an adult with an immature at Beale Air Force Base, *Yuba*, July 3 (JRa) were all from areas that were considered new nesting sites. Single Golden-crowned Sparrows along the Pajaro R., June 16–July 12 (DLSu) and at the Big Sur R. mouth July 2 (B.S.O.L.) furnished very odd midsummer records.

The new county conquests of Great-tailed Grackle were as follows: a pair at the Sacramento Wastewater Bufferlands, *Sacramento*, during mid-May were found with young in July (R. Jones); a pair with young at Baldwin Res., *Placer*, May 22+ (BW *et al.*); and a female at the Chowchilla sewage ponds, *Madera*, June 23 (TM, AM, BWb). Our vagrant oriole showing included an Orchard at Tunita's Cr., *San Mateo*, June 18 (†RSTh), and a Baltimore at Fairhaven, *Humboldt*, June 26 (†GJH). The Lawrence's Goldfinch invasion to the entire coast continued well into the summer. Worthy of mention were at least 5 nesting pairs in *San Mateo*, where there had been 5 historically; at least 7 nests in *Santa Cruz*; and 2 nests at Hopland June 1–29 (CEV, RJK, DAE), a first for *Mendocino*.

### Addendum

The two Black Skimmers "rumored to have visited *Santa Cruz* in February" 1993 (AB 47:297) were at Seabright Beach, Twin Lakes State Beach, February 4, 1993 (C. Hickey, *fide* DLSu).

### Corrigendum

The Red-footed Booby June 13–14 (AB 48:984) should have been in bold type.

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