

southern pacific coast region



GUY MCCASKIE

It was a relatively warm and dry summer throughout the Region, with most of the rain coming as heavy thunder showers in the mountains and eastern parts of the Region, as expected. Breeding Bird Atlas work continues to produce discoveries of local interest. An influx of Magnificent Frigatebirds occurred in late June–early July, and an unusual number of late/lost migrants were found outside their expected breeding areas.

Abbreviations: E.A.F.B. (Edwards Air Force Base, s.e. Kern Co.); F.C.R. (Furnace Cr. Ranch, Death Valley N.M., Inyo Co.); N.E.S.S. (north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.); S.C.R.E. (Santa Clara R. Estuary near Ventura, Ventura Co.); S.E.S.S. (south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co.); S.F.K.R.P. (South Fork Kern R. Preserve near Weldon, Kern Co.). Since virtually all rarities in s. California are seen by many observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird are included. Documentation for species on the California Bird Records Committee (C.B.R.C.) review list is forwarded to the C.B.R.C. Secretary (Michael M. Rogers, P.O. Box 340, Moffett Field, CA 94035-0340) and archived at the Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

LOONS THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS

A basic-plumage Com. Loon on L. Isabella, Kern, July 8 (MTH); two on L. Cuyamaca, San Diego, during the entire season (A&TK); and four on nearby L. Henshaw

July 17 (CGE) were obviously summering locally; one or two are found on the larger lakes in this Region every summer. A N. Fulmar off the Newport Beach pier, Orange, June 30 (JEP) and another about 60 mi s.w. of Pt. Loma, San Diego, July 19 (BM) had probably been present in S. California waters since the incursion of these birds in the spring; small numbers are normally found off S. California this time of the year following winters with numbers of N. Fulmars this far south.

An ad. Brown Booby was on Morro Rock at the entrance to Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo, July 5 (MG). The ad. Neotropic Cormorant found at S.E.S.S. Apr. 28 was present through July 12 (MMR), and another adult was at N.E.S.S. June 14–July 16 (MAP); there are still less than a dozen records of this species in California.

There was a major influx of imm. Magnificent Frigatebirds from the Gulf of California into the s.e. portion of the Region in late June/early July. The earliest were one along the Colorado R. over Picacho State Recreation Area, Imperial, June 23 (SG) and three together at S.E.S.S. June 25 (GMCC). Numbers rapidly built to a maximum of six at S.E.S.S. June 27 (GMCC) and 16 at N.E.S.S. July 6 (WJM), with multiple birds present through mid-July; the latest were one at S.E.S.S. July 19 (GMCC) and another remaining at N.E.S.S. through Aug. 8 (GMCC). One near Lakeview, Riverside, July 5 (RH) and another over the Prado Basin near Chino, San Bernadino, July 20 (JEP) had probably moved through the Salton Sea, and the same could be said for one in the Owens Valley over Tinnemaha Res., Inyo, July 6 (MTH) and another (same?) photographed about 40 mi s. at Diaz L. the same day (MTH). Along the coast, single immatures in Santa Barbara June 28 (JEL) and at Bolsa Chica, Orange, June 29 (BS) were the first to be seen, and were followed by up to two together at half-a-dozen locations along the coast from San Diego to San Luis Obispo (one near Pt. Piedras Blancos July 4; A&HY) during the next week. Reports (16 from 12 locations between San Diego and San Luis Obispo) continued through the end of the period, with three



over San Pedro, *Los Angeles*, July 18 (DMH) being the maximum number together.

BITTERNS TO DUCKS

The presence of a juv. Am. Bittern with an adult in Irvine, *Orange*, July 31 (TEW) indicated this species nested in that area; there is only one confirmed nesting record in *Orange*. Two ad. Little Blue Herons in Carpinteria, *Santa Barbara*, June 14–24 (WF) and another at Whale Rock Res. near Cayucos, *San Luis Obispo*, June 13 (MA) were well n. of the resident population in San Diego. A sub-ad. Tricolored Heron in Imperial Beach, *San Diego*, July 25 onward (TRC) was the only one reported. Three ad. Reddish Egrets at Bolsa Chica June 13 (COJ) were on the s. coast where small numbers are found every year, but an immature at N.E.S.S. July 11–26 (RC) and what was believed to be the same bird at S.E.S.S. Aug. 2–8 (RC) was inland where far more unusual. A Wood Stork at N.E.S.S. June 27–July 4 (GMcC) was the only one found away from S.E.S.S., where numbers built up to about 45 in July (PAG).

Up to 40 Brant at N.E.S.S. throughout the period were at an inland location where similar numbers are present every summer, but one near Lancaster, *Los Angeles*, July 3 (MSM) was unexpected. A male Blue-winged Teal accompanying at least one female and five recently hatched ducklings at Bolsa Chica July 18 (RAH) provided solid evidence of nesting there; there are very few documented nesting records for this species in S. California. The presence of a female N. Pintail with nine ducklings at E.A.F.B. May 18 (MTH) provides the first record for breeding in the desert portion of e. *Kern*. The female Harlequin Duck found in Chula Vista, *San Diego*, Jan. 22 remained through the summer (RP). At the Salton Sea, up to 12 Surf Scoters remained around N.E.S.S. throughout the period (GMcC, MAP), up to three were in Salton City May 29–July 4 (GMcC) and one at S.E.S.S. June 25 (MAP); in addition, there were up to five White-winged Scoters at N.E.S.S. May 17–Aug. 8 (GMcC) and one was in Salton City May 29–July 11 (GMcC). Up to four Black Scoters in Santa Barbara July 18–Aug. 4 (GBW) were unexpected since this species is now rare in winter s. of Pt. Conception, and virtually unrecorded in summer. An Oldsquaw spent the summer with the Harlequin Duck in Chula Vista (RP).

HAWKS THROUGH RAILS

An ad. Bald Eagle with two immatures on L. Cachuma, *Santa Barbara*, July 15 (EM) was

at a location where this species has nested in recent years. Since Sharp-shinned Hawks are virtually unknown as a nesting bird in S. California, one in the Irish Hills of *San Luis Obispo* June 11 (RAE) and another near Bishop, *Inyo*, June 14 (T&JH) were of note. A sub-ad. Broad-winged Hawk near Big Pine July 6–7 (MTH) was the first to be found in S. California in summer. A Swainson's Hawk on the coast near the Santa Ynez R. mouth June 12 (BH) and another at S.F.K.R.P. July 9 (MTH) were probably wandering non-breeders, but one in the Cuyama Valley in e. *Santa Barbara* June 15 (GBW) was in an area where this species bred in the past. An ad. Zone-tailed Hawk near L. Henshaw, *San Diego*, June 13 (PU) was one of a very few found away from known nest sites this time of the year.

The presence of at least 3 pairs of Clapper Rails at Carpinteria, *Santa Barbara*, Apr. 22–June 23 (DZ, RAH) indicated a continuing increase in their population at the location after reestablishing themselves there in 1995.

OYSTERCATCHERS THROUGH AUKS

Single Am. Oystercatchers were on San Nicolas I. June 28–Aug. 15 (RAH) and Santa Cruz I. July 22 (JSM). The first of the fall Solitary Sandpipers were single adults in Irvine, *Orange*, July 26 (TEW) and near Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara*, July 27 (BH). A Black Turnstone, rare inland, was at S.E.S.S. June 7 (MAP). An ad. Red Knot at S.E.S.S. July 7 (RMcK) was an early fall migrant. A Sanderling on L. Henshaw July 26 (RAH) was the only one found inland away from the Salton Sea. An ad. Baird's Sandpiper at N.E.S.S. July 6 (NBB) was the only reported. An alternate-plumage Dunlin at N.E.S.S. July 26 (MSM) was unexpected, since the first migrants do not normally arrive in S. California until late September. An ad. Stilt Sandpiper at S.C.R.E. June 27–July 3 (DDJ) was the only reported away from S.E.S.S. A male Ruff was at S.C.R.E. July 2 (DDJ) and another was in Irvine July 18 (RC). Since Com. Snipes are not known to nest outside the Owens Valley and around S.F.K.R.P., except for a couple of localities in the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mts., one near Santa Maria June 30–July 1 (BH), another at Corta Madera L., *San Diego*, June 20 (PU), and a third at L. Henshaw July 26 (RAH) were of interest. The presence of 40 southbound Wilson's Phalaropes at E.A.F.B. June 10 (MTH), followed by 300 there a week later (MTH), were about 2 weeks early for such numbers, suggesting early or failed nesting.

An ad. Laughing Gull on L. Isabella July 8 (MTH) was the 3rd to be found in *Kern*, and coincided with the annual movement of these birds from w. Mexico into the Salton Sea. At least eight Franklin's Gulls around the Salton Sea June 1–July 4, with one or two remaining through July (GMcC, MAP, MSM), and seven scattered along the coast between San Diego and Morro Bay during the same period (RBa, BH, BM, DT), were probably associated with the influx of these birds in late May. A southbound juvenile was along the Los Angeles R. in Paramount, *Los Angeles*, July 28 (RBa). An ad. Heermann's Gull, rare inland, was at Salton City, *Imperial*, June 27 (GMcC), and a first-year bird was at S.E.S.S. July 5 (MCW). A 2nd-year Mew Gull, most unusual anywhere in S. California in summer and especially so inland, was near Brawley, *Imperial*, July 4–11 (GMcC). At least two Herring Gulls, rare in summer, remained at N.E.S.S. through the summer (GMcC, MAP). Unexpected were at least six W. Gulls on the Salton Sea, with a 4th-year *wymani* at N.E.S.S. June 27 (MAP), an ad. *wymani* near Salton City July 11 (PAG), and up to four 4th-year and ad. birds at S.E.S.S. July 5–Aug. 15 (RC, DSC, GMcC, MAP, MSM). An ad. Sabine's Gull at the Santa Maria R. mouth, *Santa Barbara*, July 1 (BH) was unexpected considering the time of the year.

Royal and Elegant terns did not nest at Bolsa Chica, but relocated a little n. to an inaccessible earth/sand fill area constructed in 1995 that is destined to be developed into part of the Port of Los Angeles complex in San Pedro, where 17 Royal Tern nests and at least 3000 Elegant Tern nests were counted May 27 (CTC). A well-described **Bridled Tern** was at Bolsa Chica July 17 (MI); there are 2 reports of Bridled/Gray-backed Terns at this location (5 Aug. 1990 and 12 June 1993), but this year's sighting may prove to be the first acceptable record for California. More than the expected number of Least Terns were found on the Salton Sea in June, with two at N. Shore June 7 (RMcK), six together at N.E.S.S. June 14 (MAP), one still there June 27 (CMcG), and one at S.E.S.S. June 20 (GMcC). Nine pairs of Black Skimmers with the nesting Royal and Elegant terns in San Pedro in July (MCW) established the first nesting in *Los Angeles*; one near Chino July 21 (JEP) was at an unexpected inland locality.

The presence of six Rhinoceros Auklets with breeding Pigeon Guillemots at Montana de Oro S.P., *San Luis Obispo*, June 10 (RBa) suggested the possibility of nesting in this area.

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A calling Inca Dove in Norco, *Riverside*, July 21 (JEP) was n.w. of this species' expanding range in s.e. California. At least six calling Flammulated Owls on Big Pine Mt., *Santa Barbara*, July 10–11 (JEL) was more than expected, and a calling N. Saw-whet Owl at the same location July 11 (JEL) was one of few found in this area. Four Chimney Swifts over downtown Los Angeles July 11 (MSM) were undoubtedly summering locally. Gilded Flickers continue to be found in e. *San Bernadino*, with a pair successfully fledging at least one juvenile near Cima Apr. 7–June 7 (ES, MMR), and another seen in the nearby Lanfair Valley Apr. 7 (ES).

A singing **Eastern Wood-Pewee** at S.F.K.R.P. June 27–July 9 (SAL) adds to the handful of these birds found at scattered locations throughout California and Arizona this spring/summer. A Willow Flycatcher at N.E.S.S. June 23 (PJ) was believed to be an exceptionally late spring migrant. A few Vermilion Flycatchers ventured N and W of their normal range, as indicated by a male at Owens L., *Inyo*, July 23 (JW); a pair at S.F.K.R.P. all summer (SAL); a pair that fledged two young near Lancaster July 12 (MSM); and a male in Placentia, *Orange*, June 30 (TB). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, a rare but regular straggler to California, was at Malibu, *Los Angeles*, June 15 (BP).

Since Gray Vireos are scarce in California, the discovery of a nest with three nestlings at the n. base of the San Gabriel Mts. just w. of the *San Bernadino* line June 13 (SJM) was of note, but of even greater interest was the presence of two singing birds in chamise chaparral n. of Castaic L., *Los Angeles*, in June (RBe), in an area where unrecorded in more than 50 years. A Red-eyed Vireo, unexpected in summer, was in Huntington Beach, *Orange*, June 13–21 (LO); another was at S.F.K.R.P. June 24 (BB); and a 3rd was at 6000 ft. along Division Cr. on the w. side of the Owens Valley, *Inyo*, June 26 (T&JH).

The ever-dwindling number of Purple Martins that have nested in the San Gabriel Mts. above Arcadia, *Los Angeles*, have evidently succumbed to the pressure exerted upon them by Eur. Starlings, since none was present this year (MSM).

Single singing Hermit Thrushes in the Irish Hills of *San Luis Obispo* June 12 (RAE); near San Marcos Pass, *Santa Barbara*, July 19 (MAH); at S.F.K.R.P. July 1–3 (BB); and at least three on Mt. Palomar, *San Diego*, July 19 (DSC) were away from known breeding localities. A Bendire's Thrasher near Ocotillo Wells May 19 (LH)

was close to the only known site of nesting of this species in *San Diego* in 1993.

WOOD-WARBLERS TO FINCHES

An Orange-crowned Warbler on the e. shore of the Salton Sea June 23 (PJ) was certainly unexpected, considering the location and time of the year. A territorial Nashville Warbler on Mt. Palomar June 16 (PJ) was s. of this species' known breeding range, but believed to be the same bird at this location last summer. Two singing Virginia's Warblers on the e. slope of the Sierra w. of Independence, *Inyo*, June 17–July 9 (T&JH) were w. of this species' known breeding range. A N. Parula on s. Vandenberg A.F.B., *Santa Barbara*, June 17 (MAH); another near Buellton, *Santa Barbara*, July 16–29 (MAH); and a 3rd in Newport Beach July 8–12 (KSG) were evidently lost birds spending the summer in S. California. A Magnolia Warbler near California City, *Kern*, June 13 (MTH) was an exceptionally late spring vagrant. A male Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler on Figueroa Mt., *Santa Barbara*, outside this species' known breeding range, June 14 (DC) appeared to be on territory, and a female in Poway, *San Diego*, June 23 (MMcI) was certainly lost. A lost male Blackpoll Warbler in La Jolla, *San Diego*, July 16–17 (SS) was one of a very few found in California at this time of the year.

Single Black-and-white Warblers were on s. Vandenberg A.F.B. June 17 (JG), at S.F.K.R.P. July 1 (JR), in Goleta, *Santa Barbara*, July 16–27 (DC), and at Galileo Hill in e. *Kern* July 22 (MTH). Single Am. Redstarts were in Goleta June 16 (DC); near Cantil, *Kern*, June 15 (MTH); at S.F.K.R.P. June 23 (MW); and at L. Henshaw July 26 (RAH). Similar numbers of these 2 species are found at scattered localities in this Region every summer, and are presumed to be lost migrants. An Ovenbird at Galileo Hill June 15 (MTH) and another near Cantil 3 days later (MTH) were presumed to be late spring vagrants, but one on Mt. Palomar July 7 (KW) may have summered locally. A Kentucky Warbler near Bishop June 4 (CG) was a late spring vagrant. A female Hooded Warbler banded near Santee, *San Diego*, June 30 (TC) could have been summering locally, and a male in Goleta June 28–July 28 (JEL) was clearly summering locally.

A Summer Tanager in San Diego June 18 (PU) was along the coast, where unexpected in summer. Single W. Tanagers in Los Osos, *San Luis Obispo*, June 13 (KAH) and in Goleta June 23 (KB) were on the immediate coast, and far from known breeding localities.

A female Lark Bunting seen carrying food near Darwin, *Inyo*, June 15–16 (REW) was at the same location where displaying males were present May 10, strongly indicating successful nesting. A small-billed Fox Sparrow (*schistacea* type) at Shirley Meadows in the Greenhorn Mts. of *Kern* July 9–13 (MAP) was in an area where large-billed birds (*stephensi* type) are common. Since White-crowned Sparrows are normally gone from the lowlands of S. California by early May, the presence of up to six at cowbird traps in Irvine May 26–July 10 (RAH), another at a cowbird trap in nearby El Torro July 10 (RAH), and one not associated with cowbird traps in Goleta July 14 (SC) were unexpected. An exceptionally late Golden-crowned Sparrow was near Carpinteria June 19–23 (RWH).

Two or three N. Cardinals could still be found along the Colorado R. at the *Riverside/San Bernadino* line in June and July (AME, MAP), this believed to be the entire native population of this species in California. At least ten Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported from as many locations scattered throughout the Region in June and July, giving an indication as to the numbers that are probably present in the Region this time of the year. Territorial Indigo Buntings included males near Chino May 22 (JEP), along Division Cr. in the Owens Valley July 12 (T&JH), and along Wyman Cr. in the White Mts., *Inyo*, July 4 (BO'C). Small numbers are now present in this Region every summer.

A female Bobolink at F.C.R. June 6 (MMR) was a spring vagrant. Bronzed Cowbirds are now present in small numbers throughout the Imperial Valley s. of the Salton Sea, with smaller numbers as far north as N.E.S.S., but a male in Borrego Springs June 3 (PJ) was a little to the west of where now expected, and another at F.C.R. June 6 (SBT) was relatively far north.

A Purple Finch seen feeding a recently fledged juvenile in the riparian "jungle" in the Prado Basin near Corona June 26 (JEP) was in an area where nesting is unrecorded and unexpected. An Evening Grosbeak in the Greenhorn Mts. of *Kern* in June (TG) and three together on Big Pine Mt. July 10 (GBW) were s. of this species' known breeding range.

Contributors (county coordinators in bold-face): Mike Austin, Bob Barnes, Richard Barth (RBA), Ron Beck (RBe), Tom Bishop, Karen Bridgers, N. Bruce Broadbooks, Tricia Campbell, **Eugene A. Cardiff** (*San*

Bernadino), Shirley Carter, Ryan Chornock, Charles T. Collins, David Compton, Daniel S. Cooper, **Elizabeth Copper** (San Diego), Therese R. Clawson, Brian E. Daniels, **Don Desjardin** (Ventura), **Tom M. Edell** (San Luis Obispo), Claude G. Edwards, Alan M. Eisner, Richard A. Erickson, Wayne Ferren, John Gallo, **Kimball L. Garrett** (Los Angeles), Peter A. Ginsburg, Karen S. Gilbert, Martin Gilbert, Carina Gjerdrum, Steven Glover, Tom Gray, Robert A. Hamilton, Robert W. Hansen, Lori Hargrove, Karen A. Havlena, **Matthew T. Heindel** (Kern), D. Mitch Heindel, **Tom & Jo Heindel** (Inyo), Roger Higson, Brad Hines, Mark A. Holmgren, Marshall Iliff, Curtis O. Johnson, Paul Jorgensen, Ann and Tom Keenan (A&TK), Steven A. Laymon, **Joan E. Lentz** (Santa Barbara), John S. Mariani, Elizabeth Mason, Chet McGaugh, Margaret McIntosh, **Robert McKernan** (Riverside), William J. Moramarco, Brennan Mulrooney, Stephen J. Myers, Bill O'Connell, Leo Ohtsuki, Bob Pann, **Michael A. Patten**, Robert Patton, James E. Pike, Jill Raffleson, Michael M. Rogers, Michael San Miguel, Bill Sauer, Susan Smith, Emilie Strauss, Scott B. Terrill, David Trissel, Philip Unitt, Ken Weaver, Richard E. Webster, Grant B. Weybourn, Mary Whitfield, Judy Wickman, **Douglas R. Willick** (Orange), Mark C. Winer, Tom E. Wurster, Alice and Howard York (A&HY), Dick Zembell. An additional 50+ observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season.

Guy McCaskie, San Diego Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, P. O. Box 1390, San Diego, CA 92112.



Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *Field Notes* are keyed on page 428.