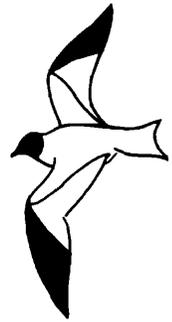


WESTERN BIRDS



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REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 1997 RECORDS

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ABSTRACT: The California Bird Records Committee assessed 241 records of 98 species in the past year, accepting 173 of them. New to California were the Great-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*), photographed and videotaped at the Cordell Bank off Marin County, the Band-tailed Gull (*Larus belcheri*), photographed at the Tijuana River mouth, San Diego County, and Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*), photographed and audiotaped at Fullerton, Orange County. With the recognition of the Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*) and Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) as species, plus more recent additions, California's bird list stands at 613 species.

This 23rd report of the California Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) details the evaluation of 241 records of 98 species. Most (156) of these records are from 1997, although 47 records are from 1996 and 38 others are from as early as 1974. A total of 173 records of 68 species was accepted, for an acceptance rate of 71.8%. Sixty-four records of 49 species were not accepted because the identification was not established, while four records of three species were not accepted because of questionable natural occurrence. The Committee is indebted to the 242 observers who put forth considerable effort to document the records discussed here. Counties best represented by accepted records are Orange (17 records), Monterey (16), Inyo (14), Los Angeles (14), Kern (11), Ventura (11), and San Diego (10). Records from 18 other counties were also accepted. As is typical, most accepted records (125, or 72%) were from coastal counties. Of the 48 accepted records from inland counties, the vast majority (41) were from southern California.

Highlights include the addition of the Great-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*), Band-tailed Gull (*Larus belcheri*), and Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*) to the California list. The first formally accepted records of the recently split Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*) are

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presented, and the first state record of Swallow-tailed Gull (*Creagrus furcatus*), previously not accepted on the grounds of questionable natural occurrence (Heindel and Garrett 1995), was accepted after reevaluation. Records of Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*), Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*), American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*), Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*), and Olive-backed Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*), all recently accepted to the state list, will be treated in subsequent reports. In addition, the first formally accepted records of the recently split Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) and the first accepted records of the Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) since the species was listed as extirpated will be treated in later reports. With all of these additions, California's list stands at 613 species. Potential first state records of the Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*), Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*), and Gray Silky-flycatcher (*Ptilogonys cinereus*) are currently being considered.

Other highlights include acceptance of the state's second Common Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*), third Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*), fifth Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) and Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*), sixth Dark-rumped Petrel (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*), and seventh Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma tethys*), as well as 10 Manx Shearwaters (*Puffinus puffinus*), returning Sandwich (*Sterna sandvicensis*) and Sooty (*Sterna fuscata*) terns, four Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (*Empidonax flaviventris*), four Dusky Warblers (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*), five White Wagtails (*Motacilla alba*), and three Black Rosy-Finches (*Leucosticte atrata*).

Annual reports traditionally include the acceptance rate for the report and estimate whether this rate is above or below average. Binford (1985) analyzed acceptance rates for the first seven annual reports. Figure 1 shows acceptance rates published by year in each report through the present. The overall nonweighted average is 81.6%. A low of 67% in the 14th report

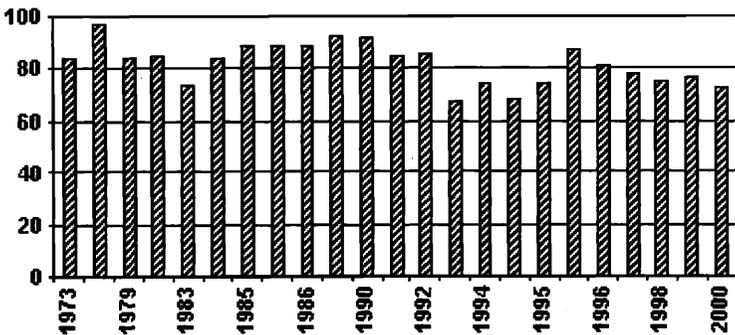


Figure 1. Acceptance rate in each California Bird Records Committee report since the committee's inception. The average unweighted acceptance rate is 81.6%.

(Roberson 1993) was almost certainly caused by that report's including the review of old records. In the 16th report, Heindel and Garrett (1995) attributed the below-average 68% acceptance rate, in part, to a more conservative Committee. While the low rates in the 14th and 16th reports have not been duplicated in recent years, this chart shows that acceptance rates exceeded the average only once in the decade since the 14th report, while they exceed it every year, but one, in the two decades prior to the 14th report. Thus acceptance rates are lower now than in the past. Some of this change may be attributed to a more conservative Committee membership, but it may also be caused by an increase in the number of records and contributors. The Committee has been able to review a higher percentage of total rarity claims now than in the past, and this may add to lower recent acceptance rates. Changes in species reviewed may also contribute. In the first two decades the Committee evaluated records of many species that are now known to occur regularly and are thus no longer on the review list. Today a higher percentage is of true accidentals and extreme rarities. In general the quality of the documentation has been excellent and it continues to improve steadily.

Committee News. The Committee's voting membership after the January 1999 meeting consisted of Richard A. Erickson (chair), Matthew T. Heindel (vice chair), Michael M. Rogers (secretary), Robert A. Hamilton, Alvaro Jaramillo, Guy McCaskie, Joseph Morlan, Michael A. Patten, Peter Pyle, and Stephen C. Rottenborn. Recent Committee members who also voted on many of the records in this report include Kimball L. Garrett, Steve N. G. Howell, Mike San Miguel, Daniel S. Singer, and Scott B. Terrill.

At its 1999 meeting, the Committee discussed the need for increased CBRC involvement with local bird clubs and other records committees (both in and out of the state). The possibility of revising review procedures to include records that are unusual regionally or temporally, even if a species occurs regularly in at least part of the state, was also discussed and will be investigated further. Two species, the Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*) and Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*), were removed from the review list; the Committee will not review records of these species after 1998.

The list of species reviewed by the CBRC is posted on the Western Field Ornithologists' World Wide Web site (<http://www.wfo-cbrc.org/cbrc/>). This site includes the California state list, the Committee's bylaws, a reporting form for e-mail submission of records, addresses of current Committee members, a list of relevant publications by CBRC members, and other information about the CBRC, Western Field Ornithologists, and *Western Birds*. A photo gallery of recent submissions, including a number of birds published in this report, is also available on the web site.

All records reviewed by the CBRC (including copies of descriptions, photographs, videotapes, audio recordings, and Committee comments) are archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, California 93012, and are available for public review. The CBRC solicits and encourages observers to submit documentation for all species on the review list, as well as species unrecorded in California. Documentation should be sent to Michael M. Rogers, CBRC Secretary, P. O. Box 340, Moffett Field, CA 94035-0340 (e-mail: mrogers@nas.nasa.gov).

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Format and Abbreviations. As in other recent CBRC reports, records are usually listed chronologically by first date of occurrence and/or geographically, from north to south. Included with each record is the location, county abbreviation (see below), and date span. The date span usually follows that published in the journal variously titled *American Birds*, *National Audubon Society Field Notes*, or *Field Notes* (now *North American Birds*), but if the CBRC accepts a date span that differs from a published source, the differing dates are italicized. Records not previously published in *North American Birds* are so noted. Initials of the observer(s) responsible for finding and/or identifying the bird(s), if they have supplied documentation, are followed by a semicolon, then the initials, in alphabetized order, of additional observers submitting documentation, then the CBRC record number consisting of the year of observation and a chronological number assigned by the secretary. All records are sight records unless otherwise indicated by † for an *identifiable* photograph, ‡ for videotape, § for a voice recording, and # for a specimen record, followed by the acronym (see below) of the institution housing the specimen and that institution's specimen catalog number.

An asterisk (*) prior to a species' name indicates that the species is no longer on the CBRC's review list. The first number in parentheses after the species' name is the number of records accepted by the CBRC through this report. The second is the number of new records accepted in this report; because this number excludes records thought to pertain to returning individuals, it may be zero. Two asterisks (**) after the species' total indicate that the number of accepted records refers only to a restricted review period or includes records accepted for statistical purposes only (see Roberson 1986).

When individual birds return to a location after a lengthy or seasonal absence, each occurrence is reviewed under a separate record number and Committee members consider whether or not they believe the bird is the same as one accepted previously. Such decisions follow the opinion of the majority of members and, if a bird is considered a returning individual, the total number of records remains unchanged. Although the CBRC does not formally review the age, sex, or subspecies of each bird, information on these subjects is often provided during the review process (and in some cases a strong or unanimous consensus is achieved). We have tried to report as much of this information as possible.

The CBRC uses standard abbreviations for California counties. Those used in this report are ALA, Alameda; COL, Colusa; DN, Del Norte; HUM, Humboldt; IMP, Imperial; INY, Inyo; KER, Kern; KIN, Kings; LA, Los Angeles; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; ORA, Orange; PLU, Plumas; RIV, Riverside; SAC, Sacramento; SBE, San Bernardino; SD, San Diego; SF, San Francisco; SLO, San Luis Obispo; SM, San Mateo; SBA, Santa Barbara; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; TEH, Tehama; VEN, Ventura. A full list of county abbreviations is available on the CBRC web site. Other abbreviations used: I., island; L., lake; Mt., mountain; n. miles, nautical miles; N.P., national park; Pt., point; R., river; S.P., state park.

Museum collections housing specimens cited in this report, allowing access to Committee members for research, or otherwise cited are the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco (CAS), Natural History

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Museum of Los Angeles County (LACM), Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History (PGMNH), San Diego Natural History Museum (SDNHM), Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (SBMNH), Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley (MVZ), University of California, Davis (UCD), and San Bernardino County Museum (SBCM).

RECORDS ACCEPTED

YELLOW-BILLED LOON *Gavia adamsii* (64, 3). One basic-plumaged adult at Albion Field Station, MEN, 29 Apr–4 Jul 1996 (RJK, DTo; 1998-110) was a county first. One at SE Farallon I., SF, 15–16 Dec 1997 (AV; 1998-024) was a first for the island and previously unpublished. An alternate-plumaged adult flew past Pigeon Pt., SM, 24 Apr 1997 (BMcK; FT; 1997-093). A basic-plumaged adult on Monterey Bay 1–2 n. miles off Pt. Joe, MTY, 11 Jan–1 Feb 1997 (SFB, RLB†, DLSh; 1997-077) was believed to be one of up to three individuals wintering at this locality since 1994–1995 (Howell and Pyle 1997). An alternate-plumaged adult off Otter Pt., Monterey Bay, MTY, 30 Oct 1997–25 Jan 1998 (RLB†, ADeM, DLSh; 1998-052) molted into basic plumage during its stay. It was believed to be the same as one wintering there in juvenal plumage 1993–1994 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999) and returning there the next two winters (Garrett and Singer 1998) but not seen in 1996–1997. A photograph appeared in *Field Notes* 52:119.

GREAT-WINGED PETREL *Pterodroma macroptera* (1, 1). One videotaped at the Cordell Bank, MRN, 21 Jul 1996 (RS; LH, LL†; 1996-133; previously unpublished) and one photographed N of the Cordell Bank, 24 Aug 1996 (BED, MiF, EDG†, SBT, MW†; 1997-068) were probably the same individual and represent a first for the Northern Hemisphere. Understandably, there was some initial confusion regarding Murphy's Petrel (*P. ultima*), as this is the "expected" dark *Pterodroma* off California. However, photographic documentation in conjunction with written notes indicated that the bird was a Great-winged Petrel. Review by Australian seabird identification expert Tony Palliser supported this identification. Differences of the Great-winged from Murphy's include its larger size, proportionately heavier bill, more uniform coloration, and more lumbering flight. The Great-winged is also similar to Solander's Petrel (*P. solandri*) but lacks the dark hood, contrasting dark "M" across the upperwings, and prominent white flash on the underwings characteristic of Solander's (Bailey et al. 1989). The extent of pale feathering around the bill onto the forehead and throat of this individual is characteristic of the race *gouldi*, which breeds only at North I., New Zealand (*Field Notes* 51:114, Marchant and Higgins 1990). This subspecies disperses northward but had never been documented N of the Tropic of Capricorn before this occurrence. A photograph was published in *Field Notes* 51:114. An additional record from Monterey Bay on 18 Oct 1998 is currently under review.

DARK-RUMPED PETREL *Pterodroma phaeopygia* (6, 1). One at Cordell Bank, MRN, 1 Aug 1997 (PP; MiF, SBT†, JAT; 1997-122; Figure 2) made the second record of this species at this location, the first being 24 Aug 1996 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999). As with all records thus far, we cannot determine if the endangered Hawaiian (*P. p. sandwichensis*) or the similar nominate subspecies from the Galapagos is involved, although the former seems more likely from the distributional pattern of records in the North Pacific (Howell and Pyle 1997).

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus* (37, 10). One was at 37°39' N, 123°16' W (approx. 12 n. miles WSW of SE Farallon I.), SF, 2 Oct 1997 (SCR; 1997-161). One was at 36°55' N, 122°40' W (SW of Año Nuevo), SM, 13 Sep 1997 (BMcK; 1997-202). One was on Monterey Bay just off the beach in Santa Cruz, SCZ, 16 Apr



Figure 2. Dark-rumped Petrel, *Pterodroma phaeopygia* (1997-122), Cordell Bank, Marin County, 1 Aug 1997. Sixth record for California.

Photo by Scott B. Terrill

1997 (BMcK; 1997-104). Monterey Bay, MTY, records were as follows: 10 Feb 1996 (JM, DR; 1996-036), 10 Aug 1997 (MMR; AB, RHH; 1997-152), 14 Sep 1997 (SFB; 1997-192), 20 Sep 1997 (NBB, MJSM; 1997-168), 27 Sep 1997 (GWL†, GMcC, MMR; 1997-158), and 31 Dec 1997 (RT; 1998-095). One was 7 n. miles SW of Morro Bay, SLO, 19 Jan 1997 (BS; 1997-043). Some of the Monterey Bay sightings, especially the three September 1997 records, may refer to the same individual but are counted as separate records. This species has occurred annually since first detected in the state in 1993 (Erickson and Terrill 1996), and 1997 was the best year yet. However, we do not know if this is a permanent change in status or an anomalous incursion. See also Records Not Accepted below.

WEDGE-RUMPED STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma tethys* (7, 1). One was at 33° 39' N, 120° 37' W (24 n. miles SW of San Miguel I.), SBA (RLP; 1996-114).

MASKED BOOBY *Sula dactylatra* (10, 3). An immature was at 38° 54' N, 123° 56' W (approximately 10 n. miles W of Pt. Arena), MEN, 15 Jun 1997 (MFO; 197-130). Another immature was at 33° 51' N, 120° 51' W (23 n. miles SW of San Miguel I.), SBA, 16 Jul 1996 (RLP, SS; 1996-115). A near-adult at Pt. Mugu Naval Station, VEN, 18 Jan–18 Feb 1997 (MFr, NF; DDesJt, MFe, KLG, DGuf, MTH, GHl, TJH, RLCL, RL, GMcC, JM, MAP, MSM, JAT, WW, JOZ; 1997-007) showed characters of one of the yellow-billed forms, *S. d. californica* or *S. d. personata*, as have all prior California adults. A photograph is in *Field Notes* 51:801. Immature birds are more difficult to identify to subspecies. The Mendocino County bird had a pale yellowish bill and broad cervical collar indicating *californica/personata* (Roberson 1998). The Santa Barbara County bird lacked a cervical collar and its bill color was not determined, making racial determination impossible. Pitman and Jehl (1998) recommended recognizing the smaller orange-billed form of the Galapagos and Malpelo islands, which breeds sympatrically with *S. d. personata* on Clipperton and the Revillagigedo islands, as a full species, the Nazca Booby (*S. granti*). Roberson (1998) concluded that all adults and subadults reaching California have been Masked Boobies, but three April juveniles may have been Nazca Boobies. If the AOU were to adopt the proposed split, the Committee would reconsider all accepted Masked Booby records.

- tail held together bowed;



when viewed from behind the bird

observer:
 Michael A. Patten
 28-30 March 1997 (sketch made)
 also observed by Brenda D. Smith

- Buteogallus anthracinus
 adult plumage
- Flapped rapidly, but usually soared
- flew with wings held flat
- generally held tail spread
- wingspan and length of Red-tailed Hawk (in direct comparison)
- cool-black plumage
- yellow cere and bare skin around eye
- whitish at base of outer two primaries



- long yellow legs
- secondaries dark gray; barred with black
- call a high-pitched, whistled, "whEEP whEEP whEEP whEEP whEEP"
- no white on thighs or rump
- tail band also white above
- no chestnut in primaries. I noted none in the secondaries as well
- broad wings
- thin white tip
- tail looked short
- single wide white tail band
- broad black trailing edge

Common Black-Hawk
 28 March 1997
 California; Riverside County; Oasis

northeast end of the Salton Sea
 0930-0955 PDT
 clear; calm; 95-80°F
 optics: Zeiss 10x40B binoculars
 Bausch and Lomb 7mm telescope
 20-25x
 observation distance: varied from 30m to 250m

Figure 3. Common Black-Hawk, *Buteogallus anthracinus* (1997-070), Oasis, N end of Salton Sea, Riverside County, 28 Mar 1997. Second California record; one of very few species accepted for the state without photographic or specimen documentation.

Sketch by Michael A. Patten

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BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY *Sula nebouxii* (80**, 1). A subadult female was at Johnson's Landing, Salton City, IMP, 29 Nov 1997 (MBS†; 1998-028). An immature at Mullet I., S end of Salton Sea, IMP, 14 Feb 1997 (KCM†; 1997-087), and later found near death on the nearby shore 1 Mar 1997, was judged to be one of the three or four individuals that arrived at the Salton Sea beginning 1 Sep 1996 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999).

BROWN BOOBY *Sula leucogaster* (51, 4). A photo of an immature on Monterey Bay, MTY, 5 Oct 1997 (RLB†, DCu†, JD‡, ADeM†, DLSh; 1998-053) was published in *Field Notes* 52:120. An adult at Diablo Canyon, SLO, 10-26 Jul 1996 (TME, JSR†; 116-1996) was a first for the county. An immature between Santa Cruz I. and Santa Rosa I., SBA, 19 Oct 1997 (HC†, DDesJ†; 1998-006) was originally thought by some observers to be a Red-footed Booby (*S. sula*), but the photographs (e.g., *Field Notes* 52:144) confirmed it was actually an immature Brown. Observers are cautioned against placing too much reliance on apparent foot color because vascularization may make feet appear red when backlit. An immature was near Niland, IMP, 28 Aug 1996 (GMcC; LJRBT, KZK†; 1996-111).

TRICOLORED HERON *Egretta tricolor* (25**, 4). One immature at Seal Beach, ORA, 27 Sep 1997 (JF†, CL; 1997-167) was judged to be the same individual as an immature at nearby Bolsa Chica, ORA, 20 Sep 1997-26 Apr 1998 (CAM, GMcC, DR, MSM†, DGS; 1998-004). Another immature was at the Tijuana R. mouth, SD, 3 Nov 1997-17 Jan 1998 (PEL, GMcC, DGS, DSgt; 1997-184). An adult was at the mouth of the Whitewater R., N end of Salton Sea, RIV, 3-6 May 1997 (GMcC; 1997-082), while another adult was at Obsidian Butte, S end of Salton Sea, IMP, 3 May 1997 (GMcC; 1997-083).

REDDISH EGRET *Egretta rufescens* (75, 1). An adult at Bolsa Chica, ORA, 24 Apr-11 May 1997 (GMcC; 1997-088) was believed to be one of three adults there in

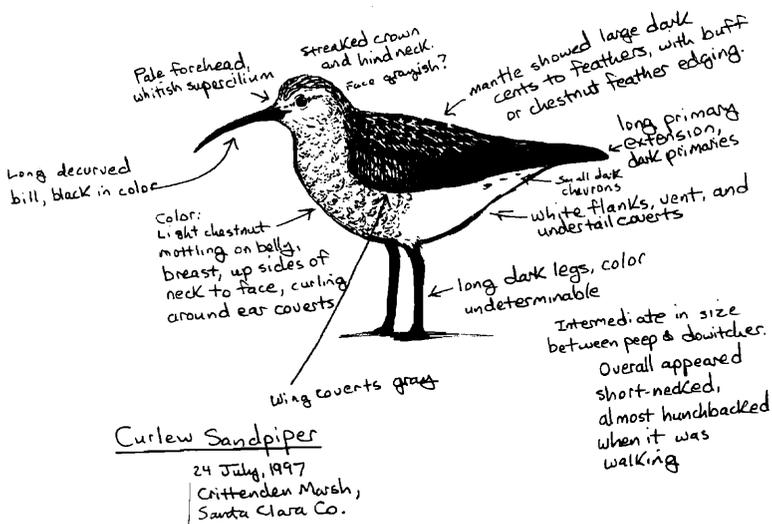


Figure 4. Curlew Sandpiper, *Calidris ferruginea* (1997-121), Mountain View, Santa Clara County, 24 Jul 1997.

Sketch by John Mariani

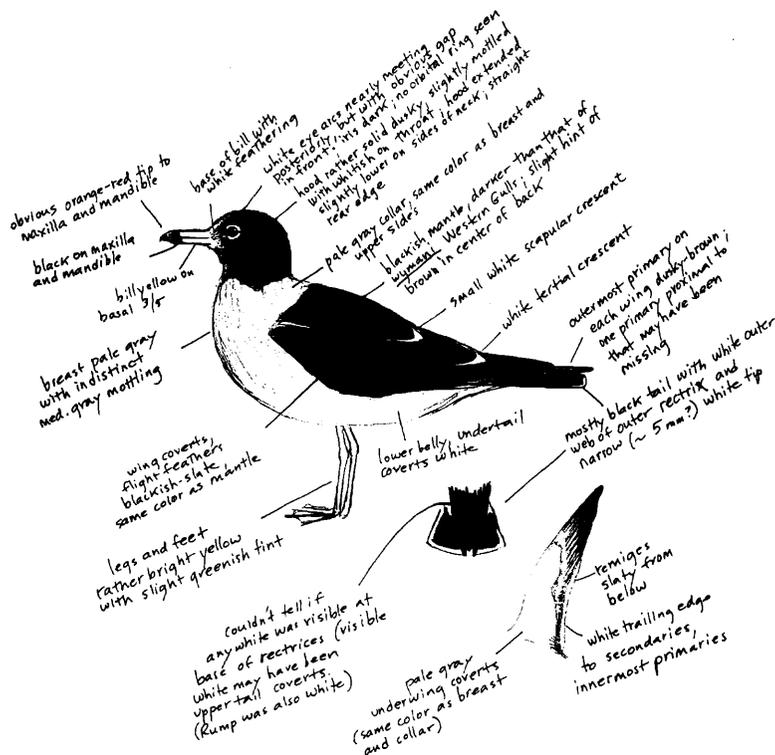


Figure 5. Band-tailed Gull, *Larus belcheri* (1997-20), at the Tijuana River mouth, Imperial Beach, San Diego County, 10 Aug 1997. First accepted California record.

Sketch by Kimball L. Garrett

1996 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999). No details have been received for a second bird reported there 30 Apr-2 May 1997 (*Field Notes* 51:927). One immature at Salton City, IMP, 16-31 Aug 1997 (GMcC; LC†, JMt, CMcG†, BMcK, JM, MAP, SCR, DSt; 1997-125) was inland on the Salton Sea, where there are only seven prior records. One returning adult with a slightly deformed bill at Imperial Beach, SD, 7 Aug-20 Dec 1997 (MMR; MiF, KLG, GMcC; 1997-134) was the same individual that has spent each winter since 18 Dec 1982 at the Tijuana R. mouth and on S San Diego Bay (Roberson 1986, McCaskie and San Miguel 1999). It was thus at least 15 years old, exceeding the previously published longevity record of 12 years, 3 months (Clapp et al. 1982).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nyctanassa violacea* (18, 0). An adult returned to La Jolla, SD, 1 Mar-3 May 1997 (AME; GMcC; 1997-065), where it has attempted to nest with Black-crowned Night-Herons (*N. nycticorax*) since first found in October 1981 (Binford 1985, Erickson and Terrill 1996, McCaskie and San Miguel 1999). The published longevity record for this species is 6 years, 3 months (Klimkiewicz and Futcher 1997). However, the longer-staying La Jolla individual does not constitute a new formal longevity record because it was not individually marked and thus only assumed to be the same bird (Klimkiewicz pers. comm.)

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TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator* (22, 1). One adult without a neck collar was near Grimes, COL, 4 Jan 1996 (JM; VH; 1996-037). An immature seen the same day and at the same location was not accepted. See Records Not Accepted.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula* (20, 1). An alternate-plumaged male at Tulare L. Drainage District, KIN, 17 Apr 1993 (GWP; 1999-031) was previously unpublished and constituted the first record for the county. The documentation and field sketches prepared at the time were not submitted until nearly 6 years later because the observer was under the impression that single-observer sightings were never accepted. In fact, this bird was endorsed unanimously on the first circulation with many members commenting on the excellence of the documentation.

COMMON BLACK-HAWK *Buteogallus anthracinus* (2, 1). An adult was at Oasis, N end of Salton Sea, RIV, 28 Mar–2 May 1997 (MAP, BDS; PAG, GMcC, DGS; 1997-070; Figure 3). An adult at nearby Thousand Palms Oasis, RIV, 13 Apr 1985, is the only other previously accepted in California (Daniels et. al 1989). This species has been recorded in spring from the lower Colorado River (Rosenberg et al. 1991). A report from northern Baja California (Short and Crossin 1967) has been questioned by Howell and Webb (1995).

***ZONE-TAILED HAWK** *Buteo albonotatus* (51, 5). One adult (not an immature as stated in *Field Notes* 52:125) at San Luis Obispo, SLO, 14 Oct 1997 (JSR; 1998-030) was the first accepted for that county and the northernmost ever recorded along California's coastal slope. A molting juvenile (photograph in *Field Notes* 51:927) was at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 24–25 May 1997 (MAP; JH, THH, SBT; 1997-096). One adult returned to Goleta, SBA, 29 Sep 1997–14 Mar 1998 (DVB,



Figure 6. Immature male Broad-billed Hummingbird, *Cyanthus latirostris* (1997-209), Weldon, Kern County, 2 Oct 1997.

Photo by Matthew T. Heindel



Figure 7. Blue Jay, *Cyanocitta cristata* (1997-191), Willow Creek, Humboldt County, 14 Dec 1997.

Photo by Ron LeValley

CAM; 1997-177) where it has been seen each winter since Dec 1993 (Erickson and Terrill 1996). One at Ventura, VEN, 17 Dec 1995–8 Mar 1996 (DM; 49-1995) may have been the same bird returning to the Ojai–Ventura area each winter since 1993–94 (Erickson and Terrill 1996). See also Records Not Accepted below. It may also have been the same as one at Ojai, VEN, 3 Dec 1997 (WW; 1997-183). One at Rancho Mission Viejo Land Conservancy, ORA, 20 Dec 1997 (RFi; 1998-058) was in an area where small numbers occur regularly every fall and winter, but it is counted as a new individual. One returned to the San Diego Wild Animal Park, Escondido, SD, 28 Sep 1997–16 Apr 1998 (PU; GEC, TRC, GMcC; 1997-186), and an adult was at Pine Valley, SD, 17 Feb 1997 (MAP; 1997-063).

YELLOW RAIL *Coturnicops noveboracensis* (68, 1). An adult male found alive under a car during a stormy night in Santa Barbara, SBA, 12 Nov 1996 (#SBMNH 6629; KW, 1998-178) was taken to the Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network where it died the next day. It constitutes the first record for Santa Barbara County (Lehman 1994).

PURPLE GALLINULE *Porphyryla martinica* (3, 1). One at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 23 Sep–12 Nov 1997 (JLD; MiF, KLG†, EDG†, JHn†, TH, GMcC, JN†, MAP, DR†, MMR†, MJSM, MSM†, LSA†, DGS, JOZ; 1997-151) was a first for the county and the first adult or near adult for the state. A photograph was published in *Field Notes* 52:125.

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AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus palliatus* (15, 2). One was at the E end of San Nicolas I., VEN, 30 Apr–16 Jun 1996 (GeM, TAS, WW†; 1996-106), and another was at the NW end of the island 15 Jun 1996 (GeM; 1997-012). The birds appeared to be of the expected W Mexican subspecies *H. p. frazari* but were too distant for any attempt to assess possible hybridization with the Black Oystercatcher (*H. bachmani*) on the basis of Jehl's (1985) index. Jehl's scoring system is helpful in analyzing specimens, but many of the index characters cannot easily be determined in the field. See Heindel and Patten (1996) and Erickson and Terrill (1996). See also Records Not Accepted below.

UPLAND SANDPIPER *Bartramia longicauda* (15, 1). One was at the Salinas commercial ponds, MTY, 12 Sep 1997 (BHG; 1997-155).

HUDSONIAN GODWIT *Limosa haemastica* (15, 1). A color photograph of a juvenile at the Eel River Wildlife Area, HUM, 9–10 Sep 1997 (SMcA†; RJA, DFx; 1997-148) was published in *Field Notes* 52:142.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. (21, 2) One juvenile at the Eel River Wildlife Area, HUM, 4–12 Sep 1997 (SMcA†; 1998-029) was photographed in the same field of view as the Hudsonian Godwit above. A color photograph was published in *Field Notes* 52:142, but no written documentation was received and the subspecies could not be determined. Further details, including documentation for a claim of up to three Bar-tailed Godwits reportedly seen there on 12 Sep 1997, would be most welcome. A photograph of another juvenile at San Gregorio State Beach, SM (31 Aug 1997; DSg†; JM, JM†; 1997-129) was published in *Field Notes* 52:121. It showed characters of the expected Siberian subspecies *L. l. baueri*.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis* (14, 1). One adult in prebasic molt was at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station, Alviso, SCL, 3–5 Sep 1997 (NL; LC, AME, MiF, MM, JM, RJR, MMR, SCR, DGS, SBT; 1997-127).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* (23, 2). One in near-alternate plumage was at the Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, 17 Apr 1997 (SCR†; 1997-098). An adult was at Mountain View, SCL, 23 Jul–15 Aug 1997 (MMR; MiF, MM, JSM, JM, DR, SCR, SBT; 1997-121; Figure 4).

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus* (68, 2). One adult molting into basic plumage at China L., KER, 29 Aug–1 Sep 1997 (MTH; 1997-126) was the second to be found in the desert portion of the county. An immature molting from first alternate to adult basic plumage was at the S end of Salton Sea, IMP, 31 May–24 Aug 1997 (GMcC; 1997-094), where the species is now of annual occurrence.

BAND-TAILED GULL *Larus belcheri* (1, 1). One adult at the Tijuana River mouth, Imperial Beach, SD, 3 Aug 1997–2 Jan 1998 (DGS; KB, TRC, BC, GE†, MFe†, KLG, SKm, RL, JM†, GMcC, JM, KM†, MAP, RWR, DR†, GLR, MMR, SCR, MSM, RMS†, LSat, JKS, DSt, DT, PU, JOZ; 1997-20; Figure 5) was a first for California and possibly for the United States. The bird appeared to be molting from second alternate into basic plumage. This species normally ranges along the Pacific coast of South America from Peru to northern Chile, but vagrants have been reported from Panama (AOU 1998) to Las Cruces, central Chile (Sallaberry et al. 1992) and even the Falkland Islands (Woods 1988). Stevenson et al. (1980) cited four Florida reports, which have been variously treated as acceptable (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992) or of questionable natural occurrence (AOU 1998, ABA 1996). A previous report from California at San Nicolas I., VEN, in the winter of 1987–1988 that failed to gain acceptance by a narrow vote (Heindel and Garrett 1995) is currently being reconsidered. See Patten (1998) for further discussion of this and other southern gulls in North America. Color photographs of the San Diego bird were published in *Field Notes* 51:1062 and *Birding* 31:63, and a black-and-white photo appears in *Field Notes*

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51:1053. The Band-tailed Gull may be distinguished from the similar Olrog's Gull (*L. atlanticus*) of Atlantic South America by its smaller size, broader black tail-band, slimmer bill, darker breast, and darker head in winter plumage. For further information on identification and distribution see Lethaby and Bangma (1999).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* (9, 0). One adult at Alviso, SCL, 25 Dec 1996–22 Feb 1997 (MJM, SCR†; 1997-002) was considered the same bird returning from the previous year (Garrett and Singer 1998) and, like all previous California Lesser Black-backed Gulls, showed characteristics of the pale race *L. g. graellsii*. It is difficult to distinguish *L. f. graellsii* from "Heuglin's Gull," which has been variously regarded as a race of the Herring Gull (*L. argentatus heuglini*), Siberian Gull (*L. [a.] taimyrensis*), Yellow-legged Gull (*L. cachinnans*), Lesser Black-backed, or even a separate species, Heuglin's Gull (*L. heuglini*) (summary in Madge 1996). The identification of Heuglin's Gull is not yet fully resolved (Eskelin and Pursiainen 1998). If more information becomes available, the Committee may need to reassess past California records of the Lesser Black-backed Gull. Heuglin's Gull breeds in NE Europe and as yet there is no definitive evidence that it has reached North America, while the Lesser Black-backed is becoming more common each year in North America and appears to be spreading west.

SWALLOW-TAILED GULL *Creagrus furcatus* (2, 1). An adult at Pacific Grove and nearby Moss Landing, MTY, 6–8 Jun 1985 (AB; ADB, RAE, ASH†, JML, PLAT†, MJL, GMcC, JM, GN†, DR, REW†; 1985-079) was originally judged by the Committee to be of questionable natural occurrence (Heindel and Garrett 1995), and placed on the supplemental list. However, acceptance of another adult Swallow-tailed Gull approximately 15 n. miles W of SE Farallon I., SF, 3 Mar 1996 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999) prompted reconsideration of the 1985 bird, which was then accepted unanimously on its first recirculation. This species has been reported N to Panama (Ridgely and Gwynne 1989, Reed 1988) and S to central Chile (Jehl 1973). It is possible that the 1985 record was related to the lingering effects of the 1982–83 El Niño. During the peak of this El Niño, all Swallow-tailed Gulls appeared to have left the Peru Current (Arntz 1986, cf. Veit 1985). This record was reviewed by the ABA Checklist Committee and not accepted on grounds of questionable natural occurrence (DeBenedictis 1996). The AOU (1998) placed the species in an appendix, stating "the origin of the bird is uncertain." Black-and-white photographs were published in *Am. Birds* 39:958, and color photos appear in Roberson (1985).

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* (3, 0). A color photograph of an adult at Bolsa Chica, ORA, 11 May–17 Jul 1997 (RL, LSa†; 1997-100) was published in *Field Notes* 51:937. It was judged to be the same bird returning to the Elegant Tern (*S. elegans*) colony off and on since 1991 (Patten et al. 1995). Three photographs of this bird showing it defending a nest and a presumed hybrid Sandwich × Elegant tern chick appear in Collins (1997).

SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata* (6, 0). An adult at Bolsa Chica, ORA, 26 Mar–26 Jul 1997 (CJE, MFe, GMcC, MAP, RWR, LSa†, DGS; 1997-089) was considered the same bird seen at the Elegant Tern colony off and on since 1994 (Erickson and Terrill 1996). A color photograph is in *Field Notes* 51:937. See also Records Not Accepted below.

LONG-BILLED MURRELET *Brachyramphus perdix* (2, 2). One in basic plumage offshore from Damnation Creek, DN, 26 Aug 1994 (CS†; 1999-060) was previously noted by Harris (1996) and Mlodinow (1997). A photograph of one in basic plumage at Pirates Cove, Muir Beach, MRN, 27 Dec 1997 (ASH†; 1998-011) was published in *Field Notes* 52:253. These are the first records of this species to be accepted by the Committee, although at least eight additional records going back to 1981 have not yet been reviewed. These include four specimens from Mono Lake (Jehl and Jehl 1981,



Figure 8. Dusky Warbler, *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (1997-174), Palomar Field Station, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Marin County, 18 Oct 1997. Although the supercilium may be fainter in the supraloral area than is typical of this species, the small bill and narrow whitish supercilium (as well as the call) helped to eliminate similar species such as the Radde's (*P. schwarzi*) and Yellow-streaked (*P. armandii*) warblers, yet to be recorded in North America.

Photo by Steve N. G. Howell

Sealy et al. 1991) as well as three records from Humboldt County (Mlodinow 1997) and one from Mendocino County. The Committee intends to review all of these past records. This species was recently split from the Marbled Murrelet (*B. marmoratus*) (Friesen et al. 1996, Patten 1997, AOU 1998). Most North American records are of fall vagrants inland across North America (Sealy et al. 1982, 1991, Mlodinow 1997), but the two California records accepted here are coastal. For information on field identification see Sibley (1993), Erickson et al. (1995), and Mlodinow (1997).

PARAKEET AUKLET *Aethia psittacula* (68, 2). One was near 37°51'N, 123°26'W (21 n. miles SW of Pt. Reyes), MRN, 12 Sep 1997 (SCR; 1997-201). Another was at San Nicolas I., VEN, 1 Feb 1997 (MTH, WW; 1997-066). Beck (1910) encountered large numbers in Monterey Bay in January 1905 and 1908, but few have been found close to shore in recent years. Instead, this species has been found to be somewhat regular in deep water well offshore in winter.

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti* (66, 2). Single males were at the Iron Mt. Pumping Plant, SBE, 30 Oct 1996 (EAC†; 1997-017) and in the Tijuana R. valley, SD, 18 Oct 1997 (GMcC; 1997-185). The vast majority of accepted records are from the desert interior; coastally, six of eight records are from the Tijuana R. valley.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD *Cyanthus latirostris* (52, 2). An immature male was at Weldon, KER, 1-4 Oct 1997 (MTH†, JCW†; 1997-209; Figure 6), and an adult male was in the Tijuana R. valley, SD, 5-8 Oct 1997 (CGE, GMcC; 1997-162).



Figure 9. Immature Mourning Warbler, *Oporornis philadelphia* (1997-157), Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, 25 Sep 1997.

Photo by Kimball L. Garrett

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER *Empidonax flaviventris* (11, 4). Single individuals were at Galileo Hill, KER, 11 Sep 1996 (JLD, MO'B; 1997-019) and 21 Sep 1997 (MTH†; 1997-207). Another was near Cantil, KER, 24 Sep 1997 (MTH†; 1997-208), and a first-year bird (probably a male from measurements) was banded at SE Farallon I., SF, 10 Sep 1997 (GP; PPT; 1997-198). All but two accepted records are from SE Farallon I. (five) or Kern County (four).

Sightings of this species are always treated with caution. Although neither of the two 1997 birds in Kern County was heard vocalizing, detailed study of these birds by a knowledgeable observer and extremely close photos allowed similar species to be eliminated. Heindel and Pyle (1999) covered the identification of the Western (*E. difficilis*) and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers in the field and included color photos of all three of the individuals recorded in 1997; another photo of the 1997 Galileo Hill bird was published in *Field Notes* 52:126. With prolonged excellent views, observers experienced with these species may be able to distinguish even silent Yellow-bellied Flycatchers from their congeners in the field. Photos, however, are often necessary for some characters (e.g., primary spacing) to be evaluated adequately.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (45, 7). One was on Pt. Loma, SD, 12 Apr–1 May 1997 (PAG; GMcC; 1997-078). There are no records of presumed spring migrants or "overshoots" in California, as all previous records in

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April or May were known to involve overwintering birds. Given that the bird was present for at least two weeks and that an unidentified *Myiarchus* was seen at this location on 19 Jan 1997, the bird probably overwintered locally. More expected fall and winter birds were in Bishop, INY, 7–11 Nov 1997 (DbP; JH†, TH; 1997-205), Corona del Mar, ORA, 16 Nov 1997 (JEP; TEW; 1998-018), Half Moon Bay, SM, 1 Dec 1997 (RST; BMcK†; 1997-212), Santa Cruz, SCZ, 9 Dec 1997–14 Mar 1998 (SGe; JM, JDP; 1998-062), Lake Merced, SF, 21–30 Dec 1997 (PJM; 1998-092), and Lake Forest, ORA, 21 Dec 1997–24 Jan 1998 (TEW; 1998-066). Narrow rusty edging at the bases of the outer webs of the rectrices, typically present on Dusky-capped Flycatchers that have been observed in the state (Patten and Erickson 1994, Erickson and Terrill 1996), was noted on all but the Pt. Loma bird. This rusty edging is typical of juvenile (but not adult) *M. t. olivascens*, the race that has been collected in the state (Roberson 1986) and that is geographically closest to California (Howell and Webb 1995, Pyle 1997).

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER *Myiodynastes luteiventris* (12, 1). One at Bodega Bay, SON, 27–29 Sep 1997 (DMM; AME, KH, LL, JMt, JM, BDP, MMR†; 1997-138) gave northern California its third accepted record (the previous two having been in Marin County) and the northernmost ever recorded on the West Coast. The apparent lack of a yellow crown patch, noted by several observers, suggested an immature. Photos and descriptions eliminated the similar Streaked Flycatcher (*M. maculatus*) of Central and South America (see Howell and Webb 1995). This bird had an extensive pale base to the lower mandible, a character thought by some to be more typical of *maculatus* (Howell and Webb 1995, Pyle 1997), although it may be of limited use in identification of immatures (Roberson 1986, S. N. G. Howell pers. comm.).

COUCH'S KINGBIRD *Tyrannus couchii* (1, 1). California's first was in Fullerton, ORA, 31 Dec 1997–21 Feb 1998 (JHr, JEP§; CA, CB, TRC, MiF, SRG§, KLG, KGi§, MTH, RL, MJM, CAM, GMcC, JM, MAP, RWR, DR†, MMR†, MSM†, DGS, JWet†, TEW, JOZ§; 1998-001); photos appeared in *Field Notes* 52:258, 270. On the basis of its rounded primary tips and buff edging on the uppertail coverts, the bird was thought to be a first-year individual (Pyle 1997). Understandably reported as a Tropical Kingbird (*T. melancholicus*) initially, this bird was correctly identified as a Couch's by its distinctive vocalizations. The most common call was a repeated "kip" or "keep", although the species' rolling "breer" and other calls were given occasionally. All these calls were very different from the staccato twittering typical of the Tropical Kingbird, and these differences are reliable in distinguishing the two species (Phillips 1994). Some observers noted a somewhat shorter bill and brighter olive upperparts than are shown by most Tropical Kingbirds. Although these features support the identification as Couch's, neither is diagnostic in itself, and the conclusive field identification of birds within this species pair relies on vocalizations.

The Couch's Kingbird breeds no closer to California than southern Texas and eastern Mexico. It is not a long-distance migrant, but at least some populations show seasonal movements (Howell and Webb 1995). The only previous records of vagrancy in the United States W of Texas were of single birds in New Mexico 23–30 Sep 1985 (*Am. Birds* 40:153) and 24 Feb–10 Apr 1998 (*Field Notes* 52:370). Birders observing silent Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds in California are encouraged to use taped calls in an attempt to elicit a response from, and positively identify, such birds; the Fullerton bird responded aggressively to commercial Couch's Kingbird recordings. Incidentally, a bird collected at Harper Dry Lake, SBE, 27 Sep 1990 (*Am. Birds* 45:153) was thought perhaps to be a Couch's Kingbird, but the specimen was identified by Melvin Traylor, Steven W. Cardiff, and J. V. Remsen, Jr., as a Tropical (Patten, in comments).

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD *Tyrannus crassirostris* (13, 1). One at Pomona, LA,

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30 Oct 1997–21 Feb 1998 (TEW; TPB, TRC, JGr, GMcC, RWR, DR, MSM, DSt, SW; 1997-203) returned for its sixth consecutive winter at this location. On 14 Jan 1997, the previous winter, it was joined by a second individual (TPB, SW; 1996-157A). Some members were initially concerned about the second individual because it was observed on only one date, whereas the first bird was seen throughout the winter. However, the descriptions of the second bird on 14 Jan 1997 were diagnostic for this species, and another birder was rumored to have seen two Thick-billed Kingbirds together at this location in November 1996.

*SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER *Tyrannus forficatus* (100, 3). A probable adult male was at Long Beach, LA, 19 Jan–22 Feb 1997 (JFt, JMt, JM, SN, MAP†, RWR, MSM†, SBT; 1997-062), a previously unpublished individual was at San Clemente I., LA, 29 Apr 1997 (JMr; 1997-080), and an apparent first-winter female was at Murrieta, RIV, 14 Dec 1997–2 Jan 1998 (TRC, MiF, CH‡, WKL†, GMcC, MAP, CER; 1997-200). This species has been recorded in the state during every month of the year, and it has even nested (hybridizing with a Western Kingbird) at Needles, SBE, in 1979 and 1983 (Bevier 1990, Rosenberg et al. 1991). The Committee will not review records after 1997.

WHITE-EYED VIREO *Vireo griseus* (36, 2). A singing male near Cantil, KER, 26 May 1997 (MTH†; 1997-110) was Kern's fifth (all in spring); a color photo appeared in *Field Notes* 51:938. A singing male in Modesto, STA, 1 Jun 1997 (HMR; JGa; 1998-166) provided the first record for the Central Valley and the only inland record for northern California outside Mono County, which has three records. Approximately 75% of accepted records are from spring (8 May to late June).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO *Vireo flavifrons* (67, 4). A singing male was at Westminster, ORA, 29–30 May 1997 (RAE, RL; 1997-101), and individuals of unknown sex were at Westhaven, HUM, 27 Sep–1 Oct 1996 (GjH, TL; 1997-053), Redondo Beach, LA, 18 May 1997 (IH; 1997-123; previously unpublished), and the Prado Basin, RIV, 10 Sep 1997 (JEP; 1998-017).

*PHILADELPHIA VIREO *Vireo philadelphicus* (108, 5). Individuals NW of Ferndale, HUM, 2 Oct 1996 (SMcA†; 1997-052) and at Montaña de Oro S.P., SLO, 10 Oct 1996 (JMC; 1997-021), N. Haiwee Reservoir, INY, 15 Oct 1996 (JH, TH; 1997-020), and Carpinteria Creek, SBA, 27 Sep–4 Oct 1997 (BS; MSM, TEW; 1997-141) fit the species' predominant pattern of vagrancy (brief stopovers in late September and early October). One at Irvine, ORA, 24 Oct–14 Dec 1997 (JEP; NBB, RL, MJSM, MSM, TEW; 1997-180), however, was unusual both for the length of its stay and for remaining into December. Previous December records at Harbor L., LA, 30 Dec 1978–12 Jan 1979 (Luther et al. 1983) and Huntington Beach, ORA, 26 Nov 1982–1 Jan 1983 (Morlan 1985) were likely of individuals attempting to overwinter, and the Irvine bird may have been doing the same. The only Philadelphia Vireo known to have overwintered in the state was in Goleta, SBA, 14 Feb–17 Mar 1992 (Heindel and Patten 1996). The number of accepted records indicates that this species is a regular, though rare, component of California's avifauna, and records after 1998 will not be reviewed.

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO *Vireo flavoviridis* (55, 7). The first inland record for northern California was provided by an individual at the Cosumnes R. Preserve, SAC, 2 Oct 1994 (JML, JAT; 1994-142). This record met resistance because of concerns about elements of the description and the lack of any previous records from this part of the state, but in the fourth round all but one member voted to accept. Presumably different individuals on the Oxnard Plain, VEN, were at Hueneme Road 20–22 Sep 1997 (TEW; 1998-067) and Laguna Road 27–30 Sep 1997 (TEW; NBB, GMcC; 1997-159). Others were at Huntington Beach, ORA, 20 Sep 1996 (CAM, JEP; 1996-171), Pt. Reyes, MRN, 7–8 Oct 1996 (GHF, JMR; 1997-050), Pescadero, SM,

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25–28 Sep 1997 (BMcK†, FT; JM; 1997-139), and the N jetty of Humboldt Bay, HUM, 14–18 Oct 1997 (DFx; 1997-149). All seven were described as having brown or dark eyes, indicating first-fall birds. Although the age of every Yellow-green Vireo in the state has not been determined, the only obvious adult (as indicated by plumage and a bright red eye, depicted in Pyle and McCaskie 1992) was at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 30 Sep 1988.

BLUE JAY *Cyanocitta cristata* (11, 1). One at Willow Creek, HUM, 2 Dec 1997 to about 7 Mar 1998 (BB; MiF, RLeV†, MMR, DGS; 1997-191; Figure 7) was in its first year, as indicated by the lack of dark barring on the exposed alula in the photo submitted (Pyle 1997). Six of the last seven accepted records have been along the coast from Sonoma County north.

SEDGE WREN *Cistothorus platensis* (5, 1). Southern California's second was at Pt. Mugu, VEN, 26–27 Oct 1997 (CVP, DVP; NBB, GMcC, MSM†, LSa†, SS; 1997-171). The only previous record for the southern part of the state was from Huntington Beach, ORA, 15–17 Oct 1991 (Patten et al. 1995). Although the Pt. Mugu bird was reportedly observed 28 Oct, it was not seen by most of the birders searching on that date, and a majority of members worried about confusion with a buffy Marsh Wren (*C. palustris*) present then. A photo of this bird was published in *Field Notes* 52:127.

DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (9, 4). An unprecedented influx brought four to California in October 1997, nearly doubling the number of state records. The first was 10 miles NNW of California City, KER, 4–5 Oct 1997 (MTH†; DVB, GMcC, MSM, JCW†; 1997-143); a color photo of this bird appeared in *Field Notes* 52:140. Two in Santa Cruz, SCZ, one at Antonelli Pond 13–22 Oct 1997 (SGe, DR; KB, LC†, JCo, BED, AME, MiF, RFo, SH, LL‡, BMcK†, JM, DS, JAT; 1997-166) and another nearby at Bethany Curve Parkway 24 Oct 1997 (SGe; 1997-181), were thought to be different individuals by a majority of members. Although the birds were not seen concurrently, the 1.5-mile separation of these two locations, coupled with the obvious influx of Dusky Warblers at the time, led most Committee members to conclude that these were different individuals. A photo of the Antonelli Pond individual appeared in *Field Notes* 52:123. Another was banded at Palomar, MRN, 18–19 Oct 1997 (SNGH†; 1997-174; Figure 8). The significant movement of this species to the west coast during the fall of 1997 also brought two to Alaska (at Gambell and Middleton I.), the first for that state in 10 years (*Field Notes* 52:1079–110). The only Dusky Warblers found in the Americas outside Alaska and California have been in Baja California, where single birds were recorded 15 Oct 1991 near Maneadero and 20–23 Oct 1995 at Cataviña (Howell and Webb 1995, *Field Notes* 50:116). Although the Dusky and Arctic (*P. borealis*) warblers are the only species of *Phylloscopus* that have been recorded in California, other Asian species could occur as vagrants, and any *Phylloscopus* seen in the state should be described in detail. The identification of Dusky Warbler vis-à-vis similar species was discussed by Erickson and Terrill (1996); see also Lewington et al. (1991), Jonsson (1993), and Leader (1995).

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe* (10, 1). A female or immature at Bodega Bay, SON, 26 Sep 1995 (LSp, SSp†; 1995-116) was initially documented only by two photographs and information on the date, location, and observers (a written description was added after the third round). All members agreed that the bird was a wheatear, with Northern being by far the most probable. The Isabelline (*O. isabellina*) and Black-eared (*O. hispanica*) wheatears can appear similar to the Northern in some plumages and have been recorded as vagrants in western Europe (Clement 1987), but no wheatears other than the Northern have been recorded in North America (AOU 1998). Through the first three rounds of voting, opinions were split among three camps: those who thought the photos eliminated species other than the Northern, those who thought the photos might not eliminate other species but who were willing to accept the bird as a Northern on the basis of probability of

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occurrence, and those who thought the photos did not eliminate other species and who were unwilling to accept the bird as a Northern primarily on probability. Eventually, the reasons why other wheatears could be eliminated were discussed in detail, and the record was accepted unanimously in the fourth round.

This record highlights a philosophical difference in the approach of Committee members when evaluating records likely of one species from its previous history of occurrence but that may not eliminate other, much less probable species. For example, some members are willing to accept records of the King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*), Mongolian Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*), Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, and Yellow Wagtail (see Records Not Accepted) even though documentation may not conclusively eliminate very similar species that are much less likely to occur in California, such as the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), Greater Sand-Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*), Streaked Flycatcher, and Citrine Wagtail (*Motacilla citreola*), respectively. Other members are more reluctant to accept such records, arguing that despite the lack of previous records of these species from California (or North America in some cases), these other species could occur.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH *Catharus minimus* (19, 2). One was at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 29–30 Sep 1997 (CC, GWL; DGS; 1997-175). A first-fall male found dead in Encino, LA, sometime around 25 Oct 1997 (#LACM 110224; 1998-007) was the first for Los Angeles County. Measurements of this bird ruled out the similar Bicknell's Thrush (*C. bicknelli*), and the cool gray-brown upperparts and tail of both birds suggested *minimus* rather than *bicknelli* (Ouellet 1993, McLaren 1995).

GRAY CATBIRD *Dumetella carolinensis* (85, 4). A singing male was at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, 7–10 Jun 1997 (DR; 1997-112), and individuals were at Desert Center, RIV, 28 Sep 1997 (MAP; 1997-160), Bishop, INY, 17–18 Oct 1997 (TH, DbP, JPa; 1997-206), and San Nicolas I., VEN, 26–27 Oct 1997 (DDJ; WW; 1997-182).

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba* (7, 5). Immatures were at SE Farallon I., SF, 10 Oct 1974 (PH†; 1977-169), Goleta, SBA, 9–11 Oct 1978 (LB, JLD, KLG, PEL†, GMcC, DR; 1978-130), Long Beach, LA, 4 Nov 1982–18 Jan 1983 (JBr, JLD, KLG, GMcC, ES†, REW; 1982-119), Moss Landing, MTY, 23 Dec 1988–21 Jan 1989 (DEG; JM, SWM, DEQ, DR†, FKS†; 1988-290), and Bolinas, MRN, 16 Nov 1996 (KH; 1997-032). For years the problem of identifying many basic-plumaged adult and most immature White and Black-backed wagtails was considered intractable. The first three records were previously accepted only as White/Black-backed Wagtails (Binford 1985, Roberson 1986) because they were not considered identifiable to species. The Moss Landing record was in circulation for nearly 10 years, and the Bolinas record was not accepted to species by more than eight members prior to the third round. Sibley and Howell (1998), however, clarified the identification of immatures and basic-plumaged adults of these two species, and this plus commentary by these authors on four of these records led to the acceptance of all five. Photos of the SE Farallon I., Long Beach, and Moss Landing birds show a dusky bar at the base of the secondaries. These photos, as well as detailed sketches of the Goleta and Bolinas birds, also show two well-defined white wing bars formed by dark-based coverts with white tips but limited white edging. During fall migration, when most or all immatures have at least some first basic coverts, this pattern indicates the immature (especially female) White Wagtail (Pyle 1997, Sibley and Howell 1998).

WHITE/BLACK-BACKED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba/lugens* (2, 1). Descriptions of a bird at the Pajaro R. mouth, SCZ/MTY, 3–11 Dec 1989 (EL; MiF, RK, GL, BMe; 1989-210) indicate one of these two species, but in the opinions of Sibley and Howell (1998) and all Committee members, details were insufficient to allow for a specific identification. Although one observer reported two individuals together, only one bird was described, and no members supported the presence of more than one bird.

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BLACK-BACKED WAGTAIL *Motacilla lugens* (9, 1). An immature, probably a male, was at Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, 1 Oct 1989 (DBef, JDi†, KEM; 1989-130). This record was in circulation for nearly a decade before the article by Sibley and Howell (1998), as well as commentary on the record by these authors, convinced the Committee that the bird could be positively identified as a Black-backed. Immature Black-backed Wagtails can be similar to adult female White Wagtails. The gray (not black) postocular stripe, however, suggested that the bird was an immature, and the extensively dark rump and dark lateral scapulars contrasting with a paler gray back, apparent lack of dark bases to the first basic median coverts, limited amount of gray in the greater coverts mostly confined to the outer coverts, and uniform white wing panel formed by the extensively white greater coverts, tertial edging, and bases of the secondaries confirmed the identification.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT *Anthus spragueii* (26, 1). A well-documented first-year bird at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 10-18 Oct 1997 (MiF, EDG†, JH†, TH, GMcC, MAP, DR†, MJSM, MSM†, LSa†, DGS, BESt; 1997-164) furnished only the second Inyo County record; a photo appeared in *Field Notes* 52:127.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora pinus* (25, 4). A first-year male was at Butterbredt Spring, KER, 8 Jun 1997 (MTH†, JCW†; 1997-109), a first-year bird was in the San Gabriel Mts. (Big Rock Creek), LA, 21 Jun 1997 (KLG; 1998-191), a probable female was in the San Gabriel Mts. (Switzer Picnic Area), LA, 22 Jun 1997 (ABi; 1997-153), and an adult male was banded at Victorville, SBE, 14 Sep 1997 (SJM†, SJP; 1997-128; photo in *Field Notes* 52:128).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora chrysoptera* (59, 4). A male was at California City, KER, 31 May 1997 (MTH†, JCW†; 1997-111; photo in *Field Notes* 51:929), a female was in Huntington Beach, ORA, 18 Sep 1997 (RFe, JEP, MSM, SS, JWe; 1997-133), a first-fall female was at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, SBE, 19-25 Oct 1997 (MAP, JCB; 1997-176), and a first-fall male was in Mission Viejo, ORA, 22-23 Nov 1997 (JEP; GMcC; 1998-019).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER *Dendroica dominica* (82, 6). An individual at Ferndale, HUM, 29 Dec 1996-Feb 8 1997 (GSL; 1997-092) showed obvious yellow in the supraloral area and was most likely of the nominate race from the southeastern U.S. This race seems to be quite rare in the state, with only a few records from late fall and winter. A male at Pt. Loma, SD, 10 Apr 1997 (PAG; 1997-117), apparent first-year males at Mesquite Springs, INY, 24 May 1997 (JH†, TH, MAP; 1997-097) and in the San Gabriel Mts., LA, 26 May 1997 (JFs; 1997-118), and an individual in Huntington Beach, ORA, 29 May 1997 (NBB, MSM; 1997-135) showed characters of the more regularly occurring race *albilora*, although some *dominica* can show white lores (Jaramillo 1993). A previously unpublished individual in Eureka, HUM, 10 Oct 1997 (GSL; 1997-147) was not identified to race.

GRACE'S WARBLER *Dendroica graciae* (33, 1). One at Montaña de Oro S.P., SLO, 24-26 Oct 1997 (JSR; 1998-036) provided the northernmost accepted coastal record at the time, although a record from Jack's Peak, MTY, during the winter of 1998-1999 has been accepted and will be published in an upcoming report.

PINE WARBLER *Dendroica pinus* (55, 3). An immature female at the Iron Mt. Pumping Plant, SBE, 24 Oct 1995 (EAC†; 1996-056) was documented only by two photographs that, in the initial opinions of some members, may not have eliminated other warblers (such as the Yellow-rumped, *D. coronata*). Because of these concerns, this record was not accepted until the fourth round, illustrating the importance of even brief written descriptions accompanying photographs submitted to the Committee. Apparently overwintering individuals were in Long Beach, LA, 25 Nov 1997-10 Jan 1998 (KGi; JM, RWR, MJSM, MSM, TEW; 1997-193) and Fullerton, ORA, 1 Dec 1997-24 Jan 1998 (JEP; TRC, MTH, GMcC, MAP, DR, MJSM, MSM, DGS; 1997-

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194). Both of the latter birds were reported by several observers to be first-year males, although some thought the Fullerton bird might have been a female. Of wood-warblers currently on the review list, the Pine is the one that overwinters in the state most frequently.

CERULEAN WARBLER *Dendroica cerulea* (15, 1). A first-spring male at Birchum Canyon, INY, 23 May 1997 (JHf, TH; JPa, SBT; 1997-106) furnished a first county record, although one was not far to the north at Oasis, MNO, 27 May 1974 (Luther et al. 1979).

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helmitheros vermivorus* (83, 2). Individuals were at Vandenberg Air Force Base, SBA, 5 Nov 1996 (BH; 1997-024) and in Westminster, ORA, 30 Oct 1997–28 Feb 1998 (JEP; NBB, RFe, MSM, DSt, TEW; 1997-179).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER *Oporornis agilis* (79, 1). A first-year female was banded on SE Farallon I., SF, 24–27 Sep 1996 (PP†; 1997-035). Owing to the paucity of vegetative cover and thorough coverage of this island by birders and banders, SE Farallon I. has hosted 45 of the state's accepted records of this secretive species. In contrast, there are only 10 accepted records for all of Sonoma, Marin, mainland San Francisco, and San Mateo counties, the areas geographically closest to SE Farallon I. Clearly, only a small percentage of those occurring on the mainland are detected.

MOURNING WARBLER *Oporornis philadelphia* (103, 4). An individual was at Galileo Hill, KER, 15–18 Sep 1994 (JLD†, MTH†; JAl†, MOC, GMcC; 1994-154), an adult female was on SE Farallon I., SF, 26 Sep 1996 (PP†; 1997-036), an immature was captured and photographed in hand in Los Angeles, LA, 24–28 Sep 1997 (KLG†; ABi, RL, MSM, JOZ; 1997-157; Figure 9), and another immature (probably female) was photographed on the Oxnard Plain, VEN, 14 Sep 1997 (TEW†; DDJ; 1998-065). The Galileo Hill record met resistance in the first three rounds owing to differences in the descriptions submitted and concern over the whitish throat and fairly broad whitish eye arcs in some of the photos (apparently the result of flash photography; see *Field Notes* 49:102). However, the bird's diagnostic call notes were heard, and photos taken in natural light, showing a yellowish throat and a thin broken yellow-buff eyering, were obtained prior to the fourth round, when the record was accepted.

The mean number of accepted records per year from 1980 to 1997 (4.9) is higher than for any other species on the review list. Also, the number of records from SE Farallon I. (48) suggests that the Mourning Warbler occurs regularly in the state but is poorly detected on the mainland (e.g., only 11 records from Sonoma, Marin, mainland San Francisco, and San Mateo counties) owing primarily to its secretive nature. Nevertheless, this species is retained on the review list in large part because of continuing difficulties many birders have separating it from the MacGillivray's (*O. tolmiei*) and Orange-crowned (*Vermivora celata*) warblers and Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*).

SCARLET TANAGER *Piranga olivacea* (94, 2). A male was in Wilmington, LA, 25–26 Oct 1996 (DMH†; KLG; 1997-027). Kern County's second was a female in Inyokern 31 Oct 1997 (SS†; 1997-195). Three quarters of the state's accepted records are from fall, most in October and November.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris* (58, 3). One (probably an immature female) at the Big Sur R. mouth, MTY, 9 Oct 1996 (JBo; 1997-046) was the first for Monterey County. Other females or immatures were at Carpinteria Cr., SBA, 13 Sep 1997 (DCo; RAH; 1997-190) and Huntington Beach, ORA, 13 Sep 1997 (NBB, MSM; 1997-154).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW *Ammodramus leconteii* (28, 1). A singing male at the N end of L. Earl, DN, 21–25 May 1997 (DFx, MMR†; 1997-095) was only California's third in spring; a color photo appeared in *Field Notes* 51:938. This record is remarkably consistent with the dates of the previous two spring records, both

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from Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 21–24 May 1977 (Luther 1980) and 24–25 May 1981 (Binford 1985).

SMITH'S LONGSPUR *Calcarius pictus* (5, 1). One at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 4–11 Oct 1997 (NBB, MiF, KLG†, EDG†, JH†, TH, GMcC, MAP, DR†, MJSM, MSM†, LSa†, DGS; 1997-163) was sexed as a female by the buff (not white) edges on the median coverts and aged as an immature by the tapered (rather than squared-off or broadly truncated) outer rectrices. A color photo was published in *Field Notes* 52:144, and four were in Dunn and Beadle (1998).

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* (62, 4). On SE Farallon I., SF, a first-fall female occurred 29 Oct 1996 (PP†; 1997-038), a first-fall male 29–30 Oct 1996 (PP; 1997-039). One at the Mattole R. mouth, HUM, 4–10 Nov 1996 (DFx; 1997-047) was the only documented individual of four or five reportedly in Humboldt County in the fall of 1996. A male at Asilomar S.B., MTY, 25–26 Nov 1997 (JHa; DR; 1997-196) was Monterey County's second and one of the southernmost ever found in the state. Only records from Pt. Lobos, MTY, 22 Oct–1 Nov 1985 (Bevier 1990) and the Kelso Valley, KER, 23–27 Dec 1978 (Luther et al. 1983) are from farther south.

COMMON GRACKLE *Quiscalus quiscula* (39, 3). Males at the Iron Mt. Pumping Plant, SBE, 24–25 Oct 1996 (AH; 1997-029) and in Torrance, LA, 3–24 Mar 1997 (DMH†; RL; 1997-086), as well as an individual in Bishop, INY, 14 Dec 1997 (JMF†; 1998-064), were all of the expected Bronzed race *versicolor*. A female was reported accompanying the male in Torrance. Although many members thought this bird was likely identified correctly, it was not described in detail, and most members accepted only the male.

BLACK ROSY-FINCH *Leucosticte atrata* (7, 3). Three individuals were at feeders in Aspendell, INY: a first-year female 11–15 Feb 1995 (GMcC; TH, RAR, ANW†; 1995-033), an apparent male 1 Apr 1995 (NF; 1995-033A), and a female 5 Apr 1997 (SKc, SJP; 1997-099). The females were distinguished from the many Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches (*L. tephrocotis*) by their sooty gray or blackish (rather than brownish) upperparts and more limited gray in the postocular area. Initially, some Committee members considered the possibility that the February and April 1995 sightings were of the same bird, assuming that the appearance of pink in the wings, belly, and rump on the April bird (this color being absent on the bird seen in February) was a result of a seasonal change in plumage. However, this species has no prealternate molt (Pyle 1997), and therefore these differences in plumage were unlikely to be the result of wear, implying there were two birds.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED

ARCTIC LOON *Gavia arctica*. One reported by two observers at Mendocino Headlands S.P., MEN, 22 Dec 1994 (1998-129) received no support. One observer was unsure of the identification, which was based entirely on the white flanks. Some members pointed out that the Pacific Loon (*G. pacifica*) may show this mark depending on its position in the water, while others felt that the eye located in the white part of the face and the pale back suggested a Red-throated Loon (*G. stellata*). For more information on Arctic Loon identification see Reinking and Howell (1993).

YELLOW-BILLED LOON *Gavia adamsii*. One at Morro Bay, SLO, 6 Jan 1995 (1995-019) went four circulations before failing in a 6–4 split decision. The bill was described as "pale bluish-green with a yellow cast in the center," which most members felt was incorrect.

SHY ALBATROSS *Thalassarche cauta*. One reported as the race *T. c. salvini* seen from shore off Pt. Piedras Blancas, SLO, 28 May 1996 (1996-093) by an

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experienced seabird researcher failed in a split decision on the third circulation. Although the race *T. c. cauta* has been photographed off Oregon (*Field Notes* 51:109, Hunter and Bailey 1997, 1998) and collected off Washington (Slipp 1952), the present record was judged inadequate as a first for California. Some members were concerned that the distance of 2.2 n. miles was too far for necessary details to be seen with the 25 × 150 optics used in this observation. Members felt that the claimed subspecies could not be reasonably inferred from the documentation. Recognition of *salvini* as a species was proposed by Robertson and Nunn (1998). Nevertheless, most members felt the observer probably did see a Shy Albatross *sensu lato*. An individual photographed off Point Arena, MEN, 24 Aug 1999, showing the characters of *T. c. cauta*, is currently under review.

PARKINSON'S PETREL *Procellaria parkinsoni*. One seen 23.5 n. miles SSW of SE Farallon I., SF, 7 Jun 1996 (1996-076) by two experienced seabird researchers eventually failed on the fourth circulation by a vote of 6-4. The Committee thought unanimously that this bird was a member of the genus *Procellaria* and probably a Parkinson's. The identification of members of this genus, however, particularly the distinction between Parkinson's and the Westland Petrel (*P. westlandica*), is notoriously difficult. These two species differ primarily in size, with the Parkinson's being about the size of a Pink-footed Shearwater (*Puffinus creatopus*), whereas the Westland is substantially larger. The White-chinned Petrel (*P. aequinoctialis*) is also larger than Parkinson's and lacks the dark tip to the bill shown by the other two (Marchant and Higgins 1990). Parkinson's has been collected off Mexico (Jehl 1974) and is thus more expected than the Westland or White-chinned, but it would still be a first for California and the United States. Ultimately, the brevity of observation (less than a minute on a moving boat), initial confusion over the identification (the bird was originally thought to be a Westland Petrel), and the inherent difficulty of judging relative size (cf. Grant 1983) weighed heavily against the record.

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus pacificus*. One dark-morph bird seen from shore off Pt. Dume, LA, 21 Dec 1997 (1998-005) by a single observer failed primarily because the sighting was distant and brief and because some parts of the description (e.g., pale area around the bill) were inconsistent with this species. There remain only three accepted records for California, all documented by photographs. Field identification and variation in this species was discussed by Stallcup et al. (1988).

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*. One on Monterey Bay, MTY, 27 Aug 1977 (1979-029A) was not accepted previously (Dunn 1988). One of the observers successfully sought recirculation at the 1999 annual meeting, arguing that the pattern of records since this species was first fully documented in 1993 made this earlier record more plausible and less significant. At the time it would have been a first record for the North Pacific Ocean. It failed, however, by a 2-8 vote on the first round. Supporters felt that the all-white undertail coverts combined with the relatively short tail were adequate to establish the identification. All members agreed that the bird was likely a Manx Shearwater, but the details written at the time were sparse, and criteria for separating Manx from several similar species had not yet been worked out. Initial confusion over the bird's identity and the brevity of the observation were strong negatives. One seen on Monterey Bay, MTY, 3 Aug 1996 (1997-060) failed on the second round by a split (4-6) decision. During the brief observation from a boat, the observer failed to note the color of the undertail coverts and later recommended against accepting the record. Unfortunately, other observers who saw the white undertail coverts failed to submit details. Distinguishing the Manx Shearwater from similar species was discussed by Howell et al. (1994) and by Roberson (1996).

MASKED BOOBY *Sula dactylatra*. The documentation of an adult 23 n. miles W of Pt. Pinos, MTY, 29 Aug 1997 (1997-197) was frustrating to the Committee. The

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observer, highly competent and experienced with seabirds, provided a brief description that failed to address the bill, head, or tail. The underwings were incorrectly described as all white, and the written account was prepared three months after the observation. Nevertheless, the Committee was generally convinced this was either a Red-footed or a Masked Booby, likely the latter.

AGAMI HERON *Agamia agami*. One reported from the Santa Maria River mouth, SLO, 5–12 May 1997 (1997-072) received no support. The included sketch closely resembled a Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*). The apparent large size may have been an illusion (cf. Grant 1983) or possibly the result of a Green Heron hybridizing with another species. A juvenile Tricolored Heron was another suggestion. The details failed to note the extremely long thin bill, chestnut belly, and amber eye color (contra Howell and Webb 1995) of the Agami Heron. The open habitat was wrong for this secretive, sedentary species (Howell and Webb 1995), which has been claimed once before in California but not accepted (Luther 1980).

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*. An immature seen with the adult at Grimes, COL, 4 Jan 1996 (1996-037; see accepted record above) failed by a split decision on the third circulation. An adult and an immature at L. Mendocino, MEN, 10 Dec 1994 (1998-128) failed on the first round by a vote of 4–6. The described vocalizations included a single “honk” upon takeoff as well as soft whistles. Members noted that the Tundra Swan (*C. columbianus*) often gives a single honk while Trumpeters almost invariably give a double honk or bugle. Distinguishing the Trumpeter and Tundra swans is notoriously difficult (Patten and Heindel 1994).

MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis*. An adult at Montaña de Oro S.P., SLO, 1 Oct 1996 (1997-009) failed by a split decision on the second circulation. The bird was apparently high aloft and seen briefly; one observer was unsure of the identification, and certain aspects of the descriptions and behavior suggested that the bird may have been a distant immature Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*). The Mississippi Kite is casual along the coast in fall with only three accepted records, all of immatures, at that season.

HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*. One at Jawbone Canyon, KER, 15 Jun 1993 (1996-080G) was said to have “red-orange” underparts, and the description did not mention the white band at the tip of the tail or the bird's behavior. Some members suggested that an immature Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) may have been seen.

***ZONE-TAILED HAWK** *Buteo albonotatus*. One seen after sunset, without binoculars, for less than 10 seconds from a moving vehicle along a freeway in Los Angeles, LA, 23 Oct 1994 (1994-203) eventually failed on the fourth circulation. One at Lake Casitas, VEN, 21 Dec 1996 (1997-084) was inadequately documented. It was probably the same bird that wintered in the Ventura–Ojai area from 1993–94 to 1995–96 and two years later in 1997–98 (see under Accepted Records). It was reportedly seen by many observers 12 Oct–21 Dec 1996 (*Field Notes* 51:801). Additional documentation is welcome despite the species having been removed from the review list.

CRESTED CARACARA *Caracara plancus*. An immature seen by a single observer near Westmorland, IMP, 14 Dec 1993 (1993-196) failed on the fourth circulation in a 6–4 decision. One of the votes against the record was on the grounds of questionable natural occurrence, whereas the other three members felt the documentation was inadequate to add this species to the state list. It is currently on the Supplemental List on the basis of a bird photographed at Mono L., MNO, in fall 1987 (Roberson 1993). The Imperial Valley record encountered resistance because it would be new to the state and the past pattern of records does not suggest natural occurrence. A caracara reported subsequently (not yet reviewed) from nearby Brawley 31 Jan 1997 showed signs of recent captivity (*Field Notes* 51:802).

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EURASIAN KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*. One female at Humboldt Bay, HUM (1996-005), reportedly boarded a ship bound from Japan. According to Palmer (1988), it was turned over about 1978 to Humboldt State University, where it was held in captivity. It was reportedly examined in 1979 and thought to be of the subspecies *F. t. interstictus* from its dark coloration. The eight duplicate slides received of the bird in captivity show a bird with an all-brown back and short tail, larger than an Aplomado Falcon (*F. femoralis*) in the same cage. Committee members were unsure exactly which species of falcon was involved, although the possibility of a Lanner Falcon (*F. biarmicus*) or a hybrid with a Lanner Falcon was suggested. However, the date stamped on the original slides was May 1973. Thus the submitted photographs were probably not of the same bird reported by Palmer.

YELLOW RAIL *Coturnicops noveboracensis*. One at Ukiah, MEN, 6-7 Apr 1993 (1998-133) received no support. The brief description submitted 5 years after the sighting indicated the bird was "straw color" rather than the dark color normally expected of a Yellow Rail. Also, the location and shape of the white wing patches were not given, and the described behavior (swimming in the open) is not typical of the Yellow Rail.

CARIBBEAN COOT *Fulica caribaea*. One photographed at Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, 13 Dec 1997 (1998-073) received no support. It was one of up to two individuals with enlarged frontal shields present at this site each winter since 1995. This is a known variant of the American Coot (*F. americana*; Roberson and Baptista 1988). The taxonomic validity of the Caribbean Coot is unclear (AOU 1998), but most individuals are indistinguishable from this variant of American Coot, which is not uncommon in California. For these reasons the Committee discourages submissions of the Caribbean Coot.

WILSON'S PLOVER *Charadrius wilsonia*. One seen at Ocean Beach, SD, 30 May 1997 (1997-113) received no support. Failure to mention the size of the bill, along with the fact that the bird fed on bread crumbs, doomed the record. It was suggested the bird may have been a Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*).

COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*. One heard and studied critically at Point Reyes, MRN, 9 Sep 1996 (1997-071) failed on the second round by a 4-6 vote. The highly qualified observer is experienced with this species and the similar Semipalmated Plover (*C. semipalmatus*). The voice transcription included diagnostic calls, and the physical description pointed toward this species. A slim majority, however, felt more tangible evidence was needed to add this species to the state list. Field separation of the Common Ringed from the Semipalmated Plover is notoriously difficult (Dunn 1993, Lakin and Rylands 1997). None of the other three observers submitted details corroborating the sighting, which would have been a first for the west coast S of Alaska. In general, the Committee takes a conservative stance with respect to single-observer sightings as first state records (cf. Crested Caracara).

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus palliatus*. One at Palos Verdes Peninsula, LA, (1997-045) was given a score of 20 by one of the observers using Jehl's (1985) character index, so it was considered a hybrid American × Black oystercatcher by the Committee.

PIED AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*. One reportedly photographed at the Salton Sea, IMP, Feb 1998 (1998-055) would have been a first for North America but received no support from the Committee. The exact location and date were unknown, even to the photographer. The bird in the photograph was a Pied Avocet but almost certainly a captive. It appeared to have clipped wings, and the clear water is unlike any known habitat at the Salton Sea. All submitted records must include the species, date,

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locale, and observer. If any element is questionable, the identification is not established. In this case the species was correct, but everything else was doubtful.

LONG-TOED STINT *Calidris subminuta*. Details of a juvenile reported at Abbott's Lagoon, MRN, 6-10 Aug 1996 (1996-112) were suggestive but inconclusive. This bird was reportedly seen by many observers, but descriptions were received from only three, and none of these appeared to be based on contemporaneous notes. There was also confusion with a bright Least Sandpiper (*C. minutilla*) showing a dark forehead, a character of the Long-toed, but also found in a minority of Least Sandpipers. Observers are cautioned that Least Sandpiper shows a great deal of individual variation, and many of its characters overlap with those of the Long-toed Stint (Patten and Daniels 1991). There remain only two acceptable records of this species S of Alaska (Paulson 1993).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*. One in basic plumage at Abbott's Lagoon, MRN, 14 Oct 1995 (1996-071) failed on the third circulation by a 4-6 vote. Supporters felt that the descriptions, including direct comparison with the Dunlin (*C. alpina*), could apply only to Curlew Sandpiper. Others were concerned that the submitted details were written 6 months after the observation and that the identification was made only when the bird flew, showing the white rump. Most species of *Calidris* show white on the sides of the rump and uppertail coverts, which may give the impression of a white rump when seen briefly or while in flight.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. An adult in basic plumage at Sunset State Beach, SCZ, 9 Nov 1996 (1996-149) failed narrowly on the fourth circulation by a 7-3 vote. Documentation from additional observers would be welcome.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*. Reports were as follows: One at MacKerricher S.P., MEN, 11 Mar 1997 (1997-105); one juvenile at Petaluma, SON, 15 Dec 1996 (1997-107); one specimen from Moss Landing, MTY, 28 Feb 1975 (#UCD WFB-464; 1997-003); one at San Clemente I., LA, 21 Mar 1997 (1997-081); and one at Anaheim, ORA, 8 Mar 1997 (1997-114). The Committee tabled all records of this species at its 1994 meeting (Heindel and Garrett 1995), anticipating a taxonomic change in which the Thayer's Gull (*L. thayeri*) would be lumped with the Iceland Gull. However, the expected taxonomic change did not occur, and the AOU (1998) continues to recognize the Iceland Gull as a separate species. Thus, at its 1998 meeting, the Committee decided to resume review of all submitted Iceland Gull records. These five are the first decisions since then. Other records, including those detailed by Heindel and Garrett (1995), are still under review. None of the five records reported here received much support. In most cases the descriptions were inadequate, but in the case of the Sonoma and Monterey County records, the possibility of a hybrid or intergrade between Kumlien's Iceland Gull (*L. g. kumlieni*) and Thayer's Gull could not be ruled out. The extent to which these taxa hybridize requires further study (AOU 1998), and the range of variation within *L. thayeri* and *L. g. kumlieni* remains uncertain (Zimmer 1991, Howell 1999).

It is thought that "pure" Iceland Gulls in juvenal plumage generally show (1) whitish tertials lacking extensive interior markings, (2) pale outer primaries concolor with or paler than the tertials and inner primaries and showing extensive white fringing, (3) pale secondaries without dark markings and not showing a dark secondary bar, (4) a pale tail without an extensive darker tail band, and (5) pale mantle feathers with limited dark internal markings (cf. Zimmer 1991). However, birds believed to be Iceland Gulls seen in winter on the Atlantic seaboard frequently do not exhibit all of these features. It is not known if this variability is a consequence of individual variation or introgression with *L. thayeri*. Thus, pale west coast birds matching presumed Iceland Gulls on the east coast are not automatically acceptable. The Sonoma and Monterey County records above fall into this category. The opposite situation occurs on the east coast

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where many sightings of Thayer's Gulls are questioned although they match presumed Thayer's on the west coast.

Juvenile *L. thayeri* may become much whiter toward the end of the winter because of bleaching and feather wear. That phenomenon may account for the appearance of some of the purported Iceland Gulls seen in California late in the winter. In any event, none of the five records reported here meets all the tentative criteria for a "pure" Iceland Gull as outlined above.

SLATY-BACKED GULL *Larus schistisagus*. One molting from second basic to second alternate plumage photographed at the Ventura Marina, VEN, 5 Feb 1995 (1995-053) received only three votes of endorsement. Identification of immatures of this species is still being worked out, and the problem is clouded in western North America by extensive hybridization between the Glaucous-winged Gull (*L. glaucescens*) and other species. Immatures of such hybrids may show an enormous amount of variation, the extent of which is unknown. Most Committee members and all outside experts from Alaska, Asia, and Europe agreed that there was nothing wrong with the bird for Slaty-backed Gull and that it may have been that species. But the lack of detailed information on the wing and tail pattern combined with lack of knowledge about variation in various hybrids precluded adding this species to the state list on the basis of this record. A photograph was published in *Field Notes* 49:199. Three additional records of this species are currently under consideration. For more information on identification and hybridization, see Goetz et al. (1986), Gustafson and Peterjohn (1994), Pyle (1997), and King and Carey (1999).

SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata*. An adult reported at Pt. Firmin, San Pedro, LA, 18 Aug 1996 (1997-016), thought possibly to be one of up to three birds at Bolsa Chica, ORA (see Accepted Records), failed on the second circulation. The distant views precluded a description of the head pattern, and the Bridled Tern (*S. anaethetus*) could not be eliminated. It would have been a first county record.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD *Cyananthus latirostris*. One reported in Huntington Beach, ORA, 1 Nov 1994 (1995-006) received eight accept votes on all four rounds, but the brevity of the description and the possibility of an aberrant pink-billed Anna's Hummingbird (rare but known to occur occasionally) prevented acceptance. Another hummingbird in Westchester, LA, 24 Sep 1996 (1997-018) was almost certainly of this species, as an experienced observer heard the bird give this species' distinctive call repeatedly. However, the bird was seen only briefly, without binoculars, and in poor light, and the coloration of the plumage and soft parts could not be evaluated to confirm the identification.

THREE-TOED WOODPECKER *Picoides tridactylus*. The description of a bird near Ukiah, MEN, 11 Apr 1993 (1998-131) included features suggesting this species, including a yellow cap and barring on the back. Hairy Woodpeckers (*P. villosus*), however, particularly juveniles, may have yellow or orange feathering instead of the typical red in the crown (Trochet et al. 1988, Kaufman 1993), and this bird was not described in detail sufficient to establish such an unusual occurrence. California's only accepted record of the Three-toed Woodpecker, from the Warner Mts., MOD, 2 Nov 1985 (Trochet et al. 1988, Bevier 1990), is currently being reevaluated.

GREATER PEWEE *Contopus pertinax*. A report of a bird at Brawley, IMP, 3 May 1997 (1997-115) consisted only of a brief, second-hand description. Most Committee members oppose accepting second-hand reports, and this one lacked sufficient detail to indicate that a Greater Pewee was seen. Another was reported at San Elijo Lagoon, SD, 1 May 1997 (1997-116). Both of these records would have been unprecedented in spring. Although overwintering Greater Pewees have remained as late as 14 Apr, none has stayed later, and there are no accepted records of birds thought to represent spring "overshoots" (although one at SE Farallon I. on 1 Jun

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1998 is currently under review). Many members thought the descriptions of both birds could have pertained to Olive-sided Flycatchers (*C. cooperi*), which can appear to lack white tufts on the sides of the rump and show a pale mandible, a somewhat crested head shape, and an olive-gray breast that appears to lack a white median stripe, characters usually associated more with the Greater Pewee.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Contopus virens*. The record of one at Los Osos, SLO, 21 Oct 1986 (1987-026A), previously not accepted (Pyle and McCaskie 1992), was reevaluated. Most members agreed that the bird was probably an Eastern Wood-Pewee, as repeated clear upslurred "pee-wee" calls and chip notes seemingly consistent with this species were described. However, most members thought that the information on the vocalizations (e.g., quality, cadence, pitch, and accenting) was insufficient to establish that these calls were outside the range of variation of the Western Wood-Pewee (*C. sordidulus*). Furthermore, descriptions of the bill suggested that the mandible was dark, a character shown by few Eastern Wood-Pewees but most Westerns.

ALDER FLYCATCHER *Empidonax alnorum*. The description of the plumage and "peep" calls of an *Empidonax* at Cosumnes R. Preserve, SAC, 15 Sep 1997 (1998-047) were apparently consistent with an Alder Flycatcher, but a majority of Committee members felt that the Willow Flycatcher (*E. traillii*) could not be eliminated. Plumage distinctions allowing the separation of most Willow and Alder Flycatchers in the hand have been identified (P. Unitt) but are not yet published. While the emphatic "peep" or "bik" calls of the Alder (versus the softer, more liquid "whit" of the Willow) may be diagnostic for this species (LeGrand 1979, Lehman 1985, Kaufman 1990), variation among Willow Flycatcher call notes may overlap somewhat with the calls of the Alder (Heindel 1997). Problems in transcription of these calls further frustrate evaluation of claims of calling Alder Flycatchers.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus crinitus*. The description of a bird in the Sepulveda Basin, LA, 15 Oct 1997 (1998-033) mentioned a bright yellow belly contrasting sharply with a dark gray breast, as well as a pinkish base to the mandible, features indicating this species. The back and head, however, were described as brown, with no mention of olive tones; this coloration is more typical of the Brown-crested Flycatcher (*M. tyrannulus*). In addition, other key features, such as tertial and rectrix pattern, were not described in detail, and a majority of Committee members were unwilling to support the record without additional detail.

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD *Tyrannus crassirostris*. Members not accepting a record from the Puente Hills, LA, 22 Apr 1995 (1995-43) noted the late spring date, the lack of any mention of the dark-headed, masked appearance typical of this species, and the entirely white (rather than pale yellowish) underparts. Supporters felt that the date was consistent with a lingering wintering bird and that a Thick-billed Kingbird in spring might be sufficiently worn that the yellow on the underparts would be difficult to detect. After four rounds, however, three members were still unwilling to accept.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO *Vireo solitarius*. Individuals were reported at Lassen Volcanic N.P., TEH, 9 Sep 1997 (1997-140) and San Pedro, LA, 26-29 Sep 1997 (1997-142 and 1998-123). Descriptions of both birds contained several features suggesting the Blue-headed Vireo, but most members felt that neither bird was described in sufficient detail to allow distinction from Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassinii*). Distinguishing some Cassin's and Blue-headed Vireos can be difficult, particularly in fall, when fresh, bright Cassin's (especially males) can appear similar to Blue-headed Vireos; see Heindel (1996) for identification criteria. The CBRC decided to review Blue-headed Vireo records from 1997 and later, and several accepted records will be discussed in the next report. At least some pre-1997 records will undergo some sort of review, and anyone who has observed this species in the state in any year is urged

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to submit documentation to the Committee.

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO *Vireo flavoviridis*. Individuals reported at Goleta, SBA, 28 Aug 1997 (1998-035) and Pt. Loma, SD, 28 Sep 1997 (1997-145) may have been Yellow-green Vireos, but most members thought that the Red-eyed Vireo (*V. olivaceus*) was not eliminated in either case. The Goleta bird preceded the earliest accepted record for the state by 11 days.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*. The description of one reported on the Carrizo Plain, SLO, 20 Sep 1997 (1997-136) was consistent with this species, and a number of members thought that the identification was likely correct. The documentation was not sufficiently detailed, however, to establish such an unusual inland record.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*. A calling individual seen only in flight at Tomales Bay, MRN, 4 Sep 1995 (1995-129) was thought by all members to have been either a Yellow or Citrine wagtail. The observer identified the bird as a Yellow from his experience with the calls of both of these species. However, some of the calls given by eastern Yellow Wagtails (the races most likely to account for California's records) are similar to those of the Citrine (Harris et al. 1989), and most Citrines recorded in Hong Kong give a flight call that is virtually inseparable from that of the Yellow (Leader 1996). Therefore, for individuals occurring in California, confident distinction of these species requires the assessment of plumage features (summarized by Leader 1996) that were not visible on the flying bird. Because few members thought that the details actually eliminated the Citrine, voting was split primarily along philosophical lines concerning the probability of occurrence of the two possible species. Those voting to accept as a Yellow Wagtail noted that the Citrine is unknown in western North America and that the location and time of year are consistent with previously accepted records of the Yellow Wagtail (all are coastal, between 27 Aug and 21 Sep). The four members who did not accept the record in the fourth round cited the precedent of a Citrine Wagtail in Mississippi in 1992 (*Am. Birds* 46:278, DeBenedictis 1995) and opined that the Citrine is a good candidate for vagrancy to the west coast by way of Siberia and Alaska. In the past the Committee accepted several essentially fly-over records of Yellow Wagtails if the call was accurately described by observers experienced with the species. The Citrine Wagtail, however, may not have been eliminated in all these cases, and the Committee may reevaluate previous claims of this species to ensure consistency.

GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER *Ptilogonys cinereus*. One was reported at Pt. Loma, SD, 4 Jun 1983 (1993-146). Although many members felt that the identification was probably correct, the observer was not sure whether the bird had yellow undertail coverts, and there was no description of a crest. These factors left such a rare species insufficiently documented in the opinions of most members, and some thought that another species, such as Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*), might have been involved.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora pinus*. A report of two on San Clemente I., LA, 15 Apr 1997 (1997-079) would have been unprecedented, both for the early date (24 days earlier than any accepted spring record) and for the presence of two birds together. All members felt that more thorough details were necessary for acceptance of such an exceptional record. The description of an individual reported at the Cosumnes R. Preserve, SAC, 15 Sep 1996 (1997-075) fit this species well, but the observation (2-3 seconds) was too brief in the opinions of a majority of members to establish an unprecedented Central Valley record. The only accepted inland record for northern California is of one at Bridgeport L., MNO, 18 Jun 1984 (Dunn 1988).

GRACE'S WARBLER *Dendroica graciae*. One reported at Chilao in the San Gabriel Mts., LA, 7 Sep 1997 (1997-022) was seen only "for a second" and was

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therefore understandably not described in detail. An individual had overwintered at this location the previous winter (Garrett and Singer 1998), but no members thought that the documentation was adequate to establish a second winter of occurrence. Another reported at Pt. Loma, SD, 27 Sep 1997 (1997-144) received little support.

PINE WARBLER *Dendroica pinus*. A report of two in the Sepulveda Basin, LA, 24 Sep 1996 (1997-023) would have represented the second earliest fall date, and the first record of two together, in the state. The Committee unanimously questioned the identification, as other species (e.g., Blackpoll Warbler, *D. striata*) were not eliminated. One reported at Little Lake, INY, 26 Apr 1997 (1997-119) was fairly well described. However, because this species is rare in the state both inland (only six records) and in spring (only single records on 7 Apr, 31 May, and 5-6 Jun), a majority of members desired more thorough documentation than was provided. The Committee recognizes that a number of records falling outside known patterns of spatiotemporal distribution of California birds are valid. However, most members tend to be conservative in voting on records that fall outside well-established patterns, helping to ensure (to the extent possible) that the predominant patterns of distribution are supported by valid records.

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helmitheros vermivorus*. Only the head and breast of one reported in Wilmington, LA, 29 Sep 1996 (1996-174) were seen as the bird sat motionless in a tree, and the description was therefore understandably brief. Most members thought that the bird was probably identified correctly but were not willing to endorse such a sparingly documented record.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER *Oporornis agilis*. A report of one at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 12 Sep 1997 (1997-188) did not eliminate other species. Likewise, a majority of members determined that one reported at Montaña de Oro S.P., SLO, 16 Sep 1996 (1996-175) was not adequately documented. Another reported at Chorro Cr. near Morro Bay, SLO, 20 Sep 1997 (1998-037) received little support.

MOURNING WARBLER *Oporornis philadelphia*. The description of one reported at Galileo Hill, KER, 14 Sep 1997 (1997-132) consisted of a compilation of field marks seen by several observers, making it difficult for Committee members to determine which characters were actually seen by the reporting observer and which were reported second-hand. Generally, the CBRC lends little weight to characters reported second-hand and not seen by the reporting observers themselves. Several members also thought that the description better fit an Orange-crowned Warbler of the race *celata* or *orestera*.

SCARLET TANAGER *Piranga olivacea*. One reported in Banning Park, Wilmington, LA, 18-19 Oct 1997 (1997-169) was rumored to have been seen by a number of observers and even photographed. Only one observer, however, submitted documentation, and a majority of members thought that these details did not eliminate other species. If other observers submit documentation of this record (and preferably photos), the Committee will reevaluate it.

EASTERN TOWHEE *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. Committee members unanimously considered a female reported in Oakland, ALA, 30 Sep 1984 (1998-146) to be a Spotted Towhee (*P. maculatus*), possibly of the race *oregonus*. This race occurs in California in winter (Grinnell and Miller 1944) and shows a blackish-brown hood and reduced white spotting on the scapulars and upper secondary coverts (Pyle 1997).

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris*. One in Huntington Beach, ORA, 3 Sep 1993 (1995-013) was seen by a number of birders, but only two submitted descriptions. All Committee members felt that a female/immature Painted Bunting was present, but after four rounds, two members were still not convinced that the record

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had been adequately documented.

BLACK ROSY-FINCH *Leucosticte atrata*. The details accompanying a report of one near Independence, INY, 6 Jul 1997 (1997-124) were not adequate to rule out the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch or to establish an unprecedented midsummer record.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL *Loxia leucoptera*. A report of 40–50 female-plumaged birds S of Albion, MEN, 25 Dec 1992 (1998-130) failed to gain any support. The presence of white wingbars was the only plumage feature noted, and size and structure were not described at all. As a result, species such as the Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*) and American Goldfinch (*C. tristis*) were not eliminated.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE (IDENTIFICATION ACCEPTED)

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. One collected at Orestimba Creek near Newman, STA, 8 Nov 1997 (1998-149) was correctly identified but unanimously judged to have been an escaped captive. Photographs of the mounted specimen were provided by Roger Wilbur. The specimen is currently in the private collection of Kenny Boyd in Fresno (*vide* BED). Barnacle Geese are common in captivity, and records of presumed escapes come from across North America. The species breeds in Greenland, and apparently natural vagrants have occurred along the Atlantic coast of Canada and the northeastern United States. For further discussion see Ryff (1984) and Bevier (1990).

GREAT TIT *Parus major*. An individual well photographed at a feeder in Chester, PLU, 12–13 Apr 1997 (CAB†; 1998-068) was thought by all members to be an escapee. This species is known to be held in captivity in at least some parts of the state, and presumed escapees have been reported on several occasions in southern California. Although this species is not generally thought of as a long-distance migrant, it is conceivable that a Great Tit from the northeasternmost part of the species' range in E Asia could make it to North America by wandering to the western Aleutians; there is a record from Little Diomed Island, Alaska, 2 Sep 1988 (AOU 1998). Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely that any such vagrant would then make the trip south all the way to California. Therefore, there is likely no plausible mechanism for the natural occurrence of this species in the state.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris*. Adult males were at Chula Vista, SD, 20–21 Mar 1997 (1997-064) and Pescadero, SM, 22 Nov–27 Dec 1997 (1997-210). The bird at Chula Vista was in “perfect” plumage, showing no abnormal wear or orangish (rather than reddish) tones that might suggest prior captivity. However, this location is close to the Mexican border, where fairly large numbers are sold as cage birds, and most members thought the probability of prior captivity was too high for acceptance of this record. The Pescadero bird was described as having a slightly orangish belly, and it was seen too briefly for plumage wear, bands, or other possible signs of captivity to be assessed. The Committee continues to be cautious with records of adult males, in part because they are held in captivity more often than females and immatures. Furthermore, the lack of any records of females and immatures in winter suggests to some members that adult males seen during this period are more likely to be escapees than vagrants (R. A. Hamilton unpubl. data).

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