

REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 1998 RECORDS

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ABSTRACT: The California Bird Records Committee assessed 269 records of 92 species in 1998, accepting 195 of them. New to California were the Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*), photographed on Monterey Bay, Monterey Co., the Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*), photographed and videotaped at Crescent City, Del Norte Co., and Pt. Reyes, Marin Co., the American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), photographed at Iron Mountain Pumping Plant, San Bernardino Co., the Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*), photographed at Bodega Harbor, Sonoma Co., and Otay, San Diego Co., the Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*), sketched and described at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co., and the Olive-backed Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*), photographed at Southeast Farallon Island, San Francisco Co. The Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) is no longer considered extirpated from California. With these additions, California's bird list stands at 613 species, eight of which are nonnative.

This 24th report of the California Bird Records Committee (hereafter the CBRC or the Committee) details the evaluation of 269 records of 92 species. Although most records pertain to birds found in 1998, the period covered by this report spans the 25 years from 1974 to 1999. Accepted were 195 records involving 73 species. The acceptance rate of 72.5% was typical for the last decade but below the overall Committee average (Rottenborn and Morlan 2000). Sixty-three records were not accepted because of insufficient documentation or descriptions were inconsistent with known identification criteria. Six additional records were not accepted because of questions concerning the bird's natural occurrence or establishment of introduced populations. Counties best represented by accepted records were Monterey (14 records), Kern (13), Orange (13), San Diego (13), Marin (11), San Francisco (11), and Riverside (10). Records were accepted from 20 other counties.

Highlights of this report include the addition of six species new to the California list: Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*), Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*), American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*), Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*), and Olive-backed Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*). Potential first state records not accepted include the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*), Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*), Falcated Duck (*Anas falcata*), Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*), and McKay's Bunting (*Plectrophenax hyperboreus*). Also reported here is the Committee's decision to readmit the Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) to the list of extant species in California. With these additions, California's list stands at 613 species, of which eight are nonnative and two have been extirpated in historical times. Potential first state records of the Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*), Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*), and Gray Silky-fly-

catcher (*Ptilogonys cinereus*) are currently being considered.

Other highlights include accepted records of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*), Neotropical Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*), Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*), Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolis*), Mongolian (*Charadrius mongolicus*) and Wilson's (*C. wilsonia*) plovers, Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*), Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), and Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*). Also accepted were California's first spring Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) and the first CBRC-reviewed Blue-headed Vireos (*Vireo solitarius*). The Committee's decision not to accept a long-standing record of the Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*; the state's only purported specimen record) is reported. Species recorded in especially high numbers in 1998 included the Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*; 3 records), Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*; 10), Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*; 5), Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*; 8), Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*; 8), Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*; 8), Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*; 16), Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*; 7), and Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*; 5).

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

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 Guy McCaskie, CBRC Secretary, P. O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, CA 91933-0275 (e-mail: guymcc@pacbell.net).

Committee News. The Committee's voting membership after the 6 January 2001 annual meeting consisted of Jon L. Dunn, Richard A. Erickson (chairman), Kimball L. Garrett (vice chairman), Robert A. Hamilton, Bert McKee, Joseph Morlan, Michael A. Patten, Peter Pyle, Scott B. Terrill, and John C. Wilson. Guy McCaskie will serve as non-voting secretary. Recent Committee members who also voted on many of the records in this report include Matthew T. Heindel, Steve N. G. Howell, Alvaro Jaramillo, Guy McCaskie, Michael M. Rogers (outgoing secretary), Stephen C. Rottenborn, Mike San Miguel, and Daniel S. Singer.

At its 15 January 2000 meeting the Committee decided to publish its *Annotated List of the Birds of California*—for the first time including nesting annotations created by the Committee—in *California Fish and*

Game, to remove the Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) and the species pair of the White/Black-backed Wagtails (*Motacilla alba/lugens*) from the CBRC review list, the latter to conform with all other species pairs/groups where records must be attributed to a single species, to place the Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) on the review list but to review records in five-year increments (see species account below), and to review records of the Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*) in one-year increments (see species account below). Also, see Miscellaneous Decisions below.

Format and Abbreviations. As in other recent CBRC reports, records are generally listed geographically, from north to south, and/or chronologically by first date of occurrence. Included with each record is the location, county abbreviation (see below), and date span. The date span usually follows that published in *North American Birds* (formerly *American Birds* or *Field Notes*) but, if the CBRC accepts a date span that differs from a published source, the differing dates are italicized. Initials of the observer(s) responsible for finding and/or identifying the bird(s)—if known and if they have supplied supportive documentation—are followed by a semicolon, then the initials, in alphabetized order by surname, of additional observers submitting supportive documentation, then the CBRC record number consisting of the year of observation and chronological number assigned by the secretary. All records are sight records unless otherwise indicated: a dagger (†) indicates the observer supplied a supportive photograph, (‡) videotape, (§) a voice recording, and (#) a specimen record, followed by the acronym (see below) of the institution housing the specimen and its catalog number.

An asterisk (*) prior to a species' name indicates that the species is no longer on the CBRC 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) for more information.

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 indicate 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 report much of this information.

The CBRC uses standard abbreviations for California counties; those used in this report are ALA, Alameda; BUT, Butte; CC, Contra Costa; DN, Del Norte; HUM, Humboldt; IMP, Imperial; INY, Inyo; KER, Kern; LAS, Lassen; LA, Los Angeles; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MNO, Mono; MTY, Monterey; ORA, Orange; PLA, Placer; RIV, Riverside; SAC, Sacra-

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mento; SBE, San Bernardino; SD, San Diego; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SLO, San Luis Obispo; SM, San Mateo; SBA, Santa Barbara; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SIS, Siskiyou; SON, Sonoma; TRI, Trinity; VEN, Ventura; YUB, Yuba. A full list of county abbreviations is available on the WFO-CBRC web site. Other abbreviations used: I., island; L., lake; Mt., mountain; n. miles, nautical miles; N.W.R., national wildlife refuge; Pt., point; R., river; W.M.A., wildlife management area.

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

RECORDS ACCEPTED

YELLOW-BILLED LOON *Gavia adamsii* (65, 1). A first-winter bird was at Field's Landing, HUM, 18 Jan 1998 (MHM; 1998-023). An alternate-plumaged adult off Otter Pt., Pacific Grove, MTY, 24 Nov 1998–19 Mar 1999 (DR; 1999-059) returned for its sixth winter, as summarized by Rottenborn and Morlan (2000).

SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS *Phoebastria albatrus* (7**, 3). The long-predicted increase in records of this endangered species in California waters may be underway. Immatures about 20 miles W of Bodega Head, SON, 28 Aug 1998 (GL†, DnWN†; BDP, DGS; 1998-148), 15 n. miles W of Pt. Reyes (38° 03' N, 123° 21' W), MRN, 26 Oct 1998 (BMcK†; ADeM, SWe; 1998-179), and 3 n. miles WNW of Pt. Pinos (36° 40' N, 122° 00' W), MTY, 21 Dec 1998 (SNGH, ADeM; RJA, SFB, RLB†, JEG, GGr, PKe, DLSh†, MS, RLT†; 1998-231) were considered separate individuals by the Committee and provided the first accepted records since 1987. On the basis of photographs, Pyle considered the first two birds "somewhat worn whereas the third was immaculate (also per SNGH description)," leading him to conclude that the first two birds were >1 year old and the third was in its first year (ca. 6 months old). This also explains the pale eye crescents apparent on the first two birds but not the third, the first sign of adult plumage (H. Hasegawa pers. comm. to Pyle). A photograph of the third bird appeared in *N. Am. Birds* 53:203 and on the cover of *Western Birds* vol. 31, no. 1 (2000).

BULWER'S PETREL *Bulweria bulwerii* (1, 1). One seen well by a boatload of observers on Monterey Bay, MTY, 26 July 1998 (JD, BMcK†; AB, GB†, JEG, JMo†, DLSh, RLT†, DW†; 1998-119) represented the first well-documented record for North America—preceding a bird off North Carolina (LeGrand et al. 1999) by only days. Therefore the record was forwarded to the American Birding Association's Checklist Committee for its review. The similar Jouanin's Petrel (*B. fallax*) has been recorded as close as Hawaii (Clapp 1971) but is stockier (thicker winged, larger headed, and larger billed) and typically has proportionally shorter outer rectrices. The Committee's unanimous acceptance of the record on a single circulation is a testament to the exceptional package of documentation compiled by veteran trip organizer Debra L. Shearwater. Photographs appeared in *Field Notes* 52:498 and 519.

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus pacificus* (3, 1). A dark-morph individual was on Monterey Bay, MTY, 10–21 Oct 1998 (EWG†, TmCG; BB†, RLB††,

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DC†, ADeMt, PG†, JEG, AK†, GMcC, BMcK†, DR†, MMR†, DMS, DLSh, WDS, JSt, RLT†; 1998-162). Another exceptionally complete set of documentation (cf. Bulwer's Petrel) made the decision of Committee members easy. The previous California records were from Monterey Bay, MTY, 31 Aug 1986 (Stallcup et al. 1988, Bevier 1990) and the Salton Sea, RIV, 31 Jul 1988 (McCaskie and Webster 1990, Pyle and McCaskie 1992). A photograph of the 1998 bird appeared on the cover of *N. Am. Birds* vol. 53, no. 1 (1999).

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus* (43, 6). A record of one seen from shore at Pigeon Pt., SM, 5 May 1996 (GD, NL; 1996-077A) received the requisite number of accept votes only on its fourth and final circulation. Five accepted records in 1998 represented only half of the previous year's record total (Rottenborn and Morlan 2000): Cordell Bank, MRN, 11 Jul (MI; 1999-144), three on Monterey Bay, SCZ, 8 Aug (MI, BMcK; 1998-021; BMcK†, MI; 1998-022; MI; 1999-134), and one at SE Farallon I., SF, 3 Oct (WR; 1999-032). One additional record from 1998 is still under Committee review.

MASKED BOOBY *Sula dactylatra* (11, 1). The recent surge in records of this species continued with an adult at Año Nuevo I., SM, 19 Jun–6 Aug 1998 (MF, MM, CAM, JM, JDP, RWR, MMR, SCR, DGS, FT; 1998-098). The bird was clearly a Masked Booby in the now limited sense that excludes the Nazca Booby (*S. granti*), newly recognized as a species (Pitman and Jehl 1998, Roberson 1998, AOU 2000). *Field Notes* 52:499 refers to a videotape that the CBRC has not seen.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY *Sula nebowxii* (80**, 0). A subadult near Obsidian Butte, IMP, 19–28 Feb 1998 (JEP, DSP, RJN; 1998-111) was considered probably the same individual as one seen at Salton City, IMP, 29 Nov 1997 (Rottenborn and Morlan 2000).

BROWN BOOBY *Sula leucogaster* (58, 7). Four records in 1998 were uncomplicated, but records of three birds found earlier were not. The former were an immature at San Simeon State Beach, SLO, 19 Jan 1998 (TME, KH; 1998-054; what may have been the same bird was reported at Morro Bay, SLO, 20–22 Dec 1997—*N. Am. Birds* 52:256), an adult at Morro Rock, SLO, 5 Jul 1998 (MG; 1998-122), an adult male at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 7 Jun 1998 (KB, GGA, KCK, LML†, JM, RSt; 1998-088), and a second-year male at SE Farallon I., SF, 12–24 Oct 1998 (WR, PP†; 1999-007). The Pt. Reyes bird was the northernmost ever recorded in California; one was in northwestern Washington 18 Oct–9 Nov 1997 (*Field Notes* 52:114-115).

Most interesting of the other three records was an immature seen from a boat 12 n. miles SSW of Santa Barbara, SBA, 31 Aug 1996 (BS; DG, KAH, AH, DK†, CAM, MMR; 1996-117A; Figure 1). The record received 80% acceptance in its first round of circulation as a Red-footed Booby (*S. sula*; 1996-117) before failing acceptance by the same margin. It was then resubmitted as a Brown Booby (1996-117A) and gained a unanimous decision on its second round. Descriptions of the bird's foot color varied, so observers were not of one mind concerning the bird's identity. The Committee's initial reliance on reported reddish feet (also suggested by photographs) eventually gave way to a full consideration of other characters (i.e., underwing pattern, dark brown coloration, bill color and bill/head shape, heavier structure, uniform color of central rectrices) and a realization that apparent foot color can be influenced greatly by lighting.

An immature 15 miles SE of East Pt., Santa Rosa I., SBA, 30 Sep 1997 (BD†; 1998-069) was supported by a single color photograph and was accepted (unanimously) only after its third circulation (a second bird reported without documentation was not accepted). This may have been the same bird seen between Santa Rosa I. and Santa Cruz I., SBA, 19 Oct 1997 (Rottenborn and Morlan 2000). Another immature at Newport Beach, ORA, 7 Dec 1997–7 Feb 1998 (LRH; GMcC, JEP, DGS; 1997-211) was

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initially identified as a Red-footed Booby. Only after circulating the record three times did the Committee consider the entire date span to pertain to the same bird.

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* (10, 2). Adults were near Obsidian Butte, Salton Sea, IMP, 28 Apr–12 Jul 1998 (KZK†; GMcC, MAP†, SCR, DGS; 1998-079) and 3 miles S of Mecca, Salton Sea, RIV, 14 Jun–16 Jul 1998 (MAP†; GMcC; 1998-097).

TRICOLORED HERON *Egretta tricolor* (26**, 1). Returning adults were at the Tijuana R. estuary, SD, 25 Jul 1998–12 Feb 1999 (GMcC; 1998-112; same as 1997-184, Rottenborn and Morlan 2000) and Bolsa Chica, ORA, 31 Oct 1998–7 May 1999 (RF, MTH, PKn†, VL, JM, MMR†, SS; 1998-200; same as 1997-167 and 1998-004, Rottenborn and Morlan 2000). Another adult was 4 miles S of Mecca, Salton Sea, RIV, 31 Jan–7 Mar 1998 (MAP; KLG†, CAM, GMcC; 1998-048).

REDDISH EGRET *Egretta rufescens* (78, 3). An immature around Johnson Rd. and Colfax St. at the N end of the Salton Sea, RIV, 11 Jul–1 Aug 1998 (RC, GMcC, MJSM, DGS; 1998-101) was considered the same as an immature at Obsidian Butte, Salton Sea, IMP, 2–8 Aug 1998 (GMcC; MJSM; 1998-114). On the coast, an adult was at Seal Beach N.W.R., ORA, 17 Apr 1998 (JF; 1998-071), and an immature was at the Tijuana R. estuary, SD, 29 Aug–4 Oct 1998 (GMcC; 1998-121).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nyctanassa violacea* (18, 0). The adult that has been reported at La Jolla, SD, for nearly 20 years (Rottenborn and Morlan 2000) was seen again 30 Apr–26 May 1998 (DGS; 1998-083).

EMPEROR GOOSE *Chen canagica* (63, 1). One was on the Garcia R. Flats, MEN, 28 Dec 1996–24 Feb 1997 (ERH; MG†, MMR†, PMS; 1997-091). Two birds were initially reported with marginal written documentation, but photographs received subsequently documented the presence of only one.

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator* (24, 2). Adults were 7.5 miles NNE of Marysville, YUB, 3 Feb 1994 (TM, BEW†; 1998-077) and on Rindge Tract, SJ, 17 Dec 1995 (WH; 1998-215). A second adult accompanying the latter bird, also reported as a Trumpeter Swan, was not accepted.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* (5, 1). An adult at Lower Klamath N.W.R., SIS, 28 Jan 1998 (TCB; 1998-026) was in the same area as ones seen in 1991–92 and 1994 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999) and may have been the same individual. Patten (2000) summarized recurring doubts concerning the provenance of Whooper Swans in North America.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula* (21, 1). One at the Salinas sewer ponds, MTY, 25 Apr–4 May 1998 (CHo; DR, SCR, JS†; 1998-084) fit the pattern of males in spring established by most records of this species (Spear et al. 1988) and was the first to be found in Monterey County.

COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina* (2, 1). Two males photographed at Bolsa Chica, ORA, 26 Dec 1994 (PK; 1995-082; Figure 2) made California's second record, following a male at Silver Lake, SBE, during falls and winters between February 1989 and November 1992 (Patten 1993). The current record struggled through four rounds because the birds were identified from photographs well after the sighting, and the prints that accompanied the record through three rounds were inadequate for some members to rule out hybrids. Communication between Committee members and the photographer and inspection of the original slides led to eventual acceptance by a 9–1 plurality.

KING EIDER *Somateria spectabilis* (34, 1). Record 1998-014 involved a female seen at Laguna Beach, ORA, 23 Dec 1995 (JEP) and at Huntington Beach, ORA, 28 Dec 1995 (DSP).

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MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis* (27, 1). A first-summer bird at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 6–7 Jun 1998 (SCR, MJM, MMR†, MJSM, SBT; KSG, MSM; 1998-087) was at the site of more records than anywhere else in California but was the first in the state since 1994 (Howell and Pyle 1997).

HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus* (4**, 4). Following the appearance of a number of Harris's Hawks in southwestern California in 1994, the Committee packaged several records together under number 1996-080 so it could reconsider its designation of the California population as extirpated. After a single circulation, we decided to consider the individual reports separately to avoid the possibility of different members accepting different records and no single record achieving acceptance on its own. After three more circulations, four records had been accepted: up to eight at Borrego Valley, SD, 15 Apr 1994–22 Sep 1996 (RT; AME, RAE, PJ, PEL, CAM, GMcC, MAP†, DR†; 1996-080A; Figure 3), up to five (including two that constructed a nest) at Boulevard, SD, 1 Jun 1994–31 Oct 1995 (PEL, ADS; 1996-080B), one in the Coachella Valley, RIV, 31 Dec 1994–29 Jan 1995 (SJM; MAP; 1996-080D), and up to five at George AFB, SBE, 2–21 Jan 1995 (EAC†, CAM, MAP, MSM; 1996-080E). Thus the Committee no longer considers the species extirpated from California. Four more records from the same period are still under review.

At its January 2000 meeting the Committee decided to review subsequent records only once every five years. Patten and Erickson (2000), using primarily CBRC data, summarized the reappearance of this species in California and northern Baja California, emphasizing the cyclic nature of this species' occurrence in those areas over the past 150 years. Erickson et al. (in press) reported additional recent records for northern Baja California.

*ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus* (54, 3). An adult was in Mission Viejo, ORA, 18 Oct 1975 (SJG; 1999-178), an adult was near Lake Henshaw, SD, 13 Jun 1998 (PU; 1999-039), a returning adult (cf. Rottenborn and Morlan 2000) was at Goleta, SBA, 21 Oct 1998–24 Mar 1999 (FE, SS; 1998-206), and two adults were at San Diego Wild Animal Park, San Pasqual, SD, 19 Nov 1998–15 Mar 1999 (GMcC, JM; 1999-024), one judged to be a returning bird (cf. Rottenborn and Morlan 2000).

GYRFALCON *Falco rusticolus* (8, 1). A gray-morph juvenile at Tule Lake N.W.R., SIS, 24 Nov 1998 (RE; 1999-058) was the fifth to be recorded in the California portion of the Klamath Basin.

YELLOW RAIL *Coturnicops noveboracensis* (70, 2). Females were found in weakened condition in Manhattan Beach, LA, 20 Oct 1998 (#LACM 110747; 1999-097) and Santee, SD, 16 Dec 1998 (#SDNHM 50186; 1998-232). There were only four previous accepted records for southern California, three in the period 1896–1917.

In comments, Patten noted the light weight of both specimens (perhaps merely a result of their poor condition) and questioned how the similar Swinhoe's Rail (*C. exquisitus*) of east Asia was eliminated from consideration. Although the chance of Swinhoe's Rail reaching California is remote and these specimens do match other Yellow Rail specimens, specimens for comparison with Swinhoe's Rail are not available at either museum. This question seems relevant to other California specimens as well, so an eventual review of all records may be in order.

MONGOLIAN PLOVER *Charadrius mongolicus* (8, 2). Juveniles were at Bodega Harbor, SON, 2–3 Sep 1996 (DnWNT; KB, LML, BDP; 1996-118) and the Eel River Wildlife Area, HUM, 2–3 Oct 1998 (SNGH, SWe; WB, AJ, JSM, GMcC, JM, MSM; 1998-150). Previous California records, all coastal from Marin County through Ventura County, span the period 12 July to 25 September.

WILSON'S PLOVER *Charadrius wilsonia* (8, 1). An adult male was at Coronado, SD, 27 Apr–1 May 1998 (NBB, BF†, PAG, RL, JOZ; 1998-072); reports of it as late



Figure 1. Immature Brown Booby, *Sula leucogaster*, 12 nautical miles south-southwest of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, 31 Aug 1996 (1996-117A). This individual was originally identified as a Red-footed Booby, *S. sula*, and was nearly accepted as such. Note the seemingly red feet but also apparent whitish mottling on the underwing coverts and the bill's shape (relatively thick with flat forehead and culmen) and color (bluish gray with no hint of pinkish).

Photo by David Koeppel



Figure 2. Male Common Pochard, *Aythya ferina*, one of two at Bolsa Chica, Orange County, 26 Dec 1994 (PK; 1995-082) that represent the second record for California.

Photo by Peter Knapp



Figure 3. Adult Harris's Hawk, *Parabuteo unicinctus*, in Borrego Springs, San Diego County, 13 Jan 1995 (1996-080A), one of up to eight there beginning in April 1994. On the basis of this record and three others, the species is no longer considered extirpated in California.

Photo by Don Roberson

as 2 May were not accepted. Surprisingly, of six California records in the latter half of the 20th century, only one other was south of Ventura County.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus palliatus* (16, 1). An adult was at San Nicolas I., VEN, 28 Jun–3 Sep 1998 (RAH; 1998-117); nine of California's accepted records are from the Channel Islands.

BRISTLE-THIGHED CURLEW *Numenius tahitiensis* (2, 2). California's first accepted records, of one at Battery Pt., Crescent City, DN, 14–16 May 1998 (ADB†; BED, GE†, GMcC, JM, DvWN, DR†; 1998-075) and one at Kehoe Beach, Pt. Reyes, MRN, 16–25 May 1998 (LML‡; KB, LC, MF, BG, SCH, SNGH†, KCK, MJM, JSM, JLM, JM, BDP, MAP, RWR, JR, MMR, SCR, TR, MSM†, DGS, RS†; 1998-076), were part of a larger phenomenon involving 13–17 birds from Washington through central California and discussed in detail by Patterson (1998) and Mlodinow et al. (1999). Photographs of the accepted birds were published by Patterson (1998), in *Field Notes* 52:384, and on the cover of *Western Birds* vol. 30, no. 3 (1999). Two other records were not accepted (see below).



Figure 4. Adult Iceland Gull, *Larus glaucooides*, at Bodega Harbor, Sonoma County, 13 Jan 1985 (1985-007), the first accepted record for California.

Photo by Albert Giorso

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* (23, 2). An adult was at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, SM, 12–29 Sep 1998 (RST; AME, MF, DGS; 1998-138), and a juvenile was at the confluence of Alviso and Coyote sloughs, SCL/ALA, 2 Oct 1998 (SCR; 1998-204).

AMERICAN WOODCOCK *Scolopax minor* (1, 1). One was at Iron Mt. Pumping Plant, SBE, 3–9 Nov 1998 (MAP, GMcC; RF, KSG, JM, DR†; 1998-177). Patten et al. (1999) provided details of this record, California's first.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus* (72, 4). An adult was at Mystic L., near Lakeview, RIV, 15 Nov 1998–27 Mar 1999 (MAP†; DSC, RF, RL, CAM, GMcC, JM; 1998-181). An adult or bird in second alternate plumage at Alviso, SCL, 28 Apr–2 May 1998 (SCR; MWE, MF, NL, MJM, RWR; 1998-070) was followed by one in first alternate plumage there 8–17 May 1998 (SCR; NL, JM; 1998-078). One in first alternate plumage at Lower Klamath N.W.R., SIS, 14–16 Jun 1998 (ADB, RE; 1998-140) was at a less traditional time and place.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus* (20, 0). An adult at Santa Barbara, SBA, 17 Nov–24 Dec 1997 (DSW; 1997-204) returned for its sixth winter at the same location.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides* (2, 2). After nearly 15 years of intermittent review (cf. Heindel and Garrett 1995, Rottenborn and Morlan 2000) and the formal input of at least 12 outside consultants from throughout North America and Europe (E. A. T. Blom, Davis Finch, Roger Foxall, Daniel D. Gibson, Michel Gosselin, Peter J. Grant, Raymond Henson, Ted Hoogendoorn, Dennis Paulson, J. V. Remsen, Jr., Stuart Tingley, Thede Tobish), this species was finally added to the state list at the January 2000 meeting, on the basis of two records: an adult at Bodega Harbor, SON, 30 Dec 1984–18 Jan 1985 (KFC, DDeS; JRA†, LCB, RAE, AG†, RLeB†, GMcC,

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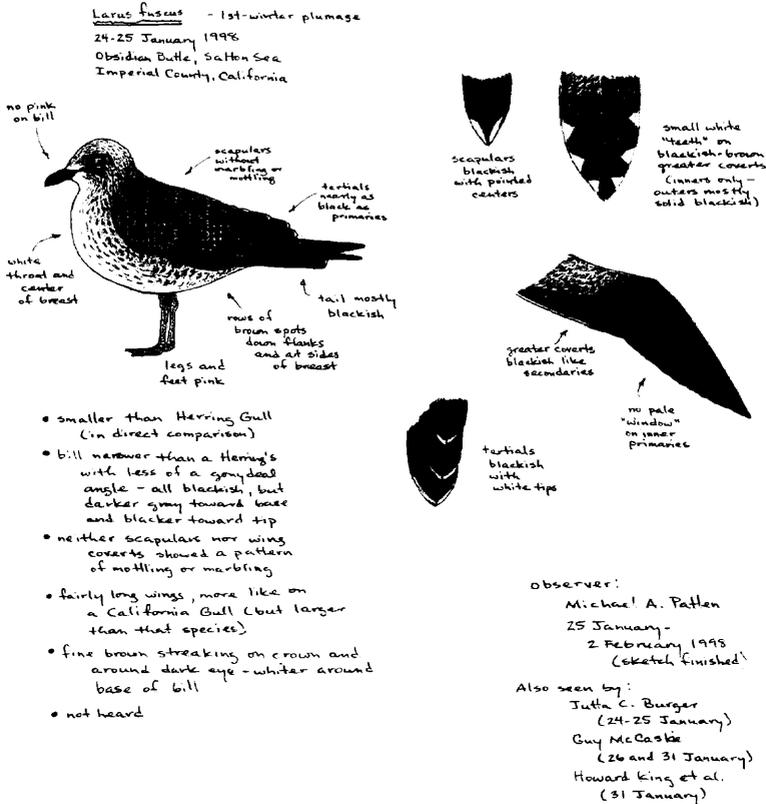


Figure 5. First-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull, *Larus fuscus*, at Obsidian Butte, Salton Sea, Imperial County, 25 Jan 1998 (1998-042), the first record of this plumage in California.

Sketch by Michael A. Patten

JM, DnWN†, JOf†, BDP, DGS†, RS†, SW†; 1985-007; Figure 4) and a juvenile at the Otay dump, SD, 17-25 Jan 1986 (REW†; LRB†, JLD†, JML, MJL, GMcC, DR, AS†; 1986-015). Perhaps not surprisingly, both of these birds were at the pale end of the spectrum (i.e., more like nominate *glaucoides* than the expected Kumlien's Gull, *L. g. kumlieni*, of North America); birds closer in appearance to *kumlieni* (and thus pale Thayer's Gulls, *L. thayeri*, as well) have not fared well in the CBRC review process (see Rottenborn and Morlan 2000 and Records Not Accepted below).

Many Committee members expressed skepticism of the current taxonomic treatment of the Iceland/Thayer's Gull complex in America (AOU 1973, 1983, 1998)—indeed, that skepticism was largely responsible for the temporary suspension of CBRC review of these records—but all eventually agreed that such taxonomic considerations are beyond the scope of the CBRC and that the treatment here matches better what has been done with extralimital records elsewhere in North

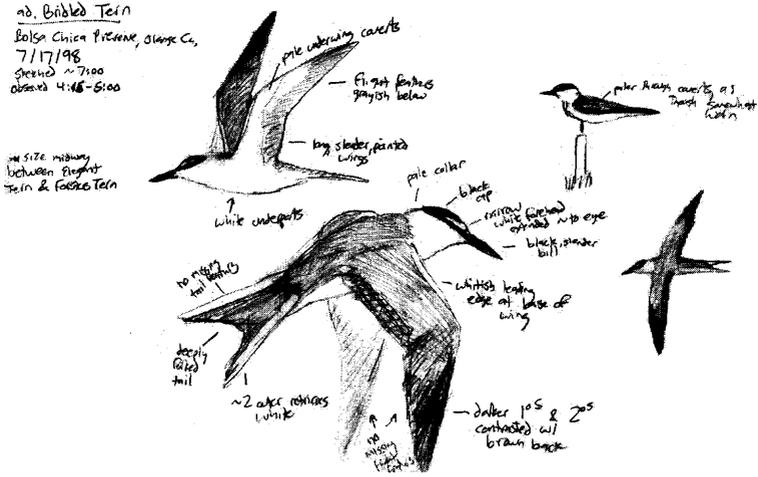


Figure 6. Adult Bridled Tern, *Sterna anaethetus*, at Bolsa Chica, Orange County, 17 Jul 1998 (1998-105), the first accepted record for California.

Sketch by Marshall Iliff

America. Because of the complex taxonomy and identification of this species, records will be handled differently than for other species; records will not begin circulation as received but will be held until the next annual meeting, when they may or may not undergo an expedited review. Rottenborn and Morlan (2000) addressed the Committee's latest dealings with these birds.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* (17, 8). California is not immune from the population expansion of this species in North America, as ten individuals were seen in 1998: a returning adult at Alviso, SCL, 11 Oct 1997-23 Jan 1998 (MJM; MWE, MF, JM, RWR; 1997-150) and again in the Alviso area, SCL/ALA, 21 Oct-8 Dec 1998 (SCR; MMR†; 1998-203), a second-winter bird at L. Cunningham, San Jose, SCL, 31 Oct 1997-31 Mar 1998 (SCR†, MMR†; MF, MTH, NL, MJM, GMcC, JM, RWR, DR†, RMS†, MSi; 1997-178), returning in its third winter 20 Dec 1998-14 Mar 1999 (SCR; MJM, MMR†; 1999-001), an adult at L. Cunningham, San Jose, SCL, 8 Jan 1998 (BMcK; 1998-003), a returning adult at Doherty State Beach, ORA, 8 Oct 1997-4 Mar 1998 (JDW†; TC, MTH†, MF, GMcC; 1997-156) and again 4 Nov 1998-10 Mar 1999 (LML†, JM, DSP; 1998-201) with a second adult there 30 Nov-7 Dec 1998 (DSP; MTH; 1998-207), an adult at the Whitewater R. delta, Salton Sea, RIV, 14 Feb-8 Mar 1998 (MAP; CAM, GMcC; 1998-049), an adult at Salton Sea State Recreation Area, RIV, 21 Jan-7 Mar 1998 (DSP; TC, KLG†, MTH, RL, CAM, GMcC, KM, MAP; 1998-025), an adult at Obsidian Butte, Salton Sea, IMP, 19 Jan 1998 (GMcC, PEL; 1998-039), a first-winter bird at Obsidian Butte, IMP, 24 Jan-8 Mar 1998 (MAP; KLG, MTH†, CAM, GMcC; 1998-042; Figure 5), and an adult at the Brawley landfill, IMP, 30 Dec 1998-1 Feb 1999 (SJT; 1999-048), considered probably different from one at the same locality 22-27 Jan 1996 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999). A photograph of the first San Jose bird was published in *Field Notes* 52:253.



Figure 7. Possible Blue-headed Vireo, *Vireo solitarius*, on San Nicolas Island, Ventura County, 20 Oct 1998 (1998-216). The extensively white-edged outer rectrices, blackish tertials with thick whitish edges, brilliant white throat, bluish head, and seemingly sharp demarcation between throat and auricular support identification as Blue-headed, but using known identification criteria most members could not rule out a bright Cassin's Vireo.

Photo by Sandra G. Harvill

Several CBRC members expressed the concern that not all California birds may be of European/eastern North American origin (i.e., *L. f. graellsii*) and that certain Asian taxa (e.g., *heuglini*, *taymirensis*) may be involved as well. In the end, the AOU's (1998) regarding all of these taxa as subspecies of the Lesser Black-backed Gull rendered such concerns outside the scope of CBRC review. In the future, if the AOU defines a less inclusive Lesser Black-backed Gull, some or all of these records may be reconsidered.

BRIDLED TERN *Sterna anaethetus* (1, 1). An adult at Bolsa Chica, ORA, 17 Jul 1998 (MI; KSG, JEP; 1998-105; Figure 6) represents the first accepted record for the state; another record from Bolsa Chica 12 Jun 1993 (Erickson and Terrill 1996) has been resubmitted in light of the 1998 sighting. The Bridled Tern becomes one of five species on the state list supported by only sight records.

After some initial confusion concerning potential differences between the west Mexican *S. a. nelsoni* and the Caribbean *S. a. recognita/melanoptera* (i.e., the bird had a pale collar and white on at least the two outer rectrices), the record was accepted unanimously on the second circulation. Ridgway (1919) said only that *nelsoni* is "similar to *S. a. recognita* but averaging larger, with relatively longer or more slender bill, and under parts of body tinged with pale gray." The tail pattern also eliminates the only other similar species, the Gray-backed Tern (*S. lunata*) of the central Pacific.

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SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata* (6, 0). A returning adult (cf. Rottenborn and Morlan 2000) was at Bolsa Chica, ORA, 12–19 Apr 1998 (PEL; 1998-080).

LONG-BILLED MURRELET *Brachyramphus perditus* (3, 1). Birds in “basic” plumage (first alternate?) at Pt. Saint George, DN, 21 Jul 1998 (ADB; 1998-118A), 29 Jul 1998 (ADB; 1998-118B), and 22–23 Aug 1998 (BED; 1998-118) were judged to be the same individual, contra *N. Am. Birds* 53:101. Rottenborn and Morlan (2000) reported the first accepted records of this species and summarized other records that remain unreviewed by the CBRC, including several specimens.

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti* (69, 3). An immature male was found dead 22 km N of Blythe, RIV, 26 Nov 1992 (#LACM 107326; SC; KLG, MAP; 1994-72), an immature male was at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 7 Oct 1998 (JHe†; TH; 1998-212), and a male was at Independence, INY, 2 Nov 1998 (RAHu; 1998-213). Patten took the Blythe specimen to Moore Laboratory of Zoology at Occidental College, there confirming its identity as *C. t. eluta* of western Mexico (the subspecies believed to account for all California records). Acceptance of the last bird was not unanimous, as Morlan felt that the description failed to rule out a Plain-breasted Ground-Dove (*C. minuta*), a southern species that seems very unlikely to reach California as a natural vagrant (its status in captivity is unknown). The larger size and black axillars of *talpacoti* are distinctive, as are purple markings on the wing coverts of *minuta*.

GROOVE-BILLED ANI *Crotophaga sulcirostris* (11, 1). One at Desert Center, RIV, 4 Oct 1998 (MAP, BDS; 1998-155) provided the seventh fall record from the interior, conforming to the predominant pattern developing in California.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD *Cyanthus latirostris* (54, 2). Lone females presumably wintering were at San Elijo Lagoon, SD, 5–8 Jan 1998 (MBS; MMR; 1998-027) and Goleta, SBA, 28 Nov 1998–28 Feb 1999 (RAH; GMcC, DR, SCR; 1999-062).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD *Archilochus colubris* (4, 1). An immature female captured at SE Farallon I., SF, 25 Aug 1998 (PP†; SD, DH, MH†; 1999-008) fit the species’ incipient pattern of early fall vagrancy to California (the previous two fall records, also from this location, were on 21–22 Aug 1985 and 7 Sep 1994). Howell and Pyle (1997) discussed its separation from other small hummers, particularly the Black-chinned (*A. alexandri*); Pyle (1997) authored the definitive treatment for this species in the hand (as all accepted California records have been).

GREATER PEWEE *Contopus pertinax* (32, 1). An individual that wintered at Brock Research Center, IMP, 24 Dec 1998–27 Feb 1999 (MAP†; RF, KSG, KZK†, CAM, GMcC, JM, MMR†, MJSM, DMS; 1999-043) was identified as an adult because of its fresh, truncate rectrices and unworn tertials (the Greater Pewee is unique among North American *Contopus* in retaining the juvenal flight feathers during the first prebasic molt; Pyle 1997). A color photograph of this bird was published in *N. Am. Birds* 53:221.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Contopus virens* (9, 5). A virtual invasion of this eastern flycatcher in spring/summer 1998 more than doubled the state’s accepted records, with individuals found at Bodega Head, SON, 3 Jun 1998 (ANW; PCoS, BDP; 1998-115), Pt. Reyes, MRN, 22 Jun 1998 (JM; TB†; 1998-004), Mono L. County Park, MNO, 4–8 Jul 1998 (SH†, RSt; MWES, DL, DP§, JiP, DR†, AW; 1998-103), Galileo Hill Park, KER, 10 Jun 1998 (MTH; 1998-120), and South Fork Wildlife Area, KER, 27 Jun–9 Jul 1998 (SAL; MTH, MAP; 1998-102). With vocalizations critical to distinguishing this species from the Western Wood-Pewee (*C. sordidulus*), audio tape nicely supported the Bodega and Mono Lake records (photos of the latter bird supported the record but were not definitive). A photo of the Pt.

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Reyes bird showed a relatively pale breast and entirely yellow-orange lower mandible, marks highly suggestive of the species claimed, but probably more important to this record's acceptance was an hour the finder spent listening to and describing the bird's somewhat variable clearly whistled songs mixed with frequent call notes, none of which were like those of its western counterpart. The Galileo bird, a first for Kern County, gave only frequent "chip" call-notes with an occasional "Dusky-capped Flycatcher-like peeeeeeah" (described as the typical Eastern Wood-Pewee song minus the final syllable). These vocalizations, combined with the bird's appearance (the lower mandible was "all orange-yellow" and its "very crisp" plumage featured a "white throat, faint vest, and fairly light undertail coverts") and the observer's skill and experience levels, were considered adequate for CBRC endorsement. The bird at South Fork Wildlife Area was observed and heard singing by several observers.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER *Empidonax flaviventris* (12, 1). A silent immature at California City, KER, 7 Sep 1998 (MTH; RC, MSM, MJSM, JCW†; 1998-124) was the fifth for Kern County, which now claims nearly half the state's records. All California records but one (Carpinteria, SBA, 16-17 Oct 1987; Pyle and McCaskie 1992) are for September. Although sight records of this species are still somewhat contentious within the Committee because of the high potential for confusion with the Western Flycatcher complex (*E. difficilis/occidentalis*) and the Acadian Flycatcher (*E. virescens*), this record received unanimous endorsement during the first round of voting. Photographs of this bird were not definitive, but they supported prolonged close observations by several experienced observers, and submission of the photos was considered important by at least one member. The spacing of the primaries on this bird was not inspected (cf. DeSante et al. 1985, Heindel and Pyle 1999), but independent review of museum specimens by Howell (in litt.) and Patten (in litt.) suggests that this feature's utility may be limited because of overlap in the pattern of primary spacing of the Yellow-bellied and Western flycatchers.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (52, 7). Acceptance of one at Bolinas, MRN, 12 Jan-21 Mar 1998 (KH; PP; 1998-002) and one inland at Finney L., IMP, 12 Jan-28 Mar 1998 (BDCW; KLG†, GMcC, MAP; 1998-051) yields a seasonal total of eight for 1997-98. In 1998-99, a returning bird was at Santa Cruz, SCZ, 19 Dec 1998 (SG; 1999-027, same as 1998-062), and new individuals were at Bodega Bay, SON, 22-27 Dec 1998 (BDP; JEPa, DnWN; 1999-005), nearby at Bodega Dunes Campground, SON, 23 Dec 1998-16 Jan 1999 (DnWN†; BDP, JEPa; 1999-006), Los Osos, SLO, 12-19 Dec 1998 (TME; KH; 1999-096), Ventura 28 Dec 1998-2 Jan 1999 (WW; DDesJ†; 1999-029), and Long Beach, LA, 27 Dec 1998-28 Mar 1999 (KSG; RF, MJSM, MSM†, JM; 1999-016). Records of this southern flycatcher follow an upward trend and scatter fairly evenly northward along the coast to Sonoma County, with outliers farther north and in the interior. San Diego County claims only three records, suggesting that this corner of the state may lie southwest of the vector followed by most vagrants to California. All accepted records are thought to pertain to late fall migrants or, particularly, overwintering birds.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus crinitus* (42, 2). Individuals were at Twenty-nine Palms, SBE, 12 Sep 1998 (BiD, EAC†; 1998-221) and in Manhattan Beach, LA, 18 Oct 1998 (KL†; KSG, TEW; 1998-208). The former record was the state's third earliest and only the fifth inland. Despite being underexposed, photographs helped this report gain unanimous acceptance since they showed important field marks, particularly pale edging to the inner tertials that appears thicker basally than expected on a Brown-crested Flycatcher (*M. tyrannulus*; Heindel and Patten 1996, Pyle 1997).

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SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER *Myiodynastes luteiventris* (13, 1). California's first spring record, at Gazos Creek, SM, 14 Jun 1998 (RST; BMcK†, AME; 1998-106), was the first of its kind for San Mateo County and the fourth for northern California. Photographs were inadequate to eliminate the similar Streaked Flycatcher (*M. maculatus*), but all three observers described the Sulphur-bellied's distinctively thick blackish malar streak. Those with the best views also noted blackish streaks on a whitish background from the throat to the lower breast and flanks, unstreaked belly, undertail coverts washed with yellow, lack of yellow in the face, and only a very limited amount of pale on the lower mandible (cf. Howell and Webb 1995, Pyle 1997). A report of this bird continuing on 15 Jun 1998 received no CBRC support, as members were not convinced that the description ruled out a female Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*).

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD *Tyrannus crassirostris* (14, 1). One at Pomona, LA, 14 Oct 1998–1 Mar 1999 (MJS; 1998-175) returned for its seventh winter at this location, while an immature at Half Moon Bay, SM, 19 Dec 1998–7 Mar 1999 (AWK; GEC, MD, MW†, RF, NL, LML †, MMa, JM, CL, DvWN, MMR†; 1998-233) was a first for San Mateo County and one of the northernmost records for this species. The age of the latter bird was inferred from the rufous edgings to the rectrices and wing coverts, fresh tertials, and bright yellow underparts (cf. Pyle 1997).

WHITE-EYED VIREO *Vireo griseus* (38, 2). A singing male at Butano Creek, SM, 18 Jun 1998 (DLSu; 1999-026) furnished a county first, while another at Pt. Saint George, DN, 27 Jun 1998 (ADB; 1998-141) was well north of the state's previous northernmost records (in Marin County). Approximately 75% of accepted records are from spring (8 May to late June).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO *Vireo flavifrons* (69, 2). One at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 13 Jun 1998 (AME; 1998-108) was in spring, season of approximately 70% of California's records. The state's third in winter was at Westminster, ORA, 29 Dec 1998–15 Feb 1999 (KSG, SSo, RF, JM, GMcC, MTH, DR; 1999-018).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO *Vireo solitarius* (5**, 5). This recently recognized species was added to the review list in 1998 (records from 1997 and later), with the following records being the first to gain formal CBRC acceptance: likely immature female on SE Farallon I., SF, 1 Oct 1998 (PP; 1999-011), immature (likely male) banded on SE Farallon I., SF, 11 Oct 1998 (WR; PP†; 1999-012), immature male banded at the Big Sur R. mouth, MTY, 28 Sep 1998 (JBo†; 1999-057), one at Arroyo Grande Creek, SLO, 14 Oct 1998 (BS; 1998-157), and a wintering bird in Orange, ORA, 31 Oct 1998–16 Jan 1999 (DRW; 1999-095). At least some pre-1997 records will undergo a form of review, and anyone who has observed this species in the state in any year is urged to submit contemporaneous documentation to the Committee.

Blue-headed Vireos are difficult to separate from bright Cassin's Vireos (*V. cassinii*) under field conditions (Heindel 1996, Pyle 1997), and evaluation of many records is troublesome, even with a fairly detailed description and/or photographs (see Figure 7). Accepted birds were described as possessing or photographed exhibiting (1) an immaculate white throat sharply demarcated from the auriculars (no blending at the border), (2) white center of breast and belly, (3) blue or blue-gray head contrasting with a green back (some with greenish napes), and (4) lemon-washed flanks (often very bright). One bird in hand was reported to have outer rectrices with pale outer edges approximately 1 mm thick. Until identification criteria are better delineated, the Committee requests unusually detailed and precise descriptions of suspected Blue-headed Vireos.

*PHILADELPHIA VIREO *Vireo philadelphicus* (116, 8). Individuals found within the typical autumn window of occurrence (mid September to late October) were at Fairhaven, HUM, 2 Oct 1998 (BED, DRi; RF, JM, MMR, GMcC, MSM; 1998-152),

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Pt. Reyes, MRN, 30 Sep 1998 (PU; JFH, DGS; 1998-189), El Granada, SM, 4 Oct 1998 (RST; 1999-046), Big Sur R. mouth, MTY, 27 Oct 1998 (JBo; 1999-056; banded immature), Los Angeles R. near Glendale, LA, 26 Sep–11 Oct 1998 (KLG; 1999-037), and Huntington Beach, ORA, 12–22 Oct 1998 (KSG, MSM; 1998-199). One at Bodega Head, SON, 5–10 Sep 1998 (DnWN; KCK, BDP, DGS; 1998-134) arrived a day later than the state's earliest fall record. A singing male at the Parker Creek Diversion Dam, MNO, 21 Jun 1998 (ES; DMat, DPŞ, JiP; 1998-104) furnished California's eleventh in spring, with Mono County accounting for six of these records (the previous five occurred at Oasis). Although photographs of this bird appear to be diagnostic, and the record was accepted unanimously, a recorded song included phrases that some members considered similar to those of a Warbling Vireo (*V. gilvus*) and thus seemingly atypical for a Philadelphia Vireo.

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO *Vireo flavoviridis* (63, 8). This vireo's impressive showing in fall 1998 matches the previous seasonal high set in fall 1988; as in that year, seven occurred along the coast. Individuals were at Fort Funston, SF, 30 Sep–4 Oct 1998 (LC, MWE, MJM, JM; 1998-151), Lighthouse Field State Beach, SCZ, 15 Oct 1998 (SG; 1998-220), Oso Flaco L., SLO, 28 Sep 1998 (BS; 1998-145), Oxnard Plain, VEN 13–16 Sep 1998 (GMcC, MSM; 1998-139), Oxnard Plain, VEN, 26 Sep–4 Oct 1998 (SJT; JLD; 1998-229), Oxnard Plain, VEN, 29–30 Sep 1998 (MSM; JLD; DSP; 1998-154), and Pt. Loma, SD, 17 Oct 1998 (GMcC; GLR; 1998-165). Few of these birds were aged specifically, but none was thought to be an adult. An immature at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 6 Oct 1998 (MTH; 1998-219) provided the second record for Kern County and only the state's fourth inland.

VEERY *Catharus fuscescens* (10, 1). An immature banded at the Big Sur R. mouth, MTY, 21 Sep 1998 (JBo†; 1998-174) made the state's seventh fall record. This bird's appearance was consistent with *C. f. salicicola*.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH *Catharus minimus* (20, 1). An immature at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 9 Oct 1998 (MTH, DSP, JCW; 1998-184; Figure 8) was the second identified inland in California, the first having been at the same park 14–18 Sep 1989 (Patten and Erickson 1994).

WOOD THRUSH *Hylocichla mustelina* (14, 1). An immature at California City, KER, 11–13 Oct 1998 (KSG, MTH, GMcC, MAP, MJSM, SBT†, JCW; 1998-160) was a first for Kern County and the state's fifth Wood Thrush inland.

*GRAY CATBIRD *Dumetella carolinensis* (101, 16). After a single spring record in 1998—of a one-year-old bird banded near the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, 20 Jun 1998 (KN; 1998-109)—Gray Catbirds arrived in bulk in fall 1998; the final tally of 15 records eclipsed the previous high seasonal total of seven from fall 1991. Remarkably, seven of these were inland, including four in Kern County (just one previous fall occurrence there). Individuals were at Chico, BUT, 7–8 Oct 1998 (RW; HO, JOs, RER, MSk; 1998-167), Bodega Head, SON, 22 Sep–8 Oct 1998 (DnWN; DGS; 1998-188), Pt. Reyes, MRN, 22–23 Sep 1998 (KB, JFH, DGS; 1998-156), SE Farallon I., SF, 31 Oct 1998 (WR; lSt†; 1999-033; immature; Figure 9), Tunitas Creek, SM, 23 Oct 1998 (AW; 1998-168), near Año Nuevo State Reserve, SM, found dead 30 Dec 1998, likely wintering (BMcK†; #LACM 111151; 1999-070), Galileo Hill Park, KER, 14 Oct 1998 (KSG; 1999-034), near Cantil, KER, 23 Oct 1998 (MTH; 1998-218), California City, KER, 18 Oct–31 Dec 1998 (JHu; MTH, MAP†, DMS, GMcC, MSM, MJSM, JCW†; 1998-171; adult), California City, KER, 20 Oct–16 Nov 1998 (JHu; MTH, GMcC, MSM; 1998-180; immature), Iron Mt. Pumping Plant, SBE, 24 Oct 1998 (MAP; BiD; 1998-169; immature), Horsethief Springs, Kingston Range, SBE, 6 Oct 1998 (BiD; 1998-122), McGrath State Beach, VEN, 19 Sep 1998 (NF; 1999-040), San Nicolas I., VEN, 11–17 Oct 1998 (RAH; WW; 1999-045; banded), and San Diego, SD, 27–28 Oct 1998 (GLR; GMcC; 1998-170). The

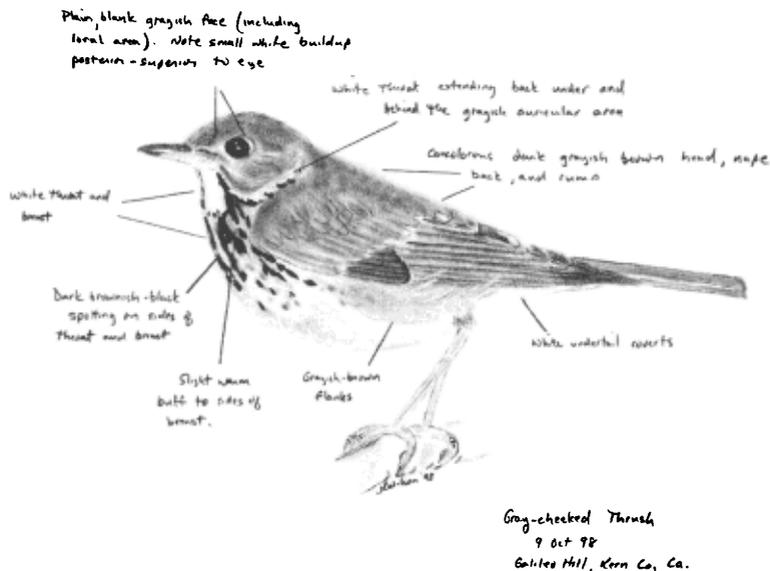


Figure 8. Gray-cheeked Thrush, *Catharus minimus*, at Galileo Hill Park, Kern County, 9 Oct 1998 (1998-184). Key features include dominance of cool gray tones to the upperparts, brownish-black spotting on white underparts, whitish border to the lower auriculars, and incomplete whitish eye-ring.

Sketch by John C. Wilson

number of accepted records indicates that the Gray Catbird is a rare, regular component of California's avifauna, and records after 1999 will not be reviewed.

WHITE/BLACK-BACKED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba/lugens* (5, 3). In 1993, Howell and David Sibley were asked independently to review five vexing northern California records (1988-290, 1989-130, 1989-210, 1990-189, 1990-200); we thank them for their effort and advice, provided both in letters to the Committee and via publication of Sibley and Howell (1998), which included their updated opinions on all California records. The three records discussed here (among the five reviewed by Howell and Sibley) were originally considered by the CBRC in the early 1990s, then re-reviewed following publication of Sibley and Howell's enlightening paper. Unfortunately, members were still unable to reach consensus on the age and sex of these birds, a step critical to identifying them to species (Pyle 1997). For two of these records, pitfalls inherent in the identification process were compounded by differing opinions regarding the likelihood that each pertained to a single bird that wintered in the same general area for four consecutive years. Finally, given that these wagtails are known to interbreed, at least occasionally (e.g., Kishchinski and Lobkov 1979, Badyaev et al. 1996), the potential for hybridization naturally affected members' opinions (although Sibley and Howell suspected that "fewer than 5%" of the 216 wagtail specimens they inspected might have been hybrids). Though records such as these frustrate the field ornithologist (and bird records committees), they are instructive reminders that the natural world does not always conform neatly to our organizing



Figure 9. Gray Catbird, *Dumetella carolinensis*, on Southeast Farallon Island, San Francisco County, 31 Oct 1998 (1999-033), one of a record 16 accepted records in 1998. The four inner greater coverts have been replaced and thus contrast with the duller outer greater coverts and primary coverts, a "molt limit" not shown by fall adults. Note also the lackluster remiges, typical of immatures.

Photo by Ivan Samuels

schemes and that some birds may simply not be identifiable to species, even by skilled observers studying them at close range.

An early fall vagrant at the Eel River Wildlife Area, HUM, 1–3 Sep 1994 (NL, DEQ†, DSa; 1994-133A) was submitted as a White Wagtail and received four "accept" votes, along with six votes for acceptance at the species-pair level. Upon its 1998 re-submission the voting results after two rounds were identical to the original results (four votes for the White Wagtail, six votes for the species pair). Most members were nearly convinced that the bird was, in fact, an adult White Wagtail, but some were troubled that a well-regarded observer (one of many who observed this bird without submitting documentation) verbally reported having observed dark scapular lines not visible in two distant photographs. Sibley and Howell (1998) identified this individual only to the species-pair level.

A widely seen and closely studied bird at Moss Landing, MTY, 21 Dec 1990–21 Jan 1991 (DEG; JLD, SNGH, GMcC, PEL, RJO'B†, MAP, DR†, DAS, SWe; 1990-200A; photograph in *Am. Birds* 45:317) was generally thought to be an adult female White or immature Black-backed Wagtail. The record was twice submitted as a "White/Black-backed Wagtail," receiving unanimous support to the species-pair level each time. After the first review (as 1990-200), Morlan accepted it as a Black-backed, while Roberson and Pyle accepted it as a White that had wintered in the general area the preceding three years (Moss Landing, MTY, 23 Dec 1988–21 Jan 1989 [1988-290]; Sunset State Beach, SCZ, 3–11 Dec 1989 [1989-210]; Pajaro R. mouth/Sunset State Beach SCZ/MTY 7 Nov–3 Dec 1990 [1989-210]). In the second review (as 1990-200A), Pyle's opinion remained unchanged, while the remaining votes went

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to the species pair (Roberson was then off the Committee). Lars Svensson kindly reviewed a photograph of this bird but was unable to state anything conclusive regarding the appearance of birds of the subspecies *ocularis* of NE Siberia and NW Alaska (i.e., those known to reach California). Sibley and Howell (1998) identified this bird only to the species-pair level, opining that it was probably an adult female White Wagtail, although probably not the same individual involved in previous records from the general vicinity (because the appearance changed too rapidly from that ascribed to 1990-189A, discussed in the following paragraph; S. Howell pers. comm.).

One at the Pajaro R. mouth/Sunset State Beach, MTY/SCZ, 7 Nov–3 Dec 1990 (BMe; JSM, JMS; 1990-189A) was seen by fewer observers and supported by much sparser details than were the preceding two records. It was first submitted as a White Wagtail and received three “accept” votes (all members accepting the species pair). In 1993, commenting at the CBRC’s request, Sibley (in litt.) regarded the descriptions of this bird as “just too little to go on,” while noting that they suggested an immature White Wagtail; Howell (in litt.) simply considered the documentation insufficient to support a species-level identification. Sibley and Howell (1998) erroneously published this record as an immature White Wagtail (S. Howell in litt.). Upon its resubmission in 1998, four members accepted it as a White Wagtail, with all members accepting the species pair. Among those accepting, Jaramillo, McCaskie, and Pyle reckoned it was likely a returning bird; Rottenborn, following Sibley and Howell (1998), considered it more likely an immature.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT *Anthus hodgsoni* (1, 1). A first-fall bird observed and banded at SE Farallon I., SF, 26-29 Sep 1998 (RB, PC, WR; DMA†, PPT†; 1999-010) marked the debut of this distinctive Old World species in California. This individual belonged the “expected” subspecies *yunnanensis* of northern Eurasia, which has accounted for all vagrant Olive-backed Pipits of known race in the New World. Capitolo et al. (2000) presented a full account of this record, including photographs and a summary of the North American records.

SPRAGUE’S PIPIT *Anthus spragueii* (27, 1). Imperial County’s second record, comprising at least 12 wintering near Calipatria, IMP, 10 Jan–21 Feb 1998 (KLG, MTH, PEL, RL, CAM, GMcC, TRC, MAP; 1998-040), exceeded the largest flocks previously recorded in California (flocks of up to five near Needles, 2–27 Nov 1986, Langham 1991, and near Lancaster, LA, 22 Nov 1981–7 Mar 1982, Binford 1985). The birds were in a field of cut Bermuda Grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) near the intersection of Sinclair Road and Highway 111.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora pinus* (26, 1). An immature male at Birchim Canyon, NW of Bishop, INY, 6 Sep 1998 (DP, JiP; JHe, TH; 1998-214) was the second recorded in Inyo County. This eastern warbler’s pattern of vagrancy is atypical in that inland records account for most of the state total (61%); perhaps even more unusual, 58% of the fall records are away from the coast.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora chrysoptera* (60, 1). A male at SE Farallon I., SF, 29–30 Sep 1998 (IS; RB, PP, WR; 1999-013) was the island’s third fall record and seventh overall.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER *Dendroica dominica* (85, 3). One at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, 9 Sep 1998 (DR; 1998-142) was judged to be of the more regularly occurring subspecies *albilora*, while an immature male at San Nicolas I., VEN, 7–14 Sep 1998 (RAH; SGH; 1998-193) with some yellow in the lores was not ascribed a race (some *albilora* can show this). A bird presumed to be wintering was in Eureka, HUM, 14 Jan 1998 (MHM; 1998-022).

GRACE’S WARBLER *Dendroica graciae* (34, 1). The state’s northernmost coastal record was at Jacks’ Peak Regional Park, MTY, 12 Dec 1998–3 Feb 1999 (RFT; JA, DPH, CH, DR, MMR; 1999-004).

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PINE WARBLER *Dendroica pinus* (56, 1). A male that wintered at El Dorado Park, Long Beach, LA, 25 Nov 1998–10 Apr 1999 (KSG, CAM, MSM, MJSM, JM, SSo; 1998-202) began singing by the end of its stay. This bird was judged to be probably different from 1997-193, a likely immature male that wintered in a different part of this large park in 1997–98. Although this species winters in the state with some regularity, no individual is believed to have returned for a second year. One reported in Fountain Valley, ORA, 17–18 Nov 1998 (*N. Am. Birds* 53:106) was not submitted for review.

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helmitheros vermivorus* (84, 1). One at San Pedro, LA, 23 Nov–14 Dec 1996 (DMH; KLG; 1997-025) required three circulations because a submitted photograph was not identifiable and the only submitted description covered just the bird's call notes and behaviors, plus a sketch depicting the undertail coverts. Additional documentation was eventually submitted and the record was accepted unanimously, but other widely seen birds routinely fare poorly in CBRC review for similar reasons (cf. the account for this species under Records Not Accepted). One reported at Moss Landing, MTY, 16 Nov 1998 (*N. Am. Birds* 53:102) was not submitted for review.

MOURNING WARBLER *Oporornis philadelphia* (106, 3). Accepted were an immature male banded at SE Farallon I., SF, 15–16 Sep 1998 (PP; WR†; 1999-014), an immature at Chorro Creek, Morro Bay, SLO, 20 Sep 1997 (JSR; WB; 1998-038), and an immature banded at San Nicolas I., VEN, 12–13 Sep 1998 (RAH; 1998-136). The first two birds were described as showing the distinctly yellow throats typical of this species, while the last had a throat described in the hand as being "pale gray with pale yellow tips; the yellow coloration was quite muted and would have been difficult to discern in the field." While members were somewhat concerned with this description, all distinctive measurements, appearances, and the call were consistent with a Mourning Warbler and eliminated congeners. In-hand photographs of this interesting bird were, unfortunately, destroyed by the developer.

RED-FACED WARBLER *Cardellina rubrifrons* (11, 1). One photographed at Bishop, INY, 20–21 May 1998 (BT; NBB, KSG, JHe†, TH, DP, JiP; 1998-085) constituted the state's eighth spring record, all but one at inland locales. This bird's relatively dull plumage suggested perhaps a one-year-old female, but Pyle (1997) urged caution in assessing age and sex in this species.

SCARLET TANAGER *Piranga olivacea*. (99, 5). A female was photographed at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 1 Jun 1998 (RS; GG†; 1998-096). A male observed there on 30 Sep 1998 (RS; JFH, DGS, SCH, PU; 1998-158) was described by all viewers as having entirely black remiges and wing coverts, indicating an adult (it was termed a "young male" in *N. Am. Birds* 53:102). Additional fall males were at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 1 Oct 1998 (DSP; 1998-183), Chatsworth, LA, 27 Oct 1998 (JWS†; 1998-190; immature), and Huntington Beach, ORA, 31 Oct–1 Nov 1998 (KSG; 1999-113; immature).

CASSIN'S SPARROW *Aimophila cassinii*. (40, 1). A male was voice-recorded as it sang and skylarked in the North Domenegoni Hills, RIV, 26 May 1995 (KFC; 1999-198). Whereas the species' diagnostic primary song was captured on tape, several members noted that a second song (presumed to be from the same bird) sounded atypical for a Cassin's Sparrow. Spring vagrants in May and June account for most California records.

FIELD SPARROW *Spizella pusilla* (6, 1). Kern County's first was photographed at Inyokern, KER, 1–4 Nov 1998 (SS†; MTH; 1998-205). Like previous California Field Sparrows', this bird's appearance was consistent with the pale western subspecies *arenacea*.

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SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* (64, 2). One was at Arcata Marsh, HUM, 28 Oct 1998 (PL; 1999-055), and a female was photographed on SE Farallon I., SF, 1 Nov 1998 (PPT; 1999-035). Each fit the predominant pattern of late fall records from the northern coast.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris* (65, 7). First-fall birds on the Shasta R. NE of Grenada, SIS, 19 Sep 1998 (RE; 1999-036) and at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 29 Sep 1998 (GE; 1998-172) were county firsts. Other immatures were at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 24 Sep–10 Oct 1997 (RJN; JHe, TH, GMcC, MAP; 1997-146, 1997-146A) and 21 Sep 1998 (GMcC; MSM; 1998-144), at Ridgecrest, KER, 24–27 Sep 1998 (LSu; 1998-210), and near Cantil, KER, 6–7 Sep 1998 (MTH; 1998-217). These records fit the predominant pattern of Painted Bunting records in California, of immatures occurring from late August through mid October.

An adult male at Twentynine Palms, SBE, 8 Oct 1998 (BiD; 1998-223) was accepted 8–2 as a natural vagrant in the first round on the strength of its relatively remote desert location and appropriate date. While the Committee shares a general uneasiness that released/escaped birds may account for a considerable proportion of the state's adult male Painted Bunting records (see this species' account under Records Not Accepted, Natural Occurrence Questionable), this vote demonstrates that those concerns can be overcome.

COMMON GRACKLE *Quiscalus quiscula* (44, 5). Records were of a weakened male taken as a specimen from Rohnert Park, SON, 15 Nov 1997 (SE†; 1999-101; #Sonoma State University 1985), a spring migrant photographed at Pt. Sur, MTY, 21 Apr 1998 (JBo; DR†; 1998-089), a male photographed and voice recorded at Bishop, INY, 13 Sep 1998 (DP†§, JiP; 1998-211), a singing male videotaped in Wildomar, RIV, 21 Jan–15 Feb 1998 (CHa†; TRC, GMcC, CAM, MAP; 1998-041), and a singing male voice recorded at Twentynine Palms, SBE, 27 Mar–11 Apr 1998 (MF, MAP, DGS, JOZ§; 1998-061). Like the previous California records, all birds identifiable to subspecies were of the expected Bronzed race *versicolor*. The Rohnert Park and Pt. Sur birds were county firsts.

Through spring 1988, 15 of 22 accepted records were of apparent spring migrants occurring between 12 April and 12 June. From fall 1988 through fall 1998, only four of 22 accepted records fell within this spring window. During the latter period, 15 records pertained to apparent fall migrants. Inyo County claims a remarkable 18 records, more than triple the total for any other county.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, identification not established

LEAST GREBE *Tachybaptus dominicus*. The description of a bird in Golden Gate Park, SF, 22 Jan 1998 (1998-043) was insufficient to establish its identity.

STREAKED SHEARWATER *Calonectris leucomelas*. One reported on Monterey Bay, MTY, 6 Dec 1998 (1999-003) received no support.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*. The documentation for a small black and white shearwater S of Santa Cruz I., SBA, 20 Sep 1998 (1998-143) was considered inadequate to support the record; the species remains unconfirmed in California waters south of Morro Bay or north of Bodega Bay.

RED-TAILED TROPICBIRD *Phaethon rubricauda*. The report of one seen briefly from shore off south Vandenberg Air Force Base, SBA, 10 September 1998 (1998-038) received limited support through two circulations.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY *Sula nebouxii*. A bird reported at Battery East, SF, 26 Sep 1998 (1999-075) was not identified by all observers present. Several Committee members accepted that a booby was seen, but all but one agreed with those observers who considered the identification only probable.

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LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser erythropus*. The report of one at Tule Lake N.W.R., SIS, 15 Mar 1998 (1998-057) received but a single vote to accept.

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*. The Committee's traditional tough stand on this species continued, as evidenced by the following records not accepted: adult near Lower Klamath N.W.R., SIS, 14 Feb 1998 (1998-194), adult at Ash Creek W.M.A., LAS, 15 Feb 1998 (1998-195), adult at Cosumnes R. Preserve, SAC, 16 Nov 1998 (1998-227), one heard only N of Marysville, YUB, 16 Dec 1998 (1998-228), and two adults and three immatures on Clair Engle L., TRI, 29 Dec 1998 (1999-023). Only the last record received any accept votes. We appreciate the efforts of the Trumpeter Swan Society to compile reports of this species in California, but records lacking adequate documentation will ultimately fail to receive the Committee's blessing.

FALCATED DUCK *Anas falcata*. The report of a male seen briefly at Gray Lodge W.M.A., BUT, 15 Feb 1998 (1998-046) was interesting but received little support from Committee members.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK *Anas rubripes*. Votes on a record of a bird seen briefly at Cosumnes R. Preserve, SAC, 14 Mar 1997 (1997-069) were initially split almost evenly among "accepted," "not accepted—natural occurrence questionable," and "not accepted—identification not established." Votes for the last option dominated in the third and final circulation.

KING EIDER *Somateria spectabilis*. One at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 29 Jan–16 Feb 1997 (1997-061) received a split vote on its fourth and final circulation. Most Committee members agreed that this bird (seen by many, including at least one CBRC member) was probably identified correctly, but the documentation was considered inadequate.

* ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus*. Individuals at Carlsbad, SD, 20 Nov 1997 (1998-031) and 4.2 miles SE of Onyx Summit, SBE, 30 Aug 1998 (1998-124) were not documented to the Committee's satisfaction.

YELLOW RAIL *Coturnicops noveboracensis*. One seen briefly, and only in flight, at Fort Bragg, MEN, 5 Oct 1995 (1998-132) received majority acceptance initially but only a minority on the second and final round.

GRAY-TAILED TATTLER *Heteroscelus brevipes*. A report of one at Bodega Head, SON, 30 May 1998 (1998-093) received no support, whereas one heard, and seen as a silhouette only, at Princeton Harbor, SM, 6 Jun 1998 (1998-164) received three and two "accept" votes on two rounds. Another report from Pt. Reyes during the same period is still under CBRC review.

BRISTLE-THIGHED CURLEW *Numenius tahitiensis*. Reports of two birds at Kehoe Beach, Pt. Reyes, MRN, 6 May 1998 (1998-090) and one at Big Lagoon, HUM, 9 May 1998 (1998-081) corresponded with the 1998 landfall (see accepted records) but were not accepted by simple majorities on a single circulation. The Marin birds were identified about ten days after the sighting, and the Humboldt bird was seen only in flight.

RED-NECKED STINT *Calidris ruficollis*. The identity of a male stint in presumed first alternate plumage collected at the mouth of the Alamo R., Salton Sea, IMP, 17 Aug 1974 (#SDNHM 38887; GMcC, JBu†; 1984-085) remains unresolved. The record was published as a Red-necked Stint by McCaskie (1975), Roberson (1980), Garrett and Dunn (1981), AOU (1983), Veit (1988), and Small (1994), but the CBRC has never accepted it; since receiving a simple majority vote on its first circulation in 1985, the record never reached even a split vote on four subsequent rounds. All have agreed that the bird was either a Red-necked or a Little Stint, but most have been

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unwilling to go beyond that. In 1993, the specimen was sent to the National Museum of Natural History where M. Ralph Browning and the late Claudia Wilds compared it with approximately 100 specimens of Red-necked and Little stints but were unable to identify it. Nevertheless, the record did receive three accept votes on its final circulation, and many members believe the specimen may yet be identified. The Committee would welcome the chance to review any significant reanalysis of the specimen.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. A reported juvenile at Eureka, HUM, 16–21 Sep 1992 (1993-050, 1993-050A) received three to six “accept” votes during five circulations (the review process was restarted following receipt of better photographs), and most Committee members agreed that the bird may have been a Little Stint. In contrast, a bird reported from Abbott’s Lagoon, Pt. Reyes, MRN, 9 Aug 1998 (1998-125) received no support.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*. One reported from the Santa Maria R. estuary, SBA, 6 Sep 1997 (1998-032) received but a single vote to accept on its second circulation. The observers failed to note a white rump, and the plumage described matched neither an adult or a (very early) juvenile.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*. A report from Kern N.W.R., KER, 31 Dec 1998 (1999-002) received no CBRC support.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*. Records not accepted included an adult at Arcata, HUM, 6–23 Feb 1987 (1987-072), two juveniles at Alviso, SCL, 16–28 Jan 1998 (1998-091), a juvenile at Moss Landing, MTY, 15–20 Feb 1998 (1998-059), a juvenile near Milpitas, SCL, 24 Feb 1998 (1998-107), and a second-winter bird at Año Nuevo Pt., SM, 27 Feb 1998 (1998-056). The first bird resembled a typical Kumlien’s Gull (*L. g. kumlieni*) but was not photographed and received only five or six votes to accept on each of four circulations. The other records scored more poorly, with only one to three votes to accept per record per circulation, except for six votes for the Alviso birds in the initial round. Rottenborn and Morlan (2000) provided more information on records of this species not accepted by the CBRC; Terrill et al. (1999) discussed the situation in the San Jose area in more detail. Howell (2000; in votes) emphasized another potential confounding factor in review of potential Iceland Gulls: hybrid Glaucous-winged (*L. glaucescens*) × Herring (*L. argentatus*) Gulls.

ROSS’S GULL *Rhodostethia rosea*. An adult reported from Berkeley, ALA, 14 Jan 1998 (1998-100) was described with too little detail for a first state record.

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti*. Most members felt that a bird at Twentynine Palms, SBE, 24 Oct 1998 (1998-225) was likely this species, but by the third round of voting only four members considered the description adequate to support the record. Several comments referenced the Plain-breasted Ground-Dove (*C. minuta*), a situation discussed under Records Accepted.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD *Archilochus colubris*. A female reported at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 26 Aug 1998 (1999-054) received no votes for acceptance after two voting rounds. In light of cautionary treatment by Pyle (1997), and considering other tantalizing encounters with *Archilochus* hummingbirds in the state that ultimately proved to involve likely or definite Black-chinneds, most members indicated unwillingness to accept sight records of this species without definitive observations of the shapes of the primaries (cf. Howell and Webb 1995, National Geographic Society 1999, Sibley 2000). We urge observers claiming vagrant Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to obtain definitive photographs (including the primaries) and/or in-hand data.

GREATER PEWEE *Contopus pertinax*. Nine positive votes cast in the first round for a bird photographed at SE Farallon I., SF, 1 June 1998 (1998-116) would normally have constituted Committee endorsement of the state’s first spring record of

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a Greater Pewee, but Heindel requested recirculation to further consider a fairly bold breast pattern, relatively bold wing-bars, missing greater wing-coverts, and fresh tertials contrasting with wings that otherwise looked worn to most members (Figure 10). Howell and Jaramillo, the members most familiar with the Greater Pewee and potentially confusing tropical species, considered this record to be fairly straightforward; nonetheless, a majority voted not to accept in the third and fourth rounds, believing that the bird looked atypical (at least in photographs) and was inadequately supported by written details. Morlan and Patten opined that the bird may have been an Eastern Wood-Pewee (*C. virens*), partly because of an unprecedented incursion of that species to California in spring 1998. Given that the bird was seen at close range over the course of a day by at least two observers (only one of whom submitted a report), questions raised by the equivocal photographs might have been resolved by recording more detailed observations of the bird's appearance and size. Comments on Figure 10 are welcome.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Contopus virens*. A single observer briefly described a singing Eastern Wood-Pewee at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 1 Jun 1998 (1998-196). Though the distinctive "pee-a-wee" song was mentioned, the rest of the description was too superficial, with the problematic claim that the "head, upperparts, and tail were all brown." The record therefore received no Committee support, although it could be revived with submission of corroborating information from others reported to have seen this bird. Also from the same observer were reports of a vocalizing bird at Greenhorn Summit, KER, 1 Aug 1998 (1998-197) and another bird at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 24 Sep 1998 (1998-198). Lacking convincing detail, these reports received no support.

ALDER FLYCATCHER *Empidonax alnorum*. A widely studied immature *Empidonax* at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 7-11 October 1998 (1998-161; Figures 11 and 12) may well have been an Alder Flycatcher, but whereas the calls (most commonly "a bunting-like pit" but with occasional "soft whits") were atypical for western Willow Flycatchers (*E. traillii brewsteri*, *E. t. adastus*, *E. t. extimus*), they fell short of the more powerful "peep" or "beck" calls normally heard from Alder Flycatchers. After examining slides of 1998-161 with a large number of specimens of both the Willow and Alder at hand, Philip Unitt concluded that the western subspecies of Willow Flycatcher were eliminated on the basis of tertial pattern and that the bird was likely an Alder Flycatcher. Without specimens of first-fall eastern Willow Flycatchers (*E. t. traillii*) for comparison, however (juveniles certainly identified as *E. t. traillii* are almost lacking in collections), he was unwilling to state with certainty that the bird was an Alder Flycatcher. The record was defeated 1-9 after two rounds of voting, with most members opining that they would likely have voted differently if the bird had sounded like a typical Alder Flycatcher. Two singing birds in spring comprise California's only accepted records.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO *Vireo solitarius*. Individuals were not accepted from Mono L. County Park, MNO, 5 Sep 1995 (1999-128), Eureka, HUM, 19 Dec 1998 (1999-116), Pt. Reyes, MRN, 19 Sep 1998 (1998-187), Los Osos, SLO, 15-22 Sep 1998 (1999-071), San Nicolas I., VEN, 20 Oct 1998 (1998-216; Figure 7), and Pilarcitos Creek, SM, 1 Nov 1998 (1999-047). As might be expected, reports of this taxon have surged following the three-way split of the Solitary Vireo complex, but identification of this vireo is more problematic than many observers seem to appreciate, and the CBRC is unlikely to endorse records of incompletely or ambiguously described birds. The field marks discussed under Accepted Records are particularly important. Note also that most Blue-headed Vireos appear to pass through California from late September through October and that reports from outside this window may require exceptionally complete details for CBRC endorsement.



Figure 10. Possible Greater Pewee, *Contopus pertinax*, on Southeast Farallon Island, San Francisco County, 1 June 1998 (1998-116). This bird's crest and bill appear more or less typical for a Greater Pewee, but most members considered the whitish wing-bars and edging to the inner secondaries and tertials to be outside the species' typical range of variation.

Photo by Clyde Morris

*PHILADELPHIA VIREO *Vireo philadelphicus*. Descriptions of a bird at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 4 Oct 1998 (1998-153) failed to rule out the similar Warbling Vireo and received no votes for acceptance.

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO *Vireo flavoviridis*. One reported at the Marin Headlands, MRN, 5 Oct 1996 (1997-049) fell a vote shy of acceptance after four voting rounds, while one reported from Moss Beach, SM, 4 Oct 1998 (1998-226) received only four votes to accept in the first round. In each case, members expressed concern that a bright Red-eyed Vireo (*V. olivaceus*) was not eliminated. Yellow-green Vireos are most reliably identified by the extension of yellow tones from the shoulder to behind the auriculars and by yellow edges to the remiges and rectrices (Terrill 1981, Erickson and Terrill 1996).

VEERY *Catharus fuscescens*. Descriptions of a rusty *Catharus* thrush at the Carmel River mouth, MTY, 21-22 Sep 1998 (1999-052) pointed toward this species, but most members ultimately concurred that the observers' views were too brief to permit the bird's confident identification.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora pinus*. One reported at Birchim Canyon, NW of Bishop, INY, 22 May 1998 (1998-082) was seen rather briefly by a lone observer and received only one "accept" vote during the first round. Apart from most members' unwillingness to accept uncorroborated records from the observer, the



Figure 11. Alder/Willow Flycatcher, *Empidonax alnorum/trailii* at Galileo Hill Park, Kern County, 11 Oct 1998 (1998-161). Alder-like features evident in this photo include the whitish chin and throat, generally grayish underparts, prominent wing bars, fairly obvious eye-ring, and relatively short bill.

Photo by Larry Sansone

description of the wings and back was atypical for a Blue-winged Warbler, and the bird could not be refound by others later in the day.

PINE WARBLER *Dendroica pinus*. Reports of brightly colored individuals at Arroyo de la Cruz, SLO, 25 Sep 1998 (1999-042) and Oceano, SLO, 1 Oct 1998 (1999-041) each garnered four votes of acceptance during the first round. Members are generally skeptical of Pine Warblers reported in September and early October, and the CBRC is presently re-reviewing the three accepted records from before 13 October. It appears that observers underestimate the variability of Blackpoll (*D. striata*) and Bay-breasted (*D. castanea*) warblers, which can appear nearly plain backed during their first fall. Observers should also be aware that a Pine Warbler's tail is no longer than that of a Blackpoll or Bay-breasted (Pyle 1997); thus, descriptions of this feature should relate the undertail coverts to the tail tip. Early fall claims of the Pine Warbler should be backed by impeccable details, preferably by multiple observers, or by definitive photographs.

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helminthos vermivorus*. A report of one in Ventura, VEN, 6-25 Jan 1997 (1997-085) ultimately foundered after four rounds, despite having been seen by multiple observers during an extended stay. The only description

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submitted for CBRC review pointed toward this rather distinctive warbler, but most members were concerned by mention of "a few small brown streaks at the top of the chest," which this species would not show unless wet or otherwise mused. This debacle again demonstrates how CBRC review can be undermined when observers assume that others will submit adequate supporting details. If additional details are received, the record will be re-reviewed.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER *Oporornis agilis*. One reported at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab, MTY, 13 Sep 1998 (1998-192) was supported by fairly extensive notes that most members took as supporting the observer's claim. Another person present on the day of the sighting, however, submitted a note to the Committee stating that the observer "considered the record tentative" on that day, and conveying an "impression [from the observer] that the bird was seen very, very briefly (1-2 seconds) only." In light of this testimony, the record garnered only four votes in the first round.

MOURNING WARBLER *Oporornis philadelphia*. The Committee withheld endorsement of individuals claimed at Santa Barbara I., SBA, 31 May 1974 (1980-021A; resubmitted after prior nonacceptance as a Connecticut Warbler), Ferndale, HUM, 31 Aug 1996 (1997-048), Hansen Dam Park, Los Angeles, LA, 24 Sep 1996 (1997-026), Big Sur R. mouth, MTY, 19 Sep 1998 (1999-066), and Mt. Diablo State Park, CC, 16 Oct 1998 (1999-064). Most members opined that the bird at the Big Sur R. mouth was most likely a Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*). The revived report from Santa Barbara I., which four members voted to accept, seemingly suffered more from the baggage of prior submission (the observer having previously argued for another species) than from weakness of the documentation, which indicated an alternate-plumaged female Mourning Warbler. The remaining three reports involved birds described as showing little or no yellow in the throat, which in fall should indicate an adult female, which should account for a very small percentage of vagrants; an aberrant bird or hybrid (the latter unproven; Pitocchelli 1993, Heindel and Patten 1996); or the observer's failure to detect pale yellow (cf. earlier discussion of 1998-136). Though most members considered these reports to be likely correct, observer inexperience and other factors ultimately turned the voting decisively against them. For further information on identification of this species and congeners see Pyle and Henderson (1990), Pyle (1997), and Dunn and Garrett (1997).

SCARLET TANAGER *Piranga olivacea*. Members generally agreed that a male was seen at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 10 Nov 1997 (1998-060), but after four rounds three members remained unconvinced that the record was adequately documented.

SMITH'S LONGSPUR *Calcarius pictus*. A report of one at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 10 Oct 1998 (1998-185) received no votes for acceptance, a few members suggesting that the details better fit a Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*). A report from San Nicolas I., VEN, 18 Oct 1998 (1999-030) was thought to have greater potential of being correct, but after two rounds this report also received no votes to accept because the Vesper Sparrow and other longspurs were not convincingly ruled out.

McKAY'S BUNTING *Plectrophenax hyperboreus*. A nearly white bird associating with Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) west of Orleans, HUM, 18 Sep 1998 (1998-147) was considered by the Committee to have almost certainly been a partially albinistic Dark-eyed Junco.

VARIED BUNTING *Passerina versicolor*. An adult male reported at Lancaster, LA, 21-23 Apr 1996 (1996-100) received no votes for acceptance after four rounds, the tallies being evenly split between "identification not established" and "natural occurrence questionable." Although most members considered the identification to be

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likely correct, several were concerned that one description likened the bird's size to that of a Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) and that the only other description appeared to have been written several weeks after the sighting. Members' standards of acceptance are generally quite high for this species owing to its extreme rarity in California (two accepted records to date) and to its potential for escape from captivity. Hamilton (in press) has seen as many as 42 for sale in northwestern Baja California (Rosarito, 5 July 2000). For such species, observations should be detailed enough to detect signs of possible earlier captivity (e.g., atypical coloration in any feather tract, broken remex tips, frayed rectrices, abnormally long claws, bill deformities), and the description should indicate that such an inspection was conducted.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris*. The description of one reported at San Elijo Lagoon, SD, 20 Aug 1996 (1997-028) included relatively little detail, and the bill was described as being "very small and black." Since the Painted Bunting's bill is relatively large for a *Passerina* bunting and is typically dusky with a pinkish tinge, documentation of this record was considered deficient by all but one member after the third round of voting.

COMMON GRACKLE *Quiscalus quiscula*. Brown-headed individuals reported at the Honey Lake Wildlife Area, LAS, 11 May 1998 (1998-074) and at Panamint Springs, INY, 17 Oct 1998 (1999-063) received almost no Committee support because the descriptions did not match any post-juvinal plumage of the Common Grackle. Members opined that the latter description better fit a small female Great-tailed Grackle (*Q. quiscula*), with Patten suggesting the possibility of a small bird of the subspecies *nelsoni* in a flock of the substantially larger *monsoni*; these races have colonized California rapidly in recent decades (Dinsmore and Dinsmore 1993, W. Wehtje pers. comm.) and appear to be forming a "hybrid swarm" north and west of the species' historic range (Rea 1969, W. Wehtje pers. comm.). Another possibility mentioned was a Great-tailed Grackle × Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*), a hybrid combination believed to have occurred recently in Santa Maria, SBA (unpubl. CBRC record 1999-122).

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE (IDENTIFICATION ACCEPTED)

BROWN BOOBY *Sula leucogaster*. Another immature initially identified as a Red-footed Booby (see accepted records above) was at a fishing pier on Pt. Loma, SD, 17 Nov 1997 (CT†; AM†, SW; 1998-008). The bird was exceptionally tame (even for a booby), in abnormal plumage (white feathers on the mid breast), entangled in fishing line, and emaciated when taken into captivity that day. According to Meryl Faulkner, an experienced wildlife rehabilitator specializing in seabirds, the condition of the feet, bill, and feathers clearly indicated the bird had been in captivity for some time prior to 17 Nov 1997 (McCaskie, in comments). The fourth and final vote on the record was five "accept" and five "not accept, natural occurrence questionable."

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. One was at Granite Bay, PLA, at least 1 Jan–10 July 1998 (JAT; 1998-045). The record received no support as representing a natural vagrant, from the observer or the Committee, but the archiving of records of all long-distance migratory species is strongly encouraged.

PYRRHULOXIA *Cardinalis sinuatus*. Although occurring at an "expected" time of year for natural strays of this species in California (May through July), a female at Pt. Loma, SD, 10 Jun 1998 (REW; 1999-044) "appeared ragged" and was close enough to the international border that six members considered it more likely an escapee. Recent investigations (Hamilton in press) have yielded multiple sightings of

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Pyrrhuloxias (and many other wild-caught birds) at pet stores in northwestern Baja California.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris*. Records not endorsed by the Committee include a spring adult male at Big Pine, INY, 9 Jun 1996 (JHe; 1996-105), a fall adult male at Victorville, SBE, 12 Oct 1997 (BiD; 1997-165), and an adult male with an adult female at Niland, IMP, 22–24 Dec 1998, with the female present to 18 Jan 1999 (MSM; GMcC, MAP; 1999-017). Interestingly, the observer of the Victorville bird also found the adult male at Twentynine Palms, SBE, 8 Oct 1998 (see accepted records above). The former record failed to gain acceptance because Victorville is far more urbanized than is Twentynine Palms (increasing, perhaps, the likelihood of escape/release) and the underparts and rump of the Victorville bird were described as being “salmon reddish” versus the Twentynine Palms bird’s “typical” shade of red. The pair at Niland included the first green Painted Bunting detected wintering in California (none of the seven prior reports of wintering adult males gained CBRC endorsement). Nine members considered natural occurrence unlikely in this case because the record involved a pair of adults and the likelihood that caged Painted Buntings are kept and sold in fair numbers in the Mexicali region. The Big Pine bird, which received seven votes for acceptance after four rounds, was well described by a seasoned observer as showing normal bright coloration, and both the date and location were perhaps ideal for a naturally occurring spring vagrant. It is, therefore, not surprising that this record was highly controversial. We provide the following condensation of Hamilton’s ongoing research into the Painted Bunting’s unusual status in California to help clarify the Committee’s reasoning in this case.

Painted Buntings have, since 1962, established a pattern of fall vagrancy to California consistent with that exhibited by other eastern landbirds, with 69 accepted fall records between 17 August and 3 December. Green birds of unknown age excluded, immatures account for 30 of 41 fall records (73%). With the exclusion of eight fall records of adult males rejected by the Committee because of questionable natural occurrence, the proportion of immatures rises to 91%. A share of first-year birds in the range 73–91% matches expectations for naturally occurring vagrant songbirds (e.g., Robbins et al. 1959, Ralph 1971, Gathreaux 1982, DeSante 1983). During the remainder of the year, however, birds less than a year old account for just one of 19 records (5%), with colorful males accounting for 17 of the 18 records of adults (94%). Patterns of vagrancy such as these are, to our knowledge, unknown in nature.

Painted Buntings are the single most abundant wild-caught species at bird markets that we have monitored in Baja California, with a high count of 40 colorful males and 37 green birds at a Rosarito pet store 5 July 2000 (Hamilton in press). In addition, birders note apparent escapees (colorful males with abnormal appearance) south of the border with some regularity (Erickson et al. in press). Just as troubling, a colorful male collected at the Sagehen Field Station, NEV, 17–18 Apr 1985 (1988-229) was yellow below and scarred between the orbits, strong indications of prior captivity (Hawthorne 1972). This record’s remote northeastern location and spring timing might best be explained by a wild-caught escapee responding to migratory restlessness and attempting northward migration (alternate scenarios have not been articulated).

A fundamental CBRC objective is to distinguish between natural patterns of occurrence and those relating to captivity. Therefore, some members consider it best to withhold CBRC endorsement of adult male Painted Buntings outside of fall migration until it becomes clear that the preponderance of adult males in winter, spring, and/or summer results from some unique natural phenomenon, not simply wild-caught escapees adapting to their new surroundings in winter and yielding to *Zugunrhue* in spring. Whereas winter and late summer records generally receive little



Figure 12. Alder/Willow Flycatcher, *Empidonax alnorum/trailii* at Galileo Hill Park, Kern County, 11 Oct 1998 (1998-161). The bold tertial edging and eye-ring rule out western subspecies of the Willow Flycatcher, though not an eastern bird. The appearance of a gray nape contrasting with the greener back results from exposure of the grayish bases of green-tipped nape feathers.

Photo by Larry Sansone

support, most members believe that Painted Buntings are likely to wander occasionally to the eastern deserts in late spring/early summer. Furthermore, colorful male Painted Buntings may be more likely than females or nonbreeding green males to “overshoot” their breeding grounds. Seemingly supporting this hypothesis are photos in *N. Am. Birds* 53:343–344 of definitive alternate-plumaged males in Saskatchewan 1–13 May 1999 (underparts not clearly visible) and near Aztec, New Mexico, 28 April–2 May. Note, however, that an adult male photographed in northern Ontario 15 May 1998 (*N. Am. Birds* 52:406) had faded red underparts, suggesting diet deficiencies and possible prior captivity. Because of such considerations, California’s five spring/early summer records of colorful males in the eastern deserts are particularly difficult to assess. Two accepted records from the 1980s (1986-262, 1987-138) are presently being reassessed, while two later records (1996-092, 1996-105) are not accepted, and the fifth (2000-086) is circulating for the first time. All members recognize the potential for each of these records to pertain to a naturally occurring vagrant, but the lack of green birds causes a minority of members to withhold endorsing them at this time.

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With continued research and the accumulation of records, the Painted Bunting's natural patterns of vagrancy should become better established, perhaps prompting reevaluation of certain records in light of more complete knowledge of the species' natural history. In the meantime, we hope that increased understanding of the issues will help replace current hostility over the fate of individual records with the positive energy of a larger mystery to be solved. We strongly encourage the continued submission of documentation of Painted Buntings, as these records are needed to build a more complete picture of the species' status and distribution in California. We also welcome responses to this discussion.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, Identification accepted but establishment of introduced population questionable

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*. A neck-collared adult NW of Roseville, PLA, 22–23 Dec 1998 (BEW; REM; 1998-230) was captured in northern Idaho, released in southern Idaho in November 1996, and seen in various states and provinces in the interim. McCaskie and San Miguel (1999) explained the CBRC's position on such records.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

The following decisions were made at the January 2000 meeting.

WHITE IBIS *Eudocimus albus* (2, 0). Two records at the Salton Sea in the 1970s are now considered as pertaining to the same individual. We infer an adult at the N end of the sea, RIV, 10–24 Jul 1976 and at the S end of the sea, IMP, 5 Aug 1976 (1976-045) was the same as one at Unit 1, Salton Sea N.W.R., IMP, 25 Jun–14 Jul 1977 (1978-049). These records were originally reported by Luther et al. (1979, 1983). The only other California record is of one collected in San Diego, SD, 15–20 Nov 1935 (Huey 1936, Dunn 1988).

GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER *Ptilonys cinereus*. This species joined the Falcated Duck (*Anas falcata*), Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*), and Oriental Greenfinch (*Carduelis sinica*) on the Supplemental List of California birds (Patten and Erickson 1994) on the basis of these three records "not accepted, natural occurrence questionable": one photographed at Ventura, VEN, 9 Apr 1976 (1980-115, Binford 1985), one at Pt. Loma, SD, 24 May 1993 (1993-115, McCaskie and San Miguel 1999), and one photographed at Poway, SD, 10–12 Mar 1994 (1994-075, Howell and Pyle 1997). A more recent record from Orange County is still under review.

CORRIGENDA TO THE TWENTY-THIRD COMMITTEE REPORT (Rottenborn and Morlan 2000)

The date of the accepted Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel (1996-114) was not given. This bird was recorded 31 July 1996.

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