

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION /Guy McCaskie

The weather was relatively mild with no prolonged hot spells. Southern California has not experienced the extreme drought conditions prevailing to the north, and summer rains in some areas put the average rainfall above the yearly average.



The coastal area was on the whole unexciting, except for an influx of frigatebirds, the appearance of nesting Black Skimmers, and California's first Violet-crowned Hummingbird. However, the offshore islands produced a number of interesting records, including some very late spring migrants. The mountains continue to yield interesting data on breeding birds that appear to be extending their ranges southward or westward, but much is yet to be learned and the presence of more observers in this area during June and July could produce much significant data. The Salton Sea was well covered and many significant records produced in that area during the period included California's second White Ibis and its first inland Black Scoter.

LOONS, GREBES — A Com. Loon on Encino Res., Los Angeles Co., June 9-10 (JD) was probably a late spring migrant, but one off Oxnard, Ventura County June 14 (JA) and two at nearby Pt. Mugu July 28 (JD) were summering locally. Arctic Loons were seen passing north off Goleta Pt., Santa Barbara County, through June 22 (PL), but one in Santa Barbara July 2 (PL) was believed to be summering locally; small numbers of loons are seen in s. California every summer. About 75 W. Grebes were present at the north end of the Salton Sea (hereafter N.E.S.S.) throughout the period, with young noted in July (JD, IM); this species is known to nest at very few localities in s. California, and there is only one previous record of nesting on the Salton Sea (AFN 10:409, 1956). A Horned Grebe at N.E.S.S. Aug. 11 (JD) and 21 (R&EC), had undoubtedly summered locally; this species is unusual inland and not to be expected during the summer months.

ALBATROSSES, SHEARWATERS — A Black-footed Albatross in the San Pedro Channel July 19 (RLP)

was the only one reported. A New Zealand Shearwater was well seen 12 mi. s. of Anacapa I., June 26 (RLP); this is an exceptionally early date for this species to be found in California waters.

PELICANS, BOOBIES, FRIGATEBIRDS — Brown Pelicans became fairly numerous along the coast in early July, as post-breeding wanderers moved north from colonies in Mexico. The first Brown Pelicans reached the Salton Sea in early July, with nine found July 10 (GMCC), and reached a peak late in the month with 40 counted July 24 (JD); this species is of annual occurrence on this inland body of water. Totally unexpected was an imm. Blue-footed Booby on Gull I., off Santa Cruz I., June 22 (RLP); previous records from along the coast have all followed influxes of the birds into s.e. California, which have presumably reached the coast from the Gulf of California by way of the Salton Sea and the Los Angeles Basin. Magnificent Frigatebirds appeared along the coast from late June through the end of the period, with fourteen sightings, involving 18 individuals, reported between San Diego and Morro Bay, and another over Anacapa I., June 26 (RLP); as usual all were immatures. In addition one was seen at the south end of the Salton Sea (hereafter S.E.S.S.) on July 14 (GSG), two were at N.E.S.S. July 11 (BB, PU) and another was soaring over Grand Terrace near San Bernadino July 15 (B. Hazard, *vide* EAC); this species now occurs annually at the Salton Sea, but inland records away from that locality are few indeed.

HERONS, STORKS, IBISES, SPOONBILLS — One or two ad. Little Blue Herons were regularly seen at S.E.S.S. between July 3 and the end of the period (GSG, PU), and a sub-adult in the "calico" plumage was found there July 24 (RS, JL) and Aug. 5 (KVV); this species appears to be increasing as a visitor to California, and nesting should be anticipated for the near future. Cattle and Snowy Egrets nested at three localities on the Salton Sea and both species appeared more numerous than in recent years. An ad. Louisiana Heron was found at N.E.S.S. June 25 (JL) and another was seen on Morro Bay July 14 (FRT); there is a previous summer record from the Salton Sea, but no other summer record for the coast. A Least Bittern at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley (hereafter F.C.R.) June 12 (VR, AS) and another at nearby Tecopa July 28 (JT) were both at interesting localities. An Am. Bittern at N.E.S.S. July 17 (JD) was unexpected since few summer records exist for s.e. California.

Wood Storks reached a peak of c. 500 at S.E.S.S. in mid-July but were unreported elsewhere in the Region. Most exciting was an ad. White Ibis at N.E.S.S. July 10-24 (GMCC) and what was probably the same individual at S.E.S.S. Aug. 5 (KVV); an imm. collected on Pt. Loma in San Diego Nov. 20, 1935 (*Condor* 38:121, 1936) appears to be the only other valid record for California. An imm. Roseate Spoonbill was present at S.E.S.S. between June 13 and the end of the period (PU, GSS, JD), and may well have been the same individual seen at N.E.S.S. in May of this year.

GEESE, DUCKS — Two Black Brant at N.E.S.S. and another at S.E.S.S. (PU, JD) during June were the only ones found on the Salton Sea this summer. A few Gad-

wall nested in coastal San Diego County, as indicated by the presence of eight pairs, all with young, at three separate localities in June (AF). Three Blue-winged Teal were present in Goleta all summer (PL, LB) and one or two were noted at N.E.S.S. June 14 - July 20 (PU, BB, KG); this species normally leaves s. California during the summer months. A ♂ Cinnamon X Blue-winged Teal was found at S.E.S.S. June 12 (JD); this hybrid is seen annually in California and should not be considered rare. A Canvasback, rare in summer, was at McGrath S.P., Ventura Co., July 22-28 (JD) and another was on Baldwin L., in the San Bernardino Mts., July 31 (PU). Unexpected was an Oldsquaw found on San Diego Bay July 11 (GMcC) and still present at the end of the period; the bird was incapable of flight and had no doubt been present all summer.

Two White-winged Scoters, rare along the coast in summer, were on Morro Bay Aug. 9 (VR) and another was at N.E.S.S. Aug. 8-11 (R&EC, JD); this latter individual had probably arrived on the Sea in the spring and summered locally. At least four Surf Scoters were present all summer on the Salton Sea (PU, JD) and small numbers were regularly seen along the coast. A ♂ **Black Scoter** was found at S.E.S.S. Aug. 14 (GMcC, PU, WS,—p.S.D.N.H.M.). The bird appeared healthy and looked strong in flight even though it had undoubtedly been present locally all summer; this represents the first documented record for the interior of California. A flock of 25 Red-breasted Mergansers was at N.E.S.S. July 17 (R&EC); a rather large number for summer time though smaller numbers are seen regularly.

HAWKS, OSPREY, FALCONS — An ad. Goshawk was seen on Mt. Pinos, Ventura Co., June 18 (HME); this species is not known to nest south of the Sierra Nevada in California, but a number of individuals have been reported from the s. California mountains in the past 15 years. A Swainson's Hawk seen in the Lanfair Valley, south of the New York Mts. of e. San Bernardino Co., July 19 (AS) & 29 (VR) suggests the possibility of nesting in that area. A pair of Harris' Hawks found nesting at S.E.S.S. proved to be two birds confiscated by California Fish & Game personnel from "falconers" in Los Angeles, and released locally (one bird still retained jesses!). A pair of Osprey successfully nested on Tinnemaha Res., in the Owen's Valley (TH). A Peregrine Falcon near Grapevine, Kern Co., Aug. 4 (PU) was at an unusual locality.

RAILS — Four calling Black Rails were heard in the Carrizo Marsh of extreme e. San Diego Co., June 27 (VR, JD) and three or four were heard near Seeley, Imperial Co., during June (CGE, PU); both localities are west of the Colorado River Valley where the species occurs regularly in summer.

PLOVERS, SANDPIPERS — A Snowy Plover in Baker, San Bernardino Co., July 18 (VR) was at an unusual locality. It would be difficult to state with certainty whether the Am. Golden Plover on San Nicholas I., June 17 (LJ) was a late spring migrant or an early fall migrant; it often appears that the last of the spring migrant shorebirds are still moving north through s. California when the first of the fall birds appear in June. Two Lesser Yellowlegs that arrived in Goleta June 17 were judged to be early fall migrants (PL), whereas a

breeding-plumaged Black Turnstone at the same spot June 10 was most likely a late spring migrant (PL). An early Solitary Sandpiper was found near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., July 25 (PU). Few documented records of nesting Spotted Sandpipers exist for s. California; therefore the presence of four on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co., and "small numbers" at Baldwin L., in the San Bernardino Mts., all summer (GH, KG) are of interest. A pair with young in Azusa, Los Angeles Co., during June and July (MSM) clearly nested successfully. A Wandering Tattler in La Jolla, San Diego Co., June 2 (JD) was a little late. A flock of 15 Wilson's Phalaropes at S.E.S.S., June 13 (PU) and three in Goleta June 14 (PL) were fall migrants; the first fall migrant phalaropes appear in s. California in mid-June every year. A late Red Phalarope was at Goleta June 11 (PL). A non-breeding plumaged Red Knot at S.E.S.S. June 16 (PL, JD) was probably summering locally, but a breeding-plumaged bird at Goleta June 12 (PL) is best treated as a late spring migrant. A **White-rumped Sandpiper** at S.E.S.S., June 16 (RW, JD, PL—p.S.D.N.H.M.) was the second ever found in California; the first was collected at N.E.S.S. June 7, 1969. Two Baird's Sandpipers, judged to be adults, were early at S.E.S.S. July 17 (PU, R&EC). A breeding-plumaged Dunlin was in Goleta June 6 (PL) and another was on San Diego Bay June 15 (GMcC); there are very few June records of this species for California. Three Stilt Sandpipers at S.E.S.S., July 24 (RS, JL, JD) were the first noted this fall.

SKUAS, GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS — Four South Polar Skuas were seen between San Pedro and Santa Barbara I., June 5 (KG), one was seen near Santa Barbara I., June 27 (RLP) and another was found near San Miguel I., July 14 (RLP); we still have much to learn about the status of these birds off s. California, and we must investigate the possibility of other forms of skuas. The first yellow-legged Western Gull was found at the Salton Sea June 26 (VR) but numbers built-up rapidly with 90 found there July 10 (GMcC); this species regularly wanders north from the Gulf of California after the nesting season. Most unusual was a Mew Gull on Hansen Dam in the San Fernando Valley July 7-31 (JD); it was evidently summering at that inland locality. Laughing Gulls were present as usual on the Salton Sea during July, but numbers appeared to stay below one hundred; a second-year bird at McGrath S.P., July 22 (JD, GSS) was on the coast, where they are extremely rare. A Franklin's Gull was in Santa Barbara June 14-15 (RW, LB), two were at S.E.S.S., June 13 (PU), three were present at N.E.S.S., June 16 (JD, PL) and one or two were there July 17-24 (JD, RS, JL); this species is quite rare in summer. Up to five Bonaparte's Gulls were present at N.E.S.S., during June and July and another was seen in Imperial Beach July 11 (GMcC); one or two of these birds remain in s. California every summer. Black-legged Kittiwakes were present along the entire coast throughout the summer with up to 40 in Santa Barbara during July (RW), over 300 in King Harbor, Los Angeles Co., in June and July (SW) and smaller numbers reported in Ventura and San Diego Cos.; it is not unusual for numbers of these birds to over summer following heavy winter flights. A second-year Sabine's Gull was seen in Santa Barbara harbor June 14 (RW); small numbers probably summer offshore but are most unusual close to land.

Fair numbers of Gull-billed Terns were present on the Salton Sea this summer with 17 nests found July 4 (GSG). Forster's Terns were first found nesting at the Salton Sea in 1970 (AFN 24:717, 1970) so the discovery of 32 nests at S.E.S.S., July 4 (GSG) is of significance; a colony on San Diego Bay (Condor 65:246, 1963) that is still thriving is the only other spot in s. California where this tern is known to nest. An Arctic Tern off Oxnard June 3 (JD, VR) and three off the Palos Verdes Pen., June 5 (KG) were to be expected since small numbers appear to move north fairly close to the coast in the late spring. However, three **Arctic Terns** at S.E.S.S., June 13 (GMCC, PU) were most unusual since only two other individuals have ever been found inland in California. Three Least Terns were at N.E.S.S., June 19 (PU) and another was at S.E.S.S., July 4 (GSG); this species is a casual wanderer to the Salton Sea and virtually unknown elsewhere in the interior of California. Over 100 Black Skimmers were present on the Salton Sea with some 25 nests located (GSG, PU) indicating this species is now well established as a summer visitor to this area of California. A pair of Black Skimmers nested on San Diego Bay in July (R&EC) for the first coastal record, two were seen in Santa Barbara June 30 (RW) and another was at McGrath S.P., on July 18 (LB); the species is still very rare on the coast.

ALCIDS — A Com. Murre was at Santa Cruz I., June 14 (JA) and three were there July 23 (JA), two (in breeding plumage) were on Prince Islet off San Miguel I., July 14 (RLP), and two more were found off Oxnard July 25 (KG); this species is not to be expected in s. California waters during the summer. A scattered group of 39 Horned Puffins was s. of San Miguel I., June 8 (RLP); late spring appears to be the time of year to look for this species in s. California waters.

DOVES, CUCKOOS, OWLS, GOATSUCKERS — A Band-tailed Pigeon on San Nicholas I., June 27 (LJ) and another in New York Mts. of e. San Bernardino Co., July 30 (VR) were both outside their normal range, but the species is prone to wander. A White-winged Dove in Santa Barbara June 12-13 (*vide* GH) was west of its normal range. Three Yellow-billed Cuckoos were found in the e. part of the Region with one at F.C.R., June 13 (VR, AS), one more near Tecopa June 15 (JT) and the other in Kelso July 1 (PL); this species is rare away from the Colorado River Valley. A Barn Owl in the New York Mts., July 20 (VR) was most unusual since there are virtually no other records from this area of California. Whip-poor-wills were found on Clark Mt., in e. San Bernardino Co., June 12 (AS, VR) and July 25 (WS) indicating they were present all summer; one heard in Ojai, Ventura Co., June 2 (DS) represents the northernmost record for California. A Lesser Nighthawk on Anacapa I., July 24 (KG) was at an unusual locality.

SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS — A group of 25 Black Swifts was in Santa Anita Canyon of the San Bernardino Mts., June 27 (IM) indicating that the species nested locally; one over Anacapa I., July 24 (KG) appears to be the first recorded from the Channel Is. Two Chimney Swifts continued to use a chimney in Ventura as a roosting site into mid-July (LB, H&PB). Three birds over Big Pine, Inyo Co., June 10 (TH) and two over San Pedro

July 15 (SW) were suspected of being Chimney Swifts but are best treated as *Chaetura* sp. A Vaux's Swift was carefully identified near Green Valley L., in the San Bernardino Mts., July 27 (KG) indicating that the species can occur in s. California during the summer. Three Anna's Hummingbirds were found in extreme e. San Bernardino County in late July (VR); there are few records for this area in California. Totally unexpected was a **Violet-crowned Hummingbird** frequenting a feeder at the home of William Haggard near Santa Paula, Ventura Co., from July 6 to the end of the period (HC—p. S.D.N.H.M.); there are no previous records for California.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — An E. Kingbird, a scarce but regular visitor to California, was found in the Saline Valley, Inyo Co., June 6 (TH), another was seen on San Nicholas I., June 25 (LJ) and a third was on Santa Cruz I., July 2 (JA). Two Dusky Flycatchers were found in the Laguna Mts., July 24 (PU) but there was no evidence of nesting. Apparently several pairs of Violet-green Swallows nested near Encino, as adults were seen feeding young at Encino Res., July 13 (JD); this is a lowland locality outside the species' known breeding range. Again Barn Swallows nested in the Imperial Valley, being found at three localities (GSG, JD) and also nested along the coast in San Diego (JD); these localities are recent additions to the species' known breeding range. Purple Martins are now scarce in s. California with less than a dozen individuals being reported all summer.

CROWS, VERDINS, BLUEBIRDS — A Com. Crow in the New York Mts., July 30 (VR) was far from an area of normal occurrence. A pair of Verdins found near Rosamond, Kern Co., in May (SW) were at the n.w. extremity of the species' range. The presence of eight adults and two juvenile Mountain Bluebirds in the New York Mts., July 21 & 30 (VR) was most interesting since the species is previously unknown as a breeding bird in this area of California.

VIREOS, WARBLERS — Territorial ♂ Solitary Vireos (*V. s. plumbeus*) were found at three localities on the n.e. slope of the San Bernardino Mts., during the period (KG); this is the w. limit of this form's recently expanding breeding range. A Red-eyed Vireo on San Nicholas I., June 26-27 (LJ) was a late spring straggler as was also the Black-and-white Warbler there June 27 (LJ). A ♂ Tennessee Warbler at Oasis June 11 (TH) was the latest of a rash of these birds occurring in that area of California during May. Four Orange-crowned Warblers were on Clark Mt., in e. San Bernardino Co., June 12 (VR); this species is unrecorded as nesting in this area. A ♂ Nashville Warbler was near Blue Ridge in the San Gabriel Mts., June 13 (KG); positive proof of nesting south of the Sierra Nevada is still lacking but circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that small numbers do nest in the s. California mountains every summer. An ad. Virginia's Warbler was seen feeding a juvenile at Green Spot Picnic Ground in the San Bernardino Mts., July 27 (KG); this species was first found nesting in this mountain range in 1974 (*Western Birds* 5:45-56, 1974). Three Hermit Warblers were found in the San Bernardino Mts., July 27-29 (KG); this is another

species long suspected of nesting in these mountains, but still requiring proof. A ♂ Bay-breasted Warbler, a rare straggler to California, was on San Nicholas I., June 26-28 (LJ). MacGillivray's Warblers were found at five localities in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mts., during the summer and a female was watched feeding a juvenile near Big Bear L., July 27 (KG); this species is certainly a part of the breeding avifauna of these mountains, and can be found in most areas of extensive willow thickets within well-developed coniferous forests during June and July.

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS — A ♂ Bobolink near Imperial Beach July 25-26 (PU, R&EC) was totally unexpected since very few reach the coast in spring, and fall migrants are not present until September. A ♀ Scott's Oriole on Anacapa I., July 24 (KG) was certainly out of range. Away from the Colorado River Valley Great-tailed Grackles were scarce with up to six at Ramer L., in July (GMcC) and four or five around the nearby S.E.S.S., throughout the summer (PU, JL, IM). A ♂ **Scarlet Tanager**, only the third to be found in s. California in spring, was present in San Pedro June 20-24 (SW JD). Two or three Hepatic Tanagers were present along Arrastre Creek in the San Bernardino Mts., June 5 - July 1 (H&PB, JD), a pair was on Clark Mt., June 12 (VR) and, most interestingly, three were found in the New York Mts., July 29 (VR); this species is a recent addition to the breeding avifauna of California, and is previously unrecorded from the New York Mts. A ♂ Summer Tanager at Brock Ranch, Imperial Co., June 16 (JD) may have been nesting locally, but an imm. male in Santa Barbara July 3-5 (LB) was a lost wanderer.

FINCHES, SPARROWS — Two Cardinals were seen near Earp on the Colorado R., July 24 (WS); this is the only area in California where this species occurs naturally. Four ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported with one on Santa Cruz I., June 18 (JA), one in Santa Barbara June 15 (LB), another on the Palos Verdes Pen., June 13-21 (SW) and the other near Vista, San Diego Co., July 24 (CGE). Single ♂ Indigo Buntings were in Big Pine June 7 (TH) and at Oasis June 11 (TH); a pair was found in Bishop July 12 (SC), and two males were at Morongo

Valley July 23 (WS). A Lawrence's Goldfinch in the New York Mts., July 30 (VR) was at an unusual locality. An Evening Grosbeak along Arrastre Creek in the San Bernardino Mts., July 27 (KG) was unexpected since it is not known to nest in s. California. A few Red Crossbills were present along Blue Ridge in the San Gabriel Mts., from late May through June (MSM, KG) and six appeared on Santa Cruz I., July 2 (JA); this is a totally unpredictable bird. Grasshopper Sparrows were found near O'Neil Park, Orange Co., June 21 (JD), near Vista, San Diego Co., June 20 (CGE) and near San Diego in April and May (GMcC); this species appears to be restricted to areas of native grasses and is consequently on the decline in s. California. A Rufous-crowned Sparrow was found in the New York Mts., May 18, July 28-29 (VR); this is far from the species' known range in California, but it is interesting to note that a pair was reported seen in the neighboring Providence Mts., Mar. 25, 1975 (Steve Forsell). Two pairs of Dark-eyed Juncos nested in coastal Goleta (PL); this species was not known to nest on the coast south of Morro Bay 30 years ago. A Gray-headed Junco on San Nicholas I., June 26 (LJ) was certainly lost, as was the Lincoln's Sparrow accompanying it; both species are normally gone from the coast by early May.

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