

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

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Seabird nesting success was poor, because of food shortages and an unseasonal storm on May 28 that flooded many nests (Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Alan Baldrige). The drought continued to have negative effects. Lowered water levels at Hartson Reservoir near Honey Lake allowed coyotes to reach the heronry there, resulting in total destruction of thirty Snowy Egret and two hundred forty Black-crowned Night-Heron nests. Already imperiled species such as Bank Swallow have also been impacted. Breeding bird atlasing projects continued to produce significant nesting information. The spring vagrant season among landbirds was rather modest except for a handful of standouts.

We are grateful to Phyllis Bailey for compiling the land-bird reports for Yee's analysis.

Abbreviations: C.V. (*Central Valley*); Cyn. (*Canyon*); F.I. (*S.E. Farallon I.*); M.B.O.S.P. (*Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, Santa Clara*); S.F. (*San Francisco*); ph. (*photo on file with Regional Editors*). All records from F.I. should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Place names in *italics* are counties.

GREBES THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS

A late Red-necked Grebe June 15–17 was at Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes (RMrr, m.ob.), where others have lingered in past years. A Laysan Albatross 3.5 mi n.w. of Pt. Pinos, *Monterey*, June 16 (RT) was rare in summer. Throughout summer N. Fulmars were common offshore, e.g. 35 off *Monterey* July 1 (AB, DLSh, MJL). An early Flesh-footed Shearwater was 7.5 mi s. of Santa Cruz Pt., *Santa Cruz*, July 1 (DLSh, m.ob.). Several early Black Storm-Petrels continued through the Period off

Santa Cruz and *Monterey* (RT, DLm, DLSh).

Last year's new colony of Double-crested Cormorants on towers beside the San Mateo Bridge, *San Mateo*, swelled to 100 nests from about 12 in 1989 (PJM). Three Pelagic Cormorants at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo*, June 7 (HRC) were both unseasonal and far enough into the bay to be very rare at any season. Despite being separated by 170 miles but only one day, single imm. Magnificent Frigatebirds at Ano Nuevo Pt., *San Mateo*, July 28 (M. Casey) and at Mendocino Headlands, *Mendocino*, July 29 (J. Curry) may have represented the same individual of this highly mobile and conspicuous species.

HERONS THROUGH DUCKS

A total of four Great Egrets was reported from three *Mono* locations, where always unusual, on June 29 (ES). The first Snowy Egret nesting attempt in *Del Norte* was successful as evidenced by two adults with three immatures at Smith R. estuary July 21 (ADB). *Santa Clara*'s long-time resident Snowy Egret x Little Blue Heron was still present July 14 (PJM *et al.*), but no other Little Blues were reported. A record of 200 Cattle Egrets between Firebaugh and Dos Palos, *Fresno*, July 13 (DES) was the largest Regional number in recent years, while a flock of 350 White-faced Ibis, including many immatures, in *Sierra Valley*, *Plumas*, July 21 (LJ) was this summer's highest number reported.

Several summering Tundra Swans and arctic nesting geese were reported: two swans and a Greater White-fronted Goose in the Klamath Basin, June 9; a swan on Goose L., *Modoc*, July 28; and two Snow Geese with a Ross' Goose at Big L., *Shasta*, July 28 (all SFB). Though summer reports often note the healthy appearance of the birds involved, it is highly likely that some physical impairment prevented them from migrating. Summer Brant sightings tallied 54 birds from coastal localities, including a light-bellied individual at Princeton Harbor, *San Mateo*, May 23–June 4 (tPJM). Much rarer inland, Brant were seen at Tule Lake N.W.R., *Siskiyou*, June 9 (SFB); Honey



Lake W.M.A., *Lassen*, June 24 (DS, DB); and *Mono L.* June 16–July 26 (DKe, RAE, AME).

Still uncommon but possibly increasing in n.e. California, up to 19 Wood Ducks, including seven young, were seen in *Sierra Valley*, *Plumas* and *Sierra*, through June (DS, LJ, KL), and three were at Whitehorse Flat Res., *Modoc*, June 8 (BED). A ♀ Green-winged Teal with five young at the Tracy sewer ponds July 11 was *San Joaquin*'s first nesting record (DGY). *Humboldt*'s first nesting record of Gadwall was obtained when a hen and brood of five were seen at Arcata Marsh July 28 (BED). Small numbers of Am. Wigeon nest in n.e. California every year, and their range may be expanding southward. Eight broods totalling 47 chicks were at Crowley L., *Mono*, July 25 (PJM), only a year after the first nesting record there. Nesting also was noted at Bridgeport Res., *Mono*, July 23 (PJM).

San Mateo's first summering Redheads were a pair seen at L. Lucerne June 17 (RSTh). A Tufted Duck present along the Hayward Regional Shoreline, *Alameda*, from July 4 on (tRJR) furnished only the second summer record of the species in the Region. An incredible total of

48 Harlequin Ducks was found at Pt. Saint George, *Del Norte*, June 20 (ADB), but equally noteworthy was one on the N. Fork of the Stanislaus R., *Calaveras/Tuolumne*, July 22 (RJR). Does nesting still occur in the Sierras? Four coastal Oldsquaws were recorded this summer. A Black Scoter at Pt. Reyes June 16–July 2 (GFi, JM, RJR) was the only one reported.

RAPTORS

Ospreys nesting on a pile driver in the Napa R. by Vallejo, *Solano*, were apparently the first known to nest by greater S.F. Bay tidewaters (HRC, RbL, V. Coburn). Fifteen Ospreys at Bolinas Lagoon, *Marin*, July 31 (JMR, m.ob.) was a large number for that site. Two Bald Eagles fledged near Blue L. (L. Dillard, M. Fahr, M. Morris) represented the first coastal *Humboldt* nesting. Sharp-shinned Hawks were discovered for the first time breeding on Mt. Diablo, *Contra Costa* (KGH, G. Beeman) and in the Diablo Range at Henry Coe S.P., *Santa Clara* (JY, AL). Additionally, four Sharp-shinned Hawks were unusual in summer in lowland *San Mateo* (PJM) and one was at Livermore, *Alameda*, July 28 (ALE). Stray

Red-shouldered Hawks visited Hat L., Lassen N.P., *Shasta*, June 24 (D. Ward, DPM) and Mono Lake C.P. July 26 (AME). The former was the first park record.

Another species was added to the list of California breeding birds with the late report of a pair of **Ferruginous Hawks** *nesting* successfully in 1988 and 1989 on the Madeline Plain near Termo, *Lassen* (*fide* P. Roush *fide* WDS). Adults were also reported in 1990, and one was seen there June 3 (TDM, AM), so nesting was again likely. An adult Ferruginous Hawk documented from Sierra Valley, *Plumas*, June 17–24 (LJ, KL, †WDS, †GFi, MPI) was in another area of potential nesting.

QUAIL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A California Quail at Manzanita L. in Lassen Volcanic N.P., *Shasta*, June 24–28 appeared to be a first summer record for the park (DPM). A Sandhill Crane flying over the Pt. Reyes lighthouse June 3 (MCM) must have been a startling sight. A Virginia Rail heard at the mouth of Lee Vining Cr. June 30 was the first in the Mono Basin in 40+ years (ES). It was found in a small wetland created after increased flows were mandated in the creek. Lesser Golden-Plover reports included an alternate-plumaged *fulva* at Abbott's Lagoon July 14 (SFB), a *dominica* at the same location prior to Aug. 5 (CSp *et al.*), and a basic-plumaged bird of undetermined race at Mountain View Forebay, *Santa Clara*, July 4 (MJM). A Snowy Plover nest in Adobe Valley June 7 (DS, D. Herbst) and chicks at Bridgeport Res. July 23 (PJM) represented new *Mono* nesting locales.

A ragged-looking Greater Yellowlegs at Bridgeport Res. June 12 was felt to be summering (PJM), a rare event in the Great Basin. Of Lesser Yellowlegs which were aged, the first returning adult was at Palo Alto July 3 (PJM) and the earliest juvenile was at Sunnyvale July 29 (PJM). Only one Solitary Sandpiper was reported, at Mono L. July 25 (PJM). Three alternate-plumaged Wandering Tattlers at Pt. Lobos June 26 (RHwt) were *Monterey's* earliest fall returnees by one day (*fide* DR). A pair of Spotted Sandpipers with two young at the Calistoga sewer

ponds July 5 (BiG) established the first *Napa* breeding record (*fide* RbL). Very rare inland during fall, a Whimbrel was at the Stockton sewer ponds July 6 (WRH). Two Long-billed Curlews and five Marbled Godwits, both considered casual in the Tahoe Basin, were reported from Rowland Marsh, *El Dorado*, July 16 (MBG, NB). A Ruddy Turnstone at Tule L., *Siskiyou*, June 9 (SFB) and a Sanderling near Lemoore, *Kings*, June 22 (DS, T. Poole) were our only inland sightings.

Three Semipalmated Sandpipers included a juvenile at Ft. Dick, *Del Norte*, July 21 (ADB), an inland adult at the Lodi sewer ponds July 26 (DGY), and another adult on Alameda Cr., *Alameda*, July 29 (RJR). The first Baird's Sandpiper of the season was an adult, as expected, at Abbott's Lagoon July 14 (SFB). The remaining five reports, all coastal, were of juveniles, beginning with one in Crescent City Harbor July 23 (ADB). Summer period Dunlins are always notable. A basic-plumaged bird was at the mouth of L. Talawa, *Del Norte*, June 4 (ADB). Alternate-plumaged birds were found in Hayward June 21–July 31 (RJR), at Salinas R. mouth, *Monterey*, June 24 (CGott), and Crowley L. July 25 (PJM), representing a summering bird, a late spring migrant (*fide* DR), and a probable early fall migrant, respectively. The only Stilt Sandpiper was an adult at Moss Landing W.M.A., *Monterey*, July 28 (†RSTh, PJM). Four basic-plumaged Short-billed Dowitchers at the Carmel R. mouth, *Monterey*, June 9 were felt to be summering (DR), while a bird at Mono L. June 16 (J. Carle, D. Marquart) was the first in June for *Mono*. A Long-billed Dowitcher in Palo Alto July 3 may have been the second earliest fall record for the Region (PJM). Twenty-three Wilson's Phalaropes on the coast after June 9 was a strong showing.

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

Unexpectedly our only reported Franklin's Gull was a first summer bird at Pescadero, *San Mateo*, June 17–18 (RSTh, GJS, J. McKean). We had our usual scattering of summering yearling Bonaparte's Gulls, but an

immature still showing patches of natal down July 31 at Point St. George, *Del Norte* (ADB), defied precedent. The nearest known breeding grounds are on Vancouver I., nearly 500 mi to the north. Was this bird merely a precocious fall migrant, or was it fledged in the western states? Among rare summer gulls were a Mew Gull at Bolinas Lagoon, *Marin*, through July 3 and a second year Herring Gull there July 1 (both PP, KH), plus a sick ad. Herring Gull at Sunnyvale sewage ponds, *Santa Clara*, June 20 (PJM).

Elegant Tern counts in n.w. California peaked at 400 July 17 at Humboldt Bay (FJB). Two Com. Terns at Hayward Shoreline, *Alameda*, June 9 (JMR) were unusual in that most early summer stragglers are on the outer coast. A single nest of Least Tern at Hayward Shoreline (RJR, JMR) added a new breeding site. The major colony at Alameda Naval Air Station gathered between 87 and 101 pairs and fledged about one bird per pair (LDC). Two coastal and four S.F. Bay Black Terns in July were a bit early, with three July 8 in western *Solano* (MFRi) particularly so.

Seven species of alcids were seen from shore at Chimney Rock, Pt. Reyes, including two or three Ancient Murrelets June 23–July 2 (JiD, D. Oglesby, m.ob.) and up to six Horned Puffins June 9–July 21 (J. Manker, JM, m.ob.). As some of the latter were oiled, it is likely that more than six Horned Puffins were represented. Offshore, three Horned Puffins were at F.I. June 1–3, one was there June 22–24 (P.R.B.O., m.ob.), and singles were off *Monterey* June 2 and off *Santa Cruz* July 1 (both DLSh, AB). Rhinoceros Auklets and Tufted Puffins were unusually numerous away from F.I., as exemplified by 65 "Rhinos" offshore *Monterey* June 2 (AB, DLSh) and nine Tufted Puffins there July 1 (DLm, DLSh, D. Rookaird).

OWLS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

As we mark the 10th year of Barred Owls invading our northwest, the ♂ Barred Owl of Willow Cr., *Humboldt* (present since 1983), was joined by a female in mid-July (C. Moen).

This establishes at least three known pairs in the state; it is only a matter of time before nesting will be confirmed. Confirmation of nesting Long-eared Owl sometimes is as difficult within the Region. Two birds at the M.B.O.S.P. June 9 (MRo, J. Carliss) and three at Sierra Valley, *Plumas*, into mid-June (LJ *et al.*) appeared to be in new locales for the species but showed no signs of nesting. However, a pair with a fledgling n. of L. Berryessa June 19–29 (G. Gamble, †BiG, †RbL, BDP *et al.*) appeared to be a *Napa* first.

White-throated Swifts are extremely rare in the montane areas n. of *Plumas*, so two birds w. of Fall R. Mills, *Shasta*, June 24 (TDM, AM) were of note. The 2nd Regional nesting of Broad-tailed Hummingbird was documented n.e. of Crowley L. in Wildrose Canyon, *Mono*, June 11 (PJM, WDS). Lundy Canyon to the n. of Mono L. is where the other family has been raised. Usually confined to *Modoc*, two ♂ Red-naped Sapsuckers were seen just e. of Conway Summit, *Mono*, June 14 (WDS) within an aspen grove, one of their choice nesting habitats. Nesting within *Mono* has occurred at least 3 times.

A Black Phoebe s.e. of Pittville June 23 (TDM) was only *Lassen's* 5th; they are rare at high elevations and even rarer in our Great Basin region away from *Siskiyou*. Five Ash-throated Flycatchers in *Del Norte* May 20–June 6 was a good spring showing for the n. coast. The pair of E. Kingbirds at Homestead in Sierra Valley June 11 (LJ) was a *Plumas* first and may have been contemplating doing some homesteading, as they have bred at Honey L. just to the north. Coastward spring vagrants included singles at L. Earl, *Del Norte*, June 19 (B. Barton), McKinleyville, *Humboldt*, June 24 (GSL *et al.*), and near Pescadero June 25–26 (RSTh *et al.*). Another along Cloverdale Rd., *San Mateo*, July 26 (GFi, M. Plant) was more likely a bird of the "fall."

SWALLOWS THROUGH THRASHERS

Life seemed good for Bank Swallows (recently elevated to State Threatened Status) in *Mono* as the newly established colony in Bridgeport swelled to

at least 100 pairs from last year's 30+ (PJM). However, reality sets in when one examines their plight in the Sacramento Valley. The *Sacramento Bee*, June 24, 1990, recounted the state Department of Fish and Game's dismal figures of 4500 pairs along the Sacramento R. this year compared to about 16,000 in 1986. This precipitous drop has been blamed on the Army Corps of Engineers' continued re-enforcing of the river bank with rocks to arrest erosion, coupled with the long drought. The future of the bird's largest stronghold in the state looks bleak. A most unseasonable and extralimital Steller's Jay near Lodi L., *San Joaquin*, June 17 (M. Phelps) may have been related to the lowland incursion last winter. *Napa's* first breeding Red-breasted Nuthatches were found with young near Atena Springs July 14 (†RbL, BiG). In *Mono*, the presence of six singing Ruby-crowned Kinglets at Glass Cr. Meadow June 8 and another near Conway Summit June 14 (both WDS) was duly acknowledged, as they are considered rare breeders e. of the Sierran crest.

The Townsend's Solitaire at Pt. Reyes June 16 (GFi, S. Glover) became the Region's latest for spring along the coast. The sharp decline in nesting Swainson's Thrushes on the w. slope of the Sierra Nevada in recent years prompted BED to comment, "At least they are breeding somewhere," when he observed four birds near Nevada City, *Nevada*, June 3. Nesting Hermit Thrushes e. of Hecker Pass on Hwy 152, *Santa Clara*, June 11 (DLSu) extended their nesting range in the s.e. edge of the Santa Cruz Mts. (WGB). The singing N. Mockingbird near Terro, *Lassen*, June 3 (TDM) was also a pioneer of sorts, as they are very rare in our Great Basin region away from *Siskiyou*.

VIREOS, WARBLERS

Plumbeus Solitary Vireo is showing strong signs of attempting to establish itself as a breeder in the Region, as at least one bird has been found in *Mono* during 4 of the past 5 summers. This year a singing male was in Wildrose Canyon, Glass Mt., June 7–11 (WDS, PJM). The Yellow-

throated Vireo at Gazos Cr. June 3 (†MFe, RSTh) established a first for *San Mateo*. Our sole Red-eyed Vireo was on F.I. June 14–16.

The strong showing of Tennessee Warbler mentioned in the Spring report continued into June with six birds along the coast June 2–20. A Virginia's Warbler on F.I. June 17 appeared to be only the Region's 5th in spring away from the e. side of the Sierra; the others were also from F.I. Only one N. Parula at Gazos Cr. June 17 (RSTh) and one Chestnut-sided Warbler at F.I. June 15 was a meager showing for this two-some. Four coastal Magnolia Warblers June 14–19 were well below our recent spring average while the Cape May Warbler at Pt. Reyes June 16 (RSTh) met the recent status quo. Two "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warblers were at Pt. Reyes June 16 (DSg, RSTh *et al.*); late spring "vagrants" are now annual. Black-throated Gray Warbler was finally confirmed breeding in *Contra Costa* when a pair was observed attending young in Pine Canyon, Mt. Diablo, June 28 (†KGGH). Single Black-throated Green Warblers on F.I. June 14 & 18–19 and another at Bolinas Lagoon June 28 (†PP) made for an impressive spring showing. Two "western" Palm Warblers were on F.I. June 18–19. Two Blackpoll Warbler reports were received: Pt. Reyes June 22 (†MAP, D. Pikus) and, surprisingly, one from the interior: Honey Lake W.M.A., *Lassen*, June 2 (†TDM, AM).

Three Black-and-white Warblers along the central coast June 10–16 were typical for spring but a male at Lodi L., *San Joaquin*, July 29–Aug. 9 (DGY) qualified for the fall season and was very rare for the C.V. There was nothing atypical about nine Am. Redstarts coastally June 11–23, but the singing Prothonotary Warbler collected near Los Banos, *Merced*, June 20 (†M. Holmgren, R. Fleischer) provided a Regional first during spring. Spring Ovenbirds most often are found on F.I. as this Season typified: three there June 14–19 in addition to the two there last Season. The ♀ Connecticut Warbler on F.I. June 16 provided the 7th or 8th Regional spring record (the others were also at F.I.). The ♀

Hooded Warbler at Fairhaven, *Humboldt*, June 24 (GSL, LPL) marked the 13th consecutive spring we have recorded the species. A Yellow-breasted Chat near Pt. Reyes Station, *Marin*, June 11–14 (GFi) was considered extralimital, while the singing male in the n.w. corner of the Mono Basin June 28–29 (D. Marquart) may have been involved in a rare breeding attempt for that locale.

GROSBEAKS THROUGH FINCHES

It was a mediocre spring for Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Excluding the two from the Spring report there were five along the c. coast June 11–16, one in Milpitas, *Santa Clara*, June 16 (*vide* D. Johnson), and two in *Mono* June 1 & 16. Blue Grosbeak has been a suspected breeder in *Monterey's* upper Salinas Valley areas since 1939 and in *Alameda's* Patterson Pass area for the past several years. Both counties confirmed Blue Grosbeak as a breeder this summer when a nesting pair was observed in the Salinas Valley between San Lucas and San Ardo June 16–17 (†DR), and two nesting pairs were seen along Patterson Pass and Cross Roads e. of Livermore June 9–30 (ALE). Six coastal and two Mono L. Indigo Buntings June 5–July 13 was a modest affair.

The Rufous-crowned Sparrow heard at the M.B.O.S.P. June 9 (CB) was part of the small population that is resident in this portion of the Santa Cruz Mts. Their paucity in this mountain range is reflected in the few *San Mateo* records on file and their absence, thus far, in *Santa Cruz* (Suddjian, 1990, *Atlasser's Assistant—A Preliminary Analysis of the Status and Distribution of Breeding Birds in Santa Cruz County*, 2nd edition.) Not surprisingly, our two Clay-colored Sparrows were on F.I. June 14–18, as spring mainland records are few. The Brewer's Sparrow at Westhaven, *Humboldt*, June 14 (GSL, m.ob.) and the Vesper Sparrow on F.I. June 14–16 were coastal vagrants. A Lark Bunting at Dyson L. June 17–23 (LJ, WDS *et al.*) might be a first for *Plumas* and the 3rd for Sierra Valley. Point St. George's singing Grasshopper Sparrow was last detected June 20 (ADB). During a

search for nesting Bobolinks, a female was found in Eagleville, *Modoc*, June 27 (DnB, WDS). However, no further evidence was found in this area where they have been suspected of breeding in the past.

The gloomy Tricolored Blackbird picture painted in the Spring report was brightened slightly with the news that the *Sonoma* Breeding Bird Atlassing Project had detected 3 new nesting colonies (BBu). Unfortunately, there was no mention of their sizes or breeding success. *Lake's* first record of Hooded Oriole materialized when a male appeared at Clearlake Oaks June 21. It was joined by a female July 14 and both remained at least through the end of the Period (G. & L. Commeay). After breeding along the c. coast last year, Red Crossbills were seen in very small numbers in the same areas with no mention of breeding this year, further reaffirming their erratic breeding behavior. Seven birds in Livermore July 9 (KGGH) were very unseasonal. Up to six Am. Goldfinches at Ft. Bidwell in Surprise Valley, *Modoc*, June 26 (WDS, DnB) were summer rarities in our Great Basin region. The Evening Grosbeak in Belmont June 18 (PJM) furnished only the 2nd summer *San Mateo* record. Summer sightings along our coastline are very rare away from the immediate northwest.

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