# MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

David G. Yee, Bruce E. Deuel, and Stephen F. Bailey

Highlighting this season were the many quality rarities on Southeast Farallon Island and in Mono County. Vagrant warblers led the way, as they padded an impressive list of 33 total warblers seen in the Region. A midsummer long-distant pelagic trip began to fill the gaps in our knowledge of far-offshore birds during these months. And since this is the "nesting" season, we were pleased to receive a good number of breeding records. Although only the highlights are mentioned owing to



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Abbreviations: C.V. (Central Valley); Cyn. (Canyon); F.I. (Southwest Farallon Island); S.F. (San Francisco); ph. (photo on file with Regional Editors). All records from F.I. and Palomarin should be credited to Points Reyes Bird Observatory.

## GREBES TO FRIGATEBIRDS

Two seasonally rare Red-necked Grebes were found: at Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes, July 7–19 (B. Jording) and "s. of Ano Nuevo" July 8 (SGI). A mixed colony of Western and Clark's grebes on L. Hennessy (RLCL, E. Sabine), had 5 Clark's nests by July 20 (ph. ABtt, J. Karr). These are the first known Clark's nestings in *Napa*.

As offshore boat trips become year-round, so do sightings of Laysan Albatross. There were 4 summer reports, which were formerly very rare in these months. Three early Blackvented Shearwaters were offshore Monterey July 27 (AB, DLSh). A Wilson's Storm-Petrel was described far s.w. of Pt. Reyes July 28 (L. Terrill, †SBT, RN). Leach's Storm-Petrel was the only common bird on that trip, which scouted as far as 100 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes in Marin and San Mateo. Of the 200+ seen, at least four were all-dark, and three had only small ovals of white beside the rump (SFB, AdW, m.ob.). These dark morphs did not necessarily come from s. of the Region, as D.G. Ainley (1980, Auk 97: 837-853) has found all morphs on F.I., although most F.I. birds have a white rump with a median line.

The large colony of Double-crested Cormorants nesting on the Bay Bridge has expanded across the county line (SFB) for the first modern nesting in San Francisco. A Magnificent Frigatebird was independently reported July 21 from Angel I. (S. Michalowski) and just e. of the Golden Gate Bridge (G. Moore, N. Peterson); both locales are along the San Francisco/Marin line.

# BITTERNS TO DUCKS

Common nowhere in the Region, a Least Bittern at Half Moon Bay June 3 (SBT) was only San Mateo's 2nd. As usual, a Little Blue Heron was at the Alviso heronry, San Clara, June 11 (MiF). The Little Blue Heron X Snowy Egret hybrid also summered there. Cattle Egrets have reached the nadir of observer interest, with only one report, a bird in San Jose July 3 (WGB). The White-faced Ibis "invasion" seems to have receded, with no C.V., one coastal, and 3 Great Basin reports totaling fewer than 30 birds. Inland Brant, unknown in summer just 5 years ago, involved 10 birds at Crowley L. June 11, including two color-marked individuals (PJM); one there July 6 (GMcC et al.); and singles in the Mono Basin June 15 (D. Keller) and June 26 (D. Taylor), all Mono. Introduced coastal populations of Canada Geese continue to expand, evidenced by new nesting locales in Mendocino, San Mateo, and Monterey.

A & Mallard X N. Pintail summered at Rodeo Lagoon, Marin (CLF). Blue-winged Teal were widely reported, including a brood at the Napa sewer mitigation ponds June 15 (RLCL); actual nesting attempts are rarely recorded. A Gadwall brood at the Stockton sewer ponds July 8 (DGY) comprised one of very few San Joaquin breeding records. The southward breeding expansion of Am. Wigeon continued, with 2 broods at Hot Creek Fish Hatchery, Mono, July 23 (PJM). Pochards made rare summer appearances: three Redheads at Ft. Dick June 17 (ADB) (2nd Del Norte), a Ring-necked Duck at the Modesto sewer ponds July 29 (HMR) (2nd or 3rd Stanislaus), and a brood at Crowley L. July 21 (PJM) (first Mono nesting); a Greater Scaup at the Stockton sewer ponds June 28 (DGY) (first San Joaquin); and a Lesser Scaup at the Hollister sewer ponds (first San Benito). A & Tufted Duck summering at the Hayward Regional

Shoreline, *Alameda* (†RJR) is likely the same bird from the previous year.

The 9 King Eider reported from Monterey in spring reappeared at Moss Landing June 2 and remained through the period (C. Johnson, †RSTh, †DR). Single Oldsquaws summered at Pt. Reyes (m.ob.), Princeton Harbor, San Mateo (m.ob.), and Ft. Bragg (DT). Up to 20 Black Scoters at Pt. Reyes was a good summer showing. A Barrow's Goldeneye at Tule Lake N.W.R., Siskiyou, July 28 (NEC, RE, MFRb) was quite unseasonal. A Com. Merganser was at Bear Gulch Res., San Mateo, June 1 (fide WGB); surprisingly, there are no previous May or June records for the county. A 9 Red-breasted Merganser at Crowley L. July 21 (PJM) was extremely rare e. of the Sierras.

## RAPTORS

An Osprey nest near LaGrange was *Stanis-laus's* first, but it appeared unsuccessful (B. Corey, HMR, SLR). A Ferruginous Hawk at Killgore Hills, *Siskiyou*, July 24 was possibly nesting in the area (RE).

## **QUAIL TO SHOREBIRDS**

A California Quail at Fish Camp (4500'), Mariposa, July 10 (RAE) was above normal altitudinal range. A Clapper Rail at Redwood Shores June 27 (RSTh) was one of very few remaining in San Mateo, while a Sora heard s. of Half Moon Bay June 30 (BS) was tantalizing since there are no county nesting records. At the periphery of their range, Com. Moorhens dispersed to Mendocino, Monterey, and Mono, with a first confirmed Napa breeding.

The known nesting range of Black-necked



Stilt was expanded with the finding of chicks at Moonglow Dairy, Monterey, July 30 (DEG) and at Hollister sewer ponds July 19 (KVV), a San Benito first. Very early was a Lesser Yellowlegs at Bridgeport Reservoir, Mono, July 6 (BS, RSTh). A Wandering Tattler in basic plumage in Monterey harbor June 17 (MP) was felt to be the first summering bird in the county. A rare C.V. "fall" Whimbrel record was obtained when two adults appeared at the Stockton sewer ponds July 17-19 (DGY). Twelve Long-billed Curlews, mostly in pairs, were in Mono in June (v.o.), where nesting is unknown. A large number for inland, 20 Marbled Godwits were at Modoc N.W.R. July 5 (GMcC et al.).

Semipalmated Sandpiper records included adults near Woodland, Yolo, July 20 (MJL) and Humboldt Bay July 23 (BBA), and a juvenile at L. Merced, S.F., July 25–27 (ASH, SFB, JMHu). Baird's Sandpiper sightings were limited to an adult at Hollister sewer ponds July 19 (KVV) and a juvenile at the Hayward Shoreline July 26 (RJR). An ad. Pectoral Sandpiper at the Salinas sewer ponds July 21 (K. Monahan) may have been Monterey's earliest fall bird. A Dunlin in alternate plumage with very worn primaries at Abbot's Lagoon, Marin, June 8 (SFB) probably summered, as did 5–6 birds at the Hayward Shoreline June 13–July 17 (RJR).

The Region's 5th summer Ruff appeared at Pt. Reyes July 20–22 (S. Wight, †m.ob.). Two alternate plumage Long-billed Dowitchers near Ft. Dick June 17 (ADB) were *Del Norte's* first for June. A  $\Im$  Red Phalarope in alternate plumage at MacKerricker S.P. June 1 (DT) was the only one noted on shore.

#### LARIDS, ALCIDS

An ad. or subad. Pomarine Jaeger at South L. Tahoe June 20–21 (†D.L. Moodey) was the Region's 3rd for the interior; both previous records were from *Mono* in mid-September. Three Long-tailed Jaegers and a S. Polar Skua were tallied up to 100 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes July 28 (SNGH, AdW, SFB, SBT).

An ad. Laughing Gull at the S. Jetty of Humboldt Bay July 31 (†BBA) was the 3rd for Humboldt and the north coast. Single ad. Franklin's Gulls were at the Gualala R. mouth, *Sonoma/Mendocino* (first for the latter county) June 1 (†BDP) and at Bolinas Lagoon June 11 (KH). Closer to breeding sites, four ad. Franklin's Gulls were at Goose L., *Modoc*, June 9 (DGY, S. Yee), and an immature was at Lower Klamath N.W.R. July 28 (NEC, RE, MFRb).

Crowley L., *Mono*, gathered an impressive assortment of gulls and terns. The 120 Bonaparte's Gulls there July 21–22 (PJM) was a large number to summer e. of the Sierra.

A juv. Heermann's Gull July 27 (†JHd, ph. †THd) furnished the 2nd record for the Region's Great Basin district (see AB 43: 533). An ad. Herring Gull June 11–July 22 (PJM) was seasonally rare, especially inland, but the lake's best larid was the Region's first Yellowfooted Gull, a juvenile July 21–29 (†PJM, PEG). Both the Heermann's and the Yellowfooted presumably wandered N across the desert and up the Owens Valley.

Beleaguered terns had very good nesting seasons at Alameda Naval Air Station. As the introduced Red Fox destroyed colonies elsewhere around S.F. Bay, an estimated 1020 Caspian Tern nests at Alameda seemed to be fledging most of their young (SFB). The Stations's colony of Least Terns, now with all but two of the Region's nesting pairs, fledged a record 131–144 young from 120 nests (108–114 separate pairs—LDC).

Crowley L. hosted an ad. Arctic Tern July 6 (†GMcC, B.E. Daniels, NBB), the Region's 5th truly inland record (beyond S.F. Bay). Two ad. Least Terns, at Bridgeport Res., *Mono*, July 4 (†RSTh) were the first for the Region's Great Basin district. Most likely they came from the south, although records from the Mojave Desert are very few. A migrant concentration of 34 ad. Black Terns at Crowley L. July 22 (PJM) was unprecedented for *Mono*.

A Xantus' Murrelet 1–2 mi s.w. of F.I. June 21 (SBT, G. Bauer) continued a recent pattern of May–June sightings there. When will they be found nesting? A basic-plumaged Ancient Murrelet off Gazos Cr. July 28 (†RSTh, GIS) was the first in summer for *San Mateo*.

# DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

A White-tipped Dove was well studied off Hwy 198 just e. of the California Aqueduct, Fresno, June 4-mid July (†RH et al.). We consider it a probable escapee owing to its long stay in unnatural habitat, far from its neotropical range, and without a suitable pattern of vagrancy. However, we welcome sightings and information on the status and captivity of potential vagrant species. Sadly, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo at F.I. July 8-12 was only the 2nd spring coastal record in 2 years. More disturbingly, no nesting reports have been received in 2 years. Is the Region on the verge of losing this species? Future comments on Burrowing Owl may carry a similar tenor. The Redwood City pair June 27 was speculated to be the last nesting pair in San Mateo (PJM). A freshly dead Shorteared Owl at Mono L. June 19 (D. Parker) was noteworthy because the species has not bred in the Mono Basin in recent memory.

Five Lesser Nighthawks at F.I. June 5–July 22 and another at Bodega Bay June 10 (DN) was one of their best spring coastal showings ever. Single Chimney Swifts were over Pt. Reyes June 3 (RS) and F.I. July 9. While this species is very rare, this is the 4th spring in the past 5 that they have been detected along the c. coast. Vaux' Swift breeding has not been confirmed in *Monterey*, but one at Partington Cyn. June 29 (DR, RC) fits a pattern of recent summer sightings in suitable breeding habitat within the county.

The summer status of Lewis' Woodpecker in w. Siskiyou is uncertain, so one along the Klamath R. June 6 (HG) was of interest. A vocalizing Red-breasted Sapsucker at Annapolis, Sonoma, July 6 (BDP) was at the s. boundary of the species' breeding range along the coast. Meanwhile, up in the Sierra at 10,600', a nesting pair at Hall Natural Area, Mono, July 27 (DDeS) probably set an altitude record.

# FLYCATCHERS TO THRASHERS

Breeding bird atlassing finally confirmed Dusky Flycatcher breeding in Monterey near Cone Peak July 26 (DR), though breeding has been suspected since 1969. Difficulty in distinguishing between Pacific-slope and Cordilleran Flycatchers in areas of sympatry was well presented by our neighbors to the north (AB 44: 1179). Such difficulties may exist in the n.e. corner of California as well. Indeed, several observers commented on their confusion at hearing call notes from "W. Flycatchers" that appeared to range the spectrum of the two "species" in the Warner Mts., Modoc, July 5-6 (GMcC, RAE et al.). Johnson and Marten (1988 Auk 105: 177-191) considered all Warner Mt. breeding birds to be Cordilleran Flycatchers. Readers interested in some good counterpoints to the "W. Flycatcher" split should refer to Phillips (1991, *Known Birds of North and Middle America*, part 2).

An E. Phoebe at F.I. June 2 was only the island's 4th in spring. F.I. islanders were treated to royalty June 6–7 as both **Tropical Kingbird** and Cassin's Kingbird paid visits (†PP); the former was the Region's 2nd in spring, the latter the island's first in spring. The family of W. Kingbirds at Bridgeport, *Mono*, July 6 (RSTh) provided a first confirmed nesting for the Mono Basin. Four E. Kingbirds at F.I. June 11–July 19 and another three along the c. coast June 20–July 23 made for one of their best showings away from breeding grounds during summer.

Common Ravens established a nesting first for the Sutter Buttes June 4 (WA). The rediscovery of nesting Mountain Chickadees near Cone Peak July 26 was considered *Monterey's* bird "event of the summer" (DR). A small population was presents until at least 1960, but recent visits failed to find them. It had been speculated that the species was extirpated by the huge Marble Cone fire of 1977. If recolonization has truly occurred, it is amazing considering that the nearest resident birds are in *Santa Barbara* 150 mi to the south, with no records in between (DR). A Mountain Chickadee at Pt. Reyes June 14



Tropical Kingbird on Southeast Farallon Island, California, June 6, 1991. Second spring record for northern California. Photograph/Peter Pyle.

(G. Byron) appeared to be Marin's first since 1984; the majority of this county's records are for June. After 2 years of scrutiny, Canyon Wren was confirmed nesting on Mt. Diablo June 26 (†KGH, RJR-Contra Costa's first); three fledglings were observed.

Unexpected were nesting Varied Thrushes at Butano S.P. and Butano Cr., San Mateo, June 21, and at Cascade Cr., Santa Cruz, July 2. Single nests were confirmed at each locale, with territorial birds at 6 other spots in the former areas June 6-July 11 (all DLSu fide Albatross). There were formerly no nesting records s. of Humboldt, however, summering birds were detected just to the n. of these areas in La Honda in 1986. Vagrant thrashers included the Region's 4th spring Gray Catbird at F.I. June 23, a Sage Thrasher at F.I. June 23-26, and single Brown Thrashers at Mono L. County Park June 10 (†PJM, †DS) and Newark, Alameda, June 23 (M. Lewis).

## **VIREOS, WARBLERS**

In recent years, short visits to Glass Mt., Mono, have revealed breeding plumbeus Solitary Vireos, but little was known of this population. This season, much more thorough surveys found 12+ birds June 13-29 (DS, PJM), leading to the conclusion that the bird is a widespread, fairly numerous breeder from at 1991, on Southeast Farallon Island, California, provided only the third state record least 6800-8800' in the Glass of such a hybrid. Photograph/Peter Pyle. Mt. area, primarily in piny-

on-pine woodland, and secondarily in open Jeffrey Pine Forest (DS). Single Red-eyed Vireos in Pacifica, San Mateo, July 1 (S. Smithson), Stinson Beach, Marin, July 7 (DaS), and F.I. July 21 were expected, but singing males at Lee Vining June 9 (†PJM) and Glass Mt. June 29 (†DS) provided first and 2nd records for the Mono Basin.

The Region's 4th spring Golden-winged Warbler at F.I. June 3 (ph. †pp) was overshadowed by the state's and Region's 3rd Blue-winged x Golden-winged warbler at F.I. June 6 (ph. †pp). The hybrid was a 3 "Brewster's type." In addition to the five Tennessee Warblers at F.I. June 2-4, two birds were at Pt. Reyes June 3 (RS, ASH), with one of them sporting a shiny new band, undoubtedly from F.I. the day before. On Glass Mt., a pair of Virginia's Warblers in Kelty Cyn. June 25 and 10+ birds (with confirmed breeding) in Frazier Cyn. June 29 (DS) indicated that this species probably breeds regularly there, the only such Regional site. A pair of N. Parulas at Gazos Cr., San Mateo, May 28-July 2 nested and successfully raised young (RSTh, PJM, SBT, m.ob.). The Regions's first nesting record was in Monterey in 1952. Other nesting records come from Marin where, indeed, they seemingly nested again as a territorial pair, with the female carrying food at Five Brooks June 16-July 3 (RS, DaS). The male singing in May at Olema remained until June 25 (G. Byron).

Four Chestnut-sided Warblers were at F.I. June 2-July 7, with another at Half Moon Bay June 4 (BS). The state's first summering Magnolia Warbler at Gazos Cr. June 23-July 25 (BS, m.ob.) surpassed six additional coastal birds June 7-19. Birds in Visalia, Tulare, June 4 (RH), and lower Walker Cr., Mono, June 15 (†ES) appeared to be only the Region's 2nd and 3rd interior spring records.

Hoodeds June 7 & 19. Another Hooded Warbler was in S.F. June 8-11 (DSg, ASH). Our lone Canada Warbler was at Pt. Reyes June 6 (KH, JM et al.).

## **TANAGERS TO FINCHES**

A Summer Tanager was at F.I. June 6. The S.F. East Bay received a jolt when ad. & Scarlet Tanagers were at Tilden Regional Park, Contra Costa, June 4 (†M. Nordstrom) and Hayward, Alameda, June 30 (†D. Hamilton). All 13 previous Regional records were along the immediate coast. A healthy 16 Rosebreasted Grosbeaks were along the c. coast June 1-July 29. Indigo Buntings were scarce, with only five along the c. coast June 2-July 21. A Dickcissel put in a rare spring visit at F.I. July 7. Vagrant Spizella sparrows included a Clay-colored at F.I. June 12 and a Brewer's at Pt. Reyes June 7 (JEP). The Swamp Sparrow at McGee Meadows (8600'!), Glass

state's 5th (2nd in spring) Blue-winged and Golden-winged warblers are both very rare in western North America, and their hybrids are even more so. This "Brewster's" warbler found June 6,



met their respective spring averages. Near the top of the season's outstanding warbler list was the Region's first Grace's Warbler, a female at Deer Spring, Glass Mt., Mono, June 26 (†DS). Single Bay-breasted Warblers at Half Moon Bay June 2-3 (RSTh, SBT), Pt. Reyes June 6 (JM et al.), and F.I. June 7 represented an above-average display. Three Blackpoll Warblers were along the c. coast June 6-10. In addition to eight Black-and-white Warblers along the c. coast June 1-10, an impressive three were in Mono: Lee Vining Cr. June 10 (†ES et al.), lower Walker Cr. June 15-July 1 (†ES), and upper Owens R. June 18 (ES). Eight Am. Redstarts spanned the summer along the c. coast June 6-July 28. Ovenbirds were at F.I. and Pt. Reyes in an 8:2 ratio June 4-10, which are expected areas, numbers, and dates. The lone maverick was at Dexter Cr., Mono, June 12 (†PJM, DS). Northern Waterthrushes were well represented, with three c. coastal birds June 1-10 to supplement the two from spring. Completely unexpected was the Region's first and the Louisiana Waterthrush at F.I. June 2-3 (ph. †PP). Augmenting F.I.'s early June warbler frenzy were a Kentucky June 2-4 (†PP), Mourning June 7-11 (†PP), and two

At Pt. Reyes, a Black-throat-

ed Green Warbler June 6-7

(AG, SMo et al.) and a Blackburnian Warbler June 2 (RS) Mt., June 13 (†DS, †PJM) was only the Region's 3rd in June.

Single Bobolinks at River Spring L., Mono, June 14 PJM, DS) and the Marin headlands July 3 (CLF et al.) met the recent spring average. Napa's breeding bird atlassers were rewarded with their first nesting Yellow-headed Blackbirds: 10 pairs at American Canyon Cr. June 29 (C. Wilcox, BWk, RLCL, ph. ABtt). The female of S.F.'s legendary pair of Greattailed Grackles was still observed as of June 22 (SFB). The male appears to have passed on, not having been seen in over a year. It has been 13 years since he established the Region's first record, with his faithful mate appearing the following year. A Cassin's Finch at Snow Mountain Wilderness, Lake, July 10 (B. McIntosh) would suggest nesting, a possibility since the high mountain forests where they breed in Humboldt/Trinity remains contiguous s. to about this point in the Inner Coast Range.

Cited Contributors: (Subregional editors in boldface) Brooks B. Allen, Walt Anderson, Stephen F. Bailey, Alan Baldridge, Alan D. Barron, Anthony Battiste (ABtt), William G. Bousman, Rita Carratello, Neal E. Clark, Laura D. Collins, David DeSante (DDeS), Bruce E. Deuel, Ray Ekstrom, Richard A. Erickson, Carter L. Faust, Mike Feighner (MiF), Douglas E. George, Ron H. Gerstenberg, Albert Ghiorso, Steve Glover, Philip E. Gordon, Helen Green, Keith Hansen, Rob Hansen, Jo Heindel (JHd), Tom Heindel (THd), Kevin G. Hinsta, Alan S. Hopkins, Steve N. G. Howell, Joan M. Humphrey (JMHu), Lin Jensen, Robert J. Keiffer, Dan J. Keller, Robin L. C. Leong, Michael J. Lippsmeyer, Timothy D. Manolis, Guy Mc-Caskie (GMcC), Peter J. Metropulos, Joseph Morlan, Scott Morrical (SMo), Dan Nelson, Ron Norden, Benjamin D. Parmeter, John E. Parmeter, Michael Perrone, Peter Pyle, Harold M. Reeve, Sherrie L. Reeve, Jean M. Richmond, Robert J. Richmond, Michael F. Robbins (MFRb), Don Roberson, Ruth A. Rudesill, Barry Sauppe, Debra L. Shearwater (DLSh), David Shuford, David Sibley (DaS), Daniel Singer (DSg), Rich Stallcup, Bradley M. Stovall, Gary J. Strachan, Emilie Strauss, David L. Suddjian (DLSu), Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn (RSTh), Dorothy Tobkin, Kent Van Vuren, Bruce Walker (BWk), Adrian Wander (AdW), Jerry R. White, David G. Yee, Bob Yutzy. Many more contributors were not specifically cited; all are appreciated.-STEPHEN F. BAILEY (grebes through frigatebirds, raptors, larids and alcids), Department of Ornithology and Mammalogy, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118; BRUCE E. DEUEL (bitterns through ducks, quail through shorebirds), 18730 Live Oak Rd., Red Bluff, CA 96080; DAVID G. YEE (doves through finches), 2930 Driftwood Pl. 939, Stockton, CA 95219.