

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

Guy McCaskie

This season was somewhat uneventful, especially so compared with the excitement of a year ago. Cooler-than-normal temperatures throughout the period, along with some heavy rains from the south in late June, helped drought conditions. However, the Region is still crying for water.

Abbreviations: C.L.N.W.C. (*China Lake Naval Weapons Center, extreme n.e. Kern Co.*); H.D.L. (*Harper Dry Lake, n.w. of Barstow, San Bernardino Co.*); L.A.C.N.H.M. (*Los Angeles County Natural History Museum*); N.E.S.S. (*north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.*); S.B.C.M. (*San Bernardino County Museum*); S.C.R.E. (*Santa Clara River Estuary, near Ventura, Ventura Co.*); S.D.N.H.M. (*San Diego Natural History Museum*); S.E.S.S. (*south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co.*); S.F.K.R. (*Nature Conservancy preserve, along the South Fork of the Kern R. near Weldon, Kern Co.*); W.F.V.Z. (*Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Los Angeles*). As virtually all s. California rarities are seen by numerous observers, only the observer initially identifying the bird is noted. Documentation is on file with the California Bird Records Committee (c/o Michael A. Patten, P.O. Box 8612, Riverside, CA 92515) for all rarities listed in this report; records submitted without documentation are not published.

LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS

A Com. Loon flying N over the N.E.S.S. June 8 (GMcC) was late for a spring migrant. An alternate-plumage Horned Grebe at S.E.S.S. June 28 (KLG) was probably summering locally. A pair of Eared Grebes with two young in Santa Barbara Aug. 4 (PEL) established the first record for nesting in *Santa Barbara*. Likewise, 2 family groups (six chicks) of Clark's Grebes on L. Cachuma Aug. 19 (PEL) also established the first nesting record for *Santa Barbara*.

Of extreme interest, but just outside of North American waters, was a **Dark-rumped Petrel** (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) 226 nautical mi w.s.w. of San Miguel I. Aug. 2 (PP), placing yet another seabird on the list of species to be looked for in California's waters. A Cook's Petrel 178 nautical mi w.s.w. of San Nicolas I. July 26 (PP), eight more between 265 and 295 nautical mi s.w. of San Nicolas I. July 27 (PP), and a 10th 196 nautical mi w.s.w. of San Miguel I. Aug. 2 (PP) were over waters where this species undoubtedly occurs regularly. Two Sooty Shearwaters were inland around the Salton Sea, with one captured on a road near Seeley, *Imperial*, July 6 (RH *

S.D.N.H.M.), and the other was flying S over the Salton Sea off Salton City, *Imperial*, July 13 (GMcC), this giving us 5 records for this general area. A Wilson's Storm-Petrel 4 nautical mi w. of Manhattan Beach July 30 (PP) is one of a very few ever found in s. California waters and the first in *Orange*.

Four Red-billed Tropicbirds were seen between July 25 & 29, with one 44 nautical mi s.w. of San Clemente I. July 25 (PP), another 161 nautical mi w.s.w. of San Nicolas I. July 26 (PP), and two together 23 nautical mi w. of San Clemente I. July 29 (PP). What was probably a Red-tailed Tropicbird was seen 44 nautical mi w.n.w. of San Miguel I. Aug. 5 (PP). An ad. Brown Booby, a casual straggler to the coast of California, was seen to land on Arch Pt. on Santa Barbara I. Aug. 8 (PP). Brown Pelican numbers on the Salton Sea built up to about 950 in late July (WRR), but one in Chino, *San Bernardino* July 26 (JEP) was the only one reported inland away from the Salton Sea. Magnificent Frigatebirds were scarce, with an immature over La Jolla, *San Diego*, July 24 (J & DMcM), another over Malibu July 13 (CB), one over Pt. Mugu, *Ventura*, July 18 (DS), another near Ventura Aug. 1 (HG), and what was probably the same bird over Carpinteria Aug. 2 (PT), and an immature inland at N.E.S.S. July 27 (MAP) being the only five reported.

HERONS TO GROUSE

At least six ad. Little Blue Herons were around s. San Diego Bay throughout the summer, with a nest containing three young ready to fly along the Tijuana R. near Imperial Beach June 23 (GMcC). A Little Blue Heron's nest about 10 mi e. of Brawley, *Imperial*, July 7 (CGE) contained two well-grown young July 5 (MAP) and is only the 2nd nest found away from San Diego in s. California; a lone adult was at S.E.S.S. June 24 (WWR). An ad. Tricolored Heron, a casual straggler to the Salton Sea, was at Finney L. near S.E.S.S. May 26 (R & RC), and another was at N.E.S.S. July 27 (GMcC) and Aug. 24 (CMcG). A 2nd-year Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, a casual straggler to California, was along the Tijuana R. near Imperial Beach June 16-23 (GMcC). White-faced Ibis were nesting near Lancaster, *Los Angeles* (10-20 pairs, KLG) at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area near Lakeview, *Riverside* (two recently fledged juveniles seen July 27, CMcG) and at Finney L. near S.E.S.S. (at least 100 pairs, GMcC). A pair of Wood Storks was attending a nest in a mixed colony of Great Blue Herons (10 pairs) and Great Egrets (30 pairs) near Escondido, *San Diego*, May 12-22 (JO'B); a check of the area in July indicated that the nesting attempt was unsuccessful, though the pair was still present. Two Wood Storks at S.E.S.S. May 29 (KLG) were the first found there this summer, with numbers building up to about 70 in July (WRR); an immature at N.E.S.S. June 28-29 (GMcC) is one of a very few found away from the S.E.S.S. in recent years.



Two Brant on Klondike L. near Big Pine, *Inyo*, June 25 (T & JH) and another near Lost Hills, *Kern*, July 14 (MOC) were probably lost spring migrants and the only ones reported inland away from the Salton Sea. A pair of Canada Geese with four half-grown goslings in Cartago, *Inyo*, June 4 (T & JH) gives us our first record for nesting for wild birds. Three pairs of Blue-winged Teal near Cantil, *Kern*, all summer (MTH) were suspected of nesting. A Ring-necked Duck, rare in summer, was in Atascadero June 27 (TME), four were on L. Cachuma July 19–Aug. 19 (PEL), another was at the S.C.R.E. July 8–13 (SEF), two more were on L. Cuyamaca in the mountains of *San Diego* July 4 (REW), and a group of three were well inland near Cantil July 4 (MTH). The two Harlequin Ducks at Pt. Mugu in the winter were still present Aug. 4 (FH). An Oldsquaw, very rare in summer along the coast, was present on Morro Bay throughout the period (MW). Two Black Scoters, exceptionally rare in summer, remained at Pt. Mugu throughout the period (FH), and another was at Pt. Sal, *Santa Barbara*, July 7 (PEL). The two White-winged Scoters present at N.E.S.S. since Apr. 13 continued through June (GMcC), with one remaining through June 29 (MAP); a third was at S.E.S.S. June 6 (SB). A Com. Goldeneye on Upper Newport Bay in June and July (SM) was one of few ever to have summered in s. California. A Bufflehead at Bolsa Chica in June and July (SM) is the first found in *Orange* in summer; one was on Big Bear L. in the San Bernardino Mts. June 8 (SM), and another was on L. Cuyamaca in the mountains of *San Diego* July 21 (DKi).

Two N. Goshawks on Mt. Pinos July 19–20 (FS) were in the area where a pair nest-

ed last summer, and another near L. Fulmer June 22 (DRW) is one of a very few ever reported in the San Jacinto Mts. A flock of up to 34 subadult Swainson's Hawks near Big Pine June 19–July 4 (T & JH) was an unusual concentration for this time of year; at least 2 pairs nested (one produced one chick) between Edison and Caliente in the s. San Joaquin Valley (SF), and at least one, and probably as many as 3 pairs, nested near Lancaster this summer (KLG, SS), this being the first confirmation of breeding in these areas in over 5 years. An imm. Peregrine Falcon at N.E.S.S. July 20 (MAP) was the only one at the Salton Sea this summer, an area where birds dispersing from nest sites in the Gulf of California are regular.

The first reports of Blue Grouse on Mt. Pinos since the 1960s was made by U.S. Forestry Service personnel in July, when one or two birds were found.

GALLINULES TO ALCIDS

A pair of Com. Moorhens accompanied by four young near Santa Margarite L. July 25 (JMcD) gave us one of very few confirmed breeding records for *San Luis Obispo*.

An alternate-plumaged Lesser (Am.) Golden-Plover at the Santa Maria R. mouth July 6 (JSR) was an early fall migrant. Sixty-two Greater Yellowlegs around San Diego Bay June 15 (REW) was an exceptional number for summer. An ad. Solitary Sandpiper on Tinnemaha Res. near Big Pine July 24 (T & JH) was the earliest reported this fall and was followed by six more in the e. portion of the Region by the end of the month. A Whimbrel, scarce in the n.e. portion of the Region, was on Tinnemaha Res. July 24 (T & JH). A

Ruddy Turnstone at S.E.S.S. June 8–22 (REW) gives us the first summer record for the Salton Sea; one at N.E.S.S. July 27 (GMcC) was the only fall migrant away from the coast. An ad. Red Knot photographed on Owens L. July 25 (T & JH) was only the 2nd ever found in *Inyo*, one near Lancaster July 20 (LS) was the only other found away from the Salton Sea. A Sanderling near Lancaster July 26 (KLG) was the only one reported away from the Salton Sea. An ad. Semipalmated Sandpiper was at C.L.N.W.C. July 19 (DVB), and another on Baticuitos Lagoon, *San Diego*, July 28 (GMcC) was the first juvenile found this fall. Some 60 W. Sandpipers at the mouth of the New R. at the S.E.S.S. throughout June (GMcC) was a large number for summer. An ad. Baird's Sandpiper at S.E.S.S. July 5 (MAP) was very early, followed by at least six more between July 13 and the end of the period. A Pectoral Sandpiper was near Cayucos on the unexpected date of June 14 (TME), and a somewhat early adult was near Lancaster July 26 (KLG). A Dunlin at S.E.S.S. June 22 (GMcC) was one of very few found in s. California in summer. A Stilt Sandpiper at S.E.S.S. June 29 (MAP) tied the earliest date for a fall migrant; an adult photographed on Tinnemaha Res. July 20 (T & JH) was one of very few found in this area of California. A ♂ Ruff near Lancaster July 20 (LS) was at an inland locality; another in Goleta July 31 onward (SEF) was believed to be the same bird that was present here this time last year. A pair of Com. Snipe was nesting in the Garner Valley in the San Jacinto Mts., *Riverside*, this summer (RMcK), this locality being at the s. extreme of this species' breeding range.

An unidentified jaeger at N.E.S.S. Aug. 3 (MAP) was probably the ad. Pomarine Jaeger photographed there Aug. 10–24 (GMcC * S.B.C.M.) and had probably been present on the Salton Sea all summer. An ad. Long-tailed Jaeger 149 nautical mi w. of San Nicolas I. Aug. 1 (PP) and a subadult 95 nautical mi w. of San Miguel I. Aug. 5 (PP) were early for s. California waters. Two S. Polar Skuas, somewhat rare in s. California waters, were 148 nautical mi s.w. of San Nicolas I. July 26 (PP). Post-breeding Laughing Gulls appeared on the Salton Sea in June, as expected, with a maximum of 350 on June 15 (GMcC). A first-summer Franklin's Gull was near Lancaster July 13 (KLG). An ad. Heermann's Gull was at S.E.S.S. July 19 (KLG * S.B.C.M.), and two juveniles were together in Salton City on the Salton Sea Aug. 3 (GMcC). A first-summer Glaucous Gull photographed at the S.C.R.E. June 1–22 (BS) was one of a very few found in s. California in summer. A Sabine's Gull, probably a first-summer bird, at N.E.S.S. July 4 (SM) may

have been summering on this inland body of water.

At least 60 pairs of Gull-billed Terns successfully nested at S.E.S.S. this summer (KCM), and 30 nests were found around the s. end of San Diego Bay in June (EC), these being the only 2 localities in California where this species occurs in California. A basic-plumaged Royal Tern at N.E.S.S. July 4 (SM) is only the 3rd ever reported inland in California. A basic-plumaged Sandwich Tern was with nesting Elegant Terns at Bolsa Chica June 29–July 16 (BED); this could be the same individual seen on Malibu Lagoon May 20, and even the same bird present around San Diego in the 1980s. However, this species is relatively common along the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica in winter, where they associate with Elegant Terns, suggesting that occurrences with Elegant Terns on the coast of California are not completely unexpected. Two ad. Arctic Terns, casual inland, at S.E.S.S. June 22 (GMcC) were probably very late spring stragglers. Three Forster's Tern nests were at S.E.S.S. in June but appeared to be deserted by mid-July (KCM), there being few documented records for breeding for this species at the Salton Sea. Three Least Terns around S.E.S.S. June 2 (REW) and a first-summer-plumaged bird there June 29 (GMcC) were inland, where considered casual. Although some 480 Black Skimmers were present around S.E.S.S. this summer, only 80 pairs attempted nesting; and most of these failed (KCM, WRR). Nesting was also reported on s. San Diego Bay and at Bolsa Chica, but the number of nests and their success was not known.

A Pigeon Guillemot flying past Pt. Dume, Los Angeles, June 6 (KLG) was along the s. coast, where very rare. Two Craveri's Murrelets flying N 137 nautical mi s.w. of San Nicolas I. July 26 (PP), and a pair with a young bird still showing down 132 nautical mi w.s.w. of San Nicolas I. July 28 (PP) were farther offshore than previously recorded.

CUCKOOS TO DIPPERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported to have had their best breeding season in recent years in the S.F.K.R., with 11–13 pairs producing 20–30 young (SL). In addition, one was near Lone Pine, Inyo, June 15 (AK & JW), 3 or 4 pairs were present near Big Pine June 22 through the end of the period (EG, T & JH), one or two were at China Ranch near Tecopa, Inyo, July 1–3 (T & JH), one was at the Saucito Ranch on the Carrizo Plain July 30–Aug. 1 (JK), and one was in Granada Hills in the San Fernando Valley July 10 (DM). This is most encouraging news about this declining species. Two Flammulated Owls, a poorly known species, were on Big Pine Mt., Santa Barbara, June 25 (SEF), 21 calling birds were in the San Bernardino Mts., and 2 or 3 more were located on Black Mt. in the San Jacinto Mts. during the season (RMcK), with most of the vocalization recorded in May. Two Whip-poor-wills were

calling near L. Fulmer in the San Jacinto Mts. June 21 (DRW), this being one of about a half-dozen localities in California where the species undoubtedly breeds, although actual nesting in California is still to be documented.

The only Black Swifts reported were up to four over Forest Falls in the San Bernardino Mts. June 9–July 6 (SM, DRW), where they undoubtedly breed; small numbers foraging over the S.F.K.R. throughout the period (MTH); and one in the Piute Mts., July 21 (SF). Up to 20 Chimney Swifts were around downtown Los Angeles, where small numbers are found every summer, July 11 through the end of the period (KLG). At least six Vaux's Swifts with Chimney Swifts over downtown Los Angeles July 12 (KLG) gives us one of a very few s. California summer records. A bird identified as a ♀ Broad-tailed Hummingbird was on a nest in California City May 16; this location is w. of their known range, away from the mountains, and only the 2nd individual ever recorded in Kern. The nest was found deserted May 27, and the nest with two young in it was recovered (MTH * W.F.V.Z.). A ♂ Williamson's Sapsucker at Grassy Hollow Campground in the San Gabriel Mts. June 17 (JA) is one of a very few found in Los Angeles in summer.

A Brown-crested Flycatcher near Big Pine June 4–7 (BED) was n.w. of this species' known range but was in suitable nesting habitat and appeared to be defending a territory. Four pairs were present in the S.F.K.R. in June and July (SL), this being the n.w. extreme of this species' breeding range; single pairs at Cushenbury Springs, San Bernardino, June 11 (RMcK) and in Morongo Valley all summer (MAP) were along the w. extreme of this species' breeding range. An E. Kingbird near Spring Valley, San Diego, June 15 (PU) was undoubtedly a late spring straggler. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, a very rare to casual straggler to California, was at L. Cuyamaca in the mountains of San Diego June 25–29 (DDG), and another was near Lakeview July 7 (SM).

A juv. Am. Dipper in Icehouse Canyon of the San Gabriel Mts. July 14 (KR) was undoubtedly hatched locally. A Hermit Thrush in the Cuyamaca Mts. of San Diego July 4 (REW) was outside the species' known breeding range.

VIREOS TO FINCHES

A Gray Vireo in the Inyo portion of the Grapevine Mts. June 10 (T & JH) gives us the first reliable record of this species in this area of California in many years. A pair of Plumbeous Solitary Vireos (*Vireo solitarius plumbeus*) near Big Bear L. in the San Bernardino Mts. July 6 (DRW) were in habitat more suitable for *cassinii*. Three Red-eyed Vireos were in the n.e. portion of the Region, with one at China Ranch near Tecopa July 3 (T & JH), a singing male near Independence, Inyo, July 3–6 (JW), and another male near Big Pine June 29–July 15 (T & JH). Most

unusual was a pair of Lucy's Warblers with two young at the S.F.K.R. July 27 (SL), this being well to the n.w. of this species' known breeding range. A ♂ N. Parula in Huntington Beach June 12 (SM) and another near Pala, San Diego, July 12 (ERL) were probably late spring stragglers, but another in extensive riparian growth near Norco, Riverside, June 27 (JEP) may have been summering locally. A Black-and-white Warbler in Goleta June 15 (RGJ) is best considered a late spring vagrant, but another in San Diego July 10–11 (BHa) may have been summering locally. A ♂ Kentucky Warbler at Morongo Valley Aug. 25–Sept. 2 (MAP) may have been the individual rumored to be present on June 26 (*vide* EC). A singing ♂ Hooded Warbler at Morongo Valley July 11 (ERL) was still present Sept. 2 (MAP) and is best considered to have summered locally.

A pair of Summer Tanagers at Scotty's Castle in Death Valley National Monument in late May was still present Aug. 31 (BED) and was feeding a fledged juvenile, documenting nesting at this locality; another pair near Big Pine June 23–July 21 (T & JH) may have nested (male seen carrying food on July 10). These locations were n. of the northwesternmost known breeding locality at the S.F.K.R., where about 60 birds are believed to have been present this summer (SL); elsewhere, summer stragglers included a male near Lompoc, Santa Barbara, June 30 (JMC), a male found dead in Halsey Canyon, Los Angeles, June 19 (DKa * L.A.C.N.H.M.), another male in Huntington Beach July 28–Aug. 22 (DP), and a 4th male in Solana Beach July 13 (RP). A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak at China Ranch near Tecopa July 2 (T & JH), a singing male at the S.F.K.R. June 11 (PLW), another male near Heart Bar Campground in the San Bernardino Mts. June 16 (GR), and a 4th male in La Jolla June 29–30 (JN) were summer stragglers. A ♂ Indigo Bunting initially near L. Cuyamaca in the mountains of San Diego May 22 (RF) was found again July 3 (CGE), mated with a Lazuli Bunting and feeding a recently fledged young. Other reports of Indigo Buntings included a territorial male near Tinnemaha Res. in the Owens Valley June 19–July 31 (T & JH), a female near Big Pine June 20 (T & JH), a male at China Ranch near Tecopa July 4 (T & JH), and another territorial male on the S.F.K.R. all summer (SL); in addition, what was considered a ♂ Indigo X Lazuli Bunting was near Morro Bay June 22 (JSR).

A Green-tailed Towhee in suitable breeding habitat on Big Pine Mt. June 27 (JEL) was the first ever in Santa Barbara in summer. A California Towhee photographed at Sage Flat 5 mi s. of Olanchia June 16 (T & JH) was probably of the race *kernensis*, and if so, extends the range of that race eastward into Inyo. A Brewer's Sparrow feeding two recently fledged juveniles in an area of coastal sage scrub near Yucaipa, San Bernardino, June 25 (CMcG) and another pair feeding young near Highland, San Bernardino, June 2 (RM-

ck) were s.w. of this species' known California breeding range. Two Large-billed [Savannah] Sparrows (*Ammodramus [sandwichensis] rostratus*) at Pt. Mugu June 20–29 (RJM) were somewhat early. Up to 15 Grasshopper Sparrows in the San Joaquin Hills near Irvine in June and July (RAE) was an encouraging number for the s. coast.

A ♂ Bobolink on Vandenberg A.F.B. June 12 (BHi) was a late spring vagrant. A Yellow-headed Blackbird, rare along the coast in summer, was in Goleta June 25 (PEL); two more were at Pt. Mugu July 20 (RJM). Small numbers of Great-tailed Grackles were scattered throughout the Owens Valley n. to Bishop (T & JH); at least five were around C.L.N.W.C. (DVB); a minimum of 15 pairs were in California City (MOC); and up to six were near Lancaster throughout the summer (KLG). These localities mark the n.w. limit of this species' current breeding range in California. In addition, single birds were along the coast and north of any known breeding locations, including one in Ventura June 5 (RJM) and another near Santa Paula July 28 (MAH). At least five Bronzed Cowbirds were in Brawley the westernmost locality of regular summer occurrence, with the first seen Apr. 21 (REW) and a juvenile being fed by a Brewer's Blackbird June 21–22 (KLG).

A pair of Red Crossbills accompanied by a streaked juvenile at Yucca Valley, *San Bernardino*, June 8 (MAP) were suspected to have nested at this high desert locality; up to 40 in a day in the Mt. Pinos/Mt. Able area in June and July (RJM, JEL), 8 on Pine Mt. June 8 (JEL), 12 at Fish Cr. in the San Bernardino Mts. June 8 (SM), and two more at nearby Bluff L. July 6 and another near L. Fulmer in the San Jacinto Mts. June 22 (DRW) were in more suitable nesting habitat, and one in Los Osos June 14 (JSR) was on the immediate coast. An Evening Grosbeak on Mt. Able, *Ventura*, June 8 (RJM) was unexpected for the time of year.

Corrigendum: The "Philadelphia Vireo" collected at H.D.L. Sept. 30, 1990 (*AB45:152*) has been reidentified as a Warbling Vireo.

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