

California Bird Records Committee Watch List

Established naturalized bird species not yet accepted to the State List

Updated 29 November 2019

The following list includes introduced bird species known to occur in California. Most of these are known to breed in the wild and have populations totaling >100 individuals. They meet at least some of the CBRC criteria for addition to the California state list, but are either "data deficient" or geographically limited enough within California to call into question the wisdom of adding them to the official state list at this time.

The CBRC has formalized this "Watch List" of naturalized species that merit detailed study to determine when and if all CBRC criteria for addition to the state list have been met. The CBRC Introduced Birds Sub-committee maintains files on these species to serve as the basis for potential listing packages. In general, very little is known about the basic biology and ecology of many of the naturalized populations occurring in California. In addition to a lack of knowledge regarding overall population sizes and trends, there is limited data for most introduced species on habitat requirements, nest-site selection, breeding phenology, food habits, local movement and dispersal, and impacts (negative or positive) on native species. While some aspects of avian biology and ecology require rigorous or carefully designed studies, many of the above can be addressed with careful and dedicated observation by amateurs (citizen scientists), either during the course of general birding or through targeted effort. We encourage the accumulation and publication of data on non-native birds by all observers, both amateur and professional. Such information can also be reported to eBird, county sub-regional editors for North American Birds, or directly to the CBRC Introduced Birds Sub-committee via the chair, [Kimball Garrett](#).

The information presented below is intended as a brief overview of the status of each species in California. It has been gleaned from a number of sources, and citations have been omitted to improve readability, not to imply that it is solely the work of the CBRC Introduced Birds Sub-committee. A partial list of sources from which we obtained most of this information is included at the end of the list. Of particular note is that estimates of population size came from one of two sources. These estimates were either taken from published literature, or approximated from eBird's public data visualization tools. As a rule, these estimates should be considered a crude (but generally conservative) approximation of population size.

Anseriformes - Screamers, Swans, Geese, and Ducks

Anatidae - Ducks, Geese, and Swans

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

A moderately sized resident population occurs in the north San Francisco Bay area and near Sacramento, probably numbering several hundred individuals. Smaller numbers are found elsewhere in northern California from San Benito County north to the Oregon border, primarily west of the Sierra Nevada. Single birds and pairs are occasionally recorded in southern California, likely representing local escapees from aviculture, though some reports of juveniles may be the result of dispersal from successful local breeding. Pairs breed occasionally, but there is currently no well-established population in southern California. The Mute Swan is native to Europe and Asia, with introduced populations in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and much of the United States. Given its potential status as a pest species, it currently has a low potential to be added to the state list.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

This species is a breeding resident on the coastal slope of Los Angeles and Orange Counties, where the population probably numbers about 300 individuals. Breeding was noted in Orange County as early as 1980, but overall numbers remained low through the early 2000s. Since that time, the population has been steadily increasing in size, and appears to be expanding slowly eastward into western Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Scattered sightings in northern California likely pertain to escapees from local waterfowl collections. The Egyptian Goose is native to sub-Saharan Africa and the Nile Valley, and has introduced populations across much of western Europe, in the Middle East, and in Florida, Texas, and southern California. Given the relatively small size of the population, this species currently has low potential to be added to the state list. If it continues to expand in size and geographic area as it has in the last 10-15 years, however, it would be a good candidate for future addition, though its status as a possible pest species may mitigate that potential.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

A moderately sized population, numbering a few hundred individuals, has been resident near Santa Rosa, Sonoma County since at least the 1970s. This species has undoubtedly benefitted from the placement of nest boxes for Wood Ducks (*A. sponsa*), as well as from private ranches and vineyards that provide suitable habitat. Much smaller numbers are found on the coastal slope of southern California in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties, where the total number is likely less than 100 individuals, and no single location seems to harbor more than a few breeding pairs. Like the birds in Sonoma County, breeding populations in southern California are likely dependent on artificial nest boxes. Scattered sightings of single birds or pairs may occur throughout the state, and these almost certainly represent local escapees from aviculture. These birds may persist for years, and may even breed ephemerally, but do not form established, self-sustaining populations. The Mandarin Duck is native to (breeds in) eastern Asia from southeastern Russia south to eastern China and Japan, and winters in southern China. There are introduced populations across much of western Europe, and in northern California; this species is popular in aviculture, however, so occasional escapees may be found anywhere. Given the relatively small size (<500 birds) of the overall population, and their apparent reliance

on man-made nest boxes (and possibly continued supplement from captive populations), this species currently has low potential to be added to the state list.

Psittaciformes - Parrots

Psittacidae - New World and African Parrots

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

A large population is resident in Bakersfield in Kern County, with small numbers present in the area since 1977, and nesting first documented in the early 1980s. The population increased steadily for several years, and then apparently exploded in the mid 2000s. The highest number reported on a Christmas Bird Count is 1394, though the population has been estimated to be as high as 3000. Scattered reports of birds elsewhere in Kern County and adjacent Tulare County since 2015 are almost certainly individuals dispersing from the Bakersfield population. A much smaller population formerly occurred on the coastal slope of Los Angeles County, but these have been mostly extirpated, apparently through competition with other psittacids. A flock of about a dozen birds at Playa del Rey is the only population of significance remaining. Scattered sightings of single birds or pairs elsewhere in the state (though primarily on the coastal slope of southern California) likely pertain to local escapees. Some of these may persist for many years and even form small flocks or occasionally breed, but likely do not represent self-sustaining populations. The Rose-ringed Parakeet is native to the sub-Saharan African tropics and from Pakistan and India east to southeastern China and Burma. There are very large (>5000 birds) introduced populations in Great Britain, Belgium, and The Netherlands, and numerous smaller introduced populations in cities in tropical and temperate regions across the globe. Given the relatively large size and restricted range of the California population, it currently has moderate to high potential to be added to the state list.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*

Since 2016, a small flock (up to 30 birds) has been resident in Calexico in Imperial County, where they have nested. There is also a single sighting of six birds 15 km to the north in El Centro. These birds have undoubtedly expanded from the naturalized population just across the border in Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico. A handful of sightings near the international border in extreme southwestern San Diego County (since 2008) may represent dispersing birds from the small population in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, while a few reports further north in southern California are more likely local escapees. Monk Parakeets are native to southern South America, but have established populations in cities in North America, Europe, and Africa. Given the small size of the population and its designation as a pest species, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

White-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris versicolorus*

This species was more abundant in California historically with significant populations in San Francisco and Los Angeles during the 1970s-1980s. These populations crashed, however, after Peru banned the export of this species, and these populations were nearly or completely extirpated by the end of the century. Since 2000, there have been scattered sightings (mostly of single birds) in both locations. A flock of about 30 birds resident in Huntington Park in Los Angeles County was first detected in 2018. The total population probably numbers fewer than

50 individuals. White-winged Parakeets are native to northern South America, and have introduced populations in California, Florida, and Puerto Rico. Given the small size of the population, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

Lilac-crowned Parrot *Amazona finschi*

Small numbers of this species were first detected (and breeding) in the San Gabriel Valley in the late 1970s. The population has increased steadily since that time in both geographic range and population size. While about half the population is associated with other Amazon parrots in the San Gabriel Valley, significant populations (each at least 50-100 individuals) occur in the Pomona Valley, the San Bernardino Valley, central Orange County, and coastal San Diego County. Small (typically single-digit) numbers are encountered throughout the coastal slope of Orange and Los Angeles Counties, and have been reported west to Santa Barbara since 2015. The total population probably numbers between 600 and 900 individuals. This species regularly hybridizes with the Red-crowned Parrot (*A. viridigenalis*), and at least one apparent hybrid with a Red-lored Parrot (*A. autumnalis*) has been recorded. The Lilac-crowned Parrot is native to western Mexico, and has introduced populations in eastern Mexico, southern California, Texas, and Florida. Given the size of the population, it currently has moderate to high potential to be added to the state list.

Red-lored Parrot *Amazona autumnalis*

A small population is resident in southern California, with several dozen birds each in the San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles County and in central Orange County. Small numbers persisted in Riverside from 2004-2010, and have been reported in the vicinity of Redlands (San Bernardino County) since 2010, the greater San Diego area since 2012, and in Stockton (San Joaquin County) since 2005. High counts from Los Angeles and Orange Counties are each about 75 birds, and the total population probably numbers between 100 and 200 individuals. This species hybridizes with the Red-crowned Parrot (*A. viridigenalis*), and at least one apparent hybrid with a Lilac-crowned Parrot has been recorded. The Red-lored Parrot is native from eastern Mexico south to extreme northwestern South America, with a disjunct population in central Brazil. There are introduced populations in western Mexico and southern California. Given the small size of the population and the potential for hybridization with other Amazon parrots, it currently has low potential to be added to the state list.

Yellow-headed Parrot *Amazona oratrix*

A small population is resident in southern California, with the greatest concentration (at least 50 birds) in the western San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles County. Smaller flocks (probably less than 10 individuals each) are resident in central Orange and coastal San Diego Counties, and there are scattered sightings elsewhere on the coastal slope of these three counties. The total population probably numbers between 75 and 125 individuals. This species is superficially similar to the less common Turquoise-fronted Parrot (*A. aestiva*) and Yellow-crowned Parrot (*A. ochrocephala*), especially immature birds with reduced yellow on the head. The Yellow-headed Parrot is native to Mexico and northern Central America, with introduced populations in western Mexico and southern California. Given the small size of the population, it currently has low potential to be added to the state list.

Turquoise-fronted Parrot *Amazona aestiva*

There have been a few sightings of this species in association with other parrots in Los Angeles and Orange Counties since 1996. Most reports come from the vicinity of Pasadena, with a maximum of four at one time, and the total population likely numbering in the single digits. The species is superficially similar in some plumages to the Yellow-headed Parrot and Yellow-crowned Parrot, and could be mistaken for either, or vice versa. Turquoise-fronted Parrots are native to central and eastern South America. Given the small size of the population, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

White-fronted Parrot *Amazona albifrons*

A small flock (max. 11) appears to be resident in Hemet in Riverside County, and there have been regular sightings of up to three birds in the vicinity of Pasadena and Temple City in Los Angeles County since 1996, and a few scattered reports elsewhere in the greater Los Angeles area (and one from San Diego County) more recently. The total population probably numbers 10-20 individuals. This species has bred in southern California. The White-fronted Parrot is native to Mexico and Central America. Given the small size of the population, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

Burrowing Parakeet *Cyanoliseus patagonus*

There have been a few, sporadic sightings of a pair of birds in the Tijuana River Valley in San Diego county since 2012, and a flock of 15 was photographed there in May 2019. Individuals or pairs, likely local escapees, have been found occasionally in Los Angeles County. Burrowing Parakeets are native to southern South America. Given the small number of birds and their sporadic occurrence, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

Nanday Parakeet *Aratinga nenday*

A resident population occurs in the vicinity of the Santa Monica Mountains in western Los Angeles and eastern Ventura Counties. There are scattered sightings of individuals or small flocks (<15 individuals) west to Ventura, east to Pomona/Claremont, and south to Long Beach. Reports in Orange County may pertain to birds wandering from naturalized populations or local escapees. The total population probably numbers between 300 and 500 individuals. Small numbers have been established along the southwestern edge of the Santa Monica Mountains since the 1970s, and breeding locally in sycamore woodlands in the adjacent canyons since at least 1991. The Nanday Parakeet is native to central South America, with introduced populations in southern California and Florida. Given the size of the population and the pace of its westward spread, it currently has moderate potential to be added to the state list.

Blue-crowned Parakeet *Thectocercus acuticaudatus*

A small population, probably numbering 50-100 individuals, is resident in southern California, with two areas of concentration. A flock resident in the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County may number anywhere between one to six dozen birds; scattered sightings west to Malibu, south to the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and east to Montclair (San Bernardino County) may represent individuals wandering from the San Gabriel Valley, occasional escapees, or both. Small

numbers occurred regularly in the northern San Fernando Valley in the 1990s and early 2000s, but there have been no recent reports from that area. Another flock of about two dozen individuals is resident in the vicinity of Point Loma in San Diego County, with occasional reports east to Lakeside. The parakeets have been present since the early 2000s, with sightings in Los Angeles County as early as 1985. Breeding was first noted in 1997 in Los Angeles County and 2001 in San Diego County. The Blue-crowned Parakeet is native to South America in three disjunct populations, and has introduced populations in California, Florida, Spain, and Portugal. Given the small size of the population, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

Mitred Parakeet *Psittacara mitrata*

A moderately large resident population occurs in coastal Los Angeles and Orange Counties, with significant concentrations or winter roost sites in or near the cities of Long Beach, Redondo Beach, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Temple City, and Orange. Each of these roosts consists of 50-250 birds, for a total population exceeding 1000 birds in the greater Los Angeles area. The species has been present in the Los Angeles area since at least 1980, and likely breeding by the late 1980s, with one confirmed breeding report during the Los Angeles County Breed Bird Atlas effort (1995-1999). Smaller numbers occur throughout the coastal slope of these two counties, though some reports may pertain to misidentified Red-masked Parakeets (*P. erythrogenys*), which can appear quite similar. A small flock, numbering about 80 individuals, is resident in Sunnyvale in Santa Clara County, where it has also nested successfully. The Mitred Parakeet is native to the eastern slopes of the Andes from northern Peru to northern Argentina. The only large introduced populations are in California and Florida, but smaller populations (up to several dozen birds) occur in metropolitan areas in New York, Spain, and outside their native range in Peru and Argentina. Given the size of this long-established, breeding population, it has high potential to be added to the state list.

Red-masked Parakeet *Psittacara erythrogenys*

There are several small to moderately sized populations resident throughout California: at least 200-300 birds occur in San Francisco, 50-100 birds occur in the greater San Diego area, and an estimated total of 300-400 parakeets populate winter roosts in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. The Los Angeles and San Francisco populations have been established (though initially in much smaller numbers) since the mid 1990s, while the San Diego population appears to have become established as early as 2007. Breeding was documented in San Francisco in 1989, and in San Diego in 1998, but no nests have been described in Los Angeles. This species is reported uncommonly throughout the greater Los Angeles area. While some of these reports are accurate, especially those of single birds or small flocks, many reports are more likely misidentified Mitred Parakeets, especially those of large flocks away from known areas of occurrence. Red-masked Parakeets are native to the Pacific slope of Ecuador and northern Peru, with introduced populations in southern Peru, Puerto Rico, Florida, and California. Given the moderate size of the population and its geographic range, it has moderate potential to be added to the state list.

Passeriformes - Passerine Birds

Corvidae - Crows, Jays, and Magpies

Black-throated Magpie-Jay *Calocitta colliei*

A small population of up to 20 individuals has been resident in southwestern San Diego County since 1992, with breeding documented in the Tijuana River Valley and along the Sweetwater River in Bonita. Occasional sightings of 1-5 birds elsewhere on the coastal slope of San Diego County may represent dispersal or local escapees. The Black-throated Magpie-Jay is native to western Mexico. Given the very small size and restricted range of the population, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

Zosteropidae - White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies

Swinhoe's White-eye *Zosterops simplex*

[*The identification of this population is tentative. While plumage features and vocalizations are consistent with this taxon, they are similar enough to other species of Zosterops that caution is warranted. Genetic analysis currently being conducted will hopefully confirm the identification of this population.*] A small but rapidly growing population is resident in coastal Orange, Los Angeles, and San Diego Counties. The largest concentrations occur in coastal Orange County between Huntington Beach and Irvine, but the species appears to be established along the coast from Long Beach south to Encinitas, and inland in Orange County to Irvine and Anaheim. Scattered sightings extend west to Malibu, north/east to Fullerton, and south to San Diego. Remarkably, three were photographed on Catalina Island in December 2018, indicating that this species is capable of long distance dispersal (white-eyes in general are well-known for their dispersal abilities and rapid speciation). The total population probably numbers between several hundred and a few thousand individuals. The first report was of four birds on the west side of Upper Newport Bay during the Christmas Bird Count in January 2006, and the population had grown to several dozen birds by 2011. White-eyes were undoubtedly breeding locally during this period, but the first nest was not detected until 2015. In 2014 the population showed signs of expansion within Orange County, and first appeared in San Diego County in Encinitas in 2016, and in Los Angeles County in Long Beach in 2017. Swinhoe's White-eye is native to southeastern Asia, from eastern China (including Taiwan) west to Myanmar and south to Malaysia. If the species continues to expand as it has in the last five years, it has moderate to high potential to be added to the state list in the future.

Ploceidae - Weavers and Allies

Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus*

A resident population occurs in coastal Los Angeles and Orange Counties, with highest densities along the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers in Los Angeles County, and along the Santa Ana River and San Diego Creek in Orange County. There are scattered sightings on the coastal slope west to Ventura, east to Redlands and the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, and south to the Tijuana River Valley. Reports of single birds from the Antelope Valley (Los Angeles County) and Galileo Hill (Kern County) are the only records from the desert. Estimates from the turn of the century suggest the total population size was between 600 and 1200 individuals, but it is not known how those numbers have changed (if at all) in the 20 years since then. The current population seems to have become well-established by the late 1990s, but there are scattered sightings of

individuals dating back to the late 1970s. Given the size of some flocks in the late 1990s (up to 200), they were undoubtedly breeding locally by that time. Very small numbers have occurred irregularly since 1993 in the South San Francisco Bay area in Santa Clara County. While breeding has been documented here on a few occasions, there is currently no self-sustaining population. The Northern Red Bishop is native to northern tropical Africa, and has introduced populations in southern California, Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and on a few smaller Caribbean islands. Given the size of the population, it currently has moderate potential to be added to the state list. If an accurate estimate of the current population size is obtained and shown to be similar to past estimates, that potential would increase.

Viduidae - Indigobirds

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

A small, resident population is widespread in coastal southern California. They occur in the highest densities in northwestern Orange and southeastern Los Angeles Counties, where double-digit flocks are regularly recorded. Smaller numbers are regularly reported west to the San Fernando Valley and Palos Verdes Peninsula, east to Redlands and Riverside, and south to San Diego. The total population probably numbers several hundred individuals. The population seems to have taken hold in the 2000s, but there are scattered sightings of individuals as early as 1992. The detection of juveniles indicated that breeding was occurring during the early 2010s, and the Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*) was confirmed as the primary host of this brood parasite in 2014. The Pin-tailed Whydah is native to sub-Saharan Africa, and has introduced populations in southern California, Florida, Puerto Rico, and Portugal. Given the size of the population and its recent establishment, it currently has low to moderate potential to be added to the state list. If the species continues to expand as the Scaly-breasted Munia has done, however, it would be a good candidate for future addition.

Estrildidae - Waxbills and Allies

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*

A small, resident population is widespread but sparsely distributed in coastal Orange and Los Angeles Counties. They occur in the highest densities in Huntington Beach and North El Monte, where flocks numbering 44 and 24, respectively, have been recorded. Elsewhere, single-digit counts are the norm. A few sightings in western Riverside and San Bernardino Counties may represent individuals dispersing eastward from coastal populations, or local escapees. The total population probably numbers between 100 and 150 individuals. The current extant population seems to have taken hold in 2013, but there is a sighting as far back as 1982. A flock that included juveniles was photographed in Orange County in 2015, providing evidence of local breeding. The Orange-cheeked Waxbill is native to Africa, and has introduced populations in southern California, Texas, Bermuda, and on several Caribbean islands. Given the small size of the population and its recent establishment, it currently has low potential to be added to the state list. If the species continues to expand as the Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*) has done, however, it would be a good candidate for future addition.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata*

A small, resident population is widespread but sparsely distributed in coastal Orange and Los Angeles Counties. They occur in the highest densities in Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley, where flocks numbering 46 and 30, respectively, have been recorded. Elsewhere, single-digit counts are the norm. The total population probably numbers between 100 and 200 individuals. The current extant population seems to have taken hold in 2013, but there is a sighting as far back as 1996. Nesting was noted as early as 2014. The Bronze Mannikin is native to Africa, and has introduced populations in southern California, Texas, and Puerto Rico. Given the small size of the population and its recent establishment, it currently has low potential to be added to the state list. If the species continues to expand as the Scaly-breasted Munia has done, however, it would be a good candidate for future addition.

Fringillidae - Finches, Euphonias, and Allies

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

This species occurs throughout the state, with most sightings concentrated in the greater Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay areas. Most encounters are with single birds, indicating that these birds are local escapees, though sightings at locations such as Deep Springs College in Inyo County and on San Clemente Island suggest that formerly captive birds may still be capable of long distance dispersal. Small flocks (max. 10) are rarely seen, but these groups do not seem to persist. Pairs have bred on occasion, for example, five young fledged from a nest at Kenneth Hahn SRA in Los Angeles County in June 1999. At any given time there are probably fewer than two dozen individuals scattered throughout the state. The European Goldfinch is native to Europe, western Asia, and the north coast of Africa, and has introduced populations in Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay, Argentina, Bermuda, Texas, Bermuda, the greater Chicago area, and perhaps New York City. Given the ephemeral nature of this species' occurrence in California, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

Thraupidae - Tanagers and Allies

Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater *Sporophila torqueola*

A few birds (max. 4) have been reported consistently in the Tijuana River Valley in San Diego County since at least 2010, with sporadic reports going back to 1977. It is unknown whether these constitute a very small, persistent population or are the result of continued escape or release of captive birds, but they have not yet been recorded breeding. There are a few scattered reports elsewhere in coastal San Diego County. The Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater is native to western and southern Mexico, and has an introduced population in the Cape District of Baja California Sur. Given the very small size and restricted range of the population, it currently has very low potential to be added to the state list.

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