

THE 41ST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 2015 RECORDS

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ABSTRACT: The California Bird Records Committee reached decisions on 185 records involving 192 individuals of 80 species and three species groups (Singer et al. 2016), endorsing 151 records of 157 individuals. The first accepted state records of the Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) and Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) are outlined in this report, bringing California's total list of accepted species to 663, of which 11 are established introductions. Other notable records detailed in this report include the state's second of Tristram's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma tristrami*) and Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*), third and fourth of the Nazca Booby (*Sula granti*), fourth of the White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) and Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*), and sixth and seventh of the Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*).

This 41st report of the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC), a committee of Western Field Ornithologists, summarizes evaluations of 185 records involving 192 individuals of 80 species and three species groups. The committee accepted 151 of the 185 records for an acceptance rate of 81.6% involving 157 individuals of 68 species and three species groups. We consider 20 records of 16 individuals to represent returning or continuing birds that were accepted previously. Twenty-eight records, involving 30 individuals of 22 species, were not accepted because the identification was not considered to be substantiated; four records, involving three individuals of three species, were not accepted because natural occurrence was questionable; and two records of two species were not accepted because the date and/or location could not be established. Reports of multiple individuals together are given the same record number for purposes of review; we report the total number of accepted individuals, which may be greater than the number of accepted records. Although the majority of the records in this report pertain to birds documented in 2015, the period covered spans the years 1855 to 2016.

The committee has recently accepted first California records of the Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) and the Buff-breasted Flycatcher (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) from 2016, the details of which will be published in the next report. However, the recent lumping of the Thayer's Gull (previously *Larus thayeri*) with the Iceland Gull (*L. glaucoides*) by the American Ornithological Society (Chesser et al. 2017) resulted in the loss of one species from the state list. These changes bring the total number of accepted species on California's

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state list as of July 2017 to 665. Potential additions to the state list currently being considered by the committee are of Jouanin's Petrel (*Bulweria fallax*) and the Kermadec Petrel (*Pterodroma neglecta*).

Species account headings are organized with English and scientific names first, followed in parentheses by the total number of individuals accepted in California (as of this report) and the number of new individuals accepted in this report. Following the heading are accounts for records accepted (as applicable), followed by records not accepted because the identification was not established, the date and/or location was uncertain, or natural occurrence was questionable (as applicable). A double asterisk (**) following the number of accepted state records indicates that the species has been reviewed for a restricted time span, so the number of accepted records does not represent the total number of California records. Date ranges for each record are those accepted by the CBRC. When the observer(s) who originally discovered the bird provided documentation, their initials are listed first, in italics, followed by the initials of subsequent observers supplying documentation. A dagger (†) following an observer's initials indicates submission of a photograph, (S) indicates submission of a sketch, (§) indicates submission of audio recordings, (§) indicates submission of a video, and (#) precedes a specimen number. The absence of a symbol following the observer's initials indicates the submission of a written report without other documentation. Additional details regarding minutiae of formatting and abbreviations may be found in previous CBRC reports, available at www.californiabirds.org, and in CBRC (2007). Also available at the website is the California bird list, the review list, an online form for submitting documentation for review species, committee news, recent photos of rare birds, the CBRC's bylaws, a form for querying the CBRC database, and all annual reports from 1996 through 2014. Age terminology follows that used by CBRC (2007).

Observers are encouraged to submit documentation for all species on the CBRC's review list to the CBRC's secretary (e-mail: secretary@californiabirds.org); an online reporting form is available on the CBRC website (www.californiabirds.org). Documentation of all CBRC records is archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology (www.wfz.org) and is available for public review by appointment.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna autumnalis* (33, 1). An adult was at Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park, LA, 2 Jul 2015 (RH†, TAB†, JSF†, AEK†, TGM†, JOL†; 2015-058). Some committee members expressed concern about the natural occurrence of this species on the coastal slope, but photos clearly show that the legs were unbanded and toes unclipped, and that the feet and flight feathers were undamaged, arguing against an origin from captivity. In addition, the occurrence of this individual in July fits the seasonal pattern of previous California records from the Salton Sink, and this sighting followed several sightings in Arizona west of the species' normal range, including a few in the Colorado R. valley. **NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE:** One at Howarth Park in Santa Rosa, SON, 2–9 Aug 2015 (VM†, RoSt†, ST†, RAR; 2015-076) was refound just 14.5 km away at Roberts Lake, SON, 21 Sep–3 Nov 2015 (AW†, ESH, LB; 2015-121). A majority of CBRC members agreed that the bird's tameness, occurrence at an urban lake far north of any previous records in California, and lengthy duration of its stay suggested it may have been an escapee.

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FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolor* (6**, 6). Once a fairly common breeder in the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys and along the southern coastal slope, this species was essentially extirpated from California by 2010, probably because of conversion of wetlands to agriculture, overhunting, and exposure to toxins (Hamilton 2008). Since it was added to the CBRC review list in 2011, six individuals at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, RIV, 3–7 Jan 2015 (RMat; 2015-006) were the first to be documented. At least five of the six were shot by hunters. The question of natural occurrence was raised because when the species was still common in California in summer, winter occurrence was rare (Hamilton 2008). This record, however, coincided with the appearance of several at unusual locations in Arizona and so may have represented part of a wider northward movement.

EMPEROR GOOSE *Anser canagicus* (94, 1). A juvenile near the lower Smith R., DN, 5–9 Oct 2015 (DBet, LBr†, RFow†, DK-B†, PSet; 2015-110) was feeding in a pasture with two Greater White-fronted Geese (*A. albifrons*). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A goose observed flying north over County Line Rd., ~8 km east of Hershey, COL/YOL, 1 Feb 2015 (2015-073) with a skein of 60 Greater White-fronted Geese may well have been an Emperor but was not described sufficiently to convince enough members that a hybrid or possibly a blue Snow Goose (*A. caerulescens*) was not seen.

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator* (147, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A swan specimen at the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, England (UMZC #12/Anat/25/b/l) was collected at the Sutter Buttes, SUT, 5 Feb 1855 (1855-801) and identified by the collector as a Trumpeter Swan. A committee member recently discovered the existence of this specimen and requested that the curator verify the bird's identity. While measurements of the bill nail fit the Trumpeter, the bill length and wing chord fit the Tundra Swan (*C. columbianus*), and plumage and facial features were inconclusive.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra* (1, 1). The breeding distribution of the Common Scoter extends along the northern shore of Eurasia from Iceland to the mouths of the Olenek and Lena rivers in northern Russia, and the species winters primarily along the west coast of Europe, with no records along the east coast of Asia (Reeber 2015). The only previous North American records come from Greenland (Boertmann 1994). This led to the expectation that the first Common Scoter for the North American mainland would show up along the eastern seaboard. Thus it came as a surprise when an adult male visited the harbor at Crescent City, DN, 25 Jan–13 Feb 2015 (BBo†, RFow†, TF-H†, RHol†, DK-B, CAM†, BMat, GMcC, DSS†, BS††, SLS; 2015-013; Figure 1). Even more surprising was that the second also showed up in the western United States, when another male, probably in its second winter, was discovered at Siletz Bay along the Oregon coast 13 Nov–5 Dec 2016 (Oregon Birds Records Committee 163.1-16-01).

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE *Leptotila verreauxi* (0, 0). NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE: One on a cruise ship from the San Pedro Channel, LA, to at least the Oregon border, 26–27 Apr 2015 (NH†; 2015-031), presumably came aboard during one of the ship's known stops at west Mexican ports of call days before entering U.S. waters. The committee unanimously considered this bird ship-assisted.

GROOVE-BILLED ANI *Crotophaga sulcirostris* (12, 1). One at Coso Junction, INY, 27-28 Oct 2015 (SB††, TAB†, JHe†, THe†, CHo†, RHo; 2015-123; Figure 2) constituted a first for Inyo County, the northernmost California record, and one of few records west of the continental divide that are north of 36° N latitude (Mlodinow and Karlson 1999, Meyers 2008).

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD *Cynanthus latirostris* (90, 3). Females at

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Figure 1. Mainland North America's first Common Scoter was a male in the harbor at Crescent City, Del Norte Co., 25 Jan–13 Feb 2015 (2015-013). In the male Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*), the bill protuberance is knob-shaped and entirely yellowish, whereas in the Common Scoter the bill profile is concave, with the protuberance mostly black and a yellow patch limited to the culmen.

Photo by Gary Woods

Chiriaco Summit, RIV, 9 Sep 2015 (JCSi†, JSz†, JLD; 2015-092) and in Goleta, SBA, 31 Oct–4 Nov 2015 (PK, JH†; 2015-155) followed a well-established pattern of fall vagrancy to southern California. A female at the Smith R. National Recreation Area, DN, 27 Jun 2015 (CRy†, ADB; 2015-071) was unexpected as there were only two previous records from northwestern California (both in Humboldt County), and



Figure 2. This Groove-billed Ani at Coso Junction, Inyo Co., 27–28 Oct 2015 (2015-123) provided a first county record. The mix of brown and black flight feathers indicates a hatch-year bird (Pyle 1997).

Photo by Thomas A. Benson

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only two previous June records for the state: for Sonoma, SON (2004-105; Cole et al. 2006), and Borrego Springs, SD (2009-102; Pyle et al. 2011).

YELLOW RAIL *Coturnicops noveboracensis* (86**, 1). A Yellow Rail nest found near Bridgeport, MNO, on 15 Jun 1948 was collected on 22 Jun (JED; 1948-801; SBCM #9433). The bird itself was not seen, though it was heard calling nearby, and the identification was confirmed through comparison of the collected eggs with egg specimens of this species held at the WFVZ (WFVZ #139804). The committee ceased review of new occurrences of this species in 2003.

WILSON'S PLOVER *Charadrius wilsonia* (25, 1). A female was on the shore of San Diego Bay, SD, 12 May 2015 (RTP†; 2015-035). Fourteen of California's 25 records are from southern coastal San Diego County.

UPLAND SANDPIPER *Bartramia longicauda* (31, 1). One on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 21–24 Aug 2015 (AJSt†, JRT†; 2015-086) furnished the seventh record for this location.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* (44, 1). An adult male was at the south spit of Humboldt Bay, HUM, 12 Aug 2015 (MLat†; 2015-080). The rump and underwings were not seen, so the subspecies could not be determined.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT *Limosa haemastica* (53, 2). An alternate-plumaged male was at Clam Beach, HUM, 25–26 May 2015 (RFow†; 2015-065). One in basic plumage, also presumably a male given its small size in comparison with nearby shorebirds, was at Struve Slough and lower Harkins Slough, SCZ, 11–26 Oct 2015 (ARi†, DVP, LBH, GK†, NLv†; 2015-117).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* (49, 3). Three individuals were at New Chicago Marsh in Don Edwards NWR, SCL, in 2015. A well-described basic-plumaged bird on 5 Jul (MJM; 2015-060) was followed by another in basic plumage on 13 Sep (BPot†, JMu†; 2015-100). Though the committee agreed that these two sightings could have been of the same first-summer individual, the regularity with which this location is covered and the nearly two-month gap between sightings suggests that the birds were different. The third, a juvenile, was present 11–13 Sep 2015 (WB†, BAM†; 2015-093). **IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED:** The record of one in nonbreeding plumage along the Eel R., HUM, 17 Oct 2013 (2013-286) was not accepted after three rounds of voting. The committee decided that the documentation did not adequately eliminate the possibility of a Stilt Sandpiper (*C. himantopus*).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* (24, 1). One in alternate plumage was at Tulare Lake Drainage District ponds ~13 km northwest of Corcoran, KIN, on 11 July 2015 (MEST†; 2015-064). It may have been seen again in the same location on 19 July, but adequate documentation was lacking and the committee did not accept its occurrence on the later date.

LONG-BILLED MURRELET *Brachyramphus perdix* (31, 1). One was at sea just outside of the Humboldt Bay inlet, HUM, 20 Jul 2015 (CSSt†; 2015-075). This date coincides with the species' predominant window of occurrence (mid-July through August) in California.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* (28, 2). A winter adult first found at the Modesto Regional Water Treatment Plant ponds, STA, 13 Dec 2015, was refound on 26 Dec 2015 at the nearby Ceres Water Treatment Plant, STA, where it remained until 4 Jan 2016 (TAB†, JGa†, CL†, CAM†, MJR†, JCS†, SBT†, JLD; 2015-149). This individual represents only the sixth record away from California's immediate coast. Another winter adult was in the harbor at Crescent City, DN, 23–26 Nov 2015 (RCo; 2015-160).

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LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus* (118, 2). A winter-plumaged adult was at sea with a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls ~11.8 km southwest of the Santa Ana R. mouth, ORA, 10 Jan 2015 (JLD, TAB†, AKH†; 2015-003). A first-summer bird was at an evaporation pond near Stratford, KIN, 22 Jun–12 Jul 2015 (MES†, PB†, BJG†, JR, GW†; 2015-056). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One in juvenal plumage was reported 4.8 km off Dana Pt., ORA, 20 Dec 2014 (2014-170). Because the retention of the dark back feathers of juvenal plumage into December (when a first-winter Little Gull should have a pale gray back) is atypical, the committee decided that the observation was too brief for certain identification. A record of a first-winter Little Gull from Red Hill, along the south shore of the Salton Sea, IMP, 15 Jan 2015 (2015-007), lacked detail sufficient to eliminate Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) conclusively.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides* (23, 1). An adult with white primary tips was seen on the American R., SAC, 2 Jan 2015 (CG†; 2015-001). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: Reports of two first-cycle individuals at the Teapot Dome Landfill 9 km southwest of Porterville, TUL, 9–10 Jan 2015 (2015-008) and another at the Ogier Ponds, 6 km northwest of Morgan Hill, SCL, 18–21 Feb 2015 (2015-072) typified the problems the CBRC has experienced with reports of first-cycle birds. Traditionally, the committee has conservatively accepted only the palest first-cycle individuals (Hampton 2013). First-cycle birds near Fernbridge, HUM, 12 Dec 2013 (2013-291) and Richardson Bay, MRN, 31 Jan 2015 (2015-023), though pale, were too poorly photographed to allow their subtleties to be adequately assessed. A very white immature bird at the Ogier Ponds, SCL, 22 Feb 2015 (2015-018), may have been a leucistic gull of another species. Also, in late winter, feather wear and bleaching can give a false impression of a gull's initial paleness. In light of concerns regarding the data that supported recognizing the Iceland and Thayer's (formerly *L. thayeri*) gulls as separate species in the first place, and reflecting the probability that *L. glaucoides kumlieni* represents a highly variable group of intergrades between nominate Iceland and Thayer's, the American Ornithological Society has lumped the Thayer's Gull into the Iceland Gull (Chesser et al. 2017). As a result, the CBRC will not review reports of the Iceland Gull after 2016.

SLATY-BACKED GULL *Larus schistisagus* (58, 1). An adult was with other gulls at Vasona Lake County Park, SCL, 28 Jan–2 Feb 2015 (GZ†, WGB, MJM†; 2015-014). This was the only record of a Slaty-backed Gull submitted from California in 2015, a reduction from the preceding eight years in which at least three individuals had been accepted each winter.

KELP GULL *Larus dominicanus* (1, 1). Representing the first record of this Southern Hemisphere gull for the Pacific coast of North America north of Manzanillo, Colima (Gomez de Silva et al. 2013), three sightings of an adult (or near adult) in the spring of 2015 were considered by the committee to represent the same individual. First reported at Año Nuevo SB, SM, 27 Apr 2015 (BoS†; 2015-033), it was refound at the mouth of Pilarcitos Cr. in Half Moon Bay, SM, 20 May 2015 (AJ†; 2015-034), then again on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 24–29 May 2015 (EdJ†, PWa; 2015-037; Figure 3). There are several previous Kelp Gull records for North America, with breeding (and hybridization with the Herring Gull [*L. argentatus*]) recorded along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico (Dittman and Cardiff 2005). The California bird had worn flight feathers and was missing a white mirror on primary 10 (as in only a small percentage of Kelp Gulls), but otherwise it appeared typical for a Kelp Gull. Characters that distinguish the Kelp Gull from similar dark-backed species, namely, the Lesser Black-backed Gull (*L. fuscus*), Yellow-footed Gull (*L. livens*), and Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*), include yellowish to greenish legs and a slaty blackish mantle that does not contrast strongly with the black wingtips (Howell



Figure 3. California's first Kelp Gull, seen at three widely spread locations, is shown here on Southeast Farallon I., San Francisco Co., 24–29 May 2015 (2015-037). Photographs from all three locations showed worn flight feathers and a missing white mirror on primary 10.

Photo by Edward J. Jenkins

and Dunn 2007). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: Positive identification of a dark-backed adult gull at Humboldt Bay, HUM, 5–10 Aug 2015 (2015-170) was not possible because of the great distance at which it was photographed.

BRIDLED TERN *Onychoprion anaethetus* (4, 1). One was at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, ORA, 23 Jun 2015 (TF-H††, JeB†, TAB†, RSc†; 2015-054).

ARCTIC LOON *Gavia arctica* (13, 1). One was seen on the ocean off Big Lagoon, HUM, on five occasions 29 Sep–28 Nov 2015, (TMcK†; 2015-142). Several members expressed concern about the distance to the bird and blurriness of some photos, but images clearly show the distinct white flank patches that are critical for distinguishing this species from the Pacific Loon (*G. pacifica*). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A loon in Upper Newport Bay, ORA, 14 Dec 2015 (2015-005) was thought to be a Pacific Loon by most members. The white from the belly extended relatively high on the bird's sides, but little to no white was visible on the flanks.

YELLOW-BILLED LOON *Gavia adamsii* (100, 1). An adult in alternate plumage migrated south past Ocean Beach, SF, on 24 Oct 2015 (PSa; 2015-168). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A supposed Yellow-billed Loon in Mendocino Bay, MEN, on 26 Dec 2014 (2014-182) was thought by most members to be a Common Loon (*G. immer*).

CHATHAM ALBATROSS *Thalassarche eremita* (1, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A first-cycle bird seen over Bodega Canyon, MRN, 29 Jul and again on 10 Sep 2000 (2000-165) had been accepted as a Shy Albatross (McKee and



Figure 4. This White-chinned Petrel off Moss Beach, San Mateo Co., 15 Sep 2015 (2015-144) had a more extensive white chin patch than those previously recorded in California.

Photo by Mary Gustafson

Erickson 2002) at a time when the Chatham (*T. eremita*), Salvin's (*T. salvini*), and White-capped (*T. cauta sensu stricto*) albatrosses were considered conspecific under this name. After these taxa were split, this record was re-evaluated as a Chatham Albatross, not accepted as such, then evaluated as a Salvin's/Chatham Albatross; see the following account for a detailed discussion of the record.

SALVIN'S/CHATHAM ALBATROSS *Thalassarche salvini/eremita* (1, 1). In light of updated identification criteria for immature Chatham, Salvin's, and White-capped albatrosses, particularly differences in bill coloration (Howell 2009, 2012), the committee reassessed documentation of the first-cycle bird seen over Bodega



Figure 5. During netting for Ashy Storm-Petrels (*Oceanodroma homochroa*), two Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels of the Peruvian subspecies *kelsalli* were captured on Southeast Farallon Island, San Francisco Co., in 2015: the first on 19 April (2015-041), the second, shown here, on 20 May (2015-042).

Photo by Daniel Johnston

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Canyon, MRN, on 29 Jul and 10 Sep 2000 (2000-165). However, in the descriptions and photographs, variation in bill coloration is too great for the committee to identify the bird as either a Chatham (bill of immature yellow or orange) or a Salvin's (bill of immature gray). Therefore, the committee voted to accept it as representing the species pair Salvin's/Chatham Albatross (CJC, MWE†, AME, LH, JL†, MSM†, TMcG, EPr†, DEQ†, RMS†, DLS, SBT†; 2000-165A) and not necessarily the same individual now accepted as a Chatham Albatross (Singer et al. 2016) in the same area a year later on 27 Jul 2001. This record may be reconsidered yet again as field identification criteria evolve.

WHITE-NECKED PETREL *Pterodroma cervicalis* (0, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: Distant, blurry photos of a seabird flying past Pt. Pinos, MTY, 24 Aug 2015 (2015-084) are inadequate to identify it. The observer was unable to identify the bird at the time, but his description and sketch suggest that he saw a petrel of the genus *Pterodroma*, either a White-necked or a Juan Fernandez (*P. externa*), neither of which is yet recorded in California, although the remnants of hurricane Newton did bring one to Tucson, Arizona, on 7 Sep 2016 (http://www.azfo.net/gallery/2016/html08/Juan_Fernandez_Petrel_PimaCounty_Gibbons_07_September_2016_636092926978544681.html). Distinguishing these two similar species can be difficult when the plumage of a Juan Fernandez Petrel becomes worn or the bird is in molt, exposing the white bases to the nape feathers and giving the appearance of a white collar as in the White-necked Petrel (Spear et al. 1992, Howell 2012). The two most reliable features for identifying the White-necked Petrel are the more extensive black lesser primary coverts on the underwing creating a broader black leading edge to the outer wing and the black cap contrasting more sharply against the white nape (Spear et al. 1992, Howell 2012). Although these features were sketched by the observer, the committee prefers diagnostic photos or a specimen to confirm a first state record.

WHITE-CHINNED PETREL *Procellaria aequinoctialis* (4, 1). One was well photographed 30 km west-southwest of Moss Beach, SM, 15 Sep 2015 (MGut, VLe†, PSv†; 2015-144; Figure 4). California's three previous White-chinned Petrels had small, inconspicuous white chin patches; in contrast, the one in 2015 had the chin extensively white, suggesting that it was from an Atlantic or Indian Ocean population (Howell 2012).

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Ardenna pacifica* (9, 1). One at Pt. La Jolla, SD, 17 Jul 2015 was well described and compared to nearby Sooty Shearwaters (*A. grisea*) and Black-vented Shearwaters (*Puffinus opisthomelas*) (PEL; 2015-063). This largely tropical species can be fairly common along the west coast of southern Mexico, so it is not too surprising that one ventured north during 2015 when the sea-surface temperatures off the California coast were unusually warm.

GREAT SHEARWATER *Ardenna gravis* (16, 2). One was seen on an organized whale-watching trip ~4.8 km west of Moss Landing, MTY, 7 Aug 2015 (KSpt†; 2015-079). Another was found on an organized pelagic trip 22 km west-northwest of Ft. Bragg, MEN, 18 Oct 2015 (RFow†, EAE†, KAH, RJK†; 2015-119).

WEDGE-RUMPED STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma tethys* (12, 4). Two were captured on Southeast Farallon I., SF: the first on 19 Apr 2015 (PWa†, EGrt; 2015-041) was banded, while the second on 20 May 2015 (PWa, DJo†, EGrt; 2015-042; Figure 5) was too small for the bands available. The relatively short measurements of both birds indicate that they were the smaller Peruvian subspecies *kelsalli* (Howell 2012). Another Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel was with a large mixed-species flock of storm-petrels at Cordell Bank, MRN, 22-23 Aug 2015 (SNGH†; 2015-090). On the first day it was noticed in photos of the flock only after the photographer was back on shore. Prior to 2015, Monterey Bay was the farthest north that this spe-

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cies had been encountered. A strengthening El Niño–Southern Oscillation and the extremely warm waters off California associated with “the Blob” (Kintisch 2015) may have contributed to this species pushing so far north. One of two storm-petrels with white rumps seen on 16 Sep 2015 at Santa Lucia Bank, ~48 km west-southwest of Morro Bay, SLO (BLSt, PWF; 2015-096), was accepted as a Wedge-rumped. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: Although the other storm-petrel at Santa Lucia Bank on 16 Sep 2015 (2015-096A) was thought to be a Wedge-rumped by the initial observer, the photos of this bird were distant and a majority of the committee decided they were inconclusive.

TRISTRAM’S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma tristrami* (2, 1). One was found dead during routine surveys of predation on storm-petrels on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 18 Mar 2015 (RBr†; 2015-025). The carcass has been transferred to the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco (CAS ACC7136), but as of December 2017 the specimen had not yet been prepared (M. Flannery pers. comm.). The only other accepted record for North America and the eastern Pacific is of a live bird captured on this same island on 22 Apr 2006 (2007-162; Warzybok et al. 2008). The wing on that bird was a full centimeter longer than the bird found in 2015, attesting to their being different individuals.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata magnificens* (51**, 10). Warm ocean temperatures brought an influx of juveniles to California in the summer of 2015. The first was at Batiquitos Lagoon, SD, 15 Jun 2015 (TRy†; 2015-045). One at Ramer Lake, IMP, 20 Jun 2015 (GMcC; 2015-047) was considered a different individual from one at the same location 28 Jun 2015 (EHo†; 2015-057). On 21 Jun 2015, single individuals were at Ventura Harbor, VEN (JBa†; 2015-048), 5.1 km northwest of Rocky (or Palos Verdes) Pt., LA (ECot; 2015-049), and Lake Murray, SD (APot; 2015-050). Boat passengers saw another over the Nine Mile Bank, ~18 km west of Pt. Loma, SD, 17 Jul 2015 (TAB†, DPo, BRi†; 2015-067). One was flying over Goleta Beach, SBA, 29 Jul 2015 (TTu†; 2015-070). One was perched on a snag at Salton Sea SRA, RIV, 6 Aug 2015 (RMcK†, CMcG†; 2015-077) before flying east over the Indio Hills. The last was feeding on discarded bait fish over the Pt. Loma kelp beds, ~2.5 km southwest of the mouth of the San Diego R., SD, 25 Aug 2015 (JJat†; 2015-083). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: Records of one bird in La Jolla, SD, 16 Jun 2015 (2015-046) and two in Goleta, SBA, 22 Jun 2015 (2015-052) were not accepted as Magnificent Frigatebirds and were re-evaluated as Magnificent/Great/Lesser Frigatebird (2015-046A and 2015-052A, respectively); see below.

MAGNIFICENT/GREAT/LESSER FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata magnificens/minor/ariel* (9, 3). A frigatebird was observed in silhouette flying south over the cliffs near the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, SD, 16 Jun 2015 (JMi; 2015-046A). Two frigatebirds photographed with a phone while flying over Goleta, SBA, 22 Jun 2015 (DMcC†; 2015-052A) were not identifiable to species. The time of year suggests that all three of these were Magnificent Frigatebirds, but the committee is taking a conservative approach to accepting frigatebird records to species unless there is substantive evidence to support species identification.

MASKED BOOBY *Sula dactylatra* (22, 1). A moribund subadult was found at Doheny State Beach at Dana Pt., ORA, 27 Jan 2015 (TLet, KLG†, DGo†, JWet; 2015-012). The bird died the following day and became California’s first Masked Booby specimen (LACM #120096). Dissection revealed the bird was male and had died from starvation. California records likely pertain to the subspecies *personata*, which has breeding colonies as close to California as the Alijos Rocks off Baja California Sur (Howell and Webb 1995). Measurements of the Dana Pt. specimen are consistent with *personata* and too large for nominate *dactylatra*, which breeds in the Caribbean and Atlantic (K. Garrett pers. comm.).



Figure 6. This immature Red-footed Booby was found near Platform Eureka, 15 km southwest of the Huntington Beach Pier, Orange Co., 19 Sep 2015 (2015-098). Like many boobies found along the California coast, it had swallowed a fishhook.

Photo by Thomas A. Benson

NAZCA BOOBY *Sula granti* (3, 1). One adult on Anacapa I., VEN, 20–21 May 2015 (THa†, JBa†; 2015-036) was initially thought to be a Masked Booby, but photos taken the second day showed it to have an orange bill typical of the Nazca Booby.

MASKED/NAZCA BOOBY *Sula dactylatra/granti* (20, 2). A badly decomposed first-year bird was found at McGrath State Beach, VEN, 21 Jun 2015 (JHo, CDu†, KLG; 2015-125). We have been unable to get information from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which last had custody, on this specimen's disposition. An adult was observed from a whale-watching boat over Carlsbad Canyon, SD, 17 Jul 2015 (JMcM; 2015-089). The bird was ~1 km away and so too distant to be identified to species.

RED-FOOTED BOOBY *Sula sula* (26, 7). Seven records in 2015, the most the committee has accepted in a single year, were most likely a result of the strengthening El Niño–Southern Oscillation. All were immatures and six of the seven died. One at Shelter I. in San Diego Bay, SD, 5–6 Jul 2015 (JMcD†, LMD†, TF-H, AEK†, GMcC, JMcM†, GNu†, KRo†, JTS†; 2015-059) appeared weak and possibly sick, so it was captured and taken to a rehabilitation center where it eventually died (SDNHM #54598). A few members raised the question of ship assistance, but the majority of the committee agreed that even if the bird rode a boat into the marina, it is at least as likely the bird got on the boat in California waters as not. One on the pier at Newport Beach, ORA, 23 Jul 2015 (SEb†, KLG†, SKa†; 2015-069) was taken to a rehabilitation center, where it died three days later (LACM #120211). One found moribund at Newport Beach, ORA, 2 Sep 2015 (KLG†, SKa†; 2015-087) was taken to a rehabilitation center, where it died later that day (LACM #120265). One found emaciated at Redondo Beach, LA, 13 Sep 2015 (KCl†, KLG, SKa†, BSk†; 2015-094) was taken to a rehabilitation center, where it was eventually euthanized on 27 Dec 2015 (LACM #120307). One landed on a boat at the 277 Bank ~25 km southeast of Santa Catalina I., LA, 13 Sep 2015 (AKB†; 2015-097). It rode the boat into the harbor at Dana Pt., ORA, and remained there until it died on 15 Sep 2015. The carcass was not salvaged. One was found near Platform Eureka, 15 km southwest



Figure 7. California's second Couch's Kingbird was at Sunset Park in Visalia, Tulare Co., 12 Nov 2015–18 Jan 2016 (2015-137).

Photo by Martin Meyers

of the Huntington Beach Pier, ORA, 19 Sep 2015 (TAB†, ABL†, JLD; 2015-098; Figure 6). It had evidently swallowed a fishhook, having 10 m of fishing line dangling from its mouth. One found at Mission Bay, SD, 24 Sep 2015 (ASa†, PUn; 2015-172) was taken to a rehabilitation center, where it later died (SDNHM #54756).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nyctanassa violacea* (68**, 3). The committee reviewed four reports corresponding to at least three individuals at Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, VEN. The first report from 16 Sep 2010 was of two juveniles (DPe†, AJS; 2010-194), and on the basis of plumage progression a one-year old seen 20 Jul 2011 (DPe†, AJS; 2011-282) was considered to be one of those birds. Adults seen on 20 Jul 2011 (DPe†, AJS; 2011-094) and 16 Mar 2012 (DPe†, AJS; 2012-256) may have been the same individual that was found there on 13 Nov 2009 (2009-229). The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was first detected at this location in 2007 (2007-131), with breeding confirmed in all subsequent years. The committee ceased reviewing new occurrences of this species in 2013.

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus* (34, 2). An adult was with a flock of White-faced Ibises in a flooded field near the headquarters of the Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR, IMP, 20 Jun 2015 (GMcC, MGr†; 2015-051). The flooded agricultural fields of the Imperial Valley have hosted the majority of California's recorded Glossy Ibises. A well-photographed adult in basic plumage at the Yolo Bypass, YOL, 18 Sep 2015 (JCS†, TE†; 2015-104) provided the first accepted record outside of the typical May-to-August window for occurrence and the first of a bird not in alternate plumage.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL *Platalea ajaja* (144, 7). An immature along the southeastern shore of the Salton Sea, IMP, 10 Jan–21 Mar 2015 (JFG†, BED†, TAB†, EGK†, GMcC; 2015-004) was the first reported in California since the winter of 2007–2008. The committee also accepted an older record of six immatures near Bluewater, ~16 km south of Parker Dam along the Colorado R., SBE, on 24 Jun 1973 (RAE; 1973-801). These six were part of the largest recorded invasion of the spoonbill into the Salton Sink and southwestern U.S., which occurred in the summer and fall of 1973 and, at the time, more than tripled the number of accepted records for California (Patten et al. 2003).

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BLACK VULTURE *Coragyps atratus* (10, 0). The CBRC inferred that one around Bolinas, MRN, 29 Jan–25 Apr 2015 (DSSt, PP†, MD†, RL†, GMcC, SBT†, MW†, JM†, SR†; 2015-015) and at Pt. Reyes, MRN, 10 May 2015 (AMe†; 2015-053) and 18 Jul 2015 (CAr†, PP; 2015-066) was the same bird seen the previous year in Sonoma County (2014-027, 2014-034, and 2014-061). Likewise, a Black Vulture seen ~1.5 km north of Plaskett, MTY, 14 May 2015 (GS; 2015-038) was thought to be the same one seen in Solvang, SBA, 30–31 Aug 2015 (WvD†; 2015-091) and around Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo, SLO, between 14 Dec 2015 and 28 Mar 2016 (JAN, HE†, TME†; 2015-171); this bird was considered to be the same individual first reported in Goleta, SBA, on 10 Sep 2009 (2009-156) and observed periodically every year since then between Ventura and Monterey counties.

MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis* (50, 2). An immature was at the ponds along Dairy Mart Road, Tijuana R. valley, SD, 4–7 Apr 2015 (GMcC, PEL†, CAM†, TAB†, KR†, JTS†, TF-H†, MMT†; 2015-026). It represents California's earliest spring record by 6 weeks as well as the first spring occurrence of a bird in juvenal plumage. A second immature was at the South Coast Botanic Garden, LA, 10–13 Jul 2015 (SWo†, DMax†, CAM†, JLD; 2015-061).

COMMON BLACK HAWK *Buteogallus anthracinus* (10, 3). An adult was flying with Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) at Dos Palmas Preserve, RIV, 15 Mar 2015 (PS†; 2015-022). Remarkably, two adults were at the Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, RIV, 14 Apr–26 May 2015 with possible prospecting for a nest site documented in a video (MTo, CVO†, TAB†, CAM†, EH††§, JOZ, LS†; 2015-027).

ELF OWL *Micrathene whitneyi* (7**, 0). A nesting pair and third adult, 4–25 Apr 2015 (MGr†, EAE† ARA†; 2015-029) were at the location in Riverside County where the species has nested since 2010 (Johnson et al. 2012).

CRESTED CARACARA *Caracara cheriway* (19, 2). A juvenile at the Alamo R. Wetlands east of Brawley, IMP, 19 Jan–28 Feb 2015 (HW, JC, MW†, LS†, GMcC, JPS†, JLD; 2015-009) was only the fourth recorded in the Salton Sink and Imperial Valley. A subadult was well studied at L. Henshaw, SD, 18 Mar 2015 (GNu†; 2015-024). Most members considered the Crested Caracara at the Buena Vista Landfill, Watsonville, SCZ, 6 Jan 2015 (JF†; 2015-010) and at Half Moon Bay, SM, 10–28 Feb 2015 (AR, JoGa†, MdF†, SBT†, CL†, JM†; 2015-017) to represent the same individual first found in 2014 along California's central coast at Pescadero, SM (2014-030; see Singer et al. 2016). At its 2015 annual meeting the committee concluded that a Crested Caracara at Estero Bluffs SP and Los Osos, SLO, 29 Jun–20 Jul 2013 (MBu†, JWh†, TS†; 2013-109), was the same bird first reported at Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, VEN, 19 Dec 2011 (2011-239; Pike et al. 2014) and widely seen on the coast from the Ballona Wetlands, LA, 13 Jan 2012 (2012-005) to Mace Blvd., south of Putah Cr., YOL/SOL, 16–17 Apr 2012 (2012-052; Pike et al. 2014). The committee considers the Crested Caracara at the Chula Vista Marina, SD, 7 Jan 2014 (FB; 2014-004), to be the same as one first documented in the Tijuana R. valley, SD, 9 Sep 2006 (2006-127; Heindel and Garrett 2008) and reported sporadically in the same general area through at least 10 Oct 2013 (2013-157; Rottenborn et al. 2016). **DATE AND/OR LOCATION UNCERTAIN:** An injured Crested Caracara left at the Acacia Animal Hospital in Escondido, SD, 31 Dec 2014 (2014-181) did not survive. The specimen was provided to the San Diego Natural History Museum, where Philip Unitt prepared it as a skin and skeleton (SDNHM #54585), but questioning of the hospital's staff revealed no data regarding the bird's location of origin, date of finding, or identity of the finder. Moreover, the specimen showed abnormalities beyond the injuries to one wing, such as malformed claws on one foot and an asymmetrical tail molt, that to some members of the committee suggested prior captivity.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Contopus virens* (14, 1). One calling bird captured

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and banded at Southeast Farallon I., SF, 4 Oct 2015 (KNN†, KMS, DMax§; 2015-112) constituted California's third record of a fall vagrant; the majority of California's Eastern Wood-Pewee records are from late spring and summer, when the species is more vocal and thus easier to identify.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER *Empidonax flaviventris* (29, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The committee unanimously agreed not to accept a report from Ulistac Natural Area, SCL, 28 Sep 2015 (2015-114) despite an eye-ring shape suggestive of this species. The two photographs were inconclusive, and no descriptive information was provided, so all field marks necessary for identification of this species could not be evaluated.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (103, 2). Wintering individuals were at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in Goleta, SBA, 3 Jan–19 Feb 2015 (LRB†, JLD, JMC†, DMC, PAGa†, HPR†, WvD§, WTF†, TAB; 2015-002) and at Gilman Park in Fullerton, ORA, 16 Mar–15 May 2015 (MH†, TF-H†, MMT†, RSc†, TAB†; 2015-021). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A *Myiarchus* was briefly observed and photographed at Moss Landing, MTY, 21 May 2015 (2015-039) before it flew off. Some committee members were concerned by the brevity of observation, the lack of information on vocalizations, and the late date. There is precedent, however, for a wintering Dusky-capped Flycatcher lingering this late into the spring (see Rottenborn et al. 2016).

SOCIAL FLYCATCHER *Myiozetetes similis* (0, 0). DATE AND/OR LOCATION UNCERTAIN: A photograph of a *Myiozetetes* flycatcher shared on iNaturalist.org was reportedly taken through a window of a residence in South El Monte, LA, 28 Oct 2015 (2015-132). Subsequent searches of the neighborhood by the birding community revealed clear differences between existing utility poles and those shown in the background of the photograph. Not only did the committee unanimously vote not to accept this record because of uncertainty regarding the reported location, but some members also commented that the similar Rusty-margined Flycatcher (*M. cayanensis*) could not be ruled out from the photograph.

COUCH'S KINGBIRD *Tyrannus couchii* (2, 1). One at Sunset Park in Visalia, TUL, 12 Nov 2015–18 Jan 2016 (SDS†§, JCS†, LST†, MAS†§, TAB†§, SLSt, EAE†, JTS†, KCK, MM†, THe†, JLD; 2015-137; Figure 7) established a first record for northern California and the second for the state as a whole. In its year of hatching, by the lack of notches on the outer primaries (Pyle 1997), the bird gave sharp “kip” call notes, as well as rolling “breer” calls, which are quite unlike the twittering vocalizations of the similar Tropical Kingbird (*T. melancholicus*).

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD *Tyrannus crassirostris* (23, 0). One returned for its sixth winter at the mouth of Poggi Canyon in Otay Valley, Chula Vista, SD, 21 Nov 2015–31 Mar 2016 (PM†, MSe†, GMcC, EAE†; 2015-139), and another returned for its third winter in San Dimas, LA, 2 Nov 2015–8 Jan 2016 (AW†; 2015-165). Seventeen of the 23 accepted records of this species are of wintering birds, of which eight have returned for multiple winters.

BROWN SHRIKE *Lanius cristatus* (4, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A shrike at Manchester SP, MEN, 5 Mar–22 Apr 2015 (2015-019) was initially reported as a Brown Shrike for the first three weeks of its stay and submitted to the CBRC as such. Initial photographs showed a relatively small shrike with a solid black mask, a gray crown contrasting with reddish-brown back, and no ventral barring, which suggested a male of *L. c. lucionensis* rather than the expected nominate subspecies, if the bird was indeed a Brown Shrike. Although not all Brown Shrikes recorded in North America, 16 as of 2015, have been identified to subspecies, all that have were *L. c. cristatus* (Pyle et al. 2015). However, a few birders suggested the bird may have been a Red-backed



Figure 8. This Dusky Warbler along Redwood Creek, Marin Co., 15–20 Oct 2015 (2015-116) was the 14th recorded in California.

Photo by Hannah Conley

Shrike (*L. collurio*, a species unrecorded at that time in North America), or a hybrid having Red-backed as a parent, and they sent photographs to experts experienced with Asian shrikes. Critical to an identification as a male Red-backed Shrike would be the appearance of the diagnostic black and white outer rectrices. The Mendocino shrike's prealternate molt was not yet completed before it presumably migrated; however, tail molt had progressed enough to show that this shrike lacked extensive white on the base of the outer rectrices, confirming that it was not a pure Red-backed Shrike.

The committee evaluated the Mendocino shrike as a Brown Shrike and unanimously voted not to accept it as that species, relying in large part on the exhaustive



Figure 9. This Gray-cheeked Thrush at Galileo Hill, Kern Co., 29 Sep–1 Oct 2015 (2015-105) was only the fourth recorded inland in California, three of which have come from this desert oasis.

Photo by Alex Abela



Figure 10. California's 14th Field Sparrow wintered in Ojai, Ventura Co., 19 Nov 2015–23 Apr 2016 (2015-140).

Photo by Thomas A. Benson



Figure 11. This Mourning Warbler at Ferry Park, San Francisco Co., 6–8 Oct 2015 (2015-106), represented the county's first mainland record—San Francisco's previous 66 Mourning Warblers occurred on Southeast Farallon Island.

Photo by Michael Park

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analysis by Pyle et al. (2015). Features most telling for eliminating the Brown Shrike consisted of the sharp contrast between the grayish head/nape and the reddish brown back and the blackish formative rectrices with pure white edges. Pyle et al. (2015) concluded that the most likely identification of this bird was a Red-backed Shrike × Turkestan (*L. phoenicuroides*) Shrike, a most unexpected occurrence because neither species, as of 2015, had been recorded in North America.

WHITE-EYED VIREO *Vireo griseus* (76, 1). A singing male at Bodega Bay, SON, 7–8 Jun 2015 (DWN†, ESH§, RAR; 2015-044) established the first record for Sonoma County. The majority of California's White-eyed Vireos have been singing males in late May or early June.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO *Vireo solitarius* (79, 3). Fall migrants were along Pine Gulch Cr., MRN, 1–3 Oct 2015 (MD, RDiG†; 2015-109) and at Bella Vista Park in Goleta, SBA, 13–14 Oct 2015 (PSc†, WTF†, DL†, AO†; 2015-113). A Blue-headed Vireo was observed in Bonsall, SD, 6 Nov 2014 (PT†; 2014-183) and again 27 Dec 2015 (PAGi, MS†; 2015-162). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one at Monte Verde Park in Lakewood, LA, 12 Oct 2015 (2015-148) did not adequately eliminate a bright Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassinii*). The Blue-headed Vireo remains difficult for the committee to evaluate, so observers are encouraged to provide especially thorough documentation. See Heindel (1996) and Nelson et al. (2013) for identification criteria.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO *Vireo philadelphicus* (117, 1). A sight record from Fairhaven, HUM, 17–19 Sep 1994 (BDe; 1994-209) was accepted during its fourth and final circulation at the committee's 2016 annual meeting.

BLUE JAY *Cyanocitta cristata* (18, 1). One in Quincy, PLU, 18 Nov 2015–23 Apr 2016 (JCS†, SBT†, JLD; 2015-169) represented the tenth time this species has been acceptably documented wintering in California.

CAVE SWALLOW *Petrochelidon fulva* (11, 2). One was at the southeast end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 25 Jan 2015 (GMcC; 2015-011), and another was at El Dorado Regional Park, LA, 28 Nov 2015 (AKL†; 2015-143). The latter was the first for California away from the south end of the Salton Sea.

WINTER WREN *Troglodytes hiemalis* (21, 4). A fall migrant was at Horse Thief Spring, SBE, 11–12 Nov 2015 (MW, TAB†§; 2015-134). Wintering birds were at Clear Lake SP, LAK, 7 Nov 2015–10 Feb 2016 (BMc†§, JRW, BBa†; 2015-145) and San Luis Obispo Cr., SLO, 8 Dec 2015–10 Mar 2016 (TK§, CRy, BKS†, SBT, TAB†, WBK§, HE†; 2015-147). One at Carneros Cr. in Napa, NAP, 30 Dec 2015 (WS§, AG; 2015-161) may have been a late migrant. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The documentation for a report of one at the San Luis Reservoir SRA, MER, 1–10 Dec 2015 (2015-146) included two photos but no audio recordings, and several committee members expressed reservations about accepting this species on the basis of photos alone, especially as a well-documented Pacific Wren was at the same location at the same time.

DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (14, 1). One at Redwood Cr., MRN, 15–20 Oct 2015 was captured by mist net (HC†, DWNe†, SBT, AM†, PB†, MD†, JA†, GZ†; 2015-116; Figure 8). California's 14 records extend seasonally from 27 September to 3 November.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH *Catharus minimus* (25, 1). One at Galileo Hill, KER, 29 Sep–1 Oct 2015 (JCS†, SLS, KH-L†, ARA†, KRo†; 2015-105; Figure 9) was the third for this well-birded desert oasis. California's records for this species are concentrated at a few well-covered locations where there is little or no understory vegetation and skulking birds are often detectable.

WOOD THRUSH *Hylocichla mustelina* (31, 1). One in Arcata, HUM, 28–31

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Oct 2015 (EBC, EAE†, RFow†, TMcK; 2015-124) established the first record for Humboldt County and northwestern California. Only about one-third of the state's records come from northern California.

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER *Toxostoma curvirostre* (34, 3). Up to two were along the Colorado R. at Black Meadow Landing, SBE, 3 Nov–21 Dec 2015 (CK†, TAB†; 2015-128), and another was at Bard, IMP, 21 Dec 2015–3 Jan 2016 (PEL, JTS†; 2015-158). **IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED:** A sight record from Rancho Mirage, RIV, 2 Apr 2015 (2015-030) did not adequately exclude the similar Bendire's Thrasher (*T. bendirei*).

GRAY THRASHER *Toxostoma cinereum* (1, 0). **NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE:** A Gray Thrasher was at Famosa Slough, SD, 2 Aug 2015 (JBr†, TH, LR†, TF-H†, MW†, CAD†, GMcC, TAB†; 2015-074; see this issue's inside front cover). This species is endemic to Baja California and is a fairly common resident from approximately 31° N to the peninsula's southern terminus (Howell and Webb 1995). Its northernmost limit along the Pacific coast is Ejido Eréndira (Unitt et al. 1995), ~180 km south of Famosa Slough. There are no previous records of vagrants. But eight reports to www.eBird.org, some supported by photographs, show the Gray Thrasher occurring since at least 2010 in Valle de Trinidad, ~45 km from the nearest edge of the previously known range. From 1926 to 1936 this valley received considerable attention from early 20th century collectors Chester Lamb, Griffing Bancroft, Laurence M. Huey, May Canfield, and Sam Harter, none of whom detected the species. So apparently the recent reports represent a genuine range expansion since the 1930s (P. Unitt pers. comm.). Valle de Trinidad is still ~200 km from Famosa Slough (and 140 km from the nearest border with California), but evidence of a range expansion suggests that wayward Gray Thrashers might be capable of crossing the border under their own power. As with other prospective vagrants from Mexico, however, the possibility of human assistance was a major factor in the decision not to accept this record. Photos of the Famosa Slough thrasher show stained tail feathers, a damaged bill, and a missing claw on one toe, all of which may betray previous captivity. The species is kept, albeit rarely, in cages and for sale in Baja California (K. Garrett and K. Rademaker pers. comm.).

EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla tschutschensis* (18, 0). **IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED:** One reported from San Pablo Bay, SON, 27 Nov 2015 (2015-156) was not described well enough to rule out similar species. Additionally, the date falls well outside the Eastern Yellow Wagtail's established season of occurrence in California, as the 18 accepted records fall in a well-defined window from 27 August to 25 September (CBRC 2007, Tietz and McCaskie 2017).

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba* (30, 1). An adult of the subspecies *ocularis* was at Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, 20–23 Oct 2015 (WL†, JM†, JA†, GZ†, KRS†, RL†, EC†, JLD; 2015-118).

BLACK ROSY-FINCH *Leucosticte atrata* (16, 0). **IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED:** The report of one from High Lake above Cottonwood Basin, INY, 23 Jun 2015 (2015-055) was not accepted because of the brevity of the sighting and description, possibility of confusion with the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*L. tephrocotis*), and unprecedented midsummer date. California's 16 accepted records fall between 11 November and 5 April (CBRC 2007).

COMMON REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea* (176, 2). One on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 12–13 Dec 2015 (RJ†; 2015-150) was the second recorded on the island. Another was at Chester, PLU, 18 Dec 2015–18 Jan 2016 (TAB†, ARA†, CD†, JLD; 2015-159).

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* (136, 5). Individuals were at Little R.

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State Beach, HUM, 3 Nov 2015 (GSL†, EAE†, TMcK, RFow†; 2015-130); Bear River Ridge, HUM, 4-7 Nov 2015 (KO†, CAM†, EF†; 2015-153); Charleston Slough, SCL, 5 Nov 2015 (GZ†, CL†, SCR, RWR†; 2015-133); Gold Bluffs Beach, HUM, 16 Nov 2015 (MMo†; 2015-135); and MacKerricher SP, MEN, 25 Nov–3 Dec 2015 (CV, SST†, KAH, RA†, GG†, DBe†, JCS†, RJK†, DF†, BeB, JLD; 2015-141).

CASSIN'S SPARROW *Peucaea cassinii* (54, 2). One was at Castaic, LA, (JOH†, ABL†, MW†, MM†, LS†, KLG†; 2015-040), 26–31 May 2015; another was at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, 19 Sep 2015 (PP†; 2015-099).

FIELD SPARROW *Spizella pusilla* (15, 2). One at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy, Ojai, VEN, 19 Nov 2015–23 Apr 2016 (BSH, JGr, LY†, RMcM†, BOC†, JCS†, TAB†, SLS, SBT†, RSTe, DK-B†, JTS†, DPe†, KLG†, JeB†, JLD; 2015-140; Figure 10) was the first recorded in Ventura County. Inyo County's third wintered at Aspendell, INY, 27 Dec 2015–18 Mar 2016 (SLS, BS†, TAB†, DJH†, KNN†, NJO†, CGL†, GmC, CHo†, RHo†, JHe, CAM†, JLD; 2015-164).

LECONTE'S SPARROW *Ammodramus leconteii* (37, 1). One returned for its second winter at Abbott's Lagoon, MRN, 4 Oct 2015–26 Jan 2016 (TEG†, MDA†; 2015-129), and another was at Castaic Lagoon, LA, 22 Nov–17 Dec 2015 (DAB†, TAB†, DK-B†, SLS, JCS†, KLG†, JSF, JTS†, JLD; 2015-138).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD *Euphagus carolinus* (47**, 3). The CBRC reviewed reports of the Rusty Blackbird from 1972 through 1974, then ceased review because of the species' regularity of occurrence in California. In 2006, it resumed review of this species in response to a population decline and a resultant decline in California reports (Niven et al. 2004, CBRC 2007). One during the earlier period of review was at Orick, HUM, 3 Dec 1972 (RAE; 1972-801). More recently, one was at Glenshire Pond, Union Valley, NEV, 25 Jan–3 Feb 2015 (GH†, WC†, BMA†, JCS†; 2015-016); another was in Camarillo, VEN, 23 Nov 2015 (DVE†, DBu; 2015-175).

COMMON GRACKLE *Quiscalus quiscula* (97, 3). Individuals were at New Pine Creek, MOD, 21 Oct 2015 (DJ†; 2013-290), at Big Pine, INY, 24–27 Apr 2015 (THE†, JHe†, KH-L†, CHo†, RHo†, JLD; 2015-032), and at Baker, SBE, 8 Oct 2015 (BS†; 2015-111).

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helmitheros vermivorum* (129, 3). Individuals were at Mojave Narrows Regional Park, SBE, 1–2 Oct 2015 (BD†, MW†; 2015-101); Primm Valley Golf Club, SBE, 10 Oct 2015 (TAB†, AEK†; 2015-108); and Cooper Gulch Park, Eureka, HUM, 20–30 Oct 2015 (TMcK, EAE†, SBT, RFow†; 2015-120).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH *Parkesia motacilla* (19, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The date of one reported at Pacific Beach, SD, on 22 Aug 2015 (2015-085) was within the range of accepted records, and the submitted photograph, while poor, clearly showed a waterthrush. However, most committee members were not satisfied that the written description adequately distinguished the bird from the Northern Waterthrush (*P. noveboracensis*).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora cyanoptera* (50, 2). One landed on a boat on Monterey Bay, MTY, 24 May 2015 (KSp†; 2015-078), and another was found singing along the South Bank Trail in Carmel Valley, MTY, 10 Jun 2015 (RC†; 2015-068).

MOURNING WARBLER *Geothlypis philadelphia* (151, 3). One was at Montaña de Oro SP, SLO, 5 Jun 2015 (JSR†, JCC†; 2015-043); another was in Encinitas, SD, 14–16 Sep 2015 (JMcM†, TAB†, JTS†, ND†, ARA†, MB†; 2015-095). One at Ferry Park, SF, 6–8 Oct 2015 (MJR†, MSP†, GZ†, LP†, JA†, DWNe†, PSa†, RL; 2015-106; Figure 11) was the 67th recorded in San Francisco County but the first in the city itself.

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CAPE MAY WARBLER *Setophaga tigrina* (40**, 5). A singing male put in a brief appearance at Marina del Rey, LA, on the early date of 21 Apr 2015 (DSC§, MAS, SG; 2015-028). Other Cape May Warblers were on Santa Barbara I., SBA, 16 Jun 2015 (CDr†; 2015-082), at Redwood Shores, SM, 17 Sep 2015 (RSTh; 2015-152), on Pt. Reyes, MRN, 26 Sep 2015 (CC, ID†; 2015-102), and on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 15–26 Oct 2015 (first-year male banded; RJR†, JRT, KM†; 2015-166).

CERULEAN WARBLER *Setophaga cerulea* (19, 1). One well-documented immature male was at Samoa Park, HUM, 10–12 Oct 2015 (TMcK, EAE†, LP†, EHa†, DWNe†, RFow†; 2015-107), only the fourth Cerulean Warbler recorded in California in the 21st century.

GRACE'S WARBLER *Setophaga graciae* (70, 0). One at Greenwood Cemetery, SD, 15–18 Mar 2015 (NC†; 2015-020) and another at North Campus Open Space (formerly Ocean Meadows Golf Course) in Goleta, SBA, 18–30 Nov 2015 (PSct, MT†, DT†, GKi†, BMi, WBK†; 2015-154) returned for their fourth and third winters, respectively.

RED-FACED WARBLER *Cardellina rubrifrons* (25, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one from Thousand Oaks, VEN, 15 Jun 2015 (2015-062) was insufficient for a single-observer sight record.

VARIED BUNTING *Passerina versicolor* (7, 2). Less than a year after an adult male was found in Los Angeles County (2014-028; Singer et al. 2016), one in female-like plumage showed up at Fiesta I., Mission Bay, SD, 13 Oct 2015 (MSa†; 2015-131). Amazingly, a second individual in similar plumage came to a feeder on Pt. Loma, SD, 1–2 Nov 2015 (SBM†, KMa†, GMcC, TAB†, GNu†; 2015-127). Plumage differences, including the latter's fresher-appearing greater coverts, confirmed the two as different individuals. The acceptance of these three recent records from the coastal slope is notable, as California's first four records came from the interior deserts (CBRC 2007).

MISCELLANEOUS

The long-staying Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*; 2012-058) first seen at Southeast Farallon I., SF, 25 Apr 2012, the female Common Black Hawk (2008-053) resident near Santa Rosa, SON, since 14 Apr 2008, and the Curve-billed Thrasher (2012-091) found at Starlite Estates near Bishop, INY, on 11 Jun 2012 were all still present through 31 Dec 2015.

CORRIGENDA

In the CBRC's 40th report (Singer et al. 2016), the date for the Dusky-capped Flycatcher (2014-075) published as 20 Aug 2016 should have been 20 Aug 2014. The dates of the LeConte's Sparrow (2014-157) published as 30 Dec 2014–24 Jan 2015 should have been 20 Dec 2014–24 Jan 2015.

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