

## MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

/ Dave DeSante, Ron LeValley, and Rich Stallcup

An exceptionally dry autumn characterized the entire Region, particularly in the interior and along the coast from San Francisco Bay southward. Only 1.02 inches of rain fell in Sacramento between July 1 and Nov. 30 and, at the end of the period, the Region



was still awaiting its first major storm. Temperatures during August and September were hot, often sweltering, with San Francisco hitting 100° F. and the s. San Joaquin Valley reaching 113° F. Temperatures in October and November were average or slightly below. This fair, dry weather seemed to contribute to the late arrivals of many of our wintering birds, including the major concentrations of waterfowl and certain shorebirds.

The major trend among passerines was a general scarcity of all those species breeding in the far western mountains (Sierra-Cascade Axis and Coast Ranges). This not only included many common transients that winter in the tropics (most warblers, tanagers, flycatchers, etc.), but also many of the common wintering birds of our coast and valleys (Audubon's Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Oregon Junco, etc.). Compounded upon this was a total lack of irruptive montane species in the lowlands (Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill etc.). It is tempting to attribute these scarcities to a poor breeding season among montane species due to an extremely cold, wet early summer followed by an equally hot, dry late summer. It is also possible, however, that the dry, mild fall allowed birds to migrate or remain in the mountains throughout the fall and thus go relatively undetected along the coast and in the valleys. Waves of passerines, especially as detected on South Farallon I., (all Farallon data contributed by P.R.B.O.) were unusually few and ill-pronounced.

Special highlights of the period included major flights of New Zealand Shearwaters, Pectoral Sandpipers, Tropical Kingbirds and Blackpoll Warblers along with large numbers of Fulmars and Red Phalaropes. Four

species new to n. California were reported during the period. In our Region were Blue-footed Boobies, a Golden-cheeked Warbler and a Scarlet Tanager. Reported from the neighboring Great Basin - Central Rocky Mt. Region was a Louisiana Heron at Honey Lake.

**LOONS, GREBES** — All species of loons and ocean grebes were considered normal in terms of arrival dates and numbers in the Monterey area (WR). Seven Com. Loons were at Folsom L., Sacramento Co., Oct. 30 (DAG, TM, JT) and 2 were at Oroville L., Butte Co., Nov. 9 (WW). They are uncommon but regular on deep inland lakes. Single Horned Grebes, always rare away from the coast, were reported from near Davis, Yolo Co., Nov. 2 (DAG) and from the Sierra Nevada near Portola, Plumas Co., in early Nov. (BMCL). Eared Grebes were reported as being more common than in previous years in the Central Valley this fall (TM, DMS, RHG). At least 8 young W. Grebes were successfully reared at the Mendota Wildlife Area, Fresno Co., by the end of July (Bob Allen, AC).

**ALBATROSSES, SHEARWATERS, PETRELS** — Most exciting was a well described Laysan Albatross from 13 miles offshore Humboldt Co. Oct. 15 (Gary Friedrichsen). On Oct. 24 an organized pelagic trip in the same area located at least one and probably two of this species and photographed them along with 150+ Black-footed Albatross (RS, RLeV, et al.). These constitute some of the very few reports for the Region, although fishermen regularly see white albatrosses in winter from over 50 miles offshore. Details of this record will be published elsewhere. Other reports of albatrosses were 3 Black-footed from Pt. Pinos, Monterey Co. Aug. 17 (AB, WR) and singles on Monterey Bay Nov. 12 & 19 (AB). A good flight season for Fulmars developed through the fall when they were noted on most of the late October and November pelagic trips with maxima of 150+ off Humboldt Bay, Oct. 24 (RLeV, RS et al.) and 134 in Monterey Bay Nov. 12 (AB). As in other Fulmar flight years, many of these birds were picked up dead on the beaches of Monterey Bay and Pt. Reyes Peninsula. One of the largest concentrations of Pink-footed Shearwaters ever reported was one of 2000 birds on Aug. 17 off Pt. Pinos (AB). Much smaller numbers were found in Monterey Bay during the remainder of the fall (AB). Records of the rare Pale-footed Shearwater included 1 off Bodega Bay, Sonoma Co., Oct. 17 (VDaC, BDP, BMCL), 1 in Monterey Bay Oct. 14 (AB, WR), the first there since 1966, and 1 or 2 more there Nov. 12 (AB). New Zealand Shearwater staged a massive influx this fall; on many boat trips it was the most common shearwater, especially off San Francisco, where a flock of 400+ was seen on Sept. 15 (DDeS). The earliest report was of 1 off San Francisco Aug. 18 (RLeV) and the latest were 3 exceptionally late birds in Monterey Bay Nov. 19 (AB). In between those dates, flocks of 200 were reported from boat trips out of Bodega, San Francisco, and Monterey Bays, and 20+ were reported from Humboldt Bay Oct. 24 (LCB, BDP, et al.). Slender-billed Shearwaters were reported from Monterey Bay Nov. 12 when 2 birds were seen (AB). Except for last February, these are the first reports in this area since 1966. The only Manx Shear-

water seen was off Monterey Sept. 25 (AW, BMCL, RS).

The customary large fall flock of petrels in Monterey Bay was seen Oct. 4 (AB, WR) when 3300 were found and Oct. 10 (G.G.A.S., AB, TS) when approximately 5500 were found. On both dates a single Fork-tailed Petrel was observed with the Black and Ashy Petrels, which were present in their usual proportions of 1 Black for every 9 Ashies (AB). By late afternoon of Oct. 27 a NNW gale brought 3 Fork-tailed and 1 Leach's Petrels into Monterey Bay. By the next day at least 70 Fork-tailed Petrels were present, and even though the wind died down there were still 10-20 on the 29th and 4 on the 30th. Four Leach's Petrels seen from a boat in Monterey Bay constituted the first time this regular observer has seen more than a single bird of this species there (AB). All of these Leach's Petrels had white rumps, indicating they were probably from breeding areas in n. California or farther north.

**PELICANS, CORMORANTS, FRIGATEBIRD** — Brown Pelicans continue to be reported in good numbers this fall, with 50-100% imm. on bays and lagoons but as many as 95 per cent ad. on the outer ocean and coastal promontories. All of our data indicate that imm. birds favor sheltered inlets and older birds prefer the open ocean. Extreme examples follow: *bay-lagoon locations* — 84 imm. and 0 ad. on Tomales Bay, Marin Co., Aug. 26 (RS, GM) and 29 imm. and 1 ad. at the Palo Alto Baylands, Santa Clara Co., Oct. 16 (TC); *promontory locations* — 238 ad. and 12 imm. on outer Pt. Reyes in late July (LG). No unusual concentrations of White Pelicans were reported. An excellent description was received of 1 ad. and 3 imm. **Blue-footed Boobies** on Oct. 16, and 2 on the following day from Lover's Pt., Pacific Grove, Monterey Co. (G & L Mai, EH). This is a new bird to the n. California avifauna, but somewhat predictable owing to this fall's invasion into s. California. Over 500 Double-crested Cormorants Oct. 17 and 800 on Nov. 11 at the Palo Alto Baylands were probably normal (TC), as were a few individuals in the Sacramento Valley (TM, RS, fide ML). Pelagic Cormorants, usually strictly oceanic, were found at least 3 miles inland on the Klamath R., Del Norte Co., again this fall (RS, GMCC et al.) as they have been in other years. An imm. **Magnificent Frigatebird** was seen in Monterey Harbor Sept. 4 (LJ et al.) and undoubtedly the same individual was well photographed at Moss Landing, Monterey Co., on the same day (BW). This represents only the fifth verified record for the Region.

**HERONS, IBIS** — Three imm. Green Herons were seen in the San Joaquin Valley during the period, which is more than usual (DMS, GS). Two ad. Little Blue Herons were well described from near San Quentin Prison, Marin Co., Aug. 29 (N & HS). One or 2 have been reported from this area for several years and they may attempt to breed on W. Marin I., San Rafael, Marin Co. This season Com. and Snowy Egrets departed early after a very successful breeding period at W. Marin I. Only 10 Com. and 40 Snowy Egrets were counted there on Sept. 1 (ABu). Besides the known day roosts of Black-crowned Night Herons reported in the Region, 35 individuals were seen in the Martinez Marsh, Contra Costa Co., Nov. 13, the

largest number ever seen together in the county (LF). The **White Ibis** that arrived in the spring (AB 25:794) was seen near San Rafael until at least Sept. 9 (ABu). About 150 White-faced Ibis were present in flooded areas of w. Merced Co. from late October on (GS). A wintering population of less than 300 individuals still exists in the San Joaquin Valley. On Oct. 3, 1 was found at Pt. Pinos (VLY, RLB) and Oct. 13 another was seen at Arcata, only the second record for Humboldt Co. (DE, FB). There are very few recent coastal records for this species.

**WATERFOWL** — Bulk numbers of swans and geese were late in arriving in the Central Valley because of the very dry fall. Whistling Swans were not seen in San Joaquin Co. until Nov. 8; only 600 were on the Jones Tract, San Joaquin Co., Nov. 30 (DMS) and very few were at Volta L., Merced Co., where there have usually been 150+ (ROW). By Nov. 10 barely 10 per cent of the geese recorded in n. California had arrived in the Central Valley, the rest still remaining on open water in the Tule-Kalmath Basin north of our Region. Even as late as Nov. 24 only 60 per cent of the geese had arrived in the Central Valley, when 345,000 were tallied (CF & G). Duck populations paralleled last year with a maximum of 3,800,000 in the Central Valley Nov. 24. Of this maximum 3,000,000 were Pintails, mostly in the San Joaquin Delta area, and 300,000 were Mallards, with the largest numbers in the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (S.N.W.R.) and the Butte Sink, Butte Co. (C.F. & G.).

On wildlife areas in the Region, between Oct. 16 and Dec. 5, 53,940 hunters, with great skill and enthusiasm, managed to gun down 110,532 birds, including 103,105 ducks, 4,204 geese and 3,223 coots. This represents less than 3 per cent of the population present during the same period (C.F. & G.).

The first Black Brant of the season were 11 at Humboldt Bay Oct. 9 (DE, DA) and 1 at Limantour Estero, Marin Co., two days later (Pat Welsh). A **Brant**, which is very rare in this region, was described from Limantour Estero in November (Diann MacRae). Seven White-fronted Geese at Humboldt Bay Sept. 24 and 60+ over Arcata Oct. 14 (RLeV) were the only reports from the coast. An ad. and an imm. of the blue phase of the Snow Goose, along with an intermediate phase bird, were reported from S.N.W.R. on Nov. 13 & 20. (TM, RS et al.) A belated report of a Blue-winged Teal with a ♀ teal July 8 at Mendota W.A. was most interesting (AC). As is usual, 3 Blue-winged Teal were at Coyote Hills Regional Park, Alameda Co., after Sept. 26 (RS, JL) and up to 10 were present at the Palo Alto Baylands after Oct. 17 (TC, VDaC, WMP et al.). At least 7 Eur. Widgeon were found in the Region — always with large groups of Am. Widgeon. One thousand Canvasbacks were at the sewer ponds on Hwy 4, San Joaquin Co., Nov. 30, a large number for the Central Valley (DMS). Three ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye were with 54 Commons along the American River, Sacramento Co., Nov. 26 (fide BK). As usual, at least 10 were at L. Merritt, Oakland, Alameda Co., from at least Nov. 6 on (DE, GMCC, RS et al.). At least 4 Oldsquaws were at the S. Point, Pt. Reyes, Nov. 9-27 (WMP, ABu, LCB). One ♀ was

along the Bayshore in s. Alameda Co. Nov. 3 (BR) and 1 was at Moss Landing from Nov. 9 to the end of the period (VA). A ♂ Harlequin Duck was at Santa Cruz after Oct. 30 (Wittgenstein, TC) and a ♀ was at McClure's Beach, Marin Co., Nov. 26 (DE, ST). Two ♂♂ were at Pt. Arena, Mendocino Co. Nov. 27 (GMcC, LJ). Most unusual was a ♀ or imm. White-winged Scoter at the Chico Sewage Plant, Butte Co. Nov. 3 for probably the second inland record for the Region, along with a nearly equally rare ♀ or imm. Surf Scoter (TM, BW). The head of another Surf Scoter was found at the same place (TM). Reports of at least 23 Com. Scoters were received from various sheltered coves by many observers and 1 ♂ flew by S. Farallon Oct. 12. The only reports of Hooded Mergansers were 1 from the interior and 5 from the coast during the period. A Com. Merganser at the mouth of the Carmel R., Monterey Co., Sept. 25 and 2-5 after Oct. 12 were considered unusual for the location (WR, RLB).

**RAPTORS** — A large migration of Turkey Vultures was noted during mid-October in Fresno and Tulare Cos. Very few were seen there before or after this time (RHG). Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported primarily from coastal locations, with 39 records for the Region. Only 8 reports of Cooper's Hawks were received, 4 from along the coast and 4 from the San Joaquin Valley. An albino Red-tailed Hawk is wintering at a w. Marin Co. location for at least the third straight year. (ABu, WMP, BMcL et al.). Reports of 18 Rough-legged Hawks from the Central Valley and 10 more from the coast north of San Francisco are more than usual for a fall period. Similarly, 18 records of Ferruginous Hawks from the Central Valley and s. coastal areas of our region indicate a major flight for this species as well. Twenty-one reports of Golden Eagles (10 ad., 6 imm. and 5 of unknown age) were received from the coast and coastal ranges, including 1 imm. on S. Farallon, the first island record. Reports of 9 Bald Eagles were received: 4 ad., 3 imm. and 2 unknown; however only 2 of these were from the coast. A total of 20 Ospreys were reported from coastal lagoons and Sierran foothill lakes. Records of 12 Prairie Falcons from the Central Valley, 14 Peregrines from the coast and 1 from the Sierras, and 8 Pigeon Hawks, mostly from the north coast, were encouraging. Each individual report, with details, of all birds including raptors is kept in journals. Any responsible person wishing details on observations or locations may contact the regional editors.

**GROUSE, CRANES, RAILS** — The seldom seen Ruffed Grouse was reported Oct. 25 at its usual location at the north end of Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, Del Norte Co., (DE, AM). Several flocks of Turkeys were seen in the Watts Valley area, Fresno Co., where 11 of a flock of 30 were banded (AC). Three Sandhill Cranes, always rare along the coast, were very early at Coyote Hills Regional Park, Sept. 7 (RS). In the Central Valley, cranes followed their normal patterns, and the largest number reported was a flock of 2000 during the first week of November in then. San Joaquin Valley (DMS, BK). A Virginia Rail, one of 3 birds at Alameda South Shore Nov. 2, walked through a group of birders and, while one of the group was trying to photograph it, crossed a street, went under a car,

up on the curb, onto the sidewalk and then flew to the recessed balcony of a second-floor apartment! (ABu). No more information on the fate of this bird was reported.

**SHOREBIRDS** — Mountain Plovers were again reported from near Woodland, Yolo Co., with 12 on Nov. 16 (DAG) and near Mendota, Fresno Co., with flocks of 25-50 seen on Oct. 31 and Nov. 14 (AC). Normal numbers of Am. Golden Plovers were reported from along the coast with a maximum of 20 in the Loleta Bottoms, Humboldt Co., Oct. 9 (DE, DA). The only Solitary Sandpiper from the region this fall was 1 at a small pond near Fulton, Sonoma Co., Aug. 28 (DE, LS). Normal concentrations of Lesser Yellowlegs occurred this fall with maxima of 9 at the Woodland sugar ponds Aug. 28 (B & RL) and 14 at Coyote Hills Park on Oct. 14 (J & SL). A flock of 300 Knots at the north end of Humboldt Bay Aug. 27 had decreased to about 10 by Sept. 12 (RLeV). Elsewhere in the Region they were reported in small numbers at the regular locations. The only reports of Rock Sandpipers were 2 on S. Farallon: 1 on Oct. 19 & 26; 2 at Crescent City, Del Norte Co., Nov. 26 (GMcC, LJ) and 2 at Bodega Head Nov. 27 (VDaC). Pectoral Sandpipers were more common this fall than ever before. The first was noted on a small farm pond east of Bodega Aug. 21 (RLeV) and then they were reported from just about every bit of suitable habitat in the Region. The maximum reported was 65+ at the Woodland sugar ponds Sept. 6 (RS, TM, RLeV et al.) and some were present there until at least Sept. 19 when there were 11 (B & RL). On the coast, however, they remained until at least Oct. 17 when 3 were seen at Bodega Bay (BDP). It is possible that, because of the dry fall, this species was concentrated at the only wet areas in the Region, which are areas that are regularly checked by birders. Places in Humboldt Co. that had numerous Pectoral Sandpipers last fall were dry this year and only 2 were reported there (RLeV). Baird's Sandpipers, both along the coast and in the Central Valley, followed regular patterns with a total of 24 birds reported between Aug. 16 and Sept. 17. Dunlins and most of the sandpipers that winter in any numbers in the Region were later and scarcer than usual in the interior (TM, ROW), probably due to the dry conditions. A Stilt Sandpiper was at Woodland Sept. 6 & 7 (JT, TM, Walt Luke et al.) and another was photographed at a pond near Drake's Beach, Pt. Reyes, Sept. 11 (B&RL, LG). Huge concentrations of Marbled Godwits occur along the north end of Humboldt Bay; 3000 there Oct. 15 is probably a normal number (RLeV). An albino plumaged Marbled Godwit was reported from Pt. Reyes Sept. 25 (J & SL). American Avocets again appeared on Humboldt Bay Aug. 27, and increased to 100+ by Oct. 15 (RLeV, DE). Red Phalaropes were reported as abundant along the entire coast during August and September after which their numbers declined, except for 2000 along the s. edge of Monterey Bay Oct. 18. The last seen there were 23 on Nov. 19 (AB). In contrast to other flight years of this species the peak flocks occurred early and consisted primarily of partially breeding-plumaged birds which did not linger into the winter.

**JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMER** — Pomarine and

Parasitic Jaegers followed normal patterns in the Region. Interesting were 19 Parasitics independently counted on Sept. 17 (RS) and Sept. 19 (LCB) from Pt. Pinos. Skuas were again reported this fall with up to 4 off Monterey Sept. 25 (LCB, RS, AW, VDaC), 3 in the same area Oct. 4 (AB, WR), 1 off Bodega Bay Oct. 17 (BDP, BMcL) and 1 seen from S. Farallon Oct. 29. An early first year Glaucous Gull was seen on the rooftop of the Cal. Acad. of Sci., San Francisco Nov. 19-24 (LCB, RLeV). Two Glaucous-winged Gulls, rare but regular in winter in the Central Valley, were reported from Folsom L., Oct. 30 (DAG). A major influx of Franklin's Gulls occurred in the Region with a total of at least 7 imm.: 1 at Tulare L., Kings Co., Aug. 21 (AC), 2 at the south end of Humboldt Bay Aug. 24-26 (RLeV, DA), 1 at Davis Sept. 1-4 which died on the 4th (JT, TM, B & RL), 1 at the north end of Humboldt Bay Sept. 15-Oct. 13 (RLeV, DE), 1 at Seaside, Monterey Co., Sept. 27 (fide AB) and 1 near the Dumbarton Bridge, San Francisco Bay, Oct. 21 (BR). Numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes seemed low this year. Small numbers at Monterey and Bodega Bays were the only reports from the Region. Almost phenomenal was a report of an imm. Least Tern at the north end of Humboldt Bay Aug. 27 (RLeV). The second regional record of the **Black Skimmer** was of 2 adults flying by Pt. Pinos Sept. 26 (WR). The first record was reported last season (AB 25:902).

**ALCIDS** — Greater-than-normal numbers of Xantus' Murrelets were reported from Monterey Bay with 16 on Sept. 25 (RS, AW), small numbers through Oct. and 2 on Nov. 12 (AB). Ancient Murrelet numbers climbed to 20 in Monterey Bay by Nov. 19 (AB). Tufted Puffins were also reported from Monterey Bay in greater-than-normal numbers with 3 off Pt. Pinos Aug. 17 and singles on the bay Oct. 4 & 10 (AB) and Nov. 23 (VR).

**DOVES, ROADRUNNER, OWLS** — A **White-winged Dove**, very rare in this Region, visited the feeder of Mrs. Erica Hurf, Monterey, Nov. 7-10 and was photographed (RLB, VLY). A Roadrunner was at Saddle Dam near Oroville this fall where they are rarely seen (ML). Two Barn Owls were found dead, apparently shot, on Pt. Reyes Oct. 31 (VR). Other birds of prey have been found shot there (sometimes in piles) in recent years. Any evidences of raptor kills should be reported to California Department of Fish and Game. The only reports of Long-eared Owls were 1 from the Sacramento area Oct. 7 (fide BK) and 1 at Clarksburg, Yolo Co., Nov. 9 (C. Quick, fide BK).

**SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS, WOODPECKERS** — Eight separate reports of Vaux's Swifts from coastal Marin and Monterey Cos. and S. Farallon Sep. 14-29 undoubtedly indicated a major movement (WMP, LCB, AW). Two were also seen in the Fresno area in late Sept. (RHG) and more than **250** were seen feeding over the township of Minden, Nev. Oct. 1 (RS, GM). An imm. ♂ Calliope Hummingbird, rare near the coast in fall, was at a feeder in Lafayette, Contra Costa Co., Sept. 14 (LF) and another Calliope, reported from Woodland, Yolo Co., left Oct. 9 (fide BK). Six "pure" and 3 "hybrid" Yellow-shafted Flickers were reported from the coast and Central Valley — probably normal numbers. Pileated Woodpeckers were again reported

from Inverness Ridge, Marin Co. (fide P.R.B.O.). Three were in sight at one time Aug. 16 at Alpine Dam, Marin Co., (A Bu, WMP) and 2 ♂ were in Upper Sonoran Blue Oak — Chapparral association near Lake Berryessa, Napa Co., Oct. 16 (DAG, TM, JT, JW). Several observers report Acorn Woodpecker declines due to Starling occupation of nest and roost sites (LF, DMS, HA). An Acorn Woodpecker that appeared on S. Farallon Sept. 18 was the first record for the island. Lewis' Woodpeckers were reported as very common in their regular haunts and present in several places where they have never before been found. A Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was seen at Sequoia National Park Sept. 18 (PW). This may be the southernmost record for this species.

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — A Western Kingbird on S. Farallon, Aug. 27, and 1 at Pt. Pinos, Sept. 19 (RS) were the only reports from the coast where they are rare. An amazing **14** individual Tropical Kingbirds reported along the coast from mid-October to early November with 1 remaining in Pacific Grove through the end of the period. Most surprising were 4 seen together near Ferndale, Humboldt Co., Nov. 3 (RLeV, DA, DE). A single was on S. Farallon Oct. 20. A very late Ash-throated Flycatcher was at Chico, Butte Co., Oct. 7-15 (TM). A **Great Crested Flycatcher**, the fifth for the Region, was on S. Farallon Sept. 18. That day was also a major wave day for other flycatchers along the coast, including 10 Hammond — Dusky types on Pt. Reyes (LCB, RLeV), virtually the only ones reported, 50 W. Flycatchers and 6 Say's Phoebes on S. Farallon and 40 Black Phoebes on outer Monterey Peninsula (RS, GM). Except for a single Hammond's — Dusky type on Sept. 10 at Glen Hall Park, Sacramento, Traill's and Westerns were the only *Empidonax sp.* reported from the Sacramento Valley this fall and were in nearly equal numbers (TM, RS). This situation is probably normal in the fall. The only Gray Flycatcher reported was 1 on S. Farallon, Aug. 27. A very late W. Flycatcher was in Lafayette Oct. 24 (LF). The incredible number of **5 Least Flycatchers** was banded on S. Farallon Sept. 5, Oct. 1, Oct. 11-12, Oct. 18-22 and Nov. 20-22. Details will be published elsewhere. Four Horned Larks were on S. Farallon Oct. 28-29 where they are very rare. A pure white and a partially white albino Tree Swallow were near Davis with at least 2500 other swallows, Aug. 17-25 (RS, TM, JT). A very late Bank Swallow was at Arcata, where they are very rare, Sept. 29 (DE, RLeV). The last Barn Swallow was one from Arcata Oct. 26 (RLeV) while the last Cliff Swallows were over Sutter I., in the Sacramento Valley, Oct. 24 (fide BK). A Purple Martin on S. Farallon Aug. 23 was the only one reported.

**CORVIDS THROUGH MIMIDS** — Besides being seen at the usual coastal locations in Humboldt and Mendocino Cos., 3 Gray Jays were seen at Trail Gulch Lakes in the Scott Mts., Siskiyou Co., Sept. 6 (DA). This is the first interior sighting in many years of this very elusive species. Two Ravens were seen over Monticello Dam, Solano Co., Oct. 16 (TM, DAG et al.). They are very rare in the Sacramento Valley and surrounding foothills. Red-breasted Nuthatches were totally absent away from the mountains this fall. Except

for isolated resident birds in Golden Gate Park (ABu), in Berkeley (VR) and in Ferndale (DA), no individuals were found in the lowlands either on the coast or in the interior! A single flock of 300+ Pygmy Nuthatches in Golden Gate Park, Sept. 17 (ABu) illustrates how locally abundant this species can be in the Bay Area. A single Pygmy Nuthatch in willows along the Putah Creek about 2 miles south of Davis (CC, LKB) appears to be only the third record for the Central Valley. As in past years, a few Dippers were reported from the Inner Coast Range (fide VH). The year-round status of this bird in the lowlands of the Region is not known and all sightings there should be reported. A **Brown Thrasher**, identified as the western race, was banded and photographed on S. Farallon Oct. 25. It was the sixth fall record for the Region. Two coastal Sage Thrashers were recorded this fall: 1 at Coyote Hills Park, Sept. 12 (fide VH) and 1 on S. Farallon, Sept. 21.

**THRUSHES THROUGH VIREOS** — Robins were very scarce throughout the fall until numbers began to build up in the early November (DDeS, VR, RHG). Although Varied Thrushes were recorded as early as Oct. 5 in Tilden Park, Berkeley, (WMP), large numbers did not arrive until the second and third weeks of November, when major influxes occurred at Searsville L., San Mateo Co., and in the Santa Cruz Mts. (DDeS), in the Monterey area (WR), and even in Lafayette where such influxes are considered highly unusual (LF). Swainson's Thrushes were reported only from Bolinas, Marin Co., (P.R.B.O.) and S. Farallon where numbers were greater than normal. The only concentration of Hermit Thrushes was an early wave with the Swainson's on S. Farallon Sept. 21-22. All other observers were in universal agreement that Hermit Thrush numbers were well below average (P.R.B.O., DDeS, BK et al.). A single Mountain Bluebird at Coyote Hills Park Nov. 6 was the only coastal record (J & SL). The only coastal reports of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were 1 at Rodeo Lagoon Aug. 19 and 3 there Sept. 16 (WMP, ABu et al.) and 1 on S. Farallon Oct. 4. In contrast to the majority of our montane birds, both species of kinglets were present in the Region in better than average numbers, with the main influx reaching Bolinas and S. Farallon Oct. 16-31 (P.R.B.O., DDeS, VR) and a few in the Central Valley after late Oct. (DAG, BK). Eleven reports of Phainopepla from 8 locations around the Central Valley were normal for a fall. Cedar Waxwings were extremely scarce throughout the Region this fall with numbers beginning to pick up at the very end of November. For the third straight year, good numbers of N. Shrikes have been found in the Region. Along the coast an imm. was present at the Palo Alto Baylands after Oct. 23 (GF, TC, ABu, et al.), 1 was near Drake's Estero, Oct. 25 (fide VH), an ad. was banded on S. Farallon Oct. 29 for the first island record, an imm. was near Tomales Bay State Park Nov. 22-27 (WMP, LCB et al.) and another ad. was on the Samoa Peninsula, Humboldt Co., Nov. 25 (GMcC, LJ et al.). In the Central Valley, where they are even less common, an imm. was found at Durham, Butte Co. Nov. 20 (TM). In contrast to most western warblers, Warbling Vireos were unusually common along the coast this fall: large

numbers were captured at Bolinas Sept. 6-15, 25 were on S. Farallon Sept. 18 and small numbers were captured again at Bolinas Oct. 1-5, which is unusually late for this species in the Region (P.R.B.O.).

**WOOD WARBLERS** — The vast majority of our western montane warbler species, except Audubon's, pass through the Region during August and the first half of September. This movement was especially poor this year in all parts of the Region including the Sierra (DDeS, TM) and the Central Valley (DAG, TM). Along the coast the situation was even more pronounced. The normally rare Nashville, Hermit, Black-throated Gray and MacGillivray's were virtually nonexistent, the majority of the few records being in late September and October. Even such relatively common birds as Wilson's, Yellow, Orange-crowned and Townsend's were very scarce during the early migration season (RS, RLeV et al.). In fact only 18 individual western warblers of any kind were seen on S. Farallon between July 31 and Sept. 15. The previous 3 years' average for these six weeks has been 136 with a range from 119-163 (P.R.B.O.).

The situation improved greatly after Sept. 16. From Sept. 17 to Oct. 18 excellent numbers of Yellow Warblers with lesser numbers of Orange-crowns and many early Myrtles predominated along the coast. Since this same period produced one of the most spectacular waves of vagrant warblers yet to be recorded in the Region, it is felt that most of these Yellows, Orange-crowns and Myrtles originated north or east of the Rockies and were, likewise, vagrants. Our wintering Audubon's, Myrtles and Townsend's were quite late in arriving in the Region, good numbers not being found until after Oct. 14. Heavy movements of Audubon's were recorded in Santa Cruz Oct. 14-15 (fide VA), on S. Farallon Oct. 25, at Searsville L., Oct. 30-Nov. 1 (DDeS) and near Fresno in early November (RHG). Most observers agree that the total number of Audubon's Warblers during the entire fall migration period was low compared to previous years. Some noteworthy late dates for western warblers were Nashville: 1 at Ferndale Nov. 21-29 (DA); Black-throated Gray: 1 at Colusa Nov. 21 (DAG); Wilson's: 1 at a feeder in Yuba City through the end of the period (PH) and 1 in Ferndale Dec. 1 (DA). The only chats recorded during the entire fall were 2 individuals banded on S. Farallon Sept. 21 & 23 and 1 seen in Farnham's Sanctuary, Sacramento, Sept. 26 (fide BK).

It was indeed a good year for vagrant warblers in our Region. Eighteen species were found during this period, equalling the record set in 1968. A virtually massive flight of Blackpoll Warblers, however, caused the total number of individuals seen this fall to exceed any other year. A minimum of 40 individual Blackpoll Warblers were found on coastal points on the mainland between the Samoa Pen., where 4 were seen this fall (RLeV, DE), and the Monterey Pen. and at least 23 more were seen on S. Farallon I. All records fell in the period between Sept. 8 and Oct. 17 and individuals were seen on 20 out of the 40 days; yet there were times when apparently massive flights reached our coast. One such day was Sept. 17 when 11 individuals were found in five separate localities in Pacific Grove (RS), 1 was on Pt. Reyes (LG) and at least 7 were

on S. Farallon. It is staggering to consider the number of Blackpolls that must have passed the California coast on that day, but it is more amazing to consider that the species was only "discovered" in our Region 9 years ago. It was a good, but not exceptional, year for Palm Warblers with 16 on S. Farallon between Sept. 22 and mid-November and 8 on the coast between Sept. 18 and the end of the period. Except for 1 in Ferndale, Nov. 23-29 (DA), all others were in the well-worked Pt. Reyes or Monterey areas. An apparently normal year for Am. Redstarts produced 10 on S. Farallon Sept. 5-23 and 10 more on the coast Sept. 3-26 including 1 on Sept. 3 on the Samoa Pen. (RHG). Likewise, an average year for Tennessee Warblers produced 4 on S. Farallon Sept. 17-22 and 4 more on the coast Sept. 3 to Oct. 18, while a good year for N. Waterthrushes produced 1 on S. Farallon Sept. 21 and at least 6 more on the mainland between Sept. 3 and Oct. 17 including 1 at the Richardson's Bay Audubon Sanctuary, Marin Co., in late Sept. (BM). A normal year for Black-and-white Warblers produced 4 records: 1 on Sept. 3 on the Samoa Pen. (RHG), 1 on Sept. 9 on S. Farallon and another there Sept. 22, and 1 on Oct. 10 in the Carmel River Valley (RS, GM).

Most of the remaining species of warblers found in the Region this fall are continuing the pattern of occurrences that has become characteristic of them over the past few years: a **Blue-winged Warbler** was observed at Pt. Pinos Sept. 25 (VDAc, RR), the second record for the Region; 2 **Virginia's Warblers** were seen this fall, the first Oct. 10 at Pt. Pinos, Pacific Grove (RS, GM, VLY, RLB) and the second Oct. 13-15 at a feeder in Pacific Grove (EH). These represent the fifth and sixth individuals recorded in our Region. A **Magnolia Warbler** was on Pt. Reyes Sept. 19 (RS, GM) and another was on S. Farallon Sept. 22. The sixth fall record of the **Cape May Warbler** was a ♀ at Pt. Pinos Oct. 2 (WR). Three **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were found this fall: a ♂ captured on S. Farallon Sept. 17 and a ♀ captured there Sept. 22, and a ♀ seen at L. Merced, San Francisco on Sept. 18 (fide VH). A **Blackburnian Warbler**, the twelfth in our Region in the fall, was captured on S. Farallon Sept. 17. The third fall record of the **Bay-breasted Warbler** for our Region was 1 well described from Pt. Reyes Sept. 18 (LCB, RLeV, RG et al.). Two **Prairie Warblers** were found this fall, the ninth and tenth for our Region: 1 captured and photographed at Pacific Grove Oct. 16 (EH, AB, WR) and 1 captured on S. Farallon on the very late date of Nov. 22. Two **Ovenbirds** were captured on S. Farallon on the first Sept. 17-18 and the second Sept. 18-19. Two **Hooded Warblers** were found this fall, the first, a ♀ Sept. 6 at Rodeo Lagoon (V & BDAc), the second, a ♂ on the Samoa Pen. Oct. 2 (DE). A **Canada Warbler** was present at Rodeo Lagoon Sept. 8 (MM, WMP) but could not be found subsequently. Each of these last two species was previously represented by only 1 fall record for our Region.

In a class all by itself was the **Golden-checked Warbler** that was captured on S. Farallon I. Sept. 9, for the first record for California and only the second U.S. record outside of Texas. Details will be published elsewhere (P.R.B.O.).

**ICTERIDS, TANGERS.** — Four Bobolinks were found at Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove, Sept. 23 (WR) with 1 bird remaining until Sept. 26 (WR, AB, AW et al.). Single Bobolinks were present on S. Farallon Sept. 24-30 and Oct. 11-13, 1 was on Pt. Reyes Sept. 26 (RS) and 1 was near Salinas Sept. 29 (fide VA). Hooded Orioles continued to besiege feeders at San Rafael through Aug. 19 where they consumed 1 gallon of sugar water per month (ABu) and at Lafayette through Aug. 29 where they were simply "hooked" on sugar water (LF). This species was seen in late fall in Monterey (WR) and a ♂ was present and photographed at Yuba City Nov. 3 through the end of the period (PH) at the same spot where a ♀ wintered last year. Most Bullock's Orioles had left our Region by very early September. Several in Monterey in November (WR), however, will probably prove to winter. Eight reports of Baltimore Orioles were more than usual in our Region in a single fall: 4 banded on S. Farallon Sept. 22, possibly a hybrid Sept. 28, Oct. 2 and Oct. 17; 1 on Pt. Reyes Oct. 17 and another at Esplanade Park, Pacific Grove, also Oct. 17 (RS) 1 at Arcata Oct. 23 (ST, TM) and 1 at Dillon Beach Nov. 16 (BG). Banding data from S. Farallon indicate that Brown-headed Cowbirds disperse or migrate rather early compared to most blackbirds. They were regular visitors on the island from Aug. 18 to Sept. 21 after which date only 1 was seen Oct. 29.

An imm. ♂ **Scarlet Tanager** was seen in bush lupine at a small pond on Pt. Reyes on Sept. 26 (RS) the first record for the Region (and long overdue at that). A ♂ **Summer Tanager** was seen at a feeder in Fremont Nov. 20 (fide JL) while another ♂, presumably the same individual as last year, returned to the feeder in Pacific Grove Nov. 21 and remained through the end of the period (AB).

**FINCHES** — A hybrid grosbeak (Rose-breasted × Black-headed) was captured on S. Farallon on Sept. 18. An **Indigo-Bunting** was seen on Pt. Reyes Sept. 18 (RG, LCB). Although there are many late spring and summer records for this species in our Region, this appears to be only the ninth fall or winter record. Winter finches made news this fall by their nearly complete absence. In marked contrast to last year, not a single **Purple Finch** reached S. Farallon. **Pine Siskins**, continuing a trend begun last fall, were very scarce throughout the Region. No reports of either **Evening Grosbeaks** or **Red Crossbills** were received during the entire period. **American Goldfinches** were reported in above average numbers in the Bay Area this fall and these mostly after November when **Lesser Goldfinches** became increasingly scarce (DDeS, ST).

**SPARROWS, LONGSPURS** — A **Green-tailed Towhee** in Sacramento Sept. 16 (TM) was the only one reported away from the mountains. It was an excellent fall for **Lark Buntings**: 1 was observed near Sattley in the Sierra Valley, Sierra Co., Sept. 1. (G. Miller, B. Snyder, fide VH), 1 was present in the Carmel River Valley Sept. 17 (RS, GM), 1 was seen on S. Farallon Sept. 23 and 2 were along W. Butte Rd., Sutter Co., Nov. 10 (J & SL) with one remaining until at least Dec. 5 (DAG). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** banded on S. Farallon Sept. 21 was the only one reported. Presumably the same **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** that wintered last

year at the east end of the Dumbarton Bridge, Alameda Co., returned again this year since a bird was found in the same place, Nov. 2 to the end of the period (BR, PE, many). Two Vesper Sparrows were present in the Arcata Bottoms Oct. 20-21, perhaps only the seventh or eighth Humboldt Co. record (DE, FB). At least 7 others were seen on S. Farallon Sept. 19-Oct. 12. In marked contrast to most eastern species, Slate-colored Juncos were extremely scarce this fall, with only 2 sightings: 1 at Inverness from early November until the end of the period (G. Brady, fide VH), and 1 at S.N.W.R. Nov. 20 (RS, TM et al.). Oregon Juncos were also unusually scarce throughout the Region during the fall. Virtually absent from the Central Valley, and scarce in the Sierran foothills (TM, DMS), they were quite uncommon even on the coast from Ferndale (DA) to Stanford (DDeS) and even on S. Farallon. Two early Tree Sparrows were found on S. Farallon, 1 seen on Oct. 11 and the other banded Oct. 21. At least 5 Clay-colored Sparrows (4 banded), Sept. 13-27 and at least 4 Brewer's Sparrows (2 banded), Sept. 17-28, all on S. Farallon, were normal for the fall.

The major influx of *Zonotrichia* along the central coast occurred between Oct. 1-3 (P.R.B.O., ABu, RJR, RLeV) while the main influx in the Central Valley was on Sept. 29-30 (RS, DMS). For the first time in four years, the massive wave of sparrows that regularly inundates S. Farallon was totally absent (P.R.B.O.). These combined data suggest that the *Zonotrichia* flight this year was further inland than usual. White-crowneds were generally considered to be less common than usual along the coast while Golden-crowneds were unusually numerous (P.R.B.O., DDeS). This same relative situation was noted in Sacramento where White-crowneds were found to outnumber Golden-crowneds by only 2 to 1; 4 or 5 to 1 is normal (BK). Both Harris' and White-throated Sparrows were reported with unusual frequency this fall. An imm. Harris' Sparrow was banded on S. Farallon Oct. 24-28, another was near Esparta, Yolo Co., Oct. 25 (DAG), 2 more were near Angwin, Napa Co., Oct. 31 (fide Madrone Audubon Society), an imm. was at a feeder in Lafayette Nov. 23 (LF) and another was banded at the Richardson's Bay Audubon Center Dec. 4 (BM). These records tie in well with a virtual invasion into e. California. At least 23 individual White-throated Sparrows were recorded from at least 13 locations, a record for a single fall. Both Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows were generally agreed to be quite scarce this fall (P.R.B.O. Eds.). A Swamp Sparrow was present near Davis Nov. 23 (DAG) for only the second Central Valley record. At least 1 other was seen at Olema Marsh, Marin Co., after Nov. 26 (ST, DE et al.) It was an excellent year for longspurs: 1 was on Pt. Reyes on the exceptionally early date of Sept. 9 (LCB, WMP) and up to 15 were there Oct. 30-Nov. 27 (LCB, WMP et al.), 1 was at the Salinas R. mouth, Monterey Co., Sept. 17 (RS, GM), at least 12 were on S. Farallon Sept. 26-Oct. 28, 2 were at Eagle L., Lassen Co., Oct. 1 (TR et al.) and 2 were at Table Bluff, Humboldt Co., Oct. 25 (RS, GM). The first longspurs ever seen in the Central Valley were 2 ♂ Chestnut-collareds near Davis Nov. 6-9 (TM, JT, DAG et al.) and 1 Lapland at the same place Nov. 6-8 (DAG, RS). A **Snow Bunt-**

ing was present Oct. 26-29 at Arcata (RLeV, DE, DA et al.). Recent records indicate that this species may be more readily found there than anywhere else in the state.

**CORRIGENDA** — At the request of the observers, the Pale-footed Shearwater record in *AFN* 24:712 should be deleted. In *AFN* 24:713 and *AB* 25:102 the Ruddy Turnstone record from Davis Sewage Pond should be Aug. 12 instead of Oct. 12 and should be credited to RL & TM, not TM, SS. In *AB* 25:106 the Brewer's Sparrow Sept. 13 credited to LCB should be from Pt. Reyes, Marin Co. In *AB* 25:624 under Gray Jays, the location Hooper Valley should read Hoopa Valley. In *AB* 25:900-901 the nesting success of herons and egrets reported in Humboldt Co. should be credited to John Ives instead of fide RLeV.

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## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION / Guy McCaskie

Locally the fall was dry. However, I do not believe that local weather conditions have any affect on migrants passing through the area, other than concentrating them at limited water sources during very dry years. With the continuing growth of interest in birds, and the ever-increasing army of birdwatchers in the Region comes the expected influx of reports to handle, many of which contain records of the casual and accidental nature. This fall 52 species considered accidental or unrecorded in s. California ten years ago (see R. L. Pyle, *Annotated Field List Birds of s. California* rev. ed., A. Small, 1961) were reported; of these 40 were land birds, and involved over 320 individuals. I believe this is largely the result of better and more knowledge-