

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF AVIAN VISITANTS IN
THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

By AMELIA S. ALLEN

For more than twenty years I have been recording the dates of arrival and departure of birds visiting the San Francisco Bay region as I have had opportunity to observe them. Since 1920 reports based upon the records of various observers have been printed in the Season Department of *Bird-Lore*. Making use of these series of dates I have made out the accompanying charts in an attempt to show the average dates of arrival and the latest dates on which the different species have been seen. The species have been arranged in the order of the average dates of arrival, and only those for which a fairly accurate series is available are included in the list.

Three birds have changed their habits during the period covered. The Point Pinos Junco and the Western Robin which up to 1917 were considered winter visitants in the Bay region have become permanent residents since that date and are now quite abundant during the nesting season. In the summer of 1932 and again in 1933 the Red-breasted Nuthatch was also found breeding in one locality in the Oakland Hills. The extensive plantings of Monterey pines in the hills in the East Bay region may be responsible for this change as well as for the later dates of arrival recorded after 1924. Before that date the species was commonly observed on the University Campus and in the lower hills during the first half of September. But now one must make a special effort to find them, and consequently they are probably not recorded when they first arrive.

Until 1927 records for the Cedar Waxwing were in the main confined to mid-winter or to the spring migration, but the increase in abundance of berry-bearing shrubs in cultivated gardens has apparently attracted them earlier in the season. Averages of dates of arrival have therefore been based upon the records of the last six years. The Say Phoebe is not a common winter bird in the region, but a series of eight dates of arrival have been given to me by Mrs. Edwin Blake who has exceptional opportunities for observing it. The Sierra Junco is not accurately distinguishable from the resident Point Pinos Junco in the field. I have therefore made use of only six dates covering the years before the Point Pinos Junco became established in the region. The Coast Varied Thrush escapes observation some years but I have a series of seven dates before the end of October, the earliest of which, September 24, 1929, is based upon a few feathers which Dr. Grinnell found on a newly mowed lawn on the campus of the University of California. In 1928 a Varied Thrush was found in an exhausted condition on our east porch on the afternoon of October 11 where it was left undisturbed until it was able to fly. The next morning I picked up from the spot where it had rested half a dozen dark seeds which I sent to Professor Jepson with a request that he identify them. He very kindly sent me the following reply, dated October 20, 1928.

Dear Mrs. Allen:

Your "seeds" are drupelets from berries of the genus *Rhamnus*, black-berried series. They do not belong to the red-berried series (*Rhamnus crocea* or *ilicifolia*); I am quite certain that these drupelets are those of the Coffee Berry (*Rhamnus Californica*).

This species is, however, extremely variable. It has a large number of minor geographic variants, not all of which, probably, we have as yet discovered. These drupelets are, it is to be said, slightly different from anything I have before seen and possibly indicate that your bird may have been migrating several hundred miles.

Yours sincerely,

W. L. Jepson.

From this evidence it seems probable that this individual Varied Thrush had just arrived on October 11 and may have traveled several hundred miles after feeding upon the fruit of the coffee berry in question.

The difficulty of discovering the date of departure of summer visitants is complicated by the fact that the local breeding population seems to disappear before the members of the species which breed farther north or at higher altitudes pass through the region on their southward migration. Probably almost every latest date in the column of departures is a record of such a migrant bird and, in the case of the Yellow and Pileolated warblers, should be credited to the subspecies which breeds in Alaska.

Species	SUMMER VISITANTS			Departure Latest date
	Earliest date	Arrival Average date	No. years recorded	
Allen Hummingbird.....	Jan. 17, 1932	Feb. 13	21
Lutescent Warbler.....	Feb. 21, 1928	Mar. 6	23	Oct. 5, 1924,-30
Golden Pileolated Warbler.....	Mar. 12, 1916	Mar. 24	22	Oct. 16, 1920
Western Warbling Vireo.....	Mar. 13, 1916	Mar. 27	25	Oct. 6, 1924
Western House Wren.....	Mar. 4, 1921	Mar. 27	16	Nov. 4, 1931
Western Flycatcher.....	Mar. 18, 1928	Mar. 29	22	Oct. 16, 1920
Cliff Swallow.....	Feb. 28, 1918	Mar. 31	9	Oct. 4, 1931
Tolmie Warbler.....	Apr. 3, 1926	Apr. 13	18	Nov. 27, 1920
Black-headed Grosbeak.....	Apr. 4, 1916	Apr. 15	23	Oct. 7, 1923
California Yellow Warbler.....	Apr. 8, 1932	Apr. 18	16	Oct. 16, 1920
Russet-backed Thrush.....	Apr. 11, 1918	Apr. 23	17	Oct. 2, 1927
Lazuli Bunting.....	Apr. 13, 1914	Apr. 23	17	Aug. 28, 1933
Olive-sided Flycatcher.....	Apr. 12, 1917	Apr. 30	18	Sept. 15, 1928
Western Wood Pewee.....	Apr. 18, 1922	May 2	14	Sept. 30, 1932

The Western House Wren is near the northern limit of its winter range and this may account for the November date. The whole series for the species shows three mid-winter records, and, omitting these years, the spring arrivals vary from March 4 to April 20. There are such discrepancies in reports of the departure of the Allen Hummingbird that more careful observation is needed before the blank can be filled. In my series the latest date for Berkeley is August 23; Mount Hamilton, September 15, and Marin County, October 11. In the spring the earliest records come from Golden Gate Park and Lake Merced where the bird is abundant for a week or more before it becomes conspicuous in Berkeley. The earliest date for Berkeley is based upon a nest containing one fresh egg on February 13, 1920, indicating an arrival during the first week of February.

Species	WINTER VISITANTS			Departure Latest date
	Earliest date	Arrival Average date	No. years recorded	
Cedar Waxwing.....	Sept. 5, 1929	Sept. 18	6	June 5, 1921
Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	Sept. 7, 1922	Sept. 23	8	May 5, 1932
Gambel Sparrow.....	Sept. 11, 1917	Sept. 23	22	May 4, 1933
Townsend Warbler.....	Sept. 9, 1927	Sept. 25	19	May 15, 1933
Golden-crowned Sparrow.....	Sept. 18, 1928	Sept. 26	22	May 18, 1933
Say Phoebe.....	Sept. 20, 1931	Sept. 26	8
Fox Sparrow.....	Sept. 14, 1930	Sept. 27	19	May 2, 1933
Audubon Warbler.....	Sept. 10, 1932	Sept. 30	23	May 5, 1929
Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	Sept. 22, 1931	Sept. 30	23	Apr. 20, 1927
Dwarf Hermit Thrush.....	Sept. 20, 1928	Oct. 3	23	Apr. 27, 1924
Sierra Junco.....	Sept. 19, 1918	Oct. 6	6
Western Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	Sept. 19, 1918	Oct. 7	11	Apr. 17, 1927
Coast Varied Thrush.....	Sept. 24, 1929	Oct. 8	7	Apr. 28, 1932
Western Robin.....	Nov. 1, 1915	Nov. 6	5

Already the dates of departure for the Gambel, Golden-crowned and Fox sparrows have been pushed forward several days by the records of persons who are banding birds. It remains to be seen just how general will be the knowledge accumulated by this new method of observation, but it is easy to predict that many uncertainties will be cleared up and more exact information as to the movements of the different subspecies will be made possible.

Berkeley, California, August 28, 1933.