southern pacific coast region



GUY McCASKIE

he Region experienced a decidedly The Region experience ______ drier than normal winter with slightly cooler than expected temperatures. Some of the mountain passerines that moved into the lowlands during fall remained through winter, with Mountain Chickadees considered more numerous and widespread than usual along the western and eastern bases of the mountains, particularly so in Los Angeles; numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches remaining higher than normal along the coast; and Golden-crowned Kinglets being more widespread and numerous than expected, but none of these being as numerous and widespread as after major fall flights.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China L. Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme n.e. Kern Co.); N.E.S.S. (north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.); S.D.N.H.M. (San Diego Natural History Museum); S.E.S.S. (south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co.); V.A.F.B. (Vandenberg Air Force Base in n. coastal Santa Barbara Co.). Since virtually all rarities in s. California are seen by many observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird are included. Documentation for species on the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) review list is forwarded to the CBRC Secretary and archived at the Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

GREBES THROUGH HAWKS

A Red-necked Grebe, rare s. of *Monterey*, in Long Beach, *Los Angeles*, Jan. 9–26 (MSanM) was the only one reported in the Region. Short-tailed Shearwaters were more numerous than usual, as indicated by at least five off Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo*, Jan. 17 (TME); two off Pt. Dume, *Los Angeles*, Dec. 20 (KLG); and 10 off La Jolla, *San Diego*, Jan. 1 (GMcC). Two ad. Brown Boobies on the Los Coronodos Is. off extreme n. Baja California Jan. 31 (PAG) appeared paired and on territory; this species is not known to nest on the Pacific coast of Baja California (Howell & Webb. *The Birds of Mexico and N. Central America*. 1995) and is considered a casual straggler off S. California.

The Tricolored Heron found in Imperial Beach, San Diego, July 25 was still present Feb. 17, and another found in Bolsa Chica, Orange, Oct. 31 remained through the end of the period; one inland at N.E.S.S. Feb. 14–27 (MDB) was believed to be the same bird present at this location last winter. The ad. Reddish Egret around Imperial Beach since Aug. 2 was still present Mar. 14, and was the same identifiable individual that spent the past 16 winters in this area.

A Trumpeter Swan on Pleasant Valley Res. near Bishop, Inyo, Jan. 2-Feb 13 (J&DP), then about 20 mi s. with Tundra Swans on Tinnemaha Res. Feb. 22 through the end of the period (T&JH), was banded as an adult in Idaho 7 Dec. 1996 and is only the 3rd non-translocated/managed individual found in S. California. The female Tufted Duck found near Saticoy, Ventura, Nov. 29 remained through Feb. 12 and was the only one reported in the Region. Oldsquaws were more numerous along the coast than usual with at least 20 reported, including up to six together on San Diego Bay in February (ECH, SW) and single birds inland in Laguna Niguel, Orange, Dec. 19-Mar. 22 (KLP); La Mesa, San Diego, Jan. 18-Feb. 10 (JiM); and on the Colorado R. below Parker Dam, San Bernardino, Jan. 31-Feb. 28 (MMS). A Barrow's Goldeneye, rare in S. California, was with Com. Goldeneve near Bishop Jan. 28-Feb. 7 (GMcC), and two more were with Com. Goldeneye on L. Isabella, Kern, Feb. 23 (MTH).

An ad. Broad-winged Hawk photographed near El Centro, *Imperial*, Feb. 25–26 (KZK) appeared to be an exceptionally early migrant, possibly moving with Swainson's Hawks in the same area. A Swainson's Hawk in Lakeside, San Diego, Jan. 29 (MBS) was either wintering locally or an exceptionally early spring migrant, but 13 around El Centro and Westmorland, Imperial, Feb. 15 (KLG) and 20-30 over Santa Ana, Orange, Feb. 17 (BE) were clearly migrants. The Zone-tailed Hawk spending its 6th winter in Goleta, Santa Barbara, was last seen Mar. 24; another spending its 6th winter around Ojai, Ventura, was present Dec. 20-Mar. 7 (JST); one was over Costa Mesa, Orange, Jan. 27 (PHB); another was near Perris, Riverside, Feb. 1 (AH); and up to two were around Escondido, San Diego, Nov. 19-Mar. 15 (GMcC). Roughlegged Hawks were virtually nonexistent in S. California with two in e. San Luis Obispo Feb. 15 (TME) and one near Independence, Inyo, Jan. 15 (J&DP) being the only ones reported.

RAILS THROUGH GULLS

An emaciated **Yellow Rail**, found alive by jogger Dan Martin on a residential street in Santee Dec. 16, was the first for *San Diego* (* S.D.N.H.M.) and 6th in S. California. A Sandhill Crane around Ventura Dec. 20– Jan. 7 (RK) was on the coast and away from areas of regular occurrence.

All at known wintering localities were five Pacific Golden-Plovers at the airfield on n. V.A.F.B. Jan. 3 (BHi); one near Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, Dec. 27 (BHi); up to three in Seal Beach, Orange, Dec. 1-Feb. 12 (DRW); one at Bolsa Chica Jan. 17-Mar. 14 (GM); another in nearby Huntington Beach Nov. 12-Mar. 3 (JEP); one on Upper Newport Bay Jan. 3 (TEW); and three in Imperial Beach Jan. 30-Mar. 20 (JC). Thirteen Mt. Plovers at the airfield on n. V.A.F.B. Jan. 3 (BHi) and up to 23 at Seal Beach Dec. 24-27 (JF) were along the coast where now very rare; 25 near Lost Hills, Kern, Dec. 19 (VH) and up to 200 near Lancaster, Los Angeles, Dec. 6-Feb. 7 (M&NF) were the only others reported away from the area around S.E.S.S. An oystercatcher flying past the pier in Newport Beach, Orange, Feb. 6 (MJSanM) was either an American or an American × Black hybrid.

A Solitary Sandpiper near Bishop Oct. 19-Dec 9 (J&DP) was either a remarkably late fall migrant or attempting to winter locally Three Ruddy Turnstones at S.E.S.S. Feb 27-Mar. 4 (MAP) had undoubtedly spent the winter locally on the Salton Sea. A Black Turnstone at S.E.S.S. Feb. 2-27 (JoM) was only the 2nd to be found on the Salton Sea in winter. A Pectoral Sandpiper near Saticoy Dec. 26 (ST) was unusually late. A female Ruff was at S.E.S.S. Dec. 2-Feb. 25 (KZK), and another in Oxnard, Ventura, Mar 15 (DDJ) was believed to have wintered locally. A Wilson's Phalarope at SESS Nov. 29 through the period (GMcC) was one of a very few known to have successfully wintered in California.

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A 2nd-year Laughing Gull at S.E.S.S. Dec 12 (GMcC) was the only one reported. Far inland, where unexpected, were an ad. Mew Gull in Bakersfield, Kern, Dec. 19 (MTH), one at Salton City, Imperial, Jan. 1 (DSP), another at S.E.S.S. Dec. 5 through the period (MAP); and a first-year bird near Lakeview, Riverside, Dec. 19 (MAP). A pale first-vear gull at Dana Pt., Orange, Feb. 13-Mar 13 (DR) was variously identified as an Iceland and an intergrade Iceland/ Thayer's gull based on characters given by Kevin J Zimmer (Plumage Variation in "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull. Birding 23:254-269, 1991); similar pale first-winter gulls have previously been reported in California and are currently being reviewed as Iceland Gulls by the CBRC. Five ad. Lesser Blackbacked Gulls were present with one at NESS Jan. 26-Feb 27 (MAP) believed to be the same bird present here last winter; another in Brawley, Imperial, Dec. 30-Feb. 1 (ST, MSanM); one at Dana Pt. for its 5th winter Nov. 4-Mar. 10 (KLP), joined by another Nov. 30-Dec. 7 (DSP); and the 5th in nearby Santa Ana Feb. 13 (VH). Up to five W Gulls at S.E.S.S. Dec. 5-Jan 31 (GMcC, MAP) were unexpected, but numbers reaching this inland body of water appear to be on the increase.

Eleven first-year Glaucous Gulls along the coast between Pt. Piedras Blancas, *San Luts Obispo*, and San Diego, along with single birds inland near Arvin, *Kern*, Dec. 19 (MTH), N.E.S.S. Jan. 26 (MAP), and S E S S Jan. 30–Feb. 14 (GMcC), were more than expected. Black-legged Kittiwakes were remarkably scarce along the coast, but the presence of about 150 off Morro Bay Jan 16 (TC) and at least 60 30–40 mi w. of San Diego Feb. 11 (PL) suggests some were offshore, at least later in the winter. A firstyear bird on L. Cachuma, *Santa Barbara*, Jan 20 (CS) was inland, where unexpected. An exceptionally late ad. Sabine's Gull flew past La Jolla Dec. 6 (GMcC).

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

A White-winged Dove at N.E.S.S. Jan. 2 (CMcG) was one of a very few found inland away from oases in Anza-Borrego Desert S.P. in e. San Diego; one in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Dec. 27 (LRB) and another near Pt. Mugu, Ventura, Jan. 30 (WW) were the only two found along the coast. A Lesser Nighthawk at Finney L. near S.E.S.S. Feb. 25 (TRC) was probably the same bird present at this location last winter. Up to three Com. Poorwills near Lompoc Dec. 16-Jan. 3 (BHi); two in the Santa Ynez Mts., Santa Barbara, Jan. 2 (GT); two more near Refugio Pass above Santa Barbara Jan. 12-21 (SB); two on Santa Cruz I. Dec. 12-13 (MAH); and another in Trabuco Canyon, Orange, Feb. 25-Mar. 3 (RAH) represented an unexpected number for winter. One or two Vaux's Swifts in Goleta Dec. 24-Jan. 26 (JEL); ten over Whittier, Los Angeles, Dec. 24 (MSanM); and 100+ near San Clemente, San Diego, Feb. 24 (DWA) were wintering locally. The female Broad-billed Hummingbird found in Goleta Nov. 28 was still present at the end of the period. The male Broad-tailed Hummingbird in Santa Barbara since Nov. 17 was present through the period. A male Allen's Hummingbird near Inyokern Feb. 16-20 (TM) was the first in e. Kern.

A female Williamson's Sapsucker in Brawley Jan. 18–19 (RCH, PEL) was the first to be found in *Imperial*. Reports of at least 12 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers scattered throughout the Region probably reflect observers' familiarity with distinguishing characters separating this species from Rednaped Sapsuckers rather than an increase in occurrence. A White-headed Woodpecker on Figueroa Mt. near Santa Barbara Jan. 17 (DC) and another near L. Isabella Dec. 6 (JCW) were away from any known area of normal occurrence.

A Greater Pewee, a casual straggler to California, at Brock Ranch Dec. 24–Feb. 15 (MAP) was the 3rd to be found in *Imperial*. The Least Flycatcher found at Upper Newport Bay, *Orange*, Nov. 21 was still present Feb. 24, and another was near Imperial Beach Dec. 26–Jan. 23 (TRC). A Hammond's Flycatcher, very rare in winter, in Huntington Beach Nov. 9–Mar. 16 (JEP) was joined by a 2nd Feb. 16–Mar. 16 (KSG), and a 3rd was in Laguna Niguel Jan. 7–9 (KLP).

Twenty-five Gray Flycatchers, the "expected" *Empidonax* in winter, were reported

from along the coast and the s.e. portion of the Region. A Dusky Flycatcher in Covina, Los Angeles, Jan. 17-28 (TEW) and another in Yorba Linda, Orange, Jan. 17-18 (DRW) were two of a very few to be found in California in winter. A dozen Pacific-slope Flycatchers were reported along the coast and in the lowlands e. to the Riverside/San Bernardino basin, but six of these were in December when possibly late fall stragglers rather than true wintering birds. There were more E. Phoebes than expected with single birds near Lompoc Feb. 28 through the period (NG); at L. Cachuma Jan. 9-Mar. 13 (MAH); near Santa Paula, Ventura, Dec. 27-Jan. 2 (ST); in Topanga, Los Angeles, Dec. 20 (RJN); near L. Elsinor, Riverside, Feb. 7-14 (KSG); near Lakeview, Riverside, Dec. 23 (AEM); N.E.S.S. Jan. 2-31 (BT); S.E.S.S. Feb. 6-25 (KC); and Borrego Springs, San Diego, Dec. 20 (PP). Three Dusky-capped Flycatchers were found this winter: one in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo, Dec. 13-19 (TME); another in Ventura Dec. 28-Jan 2 (DP); and a 3rd in Long Beach Dec. 27 still present Mar. 28 (JEP). The only Ash-throated Flycatchers reported were one in Long Beach Nov. 3-27 (KSG) and another near Imperial Beach Dec. 8 (PU). Single Tropical Kingbirds in Goleta Nov 28-Mar. 3 (DC) and Dec. 4-Jan. 2 (DAK), Ventura Jan. 10 (JST), Oxnard Feb. 20-Mar. 16 (LO'N), Los Alamitos, Orange, Nov. 25-Dec. 8 (JEP), and near Imperial Beach Dec. 13-Feb 5 (GMcC), along with two near Pt. Mugu Jan. 31-Feb. 27 (AS), represented an average number for winter. The Thickbilled Kingbird in Pomona since Oct. 14 was still present Feb. 19, and one photographed near Santa Paula Feb. 25-Mar. 3 (SH) was the first for Ventura. Two Scissortailed Flycatchers were reported: one in Irvine, Orange, Jan. 1-30 (DRW), believed to be the same bird in nearby Newport Beach Mar. 2–10 (KSG); and the other near Escondido, San Diego, Dec. 23-Jan. 2 (RP, CGE).

VIREOS THROUGH SHRIKES

A **Yellow-throated Vireo** in Westminster, Orange, Dec. 29–Feb. 15 (MB) was only the 2nd known to have wintered in California. Reports of Plumbeous Vireos (40) far outnumbered those of Cassin's Vireos (nine) along the coast and the lowlands e. to the Riverside/San Bernardino basin, and single Plumbeous Vireos at S.E.S.S. Dec. 5–Jan. 16 (MAP) and in Brawley Dec. 12 (TRC) were the only "Solitary" vireos in the e. portion of the Region. A Blue-headed Vireo, a casual straggler to California, was in Orange Oct. 31–Jan. 16 (DRW). A Warbling Vireo near Holtville, *Imperial*, Jan. 23 (BF) was one of very few found in winter; single birds in Long Beach Dec. 26 (DS) and San Diego Dec. 15 (PAG) were considered exceptionally late fall migrants, and one in Anza-Borrego S. P. Feb. 27 (PJ) was an early spring migrant.

Two Bank Swallows at S.E.S.S. Dec. 12 (GMcC) were either remarkably late migrants or attempting to winter locally, and one there Feb. 14 (ST) was believed to have wintered locally. A calling Juniper Titmouse in California City Feb. 24 (MTH) was the first to be identified in *Kern*; we know that titmice periodically stray into this area of the high desert and that Oak Titmice were present last fall, but we are in the dark as to which titmouse is more regular. A Winter Wren at S.E.S.S. Dec. 5–22 (MAP) was identified by call as *hyemalis* from the e. North America population (KLG).

The Gray Catbird present in California City since Oct. 18 was still present Dec. 18. A Brown Thrasher in Los Angeles Jan. 25-Mar. 18 (LS) was the only one found. A Bendire's Thrasher, rare in winter, was in the San Felipe Valley of e. San Diego Dec. 21 (PU), another was at nearby Agua Caliente Springs Jan. 21 (ECH), and a 3rd was on the coast in Costa Mesa, Orange, Jan. 3-Feb. 20 (BML). A male Gray Silky-flycatcher at Falcon Group Camp in the Santa Ana Mts., Orange, Jan. 29-Feb. 18 (DL) was the subject of much discussion regarding genuine vagrancy (closest known area of normal occurrence for this normally resident species is 650 mi distant in s.e. Sonora, Mexico) vs. escapee and is now under review by the C.B.R.C. An imm. N. Shrike in Aspendell, Invo, Jan. 28 (GMcC) was the only one reported this winter.

WARBLERS

A Tennessee Warbler in Bishop Dec. 14–15 (J&DP) was remarkably late for that area of California; one in Goleta Jan. 6 (SEF), another in Santa Barbara Dec. 20-Jan. 2 (JEL), and a 3rd in Irvine Jan. 1-3 (TEW) were the only reported wintering. A Virginia's Warbler in Riverside Dec. 12-25 (DSC) was evidently attempting to winter locally. A Lucy's Warbler at Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo, Dec. 19 (TME); another near downtown Los Angeles Feb. 15 (KLG); and one in Brea, Orange, Feb. 28-Mar. 6 (KSG) were the only three found. A N. Parula in Santa Barbara Feb. 7-Mar. 30 (SCR) and another in Anaheim Nov. 29-Mar. 21 (BML) were the only two found this winter. A Chestnut-sided Warbler was present in

Long Beach Dec. 27–Jan. 24 (KSG), and another was in Atwater Village in Los Angeles Feb. 16–21 (RB).

A Magnolia Warbler in Covina Jan. 15-Feb. 25 (MJSanM) was one of a very few found wintering in California. A male Black-throated Blue Warbler first seen in Coronado, San Diego, in December was still present Mar. 28 (HW). Five Black-throated Green Warblers were present with one in Long Beach Dec. 27 (DRW); another in Laguna Beach, Orange, Jan. 21-23 (RAE); one in La Habra Heights, Los Angeles, Mar. 11 (RAH); another in Oceanside, San Diego, Nov. 16 through the period (PAG); and the 5th in National City, San Diego, Nov. 5 through the period (DWA), the latter two returning for their 3rd winters. Small numbers of Hermit Warblers regularly winter along the coast of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara but are rare s. of there, so single birds in Anaheim, Orange, Nov. 13-Jan. 1 (BML), another near Imperial Beach Dec. 19 through the end of the period (TRC), and an unprecedented individual in the Greenhorn Mts., Kern, Dec. 26 (SAL) were of note. A Blackburnian Warbler near Corona, Riverside, Dec. 10 (IEP) could have been a very late fall vagrant, but one on the Palos Verdes Pen., Los Angeles, Dec. 26-Jan. 23 (JI) and another in Los Angeles Feb. 24-26 (KLG) were only the 2nd and 3rd to be found in S. California in winter and two of a very few found wintering in North America. The Pine Warbler found in Long Beach Nov. 25 was still present Mar. 28. A Prairie Warbler in Los Osos Dec. 19-Feb. 27 (JSR); another photographed in Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Jan. 17 through the period (BHi); and a 3rd near Pomona Feb. 13 (KLG) were clearly wintering.

Ten Palm Warblers along the coast were less than average, and one inland in Bishop Dec. 9-22 (T&JH) was only the 2nd in Inyo at this time of the year. Twenty-two Blackand-white Warblers along the coast were a little more than expected, and 20 Am. Redstarts in the same area were certainly more than average. The Worm-eating Warbler found in Irvine Oct. 18 was still present Jan. 14 and believed to have successfully wintered locally. Four N. Waterthrushes along the coast were less than expected. A Kentucky Warbler in Morongo Valley, San Bernardino, Dec. 4-5 (VL, EAC) is best considered a late fall straggler, but one in Vista, San Diego, Mar. 15-25 (PAG) had probably wintered locally. A remarkably late Canada Warbler was near Guadalupe, Santa Barbara, Dec. 10 (JMC). A late-moving Painted Redstart was in Yucca Valley, San Bernard*ino*, Dec. 3 (EAC), and one found in Brawley Nov. 29 was still present Mar 19

TANAGERS THROUGH ORIOLES

Seven Summer and at least 60 Western tanagers along the coast were about average The presence of at least 12 Clay-colored Sparrows along the coast was more than expected. A Black-chinned Sparrow on the w. slope of the Cuyamaca Mts., San Diego, Feb. 7 (PU) was one of a very few found in California in winter. A Lark Bunting in Independence Dec. 18 (RH), at least one on the Elkhorn Plain in e. San Luis Obispo Jan 1-2 (WAB, GPS), another in Orange Dec 20-23 (JSB), two together in the w Antelope Valley, Los Angeles, Jan. 24-Feb 7 (DP), and a 5th near Calimesa, Riverside, Feb. 16 (RAE) were the only found A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows photographed near Port Hueneme, Ventura, Feb 15-21 (DDJ) was in a weed-choked field, very different from the salt marsh habitat at Morro Bay and Upper Newport Bay where up to five were present Dec. 4-Feb 15 (TME) and one Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (JEP), respectively. Harris's Sparrows were decidedly scarce, with one near Onyx, Kern, Dec 27 (BG) and another at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino, Dec. 29 through the period (KL) being the only two reported. The only longspurs reported were three Laplands in Seal Beach Dec. 27 (MW).

A female **Pyrrhuloxia** in Costa Mesa Feb. 7-Mar. 14 (PHB) was the 3rd to reach the coast of California. Seven Rose-breasted Grosbeaks along the coast represented an expected number for winter, and the only Black-headed Grosbeak was in Cowan Heights, Orange, Feb. 20 (RAH). A male Indigo Bunting photographed near Lompoc Jan. 30-Feb. 3 (BHo) was one of a very few to be found in California in winter A male and a female Painted Bunting in Niland, Imperial, Dec. 22 (PAG, MSanM), with the female still present Jan. 18 (PEL), pose an interesting problem for the CBRC members evaluating records since males are often considered escapees and since there are no endorsed winter records for California. A Dickcissel at a feeder in Carpinteria Feb. 24-28 (LRB) and another in Sylmar, Los Angeles, Nov. 25-Dec. 18 (RB) are two of a very few found at this time of the year in California.

A male Rusty Blackbird in Santa Barbara Dec. 6–Jan. 18 (PMcN) and another at C.L. Dec. 7 (SS) were the only two reported A photographed Com. Grackle in Lompoc Jan. 3 through the period (BH1) adds another to the ever-increasing number recorded in California. A Bronzed Cowbird near Imperial Beach Dec. 1 (JT* to S.D.N.H.M.) was only the 2nd to reach the coast of California. A female Orchard Oriole was in Huntington Beach Jan. 19-22 (KSG), and another in Niland Dec. 22-Jan. 23 (MSanM) was the 4th to be found around S.E.S.S.. An impressive 15 Baltimore Orioles were found along with the regular wintering population of Bullock's Orioles along the coast. At least 10 Scott's Orioles along the coast and two along the s. slope of the Laguna Mts. in San Diego Feb. 2 (PU) were all away from the w. edge of the Colorado Desert where small numbers regularly winter.

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southern pacific coast

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