

A few Great-tailed Grackles continue to be seen in s.e. Oregon, with singles near Ontario, *Malheur*, 6 Jun (R. L. Rowland) and at Malheur throughout the summer (m.ob.). Last summer, Washington's first **Tricolored Blackbirds** were found near Wilson Cr., *Grant*; this summer, two pairs were present there 18 Jun (EH). A Com. Grackle reported from Page Springs, *Harney*, 28 Jun will be about the 22nd for Oregon if accepted by the O.R.B.C. (S. Nemetz). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were nesting at 5 locales on Ft. Lewis, *Pierce/Thurston*, WA (SA), one of the few w. Washington locations with annual breeding. Washington's 3rd **Hooded Oriole** was at Joyce, *Clallam*, 17–21 Jul (†BN). A few White-winged Crossbills were found this summer, including one at Mt. Dickerman, *Snohomish*, WA, 11 Jul (K. Knittle) and about 20 near Sherman Pass, *Ferry*, WA, 20–21 Jul (BTw).

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in *italic type* are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 358.

middle pacific coast region



**DON ROBERSON,
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Persistent northwest winds associated with La Niña continued into summer, resulting in cool temperatures and strong nutrient upwelling that led to high seabird productivity. After reproduction of many seabirds was hampered by last year's El Niño conditions (warm, relatively nutrient-poor water over broad areas), it was encouraging to see large numbers of juvenile Brown Pelicans, Brandt's and Pelagic cormorants, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, Cassin's Auldets, Heermann's Gulls, and Elegant Terns. Onshore it was a rather typical summer, foggy along the coast and sunny inland, although some montane snowpacks lingered later than normal.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (*California Bird Records Committee*); C.V. (*Central Valley*); F.I. (*Southeast Farallon Island*); N.S. (*National Seashore*); S.F. (*San Francisco*); R.P. (*Regional Park*); R.S. (*Regional Shoreline*); S.R. (*State Reserve*); W.A. (*Wildlife Area*). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documenta-

tion are normally not published. These include C.B.R.C. review species and claims of first county records. Birds banded at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey*, should also be credited to Big Sur Ornithology Lab.

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

Pacific Loons migrating N in June are not unusual, but 377 in one hour flying N past Pelican Pt., *Santa Cruz*, 10 Jun (DLSu) and 350 in 1.5 hours over Pt. Reyes N.S., *Marin*, 5 Jun (SBT) indicated an unusually strong passage. Inland Com. Loons, typically averaging two per summer, included two at Upper Twin L., *Mono*, 23 Jun (MFRb) and one at Crowley L., *Mono*, 23 Jul (PJM). A single Horned Grebe at Butte Valley W.A., *Siskiyou*, 17 Jun (MFRb) was slightly below expectation. A Red-necked Grebe at Pt. Reyes 11–13 Jun (EDG, LLu) was at the site of most of our summer records. A pair of Eared Grebes with chicks at Hayward R.S. 8 Jul (RJR) provided *Alameda*'s 3rd breeding record; another nesting attempt in early August failed (RJR). Large numbers of Black-footed Albatross were on Monterey Bay throughout July, with a local summer record of 359 on 21 Jul (DLSh, JiD). Northern Fulmars occur erratically during summer months; 25–30 on Monterey Bay, *Monterey*, 10 Jul (DLSh, JiD) represented a fairly high summer count. Since the first accepted record of Manx Shearwater on 25 Jul 1993, there had been no records between 21 May and 8 Aug until this year, when one was over the Monterey Seavalleys, *Monterey*, 31 Jul (†DR, †SFB). A Brown Booby, annual in summer/fall since 1991, was on Castle Rocks, *Monterey*, 22–27 Jul (H. Gellerman, †DR et al.).

Six Am. Bitterns along Wise Rd. 4 Jun in e. *Placer* (EP) were indicative of widespread increases for this species on the e. side of the Sacramento Valley and adjacent foothills during recent years. Marsh habitat has been increasing as a result of higher rainfall, irrigation, removal of cattle, mitigation wetlands, and new urban runoff (*vide* BDW). Least Bittern sightings have gone up in recent years as well: singles were noted 8 & 12 Jun at Conway Ranch, *Yolo* (B. Hamil-

SA The banded Arctic Tern spending its 6th summer at Hayward R.S., *Alameda*, actually *nested* this year, apparently hybridizing with a Forster's Tern (†RJR, ph. PEG). The Arctic female had unsuccessfully attempted to solicit copulations from Forster's Terns in previous years, but this summer it shared incubation duties with a Forster's at a 3-egg nest from 18 Jun to 8 Jul, when the eggs hatched. Two of the chicks died, and on 12 Jul San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory collected one dead chick and banded the surviving one. This chick fledged around 5 Aug; it and the adult Arctic were last seen 17 Aug. Although the fledgling was similar in size and overall plumage to a Forster's, the presence of more extensive black on the hindcrown (intermediate between Arctic and Forster's) suggested actual hybridization rather than brood adoption by the Arctic.

An Arctic Tern (left) and Forster's Tern (right) produced this hybrid chick (center) that survived to fledge around 5 August at Hayward Regional Shoreline, central California. This shot was taken 19 June 1999. Not only was this hybrid combination apparently unrecorded previously, but also Arctic Terns had not been recorded nesting along the West Coast south of Everett, Washington. Photograph/ Phil E. Gordon



ton) and at Vasona Res., *Santa Clara*, 10 Jul (D. Bleher). Little Blue Herons away from their regular sites in s. S.F. Bay were an adult at Carmel R. mouth, *Monterey*, 19 Jun (J. Barnum, ph. BHL) and an immature at Coyote Hills R.P., *Alameda*, 1–3 Aug (AWi, †JMR).

Five Wood Ducks at Lee Vining, *Mono*, 26 Jun (I. Mendelbaum, D&JP) provided a

SA A couple of imm. California Condors from recent repatriations in *Monterey* began following Turkey Vultures to "wild" carcasses (mostly seals and sea lions) on remote Big Sur beaches this summer rather than surviving solely on carrion placed for them by project organizers (Ventana Wilderness Society, *fide* DR). While this caused some concern about possible lead ingestion (fishermen illegally shoot sea lions), it also recalled the era when this species was first described to science. George Vancouver collected those first condors as they fed on whale carcasses on the shores of Monterey Bay in 1792.

first summer record for the Mono basin. All but one of 17 Blue-winged Teal reported were males. In *Humboldt* 12 were considered northbound migrants 4–11 Jun (m.ob.), but individuals in *Santa Cruz* 4–15 Jun (DLSu), *Mono* 14 Jul (BtM), and *Mendocino* 4–19 Jun (GEC, CEV) were better considered nonbreeders or post-breeding dispersants. A pair in Martinez, *Contra Costa*, 6 Jul (SAG) showed no evidence of breeding. Three summering Long-tailed Ducks were holdovers from spring—one to at least 29 Jul in Moss Landing, *Monterey* (RF, R. Fowler), and two at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma*, through 31 Jul (LLu, CLu, BDP). Another was at outer Pt. Reyes 6–12 Jun (LLu, CLu, EDG).

Nesting Sharp-shinned Hawks are proving to be more numerous in the Santa Cruz Mts. than ever expected. No fewer than six family groups or begging young were located in *Santa Cruz*, and seven more were in *San Mateo*, mostly in secondary redwood forest. Secretive behavior, poorly known calls, and use of habitat that attracted limited coverage by birders are likely contributors to poor past detection (*fide* DLSu), but population increase cannot be ruled out

and fits a pattern observed elsewhere in the Region. Calling Black Rails were discovered at 2 new sites in *Butte*, with one at Upper Bidwell Park and two near Centerville 8 Jul (J. Tecklin, TDM) extending the n. range for the species in the e. foothills. Common Moorhen was confirmed breeding in *Siskiyou* at Shasta Valley W.A. 9 Jul (RE) when two adults and four chicks were seen.

PLOVERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Three ad. Am. Golden-Plovers were noted: one at Pescadero, *San Mateo*, 5 Jul (SCR, BMcK) was early, and two were at Novato, *Marin*, 14 Jul (EDG). Adult Pacific Golden-Plovers were in *Alameda* and *Marin* on 14 Jul, with one at Hayward R.S. (RJR) and three at Abbotts Lagoon, Pt. Reyes (EDG, m.ob.). Twenty-two Long-billed Curlews near Indian Creek Res. 15 Jul (†JLx) constituted an *Alpine* first. The Region's 6th and 7th inland Black Turnstones were e. of Kettleman City 13–31 Jul (RH) and at Mono L. 29 Jul (J. R. Jehl), providing firsts for *Kings* and *Mono*, respectively. A Semipalmated Sandpiper along Brewer Rd. 24 Jul (EDG, TEa) was *Placer's* first. An ad.

Baird's Sandpiper at Princeton, *San Mateo*, 26 Jun (RSTh) was exceptionally early and represented one of very few June records. Additional county firsts included an alternate-plumaged male Ruff 5 Jul and a female Red Phalarope 4–5 Jun s. of Honey L., *Lassen* (ph. †A. Brees) and two juv. Short-billed Dowitchers at Loyalton, *Sierra*, 12 Aug (†JMcC).

Rare on the n. coast, an ad. Laughing Gull visited both the *Sonoma* and *Mendocino* sides of the Gualala R. mouth 21 Jun (†BDP, DE). After a record spring, four Franklin's Gulls were about average for summer: first-year birds were at Pigeon Pt., *San Mateo*, 11 Jun (RSTh) and Lower Klamath N.W.R., *Siskiyou*, 15 Jun (RE, MFRb), and adults were near Five Points, *Fresno*, 24 Jun (JSe) and n.w. of Shelter Cove, *Humboldt*, 20 Jul (EE). A few more "northern" gulls than usual lingered into June, all first-year birds. A Mew Gull, recorded in the Region about 2 summers out of 3, was at the Pescadero Cr. mouth 6 Jun (AJ) for *San Mateo's* first summer record. Only slightly more regular during this season, Herring Gulls were in Palo Alto, *Santa Clara*, 5 Jun (SCR) and Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo*, 11–12 Jun (AJ). More unusual was a Thayer's Gull at Palo Alto 5 Jun (SCR); there are fewer than 10 Regional summer records of this species. A Glaucous Gull at Baldwin Cr. Beach, *Santa Cruz*, to 9 Jun (SAI, DLSu) and singles in *Humboldt* at the mouths of Redwood Cr. 14 Jun and the Mad R. the next day (both KI) nearly doubled our summer records for this species. After an unprecedented nearshore spring passage that continued well into June, Black-legged Kittiwakes oversummered along the c. coast in record numbers. High counts, nearly all first-year birds, included 110 at the Carmel R. mouth, *Monterey*, 19 Jun (SFB), 185 along the *San Mateo* coast between Gazos Cr. and Pescadero Cr. 5 Jul (SCR), and 140 at Pigeon Pt. 23 Jul (RSTh). Similar oversummering has occurred 4 other times over the past 40 years—always following strong nearshore passages of kittiwakes in spring.

Two ad. **Royal Terns** at Año Nuevo S.R., *San Mateo*, 26 Jul (†PJM) were very unusual, as this species has been recorded in the Region fewer than 10 times in the past 2 decades. Low Elegant Tern abundance in June and early July likely reflected low ocean temperatures (e.g., compare this summer's high Humboldt Bay count of 47 on 28 Jul (DFx) to the 1700 present during the 1992 El Niño).

For the 2nd consecutive year, Californ-

ia's only inland-breeding Least Terns nested at private ponds in s.w. *Kings* (†JSe). A pair was first noted 18 May, and six adults were observed from late May through June. A nest with eggs on 17 Jun eventually failed, but another produced one fledgling which was present with four adults to 6 Aug. Black Skimmers in the s. S.F. Bay area included at least three in *Alameda*, where a nest at Hayward R.S. fledged one young in early August (RJR), a pair nesting at the site of last year's first successful *San Mateo* nest in the Menlo Park salt ponds 25 Jun into August (PJM), and at least three in *Santa Clara*, where there was no evidence of nesting this year (WGB). Possible spring migrant skimmers were one flying N at Pigeon Pt. 11 Jun (RSTh), two at the San Lorenzo R. mouth, *Santa Cruz*, 7 Jun (DBo, L. Wilson), and one at Elkhorn Slough 16 Jun (YG); one or more pairs between the Pajaro R. mouth and Moss Landing, *Monterey*, 23–25 Jul (RF, YG) were probably southbound. Rare but nearly annual in summer, an Ancient Murrelet was on Humboldt Bay 14 Jun, and four were off Westport, *Mendocino*, 21 Jul (both EE). A Horned Puffin 5 km w. of the Eel R. mouth, *Humboldt*, 13 Jun (EE) presaged an August influx.

Common Nighthawks seen and heard over Cupertino, *Santa Clara*, 17 Jun (†L.B. Gray), and Santa Cruz, *Santa Cruz*, 21 Jul (D. Breese) were among the very few records for these counties. Lesser Nighthawks were n. of their known range at 2 sites in e. *Mono* (PJM). A Red-naped Sapsucker, w. of its breeding range at Canyon Cr. Meadows 23–25 Jul (GSL), was only *Trinity's* 3rd.

SA We no longer use the word "accidental" to describe vagrants, since the vast majority are not "accidents" but represent predictable phenomena showing recognizable patterns when enough data are available. Most are young birds making navigational errors. If you'd like to argue that "accidental" is still a useful word, try citing the Red-headed Woodpecker. The 4 prior California records, all adults, comprised two apparent spring migrants, one summering bird (at the Salton Sea!), and one coastal wintering individual. Now, yet another inexplicable adult can be added to this mix: Jim Smith photographed a **Red-headed Woodpecker** on outer Pt. Reyes, *Marin*, 17 Jul as it "telephone-pole-hopped" away from the Chimney Rock parking lot. All efforts to relocate it failed.

Apparent hybrid Red-naped × Red-breasted sapsuckers were in Trinidad, *Humboldt*, 10 Jul (SMcA) and 3 *Mono* locales (†W. Richardson); at Green Cr., *Mono*, hybrids paired together (†JyF). It now seems hybridizing sapsuckers are as likely here on the e. slope of the Sierra as are "pure" Red-naped pairs (5 records of "pure" pairs; hybrid pair details in *W. Birds* 4: 107–108). In the coastal ranges, Red-breasted Sapsuckers produced young again in *San Mateo* and *Santa Cruz* (DLSu, BMcK), while Pileated Woodpeckers were successful again in *Santa Clara* (L. Chibana).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH TANAGERS

A Hammond's Flycatcher was quite late at Hidden Gulch, *San Mateo*, 5 Jun (DLSu). Vagrant E. Kingbirds were coastal at Pt. Reyes 5 Jun (ph. RS, LLu, CLu) and Fairhaven, *Humboldt*, 2–6 Jun (KI, DFX, JCP) and were inland in e. *Sacramento* 24–27 Jun (SAb), but one in Shasta Valley, *Siskiyou*, 15 Jun (RE) was where a pair likely nested last summer. A Yellow-throated Vireo banded at Big Sur R. mouth 28 Jul (T. Gordon, JBo, ph. DR) subsequently summered and underwent a complete molt, remaining into September. *Monterey's* only previous record was one found dead 23 Aug 1981 that may also have been attempting to summer. A late migrant Red-eyed Vireo was on S.F. Bay at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo*, 2 Jun (RSTh), but one near Woodfords 11–15 Jul was summering as an *Alpine* first (†TEa, JSL). A Red-breasted Nuthatch visiting a Sacramento feeder all summer (M. B. Metcalf) caused Manolis to speculate about possible C.V. breeding in planted conifers.

A Cactus Wren singing at Yellowjacket Springs, *Mono*, 6 Jun represented California's northernmost record (PJM). A brief observation of an apparent pair of **Eastern Bluebirds** on private property near Benton Hot Springs, *Mono*, 4 Jun (†PJM) would represent a California first if the C.B.R.C. accepts the record. The nearest populations in s.e. Arizona are thought to be resident, although there is some local movement to the lowlands in winter. A vagrant Gray Catbird was along Lee Vining Cr., *Mono*, 19 Jun (J. Ellis), and a pair of Le Conte's Thrashers n. of Fish Slough 13 Jun (ph. †JLx) were away from the only known *Mono* locale in the extreme southeast. Summer Cedar Waxwing locales where nesting is poorly known included Trinity Center Airport, *Trinity*, 13 Jun (K. Goetz), McCloud, *Shasta*, 27 Jun (B&CY), and Markleeville, *Alpine*, 20 Jun (DR). A Phainopepla on the w. shore of

Mono L. 30 Jun (BtM) was only the 6th for *Mono*, and the first in summer.

Once again our "summer warbler" discussion recalls a page from the old Eastern Peterson guide. The rarest was a singing Blue-winged Warbler along Santa Rosa Cr., *Sonoma*, 2 Jun (C. Shervington, ph. DN, BDP et al.). Northern Parulas successfully nested at the Big Sur R. mouth, where up to three singing males and two females summered; a recent fledgling was netted 15 Aug (†CHO). Elsewhere along the coast were eight other N. Parulas, and another in molt 31 Jul apparently summered at Cosumnes R Preserve, *Sacramento* (JTr). Rounding out the list of more expected "eastern" warblers were two Tennessees; three Chestnut-sideds, including *Lake's* 2nd at Rodman Slough 24 Jun (JRW, BJMcI); a Magnolia at Fish Slough, *Mono*, 16 Jun (†JyF); two Palms; three Black-and-whites; six Am. Redstarts (four in *Humboldt*); and an Ovenbird on Mt Davidson, S.F., 5 Jun (DSg). Less expected were a Yellow-throated Warbler 19 Jun at Skyline Cemetery, *San Mateo* (†RSTh), and three Hoodeds: males along Butano Cr. 7 Jun (DLSu) and San Pedro Cr. 22 Jun (RSTh), both *San Mateo*, and a female netted along Little Cr. 8 Jul, a *Colusa* first (T. Gardelli, *fide* KH). "Western" warblers out of place were two Townsend's quite late in *Mono* 6–7 Jun (PJM, S. Heath) and a female in *Amador* 25 Jul that may have summered in the Sierra (MFRb). Two Summer Tanagers were reported from the coast, plus a male 15 Jul in Carmichael, *Sacramento* (SAb).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Three Clay-colored Sparrows made it to the coast in mid-June; one at Birds Landing, *Solano*, 22 Jun (†BDW) and one banded in Carmen Valley, *Sierra*, 1 Jul (†JMCC, J. Steele) provided 2nd and first county records, respectively. After the impressive May influx, Black-chinned Sparrows were discovered at various locales on Hull Mt., *Lake/Mendocino*, 9–29 Jun (JEH, RJK et al.); on Snow Mt., *Lake*, 3 Jul (D. Woodward); 5 mi inland from Cape Mendocino, a *Humboldt* first, 3 Jul (†DFx, JCP); and at Red Mt., *Trinity*, 8 Jun (JEH et al.). Sage Sparrows were unexpected in Belmont, *San Mateo*, 27 Jun (RSTh) and Sierra Valley, *Plumas*, 13 Jun (†MEa). The last of winter's Lark Bunting incursion was along Phillip Rd., *Placer*, 18 Jun (JSL). Black-throated Sparrows were also newsworthy in spring, and by June additional birds were in Killgore Hills, *Siskiyou* (RE, MFRb), and several new *Mono* sites (PJM). Grasshopper Sparrows were

reported in high numbers throughout the Region, with special mention of good breeding populations in *Santa Clara*, *San Mateo*, and *Humboldt*. Three Golden-crowned Sparrows lingered into June, the most remarkable at Sutter Cr., *Amador*, 10 Jun (MFRb). Both a White-throated Sparrow in Bayside 1 Jun (DFx, JCP) and a "Slate-colored" Junco in McKinleyville 4 Jun (GSL) were very late in *Humboldt*. A "Gray-headed" Junco on Pt. Reyes 5 Jun (RS, ph. S. Hein et al.) was not only late, but the first "pure" example of this type in *Marin*.

Fifteen Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at coastal locales (often feeders) or desert vagrant sites were more than expected, but more unusual were males in Chicago Park 14 Jun (I. Terry), *Nevada's* 2nd, and Yosemite Valley, Yosemite N.P., *Mariposa*, 24 Jun (†L. Vance). Blue Grosbeaks outside their normal range included a pair at Tubbs I., *Sonoma*, 21–25 Jul (BDP) and singles at Anderson Marsh, *Lake*, 11 Jun (†RI, †KC), a county first, and in little-worked *Placer* 4 Jun (EP) and *Amador* 3 Jul (SAG); there were also three coastal vagrants and males at 2 sites n. of their range in *Mono* (G. Ballard, PJM). Eleven Indigo Buntings (mostly singing males) were scattered widely N to *Mendocino* and *Humboldt*, including first county records in *Placer* at Pigeons Roost Canyon 22 Jun (R. Wachs) and in *Alpine* near Woodfords 30 Jun–17 Jul (†JLx). An ad. male Dickcissel along the Guadalupe R., *Santa Clara*, 24–26 Jul (MMR et al.) and a Bobolink at Cloverdale Ranch, *San Mateo*, 27 Jun (BMcK) were both unexpected.

Great-tailed Grackles consolidated recent gains and spun off new vagrants. The same male was likely responsible for young fledged from 2 nests in Seaside, *Monterey*, in early July, while a nest at Shadow Cliffs R.P., *Alameda*, produced young by 24 Jun (ALE, GFB). On the other side of the Sierra Nevada, courtship at Bridgeport 7 Jun pushed the species' range farther north into *Mono*, although no colony developed (PJM). Females in Arcata, *Humboldt*, 5 Jun (JSL, †DFx et al.) and Redding, *Shasta*, after 8 Jun (BED et al.) provided first & 2nd county records, respectively. Vagrant males reached the coast in Santa Cruz 9 Jun (SG) and 6 Jul (BHI) and at Pescadero, *San Mateo*, 18 Jun (DLSu). Two Gray-crowned Rosy Finches in Sierra Buttes 8 Jul (JMCC) were a *Sierra* county first, suggesting local breeding. Lawrence's Goldfinches were again widespread toward the c. coast and occurred north in good numbers to *Mendocino* (RJK), *Trinity* (JEH et al.), and *Tehama* (BED).

ADDENDA

Three important records from the last year were inadvertently overlooked; each adds to our knowledge about the Region's birds. An inland Gray Catbird, rare enough to be a C.B.R.C. review species, was at Bidwell Park, Chico, 7 Oct 1998 (†Rob Willis, Richard Redmond, †John & Helen Ost), a first in *Butte*. A Yellow-breasted Chat at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey*, 20 Dec 1998 (†JND) and an Indigo Bunting in a S.E. yard 30 Jan 1999 (†Paul Saraceni) were among our very few winter records for these species.

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