

southern pacific coast



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Most observers felt that there were few major waves of migrants this spring, and relatively few important rarities were found. Highlights include California's second Glossy Ibis (the first still under review by the CBRC), a Wilson's Plover, and both White-rumped and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. A Black-backed (Abeille's) Oriole in extreme sw. San Diego County was a potential natural vagrant.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); F.C.R. (Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley National Park, Inyo); G.H.P. (Galileo Hill Park in extreme e. Kern); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); S.F.K.R.P. (S. Fork Kern River Preserve, near Weldon, Kern). Because 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 of Vertebrate Zoology, Camarillo.

LOONS THROUGH IBIS

A Pacific Loon near Seeley, *Imperial*, 13 Apr (GMcC) was migrating n. from the Gulf of California with Common Loons. A first-year Yellow-billed Loon at Pt. Mugu 26 Mar (DP, ST) was the first to be found in *Ventura*, and single birds flying n. past Pt. Piedras Blancas, *San Luis Obispo*, 1 May (RR) and 19 May (RR) were seen during a 3-month survey for Gray Whales.

A Laysan Albatross over the Tanner Bank sw. of San Clemente I. 22 Apr (TMcG) was in an area where small numbers can be anticipated; single birds in the Los Angeles Basin at Baldwin Park 1 Apr (*vide* DG) and San Pedro 30 Apr (*vide* MH) were onshore and suspected to have been human-assisted. Seventy-eight Black-footed Albatrosses were seen from Pt. Piedras Blancas 16 Apr–1 Jun, with 26–28 passing 10–14 May (RR). Two Northern Fulmars in the San Pedro Channel 20 May (KLG) and single birds off Pt. Piedras Blancas 23 and 24 May (RR) were the only ones reported, indicating just how few were in s. California waters. A Flesh-footed Shearwater, rare in s. California waters, was off Pt. Piedras Blancas 11 Apr (RR), and a Manx Shearwater was seen from there 28 May (RR).

An ad. Little Blue Heron at S.E.S.S. 13 May (SK) was the only one reported away from coastal *San Diego*. Two ad. Reddish Egrets near Imperial Beach, *San Diego*, 14 May (YI) were probably spring overshoots from Baja California. The ad. Yellow-

crowned Night-Heron that has been associating with nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons in La Jolla, *San Diego*, since Oct 1981 was again present 9 Apr–6 May (AME). Another was near the San Diego R. mouth 3 May (EW). An ad. **Glossy Ibis** in alternate plumage near Calipatria, *Imperial*, 27 May (ph. MAP) was the 2nd to be reported in California.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

Two Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, casual stragglers to California, were at S.E.S.S. 28 May+ (AK). Twenty Brant on L. Henshaw in the mountains of *San Diego* 5 Mar (GMcC) and 25 near Seeley 28 Apr (GMcC) were the largest flocks reported inland; large numbers regularly move n. from wintering grounds in the Gulf of California across se. California to the Pacific coast each spring, and are normally "grounded" only during stormy conditions. Single Brant near Lancaster, *Los Angeles*, 16 Apr (MSanM) and 13 May (MSanM), one in Inyokern, *Kern*, 16 May+ (TM), and 2 in Bishop, *Inyo*, 11 May (T&JH), with one still present at the end of the period, were all outside the area of expected inland occurrence. Two Eurasian Wigeons still on Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo*, 22 Apr (JSR) were the latest of the birds present during the winter. A male Eurasian Green-winged Teal, rare but regular along the Pacific coast, was in Goleta, *Santa Barbara*, 3–21 Apr (PEL). The male Harlequin Duck found in Imperial Beach 7 Nov was still present 17 May (TS). Forty Surf Scoters on L. Henshaw 5 Mar (GMcC) was the largest flock reported inland; they, like the Brant, regularly migrate across se. California each spring; one at C.L. 26 May (SS) was the only one reported away from the area of expected inland occurrence in the se. portion of the Region. A Long-tailed Duck on Oso Flaco L., *San Luis Obispo*, 15 Apr–20 May (LM) was not only late but also slightly inland, where unexpected.

At least one Harris's Hawk was still present around Borrego Springs, *San Diego*, 22 Mar (JR) and a pair was at a nest near Boulevard, *San Diego*, in May (PU); these birds are remnants of the 1994–1995 influx. An ad. Zone-tailed Hawk around S.F.K.R.P. 1–28 Apr (SAL, RAB) was the 3rd to be found in *Kern*. A Merlin on Camp Pendleton, *San Diego*, 21 Apr (JWK) was late for s. California.

PLOVERS THROUGH PUFFINS

Four wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers

remained at Seal Beach, *Orange*, through 6 Apr (KSG), one remained at Imperial Beach through 11 May (RP), and one inland near Brawley, *Imperial*, 13 Apr (GMcC) was probably the same bird seen in this area in February. A **Wilson's Plover** in Coronado, *San Diego*, 5 May (ph. RP) established the 9th record for California. Two apparent "pure" American Oystercatchers along with a hybrid American \times Black paired with a Black Oystercatcher were found on San Nicolas I. 20 May (WW).

Because Solitary Sandpipers are scarce in spring, single birds near Bishop 5–7 Apr (NH) and 19 Apr (CG), 3 in e. *Kern* between 21 and 30 Apr (JCW, TEW), and one at S.E.S.S. 26 Apr (DSC) were of note. The Wandering Tattler found at S.E.S.S. 5 Mar remained through 24 May (BMi). A Whimbrel at Desert Center, *Riverside*, 22 Apr (RH1) was at the time peak numbers were passing through the Salton Sea, but was at a desert location where virtually unrecorded. The only Ruddy Turnstones found away from the Salton Sea were one at Tinemaha Res near Big Pine, *Inyo*, 15 May (T&JH) and 4 in the s. San Joaquin Valley near Lost Hills, *Kern*, 11 May (JS). Two Black Turnstones on the Salton Sea near Salton City, *Imperial*, 6 Jun (GMcC) and one at N.E.S.S. 11 June (MAP) were inland and unusually late for spring migrants. A Surfbird, most unusual inland, was near Lancaster 13–21 May (KL). The only Sanderling reported inland away from the Salton Sea was one on Tinemaha Res 19 May (T&JH). A Semipalmated Sandpiper on Tinemaha Res. 5 May (T&JH) was the only one found this spring. A **White-rumped Sandpiper** photographed at C.L. 25–29 May (SS) was the first to be found in *Kern* and about the 10th for s. California. A Pectoral Sandpiper, rare anywhere in California in spring, was in Lakeside, *San Diego*, 10–11 May (OO). An alternate-plumage **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** photographed at Bolsa Chica, *Orange*, 16–18 May (PK) was one of few found in California in spring. The Stilt Sandpiper that spent the winter in *Orange* was last seen 2 Apr (DB). A Red Phalarope at N.E.S.S. 26 May (MAP), one near Los Hills 25 May (JS), and another in the Saline Valley, *Inyo*, 24 May (REM) were inland, where rare.

A Long-tailed Jaeger at the Cortez Bank s. of San Clemente I. 22 Apr (TMcG) is one of few reported in spring in s. California waters. About 35 Franklin's Gulls were found in the Region 15 Apr–2 Jun, with most in the e. portion but with at least 11 along the coast, including 6 migrating n. past Pt. Piedras Blancas between 9 and 22 May (RR). A Little Gull was seen migrating n. past Goleta Pt.,

Santa Barbara, 9 Mar (DC). An ad. Heermann's Gull was inland at S.E.S.S. 3 Mar+ (JEP, DSP). At least one Western Gull was present inland at S.E.S.S. 30 Apr+ (GMcC). A Least Tern, rare but regular inland on the Salton Sea, was at N.E.S.S. 19 May (GMcC). Six Xantus's Murrelets seen from Pt. Piedras Blancas 23–28 May (RR) were the earliest ever found in *San Luis Obispo*; these birds normally move n. after nesting. A Tufted Puffin off Pt. Piedras Blancas 30 May (RR) was one of a few ever seen from shore in s. California.

DOVES THROUGH MOCKINGBIRDS

A White-winged Dove in Goleta 6 May (HPR) was the only one reported on the coast. An Inca Dove was at the Butterfield Stage Station in the Anza-Borrego Desert S.P. 5–24 Apr (BMu) and another was in Ridgecrest, *Kern*, 25 Mar+ (BSt); this species is expanding its range in s. California, so nesting in these areas in the near future can be anticipated. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Bakersfield, *Kern*, 18 May (JCW) was an unusually early spring migrant; one at G.H.P. 4 Jun (KSG) was on a more expected date for first spring migrants. A Common Nighthawk at Deep Springs, *Inyo*, 20 May (T&JH) ties the earliest date for a spring migrant anywhere in California. Acorn Woodpeckers near Bishop 13 May (J&DP), at Butterbredt Springs near Cantil, *Kern*, 26 Apr (JCW), and at nearby G.H.P. 30 May–3 Jun (JH) were far from any known locations of normal occurrence.

A Willow Flycatcher at S.E.S.S. 6 May (GMcC) was somewhat early for a spring migrant. A wintering Eastern Phoebe in Costa Mesa, *Orange*, remained through 26 Mar (RF), one in Chino, *San Bernardino*, was last seen 16 Mar (JEP), and another was found near Corona, *Riverside*, 16 Mar (JEP). The wintering Thick-billed Kingbird near Santa Paula, *Ventura*, remained through 22 Apr (BSi). Four Eastern Kingbirds in *Inyo* between 14 and 29 May (REM, T&JH) was an average number for this area of California. Reports of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, a rare straggler to California, included single birds at Saratoga Springs, *San Bernardino*, 6 May (GP), F.C.R. 14–16 May (GW), South Belridge, *Kern*, 14 May+ (DDeT), Goleta 24–26 May (MB), and San Diego 22–27 May (EW).

A Bell's Vireo at Butterbredt Springs 29–30 Apr (SF) is one of only a few found away from known nesting localities in s. California. A Yellow-throated Vireo was photographed in Torrance, *Los Angeles*, 27 May (KL). A singing Blue-headed Vireo well-studied in Huntington Beach, *Orange*, 13 May (JEP, BED, DRW) is one of few report-

ed in California at this time of the year. Single Hutton's Vireos at Morongo Valley, *San Bernardino*, 18 Mar (M. San Miguel Jr.) and Butterbredt Springs 1–8 Apr (KSG) were e. of the species' range in California and at desert locations where seldom reliably reported. A Red-eyed Vireo at G.H.P. 20 May (JCW) was the only one reported away from S.F.K.R.P., where this species is now present every summer and has nested. A Philadelphia Vireo, most unusual in spring, was banded and photographed at Oso Flaco L. 2–4 Jun (PN). The only Gray Catbird reported was near Bow Willow in Anza-Borrego Desert S.P. 31 May (DSe). The Blue Mockingbird found in Long Beach 5 Dec was last seen 25 Mar (KSG).

WOOD-WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

The only Tennessee Warblers reported were single birds in the town of Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo*, 27 May (PN) and another near Santa Ynez, *Santa Barbara*, 12 May (BKH). At least 20 Northern Parulas, with 10 along the coast and 10 in the e. part of the Region, 22 Apr–25 May was a little more than expected. The wintering Chestnut-sided Warbler in Long Beach remained through 9 Apr (KSG) and the one in Lake Forest, *Orange*, remained through 19 Apr (DRW); one in Wilmington, *Los Angeles*, 20 May (JI) was the only migrant reported this spring. Single Magnolia Warblers were in the Saline Valley 23–24 May (REM), at G.H.P. 21 May (JCW) and 27 May (KSG), and on the coast at Pt. Piedras Blancas 24–28 May (RR). A Black-throated Green Warbler, much rarer in spring than fall, was in the Saline Valley 23 May (REM). The Yellow-throated Warbler wintering in Huntington Beach remained through 2 Apr (DRW). Four Palm Warblers along the coast 20 Mar–30 Apr (BED, KSG, RS, REW), and single birds near Riverside 20 Apr (HK) and 30 Apr (JB), were in areas where not present in the winter, and are suspected to be migrants that wintered somewhere on the coast. An expected number of 12 Black-and-white Warblers, but far fewer than the expected 9 American Redstarts were reported at scattered locations 28 Apr–30 May. A Prothonotary Warbler was on Pt. Loma in San Diego 20–25 May (PAG). The Worm-eating Warbler found in Huntington Beach 18 Oct remained through 26 Mar (DRW). Two Ovenbirds on the coast, along with 7 in e. *Kern* and *San Bernardino* between 8 and 31 May, was about average. A **Louisiana Waterthrush** in Huntington Beach 30 Apr (DRW) was early for any vagrant in California, but typical of migration dates in the se. U.S. A Northern Waterthrush in Goleta 13 May (RPH) and 5

in *Inyo* and e. *Kern* between 18 and 31 May were fewer than expected. A Kentucky Warbler was at G.H.P. 30 May (DSt). Five Hooded Warblers were reported in the e. portion of the Region between 9 and 28 May (KSG, CMcG, MSanM), including *Imperial's* first at In-ko-pah 28 May (MAP).

The Clay-colored Sparrow that wintered in Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara*, remained through 9 Apr (JMC), one was in the Saline Valley 16–18 May (REM) and one near Niland 11 May (PAG, GMcC) was only the 3rd to be found in *Imperial*. A Swamp Sparrow in Santa Maria to 9 Apr (JMC) was the latest remaining wintering bird, since single individuals in California City, *Kern*, 1–15 Apr (KSG) and in Bishop 30 Apr (JMF) were believed to be migrants. A Harris's Sparrow in Ridgecrest 29 Mar–24 Apr (PW) was the only one reported. The latest of the wintering White-throated Sparrows were one on Point Loma in San Diego to 19 Apr (REW) and another in Thousand Oaks, *Ventura* to 26 Apr (CB). A Grasshopper Sparrow in the Saline Valley 19 May (REM) was at an unexpected locality.

Fifteen Rose-breasted Grosbeaks 9–30 May was about average. Indigo Buntings continue colonizing some areas in s. California, as indicated by the presence of at least 6 territorial males scattered throughout the Region in May. A male Painted Bunting at F.C.R. 26–27 May (MSanM) is best considered a spring vagrant, but one in Santee, *San Diego*, 15 Apr (BMu) had more likely escaped from captivity. Dickcissels, rare in spring, were at F.C.R. 26–27 May (AME) and the Saline Valley 28–29 May (REM). A male Bobolink inland at Independence, *Inyo*, 21 May (RHu), a male at F.C.R. 27 May (MSanM), a female there 28 May (MSanM), and a male along the coast near the Santa Ynez R. mouth, *Santa Barbara*, 20 May (BKH) was about average. A female Bronzed Cowbird in the Saline Valley 29 May (REM) was about as far n. as the species has been recorded in California. A Common Grackle in Long Beach 10 Mar (KSG) was the latest of ≤5 present in Jan. A wintering Baltimore Oriole remained in Long Beach through 12 Mar (KSG) and another was found in Highland Park, *Los Angeles*, 15 Mar (DSC), but a male on Pt. Vicente, *Los Angeles*, 16 Apr (KL) was believed to be a migrant. An adult male **Black-backed Oriole** (*Icterus abeillei*) near Imperial Beach 9 Apr–6 Jun (GH) was the first to be reported in the U.S. Whether this partly migratory oriole from central Mexico was a genuine vagrant or an escapee will be debated by the CBRC and others. However, based on distances other orioles have wan-

dered from their normal ranges, this species might have the potential to reach the U.S.

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Maurer, **Guy McCaskie** (*Imperial*), Chet McGaugh, Tod McGrath, Terri Middlemiss, Bob Miller (BMI), Leslie Mosson, Brennan Mulrooney (BMu), Paloma Nieto, Oz Osborn, Jim and Debby Parker (J&DP), **Michael A. Patten** (*San Bernardino* and *Riverside*), Robert Patton, Dharm S. Pellegrini, David Pereksta, James E. Pike, Greg Pregill, Hugh P. Ranson, Joan Rosen, Richard Rowlett, Jim S. Royer, Michael San Miguel, David Seay (DSE), Jeff Seay, Brad Sillasen (BSi), Todd Stands, Bob Steele (BST), Susan Steele, Dan Stoebel (DSt), Russell Stone, Steven Tucker, Philip Unitt, Edward Wallace, Richard E. Webster, **Walter Wehtje** (*Ventura*), **Douglas R. Willick** (*Orange*), **John C. Wilson** (*Kern*), Peter Woodrow, Gerry Wolfe, Thomas E. Wurster. An additional ±50 observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season.



west indies



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It was a remarkable season for rare birds, with records expanding national and Regional lists. Reports span the length and breadth of the Region: Bermuda in the north, Aruba in the south, the Cayman Islands in the west, and Barbados in the east. Reports from the Bahamas, Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands south to St. Lucia provide an avian smorgasbord from pelagics to endemics. The new frontier in West Indian ornithogeography is a renewed interest in pelagic birds, particularly out of

Bermuda and Barbados. I say "renewed" because colleague Ruud van Halewijn probably initiated the "big bang" of expanded discovery during his voyages in the southeastern Caribbean in 1970–1972 (van Halewijn and Norton 1982). Look for the newly released review of Caribbean seabird ecology and distribution (D. S. Lee and B. A. Schreiber, eds.), largely an outcome of Ruud's work in the 1970s.

In the aftermath of hurricane *Lenny*, residents of St. Croix, St. Kitts, and Nevis remarked on the dearth of hummingbirds (C&KM). Despite the return of flowering plants, hummers were not in evidence. On the other hand, many small ponds benefitted from heavy rains associated with these tropical disturbances. Resident duck and shorebird populations respond to renewed