

# Middle Pacific Coast



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Most summer reports we received were short, with few notable rarities. McCormick reported a “noticeable drop in the number of passerines” at six banding stations in the High Sierra and hypothesized that heavy April rain and snow had affected early nesters. Subregional editors reported “slim summer lists” of vagrants, and many observers reported not seeing expected nesting birds in historical breeding locations. Whether this is an isolated phenomenon this summer, or a disturbing trend, remains to be seen.

**Abbreviations:** B.S.O.L. (Big Sur Ornithology Lab); C.B.R.C. (California Bird Records Committee); C.P. (County Park); C.R.P. (Cosumnes River Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.V. (Central Valley); FI. (South-east Farallon I., *San Francisco*); N.S. (National Seashore); O.S.P. (Open Space Preserve); P.R.B.O. (Point Reyes Bird Observatory); R.P. (Regional Park); R.S. (Regional Shoreline); S.B. (State Beach); S.F. (San Francisco); S.R. (State Reserve); U.C. (University of California); W.A. (Wildlife Area).

Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are normally not published. The Regional Editors will forward documentation for C.B.R.C. review species to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, CA 91933.

Banded birds on FI. should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory and those banded at Big Sur R. mouth to the Big Sur Ornithology Lab of the Ventana Wilderness Society.

## LOONS THROUGH PELICANS

A breeding-plumaged Common Loon on the Modoc Plateau, *Modoc* 1 Jul (BED, TDM) was unusual both for the date and the location. This species formerly bred in small numbers in the ne. portion of the Region, but has been extirpated as a breeder. Two nesting pairs of Clark's Grebes represented the first documented breeding in *Yolo* (JKn). Scarce in summer, 2 Laysan Albatrosses were near Cordell Bank, *Marin* 20 (LTer et al.) & 26 Jul (RAR et al.); 119 Black-footed Albatrosses near the Bank 20 Jul (SBT et al.) was the high count for the period. A single Wilson's Storm-Petrel near Cordell Bank, *Marin* 20 Jul (SBT et al.) appeared at a location where this species is now annual in summer and fall. Typically a deepwater species in this Region, an injured Leach's Storm-Petrel was inland at Carmel, *Monterey* 2 Jul (CHO). An Ashy Storm-Petrel was mist-netted at night at Ano Nuevo I., *San Mateo* 23 Jun (GJS). This species has not been recorded breeding there but may be exploring the island as a potential breeding site. The entire global population (estimated at just 10,000 birds) breeds on only a few islands off California, so an additional breeding site would be a positive development. The 158 American White Pelicans at the Napa-Sonoma Marshes W.A., *Napa* 22 Jul (RLCL, BiG) were all imms., indicating a productive year for this species.

## BITTERNS THROUGH DUCKS

A recently fledged American Bittern at Shollenberger Park 2–6 Jul (Ron Storey, ph. BDy) would, if hatched locally, represent the first breeding record for *Sonoma*; ad. birds had been noted earlier in the season. A surprise, both for the coastal location and the season, was another American Bittern flying along Hwy 1 e. of Lombardi Cr., *Santa Cruz* (Bonnie S. Bedzin). Three vocal Least Bitterns were found at two locations n. of Davis, *Yolo* 12 Jun into Aug (AEEn, SCH, JCS). Another Least Bittern w. of Lincoln 14–17 Jun was the 3rd for *Placer* (EP, CIH, DCa). The only Little Blue Heron reported was an ad. 25 Jun–15 Jul in Alviso, *Santa Clara* (Clyde Morris, m. ob.). The Cattle Egret nest found last sea-

son at the Hayward R.S., *Alameda* held 2 fledglings 9 Jun (RJR). At least 2 White-faced Ibis apparently summered in S.F. Bay, with sporadic observations of up to 2 in Alviso, *Santa Clara* 9 Jun–29 Jul (RWR, FV, RWR, MJM, MMR, AME, Dean Manley) and one nearby in Fremont, *Alameda* 22 Jun (MMR). This species attempted to breed in the now-defunct Alviso heronry in 1991 and 1992, so breeding at an unknown location is a possibility. Other coastal reports this season included one at Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt* 26 Jun (Linda Long) and 3 in bayside marshes in *Napa* 10 Jul (CLO).

Summering Brant were reported widely from three coastal counties. One inland 22 Jun–4 Jul at Mono Lake C.P., *Mono* (m. ob.) was much less expected. Single male Eurasian Wigeons summered on outer Guadalupe Slough, *Santa Clara* 30 May into Aug (MMR, MJM, WGB; injured right wing) and at Zmudowski S.B., *Monterey* 15 Jun (Craig Hunter; moved from Moonglow Dairy); both birds constituted 2nd summering records for their respective counties. Ad. male Blue-winged Teal at the Sanger and Fresno W.T.P.s, *Fresno* 11 & 26 Jun, respectively, were from a part of the Region where rarely reported, especially in summer (JND). Northern Shovelers were found breeding at two bayside locations in *San Mateo* 7 & 12 Jun (MMR, RSTh) and at the C.R.P. (JTr), the latter being the first breeding record for the preserve. Nesting Redheads are apparently on the increase in *Yolo*, with breeding noted at several locations (*vide* CCo). Ring-necked Ducks were reported in Jun in *Mendocino* (CEV) and *Santa Clara* (Leda Beth Gray, David Drake), but no evidence of breeding was noted. Multiple broods of Lesser Scaup were found again in bayside areas of both *Santa Clara* (MMR) and *Alameda* (RJR) 18 & 27 Jul. A female Harlequin Duck was again found along the Merced R. in Yosemite N.P., *Mariposa* 7 Jun (Sue & Jerry James), but no follow-up search was made to confirm breeding as last year. The apparently resident male Harlequin Duck continued at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo* 6–28 Jun (RSTh et al.). An imm. White-winged Scoter at Ft. Point, S.F. 11 Jul (PSar) was unseasonal. Summering Long-tailed Ducks included an ad. male at Ft. 3 Jul–1 Aug (P.R.B.O.) and a continuing female at the Pajaro R. mouth into Aug in both *Santa Cruz* and *Monterey* (Ryan DiGaudio, Carlton R. Eyster, RgW, Lois Goldfrank). A brood of Ruddy Ducks at the Ukiah W.T.P. 8 Jun and a nest there 15 Jun were only the 2nd and 3rd breeding records for *Mendocino*.

### HAWKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Ospreys again nested at the s. end of Mare

1., *Solano*, with 2 birds fledging from each of two nests 9 Jun (Wally NeVill, RLCL). A suburban Cooper's Hawk nest with young in Watsonville 12 Jun (BMMo) was the first such nesting in *Santa Cruz*, despite such behavior now being commonplace in nearby *Santa Clara* and *Alameda*. At least 4 Swainson's Hawks found s. of Napa 12–22 Jul (SAG et al.) were the first documented for *Napa*. *Monterey's* ad. male *Zone-tailed Hawk* continued to grace the lower Carmel Valley 6 Jun & 8 Jul (Eric & Christine Jones, †SFB). Ferruginous Hawks nested successfully for the 2nd year in a row at an undisclosed location in e. *Siskiyou* (Trent Seager).

*Yellow Rails* were heard again at the same two sites frequented last summer. Up to 2 were heard near Mt. Shasta, *Siskiyou* 2 Jun–29 Jul (ADB, RE, m. ob.), and a single bird was heard ne. of Ft. Bidwell, *Modoc* 24 May–28 Jun (SAG, m. ob.). Twenty Black Rails heard at Mare I., *Solano* 6 Jun constituted the highest count ever for the W. Magazine Marshes (RLCL, Wally NeVill).

An American Golden-Plover at the s. jetty of Humboldt Bay, *Humboldt* 25–30 Jun was hard to characterize (SMcA, KGR). On the heels of the first record this spring, *Butte's* 2nd Pacific Golden-Plover was near Nelson 16 Jun (JMHu). Another was seen at the Huichica Cr. Unit of the Napa-Sonoma Marshes W.A., *Napa* 7 Jun (RLCL, Larry Kent). Inland Snowy Plovers included a high count of 52 at the s. end of Goose L., *Modoc* 23 Jun (PJM, FrT; known breeding location), up to 3 at the Modesto W.T.P., *Stanislaus* 29–31 Jul (JHG), and 9 at the Los Banos W.T.P., *Merced* 24 Jul (KVV).

American Avocets bred successfully at the Humboldt Bay N.W.R., *Humboldt* 8–28 Jun (Don Wattenbarger, MWa). A pair with 3 chicks at the confluence of Watsonville and Struve Sloughs 21 Jun (RgW) confirmed a rare breeding attempt by this species in *Santa Cruz*. Solitary Sandpipers were found at the C.R.P. 25 Jul (JTr), Calero Res., *Santa Clara* 30 Jul (Ann Verdi), and the Modesto W.T.P., *Stanislaus* 30–31 Jul (JSL, JLx). A basic-plumaged Wandering Tattler at Año Nuevo S.R., *San Mateo* 14 Jun (PJM) was unexpected; fall migrants do not return until mid-Jul. Also out of place were 110 Long-billed Curlews at the Rush Cr. delta at Mono L., *Mono* 21 Jun (Debbie House). Lingering or summering Black Turnstones were found both at Bean Hollow S.B., *San Mateo* 13 Jun (DLSu; one in basic plumage) and at Pt. Pinos, *Monterey* 8–9 Jun (DR, BJW, DSg et al.; 5 in basic or partial alternate plumage). Five Red Knots on Coyote Slough 26 Jun, again including a mix of birds in basic and partial alternate plumage (MMR, MJM),

represented the first Jun record for *Santa Clara* and one of fewer than a dozen records of summering knots in the Region.

The only inland Sanderling reported was a molting ad. at the Modesto W.T.P., *Stanislaus* 28 Jul (JHG). Semipalmated Sandpiper numbers were well down from last year, with only 3 ads. 15–28 Jul (JKn, WGB) and 2+ juvs. 26–30 Jul (DFx, JCP, MJM, AME) reported. Single Baird's Sandpipers were found in *Yolo* 12 & 14 Jul (SCH, JKn), 4 were in *Humboldt* 17 Jul (Vanessa Loverti), and single ads. were in *Santa Cruz* 21 Jul (DLSu) and *Santa Clara* 30 Jul (MMR, MJM). The only Pectoral Sandpiper was at Goose L., *Modoc* 29 Jul (KVV). Summer Dunlin included birds in *Humboldt* 30 Jun (EE; basic) & 8 Jul (KGR), *San Mateo* 26 Jul (RSTh; alternate), and 2 in *Santa Clara* 26 Jun (MMR, MJM; basic and injured alternate). A surprising early Red Phalarope was inland at Mono L., *Mono* 22 Jul (Debbie House).

### LARIDS THROUGH ALCIDES

Relatively scarce in summer, single South Polar Skuas were near Cordell Bank, *Marin* 20 & 26 Jul (LTer et al., RAR et al.). The only Franklin's Gull reported during the period was a northbound ad. off Pigeon Pt., *San Mateo* 13 Jun (RSTh). The isolated Heermann's Gull colony at Robert's L., *Monterey* was successful this year (DR, RC) after two years of failure (2001, 2002) that followed two successful years (1999, 2000). Unusual in the Sierra Nevada, especially in summer, were 2 subad. Herring Gulls at Tenaya L., *Mariposa* (MaB). Another was present on the coast 1 Jun–16 Jul at Pillar Pt., *San Mateo* (AJ). Least Terns were well represented in the North Bay region, where typically scarce. At the Napa-Sonoma Marshes W.A., *Napa*, 6, 21 (a high count for *Napa*), and 8 were reported 6, 12, & 22 Jul, respectively (Larry Kent, RLCL, BiG), and 5 were at the Can Duck Club, *Napa* 15 Jul (Scott Demers et al.). Farther n. and coastal, an ad. Least Tern at MacKerricher S.P. 25 Jul (†DT) was a first for *Mendocino*. This species once again nested successfully at the C.V. location near Kettleman City, Kings, where a pair fledged a single chick (JSy). Continuing their push n., a Black Skimmer was at Knight I., *Solano* 16 Jul (Scott Demers et al.). High counts of Xantus's and Craveri's Murrelets in Monterey Bay, both on 25 Jul, were 12 and 4, respectively (ShJ). A record 123 pairs of Rhinoceros Auklets bred on Año Nuevo I., *San Mateo* (J.Thayer).

### DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

A vagrant White-winged Dove near Pescadero, *San Mateo* 14 Jun (RSTh) pro-

vided a rare Jun record. Migrant Yellow-billed Cuckoos are rarely detected in the Region, so singles at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 4 Jun (B.S.O.L.; banded) and F.I. 10 Jun (P.R.B.O.) were noteworthy. A Greater Roadrunner at the Carmel R. mouth, *Monterey* 29 Jun was the first at that well-worked locale "in decades" (Mike Tyner). First mentioned in spring, *Fresno's* two Great Gray Owl nests near Shaver L. each produced 2 young that were present near the nests at least into late Jun (JND). Observers in *Santa Cruz* once again thoroughly surveyed all of that county's historical Black Swift nest sites. Though the number of sightings was up over last year, there was once again no solid nesting evidence found (DLSu, m. ob.); for the first time in several years, an occupied nest was discovered 15 Jun at the traditional site at Año Nuevo S.R., *San Mateo* (GJS). Flocks of 8 at Takopah Falls, Sequoia N.P., *Tulare* 6 Jun (SAG) and 3 in Kings R. Canyon, *Fresno* 26 Jun (JND, SRv) were thought to be at new locations.

The status of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds in the Region away from breeding sites is poorly understood, and few records are ever documented. This summer, we received four reports: one banded at Lee Vining Cr., *Mono* 7 Jul (River Gates); a female 11 Jul at Ft. Bidwell, *Modoc* (JSL); a well-described ad. male near Prather 25 Jun (†JND; *Fresno's* first); and one at N. Lake Tahoe 29 Jul (David Lukas; *Placer's* first). Numerous Pileated Woodpecker sightings from *San Mateo*, *Santa Clara*, and *Santa Cruz* indicated continued expansion of this species' range in the Santa Cruz Mts. (WGB, DLSu, RSTh, m. ob.).

A singing Eastern Wood-Pewee was at Sacramento, *Sacramento* 22 Jun (JML et al.). There are only five accepted records for the Region. A singing Least Flycatcher near Chester 24–25 Jun (†Gabe Martinez et al.; first for *Plumas*) may have been a late vagrant, but one near the confluence of the Van Duzen R. and the Eel R., *Humboldt* 2 Jul (†TMcK) was on a nest! This is apparently just the 2nd documented nesting for California. A Cassin's Kingbird at Crissy Field 2 Jun was just the 2nd for S.F. (†PSar). Vagrant Eastern Kingbirds were at Rush Cr., *Mono* 3 Jun (Chris McCreedy) and Skyline Ridge O.S.P., *San Mateo* 29 Jun (DLSu). Easterns at potential breeding sites included one near Eagleville, *Modoc* 23 Jun (PJM, FrT) and a pair at the now traditional site on Lava Lakes Ranch, Siskiyou through at least 25 Jul (RE). A singing Yellow-throated Vireo at Lanphere Dunes 7–13 Jun was just the 4th for *Humboldt* (EE, CJR, KGR, MWa et al.; banded). Four vagrant Red-eyed Vireos were detected: Mt. Davidson, S.F. 6 Jun (PSar);

Orick, *Humboldt* 9–11 Jun (KI, DFx); outer Pt. Reyes, *Marin* 10 Jun (RS); and F.I. 10–13 Jun (P.R.B.O.).

A wayward Yellow-billed Magpie reached the coast near Jenner, *Sonoma* 19 Jul (DN). Though the origins of recent reports from S.F. and *San Mateo* are certainly open to debate, records such as this likely pertain to post-breeding wanderers rather than escapees. A flock of 100 Common Ravens near Fresno, *Fresno* 11 Jun was a large flock for the summer away from a food source such as a dump (JND). A pair of Purple Martins with 3 fledglings near Davis during Jun provided Yolo's first breeding record (SCH). Tree Swallows are unknown as breeders near the *Santa Clara* bayshore, so four sightings 7 Jun–9 Jul, including a copulating pair near Mountain View 7 Jun (WGB), were intriguing. The spring report of the demise of *Monterey's* only Bank Swallow colony was apparently exaggerated. A later check of the San Lorenzo R. colony turned up 25–30 birds, which is fewer than usual but preferable to extirpation (J&HBa). A White-breasted Nuthatch at Nisene Marks S.P. 5 Jun (Tonya Haff) provided an extremely rare breeding season record for *Santa Cruz*. A Hermit Thrush seen and heard at the C.R.P. 14 Jul was a remarkable summer find for the C.V. floor (Jeanne Hammond).

### THRASHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

An unprecedented 4 summer Gray Catbirds included a first for *Modoc* 19 Jun–14 Jul at New Pine Cr. (Steve Huckabone, JSL, JLx), one reported without details from *Humboldt* 13–14 Jun, a singing bird near Davis, *Yolo* 12–15 Jun (Andrew Engilis, m. ob.), and one at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 28 Jun (†Terry Coburn). Most catbird records are from fall migration; there has yet to be a confirmed California breeding record of this songster, a widespread breeder across North America, although the *Modoc* bird was in potential breeding habitat and not far from known nesting sites at Malheur N.W.R. in se. Oregon.

The warbler of the season was a male Blue-winged banded 26 Jun at Big Sur R. mouth (ph. B.S.O.L.), *Monterey's* 4th. Two Nashville Warblers 2–3 Jul at U.C. Hopland Research & Extension Center, *Mendocino* were thought to represent a slight southward extension of their breeding range (CEV). Seven Northern Parulas was a below-average total; all were coastal except a male 10 Jun at Black Diamond Mines R.P., *Contra Costa* (ES) and a female 6 Jun at lower Rush Cr., *Mono* (Chris Tonra). Late migrant Chestnut-sided Warblers included 2 in *Humboldt* at Fernbridge 8 Jun (KGR) and Dry Lagoon 26 Jun (KI) and a singing male at Pilarcitos Cr., *San*

*Mateo* 1 Jun (RSTh). A singing male Magnolia Warbler was at Antonelli Pond, *Santa Cruz* 1 Jun (SGe); a silent male was at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse, *Marin* 10 Jun (RS). A singing male Black-throated Blue Warbler was heard at Montara, *San Mateo* 8 Jun (AJ), and a female was at Mill Cr., *Mono* 29 Jun (River Gates). A Yellow-throated Warbler was reported without details from Trinidad, *Humboldt* 18 Jun. A Bay-breasted Warbler was at Patricks Pt., *Humboldt* 9 Jun; a Black-throated Green Warbler was there 18 Jun (both KI).

Four Black-and-white Warblers were coastal; inland, a singing male was at Mill Cr., *Mono* 29 Jun (River Gates). Sixteen American Redstarts along the coast included 3 in S.E., 7 in *Marin*, and 4 in *Humboldt*; the only inland report was a singing male 20 Jun at Mill Cr., *Mono* (PJM). A singing male Worm-eating Warbler was at outer Pt. Reyes, *Marin* 10 Jun (RS). Singing Ovenbirds at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 6 Jun (Jason Scott) and L. Merced, S.F. 9 Jun (Brian Fitch), as well as a silent one at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse, *Marin* 10 Jun (RS), were migrants; more intriguing was one singing 8–17 Jul at Titlow Hill Road, *Humboldt* (KI, m. ob.). A Northern Waterthrush was banded 25 Jun by refuge personnel at Modoc N.W.R., *Modoc*. A singing male Kentucky Warbler at Soquel Cr. 5 Jun provided just the 2nd record for *Santa Cruz* (DLSu). Two female Hooded Warblers were banded at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 4 & 24 Jun (BSOL); a male sang 6 Jun in the Presidio, S.F. (Brian Fitch).

Distressingly, a survey of each of the Yellow-breasted Chat breeding locations documented by the 1989–1993 *Napa* Breeding Bird Atlas found no chats (BiG, RLCL). Leong opines that "perhaps this year was not a good year for them, or, the habitat in *Napa* is so fragmented that they are now extirpated from the county."

### TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

The season's only 2 reported Summer Tanagers were from *Santa Cruz*: one 7 Jun at Rancho del Oso (GJS) and one at Natural Bridges S.B. 12 Jun (SGe). Surprisingly, a historical breeding site for Rufous-crowned Sparrow at Alderpoint, *Humboldt* did not turn up any birds in a survey 20 Jun (KGR, MWa). Similarly, checks of "many" former Black-chinned Sparrow breeding sites in *Monterey* turned up only one bird, 12 Jul at Chews Ridge (Mike Yough); this was the first time in 20 years that none were found in *Santa Clara* (fide MMR). An unusually high-elevation migrant Black-throated Sparrow 8 Jun at Lundy Canyon, *Mono* was at 2100 m (Kelly Miller). Grasshopper Sparrows were

widespread in *Santa Clara* and *Humboldt*. Singing Golden-crowned Sparrows 13 Jun near La Honda, *San Mateo* (FrT) and 17 Jun at Killgore Hills, *Siskiyou* (RE) were very late. Dark-eyed Juncos 6 Jun at Palo Alto (MMR) and Shoreline Park (WGB), *Santa Clara* were thought to be possible bayside breeders; at C.R.P., there was no confirmed breeding for the first time in three years, although up to 4 birds were found regularly through the season (JTr, Terry Ronneberg).

Sixteen Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in coastal counties; inland, one male was at Sequoia L., *Fresno* 9 Jun (GWPo). A single Blue Grosbeak at Fish Slough, *Mono* 18 Jun was off course (PJM); a pair with fledglings in the Chalfant Valley 1 Jul was *Mono's* first confirmed breeding (Sacha K. Heath). A hatch-year male Bobolink 13–24 Jul at Pt. Reyes N.S., *Marin* was with blackbirds (Ellen Blustein, ph. RS). Two males near Eagleville, *Modoc* 23 Jun were in the one spot in the state where they may breed (PJM, FrT). Good news from *Santa Cruz* was a new nest colony (only the county's 2nd) of Tricolored Blackbirds at Soda L., with approximately 1000 birds; this area produced none in 1999–2001 surveys (BMMo). Great-tailed Grackles continue to be reported widely, including nesting at Dechambeau ponds, *Mono* 27 Jul (ES, Debby Parker). Scott's Orioles with juvs. at Benton Hills 21–26 Jun confirmed the first breeding in *Mono* (PJM). Red Crossbills were widely reported along the coast in *San Mateo*, *Santa Cruz*, and *Mendocino*; less expected was one 23–26 Jul at Slide Hill Park in Davis, *Yolo* (Michael Perrone).

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