

Northern California



Luke W. Cole

(Thrashers to Finches)

561 Hill Street

San Francisco, California 94114

(luke@igc.org)

Scott B. Terrill

(Loons to Frigatebirds, Larids to Alcids)

H.T. Harvey & Associates

3150 Almaden Expressway, Suite 145

San Jose, California 95118

(sterrill@harveyecology.com)

Michael M. Rogers

(Herons to Shorebirds)

499 Novato Avenue

Sunnyvale, California 94086

(m.m.rogers@comcast.net)

Steven A. Glover

(Doves to Wrentit)

6526 Conestoga Lane

Dublin, California 94568

(sgloverccc@aol.com)

The winter season featured mild temperatures with no extended cold snaps, but rain fell in copious amounts throughout the period, resulting in rainfall totals as high as 200% of normal in some areas. Unusual wintering warblers, usually a staple of the Region's winter column, were notably scarce. This absence was more than made up for, however, by numerous outstanding rarities, including the continuing Common Black-Hawk, multiple wintering Iceland Gulls, and the Region's second wintering Sedge Wren. By far the highlight of the season, however, was Jaramillo's discovery of at least three Slaty-backed Gulls.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.R.P. (Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.V. (Central Valley); Fl. (Southeast Farallon I., *San Francisco*); P.R.B.O. (Pt. Reyes B.O.); S.F. (San Francisco). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are not published. Documentation for C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933. Birds banded on Fl. should be credited to Point Reyes B.O. and those banded at Big Sur R. mouth to the Big Sur Ornithology Lab of the Ventana Wilderness Society.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS

Rare inland, but very rare in the C.V., a Pacific

Loon was at L. Natomas, *Sacramento* 2–15 Jan (Craig Swolgaard, m.ob.). A Yellow-billed Loon at Fields Landing, *Humboldt* 9 Feb was seen by multiple observers but only briefly described (*fide* DFX), and another was reported, without details, off Pacific Grove, *Monterey* 6 Feb+ (*fide* DR). This species remains a C.B.R.C. review species and requires documentation. A Pied-billed Grebe with 2 fledglings at Briones Res., *Contra Costa* 19 Feb (DSW) indicated quite early nesting. Mid-winter Horned Grebes are rare in the C.V., so one 3 Jan at L. Natomas, *Sacramento* was noteworthy (EG). Even rarer in the C.V., a Red-necked Grebe was in n. Davis, *Yolo* 28 Jan–21 Feb (Jim White, m.ob.). The Laysan Albatross wintering at Pt. Arena Cove, *Mendocino* was last reported 28 Feb (*fide* RJK). Flesh-footed Shearwater occurs in small numbers in winter: one was reported on Monterey Bay, *Monterey* 14 Dec (RgW et al.), and 2 were off *Monterey/Santa Cruz* 30 Jan (ShJ). A Manx Shearwater was off Pt. Sur, *Monterey* 19 Dec (ph. DR). A Brown Booby was reported without details from Fl. 22 Feb (P.R.B.O.), the location with the most observations of this species in the Region. Pelagic Cormorants are very rare away from the immediate coast, and inland stays are usually quite brief, so one at Shoreline L. 20 Dec–20 Feb (WGB, m.ob.), possibly the same as a bird here 19–21 Sep (first in *Santa Clara* since 1997; MDo, MJM et al.), was exceptional.

HERONS THROUGH DUCKS

A Least Bittern was last noted at C.R.P. 11 Dec (JTr). Cattle Egret reports continue to dwindle, with only five received this season. A group of 24 tallied at Hallwood, *Yuba* 14 Dec (BED, PBS) was the only inland report and the only one of more than 2 birds. We encourage submission of all reports of this species to better understand its possibly changing status. High numbers of White-faced Ibis were tallied in the C.V., with 1378 reported on the Marysville C.B.C., *Yuba* 14 Dec and 7666 on the Peace Valley C.B.C., *Sutter* 21 Dec (*fide* BED). Coastal reports were much more limited, with up to 2 at Hudemann Slough, *Sonoma* 15 Jan–5 Feb (KWi, BDP), 2 at Kennedy Park, *Napa* 22 Feb (JRow, Carmen Oliver, FrO), and up to 5 in the vicinity of Zmudowski S.B., *Monterey* 24 Dec–17 Feb (RF, Jim & Anne Williams, BGE).

Wintering geese were well reported again this season. Particularly large groups of birds showed up coastally, with 133 Greater White-fronted Geese over the Palo Alto Baylands 11 Dec (MMR, Dean Manley) and 120

birds about equally split between Snow Goose and Ross's Goose over the Alviso Marina 15 Jan (MDo; both *Santa Clara*) being the highest coastal counts reported this season. A Greater White-fronted Goose near Hornitos 16 Feb+ (EP, m.ob.) was apparently the first for *Mariposa*. Cackling Geese are receiving more attention now that they are a full species. A now-annual occurrence, flocks of up to 5000 *leucopareia* were reported from coastal *Humboldt* 2 Jan–13 Feb (m.ob.). This subspecies was also widely reported in small numbers from many coastal locations, with counts of 26 at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* 19 Dec (RJR), 21 at L. Cunningham in San Jose, *Santa Clara* 16 Jan (SCR), and 19 at San Felipe L., *San Benito* 29 Jan (LLu, CLu) being the only reports in double-digits. Flocks of up to 50 Cackling Geese in coastal *Mendocino* 31 Jan–13 Feb (DT) and 100+ over Younger Lagoon, *Santa Cruz* 12 Jan (JLL) were not identified to race but were likely also *leucopareia*. Numerous reports of up to 5 *minima* were also received from various coastal locations. More notable was *Tuolumne's* first Cackling Goose, a *minima* 15 km sw. of Sonora 17 Jan (ph. SAG); 4 *minima* were there 5–6 Feb (DR, RC). The only report of another race was a probable *taverneri* in Redding, *Shasta* 11 Jan (BED, Rob Santry). There was only one other report of truly inland Cackling Geese. As we have little information on this new species in our notebooks, we welcome additional reports from the state's interior. An Emperor Goose at the Eel River W.A., *Humboldt* met an early demise when shot 15 Jan (Dave Kyle, *fide* RbF). Another surprise was a Barnacle Goose at the San Joaquin River N.W.R., *Stanislaus* 16–18 Jan (vt. Dave Malia, †JM). The three previous state records of this species have all been regarded by the C.B.R.C. as being of "questionable natural occurrence," but the recent sharp increase in e. North American records suggests that natural vagrants are conceivable in the West. Of more dubious origin was a returning Barnacle Goose × Cackling Goose hybrid at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* 19–25 Dec, thought to be at least 16 years old (RJR).

If accepted by the C.B.R.C., 3 Trumpeter Swans (2 ads. and an imm.) at Nicasio Res., *Marin* 6–26 Feb (LLu, CLu, m.ob.) would constitute a very unusual coastal appearance. Coastal Tundra Swans were widely reported this season, with the highlight being an ad. Bewick's Swan reported from the Eel R. delta, *Humboldt* 12 Jan (BS). Eurasian Wigeon continued to be found in impressive numbers, with well over 100 reported from 17 counties. Particularly remarkable were 24+ at Kutras L. in Redding 13 Dec (B&CY), about five times the previous *Shasta* high count! Also notable were 3 ad. males in *Lake* 26 Dec–18 Feb and another at San Felipe L., *San Benito* 29 Jan

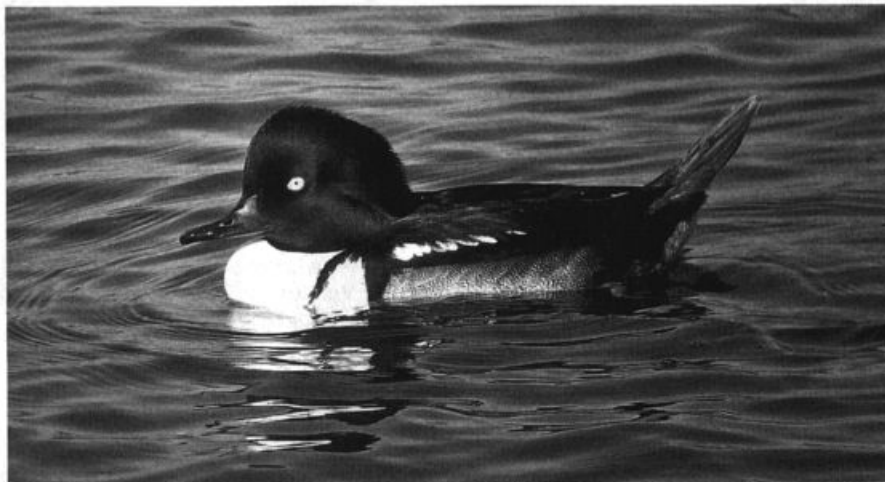
(RJA, LLu, CLu). Given these numbers, it is perhaps surprising that only 2 Eurasian Wigeon × American Wigeon hybrids were reported. A bonanza of 10,000–15,000 ducks at Redding's Kutras L., *Shasta* 13 Dec contained an estimated 3000–5000 each of American Wigeon and Northern Pintail and 2000+ Common Goldeneyes; remarkably, by the next day tallies of the first two species dropped to only 50 and 5–10, respectively. A male Mallard × Northern Pintail hybrid was at the Garcia R. flats, *Mendocino* 12 Jan (DT). Twelve Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal were found in eight counties, with *Humboldt* and *Santa Clara* hosting 3 each. Additionally, 4 hybrids with American Green-winged Teal were found in *Humboldt*, *San Mateo*, and *Santa Clara*.

South Humboldt Bay, *Humboldt* often harbors our highest Redhead counts, but 478 in "one tight flock" 2 Jan (RbF) is one of the highest counts in our notebooks. Nine Tufted Ducks from seven counties included *Mariposa's* first, a female below the L. McSwain Dam 17 Jan that spent most of her time in nearby *Merced* 17 Jan–12 Feb (SAG, m.ob.). An inland male Greater Scaup at the Sacramento N.W.R. 5 Dec (BED) was one of very few records for *Glenn*. An imm. male Harlequin Duck at the w. end of the San Mateo Bridge in Foster City, *San Mateo* 1 Jan–30 Mar (RSTH, KO, Ken Burton) was the south-

27 Long-tailed Ducks included inland birds at *Butte's* Sacramento N.W.R. 8 Jan (ph. John Lewis, Mike Skram) and Oroville W.A. 17 Feb–3 Mar (*fide* BED, Paul & Rita Rosso) and the female continuing at the O'Neill Forebay, *Merced* through 29 Dec (m.ob.). Barrow's Goldeneye × Common Goldeneye hybrids were found at Shoreline L., *Santa Clara* 4 Dec–19 Feb (MMR, MJM, m.ob.) and in Redding, *Shasta* 13 Jan (RBr, Rob Santry). Less expected was a Hooded Merganser × Barrow's Goldeneye hybrid at L. Merritt, *Alameda* 8 Jan–6 Feb (Ron Thompson, ph. Steve Look, ph. JM, m.ob.), presumably the same bird as the imm. present last year (N.A.B. 58: 428). Inland Red-breasted Mergansers included up to 4 at Redding, *Shasta* 10 Dec–10 Feb (RBr, BED, Rob Santry, B&CY) and one at L. Success, *Tulare* 25 Feb (Steve Summers).

RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS

At least one White-tailed Kite near Honey Lake W.A. 4–12 Jan constituted only the 2nd winter record for *Lassen* since 1980 (Robert Hill, JLx, FrO, EP, JRa). The returning Common Black-Hawk, first refound last season, became more dependable while visiting North L. in Stockton, *San Joaquin* 17 Jan–12 Mar (DGY, ph. †MMR, ph. †JM, m.ob.). As was true last year, this bird was attracted to the easy fishing when this lake was drawn



This striking duck—apparently a Hooded Merganser × Barrow's Goldeneye hybrid—spent 8 (here 22) January–6 February 2005 at Oakland's Lake Merritt, Alameda County. Quite possibly the same individual, then in its first winter, was noted there briefly in March 2004. This hybrid combination is previously unknown. Photograph by Joe Morlan.

ernmost ever in S.F. Bay, beating out the ad. male continuing at Coyote Pt. 11 Jan–26 Feb (m.ob.). A inland male in Merced R. rapids below El Portal, *Mariposa* 26 Feb (Jared Verner) continued the string of sightings in this area but was upstaged by *Yolo's* first, a male shot by a hunter at the Yolo Bypass W.A. 23 Jan (*fide* CCo). Inland White-winged Scoters included *Trinity's* 2nd, a first-winter male at Lewiston L. 18 Feb (FrO), and a male at the O'Neil Forebay, *Merced* 21 Jan–10 Feb (Gary Woods, m.ob.). Reports of

down. A Broad-winged Hawk was reported at L. Merced, S.F. 6–15 Jan (DPM, ASH, m.ob.). A late dark-morph ad. Swainson's Hawk was at Madera, *Madera* 1 Dec (JND). Returning Harlan's Hawks were found n. of the San Jose Airport, *Santa Clara* 19 Dec (ADeM, GHt, DJK) and n. of Devil's Den in s. Kings 2 Dec (JSy). Another wintered n. of Eureka, *Humboldt* 21 Dec–14 Feb (RbF, ScC). Second-hand reports of last season's Crested Caracara continued, with a rancher in the Eel R. delta, *Humboldt* apparently

hosting the bird with road kills through Jan (*fide* SWH). A Gyrfalcon n. of Honey L. 7 Feb (BMS, Frank Hall) would be the first for Lassen and the 11th for the state if accepted by the C.B.R.C.

Wild Turkeys continue their expansion into Santa Cruz, where 121 were tallied on the Santa Cruz C.B.C. 18 Dec, a year after being first recorded on this count! They are



After irregular appearances in the fall, this returning Common Black-Hawk finally became somewhat predictable when it regularly visited North Lake in Stockton, San Joaquin County during the second half of (here 18) January 2005. After month's end, it once again wandered unpredictably around western Stockton until at least 12 March. Photograph by Todd Easterla.

now being reported in suburban backyards within a few blocks of the coast. A Yellow Rail was seen by a throng of observers at Tomales Bay, Marin during the 10 Jan high tide (EDG, WEH, m.ob.). Several Black Rails were seen here 12 Dec and 10 Jan as well, with most being eaten by Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets (EDG, m.ob.).

SHOREBIRDS

Wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers included one at Merced N.W.R., Merced 30 Dec–16 Feb (JHG, EP, JRa, FrO), another at the Fresno W.T.P., Fresno 14 Dec (JND), and 3 at the Modesto W.T.P., Stanislaus 2 Jan (JHG). A Mountain Plover at Hartson L. 4 Jan (CPD) was only the 3rd Lassen record. The previous two records, involving 8 birds 25–30 Jan 2002 (Tom Rickman et al.) and 2 birds 7 Feb 2003 (DS, PJM, †FrT et al.), were found in the same vicinity, suggesting that this may be a new regular location for the species. Up to 244 Mountain Plovers w. of Madera 22–27 Feb (Gary Woods, MiF, KVV, JND) constituted only the 3rd record for Madera, although the species may prove regular with increased coverage of the county lowlands. The same area hosted up to 1500 Long-billed Curlews 27 Feb (Gary Woods, JND), about 7.5% of the estimated global population. Rock Sandpipers at southerly locations included one at Fl. 15 Dec (P.R.B.O.) and the returnee along West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz continuing through 2 Apr (SGe, DLSu, RgW, m.ob.). The only Stilt Sandpiper reported was at Merced

N.W.R., Merced 6–14 Feb (LCh, SAG, JHG). For the 2nd winter in a row, a Wilson's Phalarope was found at the Yolo Bypass W.A., Yolo, again on 26 Dec (TCO). Red Phalaropes were scarce; besides 100+ off Bodega Head, Sonoma 2 Jan (BDP) the only reports were of a single bird at Shoreline L., Santa Clara 1 Jan (Roland Kenner, Pat Kenny, RWR et al.) and 3 on Monterey Bay 30 Jan (ShJ).

LARIDS THROUGH ALCIDS

An ad. Laughing Gull was off Ocean Beach, S.E. 31 Dec (†PSar). An ad. Mew Gull at the Fresno W.T.P. 29 Jan (GWPo, m.ob.) represented the 6th for Fresno since Jan 2004; there were only three records prior to that. The increase in detections is likely due to recent, increased scrutiny of gull flocks in this area. Elsewhere inland, Mew Gulls made an exceptional showing in Shasta, where 25–30 were

found during the period (BED et al.). Likewise, Thayer's Gulls have been considered quite rare in the San Joaquin Valley, but increased scrutiny of large gull flocks produced 8 during the period. In Fresno, 5 were at the American Avenue Landfill 14 Dec (JND, Lowell Young), and another was at Clovis 18 Jan (GWPo, Jack Gulley); in Kings, one was at the Nevada Ave. ponds 4 Dec (SAG), and another was s. of Corcoran 17 Jan (JCS). A second-winter Iceland Gull was well documented at Hidden L. Park, Milpitas, Santa Clara 22 Feb–7 Mar (ph., †AJ, ph., †m.ob.). Gulls showing characteristics of Iceland Gulls have been documented in the Region, but observations of a number of morphological "intergrades" between Iceland (*kumlieni*) and Thayer's have complicated the issue. The Hidden L. bird appears to be solidly within the Iceland group, but evaluation by the C.B.R.C. is pending. Another bird, apparently an ad.

kumlieni, was at the Yolo County Landfill, Yolo 20 Jan (ph. JKN, Richard Millington). There were only 6 Western Gulls reported from inland locations, where they are scarce and local, and one at Delevan N.W.R. 19 Feb (ph. LLu, CLu) was the first for Colusa. Glaucous Gulls were found in average numbers, with 20–25 in the Region. The highest concentration was in coastal San Mateo, where at least 6 were present (AJ, m.ob.).

A Caspian Tern at the Holland Tract 10–22 Dec, joined by another bird 22 Dec, evidently represented the first winter record for Contra Costa (DSW, SAG et al.). A first-winter Common Tern at Capitola, Santa Cruz 17–18 Dec (DLSu) was likely a late migrant. Rare in the Region in winter, 2 Xantus's Murrelets were just off Pt. Sur, Monterey 19 Dec (DR). Erratic and rare in the Region at any time of year, 3 Horned Puffins were in Humboldt: one (dead) at Centerville Beach 14 Jan (Shail Pec-Crouse, *fide* EE), one near Trinidad 8 Feb (Michael Morris), and one at Samoa Beach 20 Feb (Amanda Austin).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

First county records of Eurasian Collared-Dove were recorded near Corralitos, Santa Cruz 1 Jan (DLSu) and Susanville, Lassen 27 Feb (PJM, DS). Rare Mono winter doves included a White-winged at Paradise 8 Jan (DHo) and a Mourning at Thompson Ranch 19 Dec (Don Banta). Santa Clara's urban Greater Roadrunner at Alviso was present through at least 5 Mar (m.ob.). Six White-throated Swifts at Buckingham Bluffs 18 Dec provided a very rare winter record for Lake (BJMcI). A female Costa's Hummingbird at Bayside 7 Dec–14 Jan represented a rare Humboldt record (†DFx et al.). Allen's Hummingbirds at Año Nuevo S.R. (AdW) and L. Lucerne 2 Jan (AdEM) were the earliest ever found in San Mateo; one at La Selva, Santa Cruz (Jennifer Green) beat them by a day. The inland status of Allen's e. of Coast Range breeding sites is muddled, so an ad. male found dead at Rancho Cordova, Sacramento 7 Feb was noteworthy (*fide* AEn).

Vagrant Williamson's Sapsuckers were at San Mateo 18 Dec–15 Jan (San Mateo's 4th; Eric Goodill, m.ob.), L. Cunningham, San

SA A highly coastal species of ne. Asia, Slaty-backed Gull occurs regularly in North America only in coastal and insular Alaska. Vagrants, however, have been recorded widely across the Continent, even to the East Coast. Given that, the relative dearth of records on the West Coast s. of Alaska (there are as yet no accepted records for California) is perplexing. This season (and into Mar), Jaramillo repeatedly searched through the gull concentrations at Venice Beach, San Mateo, where he found 3 Slaty-backed Gulls: a first-winter (13 Jan–20 Feb), a third-winter (20 Jan–19 Feb), and a fourth-winter or older (21 Mar). All were well documented, including excellent photographs, and have been approved in C.B.R.C. review. The fact that there were three at a single location is astonishing and raises some fundamental questions. Is this species regular in small numbers along the coast but largely missed in the masses of wintering gulls? Was this an invasion year, but with birds only detected at this location? Or was this a unique occurrence? With increased understanding of the identification of all age classes of this species, especially relative to hybrids, and increased coverage of gull concentrations along the West Coast, we may obtain answers to these questions.

Jose 11 Feb–30 Mar (*Santa Clara's* 3rd; Kim Blythe, m.ob.), and Boggs Mt. S.F. 24–26 Feb (*Lake's* first; Jeanette Knight, Darlene Hecmovich, JRW, ph. DvW); a bird at Lee Vining Canyon 19 Dec was one of few ever found in winter in *Mono* (Paul McFarland). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Woodside, *San Mateo* 18 Dec (Sue Cossins); holdovers from fall were at Los Altos Hills, *Santa Clara* through 17 Mar (GHa, m.ob.) and Quail Hollow Ranch C.P., *Santa Cruz* through 22 Dec (JCS, DLSu). Red-naped Sapsuckers were near Soquel, *Santa Cruz* 5–29 Dec (Henry Harrelson); Monterey, *Monterey* 11–18 Dec (BJW, ph. BHL, AB et al.); Orinda, *Contra Costa* 19 Dec (Meg Paulitich et al.); and Bass L., *Madera* 18 Jan (GWPO, Jack Guffey).

A Least Flycatcher at Arcata 18 Dec+ was just the 2nd to winter in *Humboldt* (EE, JTz, ph. RbF, ph. KGR, m.ob.). Wintering Hammond's Flycatchers were at Pt. Reyes, *Marin* 7 Jan (MtB, RyT, DVP) and L. Solano, *Solano* 6 Feb–6 Mar (2 on the last date; ph. SAG, FrO, ph. DR, RC). Rarer still in winter was a continuing Dusky Flycatcher at Antonelli Pond through 28 Mar, the 3rd known to winter in *Santa Cruz* (SGe, DLSu, m.ob.). Single Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatchers at Sacramento 20 Dec (DCo, Dan Kopp) and Caswell Memorial S.P., *San Joaquin* 2 Jan (ph. HMR) were the only ones reported. Eastern Phoebes were at Putah Cr., *Yolo & Solano* 2 Dec (Irene Torres) and at Lemoore 15 Jan (first for Kings; †Mark Stacy, Christy Uhor); the *Sacramento* bird found in Nov was present through at least 15 Mar (m.ob.). A male Vermilion Flycatcher near Kerman 14 Dec–9 Feb was a nice find for *Fresno* (Gary Woods, ph. Alan Birnbaum, m.ob.). Two returning male Vermilion Flycatchers were at the Los Banos W.A., *Merced* through at least 26 Feb (Gary

Gerstenberg, KVV, Lara Sparks). A Tropical Kingbird at Walnut Creek 21 Dec was just the 2nd ever found in *Contra Costa* (COg); 4 other Tropicals were reported, all coastal. The only bird reported after Dec was at Monterey, *Monterey* through 14 Feb (BJW, m.ob.).

A Northern Shrike in High Valley 16–18 Dec was the 4th to be found in *Lake* (JRW, DvW, Cliff Johnson); 4 other Northern's were at expected n. coast or Great Basin locations. A Blue Jay at Redwood Valley 23 Jan–9 Apr was the 6th for *Humboldt* (Cathy & Tom Hinz, ph. RbF, m.ob.). A wayward Yellow-billed Magpie 18 Dec at Bay Point was a first for *Contra Costa's* C.B.C. (Kent Fickett, Joel Summerhill). Thirty-five Tree Swallows at Ukiah 30 Jan were the earliest ever recorded in *Mendocino* (CEV). A Northern Rough-

winged Swallow at C.R.P. 2 Dec (JTr) may have been the same bird found there 15 Jan (CCo, Kimya Lambert); this species is still very rare in the Region in winter. The northward push of Barn Swallows in mid-Dec–Jan was detected once again this season, though numbers were slightly less than in previous years. Some 92 were detected, many of them heading northward and along the immediate



This apparent juvenile Vega Gull was photographed in the gull flock on Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, California 7 January 2005. The white tail base, and banded greater coverts suggest this is not a *smithsonianus*. Recent reports of Herring Gulls (*smithsonianus*?) with white-based tails in the lower 48 states, however, put into question how valuable the tail pattern is in differentiating *smithsonianus* from Palearctic Herring Gulls. The range of variation in the various "Herring Gull" taxa has yet to be clearly defined. Photograph by Alvaro Jaramillo.

coast. Two at Bay Point 18 Dec were the first for *Contra Costa's* C.B.C. (Kent Fickett, Joel Summerhill). Three Cliff Swallows at the Sacramento Bufferlands, *Sacramento* 27 Jan were likely very early returnees (CCo).

WRENS THROUGH TOWHEES

A Winter Wren of the e. subspecies group was an extreme rarity for the Region 19 Dec, especially at 2100 m in Lundy Canyon, *Mono* (BrtM). A Sedge Wren at South S.F. 9–26 Jan (†RSTh, ph. DVP, m.ob.) was just the 2nd to winter in the Region. Amazingly, the first record was from *San Mateo* in 2002–2003. A pair of Western Bluebirds at Presidio Hills 9 Feb+ was just the 3rd record for S.F. (Matt Zlatunich, m.ob.). Five West-erns in Lee Vining Canyon 19 Dec provided

a first winter record for *Mono* (Paul McFarland, Blake Babaree). Swainson's Thrushes are very rare in the United States in winter, so a fresh road-kill picked up at Stinson Beach, *Marin* 1 Jan was a significant find (ph. Bob Battagin, Deborah Fitzpatrick). A Gray Catbird was at Salmon Cr., *Humboldt* 7 Feb (Bryon Cariss). Sage Thrashers were one-day wonders at Chowchilla, *Madera* 3 Dec (Frank Gibson) and Moss Landing, *Monterey* 12 Feb (ph. MDo, ph. DR, RC). One Bohemian Waxwing was at Susanville, *Lassen* 26 Dec (MtB, DVP, DCo), and 2 were in Oakmont, *Sonoma* 25 Jan (†Ken Ackerman, Gloria Markowitz).

It was a quiet winter for vagrant and unusual w. warblers. A male Magnolia Warbler 12 Dec at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* (DWM) may have been a late migrant; one wintered at Pine L. Park, S.F. 28 Dec+ (DPM, m.ob.). A Townsend's Warbler × Hermit Warbler hybrid was reported in Pacific Grove, *Monterey* 27 Dec (DVP). Seven Black-and-white and 27 Palm Warblers wintered along the coast. A Northern Waterthrush spent the period at Charleston Road marsh, *Santa Clara* (RGJ, SCR, m.ob.), while another wintered at Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt* 9 Dec+ (PLo, EE, m.ob.).

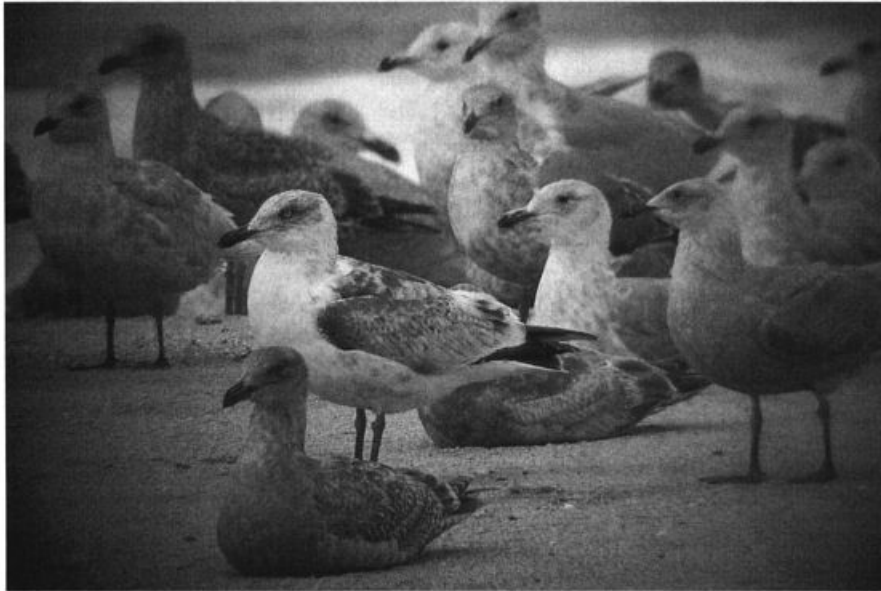
A Summer Tanager continued at Natural Bridges S.B., *Santa Cruz* until 5 Dec (SGe); another stayed in Golden Gate Park, S.F. from the fall until 28 Dec (ASH), and a yet another was in Sacramento, *Sacramento* 30 Jan (ph. Rick Soehren). Fifteen Western Tanagers were scattered along the coast; notable was *Trinity's* first winter record, at Salyer 24 Dec (GSL). Out-of-place Green-tailed Towhees turned up in Orinda, *Contra Costa* 19–26 Dec (Sean O'Brien, ph. Jane Larkin); Zmudowski S.B., *Monterey* 7 Dec–11 Feb (BMth, DR, Betty Cost); and near Lincoln 22 Jan–3 Feb, providing *Placer's* first winter and valley floor records (Dennis Bowcut, EP, John Lewis, m.ob.).

SPARROWS THROUGH BUNTINGS

American Tree Sparrows were at Tule Lake N.W.R., *Siskiyou* 17 Dec (RyT) and at Dechambeau ponds, *Mono* 19 Dec (KNN). *Humboldt* had 3 Clay-colored Sparrows: one 9 Dec at Eureka (Jeff Dayton) and 2 on 12 Jan at Ferndale (RbF). A Grasshopper Sparrow found 3 Dec at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, *Santa Clara* was unusual; one 3 Jan at Santa Teresa C.P. furnished the first Jan record for *Santa Clara* (both GHa). *Alameda* had the only reported Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows: singles at Arrowhead Marsh 12 Dec–8 Feb (Bob Battagin, ES, m.ob.) and at

Hayward R.S. 25 Dec (RJR).

Thirty-one Swamp Sparrows were along the coast (including 10 at Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt*); inland, singles were at Livermore, *Alameda* for the period (ALE, ph. SAG); at Dechambeau ponds, *Mono* 19 Dec (KNN); and at C.R.P. 18 Nov–4 Jan (HG, Mike Green, JTr, CCo, m.ob.). The 49 White-throated Sparrows reported was a significant drop-off from normal winters; for comparison, last winter there were 51 reported in *Santa Cruz* alone. The *Zonotrichia* of the season was Harris's Sparrow, which staged a remarkable inva-



First discovered by the photographer 13 January 2005 (here 20 February), this Slaty-backed Gull in its second winter (or second plumage "cycle") at Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, California was accepted as a first state record. An additional two, perhaps three, Slaty-backed Gulls were photographed at the same location this winter. Photograph by Alvaro Jaramillo.

sion with 15 reported, including 3 in *Humboldt*, 2 in *Sonoma*, and singles in *Mono*, *Monterey*, *Napa*, *Santa Clara* (first record since 1988, *fide* WGB), *Shasta*, *Siskiyou*, and *Solano*. The three others were first county records: at Colusa N.W.R., *Colusa* 26 Nov–5 Dec (ph. RbF, †BED, m.ob.); at Oakhurst R. Parkway, *Madera* 26 Dec–5 Feb (Bob Power, †JND, m.ob.); and at San Joaquin River N.W.R., *Stanislaus* 4 Jan+ (HMR, m.ob.). Small flocks of wintering Lapland Longspurs in *Humboldt* and *Monterey* were joined by Chestnut-collareds: 2–3 e. of Gonzales were the first known to winter in *Monterey* (BMth, ph. DR, RC, J Hoeksema, m.ob.), and a single was at Bear R. Ridge, *Humboldt* 8 Feb (BS). Two Snow Buntings were in *Humboldt* 31 Jan: one at Centerville Beach (RBS) and one at Redwood Cr. mouth (BS). Nine Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported. The only Black-headed was at Carmel Valley, *Monterey* 29 Nov–10 Dec (CHo). A female Indigo Bunting frequented a feeder at Capitola, *Santa Cruz* 26 Dec–21 Jan (DLSu). A first-fall male Painted Bunting—perhaps *Humboldt's* 3rd "wild" record—was at Freshwater 10–15 Dec (Cary Frazee, ph. TWL, †DFx).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES

The count of 160 Tricolored Blackbirds found on the *Santa Cruz* C.B.C. 18 Dec was only 16% of that C.B.C.'s 10-year average, marking the steady and alarming decline in this species in the area (*fide* DLSu). An Orchard Oriole at Manteca, *San Joaquin* 5 Feb+ (ph. Tiny Gehrke, m.ob.) was apparently the first to be documented for the C.V. Additional Orchards graced Arcata, *Humboldt* 12 Dec (GAB) and L. Merced, S.F. 21 Dec–2 Feb (PJM, HuC, m.ob.). A Hooded Oriole was at Sunnyvale, *Santa Clara* 19 Dec (SEM, Chris

Wolfe); one w. of Sheridan 29 Dec provided *Placer's* first winter record (CCo). Several "Orchard/Hooded" Orioles were also reported from a variety of locations.

Winter finches had a strong showing, though numbers of many species dropped precipitously in the new year. Red Crossbills staged a coastal invasion, with flocks of up to 53 in *San Mateo* and 76 in *Santa Clara*. One or 2 Cassin's Finches were at Moss Beach, *San Mateo* 1 Dec (RSTh), and one was at Elk Grove, *Sacramento* 2–4 Jan (AEn). As part of the winter finch invasion, an unprecedented 2 widely separated Common Redpolls were found: one in mid-Dec in Eureka, *Humboldt's* 2nd (Darrel Olsen, *fide* EE, PLo), and one 4 Jan near the Honey Lake W.A., *Lassen* (†TDM). Pine Siskins irrupted in numbers throughout the Region, particularly along the coast. The 1242 in the *Santa Cruz* C.B.C. circle was over 400% of the average over the last 10 years (*fide* DLSu). Lawrence's Goldfinches were also found in numbers, some in unexpected locations: first county winter records were provided by one at a feeder in Chalfant Valley, *Mono* 28 Nov–28 Feb (Andy Zdon) and a wintering

flock of up to 20 at the U.C. Hopland Research & Extension Center, *Mendocino* (CEV). The irruption did not include Evening Grosbeaks: the only reports were of 4 at Eureka, *Humboldt* Jan 2 (TWL) and 6 at Inverness, *Marin* Jan 8 (Alan Wight).

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): R. J. Adams, Alan Baldrige, Gary A. Bloomfield, William G. Bousman (*Santa Clara*), Matthew Brady, Adam Brown (EI.), Ray Bruun, Scott Carey, Rita Carratello, Les Chibana, Terry Colborn, Daryl Coldren, Luke W. Cole (*Kings*), Chris Conard (*Sacramento* and *Yolo*), Hugh Cotter, Jeff N. Davis (*Madera*), Al DeMartini, Bruce E. Deuel (n. C.V. counties), Colin P. Dillingham, Matthew Dodder, Mark W. Eaton (*San Francisco*), Arthur L. Edwards, Ray Ekstrom (*Siskiyou*), Elias Elias, Bruce G. Elliot, Andrew Engilis, Mike Feighner, David Fix (*Humboldt*), Rick Fournier (RF), Rob Fowler (RbF), James H. Gain (*Stanislaus*), Steve Gerow, Steve A. Glover (*Contra Costa*), Edward D. Greaves, Helen Green, W. Edward Harper, Stanley W. Harris, Garth Harwood, Bill Hill, Craig Hohenberger, Alan S. Hopkins, Debbie House, Grant Hoyt, John E. Hunter (*Trinity*), Alvaro Jaramillo, Richard G. Jeffers, Shearwater Journeys, Robert J. Keiffer (*Mendocino*), Dan J. Keller, Jon King, Robin L. C. Leong (*Napa* and *Solano*), Tom W. Leskiw, Gary S. Lester, Cindy Lieurance, Leslie Lieurance, Janet L. Linthicum, Paul Lohse, Jim Lomax, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, Timothy D. Manolis (*Lassen*), Blake Matheson, J. Mac McCormick (*Plumas* and *Sierra*), Bryan J. McIntosh, Peter J. Metropulos (*San Mateo*), Bartshe Miller, Steve E. Miller, Joseph Morlan, Dan P. Murphy, Kristie N. Nelson (*Mono*), Chet Ogan, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino (*Placer*), Benjamin D. Parmeter, Jude C. Power (*Humboldt*), John Ranlett, Harold M. Reeve, Robert W. Reiling, Robert J. Richmond (*Alameda*), Don Roberson (*Monterey*), Michael M. Rogers, Kerry G. Ross, Stephen C. Rottenborn, James Rowth, Ruth A. Rudesill (*Sonoma*), Peter B. Sands, Paul Saraceni, Barry Sauppe, Jeff Seay, David Shuford, John C. Sterling (*Alpine*, *Calaveras*, and *Modoc*), Bradley M. Stovall, Emilie Strauss, David L. Suddjian (*Santa Cruz*), Robert B. Sutherland, Ryan Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Jim Tietz, Dorothy Tobkin, Francis Toldi, John Trochet, Steve Umland (*Tuolumne*), Kent Van Vuren (*Merced* and *San Benito*), David Vander Pluym (*Mariposa*), Chuck E. Vaughn, Brian J. Weed, Jerry R. White (*Lake*), Denise S. Wight, Brian Williams (*Nevada*), David Wimpfheimer, Ken Wilson, Adam Winer, Roger Wolfe, Dave Woodward, David G. Yee, Bob & Carol Yutzky (*Shasta*). Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are appreciated. ☺