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Southern California



Guy McCaskie | Kimball L. Garrett

With temperatures warmer than average and precipitation less than expected during the winter period, this seemed like the winter that wasn't. This perception was reinforced by the near-absence of irruptive northern species pushing into the Region, or mountain species moving into the lowlands. The presence of "Arizona specialties" included three Broad-billed Hum-



The only species of golden-plover known to winter in California is Pacific Golden-Plover. This one, photographed on 14 January 2006, was present on Mission Bay in San Diego through the winter season. Photograph by Douglas W. Aguillard.

mingbirds, three Thick-billed Kingbirds, an amazing nine Dusky-capped Flycatchers, six Grace's Warblers, and nine Painted Redstarts; of course we really have no evidence that these birds come from Arizona (the nearest area where significant numbers breed), and it is indeed possible that many represent reverse migrants from well into Mexico. The season's

rarities included California's sixth Baikal Teal (and the first to be seen by birders), five Lesser Black-backed Gulls, a Rufous-backed Robin, and a wintering Smith's Longspur.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); F.C.R. (Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley N.P., Inyo); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.C.R.E. (Santa Clara R. estuary near Ventura, Ventura); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); V.C.G.P. (Ventura County Game Preserve near Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, Ventura). Museum collections abbreviated in the text are: SDNHM (San Diego Natural History Museum). 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 (C.B.R.C.) review list is forwarded to the Secretary and archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

The presence of 4 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks shot by hunters on the Wister Unit at S.E.S.S. in late Oct-early Nov (Aaron Freitas, *fide* KCM), along with one in El Monte, Los Angeles 17-28 Dec (LS), and another in Goleta, Santa Barbara 1 Dec+ (KB), suggests the movement of these birds into se. Arizona spread into s. California. At least 2 blue-morph Ross's Geese accompanied white morphs at S.E.S.S. through the winter (BM, GMcC), and another was at C.L. 9 Dec-21 Jan (SSt). Two Tundra Swans at Desert Center, Riverside 7 Dec (CMcG) and another near Westmorland, Imperial 4-10 Dec (AK) were at the s. extreme of this species' winter range. Numbers of Blue-winged Teal wintering along

the coast now equal or exceed those of Cinnamon Teal, with flocks of up to 81 in *San Luis Obispo* and 36 in *Orange*; in addition, numbers at the Salton Sea continue to increase, as indicated by 30+ at the mouth of Salt Cr. on the e. shore of the Salton Sea, Riverside 26-31 Dec (MSanM, GCH). A Baikal Teal in Lompoc, Santa Barbara 10 Dec-9 Jan (WTF) was the 6th to be found in California, the other 5 having been shot by hunters. A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal, rare in s. California, in Goleta 14 Dec-11 Jan (WTF) was the same bird present during the past three winters, and single males were near



This Fulvous Whistling-Duck in Goleta, Santa Barbara County, California was present from 1 (here 13) December 2005 through the winter season; it was believed to be associated with the movement of these ducks into Arizona, Baja California, and Utah in November 2005 through January 2006. Photograph by Jamie M. Chavez.

El Monte 24 Dec (CAM) and on Upper Newport Bay, Orange 8-10 Feb (SSm). Two or 3 Harlequin Ducks on the coast of *San Luis Obispo* were the only ones reported. A Surf Scoter at F.C.R. 17-26 Dec (V&GW) and up to 2 at the mouth of Salt Creek 21-26 Dec (GMcC, MSanM)—along with a White-winged Scoter at Tinemaha Res. near Big Pine, Inyo 13 Dec (T&JH) and up to 3 at the mouth of Salt Creek 4 Dec+ (PS)—were inland, as was a Long-tailed Duck on the Colorado R. below Parker Dam, San Bernardino 18 Dec-29 Jan (HV). The continued decline in the number of White-winged Scoters on the coast of s. California

is illustrated by reports of only 6 this winter. Twenty Black Scoters along the coast, along with San Clemente 1's first on 8 Dec (ELK, see *Western Birds* 36: 158-273, 2005), was about average. Ten Long-tailed Ducks along the coast, including 3 together on Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo* 10 Dec-27 Feb (DML), were fewer than normal. A Common Goldeneye × Barrow's Goldeneye hybrid with 3 Barrow's below Parker Dam 18 Dec (HV) was believed to be the same bird present here each of the past two winters; a Barrow's at the mouth of Salt Cr. 19 Dec-22 Jan (AH) was one of a very few ever on the Salton Sea.

A Pacific Loon on L. Castaic, Los Angeles 8-28 Dec (MSanM) was inland, where considered rare. A Red-necked Grebe on Silverwood L., San Bernardino 3-4 Dec (SJM) was inland, where considered casual, and another at Imperial Beach, San Diego 17 Dec-27 Feb (SW) was exceptionally far south. Northern Fulmars were scarce in s. California waters this winter, with up to 12 in Santa Monica Bay, Los Angeles through the winter (KGL) being the largest number reported. Short-tailed Shearwaters appeared scarcer than normal, but one at La Jolla, San Diego 11 Mar (MS) was late for s. California waters. A Manx Shearwater 8 km off Marina del Rey, Los Angeles 6 Jan (JSF) was believed to be the same bird seen from nearby Pt. Vicente 30 Dec (TMcG). At least 2 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels at Cambria, San Luis Obispo 2 Jan (MJI) were pushed close to shore by stormy weather.

A Tricolored Heron at the mouth of Salt Cr. 22 Dec-3 Jan (DVP, MSanM) is one of a very few at the Salton Sea in winter. At least 8 Reddish Egrets were in coastal San Diego and Orange through the period. Two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons found in Imperial Beach in Jun were present through Feb (GMcC). A Wood Stork near Escondido 31 Dec (KW) was a bird that has been resident in the San Diego Wild Animal Park since 1986.

A White-tailed Kite at Mountain Pass in e. San Bernardino 22 Dec (BD) was far from any area of regular occurrence. A Harris's Hawk of unknown origin was around Blythe, Riverside 11 Nov-17 Dec (RH). A young Broad-winged Hawk in Lake Forest, Orange 18 Dec (JEP) was the first to be found in winter in s. California in many years. Five Swainson's Hawks at Borrego Springs, San Diego 6 Feb were the earliest of the spring migrants to pass through that area, with 183 counted by the end of the month (HC, PJ); one near El Centro, Imperial 8 Feb (KZK) was also an early spring migrant, but single birds over Long Beach, Los Angeles 18 Dec (TEW) and Fullerton, Orange 29 Jan (DRW) were either very late/early migrants, or wintering locally. Wintering Zone-tailed Hawks included single birds at Goleta, Santa Barbara 13 Oct-20 Jan (HPR), in Ojai, Ventura 18 Dec (BT), at Rancho Santa Margarita, Orange 28 Jan (VL), 2 around Escondido, San Diego through the period (KW), and single birds inland at Blythe 14 Dec-23 Jan (RH) and near El Centro 24 Sep-22 Dec (KZK); in addition an injured ad. was captured in a residen-



Totally unexpected, and establishing one of a very few mid-winter records for anywhere in North America, was this Baird's Sandpiper in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, photographed on the first day of its 9-12 January 2006 stay. Photograph Mark Brown.

tial area of San Diego 23 Jan (fide PU; *SDNHM). At least 2 Rough-legged Hawks around the Carrizo Plain, and another in the nearby Cuyama Valley, appeared to be the only ones present this winter. The presence of a Crested Caracara near Pt. Conception, Santa Barbara 10 Jan (JRS) and another at the S.C.R.E. 5 Jan (DLG) adds two more records to the ever-increasing number from along the coast of California.

POLOVERS THROUGH ALCIDS

Wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers included 3 at Guadalupe, Santa Barbara 22 Dec (WTF), up to 3 at Seal Beach, Orange through the period (RS), single birds at Bolsa Chica, Orange since mid-Aug (BED) and on Mission Bay in San Diego 29 Dec-14 Apr (JRJ), and up to 5 near Imperial Beach through the period (RTP). An American Oystercatcher was in La-



One of a remarkable six present along the coast of southern California this winter, this Grace's Warbler was found in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County on 22 February 2006 (here 4 March). Photograph by Oscar Johnson.

guna Beach, Orange 27-29 Dec (KLP), and another was on Santa Cruz I. 8 Jan (OJ); a black-and-white oystercatcher at Seal Beach 1 Jan (TAB) was believed to be a hybrid.

Single Whimbrels inland at Rosamond and nearby Lancaster, Los Angeles 12 Feb (MSanM) were believed to be exceptionally early spring migrants. A Black Turnstone with at least 15 Ruddy Turnstones at S.E.S.S. 3 Feb-16 Apr (BM, GMcC) is thought to be the same bird present since Aug. Single Sanderlings inland on the Salton Sea at the mouth of Salt Cr. 4 Dec (CMcG) and at Red Hill 5 Nov-24 Feb (GMcC) were believed to be wintering locally. A Baird's Sandpiper in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara 9-12 Jan (MB) provided the first winter record for California. A Silt Sandpiper at the V.C.G.P. through the period (RB) and another at the San Diego R. mouth, San Diego 10-26 Feb (PD) were on the coast, where most unusual, particularly so in winter. The Ruff found at S.E.S.S. 31 Jul remained

through 14 Apr (DR). One Red-necked and 6 Wilson's Phalaropes at S.E.S.S. 20 Dec (KLG) were either exceptionally late fall migrants or attempting to winter locally. Red Phalaropes strewn along the coast of San Luis Obispo in early Jan, with up to 75 at some locations, were correlated with a strong Pacific storm, but virtually none were found farther s.; one in the Cuyama Valley, San Luis Obispo 3 Jan (TME) was well inland, and another in Huntington Beach, Orange 1 Jan (SGM) was only a few km inland.

A Laughing Gull, rare in the Salton Sink in winter, was near N.E.S.S. 3 Jan (MSanM), and up to 2 were near Imperial, Imperial 9-22 Jan (BM); in addition, 4 were on the coast, where even rarer, with 2 in Goleta 31 Jan (DMC, OJ) and single birds at the San Diego R. mouth 8-23 Feb (MJB) and Imperial Beach 25 Dec (BC). A Franklin's Gull, even rarer in winter, was in Goleta 31 Dec (DA), and another was in Placentia, Orange 25 Nov-3 Jan (JEP). The Little Gull found on L. Perris, Riverside 12 Nov was still present 27 Mar (HBK). A Heermann's Gull, rare inland, was at S.E.S.S. 17 Feb-4 Mar (GMcC). At least 4 Mew Gulls were present well inland around S.E.S.S. during the winter. Five Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported, with single ads. on the coast in Goleta 18 Jan (WTF) and at Doheny Beach S.P., Orange 12-15 Dec (MJI), and inland an ad. on Obsidian Butte at S.E.S.S. 4 Dec (GMcC), a different ad. at nearby Red Hill 22 Feb-4 Mar (KLG), and a first-winter bird at the mouth of Salt Cr. 22 Feb (KLG). A Western Gull inland near Lancaster 25 Feb (MSanM) was one of a very few ever found in the Antelope Valley, but another near Chino, San Bernardino 3 Dec (CMcF) was in an area where found in recent winters. The only Glaucous Gulls were an ad. at Pt. Piedras Blancas, San Luis Obispo 19-20 Feb (DR), and first-winter birds 8 km off Marina del Rey 25



The number of Common Grackles reaching California has increased every decade since the first was found in 1967. This one near Imperial Beach, San Diego County was recorded 17 (here 19) December 2005 through 26 February 2006, one of two known in southern California this winter.

Photograph by Matt Sadowski.



This Dusky-capped Flycatcher, photographed in Brawley, Imperial County on the last day of its 1-6 December 2005 stay, was one of an unprecedented nine found in southern California this winter. Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.

Feb (JSF) and at Dana Pt., Orange 5-17 Feb (N&MF). Black-legged Kittiwakes were remarkably scarce, with only 5 reported s. of *San Luis Obispo*.

An Elegant Tern at San Elijo Lagoon, *San Diego* 12 Dec (RTP) was late, and another in Santa Barbara 2-15 Feb (GR) was evidently wintering locally. A Black Skimmer at N.E.S.S. through 2 Jan (CMcG) remained at this inland location later than expected. A Marbled Murrelet at San Simeon 20-25 Feb (TME) was at the s. limit of this species' normal range.

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

White-winged Doves are now common residents at Anza Borrego S.P. in e. *San Diego* but are unusual elsewhere in winter, so one on the coast in Los Osos, *San Luis Obispo* 20 Feb (GPS), one in Niland, *Imperial* 20 Dec (ELK), and 2 in Brawley 3 Mar (DRW) were noteworthy. A Ruddy Ground-Dove at F.C.R. 25 Dec (V&GW), up to 3 around Blythe 14 Dec-1 Jan (RH), one near El Centro through the winter (KZK), and another near Imperial, *Imperial* 22 Dec (AH) were the only ones reported away from the resident population at Calipatria. A Spotted Owl in Silverado Canyon 18 Dec (DL) is believed to be one of fewer than 10 resident in Orange. Totally unexpected were single Lesser Nighthawks on the coast at the Santa Ynez R. estuary, *Santa Barbara* 18 Dec (WTF) and in Santa Barbara 31 Dec-2 Jan (RAH); these provide the first winter records for *Santa Barbara*. Three Broad-billed Hummingbirds were found, with one in Mission Viejo, *Orange* 6 Dec-22 Feb (JEP) joined by

another 17 Dec-22 Jan (DRW), and a male inland at Borrego Springs 5 Dec-8 Feb (HC). Single Costa's Hummingbirds in Los Osos, *San Luis Obispo* 10 Feb (GPS) and near San Miguel, *San Luis Obispo* 19 Feb (MTy) were farther n. than expected in winter. A Nuttall's Woodpecker at N.E.S.S. 2 Jan (CMcG) was outside the species' known range. About a dozen Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were found scattered throughout the Region, as is normal.

A Least Flycatcher in Long Beach, *Los Angeles* 6 Dec-7 Feb (TEW, KSG) and a Dusky Flycatcher on the Palos Verdes Pen., *Los Angeles* 11 Dec-28 Jan (KGL) were the only ones reported. Hammond's Flycatchers continue to prove regular in winter on the coastal slope, with 5 noted during the period; Gray (about 50 reported) and Pacific-slope (about 30) Flycatchers are still our "default" winter *Empidonax*. Eleven Eastern Phoebes during the period was a bit above normal. A male Vermilion Flycatcher s. of Nipomo 23 Feb+ was only the 2nd for *San Luis Obispo*. An amazing 9 Dusky-capped Flycatchers were recorded this winter: coastally, birds were in Goleta, *Santa Barbara* 31 Dec-20 Feb (CAM), in *Los Angeles* at La Verne 6 Dec-10 Jan (MJSM), Lakewood 18 Dec-3 Mar (SB), Arcadia 17-20 Dec (EB, JP, TEW), and at Costa Mesa, *Orange* 30 Nov-22 Feb (JEP); in *Imperial* birds were at Picacho State Recreation Area 27 Nov-19 Dec (GCH), Brawley 1-6 Dec (BM), Wister 2 Dec-4 Mar (ToE), and Ramer L. 20 Dec-17 Feb (BM). Seven Tropical Kingbirds wintered along the coast, and a returning bird was near Seeley, *Imperial* from the fall through 19 Mar (GMcC). Thick-billed Kingbirds continued from the fall in Santa Paula, *Ventura* (reported only through 19 Dec but likely wintered; SH), Wilmington, *Los Angeles* through 20 Apr (KGL),



Single Crested Caracaras have been found along the entire coast of California since the fall of 2001; this individual was photographed at the Santa Clara River estuary, Ventura County on 5 January 2006. Whether these records pertain to just one or two birds moving up and down the coast, or instead to more sedentary birds that remain undetected for long periods of time, is a puzzle under consideration by the California Bird Records Committee. Photograph by Daniel L. Grant.

and Lake Hodges, *San Diego* through 13 Apr (PEL). Western Kingbirds are casual in the Region in winter, so one in Culver City, *Los Angeles* 13 Jan (RB), up to 2 in Long Beach 29 Jan-2 Feb (TMi, KSG), and one in Escondido, *San Diego* 23 Jan (BZ) were noteworthy; another in Santa Ana, *Orange* 18-19 Jan 2005 (DRW) was inadvertently omitted from last

winter's report. The Irwindale, *Los Angeles* Scissor-tailed Flycatcher remained through the period; others were in Alhambra, *Los Angeles* 4 Jan (TC) and Santee, *San Diego* 25 Jan-18 Mar (BZ).

VIRES THROUGH WARBLERS

A Bell's Vireo returned for its 3rd winter in Long Beach 11 Oct-5 Mar (KGL). Gray Vireo's sole wintering area in California is around the Elephant Tree groves in Anza-Borrego S.P. (see *Western Birds* 31: 258-262, 2000); this winter, one was found there on 18 Jan (LH). Plumbeous Vireos, amazingly unknown in California until 1960, are proving to be uncommon but expected winter visitors to the Region, with some 36 noted this winter on the coastal slope and another 5 on the deserts; in contrast, only about 10 Cassins Vireos were reported (all coastal). Warbling Vireos, casual in winter, were in Coronado *San Diego* 17 Dec (EAC) and in South Pasadena, *Los Angeles* 30 Jan (SMI).

The obscure Western Scrub-Jay reported in fall near Holtville, *Imperial* was still present there 9 Mar (DRW). Two Yellow-billed Magpies in Santa Barbara through the period (GR) were possibly escapees, and one at Bolsa Chica, *Orange* 30 Jan-17 Feb (AB) was almost certainly such. Up to 10 Bank Swallows were present through the period at S.E.S.S (GMcC), but a Cliff Swallow there 17 Feb (GMcC) was probably an early spring transient. High Barn Swallow winter counts are now an annual phenomenon, e.g., 25 in Goleta 3 Jan (DMC) and up to 150 at S.E.S.S through the period (GMcC); up to 9 in the cold Owens Valley, *Inyo* 17 Dec-9 Jan (T&JH) reinforce this trend. Five Pygmy Nuthatches in Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara* 23 Feb (MPB) were somewhat out of range. A House Wren in Little Lake Canyon 21 Dec (SLS) was only the



This Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal on Upper Newport Bay, Orange County, photographed here on 10 February 2006, shows the strong pale lines on the face, which are much less prominent in the North American subspecies, *californensis*. Photograph by Herbert Clarke.

4th to be found in *Inyo* in Dec. A Winter Wren in Malibu, *Los Angeles* 18 Dec gave call notes typical of boreal/eastern *hiemalis* (KLG).

A Rufous-backed Robin at Wister, S.E.S.S

21 Dec–20 Jan (TaE) established California's 14th record. Sage Thrashers are remarkably early "spring" migrants in the Region, but their status is complicated by a scattering of wintering individuals; some this season were clearly winter birds, such as one in San Luis Obispo 16–25 Dec (RJ) and one in Huntington Beach 8 Jan (RAE), but several late-Jan sightings were in areas where none wintered, and the push of migrants was illustrated by counts of 12 near Mojave, Kern 9–10 Feb (HLJ), 31 in the Antelope Valley, Los Angeles 12 Feb (JSF), and 22 on the Carrizo Plain, San Luis Obispo 13–14 Feb (AFS). Brown Thrashers were found in Long Beach 18 Dec–8 Mar (E&VZ) and at El Capitan State Beach, Santa Barbara 22 Dec–9 Feb (DF). A Sprague's Pipit was near Calipatria 13 Nov–10 Dec, with another there 20 Dec (GMcC).

A dozen coastal Nashville Warblers during the period were expected, but a Virginia's Warbler at Playa del Rey, Los Angeles 5–12 Mar (RB) was at a season when casual in the Region. Lucy's Warblers, very rare coastally and in winter, were in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara 25 Jan–8 Feb (PAG) and Goleta 22 Feb–11 Mar (DMC). A Northern Parula in Morro Bay 1 Dec–12 Mar+ (LA) was the first to winter in San Luis Obispo; 2 others were in s. coastal Los Angeles (KGL). A lingering Yellow Warbler in Bishop 17 Dec (C&RH) was the latest for *Inyo* by a week. A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Huntington Beach remained from the fall through 13 Apr (PEL); others were in Mission Viejo, Orange 6 Dec–21 Jan (JEP) and near Arcadia, Los Angeles 17 Dec (ES). A returning female Black-throated Green Warbler was in Costa Mesa 26 Dec–25 Feb (PTC), and another continued in Riverside 5 Nov–12 Feb (DG). The 4 wintering Grace's Warblers continued on Pt. Loma, San Diego through the period, with at least 3 still present 12 Mar (MTH) and one remaining through 15 Apr (PGi); a returning winterer in Del Mar, San Diego was seen 22 Dec (MJB), and one was in



This Thick-billed Kingbird, photographed at Lake Hodges, San Diego County on 20 February 2006, was one of three known to be wintering in California in winter 2005–2006. Photograph by Thomas A. Blackman.

were also found at S.E.S.S. between 13 Jan and 8 Mar (SSt, TMcG, JFG). Twenty-four Black-and-white Warblers and 11 American Redstarts were on the coastal slope; 5+ additional redstarts were around S.E.S.S., as expected. An Ovenbird at Wister 17 Jan–26 Feb (DG) was only the 6th for the Salton Sink and among the few ever to winter in the Region. The only Northern Waterthrushes were in Santa Barbara 31 Dec (HPR) and in Huntington Beach 8 Dec–25 Feb (DC). A MacGillivray's Warbler wintered in Hunt-

ington Beach 29 Nov–1 Mar (JEP).

The male Hooded Warbler found in Santa Monica, Los Angeles 24 Nov remained until 8 Feb (LP). Some 40 Wilson's Warblers on the coast included one on Santa Rosa I. 7 Feb (RF). In addition to the 4 wintering Painted Redstarts noted in the fall report, single birds were in Los Angeles at Monrovia 12 Dec–9 Mar (TEW), Newhall 28 Dec–20 Feb (BA) and Eaton Canyon 20 Mar (MCL), and in San Diego at Coronado 17 Dec–15 Jan+ (EAC) and Rancho Santa Fe 22 Dec (CM). A Yellow-breasted Chat in the San Felipe Valley 30 Dec (LH) was the latest ever for San Diego.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

At least 20 Summer Tanagers were found at various coastal localities. A Western Tanager in Bakersfield 4–18 Dec (K&BK) was very late for Kern. Six Green-tailed Towhees were on the coastal slope from Los Angeles to San Diego, and 6 Clay-colored Sparrows were scattered the length of the coast. Black-chinned Sparrows are very rarely noted in migration and winter, so up to 7 in the Anza-Borrego S.P. area 20 Dec–18 Jan (KL, LH) and single birds in Escondido 30 Dec (KW) and near L. Henshaw 14 Jan (PU) were of note. A Black-throated Sparrow was e. of San Juan Capistrano, Orange 17 Dec (LC, LN). A Grasshopper Spar-



A male Smith's Longspur near Calipatria, Imperial County 20 December 2005 through 17 February 2006 (here 13 January) was only the seventh to be recorded in California and the second in winter. Photograph by Bob Miller.

row was on Santa Rosa I. 19 Feb (RF). The last of 3 wintering Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Seal Beach, Orange was seen 13 Mar (JF); another was in Imperial Beach 31 Dec (MUE). Up to 2 Lark Buntings were on the Carrizo Plain 30 Dec–21 Feb (RHZ, AFS). Over 30 Swamp Sparrows were reported along the coast, and 8 were at S.E.S.S. during the period. The only Harris's Sparrow was in Fountain Valley 9 Dec+ (JEP). The fields ne. of Calipatria again hosted large numbers of longspurs, with up to 15 McCown's 20 Dec–17 Feb, up to 25 Laplands 10 Dec–26 Feb, and up to 300 Chestnut-collareds 10 Dec–26 Feb, with 2 still present 2 Mar (GMcC); among these was a Smith's Longspur, only the 7th to be found in California, 20 Dec–17

Feb (ToE). A Lapland Longspur in Goleta 15 Dec (DMC) was along the coast, where scarce.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (8 this winter) and Black-headed Grosbeaks (5) were in near-normal numbers. The Indigo Bunting found 29 Nov in Morro Bay remained until 3 Dec (DB); a male was well photographed in Northridge, Los Angeles 31 Dec–5 Mar (ET). A Lazuli Bunting in Irwindale 17 Dec (AL) was unseasonal. A green Painted Bunting was in Goleta 30 Dec (WTF).

Five Tricolored Blackbirds at N.E.S.S. 2 Jan (CMcG) and an ad. male near Niland 22 Dec (ToE) were out of range. Single Common Grackles, still only casual in California, were near San Luis Obispo 27 Nov–22 Dec (JSR) and near Imperial Beach 17 Dec–26 Feb (GMcC). A flock of 80+ male Great-tailed Grackles in Oceano demonstrates the magnitude of this species' expansion into San Luis Obispo. Five hundred Brown-headed Cowbirds s. of Big Pine 13 Dec (T&JH) was an unprecedented winter count for *Inyo*. An imm. male Orchard Oriole was in Costa Mesa 1 Jan (JEP). The expected small numbers of Hooded and Bullock's Orioles were found this winter; a Bullock's at Cuyamaca Rancho S.P., San Diego 7 Jan (GLR) was at an unexpectedly high elevation. Nine Baltimore Orioles were reported through the period. Three male Scott's Orioles at Black Rock Campground, Joshua Tree N.M., San Bernardino 24 Feb (MTo) may have been exceptionally early spring arrivals.

Cited observers (county coordinators in bold-face): Dustin Alcalá, Lisa Andreano, Brian Ash-



At the south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial County, this Lesser Black-backed Gull was findable 22 (here 26) February through 4 March 2006; it was one of five reported in Southern California in winter 2005–2006. Photograph by Henry Detwiler.

ton, Ed Barajas, Richard Barth, Tom A. Benson, Mark J. Billings, Al Borodayko, Suzanne Bowers, Dick Boyd, Kyle Braunger, Mark P. Brown, Dick Cabe, Barbara Carlson, Jamie M. Chavez, Hal Coen, Laura Cohen, Tori Collender, David M. Compton (*Santa Barbara*), Peyton T. Cook, Elizabeth A. Copper, Brian E. Daniels, Bill Deppe, Pete Dunne, Tanner Easterla (TaE), Todd Easterla (ToE), Tom M. Edell (*San Luis Obispo*), Richard A. Erickson, Michael U. Evens (*San Diego*), Jon S. Feenstra, John Fitch, Dan Fontaine, Rob Fowler, Nick & Mary Freeman, Wes T. Fritz, Peter A. Gaede, Kimball L. Garrett (*Los Angeles*), Pete Ginsburg (PGi), Dave Goodward, Daniel L. Grant, John F. Green (*Riverside*), Robert A. Hamilton, Lori Hargrave, Gjon C. Hazard, Sandy Hedrick, Matthew T. Heindel, Tom & Jo Heindel (*Inyo*), Roger Higson, Andrew Howe, Marshall J. Iliff,

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Schmierer, Peter Siminski, Gregory P. Smith, Steve Smith (SSm) Susan Steele (SSi), Ed Stonick, John R. Storrer, Mary Beth Stowe, Bob Talryn, Ed Thomas, Mike Todd (MTo), Mike Tynner (MTy), David Vander Pluym, Philip Unitt, Herman Vanooosten, Stanley Walens, Ken Weaver, Walter Wehtje (*Ventura*), Douglas R. Willick (*Orange*), John C. Wilson (*Kern*), Vicki & Gerry Wolf, Thomas E. Wurster, Roger H. Zachary, Barry Zimmer, Elias & Val Zuniga. An additional 25+ observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season; all have our thanks. 🐾

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Baja California Peninsula



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Gorgonio Ruiz-Campos

There was plenty to write about this season, as the north and south ends of the Region were well covered. We appreciate reports from visitors to Los Cabos who are not necessarily focused on birding. Highlights included the Region's first confirmed Streak-backed Oriole, Baja California's first Dusky-capped Flycatchers and Blue-headed Vireo, rare waterfowl, the return of Sandhill Cranes to the Mexicali Valley, Long-tailed Jaegers in the Gulf of California, and numerous rare passerines.

Abbreviations: C.P.G.P. (Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds); E.S.J.C. (Estero San José del Cabo).

WATERFOWL THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck went unrecorded for the first winter this decade, while Fulvous Whistling-Duck sightings at Lagunas de Chametla continued from our last report: 3 on 23 Dec (IMC, RV) and one 18–22 Mar (ph. MJI). All six of the Region's goose species were reported. Only 2 of 20 Greater White-fronted Geese, but 8 of 10 Snow Geese, were in Baja California. An imm. Ross's Goose at the Río Guadalupe estuary 17–18 Dec was relocated at Real del Mar 20 Dec–31 Jan (TJM, ph. MJB et al.). We consider many of the following white-cheeked goose reports tentative at the subspecies level, especially at the *taverneri* Cackling/*parvipes* Canada species interface (cf. N.A.B. 59: 329). Aleutian Cackling Geese (*B. h. leucopareia*) were at the Manadero Plain 10 Oct (6; ph. RAH et al.) and El Descanso 3 Dec (ph., †MJI, MJB), and *minima* Cacklings were at Guerrero Negro 7–30 Nov (5, AG-A) and C.P.G.P. 24 Jan (1, MJI, RAE). Up to 3 *taverneri* were at C.P.G.P. 24 Jan–25 Feb (ph. MJI et al.) and "Lessers" at Heroes de la Independencia 21 Jan–26 Feb may have included one *taverneri* and 4 *parvipes* (†MJB, ph. TJM, DP), but we still consider *parvipes* unconfirmed in the Region. Lastly, up to 40 *moffitti* Canadas were at C.P.G.P. 9 Dec–24 Jan (ph. GR-C, GDLG et al.).

Wood Ducks were well reported, with up to 5 at the Mexicali Zoo 22 Sep–25 Feb (ph. MJI et al.), a female in Tijuana 7–16 Jan (ph. MJB, TJM), and a male record far s. in Baja California at Lagunita El Ciprés 29 Jan (ph. MJB et al.). A male Eurasian Wigeon at E.S.J.C. 18–23 Jan (ph. DSC, ph. SGM) was the 2nd for Baja California Sur; 3 were found in the Region's far north. Also rare in Baja California Sur, 3 Mallards at E.S.J.C. 25 Jan (†MN, CN)



Sandhill Cranes had not been seen in Baja California for nearly 25 years, so these birds dropping in to roost at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds 24 January 2006 were a welcome sight. Their long necks, long bills, and especially their extensive red caps all indicate they were Greater Sandhill Cranes (subspecies *tabidal*), which has recently become more prevalent in the adjacent Imperial Valley. Photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.

were the first found since Sep 2000. Last winter's female Garganey apparently returned to E.S.J.C., where it was seen 17–22 Mar (ph. MJI). The most unusual of 9 Greater Scaup was a male at E.S.J.C. 21 Jan (†SGM). The female Harlequin Duck at La Joya 11 Nov–31 Jan (ph. MJB et al.) was presumably the same one seen there in Mar 2003 and Mar–Jun