

Northern California



Stephen C. Rottenborn
Michael M. Rogers
Jeff N. Davis
Ed Pandolfino

SPRING

Drought conditions continued to affect the entire Region in spring 2015, and temperatures were above average in March and early April before normalizing. Perhaps related to warm conditions, short-distance migrants such as Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Wilson's Warblers, and Hooded Orioles arrived earlier than average. At Southeast Farallon Island, the variety and number of migrant landbirds were exceptional, with several productive waves of migrants. The season's outstanding rarities included an apparent Red-backed Shrike x Turkestan Shrike hybrid, California's first Kelp Gull and second Tristram's Storm-Petrel, the Region's third and fourth Gull-billed Terns and fourth and fifth Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels, and lingering Black Vulture, Rustic Bunting, and Brambling.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.R.P. (Cosumnes River Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.V. (Central Valley); F.I. (Southeast Farallon Island, *San Francisco*); H.R.S. (Hayward R.S., *Alameda*); P.R.N.S. (Point Reyes National Seashore, *Marin*); Point Blue (Point Blue Conservation Science); S.F. (San Francisco, not State Forest). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are not published. Documentation of C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Tom Benson, Secretary, secretary@californiabirds.org.

WATERFOWL

Surprising numbers of geese lingered into

May. Greater White-fronted Geese were reported from seven counties through 31 May. An ad. blue-morph Snow Goose with 15 white morphs at the Sacramento N.W.R., *Glenn* 16 May was apparently the second-latest for the n. C.V. (ph. Steve Nord). A Ross's Goose lingering around Mountain View through 25 May (Eric Goodill, MMR, MJM) tied the late date for *Santa Clara*, and Cackling Geese were reported from four counties through 29 May. A Brant at the Salinas W.T.P., *Monterey* 14 May (KVV) was notable for its slightly inland location. Eurasian Wigeon in six counties through 31 May likewise represented more lingering birds than expected and included the latest for the n. C.V. at the Sacramento N.W.R., *Glenn* 18 May (†Bob MacMillan). Six Eurasian Teal were reported in five counties through 23 Apr. Male Tufted Ducks continued at Stafford Lake, *Marin* through 9 Mar (ph. Kevin Keirn, Donna Bray) and Lake Hennessey, *Napa* through 21 Mar (m.ob.); another was found at Abbotts Lagoon, *Marin* 24 Apr (Tate Snyder, AJ et al.). An unidentified eider was seen off Pigeon Point, *San Mateo* 13 May (RSTh). Of 3 Long-tailed Ducks, the latest was a lingering male at the Pajaro Dunes, *Santa Cruz* 6-9 May (NLv et al.). A female Hooded Merganser was on eggs in a nest box at Essex Pond, *Humboldt* 23 Apr (fide Elizabeth Feucht); another female along the Tuolumne River 16 May (HMR) raised thoughts of a possible first breeding record in *Stanislaus*. Inland Red-breasted Mergansers were found at Lake Camanche, *Amador* 13 Apr (DMr) and Crowley Lake, *Mono* 17 May (LKh).

LOONS THROUGH PELICANS

Red-throated and Pacific Loons are annual (albeit in low numbers) inland in early spring, but up to 2 Red-throated Loons at Lexington Reservoir 3-22 May (ph. Stephen Peterson et al.) provided *Santa Clara*'s first May record, and a Pacific Loon at June Lake, *Mono* 23 May (ph. Phil Carnehl) was similarly late. Few Horned Grebes linger past Apr, so up to 3 at Alviso, *Santa Clara* 3-9 May (MMR, Gena Zolotar) and one at the Pajaro River, *Santa Cruz* 16 May (ph. Aaron Gabbe, Craig Fosdick) were notable. *Santa Clara*'s wintering Red-necked Grebes at Calero Reservoir and Coyote Reservoir lingered through 9 Mar and 13 Apr, respectively (RPh, Andy Bradshaw, PLD, EFe et al.), but one at Lexington Reservoir 3-17 May (ph. Stephen Peterson et al.) was quite tardy. Dorris Reservoir hosted *Modoc*'s second Red-necked Grebe 1-2 May (ph. SCR, JLx).

Laysan Albatrosses were well represented offshore, with a high of 9 seen from a repositioning cruise between *Monterey* and *Mendocino* 20 Mar (JCS, Tom Crabtree et al.). Even more exciting were the high numbers of Murphy's Pe-

trels observed. Three off *Sonoma* 20 Mar (PEL, Nick Lethaby et al.) furnished a first county record. From late Apr through May, double-digit counts were recorded on nine days, with highs of 68 between *Monterey* and *Mendocino* 27 Apr (Nathan Hentze), 63 from *Mendocino* to *Del Norte* 7 May (PEL, Gary Nunn, JCS, Monte Taylor et al.), and 54 in the vicinity of Davidson Seamount, *Monterey* 6-8 May (AdS et al.). The second record for F.I. was recorded 30 May (†Edward Jenkins). Twenty-two Hawaiian Petrels were recorded on these cruises 20 Mar-13 May, with a high of 9 off *Mendocino* and *Humboldt* 7 May (PEL, Gary Nunn, JCS, Monte Taylor et al.). Fewer Cook's Petrels were reported on repositioning cruises, with 17 seen on four dates 20 Mar-13 May, but 145 were seen on a research vessel 6-8 May around Davidson Seamount, *Monterey* (AdS et al.).

The difficulty of distinguishing Short-tailed Shearwaters from Sooties clouds our understanding of typical departure dates of the former, but it appears that only a few linger into Mar (and possibly early Apr). Two seen from shore at the entrance to Humboldt Bay, *Humboldt* 9 Mar (†RbF) were therefore noteworthy. The tail end of last winter's Black-vented Shearwater incursion provided the first spring record for S.F. in a decade, with 2 at Lands End 10 Mar (Collin Adams, Amanda Starbuck). Single Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels mist-netted at F.I. 19 Apr and 20 May (ph. Point Blue) provided the fourth and fifth Regional records and the northernmost records to date; the previous three were from Monterey Bay. This species has typically been recorded off California only during warm-water conditions, and these records further exemplify the influx of southern seabirds that accompanied warmer water last winter. The significance of these records was eclipsed by California's second **Tristram's Storm-Petrel**, which was found dead (likely the victim of Burrowing Owl predation) at F.I. 18 Mar (ph. Point Blue); the first was also at F.I., on 22 Apr 2006.

A Blue-footed Booby at F.I. 22-24 Apr (Point Blue) provided a rare spring record, but one at the Klamath River mouth 20 Apr (†SMcA), furnishing *Del Norte*'s second record, was far less expected so far north. Twenty-nine Brown Boobies more than doubled our previous spring total. At least 18 were at F.I., with high counts of 12 on 2 & 19 Mar (Point Blue); numbers there dwindled in Apr and early May but were bolstered by a few arrivals later in May. Elsewhere, 2 were in *Monterey*, 3 in *San Mateo*, 2 in *S.F.*, 2 in *Marin*, and one in *Humboldt*. The **Northern Gannet**, now present for three years, was seen at F.I. most days (Point Blue), was detected around Alcatraz Island and the Golden Gate Channel, *S.F.* on a number of occasions

23 Apr+ (m.ob.), and provided *San Mateo's* first record at Daly City 25 May (PSar). A Brandt's Cormorant at Richmond 19 Apr (LKh, EPI, Jeff Hoppes) provided one of few recent spring records for *Contra Costa*, while a Pelagic Cormorant at Alviso, *Santa Clara* 30 May (MDo) may have been the same bird observed at this location sporadically over the past eight winters. The wintering American White Pelican wandered around coastal *Humboldt* and *Del Norte* until 21 Apr (m.ob.). A Brown Pelican was unusual (especially in spring) as far inland as Davis, *Yolo* 12 May (Susan Nishio).

BITTERNS THROUGH CRANES

Least Bitterns were reported in above-average numbers. Two were at Las Gallinas, *Marin* 16-18 May (Mark Dettling, Megan Elrod, Daphne Hatch), and up to 2 were at Campbell Cove, *Sonoma* 24 May+ (PBC, Mike Bumgarner, DN, m.ob.). Birds returned to Yolo Bypass W.A., *Yolo* 6 May+ (m.ob.), another was at the Cache Creek Conservancy, *Yolo* 16-20 May (Brent Campos et al.), and 4 were found at three locations in *Sacramento* 11 Mar-12 May (m.ob.). A Little Blue Heron courting a Cattle Egret at Natomas, *Sacramento* 8 May (Sarah Mayhew) was likely a returning bird but remained only a single day this year, unlike last summer when it spent 22 Jun-7 Jul at the same location. Up to 2 Cattle Egrets continued from winter through 16 Apr near Fort Dick, *Del Norte* (ADB).

Marin's **Black Vulture** continued in Bolinas through 10 May (RDIG, Alex Merritt, m.ob.). Another n. of Pacific Valley 14 May (†Greg Smith), providing the first record for *Monterey*, was deemed by the C.B.R.C. to be the same as a bird that has wandered the coast from *Ventura* to *San Luis Obispo* since 2009. A White-tailed Kite at Willow Creek W.A. 4 Mar (Peter Young, Jim Moore) was a rare find for *Lassen*. A Bald Eagle nest at Gallighan Slough held 2 young 6 Mar; both successfully fledged in early Jun, for the second successful nesting for this site and *Santa Cruz*. Hawkwatching from *San Francisco* on warm days with light to moderate offshore winds turned up 7 Broad-winged Hawks 18 Apr-3 May (HuC, DMO, m.ob.) and 2 Swainson's Hawks 30 Apr (HuC et al.). Both species were regarded as casual spring migrants prior to the recent regular monitoring of hilltop observation points. Farther south, northbound ad. Broad-wingeds were seen over Belmont, *San Mateo* 18 Apr (RSTh) and over Loma Prieta 19 Apr (second spring record for *Santa Cruz* and fifth for *Santa Clara*; ph. Pete Sole, DvWb et al.). Migrant Swainson's Hawks were seen over Belmont, *San Mateo* 25 & 27 Apr (both RSTh), over Quail Hollow Ranch, *Santa Cruz* 26 Apr (ph. AMR), and over Harkins Slough, *Santa Cruz* 15 May (ph. AMR, BRa, RRa). North

of *S.F.*, coastal migrants were found at Laguna de Santa Rosa, *Sonoma* 10 Apr (ScC) and e. of Willow Creek in *Humboldt* 3 May (TKz, †RbF, DCo, Casey Ryan). A pair nested again in Coyote Valley, *Santa Clara*, with nest building first observed 8 Apr (RPH, m.ob.).

Black Rails were well reported from *Sacramento*, with one at Stone Lakes N.W.R. 11-27 Mar (Mark Sawyer, m.ob.), one at Twitchell Island 17 Apr (Iryna Dronova), and up to 3 at C.R.P. 23 May-6 Jun (Breck Breckenridge, Julian Wood, JTr, m.ob.). Up to 4 were found at Alviso Marina C.P., *Santa Clara* 13 Mar-9 May (FV, m.ob.), with additional birds heard along nearby Alviso Slough 14 Apr+ (DvWb, WGB, MMR, MDo); another was heard farther n. at Coyote Hills R.P., *Alameda* 21 May (Jerry Ting). The Sandhill Crane at the Smith River bottoms, *Del Norte* was last seen 4 Apr (LzW, LPT). Lingering cranes in *Humboldt* included 2 near Ferndale 25 Apr (TMcK), 2 near McKinleyville 26 Apr (GSL, LPL), and 2 at Cock Robin Island 20 May (ph. Elizabeth Feucht et al.).

SHOREBIRDS

Continued drought resulted in 36-year-record-low water levels at Lake Camanche, but this yielded near perfect conditions for shorebirds, particularly on the n. *Amador* side. In *Amador*, 5 Snowy Plovers 12 Apr-15 May (TEa, FS, Greg Hemig) may have been the first for the county, as was a Baird's Sandpiper 25 Apr (TEa, FS, ph. DMr, JCS, JLx et al.). Up to 3 Wilson's Phalaropes 7-13 May (TEa, ph. DMr, TS, Greg Hemig et al.) and up to 9 Marbled Godwits 21-25 Apr (ph. DMr, JLx et al.) provided the county's second and third records, respectively. Other notable shorebirds there included 40 Black-bellied Plovers, 4 American Avocets, 2 Black-necked Stilts, one Willet, 28 Whimbrels, 20 Long-billed Curlews, 10 Dunlin, and 3 Red-necked Phalaropes. Both Whimbrel and Long-billed Curlew were also seen in nearby *Calaveras*. Notable breeding records for American Avocets were obtained in *Mendocino*, where a pair incubated four eggs 30 Apr+ (SJS, CEV, RfK, m.ob.), and *Santa Cruz*, where three nests with eggs were found at College Lake 22 Apr-6 May (GKt et al.). Notable Black Oystercatchers inside S.F. Bay included 2 in Benicia, *Solano* 3 & 16 May (Ken Poerner, EPI), a nesting pair at Ballena Bay, *Alameda* (Vern Nelson, RJR, m.ob.), and *Santa Clara's* fourth, at Alviso 14 Apr (Jason St. Pierre) and 25 May+ (MMR, MJM, m.ob.). At least one American Golden-Plover was reported from Lake Earl and Lake Tolowa, *Del Norte* 21 May-4 Jun (ph. LBr). It was seen associating with a late Pacific Golden-Plover 25 May-4 Jun (ph. LBr).

The wintering Solitary Sandpipers reported last season continued through 9 Apr in Napa,

Napa (MBe, m.ob.) and through 8 Apr nw. of Millerton Lake, *Madera* (Nina Jones, m.ob.). Twenty-one migrant Solitaries reported from ten counties 16 Apr-9 May included *Amador's* second, at the lone W.T.P. 25-26 Apr (TEa, FS, JCS, JLx, Greg Hemig), and a remarkable 5 at the Hayfork W.T.P. 30 Apr-4 May (fewer than five previous *Trinity* records, all of single birds; JLx, JSL). *Humboldt's* twelfth (and second in spring) Hudsonian Godwit graced Clam Beach 25-26 May (Mark Colwell, ph. SMcA, David Orluck, Deven Kammerichs-Berke, ph. RbF, m.ob.). Unusual shorebirds near Stratford, *Kings* included a Red Knot far inland 30 May and the only Stilt Sandpipers reported, up to 2 birds present 2-4 May (both MSy). Ruffs were at H.R.S. 18 Apr (RJR) and inland along Ostrom Rd., *Yuba* 28-30 Apr (JLx, JLa, ph. JCS, JSL, †BED, m.ob.). Single Sanderlings were far inland in *Modoc*, at Modoc N.W.R. 1 May and along Goose Lake Causeway 2-3 May (both SCR). Four Sanderlings at Alviso 25 May were the latest ever in spring for *Santa Clara* (ph. MMR, MJM). Besides the *Amador* bird noted above, Baird's Sandpipers were found near Kettleman City, *Kings* 9 Apr (2 birds; ph. JSy), along Abel Rd., *Colusa* 15 Apr (JCS), at Llano Seco North Central Valley W.M.A., *Butte* 19 Apr (MRg, Matt Forster), and at Colusa N.W.R., *Colusa* 24 Apr (JCS et al.). Spring Pectoral Sandpipers were found at *Humboldt Bay* N.W.R., *Humboldt* 20 Apr (Carrick Rice), *Redding* W.T.P., *Shasta* 24 Apr (Brooke McDonald), and s. of Corcoran, *Kings* 3 May (ph. MSy). Two of the 3 reported Semipalmated Sandpipers were the fifth and sixth in spring for *San Mateo*, at Ravenswood Trail, Menlo Park 23-26 Apr (RSTh et al., ph. MDeF, CHy) and Pilarcitos Creek mouth, Half Moon Bay 11 May (ph. MDeF, CHy); the third was at Colusa N.W.R., *Colusa* 24 Apr (†JCS).



This Gull-billed Tern, photographed on the last day of its 26 April-2 May 2015 stay south of Corcoran in Kings County, may have been a returning bird from last summer, which provided Northern California's second record. Photograph by Mark Stacey.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

SKUAS THROUGH SKIMMERS

The only South Polar Skuas reported were off Eureka, *Humboldt*, with singles on 15 (RbF, SMcA, Mark Colwell et al.) & 21 May (PEL et al.). Long-tailed is the least frequently reported jaeger in spring; singles were off *Monterey* 6 May (PEL, Gary Nunn, JCS, Monte Taylor et al.), *Trinidad Head, Humboldt* 13 May (PEL et al.), and Eureka, *Humboldt* 15 May (RbF, SMcA, Mark Colwell et al.). Nine Scripps's Murrelets were seen on four dates, 7-21 May, between *Mendocino* and *Del Norte*. The total of 75 Sabine's Gulls, mostly alternate ads., between *Monterey* and *Mendocino* 20 Mar (JCS, Tom Crabtree et al.) was exceptional for such an early date. A good count of 5400 northbound Bonaparte's Gulls passed Pigeon Point, *San Mateo* 14 Apr (RSTh). Our only Laughing Gull was an ad. at Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 4-5 May (AJ et al.), while 8 Franklin's Gulls in six counties 29 Apr–25 May represented a modest showing. Among 3 Mew Gulls lingering into May, the latest was present through the period at Lake Merced, *S.F.* (m.ob.). Single Lesser Black-backed Gulls, both on 12 Mar, were at Lake Elizabeth, *Alameda* (ph. Jerry Ting) and Folsom Lake (third or fourth for *Placer*; RPz). Five Glaucous Gulls were recorded, the latest being at Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 11 May (MDeF, CHy). California's first **Kelp Gull** was well documented at Año Nuevo S.R., *San Mateo* 27 Apr (ph. Bob Siegel), Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 20 May (ph. AJ), and FI. 24-29 May (ph. Point Blue); the same ad. was thought to be involved in all three appearances. This bird represented the first North American record w. of Colorado. A **Gull-billed Tern** s. of Corcoran, *Kings* 26 Apr–2 May (ph. MSy, m.ob.) may have been the same individual recorded there last May; one at the Pajaro River mouth 16 May (ph. JGa, Nicholas Kronick) was seen in both *Santa Cruz* and *Monterey*, providing a first record for each county. The Region had

only two prior records. Six Black Terns at Lake Camanche 14-15 May (TEa, TS, Greg Hemig) were seen in both *Calaveras* and *Amador*, providing a first or second record for the latter county. The wintering Common Tern at Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt* lingered through 16 Mar (EE, RbF). Elegant Terns were early, with 2 at Bolinas Lagoon, *Marin* 20 Mar (ph. PP), 24 at Terrace Point, *Santa Cruz* 21 Apr (AMR), and 2 at Mountain View 20 Apr (Jason St. Pierre, Cole Jower), the latter providing the first Apr record for *Santa Clara*. Black Skimmers included the expected breeders in S.F. Bay and migrants in *Monterey* and *Santa Cruz*, whereas one at Ocean Beach 10 May (HuC, PSar) provided only the fifth *S.F.* record.

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

The Band-tailed Pigeon incursion in the lowlands continued well into spring, highlighted by what may have been Modesto's first record, involving 2 birds at Tuolumne River R.P., *Stanislaus* 19 Apr (HMR). The last lowland report of the season was of a single bird at Oroville, *Butte* 27 May (Carol Anderson). Our only White-winged Dove was at San Mateo, *San Mateo* 28 May (ph. Mike Aicardi). A Great Gray Owl with a broken wing found at Lake Mary near Mammoth Lakes 22 May (*vide* KNN) provided only the second or third record for *Mono*.

Astounding numbers of Anna's Hummingbirds visited multiple feeders at a residence in Carmel Valley, *Monterey* during the period; the peak estimate of more than 900 on 30 Apr (PFw), based on timed counts and presumed turnover rates from the literature, recalled densities at certain feeders in the mountains of Arizona. This total eclipsed our previous highest one-day estimate of 150 at Springville, *Tulare* 6 Sep 1980. A female Costa's Hummingbird at Napa 10 Apr (Craig Cummings) established about the fifth record of that species for *Napa*. A total of 38 ad. male Rufous Hummingbirds at Summit Ridge 11 Apr (JGa, AMR, Nicholas Kronick) represented a strong showing for *Santa Cruz*. Also impressive were 20 ad. males at nearby Loma Prieta Ave. on the *Santa Cruz/Santa Clara* border 17 Apr (JGa, Kevin Condon, Nicholas Kronick). A high count of 7 Calliope Hummingbirds at Summit Ridge 17 Apr (JGa, Nicholas Kronick, m.ob.) more than doubled the previous record of 3 for any spring season in *Santa Cruz*. Likewise, 10 in *Monterey* during the period established a new seasonal high count for that county (*vide* DR), and 5 at Dinosaur Point Rd. 1 May (MMR, RGJ, RFu) set a new single-locality high count for *Merced*.

The fall-winter invasion of Lewis's and Acorn Woodpeckers fizzled out in spring, with no especially notable numbers or occurrences. A Williamson's Sapsucker along Hwy. 36 on the *Shasta/Trinity* border 4 May (JSL) provided the first spring record for *Trinity*. Although this species may be resident in the ne. portion of the county, this bird was about 100 km sw. of that area. Six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included 5 coastal (one in *Marin*, 2 in *San Mateo*, one in *Santa Cruz*, and one in *Monterey*) and one inland at O'Neill Forebay, *Merced* 12 Mar (PDu, FrO), continuing from winter. Similarly, 8 Red-naped Sapsuckers involved 5 coastal and bayside birds (one in *Solano*, one in *Alameda*, 2 in *Santa Clara*, and one in *Santa Cruz*) and 3 inland (2 in *Lassen* and one in *Merced*). An unusual movement of Pileated Woodpeckers brought one to the Presidio 16 Apr (the third or fourth for *S.F.*; HuC, BFi, LKh), 3 to *Contra Costa*, and 2 to *Monterey*. All but one occurred within the period of 14-29 Apr; the outlier was one at Lake Anza, *Contra Costa* 17 May (Christine Woo).

Large numbers of Hammond's Flycatchers moved through *Santa Clara*, with 10 reported 3 Apr–23 May (twice the average *vide* WGB), and *Mono*, with 39 reported 26 Apr–31 May (a new seasonal high count *vide* KNN). All but one of *Napa's* records of Gray Flycatcher have come from Wild Horse Ridge; one bird there 27 Apr and another there 1 May (ph. MBe) provided the fifth and sixth records for the county. Black Phoeebes continue to increase their presence in *Lassen*, with multiple reports during the season, including from as far e. as Biscar Reservoir and Honey Lake (*vide* KAB). Typical for the season, 2 Eastern Phoeebes were reported: one at Pescadero, *San Mateo* 8 Mar (LFI), and another at Bolinas Lagoon, *Marin* 18 Mar (JsC). *Sonoma's* first Vermilion Flycatcher was a female along the Santa Rosa Creek trail in Santa Rosa 20 Apr (DgSh). Another at Oasis Ranch 22-23 May (PJM, ADeM) established the third spring record for *Mono*. Tropical Kingbirds, most continuing from winter, included one in *S.F.*, 2 in *San Mateo*, one in *Contra Costa*, and 2 in *Santa Cruz*. Scarce anywhere along the Region's immediate coast, a Cassin's Kingbird stopped in at the lighthouse at Point Reyes N.S., *Marin* 30 Apr (ph. DSg). Our only Eastern Kingbird visited FI. 25-27 May (Point Blue).

The most thought-provoking find of the season was a "brown" shrike in Manchester, *Mendocino* 5 Mar–22 Apr (ph. Alison Cebula, ph. m.ob.). Not clearly a Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*), for which there are three previous records for California, this bird most closely resembled a Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) x Turkestan Shrike (*L. phoenicuroides*) hybrid (see *North American Birds* 69: 4-35).



The two Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels mist-netted at Southeast Farallon Island in Marin County, California in spring 2015 (here 20 May) were the northernmost individuals recorded to date anywhere in the Pacific. Photograph by Daniel Johnston.

Not only are there no previous records of this hybrid for North America, there are no records of these Old World parent species either. Two Least Bell's Vireos were reported: one singing w. of Corcoran, *Kings* 9-31 May (ph. MSy, ph. m.ob.) and another at Belmont, *San Mateo* 14 May (RSTh). A total of 25 Warbling Vireos at Pacheco S.P. 9 May (MMR, PDu) represented the largest pulse of migrants of that species ever reported from one location in *Merced*. Red-eyed Vireo is less than annual in spring, so the total of 4 this spring was remarkable. Singles were at Golden Gate Park, *S.F.* 9 May (ASH), *Putah Creek*, *Yolo* 18 May (AEn), *Point Reyes N.S.*, *Marin* 28 May (DSg), and *Tunitas Creek Rd.*, *San Mateo* 29 May (RSTh).

The invasion of Steller's Jays on the C.V. floor that began last fall continued into May in the n. C.V. with numerous reports from *Sutter*, *Yuba*, *Butte*, *Glenn*, and *Tehama* (fide BED). Golden-crowned Kinglets nested at the Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park during the period (m.ob.), apparently for the second consecutive year, representing the first confirmed breeding records for *S.F.* Six Townsend's Solitaires were found outside areas of residency during the period, with one in *Tehama*, 2 in *Napa*, one in *S.F.*, one in *San Mateo*, and one in *Contra Costa*. Small numbers of residual Varied Thrush from the massive fall-winter invasion lingered in the C.V. and along the coast through spring, with some in *Monterey* even hanging on into Jun (fide DR).

THRASHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Our only Gray Catbird report was of a briefly glimpsed bird during a late snowstorm near McGee Creek, *Mono* 15 May (ADeM). Six out-of-range Sage Thrashers included 4 along the coast, one in the C.V., and one at n. Lake Tahoe, *Placer*. Lapland Longspurs were at Ferndale bottoms, *Humboldt* 1 Mar (AxL), on FI. 12 May (Point Blue), and at Lake Tolowa, *Del Norte* 22 May (LBr). Two Chestnut-collared Longspurs continued from winter on Bear River Ridge, *Humboldt* through 4 Apr (TKz, m.ob.). An Ovenbird at Charleston Road marsh, *Santa Clara* was a winter bird that barely continued into spring 1 Mar (AV). Ovenbirds were also in Cottonwood Canyon, *Mono* 23-26 May (PJM, m.ob.) and on FI. 24 May+ (Point Blue). A total of 6 Northern Waterthrushes was more than double our average and included a singing bird likely returning for its third spring near Lake Almanor, *Plumas* 9 May (RDB, CPD). Blue-winged Warblers are reported in our Region at a rate of about one every five years, so the male that landed on a boat 3 km off Moss Landing, *Monterey* 24 May (Kate Spencer, ph. Don Bacchus) was a very good find. All but one of our 9 Black-and-white Warblers (twice our average)

were in coastal or Bay Area counties. The exception was along McGee Creek, *Mono* 18 May (CMc). A Prothonotary Warbler at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* 30 May (Mike Heffernon) and 3 Tennessee Warblers at Point Reyes, *Marin* 29-31 May (Everett Clark, LKh, m.ob.) all arrived just in time to provide late spring records. The Lucy's Warbler at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* 9-14 Mar (DeH, RAR, m.ob.) provided our first spring record since 2009. A Kentucky Warbler at Point Reyes, *Marin* 28 May sang a bit and even posed briefly for a photograph (ph. DSg). Our only Hooded Warbler was on FI. 14-16 May (Point Blue). A male American Redstart in Philo, *Mendocino* 1 Mar–19Apr (TDB, m.ob.) sang throughout his visit. Our other redstart was a female in a Pacific Grove, *Monterey* backyard 25-29 May (ph. RC, ph. DR, m.ob.). We average more than seven Northern Parula reports in spring and have received no fewer than two for at least the past 25 springs. Therefore, our lone parula at Point Reyes, *Marin* 30 May (Mary Ann & Mark Butler, Roger Harshaw) marked a season low for the Region. Magnolia Warblers were in Cottonwood Canyon, *Mono* 24 May (Meg Andrews) and at Pacific Grove, *Monterey* 27 May (ph. RC, ph. MiR). Three Chestnut-sided Warblers provided our best spring total for this species in more than 25 years, with males at Mendocino Highlands S.P., *Mendocino* 25 May (M. Gertz), at Willow Glen, *Santa Clara* 26 May (Brooke Miller; first spring *Santa Clara* record), and on FI. 31 May (Point Blue). We tallied 16 Palm Warblers, twice our average, and this included one Yellow Palm Warbler on FI. 25 Apr (Point Blue). A singing Yellow-throated Warbler in Bodega Bay 27 May (v.r. DN) furnished a first for *Sonoma*.

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Two of the season's 3 Clay-colored Sparrows were in *Mono*, one at South Tufa 1 May (†George Chisman) and another at Bridgeport 22 May (KNN, JLD), with a third bird on FI. 18 Apr (Point Blue). Black-chinned Sparrows are sparsely distributed and irregular breeders in the Region. This spring they continued for the fourth year near Loma Prieta in both *Santa Clara* and *Santa Cruz*, with singing birds arriving by 4 Apr (JGa, AMR, m.ob.). In contrast, they have apparently not bred on Mount Diablo, *Contra Costa* for several years, and this year's only Black-chinned Sparrow reported there 19 Apr did not remain (LKh, EPI, Jeff Hoppes). Eleven singing Black-chinned Sparrows were along Bear Mountain Rd. in Henry Coe S.P., *Santa Clara* 16 May (MMR). Two Black-throated Sparrows were at n. Lake Tahoe, *Placer* 30 Apr–2 May (ScD). A Nelson's Sparrow continued from winter through 20 Mar at Arrowhead Marsh, *Alameda* (Mark Rauzon). The season's

latest lingering White-throated Sparrow was at Marina, *Monterey* until 22 May (SRv). Also continuing from winter were 4 Harris's Sparrows, one each at Red Bluff, *Tehama* 18 Mar (MSw), Salmon Creek, *Sonoma* 10 Apr (LHg), Modesto, *Stanislaus* 21 Apr (Tom & Anne Myers), and Arcata, *Humboldt* 30 Apr (GAB). Our winter Rustic Bunting in *S.F.* continued through 31 Mar (m.ob.).

Eleven Summer Tanagers included a remarkable 3 at Oasis Ranch, *Mono* 22-23 May (PJM, ADeM, CMc). Twenty-two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks provided a good showing, as we average fewer than 14. A Blue Grosbeak was at Spenceville W.A. 10 May (ECB, RCD, John Lace), the same location that hosted *Nevada's* first last year. Indigo Buntings were present in typical numbers (8 vs. an average of 7), but there was nothing average about an ad. male Painted Bunting at Bridgeport, *Mono* 20 May (ph. Tim Taylor, Ryan Spaulding). Tricolored Blackbirds are in significant long-term decline in the state, so it was encouraging to receive reports of new or re-colonized breeding locations. Up to 30 Tricoloreds along the Carson River 3-21 May (TEa, LKh, m.ob.) provided *Alpine's* first documented record, a new colony was found 28 Mar near Fall River, *Shasta* (B&CY, KAb, DMr), and nesting was confirmed at a site in Potter Valley, *Mendocino* 8 May (GEC), where the birds have been absent for about 10 years. Orchard Orioles were at the Presidio, *S.F.* 16 Apr (HuC, LKh, BFi), on FI. 17-18 May (Point Blue), and at Belmont, *San Mateo* 31 May+ (RSTh, LBt). An unexpected Hooded Oriole at s. Lake Tahoe, *El Dorado* 7-10 Apr (Bob Sweatt, MMy) provided a first for the Lake Tahoe Basin (*El Dorado*, *Placer*, and *Nevada*). Baltimore Orioles included a bird continuing from winter at San Mateo, *San Mateo* through 6 Mar (Merry Haverman), a male at Capitola, *Santa Cruz* 8 Apr (Judy Donaldson), and a male and female in different locations in Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* 26-29 May (RAR, DN, m.ob.). An oriole at Westgate Landing C.P., *San Joaquin* 15-31 May (Pat & Dave Croft, DGY, JLD, m.ob.) showed clear signs of being a Baltimore x Bullock's hybrid. A Scott's Oriole was at Paradise, *Mono* 4-18 Apr (DHo). The Brambling found in winter in Arcata, *Humboldt* continued through 12 Mar (Cindy Kuttner). A Cassin's Finch visited a feeder in *S.F.* 20 Apr (PSar).

Cited observers (county subregional editors in boldface): **Ken Able** (*Lassen*), Alan D. Barron, Leonie Batkin, **Murray Berner** (*Napa*), **William G. Bousman** (*Santa Clara*), Tim D. Bray, Lucas Brug, Ryan D. Burnett, Scott Carey, Rita Carratello, George E. Chaniot, Josiah Clark, Peter B. Colasanti, **Daryl Coldren** (*Humboldt* and *Del Norte*), **Chris Conard** (*Sacramento*), Hugh Cotter, **Rudy C. Darling** (*Nevada*),

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Jeff N. Davis (*Madera*), Malia DeFelice, Al DeMartini, Bruce E. Deuel (n. C.V. counties), Scott Dietrich, Ryan DiGaudio, Colin P. Dillingham (*Plumas* and *Sierra*), Matthew Dodder, Peggy L. Don, Jon L. Dunn, Pete Dunten, Todd Easterla, Elias Elias, Andrew Engilis, Paul Fenwick, Eric Feuss, Brian Fitch, Leslie Flint, Rick Fournier (RF), Rob Fowler (RbF; *Humboldt* and *Del Norte*), Rob Furrow (RFu), John Garrett, Steve Gerow (*Santa Cruz*), John Harris (*Stanislaus*), Karen Havlena (*Mendocino*), Chris Hayward, Alan S. Hopkins, Debbie House, Lisa Hug, John E. Hunter (*Trinity*), Alvaro Jaramillo, Richard G. Jeffers, Logan Kahle (*Contra Costa*), Robert J. Keiffer (*Mendocino*), Gary Kittleson, Tony Kurz, Alexandra Lamb, Jim Laughlin, Paul E. Lehman, Robin L. C. Leong (*Solano*), Gary S. Lester, Lauren P. Lester, Nick Levendosky, Jim Lomax, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, Don Marsh, Dan J. Maxwell (*Marin*), Sean McAllister, Chris McCreehy, Tristan McKee, Peter J. Metropulos (*San Mateo*), Dominik Mosur (*San Francisco*), Martin Meyers, Dan Nelson, Kristie N. Nelson (*Mono*), Frances Oliver (*San Joaquin*), Ed Pandolfino (*Placer*), Ryan Phillips, Eric Pilotte, Linda Pittman, Gary W. Potter (*Fresno*), Ron Pozzi, Peter Pyle, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Harold M. Reeve, Robert J. Richmond (*Alameda*), Michael Rieser, Alex M. Rinkert, Don Roberson (*Monterey*), Michael M. Rogers (MMR), Michael Rogner (MRg), Stephen C. Rottenborn, Steve Rovell, Ruth A. Rudesill (*Sonoma*), Paul Saraceni, Adam Searcy, Jeff Seay (*Kings*), Doug Shaw, Daniel Singer, Mark Stacy, John C. Sterling (*Modoc*, *Alpine*, *Calaveras*, and *Yolo*), Fritz Steurer, Tim Steurer (*El Dorado* and *Amador*), Steve J. Stump, Steven D. Summers (*Tulare*), Michele Swartout, Ronald S. Thorn, Jim Tietz (F.I.), John Trochet, Steve Umland (*Tuolumne*), Frank Vanslager, Chuck E. Vaughn, Ann Verdi, Kent Van Vuren (*Merced*), Dave Weber, Liz West, Jerry R. White (*Lake*), David G. Yee, Bob & Carol Yutzy (*Shasta*). Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are appreciated.

SUMMER

Nearshore sea surface temperatures were above average in June and near record-high values in July. At Southeast Farallon Island, breeding success by most seabird species was about average, despite reduced numbers and a delayed start to breeding. Warm-water conditions are usually associated with reduced seabird breeding success, but strong upwelling in early spring appar-

ently benefitted the local food web, which also brought Sooty Shearwaters, Elegant Terns, and Sabine's Gulls to nearshore areas in unusually large numbers. Notable rarities this season included the continuing Black Vulture, a Curlew Sandpiper, and a Little Stint. Significant breeding records included the southernmost breeding records by Harlequin Ducks in North America.

WATERFOWL THROUGH PELICANS

Brant inside S.F. Bay included 4 at Brooks Island, *Contra Costa* 27 Jul (LKh, CDu), where they have been fairly regular in recent years, as well as single birds at Aquatic Park, S.F. 10 Jul (ph. Carlo Arreglo) and Coyote Point, *San Mateo* 24-28 Jul (RSTh, AME). Two green-collared Trumpeter Swans from the introduced Oregon population found s. of Alturas, *Modoc* 15 Jul (SCR) provided only the second summer record for the Region; might pairs from that population eventually breed in California? A very late Eurasian Wigeon lingered from spring at Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt* through 3 Jun (m.ob.). Two female Ring-necked Ducks with about 14 ducklings near Truckee 7 Jul (ph. WGB) were thought to provide the first breeding record for *Nevada*. A single Hooded Merganser duckling with them was likely a result of egg dumping. Lesser Scaup bred again at H.R.S., with the first downy young noted 5 Jul (RJR), but no breeding evidence was noted in *Santa Clara* for the second year in a row. A female Harlequin Duck with 5 ducklings along the San Joaquin River near Balloon Dome 11 Jul (Ian Allison, ph. Kearey Allison) provided only the second breeding record for *Madera*, and the first in 91 years! This likely constitutes the southernmost breeding location for North America and presumably the world. Unseasonable scoters inside S.F. Bay (all in *San Mateo*) included a White-winged at Redwood City 21 Jun (female; RSTh), another at Coyote Point 29 Jun (male; ph. Gena Zolotar), and a Black at the latter location 5 Jul (male; ph. Warren & Marilyn Regelman). Unusual far inland, and especially so in summer, an ad. male Red-breasted Merganser stayed at Bridgeport Reservoir, *Mono* 19 Jun-6 Jul (PJM et al., ph. RCP).

A Red-throated Loon at Lexington Reservoir lingered from spring through 2 Jun (MMR), furnishing *Santa Clara* with its first summer record. A concentration of 150 Pied-billed Grebes at Clifton Court Forebay 27 Jul (LKh, CDu) provided one of the highest counts ever for *Contra Costa*. Rare summer Horned Grebes were at Crowley Lake, *Mono* 15 Jun (CMc), Mountain View, *Santa Clara* 16 Jun (Jasen Liu), and Eagle Lake, *Lassen* 28 Jul (DPA). Eared Grebes nested again at H.R.S., where they have bred each year since 1999 (RJR); this is the most regular S.F. Bay-area breeding location. In contrast, bayside nesting by Clark's Grebes has been documented

only since 2011. This season, at least three nests were present in a former Mountain View, *Santa Clara* salt pond 6 Jun+ (MMR, MJM, RGJ), including one built on an old hunting blind. A cruise on 12 Jul produced a Hawaiian Petrel off *Humboldt* and 8 Ashy Storm-Petrels (3 off *Del Norte* and 5 off *Mendocino*; Jeff Gilligan, Owen Schmidt). A Manx Shearwater was seen from Moss Beach, *San Mateo* 31 Jul (RSTh); we average 1-2 each summer. The sulid trio of Northern Gannet, Blue-footed Booby, and Brown Booby was once again recorded at F.I.; a Blue-footed was seen 19-30 Jul, up to 5 Brown Boobies were present throughout the period (with the high of 5 on 4 Jun), and the gannet was observed sporadically both at F.I. and at Alcatraz Island, S.F. (Point Blue, m.ob.). Otherwise, the only booby was a Brown at Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 26 Jun (MDeF). A Brandt's Cormorant at Miller/Knox R.S. 11 Jul (LKh, CDu) provided *Contra Costa*'s first summer record since 2008. American White Pelicans are scarce in most coastal areas; concentrations of 90+ at Bodega Harbor, *Sonoma* 3 Jun (Len Blumin), 280 at Struve Slough, *Santa Cruz* 18 Jul (DSy), and up to 200 at Elkhorn Slough, *Monterey* throughout the period (m.ob.) were unusually large. One was at Roberts Lake, *Monterey* 22 Jul (ph. SLn, ph. RC, DR); there are fewer than 10 Monterey Peninsula records. A Brown Pelican at West Sacramento 12 Jun (Aaron Haiman) provided one of few *Yolo* records.

BITTERNS THROUGH CRANES

Least Bitterns continued to be reported in above-average numbers. Up to 2 continued at Las Gallinas, *Marin* through the period (ph. m.ob.), one continued at Campbell Cove, *Sonoma* through 30 Jun (DN, JLx, m.ob.), up to 3 continued at Yolo Bypass W.A., *Yolo* 29 Jun-19 Jul (ph. m.ob.), and one was found again at Mather Lake, *Sacramento* 12 Jun (Phil Lutz). In addition, up to 3 birds were found at Clear Lake 13 Jun-24 Jul (Greg Guisti, Brad Barnwell), the first found in *Lake* in two years.

Marin's Black Vulture was seen again over Chimney Rock at P.R.N.S. 18 Jul (ph. Carlo Arreglo). Bald Eagles nested at Crystal Springs Reservoir, *San Mateo* for the third year in a row, successfully raising 2 young this year. An unseasonable Broad-winged Hawk heading n. over P.R.N.S. 4 Jun (ph. DSg) apparently provided the first summer record for the Region. Swainson's Hawks nested successfully again near the Napa County Airport, *Napa* (one fledgling at nest 31 Jul; MBe) and along Coyote Creek at Coyote, *Santa Clara* (one nearly fledged nestling 16-24 Jul; WGB, RPh).

Up to 4 Yellow Rails were found again s. of Eagle Lake, *Lassen* 7 Jun-4 Jul (m.ob.). Black Rails continued to be found along Alviso