Northern California

Persistent coastal fog and strong northwesterly winds during the first half of the fall season resulted in a poor landbird migration along the coast. Low numbers of rarities were reported from most of the region in general. The notable exception was in Humboldt County, which experienced one of the best vagrant seasons in decades. Regional highlights included our first Neotropic Cormorant, fourth Brown Shrike (just the second for the mainland), our fourth Smith’s Longspur, and a generous irruption of Evening Grosbeaks thought to involve birds from northern breeding areas.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.R.P. (Cosumnes River Preserve, Sacramento); C.V. (Central Valley); F. (Southeast Farallon Is., San Francisco); H.R.S. (Hayward Regional Shoreline, Alameda); PRBO (PRBO 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 Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P. O. Box 273, Imperial Beach, CA 91933.

WATERFOWL THROUGH QUAIL

A large movement of Greater White-fronted Geese spanning every coastal or near-coastal county from Humboldt to San Benito 28–30 Sep included a notable 637 at H.R.S. 29 Sep (RJR) and 245, a record count for San Benito, at Paicines Res. the same day (DLSh). Snow Geese returned early to the Sacramento N.W.R., Glenn, with 14,000 counted 22 Oct and over 20,000 there just a few days later (Frank Hall et al.). Brant inside S.F. Bay included 2 ratty birds at Brooks L., Contra Costa 2 Aug, with 3 there 11 Sep–16 Oct (Pat Betch, RCP), the first Sep record for Santa Clara, in Alviso 26 Sep (MMR, RG), ph. MFM, and perhaps the same individual in nearby Sunnyvale 31 Oct (Steve Tracey, KK, PK et al.). Elsewhere, one at Mono Lake C.P., Mono continued until 15 Sep (m.ob.), and Tule’s first was at L. Success 20–23 Oct (ph. SDS et al.). A Cackling Goose along White Rock Rd. 20 Oct (DLSh) was one of few ever found in Mariposa. Three ad. Trumpeter Swans and 2 Bewick’s Swans were reported from near Nelson, Butte 24 Nov (kJHS).

Wood Ducks in unexpected locations included one at Davis Cr., Modoc 5 Sep (SCR) and 2 at Crowley L., Mono 1 Oct (KNN). A European Teal was at the Yolo Bypass W.A., Yolo 28 Nov (SC). Redheads bred again at H.R.S., with a duckling accompanying a female 23 Aug (RJR). Three broods of Ring-necked Ducks along the w. side of Crowley L., Mono 1 Aug (DS) were well s. of the species’ normal breeding range in the Region. Returning Tufted Ducks were at Stone Lagoon, Humboldt 24 Nov (female; Jeff Allen) and L. Merritt in Oakland, Alameda 27 Oct. (male; Hilary Powers, m.ob.). Harlequin Ducks inside S.F. Bay included males at Brooks L., Contra Costa 11 Sep–3 Nov (RCP m.ob.) and Coyote Pt., San Mateo 2 Aug–20 Sep (LB, RSTH et al.), the latter present on and off since at least 6 Aug 2002. Surf Scoters far inland included one at Eagle L., Lassen 5 Nov (Lo) and 5 at L. Shasta, Siskiyou 29 Oct–17 Nov; the latter group was accompanied by a female Black Scoter 29 Oct (RE, Neal Clark), only the 3rd ever for that county. Five Long-tailed Ducks in five counties 16 Octs included one inland at Tule Lake N.W.R., Siskiyou 26 Oct (Dave Menke). A female Hooded Merganser at Pt. Joe 7–8 Aug (Sarah Lane, DR) and at Laguna Grande 17 Aug–10 Sep (Tomi Kimple, DR et al.) provided only the 2nd “summer” record for Monterey. Red-breasted Mergansers were more numerous than usual far inland, with an “invasion” of 16 in Siskiyou 30 Oct–11 Nov (BB, RE, m.ob.), 3 in Surprise Valley, Modoc 27 Nov (ph. SCR), and 2 at Topaz L., Mono 30 Oct (KNN); also notable were one at Folsom L., Placer (Ron Pozzi) and Yolo’s 6th at the Winters W.T.P. 22 Nov (WEH, m.ob.). Late broods of downy young California Quail were found at Morgan Hill, Santa Clara 9 Sep (SCR) and at Patine Res., San Benito 29 Sep (DLSh).

LOONS THROUGH PELICANS

Five Pacific Loons at inland locations represented an average showing. Red-throated Loon is rarer inland, so singles at L. Almanor, Plumas 8–15 Oct (Harv Wilson, Tony Brake, m.ob.) and Crowley L., Mono 26 Nov (TLD). DVP were noteworthy. Seasonal high counts included 27,750 Pacific Loons at Pt. Pinos, Monterey 21 Nov (BLS) and 1485 Red-throat-
ed Loons at Seacliff S.B., Santa Cruz 8 Nov (DLSu). The only Yellow-billed Loon was in Berkeley, Alameda 26 Nov+ (Ellen Sasaki, Sheila Dickie, Harold Newman, m.o.b., p. L.Ter). Inland Horned Grebes included singles at Grant L., Mono 15 Oct (Bob & Susan Steele) and L. McClure, Mariposa 21 Oct (DLSu) and up to 6 on L. Almanor, Plumas 26 Sep–6 Nov (CPD). Just as scarce inland is Red-necked Grebe, represented this season by singles at Bass L., Madera 22 Sep (FHU), L. Shasta, Ysokiyo 26-29 Oct (RE, m.o.b.), and O'Neill Forebay, Merced 23 Nov (ADEM); up to 2 were at L. Almanor, Plumas 8-Oct–6 Nov (Harry Wilson, Tony Brake, m.o.b.) and 3 at Fall River L., Shasta 12 Oct (KAB).

The Pt. Arena Cove, Mendocino Laysan Albatross returned for its 18th winter 22 Nov (Tom Reid). A probable Laysan Albatross × Black-footed Albatross hybrid was on Monterey Bay, Santa Cruz 27 Aug (Shl). A juv. Short-tailed Albatross at Bodega Canyon, Sonoma 20 Nov (Dsg, TMcG, SNHG, ph. Martijn Verdoes) and a Hawaiian Petrel off Ft. Bragg, Mendocino 15 Aug (Shl), ph. TMcG, ph. SBT) were the season's only representatives of these two species, which have become regular offshore in recent years. The record invasion by Cook's Petrels in Jul did not continue into the fall, at least not within reach of pelagic birding trips; the only report was of a single individual on Monterey Bay, Monterey 6 Aug (Shl). Instead, the standout Perodroma of the season was a Great-winged Petrel of subspecies Gouldi on Monterey Bay 18 Sep (p.a., TEa, ph. Martijn Verdoes, ph. Dsg, Monterey Seabirds), providing a first Santa Cruz record and the 3rd record for the Region and North America. An inshore incursion by Northern Fulmars in mid-Nov, exemplified by counts of 470 attracted to a roting Blue Whale carcass at Bean Hollow S.B., San Mateo 20 Nov (GvH) and 1775 at Pt. Pinos, Monterey during a storm 21 Nov (BLSu), was followed by a significant die-off, with hundreds found dead on beaches over several subsequent weeks. Both the seasonal total of Flesh-footed Shearwater reports (20 between 9 Sep and 25 Oct) and the high of 7 off Monterey 8 Oct (Shl) were higher than average. Three Black-footed Shearwaters flying northward at Pigeon Pt., San Mateo 16 Oct (RSTh) were the only ones reported. Eighteen Wilson's Storm-Petrels, an average showing, were reported 13 Aug–3 Oct from Monterey n. to Mendocino. An observation of 2 each of Leach's and Least Storm-Petrels seen from Pt. Pinos, Monterey during a storm 21 Nov (BLSu) was extremely unusual; even during storms, neither species is typically seen from shore (away from Leach's breeding areas) in the Region, and Least Storm-Petrels were in low numbers offshore this season. On 6 Sep at Fl., an ad. Brown Booby (MtB, ph. Osj, JTez) was outshone by a juv. Neotropic Cormorant (ph., JTez, MtB); the latter bird provided the first Regional record and the state's first coastal record (p.a.). Brandt's Cormorants attempted record-laté nesting at Seacliff S.B., Santa Cruz, with a dozen new nests initiated in Sep and incubating birds observed as late as 23 Oct. However, none of these late nesting attempts were successful, as the last young successfully fledged in early Sep (DLSu). Brown Pelican numbers at Fl. were unusually low, peaking at only 95 on 6 Aug (PRBO). One at Sherman I. 29 Nov–3 Dec (DaW, JSJL) provided the 5th record for Sacramento and was also seen in Solano.

BITTERN THROUGH CRANES

A notable two or three broods of American Bitterns were found at Sirue Slough, Santa Cruz 18 Aug (LGO, JPO et al.). Least Bitterns continued near Clear L., Lake 6-13 Aug (at least 5 birds in three locations, FHA, m.o.b.) and at Yolo Bypass W.A., Yolo 14 Aug (SCM, MP) and 10 Sep (Chuck Brittain); Sonoma's 2nd record consisted of 2 birds near Bloomfield late Jul into Aug (Lori Duckworth). Among five reports of single Cattle Egrets away from the C.V. 2 Aug–21 Nov was Napa's first since 30 Nov 1986, at Napa Valley College, 21 Nov (LKe). Coastal White-faced Ibis were reported in good numbers throughout the fall: 14 at Fl. 24 Aug (MtB, OsJ, JTez) provided the 3rd island record and one at L. Merced, S.F. 30 Oct (D Meo, m.o.b.) was likewise notable. Five at Salt Springs Valley Res. 2 Sep (Dan Maxwell) were unexpected in Calaveras.

Juv. Northern Goshawks were reported from Sonoma at Toly Creek Ranch 17 Nov (RAR) and Westside R.P. at Bodega Bay 21 Nov (RMe). The continuing Sonoma Common Black Hawk was seen again at Laguna de Santa Rosa 5 Aug and 12 Sep (Ph. Stan Moore). Migrant Broad-winged Hawks were reported from Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz 9 Sep–2 Nov. Swainson's Hawks along Ramal Rd. in e. Sonoma, including 2 jvs. 4 Aug (RAR) and 2 ads. 22 Aug (AWg), may have been the family reported 31 Jul (MBe) from nearby Napa. Nine migrant Swainson's reported from five coastal
and near-coastal counties from Marin to San Benito 30 Aug–10 Nov included a notable 5 birds from Santa Clara; more surprising were 2 juvs. apparently wintering in Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 26 Nov+ (AJ, m.o.b.). An ad. dark-morph Harlan’s Hawk near the Hwy. 113/Flannery Rd. jct. in e. Solano 12 Nov (Zach Smith, EP) was followed by an ad. light morph there 23 Nov (Zach Smith). The Crested Caracara remained through the season near Ft. Dick, Del Norte (m.o.b.). Six Merlins in Aug included very early birds in Humboldt 1 Aug (KL), San Mateo 8 Aug (George Cristman), and Del Norte 13 Aug (Lub). The Clark’s Nutcracker continued at Heron’s Head Park, S.F. through the season (m.o.b.). A single Greater Sandhill Crane remained at Bridgeport, Mono 30 Oct (m.o.b.), when it was joined by 2 Lesser Sandhill Cranes (KNN), perhaps the first of this latter subspecies for Mono. A southbound Sandhill Crane seen over Rodeo Lagoon, Marin 29 Nov (Eddie Bartley et al.) eventually flew across the Golden Gate, providing the 2nd S.F. record.

**SHOREBIRDS**

Nine American Golden-Plovers 27 Aug–23 Nov, all juvs., included one at the Fresno W.T.P. 16-22 Nov (ph. GaW, Jsy et al.), the first for Fresno. Twenty-two Solitary Sandpipers were reported from 14 counties 1 Aug–28 Sep. An impressive total of 113 Lesser Yellowlegs at Crescent City 16 Aug (Lub) may have represented the highest count ever for Del Norte. Four Hudsonian Godwits, all juvs., were found near Corcoran, Kings 22-28 Aug (ph. Mark Stacy) and the 7th, 8th, and 9th for Humboldt at Eel River W.A. 3 Sep (ph. SMcA), n. Humboldt Bay 6 Sep+ (Dan Maxwell, RHW), and Cock Robin 1-6-9 Oct (ph. SMcA, KBu, TKz, Jesse Sargent). A Black Turnstone at the Upper Truckee R. delta, El Dorado 30 Aug (RPD) was thought to be the first for the Tahoe Basin.

Inland Red Knots included 2 at Crowley L., Mono 16 Sep (FJM) and one n. of Stratford, Kings 30 Sep (Jsy). Two juv. Sanderlings at Red Bluff R.A. 18-19 Sep (TBED) provided only the 2nd Tekoma record. Semipalmated Sandpipers were well reported, with at least 70 in 17 counties 1 Aug–21 Sep. Over 140 Baird’s Sandpipers in 22 counties 1 Aug–2 Oct included a pure flock of 28 juvs. at the sw. corner of Goose L. 5 Sep (SCR), the highest count ever for Modoc. Over 150 Pectoral Sandpipers in 18 counties 1 Aug–8 Nov included one at Slat Springs Valley Res. 16 Sep (JLx), only the 2nd for Calaveras. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were reported from Yolo Bypass WA. 7-17 Oct (Yolo’s 11th; Scott Hoppe, m.o.b.) and H.R.S. 12 Oct (RJR). Santa Cruz’s Rock Sandpiper returned to Santa Cruz for an 8th winter 30 Nov (PDB). A total of 11 Stilt Sandpipers in seven counties 14 Aug–20 Nov was about average but included Madera’s first at the Madera W.T.P. 14-17 Aug (TlyH, ph. GaW, m.o.b.). One Buff-breasted Sandpiper was a juv. reported from L. Talowa, Del Norte 19 Aug (Lub). Eight Ruffs in five counties 17 Aug–27 Oct continued the weak fall showing of the past two years, although 3 together at Bridgeport, Mono 11 Sep (RS) were notable. Santa Clara and Humboldt failed to produce any Ruffs in 2010, the first time this has happened in 20 years and 13+ years, respectively. A Wilson’s Phalarope at the Lodii W.T.P., San Joaquin 6-21 Nov (TDM et al.) was late. Two Red Phalaropes at Sherman 1. 25 Oct (DaW) provided Sacramento with its 2nd record.

**GULLS THROUGH ALCIDs**

A count of 2200 Sabine’s Gulls in the Bodega Canyon/Cordell Bank area, Sonoma/Marin 3 Oct (RS, vob.) was extremely high for such a late date, while 530 seen from the n. jetty of Humboldt Bay, Humboldt 17 Aug (DFx, JCP) provided a record-high count from shore. Nine were in Mono, Placer, Siskiyou, and Yolo 17 Sep–early Nov, representing an average showing inland. A juv. Little Gull at the Eel R. mouth 31 Oct–2 Nov (DCo, Ltu, ph. SMcA, vob.) provided the 6th record for Humboldt. A Laughing Gull, not quite annual in the region, was in San Rafael, Marin 30 Sep–2 Oct (ph. David R. Moore, Michael Stevenson). Five Franklin’s Gulls in five counties 15 Aug–6 Oct provided a below-average total; one of these off Noyo, Mendocino 15 Aug (SHJ), was offshore, where rarely recorded in the region. A juv. Mew Gull in Half Moon Bay, San Matee 22 Aug (AJ) was very early but not unprecedented. The only Thayer’s Gulls reported inland were singles on the Klamath R. below Iron Gate Dam, Siskiyou 31 Oct (RE, Steve Nelson) and Kings at Hanford 21-24 Nov (ph. MSp) and Corcoran 29 Nov (ph. SDS). Similarly, 3 Glaucous-winged Gulls were inland, with singles at L. Almanor, Plumas 27-30 Oct (CPc, Scott Edwards, Amber Edwards), s. of Corrigan, Kings 26-28 Nov (ph. JLt, MSp), and near Porterville, Tulare 29 Nov (SDS). Inland Western Gulls included singles at San Luis Res., Merced 9 Aug (PMJ), Tracy W.T.P., San Joaquin 23 Sep (Terry Ronneberg), and American R. Parkway, Sacramento 1-10 Nov (WEH, DaW). A juv. Lesser Black-backed Gull Tazlina 8 Oct (KNN) provided a 3rd Mono record, while a third-cycle bird at the Davis W.T.P. 9 Nov (Tet) represented Yolo’s 3rd record. Of 3 Glaucous Gulls reported, 2 were inland at the Davis W.T.P., Yolo: an ad. 21 Nov and a second-cycle bird 30 Nov (both TEA). Single migrant Black Terns were in Santa Cruz at Watseville Slough 22-23 Aug (RgW, Nanci Adams) and Capitola Beach 3 Sep (DLSu) and in Oakland, Contra Costa 20 Sep (ph. RCP). Of 5 Common Terns reported from coastal areas, 3 were in one flock at the n. jetty of Humboldt Bay, Humboldt 17 Aug (DFx, JCP); 43 in inland areas included Madera’s first three records, with different individuals at the Madera W.T.P. 16-17 Aug (ph. LyH et al.), 2 Sep (ph. LyH), and 19 Sep (ph. GaW). The only Arctic Tern
onshore was at Tolowa Dunes S.P., Del Norte 10 Sep (TKz). At H.R.S., 18 ad. Black Skimmers had 12 nestlings and one fledgling 7 Aug (RJB); 25 (11 of them juv.) at Redwood Shores, San Mateo 16 Oct (RSTh) likely included some of these H.R.S. birds. The only obvious migrant skimmers were 2 at Carmel River S.B., Monterey 1-7 Aug (Sarah Lane, Betsy Adler, m.o.). Inland jaegers included at least 4 Parasitics in Mono 4-28 Sep, Stanislaus's first Parasitic at the Modesto W.T.P. 26 Sep (ERC, HMR), and Plaice's 4th Long-tailed at N. Lake Tahoe 30 Aug (ph. WRI). At Bodega Canyon and Cordell Bank, Sonoma/Marin, 300+ Long-tailed Jaegers 11 Aug (ShJ) nearly doubled last fall's record one-day count, for comparison, that trip recorded only 4 Pomarine and 7 Parasitic Jaegers.

A juv. Common Murre at the Stevens Cr. mouth in Mountain View, Santa Clara 3 Sep (WGB et al.) was unusually far inside S.F. Bay. A count of 101 Marbled Murrelets between Moss Beach and Pigeon Pt. 30 Nov (LBT, RSTh) provided one of the highest San Mateo counts in recent years. Fourteen Xantus' Murrelets offshore included 2 hypoleuca off Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 17 Sep (ShJ). One Xantus' Murrelet was seen from Pt. Pinos, Monterey after a storm 21 Nov (DR). The season's high count of 6300 Cassin's Auklets off Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 2 Oct (ShJ) may have reflected the double-brooding that was documented on Pt. last summer.

**DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES**

Eleven records of White-winged Dove spanned the season 24 Aug—26 Nov. They included Sacramento's first at Citrus Heights 16-18 Sep (ph. Mkm), Mariposa's first on White Rock Rd. 18 Sep (DLSu), Modoc's 2nd at Tule L. 26 Nov (ph. SCR), and Santa Cruz's latest ever, also 26 Nov (DLSu). The Modoc dove was in the snow, a setting particularly mismatched with this species, which is generally accustomed to more hospitable southerly climes. Common Ground-Doves, exceptional anywhere in the Region, included one at the Carmel R. mouth, Monterey 18 Nov (ChO) and the first for Kings at Boggs Slough 12 Sep (RH). Among three reports of Yellow-billed Cuckoos was one from outside the current known breeding range, a single bird at C.R.P. 15 Aug (Trz), the first for Sacramento in many years. Single Common Poorwills were on the C.V. floor, where rare, at Gustine W.T.P., Merced 9 Aug (PJM) and at the bustling River Park Shopping Center in Fresno, Fresno 17 Oct (George Folsom). Four Black Swifts, including Yolo's first for fall at L. Solano Diversion Dam 19 Sep (Ron Melcher), was an average showing.

A Chimney Swift over the Mokelumne R. in Acampo 9 Sep (TDG) furnished the 2nd record for San Joaquin and the 4th for the C.V. The only other record was one over Pt. 14 Sep (PFT). The last Varux Swift of the season was a late migrant over Sacramento, Sacramento 8 Nov (Dan Airola). Three reports of Ruby-throated Hummingbird represent our best seasonal showing ever (p.a.). Reported were an ad. female captured and measured on FL 29 Aug (OsJ, ph. MB, ph. JTz); an ad. female in Bolinas, Marin 9-12 Aug (KJH), and a juv. female at the same location 24 Aug (KJH). Continuing a recent trend, Santa Cruz hosted numerous migrant Black-chinned Hummingbirds. As in the past, most were females or imm. males. The 14-16 reported this season spanned the period 1 Aug–10 Oct (m.o.). Modest numbers of Lewis's Woodpeckers were reported overall, with a high count of 40 along a 4-km section of White Rock Rd., Mariposa 20 Oct (DLSu). Providing a notable record for S.F., a Williamson's Sapsucker was at Presidio N.P. 22 Sep (Andrew Scavullo, JSc).

Captured, banded, measured, and photographed, a Yellow-billed Flycatcher at FL 8 Oct (ph. NS, OsJ, ph. TB, Dan Maxwell, Sara Chandler) was thoroughly documented. If accepted by the C.B.R.C., it will be the 8th record for the island and only the 9th for the Region. Five Least Flycatchers were all coastal, with one in Humboldt, 3 on FL, and one in Santa Cruz. Eastern Phoebes were split, with 3 coastal (2 on FL and one in Marin) and 3 inland (singles in Yolo, Merced, and Kings). A Great Crested Flycatcher, representing a first for mainland S.C., was at the S.F. Zoo 28-31 Oct (p.a., ph. TH, m.o.). Standing out among 15 coastal Tropical Kingbirds was one in the interior, Yolo's first at N. Davis Pond 20 Nov (Chris Dunford, m.o.). Constituting another first for Yolo, a Cassin's Kingbird was at the west end of Road 27, 11 km sw. of Winters 15 Oct (Sha, MP, m.o.). A Cassin's at 2286 m at Devils Postpile N.M. 27 Aug (TPBC) set a high-elevation record for Madera and probably for the state. A Western Kingbird at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek, Contra Costa 2 Nov (Ted Robertson) was late. The only Eastern Kingbirds reported were in Santa Cruz; one at Seacott S.B. 7 Aug (DLSu), one at Twin Lakes S.B. 27 Aug (PDB, SGE et al.) and one at Antonei Pond 3 Sep (Gabriel Gartner). Del Norte's 5th Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was at the Smith River Bottoms 5-20 Nov (LuB, ph. SMcA, m.o.).

At the Vista Point ponds in McKinleyville, a Brown Shrike 21 Nov+ (GSL, LPL, m.o.) provided the first record for Humboldt and just the 4th for the state. A Bells Vireo at L. Success, Tulare 15 Sep (SDS) was near the site where a pair was thought to have bred last season. The Region's only Plumbeous Vireo was also in Tulare, at Veterans Park in Porterville 7 Oct (SDS). An ad. Hutton's Vireo feeding at the Big Sur R. mouth, Monterey 16 Sep (LGo, WGo) established a record late breeding date for the species anywhere in its range. A Blue-headed Vireo in Eureka, Humboldt 26 Oct (ph. SMcA, DGo, TKZ, LUt, RFe) awaits C.B.R.C. review. The only Philadelphia Vireo was reported at Pt. Reyes N.S., Marin 29 Sep–1 Oct (SNGH, Jim White). Three Red-eyed Vireos included singles at Pt. Reyes N.S. 19 Sep (SBT, LTr), Little R., Humboldt 16 Sep (KI), and Babel Slough, Yolo 14 Sep (GFw).

Completing the trifecta at Pt. Reyes N.S., a Yellow-green Vireo was reported from Chimney Rock 19 Sep (RS). Out of place on the C.V. floor, a Steller's Jay in Sacramento, Sacramento 14 Nov+ (DPM, Dan Airola, m.o.) drew the attention of many birders. Western Scrub-Jays staged a minor invasion along the immediate coast away from areas of residency, with six reports in Humboldt, one in Del Norte, and one in Marin. A total of 105 American Crows near Topaz L. 13 Nov (KNN) was a high count for Mono, especially away from the lowlands. Monitoring Doppler radar images led to the discovery of a roost of roughly 100,000 swallows, mostly Tree Swallows, 26 km e. of Los Banos, Merced 19 Oct (Brace Cousins). A Barn Swallow over EL 17 Nov (NS, JTz) established the latest fall record for the island. Del Norte's 2nd Oak Titmouse visited a feeder in residential Crescent Hill. A Rufous Hummingbird feeding at Petaluma 21 Nov+ (GSL, MJS, m.o.) was one of three records for the state. A Black-chinned Hummingbird at the Smith River Bottoms 5-20 Nov (LuB, ph. SMcA, m.o.) was late. The only Eastern Kingbirds reported were in Santa Cruz; one at Seacott S.B. 7 Aug (DLSu), one at Twin Lakes S.B. 27 Aug (PDB, SGE et al.) and one at Antonei Pond 3 Sep (Gabriel Gartner). Del Norte's 5th Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was at the Smith River Bottoms 5-20 Nov (LuB, ph. SMcA, m.o.).
This season, we experienced an irruption of Evening Grosbeaks on a scale not seen since the late 1980s. Reports came from low-elevation coastal and Central Valley sites starting in late Sep in Humboldt and spreading southward, with numbers peaking in Sep n. of San Francisco and in Oct 1 of San Francisco (Figure 1). Though the number of individuals reported does not compare to historical irruptions, the geographic spread is similar. Figure 2 demonstrates the growing power of eBird to confirm anecdotal reports, allowing one to compare this year’s numbers (in terms of percentage of checklists reporting the species) with the past several years. These data also suggest that the irruption may be building steam as we move into winter. Information from Regional Editors in Washington and Oregon and analyses of eBird data confirmed that this season’s Evening Grosbeak movements are widespread along the West Coast, with numbers and geographic range of records in both states well above average throughout Sep and into Oct, dipping in Nov and rising again in Dec.

C.B.C. and B.B.S. data show long-term declines in Evening Grosbeak abundance across North America. Major winter irruptions s. of the breeding range in the e. United States, common into the late 1980s, are now a thing of the past. Likewise, C.B.C. data from Washington, Oregon, and California indicate that the large numbers frequently observed on the West Coast prior to the early 1990s have also not been seen in recent decades. These West Coast irruptions have been generally thought to be more at rudiments of locally breeding populations of the western subspecies (mackinaw) than latitudinal movements. However, we have reason to believe that, at least this year, the irruptive birds in California may be moving down from the north. Sewall et al. (Condor 106: 161) found that at least four distinct call types among Evening Grosbeaks may allow one to determine the breeding range of these irruptive visitors. For the most part, Sierra-breeding birds give call type 1 (likely corresponding to a subspecies of Grinnell, currently lumped with mackinaw). Based on reports from eBird and recordings from Santa Cruz, this year’s birds are giving Type 1 calls (side Tom Hahn), the call type typically associated with breeders from the Pacific Northwest and the n. Rockies. In addition, the timing of reports this year is at least suggestive of a southward movement of the phenomenon, if not of the grosbeaks.

City 26 Oct–30 Nov (Sky Lloyd). Another, Del Norte 3rd, was at the Smith River Bottoms 12 Nov (pH. TK). Lake’s 1st fall record of Mountain Bluebird was of a female at Hull Mt. 12 Oct (JR). As many as 20,000 American Robins feasting on juniper berries on the exposed shoreline of Eagle L. in late Nov (LR) must have been a spectacle.

THRASHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Five Gray Catbirds furnished the Region’s 2nd highest total for any season in the past 20+ years, with 2 birds at P. Reyes, Marin (10 Sep and 18 Oct) and 3 on FL (8 & 20 Oct and 9 Nov). Sage Thrashers away from their normal range included Madera’s earliest fall record 29 Aug se. of Madera (ph. GaW), 2 each in Monterey and Tulare, and singles in Mendocino, Tuolumne, Humboldt, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and FL. The only Brown Thrasher was at Pt. Pinole R.S. 24 Nov+ (ph. LLK, ph. Linda Pittman) and was Contra Costa’s first. Seven Red-throated Pipits included one inland at Yolo Basin W.A., Yolo 19 Oct (JS, JSL, RAR).

Four Bohemian Waxwings were near Eagle L., Lassen 20 Nov (LOR). Trinity’s 2nd Lapland Longspur was an early bird found n. of Coffee Creek 7 Sep (ADB). Other Lapland Longspur reports came from 12 counties 6 Oct–28 Nov. Chestnut-collared Longspurs were at C.R.P. 9 Oct (JT), Jennen Headlands, Sonoma 11 Oct (RDG), Redwood Creek, Humboldt 14 Oct (SMca), FL 17–20 Oct (PRBO), and H.R.S. 13–18 Nov (RJR). The longspur event of the season was the 4th Regional and 8th state record of Smith’s Longspur at FL 6–8 Nov (ph., TNS; JTz, ET, EA), a first for the island. A Snow Bunting was along Bald Hills Rd., Humboldt 14–15 Nov (TKc). A female in FL. LTA.

Aside from reports of an outstanding Oct in Humboldt, the warbler season was rather unremarkable, with most species showing up in below-average numbers. The total of 25 Tennessee Warblers was just under our 20-year average of 29; however, 5 in Santa Cruz set a new county record. Both Virginia Warbler reports came from the same county (San Mateo) and same observer, with one in Half Moon Bay 26 Sep (A) and the other at Pilaritos Cr. mouth 6 Oct (A) at least 20 years, with a late singing bird at C.R.P. 22 Aug (Paul Cordiera, JT, CCo, DKo, MKm, TFI) and a female in Trinidad, Humboldt 1 Oct (MHa). Humboldt accounted for 9 of our 27 Chestnut-sided Warblers, with all reports coastal except for one that met its end against a window in Fresno. Fresno 30 Aug (LyH) and another at Babel Slough, Yolo 28 Sep (TEa, KVg). The total of 10 Magnolia Warblers was half our average, and we missed Cape May Warbler for only the 3rd time in the past 20 years. Eleven Black-throated Blue Warblers hit right on our average number. As with Cape Mays, we received no reports of Black-throated Green Warblers for only the 3rd time in the last two decades. All 10 Blackburnian Warbler reports came from coastal counties. We received only two reports of Prairie Warbler (compared to an average of 11), and both were in Humboldt: one at n. sp., Humboldt Bay, Humboldt 24 Sep (KU) and one at the El R. mouth 12 Oct (ph. SMca).
highlight among 110 Palm Warblers was one of the e. subspecies hypochrysea. a first documented record of this taxon for Fl. 30 Nov (ph. NS, ET, JTz, EA, fide JLD and PF). A Bay-breasted Warbler at Toly Creek Ranch 14 Sep (PBC, RAR) was Sonoma’s 2nd. Our other 2 Bay-breasted were in Humboldt: one in Orick 13 Oct (Kl) and the other in Trinidad 14 Oct (MHA). Forty-four Blackpoll Warblers fell under our fall average of 68. A female Cerulean Warbler banded at Lanphere Dunes, Humboldt (LTu, Kim Hollinger, ph. RbF; ph. Vitek Jirinec, m.ob.) was the 10th for the Region and the 18th for the state. Twenty-nine Black-and-white Warblers and 20 American Redstarts were both below-average numbers for these species. A single Ovenbird on Fl. 1-3 Oct (PRBO) matched our previous low for this species, and 13 Northern Waterthrushes was just 60% of our average. Fl. produced a Mourning Warbler 12 Sep (Dan Maxwell, ph. TJS) and a Connecticut Warbler 14 Sep (ph., TMB; ph., TJS; TJS, Dan Maxwell). Continuing its domination of warbler records this season, Humboldt accounted for our only Hooded Warblers, with one at Mad River C.P. 6-12 Sep and another at Mad R. estuary 29 Oct-1 Nov (Brent Campos, TWL et al.). Canada Warblers were at Pine Gulch, Marin 10 Sep (KHI), Ph. Reyes, Marin 23 Sep (ph. David Moore), Fl. 3 Oct (PRBO), and Redwood Creek, Humboldt 17-22 Oct (LuB, DC0, TzK, m.ob.).

SPARRROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Six Green-tailed Towhees included 1 on the C.V. floor (3 in Sacramento and one in yolo), one in S.F, and one in the foothills of Solano. A Cassin’s Sparrow along Redwood Cr. in Orick 13-19 Oct (Kl, ph. SMCa, m.ob.) was Humboldt’s 2nd, the 5th non-fl for the Region, and the only 2nd non-fl fall Regional record. American Tree Sparrows were in McKinleyville, Humboldt 22-24 Oct (GSI, LPL) and at Davis Creek, Modoc 28 Nov (SCR). Forty-nine Clay-colored Sparrows were all in coastal or S.F. Bay Area counties. Black-throated Sparrows were in Coyote Hills R.P., Alameda 22-26 Sep (ph. Gail West, Stephanie Floyd, ph. m.ob.), near Arroyo Seco, Monterey 25 Sep (ph. Bruce Finocchio, fde JSF), and along Little Panoche Rd., Fresno 22-23 Oct (ADEM, JSL). Lark Bunting reports continue to be sparse, with just 2 birds this fall, one on Fl. 25 Aug (PRBO) and one at Pt. Reyes, Marin 16 Sep (Barbara Carlson). Swamp Sparrows put in a decent showing, with 38 reports that included a first record for Kings in Hanford 23 Nov+ (ADEM) and a 2nd for Modoc at Tule L. 26 Nov (SCR). The total of 89 White-throated Sparrows was below average. Harris’s Sparrows were along Millville Plains Rd., Shasta 26 Oct (Frank & Daliss Sanderson), on Fl. 11 & 28-29 Nov (PRBO; EA, JTz, NS, ET), and in Crescent City, Del Norte 29 Nov (Gary Maschmeyer).

Nine Summer Tanagers were all coastal, with S.F producing 4 of those. We set a new Regional high for any season with 3 Scarlet Tanagers: singles at Pt. Reyes, Marin 8 Oct (ph. ET, the S.F. Zoo, S.F. 28-31 Oct (1TPM, fAlan Ridley, fMVW, m.ob), and on Fl. 6 Nov (NS, JTz et al.). Sixteen Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and 8 Indigo Buntings were close to average numbers for these species. A Painted Bunting at Fermdale Bottoms 8-9 Oct (ph. TzK, Jesse Sargent, m.ob.) was Humboldt’s 4th. Four of our 11 Bobolinks were on Fl. 13 Sep-7 Oct. A Rusty Blackbird at the Woodland W.T.P. 28 Oct (TEA, JCS) would be Ulo’s 2nd if accepted by the C.B.R.C. Doran R.P., Sonoma was the location of two Rusty Blackbird reports, one undocumentated report of a female 11 Nov (DHS), followed by a male 18 Nov (ph. Dan Brown). Sixteen Orchard Orioles were all coastal or S.F. Bay Area counties, but only Baltimore Oriole was inland at the Sacramento Bypass 11 Sep (Ulo’s 2nd; TEA, KVZ).

Addenda: The following significant records did not make it into the summer 2010 report. The first photographically documented Barred Owl in Modoc was paired with a Spotted Owl at a Manzanita Ridge nest site 30 Jun (DEQ, ph. JLD, KAB). Great Gray Owls had been confirmed breeding in the state only as far n. as El Dorado, so a fledglings photographed at an undisclosed location in Modoc 16 Jul (ph. DEQ) established not only a first county breeding record but also the northermost breeding record for the state by roughly 300 km.

Corrigendum: Mendocino’s first winter record of White-throated Swift, cited in the winter 2009-2010 report, was misattributed. The actual observer was JRB. We regret this error.

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): Ken Able (Lassen), Elizabeth Ames, Alan D. Barron, Leonie Batsin, Bob Battaglin, Murray Berner (Napa), William G. Bousman (Santa Clara), Matthew Brady (Stanislaus), Philip D. Brown, Lucas Brug, Ken Bunton, Helen Button, Eric R. Caine, Joseph Clark, Peter B. Colasanti, Daryl Coldren, Chris Conard (Sacramento), Hugh Cotter, Rudy Darling (Nevada), Jeff N. Davis (Madera), Al DeMartini, Bruce E. Deuel (n. C.V. counties), Ryan DiGaudio, Colin P. Dillingham (Plumas and Sierra), Jon L. Dunn, Robert P. Dunn, Todd Easterla, Mark W. Eaton (San Francisco), Ray Ekstrom (Siskiyou), Gil C. Ewing, Brian Fitch, Tim Fitzter, David Fix, Rob Fowler (RbF; Humboldt), Steve Gerow (Santa Cruz), Steve A. Glover (Contra Costa), Lois Goldfrank, Wally Goldfrank, Kevin Guse, Melody Hamilton, Steve C. Hampton, Keith Hansen, Rob Hansen, W. Edward Harper, Sydney Harrison, Garth Harwood, Floyd Hayes, Lynn Hemink, Rob Hewitt, David Hofmann, Craig Hohenberger, Steven N. G. Howell, John E. Hunter (Trinity), Ken Irwin, Alvaro Jaramillo, Richard G. Jeffers, Oscar Johnson, Robert J. Keiffer (Mendocino), Roland Kenmer, Pat Kenny, Larry Kent, Dan Kopp, Tony Kurz, Robin L. C. Leong (Solano), Tom W. Leskiw, Gary S. Lester, Lauren P. Lester, John Lockhart, Jim Lomax, Laura Look, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, Timothy D. Manolis, Mark Martucci, Sean McAllister, Todd McGrath, Richard Merriss, Peter J. Metropulos (San Mateo), Dominick Mosur, Dan P. Murphy, Kristie N. Nelson (Mono), Frances Oliver (San Joaquin), Lew Oting, Ed Pandolfino (Placer), Michael Perrone, Eric Ploite, Jeff Pekan, Gary W. Potter (Fresno), Jude C. Power, Robert C. Power, Peter Pyle, David E. Quady, Harold M. Reeve, Will Richardson, Robert J. Richmond (Alameda), Dom Robinson (Monterey), Michael M. Rogers, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Ruth A. Rudesill (Sonoma), Adam Scarcy (Marin), Jeff Seay (Kings), Shearwater Journals, Debra Love Shearwater, David Shuford, Dan Singer, Jim H. Snowden, John Sorrensen, Mark Stacy, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling (Modoc, Alpine, Calaveras, and Yolo), Noah Stryker, David L. Suddibjan (Santa Cruz), Brian L. Sullivan, Steven D. Summers (Tuolumne), Erika Taketa, Linda Terrill, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Jim Tietz (El), John Trochet, Leslie Tucci (Del Norte), Steve Umland (Tuolumne), Kent Van Vuren (Merced and Son Benito), David Vander Pluyin (Mariposa), Jerry R. White (Lake), Alan Wight, Dan Williams, Roger Wolfe, Gary Woods, David Yee, Bob & Carol Yutzy (Shasta). Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are appreciated.