Northern California

Warm sea surface temperatures continued from fall, reducing nearshore ocean productivity. This may have resulted in the presence of starving Brown Pelicans around Monterey Bay, and a large die-off of Cassin’s Aukslets all along the coast. These warm waters were certainly responsible for high Black-vented Shearwater numbers; late-lingering Hermann’s Gulls, Brown Pelicans, and Elegant Terns, the continued push of Brown Boobies, and the largest incidence of Royal Terns in recent times.

Warm water offshore gave us at least a glimmer of hope for relief from California’s lengthy drought, and December rainfall was above average. However, in January, a month that typically supplies more than a fifth of our annual total, most of the Region saw not a drop of rain. Subnormal precipitation in February assured us of another year of drought. The highlight of the season was an adult male Common Scoter, a first for North America outside of Greenland. A Rustic Bunting stayed through the period and provided the state with its fifth record. The irruptions first noted in fall of Band-tailed Pigeons, Lewis’s Woodpeckers, Steller’s Jays, and Varied Thrushes into areas where they are generally uncommon or rare continued through winter (see S.A.).

**Abbreviations:** C.B.R.C. (California B. R. C.); C.P.R. (Cosumnes River Preserve, Sacramento); C.V. (Central Valley); F.I. (Southeast Farallon Island, San Francisco); H.R.S. (Hayward R.S., Alameda); Point Blue (Point Blue Conservation Science); P.R.N.S. (Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin); 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 THROUGH PELICANS**

Two Brant were deep inside S.F. Bay at H.R.S. 1 Feb (RJR). This species is more regular farther n. in the Bay at Brooks Island, **Contra Costa**, but a tally of 110+ there 8 Feb (Tony Brake) was exceptional. Trumpeter Swans were well reported, with an ad. and a juv. at the Chico W.T.P., Butte 10-24 Jan (ph. KnS, ph. MRg, ph. Bruce Mast), perhaps the same 2 birds later along Pennington Rd., Sutter 24 Jan (ph. Bruce Mast), and 6 below Fall River Cemetery (third Shasta record; ph. DMR). Three Tundra Swans at Bass Lake 13 Feb (Nina Jones) provided only the fourth record for **Madera**. The only Bewick’s Swan reported was near Nelson, Butte 14 Dec (JHS).

The returning **Falcated Duck** continued at Colusa N.W.R., Colusa through 17 Feb (Pat Bachtetti). Blue-winged Teal were numerous at Bridgeway Island Pond, Yolo throughout the season, and 84 carefully counted 25 Jan was a very high tally for the Region (Kirk Swenson). Eurasian Teal were found at Arcata Marsh, Humboldt 23 Dec (Deven Karmmerichs-Berke), Ferndale Bottoms, Humboldt 19-27 Feb (CDu, RfB, m.ob.), C.R.P. 29 Jan (ph. Cory Gregory), and Pescadero Marsh, San Mateo 4 Feb (Donna Pomeroys). Male Tufted Ducks were reported from Lake Earl, Del Norte 14 Jan (JLD, *WEH, Dan Tankersley), Stafford Lake, Marin 20 Jan–27 Feb (DScg, ph. Alex Merritt, m.ob.), Lake Hennessy, Napa 30 Jan–21 Mar (Alex Greene, ph. Deh, Dyh, m.ob.), and Modesto W.T.P. 4 Jan (second for Stanislaus, ph. JHG).

The 2 male White-winged Scoters continued at Fall River Lake, Shasta through 22 Dec (ph. B&CBS), with one remaining through 5 Jan (Michael & Muriel Plank). The long-staying female White-winged Scoter at Alviso, Santa Clara was last seen 18 Dec (MMR). The Richmond, **Contra Costa** Black Scoter was last reported 27 Jan (Albert Linkowski). The find of the season was an ad. male **Common Scoter** at Crescent City Harbor, Del Norte 25 Jan–13 Feb (ph. Bill Bouton, m.ob.). This bird provided the first North American record outside of Greenland and was seen by hundreds of people who made the trek to the nw. corner of our Region. Besides the Truckee, Nevada Long-tailed Duck that continued through 9 Dec (Bill Frey), 3 others were found well inland: singles at Eastman Lake, Shasta 17 Dec (ide Frank Sanderson), Black Butte Forebay, Tehama 4-7 Jan (ph. MRg, m.ob.), and n. Lake Tahoe, Placer 7-14 Feb (ScD, Wri, Rpz). Other notable Long-taileds closer to the coast included singles at Benicia, Solaro (RMu), American River Parkway 31 Dec (third **Sarco-**

mento record; ph. GEw, ph. CrS, m.ob.), Martinez, **Contra Costa** 1 Jan (Jeff Hoppes, Catherine Spaulding et al.), and Miller/Knoxe R.S., **Contra Costa** 8 Feb (LKh, ph. m.ob.). Providing one of few records for **Merced**, an ad. male Barrow’s Goldeneye was at O’Neill Forebay 9 Feb (ph. KVV). An apparent Hooked Merganser x Buf- feetled was at Crescent City Harbor, Del Norte 14-28 Feb (Jeff Harding, ph. Julio Morelo, Sky Lloyd). Several Red-breasted Mergansers were again found far inland, with singles near Truck- ee, **Nevada** 13 Dec (MMy), at Stampede Reser- voir 27-29 Dec (second record for Sierra, SRs, DRS, JSL, JLx), at Thermalito Forebay, Butte 1 Jan (Andy Tomasselli), and at Lake-of-the-Pines, **Nevada** 10-23 Jan (KSp, m.ob.). Eight more inland Red-breasted Mergansers were reported closer to the coast in Lake, Napa, Noyo, **Sacramento**, and San Joaquin through 17 Feb (m.ob.).

Among 9 Red-throated Loons and 4 Pacific Loons inland, the most noteworthy were **Merced**’s fourth Red-throated at O’Neill Forebay 14 Jan (ph. KVV) and a Pacific on Crowley Lake, Mono on the late date of 20 Dec (KWe). A count of 8000 southbound Pacifics at Ocean Beach, S.F. 2 Jan (RyD) signified a late migrant push. More difficult to explain was the sudden appearance of 8000 Pied-billed Grebes at Lake Earl, Del Norte Jan (RfB, RHo), as they had not been present the previous day. This count also bests our previous record of 560. A Red- necked Grebe at Stampede Reservoir 26 Dec–18 Jan (Tim Lenz, ph. CPD, m.ob.) was a first for **Sierra**. Laysan Albatrosses are rarely seen from shore, so one at Point Pinos, **Monterey** 17-18 Dec (†BLS, †DR, CSc et al.), accompanying Black-footed Albatrosses at fishing boats, was remarkable. Similarly, shearwaters seldom venture far inside S.F. Bay, making a Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwater from Alameda, Alameda 3 Dec (RJR) particularly noteworthy. Falls incursion of Black-vented Shearwaters persisted. The high count was of 10,700 from At años Nuevo Point, San Mateo to Waddell Creek S.B., **Santa Cruz** 30 Dec (PJM). Even more unusual were the num- bers farther north. Up to 17 seen from Ocean Beach 30 Dec+ (PP HuC, m.ob.) were the first seen from mainland S.F. in more than a decade, and counts of 525 at Bodega Head, Sonoma 4-9 Jan (DN, SeC) and 700+ at Gualala, Mendocino 2 Jan (JRW) were exceptional for these counties. Humboldt records included 2 off Humboldt Bay 4 Jan (†RfB, †JCS) and 3 there 8 Jan (JuB, Devin Bosler), and one made it as far n. as the Klamath River mouth, Del Norte 10 Jan (+JLB. A Blue-footed Booby at Terrace Point 10 Feb (+TA) provided the only **Santa Cruz** record outside the 2013 invasion. The Brown Booby parade that began in fall continued. Individuals of all ages and sexes were recorded at FJ through the period, with a high of 11 on 23 Feb (Point Blue).
THR
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olo
in six counties included light-morph bir
Joaquin River Delta. Seven Harlan’
R.
ów). Two American White Pelicans at Crow
the Smith River mouth,
20 Dec (DHo) were very late for that location; one standing on ice 10 Jan (DHo)
obviously lingered too long. By 20 Feb, the lake was hosting its first northbound migrants (110
birds; Steve Brad).

HERONS THROUGH TERNs
The Least Bittern at Foothill R.P., "Sonoma" con-
tinued through 8 Jan (DgSh). The only coastal
Cattle Egrets reported to us were one-day birds at
Struve Slough, "Santa Cruz" 15 Feb (NAd) and
Ferndale Bottoms, "Humboldt" 18 Feb (ph. Eliza-
abeth Feucht), but many more reports (e.g., of
up to 51 birds in "Sonoma") were submitted to
eBird. White-faced ibises were numerous coastal-
ly, with the first for the Centerville to King
Salmon C.B.C., "Humboldt" found 4 Jan (*GSL)
and up to 24 in "Santa Cruz" and up to 36 in
Monterey in Dec and early Jan (m.ob.). A Black
Vulture at Bolinas 29 Jan+(first "Marin" record,
ph. D5g, m.ob.) may have been the same in-
dividual seen in the fall in "Sonoma." Notable
White-tailed Kites included up to 3 at the Alert
Creek W.A., 22 Jan-10 Dec (Curis Marantz, J.LD. KA, DRs, SRs) and 2 in Sierra Valley,
Plumas 17 Dec (Terry & Jerry Williams). A pair of
Bald Eagles nesting at Rank Island 27 Dec (Jsy)
provided the first "Fresno" nesting record for the
C.V. floor; "Sonoma’s Common Black Hawk was
seen again 4+10 Jan (DgSh, m.ob.) at Laguna
de Santa Rosa; it has been mostly resident there
since at least 2005: A late Swainson’s Hawk was
over downtown "Santa Clara," 17 Dec (FrT) and
also away from the known wintering population in the Sacramento—San Joaquin River Delta. Seven Harlan’s Hawks in six counties included light-morph birds in Yolo 30 Jan (SCH) and San Joaquin 22 Jan–25 Feb (DGY). The Smith River Bottoms Sandhill Crane found last season continued through the period (seventh "Del Norte" record; LBr, m.ob.). Three records from "Humboldt" 15 Dec–27 Jan
(one involving 2 birds) were likewise notable.

A Pacific Golden-Plover at Tulare W.T.P., "Tu-
late" 6–16 Jan (ph. DaF et al.) was unexpected. Up
to 54 Mountain Plovers were found along Coun-
ty Line Rd., Yolo/"Colusa" 29 Jan–16 Feb (CKI, ph
SCH et al.); 5 more were found 6 km farther n.
in "Colusa" along White Rd. 21 Feb (Linda An-
gerer). The only coastal bird was at the Ed River
mouth, "Humboldt" 20–25 Jan (ph. SMcA, Brad El-
vert, TMcK, DFX). Wintering Solitary Sandpip-
ers were found at two locations: along the Napa
River in downtown Napa, Napa 19 Jan–18 Mar
(Jason Celaya, ph. MBE, MKu, m.ob.) and along
Rd. 208 5 km nw. of Millerton Lake 11 Feb–7
Mar (ph. Nina Jones, m.ob.). Although the lat-
ter provided the first winter record for Madera,
reports from this location a year earlier 18-20
Nov 2013 and 13 Mar 2014 suggest a return-
ing wintering individual. The only Ruff reported
was 14 Feb–22 Mar at Pixley N.W.R., "Tulare" (Jim Moore, ph. Steve Turley; ph. SDs, m.ob.).
The Alviso Wilson’s Phalarope reported last season remained through 9 Jan (ph. Caroline
Lambert), providing the fourth winter record for
"Santa Clara." December storms pushed Red
Phalaropes inland to Alviso, "Santa Clara" 14 Dec
(*SCR, *MMR) and 27 Dec (Jasen Liu) and to the
A Pigeon Guillemot at Point Arena, "Mendocino"
3 Jan (GEC, CEV) provided a rare Jan record for
this species, which winters n. of the Region.
Continuing warm weather was likely responsible for San Mateo’s second winter record of Scripp’s
Murrelet, with 4 off Half Moon Bay 21 Feb (AJ,
RSTh et al.); in "Monterey," 2 were seen from Point
Pinos 25 Dec (DR, RC), and one was on "Mon-
terey" Bay 22 Feb (Shj). Ancient Murrelets con-
tinued in good numbers, with a high of 75 at Moss
Beach, "San Mateo" 14 Dec (RSTh). Completely
unusual was a mortared Ancient Murrelet found on a road in Quincy 7 Dec (Christina
Caires; ph. Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care), a first for
Plumas. The Region has previous inland records only from "Contra Costa," "Mono," and "Shasta.
Apparently owing to a dearth of food, large num-
bbers of Cassin’s Auklets were found dead around
Monterey Bay and in coastal Humboldt. Horned
Puffins seen from shore included one at Point
Ponponio S.B., "San Mateo" 3 Jan (ADeM), and one at Point
Pinos, "Monterey," singles on 20 and 30 Dec and 2
and 21 Dec (Sc, DR, Chris Wood, PFw).

A total of 390 Bonaparte’s Gulls at Eagle Lake,
"Lassen" Dec (FRH) provided a high count for
this location, especially so late in the year. Frank-
lin’s Gulls were reported by 3 in coastal "Hum-
boldt as late as 5 Jan (m.ob.); one in the Smith
River Bottoms, "Del Norte" Dec (Tk, Casey
Ryan), and 2 at Corcoran Reservoir, "Kings" 20
Dec (Mys). Notable inland Mew Gulls included
singles at Folsom Lake, "Placer" 7-11 Feb (Donald
Pendleton, RPC), "Colusa" N.W.R. 11 Feb (Colusa’s
second; *Oscar Canino), and Lucerne Harbor,
Lake 19 Feb (JRW et al.), as well as 3 at Lake
Almanor, "Plumas" 17 Feb (ph. DVP LHA). A West-
er Gull at Folsom Lake, "Placer" 1 Feb (LKh, CH)
was noteworthy so far inland. Counts of 795 Cal-
ifornia Gulls at Crowley Lake, "Mono" 20 Dec and
338 still present 27 Dec (JLD) were high for late
December. Most gull species are hard to come by
in Nevada, so 2 Herring Gulls at Boca Reservoir
26-27 Dec (Tim Lenz, SRs, DRs) were significant.
Of a number of Iceland Gulls reported, the most
compelling was an ad. showing the features of the nominate subspecies at the Nimbus Fish
Hatchery 2 Jan (ph. Cory Gregory, Ashley Casey), a
first "Sacramento" record (p.a.). Other well-doc-
umented reports included a first-cycle bird at
Clear Lake, "Lake" 27-29 Dec (ph. Steve Stump),
2 first-cycle birds at the Teapot Dome Landfill,
"Tulare" 9-10 Jan (JLD, ph. S+DD), and different
first-cycle birds s. of San Jose, "Santa Clara" 18 &
22 Feb (ph. SCH, ph. RWR). However, some of
these birds possessed features similar to others
that have not been accepted by the C.B.R.C. due
to concerns about faded Thayer’s Gulls or vari-
ability within Thayers. Lesser Black-backed Gulls
were at Alviso, "Santa Clara" 18 Dec (ph. SCR),
Crowley Lake, "Mono" 27 Dec (JLD, R&NO; likely
a returning bird from the previous winter), the
Teapot Dome Landfill, "Tulare" 21 Jan (ph. SDs),
and H.R.S. 22 Jan (RJR).

A third-cycle Slaty-backed Gull reported at the
Salmon Creek mouth 6 Dec (*Tony Briggs
would be Sonoma’s third (p.a.); an ad. at Los Gatos
28 Jan–2 Feb (ph. Gena Zolotar, ph. MJM, WGB
et al.) furnished "Santa Clara’s third record. Glau-
cous-winged Gulls at Redding, "Shasta" 8 Dec (FrT)
and Black Butte Reservoir, "Tehama" 4+10 Jan (ph.
Mary Muchowski et al.) were in the n. C.V.,
where rare. Twenty-three Glaucous Gulls represented an average showing, 7 of these were in the C.V.,
where the species is regular in small numbers. A
late Black Tern at Bolinas Lagoon, "Marin" 4+10
Dec (Mark Dettling et al.) and an early Caspian Tern
at H.R.S. 26 Feb (RJR) represented extremes on
opposite legs of the migratory cycle, while a Com-
mon Tern at Arcata Marsh, "Humboldt" 22 Dec–4
Feb (EE) provided a rare winter record. Royal
Terns staged their largest influx in a half-century
or more, albeit a brief one. During the period 31
Jan–5 Feb, 20 birds were recorded in Monterey
from its s. border to Point Pinos (*SDS, *TBt, PLter, *MIR, ph. BHF, ph. PFw, ph. DR, Todd
Wills), with a high of 10 at the Willow Creek pic-
nic area 1 Feb (*MIR). One at Moss Beach 2 Feb
(RSTh) was part of this influx and provided the
first San Mateo record since 1990. Thereafter, the
incursion fizzled, and the only subsequent report
was of one at Point Pinos, Monterey 1 Mat (ph.
Shawn Waggoner). A few Elegant Terns lingered
along the coast from Del Norte southward; the
latest was at s. Humboldt Bay, "Humboldt" 18 Jan
(MWa). The only Black Skimmers outside S.F Bay
were 3 at Moss Landing, "Monterey" 17-23 Feb (ph.
Rachel Perpignani et al.).

PIGEONS THROUGH WARBLERS
The major incursion of Band-tailed Pigeons that
began in fall continued through winter, with a
high count of 4779 on the "Santa Cruz" C.B.C. 20
Dec (m.ob.), a total 852% over the recent 10-
year average for that count, and the first records
for the C.V. floor in "Fresno," with a peak count

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From fall through winter and continuing into early spring, the Region saw concurrent lowland irruptions of Band-tailed Pigeon, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Steller’s Jay, and Varied Thrush that were unprecedented based on available historical data. This phenomenon is well illustrated by data from the C.V., where Band-tailed Pigeons and Steller’s Jays are generally absent and the relative abundance of Lewis’s Woodpeckers and Varied Thrushes can vary dramatically from winter to winter. Figure 1 uses eBird data from C.V. counties whose boundaries are largely restricted to the valley floor (Kings, Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, and Yolo) to compare frequency of inclusion in eBird checklists from the fall 2014–spring 2015 period to the average frequency for the previous 14 years. In each case, the data show a pattern of most frequent reports in late fall and early winter, with each species continuing to be reported at a frequency far exceeding the historical average well into early spring.

Data from C.V. Christmas Bird Count circles since 1978 allow us to put the magnitude of these irruptions into historical context. Band-tailed Pigeons were present this winter at an abundance (based on birds/party hour) five times higher than the long-term average and at the second highest frequency far exceeding the historical average well into early spring.

The irruptions of Band-tailed Pigeons and Varied Thrushes were particularly widespread, with the pigeons present in remarkable abundance in coastal Southern California and Varied Thrushes in unprecedented numbers throughout most of the state.

The causes of this year’s phenomenon are unknown, but it is worth noting that all four of these species rely to some extent on acorns for food in fall and winter. According to Walt Koenig (http://www.nbb.cornell.edu/wkoenig/wicker/CalAcornSurvey.html), 2014 was among the poorest years for acorn production in California, so perhaps low acorn availability was at least partially responsible for the irruptions of some or all of these species. However, some oak species produced good or near-average acorn crops in some areas (e.g., valley oaks and blue oaks in the C.V. and Sierra foothills), and many or most of these birds (especially in the case of Varied Thrush) likely originated outside California. Furthermore, review of C.B.C. data since 1978 indicates that irruptions by these species are not necessarily synchronous, so that factors other than acorn production likely drive these species’ irruptions.

Figure 1. eBird data from Central Valley counties comparing the percent of checklists reporting each species from fall 2014 through spring 2015 to prior years (2000-2013).
Swainson’s Thrush is reported nearly every winter in Northern California, but such reports are rarely verifiable. This Swainson’s Thrush at Bolinas, Marin County 27 December 2014 was one of the few reported ever to be adequately documented. Photograph by Peter Pyle.

teo, 14 Nov–8 Mar (RSTh, m.ob.) was the only one reported. Merced hosted our only Vermilion Flycatchers, with 2 continuing from fall—a female on lower Santa Fe Grade Rd. through 13 Jan (ph. KVV), another female at Merced N.WR. through 17 Feb (m.ob.), and a male at the Grasslands WA near Los Banos 30 Dec–13 Jan (Greg Gerstenberg, ph. KVV). An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Arcata, Humboldt 31 Jan (Dominic DiMauro) furnished a rare winter record for the Region.

Among the 15 Tropical Kingbirds reported was the first for Tulare at the Tulare W.T.P. 4-18 Jan (JLt, ph. SDS). The single Western Kingbird reported, at the Aptos Creek mouth 3 Jan (ph. Randy Wardle, Shirley Murphy, m.ob.), provided the third winter record for Santa Cruz. Our only Scissor-tailed Flycatcher visited Half Moon Bay 24 Nov–Dec (ph. Tim Sullivan et al.), establishing the second Dec record for San Mateo.

Our southernmost Northern Shrike was along Rancho Tehama Rd., Tehama 26 Nov–6 Jan (DJk, m.ob.). Our only Plumbeous Vireo spent its fourth consecutive winter at San Lorenzo Park, Santa Cruz 20 Dec–5 Feb (CzS, DvS, m.ob.). Five Cassin’s Vireos included 2 inland and 3 coastal. Warbling Vireos included 2 at Golden Gate Park 5 Dec (Russ Bright) and one at H.R.S. 14 Feb (RJR). The Steller’s Jay irruption noted in fall diminished in winter, with small numbers lingering in portions of the n. C.V., where the species is normally scarce to absent (BED). The Blue Jay at Willow Creek, Humboldt continued through 7 Jan (CQg). Single out-of-place Clark’s Nutcrackers appeared at Mount Saint Helena 15 Jan (Aquas second) and Hood Mountain R.P., Sonoma 22 Jan (both DgSh).

Unseasonable swallows included single Cliffs at Yolo Bypass WA., Yolo 27 Dec (MFe) and Sacramento Regional W.T.P, Sacramento 30 Dec (Steve Scott) and 14 Dec-Jan/records of Barns, many involving multiple birds. After 12 years of no detections, the tenuous and merciful population of Mountain Chickadees at Cone Peak, Monterey was rediscovered 18-19 Jan, with 1-2 birds reported each day (MSy, JSL). Three Chestnut-backed Chickadees at Los Banos Creek Reservoir 29 Dec (ph. RMo) provided one of few records for Merced and the first there to be photographically documented. Fourteen reports of Townsend’s Solitaires away from areas of residency included Solano’s fifth, with a single bird at Gates Canyon Rd. 5 Jan (Ashley Casey, Cory Gregory, m.ob.), and a high count of 40-50 on Mount Saint Helena, Sonoma 22 Jan–16 Feb (DN, ESH, m.ob.). A Swainson’s Thrush at Bolinas, Marin 27 Dec (ph. PP) found during the Southern Marin County C.B.C. provided one of few substantiated winter records for the Region. Varied Thrushes continued to be reported in large numbers through much of the Region, with a high count of 1015 in Santa Cruz during the Santa Cruz C.B.C. 20 Dec (JdlEFe), a total more than four times the recent 10-year average.

This season was exceptional for the complete lack of notable mimid reports. It’s a rare winter that we don’t get at least one Gray Catbird or out-of-range thrasher. Longspurs were also scarce, with one Lapland Longspur at H.R.S. 3-16 Dec (RJR), 6 at three locations in Humboldt 6 Dec–28 Feb (Kz, Jared Hughey, AxL, m.ob.), and one on Fl. 17-18 Dec (Point Blue). Up to 6 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were on Bear River Ridge, Humboldt 31 Jan–24 Feb (Jared Hughey, m.ob.). Our only McCown’s Longspur report was a heard-only bird along County Line Rd., Colusa 18 Feb (JCS).

A secretive Ovenbird was at Mountain View, Santa Clara 11 Jan+ (ph. MMR, ph. m.ob.). A total of 7 Northern Waterthrushes was nearly double our average, and 15 Black-and-white Warblers also made an above-average total. Tennessee Warblers were at Belmont, San Mateo 20 Dec–7 Feb (RSTh, LBr) and at the U.C. Arboretum, Santa Cruz 14 Jan–10 Feb (GJer). We often miss Lucy’s Warbler, so singles at Santa Clara 29 Dec (first Santa Clara record; ph. Stephan Pleines, fde PDeu) and Bodega Bay, Sonoma 15 Dec (DfR, m.ob.) made for a good showing. Twenty-three Nashville Warblers was a typical tally. A MacGillivray’s Warbler s. of McKinleyville 2-26 Dec (GSl) provided Humboldt its second or third winter record, and a Hooded Warbler at Natural Bridges 5 B. 13 Jan–16 Feb (Jack Mazza, ph. m.ob.) was the second individual to winter in Santa Cruz (the other bird having spent two consecutive winters in the late 1990s). A Northern Parula first found in fall near Basso Bridge, Stanislaus (JHG, m.ob.) continued through 3 Jan (Xavier Sandoval, Sergio Pineda), providing a first winter record for that county. Likewise, a Northern Parula at Stanford University 15 Dec (RFu, Joyce Wong, Sophie Christel) also provided Santa Clara its first winter record. Our only Blackburnian Warbler was at Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 21 Dec (ph. Donna Pomeroy).

Eight Yellow Warblers were all in coastal counties, as were all 9 of our Wilson’s Warblers.

SPARRROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A Green-tailed Towhee in Fall River Mills 11 Dec (Boyd & Cathy Turner) provided a winter first for Shasta. Green-tailed Towhees were also at Flatiron Marsh, Solano 19 Dec–4 Jan (DRs, SRs, JCS et al.) and at the U.C. Farm, Santa Cruz 20 Dec–25 Feb (J.J. Mack, RRA, BRa, m.ob.). For the first time since 2000-2001, no winter American Tree Sparrows were reported. Five Clay-colored Sparrows represented a typical showing. A Black-throated Sparrow at Pixley N.W.R., Tulare 21 Feb (Alison Sheehey et al.) was an excellent C.V. find. Four Lark Bunting included one along Tim Bell Rd., Stanislaus 20 Dec (Jhr, Sandi Schoepe) and another along Robinson Rd., Solano 10 Feb (Noah Reid et al.). Two others were fall holdovers: one along Higgins Canyon Rd., San Mateo 18 Dec (RSTh et al.) and the other along Tehama Ave., Kings 23 Jan (Scott Bowers).

The precise winter range of Thick-billed Fox Sparrows (Passerella iliaca megarynchna) remains uncertain, but the impressive numbers (e.g., up to 10 along one 6-km transect) of this taxon reported from the upper elevations of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Santa Cruz and Santa Lucia Mountains, Monterey this season suggest these rare birds may represent regular wintering locations. Forty-two Swamp Sparrows was a bit over our average tally; but a dozen Harris’s Sparrows was double our average total. A long-staying and generally cooperative Rustic Bunting was in Golden Gate Park 6 Dec+ (ASH, m.ob.), providing S.F. its first, the Region its fourth, and the state its fifth record.

Eight Summer Tanagers were all in coastal counties, a total more than twice our long-term

The Northern California region has hosted four of the state’s five Rustic Bunting records. This bird was at Golden Gate Park from 6 (here Dec 13) December 2014 through the end of the winter period, affording many birders excellent studies. Photograph by Ed Harper.
Corrigenda: In the winter 2013-2014 report, for the record of the Lucy’s Warbler in S.F. 23-24 Dec, Mark W Eaton is credited as having taken a photograph, but Michael Park should have received that credit.

Cited observers (county subregional editors in boldface): Many more observers are not specifically cited, all are appreciated. Ken Able (Lassen), Nanci Adams, Alan D. Barron, Leonie Batkin, Dave A. Bengston, Murray Berner (Napa), Justin Bosler, William G. Bousman (Santa Clara), Steve Brad, Lucas Brug, Scott Carey, Rita Carratello, George E. Chamiot, Daryl Coldren (Humboldt and Del Norte), Chris Conard (Sacramento), Hugh Cotter, Rudy C. Darling (Nevada), Jeff N. Davis (Madera), Al DeMartini, Bruce E. Deuel (n. C. counties), Scott Dietrich, Colin P. Dillingham (Plumas and Sierra), Cedric Dulhaide, Jon L. Dunn, Pete Dunten, Leo J. Edson, Elias Elias, Gil C. Ewing, Dane Fagundes, Paul Fenwick, Eric Feuss, David Fix, Rick Fournier, Rob Fowler (Rbf; Humboldt and Del Norte), Dea Freid, Rob Furrow, James H. Gain, John Garrett, Steve Gerow (Santa Cruz), Frank R. Hall, William Edward Harper, John Harris (Stanislaus), Lauren Harter, Garth Harwood, Cliff Hawley, Rob Hewitt, Bill Hill, John S. Hopkins, Debbie House, Eugene S. Hunn, John E. Hunter (Trinity), Alvardo Jaramillo, David A. Jensen, Logan Kahle (Contra Costa), Robert J. Keiffer (Mercedo), Clay Kempl, Mark Kudrow, Tony Kurz, Alexandra Lamb, Gary S. Lester, Robin L. C. Leong (Solano), John Lockhart, Jim Lo-max, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, Don Marsh, Dan J. Maxwell (Marin), Sean McAl-lister, Tristan McKee, Peter J. Metropulos (San Mateo), Dominik Mosur (San Francisco), Roger Muskat, Martin Meyers, Dan Nelson, Kristie N. Nelson (Mono), Chet Ogan, Frances Oliver (Son Joaquin), Ron & Nancy Overholtz, Ed Pandolfino (Placer), Gary W. Potter (Fresno), Ron Pozzi, Peter Pyle, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Harold M. Reeve, Robert W. Reiling, Will Richardson, Robert J. Richmond (Alameda), Michael Rieser, Don Roberson (Monterey), Michael M. Rogers (MMR), Michael Rognor (MRg), Diane Rose, Steve Rose, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Ruth A. Rudesill (Sonoma), Paul Saraceni, Ken Schneider, Christian Schwarz, Cooper Scollen, Jeff Scary (Kings), Doug Shaw, David Sidle, Daniel Singer, Jim H. Snowden, Shearwater Journeys, Kevin Spencer, Mark Stacy, John C. Sterling (Modoc, Alpine, Calaveras, and Yolo), Tim Steurer (El Dorado and Amador), Steve J. Stump, Brian L. Sullivan, Steven D. Summers (Tulare), Craig Swogard, Linda Terrill, Ryan Terrill, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thornd, Jim Tietz (Fl.), Francis Tolbi, Steve Umland (Tuolumne), Chuck E. Vaughn, Kent Van Vuren (Merced), David Vander Pluym, Matt Wachs, Ken Wells, Jerry R. White (Lake), David G. Yee, Bob & Carol Yutzy (Shasta).

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Southern California

The Region’s ongoing drought continued through the winter; although a few storms deposited rain in December and January, temperatures climbed higher than average and precipitation dipped well below average as the winter progressed. A historic invasion of Varied Thrushes, first noted late in fall, continued through the winter season. Significant rarities were few, with a Roseate Spoonbill at the south end of the Salton Sea after 10 January being California’s first in seven years and the returning wintering Gray Hawk at Carpinteria being noteworthy.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern), E.A.F.B. (Edwards A.F.B., se. Kern), F.C.R. (Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley N.P., Inyo); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); P.M.N.A.S. (Point Mugu Naval Air Station, Ventura); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial; S.J.WA. (San Jacinto W.A., near Lakeview, Riverside); V.A.F.B. (Vandenberg A.F.B., nw. Santa Barbara). Museum collections abbreviated in the text are: LACM (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County) and SDNHM (San Diego Natural History Museum). Because most rarities in s. California are seen by multiple observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and/or identifying the bird are included. Documentation for species on the California B.R.C. (C.B.R.C.) review list (see www.californiabirds.org) is forwarded to the C.B.R.C. and archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

WATERFOWL THROUGH GULLS

Seven Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were at the S.J.W.A. 3-7 Jan, with 3 shot by hunters 3 Jan and 4 photographed on 4 Jan (RM); this species formerly nested at multiple locations throughout the s. half of California, but was restricted to S.E.S.S. by the 1970s and is now only a casual to accidental straggler in the state. A flock of 82 Tundra Swans on Tinemaha Reservoir, Inyo 26 Dec (C&RH) was the largest number reported in the Region, 2 at F.C.R. 1 Jan (SLH) were at an unexpected location, and single birds around Pico Rivera/South El Monte, Los Angeles 23 Dec–16 Mar (DD) and another at the