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This was an outstanding season for vagrants, especially landbirds. The undeniable highlight was a Common Cuckoo that visited Watsonville Slough in Santa Cruz County. This Eurasian species breeds east to Siberia and Japan and winters only as near as northern Southeast Asia and India. Although it occurs annually in spring and summer in Alaska, there was only one previous record for the Lower 48 and no previous fall record for North America.

The strong showing of vagrants this season was a fitting farewell to one of the bright-eyed observers who first discovered the phenomenon of avian vagrancy in California in the 1960s. That observer was Rich Stallcup. When Rich passed away on 15 December 2012, we didn't just lose one of the giants of California birding. We lost a teacher, a mentor, a friend, and a crusader for the natural world. He taught us that every bird was different, that every bird mattered. He devoted his life to understanding and protecting birds and other wild things, and he shared that understanding and ethic with anyone who cared. Rich was always in the field, observing and appreciating life. His many hours outdoors only partly explain the fact that he contributed bird records to more Northern California Regional reports than anyone in the history of this publication. His outpouring of records also had to do with his remarkable capacity to anticipate birds before seeing them. This otherworldly skill came from a deep understanding of the ways and means by which weather, habitat needs, food habits, and behaviors influence the occurrence of birds. Rich co-founded the

Point Reyes Bird Observatory in 1965; served as a Regional Editor of this publication for 11 seasons, from February 1972 to August 1976; and was honored with American Birding Association's Ludlow Griscom Award in 2002 for outstanding contributions to American ornithology. One of Rich's most celebrated attributes was his ability to educate and inspire simultaneously, an ability aptly conveyed in the preface of his book *Ocean Birds of the Nearshore Pacific*: "Although this book will be useful for identification of oceanic vertebrates, it is not meant solely as a field guide. Instead, through use of photographs, it is hoped to be more a tribute to the animals themselves—their beauty and grace, their rugged delicacy, and their share in making Earth wonderfully diverse. It is also hoped that people who see this book will be taken by the wildness and freedom of these creatures and, when chances to defend the health and integrity of ocean habitats arise, will act strongly in accord."

**Abbreviations:** C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.R.P. (Cosumnes River Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.V. (Central Valley); FI. (Southeast Farallon I., *San Francisco*); H.R.S. (Hayward R.S., *Alameda*); O.S.P. (Open Space Preserve); PRBO (PRBO Conservation Science); S.E. (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 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933.

## WATERFOWL

Brant inside S.F. Bay included one at Miller Knox R.S., *Contra Costa* 21 Oct–22 Nov (Jack Hayden, m.ob.) and 2 at Emeryville, *Alameda* 23 Oct–7 Nov (Jim Chiropoulos, Stephanie Floyd). Dusky Canada Geese at the Coyote Creek G.C. 29 Sep and in Morgan Hill 12–16 Nov (both *Santa Clara*; both SCR) may have been returning birds. Trumpeter Swan numbers continue to increase, with up to 9 at Modoc N.W.R., *Modoc* 22–24 Nov (SCR, JLD) and 2 at Upper Butte Basin W.A., *Glenn* 26 Nov (ph. Nikki Perkins). A Bewick's Swan was at Modoc N.W.R., *Modoc* 22 Nov (ph. SCR), and another was along County Road R, *Glenn* 14 Nov (JML, Laurie Dann).

Three Cinnamon Teal 17 Sep (PRBO, ph. DJM) and a Ruddy Duck 27 Sep–16 Oct (ph. PRBO) were the first for FI. since 1997. An ad. male Tufted Duck returned to Lake Merritt in Oakland, *Alameda* 28 Oct+ (Kristi Whitfield, m.ob.); an imm. male showed up nearby at Oyster Bay R.S., *Alameda* 17 Nov+ (ph. Noah Arthur, Vicky Robinson). The Coyote Point, *San Mateo* Harlequin Duck com-

pleted its tenth year of year-round residency at that location (RSTh et al.). Inland Surf Scoters included a notable 3 in *Plumas* 11 Oct–8 Nov (Dick Fording, SEd, ADE, KPa et al.), 2 in *Merced* 23 & 26 Oct (ph. KVV, DLSu), and *Yolo*'s sixth at Woodland W.T.P. 30 Oct–2 Nov (Claire Gallagher). White-winged Scoters likewise were found inland, with 2 in *Siskiyou* 25–26 Oct, one in *Placer* 13 Nov (JCS), and 15 in *Mono*, including a remarkable 14 at Crowley Lake 27 Oct (ph. Bob Steele, Susan Steele). Two Black Scoters at Eagle Lake 29 Oct were the first for *Lassen* (Kab, LOr). The Long-tailed Duck that summered at Coyote Point, *San Mateo* remained through 4 Nov (RSTh et al.); another at Clear Lake 28–30 Nov (DvW, JRW) was *Lake*'s eighth. A male Bufflehead x Common Goldeneye hybrid at Mountain View, *Santa Clara* 21 Nov+ (ph. MMR et al.) may have been the same as one seen previously at Redwood Shores, *San Mateo* 15 Nov (ph. Brooke Miller). A Red-breasted Merganser at Indian Creek Reservoir 25 Nov+ (JLD, SRs, Diane Rose) was the first for *Alpine*; others far inland included singles at Thermalito Afterbay, *Butte* 12–13 Nov (JLx), Folsom Lake, *Placer* 15 Nov (Ron Pozzi), and Corcoran, *Kings* 17 Nov (MSy), and 5 at Grant Lake, *Mono* 25 Nov (KNN, Ken Wells).

## LOONS THROUGH PELICANS

A basic-plumaged Yellow-billed Loon was off Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 11 Aug (Logan Kahle, AJa, ph. Martijn Verdoes). Seven Horned Grebes at FI. 7–8 Nov (PRBO) provided an all-time high count for the island. Among 3 inland Red-necked Grebes, one at Indian Creek Reservoir 25–27 Nov (DRs, SRs, †JLD et al.) furnished a first *Alpine* record. Lake Almanor, *Plumas* hosts one of the highest breeding concentrations of Western Grebes in the region; 3300, including 800 actively nesting pairs, 9 Aug (Nils Lunder) represented one of the highest counts for this location. On the night of 9/10 Nov, as many as 10,000 Western and Clark's Grebes appeared on Eagle Lake, *Lassen*, including many ads. with young not fully grown though obviously capable of flight (Lor); numbers gradually declined over the following weeks.

A Laysan Albatross on Monterey Bay, *Monterey* 16 Sep (ph. DR, ph. ShJ, m.ob.) had been banded on Guadalupe Island, Mexico. *San Mateo*'s first Hawaiian Petrels were well documented 43 km wsw. of Pigeon Point 25 Aug (†MDo, AJ, ph. Mark Rauzon) and 50 km wsw. of Half Moon Bay 8 Sep (†MDo, AJ, †DSg, ph. TGr); another was over Bodega Canyon, *Sonoma* 21 Sep (TMcG, ShJ, ph. Trevor Codlin). On a NOAA research cruise, a Hawaiian/Galapagos Petrel was 150 km w. of FI. 24 Aug (†G.





Sharp-tailed Sandpipers are regular but rare in northern California, as is true farther north in the Pacific Northwest. This juvenile was present 21-22 (here 22) September 2012 at Spud Point Marina, Bodega Harbor, Sonoma County. Photograph by Roger Marlowe.

Scott Mills); no documentation was provided for 4 other individuals (3 identified as Hawaiians) reported during the cruise, which also recorded 171 Cook's Petrels off the Region 18-25 Aug (G. Scott Mills, Ryan Merrill). Eight Cook's Petrels were 77 km off Trinidad, *Humboldt* 25 Oct, and one was 83 km wsw. of Cape San Martin, *Monterey* 26 Oct (both PEL et al.). Flesh-footed Shearwaters were recorded on 10 different dates, though in low numbers (1-2/trip), from *Monterey* to *Mendocino*. The high Sooty Shearwater count was of 130,000 at Seacliff S.B., *Santa Cruz* 4 Sep (DLSu); the counts of 500,000-1,000,000 recorded as recently as the 1980s-1990s have not been seen in this century. A swarm of 20,000+ Sooties was unprecedented inside Pillar Point Harbor, *San Mateo* 8 Sep (AJ et al.), feeding on anchovies, and one at H.R.S. 7 Sep (RJR) was rare so far inside S.F. Bay. *Sonoma's* third Manx Shearwater was over Bodega Canyon 27 Oct (ESH, ShJ). Black-vented Shearwaters staged a large influx in early Oct, with counts of 2000 on *Monterey Bay*, *Monterey* 7 Oct (DR et al.) and 2370 passing Terrace Point, *Santa Cruz* in one hour 31 Oct (AMR). Small numbers were recorded n. to *Humboldt* in Oct, with a few lingering into Nov n. to *Sonoma*. Up to 50 Wilson's Storm-Petrels off Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 25 Aug (PJM, AJ et al.) provided one of the Region's highest counts; 5 at Bodega Canyon, *Sonoma* 21 Sep (ShJ) were the only

others recorded. High concentrations of Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels are infrequently recorded, so Bodega Canyon, *Sonoma* counts of 1000 on 22 Aug (ESH, ShJ) and 3000 on 21 Sep (ShJ), and 1500 at the Eel River Canyon, *Humboldt* 8 Sep (Mark Colwell et al.), were noteworthy. A count of 1000 Black Storm-Petrels at Bodega Canyon, *Sonoma* 21 Sep (ShJ) was high, particularly in a year in which the species was found in only meager numbers elsewhere. A Least Storm-Petrel at Bodega Canyon 30 Sep (ph. SNGH) provided *Sonoma's* first record, and likely the northernmost record ever—unexpected in a year in which none were found elsewhere in the Region, though daily counts of 1000+ persisted through mid-Oct off s. California. Surveys of rocky islands along the *Mendocino* coast 21-30 Aug detected evidence of breeding by Ashy Storm-Petrels at four locations near Caspar, including an island where nesting had not been documented since 1926 (Harry Carter, Mike Parker, Josh Koepke). These now represent the northernmost known colonies of the species. An Ashy Storm-Petrel picked up on a sidewalk at Portrero Hill, S.F. 5 Oct (*fide* DMO) was unusual onshore.

A Masked Booby at the San Lorenzo River mouth 17 Nov (ph., †John Garrett, AMR) provided a first record for *Santa Cruz*, which had one previous record accepted only as Masked/Nazca Booby. Brown Booby is now regular in fall, as illustrated by the total of 7 individuals

in five counties: 26 km w. of Pescadero S.B., *San Mateo* 21 Aug (G. Scott Mills, Ryan Merrill); at Point Reyes N.S., *Marin* 12 Sep. (ph. KH); flying w. past Point Pinos, *Monterey* 30 Sep (subad.; †DR, RC, LRo, CRo); at New Brighton S.B., *Santa Cruz* 1 Oct (juv.; DLSu); at FI. 13 Oct–11 Nov (ad. female; JTz, ph. DJM, Lukas Musher, Nora Livingston) and 18-27 Oct (imm.; Nora Livingston, Lukas Musher, ph. JTz); and flying s. past Pigeon Point, *San Mateo* 11 Nov (imm.; RSTh). The continuing ad. **Northern Gannet** was seen at FI. most days throughout the period (PRBO). Small numbers of Brandt's Cormorants continued incubating eggs in nests, presumably after initial clutches had failed, through 19 Oct at Seacliff S.B., *Santa Cruz* (DLSu); as in previous years with such late nesting, these attempts failed. The inland incursion of juv. Brown Pelicans continued from summer. In addition to 5 in *Sacramento* and 6 in *Yolo*, those farthest from the coast were 2 s. of Corcoran, *Kings* 12 Aug (JLD); 9 at San Luis Reservoir, *Merced* 15 Aug, with 5 remaining through Nov (KVV et al.); one at *Sacramento N.W.R.*, *Glenn* 15-17 Sep (JLa et al.); one at Black Butte Reservoir, *Tehama* 7-19 Oct (BED et al.) that was also seen on the *Glenn* side of the reservoir on the latter date (DMr); and *Lassen's* second at Eagle Lake 29 Oct (ph. KAb, LOr). Reflecting the apparent low abundance of food in coastal waters, Brown Pelican counts at FI. continued to be very low for the third straight year, with a high of only 134 on 25 Oct (PRBO).

## BITTERNS THROUGH CRANES

Least Bitterns included 2 at Clear Lake, *Lake* 22 Aug (Brad & Kathy Barnwell), one at Petaluma 26 Aug and 8 Oct (2nd for *Sonoma*; ph. Ron Storey, Craig Roth), and a continuing bird at Mather Lake, *Sacramento* through 1 Sep (LPt, KZu, ph. GEW et al.). Up to 7 Cattle Egrets were at Moonglow Dairy, *Monterey* 21 Oct–23 Nov (m.ob.); singles were found in *Santa Cruz*, *San Mateo*, and *Santa Clara* 19 Aug–29 Oct. White-faced Ibis were reported from seven coastal counties, with perhaps the least expected being one at Lake Merced, S.F. 19-20 Nov (DPM, m.ob.).

White-tailed Kites at Sierra Valley 12 Oct (Terry Williams, SED, ADE) and Lake Almanor 22 Oct+ (ph. RDB et al.) were unexpected in *Plumas*, as was one at Lake Tahoe, *El Dorado* 9 Oct (ph., †JLD). Broad-winged Hawk observations over Hawk Hill in the *Marin* Headlands totaled a record 755 sightings 17 Sep–20 Oct, with a high count of 295 on 27 Sep (GGRO). Others away from *Sonoma*, *Marin*, and S.F. included *Shasta's* second at *Lassen Volcanic N.P.* 24 Sep (Randy Van Orden et al.), *Mendocino's* first at Albion 26 Sep



(†Linda Perkins), 4 over San Bruno Mountain, *San Mateo* 3 Oct (RSTh), singles over *Santa Cruz* at Watsonville Slough 1 Oct (KH) and Capitola 6 Oct (DLSu), and one at Big Sur River mouth, *Monterey* 29 Sep (John Garrett, ph. Christian Schwartz et al.). Swainson's Hawks were found in six coastal counties 8 Aug–24 Sep, with late stragglers in *S.F.* 4 Nov (PSar, HuC, DMO) and *Napa* 28 Nov (RAR). Harlan's Hawks included returning birds at Arcata, *Humboldt* 10 Nov+ (RbF) and Redding, *Shasta* 12 Nov (Frank & Darliss Sanderson); others included one at Colusa N.W.R., *Colusa* 16 Oct (Dan Tankersley et al.) and perhaps the first for *S.F.* 17 Oct (HuC). Twenty-nine Rough-legged Hawks in 11 counties 18 Oct+ was an above-average total that included several coastal birds. *Mono's* Sandhill Crane family was last seen with 2 young at Bridgeport Reservoir 17 Sep (PJM).

## SHOREBIRDS

Five American Golden-Plovers were reported: 2 from Lake Talowa, *Del Norte* 10 Sep (LuB), one at MacKerricher S.P., *Mendocino* 12–15 Sep (KHv, REH, m.ob.), one at Hanford, *Kings* 5 Oct (ph. MSy), and one at Gustine, *Merced* (ph. KVV). Two Mountain Plovers at Clear Lake N.W.R. 25–27 Oct (Kevin Spencer) were the first for *Modoc*; another at s. Arcata Bottoms, *Humboldt* 14–16 Oct (Brendan Higgins, ph. Jared Hughey, m.ob.) was notable for its coastal location. A Black Oystercatcher at the s. end of *S.F.* Bay in Alviso 6 Sep (Cheryl Strong, Rachel Tertes et al.) was only *Santa Clara's* third. Wayward shorebirds at Lake-of-the-Pines W.T.P. included 4 Black-necked Stilts 30 Aug and a Pectoral Sandpiper 25–28 Sep (both ph. RCD), comprising only the second and first records for w. *Nevada*, respectively. An "Avostilt"—an American Avocet x Black-necked Stilt hybrid—was at the Davis Wetlands, *Yolo* 3 Sep (ph. SCH). It was a poor fall for Lesser Yellowlegs in *Alameda* and *Santa Clara*, but one at Heron's Head, *S.F.* 4–10 Sep (DMO, m.ob.) was noteworthy.

A Long-billed Curlew at Clear Lake 1 Aug (FHa) was, remarkably, only the third for *Lake*. A Black Turnstone at Green Island Lagoon 9 Sep (TEa, ph. JCS) was the first for *Napa*. Red Knot reports included record high counts for *Yolo*, 4 juvs. at Yolo Bypass W.A. 26 Aug (ph. TEa), and for *Santa Clara*, 273+ at Alviso 15 Nov (MMR, MJM). A very modest passage of Semipalmated Sandpipers included only 12 birds in nine counties 10 Aug–26 Sep. A lingering Baird's Sandpiper at Woodland W.T.P., *Yolo* 1 Nov (ph. JCS) was very late. Four Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were found: one at Centerville, *Humboldt* 4 Sep (KMS, TKz, m.ob.), another there 4 Oct (ph.

SMcA), and juvs. at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* 21–22 Sep (JGE, DFr, ph. RoM, m.ob.) and Lake Talowa, *Del Norte* 17 Oct (LuB). An alternate-plumaged Curlew Sandpiper at Bodega Bay 19 Sep (ph. Gordon Beebe) was the first of the species to be found in *Sonoma*. In addition to 5 Stilt Sandpipers in *Kings* 30 Aug–8 Oct (JSy, MSy), singles were at Tulare, *Tulare* 21 Aug (Dane Fagundes), Centerville, *Humboldt* 31 Aug–4 Sep (KMS, TKz), and Crowley Lake 19 Sep (fourth *Mono* record; JLD). Buff-breasted Sandpipers were reported from Abbotts Lagoon, *Marin* 6–9 Sep (Jim White et al.), Moon-glow Dairy, *Monterey* 8–11 Sep (ph. DR, RC, m.ob.), Lake Talowa, *Del Norte* 10 Sep (LuB), and Watsonville Slough, 18–22 Sep (fifth for *Santa Cruz*; CKf, m.ob.). Eleven Ruffs in seven counties included the second for *Fl.* 21 Aug (ph. JTz, ph. DJM, Bryan White).

## GULLS THROUGH ALCIDIS

A total of 5 Sabine's Gulls in *Yolo*, *Mono*, and *Placer* 15 Sep–16 Oct represented a below-average inland showing. A Bonaparte's Gull at Prosser Reservoir in Truckee 31 Oct (MMY) was apparently the first for *Nevada*. We rarely see Bonaparte's and Little Gulls in full juvenal plumage, so a juv. Bonaparte's off Fort Bragg, *Mendocino* 24 Aug (JLD et al.) and a juv. Little on Monterey Bay, *Monterey* 9 Sep (MDo, RgW, ph. Martijn Verdoes, ph. DR, ph. JHm) were surprising. Second-cycle Laughing Gulls were at Watsonville Slough, *Santa Cruz* 27 Aug–8 Sep (CKf, JHW, AMR) and San Luis Reservoir 6 Sep (ph. KVV), the latter providing a first record for *Merced*. Aside from 33 Franklin's Gulls in *Modoc*, where regular, 13 were recorded in seven counties 13 Aug–26 Nov; a juv. at Kutras Lake 26 Nov (ph. RBr) provided *Shasta's* second record. Single Ring-billed Gulls at MacKerricher S.P. 7–9 Oct (RJK, Ryan Keiffer, KHv) and Ocean Meadows 13 Nov (KHv, JHv) were on the *Mendocino* coast, where rare. A juv. Iceland Gull at the Baldwin Creek mouth, *Santa Cruz* 15–16 Nov (ph. Jeff Poklen et al.) appeared to be of subspecies *kumlieni*; if accepted, this would represent the earliest record for the state by 19 days. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull at Oyster Bay R.S. 14 Nov (ph. Noah Arthur) provided *Alameda's* fourth record. All 3 Glaucous Gulls appeared synchronously, on 24 Nov, in three different counties.

An ad. Least Tern was at Hanford, *Kings* 5–19 Aug (ph. MSy). The only Black Terns noted in coastal areas were at Mountain View, *Santa Clara* bayside ponds, where a juv. was present 25 Aug–3 Sep (MMR, MJM, Lea Crisp et al.) and an ad. was present 1–2 Sep (Don Pendleton, DvWb et al.), and at Watsonville Slough, *Santa Cruz* 3–6 Sep (juv.; JHW et al.).

A juv. Common Tern at Indian Creek Reservoir 27 Aug (JLD, SRs) provided *Alpine* with its second record. Although Brown Pelicans and Heermann's Gulls were in low numbers coastally, another southern breeder, Elegant Tern, appeared in above-average numbers and lingered late. Elegants were present into Nov as far n. as *Mendocino* and well inside *S.F.* Bay; they were last recorded 24 Nov in *Santa Cruz*, *Santa Cruz* (AMR). Away from s. *S.F.* Bay, where up to 24 Black Skimmers were present at Redwood Shores, *San Mateo* and Mountain View, *Santa Clara*, the only 2 recorded were at Elkhorn Slough, *Monterey* 15 Aug (YG). The high South Polar Skua count was of 9 on *Monterey Bay*, *Monterey* 29 Sep (RgW et al.). Five Long-tailed Jaegers in a single flock 72 km off *Monterey* 26 Oct (PEL et al.) were fairly late. Single Long-taileds were inland at Crowley Lake, *Mono* 19 Aug (juv.; Bob Steele, JLD, Susan Steele), Mud Lake, *Alpine* 27 Aug (juv.; †JLD, SRs), Clear Lake, *Lake* 13 Sep (JCS), San Luis Reservoir, *Merced* 6–15 Sep (imm.; †KVV, TEa), and n. Lake Tahoe, *Placer* 15–16 Sep (second-year bird; ph. ScD, ph. Ron Pozzi, ph. WRi). Pigeon Guillemots nested late in *Santa Cruz*, with ads. carrying fish to cavities in cliffs at West Cliff Drive 27 Aug (SGe) and n. of Scott Creek 3 Sep (AMR, Nick Levandosky). This species is seldom noted in *Santa Cruz* after Sep, so one near Natural Bridges S.B. 9–25 Nov (AMR, SGe, John Garrett et al.) was late. Two Guadalupe Murrelets were approximately 135 km wnw. of *Fl.* 24 Aug (Scott Mills, Ryan Merrill). The more regularly recorded member of this spe-



In California, most Iceland Gulls are reported in late winter, when distinguishing first-cycle individuals from worn, faded Thayer's Gulls can be problematic. This juvenile of the subspecies *kumlieni*, present 15 (here) and 16 November 2012 at Baldwin Creek, *Santa Cruz* County, was the state's earliest by 19 days and posed no such identification problem, as juvenile Thayer's in such fresh plumage should not appear this pale. Photograph by Jeff Poklen.



cies pair, Scripps's Murrelet, was recorded on eight offshore trips from Monterey to Sonoma 3 Aug–19 Oct, with a high of 7 off *San Mateo* 2 Sep (AJ et al.). Either species is rarely seen from shore, so a Scripps's at Pigeon Point, *San Mateo* 23 Nov (RSTh) was noteworthy. A Parakeet Auklet was 44 km w. of Cape Mendocino, in *Humboldt* waters, 26 Oct (†PEL et al.). Three Horned Puffins were at the n. jetty of Humboldt Bay, *Humboldt* 1 Sep (TKz et al.), and one was at FI. 3 Nov (Ryan DiGaudio, ph. Lukas Musher, Nora Livingston et al.).

## DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Providing a rare inland record, a White-winged Dove was discovered among a flock of Mourning Doves at O'Neill Forebay, *Merced* 26 Oct (†DLSu). California's first **Common Cuckoo**, a juv. rufous morph, devoured caterpillars at Watsonville Slough, *Santa Cruz* 28 Sep–2 Oct (LGo, ph. SGe, ph. m.ob.). Burrowing Owls are known to cross vast stretches of open water during fall migration. Although occasionally observed from boats offshore, one 22 km nw. of Cypress Point, *Monterey* 2 Oct (JND) may have been the first ever spotted from a plane. A testament to their pelagic tendencies, many made their way out to FI. this season, with a new high count of 17 on 3 Oct (PRBO). This species sometimes appears in seemingly inhospitable settings on the mainland as well. A case in point was one on Gates Street in the residential neighborhood of Bernal Heights in S.F. 9 Oct (Rupa Bose). Much less prone to wandering, at least in California, are Great Gray Owls. A juv. drew the attention of several birders, therefore, when it appeared outside the normal range of the species ne. of Oakhurst, *Madera* 21 Oct+ (HBu, ph. GaW, JND, JSy et al.). Also making local birding headlines was a Long-eared Owl at the Stockton Rural Cemetery, *San Joaquin* 17 Nov (JLD, m.ob.). Although this species used to winter annually in the county, it has been scarce over the past two decades. The Stockton Rural Cemetery also hosted a Northern Saw-whet Owl, just the second ever for *San Joaquin*, 12 Nov (JRow, FrO, CCo, ph. LPt). Another out-of-place Saw-whet, or possibly 2, visited Golden Gate Park, S.F. 13 Nov (Moe Flannery, Logan Kahle, m.ob.). Up to 2 Common Poorwills in Lee Vining Canyon 12 Nov (Joel Ellis) established the latest fall record for *Mono*.

A Black Swift over Monte Bello O.S.P. 17 Sep (GrH) established *Santa Clara*'s first fall record. Our only Chimney Swift winged over the Fish Docks at Point Reyes N.S., *Marin* 4 Oct (†RS, TEa, TaE). The Vaux's Swift roost at Rio Lindo Academy in Healdsburg, *Sonoma* peaked at about 6500 birds 11–15 Sep (DeH, m.ob.).

Elsewhere, a cloud of 254 passing over Skylawn Memorial Park, *San Mateo* 1 Oct (RSTh) was a good-sized group. The season's last *Seiurus* hummingbird, presumably a Rufous, lingered at feeders in Morgan Hill, *Santa Clara* until 13 Nov (SCR). As most of our Calliope Hummingbirds head southeastward in fall, any in the C.V. at this season are notable. Such was the case with an imm. female in East Sacramento, *Sacramento* 22 Aug (EP). Curiously, most recent lowland reports have come from this county. In contrast to the situation during the past several years, Lewis's Woodpeckers, sustained by the best Oregon Oak acorn crop in a decade, remained in *Lassen* in good numbers through the period (KAb). If indicative of a broader pattern, this acorn bounty may explain why so few Lewis's appeared in areas outside the breeding range farther south. Seven Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included FI.'s third 11 Oct (†JTz, Nora Livingston, DJM, Lukas Musher), *Tehama*'s first at Red Bluff R.A. 13–16 Oct (†BED, ph. JCS), and *Mono*'s third at Dechambeau Creek 2–3 Nov (ph. KNN). *Del Norte*'s Crested Caracara continued near Fort Dick 14 Aug (Debra Boner).

Another Yellow-bellied Flycatcher made it out to FI., which has hosted the lion's share of the Region's records. This one was there 1 Sep (DJM, †JTz, Elizabeth Ames, Jay Wright, Alex Gulick), furnishing the second earliest record for the state. Another visited nearby Nunes Ranch at Point Reyes N.S., *Marin* 6–7 Sep (RS, ph. DWm). Despite the annual presence of Willow Flycatchers during the breeding season in n. and cen. *Humboldt*, only one modern breeding record existed until this season. The second was confirmed at the Mad River Fish Hatchery in Blue Lake, where 2 ads. attended and fed a juv. 29 Aug (TKz, Meghan Still). *Merced*'s first fall Gray Flycatcher was at Pacheco S.P. 19 Oct (ph. KVV). Three Vermilion Flycatchers included 2 inland, an imm. male in Lemoore, *Kings* 29–30 Aug (ph. SDS), an ad. male in Gustine, *Merced* 24 Nov (Jean Okuye), and one along the coast, an imm. female at Point Pinos, *Monterey* 11–18 Nov (ph. BHL, ph. DR, m.ob.). Two Dusky-capped Flycatchers were reported: one at the RCA station at Point Reyes N.S., *Marin* 19 Nov (ph. DSg) and one at Janes Creek in Arcata, *Humboldt* 20 Nov+ (GAB, ph. RbF, Jared Hughey, m.ob.). *Santa Cruz* saw its first and second Great Crested Flycatchers this season, with one well-studied bird at Natural Bridges S.B. 16–22 Sep (Christian Schwarz, ph. Steven Tucker, Chris Lay, Amy Patten, ph. m.ob.) and another along the Pajaro River downstream of Hwy. 1 near Watsonville 20 Sep (ph. Nelson Samuels). That bird was also seen on the *Monterey* side of the river. A total of 72 Tropi-

cal Kingbirds was more than twice our recent 10-year average. Our only Scissor-tailed Flycatcher dropped in at the Veterans Affairs Hospital, S.F. 18 Oct (†Ross Wilming).

*Sonoma*'s first Yellow-throated Vireo passed time at Spring Lake R.P. 16–21 Sep (JLx, Bill Doyle, DN, AWgh, Giel Witt, ph. m.ob.). Our only reported Plumbeous Vireo was in the C.V., where scarce, at Woodbridge Wilderness Area, *San Joaquin* 6 Oct (DGY, Mary Fuhs). Nine Philadelphia Vireos included *Mono*'s first for fall at Dechambeau Creek 7 Sep (ph. KNN).

Establishing a third record for *San Joaquin*, a Chestnut-backed Chickadee foraged among the pines at the fire station on Corral Hollow Rd. 27 Oct–7 Nov (DGY, JRow, LZW, JCS). Above-average numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported, with record or near-record high counts for single localities within their respective counties at FI. 28 Sep (54; PRBO), O'Neill Forebay, *Merced* 19 Oct (34; KVV), and U.C. Santa Cruz, *Santa Cruz* 20 Oct (62; John Garrett). Keen birders have managed to turn up several Winter Wrens since the recent taxonomic split with the regularly occurring Pacific Wren. Examples from this season, both representing county firsts, included one at Pine Gulch Creek, *Marin* 12 Nov (v.r. Erik Enbody) and another at Putah Creek, *Yolo* 20 Nov (JLD, WEH, Dan Tankersley, ph. RbF, m.ob.). An **Arctic Warbler** descended on FI. 28 Sep (DJM, †KNN, †JTz, ph. Elizabeth Ames et al.), establishing the second record for the island and the fourth for the Region. Most of our Region's Gray-cheeked Thrushes have been on FI. Another was added to the impressive tally out there, which now stands at 15, when one made it to the island 4 Oct (ph. DJM, Lukas Musher, †KNN, †JTz).

## THRASHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

A Gray Catbird was at Bodega Dunes S.P., *Sonoma* 1–4 Oct (RAR, DFr, m.ob.), and *Sutter*'s first was at Bobelaine Sanctuary 19–20 Oct (JCS, JLa, JSL, BED). Our only Brown Thrasher provided *Sacramento* with its third record 3 Oct (ph. MaS, Stan Wright). This bird was at the same location (Stone Lakes N.W.R.) where one was banded in summer 2008. The most noteworthy thrasher report was of a well-described Bendire's Thrasher at Cidago Canyon, *Mono* 24 Aug (†ADeM). This bird provided *Mono* its second record and is one of no more than 10 for the Region. The tendency of this species to wander after breeding is well documented, with six records from FI. and reports from the C.V. and coastal locations in both n. and s. California. *Marin* Red-throated Pipits were at Point Reyes 4 Oct (RS) and Abbots



Lagoon 12 Oct (Jeff Miller); another was at Mad River C.P., *Humboldt* 8 Oct (KI). Three Bohemian Waxwings were near Likely, *Modoc* 22 Nov (SCR). All our Lapland Longspurs were in coastal or bay counties except for a bird on Wild Horse Ridge (*Napa* and *Solano*) 28 Oct (MBe) and at least 2 along North Vail Rd., *San Joaquin* 15 Nov (TEa, JCS). Chestnut-collared Longspurs were at H.R.S. 6 Oct (RJR), near Abbotts Lagoon trailhead, *Marin* 21-29 Oct (ph. Erik Enbody, DMO), and at Isenberg Crane Reserve, *San Joaquin* 7 Nov (DCo). *Humboldt's* second Smith's Longspur was at Fay Slough W.A. 9 Sep (Paul Roush, DCo, RHw, ph. Meghan Still, KMS).

This was an excellent fall for eastern warblers, with most species reported in above-average numbers. Some subregional editors noted record numbers for some species in their counties, reminding them of the "old days" (1970s). Six of our 8 Ovenbirds were on FI., with singles elsewhere at Point Reyes, *Marin* 29 Sep-1 Oct (JHm) and Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 7 Oct (AJ). We miss Worm-eating Warbler about every other fall, so birds at Pescadero 18-26 Oct (*San Mateo's* third; MKu, ph. m.ob.) and Arcata, *Humboldt* 26 Oct+ (RbF, m.ob.) were welcome treats. Twenty-seven Northern Waterthrushes were all in coastal counties, as were all 31 Black-and-white Warblers. Prothonotary Warblers were at the Carmel River mouth, *Monterey* 29 Aug (ph. RF) and the Rush Creek delta, *Mono* 20 Sep (Ken Wells, Karen Murphy). Forty-four Tennessee Warblers were well above our average (30). The Big Sur River mouth, *Monterey* produced our only Lucy's Warbler 21 Aug (†DR). Virginia's Warbler was one species present in below-average numbers. Singles in *Humboldt* at Arcata Marsh 7 Sep (DFx) and at *Humboldt* Bay n. Spit 19 Sep (KI) were the only ones reported well beyond their breeding range (vs. the average of 6). It is a rare fall when all our Connecticut Warblers are found away from FI. One was on *Humboldt* Bay n. Spit, *Humboldt* 25 Sep (TWL, KMS, TKz, DCo), and another very obliging bird was enjoyed and exhaustively photographed at Point Reyes, *Marin* 28 Sep-1 Oct (ph. Cole Wolf, Matt Bauman, m.ob.). *Humboldt* recorded its fourth and fifth Mourning Warblers: one at Mad River C.P. 3 Sep (†GAB, ph. TKz, ph. KGR, m.ob.), the other at Arcata Marsh 9 Sep (Casey Ryan, Anji Trujillo). A Hooded Warbler at H.R.S. 26 Sep (RJR) was our only one this season. Fifty-seven American Redstarts included 4 in *Mono*, a new seasonal high for that county. We more than doubled our average for Cape May Warblers, with 5 birds: singles on FI. 7-8 Sep (ph. DJM, JTz, Elizabeth Ames, Jay Wright), at *Humboldt* Bay n.

spit, *Humboldt* 18 Sep (DCo, SMcA, Amber Transou), near Golden Gate Bridge, *S.F.* 18 Sep (Ivan Samuels, JsC, MWE), and likely 2 different birds in *Sonoma* at Owl Canyon 26 Sep (ph. Scott Tracey) and at the entrance to Bodega Bay Marine Lab 30 Sep-2 Oct (DN, ph. ScC, m.ob.). *Santa Cruz* set a new seasonal record with 5 Northern Parulas, contributing nearly half our total of 12 (vs. an average of 7). *Sacramento* accounted for both the inland county parula reports, with birds at C.R.P. 11 Aug (JTr) and near Freeport 3 Sep (vt. CCo). Among 26 Magnolia Warblers, the only one in a non-coastal county was at Lee Vining, *Mono* 15 Oct (Sally Miller). Single, different Bay-breasted Warblers were on FI. 12-14 (JTz, MtB, DJM) & 18 Sep (PRBO); one at Babel Slough 19 Sep (ph. TEa) was *Yolo's* first and only the third for the C.V. Eleven Blackburnian Warblers included 2 each in *Humboldt*, *Marin*, *S.F.*, and *Monterey*, and 3 on FI. We received reports of 51 Chestnut-sided Warblers compared to an average of 39, and *Santa Cruz* (with 8) nearly doubled its ten-year average. The 86 Blackpoll Warblers this season was our highest total in more than a decade. Eleven Black-throated Blue Warblers was about average, as was our Palm Warbler total of 142. Notable among the Palm Warblers was *Placer's* first at Rocklin 28 Oct (†SCR). In a possible first for this column, a Yellow-throated Warbler on FI. was first found and identified via webcam by an observer in Louisiana 14-15 Sep (MtB, JTz et al.). More conventional means produced Yellow-throated Warblers at Ferry Park, *S.F.* 13 Sep+ (likely returning from last year; Noah Arthur, m.ob.), along the Eel River, *Humboldt* 20 Oct (Meghan Still, RHw, DCo, MWA), and near Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 21 Oct (†Virginia Marshall). Prairie Warblers were sparsely reported, with a total of 5, less than half our average. Black-throated Green Warblers were on FI. 4 (DJM, Maggie MacNeil, JTz) & 13 Oct (PRBO), and another was at Point Reyes, *Marin* 22-23 Oct (ph. Mark Butler). Our only Canada Warbler was at Arcata, *Humboldt* 25-26 Oct (†John Oliver). Last, but certainly not least, a Painted Redstart was at Point Reyes 12-14 Nov (DSg, ph. AWgh, m.ob.), providing the tenth Regional record and the fourth for *Marin*.

### SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Among our 10 Green-tailed Towhees, the 3 or 4 found along Blue Ridge Rd. 9 Sep-13 Nov were unexpected for *Napa* (RMu, CLo, JLv, RLCL, MBe, JSL). The season's only American Tree Sparrow was along the ne. shore of Mono Lake, *Mono* 14 Nov (CHo). Clay-colored Sparrows were plentiful (82 vs. an average of 63), with more than 20 in *Santa*

*Cruz* setting a new county record. However, the season's star *Spizella* was a **Field Sparrow** at Point Reyes 3-5 Nov (KH, ph. Len Blumin, ph. JM, m.ob.). That bird was *Marin's* first, the Region's fifth, and Rich Stallcup's last county bird. Black-throated Sparrows were on FI. 6 Sep (PRBO), at Antonelli Pond, *Santa Cruz* 8 Sep (SGe et al.), along Usal Rd., *Mendocino* 24 Sep (CEV, KHv, GEC), and at Rodeo Lagoon, *Marin* 15 Oct (†LaG, Jeff Fairclough). Lark Buntings were reported from *Mono*, *S.F.*, FI, *Marin*, and *Kings*, but the flock of 20 at Kneeland Airport, *Humboldt* 3 Oct (TWL) may have been the largest single flock ever recorded in the Region. Lark Buntings are known to be somewhat gregarious in migration, and double-digit flocks have been recorded in *s. California* on occasion (numbering into the hundreds in *San Bernardino* in winter 1951-1952; *Field Notes* 6: 33, 210, 263). However, nearly all our reports are of singles, with the previous flock record being 17 in *Stanislaus* May 1999 (*Central Valley Bird Club Bulletin* 2: 33). A Nelson's Sparrow was at Moonglow Dairy, *Monterey* 29 Nov (ph. Paul Fenwick). Reports of Swamp Sparrows in fall and winter appear to be increasing, and this season's total of 94 is a new record, due in part to at least 35 birds at Giacomini Wetlands, *Marin* 14 Nov (JCS, TEa). Five Harris's Sparrows included a *Yolo* bird returning for its second year at Davis 26 Oct+ (Chris Dunford, m.ob.) and *Stanislaus's* second near Oakdale 22-25 Nov (ph. John Harris). A **Little Bunting** 14 Nov (†JTz, †Lukas Musher) provided FI.'s second record and California's third.

Seven Summer Tanagers was right on our average. Our only Scarlet Tanager was at Laguna Grande Park, *Monterey* 13 Oct (L&C Rose, Mike Stake, ph. DR et al.). *Santa Cruz* accounted for 11 of our 28 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, setting yet another seasonal county record. Blue Grosbeaks were notable on FI. 25 Aug (PRBO), Oasis, *Mono* 15 Sep (PJM), along Stevens Creek, *Santa Clara* 15-18 Sep (ph. PLD, MMR et al.), and in *S.F.* 21 Sep (JsC, m.ob.). Eighteen Indigo Buntings set a new fall high for the Region. We are usually lucky to score more than one Painted Bunting, so 3 was an impressive total, with singles on FI. 9 (Elizabeth Ames, DJM, Lukas Musher, Jay Wright) & 18 Sep (PRBO) and another visiting a *S.F.* feeder 27-29 Sep (ph. Jason McVay). Dickcissels were on FI. 17 Sep (PRBO), at Coyote Point, *San Mateo* 18 Sep (RSTh), and at Fort Mason, *S.F.* 1 Oct (ph. David Assman, m.ob.). Twenty-three Bobolinks was our highest fall total in a dozen years. Our only Rusty Blackbird was on FI. 14-18 Nov (ph. Lukas Musher, Maggie MacNeil, ph. JTz et al.). Our 14 Orchard Orioles included one that rewarded county bird-



ers by crossing Putah Creek between Yolo and Solano 11-15 Sep (ph. TEa, SCH, m.ob.), providing Solano with its first record. Four of our 6 Baltimore Orioles were on Fl. 11 Sep-4 Oct. Twenty Pine Grosbeaks in Golden Trout Wilderness Area, Tulare 7 Nov (SDS, TKz) were at the s. end of the species' range.

This fall saw a remarkable continent-wide irruption of boreal seed-eating species. In California, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Red Crossbills, and Pine Siskins were all unusually abundant and widespread (more on this in a winter report S.A. box). It can be difficult to determine the source of birds involved in these irruptions for most species. However, the distinctive calls of different Types of Red Crossbills can be useful, and this season observers in Marin, Monterey, Sacramento, Santa Cruz, and Fl. all noted that Type 3 flight calls were heard. Type 3 Red Crossbills breed primarily in the Pacific Northwest.

**Corrigenda:** In the fall 2011 column, we mistakenly reported there was one White-winged Dove in Humboldt 22 Sep when there were 2, that there were 10 Tropical Kingbirds there during the period when there were 13, and that there was one Eastern Phoebe there when the only one reported could not be confirmed. In addition, the Northern Wheatear in S.F. and Painted Bunting in Mono were not the first records for those counties but the second.

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## Southern California



**Guy McCaskie**  
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The fall was even warmer than normal and quite dry, apart from some interior thunderstorms; this changed in November, when a series of Pacific troughs brought cooler-than-average temperatures and some precipitation. Mid-October's Tropical Storm Paul, off the Pacific Coast of Baja California, brought little in the way of weather to our Region but did bring a couple of dozen Magnificent Frigatebirds to San Diego and one farther north.

Movements of some irruptive species, including Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks, were noted widely in the lowlands this fall. The fall also produced some exceptional rarities, including California's first Gray Hawk and second

Wood Sandpiper, two White Ibis sightings (possibly involving the same bird), and only the second Varied Bunting in California since 1914. A photographed Swainson's Thrush of the Olive-backed subspecies group provided the best documentation to date in the Region for what may well prove to be a full species.

**Abbreviations:** B.S. (Butterbrecht Spring at the s. end of the Sierra Nevada above Cantil, e. Kern); C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); F.C.R. (Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley N.P., Inyo); G.H.P. (Galileo Hill Park, extreme e. Kern); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); P.P. (Piute Ponds on Edwards A.F.B., ne. Los Angeles); S.C.R.E. (Santa Clara River estuary near Ven-