

known to be particularly vulnerable. New species are regularly added to the Region's avifauna, and some establish breeding populations with varying levels of fanfare. The invasion of Barred Owls through the Region has increased the complexity of Spotted Owl conservation and management efforts. Lastly, non-consumptive recreation by humans has become a well-documented source of disturbance to the wilds around us. Outdoor recreation has increased by an estimated 10% per year over the past several decades. Rock climbers disturb cliff-nesting birds, beach-walkers or their dogs flush roosting shorebirds, and boaters (with or without motors) push waterbirds from feeding or resting areas. The list of human disturbances goes on, but the ecological effects are not well understood in many cases.

The past ten years have witnessed a surge in avian conservation planning and action. Bird conservation initiatives (e.g., Partners in Flight, the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbirds for the Americas) have emerged to create conservation strategies increasingly

designed at the scale of BCRs. These initiatives are joining forces and, by integrating existing waterfowl management plans, are working on comprehensive "all-bird" strategies and partnerships (NABCI) with which to coordinate bird conservation and even seek expanded conservation funding. Bird conservation has become more efficient, more effective, and has a higher profile. Conservation strategies focus on a wide range of endeavors: identification of Important Bird Areas, ecoregional planning to prioritize important areas, purchase or easement of important habitats, development of best management practices, education, outreach, development of partnerships (including international efforts to address Neotropical migrants), and identification of funding opportunities. Certain larger issues—human population growth, global warming, pollution, aspects of forest management, and invasion of exotic species—require more attention and policy involvement due to the greater political and economic complexities associated with these issues.

Middle Pacific Coast

Last summer we lamented a lack of notable rarities; this summer we celebrate a surfeit of them. Perhaps the most unexpected was the state's first Common Eider, although several surprising species were reported. The amazing influx of warblers, many from the Southeast, which began in spring, continued unabated into summer, not just along the coast but also well inland in places like *Mono*. Suddjian reported that it "was one of the more interesting summers on record for *Santa Cruz*," and that assessment could be applied to the Region as a whole.

Abbreviations: B.S.O.L. (Big Sur Ornithology Lab); C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.R.P. (Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.V. (Central Valley); FI. (Southeast Farallon I., *San Francisco*); O.S.P. (Open Space Preserve); P.R.B.O. (Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory); S.F. (San Francisco). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are not published. Documentation for C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933. Birds banded on FI. should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory (P.R.B.O.) and those banded at Big Sur R. mouth to the Big Sur Ornithology Lab (B.S.O.L.) of the Ventana Wilderness Society.

GREBES THROUGH DUCKS

At least 13 ad. and 2 juv. Clark's Grebes at San Pablo Res. 6 Jun (RSa) represented a first nesting for *Contra Costa*, where breeding by Western Grebes remains unconfirmed. We have much to learn about *Aechmophorus* grebe ecology and behavior in the Region. The only storm-petrels reported included one Wilson's, 3 Fork-tailed, and 128 Ashy near Cordell Bank, *Marin* 24 Jul (RS, SBT et al.). Large numbers of American White Pelicans were reported from the Region starting in early Jun. Breeding Brandt's Cormorants had a banner year on the Coast Guard Jetty,



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Monterey, where 208 active nests, many of which contained 3 young, were counted 25 Jun (DLSH).

A Little Blue Heron returned briefly to Salt Pond A4 n. of Sunnyvale, *Santa Clara* 21 Jun–1 Jul (Kira Od, *fide* LCh, Roland Kenner, Pat Kenny, Dave Weber). A belated report of a breeding-plumaged Glossy Ibis in a nesting colony of 5000 White-faced Ibis at Sutter N.W.R., *Sutter* 29 May (ph., †Michael Peters) was intriguing, given the possibility of breeding in such circumstances; this provided only the 2nd record for the Region. Two wandering White-faced Ibis at the Lake of the Pines S.T.P. 20 Jul (Dennis Biladeau, Rudy Darling) were thought to be the first for the w. slope of the Sierra Nevada in *Nevada*. Coastal birds included 5 at the Napa–Sonoma Marshes W.A., *Napa* 26 Jun (MBe), one at Bodega Harbor, *Sonoma* 7 Jul (AWgh), and another at Zmudowski pond, *Monterey* 10 Jul (JB, NJM).

We received three unusual summer reports of the recently split Cackling Goose: one lingered in *Santa Cruz*, *Santa Cruz* through 1 Jun (SGe), *Santa Clara*'s first summer record was at the Coyote Creek G.C. 6 Jun (MJM), and one was at Roberts L., *Monterey* 21 Jun (RC). A male Eurasian Wigeon with an injured right wing on Salt Pond A2W 5 Jun (ph., †WGB) was likely the same individual that summered along nearby Guadalupe Slough last year in *Santa Clara*. *Napa*'s first brood of Blue-winged Teal, reported last season, survived to at least 26 Jun (MBe). A Cinnamon Teal at the Hayfork S.T.P. 8 Jul (JLx) was only *Trinity*'s 5th. A female Northern Shoveler with one small young in the Napa flood plain 6 Jun confirmed the 3rd instance of breeding in *Napa* (MBe). Redheads nested at Hayward R.S., with young seen 4–16 Jul (m.ob.); this is the first breeding in *Alameda* since 1916. Multiple broods of Lesser Scaup were again observed at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* (4 Jul; RJR) and Sunnyvale W.T.P., *Santa Clara* (ph. WGB, Peggy Don; 19–25 Jul). Completely unexpected, especially in summer, was an ad. or near-ad. male **Common Eider** in Crescent City, *Del Norte* 5–18 Jul (ph. Chuck Vaughn, ph., †m.ob.). This first state record was of the orange-billed Pacific race *v-nigra* and represents the first documented record s. of British Columbia, although another (or the same?) male was found 3 Aug+ at Port Angeles, Washington, for that state's first record. A summering male White-winged Scoter joined the resident Harlequin Duck at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo* 27 Jun–23 Jul (RSTh, AME). Summer Long-tailed Ducks were at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* 7–31 Jul (AWgh, RS, BBu), Moss Landing, *Monterey* 5–24 Jul (YG et al.), and Crowley L., *Mono* 29 Jul (AWgh). A Hooded Merganser at Foster City 3 Jun (RSTh) furnished only the 2nd summer record for *San Mateo*, and a Red-breasted

Merganser at *Trinity* L. 8 Jul (JLx) constituted the first summer record for *Trinity* (and only the 6th ever).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Two pairs of Ospreys nesting at Loch Lomond, *Santa Cruz* 27 Jul (Chris Berry) constituted the only modern nesting confirmations for the *Santa Cruz* Mts. area away from the established site at San Vicente Cr. near Davenport, which was also active this year. Two ads. with 2 juvs. off Black Road above Los Gatos 8 Jul were thought to have nested nearby (*fide* KPa), although nesting is still unconfirmed in *Santa Clara*. A White-tailed Kite at Lower Roberts Res. 9 Jul was one of very few records for *Modoc* (JLx). Ad. and juv. Swainson's Hawks in McArthur 13 Jul represented the first probable breeding in *Shasta* in over 20 years (B&CY). A **Crested Caracara** frequented a deer carcass e. of Valley Ford, *Sonoma* 17 Jul–1 Aug (DN, LLu, CLu, †RAR, ph. AWgh, m.ob.); the status of this species in the state is still being debated by the C.B.R.C., but this was a first county record, whatever its origin.

At least one Yellow Rail was still being heard near the town of Mt. Shasta, *Siskiyou* 22 Jun (Janet & Art Cupples), but no reports were received of this species in *Modoc* this year. An imm. Virginia Rail in Diamond Valley 23 Jul constituted the first breeding record for *Alpine* (ph. TEa). A pair of Snowy Plovers with 3 precocial young at the Modesto S.T.P. 30 Jul (JHG) was only the 2nd breeding confirmation for *Stanislaus*, the last being in the 1980s. Two pairs of American Avocets bred again at Humboldt Bay N.W.R., *Humboldt*, with the young successfully avoiding raven predation until at least 13 Jun (DFx, JCP et al.). Three nesting pairs at the Mud Lake S.T.P. represented the first breeding for *Alpine* (EP, m.ob.). Early returning Lesser Yellowlegs included one at Laguna Cr. Marsh 24 Jun (two weeks earlier than *Santa Cruz*'s previous earliest fall record; DLSu) and another 8 km w. of Corning 30 Jun (one of only a few from *Tehama*; JLx). Only 2 Solitary Sandpipers were reported: one 24–25 Jul at American R. Parkway, *Sacramento* (Dave Johnson) and another 29 Jul at Crowley L., *Mono* (AWgh).

Three Whimbrels at South Lake Tahoe 20 Jul (TS) were the first documented in *El Dorado*. Long-billed Curlews were confirmed breeding in *Shasta* for the first time, with distraction displays observed near McArthur 12 Jun (B&CY), and young birds in the same area 17 Jun (Red & Nancy Modeen). A Bar-tailed Godwit was reported from Bodega Harbor, *Sonoma* on the record-early date of 6 Jul (†RyT). A record-high count of 352 Surfbirds was obtained at the same location 29 Jul (RS); most of the previous triple-digit totals of this species have been from spring, although in recent years, large numbers of al-

ternate-plumaged ad. Surfbirds have been staging on mudflats at this location. Once again, mid-summer Red Knots were found on s. San Francisco Bay in Alviso, *Santa Clara*, with 2 found 1 Jul (RWR, FV). Five ad. (14–29 Jul) and 10 juv. (22–31 Jul) Semipalmated Sandpipers were detected, with a mix of inland and coastal birds. Ten Baird's Sandpipers, all coastal, were found 13–31 Jul. Only 2 Pectoral Sandpipers were located: an unseasonal bird near Kettleman City, *Kings* 24 Jun (JSy) and an ad. at Moonglow Dairy, *Monterey* 25–28 Jul (RbF, ADEm). Four Stilt Sandpiper reports were equally split between inland and coastal counties 14–24 Jul. Three different Ruffs, 2 males and a female, graced New Chicago Marsh in Alviso, *Santa Clara* 11 Jul+ (AME, Dean Manley, ph. WGB, ph. MMR, m.ob.); these are likely all returning birds. Two hundred Short-billed Dowitchers at the Davis Wetlands 11 Jul (JKn) tied the previous Yolo high count and formed an impressive concentration for any inland location in the Region.

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

A very high number for so early in the fall migration, 900 Sabine's Gulls were observed on six 16–24 km aerial transects, each about 150 meters wide, from Monterey Bay to Big Sur, *Monterey* 29 Jul (JND, Laird Henkel, Brad Keitt). Extrapolation indicates that there were thousands off the *Monterey* coast on that date. All 13 Franklin's Gulls reported occurred in Jun. A Laughing Gull at Pescadero Marsh 10 Jun was the 3rd for *San Mateo* (BDP, AWgh, J. R. Blair) and a well-documented, first-summer Little Gull present at the same location 8 Jun–6 Jul (RSTh, m.ob.) represented a county 2nd. There are now approximately 20 Little Gull records for the Region. A very worn, first-summer Mew Gull at Eureka, *Humboldt* 6–31 July+ (MWa et al.) was one of only a few well-documented summer records of this species in the Region. The San Joaquin Valley supports the only documented inland breeding locations of the endangered California Least Tern. From 1999 to 2003, there was a colony of one to 3 pairs near Kettleman City, *Kings*, and during the past two years, breeding has also occurred in *Kings* approximately 25 km se. of this location, where two pairs produced at least 2 young this season (RH, JSy). Elsewhere in the Region, inland Least Terns remain quite rare, and an ad. at Buckhorn Res. 15 Jun (†TDM) was a first for *Lassen*. The only large breeding colony of Least Terns in the Region occurs on e.-cen. San Francisco Bay in *Alameda*. Post-breeding Least Terns stage, to varying degrees, in south San Francisco Bay, where a record 276 were found on *Santa Clara* salt ponds 28 Jul (SCR et al.). There was good news from the Salinas R. mouth, *Monterey* Caspian Tern colony, where 221 fledglings among over 450 ads. 17 Jul

SA In what may be a grim harbinger, the University of California—Davis Center for Vectorborne Diseases reported that 128 out of 251 dead birds from California tested in July 2004 tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). While southern California continues to be hardest hit (with more than 94% of the 1229 total cases in 2004), the Region's 51 positive test results were 40% of the 128 positives in Jul. The cases were spread widely among the Region's counties: *Butte* (17 birds), *Shasta* (7 birds), *Glenn* (5), *Santa Clara* (4), *Alameda* (3), *Fresno* (3), *Sacramento* (3), *Humboldt* (1), *Marin* (1), *Mendocino* (1), *Placer* (1), *Solano* (1), *Sonoma* (1), *Stanislaus* (1), *Tehama* (1), and *Tulare* (1). These are the first WNV positive dead bird results from the counties of *Alameda*, *Glenn*, *Humboldt*, *Marin*, *Placer*, *Solano*, *Sonoma*, and *Stanislaus*. Of the 51 birds, corvids are extremely over-represented, with 86% of the cases, as indicated by the following totals: Yellow-billed Magpie (16 cases), Western Scrub-Jay (15), American Crow (9), Common Raven (4), Cooper's Hawk (2), and one case each for Barn Owl, Northern Mockingbird, Brewer's Blackbird, House Finch, and House Sparrow. The high number of magpies affected is of particular concern, given the isolated, relatively small global population of this California endemic.

(DR) was more than twice the previous high for this intermittent colony.

An apparent pair of mostly alternate-plumaged Long-billed Murrelets was well seen and photographed off Salmon Cr. mouth, *Sonoma* 7 Jul (†RyT, ph. Michael Donnellan). This species is now annual in summer and fall in the Region, and this observation adds fuel to the speculation that small numbers of this Asian species may breed in North America. Another was reported without details 15 Jul off *Humboldt*. An alternate-plumaged ad. Horned Puffin was present in the surf at Capitola, *Santa Cruz* 14–15 Jul (Alex Jones, Alison Markiewicz, RgW, †DLSu).

CUCKOOS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

A window-killed Yellow-billed Cuckoo at lower Mill Cr. 22 Jul provided an unexpected mid-summer *Mono* record (Carin Sorisio). A Great Gray Owl 20 Jul was a rare sight on the Yosemite Valley floor, *Mariposa* (Jtz, Rebecca Green). Yet another intensive survey of former Black Swift nest sites in *Santa Cruz* was undertaken during the summer breeding season, and though there were 11 sightings, there was once again no solid evidence of nesting (DLSu, CGE, SGe). A vagrant Chimney Swift, just the 4th for *Santa Cruz*, was at Big Basin Redwoods S.P. 26 Jun (†DLSu). *Humboldt's* female Magnificent Hummingbird made a surprise return to a Eureka feeder 21 Jun and was reportedly present for "several days" (D. Wattenbarger, L. Carro). A male Costa's Hummingbird at a Napa feeder 14–18 Jun furnished a rare *Napa* record (DeH, DvH). An ad. *Selasphorus* hummingbird, presumably an Allen's based on location, was found feeding juvs. 22 Jun at C.R.P., providing just the 2nd nesting confirmation for the C.V. (JTr).

A singing Eastern Wood-Pewee at Putah Cr., *Solano/Yolo* 26–27 Jun would furnish a rare record for the Region if accepted by the C.B.R.C. (AEn, SCH). As usual, early to mid-Jun brought a trickle of Willow Flycatchers to the Region; one near the mouth of Redwood Cr., *Humboldt* 29 Jun was surprisingly late (KI). A singing Least Flycatcher was near Orick, *Humboldt* 21 Jun (KI). A briefly seen Great Crested Flycatcher at C.R.P. 5 Jul

would represent the first Jul record for California and a first for the C.V. if accepted by the C.B.R.C. (JTr, †CCo, †Terry Ronneberg). The vast majority of California records have been in Sep and Oct. Unseasonal *Santa Cruz* flycatchers included a wandering Say's Phoebe at Moore Cr. Preserve 23 Jul (almost six weeks ahead of typical coastal arrival dates; †SGe) and 3 Western Kingbirds on the coast in Jun, the latest of which was near *Santa Cruz* 24 Jun (DLSu). A Western Kingbird at the Redwood Cr. mouth, *Humboldt* 26 Jun was similarly unseasonal (KI). Eastern Kingbirds were at Trinidad Head, *Humboldt* 19 Jun (Michael Morris), Mud Lake S.T.P. 26 Jun (*Alpine's* first; †JLx), and at Blue L., *Lassen* 19 Jul (SAbb, BWb).

VIREOS THROUGH THRUSHES

The unsurpassed spring for vagrant vireos continued deep into summer. White-eyed Vireos, normally very rare in the Region, were at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 3–15 Jun (singing male; †RbF, Pascal Cauchois, †SBT et al.), Big Basin Redwoods S.P. 15 Jun (first for *Santa Cruz*; †DLSu.) and near Bradley, *Monterey* 22 Jun (banded; B.S.O.L.). Singing male Yellow-throated Vireos were at Big Sur R. mouth 3–14 Jun (†RbF, Pascal Cauchois, m.ob.) and near Orick 16–26 Jun (5th for *Humboldt*; KI, m.ob.). Single Philadelphia Vireos were at Big Sur R. mouth 14–15 Jun (MtB, RbF et al.), near Orick 18 Jun (BS), and along the lower Mad R., *Humboldt* 1–3 Jul (KI; ph. RLeV et al.). Prior to this spring, only 2 or 3 spring Philadelphias had ever been detected in the Region away from Great Basin oases, with nearly all California records coming from Sep and Oct. It was a banner spring for Red-eyed Vireos, with no fewer than 8 found coastally 3 Jun–5 Jul. Three inland reports, all on the summer date of 20 Jul, were more noteworthy: 2, including a singing male, were at C.R.P. (JTr, Dave Feliz, Kurt Mithke), and an ad. was banded near Hopland, furnishing a long overdue first for *Mendocino* (CEV, RJK, Becky Eisen, Lars Talleklint).

Three Pinyon Jays at McArthur 12 Jun were surprisingly just the 2nd ever found in *Shasta* and the first in 20 years (B&CY). Bank Swallows have never been confirmed

nesting in *Humboldt*, so a pair thought to be prospecting for nest sites near Fernbridge 16 Jun was an intriguing find (KGR). Apparent Barn Swallow x Cliff Swallow hybrids were well-described from Redwood Shores, *San Mateo* 11 Jul (†RSTh) and Moore Cr. Preserve, *Santa Cruz* 23 Jul (†SGe). Unseasonal Red-breasted Nuthatches included one at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 13 Jun (SRv) and a rare Jul C.V. record at Woodland, *Yolo* 31 Jul (JCS). A belated report of a pair of nesting House Wrens at McKinleyville in May provided a "remarkable" coastal nesting record for *Humboldt* (Jake Houck). A post-breeding dispersant at Natural Bridges S.B. 26 Jun was the earliest such record for *Santa Cruz* (SGe). One of the Region's rarest vagrant songbirds and a first for *Mono*, a Veery was banded at lower Rush Cr., *Mono* 19 Jun (ph. P.R.B.O.). Recently hatched Hermit Thrushes banded in *Sacramento* at Stone Lakes N.W.R. 1 Jul (Stan Wright, Beatrix Treiterer) and C.R.P. 6 Jul (P.R.B.O.) were both thought to have been produced nearby. If so, they represent the first breeding for the C.V. A Varied Thrush at Alviso, *Santa Clara* 16 Jun was an unusually late migrant (Karl Fowler).

MIMIDS THROUGH WARBLERS

Three Gray Catbirds made an impressive summer showing: 28 Jun at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* (RbF, DVP, RyT); 9 Jul at Blue L., *Humboldt* (KI); and 21 Jul at Pescadero (†GrH), a first summer record for *San Mateo*. A Brown Thrasher 21 Jun at Chadbourne Gulch (RLeV) was just the 2nd for *Mendocino*, following the first record this spring; one at Big Basin Redwoods S.P. 22 Jun was *Santa Cruz's* 3rd (†DLSu).

The amazing warbler spring became the amazing warbler summer in the Region, with 23 species reported. Suddjian reports that 11 species of vagrant warblers were found in *Santa Cruz* alone this spring and summer—twice the previous high of six species, and nearly three times the previous 10-year average (3.7 species). The county total of 30 individual vagrant warblers compared to a previous high of nine and was more than six times the previous 10-year average (4.8)!

Among our Region's more common migrants, there were a remarkable 24 Northern Parulas (including 2 or 3 at C.R.P. 24 Jul; JTr), 11 Chestnut-sided Warblers, 2 Blackpolls, 11 Black-and-white Warblers (5 in *Monterey*), 16 American Redstarts, and 7 Ovenbirds (notably, one 12 Jul along lower Lee Vining Cr., *Mono*; Leah Culp). Many of these birds were present for substantial periods, in suitable nesting habitat, and we can only speculate on how many actually bred. One pair of parulas was confirmed nesting at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 13 Jun, with eggs hatching 1 Jul, but the young were presumably predated, as all were gone by 5 Jul (RbF, SBT, LTer, MtB, m.ob.). A Cape May Warbler

SA With all the superlatives used up in reporting the rest of the Region's warbler invasion, how do we describe the unprecedented 23 Hooded Warblers this season? The last major invasion of Hoodies was May–Jul 1992, when more than 80 birds were reported in California, including 29 in the Region, 13 in Jun–Jul (*American Birds* 46: 478; 1176). This summer, breaking that 12-year-old mark, Hoodies hit the coast in a big way, with (from south to north) 5 in *Monterey*, 10 in *Santa Cruz*, 5 in *San Mateo*, and 2 in *San Francisco*; this is in addition to the 6 Hoodies reported from May. Contrast this to recent history: *Santa Cruz*, for example, previously had only six total spring/summer records, and the 1994–2003 average was just 0.3 per year (DLSu). Birders eagerly anticipated breeding with this level of activity, and they were not disappointed. At the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey*, which had a total of 6 Hoodies this spring/summer (including a male banded 28 May, reported last season), Fowler found a just-fledged juv. on 6 Aug that confirmed the first successful nesting of this species in the Region. After intriguing sightings all summer, breeding was also confirmed in *Santa Cruz* at the Soquel Demonstration S.F. 10 Aug, when a female was seen feeding a begging fledgling (†SGe, DLSu). Three singing males along Gazos Cr., *San Mateo* 6–27 Jun (RSTh, DSG, m.ob.) and a female at Gazos Cr. mouth 17 Jun (RSTh) led to speculation that there might also be breeding in *San Mateo*, but this was not confirmed. Males were also at Mt. Davidson, S.F., 1 Jun and 18 Jun (both David Armstrong). Finally, a singing male was inland at C.R.P. 17 Jun (JTr).

was at Fl. 30 Jun (P.R.B.O.). Bay-breasted Warblers were at Elk Head, *Humboldt* 19 Jun (KI) and Fl. 21 Jun (P.R.B.O.). An astounding 4 Prothonotary Warblers included singles at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 9–15 & 12–15 Jun (RbF, SRv, SBT, LTer) and Carbonera Cr., *Santa Cruz* 12 Jun (DLSu); even more unexpected was a singing male 4 Jun at Adobe Ranch, *Mono* (†KNN). A Northern Waterthrush 7 Jun at Rancho Del Oso (CGE) was just the 4th spring record for *Santa Cruz* and the first since 1987. A well-described Mourning Warbler was at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 5–6 Jun (†RbF, †SBT, TAm); one was reported without details from Fl. 29 Jun–8 Jul. A Canada Warbler 8 Jun at Big Sur R. mouth (Jeremy Bird, †RbF) was the first-ever spring record for *Monterey*; one 19 Jun near Trinidad (KI) was only the 2nd spring record for *Humboldt*. Black-throated Green Warblers were at Fl. 19 Jun (P.R.B.O.) and Pescadero, *San Mateo* 20 Jun (RSTh).

While most of the warbler action was along the coast, several species were also found inland. Chestnut-sided Warblers in the Sierra Nevada included males 11–12 Jun at Carson R. Road, *Alpine* (ph. TEa, Bill Hart) and 22 Jun at Carman Valley, a first summer record (and only the 2nd overall record) for *Sierra* (JMMc, Jim Steele, Doug Perez, Mat Cool). Lower Rush Cr., *Mono*, had a spate of rarities, including a Magnolia Warbler 2–18 Jul (P.R.B.O.) and a Blackburnian Warbler 19 Jun (ph. Kelly Grady, P.R.B.O.). On the coast, *Humboldt* had a Magnolia Warbler at McKinleyville 24–26 Jun (KGR, MMo, KI) and a Blackburnian Warbler at the Redwood Cr. estuary 18 Jun (KI). A Magnolia was also at Fl. 19 Jun (P.R.B.O.). Three Yellow-throated Warblers included one singing 8 Jun at Lassen Volcanic N.P., a first for *Shasta* (†John Mariani); one 8 Jun with no details from the Little R. estuary, *Humboldt*; and one singing at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 13 Jun (†SBT, LTer, †MtB, †RbF).

The vagrants were not just from the east and southeast. A Grace's Warbler, found in mid-May at Chimney Peak Campground, *Tulare*, stayed through 29 Jun (ph. Bob Steele, RAB). Nor was the warbler action limited to vagrants, as there were remarkable records of our more common species as well. Yellow-rumped Warblers nesting w. of Castle Rock S.P. and at Long Ridge O.S.P. in the Santa

Cruz Mts. provided the first confirmed breeding records for *San Mateo* (DLSu). Nesting was also confirmed in *Napa* at Robert Louis Stevenson S.P. and near Bateman (MBe); the only previous *Napa* nesting records are from 1930, 1932, and 1972. MacGillivray's Warblers were confirmed nesting 15 Jul at Upper Van Ness Cr. (MBe), the first *Napa* breeding record since 1949. A female Townsend's Warbler 19 Jun–19 Jul at Big Basin Redwoods S.P., *Santa Cruz* (DLSu) is apparently only the 2nd confirmed summering record for this species in California (see N.A.S.F.N. 50: 994).

TANAGERS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

Five Summer Tanagers were along the coast, and 2 were found 24 & 31 Jul, respectively, at C.R.P. (JTr, AEn, Irene Torres). A first-year male Scarlet Tanager 11 Jun at Mt. San Bruno C.P. was a first for *San Mateo* (ph. Herb Brandt, Clo, JM). Two family groups of Western Tanagers at Long Ridge O.S.P. 5 Jul confirmed the first known breeding in *San Mateo* (DLSu).

A Clay-colored Sparrow along lower Wilson Cr., *Mono* 10 Jun (River Gates) was a first for the Mono Basin. Just one Black-chinned Sparrow was reported: 6 Jun at Loma Prieta, *Santa Clara* (Tom Olson). None was found in *Santa Cruz* despite coverage of known nesting areas (fide DLSu). A Grasshopper Sparrow 22 Jun at Carman Valley was a first for *Sierra* (Jim Steele, JMMc, Doug Perez, Mat Cool); an ad. with 3 juvs. near Sheridan may be the first confirmed breeding for *Placer* (CIH). An injured White-throated Sparrow in San Jose, *Santa Clara* was last seen 28 Jun (Laurie West Roberts); another White-throated at Fl. 23–24 Jun was completely unexpected (P.R.B.O.). A well-described Dark-eyed Junco showing the characteristics of the Slate-colored Junco group was reported 24 Jun from Natural Bridges S.B. (†SGe), the first in *Santa Cruz* outside of fall or winter.

A whopping 45 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported—mostly from the coast, but including single records from *Mono*, *Nevada*, *Siskiyou*, *Tulare*, and *Tuolumne*—some 50% higher than our record of 30 reports of this "rare" species in the summers of 2000 and 2001. We have questioned in these pages (N.A.B. 54: 421) whether the increased reports were the result of range expansion or of better reporting; with steadily rising numbers over

the years, it seems range expansion may be the answer. Indigo Buntings were also widely reported, including a male 11–16 Jun at Crystal Basin (TEa, TS) that was probably the same bird found there 17 May (*El Dorado's* first; SAG). A Red Crossbill at Fl. 29 Jul–2 Aug provided the earliest fall record there, with the previous early record being 8 Sep (P.R.B.O.). **Observers:** Steve Abbott, Tim Amaral, Robert A. Barnes, Murray Berner, William G. Bousman (*Santa Clara*), Matthew Brady, June Buntin, Betty Burrige, Rita Caratello, Les Chibana, Luke W. Cole (*Kings*), Chris Conard (*Sacramento & Yolo*), Jeff N. Davis, Al DeMartini, Bruce E. Deuel (n. C.V. counties), Todd Easterla, Mark W. Eaton (*San Francisco*), Alan M. Eisner, Ray Ekstrom (*Siskiyou*), Chris G. Emmons, Andrew Engilis, David Fix (*Humboldt*), Rob Fowler, James H. Gain (*Stanislaus*), Steve Gerow, Yohn Gideon, Steven A. Glover (*Contra Costa*), David Hamilton, Denise Hamilton, Steve C. Hampton, Rob Hansen, Garth Harwood, Cliff Hawley, John E. Hunter (*Trinity*), Ken Irwin, Robert J. Keiffer (*Mendocino*), Jon King, Robin L. C. Leong (*Napa & Solano*), Ron LeValley, Cindy Lieurance, Leslie Lieurance, Jim Lomax, Calvin Lou, Michael J. Mammoser, Timothy D. Manolis (*Lassen*), J. Mac McCormick (*Plumas & Sierra*), Nancy J. McMahon, Peter J. Metropulos (*San Mateo*), Joe Morlan, Mark Morrisette, Dan Nelson, Kristie N. Nelson (*Mono & Fl.*), Ed Pandolfino (*Placer*), Kathy Parker, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Jude C. Power (*Humboldt*), Robert W. Reiling, Robert J. Richmond (*Alameda*), Don Roberson (*Monterey*), Michael M. Rogers, Kerry G. Ross, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Steve Rovell, Ruth A. Rudesill (*Sonoma*), Barry Sauppe, Rusty Scalf (RSa), Jeff Seay, Debra L. Shearwater, Dan Singer, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling (*Alpine, Calaveras, & Modoc*), Tim Steurer (*El Dorado & Amador*), David L. Suddjian (*Santa Cruz*), Linda Terrill, Ryan Terrill, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Jim Tietz, John Trochet, Steve Umland (*Tuolumne*), Kent Van Vuren (*Merced & San Benito*), Chuck E. Vaughn, David Vander Pluym (*Mariposa*), Frank Vanslager, Matt Wachs, Bruce Webb, Jerry R. White (*Lake*), Alan Wight, Brian Williams (*Nevada*), Roger Wolfe, Bob & Carol Yutzy (*Shasta*). Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are very much appreciated. 🐦

State of the Region

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The Middle Pacific Coast Region encompasses a wide variety of bird habitats and ecogeographic regions ranging from Great Basin deserts to coniferous forests to annual grasslands and oak savanna to coastal estuaries and sandy beaches. With this variety comes a host of bird conservation challenges. The region has experienced great historical transformations of natural landscapes into agricultural/silvicultural as well as urban/suburban landscapes that have not only reduced important habitats for many species, but that have also created the conditions for new threats that are currently impacting bird populations. The issues that confront current conservation and land management programs are summarized here in two sections: Historical Actions and Current Conservation Challenges. These are by no means exhaustive lists but are major and are representative of the whole range of issues.

The legacy of past environmental degradation is not just the new conservation challenges that have arisen but also a host of conservation initiatives and laws implemented to stop and reverse the destructive trends. These include environmental protections, impact avoidance measures, and habitat restoration efforts through a national and state regulatory framework that includes but is not limited to: the National Environmental Policy Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act, various wetland protection regulations, and the federal and state Endangered Species Acts. Among those factors that have provided traction in the efforts to restore some of the state's lost natural heritage are the California Partners in Flight initiatives and habitat-based bird conservation plans, four Joint Ventures that include the Region (<birdhabitat.fws.gov/navmp/nort.htm>), and lawsuits forcing government agencies to adhere to sound natural resource extraction practices. Looming ahead, however, are potential threats to these laws, funded programs, policies, and regulations by unscrupulous federal and state governmental employees and lawmakers. Of profound significance for bird conservation is the recent, increasing disregard in some sectors of government for scientifically based policy and management recommendations.

Historical Actions

• Destruction and fragmentation of riparian habitat in the Central Valley

During the past 170 years, the original hydrologic systems and well over 90% of the riparian habitat has been destroyed in the Central Valley, with most of the remaining habitat in degraded condition (Katibah 1984). This has directly resulted in the severe reduction in the populations of many riparian-obligate birds. Representative species affected include Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Yellow-breasted Chat.

• Destruction of freshwater wetlands in the Central Valley

During the past 170 years, most of the wetlands in the Central Valley have been destroyed (Frayer et al. 1989), ultimately through the development of the water transport and flood control system that lead to the damming of most river systems, the erection of extensive levee and stream bank stabilization systems, and the rerouting of water to the agricultural (mostly cotton) fields in the southern San Joaquin Valley and the southern California metropolitan areas. This new water management infrastructure served as a catalyst for the increased development of agriculture and urban centers throughout the valley. Representative species negatively affected include Least Bittern and Black Tern.

• Destruction of wetlands in the San Francisco Bay estuary

During the past 170 years, approximately 85% of the wetlands bordering the San Francisco Bay Estuary have been filled to support urban growth or transformed to artificial, diked ponds for the development of the salt industry (Marshall and Dedrick 1994). Representative taxa negatively affected include Black Rail, and the Alameda, Samuel's, and Suisun subspecies of Song Sparrow.

• Logging

The extensive historical logging of the old-growth coniferous forests in the north coast ranges and the Sierra Nevada has led to the reduction of bird populations that reach their highest densities in these forests. It has also created a mosaic of even-aged stands of various successional stages, including vast brushlands where soil loss has been exacerbated by unsustainable clear-cutting logging practices. These silvicultural landscapes are more susceptible to catastrophic wildfire than the natural landscape of old-growth forests. Representative species negatively affected include Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Vaux's Swift.

• Past wildfire suppression efforts

The suppression of wildfire throughout the forested regions has created an "unnatural" fire regime. Because of the heavy accumulation of vegetation, wildfires are fueled to catastrophic levels that have already completely destroyed vast acreages of forests. Representative species negatively affected include Pileated Woodpecker and Hermit Warbler.

• Agriculture

The development of intensive agriculture in the Central Valley as well as in other inland valleys includ-

ing Napa, Salinas, and Sonoma, has greatly reduced or eliminated native habitats in these agricultural landscapes. Although many species of birds have adapted and even flourished in some agricultural areas (especially in flooded rice pastures and alfalfa fields), many others have not. Representative species negatively affected include Le Conte's Thrasher and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Current Conservation Challenges

• Logging

In addition to the direct effects from the loss of habitat described above, the alteration of the forest structure from logging practices has enabled Barred Owls to colonize California within the past two decades. Barred Owls have been documented to eat, harass, and displace the threatened Spotted Owl. Logging practices may also include the removal of large snags that are not currently protected as valuable wildlife habitat, especially for nesting Vaux's Swift.

• Livestock overgrazing

Livestock overgrazing has increased soil erosion, degraded springs, initiated the transformation of wet montane meadows to dry scrubland, severely impacted recruitment of blue oaks, and has denuded lower vegetation strata in riparian habitats. Representative species negatively affected include Willow Flycatcher and Song Sparrow.

• Sudden Oak Death Syndrome

This is a relatively new threat that has already killed many thousands of hardwood trees in the central coast region of California. It is not known if this disease will spread further and how much of an impact it will ultimately have on the state's forests. Representative species negatively affected include Hutton's Vireo and Oak Titmouse.

• West Nile virus

This disease first entered northern California in 2004, and its future impact on bird populations is unknown. However, elsewhere in the country, crows, jays and magpies have been especially affected by West Nile virus, so there is great concern over its impact on bird populations, particularly on the state's two endemic bird species, both corvids: Yellow-billed Magpie and Island Scrub-Jay.

• Fire in sagebrush ecosystems

Degradation of the sagebrush steppe ecosystem in northeastern California by overgrazing of cattle, invasive species of plants that increase fire rates and effects, the fuel buildup in old stands of sagebrush and mountain mahogany, and the current six-year long drought has created conditions for catastrophic wildfires, which have already destroyed millions of acres of sagebrush in neighboring Nevada. Representative species negatively affected include Greater Sage-Grouse and Sage Thrasher.

• Starling competition for nest sites

The European Starling invaded California during the twentieth century, and has greatly increased its population especially in agricultural areas. Starlings aggressively compete with and often outcompete other secondary-cavity nesting birds for cavities. They are known to expel occupied nests of native species, even woodpeckers. Representative species negatively affected include Purple Martin and Western Bluebird.

• Cowbird brood parasitism

Brown-headed Cowbirds also invaded California west of the Cascade-Sierra divide during the twentieth century. With riparian areas already highly fragmented, cowbirds have been able to penetrate many of these residual patches to parasitize broods of Least Bell's Vireos, Yellow Warblers, and other susceptible songbirds. This led to the regional or local extirpation of some of these riparian-obligate species.

• Degradation of the marine ecosystem

The overfishing of species that are critical to the food web of the ocean and that are also important prey of a variety of seabirds, along with the effects of pollution and the recent warming of sea temperatures, may have a profound long-term impact to the state's nesting seabirds as well as to the many seabird species that migrate through and/or winter along the California coast (Ainley et al. 1994). Representative species negatively affected include Ashy Storm-Petrel (nearly the entire global population) and Common Murre.

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The California Clapper Rail (subspecies *obsoletus*) is listed as federally "Endangered" because of its small population—as low as 300 birds in 1991—which faces threats from introduced predators (such as Red Fox), development, and habitat fragmentation. Most surviving birds, now numbering about 650, are found in the marshes of southern San Francisco Bay, where most of 15,100 acres of salt ponds will be restored to wetlands in starting 2005, increasing habitat for the rail, Black Rail, and Marbled Godwit. This bird was photographed at the Palo Alto Baylands of Santa Clara County. Photograph by Peter LaTourrette/VIREO.