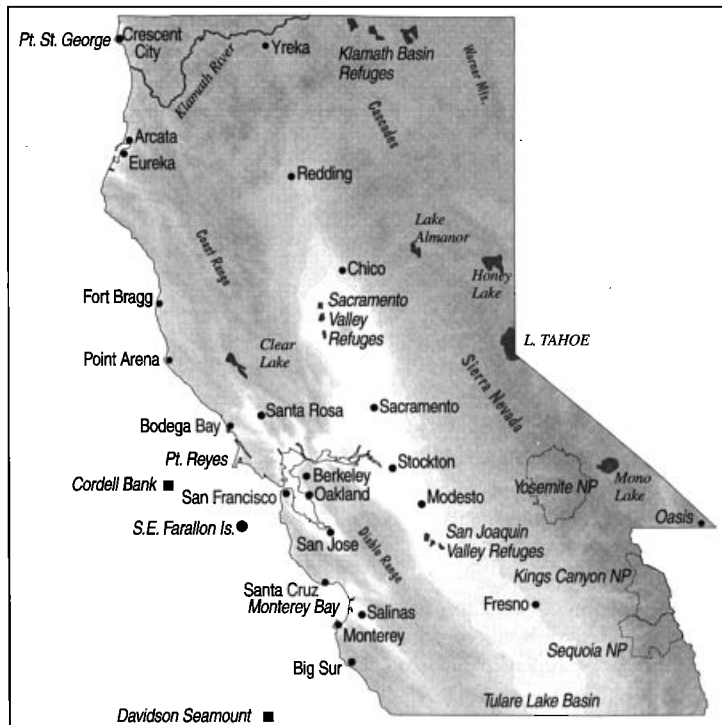


# Middle Pacific Coast



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Summer 2001 saw a continuation of drought conditions, particularly in the northeast. The coast was sunny in June but often fog-draped by July. The incursion of “southeastern” vagrants that began in mid-May continued well into June. As noted in the spring report, this influx correlated with atypical weather conditions over the Gulf of Mexico during the major trans-Gulf passerine migration period.

**Abbreviations:** C.B.R.C. (California Bird Records Committee); C.V. (Central Valley); F.I. (Southeast Farallon I.), N.S. (National Seashore); O.S.P. (Open Space Preserve); S.F. (San Francisco); R.P. (Regional Park); R.S. (Regional Shoreline); S.R. (State Reserve); W.A. (Wildlife Area).

This is Dan Singer’s final report as a member of our group of Regional editors. He has analyzed the blizzard of records of waterfowl, raptor, and waders over the past decade, and his expertise will be missed. We welcome Michael M. Rogers—just off a stint as Secretary of the C.B.R.C.—in his stead. Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are normally not published. Observers wishing

C.B.R.C. review should also send their documentation to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, San Diego, CA 91933. Banded birds on F.I. should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory, those banded at Big Sur R. mouth to Big Sur Ornithology Lab of the Ventana Wilderness Society. Colonial waterbird counts on S.F. Bay and landbirds banded at Coyote Cr., *Santa Clara* should be credited to San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

**SA** For the 3rd consecutive year, a Shy Albatross occurred in waters off cen. California: this year’s bird was an imm. off-shore of Sonoma 27 Jul (ph. DN). What makes this unprecedented series of occurrences even more remarkable is that this species was first recorded in California waters only three years ago. To further put this situation into perspective, Shy Albatrosses have only been recorded in the northern hemisphere five times outside of our records: Washington State (Sep 1951, Jan 2000), Oregon (Oct 1996), Israel (Feb–Mar 1981), and Somalia (Sep 1986). Finally, it appears that more than one taxon have likely been involved in the California records, although more research on these birds is currently underway.

Albatross taxonomy, including the Shy Albatross group, is currently in substantial flux. The Shy Albatross complex is currently treated as one species by the American Ornithologists’ Union but has been considered to comprise up to four species by others. Cole (2000; *N. A. B.* 54: 124–135) summarized Shy Albatross occurrences, distribution, and the taxonomic situation, and he concluded that the first California bird (Aug 1999), an ad., was a Shy Albatross of the nominate form *Thalassarche cauta cauta*. The next Shy to occur off California on 29 Jul 2000 was an imm. and, remarkably, appears to have been a Salvin’s Albatross (*T. [c.] salvini*), although the taxonomic identification of the bird is still being analyzed. These were followed by observations of imm. Shy “types” close to the same location on 10 & 17 Sep 2000. It is currently unclear how many individuals were involved in these sightings, but observers who saw the 29 Jul and 10 Sep birds thought that different individuals were involved based on bill color. This year’s bird, well photographed on 27 Jul, may well be yet another individual, and its taxonomic status has yet to be determined. All of these records are currently under review, but the last three years’ showing of Shy Albatrosses off our Region is mind-boggling, whatever their taxonomic dispensation turns out to be.

## LOONS THROUGH HERONS

Three Laysan Albatrosses were on Monterey Bay, *Monterey* 1 Jun (DLSh et al.). Up to 3 Least Bitterns at Clear L.'s Kelsey Cr. outlet 20 Jul into Sep comprised *Lake's* 3rd documented record (JRW, DvW, m. ob.). Single ad. Little Blue Herons were noted 4 Jul along Artesian Slough, *Santa Clara* (AV) and 10 Jul along Alameda Cr., *Alameda* (PEG). Extremely dry conditions in Sierra Valley, *Plumas* forced White-faced Ibis to look elsewhere for more favorable breeding habitat (MMC). Last year, an estimated 1700+ pairs nested there (*N. A. B.* 54 420).

## GEESE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A Cackling Canada Goose (race *minima*) at Roberts L., Seaside, *Monterey* 4 Jun (DR) represents one of a handful of very late migrant records from our notebooks. Sixty-four Greater Scaup 17 Jul near Petaluma, *Sonoma* was far more than usual for summer (RS). Reports of Bufflehead were slightly above average, with 5 reported coastally and individuals on Sierran lakes in *Tuolumne* 4 Jun (KJB) and *Madera* 24–30 Jun (J&DP). Two broods of Hooded Merganser at Antelope L., *Plumas* 1 Jul (RS) marked the Region's 2nd nesting since 1998 (*N. A. B.* 52: 499), but these are the only breeding records of which we have knowledge since 1981. A Ruddy Duck and her brood at Heather Farms Park 5 Jun (Hugh Harvey) was the first confirmation for *Contra Costa's* breeding bird atlas (now in its 4th year). This species can be surprisingly scarce as a breeder in parts of the greater Bay Area.

Two Bald Eagles at Don Pedro Res., *Tuolumne* 3 Jun (Linda Fruge) were considered unusually late, although breeding attempts should not be ruled out because the species is recolonizing the former breeding range in California as it continues a highly successful recovery continentwide. Two displaying Sharp-shinned Hawks along Mosquito Ridge Road 5 Jun (BDW) made for a rare summer record for *Placer*. A Prairie Falcon over Neary Lagoon 10 Jun (BMMo) was unusual near the coast on this date and represented a summer first for *Santa Cruz*.

As expected, many of the interesting shorebirds reported this season were ads. Reports of unaged shorebirds involving less common or rare species are problematic and are not likely to be published. Different individual ad. American Golden-Plovers were at Redwood Shores, *San Mateo* 12–15 Jul (RSTh, PJM) and 17 Jul (RSTh). Single Pacific Golden-Plovers were noted at Ravenswood O.S.P., *San Mateo* 23–26 Jul (RSTh) and at the mouth of Salmon Cr., *Sonoma* 31 Jul (DASH). Snowy Plovers con-

tinued to show strong reproductive success on Eel R. gravel bars in *Humboldt* (SMcA). A Semipalmated Plover just w. of *Sierraville* 9 Jun was believed to be *Sierra's* first, though there are records nearby from Sierra Valley in *Plumas* (MMC). Four Semipalmated Sandpipers spanning 9–28 Jul were most certainly all ads., though only 2 were reported as such. Certainly one of the avian highlights of the summer was the Region's 4th **Red-necked Stint**: a beautiful alternate-plumaged ad. graced Moss Landing, *Monterey* 13–14 Jul (DEG; ph. JSo, †DR, †DSg). There are currently only eight records for the state. An ad. Pectoral Sandpiper at Moss Landing, *Monterey* 20–21 Jul was the only one reported but typical of most Julys (RF, DR).

## GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

Two pairs of Western Gulls nested at Bay Point, *Contra Costa* 10 Jun. This represents an unusually e. record within S.F. Bay for this species (SAG). Three pairs of Heermann's Gulls again attempted to nest at Roberts L., Seaside, *Monterey* (DR, RC), but this year the attempts failed. Caspian Terns fledged young from at least two nests at Salinas R. mouth, *Monterey* by 21 Jul (RC, DR); they have had little success at this site in recent years. Unusual summer records of Common Terns were noted in S.F. Bay: first-summer birds included up to 5 at Redwood Shores, *San Mateo* 23 Jun–7 Jul (RSTh et al.) and between 10–27 Jul (PJM, Adam Winer, m. ob.); one at Charleston Slough 29 Jul (PJM); and one at Sunnyvale 31 July–5 Aug (RWR, FV), both *Santa Clara*. Ad. Commons included one at Charleston Slough 24 Jun and 2 in Eureka, *Humboldt* 26 Jul (EE). Forster's Terns nested at multiple sites in S.F. Bay. Among these colonies, 381 nests were counted at Evaporator Pond A16, *Santa Clara* (JTH). After returning for seven years, the Arctic Tern did not return to breed at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* this summer (RJR). Two ad. Least Terns at Berenda Reservoir 1 Jun (†LkC) made a first for *Madera*. Within the C.V., three pairs nested successfully again this year near Kettleman City, *Kings* 13 Jul (JSe, SBT). This is the only inland nesting colony in the state. The Least Tern nesting colony on artificial shell mounds at Albany, *Contra Costa* reached a new high of 51 individuals on 10 Jun. This is significant, as there is only one other nesting colony for this Endangered species in S.F. Bay (Mark Rauzon). Three to five pairs of Black Skimmers nested in the S.F. Bay area, a new high for the Region. Two pairs attempted to nest at Hayward R.S. 3 Jun–8 Jul: one pair produced 2 young, but none fledged (RJR). Another pair attempted to nest near Menlo Park, *San Mateo*

15 Jul (PJM); this pair has been here since 1996. Up to 4 ad. and 2 young were observed at Evaporator Pond A16, *Santa Clara* 3 Jun–14 Jul (JTH, RWR, MJM, FV et al.). The first mid-summer record for this species in *Contra Costa* occurred 19 Jun at Pt. Isabel R.S. (Dustin Alcalá). An unusual "dark morph" Common Murre was at Table Bluff, *Humboldt* 31 Jul (EE). The earliest pair of Xantus's Murrelet on Monterey Bay, *Monterey* this summer/fall was 3 Jul (JBo), but water temperatures there were rather cool throughout the season. A Horned Puffin in alternate plumage was just 1.6 nmi off the Mendocino Headlands, *Mendocino* 10 Jul (PAH, EE).

Out-of-range Yellow-billed Cuckoos were at Eel R., *Humboldt* 1–6 Jul (TMcK, SMcA, ANT) and Mono City, *Mono* 2 Jul (window kill, *fide* KNN). A freshly road-killed Short-eared Owl at Año Nuevo S.R. 18 Jul provided *San Mateo's* first summer record (Brian Walton). An absence of Common Nighthawk reports from coastal *Humboldt* has raised concern that the local urban population may have been extirpated (DFx). On the heels of the apparent disappearance of Black Swift as a breeder in coastal *Santa Cruz* comes news that for the first time in memory no Black Swifts were reported from *San Mateo*, not even at Año Nuevo S.R. (PJM). Early migrant Vaux's Swifts were at Ukiah, *Mendocino* 21 Jul (6; CEV) and at Lakeport 3 Aug (*Lake's* earliest; JRW), but one near S.F. Bay at Palo Alto, *Santa Clara* 5 Jul was unexpected (WGB). Unseasonal Lewis's Woodpeckers were at Summit Ridge, *Santa Clara/Santa Cruz* 1 Jun (RWR, FV) and near Woodside 8 Jun (first in summer for *San Mateo*; RSTh). An Acorn Woodpecker 21 Jun near upper Rush Cr. was one of the few ever found in *Mono* (Mark Pollock). A Nuttall's Woodpecker 1 Jul at Weaverville was the first ever found in *Trinity* during the breeding season (JCS), while another was in S.F. city, where barely annual, 26 Jun (ASH, AR). Both may represent post-breeding dispersal, but this species's range has expanded in recent decades.

Most encouraging were 3 Willow Flycatcher nests at lower Rush Cr., *Mono*, the first found in the Mono Basin in at least 15 years (CMcC). It is unknown if Willow Flycatchers currently nest in *Shasta*, but one at Hat Cr. 8 Jul is a strong indication that they do (Ray Bruun). With the exception of a single early bird in S.F. city 11–14 May (HuC, MWE), the coastal migration of Willow Flycatchers was typical, with small numbers found 2–24 Jun; however, one banded at Coyote Cr., *Santa Clara* 22 Jul was a full month earlier than they are usually recorded as fall migrants (*fide* WGB). The discovery of 2 singing Cordilleran Flycatchers by

researchers in *Mono* (KNN et al.) adds to the handful of summer records here, identified either from vocal (see P. E. Lowther, no. 556 in *Birds of North America* series) or observational evidence (*Field Notes* 52: 500), that support the finding that *E. occidentalis* is the breeding species in low densities on the e. side of the Sierra and in the White Mts. A pair of Say's Phoebes with young near Blackhawk provided the first nest record for *Contra Costa* since 1984, this apparently representing the northernmost nest site in the Coast Ranges (Malcolm Sproul).

Vagrant Eastern Kingbirds were at Pt. Reyes N.S., *Marin* 12 Jul (DFx, JCP), lower Wilson Cr., *Mono* 15 Jul (Sue Prentice), and Shasta Valley W.A., *Siskiyou* 20 Jul (RE). The Region's only nesting Easterns were at a nest at Lava Lakes Ranch, *Siskiyou* 17 Jun, and though the ads. were still present 1 Jul, the nest had disappeared. (RE). A first-summer Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 16 Jun (RC, ph. DR), and another spent the summer near Younger Lagoon 17 Jul–Sep (*Santa Cruz's* 3rd; Brad Keitt, ph. JND, ph. LCh, m. ob.). A single food-toting Loggerhead Shrike was found 28 May just n. of Loyalton, *Plumas/Sierra* (JSL), and the first nesting for Sierra Valley was confirmed at the same spot 16 Jun, when fledglings were observed being fed (DS).

Single male White-eyed Vireos were at Trinidad 10–30 Jun (*Humboldt's* first; Kl, m. ob.) and Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* 11 Jun (†RF), bringing this spring's total to an unprecedented 4. At least 3 vagrant Red-eyed Vireos were tallied: one 9 Jun near Bodie, *Mono* (KNN); a singing male 17 Jun at Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* (RE, SRV); another of the same banded there 8 Jul; and one at Samoa, *Humboldt* 23 Jun (KI). Cliff Swallows were found for the first time in 13 summers at Bennett Juniper, *Tuolumne*, where as many as 18 birds were noted 27–29 Jul (at 8400 ft; KJB). A titmouse thought to be an Oak Titmouse was at 6500 ft at Sardine L., *Sierra* 14 Jul (LCh). Though both species of titmouse can occasionally occur at such a high altitude, neither is expected in this part of the Region. A singing Winter Wren in suitable nesting habitat at Robinson Cr. 1 Jul was the first summer record for *Mono* (KNN). Golden-crowned Kinglets were confirmed nesting along Bodfish Cr. and Los Gatos Cr. 12–13 Jul, providing *Santa Clara's* first nest records since the 1950s. They were also detected widely in the s. Santa Cruz Mountains of adjacent *Santa Cruz* (DLSu). A pair of Wrentits at Pacific Grove, *Monterey* 28 Jul was only a couple mi from the nearest suitable nesting habitat, but this is noteworthy, as

they are rarely detected away from known breeding stations (SFB).

### THRASHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

A singing Gray Catbird that frequented a yard in the Killgore Hills, Shasta Valley 23–24 Jun (†RE) was a first for *Siskiyou*. There have been a smattering of prior late Jun and Jul coastal records, but this is the first mid-summer occurrence in the interior. Sage Thrashers at Glass Beach, Ft. Bragg, *Mendocino* 10 Jun (†JRW) and Ravenswood O.S.P., *San Mateo* 17 Jul (RSTh) were first summer records for those counties and completely unanticipated.

A singing **Blue-winged Warbler** at Big Sur R. mouth 9 Jun (†DR) was the 3rd ever in *Monterey* and the first for spring; this becomes the 10th Regional record. A Tennessee Warbler was on F.I. on the odd dates of 9–12 Jul, but such mid-summer wandering far from breeding areas is known in the East (*vide* SBT).

A Virginia's Warbler at Dechambeau Cr.,

**SA** The Region was inundated with Northern Parulas, a situation reminiscent of the large-scale vagrancy and oversummering of the species in 1992 (see Terrill et al., "The Changing Seasons," *A. B.* 46: 1109–1111). For the 4th consecutive summer, up to 3 singing Northern Parulas on territory in *Monterey* (BSOL, DR) suggest that localized nesting continues there. Away from *Monterey*, a pair nested at Patricks Point S.P., *Humboldt*: the pair was first seen 18 Jun, copulation was observed 27 Jun, the nest was located 28 Jun in a clump of *Usnea* out a lower limb of a Red Alder, and finally the pair was seen carrying food to cap a nest 7 Jul and then to 2–3 fledglings 20 Jul (KI, DFx, JCP, GSL). The only previous nest in *Humboldt* was back in 1992, when 3 young were fledged from a nest on Elk Head, a few mi to the south. At L. Merced, S.E., a pair was present from 30 Jun–31 Jul+ (AR, Rich Ferrick). A singing male Northern Parula at La Honda, *San Mateo* 23 Apr was still there 6 Jun, while 3 others were in *San Mateo* or adjacent *Santa Cruz* (RSTh, DLSu et al.) this season, plus another S.F. bird at Mountain L. Park 4 Jun (HuC). *Humboldt* had 4 other singing males beyond the pair discussed above (KI, GSL, C. J. Ralph). The first summer record in *Contra Costa* was a male at Jewel L., Tilden Park 2 Jul (Brian Fitch). Two more were in *Mono* in Jun or Jul (KNN, CMcC). *Nineteen* Northern Parulas, plus fledglings!

*Mono* was carrying food to young in late Jun–Jul (Mike Green, KNN), confirming nesting for the first time in the Mono Basin since 1975. Likewise, a male Yellow Warbler carrying food at Jewel L., Tilden Park 9 Jun (Bob Brandriff et al.), and another near Pinole 16 Jun (Steve Hayashi, Lillian Fujii), were the first breeding records in *Contra Costa* in 50 years. Six Chestnut-sided Warblers were along the coast from 7–26 Jun, 2 in *Monterey* and 4 in *Humboldt*. More unusual were a Cape May Warbler in Trinidad, *Humboldt* 17 Jun (KI) and a singing male Black-throated Blue Warbler in Aurora Canyon, *Mono* 10 Jun (†Mark Pollack). The first breeding confirmation of Audubon's Warbler in S.F. was an ad feeding a fledgling 28 Jun (ES, GGf), and the first confirmation in coastal *Humboldt* in many years were young in the cypress grove on n. spit at Humboldt Bay 8 Jul (DFx). Unusual summer vagrant warblers were a Palm at Big Sur R. mouth 11 Jun (RF), a Blackpoll on FI 8–11 Jul (P.R.B.O.), and a singing male Bay-breasted along Mill Cr., *Mono* 10 Jun (KNN). More expected were the smattered of summer Black-and-white Warblers (3 coastal, 2 in *Mono*) and American Redstarts (11 coastal, 3 in *Mono*).

Six Ovenbirds were more than a usual summer, but most extraordinary were singing birds at Dedrick 9 Jun (TMcK, a first for *Trinity*) and in a Tulelake, *Siskiyou* yard 23 Jun (KvSp). Northern Waterthrushes at Salt R., *Humboldt* 30 Jun and at Robinson Cr., *Mono* 30 Jun were very late (DFx), and one banded at Carmen Valley 11 Jun (MMC) was the first for *Sierra*. A pair of Common Yellowthroat feeding young along lower Wilson Cr., *Mono* in Jul (Sue Prentice) were perhaps the first to nest in the Mono Basin, while one in *Placer* 28 Jun (BDW) was in an area where no nests are known.

Continuing the spring incursion of south-eastern species were an amazing 9 Hooded Warblers: 4 at Big Sur R. mouth and another at Carmel R. mouth, *Monterey* 5–22 Jun (Jason Scott et al.), 2 in *Santa Cruz* (including a male in mid-Jul; Barbara & Kevin Monahan, DLSu), and singles in *Sonoma*, *Humboldt*, and *Mono*. A Yellow-breasted Chat nest with young 26 Jun along Piper Slough (SAG) was the first confirmed breeding in *Contra Costa* in many years, one at Pike 28 May (JSL) may suggest they are more regular in *Sierra* than previously thought.

### TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A male Scarlet Tanager at Live Oak 27 Jun (†DLSu) and a female on F.I. 17 Jun (†Rusty Japuntich) were extraordinary; the former was the first for *Santa Cruz*. Both Black-chinned

and Grasshopper Sparrows were widespread this summer around the n. edges of their ranges in our Region. A White-throated Sparrow in a Bayside yard, *Humboldt* 24 Jun (JCP) may have summered, as apparently did a Golden-crowned Sparrow in heavy molt at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo* 27 Jul–19 Aug (RSTh).

At least 30 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks this season matched the record 30 birds of last summer. Most were in Jun and were probably late vagrants, but at least 6 lingered into Jul and must have been attempting to summer. All were in coastal or Bay Area counties except for a male in Mendocino N.F., *Tehama* 13 Jun (Doug Shaw). In contrast, the 9 Indigo Buntings seemed average, although a male near Kettleman City 7 June (JSe) was just the 2nd ever in *Kings*.

A singing male Orchard Oriole at the n. spit at Humboldt Bay 21 Jun (KI) and a singing male Baltimore Oriole 30 May–2 Jun at Lanphere Dunes (PAH) were rare late spring vagrants in *Humboldt*. It seems as though we'll never stop reporting the continued spread of Great-tailed Grackle. News this summer included the first nesting for *Santa Cruz* (two pairs with young at Watsonville Slough 19 Jun; John Welch, Brian Voegtlen), a nest with 2 fledged young at Rooster Run Golf Course in *Sonoma* in Jul (DN, Rick Lebadecour, Alan Wight et al.), the first Mono Basin nest at Willow Springs on the s. shore of Mono L., *Mono* 9 Jun (Bartshe Miller), and a 2nd male joining the first at Tulelake, *Siskiyou* (DHpt, KvSp).

Red Crossbills were widespread in *Humboldt* and discovered in Snow Mt. Wilderness, *Lake* in Jul (DvW, JRW). For yet another summer, Lawrence's Goldfinches were widespread in the coast ranges and especially in interior Mendocino at the n. edge of their range (CEV, GEC et al.).

**CORRIGENDA**

Last fall's Yellow-green Vireo at Orick, *Humboldt* was present 28 Sep rather than 28 Nov (KI). From the winter report: the American Tree Sparrow in *Marin* 17 Dec was at Kehoe Marsh rather than McClures Beach (LLu, CLu), and the "Hooded Warbler" reported 13 Jan in *Sonoma* was actually a Hooded Oriole. We thank David Fix, Les Lieurance, Benjamin D. Parmeter, and Ruth Rudesill for these corrections.

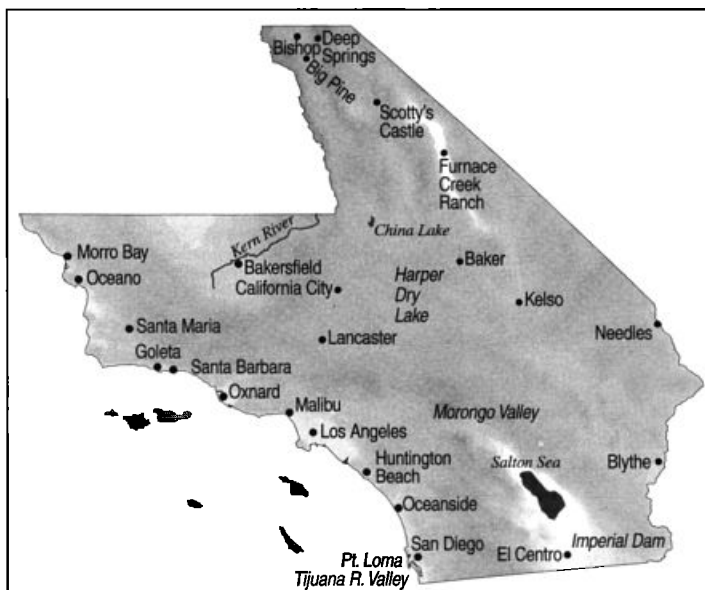
**Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface):** Dick Ashford, Stephen F. Bailey, Jim Booker, **William G. Bousman** (*Santa Clara*), **Penelope K. Bowen** (*Alpine & Calaveras*), **Kenneth J. Brunges** (*Tuolumne*), Rita

Carratello, George E. Chaniot, Les Chibana, **Luke Cole** (*Kings*), **Hugh Cotter** (*S.F. city*), Jeff N. Davis, **Bruce E. Deuel** (*n. C.V. counties*), Mark W. Eaton, **Ray Ekstrom** (*Siskiyou*), Elias Elias, **David Fix** (*Humboldt*), Rick Fournier, **James H. Gain** (*Stanislaus*), Doug E. George, **Steven A. Glover** (*Contra Costa*), George Griffeth, Philip E. Gordon, Janet T. Hanson, Dave Haupt, Pablo A. Herrera, Alan S. Hopkins, **John E. Hunter** (*Trinity*), Ken Irwin, **Robert J. Keiffer** (*Mendocino*), **Robin L.C. Leong** (*Napa & Solano*), Gary S. Lester, Cindy Lieurance, Les Lieurance, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, **Timothy D. Manolis** (*Sacramento & Yolo*), **Peter J. Metropulos** (*San Mateo & Mono*), Sean McAllister, **Mac McCormick** (*Sierra & Plumas*), Chris McCreedy, Tristan McKee, Bryan M. Mori, Dan Nelson, Kristie N.

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# Southern Pacific Coast



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**S**outhern California experienced a typical swarm and dry summer. Encouraging numbers of the Endangered Western Yellow-billed Cuckoos (*C. a. occidentalis*), and Least Bell's Vireos (*V. b. pusillus*) were reported, but populations of Southwestern Willow Flycatchers (*E. t. extimus*) remained precariously small. Reports of Brown-crested Flycatchers suggest that this species is continuing to expand its range westward. An interesting variety of wood-warblers