

Southern Pacific Coast



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Highlights of the summer season were few but included California's first nesting Ruddy Ground-Doves in the Imperial Valley and two more Glossy Ibis, including the first for the Region's coast. A general paucity of aquatic birds on the Salton Sea and poor nesting success for piscivorous birds there suggest that stresses to the Sea's aquatic ecosystems continue; these conditions are likely to continue and worsen unless the ecological health of the Sea (and Colorado River delta) is deemed as worthy a goal as the accommodation of additional millions of people in coastal and desert urban regions of the Southwest has been.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China L. Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); E.A.F.B. (Edwards Air Force Base, se. Kern); F.C.R. (Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley National Monument, Inyo); G.H.P. (Galileo Hill Park in extreme e. Kern); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.C.R.E. (Santa Clara River Estuary near Ventura, Ventura); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial);

S.F.K.R.P. (S. Fork Kern River Preserve, near Weldon, Kern); V.A.F.B. (Vandenberg Air Force Base in nw. Santa Barbara); V.C.G.P. (Ventura County Game Preserve near Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, Ventura). Specimen collections cited in this report are: L.A.C.M. (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County) and S.D.N.H.M. (San Diego Natural History Museum). Because virtually all rarities in s. California are seen by many observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird are included. Documentation for species on the California Bird Records Committee (C.B.R.C.) review list is forwarded to the C.B.R.C. Secretary and archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

FULMAR THROUGH HAWKS

A Northern Fulmar off Newport Beach, Orange 9 Jul (MJI) was evidently summering locally. A Red-billed Tropicbird seen from San Clemente I. 20 Jul (BLS) and 3 there 28 Jul (BLS) were the only ones reported. A Brown Booby seen from Pt. Pedernales, Santa Barbara 4 Jun (AB) was on the coast, where reported far more often than 20 years ago, and another inland, dead about one week, near Calexico, Imperial 17 Aug (KLG, KCM; *L.A.C.M.) had no doubt originated from the Gulf of California. Reports of an imm. Magnificent Frigatebird at Pt. Vicente, Los Angeles 13 Jul (KGL), Bolsa Chica, Orange the same day (BED), and near La Jolla, San Diego 18 Jul (DH) could have been of the same individual moving s. along the coast; at S.E.S.S., single imms. were seen 5 Jul (HBK) and 5 Aug (Salton Sea N.W.R. personnel, *vide* BM).

The only Little Blue Heron away from San Diego was an ad. at Bolsa Chica 23 Jul+ (BED). Two Tricolored Herons were found at S.E.S.S. 9 Jul (AEK), with one remaining through the end of the period (GMcC). A Glossy Ibis photographed at V.C.G.P. 19 Jul+ (DD) is the first to be found on the coast in this Region, and another near Calipatria, Imperial 9 Jul (JLD, GMcC) was the 3rd around S.E.S.S. Four Wood Storks at S.E.S.S. 12 Jun (GMcC) were the earliest this summer, and 45 on 29 Jun (GMcC) provided the highest count.

The presence of a female Blue-winged Teal with 7 young at Bolsa Chica 6 Jun (LRH) documented the 4th year this species has nested in the area. The male Harlequin Duck was still present on Mission Bay in San Diego 24 Jul (HA), indicating it was summering locally. A Long-tailed Duck at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, San Luis Obispo 10 Jun (MB) was

probably summering locally.

A pair of Bald Eagles fledged 2 young at L. Hemet to establish the first nesting record in *Riverside* (HBK), while an ad. at Santa Margarita L., *San Luis Obispo* 15 Jul (RZ), and 2 ads. at L. Cachuma, *Santa Barbara* 15 Jul (LM) were at locations where this species has bred. The continuing Harris's Hawk at Blythe, *Riverside* was still present through the period (RH).

RAILS THROUGH PUFFINS

A Sora at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh in Playa del Rey, *Los Angeles* 31 Jul (RB) was almost certainly a fall migrant, as this species has nested only very rarely in the Region in recent decades. An American Oystercatcher was on San Nicolas I. 30 May (RAH). Since Black Oystercatchers nest only very locally on the mainland s. of Pt. Conception, *Santa Barbara*, up to 5 at the mouth of the Ventura R., *Ventura* (DD) and up to 3 at the entrance to San Diego Bay, *San Diego* (RAP), present all summer, were of note, as they were at rock breakwaters where nesting could occur.

Single Solitary Sandpipers at Mojave Narrows, *San Bernardino* 5 Jul (JS), Piute Ponds near Lancaster, *Los Angeles* 19 Jul (JF), Blythe 19 Jul (RH), and the Ballona Freshwater Marsh 22 Jul (RB) were the earliest this fall. Four Long-billed Curlews near Bishop, *Inyo* in Jun (T&JH) were suspected of nesting; this area is at the extreme s. limit of the species' known breeding range. A Ruddy Turnstone at C.L. 25 Jul (SSt) and another at Piute Ponds 26 Jul (JF) were the only 2 reported inland away from the Salton Sea. A Semipalmated Sandpiper at C.L. 19 Jul (TEW) was the only one reported. Two Baird's Sandpipers at Blythe 20 Jul (RH) and one at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, *Riverside* 20 Jul (HBK) were the earliest this fall. Ad. Pectoral Sandpipers at V.C.G.P. 26 Jul (WW), at Piute Ponds 31 Jul (JF), and at nearby Lancaster 2 Aug (JF) were noteworthy, as virtually all fall records involve juvs. in Sep and Oct. A Dunlin on San Diego Bay 21 Jun (DPA) was one of a very few ever found in s. California at this time of the year. A somewhat early female Ruff was at Piute Ponds 19 Jul (JF).

Single South Polar Skuas seen from San Clemente I. 17 Jun (ELK) and between Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands 19 Jul (BAI) were noteworthy.

An ad. Laughing Gull near Imperial Beach, *San Diego* 20 Jul (DWA) was on the coast, where rare; an ad. at Blythe, *Riverside* 24 Jun (RH) coincided with the

influx of post-breeding birds at the Salton Sea, building up to about 250 at S.E.S.S. 20 Jul (GMcC). Single Franklin's Gulls at C.L. 8 Jun (TEW) and at Malibu, *Los Angeles* 12 Jun (RB) were considered late spring migrants, while birds at S.E.S.S. 15 Jul (GMcC) and C.L. 21–25 Jul (SSt) were the first of the fall migrants. A Heermann's Gull, rare inland, was around S.E.S.S. 13 May–3 Jul (KCM), 3 were together near Seeley, *Imperial* 22 Jun (GMcC), and another was at Salton City, *Imperial* 1 Aug (GCH). On the coast, there were 59 nest attempts by Gull-billed Terns at s. San Diego Bay (RAP), while 3 individuals at Bolsa Chica 2 Jun (MSanM) established the 3rd record for *Orange*. About 30 nests of Royal Terns accompanied over 10,000 pairs of Elegant Terns nesting at s. San Diego Bay (RAP), an impressive concentration; however, according to CTC, numbers of these two species nesting in *Orange* and *Los Angeles* were very low, suggesting that the breeding population shifted southward this summer. Single Common Terns at C.L. 16 Jun (SSt) and at S.E.S.S. 29 Jun (GMcC) were inland; numbers along the coast appear to have declined in recent years. Single Least Terns at the Prado Basin, *Riverside* 14 & 29 Jul (JEP, DPe) were the only 2 reported inland away from the Salton Sea, where as many as 7 were present in Jun and Jul (GMcC).

A Common Murre at La Jolla 29 Jun (MS) was undoubtedly summering locally. Single Pigeon Guillemots at Pt. Vicente, *Los Angeles* 1 Jun (KGL) and especially at San Clemente I. 13 Jun (FB) were unusually far south. Five ad. Marbled Murrelets on the n. *San Luis Obispo* coast 21 Jul (LAH) were at the s. extreme of this species' normal range. A Craver's Murrelet at W. Cove Pt. 25 Jul (BLS) provided the first record for San Clemente I. A dead Tufted Puffin on the beach at Camp Pendleton 12 Jul (NB, *S.D.N.H.M.) provided only the 4th record for *San Diego*.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to spread across s. California, with estab-

lished populations in the Imperial Valley, *Imperial* (GMcC), around Blythe (RH), and in Ridgecrest, *Kern* (JCW), with additional reports of up to 2 at N.E.S.S. 22 Jun (HBK) and a pair in Bishop 19–30 Jul (J & DP). A Ruddy Ground-Dove at Blythe 18 Jul+ (RH) was believed present since the winter, and a pair at Calipatria successfully fledged 2 young in late May and were still present at the end of the period (GMcC), providing the first record for nesting in California. The first Yellow-billed Cuckoo arrived at S.F.K.R.P. 1 Jun (A&AT); away from this "stronghold," 2 were near Tinemaha Res., *Inyo* 17 Jul (T&JH), and single birds were near Big Pine, *Inyo* 1 Aug (T&JH), Morongo Valley, *San Bernardino* 14 Jun (VL), and along the Colorado R. at Picacho State Recreation Area, *Imperial* 30 Jun–9 Jul (PJ).

Whip-poor-wills were again present at Heart Bar Campground in the San Bernardino Mts., *San Bernardino* (HBK), but physical evidence of nesting in California has yet to be obtained. Seven Chimney Swifts were over the Boyle Heights section of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles* 1 Jul (LS) but did not appear to be nesting. A Broad-billed Hummingbird banded at Morongo Valley 26 Jul (BC) established the first summer record for California. A Lewis's Woodpecker along the upper end of Arrastre Cr. in the San Bernardino Mts. 28 Jun (TB) was probably summering locally. A Red-naped Sapsucker in Ridgecrest 10 Jun (K&BK) was the latest ever recorded in e. *Kern*.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CORVIDS

Willow Flycatchers of the Endangered subspecies *extimus* enjoyed better than average success at S.F.K.R.P. this summer, with 42 young fledged by 15 males and 19–21 females (MWh). A pair e. of San Juan Capistrano 15 May+ (MTR, DRW) brought to three the number of territories occupied in recent years in *Orange*. A singing Least Flycatcher was at S.F.K.R.P. 20–29 Jun (MWh). A Western Wood-Pewee on 24–25 Jun and single Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers 25 Jun at G.H.P. (KSG) were exceptionally late spring migrants. Say's Phoebe

SA The breeding success of larids at the Salton Sea was mixed in 2003 (KCM). Nesting success was markedly lower than average for species such as Caspian Tern (<100 pairs, about 20 fledged) and Black Skimmers (<100 pairs, none fledged) that depend mostly on fish. At least 50 pairs of California Gulls nested at three sites, and they too seemed to have lower-than-average nesting success; the only two nests of Laughing Gulls failed. In contrast, nesting success was higher than average for approximately 155 pairs of Gull-billed Terns (>100 fledged), a species whose diet is more varied and which includes a large proportion of terrestrial prey. This year's poor productivity of fish-eating larids, coupled with the lack of breeding by cormorants as well as the general paucity of waterbirds on the Sea, suggests that the Sea's aquatic prey base is currently under stress.

are rare and local breeders in *Santa Barbara*, so a pair with a nest in Sisquoc 3 Jun (JMC) was of interest. At the nw. edge of their range were nesting Vermilion Flycatchers at S.F.K.R.P. 20 May–11 Jul (BB) and in San Bernardino, *San Bernardino* through May (TB). At least nine pairs of Brown-crested Flycatchers were documented around S.F.K.R.P. through the period (BB, MWh), with up to 20 pairs extrapolated for the entire South Fork of the Kern R. In addition to those noted in the spring report, single Eastern Kingbirds were found on San Clemente I. 5–8 (IR) & 7 Jun (BLS) and at Hearst Castle, *San Luis Obispo* 23 Jul (GPS). A pair of Cassin's Kingbirds raised young in Bakersfield in Jun (MMcQ), establishing the first nesting for the San Joaquin Valley portion of *Kern*. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher near Seeley 15–18 Jun (GW) established only the 2nd documented record for the Salton Sink.

The decline of Loggerhead Shrikes along the mainland coast of the Region continues, with only two successful pairs noted in *Orange* (BED, RAE, MJ1) and as few as six territories found in coastal *Los Angeles* (KLG). Bell's Vireo continued to reclaim its former breeding range in the

Region; for example, 17 territories in the Hansen Dam basin, Lake View Terrace, *Los Angeles* through the period (KLG, SSo) was the highest ever recorded there. Late-spring Red-eyed Vireos were in Wilmington, *Los Angeles* 14–15 Jun (KGL, JF), at G.H.P. 3 Jul (KSG), and in Montecito Heights, *Los Angeles* 3 Jul (TEW). An American Crow n. of Needles, *San Bernardino* 17 Jul (CMcG) was one of the few ever found in the se. part of the Region in summer.

SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS

Tree Swallows continue to respond to increasing provision of nest boxes in the Region; a pair attempted to nest in a box at Harbor Regional Park near San Pedro, *Los Angeles* this summer (DMH), an area from which the species had long been extirpated. Chestnut-backed Chickadees continue their pioneering in s. *Santa Barbara*, with 2 in Goleta 28 Jun (MAH) and one in Montecito 21 Jul (NAL). A pair of Mountain Chickadees fledged 3 young in O'Neill Park, *Orange* (MJ1), establishing the lowest elevation breeding record for the county.

A Swainson's Thrush in Newport Beach, *Orange* 12–19 Jul (DRW) was out of breeding habitat; an injured bird

remained near El Centro from 20 Jun to at least 14 Sep (KZK). A Hermit Thrush at G.H.P. 13 Jun (KSG) was the latest record of a spring migrant in e. *Kern*. Different Gray Catbirds were at G.H.P. 7–11 Jun (DSC) and 18–25 Jun (KSG).

Breeding Orange-crowned Warblers continued their expansion into landscaped urban parks and residential areas in coastal *Orange* (DRW, RAE); a juv. in Calipatria, *Imperial* 29 Jun (BM) had dispersed well away from breeding areas. Up to 4 Lucy's Warblers at C.L. 21–31 Jul (SSt) were presumably fall migrants, as was a very early coastal bird in Palos Verdes Estates, *Los Angeles* 13 Jul (KGL). Spring vagrancy of Northern Parulas continued well into the summer, with one in Carpinteria, *Santa Barbara* 15 Jun (DMC), 2 singing males at V.A.F.B. 16–17 Jun (DMC, MAH), one at S.F.K.R.P. 21 Jun (AS), a singing male near Pasadena, *Los Angeles* 24–25 Jun (CMcG, JF), and a singing male in Long Beach, *Los Angeles* 27 Jun (KGL). A Magnolia Warbler was found dead in Blythe 15 Jun (RH), and one was at G.H.P. 25 Jun (KSG). A Grace's Warbler at Buckhorn Campground, *Los Angeles* 14 Jun (JF) was the first to be found in the San Gabriel Mts. in summer. A male Blackpoll Warbler in



Only the second recorded in the Salton Sink in California, this Scissor-tailed Flycatcher frequented Fig Lagoon near Seeley, Imperial County 15–18 (here 16) June 2003. Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.

Irvine, *Orange* 24 Jun (PC) was a very late spring vagrant, as were Black-and-white Warblers at G.H.P. 12–13 & 26 Jun (KSG) and at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino 28 Jun (BAi). Four straggling American Redstarts, all in the interior, were found 10–27 Jun. A singing male MacGillivray's Warbler in Cardiff, San Diego 15–16 Jun (SSu, PAG) was far from breeding habitat and thus a very late spring migrant. Hooded Warblers included a singing male in Long Beach 11 Jun (AEK) and a female at G.H.P. 24 Jun (KSG). A Wilson's Warbler at G.H.P. 26 Jun (KSG) was the latest to be found in spring in e. Kern; a male summering at Harbor Regional Park near San Pedro 7 Jun–27 Jul (KGL, DMH) was one of the few to summer recently in lowland Los Angeles.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Two pairs of Hepatic Tanagers were present 10 Jun+ at the long-occupied Upper Arrastre Cr. site in the San Bernardino Mts. (AEK, EP, MWi). Summer Tanagers were scattered through the Region, with an impressive 80–100 pairs estimated to be breeding at S.F.K.R.P. and vicinity (BB). A pair of Brewer's Sparrows with fledged young near Ranchita 4 Jul (PN) established the first nesting record for San Diego. Exceptionally early was a Large-billed Savannah Sparrow at S.E.S.S. 2 Jun; 10 were present there by 18 Jun (GMcC).

Eight Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found in coastal counties 1–24 Jun; birds in the interior (besides those mentioned in the spring report) were at Blythe 7 Jun (RH), G.H.P. 18 Jun (KSG), and at Picacho State Recreation Area 1 Jul (PJ). A Black-headed Grosbeak at G.H.P. 24 Jun (KSG) was the latest spring migrant for e. Kern, and one in Indian Wells Canyon 4 Jul (SSt) was the considered the earliest fall record for that same area. Among the Indigo Buntings noted through the period were 4–5 territorial males at S.F.K.R.P. (BB) and an apparent returning male in San Luis Obispo 16–19 Jul (MDS).

A Bobolink was at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh in Playa del Rey 29 Jun (DSC). A male Tricolored Blackbird on San Clemente I. 27 Jun (BLS) established the first record for the island. A male Bronzed Cowbird was slightly w. of the species' normal range in Borrego Springs, San Diego 29 Jun (JB). A molting ad. male Baltimore Oriole in Lake View Terrace 2 Aug (KLG) likely summered locally; a hybrid ad. male Baltimore Oriole x Bullock's Oriole was on the Palos Verdes Peninsula 7 Jun (KGL). Nesting

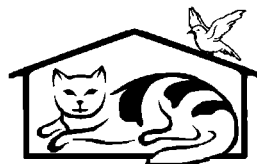
Purple Finches inland from San Juan Capistrano in Jun (MTR, DRW) provided a range extension within *Orange*. Two ad. Cassin's Finches with 3 young in Big Pine 16 Jun (T&JH) were on the floor of the Owens Valley, below the species' normal breeding elevation. A male American Goldfinch in Big Pine 19 Jul (T&JH) established the first Jul record for *Inyo*.

EXOTICS

Two singing male and 2 female Northern Cardinals were in Costa Mesa, *Orange* 20–23 Jun (DRW). An ad. European Goldfinch with 3 juvs. in Long Beach 4 Jul (KGL) established another breeding record of this frequent escapee.

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): Douglas W. Aguillard, Bruce Aird (BAi), Bernardo Alps (BAI), Howard Atteberry, Bob Barnes, Joe Barth, Richard Barth, Nick Basinski, Fred Beaudry, Tom Benson, Adam Brown, Mark Brown, Barbara Carlson, Jamie M. Chavez, Charles T. Collins, David M. Compton (*Santa Barbara*), Peyton Cook, Daniel S. Cooper, Brian E. Daniels, Don Desjardin, Jon L. Dunn, Tom M. Edell (*San Luis Obispo*), Richard A. Erickson, Michael Evans (*San Diego*), Jon Feenstra, Kimball L. Garrett

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