

Southern California



Guy McCaskie | Kimball L. Garrett

Heat was the hallmark of this summer, with temperatures through the month of July breaking records for many parts of the Region. The attendant wildfires and, locally, monsoon rains added punctuation to the hot summer period. Seasonal highlights included the first documented nesting of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in California and a potential first state record of Yellow Grosbeak. An Arctic Loon that died at a rehabilitation facility established the first specimen of this primarily Old World species for California.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); G.H.P. (Galileo Hill Park in 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 R. Estuary near Ventura, Ventura); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); S.F.K.R.P. (South Fork Kern River Preserve near Weldon, Kern). Museum collections abbreviated in the text are: LACM (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County) and SDNHM (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 B.R.C. (C.B.R.C.) review list is forwarded to the Secretary and archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

WATERFOWL THROUGH HAWKS

Three Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at S.E.S.S. 13 Jul (GMcC) were probably post-breeding

wanderers, as this species now appears extirpated from California as a nesting bird. A flock of 35 Brant flying northward off Imperial Beach, San Diego 6 Jun (MJB) was exceptionally late. The presence of a female Gadwall with one duckling at S.E.S.S. 1 Jul (GMcC) provides the first evidence of breeding at the Salton Sink. A Surf Scoter at S.E.S.S. 14-17 Jun (GMcC) was probably attempting to summer at this inland location. A Common Merganser, a rare breeder on the coast of s. California, was seen with 6 ducklings on Pico Creek near San Simeon, San Luis Obispo 1 Jul (MLS).

An emaciated Arctic Loon captured in Newport Beach, Orange 5 Jul (KLG; *LACM) provides the 5th record for California. A Common Loon at S.E.S.S. 17 Jun (GMcC) and another at N.E.S.S. 30 Jun-1 Jul (SB) were either very late spring migrants or attempting to summer locally. An exciting concentration of "pelagics" visible from the Newport Beach pier in late Jul produced counts of 300 Pink-footed, 560 Sooty, and 400 Black-



This adult male Tricolored Blackbird was one of six found with other blackbirds at a dairy near Seeley, Imperial County, California in July (here 30 July) 2006, well outside the species' known range. Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.

vented Shearwaters, along with 3 Black Storm-Petrels, on 28 Jul (MJ1). Five Red-billed Tropicbirds at West Cove on San Clemente I. 29 Jul (SWS) and another 16 km s. of there 30 Jul (HBK) suggested an influx to the area. A Brown Booby foraging off Imper-

al Beach 8 Jul (GMcC) adds another record to the ever-increasing number from the coast of California. For the first time since 1939, Brown Pelicans nested (43 nests counted on 16 May) on Prince I. off San Miguel I. (California Dept. of Fish & Game). A frigatebird over Pt. Fermin, Los Angeles 8 Aug (*vide* BA) was presumably a Magnificent; occurrences of this species in the Region have steeply declined in the past 10 years.

Away from coastal San Diego, the only Little Blue Heron reported was an ad. in the Prado Basin, Riverside 8 Jun (JEP). A Tricolored Heron, a species much rarer in California today than 30 years ago, was at San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego 10 Jul (RTP). On the other hand, numbers of Reddish Egrets continue to increase, with at least 4 in coastal San Diego and Orange during the period; farther n., one at S.C.R.E. 26 Jul (DD) was believed to be the same bird present off and on at Carpinteria, Santa Barbara 4 Jul-5 Aug (LM). The pair of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons in Imperial Beach fledged 3 young in Jul (GMcC), estab-

lishing the first record for nesting in California; a subad. in the Riverside portion of the Prado Basin 3 Jul (JEP) was only the 2nd to be found inland in California. Single Glossy Ibis, a species expanding its range westward into California, were in the Prado Basin 8 Jun (JEP) and near Calipatria 26-31 Jul (GMcC). The first Wood Stork of the summer was at S.E.S.S. 11 Jun (JM), and numbers built up to a high count of 27 on 22 Jul (KLG).

Ospreys have become established and increasing as a breeding bird on the s. coast in recent years, with at least 10 nests known in San Diego this year and the first in Orange in over 100 years on Upper Newport Bay (DRW). A pair of White-tailed Kites successfully fledged young from a nest near Calexico, Imperial in early May (DRW), an area only recently colonized by this species. Bald Eagles successfully fledged young at L. Henshaw, San Diego (PU) and Lopez L., San Luis Obispo (MLS). Single Sharpshinned Hawks, unexpected in s.

California in summer, were at Big Pine, Inyo 27 Jun (T&JH) and near Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo 4 Jul (AFS). A Zone-tailed Hawk near Sheep Camp in the Sierra Madre Mts., Santa Barbara 30 Jun (TM, VH) was in suitable breeding habitat, but a subad. at Corona,



This Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in an inundated part of the Prado Basin, Riverside County, California 3 July 2006 is only the second to be found away from the coast in the state. Photograph by James E. Pike.

Riverside 19 Jun (JEP) was unexpected, as most recorded in the lowlands are during fall and winter.

RAILS THROUGH ALCIDS

Vocalizing Black Rails were present and probably nesting at three locations at the S.E.S.S./Imperial Valley during the summer. The presence of a young Sora in the Cholame Valley, *San Luis Obispo* 7 Jul (TME) and 3 young near Temecula, *Riverside* 23 Jun (RAE) establish two of a very few nesting records in s. California in the modern era; one at S.E.S.S. 8 Jul (JM) was an early fall migrant. Two pairs of Common Moorhens successfully bred at C.L. this summer (SLS), the first time ever for that area.

Single Pacific Golden-Plovers at Carpinteria 14-16 Jul (PAG) and in Long Beach, *Los Angeles* 8-13 Jul (KGL) were early migrants. An American Oystercatcher × Black Oystercatcher hybrid was in Ventura, *Ventura* 26 Jun (MBra, OJ). The earliest migrant Solitary Sandpiper this year was one at S.E.S.S. 7 Jul (GMcC), followed by at least 4 more scattered throughout the Region by the end of the month. The presence of 7 Black Turnstones at S.E.S.S. 14 Jun (GMcC) suggested they were summering locally. A Surfbird in Coronado, *San Diego* 12-19 Jul (MS) was suspected to have summered locally, while another at Playa del Rey, *Los Angeles* 23 Jun (RB) was considered an early fall migrant. Up to 2 Red Knots at C.L. 7-12 Jul (SLS) were the only ones reported inland away from the Salton Sea. Single ad. Semipalmated

Sandpipers were at S.C.R.E. 26 Jul-5 Aug (DD), Long Beach 23-25 Jul (KGL), and inland at S.E.S.S. 7 Jul (GMcC), and the earliest juv. was one in Goleta, *Santa Barbara* 24 Jul (WTF). The earliest Baird's Sandpipers this fall were single ads. in Long Beach 16-18 Jul (KGL), *Santa Maria*, *Santa Barbara* 21 Jul (MBro), at Owens L., *Inyo* 23 Jul (SLS), and near Imperial, *Imperial* 26 Jul (GMcC). A Curlew Sandpiper, a casual straggler to California, made a brief stop at San Elijo Lagoon 9 Jul (SES). Single Stilt Sandpipers in Blythe, *Riverside* 22 Jul (RH) and Long Beach 25-26 Jul (RB) were the only ones found away from S.E.S.S. Two Wilson's Snipe at S.E.S.S. 29 Jul (GMcC) were early fall migrants.

A Long-tailed Jaeger off San Diego 9 Jul (MJB) was either a very early fall migrant or more likely summering locally, while the date of another at S.C.R.E. 29 Jul (BJ) coincides with the arrival of the first of the fall migrants off-



These three young Yellow-crowned Night-Herons with one of the adults (partly visible; upper right) left this nest in Imperial Beach, San Diego County, in July 2006 (here 14 June), establishing the first record for nesting in California. Photograph by Vic Murayama.

shore. Single Laughing Gulls at Morro Bay 22 Jun (TME), Cabrillo Beach, *Los Angeles* 6 Jun (BA), Huntington Beach, *Orange* 1 Jul (LO), San Diego 18 Jun (SES) and 19 Jun-22 Jul (EA), and near Imperial Beach 23 Jul (GMcC) were on the coast, where rare; two pairs nested at S.E.S.S. during the period, along with several dozen pairs of California Gulls (KCM). Two or 3 Franklin's Gulls were present at S.E.S.S. through the summer, and another was in Santa Barbara 26 Jun (KKa); an ad. at C.L. 10 Jul (SLS) and a juv. at S.E.S.S. 13 Jul (GMcC) were the first of the fall migrants. The Little Gull found at S.E.S.S. 12 Apr remained through 26 Jul (GMcC), at

which time it had molted into second-winter plumage. A pair of Heermann's Gulls attempted unsuccessfully to nest in Shell Beach, *San Luis Obispo* in Jun (BKS), and single birds at S.E.S.S. 12 Jun (MBS) and 26 Jul (GMcC) were inland, where rare. A worn first-summer Mew Gull in Cayucos, *San Luis Obispo* 17 Jun-1 Jul (DML) was evidently summering locally. An ad. Yellow-footed Gull near Imperial Beach 23 Jul (TS) was one of a very few to be found on the coast of California. Worn Glaucous-winged Gulls were inland at S.E.S.S. 27-31 May (JM) and at N.E.S.S. 10 Jun (CMcG). A Sabine's Gull was visible from shore at S.C.R.E. 27 Jul (KKr).

Over 170 pairs of Gull-billed Terns enjoyed a moderately successful breeding season at S.E.S.S. this year, with up to 90 young fledged, some 700 pairs of Caspian Terns also nested with good success there (KCM). Officials are investigating the deliberate destruction of a colony of several hundred pairs of Caspian and Elegant Terns, along with at least one pair each of Royal Terns and Black Skimmers, on two barges moored within Long Beach Harbor at the end of Jun (TA); the young were washed into the water, where most drowned. A count of 75 Elegant Terns on San Clemente I. 29 Jul (SWS) is the largest number recorded on that island. A group of over 100 Common Terns off San Diego 9 Jun (MJB) was probably summering locally. At least 8 Least Terns were present at S.E.S.S. during the summer (GMcC), but breeding at this inland locality has yet to be established. Black Skimmer nesting efforts at the Salton Sea were erratic and late; up to 1200 ads. were present, but nesting attempts (which continued into Sep) yielded few young by the end of Aug (KCM). A Pigeon Guillemot at Newport Beach 26-27 Jul (MJI) was unusually far south.

PIGEONS THROUGH JAYS

Single Band-tailed Pigeons on San Clemente I 8 & 25 Jul (JEB) were far outside the species' normal range. At a time when numbers of the



This summering immature Mew Gull, photographed at Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County, California 17 June 2006, shows the worn and bleached flight feathers on the wings typically present on northern gulls summering in southern California. Photograph by Davis M. Lawrence.



One of at least eight Least Terns present around the south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial County, California through the summer, this individual was photographed on 22 June 2006. Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.

introduced Spotted Dove are crashing, it was a surprise to find a pair with 2 recently fledged young in Niland 21 May (GMcC), establishing the first breeding record for *Imperial*. Single White-winged Doves were found along the coast on Point Loma, *San Diego* 17 Jul (PU) and in Carson, *Los Angeles* 30 Jul (KGL), where rare, and another in Independence, *Inyo* 20 Jul (RAH) was n. of the species' normal range. A Ruddy Ground-Dove near El Centro, *Imperial* 30 Jul+ (KZK) was the only one found away from the small resident population near Calipatria, *Imperial*. Single Yellow-billed Cuckoos along San Felipe Cr. in e. *San Diego* 24 Jun–8 Jul (PJ) and on the San Luis Rey R. near Oceanside, *San Diego* 3 Aug (KF) were in suitable breeding habitat, but one in El Centro 18 Jun (BK) was a late spring migrant in an area where few have been recorded.

A Short-eared Owl at PP. 25 Jun (MvanN) was in an area where breeding is unknown. A Lesser Nighthawk, rare on the coast of *San Luis Obispo*, was in Los Osos 19 Jun (GPS). The only Chimney Swifts reported were 2 near El Capitan State Beach, *Santa Barbara* 26 Jun (WTF). Two Vaux's Swifts, a species not known to nest in s. California, were at Ragged Pt. in nw. *San Luis Obispo* 15 Jul (TME). A male Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Heart Bar campground in the San Bernardino Mts. 24 Jun–8 Jul (JEP) was w. of the species' normal range. A Downy Woodpecker on Pt. Loma, *San Diego* 16–23 Jul (CGE) was far from typical habitat. A Red-naped Sapsucker on Mt. Palomar, *San Diego* 8 Jul (PU) was outside the species' known breeding range. A truly lost Northern Flicker was at C.L. 18–21 Jul (SLS).

A singing Olive-sided Flycatcher was in Upper Trabuco Canyon, *Orange* 23 Jun (DV); breeding was last recorded in the Santa Ana Mts. in 1941. A Greater Pewee on Clark Mt., *San Bernardino* 27 May–3 Jun (SBT, DHu) was the first for this locality and established only the 2nd late-spring/summer record for Cali-

ornia. A tardy Western Wood-Pewee at G.H.P. 28 Jun (K&BK) was the latest ever found on the e. *Kern* deserts. Willow Flycatchers of the endangered subspecies *extimus* barely hang on in the Region; at least 16 males and 15 females were found at S.F.K.R.P. (MW), and a pair fledged 2 young in Fillmore, *Ventura* (JG). Two fledgling Say's Phoebes in Playa del Rey 17 Jul (JC) established the first nesting record for that coastal region of *Los Angeles*. Vagrant Eastern Kingbirds were noted at L. Cachuma, *Santa Barbara* 22 Jun (CP) and in Irvine, *Orange* 17 Jul (MTH).

The presence of 3 singing male Hutton's Vireos on San Clemente I. 13 Jul (SWS) suggests the possible establishment of a small population there. A pair of Warbling Vireos along the Santa Clara R. in Santa Paula, *Ventu-*



This male Northern Cardinal in Blythe, Riverside County, California, photographed on the second day of its known 6–8 June 2006 stay, was at the extreme western edge of the species' range in the Southwest, and possibly the only one on the California side of the Colorado River. Photograph by Roger Higson.

ra 28 May–15 Jun (JG) was the first to be confirmed nesting there in 17 years of survey work. A Red-eyed Vireo was singing in Long Beach 18 Jun (KGL), and another was at S.F.K.R.P. 6 Jul (BB). A Pinyon Jay found dead in Inyokern 24 Jul (LK) was the first to be found in summer in the *Kern* desert lowlands.

SWALLOWS THROUGH FINCHES

Several pairs of Purple Martins successfully nested near Atascadero, *San Luis Obispo* in Jun (MLS), and the presence of up to 35 birds

at Lost L. in Cajon Pass, *San Bernardino* 16 Jul–7 Aug (DG) suggests a nearby breeding colony. A Mountain Chickadee in Santa Barbara 27 Jun (KB) was the first to be found in summer in coastal *Santa Barbara*; one in West Covina, *Los Angeles* 27 Jun (AL) was well below breeding habitat. Two Bushtits, rare in the Salton Sink, were at N.E.S.S. 10 Jun (MSanM).

Five singing Winter Wrens at Montaña de Oro S.P., *San Luis Obispo* 9 Jul (AFS) were at the s. end of the species' breeding range. Recent breeding records miles from the nearest known populations have suggested that at least some California Gnatcatchers are capable of substantial dispersal, but it was still a shock to receive a well-documented report of a single bird just s. of Gorman, *Los Angeles* 12 Jul (BED); this is some 50 km n. of the nearest possible remnant population in the Santa Clarita area and much farther from any known significant population. A Townsend's Solitaire on Pt. Loma 11 Jun (MJB) was well away from breeding areas. A Swainson's Thrush at G.H.P. 29 Jun (K&BK) was exceptionally late for the desert lowlands. A Hermit Thrush at Lower Bear Campground in the San Rafael Mts., *Santa Barbara* 18 Jun (WTF) was the 3rd found in this area in summer; 2 singing birds in the Bigcone Douglas-fir belt of the San Gabriel Mts. in Jun (LB, MSanM) were far below known breeding habitat in this range. A Brown Thrasher was at Deep Springs, *Inyo* 4 Jun (C&RH). At least two pairs of American Pipits nested at an elevation of 3450 m at High L. in the Cottonwood Lakes Basin, *Inyo* (LRB); a nest with 5 chicks was photographed on 29 Jun, establishing one of the few documented nestings for the Region.

Lucy's Warblers may have nested near Brawley, *Imperial* (GMcC), with an ad. and at least 2 imms. noted together 26 Jul; an early coastal vagrant was in Del Mar, *San Diego* 31 Jul (RAE). Late Northern Parulas, not cited in the spring report, were in Goleta 19 Jun (NAL) and near El Centro 28 Jun (KZK). A Hermit Warbler in Long Beach 30 Jul (KGL) was an exceptionally early coastal migrant. Five American Redstarts were noted during the period; the most exceptional of these was a female paired with a male Yellow Warbler and attending a nest with (presumed hybrid) young in Bel Air, *Los Angeles* in late Jun and Jul (JMD). Black-and-white Warblers were nw. of Calipatria 5 Jun (JM), in Ridgecrest, *Kern* 13 Jun (SLS), and in Huntington Beach 24 Jun–5 Aug (BED). A nesting pair of Painted Redstarts returned to Agua Dulce Cr. in the Laguna Mts., *San Diego* 17 Jun–8 Jul (DWA).

A male Hepatic Tanager returned to Agua Dulce Cr., Laguna Mts. 1–8 Jul (BM, MJB,



This lost female Rose-breasted Grosbeak joined House Finches at a feeder near El Centro, Imperial County, California on 8 July 2006 but was gone the following day. Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.

MTH); a pair was also at the traditional site at Arrastre Cr. in the San Bernardino Mts. (AEK). A nesting pair of Summer Tanagers in Jacumba through the period (EK, MUE) extended this species' limited breeding range in San Diego. A singing male Western Tanager in Huntington Beach 16-20 Jun (DC, BED) was well away from nesting habitat.

Black-chinned Sparrows were found singing in two canyons on San Clemente 1. 3 Jun-7 Jul, with nesting confirmed for the first time on the island (SWS). A Black-throated Sparrow on Otay Mt., San Diego 22 Jun (MBS) was well away from breeding areas. The earliest Large-billed Savannah Sparrow on the coast was at Oceanside, San Diego 22 Jul (KW). A Golden-crowned Sparrow at G.H.P. 13 Jun (K&BK) was exceptionally late but was overshadowed by a bird at a feeder s. of Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo 2-20 Jul (AFS). A nesting pair of Dark-eyed Juncos in Rancho Palos Verdes, Los Angeles 20 Jul (KGL) established the first breeding record for the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

A male Northern Cardinal in Blythe, Riverside 6-8 Jun (RH) was one of the few recently found on the lower Colorado River. The season's outstanding rarity was a male Yellow Grosbeak at Keough's Hot Springs, s. of Bishop, Inyo 31 Jul-2 Aug (EP-G, CK). Although

plumage and bill anomalies recalled the individual that frequented an Albuquerque, New Mexico feeder in 2005-2006, there were demonstrable differences; the C.B.R.C. is reviewing this record, which would be a first for California if accepted. The late spring push of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks continued through the summer period; a dozen birds were reported in the coastal counties 1 Jun-24 Jul, with others s. of Big Pine, Inyo 3 Jul (RG) and near El Centro 8 Jul (KZK). Eight singing male Indigo Buntings in the Region 4 Jun-30 Jul were as expected.

Single male Bobolinks were on San Clemente 1. 8-9 Jun (SCH) and near Westmorland, Imperial 2 Jul (JM). Up to 6 male Tricolored Blackbirds at a dairy near Seeley 16 Jul+ (MJB) were exceptional for the Imperial Valley. Up to 20 Bronzed Cowbirds in the Imperial Valley through the period (GMCC) point to this species' increase in that area. Lawrence's Goldfinches nesting at Glacier Lodge, Inyo 10 Jun-23 Jul (DHo, RAH, T&JH) were at an exceptionally high elevation and in a portion of the Region where rare. Six Evening Grosbeaks on Big Pine Mt., Santa Barbara 17 Jun (WTF) and 2 on Mt. Pinos, Ventura 1 Jul (LC) were apparently remnants of the late-spring irruption in these areas.

Corrigendum: In the summer issue (*North American Birds* 60 436), the Mississippi Kite was photographed by Daryl Coldren, not Edward R. Pandolfino.

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