

Field Notes

(May - June 2013)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Bitterns

A group of six to eight **Greater White-fronted Geese** found along lower San Francisco Creek in the third week of January remained through the period, spending time in both counties (m.ob.). Three birds were at the Coyote Creek GC on 7 Feb (MMR, NM) and singles were at Lake Cunningham 1-14 Feb (JPa, KBu, RWR, FV) and in Shoreline Park on 27 Feb (AME). The single **Snow Goose** wintering in New Chicago Marsh and fields south of Los Esteros was joined by two others on 20 Feb (RWR, FV, BM) and the three remained at least through 25 Feb (v.ob.). They were joined as well by at least one **Ross's Goose** over that period (v.ob.). The immature **Ross's Goose** at Lake Cunningham remained there at least through 17 Feb (v.ob.). A group of five **Tundra Swans** was found north of Bloomfield Road on 6 Feb (WGB) and were seen there irregularly through 2 Mar (v.ob.). A single Tundra Swan, with a stained head and neck was found in the Ogier Avenue ponds on 25 Mar (HD), but did not remain. At least seven **Eurasian Wigeon** were still on Pond A14 in Alviso on 2 Mar (MMR, MJM) but had dropped to one by 24 Mar (MMR, RGJ, MJM, LCr). A flooded pond off of Moffett Field had one to three males for most of the period (RFu, v.ob.). One to three male Eurasians continued at the South County Regional Waste Water Authority treatment ponds in Gilroy through most of the period as well. A male Eurasian Wigeon found during the last period inland on a pond in Anderson CP was seen again on 7 Mar (BH) and 13 Mar (H&GW). **Blue-winged Teal** continued to turn up in New Chicago Marsh through the period, either along Artesian (Mallard) Slough or on the ponds at State and Spreckles, generally one or two birds (m.ob.). Three males and two females were seen on Pond A3W on 22 Feb (SW), and a couple of Blue-wings were seen there again or nearby into March (v.ob.). Single birds in inland locations included a female on Thompson Creek above Tully Road on 1 Feb (JPa, KBu) and a male in a channel along Hwy 101 near Cochrane Road on 7 Feb (MMR, NM). The numbers of **Redheads** seen in March are usually in single digits so those remaining on Pond A3W this year were a surprise. From 100 to 190 birds were found through the period; 190 there on 3 Feb (RFu), 100+ on 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM). The continuing hybrid male **Bufflehead X Common Goldeneye** was seen on Shoreline Lake again in early March (v.ob.). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** showed up at Shoreline Lake on 20 Feb (JTh) and has stayed through

the end of the period (m.ob.). A 1st-winter **Red-throated Loon** was found on Shoreline Lake on 22 Mar (GL, PLD) and has remained through the end of the period (m.ob.). A **Red-necked Grebe** was found on 22 Feb (BWh *fide* GZ) and was seen once again on 25 Feb (PDu), our first record since 2006. An **American Bittern** has been found more or less regularly near the entrance channel of the Mountain View Forebay over the period (m.ob.). Surprisingly, a second bittern has been seen there, once on 14 Feb (PLaT) and another time on 12 Mar (JMa).

Eagles through Swallows

The nesting pair of **Bald Eagles** on the west side of Calaveras Reservoir are using their

A Red-necked Grebe, a Swainson's Hawk, a Townsend's Solitaire, and a plethora of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers highlighted the period

lower nest this year, first recorded 17 Feb (RGJ). Other nesting pairs have been seen where they have nested in the past but no breeding activities have been recorded. A light morph **Swainson's Hawk** was seen flying north through Ed Levin CP on 24 Mar (ViT), a spring migrant. The adult and juvenile **Ferruginous Hawks** in the Coyote Valley were last seen on 14 Mar (RPh). Single Ferruginous were seen along Coyote Ridge on 13 and 16 Feb (CE). A rufous morph was seen at Ed Levin CP on 15 Mar (PDu). Flatlands **Prairie Falcons** seen in Coyote Valley on 20 Feb (LMy) and over Chesbro Reservoir on 10 Mar (AV) may be the same wintering bird. One along the Pajaro River at the county line on 1 Mar (AR) is from an area with few previous reports. The absence of **Snowy Plovers**

in the South Bay this winter may be related to high water levels from the December rains. At least two birds were heard near Moffett Field on the night of 23 Mar (RFu, MMR), the first this year. Single **Lesser Yellowlegs** included one over the Alviso EEC on 10 Feb (RFu) and another nearby at the ponds next to State and Spreckles on 31 Mar (MDo). Thirty-seven **Sanderling** was a good count in Pond A14 on 2 Mar (MMR, MJM), smaller numbers were seen in nearby ponds during the month (v.ob.). It has been a poor winter for seeing **Glaucous Gulls**, the only one during the period was a 1st-cycle bird at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 16 Feb (AME). A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen on the alluvial soils of Pacheco Creek northeast of Casa de Fruta on 10 Mar (DLSu). Another roadrunner continued to be seen on private lands in the Santa Teresa hills and it was heard cooing on 24 Mar (JPa). **Short-eared Owls** found during the period included one at the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 6 Feb (PDu), at least one bird in Coyote Valley 22 Feb through 12 Mar (RWR, FV, v.ob.), possibly a lingering bird in the Palo Alto FCB on 1 Mar (T&CS), and one near the Twin Creeks sports complex in Sunnyvale on 10 Mar (RFu). Six male **Rufous Hummingbirds** at Ed Levin CP on 10 Mar (RFu) were the first of these migrating gems. Other migrating Rufous were found at five other locations during the period. The first male **Allen's Hummingbird** was seen along Coyote Creek near Sycamore Drive in Milpitas on 12 Feb (PDu). This species is now a rarely observed breeder so a female building a nest at the Arastradero Preserve on 19 Mar (MB) was a great find. Three **Lewis's Woodpeckers** in San Antonio Valley on 3 Feb (GHa) were in an area where they nest each year, but one in Deer Valley in Joseph Grant CP on 10 Feb (MO'B, DR) was in the western Diablo where seldom found. It has been an exceptional winter for **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**. Two 1st-winter males continued in the period with the Ed Levin CP bird seen through 15 Mar (MDo, m.ob.) and the Stevens Creek CP bird found through 12 Mar (JPa et al., m.ob.). Adding to these was an adult female near Thompson Creek at Quimby on 3 Feb (AV) and an adult male at Arastradero and Page Mill roads on 10 Mar (SEM). The **Eastern Phoebe** wintering at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds was last seen on 5 Mar (AV). An early migrating male **Purple Martin** in western Morgan Hill on 26 Mar (SCR) was a surprise.

Nuthatches through Sparrows

The **Red-breasted Nuthatch** flight year continued with birds lingering in the Diablo Range and the flatlands. The high count in the yellow pines in Henry Coe SP was 10 on 21 Feb (WGB) while flatland birds were all singletons (m.ob.). A surprise in this flight year was a single **Pygmy Nuthatch** in Henry



Red-necked Grebe
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

Field Notes *cont'd*

Coe SP on 13 Mar (H&GW), likely a Sierran bird rather than one of our sedentary coastal birds. A **House Wren** wintering near Hicks and Alamitos roads was seen again on 2 Mar (JPa). Similarly, two **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** along the Stile Ranch Trail in Santa Teresa CP on 3 Feb (GHa) are considered wintering birds. Single **American Dippers** were seen in Stevens Creek Canyon on 1 and 17 Mar (MJM, LCr, FV). A pair was seen along Los Gatos Creek above town on 12 Mar (JPa et al.). A female **Golden-crowned Kinglet** in Rancho Canada del Oro OSP on 19 Mar (JPa) was likely on the move; a bird along Page Mill Road in Monte Bello OSP on 27 Mar (BM) may be a local resident. It's been a couple of winters since we've found **Townsend's Solitaire**. There was a delayed report of one on Mt. Hamilton on 2 Jan (KHo et al.). Another was found on the Center Flats Trail in Henry Coe SP on 3 Mar (JY). A male **Phainopepla** was found along Roop Road across from the Mendoza Ranch entrance on 11 Feb (JTh et al.) and 13 Mar (JJo et al.). The will-o-the-wisp **Northern Waterthrush** was found only three times in the Charleston Road marsh: 24 Feb (SCT), 23 Mar (BalS), and 31 Mar (RGJ). The **Cape May Warbler** found in January along San Francisquito Creek was last seen 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM, m.ob.) for a two-month stay. By the end of February it had developed its chestnut cheek patch and had replaced most of the stained and matted feathers next to its bill. The **Yellow Warbler** wintering in the Palo Alto Baylands was seen again on 14 Feb (MDo) and 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM). Another wintering bird was found along Artesian (Mallard) Slough on 26 Mar (JTh). The continuing **Palm Warbler** in the Sunnyvale Baylands Park was seen again on 23 Feb (WGB) and 3 Mar (RGJ et al.). A different Palm was found in the Charleston Road marsh on 2 Feb (DPe). A wintering **Hermit Warbler** was seen in La Rinconada Park in Los Gatos on 13 Mar (GZ), the third this winter. Three **Chipping Sparrows** at Jeffrey Fontana Park on 6 Mar (JPa) may have been part of wintering flock seldom found this winter. Two **Grasshopper Sparrows** seen in Ed Levin CP on 10 Mar (SEM) were part of an



Townsend's Solitaire
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

unusually early vanguard, the median arrival date is 22 Mar. Six **White-throated Sparrows** were found during the period. A bird wintering at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park was seen again on 5 Feb (RWR, FV) and 23 Feb (WGB). This bird has been found again in April. Two birds were at the Ulistac Natural Area on 23 Feb (JPa et al.) and one was there 3 Mar (DNi, JB). A fourth bird was found along San Francisquito Creek below Hwy 101 on 11 Mar (JMa) and was seen again on 18 Mar (WGB). One was along Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 on 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM) and another was singing on Miranda Avenue in Palo Alto on 31 Mar (RFu).

Tanagers through Evening Grosbeaks

A wintering **Western Tanager** was seen at Vasona CP on 12 Feb (GZ) and one was heard along San Francisquito Creek below El Camino on 15 Mar (CBa). A 1st-winter male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** found at a Los Gatos feeder in December was last seen on 10 Feb (LSu). **Great-tailed Grackles** were particularly numerous around Lake Cunningham in February with a peak count of 19 on 2 Feb (AV). Four to 12 birds were at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 24-26 Mar (KHo et al., MJM). Single males have been near the Lockheed Martin ponds 11-27 Mar (PBr, BM) and at Cottonwood Lake 13-14 Mar (MJM). A wintering 1st-winter male **Bullock's Oriole** was found in the Ulistac Natural Area on 2 Feb (KBu, JPa) and it is likely that the same male was seen there again on 3 Mar (DNi). The female **Baltimore Oriole** found along San Francisquito Creek in January in the same area as the Cape May Warbler was found again on 26 Feb (SK) and remained at least through 17 Mar (ChW, m.ob.). Wintering **Red Crossbills** in Henry Coe SP were seen again on 21 Feb (WGB) and 7 Mar (BH, CL), with 40 counted on the latter date. A single bird was found east of Mt. Hamilton on 3 Feb (GHa). The **Pine Siskin** winter flight has continued with large numbers in February (200 on Mango Avenue in Sunnyvale about 2 Feb, LWR), but has started to taper off in March (31 in Charleston Road marsh on 13 Mar, WGB). A single male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was last reported at a Hidden Villa feeder on 8 Feb (GHa). The first influx of flatland Lawrence's were nine along San Felipe Road, a male singing at Gavilan College, and another male singing in a Morgan Hill yard, all on 16 Mar (SCR). The winter flight of **Evening Grosbeaks** started to peter out during the period as they consumed their Chinese pistache berries. There were no reports from Mountain View and Los Altos, and 17 birds at HP on Page Mill Road on 6 Feb (FT) were the last reported from that area. But birds did continue in Sunnyvale (MSa, MMR, v.ob.), mostly on Mango and Knickerbocker avenues. Thirteen were sighted on 18 Feb (MSa), 15 tallied on 8 Mar (KJo), and 14 nearby on Molino and West Olive on 13 Mar (MMR). The last report was



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Photo courtesy of Peter LaTourrette

of two on 22 Mar (MMR). Elsewhere, small numbers were seen along San Francisquito Creek below Hwy 101 with two there on 28 Feb (FT), one on 2 Mar (SCR et al.), and 12 flying over on 22 Mar (RFu).

Observers: Charlie Bacon (CBa), John Blake-lock (JB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Patty Brown (PBr), Karen Burnson (KBu), Lea Crisp (LCr), Helen Daley (HD), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PLD), Pete Duntun (PDu), Craig Edgerton (CE), Al Eisner (AME), Rob Furrow (RFu), Beth Hamel (BH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Kirsten Holmquist (KHo), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Jim Johnson (JJo), Kent Johnson (KJo), Sandy Koonce (SK), Caroline Lambert (CL), Pete LaTourrette (PLaT), Garrett Lau (GL), Nateri Madavan (NM), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Juliana Manoliu (JMa), Brooke Miller (BM), Steve Miller (SEM), Lisa Myers (LMY), David Nickerson (DNi), Matt O'Brien (MO'B), Janna Pauser (JPa), Don Pendleton (DPe), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Laurie West Roberts (LWR), Dave Rocha (DR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Mike Sabin (MSa), Bilal al Shahwany (BalS), Tate & Curtis Snyder (T&CS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Jim Thomas (JTh), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Francis Toldi (FT), Steve Tracey (SCT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Hanny & Geert Waarts (H&GW), Bryan White (BWh), Shane Wilson (SW), Chris Wolfe (ChW), James Yurchenco (JY), and Gena Zolotar (GZ).

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