

# Field Notes

*(October 2013-November 2013)*

by Bill Bousman

## Geese through Hawks

The first **Greater White-fronted Geese** of the season were two over Coyote Creek above Hwy 237 on 10 Oct (PDU). A juvenile was at Lake Cunningham 23 Oct to at least 15 Nov (JPa, KBu). Of the five swans on outer Pond A3W on 17 Nov (FV et al.), two were **Tundras** and were identified on 19 Nov (SEM) and 24 Nov (MJM). The first **Eurasian Wigeon** of the season was on Pond A14 in Alviso on 29 Sep (MJM, RGJ). Males have continued there into November (v.ob.) with two on 26 Oct (MH). A single male was at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 2 Oct (MMR, MJM) and was there at least through 15 Oct (v.ob.). Another male was on Pond A3W on 31 Oct-21 Nov (RWR, BM). **Blue-winged Teal** were found again, two males at the SCRWA ponds on 15 Oct (WGB). The first Blue-wingeds of the season on Artesian (Mallard) Slough in Alviso were two males on 23 Oct (MJM) and these teal were found there through the period (v.ob.) including two males and two females on 29 Nov and two more males nearby over Pond A16 (both WGB). A female Blue-winged stopped by the Mountain View Forebay on 6 Nov (MDo). One of our less frequent duck hybrids, a male **Cinnamon X Blue-winged Teal** was in Artesian Slough on 29 Nov (WGB). Eight **Redhead** showed up in the Alviso ponds on 29 Sep (MJM, RGJ). The peak count there during the period was 54 on 20 Oct (MMR), much less than have been there in recent years. The first of the season **Barrow's Goldeneye** was a male at Shoreline Lake on 26 Nov (SEM, KO), perhaps it will stay around. Our only loon for the period was a **Common Loon** at Calero Reservoir on 2 Oct (PDU). As in a number of recent years, a **Pelagic Cormorant** showed up on the Alviso ponds on 18 Oct (WGB) and was seen there at least through 17 Nov (v.ob.). An **American Bittern** was found in the entrance channel of the Mountain View Forebay on 5 Oct (KDeM et al.) and has remained into November (v.ob.). Other wintering bitterns included one along the Guadalupe River below Coleman on 14 Oct (JPa), a second

along Alviso Slough on 3 Nov (MH), and the third over Triangle Marsh on 17 Nov (JBr, WBr). A single **White-faced Ibis** over the Alviso ponds on 11 Nov (JaL) and a second one foraging in the Mountain View Forebay on 13 Nov (JMD) may be birds attempting to winter. A **Broad-winged Hawk** soaring west of I-680 in San Jose on 8 Oct (JLo) was the second migrant this fall (and both over urban areas). A light morph juvenile **Swainson's Hawk** was seen over New Almaden on 13 Nov (JPa et al.). Both an adult and a juvenile **Ferruginous Hawk** have been seen in the

*Alviso provided both a Yellow Rail and a juvenile Bar-tailed Godwit, both exceptional finds*

Coyote Valley through the period (m.ob.). A juvenile at the end of Marsh Road on 11 Nov (WGB) was the only other report.

## Rails through Terns

Astounding was a **Yellow Rail** grounded at the Alviso EEC on 22 Oct (GKe) and was well photographed in the parking lot there. This is only the third recent county record of this secretive rail. A **Sandhill Crane** made a brief visit to the Palo Alto FCB on 4 Oct (MMR et al.). A few **Snowy Plovers** have used the Alviso ponds during the period (v.ob.) with a high count of four on 5 Oct (MMR). The concentration of **Lesser Yellowlegs** in New Chicago Marsh at the end of Gold

Street continued through 19 Oct (v.ob.) with a high count of 5 on 8 Oct (MMR). Single birds were also seen in Pond A16 on 23 Oct (MJM), Pond A15 on 26 Oct (MH), the Palo Alto Baylands on 7 Nov (JMa), and New Chicago Marsh on 16 Nov (MJM). During an SFBBO shorebird survey in the South Bay on 15 Nov, the party covering the Alviso ponds spotted a juvenile **Bar-tailed Godwit** in Pond A15 (MMR, MJM, LCr). This is only our third county record of this species that is famed for its migratory flights from the arctic to the South China Sea and then on to New Zealand. The bird shifted over to Pond A9 where it joined more than 37,000 shorebirds including 1,240 Marbled Godwits. Luckily, it remained through 18 Nov (m.ob.), although often a challenge to find amongst so many godwits and other large shorebirds. A late **Black Turnstone** was seen on Pond A15 on 5 Oct (MH). **Red Knots** continued to use Ponds A9 and A15 as a high-tide roost during the period. The high count was of 57 birds flying out of A9 as the tide dropped on 15 Nov (MMR, MJM, LCr, SCR). The **Baird's Sandpiper** passage was nearly nonexistent, saved only by a late juvenile in Pond A15 on 8 Oct (MMR). Somewhat better, the **Pectoral Sandpiper** passage petered out with two to six birds in the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 2-10 Oct (MMR, MJM, RWR, FV) and a single bird in the Lockheed Martin marsh and ponds on 4 Oct (MMR et al.). **Elegant Terns** lingered during the period with a high count of 55 on Pond A11 on 3 Nov (MH) and the last one seen on 17 Nov (BM).

## Roadrunners through Dippers

The only report of a **Greater Roadrunner** was one along Del Puerto Road on 24 Oct (WGB). A **Short-eared Owl** was seen in the marsh along Coyote Creek north of Pond A9 on 17 Nov (MDo, KDo). The last of the **Vaux's Swift** passage was of six birds over Monte Bello OSP on 7 Oct (GHa). The HY male **Costa's Hummingbird** remained at Vasona CP through the end of the period (m.ob.). It has been there for at least three months and three weeks, beating out a 1996 male that stayed at a feeder in San Jose for at least three months and a week, but falls short of the female at a Morgan Hill feeder that remained for about five months and a



*Bar-tailed Godwit (female)  
©Tom Grey*

## Field Notes *cont'd*



Yellow Rail  
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week in 2011 and 2012. A female Costa's was seen along Alum Rock Falls Road on 9 Oct (SCR). **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were reported from the San Antonio Valley through October (v.ob.) with a high count of seven on 24 Oct (WGB). A small movement of Lewis's into the western Diablo Range has been observed with one seen above Cherry Flat Reservoir on 9 Oct (SCR) and one or two at Joseph Grant CP on 27 Oct (JJo et al.) and 23 Nov (JTh). An adult male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** showed up in Ed Levin CP on 18 Oct (GZ), likely the same bird seen there last winter. It has been found there through the period (m.ob.). Single **Prairie Falcons** have been seen off Fortini Road on 13 Oct (JPa), in the Coyote Valley on 27 Oct (BM), and along the Calero Creek Trail on 29 Nov (JPa). Presumably these observations are of one bird. A **Tropical Kingbird** was found near the southeast corner of Pond A3W on 30 Oct (BM) and remained at least through 17 Nov (m.ob.). Our nine previous visitors each stayed between one and three days, but this bird remained in the area for nineteen days—pretty neat. Six **Tree Swallows** over Lake Cunningham on 20 Oct (JPa) are probably part of a wintering flock rather than late migrants. We have only a handful of winter records for **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**, so one over the Lockheed Martin channel on 17 Nov (JMD) was of interest. Two **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** in St. Joseph's Hill OSP on 18 Oct (GKe) and four along the Calero Creek Trail on 7 Nov (JPa) may be attempting to overwinter. An **American Dipper** along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road found on 7 Nov (RCP) was at a location used in past years. Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were banded at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) on 6 and 19 Oct (JS). Other records included

two to four birds at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park 14-17 Oct (PKe, RKe, v.ob.) and one in Gilroy (JMy, RPh et al.). The timing suggests a weak fall movement. Two **Sage Thrashers** were found during the period (assuming they were different birds). The first was at Calero CP on 5 Oct (JHi et al.). The second was about one and a half miles east on Laguna Avenue in Coyote Valley (as the thrasher flies) on 25-26 Oct (DNi, v.ob.).

### Phainopepla through Goldfinches

A female **Phainopepla** was near Spring Valley Pond in Ed Levin CP on 23 Nov (K&DB) and was seen again on 25 Nov (KO). **Northern Waterthushes** were found again at the Charleston Road marsh during October (v.ob.) with two seen on 6 Oct (BM). A **Nashville Warbler** was found at the Ulistac Natural Area on 14 Oct (MMR), the second this fall. Banding data from SFBBO (*vide* JS) significantly augmented our fall records for **MacGillivray's Warblers**. Individuals were banded at CCFS on 8 Sep, 11 Sep, 28 Sep, and the last on 5 Oct. Our only **Blackpoll Warbler** this fall was found at the Ulistac Natural Area on 11 Oct (PDu) and was seen over the next two days by many observers. The only **Yellow-breasted Chat** of the fall was a bird captured at CCFS on 2 Oct (JS). The **Clay-colored Sparrow** found along the Guadalupe River Trail in late September was seen once again on 2 Oct (JPa). A **Vesper Sparrow** was seen at the pullout on the top of the Lexington Reservoir Dam on 23 Oct (KA). One or two **Swamp Sparrows** were found along the marsh next to the runway at the Palo Alto Baylands on 1 Nov (MDo) and have remained through the month (m.ob.). The first two **White-throated Sparrows** of the season were found at the Ulistac Natural Area on 11 Oct (PDu) and the Sunnyvale Baylands Park the same day (GZ, PLAT). By the end of period, at least 13 White-throateds had been seen plus two more at feeders. '**Slate-colored**' **Juncos** included one at a Los Gatos feeder on 27 Oct (MH) and a second at Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 26 Nov (SS). A **Summer Tanager** was calling along Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 on 3 Oct (MMR). A female or immature **Blue Grosbeak** was discovered at Ulistac Natural Area on 12 Oct (JPa, GZ, MJM, LCr) and remained at least one more day (m.ob.). A single female-type **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was seen in Coyote

Valley on 10 Oct (JPa) and another bird was flying over Coyote Creek above Hwy 237 the same day (PDu). Goodly numbers of **Great-tailed Grackles** continued at Lake Cunningham through the period with a high count of 47 on 20 Oct (JPa). Five birds were along the Lockheed Martin channel and ponds on 11 Oct (WGB), but appear to have moved on. A single male Great-tailed has been seen from Shoreline Lake to the Palo Alto Duck Pond on 5-28 Nov (m.ob.). **AHY Baltimore Oriole** was found along the Guadalupe River below Coleman Avenue on 25 Nov (JPa, AV) photographic documentation was obtained that day and on 26 Nov (EBa, DFi). The bird was last seen on 27 Nov (JPa, AV, KBU). This is the third Baltimore Oriole in 2013 (out of eight total for the county). A single **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was found at Monte Bello OSP on 8-22 Oct (GHa). At the opposite end of Monte Bello Ridge, three birds were found on 17 Nov (RCP). On the western side of the Diablo Range, a single bird was seen above Cherry Flat Reservoir on 9 Oct (SCR). Along Mines Road and in the San Antonio Valley, 5-23 birds were seen 21-24 Oct (RCi, WGB).

Observers: Kumaran Arul (KA), Katherine & Dorsey Bass (K&DB), Ellen Bateman (EBa), Bill Bousman (WGB), Jim Brooks (JBr), Will Brooks (WBr), Karen Burnson (KBU), Rich Cimino (RCi), Lea Crisp (LCr), Mike Danzenbaker (JMD), Karen DeMello (KDeM), Kelly Dodder (KDo), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Duntun (PDu), Diane Finke (DFi), Garth Harwood (GHa), Jan Hintermeister (JHi), Marcel Holyoak (MH), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Jim Johnson (JJo), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Greg Kerekes (GKe), Peter LaTourrette (PLAT), Jasen Liu (JaL), Jim Lomax (JLo), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Juliana Manoliu (JMa), Brooke Miller (BM), Steve Miller (SEM), Jean Myers (JMy), David Nickerson (DNi), Kurt Ongman (KO), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Josh Scullen (JS), Scott Smithson (SS), Jim Thomas (JTh), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), and Gena Zolotar (GZ).

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