

Field Notes

(June-July 2014)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Shorebirds

The **Greater White-fronted Goose** mentioned in the last report was seen again on 7 Jun (MMR) and 19 Jun (MDo) and is likely oversummering. Another summering (or permanent) white-front was seen in the Morgan Hill Community Park on 21 June (SCR, JD). The only summer report of **Blue-winged Teal** was a pair in the Lockheed Martin channel on 24 Jun (BM). A pair of **Redhead** was found on 8 Jun (MJM) in Pond A16 and remained there at least through 5 Jul (AME). The female-plumaged **White-winged Scoter** on closed refuge ponds was encountered again during surveys 29 Jun to 27 Jul (MMR, MJM, RGJ, JStP). The only **White-faced Ibis** for the period was one at the south end of Calaveras Reservoir on 21 Jun (SCR, JD). The nesting pair of **Swainson's Hawks** in Coyote Valley hatched one young and it fledged about 9 Jul (CL, RPh, v.ob.). A different pair of dark-morph Swainson's were seen in the valley through 7 Jun (SCR). A second-year light-morph Swainson's was seen along Coyote Creek below Crittenden Lane on 7 Jun (MMR), the first record for the Palo Alto SBC. One or more **Black Rails** were heard along Alviso Slough during the period (v.ob.). Two were calling along Alviso Slough near Pond A12 on 2 Jul (WGB) and two were heard in the old marina on 8 Jul (PDu). **Snowy Plovers** appear to have had a successful breeding season in dried-out Crittenden Marsh and the unnamed panne to the north. Good numbers were seen throughout the period with 12 adults and 14 chicks in six broods tallied on 27 Jul (MJM, RGJ). Thirteen birds were counted on Pond A9 in Alviso on 29 Jun (MMR, MJM,

RGJ) but were flooded out in July. Up to four birds have been seen in Pond A13 (v.ob.) and have been trying to nest. An adult **Wandering Tattler** in Pond A11 on 20 Jul (CJo, LAV) was a surprise, our first July record and only the second for the summer period. It has been another poor summer for **Lesser Yellowlegs**, with only one bird seen in New Chicago Marsh on 23 and 28 Jul (RWR, FV, WGB). An alternate **Ruddy Turnstone** was found on Pond

count of 2700+ birds in New Chicago Marsh on 16 Jul (WGB). **Red-necked Phalarope** will not peak until August or September, the high summer count was of at least 500 birds in Pond A12 on 23 Jul (WGB).

Terns through Falcons

The first of the fall-staging **Least Tern** were three on Pond A2E on 4 Jul (WGB). Sixteen the next day (MJM) was the high count for the period and they have remained there through the end of the period (v.ob.). **Black Skimmers** nested on closed refuge ponds this summer with both a fledgling and a precocial young seen on 29 Jun (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A single **Greater Roadrunner** was reported from the edge of Coyote Reservoir during June (v.ob.), sometimes calling. **Vaux's Swifts** again nested in a chimney near the McAbee entrance to Almaden Quicksilver CP, nestlings were heard on 21 Jun (JPa). Summer resident Vaux's were recorded from

the Almaden Valley along the front of the Santa Cruz Mountains into southern San Mateo County. The high count of the period was 12 birds over Paso Los Cerritos near Meridian on 24 Jul (JPa). **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** have continued to be found along the Los Gatos Creek Trail in Willow Glen, at nearby feeders, and along the Alamitos Creek Trail in the Almaden Valley (m.ob.). A fledgling was seen along the Alamitos Creek Trail near Graystone Lane on 4 Jul (LBa, RSTh) and a female on a nest was found nearby the next day (JPa). A fall passage adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** was a surprise at a Morgan Hill feeder 24 Jun to 6 Jul (SCR). Four **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were seen in the San Antonio Valley where they are resident on 5 Jun (WGB). Two nestling **Pileated Woodpeckers** in the nest cavity in Sanborn-Skyline CP mentioned in the previous period fledged about 12 Jun (JJo). One or two fledgling

Breeding Swainson's Hawks and Phainopepla were the high points of the nesting season, other rarities included a Wandering Tattler and an Indigo Bunting.

A16 on 21 Jul and remained there two days (WGB, v.ob.). The first fall **Red Knots** showed up on 22 Jul (BM) with 10 on Pond A9 and at least four have been found there through the end of the period (v.ob.). Extraordinary numbers of adult **Pectoral Sandpipers** have shown up along the coast this summer, our token bird was seen in the New Chicago Marsh on 28 Jul (WGB). The passage of **Wilson's Phalaropes** has been typical this summer with a peak



*Wandering Tattler
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey*

Field Notes *cont'd*

Peregrine Falcons were observed in Larios Canyon on 1 Jun and two young fledged from a nest on a wind tunnel at Moffett Field on 11 Jun (both MMR).

Flycatchers through Swallows

Late spring migrant **Willow Flycatchers** were both singing, one in an Almaden Valley yard on 9 Jun (JPa) and one at the edge of the South County Regional WasteWater Authority treatment ponds in Gilroy on 13 Jun (MMR). **Say's Phoebes** in the valley have continued to surprise this year. One was seen in Coyote Lake CP on 1 Jun (MMR) where they have nested in the past. A nest was found on a wind tunnel at Moffett Field on 7 Jun and fledged two young on 13 Jun (MMR). Birds were found in the vicinity of Moffett Field on 19 and 22 Jul (MMR, BM). A juvenile at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 29 Jul (WGB) may be one of these fledged young or from a different nest. **Cassin's Kingbirds** continued to be seen along San Felipe Road in June (MMR, WGB) and a nest with young was observed 22 Jun (SCR, JD). The Breeding Bird Atlas shows only two breeding locations northwest of urban areas in the county for **Western Kingbird**, but this year birds were found more widely. On 7 Jun (GZ et al.), three were seen near the Stanford Dish where they have nested in past years. On the same day, single birds were also seen south of Foothill Boulevard and El Monte (CJC et al.), at Monte Bello OSP (ViT et al.), at the northeast edge of Moffett Field (MMR), and at the southern edge of closed refuge ponds (MJM). The next day a single bird was found at the Arastradero Preserve (MDo). The single bird at the northeast corner of Moffett Field on 7 Jun appeared territorial. Two birds were seen there on 27 Jul (MJM, RGJ) and three were there on 30 Jul (PDu). It is likely (but unproven) that they nested nearby. A single bird was seen again at the same location in closed refuge ponds on 29 Jun (MMR, MJM, RGJ) and six birds were there on 27

Jul (MJM, RGJ). On the latter date, it was determined that one of the six was an adult and two were recently fledged young, thereby confirming nesting. Two kingbirds were encountered on a visit to Arastradero Preserve on 27 Jun (WGB). Both birds were foraging in a wet area near Arastradero Road and then flying to the northeast, one carrying food, thus the second confirmation for the summer. **Purple Martins** continued in the area of Summit Ridge near Loma Prieta during the period.

Nuthatches through Goldfinches

Summer records or **Red-breasted Nuthatch** of the flatlands are sporadic so one-to-two birds in Mountain View on 29-30 Jul (GZ et al.) was interesting. A **Canyon Wren** was singing in Larios Canyon on 1 Jun (MMR), the only bird found this year. Three **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were found in the forest along Wrights Station and Morrill roads on 21 Jun (SCR, JD). At least three **Cedar Waxwings** were seen along the Alamitos Creek Trail on 12 Jul (JPa), a few birds are found irregularly during the summer. A pair of **Phainopepla** were seen in San Antonio Valley on 10 Jun (LRO, GHa), the female on a nest. A single bird was seen once again in Santa Teresa CP on 2-3 Jul (CEd). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was singing at the upstream end of Coyote Reservoir on 22 Jun (SCR, JD). **Chipping Sparrows** have nested again in the Santa Cruz Mountains at the county border, their last holdout on the west side of the valley. An adult and three fledglings were seen on 21 Jun (SCR, JD) and an adult and two fledglings were there on 28 Jun (RGJ et al.). A white-bellied male **Indigo Bunting** at the Gate 5 pond in Monte Bello on 31 Jul (GHa) showed some possible hybrid characters. A sizeable colony of up to 350 pairs of **Tricolored Blackbirds** nested in the southeast corner of Calero Reservoir 7 to 24 Jun (SCR, v.ob.) with some fledged young. Breeding **Great-tailed Grackles** were successful at Lake Cunningham with at least 12 fledglings seen on 13 Jul (JPa). Small numbers of



Phainopepla
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

Lawrence's Goldfinches were found in three locations in the Diablo Range (v.ob.) with a high count of six birds at Isabel Creek on 10 Jun (LRO, GHa). One to four birds continued in the flatlands along San Felipe Road 1-21 Jun (MMR, SCR, JD). Santa Cruz Mountain birds included at least two in Foothills Park on 7 Jun (JRY, DPo), more were found that day in San Mateo County. A pair was at Monte Bello on 9 Jul (GHa).

Observers: Lisa Avila (LAv), Leonie Batkin (LBa), Bill Bousman (WGB), Charles Coston (CJC), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Jon Dunn (JD), Pete Duntun (PDu), Craig Edgerton (CEd), Al Eisner (AME), Garth Harwood (GHa), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Chris Johnson (CJo), Jim Johnson (JJo), Caroline Lambert (CL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Brooke Miller (BM), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Donna Pomeroy (DPo), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AMR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Logan Rosenberg (LRO), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jennifer Rycenga (JRY), Jason St. Pierre (JStP), Ron Thorn (RStH), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Frank Vanslager (FV), and Gena Zolotar (GZ).

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