

# Field Notes

*(June-July 2015)*

by Pete Dunten

## Ducks through Rails

As many as four adult Northern Pintail were reported from scattered locations around the southern edge of San Francisco Bay in June and July (m. ob.). A female and three ducklings were at the Sunnyvale WPCP on Jul 20 (MJM). Broods have been found in about one year of two over the past 15 years. Uncommon summering ducks included an American Wigeon on Alviso Salt pond A16 July 10 and 18 (RCP, JL, WBr), and Redhead at several locations throughout the period, with a high count of seven on Alviso salt pond A11 on Jul 4 (SCR). Two Surf Scoters were found on or near Shoreline Lake through the period (m. ob.). The Red-throated Loon found on Lexington Reservoir in early May was last seen on Jun 2 (MMR). An American Bittern flying over the Monte Bello OSP was one of the highlights of the Palo Alto Summer Bird Count (SBC) on Jun 6 (GHa et al). Two White-faced Ibis visited the Coast Casey Forebay from Jun 14 to 16 (JR, LF, NA, JL). A pair of Bald Eagles at Felt Lake surprised a counter on the Palo Alto SBC on Jun 6 (CO). One was in the same area Jul 16 (KH). Reports from their usual haunts during the June to July period included birds at Lexington and Calero Reservoirs and Ed Levin CP (m. ob.). A bit further afield was an adult visiting the ponds along the Pacheco Pass Highway from Jul 11 through the end of the month (m. ob.) A pair of Swainson's Hawks nested successfully along Coyote Creek this year, their third in Coyote Valley, with a nestling observed on Jul 16 and 24 (WGB, RPh). An early Sora was spotted on Jul 29 at the Coast Casey Forebay (BB).

## Shorebirds through Skimmers

July brings shorebirds in great numbers, and this July brought a nice variety of uncommon shorebirds. An early migrant was an adult Pacific Golden-Plover present for one day only on Jul 9 at Alviso salt pond A16 (VH, MJM). The high count of Snowy Plovers was made on a survey

*Shorebirds Were on the Move! And a Breeding MacGillivray's Warbler was one of the highlights of the summer.*

on Jun 27, with 13 on Alviso salt pond A13 and six on a closed refuge pond (MJM, MMR, RJ). The Black Oystercatcher favoring the Alviso salt pond A10/A11 levee since Apr 14 was last seen there on Jun 22 (BP). Lesser Yellowlegs arrived in July, with singles (possibly the same bird) at Alviso salt pond A12 on Jul 7 (MJM), Alviso salt pond A16 on Jul 10 (RCP), and New Chicago Marsh on Jul 18 (TH). A Ruddy Turnstone was a nice find



*Pacific Golden-Plover  
Photo courtesy Tom Grey*

on Alviso salt pond A17 at low tide on Jul 17 (WBr, JL). Semipalmated Sandpipers on their way south arrived in the area in July, with three in New Chicago Marsh on Jul 4 (SCR) and one at Alviso salt pond A12 on Jul 18 (WBr, JL). The rarest shorebird found was a Curlew Sandpiper, only the fourth in the county, at New Chicago Marsh on Jul 5 (MJM). It was already in basic plumage. A Dowitcher staying into the summer was unusual at Coast Casey Forebay on Jun 16 (GZ). A Wilson's Snipe at the same location on Jul 28 and two on Jul 29 were early arrivals (BB). This was another good year for the south-bound passage of Wilson's Phalaropes, with 2600 in New Chicago Marsh on Jul 4 (SCR) and 9600 on Jul 25 (MJM, RJ). An unseasonal Mew Gull in tattered plumage was at the Don Edwards NWR EEC on Jul 17 (WGB, MJM). Caspian Terns did well on the newly built islands in Alviso salt pond A16, with a high count of 63, including young birds, tallied on Jul 1 (EE). An Elegant Tern was noted on Jul 21 over Salt pond A3W (MMR). The first Least Terns in the south bay, likely dispersing from breeding colonies further north along the bay, were three over Salt pond A2E on Jul 25 (MJM, RJ). An adult Black Tern on its way south was over the Sunnyvale WPCP east pond, still showing alternate plumage, on Jul 19 (LK, VK). The high count of Black Skimmers was nine at New Chicago Marsh on Jun 11 (WGB). On Jul 17 two chicks were seen together at one of the nest scrapes in New Chicago Marsh (FV).

## Phoebes through Goldfinches

June and July are a time of few arrivals for landbirds. Say's Phoebes were present though the period, with all observers reporting single birds near the bay. One was at Arzino Ranch on Jun 6 (BP); one was at Moffett Field on Jun 6 and 16 (MMR,

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JL); one was at the Sunnyvale WPCP on Jul 5 (BM); and one was near the Twin Creeks Sports Complex on Jul 6 (MS-T). A Purple Martin over Monte Bello OSP was an excellent addition to the Palo Alto SBC on Jun 6 (RF). Additional sightings away from the Loma Prieta area where the Martins nest included six birds over Almaden Reservoir on Jun 11 (JPa) and one over Star Creek Ranch southwest of Gilroy in the Santa Cruz Mountains on Jul 1 (AR). Eight Phainopeplas, including immature birds, were found at the Digger Pine Ranch in the San Antonio Valley on Jul 31 (WGB). A Black-and-white Warbler, unexpected at this time of year, was recorded singing along the Guadalupe River trail on Jun 9 (KG). MacGillivray's Warbler, rare as a breeding bird in the county, was found doing just that at Star Creek Ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains southwest of Gilroy. Two males were singing on Jul 1 and Jul 3, and on Jul 3 a female was seen feeding two juvenile birds (AR). Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler is also an uncommon breeding bird in the Santa Cruz Mountains. An immature together with an adult at Vasona Lake CP on Jul 6 was likely dispersing from that local population (BM). A single bird was reported at Vasona on Jul 24 (JPa, KB). A late-to-depart Yellow-rumped Warbler was reported at Edenvale



Garden Park on Jun 12 (SPv). The Yellow-breasted Chat found at Stevens Creek CP near the reservoir dam at the end of May remained until Jun 2 (OA, SPa). Rose-breasted Grosbeak is unusual in our area at any time of the year; hence one in a yard in San Jose's Almaden neighborhood on Jul 21 was a nice surprise (fide LSu). Lawrence's Goldfinches turned up at many locations in the county, with high counts of 12 at Henry Coe SP on Jun 3 (JY, AL) and 28 at the Digger Pine Ranch in the San Antonio Valley on Jul 31 (WGB). Single birds were at JD Grant CP on Jun 28 (MV), Ogier Ponds on Jul 3 (SCR), and the Willow Glen neighborhood in San Jose on Jul 27 (BM). Two Lawrence's Goldfinches visited Monte Bello OSP on Jul 21 and 24 (GHa).

Observers: Ozzie Altus (OA), Nancy Asquith (NA), Bob Bolles (BB), Will Brooks (WBr), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KB), Elias Elias (EE), Lindy Fung (LF), Rob Farrow (RFu), Kevin Gin (KG), Garth Harwood (GHa), Kharon Hathaway (KH), Victoria Heyse (VH), Tom Hurley (TH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Leena Khanzode (LK), Vivek Khanzode (VK), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Jason Liu (JL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Brooke Miller (BM), Chris O'Connell (CO), Steven Patt (SPa), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergey Pavlov (SPv), Bill Pelletier (BP), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (RCP), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Joseph Rothstein (JR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Matthew Strusis-Timmer (MS-T), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Mike Voydanoff (MV), James Yurchenco (JY), Gina Zolotar (GZ)

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