

Field Notes

(June-July 2016)

by Pete Dunten

Ducks through Bald Eagles

The Redhead is a very rare breeding bird in the county, and as many as three were found at the south end of the bay on dates between 6 Jun and 12 Jul (SHa, WGB, MJM, MMR, RJ), though no evidence of nesting was reported. One of the nice finds on the Palo Alto Summer Bird Count held on 4 Jun, was a late-to-depart Ring-necked Duck on Bear Gulch Reservoir (RCP, SSm). Both Scaup typically leave by the first week of May, though small numbers of Lesser Scaup have been known to nest at the south end of the bay. Lingering Greater Scaup included six males on Alviso salt pond A10 on 26 Jun and a single male on Salt pond A3W on 24 Jul (both MMR, MJM, RJ). Lesser Scaup were reported on eight dates between 26 Jun (MMR, MJM, RJ) and 28 Jul (WGB) with a high count of five on 24 Jul (RJ, MMR, MJM). One to two individuals of another duck uncommon in the summer, Common Goldeneye, were spotted at locations along the south edge of the bay on five dates between 3 Jun (DN) and 28 Jul (WGB). A Red-breasted Merganser found on Salt Pond A1 during the Palo Alto Summer Count on 4 Jun was a nice surprise (WGB). What was likely the same bird was found

*Another pair
of Bald Eagles
raise a family in
the county!*



Juvenile Bald Eagle
Tom Grey

again on Salt Pond A2E as late as 9 Jul (WGB). A single Horned Grebe spent the summer locally at the Sunnyvale WPCP, where it was noted on 6 Jun (SHa) and 12 Jul (WGB). Clark's Grebes attempted nesting on closed refuge ponds again this year. Though nests with eggs were seen on four dates between 4 Jun and 24 Jul, no hatchlings have been spotted (MJM, MMR, RJ). A lone White-faced Ibis visited the Sunnyvale WPCP between 10 and 13 Jun (WGB, ChJ). A pair of Bald Eagles successfully fledged two young at Felt Lake in late June, and the two immatures were seen several times in July from spots bordering the lake (RF, TGr, AJ).

Plovers through Terns

A Golden-Plover at Alviso Salt Pond A13 on 26 Jun was pegged as a Pacific Golden-Plover with the help of its characteristic flight call (MMR, RJ, MJM). A calling Pacific Golden-Plover was found at the same location again on 21 Jul (AR). Four Black Oystercatchers on closed refuge ponds 26 Jun set a record high count for the county (MMR, MJM, RJ). For many shorebirds embarking on fall migration, the adults leave first, followed by the immatures in fresher

plumage. The first immature Least Sandpipers of the fall reached the Gilroy SCRWA on 27 Jul (WGB). Single Semipalmated Sandpipers passing through on their way south stopped at New Chicago Marsh on three dates: 26 Jun (RJ, MMR, MJM), 9 Jul (SCR), and 25 Jul (ChJ). The late July sighting was the first immature of the fall. Immature Western Sandpipers joined older birds in New Chicago Marsh on 22 Jul (WGB). The first Sanderling of the fall was at Gold St and Elizabeth St in Alviso on 24 Jul (BM). Red Knots noted at the tail end of spring migration included 44 on 4 Jun and 33 on 5 Jun on closed south bay refuge ponds (both MJM). The high counts of hundreds of Knots in the spring occur further north in the bay in Alameda and San Mateo counties. A Dowitcher staying for the summer was seen at Mallard Slough on 3 Jun (DN), and the first returning dowitchers of the fall



Pacific Golden-Plover
Tom Grey

were a group of five in New Chicago Marsh on 20 Jun (MJM). The first Wilson's Phalaropes to return were five in New Chicago Marsh on 15 Jun (ChJ). The phalaropes will stay for a time to complete their molt before continuing south for the winter. The high counts of Wilson's Phalaropes were 550 at New Chicago Marsh on 28 Jun

Field Notes *cont'd*

(WBr) and 363 at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 12 Jul (WGB). The first immatures were noted on 12 Jul (WGB). Single immature Herring Gulls were at Salt Pond A3W on 4 Jun and the Sunnyvale WPCP on 18 Jun (both MJM). Caspian Terns had a successful year at Alviso Salt Pond A16, with the high count of 141 including 28 young birds on 28 Jul (WGB). The first Elegant Tern of the season, an immature, was found at Salt Pond A3W on 27 Jul (AR). The first report of Least Terns staging on Salt Pond A2E was on 24 Jul, when six birds were counted (MJM, MMR, RJ). Although the boardwalk is gone, its supporting posts remain and provide perches for the terns. As many as six Least Terns stayed through the end of the month (m. ob.). Four Least Terns were also noted at Alviso Salt Pond A16 on 25 Jul (TU), a location they're not known to remain for any length of time.



Black and White Warbler
Steve Rottenborn



Greater Roadrunner
Tom Grey

Roadrunners through Goldfinches

A Greater Roadrunner was found in Henry Coe SP on 1 Jul (BK) and another at the fire station along Mines Rd in San Antonio Valley on 16 Jul (KWi). Loggerhead Shrikes were reported from four locations, with one along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley on multiple dates in Jun and Jul (DN, WGB), one seen from Arastradero OSP on 17 Jul (RHo), one along Hellyer Ave on 18 Jul (JPa), and two at the Gilroy SCRWA on 27 Jul (WGB). A survey of Mount Thayer on 9 Jun tallied seven Purple Martins (AJ). Mt Thayer is one of the known nesting locations of this species in the Santa Cruz range. A Martin was also at Calero Reservoir on 6 Jul (PDu) and two were over the Los Capitancillos ponds on 12 Jul (AVe). A Bank Swallow was over Calero Reservoir on 3 Jul (PDu) and 5 Jul (ChJ). These dates suggest the bird was a dispersant that had left its breeding colony. Another was found 24 Jul at Mallard Slough (BM). The last-to-depart Cedar Waxwings typically leave in early June. This year the latest waxwings were singles at Monte Bello OSP on 10 Jun (GHa) and along San Francisquito Creek near Geng Rd on 16 Jun (DPe). A

singing Black-and-white Warbler 4 Jun on private land along Llagas Creek in the south county was only the third record for Jun (SCR). Adding to the unseasonal records, a Golden-crowned Sparrow was found at Chitactak-Adams CP on 26 Jul (GM). A Yellow-headed Blackbird visited Alviso Salt Pond A16 at the tail end of spring migration, 13 – 14 Jun (CW, WGB). Lawrence's Goldfinches were found in small numbers in Jun and Jul, with a high count of four in Henry Coe SP on 1 Jul (BK).

Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), Will Brooks (WBr), Pete Dunten (PDu), Ron Fulks (RF), Selimah Harmon (SHa), Garth Harwood (GHa), Richard Hopf (RHo), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Bryan Kett (BK), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Gary Martindale (GM), Brooke Miller (BM), David Nickerson (DN), Janna Pauser (JPa), Don Pendleton (DPe), Bob Power (RCP), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Scott Smithson (SSm), Tom Unsicker (TU), Ann Verdi (AVe), Kiki Widjaja (KWi), Cynthia Worthington (CW)

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