

Field Notes

(October-November 2018)

by Pete Dunten

Greater White-fronted Goose through Red-necked Phalarope

October brought wintering geese back to our area. First to arrive was a **Greater White-fronted Goose**, seen flying over Ulistac NA on 5 Oct (OA). A gaggle of twelve was on the Coyote Creek Golf Course on 14 Oct (SCR). On 13 Oct a **Cackling Goose** flew over Morgan Hill (SCR). A wedge of seventy Cackling Geese followed by an additional twelve flew over Ed Levin CP on 5 Nov (BM). Smaller groups have been found in November at several locations between the bay and Coyote Valley (m. ob.). The

ter was on Alviso Salt Pond A16 on 7 Oct (DWn). The only report away from the bay was of one at the SCRWA Ponds outside Gilroy on 11 – 12 Oct (MJM, DZ, RWR). The hybrid **Cinnamon Teal x Northern Shoveler** was found again on 5 Nov along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road (GL). **Redhead** appear to be having another good year, after the phenomenal winter of 2017-2018, with 2,960 tallied on Pond A3W on 4 Nov (MJM, MMR, RJ). By mid-November, Shoreline Lake hosted both goldeneyes as well as a hybrid between the two. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found on 18 Nov (FV), one day after a hybrid **Barrow's x Common Goldeneye** was noted (STu). Both have stayed through the end of November. A **Common Loon** was on one of the deeper salt ponds in Alviso,

remained robust into November, with 135 censused on Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 4 Nov, together with nineteen additional plovers at other bayside locations on the same date (MJM, MMR, RJ). Single **Ruddy Turnstones** were noted on Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 6 Oct (STu) and in New Chicago Marsh adjacent to State St and Spreckles Ave between 6 Oct and 11 Nov (MJM, MMR, RJ, m. ob.). One to two **Pectoral Sandpipers** frequented the marsh along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road between 15 Oct and 22 Oct (BM, m. ob.). Another stopped at Coast Casey Forebay between 8 – 9 Nov (WGB, m. ob.). A **Baird's Sandpiper** slow to head south stopped at Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 2 Oct (GL). This bird was “late” in the sense that about one in one hundred Baird's Sandpipers in the county have been found after October 1st. A **Ruff** added to the great variety of shorebirds visiting the marsh along the entrance road to Don Edwards NWR on 14 Oct (FV). It was enjoyed by many through 20 Nov. A **Red-necked Phalarope** on 22 Oct in the marsh along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road was also late to head south (BrJ).

Lesser Black-backed Gull through Chestnut-collared Longspur

A second-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was in the gathering of gulls on Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 10 Nov (NoA). **Caspian Terns** took their leave early this year, with the latest report from Don Edwards NWR of a single tern on 21 Oct (BM). **Elegant Tern** numbers tapered from forty on 2 Oct at the Alviso A10/A11 levee (JVs) to twelve at Pond A4 on 5 Nov, the last date they were detected (MDo). At least one **Common Tern** remained with the large group of Forster's Terns near the Alviso A10/A11 levee through 6 Oct (RWR, JVs, ChJ, STu). Two were found there on the last day of September. All the tern activity attracted a **Parasitic Jaeger** to A11 on 3 Oct (RPh). It was seen harassing Forster's Terns, taking advantage of its superiority in the air to relieve the terns of the small fish they labor to catch. A **Common Poorwill** calling on 3 Nov at Santa Teresa CP was unseasonal (JRY). Immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** turned up at two locations in October. First was one at the Santa Clara Valley Water District headquarters on 23 Oct (AVe, JPa, KB). The sapsucker was seen through November and into December (m. ob.). Another immature Sapsucker was discovered at Ulistac NA on 26 Oct



Ruddy Turnstone by Garrett Lau

first **Snow Geese** of the winter were a group of five along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road on 31 Oct (MKi). Further south, one was on Coyote Lake on 3 Nov (ACo) and two were on a field on the outskirts of Morgan Hill on 10 Nov (SCR). Single Snow Geese visited the wetland adjacent to State St and Spreckles Ave in Alviso on 10 Nov (ChJ, BM), the Sunnyvale Community Center lawn on 23 Nov (MMR), the Shoreline Park kite-flying area on 26 Nov (JHu) and the Bay Trail south of Pond A1 on 29 Nov (WGB). Three calling **Tundra Swans** flew over Ogier Ponds on 13 Nov (RH). Forty-five in a V formation flew over the Don Edwards NWR EEC on 26 Nov (BB). Most winters, Tundra Swans aren't found in the county. They last visited in the winter of 2016-2017. The first **Eurasian Wigeon** of the win-

A11, on 6 Oct (STu). Sixty-eight **Brown Pelicans** at Shoreline Lake on 12 Nov (GL) was a good count for a date in November. Two **White-faced Ibises** briefly visited Charleston Slough on 7 Oct (CQ, MTd, BF), and a single ibis was found at the SCRWA outside Gilroy on 11 – 12 Oct (MJM, DZ, RWR). The first **Ferruginous Hawks** to arrive for the winter were single birds at the SJ/SC WTP on 6 Oct (DWn) and along Palm Ave in Coyote Valley on 8 Oct (JPa). A **Pacific Golden-Plover** stayed with Killdeer in the marsh along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road from 16 Oct (JVs) to 30 Oct (m. ob.). A week later the same location hosted an **American Golden-Plover**, the first in the county since 2006. The American Golden-Plover visited from 7 Nov (MDo) through 10 Nov (m. ob.). **Snowy Plover** numbers

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(PLa) and seen through 24 Nov (m. ob.). **Hammond's Flycatchers** are rare in the fall. In addition to the Hammond's found in September, two occurred in October. One was at Ulistac NA on 5 Oct (OA) and another was at Sunnyvale Baylands on 23 Oct (PKe). A **Tropical Kingbird** along the Bay Trail adjacent to Moffett Field on 3 Nov was a nice find (DA). The **Townsend's Solitaire** present at West Valley College since the second week of September stayed until 25 Oct (OA). Another was on Mt Umunhum on 26 Nov (WGB). An invasion of **Mountain Bluebirds** began in November. On the 12th, two were at the Shoreline Park kite flying area (DZ, ST). This is the earliest date Mountain Bluebirds have arrived in the winter. On the 17th, five were hunting from fence lines along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley (STu). Four were still present there on 21 Nov (SPz, TB), and sightings have continued in December. Single **Phainopepla** were noted at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 23 Nov and opposite the Mockingbird Hill entrance to Quicksilver CP on 25 Nov (both JPa). A **Chestnut-collared Longspur** frequented the Shoreline Park kite-flying area between 10 Nov and 15 Nov (SCR, m. ob.). They occur a few times each decade, the last sighting being in 2004.

MacGillivray's Warbler through Scaly-breasted Munia

October saw the end of warbler migration, and a few hardy species were found in November in addition to the regularly wintering Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers. Migrant **MacGillivray's Warblers** visited Ulistac NA on 2 Oct (PB) and Stevens Creek north of Hwy 101 on 14 Oct (SCR). An **American Redstart** at Sunnyvale Baylands on 7 Oct (SCR) was the second this fall. A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Ulistac NA on 5 Oct (OA, m. ob.), the second sighting this fall from that location, a haven for migrants. **Palm Warblers** were found in exceptional numbers beginning in late October. On the 21st, one was at Los Capitancillos Ponds (JPa, KB); on the 29th, one was at the Don Edwards EEC (AMa). Between 10 and 13 Nov, one to two were at Byxbee Park (SCR, m. ob.), and at least one has remained into December (WGB). San Jose's Hogue Park hosted one between 13 and 24 Nov (KB, m. ob.). Finally, one was at the Shoreline Park kite-flying area on 15 Nov (ChH) and two

were near the Moffett Field Golf Course on 16 Nov (SCR). The only **Yellow-breasted Chat** noted this fall was one at the Coyote Creek Field Station on 3 Oct (DWn, WH). Staying late, possibly for the winter, were a **Yellow Warbler** at Ulistac NA on 19 Nov (JRu), a **Black-**

Yellow-headed Blackbirds joined the large blackbird flocks along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley between 8 Oct and 12 Oct (JPa, m. ob.). And on 18 Oct, three **Scaly-breasted Munias** were at a feeder in Morgan Hill, a new location in the county for this exotic species (SCR).



Palm Warbler by Gary Woods

throated Gray Warbler along the Guadalupe River opposite Ulistac NA on 16 Nov (PLa) and another in New Almaden on 25 Nov (JPa), and a **Wilson's Warbler** at the Palo Alto RWQCP on 10 Nov (SCR). Two **Clay-colored Sparrows** were among the attractions at the SCRWA outside Gilroy on 6 Nov (JPa et al.). **Swamp Sparrows** away from the bay outnumbered those wintering near it (or at least were easier to find). The first to arrive, on 23 Oct, was one at Los Gatos CP (JVs). Another was along the Guadalupe River Trail north of Blossom Hill Rd on 20 Nov (JPa, KB) and nearby on 23 – 24 Nov (AVe, EvM). Bayside, one was at the Sunnyvale WP-CP's Moffett Channel on 20 and 21 Nov (PDu, PL). This location is just within the San Jose CBC count circle. The first **White-throated Sparrow** of the season turned up at Sunnyvale Baylands on 9 Oct (PKe). The period brought single **Summer Tanagers** to West Valley College on 30 Oct (OA) and to the Arizona cactus garden at Stanford University on 18 Nov (JU). Neither was found again. A few **Western Tanagers** have chosen to stay in the area as temperatures drop. One has frequented a neighborhood in Mountain View into December (GZ), and two were in a Los Gatos neighborhood on 30 Nov (EvM). One to two

Observers: Ozzie Altus (OA), Dorian Anderson (DA), Noah Arthur (NoA), Patrick Baglee (PB), Terry Blows (TB), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KB), Angela Conry (ACo), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDu), Bob Foehring (BF), Chris Hayward (ChH), Rick Herder (RH), William Hoppes (WH), John Hull (JHu), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Brian Johnson (BrJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Pat Kenny (PKe), Mike Kinberg (MKi), Peter LaTourrette (PLa), Garrett Lau (GL), Patricia Lynch (PL), Aaron Maizlish (AMa), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), multiple observers (m. ob.), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Clarence Quindipan (CQ), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Judy Rudolph (JRu), Jennifer Rycenga (JRy), Michael Todd (MTd), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Julien Ueda (JU), Frank Vanslager (FV), Jason Vassallo (JVs), Ann Verdi (AVe), Dan Wenny (DWn), David Zittin (DZ), Gena Zolotar (GZ)

Please send notice of rarities to Pete Dunten via email at pdunten@gmail.com