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# Field Notes

(June-July 2017)

by Pete Dunten

## Ducks through Terns

**Redheads** were found on Alviso Salt Pond A16 from the beginning of June through the end of July, with a high count of twelve on 29 Jul (STu). On 25 Jun, pairs were noted at three locations, Salt Ponds A16, A10, and Crittenden Marsh (MJM, RJ, MMR). The **Common Loon** at Los Capitancillos Ponds since 22 May stayed through 3 Jun (m. ob.). Another on Salt Pond A3W was one of the highlights of the Palo Alto Summer Count on 3 Jun (MJM). On 12 Jun two were found at Los Gatos Creek CP (OA). Two remained through 21 Jun (m. ob.), and a single Loon was present until 3 Jul (SCR). Seven **Eared Grebe** nests in Crittenden Marsh on 12 Jul (FV) were unexpected; the Grebes

**Bar-tailed Godwit**, the county's fifth, briefly visited Alviso Salt Pond A17 on 23 Jul (WBr) and was not seen again. The subspecies nesting in far northwestern North America normally winters in Australia and New Zealand. A **Little Stint**, the county's third, also took a wrong turn on migration south and found itself in New Chicago Marsh on 30 Jul (WBr) instead of along the coast of south Asia or Africa. Its plumage was much more colorful than the county's second, present Apr - May 2016. The stint has remained at the same location into August. **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were moving south in July, with an immature found in New Chicago Marsh on 2 Jul (MJM) and an adult there from 20 - 24 Jul (RWR, m. ob.). The first **Pectoral Sandpiper** of the fall was a single in New Chicago Marsh on 31 Jul (DN). **Red Knots** were

(WBr). Numbers increased to sixty on one of the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds by 3 Jul (WP, KON). A group of three returning **Red-necked Phalaropes** arrived on 1 Jul at New Chicago Marsh (FV). Their numbers quickly increased as well, with 69 at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 7 Jul (DN). **Elegant Terns** arrived from the south on 12 Jul when one was at the Sunnyvale WPCP (RWR). The high count through the end of July was four seen at Salt Pond A2E on 14, 17, and 30 Jul (RWR, GL, MDo). The first **Common Tern** of the fall was with a group of 60 Forster's Terns at the Sunnyvale WPCP west pond on 20 Jul (P Du). Coming from a bit further north in SF Bay, **Least Terns** also arrived on 12 Jul, when two were at Salt Pond A2E (FV). Numbers increased to a high count of 34 at A2E on 23 Jul (WBr) and fifteen at Alviso Salt Pond A16 the same date (GL, WP).



Wood Thrush by Peter LaTourrette

have not nested in the county since 1993 (fide WGB). Though **Horned Grebes** are usually absent over the summer, one was on the Alviso Salt Ponds on 23 Jun (DY) and 9 Jul (WGB), and another was at Crittenden Marsh between 13 and 16 Jul (WGB, GL, ChJ). Two **White-faced Ibises** flew over New Chicago Marsh on 18 Jul (WBr). A

present in good numbers in June, with 59 tallied on a closed refuge pond during the Palo Alto Summer Count on 3 Jun (WGB) and sixteen on an adjacent closed refuge pond on 25 Jun (MMR, MJM, RJ). The first three **Wilson's Phalaropes** of the fall (and the year) arrived on 28 Jun at Don Edwards NWR

## Swifts through Goldfinches

Though June and July are thought of as the months when nesting activity peaks, a few birds are still headed north in early June. One such bird, a **Black Swift**, passed over Henry Coe SP on 4 Jun (WBr). Nesting by **Vaux's Swifts** was confirmed at five sites in Almaden Valley (JPa). Nuthatches continued to be found in Los Altos, with a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** noted on 3 Jun during the Palo Alto Summer Count (P Du), and a family of five **Pygmy Nuthatches** at a suet feeder in Los Altos on 12 Jun (JT). Pygmy Nuthatches nest in the Santa Cruz Mountains and occasionally at locations on the valley floor. One at Henry Coe SP on 4 Jun (WBr) was found at a location where there are few records. One was also noted at Cuesta Park in Mountain View on 5 and 7 Jun (GZ, DN). The hauntingly beautiful, flute-like song of a **Wood Thrush** was



## Field Notes *cont'd*

a treat along Old Oak Glen Road near Chesbro Reservoir on 1 Jun (MJM, m. ob.). The thrush, a vagrant from the east and a county first, did not stay longer than a day. Two **Cedar Waxwings** at Hellyer CP on 7 Jul were notable (AV), given their rarity at this time of year. Another vagrant from the east, a **Northern Parula**, turned up along the Alamitos Creek Trail

in late May was seen again on the first two days of June (BM, RJ) but not thereafter. The **Blue Grosbeak** found in the south county along the Pajaro River in May was present into July, and on 5 July a family of three Grosbeaks was seen at that location (RWR, FV). Blue Grosbeaks also nested successfully at the CCFS for the first time, with a pair banded on 28 Jun (JSc) and a young bird seen with the adult female on 27 Jul (AR).

found in a flock since May of 2015. A pair of **Lawrence's Goldfinches** was noted in late May at Rancho Canada del Oro (JPa), and on 6 Jul one was seen on a nest (EdG, JPa). As many as four Lawrence's Goldfinches were at the park on 13 Jul (JPa et al.), and the nest was still occupied on 16 Jul (GL, SPz). Three Lawrence's Goldfinches, including one immature, were spotted on IBM land along Bailey Ave on 1 Jun (RH). The high count for the period was 31 goldfinches along Mines and Del Puerto Canyon Roads in the eastern part of the county on 25 Jul (LKa, AC).

**Observers:** Ozzie Altus (OA), John Blakelock (JnB), Terry Blows (TB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Will Brooks (WBr), Anthony Ciancimino (AC), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDu), Ed Gasiorowski (EdG), Rick Herder (RH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Logan Kahle (LKa), Garrett Lau (GL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Brooke Miller (BM), David Nickerson (DN), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Janna Pauser (JPa), William Pelletier (WP), Sergio Perez (SPz), Rob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Josh Scullen (JSc), Mike Shafto (MSh), Jack Tomlin (JT), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Alie Victorine, (AVi), Denny Yang (DY), Gina Zolotar (GZ)



Blue Grosbeak by Peter LaTourrette

on 11 Jun (ChJ). The Parula, only the tenth county record, was also a one-day wonder. Three **Hermit Warblers** at Henry Coe SP on 4 Jun (WBr) were late for migrants. In the county they are known to nest in the Santa Cruz Mountains but not in the Diablo Range. A **White-crowned Sparrow** at the Don Edwards NWR EEC from 4 – 31 July (GL, TB, DN, JnB) was unexpected; there are only a handful of summer records. The **Indigo Bunting** that was first found singing near Ed Levin CP

Nine **Great-tailed Grackles** in the vicinity of the marsh bordered by the Yahoo Campus and Sunnyvale WPCP on 3 and 4 Jun were a high count for that location (MJM, MSh). A single **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was in a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, starlings, and cowbirds near Crittenden Marsh on 30 Jul (STu). Yellow-headed Blackbirds are typically found in higher numbers during spring migration than in the fall. No more than one or two have been

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