

# Field Notes

(February-March 2018)

by Pete Dunten

## Geese through Owls

Small numbers of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were present through the end of March, with high counts of six at the Santa Jose/Santa Clara WPCP (DWN) and nearby Arzino Ranch on 3 Feb (CDB, DDB), twelve at Byxbee Park on 4 Feb (WGB), nine at the Shoreline Lake kite flying area on 12 Mar (GL), and nine nearby at Byxbee Park on 25 Mar (WGB). The high counts of **Cackling Geese** were nineteen on 2 Feb at Los Gatos Creek CP (ER, DZ) and ten on 14 Mar flying over the Coyote Creek Field Station (AR). The hybrid male **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** was noted again in Mallard Slough on 11 and 12 Mar (MJM, JuH, DSc). The **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** at the North

VTA Mitigation Pond stayed through 9 Mar (RJ)

and the Eurasian Teal at Coast Casey Forebay was found through the end of March (MJ, m. ob.). The last date a **Barrow's Goldeneye** remained at Shoreline Lake was 13 Mar (DZ). A **Red-throated Loon** frequented Shoreline Lake between 7 and 11 Mar (FV, m. ob.). The **Pelagic Cormorant** found the last week of January was seen once more on the levee between Alviso Salt Ponds A14 and A11 on 1 Feb (JVs). The **American Bittern** in the channel at the end of Terminal Way was noted again on 16 Feb (WGB). It can be remarkably hard to find for such a large bird. An evening gathering of **Northern Harriers** along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley totaled 21 birds on 8 Feb (RPh). The number of harriers wintering in the county is greater

than the number of breeding residents, and the location of this winter roost is far from the harrier's known breeding grounds in the county. Two **Swainson's Hawks** on migration were seen riding thermals over Pearson-Arastradero Preserve on 18 Mar (RFu et al.). Three overwintering **Ferruginous Hawks** were over Coyote Ridge on 3 Feb (CE). The latest date one was seen was 6 Mar, in the south county along Gilroy Hot Springs Rd (DZ). **Black Oystercatchers** were extremely rare this far south in SF Bay until 2015; since then at least one has been found every year. This year, the first



Red-throated Loon by Garrett Lau

sighting was of one at the San Francisco Creek Delta on 28 Mar (JL). A **Glaucous Gull** rested on one of the islands at Alviso Salt Pond A16 on 9 – 11 Mar (DN, BH, MJM, et al.). Our first **Caspian Tern** of the year arrived on 28 Mar at Palo Alto Baylands (GL). None have been reported from Alviso Salt Pond A16, where they have nested in recent years. This year the terns will have to establish a colony without help from decoys and recorded calls. A **Black Skimmer** returned on 13 Feb to Charleston Slough (CnB), and through the remainder of Feb and Mar the high count was only three at Charleston Slough, on 12 Mar (GL). A single **Short-eared Owl** was seen in Coyote Valley near the OSP at the end of Palm Ave between 13 Feb (RPh) and 3 Mar (VT).

**Hummingbirds through Solitaires**  
**Rufous Hummingbirds** on migration turned up on 1 Feb in Almaden Valley (MFa) and on 2 Feb on the Stanford Campus (RFu). A female **Allen's Hummingbird** on a nest outside Gilroy near Uvas Creek on 22 Feb was a nice find (JMy). The nest held three eggs on 6 Mar (JMy). A male Allen's Hummingbird was displaying on 27 Mar at San Felipe Rd not far from Pacheco Creek (PDU). Nesting at this location is a possibility, though it has not been confirmed. Up to two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were seen at Chesbro Reservoir through 26 Mar (JPa).

The woodpeckers have been present since late October of last year. One was noted on 24 Feb at Coyote Valley OSP (RPh, LM); the first report from this location was in early January. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found along the Coyote Creek Trail below Anderson Dam on 16 Feb (JH). The Red-naped Sapsucker wintering at Almaden Lake Park was present

as late as 5 Mar (SPz). Two **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were discovered in March, one at Rancho Cañada del Oro on 5 Mar (JPa, KB), and one at Vasona Lake CP on 29 Mar (SLC). The sapsucker at Rancho Cañada del Oro was seen again on 6 Mar (RPh) and 11 Mar (BM); the Vasona Lake sapsucker was found again on 30 Mar (SLC). The only Empidonax flycatcher that nests in the county is also the first to arrive in the spring. Single **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** were found at McClellan Ranch Preserve (MJM) and in Stevens Creek CP (BM) on 24 Mar. The **Vermilion Flycatcher** in Coyote Valley stayed through 13 Mar (MJM). **Western Kingbirds** returned on 28 Mar, when two were seen at Coyote Ridge OSP and one was at Coyote Valley OSP (both GL). The quarrel-

## Field Notes *cont'd*

some songs of **Warbling Vireos** can be heard again, another sure sign of spring. The first arrival was at Coyote Lake CP on 9 Mar, and the second at Rancho Cañada del Oro on 11 Mar (both ER). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was a nice find in the NW section of Henry Coe SP on 25 Feb (SPz). A second visited a Los Altos neighborhood well-provisioned with fruiting Blue Elders on 14 Mar (KBe).

**Warblers through Evening Grosbeak**  
**Nashville Warblers** are most often found in the county as spring migrants moving north along the Diablo Range. They are occasionally found in the winter; this winter one was at Ulistac NA on 26 and 28 Feb (PB, RPh, JVs). Single wintering **Yellow Warblers** were at the Sunnyvale WPCP from 7 Feb to 6 Mar (EvM, STu, JRu) and at Los Gatos Creek CP on

18 Mar (DZ), when six were tallied. A **Song Sparrow** from one of the Pacific Northwest groups was at the Mountain View Forebay on 13 Mar (WGB). All of the sightings of Pacific Northwest Song Sparrows this winter have been of birds near water, either the Bay edge or along the Guadalupe River. A **Swamp Sparrow's** characteristic call gave it away at Alviso Marina on 25 Mar (BM). The sparrow was refound through 29 Mar (m. ob.). They are occasionally found in April and even early May (fide WGB). Single **Slate-colored Juncos** visited a feeder in San Jose on 15 Feb (RWR) and the Pueblo Picnic Area in Santa Teresa CP on 7 Mar (BM). The first **Black-headed Grosbeak** was noted late in the month on 23 Mar outside Gilroy (JMy) and the second on 31 Mar at Rancho Cañada del Oro (MDo). Two more signs of spring arrived earlier on the same date, 19 Mar. Our first **Hooded Oriole** was visiting a hummingbird feeder in

(JMn) and one was along San Felipe Rd (PDU). Five **Evening Grosbeaks** in Downtown Los Altos on 29 Mar was the high count of the winter (DZ).

**Observers:** Patrick Baglee (PB), Kathleen Bendler (KBe), Cynthia Berg (CnB), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KB), Cedro De Bryl (CDB), Domo De Bryl (DDB), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), Craig Edgerton (CE), Marion Farber (MFa), Rob Furrow (RFu), Jane Haley (JH), Julie Hart (JuH), Bob Hirt (BH), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Melissa Johnson (MJ), Garrett Lau (GL), Susan LeClair (SLC), Jasen Liu (JL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Jeff Manker (JMn), Eve Meier (EvM), Jean Myers (JMy), Lisa Myers (LM), David Nickerson (DN), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Edward Rooks (ER), Judy Rudolph (JRu), Daniel Schlaepfer (DSc), Vivek Tiwari (VT), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Jason Vassallo (JVs), Dan Wenny (DWN), David Zittin (DZ)



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Nashville Warbler by Jason Vassallo

24 Feb (KH et al.). Two more wintering warblers were noted in February, a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** at Overfelt Gardens on 3 Feb (RJ), and a **Wilson's Warbler** at Lake Ranch in Sanborn CP on 24 Feb (ER, DZ, STu). The **Chipping Sparrows** wintering at TJ Martin Park stayed until

San Jose on that date (fide LM). The second Hooded Oriole to arrive was on 25 Mar at Ed Levin CP (STu). Our first **Bullock's Oriole** visited Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 19 Mar (BB). The second arrivals were on 27 Mar in the southern part of the county, when one was in Gilroy along Uvas Creek