

Field Notes

(April-May 2018)

by Pete Dunten

Geese through Terns

A solo **Greater White-fronted Goose** lingered at Vasona Lake CP through 15 May (JVs). The last **Eurasian Wigeon** report was on 24 Apr from Pond A2E (DA). Two **Common Loons** passed through on their way north, one stopping at Lexington Reservoir on 13 Apr (RPh) and another at Chesbro Reservoir from 15 – 17 Apr (PDU et al., m. ob.). **Swainson's Hawks** are again nesting in Coyote Valley, after returning in early April. One was in Coyote Valley by 3 Apr (MJM), and two were reported by 10 Apr (SPv). One has also been seen frequenting the south county near San Felipe Rd, beginning on 31 Mar (AJ) and continuing through 8 May (SPv). The same individual may be responsible for sightings over Gilroy High School on 17 Apr (JMn et al.), along Bloomfield Ave on 1 May (DLS), and over the Gilroy SCRWA on 11 May (WP, KON). Migrants included one south of Anderson Reservoir on 7 Apr (SCR), twenty over a ridge south of Mount Hamilton on 9 Apr (JSm), and one over Ed Levin CP on 15 Apr (RFu). Large groups on migration are common in the Central Valley but quite unusual here. Fifteen Swainson's Hawks were tallied on a single day in May of 2013, and looking for a higher count going back in the records takes one to the year 1927. The spring passage of phalaropes was marked by relatively low numbers in the south bay. The first **Wilson's Phalarope** was at Alviso on 21 Apr (LL) and the high count this spring was eleven on 5 May at the Sunnyvale WPCP (TB). Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** were on Alviso Salt Pond A14 on 20 Apr (WGB), and the high count was seven on 23 Apr in the impoundment east of Alviso Salt Pond A12 (GL). The **Glaucous Gull** present at Alviso Salt Pond A16 since early March remained through 29 Apr (MMR, MJM). The **Caspian Tern** colony on the islands at Alviso Salt Pond A16 organized itself without help from decoys or recorded calls this

year. A healthy count of 194 terns was made on 27 May (MJM, MMR, RJ). A **Black Tern** briefly foraged at Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 12 May (RL). They are missed more often than not during spring migration; most of our records are of birds on fall passage.

one to two were at Ed Levin CP on 18 and 20 Apr (RPh, ChJ), and one was south of Anderson Reservoir on 22 Apr (SCR). Olive-sided Flycatchers returned in mid-April; one was at Picchetti Ranch OSP on 14 Apr (GL, WP, KON, SPz, PL) and one was at



Calliope Hummingbird by Garrett Lau

Sapsuckers through Kingbirds

Adding to the tally of **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** reported this spring, one was found at the Heintz OSP in Los Gatos on 2 Apr (RWR). All three of the birds found this spring were immature sapsuckers. It's hard to know whether these were wintering birds or migrants given how easy it is to overlook sapsuckers. A **Nighthawk** seen briefly at the junction of Mines and Del Puerto Canyon Roads on 12 May could have been either a Lesser or Common Nighthawk (fide BMA). A **Black Swift** on migration was over Monte Bello OSP on 8 May (GHa). The first **Vaux's Swift** of the year was spotted over Shoreline Lake on 31 Mar (SPv et al.). **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** came back to feeders in Willow Glen on 15 Apr, when both a male and female were seen (BM). **Calliope Hummingbirds** passed through the county between 13 and 22 Apr, with one to two at the Stile Ranch Trail delighting photographers during that period (JPa, m. ob.). Another was at Blue Oak Ranch Preserve in the Diablo Range on 17 Apr (DR),

Loma Prieta on 15 Apr (AR, NL). This spring yielded a bounty of migrant Empidonax flycatchers. Single **Hammond's Flycatchers** were found at four locations. One was along Old Oak Glen Road between 10 and 17 Apr (MJM, m. ob.), one was at Rancho Cañada del Oro between 14 and 16 Apr (MDo et al.), one was in Stevens Creek CP at the Cooley Picnic Area on 18 Apr (PL, EvM), and two were south of Anderson Reservoir on 22 Apr (SCR). A **Dusky Flycatcher** was an excellent find on 24 Apr near Gilroy Hot Springs and Canada Roads (MJM). They are about equally likely in spring and fall. A **Gray Flycatcher** found along the Los Gatos Creek Trail near Meridian Ave on 4 May also stayed for only one day (LL). A pair of **Cassin's Kingbirds** returned to the eucalyptus trees along San Felipe Road on 3 Apr (MJM). This location in the south county has sightings dating back to 1998.

Martins through Goldfinches

There was one report of **Purple Martins** on migration away from their known summer haunts in the Santa

Field Notes *cont'd*

Cruz Mountains. Three were spotted south of Anderson Reservoir on 22 Apr together with swallows (SCR). The first **Swainson's Thrushes** of the spring were singles at Old Oak Glen Ave on 15 Apr (STu) and at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) on 29 Apr (DWn). **Nashville Warblers** transited the county between 14 Apr and 5 May. Of the twelve locations reporting Nashvilles, only one was in the lowlands, a bird at CCFS on 21 Apr (DT). The earliest arrival on 14 Apr was at Picchetti Ranch OSP (GL, WP, SPz, DPe). The high count was eight south of Anderson Reservoir on 22 Apr (SCR). Single **MacGillivray's Warblers** were found at six locations between 16 Apr and 21 May. The first arrivals were at Blue Oak Ranch Reserve on 16 Apr (DR) and south of Anderson Reservoir on 5 May (SCR). The other MacGillivray's were all at lowland locations - along the Los Gatos Creek Trail near Meridian Ave on 7 May (RPh), at CCFS on 16 May (DWn, WH), at Penetencia Creek Park on 20 May (MSm), and at Santa Clara University on 20 and 21 May (JVs).

A **Northern Parula**, a spring vagrant from the east, was quite a treat at Mitchell Park from 22 May through 25 May (GZ, m. ob.). It was the eleventh recorded in the county, and only two have stayed for a longer period. The male announced himself with two different song types broadcast from the treetops. Another accomplished vocalist, the **Yellow-breasted Chat**, was heard at West Valley College on 8 and 9 May (JVs, RPh). A second was singing at the pond on Del Puerto Canyon Road at the eastern edge of the county on 13 May (BMa et al.). Flirting with the county line on the west side of the county at Loma Prieta, a **Black-chinned Spar-**

row visited Santa Clara County on 21 May (WP). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** found at Mission City Memorial Park in San Jose on 19 Apr was only the second spring record for the county (JVs). Its unique song was enjoyed by many during the duration of its stay through 23 Apr. **White-throated Sparrows** are typically gone by the end of the first week of May. The latest reports this year were of three at

over Monte Bello OSP on 30 May was one of the few recent sightings (GHa). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were widespread. Notable counts included eight along San Felipe Road on 8 Apr (JVs), six at Palm Ave and Lantz Dr in Coyote Valley on 18 Apr (JPa), eleven at the northern border of Pacheco SP on 4 May (PDU), six at Monte Bello OSP on 6 May (JVs, KC), and six at J Grant CP on 6 May (BTh).



Peter E. Hart

Northern Parula by Peter Hart

Ulistac NA on 4 May (DN) and a remarkably late individual along the Los Gatos Creek Trail near Meridian Ave on 29 May (JPa). A calling **Summer Tanager** at Vasona Lake CP on 11 Apr was not found again (STe, JSm). The small marsh at Ulistac NA hosted a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on 9 May (RJ). An **Evening Grosbeak** flying over Coyote Creek near Morgan Hill on 8 Apr was the last report for this winter (SCR). The last invasion of Evening Grosbeaks occurred in the winter of 2015-2016, followed by two winters with few grosbeaks in the area. 2015-2016 was also the last winter **Red Crossbills** invaded; one flying

Observers: Ozzie Altus (OA), Dorian Anderson (DA), Terry Blows (TB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Kevin Corrigan (KC), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), Rob Furrow (RFu), Garth Harwood (GHa), William Hoppes (WH), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Garrett Lau (GL), Nicholas Levendosky (NL), Raymond Liao (RL), Louise Liou (LL), Patricia Lynch (PL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Jeff Manker (JMn), Bruce Mast (BMa), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), David Nickerson (DN), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergey Pavlov (SPv), William Pelletier (WP), Don Pendleton (DPe), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips

(RPh), David Rankin (DR), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Debi Shearwater (DLS), Marc Simmel (MSm), Jeff Smith (JSm), David Tattoni (DT), Scott Terrill (STe), Brent Thomas (BTh), Steve Tucker (STu), Jason Vassallo (JVs), Dan Wenny (DWn), Gina Zolotar (GZ)

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