

Field Notes

(April-May 2019)

by Pete Dunten

Geese through Skimmers

Single Greater White-fronted

Geese were found in April, one at the SCRWA ponds outside Gilroy on 18 Apr (MJM) and one at Lake Cunningham on 28 Apr (JPa, KB). A **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** stayed in the area through 4 Apr at Charleston Slough (JD). A **Cattle Egret** at the SCRWA ponds east of Llagas Creek was a one-day wonder on 6 May (WGB). On the same date the eastern ponds hosted two **White-faced Ibises** (WGB). From 13 – 14 May eighteen Ibises were present (WP, GL, FV), and on 15 May a single Ibis remained (WP, KON). On 4 Apr, a **Swainson's Hawk** returned to the site where a pair nested last year in Coyote Valley (MJM). Two were seen at that location on 6 Apr (DKa). Also on Apr 6th, a second pair of Swainson's Hawks were seen at a nesting site in the south county (SCR). Migrants were noted on seven dates between 10 Apr, when one was over Santa Teresa CP (WGB), and 1 May, when one passed over Ed Levin CP (ABr). The high count of birds on passage was two on 27 Apr over Ed Levin CP (MMR et al.) and the total number of spring migrants matched our long-term average. **Solitary Sandpipers** stopping briefly on their way north were seen at three locations, on dates falling at the tail end of spring migration. One visited the SCRWA ponds outside Gilroy on 2 May (ST), one was at Lake Vasona CP on 3 May (STe), and the last was at Charleston Slough on 4 May (WP et al.). A flock of 84 **Whimbrel** at the SCRWA ponds was a nice count on 18 Apr (MJM). A single **Wilson's Phalarope** at the SCRWA ponds out-

side Gilroy on 13 May was the only Wilson's Phalarope found on spring migration (WP, GL). The first **Red-necked Phalaropes** heading north were noted earlier, on 19 Apr, when 38 were on Alviso salt pond A12 (RJ). A **Glaucous Gull** in no hurry to go north was lounging at Alviso A16 on 5 May (MJM). The two **Elegant Terns** at Alviso A16 on 1 May were only the 3rd spring record for the county (ST). On 10 May, Elegant Tern nests were discovered in a mixed colony with **Caspian Terns** just north of the county line in San Mateo county (fide GMc). **Black Skimmer** numbers increased in May to a record high count of 49 at Shoreline Lake by 28 May (RPh). The Skimmers are nesting on the island in Shoreline Lake this year, with two young present on 30 May (RPh).

Hummingbirds through Kingbirds

The 3rd of April brought the first **Black-chinned Hummingbird** of the year to the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose (BM) and the first **Calliope Hummingbird** to Pacheco SP (PDU); both were males. While Black-chinned Hum-

mingbirds nest along our waterways and stay over the summer, Calliope Hummingbirds are spring passage migrants. The second male Calliope Hummingbird of the spring was found at Santa Teresa CP on 6 Apr (JoS). A male was there on 7 Apr (ChJ) and 8 Apr (SPz) as well. The first female Calliope stopped at the flowering eucalyptus trees along the entrance road to Pacheco SP on 7 Apr (WP, KON). Sightings of a female at Pacheco SP on 13 Apr (WP, KON) and a male at Santa Teresa CP between 14 – 16 Apr (WP, KON, ST, EvM) rounded out the records for this spring. A **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen on 22 Apr at Blue Oak Ranch Preserve in the Diablo Range (AM et al.). Pileated Woodpeckers occur regularly in the Santa Cruz Mountains but are quite rare elsewhere in the county. The first-of-spring **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was at Loma Prieta on 18 Apr (ST). Two **Willow Flycatcher** sightings made for a good spring showing – they are missed about one year in two during spring migration. The first was heard and seen at the SCVWD Coyote Pumping Station near



Grasshopper Sparrow by Tracy Pham

Field Notes *cont'd*

Anderson Lake CP on 22 May (BMo), and the second was photographed at Ulistac NA on 2 Jun (ChJ). Eleven **Hammond's Flycatchers** were reported from nine locations between 4 Apr (MDo, BM) and 14 May (TvP), with a high count of two at Alum Rock Park on 6 Apr (WP, KON et al.). Seven **Cassin's Kingbirds** were tallied in the south county at four locations on 6 Apr during a survey (SCR). This year they are nesting at three locations.

Swallows through Grosbeaks

A single **Bank Swallow** flew over a closed refuge pond in Don Edwards NWR on 18 Apr (AR). They are noted during spring migration about one year in two. A pair of **Canyon Wrens** are nesting at Alum Rock Park this year for the first time in many years. The Wrens were first seen on 6 Apr (WP, KON et al.). A **Townsend's Solitaire** visited the Mountain Winery in Saratoga on 5 May (DSu). **Swainson's Thrushes** reached us on 20 Apr; two were at Lake Silveira along Llagas Creek that day (SCR). A **Phainopepla** along the Alamitos Creek Trail on 30 May (AVe) could have been a migrant, though there are a few summer records from the Santa Teresa hills. **Nashville Warblers** passed through on migration between 18 Apr (EvM) and 2 May (BM); all sightings were of single warblers. **MacGillivray's Warblers** returning north first reached us on 11 Apr when one was along the Calero Creek Trail (MJM). The high count of two occurred at Loma Prieta on 18 Apr (ST). Another six

migrants passed through the county between 18 Apr and 29 Apr (EvM, DT, MDa, STu, PLa). The latest sightings, on 20 May at Sanborn CP near Skyline Blvd (PLa) and on 28 May at Aldercroft Heights above Lexington Reservoir (RyL), were at locations in the Santa Cruz Mountains where nesting is a possibility. Nesting has been detected in the Santa Cruz Mtns in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties. Single **Yellow-breasted Chats** turned up at Vasona CP on 26 Apr (OA) and along Llagas Creek at the SCRWA outside Gilroy (MJM). A **Green-tailed Towhee** was banded at the Coyote Creek Field Station on 24 Apr (DO). About one in every five of the county records have occurred in the spring. The **Swamp Sparrows** that wintered at Alviso Marina CP stayed long enough into the spring to start singing. Two were heard there on 3 Apr (SCR). Single Swamp Sparrows were present along the Guadalupe River Trail north of Blossom Hill Rd on 4 Apr (JPa) and between Coleman and Blossom Hill Rds on 15 Apr (BM). April 15th was also the last date a Swamp Sparrow remained at Alviso Marina (WGB). **Lazuli Buntings** returned on 7 Apr. One was found in Henry Coe SP (CF) and another at Santa Teresa CP (STu). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was a delightful surprise at a feeder in San Jose on 29 and 30 May (JaJ). On 27 Apr a **Blue Grosbeak** surprised a Birdathon team at Ed Levin CP (GRy et al.). Three Blue Grosbeaks were found on 28 Apr (FV), with two still present on 31 May (LPi). Ed Levin CP is one of the few locations in the county favored by Blue Grosbeaks, with the last occurrence in 2011.

Observers: Ozzie Altus (OA), Bill Bousman (WGB), Andrew Bradshaw (ABr), Karen Burnson (KB), Mike Danzenbaker (MDa), Jim Dehnert (JD), Pete Dunten (PDU), Craig Fosdick (CF), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Jane Jordan (JaJ), Daniel Kadra (DKa), Peter LaTourrette (PLa), Garrett Lau (GL), Ryan Lefler (RyL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Aleksey Maro (AIM), Gerry McChesney (GMc), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), Bryan Mori (BMo), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Debbie Ottman (DO), Janna Pauser (JPa), William Pelletier (WP), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Linda Pittman (LPi), Travis Poitras (TvP), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Gordon Rydquist (GRy), Joshua Stacy (JoS), David Sudjian (DSu), David Tattoni (DT), Scott Terrill (STe), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AVe)

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