



# Bird Notes

Please report rarities to  
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## Geese through Skimmers

Winter typically brings Snow Geese in ones and twos; this year an unusually large number of Snow Geese arrived in late October. Four **Snow Geese** visited pond A17 from 24 Oct to mid-day on 25 Oct (MA, ST, PDo). As many as seven immature Snow Geese frequented Palo Alto Baylands from the evening of 25 Oct through 31 Oct (m. ob.). On 31 Oct two immatures and an adult were at the Shoreline Park Golf Course (RPh).

The **Common Loon** summering on Felt Lake was last reported on 25 Aug (FV). A **Sandhill Crane** flew over Byxbee Park on 27 Oct (ABu) and one, presumably the same individual, was over Shoreline Park on 28 Oct (MDo). Sandhill Cranes occur in the county less than annually, with nearly half our records in October.

Highlights of shorebird migration included a **Ruddy Turnstone** at A16 and A17 from 26 – 29 Aug (MJM, ST, MA), one to two **Pectoral Sandpipers** in New Chicago Marsh between 4 – 9 Sept (ST, m. ob.), and single **Baird's Sandpipers** at A13 from 1 – 4 Aug (WL, m. ob.) and Coast Casey Forebay on 20 Sept (MDo). Small groups of **Red Knots** were found on multiple dates beginning on 1 Sept when five were in a closed refuge area (RJ, MJM). Six were tallied on 29 Sept in a closed refuge area (MMR, FT), and on 20 Oct the high count for the period, 12 Knots, was recorded at the Stevens Creek delta (RWR). Four were noted there on 26 Oct (ST).

A **Ruff** in New Chicago Marsh on 3 Sept was a nice find (ALx et al., BB). It was seen between 3 – 9 Sept, on 15 Sept at Alviso Marina, and again 13 Oct in New Chicago Marsh (m. ob.) A second Ruff was another nice find on 27 Sept at the Geng Rd pond (JMa). The Ruff was found at the Geng Rd pond and in nearby San Francisquito Creek in both San Mateo and Santa Clara counties between 27 Sept – 11 Oct and again 18 Oct (m. ob.)

**Western Gulls** nested successfully this year, with an occupied nest noted on 1 Jun at pond A2W (WGB) and two juvenile gulls present on closed refuge ponds on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, RJ). The high count of **Elegant Terns** this fall was fourteen over pond A2E on 15 Aug (RPh). Eleven were tallied on a survey of several ponds at the south end of the bay on 1 Sept (MJM, RJ). A **Common Tern** on migration stopped at



Tropical Kingbird  
Eric Goodill



Clay-colored Sparrow  
Brooke Miller



Vermilion Flycatcher  
Bill Pelletier

pond AB1 from 5 – 11 Aug (GL, m. ob.) The **Black Skimmers** counts at Shoreline Lake included 11 young on 14 Aug (RPh). Beginning on 8 Sept Skimmers were reported at nearby Charleston Slough, with as many as 98 individuals present on 10 Sept, including 18 juveniles (RPh). A count of the group on Adobe Creek the next day included 19 juveniles among the 92 Skimmers (RPh). Numbers dropped off through Sept, with 14 at Charleston Slough on the 25th (WGB) and only two at Mountain View Forebay on 28 Sept (MMR et al.)

## Woodpeckers through Finches

A single **Lewis's Woodpecker** greeted visitors at Calero CP on 9 Oct (EvM et al.) and again on the following day (BLL et al.) A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found visiting Stanford Campus on 13 Oct (TGr, WP et al.) The male **Vermilion Flycatcher** at J Grant CP first noted on 23 Jul remained through August and into September. Photos taken on 4 Sept showed the Flycatcher was molting primaries asymmetrically, and hence likely to stay a bit longer (EGa). The latest sighting was on 20 Sept (WGB).

A **Tropical Kingbird** at Shoreline Lake on 12 Oct fell within the pattern of primarily fall occurrence for this species (LM et al.) Two Tropical Kingbirds at the Palo Alto Duck Pond on 20 Oct set the record for the highest count at one location in the county (ABu). One to two have been found through 29 Oct at locations nearby including the Palo Alto WTP, Byxbee Park, and the edge of Mayfield Slough (m. ob.) In answer to one of the county challenges given in the July/August 2019 issue of The Avocet, an observer located a roost used by the **Pygmy Nuthatches** at Cuesta Park. Four Nuthatches were counted entering a cavity in a Palm Tree after sunset on 30 Sept (GL).

A **Lapland Longspur** briefly visited the Shoreline Park kite-flying area on 20 Oct (ChJ). A **Tennessee Warbler** was a nice backyard bird, seen visiting a birdbath near Los Capitancillos Ponds on 3 Oct and again the next day (STu). **Blackpoll Warblers** were the first of the offcourse migrating warblers to occur in the county. One was at Vasona Lake CP on 12 Sept (ST, PDo, SPz) and another was at Ulistac NA on 18 Sept (ST). The latest uncommon warbler to arrive was a **Palm Warbler** at the Palo Alto WTP on 27 Oct (BM). It found the environment to its liking and has remained into November (m. ob.)

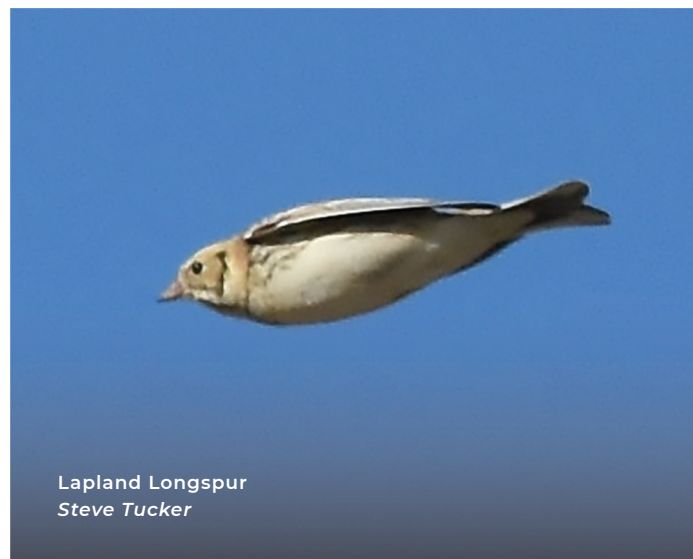
Six **Clay-colored Sparrows** in a 16-day period in late September and early October was a nice total. Single migrants were found at Ulistac NA between 21 – 23 Sept (MDo), on a closed refuge levee on 29 Sept (MMR, FT), at Vasona Lake CP between 1 – 3 Oct (AVE), along the SF Bay Trail between San Francisquito Creek and the Palo Alto Golf Course on 3 Oct (DPe), at TJ Martin Park together with **Chipping Sparrows** on 6 Oct (STu, ST), and at Los Capitancillos Ponds on 6 Oct (STu).

## Two Tropical Kingbirds at the Palo Alto Duck Pond on 20 Oct set the record for the highest count at one location in the county

A **Vesper Sparrow** associating with two Savannah Sparrows was photographed late in the day on 19 Oct at the Stanford Dish (PDU). A male **Summer Tanager** posed for a photo along the Stevens Creek Trail between El Camino and Hwy 101 on 16 Sept (TrG, ERz), a day with rain in the morning that brought down many migrating passerines.

An immature **Painted Bunting** was one of the migrants photographed that day, stopping at the Sunnyvale WPCP (PKe). This is only the 4th county record; all have been at locations near the edge of SF Bay. Rounding out the records for the 16th of Sept, an immature **Blue Grosbeak** was noted along Stevens Creek near La Avenida, downstream of the Summer Tanager (WGB). **Evening Grosbeaks** arrived in the area on 13 Oct, when a group of six were found at Almaden Lake Park (JPa). Two overflew Shoreline Park on 24 Oct (RPh).

**Observers** Mike Ambrose (MA), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Adam Burnett (ABu), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), Leslie Flint (LFI), Tricia Gardner (TrG), Elinor Gates (EGa), Tom Grey (TGr), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Pat Kenny (PKe), Alex Lamoreaux (ALx), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Garrett Lau (GL), William Lawton (WL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Juliana Manoliu (JMa), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), Lisa Myers (LM), Janna Pauser (JPa), William Pelletier (WP), Don Pendleton (DPe), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Reiling (RWR), Ellie Resendiz (ERz), Mike Rogers (MMR), Francis Toldi (FT), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AVE)



Lapland Longspur  
Steve Tucker