



Bird Notes

Please report rarities to
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Geese to Sandpipers

A ribbon of 100 **Snow Geese** passed over Los Gatos on 12 Oct (JPa), a harbinger of winter. A flock of 16 **Ross's Geese** over J Grant CP on 21 Oct was a nice count (WP, KON), with a single **Snow Goose** tagging along. Such high counts of Ross's Geese don't usually occur until December. Three **Tundra Swans** flew over Ulistac NA on 27 Oct, again an early date (BB). A single **Brandt's Cormorant** was photographed near Charleston Slough on 26 Aug (RjB), the first in the county since 2014. Then one to two Brandt's Cormorants joined the Double-crested Cormorants at Sunnyvale pond A4 beginning on 3 Sept (GL). They were seen regularly through 26 Sept (m. ob.) and one was found again on 25 Oct (DW). A **Ferruginous Hawk** photographed over Los Gatos on 22 Sept was our earliest arrival, by one day (JPa). **Black Rails** were hard to find this year, with only the fourth report of the year on 31 Jul at the Sunnyvale WPCP, where one was heard calling (JM). One to two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were in New Chicago Marsh between 13 Oct (FV) and 22 Oct (m. ob.). They seem to prefer the company of Killdeer on their fall visits, while at other times and locations they often associate with Black-bellied Plovers. Two shorebirds normally found on rocks along the coast stopped briefly in the county. A **Black Turnstone** turned up on the edge of pond A8 between 31 Aug (fide eBird) and 2 Sept (m. ob.) and a **Wandering Tattler** visited Shoreline Lake between 27 Sept (JM) and 2 Oct (m. ob.). This fall saw extraordinary numbers of **Pectoral Sandpipers** on migration. The first arrival was a single sandpiper on 5 Sept at Palo Alto Baylands (Mlg). Numbers were up to 14 sandpipers in New Chicago Marsh on 13 Sept (STu), then 60 on 4 Oct (STu) and 67 on 6 Oct (MJM). Counts tapered to 35 on 13 Oct (ABu) and 12 on 18 Oct (ABr), with the last sighting of two birds occurring on 22 Oct (DA). The last year in which fall migration brought more than 50 Pectoral Sandpipers was 2004. A **Ruff** has frequented New Chicago Marsh beginning on 12 Aug (MA). It has been seen sporadically throughout August, September, and October (m. ob.). A single **Red Phalarope**, another coastal visitor, found its way to the south end of the bay, where it was seen on 21 Sept along the edge of pond A1 (RPh).

Gulls to Woodpeckers

An immature **Sabine's Gull** was sighted heading west over pond A4 on 5 Sept (ABu, GL, SW). It settled in at the Sunnyvale



Ruff
Garrett Lau



Sabine's Gull
Garret Lau



Green-tailed Towhee
Meg Barron

WPCP west pond and the surrounding channels until 9 Sept (m. ob.). A **Long-tailed Jaeger**, the county's 4th, flew over Shoreline Lake on 4 Aug (ED). A **Parasitic Jaeger** was another one-day visitor, flying over pond A8 on 2 Sept (STu). After a period of five years with no reports, a **Common Murre** found its way into the county on 25 Aug (BM). The Murre was seen in Guadalupe Slough, bordering the Sunnyvale WPCP. Another Murre was found in the Guadalupe River above Alviso Marina on 2 Sept (DW). Neither Murre was seen on more than one day. The few Murres that visit the county typically don't fare well. A **White-winged Dove** keeping its own company was photographed at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 2 Sept (PDU). It was seen with other doves on 3 Sept (BM, MDo). Of the nine county records, 7 have been in late summer and fall. An immature male **Costa's Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Morgan Hill between 19 Aug and 19 Sept (fide eBird). An immature **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found at Ulistac NA on 7 Oct (MKn), together with two Red-breasted Sapsuckers. Those three sapsuckers will have a rough time maintaining exclusive use of any sap wells they open. This is one of our earlier arrivals for a Red-naped Sapsucker; we don't usually have an opportunity to see the immature plumage. The sapsucker was spotted again on 25 Oct (ChJ).

Flycatchers to Tanagers

The long-staying **Vermilion Flycatcher** at J Grant CP was present through at least 17 Aug (FV). It has been in the park since 13 Apr. Traveling from even further southeast, a **Thick-billed Kingbird** put in an appearance on Mt Umunhum on 7 Oct (WGB). The Kingbird was the county's first. A **Red-eyed Vireo** found at J Grant CP on 31 Jul (RMz, ED) stayed through 10 Aug; it was the county's 6th record. The epicenter of fall warbler activity was Vasona Lake CP this year. A **Northern Waterthrush** on 29 and 30 Aug (MDo) was the first vagrant at the park. Another was there on 23 and 29 Sept (STu, MDo, MDa). A **Blackpoll** visited the park between 26 Sept (STu) and 30 Sept. The second Blackpoll of the season was at the Palo Alto WCP on 26 Oct (MJM). The county's first **Bay-breasted Warbler** (found by SLC, identified by BM) was at Vasona between 26 Sept and 4 Oct. The last of the vagrant warblers detected at Vasona was an **American Redstart** noted on 27 Sept (MDa). A yard with a water fountain in the Duveneck-St. Francis neighborhood of Palo Alto provided a bath for a **Tennessee Warbler** on 19 Sept (fide eBird). Completing the list of vagrant warblers, a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** stopped near the Rengstorff House at Shoreline Park between 3 and 5 Oct (AL, JY). A **Green-tailed Towhee** was a surprise visitor to a Los Altos yard on 13 Sept (MBa). Although this was not the first in Los Altos, not many yard lists include a Green-tailed Towhee. That particular yard also hosted a **Clay-colored Sparrow** on 13 Sept (MBa), a first for the town. A second Green-tailed Towhee was found along Stevens Creek above Crittenden Lane on 25 Sept (MMR). Two more Clay-colored Sparrows were found this fall, one at Ulistac NA on 30 Aug



Palo Alto Baylands
Eve Meier

SELF-GUIDED FIELD TRIPS

New! SCVAS trip leaders have been developing a series of self-guided field trips. We will pick out a few special places to bird each month based on where you can socially distance and enjoy the best of the birding season.

Visit <https://scvas.org/self-guided-field-trips> to see this month's selection. Regular field trips have been suspended but will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

(BM) and one at Vasona Lake CP on 27 Sept (STu). Three **Brewer's Sparrows** this fall was a nice total. The first was at Alviso Marina CP on 27 and 28 Aug (EvM), the second along the Guadalupe River Trail near Blossom River Way on 3 Sept (JPa), and the third along the edge of pond A4 on 14 Sept (GL). The five **Vesper Sparrows** seen this fall were a record high total for fall migration. The first was at the Don Edwards EEC garden on 19 Sept (MA), followed by two at Shoreline Park from 1 – 6 Oct (DA), a fourth at Vasona Lake CP from 5 – 8 Oct (GL), and the fifth at Martial Cottle Park on 11 Oct (STu). A **Summer Tanager** stayed for only a day at Ulistac NA on 17 Sept (PDU).

Observers Mike Ambrose (MA), Dorian Anderson (DA), Meg Barron (MBa), Raja Bhadury (RjB), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Andrew Bradshaw (ABr), Adam Burnett (ABu), Hallie Daly (HDy), Emilie Danna (ED), Mike Danzenbaker (MDa), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), Monica Iglesia (MIg), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Mark Kinsman (MKn), Garrett Lau (GL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Susan LeClair (SLC), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Roberto Martinez (RMz), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), Julio Mulero (JM), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Janna Pauser (JPa), William Pelletier (WP), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Dave Weber (DW), Susan Weinstein (SW), James Yurchenco (JY)