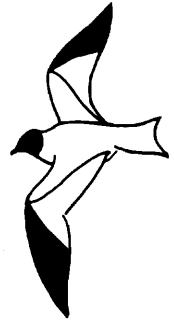


WESTERN BIRDS



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REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 1995 RECORDS

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This report covers 136 records of 73 species submitted to the California Bird Records Committee (hereafter the CBRC or the Committee). Although most records pertain to birds found in 1995, the period covered by this report extends from 1970 (and 1918 for one specimen record) to 1996. Accepted were 102 records of 56 species, for a fairly typical acceptance rate of 75%. Of the records not accepted, 31 were excluded on the basis of identification not established, three on questions of natural occurrence. Counties best represented by accepted records were San Francisco (15, nearly all from Southeast Farallon Island), San Diego (10), Monterey (9), Imperial (8), Marin (7), Los Angeles (6), and Humboldt, Kern, and Santa Barbara (5 each).

Highlights of this report include accepted records of three species of Old World warblers (family Sylviidae), two of which are new to the California list: the Lanceolated Warbler (*Locustella lanceolata*) and Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*). After deliberations that lasted nearly as long as the CBRC itself, acceptance of a 1972 record of the Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) added that species to the state list as well. A previously accepted 1970 record of the Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*) was reassessed, and the final vote resulted in the deletion of that species from the state list. With a net gain of two species, the California list as of this report stands at 599, incorporating species-level splits from the American Ornithologists' Union (1997). In addition, the Swallow-tailed Gull (*Creagrurus furcatus*), Red-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa brevirostris*), Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*), and White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) have been accepted for the state list and will be treated in the next CBRC report. With these four species the California bird list will be 603. Further prospective additions currently under review by the Committee are the Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*), Parkinson's Petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*), Great-

winged Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*), Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*), Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), and Buff-collared Nighthjar (*Caprimulgus ridgwayi*).

Committee News. At the January 1998 Committee meeting held in Alviso the duties of the secretary position were further divided. Michael M. Rogers was elected secretary in a non-voting capacity; immediate past secretary David V. Blue will continue in the role of CBRC technical-support specialist. The Committee's membership at the close of the January 1998 meeting consisted of Michael M. Rogers and the following ten voting members: Richard A. Erickson (chair), Matthew T. Heindel (vice-chair), Kimball L. Garrett, Steven N. G. Howell, Alvaro Jaramillo, Guy McCaskie, Joseph Morlan, Mike San Miguel, Stephen C. Rottenborn, and Daniel S. Singer. Additional recent Committee members who voted on many of the records treated in this report include Shawneen E. Finnegan, Michael A. Patten, Peter Pyle, and Scott B. Terrill. The most important by-law change adopted was the limitation of members to a single three-year term before a mandatory hiatus from the Committee (prior to this change, members could be elected to two consecutive three-year terms before being ineligible for reelection); the Committee hopes that the new system will increase participation in the review process.

The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) was removed from the Review List, whereas the recently split Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*) and Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) were added. The Committee will review all records of the murrelet and all records after July 1997 of the vireo; documentation for earlier records of the Blue-headed Vireo is requested but will be analyzed differently. The Review List may be obtained from the Committee's World Wide Web site (www.wfo-cbrc.org). This site also includes the California state list, a reporting form for direct e-mail submission of records to the CBRC, the addresses of current Committee members, a photo gallery of recent submissions, a list of relevant publications by CBRC members, and other information about the CBRC, as well as about Western Field Ornithologists and *Western Birds*.

One minor change adopted here involves the format of the record number; that number now consists of the year (of submission) followed by a three-digit individual number assigned to the record. For example, what was formerly record number 31-1995 becomes 1995-031.

CBRC Functions. All records reviewed by the CBRC (including copies of descriptions, photographs, videotapes, audio recordings, and Committee comments) are archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, California 93012, and are available for public review. The CBRC solicits and encourages observers to submit documentation for all species on the Review List, as well as species unrecorded in California. Documentation should be sent to Michael M. Rogers, CBRC Secretary, P. O. Box 340, Moffett Field, CA 94035-0340 (e-mail: mrogers@nas.nasa.gov).

Documentation. For records in the present report an average of 2.58 observers/record submitted reports, but this number was higher (2.97 submissions/record) for accepted records than for those not accepted on the basis of identification (1.30 submissions/record). Documentation in the

form of photographs accompanied 55% of the accepted records but only 17% of the records not accepted on the basis of identification. Occasionally records with seemingly good photographic documentation are not accepted because there are no accompanying written details; Committee members (and birders in general) are well aware of how photographs (especially a single exposure) can be misleading, and it is always desirable to augment this "tangible" documentation with written descriptions and accounts of the conditions and circumstances of observation.

Relatively few records are supported by original notes (or copies) taken in the field during observation. Such "contemporaneous" documentation is highly desirable, since it is inevitable that details will be lost or muddled if there is a significant time lag between observation and the production of documentation. Committee members and knowledgeable birders tend to reject the notion of "photographic memory." In general, descriptions are viewed less favorably if written long after the observation or after references such as field guides or handbooks are consulted. Observers submitting documentation should always indicate when the documentation was written and whether or not it was based on notes taken during the observation; photocopies of contemporaneous field notes or sketches should always be submitted if they exist. For the present report, only 13.4% of observers of accepted records submitted copies of notes made in the field during observation; this percentage dropped to 5.1% for unaccepted records. An additional 8.9% of observers of accepted records explicitly indicated that their documentation was based on notes made in the field even though copies of those notes were not included.

"Ideal" documentation for non-specimen records might include a series of photographs (and videotape or audiotape, where appropriate), copies of notes and sketches taken in the field during observation, and additional documentation neatly written, signed, and dated by the observer. Submission of such documentation by multiple observers is obviously desirable. We recognize that it is often difficult or impossible to obtain photographs and that the generation of notes and sketches in the field during observation must be balanced with careful and critical viewing and confirmation of characters. Since it is generally not possible to observe and write descriptions at exactly the same time (although tape recorders are helpful in this regard), the notion of "contemporaneous" documentation must be viewed realistically.

Format and Abbreviations. As in other recent CBRC reports, records are listed geographically, from north to south, and/or chronologically by first date of occurrence. Included with each record is the location, county abbreviation (see below), and date span. The date span usually follows that published in *National Audubon Society Field Notes* (formerly *American Birds*, and now simply *Field Notes*) but, if the CBRC accepts a date span that differs from a published source, the differing dates are italicized. Initials of the observer(s) responsible for first finding and/or identifying the bird(s)—if known and if they have supplied documentation—are followed by a semicolon, then the initials of additional observers submitting documentation, then the CBRC record number. All records are sight records unless indicated otherwise: initials followed by a dagger (†) indicate the observer

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supplied an identifiable photograph; (†) indicates videotape; (§) indicates a voice recording; and (#) indicates a specimen record, followed by the acronym (see below) of the institution housing the specimen and that institution's specimen catalog number.

An asterisk (*) prior to a species' name indicates that the species is no longer on the CBRC Review List. The first number in parentheses after the species' name is the number of records accepted by the CBRC through this report; the second is the number of new records accepted in this report (because this number excludes records thought to pertain to returning individuals, this number may be zero). Two asterisks (**) after the species' total indicate that the number of accepted records refers only to a restricted review period or includes records accepted for statistical purposes only—see Roberson (1986) for more information.

When individual birds return to a location after a lengthy or seasonal absence, each occurrence is reviewed under a separate record number, and the Committee members indicate whether or not they believe the bird is the same as one accepted previously. Such decisions follow the opinion of the majority of members and, if a bird is considered a returning individual, the total number of records remains unchanged.

Although the CBRC does not formally review the age, sex, or subspecies of each bird, information on these subjects is often provided during the review process (and in some cases a strong or unanimous consensus is arrived at). We have tried to report as much of this information as possible.

The CBRC uses standard abbreviations for California counties; those used in this report are: BUT, Butte; DN, Del Norte; FRE, Fresno; HUM, Humboldt; IMP, Imperial; INY, Inyo; KER, Kern; LA, Los Angeles; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MOD, Modoc; MTY, Monterey; ORA, Orange; PLU, Plumas; RIV, Riverside; SBE, San Bernardino; SD, San Diego; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SBA, Santa Barbara; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SIS, Siskiyou; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; TEH, Tehama; VEN, Ventura. A full list of county abbreviations is available on the WFO-CBRC web site.

Museum collections housing specimens cited in this report or which allowed access to Committee members for research, or which are otherwise cited, are: California Academy of Sciences (CAS), Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (LACM), Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History (PGMNH), San Diego Natural History Museum (SDNHM), Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, at the University of California, Berkeley (MVZ), Burke Memorial Museum at the University of Washington (UWBM). Other abbreviation: NAS, National Audubon Society.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

ARCTIC LOON *Gavia arctica* (3, 1). One was seen and extensively photographed at Bodega Bay, SON, 5 May-18 Jun 1995 (ANW†; CC†, JM, BDP, DEQ†, RAR†, SBT†; 1995-057). Photographs taken on 14 May were published by Birch and Lee (1997); additional photos taken on 11 June show the bird to have been lightly oiled, although it was still capable of flight at that time. The first two California records, in November and December 1991, also on the central coast, were detailed by Reinking and Howell (1993) and Patten et al. (1995). The single dissenting vote on the current

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record, which passed 9-1, cited the suggestion of a Common Loon (*G. immer*) neck pattern as possibly indicating a hybrid; the combination *Gavia immer* × *arctica* has been reported by Hunter and Dennis (1972). Identification of the Arctic Loon was discussed by Reinking and Howell (1993) and Birch and Lee (1997).

YELLOW-BILLED LOON *Gavia adamsii* (58, 1). One was near the mouth of Walker Creek, Tomales Bay, MRN, 19 Feb-16 Mar 1995, with the bird's two-to-three-day-old corpse found on Dillon Beach, just outside Tomales Bay, on 19 Mar (KB; GMcC, JM, DSg, RS†; 1995-031; #CAS 85767). A bird arriving in Monterey Bay, MTY, in alternate plumage 10 Nov 1995 (DR†; BMcK†, JM, DLSh, DSg, JCW†; 1995-120) and remaining until 10 Feb 1996 was judged to be a returning bird that had arrived, also in alternate plumage, in the same area on 7 Nov 1994 (one of three birds treated under CBRC record 1994-178; see Howell and Pyle 1997). The Yellow-billed Loon is now of annual occurrence in California, with the great majority of records coming from the central coast in winter.

STREAKED SHEARWATER *Calonectris leucomelas* (6, 1). One was found exhausted in a supermarket parking lot in Red Bluff, TEH, on 5 Aug 1993; it was brought to a bird rehabilitator and ultimately released at the mouth of Humboldt Bay, HUM, on 13 Aug 1993 (BY; SWH†; 1993-133). With two dissenting votes, the Committee voted that the bird's presence in the northern Sacramento Valley likely represented a natural occurrence. Nearly all procellariiforms recorded inland in California have been at the Salton Sea or adjacent regions of the Sonoran Desert; most have occurred during the late April to late September season of southerly monsoon winds, but few have been clearly related to tropical storms in Mexico (Patten and Minnich 1997). In addition to this one, anomalous interior records are of a Black Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma melania*) found in Kings Canyon National Park, Tulare Co., 5 Oct 1994 (*NAS Field Notes* 49:96, 1995) and a Laysan Albatross at Whiskeytown Reservoir, Trinity Co. (*Am. Birds* 45:492, 1991); the latter bird was thought by some to have been transported artificially, as it had been marked on the head with paint. Procellariiforms are generally rare within San Francisco Bay away from the mouth of the Golden Gate; the occurrence of the Streaked Shearwater in Red Bluff suggests to some a route from the bay up the Sacramento River, though other scenarios (including transport by humans—both Sacramento and Stockton are busy shipping ports) certainly cannot be ruled out.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus* (12, 4). Single birds were observed just off Southeast Farallon Island, SF, on 22 Mar 1995 (PP; 1995-141) and 15 Oct 1995 (PP†; 1995-135). Single birds were also in Monterey Bay, MTY, on 10 Sep 1995 (TE†; DLB†; 1995-122) and in both the Monterey and Santa Cruz county portions of Monterey Bay on 29 Oct 1995 (SNGH; BMcK†, SW; 1995-110); the committee received no documentation for four other sightings in Monterey Bay during fall 1995 reported by Yee et al. (1996). These records continue a trend since 1993 of annual occurrence in California, primarily in fall (Erickson and Terrill 1996, Howell and Pyle 1997). Several additional records since 1995 are currently under review by the Committee.

BROWN BOOBY *Sula leucogaster* (45, 1). A subadult male with blue facial skin, a few whitish feathers on the crown, and some brown flecking on the sides of the breast (probably of the northernmost eastern Pacific subspecies *brewsteri*) was at Southeast Farallon Island, SF, 27 Sep-11 Oct 1995 (PP; 1995-136). A first-year Brown Booby was in the same general area 9 Aug-4 Sep 1994 (CBRC record 1994-182; Howell and Pyle 1997), but the Committee followed the lead of the observer in considering the 1995 bird to be a different individual.

TRICOLORED HERON *Egretta tricolor* (15**, 1). One of undetermined age was at the south end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 13 May-19 Aug 1995 (GMcC; 1995-074).

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The resightings of this individual by different observers through 19 Aug were not submitted to the CBRC; observers are urged to always submit details on Review List species to add to the body of documentation and to help the Committee consider issues such as date span.

REDDISH EGRET *Egretta rufescens* (68, 0). The perennially wintering bird around the south end of San Diego Bay, SD, was refound 7 Oct–26 Nov 1995 (GMcC; 1995-100) and presumably remained in the area through the winter; it has returned annually since 1982 and is individually recognizable by a bill deformity. Clapp et al. (1982) gave a longevity record of 12 years, 3 months for this species, which the San Diego bird has now surpassed.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nyctanassa violacea* (17, 1). A first-year bird was at the Point Mugu Gun Club near Port Hueneme, VEN, 30 Aug–4 Sep 1995 (DD†; GMcC, TRC; 1995-035; Figure 1). This is one of the few records of an immature accepted for California. The adult present since 1981 continued at and near La Jolla, SD, in 1995, with a sighting from 4 March 1995 submitted to the Committee (GMcC; 1995-101); since this bird was in adult plumage when first discovered, it was at least 16 years old in 1995. No longevity data for this species were provided by Clapp et al. (1982) or Watts (1995).

BLACK VULTURE *Coragyps atratus* (1, 1). A sight record of a single bird over the Chico Sewage Treatment Plant, 4 miles southwest of Chico, BUT, on 13 Apr 1972 (TM; 1972-012) becomes the first accepted record of this species for California and illustrates a number of points about the Committee's review process. Single-observer sight reports of first state records are rarely accepted by the Committee, although there is no formal barrier to acceptance of such records. In the present case, the combination of an experienced observer, excellent views, and a thorough description of a distinctive species ultimately satisfied the Committee on the identification. The final vote was completed in 1997, well after a widely seen and thoroughly documented Black Vulture appeared in Arcata, HUM (that record is currently in circulation). The more important issue relating to the Chico record is the question of natural occurrence. There is no firm evidence that this species is commonly kept in captivity, though much speculation centered on that issue, particularly the species' possible use in location shooting for the film industry. Committee members disagreed on the magnitude of movement within southwestern and western Mexican populations of the Black Vulture, and even whether a California bird might have originated from eastern North America; some expressed concern that the natural occurrence of "supporting" records from Idaho, British Columbia, and the Yukon had been questioned by local experts. Ultimately, the record was accepted on a 9-1 vote, the dissenter questioning the bird's natural occurrence.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna autumnalis* (15, 4). Four records, all from the Salton basin, were thought to pertain to different individuals, although several committee members suspected some duplication. One was at the mouth of the Whitewater River at the north end of the Salton Sea, RIV, 12 Jul–20 Aug 1993 (GjH, RWH; 1993-140). One was near the mouth of the New River, IMP, 10 Aug 1994 (KCM, KS†; 1994-146). One at Ramer Lake near Calipatria, IMP, 27–28 Aug 1994 (GMcC; 1994-157) was thought by only a minority of Committee members to be the same as the one at the New River earlier the same month. Finally, another was at Ramer Lake 29 May–3 Jun 1995 (AME; EDG†, MSM, MJSM, JOZ; 1995-063).

EMPEROR GOOSE *Chen canagica* (61, 2). Two different adults shot by sport hunters were documented by photographs of the taxidermy mounts. One at North Humboldt Bay, HUM, 5–11 Dec 1994 was shot on the last date (photos of mount obtained by SE; 1996-002). One in the Arcata Bottoms, HUM, was shot 13 Dec 1994 (photo of specimen provided by GSL; 1996-003).

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GARGANEY *Anas querquedula* (18, 3). A female was at Ocean Ranch, Eel River Wildlife Area, HUM, 16-23 Sep 1995 (GSL†, LPL; 1996-004). This is another case where numerous observers saw a Review List species but documentation was submitted only in the form of one brief description and two undated photos. One, thought to be an immature or eclipse male, was on Vandenberg Air Force Base, SBA, 29 Dec 1995-29 Feb 1996 (BHT; JMC, TRC, SEF, PAG, PEL, CAM, GMcC; 1996-010); a photograph was published in *NAS Field Notes* 50:222. One, probably a first-year male, was near Cantil, KER, 28 Sep-1 Oct 1995 (MTH; NBB, MOC, JLD, GMcC, DEQ, JCW; 1995-102), the second record for this desert locality.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus* (48, 0). Returning individuals were in Irvine Regional Park, ORA, 3-8 Nov 1995 (GMcC; 1995-118), and in Santee, SD, 5 Feb 1995 (GMcC; 1995-032); both presumably remained through the winter. The Irvine bird was in at least its third winter, the Santee bird its fourth.

MONGOLIAN PLOVER *Charadrius mongolicus* (6, 1). A juvenile was at the Ventura Duck Club near Oxnard, VEN, 3-7 Sep 1995 (DD†; MJSM, MSM; 1995-098). All of the six accepted records for the state have been between 7 August and 25 September, except for a returning adult that appeared as early as 12 July in years following its initial appearance.

EURASIAN DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus* (6, 1). Two were together at Lake Talawa, DN, 8-12 Sep 1992 (FG†, GSL†, RLeV, MMT†; 1992-249). Photographs such as that published in *Am. Birds* 47:169, 1993, clearly show one bird to have been a juvenile; the second, slightly less contrastingly marked, might have been a juvenile as well. A third bird was reported present, but the Committee received no documentation.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT *Limosa haemastica* (13, 1). A juvenile was well described from Mystic Lake, San Jacinto Valley, RIV, 16 Sep 1995 (MAP, BDS; 1995-086). All three previous southern California records had been for spring (9-22 May), although seven of the eight northern California records are for fall (9 August to 3 October).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* (20, 3). A sight record of one at Horseshoe Pond, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 12 Aug 1993 (PD; 1993-176) was unanimously accepted after three circulations; the description was written two months after the observation, a factor troubling several Committee members on the initial circulations. One was photographed at the Cliff House, San Francisco, SF, 8-9 Aug 1994 (ASH†; 1995-087). An adult was at Abbott's Lagoon, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 2-21 Oct 1995 (SM; RST, BDP, EDG†, JM, SBT; 1995-105; Figure 2); another photograph was published in *NAS Field Notes* 50:219, 1996.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus* (58, 5). A first-summer bird was in Alviso, SCL, 4-11 May 1995 (MMRT; 1995-065), representing a first county record. An adult was off Pt. Fermin, San Pedro, LA, 23 Dec 1995 (MSM, KLG; 1996-011). Adults in alternate plumage were at the south end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 7 May 1995 (RjN; 1995-076) and near Mecca, RIV, 15 Jun 1995 (PGR; 1995-077); these were thought by the majority of Committee members to be different individuals. Finally, a bird molting out of first alternate plumage was at the south end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 24 Jul-12 Aug 1995 (JNT, GMcC; TRC, JLD, MTH†, MAP†, SBT†; 1995-081).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus* (19, 2). An adult was at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, Menlo Park, SM, 17-18 Feb 1995 (RST; JoM; 1995-037). A first-winter bird at the mouth of the Santa Ynez River, SBA, 5-10 Jan 1995 (BHT; 1995-052) was documented only with two photographs taken on 6 January without accompanying notes; observers are urged to fill in details about observations even when photographs are assumed to "speak for themselves." A returning wintering adult was in Santa Barbara, SBA, 21 Nov 1995 to at least 30 Jan 1996 (BHT, RLI, CAM, GMcC; 1996-009).

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LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* (8, 1). An adult was at Coyote Creek Riparian Station and Alviso, SCL, 22 Oct 1995–23 Mar 1996 (NL†; BDP, DEQ, RJR, MMR†, SCR, SBT; 1995-114); it was seen just across the county line near the Newby Island Dump, ALA, 13–16 Feb 1996 and represented a first record for both counties.

SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata* (3, 1). An adult was at the Santa Clara River estuary (McGrath State Beach), VEN, 28 May 1995 (WW; 1995-055). One at Bolsa Chica Reserve near Huntington Beach, ORA, 17 Jun–8 Aug 1995 (TRC, JLD, PLK†, JL, CAM, GMcC, DR, MAP, BDS; 1995-070; Figure 3) was considered the same bird as an adult present there 30 Jul–10 Aug 1994 (1994-109; see Erickson and Terrill 1996, Howell and Pyle 1997).

THICK-BILLED MURRE *Uria lomvia* (34, 1). One was photographed on Monterey Bay off Pacific Grove, MTY, 16 Oct 1995 (RMSt; 1995-111); most California records are from this area.

CRESTED AUKLET *Aethia cristatella* (2, 1). One off Bodega Bay, SON, 24 Jun 1995 (LL‡, SBT†; MD†, EDG, BDP, RMSt, DLSh; 1995-069; Figure 4) was extensively photographed and videotaped. The first California record was of a single bird at Bolinas, MRN, 16–17 Jul 1979 and found dead on the latter date (Weyman 1980). This pattern of summer occurrences of far northern alcids is further supported by California records of an adult Least Auklet (*Aethia pusilla*) in June (Bailey 1989), a juvenile Kittlitz's Murrelet (*Brachyramphus brevirostris*) in August (Devillers 1972), at least two June and July Parakeet Auklets (*Aethia psittacula*), and numerous Horned Puffins (*Fratercula corniculata*); there is also a July record of an adult Crested Auklet in Baja California (Pitman et al. 1983).

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti* (61, 1). A male was at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, INY, 21–22 Oct 1995 (GMcC; 1995-113). This species is nearly an annual visitor to this part of the state, although reports have decreased in recent years.

GROOVE-BILLED ANI *Crotophaga sulcirostris* (10, 1). One in Wilmington, LA, 2 Dec 1995–4 May 1996 (TK, NP, PDS; TRC, AME, KLG, CAM, GMcC, BMcK, MAP, BDS, MSM, MJSM, JHT†; 1995-125) was the second for Los Angeles Co. and is perhaps only the second to have wintered in the state. Descriptions and photographs showed a relatively small-billed individual with shallow grooves, suggesting it may have been an immature female (Pyle 1997); a photograph was published in *NAS Field Notes* 50:224, 1996.

GREATER PEWEE *Contopus pertinax* (30, 0). One on the grounds of the San Diego Zoo, SD, 7–21 Jan 1995 (GMcC; 1995-016) was considered by most Committee members to be a returning individual; this record fits the California pattern dominated by wintering (and often returning) birds.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (36, 2). Individuals were in San Francisco, SF, 28 Dec 1995–20 Jan 1996 (GMcC, JM, MMR, DSgt; 1996-027) and at Moss Landing, MTY, 27 Dec 1995–12 Feb 1996 (DEG; JM, DR†, MMR, DSgt; 1996-035).

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD *Tyrannus crassirostris* (13, 0). One at Pomona, LA, 30 Nov 1995–24 Mar 1996 (TRC, KLG†, CAM, GMcC, MSM; 1995-126) returned for its fourth consecutive winter, though no documentation has been submitted supporting its presence during the winter of 1993-1994.

*SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER *Tyrannus forficatus* (94, 2). One at Crannell Bottoms, HUM, 26–28 May 1995 (MH; JEH, LPL; 1995-072) was probably an adult male; another at Point Loma, SD, 27–31 May 1995 (PU; 78-1995) was considered

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an immature. This species was removed from the CBRC Review List as of the January 1998 meeting, so post-1997 records will no longer be reviewed.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO *Vireo flavifrons* (56, 1). One was at Vandenberg Air Force Base, SBA, 9 Jun 1995 (JAY; BH†; 1995-079). This species is decidedly more common in spring than fall, with almost 70% of accepted records from late April to June.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO *Vireo philadelphicus* (101, 5). One was banded on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 11-19 Sep 1995 (PC, CH, BW†; 1996-015). Individuals were at Princeton, SM, 24-28 Sep 1995 (DJP; RST; 1995-095), at Irvine, ORA, 30 Sep 1995 (RAH; 1995-115), and at Point Loma, SD, 7-8 Oct 1995 (GMcC, TRC; 1995-103) and 22 Oct 1995 (PAG; GMcC; 1995-112).

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO *Vireo flavoviridis* (43, 4). One at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 21-26 Sep 1995 (MTH†; JLD, GMcC, MAP, BDS; 1995-091) was a county first and only the second accepted record from the interior. More typical were individuals coastally at Wilmington, LA, 7-8 Oct 1995 (MSM; NBB, KL†; 1995-099), at Lake Merced, SF, 16-28 Oct 1995 (JM, DSg, SBT; 1995-130), and at Sunset State Beach, SCZ, 17 Oct 1995 (BMe; DLSu; 1995-096).

LANCEOLATED WARBLER *Locustella lanceolata* (1, 1). One at SE Farallon I., SF, 11-12 Sep 1995 (PC, CH, BW†; 1996-014; Figure 5) was a first for the state and only the second record for North America; a record of up to 25 birds on Attu I., Alaska, in summer 1984 was detailed by Tobish (1985). Among the diverse array of vagrants found on Southeast Farallon Island, this ranks as one of the most unusual. Identification of this species is relatively straightforward (Riddiford and Harvey 1992, Leader 1994). Hickey et al. (1996) discussed this record and the identification criteria for this species.

DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (5, 1). One at Vandenberg AFB, SBA, 31 Oct-3 Nov 1995 (BH†; JEL, GMcC, REW†§; 1995-119) was only the fifth for California, though the second for Santa Barbara County. Photographs and tape recordings provided excellent supporting documentation; one photo was published in *NAS Field Notes* 50:116, 1996. Erickson and Terrill (1996) summarized the status and major identification points of this species. The fall of 1997 saw an influx of this species into the state; at least three records are currently under review by the CBRC.

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis* (1, 1). This primarily Old World species was added to the state list on the basis of an individual caught and banded at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab at Andrew Molera State Park, MTY, 13 Sep 1995 (ASp†, CE, AI; 1995-106; Figure 6). Remarkably, this is only the second record of this species south of Alaska, the first being from Baja California Sur in 1991 (Pyle and Howell 1993); an additional California record from 1996 is currently under review by the Committee. Despite measurements and in-hand photographs, no consensus was reached as to the subspecies involved; *kennicotti*, which breeds in Alaska, may seem most likely on geographic grounds, but the Baja California record was suspected to represent one of the Asiatic forms. An analysis of the photographs by Paul J. Leader of Hong Kong was most helpful in conclusively eliminating other *Phylloscopus* warblers from consideration.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe* (8, 1). One, probably an immature, was at Baker Beach, SF, 23 Sep 1995 (DSg†; JM; 1995-127; Figure 7).

GRAY CATBIRD *Dumetella carolinensis* (71, 3). Individuals were at Ocotillo, IMP, 13-17 Jun 1995 (GMcC; 1995-066), Furnace Creek Ranch, INY, 2 Oct 1995 (MTH†; TH, SBT†; 1995-128), and near California City, KER, 30 Sep-1 Oct 1995 (MOC, MTH†, JCW†; 1995-142).

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YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* (11, 1). An immature was at Lake Earl, DN, 29 Aug 1995 (GSL†, LPL; 1996-006; Figure 8). This marks the earliest seasonal occurrence in the state, with all records spanning 29 Aug–20 Sep.

BLACK-BACKED WAGTAIL *Motacilla lugens* (6, 1). An immature male was at Bolinas, MRN, 3 Nov 1995 (PP; SNGH, RS†, SW; 1995-117; Figure 9). White and Black-backed wagtails in first basic plumage can often be distinguished from older birds by their two generations of upperwing coverts: the fresher first-basic medians contrasting with the more worn juvenal greater (Pyle 1997); determination of the age of the Bolinas bird was a critical precursor to confident species identification.

*RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus* (105, 1). A bird heard flying over Montezuma Slough, SOL, 21 Oct 1991 (RS; 1993-045) finally gained acceptance after going 9–1 during the third round. All Committee members agreed the identification was correct but many were troubled by the skimpy documentation for this and other “heard-only” records. Most members eventually voted to accept because the species is no longer on the Review List, the bird occurred during a strong flight year for this species in California, and the observer had extensive experience with this and other pipit species. The Committee, however, has been inconsistent in its treatment of “heard only” records of the Red-throated Pipit.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT *Anthus spragueii* (23, 1). An immature female was at Desert Center, RIV, 1 Oct 1995 (MAP†, BDS; #SDNHM 49303; 1995-093); the specimen was obtained after the pipit was chased and grounded by a Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora pinus* (21, 1). After several years of multiple records only one was recorded in 1995: an immature at Galileo Hill Park, KER, 24–26 Sep (SS; NBB, JLD†, MTH†, GMcC, MAP, DEQ†, MSM, MJSM, BDS; 1995-092). Several observers and Committee members thought the bird was most likely a female from the extent of olive on the crown, but many remained noncommittal, pointing out the hazards of sexing some species from photographs and field descriptions.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora chrysoptera* (54, 3). A male was at Pescadero, SM, 25–30 Aug 1995 (RST; BMcK, SBT; 1995-131) for the state's second August record. Kern County's first fall record was of a male at Galileo Hill Park, KRN, 21–24 Sep 1995 (MTH†, GMcC, MJSM; 1995-104), and a male was in Huntington Beach, ORA, 19 Oct 1995 (JRG†, SRG; 1996-024).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER *Dendroica dominica* (76, 2). One at Point Reyes, MRN, 31 May–4 June 1995 was of the expected white-lored subspecies *albiflora* (RS; JM, BDP; 1995-058). Far more unusual was a yellow-lored individual at Ramer Lake, IMP, 17 Dec 1995–16 Mar 1996 (TRC, JLD, LJE†, RLI, JLM, CAM, GMcC, MAP, RMS†, MJSM, BDS; 1995-143). Though likely of the nominate form, *dominica*, the restricted-range subspecies *stoddardi* could not be eliminated by the descriptions or photographs. *Dominica* and *stoddardi* typically have bright yellow supraloral areas and no white on the chin; *albiflora* may show pale yellow in the anterior supercilium and usually have at least some white in the chin (Dunn and Garrett 1997). The subspecies *stoddardi*, breeding in a limited area of coastal northwestern Florida and adjacent Alabama and with a winter range that remains unknown, does not seem to be a likely candidate to occur in California, and its validity has been questioned by some authors.

GRACE'S WARBLER *Dendroica graciae* (31, 2). A female at Clark Mtn., SB, 3 Jun 1995 (MAP; BDS, SBT; 1995-060) was noteworthy as all other acceptable records there are of males and, though long speculated, breeding has never been confirmed at this site; up to two males on Clark Mountain at the same time are still under review. One wintered at 1650 m elevation at Chilao in the San Gabriel Mtns., LA, 22 Oct 1995–10 Mar 1996 (TK, NP; CAM, KLG, TN, MJN, GP, MSM; 1996-030).

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PINE WARBLER *Dendroica pinus* (52, 1). A male at La Mirada, LA, 13 Jan - 18 Feb 1995 (LJS; JLD, KLG, RAHt, CAM, GMcC, MAP, MSM; 1995-012) was thought by some to be an immature.

CERULEAN WARBLER *Dendroica cerulea* (14, 1). A HY male was banded at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab, MTY, 4 Oct 1995 (DRt; 1995-107). This individual was readily aged by the juvenal rectrices and judged to be a male on the basis of its black back streaking.

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helmitheros vermivorus* (79, 4). One was at Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay, SON, 15-16 Sep 1995 (BDP; 1995-094), and another wintered in San Francisco, SF, 19 Nov 1995-20 Mar 1996 (SH, JLM, JoM, DSg; 1996-013). Two collided with windows in Monterey Co.: the first was found dead 26 Oct 1995 in Monterey (BJWt; #PGMNH 2320A; 1996-001), whereas the second, in Pacific Grove, 6 Dec 1995 (ECt; 1996-018), was only stunned and soon flew off.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH *Seiurus motacilla* (8, 1). One was at Yucca Valley, SBE, 7-10 Jun 1995 (EAc; NBB, BED, RJN, MAP, LP, SJP, BDS; 1995-061). This is the second early June record for California; Louisiana Waterthrushes have largely reached their breeding grounds in eastern North America by late April, and fall migration there begins by early July, exceptionally in June (Dunn and Garrett 1997). June records in California are therefore difficult to interpret but probably involve late spring wanderers.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER *Oporornis agilis* (77, 3). Immatures, two of which were banded, were at Southeast Farallon Island, SF, 9 Sep 1995 (PC, BWt; 1995-137), 21 Sep 1995 (BW; 1995-138), and 23 Sep 1995 (PP; Pct; 1995-016).

PYRRHULOXIA *Cardinalis sinuatus* (18, 4). Up to four, including a female on a nest, were at Chemehuevi Wash, SBE, 28 May-8 Jul 1995 (RLi, DRt; EDGt, GMcC, MAP, MSM, MJSM, BDS; 1995-056; Figure 10). This species nested here in 1977 (Garrett and Dunn 1981).

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris* (50, 4). In central California one was near Davenport, SCZ, 15 Sep 1992 (KK; 1992-247), another in Santa Cruz, SCZ, 3-17 Nov 1995 (SH; JDt, SG, JM, KMcK, BDP, DR, DLSu, SBTt; 1995-132). More expected were single birds in San Diego, SD, 4 Sep 1992 (NW; 1993-024) and Imperial Beach, SD, 2-3 Dec 1995 (TAC, GMcC; 1995-133). This species continues to present difficulties for Committee members. The two 1992 records took four rounds before acceptance. Issues of identification, which generally result from scant documentation, as well as concerns over natural occurrence, remain problematic. None of these individuals was an adult male.

CASSIN'S SPARROW *Aimophila cassinii* (39, 1). One on Southeast Farallon Island, SF, 15-17 Oct 1995 (BW, PP; 1995-140) was the first there since 1988; most of the fall records for California are from this locality.

LE CONTE'S SPARROW *Ammodramus leconteii* (27, 1). One in first basic plumage was banded on Southeast Farallon Island, SF, 27 Oct 1995 (BWt, PP; 1996-017).

SMITH'S LONGSPUR *Calcarius pictus* (3, 1). An immature male was at Point Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 24-31 Oct 1995 (TAC, JDK, LLt, GMcC, JM, BDP, DEQ, JW; 1995-097). Two recent records of this species are currently under review.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* (58, 3). One was at Point Reyes, MRN, 22-31 Oct 1995 (BMcK; TRC, LLt, GMcC, JoM, BDP, DEQ; 1995-108), two were at L. Talawa, DN, 22 Nov 1995 (GMcC; 1995-134), and up to eight were at the Eel R. mouth, HUM, 10 Nov 1995-6 Jan 1996 (CAM, PAG; 1996-120). Sexing this

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species in the field remains challenging, and most Committee members refrained from commenting. Nevertheless, videotape of the Point Reyes bird appears to show a secondary and primary covert pattern consistent with that of a male. The Lake Talawa birds were thought by the observer to be females.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED: IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED

*MURPHY'S PETREL *Pterodroma ultima*. One reported 12 miles west of Southeast Farallon Island, SF, 3 Jun 1985 (1985-068) was originally submitted (and subsequently rejected) as a Solander's Petrel (*Pterodroma solandri*); this rejection was not published in any CBRC report. The record was then recirculated as a Murphy's Petrel, going four circulations and ultimately receiving six "accept" votes, shy of the nine necessary for acceptance. It was the consensus of the CBRC that the bird was most likely a Murphy's, considered the "default" dark *Pterodroma* petrel in the waters off California. Decision by "default," however, is not acceptable to many CBRC members, and the two recent independent sightings of an apparent Great-winged Petrel (*P. macroptera*, currently under CBRC review) are testimony to the dangers of such assumptions. Furthermore, Solander's Petrel has been collected at 40° N in the North Pacific Ocean (LACM #102806), albeit well west of California, so that species' occurrence off California should still be deemed possible.

One reported off Pt. Arena, MEN, 21 May 1981 (1981-045; distant photo) has a similar history. Originally submitted as a Solander's, it was nearly accepted as that species (reaching eight accept votes in its third circulation) but ultimately rejected. The establishment of Murphy's as the "expected" dark *Pterodroma* off California led to reassessment of this record as that species, but it was finally rejected on a 5-5 vote. This record came from a period prior to any accepted records of dark *Pterodroma* in California waters, and before much useful field identification information on the several dark Pacific Ocean species was available (Bailey et al. 1989).

STEJNEGER'S PETREL *Pterodroma longirostris*. After four circulations, a report of four seen and one photographed (with no accompanying description) on 10 Oct 1991 about 120 miles WSW of Pt. Conception, SBA, (1992-053) received a 5-5 vote and thus was not accepted. The small image in the slides suggested Stejneger's to most Committee members, but some were not convinced. The report fits within the seasonal (July to November) pattern of the six accepted California records of this species; see the discussion of seasonal patterns by Heindel and Patten (1996). This is another case of an experienced seabird observer on a research cruise not being able to provide convincing documentation, pointing to the problems of seabird documentation and identification discussed by Howell and Pyle (1997).

BULWER'S PETREL *Bulweria bulwerii*. A medium-small dark procellariform seen at the mouth of the Whitewater River at the north end of the Salton Sea, RIV, 10 Jul 1993 (1993-118) was thought to be this species. The sighting occurred during a small incursion of tubenoses, which included a Cook's Petrel (*Pterodroma cookii*) and a Least Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma microsoma*) (McCaskie 1993, Patten and Minnich 1997). Several committee members were convinced that a *Bulweria* was seen but not that Jouanin's Petrel (*B. fallax*) could be eliminated; only one of the eight rejecting Committee members specifically indicated that the record was acceptable as *Bulweria* sp.? Although the size and bill-shape differences between the two *Bulweria* species are usually marked, most California observers are understandably poorly versed in this problem; this, coupled with the difficulty of putting seabird size and shape into perspective on a relatively calm desert sea, made the specific identification of this potential first state record less than convincing for several committee members. Bulwer's Petrel is a warm-water species reported without documentation as far north as the waters south of Clipperton Island and possibly the Islas Revillagigedos (Howell and Webb 1995).



Figure 1. This Yellow-crowned Night Heron, *Nyctanassa violacea* (1993-035), near Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., 4 September 1995, is one of the few in first-year plumage to be found in California. Note the stout, dark bill and long-legged appearance.

Photo by Don DesJardin

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma castro*. One reported 12 Sep 1970 about 25 miles west of Mission Bay, San Diego SD (1973-103), had been accepted previously (Luther et al. 1983); details are provided by McCaskie (1990). Of the agonizing seabird-related decisions facing the Committee and detailed in these Committee reports, this record certainly stands out as one of the most difficult. Re-analysis and ultimate rejection of long-accepted state records is not to be taken lightly, and the Committee was deeply split in this case. One matter of concern for many members was the lack of any well-documented and accepted records of this species since this 1970 sighting, despite increased offshore coverage. Indeed, several claimed Band-rumped Storm-Petrels have failed to gain CBRC acceptance, as most recently reported by Erickson and Terrill (1996). The 1970 bird off San Diego was identified by plumage, shape, and flight characters; assessment of these characters can be tricky, especially given the range of uppertail covert patterns and overall size shown by eastern Pacific Ocean Leach's Storm-Petrels (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*; see Ainley 1980). Field identification of the Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was discussed by Lee (1984) and references therein.



Figure 2. Bar-tailed Godwit, *Limosa lapponica* (1995-105), in flight (on left) with a Marbled Godwit, *L. fedoa*, at Abbott's Lagoon, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Marin Co., 12 October 1995.

Photo by Ed Greaves

BROWN BOOBY *Sula leucogaster*. One reported flying over the junction of Interstate 15 and Highway 163 just north of San Diego, SD, 5 Jan 1995 (1995-48) had essentially no accompanying description from the single observer and was thus unacceptable to all ten Committee members.

ANHINGA *Anhinga anhinga*. A single-observer sight report of one seen in flight over Irvine, ORA, 30 Jul 1995 (1995-088) received three accept votes but was not considered adequately described by the remaining Committee members. In addition, the possibility of the occurrence of escapees of other *Anhinga* species ("darters") cannot be ruled out by brief descriptions. There remain but three accepted records of this species for California.

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*. Two adults and an immature reported at Lake Almanor, PLU, 15 Feb 1993 (1993-068) were narrowly rejected, receiving seven "accept" votes. None of the birds was neck-collared (as many recent Trumpeters in California have been). Those failing to accept the record were primarily concerned with the difficulty of assessing critical features of bill shape and face pattern at the great distance of observation (>400 m), as well as the fact that the birds were not heard to call. A major point favoring acceptance was the obviously larger size of these birds in a large flock of Tundra Swans (*Cygnus columbianus*). For the identification of Tundra and Trumpeter swans see Patten and Heindel (1994).

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*. One reported 14 February 1995 at Buena Vista Lake, KER, (1995-040) was described briefly and gained only a single vote to accept. The largely white plumage suggested the Smew but did not rule out, for example, the Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis*) or various leucistic ducks.

MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis*. One reported south of Imperial Beach, SD, by a single observer on 5 Jun 1983 (1993-142) received seven accept votes; dissenting Committee members cited the brevity of the observation, distance of the bird from the observer, and delayed submission of the record.



Figure 3. Sooty Tern, *Sterna fuscata* (1995-070) among Elegant, *S. elegans*, and Royal, *S. maxima*, terns at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co., 15 July 1995; an adult Sooty Tern has been present at this location each summer since at least 1994.

Photo by Peter L. Knapp

CRESTED CARACARA *Caracara plancus*. An intriguing second-hand report of two birds seen from (and one even briefly striking) a hang-glider over Oriflamme Mountain, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, SD, 20 Jun 1995 (1996-026) was unanimously considered to lack adequate documentation.

RED-NECKED STINT *Calidris ruficollis*. An adult reported from the Santa Clara River estuary, VEN, 4 July 1987 (1992-215) split the committee rather evenly; several rejecting members were concerned that the Little Stint (*C. minuta*) was not completely eliminated. Plumage variability in alternate-plumaged Little Stints is probably underappreciated.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. A juvenile photographed at Bodega Bay, SON, 27 Jul 1992 (1992-259) had the Committee rather evenly divided between considering it a Little Stint or a bright Semipalmated Sandpiper (*C. pusilla*). The photograph was then reviewed by P. J. Leader and G. Carey in Hong Kong, who strongly felt that the bird was neither a Little Stint nor a Red-necked Stint.

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti*. One was briefly described from Iron Mountain Pump Station, SBE, 24 Sep 1994 (1994-170); bill color and underwing covert color were not noted, and the description of the underparts as "gray" did not seem to fit with the "reddish-brown" upperparts. This was the only report of this species in California in 1994; it has been nearly annual since 1984, with acceptable records lacking only in 1986 and 1994.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. Photographs of a specimen at the University of Washington Burke Museum (UWBM #10199; 1995-042)



Figure 4. Crested Auklet, *Aethia cristatella* (1995-069), just off Bodega Head, near Bodega Bay, Sonoma Co., 26 June 1995. This makes the second record for California; the first was of a beached bird in Marin Co. in 1979.

Photo by Ron Saldino

were forwarded to the Committee for review and provided an interesting example of the process of evaluation. The specimen label indicated that the bird was collected by R. H. Palmer in March 1918 in Fresno, FRE. All members agreed that a March record in California was extremely unlikely, and many questioned whether the date, collection locality, or both might be incorrect on the label. The specimen was accessioned into the Burke Museum collection in 1928, and it appears the information on the tag was written at that time (*vide* C. Wood), raising concern of a transcription error. The record failed to go more than a single round, although all Committee members agreed the specimen was correctly identified.

Note that in cases where basic locality and/or date information are questionable, a rejection of a record is considered to be on the basis of identification (even when the identity of the bird is agreed to be the claimed species).

GREATER PEWEE *Contopus pertinax*. Reports of a singing bird in the Laguna Mountains, SD, 28 May 1995 (1995-090) and another at the south end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 29 May 1995 (1995-064) lacked adequate documentation, given the unprecedented time of year for both reports (all accepted California records lie between 11 Sep and 14 Apr and pertain to fall or wintering individuals). Unseasonal records are invariably treated with great caution, and the fullest documentation is usually necessary to convince this Committee to accept. Both records were thought to be correct by several members, but in each case it was not clear that the observers fully appreciated the significance of the dates.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Contopus virens*. A bird photographed and tape-recorded in Huntington Beach, ORA, on 29 Nov 1994 (1995-014) was considered more likely a Western Wood-Pewee (*C. sordidulus*) from plumage features, including a



Figure 5. Lanceolated Warbler, *Locustella lanceolata* (1996-014), Southeast Farallon I., San Francisco Co., 11 September 1995. Only the second record for North America.

Photo by Brett Walker



Figure 6. Arctic Warbler, *Phylloscopus borealis* (1995-106), Big Sur River mouth, Monterey Co., 13 September 1995. The very long supercilium, mottled auriculars, and long primary projection helped identify this species, a first for California.

Photo by Allen Spaulding



Figure 7. Northern Wheatear. *Oenanthe oenanthe* (1995-127), Baker Beach, San Francisco. 23 September 1995.

Photo by Daniel S. Singer



Figure 8. Yellow Wagtail. *Motacilla flava* (1996-006), Lake Earl, Del Norte Co., 29 August 1995.

Photo by Gary S. Lester



Figure 9. Black-backed Wagtail, *Motacilla lugens* (1995-117), in first basic plumage, Bolinas, Marin Co., 3 November 1995.

Photo by Rich Stallcup



Figure 10. Female Pyrrhuloxia, *Cardinalis sinuatus* (1995-056), Chemehuevi Wash, San Bernardino Co., 29 May 1995. Three males were also present.

Photo by Don Roberson

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mostly if not entirely dark lower mandible, dull olive back, and dingy underparts. Committee members were less certain of the bird's call, with some considering the bird a possible *virens* from its repeating a down-slurred note. Any wood-pewee observed after mid-October should be studied carefully, and the observers are commended for going to such lengths to document this bird. The identification of these two taxa remains one of the more difficult challenges in North American field ornithology.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer*. One reported at Point Lobos, MTY, 30 Nov 1994 (1994-187) was rejected because the documentation submitted failed to eliminate the Ash-throated Flycatcher (*M. cinerascens*).

*SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER *Tyrannus forficatus*. One near Imperial Beach, SD, 10 Oct 1995 (1993-057) went four rounds before being rejected 8-2 on grounds of identification. This record points out how the committee process may conflict with "reality" as perceived by the birding public. Virtually all members felt a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was indeed present and, in fact, was seen by many local observers. Unfortunately, only one observer submitted details, and a minority of members felt that the documentation was inadequate to establish the identification; the Committee welcomes additional documentation from others who observed this bird and might provide grounds for reevaluation of this record.

EYEBROWED THRUSH *Turdus obscurus*. A report from William Heise County Park, near Julian, SD, 19 Feb 1995 (1995-144) lacked detail sufficient for a potential



Figure 11. This meadowlark, *Sturnella* sp. (1989-011), was captured and photographed on Southeast Farallon I., San Francisco Co., 29 October 1985, and submitted as a possible Eastern Meadowlark (*S. magna*). Fresh-plumaged Western Meadowlarks (*S. neglecta*) may lack significant yellow in the malar region and can be unusually dark above; a consensus of CBRC members and outside experts was this individual was likely a Western.

Photo by Peter Pyle

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first state record. Curiously, the four California reports (none accepted) of this species fall between 19 February and 6 March.

GRAY CATBIRD *Dumetella carolinensis*. One seen briefly in Wyman Canyon, White Mountains, INY, 14 Jun 1984 (Johnson and Cicero 1986; 1993-043) lacked sufficient documentation.

*RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus*. "Heard-only" records from Big Sur R. mouth, MTY, 14 Oct 1992 (1992-026), Salinas R. mouth, MTY, 16 Oct 1992 (1992-027), and Moss Landing, MTY, 17 Oct 1995 (1992-028) failed to garner acceptance primarily because of differing philosophies by Committee members over the acceptability of such records. This species is no longer on the review list.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER *Dendroica dominica*. One reported from Point Reyes, MRN, 2 Jun 1992 (1993-046) and another from near Point Bonita, MRN, 22 May 1993 (1993-126) both went four rounds before a decision was reached. These records lacked sufficient documentation, though each was supported by a majority of Committee members.

MOURNING WARBLER *Oporornis philadelphia*. One reported at Galileo Hill, KER, 24 Sep 1994 (1994-136) was considered a MacGillivray's Warbler (*O. tolmei*) by most members.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*. A report from Death Valley, INY, 4 Nov 1989 (1992-234) would represent only the third record for the California deserts. The bird was seen very briefly as it flew overhead and the documentation, albeit from an experienced observer, was therefore sparse.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK *Sturnella magna*. A report from Southeast Fallon Island, SF, 27-30 Oct 1985 (1989-011; Figure 11) went three rounds, with votes of 1-9, 7-3, and 2-8, implying the difficulty of such an identification. Expert opinion from several authorities largely supported identification as an Eastern Meadowlark, though one reviewer was adamant that the bird was not an Eastern and all agreed that 100% certainty was impossible. Subsequent research on specimens by several Committee members cast ample doubt on the identification, and ultimately the record had little support. Some morphologically intermediate meadowlarks may be impossible to identify without in-hand examination or a specimen (Pyle 1997).

COMMON GRACKLE *Quiscalus quiscula*. One reported near Bishop, INY, 29 Sep 1993 (1993-186) lacked sufficient documentation. Most members felt a Common Grackle was seen, but the head gloss was described as purple, a characteristic atypical for *Q. q. versicolor*, the only subspecies of the Common Grackle recorded in California. Although interpretation of color is subjective, the word "blue" perhaps best describes the head gloss in *versicolor*.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED: NATURAL OCCURRENCE
QUESTIONABLE (IDENTIFICATION ACCEPTED)

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*. The rejection of two birds at Modoc National Wildlife Refuge, MOD, 30 Nov-26 Dec 1993 (RLR; 1994-004) pointed to a growing problem with this species in California, that of how to deal with birds transported from Idaho to Oregon and subsequently wandering to California. This record was rejected on the issue of natural occurrence because of this management practice; the birds were recognizable as transplanted individuals by their combination of green neck collars and pink-dyed wings.

CRESTED CARACARA *Caracara plancus*. One well-described and photographed at Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, Chula Vista, SD, on 9 Feb 1995 (RC; BMO, DWA; 1995-021) received three accept votes but was suspected by the other

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seven Committee members, citing the coastal, urban locality, of being of questionable origin. The question of the natural occurrence of California's Crested Caracaras has not been satisfactorily established by the Committee. Three records from remote, rural localities 650–1300 km north of the present record—near Mono Lake, MON, in the Shasta Valley, SIS, and at Ft. Dick, DN—have been rejected by the CBRC because of questions about natural occurrence; the species has been placed on the Supplemental List. Given this conservative approach, which stems in part from the lack of any clear pattern of northward vagrancy by this neotropical species, a marked decline in southeastern Arizona, and reports of known escapees, it is not surprising that a record from an urban area was not viewed favorably. Some wondered whether the occurrence of the caracara at Chula Vista might have been related to a possibly natural influx of Harris' Hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) into southern California from 1994 to 1996 currently under CBRC review); however, the lack of any obvious ecological tie-ins between the two species perhaps rendered such speculation moot.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris*. An adult male visited a feeder in Hiouchi, DN, 5–10 Nov 1995 (CCr†; 1996-007). Members were fairly evenly split over the issue of natural occurrence.

CONTRIBUTORS

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