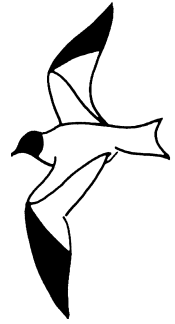


# WESTERN BIRDS



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## THE 38<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 2012 RECORDS

*This report is dedicated to the memory of former committee member Jon Winter (member 1970–1976).*

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**ABSTRACT:** The California Bird Records Committee reached decisions on 280 records involving 525 individuals of 88 species and two species pairs documented since the 37<sup>th</sup> report (Nelson et al. 2013), endorsing 226 records of 471 individuals. The recent addition of the Scaly-breasted Munia (formerly Nutmeg Mannikin, *Lonchura punctulata*) to the state list, and the split of the Sage Sparrow into the Sagebrush Sparrow (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) and Bell's Sparrow (*A. belli*), combined with first accepted state records of the Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*), Gray Hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*), and Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) outlined in this report, brings California's total list of accepted species to 654, 11 of which, including the munia, are established introductions. Other notable records detailed in this report are of the Common Crane (*Grus grus*), Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*), and Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*).

This 38<sup>th</sup> report of the California Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or the committee), a formal standing committee of Western Field Ornithologists, summarizes determinations on 280 records of 88 species and two species pairs involving 525 individuals. The committee accepted 226 of the 280 records, involving 471 individuals of 78 species and two species pairs, for an acceptance rate of 81%. We consider 24 of these records, involving 26 individuals, to represent returning or continuing birds that were accepted previously. Fifty-two reports of 34 species were not accepted because the identification was not considered to be substantiated, and two reports of two species were not accepted because natural occurrence was questionable. Reports of multiple individuals together are given the same record number

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for purposes of review; we report the total number of accepted individuals, which may be greater than the number of accepted records. Although the majority of the records in this report pertain to birds documented in 2012, the period covered spans the years 1960 through 2013.

Highlights of this report include the first acceptance to the California state list of three species: the Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*), Gray Hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*), and Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*). Also included are the second state records of the Common Crane (*Grus grus*) and Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*), the third Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*), and the first spring records of the Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*) and Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*). In addition, the state received the southernmost Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) recorded in North America, the second Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*) in nearly a century (fourth, overall), and a doubling of records of the White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*). Furthermore, the committee added the Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*) to the state list on the basis of a naturalized population. In 2013, the committee accepted first California records of the Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*), Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*), and Common Swift (*Apus apus*), the details of which will be published in the next report. These records, combined with the split of the Sage Sparrow into the Sagebrush Sparrow (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) and Bell's Sparrow (*A. belli*) (AOU 2013a), bring the total number of accepted species on California's state list as of press time to 657. At its 2014 annual meeting, the committee removed from the review list the Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*), Galapagos/Hawaiian Petrel (*Pterodroma phaeopygia/sandwichensis*), and Pine Warbler (*Setophaga pinus*). Counties hosting the most accepted records (numbers refer to the number of records, not individual birds) were San Diego (35), Los Angeles (19), Imperial (17), Marin (15), Riverside (14), San Francisco (14), Humboldt (12), Santa Barbara (12), and San Mateo (10). In all, records were accepted from 36 of California's 58 counties (62%), including all 15 coastal counties.

Species-account headings are organized with English and scientific names first, followed in parentheses by the total number of accepted individuals in the state and the number of new individuals accepted in this report. Following the heading are accounts for records accepted (as applicable), followed by records not accepted because identification was not established or because natural occurrence was questionable (as applicable). An asterisk (\*) preceding the species name indicates that the CBRC has discontinued reviewing records of the species after 2012. A double asterisk (\*\*) following the number of accepted state records indicates that the species has been reviewed for a restricted time span so the number of accepted records does not represent the total number of records for the state. Date ranges for each record are those accepted by the CBRC, and instances where these differ from those published in *North American Birds* are indicated with italics. A dagger (†) following an observer's initials indicates submission of a photograph, (S) indicates submission of a sketch, (S) indicates submission of audio recordings, (‡) indicates submission of a video, and (#) precedes a specimen number. Museum collections mentioned in the text are LACM (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County), SDNHM (San Diego Natural History Museum), and

WFVZ (Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology). The absence of a symbol following the observer's initials indicates the submission of a sight report alone. Additional details regarding minutiae of formatting, abbreviations, and our treatment of age, sex, and subspecies in records may be found in previous CBRC reports, at <http://www.californiabirds.org/>, and in CBRC (2007). Also available at the website is the California bird list, the review list, committee news, recent photos of rare birds in California, the CBRC's bylaws, a form for querying the CBRC database, and all annual reports from 1996 through 2011. Age terminology follows that used by CBRC (2007).

Observers are encouraged to submit documentation for all species on the CBRC's review list, sending it to Guy McCaskie, CBRC secretary, P. O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, CA 91933-0275 (e-mail: [secretary@californiabirds.org](mailto:secretary@californiabirds.org)). In recent years, the proportion of records supported only by photographs, without any written documentation, has increased considerably. Even minimal written details on a bird's appearance, accompanying photographs, can assist significantly in documenting records of rare birds. Documentation of all CBRC records is archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, CA 93012, and is available for public review.

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** *Dendrocygna autumnalis* (32, 1). One was at the Toledo Pits 8 km west of Tipton, TUL, 15–27 May 2012 (RHD†; DF†, JFL, MMat†, BKS†, SS†; 2012-074). The lone committee member voting against acceptance expressed concerns that the bird might be an escapee, though it was unbanded and considered wary. The date span lies at the early end of the pattern of previous California records, which are mainly from June through August. Nearly all previous California records have been from the Salton Sink, though the first, at Buena Vista L., KER, 19 Jun 1938, was at a site (now largely destroyed) also in the San Joaquin Valley, about 85 km south of Tipton. The species' northward vagrancy and expansion of its breeding range are well documented (James and Thompson 2001, Corman and Wise-Gervais 2005). This is the first record accepted since 2000.

**EMPEROR GOOSE** *Chen canagica* (91, 1). The written description of one seen off Rodeo Beach/Lagoon, MRN, 27 Nov 2011 (WL; 2011-270), lacked details of the head pattern, leading to one vote against acceptance. However, other members troubled by the incomplete description acknowledged that the very rare but superficially similar dark-morph Ross's Goose (*C. rossii*) is highly unlikely on the ocean.

**WHOOPER SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus* (11, 1). An adult observed at King I., SJ, 9 Jan 2011 (DGY; 2011-179), along with a previous record near Stockton, SJ, 16 Dec 1988 (McCaskie and San Miguel 1999), establishes the southernmost record for California.

**FALCATED DUCK** *Anas falcata* (3, 1). The committee unanimously considered an adult male at Colusa N. W. R., COL, 2–22 Dec 2012 (CG†; CT†; 2012-196), the same as the one here 8 Dec 2011–10 Feb 2012 (2011-205), and this return was noted by Nelson et al. (2013). A similar male seen shortly thereafter at Sacramento N.W.R., GLE, 30 Dec 2012 (TSt; 2012-238), was agreed to be the same individual, as the sites are about 30 km apart.

**KING EIDER** *Somateria spectabilis* (41, 1). A first-winter male at Elkhorn Slough, MTY, 27–28 Dec 2012 (LMat†; 2012-249), was photographed alive from a tour boat on 27 Dec by an unknown person, then shot by a hunter the next day. The specimen, if preserved, remains in private hands.

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ARCTIC LOON *Gavia arctica* (9, 2). An apparently ill adult at the Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, 12 Nov 2010 (STi†; 2010-192), was accepted on a vote of 8–1. An adult (fide P. Pyle) at the mouth of San Simeon Cr., SLO, 13–15 Jan 2012 (CAM†; DWA†, BB†, TME†, GMcC, BLS†, CT†; 2012-006), was extensively photographed; a photo was published in *N. Am. Birds* 66:344. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one on Camanche Reservoir, SJ, 2–22 Jan 2011 (2011-274), would have been California's first inland; good details were provided, but three members felt they were not conclusive. The bird was described as having a "smudgy" and barely complete chin strap; it is not clear whether Arctic Loons ever show such a mark (a chin strap is shown by most Pacific Loons, *G. pacifica*).

YELLOW-BILLED LOON *Gavia adamsii* (94, 3). This species continues to appear annually, most frequently along the central coast. First-winter birds were at Del Monte Beach in Monterey and Seaside, MTY, 31 Jan–8 Feb 2012 (BJW; RBe†, DR†, BLS; 2012-013), and at Monterey harbor, MTY, 30 Dec 2012–3 Jan 2013 (BTM; DR; 2012-250). One was at Half Moon Bay, SM, 11 Aug 2012 (LK; AJ, JMu†, DSS†, SBT, MV†; 2012-113); a handful of these loons have remained into the summer, but this is only the fourth to be discovered in mid-summer. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One at Monterey harbor, MTY, 10 May 2012 (2012-098), was nearly accepted on the first round under the presumption it was the same bird as 2012-013, seen three months earlier. However, the relatively brief description (the bird was seen without optics from a paddleboard) and the long gap after the last documentation of the earlier bird eventually whittled the "accept" votes down to three. A loon photographed at the municipal wharf, Santa Cruz, SCZ, 10 Nov 2011 (2011-229) was more likely a Common Loon (*G. immer*).

SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS *Phoebastria albatrus* (38\*\*, 1). One in its first spring 9.7 km southwest of Noyo Harbor, Ft. Bragg, MEN, 20 May 2012 (RHD†, KAH, RJK†, MMa†, DWN†, DT; 2012-082), had been banded before fledging, 21 Apr 2011, on Torishima I., Japan.

GREAT-WINGED PETREL *Pterodroma macroptera* (5, 1). One photographed, remarkably, from shore at Pt. La Jolla, La Jolla, SD, 18 Dec 2012 (GN†; 2012-209), was two months later than the previous late summer and fall records; even more astounding was the quality of the photographs (one published in *N. Am. Birds* 67:368). Plumage characters confirm that the bird was of the subspecies *gouldi* (the Gray-faced Petrel, considered by Onley and Scofield [2007] and Howell [2012] to be specifically distinct from the Great-winged); all California records appear to pertain to this taxon. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one 11.2 km off Half Moon Bay, SM, 17 Sep 2011 (2011-269), received no support; two observers who saw the bird briefly submitted documentation, but the primary observer (who had considerable previous experience with the species) did not, so the record was inadequately documented.

HAWAIIAN PETREL *Pterodroma sandwichensis* (19, 5). A pattern of regular use of the far offshore waters by this species, as distinguished from the Galapagos Petrel (*P. phaeopygia*), from April to September continues to crystallize as records accumulate. Here we add birds 232 km southwest of Pt. Arguello, SBA, 23 Apr 2012 (GSM†; 2012-076); 62 km southwest of Año Nuevo, SM, 9 May 2012 (PEL; 2012-078); 43 km west-southwest of Pigeon Pt., SM, 25 Aug 2012 (MDo S; CDu†, MR†, DSS; 2012-115); 48 km west-southwest of Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM, 8 Sep 2012 (MDof; TG†, AJ, DSS; 2012-122); and over Bodega Canyon, off Bodega Bay, SON, 21 Sep 2012 (TC†; 2012-138). All these records except that for 9 May included photos that eliminated the Galapagos Petrel; the sight record involved a bird close to a large cruise ship, with the head pattern seen well. Increasing coverage well offshore from the stable decks of cruise ships is showing the Hawaiian Petrel to be a regular part of

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our pelagic avifauna. It and the “Galapagos/Hawaiian Petrel” category were removed from the review list at the committee’s 2013 meeting.

\*GALAPAGOS/HAWAIIAN PETREL *Pterodroma phaeopygia/sandwichensis* (29, 3). Sight records in which the Galapagos Petrel could not be eliminated were made 141 km west-southwest of Point Sur, MTY, 28 Apr 2012 (GSM S; 2012-077); 48 km west of Southeast Farallon I., SF, 9 May 2012 (PEL; 2012-079); and 199 km west of the Farallon Is., SF, 24 Aug 2012 (GSM S; 2012-145). As noted above, there is a clear pattern of dispersal of the Hawaiian Petrel to waters off California, whereas the Galapagos Petrel is so far not known to range north of 20° N off Middle America (Howell 2012).

STREAKED SHEARWATER *Calonectris leucomelas* (18, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One seen on the water and briefly in flight in fog 72 km off Pt. Reyes, MRN, 27 Sep 2011 (2011-255), was documented by a single observer. While a majority of committee members supported the identification in the first round, concerns about the brevity of observation and some aspects of the description led to non-acceptance.

CORY’S SHEARWATER *Calonectris diomedea* (2, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: If accepted, the report of one from the Newport Beach pier, ORA, 27 May 2012 (2012-089) would have been only the third for the eastern Pacific Ocean. However, the distance of observation (1.5 km) precluded photo-documentation and analysis of some key characters.

RED-TAILED TROPICBIRD *Phaethon rubricauda* (34, 1). One was over Año Nuevo I., 30 Apr 2012 (JFF†; 2012-063), less than 0.5 km off the mainland of San Mateo Co. Although a seabird of relatively warm tropical waters, the Red-tailed Tropicbird is now known from northern California (Monterey Co. north to Humboldt Co.) by 13 records. Most occurrences from California are from far offshore, but there are three previous records at Southeast Farallon I., as well as from shore at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, ORA, and at Cabrillo Beach, LA (LACM #114039, Iliiff et al. 2007).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata magnificens* (37\*\*, 25). Although no strong winds were associated with the northward passage of the remnants of Tropical Storm Paul into southern California, Magnificent Frigatebirds nonetheless appeared in the storm’s wake. Twenty-four, including an adult male, an adult female, and 22 first-year or second-year birds, were at La Jolla and Coronado, SD, 18 Oct 2012 (JK†; DWA†, AAr†, EGK†, GMcC, JMMc†; 2012-160); the same movement brought a single individual in its first fall to Pt. Dume, Malibu, LA, 18 Oct 2012 (KR†; 2012-161). The La Jolla/Coronado group was the largest ever noted in California, eclipsing a flock of 22 at the north end of the Salton Sea 29 Jul 1979 (Patten et al. 2003).

MASKED BOOBY *Sula dactylatra* (17, 1). One in its second fall bird was seen and photographed in flight at the San Lorenzo R. mouth, SCZ, 17 Nov 2012 (JFG†; 2012-187); the “dusky-greenish yellow bill, with no pink or orange hues,” though difficult to discern in the photos, was sufficient to eliminate the Nazca Booby.

MASKED/NAZCA BOOBY *Sula dactylatra/granti* (12, 1). A subadult seen from Pt. La Jolla, La Jolla, SD, 23 Dec 2012 (BR; PT†, SWa; 2012-221) was clearly of this species pair. Although the bill was described as “pale tangerine” by one observer (implying the Nazca), the bill color was noted by the other observers simply as “pale” and is not apparent in the rather poor photographs. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A distant bird scoped from Pt. La Jolla, La Jolla, SD, 9 Nov 2012 (2012-204), was not seen well enough for other black-and-white sulids to be eliminated.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY *Sula nebouxii* (114\*\*, 2). An unseasonal bird was at Carlsbad, SD, 30 Apr 2012 (JMMc†, BMu; 2012-062). One at Obsidian Butte, south

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end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 7 Oct 2012 (BJS†; 2012-154), was within the more typical late summer and early fall window of occurrence.

RED-FOOTED BOOBY *Sula sula* (19, 1). A first-year or second-year bird was photographed from a whale-watching boat 5 km west of Mission Bay, SD, 23 Sep 2012 (MGa†; 2012-140).

NORTHERN GANNET *Morus bassanus* (1, 1). Completely unexpected was an adult found among the massive seabird colonies (primarily of the Common Murre, *Uria aalge*) on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 25 Apr 2012 and seen intermittently to at least October 2014 (PW; BED†, GMcC, TMcG†, LS†, BJS†, SWE†; 2012-058; Figure 1; photo also published in *N. Am. Birds* 66:574 and on the cover of *W. Birds* 44[1]). This individual, the first for the entire Pacific Ocean, was subsequently seen on a rock along the shore of southern Marin Co. in late October 2013, and in the spring of 2014 it took up part-time residence in a cormorant colony at Alcatraz I. within San Francisco Bay. Gibson et al. (2013) discussed sight records northwest of Barrow, Alaska, 16–17 August 2010, and Day et al. (2013) discussed these sightings in the context of changing seabird distributions in that region. Large-scale reductions in arctic pack ice have conceivably introduced a dispersal route for the gannet [and other seabirds? See Able et al. (2014)] from the North Atlantic to the Pacific. Cross-continental vagrancy seems far less likely, with interior records no closer than northern Arkansas (*N. Am. Birds* 59:608).

\*NEOTROPIC CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* (44, 10). Records of this increasing species continue to accumulate in southeastern California, and with a considerable sigh of relief (due to the difficulty of resolving “same bird” issues) the committee removed it from the review list at its 2014 meeting; since the species’ removal, single-day counts at the south end of the Salton Sea in spring 2014 have ranged up to 31 birds! The committee considered one at Ramer L., IMP, 3 Feb–17 Mar 2012 (GMcC; TJ†; 2012-016) to be the same as one of the birds previously accepted under record 2011-048 (Nelson et al. 2013). An adult and a one-year-old bird were at the west end of Young Road on the south shore of the Salton Sea, IMP, 27 Jun–8 Jul 2012 (GMcC; ARA†, SBT†, STu†; 2012-099). Two adults and a one-year-old bird were at the north end of Lack Road on the south shore Salton Sea, IMP, 21 Jul–9 Oct 2012 (HK†; KLG†, GMcC, CMcF†, BJS†, ET†, STu†; 2012-110), the latter considered to be the same bird as in record 2012-099. A two-year-old bird was at Fig Lagoon, IMP, 30 Jun–5 Aug 2012 (GMcC; 2012-100). Another two-year-old bird was at the Alamo R. mouth at the south end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 26 Jul–26 Aug 2012 (GMcC; 2012-107). An adult was along Schrimpf Road at the south end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 9 Oct 2012 (GMcC; 2012-157). One at Fig Lagoon, IMP, 13 Sep 2012 (JMMc†; 2012-133), was accepted in its third round despite a single poor photo and brief description. Along the lower Colorado R., single first-spring birds were at Imperial Dam, IMP, 18 Apr 2012 (DVP; 2012-055) and L. Havasu, SBE, 5 Apr 2012 (LH; 2012-097). An adult at Parker Dam, SBE, 12 Dec 2012 (DVP†; 2012-203) was considered to be the same as the one there 3 Dec 2011–21 Jan 2012 (2011-201; Nelson et al. 2013). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One at Fig Lagoon, IMP, 28 Oct 2012 (2012-169) was described only briefly.

TRICOLORED HERON *Egretta tricolor* (62\*\*, 1). A juvenile at the mouth of Salt Cr., RIV, 5–18 Aug 2012 (CMcG†; TABe; 2012-111), is the 22nd recorded at the Salton Sea since 1990; six of these are from the Riverside Co. portion.

\*YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nyctanassa violacea* (66, 11). The committee struggled with a series of records from the San Diego area; because there is now a breeding population here, individuals and record numbers are difficult to track, and records after 2012 are no longer reviewed. Two adults at the Imperial Beach Sports Park, Imperial Beach, SD, 17 Dec 2011–29 Jul 2012 (PEL; GMcC, JPe†; 2011-254),

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were noted by Nelson et al. (2013) as being considered individuals accepted as juveniles in previous years from this site (where the species has nested since 2006). At its January 2013 meeting, however, the committee agreed that juveniles are normally chased away from the nest site after fledging and do not return. Reconsidering the record, the CBRC concluded these most likely constituted two new, previously unreviewed individuals. Two nests at this park, one in an ash tree (*Fraxinus* sp.) and one in a pine (*Pinus* sp.), contained three young each in 2012: 6 Jun–15 Jul 2012 (JPe†; GMcC; 2012-086) and 17 Jun–24 Jul 2012 (GMcC; CAM†, JPe†; 2012-095). Two adults, differing slightly in leg color, around the San Diego R. mouth, SD, 29 May–10 Sep 2012 (JPe†; TAB†, AR†; 2012-083), were considered to be the same two as were there 28 Apr–7 Sep 2011 (2011-062) and in prior years (Nelson et al. 2013; photo in *N. Am. Birds* 66:733). An adult at Sea World, San Diego, SD, 9 Jul–5 Sep 2012 (JPe†; 2012-105) was considered the same bird as that seen there in 2009, 2010, and 2011 (2011-100; Nelson et al. 2013). Another at Sea World 2 Dec 2007 (TO; 2007-309), was considered to be the same bird as at nearby Famosa Slough, 7 Aug 2007 (2007-166). Away from the San Diego area population, one in its first fall was at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, ORA, 11 Nov 2012–20 Jan 2013 (TABe†, RCa†, JLD, ABL†, SMO; 2012-183).

WHITE IBIS *Eudocimus albus* (6, 3). An adult at the Baker sewage ponds, SBE, 31 Aug–6 Sep 2012 (JBo†; TABe†, JLD, RHo†, GMcC, SJM†, MSr†; 2012-117; photo in *N. Am. Birds* 67:159) was the first for the Mojave Desert. A similar adult appeared at L. Jocelyn, Carpinteria, SBA, 23 Sep–5 Oct 2012 (EBC S; JLD, GMcC, JMo†, HPR†, DR†, BKS†; 2012-141). Because both birds were in worn plumage with brown-stained wing coverts and not molting, unusual for adult White Ibises at this time of year, there was considerable discussion as to whether the Baker and Carpinteria records involved the same individual, possibly an escaped captive, but ultimately the majority of the committee rejected these hypotheses. In part on the basis of these new records, the committee reconsidered the record of an adult at Bolinas and San Rafael, MRN, 14 May–9 Sep 1971 (JWn; LCB, EO†; 1981-014), previously not accepted on the grounds of questionable natural occurrence (Morlan 1985); the recent review resulted in a unanimous acceptance. NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE: Also re-reviewed was a record previously not accepted (105-1978; Binford 1983) of a White Ibis in Malibu Canyon, LA, from about one month before 22 Apr 1978 until sometime in May 1978, then at Pt. Mugu/Santa Clara R., VEN, from 6 Jun 1978 until 22 Dec 1979, when collected (LACM #90516). Because the species was known to have been kept in captivity at nearby Busch Gardens in the San Fernando Valley, LA, with some accounts of free-flying individuals, the record did not gain acceptance on re-review even in light of the other accepted coastal records.

BLACK VULTURE *Coragyps atratus* (7, 0). One adult near Goleta, SBA, 23 Jul–29 Nov 2012 (WTF†; DMC†, MSm; 2012-106) was judged to be the same as the one in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties since Sep 2009 (2009-156). Similarly, an adult at Lompoc, SBA, 22 Feb 2011 (KHo; 2011-033), was considered the same as 2011-004 at Buellton, 14 Jan 2011, as was one in Vandenberg Village and Lompoc, SBA, 21 Sep–18 Dec 2012 (BKS†; KHo, PK, PSc†; 2012-137). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One reported at Mission Canyon in Santa Barbara, 16 Feb 2012, and later at Goleta, SBA, 17 Mar 2012 (2012-024), was considered inadequately documented, as was one over the Verdugo Hills, LA, 7 Nov 2012 (2012-179).

MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis* (46, 1). A one-year-old bird was in the Tijuana R. Valley, SD, 1–2 Aug 2012 (PM†; JMMc†, GMcC, VM†, STu†; 2012-109; photo in *N. Am. Birds* 66:752). Another one-year-old bird at Mast Park in Santee, SD, 9 Jul 2011 (BJS†; 2011-275), was initially submitted to [www.iNaturalist.org](http://www.iNaturalist.org)

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(which the CBRC does not monitor for entries of reviewed species) as a White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) but later reidentified.

COMMON BLACK HAWK *Buteogallus anthracinus* (7, 1). An adult at Parker Dam, SBE, 6 Apr 2012 (TJ†; 2012-047), joins three previously accepted spring records for the deserts of southern California.

\*HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus* (67\*\*, 3). Three chicks were produced by the long-staying adults at Jacumba, SD, with the first chick noted on 9 May, all three chicks visible in the nest by 22 May, and all three found newly fledged on 27 Jun 2012 (EGK†; GMcC; 2012-070). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One at Indian Wells, RIV, 10 Mar 2012 (2012-035), was described only briefly. NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE: One at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery, Pt. Loma, SD, 29 Oct 2011 (TRSt†; 2011-160), was met with divided opinion, as the coastal locality raised the specter of escape from captivity, and at least two committee members believed that a band was visible on one leg in the photo.

GRAY HAWK *Buteo plagiatus* (1, 1). A juvenile remained in the vicinity of Santa Claus Lane on the west side of Carpinteria, SBA, 25 Nov 2012–15 Mar 2013 (EBC†; DAB†, JCT†, JLD, JSF†, WTF†, NG†, RHo†, OJ†, GMcC, JMo†, LSt†, BKS†, CT†, SBT†, MT&DT†; 2012-193; Figure 2), establishing the first accepted record for California. A flight photo was published in *N. Am. Birds* 67:183. Characters distinguishing this species from its sibling species *B. nitidus*, the Gray-lined Hawk, found from Costa Rica through much of South America, were discussed by Millsap et al. (2011). This individual returned in adult plumage for the winter 2013–14, using many of the same hunting and resting perches. The Gray Hawk breeds in Arizona as far west as Gila Co. (Corman and Wise-Gervais 2005) and Maricopa Co. ([http://www.azfo.org/seasonalReports%5C2009\\_spring.html#SouthCentralSpring2009](http://www.azfo.org/seasonalReports%5C2009_spring.html#SouthCentralSpring2009)): recent spring and summer sightings reported to [www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org) extend north to Yavapai Co. Populations have increased during the current century with protection and management of riparian habitats (Corman and Wise-Gervais 2005). The species withdraws almost completely from Arizona and Sonora in winter, being present mainly from mid-March to September (Phillips et al. 1964, Russell and Monson 1998). Vagrancy within the U.S. has been limited, but two records for Kansas (a sight record in Geary Co. 15–16 Apr 1990 [*N. Am. Birds* 44:455] and of one photographed in Sedgwick Co. 20–30 Oct 2005 [*N. Am. Birds* 60:95]) were accepted by the Kansas Bird Records Committee ([http://www.ksbirds.org/kos/kos\\_kbrc.htm](http://www.ksbirds.org/kos/kos_kbrc.htm)). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of an immature flying over the Marin Headlands, MRN, 10 May 2012 (2012-072) was inadequately documented.

\*YELLOW RAIL *Coturnicops noveboracensis* (85\*\*, 1). One was at Tomales Bay near Inverness, MRN, 23 Dec 2003 (BSh; 2003-206). The CBRC ceased review of records of this species after 2003.

COMMON CRANE *Grus grus* (2, 1). An adult at Modoc N.W.R., MOD, 27 Dec 2012 (JHK†; 2012-231) was with an adult Sandhill Crane (*G. canadensis*) and two immature cranes, which some CBRC members thought might represent hybrid offspring. The photos (see *N. Am. Birds* 67:334) do not appear to show any bands. What was likely the same adult Common Crane and family group was seen at Overton, Nevada, 15 Jan–5 Feb 2013 (*N. Am. Birds* 67:321). The Modoc record comes closely on the heels of California's first accepted record (2011-065), of one at L. Earl, DN, 5–8 May 2011 (Nelson et al. 2013).

WILSON'S PLOVER *Charadrius wilsonia* (21, 1). A one-year-old bird was at Border Field State Park, Imperial Beach, SD, 14 Jun–1 Jul 2012 (MSa†; CAM†, GMcC, JPa†, BJS†; 2012-093). Thirteen of California's 21 records are for San Diego Co., and all but one of those are between 24 March and 1 July.



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WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola* (2, 1). A juvenile was near the Santa Margarita R. 2.4 km east of the river's mouth, Camp Pendleton, SD, 24–29 Sep 2012 (BMu; AF†, GMcC, JMMc†; 2012-142; Figure 3; photo also published in *N. Am. Birds* 67:160), establishing California's second accepted record. The first, of an adult, also on a military base, at China L., KER, 22–23 May 2007 (2007-119; Singer and Terrill 2009), still represents the only spring record for the Pacific states and provinces south of Alaska. Most of the four other records are of juveniles in fall (Howell et al. 2014), like that for Camp Pendleton in 2012.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* (41, 2). Single juveniles were at Montaña de Oro State Park, SLO, 7 Sep 2012 (KJZ†; 2012-123) and the Santa Clara R. Estuary, VEN, 18 Sep 2012 (DPe†; 2012-216). One member raised the possibility that these two records represented the same individual (the localities are about 200 km apart), but the committee elected to consider them different.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* (43, 2). A one-year-old bird, lacking any chestnut alternate plumage and molting the secondaries, was at the south end of San Diego Bay, SD, 16 Jun–17 Jul 2012 (PEL; ARA†, CAM†, GMcC, SES, MSr†; 2012-094). An alternate-plumaged adult was at Westside Park, Bodega Bay, SON, 20 Sep 2012 (GBet†; 2012-135). The bird at Bodega Bay occurred at the peak time of fall records of this species, but the one at San Diego Bay was the first recorded in California in June. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one on the south shore of the Salton Sea, IMP, 29 Jun 2012 (2012-112) was documented inadequately. Another from the Ventura County Game Preserve, VEN, 6 Apr 2012 (2012-048) ultimately failed 7–2 on the fourth round.

RED-NECKED STINT *Calidris ruficollis* (14, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The documentation of a bird on the south jetty of Humboldt Bay, HUM, 1 Sep 2012 (2012-144), was inadequate, though it was described as retaining much alternate plumage. A supposed juvenile Red-necked Stint photographed at the Ventura County Game Preserve, VEN, 29 Aug 2010 (2010-191) was agreed by all to be a relatively bright Semipalmated Sandpiper (*C. pusilla*).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* (21, 2). Adults retaining alternate plumage were at the Alexandre Dairy near Ft. Dick, DN, 10 Jul 2012 (KMB†; JCS†; 2012-101) and Arcata Marsh, Arcata, HUM, 29–30 Jul 2012 (TK†; CSB, RF; 2012-108). Two-thirds of California's Little Stints have been recorded since 2006, likely reflecting greater awareness of the species' status and characters rather than a change in its abundance or distribution.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis* (26, 1). One was at the Bolinas sewage ponds, MRN, 11 Nov 2012 (MDe, RD†, JMi, SBT†; 2012-207). Even at this late date, which exceeds California's latest by nearly a month, the bird was an adult. Although the juvenile plumage remains unrecorded in the state, two juveniles were photographed at Shafter Lake, northwestern Texas, 16 Oct 2008 (*N. Am. Birds* 63:118), raising the possibility of California records in the future.

COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago* (1, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: Snipes at Inverness, MRN, 3 Nov–17 Dec 2011 (2011-207) and Centerville Beach, west of Ferndale, HUM, 16 Jan 2012 (2012-008) were reported as the Common by observers specifically checking concentrations of Wilson's Snipes (*G. delicata*) for apparent Common Snipes. These reports are from the same winter as the one accepted California record (2011-215, 11 Dec 2011; Nelson et al. 2013). However, the inadequacy of the photos (understandable given the difficulty of photographing a snipe in flight) and reliance on fewer diagnostic characters than available on a bird in the hand (as in the accepted record) led to lack of acceptance. One key character, the relative amount of white and black on the underwings, varies considerably in the

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Common Snipe (Minias et al. 2014), though there is no indication that Wilson's shows the extensively white underwings typical of most Common Snipes. The extent and pattern of white on the trailing edge of the secondaries, broader and more "scaloped" on the Common than on Wilson's, is perhaps the most diagnostic feature. Photos of the birds at Inverness Park appear to show both whitish underwings and a pattern of the secondaries resembling the Common Snipe's, but the committee believes variation in these features is insufficiently understood for this record to be accepted at this time.

LONG-BILLED MURRELET *Brachyramphus perdix* (30, 1). An adult seen and photographed on Humboldt Bay, HUM, 22 Apr 2012 (JKJ†; 2012-060) represents California's only accepted spring record. Several members commented on the relatively poor quality of the photograph and lack of any accompanying description, while one member did not endorse the record because of possible overlap in appearance with transitional plumages of the Marbled Murrelet (*B. marmoratus*).

\*PARAKEET AUKLET *Aethia psittacula* (293, 207). The CBRC discontinued reviewing records of the Parakeet Auklet after 2012 because of an increase in reports far offshore of this irruptive species. This increase is likely due to more frequent trips to deep waters off northern California rather than to an actual range expansion. A group of four were seen off San Mateo, SM, 10 May 2011 (MH S; 2011-272); up to 200 were seen in deep water off Humboldt and Del Norte counties, 17 Apr 2012 (PEL; GMcC, RM†, BJS†; 2012-054); two were seen 74 km west of Big Lagoon, HUM, 10 May 2012 (PEL; 2012-080); one was seen 43 km west of Cape Mendocino, HUM, 25 Oct 2012 (PEL; 2012-176). One member voted against acceptance because of the brevity of the observation and lack of bill detail seen and described; multiple members also noted the unusual date. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One 8 km west of Bodega Bay, SON, 28 Jan 2012 (2012-178) was seen poorly and no details of the head or bill were noted; most members found the description inadequate.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus* (108, 1). One in its first fall 15 km northwest of Pt. Pinos, MTY, 9 Sep 2012 (MDo†; JHI†, DR†, DSS, MV†; 2012-128), provided Monterey Co. with its first fall record and fifth overall.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoideus* (15, 4). The Iceland Gull complex continues to plague the committee with difficult records; uncertainties regarding identification criteria and taxonomic status render consistent treatment of Iceland-type gulls difficult at best (CBRC 2007; Pyle et al. 2011a). Nevertheless, the committee endorsed four records in 2012. One in its first winter was at Ft. Baker, Sausalito, MRN/SF, 2–9 Feb 2012 (SCH†; DSS†, LB†, MB†, JM†; 2012-015). An adult was at the Davis wastewater-treatment plant, YOL, 9–19 Mar 2012 (SCH†; ToE†; 2012-036)—members' opinions leaned toward the far less expected nominate *glaucoideus*, but the committee does not make formal decisions on subspecific taxa. A second-winter individual at Vernalis, SJ, 24 Mar 2012 (DGY†; 2012-096), was accepted after three rounds; members were concerned with the bird's large size and the possibility it may have been a Glaucous Gull (*L. hyperboreus*). Obviously small Iceland Gulls, likely females, have been more readily endorsed in the past (Nelson et al. 2013); acceptance of larger individuals such as that at Davis, likely males, may increase in the future as the status of the Iceland Gull in California is clarified. A fresh-plumaged first-winter bird was at the mouth of Baldwin Cr., SCZ, 15–16 Nov 2012 (JPo†; JFG†; 2012-185; photo published in *N. Am. Birds* 67:155). Previously accepted records extend from 4 December to 14 March (Nelson et al. 2013); these new records expand this interval from 15 November through 19 March. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A single-observer sight record of a third-winter bird at Jenner, SON, 8 Jan 2012 (2012-011), received limited support. A first-winter bird at Napa Valley College, NAP, 5–6 Feb 2012 (2012-037) may have been a hybrid Glaucous-winged (*L. glaucescens*) × Glaucous Gull or another combination. A second-winter bird photographed at the Yolo

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Co. landfill near Davis, YOL, 1 Mar 2012 (2012-034), was not accepted because of some members' concerns that wear late in the winter could account for a Thayer's Gull (*L. thayeri*) appearing so pale and the bird's large size, especially its bill. A report of a bird of unknown age from Oceano, SLO, 16 Mar 2012 (2012-038), received no support, as it lacked sufficient detail and any photos.

\*LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* (113, 18). The number of records of the Lesser Black-backed Gull has met the committee's criterion for a species' removal from the review list—the species has been steadily increasing since California's first documented record in 1978 (CBRC 2007). The CBRC has discontinued reviewing records after 2012. Listed here are 18 new records and two records of previously accepted individuals continuing. One adult at Salton Sea State Recreation Area, RIV, 8 Dec 2011 (CMcG†; 2011-248) was examined in detail with respect to whether it represented another individual long present at this location; differences in bill coloration showed it to be a new bird. Birds in their third winter or older were at Rock Hill, Salton Sea, IMP, 7 Jan 2012 (CMcG; 2012-003), at the northwest corner of the Salton Sea, RIV, 15 Jan 2012 (RMcK S; 2012-041), and at the San Leandro marina, ALA, 22 Jan 2012 (NA†; 2012-066). A first-winter bird was at Malibu Lagoon, LA, 19 Feb 2012 (TMcG†; 2012-044). The leg color of a third- or fourth-winter bird photographed at Oceano County Park, Oceano, SLO, 16 Mar 2012 (TME†; 2012-039), was muted, eliciting inconclusive speculation about a possible origin in Asia or hybridization with one of the large pink-legged gulls. A second-winter individual and an adult were in south San Diego Bay, SD, 21–23 Mar 2012 (MSa†; 2012-042), and 21–24 Mar 2012 (MSa†; GMcC; 2012-043), respectively. A relatively large-billed adult was well photographed at Folsom L., PLA, 28 Mar–3 Apr 2012 (GE†; 2012-046). One in its second winter at the Davis water-treatment plant, YOL, 30 Mar 2012 (JCSt; 2012-245), was accepted on the basis of one poor photograph and no written details; unfortunately, the lack of written details accompanying photographic submissions is a continuing trend in the documentation of rarities; the committee urges observers to include written descriptions in addition to photographs, as such details may be of great use in judging a record's validity. Individuals in their first spring were at the north end of Poe Road, Salton Sea, IMP, 10–19 Apr 2012 (GMcC; 2012-025), and at Corvina Beach, Salton Sea, RIV, 12 May 2012 (CMcG†; 2012-073); a one-year old bird was at the south end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 13 Jul–21 Sep 2012 (GMcC; HK†; 2012-102). An adult at Obsidian Butte, IMP, 15 Sep–10 Dec 2012 (GMcC; 2012-134), was considered the same as the one there 18 Sep–9 Nov 2011 (2011-133; Nelson et al. 2013). An adult was at Oyster Bay, San Leandro, ALA, 14 Nov 2012 (NA†; 2012-186); another was at the Yolo Co. landfill, YOL, 8 Dec 2012–9 Jan 2013 (SCH†; 2012-199). A third-winter individual was at Morgan Hill, SCL, 22–23 Dec 2012 (SCR†; 2012-222). An adult at the Norco Egg Ranch, Norco, RIV, 26 Dec 2012–9 Mar 2013 (CMcG†; MG†, SR†; 2012-232), was considered a returning bird, previously recorded 28 Dec 2010–26 Mar 2011 and 19 Nov 2011–13 Jan 2012 (2011-193; Johnson et al. 2010, Nelson et al. 2013); a first-winter bird, also at the Norco Egg Ranch, was present from 27 Dec 2012 through 26 Feb 2013 (DW†, HK; 2012-233). Finally, an adult was at Folsom L., PLA, 28 Dec 2012 (JLD; BW; 2012-239).

SLATY-BACKED GULL *Larus schistisagus* (49, 6). Submitted photographs of an adult at Ferry Pt., CC, 11 Feb 2011 (ToE†; 2011-244), lacked an accompanying description and did not show the wings spread, but what could be ascertained in the photographs was ultimately judged sufficient. A total of seven individuals were recorded in 2012, one of which is considered a bird from 2011 returning. An adult at Pacific Commons in Fremont, ALA, 31 Jan 2012 (JT†; 2012-065), was considered the same as the one present 17–29 Nov 2011 (2011-180; Nelson et al. 2013). A dark-eyed second-winter bird was at the mouth of Pilarcitos Cr., Half Moon Bay, SM, 30

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Jan 2012 (AJ†; 2012-012), and what was considered the same individual was later at Don Edwards San Francisco Bay N.W.R., Alviso, SCL, 11–18 Feb 2012 (SCR†; 2012-064); some members were concerned about the darkness of the eyes, but their color appears to fall within the normal range of the species' age-related change in eye color (A. Jaramillo pers. comm.). Adults were at Ft. Baker, MRN/SF, 7–9 Feb 2012 (ToE†; JMo†, DSS†; 2012-017), at San Gregorio State Beach, SM, 11 Feb 2012 (RTh†; 2012-059), and at Half Moon Bay, SM, 20 Feb 2012 (AJ†; 2012-027). An additional adult was at the mouth of the Russian R., SON, 20–21 Feb 2012 (ToE†; 2012-028), and a second bird at the same location 4 Mar 2012 (ToE†; 2012-033); these represented the first and second records, respectively, for Sonoma Co. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one at the Davis wastewater-treatment plant, YOL (2011-247), 5–21 Feb 2011 was not accepted because of the lack of a pale (or paling) eye on a second-winter individual (but see records 2012-012 and 2012-064), difficulty in assessing the darkness of incoming mantle feathers, and lack of the expected broad white tertial tips. The divergent opinions represented in two rounds of split votes (5–4, 4–5, respectively) illustrate the continuing difficulty in identifying four-year gulls in their first two years of life (Pyle et al. 2011a). The report of a second-winter individual at Half Moon Bay, SM, 23 Feb 2011 (2011-258), was ultimately not accepted because the photographs provided were inadequate to rule out possible hybrids involving the American Herring (*L. argentatus smithsonianus*) or Vega (*L. a. vegae*) Gulls. The report of a second-winter bird at Ft. Baker, MRN/SF, 7–9 Feb 2012 (2012-018) was ultimately not accepted because of its retarded plumage, apparently pale mantle feathering, and the possibility of hybridization, though its structure and wing pattern were consistent with the Slaty-backed Gull. The report of a third-winter bird at Drake's Beach, MRN, 10–11 Feb 2012 (2012-023), was poorly documented. The report of an adult from the Davis wastewater-treatment plant, YOL, 9 Mar 2012 (2012-067), lacked photographs or written details regarding the wing pattern.

SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis* (7, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED. An adult *Thalasseus* in Chula Vista, SD, 12–15 Apr 2012 (2012-050), allowed for careful study and submission of excellent photographs. It had more yellow on the bill than expected of a Sandwich Tern of the expected subspecies *T. s. acufilavidus*, suggesting mixed parentage, so most members did not accept the record (see Pyle et al. 2011a). Hybridization between *acufilavidus* and the Elegant Tern (*T. elegans*) appears to be rare: these species have hybridized in California (Collins 1997), and birds presumed to be hybrids have been reported from the Elegant Tern's main breeding colony on Isla Rasa in the northern Gulf of California (Velarde and Rojo 2012), two adult Sandwich Terns having been observed in this colony in 1986 and 2008 (Velarde and Tordesillas 2009). The possibility of a Cayenne Tern (*T. s. eurygnatha*) or a hybrid between the Sandwich and Cayenne terns was also raised; these two populations hybridize in the Caribbean where their breeding ranges overlap (Hayes 2004). If these subspecies of the Sandwich Tern are recognized at the species level, as proposed by Efe et al. (2009), the committee will have to revisit questions regarding hybridization and variation of the Elegant Tern and its close relatives.

COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus* (1, 1). A first-fall female Common Cuckoo in Watsonville, SCZ, 28 Sep–2 Oct 2012 (SGe; TABe†, BB†, JLD, TG†, KHa†, MJM†, GMcC, MMe†, DRM†, JMo†, WN†, MR†, DR†, BKS†, PSo†, BJS†, JCS†, BLS†, STu†, JWt†, CW†; 2012-147; Figure 4; photos published *N. Am. Birds* 67:184, and cover of *W. Birds* 44[2]), not only represented a first state record, it was just the second to be found in the contiguous United States. The Common Cuckoo is remarkably difficult to distinguish from the Oriental Cuckoo (*C. optatus*); where the two co-occur, many cuckoos are left unidentified to the level of species. Adults of both the Common and Oriental are of either a gray or a rufous morph, with the latter

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restricted to females (Beaman and Madge 1998). One key distinction is that “hepatic” (rufous-morph) females and juveniles of the Common Cuckoo typically lack barring on the rump, while that barring is always present in corresponding plumages of the Oriental Cuckoo (Mullarney et al. 1999). The Santa Cruz bird had the white patch on the nape and narrow white dorsal fringes indicating juvenile plumage (Mullarney et al. 1999), and the rufous of newly molted formative scapular feathers identified it as a hepatic female. Thus the Oriental Cuckoo was excluded primarily on the basis of the unbarred rump, in conjunction with barred alula coverts, thin ventral barring, and lack of contrast on the pale, faintly barred underwing (Howell et al. 2014). The Common Cuckoo is a very rare to casual vagrant to islands in the Bering Sea, primarily in spring and early summer; the only fall record is of a juvenile on the Alaska mainland, 9–11 Sep 2008 (Tobish 2009). Farther afield, additional records have come from Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, 3–4 May 1981 (Baicich 2010), Barbados, 5 Nov 1958 (Bond 1993), and Midway Atoll, northwestern Hawaiian Islands, 23 May 1997 (Pyle and Pyle 2009). The much scarcer Oriental Cuckoo has been recorded 14 times on islands off western Alaska and only once on the mainland (Howell et al. 2014). Curiously, in contrast to the clustering of Common Cuckoo sightings in spring, the large majority of Oriental Cuckoo records extend from late June through early October (Howell et al. 2014). The Oriental Cuckoo could occur in California, but occurrences of both species in Alaska have declined since 2000, perhaps implying a decline in the source population in northeastern Asia (P. E. Lehman in litt.).

ELF OWL *Micrathene whitneyi* (5\*\*, 2). A nesting pair was at Corn Spring in eastern Riverside Co., 31 Mar–27 May 2012, a site that had been occupied by one or two birds during the breeding seasons of the preceding three years (DWN†; MMA†, CMcC†; 2012-045; also 2010-050 and 2011-056; Nelson et al. 2013). Along the Colorado River in extreme southeastern Riverside Co., two additional owls were detected 400–500 m apart on 15 Apr 2012 but not on successive surveys of the area (RRA; 2012-252). See Johnson et al. (2012) for more information on the Elf Owl’s recent status in California.

\*BARRED OWL *Strix varia* (8, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A bird heard in the Six Rivers N. F., HUM, 14–15 Jul 1976 (1976-502), was likely correctly identified, advancing this species’ appearance in California by five years (CBRC 2007). However, the calls weren’t the classic “who cooks for you?” advertising call and weren’t ascribed to this species until well after the fact, and the possibility of a hybrid with Spotted Owl (*S. occidentalis*) was not excluded. Furthermore, the committee is reluctant to accept a first state record based only on sounds heard by a single observer. The committee reviews records of the Barred Owl, still spreading as a resident in California, through 1989 only.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD *Cyananthus latirostris* (82, 1). A first-fall female was at Chiriaco Summit, RIV, 28–30 Oct 2012 (OJ†, AJS†; TABe†; 2012-171), while an adult male returned to winter in San Diego, SD, 24 Nov 2012–29 Jan 2013 (2011-170) (JK†, GN†; 2012-194).

CRESTED CARACARA *Caracara cheriway* (11, 1). The six following records from 2012 all pertain to the same wandering adult as determined by detailed analyses of feather wear and molt timing (Nelson and Pyle 2013): Ballona Wetlands, LA, 13 Jan 2012 (RP†; 2012-005); Pt. Piedras Blancas, SLO, 10–25 Feb 2012 (BB†, JD†, CAM; 2012-019); Pt. Sur, MTY, 30 Mar 2012 (SJ†; 2012-069); Mace Blvd., south of Putah Cr., YOL/SOL, 16–17 Apr 2012 (MSc; SCH†, SMa†; 2012-052); Pt. Mugu, VEN, 19 Dec 2011–6 Jan 2012 (FF†; AJS S; 2011-239). The committee considered a different adult, first observed chasing Western Gulls (*L. occidentalis*) in the Tijuana R. valley, SD, 2–9 Sep 2012 (TF; EGK†, GMcC, GN†, MSr & CSr†; 2012-118), the same as the one present sporadically from 9 Sep 2006 through 1

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Oct 2011 (2006-127, 2007-144, 2008-093, 2009-076, and 2011-139; Singer and Terrill 2009, Pike and Compton 2010, Nelson and Pyle 2013, Nelson et al. 2013). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: An adult Crested Caracara was photographed at Sonoma State University, SON, on an uncertain date, possibly 2 Mar 2012 (2012-032). The absence of characters matching any caracara known to be in California, in conjunction with the lack of a firm date, led a majority of members to question the validity or authenticity of this report.

GYRFALCON *Falco rusticolus* (12, 1). A first-winter Gyrfalcon was at the San Jacinto W. A., RIV, 15 Jan–9 Mar 2012 (MAC†, DWA†, TAB†, DFU†, BH†, CAM†, GMcC, CMcG†, LMO†, SJM†, DWN†, CT†; 2012-007; Figure 5; photo also published in *N. Am. Birds* 66:344). Amazingly, the same Gyrfalcon intercepted birdwatchers ~300 km to the north at Owens L., INY, 21 Mar 2012 (DH†; JLD†; 2012-056). Analysis of feather wear and plumage details confirmed that these two records involved the same individual. The record for Riverside Co. is the southernmost of this species for California and North America. Captive origin is always a concern with wayward raptors, as discussed in CBRC (2007). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The committee judged three sight records from Humboldt Co. inadequate: one from the Arcata Bottoms, HUM, 26 Sep 2011 (2011-268), one from Fay Slough W. A., 19 Mar 2012 (2012-090), and one from the mouth of Redwood Cr. 29 Sep–2 Oct 2011. A September date for the Gyrfalcon is unprecedented in California, and unexpected for a bird in its first fall, as the descriptions suggested. Note, however, that Gyrfalcon records from nearby Oregon begin from late September (Marshall et al. 2003).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER *Empidonax flaviventris* (27, 4). A first-fall immature at Southeast Farallon I., SF, 1 Sep 2012 (DMx†; JRT, JW†; 2012-127) established the second-earliest fall date for the species in California. Fully a third of the state's records have come from this rocky, barren island. Additional first-fall birds at Grasslands Regional Park, YOL, 2–3 Sep 2012 (ToE†; SCH; 2012-129); Nunes Ranch at Pt. Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 6–7 Sep 2012 (RSt; DFr, GH, DWN†, DWm†; both 2012-121 and 2012-205); and Huntington Beach Central Park, ORA, 15–16 Oct 2012 (ToE†; DAB†, TABe†, BED†, JLD†, BSi†; 2012-158), constituted first records for the respective counties. The latter date matches the latest for this species in California. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: Documentation submitted for *Empidonax* flycatchers seen at Pt. Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 30 Sep 2006 (2006-226) and 4 Oct 2012 (2012-188) and at Desert Center, RIV, 10 Sep 2011 (2011-267) proved inconclusive. See Heindel and Pyle (1999) for useful identification criteria.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (94, 6). An especially early first-fall migrant at Malibu Lagoon, LA, 9 Nov (ABr†; 2012-242), was in the midst of its preformative molt. Additional apparent migrants were at Pt. Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 19 Nov 2012 (DSS†; 2012-198) and 6–8 Dec 2012 (AM†, DMO†; 2012-237); in Arcata, HUM, 20–24 Nov 2012 (GB†S; RF†; 2012-190); and near Hinds Pumping Station, RIV, 17–18 Dec 2012 (JY†; 2012-208). One in Niland, IMP, 6 Jan 2012 (GMcC; 2012-002), was likely wintering. The first Dusky-capped Flycatcher known to return to California in successive winters (see Figure 8, Pike and Compton 2010), was back to La Mirada Cr. Park, LA, for the sixth consecutive year, 13 Dec 2012–20 Mar 2013, (SRe†; 2012-227; 2008-040, 2008-187, 2009-222, 2011-037, and 2011-233; Nelson et al. 2013). Another returned for its second winter, 18 Nov 2012–27 Mar 2013, to Veterans' Memorial Park in Bell Gardens, LA (RBA†; KR†, AW†; 2012-213; 2011-010; Nelson et al. 2013).

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus crinitus* (57, 2). A first-fall immature in Birchim Canyon, 16 km north of Bishop, INY, 6 Sep 2012 (DPr, JP†; 2012-201), was exceptionally early; another was at Natural Bridges State Beach, SCZ, 16–21

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Sep 2012 (STu†, CS†, JBI†, MBI†, SGe†, JLR†, JCS†, SBT†; 2012-132). The latter had almost completed replacing its primaries during its preformative molt, which typically takes place in the winter range (P. Pyle pers. comm.). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one along the Pajaro R. in Watsonville, SCZ/MTY, 20 Sep 2012 (2012-139), garnered no support on the second round, as no calls were heard to help bolster the distant, equivocal photographs.

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD *Tyrannus crassirostris* (22, 2). One in Otay Valley at the mouth of Poggi Canyon, Chula Vista, SD, 14 Oct 2012–14 Apr 2013 (GMcC, MSr†; 2012-163), was back for at least its third winter (2010-176 and 2011-184; Nelson et al. 2013). A first-year bird wintered in San Dieguito Valley 4 km east of Del Mar, SD 22 Dec 2012–26 Mar 2013 (PU; DB†, SBr†, GMcC, CSm†; 2012-220), while another first-year individual at El Dorado Park in Long Beach, LA, 19–25 Oct 2012, was evidently a migrant (DAB†, MMe†, KR†; 2012-164).

WHITE-EYED VIREO *Vireo griseus* (74, 5). A spring vagrant was banded at Audubon Starr Ranch, ORA, 29 May 2012 (CM, TSht†; 2012-087). Additional birds were in El Segundo, LA, 10–12 May 2012 (RBa†, FG†, ABL†, JRa†, DS†; 2012-071; photo published *N. Am. Birds* 66:557); Harbor Regional Park, LA, 12–15 May 2012 (JLS†, ABo†; 2012-087); and Galileo Hill Park, KER, 31 May–1 Jun 2012 (SLS; BK, KK†; 2012-085). One at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma, SD, 19 July–6 Oct 2012 (GN†, JLD, EGK†, GMcC, KR†, STu†; 2012-104), was one of very few White-eyed Vireos recorded summering in California. Since 2008, however, it is noteworthy that there have been more records of summering individuals (3) than of fall vagrants (2).

\*YELLOW-THROATED VIREO *Vireo flavifrons* (119, 1). The record of one at Inverness, MRN, 30 May 1987 (JA; 1987-501), had initially been assigned the number 1988-114, but the physical record had been lost. The committee reviews records of this species through 2007 only.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO *Vireo solitarius* (73, 4). San Diego Co. hosted fall migrants near Famosa Slough in San Diego, 24 Oct 2011 (PEL; 2011-153) and Lake O'Neill, Camp Pendleton, 11 Sep 2012 (JMMc†; 2012-131). Another was in willows along Pecho Road near Los Osos, SLO, 20–21 Oct 2012 (JSR; ARA†, BB†, TME; 2012-166). A record of what was originally thought to be a bright Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassinii*) wintering along the Wilmington Drain, Wilmington, LA, 26 Dec 2011 (DS†; 2011-273), was submitted following the acceptance of a Blue-headed Vireo at that location the following winter, 13 Jan-4 Mar 2013 (2013-006); it was a first-year bird in 2011 and an adult in 2013, and the committee considered it the same individual. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The committee's decisions not to accept records from Eureka, HUM, 23 Sep 2012 (2012-251), Harkins Slough, Watsonville, SCZ, 12 Oct 2012 (2012-167), and Bishop, INY, 15 Dec 2012 (2012-244), reflect its cautious approach with this difficult taxon. See Nelson et al. (2013) for additional information on the evolving criteria for identifying the Blue-headed Vireo.

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO *Vireo flavoviridis* (108, 5). Specimens preserved from San Diego, SD, received from wildlife rehabilitators, were one in North Park, 16 Sep 1996 (SDNHM #50241; 1996-179), and one near Tecolote Canyon in Clairemont, 3 Oct 2012 (SDNHM #53708; 2012-215). Also in fall 2012 were one on Pt. Loma, SD, 26–27 Sep 2012 (SESS; EGK†, GN†; 2012-146), and, in Ventura Co., one at Camarillo, 13 Oct 2012 (SBT†; 2012-165), and one near Oxnard, 24–28 Oct 2012 (TABe†, JC†, OJ, MMe†; 2012-168).

BLUE JAY *Cyanocitta cristata* (16, 1). One along Redwood Cr. near Arcata, 11 Jul 2012, was the sixth recorded in Humboldt Co., on a mid-summer date unprecedented for California (KL†; 2012-103). Previous records had extended from 7 Oct to 25



Figure 1. A first for California and the entire Pacific Ocean, this Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) spent much of its time within a large colony of Common Murres (*Uria aalge*) on Southeast Farallon Island after its discovery on 25 April 2012. This photo was taken 24 June 2012 (2012-058).

Photo by Todd McGrath

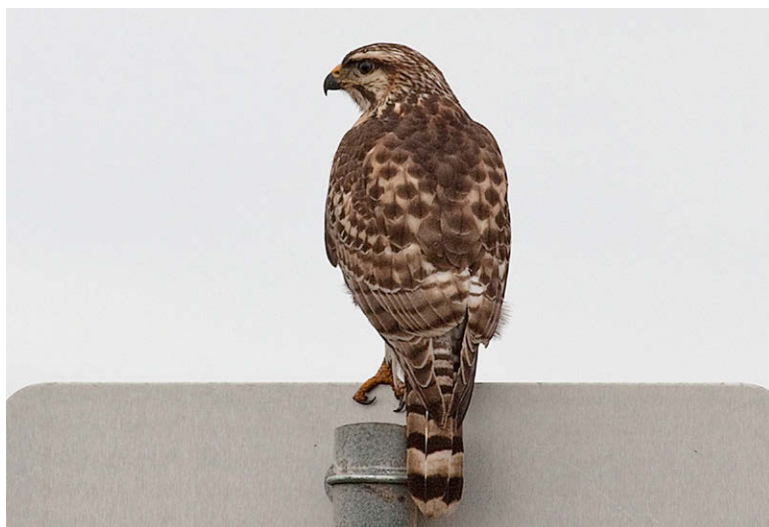


Figure 2. California's first accepted Gray Hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*) wintered near Carpinteria, Santa Barbara Co., 25 November 2012–15 March 2013 (2012-193). This photo, taken 25 December 2012, shows the considerable extension of the tail beyond the primary tips and extensively white cheeks, distinguishing it from the superficially similar juvenile Broad-winged Hawk (*B. platypterus*).

Photo by Ronald Holland



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May. Washington has a mid-August record (Wahl et al. 2005), and the species has nested as close as northeastern Oregon (Marshall et al. 2003).

CAVE SWALLOW *Petrochelidon fulva* (9, 4). Two photographed at the southeast end of the Salton Sea, IMP, 18 Dec 2012 (AJSt; 2012-210), were later joined by two others, 12 Mar–6 Apr 2013 (GMcC; TABe†, EC†, KLG, MGr†, RBMc†, JMof; 2013-040). One found 5 km away on 30 Mar 2012 was considered part of this same wintering group (KLG†; 2013-061). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A worn one-year-old bird photographed in Mountain View, SCL, 4 Aug 2011 (2011-113), prompted much debate before ultimately failing to gain acceptance on its fourth round. The described “pumpkin” coloration of the forehead and rump was more appropriate for the Cave Swallow than for the similar Cliff Swallow (*P. pyrrhonota*), but this was not evident in the lone photograph provided to the committee. Most intriguing was the presence of newly molted inner primaries, as juveniles of neither species should be molting flight feathers in early August (Pyle 1997). By contrast, one-year-old Cave Swallows could be molting those feathers in late summer, whereas one-year old Cliff Swallows are not currently known to do so (Pyle 1997). Committee members Johnson and Pyle argued persuasively, however, that the outermost visible primary was likely a retained juvenal feather, a remnant of a previous incomplete preformative molt. Thus the worn condition of this one-year-old bird could be explained by its being a Cliff Swallow showing delayed plumage maturation and undergoing an early second prebasic molt. The Cave Swallow remains unrecorded in northern California.

WINTER WREN *Troglodytes hiemalis* (12, 4). One with grayish coloration from chin to breast wintering at Huntington Beach Central Park, 30 Oct–30 Dec 2007 (JEP†; CAM; 2007-310), was the first recorded in Orange Co.; its calls were variously compared to those of the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) and Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*). Additional pale-throated birds at Putah Cr., YOL, 20 Nov 2012–20 Jan 2013 (JLD; RF†, SCH†, EP†; 2012-192), and Pine Gulch Cr., MRN, 12 Nov 2012 (EEn†; 2012-189), similarly gave the Song Sparrow-like calls distinguishing the Winter Wren from its sister species, the Pacific Wren (*T. pacificus*), and also provided first records for the respective counties. A more controversial bird along Kinevan Rd. at San Jose Creek, near San Marcos Pass, SBA, 14–29 Nov 2011 (ARA†; DMC, TME; 2011-188), went four rounds before acceptance. The photos supported the identification as a Winter Wren, but the vocalizations were simply stated to be dissimilar to those of Wilson’s Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) and, thus, those of the Pacific Wren. The committee encourages the audio recording of all potential Winter Wrens, particularly as our understanding of the relative importance of various phenotypic traits distinguishing these two species continues to evolve. IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one in San Francisco, SF, 1 Jan 2012 (2011-235), went four rounds without gaining the necessary majority for acceptance. While the described calls sounded appropriate for the species, no recordings were obtained. Furthermore, the report contained no description of the bird itself, which could be seen only partially in the lone photo that was procured.

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis* (8, 1). One captured and banded on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 28 Sep 2012 (DMx†; KNN†, EMA†, JRT; 2012-149), was the first to be recorded in California since 2007. To date, all records are for the month of September. The three-way split of this species (Chesser et al. 2014), with *P. borealis* breeding in Alaska but the Kamchatka Leaf Warbler (*P. examinandus*) having occurred on the Aleutian Is., may lead the CBRC to reexamine the accepted records. The small size of the Southeast Farallon bird suggested to the banders that it represented the subspecies breeding in Alaska, *P. b. kennicottii*, but the committee made no formal decision beyond the Arctic Warbler, *sensu lato*.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe* (13, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT

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ESTABLISHED: One reported from India Basin Park in San Francisco, SF, 28 Oct 2011 (2011-163), was incompletely and briefly seen at a distance of 200–300 m. While most committee members believed that a Northern Wheatear was seen, some key details, such as tail-pumping, were not noted by the observer, who had no prior experience with the species.

VEERY *Catharus fuscescens* (14, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one near Davis, YOL, 4 Jun 2012 (2012-088), went three rounds before failing to gain acceptance. While the observer was experienced and much of the description sounded good for the Veery, the bird was observed for less than 30 seconds, no diagnostic vocalization was heard, pale gray on the flanks was not noted, and no photo was obtained. *Catharus* thrushes are notoriously difficult to identify, and the committee maintains a high standard for records within this genus. Only 42% (14 of 33) of submitted reports of the Veery have been accepted, among the lowest of species on the review list. Furthermore, of the four records that have been accepted over the past decade, three were of birds either captured or preserved as a specimen, and the last was heard singing in the Sierra Nevada.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH *Catharus minimus* (23, 1). One in its first fall was netted and measured on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 4 Oct 2012 (DMx†; KNN†, JRT; 2012-153). All three Gray-cheeked Thrushes recorded in California in the past 15 years have been on this island, which accounts for fully 65% (15 of 23) of all California records of this species.

RUFIOUS-BACKED ROBIN *Turdus rufopalliatus* (18, 1). Like nearly all of California's other Rufous-backed Robins, this first-fall male was found at a desert oasis, in this case Chiriaco Summit, RIV, 29 Oct–9 Dec 2012 (AAN†, TABe†, JLD, LSt†, DVP†; 2012-172).

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER *Toxostoma curvirostre* (30, 2). A first-spring male of the western subspecies *palmeri* near Bishop, 11 Jun–27 Sep 2012, was a first for Inyo Co. and established only the second record of a Curve-billed Thrasher summing in the state (RS; SC†, JLD†, JH†, TH, KNN†, DPr†, JPr†, KS†, SLS†, JCS†; 2012-091). Especially intriguing was an apparently paired bird west of the McCoy Mts. ~40 km west-northwest of Blythe, RIV, 19–27 Apr 2012 (CMcC†; 2012-051), but unfortunately the second bird was not seen well enough for the species to be confirmed.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba* (28, 1). One in its first fall was at Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro, LA, 8–18 Dec 2012 (BA; JLD, JSF†, KLG†, MGr†, RHo†, DMg†, JRa†, KR†, LSt†, CT†; 2012-197; this issue's front cover). While the subspecific identification of first-fall White Wagtails is notoriously difficult, and complicated by interbreeding (Pyle 1997, Alström and Mild 2003), the clean gray rump, extensive dark centers to the median and greater secondary coverts, and distinct dark bar at the base of the secondaries indicated it to be *M. a. ocularis* (Alström and Mild 2003). Surprisingly, this is the first definitive record of this Alaska-breeding subspecies for California since 1996, and only the second since 1989 (CBRC 2007). The late fall date is typical of the race, as all fall birds identified as *ocularis* in the state have been found after 4 Oct. The converse is true of *M. a. lugens*, the Black-backed Wagtail, as nearly all fall migrants of it have been detected before 8 Oct (CBRC 2007). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A short report of one near Mendocino, MEN, 6 Oct 1995 (1995-145), contained details that were consistent with the claimed species but was written from memory 17 years after the observation.

SMITH'S LONGSPUR *Calcarius pictus* (10, 2). A male at Bear R. Ridge near Ferndale, 19–20 Apr 2012 (SEM†, KR†, AS†; 2012-053; Figure 6), and an adult male at Fay Slough near Eureka, 9 Sep 2012 (PR; MSt†; 2012-124), were the first of this species to be seen in Humboldt Co. More importantly, the former was the first ever

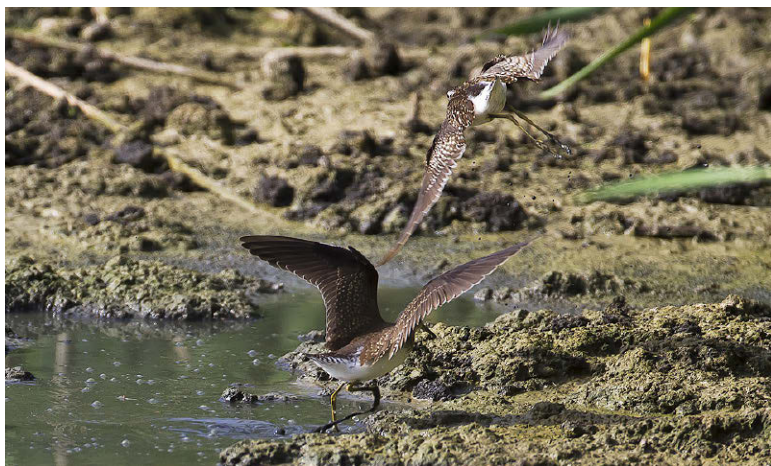


Figure 3. This Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*), California's second, spent 24–29 September 2012 at a sewage pond near the mouth of the Santa Margarita R., Camp Pendleton, San Diego Co. (2012-142). In this photo, taken 26 September, the completely white rump and coarse whitish and rufous upperpart spotting distinguish it from the Solitary Sandpiper (*T. solitaria*) just below it.

Photo by Andrew Fisher



Figure 4. Albeit not a candidate for framing, this photo taken 29 September 2012 of a Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) in Watsonville, Santa Cruz Co. (2012-147), shows thin, evenly spaced barring throughout the underparts, including across a uniformly pale underwing. The remarkably similar Oriental Cuckoo (*C. optatus*) has broad and dark ventral barring and a white stripe contrastingly bordered by dark across the median underwing, a feature completely lacking in this bird.

Photo by B. J. Stacey



Figure 5. This second-year Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), seen here finishing off an American Coot (*Fulica americana*) at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Riverside Co., 15 January–9 March 2012 (2012-007), was also recorded ~300 km away at Owens L., Inyo Co., 21 March 2012 (2012-056), and represents the southernmost record in North America.

*Photo by Mark A. Chappell*

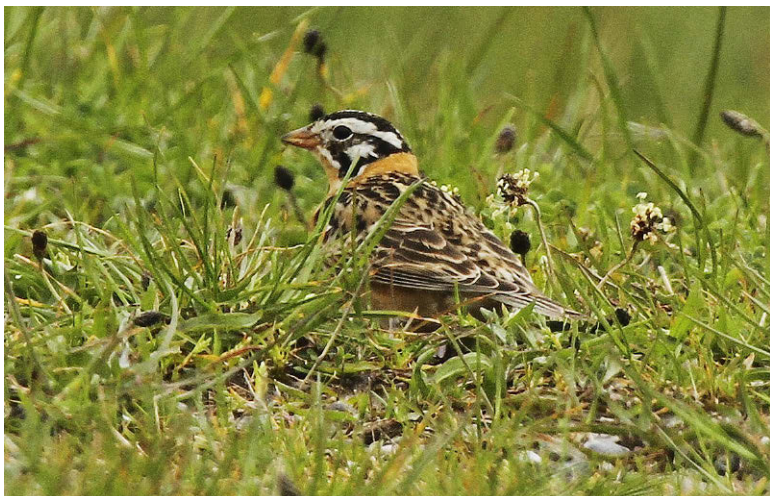


Figure 6. This striking male Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*) photographed on the first day of its 19–20 April 2012 layover at Bear River Ridge represents the first record of that species for Humboldt County (2012-053) and the first for California in spring.

*Photo by Alex Simon*

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to be found in California in spring and in such striking breeding plumage. Arizona's only record of Smith's Longspur was on a similar date, but that bird, collected in the White Mts. 24 Apr 1953, was in worn basic plumage (Phillips et al. 1964).

**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis* (126, 2). First-winter females were at the Eel R. W. A., HUM, 1 Jan 2012 (KMB†; 2012-004), and at Tolowa Dunes State Park, DN, 16 Jan 2012 (TK†; 2012-010). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: All committee members believed that a bird observed at Abbott's Lagoon on Pt. Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 6 Nov 2011 (2011-222) was very likely a Snow Bunting but agreed that the sparse details fell short of meriting acceptance.

**WORM-EATING WARBLER** *Helmitheros vermivorum* (124, 4). A first-spring vagrant was in Bolinas, MRN, 10 Jun 2012 (KF†; 2012-092), a fall vagrant was in Pescadero, SM, 18–26 Oct 2012 (MK; JRy†; 2012-181), and a wintering bird was at Shay Park in Arcata, HUM, 26 Oct 2012–11 Jan 2013 (RF; TK†; 2012-226). Also accepted was an older record of one at Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, 12 Sep 1979 (BSh; 1979-501), submitted to www.eBird.org but never previously reviewed by the committee.

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** *Parkesia motacilla* (18, 2). One at California City, KER, 3–8 Sep 2012 (TEW; TABe†, KHL, BSt†, STS†; 2012-120), was the first to be recorded in California since 2004. An older record of one “found dead” at Cottonwood Springs in Joshua Tree N. P., RIV, 8 May 1960 (WFVZ #43171; 2011-116), went three rounds before acceptance. The specimen, in the Donald Bleitz collection housed at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, is clearly a Louisiana Waterthrush. However, Bleitz was known to band and “experimentally” release birds that had been transported to him from around the world, complicating the issue of the specimen's provenance. Following a tortuous investigation, the CBRC ascertained that an associate of Bleitz had banded multiple site-appropriate birds at Cottonwood Springs around that time and that the specimen had been obtained on site. This record now shortens the interval between the first state record (in 1908) and the second to 52 years, from the previous 77.

**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** *Vermivora chrysoptera* (75, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A report of one at Oceano Lagoon, Pismo State Beach, SLO, 17 Sep 2012 (2012-143), contained details such as “broad yellow wing patches” that strongly suggested the claimed species. The bird was seen incompletely, however, and the record ultimately failed to gain acceptance after four rounds.

**BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** *Vermivora cyanoptera* (47, 2). A singing male was at Cottonwood Cr. near Oasis, MNO, 27 May 2012 (PJM†; AD; 2012-246), and another male was near Covington Park, Morongo Valley, SBE, 4 Jun 2012 (RCr†; 2012-116).

**CONNECTICUT WARBLER** *Oporornis agilis* (119, 4). First-fall immatures were at Prisoner's Harbor on Santa Cruz I., SBA, 14 Sep 2012 (NL; 2012-223), the north spit of Humboldt Bay near Fairhaven, HUM, 25 Sep 2012 (TLS; AD; 2012-228), and at Pt. Reyes National Seashore, MRN, 28 Sep–1 Oct 2012 (MBa†; CW†, RLB†, KSc, JCS†, JWt†; 2012-148). A record of one seen briefly at dusk on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 1 Oct 2006 (RF; 2007-040; 2007-308), went four rounds before acceptance, largely because of ambiguities in the report regarding the bird's described “walking” versus “hopping,” a key point of distinction from the similar Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*).

**MOURNING WARBLER** *Geothlypis philadelphia* (143, 2). A vocalizing female was at California City, KER, 30 May 2012 (SBT†; 2012-241), while one in its first fall was at Mad R. Beach Co. Park, HUM, 3 Sep 2012 (GBL S; TK†, KR†; 2012-119). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: A report from Arcata Marsh, HUM, 9 Sep 2012 (2012-130), suggested the Mourning Warbler, but the observer was not

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experienced with this difficult-to-identify species and was not completely certain of the identification; it failed to pass after three rounds.

CAPE MAY WARBLER *Setophaga tigrina* (27\*\*, 7). A first-spring male was in Santa Cruz, SCZ, 12–15 Apr 2012 (SGe†; 2012-081). An adult male was at Southeast Farallon I., SF, 7–8 Sep 2012 (DMx†; JRT; 2012-126), the 72<sup>nd</sup> of this species to appear on the island (J. Tietz in litt.). Additional records of first-fall birds were of single individuals near the Golden Gate bridge, SF, 18 Sep 2012 (ME; 2012-136); Goleta, SBA, 3 Oct 2012 (KA†; 2012-223); and the Carrizo Plain, SLO, 4 Nov 2012 (DT†, MT†; 2012-177), and of two different individuals in Bodega Bay, SON, 26 Sep 2012 (STr†; 2012-151), and 30 Sep 2012 (SCa†; 2012-150). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: One at O'Neill Forebay, MER, 27 Sep 2012 (2012-152), was only sparingly described and received no support. The brief description of another bird in Goleta, SBA, 15 Sep 2012 (2012-219), suggested a male Cape May Warbler, but members were concerned by the presence of white “wing bars” rather than the more expected white patches on the median coverts.

\*PINE WARBLER *Setophaga pinus* (114, 11). All 21 California records of this species from 2010 to 2012 were from the southern half of the state, including one of two first-fall birds discovered in the same tree in Fountain Valley, ORA, 27 Nov 2012–6 Jan 2013 (JEP; 2012-224) and 27 Nov 2012–21 Jan 2013 (JEP; KSp, TABe, TFH†; 2012-240). New birds for the winter period were in Montecito, SBA, 10 Jan 2012 (OJ; 2012-009); Coronado, SD, 25 Nov 2012–10 Apr 2013 (EC; JK†, PEL, GMcC, JMMc†, MSr†, SBT†; 2012-195); Yorba Linda, ORA, 1 Nov 2012–27 Feb 2013 (TFH†; 2012-248); Del Mar, SD, 10 Dec 2012 (PEL; 2012-202); and Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area, Los Angeles, LA, 9 Dec 2012–31 March 2013 (TABe†, RBa†; both 2012-214 and 2013-046). Adult males returning for their third winters were at Hansen Dam Park in Lake View Terrace, LA, 28 Oct 2012–31 Mar 2013 (KLG†; KR†; 2012-191; also 2010-159 and 2011-237; Nelson et al. 2013) and Palos Verdes Estates, LA, 23 Dec 2012 (JEP†; 2012-225; also 2011-025 and 2011-236; Nelson et al. 2013). First-fall females at La Mirada Park, La Mirada, LA, 24–25 Oct 2012 (JRo; 2012-170); Pt. Loma, SD, 30 Oct–4 Nov 2012 (ARA†; 2012-173); and Goleta, SBA, 4 Nov 2012 (NL; 2012-180), were evidently migrants. Another migrating first-fall female near Oxnard, 11 Oct 2012 (DAB†; 2012-156), was a long-awaited first record for Ventura Co. The committee removed the Pine Warbler from the review list at the 2014 meeting and now reviews only records through 2013.

GRACE'S WARBLER *Setophaga graciae* (65, 4). Individuals at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma, SD, 3 Sep 2012 (AJS; 2012-243) and Montaña de Oro State Park, SLO, 29–30 Sep 2012 (JSR; 2012-230) were evidently migrants. Newly discovered wintering birds were at Camino Real Park in Ventura, VEN, 10 Dec 2012–20 Jan 2013 (IT; Jc†, JSF†, PEL, GMcC, SBT, DVP†; 2012-212) and Spring Valley, SD, 24 Dec 2012–17 Mar 2013 (DWA†; PEL; 2012-229), while returning birds included one back for its fifth winter in Goleta, SBA, 28 Oct 2012–21 Feb 2013 (DMC†, DMx†, HPR†, MSm; 2012-218), and another returning to Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego, SD, 31 Oct 2012–10 Apr 2013 (CA†, GMcC, MSa†, SBT†; 2012-174).

RED-FACED WARBLER *Cardellina rubrifrons* (23, 1). A well-described bird was at Horse Heaven Campground in the Laguna Mts., SD, 9 Aug 2012 (SRo; 2012-114), also the area of California's last Red-faced Warbler, 16 Sep 2007 (Singer and Terrill 2009).

EASTERN TOWHEE (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) (0, 0). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: An intriguing report of one at Venice I., west of Stockton, SJ, 18 Dec 2011 (2011-266), received no support, despite many members believing that the claimed species could have been involved. While much of the description matched





Figure 7. This first-fall Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*) at Horsethief Springs in the Kingston Mts., 10–12 Oct 2012 (2012-155), is the first recorded in San Bernardino Co. and only the second in California in nearly a century. Although the presence of obscure wingbars is often cited as a trait of the Varied Bunting (e.g., Beadle and Rising 2000), it is in fact typical for this species to exhibit pale wingbars at least in fresh plumage (S.N.G. Howell pers.comm.). In this photo, taken 11 October 2012, note the pale contrasting tips of the median secondary coverts, most of which are hidden by the scapular feathers.

Photo by Thomas A. Benson



Figure 8. The Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*, also known as the Nutmeg Mannikin) is now well established over much of the coastal slope of southern California, and the committee determined that the species met all criteria for addition to the California list as an introduced species. Shown here are 28 specimens from a series of 42 at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and collected in Los Angeles and Orange counties between 1995 and 2014.

Photo by Kimball L. Garrett

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a female Eastern Towhee and not any race of the Spotted Towhee (*P. maculatus*), the committee was most concerned that the distinctive white patch at the base of the outer primaries was not observed. In addition, several members cited the possibility of hybridization with another species of towhee. New Mexico has accumulated 16 records of the Eastern Towhee but also has three well-documented records of hybrid Eastern × Spotted Towhees (S. O. Williams). Furthermore, the committee is reluctant to accept a first state record by a single observer in the absence of a photograph. We expect that the Eastern Towhee will eventually be documented adequately in California, but it has been over a decade since the last of Arizona's two winter records of this species (Rosenberg et al. 2007).

FIELD SPARROW *Spizella pusilla* (12, 4). One visiting a feeder in San Francisco, SF, 28 Dec 2012–10 Feb 2013 (KMCK†; ME†, JMo†; 2012-234), exhibited the pale gray underparts consistent with the Great Plains race *S. p. arenacea*, as have all other Field Sparrows recorded in California. Another relatively drab representative of this race was at the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, Baldwin Hills, 19 Apr–9 May 2012 (AB†, EB†; KLG, ABL, JCS†; 2012-057; photo published *N. Am. Birds* 66:574), providing Los Angeles Co. with its first record. The absence of prior spring records for California, as well as the length of the stay, suggested that the bird might have been wintering in a less-visited portion of this well-birded park. A migrant at Nunes Ranch on Pt. Reyes National Seashore, 3–5 Nov 2012 (LB†, DRM†, JMo†, SWo†; 2012-175), provided a first record for Marin Co. Another at China L., KER, 14–15 Oct 2012 (DVB†; SGr; 2012-159), was likely as early as one could expect a fall migrant in the state, given that the species' peak migration does not begin until mid-October (Pyle et al. 2011a).

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla* (3, 1). One was on Southeast Farallon I., SF, 14 Nov 2012 (JRT; LMu; 2012-184). Although the bird was seen rather briefly and not photographed, the white eye ring, chestnut face with a dark frame that fell short of reaching the small, conical bill, and white outer rectrices, along with the sharp "tsip" vocalizations, convinced the committee that the Little Bunting and not the Reed Bunting (*E. schoeniclus*), Chestnut-eared Bunting (*E. fucata*), Rustic Bunting (*E. rustica*), or Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*) had been observed. The now three records of the Little Bunting in California span the period 27 Sep–14 Nov. An additional fall record along the Pacific coast comes from the Vizcaino Peninsula in Baja California Sur, 8 Oct 2008 (Rademaker and Powell 2010), while the first winter record for North America was recently established in northeastern Oregon, 28 Jan–25 Mar 2013 (Contreras and Tumer 2013).

PYRRHULOXIA *Cardinalis sinuatus* (28, 1). A male was in a wash vegetated with ironwood (*Olneya tesota*) and blue palo verde (*Parkinsonia florida*) at the north end of the McCoy Mts., RIV, 28 Apr 2012 (CMcC; 2012-061).

VARIED BUNTING *Passerina versicolor* (4, 1). A first-fall immature at Horsethief Springs in the Kingston Mts., 10–12 Oct 2012 (DAG†; TABe†, JLD, SJM†, BS†, JCS†; 2012-155; Figure 7; photo published *N. Am. Birds* 67:185), represents the first record of this species in San Bernardino Co. and only the fourth for California. Separation from the very similar Indigo Bunting (*P. cyanea*) was centered on the clearly decurved culmen, the absence of streaking across the breast, the uniform buff coloration over the entire underparts, and the indistinct edgings to the tertials and greater secondary coverts. In addition, it was evident in photographs that the (outermost) ninth primary was shorter than the fifth primary, as is characteristic of the Varied, while the opposite is true for the Indigo (Pyle 1997). California's first two records of the Varied were of adults collected 8 and 9 Feb 1914 near Blythe, RIV, from a remarkable flock of 15–20 birds. The only other record is of an adult male at Mesquite Spring, Death Valley N. P., INY, 18–21 Nov 1977 (Luther et al. 1979).



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Thus the bird in the Kingston Mts. was only the second Varied Bunting to appear in the state in nearly a century, and the first that was not an adult.

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** *Euphagus carolinus* (29\*\*, 5). A first-winter female was at Legg L. in El Monte, LA, 3 Jan 2012 (ML†; ABL†; 2012-001). Others were discovered at famed, offshore migrant traps, with two birds at Lemon Tank on San Clemente I., LA, 13–15 Nov 2012 (JTS†; 2012-182), and a first-fall female at Southeast Farallon I., SF, 14–18 Nov 2012 (LMu†; JRT†; 2012-206). Another first-fall immature was far inland at China L., KER, 20–22 Nov 2012 (SLS†; 2012-211).

**COMMON GRACKLE** *Quiscalus quiscula* (90, 3). A male at Bob's Cr. Ranch, 19 km southeast of Pittsville, 4–14 May 2012 (KPA†; 2012-075), was the first to be recorded in Lassen Co. A record of a spring vagrant male along Soquel Cr. in Capitola, SCZ, 2 May 2011 (DLS; 2011-099) went three rounds before acceptance, as the bird was observed mainly in flight and only briefly perched atop a redwood tree. A first-winter male was in Bishop, INY, 19 Feb–3 Apr 2012 (CY†; JLD†, KNN, NJO, DP†, JP†, BS†, SLS; 2012-026).

**COMMON REDPOLL** *Acanthis flammea* (91, 10). A first-winter female was in McArthur, SHA, 17 Dec 2011–14 Jan 2012 (OJ†; JRT†; 2011-218), while a first-winter male in Julian, SD, 4–19 Feb 2012, was one of the most southerly of this species yet recorded (MGo†; PEL, CAM†, GMcC, CMcG†, VM†, SJM†, MS†; 2012-014; photo published *N. Am. Birds* 66:376). However, a first-spring female on San Clemente I., LA, 3–4 May 2012 (MSIS; JST†; 2012-068), was perhaps arriving from points even farther to the south. Two more first-winter females were at Winema Lodge near Tulelake, SIS, 10 Feb–5 Mar 2012 (BP†; DN, FO, LP†, JRu, BLS†; 2012-022), while an adult male was in Paradise Estates, MNO, 21–22 Jan 2012 (DH†; 2012-031). Additional first-winter birds were in Taylorsville, PLU, 6–25 Feb 2012 (SE; CD†; 2012-020); Woodland, YOL, 22–25 Feb 2012 (JS†; JCS†; 2012-029); Santa Cruz, SCZ, 24–26 Feb 2012 (SMd†; DLS; 2012-030); and Westwood, LAS, 9 Apr 2012 (SMcD†; 2012-200). IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED: The report of one at Mammoth L., MNO, 7 Feb 2012 (2012-040), was likely correct but too light on details, even for a year of irruption.

### POPULATIONS ACCEPTED

In addition to evaluating and archiving records of birds that rarely occur in California, the committee also maintains a California bird list, which includes introduced species considered to be established in the state. For a species to be added to the list, the identification must be established and the population in the state must be considered “viable.” The committee’s criteria for viability are (1) that the species has bred in the state for 15 consecutive years, (2) that the population is increasing or stabilized after an initial period of increase, (3) that the species occupies enough geographically contiguous suitable habitat that the population is unlikely to diminish significantly, and (4) that the occupied environment is ecologically similar enough to the species’ native habitat, or to that of other successful introductions, that permanent establishment seems likely. Populations maintained primarily by continued releases or requiring intensive management are not considered viable.

\***SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA** *Lonchura punctulata*. The CBRC’s Introduced Birds Subcommittee (K.L. Garrett, J. Morlan, J. E. Pike) gathered evidence that naturalized populations of this species had met the criteria for addition to the California list; the full committee accepted their proposal (2013-085), and the species has since been added to the American Birding Association’s checklist as well (Pranty and Floyd 2013).

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Scaly-breasted Munias have been reported in the wild in California since at least the mid- to late 1980s; breeding was not documented until 1997, although the species was clearly naturalized here before that. It ranges from southwestern San Diego County to coastal San Luis Obispo County, with the largest numbers in the coastal lowlands of Orange and Los Angeles counties, especially along rivers. Small populations have also been noted in the south San Francisco Bay area. A series of specimens (42 from southern California populations at LACM alone; Figure 8) document that the established subspecies is the nominate subspecies of much of the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka; it is characterized by clean black-on-white scaling on the underparts, a black bill, and yellow-tinged uppertail coverts (Restall 1997). A distinctly different subspecies from southeast Asia, *L. p. topela*, has long been established on the Hawaiian Islands (Pyle and Pyle 2009). This species has generally been called the Nutmeg Mannikin in the North American literature, but the A.O.U. adopted the more widely used English name in its 55<sup>th</sup> supplement (Chesser et al. 2014).

### CORRIGENDA

The following corrections should be made to the CBRC's previous report (Nelson et al. 2013): California's latest record of the Blue Jay should be changed from 8 May 2012 to 25 May 2005 (Iliff et al. 2007); the record number (2010-046) was omitted from the 26–27 May 2010 report of a Great Crested Flycatcher in Olivenhain, SD; the county of the Short-tailed Albatross (2011-265) 65 km off Pigeon Pt. should be changed from SCZ to SM; the total number of records of the Neotropic Cormorant should be 34, not 33; the two adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at Imperial Beach, SD, 7 Dec 2011–29 Jul 2012 (2011-254) were presumed to be birds returning to a frequently used nest site but were inadvertently counted in the final tally, which should be changed from 7 to 5.

The following correction is noted for the 36<sup>th</sup> report (Johnson et al. 2012): the total number of records for Neotropic Cormorant should be 26, not 25.

### DATA SOLICITATION

Sightings for 2012 for which the CBRC has received no documentation: a Little Stint at the Elk R. mouth, HUM, 24 Jul (*N. Am. Birds* 66:730); a White-eyed Vireo at Galileo Hill Park, KRN, 15 Jul (*N. Am. Birds* 66:734).

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