

Central Valley Region Bird Highlights: August 2010 through November 2010

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WATERBIRDS

A **Brant** feeding with **American Coots** at Lake Success in 20-22 October (SDS, AD, JLx) provided the first Tulare County record of this coastal species. Rare south of Merced County in the valley, a **Cackling Goose** was photographed in Bakersfield, Kern County. on 7 November (BB). A **Eurasian Green-winged (Common) Teal** was reported from the Vic Fazio Yolo Basin WA on 28 November (SHa). This subspecies and intergrades with the American subspecies are present each year in the Central Valley. Kutrass Lake in Redding, Shasta County, was once again the site of late fall/winter scoters with two female **Surf Scoters** on 4 November (BED) and one was still present on 22 November (RBr), another female was photographed in Bakersfield on 8 November (BB), and another was at Folsom Lake in Placer County on 8 November (RP). Also on Folsom Lake was a female, Red-breasted **Merganser** on 21 November (RP). Another was at the Winters WTP on 22-29 November (EH, JLD) for one of few Yolo County records. An adult male **Long-tailed Duck** was in Benicia, Solano County, on 29-30 November (Epi). A juvenile **Brown Pelican** and a **Pacific Loon** made a splash when present on Sherman Island in southern Sacramento County on 29-30 November (DW, KPa). An ailing **Common Loon** was at the Jersey Avenue Ponds on 25 November (MSt) for the second Kings County record. Twenty-eight **Cattle Egrets** along Coal Creek Road near Buena Vista on 25 August provided the first Amador County record and perhaps the first record for the Sierra Nevada foothills (DM). Five **White-faced Ibis** at Salt Springs Reservoir on 2 September (DMx) was a great find for Calaveras County, and 30+ were there on 3 September (JLx).

An **American Golden-Plover** at the Fresno WTP on 19-22 November (GaW, JND, JSy) was well photographed for the first Fresno County record. **Snowy Plovers** regularly breed in a few evaporation ponds in the Tulare Basin but remain noteworthy elsewhere in the Central Valley. A juvenile was at the Lodi WTP, San Joaquin County, on 7 August (JRw) and the following day with a **Baird's Sandpiper** (SHo, EH). Another **Snowy Plover** was at the Modesto WTP on 14 August (EC) in Stanislaus County, one was along Pleasant Grove Road, Sutter County, on 27-28 August (JLg), and another was along Folsom Lake in Placer County on 6 September (RP). A **Willet** at the Lincoln WTP on 2 August (RP), with a **Marbled Godwit** there on 20 August (CA) and two more godwits on 1 September (DR) were rare finds for Placer County. The **Willet** flying



Figure 1. Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) at the Lodi Wastewater Treatment Ponds, San Joaquin County, 9 August 2010. Photo © 2011 Daniel Lee Brown

Above migrating **Sandhill Cranes** over Sacramento was a memorable sight on 3 October (CH) and an unusual record for the county. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the lone WTP on 15-16 September (DM, JLx) was one of the few Amador County records. **Solitary Sandpipers** migrate through in small numbers each spring and fall but are always worthy of note. This fall one was at the Tracy WTP on 1 August (SHu) in San Joaquin County, one at the Lincoln WTP on 1 August, two on Ben Hur Road on 17 August (KPa) for the second Mariposa County record, one at the Groveland WTP on 3 September (JR) for a nice Tuolumne county record, one at the Davis Wetlands, Yolo County, on 29 August (KGs), and another with a **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Chico WTP, Butte County, on 8 August (JSL). Three **Baird's** were at the Vic Fazio Yolo Basin WA on 14 August (KGs), one was at the Woodland WTP on 19 August (EP), followed by seven there on 23 August (ToEa), and two at the Jack Stone Ponds, Kings County, on 28 August (MSt). Additional **Marbled Godwits** were reported with six at the Lodi WTP (JRw) on 1 August, another at the Woodland WTP on 19 August (EP), three the following day (SHa), and one on 21 August (EP). The best shorebird find of fall was a juvenile **Hudsonian Godwit** at the Nevada Avenue Ponds in Kings County on 22 August (MSt) and perhaps a different one on 28 August (MSt). Few **Pectoral Sandpipers** arrive prior to September, so two adults at the Madera WTP on 2 August (LH) were noteworthy. One along Salt Spring Valley Reservoir on 16 September (JLx) provided only the second or third Calaveras County record. Its Siberian cousin, the **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was at the Vic Fazio Yolo Basin WA on 7-16 October (SHo, KT), providing the eleventh record for Yolo County,



Figure 2. Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) at the Woodland Wastewater Treatment Ponds, Yolo County, October 2010. Photo © 2011 John Sterling

which has hosted the vast majority of the Central Valley records. As usual, a few juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were found including one at the Jack Stone Ponds on 4-5 August (SDS) with an adult 5-8 August (DVP, LHa, MSt), one at the Woodland WTP on 20 August (SHa), two there on 23 August (ToEa), one at the Kent Avenue Ponds in Kings County on 28 August (MSt), and one along Pleasant Grove Road, Sutter County, on 30 August (JLg). **Stilt Sandpiper** is rare in the state away from the Salton Sea. One at the Madera WTP on 14-18 August (LH, SDS, KPa) was the first Madera County record, but singles at the Nevada Avenue Ponds on 14 August and 28 August (MSt) and Jack Stone Ponds 20 November (MSt) were in Kings County where there are numerous records, including records of wintering birds. Another was at the Davis Wetlands on 26-28 August (SHa, PA). The only reports of **Ruff** were from Utica Road in Kings County on 24 September (JLt), and Gun Club Road in Merced County from early October to 27 October (PJM, DMo). A **Sanderling** was also at the Madera WTP on 14 August (LH), with another at the Woodland WTP on 21-22 August (EP, KGs), one along Folsom Lake in Placer County on 6 September (RP), and one at Jack Stone Ponds on 6 September (MSt). Two others along the Sacramento River in Red Bluff on 18-19 September (BED) provided the second record for Tehama County. A **Long-billed Dowitcher** visited Lake-of-the-Pines WTP in the foothills in Nevada County on 9 September (RD), which provided one of the few records

Figure 3.
White-winged Dove
(*Zenaida asiatica*).
in Citrus Heights,
Sacramento County.
19 September 2010.

Photo by Mark Martucci



for the foothills and for Nevada County. Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** at the lone WTP on 16 September (JLx) was one of few Amador County records. A **Parasitic Jaeger** at the Modesto WTP on 26 September (HR, EC) was well photographed to provide an excellent record for Stanislaus County. **Western Gulls** are now found annually in small numbers during winter in the Central Valley. However, an adult at the Tracy WTP in San Joaquin County was found on the very early date of 23 September (TR). A third cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at the Davis WTP on 10 November (ToEa) added to the total in Yolo County since this species was first found there in 2009. **Sabine's Gulls** primarily migrate over the ocean, but a few are now found each fall at inland sites, including ponds and lakes in the Central Valley. One juvenile was at the Jack Stone Ponds on 13 September (JLt). An adult in alternate plumage was at the Woodland WTP on 6-8 October (JM) and replaced by a late juvenile from 22-28 October (SHa, MP, JCS, ToEa). A **Common Tern** was at the Madera WTP on 16-18 August (LH, SDS, KPa) and a second one was there on 9 September (LH). Three more were found at the Woodland WTP on 9 September (ToEa).

LANDBIRDS

Somewhat expected given the species recently expanding range, a **Common Ground-Dove** near Bogg's Slough on 12 September (RHa) provided the first Kings County record. There are now records in Tulare County and increasingly in Kern County. An amazing record of a **White-winged Dove** was of one photographed on 19 September (MM) in a backyard in Sacramento County. **Greater Roadrunner** is rare in some areas including Contra Costa County where one was seen on a golf course in Brentwood on 2 September (JC), which provided the first record in that county since 1986. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** in Davis was found on 30 October (CDf) and seen for several days. This species' status on the valley floor is unclear due to its cryptic and nocturnal habits.



Figure 4. Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) at San Luis National Wildlife Refuge, Merced County, 10 December 2010. Photo © 2011 Gary Woods

Three **Black Swifts** flew over the Lake Solano Diversion Dam along Putah Creek on 19 September (RM), providing first fall records of this elusive species for Yolo and Solano counties.

We now expect **Eastern Phoebe** in late fall and winter in the Central Valley, and three were found this fall with one in Tar Canyon on 11 November (MSt) for one of few Kings County records, one at the San Luis NWR in Merced County on 24 November (MS), and another along Putah Creek on 19 November (MK) where there have been several previous records in the past decade. The only **Vermilion Flycatcher** report was of one at the Tule Elk State Park in Kern County on 28 November (DMo). An unexpected find was Yolo County's first **Cassin's Kingbird** near Winters (MP, SHa) that was found on 15 October and stayed for several weeks. This species is not known north of the southwestern corner of San Joaquin County. A bit more expected was Yolo County's first **Tropical Kingbird** found on 20 November (CDf) that remained into the winter and provided one of few Central Valley records. A **Bell's Vireo**

at the Vic Fazio Yolo Basin W.A was last heard on 4 August (EW). Much rarer, a vagrant **Red-eyed Vireo** was along Babel Slough in southern Yolo County on 14 September (GEW). Two migrant **Bank Swallows** at the Tracy WTP on 1 August (SHu) were a nice find in San Joaquin County where only one nesting colony persists. Rare on the valley floor in southern San Joaquin Valley, a **Pacific Wren** found on 3 November in Lemoore (MSt) wintered to establish one of few Kings County records. Sacramento hosted two montane species with a **Mountain Chickadee** at East Lawn Cemetery on 15 November (MBM) and a **Steller's Jay** in Curtis Park in on 29-30 November (DA). These were nice finds as these species are not annually found in the Central Valley. A **Sage Thrasher** was along Rock River Road in western Tuolumne County on 18 September (JTU), another was on the back side of Lake Success in Tulare County on 25 October (SDS), one was at Atwell Island in southwestern Tulare County on 30 September (SAL), and a fourth was along Little Panoche Road in Fresno County on 22 October (AD). This Great Basin species is a rare but regular fall migrant along the edges of the Central Valley. At the Vic Fazio Yolo Basin WA, a **Red-throated Pipit** was with American Pipits on 19 October (JCS). This is the second Yolo County record and perhaps only the third Central Valley record of this Siberian species. A **Northern Parula** was at the Cosumnes Preserve in Sacramento County on 22 August (PC, JTr) where there have been numerous previous records of this eastern vagrant warbler. Another found at Hart Park in Bakersfield on 30 November (BBa) was wintering. A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** hit a window in Fresno on 31 August (LH) and the specimen was sent to a museum for the first or second Fresno County record. A living **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Babel Slough on 3 October (ToEa, KGs), providing another record for Yolo County of this eastern warbler. The only report of a **Blackpoll Warbler** was from Babel Slough on 27 September (AE). A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Bogg's Slough on 6-7 September (MSt, JSL) was a second record for Kings County. A male visited East La Loma Park in Modesto on 9 October (EC) for one of few records for Stanislaus County. Hart Park in Bakersfield hosted a **Summer Tanager** 24-30 November (AS). Along the Tule River in Kings County, a female **Indigo Bunting** was found in a flock of **Lazuli Buntings** on 7 September (JSL). Unusual on the valley floor, a **Green-tailed Towhee** was along the American River Parkway in Sacramento County on 19-21 September (JeL, DJ), another was in the foothills in Camino, El Dorado County on 19-22 September (SSt), and one at the Yolo Grasslands Park on 10 October (ZS) was the second record for that vagrant trap. Rare in Yolo County, a **Brewer's Sparrow** was at the Vic Fazio Yolo Basin WA on 4 September (KGs, ToEa). Kings County's first **Swamp Sparrow** was at the Hanford WTP from 23-30 November (MSt, AD, JSL). An influx of **Evening Grosbeaks** into a few Sacramento and Yolo County neighborhoods began on 28 September (JeL) and extended through the winter. Others were seen at Dinosaur Point above San Luis Reservoir in Merced County with seven on 7 October (AD) and one on 23 October (KVV).

I greatly appreciate the summaries of bird sightings for Yolo County generously provided by Steve Hampton (SHa) and the Middle Pacific Coast Regional Report provided by Ed Pandolfino (EP). Other observers: Chad Aakre, Dan Airola, Peter Armstrong, Bob Barnes (BBa), Ray Bruun (RBr), Blaine Burnette, Eric Caine, Jane Chinn, Paul Cordero, Rudy Darling, Jeff Davis (JND), Al DeMartini, Bruce Deuel (BED), Jon Dunn (JLD), Christopher Dunford (CDf), Todd Easterla (ToEa), Andy Engilis, Jr., Gil Ewing (GEw), Kevin Guse (KGs), Lauren Harter (LHa), Rob Hansen (RHa), Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Lynn Heminck, Scott Hoppe (SHo), Steve Huckabone (SHu), Dave Johnson, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham (JeL), Jim Laughlin (JLg), Steve Laymon (SAL), John Lockhart (JLt), Jim Lomax (JLx), John Luther (JSL), Jeff Mangum, Don Marsh, Mark Martucci, Dan Maxwell (DMx), Ron Melcer, Mary Beth Metcalf, Peter Metropulos (PJM), Dominic Mosur (DMo), Ed Pandolfino, Kathy Parker (KPa), Michael Perrone, Eric Pillotte (EPi), Ron Pozzi, Harold Reeve, Jeanne Ridgley, Terry Ronnenberg, Deren Ross, Jim Rowoth (JRw), Jeff Seay (JSy), Alison Sheehey, Zach Smith, Mark Stacey (MSt), John Sterling (JCS), Marie Stewart, Stefanie Stewart (SSt), Steve Summers (SDS), Kevin Thomas, John Trochet (JTr), John Turner (JTU), Kent Van Vuren, David Vander Pluym (DVP), Ed Whisler, Dan Williams, and Gary Woods (GaW). Abbreviations used: W.A.= State Wildlife Area, WTP=Wastewater Treatment Plant; CBRC= California Bird Records Committee; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge.

ERRATUM: In reference to a prior northern California sighting of **Mexican Whip-poor-will** in this column, (CVBC Bulletin, Vol. 13[4]: 84) the county in question was Humboldt County, not Trinity County.