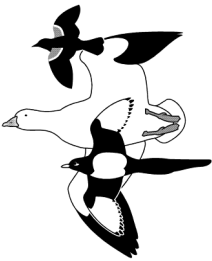




Central Valley Birds



**Broad-billed Hummingbird in the
Central Valley**

**Multiple Bufflehead × Common
Goldeneye Males in the Central Valley**

Notes from the Field

Vol. 28, No. 1, 2025

Central Valley Birds

Volume 28, Number 1, 2025

Published by the Central Valley Bird Club



ARTICLES

- 1 First San Joaquin County Record of a Broad-billed Hummingbird
René C. Reyes
- 5 New Observations Show that Multiple Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye Males Were Present in the Central Valley, California
Frank Severson, Andrea Willey, Daniel A. Airola, Liam Huber, and Asher Perla

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

- 10 Introduction—*Chris Conard*
- 11 Unusual Hovering Behavior and Attempted Prey Theft by Snowy Egrets—*Chris Conard*
- 13 Great Egret Predation on a Horned Lark—*Howard O. Clark, Jr.*
- 16 Loggerhead Shrike Predation on a Northern Pacific Rattlesnake—*Howard O. Clark, Jr.*

BOOK REVIEWS

- 20 Birds of Point Reyes—*Chris Swarth*

BIRD HIGHLIGHTS

- 22 Central Valley Bird Highlights: June through July 2023
Zane Pickus and Emmett Iverson
- 25 Central Valley Bird Highlights: August through October 2023
Zane Pickus and Emmett Iverson
- 35 Errata
- 36 In Memoriam: Edward C. (Ted) Beedy

Front Cover: Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cyananthus latirostris*). 5 March 2024. Stockton, San Joaquin County, California. *Photo by Steve Abbott.*

Back Cover: Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*). 13 July 2023. Upper Butte Basin WA, Little Dry Creek Unit, Butte County, California. *Photo by Liam Huber.*

First San Joaquin County Record of a Broad-billed Hummingbird

René C. Reyes

Stockton, CA. Rene.c.reyes@gmail.com

Keywords: *Cyananthus latirostris*, extralimital, San Joaquin County, vagrant

The Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cyananthus latirostris*) is a small hummingbird that breeds in Mexico and the southwestern United States (Powers and Wethington 2022). It occurs mainly in riparian woodland, low elevation wooded canyons, and shrub thickets (Williamson 2002).

The Broad-billed Hummingbird is a vagrant in California with few sightings reported along the coast and the southern part of the state. Only three other records exist for the Central Valley: an adult male in a residential yard in Davis, Yolo County, 31 January–4 February 2021; a molting male at a residence in Redding, Shasta County, 4–6 October 2023; and an immature male at the Clovis Botanical Garden, Fresno County, 8–24 November 2023.

During 4–9 March 2024, an adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird visited the water-wise and native plant garden at my home in an urban neighborhood in central Stockton, San Joaquin County, California. The bird is the first San Joaquin County record and only the fourth for the Central Valley. I describe the circumstances of its occurrence here.

The bird was observed in my garden in a neighborhood in central Stockton, just east of the University of the Pacific. The garden is 75 m² (800 ft²) in size and contains over 60 species of California native plants and shrubs, another 20 drought-tolerant non-native plants, and five bird baths. The weather in early-March 2024 was cool, ranging from 4–19° C (40–67° F), with sunrise and sunset occurring at about 06:25 and 18:07, respectively.

I and others observed the hummingbird daily during its period of occurrence using binoculars and cameras. Because the garden was small, the hummingbird was easily observed with and without binoculars. It did not skulk or show wariness, so observers could quietly walk around the garden to obtain clear views of the bird and observe its behavior.

On 4 March, the Broad-billed Hummingbird was first heard making a 3-note “tek tek tek” call like that of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*), followed by a buzz typical of hummingbirds, and a rapid tik-tik-tik

call. The unusual sounds directed me to a ceanothus tree (*Ceanothus* sp.) where a hummingbird with a bright reddish orange base to the bill was perched. I noted that the bird had a blue throat, green head with white supercilium and eyeline, emerald breast, and a forked tail (Figure 1). I sent an image to David Yee for species verification, who agreed that it was a Broad-billed Hummingbird.



Figure 1 a, b.

Broad-billed Hummingbird observed in a garden in Stockton, California, from March 4–9, 2024.

Photos by Steve Abbott.



The hummingbird exhibited a daily routine, arriving at the garden at sunrise (at about 06:30) and leaving the garden, presumably to roost, an hour before sunset (at about 17:00). Of the six days the hummingbird was observed, on two days (5 and 7 March) he remained in the garden for more than 10 hours, feeding regularly. On 6 March, the hummingbird came to the garden in the morning and then departed for an extended period (8.5 hrs) before returning. On 8 March, it came and went multiple times. On 9 March, it arrived at 06:20 and left at 07:30 and was not seen again throughout that day. Thus, the hummingbird regularly arrived in the morning and departed in the afternoon over its six-day period of occurrence, but its presence during the day was variable. Its night roosting location was not identified.

From the first observations, the hummingbird aggressively defended food sources including three hummingbird nectar feeders and flowering shrubs. It successfully chased two resident Anna's Hummingbirds (*Calypte anna*) away from the nectar feeders and he aggressively challenged the numerous Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*), Lesser Goldfinches (*S. psaltria*), crowned sparrows (*Zonotrichia sp.*), and a California Scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma californica*) that came close to any food source.

The hummingbird was most attracted to the Bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*; Figure 2), a densely branching shrub with many bright-yellow flower clusters at the ends of its branches. Bladderpod is native to southern California, Baja California, and northwest Mexico, where it grows in a variety of habitats from coastal bluffs to desert arroyos. The individual also visited hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*), pineapple sage (*S. elegans*), and 'hot lips' sage, a cultivar of *S. microphylla*. All these plant species are native to southern California and Mexico, so it was not surprising that it chose them over other flowering plants in the garden.



Figure 2. Broad-billed Hummingbird feeding on nectar of a Bladderpod flower.
Photo by Rene C. Reyes.

Possibly the long periods of feeding on certain days were to gain fat for its departure. The frequent arrivals and departures on the day before it permanently departed may have indicated restlessness related to an urge to migrate. On its last day, he fed early in the morning for a full hour and left

permanently at 07:30, consistent with hummingbirds' pattern of migrating during the daytime.

The reason for the vagrant occurrence of the Broad-billed Hummingbird in the Central Valley can only be speculated upon. Although the species is mostly sedentary, breeders in the northern portion of its range are migratory, moving northward in spring to breed as far as southern Arizona where they mostly occur from March to September (Powers and Wethington 2022, eBird.org). Male hummingbirds migrate earlier than females, so it is not unusual to see a male hummingbird in Arizona in March (eBird.org). Hummingbirds migrate solitarily, and this young male may have overshot in its spring migration, perhaps due to northeasterly trade winds.

I thank David Yee for verifying the species and age of the Broad-billed Hummingbird, Steve Abbott for the use of his high-quality photographs, and Frances Oliver for review comments.

LITERATURE CITED

- Powers, D.S. and S.M. Wethington. 2022. Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*), version 1.2. In: Birds of the World (A.F. Poole, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.brbum.01.2>
- Williamson, S.L. 2002. A Field Guide to Hummingbirds of North America (Peterson Field Guide Series®). Houghton Mifflin Company

New Observations Show that Multiple Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye Males Were Present in the Central Valley, California

Frank Severson¹, Andrea Willey², Daniel A. Airola³, Liam Huber⁴, and Asher Perla⁵

¹West Sacramento, CA. frankseverson@gmail.com

²Waterbird Habitat Project, Sacramento, CA. andrea.willey@mac.com

³Conservation Research and Planning, Sacramento, CA.
d.airola@sbcglobal.net

⁴Chico, CA. liamhuber24@gmail.com

⁵Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. asher.perla@gmail.com

Keywords: *Bucephala albeola*, *Bucephala clangula*, hybrid, California

ABSTRACT

We report simultaneous observations in early 2025 of two hybrid Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) × Common Goldeneye (*B. clangula*) males on the American River in Sacramento County and at Stonegate Pond in adjacent Yolo County in the Central Valley, California. These observations correct apparently mistaken previous inferences by Airola et al. (2024) that a single hybrid bird moved between these two sites. We also report on a hybrid seen contemporaneously at the Sutter Bypass with a hybrid at the American River. Based on plumage similarity, and lack of simultaneous occurrence, it is possible that the hybrid that occupied Stonegate Pond may have moved 45 km to the Sutter Bypass. Thus, at least two hybrid Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye males, and possibly three based on plumage differences, appear to have occurred in the Sacramento area over 2022–2025.

Airola et al. (2024) reported on the occurrence, longevity, and movements of what they considered to be a single Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) × Common Goldeneye (*B. clangula*) hybrid in the Sacramento region over 2014 to 2024. The reporting that a single hybrid male likely moved between two sites, the lower American River, Sacramento County (38.5731, -121.3533) and Stonegate Pond in West Sacramento, Yolo County (38.5397, -121.5384), California (Figure 1), was based on general plumage similarity, a rarity of hybrid forms, and a lack of simultaneous sightings of a hybrid at each site.

Here we report simultaneous observations of a hybrid at both of these sites in 2025 (Figure 1) , strongly suggesting that the occurrences reported over 2022–2024 (Airola et al. 2024) did not represent movements of a single individual between sites as previously inferred, but rather two different individuals. We also report the circumstances of another 2025 record of a hybrid Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye male in the Sutter Bypass in Sutter County and discuss whether this record represents one of the two Sacramento area individuals or a third hybrid male in the Central Valley.

A hybrid Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye male was reported on the lower American River above Watt Avenue during fall and winter of 2014–2024 and at Stonegate Pond during 2022–2024 (Airola et al. 2024). In 2025, we suspected that the sites may have supported two different birds because of their repeated closely timed occurrences at the two sites (e.g., on 7 and 9 February at Stonegate Pond, and 8 and 10 February at the American River). Therefore, on 14 February we conducted simultaneous surveys of the American River above Watt Avenue and at Stonegate Pond. At 17:00 that day, we simultaneously observed one male hybrid at Stonegate Pond and a second one at the American River.

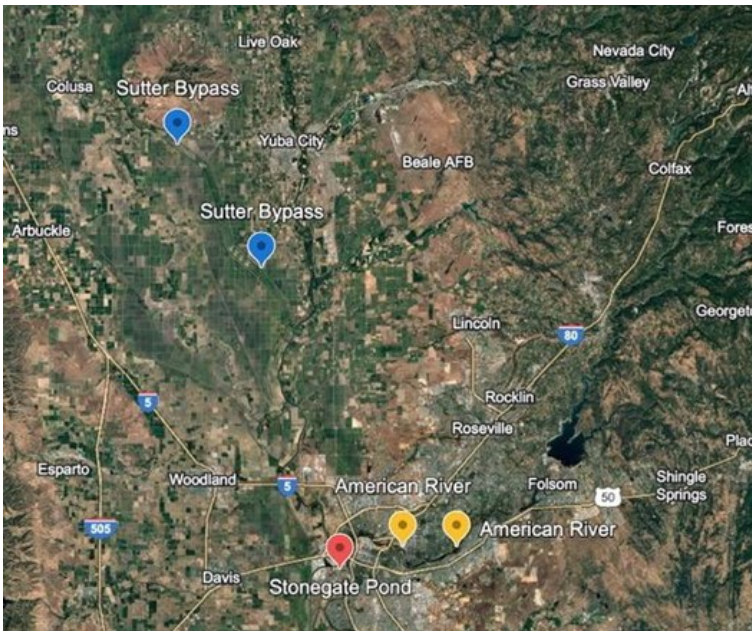


Figure 1. Locations of Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye hybrids in the Sacramento Region in 2025.

These observations strongly indicate that our previous inferences regarding movements of a single individual, based on the general similarity of plumage, rarity of hybrids, and lack of contemporaneous periods of presence and absence (Airola et al. 2024) were incorrect. More careful examination of plumage in the hybrids at the American River and Stonegate Pond showed subtle, but distinct and consistent differences (Figure 2). The hybrid at the river had a very small white spot behind the bill, small dual black projections behind the bill, and a rounded white patch behind the eye. In contrast, the pond hybrid lacked the small white spot, had more extensive dual black projections behind the bill, and a more angular edge of white behind the eye.

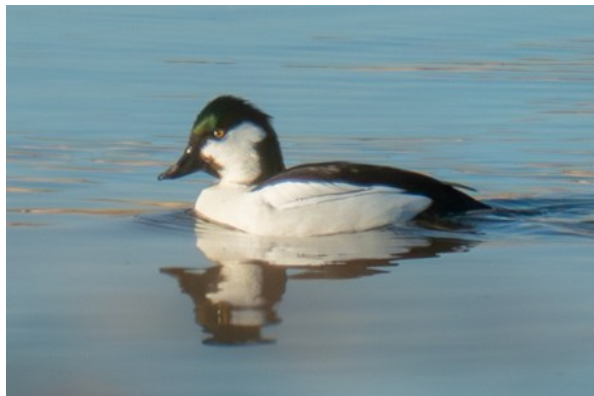


Figure 2. Hybrid Bufflehead \times Common Goldeneye males at the American River (left) 11 February 2024 and Stonegate Pond 22 January 2025 (right). The two hybrids displayed subtle, but consistent differences in facial feathering, including a very small white spot at the base of the bill, smaller dual projections of black behind the bill, and a more rounded white patch behind the eye on the American River bird, compared to the Stonegate Pond bird.

Photos by Andrea Willey (left) and Frank Severson (right).

On 14 and 17 January 2025, Huber and Perla observed a hybrid male Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye in a group of Common Goldeneye at the Sutter Bypass (Figure 3; <https://ebird.org/checklist/S209918352>; <https://ebird.org/checklist/S209716397>). By happenstance, their observation on 14 January was simultaneous with an observation by Airola of a hybrid near Paradise Beach on the American River, 48 km to the south. Thus, these were two different individuals.



Figure 3. Hybrid Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye at Sutter Bypass, Sutter County, California, 17 January 2025.

Photo by Liam Huber.

The Sutter Bypass observations occurred over a 37-day period (15 December to 21 January) when no hybrid was observed at Stonegate Pond during 14 surveys by Severson and others (eBird.org). The availability of only a few low-resolution photos from the bird at the Sutter Bypass hampers close comparison of plumages to determine if the birds were different or the same individual. The bird at the bypass looks generally similar to the one at Stonegate Pond (Figure 4), and we cannot completely discount the possibility that the same bird could have made the 45 km trip between the two sites. If, however, the Sutter Bypass bird is a different individual, then three hybrid males were simultaneously present in this part of the Central Valley. In addition to these male hybrids inland from the coast, one female reported to be a hybrid also was present in the southern portion of San Francisco Bay over 11–30 January in 2025 (eBird.org).



Figure 4. Comparison of Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye males at Sutter Bypass (left) and Stonegate Pond (right).

Photos by Liam Huber (left) and Frank Severson (right).

We thank Chris Conard and Jeri Langham for earlier contributions to hybrid studies and Maureen Geiger, Daphne Reimer, and Bill Yeates who contributed eBird observations from Stonegate Pond.

LITERATURE CITED

Airola, D.A., F. Severson, A. Willey, C. Conard, and J. Langham. 2024. Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye hybrid winters for over a decade in the Sacramento region, California. *Central Valley Birds* 27:51–61.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Chris Conard

Sacramento, CA. conardc@gmail.com

Here we announce a new feature in *Central Valley Birds: Notes from the Field*. The Editorial Committee is always looking for contributions from Club members and others on birds in the Central Valley. This new feature offers a venue for shorter, more focused reporting of interesting observations. As birders spend time in the field, we see interesting behavior, species interactions, and novel uses of habitat. These observations are usually of common species doing unexpected things. Some observations can lead to deeper research and more extensive articles, but others are suited to a short narrative.

Accompanying photos are helpful, but not necessary. As one begins to prepare a contribution for *Notes from the Field*, a good place to start is *Birds of the World* (birdsoftheworld.org) to gain insight into whether the behaviors are unusual and what may be driving these behaviors.

Notes from the Field also is a suitable place to record updates to articles previously published on avian status and ecology, such as results of continued monitoring of distributional changes, population sizes, reproductive success, or novel behaviors. Most who go on to prepare observations for publication find that they learn far more about their subject than they can include in one article, but the learning process is the most rewarding aspect of writing.

This issue includes three articles on unusual predatory behaviors reported for common species. If you have an idea for a contribution, please reach out to me to share your observations with interested readers.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Unusual Hovering Behavior and Attempted Prey Theft by Snowy Egrets

Chris Conard

Sacramento, CA. conardc@gmail.org

Keywords: *Egretta thula*, foraging, kleptoparasitism

We often think of herons and egrets as wading birds, standing still with necks cocked for a strike. They stand in or at the edge of shallow water, and at other times, in a grassy field. Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*) are often more active hunters, walking and swishing their yellow feet to flush potential prey (Willard 1977, Kushlan 1978). Foraging Snowy Egrets exhibit the "[b]roadest behavioral repertoire" in the North American heron family, with 21 foraging strategies described (Kushlan 1978, Parsons and Master 2020). Stealing prey (kleptoparasitism) was not included in the list of Snowy Egret foraging behaviors, but Collins (2006) described them as stealing prey from Elegant Terns (*Thalasseus elegans*) in a manner similar to some of the behavior described here.

At a pond on the Bufferlands surrounding the EchoWater Facility (Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant) in Sacramento County, California, I have seen multiple instances of Snowy Egrets hovering above foraging Double-crested Cormorants (*Nannopterum auritum*). The pond has two islands that are commonly used as roosting sites by waterfowl and other waterbirds. Dozens of cormorants regularly loaf on one of the islands, especially midday on sunny days in fall and winter. Up to 15 Snowy Egrets, plus a few Great Egrets (*Ardea alba*) and Great Blue Herons (*A. herodias*), gather near or among the roosting cormorants. The cormorants periodically swim off the island as a group, searching for fish by swimming at the surface with their heads under the water. When they find and pursue a school of fish, they dive and rush after them.

On several occasions, a group of roosting Snowy Egrets, along with an occasional Great Egret, has flown out, hovered over the cormorants, and struck at the water with their bills. I have not seen a Snowy Egret successfully catch a fish this way, but they are certainly trying to do so. On 30 December 2020, one of 85 roosting cormorants present walked into the water, bathed, and then began foraging by putting its head under water and slowly swimming away from the island. Snowy Egrets walked to the water's edge with apparent interest and then, as more cormorants joined the foraging

effort, some of the Snowy Egrets flew toward the swimming cormorants. The egrets hovered and awkwardly probed their bills into the water. A Great Egret landed in water among the cormorants, and only its head and part of its neck were above the surface. It appeared to capture and swallow a fish. A Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) flew in, creating a multispecies feeding frenzy. In another instance, on 12 December 2017, over 200 cormorants were joined by gulls, and as the cormorants drove fish near the surface, a roosting group of 26 Snowy Egrets left the island, hovered above the feeding activity, and stood briefly on the backs of the churning cormorants and gulls.

On 3 January 2021, after foraging with an attendant flock of Snowy Egrets hovering over them, the cormorants returned to the island and resumed roosting. A fish popped partway out of the bill of a cormorant that had been on shore for a few minutes. A Snowy Egret ran several meters, grabbed the fish with its bill and struggled with the cormorant, but the cormorant ultimately retained the fish. The same Snowy Egret then ran and probed at the bills of several nearby cormorants before settling to roost alongside the cormorant flock. I have seen Snowy Egrets pester roosting cormorants in a similar manner, but this is the closest to a successful theft that I have observed.

I have not seen successful feeding by the Snowy Egrets either from attempts to steal prey or from the energy-intensive hovering strategy. Collins (2006) suggests that the Snowies may attempt to steal fish from terns because those fish are far larger than those that Snowy Egrets normally capture. Although from my distant vantage point, it was difficult for me to see the type or size of the fish the cormorants are pursuing, the chance to steal a fish or capture fish driven to the surface by foraging cormorants was clearly enough to encourage the Snowy Egrets to try.

LITERATURE CITED

- Collins, C.T. 2006. Interspecific kleptoparasitism of Elegant Terns by Snowy Egrets. *Waterbirds* 29:401–404.
- Kushlan, J.A. 1978. Feeding ecology of wading birds. P. 249–298 in: *Wading Birds* (A. Sprunt IV, J.C. Ogden, and S. Winkler, Editors) National Audubon Society Research Report 7. New York.
- Parsons, K.C. and T.L. Master. 2020. Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (A.F. Poole and F.B. Gill, Editors). Prepared 2000. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.snoegr.01>
- Willard, D.E. 1977. The feeding ecology and behavior of five species of herons in southeastern New Jersey. *Condor* 79:462–470.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Great Egret Predation on a Horned Lark

Howard O. Clark, Jr.

Colibri Ecological Consulting, LLC, 9493 North Fort Washington Road, Suite 108, Fresno, CA 93730. hclark@colibri-ecology.com

Keywords: Ardea alba, Eremophila alpestris, foraging, predation

Great Egrets (*Ardea alba*) are common in the San Joaquin Valley year-round. They are often seen in wetlands, as well as in grassy fields where they forage on invertebrates and small mammals (e.g., *Peromyscus* sp. and *Microtus* sp.; Houck 1967; pers. obs.). Predation on avian species has been reported infrequently. Here I describe a predation event involving a Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*).

On 12 February 2025, at about 12:00, I was driving southbound on State Route 43 just north of Nevada Avenue, approximately 5 km north of Corcoran in Kings County, California. I saw a Great Egret with prey in its bill along a grassy ruderal strip between the highway and the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway tracks, which prompted me to pull over for a better look. The observation took place under cloudy conditions, with a slight breeze and temperature 13° C (55° F).

From the road shoulder I took several photos of the event, which lasted <2 minutes before the egret with the prey item flew away over the railroad tracks and into an orchard. I sought to identify the prey, since it seemed to be large. I determined that it was a bird, which was still struggling in the egret's bill, with fitful and weakened wing flaps. After examining the photos, I identified the prey as a Horned Lark due to the small size, yellow and black markings on the head, pointed wings, brown back, light breast and belly, and black tail feathers (Figures 1 and 2; Sibley 2014).

Horned Larks are year-round residents in California, occupying open habitats and nesting on the ground (Beason 2020). It seems likely that an egret foraging in grassy open habitats would encounter Horned Larks, but catching this alert and swift bird may be challenging. Other avian prey reported for Great Egrets throughout their nearly worldwide range include Western Meadowlarks (*Sturnella neglecta*), sandpipers (*Calidris*), crakes (*Porzana*), kingfishers (*Halycon*), sparrows (*Passer*), white-eyes (*Zosterops*), swallows (*Hirundo*), terns (*Sterna*; Genelly 1964, Reppenning 1977, McCrimmon et al. 2020), and Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Setophaga coronata*; C. Conard, pers. comm.).



Figure 1. Great Egret with Horned Lark in bill.



Figure 2. Great Egret readjusting its grip on the Horned Lark.

I thank Jeff Davis for assisting with the Horned Lark identification.

LITERATURE CITED

- Beason, R.C. 2020. Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (S.M. Billerman, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY. doi.org/10.2173/bow.horlar.01
- Genelly, R.E. 1964. Common Egret preys on meadowlark. Condor 66:247. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/condor/vol66/iss3/11>
- Houck, W.J. 1967. A note on the food of the Common or Great Egret. Murrelet 48:51. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3535958>
- McCrimmon Jr., D.A., J.C. Ogden, G.T. Bancroft, A. Martínez-Vilalta, A. Motis, G.M. Kirwan, and P.F.D. Boesman. 2020. Great Egret (*Ardea alba*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (S.M. Billerman, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY. doi.org/10.2173/bow.greegr.01
- Repenning, R. 1977. Great Egret preys on sandpiper. Auk 94:171. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/auk/vol94/iss1/45>
- Sibley, D.A. 2014. The Sibley Guide to Birds. Second Edition. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Loggerhead Shrike Predation on a Northern Pacific Rattlesnake

Howard O. Clark, Jr.¹ and Madison Wallwork²

^{1,2}*Colibri Ecological Consulting, LLC, 9493 North Fort Washington Road, Suite 108, Fresno, CA 93730. hclark@colibri-ecology.com, mwallwork@colibri-ecology.com*

Keywords: Crotalus oreganus, foraging, Lanius ludovicianus, predation

The Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) commonly inhabits open landscapes with scattered shrubs interspersed with grasses and forbs in grasslands, scrublands, steppes, deserts, prairies, and savannas throughout most of North America, including Mexico (Yosef 2020). The species is known for impaling prey on sharp objects, such as barbed wire, cacti, thorns, and yucca (Reid and Fulbright 1981, Yosef 2020). Once an item is impaled, the shrike typically flies off, leaving the item behind, possibly using impalement as a food cache method (Yosef and Pinshow 2005). Common prey items include invertebrates such as grasshoppers, crickets, and beetles, and vertebrates such as rodents, birds, amphibians, and reptiles (Cicero 1993, Clark 2011a, Yosef 2020). Here we describe a successful predation attempt on a rattlesnake.

At 08:05 on 20 March 2025, we were driving southbound on a dirt access road adjacent to the Tumeys Hills, 27 km southwest of Mendota, Fresno County, CA (36.59931°N, -120.62260°W) at 242 m elevation. We saw a Loggerhead Shrike struggling with a snake in its bill while in flight. The shrike landed about 6 m in front of our vehicles, dropped the snake, and flew 3 m west to a nearby barbed wire fence to perch. We attempted to photograph the shrike, but it kept flying south down the fence line. We examined the snake and determined that it was a juvenile northern Pacific rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus*; Hansen and Shedd 2025), with a weight of 35 g and full head to tail length of 33 cm (Figure 1). While taking measurements, the snake coiled reflexively but did not attempt to strike. The temperature was 8.3° C (47° F) with overcast conditions and no breeze.

We left the snake on the side of the road in hopes that the shrike would return to retrieve it. The snake had severe head trauma (Figure 2). A similar account of head trauma in snake prey is reported by Clark (2011b). The Loggerhead Shrike punctures prey in the head and neck region by repeatedly striking the base of the head and the head with the sharp point of its bill (Chapman and Casto 1972).

Several snake species have been reported as Loggerhead Shrike prey, including racers (*Coluber* sp.), ring-necked snake (*Diadophis punctatus*), queen and crayfish snakes (*Regina* sp.), and various garter snakes (*Thamnophis* sp.) as summarized by Clark (2011a). One notable report is the predation on an eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*) in New Mexico that was 41 cm long and weighed 33 g. (Chapman and Casto 1972). The Loggerhead Shrike there was flying 6 to 9 m above the ground with a snake in its bill, and upon being startled, dropped its prey and flew to a nearby wire. A juvenile Pacific gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer catenifer*) reported as a prey attempt measured 35.5 cm long and weighed 13 g (Clark 2011b). The Loggerhead Shrike's weight range of 45–60 g (Yosef 2020) may make it challenging, but not impossible to subdue and transport snakes, and shrikes seem to target juveniles of larger species, or smaller species, such as the ring-necked snake.



Figure 1A. Juvenile northern Pacific rattlesnake as found after the Loggerhead Shrike dropped it on the dirt road. 1B. The juvenile northern Pacific rattlesnake after measurements were taken.



Figure 2. Close up of head trauma presumably inflicted on the juvenile northern Pacific rattlesnake by the Loggerhead Shrike to neutralize and subdue the snake.

LITERATURE CITED

- Chapman, B.R., and S.D. Casto. 1972. Additional vertebrate prey of the Loggerhead Shrike. *Wilson Bulletin* 84:496–497.
- Cicero, C. 1993. Vulnerability of prey stimulates attacks by jays and shrikes on adult birds. *Western Birds* 24:101–102.
- Clark, H.O., Jr. 2011a. Reptiles and amphibians as Loggerhead Shrike prey. *Sonoran Herpetologist* 24:20–22.
- Clark, H.O., Jr. 2011b. Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) Predation on a Pacific Gopher Snake (*Pituophis catenifer catenifer*). *Sonoran Herpetologist* 24:117–118.
- Hansen, R.W., and J.D. Shedd. 2025. *California Amphibians and Reptiles*. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Reid, W.H., and H.J. Fulbright. 1981. Impaled prey of the Loggerhead Shrike in the Northern Chihuahuan Desert. *Southwestern Naturalist* 26:204–205.
- Yosef, R. 2020. Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), Version 1.0. In *Birds of the World*. Poole, A.F., and F.B. Gill (Eds.). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.logshr.01>
- Yosef, R., and B. Pinshow. 2005. Impaling in true shrikes (Laniidae): A behavioral and ontogenetic perspective. *Behavioural Processes* 69:363–367.

Book Review

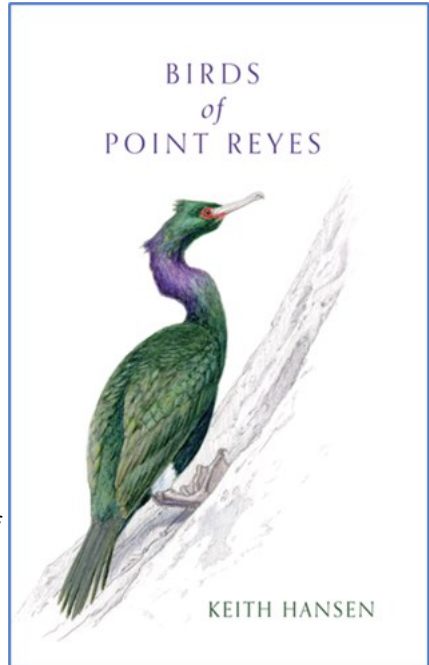
Birds of Point Reyes, by Keith Hansen. Heyday Books, Berkeley, California. 2023. 80 pp.

Chris Swarth

cswarth10@gmail.com

This compact book, *Birds of Point Reyes*, by artist and author Keith Hansen is a brief but colorful introduction to the diverse birdlife of the Point Reyes Peninsula in Marin County. Keith is widely known in the birding world in California and he's a welcome presence every year at the Bird Club symposium where he displays his artwork, books, and identification expertise. His paintings and sketches are found in many books on western birds.

The press, Heyday Books, has recently published several other short books by Keith and others on local birdlife - *Birds of Lake Merritt*, *Birds of Berkeley*, and *Birds of the Delta*. Each in this series follows a similar format which includes delightful, accurate illustrations paired with species accounts that contain spirited and sometimes humorous anecdotes.



Point Reyes is one of the most exciting spots to bird on the California coast and from his home base in Bolinas, Keith has developed an intimate knowledge of the birds there. Jutting into the ocean west of the San Andreas fault, this rolling peninsula with its dairy ranches, cypress groves, and languid tidal estuaries supports a wide variety of birds, especially during migration and in winter. Nearly 500 bird species have been found in Point Reyes National Seashore, the highest number for any national park. This has made Point Reyes a mecca for birders for decades.

In the 1960s and 1970s it was discovered that during migration the “islands” of Monterey Cypress trees and willow-covered ravines dotting the open ranch lands of the outer Point attracted an astonishing number of rare vagrant eastern warblers and other neotropical migrants. In 1965, the Point Reyes Bird Observatory began operations at Palomarin in the southern part of the Seashore. Point Blue (as PRBO is known today) has been a leader in Western field ornithology and conservation science for 60 years. In spring and summer, breeding Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, and Black Oystercatchers can be viewed from the lighthouse and other coastal vantage points, and during migration a spotting scope aimed westward can reveal immense flocks of shearwaters, loons, sea ducks and other near-shore and pelagic species. *The Birds of Point Reyes* celebrates this diversity, the spectacular land-ocean interface, and the special qualities that make this a unique place.

Twenty-seven full color plates are included along with natural history accounts of 46 species that one might expect to encounter during a day or two of birding. The plates are nicely reproduced, although not all are originals; some are also found in Hansen’s *Field Guide to the Birds of the Sierra Nevada*. A short introduction includes a location map, an orientation to the landscape, and tips on how to get the most out of a field trip.

This book is aimed squarely at beginning birders, but experienced birders exploring the area for the first time will also find much to enjoy. You won’t find extensive natural history, but readers are certain to expand their knowledge of the birds they may already know well. This is not a field guide, a detailed site guide, nor does it include a list of the avifauna. These are not the author’s objectives. The goal is a fun and engaging read, and for this purpose it succeeds.

The species accounts are sprinkled with interesting and playful observations. For example, did you know that Double-crested Cormorants seem to have an “Adam’s apple”? ...or that Great Horned Owls launch from shoreline trees to swoop silently out over



Drakes Bay to grab sleeping Surf Scoters? One account sets us into the crown of a tall Redwood, rubbing shoulders with a migrating Townsend's Warbler as it embarks at daybreak on its journey south. Another account asks us to listen closely on a calm day for the "tooting" sound made by the swiftly-beating wings of a Surf Scoter as it takes flight. A Nuttall's White-crowned Sparrow is described and illustrated in all its subtle, sub-specific appearance. The "ringing trills and diverse riffs (of a Rock Wren)...cascade and tumble down the steep, tortured strata of Point Reyes colossal face."

Keith possesses a keen eye for painting his subjects in a style that can give viewers an unusual or surprising perspective. A kingfisher with bill open; a snipe in a hunched position; a Lincoln's Sparrow with a sidewise, furtive demeanor. His plate of Northern Harriers has five individuals in flight – males, females and a juvenile – depicting the various ways they bank and soar. Keith Hansen encourages us to watch, observe, and think about birds differently, and this aim is accomplished handily in his book on the birds of Point Reyes.

Central Valley Bird Highlights: June through July 2023

Zane Pickus¹ and Emmett Iverson²

¹324 Merganser Pl, Davis, CA 95616. zanep987@gmail.com

²9231 Voula Lane, Wilton, CA 95693. emmett.iverson95@gmail.com

Multiple **Yellow-billed Cuckoos**, a scarce breeder in the Central Valley, were heard singing and calling by experienced observers in Colusa (SS) and Glenn counties (MR) in early July. This species once bred commonly in the riparian zones of the Central Valley but has been nearly extirpated as a breeder due to habitat loss. Two “peenting” **Common Nighthawks** foraged over the Sacramento River near Red Bluff in Tehama County during the period (MSw). This seems to be an annual occurrence at the location, the only place this species occurs semi-regularly on the valley floor. Three **Costa’s Hummingbirds** were observed, in Madera (GW), Kings (MSt), and Fresno (BM) counties. A male in Lemoore, Kings County stayed six weeks. For the third year in a row, **Allen’s Hummingbirds** were at a private residence near Clarksburg in Yolo County (TU). First found in April, a lone male stayed until June and was suspected of breeding in the area. This species is an abundant breeder on the coast but is exceedingly rare anywhere in the Central Valley.

Summer is a slow season for songbirds in the Central Valley, but fall shorebird migration ramps up in late June and is in full swing by July. An adult **Stilt Sandpiper** was found on 30 July and hung around an extra day for birders at Staten Island in San Joaquin County (AE). A **Pacific Golden-Plover** in breeding plumage was at Tracy WTP in San Joaquin County on 2 July (RPe KF). Five Snowy Plovers were present in the period. One was at the Robben Road Ponds in Solano County on 1–2 July (RM), another was on the shore of Tulare Lake in Kings County on 5 July (AH), and a single bird was at Clifton Court Forebay in Contra Costa County on 31 July (SC). Also, two birds were amongst a massive shorebird flock in Kings County on 23 July (MSt).

A **Sanderling** on 28 July was quite a surprise at the Lincoln WTP in Placer County (RPo). Only two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were found in all of the Central Valley this July. Compared to the 10 records from July 2022, this was a poor year for the species in the region. A juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at the Sacramento Regional WTP in Sacramento County on 31 July (CC), and a worn adult was at the Tracy WTP on the same date (RR).

A single **Solitary Sandpiper** was scurrying around the edges of vernal pools at the Anatolia Vernal Pool Preserve in Sacramento County (AB, LB) from 19–24 July. **Baird’s Sandpipers** showed up right on time, as the valley’s

first birds of the fall were found in late July in Yolo (KD, LWD) and Contra Costa (JC) counties. A **Common Tern** found by a San Joaquin Audubon field trip on 5 July at McDonald Island (DY) is only the fourth Central Valley record for the summer period. An adult **Franklin's Gull** photographed at Thermalito Afterbay in Butte County on 27 July (SA) was also noteworthy.

An immature **Brown Pelican** spent most of June south of Manteca on the San Joaquin River (EH) before (presumably) being re-found in late July on the other side of San Joaquin County just south of Lake Camanche. The Natomas **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** found in May was re-found a few miles away on June 11th (MH), where many birders chased it for their Sacramento County list. A **Glossy Ibis** at the Davis Wetlands in Yolo County was seen by a lucky few birders between 4–10 July (SH). This well-documented bird was accepted by the California Bird Records Committee for the eleventh Central Valley record.

A singing **Red-eyed Vireo** was at the Turtle Bay Bird Sanctuary in Shasta County on 22 July (EO). The bird remained through 1 August and was the second **Red-eyed Vireo** present in the county at the time, along with another bird outside of the Central Valley. An astonishing, sixth Central Valley record of **Black-billed Magpie**, first noted visiting a feeder near Nur Pon Open Space Preserve in Redding (B&CY) on 9 April, continued through the period. Although this species is not rare in the eastern (Great Basin) portion of Shasta County, its location in the north Central Valley is exceptional. Even more incredibly, the bird eventually paired with a Yellow-billed Magpie and produced two hybrid offspring. An article on this occurrence was recently published (Airola and Yutzy 2025. *Western Birds* 56:60–67).

Black-and-white Warbler
(*Mniotilta varia*).
13 July 2023.
Upper Butte Basin WA,
Little Dry Creek Unit,
Butte County.

*Photo by
Liam Huber.*



A singing **Black-and-white Warbler** at the Upper Butte Basin WA—Little Dry Creek Unit in Butte County on 13 July (LH, MSk, MF) was the sixth summer record for the species in the Central Valley. An **American Redstart** was heard singing from a survey point count on 13 June on the Yolo County side of Putah Creek at Fishing Access #4 (FF). As previously reported (Oliver et al. 2024. CV Birds 27:41–50), a pair of **Summer Tanagers** were found in early June at a park near Ripon in San Joaquin County (DY). This closely monitored pair was ultimately nested successfully, a first nesting record for San Joaquin County and the Central Valley.



Summer Tanager
(*Piranga rubra*).
14 July 2023.
Oak Park, Ripon,
San Joaquin County.

Photo by Jim Gain.

We thank the following observers for reporting their significant findings to the Central Valley Bird Club's listserv, eBird, and, where appropriate, the California Bird Records Committee: Stuart Angerer, Linda Barth, Aidan Brubaker, Srikant Char, Jim Chiropoulos, Chris Conard, Konshau Duman, Lynette Williams Duman, Andy Engilis, Frank Fabbro, Michael Fischer, Kasey Foley, Alex Henry, Mackenzie Hollender, Scott Hoppe, Eric Hopson, Liam Huber, Bruce Mast, Roger Muskat, Eric Ongman, Richard Petersen (RPe), Ron Pozzi (RPo), Rene Reyes, Michael Rogner, Shannon Skalos, Mike Skram (MSk), Mark Stacy (MSt), Michele Swartout (MSw), Tom Uslan, Gary Woods, David Yee, Bob and Carol Yutzy (B&CY).

m.obs. = many observers; WA = State Wildlife Area; WTP = Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Central Valley Bird Highlights: August through October 2023

Zane Pickus¹ and Emmett Iverson²

¹324 Merganser Pl, Davis, CA 95616. zanep987@gmail.com

²9231 Voula Lane, Wilton, CA 95693. emmett.iverson95@gmail.com

A pair of **Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels** were found on 21 August at Tulare Lake in Kings County (MSt). This remarkable first Central Valley record came on the heels of Hurricane Hilary slamming into southern California, bringing with it a wave of displaced seabirds looking for refuge on inland water bodies. Prior to this storm, there were only 16 state records for this species accepted by the California Bird Records Committee, and Hurricane Hilary brought an additional 32 records to the state!



Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates Tethys*). 21 August 2023. Tulare Lake, Kings County. Photo by Gary Woods.

Tulare County had another Central Valley first with a shocking **Greater Pewee** from 8–26 November, one of the northernmost inland records for California (SSu). The bird was seen at Bartlett Park just outside Porterville. The Central Valley's first **Blue-headed Vireo** was at the Putah Creek Riparian

Reserve on 11 September, seen and photographed briefly in both Yolo and Solano counties (MMA, LC, JG). While birders were initially disappointed at the rapid disappearance of this rarity, it was relieved for some when another **Blue-headed Vireo** was found upstream in Putah Creek Canyon in the evening of 1 October (BW). This second county record for Yolo and Solano counties, while only seen for an evening, was successfully chased by those close enough to arrive before dark. While it is quite surprising that the region got its first and second records of **Blue-headed Vireo** in such a short timeframe, perhaps it makes sense given the species had an above average showing on the coast of California in the fall of 2023.



Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*). 1 October 2023. Putah Creek—fishing access #2, Yolo County. Photo by Bart Wickel.

Two **Brants** were found, with one on 10 November from Staten Island in San Joaquin County (CW, TW) and a notably early record from Grand Island Bakersfield in Kern County on 13 September (JW). **Surf Scoters** were reported twice with one on 16 November at Folsom Lake in Placer County and another at “Private Property H” in Kings County on 29 October (MSt). A **White-winged Scoter** found at the Thermalito Afterbay in Butte County on 30 October remained until 5 November (LH, JLe). San Joaquin had a **Long-tailed Duck** at Staten Island on 23 November that stayed for a week (AE). Seven **Red-breasted Merganser** records occurred during this period, almost all at large reservoirs along the edge of the valley in November. A **Barrow’s Goldeneye** was at the Lincoln WTP in Placer County on 30 November (GM). This species is always quite unusual away from usual wintering locations.

The southern portion of the Central Valley had seven **Common Ground Dove** records, with five coming from Tulare County and one each from Kern and Kings counties, respectively. **White-winged Doves** had quite the fall with four in the region, three of which came from the northern part of the valley. Solano County kicked off the action with a bird along Putah Creek at Fishing Access #1 on 15 August (KD, JLi). Another was along Newville Road in Tehama on 17 September (MSw), and a few days later on 21 September yet another was in Butte County at the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park (MRO). The only report of this species from the southern portion of the valley came from the town of Tulare on 25 November (DF).

A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was detected in Butte County while doing permitted surveys at the Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area on 12 August in Butte County (LCo). This species has plummeted in population over recent decades, so it is always encouraging to see reports from historic breeding areas.

A young male **Costa's Hummingbird** was found 7 September on Payen Rd in El Dorado County (AP). San Joaquin had a **Costa's Hummingbird** as well, first found on 8 September and continuing through the winter, though it was only seen intermittently (GO, EO). A stunning male **Broad-billed Hummingbird** was photographed just outside Redding in Shasta County on 4 October (TK, MK). This bird delighted local birders for two days before moving on and represents a first county and second Central Valley record. The wait for the third record was short though, as on 8 November, a young male **Broad-billed Hummingbird** was found in Fresno County at the Clovis Botanical Gardens (RC). This individual continued into early December.

American Golden-Plovers had a strong fall in the Central Valley with four observed, including the first documented record for Butte County on 6 October (LH). A five-minute-wonder touched down at the County Road 104 Ponds in Yolo County on 23 September (ZP, BW) and another spent a week at Los Banos WTP in Merced County from 14–21 September (GW). Finally, an **American Golden-Plover** was found 14 October on "Private Property H" in Kings County and continued into early November (MSt). A **Pacific Golden-Plover** at Cosumnes River Preserve in Sacramento County on 19 August was a delight for birders (AL), as was an adult in basic plumage found in Butte County on 11 September (KM).

Mountain Plovers have declined significantly in the Central Valley in the past 50 years and only a few wintering flocks persist at known locations. So, it was exciting when on 7 October, a flock of four migrant **Mountain Plovers** were found along Nelson Shippee Road in Butte County (KSo), just the second county record. A smattering of **Snowy Plovers** occurred with sightings from Clifton Court Forebay in Contra Costa (JB, EM) and Los Banos WTP in Merced

County (PD). Both locations had up to three birds from early August into mid-October. **Snowy Plovers** are much more expected at private locations around Tulare Lake than elsewhere in the valley and up to 75 were reported on a single eBird checklist on 21 October (MSt). WTP in Merced County (PD). Both locations had up to three birds and the dates spanned from early August into mid-October.



Hudsonian Godwit
(*Limosa haemastica*).
18 August 2023.
County Rd 104 Ponds,
Yolo County.

Photo by
Josh Greenfield.

A juvenile **Hudsonian Godwit** stopped a few hearts on the evening of 18 August, when photos were sent out via group chats and listservs from the County Road 104 Ponds in Yolo County (ZP). It was briefly seen the following morning at dawn and then disappeared without a trace, less than an hour after sunrise. This stunning trans-equatorial migrant was the first confirmed record for Yolo County and the third for the Central Valley, with the previous two records from Kings County. A rusty adult **Red Knot** was found at the Woodland WTP in Yolo County on 3 August, but it did not stay for more than a day (LC, MMA). Two more **Red Knots** occurred, with a report at “Private Property H” in Kings County from 21 October to mid-November (MSt), and another from the Tulare County portion of the Tulare Lake on 23 September (DF), where a **Ruff** was also photographed (SSu). The only other **Ruff** during this period was a bird found on Staten Island in San Joaquin on 18 August (ISC).

A pair of **Stilt Sandpipers** found 7 September on Nelson Shippee Road was the first record for Butte County (LH). Lincoln WTP in Placer County had a **Stilt Sandpiper** on 15 August (RP). The County Road 104 ponds in Yolo had a **Stilt Sandpiper** stay several weeks in mid-September (ZP, FF, KF, MH) and Solano County had a one-day wonder on 23 August at the Robben Road Ponds (RM). Up to eight **Sanderlings** were seen at Los Banos WTP in Merced County in mid-August and early-September (PD, GW). Staten Island in San Joaquin also had a **Sanderling** on 19 September (KF, RP). 16 to 20 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were found, almost all from August with just a few September records. This species seems much more expected in the northern part of the Central Valley, with very few reports each year in the south, usually from Kings and Tulare counties. Another scarce migrant, the **Solitary Sandpiper** produced 14 records during this period, about average for this species.

Dreams came true for a young birder, when a fading adult **Red-necked Stint** popped into their scope on 29 August at the Yolo Bypass WA, Yolo County (ZP). This Siberian peep was the second record for the Central Valley, with the only previous record also from the Yolo Bypass WA in August 2009. Fortuitously, it was re-found the following evening amongst a skittish flock of **Western Sandpipers**.



Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*) with two Western Sandpipers (*Calidris mauri*).
Yolo Bypass WA, Yolo County. Photo by Josh Greenfield.

A crispy, immature **Little Gull** was spotted at the Kern Water Bank in Kern County on 22 September (JSt). An adult **Black-legged Kittiwake** at the Fresno WTP on 12 October was the first Fresno County record (GW). The bird was seen through 15 October and is one of fewer than five records for the Central Valley. Two adult **Heermann's Gulls**, the Central Valley's third record, were found at the Sacramento County Bufferlands on 27 October (CC). A **Long-**

tailed Jaeger at Stockton WTP on 1 September was a first record for San Joaquin County (DY). It was a poor fall for **Sabine's Gull** in the Central Valley, with a lone bird from Clifton Court Forebay in Contra Costa County on 31 August (JB).

Two **Franklin's Gulls** were in Butte County. One at Thermalito Afterbay was found 30 August and continued until 21 September (LH). Possibly the same bird was reported 11 October from Nelson Shippee Road (SA). Three **Franklin's Gull** occurred in the southern valley, one from Tulare County (SSu) and two from Kings County (MSt). Five **Western Gull** occurred this fall, including the return of a banded adult in Yolo County that has been seen every winter since 2009 (JT). The **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, a species that was a mega rarity just 25 years ago, continues to show up with some regularity as five were found during this period, nearly all in November. A second-cycle **Glaucous Gull** on the Feather River in Butte County was at the early date of 31 October.

Common Terns had a fantastic fall with seven observations, some with up to 15 birds present! Two birds flying around Black Butte Reservoir on 11 September represented the first record for both Glenn and Tehama counties (JLo). The Thermalito Afterbay in Butte County had a flock with 15 birds on 17 September and three on 4 October (LH). Very rare in Yolo County, a lone **Common Tern** was downed by a storm on 21 August at the Woodland WTP (ZP, FF). Comanche Reservoir in Amador had three sightings in the period with up to 13 birds present at once (TE).

On 21 November, a **Pacific Loon** was found on Bullard/Fulkner Pond, a small pond in Fresno (GF). Quite rare in Fresno County, this bird remained until 27 November. Another **Pacific Loon**, this time in San Joaquin County, was on Camanche Reservoir with thirteen **Common Loons** on 2 November. There were scattered records of the Common Loon during this period, usually at reservoirs in November.

Neotropic Cormorants were found at Fresno WTP in August with up to four birds present and reports continued through the end of November (JM, JSt). The species is slowly expanding its range northward, and it will be interesting to see if it will colonize the Central Valley the way **Great-tailed Grackles** did in the early 2000s. An immature **Brown Pelican** was at the Stockton WTP in San Joaquin County from 2–17 September (RB). Another inland **Brown Pelican** flew over the Cosumnes River Preserve in Sacramento County on 19 November (PM, MGe).

Three **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were found during this period, including a migrant on 18 September at Lake Solano County Park in Solano County (JG). On the edge of the valley, an immature bird was near the town of Guinda in Yolo County on 22 November (ZP, ES, EI). A second Yolo County **Yellow-**

bellied Sapsucker was photographed along Cache Creek on 6 November (CCCS). Only one **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found, in Porterville, Tulare County on 21 October (SSu).

Late flycatchers included a **Tropical Kingbird** at Lake Yosemite County Park beginning 12 November and observed regularly through the end of the period (DK). This was the second Merced County record. By the end of the fall, any *Myiarchus* flycatcher is exceptional, so a report of a likely **Ash-throated Flycatcher** on 18 November in Tulare County was intriguing (DF). Two **Eastern Kingbirds** were found, one at the Lakeshore East Campground, Shasta County on 3 September (DM, MMo). Another along the Natomas Main Drainage Canal, Sacramento County on 6 September was a third county record (BP).

A single **Gray Flycatcher** was observed in San Joaquin County on 1 September (KM). A female **Vermilion Flycatcher** returned on 13 October for a fifth consecutive winter at Merced NWR (DS). Later, a brilliant male joined her and continued through the period (m.obs.). Another pair of **Vermilion Flycatchers** were at Kern NWR 10 October–16 November (SSu). Quite surprisingly for fall was a **Bell's Vireo** at Grand Island Bakersfield on 12 August in Kern County (JW). Typically, this species is detected singing earlier in the season, so where this bird spent the summer remains a mystery. A **Red-eyed Vireo** continued into August from its previously reported summering location in Redding, Shasta County.

Shockingly, **Pinyon Jay** was photographed at “Private Property H” on 29 October (MSt), just the second record for Kings County and apparently the fourth for the Central Valley. Perhaps just as surprising was that the bird was in a eucalyptus grove, a far cry from its typical pinyon pine habitat. An odd, California-wide irruption of **Pygmy Nuthatches** occurred in September, with the Central Valley lucky enough to get a few records. A small flock of four birds was near Rocklin, Placer County on 17 September (CW), and three more were together at Riverbottom Park in Fresno County on 15 September (JSe). Perhaps unrelated to the irruption was a single bird near Chico in Butte County on 27 November (LH, MSK). The late November date is more typical for the species based on prior records in the region.

It was another active fall for **Winter Wrens** in Putah Creek Canyon. One returned to Lake Solano County Park in Solano County for its second winter, first reported on 24 October and continuing through the winter (DaH, DeH). Another was briefly observed below Monticello Dam in Solano County on 30 October (EM). A third was at Putah Creek, Fishing Access #3 on 26 November, which stuck around through the winter (SSc). Finally, a fourth **Winter Wren** returned to the same location as the previous winter at Putah Creek, Fishing Access #2 on 30 November, remaining through the season (JG).

All four records were thoroughly documented and accepted by the California Bird Records Committee.

A vagrant **Gray Catbird** was found along Putah Creek west of Mace Blvd. on 31 August, representing the third Solano County record (RM). Five **Sage Thrashers** were found in the period, with one near Red Bluff in Tehama County (SL), two low in the foothills of Stanislaus County (SN, SR), one at Pixley NWR in Tulare County (DF), and one at the Kern Water Bank (JSt). These records spanned from late September to early November. Only one **Townsend's Solitaire** was reported on 24 September at Laughlin Park in San Joaquin County (KM).

Winter finches often appear in the valley in late fall. This year, there were six reports of **Evening Grosbeak**, with one coming from Sacramento County, two from the lowlands of Shasta County, and three near Chico, Butte County (m.obs.). Five reports of **Red Crossbill** is a typical fall tally, with reports from San Joaquin, Sacramento, Yolo, and Yuba counties (m.obs.). Surprisingly, there were no reports of **Cassin's Finch** in the period.

Four **Lapland Longspurs** were found in the Central Valley in fall 2023. One was heard near Willows, Glenn County on 30 November (MSw), and another was picked out of a large flock of **Horned Larks** on Poundstone Road in Colusa County on 18 November (LS, LuC, MS). Additional birds were at Folsom Lake in Placer County on 8 November (RP) and flying over Clifton Court Forebay in Contra Costa County on 19 November (DM). Four **Grasshopper Sparrows** were reported from late-October into November, not entirely surprising for a species that migrates later than other summer sparrows in the region. These records came from Kern, Madera, Yolo, and Colusa counties (m.obs.). A **Lark Bunting** was an exciting find at the Yolo Bypass WA on 8 September (JE).

Two **Clay-colored Sparrows** were found, with one in residential Roseville in Placer County on 28 August (AK), and another at Grand Island Bakersfield in Kern County on 20 September (JW). **Brewer's Sparrows** are rare but regular migrants through the Central Valley in fall. One was at the Sacramento Bypass WA in Yolo County 14-15 September (KD), two were in lowland Placer County on 15 and 21 September (DC, JT), and another was on Frankenheimer Road in Stanislaus County on 8 October (HR). **Brewer's Sparrows** tend to be much more regular in the southern valley, and this year was no exception, with roughly half a dozen reports spread throughout Kern and Tulare counties (m.obs.). A **Swamp Sparrow** was at the San Joaquin River NWR in Stanislaus County on 20 November (CS), and another was at Kapusta Lake in Shasta County a week later on 27 November (KO, EO). Surprisingly, a group of three individuals were together at a marsh near Tupman, Kern County on 11 November (TE). **Green-tailed Towhees** had a typical fall showing with four records from the region, with birds found in Yolo, Sacramento, and Tehama counties (m.obs.).

A first-year male **Orchard Oriole** found at the University of California, Davis Arboretum on 11 October continued through the winter to delight dozens of birders (GP). It was the fifth Yolo County record. On the edge of the region, a **Baltimore Oriole** was photographed on private property near lone on 11 September, representing the first record for Amador County (TE).

It was an excellent fall for vagrant eastern warblers in the Central Valley. Two **Northern Waterthrushes** were found, with one at Putah Creek, Fishing Access #1 in Yolo and Solano counties on 15 August (KD, JLi), and another at the Yolo Bypass WA on 9 September (JG). A **Black-and-white Warbler**, Solano's third, was photographed at Lake Solano County Park on 29 August (MRe). Particularly rare for the region was a **Lucy's Warbler** at the Kern Water Bank on 20 November (TE). While not nearly as exceptional in the deserts of eastern Kern County, there are as few as two prior Central Valley records. A **Virginia's Warbler** at Lake Solano County Park 17–18 September was the first county record for Solano (KD, LWD).

Four **American Redstarts** were found, including three in Yolo County. The first was at the Putah Creek Riparian Reserve on 1 September (SSc). A stunning adult male was at Babel Slough from 2–7 September (KT, MGu), and a likely hatch-year bird was in residential Davis on 10 September (CD). The fourth **American Redstart** was just inside the El Dorado County line on Payen Road on 12 September, making it a first county record (DE).

Northern Parulas had a sensational year in the Central Valley, with nine reports from around the region. Butte County had two individuals, with one at Big Chico Creek on 13 September (MF) and another at Gray Lodge WA on 19 September (LH, MSk). Another was along the American River Parkway in Sacramento County on 18 September (MMa). Yolo and Solano counties did especially well for **Northern Parulas**, with two together simultaneously at the Putah Creek Riparian Reserve in late August through early September (KS_w, JG), one at Lake Solano County Park 6–17 September (DaH, DeH), and another at Elk Slough near Clarksburg on 2 September (AE). A **Northern Parula** at Riverbottom Park in Fresno County was a second county record (GW). Perhaps the most exceptional of the reports was a very late bird discovered 20 November at the Kern Water Bank, which stuck around for the winter (TE).

A **Magnolia Warbler**, Merced County's third, was at San Luis Reservoir SRA on 1 October (GH). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** on private property near lone on 31 August was a second county record for Amador (TE). Another was within the American River Parkway on 19 September (MMa, LC). A **Blackpoll Warbler**, straddling the Fresno-Madera County line at Riverbottom Park on 7 September, is one of very few records for both counties (JSe). Another **Blackpoll Warbler**, the second record for Butte County, was at Gray Lodge WA on 17 September (LH). Two other **Blackpoll Warblers** were in eastern Contra Costa County on 16–19 September (SC) and 20 October (AL).

A few vagrant Cardenallids were found as well. For the first time in Central Valley, a pair of **Summer Tanagers** were documented breeding with two fledged offspring photographed at Oak Grove Park in San Joaquin County (Oliver et al. 2024. *Central Valley Birds* 27:41–50). Additional reports from nearby riparian areas in August and September were likely these same birds beginning to wander about the area. Another **Summer Tanager** was at the Kern Water Bank on 22 September (JSt). The flamboyant male **Summer Tanager** returned to winter near the honeybee box at William Land Park in Sacramento County on 26 September (AL), although it proved difficult to see until later in the season. A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was photographed on Eight Mile Road in San Joaquin County on 22 August (RB, SR). Finally, an **Indigo Bunting** was reported from the Kern Water Bank on 23 August (TE). We thank the following observers who reported their significant findings to the Central Valley Bird Club's listserv, eBird, and, where appropriate, the California Bird Records Committee:

Stuart Angerer, Ralph Baker, Jerald Britten, Srikant Char, Rachel Clark, Laura Cockrell (LCo), Lyann Comrack (LC), Chris Conard, Dan Cook, Lucas Corneliusen (LuC), Konshau Duman, Lynette Williams-Duman, Chris Dunford, Pete Dunten, Todd Easterla, Jonathan Eisen, Dena Elimelech, Andrew Engilis, Frank Fabbro, Dane Fagundes, Ken Ferguson, George Folsom, Matthew Forster, Maureen Geiger (MGe), Joshua Greenfield, Mike Guard (MGU), Angela Haas, David Hamilton (DaH), Denise Hamilton (DeH), Gjon Hazard, Alex Henry, Marcel Holyoak, Liam Huber, Emmett Iverson, Larry Jordan, Melinda Kashuba, Tim Kashuba, Doug Kranjovich, Adam Kucharek, Steve Layman, Andrew Lee, John Lewis (JLe), Albert Linkowski, Jasen Liu (JLi), Jim Lomax (JLo), Mark Martucci (MMa), Karen McClure, Josh McLaughlin Gary Mele, Paul Miller, Kurt Mize, Ethan Monk, Dominik Mosur, Megan Mosur (MMo), Roger Muskat, Sierra Nystrom, Elizabeth Olin, Gabriel Olin, Adam Panto, Bryce Parker, Richard Petersen, Gerrit Platenkamp, Ron Pozzi, Srin Raman, Harold Reeve, Sharon Reeve, Michael Reinhart (MRe), William Rockey, Michael Rogner (MRo), Elliot Schoenig, Sam Schmidt (SSc), Jeff Seay (JSe), Mike Skram (MSk), Ken Sobon (KSo), Ian Souza-Cole, Mark Stacy (MSt), Lucas Stephenson, John Sterling (JSt), Steve Summers (SSu), Dale Swanberg, Michele Swartout (MSw), Kirk Swenson (KSw), Kim Tenggardjaja, Jerry Ting, Jim Thomas, C. Walker, Bart Wickel, John Wilson, Chris Wills, Teri Wills, Gary Woods, David Yee, and the Cache Creek Conservancy Staff (CCCS).

m.obs. = many observers; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; SRA = State Recreation Area; WA = State Wildlife Area; WTP = Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Errata:

Pandolfino, E.R., and L.A. Douglas 2024. Winter abundance trends for the Oregon Vesper Sparrow in California. *Central Valley Birds* 27: 1–11.

There were two errors on the rate of declines of Oregon Vesper Sparrows shown in Figures 3 and 4 and in the text in Results. The rate of decline shown in Figure 3 and the text for all counts should be $-1.5\%/yr$, not $-0.1\%/yr$. In Figure 4 and in the text for northern California counts, the rate of decrease should be $-2.3\%/yr$ not $-0.3\%/yr$. These changes will be incorporated into the online version of these articles, when they are uploaded to the Central Valley Bird Club website (www.cvbirds.org/bulletin/) once the revised site is operational later in 2025.

In Memoriam: Edward C. (Ted) Beedy

Edward C. (Ted) Beedy, a long-time CV Bird Club member passed away March 28, 2025. Ted was a highly respected, dedicated, and visionary wildlife biologist, ornithologist, environmental consultant, conservationist, and birder who lived nearly his whole life in Northern California.



Ted Beedy with his wife, Susan Sanders, receiving the Conservation Award at the 2024 Central Valley Bird Symposium.

Photo by Keith Hansen.

Ted and spouse Susan Sanders were the 2024 recipients of the bird club's Conservation Award. Ted was recognized for a lifetime of professional and volunteer work conserving birds and their habitats in the Central Valley and elsewhere in Northern California. Ted's many accomplishments were summarized in the award commendation (*Central Valley Birds* 27:120-124). A more detailed obituary will be published in *Western Birds*.

Ted was a respected leader within the Central Valley Bird club. For many years, he served on the Editorial Board and co-authored many papers published in *Central Valley Birds* on Tricolored Blackbirds. He regularly attended the club's annual symposium, where he led field trips annually.

Ted is remembered for key roles in conserving the Tricolored Blackbird, saving Mono Lake, creating the Yolo Bypass Wildlife area, and developing conservation plans for wildlife in Placer and Nevada Counties.

Ted was a collaborator, a natural and skilled teacher and mentor, a caring and supportive friend. He was also fun-loving and had a great sense of humor. His legacy will continue in our memories, the places he saved and helped create, and in those he taught and inspired.

Ted is survived by his wife, Susan Sanders, children Josiah (Abby) and Katrina Beedy, and grandchildren Lacey and Leo, to whom he was dedicated.

Central Valley Birds

Volume 28, Number 1, 2025

Published by the Central Valley Bird Club



Editor—Daniel A. Airola; d.airola@sbcglobal.net

Assistant Editor—Chris Swarth; cswarth10@gmail.com

Layout Editor—Frances Oliver; hummer52ffo@yahoo.com

Editorial Committee: Chris Swarth (Chair), Chris Conard, Lily Douglas, Jon Dunn, Andy Engilis, Jr., John Harris, Dan Kopp, Tim Manolis, Ed Pandolfino, Zane Pickus, Linda Pittman, John Sterling, John Trochet, and Lynette Williams-Duman.

The Central Valley Bird Club is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the study of the distribution, status, ecology, and conservation of birds in the Central Valley of California. Membership dues for individuals: **Regular \$30/year; Family \$45/year; Contributing \$60/year; and Life \$350.** Make check payable to the **Central Valley Bird Club** and send to the address below. Membership includes a subscription to *Central Valley Birds*. Dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Central Valley Bird Club
c/o Frances Oliver
1817 Songbird Place
Lodi, CA 95240

Officers of the Central Valley Bird Club

President—Pat Bacchetti; bacpab@comcast.net

Vice-President—Cliff Hawley; yellowhammerCA@gmail.com

Secretary—John Harris; jhh.birder@gmail.com

Treasurer—Lily Douglas; ldouglas14@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Daniel A. Airola; d.airola@sbcglobal.net

Andy Engilis; aengilisjr@ucdavis.edu

Stephanie Levins; stephanie.a.levins@gmail.com

Frances Oliver; hummer52ffo@yahoo.com

The CVBC maintains an internet website for current information about upcoming field trips and other events: **www.CVBirds.org**

Central Valley Birds publishes peer-reviewed articles, notes, and reviews of publications on the avifauna of California's Central Valley. Of particular interest is original information that addresses bird status, distribution, ecology, and conservation. Contribution of high-quality photographs and artwork are also welcomed; potential contributors are encouraged to contact the Layout Editor.

