

Central Valley and Foothills Bird Highlights: August through November 2013

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The fourth Central Valley and first Yolo County record of **Black Scoter** was discovered at the Yolo Bypass WA on 25 Nov (KE+). It was a female in a shallow marsh, not the deep-water habitat expected for a scoter. A **White-winged Scoter** at the O'Neill Forebay in Merced County on 22-26 Nov (KVV) added to the long list of coastal waterbird records for that location. A third scoter species, **Surf Scoter**, was at William B. Pond in Sacramento on 30 Nov (JML). An adult **Glossy Ibis** in basic plumage was photographed near Tracy on 8 Aug (DY) for San Joaquin County's first record. A **White-faced Ibis** graced the Lone WTP in Amador County on 5 Oct (DM). This species rarely wanders in the foothills. Four **Brown Pelicans** at San Luis Res, Merced County on 13 Sept–26 Nov (GF) was a surprise as no others were seen in the valley this fall.

Pacific Golden-Plovers were found with one in basic plumage at the Nevada Ave TLDD ponds in Kings County on 31 Aug (MSy). Two **American Golden-Plovers** were at the Woodland WTP on 17-24 Oct (SCH) and a third was photographed at the Yolo Bypass WA on 18 Oct (LM). The best shorebird find was the **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at the Clear Creek WTP south of Redding on 6 Sept (JLx). This was the first record for Shasta County and only the second confirmed record for the Central Valley. **Stilt Sandpipers** are annual in small numbers in fall in the valley, but still noteworthy. At least three adults were Kings County with two at the Jersey Ave ponds in on 11 Aug and one that may be a lingering bird on 6-7 Oct (MSy), and one at the Nevada Ave TLDD ponds on 31 Aug (MSy). As usual, a few **Willetts**, **Marbled Godwits**, and **Semipalmated**, **Baird's**, **Pectoral** and **Solitary sandpipers** were reported in typical locations. A **Baird's Sandpiper** below the Black Butte dam on 26 Aug (JSL) was a rare find for Tehama County. A very late **Solitary Sandpiper** was still present in Madera County on 20 Nov (CH). A **Pectoral Sandpiper** and a **Sanderling** were a surprising find at the Granite Bay boat launch at Folsom Lake in Placer County on 26 Sept (RPz).

Yolo County's Davis WTP once again hosted some unusual gulls with an immature **Franklin's Gull** on 27 Aug (DW), on 30 Sept (SCH), and on 21-22 Oct (SCH), and an early fresh juvenile **Western Gull** on 28 Aug (SCH). A first cycle **Western Gull** in southern Colusa County on 19 Nov was a first for that county (JSL). Another immature **Franklin's Gull** was at the Ceres WTP in Stanislaus County on 15-26 Nov (EP, JLD+) and another at Folsom Lake on 30 Sept (RPz)

was one of few records for Placer County. **Bonaparte's Gulls** are not usually seen away from their traditional winter or migratory stopover locations in the valley, and are fairly rare in the foothills. One was at Salt Springs Valley Res. on 9 Nov (JCS) for one of few Calaveras County records. North of the Yolo Basin and American River, **Glaucous-winged Gulls** are rare, so two with one **Thayer's Gull** near Sacramento NWR on 19-22 Nov (JSL, JLx) was a good record for Glenn County. A second-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** photographed at the Recology site on the San Joaquin/Stanislaus county line on 16 Nov (DY) was a first record for Stanislaus County. This European species is now annually found in the valley during late fall and winter. A **Sabine's Gull** flew around the Modesto WTP on 22 Sept (JH). This was the only record this fall in the valley for this pelagic migrant. Three **Common Terns** at the Hanford WTP on 5 Oct (MSy) was a rare find for Kings County.

Last summer's **Inca Dove** in Tulare County continued to at least 4 Oct (DF, CH). Still barely persisting in the valley, **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** are rarely found away its few remaining breeding locations. One along Putah Creek at Pedrick Road Bridge in both Yolo and Solano counties was a surprise find on 16 Aug (CGa). What may have been the same individual was seen on 2 Sept (RR). A second cuckoo was heard calling near Paradise Beach in the American River Parkway in Sacramento County on 18 Aug (KT). A few **Calliope Hummingbirds** migrate through the valley in fall. One in Oakdale, Stanislaus County on 13-16 Sept (JH) and one in Folsom, Sacramento County on 6 Oct (SA) were the only reports. **Costa's Hummingbird** records span the season in the valley, but this species is always rare. An adult male was in Avenal in Kings County on 24 Nov (JLk, SSt) and an immature male was in Esparto in Yolo County on 4 Nov (WR). Two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were on the valley floor at Burriss Park in Kings County on 9 Oct through the winter (GW). Tulare County had two rare sapsuckers with a female **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** returning for another winter at the Lake Success campground on 28 Oct (SDS) and a **Red-naped Sapsucker** near Springville on 28 Nov (TKz). An **Eastern Kingbird** was in Redding on 11-14 Sept (BY). Kings County hosted two **Eastern Phoebes** with one returning bird at the Lemoore Sportsman's Club on 9 Nov and another in Lyon's Park in Lemoore on 8 Nov (MSy). **Western Kingbirds** were considered accidental during late fall and winter in California until recent years when several have been photographically documented. One was at the Sacramento NWR on 25 Nov (JE+) for probably the first Nov record for Glenn County. **Cassin's Vireos** are rare winter residents in the valley, and one at the Tuolumne River Regional Park was the only report (HR).

Unprecedented in the valley during summer was a female **Varied Thrush** at the Basalt Campground in Merced County (KVV) on 14 August. A somewhat overdue first Kings County record of **Townsend's Solitaire** was in Hanford on 23 Sept (SDS, JLD). This is at least seven weeks before we expect to see our first fall migrants of this species. Another montane species,

Mountain Chickadee was seen at Henderson Park near Snelling in Merced County on 26 Nov (ADeM). A **Lapland Longspur** at Merced NWR on 16 Nov (AR) provided a long-overdue first county record. Two more were along Devil's Den Road in western Kings County on 2 Nov (JLk, MSy). Surprisingly, these were the only longspurs reported this season.

Putah Creek at Pedrick Road Bridge in Yolo/Solano counties once again provided vagrant warbler excitement with a **Tennessee** and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** from 1-3 Sept (SCH, MP+). Another **Tennessee Warbler** was at the Gristmill along the American River Parkway in Sacramento County on 7 Sept (CSw). And another **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was photographed in the Sutter Buttes on 11 Sept (PS). A third **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Babel Slough in Yolo County on 22 Sept (TEa, DA). The Tule River at Lake Success in Tulare County had both a singing **Bell's Vireo** (one of few "regular" locations for this species in the valley) and a **Virginia's Warbler** from 9-11 Sept (SDS+). A **Lucy's Warbler** photographed on 6 Oct near Buttonwillow in Kern County (JCS) was only the second record for the Central Valley. It was seen for several days in mesquite scrub. The second record for Kings County of a **Palm Warbler** was established on 19 Oct in the Tulare Basin (SSt, MSy, JKI), and the second record for Merced County was at Dinosaur Pt on 30 Nov (JB). Wintering **Nashville Warblers** are rare but regular along the coast, but exceptionally rare inland. One at Boggs Slough in Kings County on 23 Nov (MSy) provides one of few late Nov records for the valley. Adult male **American Redstarts** made a splash with three found during a weeklong stretch with one on the Sousa Trail at the San Luis NWR in Merced County (DC+) from 8-18 Aug, another at Reichmuth Park in Sacramento on 14 Aug–6 Sept (BW+), and a third at the Sacramento Bufferlands (CC) on 16 Aug. Rounding out the vagrant warbler records was the **Northern Waterthrush** along the San Joaquin River in Stanislaus County on 28 Oct (RB, SSa, HR).

Grasshopper Sparrow is still a relatively little-known species in the valley, with scattered records of fall migrants and wintering birds. One was on Beckwith Road in Stanislaus County on 21 Oct (RB), and two at the Chico State University Farm on 24 Sept (JBS) with a **Lark Bunting** (MF). Another **Lark Bunting** was at the San Joaquin River NWR at the Beckwith Road observation deck from 1-22 Nov (KR+). A **Harris's Sparrow** returned to north Davis in Yolo County for its third winter on 20 Oct (CD), and another was in the foothills near Comanche Res on 19 Nov (GH) for one of few Amador County records.

A **Summer Tanager** was at the Cosumnes River Preserve in Sacramento County on 7 Sept (JTr). Yolo County's second **Baltimore Oriole** was an adult male at the Sacramento Bypass on 19 Aug (SCH+). The second Yolo and Solano county record of **Orchard Oriole** was along Putah Creek at Pedrick Road Bridge on 6 Sept (CGa); the same location where the first record was found nearly a year before. Rounding out the vagrants found in August, a

Bobolink was at the Chico State University Farm on 8 Aug (JBS) provided the second record for that location and for Butte County.

The observers are: Steve Abbott, Dan Airola, Ralph Baker, Justin Bosler, Diane Colborn, Chris Conard, Al DeMartini, Bruce Deuel (BED), Chris Dunford, Jon Dunn (JLD), John Eady, Ken Ealy, Dane Fagundes, George Folsom, Matthew Forster, Claire Gallagher (CGa), Steve Hampton (SCH), Ed Harper (WEH), Chris Hiatt, John Harris, Greg Hemig, Tony Kurz (TKz), Jeri Langham (JML), Jim Lomax (JLx), John Luther (JSL), Don Marsh, Leslie Morris, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Ron Pozzi (RPz), Harold Reeve, Alex Rinkert, William Rockey, Ruth Rudesill, Sal Salerno (SSa), Jim Snowden (JBS), Mark Stacey (MSy), John Sterling (JCS), Steve Summers (SDS), Craig Swolgaard (CSw), Kevin Thomas, John Trochet (JTr), Kent Van Vuren, Brian Williams, Dan Williams, Gary Woods, David Yee, and Bob Yutzy.

Abbreviations used: WA=State Wildlife Area, WTP=Wastewater Treatment Plant; CBRC=California Bird Records Committee; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge.