

Central Valley Region Bird Highlights: June through July 2012

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Horned Grebes are rare on the valley floor and especially in summer, so one remaining at the Davis Wetlands and another at the Cosumnes River Preserve on 10 June was unprecedented (GEw, CCo+). Mather Lake in Sacramento County once again hosted locally rare **Least Bitterns** with two vocal males from 4 July to August (PL, KZ+). Juvenile **Brown Pelicans** made splash in the region with two at the Yolo Landfill on 6 July (MG), two joining the long-staying pelican at the Port of Sacramento on 14 July (MW), and one at the Yolo Bypass WA from 15-21 July (DP+) in Yolo County, one on Sherman Island in Sacramento County on 8-22 July (GeW+), one at the Stevenson Ranch on 14 July (RB), eight and ten at San Luis Res. on 17 July (KVV) and 21 July (BS), respectively, in Madera County, one at Contra Loma Park in Antioch, Contra Costa County on 14 July (PS), one flying over Hwy 5 near Patterson in Stanislaus County on 27 June (JND), one at Little Panoche Res. from 11 July through the summer (MT), one at Westlake in Kings County on 9-26 July (JSy+), and another at Riverlakes Park in Bakersfield, Kern County on 10-11 July (GF+).

Although rare but regular in Yolo County, 50 **Marbled Godwits** found on 21 July (SCH) was an extraordinarily high number and may be the largest flock ever encountered in the Central Valley. Two at Natomas on 1 July (DW) and two more at the Cosumnes River Preserve on 13 July (CCo) were rare migrants in Sacramento County. Among the rare shorebirds were a **Ruddy Turnstone** at the Modesto WTP in Stanislaus County on 10 June (HR), an adult **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at the Yolo Bypass WA on 4 July (ToE), and a **Stilt Sandpiper** there on 14-15 July (ToE). The Recology facility on Gaffery Road in Stanislaus County had an injured **Western Gull** hanging out with other gulls on 1 July (JH), and one-two adults on Sherman Island on 8 July (GEw) were unexpected for this coastal breeding species during summer. A breeding pair of **Least Terns** arrived at the Sacramento WTP on 11 June (CC) for the fifth straight year. Their first nesting attempt failed when the eggs were eaten, but the fate of their follow up nesting attempt was unknown. Another **Least Tern** at Natomas on 4 July (WEH+) was the first record for that Sacramento County location and one of few away from the three recent breeding locations in the Central Valley.

San Joaquin County's first **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** in over 20 years was at the Tracy WTP on 24 June (TR) but could not be relocated. The pair of **Least Bell's Vireos** found in May, continued through the breeding season at Merced NWR (JB+). **Swainson's Thrush** is not known to nest in the Central Valley, so it was extraordinary when two territorial birds remained until at least 29 June along the San Joaquin River in Stanislaus County (CG+). A singing male **Northern Waterthrush** was along Sand Creek in southwestern Colusa County on 7 June (JCS) for the second county record. Another eastern vagrant warbler, **Northern Parula**, were found in three locations with one along the Sacramento River in Glenn County on 11-12 June (MD+), one at the Cosumnes River Preserve on 21 July (JTr+), and another was along the San Joaquin River in Stanislaus County on 12 June (CG). Surprisingly, a male **Summer Tanager** graced Yosemite Lake Park in Fresno on 14 June (LPa).

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Abbreviations used:

WA=State Wildlife Area; WTP=Wastewater Treatment Ponds; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; Res.=Reservoir.