

First Central Valley record of Common Redpoll

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From 3 February to 17 February 2002 a Common Redpoll (*Carduelis flammaea*) visited my thistle feeder and backyard trees in Anderson, Shasta County, California. My husband, Jim, and I first observed the redpoll at 1430 on 3 February when it came to the feeder. American Goldfinches (*Carduelis tristis*) and occasionally a House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) and a Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*) also used the feeder during this time period. During the first week I saw it very regularly at approximately 0730 on 5, 6 and 8 February. Jim saw it at the feeder several times each day between 4 and 8 February, typically at about 0730, 0930, and 1400. Once or twice he was able to approach the bird to within 2 m. This whole time it faithfully used the same perch of the thistle feeder (Figure 1). It was never observed feeding on the ground. The bird once ventured onto the porch near my husband's feet for a drink of water. Over 100 people came, primarily from all over California, to observe the bird during its stay. Among the many individuals who came by were Nancy and Red Modeen, John Coon, John Sterling, Steve Glover, Bruce Deuel, David Nelson, and Randy Van Orden.

The bird was the size of a Lesser Goldfinch but with a proportionately longer notched tail. There were two wing bars. The yellow bill was dark on the top edge of the upper mandible and dark near the tip of the lower mandible. It had a red cap, a black mask, and streaked flanks. The black mask extended from in front of each eye down onto the throat and had a nearly straight lower edge. The black above the bill turned into black specks towards the red cap. The breast was very light gray, with heavy streaks on buff-colored sides. The bird's cheeks were slightly darker than the rest of the face except for the mask and were finely streaked with gray. The undertail coverts were faintly streaked. The legs were gray-black. Overall, the plumage suggested either a first year bird or an adult female.

This is about as far south as this species has been seen in California, and is the first documented record for the Central Valley. The only prior records of Common Redpoll in the state that have been accepted by the California Bird Records Committee (which has yet to review this record) are: "many" at Eagle Lake, Lassen County, between 30 November to 23 December 1899; one at Manila, Humboldt County, 22 May 1969; 24 at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Siskiyou County, between 29 December 1985 and 11 January 1986; 30 at nearby Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, Siskiyou County, between 20 January and 2 March 1986; and one at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge 23-25 November 1991 (McCaskie et al. 1988; Patten et al. 1995). The specimen for "Plumas County" cited in McCaskie et al. (1988) was recently reviewed by the CBRC and subsequently rejected due to uncertainties of its origins (Erickson, unpublished files of the CBRC, pers. comm.).

LITERATURE CITED

McCaskie, G., P. De Benedictis, R. Erickson, and J. Morlan. 1988. *Birds of Northern California: An Annotated Field List*. Golden Gate Audubon Society, Berkeley, CA.

Patten, M. A., S. E. Finnegan, P. E. Lehman. 1995. *Seventeenth Report of the California Bird Records Committee: 1991 Records*. *Western Birds* 26:113-143.



Figure 1. Common Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*), at feeder with American Goldfinches (*Carduelis tristis*), Anderson, Shasta Co., 16 February 2002.

photo by David Nelson