

Central Valley Bird Highlights: June through July 2006

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WATERBIRDS

The Stockton Sewage Ponds hosted a **Red Knot** and **Ruff** on 31 July (RF+) that represented San Joaquin County's fifth Red knot ever and the first Ruff record in over ten years. Two juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were also there at the same time (JLu, TE). Shorebirds generally leave California for their breeding grounds by mid-May and don't return in fall migration until the last week of June, so the following shorebirds found at the Vic Fazio Wildlife Area in Yolo County on 2 June (JHu) were noteworthy: eight **Marbled Godwits**, one **Whimbrel**, 35 **Black-bellied Plovers** and three **Dunlin**. Eight **Willetts** there on 1 July (JK) was an early date and a large number for this locally rare species.

LANDBIRDS

Yellow-billed Cuckoos are quite rare away from their breeding range along the Sacramento River from Tehama to Sutter counties, therefore, one seen at Woodbridge Regional Park on in San Joaquin County on 2 August (RS) was noteworthy and probably was a fall migrant. Another at the Fremont Weir in Yolo County on 16 June (BCa+) was probably breeding locally as it was also heard later in June. A singing **Eastern Wood-Pewee** along lower Putah Creek on 4 June (RMu, JCS, TE+) was heard well and photographed. Pending CBRC acceptance, it will be the first Solano County record and only the third CBRC accepted record for the Central Valley. There are few than a dozen accepted records for California. Several **Purple Martins** were seen flying around the Fremont Weir as early as June 19, and thus may have bred locally. They were last seen on 20 July (CH). If nesting in riparian habitat at this site, they would be the first recent nesting birds on the valley floor away from artificial structures in the Sacramento and Davis metropolitan areas. These birds should be looked for in summer 2007 to confirm breeding and breeding habitat.

Among the resurgence of **Least Bell's Vireos** in the Central Valley, an apparent first-year bird was along Dry Creek on 11 August (DY) for the first record in San Joaquin County in roughly sixty years. Another singing male was at the Tule Elk Preserve in Kern County from 11 May to 8 June (BCa). A vagrant **Northern Parula** surprised visitors (DR, RC) to the Honey Run Ecological Preserve near Chico on 21 June and was seen again on 23 June (JSn) for a second county record. The Consumnes River Preserve in Sacramento County was once again the scene of a vagrant singing **Hooded Warbler**, detected only on 15 July (JTr). A singing male **Indigo Bunting** at the Bufferlands in Sacramento County was present from 10-28 July (CC). A

pair of **Indigo Buntings** was along the Fremont Weir in Yolo and Sutter counties from 9-18+ June (MPe, RM, BCa, SB+) for the fourth Yolo record and perhaps only the second Sutter record. Nesting was not confirmed. **Grasshopper Sparrow** status is still not well known in Solano County where it is considered rare, so one in the Jepson Prairie along Sikes Road on 3 June (CH) provided further evidence that this species breeds locally there.

CBRC = California Bird Records Committee
(<http://www.wfo-cbrc.org/cbrc/>)

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Eastern Wood Pewee (*Contopus virens*) along Putah Creek, Solano County, 4 June 2006.

photo by Todd Easterla