

2000 (Sixth) Report of the Sacramento Bird Records Committee

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The Sacramento Bird Records Committee (SBRC) reviews records of unusual birds reported within the boundaries described in the *Checklist of the Birds of the Sacramento Area* (Sacramento Audubon Society 1993; hereafter referred to as the *Checklist*). For additional information about the SBRC, including the list of reviewed species, etc., refer to previous SBRC reports (Manolis 1998, 1999, 2000). Current members of the SBRC are: Bruce Deuel, Ed Greaves, Ed Harper, Jeri Langham, Tim Manolis (chair), Brian Williams, David Yee, and Andrew Engilis, Jr. (elected in March 2001 to replace Ted Beedy).

The SBRC recently (March 2001) revised arrangements for the archiving of records submitted and reviewed. Previously, copies of all records were archived with Jeri Langham at California State University, Sacramento, and Ed Harper at American River College. In future, original copies of all submitted records will be housed in the Museum of Wildlife Fisheries Biology (MWFB) at the University of California, Davis, under the care of Andrew Engilis, Jr., while a second set of copies will remain at California State University, Sacramento. The MWFB is poised to develop into a major center for research with a primary emphasis on the vertebrate fauna of the Central Valley. The SBRC is therefore enthusiastic about this opportunity to incorporate the SBRC archives into a much larger data base of information about the avifauna of the Central Valley as a whole. Hopefully, this move will also increase the accessibility of the SBRC archives, which are open to all interested parties, for future research.

The SBRC has reviewed 20 records since the last report (Manolis 2000). Of these, 16 were accepted, 2 were not accepted, and 2 were held for recirculation. The information for records discussed here includes: the record number (e. g., 10-00 would be the tenth record received in 2000); for accepted records, the initials of the observer(s) submitting documentation (i. e., not necessarily the first observers of the bird[s]); and comments on additional supporting documentation (e. g., tape recordings, photos, etc.).

REPORTS ACCEPTED

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)— One heard (13-97, JTr) at the Cosumnes River Preserve, Sacramento Co., 7 July 1996, was the first report in decades for Sacramento County. Probably the same bird was heard in the same area on 20 July 1996 (AE, TM, BWb).

Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*)— Single birds were observed on Road 42B in Capay Valley, Yolo Co., 24 December 1991 (42-92, JK [photos]) and at the Cosumnes River Preserve, Sacramento Co., 27 October 1994 (11-95, JTr).

This species is a rarely-seen resident of the foothills on either side of the *Checklist* area. The location of the Yolo County sighting is "...between Guinda and Rumsey, close to the hills, which are chaparral-covered, rocky, and rugged", and local residents reported seeing Roadrunners in the area "frequently" (fide JK). The Sacramento County report is much more surprising, coming from the valley floor rather distant from seemingly suitable habitat.

Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*)—Two autumn records were accepted: One (55-92, TM) seen at Reichmuth Park, Sacramento Co., 1 October 1992; and another (56-92, TM) seen at Elk Grove Park, Elk Grove, Sacramento Co., 12 October 1992.

Most local records are for the fall or winter, but this may primarily reflect the fact that this species is most easily told from other "Solitary Vireos" in fresh autumn plumage.

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)—One (5-93, BWi) was seen along Cox Creek in the Spenceville Wildlife Area, Yuba Co., 30 January 1993; another (3-97, SH, DSt) was found wintering in Davis, Yolo Co., 25 December 1996 to 8 February 1997.

Record 5-93 is the second record for Yuba County, the first reviewed by the SBRC. Both are January records.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*)—One (1-95, BWi) found along Crosby-Herold Road NE of Lincoln, Placer Co., 17 December 1994, was a first record for Placer County.

The bird, apparently wintering on private property and only occasionally making appearances near the public road, was seen sporadically through at least 1 January 1995. Presumably the same bird, apparently having returned for a second winter, was reported at this site 15 December 1995 through 17 February 1996.

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*)—An alternate plumage male (52-97, DW [sketch]) found in an East Sacramento neighborhood, Sacramento Co., on 6 June 1997, is the first "spring" record accepted for the *Checklist* area, the few previous records coming from autumn.

Blackpoll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*)—One (40-94, MP) was seen along River Road south of Linden Avenue, West Sacramento, Yolo Co., on 20 September 1992.

This record required two circulations. The vote was 6-2 on the first round, 8-0 on the second. The bird allowed detailed study, but only from certain angles (e. g., the back was not seen well), and this initially led some members to question if other species (Pine Warbler [*D. pinus*] or Bay-breasted Warbler [*D. castanea*]) were adequately eliminated from consideration. The eventual consensus, however, was that the features described indicated this species.

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)— A female (55-97, JR, JTr) was seen at the Consumes River Preserve, Sacramento Co., 26 September 1997.

Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) — Two fall records, both from Sacramento County, were accepted by the SBRC: one (22-97, JTr) seen at the Cosumnes River Preserve on 12 September 1996; and one (22-98; SW [photos]) mist-netted, banded, and released at North Stone Lake on 26 August 1998.

Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*)— One (17-98, JK [photo]) was photographed in Woodland, Yolo Co., 24 May 1995.

The bird was coming to a feeder, reportedly for a few days prior to being photographed.

Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*)— Two accepted reports came from the foothill borders of the *Checklist* area, one (9-87, EG) on the east side at Sweetwater Creek, El Dorado Co., 10 May 1987; and another (26-96, SH) on the west side at the summit of Rayhouse Road, Yolo Co., 12 May 1996.

REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

Brown Thrasher — One (37-96) was reported seen in East Sacramento, Sacramento Co., 17 November 1996.

The description and sketch submitted were intriguing but, in the minds of most SBRC members (the vote was 2-6), insufficient to conclusively establish the identification.

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*)— A bird present at Reichmuth Park, Sacramento Co., from 1-17 January 1996 (and perhaps later).

This bird generated considerable discussion and controversy both at the time of its observation and during SBRC review. It was seen by a number of observers and at least two SBRC members, both of whom submitted the only descriptions received. One member submitted the bird as an Orchard Oriole, the other as an "Oriole sp?," leaning towards Hooded Oriole. The final vote was 1-7, with both members who had seen the bird voting not to accept it. Obviously a small oriole, the bird had some features of both *I. spurius* and *I. cucullatus*, the Hooded Oriole. As a number of SBRC members pointed out in their comments on the record, distinguishing between these two species in dull, immature female-type plumage can be fiendishly difficult. The primary characters supporting identification as *I. spurius* were size and shape (relatively small and compact, to at least some observer's eyes) and call (reported as an "emphatic 'chuck'"). However, both descriptions received described the culmen as decurved ("noticeably" or "distinctly") as is typical of Hooded Oriole, and a number of committee members cited personal experience and literature references to the effect that Hooded Orioles gave "chuck" calls, too. In the end, most members

decided that, while the bird may well have been an Orchard Oriole, it could not be accepted as such with any degree of certainty.

The SBRC sincerely thanks all those who have submitted reports, including the following observers who submitted reports evaluated here: Andrew Engilis, Jr., Ed Greaves, Steve Hampton, John Kemper, Tim Manolis, Michael Perrone, John Ranlett, Dan Stoebel (DSt), John Trochet (JTr), Bruce Webb (BWb), Brian Williams (BWi), Dan Williams, Stan Wright, David Yee.

LITERATURE CITED

Manolis, T. 1998. 1997 (third) report of the Sacramento Bird Records Committee. CVBC Bulletin 1:2-7.

Manolis, T. 1999. 1998 (fourth) report of the Sacramento Bird Records Committee. CVBC Bulletin 2:1-5.

Manolis, T. 2000. 1999 (fifth) report of the Sacramento Bird Records Committee. CVBC Bulletin 3:1-6.