

Central Valley Bird Highlights: August through November 2016

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Kutras Lake, part of the Sacramento River in Redding, Shasta County, is a magnet for rare waterbirds and gulls. Three **Surf Scoters** were there on 23 October (BMcD). A **Surf Scoter** at the Marysville WTP on 6-21 November (IG) provided one of few records for Yuba County and another was in Stanislaus County at the Modesto WTP on 13 November (HR). A rare inland **Brant** was photographed with Cackling Geese at the San Joaquin River NWR in Stanislaus County on 3-18 November (*fide* SSa, DG) and another was at Staten Island in San Joaquin County on 22 November (BS). The only reported **Red-breasted Merganser** was at O'Neill Forebay in Merced County on 29 November where they are somewhat regular (KVV). A lost **Brown Pelican** visited Lake Success on 31 August to 17 September (*fide* SDS, JSL+). A rare Amador County **Cattle Egret** found refuge at the Lone WTP on 18 September (LMcK).

The first **Pacific Golden-Plover** arrived on 14 August with two on 11 September along with a **Sanderling** at the Modesto WTP (HR). A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at the Arbuckle WTP in Colusa County was joined by a **Baird's Sandpiper** on 1 August (KSc). Two more **Baird's** were at the Lincoln WTP in western Placer County on 5-8 August (JSp); and a single was at the Fresno WTP on 6 August (MH). A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** stopped at the Ripon WTP in San Joaquin County on 19-22 August (DG+), while singles were at the Fresno WTP on 9 August (MH) and 22 August (RSx). The Sacramento County Regional WTP hosted a **Sanderling** on 1 September (CCo). Four **Stilt Sandpipers** were together in Kings County on 6th Ave on 22 October (MSy). A scattering of **Solitary Sandpipers** included one at the Lone WTP in Amador County (JH+) on 22-23 August, and one at the Davis WTP in Yolo County on 26 September to 2 October (KB+). A **Red Phalarope** photographed at the Yolo Bypass W.A on 27 November (KDeF) was the first Yolo County record in 14 years. Two were along Abel Road in Colusa NWR 20-24 November (TB, GF+) for the first Colusa County record. And one more was at Staten Island in San Joaquin County on 29 November (IS-C). Although this is the most expected phalarope species in late fall and winter in the region, it is very rare.

Also rare but nearly annual in the valley, a **Long-tailed Jaeger** visited the Yolo Bypass W.A. on 2 September (KSw) and Fresno County's second ever was at the Fresno WTP on 9-25 September (GW+). As expected, a few rare inland **Sabine's Gulls** were found in the valley. Two were at San Luis Reservoir in Merced County on 4 October (JLD), and one was at the Sacramento County Regional WTP on 26 September to 1 October (CCo+). Only one reported

Franklin's Gull, a low number compared to recent falls, was at the Fresno WTP on 19 October (GW). The northernmost **Mew Gull** was at Kutras Lake on 30 November (B&CY)—this species is rare north and south of the Delta and American River–Davis area. A rare Kings County **Western Gull** was photographed on the TLDD ponds on 7 August (MSy). Now a regular rare visitor to the region, a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was at the canal west of the Recology plant at Gaffery Road on Stanislaus County on 20-27 November (EC+). Two **Common Terns** were discovered at the Madera WTP on 11 September (GW), one visited Bravo Lake in Tulare County on 11 October (DF), while three **Common** and one **Arctic Tern** were attracted to bait fish at San Luis Reservoir in Merced County on 2 October (PD). The latter was the second Merced County record.

A **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Clear Creek WTP, Shasta County on 30 November (MG) may have been attempting to over-winter, as was one at the San Joaquin River NWR in Stanislaus County on 18 November (LW+). Glenn County's first record of a **Cassin's Kingbird** surprised birders at the Sacramento NWR on 27 November into December (PS, ML+). The only **Vermilion Flycatchers** reported were a pair at the Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area south of Buttonwillow in Kern County on 30 November (BDp). **Plumbeous Vireos** are rare but regular in the valley in late fall and winter. One in north Davis on 5-23 November (CD+) remained to the middle of the month and was one of few documented in Yolo County. Equally rare in late fall and winter, a **Cassin's Vireo** was in Woodland on 30 November (BC). A montane **Townsend's Solitaire** descended to the Sacramento City Cemetery on 5 October (MSw).

Babel Slough in Yolo County once again hosted vagrant warbler species with a **Blackpoll Warbler** on 23 September (MSw) and an **American Redstart** on 2 October (GEw). And once again, San Luis Reservoir Wildlife Area in Merced County hosted vagrant species, with a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** on 11 September (RE), a **Magnolia Warbler** on 13 September (DSw, KVV), a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** on 14 September (PD), and a **Costa's Hummingbird** on 28 October (KVV). Regular checking of these and other similar sites in the valley may yield consistent results in finding vagrant birds. An **Ovenbird** visiting a backyard in Woodland on 18 September (IS-C) provided Yolo with only its third county record. A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** visited a yard in Modesto, Stanislaus County on 24 September (HR), and another visited the Big Sycamore Trial below Lake Success in Tulare County on 28-29 September (DF+). An **American Redstart** graced the American River Parkway in Sacramento County on 1 October (KK). Very rare inland in late fall and winter, a **Nashville Warbler** was at Clear Creek WTP on 23 November (MG). A **Northern Waterthrush** in nw Roseville on 4 September (CW) was only the third record for Placer County. Solano County's first **Canada Warbler** stopped over at the Lake Solano County Park on 7 September (SHu).

Summer Tanagers are rare but increasingly reported vagrants in the valley. One was photographed at Putah Creek in Yolo/Solano counties on 5 August (KSw), another was along Putah Creek on 19 August (GB), an adult male was at the Tuolumne River Regional Park in Modesto, Stanislaus County on 18-25 September (HR+), and Tehama's first was in Red Bluff on 19-27 August (DSx+). An amazing find was the adult male **Orchard Oriole** in Madera, found on 25 August (IM+) and remained through the winter for the first Madera County record. Yolo County's fourth **Black-throated Sparrow** was at the Yolo Bypass W.A. on 30 August (LM+) and two along Madera Canal at mile 28 on 11 September remained through the winter and may have been the first records for Madera County (GW). Another was found nearby on Road 607 in Madera County on 20 October (TW). A **Sagebrush Sparrow** joined the Madera canal sparrow flock on 3 October (RSx+), as did a **Clay-colored Sparrow** on 13 October (ADeM+). Two **Clay-colored Sparrows** at Clear Creek WTP on 16 October (MG) were a first record for Shasta County and another was at Michigan Bar in Sacramento County on 11 September (SF). A **Harris's Sparrow** briefly visited Clear Creek WTP on 14 October (GH).

The observers are: Keith Bailey, Gordon Barrett, Ted Beedy, Eric Caine, Brent Campos, Chris Conard (CCo), Kathy DeFay, Al DeMartini (ADeM), Bill Deppe (BDp), Chris Dunford, Jon Dunn (JLD), Pete Dunton, Richard Edden, Dane Fagundes, Stephen Fettig, Gary File, Dan Gilman, Ian Gledhill, Matt Gould, John Harris, Mark Haywood, Geoffrey Helmbold, Stanton Hunter (SHu), Keith Kwan, Melissa Lea, John Luther (JSL), Brook McDonald (BMcD), Lisa McKenzie (LMcK), Irene Moon, Harold Reeve, Sal Salerno (SSa), Xavier Sandoval, Ben Sandstrom, Mark Sawyer (MSw), D. Saxelby (DSx), Rick Saxton (RSx), Ken Schneider (KSc), Ian Sousa-Cole (IS-C), Judy Spitler (JSp), Mark Stacey (MSy), Pam Starr, Steve Summers (SDS), Dale Swanberg (DaS), Kirk Swensen (KSw), Kent Van Vuren, Charles Walker, Torin Waters, Liz West, Gary Woods, and Bob and Carol Yutzky.

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