

Central Valley Bird Highlights: March through May 2017

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There are few wetlands in Tehama County on the valley floor, so scarce waterbirds that occur regularly elsewhere are more noteworthy there. A **Eurasian Wigeon** was at the Tehama Road ponds on 2 March (JCS). A **Surf Scoter** was along Putah Creek at Fishing Access #4 on 4-19 March in Yolo and Solano counties (C&TW). Three migrant **Red-breasted Mergansers** were together at the Kern Water Bank near Buttonwillow in Kern County on 9 April (JCS), and three were along Able Road in Colusa NWR on 4 May (L&SA). **Black Rails** were found again with one at the Cosumnes River Preserve for the third straight spring on 28 April (JTr), one at White Slough WA in San Joaquin County 26 May (JRw+) where they are annually found, and El Dorado County's first in a small wetland in El Dorado Hills 1 May (CB) with 2-3 heard by many birders through the spring period.

As usual, a few scarce wintering and migrant shorebirds were reported. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was at the Gustine WTP in Merced County on 7 March (PDU) and another was at the Lodi WTP on 23 March (DGY). **Snowy Plovers** appeared where they are rare, including one just north of Delevan NWR in Colusa County on 3-6 April (SA+), one at Bridgeway Pond in West Sacramento, Yolo County on 22 March (MS), one at Llano Seco Road in Butte County on 6 April (MF+), and three at Granite Bay, Folsom Lake on 7 April (RPz). **Marbled Godwits** are scarce migrants north of the Tulare Basin. Two were at the Colusa NWR on 14 -25 April (L&SA) and one was at the Sacramento NWR, Glenn County on 22 April (KJ).

A rare inland **Sanderling** graced the Lincoln WTP on 21 April (PR+) for only about the 10th Placer County record. A Siberian vagrant **Ruff** was at Llano Seco Road in Butte County on 4-8 April (MF+) and another was just west of Alpaugh in Tulare County on 8-9 April (PM+), along with a **Stilt Sandpiper**. Yolo County hosted a **Stilt Sandpiper** at the Davis WTP on 7 May (SCH+) where it was joined by another on 10-14 May (SCH+) with a **Red Knot** (LS+). **Willetts** are rare north of the Tulare Basin. Noteworthy records were two at Black Butte Res. in Tehama County on 1 May (RW), one at Llano Seco Road on 21 April– 1 May (MF), one at 7 Mile Road in Butte County on 2 May, and one at Colusa NWR on 4-7 May (MSw+). Very rare in spring, a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the Olive City Agricultural and Nature Center provided one of very few Tehama County records (MSw) and another at the Yolo Bypass WA on 27 April (FF) was one of few spring Yolo County records.

Probably the same **Slaty-backed Gull** found in previous years at the landfill off Hwy 12 in Solano County was photographed on 5 March (RMu+). A

very late adult **Western Gull** lingered at the San Joaquin River NWR in Stanislaus County on 20 May (ErH). **Sabine's Gulls** are rare inland fall vagrants, so one at the Woodland WTP in Yolo County on 7 April (KB) was an astounding first spring record for the county.

Black Swifts are rarely detected migrants on the valley floor, so two at the San Joaquin River NWR on 13 May (BT) was quite a find and one of few Stanislaus County records. **Costa's Hummingbirds** can appear anywhere at any season in the valley, but are still rare and unexpected. A male visited a backyard in Red Bluff, Tehama County on 11 April (MSw), and another was at Dinosaur Point Road in Merced County on 14 April (PDU). The wintering Fresno **Vermilion Flycatcher** and **Cassin's Kingbird** were last reported on 4 March (EE) and 17 March (RSx), respectively. Tulare's first and long overdue **Cassin's Kingbird** was photographed at Pixley NWR on 27 March (DJ). It was the fifth kingbird species to be recorded in Tulare County. A migrant **Vermilion Flycatcher** was at the Kern Water Bank, Kern County on 3 April (JCS). The top bird of the season was the **Red-eyed Vireo** at the Sacramento NWR on 23-24 April (MSi+) that provided the first Glenn County record.

A **Palm Warbler** at White Slough WA in San Joaquin County on 2-9 April (JRw) was a great find. Amador County's first **Northern Parula** was on Irish Hill Road near Lone on 14 May (CG) and only the third vagrant warbler reported for that county. Another was at along vagrant hotspot of Putah Creek near Pedrick Road in Yolo and Solano counties on 28 May (TG+). An apparent immature **White-winged** subspecies of the **Dark-eyed Junco** was photographed at Lodi Lake on 3-5 March (DGY+). A big surprise was the adult male **Summer Tanager** visiting a feeder in Redding, Shasta County on 9-17 April (JM+), and one returned to Cosumnes River Preserve, Sacramento County for presumably its fourth summer on 28 May (CCo). Yolo's third **Baltimore Oriole** was a singing male near Lake Solano in both Yolo and Solano counties on 26 May (AE). Lastly, an **Indigo Bunting** was reported along Putah Creek on the Solano County side on 11 May (KS).

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