

# Central Valley and Foothills Bird Highlights: March through May 2019

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The **Red-throated Loon** found in late February was still at the deep-water channel in West Sacramento, Yolo County on 2 March (SSm). Two migrant **Common Loons** visited Lake Solano on Putah Creek, Yolo/Solano counties, on 14 March—3 April (EI+). The Central Valley's and Kern County's second **Neotropic Cormorant** was photographed at the Kern Water Bank on 12-15 May (JCS+). This private property also hosted a **Glossy Ibis** on 23 April providing Kern County with its long over-due first record (JCS). Another returned to the **White-faced Ibis** colony at the Woodland WTP, Yolo County on 19 May (LS+).

A gorgeous male **Garganey** was discovered in the throng of teal at Bridgeway Island Pond, West Sacramento on 1-20 March (GEw+) for the second documented record for Yolo County and one of few for the valley. A late migrant **Trumpeter Swan** stopped over at Dale Lake on 26-29 April (MSw+) providing another recent record for Tehama County. The wintering **White-winged Scoter** lingered until at least 28 March (EH, MM) at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery in Sacramento County.

The best bird of the season was the **Zone-tailed Hawk** photographed over the McFarland-Delano Landfill in Kern County on 18 April by an anonymous ebirder. This is the first documented record for the Central Valley.

A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was picked out of a large flock of Black-bellied Plovers just east of Tipton in Tulare County on 16 April (DF) for one of few county records. Shasta County's fourth **Snowy Plover** was at the Clear Creek WTP on 23 April (JSL) and a **Solitary Sandpiper** was there the following day (DPI). A **Snowy Plover** was also at the Colusa NWR along Abel Road, Colusa County on 8 May (MSw) for about the fourth county record. Another was at the Davis WTP on 6-9 May (HC) in Yolo County where annually found in spring in recent years. **Ruddy Turnstones** are rare anywhere inland, so two at the Davis WTP on 4-10 May (MPe) and one at the Woodland WTP on 13 May (MPe) were noteworthy for Yolo County. Even more rare inland with fewer than ten records for the Central Valley and the third record for Yolo County, two **Black Turnstones** joined the other turnstones at the Davis WTP on 4 May (MPe+), along with a rare **Stilt Sandpiper** on 6 May (SCH).

**Pectoral Sandpipers** are rare spring migrants in the state and are much more common in the fall. One was found at the Colusa NWR along Abel Road on 6-12 May (SA+) for one of few spring Colusa County records. Two

**Sanderlings** at the Fresno WTP in Fresno County on 29 April (RSx) were rare that far north in the valley. This primarily coastal species is only regularly found in the valley in the Tulare Lake Basin of Kings and Kern counties. **Baird's Sandpipers** are also rare in spring but regular in fall. Four visited the Davis WTP in Yolo County on 4-6 May (BW, SCH).

A **Ruff** was spotted at the Yolo Bypass W.A. on 21 April (AH), and it or another was at the North Regional Pond in Woodland on 29 April—1 May (KB).

A **Mew Gull**, rare in the valley away from the Delta was also present at the Clear Creek WTP in Shasta County on 2 March (DPI). The wintering first cycle **Glaucous Gull** at the Koster Road pit, San Joaquin County remained until at least 9 March (LC+). And another winter holdover was seen on 10 March at the Davis WTP in Yolo County on 11 March (JB, BW). An early and rare spring migrant **Franklin's Gull** at Beale's Point in Folsom Lake on 3 April (BB) was one of few records for Placer County.

A rare migrant **Black Swift** was seen over Carmichael in Sacramento County on 21 May (CH), and another was photographed over the Putah Creek canyon west of Winters in Yolo and Solano counties on 26 May (BW). The wintering **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Lost Lake Recreation Area remained until at least 9 March (JMCL). A first winter female **Vermilion Flycatcher** along Bruceville Road near the Cosumnes River Preserve in Sacramento County delighted many local birders from 9-12 March on this third county record (AK+). A nicely photographed **Eastern Phoebe** was at the Los Banos Wildlife Area in Merced County on 10 March (EV). The wintering juvenile **Northern Shrike** in Woodland, Yolo County remained until at least 14 March (JR). A **Plumbeous Vireo** was photographed on 30 March in Marriot Park, Sacramento County on 30 March (MS).

The wintering **Tennessee** and **Palm warblers** in Davis, Yolo County remained until at least 11 March and 21 March respectively (SCH, SBT, CD). A migrant **Northern Parula** brighten-up the Grasslands Park in Yolo County on 17 March (MPe). A singing male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** delighted homeowners near Meridian on 19 May (MF+). This was the second record for Sutter County. Another was in Clovis, Fresno County on 17 May (CHi, GF). A male **Summer Tanager** was photographed in Davis, Yolo County on 8 May (DL+). Grasslands Park hosted a **Green-tailed Towhee** on 28 May (MPe) for only the third spring record for Yolo County. Another was along Latrobe Road in eastern Sacramento County on 6 May (EH). A **Swamp Sparrow** found on 15 March (RS) at the Merced NWR, Merced County was likely an overwintering bird. A rare yard bird is always a treat and such was the **Baltimore Oriole** in Wilton, Sacramento County on 4 May (LP, FO).

As usual, a few **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, **Calliope Hummingbirds**, **Gray Flycatchers**, **Sage Thrashers** and **Brewer's Sparrows** were reported. These have proven to be regular spring migrants in small numbers. Therefore I did list each record in this report and will not in future spring reports.

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



On 19 May 2019, Matt Forster reported an adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) coming to a feeder located along South Meridian Rd., Sutter Co., California. Photo © John Sterling