

# 2020 Central Valley Photo Highlights

Compiled by Frances Oliver and Dan Brown

We had many great birds, some extremely rare in the Central Valley during 2020. Thanks goes to the many photographers who sent in their submissions for our journal. Unfortunately, due to space limitations we had to choose carefully to fit the allotted space. We look forward to the seeing the photos of birds for 2021!



The first Central Valley record of a Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) was found by Steve Summers at the Tulare WTP, Tulare Co. on 29 January 2020. It continued through 1 February. It was the 13<sup>th</sup> record for the state accepted by the California Bird Records Committee and the first for Northern California.

Photo @ Steve Summers.

The Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*), appears to be expanding their range. Once considered to be a Southern California rarity, they have been observed in a number of Central Valley counties including; Kings, Kern, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, and as of 2021 in Yuba.



This cormorant was photographed at the TLDD ponds, Kings Co. on 11 July 2020 by Mark Stacy.

On 5 October 2020, Chris Conard found a Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) at the Sacramento Regional WTP, Sacramento Co. This Red Knot is a third county record, and the first since 2000. It continued thru 8 October.

Photo @ Chris Conard.



It was a great fall season for shorebirds in Colusa County!

First, while looking for Pectoral Sandpipers, Jim Lomax found a first county Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) along Grimes-Arbuckle Rd. on 17 September 2020.

Photo @ Matt Forester.



Then, while searching for the Curlew Sandpiper a Reeve (*Calidris pugnax*) was discovered by Todd Easterla. Throughout the fall it continued to be spotted at several different locations in Colusa Co.

Photo @ Linda Pittman.





On 16 April 2020, while doing a survey along the Mohler Tract, San Joaquin River NWR, Jim Gain photographed a Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) lazily flying overhead between San Joaquin and Stanislaus Co. Unfortunately, it was only a one-hour wonder. This hawk was a first county record for both. And a first spring record for the Central Valley. *Photos @ Jim Gain.*



Chris Conard has documented Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) successfully nesting at the Sacramento Co. Bufferlands, Sacramento Co. most years since 2008. An adult was photographed on the nest on 7 July 2020 and the nestling on 13 July. *Photos @ Chris Conard.*



A Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) was observed flying around the Stony Gorge Reservoir on 28 January 2020 by Logan Kahle and Augie Kramer. A first county record, it continued to delight birders through 23 February.

*Photo @ Michele Swartout.*

The first documented valley record of a Barred Owl was in south Davis in Yolo County from 11 December 2019–12 January 2020. Originally, it was found roosting in a barn, then later along Willow Slough. See CV Birds 23:37-39.



Photo @ John Ehrenfeld.



Long-eared Owls (*Asio otus*) appear to be under-reported and/or recorded in eBird in Colusa Co., so this owl photographed on a daytime roost at Craig's Canyon on 24 February 2020 was a great find by Robert Keiffer. Unfortunately, though the area was searched carefully the next day, it was not re-found.

Photo @ Robert Keiffer.

A Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) was found at NE corner of the auto tour loop at Merced NWR, Merced Co. by Karen Evans on 28 October 2020. It continued to be reported sporadically through 10 January 2021.



Photo @ Ralph Baker.

On 5 October 2020, Linda Barth found a Chestnut-sided warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) in a willow by the Visitor Center at the Sacramento NWR, Glenn Co. It was a first county record, unfortunately it only stayed around for one day.



Photo @ Linda Barth.



On 27 May 2020, while birding at the Yolo County Grasslands Regional Park, Michael Perrone and Steve Hampton heard an interesting chip. Eventually they were able to visually confirm it as a Kentucky Warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*). A long overdue first county record. Throughout the day many birders attempted to photograph this bird with limited success. A very skulky bird.

Sketch by Ethan Monk.

Carla Barbero discovered the first Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*) on 15 September 2020 along the American River Parkway, Sacramento Co. Over the next six days, as many as three individuals were reported.



Photo @ Chris Conard.