

Central Valley Bird Highlights: March through May 2020

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Two **Pacific Loons** and a **Red-breasted Merganser** were on Comanche Res. in Amador and Calaveras counties on 3 March (JSL+). Another **Pacific Loon** was at Lake Ming in Bakersfield, Kern County until at least 26 April (K&BK). With two records of male **Garganey** in winter, another was discovered on Staten Island on 19 March (BS) for a first San Joaquin County record. Another **Red-breasted Merganser** was on Lake Success in Tulare County on 13 March (DFg). A **Sandhill Crane** was at the Kern Water Bank on 30 March (JCS). This species congregates in nearby Pixley NWR in Tulare County but rarely wanders south to Kern County. A probable pure **Glossy Ibis** was photographed along Desmond Road in Sacramento County on 6 May (JHm) for what would be the first county record if accepted by the CBRC.

What may have been the same **Marsh Sandpiper** seen on alternate years in Yolo and Solano counties was found on 29 March at the Kern NWR (WR) for Kern County's first record of this extremely rare Eurasian shorebird.

A **Snowy Plover** was at the Sacramento NWR on 1-6 April (LK) for one of few Glenn County records, and up to two were at Llano Seco in Butte County on 20-22 April (MF, DB) where this species has been seen in several prior years. More surprising was the Snowy Plover at Granite Bay on Folsom Lake in Placer County on 6 April (RPz). **Solitary Sandpipers** are regular spring migrants in very small numbers and are always noteworthy. One was at the San Joaquin River NWR in Stanislaus County on 22 April (JG), two were in Merced County with one at Wilson Road on 19-21 April (JLx+) and San Luis NWR on 20 April (RB), and one was on Sherman Island in Sacramento County on 22 April (JRg). The Woodland WTP in Yolo County had rare shorebirds once again with a **Stilt Sandpiper** on 14 April (BW) and a **Sanderling** on 18 May (LE) in breeding plumage which is rarely seen in the Central Valley. Up to three **Red Phalaropes** were near the Davis Wetlands on 18 May (JT) for one of few Yolo County records. A first cycle **Glaucous-winged Gull** and a **Mew Gull** were along Poundstone Rd in Colusa County where rare on 5 March (JLx) and 6-7 March (MRz), respectively. A first cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was on Folsom Lake, Placer County on 21 March (RPz). The only **Franklin's Gull** reported was in a rice field along Richvale Hwy in Butte County on 23-26 May (EM+).

The first spring record for the Central Valley of a **Broad-winged Hawk** was photographed at the San Joaquin River NWR in both San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties (first county records) on 16 April (JG). This rare hawk is mostly seen as a rare fall migrant and winter visitor on the coast with increasing records in recent springs. But there are very few records for the Central Valley at any season.

A **Costa's Hummingbird** was heard and photographed near Redding in Shasta County on 31 March (GH). Colusa County's long overdue first **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found in the town of Colusa on 14-15 March (LS, LC+). A **Dusky Flycatcher** missing its tail in Davis on 5 March to 12 April likely wintered locally (SCH+) as they don't migrate through until at least mid-April. There is one previous winter record for Yolo County. A **Northern Shrike** near Butte City was photographed on 1-5 March (MF) and undoubtedly wintered locally. A very rare migrant **Purple Martin** at Sacramento NWR on 5 April (AH) was one of few valley records for Glenn and adjacent counties. A rare spring **Townsend's Solitaire** was at the Odd Fellows Lawn Cemetery in Sacramento on 21 April (LE). Most valley records are of fall and winter vagrants.

Yolo's first **Kentucky Warbler** crept around the Grasslands County Park on 27 May (MPe+) where it was detected off and on through the day until dusk when it sang high in a tree at just prior to departing. Another first for Yolo County was a **Virginia's Warbler** outside of the Central Valley boundary at the summit of Rayhouse Road on 26 April (AH). A male **Tennessee Warbler** was photographed at the Yolo Bypass WA on 9 May (MD) added to Yolo County's spring warbler list. Bidwell Park in Butte County had a visiting **Black-and-white Warbler** on 20 May (WH). The Consumnes River Preserve in Sacramento County once again hosted a **Hooded Warbler** (fifth for the reserve) on 29 May (AE). This was quite a spring for the extremely rare **Worm-eating Warbler** in the region which had only four prior records. Shasta County's first record was in Igo in Shasta County on 16 May (EO), and another was Red Hill Management Area in Tuolumne County also on 16 May (GA).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak is an annual spring vagrant in the valley with most records at backyard feeders including one in Modesto on 17 May (JG) for one of few Stanislaus County records and two in Shasta County with one at Clover Creek Preserve on 17 May (JSu) and Redding (KT). An **Evening Grosbeak** visited a yard in Sacramento on 9 March (JHm). Solano County's first documented **Sagebrush Sparrow** was a great find along Robinson Rd on 3 March (CDh+).

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 will not be listing each record in this report and in future spring reports.

Wintering birds that were reported into the spring season included the Colusa **Garganey** 13 April, Sacramento **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** 3 April, Kings **Brown Pelican** 30 March, Yolo **Lesser Black-backed Gull** 17 March, Sacramento **Hammond's Flycatcher** 21 March, Madera **Vermilion Flycatcher** 20 March, Colusa **Northern Shrike** 15 March, Yolo **Cassin's Vireo** 6 March, Sacramento **Clay-colored Sparrow** 9 March, and Yolo **Swamp Sparrow** 29 March.

Thanks to the following observers who reported their significant findings to the Club's listserv and/or to eBird; Diego Bustamante, Lucas Corneliussen, Matthew Doyle, Cedric Duhalde (CDh), Leo Edson, Andy Engilis Jr (AE), Dane Fagundes, George Folsom, Matt Forster, Jim Gain, Geoffrey Hembold, Wyatt Hersey, Adrian Hinkle, James Holmes (JHm), Logan Kahle, Ken & Brenda Kyle, Jim Lomax (JLx), John Luther (JSL), Eric Ongman, Michael Perrone (MPe), Ron Pozzi, Mark Rauzon (MRz), Jason Riggio (JRg), William Rockey, Ben Stalheim, Lucas Stephenson, Joan Suther, Kenneth Tarbox, Jim Thomas, John Trochet (JTr) and Bart Wickel.

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

Correction: Ron Pozzi found the Franklin's Gull at Beal's Point at Folsom Lake in Placer County on 2 April 2019 and it was seen the following day.



Dusky Flycatcher (*Empidonax oberholseri*). Rollingwood Bluffs, Sacramento Co. 19 May 2020.

Photo @ Max Brodie.