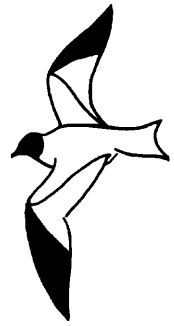


WESTERN BIRDS



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TWENTIETH REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 1994 RECORDS

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This report covers 167 records of 75 species submitted by 158 observers to the California Bird Records Committee (hereafter the CBRC or the Committee). The 130 records accepted, of 57 species, represent an acceptance rate of 77.8%. They pertain to 24 counties, with most being from San Francisco (16 accepted records, all from SE Farallon I.), Los Angeles (15), Monterey (12), Marin (11), and Orange (11).

The records in this report span the period 1978–1995, with the great majority from 1994; records relating to 1995 refer to long-staying birds first found in 1994 or earlier. Three species (Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Dark-rumped Petrel, Greater Shearwater) are added to the state list on the basis of well-documented records. Other highlights of 1994 include a Roseate Spoonbill, a Whooper Swan, a Little Curlew, two Red-necked Stints, an adult Sooty Tern, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, a singing Eastern Wood-Pewee, a Louisiana Waterthrush, an overwintering adult male Mourning Warbler, and two Field Sparrows.

Committee News. At the January 1997 meeting in Camarillo, it was agreed that the Secretary need not necessarily be one of the ten voting members of the Committee and that the present roles of Secretary would be spread between a voting Chairperson, and a voting or nonvoting Secretary. Subsequently, Richard A. Erickson was elected Chairperson and David V. Blue was elected nonvoting Secretary.

The Committee's membership at the close of the 1997 meeting was Richard A. Erickson (Chairperson), Scott B. Terrill (Vice Chair), David V. Blue (nonvoting Secretary), Kimball L. Garrett, Steve N. G. Howell, Guy McCaskie, Joseph Morlan, Peter Pyle, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Mike San Miguel, and Daniel S. Singer.

Potential first-state records currently under review by the CBRC include the Shy Albatross (*Diomedea cauta*), Parkinson's Petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*), Great-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*), Bulwer's Petrel

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(*Bulweria bulwerii*), Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*), Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), Red-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa brevirostris*), Swallow-tailed Gull (*Creagrus furcatus*), White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*), Buff-collared Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ridgwayi*), Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) and Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*). Recently accepted first state records are of the Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) and Lanceolated Warbler (*Locustella lanceolata*; Hickey et al. 1996), bringing the state list to 595 as of 18 January 1997.

CBRC Functions. All records reviewed by the CBRC (including copies of descriptions, photographs, videotapes, voice recordings, and Committee comments) are archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, California 93012, and are available for public review. The CBRC solicits and encourages observers to submit documentation for all species on its Review List (see Roberson 1993), as well as species unrecorded in California. Please note that records formerly sent to Michael A. Patten should now be directed to David V. Blue, CBRC Secretary, 1013 Heritage Drive, Ridgecrest, CA 93555-5509.

Documentation/Descriptions. It should be noted that most records not accepted achieved this status not because the Committee felt a mistake had been made but rather because the documentation provided did not establish the identification beyond reasonable doubt. Many birders do not take field notes or look critically at birds they find, and many rely on cameras or other technology to fill in the gaps. But if that film is damaged or lost there is no documentation. We can only encourage observers to train their minds to describe what they see and to practice writing descriptions and making sketches (even simple or crude sketches can be most helpful). Consider writing notes and making sketches for a familiar and common bird like a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). This species (it must have some use!) is a good subject for honing your observational skills, rather than trying to develop them only when confronted with a rarity.

Persons submitting photographs should send at least a cover sheet with the circumstances of the observation, weather conditions, distance from the bird, etc., as well as the date and location. Records consisting of a photograph *only* are not looked upon favorably by CBRC members, some of whom reject outright any such records! Therefore, if you take the time to send photos, the record will be enhanced greatly, to your credit and to everyone's benefit, by an accompanying written account (albeit brief) of the sighting.

Legible writing is also appreciated for any record submitted to the CBRC—at least one observer has not been credited in this report because we could not decipher his/her handwriting!

Seabird Documentation. Seabirds present a special situation deserving some comment. Erickson and Terrill (1996) noted briefly some problems associated with records of pelagic birds and here we discuss factors observers should consider when documenting their sightings. The problems of an unstable observation platform and, usually, briefer views of a bird than one might like, are compounded by the fact that most seabird rarities are unfamiliar to the majority of birders, who make at most one or two pelagic

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trips a year. In such instances, photos can be a real boon in evaluating an identification. At the same time, critical written descriptions and sketches can also be very useful, perhaps providing important information that a photo may not show.

Certain basic details of a seabird observation should accompany any such record (photographic or sight). A simple sketch (Figure 1) can serve to convey much of the important information about the bird's flight path relative to your position, to the sun, and to the wind direction and strength. Flight paths A and B (Figure 1) clearly represent two very different observation scenarios, although a brief sentence summarizing the circumstances could make both sound the same: bird A is going in the direction opposite to

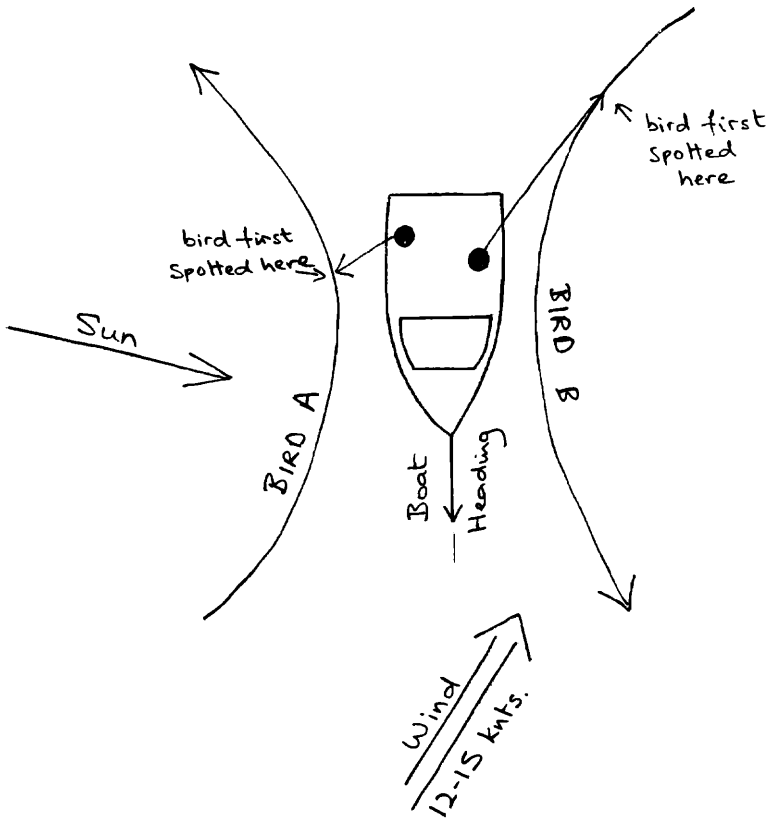


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of a boat and its heading, observer positions on the boat, the sun's relative position (even if overcast), the direction and strength of the wind, and two birds' flight paths relative to an observer and the boat. These details should be noted in descriptions of seabirds.

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the ship's, with the wind, and against the sun; bird B is going with the ship, against the wind, and in good light, and therefore could be watched for longer and in far better light than bird A.

Flight behavior, while often of help in identification, is primarily of use when synthesized with a number of variables and, like so many factors, depends greatly upon an observer's experience. Relying upon a single flight style, which may be touted as diagnostic by field guides, can lead to misidentifications. Flight manner may be broken into four broad categories that seabird researchers have recognized and used in data collection for many years (e.g., Spear and Ainley 1997a,b): direct flight (transiting or migration), non-directional flight ("milling"), feeding or foraging flight, and escape flight (in response to being disturbed by a boat or a predator, such as a jaeger). Each of these categories varies with wind strength, which can be calm (0–2 knots), light (3–9 knots), moderate (10–19 knots), or strong (20–30+ knots). Crudely, this can mean 4 flight manners \times 4 wind speeds = 16 flight manners. In addition, a bird's flight direction relative to wind direction can also affect greatly its flight manner: the three main categories here are

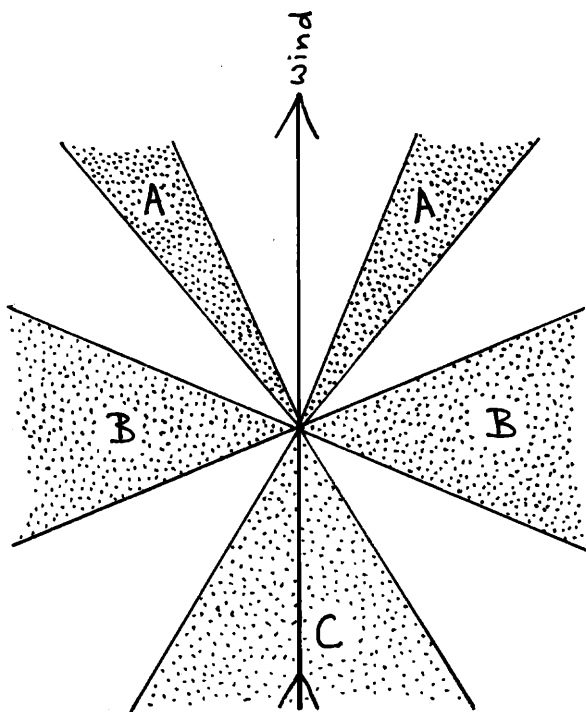


Figure 2. Bird flight paths relative to the wind: A, flying with the wind (rarely do birds fly with the wind directly astern); B, across the wind; C, into (or against) the wind.

into the wind, with the wind, and across the wind (Figure 2). Consequently, 16×3 gives a minimum of 48 potential flight styles for a single bird! Many seabird species show similar overall variations in flight manner.

For example, a Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) feeding into a light to moderate wind often beats its wings fairly steadily, then banks back into a glide with the wind before turning and beating into the wind again (much as a tern does over a lake). However, a Leach's Storm-Petrel transiting across or with a moderate to strong wind can travel by a progression of long, shearing glides interspersed with short bursts of brief flapping.

Although evaluating a bird's flight behavior often requires some comparative experience, noting its flight direction relative to the wind, and wind speed, is fairly straightforward. Another trick to practice is noting how a bird holds its wings, as viewed head-on, and through how much of an arc the wings are flapped, especially relative to a horizontal plane. Our intent is not to discourage observers from ever setting foot again on a ship (!) but to draw attention to many factors that should be considered in observing seabirds. As with describing and sketching a House Sparrow, you can practice with sketches of flight direction, wind speed, ship direction, etc., on those long stretches punctuated by little but Sooty Shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus*) or Black Storm-Petrels (*Oceanodroma melania*).

Format and Abbreviations: As in other recent CBRC reports, records are listed geographically, from north to south, and/or chronologically by first date of occurrence. Included with each record is the location, county abbreviation (see below), and date span. The date span usually follows that published in *National Audubon Society Field Notes* but, if the CBRC accepts a date span that differs from a published source, the differing dates are italicized. Initials of the observer(s) responsible for first identifying the bird (if known and if they have supplied documentation) are followed by a semicolon, then the initials of additional observers submitting documentation, then the CBRC record number. All records are sight records unless indicated otherwise: initials followed by a dagger (†) indicate the observer supplied an identifiable photograph; (‡) indicates videotape; (§) indicates a voice recording; and (#) indicates a specimen record, followed by the acronym (see below) for the institution housing the specimen and that institution's specimen number.

An asterisk (*) prior to a species' name indicates that the species is no longer on the CBRC Review List. The number in parentheses after the species' name is the number of records accepted by the CBRC through this report. Two asterisks (**) after the species' total indicate that the number of accepted records refers only to a restricted review period or includes records accepted for statistical purposes only—see Roberson (1986) for more information.

When individual birds return to a location after a lengthy or seasonal absence, each occurrence is reviewed under a separate record number, and the Committee members indicate whether or not they believe the bird is the same individual as one accepted previously. Such decisions follow the opinion of the majority of members and, if a bird is considered a returning individual, the total number of records remains unchanged.

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Although the CBRC does not formally review the age, sex, or subspecies of rarities, information on these subjects is often provided during the review process. We have distilled much of this information into the following species accounts, while accepting responsibility for our interpretations of the Committee's comments. Intensive study of molt and age determination of nonpasserine land birds (doves through woodpeckers of AOU 1983 sequence) and passerines for a forthcoming identification manual (Pyle, in press) has refined our treatment of ageing/sexing birds reported here. Observers should recognize, however, that without considerable comparative experience, precise ageing/sexing of many species often may not be possible in the field.

The CBRC uses standardized abbreviations for California counties; those used in this report are ALA, Alameda; COL, Colusa; CC, Contra Costa; DN, Del Norte; IMP, Imperial; INY, Inyo; KER, Kern; LA, Los Angeles; MRN, Marin; MER, Merced; MNO, Mono; MTY, Monterey; ORA, Orange; RIV, Riverside; SBE, San Bernadino; SD, San Diego; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SLO, San Luis Obispo; SM, San Mateo; SBA, Santa Barbara; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SIS, Siskiyou; SON, Sonoma; VEN, Ventura.

Museums that house specimen records reported here, have allowed CBRC members access to specimens in their care, or are otherwise cited, are abbreviated as follows: CAS, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco; LACM, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History; SBCM, San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands. Other museum collections used regularly by Committee members include the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, the San Diego Natural History Museum, and the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

YELLOW-BILLED LOON *Gavia adamsii* (56). Three different individuals (summed into a single record because of confusion over how many immatures were seen, when and by whom) were in Monterey Bay, MTY, during mid November 1994 to mid March 1995: an adult, initially in alternate plumage, 7 Nov 1994–26 Mar 1995, and single immatures 12 Dec 1994–19 Mar 1995 and 29 Dec 1994–19 Mar 1995 (SFB, ADeM, TE, LL‡, GMcCh, JP, DR, SCR, DLS†, RLT†; 178-1994). A videotape of all three birds on 19 March 1995 helped the CBRC evaluate how many birds were involved in this unprecedented record.

LIGHT-MANTLED SOOTY ALBATROSS *Phoebastria palpebrata* (1). A single bird at Cordell Bank, MRN, 17 Jul 1994 (RS†; LL‡, BDP, LT‡, SBT†, AW†; 124-1994; Figures 3–4; photo in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 48:985) furnished the first Northern Hemisphere record for this beautiful subantarctic albatross. The issue of possible ship assistance was raised and felt to be unlikely, given the history of regular occurrence by Southern Hemisphere albatrosses in the Northern Hemisphere, albeit mainly in the Atlantic Ocean. The A.O.U. (1983) has abbreviated this species' traditional name, which we prefer, to "Light-mantled Albatross."

DARK-RUMPED PETREL *Pterodroma phaeopygia* (2). Single birds seen and well described at 37° 5.27' N, 123° 56.04' W (69.2 n. miles SW of Pt Reyes, MRN), 3 May 1992 (SFB, JDr, CBH, RWH, KHo, CHd, RN, GFW; 130-1992) and at 38° 28.0' N,

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122° 27.1' W (approximately 29 miles W of Granite Canyon, MTY), 26 Jun 1994 (SCR†; 121-1994; Figure 5), are the first accepted records of this species from California waters, where its occurrence had been anticipated (Pyle et al. 1993).

Although the provenance of California birds cannot be determined, the Hawaiian population (versus the Galapagos) seems more likely, cf. Spear et al. (1995). Sibley and Monroe (1993) treated these two forms as separate species, stating that they differ "in vocalizations and morphology to a degree suggesting specific status." This split is based upon Tomkins and Milne (1991), who did not, however, advocate specific status for the two forms and who properly noted that further study is needed.

Despite the statistical significance of differences in certain measurements between Galapagos and Hawaiian forms (Tomkins and Milne 1991: table 5), the overall differences are slight in absolute terms and unlikely to be of use at sea. Also, while Tomkins and Milne (1991: 33) cited Loomis (1918) as detailing plumage variation between the Galapagos and Hawaiian forms, that author (p. 101-102) noted overlap in both size and plumage between the two. Nonetheless, Hawaiian birds average larger (e.g., mean wing "length" of 312 mm versus 291 mm in Galapagos birds; Tomkins and Milne 1991: table 5) and appear consistently to have an all-white forehead, which in Galapagos birds is often (but not always) marked with slight dark freckling. For now then, forehead pattern is about all that birders have to go on, and an all-white forehead is equivocal! As with other petrels, however, critical appraisal of underwing patterns might reveal some differences; such an examination appears not to have been made, probably due largely to the traditional preparation of specimens, which have their wings tightly closed.

*MURPHY'S PETREL *Pterodroma ultima* (118). Four individual birds seen approximately 15-20 miles W of Cordell Bank, MRN, 1 Jun 1986 (ADB, JMD†, RAE, GSL, ML, GWW†, DGY; 401-1986, 402-1986, 403-1986, 404-1986) and one bird approximately 15 miles W of Cordell Bank, MRN, 7 Jun 1986 (DDeS; 406-1986) have been accepted as Murphy's Petrels, although two of the records (402-1986, 404-1986) were originally submitted as pertaining to Solander's Petrel (*P. solandri*). While Murphy's Petrel has proved to be a regular visitor to offshore California waters, there are no accepted state records of Solander's Petrel, a species of the western Pacific Ocean. See also under Records Not Accepted.

GREATER SHEARWATER *Puffinus gravis* (1). One was in Monterey Bay, MTY, 1-2 Oct 1994 (DLS; JMD†, RAE, GMcCa, DR; 144-1994; photos in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 49:95); a search on 3 October failed to find the bird. Despite this bird's being seen by numerous observers, only three full descriptions and one set of photographs were received. Ironically, this species was removed recently from the California state list (Erickson and Terrill 1996) on the basis of re-evaluation of a report from Monterey Bay in February 1979.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus* (9). This species was added to the state list on the basis of several well-documented records in 1993 (Erickson and Terrill 1996), and the trend continued in 1994: one was about 5 miles W of Davenport, SCZ, 29 Aug 1994 (SFB; 131-1994), up to three birds were off Pt. Pinos, MTY, 21 Sep-5 Oct 1994 (JLD; ABu, RAE, GMcCa, JM, DR†; 152-1994), two were off Morro Bay, SLO, at 35° 17.32' N, 121° 0.51' W on 2 Oct 1994 (JB, CHd, BS†; 140-1994), one was 3 miles SW of Table Rock, SCZ, 17 Dec 1994 (SA, DLS; 36-1995), and one was in Monterey Bay, MTY/SCZ, 30 Dec 1994 (SFB, DLS; 2-1995).

RED-TAILED TROPICBIRD *Phaethon rubricauda* (12). An adult was seen approximately 160 n. miles WSW of San Nicolas I., VEN, on 25 Jan 1994 (PP†; 52-1994), and an immature 84 n. miles W of San Nicolas I., VEN, on 29 Jan 1994 (PP; 53-1994). These parallel two January records in 1993 (Erickson and Terrill 1996),

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suggesting that this species may be regular in winter far offshore of southern California.

MASKED BOOBY *Sula dactylatra* (7). A yellow-billed adult flew past SE Farallon I., SF, 9 Aug 1994 (PP; DWH; 181-1994), about 90 minutes after the observers had found an immature Brown Booby! A first-year bird was seen 3 miles S of White Point, LA, 30 Apr 1994 (MSM, SLW†; 84-1994).

The distribution of the different forms of Masked Boobies in the eastern Pacific Ocean presents an interesting pattern, noted in part by Patten and Erickson (1994), and more than one species may be involved (R. L. Pitman and J. R. Jehl, Jr., unpubl. data). Yellow-billed birds nest in Hawaii (*S. d. personata*), off western Mexico and on Clipperton I. (*S. d. californica*), and off Chile on San Ambrosio, San Felix, and Easter islands [subspecies unknown; attributed incorrectly to *granti* by Johnson (1965) and Patten and Erickson (1994)]. Birds nesting on the Galapagos and Malpelo I. (*S. d. granti*) are orange-billed, and adults and subadults are separated readily at sea from yellow-billed birds. On Clipperton and Mexico's Revillagigedo Islands, small numbers of *granti* nest among the many *californica* and mate assortatively, with little or no interbreeding (Pitman and Jehl unpubl. data).

Yellow-billed birds are more pelagic than *granti*, which favors more inshore waters for feeding and occurs commonly off SW Mexico (Howell and Engel 1993, Pitman and Jehl unpubl. data); *granti* also has been recorded in the Gulf of California (Tershy and Breese 1997) and off the Pacific coast of Baja California (Pitman and Jehl unpubl. data). Anyone lucky enough to see an adult or near-adult Masked Booby in California should make an effort to determine the bird's bill color.

BROWN BOOBY *Sula leucogaster* (44). Single first-year birds were at SE Farallon I., SF, 9 Aug–4 Sep 1994 (DWH, PPT; JM; 182-1994) and at the Angel's Gate entrance to Los Angeles harbor, LA, 14 Aug 1994 (JKA, KL†; 129-1994), continuing the trend of autumn records noted in 1993 by Erickson and Terrill (1996).

RED-FOOTED BOOBY *Sula sula* (11). A sick brown-morph bird found on the beach near Daly City, SM, 13 Jun 1994, was picked up dead there the next day (RB, KC; JM; 101-1994; #CAS 85273).

TRICOLORED HERON *Egretta tricolor* (14**). An immature at the NW corner of the Salton Sea, RIV, 2 Jan–12 Feb 1994 (GMcCa, MAP; 1-1994) was considered probably different from a bird at the mouth of the Whitewater R., 1 Oct 1993 (21-1994; Erickson and Terrill 1996). One and probably two adults, plus two begging juveniles, were at Ramer Lake, IMP, 6–14 Aug 1994 (GMcCa, MAP; 126-1994), implying that this species nested there amid the large heronry. Three alternate-plumaged adults at Obsidian Butte, IMP, 16 Jul 1994, with one adult seen there again on 23 Jul and 14 Aug 1994 (GMcCa, KLG, MAP; 107-1994), may have involved one or more of the Ramer Lake adults.

REDDISH EGRET *Egretta rufescens* (68). Single adults were at Seal Beach NWR, ORA, 24–30 Apr 1994 (JFt, DRW; 82-1994), at Bolsa Chica, ORA, 29 Apr–31 May 1994 (BED, RAE, DRW; 113-1994), and at Point Firmin, LA, 1 May 1994 (KL; 97-1994). Single immatures were at Obsidian Butte, IMP, 4 Sep 1994 (KLG; 202-1994) and at Famosa Slough/San Diego R. mouth, SD, 5 Nov 1994–15 Apr 1995 (SEF, MAP; 3-1995). An adult at Chula Vista, SD, 28 Aug–23 Dec 1994 (GMcCa; 155-1994) is considered a returning bird (with a deformed bill) that first appeared at the S end of San Diego Bay in 1982 (see Erickson and Terrill 1996). All accepted state records have been of dark-morph birds and are presumed to be of the northwest Mexican race *E. r. dickeyi*, in which a white morph is unreported.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nycticorax violaceus* (16). An adult at La Jolla, SD, 22 Jan 1994–26 Feb 1995 (PEL, SBT†; 60-1994) is considered the same



Figure 3. Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Cordell Bank, Marin Co., 17 Jun 1994. Given such a view, this species is unmistakable: note the smooth-looking pale body in contrast to the dark hood and wings and, in particular, the pale blue line along the side of the lower mandible.

Photo by Scott B. Terrill

as that first seen near there in October 1981 (Binford 1985, Erickson and Terrill 1996). It is easy to “overlook” returning birds and assume (often wrongly) that someone else will document them: this bird barely made the report, and the Committee greatly appreciates the four-line description and two poor photographs submitted!

ROSEATE SPOONBILL *Ajaia ajaja* (5**). An immature at Fig Lagoon, 2 mi. SW of Seeley, IMP, 27–30 Dec 1994 (GMcCa, MAP†, BDS; 207-1994) was the first recorded in California since 1983. Committee review of this species began only after 1977.

WHOOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* (2). An adult was at Lower Klamath NWR, SIS, 24 Nov 1991–18 Jan 1992 (RE; JA, SFB, JLD, SEF, FG, CM†, GMcCa, DLR, DR†, JS, MMT†, LT, SBT; 197-1991). California’s first Whooper Swan was an adult near Grimes, COL, in January 1984 (Roberson 1986). Subsequent late-winter reports, all of a single adult, in California (Klamath Basin and Sacramento Valley, 1992/1993 through 1995/1996) and early-winter reports from Oregon (Summer Lake Wildlife Area, Nov–Dec 1994 and Nov–Dec 1995, presumably *en route* to points south) may be recurrences of this single bird.

EMPEROR GOOSE *Chen canagica* (59). A first-year bird was at Bodega, SON, 26 Dec 1994–6 Jun 1995 (JAMcD; KFC, EG†, GMcCa, JM, BDP, DR, SCR, DSg, EGS; 5-1995).

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Figure 4. Light-mantled Sooty Albatross with Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*), Cordell Bank, Marin Co., 17 Jun 1994. A unique combination: note the distinctly different shapes of these two albatross genera.

Photo by Scott B. Terrill



Figure 5. Dark-rumped Petrel, 29 miles W Granite Canyon, Monterey Co., 26 Jun 1994. On the upperparts, note the long, tapered tail and long wings, typical of the Dark-rumped and Juan Fernandez (*Pterodroma externa*) petrels. The view of the underparts shows the dark underwing bar, dark hood, and long-winged appearance, diagnostic of the Dark-rumped Petrel.

Photos by Stephen C. Rottenborn

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KING EIDER *Somateria spectabilis* (33). An immature male at Redondo Beach, LA, 28 May 1992 (JKAT; 130-1994) was considered probably the same individual as that at Seal Beach, ORA, 13-31 Dec 1991 and at Belmont Shores, LA, 9-17 Jan 1992 (213-1991). The discussion of this question revealed how little we know about the (winter) molt of immature King Eiders; a better understanding of the extent and timing of molts could lead to a re-evaluation of the same-bird question.

MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis* (26). A bird in first-basic plumage was seen along the Owens River, 9 miles W of Westgard Pass, INY, 26 May 1994 (HK, 96-1994).

ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus* (48). In spring, single adults were reported over Valyermo, LA, 25 Apr 1994 (MSM; 83-1994) and over California City, KER, 26 May 1994 (GTO; 98-1994). Birds considered to be returning adults, at Goleta, SBA, 24 Aug 1994-16 Jan 1995 (ZL; ABi, SEFT, PEL, CM, GMcCa; 128-1994) and Laguna Hills, ORA, 17 Dec 1994-22 Jan 1995 (JEP; SEFT, GMcCa; 17-1995), and single juveniles at East Hicks Canyon, ORA, 12 Sep 1994 (KFC; 171-1994) and over Kit Carson Park, Escondido, SD, 19 Nov 1994 (GMcCa; 175-1994) are typical of the pattern in recent years, with a few birds occurring through autumn and winter in southern California. Descriptions of these birds varied in quality from poor (mostly) to good, and the descriptions of one supposedly returning wintering bird vacillated between characters more typical of a juvenile to those of an adult (despite this, the record was accepted!) Observers confronted with a Zone-tailed Hawk are cautioned to note the tail pattern carefully and, if possible, to sketch it. We note here that, *contra* Clark and Wheeler (1987), followed by Erickson and Terrill (1996), Zone-tailed Hawks are not sexed reliably by tail patterns, although there is a tendency for the sexes to differ (American Museum of Natural History specimens examined critically by Howell and sexed by unequivocal measurements). Also see Records Not Accepted.

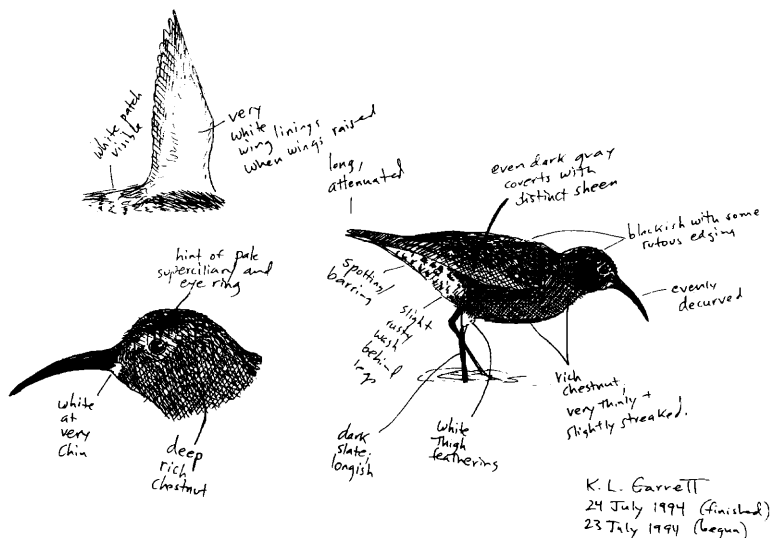


Figure 6. Curlew Sandpiper, Edwards Air Force Base, Los Angeles Co., 23 Jul 1994.

Sketch by Kimball L. Garrett

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UPLAND SANDPIPER *Bartramia longicauda* (14). One at Twentynine Palms, SBE, 28 Sep 1994 (EAC†; 25-2995) was the latest for California by a week. Unfortunately, no written details accompanied the photograph, causing one member to reject the record (see the introduction to this report).

LITTLE CURLEW *Numenius minutus* (4). An adult at Carmel R. SB, MTY, 6–28 Sep 1994 (BHI; JLD†, EG†, DPH, LL†, JM, DEQ, DR†, SCR, LT, SBT, BJW†; 137-1994; photo in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 49:97) was considered by only three Committee members to be the same bird as that at the Santa Maria R. estuary in August 1993 (125-1993; Erickson and Terrill 1996) and thus is treated here as a new record.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* (17). Single first-year birds showing the characters of the expected race *baueri* were at Moonglow Dairy, Moss Landing, MTY, 5–8 Sep 1994 (RC, DR†; BJW; 139-1994) and at Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, 9–24 Sep 1994 (NL, MM, JM, MMR†, SCR, SBT; 138-1994; photo in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 49:97).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* (6). A juvenile was found at Bolinas Sewer Ponds, MRN, on 22 Sep 1994, and what was considered to be the same bird, molting into first-basic plumage, was seen there again 9–10 Oct 1994 (TE†; SNGH; 204-1994).

RED-NECKED STINT *Calidris ruficollis* (8). Single alternate-plumage adults were at the Santa Clara R. estuary, VEN, 29 Jun–2 Jul 1994 (DDj†, SEF, PEL, NL, JM, MAP; 103-1994) and at the Santa Maria R. estuary, SBA, 11–15 Jul 1994 (BHn†; AME, RST†; 110-1994).

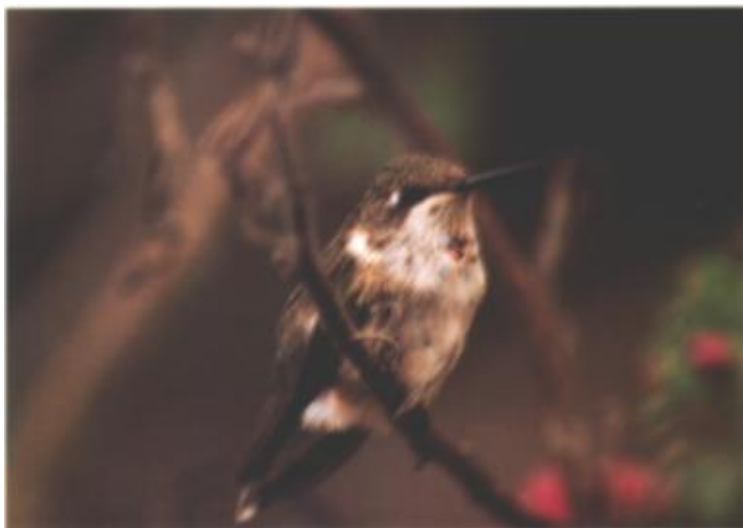
Unlike the Little Stint, for which four of the six accepted California records have been of juveniles, all of the accepted Red-necked Stints have been adults in alternate plumage [despite the efforts of Veit (1988), the identification of a molting one-year-old



Figure 7. Adult Sooty Tern at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co., 10 Aug 1994.

Photo by Peter Knapp

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Figures 8 and 9. Immature male Ruby-throated Hummingbird, SE Farallon I., SF, 7 September 1994. In particular, note the short bill and deep emerald-green, buff-fringed upperparts, including the crown. The blackish lores, whitish throat and underparts, and white postocular spot (versus line) eliminate Anna's, Costa's, and other similar North American hummingbirds.

Photos by Steve N. G. Howell

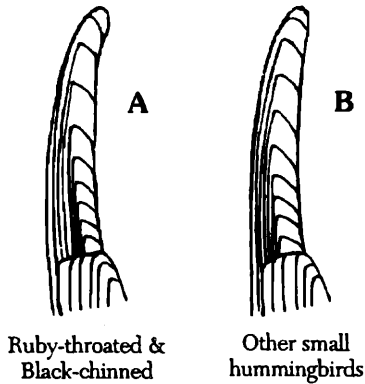


Figure 10. Shape of the closed primaries on A, *Archilochus* hummingbirds (Ruby-throated and Black-chinned); B, *Calypte* hummingbirds (Anna's and Costa's). With good views in the field, the relatively narrow inner six primaries of *Archilochus* are visible.

Sketch by Steve N. G. Howell, from Pyle (in press)

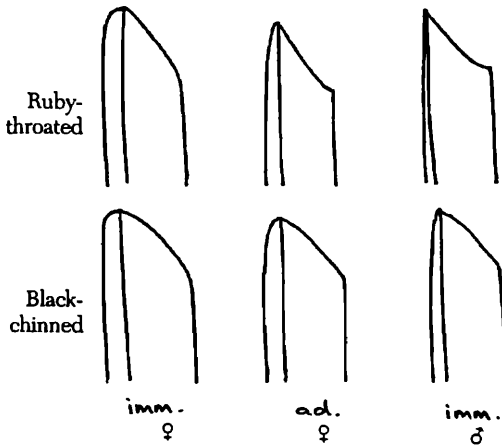


Figure 11. Differences in the shapes of primary 6 (numbered distally) of Ruby-throated and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, by age and sex. Note that the shape of this primary (blunt in females, pointed in males) can be used to sex autumn immatures (distinguished from adults by their fresh, buff-tipped upperparts). The "step" on the inner web, in combination with a more pointed tip, is helpful in distinguishing adult female and immature male Ruby-throateds from the Black-chinned; the feather shapes are more similar, however, in immature females.

Sketch by Steve N. G. Howell, from Pyle (in press)

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bird collected at the south end of Salton Sea 17 Aug 1974 [McCaskie 1975] remains problematical and the CBRC has not accepted the record]. We suspect that this difference reflects an identification dilemma rather than a difference in the status of the age classes between these species.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* (18). One, starting its molt into alternate plumage, was at the mouth of the Whitewater R., Salton Sea, RIV, 16–26 Apr 1994 (TC, PAG, GMcCa; GCH, MAP; 76-1994; #SBCM 54281); on the last date it was shot by GCH and proved to be a female with ovary measuring 1.8×2.5 mm. An alternate-plumaged adult was at Piute Ponds, Edwards Air Force Base, LA, 23–24 Jul 1994 (NBB†, KLG, MSM; GM†; 108-1994; Figure 6).

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus* (53). An adult and two first-winter birds were among a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls (*L. philadelphia*) at the Niland Marina, SE corner of Salton Sea, IMP, 24 Jan–17 Feb 1994; the two immatures were still present 24 Feb, with one found dead there on 26 Feb (KLG†, PAG, MH, PEL, GMcCa, KCM, MAP; #LACM 107890; 47-1994). In addition, a first-winter bird was at Long Beach, LA, 16 Jan 1993 (KL; 99-1994), an alternate-plumaged adult flew past Hayward Shoreline, ALA, 18 Apr 1994 (RJR; 104-1994), and a second-winter bird was off La Jolla, SD, 18 Nov 1994 (GMcCa; 176-1994).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* (7). An adult was at Doheny SB, ORA, 27 Dec 1994–29 Jan 1995 (JEP; SEF†, JRG†, KLG†, EG†, RAH†, CJ†, CM†, GMcCa, JM, MAP, MSM, BDS; 206-1994; photo in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 49:198). Like others accepted from California (four of them from the Salton Sea and all adults), this bird showed the characters of the British race *graellsii*.

SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata* (2). An adult at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, ORA, 30 Jul–10 Aug 1994 (DRW; NBB, BED, RAE, RAH, PK†; 109-1994; Figure 7) constitutes the second state record. Erickson and Terrill (1996) detailed the checkered recent history of reports of dark-backed terns from the Bolsa Chica area.



Figure 12. Black-backed Wagtail, Crescent City, Del Norte Co., 7 Sep 1994. The extensively white wings and black mottling on the back of this bird distinguish it readily from the White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*).

Photo by Gary S. Lester

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THICK-BILLED MURRE *Uria lomvia* (33). Single individuals were seen approximately 2.8 miles off the Palos Verdes Peninsula, LA, 21 May 1994 (KLG; HK, KL†, AS; 92-1994), off Pt. Pinos, MTY, 5 Oct 1994 (NBB†, JLD†; 179-1994), and flying past SE Farallon I., SF, with a flock of 20 Common Murres (*U. aalge*) on 1 Nov 1994 (PP; 183-1994). The Los Angeles record is the first south of Monterey County and adds to the pattern of late spring and summer vagrant alcids (Parakeet, *Cyclorhynchus psittacula*; Least, *Aethia pusilla*; Crested, *A. cristata*, auklets; Horned Puffin, *Fratercula corniculata*) from central and southern California and Baja California. The Farallon record parallels a similar, but not accepted, record of a bird flying past the island with a flock of Common Murres on 29 Oct 1988 (214-1988).

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti* (59). Three birds at Furnace Creek Ranch, INY, 14–31 May 1994 (GMcCa, MAP; 88-1994) were considered most likely to have been three of the five birds found at this site Oct–Nov 1993 (Erickson and Terrill 1996).

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD *Cynanthus latirostris* (46). Singles were at Goleta, SBA, 1 Jan 1994 (PEL, CM, GMcCa; 11-1994) and 25 Dec 1994–28 Jan 1995 (SEF, RAH, PEL, CM, GMcCa; 7-1995), and at Iron Mountain Pumping Plant, SBE, 29 Oct–5 Nov 1994 (MAP†, BDS; 161-1994). An adult male at a feeder in Camarillo, VEN, 9 Oct 1994–5 Feb 1995 (PEL, CM; 8-1995) was considered the same male seen there in Nov and Dec 1993 (197-1993; Erickson and Terrill 1996).



Figure 13. Mourning Warbler with MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*), SE Farallon I., San Francisco Co., 13 Sep 1994. Note the narrow, broken eyering and yellow median chest of the Mourning versus the thicker eye-crescents and dusky median chest of the MacGillivray's.

Photo by Steve N. G. Howell

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RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD *Archilochus colubris* (3). An immature male was at SE Farallon I., SF, 7 Sep 1994 (SNGH†; 184-1994; Figures 8, 9). A critical precursor to finding a Ruby-throated Hummingbird is to become thoroughly familiar with the Black-chinned (*A. alexandri*), Anna's (*Calypte anna*), Costa's (*C. costae*), Calliope (*Stellula calliope*), and *Selasphorus* hummingbirds. Under favorable conditions, the relative widths of the inner six primaries (narrow in *Archilochus*, wide in the other genera; Figure 10) can often be seen on a perched bird, helping to narrow the choice down to Ruby-throated/Black-chinned. Separation of the Ruby-throated and Black-chinned hummingbirds in the field is often relatively straightforward given good views and critical field experience with one or both species. The glittering upperparts of both species change from a bluer to more golden green with wear, but the Ruby-throated is consistently more of an emerald green, a mark in itself that might draw attention to a vagrant in California (e.g., Figures 8, 9). The forecrown of the Black-chinned is consistently dusky grayish, not showing any distinct green tones, while that of the Ruby-throated typically is green but, on worn birds (mainly on the Mexican wintering grounds), can be dusky like a Black-chinned's. Thus, a green forecrown should be diagnostic of the Ruby-throated, although the green feathers are tipped with buff, and so less obvious, in fresh-plumaged immatures (e.g., Figure 8). The shorter bill of the Ruby-throated is useful (e.g., Figure 9), particularly if the bird's sex can be determined, while the shape of the primaries can be useful on birds in the hand (Phillips 1975, Pyle, in press; Figure 11). Differences in the timing of primary molt can also be useful with birds seen in winter (Baltosser 1995, Pyle et al. 1997), when crown color can be equivocal: in general, the Black-chinned's molt is about a month advanced over that of the Ruby-throated (reflecting the former's earlier breeding season), females and adults molting earlier than males and immatures.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Contopus virens* (3). One was heard singing and tape recorded at a campground 2 miles E of Big Pine Mt., SBA, 24 Jun-9 Jul 1994 (JTH§, CP, GTi; SEF, PEL, JEL, RL; 111-1994). The repeated full song was diagnostic, and the appearance, including pale underparts and a completely yellow lower mandible, was also indicative. The only other accepted records for California are of a bird captured and banded on SE Farallon I., SF, on 15 Jun 1975, and one singing near Manteca, SJ, 18 Aug-17 Sep 1983.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (34). Individuals were on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, LA, 1-17 Jan 1994 (MH†; KL, CM; 55-1994), at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, 11 Nov 1994 (DPH; 186-1994), in Huntington Beach, ORA, 28 Nov 1994 (JEP; RAE; 177-1994), and in Fountain Valley, ORA, 28 Dec 1994-15 Jan 1995 (CM, GMcCa, JEP, SBT†; 9-1995).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER *Tyrannus forficatus* (92). A female in first alternate plumage was collected by EAC at Harper Dry Lake, SBE, 18 May 1992 (38-1995; #SBCM 53745), a female or immature male was at Lake Hodges, SD, 4-17 Jan 1994 (GMcCa; 48-1994), a probable male was near Oasis, MNO, 28 May 1994 (BED; 117-1994), and a bird of unknown age and sex was at McGrath SB, VEN, 28 May 1994 (WW; 205-1994).

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe* (7). Individuals, probably in first basic plumage, were near Nicasio, MRN, 27 Sep 1992 (JE†, DSf; 258-1992) and in La Mirada, LA, 5 Nov 1994 (WSS†; RP†, BP, JAJ, MSM; 167-1994). The latter is the first record for southern California.

VEERY *Catharus fuscescens* (9). One was at Point Reyes NS (Fish Docks), MRN, 4 Jun 1992 (SNGH; 144-1992).

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH *Catharus minimus* (17). Two were on SE Farallon I., SF, one on 20 Sep 1994 (PP†; 189-1994) and the other on 21 Sep 1994 (SNGH;

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PP; 190-1994). The former, in first basic plumage, was caught and measured; photographs of it appear in McLaren (1995). The second bird was seen to lack a band and, unlike the first bird, did not have buffy tips to the greater coverts, which resulted in its age being left unknown. Both birds were too large and too gray for Bicknell's Thrush (*C. bicknelli*), which is unrecorded in the west; see Curson (1994), McLaren (1995), and Knox (1996).

GRAY CATBIRD *Dumetella carolinensis* (68). Birds in first basic plumage were caught, banded, and measured on SE Farallon I., SF, on 25 Sep 1994 (PP†; 191-1994), 28 Sep-10 Oct 1994 (PP†; SNGH†; 192-1994), and 2 Oct 1994 (PP†; 44-1995).

BLACK-BACKED WAGTAIL *Motacilla lugens* (5). An individual in adult basic plumage, probably a male, was found in Crescent City, DN, 6-7 Sep 1994 (KCK†; GSL†; 143-1994; Figure 12).

WHITE-EYED VIREO *Vireo griseus* (33). Singing males were near Corona, RIV, 18 May 1994 (MAP; 85-1994) and at Galileo Hill, KER, 28 May 1994 (JFs; 93-1994). One of unknown age and sex was caught and banded at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab, Andrew Molera SP, MTY, 4 Jun 1994 (CHof; 105-1994).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO *Vireo flavifrons* (55). One was near Desert Center, RIV, 14 May 1994 (BES†; 95-1994). A singing male near Weldon, KER, 7-30 Jul 1994 (DVB†, GMcCa; 125-1994) was the first to be recorded in Kern County.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO *Vireo philadelphicus* (96). One was at Los Osos, SLO, 19-20 Oct 1994 (KAH; 173-1994).

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO *Vireo flavoviridis* (39). Single individuals were at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, 14-20 Oct 1992 (RC; BG; 310-1992), at Wilmington, LA, 16-17 Oct 1994 (MH†; KL†; 165-1994), and on SE Farallon I., SF, 17 Oct 1994 (PP; 193-1994). Plumage and/or eye color suggested that all three birds were immature.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora pinus* (20). A singing male was at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory headquarters near Bolinas, MRN, 18 May 1994 (PP; 102-1994). A probable male (but possibly an adult female in basic plumage) was at L. Palmdale, LA, 31 Aug 1994 (CHd, NM, CDY; 132-1994).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER *Vermivora chrysoptera* (51). A male was at Oasis, MNO, 8 May 1992 (BSi; 172-1992). A male was in Wilmington, LA, 27 May 1994 (PB; NBB, KL†; 94-1994). An adult female in basic plumage was in Arroyo Grande, SLO, 1-3 Oct 1994 (SM; JLD, CM, JM, SBT; 159-1994).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER *Dendroica dominica* (74). A male or adult female in basic plumage, evidently of the "white-lored" subspecies (*D. d. albilora*) was near Pescadero, SM, 29 Sep-5 Oct 1994 (BTM; AME, BDP, RST; 194-1994).

PINE WARBLER *Dendroica pinus* (51). A probable immature male was in Santa Barbara, SBA, 1 Jan-6 Feb 1994 (RAH; SEF, PEL, CM, GMcCa; 12-1994).

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helmitheros vermivorus* (75). A bird found wintering in Santa Barbara, SBA, 1 Jan-12 Mar 1994 (PEL; SEF, CM, GMcCa; 13-1994) returned for its second winter, 24 Oct 1994-18 Mar 1995 (SEF, BHn, PEL, GMcCa; 34-1995). Individuals were in Death Valley NM (Scotty's Castle), INY, 14 May 1994 (PAG, GMcCa; 90-1994), at Twentynine Palms, SBE, 18 Jul 1994 (SIT†; 148-1994), in Wilmington, LA, 15-16 Oct 1994 (MH, KL; 26-1995), and at Westminster, ORA, 1-6 Nov 1994 (JEP, RAE, GMcCa, MAP, BDS; 166-1994). An adult was caught, banded and measured on SE Farallon I., SF, 21-24 Sep 1994 (PP†; 195-1994).

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LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH *Seiurus motacilla* (7). One was at Galileo Hill, KER, 16–18 Sep 1994 (JTH; MOC, JLD†, MTH†, GMcCa; 153-1994). A photograph of this bird appeared in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* (49:102).

*KENTUCKY WARBLER *Oporornis formosus* (106). One was at Galileo Hill, KER, 22–23 Sep 1994 (MTH†; 196-1994). Because of its relative abundance in the state, highlighted by the spring and summer of 1992 (Patten and Marantz 1996), this species has been removed from the CBRC review list.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER *Oporornis agilis* (74). A male (PPT; SNGH†; 197-1994) and a female (SNGH; PPT; 198-1994) in first basic plumage were caught, banded, and measured on SE Farallon I. SF, both 18–20 Sep 1994.

MOURNING WARBLER *Oporornis philadelphia* (93). Individuals caught, banded, and measured included a male at Big Sur Ornithology Lab, Andrew Molera SP, MTY, 31 May 1994 (JDa; 106-1994), an immature male on SE Farallon I., SF, 29 Aug 1994 (PPT; 45-1995), and an immature, probably a female, at the latter location on 13 Sep 1994 (SNGH†; 199-1994; Figure 13). Another bird, an adult female, was seen on the same island on 25 Sep 1994 (SNGH, PP; 200-1994). In southern California, an immature male was observed near Trona, SBE, 17 Sep 1994 (MAP; GMcCa; 134-1994) and an adult male was present at Newport Beach, ORA, 31 Dec 1994–25 Feb 1995 (BED; SEF, CM, GMcCa, MAP; 11-1995). The latter is only the second wintering Mourning Warbler recorded in North America, the only previous record involving one in Wilmington, LA, 26 Dec 1981–28 Jan 1982 (Binford 1985).

SCARLET TANAGER *Piranga olivacea* (89). An adult male at least two years old was near Milpitas, SCL, 13–31 July 1994 (SCR†, JM, SBT; 122-1994). Males in first basic plumage were in Morro Bay SP, SLO, 2–13 Nov 1994 (SJH; KAH; 174-1994), and on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, LA, 6–15 Nov 1994 (KL†; 29-1995). A photograph of the latter individual appeared in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* (49:103).

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris* (46). An adult-plumaged male was at Hole-in-the-Wall, SBE, 2–5 Sep 1993 (BHo†; JN; 137-1993). Birds in supplemental plumage were near Cantil, KER, 10 Sep 1994 (MTH†; 201-1994), and in Death Valley NM (Furnace Creek Ranch), INY, 25–27 Aug 1994 (GMcCa; 158-1994). The adult male was slightly faded, provoking concern that it had escaped from captivity. However, it was in the process of a normal molt (which cage birds may or may not show) out of worn plumage, and since the locality and date of occurrence were consistent with other records of this species in California, it was accepted on the fourth and final round.

FIELD SPARROW *Spizella pusilla* (5). Individuals showing the characters of the western subspecies, *S. p. arenacea*, were in Martinez, CC, 4 Jan–12 Apr 1994 (DSW; GF, EG†, JL†, CM, JM, BDP, DR, MMR, SBT; 14-1994), and in Huntington Beach, ORA, 20 Jan–13 Mar 1994 (RAH, GMcCa, JCW†; 56-1994).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW *Ammodramus leconteii* (26). A basic-plumaged bird was at Death Valley NM (Furnace Creek Ranch), INY, 5 Nov 1994 (DG, BGP†; 172-1994). A photograph of this individual appeared in *Natl. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* (49:103).

COMMON GRACKLE *Quiscalus quiscula* (34). One was at Cottonwood Springs Oasis, RIV, 17 Apr 1993 (DEQ; 73-1993). Males were at Panamint Springs, INY, 29 May 1994 (SBT†; 123-1994) and at Galileo Hill, KER, 29 Oct 1994 (CDY; MTH†; 164-1994). All were Bronzed Grackles, *Q. q. versicolor*, the only form of the Common Grackle recorded in California.

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RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED: IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED

SOLANDER'S PETREL *Pterodroma solandri*. Single birds seen approximately 15 miles W of Cordell Bank, MRN, 7 Jun 1986 (405-1986, 407-1986) were insufficiently documented to allow specific identification. In large part this reflects the inadequate and misleading identification information then available concerning the appearance at sea of Solander's Petrel vis-à-vis Murphy's Petrel. Field-identification criteria for dark *Pterodroma* were subsequently elucidated by Bailey et al. (1989) and Spear et al. (1992).

***MURPHY'S PETREL** *Pterodroma ultima*. Single birds seen approximately 9-17 miles W of Cordell Bank, MRN, 7 Jun 1986 (408-1986, 409-1986) were subsumed into the complex of confusing and inadequately described *Pterodroma* discussed above under Solander's Petrel. Also see Records Accepted.

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus pacificus*. A dark-morph bird was seen 2 miles W of Table Rock, SCZ, 18 Dec 1993, on the Santa Cruz CBC (66-1994). This record was rejected 6:4 on the second round. Some committee members (including those with the most seabird experience) accepted the record, while others felt that details provided by one observer suggested the bird was not seen long enough to confirm the identification. Clearly, sightings of certain pelagic birds will always be troublesome.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*. A record of a bird seen briefly over Bodeaux Canyon, SON, 5 Nov 1994 (47-1995) was unconvincing.

***TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*. A bird reported 8 Sep-5 Oct 1991 at Hayward Shoreline, ALA (4-1992) was poorly documented.

MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis*. Descriptions of a bird reported over Torrance, LA, 30 Apr 1994 (114-1994) and of two over Rancho Park Golf Course, LA, 3 May 1994 (91-1994) were unconvincing.

COMMON BLACK HAWK *Buteogallus anthracinus*. One was reported from Highway 195 near the N end of the Salton Sea, RIV, 13 Jun 1994 (116-1994). This intriguing report did not convey enough detail for Committee members to accept a second state record of this extreme rarity.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus*. One was reported from the Pacific Coast Highway in Los Angeles, LA, 9 May 1994 (169-1994); a photograph does not support the record, suggesting a Red-tailed Hawk (*B. jamaicensis*) to at least two Committee members. Single birds reported over Highway 67 near Santee, SD, 4 Nov 1992 (56-1993) and over Palomar Airport Road, Carlsbad, SD, 23 Aug 1993 (34-1994) were not seen or described in enough detail to rule out other species, although the latter received a 5:5 vote. See comments under this species in Records Accepted.

CRESTED CARACARA *Caracara plancus*. An intriguing report of one 6 km SW of Coachella, RIV, on 9 Jan 1994 (18-1995) failed to gain acceptance largely because it was second-hand.

GYRFALCON *Falco rusticolus*. One reported near Midway, ALA, 27 Nov-14 Dec 1993 (5-1994) raised interesting issues: some members thought it was an immature gray-morph Gyr, others thought that the possibility of an escape could not be eliminated, while others felt that the description did not eliminate the possibility of an escaped hybrid! The record was rejected on the grounds of identification 6:4 on the second round. Sadly, the incidence of captive falcons is unlikely to decrease (e.g., an escaped adult Gyr had also been frequenting the same area as the rejected bird during the same period!), so any large falcon thought to be a Gyrfalcon should be studied carefully and also checked for signs of captivity.

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WILSON'S PLOVER *Charadrius wilsonia*. A bird seen in flight at Ormond Beach, ORA, 31 Aug 1994 (163-1994) may have been of this species but members felt the sighting was too brief for a positive identification to be accepted.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. A bird reported as a Little Stint was seen at San Joaquin Marsh, Irvine, ORA, 11 Sep 1994 (141-1994). Details were inadequate to support this difficult identification; for example, the observers did not determine the age of the bird, always a critical first step with an odd-looking shorebird. We recommend that observers become fully conversant with the age classes of the commoner shorebirds in fall because age-related plumage differences are often greater than differences among species. Thus, apparent "oddballs" can be basic-plumaged adults with a flock of juveniles of the same species, or vice versa.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*. A bird that may well have been this species was seen at Bodega Bay, SON, 20 Sep 1994 (160-1994). The descriptions submitted, however, did not fully establish the bird's identification, particularly in light of the brevity of the sighting and the extreme rarity of this species in California in autumn. As with the Little Stint (above), the age of this bird was not determined. The record was rejected 6:4 on the first round.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. A possible sighting of one in flight at the Santa Maria R. mouth, SBA, 29 Apr 1994 (87-1994) was too brief to establish such a rare occurrence.

WHITE-FRONTED SWIFT *Cypseloides storeri*. This record was submitted not because anyone really thought there was much likelihood that a White-fronted Swift, itself a controversial taxon (Navarro et al. 1992, Howell 1992, 1993, Peterson and Navarro 1993, Howell and Webb 1995) and one highly unlikely to reach North America, was involved, but rather to refute an unseasonably late report of the Black Swift (*C. niger*) from California. The bird in question was over Furnace Creek Ranch, INY, 2 Nov 1974 (62-1995; Garrett and Dunn 1981). The observer submitting the record provided no contemporaneous field notes, and the CBRC member with perhaps the greatest field experience with neotropical swifts thought that other descriptions (which did include copies of original field notes) were concordant with the Black Swift. The conspicuously protruding "spines" reported on this bird's tail by one observer were atypical for either a White-fronted Swift or a Black Swift; as the undescribed molt of the latter presumably occurs on the (unknown) winter grounds, a November Black Swift in worn plumage might show an apparently "spiny" tail. Another observer's field notes said, "Slow languid flight, fairly large. All black, white forehead." This description is fine for a Black Swift, and the slow languid flight should eliminate the heavy-bodied, fluttery White-fronted Swift (Howell and Webb 1995, Howell et al. in press). Needless to say, the record as a White-fronted Swift was rejected, and, while the original identification as a Black Swift has been challenged, a decision about the matter is beyond the scope of this Committee.

GREATER PEWEE *Contopus pertinax*. The description of a bird at Whittier Narrows Nature Area, LA, 9 Oct 1994 (156-1994) fit a Western Wood Pewee better than a Greater Pewee.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER *Empidonax flaviventris*. One was described from SE Farallon I., SF, 25 Aug 1992 (251-1992). The observers were distracted by a Red-faced Warbler (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) and a documentary film team on the island that day and thus were unable to capture and measure the bird. The record failed on the fourth and final round because two members were uneasy about accepting sight-only records of non-vocalizing individuals of this species, in combination with this bird's abnormally dark lower mandible (which would have been abnormal for similar species of *Empidonax* as well).

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ALDER FLYCATCHER *Empidonax alnorum*. The CBRC is not yet ready to accept as Alder Flycatchers migrant "Traill's" Flycatchers giving "peek" call notes, such as one at Galileo Hill, KER, 11 Sep 1994 (185-1994). See Patten et al. (1995) for further discussion on this topic.

RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus*. A pipit observed near Port Hueneme, VEN, 13 Oct 1991 (225-1991) was not heard calling, and the plumage description fell short of eliminating other potentially occurring pipits.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT *Anthus spragueii*. The description of a bird seen at Merced NWR, MER, 15 Jan 1994 (20-1994) did not eliminate several species of sparrows found on this refuge in winter.

GRAY CATBIRD *Dumetella carolinensis*. A bird observed at Moss Landing, MTY, 27 Sep 1993 (73-1994) was glimpsed from a distance of 70 to 80 yards.

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*. A bird seen near Olema, MRN, 9 Apr 1994 (78-1994), was identified due its greater similarity to a field-guide picture of this species than to any other species in the guide. Beginners are cautioned that this method does not produce accurate identifications. The Committee unanimously felt that the bird was not a Bluethroat and was probably a Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO *Vireo flavifrons*. A bird heard singing and seen briefly in San Rafael, MRN, 28 April 1992 (181-1992) was considered probably of this species by the Committee, but the description's being written several months after the encounter caused the record's rejection in the end.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO *Vireo philadelphicus*. Descriptions of birds observed at Buena Vista L. Recreation Area, KER, 5 May 1994 (118-1994) and at the Carmel R mouth, MTY, 2 Oct 1994 (145-1994) better fit other species of vireos. The former would have been the earliest spring record in the state by 18 days.

WORM-EATING WARBLER *Helmitheros vermivorus*. Details concerning a bird at Redondo Beach, LA, 26 May 1992 (192-1992) were unconvincing.

KENTUCKY WARBLER *Oporornis formosus*. The described song of a bird heard near Chilao, San Gabriel Mts., LA, 15 Jun 1992 (199-1992) was correct for this species, but the plumage description left too much to be desired.

SCARLET TANAGER *Piranga olivacea*. A bird photographed at Twentynine Palms, SBE, 18 May 1994 (27-1995) was almost unanimously considered a Summer Tanager (*P. rubra cooperi*) by the Committee. A male observed briefly at Point Loma, SD, 24 Aug 1994 (28-1995) was in transitional green and red plumage. This plumage would not be found on a migrant Scarlet Tanager, and it was felt unlikely that the bird had summered at this well-birded locale. Alternatively, a male Summer Tanager molting from first alternate (green) to adult basic (red) plumage would be far more likely there on this date.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti*. A male at the Fillmore Fish Hatchery, VEN, 24-25 Nov 1978 (REW; 31-1981) was rejected on the basis of its possibly being an escapee. The coastal location and early date (1978), somewhat predating the spread of this species in the 1980s as an autumn-winter vagrant to the interior southwestern USA, were factors which also contributed to the 7:3 rejection of this record.

GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER *Ptilogonys cinereus*. One near Poway, SD, 10-12 Mar 1994 (BB; NBB†, JC, RAH†, GMcCa, MAP, MBS†, MMT†, SW, JOZ; 75-1994)

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had a badly frayed tail and uneven primary tips, suggesting that it had been in captivity. As this species is commonly kept as a cage bird in nearby Mexico, it was unanimously considered a probable escapee by the CBRC.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris*. An adult-basic male in Del Mar, SD, 23 Feb 1994 (PAG; 80-1994) was observed at a feeder. The origin of birds of this age/sex group at feeders in the winter are routinely questioned by the CBRC, and this one was—unanimously.

CONTRIBUTORS

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