

Field Notes

(June-July 2019)

Pete Dunten

Geese through Sandpipers

A single **Greater White-fronted Goose** stayed into summer at Penetencia Creek Park. It was seen between 30 Jun and 9 Jul (AMc, m. ob.). On 14 Jun a hen **Redhead** with a single duckling was photographed in New Chicago Marsh (GL, LC). This is the second year in a row a Redhead has been seen with duckling(s) in tow. Going further back in time, the last record of nesting by Redhead was in 1984. A **Common Loon** graced the Palo Alto Summer Count on 1 Jun (VB, PDU). The Loon was found on Felt Lake, where the water level was still high from our wet spring. It was found on the lake again on 28 Jul (DB), 30 Jul (ST) and 31 Jul (BM). A single **White-faced Ibis** was reported repeatedly during the period, beginning on 8 Jun from New Chicago Marsh (AnH, JRo, AIT). Subsequent reports were from nearby Alviso pond A16 on 20 and 25 Jun (JY, AL, PDU), New Chicago Marsh on 4 and 13 Jul (CG, TGr), and both Coast Casey Forebay and Palo Alto Baylands on 21 Jul (AH, RBj). The latest sighting was at Coast Casey Forebay on 30 Jul (BM, SPz, DW). A **Black Rail** was heard calling from Harvey Marsh on 14 Jun (EP). This is a new location for Black Rail in the south bay. They recolonized the south bay in 2013 after an absence exceeding 100 years and have been regularly found at Alviso Marina in recent years. A single rail called repeatedly from 12 - 20 Apr 2017 at Coast Casey Forebay, but there have been no further reports from that location, **Sora Rail** occurs from fall through spring and is rare in the summer, with no confirmed nesting in the



Bell's Vireo by Jerry Ting

South Bay. This summer Sora were heard calling at both Mallard Slough in Don Edwards NWR, on 6, 7 and 22 Jun (JT, GL, DN), and at the San Pedro Percolation Ponds in Morgan Hill on 3 Jul (RH). A single **Pacific Golden-Plover**, a late spring migrant, stopped at New Chicago Marsh from 3 - 4 Jun (MJM, m. ob.). The June to July period covered in this issue of the Field Notes is unusual, as it spans both the end of spring migration and the beginning of fall migration. The first **Ruddy Turnstone** at the start of the fall migration period was at the edge of Alviso salt pond A15 on 14 Jul (PDU). **Western Sandpipers** numbered in the thousands by the end of July; some will stay for the winter, while others will continue further south. . One with a leg flag bearing a code was photographed on 13 Jul on the impoundment between Alviso pond A12 and the railroad tracks (PDU), and the markings revealed the bird was banded in Panama in February of 2015. In the spring of 2016, the same impoundment hosted another Western Sandpiper banded in Panama (as mentioned in last month's County Birding Challenges). Histor-

ically, only one in one thousand banded Western Sandpipers are encountered after banding. The first **Semipalmated Sandpiper** of the fall, an adult, was seen in New Chicago Marsh on 12 Jul (MJM).

Terns through Kingbirds

An **Elegant Tern** at pond A1 on 22 Jul was the first of the fall (ST). A single Elegant Tern was there again on 29 Jul (ST). They have not been present this summer despite the nearby colony in San Mateo County. Least Terns arrived at pond A2E on 28 Jul, when eight were tallied (MJM, MMR). The Terns disperse after the breeding season and one of their favored staging locations before fall migration is pond A2E in the south bay. This year their arrival date was the third latest on record, perhaps due to the late rains in May delaying the start of nesting. Six terns were sighted on both 29 Jul (ST) and 30 Jul (BLL, VLL). **Black Skimmers** nested at Shoreline Lake this summer in unprecedented numbers. Five nests were noted on 4 Jun, and nine were found on 18 Jun (RPh). Two young birds were present on 25 Jun, and the high count of young birds

reached eight on 19 Jul (RPh). The same date the tally of Black Skimmers at Shoreline Lake was 59, the highest count for the period (RPh). Two **Allen's Hummingbirds** near Purisima Creek at Foothill College were unexpected on 1 Jun during the Palo Alto Summer Count (PDU). They are more often encountered at higher elevations in the Santa Cruz Range during the count. The two were also present at Foothill College on 2 Jun and 4 Jun (PDU). An adult male Allen's was reported from the Don Edwards EEC on 14 – 15 Jun (LuC, TU, CU). The last of the three **Willow Flycatchers** found during spring migration, and the only one this period, visited a bird bath in Almaden Valley on 9 Jun (JPa). A **Say's Phoebe** at the Stanford Dish on 1 Jun was at a location they've not been found nesting in previous years. Say's Phoebe, formerly absent during the summer, is now regularly found at Moffett Field and may be expanding its range locally. A male **Vermilion Flycatcher** at J Grant CP on 23 Jul was only the 2nd county record, and the first in the summer (RA). It was flycatching and enjoyed by many on dates through 30 July. An **Eastern Kingbird** at Los Capitancillos ponds on 9 Jun was a one-day wonder and only the eighth county record (STu). Another visited Mallard Slough near the Don Edwards NWR EEC on 22 Jun for the ninth record, and also stayed for only a day (MJ, m. ob.). Of the nine records, six have been in the fall, three have been in the late spring, and the spring records have been all one-day-only.

Vireos through Buntings

A **Bell's Vireo** whose plumage indicated it was one of the Eastern

subspecies was heard singing vociferously on 5 Jun from the upland area next to the Don Edwards EEC (WGB). It was the first record in the county for an Eastern Bell's Vireo. The exuberant vireo was heard easily and seen with more difficulty by many through 24 Jun (JRy). A singing **Red-eyed Vireo** was a nice surprise along Guadalupe Creek at Los Capitancillos Ponds on 13 Jul (STu). Common in the Eastern



Grasshopper Sparrow by Ryan Phillips

US, Red-eyed Vireo has only five entries in the county records, the most recent dating to 2010. A **Bank Swallow** was seen briefly at Coast Casey Forebay on 27 Jul (STu). Bank Swallows visit the county in late summer, before fall migration starts, about one year in two. The late spring vagrants from the east included two warblers. A male **Hooded Warbler** was recorded and photographed on 10 Jun in Palo Alto neighborhood (JkG, DT). A male **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was also recorded and photographed, on 12 Jun at the South Bay Yacht Club in Alviso (RJ, m. ob.). The third and last **Yellow-breasted Chat** of the spring was heard advertising his presence from the upland adjacent to the Don Edwards EEC between 5 – 7 Jun (WP, MJM, JTi, GL, DN). 18 Jul (RPh). A juvenile **Grasshopper Sparrow** was photographed at the kite-flying area of Shoreline

Lake Park on 18 Jul (RPh). While Grasshopper Sparrow is not rare in this county, this is the first record of nesting near the bay. A male **Indigo Bunting** was a nice find at the Stanford Dish during the Palo Alto Summer Count on 1 Jun (SPv, JsC, JRo). The Bunting was reported on many dates through 23 Jun (BKa).

Observers: Robin Agarwal (RA), Raminder Bajwa (RBj), Valerie Baldwin (VB), Dana Bangs (DB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Jason Chou (JsC), Lucas Corneliussen (LuC), Pete Dunten (PDU), Carter Gasirowski (CG), Jake Glassman (JkG), Tom Grey (TGr), Ann Hep (AnH), Rick Herder (RH), Andy Howey (AH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Melissa Johnson (MJ), Baris Karadogan (BKa), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Virginia Langdon-Lassagne (VLL), Garrett Lau (GL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Amy McDonald (AMc), Brooke Miller (BM), David Nickerson (DN), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergey Pavlov (SPv), William Pelletier (WP), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Eric Pilotte (EP), John Rodgers (JRo), Jennifer Rycenga (JRy), David Tattori (DT), Alex Tey (AIT), Jerry Ting (JTi), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Connie Unsicker (CU), Tom Unsicker (TU), Dave Weber (DW), James Yurchenco (JY), David Zittin (DZ)

Please send notice of rarities to Pete Dunten via email at pdunt-en@gmail.com