THE BIRDS OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

by PAUL E. LEHMAN

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Presented here (http://www.sbcobirding.com/lehmanbosbc.html) is a revised version of *The Birds of Santa Barbara County, California* (1994), updated with information available through May 2026. For many years, I have wanted to update my 1994 book. A lot happens in the bird world over several decades! So, I began revising the manuscript in 2010, a process that was first "completed" in 2013 and posted online. Annual revisions have been posted since then. Here are updates to all the species accounts (508 species, + 4 or 5 on the Channel Islands only*)* through July 2026, as well as partly updated introductory chapters.

I have attempted to not only incorporate the many individual records of interest made since April 1994 but also to update general status and distribution information of most species, as well as to discuss important historical and recent population trends. This is still very much a 'work in progress.' Every time I reread several species accounts, I still find things to tweak. There are a good number of holes remaining to be filled. More detail on the changing status of some species is still needed. More information on other species is warranted. I will continue to add past records of interest as they come to my attention, and I will add future records as each county seasonal report is compiled and additional eBird data are mined. Recent and growing resources such as eBird are extremely helpful but paint a somewhat incomplete picture, especially the more and more years one travels into the past. There are also some issues with inaccurate data.

Input from the birding public is eagerly sought. If you have corrections or new information that would be valuable to include in any of the species accounts, please submit it to https://sbcobirding.groups.io/g/main. We will consider these data for all future updates. This electronic publication can be modified easily, and the plans are to do so on a regular basis.

For help in the preparation of the version you see before you, I would like to thank especially a number of people. Foremost is Mark Holmgren for overseeing the conversion of the 1994 hard-copy of *The Birds of Santa Barbara County, California* to an electronic form, as well as for supplying me with much post-1994 data, particularly involving breeding birds, and a number of hard-to-find data-sets and references. Also critical in this process were the many years of hard (and often thankless) work compiling the huge number of county bird records of interest since 1994, when I moved out of the county and "retired" from local record-keeping and preparing seasonal summaries (1979–1994). The preparation of these seasonal reports (four per year, every year) since then has been carried out largely by Joan Lentz (1994–2000) and by Dave Compton (2000–2025). Thanks also to the Christmas Bird Count compilers, and their assistants, of the five CBCs held in the county every year; the data these surveys produce are invaluable. Jamie Chavez and Wim van Dam have been instrumental in creating websites where this update could be housed and periodically updated, and where observer comments can be sent. Steve Colwell developed "BirdView," extremely helpful data-mining software that makes searching large quantities of eBird data much easier. A review of the botanical information was provided by Larry Ballard. Many helpful comments on drafts of the updated species accounts were provided

by Ballard, Compton, Holmgren, and Lentz; and by Louis Bevier, Linus Blomqvist, John Callender, Jamie Chavez, Paul Collins, Steven Courtney, Peter Gaede, Jim Greaves, Nick Lethaby, Jane Mygatt, and Peter Schneekloth. Also, Krista Fahy and Janet Hamber assisted with information housed at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

Again, input is welcome!

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September 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topography and Climate

Habitats

Bird Migration and the Seasons

Ornithological History

Methods

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

References

Appendix: The Spring Coastal Seabird Migration

Chapter 1: TOPOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

TOPOGRAPHY

Mainland Santa Barbara County covers 2738 square miles (7092 square kilometers) and is roughly rectangular in shape. [The countys' major topographic features are shown in Figure X.] The elevation varies from sea level to 6828 feet (2101 meters) at the summit of Big Pine Mountain. Much of the county is mountainous, traversed by three major mountain ranges. The southern limit of the southeast-trending Coast Ranges is represented by the San Rafael and Sierra Madre Mountains, which occupy much of the northeastern part of the county. The western limit of the Transverse Ranges is represented by the east-west trending Santa Ynez Mountains located near the southern coast of the county. These three mountain ranges are largely sedimentary in composition and have been formed by compressive forces, which continue today.

The northernmost range, the Sierra Madre, is bordered to the north by the Cuyama River, which flows westward along the Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo County line and becomes the Santa Maria River just east of the city of Santa Maria. Elevations in the Sierra Madre reach 5747 feet (1768 meters) at McPherson Peak and 5845 feet (1798 meters) at Peak Mountain. South of the Sierra Madre the Sisquoc River flows west to join the Cuyama River at Garey; the Sisquoc drains the south slope of the Sierra Madre and much of the San Rafael Mountains to the south and east. The San Rafaels contain the tallest mountains in the county: Big Pine Mountain (6828 feet, 2101 meters), San Rafael Mountain (6593 feet, 2029 meters), and Madulce Peak (6541 feet, 2013 meters). In the extreme northeastern corner of the county is the arid Cuyama River Valley at an elevation of approximately 2200 feet (677 m).

The Santa Ynez River flows westward between the San Rafael and Santa Ynez Mountains and reaches the ocean west of Lompoc. The Santa Ynez Mountains run parallel to the South Coast from western Ventura County west to Point Arguello on the North Coast. These mountains are much higher in the eastern half of the county (east of Gaviota Pass) where they reach elevations of 3985 feet (1226 meters) at La Cumbre Peak, 4298 feet (1322 meters) at Santa Ynez Peak, and 4690 feet (1443 meters) at Divide Peak in the extreme east. The highest elevation of the lower, western half of the range is 2170 feet (668 meters) at Tranquillon Mountain near Point Arguello.

The western sector of Santa Barbara County is one of low ranges and a series of hills that mostly trend east-west and separate three major valleys. Elevations do not exceed 2000 feet (615m) and are typically below 1300 feet (400m). The large Santa Maria River Valley forms the northern border of the county in this area. To the south are the Casmalia Hills near the coast and the Solomon Hills farther inland, with the Los Alamos Valley and San Antonio Creek farther to the south. The southernmost major valley is the Santa Ynez, often called the Lompoc Valley at its most western end. Separating it from the Los Alamos Valley to the north are the Purisima Hills.

Most of the coastal plain of the county is quite narrow. The major exceptions are the Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys, which extend up to 17 and 10 miles (27 and 16 kilometers) inland, respectively, and the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria, where the coastal plain is up to 4 miles (6 kilometers) wide.

The differences in elevation and topography discussed above, as well as the amount of residual soil and the characteristics of the underlying geologic formation, play extremely important roles in determining the natural vegetation found in the various regions of the county. The vegetation, in turn, is the most critical factor in determining the distribution of birdlife.

CLIMATE

Much of Santa Barbara County is characterized by a Mediterranean climate with mild year-round temperatures and dry summers. Coastal regions are under the moderating influence of the ocean. Substantially larger diurnal and seasonal fluctuations in temperature occur in the inland mountain and valley areas.

The mountainous terrain results in marked differences in temperature and precipitation in the different regions. In addition to varying elevation and exposure, distance from the ocean is an important influence on climate. Much of the western half of the county is marked by low relief and is influenced by marine inflows of moist air. In contrast, the mountainous eastern half of the county is characterized by greater extremes associated with a more continental climate. Marked variations in temperature and precipitation occur on a local scale due to orographic (mountain) effects, localized air flow, and cold air drainage from the mountains.

Of major importance to the coastal climate is the change in orientation of the coast line in the Point Conception area. North of Point Conception (the "North Coast"), the coast trends north-south and is exposed to rather persistent northwest winds most of the year. (These winds vary with local topography.) In Santa Maria, the average wind speed is 7 mph (11 kph) (UCAES 1965) from the west or northwest, with moderate winds frequently recorded during the afternoons. Winds in excess of 20 mph (32 kph) occur regularly. The Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys, which open onto this section of the coast, are influenced by marine air. East of Point Conception, the South Coast is somewhat protected from this wind, resulting in winds of lower speeds and more variable directions. Winds at the Santa Barbara Airport in Goleta are primarily from the south or southwest with an average speed of 6 mph (10 kph) (UCAES 1965), increasing slightly during April and May. Rather strong winds (15–20+ mph [24–32+ kph]) often occur in the afternoons during spring. The marine influence along the South Coast is not as pronounced as along the North Coast.

January minimum temperatures are usually from 35–45°F (2–7°C) near the coast (coldest in the Santa Maria Valley), but between 28 and 35°F (-2 to 2°C) inland. Some inland cold spots have reached 10°F (-12°C) or lower. Throughout most of the county, however, daytime temperatures in January usually reach 55 to 65°F (13–18°C). In July, the coast and coastal valleys have maximum readings averaging from 65 to 74°F (18–23°C), while it may be 90–95°F (32–35°C) in the inland valleys and 80–85°F (27–29°C) in the mountains. Extreme high temperatures during summer reach 100°F (38°C) or higher. Night-time temperatures throughout much of the county in summer regularly drop to between 52 and 56°F (11–13°C).

Precipitation totals vary markedly from year to year and from region to region [(Figure X)]. Approximately 90 percent of the annual total occurs between early November and late April; summer thunderstorms occur occasionally in the higher mountains, rarely elsewhere. Annual totals (from Smith 1976) range from more than 30 inches (76 cm) in the higher mountains in the east to as low as 5 inches (13 cm) in the arid rainshadow in the extreme northeast. The low elevations along the North Coast receive less rainfall per year than along the South Coast, where orographic influences are greater. Along the coast, average amounts vary from 17 inches (43 cm) in Santa Barbara to 14 inches (36 cm) at Santa Maria, 13 inches (33 cm) at Lompoc, and 12 inches (30 cm) at Point Arguello. Fifteen inches (38 cm) fall in Los Alamos, located in the western interior. Juncal Dam at Jameson Lake (elev. 2224 feet, 684 meters) along the upper Santa Ynez River receives more precipitation than does Lake Cachuma at an elevation of approximately 800 feet (246 m). In the mountains, 15 inches (38 cm) fall at the potreros of the eastern Sierra Madre, 24 inches (61 cm) at Rancho San Julian south of Lompoc, 28 inches (71 cm) at San Marcos Pass behind Santa Barbara, and 34 inches (86 cm) at Big Pine Mountain. The average rainfall at Cuyama in the Cuyama Valley is only 5 inches (13 cm).

Most of the county receives little or no snowfall, with the exception of the highest mountains, where up to four feet of snow may be present on Big Pine Mountain in winter. Several feet may remain on the ground for months on some north slopes and in other sheltered areas above 3500–4000 feet (1080–1230 meters) in the eastern interior.

Cool coastal fog develops principally during the late spring and summer months and regularly penetrates well into the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valleys. It develops during the evening and usually burns off by the following afternoon, although it may persist for several days at a time along the coast. In some years, fog patterns are much weaker than in others. The valleys in the western half of the county also regularly contain localized fog during the late-night and early-morning hours that are not coincident with coastal fog. Such “valley fogs” are rarer in the eastern half of the county. These coastal and valley fogs supply supplemental moisture to plants and reduce evapotranspiration.

Additional information on Santa Barbara County’s weather and climate is found in Lentz (2013).

Chapter 2: HABITATS

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of the habitats in a region is critical to an understanding of the status and distribution of the bird species found there. Floristically, the Santa Barbara region is both the northern limit for many southern plant species and the southern limit for many northern species (Broughton 1972, Smith 1976). Point Conception and the crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains is generally accepted as the dividing line, biologically speaking, between Northern and Southern California due to the climatic and oceanographic changes that occur there. A transition in soil types also occurs in the Point Conception region. The overall east-west orientation of the three major mountain ranges contributes to this north-south boundary effect because many plant species have elevational limits and do not cross these barriers (Broughton 1972), and because of differences in slope aspect. The geographic location of the county and its varied topography result in a diverse flora. The distribution of the many plant species and communities is influenced by topography and its effect on temperature and precipitation, the soil type and underlying geologic formation, and maritime effects.

Much of the native vegetation remains intact in the backcountry of Santa Barbara County, an area that has not received substantial human population pressure. In contrast, most coastal areas and some inland valleys have undergone major change during the past 200 years as a result of both urban and residential expansion and agricultural and ranching practices. The Santa Barbara, Lompoc, and Santa Maria areas are the most heavily affected. Certain habitats, such as wetlands, native grasslands, and riparian woodlands, have been substantially altered and reduced. In addition, the introduction of many non-native weeds into California has taken its toll on the native flora; many of these foreign species are now well established and even dominate large areas. A map depicting the general natural vegetation communities found in Santa Barbara County before human modification is found in Lentz (2013).

This chapter describes the plant communities and habitats of Santa Barbara County and some of their characteristic bird species. These communities are presented by “ornithological districts” (see Chapter 5), beginning with District C (ocean and coastal lowlands), followed by District I (interior lowlands), District M (mountains), and finally District V (Cuyama Valley). Plant community names are boldfaced and are used in the individual species accounts that follow. Botanical nomenclature follows *The Jepson Manual* (Baldwin et al. 2012). For additional information, see Smith (1976) and Lentz (2013).

A list of the habitat terms used in the text includes:

- offshore waters
- nearshore waters
- rocky shore and sandy beach
- coastal wetlands
- freshwater marsh
- coastal sage scrub
- grasslands
- riparian woodland and forest
- oak woodland
- chaparral
- oak savanna
- coniferous forest
- pinyon-juniper woodland
- semidesert (sagebrush) scrub
- altered habitats

DISTRICT C: OCEAN AND COASTAL LOWLANDS

Offshore Waters

The *offshore* (oceanic) *waters* off Santa Barbara County vary substantially in their characteristics. Such parameters as sea surface temperature, salinity, and biologic productivity fluctuate with changes in season and location (both latitudinally and with distance from shore). The topography of the continental shelf [(Figure X)] also influences the characteristics of the offshore waters. Conditions north and southeast of Point Conception often differ substantially; waters to the north have characteristics similar to those off Central California (e.g., lower temperatures), whereas those to the southeast make up part of the Southern California Bight and share many of its associated characteristics (e.g., warmer temperatures). Surface characteristics of the waters also vary at a frequency ranging from weeks to years.

Physical Characteristics

Large-scale seasonal changes in the oceanic conditions are primarily the result of changes in major current patterns. These patterns result from the direction and strength of the prevailing winds and the resultant direction of water flow (Ainley 1976). The overall pattern off Santa Barbara County finds the California Current flowing southeastward well offshore. Water from the north at the surface is cooler, less saline, and with higher oxygen and nutrient content compared to the northward-flowing Davidson Countercurrent.

Far offshore, in the boundary area between the eastern Pacific transition zone and the outer California Current, the varying strength of the current by season and year coupled with the dynamics of ocean systems creates a large degree of heterogeneity in the chemical, physical, and biological structure of these waters (Pyle and Veit unpubl.). An important mesoscale feature of boundary waters are the numerous countercurrent eddies or jets that extend seaward from the outer edge of the California Current. The edges of these countercurrents concentrate marine biota including plankton, fish, and probably birds. These countercurrents tend to be stronger and more prevalent in the northern areas, where the California Current is more concentrated (Pyle and Veit unpubl.).

Within 100 miles of the coast, the surface currents vary seasonally. Along the coast north of Point Conception, surface water often flows northwestward (Davidson Current) from November through February and southeastward the remainder of the year (Jones 1971). South of Point Conception, in the Santa Barbara Channel and around the Channel Islands, the flow is to the northwest. This flow forms the inside edge of the Southern California Eddy and is called the Southern California Countercurrent (Jones 1971), which is largely permanent in location and well developed in winter and weak in spring. This water is a mixture of California Current surface water and upwelled water; its increased surface temperature is a result of solar heating (Jones 1971). The Southern California Eddy is a large counterclockwise gyre centered over the shallow (ca. 200m) Santa Rosa-Cortes Ridge that trends from San Miguel, Santa Rosa, and Santa Cruz Islands southeastward to San Nicolas Island and beyond. This ridge is usually an area of high biologic productivity characterized by an abundance of phytoplankton (Jones 1971).

Within the Santa Barbara Channel, one or two smaller-scale gyres are often present. A better-defined gyre with a counterclockwise flow is located in the western section of the Channel with its easternmost, northward flow located between Santa Cruz Island and Santa Barbara; it is bordered to the east by a smaller gyre with a clockwise flow (Pirie et al. 1974). At times, the area where these two gyres meet is characterized by upwelling, particularly during the late summer and fall, resulting in high biologic productivity.

Productivity

Oceanic conditions off California as a whole can be broken down into three distinct seasons: the upwelling period, the oceanic period, and the Davidson Current period. During spring and early summer, northwest winds occur frequently, the California Current comes close to shore, and the surface water flows south and offshore, which brings colder subsurface water rich in nutrients to the surface. This upwelling results in lower surface temperatures, higher salinities, and higher biologic productivity. The process occurs south of Point Conception mainly during April, May, and June, beginning somewhat later north of Point Conception (Jones 1971). Particularly strong upwelling conditions often exist off Point Conception. Data for the waters off Point Arguello (Jones 1971) show that phosphate values associated with periods of upwelling increase beginning in March, peak between May and August, and decline after that. Before the end of the upwelling period in late summer, sea-surface temperatures may differ by as much as 3°C between the eastern Santa Barbara Channel and the waters west of the Santa Rosa-Cortes Ridge and to the north of Point Conception. In winter, this difference may be only 1°C. The extent and duration of upwelling in a given year may vary depending on wind speed and direction.

During the oceanic period (late summer through fall), winds and southward flow slacken, allowing an inshore and northward flow of warm, subtropical waters that had been displaced westward during the upwelling period (Ainley 1976). Sea-surface temperatures now reach their maximum, salinities remain high, and phytoplankton production is at the lowest level of the year.

The Davidson Countercurrent dominates the third period (winter months) and moves northward close to shore. This current is pushed by strong southerly winds accompanying storms (Ainley 1976). During this period, plankton production is low, surface salinities reach their annual low as a result of storm-water runoff (of minimum importance off Santa Barbara County, where runoff is low), and temperatures begin to decline.

Seabird Occurrence

The characteristics of the offshore waters and their variations as determined by currents and submarine topography [(Figure X)] have important implications for marine-bird distribution and abundance. The clearest relationship between oceanographic conditions and bird distribution involves ocean temperatures, and to a lesser extent salinity (Ainley 1976). Water temperatures affect bird abundance and distribution in two ways. First, they are an index of the degree of upwelling taking place and, thus, the nutrient richness of the waters. High phytoplankton production in the upwelled water would, in turn, feed a greater number of zooplankton and fish. Ainley (1976) points out, however, that this relationship is not well understood and that high food abundance does not necessarily mean high food availability. For instance, Northern Anchovies (*Engraulis mordax*), a principal food source for seabirds off California, are present but remain in deep water when surface temperatures are warm. Productive waters are certainly known to support large numbers of seabirds. Off Santa Barbara County, several areas regularly characterized by upwelling (e.g., off Point Conception and San Miguel Island, at Arguello Canyon, and along the Santa Rosa-Cortes Ridge) often support large numbers of seabirds. If upwelling has been poor in a given year, smaller numbers of birds than usual may occur.

The second way in which water temperatures may affect seabird distribution and abundance is that certain species appear to frequent waters that have a specific range of temperatures. In the northern Pacific, each water mass or oceanographic region, as defined by certain physical factors, has a particular marine-bird community associated with it (Ainley 1976). Therefore, the occurrence of certain species off Santa Barbara County may be tied to rather strict seasonal controls and also may differ markedly north and south of Point Conception. These differences are well illustrated by the occurrence of three southern, warm-water species: Craveri's Murrelet, Least Storm-Petrel, and Magnificent Frigatebird. Almost all county records to date for the petrel and murrelet are for late summer during the warm, oceanic period. More than 100 frigatebirds have been observed in the county, all but 5 individuals between mid-June and early September

and only 5 birds along the coast north of Point Conception. Black Storm-Petrels also frequent warmer waters and are most numerous off Santa Barbara County during late summer and early fall when ocean temperatures are at their maximum. Most records of the subtropical Red-billed Tropicbird also come from this period. As stated earlier, the differences in water temperature north and south of Point Conception are usually greatest during the late-summer months; this helps to explain the differences in the occurrence of Craveri's Murrelet, Least Storm-Petrel, and Magnificent Frigatebird (discussed above). During oceanic periods characterized by abnormally warm conditions farther to the north, such southern species may travel north of Point Conception in greater-than-normal numbers.

Such relationships and contrasts are not as pronounced in cold-water species but are indicated by seasonal and distributional data. Northern Fulmars and Black-legged Kittiwakes, both winter visitors that frequent cold water, usually reach their peak abundance later in winter with decreasing latitude and are scarcer during warm-water years (Ainley 1976). In the Santa Barbara Channel, where waters may be "too warm" early in winter, maximum kittiwake numbers in nearshore waters have come during the late winter and early spring. Ainley (1976) states that areas of high salinity (which peaks in spring) may also be frequented by fulmars. Sooty Shearwaters, abundant May–September, also frequent colder waters and are usually recorded in greatest numbers in the Santa Barbara Channel during May and June, a period of upwelling before temperatures rise to their late-summer highs. Then, during mid-summer (July–August), Sooties are most numerous in the far western Santa Barbara Channel and north of Point Conception, corresponding to the period of maximum productivity and relatively low temperatures in these waters.

In addition to preferences in water temperature and salinity, a number of species may have additional predilections for waters with a combination of characteristics indicative of water depth. Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses, Leach's Storm-Petrels, and Murphy's, Hawaiian, and Cook's Petrels frequent deep water; Black-vented Shearwaters are usually relatively close to shore. Ainley (1976) suggests that "oceanic" waters far from land are favored by Horned Puffin and Laysan Albatross, and that altered circulation patterns resulting in the inshore movement of oceanic waters may play a role in bringing these species closer to land. The relative scarcity of records for most deep-water and/ or "oceanic" species off Santa Barbara County may be explained by the relatively infrequent trips made into these waters by observers. During trips that have been made, observers have found substantial numbers of several species (e.g., Black-footed Albatross and, irregularly, Cook's Petrel).

In summary, a relationship between pelagic birds' status and distribution and several physical and biological parameters of the ocean waters off Santa Barbara County is shown for a number of species and suggested for several others. For a clearer picture to emerge, additional oceanographic data need to be collected and compared with existing species counts. In addition, more field work is needed, particularly beyond the Channel Islands and north of Point Conception.

Nearshore Waters

The nearshore waters of Santa Barbara County are areas where birdlife is clearly visible from land. These relatively shallow waters include open ocean, kelp beds (*Macrocystis pyrifera*), many small to medium-sized embayments somewhat protected by adjacent headlands and/or kelp beds (e.g., Point Sal, Cojo Bay, and Goleta Beach [County] Park), and man-made harbors. No natural harbors or large bays exist. Some characteristic species of nearshore waters include Surf and White-winged Scoters; Horned and Western Grebes; Red-throated and Common Loons; Brown Pelican; Brandt's, Pelagic, and Double-crested Cormorants; and many terns and gulls. Along the South Coast, the more protected kelp beds are visited by Great Blue Herons and Great

and Snowy Egrets. In summer, most non-breeding scoters and loons frequent the more protected embayments and harbors.

Rocky Shore and Sandy Beach

The coastline is made up of both *rocky shore* and *sandy beach*, with the latter predominating, especially along the South Coast. Extensive but disjunct rocky-shore habitat is present along much of the North Coast. The most extensive areas are along north Vandenberg Space Force Base (formerly Vandenberg Air Force Base), from Mussel Rock and Point Sal south to Shuman Creek, at Purisima Point, along south Vandenberg SFB from just north of Point Pedernales to several miles south of Point Arguello, and near Point Conception. These rocky-coast areas support resident Black Oystercatchers, nesting Pelagic Cormorants and Pigeon Guillemots, and possibly breeding Rhinoceros Auklets (Point Arguello only), along with wintering populations of Black and Ruddy (scarce) Turnstones, Surfbirds, and Wandering Tattlers. Although large numbers of Brandt's Cormorants are present throughout the year, they are known to breed only very locally along the mainland coast of Santa Barbara County.

Along the South Coast, *rocky shore* habitats are extremely limited east of Gaviota. The only such areas between Goleta and Carpinteria are quite small and are located at Goleta Point and Coal Oil Point, at the Santa Barbara Harbor breakwater, along the coast in eastern Carpinteria (Carpinteria Bluffs), and at Rincon Point. The only North Coast nesting species that breeds here is Brandt's Cormorant (at one site), and the only regularly wintering shorebird that is mostly restricted to rocky shores is the Black Turnstone. Rocky shelves (often found below sandy beaches) exposed at low tide attract Snowy Egrets, Black-crowned Night Herons, shorebirds, and gulls.

Sandy beaches are widespread, but in some areas they are heavily disturbed by humans. Dune areas exist along the North Coast in the vicinity of the Santa Maria River mouth (Guadalupe Dunes) south to Mussel Rock and along much of north Vandenberg Air Force Base from Shuman Creek south to the Santa Ynez River mouth. They are most extensive in the Guadalupe Dunes and Purisima Point areas. Heavy human recreational impacts in the Guadalupe Dunes (formerly) and along much of the South Coast between Gaviota and Carpinteria have resulted in the decline in local breeding populations of Snowy Plovers and Least Terns. The most protected sandy beach and dune areas are found on Vandenberg SFB Snowy Plovers, Least Terns, and Horned Larks breed in such sparsely vegetated areas. Typical sandy beach visitors include large numbers of shorebirds (such as Black-bellied Plover, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Sanderling, and Willet), terns (e.g., Forster's, Royal, and Elegant), and gulls (e.g., Short-billed, Ring-billed, Western, California, and Glaucous-winged). Black and Ruddy Turnstones, migrant Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitchers, phoebes, American Pipits, and Yellow-rumped Warblers are attracted to the upper portions of the beach where kelp deposits attract many invertebrates.

Foredunes are characterized by a growth of sand-verbena (*Abronia* spp.), Beach Bur-sage (*Ambrosia chamissonis*), *Camissoniopsis cheiranthifolia, Atriplex leucophylla,* and introduced ice plant (*Carpobrotus chilensis, C. edulis,* and *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*). The more stabilized dunes host a number of low shrubs, including Mock Heather (*Ericameria ericoides*), Yellow Bush Lupine (*Lupinus arboreus*), Dune Lupine (*L. chamissonis*) along the North Coast, California Wax Myrtle (*Morella californica*) in moist places, sand-verbena, and Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*). Breeding bird species are relatively few and include Bewick's Wren, California Thrasher, House Finch, White-crowned Sparrow (North Coast only), and Brewer's Blackbird.

Coastal Wetlands

Coastal wetlands (of marine influence) have been severely reduced in size since the early 1900s. The five principal areas that remain are small, isolated, and in mostly poor condition. Dredging and filling operations and accelerated siltation rates resulted in the loss of most

wetland habitat in the Goleta and Santa Barbara areas. Formerly more extensive marshes existed in the Goleta Slough and Devereux Slough areas and in southeastern Santa Barbara (the "Estero," now gone), and which supported larger numbers of waterbirds than today. The near disappearance of this habitat has resulted in a substantial reduction in populations of Ridgway's Rail (endangered and off-and-on extirpated from Santa Barbara County) and "Belding's" Savannah Sparrow (endangered). Coastal wetlands (and the approximate acreage of actual marsh habitat) that still remain are at the Santa Maria River mouth (50 acres) and Santa Ynez River mouth (ca. 110 acres) along the North Coast, and Devereux Slough (15 acres), Goleta Slough (only 125 acres is true saltmarsh), and Carpinteria Salt Marsh (ca. 150 acres) along the South Coast. These habitats and their inhabitants continue to be threatened by human disturbances: adjacent development, pollutants, siltation, reduction of freshwater inputs, and changes in mammalian predator populations.

The dominant plant species in these coastal wetlands is Pickleweed (*Salicornia pacifica*). Other characteristic plants include Alkali Heath (*Frankenia salina*), Wooly Sea Blite (*Suaeda taxifolia*), and Salt Grass (*Distichlis spicata*). The more extensive growths of *Salicornia*—found at the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths, Devereux and Goleta Slough, and Carpinteria Salt Marsh—are frequented by wintering Marsh Wrens, roosting Western Meadowlarks, and permanent resident "Belding's" Savannah Sparrows.

Most waterbirds frequenting coastal wetlands actually utilize open shallow water and mudflat habitats rather than vegetated marsh. Such areas are important for most waterfowl, are critical for most shorebirds, and are utilized by large numbers of roosting terns and gulls. The covering of rich mudflats by upriver siltation and sand encroachment has been a major problem at several wetland sites, as has been the covering of open mudflat and shallow water by vegetation.

Freshwater Marsh

Freshwater marsh is another habitat that has been greatly reduced over the past hundred years. Bordering lakes, ponds, sloughs, estuaries, and creeks, it now exists only in small, disjunct areas and continues to be degraded. Some of the characteristic plant species include the Southern Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus californicus*), Common Tule (*S. acutus*), and cattails (*Typha* spp.). The most important North Coast locations supporting this habitat include: areas just inside the Guadalupe Dunes both north and south of the Santa Maria River mouth, "Guadalupe Slough" in Guadalupe, and several settling ponds near Betteravia (formerly, now gone), all in the Santa Maria Valley; along the Cuyama River near Garey; and San Antonio Creek, the Waterfowl Management Ponds and nearby Santa Ynez River mouth area, Lake Canyon, Punchbowl Pond, and several other ponds on Vandenberg SFB Along the South Coast, the most important areas are Lake Los Carneros, Goleta Slough, and Atascadero Creek in Goleta; Laguna Blanca; and the Andrée Clark (Santa Barbara) Bird Refuge. More extensive freshwater marshes existed earlier in the 20th century in the Goleta area and in southern Santa Barbara city. Their disappearance resulted in the extirpation of breeding White-faced Ibis, along with reductions in local populations of rails, Common Gallinules, American Bitterns, and several passerine nesters including Red-winged and Tricolored Blackbirds and Common Yellowthroat. This habitat also supports several species of nesting waterfowl (e.g., Gadwall, Mallard, Cinnamon Teal, and Ruddy Duck).

Additional aquatic habitats along the coast include vernal pools, ephemeral and persistent ponds, and wet areas created by humans through irrigation, golf courses, and the construction of water storage and sewage treatment facilities. Freshwater ponds and small lakes are found at a number of sites in the Santa Maria Valley and on Vandenberg SFB Along the South Coast, the larger lakes include Lake Los Carneros, Laguna Blanca, Lauro Reservoir, and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Flooded fields and pastures are found principally in the Santa Maria Valley but are now much reduced as a result of changing agricultural and irrigation practices and are most

consistently found only near Guadalupe. This habitat attracts waterfowl and very large numbers of shorebirds, especially Black-bellied Plovers, Hudsonian Whimbrels (spring only), Long-billed Curlews, Marbled Godwits, Dunlin, Least Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, Wilson's Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, and Willets. When water levels are appropriate, sewage treatment ponds are heavily frequented by shorebirds. In addition to attracting large numbers of the above species (except Hudsonian Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, and Wilson's Snipe), they are also particularly attractive to Western, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpipers, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, and Bonaparte's and Short-billed Gulls. Sewage treatment ponds have hosted many rarities over the years, including numbers of Ruffs, Sharp-tailed, Semipalmated, and Stilt Sandpipers, and Little and Franklin's Gulls. The sewage treatment ponds that attract the largest numbers of birds in the past and currently are located near Santa Maria, near Orcutt, near Lompoc (waterfowl only), and in Goleta. Several settling ponds associated with a sugar-processing operation (terminated in summer 1993) at Betteravia in the Santa Maria Valley were also excellent for waterfowl and shorebirds and generally supported the same species as the sewage treatment ponds.

Coastal Sage Scrub

The *coastal sage scrub* community is found principally near the coast. It is also found locally in the upper sections of valleys and on the coastal slopes of the foothills where marine air penetrates inland (Smith 1976); examples occur along the Santa Maria Valley foothills at Garey, near Lompoc, in the Santa Ynez Valley east to Solvang, and on the south slopes of the Santa Ynez Mountains. It is most well-developed near the coast and is most extensive along the North Coast where it forms a transition between coastal dunes and sea-cliffs and communities farther inland (e.g., grassland and oak woodland). The characteristic vegetation of this community is low shrubs and includes California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), Purple Sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), Coyote Brush, California Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), and Bush Sunflower (*Encelia californica*). Some of the common breeding bird species of this habitat include California Quail, Anna's and Costa's Hummingbirds, Bushtit, Bewick's Wren, California Thrasher, House Finch, Song Sparrow, and Spotted and California Towhees. In addition, several species nest along the coastal strip north of Point Conception but are largely or totally absent from the coastal plain east of Gaviota; these include Greater Roadrunner, Costa's Hummingbird, and White-crowned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows.

The Hollister/Bixby Ranch area, located on the South Coast between Point Conception and Gaviota, also contains coastal sage scrub habitat similar to that found to the north. Interestingly, this area supports several breeding bird species otherwise absent or very rare this close to the ocean along the South Coast (e.g., Greater Roadrunner, Loggerhead Shrike (formerly), and Bell's Sparrow), as well as several that are rare or absent to the north (e.g., Phainopepla and Black-chinned Sparrow).

Grasslands

Over the past 200 years, grassland communities have been altered substantially by human activities such as burning, grazing, fire suppression, agriculture, urban expansion, and the introduction of non-native plant species. To a great extent, perennial bunch-grasses have been replaced by introduced annual species, and many other grasslands have disappeared altogether. Coastal areas still supporting large expanses of grassland include portions of the Santa Maria Valley; the Casmalia, Solomon, Santa Rosa, and Purisima Hills; Vandenberg SFB; the Hollister/Bixby Ranch area; a number of isolated pockets in the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains; and several smaller but important coastal terraces between Gaviota and Santa Barbara (e.g., Ellwood Mesa, Coal Oil Point, Santa Barbara Airport, and More Mesa in Goleta; San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara). Some of the grassy hillsides west of Goleta have been lost to expansion of avocado and lemon orchards. Common species associated with grassland habitats include Savannah Sparrow (winter only) and Western Meadowlark. Several species of

raptors, including White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, and Burrowing and Short-eared Owls (both nearly extirpated locally) frequent these areas. In the Santa Maria Valley, short grassland is favored by flocks of Long-billed Curlews, Horned Larks, and American Pipits (winter only); particularly sparsely vegetated or over-grazed areas formerly supported regular wintering Mountain Plovers (very local). The tall-grass hillsides in the Point Sal and Vandenberg SFB areas support populations of Grasshopper Sparrows. More Mesa in Goleta contained a large fall and winter roost of White-tailed Kites during the 1970s and early 1980s (smaller or no roosts since then), and it is the only site along the eastern South Coast that fairly regularly hosts one or two wintering Burrowing and Short-eared Owls.

Riparian Woodland and Forest

Riparian woodland and forest habitats were much reduced during the 1900s and presently exist in rather disjunct and degraded stands along streams and rivers and in foothill canyons. The most extensive areas remaining along the coast are found along the Santa Maria River (particularly west of Guadalupe), San Antonio Creek (mostly on Vandenberg SFB), and the Santa Ynez River. San Antonio Creek on Vandenberg SFB and several sections of the Santa Ynez River west of Buellton and Lompoc have particularly rich growth. Smaller pockets of riparian vegetation are found near Garey and along Shuman Creek, Bear Creek, and Honda Creek on Vandenberg SFB Most of these areas are characterized by a cool climate with regular foggy periods. The dominant plants are willows (*Salix* spp.), with some areas supporting dense stands and large trees. Black Cottonwoods (*Populus trichocarpa*) and Box Elders (*Acer negundo*) are found locally.

The North Coast riparian areas support a large, relatively diverse number of breeding species that are characteristic of this habitat. Several of these species are now very rare as breeders from the smaller remaining riparian areas along the South Coast (for example, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Wilson's Warbler). Large breeding populations of Western Warbling-Vireos and (Northern) Yellow Warblers also still exist on the North Coast, whereas they are now uncommon, local nesters along the South Coast. In addition, Song Sparrows are abundant, and Hairy Woodpeckers, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, and Purple Finches are resident.

Along the South Coast, extensive and relatively undisturbed riparian habitat is found rarely. Many of the remaining examples are found in portions of foothill canyons such as Gaviota (mostly willows), San Onofre, Corral, Refugio, El Capitan, Dos Pueblos, Tecolote, San Roque, Mission, Rattlesnake, Cold Spring, Hot Springs, San Ysidro, and Gobernador. Many of the other small canyons west of Goleta contain small pockets of mostly grazed and degraded riparian habitat. These areas are characterized by Western Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), willows, White Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), Big-leaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*), Black Cottonwood, and Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), but little native undergrowth.

Several creeks that flow onto the coastal plain between Goleta and the Ventura County line also support riparian habitat of varying size and vigor, but many have been further degraded over the past several decades. Some of these creeks are Winchester, Glen Annie, Carneros, San Pedro, San Jose, Maria Ygnacio, San Antonio, and Atascadero in Goleta; Arroyo Burro and Mission Creek in Santa Barbara; San Ysidro and Gobernador Creeks in Montecito; and Carpinteria and Rincon Creeks in Carpinteria. Most of them support willows and sycamores and fewer alders, maples, bays, and cottonwoods. Breeding bird species include Black-chinned Hummingbird, Hairy (scarce) and Downy Woodpeckers, Western Wood-Pewee (declining), Western Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo, Western Warbling-Vireo (local), (Northern) Yellow Warbler (local), Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, and Black-headed Grosbeak. Several species that have been extirpated from most of the South Coast include Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Wilson's Warbler, although all three continue to nest at a few sites. Migrant landbirds are

numerous in riparian habitats in both spring and fall. Budding willows and sycamores during the late winter and early spring are attractive to Pine Siskins; Lesser, Lawrence's, and American Goldfinches; Bullock's Orioles; and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

A number of riparian breeding bird species have undergone serious declines in their populations over the past century along the South Coast and in Southern California as a whole. This trend was probably caused by the destruction of formerly large expanses of riparian habitat, by the continued degradation of that which remains, by drought, tree removal, and by an increase in local populations of the Brown-headed Cowbird, a brood parasite. Such species as Long-eared Owl and Bell's Vireo are thought to be totally extirpated as breeders from the coast; Willow Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Wilson's Warbler are now rare or, at best, uncommon and local; and Western Warbling-Vireos and (Northern) Yellow Warblers are, at present, local and uncommon in South Coast riparian areas.

Oak Woodland

Extensive *oak woodlands*, with closely-spaced trees and a well-shaded floor, are rather localized along the coast. On the North Coast, the major areas with oaks are found in the Casmalia Hills south of Casmalia and in the Purisima and Santa Rosa Hills; smaller pockets are found in a number of coastal canyons and on hillsides that face away from the coast between Point Sal and Point Conception. The dominant species is Coast Live Oak. The summit of Tranquillon Mountain near Point Arguello supports a stand of Tan Oak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*). Along the South Coast, oak woodlands are more extensive and are found principally in foothill canyons and in the more vegetated residential areas in Santa Barbara (e.g., Hope Ranch and Montecito). This community has been greatly reduced in the Goleta area.

Characteristic birds of oak woodland include Band-tailed Pigeon (South Coast only), Western Screech-Owl (very local on North Coast), Acorn and Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Western Flycatcher (summer only), Hutton's Vireo, Western Scrub-Jay, Oak Titmouse, Bushtit, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (winter only), White-breasted Nuthatch, and Orange-crowned Warbler.

Closed-cone Pine Forest

Very localized *closed-cone pine forests* exist to the southeast of Orcutt, on the summit of the Purisima Hills north of Lompoc, in Lompoc Canyon west of Lompoc, and at Jualachichi Summit along the Jalama road. This community supports Bishop Pine (*Pinus muricata*) and a nearby, very small stand of Douglas-Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), the southern-most in California. No localized or unique bird populations are found in this forest type.

Chaparral

Found along the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains and locally in the Point Sal, north Vandenberg, and Lompoc areas is *chaparral*, probably the most widespread plant community in Santa Barbara County. This dense, shrubby community is found on poorer soils and is dominated by Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.) (particularly Bigpod Ceanothus [C. *megacarpus*] east of Point Conception), Scrub Oak (*Quercus dumosa* and *Q. berberidifolia*), and Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) at lower elevations. Characteristic lower-elevation chaparral birds include California Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Anna's and Costa's (summer only) Hummingbirds, Wrentit, Bewick's Wren, California Thrasher, Lesser Goldfinch, Golden-crowned Sparrow (winter only), and Spotted and California Towhees).

Altered Habitats

Much of the coastal plain has been altered by humans. Extensive agricultural operations exist in the Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys, with some of the principal crops being broccoli, lettuce, strawberries, and flowers. Grazing operations are also present in the Santa Maria Valley and along the coast locally from Point Sal to Point Conception. Much of the agricultural land in the Santa Barbara and Goleta Valley area has been lost to urban expansion, with field crops

presently grown only in small, isolated areas (e.g., Patterson Avenue in Goleta and in Carpinteria). Lemon and avocado orchards are numerous, and although many have been displaced by residential expansion in the Goleta area, since the 1970s and 1980s they spread from there along the foothills west to the Refugio Road area. Such orchards generally are of minimal value to birds, with a few notable exceptions. They occasionally support White-tailed Kite roosts in fall and winter and they were a favored habitat of the now-rare Common Ground Dove.

Most of the human population of Santa Barbara County resides in the Santa Maria Valley and the Lompoc area along the North Coast, and in the greater Santa Barbara area along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria. Growing populations in these areas have resulted in the expansion of major residential and urban areas and the loss of much native habitat, especially grasslands, coastal sage scrub, and oak woodlands, as well as agricultural land. Exotic plantings in these same residential and urban areas, as well as city parks and golf courses, have created new habitats during the past hundred years. Urban and residential areas include a wide variety of introduced conifers and flowering and other insect-rich plants, with eucalyptus, bottle-brush (*Callistemon* spp.), Cape Honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*), and *Tipuana tipu* trees being particularly important additions. Such species as Rock Pigeon, Band-tailed Pigeon, Anna's Hummingbird, American Crow, Northern Mockingbird, American Robin, European Starling, House Sparrow, House Finch, Hooded Oriole, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Brewer's Blackbird have benefited from the creation of agricultural, urban, and residential environments. The planting of winter-blooming species such as eucalyptus has provided a new food source and probably has been the principal cause of the regular over-wintering, particularly between Goleta and Carpinteria, of a small number of individuals of several species previously thought to leave the state, including Bullock's Oriole and Western Tanager (annual in small numbers) as well as Costa's Hummingbird, Orchard, Hooded, Baltimore, and Scott's Orioles, Nashville and (Northern) Yellow Warblers, and Summer Tanager (all rare but somewhat regular).

DISTRICT I: INTERIOR LOWLANDS

Oak Savanna

Large areas in the interior lowlands are characterized by *oak savanna*, particularly in the Santa Ynez and Los Alamos Valleys. Smaller areas of this habitat are found in the eastern Santa Maria Valley, locally along the Cuyama River between Santa Maria and New Cuyama, and in the watersheds of El Jaro and Jalama Creeks. This habitat is composed of grassland with scattered oaks, principally Coast Live Oak and Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*); in some areas, Blue Oak (*Q. douglasii*) is also present. Many of the perennial native bunch-grasses have been replaced by introduced annual species, including Wild Oat (*Avena fatua*), brome (*Bromus* spp.), foxtail (*Hordeum* spp.), fescue (*Festuca* spp.), and wild mustards (*Brassica* spp.). Regeneration of the oaks in many areas is threatened by drought and by cattle (which graze on and trample the seedlings) and feral pigs (which root up oak-woodland understory and eat acorns). Some of the characteristic breeding bird species in this habitat include Wild Turkey, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Acorn Woodpecker, Violet-green Swallow, Western Scrub-Jay, Yellow-billed Magpie, American Crow, Oak Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, Lark Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, and Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds. The expansion of grape vineyards during the past several decades primarily into this habitat has resulted in the loss of a substantial amount of acreage, and the vineyards themselves are attractive to only a very few avian species.

Many of the streams and rivers that flow through these valleys are bordered by a patchy growth of Western Sycamores, Black Cottonwoods, Fremont Cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*),

and willows. Where such creeks flow out of the surrounding foothills (e.g., Nojoqui Falls [County] Park, Quiota Creek near Santa Ynez, and in several canyons bordering the Cuyama River west of New Cuyama), White Alder, Bigleaf Maple, and California Bay may also be present. These areas support nesting Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Western Wood-Pewees, Western Warbling-Vireos, Swainson's Thrushes (local), Bullock's Orioles, and (Northern) Yellow Warblers.

Riparian Woodland

The most extensive *riparian woodland* areas found inland are along the Sisquoc River, the Santa Ynez River between Buellton and Lompoc, and the upper Santa Ynez River (defined here as the stretch of the river east of Lake Cachuma) and several nearby creeks (e.g., Mono and Agua Caliente Creeks) between Gibraltar Reservoir and Juncal Dam. The vegetation of the upper Santa Ynez River is characterized by an association of Fremont Cottonwoods, Red Willow (*Salix laevigata*), and Coast Live Oak, with a declining but complex understory of small trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials and annuals. Broader portions of the valley host a canopied forest dominated by the above species but also including Pacific Willow (*S. lasiandra*), Black Cottonwood, and Western Sycamore. Those areas that are substantially flooded by winter storms support sparse to dense thickets of shrubs, usually Arroyo Willow (*S. lasiolepis*) or Narrow-leaved Willow (*S. exigua*). These areas supported a small, declining breeding population of the endangered "Least" Bell's Vireo (at least formerly). Narrow canyons tend to be dominated by Coast Live Oak or, under more mesic conditions, White Alder and Western Sycamore. Dominant understory species are California Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), California Wild Rose (*Rosa californica*), Mule Fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), and Mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*). Substantial numbers of several declining breeding species, including Western Warbling-Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, (Northern) Yellow Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat, frequent these habitats. Other characteristic nesting species are Nuttall's Woodpecker, Ash-throated and Western Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewee, Northern House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wrentit, Song Sparrow, Bullock's Oriole, Common Yellowthroat, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting. The riparian habitat near Buellton is known to support nesting Willow Flycatchers, Tree Swallows, and Blue Grosbeaks.

Freshwater Habitats

Extensive *freshwater* habitats are found locally in District I. Most inland streams are not of adequate size to support waterbirds; the principal areas that do are the Santa Ynez River, several small sewage treatment ponds (e.g., at Los Alamos), and, especially, several man-made reservoirs along its course, including Lake Cachuma, Gibraltar Reservoir, and Jameson Lake.

Lake Cachuma is by far the most important inland area for waterbirds, and it is also the only one that receives regular observer coverage. The east end of Lake Cachuma and the upper reaches of several of its bays are characterized by relatively shallow water with some emergent vegetation along its borders (principally willows, cattails, and bulrushes). A small number of Tree Swallows nest here, as do Wood Ducks and, irregularly, Western and Clark's Grebes when water levels are adequate. During the late summer and fall, mudflats may be exposed providing extensive feeding habitat for shorebirds. The western end of the lake is deeper water and may be frequented by such otherwise coastal species as Horned Grebe, Common Loon, and several gulls. The lake, overall, supports varying numbers of wintering and migratory waterfowl. A small number of Ospreys and Bald Eagles regularly over-wintered there, although fewer have done so in recent years, and Bald Eagle has bred since 1989. Lake Cachuma and Gibraltar Reservoir are the only two sites that regularly support moderate numbers of wintering Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers. Other species found regularly at Cachuma and nowhere else inland include Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, Bonaparte's Gull, and American Herring Gull. Occasionally, small numbers of Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Short-billed Gulls are noted. A number of species normally restricted to the coast have been recorded here, such as

Surf and White-winged Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Parasitic Jaeger, Least, Common, and Elegant Terns, Black Skimmer, Glaucous-winged Gull, Red-throated and Pacific Loons, and Reddish Egret.

Gibraltar Reservoir and Jameson Lake are smaller and support fewer waterbirds than does Lake Cachuma, both in terms of abundance and diversity. The adjacent stretches of the Santa Ynez River support relatively few waterbirds but are mostly poorly covered by observers. The most noteworthy species there are nesting Wood Ducks and Spotted Sandpipers present locally when water levels are adequate; Common Mergansers have nested on several occasions.

Other Habitats

At the lower elevations (below ca. 2000 feet) of the inland hills, several different plant communities are found. On the warmer and drier south-facing slopes *coastal sage scrub* is often found, while on the cooler and wetter north slopes *oak woodland* may occur. Much of the Santa Ynez and San Rafael Mountains and the Sierra Madre are covered by *chaparral,* particularly where the soils are poor or rocky. Also present on the lower slopes of the San Rafael Mountains are grassy areas or broken chaparral containing stands of Gray Pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), which do not host a diverse or unique bird fauna.

Growing human populations in several communities in the Santa Ynez Valley have resulted in the expansion of residential and small urban areas. Like in District C, exotic plantings in these areas, as well as city parks and golf courses, have created both new habitats and resulted in the loss of native vegetation during the past hundred years. Perhaps most important to birds are introduced conifers and flowering and other insect-rich plants, with eucalyptus and pepper trees being particularly important additions.

DISTRICT M: MOUNTAINS

Chaparral

Above an elevation of approximately 2000 feet, *chaparral* is the dominant community, covering most of the Santa Ynez Range and much of the San Rafael Mountains and Sierra Madre. The dominant plants include several of those present at lower elevations (i.e., Chamise and Scrub Oak) and others such as Eastwood and Bigberry Manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa, A. glauca*) and *Ceanothus cuneatus* and *C. crassifolius.* The characteristic avifauna is similar to that of the chaparral at lower elevations, with the additions of Mountain Quail, Common Poorwill, Black-chinned Sparrow (summer only), and Fox Sparrow (winter only). Rocky outcroppings in the area are frequented by White-throated Swifts and Canyon Wrens.

Oak-Madrone Woodland

An *oak-madrone woodland* (mixed evergreen forest) occurs locally on the north slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Sierra Madre; good examples are found at Refugio and San Marcos Passes, and in Tepusquet, Bates, and upper Aliso Canyons. This community is characterized by a growth of Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), Tanbark Oak, Coast Live Oak, and California Bay. Widespread bird species such as Western Flycatcher, Western Scrub-Jay, Oak Titmouse, Bushtit, House and Bewick's Wrens, Purple Finch, and Orange-crowned Warbler are numerous. The only known summering Northern Saw-whet Owls and Black-throated Gray Warblers in these mountains are also found in this habitat. Several creeks flow through these areas (e.g., on the north side of Refugio Pass and along Kinevan Road and Cold Spring Canyon near San Marcos Pass) which support a growth of Big-leaf Maple and White Alder, as well as Western Sycamore and California Bay. Western Warbling-Vireos and (Northern) Yellow Warblers are fairly common at these locations. Cassin's Vireos nest in small and irregular

numbers. And a very localized, irregular population of breeding Hermit Thrushes was first discovered in 1981 at two sites in the Santa Ynez Mountains.

Also found along the north-facing slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains, principally from La Cumbre Peak east to the Ventura County line, are scattered Bigcone Douglas-Fir [Bigcone Spruce] (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*). These trees support (at least formerly) small populations of breeding Olive-sided Flycatchers, as well as wintering Townsend's Solitaires and several irregular montane irruptive species. Clusters of these trees are also found on steep north- and west- facing slopes and at the heads of canyons down to the middle elevations in the San Rafael Mountains and Sierra Madre.

Grasslands

Grassland areas in the mountains are known as potreros. They are rather small and localized in the San Rafael Mountains but are more extensive in the Sierra Madre, where they include Montgomery, Pine Corral, Salisbury, and Santa Barbara Potreros. These areas support mostly annual plant species and are characterized by an excellent growth of native wildflowers. The bird fauna of these grasslands is not well known.

Montane Coniferous Forest

The *montane coniferous forest* is most extensive and best developed on several of the higher peaks in the San Rafael Mountains, most notably Figueroa Mountain and Ranger Peak, San Rafael Mountain, Madulce Peak, and, especially, Big Pine Mountain. On the lower slopes of these peaks is Gray Pine, followed at slightly higher elevations by Coulter Pine (*Pinus coulteri*), which is often mixed with Coast Live Oak and Blue Oak. Above the Coulter Pine is Ponderosa Pine (*P. ponderosa*), the dominant species at the top of Figueroa Mountain. Much of the remaining Ponderosa Pine forest on Figueroa also contains Goldencup (Canyon Live) Oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*) and Coast Live Oak, forming an oak-coniferous woodland. On the cooler, north-facing slopes, as well as in moist ravines, Bigcone Douglas-Fir is also found, sometimes in fairly large stands, as on the north slope of Ranger Peak. These conifer and oak-conifer forests support characteristic montane residents and breeders including Mountain Quail, Northern Saw-whet Owl (rare), Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Chipping Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Western Tanager. Montane winter visitors include Williamson's Sapsucker (rare), White-headed Woodpecker (rare), Townsend's Solitaire, and Cassin's Finch (irregular).

Big Pine Mountain, the highest peak, is characterized in the somewhat drier areas by chaparral or by the same species present on top of Figueroa Mountain. In the higher, cooler, and wetter sections along its north side—here defined as the area between West Big Pine Mountain and the Bear Campground and Alamar Saddle area—is an extensive forest (though substantially burned during the early 2000s) composed of more cold-tolerant and mesic species, including White Fir (*Abies concolor*), Jeffrey Pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*), Sugar Pine (*P. lambertiana*), and Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*). These same species are also found, though now extensively degraded by drought and fire, along the north slopes of San Rafael Mountain and Madulce Peak. The forest on San Rafael Mountain is best developed in the Mission Pine Springs area; it is drier and more open than that on Big Pine Mountain and contains only a few White Fir. Several stands of Western Choke Cherry (*Prunus virginiana* var. *demissa*) and Bitter Cherry (*P. emarginata*) are present in wet areas on these mountains, with a widespread growth of manzanita *(Arctostaphylos* spp.) in the drier areas. Both mountains suffered extensive fire damage in 2007, resulting in a substantial reduction in the amount of conifer forest present.

A number of montane avian species that are very local in Santa Barbara County are found on Big Pine Mountain in summer. These species, largely or totally unknown in summer on Figueroa Mountain, include American Goshawk (rare), Flammulated Owl, Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Dusky Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet (formerly), Cassin's Finch (rare), Red Crossbill (irregular), Fox Sparrow, Nashville Warbler

(irregular), and Yellow-rumped ("Audubon's") Warbler. Other species include all those listed earlier for Figueroa Mountain. Many, but not all, of these same species are found (at least formerly) on San Rafael Mountain. Madulce Peak remains poorly surveyed.

Unfortunately, a substantial amount of montane coniferous forest has been lost in Santa Barbara County and elsewhere in much of California over the past two decades or more as a result of drought and fire. Only relatively small or open areas of such habitat still exist on Figueroa Mountain, and the acreage of forest on Big Pine and San Rafael Mountains and on Madulce Peak has been much reduced since the 1990s.

DISTRICT V: CUYAMA VALLEY

The Cuyama Valley is a unique region in Santa Barbara County. Considered to be near the southern end of the Coast Ranges by geologists, it was considered to be a biogeographic outlier of the "San Joaquin Desert" by Germano et al. (2011). It is an arid area characterized by extensive *agriculture* (principally alfalfa, carrots, grapes, and pistachio groves) on much of the valley floor, with areas of *semidesert scrub* and *pinyon-juniper woodland* in the surrounding foothills and canyons to the east and south, and in the Cuyama River bed. Conversion of much of the alfalfa to pistachios, carrots, and grapes since the 1980s or 1990s has resulted in the loss of much foraging habitat for raptors, Horned Larks, American Pipits, etc. The foothills to the south and west of New Cuyama are covered mostly in *grassland*, including seasonally showy wildflowers. Small stands and many scattered single deciduous trees (e.g., Fremont Cottonwoods) are found in and along the river and creek channels and around ranch houses and in the town of New Cuyama, as are some planted conifers. A few stands of introduced tamarisk are also found in the river bed. The cottonwoods are utilized by nesting hawks and kingbirds, also by Nuttall's Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers. Many small holding-ponds are scattered throughout the valley and are utilized to varying degrees by some migrant waterbirds, and they are a focal point for foraging concentrations of Lesser Nighthawks in late summer. Formerly bordered by cattails and bulrushes, almost all of these ponds are now lined in plastic, much to the detriment of several species including Tricolored Blackbird. A large sewage treatment pond alongside Branch Creek, just west of New Cuyama, was completed in October 2017, and in the short period since then it has attracted many waterbird species that were previously rare or unknown in District V. Another relatively new attractive pond is located in lower Quatal Canyon. A large dairy operation south of Cuyama was attractive (at least formerly) to the largest number of Tricolored Blackbirds remaining in the county, and its settling (effluent) ponds were frequented by a number of waterfowl and shorebirds.

The agricultural areas are characterized in winter by a number of raptors, including Northern Harrier, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Merlin, and Prairie Falcon (permanent resident). Also present at this season are Mountain Bluebirds, Vesper Sparrows, and large numbers (at least formerly) of Horned Larks (smaller numbers remain to nest) and American Pipits. Common Ravens are numerous year-round. Lawrence's Goldfinches breed locally.

The foothills and canyons to the east (i.e., Ballinger, Deer Park, and [mostly Ventura County sections of] Quatal Canyons) and to the southwest (e.g., lower Santa Barbara Canyon) of the main valley support a semidesert flora characterized by scattered Pinyon Pine (*Pinus monophylla*) and California Juniper (*Juniperus californica*) and such shrub species as Big (Great Basin) Sagebrush (*Artemesia tridentata*), Rubber Rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), Arrow-weed (*Pluchea sericea*), Allscale [Common Saltbush] (*Atriplex polycarpa*), Four-wing Saltbush (*A. canescens*), Big Saltbush (*A. lentiformis*), and Cheese Bush (*Ambrosia salsola*). Several desert birds reach the western limit of their breeding ranges in California in this area. These include Brewer's Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, and Scott's Oriole. Other breeding species

include Mountain Quail (at least formerly), Greater Roadrunner, Lesser Nighthawk, Common Poorwill, Costa's Hummingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Rock Wren, and Bell's Sparrow.

Chapter 3: BIRD MIGRATION AND THE SEASONS

The migratory movements of birds in Santa Barbara County are not often pronounced. As in most of Southern California, the climate is much more equable than in the remainder of the continent. This has resulted in more protracted spring and fall migrations of birds, with fewer sharp peaks in numbers. In the eastern United States and Canada, large-scale fall landbird movement is often initiated by the passage of a cold front, with its falling temperatures and northwest winds. Spring movements of birds often accompany warm fronts with their higher temperatures and southerly or southwesterly winds. In Southern California such fronts are usually weaker, and, while their passage may result in an increase in movement, the associated number of individuals is fewer. An important weather factor affecting landbird numbers in District C is the presence of coastal fog, or, more accurately, the "marine layer." These conditions often result in greater numbers of passerines at coastal migrant traps in both spring and fall compared to those under mostly clear conditions. Calm or offshore winds, even with clear skies, may also facilitate somewhat greater numbers of migrants present near the coast, with spring headwinds contributing to especially large numbers of landbirds seen during visible migration "morning-flights" through the foothills and mountains.

Migrant concentrations vary in size substantially from year to year. Hundreds of migrants may be found in a relatively small area, particularly during April and early May. For example, there was a "great wave" of transients along the South Coast during late April 1912 (Dawson 1923), 100 Western Tanagers were in a several-acre area in Goleta 9 May 1977, large numbers of migrants were in the lowlands during April and early May 1991, and, in fall, 300+ Western Tanagers were at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in "one hour" on 31 August 1957. Some morning-flight events may involve hundreds of individuals.

Large-scale movements of coastal seabirds (e.g., Brant, scoters, terns, gulls, loons) move past the coast annually during spring, mostly between March and May.

The migratory passage of birds is by no means restricted to the typical "north in spring" and "south in fall" pattern. Sizeable movements take place every month of the year. In addition, not all movements are solely latitudinal. Altitudinal migration also occurs; individuals of several species regularly wander to higher elevations in late summer and early fall. Post-breeding dispersal patterns bring several species (e.g., Elegant Tern, Heermann's Gull, Black-vented Shearwater, Brown Pelican) north into the county during summer and fall.

Nocturnal migration of many landbird species is well known, but a number of waterbirds may also move nocturnally, particularly some grebes, rails, shorebirds, terns, and herons, but also some waterfowl. Some surprises include large numbers of Red-necked Phalaropes heard flying several miles inland over the coastal plain after sunset (see species account).

Most of the effort to observe migrants has been concentrated near the coast. Migration in the remainder of the county is less well known. The fall movement through the mountains and Cuyama Valley is particularly understudied. Data on early arrival and late departure dates and maximum counts are incomplete from these areas. Some of the areas that concentrate spring and/or fall landbird transients are as follows: riparian areas along the lower Santa Maria River west of Guadalupe, along San Antonio Creek, and along the lower Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc; Jalama Beach County Park (formerly Jalama State Beach); Gaviota State Park (fall only; formerly named Gaviota State Beach); Refugio and El Capitan State Beaches; lerp-infested eucalyptus in Ellwood; the coastal plain in southern Goleta; riparian creeks in Goleta (e.g., San Pedro, San Jose, Maria Ygnacio, and Atascadero Creeks); foothill canyons between Refugio and Carpinteria; several city parks in Santa Barbara (e.g., Elings, Chase Palm); the Santa Barbara Cemetery (formerly); and Carpinteria and Rincon Creeks. The Point Conception and Point Arguello areas may be good for concentrating migrants but are mostly off-limits to the public.

The isolated clumps of trees found around parks and farmhouses in the Cuyama Valley act as small oases for transients moving through that sparsely vegetated area.

In spring, large numbers of many migrant landbirds are found in the foothills and mountains. A notable early-morning visible migration many passerines may occur through the Santa Ynez Mountain passes (e.g., San Marcos, Refugio) at that season, particularly during headwinds. Moderate-to-large, but declining, numbers of migrating shorebirds can be found in the Santa Maria Valley (including the Santa Maria River mouth), at the Santa Ynez River mouth, at Devereux and Goleta Sloughs, and at Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Along the South Coast, the coastal seabird migration is most easily observed in spring from Shoreline Park in Santa Barbara, at Goleta and Coal Oil Points, and from Gaviota. In fall, such a movement is largely detectable only along the North Coast, with the Santa Maria River mouth being the most accessible location.

The first spring migrants arrive in early January, with the appearance of Cinnamon Teal and migrant Allen's Hummingbirds. The end of the month sometimes brings the first Rufous Hummingbirds and Tree and Violet-green Swallows. Northern Rough-winged, Cliff, and Barn Swallows arrive during February. March brings a definite quickening of migrant activity: Cassin's and Western Kingbirds, Western Flycatchers, Western Warbling-Vireos, and Hooded and Bullock's Orioles appear during the first half of the month (during the 2000s, even during the last week of February), followed by migrant Orange-crowned Warblers and Wilson's Warblers, and later by Black-throated Gray Warblers and Black-headed Grosbeaks by month's end. The peak passage of waterfowl and swallows takes place during this month. The spring coastal seabird migration, which begins in late February, is in full swing by mid-month, with the peak movement occurring between late March and early May. (For a further discussion of this passage see Appendix I.) Also in March, the first flocks of migrant shorebirds, particularly Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, and Short-billed Dowitchers, appear, as do Caspian Terns.

April and May are the peak months of spring migration for shorebirds and landbirds. The largest numbers of flycatchers, vireos, orioles, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and buntings pass through between mid-April and mid-May, and hundreds of individuals may be seen in a day. Small numbers of transient landbirds (such as Western Wood-Pewees, Western Warbling-Vireos, Western Tanagers) continue to pass through the county through early June. Most of the spring records of vagrant species have come from late in the season (mid-May to mid-June). Shorebird numbers are at their maximum between mid-April and late May. Early May to mid-June is an excellent time to observe pelagic species offshore such as phalaropes, jaegers, several alcids, Black-footed Albatross, storm-petrels, and shearwaters. During early June the last of the shorebirds and coastal seabirds are still moving north. On several occasions, late northbound shorebirds (e.g., Long-billed Dowitchers, Red-necked Phalaropes) have been observed side by side with the first southbound migrants (e.g., Greater Yellowlegs, female Wilson's Phalaropes).

With the advent of summer, many species breeding in Santa Barbara County have long since begun nesting activities. Anna's Hummingbirds breed throughout the year, Allen's Hummingbirds have been seen building nests as early as mid-December, Hutton's Vireos with almost completed nests have been observed late in January, and several other resident species (e.g., Hairy Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, California Towhee) have fledged young by the middle of April. Many of the lowland species, particularly permanent residents, breed during March, April, and May, and they may be attempting second or third broods by June. Also during June and July, small numbers of nonbreeding waterfowl, shorebirds, and gulls summer along the coast.

Southbound transient shorebirds begin to arrive by late June, and several species (e.g., Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Willet) are relatively numerous by early July. Large numbers of many species are present by the end of July. Among shorebirds, these first fall migrants are invariably adults; the first juveniles do not typically appear until late July or later. Heermann's Gulls arrive from Mexico beginning in the

second half of June and Elegant Terns first appear typically in early July. Substantial numbers of Sooty Shearwaters may be present offshore. The first fall migrant landbirds appear in early July, particularly in the mountains. The early transients include Black-chinned, Costa's, and particularly Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds (mostly adult males). Also at this season, there is a post-breeding up-slope movement of some lowland nesters, resulting in a few individuals of a number of hummingbirds, orioles, and such otherwise sedentary species as Black Phoebe and nominate Bell's Sparrow being recorded at high elevations away from breeding areas. The extent of this movement in Santa Barbara County is poorly known due to the limited coverage of the higher mountains during late summer and early fall.

The numbers of transient landbirds increase during August. Fall migration is quite protracted, with large numbers of migrants present between mid-August and mid-November. Most flycatchers, vireos, several warblers (e.g., Orange-crowned, Yellow, Wilson's), tanagers, and grosbeaks pass through mostly between August and early October. Other sparrows and warblers peak between late September and early November. Vagrant species occur primarily between early September and early November. During montane invasion years, Mountain Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Pine Siskins may arrive in the lowlands between early September and early October. Both late stragglers and some vagrants may occur well into December and even into early or mid-January but still not apparently winter locally. For example, small numbers of Nashville, Yellow, Palm, and Wilson's Warblers are reported regularly into early January, but fewer typically remain throughout winter.

Many pelagic species are most numerous between late July and mid-October. Large numbers of shearwaters, storm-petrels, and jaegers are present, and it is during this period that such warm-water species as Guadalupe and Craveri's Murrelets and Least Storm-Petrel are most likely to occur. The fall passage of coastal seabirds (e.g., Brant, scoters, loons) is less pronounced overall than the passage in spring and it is most apparent from shore along the North Coast. Most southbound transients pass slightly farther offshore and are rarely detected in numbers from along the South Coast. The fall movement occurs mostly between early October and late December.

Chapter 4: ORNITHOLOGICAL HISTORY

The first published study dealing with bird distribution in Santa Barbara County appeared in 1876 when Henshaw reported his observations following visits to the South Coast area in the *Annual Report of the Geographical Survey.* After visiting Santa Cruz Island, he arrived in Santa Barbara in June 1875 and came "to consider it the most inviting place on the Pacific to live in." He camped at "Moore's Island," "ten miles from town" [Goleta?], excavating Indian burial sites. e departed Santa Barbara in July. His account deals with only a relatively few species.

Beginning in the first decade of the 20th century, short articles appeared periodically in *The Condor* discussing the status and distribution of a number of species in the Santa Barbara area and documenting unusual local occurrences. These articles were published on a regular basis through the 1950s.

The first major work on the status and distribution of the birds in this region was George Willett's *Birds of the Pacific Coast of Southern California* (Willett 1912). It was followed in 1933 by his more thorough *Revised List of the Birds of Southwestern California* (Willett 1933). During this same period, William Leon Dawson published his four-volume *The Birds of California* (Dawson 1923). These earlier works are incomplete and now mostly out-of-date. The historical perspective they give, however, is of major value for species whose status or distribution have changed substantially.

Willett's 1933 work described the status and distribution of all species in the southwestern portion of the state. The relative lack of data from the Santa Barbara County area in comparison to the Los Angeles and San Diego regions, however, resulted in cursory treatment of many species in this area. Much of what is stated about the status and distribution of southwestern California's species applies to the region as a whole, but it does contain a number of local records and specific references to Santa Barbara County. Despite these limitations, a substantial amount of general information can be drawn from Willett's books.

Dawson's *The Birds of California* is a popular account of the natural history of the species found in the entire state, with a special emphasis on eggs and nests. Even though Dawson was a Santa Barbara resident who carried out much fieldwork in the local area, there is relatively little information given on the status and distribution of the species in the county.

The Distribution of the Birds of California by Joseph Grinnell and Alden Miller (1944) is an excellent and relatively thorough treatment of birds in the entire state. Although so much has changed since its date of publication that it is now substantially out-of-date, its discussion of the state's subspecies remains unequalled. Specific nest records and other historical data are also very useful, as is information on habitat preferences. Similar to the earlier works of Willett and Dawson, the geographical scope of the book did not allow a detailed treatment of Santa Barbara County. Additionally, it is apparent from the range maps and species accounts that much of Santa Barbara County was poorly known, particularly the North Coast, the higher mountains, and the Cuyama Valley area.

In 1951, Miller published *An Analysis of the Distribution of the Birds of California,* which contains a good discussion of species' habitat preferences. His breakdown of the state's vegetation associations and the characteristic birds they contain is valuable.

Robert Pyle's *Annotated Field List: Birds of Southern California,* published in 1953 and revised by Arnold Small in 1961, contains bar graphs depicting seasonal abundance and annotations citing specific records of interest. This book is now out-of-date and contains factual errors subsequently corrected by additional fieldwork. Its treatment of Santa Barbara County is cursory.

Small's *The Birds of California* (1974) is a popular treatment of the state's avifauna that contains little information on Santa Barbara County.

The *Birds of Southern California: Status and Distribution* (1981) by Kimball Garrett and Jon Dunn is excellent, but it has become dated. Due to the scope of this book, the treatment of Santa

Barbara County is incomplete but still extremely valuable. The bar graphs denoting seasonal status are mostly accurate for the Santa Barbara region.

Two booklets have appeared that deal exclusively with the Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties region. Due to the limited area covered by each, the detail given was greatly increased over that given in the other works. T. Nelson Metcalf's *Birds of the Santa Barbara Region* (1967, revised 1972) is now out-of-date and it contains some erroneous information. It was, however, a first attempt at describing the status and distribution of the birds of the Santa Barbara region. Metcalf used bar graphs to show changes in seasonal status and he provided supplemental information through annotations that gave specific records. The geographic scope of the work was a circle with a radius of fifty miles and centered in Santa Barbara. Although it included much of Ventura County, it omitted northwestern Santa Barbara County and the pelagic waters well offshore. *The Birds of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, California* by Richard Webster, Paul Lehman, and Louis Bevier (1980) follows the same format as that of Metcalf (1972), and although more up-to-date, its format did not permit great detail. It covered all of mainland Santa Barbara County and its offshore waters to 100 km, an area nearly equivalent to that covered in this study (except for the offshore waters). An annotated *Checklist: Birds of Santa Barbara County* by Lehman and Joan Lentz (1993) was published by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, and an updated version by Lentz and Dave Compton was published in 2006.

The journal *North American Birds* (formerly *Bird-Lore, Audubon Field Notes American Birds,* and again *(National Audubon Society) Field Notes*) has been an extremely valuable source of Santa Barbara County records since the early 1900s. This journal documents occurrences of out-of-range species, unseasonal records, unusual concentrations, extralimital breeding, and the status of rare and endangered species, and presents migration, breeding, and winter census data.

The annual Christmas Bird Count results for the Santa Barbara area were published in *Bird-Lore* between 1912 and 1939. This count resumed in 1961 as the Santa Barbara Christmas Bird Count, and it continues to be held annually to the present. Other CBCs in Santa Barbara County, initiated since the 1980s, are Santa Maria-Guadalupe, Lompoc, Cachuma, and Carpinteria. The complete results of all CBCs were published annually through 1998 in *Audubon Field Notes, American Birds,* and *Field Notes,* and then separately from 1999–2001 by the National Audubon Society (again in *"American Birds")*. This was followed by the publication of only an overall CBC summary through 2012. Full results of the individual CBCs may be viewed online, at http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count or simply http://www.christmasbirdcount.org or netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/

Throughout the ornithological history of Santa Barbara County, most fieldwork (including specimen and egg collecting) has taken place along the South Coast, more specifically the lowlands between Goleta and Carpinteria. Additional fieldwork was carried out somewhat regularly in the Santa Ynez Valley and San Marcos Pass area of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Shortly after the turn of the century, extensive egg collecting was undertaken, most notably by William Leon Dawson, Robert Canterbury, and Lawrence T. Stevens; this continued into the 1950s. An increase in specimen collecting began in the late 1910s and in the 1920s and lasted into the 1960s, largely the result of the efforts of L. B. Bishop, G. C. Lamb, Egmont Z. Rett, and Waldo G. Abbott. During most of this period, however, little was collected or published from elsewhere in the county. This gap is reflected in Grinnell and Miller's (1944) spotty treatment of species known to be long-time inhabitants.

Many of the specimens and eggs collected early in the 20th century were deposited at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (formerly the Museum of Comparative Oology, 1918–1925). A tragic fire at the museum in 1962 destroyed some 4300 bird specimens and 5000 egg sets, along with almost all personal field-notes, diaries, and museum records, resulting in the loss of much historical information. Despite this loss, the Museum currently contains a collection of almost 11,000 specimens, more than 1650 skeletons, 12,000+ egg sets and nests, many

photographs, census data, and field notes. Paul W. Collins and Krista Fahy at the museum's vertebrate lab have been particularly active in assembling a fine collection of specimens, photos, field notes, and other records. The collections at the UCSB Vertebrate Museum (now the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration [CCBER]) focus on the period following the early 1960s. Its period of greatest growth was between 1980 and 2010. It holds some 9000 bird skins and skeletons, and an extensive collection of field notes. The two museums are invaluable sources of information on the natural history of the Santa Barbara region.

Beginning in the 1960s, observer coverage of the county increased substantially. Along the North Coast, the Lompoc and Santa Ynez River mouth areas were visited more regularly, although the remainder of that region was still largely neglected. Figueroa Mountain in the San Rafael Range began to receive regular coverage, as did the Camino Cielo area in the Santa Ynez Mountains. Still, those peaks with no public road access (e.g., Big Pine and San Rafael Mountains) were not visited. The upper Santa Ynez River area received infrequent coverage. By the early 1970s, the Cuyama Valley had still received little attention, despite regular journeys by observers to the nearby Carrizo Plain in San Luis Obispo County.

One of the most important developments during the late 1960s and early 1970s was the increase in observer numbers, the improvement of field-identification skills, and the "discovery" of where and when to look for migrants, including vagrant species during fall. This increased awareness resulted in a more accurate knowledge of bird distribution and in a phenomenal increase in the number of rare birds being reported. Such records come from throughout the year. Coverage during these years was still centered along the South Coast, particularly in the coastal sections of Goleta and Santa Barbara.

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed an increase in the number of boat trips exploring the Santa Barbara Channel area between Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands during spring and early fall. It was not until the late 1970s that expeditions to the western section of the Channel and the Santa Rosa-Cortes Ridge were undertaken. Our knowledge of much of the county's offshore waters, particularly those well offshore and off the North Coast, remained extremely limited until the late 1990s.

The mid-1970s saw an even greater increase in fieldwork in the Goleta and Santa Barbara areas at all seasons, particularly in the search for regular migrant and vagrant species. Increased coverage in winter of the well-vegetated residential areas in the Santa Barbara area (e.g., Hope Ranch, Mission Canyon, Riviera, Montecito) recorded many additional winter rarities. Several species previously thought to be largely absent at this season (e.g., several hummingbirds, flycatchers, orioles, warblers, and tanagers) were found to winter regularly in small numbers.

In 1976, the first of three consecutive spring surveys of the northward coastal seabird migration was made at Goleta Point. These regular censuses took place mostly during the afternoon hours between early March and late May and were the first local attempt at documenting this large-scale movement. These were followed by even more intensive spring surveys conducted annually between 1999–2003, during which period many of the surveys took place in the early morning—in contrast to the 1970s surveys.

It was not until the late 1970s that observers began to travel farther afield on a regular basis. Along the South Coast, the campground areas at Gaviota State Park (formerly named Gaviota State Beach), Refugio State Beach, and El Capitan State Beach and the Carpinteria area were censused regularly, particularly in fall. During 1977, limited fieldwork was begun in the Cuyama Valley area, resulting in much new information, including the discovery of several new breeding species. Beginning in 1978, the Santa Maria Valley finally began to receive attention. Also during 1978, an intensive study of Bell's Vireos in the upper Santa Ynez River area was initiated, and which continued most summers through 1993. As a result, the riparian richness of that part of the interior was discovered. Occasional boat surveys were begun on Lake Cachuma, the largest inland body of water.

During the early 1980s, additional areas to receive the attention of observers were the riparian and coastal areas along the North Coast (most notably Vandenberg SFB south to Point

Arguello) and much of the San Rafael Mountains. Summer fieldwork begun in 1980 and 1981 on Vandenberg SFB was critical in determining the breeding status and distribution of many species in that area. Coverage there during the remainder of the year did not improve greatly until 1987. The first detailed summer survey of the Big Pine Mountain area took place in 1981. Although this visit to the highest peak lasted only three days, it resulted in the discovery of nine species not previously known to nest in the county. Big Pine Mountain has now been visited briefly almost every summer between 1981 and 2024 (see Lentz 1993). The first summer survey in the San Rafael Mountain area occurred in1982, but that peak has received very limited coverage to this day, with several summer visits during the 1980s and early 1990s, and then again briefly in the 2020s.

Some additional historical information from between the 1970s and 1990s can be found in Lentz (2020).

Between 1987 and 1995, seabird surveys conducted along transects extending far offshore were carried out some four times per year under the auspices of the California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI). These censuses added greatly to our knowledge of the status of pelagic species from 50 to 200+ nautical miles offshore, and they discovered several new species in the area covered by *Birds of Santa Barbara County, California.* These surveys continued up to four times annually through about 2000 and up to three times (mostly winter, spring, and summer) during many years to the present, but much of the more recent data have not yet been examined. CSCAPE or CalCurCEAS (California Current Cetacean and Ecosystem Assessment Survey) research cruises carried out under the auspices of NOAA/SWFSC, as well as several NMFS/NOAA spring rockfish surveys, have provided additional offshore data.

Organized pelagic trips increased in frequency beginning in the 1990s, and starting in the late 1990s (and continuing through 2014, fewer thereafter) one to three trips were scheduled most years to the deeper waters near and beyond the shelf edge, well to the west and southwest of the county mainland (e.g., from Arguello Canyon south to the San Juan Seamount). Since about the late 2010s, these one-day trips have concentrated more to the south of the Channel Islands, around the Santa Cruz Basin. Beginning soon after 2010, birders have taken cruise-ship sailings well to the west of the mainland near the shelf edge, almost annually during spring and increasingly so in fall and winter. These visits have produced many interesting sightings, including those of several deep-water species. All these trips have added greatly to our knowledge of the status of many offshore species.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX [1994–2026 mainland coverage]

Beginning in 2012 with the discovery of a hawk-watch site in the foothills of eastern Montecito, informal efforts have been made to survey the autumn migration of raptors. During these efforts, Broad-winged Hawks have been recorded here in small numbers, suggesting that the species may be a regular transient along the South Coast during autumn. Survey efforts are typically made starting in mid-September and last through the first week of October, coinciding with historical peaks of migration for Broad-winged Hawks at Hawk Hill in Marin County. Survey efforts typically last only a few hours on those days surveyed, are typically conducted during the afternoon, and record small numbers of a variety of migrating raptors. A more organized effort to document fall migration of raptors is needed to better understand Broad-winged Hawk status as a fall migrant in the county. Data collected from radio-tracked Broad-winged Hawks captured in fall at Hawk Hill and fitted with tracking devices have given researchers insight into this species migration routes through California. In contrast, few if any efforts have been made to passively count migrating Broad-winged Hawks in Southern California—largely owing to the absence of sites where this species can be regularly viewed during fall. Continued efforts to survey for this species in Santa Barbara County, and the

pioneering of further sites will likely contribute to a better understanding of Broad-winged Hawk migration in Southern California with broader implications throughout the western portion of the species' range. (Eric Culbertson)

More recently, another hawk-watch site was established in 2024 above Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc.

Coverage of the Santa Ynez Valley and Cuyama Valley have improved in recent years. Very recently, dedicated weekend surveys of the Cuyama Valley and Sierra Madre foothill region have been organized annually in both winter and spring beginning in 2024. These surveys have produced plenty of interesting records and found larger (mostly) numbers of desert sparrows than previously recorded, including in areas rarely visited north of Ballinger Canyon, as well as large numbers of wintering Mountain Bluebirds, early-migrant (?) Sage Thrashers, and spring Lawrence's Goldfinches. (Linus Blomqvist)

[Figure X shows the principal localities in Santa Barbara County visited by observers. Most locations mentioned in the species accounts are shown on this map.] For more information on bird-finding in the county, see also Schram (2007) and sbcobirding.com.

From the above discussion, it should be clear that some regions have been more thoroughly studied than others. For example, coverage has been extensive in the Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria areas relative to the Santa Maria Valley. Yet the Santa Maria area has been more thoroughly studied than Point Conception, New Cuyama, or Big Pine Mountain. In many cases, the limited coverage of specific areas is spelled out in the species accounts. Thus, for the well-covered areas (i.e., the South Coast), more accurate distributional information, early-arrival and late-departure dates, and maximum counts of individuals are available. In addition, these areas account for more of the unseasonal records and sightings of vagrants.

Chapter 5: METHODS

DATA COLLECTION

The sources used and the methods of data collection were as follows:

Literature

A) Historical Works: These works include such important sources as Willett (1912, 1933), Dawson (1923), and Grinnell and Miller (1944) (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of these books). These sources provided accounts of past geographical range and nesting status that document historical changes in range, abundance, unusual occurrences, and descriptions of habitat preferences. An excellent source for older articles from the late 1800s to 1940 is the series of bibliographies of California ornithology by Joseph Grinnell (1909, 1924, and 1939). These bibliographies list the known published articles dealing with birds in California during these periods, are very thorough, and include articles published in obscure and discontinued publications that might not otherwise be found.

B) Works since 1960s: More recent works that were used include Metcalf (1967, revised 1972), Webster, Lehman, and Bevier (1980), Garrett and Dunn (1981), and California Bird Records Committee (2007) (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of these publications). Again, data on geographical range, seasonal status, unusual occurrences, and habitat preferences were extracted.

C) Journal Literature: Many journal articles dealing with individual species or specific areas exist. Some do not deal directly with status and distribution but may do so indirectly through their discussion of the species' breeding biology, behavior, etc. The 1994 search was carried out using the following sources: Grinnell (1909, 1924), Biological Abstracts, Ecological Abstracts, and Zoological Record. Three particularly important journals are *North American Birds* (1999–2019) (formerly *Bird-Lore, Audubon Field Notes, American Birds* [1971–1994], and, again, *[National Audubon Society] Field Notes* [1994–1998]), *The Condor,* and *Western Birds* (formerly *California Birds).* Also important are the online data from the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Counts (www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count). These sources, particularly *North American Birds,* document occurrences of out-of-range species, unseasonal records, unusual concentrations, and extralimital breeding; discuss the status of rare and endangered species; and present migration, breeding, and winter census data. All of them were searched for data relevant to Santa Barbara County.

Museums

Natural history museums are excellent sources of information. They not only contain specimen and egg collections that include date and locality information, but they also serve as depositories for field notes, photographs, video, audio recordings, reports, and other literature not available in most libraries. Collections at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Vertebrate Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) [now the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER)], the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo were thoroughly checked for the 1994 publication. A brief visit was also made to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. Most museums now make their basic specimen data available online, and multiple additional collections were viewed via the *VertNet* website, among others, in making the current updates.

Observers' Field Notes

The field notes taken by reliable observers are some of the best sources of information on the distribution, seasonal status, and abundance of bird species, and they may help document unusual

records. These notes may contain only the species seen on a given day or trip, or may, preferably, contain separate lists by specific locality and include information on the number of individuals seen or heard for each of the species recorded. All field notes on file at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and UCSB Vertebrate Museum, as well as many of those of observers known to me, were examined.

Discussions with Field Observers

Determinations of many species' seasonal distribution and abundance were based not only on the available literature, field notes, and museum data, but also on the impressions of knowledgeable field ornithologists familiar with Santa Barbara County's birdlife. For the 1994 publication, these individuals included Waldo Abbott, Larry Ballard, Louis Bevier, Paul Collins, Shawneen Finnegan, Jim Greaves, Janet Hamber, Brad Hines, Ken Hollinga, Mark Holmgren, Joan Lentz, Guy McCaskie, T. Nelson Metcalf, Brad Schram, John Schmitt, and Richard Webster. For the recent updates, particular thanks go to Larry Ballard, Jamie Chavez, David Compton, Janet Hamber, Mark Holmgren, Joan Lentz, Nick Lethaby, and Jane Mygatt for their extensive input. Morgan Ball, Louis Bevier, Paul Collins, Steven Courtney, Krista Fahy, Wes Fritz, Peter Gaede, Jim Greaves, Curtis Marantz, Hugh Ranson, Florence Sanchez, Guy Tingos, and Wim van Dam were also very helpful. Although the literature and field data were the principal sources used to determine the status of a species, in a number of cases the final decision lay with the thoughts of these authorities.

eBird

Beginning after 2000, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology launched eBird, a worldwide database in to which observers may enter their personal field data, both current and historical. The use of eBird by birders has grown greatly since the 2000s, and many important data now exist only there. Past and present eBird data for Santa Barbara County has been mostly, though not entirely, mined (as of June 2024). Steve Colwell's "BirdView" program was extremely helpful in searching large quantities of eBird data. In general, the quality of eBird data is uneven. Although much of the information is reviewed by local experts and some of it culled as needed, many reports slip through the cracks, and it is sometimes difficult to address issues concerning proper identification as well as the accuracy of species counts and that of the specific geographic locations and dates given, issues which have plagued the use of much bird data over the last century or more.

Websites

Many websites are ephemeral, and several that contain at least some avian information relevant to Santa Barbara County come and go. At present, an especially valuable site is sbcobirding.com—"dedicated to the avifauna of Santa Barbara County, California"—organized by Jamie Chavez and which includes a county checklist, CBRC review list, local rarity photos, and a copy of this publication's 1994 bird-finding information.

Fieldwork

A historical synopsis of the fieldwork is given in Chapter 3.

A substantial increase in the amount of fieldwork carried out in Santa Barbara County and elsewhere in California began in the 1960s. Particularly active Santa Barbara area observers between the 1960s and early 1994 included Kevin Aanerud, Larry Ballard, Dean Bazzi, Chris Benesh, Louis Bevier, Karen Bridgers, Jon Dunn, Shawneen Finnegan, Jim Greaves, George and Joan Hardie, Brad Hines, Ron Hirst, Ken Hollinga, Mark Holmgren, Paul Lehman, Joan Lentz, T. Nelson Metcalf, Hugh Ranson, Brad Schram, Guy Tingos, Richard Webster, and Tom Wurster. Since then, additional people who have contributed an especially large amount of information include Jamie Chavez, David Compton, Wes Fritz, Peter Gaede, and Nick Lethaby. There are many additional observers who have contributed to our knowledge of Santa Barbara

County's birdlife and to this publication, between the 1960s and 2026. A partial list includes: Waldo Abbott, Alex A. Abela, Alex R. Abela, Waldo Abbott, Jessie Alstatt, John Ayres, Morgan Ball, Joel Barrett, Suzanne Barrymore, Jay Bishop, Rosey Bishop, Allyn Bissell, Linus Blomqvist, David & Linda Blue, Kyle Braunger, Mark Brown, John Callender, Sophie Cameron, Peter Cantle, Alex Castelein, Peter Colasanti, Paul Collins, Steven Colwell, Leslie Cook, Rebecca Fagan Coulter, Steven Courtney, Jeremy Cowan, Nancy Crawford, Eric Culbertson, Jared Dawson, John Deacon, Rob Denholtz, Don Desjardin, Tom Edell, Herb Elliott, Fred Emerson, Krista Fahy, Daniel Farrar, David Flint, Michael Force, Amanda Frost, Gary Fugle, Noah Gaines, Lori Gaskin, Liz (Mason) Gaspar, Steven Gaulin, Dika Golovatchoff, Carol Goodell, Eileen Gray, Brad Hacker, Janet Hamber, Robb Hamilton, Robert Hansen, Jeff Hanson, Marilyn Harding, Dave Haupt, Mitch Heindel, John Hildebrand, Becky Hoban, Jim Hodgson, Cher Hollingworth, Dave Hubbard, Richard Jeffers, Oscar Johnson, Samantha Kaisersatt, Paul Keller, Melissa Kelly, Glenn Kincaid, David Kisner, Alice Kladnik, Will Knowlton, Zev Labinger, Max Laubstein, David Levasheff, Libby Lindsay, Rob Lindsay, Jasen Liu, Gene Lynch, Helen Matelson, Curtis Marantz, Guy McCaskie, Todd McGrath, Conor McMahon, Jeri McMahon, Patrick McNulty, T. Nelson Metcalf, Margaret Millar, Barbara Millett, Liz Muraoka, Bill & Joan Murdoch, David Quesenberry, Kris Ohlenkamp, Adrian O'Loghlen, Libby Patten, Ken Pearlman, Dave Pereksta, Michael Perrone, Cruz Phillips, Peter Pyle, Kurt Radamaker, Shirley Reynolds, Gage Ricard, Alice & Charles Richardson, Diana Ricky, George Roland, Paul Rosso, Florence Sanchez, Lynn Scarlett, John Schmitt, Peter Schneekloth, Eunice Schroeder, Conor & Julie Scotland, Adam Searcy, Maggie Sherriffs, Maggie Smith, Cuyler Staplemann, Nancy States, Mike Stiles, John Storrer, Tom Turner, Wim van Dam, Richard Veit, Matt Victoria, Walter Wehtje, Grant Weyburne, and Kathleen Whitney.

In 1977, I began to accumulate bird data for Santa Barbara County. A file was started at this time that included all records of "significance" for the county gleaned from the above sources. These included occurrences of out-of-range species, unseasonal records, early-arrival and late-departure dates, maximum counts, extralimital or localized breeding, and historical changes in species' status or distributions. During the preparation (1979–1982) of my 1982 master's thesis at UCSB on the status and distribution of the birds of Santa Barbara County, this file grew rapidly, and it provided the basic information needed to write the species accounts for the 1994 version of this book. Beginning in 1979, I prepared a seasonal report four times per year summarizing the county's avian highlights; and I continued to do so until mid-1994. The collecting of records for, and the production of, these reports have continued through the present, largely under the guidance of Joan Lentz (1994–2000) and David Compton (2000–2025). These seasonal reports have been the major source of information used in the preparation of this updated version of *The Birds of Santa Barbara County, California.* Copies are on file at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Since the 1990s, the explosion of information available via the internet has added additional sources of information; these include the local Santa Barbara County listserve (*SBCoBirding*) and reports submitted to eBird.

Observers are urged to take accurate field notes and to properly document unusual sightings. Photographs of rarities are particularly valuable. For additional information on note-taking methods see Remsen (1977) and Dittmann and Lasley (1992). To supplement the information presented in this publication, to inform us of records we have missed, and to provide information for any future revisions, please submit details of your bird sightings that represent early or late dates, unusual totals, unusual breeding records, out-of-range individuals, or substantial changes in range and abundance [see Introduction for contact information].

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The major problem encountered was determining the accuracy of the data collected. Particularly unusual records from the literature, internet, eBird, specimen and egg collections,

and observers' field notes had to be accompanied by adequate documentation to be accepted for inclusion in the manuscript. This documentation included a description of the bird's plumage or call, or specifics on the collecting date and location of the specimen or egg. In addition to misidentifications, inaccurate date and/or locality information accompanying reports, specimens, or eggs are known to occur regularly. Such inaccuracies are not always easily detectable. Sometimes uncertainty was resolved by my best judgment, and it is probable that some incorrect reports have been included and that some valid records have been wrongly rejected.

Different regions have been more thoroughly studied than others. A number of important areas are either privately owned (e.g., Point Conception area) or controlled by limited access (e.g., Vandenberg SFB). Much of the backcountry of Santa Barbara County is not accessible by vehicle; in a large portion of Los Padres National Forest (e.g., the Dick Smith and San Rafael Wilderness Areas) access is limited. This uneven coverage by observers is described in Chapter 3 and in many of the individual species accounts.

One specific site—Quatal Canyon in District V—has been visited by many birders over the years, and many of these folks have reported their sightings as coming from Santa Barbara County. But much of the arid native vegetation there is just inside Ventura County. Thus, some records published here may have involved birds seen outside Santa Barbara County.

Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data, such as the average and high counts of species since the 1970s, are often provided for the Santa Barbara and Cachuma CBCs in the species accounts. Only for select species are such data offered from three other current counts carried out in the county: Santa Maria–Guadalupe, La Purisima (Lompoc), and Carpinteria. This decision was made because observer coverage in each of these three CBCs has not been as thorough as it is in the Santa Barbara and Cachuma count circles.

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The area covered in this work is mainland Santa Barbara County (2738 square miles / 7090 square kilometers in size) and its offshore waters to a distance of 200 nautical miles (230 mi, 370 kilometers) from the closest point of land. Those Channel Islands politically considered part of Santa Barbara County (San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and Santa Barbara Islands) are not treated in any detail, except for the brief mention of nesting seabird populations and of occurrences of species that have yet to be recorded in the mainland county. This was done for two reasons: the status of many of the species on the islands is substantially different from that on the mainland, and distributional information on the birds of these islands is included in other publications (e.g., Jones et al. 1989; Collins and Jones 2015, Collins et al. 2026). If these islands were included, four or five additional species would be added to *Birds of Santa Barbara County*: Emperor Goose, Jouanin's Petrel, Island Scrub-Jay, and Pyrrhuloxia, as well as a Black-billed/Eurasian Magpie of uncertain origin. Also, a ship-assisted Hawfinch from Asia, still on board a vessel off Santa Barbara County, was not accepted. See the species accounts for further information.

The data are presented as individual species accounts for each of the 508 species recorded in mainland Santa Barbara County and its offshore waters through July 2026, including established introduced species. Birds that are unestablished escapes are not treated.

Each account starts with a short paragraph giving a summary of the species' status and distribution. It discusses habitat requirements or preferences, then offers more detailed information by "district" (see below) or by season, including historical change if relevant, nesting status, cites individual records of significance (e.g., rare visitors, out-of-season records, etc.), gives data of interest on migration such as early-arrival and late-departure dates and maximum counts, and briefly lists banding recoveries. In most cases, the account first covers the district(s) and season(s) in which the species is most numerous, then moves on to other districts and seasons.

The status and distribution of selected subspecies are discussed in the species accounts. In most cases, these involve subspecies or subspecies groups that are identifiable in the field.

The status of many species is markedly different from one part of the county to another. For example, a marine bird such as a loon is likely to be a common visitor along the coast, yet it is generally rare inland on the larger lakes and reservoirs. This varying status is fully discussed. One way in which to do this is to divide the county into "ornithological districts" based on habitat, elevation, and distance from the coast. Such a division has been attempted in the past. Miller (1951) divided California into "ecological formations" based on plant biomes in his analysis of the distribution of the birds of the state. Webster et al. (1980) divided Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties into three districts—l) Coastal Aquatic Habitats, 2) Lowlands, and 3) Mountains, Montane Valleys, Arid Valleys—and further divided them by habitat type. Garrett and Dunn (1981) divided Southern California into five districts: l) coast and ocean, 2) mountains, 3) desert, 4) Salton Sea, and 5) Colorado River.

This study divides Santa Barbara County into four districts as follows:

District C— ocean and coastal lowlands
District I— interior lowlands and mountain valleys generally below 2000 feet
District M— mountains (above 2000-foot elevation, except for District V)
District V— Cuyama Valley

Because the status of many species is substantially different north and south (east) of the Point Conception area, District C is subdivided as follows:

North Coast— District C from Point Conception northwards
South Coast— District C south and east of Point Conception

The boundaries between the districts are not sharp. For example, the Garey and Sisquoc area east of Santa Maria and Barka Slough in eastern Vandenberg SFB support species characteristic of both Districts C and I and are thus difficult to classify. The 2000-foot elevation contour between District M and Districts C and I is not a clear ornithological boundary. A number of lowland species are found above that elevation and several montane species are found below it. District V, the Cuyama Valley, is defined here as an arid valley region and includes the main valley area and the canyons that border its eastern and southeastern sides (e.g., Ballinger, Deer Park, Quatal, and Santa Barbara Canyons). Its boundary with District M along the base of the Sierra Madre and with District I to the west of New Cuyama is somewhat imprecise. (The boundary between Districts V and I was formerly considered to be near the "Caliente Ranch Wetland," 6.5 miles (10 kilometers) west of New Cuyama, but it has now been moved farther west in the valley bottom to near Cottonwood Canyon Road.) For a map of these Districts, see following:

The relative abundance terms used in the species accounts are as follows:

Common to Abundant— 15 or more individuals per day in proper habitat

Uncommon to Fairly Common— 1 to 15 individuals per day in proper habitat

Rare— 1 to 15 individuals per season in proper habitat or infrequent

Very Rare— average of fewer than one record per season, or very infrequent

Casual— two to ca. 10 records

Accidental— one record (and future records are not expected for a substantial period of time).

Species that are nocturnal, shy, or retiring (e.g., rails, owls, goatsuckers) will likely be encountered by most observers fewer times than implied by the abundance term used.

Institution abbreviations are:

CAS— California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco

CUMV— Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates, Ithaca

DMNS— Denver Museum of Nature and Science

FMNH— Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

LACM— Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles

MCZ— Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge

MVZ— Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley

ROM— Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

SBMNH— Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Santa Barbara

UAZ— University of Arizona Museum of Natural History, Tucson

UCLA— Donald R. Dickey Bird and Mammal Collection, University of California, Los

Angeles
UCSB— Vertebrate Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara; now Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration **(CCBER)**
UMMZ— University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor
USNM— (United States) National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution), Washington, D.C.
UWBM— University of Washington Burke Museum, Seattle
WFVZ— Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Camarillo

Other terms, symbols, and abbreviations used:
transient or migrant— a species or individual passing through a given area in migration
vagrant— an individual well outside its normal range (some vagrants are difficult to distinguish from rare transients or visitors)
[date] "+" (e.g., 28+ April 2016)— also recorded beyond that date but specifics uncertain
"up to" [number] (e.g., up to 5)— maximum one-day count during date span was 5
ft— feet
km— kilometer
mi— mile
*****— specimen(s) in the museum collection at
eggs— egg set(s) in the museum collection at
skel.— skeleton(s) in the museum collection at
ph.— photograph(s) or video(s) on file at, or published in
SFB— Space Force Base (formerly Air Force Base)
AOU— American Ornithologists' Union (now American Ornithological Society [AOS])
CalCOFI— California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations surveys
CBC— Christmas Bird Count
CBRC— California Bird Records Committee
vic. Santa Barbara— along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria (used when more specific locality information unavailable)

Journal Abbreviations:
NAB (and ***FN***, ***AB***, ***AFN***)— *North American Birds* and its predecessors: [*National Audubon Society*] *Field Notes*, *American Birds*, *Audubon Field Notes*, and *Bird-Lore*
WB— *Western Birds*

ESCAPES AND EXOTIC SPECIES

Those introduced species for which established breeding populations have occurred in the county are treated in the species accounts. These include Chukar (formerly District V, but true status there uncertain), Wild Turkey, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Spotted Dove (formerly), Swinhoe's White-eye, European Starling, House Sparrow, and Scaly-breasted Munia. Also included is one currently unestablished exotic: Mute Swan. Not included in the accounts are species that are very likely escapes from captivity. Some of the species that have been observed in a free-flying state include several waterfowl, peafowl, Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), Chukar (coastal), Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), flamingos, numerous parrots and parakeets, Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*), falconry falcon hybrids, magpie-jay sp., Pin-tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*), European Goldfinch (*Spinus carduelis*), a variety of waxbills and allies, Northern Red Bishop (*Euplectes franciscanus*), Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) Red-crested (Brazilian) Cardinal (*Paroaria coronata*), and troupial sp. Individuals of some species that occur naturally or are otherwise established in one part of the county may occur as possible or likely escapes in another part (e.g., Chukar, Yellow-billed

Magpie, and Painted Bunting in urban Santa Barbara). Those reports are treated in the main species accounts.

TAXONOMY AND NOMENCLATURE

Taxonomy and nomenclature follow that presented by the *American Ornithologists' Union* [*American Ornithological Society*] *Check-list of North American Birds*, 7th edition (1998), and supplements through the 62nd (2025); and in the *American Birding Association Checklist: Birds of Continental United States and Canada*, 7th edition (2008), and supplements through 2025. Botanical nomenclature follows *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California*, 2nd edition (Baldwin et al. 2012).

Chapter 6: SPECIES ACCOUNTS

DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS (ANATIDAE)

Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)
Casual visitor in District C. A number of early reports through the 1940s. Some records since then may pertain to escaped birds, although some are probably true vagrants.

Fulvous Whistling-Ducks appeared fairly regularly along the South Coast through the first half of the 1900s. Dawson (1923) wrote that "during migration, it is regular in Santa Barbara in both early May and late August." Records from this period include: Goleta 13 September 1911, 9 or 10 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 2 May 1912 (ph. Bent 1923, Dawson 1923), vic. Santa Barbara 16 August 1913 and 5 May 1915 (Dawson 1916), 3 in Santa Barbara 1–7 March 1917, 2 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 24 April 1920, 7 in Santa Barbara 6–10 May 1920, 2 in Santa Barbara 19 September 1929, 4 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 15 August 1941, and Santa Barbara 14 August 1942.

Records of birds since the mid-1900s (all with uncertain origins to a varying degree) are: Carpinteria Salt Marsh 9 January 1963; Lake Los Carneros 10–11 February 1970; Goleta Slough 3 October 1973; Santa Maria River mouth 18 May 1980; Devereux Slough 17–26 November 1981 (ph. SBMNH); Goleta sewage treatment plant [Goleta Sanitary District ponds] 1 December 2005–30 March 2006 (ph. *NAB* 60:283, SBMNH), and Lake Los Carneros and Goleta sewage treatment plant 9 April–7 July 2018 (ph. SBMNH). The 2005–2006 bird occurred during a small incursion of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks to Southern California and Arizona.

[Emperor Goose (*Anser canagicus*)
Accidental.

One was present at Bechers Bay, Santa Rosa Island, from 16 January–6 March 2002 (ph. SBMNH). There are no records of this species from mainland Santa Barbara County and only a handful for Southern California as a whole.]

Snow Goose (*Anser caerulescens*)
Rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C, where casual in spring and summer; very rare in District I and casual in Districts M and V. Four records of blue-morph individuals.

Snow Geese frequent lakes, ponds, sloughs, river mouths, and wet pastures. Fall migrants (November–December) arrive as early as late October (earliest arrival dates: 11+ October 2007 Santa Maria, 13 October 2007 Goleta, and 14 October 1997 Santa Ynez River mouth and behind Santa Barbara (10–12)). Most of the recent fall and winter records involve single individuals or small flocks of up to 15 individuals, with typically several such reports annually; larger counts are of a flock of 25 over Santa Barbara 1 November 1991, 25 birds west of Goleta 13 January 1998, 35 in Goleta 19 November 2000, and 30 on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 23 December 2012 (and see below). Six sitting on the ocean ca. 10 mi (16 km) off Carpinteria 16 November 1989 were in atypical habitat. Winter visitants have remained to the beginning of April, casually later still (e.g., through 13 April 2021 Goleta (5), through 23 April 2023 Santa Barbara, through 26 April 2013 Goleta, through 2 May 2003 Santa Barbara, and through 3 May 2021 Santa Barbara). Probable late spring migrants were in Goleta 21 April 2001, at the Santa Ynez River mouth through 28 April 2006, in Goleta 25 April–20 May 2008 and 6–14 April 2017, and (tame) Andrée Clark (Santa Barbara) Bird Refuge 28 March–23 April 2023.

One individual first noted at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 19 March 1977 became quite tame and was last seen in late May; other tame birds were there from 30 November 1988–2 May

1989 and at Waller Park in Santa Maria from October 2007–April 2015 and from December 2024–August 2026.

This species was once a common winter visitor on the Channel Islands (e.g., Santa Rosa Island) through the early 1900s. A record of 18 in Santa Barbara 1 March 1920, with 6 still present on 6 May, reflects this earlier abundance.

Most of the records from District I come from the Lake Cachuma area (including foraging birds up to several miles away near Santa Ynez), with 14 there 27 December 2000 and up to 11 present late November 1991–early February 1992 the highest counts; up to 92 near Santa Ynez 1 December 2006–19 January 2007 is the largest count for the entire county. The earliest arrival in District I is 20 October 2001 Lake Cachuma. In addition, 3 were over the Mono Creek area 31 January 1937, and 1 was near Solvang 28 January 2012.

In District M, a flock of 50 flew over Figueroa Mountain 21 February 1989.

There are just three records from District V: 6 in Cuyama Valley 16 November 1985, 1 near New Cuyama 15 January 2011, and 1 there 19–28 November 2011.

There are four county records of blue-morph individuals ("Blue Goose"): Storke Ranch, Goleta, 12 November 2002, Glen Annie Golf Course, Goleta, 24–30 December 2006 (ph. SBMNH), Guadalupe 30 December 2011, and Santa Ynez River mouth 1–13 February 2017.

One bird banded in the Northwest Territories 30 July 1988 was recovered in Santa Barbara County 14 January 1989.

Ross's Goose (*Anser rossii*)

Rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C; very rare in District I and casual in District V. Casual in late spring and summer.

Ross's Geese frequent the same habitats as Snow Geese and, since the early 1990s, have been recorded about as frequently: annual in very small numbers during late fall and winter. The first county record was from Goleta 18 November 1971. Most records for District C are from between 28 October and 2 April and involve individuals and small flocks. The largest flocks were of 43 in Goleta 26 January 2000, with 33 remaining 1 February, and 29 at the Santa Maria River mouth 31 December 2000. One near Santa Maria 6–12 April 2016 was slightly late, and 1 in Carpinteria 13 April–18 May 1997 was very late.

Very unusual was a single-day-only immature at Devereux Slough 18 July 2003.

An individual at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge beginning November 1986 became tame and remained through 1 May 1987; other tame individuals lingered in Goleta through 26 April 1992, through 3 July 1992, from autumn 1998 through April 2001, and at Rancho Goleta from mid-December 2002 and later joined by a second bird in late 2003, with both still present until May 2013. One found at River Park in Lompoc 21 February 1985 became tame, was later joined for some time by a second individual, and it remained through early April 1991. And a single tame bird was at Waller Park in Santa Maria for many years from April 2002–January 2012.

In District I, Ross's Geese have been recorded at Lake Cachuma as follows: 2 from 25 December 1982–14 February 1983, and then a total of 15 additional records (involving 31 individuals), as early as 31 October+ 2020 and as late as through 12 March 2011. There are several sightings of Cachuma birds found grazing to the west near Santa Ynez.

The only records for District V are of singles in the Cuyama Valley 29 February 2012, 2 April 2012, and at the Caliente Ranch Wetland 30 November 2019 and 2 there 31 December 2021–2 January 2022.

A hybrid Snow X Ross's Goose was in Goleta several winters between 1995–1996 and 1999–2000, and single hybrids were near Lompoc 10 April 2006 and at Lake Cachuma from December 2010–12 March 2011.

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

Rare transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; casual in Districts M and V. Casual in late spring and summer.

Greater White-fronted Geese frequent lakes, ponds, sloughs, river mouths, and wet pastures. They are usually the earliest of the migrant geese to appear in fall. One at the Santa Ynez River mouth 27 August 2008, another at Lake Cachuma 26 August 2023, and 6 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5 September 2024 were presumably exceptionally early autumn migrants. More typical arrivals include: 16+ September 2008 Santa Barbara, 18 September 2025 Carpinteria (4), 22 September 1996 Santa Ynez River mouth (11), 22 September 2018 Hollister Ranch (2), and 23 September 2000 over Goleta (7) and 23 September 2017 at Santa Maria, at the Santa Ynez River mouth, and in vic. Santa Barbara (5) (and see below). Two to four sightings each in fall and early winter was the average through the 1990s, but numbers have increased since 2000, with up to four to six reports most years. Most of these records involve single birds or small flocks of up to 15 individuals, with a few flocks of up to 26 individuals; higher totals in District C, through the 1990s, involved 30 over Santa Barbara 24 September 1987; and, since the 1990s, 200 over Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, 24 September 2002, 65 at the Santa Maria River mouth 3 October 2009, and 60 at Guadalupe 7 November 2017. In autumn 2010, large numbers were reported from throughout the county and Southern California: the first bird arrived 23 September in Goleta, and high counts included 110 over El Capitan State Beach 1 October, 70 over downtown Santa Barbara 23 October, 68 at the Santa Maria River mouth 10 October, and 38 at Lake Cachuma 9 October increasing to 51 by 26 November (and see District I, below). Higher-than-normal numbers occurred as well into winter 2017–2018, when, for example, 65–75 were at Guadalupe/Santa Maria River mouth 23 December–9 February and 20 wintered in Goleta 12 November–27 February. Very large numbers were also found during the fall and winter in 2022–2023, including 176 in Carpinteria on 11 October, 235 at the Santa Ynez River mouth on 12 October, 156 at Lake Cachuma on 25 October, and 227 near Lompoc on 22 November; records at unusual locations included 8 offshore well off the North Coast 12 October and 2 in the mountains at Painted Cave 5 October; and winter maxima included 180 near Guadalupe 26 December, 100+ at Sandpiper Golf Course in Goleta with a high of 125 on 24 January, and 62 at Lake Cachuma 7 January.

In addition to occurring annually in fall and winter, this species is also somewhat regular during its early northward migration in late January and February. Until the early 2000s, there were more records at this season than at any other, and many of the larger flocks were encountered at this time (e.g., 75 in Goleta 1 February 1978, 53 over Goleta 27 January 1983, 34 over Madulce Peak (in District M) 26 January 1984, and 80 over Madulce Peak 30 January 1985); however, since 2010, 73 over Carpinteria 24 January 2013 is the only northbound flock larger than the 29 birds at Guadalupe 25 January-3 February 2010.

Fewer northbound birds are typically seen during March and early April, and a few wintering birds have remained into April as well, with late groups including 3 near Santa Maria through 20 April 2018 and 6 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 23 April 2019. There are a few records involving birds lingering into May. Ten individuals have remained along the South Coast into early May, with later records of 1 remaining in Goleta through 11 May 1993 and singles in Goleta 13 May 2000 and 14 May 2004, in Santa Barbara 15 May 2010, in Carpinteria 7–14 May 2016, up to 2 in Goleta 2–30+ May 2018 (see below), 1 there 8–24 May 2019, 1 in Santa Barbara through 21 May 2022, and 1 in Goleta through 13 May 2024. Along the North Coast, 1 was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 May 2008 and 1 was at Jalama Beach County Park 26 April 2021.

There are just seven summer records that do not involve tame, long-staying birds, two from District I (see below) and singles near Devereux Slough 4 June 2000, at Devereux Slough 7–10 June 2013, at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5 July–24 August 2015, at Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park 13 July–28 August 2016 (ph. SBMNH), and up to 2 at Devereux Slough and North Campus Open Space, Goleta, 2 May–2 September 2018. One individual that appeared at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 4 January 1980 soon became quite tame and remained through

November 1981, a period of almost two years, whereas another tame bird at Waller Park in Santa Maria remained many years from December 2010 through March 2017.

Records in District I come mostly from Lake Cachuma (including foraging birds up to several miles away near Santa Ynez), with a few elsewhere in the Santa Ynez Valley, and all but one having occurred between 1 October and 7 April. The largest flocks there involved 42 individuals on 15 December 2010, increasing to 61 on the Cachuma CBC 28 December and to 68 by 15 January 2011, with 55 still present 12 March, and see above. Two birds have been found at Cachuma in summer: 22 July–11 August 2015 and 8 June 2019.

In District M, see above.

In District V, 1 near New Cuyama 16 November 1986, 2 there 29 September 2010, 2 at New Cuyama 24 September 2018, and 7 there 23 September 2021 were fall migrants; whereas 1 there 2 February 2019 was a likely northbound transient.

Brant (*Branta bernicla*)

Common to abundant spring transient just offshore, rare in fall. Formerly an uncommon, now rare, winter visitor in District C. Very rare in summer after June. Casual in District I.

The "Black" Brant *(B. b. nigricans)* is primarily a transient just offshore in spring from late February to early May. From late March to mid-April large numbers can be seen migrating up the coast (e.g., 11,000 in four hours from Goleta Point 11 April 1976, 7855 in two hours there 12 April 2002, and 3555 in two hours 15 April 2003). Spring migration (March–May) totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	19,941	21,378	17,485
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

Flocks are seen farther offshore near the Channel Islands in spring as well.

Virtually all of these birds move directly past the county without stopping; only a very small number (fewer than 10 annually) remain at a coastal lagoon, slough, or river mouth for a day or more. A flock of 100+ over Isla Vista 13 April 2013 was a large concentration over land. A few small flocks may be seen as late as late May.

One to 6 birds usually remain along the coast into mid- or late June, sometimes early July. A flock of 30 off Santa Barbara 20 June 2010 and 13 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 June 2015 were large counts for so late. High counts later in summer are 7 on north Vandenberg Space Force Base (hereafter Vandenberg SFB, formerly Vandenberg Air Force Base) 27 June 1996, 6 in Carpinteria 10 July 1997, 8–14 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 2–22 July 2010, and 13–14 there 9–14 July 2013. The species is very rare in mid-summer. Only a few summering and presumed summering individuals have been found past mid-August when the species would best be described as very rare to casual.

In contrast to the large-scale, nearshore migration of Brant in spring, the species is fairly rare during fall (November–December), especially along the South Coast. It is likely that the majority of southbound migrants pass farther offshore (e.g., a flock of 200 was noted moving south 119 mi (190 km) WSW of San Nicolas Island 13 November 1989, 8 were 73 mi (117 km) WSW of San Nicolas Island 12 November 1990, a total of 262 were 111–149 mi (180–240 km) SW of San Miguel Island 14 November 1990, and a high 1300 were seen from south Vandenberg SFB 25 October 2021). An early individual was in Santa Barbara 2 October 1995 and 1 was in Goleta 9 October 2008.

Brant declined as a winter visitor beginning in the mid-1900s and no longer winters regularly. This is due, in part, to the loss and degradation of its preferred habitat of coastal

lagoons and estuaries. Only 1–5 individuals are seen onshore annually at this season, with most records for the North Coast. They were regular in small numbers on Santa Barbara CBCs through the late 1960s, but they are now rare in that area in winter. One or several small flocks are seen most years, however, between late December and mid-January flying up the coast just offshore (high counts: 80 off Goleta 31 December 2005, 50 there 30 December 2006, and 66 off Santa Barbara 11 January 2007). Whether these birds are performing very early long-distance migration or they represent more localized movements is not known. Earlier in December, larger flocks include 16 at Goleta Beach [County] Park 17 December 2015 and 22 passing south Vandenberg SFB 20 December 2015. Larger numbers than usual occurred along the South Coast during winter 2014–2015, and a few birds remained for much of the period; highs included 25 at Gaviota State Park and 40 in Goleta, both on 11 January.

Onshore Brant occur typically within just several hundred yards of the coast. One seen ca. 3 mi (5 km) from the beach at a pasture in Guadalupe 31 December 2000 was farther inland than usual. There are also several records for Lake Los Carneros.

There are three records of individuals of a "light-bellied" form (originally thought to involve *B. b. hrota*, but it is possible that pale extreme "Gray-bellied" Brant might be involved): Goleta Slough 8 March–4 April 1970, Goleta Point (flying up-coast in a flock of "Black" Brant) 29 March 1977, and Goleta Point 19 April 1984.

A "Black" Brant at Lake Cachuma 2 April 2004 and another there 3 December 2009–28 February 2010 are the only true inland records for the county. The first undoubtedly involved a spring migrant.

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)

Rare but increasing transient and winter visitor in District C; very rare in District I. Casual in summer.

There were only about 12 county records (involving 14 individuals) of Cackling Geese between 1983 and 1994, including 1 that lingered late in Goleta 8 April–6 June 1983 and 1 that accompanied a Canada Goose in Goleta 27 June and then in Santa Barbara 28 June 1990. Beginning in the late 1990s, this form (it was not officially split by the AOU [AOS] from Canada Goose until 2004) began to increase in occurrence, corresponding with an increase in the population of "Aleutian" Cackling Goose *(B. h. leucopareia).* The first certain individual of the latter subspecies was seen at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 November 1982 and had been banded at Agattu Island in the western Aleutians on 6 August 1982; another "early" record was near Guadalupe 6–8 November 1993.

Records of Cackling Geese in District C mostly span the period 25 September (2017, Goleta; see below), 2 October (2010, Goleta), and 5 October (2008, near Ellwood), through 8 April (2018, Carpinteria (2)), and they mostly involve singles and small flocks, with many birds associated with flocks of Canada Geese. A flock of 65 Cacklings flying over the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 24 October 2004, up to 40 birds at Guadalupe 11 November–23 December 2007, 34 at Lake Los Carneros 2 January 2010, 29 over Carpinteria 23 October 2016, 55–60 over Goleta and Carpinteria 22–23 October 2021, and 36 over Carpinteria 1 November 2024 are high counts (and see below). During autumns of both 2009 and 2013 there were some 12 different records (involving 16 and 70 individuals, respectively) in District C; and in fall 2017, there were many coastal reports, with highs of 39 over Carpinteria Salt Marsh 11 October, 29 near Guadalupe 31 October, 31 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5 November, 25 in Goleta 24 November, and 11 at Hope Ranch 20+ November, as well as a few birds inland (see below). Well offshore, a flock of 6 migrants were ca. 25 mi (40 km) W of San Miguel Island 12 October 2022. A small number of birds have remained into mid-April; singles at Refugio State Beach through 29 April 2010, in Lompoc through 26 April 2016, at Lake Los Carneros on 24 April 2022, and 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 27 April 2024 were later still; and 2 in Goleta 9–13

May 2010 were very late. Almost all records since 2000 likely involve *leucopareia*, but a few birds have been reported as the race *B. h. minima*, including an early flock of 12 birds in Goleta 25 September 2017 (ph. SBMNH), 1 in Carpinteria 26–29 September 2017, and up to 2 in Hope Ranch 30 September+ 2023. On average, *minima* may arrive earlier than do *leucopareia*. One bird present in Goleta 31 December 2014–2 February 2015 (ph. SBMNH) may have been *B. h. taverneri.*

A tame *leucopareia* remained at Waller Park, Santa Maria for many years, from November 2003 through April 2025.

In addition, summer individuals were at Devereux Slough 27 June 1990, Lake Los Carneros 7 July 2003, near Guadalupe 28 June–16 July 2006, and at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 June 2025.

In District I, this species is very rare, with ca. 26 records, mostly at Lake Cachuma (including foraging birds up to several miles away near Santa Ynez), between 12 October and 10 April (high counts: 18 at Lake Cachuma on 15 October 2021 and 32 present 22–30 November 2022), and a late bird from 7 April–19 May 2022. One was near Los Olivos 9 November 2011. Up to 5 at Lake Cachuma 1–8 November 2017 included one individual that had been banded in November 2016 near Modesto.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Migratory, northern birds are regular winter visitors at Lake Cachuma, where they are very rare in summer, and are uncommon to rare transients and winter visitors in District C and casual transients in Districts M and V. Feral birds have become fairly common permanent residents along the South Coast and at Lake Cachuma, uncommon along the North Coast.

Northern breeders occur primarily in District I, where a flock regularly winters in the Lake Cachuma area, November–March. Up until the mid-1990s, this flock usually consisted of 200–300 individuals, with higher numbers involving up to 500 there during January 1985 and January 1989, and up to 650 in the Lake Cachuma/Santa Ynez area 18 January–9 February 1990 (the highest count for the county). Lake surveys between November and March 2002–2004 recorded only 0–156 birds. Recent (1999–2025) Cachuma CBCs (which do not include the entire lake) have recorded between 0 and 307 (29 December 1999) individuals. Foraging birds may range more than 5 mi (8 km) from the lake, such as to fields near Santa Ynez. These geese have arrived as early as 7 October (2004 and 2005), they begin to depart in mid-February, and most are gone by mid-March; the latest records involving presumably non-summering birds were 9 April 1959 (2) and through 16 April 2006 (2) (but see below). What was probably the same individual summered at the east end of the lake through two consecutive years, 6 June–24+ October 1980 and 7 May–13+ November 1981; and other birds were there 16 July 1988, 2 July 1992, 3 June–7 August 1997 (up to 4), 29 June 2000, 29 June–16+ August 2003, mid-May–6+ August 2004, 25 May 2005, 6 August 2006 (2), 9 May–31+ August 2007 (up to 3), and 5 August 2011 (9).

Nesting at Lake Cachuma was confirmed by a pair with 4 goslings observed 24 June–18 July 2008, with 6 goslings 10 May 2009, 4 goslings 3 June 2010, 4 goslings 20 June 2012, and 14 goslings 1 June 2013, as well as irregularly since then, 2014+. Up to 13 birds summered in 2008, 18 adults were present 20 June 2012, 21 birds there 29 September 2012 were presumably too early for northern migrants. Since then, further increases have resulted in 25+ near there 13 May 2015, 30 adults present 15 June 2016, 29–36 birds tallied 8–15 August 2016, family groups and 48 individuals there 13 June 2017, 82 counted on 24 June 2020, 120 on 2 July 2021, 173 on 12 June 2022, and 204 on 16 August 2025; also, 35 were near Santa Ynez 9 June 2014 and 10 were between Lompoc and Buellton 10 July 2023.

Canada Geese are also now permanent residents along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria, where they first began to summer in the mid-1990s. The first local nesting was probably attempted in 1993 and it has occurred annually since that year, with the first definite success in 1994 (adults with 3 goslings at Devereux Slough 29 May). Numbers of local breeders

have increased slowly thereafter, with nesting first documented at other sites in Goleta beginning in 2001 (Goleta Slough). In 2005, there were 3 nesting pairs in Goleta during April–May, 12 birds (likely included some or all of the Goleta breeders) were at Laguna Blanca 12 June, and 15 individuals were in Goleta 13+ August. In late summer 2006 and 2007, 20 birds were in Goleta. Some 26–37 were present 24 July–11 September 2008. High summer counts over the following decade were of 35 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 16 July 2008, 37 at nearby Goleta Slough 21 August 2008, 52–53 at the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (now "North Campus Open Space") 26 July–29 August 2012, and 50 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 3 August 2016; and since 2020+ the high is 62 in the Devereux Slough area 15 August 2020. Also, see above for nesting in District I. Farther east, this species became established at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge by 2021, with a high count by 2023 of 20 birds, and 4 were at Carpinteria Salt Marsh from 7–24 June 2023 and 10 were there 7 July 2024.

Along the North Coast, possible nesting was first suggested by summer records including several involving small flocks: 13 over north Vandenberg SFB 2 June 2004, 1 in Santa Maria 3 June 2006, 4 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 28 July 2008, 6 there 2 August 2009, 2 there 2 August 2012, 2 at Vandenberg Village 14 June 2013 (with up to 14 there 7–14 May 2020), 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 6 June 2014, and 15 at the Santa Maria River mouth 10 August 2014. In 2015, nesting was finally confirmed, with an adult and up to 4 goslings at the Santa Ynez River mouth 16 May–13 June, where now established. A high count of presumed resident birds was established by 48 at the Santa Maria River mouth 6 September 2017.

In District C, migrants from the north are uncommon to rare but regular visitors, late October–March, to lakes, ponds, sloughs, river mouths, and wet pastures. The earliest arrival dates are 6 October 1986 Santa Maria River mouth and 12 October 1994 Orcutt (9). A small flock wintered annually at the Santa Ynez River mouth between about 1988 and the mid-1990s. Many records have involved small flocks of up to 15 individuals. The largest counts since 2000 along the North Coast are 600 (exceptional) in the Santa Maria Valley 19 January 2001 and 146 on the La Purisima CBC 17 December 2006; and along the South Coast are 120 flying over Carpinteria 17 January 1993, 120–140 in Goleta 20 December 2011–4 February 2012, and up to 204 in Goleta 4 January–9 February 2014. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 200 individuals (31 December 2016), but this total is a mix of northern migrants and permanent residents.

Late records in spring along the North Coast include 1 bird in Santa Maria 12 April 2007. Along the South Coast, before local nesting was first documented in 1993, individuals lingered or occurred only several times into late April (e.g., 16–25 April 1944 Laguna Blanca, 24 April 1947 Goleta (2), and 25 April 1971 Goleta, and 23 May–2 June 1989 Goleta) and exceptionally thereafter. Several summer birds were quite tame, having become "domesticated" over the winter while residing at such locations as the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. One accompanied a Cackling Goose in Goleta 27 June and then the next day in Santa Barbara 28 June 1990. Along the North Coast, 1 was at the Santa Maria River mouth 21 August–14 October 1982.

In District M, a migrant flock was flying south of Big Pine Mountain 3 March 1981. One was at the border between Districts M and V over Aliso Park 13 February 2020.

In District V, 1 was in the Cuyama Valley 19 November 1993, another was there 6 April 2007, 1 was at New Cuyama 2 January 2019, 9 were in Quatal Canyon 12 November 2019, and 5 were at New Cuyama 28 November 2024.

There are a small number of late-fall and winter reports from District C of birds thought to be "Lesser" Canada Geese *(B. c. parvipes).* Since 2010, from 1 to 12 apparent *parvipes* have been seen in the Goleta area most years, but this subspecies' true current and past status in the county is clouded by identification issues and uncertain taxonomic validity.

Banding recoveries of Canada (including Cackling) Geese from Santa Barbara County have included individuals banded in Alaska (4), Alberta (1), Washington (1), Idaho (2), Utah (7), Wyoming (4), and Nevada (1).

[Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)
Introduced. Formerly an uncommon and local, feral resident along the South Coast; rare in District I, and casual along North Coast.

Beginning in the early-to-mid-1990s, a few scattered Mute Swans—individuals and pairs—began to appear along the South Coast in Goleta and Santa Barbara. A few birds were seen west to Dos Pueblos Ranch and east to Carpinteria. The high single-site counts are of up to 4 in Goleta 26 September–13 November 2008, during December 2010, and from 16 June–31 July 2011; 4 at Laguna Blanca 16 December 2010; and 7 at Devereux Slough 22 November 2011. Fewer birds were found subsequently, and the last report on the South Coast was in the Devereaux Slough area 6 May 2024.

The first record in District I was of an individual at Lake Cachuma 3 March 2003, followed by it or another there 16 December 2005–21 January 2006. Since then, 1 or 2 birds were largely resident 28 September 2007–22 April 2013. One was in Buellton 1 September–24 October 2013 and again 12 August–2 September 2014, 1 was near Santa Ynez 2 December 2013 and again 9 November–1 December 2015, and 1 was near Los Olivos 15 September 2014.

There are just two reports from along the North Coast: at the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 June–8 August 2015 and 1 May 2025.

One bird in Santa Barbara and Goleta 15 April 2017–8 July 2018 appeared to be a hybrid Mute X Whooper/"Bewick's" Swan (ph. SBMNH), and another individual likely of this same combination was at Lake Cachuma and along the adjacent Santa Ynez River 2 November–28 December 2017.]

[Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)
One record involving a relocated bird.

An immature Trumpeter Swan with neck-collar "9Y3" at Devereux Slough and vic. 5–10 December 2004 was traced back to southeastern Idaho, where it had been born as a wild cygnet before being transported as part of a relocation program to another site in Idaho. Before appearing in Santa Barbara County, the bird was seen on 20 November in northern Utah. It was found dead at Devereux on 17 December 2004 (*UCSB), the likely victim of a power-line strike.]

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)
Very rare transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I. One summer record.

Tundra Swans frequent the larger lakes, ponds, reservoirs, sloughs, and estuaries in Districts C and I. They were recorded almost annually between the 1970s and 1990s, slightly less often since then. Most of these sightings have come from the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths, the Goleta/Santa Barbara area, and from Lake Cachuma. Most records fall between early November (earliest arrivals: 31 October–1 November 1981 Goleta (ph. SBMNH), 1+ November 1946 Santa Barbara, and 1 November 1981 Santa Ynez River mouth) and late March (latest departures: 23 March 1968 Goleta, "late March" 1969 Lake Cachuma, and, exceptionally, 19–20 April 2010 near Guadalupe). Most of these records occurred more narrowly between late November and early February, and only several involved birds that clearly wintered in the area. Since the mid-1900s, all records have involved single individuals and small flocks of up to 7 individuals. There are three old records involving unusually large assemblages: 31 at Laguna Blanca 27 December 1908, with up to 12 remaining through 29 January 1909 (Torrey 1913); 12 there during mid-November 1919, increasing to 44 on 24 December (Hoffmann 1920); and up to 26 there 10–31 December 1923. At that time, the species was found in Southern California in larger numbers than at present.

In District I away from Lake Cachuma, there are several records from Gibraltar Reservoir and a single report of 2 birds at Jameson Lake 19 January 1980.

One adult at the Santa Maria River mouth 13 July 1986 was totally out of season.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

Uncommon and local transient and winter visitor in District I, uncommon to rare along the South Coast, rare along the North Coast. Casual in Districts M and V. In summer, a rare breeder in District I and a rare to very rare visitor and casual breeder on the South Coast.

The Wood Duck inhabits freshwater lakes, small ponds, and rivers; it occurs less regularly at brackish sloughs and river mouths. In general, it frequents smaller bodies of water or those sections of larger ones that afford sufficient cover. Local post-breeding dispersal and true fall migrants appear beginning by late July or early August (e.g., in District I, 23–29 July 1988 (up to 21) and 26 July 2026 (13) Lake Cachuma); and, in District C, 17+ July 2013 Goleta, 24 July 1980 Santa Ynez River mouth (3), and 24 July 2009 Santa Barbara (2)). During winter, the most frequented sites are Lake Cachuma and the Santa Ynez River in District I, and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge along the South Coast. The maximum counts at Lake Cachuma include 35 on 15 November 1980, an exceptional 100 there 2 February 1985, 79 on 10 January 2002, 33–60 from 10 November 2006–8 March 2007, 81 on 1 November 2008, and 93 tallied 12 January 2013. The Cachuma CBC tallied 82 individuals on 28 December 2006; the next highest CBC count was just 29 birds (30 December 2008). Away from the lake, up to 33 were at vic. Refugio Road crossing of the Santa Ynez River, near Santa Ynez, 27 October–23 November 2002; 80 were there 26 October 2003; 35–40 were present during autumn 2004; and 35 were tallied on 1 January 2008. Smaller numbers of birds may be seen elsewhere along the Santa Ynez River, along adjacent Quiota Creek, and at various small ponds in the Santa Ynez Valley.

Beginning in 1988, small numbers of Wood Ducks were present regularly from fall to early spring at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. High counts included 18 on 19 December 2000, 21 on 12 January 1993, and 21 on 3 November 2005; 14 were still present 11–12 March 1994. Elsewhere along the South Coast, high counts include up to 13 along Atascadero Creek in Goleta 4 January–14 February 2006, 19 at Lauro Reservoir 1 January 2011, and 14 at Laguna Blanca 20 December 2013. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 20 individuals (2 January 2010). High counts along the North Coast have not exceeded 5 individuals, except for 8 birds at Pine Canyon Lakes on Vandenberg SFB 14 August 2014. Most coastal birds depart by mid-April, and the species is very rare after early May away from likely breeding locales.

Wood Ducks nest somewhat sporadically along the Santa Ynez River in District I, where late-spring and summer water levels and the location of beaver ponds dictate the locations and extent of nesting that takes place. Following wet winters, they may nest at scattered localities between Jameson Lake and Lake Cachuma, very rarely west to Lompoc. During drier years, they are restricted to the more permanent bodies of water such as the east end of Lake Cachuma, which hosted 1 or 2 broods most years between 1979 and 1987 and in 1994. A few non-breeding (?) adults are seen many summers at Lake Cachuma as well (high count: 8 from 7 June–26 July 2009). Some representative breeding records, east to west, include a female with 6 young at the confluence of the upper Santa Ynez River and Mono Creek 2 July 1982, a female with 2 very young ducklings along Quiota Creek near Santa Ynez 13 April 2010, a female with 4 ducklings on Santa Ynez River at Refugio Road 16 June 2011, 2 pairs in that area 8 April 2012, a high summer count of 10 individuals there 9 June 2013, a female with 4 ducklings along Santa Ynez River at Solvang 23 May 2008, a female with 8 ducklings along Santa Ynez River just east of Buellton 27 May 2010, and a family group along the river just west of Buellton 5 July 2019; also, 1 brood was seen just inside District C along the Santa Ynez River near Lompoc 25 July 1980. Away from there, 2 broods were seen along the Sisquoc River near Garey (at the border between Districts I and C) 17 July 1980. Other possible local breeders at other sites, ordered

northwest to southeast, include: 2 at Twitchell Reservoir 17 July 1985; 1 along Santa Ynez River just west of Buellton 21 May 1988, 4 there 17 June 2004, 3 there 28 May 2012, 1 present 16 May 2017, and up to 3 from 11–13 July 2023; pair in a sycamore tree near Nojoqui Falls (County) Park 29 May 2003; pair along Kelly Creek near San Marcos Pass 26 May 1996; and 4 adults at Gibraltar Reservoir 25 May 2013. Prior to the late 1970s, known nesting records in District I appear to have been relatively few; Metcalf (1972) noted the species as "last breeding on the Santa Ynez River in 1964." But coverage there was limited.

Most summer records from District C are from Laguna Blanca and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Records for early June to mid-July include: Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 12 May–15 June 1960, 25 May–30 August 1961, and June–6 July 1963; "Santa Barbara" winter 1965–1966 to 27 July 1966; Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 30 April–August 1980; Laguna Blanca 17 June–August 1981 and 11–31 July 1987; and during many summers from 1990 to the present. Up to 10 at the Bird Refuge June–July 1994 was a high summer count. Away from those two sites, singles were in Goleta through 7 June 1993, 4 June 1996, 26 June 2001, and 22 June–1 July 2003, 5 were there 29–30 June 2008, 1 lingered 30 June–20 July 2015, and 1 on 15 June & 13 July 2024; and singles were in Carpinteria 27 May–1 July 2024 and 24 June 2025. A juvenile in Goleta 11 July 2003 may have been raised along the South Coast or have been an early disperser from elsewhere. Two adults at the Bird Refuge during summer 1992 were followed by 3 juveniles there 30 July–September, suggesting local breeding. Five juveniles with up to 3 adults were at Laguna Blanca during summer 1994. A female with 6 juveniles at Lake Los Carneros 11 July 1995 established the first definite nesting along the South Coast. The second such record was of a female at a nest-box in Montecito 30 April–28 May 2007, which returned again 27 March–9 April 2008 (with 2 eggs on the latter date). Along the North Coast, up to 4 birds were in Santa Maria 4–25 July 1994 and 4 were at the Santa Maria Mesa Road ponds 10 July 2026; and singles were along San Antonio Creek on north Vandenberg SFB 22 May 2002 and 14 June 2004; in Santa Maria 8–11 June 2014, 7–21 July 2017, 4 July 2019, and 1 July 2021; and in Lompoc 3 July 2021.

There is one report for District M, at Zaca Lake (a possible nesting locale) 6 May 1973.

There are seven records for District V: 1 on a farm pond near Cuyama 16 November 1980, another there 9–14 April 1982, singles near New Cuyama 27 August 2020, 4–7 October 2021, and 9 December 2021, 2 there 5 September 2023, and 1 from 9–23 December 2023.

Prior to the 1950s, there were few records for the county. Streator (1886) wrote that Wood Ducks were "one of the rarest of ducks about Santa Barbara, although they are occasionally met with beyond the Santa Ynez Mountains, about 10 miles from the city." The only direct reference to a coastal sighting during this period was of a pair in Santa Barbara 18–25 February 1912 (Bowles 1912b).

Baikal Teal (*Sibirionetta formosa*)

Accidental.

A young male frequented the Mission Hills sewage treatment plant near Lompoc 10 December 2005–9 January 2006 (ph. *NAB* 60:319, SBMNH).

Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*)

Casual visitor in District C.

A male was at the Santa Maria River mouth and at farm ponds 2 mi (3 km) inland from 15 October–4 November 1989 (ph. *AB* 44:161, SBMNH). One at ponds on north Vandenberg SFB near the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 December 1995–29 February 1996 (ph. *FN* 50:222, CBRC 2007, SBMNH) was exceptional for winter. So was a young male at Waller Park in Santa Maria from 24 November 2017–11 March 2018 (ph. *NAB* 71:76, *WB* 51:5, SBMNH), which was quite tame, including taking food handouts from humans (as do a number of other formerly wild waterfowl at that site); its origin was the subject of debate, but the record was accepted by the CBRC.

Blue-winged Teal (*Spatula discors*)

Locally uncommon transient and winter visitor in District C, rare in District I; rare in summer. Casual in District V. Casual breeder in District C.

Blue-winged Teal frequent the same habitats as other teal: sloughs, river mouths, ponds, and flooded fields and pastures. They are uncommon to rare, occurring principally from mid-September to early May. There were fewer than 10 records before 1935, but this species began to occur more regularly in the late 1960s or early 1970s. It is uncertain whether this represents a true increase in numbers or instead if its apparent prior scarcity was due, in part, to poor coverage and the difficulty of distinguishing females and young males from Cinnamon Teal. Numbers increased along the South Coast after 1998 with the restoration of the eastern Carpinteria Salt Marsh (near Ash Avenue), also known as the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park—one of the favored sites for the species along the South Coast.

The largest numbers are usually encountered during spring and fall migration (primarily March–early May and late September–early November). Early southbound migrants may appear by late August, possibly earlier (e.g., 5 August 2006 near Guadalupe (3), 6+ August 2018 Goleta (up to 2)). Representative north-to-south maxima are of up to 20 near Santa Maria during October 1984, total of 45 in the Santa Maria Valley 15–21 October 1989, 8 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 May 2004, 16 at Mission Hills sewage treatment plant near Lompoc 22 November 2013, 18 in Goleta during April 1975 and 54–58 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 8–21 November 2019 (the all-time high count for the county), 18 at Lake Los Carneros 6 October 2007, 20 in Santa Barbara 25 August 1915 (Dawson 1916), and 14–18 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park wetlands 16–24 October 2010 and 17 there 9 October 2011. Winter concentrations of note, from north to south, include a flock of 12 near Santa Maria 19 December 1981; 16 and 18 on the La Purisima CBC 18 December 2005 and 17 December 2006, respectively; up to 15 at the Mission Hills sewage treatment plant during December 2005; up to 12 in the Goleta area during winter 1986–1987, 20–28 birds there 12–26 December 2016, up to 18 on 20 December 2017–27 February 2018, 24 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 20 December 2018, and a record 45–46 there 4 January–11 February 2020 (with 52 on the entire Santa Barbara CBC 4 January 2020); and up to 18 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park 6 December 2007–27 February 2008, 16 there 19 February 2011, and 17 present 16 December 2012. In spring, a high 11 remained at Goleta Slough 29 May–1 June 2019 (see below).

Most summer records, when Blue-winged Teal is rare to very rare, are for June. The species has been detected only a small number of times between July and mid-August (a period when the males are in eclipse plumage). Prior to 2019, 5 birds in Goleta 22 June 1988 and 5 there 28 June 2018 represented high mid-summer counts (and see below). Two were at the border with District I near Garey 27–30 June 2014. Following one or two possible nesting records from Goleta Slough, breeding was finally confirmed there in 2019, with at least 6 adults and as many as 5 broods found between 6 July–13 August (ph. SBMNH). Up to 6 adults at the nearby Goleta sewage treatment plant 10–16 July may have involved other individuals. A female with 8–9 ducklings were at Goleta Slough 25 June–1 July 2024.

In District I, high counts at any season are typically 3–4 birds, but 5 summer birds were at Lake Cachuma 14 June 1981.

In District V, 2 were in the Cuyama Valley 27 October 2007, 2–3 were at Caliente Ranch Wetland, west of New Cuyama, 19 March–18 April 2010, 1 was there 31 March–7 April 2018, up to 2 were at New Cuyama 5–21 April 2020, and 1 was west of there 17–21 February 2022. Two late birds were in Quatal Canyon 23 May 2019 and 2 were at New Cuyama 2 June 2021.

A bird recovered in Santa Barbara County in December 1988 had been banded in Saskatchewan in August 1986.

Hybrid Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal have been seen more than 15 times in the county.

Cinnamon Teal (*Spatula cyanoptera*)

Fairly common to common spring transient, January–April, in District C, uncommon to fairly common the remainder of the year, and a rare breeder. Uncommon transient and very rare breeder in Districts I and V.

Cinnamon Teal frequent all major freshwater habitats, sloughs, river mouths, ponds, and flooded fields and pastures. They are uncommon in early summer and uncommon to fairly common in late summer and fall. The higher counts at this season are (mid-summer) 35 in the Santa Maria Valley 4 July 1989, and (early fall) 50+ in Goleta 1 August 1939 (Rett fieldnotes), 100 in the Santa Maria Valley 24 July 1980, and 75 there on both 29 August 1980 and 28 August 1983. Well offshore, 2 were seen 23 mi (36 km) S of Santa Cruz Island 2 September 2014. The highest counts during October have not exceeded 30 individuals, and the species may be very uncommon during the late fall and early winter. The maximum count on a Santa Barbara CBC is 68 on 30 December 1995. This species is typically common only during spring migration, which begins by mid-January and runs until late April. During this period, large numbers may be encountered (e.g., 71 at a vernal pool complex in Goleta 25 February 2001, 75 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 March 2008, and, especially, 150 and 116 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant on 23 February 2004 and 28 February 2018, respectively), and flocks are regularly seen from shore over the ocean moving up the coast or resting just offshore (e.g., 200 in the water off Goleta Beach Park 8 February 1984).

In District I, the highest total on a Cachuma CBC is a mere 3 individuals (28 December 2006). Larger numbers may be seen during migration (e.g., 50 at Lake Cachuma 12 August 1981).

Small numbers have been seen on ponds in District V during spring and fall, with a high count of 25 birds at Caliente Ranch Wetland 7 March 2018 and 30 there 28 February 2020. "Spring" birds occur regularly already during February, as elsewhere in the county, and have been noted as early as 29 January 2020 New Cuyama (3). Fall birds have been seen as early as 11 August and as late as 25 November 2018. And see below.

Definite breeding records are relatively few and mostly from District C, with perhaps one such report every other year, and sites are ephemeral. Nesting localities include the Santa Maria Valley; Punchbowl Pond, Mod Pond, and ponds near main airfield on north Vandenberg SFB; Santa Ynez River mouth and areas just upriver; Devereux and especially Goleta Sloughs; Laguna Blanca; Lake Cachuma; and Caliente Ranch Wetland west of New Cuyama (female with 6–11 ducklings, 24 April–11 May 2024).

See Blue-winged Teal for hybrid Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal discussion. A bird thought to be a hybrid Cinnamon Teal X Northern Shoveler was in Goleta and Santa Barbara for a number of winters in a row, 2015–2016 through 2020–2021.

Northern Shoveler *(Spatula clypeata*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I, very rare in District V. Very rare in summer.

Northern Shovelers frequent most major freshwater habitats, sloughs, river mouths, and, to a lesser extent, flooded fields. The first fall transients arrive in early August (and see below) and the species is common by early October. Counts of 360 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 18 October 2007, 400 at Lake Cachuma 11 December 2010, 461 at Devereux Slough 15 December 2011, 560 at Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 27 September 2015, and 511 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 26 January 2020 were substantial for single sites. Large numbers are locally distributed during winter (the South Coast is favored over the North Coast, with Goleta Slough and sewage treatment plant and Laguna Blanca being particularly important areas for winterers and migrants). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 600 individuals (30 December 1995). Maxima for the Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs include 1115 and 1554 individuals (26 December 2010 and 23 December 2011, respectively) on the former, and 663

birds (19 December 2010) on the latter. Single-site winter counts from the North Coast do not typically exceed 40–50 individuals; however, 235 were at the Mission Hills sewage treatment plant near Lompoc 18 December 2005 and 500 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 19 December 2010; 350 near Guadalupe 25 February 2008 and 500 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 March 2008 may have included a large number of early northbound migrants. In District I, 350 at Lake Cachuma 21 November 2007 was a large total, and the Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 491 birds (27 December 2013).

In District V, the records to date involve 2 at Caliente Ranch Wetland 3 March 2015 and a total of ca. 11 records (involving ca. 38 individuals) since 2018 between 31 August (2020) and 9 April (2020) at ponds in New Cuyama and Quatal Canyon.

This species is much reduced by April and is rare after the beginning of May. There are only about 34 records for the months of June and July, all from District C. Five in Goleta 21 July 1968 and 12 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 11 July 2012 were probably very early fall migrants. A concentration of 10–12 birds at the latter locality from 5–23 July 2012 are difficult to categorize.

One individual banded in Alaska in July 1978 was later recovered in Santa Barbara County.

Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*)

Fairly common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I. More localized in summer, when a small number of pairs breed locally. Casual transient in District V.

Gadwall occur at lakes, ponds, reservoirs, sloughs, and river mouths in Districts C and I. Some of the favored sites include the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths, Goleta Slough, several small ranch ponds in northern Goleta, and Laguna Blanca in District C; and Lake Cachuma in District I. Numbers increase during September and October. A total of 104 at Goleta Slough 14 January 2001 and 109 at "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 16 February 2025 were high single-site counts for the South Coast; 97 were tallied along the North Coast at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 February 2016, 116 were there 26 September 2021, as were 127 on 22 January 2025; and an exceptional 454 were reported at Lake Cachuma 10 September 2002. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 147 individuals (2 January 2010); the maximum on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC is 298 birds (23 December 2011); and the largest total on a Cachuma CBC is 144 birds (27 December 2013). Spring migrants have mostly headed north by early April.

The only records to date in District V are of 1 at Caliente Ranch Wetland 3 January 2018 followed by five records (involving 16 individuals) at ponds in New Cuyama and Quatal Canyon since 2018, between 2+ October (2020) and 22 December (2018).

Until the late 1970s Gadwall was rather rare from May to September. Since then, it has increased in numbers in the county (and elsewhere along both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts), especially as a summer resident and breeder in District C. The first confirmed nesting took place in Goleta Slough during July 1979. The subsequent increase in the coastal breeding population can be seen in the following table:

	Santa Maria Area	Santa Ynez River Mouth	Goleta Slough
1979	--	2 broods	1 brood
1980	1 brood	5-6 broods	5-6 broods
1981	--	8+ broods	6 broods
1982	1 brood	--	3 broods (sewage plant)

1983	--	5 broods	4 broods

The species was still breeding at all three locations in the mid-1990s; and it has continued to do so at Goleta Slough and the nearby sewage treatment plant sporadically through 2010+, with 1 or 2 broods there most summers and high counts of 7 broods in 2005 and 4 broods in 2006. Subsequent increases have resulted in the following "first" nestings: Single broods were documented at Devereux Slough in summers 2002, 2005, 2008, and 2009; and 3 broods were there in 2013. Along the North Coast, from north to south, 1 brood was at the Guadalupe sewage treatment plant pasture on 1–2 August 2009 and 1 or 2 broods were there in June 2011 and June 2012; 1 brood was at the Santa Maria River mouth in July 2019 and in various years through at least 2021; from 1 to several broods were found at the Santa Maria sewage treatment ponds about half the years between 2008–2018, with as many as 7 broods present in June 2011; 1 or 2 additional broods were at water retention ponds elsewhere in the Santa Maria area in 2011 and 2012; 1 brood was at Jim May Park, Santa Maria, 7 August 2020; 1 brood was at the A Street Ponds in Santa Maria in July 2022; 1 brood was at Mod Pond, north Vandenberg SFB, 16 June 1998 and another was at nearby Punchbowl Pond 12 July 2023; from 1 to several nests or broods were in the Santa Ynez River mouth area (as far inland as 13th Street) in June or July almost half the years between 1995–2026, with 6 nests and broods there (inland to the north Vandenberg SFB "ponds") between the end of May and July in 1996 increasing to 11 broods with 65 young (and 90 total birds) on 15 July 2020 and to a high 17 broods with 149 ducklings on 28 June 2022; and 2 broods were at the Mission Hills sewage treatment ponds near Lompoc in June 2011. Seventy adults at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 June 1993 and a total of 152 birds there on 28 June 2024 are other high counts for summer.

Nesting may have occurred also beginning in the late 1970s or early 1980s in District I at the east end of Lake Cachuma, where small numbers summer regularly. Breeding was finally confirmed at the lake in 1988 with 3 broods seen on 29 July; 1 brood was present 29 July 1992 and 2 were there 15 June 2016. Twenty-seven birds at Santa Cruz Bay, Lake Cachuma, 23 August 2001 was a high count for summer.

There are several records of hybrid Gadwall X Mallard.

Eurasian Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*)

Rare transient and winter visitor in District C, casual in District I.

Eurasian Wigeon are usually found in flocks of American Wigeon and occur primarily between November and March (ph. *AB* 43:365). The first record for Santa Barbara County was of 1 shot at Guadalupe 14 January 1921 (Colburn 1921). Since 1968, the species has been recorded almost annually, and often with multiple individuals per winter (e.g., up to 3 at Devereux Slough during February 1999 and up to 3 at Laguna Blanca during December 1999–January 2000). One of these records involved a female that returned for six consecutive winters to the Goleta area, December 1978–January 1984 (ph. SBMNH). The earliest arrivals have been found at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 12–14 October 1971 (found dead on the latter date), at Lake Los Carneros 13+ October 1993, at Laguna Blanca 15+ October 1984, in Goleta 15–16 October 1997, and in Guadalupe 16+ October 2013. The latest spring records are through 19 April 1970, through 20 April 2007, and exceptionally through 14 May 2021 (ph. SBMNH), all in Goleta.

In District I, singles were at Lake Cachuma 14 November 1994; on a farm pond near Los Olivos 8 February 2004 (ph. SBMNH); at Lake Cachuma 30 January 2005; 2 were there 30 December 2005; and 1 was seen 7 January 2023. One returned to a pond near Santa Ynez for at least five consecutive years, 28 December 2007–24 February 2008, 6 December 2008, 23–28

December 2009, 14 November 2010–3 March 2011, and 5 November–31 January 2012; with another there 24 January 2008.

A male Eurasian X American wigeon hybrid returned to the Goleta area for five consecutive winters between February 1990 and April 1994, including an early arrival on 7+ September 1993 at Laguna Blanca and a late stay in Goleta through 5 May 1990. Other hybrids have been seen on several occasions in District C.

American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C and locally in District I (e.g., at Lake Cachuma); very rare in District V. Very rare in late spring and summer.

American Wigeon frequent lakes, ponds, reservoirs, sloughs, and flooded fields, particularly those near short, green-grass habitats (such as golf courses) where the birds graze. The species typically arrives in September, with the first individuals appearing as early as late August (e.g., 18–22 August 2023 near Devereux Slough, 23 August 1967 vic. Santa Barbara, 25 August 1980 and 1985 Santa Barbara, and 28+ August 2004 Lake Cachuma). Up to 400 have been found in Goleta and Santa Barbara. A total of 711 were reported on the Santa Barbara CBC on 3 January 1976; more recent counts have been under 250 individuals. The Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC recorded 656 birds on 23 December 2011, though most totals there are substantially lower. Most La Purisima CBCs find fewer than 70 individuals, with a high count of 180 on 20 December 2009. Cachuma CBCs have recorded up to 163 birds (29 December 1999). Numbers decrease during March and most birds are gone by May. The species is very rare between mid-May and the beginning of June in District C. Eight at Goleta Slough 21–22 May 2019 was a high count for so late in the season.

Records for District V include 1 at Caliente Ranch Wetland 16 March 2010, 1 there 31 January 2016, up to 3 present 5 February–4 March 2017, and 1 on 15 April 2022; and then an increase in numbers beginning in 2018 following the construction of the New Cuyama and Quatal Canyon ponds, with a total of 9+ records (involving 25+ individuals) between 22 October (2018) and 17 January (2020).

There are approximately 20 records in District C of birds probably or clearly attempting to summer locally, all since 1978. In District I, 2 were at Lake Cachuma 29 July 1988, 2 were there 29 July 1992, 1 was there 5 July 1994, 1 was near Buellton 21 June 2000, and singles were at Lake Cachuma 18 June 2004, 3 June 2007, and 7 June 2009.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; fairly common to common in summer and breeds locally. (Exact abundance clouded by presence of numerous feral birds.) Uncommon and local resident at the lower elevations in District M. Uncommon transient and visitor in District V, with several nesting records.

Mallards occur in almost all aquatic habitats in District C and I except the open ocean. Individuals are also regularly seen in wet meadows and pastures and on golf courses. The species is common year-round, although it is less numerous and somewhat more local during the late spring and summer. It breeds from April to August at many of the lakes, ponds, rivers, sloughs, and river mouths. Single-site maxima (which may include an uncertain number of feral birds) in District C include: North Coast—300 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment ponds 3 September 2004, 400 (likely including feral individuals) at Waller Park in Santa Maria 25 November 2007, and 350 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 28 December 2014; and South Coast—221 at Devereux Slough 25 July 2006, 210 at Goleta sewage treatment plant on both 16 August 2006 and 15 April 2008, and 350 at Devereux Slough 30 October 2008. The Santa Barbara CBC tallied a high of 771 on 31 December 2016; the maximum on a Cachuma CBC was 380 (29 December 1999). Since 2000, the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC has recorded as many as 382 birds (26 December

2010) and the La Purisima CBC maximum is 223 (19 December 2004). A total of 1169 on Lake Cachuma 11 July 2002 was exceptional, especially for the summer date. Also in summer, along the North Coast, 40 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 13 July 1979, 40 were near Santa Maria 25 June 1982, and 500+ (including ca. 100 young ducklings) were at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 24 June 2020.

The exact size and distribution of the feral population of Mallards are uncertain. Many hybrids—Mallard X domestic varieties—can be seen at city parks in Santa Maria and Lompoc, at Lake Los Carneros, Goleta Beach Park, Laguna Blanca, the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, and at Lake Cachuma. In addition, some populations of otherwise "pure" Mallards are very tame. True "wild" populations can be found at such locations as the Santa Maria Valley, Santa Ynez River mouth, Goleta Slough, and Lake Cachuma.

A pair of Mallards were well offshore some 61 mi (98 km) SW of Point Arguello 3 May 2026.

At the lower elevations of District M, Mallards have bred most years since 2000 at small ponds near San Marcos Pass.

In District V, Mallards are uncommon, with most records involving up to 12 individuals and a high of 20 at New Cuyama 2 May 2018, mostly between early August and mid-May, plus a few individuals over-summering in 2018 at New Cuyama and 3 in the Cuyama Valley 2 June 2025. One pair nested near the base of Santa Barbara Canyon in spring 2019, others did so at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond in May–June 2019 and May 2024, and 1 pair did so at the Caliente Ranch Wetland in May 2024.

Recoveries have included individuals banded in Alberta (2), Saskatchewan (1), Washington (1), Idaho (1), Wyoming (2), Colorado (1), and Nevada (1).

An apparent Mallard X "Mexican Duck" was in the Devereux Slough area 28 November–8 December 2018, and a Mallard X Northern Pintail was in Carpinteria 16 October 2025–7 January 2026.

Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Now an uncommon transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I, very rare in District V; formerly more numerous. Rare in summer, and a casual breeder.

Northern Pintails frequent lakes, ponds, reservoirs, sloughs, river mouths, and flooded fields in Districts C and I. Migrants begin to appear by the end of July (e.g., 17 July 1934 (Rett fieldnotes), 23–25 July 1992 (up to 3), and 23–24 July 1993, all in Goleta), and the species may be uncommon by late August. Pintails were much more numerous in the past; Streator (1886) called it an abundant winter resident, and more than 1000 were at the "Estero" in Santa Barbara 21 August 1912, 1200 were reported on the Santa Barbara CBC on 30 December 1967, and 100+ had already arrived in Goleta by 1 August 1939 (Rett fieldnotes). High counts between 1970–1995 included 110 at Lake Cachuma 1–3 November 1975 (Hamber 1977) and 200 there 30 November 1979; and 640, 534, 400, 247, and 117 birds on the Santa Barbara CBC 2 January 1971, 14 December 1974, 31 December 1977, 2 January 1982, and 1 January 1994, respectively. High counts of fewer than 75, however, were found along the North Coast during this same period. CBC totals during the decade following 1995 were all under 100 individuals, many under 50 birds. More recently, only 4 birds were tallied on both the 31 December 2016 and 5 January 2019 Santa Barbara CBCs, and widespread single-site maxima of only a dozen or so individuals were made elsewhere along the South Coast; the recent high count is 27 at Devereux Slough 18 October 2011 and 26–30 there 1–18 February 2014. Along the North Coast in recent years, however, larger numbers have been found at the Santa Ynez River mouth, including several counts of more than 100 birds in both January 2011 and 2014, and 170 on 7 February 2016.

In District I, high counts on the Cachuma CBC include up to 40 birds (29 December 1999); none was found on that count between 2003–2009. And see above.

Pintail numbers begin to decline during February and the species is uncommon by mid-March and rare by late May. A small number of apparent non-breeders are seen almost every summer at scattered sites in District C and inland at Lake Cachuma.

Records for District V include 6 near Cuyama 19 November 2011, 1 there 29 February 2012, and, since 2018, a total of 8+ records (involving 31+ individuals) at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond and seasonal wetlands between 25 August (2019) and 21 February (2022).

There are six breeding records for the county: 8 males and 4 females were present at Carpinteria Salt Marsh during summer 1966 and 3 or 4 broods were raised, a female with 3 young were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 31 May 1978, a female with 4–5 young were at Goleta sewage treatment plant 11 May–early July 1982, a female with 1 young were at the former Betteravia sugar ponds near Santa Maria 25 June–2 July 1982, a female with 4 large young were at Lake Cachuma 19 July 1991, and 2 broods (females with 4 and 6 young, respectively) were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 15–30 June 1993. [Just outside the county, a female with 5 young were seen on the San Luis Obispo County side of the Santa Maria River mouth 23 June 1981.]

Most interesting was a bird banded 13 November 1951 in Kahului, Hawaii and recovered in Santa Maria 17 November 1955. Other recoveries made locally have included individuals banded in Northwest Territories (1), Alberta (4), Saskatchewan (2), Manitoba (1), Montana (2), North Dakota (1), Utah (2), Nevada (1), and well to the east in Kansas (1).

Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I. Very rare in summer; one or two probable breeding records. Rare visitor in District V and casual in District M.

Green-winged Teal frequent most onshore aquatic habitats as well as flooded fields. Migrants arrive beginning in late July (e.g., 20 July 2004 Goleta, and 20 July 2012 and 22 July 1981 near Santa Maria), and the species is common by late September. Winter maxima include 300 vic. Santa Barbara 20 January 1979, 255 Santa Maria Valley 4 January 1981, 250 Goleta 15 December 2006, 247 Devereux Slough 1 December 2011, 325–500 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 11–18 January 2015 (where there are several counts of 100+), and 252 at Goleta Slough 24 January 2016. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 245 individuals (31 December 1977); between 100 and 200 is more typical. Maxima on the two North Coast CBCs include 460 and 370 birds on Santa Maria–Guadalupe (26 December 1999 and 27 December 2009, respectively) and 519 and 350 individuals on La Purisima (18 December 2005 and 16 December 2012, respectively); fewer than 200 is more typical. In District I, Cachuma CBCs have recorded up to only 77 individuals (27 December 2013), but 120 were at the lake's Santa Cruz Bay 13 January 2001, 240 were counted on the lake 12 January 2004, and 171–192 were there 3–27 December 2016. An influx of spring migrants often appears by late January or February. Most individuals have departed by the beginning of May, and the species is very rare after mid-May.

Early- and mid-summer records total about 15 in District C. The only summer reports from District I are from Lake Cachuma: 22 June 1976, 4–17 June 2004, and 7 June 2009. Up to 4 birds near Santa Maria 25 June–10 July 1982 included a possibly nesting female performing distraction displays at the former Betteravia sugar ponds 25 June–2 July; another female exhibited similar behavior at the Santa Ynez River mouth 25 May 1986. These latter two sightings would represent one or two of only several breeding records for Southern California.

One bird was at the lower elevation of District M on a pond near San Marcos Pass 16 November 2006.

In District V, there are several sightings involving small numbers of migrants at Caliente Ranch Wetland, as well as several additional records at New Cuyama, Cuyama, and Quatal Canyon, mostly since 2018, involving single individuals and small groups between mid-August

and early spring, with highs of 18 birds on 25 November 2018 and up to 33 birds from 9 September 2020–30 January 2021 near New Cuyama.

Banding recoveries have included individuals banded in British Columbia (2), Utah (1), and Colorado (3).

There are at least 13 records of the "Eurasian" race *A. c. crecca* (all males), a very rare visitor to California: Goleta Slough April 1966; Carpinteria Creek 25–26 February 1977 (ph. SBMNH); what was presumed to be the same individual for nine consecutive years in the Goleta area beginning 1 January 1982, arriving as early as 3 November (1982 and 1984), and remaining as late as 24 April (1984) (ph. SBMNH); at a small pond in northern Carpinteria 31 March–16 April 1989; Goleta area 3–21 April 2000 and 10 December 2000–late February 2001 (same bird?); presumably the same bird for four consecutive years in the Goleta area beginning 2 January 2003 (ph. SBMNH), arriving as early as 24 November (2003) and remaining as late as 8 April (2003), and joined by a second male 10 February–12 March 2004; Goleta 17 March 2007; Goleta 4 January–9 February 2016 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park 1–19 February 2016 (ph. SBMNH) and again 17 December 2016–30 January 2017 (ph. SBMNH) and 2 December 2017–22 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH); Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 13–24 November 2018 (ph. SBMNH); and Goleta Slough 27 February–31 March 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*)

Uncommon and local transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I. Casual in summer. Casual transient in District V.

Canvasbacks are found mostly on freshwater lakes and ponds along the coast and inland at Lake Cachuma. They were formerly more numerous. Bartholomew (1940) termed them a common winter resident on inland reservoirs, 1937–1939, and he saw up to 93 at Jameson Lake. Individuals begin arriving in late October (earliest arrival date: 11 October 1986 Santa Barbara) and are mostly gone by early April. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, maximum counts for the Santa Maria Valley did not typically exceed 100 individuals; those for the South Coast were usually fewer than 75. High counts for Lake Cachuma were 217 on 6 January 1976, 277 on 4 January 1977, and 150 on 6 November 1977. During the 1980s and 1990s, the wintering population in Districts C and I declined further, and the species became very uncommon and irregular away from just a few sites. Small-to-moderate numbers occurred regularly only at Lake Cachuma, the Guadalupe and Santa Maria area, the Santa Ynez River mouth, Lake Los Carneros (formerly), Laguna Blanca (formerly), and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge (formerly). By then, fewer than 10 individuals per day were typically seen along the South Coast.

During the 2000s, 9 at Devereux Slough 25 November 2009 is the single-site South Coast maximum. Only 2 birds were found on the 31 December 2016 Santa Barbara CBC. Along the North Coast, 54 near Guadalupe 1 January 2008, 134 there 3 January 2010, 104 there 28 November 2010, and 52 near Santa Maria 31 January 2014 are the highest single-site counts; in addition, 37 were in Lompoc 1 January 2012 and 40 were near Santa Maria 13 January 2013. Recent North Coast CBC maxima include 110 and 200 birds on Santa Maria–Guadalupe 20 December 1998 and 23 December 2001, respectively (though no total since 2001 exceeds 53 birds), and 143 on the La Purisima count 19 December 2004.

The Cachuma CBC recorded a high of 46 individuals on 29 December 1999, but only single digits otherwise; 30 were seen on the lake 13 January 2001 and 36 were tallied there 9 January 2003. Ten were near Solvang 14 February 2001 and up to 8 were at Jameson Lake 16 December 2014–11 January 2015. There are a small number of additional records of up to several individuals from other small ponds scattered in District I.

Wintering birds may remain through late March, very rarely to early April. One near Santa Maria 15–20 May 1987 and 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth through 23 May 1992 were late.

There are four summer records: Andrée Clark Bird Refuge June–July 1971, Lake Cachuma 22 June–11 July 1976 (Hamber 1977), near Santa Maria 13–28 July 1981, and Lake Cachuma 21 July 1984. One at Lake Cachuma 10 September 2002 had probably summered locally.

In District V, 2 were near New Cuyama 1 November 2019, 1 was there 5 November 2021, and 1 was found 15 April 2023.

Single recoveries involved individuals banded in Alaska and Saskatchewan.

Redhead (*Aythya americana*)

Uncommon to fairly common but local transient and winter visitor along the South Coast, uncommon and local along the North Coast and inland at Lake Cachuma. Very rare in summer. Several breeding records. Casual transient in District V.

Redheads frequent lakes, ponds, and coastal lagoons in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area and Lake Cachuma. The favored sites along the South Coast are Devereux Slough, the UCSB Lagoon, Goleta Slough, Rancho Goleta mobile-home park pond, Laguna Blanca (formerly), and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge (formerly). At these sites, Redheads occur in rather large, localized flocks, rarely up to 250 individuals. A total of 28 surveys of Redhead numbers at the UCSB Lagoon between 1997–2009 averaged 52 individuals, with seasonal maxima typically occurring between late November and the end of January, and the highest counts being 200 on 2 January 1999 and 251 on 25 January 2001. A total of 330 were reported on the Santa Barbara CBC on 30 December 2000. Inland, 22 were at Lake Cachuma 6 January 1976, whereas the high on the Cachuma CBC is only 13 individuals (29 December 1999) and the species is usually missed. They are rare to uncommon away from the South Coast and Lake Cachuma.

Along the North Coast, there were relatively few records until 2000+. Fewer than 35 individuals were seen there between late 1978 and late 1995; most of these birds were at the Santa Ynez River mouth. Since 2000, La Purisima CBCs have recorded as many as 20 individuals (both 19 December 2004 and 20 December 2009); and since ca. 2009, up to 20–30 individuals have been found annually at the Santa Ynez River mouth, with a high count of 37 birds on 6 March 2016. In contrast, the species continues rare in the Santa Maria area, with most Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBCs recording 0–2 birds, but with 32 reported there 21 December 2003.

Migrants arrive beginning in September (e.g., 2 September 2001 Goleta, 2 September 2022 Lompoc, 4+ September 2003 Santa Barbara, 5 September 2002 near Santa Maria), exceptionally in mid-to-late August (e.g., 17 August 2019 Goleta (2), 19 August 2024 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge (3), 20–21 August 2006 Goleta, 22 August 2015 Santa Maria River mouth (3), 26+ August 2015 Goleta). In spring, most birds depart by April, with a few sometimes remaining into early May. The species is very rare after mid-May. Up to 6 in Santa Barbara 15–19 May 1977 and 5 there 22 May 2010 were high counts for so late in the season. One lingered as late as 9 June 2015 in Goleta but did not linger later.

There are approximately 45+ summer records, June–August, for Districts C and I, with a high count of 8 at Lake Cachuma 29 June 2000, 8 adults at the Santa Ynez River mouth on both 27 June 2015 and 3 June 2019, and 14 at the Santa Maria River mouth 4 July 2021, with 8 there 31 July 2025. Breeding was first documented in 2007 with a pair and 7 large ducklings at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3+ July (ph. SBMNH); a female with up to 4 ducklings was present there 17 July–24 August 2013, as were up to 6 juveniles 28 August–4 September 2014, 5 ducklings 28 July–1 August 2015, 2 broods involving 12 and 6 young between 3–24 June 2018, and 5 ducklings 1 June 2021; and a summer-high 13 birds were there 14 June 2016. A female with 6 young were at the Santa Maria River mouth 21 July 2020, with up to 12 total individuals through 22 August. A female with 8 ducklings were at the Lake Canyon Ponds, Vandenberg SFB, 27 May 2026. This species nests locally elsewhere in coastal Southern California.

The only record in District V is of a fall migrant at New Cuyama 11–18 November 2018.

Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District I, particularly at Lake Cachuma, at least formerly. Uncommon to locally fairly common along the South Coast; uncommon and local along the North Coast. Very rare in summer, primarily at Lake Cachuma. Very rare in District V and casual in District M.

Ring-necked Ducks are a freshwater species found on lakes and ponds. They were formerly common at Lake Cachuma; high counts there included 1165 on 1 December 1976, 1005 on 4 January 1977, and 1000 on 12 November 1986. Beginning in the early 2000s, however, Cachuma CBCs have tallied no more than 89 individuals (28 December 2010), and a mere 1 and 5 birds were tallied on 30 December 2005 and 27 December 2016, respectively; and non-CBC high counts on the lake were just 125 birds on 13 January 2001 and 119 on 15 November 2002. Such declines also occurred in other species of diving ducks. A flock of 35 on a pond near Santa Ynez 4 February 2010 is one of the higher inland counts away from Cachuma. Along the South Coast, small-to-medium-sized flocks regularly winter on several ranch ponds in northern Goleta and at Lauro Reservoir and Laguna Blanca in Santa Barbara. Small numbers are also sporadically seen on Hollister Ranch west of Gaviota, at Lake Los Carneros, and at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. The high count for the South Coast is 280 on Lauro Reservoir 28 December 1991. The species is typically rare elsewhere along the South Coast, although 120 were at Laguna Blanca 4 January 2020, 158–185 were there 21 October–30 November 2024, as were 170 birds on 8 December 2024; and 92 were on "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 30 November 2025. An interesting record is of 24 on a small reflecting pool in Montecito 11–17 January 1981. Along the North Coast, the species is uncommon. Small to occasionally moderate numbers have been recorded most winters at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant and former sugar settling ponds (up to 25), on several ponds on north Vandenberg A.F.B (up to 30), and at the Mission Hills sewage treatment plant near Lompoc (high count: ca. 60 on 3 February 2010); 160 at the Santa Maria Country Club 18 February 2019 and 150 at the Mesa Road ponds in Santa Maria 28 January 2020 were high single-site counts. Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs have recorded as many as 201 (27 December 2009) and 70 (15 December 2013) birds, respectively.

This species first arrives in late September. Earliest arrival dates include 12 September 1980 near Santa Maria, 14 September 2015 Santa Maria, and 17 September 1992 Goleta. Up to 3 at Laguna Blanca 22 August–9+ September 1993 had not summered there and were probably exceptionally early fall migrants, as were 13 on Lake Cachuma 23 August increasing to 24 there 10 September 2002. Ring-necked Ducks are common by the beginning of November. In spring, this species departs somewhat later than do other diving ducks. Most individuals have departed by April (25 at Lake Cachuma 20–24 April 2008 were late for so many), and the species is very rare after early May. Four on a ranch pond west of Buellton 20 May 1993, 1 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 23 May 1996, 1 on the Sisquoc River near Sisquoc 31 May 1999, 2 on north Vandenberg SFB 23 May 2007, up to 3 in Santa Maria 19–26 May 2014, 1 in Goleta 19 May–8 June 2015, 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 28 May 2016, 3 birds west of Goleta 27 May 2018, and 1 in Santa Barbara 17–22 May 2021 were particularly late or attempting to summer locally.

There are 13 summer (June through mid-August) records from Lake Cachuma, with high counts of up to 10 from 16–29 July 1988 and up to 12 from 2–29 July 1992. Elsewhere in District I, singles were on the border with District C near Garey May–21 August 2014, near Santa Ynez 2 June–2 July 2015, and west of Los Alamos 2 June 2024. In District C, records come from Goleta 7 July 1986, Santa Ynez River mouth 12 June 1987, north Vandenberg SFB 2 July 1992, Goleta 7 July 2003, Santa Barbara 7 June 2005 (2), Lompoc 20 June–14 July 2005, Goleta 15 August 2009 and 19 May–21 September 2015, Santa Ynez River mouth 22 June–2 July 2016, Goleta 8 June 2018, Santa Barbara 22 July 2019, 22 June 2020, 28 June 2020, 2–28 August 2020, and 7 June–12 August 2021, Goleta 24 July 2021, and Carpinteria through 17 June 2025 and 27 July–9 August 2026.

In District M, up to 4 birds were present 28 December 2000–11 February 2001 on small ponds near San Marcos Pass.

In District V, there are several reports from the Ventucopa area: 6 on 11 December 2005 and singles 1 April 2006, 5 November 2006, and 6 April 2007. Four birds on 1 April 2008 and 1 on 31 January 2016 were at Caliente Ranch Wetland. Since 2018, there have been a total of ca. 17 records (involving ca. 70+ individuals) at ponds and wetlands near New Cuyama and Quatal Canyon, between 29 September (2019) and 10 April (2020).

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Casual winter and spring visitor in Districts C and I.

There are two winter records for Lake Cachuma in District I: 30 November–6 December 1987 (male) and 18 December 1987–17 February 1988 (female). There are also two winter records in District C: 1 was on a small pond near Guadalupe 27 December 1992–7 March 1993 (ph. SBMNH); and 1 was in the UCSB/Rancho Goleta area in Goleta, then in vic. Santa Barbara Harbor, and then back in the UCSB area between 29 December 2013–7 May 2014 (late; ph. SBMNH); and then it returned the following seven winters, mostly in the Goleta area (primarily to Rancho Goleta, UCSB, and Ellwood Canyon, but also Devereux Slough), 17 December 2014–1 March 2015 (ph. SBMNH), 9 December 2015–11 January 2016 (ph. SBMNH), 19 December 2016–13 April 2017 (late; ph. SBMNH), at Lauro Reservoir in Santa Barbara on 24 January 2018 only (ph. SBMNH) and again 5–13 January 2019 (ph. SBMNH), 25 December 2019–17 March 2020 (ph. SBMNH), and 22 December 2020–4 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH) at multiple sites in Goleta and in Santa Barbara at both Lauro Reservoir and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge.

In spring, a male was at the A Street ponds in Santa Maria 16–19 April 2020 (ph. SDMNH) and may have been the same individual that wintered in Santa Barbara/Goleta.

Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*)

Rare to locally uncommon transient and winter visitor in District C; numbers vary from year to year. Rare to uncommon (formerly) at Lake Cachuma in District I, casual elsewhere inland. Casual in summer.

Greater Scaup are usually found on salt water, such as at coastal lagoons, sloughs, and protected harbors along the coast, often with Lesser Scaup, as well as migrating just offshore. A few are seen on freshwater lakes and ponds on the coastal plain, as far inland as the Santa Maria and Mission Hills sewage treatment ponds. Overall, the species is uncommon to rare. Although fewer than 5 individuals may be seen one year, up to 25 may be recorded the next. High counts are 16 and 19 on the Santa Barbara Christmas Count 31 December 1977 and 4 January 2014, respectively, 14 in Goleta 27 February 1990, 13 at the Santa Barbara Harbor 7 December 2007, 14–15 in Goleta 3 January–7 April 2008, and up to 20 in Goleta 28 December 2013–16 February 2014 (and see Lake Cachuma, below).

The species typically arrives in late October or early November (earliest arrival dates: 19–21 September 2004 Santa Barbara and 27 September–8 October 1986 Santa Barbara [both exceptionally early], 8 October 2005 Santa Ynez River mouth, and 13+ October 2007 Goleta), and it departs by March or early April (e.g., 8 April 1980 Santa Barbara (2), 15 April 2008 Santa Barbara). A small number of individuals (about 5 per season) have been seen during March and early April from Goleta Point passing up the coast, usually in flocks of scoters.

Late-spring records are from a small freshwater pond in Goleta 28 April–14 May 1978, Goleta through 21 May 1989, Santa Ynez River mouth 27 May 1991 (2), Goleta 8 May 2003, Santa Ynez River mouth 24 May 2005, Goleta through 6 May 2018, and Goleta 9–19 May 2020.

True summer records are of 1 seen 9 mi (15 km) inland at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 25 June–10 July 1982, up to 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 July–30 August 1982, 1 in Goleta 12–17 June 1987, another there 24 May–30 June 1989, 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 May–20 August 1990, 1 on north Vandenberg SFB 21 July 1999, 1 in Goleta 16–18 August

2004, 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 10–15 June 2013, and 1 at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 1–2 July 2024.

The first record for Lake Cachuma was on 26 October 1976 (Hamber 1977). Thereafter, it was found in small numbers most winters between early November and late March. The maximum one-day counts are of up to 18 individuals during December 2002–February 2003, with 26 there 3 March; 22 there 30 January 2005; and 15 on the Cachuma CBC 30 December 2008. These totals include the highest counts for anywhere in the county. Greater Scaup may have been even more numerous than that because many scaup seen on the lake were at distances too great to identify to species. Later spring records include 8–11 April 1982 (total of 4), 10 April 1983 (2), and 11 April 2004. Elsewhere in District I, the only record is near Santa Ynez 29 November 2013.

Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and, at least formerly, in District I. Very rare in late spring and summer. Casual in District V.

Lesser Scaup are found at lakes, ponds, reservoirs, lagoons, sloughs, river mouths, and protected nearshore waters such as harbors, as well as migrating just offshore. They arrive as early as late September (i.e., 20 September 1970 Goleta and 22 September 1980 Santa Barbara) and are common by late October. It is uncertain whether a bird near Guadalupe 3 September 2005 was an exceptionally early fall migrant or had summered somewhere nearby. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 170 individuals, with 220 recorded on 30 December 1967; but only 36 were found 31 December 2016. Very large numbers (e.g., up to 2000) were found most winters until the 1990s on Lake Cachuma. Numbers since then have been highly variable and appear somewhat cyclic, with lower counts most winters during the 1990s, higher counts after 2000 (e.g., 700 at east end 13 January 2001, 1314 on lake 26 December 2003, and 2030 on 12 January 2004), and then much lower counts (including on the Cachuma CBC) again starting in 2004–2005 (e.g., only 12 on 28 December 2005, 56 on both 2 February and 10 February 2008, and a mere 4 on 28 December 2010, 0 on 29 December 2009 and 26 December 2014, 1 on 29 December 2015, and 0 on 27 December 2018). Such declines also occurred during this period in other species of diving ducks. Very small numbers are seen elsewhere in District I. Individuals begin to depart by March, and the last birds are usually present until the beginning of May. Lingering birds have occurred as follows: vic. Santa Barbara through 20 May 1962, and Goleta 23 May 1959, 21 May 1960, 30 May 1966, 4 June 1979 (2), 26 May–1 June 2014, and 31 May–2 June 2016.

Summer reports include: 2 in Santa Barbara 6–16 June 1910 (Torrey 1910b), 11 records from along the South Coast since 1968, 12 records along the North Coast since 1981 (including of 3 birds on 29 July 2006 near Guadalupe), and three records at Lake Cachuma since 1981.

The only records in District V are of 2 near Cuyama 18 October 2013, 1 bird in Quatal Canyon 5–26 March 2019, 1 at New Cuyama 5 November 2019, 1 in Quatal Canyon 24 December 2020–6 February 2021, 1 near New Cuyama 29 December 2020–18 February 2021, and 1 in Quatal Canyon 1–3 April 2021.

Birds recovered have included individuals banded in British Columbia (4), Alberta (3), and Wyoming (1).

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

Casual visitor in District C, including two summer records.

There are eight or nine records, mostly from rocky coastlines or estuaries. They include a "summer loafer" in Santa Barbara 2 August 1914 (Dawson 1923); mouth of Goleta Slough 29 September–6 October 1968 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria Salt Marsh 25 November 1983–27 March 1984 (ph. SBMNH); up to 4 at north Vandenberg SFB 17 December 1989–1 January 1990; Point Sal 21–22 December 1991; up to 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7–30 October 1993 (ph. SBMNH); and north Vandenberg SFB 26 October 2006 and 3 January 2008. Two worn

individuals at Point Sal 26 May–25 June 1990 undoubtedly summered locally and may have been the same individuals involved in the nearby north Vandenberg record the previous winter.

Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C, with the largest numbers along the North Coast. Now rare, formerly uncommon, in summer along the South Coast, uncommon to formerly locally common along the North Coast. Casual in District I, primarily as a fall migrant.

Surf Scoters frequent nearshore waters, bays, and harbors, with smaller numbers also occurring in coastal lagoons, sloughs, and river mouths. They are also found in protected waters surrounding the Channel Islands. Fall migrants first appear in October. Small-to-medium-sized flocks pass southward along the North Coast, but along the South Coast this species apparently passes farther offshore in fall than in spring so is detected only in small numbers. It is much more numerous along the North Coast in fall and winter than along the South Coast. For example, 5000 were along the north Vandenberg SFB coast 4 November 1990. Since 2000, counts there typically do not exceed 1600 individuals, but 2628 was the total on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 22 December 2013 and 4000–7500 were tallied on north Vandenberg 12 January–15 February 2014. Along the South Coast, 2100 were near Gaviota 14 December 2014. Totals on Santa Barbara CBCs have varied between only 23 and as many as 261 individuals, although 380 were reported on 29 December 1963. There has been an overall decline in the number of wintering Surf Scoters along the South Coast since the mid-1980s.

In spring, very large numbers of birds can be seen from shore as they pass up the coast. Most individuals pass between mid-March and early May; 800+ past Goleta Point 25 February 2003 was a large number for this early in the season. Peak movement takes place from late March to mid-April (e.g., 8400 in three hours moving past Goleta Point 19 April 1977, and 9267 there in two hours on 23 March 2002). Spring migration (March–May) totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	16,160	22,378	23,488
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

Large numbers (many hundreds to a few thousand) may also congregate or funnel during spring migration in the passes between the northern Channel Islands. Small numbers also may be seen heading north a little west of the line from western San Miguel Island to Point Arguello. The species is very rare well beyond the islands or well off the North Coast.

Small numbers of presumably non-breeding birds continue up the coast as late as mid-June, with 2 birds flying west past Goleta Point 23 June 1977 possibly very late migrants.

In summer, the Surf Scoter is much more numerous along the North Coast, where it was sometimes common through the mid-1990s (e.g., totals of 1150 between Point Sal and the Point Arguello area during summer 1990 and 675 there in summer 1991). It is much scarcer at this season along the South Coast, where summer totals have ranged from 0 to 26 individuals. Three hundred seen 3 mi (5 km) west of Gaviota during summer 1985 was an exceptional count for the South Coast, but this particular area has received meager coverage. Numbers in summer have declined substantially since the 1990s, particularly along the South Coast. A mere 7 off north Vandenberg SFB in summer 2011 illustrates this decline, although 42 were between the Santa Maria River mouth and Jalama during July 2022. Eight in Goleta 28 June 2015 is a high summer count for the South Coast during the 2000s.

One seen 5 mi (8 km) inland on a small pond north of Lompoc 25 October 1984, 2 on Laguna Blanca 22 November 1984, and 2 birds 9 mi (15 km) inland at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 14 December 1984 were at unusual localities.

Seven at Lake Cachuma 20 November 1987, 5 there 19 December 1998, 1 on 9 January 2003, 2 on 30 November 2007, 1 on 28 October 2009, 1 on 13 December 2009, 2 on 21 October 2011, and 1 on 19 November 2021 are the only records for the true interior.

An individual banded in Saskatchewan on 2 August 1961 was recovered in southern Santa Barbara County on 19 December 1961.

White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta deglandi*)

Principally a transient and winter visitor in District C. Irregular in abundance; uncommon to fairly common along the North Coast, now rare along the South Coast. In summer, very rare along the South Coast, uncommon to formerly fairly common along the North Coast. Casual visitor in District I.

White-winged Scoters are found in nearshore waters, bays, and harbors, and, to a lesser extent, at coastal lagoons, sloughs, and river mouths. Numbers have declined dramatically since the 1980s, particularly south of Point Conception. A few also may be found in protected waters surrounding the Channel Islands.

Fall migration is less noticeable than spring migration, with most birds probably passing farther offshore. The fall movement is most apparent along the North Coast where small flocks may be seen migrating south just offshore. Migrants begin appearing in October (e.g., 23 October 2021 Goleta); 10–12 off the Santa Maria River mouth 9 October 1994 and especially 2 flying south there 19 September 2000 may have been exceptionally early migrants, or, more likely, were probably over-summering locally. In winter, the number of individuals frequenting the coast fluctuates from year to year, particularly along the South Coast. For example, they were "as numerous as Surf Scoters" in the Santa Barbara area during winter 1960–1961, yet they were "almost completely absent" in 1965–1966 and 1966–1967 (T. N. Metcalf pers. comm.). Fairly large numbers also occurred in 1979–1980, 1980–1981, and 1984–1985. Beginning in the mid-1980s, however, this species became much scarcer, with fewer than 5 now seen during most winters. In contrast, the species could still be numerous along the Vandenberg SFB coastline, where 500+ individuals were seen in a day through the 1980s. Since the mid-1990s, however, numbers have declined further. The high counts there are 150–280 birds along the south Vandenberg SFB coast 3 January–9 March 2008 and 103 there 26 January 2014. Some additional totals from along the Vandenberg coastline include: 88 on 18 December 2005, 85 on 2 March 2010, 99 on 12 January 2011, 60 on 5 February 2012, but fewer than 10 birds in 2018–2019. These totals include some of the highest for anywhere along the California coast south of the Bay Area, and they also are typical of the variability in numbers from year to year. Along the South Coast, the recent high count is of up to 8 off Montecito 18 December 2021–23 January 2022.

The peak northward movement in spring occurs during April. Spring migration (March–early May) totals from Goleta Point are as follows:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	31	31	63
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

Similar totals have not been approached since the 1980s (e.g., only 1 during spring 2002 and 2 during spring 2003 despite 150 and 100+ hours of seawatching, respectively).

Numbers of summering individuals also fluctuate, and they tend to reflect those of the previous winter. The species is also much more numerous at this season along the North Coast, where it was even fairly common some years prior to the 1990s (e.g., totals of 300 between the Santa Maria River mouth and Point Arguello during summer 1980, 110 there in 1981, and 100 during 1982). During other years, it is less numerous (e.g., only 2 there in 1987, 9 in 1989, 1 in 1991, and fewer still since the mid-1990s). It is quite scarce along the South Coast in summer, even following flight years (e.g., 6 summered there in 1980 and 6 were present in 1981); summer totals for other years along the South Coast have ranged from 0 to 20 individuals, the latter total occurring in 1910 (Torrey 1910b); most totals during the 1980s and 1990s were of fewer than 3 birds, and through the 2000s no more than 1 was present in any given season.

White-winged Scoters are very rare away from the immediate coast. “Several records of immatures on Laguna Blanca” (Dawson 1923) were somewhat unusual. Also of particular note were up to 40 during fall 1979 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant, which is located 9 mi (15 km) inland; and 1 was there 20 October 2017.

The only truly inland records, from District I, involved 1 on Lake Cachuma 22 November 1984, up to 2 there 2 January–19 February 1985, 1 seen 13 March 1998, and 2 present 27 March 2010.

Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*)

Rare transient and winter visitor in most of District C; regular but declining at several localities along the North Coast, usually in small numbers. Numbers vary somewhat from year to year and the species may go unrecorded along the South Coast. Small numbers are seen in spring from coastal promontories. Casual in late spring and summer.

Black Scoters are found in nearshore waters (including near the Channel Islands), bays, and harbors, and less often at river and slough mouths. Fall migrants appear beginning in early November (earliest arrival: 31+ October 2009 Goleta). As with other coastal seabirds, however, the southward migration apparently takes place farther offshore than does the spring migration. This autumn movement is more evident along the North Coast than to the south; 8 flying south past the Santa Maria River mouth 4 November 1978 is a high count of fall migrants.

Increased winter coverage of the North Coast, particularly Vandenberg SFB, since the late 1970s showed that this species occurs there most winters in small-to-moderate numbers. High counts included a total of 30 between Mussel Rock and 2 mi (3 km) south of the Santa Ynez River mouth 28 November 1988–February 1989, 50 along the Vandenberg SFB coast on 18 November 1989 but declined thereafter with 20 seen during the winter, 33 on south Vandenberg SFB 15 December 1991, 26 there 20 March 1996, and 33 tallied on 16 December 2001. Interestingly, the favored localities were usually where there is an abrupt transition between extensive sandy beach and rocky coast. Beginning in the early 2000s, numbers have been more localized and high counts have been of up to 23 there 17 December 2021–7 January 2022 and up to 30 there 17 December 2022–2 February 2023.

The highest fall and winter counts for the South Coast are of 7 in the Santa Barbara area during winter 1973–1974, 6 in Goleta 7 November 1978, up to 5 there 6 November–16 December 2007 (with another bird in Santa Barbara 9+ December), and 4 there 27 November 2009. Typically, only 1 or 2 are seen along the South Coast most years in fall and winter. Overall, numbers have declined south of Point Conception since the early 1980s.

In March and April, small numbers are seen from shore migrating north with other scoters. Spring totals at Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978

Total # Individuals	3	32	59
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

The highest one-day total for Goleta Point was an exceptional 13 birds on 1 April 1978. High season (March–April) totals there after the mid-1990s include 4 in 1998 and 5 in 2001. Five individuals were tallied along the South Coast during late March–April 2007. One at Goleta Point 7 May 1992 was slightly late.

There are nine records of individuals that have lingered past early May: Goleta Beach Park 14 April–25 May 1978; Santa Ynez River mouth 7–18 June 1980; Point Arguello 15 May 1987 (worn); Boathouse, south Vandenberg SFB, 7 July 1988; El Capitan State Beach 3 July 1990; Point Sal 7 July 1991; Santa Maria River mouth 18–26 May 1996; 2 south Vandenberg SFB 7 June 1997; and up to 4 Santa Barbara Harbor 18–27 July 1998, with 2 remaining through 14 September.

Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*)

Very rare transient and winter visitor in District C. Casual in summer. Casual in District I.

Long-tailed Ducks are most often found at lagoons, sloughs, river mouths, and harbors along the immediate coast; they are rarer still on ponds. Records average about one or two per year; most involve fall transients and winter visitors, November–March. The earliest fall arrivals are 21+ October 1971 and 22 October 2015 (ph. SBMNH) in Goleta. Two near the Santa Ynez River mouth 6 October 2001 were difficult to categorize; the date would be exceptional for autumn arrivals. The 55 late-fall and winter records include the following: Santa Barbara 24 December 1917 (Dawson and Dawson 1918); Goleta 7 February 1954 (Small 1959a); Stow Ranch Pond, northern Goleta, 29 December 1965–4 January 1966; and 52 records between 1970 and early 2026 (ph. *AB* 42:321, *NAB* 57:259, SBMNH). Of these, up to 4 at the Santa Maria River mouth 23 November 1979–early February 1980 involved the largest number of individuals. One at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 27–29 January 2003 (ph. SBMNH) was somewhat farther inland than usual.

There are 12 or 13 coastal records of presumed spring migrants during March and April (in addition to the number of wintering birds that clearly remained into spring and summer). An individual almost 3 mi (5 km) inland on a pasture pond near Guadalupe 26 March 1986 was at an odd locality. Late lingerers which did not summer locally were in Santa Barbara through 20 May 1992, through 22 May 2004, and through 8 May 2022. Late spring migrants include singles at the Santa Maria River mouth 11 May 1980 (ph. *AB* 34:815, SBMNH), on north Vandenberg SFB 3 May 1991, and off Goleta Point 14 May 2016.

The five summer records are of a debilitated bird in Santa Barbara 9 June 1875 (Henshaw 1876), Santa Barbara Harbor 16 January–19 July 1988, south Vandenberg SFB 4 June 1995, and Santa Barbara Harbor through 23 June 2004 (ph. SBMNH) and through 2 July 2008 (ph. SBMNH).

Although Long-tailed Ducks are most often found in nearshore waters or on bodies of water just inside the beach, there are also single records during late 1971 and from 4–6 December 2009 for the upper sections of Goleta Slough, as well as those cited above for Stow Ranch Pond, near Guadalupe, and near Santa Maria.

The two true inland records involve a presumed spring migrant at Lake Cachuma 15 April 1973 and a wintering bird there from 31 January–4 March 2000.

Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I. Casual in summer. Uncommon in District V and casual in District M.

Buffleheads frequent lakes, ponds, reservoirs, lagoons, sloughs, and river mouths. They are rare in protected nearshore waters (e.g., Santa Barbara Harbor). This species does not typically arrive until late October (earliest arrival: 13 October 2008 Lake Cachuma). The population in winter along the South Coast does not normally exceed 125 individuals, although 144 were tallied on the 3 January 2009 Santa Barbara CBC; 60 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 11 January 2005, 60 in the slough channel at Goleta Beach Park 24 January 2011, and 90–119 at Laguna Blanca 20 December 2025–10 January 2026 were large single-site concentrations. Buffleheads are typically scarcer along the North Coast, being uncommon in most of this area (high single-site counts: 152 at Santa Ynez River mouth 3 January 2025, 106 at Santa Maria River mouth 11 December 2024); Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs have recorded as many as 65 (27 December 2009) and 115 (15 December 2013) birds, respectively. The highest counts at Lake Cachuma are 200 on 25 February 1986, 250 on 12 November 1986, and 238 on the Cachuma CBC 29 December 1999. Much smaller numbers have been found there beginning in the early 2000s, declines also documented during this period in other species of diving ducks. Small numbers have been found at smaller bodies of water scattered in District I. In spring, the last individuals are present into early May. A count of 18 on the Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez 2 May 2003 was a large concentration for so late in the season. There are only some 18 records in District C between 10–27 May (and see below).

The 15 summer records in District C are: Goleta 12 June 1984, Santa Ynez River mouth 15 May–15 August 1987, near Santa Maria 30 June 1998, Goleta through 30 July 2004, near Guadalupe 28 June–16 July 2006, Goleta through 21 June 2007, Goleta 18 June 2007, near Guadalupe through 2 August 2009, near Santa Maria 13 May–11 July 2011, near Guadalupe 6 August–4 October 2011, Santa Ynez River mouth 10 June 2016, Refugio State Beach 7 June 2018, Goleta 26 June–28 August 2021, Santa Ynez River mouth 28 June-12 September 2022, and Laguna Blanca 13–20 July 2026.

One at Lake Cachuma 4 September 2004 had probably summered locally. The sole true summer record in District I is of 1 at Los Alamos 11 June 2023.

One on a very small pond near San Marcos Pass 7 February 2008 was at a low elevation in District M.

In District V, singles were in vic. Ventucopa 18 January 2015 and at Caliente Ranch Wetland 31 January 2016. Better overall coverage of the District and the construction of a new sewage treatment pond in New Cuyama by 2018 resulted in larger numbers recorded on far more dates between 2018–2026, including a somewhat early arrival in Quatal Canyon 17 October 2018 and a high of up to 52 at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 5–28 November 2021; smaller numbers were seen at both sites, very rarely elsewhere, during much of the autumn and winter annually thereafter, with single late-lingering birds remaining in Quatal Canyon through 13 May 2019 and 5 May 2020, and at New Cuyama from 15–30 May 2026.

Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Uncommon winter visitor at Lake Cachuma and Gibraltar Reservoir in District I; formerly more numerous. Rare transient and winter visitor elsewhere in District I and in District C; casual in District V.

Common Goldeneyes occur regularly only in District I—at Lake Cachuma and at Gibraltar Reservoir—where they are present early November to mid-March. There are also several winter records along the Santa Ynez River between these two reservoirs and west of Lake Cachuma downriver to vic. Solvang, as well as upriver at Jameson Lake. Away from there, 1 was at Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 31 December 2014–11 February 2015. This species was formerly more numerous (e.g., sometimes fairly common) though somewhat irregular in numbers from year to year. Through the 1990s, the Lake Cachuma population was usually between 20 and 35 individuals (high count: 80 on 14 December 1987); and the Cachuma CBC

recorded as many as 27 birds (29 December 1999). There has been a steady decline since about 1999, and most totals since then have rarely exceeded single digits, and the 29 December 2015 CBC missed this species altogether. Such declines also were documented there during this period in other species of diving ducks. Rarely censused Gibraltar Reservoir has produced up to 41 individuals (31 December 1977), although most counts there are of fewer than 10. Three at Lake Cachuma 8 April 1982, 1 there 8 April 1987, and 1 there through 4 April 2004 were slightly late, whereas 2 along the Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez 20 April 2013 were very late.

Along the coast, the Common Goldeneye frequents lakes, sloughs, and river mouths. It is principally a rare late-fall transient and an early-winter visitor from mid-November through early February, with only a small number of later February and March records (through 1 Apr 1987 Goleta). The earliest arrival date is 5 November 2003 Carpinteria. Typically, no more than about 5 individuals are seen annually in District C. The highest counts are, north to south, of up to 10 in the Santa Maria Valley 15–17 December 1989, 5 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 28 December 2010 and 2 January 2025, 8 near Lompoc 8 December 1989, 5 in Goleta 28 December 1988–late January 1989, and total of ca. 9 along South Coast between 6 December 2021–1 March 2022. One lingered late from the winter through 19 April 1989 in Goleta.

The three records for District V are of 3 birds at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 16 November 2019, 1 there 14–15 November 2020, and 2 present 20 November 2022.

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)

Casual winter visitor in Districts C and I.

An immature male was at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 1 December 1989–6 January 1990 (ph. SBMNH). An adult male was at Lake Cachuma 16 January–5 February 1994 (ph. *FN* 48:247, SBMNH) and again 25 November 1994–14 January 1995 and 26 November 1995–13 January 1996.

Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor locally in District I; locally uncommon in District C. Very rare in District V and casual in District M.

Hooded Mergansers frequent freshwater lakes and ponds (including some of very small size), and, rarely, coastal sloughs. They occur regularly on Lake Cachuma (and on several nearby water treatment facility ponds)—and probably on Gibraltar Reservoir, along the Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez, and at the Mission Hills sewage treatment plant near Lompoc (at the border with District C; see below)—from early November through late March. One at Lake Cachuma 4 October 1997 was record early. The larger counts are typically of 15–21 individuals, with maxima of 53 on Lake Cachuma 29 December 1999 and 35 on Gibraltar Reservoir 30 December 1989. Elsewhere in District I, high counts include 16 along the Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez 29 November 2008, 28 on Jameson Lake 21 December 2009, 15 there on both 16 December 2012 and 16 December 2014, and 31 near Buellton 7 December 2018. Elsewhere in District I, Hooded Mergansers are uncommon to rare (e.g., 2 along Cuyama River near Sierra Madre Road 23 November–1 December 2019).

Up to 2 at Lake Cachuma 16–17 April 1998 and 1 near Santa Ynez 12–24 April 2008 were late, whereas 1 along Manzana Creek near Nira Campground 10 May 1997 and 1 on the Santa Ynez River east of Buellton 17 May 2000 were record late.

Along the South Coast, this species was formerly rare but is now a locally uncommon visitor. Numbers have increased during the past ca. 20 years. Most of the records come from the Goleta/Santa Barbara area. The earliest arrivals are 28 October 1986 Santa Barbara and 28 October 1988 Goleta. Most of the records fall between November and January. Nine in Santa Barbara 27 November 1986, 10 in Goleta 27 December 1989, 11 at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 5 January 2010, 11 there 31 December 2011, 9 at Alice Keck Park, Santa Barbara, 10 December 2020–17 February 2021, and 21 at Lake Los Carneros 24 November 2022 are high counts. One was on a small cemetery goldfish pool in Montecito on several occasions between 2

January–5 March 1966. The only individuals found after mid-April are 1 in Carpinteria 21 April 2019 (ph. SBMNH), 1 in Goleta through 26 April 2021, 1 in Carpinteria through 23 April 2022, and 2 in Santa Barbara through 23 April 2025.

Along the North Coast this species is very rare, except at the Mission Hills sewage treatment plant near Lompoc, where the highest coastal counts have been made: up to 23 from late November 1992–13 January 1993, 24–33 present 10–30 November 2009, 18–30 individuals 15 November–21 December 2010, 30 birds on 16 December 2012, 23 on both 15 December 2013 and 14 December 2014, and 22 on 22 November 2019. The earliest North Coast arrival is 21 October 1985 near Santa Maria (2). One near the Santa Ynez River mouth 26 April 1995 was record late for District C.

One bird on a vernal pool near Figueroa Mountain 17 February 1998 was on the border with District M.

One near Cuyama 2 January 2012, up to 3 near New Cuyama 30 October–12 December 2018, up to 2 there 2–13 November 2019, up to 2 from 1–5 February 2020, up to 3 from 18–21 November 2021, and 1 at the Caliente Ranch Wetland 23 January 2026 are the records in District V.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*)

Fairly common transient and winter visitor in District I, rare in District C and casual in District V. Formerly a casual summer visitor and breeder in District I, but now regular in small numbers.

In District I, Common Mergansers are present in moderate numbers from November to mid-March on Lake Cachuma, Gibraltar Reservoir, and along the Santa Ynez River when water levels are adequate. Scattered records also exist for other ponds, creeks, and rivers in District I (e.g., Jameson Lake, upper Santa Cruz Creek, Sedgwick Reserve, Manzana Creek, Los Alamos, Sisquoc River and Santa Maria Mesa Road ponds). The maximum counts are from Lake Cachuma, where 50 on 2 February 1988 was the high pre-1995 record, and 111 were counted 12 January 2004 (but 0 found on 26 December 2014), and from Gibraltar Reservoir where 80 were recorded on both 29 December 1979 and 28 December 2015, 100 were seen on 3 January 2009, and 83 were counted 2 January 2010.

Before the mid-1990s, the earliest fall arrival date at Lake Cachuma was 31 October 1971 (5), whereas the latest spring records were 17 April 1973 and 4 May 1990 (4). In addition, 1–2 individuals were along the Santa Ynez River east of Gibraltar Reservoir 16 May 1988, on Mono Creek 4–19 May 1989, at Camuesa Creek 17 May–1 June 1989; 3 were just below Gibraltar Dam on 17 May 1990; and 1 was on the Sisquoc River near Water Canyon 27 April 1993. None of these observations were linked to breeding events.

The first true summer records at Lake Cachuma were 26 June 1987 and 19 July 1991 (4), during the period when nearby breeding was initially discovered. Nesting was first documented by the discovery of separate females with 5–6 ducklings each at the east end of Gibraltar Reservoir 2 June 1989 and at the Mono Debris Dam 6 June 1989. These two nesting records were only the second and third for Southern California at the time. Since the mid-1990s, Common Mergansers have become a rare but regular summer visitor and breeder in District I. In 1994, at least 2 birds summered through August at Lake Cachuma and 3 were at Gibraltar Reservoir 5 July; in 1998, a female with 8 large ducklings was at Lake Cachuma 23 July; in 1999, up to 16 were along the Sisquoc River above Sisquoc 13 April–10 July, with 2 broods there on 17 June, a brood was discovered along the Santa Ynez River between P-Bar Flats and Pendola on 7 June, and at least 2 broods were at Lake Cachuma in June–July; in 2000, a female with 9 young was at the latter on 20 May; and in 2001, a female with ducklings was along the Santa Ynez River near Mono Creek 8 June. Since then, 1 or 2 broods of ducklings were noted at Lake Cachuma about half the years between 2000 and 2017. High summer counts tallied there

included 67 birds on 24 August 2000, 36 individuals on 11 July 2002, 36 counted 15 July 2003, and 34 seen 22 August 2010. Elsewhere, a female with 8 young were along the Santa Ynez River between Rancho Oso and Red Rock 21 July 2017. Other records suggestive of local breeding include 1 bird on Manzana Creek near Nira Campground 8 May 1999, a pair along the Sisquoc River 27–30 March 2002, a female along the upper Santa Ynez River near Pendola Station 7 May 2005, 11 birds along the Santa Ynez River near Solvang 12 April 2008, 18 at Gibraltar Reservoir 9 July 2010, 1 along the Sisquoc River 20 June 2012, and 1 at Manzana Schoolhouse 22 May 2026. Up to 5 birds were at the Santa Maria River mouth from 27 August–18 October 2025, possibly involving a family group from an unknown nesting area.

Along the South Coast, this species is very uncommon to rare, with an average of fewer than 10 individuals seen per year between mid-November and early March. It is largely restricted to freshwater lakes and ponds. The favored sites are several reservoirs in the Goleta foothills, Laguna Blanca, Lauro Reservoir, and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. It also has occurred on several occasions along brackish channels in the Goleta Slough area, four times at Devereux Slough, twice at Rancho Goleta mobile-home park pond, and once each at UCSB Lagoon and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Three birds over the ocean flew past Point Conception 9 April 2022. Exceptional for both date and location was a flock of 7 birds photographed over nearshore ocean waters west of Refugio 30 August 2018. (This species is sometimes seen under similar marine circumstances much farther to the north.) One flying over Goleta 12 April 2013 was late.

Along the North Coast, Common Mergansers are very rare. One flying over the Santa Maria River mouth 15 October 1978 provided the earliest definite migrant arrival for the county. Since then there have been only ca. 15 additional records for the North Coast between November and early March, with high counts of 9 in Santa Maria 1 February 2014 and up to 13 near there 15 December 2014–17 January 2015, plus a late-lingering bird at Santa Maria through 13 April 1995. And see above.

There are several records for District V: 2 at New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 5 December 2018, 2 there 2 March 2019, 1 there 8 March–10 April 2021, 3 there 22 December 2021, and 3 in Quatal Canyon 20 February 2019. A male at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 23 May 2019 was not only rare but also late away from a prospective breeding site.

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

Uncommon to fairly common transient and winter visitor along the South Coast, very uncommon and local along the North Coast; rare-but-regular in summer. Casual in District I.

Red-breasted Mergansers inhabit the more protected nearshore waters, bays, harbors, coastal lagoons, sloughs, and river mouths. It also may be found in small numbers in protected waters surrounding the Channel Islands. The species is present principally from late October through April, with a small number (fewer than 10) summering annually, usually at harbors and river mouths. They are typically found singly or in small flocks, with the largest concentration rarely exceeding about 10 individuals; 20–25 have been seen on multiple dates on the UCSB Lagoon since 2006, with 54 on 2 January 2016, 33 on 14 January 2018, and 35 on 22 January 2020, and 21 were at El Capitan State Beach 16 December 2011. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 42 individuals, with especially high counts of 136 on 30 December 1978 and 257 on 4 January 1997. Seven individuals seen 2–3 mi (3–5 km) off Santa Barbara 31 December 1977 and a spring migrant adult male 14-1/2 mi (23-1/2 km) off Point Sal 7 April 2024 were farther offshore than usual. Along the North Coast, this species appears to shun the less protected coastal waters; few birds are seen there during winter months when their status is best characterized as rare. High counts are 12 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 14 November 2021 and 45 there 21 January 2024. One at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 26 December 2021 and an adult male at River Park in Lompoc 26 April 2016 were slightly farther inland than normal; the latter was a presumed spring migrant. Throughout District C, adult males are scarce.

There are only eight definite records for District I. Two were of probable spring migrants at Lake Cachuma 29 April 1979 and 13 May 1982. Five were there 22 January 1984, and single

individuals were present 25 February 1986, 12–20 February 1990, 7–20 January 1996, 4 November 2016, and 5 November 2023. Several other reports from Lake Cachuma and inland rivers lack adequate documentation and may pertain to Common Mergansers.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Common transient and winter visitor and fairly common summer resident in Districts C and I, where also nests locally. Rare visitor in District V.

Ruddy Ducks are found in most freshwater habitats, including lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and marshes, and at coastal sloughs, lagoons, and river mouths. High counts at Lake Cachuma are 848 on 6 January 1976 (Hamber 1977), 600 on both 11 December 1978 and 23 November 1979, 930 on 15 November 2002, and 1539 reported 29 December 2009; versus much lower summer totals, such as only 15 there 22 June 1980. Elsewhere in District I, 400 were on Jameson Lake in the late 1930s (Bartholomew 1940). As many as 1121 individuals (on 29 December 1979) have been recorded on the Santa Barbara CBC, although other high counts from District C of 400 to 600 individuals are more typical, but with 1063 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 January 2025. Maxima on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs include 399 birds (27 December 2009) on the former and 743 individuals (16 December 2012) on the latter. Arrival and departure dates of migrants are difficult to determine.

One male in full alternate plumage at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 15 November 1986 was atypical for the date.

This species breeds locally in very small numbers at lakes and marshes where there is sufficient vegetation to provide cover. Nesting sites include several scattered ponds in the Santa Maria Valley, near Orcutt, on Vandenberg SFB, and at Mission Hills; Glen Annie Reservoir, Coal Oil Point dune pond, Lake Los Carneros, seasonal ponds at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads, Goleta Slough, and the Goleta sewage treatment plant (formerly) in Goleta; Laguna Blanca and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in Santa Barbara; “Lake Jocelyn” in Carpinteria; and Lake Cachuma.

In District V, a total of 4+ were at New Cuyama between 21–28 October increasing to up to 14 from 28 November 2018–24 March 2019, followed by singles in Quatal Canyon February–March 2019 and 14 November 2021, 1 elsewhere in Cuyama Valley 25 March 2019, 2 there 23 March 2021, and ca. 14 additional records (involving 41+ individuals) at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond between 19 September (2019) and 19 May (2024), with also 2 late birds there 2 June 2019.

NEW WORLD QUAIL (ODONTOPHORIDAE)

Mountain Quail (*Oreortyx pictus*)

Uncommon to fairly common permanent resident in District M and locally in District V and at the upper elevations in Districts C and I.

Mountain Quail frequent coniferous forests, pine-oak woodland, and chaparral. They are rather secretive and most easily found when calling in spring or following the hatching of chicks in late June and July. Numbers may vary substantially from year to year depending on such factors as rainfall. High counts include 54, 45, and 46 (including several family groups) in the Big Pine Mountain area 29 June–1 July 1981, 10–12 June 1993, and 12–14 June 2009, respectively; whereas several other summer censuses there have recorded fewer than 10 individuals to as low as just 2 birds on 13–15 June 2014 (a drought year). In the northern foothills of the Sierra Madre, this species is or was regular at a number of sites including upper Cottonwood Canyon Road, Bates Canyon, Aliso Park, upper Salisbury Canyon, Dry Canyon,

and upper Santa Barbara Canyon (bordering District V). Very high counts at the latter site included 40 birds on 19 September 2018 and ca. 50 birds on 20 April 2019.

In Districts C and I, they occur in chaparral locally down to elevations of ca. 1300–1500 feet along the slopes of the Santa Ynez and San Rafael Mountains, west to the ridge above Tepusquet Canyon (east of Santa Maria). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 31 individuals (2 January 1993), but most count totals are just in the single digits. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 34 birds (27 December 2014). A high count of ca. 40 birds was made in Colson Canyon, east of Santa Maria, 27 April 2019. To the west of Goleta, Mountain Quail were found in the late 1970s as low as 500-ft elevation in scrub bordering citrus and avocado orchards. A high count was 10 birds in El Capitan Canyon 18 April 1976. Twelve birds at only 800-ft elevation in Ellwood Canyon in Goleta 2 October 2017 may have been pushed downslope by the Whittier fire. One individual was bordering Lake Cachuma 10 May 2009 at an elevation of only 750ft.

In District V proper, Mountain Quail have been found sporadically in pinyon-juniper and semidesert scrub in Ballinger Canyon (e.g., female with 11 chicks 10 July 1978, 7 adults 1 May 1979, and singles 27 April 2010, 28 April 2011, and 3 April and 13 April 2013); three times in Deer Park Canyon (2 on 26 April 2011, up to 3 from 28 April-14 May 2020, 1 on 18 May 2024); and once in Quatal Canyon (2 on 17 March 2018 [probably in Ventura County]).

California Quail (*Callipepla californica*)

Permanent resident in all Districts. Uncommon to common in District C (mostly absent south of Highway 101 from Isla Vista to Carpinteria), fairly common to common in District I and at the lower portions of District M. Locally common in foothills of District V.

California Quail frequent areas with fairly dense cover and occur in many varied habitats including pinyon-juniper and semidesert scrub of the Cuyama Valley, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, pine-oak woodland, oak-riparian canyons, oak woodland, and locally in residential areas. Numbers may vary substantially over periods of several years in response to varying rainfall and food abundance. They reach their peak abundance in open oak woodland and in oak and riparian canyons bordered by chaparral in District C (west of Goleta), in District I, and at the lower elevations of District M, as well as locally in foothill canyons in District V. Exceptional were the estimates of 500 and 750–1000 quail at water features in juniper-and-saltbush foothill habitat at ca. 2500ft elevation in the Salisbury and Santa Barbara Canyons area 19 November 2008 and 12 December 2017, respectively, with several hundred there on many dates through 2017. Nearby, 120 birds were higher up at Santa Barbara Potrero in the Sierra Madre 29 July 2018. In arid sections of the county, numbers and distribution are influenced by surface water availability. Cachuma CBCs have recorded as many as 434 individuals (28 December 2007). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 585 individuals (with 600 tallied on the 29 December 1963 CBC), but only 163 on 2 January 2016 and 197 on 31 December 2016. Maxima on the La Purisima CBC are 334 on 18 December 1994 and, more recently, 239 birds on 14 December 2008. Highly variable numbers on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC have not exceeded 208 birds (23 December 2011).

Some populations, especially in coastal areas from Goleta to Carpinteria, have declined during the past 45 years because of residential development, drought, and increased predation. California Quail disappeared from the UCSB main campus in 1985 or 1986; they became sporadic in occurrence in the Devereux Slough (Coal Oil Point Reserve) area by 1988, but since 2009 they are uncommon there as a result of reintroduction and feeding. Other South Coast populations persist at More Mesa, in Hope Ranch, along the north side of the Mesa in Santa Barbara, and in Montecito, but these need further study. California Quail are uncommon, rare, or absent in more sparsely vegetated residential and urban areas. For example, 1 in urbanized, coastal Carpinteria 20 March 2014 was unusual.

This species is absent from most higher elevations above ca. 3500–4000ft in District M. Near-annual summer surveys of the Big Pine Mountain area between 1981–2026 failed to find

any individuals except for 2 birds in June 2006, 5 in June 2012, 2 in June 2013, and 7 in June 2014.

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS, GROUSE, TURKEYS (PHASIANIDAE)

Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*)
Introduced. Probably a former, local resident in District V. Wild status uncertain.

Chukars have been found a few times in semidesert scrub on hillsides bordering the eastern Cuyama Valley. Several were heard on the north side of Ballinger Canyon 1 May 1979, 5 were heard near there 18 April 1982, and 1 or 2 were there 29 April 1993. One was seen along Highway 33 near Ventucopa 17 April 1988. It is uncertain whether these birds had spread from established populations in eastern San Luis Obispo County or were local releases or escapes. Known or presumed escapes have been encountered elsewhere in the county (e.g., Burton Mesa).

[Sooty Grouse (*Dendragapus fuliginosus*)
Hypothetical.

Bartholomew (1940) wrote that "two chicks [were] seen on Big Pine Mtn. on June 8, 1938." This species was known to be resident on Mount Pinos and Mount Abel in nearby Ventura and Kern Counties through at least the 1960s. The subspecies involved was *D. f. howardi.* The Big Pine record, however, includes no additional details, and apparently—and oddly—no adults were ever seen.]

Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)
Introduced. Formerly an uncommon and local permanent resident in Districts C and I; now fairly common and more widespread in District I, possibly spreading in District C. Rare in District M.

Through the 1980s, the population of Wild Turkeys was never large, and, although the species spread into the Santa Ynez Valley from its initial area of introduction west of Goleta, its viable status in the county was uncertain. The extent of subsequent introductions made in these two areas is uncertain. The species was found in Dos Pueblos, Ellwood, and Winchester Canyons just west of Goleta through at least the early 1980s. In District I, it was first noted on the north side of Lake Cachuma in the 1980s, with ca. 40 there 16 September 1994.

Since the mid-1990s (and especially by about 2005) its numbers and range have increased further. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 38 (2 January 1999), 59 (2 January 2005), and 121 (31 December 2005) individuals, almost all from the Paradise area along the upper Santa Ynez River, with smaller numbers also around Painted Cave. Adults with chicks were seen along Highway 154 near Stagecoach Road in 1998. The population in the Paradise/Upper Oso area in spring 1999 was at least 27 birds, 41 were there 30 December 2000, and in early 2011 there were between 55–85 birds. The Cachuma CBC has recorded a high of 95 birds (29 December 2010). A group of 15 was near Lake Cachuma 20 August 2001; 35 at Live Oak Campground near Lake Cachuma 1 March 2009 was also a good count at a single site. This species has been found as far north as along the north flank of the Sierra Madre. A few birds at Aliso Canyon, near New Cuyama, were presumably extirpated during the mid-2010s, but a female on eggs was there in spring 2020. Also found along upper Cottonwood Canyon Road (including Bates Canyon), where 2 noted 14 April 2015, 1 seen 5 April 2016, and fresh feathers found in mid-September 2018; at Miranda Pine Campground, where 1 was noted 29 April 2015; and as far west as Tepusquet and Suey Canyons inland from Santa Maria beginning in the late 1990s, with at least 70 there in spring 1999 and 87 counted at Tepusquet 12 October 2018 and 100–109 there 13–30 November 2019. An introduction near Lompoc resulted in a number of

sightings in foothill canyons south and southwest of the city between 1991 and late 1993. Between 2011–2024, a partial summary of sites and estimated populations was as follows: Tepusquet Canyon 100–150 birds, Colson Canyon 25–50, Pine Canyon 35–50, north of Los Olivos 5–10, Happy Canyon 5–10, several sites south of Solvang and Santa Ynez 50–80, Live Oak Campground 12–15, and La Salle, Sloans, and Miguelito Canyons south of Lompoc 70–75 (*fide* L. R. Ballard); and Jalama Road 8. One was at La Purisima Mission 13 March 2014 and another was in interior Gaviota State Park 22 June 2026. In District M, 2 were near Zaca Lake 18 May 1974, 1 was heard from the summit of Figueroa Mountain 19 March 1998, and, beginning in 2007 or 2008, birds were noted at ca. 2200ft near the summit of San Marcos Pass.

Sightings in the South Coast foothills near the base of San Marcos Pass commenced in 2007 with a small flock along the East Fork Maria Ygnacio Creek and in the San Jose Creek watershed. Whether these birds spread south over the Santa Ynez Mountains (most likely) or came from foothill ranches to the west is uncertain. Nesting was documented in 2011, with a female and 2 chicks along the West Fork of San Jose Creek 15 May and a female with 5 chicks along Old San Marcos Road near Maria Ygnacio Creek 20 May. Slightly farther out on the coastal plain, 1 was at Lake Los Carneros 1 September 2024. Farther west, up to 2 were in Refugio Canyon 5 April–5 July 2023, 2 were at Hollister Ranch 22 April 2023, 1 was at Baron Ranch Trail 2 July 2023, up to 3 were at Farren Road 18 January 2024–19 May 2025, and 1 was along Arroyo Hondo from 2 February–1 July 2025. And along the North Coast, up to 4 were along Jalama Road 8 June 2023–29 March 2026, 1 was at Barka Slough 10 September 2023, and 1 was at the Santa Maria Country Club 10–23 November 2024.

Even farther outside ‘typical’ range was a group of 7 along Las Canoas Road near the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 31 December 2005, 1 along Tunnel Road 4 May 2021 and 2 there 14 December 2024, and 1 at the Botanic Garden 4 January 2025 (same?); and, even more so, 1 in an industrial park near the Santa Barbara Airport in Goleta 11 April 2011, 1 perched on a car in residential Goleta 13 June 2011, and 1 on the roof of a home in residential Montecito 29 July 2019 followed soon thereafter by it or another in lanes of Highway 101 near San Ysidro Road 31 July.

GREBES (PODICIPEDIDAE)

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Fairly common to common transient and winter visitor, and uncommon and local summer resident, on fresh and brackish water bodies in Districts C and I. Rare in District V.

This species occurs during migration and winter on almost all major bodies of water on the coastal plain and in the interior lowlands, including sloughs, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and (less commonly) protected harbors. Wetlands with persistent water and emergent vegetation are required for nesting. Winter concentrations of up to 50 individuals have been noted at Laguna Blanca and at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. The highest single-site count is 60 at the UCSB Lagoon 13 November 2005. Santa Barbara CBCs typically record about 100+ individuals, with 294 reported on 29 December 1979. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 141 birds (29 December 1999), and 147 were on Lake Cachuma 15 November 2002. Forty-five on the lake 20 July 1989 is a high count for summer. Arrival and departure dates of migrants are difficult to determine, although fall transients may appear as early as late July and probably linger into May.

In District V, single birds near New Cuyama 13 December 2006, near Cuyama 19 February 2012, and at Caliente Ranch Wetland 16 April 2018 were followed (through early 2026) by ca. 9 additional records each involving 1–2 birds from ponds at New Cuyama and Quatal Canyon between 2 September (2018) and 22 April (2020).

Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor along the South Coast, rare along the North Coast; casual in summer. In District I, formerly an uncommon to fairly common winter visitor at Lake Cachuma, now uncommon to rare, and one summer record; casual elsewhere. One record in District V.

This species frequents nearshore waters, including protected bays and harbors, and it is rare in coastal sloughs. It is rarely seen in unprotected waters along the North Coast. It also may be found in small numbers in protected waters surrounding the Channel Islands. It arrives beginning in mid-October and departs by late April. One in Goleta 16 September 1976, 2 at Lake Cachuma 20–30+ September 1986, and 1 there 22 September 2007 were exceptionally early; another in Goleta 1 October 1968 and 1 at Lake Cachuma 29 September–2 October 2025 were somewhat early. Although it is relatively widespread along the length of the South Coast, it is never numerous. Numbers there declined beginning in the early 1980s; fewer than 5 individuals were seen on a number of Santa Barbara CBCs through the early 2000s. They have increased sporadically since then, with 30 tallied on the CBC 30 December 2006 and 52 on 5 January 2008. A total of 48 birds along a 6-mile stretch of shore near Gaviota 25 January 2014 suggests that higher numbers may occur in this section of coastline. Fewer birds are seen along the North Coast, where 1 bird was as far inland as Jim May Park in Santa Maria 28 October 2010.

Occasionally, Horned Grebes are seen migrating north just offshore in small flocks during March and April. Late records in spring in District C after early May are 13 May 1992 south Vandenberg SFB, 20 May 1969 Santa Barbara (*SBMNH), and through 23 May 2015 Goleta (2). One at the Santa Ynez River mouth 6–8 June 2015 was presumably an exceptionally late migrant. Single migrants at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 26 March 1986, at a small seasonal pond in Goleta 5–9 April 1994, and at a small pond in inland Goleta 4–11 March 2014 were at atypical locations.

There are four coastal summer records of single individuals in alternate plumage: Goleta mid-April–26 June 1981, on a small pond near Guadalupe 4 July 1989, also there 16–20 August 2009, and Lake Los Carneros 23 April–21 July 2015.

In District I, this species occurs regularly only at Lake Cachuma, where it is a winter visitor, late October–March. Larger concentrations were noted there than anywhere along the coast through the 1990s. The maximum counts were 70 on 11 December 1978 and 70 on 23 November 1979, with 26 still present 9 March 1976 (Hamber 1977); more recent high counts have not exceeded 24 individuals (12 January 2004); and up to 20 (29 December 1999) have been tallied on Cachuma CBCs, but zero was seen on 28 December 2010. One in alternate plumage on the lake 1–7 May 2004 was late, whereas 1 there 26 June 1987 was presumably summering locally. Away from there, 4 were at Gibraltar Reservoir 2 January 2010 and 2 were at Jameson Lake 11 January 2015.

There is one record for District V: a spring migrant was near Cuyama 4 April 2013.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)

Very rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C; casual in District I.

Red-necked Grebes have been found in nearshore waters and at lagoons, sloughs, and river mouths in the immediate vicinity of the coast. Favored sites along the South Coast include Goleta Bay and Gaviota State Park. Single rather early migrants were at the Santa Maria River mouth 12 October 1980 and 17 October 1978 and in Carpinteria 21 October 2017 (*SBMNH). The other records are: vic. Santa Barbara 20 December 1926, 46+ records of (mostly) single individuals since 1956 in District C between 24 October and 6 April, plus high counts of up to 3 in Goleta 1–19 December 1984 and 3 there 13 January 2007; as well as 1 at an odd location of a flood-control pond near Santa Maria 11 January 2008 (ph. SBMNH). In addition, an unprecedented influx during winter 2023–2024 brought a total of as many as 13 birds between

Gaviota and Carpinteria, with a total of 8 between Gaviota and El Capitan State Beach on 17 February and 5 at Gaviota Starte Park alone on 16 March. This was followed by surprising numbers again the following winter, with an exceptional 13 birds at Gaviota State Park 24 January 2025. And in 2025–2026, a total of 15 birds included up to 13 in the Gaviota area during January–March.

Singles at the Santa Maria River mouth 17 April 1997, in Santa Barbara 20–21 April 2007, in Goleta through 23 April 2003, at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge through 11 May 1993 (ph. SBMNH), near Gaviota 16 April 2021, and at Point Conception 25 April 2021 were late.

An old sighting (before 1859 and cited by Dawson (1923)) and four records during the first half of the 20th century lack adequate supporting details. One of these latter records involved 5 individuals, which was unlikely at the time.

In District I, a Red-necked Grebe was at Lake Cachuma 17 January 2003, a late bird was present there 9 April–1 May 2004 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 was found 12 January 2008 (ph. SBMNH).

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; rare in summer and a casual breeder. Rare migrant in District V.

Eared Grebes occur in nearshore waters, protected bays, harbors, sloughs, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and, less commonly, along the wider and deeper stretches of rivers. They are uncommon in nearshore waters during winter but become fairly common during migration. They are also found in protected waters near the Channel Islands and may occur uncommonly farther offshore, again, mostly during migration. This species typically arrives beginning in August, but it is not common until late September. One in Goleta 24 July 1977; 2 at Jameson Lake 25 July 2019; 2 in Goleta 26 July 2011; 3 each at Lake Cachuma 29 July 1988 and 30 July 2000; and 1 near Santa Maria 1 August 2017 were all early arrivals.

The highest counts are from Lake Cachuma during the 1970s: 1500 on 11 December 1978, 1200 on 30 November 1979, and a spring influx of 1381 on 1 April with 722 still present 19 April 1976 (Hamber 1977). A total of 395 birds 30 December 2008 is a high for the Cachuma CBC (but only 6 on 28 December 2010), whereas 212 birds were tallied on the 1983 Santa Barbara CBC, but more recent Santa Barbara counts have not recorded more than 95 individuals, and sometimes fewer than 25 are seen. Ninety-eight at Devereux Slough 26 October 2007, 350 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 March 2012, ca. 200 at Jalama Beach County Park 12 February 2014, and 282 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 November 2016 were large single-site concentrations along the mainland coast. Truly exceptional was the single flock of 650 birds along the south shore of Santa Cruz Island 10 April 2017.

Flocks are occasionally seen flying up the coast just offshore during spring migration (March–May). Small numbers also have been noted in both spring and fall up to several miles off the mainland coast. Small to sometimes moderate numbers also occur regularly near the Channel Islands, with a very high 2150 around Santa Rosa Island 13 February 1976. A flock of 11 birds flying south far offshore along the shelf edge just northeast of San Juan Seamount 16 October 2011 was even more unusual. In winter, this species is more apt to be seen in unprotected nearshore waters from Goleta eastward compared to west of Goleta and along the North Coast. Two birds ca. 3 mi (5 km) north of Santa Cruz Island 1 December 2002 were perhaps farther from land than usual in winter.

In District V. there have been ca. 10 records (involving ca. 23 individuals) since 2018 at ponds in New Cuyama and Quatal Canyon, between 20 September (2019) and 18 May (2024), with a high of 6 birds at New Cuyama 28 November 2019.

Eared Grebes become rare after mid-May, but they have lingered somewhat regularly into late May, as late as 31 May 1982 Santa Ynez River mouth, 25 May–1 June 1969 Goleta, and through 10 June 1976 Goleta. Some 34–47 at the Santa Ynez River mouth between 21–28 May 2022 was a very large count for so late in the season. Several individuals have appeared in mid-

June but not lingered thereafter: up to 3 in Goleta 10–15 June 2015 and 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 15 June 2015.

True non-breeders were very rare summer visitors into the 2010s in Districts C and I, averaging a couple records per year, but numbers have increased somewhat since then. Five records during June–July 2017 was, at the time, substantially more than normal. Up to 6 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3–28 June 2018 and 6 there 21 July 2019 were high single-site summer counts of non-breeders; up to 4 there between 10 June–20 July 2016 included a displaying pair 10–27 June, but no further nesting evidence was obtained. In District V, 1 was at a dairy pond near Cuyama 10–13 July 2011 (migrants may begin returning by the end of July [see above]). Since 2020, non-breeding records of interest include up to 6 at Lake Cachuma June–July 2022 and up to 2 there 10–29 June 2023; and along the South Coast, a total of 6 were seen between mid-June and mid-July 2023.

The first certain breeding record was documented in 1991 when 2 adults with 2 chicks were found at Laguna Blanca 4 August; the young subsequently disappeared before fledging, and the adults were on a second (unsuccessful) nest 23 August. A nest with eggs was there again in June 1992 (unsuccessful); and 1 adult was seen 31 May 1993. Adults with 2 large chicks were at the former Betteravia sugar ponds near Santa Maria 29 June 1992. Adults on a nest and then with up to 2 chicks were at Goleta Slough 4 May–8 June 2005. An adult with 2 juveniles were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 20 August 2007, 5 broods were there during August 2022, and at least 1 pair nested there in July–August 2025. Two family groups were at the Santa Maria River mouth 3 August 2020, up to 3 nests/broods were there during August 2022, and up to 28 birds and two pairs building nests were noted 17–22 July 2026. Three adults and an "immature" bird at Lake Cachuma 7 August 1997 were evidence of probable local breeding.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

Common to locally abundant transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; uncommon to locally common in summer. Nests irregularly at Lake Cachuma, rarely elsewhere. Casual transient in District V.

In migration and winter, this species is present on the nearshore ocean and at bays, harbors, sloughs, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. They are also found in protected waters around the Channel Islands. Fall migrants probably arrive in October, with notable influxes noted at such localities as Lake Cachuma during mid-October. Several sites along the South Coast regularly support large flocks: off western Carpinteria (where 1500 reported 8 November 2007 and 3110 counted 23 December 2010), off Santa Barbara Harbor/East Beach, off More Mesa, and off Isla Vista. Many Santa Barbara CBCs record up to 1500 individuals, with 2294 counted on 30 December 2000 and 3422 tallied on 1 January 2011 (although some duplication likely). It is very common at Lake Cachuma, where 500–1000+ may winter, but is uncommon or rare on the other ponds, lakes, and reservoirs in District I. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 1142 individuals (30 December 2008); and 1146, 1168, and 1618 birds were tallied at the lake on 3 March 2003, 12 January 2004, and 19 February 2016, respectively. Along the North Coast, a staggering ca. 7000 birds were along the north Vandenberg SFB coast 28 October 2006 and 7100 birds were reported on the local La Purisima CBC 20 December 2009; the next highest CBC maximum there is of only 1084 birds on 19 December 2004.

This species is known to be a nocturnal migrant and has not been recorded migrating past Goleta Point during spring surveys.

Numbers decline by May and the species is uncommon to locally common during summer. The largest late-spring concentration recorded is 2000+ *Aechmophorus* grebes off Point Sal 26 May 1960, a late date for so many. Eight hundred there during June 1981 was a high count for summer. It is likely that a very small percentage of these individuals were Clark's Grebes. Five hundred Westerns were along the Vandenberg SFB coast on both 7 July 1988 and 7 July 1991.

Ninety-eight *Aechmophorus* sp. on Lake Cachuma 20 July 1989 was a high summer count for that locality prior to 1992, and 662 adults on the lake 23 August 2002 was a high summer count during a year with no local nesting (see below).

Nesting at Lake Cachuma was first documented in 1992, when up to 60 pairs with many young were present 2–29+ July. In addition, at least 2 mixed Western X Clark's pairs with young were seen, along with 2 or 3 intermediate-looking adults paired with Westerns. Another mixed pairing with a chick was noted in August 2000. In January and February 1993, up to 65 young of varying ages were at Lake Cachuma (this is an opportunistic breeder, with winter nesting documented on many occasions elsewhere in Southern California), and at least 4 nests were there 9 June 1993. Since 1994, Western Grebes bred in summer at Lake Cachuma in 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2024, and 2026; high counts include 334 adults with 164 young in August 1997, 601 chicks in July 2005, and 774 adults with 436 chicks on 5 August 2011; late-fall and winter nesting occurred again in 1999, with 6–8 pairs and young seen in December; and in 2017 when numerous begging young observed 5 November, as well as in 2001, 2017, and 2019. Elsewhere in District I, 3 chicks were found on Jameson Lake 2–3 August 2022.

Along the South Coast, a "Western Grebe" nest was found by L.T. Stevens in Goleta 9 May 1929; but given that this was prior to the Western/Clark's Grebe split in the 1980s, it is not known whether it pertained to Western or Clark's. Nesting along the North Coast has been documented at the Santa Ynez River mouth, where an adult was seen feeding 2 large chicks 26 August 2007, at least 1 chick was present 6 July 2014, and up to several pairs were nesting June–August during 2010 and a number of years between in 2013–2025. See also Clark's Grebe account.

In District V, a migrant *Aechmophorus* grebe sp. was found wounded in a field near Cuyama during the third week of April 2011, and single Westerns was at New Cuyama 18 October 2018 and 17 October and 1 November 2019.

An unspecified *Aechmophorus* grebe that was banded at Willard, Utah, in June 1934 was recovered in Carpinteria in March 1935.

Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*)

Uncommon to locally common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; very uncommon to locally fairly common in summer. Nests irregularly at Lake Cachuma, and very rarely in District C.

This species is found on the nearshore ocean and at bays, harbors, sloughs, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. It also may be found rarely in protected waters surrounding the Channel Islands. Throughout most of the county, Clark's Grebes are usually outnumbered by Western Grebes about ten to one. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 18 individuals, with a high of 73 birds on 3 January 2009. At Lake Cachuma the ratio of Clark's to Western grebes is often closer to 1:2, and the former may rarely be in the majority, with as many as 4:1 Clark's:Western during October 2016. A few counts there have exceeded 200 individuals, and 400–481 were present 20–23 October 2016. The maximum on the Cachuma CBC is 131 birds (30 December 2008). This species is rare in District I away from Lake Cachuma. An interesting record is that of a presumed fall migrant found dead on the road near Los Alamos 22 October 1989. Like the Western Grebe, this species is known to be a nocturnal migrant and has not been seen in active migration in the county. And like the Western, it probably arrives mostly during October.

The summer status of this species is not well known because sightings before the 1980s (when Clark's was formally recognized) were mostly lumped with the Western Grebe. It is generally believed to be much scarcer than its sibling species at this season. However, an exceptional 225 Clark's Grebes were seen between Point Sal and Point Arguello 7 July 1988, comprising one-third of the *Aechmophorus* sp. grebes present. Forty were at Lake Cachuma 29 July 1988, and 128 were there 23 August 2002 in a year when they did not breed locally. Along the South Coast, most Clark's have departed by late May, and summer birds are somewhat rare.

Nesting was first documented in 1991, when 2 pairs with a total of 6 chicks were found at the upper end of Lake Cachuma 19 August. In 1992, up to 80 family groups and nests were on the lake, 27 June–29+ July. In January and February 1993, up to 10 young were present (*UCSB). Since 1994, the species has bred at Cachuma in at least summer 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2024; high counts were 65 adults with 26 young during August 1997, 117 chicks in July 2005, and 141 adults with 160 chicks 5 August 2011. Two pairs with chicks nested as late as September–October 1996; 2–3 pairs with young were there in early December 1999; in 2017, incubating was noted 21 October and numerous begging young were observed 5 November; and in 2019, a begging juvenile was noted 25 November. In addition, at least 2 mixed Western X Clark's pairs with young were seen during July 1992, along with 2 or 3 intermediate-looking adults paired with Westerns. Another mixed pairing with a chick was noted in August 2000. In District C, and partly coincident with locally nesting Western Grebes, an adult with a young bird were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 10 September 2010, a total of 3 pairs and at least 2 chicks were there 17 July–31 October 2013, a total of 2–3 chicks were present 19 May–10 August 2014, 2 or 3 separate adults with chicks were seen 12 June–3 September 2015, adult with chick on 18 July 2016, 2 birds were incubating 21 October 2017, a total of 5 broods were found in summer (through October) 2018, and at least 1 pair with chick were seen during July–August 2025. A mixed Western/Clark's pair with chicks were there 3 June 2018. Nesting Clark's or Western Grebes were also noted there as follows: up to 11 juveniles between 23 July–15 October 2010, up to 5 chicks/juveniles between 2 August–22 November 2013, and 7+ chicks 6 July 2014. Like the Western Grebe, this species is an opportunistic breeder.

PIGEONS, DOVES (COLUMBIDAE)

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*)
Accidental.

One bird came to a yard in Orcutt 14–23 March 2014 (ph. SBMNH). There are only several previous records for the coastal slope in California.

Common Ground Dove (*Columbina passerina*)
Formerly an uncommon and very local resident in the Carpinteria and Goleta areas in District C; a very rare visitor elsewhere on the South Coast; casual on the North Coast. Present status unclear though probably rare and local; has retracted from almost all areas previously colonized in the late 1900s. Accidental inland.

There were only four county records prior to 1984: Carpinteria 25 August 1923, Goleta 2 October 1977, Goleta 13 October 1982 (2), and Goleta 7 October–18 November 1983. Beginning in 1984, Common Ground Doves were found regularly in small numbers (single-day counts did not exceed 4 individuals) in foothill nurseries and orchards in the Carpinteria area. The earlier spread of this species into similar habitats in Ventura County was described in Spencer (1987). Soon thereafter, this species began to be reported with increasing frequency in Santa Barbara and, especially, Goleta. Between 1984 and late 1987 there were five records involving 9 individuals from Goleta, one of which involved up to 4 remaining over an extended period during fall and winter 1987–1988 (and again from September 1988–May 1989) in agricultural habitat bordering South Patterson Avenue. Then, up to 8 individuals in foothill orchards in Goleta beginning in December 1987 provided strong evidence that this species had colonized citrus and avocado orchards in this area. By early 1989, a total of more than 10 individuals had been observed repeatedly on La Patera Ranch and in Glen Annie and Tecolote Canyons, and several individuals were seen repeatedly at Lake Los Carneros (in eucalyptus groves). Several

individuals also appeared at foothill feeders. On 15 December 1991, 2 were seen farther west in orchards near Dos Pueblos Canyon (where the species was last reported 23 July 2001 (2)). Records from Santa Barbara, where appropriate orchard habitat is very limited, were: 1–3 September 1985, 13 October 1987, 24 March 1988, up to 2 at a feeder throughout December 1988, 1 October 1996, and 25 July 2006. In addition, singles were in Montecito 1 September 2000 and 28 July 2006. An interesting record is of a female with an almost fully developed egg found dead in Carpinteria 6 September 1989 (*SBMNH).

Numbers in the Goleta foothills appeared to begin to decline during the early and mid- 1990s, followed thereafter by those in agricultural fields on the coastal plain. In 1997, however, at least a dozen birds were known to persist at several sites in Goleta; but that number declined to perhaps 7 birds by early 2001. The most consistent localities for this species at that time remained citrus orchards at Farren Road, Ellwood Canyon, Glen Annie Road, and La Patera Ranch in the foothills, and at citrus groves and agricultural fields along South Patterson Avenue on the coastal plain. One to 8 birds have remained at the former locales from November 2006 through June 2026. One at nearby Lake Los Carneros 14 January 2016; another near Maria Ygnacio Creek in residential northern Goleta 9 October 2016; 2 off North Patterson Avenue 24 November 2017; 1 along Tecolote Creek in northern Goleta 4 September 2018, 3 there 9 July 2020, and 1 on 28 June 2022; and up to 2 in the San Jose Creek area in northern Goleta 15 June 2024–17 July 2026 probably had all wandered just a short distance from there. Two at the South Patterson Avenue site in fall 2005 had dropped to reports of just single individuals between December 2005 and January 2015, 1 there 9 October 2016, 1 nearby along Atascadero Creek 14 September 2016, and 1 nearby at Lane Farms along Hollister Avenue 10 February 2026. In the Carpinteria area (mostly private property in lower foothills), there have been sightings of 1–3 birds through December 2025; with higher counts of up to 4 there 7–28 February 2007 and 5 found 17 March 2021. Two birds were a short distance to the west of the Goleta sites in Las Varas Canyon 1–16 February 2012, 2 birds were in adjoining Dos Pueblos Canyon 20 August 2016, 1 was in Refugio Canyon 20 May 2017 and 2 were near there 3 September 2017, up to 3 were near Gaviota 10 February–23 September 2018, 1 was at El Capitan State Beach 8 June 2019 and 3 were near there 1 May 2020 and 16 August 2024, and 1 was at Gaviota State Park 21 September 2024. To the east of the Goleta sites, 1 was calling in appropriate citrus-grove habitat along Old San Marcos Road 21 March 2026. A ground dove sp. was somewhat out of range at Goleta Slough 12 January 2016, as were single Commons in Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 22 September 2018, at San Marcos Foothills Preserve in Santa Barbara 21 October 2021, and at Lane Farms in western Santa Barbara 2–5 March 2026.

Along the North Coast, 3 birds just west of Lompoc 28 November 1990, 1 there 13 December 1990, 1 in Orcutt 8 January–25 February 1993, and 1 at Barka Slough 10 May 1993 were well west and north of normal. Even more unusual was 1 at Jim May Park, Santa Maria, 24 July 2016, following the post-1990s decline (see above).

Inland, a Common Ground Dove was shot at De la Guerra Spring at the lower elevations in District M on 2 September 2016 (ph. SBMNH).

Ruddy Ground Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*)

Accidental.

A female came to a Goleta feeder off North Fairview Avenue 5 October 1991–30 January 1992 (ph. SBMNH). It established the second coastal California record north of San Diego.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

Rare but regular fall transient along the South Coast, very rare visitor in winter and spring, and casual in summer. Very rare along the North Coast and inland.

White-winged Doves occur primarily on the coastal plain of the South Coast where they are found in parks, residential neighborhoods, and in agricultural areas. The first record for the county was in Santa Barbara 8 November 1922 (Parmenter 1923). The earliest fall records are 3

August 2007 Lompoc and 7+ August 2017 Refugio State Beach. During the 1980s and 1990s, there was an average of about 4 birds per fall along the South Coast, with the average there remaining at about 4 or 5 per fall through 2025, and with most occurring between late August and early November. The maximum South Coast autumn totals are 11 individuals during 1984, 9 in 2000, 15 in 2018, and 11 in 2024.

Along the North Coast, fall records total 74 individuals as follows: Lompoc 27 September 1977 and then 73 birds since then, between early August (see above) and 25 November (2021, Santa Maria). The maximum North Coast fall totals are 8 birds in 2012 (but which included a single flock of 7 along Miguelito Road near Lompoc 8 September) and 6 individuals in 2014.

Winter records along the South Coast average about two per year. Several of these reports have involved small groups of individuals. Up to 6 birds were present during consecutive winters in the Winchester Canyon area, Goleta: 1983–1984 through 1986–1987 and in 2023–2024, and smaller numbers again in 1988–1989, 1991–1992, 1993–1994, and 2021–2022. Single individuals lingered there through 11 April 1984 and 10 April 1985. A group of 5 were near Maria Ygnacio Creek, Goleta, 16 December 2002–6 April 2003. The only winter records along the North Coast are from Orcutt 17 December 1989 and 16–27 January 2004; Vandenberg Village 1–25 January 2007; Lompoc 14 January–29 March 2008, 10 March 2011, and 21 December 2011; near Casmalia 22 December 2020; Lompoc 19 December 2021 (2); Santa Maria 8 December 2023; and Casmalia 31 December 2023.

This species is very rare as a spring migrant along the South Coast. The records are: Goleta 25 April 1971, Goleta April–May 1973, and then 20 additional records between "early March" (1999, Santa Barbara) and 31 May (2019, Santa Barbara; 2021, Goleta [ph. SBMNH]) and 31 May–4 June (2019, Goleta). One particularly interesting record is of an individual that flew in off the ocean in strong winds at Goleta Point 2 March 1977. Along the North Coast, 1 was in Lompoc 21 April 2015, 1 was there 5 June 2022, 1 was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 27 May 2023, and 1 was near Guadalupe 10 May 2024.

White-winged Dove is casual in summer in District C: Santa Barbara 12–13 June 1976, near Orcutt 16–19 July 1995, Santa Barbara 4 June 1996, Goleta 2 June 1999, Santa Barbara 23 June 2018, and, especially surprising to over-summer locally, Goleta 21 June–22 July 2017.

Offshore, 2 or 3 birds came on board a cruise ship between 72 mi (115 km) W of Point Sal and 52 mi (84 km) SW of San Miguel Island 29 August 2025.

The 23 records in District I come from a variety of seasons. The 13 fall records include near Santa Ynez 7 October 1993 and then 12 additional records through 2025, including early individuals 11 August 2012 near Santa Ynez and 14–16 August 2018 in Buellton. The eight winter records are near or in Santa Ynez January–February 1969, 13 February 1987, 12–15 December 1990 (3), and 21 February 2014; in Solvang 27 January 1991 and again 30 October–20 December 1991; and in Buellton 20 January–24 March 2018; plus an individual banded in Phoenix, Arizona on 7 August 2007 and recovered in Ballard on 19 January 2011. One in Los Alamos 12 March 2011 and 1 in Santa Ynez 20 March 2025 were uncertain as to whether lingering winter birds or early spring migrants. In spring, 2 birds were near Santa Ynez 2 April 2015.

A spring bird near San Marcos Pass 27 May 1989 was at the lower elevation of District M.

Two records in District V: near New Cuyama 17 July 1980, particularly unusual in summer, and New Cuyama 26 September 2007.

One individual banded in Arizona 6 July 1968 was recovered in Santa Barbara County 1 September 1970. See also the banding recovery from District I, above.

Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)
Common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V, uncommon in District M.

Mourning Doves occupy a wide variety of open and semi-open habitats. From late summer through mid-winter, large flocks are often encountered, although numbers vary somewhat from year to year. A high count was 1000 near Los Olivos 23 November 1947. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1900 individuals (30 December 1967). The high counts on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs are seemingly low 161 and 248 birds on 29 December 1996 and 16 December 2012, respectively; yet the latter total is double the next highest there. Cachuma CBCs have tallied as many as 343 and 452 birds (26 December 2014 and 29 December 2015, respectively). In District M, they are probably numerous only in the Sierra Madre foothills bordering the Cuyama Valley (e.g., ca. 250 in Salisbury Canyon 19–20 November 2004). In District V, some 700 birds were seen in the Cuyama Valley 11 December 2005. They are uncommon in dense chaparral and in open coniferous forest; summer bird surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, recorded no more than 7 individuals except for 12–15 birds tallied in 2009 and 2010 following a major fire.

Several individuals have been observed well offshore, up to 40 mi (65 km) beyond the islands and off the North Coast, with the farthest being an individual 129 mi (207 km) W of San Nicolas Island 9 July 1992.

The more interesting band recoveries involve individuals banded in North Dakota (1), Washington (1), Idaho (1), Utah (1), and Arizona (3).

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*)

Common permanent resident in Districts I and M and along the South Coast, rare along the North Coast. Numbers are augmented substantially in winter. Has increased as a breeder along the South Coast. Casual visitor in District V.

Band-tailed Pigeons are particularly numerous in oaks, although they also commonly occur in montane coniferous forests and in many riparian canyons. Along the South Coast, they also frequent well-vegetated residential neighborhoods and are somewhat regularly found at bird feeders. They are found rarely in orchards and agricultural fields. In southern Goleta and where extensive plantings of trees (especially oaks) are lacking, the species is usually uncommon. It is also found regularly in the foothills along the north flank of the Sierra Madre, bordering the Cuyama Valley, such as in vic. Aliso Park, Wasioja Road, and Bates Canyon Campgrounds and in upper Santa Barbara Canyon, possibly also in Dry Canyon, but they are not believed resident there.

During winter (November to April), numbers are augmented county-wide, and the species can be quite numerous, particularly in District I and in the foothills along the South Coast. Numbers vary substantially at this season from year to year depending on the food supply (acorns are a major component). During some years, Band-tailed Pigeons have occurred in immense flocks; “half a million” were in the Santa Ynez Valley centered around Los Olivos during fall and winter 1911–1912 (Dawson 1923) and more than 1000 were in Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, 9 April 1942. More recent winters with unusually large numbers included 1977–1978 and 2014–2015. The highly variable winter numbers are illustrated by totals from the Cachuma CBC: 1018 birds on 29 December 1999, 1241 on 28 December 2006, and 1941 on 26 December 2014 (with 400 at one site near Los Olivos), but only 10 individuals on 27 December 2000 and 11 on 27 December 2001. High totals on Santa Barbara CBCs include 2909 individuals 31 December 1977 and 2464 birds 3 January 2015. Typically, this species is scarce, even in winter, along the outer coastal plain where appropriate habitat is limited; a flock of 70 in Isla Vista 31 December 2014–3 January 2015 was a high count in such an area. (See below for high North Coast counts.)

Even in summer, numbers may vary substantially in an area from year to year; for example, summer bird surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, recorded as many as 37 individuals (17–19 June 2001) but also as few as 4 birds (e.g., 13–15 June 2014, a drought year).

Band-tailed Pigeons were not known to nest on the coastal plain along the South Coast during the early 1900s. With the increase in residential plantings (especially in Hope Ranch and

Montecito), they spread as a breeder to the coastal lowlands. The first confirmed nesting there took place in July 1939, when a nest was found in Hope Ranch (Rett 1940b). Since then, the species spread to several additional parts of the Santa Barbara area, and in the late 1970s it was found nesting in a residential neighborhood in southern Goleta. By 1982 it was uncommon to fairly common in the Goleta area in summer. Subsequently, it has spread east to Carpinteria and west to at least the El Capitan or Refugio areas. Nesting may sometimes be opportunistic, with odd-season breeding records documented elsewhere, but also including an active nest in Rocky Nook Park, Santa Barbara, 14 September 2011, and two active nests at Lake Los Carneros, one between 4 September–11 December 2017 and again 27+ January 2018, and the other from 26 December 2017–27 January+ 2018.

Along the North Coast, Band-tailed Pigeons are rare visitors, mid-September–early May because of limited suitable habitat. They occur somewhat more regularly in Miguelito Canyon, including several times in summer. Up to 95 around Tranquillon Peak, south Vandenberg SFB, 20 October–10 November 2003, 106 in Lompoc 16 April 2007, 197 on the La Purisima CBC 16 December 2012, 63 in Lompoc 16 May 2014, ca. 100 at Vandenberg Village January–9 February 2015, and 114 in Lompoc 5 April 2015 are high counts. Particularly unusual records, from the late spring and summer, are of single individuals at the Santa Ynez River mouth 4 July 1980, near Point Sal 22 May 1982, on north Vandenberg SFB 15 May 1987, and in Santa Maria 16 June 2006.

One was far at sea ca. 120 mi (193 km) SW of Point Conception 17 August 1980.

Despite their regular presence in nearby foothills in District M (see above), the only records of Band-tailed Pigeons in true District V are of 1 in Ballinger Canyon 18 March 2014, 1 in New Cuyama 15 January 2015, 2 near Cuyama 10 March 2019, 1 in Quatal Canyon 22 March 2019, and 1 near Cuyama 6 May 2024.

There are banding recoveries involving individuals banded in Washington (6) and Oregon (1).

Spotted Dove (*Spilopelia chinensis*)

Introduced. Now extirpated in Santa Barbara County. Formerly an uncommon to fairly common permanent resident along the South Coast; also recorded in the Lompoc area along the North Coast and in the Cuyama Valley.

Spotted Doves frequented residential areas and adjacent agricultural areas and riparian creeks. This species gradually spread north from the Los Angeles area, where introduced, and it was first noted in Santa Barbara 7 May 1944 (2). It was still uncommon in the early 1960s. During the 1970s, it was fairly common, though somewhat local, west to western Goleta. West of there, it was very rare, having occurred on several occasions as far up the coast as Gaviota State Park.

A single individual in Lompoc during May or June 1988, 1 near there 2 January 1989, and 1 there 15–23 December 1989 were along the North Coast. One was reported in the La Purisima CBC circle during December 1997. One at San Marcos Pass 12 August 1954 (*Yale Peabody Museum) was the only record in District M. One in the Cuyama Valley 9 November 1991 was the only record in District V.

Beginning in the 1980s, the population appeared to decline. Whereas Santa Barbara CBC totals were of 20–30 individuals in the early 1980s, during the late 1980s and early 1990s counts never exceeded 6 birds. Three birds were in Glen Annie Canyon, Goleta, through summer 1994. A few birds persisted in the Winchester Canyon/Farren Road area in Goleta through the late 1990s, with 6 seen there in February 1999, and the last bird on 24 January 2004. Miscellaneous reports during the early 2000s included 1 in the Santa Barbara foothills 27 December 2001, 1 at Devereux Slough 26 May 2002, and 2–3 in the UCSB/Isla Vista area 24 August 2005. The last site known to support this species was on the Santa Barbara “east side,” where from 1–4 birds

hung on from 2000 through early 2006, with the final county sighting made on 26 February 2009 along Nopal Street in Santa Barbara.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

A recent colonist. Locally common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V; rare visitor in District M.

Naturally dispersing Eurasian Collared-Doves are believed to have first arrived in California from the east in about 2001. A population was known to exist in Ventura as early as 1992 but was believed to be descended from locally released or escaped birds. The latter population—or local releases—was probably the source of the first reports in Santa Barbara County, which involved nesting birds at two sites in downtown Carpinteria and at one site in downtown Santa Barbara in mid-April 1997. In 1998, additional sites added included the Mesa and Mission Canyon in Santa Barbara, downtown Goleta, Lake Los Carneros, and the first report from the North Coast at Lompoc (2+ September, with 10 present by November). In 1999, at least 6 birds were in Carpinteria, 15 were in downtown Santa Barbara, the first reports were received from UCSB and Isla Vista, and 1 was near Santa Maria 8 May. In 2000, 12 birds were at one site in Carpinteria, and 1 was near Guadalupe (*UMMZ). In September 2001, 39 birds in Isla Vista established a new maximum for the county, followed quickly by 48 individuals in a one-block area of downtown Santa Barbara in December. In 2003, 3 pairs in Solvang on 17 May established the first record for District I, and a new county high of 100 birds were east of Lompoc in October. In 2005, District V had its first birds, with 2 near Cuyama 22+ February, but that number jumped quickly to 31 birds near New Cuyama by 5 November. One bird at San Marcos Pass 1 May 2010 established the first record for District M. The species may occur in small numbers in the Sierra Madre foothills bordering the Cuyama Valley. Numbers on Santa Barbara CBCs steadily increased during the first decade of the century to as many as 171 birds (2 January 2010), and with 201 tallied on 1 January 2011, 212 on 3 January 2015, and 281 on 2 January 2016. Along the North Coast, numbers on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs also increased during the early 2000s, with 22 on 23 December 2007, 52 on 21 December 2008, 81 on 26 December 2010, and 99 on 23 December 2012 on Santa Maria–Guadalupe; and 23 on 17 December 2006, 99 on 19 December 2010, and 130 on 16 December 2012 on La Purisima. An abrupt increase in numbers in District I is well illustrated by the totals on the Cachuma CBC: none recorded 1999–2006, 9 birds on 28 December 2007, but 92 tallied 29 December 2009 (by then, sightings in District I extended as far east as the Paradise Road area) and 192 on 26 December 2014—though close to steady since about 2011. In 2013, a new high in District V of 85 birds were near New Cuyama 18 October. Its status in District M is somewhat unclear, although it may be a somewhat regular visitor to the potreros in the Sierra Madre.

Eurasian Collared-Dove has become a fairly regular feature of the offshore avifauna (!) and is now seen somewhat regularly at sea up and down the West Coast. A fair number of such sightings exist for Santa Barbara County waters, including from up to 35 mi (55 km) off the North Coast, including a high count of 14 there on 8 May 2019.

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Introduced. Common permanent resident, primarily near urban centers.

Rock Pigeons frequent urban and residential habitats and surrounding agricultural areas. Some individuals and flocks are free-flying “Domestic” or “Feral” Pigeons. A small number of birds which reverted to their more natural habitat of rocky cliffs were found at Point Arguello on south Vandenberg SFB between the late 1970s and mid-1990s. The (re-)establishment of nesting Peregrine Falcons there during the 1990s, however, resulted in the pigeons’ disappearance. Small numbers may continue at nearby Rocky Point. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1452 individuals (5 January 2008). A high single-site concentration included 975 in Santa Maria 29 November 2011. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 140 birds (28 December

2010). The species is mostly absent from extensive blocks of natural habitat in Districts M and V.

CUCKOOS (CUCULIDAE)

Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*)
Accidental.

One was along lower Atascadero Creek in Goleta 13 April–8 June 1993 (ph. *AB* 47:469, *WB* 27:107, CBRC 2007, SBMNH). As there are no spring records for California, it is likely that this bird was present locally since the previous fall, when a record influx brought at least 4 individuals into the southeastern part of the state.

Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*)
Uncommon permanent resident in all Districts. A few records away from areas of regular occurrence.

Greater Roadrunners frequent areas of brush that provide sufficient cover, avoiding most urban areas and the heavier deciduous and coniferous woodlands. They are found throughout much of District V, in coastal sage scrub along the North Coast (particularly on Vandenberg SFB, where they occur very close to the coastline) and in the Hollister/Bixby Ranch area along the South Coast, and in chaparral and other scrub in Districts I and M and locally down to the base of the foothills in mixed scrub-and-residential habitat along the South Coast (virtually to the coast at Rincon Point and probably in the Gaviota to Refugio area). High counts are all in the single digits. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 9 individuals (4 January 1997), but most record only 1 or 2 birds. The species is now rather local in the Santa Barbara area proper, with most individuals present in the foothills. A small, isolated population may persist in the lower Arroyo Burro and Elings Park area of Santa Barbara (the most recent sighting there on 15 March 2010). Another isolated "population" formerly existed in the Goleta Slough and Santa Barbara airport area, with up to 2 individuals noted there sporadically between February 1985 and July 1989; 1 was seen 3 August 2001.

Other South Coast records between Goleta and Carpinteria and south of Highway 101—several of which were in a much more urban settings than usual—include (from west to east): west side of former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space) in Goleta 5 July 2012; Devereux area 25 October 2006 and 27 March 2007; off Storke Road near Hollister Avenue in Goleta 21 April 2008 and for several weeks during May 2026; off Los Carneros Road just south of Highway 101 in Goleta 30 January 2012; Goleta Slough 23 August 2024; near Goleta Point on the UCSB campus 15 March 2012 and 24 March–8 May 2014 (had wandered across much unsuitable habitat to get there) and same bird (?) near Goleta Beach Park 10 March and 29 June 2014 and in coastal Isla Vista 15 April 2014; Goleta sewage treatment plant April–19 May 2025; along lower Atascadero Creek/Ward Memorial Drive 11 January 2013 and 20 August 2022; off South Patterson Avenue in Goleta 4 September 1987 and 14 March 2011; More Mesa 7 October 2016, 15 March 2022, and 6 May 2023–10 February 2024; Five Points shopping center at La Cumbre X State Streets in Santa Barbara 10 July 1991; Arroyo Burro 23 June 2025; along Carpinteria Avenue 21 December 2024; Carpinteria Salt Marsh 25 October 2013, 2 February 2014–26 May 2017, and 10 April 2022; and Carpinteria Bluffs 15 April 2012–13 May 2015 and 12 February 2023–15 March 2024.

Roadrunners were formerly more numerous along the coast, particularly in habitats now displaced by residential and agricultural expansion. At the end of the 19th century, they were "abundant all through the Lower Sonoran [Zone] from ocean to mountains; its numbers, however, have been greatly reduced by encroachment of civilization and shooting" (Willett

1933). In 1907, they were present “all along the coast from Morro Bay to Carpinteria” (Grinnell 1907).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)

Casual transient. All records since mid-1900s are from District C. Formerly more numerous.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is now a casual transient. It formerly nested in dense riparian woodland of cottonwoods and willows, a habitat now much reduced and degraded in the county and in California as a whole. Willett (1933) wrote that for Southern California it was a “fairly common summer visitant to willow regions of the lowlands . . . but nesting localities much fewer than formerly.” There are, however, no definite, direct references to cuckoos nesting in Santa Barbara County.

All records but two since the mid-1900s are from summer and fall: Montecito 30 June 1963; Santa Barbara 22 June 1967; Santa Barbara 14 June 1971; Montecito 2 August 1974; Barka Slough, north Vandenberg SFB, 19 June 1982; San Jose Creek, Goleta, 25–26 June 1982; Atascadero Creek, Goleta 20–26 September 1983 and 18–25 June 1985; Carpinteria Creek 18–25 September 1986; hit a window (but flew off) near Sheffield Reservoir, Santa Barbara, 1 August 1989 (ph. SBMNH); Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 5 June 1992; Carpinteria Creek 19 July 1993; Goleta 23 June 1996; Sweeney Road, east of Lompoc, 1–2 July 2000; hit a window Toro Canyon, Summerland, 22 June 2008 (*SBMNH); Ellwood 14–18 July 2016 (ph. SBMNH); and hit a window in Carpinteria 8 July 2017 (ph. SBMNH). Also, 2 separate birds found emaciated in Carpinteria on 10 July and 18 July 1997 later died (*SBMNH) and proved to be of the expected western race *C. a. occidentalis.* An interesting record for the first half of the 1900s (date destroyed in museum fire) is of an individual found alive inside a western Goleta service station (*SBMNH).

In late spring, 1 was in Refugio Canyon 25 May 2024 (ph. SBMNH).

One bird along Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB, 24 May 2002 was also somewhat early. This species does not normally arrive in the state until mid-June or later.

NIGHTJARS (CAPRIMULGIDAE)

Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)

Fairly common breeder in District V. Regular visitor and presumed breeder at border of North Coast and District I. Rare transient along the South Coast, very rare there in summer, and casual in winter. Very rare to casual along most of the North Coast and in much of District I and in District M.

The Lesser Nighthawk is a fairly common summer resident in arid canyons and at scattered sites in the flatland and along low ridges in District V. They were first recorded there in 1982 when up to 3 were in Ballinger Canyon 24 April–9 May. Three were in adjoining Deer Park Canyon 19 August 2000 and they were found in Quatal Canyon during multiple years since at least 2004. Beginning in the mid-1980s, this species was recorded on Breeding Bird Surveys during May in Santa Barbara Canyon, with from 1–3 individuals found (high count: 4 on 12 June 1994) on about half the surveys since then. Up to several birds have been reported from a variety of sites in the Cuyama Valley region many years in spring and early summer since the 1980s, with some high counts including 9 there 20 June 1998 and 6 individuals on 25–26 May 2013. The earliest arrival date is 5 April 2015 Ballinger Canyon. In the early years, records continued through at least early August, but departure dates in early fall were uncertain. In 2018 and 2019, more concentrated survey work discovered larger numbers at additional locations. They were found as far west as Wasioja Road, at the border with District I, in 2018, and to Caliente Ranch Wetland in 2019. In 2018, a high of 8+ birds were in Ballinger Canyon 2 June. But in 2019, additional surveys at valley water bodies near dusk produced very high, post-breeding (presumably includes fledged young of the year), valley-wide, single-day estimates of 38

individuals on 9 July and 31 birds on 12 July, with a single-site high of 28 at a pond near Cuyama on 9 July. These 2019 surveys found that the species was substantially more numerous in the eastern section of the valley than to the west. Numbers drop off notably by mid-August, and most birds are gone by late August, a few remain into early September (high of 6 on 5 September 2023), and the latest have been 1 in Quatal Canyon through 15 September and 2 at New Cuyama through 4 October 2019. In 2020, a concentration of 15 birds was noted at a pond near Cuyama 8 August.

A new area for Lesser Nighthawks was discovered in 1999 at the border between Districts I and C along the bed of the Santa Maria River/lower Sisquoc River, from 2 mi (3 km) above Santa Maria Mesa Road to 4 mi (6 km) below. One individual was noted in that general area 19 May 1999, which was quickly followed by a surprising 5 pairs (and 1 nest with 2 eggs) on 18 June 1999. This was the first nesting record away from District V. One was there 12 July 2021, a very high 45 birds were in this general area 14 May 2022 (with just 3 remaining on 27 May), which is also the all-time high count for the county, up to 15 were present 17 July-24 August 2022, up to 5 were seen 1–7 June 2024, 25+ were noted 11 July 2025, and 22–40 birds from 7 Jun–18 Jul 2026. One was nearby at the Santa Maria landfill 15 August 2011.

In the remainder of the county, this species occurs predominantly as a transient in spring (mid-April through mid-May) and fall (early August through early October). About one record per year for each of these seasons is the average. Along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria, the earliest spring record is 10 April 1969 Santa Barbara. Four in the Goleta area during May 1964 and 4 there 3 May 1994 are the high spring counts. Between 1994 and 2026, a total of 19 individuals were seen in spring. Most fall records are from the same areas and outnumber spring reports. Singles in Goleta 1 August 2018, at Elings Park 2 August 2025, in Goleta 6 August 2003, in Santa Barbara 7 August 1983, at Coal Oil Point 7–8 August 2017, and in Carpinteria 9 August 2014 were presumed early fall migrants. The maximum fall counts are of up to 5 along the beach in Santa Barbara 6–16 September 1965, up to 4 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 16–19 August 1990, up to 5 at Coal Oil Point 14–27 September 2024, and 7 during the season in Goleta in 2001. Between 1994 and 2025, a total of 49 individuals were seen in autumn. Late records are through 26 October 1966 Carpinteria Salt Marsh (up to 2), 26 October 2019 Goleta, 27 October 2014 Goleta, and 10–13 November 1975 Goleta Point (2).

In summer, Lesser Nighthawks have been recorded along the South Coast 15 times: Santa Barbara 11 July 1969, Goleta 10–25 June 1974, Goleta 2 June 1983, Santa Barbara 14 July 1984, Carpinteria 22–23 July 1984, Santa Barbara 26 June 1986, Santa Barbara 24 June 1987, Goleta 28 July 1989 and 30 July 1989, Carpinteria 20 July 1991, and Goleta 18 July 1994, 22 July 1994, 7 July 1996, 20 July 1996, and 4 June 2021.

Lesser Nighthawks are casual along most of the North Coast. Unlike along the South Coast, most records here are from spring: near Santa Maria 24 May 1992, near Santa Maria 4 May 1993, north Vandenberg SFB 17 May 1995, Lompoc 3 April 1997 (early), Santa Ynez River mouth 15–16 May 1998, Santa Maria 20 April 2001, Santa Maria 15 April 2006, Lompoc 26–29 April 2006, and Santa Maria 27 April 2012. In contrast, there are only six fall records: Santa Ynez River mouth 21 August 1983, 2 in Lompoc 28 October 2010 (late), 1 there 20 August 2017, and 1 at Jalama Beach County Park 25 September 2021, 3 there 29 September 2022, and 1 on 11–12 October 2024. In mid-summer, 1 was in Santa Maria 21 June 2006.

In much of District I, the few reports mostly involve probable transients— (Spring:) Santa Ynez 1 May 2014; and (Fall:) Santa Ynez Valley 15 August 1957, Solvang 22 November 2007 (late), 3 at Lake Cachuma 21 August 2009, near Santa Ynez 30 November 2014 (late), Lake Cachuma 11 August 2015, and near Santa Ynez 17 August 2015; as well as possible breeders at Hidden Potrero, near Upper Oso, 8 June 1991, and 2 near Santa Ynez 1 July 2007.

In District M, a migrant “nighthawk sp.” was along Arroyo Burro Road in the Santa Ynez Mountains 15 August 2011.

During winter, a Lesser Nighthawk was at Laguna Blanca 31 December 2005–2 January 2006, 1 was at Coal Oil Point 25 November–30 December 2014 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 was at Ellwood Mesa 16 January 2021. Other winter reports of "nighthawk sp.,"—all almost certainly involving Lesser Nighthawks at this time of year—are: UCSB Lagoon, Goleta, 16–26 December 2003, Carpinteria 28 December 2010, Coal Oil Point 1 January 2011, Montecito Country Club 29 December 2014, Goleta Slough and Beach 9 January 2015, and near Stevens Park in Santa Barbara 2 January 2025 (taken to rehab and released five days later). One at Lake Los Carneros 18 March 2007 would be exceptionally early for a spring migrant so may have wintered locally.

There is also one early-winter record along the North Coast: Santa Ynez River mouth 18 December 2005.

Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)

Casual visitor in District C.

Calling birds have been found in District C in Lompoc 8 August 1997, over downtown Santa Barbara 22 June 1999, near Devereux Slough 14 June 2000, and (heard only) over the Mesa in Santa Barbara 9 June 2024. The June records all likely pertain to spring migrants.

Common Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*)

Uncommon to fairly common summer resident in all Districts. Rare in winter, but status at this season not well known. Very rare away from likely breeding locales.

Common Poorwills are most numerous in open chaparral, on rocky hillsides, in semidesert scrub, and locally in coastal sage scrub. They avoid more thickly forested areas. One in lower Mission Canyon at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History grounds 21 June 1957 was in a well-wooded area at a lower elevation than is typical. Common Poorwills are most easily detected between mid-March and the end of June when they are calling. Bartholomew (1940) noted this species as early as 4 February and 26 February in 1937 and 1938, respectively. There are several breeding records for the outer coastal sections of the North Coast: a pair defending a nest at Purisima Point 9 July 1982, single nests or chicks near the Tangier airstrip on north Vandenberg SFB 11 May 2006 and 6 June 2012, respectively, and a nest with chick in dune scrub near San Antonio Creek 8 June 2015. Single birds at the mouth of San Antonio Creek 14 September 1978 and 1 just south of Point Sal 26 March 1989 were probably local breeders. The species is locally fairly common in the interior of north Vandenberg SFB, April–October (e.g., 31 October 2007, *SBMNH). In District M, a high count of 10 birds were above Aliso Park in the Sierra Madre 1 June 2018. In nearby District V, this species frequents canyon woodland and scrub bordering the valley, but not the valley floor itself.

Some movement definitely occurs during fall, as individuals have been recorded at this season well away from breeding sites. Such records include: coastal Montecito 21 November 1975, near downtown Santa Barbara 20 September 1978, coastal Goleta 27 August 1979, coastal Carpinteria 16 October 1987, coastal Goleta 28 September 1988, Fairview Shopping Center, Goleta, 28 October 1997, Lake Los Carneros 5 November 2007 (*SBMNH), lower Eagle Canyon just west of Goleta 6 November 2011, Ellwood 23 October 2013, UCSB main campus 8 October 2022, and lower Carpinteria Creek 7 October 2025. There is only one record of a definite spring migrant: Goleta Slough, spring (exact date unknown) 1971.

This species also has been detected west of Gaviota 3 November 1981 (*SBMNH) and 27 November 2014, at Gaviota State Park 7 October 1979 (2) and 22 October 1980, and 2 near Point Conception 13 November 2024. Suitable breeding habitat comes very close to the coast in this area, so these individuals may have been local residents rather than migrants.

The late-fall and winter status of the Common Poorwill is incompletely known because of the difficulty of finding silent birds and the species' ability to enter lengthy torpid states during cold weather. It is unknown what percentage of the population remains locally through winter. A small number of birds have been heard calling on mild evenings at this season, including a high count of up to 6 along East Camino Cielo through December 1989. Through early 1994, there

were 20 late-fall and winter records, many of them specimens and most from the Santa Ynez Mountains and lower foothill areas bordering the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Barbara area. Since 1995, there have been approximately 26+ winter reports (involving 33+ individuals) from the Santa Ynez Mountains between Refugio Pass and Romero Saddle, and from the edge of the Santa Ynez Valley (e.g., several reports from the Sedgwick Reserve area, 3 near Santa Ynez 16 February 2014, 1 bordering Lake Cachuma 10 December 2018, 1 near Paradise Campground 14 February 2026). Six along East Camino Cielo in early November 1990 and 8 or 9 along the upper Santa Ynez River near Red Rock 31 October–4 November 2019 were additional high counts for late autumn. Santa Barbara CBCs recorded this species 9 different years between 1970–2018; 1 was recorded on the Cachuma CBC 28 December 2007 and 4 were on that count 28 December 2010. Elsewhere in District M, singles lingered at Figueroa Mountain 10 November 2013 and at Aliso Park 13 November 2019 and 3 November 2020. One was several miles east of Figueroa Mountain along Sunset Valley Road 3 February 1991 and another was southeast of Figueroa Mountain 6 February 2021. Singles were near De la Guerra Spring 2 February 2020, 13 December 2024, and 20 February 2026, and near Cachuma Saddle 27 December 2023 and 13 December 2024. Along the South Coast, 2 along Mountain Drive in Montecito 31 December 2011 were at slightly lower elevation than most. One at Elings Park in Santa Barbara from 16–19 February 2001 and for "a couple of months" earlier, and 1 at nearby Honda Valley Park 2 January 2010, were closer to the coast than usual. Along the North Coast, 1 was near La Purisima Mission, Lompoc, 19 December 1992; 2 were on San Antonio Terrace, north Vandenberg SFB, 2 January 1994; up to 3 were in Miguelito Canyon, near Lompoc, 16 December 1997–3 January 1998, with singles there 5–19 December 1999, 21 December 2004, 28 February 2016, and 9 February 2026; 1 was on north Vandenberg SFB 26 December 2022; 1 was along Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB, 4 January 2025; and 1 was on North Harris Grade Road near Vandenberg Village 7 February 2026.

Whip-poor-will sp. (*Antrostomus vociferous* or *A. arizonae*)
Accidental.

There is one record of a Whip-poor-will sp. (either Eastern Whip-poor-will or Mexican Whip-poor-will) in District C: a bird found roosting in a citrus tree in a northern Goleta residential area off North Fairview Avenue 2 November 1982. The late date, tree perch, and tame behavior suggest that it may have been an Eastern Whip-poor-will, but plumage details noted at the time (when there was only one Whip-poor-will species) are today insufficient to determine which species.

SWIFTS (APODIDAE)

Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*)
Rare to uncommon and irregular spring transient, primarily along the South Coast; probable irregular migration route over the foothills, particularly near San Marcos Pass. Casual along the North Coast and in District I and the remainder of District M. Casual fall transient.

Until recently, most Black Swifts seen in Santa Barbara County were found during overcast weather, when they are forced to fly at lower heights. In some years (e.g., 1959, 1971, 1980, and 1994) they occurred in relatively large numbers during the late spring, but they have done so only casually during fall (i.e., in 1967). During other years, they have gone unrecorded. The existence of an irregularly-used migratory flight-line over the South Coast foothills and middle elevations of the Santa Ynez Mountains below and near San Marcos Pass was first hinted at in 1993 by an early individual near San Marcos Pass 8 May, followed by 25 birds seen from the Trout Club 13 May 1995, ca. 500 birds over Farren Road in the western Goleta foothills 22 May

1999, with 28 there 30 May 1999, and small numbers in that foothill region during the early 2000s. It was not until about 2006, however, that this migration route was fully appreciated. Eighty were seen passing by in just 20 minutes near San Marcos Pass 22 May 2008. A formal census carried out below the Pass (mostly along Old San Marcos Pass Road) from 9–28 May 2010 resulted in much larger numbers of Black Swifts seen heading west, as well as numbers being found on a more regular basis and under more varying weather conditions (but especially during overcast or on clear days with moderate or stronger W to NNW winds): a staggering total of 1112 birds were tallied that year, with high counts of 628 on 23 May (including 377 birds in just 30 minutes) and 232 on 25 May. In 2014, some 32 individuals were counted. Survey efforts there during May 2011 failed to find any swifts, however, and only 5 individuals were seen in 2012 and 3 in 2013. Another foothill vantage-point for observing westbound Black Swifts was discovered above Carpinteria in 2018. Also, 113 were tallied over Refugio Canyon on 13 May 2025.

Although there are a few records from early May, most spring migrants do not appear until mid-May, and peak counts have come from the latter half of the month. One in Goleta 20–23 April 1980, another in Santa Barbara 23 April 1980, and 2 separate individuals in Carpinteria 23 April 1988 were exceptionally early (next earliest records: 27 April 2006 Santa Barbara, 30 April 2018 Goleta and near Santa Ynez (2), 2 May 1970 Santa Barbara, 2 May 2021 Goleta). Several other unusually early (April) records lack adequate details, are not included, and may have involved White-throated Swifts. Prior to the mid-1990s, some of the higher spring totals were 200+ El Capitan State Beach 20 May 1959, 50 Goleta 4 May 1972 (somewhat early), 25 Santa Barbara 10 May 1980, and 65 Goleta 25 May 1980. Large numbers occurred during 1971, when a total of 440+ were seen between Goleta and Carpinteria between 6 May and 1 June (peak count: 300+ 29–31 May). In 1994, a total of 350 birds were counted in Goleta and Santa Barbara 17–18 May. A total of 52 were in Montecito 16 May 1996. Small numbers of birds may continue to pass through into the first week of June (including 30 in Montecito 4 June 1999). Two in vic. Santa Barbara 10 June 1971 and 1 at Point Conception 6 June 1984 were somewhat late.

North Coast spring records are of 5, 7, 5, 27, and 30 birds vic. Santa Ynez River mouth 18 May 1994, 13 May 1996, 26 May 1996, 4 June 1998, and 22 May 1999, respectively; 6 on north Vandenberg SFB 24 May 2004; 5 near Guadalupe 20 May 2011; and 3 near Barka Slough on north Vandenberg SFB 17 May 2015.

In District I, the flight of 1980 brought 4 over the upper Santa Ynez River 24 May. The other records are of 4 at Lake Cachuma 20 May 1987, 1 near there 31 May 1990, 40 over Mono Debris Dam 17 May 2000, 1 over the Cuyama River 12 mi (19 km) ENE of Santa Maria 3 May 2006, 1 in Solvang 31 May 2006, 6 over Lake Cachuma 23 May 2010, 1 there 17 May 2011, 2 near Los Olivos 19 May 2013, 1 over Nojoqui Falls Park 8 May 2014, 1 near Los Olivos 19 May 2015, and 8 over Lake Cachuma 25 May 2024, as well as a very late individual near Santa Ynez 13 June 1993.

In District M, 8 were at Figueroa Mountain 29 May 1987, 1 was near there 13 May 1995, 13 were over West Camino Cielo, Santa Ynez Mountains 21 May 2011, 41 were at Figueroa Mountain 30 May 2011, 4 were at La Cumbre Peak 23 May 2014, 3 were at Romero Saddle 28 May 2014, 3 were along East Camino Cielo 30 May 2016, and 1 was over West Camino Cielo 2 May, with 15 there on 11 May, 2018, and 3 were there 30 May 2021. One bird along Aliso Canyon Road 14 May 2018 was at the border between Districts M and V.

Black Swifts are even much more irregular and occur in smaller numbers during fall. The relatively few records are (all but one) from between late August and early October, with about half made during just two “flight” years—1967 and 2007. “Fair numbers” were in several flights over Santa Barbara 17 and 19 September 1967 and two flights involving at least 60 individuals were over Santa Maria 24 September 1967. An autumn flight in 2007 produced 23 birds over UCSB in Goleta 12 September, 5 in Santa Barbara 15 September, 3 in Goleta 20 September, and 2 at Refugio State Beach 21 September. Other records include: 3 Santa Barbara 18 September 1970; 2 Devereux Slough 15 September 1977; 2 Goleta 31 August 1984; 2 Carpinteria 7

September 1984; Carpinteria 26 September 1985; and Goleta 16 September 1996, 17 September 1996, 12 September 1999 (3), 19 September 1999 (6–8), and 6 October 2019 (2). In 2014, 4 were over Carpinteria 9 September, 1 was over Santa Barbara 15 September, and 2 were there 18 September. One was in Lompoc 7 September 2020 and 1 was at Santa Barbara Harbor 9 September 2020. In District M, 2 were near Madulce Peak 26 September 1982 and 3–4 were over Figueroa Mountain 5 October 2000.

One over Farren Road, Goleta, 24 October 2021 (ph. SBMNH) was exceptionally late.

There is one summer record (an exceptionally early fall transient?): Goleta 23 July 1971.

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*)

Casual late-spring and summer visitor, primarily to the South Coast.

Prior to 1970, there were a number of records of "Vaux's" Swifts during the summer months in the Santa Barbara area. Several of these birds were reported visiting chimneys on a regular basis. Since that time, it has been shown that most summer *Chaetura* swifts in coastal Southern California are Chimney Swifts. These earlier summer records are: 2 in Santa Barbara 7 June–early July 1963 seen going down a chimney repeatedly during the day throughout the period (nesting?), 2 in Montecito during summers of 1964 and 1965 (remaining as late as 24 September 1964), Santa Barbara 3 August 1964, Santa Barbara 29 July 1968, and Santa Barbara 10 and 24 June 1969.

The first definite Chimney Swift recorded was 1 that came down a chimney in Santa Barbara and was captured 16 June 1970 (ph. CBRC 2007, SBMNH). Records since then are: La Cumbre Peak (in District M) 14 July 1973 (not 15 July as published in *American Birds*), up to 6 at UCSB campus, Goleta, 3–10 June 1975, Goleta 7 June 1980, 4 in Santa Barbara 9 June 1980, 3 in Goleta 26 May 1983, Carpinteria 6 July 1986, 2 near Santa Maria 24 May 1987, Goleta 26 May 1987, 2 at El Capitan State Beach 26 June 2006, and Refugio State Beach 24 June 2010.

Swifts identified only as *"Chaetura* sp." but which fit Chimney Swift better than Vaux's, date-wise (but see Vaux's Swift account, below), include Goleta Beach Park 13 June 2002, 2 inland near Santa Ynez 23 June 2006, and another inland in Buellton 14 July 2011. A *Chateura* at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 3 October 2010 showed characters of Chimney Swift.

Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*)

Uncommon to fairly common but irregular transient, occasionally seen in large flocks. Casual in winter.

As a transient, Vaux's Swifts have been seen in all Districts. They are somewhat irregular in occurrence, being common some years and rare others. They are most often seen during overcast or cold weather, sometimes in very large flocks. The largest numbers are recorded from along the coast and more regularly in spring than in fall. Spring migrants move through the county primarily between mid-April and mid-May. Singles in Goleta 3 April 2014, 3 April 2021, and 5 April 2003; 1 in Santa Barbara 6 April 1969; and 5 in Carpinteria 6 April 1985 were early. An unprecedented number of record-early reports were made in 2020: 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 20 March, 3 in residential northern Goleta 24 March, 1 in Montecito 2 April, 2 in Goleta 4 April, 4 in Santa Barbara 5 April, 2 in Carpinteria 5 April, and 5 near Goleta 6 April. High counts include 600 in Santa Barbara 29 April 1922 (Grinnell 1922), 500 in Goleta 1 May 1988, 670 in Santa Barbara 2 May 1998, 925 in Montecito 25 April 2015, and a record ca. 2000–2500 in Isla Vista/West Campus 1 May 2018. The second largest count for the county is from District I: up to 2000 in 4 hours over the Santa Ynez Valley foothills 9 May 1998. Records after the third week of May include 2 in Goleta 26 May 1987, 1 near Santa Maria 28 May 1996, and 1 near Solvang 29 May 2011. The latest spring record is of 1 in vic. Santa Barbara 4 June 1894 (*WFVZ, ph. SBMNH).

Fall migrants are present between the end of August (e.g., 26 August 2018 Carpinteria) and mid-October, exceptionally to November. During 1981, large numbers (up to 200 per day) transited the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria through the second week of October. Some 500+ were in Santa Barbara 20 September 1950. A count of 100–200 at San Marcos Pass 25 September 1997 was also high for autumn. Impressive were the 659 birds tallied flying east over the UCSB campus in Goleta 26 September 2017. The latest records include 29 October 1985 Santa Barbara, 3 November 2021 Goleta, 9 November 2025 Lake Los Carneros, 13 November 2021 Santa Maria, and 17 November 2024 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge.

There are four definite winter records: Montecito 31 December 1977, 2 Lake Los Carneros 24 December 1998, with 1 seen again 26 January 1999, Elings Park 5 January 2025, and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 27 January 2025. Two *Chaetura* sp. in Goleta 3 January 1976 and 2 in Goleta 30 December 1995 were almost certainly Vaux's Swifts. One at Lake Los Carneros on 4 March 2025 presumably was a wintering bird rather than an exceptionally early spring migrant.

Other records of note involving *Chaetura* sp. include: Late Spring—Carpinteria 27 May 1990 and 2 in Santa Barbara 1 June 2009; and Late Fall—3 in Santa Barbara 11 November 2004.

White-throated Swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)

Fairly common permanent resident in Districts M and V and at the upper elevations of Districts I and C. Uncommon and somewhat irregular (particularly in summer) at lower elevations in Districts C and I.

White-throated Swifts are found regularly near ridges and mountain tops, particularly where cliffs are present, over foothills, and over District V. They also frequent sea cliffs along the North Coast. Nesting or probable nesting also takes place at bridges in Districts C and I. In summer, the largest numbers are present in District M (with high counts of 23 in the Big Pine Mountain area 5–7 July 2000 and 15–17 June 2007), along the upper Santa Ynez River, and at the upper elevations of District C along the South Coast. A few pairs nest on a cliff at the junction of Salsipuedes Creek and the Santa Ynez River just east of Lompoc and on north Vandenberg SFB where small numbers are present near coastal bluffs. L.T. Stevens found a nest "at Lompoc" on 29 May 1936. Small cliffs are utilized in District V along the upper Cuyama River near Ventucopa.

In the non-breeding season, during cold or overcast weather this species may move to lower elevations, where large flocks sometimes congregate (e.g., 1000 over Santa Barbara 5 January 1941, 200+ over Lake Cachuma 26 February 1960 and 150+ there 9 December 2018, 60 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 26 December 1988, and several counts of up to 75 in the Goleta area). More typical counts for District C are of small groups of up to 25 individuals, which are most often seen following the passage of cold fronts. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 299 individuals (4 January 2003). The maximum on a Cachuma CBC is 437 birds (26 December 2014). Some 250 birds were over Arroyo Quemada, east of Gaviota, 30 August 2018. Forty in the Cuyama Valley area 1 May 1979 may be a high count for so late in spring.

In District C, White-throated Swifts are uncommon to rare in summer away from Vandenberg and the foothills. A pair was seen copulating on several occasions during May 1981 over the UCSB campus in southern Goleta, well away from the closest known breeding areas (i.e., Santa Ynez Mountains and Santa Barbara foothills). Four birds were noted flying into crevices on the coastal bluff at More Mesa during May 2001, and 2–3 were seen entering a cliff cavity 30 June 2001, strongly suggestive of nesting at that coastal site. Subsequently, it was learned that up to 3 birds had been seen foraging at More Mesa during late spring and summer annually since 1998. Several birds were noted possibly entering crevices on coastal bluffs along the Mesa in Santa Barbara 26 May 2014.

HUMMINGBIRDS (TROCHILIDAE)

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)
Accidental.
A young male Ruby-throated Hummingbird was present at western Goleta feeders from 8–11 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)
Uncommon to fairly common transient and summer resident along the South Coast, in District I, and at the lower elevations of District M; uncommon to rare along the North Coast and in District V. Only one valid winter record.

Black-chinned Hummingbirds breed in wooded canyons and foothills and in riparian woodland and well-vegetated residential areas in the lowlands. Some of the nesting areas are Nojoqui Falls Park and in riparian vegetation along Quiota Creek and the upper Santa Ynez River in District I; San Marcos Pass and Sierra Madre foothill canyons in District M; Aliso Park at the border between Districts M and V; and in many of the foothill canyons, along many creeks on the coastal plain, and in Hope Ranch and Montecito along the South Coast. This species is very uncommon in riparian habitat along the North Coast, occurring primarily in the warmer, interior sections. A female feeding a fledgling in Goleta 22 August 2009 was a late nesting record.

Spring migrants appear during early April, very rarely in late March (e.g., 20 March 1989, 22 March 1997, and 24 March 1992 San Marcos Pass, 24 March 2009 Goleta (2)), and exceptionally on 11 March 2012 near Santa Ynez. They occur throughout much of the lowlands. Thirty at one site near Lake Cachuma 18 April 1981 was a very high concentration for spring; 5 in Goleta 31 March 1990 was a high count for so early in the season.

Adult males leave the nesting areas between July and early August; singles 7 September 1984 in Carpinteria, 9 September 2018 in Montecito, and 20 September 1982 in Santa Barbara were very late. During late July, August, and early September, transient Black-chinned Hummingbirds concentrate at feeding areas in the lowlands or foothills, sometimes in moderate numbers. Preferred habitats include exotic plantings in residential areas, hummingbird feeders, and patches of Tree Tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*) along the coast. Dawson (1923) reported 60 around one flowering plant in Santa Barbara on an unspecified date during the late summer. At least 50 were at feeders at San Marcos Pass 28 July 1990 and during late July 1992. Single birds in the Big Pine Mountain area during summer bird surveys in July 1982, July 1993, June 1996, July 1998, June 1999, and June 2013, and 4 birds there in June 1993 were probably post-breeding up-slope wanderers or migrants. Most individuals are gone by mid-September, the species is very rare or casual in late September, and the only fall record after 3 October is of 1 at San Marcos Pass feeders 6 October 1998.

Black-chinned Hummingbirds have been reported on a number of occasions during the late fall and winter months, particularly on CBCs. To date, only one of these records has been properly documented: 1 in Hope Ranch 2 January–20 February 1982.

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)
Common permanent resident throughout much of the county, uncommon at the highest elevations in District M.

Anna's Hummingbirds frequent a wide variety of habitats, including oak and riparian woodland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and semidesert scrub. They are most abundant in well-vegetated residential areas along the South Coast. Nesting may take place at any time of the year, but it does so most commonly between January and June when food supplies are typically at their greatest. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1432 individuals (31 December

1988). Concentrations of 125 in a single large patch of blooming Tree Tobacco in upper Glen Annie Canyon, Goleta, 27 July 1988 and of ca. 200 at feeders at San Marcos Pass during August and September 1993 were impressive. In District I, the Cachuma CBC has recorded a high of only 81 individuals (26 December 2014), however. Anna's Hummingbirds are uncommon to fairly common in the coniferous forests of District M. Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2008, recorded as many as 12 individuals, but then 47 were tallied 12–14 June 2009 following a large fire, which dropped to 22 birds found in June 2012, from 13–17 birds in June 2013 and 2014, 7 birds in June 2016, and just 2 in June 2020. They probably leave the highest elevations during winter months, although they have been seen several times at the summit of Figueroa Mountain at that season.

Despite the species being a "permanent resident," an unknown percent of the population carries out irregular limited or perhaps even long-distance migratory-like movements. True migration in this species is not well understood.

There are a small number of records of Anna's X Costa's Hummingbird hybrids.

Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*)

Uncommon to fairly common summer resident in the drier sections of all districts. Very uncommon transient away from breeding areas. Rare to very rare in winter, primarily along the South Coast.

Costa's Hummingbirds frequent drier habitats, including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and semidesert scrub. In migration and winter, they are also found around exotic plantings (particularly eucalyptus) and at hummingbird feeders. The species is most numerous on the drier slopes of coastal canyons and in chaparral of Districts C, I, and M. Along the coast, it is locally fairly common in the coastal sage scrub along the North Coast from Point Sal to Point Conception. It is largely absent as a breeder from the more wooded areas and from the coastal plain along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria. In District V, it nests in several canyons bordering the Cuyama Valley, but not out on the valley floor itself.

Spring migrants typically first appear during mid- or late March. Single adult males 10 March 1982 in Goleta and 12 March 1985 in Santa Barbara were clearly spring arrivals. An adult male at San Marcos Pass 25 February 1989 and singles in Buellton 24–26 February 2014 and in Santa Ynez 25 February 2014 were likely extremely early arrivals. A female on the coastal plain in Goleta 4–5 May 1992 was probably a late spring migrant; 1 there 23–26 May 2009 may have been displaced by a large foothill wildfire earlier in the month. Even more unusual was a long-staying bird in Santa Barbara from 4 May–12 July 2013.

Adult males are typically the first to leave the nesting areas during late June and July; e.g., 1 in lowland Goleta (at a locality where the species does not breed) 7 July 1981 was a fall migrant. A female/immature on the coastal plain in Goleta 22 June–5 July 1988 was early; another there 2–4 June 1990 was very early. Up to 3 seen in shrubs and open pine-forest on Big Pine and, especially, West Big Pine Mountains between mid-June and mid-July during 11 different summer surveys between 1981–2022 may have been post-breeding, up-slope wanderers. The species is rare after August and rare to very rare after September, with most of the fall transients recorded along the coast. An adult male in Carpinteria 15 October 1993 was especially late. Singles which remained in Santa Maria 2 November 2004, in Solvang through 15 October 2011, and in Santa Ynez from 1 October–2 December 2014 were late for the North Coast and District I.

Costa's Hummingbirds are rare to very rare in winter, with an average of 1–4 individuals seen most years between Goleta and Carpinteria. A total of 9 during winter 1982–1983 was a very high count. The Santa Barbara CBC has recorded as many as 5 individuals (2 January 1983). One at San Marcos Pass 10–19 January 1986 was at the lower elevations of District M. An adult male in Lompoc 16 December 1993–10 January 1994, another bird in Lompoc through 17 December 1995, 1 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 January 2003, an adult male in Santa

Maria through 6 January 2010, and 1 bird there 19 December 2015 are the only winter records for the North Coast.

There are a small number of records of Anna's X Costa's Hummingbird hybrids.

Calliope Hummingbird (*Selasphorus calliope*)

Rare to uncommon and somewhat irregular spring transient along the South Coast, in District I, and in the Santa Ynez Mountains in District M; very rare elsewhere in District M; and casual along the North Coast and in District V. One late-winter record. Casual in summer and early fall in District M.

In spring, Calliope Hummingbirds are found principally around blooming coastal sage, exotic plantings (particularly bottlebrush *(Callistemon* spp.) and Pride of Madeira (*Echium candicans*)), and at feeders along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria, as well as at feeders in the San Marcos Pass area in District M. The species occurs primarily during April and early May. The earliest records are 26 March 1961 Santa Barbara and 27 March 2018 Buellton (but see below). The latest coastal records are 13 May 2015 Montecito and through 20 May 2007 Santa Barbara (2); the latest from San Marcos Pass is 15 May 2002. It is somewhat irregular in occurrence; during some years it is present in moderate numbers (high counts: up to 15–20 in the UCSB Lagoon area, Goleta, 19–26 April 1970, total of 48 in the county (of which 11 along the South Coast and 33 at San Marcos Pass feeders) between 3 April–15 May 2002, 50+ along the South Coast 3 April–13 May 2015, and an exceptional total of ca. 100+ birds along the South Coast 14 April–20 May 2007); whereas other years it may go virtually unrecorded. There is a specimen of a male from Santa Barbara 8 April 2014 (*WFVZ).

One on north Vandenberg SFB during spring 1976, another there 27 April 1991, 1 in Orcutt 12 April 1990, 1 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 19 April 2006, 1 in Santa Maria 8 April 2018, 1 at Barka Slough 2 May 2020, 1 in Santa Maria 18 April 2021, and 1 in Orcutt 10–17 April 2026 are the only North Coast sightings.

In District I, the first records came from near Solvang 9 April 1990, 30 March 1993, and 14 April 2002 (ph. SBMNH). Since then, an additional 21 or more records have accrued, including of a high 13 birds between Buellton and Big Caliente Campground 4 April–2 May 2015.

An adult male at a feeder in Buellton 14 February 2016 (ph. SBMNH) was unprecedented for the period. If an exceptionally early spring migrant (suggested by age and sex involved), it was record early by well over a month, although only by a few days for the entire state.

In District M, singles were along Davey Brown Trail near Figueroa Mountain 3 May 2015 and at De la Guerra Spring 20 April 2026, and in the Sierra Madre foothills at Aliso Park 15 April 2018. In the Santa Ynez Mountains away from San Marcos Pass (see above), 1 was near Santa Ynez Peak 24 April 2024. One at Santa Barbara Potrero in the Sierra Madre 17 May 1968 was late for a spring migrant. A female/immature was in the Big Pine Mountain area 19 July 1982, and a lone male was at Big Pine Mountain 10 June (displaying) and 11 July 1993, with a female/immature there 21 July 1993. This species breeds in small numbers on several of the highest mountains in Ventura/Kern Counties, so nesting locally is possible, although the mid-July records may well pertain to early fall migrants. Two, including 1 young male collected (*UCSB), on Big Pine Mountain 30 August 1989 were presumably southbound migrants. There are two or three sight-reports of females/immatures in early fall from the lower elevations in District M and in District I, but none are adequately documented.

In District V, the only records are spring migrants in vic. New Cuyama 15 April 2007, 5 April 2008, and 3 April 2013, and in Ballinger Canyon 3 May 2009, although there are several additional second-hand reports of spring birds at feeders.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

Uncommon spring transient in Districts C and I, uncommon to rare in Districts M and V. Fall transients are perhaps uncommon to fairly common in the lowlands, but are probably fairly common in District M. Probably a very rare winter visitor along the South Coast but status at this season unclear.

The true status of Rufous Hummingbird is clouded by regular misidentifications with Allen's Hummingbird. Rufous Hummingbirds frequent blooming eucalyptus trees, native and exotic shrubs (e.g., bottlebrush), and hummingbird feeders during spring migration, which takes place from early February through mid-April. The first migrants (usually adult males) arrive as early as late January (e.g., 21 January 1993 Santa Maria, 22–23 January 2011 Montecito, 23 January 2005 near Carpinteria, 24 January 1993 Goleta, 28 January 1969 Santa Barbara, 28 January 1981 Goleta), although some of these birds conceivably may have wintered locally. Most individuals pass through between mid-March and mid-April. A total of 122 in Santa Barbara 7 April 1982 was an exceptional count. Large numbers were also present in the coastal lowlands during early April 1991 and 1998. The species is rare in early May. The only records after early May are of late males at Devereux Slough 14 May 2006, in Goleta 14 May 2015 (ph. SBMNH), along Carpinteria Creek 19 May 2001, at Guadalupe 21 May 2007, and at Devereux Slough 12–25 May 2007; a female near Carpinteria Salt Marsh 15 May 1972 (*SBMNH); and unsexed individuals near the Santa Ynez River mouth 21–28 May 1995 and in Lompoc 17 May 1997. Documenting late records of female Rufous Hummingbirds requires in-hand measurements or, at the very least, high-quality photographs of the spread tail feathers—because of their similarity to female Allen's Hummingbirds.

Fall migrants appear as early as late June or early July (e.g., 28 June 2003 Figueroa Mountain, adult male). Numbers feed on blooming wildflowers as they pass through District M during July and August. In the lowlands, where they are less numerous than in spring, birds frequent hummingbird feeders and a number of exotic plantings, particularly blooming Tree Tobacco. Most adult males pass through early in the period (by August), whereas female/immature birds are found through at least September.

The status of Rufous Hummingbird in late fall and early winter is poorly known and clouded by regular misidentifications. Criteria for identifying female and most immature plumages of Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds to species in the field are very subtle, making identification of most wintering birds impossible. Rufous is probably very rare during this period along the South Coast around flowering eucalyptus trees, Cape Honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*) hedges, bottlebrush, and other exotic plantings. Definite South Coast late-fall/winter records of Rufous Hummingbirds include: (female) Santa Barbara 3 January 1975 (*SBMNH), (young male) Montecito 23 January 1978 (possibly an early migrant), (adult male) Goleta 24–26 December 1980, (adult male) Santa Barbara 3 January 1981, (young male) Santa Barbara 2–24 January 1982, (young male) Montecito 2 January 1982, (adult male) Goleta 3–7 January 1982, (adult male) Santa Barbara 13 November 1983, (??) Santa Barbara 10 January 1999 and 2 January 2000, (adult male) Goleta 19 December 2005, (young males) Santa Barbara 28 December and 28–30 December 2006, (adult male) Montecito through 5 January 2008, (male) Montecito 29 November 2008, (young male) Goleta 2–3 January 2010, (young male) Goleta 1 January 2011, and (male) Carpinteria 17 December 2013–1 January 2014 and again 5 December 2014–2 January 2015 (ph. SBMNH). Elsewhere, an adult male was inland at Santa Ynez 1 November 1996.

For a further discussion of migrant and winter Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds see that account following Allen's Hummingbird.

Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*)

Fairly common transient and summer resident in District C. Uncommon transient and local summer resident in District I. Uncommon to rare transient in District M. Formerly rare to uncommon in late fall and early winter along the South Coast, but now fairly common.

Allen's Hummingbirds frequent the same habitats as do Rufous Hummingbirds, and they nest in residential areas and in oak and riparian woodland. Winter birds are found most often around blooming eucalyptus trees, Cape Honeysuckle hedges, and feeders. The first migrant adult males typically arrive in mid-January; during 1981 and 1982, this species arrived somewhat early, with several adult males appearing during the first week of January on the South Coast. In fact, it may be that a number of the late December records of adult males involved early arrivals rather than over-wintering individuals. One in Lompoc 7 January 1998 was slightly early for the North Coast. Most migrants moving farther north have probably passed through by late March. A small number of spring transients have been noted at the lower elevations in District M in the San Marcos Pass area (where the species might occasionally nest).

Nests with eggs have been found as early as 2 January 2003 in Montecito (possibly involving *S. s. sedentarius*) along the South Coast, and on 9 February 1996 near the Santa Ynez River mouth and 9 February 2013 in Santa Maria along the North Coast. Females were seen gathering nesting material in Carpinteria already on 9 December 2010 and in Santa Barbara on 17 December 2018, and another was observed sitting briefly on a nest in Goleta 28 December 2016.

In addition to breeding throughout much of District C, Allen's Hummingbirds nest in the western sector of District I east to at least the Los Alamos (18 May 2003—nest with eggs), Solvang (as early as 1932—eggs WFVZ), and Santa Ynez (as early as 1935—eggs WFVZ) areas. Farther east, single egg sets (WFVZ) come from below San Marcos Pass at Bear Creek 30 May 1933 and Kelly Creek 30 May 1935. Possible local breeders also have been seen between mid-May and early June in Tepusquet Canyon, above Los Olivos, at Sedgwick Reserve, near Lake Cachuma, and in the Paradise Road area, as well as in District M along Kinevan Road at San Marcos Pass (e.g., female and fledgling 28 May 2020).

Many southbound Allen's Hummingbirds probably move through the county in June and July, a bit earlier than the majority of Rufous Hummingbirds. In District I, several probable migrants were already in Santa Ynez 11 June 2015. In District M, 1–2 fall transients have been noted in the Big Pine Mountain area several times between late June and mid-July (high count: total of 4 there 14–16 June 2013).

The exact abundance of Allen's Hummingbird in late fall and early winter (before early January) is unclear because of the difficulty in separating non-adult-male Allen's from Rufous in the field. From the late 1970s through the 1990s, as many as 8 (but usually just 2 to 4) adult male Allen's were recorded annually between October and early January. Numbers have increased substantially in early winter since that time throughout most of coastal Southern California. After 2004, Santa Barbara CBCs recorded as many as 20 adult males (3 January 2009), followed by a record high count of 59 males on 1 January 2011. Even larger numbers of non-adult-males have been recorded at these seasons as well; see the following account for details. Many "Allen's" reported on recent CBCs, however, were not actually adult males, but rather female and immature Rufous/Allen's, making an accurate analysis of current trends in CBC numbers of Allen's more difficult, although clearly their numbers have increased greatly.

It is uncertain to what degree the resident subspecies *sedentarius* of the Channel Islands and parts of the adjacent mainland occurs in mainland Santa Barbara County, or if the late-fall and early-winter birds are the more widespread nominate *sasin.* A specimen (*MVZ) from 26 April 1938 in vic. Santa Barbara was identified as *sasin.*

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds

The difficulty of separating female and immature Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds in the field has been discussed in the accounts for the two species. A female defending a feeding territory along Manzana Creek near Nira Campground 6 May 1990 was either a slightly late Rufous or a far-inland (for the date) Allen's. Numbers of post-breeding Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds (including adult male Allen's) were already in the Gibraltar Reservoir/Mono

Creek area 12 June 1990. A female Rufous/Allen's was near Santa Ynez 18 June 1980. High counts in District M include a total of 13 Rufous/Allen's on Big Pine Mountain 14–16 June 2013 and 30 Rufous/Allen's in the Figueroa Mountain area 15 July 1993.

During the late fall and early winter (November–early January), moderate numbers of Rufous/Allen's hummingbirds are seen annually along the South Coast, particularly around blooming eucalyptus trees, Cape Honeysuckle hedges, and at feeders. Through the 1990s, the high count at this season was 25 birds between Goleta and Carpinteria during the first several days of January 1981 (1981 was an early year for arriving Rufous/Allen's, as they were locally common by mid-January in Santa Barbara and Montecito), though typical seasonal totals were in the single digits. A substantial increase in the number of wintering Rufous/Allen's (likely all or almost all Allen's) beginning around 2005 (e.g., 30 birds on the Santa Barbara CBC 2 January 2005) resulted in the Santa Barbara CBC on 1 January 2011 recording 65 Rufous/Allen's, which when combined with the 59 adult male Allen's the same day totals some 124 birds, undoubtedly virtually all of them Allen's. Soon thereafter, many observers reported all of their CBC non-adult-male Rufous/Allen's as "Allen's," rendering that distinction less meaningful. The totals of all Allen's-type Hummingbirds on each of the early January 2012–2014 and 2019 CBCs were between 162–179 individuals, and on the 2 January 2016 CBC it reached 277 birds, with 250 on 4 January 2020.

The only late fall and winter records away from the South Coast are of singles in Santa Ynez 13–30 November 2015 and Solvang 6 December 2015.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*)

Casual visitor in Districts C and V.

There is an unpublished record of an adult male heard trilling repeatedly as it passed overhead in Ballinger Canyon in District V on 21 April 1984. Since then, 3 individuals have been documented: one in spring—San Jose Creek, Goleta, 5 May 2007 (ph. SBMNH); and two in winter—(male) Hope Ranch from 3 January–3 April 1998 (ph. SBMNH) and again 17 November 1998–1 March 1999, and (female/immature) off North Fairview Avenue in Goleta 21 November 2009–15 January 2010 (ph. SBMNH).

Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*)

Very rare fall and winter visitor to the South Coast; one record in early spring. One record for the North Coast. One record from the lower elevations in District M.

There are 23 or 24 fall and winter records from along the South Coast: [Santa Barbara 20 September 1978 (not accepted by CBRC),] the Mesa in Santa Barbara 9–14 October 1979 (ph. *AB* 34:202, SBMNH), Gaviota State Park 10 October 1979–3 February 1980 (ph. SBMNH), Santa Barbara 13–17 October 1982 (ph. SBMNH), Santa Barbara 10 January–15 February 1983 and again 26 October 1983–7 February 1984, Goleta 31 December 1983–18 January 1984, Goleta 16–25 October 1985 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 27 January–22 February 1986 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 6–22 September 1993 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 1 January 1994, Goleta 25 December 1994–28 January 1995, Santa Barbara 15–22 November 1995, Goleta 28 November 1998–1 March 1999, Goleta 8 November 2009–24 March 2010 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 23–24 October 2013 (ph. SBMNH), 31 October–1 November 2015 (ph. SBMNH), 7–28 January 2017 (ph. SBMNH), and 16 December 2017–6 March 2018 (ph. SBMNH), Montecito 10–16 November 2020 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 31 January–9 February 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and Santa Barbara 22–30 January 2023 (ph. SBMNH); an amazing *6* individuals during the fall of 2023 (all ph. SBMNH): Carpinteria 19–20 September, Goleta 30 September–3 December and 5–7 October, Carpinteria 19 October, Goleta 22 October–24 February 2024 (ph. SBMNH) and 23 October–4 November; Carpinteria 26 October 2024–20 February 2025, Goleta 4 January 2025, and Carpinteria 20 December 2025.

In addition, 1 in Montecito 26–29 March 2014 was not known to be present during the winter.

The sole record for the North Coast is from Vandenberg Village 6 November 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

In District M, 1 was at feeders at San Marcos Pass 3–5 November 1985.

CRANES (GRUIDAE)

Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*)

Very rare transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; one summer record.

Sandhill Cranes have been seen primarily in fields and pastures. The October–March records are: 4 over Santa Barbara 29 March 1955; "King Ranch," Santa Ynez Valley, last week of December 1965; over Santa Barbara 27 October 1968; Lake Cachuma 31 October 1971; over Goleta 8 November 1975; 5 birds east of Santa Ynez 1 December 1979; near Guadalupe 8 December 1979–24 January 1980; flock of 210 near Santa Maria 4–5 January 1981 (an unprecedented number for the coast); near Lompoc 3–4 October 1992; Devereux Slough 31 October 2009; Lompoc ca. 11–13 November 2011 (ph. SBMNH); near Nojoqui Falls Park 25 October 2015 (ph. SBMNH); over West Campus, UCSB, Goleta 15 November 2017; in Santa Maria Valley 12 January–18 March 2019 (ph. SBMNH); flock of 14 near Los Olivos 5 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH); and 5–6 near Santa Ynez 12 November–24 December 2019 (ph. SBMNH). This species formerly wintered irregularly in large numbers on the Carrizo Plain, fewer than 20 mi (32 km) to the north of Santa Barbara County. The flock of 210 near Santa Maria in 1981 probably came from this area. Most of the other records probably pertain to migrants unrelated to the Carrizo Plain population.

In addition, 1 at Devereux Slough 21 April 2015 (ph. SBMNH) was particularly late. Exceptional was what was presumably the same individual in mid-summer at the Santa Maria River mouth 7 July–5+ August 1997 and again 15–16 August 1998.

This species was probably more regular in occurrence a hundred or more years ago. Streator (1886) wrote that it was "a rather common spring and fall migrant. They pass over usually at a great height."

RAILS AND COOTS (RALLIDAE)

Ridgway's Rail (*Rallus obsoletus*)

Formerly a rare and local permanent resident in District C; but now extirpated from the last nesting locality in the county, Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Early in the 20th century it was more common and widespread.

A recent taxonomic split from Clapper Rail, Ridgway's Rail frequents coastal marshes where extensive tidally-influenced habitats (Salicornia-dominated in our area) are bordered by upper estuarine vegetation (e.g., cattails, tules) that result from freshwater inputs. Upper estuarine habitats are important both for nesting and foraging and for birds dispersing or wandering following breeding. This species was first recorded locally by Henshaw in 1875. Historically, it occurred at Devereux Slough, Goleta Slough, Carpinteria Salt Marsh, and possibly in the former marshes (the "Estero") near the present-day Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Ridgway's Rail bones have been found at two midden sites on Vandenberg SFB, including on the north side of the Santa Ynez River mouth (Guthrie 1990), evidence that this species was formerly found along the North Coast.

The Carpinteria Salt Marsh population was known to exist early in the 1900s when rails were sighted there by A.B. Howell in 1911 and 1915. At least 9 nests were found and eggs taken between 1931 and 1936 (WFVZ) and birds were seen there in 1939 (Rett fieldnotes). Ridgway's

Rails were recorded regularly at uncertain site(s) on Santa Barbara CBCs from 1914 to 1936, with a maximum count of 16 individuals. Specimens were collected at "Campbell Ranch," the site of a formerly larger Devereux Slough, on 28 October 1934 and 23 July 1940, and 1 was seen there 30 July–8 August 1940 (Rett fieldnotes). Grinnell and Miller (1944) wrote, however, that they occurred in the coastal salt marshes around Santa Barbara "formerly, at least in 1875," but that they were "at present time not known from northwest of Ventura region." These authors were apparently unaware of the Carpinteria or Goleta populations.

Following the loss of habitat because of massive sedimentation and obstruction of tidal flows, over-hunting, and an increase in predators (e.g., foxes, raccoons, opossums, dogs), Ridgway's Rails were restricted during the latter 1900s to Carpinteria Salt Marsh. The population there (partly summarized in Zembal et al. 2011) was estimated to be 16 pairs in 1980, as many as 20 pairs in 1982 and 26 pairs in 1984, but only 7 pairs in 1985, 4 pairs in 1986, and 5 males in early 1987. By early 1988, the population was believed to consist of only 2 or 3 males; and none was seen from early 1989 until 1 was reported on 3 April 1993. Two pairs and several "extraneous males" were noted on 9 April 1995. In 1996, up to 3 breeding pairs were present during spring and summer, with an adult and chick seen on 23 May. In 1997, up to 4 pairs and 2 males were present. And in 1998, 3 pairs and 4 "advertising females" were noted. In 2001, only 1 pair plus 1 advertising female. In 2002, just 2 birds. In 2003, several reports of a single bird were followed by a single individual on 23 August 2004. The "last" report was of 1 heard on several occasions between 27 August–22 September 2011.

The only record away from Carpinteria Salt Marsh since the mid-1900s was of 1 at Goleta Slough 6 September 1969. A report listed in Wilbur (1974) from Goleta Slough 17 February 1972 probably never existed, according to the cited observer; and another report of a family-group observed in freshwater cattail marsh at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads during June 1974 (Zembal et al. 1995) lacks adequate documentation.

The Santa Barbara County populations marked the northern limit of the endangered subspecies *R. o. brevipes,* the "Light-footed" Ridgway's Rail. A small population persists at Point Mugu, Ventura County, with sizeable populations farther to the south in Orange and San Diego Counties. *R. o. obsoletus* occurs to the north in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I. Uncommon to rare summer resident and breeder in District C, casual in District I. Casual migrant and winter visitor in Districts M and V.

Virginia Rails occur in fresh- and salt-water marshes; they are most numerous in cattails and bulrushes found in marshes, lakes, ponds, creeks, and rivers. Fall migrants arrive beginning in August (early arrival dates include 4 August 2000 Goleta Slough and 5 August 2008 near the Santa Ynez River mouth), exceptionally beginning 23+ July 2020 (up to 2) in Goleta. Single individuals still in juvenal plumage were found dead in a residential area of Goleta 12 August 1990 (*SBMNH) and in downtown Santa Barbara 15 August 2013 (ph. SBMNH).

Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 13 individuals (3 January 2009), though none were found 2 January 2016 or 31 December 2016. The wintering population along the North Coast is higher, but it has never been adequately censused. Inland, the high count on the Cachuma CBC is a mere 2 birds; 3 were along the Santa Ynez River at Refugio Road 4 October 2012. The only winter record in District V is from the Caliente Ranch Wetland 25 January 2025.

The last of the wintering birds and transients are typically seen in early May. Determining if individuals seen later in the month are late migrants or are attempting to breed locally is usually very difficult.

Migrants may be found almost anywhere. For example, 1 was found dead in chaparral habitat at La Cumbre Peak in District M 26 September 1976 (*SBMNH); single birds were on the Santa Barbara Harbor breakwater 4 September 1976, in Sycamore Canyon, Santa Barbara, 4 April

1983 (*SBMNH), in agricultural fields in Goleta 10 October 1993, and along upper San Jose Creek 23 August 1997; and see juvenile records above.

A spring migrant was near Cuyama 24 April 2014, another was at Caliente Ranch Wetland 20–26 March 2016, and as many as 5 were there 28 March–24 April 2024, the only additional records for District V.

One along Carpinteria Creek 5 June 1986 was at an atypical location during the breeding season.

As a breeding bird, the Virginia Rail has probably declined because of the loss of required freshwater marsh habitat, particularly along the South Coast. An old nest record (eggs WFVZ) comes from Hope Ranch (presumably at Laguna Blanca) 8 June 1928. Small numbers formerly bred in the Goleta area; the only definite nesting there since 1977 was documented by an adult with 3 chicks at a dune pond west of Devereux Slough 11 May 2005, though a juvenile at Lake Los Carneros, where several adults had summered, on 27 July 2005 is strongly suggestive. One bird was at the latter site 5 June 2013. The species probably bred there in the early 1990s; and a high summer count of 4–6 birds were present 27 July 1999. One or 2 territorial birds were in Goleta Slough during March–early June 2006, 2 birds were near Devereux Slough 28 May 2006, 2 summered in the wetlands at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads in Goleta in 2007 and 1 was near there 21 May 2009 (*UCSB), and 1 was at the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space) 15 June–17 August 2011. Possible local breeding was also suggested by the presence of singles near Atascadero Creek in Goleta on 24 May 2001, 23 July 2005, and 29 May 2006; and at Goleta Slough 19 May 2005 and 21 July 2006, and up to 2 there 12–24 July+ 2017; although it is possible that some of these birds were very late spring or very early fall migrants.

Along the North Coast, summering birds were found during 1980 at the following localities: north side Santa Maria River mouth and (former) Betteravia sugar settling ponds (3–4 individuals), along the Cuyama River near Garey (on the border of District I) (2 individuals), and along San Antonio Creek on Vandenberg SFB (3 or 4 pairs). The number of breeding birds along San Antonio Creek certainly exceeded 3–4 pairs, but extensive areas of appropriate habitat were never censused. Between 1980 and 1993, the species was recorded in summer on several occasions along the Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc. A pair with 2 chicks were at waterfowl ponds there 11 June 1998. Since 2000, the only definite breeding record involves a pair with 4 chicks at the “triangle pond” along San Antonio Creek 10–11 May 2011. Two adults were there 7 June 2015, with 1 remaining on 25 July, and 2 were present 25–29 June 2018. An independent juvenile was farther downstream on 31 May 2005. Up to 2 birds were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 June–25 July 2015, and up to 2 were there 29 June–21 July 2018.

Suggestive of local summering in District I was 1 at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 30 July 2012. It may have been an early fall migrant, although 1 was also there 7 May 2014, at the tail end of spring migration. Breeding was confirmed there in 2018 when an adult seen 23 May was followed by an adult with 3 chicks on 10 June (ph. SBMNH). Two birds were present through June–July 2024.

Sora (*Porzana carolina*)

Uncommon to fairly common transient and winter visitor in District C, uncommon in District I. Rare migrant in District V. Several breeding records.

Soras are found in fresh- and salt-water marshes, with the largest numbers present in stands of bulrush and cattails in freshwater marshes, lakes, ponds, creeks, and rivers. They have declined over the past decades because of the loss of freshwater wetlands. Fall migrants arrive beginning in August (earliest arrival dates: 27 July+ 2022 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, 27 July 2026 Lake Cachuma, 31 July 2012 (2) Santa Barbara, but see below). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 20 individuals (2 January 1982), but only 1 and 2 birds were noted 2

January 2016 and 31 December 2016, respectively. Eleven at Lake Los Carneros 14 April 1991 was a high single-site count. In spring, Soras are rare after early May, with the latest records in District C on 19–20 May 2022 (ph. SBMNH) and through 25 May 1991 Goleta.

In District I, the high count on a Cachuma CBC is 5 birds (26 December 2003). One was late at the Sedgwick Reserve 23 May–7 June 2025.

In District V, single spring migrants were at Caliente Ranch Wetland 11 May 2007 and 19–25 April 2015, and up to 2 were there 28 March–24 April 2024.

Definite nesting records involve a nest with 3 eggs and a freshly-hatched nestling discovered near the main entrance to Vandenberg SFB 4 May 2001 and an adult with up to 4 chicks at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 12 May–14 July 2005. A pair and a juvenile in a wetland at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads in Goleta 28 July 2003 and 2 adults and 3 juveniles in Goleta Slough 4 August 2006 probably bred locally. A juvenile at Lake Los Carneros 13–30 June 1992 was also evidence of probable local breeding. One along Atascadero Creek, Goleta, May–29 June 1999 was clearly summering locally. One was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 June 2014. This species is known to have bred formerly elsewhere in coastal Southern California, and it may have done so in the past in Santa Barbara County as well. A single bird at Devereux Slough 17 July 1934 (Rett fieldnotes), 1 at Lake Los Carneros 15 July 1996, a juvenile with an adult there in late August 2008, a juvenile there 13 July 2016, and 1 at Goleta Slough 18 July 2024 may have involved local breeders or have been early fall migrants.

Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*)

A rare transient and winter visitor in District C, very rare in summer and in District I. Only several recent breeding records.

Common Gallinules are found in or near cover in freshwater marshes, lakes, ponds, rivers, and creeks that contain stands of bulrushes and cattails, primarily in District C. They are local in distribution, with the more frequented sites being several small ponds in the Santa Maria Valley; Punchbowl Pond on north Vandenberg SFB; Lake Los Carneros and a wetland at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads in Goleta; and Laguna Blanca, Lauro Reservoir, and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in Santa Barbara. Numbers appear to have declined since the 1980s, and some years only 2 or 3 individuals are reported in the entire county. Fall migrants have appeared as early as 19 July 2007 and 22 July 1973 (*SBMNH) Goleta. An average of 2–4 individuals are seen during both spring/fall migration and during most winters, and the latter birds usually remain the entire season; a total of 8 along the South Coast during autumn 1994 was a high count. The highest tally on a Santa Barbara CBC was 5 individuals on 19 December 1971, and the species has also been missed. In spring, it may linger through mid-May, exceptionally to 21 May 2016 Santa Maria, 22 May 2009 Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 27 May 1975 west of Gaviota, through 27 May 1991 Goleta, through 31 May 2011 Lake Los Carneros (up to 3; nesting?), and through 3 June 2022 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge.

Inland, gallinules are very rare in District I, with no more than about 10 records since 1975, and a majority of these from Lake Cachuma between November–January. A presumed fall arrival was there 12 August 1999, and a spring bird was found 3 May 1975. See summer records, below.

Common Gallinules decreased in numbers during the 1900s, at least as a summering and breeding bird. Dawson (1923) described the species as a "summer resident in Santa Barbara," being "rarer in winter" (the opposite of their status today). Willett (1933) stated, however, that they were "now seen only occasionally." The only definite nesting records since the early 1920s are of 2 family groups seen at the (former) Betteravia sugar settling ponds near Santa Maria 13–23 August 1981, an adult feeding a chick at Lake Los Carneros 3 June 1996, and an adult with 1 or 2 chicks at Punchbowl Pond 13 June 1996. In addition, a pair nested on the San Luis Obispo County side of the Santa Maria River mouth in 1980. Since the 1970s, other summer records are Goleta 5 June 1977, near Santa Maria 10 July 1982, Lake Cachuma 4 July 1984, former Betteravia sugar settling ponds 4 July 1989, Goleta 11 July–18 August 1989, pair at the

Santa Ynez River mouth 3 June 1990, Lake Los Carneros 2–24 July 1992, Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 22 May–2 June 1999, Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc 25 June 2007, 2 at Lake Los Carneros May–26 July 2011, Lake Cachuma 23–29 June 2012, Goleta Slough 16 May–5 July 2019, and Lake Los Carneros 11 June 2020. Two together in Santa Maria 31 May 2002 may have summered or bred locally.

American Coot (*Fulica americana*)

Very common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I, uncommon in District V. Fairly common to common summer resident and breeder in Districts C and I; rare in District V. In District M, found very locally at lower elevations.

American Coots are found in all aquatic habitats (rarely on the ocean and the smallest creeks). They are also commonly found in large flocks grazing in short-grass habitats, such as at parks and golf courses, as long as a body of water with some shelter is present nearby. They breed at many localities throughout the county, although they are quite scarce at some of them. Numbers increase several-fold during migration and winter from mid-August to April. (Many of the highest counts come from late October through December, with somewhat lower totals for the remainder of winter.) For example, 2000 were at Lake Cachuma 30 November 1979 and 2763 were counted 15 November 2002, but only 35 were present 4 July 1980 and only 20 were there 23 June 1981; however, 250 were seen 29 July 1988. A total of 1840 birds were recorded on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC on 23 December 1979, but only 15 were found in both the entire Santa Maria Valley and along San Antonio Creek during summer 1980. More recently, Santa Maria–Guadalupe tallied highs of 3560 coots on 23 December 2011 and 2287 on 23 December 2012. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 2444 individuals (31 December 1983); a total of 6000 reported on the 2 January 1966 CBC may or may not be correct. Some 1000–1200 were at Laguna Blanca alone 21 October 2024–4 January 2025. The Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 2541 birds (29 December 1999), though the next highest count is of 1144 (27 December 2000) and only 444 were detected 28 December 2010 and 168 birds on 29 December 2015.

The summer population along the South Coast is approximately 100–150 individuals.

The high count in District V is 36 birds at Caliente Ranch Wetland 26 March 2018. Fall migrants probably peak during October, and spring migrants have occurred as late as 17 May 2018 (5) at New Cuyama. The only nesting record there involves two family groups totaling 10 individuals at New Cuyama 2 June 2019.

In District M, coots are found only very locally at ponds at lower elevations (e.g., Zaca Lake).

A coot banded in Montana on 11 September 1966 was recovered in Santa Barbara County on 11 November 1966. An individual banded on its nest near Flagstaff, Arizona, in July 1981 was seen at Goleta Beach Park during winters of 1982–1983 and 1983–1984; it was back in Flagstaff during summer 1983.

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)

Casual visitor in District C.

One found alive under a car on East Ortega Street in downtown Santa Barbara 12 November 1996 was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator, where it died the following day (*SBMNH). [A published report of a bird in Santa Barbara 26 December 1914 *(Bird-Lore* 17, 1915:47; Willet 1933) was questioned by Dawson (1923) and not accepted by the CBRC because of the lack of supporting details.]

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*)

Casual transient and winter visitor in District C.

Black Rails are extremely secretive and are thought to frequent well-vegetated salt and brackish marshes along the coast. There are only six definite records for the county. Four are from the Santa Barbara area: 1 collected vic. Santa Barbara about 1875 (Cooper 1887), 1 at the "Estero" in Santa Barbara 26 December 1917 (Dawson 1923), another there 29 November 1923, and 1 that hit a window on State Street in downtown Santa Barbara in 1939 (*SBMNH). In addition, 1 was glimpsed and briefly heard at the Santa Ynez River mouth 6 May 1981, 1 was heard at Punchbowl Pond, north Vandenberg SFB 16 December 2001, and 1 was seen near Los Carneros Road X Mesa Road in Goleta 29 September 2024. This species was formerly somewhat more numerous and widespread along the coast of Southern and Central California.

STILTS AND AVOCETS (RECURVIROSTRIDAE)

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

Fairly common transient and uncommon summer resident and local breeder in District C, uncommon to locally fairly common in winter along the South Coast, rare along the North Coast. Rare migrant and breeder in District V. Casual in District I.

Black-necked Stilts are found along lagoon, lake, and pond shores, and at sloughs and river mouths. They are most widespread during migration when also seen rarely at ephemeral pools on upper beaches. Most high counts along the North Coast do not exceed 30 individuals in the Santa Maria Valley, and most highs at the Santa Ynez River mouth do not exceed 20 individuals, with a very high 43 there 11 October 2022. Until recently, highs along the South Coast were under 20 birds; but 65 were at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 15 September 2017 (and see below).

In late spring and summer, they are less common and more local. Along the North Coast, a high 36 were at Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 3 July 2006. High counts of adults along the South Coast in early summer have not exceeded 20 individuals. Nesting localities include the Santa Maria River mouth, several sites in the Santa Maria Valley including the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant, the Santa Ynez River mouth, Devereux (irregularly since 2009) and Goleta Sloughs, the Goleta sewage treatment plant (e.g., high count of 22 young there in 1996), and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge (2015–2018, up to 3 broods). More unusual one-time nest sites included a pair with fledglings along the Sisquoc River near Sisquoc 10 July 1999 and an adult with 3 chicks at East Beach, Santa Barbara, 27 July 2016. Formerly, 2 or 3 pairs were found nesting in the "Estero" in Santa Barbara in 1912 (Dawson 1916); but, by 1923, Dawson listed them as "former" nesters there. Good nesting success was found at Carpinteria Salt Marsh in 1966; subsequent nesting there has not been confirmed. Three birds on the Santa Barbara Harbor sandspit 11 June 1985 were at an odd location for the nesting season.

The only winter records prior to the 1980s were of 1 in Goleta 10–11 January 1965 and 3 there 22 January 1978. Subsequently, along the North Coast, it was recorded in small numbers (up to 10+) most winters in the Santa Maria Valley and at the Santa Ynez River mouth, although Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBCs have recorded no more than 3 individuals on fewer than half the counts, and La Purisima CBCs find them on most, but not all, counts, with a maximum of 13 individuals. Along the South Coast, it was recorded regularly in winter after the early 1980s, first in very small numbers, but increasing thereafter. Almost all these late-fall and winter reports came from the Goleta area, with a few additional sightings from Carpinteria Salt Marsh, as well as from the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge and Laguna Blanca when water levels are low. Since the mid-1990s, the species has become an uncommon to fairly common winter visitor. Maxima are 47 at Goleta Beach Park area 3 January 2012, 64 at UCSB Lagoon 28 December 2013, a high 103 on the Santa Barbara CBC 5 January 2019 (some possible duplication; included 54 at Goleta sewage treatment plant), and 47 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 21 February 2023.

Spring migrants normally appear during March (e.g., 7–9 March 1977 Goleta (up to 2) and 10 March 1979 Goleta (4)); 3 birds in Goleta 21 February 1980 were probably early spring arrivals. A high March count was 48 at Devereux Slough 16 March 2012.

In District I, this species is casual, with all records from Lake Cachuma since 1987: 17 January 1987, 2 September 2000, 24 September 2004 (5), 28 April 2006 (2), 13 May 2007, 20 June 2008 (3), 29 August 2009 (2), 30 May 2010 (4), 16 April 2015, and 11 May 2020 (2).

In District V, this species has occurred irregularly during spring and summer since 2005 at ponds associated with a large dairy operation where it has bred (e.g., adult with 4 chicks in 2010), and since the 2017 construction of the sewage treatment pond at New Cuyama where it has also bred (1–2 pairs in 2020 and 2021), as well as at ponds elsewhere in the district. The high counts are 11 birds at the dairy site 8 July 2005 and 18 at sewage treatment site 6 April 2020. In addition, 2 birds were at a pond north of Ventucopa 6 April 2007, 2 were at Caliente Ranch Wetland 1 April 2006, 1 was there 19 April 2020, 1 was in ag fields near New Cuyama 25 March 2019, and 1 was at Quatal Canyon 7 April 2019. In fall, 3 were at New Cuyama 4 September 2018, 1 there 7–10 October 2018 was perhaps getting slightly late, and 5–7 birds there 15 August–11 November 2019 were also getting late.

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Uncommon (formerly fairly common) transient in District C; occurs locally in summer and formerly in winter (now rare), with a few breeding along the North Coast and twice along South Coast. Very rare transient inland in Districts I and V, where several breeding records, and casual in District M.

American Avocets are found mostly at coastal lakes, ponds, sloughs, and river mouths. They were formerly rather widespread in District C as a transient, particularly from early or mid-March (possibly as early as late February) to mid-May (late dates: 24–25 May 2019 Goleta Slough (2), through 26 May 2019 Santa Ynez River mouth (2)) and, to a lesser extent, from August (rarely by early July) to October, but numbers have declined since the 1990s. Maximum counts typically do not exceed about 20 individuals; 38 near Guadalupe 14 April 2008 and 44 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 19 August 2011 are the largest concentrations since the mid-1990s. Fall migrants may occur as late as November.

In winter, the species was formerly a very local winter resident, occurring regularly in small numbers (fewer than 20) only in the Santa Maria Valley (primarily at the Santa Maria River mouth), in Goleta, and at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh. The high count was 65 in the Santa Maria Valley 20 January 1979. These birds ceased wintering regularly at these sites soon after the mid-1990s, though a small number might continue to do so most years at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant. Since the mid-1990s, there have been only several sightings per winter along the North Coast, with high counts of 12 at the Santa Maria River mouth 29 November 1999, 8 in Santa Maria 22 February 2004, and 16 and 25 on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 26 December 2010 and 23 December 2011, respectively. This species is found very rarely on the La Purisima CBC, with a maximum of a mere 2 individuals. Up to 8 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7–17 December 2017. Along the South Coast, a very small flock (fewer than 10 individuals) formerly wintered annually at Goleta Slough through 1979. Since the 1990s, however, there have been only a very small number of winter records from Goleta and Carpinteria involving single individuals and small groups of up to 5 birds, with 13 at the mouth of Goleta Slough 10 February 2022. The only South Coast winter record away from Devereux Slough, Goleta Slough, and Carpinteria Salt Marsh during this period is of 2 birds at East Beach in Santa Barbara 24–30 December 2000.

In summer, American Avocets are found primarily in the Santa Maria Valley. Small numbers formerly bred occasionally at the Santa Maria River mouth (usually with fairly poor success), with very high summer counts of 75 birds on 7 June 1979 and 40 on 1 June 1980, including multiple nesting pairs. A high recent count there at this season was 17 birds on 13 June 2021. In addition, single chicks were found during June 1980 and June–August 1981 farther inland at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant, 4 family groups were present June–August 1982, breeding

behavior were noted there during most subsequent summers through 1997, with occasional young noted. More recent reports there of 3 chicks on 4 July 2002, 2 birds on 20 May 2011, 9–10 birds from 30 May–3 June 2013, 4 adults on 4 June 2015, and an adult with chick 12 June 2017 suggest sporadic continued nesting attempts. Nesting was also documented at ponds along A Street in Santa Maria during 2012, with 7 adults and 1 chick seen 27 June, and along Black Road near Santa Maria between 24 April–22 May 2019 when 2 pairs with 2 chicks each (on latter date) were found. In 1987 and 1990, breeding behavior was observed at the former Betteravia sugar settling ponds. Occasional breeding was also strongly suspected through the early 1990s at the Santa Ynez River mouth when water levels were not too high; more recently, a pair with chick were noted June–July 2024. A pair with chicks was noted at the mouth of San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB, during June 1997. (For nesting, see also District V, below.) Away from the Santa Maria and the Santa Ynez River mouth areas, this species is very rare in early-to-mid-summer.

Late-spring and early-summer records for the South Coast include: Santa Barbara 1 June 1915 (Dawson 1915); and Goleta 16 June 1981, 3 June 1982, 3 June 1985, 30 June 1990, 22 June 1993, 26 June 1997, 4 June 2012 (15 birds), and 26–29 June 2018. The only certain breeding records for the South Coast involve 12–15 individuals at Carpinteria Salt Marsh in 1966 and a pair with nest and then 2 young (hatched ca. 22 May) at Devereux Slough 4 April–August 2016.

In District I, singles were at Lake Cachuma 8–17 November 1982, 17 March 1999, 3 February 2004, and 9 July 2006, 2 were there 18 March 2001, 10 were found 27 September 2011, 7 were tallied 8 March 2015, and 8–9 were present 22 August–5 September with 1 lingering through 11 September and a single bird on 13 October 2016.

In District V, 2 were near Cuyama 7 August 2005; 2 there 18 April–6 June 2010 were accompanied by a chick (plus 4 additional adults) on the latter date, a nest with 4 eggs was found 15 June 2011, and 2 birds were present 28 April 2015; up to 2 were in New Cuyama 28 May–19 June 2018; 2 early spring migrants were there 2 March with 2–6 birds present through 14 June 2019, including an unsuccessful nest between 24 May–14 June; 4 birds on 23 August 2019; up to 5 adults were present 28 March+ 2020, with a pair with nest and 3 chicks 4 June–10 July; up to 4 birds there 16 March–29 May 2021; and 1 there 15 May 2025. The late date in fall is through 8 October 2020 near New Cuyama.

One interesting record is of a migrant seen in District M flying up a creek on the east side of Figueroa Mountain 15 May 1977.

OYSTERCATCHERS (HAEMATOPODIDAE)

American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*)

Casual visitor in District C.

There are perhaps three mainland oystercatcher records involving “countable” Americans: Goleta and Coal Oil Points 8 April 2006 (ph. *NAB* 60:438, SBMNH), Sands Beach near Coal Oil Point 16 June 2011 (ph. SBMNH), and Jalama Beach County Park 2–30 January 2026. An American or hybrid oystercatcher was seen in flight near Point Conception 30 April 2012, but views were insufficient for a proper assessment. A total of 2 clear hybrid American X Black Oystercatchers were present sporadically at the Carpinteria Bluffs 2 January–8 August 2012, a hybrid was at Goleta Point 16 May 2014 (ph. SBMNH), and singles were at the Carpinteria Bluffs 9 May 2015, 10–11 June 2017 (ph. SBMNH), 15 March 2020 (ph. SBMNH), 9 February 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and nearby at Carpinteria Creek mouth 22 March 2024 (ph. SBMNH). [There are also multiple records (many involving long-staying birds) for the Channel Islands—including San Miguel, Santa Rosa, and, especially, Santa Cruz Islands—of both “countable” American Oystercatchers and of hybrid American X Black Oystercatchers. Also from Santa Barbara Island.]

Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*)

Uncommon permanent resident along the North Coast. Rare visitor, primarily during migration, along the South Coast, where one nesting record.

Black Oystercatchers frequent rocky coastlines, although they are also occasionally seen on beaches adjoining rocky areas. They are found in suitable habitat from Point Sal south to the Point Conception area. In 1989, a total of 11 birds were seen during summer surveys between Destroyer Rock and Point Conception (Carter et al. 1992). High counts during that period include a total of 12 seen between Point Sal and Point Arguello during summer 1980, and 14 and 19 in the Boathouse area, south Vandenberg SFB, on 28 November 1987 and 10 December 1992, respectively. More recent nesting population totals along the Vandenberg SFB coastline tallied by Robinette et al. (2012b) include ca. 20 birds in 2000, ca. 26 birds in 2005, and ca. 30 birds in 2012 as follows: 2 birds at Lion's Head, 2 birds between Purisima Point and Lompoc Landing, 4 birds between Honda Point and Point Pedernales, 8 birds in the Point Arguello area, and 14 birds in the nearby Rocky Point area. Just slightly farther southeast, 8 were near Sudden Ranch 16 May 2016. The southern limit of the species' normal range in the county probably is just to the east of Point Conception at Cojo Point, where there were two sightings during summer 1981. Single chicks were at Point Sal 17 July 2016 and at Mussel Rock 10–24 July 2016. Numbers may be augmented slightly during migration and winter. The Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC tallied 11 birds on north Vandenberg on 26 December 2005. Away from the rocky coast, 1 was seen flying south past the Santa Maria River mouth 27 October 1978, 2 were there 9 September 1982, and 1 was there 24 July 1994, and there have been several additional sightings there at various seasons through 2026.

Along the South Coast, Black Oystercatchers have occurred at all times of the year although most records are during spring. The two most popular sites east of Gaviota are Goleta Point/Coal Oil Point and, especially, the Carpinteria Bluffs (Carpinteria seal colony) and nearby beach areas. High counts from each site are 5 at Goleta Point on both 14 May 2003 and 7 April 2004, and up to 6 at Carpinteria 23 February–26 May 2005 and 7 there 3 January 2012. Spring records (late February–early June) total some 45+ reports involving approximately 90 individuals between 1976–2026. Records from other seasons, from west to east and not including Carpinteria Bluffs area from 2020+, are as follows: Fall—Coal Oil Point 12 October 1995 and 28 September 2016; Goleta Point and adjacent UCSB beaches 15 September 1961 and nine records since 1976 including up to 4 from 24–27 September 2003; Santa Barbara 2 September 1975; Santa Barbara Harbor 21 September 2019; Carpinteria Salt Marsh 2 August 2006; and Carpinteria Bluffs 17 August & 8 November 2012, and 24 September 2015; Winter—Gaviota State Park 2 February 2009 and 19 February 2020; Coal Oil Point 11 January 2015; Goleta Point 5 February 1972; Arroyo Burro Beach 15–16 December 2024 (up to 4); the Mesa, Santa Barbara 18 January 2020 (5); Shoreline Park, Santa Barbara, 3 January 2025 (2); Santa Barbara Harbor 11 February 1990, 10 December 2017 (2); and Carpinteria 3 January 2012 (7); and Summer—Coal Oil Point 29 June–1 July 2021; Goleta Point 24 June 1974 (2), 21 July 2002, 29 June–2 July 2021, 4 June 2025; Goleta 6 July 2013, 13 June 2019; vic. Santa Barbara 2 June 1863 (*USNM); Santa Barbara and later in Goleta 11 July 1981; Santa Barbara 12 August 1981 (2), 19 June 1996, 8–9 July 2021 (up to 2); and Carpinteria 19 June 2005 (4), 1 June 2008, 27 July 2019 (3), and 16 Jun 2024 (2), with highs of up to 4 from 19–29 June 2020, up to 5 from May–July 2025, and up to 5 through 18 Jun 2026.

The only nesting record east of the Point Conception area involves a pair with a single egg at the Carpinteria Bluffs 10–20 May 2021, an attempt which ultimately failed, and then presumably the same pair on a nest 26–27 June 2021.

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C, uncommon to fairly common but local in early summer. Casual transient in District V.

Black-bellied Plovers frequent sandy beaches, rocky shores, sloughs, river mouths, coastal lagoons, and short-grass habitats such as pastures and golf courses in District C. The first southbound migrants (birds in alternate plumage) are noted as early as late June or early July (e.g., 28 June 1989 Goleta). During fall and winter, they sometimes occurred, at least formerly, in large flocks of up to 500 individuals in the Santa Maria Valley; 700 were there 26 December 1988. High counts on the two North Coast CBCs since the 1990s have rarely exceeded 100 individuals, however; with 208 tallied on Santa Maria–Guadalupe 22 December 2013. High counts along the South Coast rarely exceed 150 individuals; 530 were at vic. Devereux Slough 27 September 1994, 395 were there 26 August 2007, and 454 were present 16 October 2011; elsewhere, 240 were at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 14 August 2010. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 403 individuals (4 January 1997), although some duplication is likely. Most breeders have moved north by mid-May. Non-breeders regularly summer locally along the coast, sometimes in medium-sized flocks of up to 50 individuals, at such localities as the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths and Devereux Slough and adjacent beaches. High counts are 135 Santa Maria River mouth 1 July 1988 and 96 Devereux Slough 27 June 1990.

An unusual record is of an individual in full alternate plumage near Santa Maria 17 December 1989–19 January 1990 and again 22 December 1991.

Up to 2 birds in District V at New Cuyama 16–17 March 2019 were probably early spring migrants, and they established the only inland record.

American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*)

Very rare fall and casual spring transient in District C.

American Golden-Plovers frequent sloughs, river mouths, coastal ponds and lagoons, short-grass habitats such as pastures and golf courses, and more rarely sandy beaches, often in association with Pacific Golden- or Black-bellied Plovers. The two golden-plovers, *P. dominica* and *P. fulva*, were not officially split into separate species until 1993. Until the late 1970s, no attempt was made to distinguish between these two forms of "Lesser Golden-Plover" in the field. Therefore, many published records not documented with photographs prior to this time cannot be assigned with certainty. Both species migrate through the county.

American is the rarer of the two golden-plover species in Santa Barbara County. It is a casual spring and very rare fall transient in District C. In fall, juveniles occur between September (earliest arrival date: 27 August–5 September 1993 near Guadalupe) and mid-November (e.g., 11 November 1918 "La Patera Point" in Goleta (*FMNH), 13 November 1999 near Orcutt, and 16 November 1986 and 17 November 1987 near Santa Maria), exceptionally into late November (i.e., 24–25 November 1977 Goleta). Most records of American Golden-Plover came from the Santa Maria Valley before much of the golden-plover habitat there was destroyed by the early 1990s. The highest seasonal counts were of 7 individuals in 1985 and 8 in 1986. Since the mid-1990s, there have been 12 autumn records (involving 11 individuals) along the North Coast, and just 5 individuals along the South Coast: a long-staying bird on the beach in Goleta 14 October–19 November 1998 and singles at Devereux Slough 1 November 2006, 4 October 2010, 14–17 October 2011 (ph. SBMNH), and 21–27 September 2024.

There are also three very early "fall" records, all involving adults: Goleta Slough 14–24 July 1980 and again 19–25 July 1981, Santa Maria River mouth 6 July 1991, and Santa Ynez River mouth 28 July 1996. A later adult was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 2–19 September 2024. In addition, a second-alternate bird at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 18–22 June 2015 (ph. SBMNH) is difficult to categorize.

The only definite spring record is of 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 29 May 1988. One at Coal Oil Point in Goleta on 11–12 June 2025 was probably a very late spring migrant.

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*)

Rare fall and very rare spring transient in District C. Now very rare in winter; formerly in the Santa Maria Valley and at north Vandenberg SFB.

Pacific Golden-Plovers frequent sloughs, river mouths, coastal ponds and lagoons, short-grass habitats such as pastures and golf courses, and more rarely sandy beaches, often in association with Black-bellied Plovers.

The two golden-plovers breeding in North America were split into separate species in 1993. Until the late 1970s, no attempt was made to distinguish between the two taxa in the field. Therefore, all published records lacking photographic documentation prior to this time cannot be assigned with certainty to American or Pacific. Both species migrate through the county; only Pacific is found in winter. Locally, Pacific is more numerous than American. It is a rare fall and very rare spring transient and rare winter visitor.

A wintering flock of Pacifics was present annually until the 1990s in the irrigated pastureland of the Santa Maria Valley west of Santa Maria—near the intersection of Black and Betteravia Roads and just west of Guadalupe (a few birds most winters to the early 2020s). The Santa Maria population was discovered in late 1978 and consisted of as many as 42 individuals (in late February–early March 1982). The birds typically arrived beginning in late August, rarely by the end of July or early August (i.e., 27 July–1 August 1993 (up to 2), 31 July 1981, and 31+ July 1988). Twenty-four were there already 27 August 1980. Most wintering birds had departed by the end of April; a few individuals remained through early May. Up to 12 there 30 April–10 May 1993 was a large count for so late in the season. More exceptional were 2 through 18 May 1982 and 2 through 16 May 1994, and singles at the Santa Maria River mouth 21 May 1989 and 1 June 1991. Two were near Santa Maria 3 June 1984 and again 11–12 July 1984; because their plumages did not match well between the two dates, it was difficult to determine whether they summered locally or were very late spring departures and very early fall arrivals, respectively. One adult Pacific was at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 1–11 June 1986.

The conversion of much irrigated pastureland to row crops in the Santa Maria Valley during the 1980s resulted in a major decline in numbers (e.g., only 2 in winters 1990–1991, 1992–1993, and 1994–1995, and up to 5 in winter 1993–1994; although 18 were there during fall 1991 and 5 in fall 1994). This area was one of only several where small numbers of Pacific Golden-Plovers regularly wintered in the continental United States. An early fall arrival was at vic. Santa Maria River mouth 15–24 July 1994.

During the 2000s, the very small wintering population was centered around remaining pastures near Guadalupe and at the nearby Santa Maria River mouth, where from 1–5 individuals were found annually from 2005–2006 to 2017–2018. Since then, there have been reports of only a few single birds in the Santa Maria Valley and River mouth in winter. An early arrival was there 16–21 July 2010, and other single early migrants were at the Santa Maria River mouth 15 July 1995 and 12–13 July 1997.

In 1988, this species was found wintering at the main airfield on north Vandenberg SFB. One was there 27 March 1988, up to 8 were present 27 September 1988–3 March 1989 and again in 1989–1990, 6 were present 18 January 1991, and up to 3 were present annually from 1991–1992 through 1995–1996, but not thereafter. This locality had not been previously censused. Elsewhere on north Vandenberg SFB, 1 was at Wall Beach on 30 January 2025.

Winter records elsewhere in the county, all assumed to involve Pacific, are as follows: Santa Barbara 23 December 1911 (Willett 1933); Goleta "during January" 1960; near Carpinteria 25 February 1962; 2–4 Goleta 31 December 1966–2 February 1967; Goleta 2 January–14 February 1971; Santa Barbara 13 December 1971–3 January 1972 and 18 December 1971–16 January

1972; the same individual in Goleta for four or five winters, 10 March–1 May 1976 (ph. SBMNH), 2 September 1976–6 May 1977 (ph. SBMNH), 26 August 1977–29 April 1978, 13 August 1978–3 May 1979, and 23 August–10 September 1979 (ph. SBMNH); singles in Goleta 30 December 1978, 23 February–23 March 1992, 4 January 1997, 12–31 December 1998, 15 January 2008, and 12 December 2019 (ph. SBMNH); 1 near Santa Barbara Harbor 7 November 2022–11 February 2023 (ph. SBMNH); 1 near Point Conception 23 February 2023 (ph. SBMNH); and Goleta 8 January–18 March 2024 (ph. SBMNH).

Spring and fall arrival and departure dates for pure transients in the Santa Maria area were almost impossible to determine because of the presence of the wintering birds. Elsewhere, many records of migrants were made before observers learned how to separate the two golden-plovers in the field, but birds identified as transient Pacific Golden-Plovers were recorded primarily between late August and mid-November. Since the late 1990s, migrants along the North Coast average perhaps only 1 or 2 per fall, whereas along the South Coast there has been a total of just 18 fall transients 1996–2025 (with several additional "golden-plover sp."). One at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 14–16 July 2006 (ph. SBMNH), another over Goleta Slough 3 August 2007, and up to 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1–12 August 2026 were early. An alternate-plumaged adult in Goleta 23–25 June 1996 was probably an exceptionally early fall migrant, as were singles near Santa Maria 23 June 1999, at Devereux Slough 11 July 2016 (ph. SBMNH), and at the Santa Ynez River mouth 8–31 July+ 2024. Singles at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 July 1997, in Goleta 31 July–16 August 1989, and at the Santa Ynez River mouth 19–31 July 2020 (ph. SBMNH) were slightly early. Two in Goleta 28 October–3 December 1983, singles at the Santa Ynez River mouth through 24 November 1996 and on 27 November 2006, and singles in Goleta 18–22 November 2010 and 27 November 2021 were late for birds that did not appear to winter locally.

As always, spring transients are much rarer still, with the only such records since 1996 along the South Coast being 1 at Coal Oil Point 31 March 2003 and up to 2 there from 8–12 April 2022.

Records of note of golden-plovers not identified to species are: (Spring) Goleta 11–12 April 1963, 16 April 1969, 22 May 1973, and 30 April 1979; Santa Barbara 25 April 1977; 6 Santa Maria River mouth 15 May 1980; and near Santa Maria 2 June 1981; and (Fall) Santa Ynez River mouth 23 July 1980 and near Santa Maria 31 July 2018.

golden-plover sp.

A golden-plover seen sporadically at Devereux Slough between 6–29 January 2017 was photographed (ph. *WB* 51:233). The mediocre photos were sent to various experienced observers who variously thought it a possible Pacific Golden-Plover, a likely European Golden-Plover (*P. apricaria*), which would be a state first, or left it unidentified.

[Eurasian Dotterel (*Anarhynchus morinellus*)

A report of a bird at Coal Oil Point 10 August 2002 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Fairly common to common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V. Numbers are augmented greatly in migration and winter.

Killdeer are found in a variety of habitats, including most fresh- and salt-water habitats (uncommon and local on upper sandy beaches and exposed rocky shores), short grass of almost any kind (including lawns), and agricultural areas. They occur regularly away from water. The largest numbers of breeding birds are found in sloughs and along lake, pond, and river shores. A high summer count is of 52 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 8 July 2024. Arrival and departure dates for migrants and wintering birds that nest outside the county are difficult to determine. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 859 individuals (3 January 1976), though many counts record far fewer. A total of 630 were on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe count 23 December

1979. Inland, high counts on the Cachuma CBC are 145 on 27 December 2011 and 143 on 29 December 2015, but most totals are only half those. Three hundred were in the Cuyama Valley 19 November 1978, compared to only 4 on 30 April 1979.

Semipalmated Plover (*Anarhynchus semipalmatus*)
Fairly common spring and fall transient in District C; uncommon though locally increasing winter visitor. A few individuals usually summer along the coast. One exceptional nesting record. Rare migrant in District I and very rare in District V.

Semipalmated Plovers frequent lagoon and pond shores, sloughs, and river mouths. Fall transients appear as early as late June. The earliest recorded juvenile was on 23 July 1993 Goleta. Some high autumn counts include an exceptional 250 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 August 1983, 60 at Goleta Slough 6–10 August 1993, 80 near Santa Maria 19 September 2017, and increasing numbers near the mouth of Devereux Slough with 95 on 5 August 2001, 97 on 29 August 2006, 102 on 30 July 2007, 120 on 22 August 2008 growing to 177 birds on 5 September 2008, and 172 on 12 September 2019. By late October or early November, the species is more localized near wintering sites.

The largest numbers winter in the Devereux area, particularly at a roosting site on the beach just west of the slough mouth: up to 52 there 31 December 1993–1 January 1994 was the high count through the mid-1990s, but it increased to 76 on 14 December 2007 and then to 100 on 2 January 2010, 118 on 24 January 2011, 119 on 13 December 2014, 136 on 1 January 2022, and 156 on 23 March 2025. Small numbers (up to 15) winter regularly at Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Semipalmated Plovers usually winter in small numbers at the Santa Maria River mouth, but they are sporadic (possibly the result of high water-levels or deteriorating habitat from siltation and encroaching sand). The two North Coast CBCs typically record only 1–3 individuals each, with 14 on the La Purisima CBC 14 December 2014.

In spring, 130 on the beach at UCSB 26 April 2011, 149–158 at Devereux Slough 14 March–24 April 2014, and 218 at Coal Oil Point 17 April 2022 were record counts for that season. Late-spring transients occur until late May.

The only truly "summering" individuals are those present throughout most of June. Such birds occur almost annually and number from 2 to 9 most years; 22 at Devereux Slough/Coal Oil Point 16 June 2004, 23 there 10 June 2013, 27 on 4 June 2017, and 26 birds on 6 June 2024 were high early-summer counts.

In summer 1999, 1 or 2 pairs of Semipalmated Plovers were found nesting at the Santa Maria River mouth 14–18 July. There were reports of at least 3 chicks at one time, of which 1 expired (*UCSB), 1 was banded, and 1 was photographed (ph. SBMNH). This established the first nesting record for California.

In District I, this species is rare but probably regular if appropriate habitat exists, with all records except one from Lake Cachuma and all involving spring and fall migrants: 24 August 1976, 4 May 1990 (2), 29 July 1992, and somewhat more regularly since then between mid-April and early May (high counts: 12 on 19 April 2015 and 26 on 29 April 2022) and between late July and late September (high count: 12–17 from 20 August–5 September 2016), with a later bird on 20 October 2016 and up to 3 very late individuals from 3–11 December 2021. This is undoubtedly the best inland location for this species as it occasionally supports suitable mudflats, especially during the late summer and fall under drought conditions. Elsewhere, 5 birds were at Los Alamos 21 April 2014, 2 were there 29 April 2018, and 1 was found 7 September 2023.

In District V, spring migrants included several at New Cuyama 22 April–5 May 2018, 10 there 16 April 2019, 1 from 7–10 May 2019, up to 4 between 21 April–9 May 2022, 2 from 28 April–2 May 2023, and 1 on 27 April 2024; and in fall, 1 near Cuyama 23 July 2013, several near New Cuyama 30 July–7 September 2018, 1 there 17 August 2019, and 2 on 5 September 2023.

Piping Plover (*Anarhynchus melodus*)
Accidental.

One was present four consecutive years on the beach at the UCSB main campus or at the nearby mouth of Devereux Slough 14–18 April 1971, 16 December 1971–22 April 1972 (ph. *AB* 26:525), 16 December 1972–6 January 1973, and 16 December 1973–3 March 1974 (ph. SBMNH).

Wilson's Plover (*Anarhynchus wilsonia*)
Casual visitor in District C.

One was at Santa Barbara Harbor and East Beach 11 August 1992 (ph. *WB* 27:8, CBRC 2007, SBMNH) and another was at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 23 July–11 September 2011 (ph. SBMNH).

Mountain Plover (*Anarhynchus montanus*)
Uncommon and very local former winter visitor to the Santa Maria Valley and Vandenberg SFB in District C, now extirpated. Casual transient and winter visitor elsewhere in District C and in District V.

Mountain Plovers frequent dirt and sparse, short-grass fields. They were formerly found wintering, early November–late February, in short-grass fields near Black and Betteravia Roads west of Santa Maria during winters of 1966–1967, 1979–1980 through 1991–1992, and 1993–1994. Twenty there 21 October 1989 was probably a typical arrival date. The highest count was of up to 80 during November 1989. The latest records in early spring were of 38 there on 4 March 1982 and 5 on 6 March 1987. Those fields were converted to strawberries and other uses by the mid-1990s and the last sighting of likely wintering birds was of 16 individuals on 9 November 1994. However, a single bird was there 30 November 2005. In late 1988, this species was found at the main airfield on north Vandenberg SFB, a site had not previously censused. Up to 15 were present 28 October 1988–3 March 1989; in 1989–1990 up to 22 were present after 16 November, with 13 remaining 7 March; and up to 19 wintered there each year between 1990–1991 and 1994–1995. La Purisima CBC tallies at the site between 2000–2014 ranged from lows of only 4 birds on both 16 December 2007 and 16 December 2012, just a single individual on 14 December 2014, to highs of 12 on both 19 December 2004 and 19 December 2010 and of 25 on 14 December 2008. Then none was seen from 2015+.

Other North Coast records, all from fall and winter, include: 51 at Point Conception 6 December 1931, near Guadalupe 7 October 1979, Santa Maria River mouth 26 September 1980 (early), 3 near the Boathouse, south Vandenberg SFB, 11–13 November 1978 (CC&P 1980) and in mid-January 1983, 2 on beach on north Vandenberg SFB 4 October 1984 (early), 4 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 26 October 1996, 40 in fields west of Lompoc 5 March 1998, Santa Ynez River mouth 20–25 October 1998, Santa Maria River mouth 27 December 2000, up to 2 Santa Ynez River mouth 11–15 October 2004, Santa Maria River mouth 8–11 December 2008, Santa Ynez River mouth 24–31 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH), fields west of Lompoc 9–10 December 2023, and Santa Maria River mouth 16 December 2025–12 January 2026.

Even more unusual were 1 in "Santa Barbara" in January 1877 (*FMNH); 1 found dead on the road in Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, 17 October 1962 (*SBMNH); 1 at the Earl Warren Showgrounds in Santa Barbara 18 October 1970; singles on the beach in Goleta 8–9 December 1984, 30 October–1 November 1993, and 25 October–6 November 2005; 1 on the beach in vic. Carpinteria State Beach 12–15 October 2017 (ph. SBMNH); 1 on the beach on the main UCSB campus 25 December 2017–8 January 2018; and 1 at East Beach, Santa Barbara, 29 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH). One in the South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields, Goleta, 5 April 1977 was not only very unusual for the South Coast, but it was also an exceptionally late spring transient.

This species might conceivably occur very rarely during fall and winter in the Cuyama Valley, but to date, there are only two records for District V: “a few” 3 December 1972 and 15 near Cuyama 31 October 2003.

Snowy Plover (*Anarhynchus nivosus*)

Fairly common but local transient and winter visitor in District C; uncommon to fairly common but local summer resident. Decreased in numbers as a breeder, especially along the South Coast, but localized recolonization in the latter region. Casual transient in District I.

Snowy Plovers are found on the drier portions of sandy beaches and at river mouths; they are less numerous in coastal sloughs. Principal wintering localities during the past five decades are the Santa Maria River mouth, Vandenberg SFB beaches, near the outlet of Devereux Slough, and the Santa Barbara Harbor sandspit and nearby beaches. An extensive survey during winter 1979–1980 found 507 wintering birds in the county. Sixty percent of these were in the Purisima Point area and at the nearby Santa Ynez River mouth on Vandenberg SFB. The pre-1994 high count at the Santa Maria River mouth was of 130 from 27–31 August 1989. Maximum fall and winter census totals on north Vandenberg SFB were 210 individuals on 28 October 1988, 196 on 28 December 1989, 235 on 30 September 1990, 265 on 29 December 1990, and 209 on 10 September 1991.

More recently, from north to south, some representative high counts included 80 at the Santa Maria River mouth 6 September 2025, 59–70 at Minuteman Beach 11 November 2025–31 March 2026, 35 at Wall Beach 20 August 2024, 83 in the Santa Ynez River mouth area 26 October 2014, 134 there 18 December 2024, and 131 on 21 December 2025. La Purisima and Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBCs have recorded as many as 60 (19 December 2010) and 124 (26 December 2005) individuals, respectively. Farther to the south at Jalama Beach, 65+ were found 16 February 1992 and 40 were tallied 14 September 2024; and 60 were just north of Point Conception 11 December 2024.

One at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant and another at the nearby former Betteravia sugar settling ponds 3 September 1987 were both 9 mi (15 km) from the coast, as were 2 at the former site 11 July 2000 and 1 there 6 September 2011.

Along the South Coast, the earliest arrival dates of probable or definite southbound migrants include 22 June 1994 Goleta (2), 25 June 2018 Carpinteria, 6 July 1987 Goleta, 11–13 July 1989 Santa Barbara, and 12 July 1999 Goleta (8); 71 were tallied at the Devereux Slough mouth 3 August 1999. Since the late 1990s, the number of wintering birds on the beach to the west of the Devereux Slough outlet has grown from 140 on 3 December 1995 to 158 on 10 November 1997, 175 on 25 November 2001, up to 192 from December 2001–February 2002, 220 on 29 December 2006, 254 on 22 September 2007, 290 on 21 November 2024, 264 on 11 December 2024, and 223–244 from 6 October–21 November 2025. High counts in the Santa Barbara Harbor/East Beach area included 62 individuals on 30 December 1995, 58 on 11 November 1997, and 42 on 18 February 2000, but then none until early 2006 when 17 were counted on 3 February, then 62 from December 2006–February 2007, 46 birds on 10 March 2010, and 58 on 4 January 2014. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 369 individuals (2 January 2005). Goleta Beach Park in Goleta ceased supporting wintering Snowy Plovers after the early 1980s, except for up to 75 there 12 February–13 March 2013 and 75 on 7 January 2017. A few individuals persisted on Carpinteria beaches through 1987, followed by an increase in wintering birds including 24 near the mouth of Carpinteria Creek 19 March 1997, up to 10 at Carpinteria State Beach 12–26 January 2013, 43 near Santa Claus Lane 21 February 2013, and 25 there 9 February 2014, and, more recently, 28 at Carpinteria State Beach 5 March 2023, and 90 at Carpinteria City Beach and 76 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh beach both on 14 December 2024, with 56 at the latter 23 November 2025. Much farther west, recent highs include 13 at El Capitan State Beach 30 August 2023, 80 at Hollister Ranch west of Gaviota 5 December 2023, and 72 on

the east side of Point Conception 19 March 2025. The latest dates in spring at non-breeding sites are 23–24 May 1990 Goleta, through 25 May 1997 Goleta (up to 3), and 26 May 1995 Goleta.

Snowy Plovers nested in vic. Santa Barbara in substantial numbers during 1910–1911 (Bowles and Howell 1912), although only a remnant of this breeding population remained in 1923 (Dawson 1923). Page and Stenzel (1981) cite the presence of 24 pairs in Goleta in 1927. The last definite record of nesting in the city of Santa Barbara during that era was in 1933 (WFVZ; but see below). The species also nested on Carpinteria beaches; at least 27 egg sets were collected there between 1909 and 1947 (WFVZ, Dawson 1923). The last known nesting near Carpinteria took place in 1960 (but see below). Another nesting site was at Goleta Beach, with at least 16 egg sets collected between 1927 and 1948 (WFVZ). Two egg sets also come from the "Goleta Slough Flats" 1934–1936. Rett (fieldnotes) found nests between Goleta and Coal Oil Points in 1935 (2) and 1936 (1 or 2).

The breeding population declined substantially during the 1900s, primarily because of the encroachment of human activities and due to predation by introduced predators and abnormally high densities of some native predators (e.g., raccoons, foxes, crows, and possibly skunks). This species became threatened in the western United States. Past nesting population sizes in California were discussed in Page and Stenzel (1981). Along the North Coast, Snowy Plovers were nesting in 1952 at Jalama Beach (6 pairs), but none were found there in 1979–1980 or in 1993 (Persons 1994). In 1965, the species was believed to have bred just west of the outlet of Devereux Slough. The only localities still found to host nesting individuals during a 1978 survey, and their estimated population sizes, were the Santa Maria River mouth (18 pairs), south Guadalupe (Nipomo) Dunes (4 pairs), Santa Ynez River mouth (5 pairs), and the Purisima Point area (55 pairs). Two or 3 breeding pairs were just north of Point Conception in 1986. Seven pairs nested at Hollister Ranch, west of Gaviota (along the South Coast), in 1990. These latter two sites were very rarely visited by researchers. Low and high late-spring and summer censuses on Vandenberg SFB from Purisima Point northwards in the 1980s and early 1990s recorded 27 individuals on 17 May 1988, 21 on 28 June 1989, and 82 on 1 July 1991; but 140 on 30 June 1990, 184 on 29 July 1990, and 138 on 5 August 1991 (Persons 1994). Survey work since that time has been limited, although the species certainly continues to nest at several sites between the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths. Totals after early July may be augmented by migrants from outside the county.

Nesting was also attempted at the mouth of Devereux Slough in 1980 and May 1982 (nest with eggs, unsuccessful), and probably in 1984. An adult with 2 fledged juveniles there 16–17 June 1991 was evidence of probable local nesting, but they may also have been exceptionally early post-breeding arrivals. Definite and consistent nesting at this locality, post-1982, was finally documented beginning in 2001 with the discovery of 2 adults with 2 chicks on 26 June. This coincided with the implementation of additional nest site protection of the area (Lafferty et al. 2006). This was followed by 3 incubating adults on 18 April 2002; 5–6 pairs, 9 nests, and 14 fledglings by mid-August 2002; 26 nesting individuals in 2003, 39 in 2006, and 48 in 2011; and with 3 additional nests at a new, nearby site at the north end of Devereux Slough in 2011. Nesting continued in the Coal Oil Point Reserve area, March–August through 2026, with substantial variation in the number of nests and especially in fledging success from year to year, and with a new high of 68 breeding birds in 2019 (Sandoval and Nielsen 2020). In 2020, a single, unsuccessful nest was located slightly farther inland at the North Campus Open Space. Nesting at the Santa Barbara Harbor sandspit, involving a single successful nest, was documented during May–July 2005, the first breeding in the city of Santa Barbara since 1933; 1 of the nesting adults (color banded) was seen again at East Beach near the harbor on 1+ August 2011. An adult with 2 chicks in Carpinteria 21 May–8 June 2013 established the first nesting record in that area since 1960. A nest at Carpinteria State Beach in spring 2020 was unsuccessful, but that was followed in 2021 with another nesting pair there 8 May–11+ July 2021, of which the female had been banded as a chick at Surf Beach near Lompoc in 2013, and

which ultimately successfully fledged young. And in 2022, 4 pairs and several nests (one successful) were discovered there between 21 March–2 July.

Two individuals that wintered near Devereux Slough in 1989–1990 had been banded at Lake Abert in southeastern Oregon. One bird at Coal Oil Point 5–17+ September 1993 had been banded on its nest in Monterey County in May 1993 and was then seen on Santa Rosa Island 22 July–15 August 1993. A color-banded bird in Carpinteria during summer 2006 had been fledged that spring at Fort Ord in Monterey County. One bird in the East Beach area, Santa Barbara, between 2009–2011 during the non-breeding season had been fledged on Vandenberg SFB in 2006; a young bird there during August 2011 had been raised earlier in the year at Marina State Beach, Monterey County; 1 there during late July 2013 had been banded earlier in the year also in Monterey County; and 1 there in August 2016 had been banded in Monterey County back in 2007. A fast-traveling color-banded Snowy Plover at Carpinteria Salt Marsh on 28 July 2011 had been seen just two days earlier far to the south at Silver Strand State Beach in San Diego (!) and was a young bird that had fledged in June to the north at Monterey's Marina State Beach. An individual at Jalama Beach County Park 24 August 2013 had been banded as a chick in Monterey County earlier that year. Back at Coal Oil Point, an adult in July 2016 had been banded earlier in the year in Monterey County, and a juvenile also in July 2016 had been banded as a chick earlier in the year in San Luis Obispo County. One at Jalama Beach County Park 10 October 2019 and 28 September 2020 had been banded as a fledgling in San Luis Obispo County in 2018. One at the Santa Maria River mouth 18 July 2021 had been banded ten years earlier at the Salinas River mouth in Monterey County in 2011.

There is one record of a fall transient juvenile in District I: Lake Cachuma 6 September 2025.

SANDPIPERS (SCOLOPACIDAE)

Upland Sandpiper (*Batramia longicauda*)

Accidental.

The first record for mainland Santa Barbara County involved a bird at Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 8 September 2019. [Another individual was heard only at that same site by an experienced observer on 21 September 2018, but the record was not formally accepted.] [One was present on Santa Barbara Island 23 May 1975.]

Hudsonian Whimbrel (*Numenius hudsonicus*)

Fairly common to locally common transient and winter visitor along the South Coast, uncommon non-breeder in early summer. Status along the North Coast more complex: common spring and early-fall transient and uncommon summer non-breeder, uncommon and very local during the late fall and winter. Very rare or casual in spring in District I, rare but perhaps regular then in District V.

Hudsonian Whimbrels inhabit sandy beaches, rocky shores, sloughs, river mouths, coastal lagoons, pastureland, and short-grass environments such as cemeteries and golf courses. The peak spring and fall migration periods for this species are during March, April, and early May, and during July and August, respectively. Flocks of up to 100 occur during spring in pastureland in the Santa Maria Valley (at least formerly, recent high is 40 birds 28 April 2010); particularly large numbers were present on north Vandenberg SFB beaches during late April and early May 1990, with an estimated 3500 present on 29 April. A total of 443 at Devereux Slough 17 April 2013 was exceptional for the South Coast. During this season, flocks also can be seen migrating up the coast just offshore. In late summer, large numbers are found along Vandenberg SFB beaches (e.g., 120 on Point Sal beach 28 July 1980). Some 400 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 28 July 2000, 230 near Santa Barbara Harbor 1 August 2009, 242 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 15 August

2011, and 203 there 30 July 2012 are large concentrations for the South Coast. Southbound and northbound migrants may occur somewhat regularly well offshore, such as the 5 birds seen flying south 125 mi (200 km) W of San Nicolas Island 9 July 1992, 2 over the shelf edge SW of San Miguel Island 21 July 2012, and 1 seen 31–39 mi (50–63 km) SW of Point Arguello 2 May 2013.

Summering non-breeders are uncommon along the length of the coast, although medium-sized flocks of up to 20 may congregate at the Santa Maria River mouth and Devereux Slough during June; 28 birds were at Devereux Slough 2 June 2010, and 25–26 and 30–36 were there and on adjacent beaches 2–16 June 2012 and 12–18 June 2013, respectively; but the 36 birds there 26 June 2010 likely contained at least some southbound arrivals.

In winter, Hudsonian Whimbrels are fairly common, but possibly declining, along much of the South Coast. Up to 30 frequent the Santa Barbara Cemetery in Montecito most years, at least formerly; and a flock of 45 was on a flooded playing field in Santa Barbara 23 February 1980. During the late 1900s, the Santa Barbara CBC recorded as many as 109 individuals (20 December 1978) and often had the highest count for this species in the nation. More recently, high counts included a total of 70 birds flying by Goleta beaches on 4 January 2014 and 68 on UCSB athletic fields 15 February 2019. Along the North Coast, Hudsonian Whimbrels are much rarer during the latter fall and winter (late September–February). Small numbers during this period occur along the rocky coast and adjoining beaches, but the species is virtually absent from river mouths and pastureland. The only winter records for the Santa Maria Valley through the mid-1990s were of single individuals near Santa Maria 23 December 1980 and 19 December 1981. A Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC total of 102 on 4 January 1981 is in error. Since the mid-1990s, high counts there and on the La Purisima CBC are of fewer than 5 individuals, and the species is missed altogether on many counts.

It is not known whether Hudsonian Whimbrels became more numerous in winter along the South Coast during the latter half of the 1900s; Dawson (1923), however, cited only one winter record for Santa Barbara.

Inland, Hudsonian Whimbrels are very rare or casual spring migrants in District I: 4 were near Santa Ynez 17 April 2007, 45 were over Foxen Canyon Road near Los Olivos 10 April 2022, and 1 was at Lake Cachuma 13 April 2022. In District V, this species will likely prove to be somewhat regular in spring (mid-March to early May), with 60–65 near Cuyama 14 April 1982, 3 west of New Cuyama 18 April 1982, 3 near Cuyama 20 April 2003, 31 near Cuyama 5 April 2008, 2 near Cuyama 27 April 2008, 2 near New Cuyama 20 April 2012, 14 at New Cuyama 15 March 2019, 1–2 there 4–17 April 2019, 3 in Quatal Canyon 12 April 2019, and 4 at New Cuyama 30 March 2020.

Individuals at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 14–19 August and 15 August 2011 had both been banded on unknown dates within the species' winter range in central Chile.

Little Curlew (*Numenius minutus*)

Casual visitor in District C.

There are three records: a juvenile was near Santa Maria 16 September–14 October 1984 (ph. *AB* 39:102, SBMNH). For more details (and ph.) see Lehman and Dunn (1985) and Schram (1985). This represented the first record for the New World. Another individual, probably a juvenile, was also in the Santa Maria Valley near Guadalupe 23–24 September 1988. A third bird, an adult, was at the Santa Maria River mouth and nearby beaches 4–20 August 1993 (ph. *AB* 48:159, *WB* 27:105, CBRC 2007, SBMNH). These records represent three of just six sightings for North America. It is possible that the same individual was involved in at least two of them.

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

Formerly a locally common transient and winter visitor along the North Coast, uncommon there in late spring and early summer. Uncommon and local along the South Coast, but has increased there in winter. Very rare in Districts I and V, casual in District M.

Long-billed Curlews are found in a variety of habitats, including sandy beaches, sloughs, river mouths, pastureland, agricultural fields, and dry grassland. They were formerly common in the Santa Maria Valley, late July–March, and fairly common there the remainder of the year. Large flocks were often encountered, the largest total being more than 1000 on 6 March 1955. With the loss of much pastureland and other open short-grass habitats there since the late 1980s and 1990s, numbers of curlews have declined substantially. For example, 459 on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 22 December 2002 is by far the largest total there since the mid-1990s; 80 near Orcutt 7 December 2012 was a good recent single-site count. The species was also seen in large numbers on Vandenberg SFB beaches; 460 on the beach at Point Sal 28 July 1980 was a very high count. A flock of 64 near Lompoc 17 March 2000 was a large count for that area. La Purisima CBCs have recorded no more than 17 individuals (22 December 1996), however, and the species is missed altogether on many counts.

Fall migrants and winterers may arrive in substantial numbers as early as late June. Two hundred were on north Vandenberg SFB beaches and 50 were near Santa Maria 23 June 1981, and a flock of 150 was near Santa Maria 25 June 1982. These would be extremely high numbers if they were summering birds. That these birds were probable migrants is supported by the arrival of 4 in Goleta 24 June 1976 and 12 there 24 June 2011, where none had over-summered. One bird near Santa Maria 19 June 2018 and 6 in Goleta 14 June 2019 may have been early arrivals. The first juveniles arrive by late July (e.g., 29 July 1990 Santa Maria River mouth (2)), with 2 at Coal Oil Point 20 July 2023.

Along the South Coast through the mid-1990s, this species occurred in numbers regularly only at Carpinteria Salt Marsh. The population there was usually fewer than 20 birds from July–April, and fewer than 5 between May–June. It was an uncommon fall migrant in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area and was uncommon to rare there in spring, early summer, and winter; 1 to 3 wintering individuals was the average. Since about 2000, however, numbers have increased, particularly in winter; and the Santa Barbara CBC has recorded as many as 50 individuals (4 January 2013 and 4 January 2020). High counts from a variety of seasons include 30 at Coal Oil Point 20 July 2023, 54 at Devereux Slough 20 October 2010, 62 at UCSB 23 November 2003, 90 at Goleta Beach Park 7 December 2010 and 70 there 31 January 2012, 170 at Devereux Slough 10 March 2022, 60 at Devereux Slough 4 April 2004, 12 at Goleta Slough 25 May 2006, and 20 at Devereux Slough 2 June 2010.

One spring migrant was well offshore beyond San Miguel Island 28 April 2006.

Most curlews have departed by mid-May. Non-breeders were formerly fairly common along the North Coast (high of 40 at the Santa Maria River mouth 7 June 1979) and uncommon along the South Coast, but such numbers have declined in at least the Santa Maria area, as discussed above. Away from the Santa Maria Valley, high early-summer counts are 20 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 June 1990 and 51–62 near Shuman Creek mouth, Vandenberg SFB, 3–10 June 2000.

Although there are very few records for Districts I and V, the Long-billed Curlew is probably a rare or very rare transient. The only definite records for District I are of 2 on 20 July 1989, 1 on 19 July 1991, 1 from 12–24 September 2004, 1 from 18–24 August 2007, 1 on ca. 4 September 2010, 1 on 27 July 2016, 2 on 13 October 2016, 1 on 4–5 November 2016, and 13 August 2022, all at Lake Cachuma; and 1 near Santa Ynez 18 September 2022. In District V, spring migrants included 3 on 8 April 2007, 1 on 23 March 2018, 2 on 3 May 2018, and 1 on 16 April and 2 on 25 May 2019; fall migrants were a flock of 26 near New Cuyama 30 July 2001, 1 near Cuyama 1 October 2015, up to 5 birds on multiple dates during August–September 2018 at New Cuyama,

1–10 birds there 12 August–8 September 2019, and singles on 17 August and 12 September 2020; and winter birds were found 11 December 2005 and 25–26 January 2025 (3).

In District M, 1 was over East Camino Cielo, Santa Ynez Mountains, 25 May 2009.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

Casual visitor in District C.

A bird on the beach at Santa Barbara Harbor 21 May 2011 (ph. SBMNH) was exceptional not only because it was a county first, but also because there were no previous May records for the state. A more "typical" individual (juvenile) occurred at the Santa Ynez River mouth 11–12 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)

Fairly common to locally common transient in District C, uncommon to rare in early summer; fairly common to locally common in winter along the South Coast, now uncommon along the North Coast. Casual migrant in District I.

Marbled Godwits are found at sandy beaches, lakes, ponds, lagoons, sloughs, estuaries, river mouths, and flooded pastureland near the coast. They usually occur in small or medium-sized flocks, occasionally in large numbers in flooded fields, particularly in the Santa Maria Valley (formerly). Fall migrants begin appearing in early July. The maximum count is 250 in the Santa Maria Valley 16 October 1981. A good single-site count for the South Coast is 127 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 22 August 2011. One was seen well offshore flying east ca. 35 mi (55 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 20 September 2003 and another was ca. 9 mi (15 km) SW of San Miguel Island 2 September 2014.

In winter, Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 297 individuals (4 January 2003; but some duplication likely). A high 270 were on the Isla Vista beach 21 January 2008 and 150 were near Goleta Point 3 March 2011. Along the North Coast, however, this species is now much scarcer. It is missed on at least half the CBCs there; the high on La Purisima counts is only 20 birds (21 December 1997); and on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe count maxima since the mid-1990s do not exceed a measly 8 individuals, except for 153 birds on 29 December 1996.

Small numbers of non-breeders often remain through the late spring and summer (late May–June); 8 in Goleta 10 June 1987 is a high count.

Inland, most records are of fall migrants at Lake Cachuma: 1 on 2 September 2000, 3 on 7 September 2008, 2 on 26 September 2009, 1 on 13 August 2016, 1 on 22 September 2020, and 1 on 13 July 2022. In spring, 1 was there 26 April 2009, and a flock of 20 was near Los Alamos 16 April 1998.

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Very uncommon transient and winter visitor along the North Coast. Very uncommon transient along the South Coast, now rare there in winter. Very rare in early summer. Appears to be declining.

Ruddy Turnstones are found along sandy beaches and rocky shores and at coastal sloughs and river mouths. Fall migrants arrive beginning in mid-July (earliest arrival date: 9 July 1983 Purisima Point (2)). Most spring transients are gone by mid-May. Numbers appear to have declined since the early 2000s.

Along the North Coast, this species occurs regularly in small numbers; the largest numbers are present during fall (e.g., 15 at Purisima Point 29 July 1981). It occurs locally during winter, at least formerly. At Purisima Point, there were 8 on 31 January 1981 and 7 on 28 February 1982. Ten were at the Santa Maria River mouth 20 January 1979. Up to 12 individuals were recorded annually on La Purisima CBCs through the end of the 1990s. Since then, Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs have recorded no more than 4 individuals, except for 12 and 22 reported on Santa Maria–Guadalupe 29 December 1996 and 28 December 1997, respectively; and the species has been missed altogether on many counts since the early 2000s. In

spring, the highest count is 15 along north Vandenberg SFB beaches 7 May 1981. The species is very rare after late May. One at the Santa Maria River mouth 15–22 June 1980, 8 in partial alternate plumage at the Santa Maria River mouth 1 July 1988, 1 near Point Conception 16 June 1989, up to 4 at the Santa Maria River Mouth 25 June–4 July 1989, 7 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 June 1991, and 1 at Purisima Point 19 June 2025 were either non-breeding wanderers or summered locally. Up to 3 at Purisima Point 2–13 July 1980 were in basic plumage and probably summered locally. One at the Santa Maria River mouth 10 June–3 July 1994 clearly summered locally, as did up to 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 6 June–29 July 2015.

This species has occurred up to 9 mi (15 km) inland in the Santa Maria Valley: at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 18 May 1980 (2), 29 July 1989, 20 August 1989, 14 August 1993, 9 August 1996, 3 September 2011, and 24 August 2012; and 2 mi (3 km) to the south at the former Betteravia sugar settling ponds 13–16 August 1981. One bird was 3.4 mi (5.5 km) inland at Guadalupe 30 August–5 September 2017.

Along the South Coast, the Ruddy Turnstone is less numerous. The highest fall count is 20 between Point Conception and Gaviota 9 September 1969; the species may be more numerous along this stretch of the South Coast than from Gaviota east to Carpinteria. It is now rare after October. Through the 1990s, no more than 10 individuals were present during winter between Goleta and Carpinteria (fewer than in other parts of coastal Southern California), but the species was recorded annually in very small numbers on the Santa Barbara CBC. Since 2000, it has been missed on most CBCs and high South Coast (east of Gaviota) winter totals do not exceed 4 individuals. Spring transients may appear as early as late March (i.e., 29 March 1978 Goleta). The latest records of probable spring migrants are 2 June 1977, 5 June 1982, and 6 June 1990 Goleta. One (basic plumage) in Goleta 3 July 1988 and singles there 17 June 1989 and 22 June 1997 were non-breeding wanderers or were summering locally; up to 2 in Goleta 23 May–4 July 1991 and up to 2 there late May–26 June 1993 clearly summered locally.

Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*)

Fairly common transient and uncommon winter visitor along the North Coast, uncommon along the South Coast. Very rare in early summer.

Black Turnstones frequent primarily rocky shores; they are also seen locally on sandy beaches (especially where kelp has been deposited), rarely at coastal sloughs and river mouths. The largest numbers are along the North Coast, at least formerly. Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC totals have been under 35 individuals, and those from the La Purisima CBC are no greater than 30 birds.

Fall migrants arrive beginning in early July (e.g., 2 July 2004 Carpinteria, 3 July 1979 Goleta (3), and 3 July 1990 Santa Barbara), and see below. They become uncommon to fairly common in August. The maximum count is an exceptional 200–300 between Point Conception and Gaviota 9 September 1969.

Along the South Coast between Gaviota and Carpinteria, the species is local in distribution, the result of the small amount of rocky shoreline available. Regular winter localities include Goleta and Coal Oil Points, the Santa Barbara Harbor area, and Carpinteria. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 59 individuals (2 January 2010); 50+ at Leadbetter Beach, Santa Barbara, 9 January 2005 and 41 at Goleta Point 3 January 2009 were high single-site counts. In spring, the high count is 62 birds at Goleta Point 25 April 2013.

There are a number of June sightings along the coast, some of which probably involve late spring or early fall migrants, whereas others are probably non-breeders summering locally. Only two records involve birds that clearly over-summered: Goleta late May–24 June 1993 and Goleta 12–29 June 2020 (up to 2). One in Goleta 13–20 June 1991 likely did so. Those records which involved likely late-spring migrants include Montecito 7 June 1915 (Dawson 1915); Carpinteria Salt Marsh 1–7 June 1920; Goleta 8 June 1959; Goleta 10 June 1976 (alternate plumage); Santa

Barbara 8 June 1988; Santa Ynez River mouth 10 June 2013, 6 June 2015, and 8 June 2019; Santa Barbara 6 June 2020 and 5 June 2021; and Goleta 2 June 2022. Records of up to 4 at the Santa Maria River mouth 25 June–4 July 1989, Santa Barbara 29 June–3 July 1990, Santa Ynez River mouth 30 June 1991, 2 in Santa Barbara 1+ July 1994, and up to 2 Coal Oil Point at 26–29 June 2021 possibly or probably involved early-fall transients. The remaining records—Goleta 18 June 1960, Santa Barbara 15 June 1977, Goleta 22 June 1977, Santa Barbara 20 June 1984, Goleta 21 June 1984, south Vandenberg SFB 22 June 1989, Goleta 22 June 1994, Carpinteria 17 June 2004, 20 June 2007, 15 June 2013, Goleta 22–24 June 2018, Santa Ynez River mouth 26 June 2020, and south Vandenberg SFB 18 June 2024—are difficult to categorize.

There is a published report of a bird seen inland at Lake Cachuma and on the unexpected date of 15 June 2005. The documentation is incomplete; thus, given the extraordinary nature of this sighting, this record is deemed only tentative.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

Rare to uncommon transient in District C, casual in winter and early summer.

Red Knots are found at sloughs and river mouths, less often on beaches or at coastal lagoons and ponds. They are most frequently seen along the North Coast (particularly at the Santa Maria River mouth) during fall migration, mid-July–late October. The species is rarer along the South Coast. The earliest arrival dates are 1 July 1988 and 2 July 1981 Santa Maria River mouth for the North Coast and 4 July 1991 Goleta and 6 July 2004 Carpinteria for the South Coast. Older maximum counts are 24 at the Santa Maria River mouth 20 July 1979 and 20 in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area 18–19 July 1970. Maximum counts since the mid-1980s have not exceeded 7 individuals, except for 17 at the Santa Maria River mouth 17 July 1994, 12 at Devereux Slough on both 21 August 1997 and 10 September 2011, 21 birds at the Santa Maria River mouth 27 August 2000, 14 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 18 July 2018, and 11 at Devereux Slough 24 August 2019. Juveniles arrive beginning in mid-to-late August. The species is casual after October. Single individuals well away from the immediate coast were seen 9 mi (15 km) inland at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 29 July 1981 and at the nearby, former Betteravia sugar settling ponds 3 September 1987 and 3 September 1989. Two at a pasture near Guadalupe 4 October 2011 were 3 mi (5 km) from the coast.

The only late-fall and winter records are from Goleta December 1975–3 January 1976, 2 at the Santa Maria River mouth 4 November–24 December 1978, 2 there October–19 December 1981, 2 there 27 November 1988, Carpinteria 10 January–21 March 1990, Santa Barbara 18 November 1995, Carpinteria 6 December 1995, Santa Ynez River mouth 7–11 November 2004, Goleta 16 October 2009–12 January 2010, Santa Maria River mouth 23 February 2012, Santa Ynez River mouth 7 February 2014, 2 in Carpinteria 17 December 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and Goleta 7 February 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Red Knots are rare but regular spring transients in April and the first half of May. Singles in Goleta 15 March 1992 and 25 March 2018 were probably early transients. High counts include 8 birds at both the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 May 2019 and at Coal Oil Point 19 May 2019. One in basic plumage at the Santa Ynez River mouth 25 May 1986 was somewhat late, as was a bird at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 May 2016. Single individuals in full or partial alternate plumage in Goleta 12 June 1976 and 4 June 1981 were probably exceptionally late spring migrants.

One in basic plumage at the Santa Maria River mouth 18–22 June 1980 and 2 there 12 June 1981 may have summered locally or were summer wanderers. Up to 3 in basic and partial-alternate plumage at the Santa Maria River mouth 12 June–15 July 1994 clearly summered locally.

Surfbird (*Calidris virgata*)

Fairly common spring and uncommon fall transient and uncommon to rare winter visitor along the North Coast. Fairly common spring transient along the South Coast; very rare in fall and winter away from Carpinteria.

Surfbirds are found on rocky shores; migrants occur very rarely on sandy beaches and at coastal sloughs and river mouths. Fall transients have arrived along the North Coast as early as 9 July 1993 at the Santa Maria River mouth and 13 July 1981 at Purisima Point (3). The species does not become uncommon until August. A count of 40–50 at the Santa Maria River mouth 31 July 2000 was both large for that time of year and at atypical beach and mudflat habitat. The maximum winter count is 26 on north Vandenberg SFB 23 December 1979; but numbers there at this season have apparently declined and it is now very uncommon to rare. Most Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs since the 1990s record no more than 5 or 6 individuals (high counts: 20 on 21 December 2003 and 14 birds 23 December 2017 on the former and 14 birds 14 December 2014 on the latter). One at the Santa Maria River mouth 3 June 1990 was late.

Along the South Coast, Surfbirds are primarily spring transients from late March through early May. Flocks of up to 100 are recorded regularly, particularly at Goleta and Coal Oil Points (highest counts: 354 at Coal Oil Point 11 April 1998, 250 at Goleta Point 16 April 2001) and along the rocky shore in Carpinteria. The earliest arrival dates are 3–4 March 2018 Santa Barbara Harbor (5), 9 March 2019 Santa Barbara Harbor, 10 March 1998 Carpinteria, and 10 March 2015 Coal Oil Point; the late dates are from Goleta Point 19 May 1997 (2) and 28 May 2019. This species was also recorded regularly at the "Carpinteria asphalt pits" from 1921–1925. Late spring migrants have been noted three times in early June: 2 at mouth of Romero Creek, Montecito, 4 June 1915 (Willett 1933), Devereux Slough 2 June 1977, and 3 in Carpinteria 10 June 1983.

During fall and winter, Surfbirds are very rare along most of the South Coast. In fall, 5 (3 collected) were in vic. Santa Barbara and Goleta 16 September 1911 (*UCLA; Bowles and Howell 1912) and 17 records were made, 1960–1993, between 11 July (1989, Santa Barbara (2)) and 2 November (1993, Santa Barbara). Since, the mid-1990s, Surfbirds have continued to be very rare in autumn (as early as 16 July 2023 Coal Oil Point and 17 July 2026 Coal Oil Point) along much of the South Coast east of Gaviota. A long-staying bird was at Goleta Point 23 October–21 November 2008 and another was at UCSB 14 August–22 September 2020. In winter, the early records are vic. Santa Barbara 30 December 1962, Santa Barbara 14 January 1968, vic. Santa Barbara 23 December 1972, and Goleta 30 December 1978. Since 2013, there have been 11 records (involving 19 individuals) at Goleta, Santa Barbara Harbor (mostly), and Carpinteria between early December and the beginning of March. More recently, however, Surfbirds have been discovered to be of fairly regular occurrence in fall and winter in the Carpinteria area, with one winter record in 1993 but then annually or almost annually since 2000–2001 at either the mouth of Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Rincon Point, or, especially, the Carpinteria Bluffs (Carpinteria seal colony). High counts there are: Fall—8–21 birds on 5–6 August 2004 and 37 on 10 August 2006; and Winter—13 birds on 19 January 2006 and 18 on 18 December 2011 (Rincon Point).

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*)

Very rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C. Most of the records have come from the Santa Maria Valley. Casual in District I.

Ruffs frequent flooded fields, sewage treatment ponds, and the vegetated edges of ponds, sloughs, and river mouths. The records from the Santa Maria Valley (including the Santa Maria River mouth), where it was formerly most regular, involve both adults and juveniles. They are: Fall—24 September 1978 and 23 subsequent records (involving 26 individuals) between 31 August (1986) and 29 November (1981) and which included 4 at the Santa Maria River mouth 6

October 1986 (an unprecedented single-site count anywhere in the state); and Winter—24 December 1978 and 5 subsequent records of single birds which remained as late as 17 March (1987). In addition, 1 there 26 March 1986 was either a previously undiscovered wintering bird or was an early spring migrant. Deteriorating shorebird habitat in the Santa Maria Valley has resulted in far fewer records since the early 1990s.

Along the South Coast, single juveniles were in Goleta 14–24 September 1983, 22 August–1 September 1989, and 23 September–7 October 1989. An adult was at Devereux Slough 16 July–8 September 1990 and again 31 July–2 September 1991 (ph. SBMNH), and what was probably the same individual was at Goleta Slough 20 July–5 August 1993 (ph. SBMNH). One was on the beach near the Santa Barbara Harbor 24 November 1991 (ph. SBMNH). A juvenile was at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 11–16 October 2005. Up to 2 juveniles were at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads in Goleta 14 September–2 October 2006 (ph. SBMNH). [A report of a bird at Goleta Slough 20 September 1977 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

In District I, 1 was at the Los Alamos sewage treatment plant 10 October 2012 (ph. SBMNH).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

Casual, formerly very rare, fall transient in District C. One summer record.

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers frequent habitats similar to those of the Pectoral Sandpiper. Deteriorating shorebird habitat in the Santa Maria Valley has resulted in far fewer records since the early 1990s. There were 14 records of juvenile birds through the early 1990s: Goleta Slough 13–21 September 1969; Devereux Slough and vicinity 5 October 1977, 24–30 October 1977, and 13 December 1977 (exceptionally late); Santa Maria River mouth 1 October 1978 and 15–17 October 1978 (up to 2); near Santa Maria 22–27 October 1978; near Devereux Slough 19 September 1979 (ph. SBMNH); Santa Maria River mouth 26–29 September 1984; near Santa Maria 20 October 1985 and 24 September 1987; near Guadalupe 7 October 1987; Santa Ynez River mouth 4–11 October 1990; and near Santa Maria 1–5 November 1991. This represented nearly half of the records at the time for Southern California. Since the mid-1990s, there have been only three county records (all involving juveniles): near Santa Maria 22–25 October 1996, Santa Maria River mouth 29–30 October 2006 (ph. SBMNH), and Santa Ynez River mouth 11 October 2013 (ph. SBMNH).

An adult at Devereux Slough 21 July 1988 was exceptional. There are only a small number of state records of birds this age and this early during fall migration.

Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*)

Very rare fall transient in District C, casual in spring.

Stilt Sandpipers usually associate with dowitchers at coastal sloughs, ponds, and river mouths. The species is most often encountered during August and September, although fall migrants arrive as early as July. The first county record was from Carpinteria Salt Marsh 14–18 August 1963. One at the Santa Maria River mouth 29–30 June 1980 was exceptionally early, as was 1 at Goleta Slough 29 June 2019. Other early records that involve adults are 2 in Goleta 27 July 1969, near Santa Maria 30 July 1979, Goleta 6–16 July 1980, near Santa Maria 29 July 1984, and near Santa Maria 8 July 2016 (ph. SBMNH). There are now 29 records (involving 40 individuals), mostly of juveniles, between 11 August (2001, Goleta; 2020, Santa Maria River mouth (ph. SBMNH)) and 7 October (1987, near Guadalupe).

This species is casual in spring: Goleta 6 May 1965, 2 in Goleta 14 April 1977 (ph. SBMNH), and Santa Maria River mouth 1 June 1980 (exceptionally late).

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Casual fall transient in District C.

There are four records: a juvenile was at several localities west of Santa Maria 16–20 September 1984, similar-looking molting adults were at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 10–11

August 1999 (ph. SBMNH) and back to the north at the Santa Ynez River mouth 13–15 August 1999 (same bird?), and one lingered long and late on Goleta beaches from 16 September–2 December 2020 (ph. *NAB* 73(1):58); SBMNH).

Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)

Casual fall transient in District C.

An adult was at the Santa Maria River mouth 15 July 1990 (ph. *AB* 44:1187, *WB* 25:13, SBMNH), and another adult was there 11–15 July 1994 (ph. *Birding* 37:630) and again 28–29 June 1995 (ph. *FN* 49:980). [Singles reported at the Santa Maria River mouth 31 August 1996 and at the Santa Ynez River mouth 13 July 2000 were not accepted by the CBRC.]

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C, uncommon and rather local in early summer.

Sanderlings are found primarily along sandy beaches, but they are also present less commonly on rocky shores and at sloughs and river mouths (common, however, at the Santa Maria River mouth). Numbers appear to have declined somewhat. Fall migrants appear beginning in early July, and spring transients may still be present in late May and even during the first few days of June—as late as, e.g., 8 June 2016 in Goleta (alternate plumage). The highest counts during fall are 600+ at Santa Barbara Harbor 17 August 1946, 1500 at the Santa Maria River mouth 12 September 1988, ca. 3000 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 22 August 1996, and 1100 on Isla Vista beach 15 November 2003. Highs in spring include 1350 on north Vandenberg SFB 7 May 1981. Approximately 150 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 May 2023 was a good count so late in the season. More recent South Coast highs have not exceeded ca. 300 birds. Offshore, birds have been found up to 20 miles beyond the islands. In winter, Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1700 individuals (31 December 1966). Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBCs have recorded as many as 2012 birds (23 December 2011), and La Purisima CBCs have found upwards of 2160 (18 December 1994), 2609 (22 December 1996—2000 of which were at the Santa Ynez River mouth), and 2095 (19 December 2010) individuals, although many other totals there are under 200!

In early summer, the larger concentrations of non-breeders (up to 25 individuals) are found at the Santa Maria River mouth and in the Santa Barbara Harbor area. A total of 140 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 June 1993 included about 10 percent alternate-plumaged birds, some of which may well have been late migrants as only 35 individuals remained on 15 June. Thirty were at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 June 1998.

Interestingly, small numbers (up to 15) occurred somewhat regularly during the late 1970s and early 1980s at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 9 mi (15 km) from the coast in the Santa Maria Valley (only record since then: 23 August 2005), and as many as 46 were found to frequent the Santa Maria municipal landfill during winters of 1986–1987 and 1987–1988, some 16 mi (26 km) inland. In addition, up to 16 birds were found 9-1/2 mi (15 km) inland near Santa Maria 27 January–28 February 2019. One bird was along a flood control channel near Lompoc 5 mi (8 km) from the coast on 19 December 1992.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

In District C, uncommon to fairly common, formerly locally common, fall transient; uncommon winter visitor and spring transient; casual in summer. Very rare in Districts I and V.

Dunlins are most numerous at coastal sloughs, river mouths, and sewage treatment ponds; they also regularly frequent flooded fields and locally on beaches. They occur rarely on rocky shores during migration. The first individuals appear by mid-September (early arrival dates: 5 September 1957 vic. Santa Barbara and 6 September 1996 Santa Ynez River mouth). An adult in alternate plumage near Santa Maria 31 July–3 August 1992 was exceptionally early.

The largest numbers were found in the Santa Maria Valley (e.g., 1200 on 20 January 1979), but numbers there have declined substantially since the late 1980s with the deteriorating shorebird habitat. The maximum since 2000 on a Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC is 100 birds (22 December 2013), and most totals there are substantially lower. La Purisima CBCs have recorded between just 0–22 individuals. A total of 76 birds were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 11 November 2020. Along the South Coast, this species also has declined coincidental to the loss of tidal mudflat habitat and is now very uncommon in winter. Seventy-five were in Goleta 24 November 1977. Totals of 117 and 147 on the Santa Barbara CBC on 23 December 1972 and 31 December 1977, respectively—if correct—are indicative of those higher counts in earlier years. It was formerly fairly common at Carpinteria Salt Marsh; recent winter counts there are of up to 15 individuals. Fewer than 10 individuals typically winter annually in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area since the 1980s; 12 at Devereux Slough 24 January 2011 and 15 there and along adjacent west Isla Vista beach 22 December 2013–24 January 2014 are recent high counts. Up to 3 at the Santa Barbara Harbor 1–17 January 1989 were at an atypical locality for that time of year.

Spring transients move through from early April to mid-May. The maximum counts are 115 on north Vandenberg SFB 7 May 1981 for the North Coast, and 63 at Devereux Slough 2 May 2010 and 219 at UCSB 28 April 2011 for the South Coast. Late dates include 25 May 2013 Carpinteria, 26 May 1984 Santa Ynez River mouth, 25–29 May 2013 Goleta, 31 May 1969 Santa Barbara, 31 May 2015 Santa Ynez River mouth (10—high number for so late), 25 May–1 June 1969 and 6 June 1976 Goleta, and 6–8 June 2015 Santa Ynez River mouth.

A bird in alternate plumage at the Santa Maria River mouth 20–27 June 1999 and another at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 July 2024 are difficult to categorize.

In District I, 1 at Lake Cachuma 4 October 1997, 8 there 10 October 1997, and up to 3 found 18 October–11 November 2016 were on typical dates for fall migrants; and 6 spring transients were present 27 April 2015. More unusual inland in winter, singles were present 28–29 December 2009 and 26 December 2014.

In District V, the first record of 2 birds near Cuyama 9 December 2007 were somewhat late in that region. There are now six spring records there between 29 March (2020) and 1 May, and four fall records between 11 October and 24 November, all involving from 1–3 individuals.

Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)

Very uncommon fall transient in District C; very rare in Districts I and V. Casual in spring. Two winter records.

Baird's Sandpipers are found most often at the upper reaches of sloughs and river mouths, and along pond, lake, and marshy creek shores. They are seen rarely on upper beaches around kelp deposits. The species is primarily a fall transient between late July and early October; nearly all of the individuals recorded have been juveniles. Singles at the Santa Maria River mouth 10 July 1980, in Goleta 12 July 1990, at the Santa Maria River mouth 6 July 1993, and near Santa Maria 5 July 1994 were adults and very early fall transients. The only other definite records of adults are 2 near Santa Maria 4 August 1981, 2 there 20–29 July 1985, 1 there [no date] July 1996, 1 in Goleta 8–11 August 2005 (ph. SBMNH), and singles near Santa Maria 21 July 2006 (ph. SBMNH), 21 July 2008 (ph. SBMNH), and 5 August 2008. Early arrival dates of juveniles include 20 July 1990 Goleta, 22 July 1981 Santa Maria River mouth, and 24 July 1987 near Santa Maria. Dawson (1916b) reported an un-aged bird 25 July 1914 vic. Santa Barbara. The largest numbers pass through during August and early September. During this period as many as 17 individuals (21 August 1982) were seen in a day through the late 1980s, particularly in the Santa Maria Valley; 13 were at the Santa Maria River mouth 20 August 1996. A total of 62 seen in the county between 29 July and 3 October 1980 is the highest season total. Since the mid-1990s, most autumn totals in District C are of fewer than 15 individuals, with a high of 20 birds in 2007, 32 individuals (24 along North Coast) in 2008, and 51 individuals (42 along North Coast) in 2020. The high single-site counts are of 11 birds at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 24 September 2003, 12 there 24 September 2015, and 28 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 13

September 2020. One individual was seen far offshore at the San Juan Seamount 22 August 1985. The species is very rare after late September. Three at the Santa Ynez River mouth through 10 October 2020 and singles near Santa Maria 11 October 1993 and 15 October 1989 and in Goleta 11 October 2020 and 16 October 1978 were late; even more so was 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 8 November 1989. Some nine fall specimens (*MCZ, UCLA, WFVZ) exist from vic. Santa Barbara (including Goleta) between 1911–1916.

Inland, in District I, Bartholomew (1940) reported 2 at Gibraltar Reservoir 16 September 1938. Up to 6 were at the east end of Lake Cachuma 24–29 August 1976, from 1–3 birds were seen at the lake on multiple dates between 20 August–11 September 2016, and up to 2 were there 30 August-2 September 2022. The species may be more regular at this locality than just these few records would suggest. The only other records for District I are of 5 near Los Alamos 18 August 1988, 1 there 18 September 2014, and 1 on 7 September 2023.

In District V, 1 was near Cuyama 26 September 2007, up to 4 were there 1–17 August 2012, up to 4 were present 17 September–1 October 2015, up to 3 were near New Cuyama between 25 August–7 October 2018, up to 4 were there 25 August–5 September 2019, a total of 5 were present 9 September–2 October 2020, up to 6 were there 12 August–1 October 2021 (high on 8 September), and 5 were found 6 September 2022, and 3 were near Ventucopa 6 September 2022.

Baird's Sandpiper is casual in spring. There are eight documented records: Santa Maria River mouth 14 May 1981, Goleta 23 March 1985, Santa Ynez River mouth 31 March 1991, near Santa Maria 14 April 1995, Santa Maria River mouth 14 April 2008 (ph. SBMNH), Surf Beach near the Santa Ynez River mouth 25 April 2009, 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 April 2017, and Wall Beach, Vandenberg S. F. B., 20 March 2026. There are four other spring records that lack adequate documentation: vic. Santa Barbara 27 April 1912, 2 May 1913, and 5–7 May 1915 (Dawson 1916); and Carpinteria Salt Marsh 25 April–2 May 1966.

An adult at the Santa Maria River mouth 18 June 1980 was out-of-season.

One in basic plumage on the beach west of Gaviota 10 December 1986 (ph. SBMNH) and another at Jim May (formerly River Oaks) Park, Santa Maria, 9–12 January 2006 (ph. *NAB* 60:284, SBMNH) were exceptional for winter anywhere in North America.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

Accidental.

A Little Stint in alternate plumage was at Goleta Slough 8 June 2023 (ph. SBMNH). It was assumed to be a late spring migrant.

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C, casual in early summer. Fairly common transient in District I, uncommon in winter. Uncommon to fairly common transient and rare winter visitor in District V.

Least Sandpipers occur in a number of aquatic habitats including sloughs, estuaries, river mouths, lagoons, lakes, and ponds, along rivers and marshy creeks, and in flooded fields. They are found locally on beaches and are rare on rocky shores. Fall adults arrive beginning at the end of June (earliest arrivals: 19 June 2013 and 2018 near Santa Maria, and 22 June 1997 (3), 26 June 1989, and 27 June 1961, all in Goleta). Juveniles arrive beginning in late July (earliest arrivals: 22 July 1981 Santa Ynez River mouth and 23 July 1989 Goleta). The species is common by late July and throughout winter (though less numerous than during migration) in much of District C and locally in District I. The maximum fall count in District C is ca. 850 in the Santa Maria Valley 14 August 1982; a more recent high count there is 500 birds on 19 October 2010. Inland, 210 were at Lake Cachuma 20 August 2016. High counts in winter are 380 and 410 on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 4 January 1981 and 23 December 2012, respectively. Santa Barbara CBCs usually record fewer than 100 individuals; although 134 were

counted 2 January 1988 and 258 were tallied on 2 January 2010. A total of 471 on the 31 December 1977 CBC would be exceptionally high if correct. Inland, high winter counts at Lake Cachuma include 116–140 individuals 15 November–27 December 2002 and 118–134 birds 12–29 December 2015 increasing to an exceptional 231 present 5 February 2016. In District V, Least Sandpipers are probably uncommon to fairly common migrants and rare but regular winter visitors in the Cuyama area, with high counts of: (autumn) 20 seen 8 August 2005, (early winter) up to 15 from 5 November–11 December 2005 and 5 on 13 December 2006, and (late winter) up to 8 between 16–29 February 2020.

Most spring transients move through by the end of April. A count of 246 at Laguna Blanca 16 April 2015 was high, as were 120–200 at the New Cuyama sewage treatment plant on 16–17 April 2026. The species is rare after the first week in May; late migrants include vic. Santa Barbara 14 May 1958, 4 in Goleta 15 May 1961, Goleta 12–15 May 1982, and 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 31 May 2008. One at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 June 1986, 2 near Santa Maria 3 June 2005, 2 there 11 June 1986, and singles at the Santa Ynez River mouth 6–12 June 2015 and 10 June 2016 were in partial alternate plumage and involved very late spring transients or early-summer wanderers.

There are two records of birds in basic plumage that probably summered locally: Santa Maria River mouth 1–18 June 1980 and Santa Ynez River mouth 22 June 1980. An additional individual was at Devereux Slough 12–19 June 2025.

White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*)

Casual visitor in District C.

There is one record of a late spring migrant at Devereux Slough from 19–21 June 2025. An early fall migrant was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 July 2026, one of very few such records in the state.

[A report of a bird at the Santa Maria River mouth 6 September 1997 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Calidris subruficollis*)

Casual fall transient.

There are six records: up to 2 were at the Santa Barbara airport and nearby Goleta sewage treatment plant 10–26 September 1964, 1 was near Guadalupe 6 September 1987, 1 somewhat late individual was at the Santa Maria River mouth 2 November 1993, singles were there 4–10 September 1997 (ph. SBMNH) and 29 August–1 September 2008, and 1 was at Coal Oil Point 15–16 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH).

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)

Locally uncommon fall transient in District C, casual in spring. Very rare in Districts I and V.

Pectoral Sandpipers frequent sloughs, river mouths (though they are rarely seen on open mudflats), pond and lake shores, marshy creeks, flooded fields, and, occasionally, ephemeral pools on upper beaches and grassy lawns near the coast. Almost all of the records involve juvenile birds, most of which pass through between late August and late October. Early arrival dates for juveniles include 14 August 2015 near Lompoc, 13–16 August 2015 Santa Barbara, 18 August 1911 Santa Barbara and 20 August 1911 Goleta (Bowles and Howell 1912), 20 August 1913 Santa Barbara (Willett 1933), and 20 August 1965 Goleta. A juvenile 4–16 August 1981 near Santa Maria was exceptionally early. There are a small number of records of early fall transients (all involving adults, most of which precede the juveniles, as in all migrant shorebirds): Goleta 10 July 1977, near Santa Maria 21 July 1980, Goleta 18–20 July 1981, 2 in Goleta 17 July 1983, near Santa Maria 20 July 1985, Goleta 25–26 July 1993, near Santa Maria 18 July 1994, 14 July 1995, and 23–26 July 1996, Goleta 25–26 July 2000, near Santa Maria 19 July 2001, Goleta 20 July 2010 and 25+ July 2014 (up to 4), and Santa Ynez River mouth 15

July 2018; and some 14 additional August–early September records of adults (involving 16 individuals). An adult in Santa Barbara 23–24 September 1985 was late for that age.

The largest numbers of Pectorals were found in the Santa Maria Valley, but deteriorating shorebird habitat there since the late 1980s has substantially dropped the counts. Some 65 birds there 24 September 1988 was the highest one-day count; during the 1990s the high count was 35 near Santa Maria 18 September 1996. Along the South Coast, 42 were in Goleta 27 September 1982. A total of 170 in the county between 29 August and 1 November 1979 and 226 between 12 September and 6 November 1982 are the highest season totals. In contrast, only 17 were seen in the county during the autumn period in both 1989 and 1995. Since the mid-1990s, season totals in District C typically have been no higher than 30–35 individuals, with 31 along the South Coast in 2005 and ca. 50 in all of District C in 2009; the largest single-site concentrations are of up to 14 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant during September–October 2004, 20 near Guadalupe 3 October 2009, 19 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 19 September 2012, and 25–30 near Guadalupe 5–19 October 2012. Pectoral Sandpipers are rare by the end of October and very rare through early November. The latest records are: 13 November 2010 near Guadalupe, 15 November 1978 Goleta, 20 November 1978 near Lompoc (*SBMNH), 24–25 November 1979 Goleta (ph. SBMNH), and 13–28 November 1982 Goleta. Additional specimens exist (*UCLA) from vic. Santa Barbara 29 August and 30 August 1911.

The only records for District I are of 3 at a pond west of Buellton 22 September 1993, flocks of 12 and 15 at Lake Cachuma 1 October 2004 and 27 September 2009, respectively, 1 there 30 September 2012, 1 at Los Alamos 22 September 2014, 1 at Lake Cachuma 11 September increasing to 5–9 birds from 20–22 September and with 1 later bird 13 October 2016, 2 there 22 September 2020, up to 2 present 26 September-5 October 2022, and 1 on 22 August 2024. A late bird on 5 November 2018 near Sisquoc was at the border with District C.

In District V, 2 were near Cuyama 26 September 2007, singles were there 29 September 2010, 1 August 2012 (early), and 13 September 2012, 2 there 17 September 2015, and 1 at New Cuyama 14 September 2018 and up to 3 there 8 October–1 November 2020. In 2021, a high total of ca. 20 birds were found near New Cuyama between 8 September–15 October.

There are seven spring records: Santa Barbara 14 April 1910 (Bowles and Howell 1912), Goleta 2 May 1975, Goleta 30 April 1978, near Santa Maria 24 April 1982 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 31 March 1986, near Santa Maria 30 April–3 May 1993, and 2 near Santa Maria 28–31 May 1996.

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*)

Rare fall and casual spring transient in District C, casual in fall in Districts I and V.

Semipalmated Sandpipers frequent sloughs, river mouths, and sewage treatment ponds near the coast. They were overlooked until the late 1970s; the first record for Santa Barbara County was not until 10–11 August 1977 at Devereux Slough. Since that time, some 231 juvenile birds have been found between late July and 15 September. Single southbound adults were at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 2 July 1981, Goleta Slough 22–25 July 1993, Santa Ynez River mouth 9 July 1994 and 18 July 1996, Santa Barbara 19 July 1996, near Santa Maria 19 July 1996, Goleta sewage treatment plant 20 July 2004 (ph. SBMNH) and 22 July 2010, near Santa Maria 23 July (ph. SBMNH) and 9 August 2010, Santa Ynez River mouth 3 July 2016, 12–15 July 2018, 8 July 2019, and 28 June 2020, and see below. The earliest fall arrival dates for juveniles are 22 July 1981 and 22+ July 2015 Santa Ynez River mouth, 23 July 1987 Goleta, and 23 July 1996 Santa Ynez River mouth. Autumn 1996 was a particularly strong year for the species, with 3 adults in July and 13 juveniles between late July and mid-September. High single-site counts include 5 at the Santa Maria River mouth 4 September 1996 and 5 at Devereux Slough 12 August 2007. Records after 15 September include 1 near Santa Maria 21–25 September 1982, 2 in Santa Barbara 17 September 1985, and 1 in Santa Barbara 19 September

2022. Single individuals at the Santa Maria River mouth 19 October 1980 and near Santa Maria 30 October 1986 were exceptionally late.

This species is casual in spring: Goleta 5 May 1981, Goleta 29 May 1981, near Santa Maria 9–10 May 1982, near Santa Maria 27 April 1988 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 7 May 1990, up to 2 Goleta 7–9 May 1991, Goleta 14–16 May 1994, Santa Ynez River mouth 9–11 May 1994, Goleta 27 April 2007, up to 2 Goleta 2–4 May 2013, and Goleta 4–6 June 2015 (ph. SBMNH; late), 26–30 April 2016, and 13 May 2017.

Single birds in District I at Lake Cachuma 20 August 2016 (juvenile) and in District V near Cuyama 7 August 2005 (juvenile) and 21 July 2010 (adult) are the only inland records.

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)

Common transient in District C, uncommon to fairly common but very local in winter, and very rare in early summer. Uncommon transient in Districts I and V, where casual in winter.

Western Sandpipers are most numerous at coastal sloughs, river mouths, lagoons, and ponds. They also occur less commonly and locally along sandy beaches and in flooded fields. In winter, they are largely restricted to tidal mudflats and locally on adjacent beaches. A population decline in the county since the 1970s or earlier coincided with the loss of tidal mudflat habitat. Presumed fall migrant adults begin appearing in late June, exceptionally in mid-June; 2 were in Goleta 15 June 2015, 1 was at the Santa Maria River mouth 18 June 1980, 10 were in Goleta 21 June 1993, and 2 were at the Santa Maria River mouth 16 June 2021. A total of 105 birds at the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths 23 June 1981 and 104 in Goleta 24 June 1988 were high counts for so early in the season. Juveniles typically arrive at the end of July (earliest arrival dates: 21 July 1997 Santa Maria River mouth (3), 22 July 1980 Santa Maria River mouth (3), 22 July 1981 Santa Ynez River mouth (2), and 22 July 1997 Goleta (2)). The maximum fall counts for the species are 1250 at the Santa Maria River mouth 17 July 1980, 1700 there 12 September 1988, and 1300 at Devereux Slough 26 August 2007.

By late October, most Western Sandpipers are found at the principal wintering areas, which are the Santa Maria Valley (especially the river mouth, at least formerly) and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. One exception was 220 continuing at Laguna Blanca 1 November 1987, with 80 still present 20 November, a late date for so many migrants. The number of wintering birds has probably declined further since the late 1980s as a result of deteriorating habitat, particularly in the Santa Maria area. Earlier maximum winter counts in the Santa Maria Valley were 200 on 20 January 1979 and 344 on 4 January 1981; more recent maxima include 205 at the Santa Maria River mouth 23 December 2007. The number of wintering birds at Carpinteria Salt Marsh normally does not exceed 150 individuals. The wintering population in the Goleta area is usually very small (not exceeding 15 individuals); 121 there on 2 January 1988 was a very high count, as was, in recent years, 50 birds on 14 February 2018 and 79 on 25 February 2026. Previously, the CBC recorded a high 170 individuals on 2 January 1971 (if all correctly identified). A flock of 30 in Goleta 12 January 1979 was unusual in that it was not present before or after this date and migrants are not expected between late November and the beginning of March.

Spring migration begins typically by mid- or late March and peaks between early April and the beginning of May. Sightings of small-to-medium-sized flocks in late February and early March at sites where the species did not winter in such numbers or at all suggest that some birds may already be on the move by then. Approximately 1000 birds at Goleta Beach Park 19 April 2007 and 850 at Devereux Slough 20 April 2013 were high counts in spring for the South Coast. One individual was found dead in chaparral and riparian habitat along the lower Jesusita Trail above Santa Barbara 4 April 1974. This species is rare after mid-May and very rare after late May.

There are 15 records (involving 29 individuals) in early June but not thereafter. These records, which largely involve alternate-plumaged birds, are probably of late northbound migrants. Mid-June records include: 4 at the Santa Maria River throughout June 1980, which clearly summered; 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth throughout June 1980, which clearly

summered; 2 at the Santa Maria River mouth and 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 June 1981; 1 in Goleta 6–12 June 1982; 3 near Santa Maria 11 June 1986; and singles (same?) in Goleta 12 & 19 June 1996.

Inland, Western Sandpipers are uncommon to rare transients. In District I, most records come from Lake Cachuma where exposed mudflats sometimes exist, usually in late summer. High fall counts there include 198 birds on 22 August 2016 and 152 on 11 September 2016; whereas 126 on 13 April 2022 is the high in spring. In District V, the maximum count is 120 birds on 25 April 2015; and the latest spring record is 15 May 2023.

Singles at Lake Cachuma 29 January 1991, 26–27 December 2013, 3 December 2016, 27 December 2017, and 26 December 2022 are the only winter records for the Santa Barbara County interior, as 1 at New Cuyama 21 February 2020 may have been a very early spring migrant.

Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*)

Fairly common transient in District C, very rare in winter and early summer. Only one inland record.

Short-billed Dowitchers are most numerous at coastal sloughs, river mouths, and sewage treatment ponds; they are also found regularly on sandy beaches, especially where ephemeral ponds are present. They are less numerous at freshwater pools on the coastal plain. The species is common only during migration, which takes place primarily from early July to late September in fall and from late March to early May in spring. Fall migrant adults may appear as early as late June (e.g., 21 June 1981 Goleta, 21 June 2022 Carpinteria (2), 23 June 1981 and 23 June 1987 (3) Santa Ynez River mouth, and 23 June 2004 Goleta (3)), and most pass through by August. Juveniles arrive beginning in early August (e.g., 4 August 1981 near Santa Maria (2) and 4 August 1982 Goleta). The highest single-day counts in fall do not exceed 125 individuals. A few individuals have been seen at the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths and at Carpinteria Salt Marsh as late as mid-November; thereafter, 1 remained at the Santa Ynez Rive mouth through 30 November 2020. One near Santa Barbara Harbor 11–15 November 1993 (ph. SBMNH) and another on UCSB beaches 18–25 November 2020 were somewhat more unusual.

Spring transients may appear in early March (e.g., 2 March 1985 Goleta (3), 3 March 1977 Goleta (3), and 3 March 1980 Goleta (10)). One at Devereux Slough 18 February 2017 and 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 16 February 2021 may have been exceptionally early migrants. Flocks of up to 200 individuals can be seen migrating just offshore and over the coastal plain during April. A total of 600 tallied on 18 April 1981 over the inner coastal plain and lower foothills at the Santa Barbara/Goleta border was a high count for such a location and was associated with a major flight of other waterbirds that day. This species is very rare after late May; there are 12 records involving 28 individuals from early June. One in basic plumage was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 14 June 1990 and 5 were near Santa Maria 11 June 2010. Up to 7 (5 basic, 2 alternate) in Goleta 16–27 June 1989 and up to 8 (basic) there 9–27 June 1991 clearly summered locally.

Short-billed Dowitchers are very rare during winter, with a fair number of erroneous reports, no more than 1 or 2 valid sightings every few years, high counts not exceeding 5 individuals, and most birds seen only on a single date. They are usually found at this season at river mouths, sloughs, and, occasionally, on sandy beaches. Until the late 1970s, it was thought that Short-billed Dowitchers were regular in small-to-moderate numbers along the coast in winter. They were erroneously but regularly reported on Santa Barbara CBCs, sometimes in numbers equal to or exceeding those of Long-billed Dowitchers. Short-billeds probably did winter in larger numbers when tidal mudflats were more extensive.

The only inland record is of a fall migrant juvenile at Lake Cachuma 31 August 2022.

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C, casual in early summer. Locally uncommon transient and winter visitor in District I. Rare transient and casual winter visitor in District V.

Long-billed Dowitchers occur in a variety of aquatic habitats, including sloughs, river mouths, ephemeral pools and kelp deposits along beaches, lagoons, lakes, ponds, and flooded fields. The largest numbers are found in the Santa Maria Valley, formerly in high numbers (e.g., 800 on 31 October 1980, 750 on 14 October 1984, and 450 on 20 January 1979); the recent high count, by far, is 400 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 7 October 2010. Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBCs since 2000 have recorded no more than 255 individuals (26 December 2010). The maximum on the La Purisima CBC is a mere 66 birds on 15 December 2013. Along the South Coast, the winter maximum of 218 (30 December 1978) was recorded on the Santa Barbara CBC; the more recent maxima are of 110 birds at the Ash Avenue Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park 18 January 2007 and 90–100 at various sites in Goleta 8 January–22 February 2011.

This species is more widespread than Short-billed Dowitcher and usually outnumbers the latter except for short periods during April and July. Fall adult Long-billed Dowitchers first arrive during early July (earliest arrival dates: 25 June 1982 near Santa Maria and 6 July 1977 Goleta); juveniles do not appear until September (e.g., 3–7 September 1987 near Santa Maria (up to 2) and 6 September 1984 Goleta), with 1 at Goleta Slough 26 August 2024 being exceptionally early. One along Carpinteria Creek one mile inland 20 September 1985 was in atypical habitat. During spring migration, Long-billed flocks are smaller than those of Short-billed Dowitcher; however, the former is regularly seen later into May.

There are 15 June records (at least three of which involved clearly over-summering non-breeders): 3–4 at the Santa Maria River mouth 7–29 June 1980, 3 (1 with crippled wing) at Goleta Slough May–1 July 1980, 1 (alternate plumage) at the Santa Maria River mouth 2–3 June 1981, 1 (alternate) in Goleta 11 June 1981, 2 (alternate) in Goleta 6 June 1982, 2 (1 alternate, 1 basic) in Goleta 7–16 June 1984, 1 (alternate) at the Santa Maria River mouth 18 June 1984, singles (alternate) near Santa Maria 25 May–7 June 1986, 19 June 1995, and 3 June 2006, 2 (alternate) in Goleta 4 June 2008, 1 (alternate) there 11 June 2008, 1 (alternate) near Santa Maria 11 June 2010, 1 (alternate) at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7–8 June 2015, and 1 (basic) at the Santa Ynez River mouth 10 June 2016.

The only regular inland location hosting this species in winter is Lake Cachuma, where the high count is 85 on the Cachuma CBC 30 December 2008. Elsewhere, this species is very rare, with a high 12–14 birds at Los Alamos 20–24 February 2016.

In District V, there are records of fall migrants near Cuyama 21 July 2010, 7 August 2011 (2), and 23 July 2013 (3), and multiple records since 2018 at a new sewage treatment pond in New Cuyama, with a high of 9 birds on 2 October 2018 and 40 tallied 7 October 2019, and with a late date of 24 November 2019. Small numbers of spring migrants were there between mid-March–mid-May, with a high of 6 on 10 April 2020. One winter record: near Ventucopa 18 February 2025.

Dowitcher sp.

Very late or over-summering dowitchers not identified to species include 1 at Devereux Slough 18 June 2013, 1 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 4 June 2015, 1 at Devereux Slough 7 June 2015, up to 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 8–12 June 2015, 1 there 10 June 2016, and 7 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 14 June 2018.

Six dowitcher sp. were spring migrants in District V at Caliente Ranch Wetland 26 March 2018, 3 fall-migrant dowitcher sp. were at New Cuyama 18 July 2018, and 1 was there 19–24 July 2020.

Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*)

Uncommon and declining transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and V. Casual in summer.

Wilson's Snipe frequent wet and flooded fields, marshy creeks and ditches, and pond edges. The first fall individuals typically arrive during mid-August (earliest arrival dates: 25 July 2016 near Santa Maria, 29 July 2016 in Santa Maria, 2 August 1986 near Santa Maria, 5 August 2020 Lake Cachuma, and 5 August 2024 Goleta). Twelve had arrived near Santa Maria already on 13 August 1981. And see below. The species is uncommon by the end of September. The largest numbers formerly occurred in the Santa Maria Valley, where up to 250 were seen in a day in late fall and early winter during the early 1980s. Because of habitat loss, counts through the 1990s did not exceed 50–75 birds; since then, maxima have further declined, but with a high of 112 in vic. Guadalupe (e.g., Jack O'Connell Park) 24 September 2005, 50–123 tallied there 14 November 2015–12 January 2016 (high on 19 November), and 101–117 from 24 November 2024–4 January 2025. One hundred in Goleta 29 January 1977 is the high count for the South Coast; more recently, 70 were tallied there 18 December 2002. Fewer than 10 individuals are usually recorded on Santa Barbara CBCs, with 54 being the maximum (4 January 2003), and 1 the minimum (1 January 2011). Inland, the high count on the Cachuma CBC is a mere 8 birds (27 December 2013), but 12 individuals were around the lake 12 January 2004. The maxima for District V are 13 scattered about the Cuyama Valley 19 February 2012 and 26 birds at Caliente Ranch Wetland 5 February 2017.

In spring, most Wilson's Snipe have departed by mid- or late April; the latest records include 10 May 1997 Goleta (2) and 11 May 2002 Goleta, with 1 at Goleta Slough 21 May 2001 being exceptionally late.

One collected in Goleta 17 July 1934 (Rett fieldnotes), 1 in Guadalupe 16 July 2010, and 1 at Lake Los Carneros 13 July 2015 (ph. SBMNH) were probably very early fall transients or summer wanderers. The latter designation best describes the bird near Santa Maria 30 June–1 July 1998. The species is only a casual breeder in Southern California.

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*)

Uncommon to fairly common transient and uncommon winter visitor in Districts C and I. Uncommon transient in District V, very rare in District M. Rare summer resident and rare to very rare breeder in District I, with also several nesting records in District C.

Spotted Sandpipers occur predominantly at ponds, lakes, creeks, rivers, sloughs, and less commonly at river mouths and along rocky shores and sandy beaches. Fall migrants first appear during July (early arrivals: 7 July 2015 Goleta, 9 July 2019 Carpinteria, and 11 July 1981 Goleta), probably rarely already the last week in June (e.g., 22 June 2025 Carpinteria Salt Marsh, 26 June 2018 Lake Los Carneros, 28 June 2021 near Sisquoc, 30 June 1977 Goleta). The first juveniles appear well away from breeding sites as early as late July. Although they are relatively widespread, they usually occur singly or in very small flocks so that maximum counts are low (e.g., 10 Santa Maria Valley 25 August 1980, 10 Tecolote Creek mouth near Goleta 25 February 2010, 12 west of Ellwood 31 January 2012, 18 Carpinteria Salt Marsh 8 August 2013). A count of 190 on the Santa Barbara CBC 30 December 1978 would be exceptional, but it is doubtfully correct; few other counts exceed 20 individuals. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 23 individuals (26 December 2014). This species may reach its highest numbers of the year during peak spring migration in May; however, it is rare after mid-May, with the latest records of likely migrants being 1 June 2016 Lake Los Carneros, 1 June 2019 New Cuyama, 2 June 2018 Hollister Ranch, 2 June 2023 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, and 5 June 2019 Ellwood. Later birds were at "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 8 June 2025 and at Lake Los Carneros 9 June 2025. The maximum count in District V is of 10 birds at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 28 April 2023. In District M, 1 was near San Marcos Pass 15 May 2010 and 1 was at Zaca Lake 2 August 2015.

The Spotted Sandpiper is a rare and local breeder in Southern California. In Santa Barbara County, it breeds very locally along the upper Santa Ynez River and several nearby creeks (e.g.,

Mono Creek). The distribution and number of nesting pairs in any given summer is affected by water levels. During summers with minimal stream flow, little or no breeding takes place. From east to west: Three nests fledged a total of 5 young along the upper Santa Ynez River east of Gibraltar Reservoir in June 1979 (ph. SBMNH), 3 pairs were present in the same area in 1980, a total of 3 adults and 2 young were at the upper end of Gibraltar Reservoir June–July 1988, and single adults with young were along Mono Creek and at upper Gibraltar Reservoir in July 1990. Up to several pairs were along the upper Santa Ynez River and nearby tributaries between Gibraltar and Juncal in June 1992 and 1993. One was along the Santa Ynez River near Red Rock Campground 10 June 1982 and another was near there 4 July 2025. Two agitated adults were at Red Rock 27 June 2013. A pair and nest with eggs was along the upper Santa Ynez River bordering Rancho San Marcos Golf Course 9 June 2002. Farther downriver, up to 11 summered at Lake Cachuma in 1976, though no nests or young were found, 1–2 adults were there 9–30 June 1981 and on multiple occasions in June and early July between 2016–2026, and good counts of 5 birds were present 13 June 2017 and up to 6 birds from 21–24 June 2019 (including an agitated bird on the first date). More conclusive were an adult with a full-grown chick found 20 July 1989 and a pair with nest and 2 chicks were present during July 2020. Spotted Sandpipers may have nested in 1993 below Bradbury Dam and near Buellton. One at Twitchell Reservoir, east of Santa Maria, 17 July 1988 was either a local breeder or a slightly early migrant.

An adult with 1 young was along the Santa Ynez River only 4 or 5 mi (6 or 8 km) from the coast in District C on 24 July 1980. Two adults with 2 recently hatched chicks were also along the lower Santa Ynez River near 13th Street on north Vandenberg SFB 25 June 2005, and an adult with 2–3 fledglings was back at that site 27 June–4 July 2006. One in the Santa Maria area 7 June 1980, singles at the Santa Ynez River mouth 15 June 1981, 3–6 June 1990, and 4 June 2021, singles at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 11 June 2010 and 19 June 2013, and 1 at Guadalupe 5 June 2021 were either very late spring migrants, summer wanderers, or have moved a short distance from a nesting site. A pair at the Santa Ynez River mouth 19–30 June 2016 exhibited some copulatory behavior on the first date.

One at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 9–13 June 2012 and another there 8 June 2022 are difficult to categorize. But 1 at Devereux Slough 2 June–6 July 2019 clearly summered locally, and up to 2 birds were seen there multiple years in June, including 2–16 June 2019 and 10–12 June 2024. One was reported at Goleta Slough 10 June 2022.

Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*)

Rare but regular fall transient in District C, very rare in spring, casual in winter. Probably a rare to very rare spring and fall transient in Districts I and V. Casual in District M.

Solitary Sandpipers are found at ponds, lakes, creeks, sloughs, and flooded fields. They are primarily a rare fall transient along the coast from mid-August to early October. The earliest arrival dates are 13 July 2026 Laguna Blanca, 17 July 1995 near Santa Maria, 22 July 1910 Santa Barbara (Bowles and Howell 1912), 23 July 2013 Carpinteria, and 27 July 1998 Santa Maria, and these all presumably involve adults; juveniles begin to arrive in early August. The largest numbers occurred in the Santa Maria Valley, at least formerly. The highest season counts, pre-1994, are totals in District C of 17 birds from both 15 August–30 September 1979 and 9 August–10 October 1981 and a total of 19 between 21 August–11 October 1985; since then, the high is 11 birds between 30 August–7 November 2018. In other years, only a very few are seen. Six at Laguna Blanca 28 August 1985 is a high one-day count; 4 were at Lake Los Carneros 5 September 2018. Very rare into mid-October, the latest fall records are through 29 October–1 November 2018 near Sisquoc (following a long-staying bird nearby at Santa Maria Mesa Road 8 August–20 September) and 7 November 2018 Goleta; plus see below. A specimen exists (*UCLA) from vic. Santa Barbara 3 September 1911.

This species is very rare but increasing in spring. The 41 records in District C are: Santa Barbara 30 April 1910 (Bowles and Howell 1912), an early individual on north Vandenberg SFB

31 March 1990, and a total of 39 individuals from 1965 through 2026 between 4 April (2022, Santa Barbara) and 9 May (1998, near the Santa Ynez River mouth). The only coastal sightings involving more than a single individual were of 2 birds in the Santa Barbara foothills 27 April 2011 and 2 in Goleta 19 April 2013 (and see District V below). A total of 8 along the South Coast between 4 April–4 May 2022 was a record high for spring.

In District I, old reports come from Jameson Lake 4 September 1935 (Rett fieldnotes), in the Mono Creek/Santa Ynez River area 5–9 August 1937, and at Indian Creek 12 September 1938 (Bartholomew 1940). More recent records are from both spring and fall and include, Fall: Lake Cachuma 24 August 1976, Lake Cachuma 20 August 2004, Cuyama River ca. 8 mi (13 km) east of Twitchell Reservoir 29 August 2012, Santa Ynez River at Lower Oso 5 September 2015, Lake Cachuma 5 September 2016, 2 near Santa Ynez 25 September 2019, Lake Cachuma 7 September 2021, and Sedgwick Reserve 4 September 2024; and Spring: near Santa Ynez 13 April 1991, Sedgwick Reserve 1 May 1993, near Santa Ynez 26 April 2011, Los Alamos 21 April–1 May 2014, Lake Cachuma 27 April 2015, near Santa Ynez 14–30 April 2018, Los Alamos 28–30 April 2018, near Santa Ynez 4 April 2021, and up to 2 in Buellton 10–11 April 2022.

In District M, single birds were noted on small pools in the San Marcos Pass area, twice in fall (14 September 2000 and 13 August 2010) and once in spring (4 May 2001).

Solitary Sandpipers may be rare but regular in spring in District V, with singles near Cuyama and New Cuyama 26 April 2008, 27 April 2008, and 19 April 2009, 23–24 April and 7 May 2019, 24 April 2020, and 13 April 2022, plus 3 there on 16 April and 2 on 20 April 2012. Singles were at Caliente Ranch Wetland 4 May 2010 and 22 April 2018, up to 3 were there 15–16 April 2020, up to 2 were present 28 April–2 May 2023, and 1 was found 12 April 2025. In autumn, there are five reports: near Cuyama 5 August 2010, 7 August 2011, and 17 August 2012, and at New Cuyama 15–21 August and 14 September 2018.

There are six exceptional winter records of Solitary Sandpiper. A bird was at the mouth of Carpinteria Creek 18 December 2006. One individual in vic. Tucker's Grove Park near Santa Barbara 14–18 March and again 19–27 April 2010 had likely wintered locally. One at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 27–30 December 2010 was probably the same bird seen 27–29 October 2010. One was at "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 10 December 2018 (ph. SBMNH) and again 16 November 2019–28 April 2020 (ph. SBMNH). One was along lower Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 12–27 December 2020 (ph. SBMNH). Along the North Coast, one was near Sisquoc 16 January 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incana*)

Uncommon transient and rare winter visitor along the North Coast. Uncommon transient and very rare winter visitor along the South Coast. Casual in early summer.

Wandering Tattlers frequent rocky shores, although they are occasionally seen on sandy beaches (e.g., Point Sal beach, Gaviota coast); they are very rare at coastal sloughs and river mouths. This species is often more numerous along the North Coast than along the South Coast. It is found regularly along the former between mid-July (e.g., 11 July 1998 south Vandenberg SFB) and early October and from April to mid-May, with a high of 24 at Point Sal 28 July 1980. Although it formerly wintered regularly along the North Coast in small numbers, it is now believed to be rare at this season. Along the South Coast, it is an uncommon migrant and very rare winter visitor. Frequented sites include Gaviota State Park, El Capitan State Beach, Goleta Point, Santa Barbara Harbor, and the rocky shore in Carpinteria. Fall transients have arrived as early as mid-July (earliest: 9 July 1992 Rincon Point and 11 July 1981 Goleta,). High South Coast counts are 12–15 in Goleta 25 August–8 September 1938 (Rett fieldnotes), 15 in Carpinteria 17 September 1967, and 15 at Santa Barbara Harbor 4 August 1991. One seen flying south well offshore ca. 61 mi (98 km) SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011 was somewhat unusual. Spring migrants are seen between late March and late May, with the earliest being 12

March 2026 Goleta Point (2) and the latest being 24 May 1960 Santa Barbara and through 27 May 2007 Goleta. A high count was 14 birds in Goleta 7 May 1979.

Wandering Tattlers were formerly regular in small numbers through winter on Vandenberg SFB, but they appear to have declined there at this season. They are very rare after October along the South Coast; the records are: Santa Barbara 6–23 November 1969, 23 December 1972, and 2 January 1977; Gaviota State Park 12 November 1978; up to 3 at the Santa Barbara Harbor each winter from 1984–1985 through 1993–1994; 1 in Carpinteria during winters of 1991–1992 and 1992–1993; singles in Santa Barbara 21 November 2004 and 3 December 2006; 1 in Carpinteria 16 January 2009; 4 at Santa Barbara Harbor 9–16 December 2012; and 1 at Gaviota 17 December 2012. Singles in Carpinteria 2 March 2000 and 3 March 2001 probably wintered locally but might have been very early spring migrants.

In early summer, single individuals at Purisima Point and Honda Creek mouth on Vandenberg SFB during June 1981; up to 2 at the Boathouse, south Vandenberg SFB, 13 June–1 July 1983; up to 2 there 11–30 June 1984; 3 there 7 July 1988; singles at Santa Barbara Harbor 8 June–28+ July 1988 and March–July 1990; and up to 2 at Rincon 28 May–19+ July 1988 and 2 there 28 June–8 July 1989 were all in basic plumage and probably or definitely summered locally. Two others were on Vandenberg SFB in early June 1981 only, and 1 was at Santa Barbara Harbor 2 June 1995. One in basic plumage at Goleta Point 19 June 1982 only was a summer wanderer. One in unknown plumage at Point Arguello 10 July 1987 and 2 (1 alternate, 1 basic) at the Boathouse 7 July 1991 may have been early southbound transients.

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*)

Uncommon fall transient and rare spring transient in District C, rare to very rare in winter. Rare transient and casual winter visitor in District I. Very rare transient in District V.

Lesser Yellowlegs frequent ponds, lakes, sloughs, and flooded fields, and they are less numerous and widespread than Greater Yellowlegs. They are rarely seen at ephemeral pools on upper beaches. The first fall migrants are adults and typically appear by early or mid-July (earliest arrivals: 27 June 2012 Goleta, 30 June 2006 near Santa Maria, 30 June 2017 and 30 June 2021 Devereux Slough, and 3 July 1988 and 1989 Goleta). Two in Goleta 17 June–July 1976, 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 21 June 1992, and 1 in Goleta 22 June 1997 were probably early fall transients. The species may briefly have become fairly common (in the past when shorebird habitat in the Santa Maria Valley was of much higher quality) during August and early September when juveniles predominate. The earliest records of juveniles are 23–27 July 2021 Devereux Slough, 27 July 2015 Santa Ynez River mouth, and 29 July 2007 Goleta. Former high counts include 100 in the Santa Maria Valley 1 September 1985 and 200 there 3–4 September 1987. A total of 38 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 28 August 2016 was a good count there since the 1990s. Along the South Coast, 25 were at Laguna Blanca 14 September 1987, 25 were at Devereux Slough 26 August 2007, 36 were at Goleta Slough 25 August 2019, and 26 were there 24 August 2024; a total of 56 estimated in Goleta between 7 August–6 November 2011 was an exceptional seasonal count. The species is rare after early October.

Rare in District I. The only fall records for District V are of singles near Cuyama 7 August 2005 and 13 July 2011, of singles at New Cuyama 16 August, 14 September 2018, 24 July 2020, and 20–26 August 2020, and up to 3 there 28 August–11 October 2019.

Spring migrants are far rarer than fall birds, and they begin arriving in early or mid- March (earliest arrival dates: 23 February 2005 Goleta (2), 24 February 2013 Santa Ynez River mouth, and 25 February 1980 Goleta), peak during April (e.g., 6 at Devereux Slough 11 April 2013, 5 there 15–18 April 2016), and have occurred as late as 8 May 1991 Goleta and 10 May 2017 Santa Maria.

The only spring records in District V are of 1 in the Cuyama Valley 12–13 April 2012 and 2 birds at Caliente Ranch Wetland 19 April 2015.

Single reports from Devereux Slough 4 June 2016 and from Santa Ynez River mouth 10 June 2016 were unseasonal and difficult to categorize.

In winter, Lesser Yellowlegs is rare and declining, with an average of 1 to 3 per year in District C. This species continues to be misidentified on a regular basis, and past reports of large numbers in winter, such as on several Santa Barbara CBCs prior to the late 1970s, are almost certainly erroneous. Wintering individuals are most frequently encountered in the Santa Maria Valley and in the Goleta area, with up to 7 having wintered at the former during 1979–1980 and up to 4 at the latter in 1969–1970 and in early 1997. Since the mid-1990s, however, winter totals typically do not exceed 1 or 2 individuals. One at Lake Cachuma 16 January 2016 appears to be the only winter record for District I.

Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*)

Common transient in District C, fairly common in late spring and summer; common in winter along the South Coast, but uncommon along the North Coast. Very rare transient in District I and casual in District V.

Willets are widespread and are found at sandy beaches, rocky shores, sloughs, river mouths, lagoons, and, to a lesser extent, at ponds and in flooded fields near the coast. Post-breeding migrants return as early as mid- or late June. Four alternate-plumaged individuals at the Santa Ynez River Mouth 12 June 1987 and 1 in Goleta 15 June 1992 were probably early "fall" arrivals. The earliest arrival date of a juvenile is 9 July 1997 at the Santa Maria River mouth. High overall counts include 175 at the Santa Maria River mouth 17 October 1978, up to 300 on Santa Barbara CBCs (560 were reported on the CBC 30 December 1967), 239 on Isla Vista beach 7 December 2006, and, exceptionally, 605 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 8 August 2011, 740 there 5–7 September 2011, and 450 on 27 August 2012. A few birds have been found as far as 11 mi (18 km) from the coast in the Santa Maria area in both fall and spring. In winter, far fewer birds are found along the North Coast than along the South Coast. High counts on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs are only 39 (20 December 1998) and 37 (19 December 1999) birds, respectively; and the species has been missed altogether on almost half the counts. Most breeders have departed by early May. Small numbers of non-breeders remain through the late spring and early summer; most of these are present at sloughs, lagoons, and river mouths (e.g., Santa Maria River mouth, Devereux Slough).

The only records for District I are: 1 at Gibraltar Reservoir 16 June 1988 (ph. SBMNH) and singles at Lake Cachuma 19 July 1991, 23 June 2006, 8 July 2006, 27 October 2006, 29 July 2007, 26 July 2009, 25 August 2024, and 16 July 2025, with a flock of 4 there on 8 July 2024. All of these birds were likely fall migrants, as were those in District V, near Cuyama 7 August 2011 and up to 2 at New Cuyama 21–30 July 2018.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Accidental.

There is one record. A juvenile was near the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 25 October 1985 (ph. *AB* 40:158, SBMNH). This was only the second record at the time for Southern California.

Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

Fairly common to locally common transient and winter visitor in District C, uncommon in District I; rare during early summer. Uncommon transient in District V, where casual in winter.

Greater Yellowlegs are found at ponds, lakes, reservoirs, sloughs, river mouths, creeks, and flooded fields; they are uncommon to rare at ephemeral pools and patches of kelp detritus on upper beaches. Fall migrants begin appearing by late June (earliest arrival dates: 17 June 1989 Goleta, 17 June 2018 near Santa Maria, and 22 June 1976 Lake Cachuma), though the species is not fairly common until mid-July. The earliest arriving juveniles are 26 July 2020 Santa Ynez River mouth, 2 August 2007 Goleta, 3 August 1988 near Santa Maria (3), and 3 August 1989

Goleta. A presumed late migrant was in the Cuyama Valley 5 November 2005. This species sometimes occurred in large numbers (up to 60) at sewage treatment ponds and flooded fields in the Santa Maria Valley during migration and winter; 150 were there 5 April 1991. More recent maxima include 60 birds at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 19 September 2012, 91 there 24 February 2016, 107 on 22 December 2017, and an exceptional 131 birds 28 February 2018 and 132 birds on 23 November 2020; 117 at the A Street pond in Santa Maria 24 December 2017; and 82–110 on flooded ball fields in Santa Maria 15–16 February 2025 and 60–67 there 15 October–15 November 2025. Farther south, 41–44 birds were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 17–20 September 2014. Some 40+ at Goleta Slough 13 August 2000, 53 there 31 August 2005, and 48 at Devereux Slough 17 August 2007 were high single-site totals for the South Coast. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 52 individuals (2 January 2005), though only 8 birds on 5 January 2019. Spring migrants are on the move by early March. A total of 17 birds at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 May 2016 was a large count for so late in spring. Small numbers regularly linger from May into early June (high of 7 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 10 June 2020, as late as 13 June 1981 Goleta (2)) but not thereafter. It is not known whether such birds are very late spring migrants or summering non-breeders; definite non-breeders very rarely remain through much of June along the coast.

This is one of the few species of shorebirds that regularly winters in District I, such as at Lake Cachuma, where 5 were seen on both 3 March 2003 (early migrants?) and 12 January 2004, but where the high count on the Cachuma CBC is a mere 3 individuals (29 December 2015). There are also five winter records from District V: New Cuyama 29 November 2019–16 February 2020, increasing to up to 3 birds through 29 February, up to 2 near New Cuyama 27 December 2020–22 January 2021, and singles there 23 December 2023, 25 January 2025, and 25 January–2 February 2026.

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*)

Fairly common fall transient and uncommon spring transient in District C; rare to uncommon in Districts I and V.

Wilson's Phalaropes occur primarily at sloughs, river mouths, lakes, and, most commonly, sewage treatment ponds. The first fall migrants (predominantly females) may appear in early or mid-June (e.g., 4 June 2020 (12) and 8 June 1977, 1987 (2), and 2015 (2) all in Goleta). Some 38 birds at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 16 June 2006 was a high count for such "early" southbound migrants. Peak numbers of Wilson's Phalaropes in fall occur from early July to late August, when large numbers formerly were found on coastal sewage treatment ponds (e.g., 400 Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 30 July 1979 and 1000 Santa Maria Valley 14 August 1982). Recent maxima have not exceeded 130 individuals (i.e., on both 13 August 2008 and 8 July 2014), except that involving 284 birds on 30 July 2012, and all from the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant; the recent South Coast maximum is 77 at Devereux Slough 5 August 2007. The earliest records of juveniles are of singles near Santa Maria 7 July 1994 and in Goleta 8 July 1994. Most individuals have departed by early September, and the species is very rare after mid-September. Singles in Santa Barbara 5 October 1987, in Goleta 5–6 October 2000, and near Guadalupe 16 October 1981 were somewhat late, whereas single individuals near Santa Maria 16 November 1980 and at Sandpiper Golf Course near Goleta 23 November–1 December 2000 were exceptional.

High counts in spring do not exceed 20 individuals. Because spring transients occur from mid-April (early arrival date: 29 March–2 April 1990 Goleta (up to 3)) into mid- or late May and fall transients may arrive in early or mid- June, it is difficult to categorize sightings falling between approximately 26 May and 8 June. Three on Lake Cachuma 1 June 1976 and 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 June 1980 were alternate females and may have been very early fall arrivals. Two in Goleta 1 June 1969, 2 there 30 May 1978, with a dull-plumaged bird remaining through 9 June, 1 in Goleta 28–30 May 1981, up to 7 near Santa Maria 25 May–1 June 1986, and

1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 June 1990 and 2 there 3 June 2020, and 1 in Goleta 1–3 June 2020 may also have been early fall transients or non-breeding summer wanderers.

Most records from District I are from Lake Cachuma during fall migration between late June and late August. The species is very rare away from Cachuma and in spring.

There are now at least six spring and more than a dozen fall records for District V, with maxima of 66 on 1 August 2012 and 54 on 13 August 2013, all near Cuyama and New Cuyama. Two birds at New Cuyama 9 June 2018 are somewhat difficult to categorize but were likely southbound arrivals.

Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)

Common to locally abundant spring transient in District C, although numbers vary from year to year; common fall transient. Rare in early summer. Two early- and one mid- winter records. Very rare migrant in Districts I and V.

Red-necked Phalaropes are most abundant in offshore waters although they also may be common at coastal sloughs, river mouths, lakes, and, especially, sewage treatment ponds; a few are found at ephemeral pools on beaches. Fall transients may arrive as early as late June (e.g., 19+ June 1976 Goleta); the first juveniles at the end of July (e.g., 30 July 2020 Santa Ynez River mouth (2)), with very early juveniles at the Santa Ynez River mouth 23 July 2017 and 19 July 2021. Approximately 10,000 between Santa Barbara and San Miguel Island 25 July 1992 and 2000 in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel 31 August 1996 were high fall counts offshore. Substantially greater numbers are seen onshore in fall (e.g., 600 in Santa Maria Valley 25 August 1980, 750 there 14 August and 1000 on 21 August 1982, and ca. 800 at the Santa Maria River mouth 11 August 1996) than in spring; 3500 at Devereux Slough 2 September 2007 was a very large number for onshore, particularly along the South Coast.

This species is rare by late October and very rare to casual in early November; single individuals in Goleta 23–26 November 1983, at the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 November 1991, at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 24 November 2003, up to 4 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 17–21 November 2025, and 1 in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel 26 November 2025 were later still, whereas 1 seen 2–3 mi (3–5 km) off Santa Barbara 2 January 1982 and 1 off the Santa Maria River mouth 22 December 1991 were exceptionally so. A bird at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 27 January 1985 is the only mid-winter record for the county and it was in alternate plumage. Other published late-fall and winter sightings have been dismissed as involving probable misidentified Red Phalaropes.

Spring migration occurs typically from mid-April until the beginning of June. During most years, the large majority apparently pass offshore; typically, they are uncommon onshore. During some years, Red-necked Phalaropes are abundant near shore. Small numbers may arrive especially early in some years; e.g., 6 in Goleta 22 March and 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 March 1995; 15 in eastern Santa Barbara Channel 30 March 2026; ca. 1650+ from Goleta Point 4–5 April 2001; singles in Goleta 2 April, 3 April, and 6 April 2004; in Santa Barbara Channel 26 March 2018; in eastern Santa Barbara Channel 30 March 2019; at Devereux Slough 28 March–3 April 2020; and at Jalama Beach County Park 31 March 2020. A total of 15,000 in the Santa Barbara Channel 17 April 1998 was a high count for that early in the season. During the peak season, ca. 50,000 were between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands 9 May 1988; ca. 39,000 were seen from Goleta Point during spring 1976, with a one-day maximum of ca. 25,000 on 10 May; a total of ca. 10,000 were seen from Goleta Point 28 April 1980; ca. 125,000 passed Goleta Point in just 1.5 hours on the morning of 28 April 1997, with additional thousands in the Channel on following days; ca. 12,800 were tallied from Goleta Point 2 May 2002, including 11,900 in only 20 minutes; and ca. 57,000 were tallied from Platform Irene, southwest of Point Arguello, in just two hours on 3 May 2011.

A previously unknown nocturnal migration of Red-necked Phalaropes over the Santa Barbara coastal plain was detected during late April and early May in 1980, 1981, and 1982. The heaviest movement occurred during the three or four hours following sunset, with fewer birds noted past midnight. Flocks were detected on a number of evenings overhead near the Santa Barbara Harbor and, most often, heading west on the inland side of Highway 101 in western Santa Barbara and eastern Goleta. These flocks were not detected farther west in Goleta. Calm, clear nights were favored, and thousands of individuals were involved on many nights. The maximum count was an estimated 30,000 in one hour on 3 May 1981 near the intersection of San Marcos Pass Road and Highway 101. This evening overland flight was not detected again until 2009, when hundreds were over downtown Santa Barbara 8 May, "several dozens" were detected over northern Goleta 9 May, "many flocks" were again over downtown Santa Barbara 14 May, and ca. 30 were over Goleta 14 May.

Probable spring transients have occurred into early June (e.g., 7 June 1979 Santa Maria River mouth (4), 9 June 2022 Coal Oil Point). Several individuals have also remained well into June from the spring season and may have summered locally: Santa Maria River mouth through mid-June 1981, Goleta through 12 June 1982, Santa Barbara through 16 June 1911 (Bowles and Howell 1912), and Carpinteria Salt Marsh through 28 June 1966. It is uncertain whether the 3 at the Santa Maria River mouth 16 June 1982 and 2 (alternate) in Goleta 17 June 1989 were late spring or early fall transients or were summering locally.

Records for District I are primarily in fall: total of 6 on Gibraltar Reservoir and Jameson Lake 21 August–13 September 1937 (Bartholomew 1940), total of 11 records (involving 43 individuals) at Lake Cachuma between 7 August (1997 (4)) and 4 October (1997) (maximum count: 10 on 28 August 2008) plus a high count of 33 there 24 August 2007, 6 on Twitchell Reservoir 10 August 2012, 1 at Los Alamos 18 September 2014 and 2 there 12 September 2020, and 1 midway between Lompoc and Buellton 21 September 2024. In spring, 1 was at Lake Cachuma 4 May 1990, 3 were there 17 May 2008, and 1 was seen 27 April 2014.

In District V, fall records predominate. The first was of up to 14 near Cuyama 1–29 August 2012. With the construction of the sewage treatment pond at New Cuyama numbers have increased, with high counts of 23 birds on 23 August 2018, 17 on 5 September 2019, and 27 present 26 August 2020. Up to 3 early arrivals were there 27–28 June 2020. Elsewhere, singles were in Quatal Canyon 25 August 20181 and 15 September 2019, and 3 were at an ag pond on 30 August 2021. In spring, 1 was near Cuyama 25 April 2015, up to 3 were at New Cuyama 10–26 May 2019, up to 2 somewhat early individuals were there 5–7 April 2020, up to 5 were seen 10–26 May 2020, 3 were found 3 May 2022, and 1 on 16 May 2026.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

Irregular transient and winter visitor in District C; numbers vary greatly from year to year. Rare to abundant in spring, uncommon to common in fall, absent to fairly common in winter, and very rare in summer. Casual in Districts I and V.

The Red Phalarope is the most pelagic of the phalaropes, occurring most regularly and in the largest numbers in offshore waters. On land, this species is rare overall and is most often encountered at coastal sloughs and river mouths, irregularly in large numbers. Fall migrants appear beginning in late July. For example, 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 15+ July 1989, another there 21 July 1997, and 10 between Point Conception and San Juan Seamount 21 July 2012 were probably early migrants, though they might have summered locally as they were mostly in basic plumage. Counts of 111 well W of Vandenberg SFB 8 August 1990, ca. 220 birds (with 10,000 Red-neckeds) in the Santa Barbara Channel 25 July 1992 (an El Niño year), and 46 from NW of San Miguel Island to San Juan Seamount 23 July 2011 were high counts for so early in the season. The species is most numerous during the late fall (late October–November); e.g., 3000 were in the western Santa Barbara Channel 5 November 2016. A substantial "wreck" in late October and early November 1911 brought more than 1000 to between Goleta and Carpinteria (Bowles and Howell 1912); large numbers were onshore,

probably the result of "alkali poisoning," in Santa Barbara and Goleta 28 October 1934 (Rett fieldnotes); 300+ were at the Santa Barbara Harbor 24 November 1961; and in 1982, 40 were onshore in Goleta 11 November and several individuals were found on creeks and puddles in roads in the foothills behind Santa Barbara on 9 November. Two large concentrations for late fall were the ca. 2500 birds between Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands 5 November 2016 and 2000+ birds over a 10-mile stretch some 190 mi (300+ km) W of San Miguel Island 1 December 2024.

Small numbers remain somewhat regularly offshore into mid-January. Larger numbers have been encountered during the early winter on several occasions (e.g., 85 in Santa Barbara Channel 27 December 1969, 60 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 19 December 2002, 62 there 5 January 2023, and, exceptionally, 5000 off the Santa Maria River mouth 23 December 1979 and 800 off the Santa Maria River mouth and north Vandenberg SFB 22 December 1991); and, in mid-winter, 1000+ in a half-hour moving south off Vandenberg SFB 15 January 1990 and up to 300 between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and Rodriguez Dome [Rodriguez Seamount] 20 January 2001. Most onshore sightings in winter involve single individuals.

Red Phalaropes are very uncommon to rare in winter after mid-January. Records falling between the end of January and mid-March include: Goleta Point 2 March 1976, total of 184 in Santa Barbara Channel 17–21 March 1976, south of Santa Cruz Island 26 February 1978, Santa Ynez River mouth 21 January 2001, and 2 there 22–26 January 2010. CalCOFI cruises, however, have recorded this species more regularly at this season, including a maximum of 200 birds well WSW of San Miguel Island 8 March 1991; also, 112 were well W of San Miguel Island and Point Conception 17 March 2026.

Spring migration occurs primarily offshore, with large flights rarely seen from shore. Numbers vary substantially from year to year. Particularly heavy flights occurred in 1976 and 1980, during which time immense numbers were seen in the ocean and small numbers came onshore. During 1976, a total of ca. 30,000 were seen from Goleta Point, with peak counts of 6500 on 17 April (a very high count for so early in the season), 10,000 on 18 May, and 8000 on 19 May. During 1980, the large numbers were farther offshore, with 30,000+ near Santa Cruz Island on 28 May; the largest on-land count that year was 70 at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 May. Twelve at the Santa Ynez River mouth 24–25 March 1995 were early.

Several individuals have remained well into June (e.g., 11 June 1976 Goleta and 4 (alternate plumage) Santa Maria River mouth 15–24 June 1980) following large spring flights. A total of 55 individuals south of San Miguel and Santa Rosa Islands 12 June 2010 was a large count for so late in the season. One near Santa Rosa Island 27 June 1997 and another in the Santa Barbara Channel 3 July 1997 and 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 19 June 1996 probably summered locally. In 1992, El Niño conditions farther offshore may have been responsible for an unprecedented summer showing, with a total of almost 40 seen in county waters between 16 June and mid-July (also see above).

Single individuals near Orcutt 15 October 1978 and 9 May 1982 were 8 mi (13 km) inland; singles at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 18 May 1982, 15 January 2001, and 13 May 2008 were 9 mi (15 km) from the coast; and 1 was at the Mission Hills sewage treatment ponds near Lompoc 11 January 2006.

There are two records in District I: 1 at Lake Cachuma 14 July 1992 (basic plumage) and 1 there 10 May 2008. And there is one record in District V: New Cuyama 16 September 2018.

SKUAS AND JAEGERS (STERCORARIIDAE)

South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccormicki*)
Rare but regular fall visitor well offshore, very rare in late spring and summer. One record of an individual seen from shore.

South Polar Skuas are found well offshore, primarily from mid-May (but see below) to late October. First recorded in Santa Barbara County waters on 29 September 1956 when 2 seen 28 mi (45 km) SW of Point Conception, followed by 1 bird on 22 September 1957 SW of Santa Cruz Island (Small 1959b); the next records came in 1971. There are now ca. 61 additional fall records involving ca. 194 individuals since 1971 between 5 August and 28 October from waters beyond the Channel Islands and well west of the mainland. A number of trip totals are between 5–6 birds; higher counts include a total of 8 individuals S of San Miguel Island 28–29 September 1976, as many as 11 birds between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 9 September 2009, and an unprecedented 41 birds south of Santa Rosa Island 11 August 1992. Very late records are 17 November 2005 from 6 mi (9 km) SE of Santa Rosa Island, 20 November 2004 from vic. northern Channel Islands, and 21 November 1987 ca. 150 mi (240 km) SW of San Miguel Island.

In spring, 1 seen ca. 53 mi (85 km) W of Point Arguello 30 April 2014 was very early. The other 10 records well offshore occur between 8 May (2016; 16 mi (26 km) SSW of San Miguel Island) and 9 June (2002; 2 birds S of Santa Cruz Island), with high counts of 5 birds S of San Miguel and Santa Rosa Islands 14 May 1978, 4 birds S of Santa Cruz Island 3 June 2008, and up to 4 individuals S of Santa Cruz Island 7 June 2008. Also, see Santa Barbara Channel records below.

There are also 17 mid-summer records: near San Miguel Island 14 July 1976, the four July records from the Santa Barbara Channel below, and 12 records (involving 18 individuals) between 1–31 July, 2007–2023, mostly south and west of the northern islands except for 1 bird between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands 1 July 2013 and another there 11 July 2016.

Briggs et al. (1987) mention 14 undated records in just three years between 1975 and 1978 in a favored area along the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge ca. 25–40 mi (40–60 km) south of Santa Rosa Island.

Skuas are very rare inside the Santa Barbara Channel: near Santa Cruz Island 15 May 1978, only 1 or 2 mi off Santa Barbara 25 July 1992, 10 mi (16 km) S of Goleta 21 July 1996, in Santa Barbara Channel 3 July 1997, just NE of Santa Rosa Island 19 July 2003, and some 15 birds in fall between August and October since 1971.

An exceptional record involves a bird seen from shore at the Santa Maria River mouth 19 October 1978.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)
Fairly common to common transient offshore, uncommon in winter. Very rare in early summer. Seen from shore in small numbers.

The Pomarine Jaeger is the dominant jaeger in the offshore waters year-round. Fall migrants typically arrive beginning in early-to-mid-August. It sometimes occurs in large numbers, particularly from September–November (e.g., 55+ Santa Barbara Channel 11 September 1971, 50+ there 8 September 1974, total of 50 near Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel Islands 20 November 2004, flock of 50 S of Santa Cruz Island 14 October 2006, and flock of 27 (total of 37) W of Point Arguello 3 November 2019), although the highest county total is actually in spring (90 between San Miguel and San Nicolas Islands 14 May 1978). Briggs et al. (1987) noted that, indeed, the waters within 25 mi (40 km) of the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge were especially productive for this species, though this was primarily in reference to fall. As many as 6 have been seen from shore in a day along the North Coast in September and October.

Small numbers remain offshore during winter months. The highest winter counts are 34 between San Nicolas and Santa Cruz Islands 26 February 1978 and 38 between western Santa Barbara Channel and ca. 80 mi (130 km) off Point Arguello 5 February 1994. A total of 11 off Goleta 5 December 1980–16 January 1981, 12 between Goleta, Ventura, and Santa Cruz Island 9

March 1991, 11 off Santa Barbara and Goleta 1 January 1994, and 12 on the Santa Barbara CBC 30 December 2006 were also above-average counts. An average of from 1 to 3 individuals are seen from shore along the South Coast each winter, with a high total of 7 birds from Goleta 31 December 2016. Seven were seen from Point Conception 3 December 2022.

In spring, numbers seen from shore vary somewhat from year to year; totals from Goleta Point were 11 in 1976, 2 in 1977, and 2 in 1978. One sub-adult moving west past Goleta Point 16 June 1992 was probably a very late migrant. This species will likely prove to be regular in small numbers from shore at Point Conception and Point Arguello. The maximum counts offshore in spring are typically lower than in fall; but see above.

Small numbers of non-breeders probably remain locally offshore through summer, although there are only 12 mid-summer records to date, 7 of which are from late July, and those involving adults may involve early, failed breeders returning south. Those between late June and mid-July are of an adult off the Santa Maria River mouth 13 July 1979, 1 near Santa Cruz Island 24 June 1984, 8 from Point Arguello 9 July 1989, 1 at Goleta Point 17 July 1992, and 1 in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel 2 July 2026. The Point Arguello record involved several full-tailed adults. In addition, 1 onshore at Santa Barbara Harbor 1 August 1993 was found dead on 4 August (*SBMNH).

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

Fairly common transient offshore, uncommon in winter. Casual in early summer. Regularly seen from shore. One record in District I.

Parasitic Jaegers frequent nearshore waters and are seen regularly from shore in small numbers. They are less numerous and greatly outnumbered by Pomarine Jaegers farther offshore. The largest numbers of Parasitics are seen in fall (late August–October) when they are seen fairly regularly in small numbers harassing terns close to shore. Regularly frequented sites between fall and spring are the nearshore waters between Goleta Beach Park and Coal Oil Point and the Santa Barbara Harbor area. Several individuals have been found flying over or standing on the beach, but this is very unusual. Even more unusual was an adult over Devereux Slough 29 February 2012. The earliest arrival dates are 11–18 August 1993 Santa Maria River mouth, 12 August 1976 Santa Barbara, and 15 August 1987 Santa Ynez River mouth (and see below).

In winter, an average of 3 to 5 different individuals likely remain over a several-month period in the waters between Goleta and Carpinteria. There are very few winter records along the North Coast. As in fall, winter Parasitic Jaegers are usually seen close to shore. High counts include: “common in December 1884 from Santa Barbara north” (Henshaw 1885), 7 in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area during December 1974, 6 in the Santa Barbara area 2 January 1977, 9 on the Santa Barbara CBC 3 January 1998 (some duplication possible), and 9 from Point Conception 3 December 2022.

Numbers of spring migrants seen from shore vary from year to year. For example, a total of 68 were seen from Goleta Point during spring 1976, but only 7 were seen in 1977, and 26 were counted in 1978. It is uncertain whether an individual over the beach on north Vandenberg SFB 5 June 2025 was a late migrant or summering locally.

There are five summer records: an adult flying up the coast past Goleta Point 22 June 1980, a one-year-old off Goleta 24 July 1981, 1 at Goleta Point 19 June 1982, a sub-adult in Santa Barbara 25 July 1983, 1 well SW of San Miguel Island 31 July 2010, and 1 off Goleta 24 July 2016. The late-July birds were probably early fall arrivals.

Accidental in District I: an adult was at Lake Cachuma 11–18 September 2004 (ph. SBMNH).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

Very uncommon fall transient well offshore, very rare in spring. One onshore record.

The fall records to date include 1 seen 12 mi (19 km) S of San Miguel Island 29 August 1981 followed by some 46+ records involving approximately 380 individuals between 15 July (2018, 18–28 mi [29–45 km] S of Santa Cruz Island (2)), 21 July (2007, ca. 80 mi [130 km] SSW of San Miguel Island), and 23 July (2011, between 29 mi [46 km] W and 65 mi [105 km] SSW of San Miguel Island (9)), and (late) 3 November (2001, between Arguello Canyon and Rodriguez Dome) and 4 November (2023, 2 in northern Santa Cruz Basin). Birds seen in late July include both adults and sub-adults, and thus they may involve both early-returning failed breeders and over-summering nonbreeders. The highest fall counts are: total of 29 birds S of Santa Cruz Island 6 October 2006, 93 birds from SW of Point Conception to San Juan Seamount 8 September 2010, 32 birds S of Santa Cruz Island 6 September 2022, and an exceptional total of ca. 500 during a repositioning cruise well off the North Coast 28 September 2024. A single flock of 12 birds were S of Santa Cruz Island on the getting-late date of 14 October 2006. Very late records are of single individuals 120 mi (195 km) WSW of San Nicolas Island 13 November 1989, 85 mi (137 km) SW of San Miguel Island 15 November 1989, and 185 mi (300 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 18 November 1989.

The only spring records are: 4 seen an unknown number of miles well off Point Conception 11 May 1987, ca. 45 mi (75 km) W of San Miguel Island 25 April 2003, ca. 45 mi (75 km) S of San Miguel Island 22 April 2006, 2 near San Juan Seamount 28 April 2006 (ph. *NAB* 60:436, SBMNH), ca. 23 mi (37 km) W of San Miguel Island 16 May 2009, ca. 40 mi (65 km) W of Purisima Point 6 May 2015, 2 seen only 14 mi (23 km) SW of Point Sal 11 May 2017, and 1 very early bird 12 April 2022 ca. 45 mi (70 km) W of Point Conception. This species very likely occurs more regularly far offshore at this season than these few records suggest.

All offshore records are from beyond the Channel Islands or from waters well to the west of the mainland, except those of 2 birds northwest of Santa Rosa Island 8 September 2001, 2 there 8 September 2015, and 1 north of San Miguel Island 27 August 2022. Several reports from farther inside the Santa Barbara Channel lack adequate documentation.

The only onshore record of Long-tailed Jaeger is of an adult at pastures near Guadalupe, some 3 mi (5 km) inland, on 28 August 2011 (ph. SBMNH).

AUKS (ALCIDAE)

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*)

Uncommon to common transient and winter visitor offshore. Rare in late spring and early summer, at least along the South Coast. More numerous overall along the North Coast. Numbers variable from year to year.

Common Murres are primarily found in offshore waters, though they are seen regularly from shore along the North Coast, less frequently from the South Coast. In general, its status along the North Coast is quite different from that along the South Coast. The species' abundance varies from year to year.

Along the North Coast, Common Murres are irregularly common. During summer and early autumn 1980, an incredible 21,500 (by far the highest count ever in the county) were seen along the coast, with most (i.e., up to 21,000 on 1 August and 10,000 on 12 September) in the Point Sal area. During 1981, with better early-summer coverage off the Point Sal and Vandenberg SFB area, fewer than 10 Common Murres were present during June; but during mid-July, numbers began to build: 200 were present in late July, 2000 were at Point Sal on 4 August, and 5000 were there 9 August. Subsequent late-summer counts over the following years in the Point Sal/north Vandenberg SFB area came nowhere close to those of 1980 and 1981. For example, only 1 was there 21 July 1984, none was seen 26 July 1986, 75 were present 10 July 1987, and 5 were there 7 July 1988. A decline in breeding murre populations in Central California followed after the early 1980s and may have been a major factor. In 1989, however, approximately 20 were along the Vandenberg SFB coast 9 July 1989, increasing to 3400 by 25 August, with fewer remaining

into mid-October. In 1990, 38 were along the Vandenberg SFB coast on 7 July, with an impressive 11,000 present 25 August. And in 2023, 410 were there 29 August.

During some of those years, post-breeding transients began to arrive along the North Coast in mid-July. These included three sightings of single adults being accompanied by large "chicks": an adult with a swimming chick was at Point Arguello 18 July 1980 and single three-quarters-sized young, each with an adult, were at Point Sal 22 July 1981 and off the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 July 1981. It is very doubtful that these young could fly, and their origin is a mystery, but very young alcids are capable of traveling long distances with their parents. The nearest known colonies are in Monterey County and on the Farallon Islands off San Francisco. In addition, 2 juveniles were found dead at Point Sal 8 August 1982 (*SBMNH). (See also South Coast discussion, below.)

Small numbers bred on Prince Islet off San Miguel Island between 1885 and 1912, with ca. 100 pairs noted in June 1910 (Willet 1910a). "Attendance" by birds on the cliffs at Prince Islet was noted in 1939 and 1976 (Capitolo et al. 2008). In July 1991, several murres in alternate plumage were seen flying by or swimming below the cliffs at Prince Islet, indicating possible nest-prospecting activity by sub-adult birds (Carter et al. 1992). Attendance by fewer than 20 birds was again noted at the cliffs in summer 1999, 2005, and 2007 (Capitolo et al. 2008). Confirmed nesting there remained elusive until 125 adults, more than half with chicks, were found in late June–July 2011, with at least 6–8 chicks remaining on 28 July. In 2019, up to 34 birds were on Prince Islet 5–7 August. On 25 February 2024, 400 birds were roosting there.

In 1978, 1980, and 1981, most of the large numbers of nearshore murres had departed by mid-fall, with 750 off the Santa Maria River mouth as late as 15 October 1978. It was not known whether these birds left the entire area or only moved farther offshore. One inside the Santa Maria River mouth 14 October 1982 was ill.

Since 1990, most maximum counts along the North Coast at any season have not exceeded a couple hundred individuals, but 550 were off north Vandenberg 4 September 2011. By far the largest recent from-shore total is 3500 off the Santa Ynez River mouth 7–8 October 2007. The largest spring total is 127 off north Vandenberg SFB 19 May 2019; that in early-summer is 31+ along the Vandenberg coast 5–17 June 2007, but 200 off Point Sal 31 August 2009 was a small echo of the immense late-summer numbers found there during the early 1980s.

Almost no large concentrations have been noted along the South Coast, and Common Murres are rare to very rare there in summer and early fall. Numbers of migrants typically arrive beginning in November, although small numbers of murres may be somewhat regular by late July in the western Santa Barbara Channel and waters off San Miguel Island (e.g., 5 in the Santa Barbara Channel 21 July 2007, 12 there 25 July 2009, and 55 birds in the Channel 1 August 2009 which included 2 separate adults with large chicks). In winter, numbers vary greatly from year to year, with the species being rare some years and fairly common others. Fifty off Summerland 9 January 1954 was a large number and the "first Southern California record in more than twenty years," according to *Audubon Field Notes.* Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 45 (3 January 1976) and 55 (1 January 2011) individuals; 60 were in the Santa Barbara Channel 1 February 2008. From shore, the species may be absent some years and uncommon others; the highest counts were in 1977 when 266 were seen during March and April from Goleta Point (including 60 on 2 March and 84 on 1 April), and in 2012 with 350 birds off Tajiguas on 9 January. Numbers decline during April and May; 25 in the Channel between Santa Barbara and Santa Rosa Island 3 May 2016, 150 in the Santa Barbara Channel 21 April 2026, and 90 there 12 May 2026 were good counts for the dates. The species is rare to absent in late spring and early summer, with the larger counts usually made following years of maximum abundance (e.g., in 1976 and 1977); high counts included 10 in the Santa Barbara Channel during summer 1976, 10 in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area during summer 1983, and 15 and 18 in the Santa Barbara

Channel 9 and 12 July 1992, respectively. A sick bird was onshore at Coal Oil Point 12 July 2004.

Pigeon Guillemot (*Cepphus columba*)

Common summer resident and breeder along the North Coast. (Also nests on the Channel Islands.) Casual in late fall and winter. Very rare spring and late-summer visitor along the South Coast.

Pigeon Guillemots nest on rocky islets and headlands along the North Coast and on the Channel Islands and feed within several miles of shore. They are rare in the open ocean; 2 were in mid-Channel near Santa Rosa Island 18 May 1980. Along the South Coast, they occur close to shore (up to 3 mi [5 km] out), and in bays and harbors.

Through the early 1990s, nesting colonies were located at Point Sal (10–12 pairs in 1980), Point Pedernales area (particularly Destroyer Rock) (180 birds in 1979 and 50+ birds in 1993), Point Arguello (300–350 pairs in 1980, 200+ pairs in 1981, 275+ birds in 1993, and 407 birds on 7 July 2019), Rocky Point (100 birds in 1979), and Point Conception (30 birds in 1979) [1979 data from Sowls et al. 1980]. Population sizes along the North Coast increased between 1980 and 1995, with colonies becoming established on coastal bluffs between Point Pedernales and just south of the Santa Ynez River mouth. Summer 1989 surveys by Carter et al. (1992) recorded 5 breeding individuals at Mussel Rock, 58 birds in the Point Sal/Lion Rock area, 30 on north Vandenberg SFB, 411 in the Honda Point/Destroyer Rock area, 953 at Point Arguello, 78 at Rocky Point, and 29 at Point Conception. More recent nesting surveys on Vandenberg SFB conducted by Robinette et al. (2012b) produced ca. 1000 birds in 2000, ca. 1150 birds in 2005, and ca. 1620 birds in 2012 as follows: 181 birds between Purisima Point and Lompoc Landing (the latter a new sub-colony just north of the Santa Ynez River mouth), 501 birds between Honda Point and Point Pedernales, 492 birds in the Point Arguello area, and 448 birds in the Rocky Point area. A total of 407 birds were off Point Conception 7 July 2019. The estimated breeding population on San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and Anacapa Islands was 1420 individuals in 1975–1977 (Sowls et al. 1980) and 2934 birds in 1991 (Carter et al. 1992).

During summer months, foraging individuals are seen at many sites between Mussel Rock and Point Sal south to Point Conception; they are rare north to off the Santa Maria River mouth, although a high count of 20 birds were there 3 August 2013.

Breeding birds may arrive starting in mid- or late February (e.g., 13 February 2025 Point Conception, 21 February 2015 near Santa Cruz Island (5), 23 February 2002 there (2) and 20 the following day), exceptionally as early as 2 February 2013 off the Santa Maria River mouth (alternate plumage). Moderate numbers may be present by early March (e.g., 50 in the Point Arguello area 6 March 1988). They mostly depart by early September; 52 off north Vandenberg SFB 25 August 2018, 65 there 28 August 2011, and 15 there 6 September 2015 were good counts for that late in the season. They are rare through late September. One remained on a cliff at Wall Beach, Vandenberg SFB, through 16 October 2024. Small numbers appear to linger most years near Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands into late October or even into November (e.g., 2 there 25 October 2017, 2 on 26 October 2022, 2 seen 27 October 2019, 6 birds 4 November 2016, 1 present 9 November 2015, and 1 off Santa Rosa Island 10–27 November 2023).

Elsewhere, 2 off the Santa Maria River mouth 3 October 2004 and 6 on north Vandenberg SFB 6 October 1989 were somewhat late. One in the Santa Barbara Channel 21 October 2012, 2 off Lion's Head, north Vandenberg SFB, 1 November 2006, and 1 near Point Sal 4 November 1990 were even more so.

The only winter records are of 1 off south Vandenberg SFB 15 December 1991, 1 there (off Destroyer Rock) 17 December 2000, 2 between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands 31 December 2000, and 1 off south Vandenberg SFB 12 January 2011.

Along the mainland South Coast, the Pigeon Guillemot is primarily a very rare late-summer visitor, with most of the records occurring between mid-July and early September. Singles from Goleta Point 5 and 8 July 1992, 1 off Coal Oil Point 20 June 2011, and 2 off Coal Oil Point 3

July 2016 were early. These sightings probably represent a small but regular post-breeding dispersal from the Channel Islands or the North Coast. One off Carpinteria 5 November 1986 and 1 in Santa Barbara 27 October 2020 were very late.

Pigeon Guillemots also occur very rarely along the South Coast in spring: Goleta Point 16 April 1978, and then 24 additional records between 10 March (2001, Goleta Point (2)) and 30 May (2008, off Santa Barbara Harbor). Several additional spring records from Gaviota and Hollister Ranch are from 10 or fewer miles (16 km) from the southernmost mainland breeding site at Point Conception, with a high count of 5 at Gaviota State Park 14 April 2025.

Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*)

Rare to very rare late-summer, fall, and winter visitor along the coast. May be somewhat regular in late summer in the Point Sal/north Vandenberg SFB area. Casual in spring.

The Marbled Murrelet is found primarily in nearshore waters and was first recorded during winter 1885–1886 when several specimens were collected near Santa Barbara (Streator 1886). One found dead on the beach vic. Santa Barbara was listed as 30 July 1910 in Willett (1933) but as 30 July 1911 with specimen data (*UCLA). There is also a specimen for "Santa Barbara Bay" 12 April 1922 (*MVZ). Since that time, the South Coast records include: Santa Barbara Harbor 21–24 August 1974, dead (mummified) on beach west of Gaviota 17 April 1977 (skel. SBMNH), three records associated with an "invasion" of this species into Southern California during winter 1979–1980 (Santa Barbara 17 December, Goleta 18 December, and 2 in Santa Barbara 29 December), 2 off Goleta 31 December 1983, Santa Barbara 29 July 1985, Goleta 28 November 1987, Santa Barbara 23 August–9 September 1988, Santa Barbara 25 July 1989, 2 seen 1 mi (1.6 km) off Point Conception 2 February 1994, Santa Barbara Harbor 31 October 2006, Carpinteria 9 January 2015 (a minor "invasion" winter), and Gaviota State Park 24 January 2025.

Marbled Murrelets are possibly somewhat regular in very low numbers along the North Coast during the late summer and early fall, less so in winter, and they are strictly casual there in spring. A pair was at Point Sal beginning 15 July 1980, with 9 there 25 August and 4 present 12–18 September; 3 birds only 2 mi (3 km) south on adjacent north Vandenberg SFB 15 October may have involved the same individuals. During 1981, the species was again noted at Point Sal, with 8 there 4 August, 4 present 12 August, and 2 remaining through at least 24 September. One was a mile to the south on north Vandenberg SFB in August 1981. In 1982, up to 4 were there 8–21 August. One was just off the Santa Maria River mouth 13 August 1983 and 2 were at Point Sal 11–21 July 1984. In 1989, 1 early individual was at Point Arguello 9 July, and up to 6 were at north Vandenberg SFB and nearby Point Sal 23 July–17 September. In subsequent years, the species became more sporadic in occurrence: 4 at Point Sal 4 September 1994, 1 off Purisima Point 19 July & 16 August 1995, 1–2 off Santa Maria River mouth 31 August 2002, 2–3 there 14 August 2004, 2 at Lion's Head, north Vandenberg SFB, 12 August 2006, 1 or 2 off the Santa Maria River mouth 2–15 August 2009, 2 near Point Sal 30 August 2009, 2 there 8 September 2010, up to 4 there (Brown's Beach) on three dates between 28 August–8 November 2011, 6 off north Vandenberg SFB 19 November 2012, up to 5 off Santa Maria River mouth 25–26 November 2014, and 2 off north Vandenberg SFB 29 August 2023.

In winter, 2 were off Santa Maria River mouth 24 January 1980 (invasion year), 2 were off north Vandenberg SFB 28 February 1982, 4 were off Santa Maria River mouth 1–2 December 2010, an impressive 14 birds were tallied off Lion's Head, north Vandenberg SFB, 13 February 2011, 2 were off north Vandenberg SFB 7 December 2011–9 March 2012, 1 was off Point Pedernales, south Vandenberg SFB, 18 December 2011, 2 were off the Santa Maria River mouth 23 December 2011, 2 were off north Vandenberg SFB 9 March 2012, up to 10 were there (Lion's Head and Brown's Beach) 12 January–15 February 2014 (high on 15 February), up to 2 were present there 7 December 2014–18 January 2015, 2 were off the Santa Maria River mouth 4 February & 3 March 2018, 4 were off north Vandenberg SFB (near Point Sal) 21 February

2018 and 2 were there (near Wall Beach) 17 March 2020 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 was off the Santa Maria River mouth 23 January 2025.

The only true spring record is of 1 found dead at Purisima Point 18 May 1982.

A number of published South Coast records of Marbled Murrelets lack adequate documentation and are not included. Many of these reports may have involved misidentified immature Pigeon Guillemots.

Scripps's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus scrippsi*)

Common late-winter, spring, and early-summer resident offshore, particularly near the Channel Islands (where it breeds). Very rare in late summer, fall, and early winter. Very rare or casual from shore.

Scripps's Murrelet (a taxonomic split involving the former "Xantus's" Murrelet) is commonly encountered offshore from January or early February (e.g., 74 in Santa Barbara Channel 21 January 2013) through early June. Through about the 1980s, this species did not arrive in numbers until late January or early February; but beginning in the 1990s they were found regularly earlier in January, and sometimes by early January after 2000 (e.g., 2 near Santa Cruz Island 3 January 2017, 2 off Santa Barbara 4 January 2014, 1 near Santa Cruz Island 6 January 2019, 16 in Santa Barbara Channel near Santa Cruz Island 7 January 2012). The first nesting birds on the Channel Islands may begin coming ashore by late January (e.g., 1 at Santa Cruz Island 19 January 1977, 2 at San Miguel Island 27 January 1993). Maximum counts of ca. 155 between San Miguel and San Nicolas Islands 14 May 1978 and ca. 470 south of Santa Cruz Island 20 May 1979 were both exceptional. More typical high counts were the 40 birds in the Santa Barbara Channel 1 May 1999 and the 74 birds, above. Between 1975 and 1977, the breeding population on San Miguel Island was thought to be ca. 150 individuals (Sowls et al. 1980), while Carter et al. (1991) estimated a mere ca. 26 pairs on Santa Cruz Island in 1991. These were very likely low estimates, and the numbers of birds on at least Anacapa Island have increased with the local eradication of rats (Whitworth et al. 2005.). Studies (e.g., Burkett et al. 2003) have estimated some 100–600 nesting birds on San Miguel and 200–600 birds on Santa Cruz, between 1991–1996, and with the latter island's numbers subsequently being reassessed, between 1994–2002, to some 400–1200 breeding individuals. This species does not nest on Santa Rosa Island. Larger numbers nest on Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands. A study of radio-tagged birds from the latter site during April–May in the mid-1990s found that some individuals foraged as far away as the waters near the northern Channel Islands (Whitworth et al. 2000).

Scripps's Murrelets are uncommon to rare well off the North Coast to the west and north of San Miguel Island during the breeding season, when most birds remain closer to the nesting sites. Some adults, and adults with chicks, are known to disperse west and north from the islands beginning in May and early June. Unlike during late winter and spring, beginning in late June or July this species is more likely to be found beyond the islands or well off the North Coast rather than near the islands or in the Santa Barbara Channel.

Numbers decrease rapidly near the islands by late June and July, and the species is rare to very rare in late summer, fall, and early winter. Scripps's (Xantus's) Murrelets were reported regularly on fall pelagic trips during the 1950s and 1960s. Some of these reports probably involved Craveri's Murrelets, which may occur almost as often as Scripps's inside the islands in fall. Also, many of these earlier "Xantus's" were not identified to subspecies, and at least some seen during the late summer and fall well offshore, particularly beyond the islands, probably involved Guadalupe Murrelets. A murrelet collected (*LACM) a mile off Santa Cruz Island 28 November 1907 was Scripps's, however. A total of 15 Scripps's W and SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011 was a good count for late summer, and 12 birds in the northern Santa Cruz Basin 27 November 2023 was a very high count for late fall.

This species is seen only very rarely or casually from the mainland. Most such records are from between late winter and early summer: Santa Barbara 30 May 1957, 1 or 2 in Goleta during late winter in the late 1960s, 4 from Goleta Point 29 February 1976, singles there 3 March 1976

and 17 March 1992, Goleta 3 March 1998, Santa Barbara 23 March 1998, 2 in Goleta 15 April 1998, off Santa Maria River mouth 2 June 2007, and just off the beach in Carpinteria 18 June 2026. There are several spring reports of multiple birds from Point Conception. Records from other times of the year are: Santa Barbara Harbor in early September 1976, one-half mile off Goleta 10 July 1981, 4 near Point Sal 17 December 1989, singles at Santa Barbara Harbor 15 September 1991 and 2 November 1991, up to 2 there 24 August–10 September 1993, 1 there 15 August 2003, Gaviota State Park 3–5 November 2018, and Goleta 12–15 August 2023.

Guadalupe Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*)
Rare late-summer and fall visitor well offshore.

A taxonomic split involving the "Xantus's" Murrelet, Guadalupe Murrelet is a rare or very rare though probably regular post-breeding, northward-dispersing visitor to Santa Barbara County offshore waters. Its exact status is clouded by possible confusion with both Scripps's and Craveri's Murrelets. Three individuals were well off San Miguel Island 11 July 1992, 1 was 78 mi (125 km) W of Point Arguello 22 October 1997, 3 were at Arguello Canyon 24 August 2002, 4 were near San Juan Seamount 8 September 2007, 1 was south of Santa Rosa Island 25 July 2009, 4 were well W and SW of San Miguel Island 31 July 2010 (ph. *NAB* 64:648, *Birding* 44(6):33), 1 was ca. 40 mi (65 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 9 September 2015, a total of 8 were between Rodriguez Dome and near San Juan Seamount 5 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was ca. 150 mi (ca. 250 km) SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2019, at least 6 were between Rodriguez Dome and near San Juan Seamount 9 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was north of Santa Barbara Island 31 July 2021 (ph. SBMNH), 2 were ca. 115 mi (190 km) WSW of Point Arguello 31 July 2021, 8 were between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 8 September 2021, 2 were well S of Santa Rosa Island 6 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH), 4 were between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 7 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was near Rodriguez Dome 12 October 2022, 7 were south of Santa Rosa Island 5 September 2023, 8 were between vic. Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 6 September 2023, 5 were 30–40 mi (50–60 km) W of Point Arguello 28 September 2024, and 1 was ca. 25 mi (40 km) S of Santa Rosa Island 9 August 2025. This species may prove to be as or more numerous than Scripps's Murrelet well offshore, near the shelf edge, between mid-July and late October some years.

A bird photographed mid-Channel between Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz Island on 21 April 2026 was either a Guadalupe Murrelet or a hybrid.

[In addition, a "Guadalupe-type" bird paired with a Scripps's or intermediate were found nesting on Santa Barbara Island in 1977 and 1978, and it or another Guadalupe was 100 meters offshore 26 May 1976 (Winnett et al. 1979).]

Craveri's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus craveri*)
Rare late-summer and early-fall visitor offshore. Seen from shore twice.

Craveri's Murrelet is a rare and irregular post-breeding visitor to Santa Barbara County waters, though its exact status is clouded by possible confusion with both Scripps's and Guadalupe Murrelets. The records include: Santa Barbara Channel off Santa Barbara 8 September 1974, 4 near San Miguel Island 16 September 1978, between Santa Rosa and San Nicolas Islands 29 August 1981, and a total of ca. 345 individuals offshore since 1985 between 25 July and 12 October, with high counts a total of 12 well off western Santa Barbara County 8 August 1990, a total of 28 birds in vic. Santa Cruz Basin 5 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH), a total of 54 birds between 6 September-12 October 2022 mostly S of the northern Channel Islands, 29 birds south of Santa Cruz Island 5 August 2023, 47 birds S of the northern Channel Islands 5 September 2023, 55 birds in the northern Santa Cruz Basin 6 October 2024, and 25 birds there 5 September 2025. In addition, 4 earlier birds were ca. 7-1/2 mi (12 km) S of Santa Cruz Island 9 July 2022. [There are multiple additional records from the waters near Santa Barbara Island,

including 11 birds there on 6 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH).] Two birds south of Santa Cruz Island 4 November 2023 (ph. SBMNH) were very late.

Also, single individuals were seen from shore in Santa Barbara Harbor 16 September 1985 and from Goleta Point 25 July 1992.

During the 1950s and 1960s, fall boat trips in the Santa Barbara Channel regularly reported "Xantus's" (now Scripps's and Guadalupe) Murrelets. Some of these reports probably involved Craveri's, which may occur as often as Scripps's at this season in more inshore waters.

Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*)

Rare and irregular winter visitor offshore; sometimes seen from shore. Probably more numerous along the North Coast than to the south. Casual in late spring and summer.

Ancient Murrelets occur both offshore and near the coast. Irregular in occurrence, they are reported fewer than half the winters. They typically arrive during November (early arrival: 15 October 1980 north Vandenberg SFB (2)), and most have departed by the end of March (late records: 1 freshly dead on the beach in Goleta 8 April 1980 (*SBMNH), ca. 35 mi (55 km) S of San Miguel Island 22 April 2006, 40 mi (65 km) W of Purisima Point 30 April 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and see below). During winter 1979–1980, an "invasion" of this species took place throughout coastal Southern California. Seventeen were off the Santa Maria River mouth 1–2 December 1979, and Ancients were recorded regularly there in small numbers through late January 1980. At least 10 were in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area December 1979–early January 1980. Another incursion, in 2006–2007, produced several South Coast records, including a count of 13 birds off Santa Barbara and Goleta 30 December, 7 birds ca. 8 mi (13 km) off Carpinteria 2 March, a late individual ca. 12 mi (20 km) S of San Miguel Island 21 April, and see below. A third, smaller incursion, in 2010–2011, produced several records, including 6 birds off the Santa Maria River mouth 8 November, 7 birds off north Vandenberg SFB 12 January, and 4 birds several miles off Santa Barbara 27 January. A fourth incursion, during 2014–2015, produced 5 birds along the South Coast between 3–10 January and 1 on 9 March. Nine were off north Vandenberg SFB 7 December 2011. One in Santa Barbara 23 February 2017 became a specimen (*SBMNH).

There are five late-spring/summer records: just off Santa Barbara Harbor 1 June 1980, 2 off Point Arguello 18 July 1980 (ph. SBMNH), 2 off Guadalupe Beach 7 June 2007, and 4 mi (6 km) S of Santa Barbara 21 May 2011, all of which followed flight years the previous winter; plus one at Point Arguello 2 August 2025. In addition, 1 was at Beecher's Bay, Santa Rosa Island, 16 August 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

Cassin's Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*)

Fairly common offshore year-round. Locally common near the Channel Islands (where it breeds) in summer. More widespread in winter. Rare close to shore; casual onshore.

Most Cassin's Auklets are found well offshore. In summer, they are common near the western Channel Islands, uncommon farther east. Some 22,140 breeding individuals were estimated for the period 1975–1977, most of which were on San Miguel Island (Sowls et al. 1980). Overall numbers are thought to have declined since the 1970s (Veit et al. 1996). Breeding estimates in 1991 were of ca. 12,300 individuals (Carter et al. 1992). Six hundred were just north of Santa Cruz Island 28 April 1990. They are uncommon in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel at this season. During fall and winter, they are more widespread, as migrants and winterers from the north are also present. Five hundred south of Point Conception 2 February 1994, 1000 between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and Rodriguez Dome 20 January 2001, and ca. 2000 between Santa Barbara and Rodriguez Dome 1 March 2009 were good counts. Several seen up to 225 mi (360 km) W of San Miguel Island 10 February 1992 were farther offshore than usual.

There may be one or several sightings per year from shore, most occurring between late fall and spring; 12 seen from Goleta Point 13 December 1976 is the high count. One was in Santa Barbara Harbor 14 February 2000. The species is seldom seen near shore in summer; it was

recorded, however, on several occasions only 1–3 mi (2–5 km) off Goleta during summer 1981. One was found freshly dead at the Santa Barbara Harbor 18 June 1971 (*SBMNH). Four were seen from Goleta Point 11 June 1978 and 2 were there 30 July 1992. One was seen from Coal Oil Point 5 September 2004.

One unusual sighting is of an individual inside the beach swimming on the UCSB Lagoon in Goleta 11 July 1981; the bird was captured later in the day and it died soon thereafter (*UCSB). Even more bizarre was an individual found alive 3 mi (5 km) inland at a Santa Barbara gas station 10 February 1989; the bird died in captivity (*SBMNH).

Parakeet Auklet (*Aethia psittacula*)

Casual visitor well offshore.

There are six records. A dead female was found in worn but fairly good condition on the beach approximately one mile south of the Santa Ynez River mouth 4 July 1988 (*SBMNH). Based on its condition, it was believed to have died at sea approximately 1–1.5 weeks earlier; therefore, the bird may have died outside of Santa Barbara County waters. CalCOFI cruises recorded this species as follows: 1 was 113 mi (182 km) W of San Nicolas Island 6 March 1991, 1 was ca. 160 mi (260 km) WSW of San Nicolas Island 1 February 1992, 5 were 222 mi (360 km) W of San Miguel Island 10 February 1992, and a total of 18 were 70–83 mi (113–133 km) W of Point Arguello 25 January 1993. Most of these offshore sightings have been made at the outer boundary of the California Current system. A small incursion into Central California waters in early 2009 produced 2 birds 24 mi (39 km) WNW of San Miguel Island on 1 March (ph. SBMNH).

Crested Auklet (*Aethia cristatella*)

Accidental visitor.

One bird was photographed in vic. Point Arguello on 28–29 July 2025. This was the first record for Southern California and one of only a handful for the state.

Rhinoceros Auklet (*Cerorhinca monocerata*)

Fairly common to common transient and winter visitor offshore, rare in summer. A small population probably nests in the Point Arguello area; otherwise irregularly seen from shore.

Most Rhinoceros Auklets are found offshore from late October to April. The largest numbers occur off the North Coast. Some 650 were between San Nicolas and Santa Cruz Islands 26 February 1978, 500 were off Point Pedernales, south Vandenberg SFB, 23 December 1989, ca. 1200 were south of Santa Rosa Island 8 February 1992, ca. 2000 were between Santa Barbara west to Rodriguez Dome 1 March 2009, and 453 were tallied flying by Point Conception 13 February 2025. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 210 birds (3 January 2009).

Small-to-moderate numbers are found regularly through early May (e.g., 35 seen ca. 40–55 mi (65–90 km) off the North Coast 8 May 2013). A few individuals are recorded into late May or early June (high count: 20 near San Miguel Island 23 May 1982), and even more rarely in summer, when most likely to be found in the western Channel and off the North Coast (high counts: 6 in Santa Barbara Channel on both 6 July and 25 July 1992, 21 between San Miguel Island and San Juan Seamount 23 July 2011).

This species is seen only irregularly from shore along the South Coast. Spring totals from Goleta Point were 6 in 1976, 9 in 1977, and 2 in 1978. Seven off Goleta Point 4 March 2003 was a good count, though eclipsed during winter 2014–2015 by a total of 33 off Goleta 31 December–3 January and 22 off Santa Barbara on 10 January alone. One at Santa Barbara Harbor 17 January 2000 was especially close to shore; 1 there 17–21 July 1990 was particularly unusual for summer.

During summer 1980, up to 25 Rhinoceros Auklets were present on the sea cliff at Point Arguello (where hundreds of Pigeon Guillemots also breed), with individuals seen entering burrows 17–18 July. During summer 1981, several brief morning censuses produced at least 7 individuals there, 4 of which were seen entering and leaving burrows 23 June and 13 July. In 1987, up to 4 were there 15 May and 10 July. From April–July 1988, a total of 9 were seen between Point Arguello and just to the north of Point Pedernales, south Vandenberg SFB. A much more detailed survey in 1989 by Carter et al. (1992) recorded probable breeding birds at Point Sal (3), Destroyer Rock area (5), and Point Arguello (24). A return to brief visits in 1990 produced 5 birds on 7 July, 3 were present during early July 1991, and 6 were seen on 30 June 1993. One was at Destroyer Rock 12 July 1996 and 3 were there 11 July 1998. At least 5 were at Point Arguello 5 June 2007, 2 were just offshore 29 May 2016, 8 were counted 7 July 2019, and 3 were seen 13 June 2025. Up to 3 were at Point Pedernales 17 June–1 July 2024, 2 were there 23 June 2025, and up to 3 were present 8 June–24 July 2026. Virtually all birds have been in alternate plumage. These onshore records span the period 1 April (1989) to late July. Definite breeding has not been confirmed, though is strongly suggested. Up to 6 birds were swimming off cliffs just north of Wall Beach, north Vandenberg SFB, between 6 June–11 July 2025 and up to 12 were there 16 June–31 July 2026. Elsewhere, singles were at Point Sal 12 August 1981 and at Point Conception 3 August 2025.

Archaeological work on San Miguel Island suggests that this species formerly bred there. Evidence of possible breeding on San Miguel was obtained in June–July 1991 when ca. 19 birds were seen, with some entering crevice sites and engaging in probable courtship displays (Carter et al. 1992).

Horned Puffin (Fratercula corniculata)

Casual late-spring visitor well offshore, with substantial numbers occurring in two separate years.

Horned Puffins have occurred well offshore on a number of occasions between mid-May and mid-June, and once in February. The late-spring records may represent an irregular movement closer to the coast from much farther offshore (where they probably occur regularly). One was near Santa Cruz Island 13 May 1973. Large numbers of individuals were reported during 1975 and 1976 spring influxes to inshore waters, with the species being "surprisingly abundant near San Miguel Island (the coolest waters off Southern California), where local numbers were on the order of several thousand birds" between April and June (Briggs et al. 1987); 31+ were in the northern Channel Islands area and farther offshore 13–27 May 1975 (19 of which were between up to 8 mi [13 km] S of San Miguel and SW of Santa Rosa Islands 14 May, and 1 was 4 mi [6 km] S of Santa Cruz Island 15 May); 1 was found dead on East Beach, Santa Barbara, in May 1975 (skel. SBMNH); a total of 24 were near San Miguel and Santa Cruz Islands 21–22 May 1976; and 39 were south of San Miguel Island 8 June 1976. In addition, a small (but unknown) number were between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount during April 1977 (Briggs et al. 1987), 2 were south of Santa Rosa Island 20 May 1979, 1 was found alive (later died) on Shoreline Beach, Santa Barbara, 11 June 1981 (*SBMNH), and 1 was near Santa Rosa Island 9 May 1988. An incursion into nearshore waters of Northern and Central California during late spring and summer in 2007 produced 1 at Point Arguello 5 June (ph. *NAB* 61:641, SBMNH), as well as a long-dead carcass in poor condition in Goleta 14 October (ph. and *SBMNH). Singles were 18 mi (29 km) W of San Miguel Island 16 May 2009 (ph. SBMNH), 5 mi (8 km) off the northwest end of Santa Cruz Island 30 May 2009 (ph. SBMNH), and 15 mi (25 km) S of Santa Rosa Island 2 May 2013 (ph. SBMNH).

Tufted Puffin (*Fratercula cirrhata*)

Very rare visitor well offshore during winter and especially spring; casual at other seasons. One sighting from shore. (Possibly briefly recolonized San Miguel Island.)

Most Tufted Puffins occur well offshore, only casually in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel and from shore. There are more than 25 records, mostly in spring and early summer, including: Fall—Santa Barbara Channel off Santa Barbara 11 September 1971; Winter—near Santa Cruz Island 24 January 1965, 7 near Santa Cruz Island 14 January 1976, south of Santa Cruz Island 26 February 1978, 142 mi (230 km) SW of San Miguel Island 28 January 1989, only one mile off Point Sal 22 December 1991, several reports during early January 1993 from near Santa Rosa Island with 3 there 22 January, and western Santa Barbara Channel 11 December 2025; Spring and Early Summer—near San Miguel Island 13 May 1975, unknown number far off the North Coast and southwest of the Channel Islands during oceanographic cruise May 1975, south of San Miguel Island 6 April 1976, Santa Barbara Channel near Santa Cruz Island 15 May 1978, 2 south of Santa Cruz Island 20 May 1979, Santa Barbara Channel near Santa Rosa Island 1 June 1980, south of Santa Rosa Island 22 May 1991, ca. 8 mi (13 km) SSE of Santa Cruz Island 9 June 2002, well W or SW of San Miguel Island 18 April 2003, near Santa Cruz Island 5 June 2005 (ph. *NAB* 59:656, SBMNH), 9 mi (15 km) S of Refugio 22 April 2006 (ph. SBMNH), 40 mi (65 km) SW of Point Arguello 16 April 2012, total of 4 individuals between 18 mi (30 km) S of Santa Rosa Island and 13 mi (20 km) S of San Miguel Island 2 May 2013 (ph. SBMNH), 2 birds N of west end of Santa Cruz Island 24 May 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and found dead at Refugio State Beach 12 March 2026 (*SBMNH); and Summer—only 0.6 mi (1 km) SE of Santa Cruz Island 30 June 2004 and ca. 11 mi (18 km) S of Santa Barbara 5 July 2010.

A non-breeding individual seen from shore at north Vandenberg SFB 9 July 1989 was very unusual.

This species formerly bred on San Miguel, Santa Cruz, and, probably, Santa Rosa Islands in the 1800s (Willett 1913), with definite nesting at Santa Cruz Island in 1875 and at San Miguel Island through at least 1906 (Willett 1933, Grinnell and Miller 1944), possibly to about 1917. Breeding evidence in the years that immediately followed uncertain. During May–July 1991, ca. 10 potential breeders were found at Prince Islet off San Miguel, with 2 birds observed bill rubbing and entering a crevice with nesting material (Carter et al. 1992). A breeding-plumaged adult was also there 5 May 1992. Since that time, however, there have been no additional reports from the immediate vicinity of Prince Islet.

TERNS AND GULLS (LARIDAE)

Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*)

Uncommon and local summer resident along the North Coast. Rare to uncommon transient, post-breeding visitor, and recent, irregular breeder along the South Coast. Formerly a more common and widespread breeder along the entire coast. One record in District I.

Least Terns nest and roost on sandy beaches and feed over the nearshore ocean. They also utilize estuaries, sloughs, lagoons, and river mouths for feeding and roosting. This endangered species still breeds, although often with poor success, at several sites along the North Coast between the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths where there are extensive dune areas. These birds typically arrive in early May (early date locally: 30 April 1994 Santa Ynez River mouth (3); but see below). The locations and approximate sizes of the colonies as censused in 1981 were: Guadalupe Dunes just south of the Santa Maria River mouth (25 pairs); mouth of San Antonio Creek, Vandenberg SFB (4 pairs); and Purisima Point, Vandenberg SFB (ca. 30 pairs). Less exact estimates of the total breeding population along the North Coast included 23 pairs in 1986 and 45 pairs in 1987. None were believed to have nested at Purisima Point in 1986, and only 7 pairs bred in 1987. Vandenberg SFB nesting colonies censused in 1989 and 1991 were as follows: San Antonio Creek mouth (3 and 1 pair, respectively), Purisima Point (18 and 10 pairs,

respectively), and Santa Ynez River mouth (3 and 1 pair, respectively). A high early-season count was of 27–34 birds at the Santa Ynez River mouth 24–31 May 2020.

The table below summarizes the numbers of California Least Tern nests, eggs, chicks, and fledglings observed at Vandenberg SFB from 1995 to 2012. Also shown are hatching success, fledging success, and breeding success from 1995 to 2012. Source: Robinette et al. 2012a.

Year	# of Nests	# of Adult Pairs	Total Eggs Laid	Total Chicks Hatched	Hatching Success*	Max. Fledglings Observed	Fledging Success*	Breeding Success*	Fledglings per Adult Pair
1995	38	45	Unknown	21	Unknown	12	57%	Unknown	0.27
1996	62	60	121	40	33%	12	30%	10%	0.20
1997	39	25	76	20	26%	2	10%	3%	0.08
1998	20	19	37	23	62%	14	60%	37%	0.75
1999	44	25	91	50	55%	15	30%	17%	0.60
2000	32	28	64	47	73%	11	23%	17%	0.39
2001	44	41	97	78-91	80-94%	54	59-69%	55%	1.32
2002	65	59	125	91-103	73-82%	39	38-43%	31%	0.66
2003	117	82	210	73-91	35-43%	33	36-45%	16%	0.40
2004	1	1	1	0	0%	0	N/A	0%	0.00
2005	44	44	74	31-32	42-43%	1	3%	1%	0.02
2006	2	2	4	0	0%	0	N/A	0%	0.00
2007	18	18	29	20	69%	16	80%	55%	0.89
2008	18	18	35	33	94%	19	58%	54%	1.06
2009	31	30	63	56	89%	37	66%	59%	1.23

2010	34	33	65	56	86%	29	52%	45%	0.88
2011	32	32	53	36	68%	4	11%	8%	0.13
2012	18	18	32	21	66%	10	48%	31%	0.56

* Hatching Success = % of total eggs that hatched; Fledging Success = % of total chicks that fledged; Breeding Success = % of total eggs that fledged.

Post-breeding concentrations have reached as high as 52 birds at the Santa Ynez River mouth during July 2015 and July 2022, and 61–63 birds there 4–5 August 2015; and 23 birds at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 July 2019 and 45 there 22 July 2020.

Many Least Terns have departed by August, and they are rare by the end of that month. The latest records for the North Coast are 15 September 1996 and 22 September 1995 Santa Ynez River mouth, 18 September 2018 Santa Maria (2) (see below), and, exceptionally, 3 October 2004 Santa Ynez River mouth (ph. SBMNH).

Farther inland than usual, 8 were seen approximately 6 mi (10 km) from the coast along the Santa Ynez River near Lompoc 24 July 1980, 3 were in Santa Maria some 11 mi (18 km) from the beach 23–28 June 2005, up to 2 were there (A Street ponds) 29 July–7 August 2006, and several more were seen (Jim May Park) some 13 mi (20 km) inland 4 August 2013 (2), 7 August 2016 (4), 6 August 2018, and 18 September 2018 (2). The latter birds were also late.

Least Terns formerly bred (through the 1950s) at several sites along the South Coast, but they ceased doing so thereafter and occurred only as very rare spring transients and rare post-breeding visitors, until they commenced breeding once again beginning in 2004. The decline followed coastal development, the loss and degradation of wetlands, heavy human recreation use of beaches, and the introduction of non-native predators (e.g., rats, cats, and dogs). Former breeding sites were located in Carpinteria, Summerland, Santa Barbara, and probably Goleta. The Carpinteria colony was the largest, with 40 pairs in 1915 (Dawson 1916) and 50 birds (including many juveniles) on 17 August 1934 (Rett fieldnotes). Nine sets of eggs were taken there by L.T. Stevens in June 1928 and 1930 (SBMNH, WFVZ), one set in June 1939, and one in June 1941 (WFVZ). The species still nested there in 1944 according to Grinnell and Miller (1944); however, it is unknown what year nesting was last attempted. Adults feeding young there 25 September 1921 (Hoffmann 1921d) is one of the latest fall records for the county. The only definite evidence for Least Terns nesting at Summerland is 2 egg sets collected (SBMNH) on 29 May 1932. A colony in Santa Barbara was at the mouth of Mission Creek. In 1932, this colony consisted of approximately 6 pairs; eggs were laid, but no young were raised that year because of too many bathers in the vicinity (Willett 1933). In 1938, 2 egg sets were collected from there (SBMNH) on 3 June. In Goleta, Least Terns were believed to have formerly bred at present-day Goleta Beach Park into the 1930s (W. G. Abbott, pers. comm. 1975) and in the Devereux area until at least 1959 or 1960 (T. N. Metcalf pers. comm. 1975).

Nesting was discovered on the beach just west of Devereux Slough (Coal Oil Point Preserve) in 2004, with a total of 3 nests 19 June–8 July, which were all predated; up to 15 birds were present late June–mid-August. In 2006, nesting was again documented there, with up to 8 adults and 4 nests in June, 3 of which were successful in producing 7 young by 15–16 July. Breeding occurred at the Coal Oil Point Preserve again in 2007 (but only 1 nest hatching young). Two adults were there 25 May 2011. A high summer total of 15 birds seen off Coal Oil Point 20 June 2011 were especially surprising given that the species was not found nesting locally that year. Up

to 3 were there 21 June–6 August 2016 and 5 were present 13–20 June 2017, but nesting was not documented in either year. Singles were found 22–24 June 2018, 12–19 June 2025, and 4–18 June 2026; and 1 was at UCSB Lagoon 12 June 2026.

Least Terns occur along the South Coast as uncommon post-breeding visitors between mid-July and late August and as very rare spring migrants. The favored sites have been Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Santa Barbara Harbor, UCSB Lagoon, Coal Oil Point, and Devereux Slough. Many records involve adults accompanied by juveniles, which may remain dependent until after their departure from the state. The origin of these post-breeding visitors is largely uncertain; they may be from the North Coast or points north, or from nesting populations in Ventura County or farther south. Two juveniles at Coal Oil Point 4 August 2020 had been banded earlier in the summer at Oceano Dunes, San Luis Obispo County, 17 June–14 July. Through the 1990s, early arrival dates included 18–19 June 1976 Goleta (2), 29–30 June 1957 Santa Barbara (3), 29 June 1993 Goleta (5), and 4–6 July 1978 Goleta (2). One at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 8 June 1960 may have been a summer wanderer. The highest count was 16 at Santa Barbara Harbor 31 July 1979. Since 2000, the earliest post-breeding visitors arrived 4 July 2025 near Santa Barbara Harbor, 5–12 July 2021 and 9 July 2022 Coal Oil Point and 12+ July 2003 Devereux Slough (4). High counts include 17 at Devereux Slough 13 August 2000, up to 25 there 5–13 August 2001, 19 at the nearby Coal Oil Point Reserve 10 August 2002, and 33 (mostly migrants) there 4–12 August 2007.

Most Least Terns have departed the South Coast by the end of August or first few days in September; the latest records are 19 September 1963 Goleta (3), 20 September 1961 Santa Barbara (4), and 24 September 1999 Santa Barbara. Records after September lack substantiating details.

Least Terns are very rare as spring transients away from nesting areas, occurring primarily during May. One in Carpinteria on 14 April 2025 was early. One seen S of San Miguel Island 22 April 2006 and another 40 mi (66 km) W of San Miguel Island 29 April 2014 were much farther offshore than usual; the former was also somewhat early. One that lingered in Goleta 5–21 May 1965 was unusual.

There is one record for District I: Lake Cachuma 1 May 1976.

Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

Casual visitor in District C.

An adult was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 June 1990. Another (?) adult was there 12 May 1992.

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

Fairly common and increasing transient and summer visitor in District C; rare but increasing in winter along the South Coast, very rare along the North Coast. Rare transient in District I. One record in District V.

Caspian Terns frequent both fresh- and salt-water in District C, although they are most numerous over nearshore waters and at sloughs and river mouths near the immediate coast. One at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 15–23 December 1989 was at an atypical locality. The first individuals typically arrive during March (early arrival date: 5 March 1981 Goleta (3)). One in Goleta 27 February 1981 was probably a very early migrant. Through the mid-1990s, high spring counts did not exceed 25 individuals except for 39 at Devereux Slough 3 May 1988. More recently, several spring maxima have reached up to 50 birds or more, with 59 at the Santa Maria River mouth 9 May 1998, a total of 68 seen migrating west over Goleta 30 March 2005, 88 at Devereux Slough 20 April 2013, 80–82 at Goleta Beach Park 17–29 May 2014, 92 at Devereux Slough 1 May 2015, 94 there 24 April 2016, 119 there 15 April 2017, 296 passing Point Conception 11 April 2021, and 174 there 10 April 2022. In summer, the highest counts are 56 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 14 June 2004, 50–58 at Devereux Slough 2–10 June 2009, and 43 at the

Santa Ynez River mouth 3 July 2010. Begging juveniles accompanying adults arrive from well outside the county beginning in late July (exact early arrival uncertain). In fall, maxima include 25 at the Santa Maria River mouth 16 August 1979 and 22 there 6 September 2004. The species is rare after early October.

Through the 1970s Caspian Tern was rare to very rare from November through February; 4 in the Santa Barbara area 3 January 1976 and 4 in Goleta November 1976–late January 1977 were high counts. Since the 1980s, it has become rare but regular along the South Coast; highs have reached 9 on the Santa Barbara CBC (29 December 1984), though single-site totals do not exceed 3–5 birds. It remains very rare in winter along the North Coast.

Inland, this species is an uncommon to rare-but-regular transient and late-summer visitor. All records except one are from Lake Cachuma. All records are between early April and late September, except for 1 on 11 December 1988, 2 from 11–18 October 2003, and 1 on 14 November 2023. The high counts are of 20 birds on 14 July 1992 and 16 birds on 10 April 2004. The only record away from Cachuma is of 1 over Solvang 9 April 2026.

In District M, 1 flew over San Marcos Pass 17 August 2022.

There is one record from District V of 2 birds at a farm pond near Ventucopa 25 July 1989.

A total of 3 individuals sighted at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 8 & 16 August 2011 and 26 June 2013 had all been banded at San Francisco Bay. Of four banded birds in Goleta 19 April 2018, one had been banded as a chick along the Columbia River in eastern Washington in 2012 and the other three had been banded at the large colony at the mouth of the Columbia River in coastal Oregon/Washington in 2004, 2008, and 2009. Another adult banded at the latter site in June 2010 was seen at the Santa Ynez River mouth 15 February 2019.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

Rare and declining transient in District C, casual in District I.

Black Terns usually are seen at coastal sloughs, lakes, and ponds; in migration (mostly in spring), they also can be seen migrating just off the coast and well offshore. Large numbers of Black Terns were reported during the early part of the 20th century: "thousands" were along the coast of Santa Barbara 25 August–11 September 1915 (Dawson 1916), and Dawson (1923) reported them "abundant during migrations in the Santa Barbara sector." This species has seriously declined and is now quite rare along the coast. Since the mid-1980s, only 1 or 2 individuals have been found onshore most seasons. Spring migrants are found between late April and late May. The maximum on-shore spring counts include up to 10 in Goleta 6–13 May 1965, 19 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 10 May 2003, and 6 there 9 May 2006. Black Terns have been noted also moving north from coastal promontories and offshore, and the species has become more regular there than onshore. Small numbers are recorded somewhat regularly during spring pelagic trips. Most records are from the Santa Barbara Channel, but farther offshore 1 was near San Miguel Island 18 May 1980 and 11 birds were 7 mi (11 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 30 April 2011; and even farther out was a bird 154 mi (250 km) SW of San Miguel Island 26 April 1990.

Three birds ca. 9 mi (15 km) N of Santa Cruz Island 2 July 2013 are difficult to categorize.

Fall migrants occur primarily between early August and late September (earliest arrivals: see below, 20 July 2015 Santa Ynez River mouth, 22 July 2014 Santa Ynez River mouth, 24 July 1993 Santa Barbara Channel, 23 July 2025 Santa Ynez River mouth). Since the mid-1900s, the maximum count is 11 in Goleta 12 August 1966; since 2000, the onshore maximum is only 3 individuals along the North Coast and 4 individuals along the South Coast for an entire autumn season (2008 and 2018, and 2007, respectively). There are also a few fall reports from offshore, though not as many as in spring, including 1 bird well offshore between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 9 September 2009, 1 bird S of Santa Cruz Island 3 September 2019, 1 early arrival there 12 July 2020, and 2 birds there 1 October 2022. The species is casual after the

beginning of October. Late records are: 13 October 1975 Santa Barbara, 5–20 October 1995 Santa Barbara, 29–30 October 2020 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, and, exceptionally, 20 November 1980 off Goleta, 21–23 November 2025 Guadalupe, and 17 December 1975 Goleta.

In District I, single fall migrants were at Lake Cachuma 4 August 2006 and 14 September 2007.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Uncommon to rare and declining transient and rare summer visitor in District C, mostly offshore. Only four valid winter records after mid-December. One record in District I.

Common Terns are found in the immediate vicinity of the coast at sloughs, lagoons, and river mouths. They are also found offshore, where currently most numerous, during migration, with the largest (moderate) numbers seen within about 20 mi (30 km) of the mainland and islands, with smaller numbers to the Santa Cruz Basin and south of Santa Rosa Island. They are rare elsewhere well beyond the Channel Islands. Farther offshore, records include 1 near the Santa Lucia Escarpment (see below), a one-year-old ca. 63 mi (100 km) SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011, 5 together ca. 52 mi (83 km) W of Point Sal 8 May 2013, 2 birds 43 mi (69 km) SSW of Santa Rosa Island 12 October 2022, 2 at Rodriguez Dome 6 September 2023, and 1 individual 44 mi (71 km) SW of Santa Rosa Island 29 August 2025. Two birds seen ca. 9 mi (14 km) inland at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 13 August 1982 were unusually far from the coast.

Spring migration takes place from late April (earliest arrival date: 19 April 1984 Goleta Point) until early June. Spring migration totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	32	144
Hours of Observation	68	107

High counts include 25 at the mouth of San Antonio Creek on north Vandenberg SFB 14 May 1981 and 35 in Goleta 29 April 1982. Onshore totals since the 1980s have been substantially lower. Offshore, 17 birds southwest of Point Conception 30 April 2011 is one of the highest recent spring counts.

A very small number of non-breeders are seen irregularly between mid-June and mid-July.

Fall transients begin to appear in mid- or late July (e.g., 13 July 2014 ca. 16 mi [25 km] S of Santa Rosa Island). A very high count is 75 birds at the Santa Maria River mouth 20 July 1979. Since the mid-1990s, maxima have been much lower and have mostly occurred offshore (e.g., 20 birds south of Santa Cruz Island 1 October 2022); the species is now generally rare onshore. Nine at Goleta Beach Park 5 October 2015 is a recent onshore South Coast high. Numbers decline during October, and the species is very rare after mid-October. Twenty-five were at the Santa Maria River mouth 15–21 October 1978, 10 were still there 27 October 1978, and 2 lingered through 4 November. Single birds near the Santa Lucia Escarpment 5 November 1983, in Santa Barbara 11 November 1997, Goleta 12 November 1987, Goleta 10–14 November 2018, and Santa Barbara 16 November 1992 were late.

There are only four acceptable records after mid-November: Goleta 14 December 1974, 18 November 1990–15 January 1991 (ph. SBMNH), and 30 December 1995; and Santa Barbara 1 January 2016. Common Terns have been reported on a number of occasions during winter months, particularly on CBCs. Only the above records were adequately documented, and most, if not all, of the others likely involved Forster's Terns.

There is one record for District I: juvenile at Lake Cachuma 27 September 2008 (ph. SBMNH).

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

Uncommon transient well offshore. Very rare to casual near or on shore.

Arctic Terns are highly pelagic in distribution, occurring as transients well offshore. Substantially more birds are seen beyond the Channel Islands and west of the county than inside the Santa Barbara Channel, particularly in spring. Spring migrants largely pass through between late April (e.g., 21 April 2007 between San Miguel Island and San Juan Seamount (2), 25 April 1992 ca. 225 mi [365 km] W of Point Arguello) and early June. One ca. 40 mi (65 km) SW of Point Arguello 17 April 1993 (ph. SBMNH) was slightly early. A total of ca. 50 between Arguello Canyon and Rodriguez Dome 28 April 2011, 20 from southwest of Point Conception to Rodriguez Dome 30 April 2011, 17 birds ca. 40 mi (65 km) W of Point Arguello 9 May 2012, and 44 between ca. 49 mi (79 km) SW of Point Arguello and ca. 55 mi (89 km) W of Point Arguello 30 April 2014 were high spring tallies. Two birds well SW of Point Conception 12 June 2010 were getting late. An adult at Goleta Point 15 June 1992 was not only late but it was also very unusual from shore.

Larger numbers appear during fall (August–early October). Eleven tallied beyond Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands 31 July 2010 and 4 seen 112 mi (180 km) W of San Miguel Island 5 August 1991 were slightly early. A one-year-old seen 48 mi (78 km) SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011 was probably summering "locally." A total of 55 in the Santa Barbara Channel and south of Santa Cruz Island 11 September 1971, a total of 65 well offshore between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and San Miguel Island 14–16 September 1985, a total of 115 birds west of Point Conception and San Miguel Island 28 September 2002, and a total of ca. 85 well off the North Coast 28 September 2024 are high counts. Three individuals 60 mi (96 km) SW of Point Conception 18 October 1971 (Jehl 1973) and 1 ca. 52 mi (86 km) W of north Vandenberg SFB 26 October 2012 were late.

One (immature) only 4 mi (6-1/2 km) off Goleta 29 May 1981 (ph. SBMNH) and 3 birds only 2–3 mi (3–5 km) off Goleta 4 September 1981 were closer to shore than usual.

The definite onshore records are of 1 in vic. Santa Barbara 9 September 1916 (*UCLA), a very late juvenile at the Santa Maria River mouth 19–28 October 1978 (ph. SBMNH), juvenile in Goleta 6 October 1984, adult (with slightly injured wing) at the Santa Maria River mouth 23 September 1986, adult in Goleta 28 September 1988, adult at the Santa Ynez River mouth 4 September 1991 (ph. SBMNH), the June record above, juvenile at the Santa Ynez River mouth 27 August 1993, adult at Gaviota State Park 1 September 1993, 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 20 September 1997, 1 found dead near Honda Creek, Vandenberg SFB, 18 September 2002, 1 in Goleta 2–7 September 2007 (ph. SBMNH), 1 on Vandenberg SFB 27 September 2007, single adults in Goleta 13–19 August 2019 (ph. SBMNH) and 30 September 2023, and Carpinteria 7 September 2024.

Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*)

Common transient and uncommon to fairly common summer visitor along the South Coast, uncommon along the North Coast. Formerly fairly common winter visitor along the South Coast, now uncommon, and very uncommon and local along the North Coast. Uncommon transient in District I.

Forster's Terns are found over nearshore waters and at coastal sloughs, lagoons, river mouths, and freshwater lakes and ponds near the coast. Numbers are lowest from late May to early August when breeders are elsewhere. A total of 40 birds were flying down the coast at Goleta Point 25 July 1992. Juveniles may begin arriving in late July (although exact early arrival date is unknown). Counts of 125 birds at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 7 November 1989 and 100+ at Devereux Slough 19 April 2005 were large for single localities. Numbers along the North Coast are rather low year-round. High counts there include up to 50 at the Santa Ynez River mouth during May 1977, 100+ in the Santa Maria area 1 May 1979, and 20 at the Santa Maria River

mouth 13 July 1979 and 21 July 1980. A count of 465 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 23 April 1989 was exceptional for anywhere in the county.

Spring migration totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	1536	2161
Hours of Observation	68	107

During winter, the species is uncommon to rare along the North Coast, occurring somewhat regularly in small numbers only at the Santa Ynez River mouth. The two North Coast CBCs miss this species more often than they record it, and high counts are under 6 individuals. Along the South Coast, Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 228 individuals (4 January 1997), although substantial declines of almost 50 percent were noted after circa. 2000, followed by another ca. 50 percent drop after circa 2010. A mere 2 birds were found on 4 January 2014 and 3 on 5 January 2019, and none were seen on 4 January 2020; but 95+ were there 4 January 2025 and 82 presumed very early spring migrants were tallied from Coal Oil Point moving west on 12 February 2021.

This species does not occur offshore on a regular basis more than about two miles. Many of the substantial number of undocumented reports farther out, where they are a rare visitor and migrant, are likely erroneous. There are, however, even a few documented records there of mid-sized flocks.

Inland, Forster's Terns occur regularly as transients (early April–mid-May, late July–early October) in small numbers at Lake Cachuma. Fifteen were there on both 4 May 1990 and 8 September 2007. There are only several mid-summer, late-fall, and winter records for the lake: 26 June 1987, 3 July 2000 (4), and 11 November 1967 and 14 January 1968 (same individual?) and 2 February 2009 (2), respectively.

Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*)

Fairly common fall transient and winter visitor along the South Coast, uncommon in spring and very uncommon in summer. Recent increase in numbers. Along the North Coast, it is an uncommon late-summer, fall, and winter visitor. Regular offshore near the Channel Islands.

Royal Terns occur over nearshore waters, along sandy beaches, and at harbors, coastal sloughs, and river mouths. They also occur regularly offshore in the Santa Barbara Channel and near the Channel Islands (including during the late summer, when they were formerly rare along the South Coast), with a few records beyond the islands in the northern Santa Cruz Basin, south of Santa Rosa Island, and westward to the Rodriguez Dome area.

Since the late 1990s or 2000s, numbers have increased at all seasons. Individuals formerly arrived along the South Coast only in small numbers beginning in late September and October (early arrivals: 12 September 1991 Goleta and 15 September 1961 Goleta (2)). High autumn counts now may begin already in early August (e.g., 12 in western Santa Barbara Channel 11 August 2007, 35–62 at Coal Oil Point 3–13 August 2025) and include 84 at Refugio State Beach 16 September 2019 and exceptional numbers in 2023, with 340–342 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 2–12 September.

During winter, the largest numbers occur along the South Coast, with some gatherings of up to 50–120 birds, and the maximum counts including up to 160 at East Beach in Santa Barbara 12–14 January 2011; 203 at Santa Barbara Harbor 6 February 2016; 200–249 at East Beach (Mission Creek outfall) from 14 December 2024–1 January 2025; ca. 200 in Carpinteria 20 December 2025; and 162, 181, and 247 on the Santa Barbara CBC 3 January 2009, 1 January 2011, and 2 January 2016, respectively (although some duplication is likely). Six at the Goleta

sewage treatment plant 29 January 1983 were at a somewhat unusual locality. Along the North Coast, up to 50 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth during December 1987. The high count on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC is 43 birds 29 December 1997, and that on the La Purisima CBC is 50 on 21 December 1997, although most totals on both counts are fewer than half those.

Royal Terns decrease in abundance after March; a small number usually remain until early May along the South Coast. Eighty-four in Santa Barbara 26 April 2009, 24 at Santa Barbara Harbor 1 May 1990, 30 in Goleta 1 May 2025, and up to 20 at the Santa Barbara Harbor through 26 May 1993, with 11 still present on 2 June and 4 on 9 June, as well as 37 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 May 2023 are large counts for so late in the season.

Summer records for the South Coast before the mid-1990s were few: singles in Santa Barbara 6 August 1950, Goleta 3 September 1960, and Santa Barbara 21 August 1965; and then a total of seven additional records (involving 9 individuals) between June–August; similar seasonal records for the decade since 1994 totaled at least 19. Since then, further increases in summer have resulted in multiple highs in the 20s of individuals and 37 at vic. Coal Oil Point 15 July 2026. Currently, the species occurs in small numbers somewhat regularly in summer. Along the North Coast, since 1979, this species has been a rare but regular mid-to-late summer visitor, late June–August. This situation is particularly interesting given the relative scarcity of this southern-breeding species at this season along the South Coast until recently. The high North Coast counts are 21 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 2 August 2014, 80 there 3 July 2026, and 67 at the Santa Maria River mouth 29 July 2026. Two there 4 June 1985, 3 on 18 June 2021, and 6 birds on 9 June 2024; at least 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 1–24 June 2021; and 1 at Jalama Beach County Park 17 June 2021 are difficult to categorize.

One bird at Santa Barbara Harbor 10 February 2016 had been banded in 1999 in San Diego County.

Elegant Tern (*Thalasseus elegans*)

Common summer and fall visitor in District C; formerly rare but increasing in spring; and casual in winter. Casual in District I.

Elegant Terns frequent nearshore waters and beaches, harbors, sloughs, and river mouths along the immediate coast, as well as offshore. Prior to about 1950, there were few records for Southern California and none known for Santa Barbara County. Their overall numbers and timing of arrival (from breeding colonies to the south) vary somewhat from year to year; the post-breeding dispersal commences some years during late June (e.g., 6–13 June 1989 Santa Barbara (up to 3) and 12 June 1987 Santa Ynez River mouth (3)), in other years not until mid-July. Begging juveniles accompanying adults arrive from nesting colonies well outside the county beginning in July (exact early arrival uncertain). A sampling of maximum counts by month includes 850 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 20 July 2013, 550–690 at Santa Barbara Harbor 24–28 July 2020, 600 near Santa Barbara Harbor 27 July 2026, 730 at Santa Maria River mouth 29 July 2026, 3000 in Santa Barbara 17–22 August 2025, 1900 at Santa Barbara Harbor 28 August 2022, 1000+ near Gaviota 30 August 2018, ca. 1000 vic. Santa Maria River mouth 3 September 2006, 1450 flying past Goleta 12 September 2022, 1200 in Carpinteria 15 September 2021, ca. 1000 at Santa Barbara Harbor 25 September 2013, and 200+ at Coal Oil Point 17–18 October 2013. Numbers decrease fairly rapidly during late October and the species is rare after early November; a count of 209 individuals in Carpinteria 8 November 2007 was very high for that late in the season. The last individuals usually remain until late November. Three in Carpinteria 6 December 2021 and up to 6 there 2–9 December 2025 were later still (and see below).

This species occurs regularly out in the Santa Barbara Channel to the northern Channel Islands. It is rare though perhaps somewhat regular farther offshore in the Santa Cruz Basin between late July–October. In addition, 1 was south of Santa Rosa Island 12 October 2025. In

spring, 1 was at Santa Cruz Island 4 May 2019. Off the North Coast, a total of 10 birds were between 9 mi (14 km) WNW of Purisima Point and 16 mi (27 km) WSW of Purisima Point 10–11 May 2017, and 3 were 18-1/2 mi (30 km) WNW of Point Sal 18 September 2022. Farther still, 2 were 25 mi (40 km) off Point Arguello 8 May 2019.

Beginning in the 1980s, the species became a rare but regular spring visitor along the South Coast following the first county record at this season on 17 April 1978 in Goleta (2). Through the mid-1990s, the earliest record was 23 March 1984 Carpinteria, and the high count was a total of 100 in Santa Barbara and Goleta during April–May 1994, with 85 in Santa Barbara on 20 April. During that same period, the only North Coast records in spring involved 4 at the mouth of San Antonio Creek 21 May 1981, 2 at the Santa Maria River mouth 19 April 1987, 3 there 25 May 1992, and 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 10 May 1994.

After the mid-1990s, Elegant Terns began to occur even more regularly and in greater numbers in spring than previously. They now can be found on several dates during most, but not all, spring seasons beginning in early April. Early arrivals are 10–11 March 2015 Goleta Beach Park, 12 March 2001 Goleta Point (3), and 22 March 2010 Goleta Point (7). High spring counts include 392 in two hours heading west past Goleta Point 20 April 2003 and 180 in ten minutes heading west off Santa Barbara 26 April 2003, up to 580 at Devereux Slough 19–24 April 2005, an impressive 1500 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 22 April 2005, 500 there 28 April 2014, 400 at Santa Barbara Harbor 15 April 2015, and 900 at Devereux Slough 1 May 2015. This increase in the species' abundance in spring north of San Diego County was coincident with the establishment of the northernmost breeding colonies in Orange County and, later, in Los Angeles County. More recently, the species has been found breeding to the north in the Bay Area. Large numbers in 2014 and 2015 may also have been due to the total failure of the large Mexican nesting colonies in the Gulf of California.

The species is casual after early December. Very late lingering birds were seen 12 December 2009 Goleta (ph. SBMNH), 13 December 2023 Goleta, through 14 December 2024 Carpinteria, 15 December 1977 Goleta, 15 December 2012 Goleta (2), through 19 December 1971 Santa Barbara (2), 26 December 2023 Santa Barbara, 30 December 1978 Santa Barbara, 11–30 December 2006 Goleta, and 31 December 1977 Santa Barbara (2). Even more unusual are the following mid- and late winter records: three reports from January 2003 (Goleta 4 January (3), Santa Barbara 4 January, and Carpinteria 9 January), Santa Barbara 2–15 February 2006, Santa Barbara 22 January 2013, Carpinteria 13 January–5 February 2016 and 14 December 2017–5 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH), Refugio State Beach 18 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH), 2 there 10 January 2019 (ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria 22 December 2019–14 January 2020 (ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria 9 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH), and Santa Barbara harbor area 26 December 2024 and 27 January 2025. Most of the other published records of Elegant Terns in winter probably involve misidentified Royal Terns and are not included.

Casual visitor in District I, with 1 bird at Lake Cachuma 21–22 September 2007, 1 on 17 October 2010, and 2 there 29 July 2016.

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)

Formerly a rare to very rare late-spring and summer visitor in District C, but now locally common in fall and winter on the South Coast, uncommon through summer. Casual in District I.

Along the Pacific Coast, Black Skimmer has expanded its range northward from Mexico and it now breeds very locally in California north to the Bay Area. This species frequents beaches and protected inshore waters and coastal wetlands. It was first recorded in Santa Barbara County on 30 June 1976 when 2 birds were seen at the Santa Barbara Harbor. Between 1976 and mid-1992, there were 16 records involving 28 individuals from along the South Coast between 17 May and 28 November. After that initial sighting in Santa Barbara, the species occurred almost annually, but a majority of the summer and early-fall sightings through 1993 actually came from the North Coast, specifically from the Santa Ynez and Santa Maria River mouths (and nearby beaches), a pattern quite different from today's. During that period, there were 13 North Coast

records involving 26 individuals between 12 June and 30 September. Two on north Vandenberg SFB 17 May 1989 and 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 May 1992 were slightly early. In fall, 2 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 October 1989 and 1 was at the Santa Maria River mouth 4–11 October 1992. At other seasons, 1 was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 31 March 1991 and up to 3 were there 3–26 January 1992.

Since the late 1980s, a flock of Black Skimmers has wintered in the Santa Barbara Harbor/East Beach area, with rare single individuals and small groups seen as far east as Carpinteria and as far west as Goleta. The precursor to this fall and winter event may have been the single bird in Santa Barbara 10–11 January 1989. The growth of this population can be appreciated by the following progression of counts: up to 7 from 28 January–1 March 1989; 16 there 1 January–4 February, increasing to up to 58 there 1 March–3 April 1991; up to 44 present 8 December 1991–mid-January, increasing to up to 77 from mid-January through the end of February 1992; in late 1992, skimmers were present beginning 12 September, numbers increased through the early winter, with a maximum of 117 counted in mid-January 1993, and with 24 still present 3 May, falling to 1 or 2 from 11–26 May; up to 36 were there again 26+ August 1993, with up to 150 birds from December 1993–April 1994, and up to 6 over-summering; and up to 250 were present in 1994–1995, with 11 birds still present 10 June and as many as 10 over-summering. Numbers continued to increase thereafter, but they appear to have declined beginning in the 2010s. The Santa Barbara CBC has tallied as many as 415 birds (30 December 2006). Other high counts include 292 on 14 January 1997, 390 on 18 January 1998, 379 on 2 January 2005, 415 on 30 December 2006, and 384 on 19 January 2017. In contrast, only 80 birds was the high count in 2024–2025 and 52 in 2025–2026. Numbers typically begin to slowly build beginning in the second half of August, but moderate-to-large numbers are not present until well into autumn, and they peak between late November–January, with lingering birds through spring (high late-season count of 47 on 20 May 2019, with 35 bird on 30 May) and a few present most summers (e.g., 7 near Santa Barbara Harbor 29 July 2018, up to 12 there during June 2025), with a very high 35–40 birds from 1 June–30 July 2019. A small number of wintering skimmers in Santa Barbara from 1991 to 1995 had been color-banded at a nesting colony at Bolsa Chica in Orange County. Additional color-banded birds noted in this flock included up to 3 different individuals from Upper Newport Bay present between 26 September 1994–6 February 1995, 2 different individuals from San Diego Bay present between 7 November–26 December 1994, and 2 different individuals from the south end of the Salton Sea present between 14 February 1994–6 February 1995. One banded as a chick in San Diego County during July 2015 was seen at Santa Barbara Harbor 4 January 2016 and then was back in San Diego County by 8 February, while a chick from the San Diego Bay colony in July 2018 was in the Santa Barbara Harbor area on 10 May 2019.

In earlier years, South Coast winter and early spring reports through the mid-1990s away from the Santa Barbara Harbor area include singles in Goleta 23 December 1988, 22 February 1989, and 31 December 1990–2 January 1991; up to 12 in Goleta 19–30 March 1991; up to 36 in Goleta 10–18 February 1992 (almost certainly part of the Santa Barbara Harbor group), and with 2 remaining through 26 March; 1 in Carpinteria 10 February 1992; and up to 12 in Goleta 19 February–2 March 1993. Since then, there have been only about 10 such records, but with high counts of up to 42 at Goleta Beach Park 26–31 January 2008, 60–65 in Goleta on several dates between 21 December 2008–17 February 2009, up to 100 in Goleta 21–22 January 2010, and up to 30 at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge between 5 August–11 October 2025.

At other seasons, there are a mere 15 records away from Santa Barbara Harbor since 1994: 2 in Goleta 4 August 1997, 1 there 2 July 2010, 4 there 16 June 2011, 2 in Carpinteria 28 July 2012, 1 in Goleta 6 July 2013, 2 there 12–29 May 2014, 1 on 19 July 2023, 2 on 25 August 2023, 1 on 24 May 2024, and 2 on 18 August 2024; 1 in Summerland 14 June 2024; 3 in Carpinteria 14

July 2024; 1 at Coal Oil Point 28 July 2025; 2 at Devereux Slough 26 June 2026 and 1 there 17 July 2026; and 6 birds farther west at Gaviota State Park 20 August 2023.

Since 1994, North Coast records total 20, involve 38 individuals, and most fall between 9 July and 16 September (exceptions are 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 February 1995, the December record below, 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 11–12 June 2015, 2 there 12 October 2018, 1 there 23 May 2021, 3 at Point Conception 15 May 2021, 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 May 2022, and 1 at the atypical site of Point Pedernales 17 June 2026). All are from the Santa Ynez River mouth except for 1 in atypical habitat at Destroyer Rock, south Vandenberg SFB, 17 December 2000; 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 16 September 2008, up to 5 there 24 July–3 August 2024, and 1 on 28 August 2026; and an unusual sighting of 2 birds some 9 mi (15 km) inland at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 17 August 2012.

In District I, Black Skimmer is a casual visitor, with 2 at Lake Cachuma 13 January 2001 and singles there 6 December 2002, 11 September 2005, and 15 August 2010.

Swallow-tailed Gull (*Creagrus furcatus*)

Accidental.

An adult Swallow-tailed Gull was present 19 July 2023 (ph. SBMNH), first at the mouth of Goleta Slough (Goleta Beach Park) and then later in the day roosting at the mouth of Devereux Slough (Coal Oil Point). This established the fifth record for California.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

Irregular winter and early-spring visitor offshore and more rarely along the immediate coast; numbers fluctuate greatly from year to year. During "flight" years the species is common, with numbers present along the coast and lingering well into spring. Summer concentrations are also noted following years of high abundance. May be virtually absent other years. Casual inland in District C and accidental in District I.

Black-legged Kittiwakes are found primarily offshore, November–March, with only a few or no individuals seen from shore during non-flight years. Typically, only small numbers at best are seen through early winter. Up to 15 were in the Santa Barbara Channel near Santa Cruz Island on 4–5 November 2016. During years of high abundance, numbers are frequently seen along the coast, particularly at harbors and piers. The larger numbers do not become evident near shore until around February or later. Flight years include early 1969, 1970, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1987, 2001, and 2002. In 1969, "several hundred" were near Santa Cruz Island 19–20 March, 1–10 were in Santa Barbara Harbor 17 July–17 August, and 2 were off Goleta 14 October (probably summered locally). In 1970, up to 40 were around Santa Barbara during summer, with a few lingering through fall. During 1976, large numbers of kittiwakes appeared in early March (e.g., 250 from Goleta Point 2 March, with a total of 1540 from there during the month and 3104 for the season; with also 413 counted in vic. Santa Rosa Island 19 March). During that month, several individuals were seen more than 2 mi (3 km) inland at freshwater lakes (e.g., Laguna Blanca on 21 March) and even at the Santa Barbara refuse transfer station on 21 March. Eighty to 90 percent of these early-spring birds were adults, but from late April onwards more than 95 percent were immatures. Large numbers remained through summer: 330 were in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area 2 June, 42 were at Santa Barbara Harbor 20 June, 28 were there 30 July, and 20 remained 2 September; 15 were in Goleta 8 August, and 8 were still there 2 September. A somewhat smaller flight took place in 1977 (e.g., 1085 from Goleta Point, March–May). That year, 1 individual was found several miles inland on Foothill Road in Santa Barbara on 4 March (*SBMNH), and there was a total of four sightings during June–August in Goleta and Santa Barbara. During 1978, 291 were seen between San Nicolas and Santa Cruz Islands on 26 February; however, very few were seen from shore. In 1998, some 20–25 were seen from Goleta Point 27 March, and a lingering bird was at the Santa Maria River mouth 8 May. In 1999, 12 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 15 May. In 2001, ca. 800 were tallied during a pelagic trip to the Santa Lucia Escarpment, Arguello Canyon, and Rodriguez Dome on

20 January, and a lingering bird was off Goleta Point 20 May. In 2002, 80 were visible off Goleta 16–17 February, 130 were there 9 March, 160 present 14 March, and a lingerer was at Santa Barbara Harbor 5 May.

Spring migration (March–May) totals from Goleta Point include:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	3104	1085	25
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

Single individuals in Santa Barbara 5 September 1975 and in Goleta 25 September 1975 were unseasonal and followed a non-flight year.

Additional records several miles inland in District C include 1 on Stow Ranch Lake, 3 mi (5 km) inland in northern Goleta, 22 November 1963, and 1 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 9 mi (15 mi) from the coast, 23 February 2018.

Even farther inland, in District I, 1 was at Lake Cachuma 20 January 1999.

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*)

Uncommon to fairly common spring and fall transient well offshore. Very rare on or near shore. Casual in summer. One record in District I.

Sabine's Gulls are pelagic in distribution and are seen only very rarely from shore. During the 1970s, unspecified flocks of 10–100 birds were concentrated in the passages between the northern Channel Islands during spring migration, whereas during fall the largest numbers occurred west of the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge (Briggs et al. 1987). Spring migrants are seen between mid-April and the beginning of June. The earliest record is of 2 birds in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel 4 April 2021. Good numbers have been present already during mid-April (e.g., 96 well off the North Coast on 12 April 2022 and 47 there 15 April 2022, total of 54 between SW of San Miguel Island and 57 mi (90 km) off Santa Maria 15 April 2013). High counts are ca. 100 between the Arguello Canyon area and San Miguel Island 30 April 2011 and 135 from SW of San Miguel Island to ca. 45 mi (75 km) off Santa Maria 16 April 2012. Two birds S of Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands 12 June 2010 were late. Sightings from or on-shore during spring include: 1 at mouth of Romero Creek, Montecito, 4 June 1915 (Dawson 1916), 3 from Goleta Point 10 May 1976 and 14 from there 18 May 1976, a one-year-old (probably a non-breeder) at Santa Barbara Harbor 14 June 1976, 1 onshore in Goleta 6 May 1996, and an oiled bird at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh 28 May 2011.

Fall migrants appear by the end of July (e.g., 7 seen W and SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011), and a high early count of 37 birds were in the Santa Barbara Channel off Goleta 30 July 2023. An adult in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel 9 July 2018 (ph. SBMNH) and singles S of Santa Cruz Island 14 July 2019 and 9 July 2022 were either summer wanderers or very early fall arrivals (failed breeders). An adult was seen from shore at the Santa Maria River mouth 8 August 1992 and a surprising 7 birds were seen from the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 August 1996. High counts include 200 north of Santa Cruz Island 5 September 1994, a single flock of 75 birds ca. 10 mi (17 km) S of Santa Rosa Island 8 September 2001, and an exceptional total of 1345 birds well off the North Coast during a repositioning cruise 28 September 2024. The latest records are of 1 north of San Juan Seamount 6 November 1993 and total of 3 birds 13–46 mi (20–74 km) SW of Point Arguello 15 November 2009.

In addition to the two from-shore August records above, there are 29 fall records (of mostly juveniles, but a few adults) on or near shore: the "Estero," Santa Barbara, 25 August 1915

(Dawson 1916), Carpinteria sewage treatment plant 19 September 1981, Santa Barbara Harbor 22–23 September 1981, and then 26 records from 1984–2026, between 5 August (2022, Goleta Beach Park) and 16 October, including high counts of 4 from the Santa Ynez River mouth 9 September 1985 and 3 there September 2016, as well as a later bird on 30 October 2025 off the Santa Ynez River mouth. Farther inland, 1 was at Jim May Park in Santa Maria 19–24 September 2017 (ph. SBMNH), an adult was there 13 September 2020, and 1 was at Lake Los Carneros 2 September 2022. In addition, single adults onshore at the Santa Maria River mouth 29 July–2 August 1990 (ph. SBMNH), 1 August 1997 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 July 1998 were early fall migrants or summer wanderers.

There are two records from District I: a juvenile at Lake Cachuma 27 September 2024 and 1 bird there 25 September 2025.

Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*)

Fairly common though declining transient and winter visitor in District C, rare (now very rare) in summer. Uncommon winter visitor inland at Lake Cachuma, casual there in summer and migrant elsewhere. Casual transient in District V.

Bonaparte's Gulls frequent offshore and nearshore waters, river mouths, sloughs, lagoons, sewage treatment ponds (where particularly numerous), and, to a lesser extent, lakes and ponds near the coast. The largest numbers are seen during migration (mid-October to mid-December and, especially, mid-March to late May), during which time numbers of birds may be seen throughout the Santa Barbara Channel and near the Channel Islands, with 100 near Santa Cruz Island 2–11 November 2014 a large number for fall since the 1990s. A total of ca. 2000 in the western Santa Barbara Channel 27 April 2013 is the highest count there since then. Small flocks have been found on a regular basis in both spring and fall as far offshore as 28 mi (44 km) S of the islands and 35–60 mi (55–95 km) W of San Miguel Island and the North Coast, with the farthest at the Santa Lucia Escarpment, 71 mi (114 km) SW of Santa Rosa Island (8 May 2024), and 63 mi (101 km) WSW of Point Arguello (flock of 24 on 1 December 2024).

Fall migrants may begin to arrive by early September (e.g., Santa Ynez River mouth 9 September 1985). Seven hundred were near Santa Maria 10 November 1990, but more recent high counts there are substantially lower. The first notable drop-off in numbers in winter occurred during the 1980s and 1990s, which was then followed by another substantial drop beginning in the early 2000s and has been noticeable along both the North Coast and the South Coast. At the former, counts often do not exceed 125 individuals (recent highs: 200 on Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 27 December 2009, 250 at Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 25 November 2014). The high count on the La Purisima CBC is 43 birds (21 December 1997). Until the early 2000s, Santa Barbara CBCs recorded as many as 455 individuals, with 1823 tallied on 2 January 2000. Only 2 were found on 2 January 2010, and 0 on both 5 January 2019 and 4 January 2020, and low winter counts, in general, have become the norm; with a recent high of ca. 500 off Carpinteria 14 December 2024.

Migration in spring is much more noticeable than in fall, with large (at least formerly) numbers of birds seen moving along and just off the coast and over the coastal plain from late March to early May. Spring migration (March–May) totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	9081	6747	5146
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

More recent single-site high counts include 770 at Goleta Beach Park 10 April 2005, 900 in Goleta 20 April 2007, 973 passing Coal Oil Point 16 April 2022, and 1000 past Point Arguello 29 April 2024.

Migrant flocks in May are made up of a larger percentage of immatures than those of March and April.

In some earlier years, large numbers (up to 200) remained at coastal estuaries and sewage treatment ponds through late May and early June. A rapid decline in numbers followed, with substantially fewer birds remaining by late June (high counts for late June and July were 30 in the Santa Maria area in 1981, 17 at the Santa Ynez River mouth in 1981, and 10 in the Goleta area in 1977). Some of these larger early-summer concentrations contained several breeding-plumaged adults. Usually, numbers declined even further during summer, and the species was very rare by late July or early August (high count: 13 near Santa Maria during August 1982). There were only a few records for late August and early September; some of these probably involved early transients rather than over-summering individuals. Like those in winter, the number of summering birds has declined substantially since the 1990s and the species is now rare in early June and very rare thereafter, with only single digits during occasional years.

Inland, Bonaparte's Gulls occur regularly in small numbers (e.g., 14 on 6 January 1976, 15 on 22 February 1988, 17 on 15 November 2002) at Lake Cachuma, from October to early May. Higher totals are 23 birds on 11 May 1976 (Hamber 1977), 25 there 4 May 1990, and 58 on 10 January 1998. Since 2000, counts have been largely under 5 birds, however. There are three summer records from the lake: 1 June 1976 (3), 10 July 1980, and 15 June 2016. The only record in District I away from Cachuma is of two spring migrants in Los Alamos 2 May 2026. There are five records for District V: sewage treatment pond at New Cuyama 30 April–4 May 2018, 5 November 2018, 2 November 2019, up to 2 from 7 November–16 December 2020, and 19 May 2024.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

Casual late-fall and winter visitor in District C.

There are a surprising five records. One was seen three-quarters of a mile off Montecito 30 December 1978. An adult returned to the waterfront between the Santa Barbara Harbor and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge for six winters, 21 November–21 December 1992 (ph. CBRC 2007, SBMNH), 29 November 1993–5 February 1994 (ph. SBMNH), 30 December 1994–1 February 1995 (ph. *FN* 49:198, SBMNH), 21 November 1995–30 January 1996 (ph. SBMNH), 26 November 1996–28 February 1997 (ph. SBMNH), and 17 November–24 December 1997. An immature was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5–10 January 1995 (ph. SBMNH). An adult was at Devereux Slough 10–31 December 2000. An immature was at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 20 April 2007 (ph. *NAB* 61:511, SBMNH).

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)

Casual visitor in District C.

There are six records: single immatures at Devereux Slough 14–22 April 1977 (ph. *AB* 31:1047, SBMNH) and at Goleta sewage treatment plant 10 May 1982; adult at mouth of Carpinteria Creek 8–9 January 1990 (ph. *AB* 44:329, SBMNH); immature at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 May–14 June 1990 (ph. *AB* 44:497, SBMNH); adult sporadically seen at Santa Maria sewage treatment plant from 24 March–22 May 1992 (ph. SBMNH); and immature at Lake Los Carneros 29 December 2011 (ph. SBMNH). A report of 1 seen from Goleta Point 9 March 2000 was never submitted to the CBRC.

Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

Very rare visitor in District C.

There are 15 definite records: one-year-old at the Santa Ynez River mouth 18–19 May 1980 (ph. SBMNH), first-cycle individual collected 2 mi (3 km) off Santa Barbara 10 December 1985 (*UCSB), 2 adults (briefly seen attempting copulation) at Devereux Slough 6 May 1992 (ph. SBMNH), 1 at Goleta Beach Park 6 May 1997, 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 16 July 2000, 1 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 26 November 2002, 1 at the Santa Maria River mouth 1–11 March 2003, 1 at Coal Oil Point 29 April 2003, 1 at Goleta Beach Park 17 September 2003, 2 there 31 January 2006 (ph. SBMNH), 1 in Goleta 28 November 2006, 1 there 29–30 May 2016, a long-staying bird there 15 May 2016–20 May 2017 (ph. SBMNH), 1 in Carpinteria 4–5 November 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 at Jalama Beach County Park 15–30 January 2026. Two older records (Santa Barbara 24 May 1971 and Goleta 20 August 1974) do not contain sufficient details to eliminate sub-adult Franklin's Gull.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

Very rare late-spring and fall transient in District C, casual in summer and winter. Casual in District I.

Franklin's Gulls are most often seen at river mouths, sloughs, lakes, and sewage treatment ponds. They are also known to occur well offshore during spring migration and there are two such records for Santa Barbara County. The pattern of occurrence is difficult to describe, as the species is apt to turn up almost any time, although spring migrants tend to occur in May and early June and fall transients in late October and November.

There are 26 fall records between 12 September (2023, Goleta Beach Park) and 30 November from District C (ph. *AB* 41:144, SBMNH). In addition, single individuals in Goleta 27–28 August 1988 and in Santa Barbara 30 August+ 1988 were early; a juvenile in Goleta 16–19 August 1994 was exceptionally early. An adult in Carpinteria 19 September 1988 was very unusual because all other fall records have involved juvenile and first-winter birds. Singles in Santa Barbara 29 December 1963 and 15 December 1980, in Goleta 2 December 1982–5 January 1983, in Santa Barbara 23 November–28 December 1986, on north Vandenberg SFB 16 December 1990, in Goleta 31 December 2005, and at the Santa Maria River mouth 11 December 2024 were probably very late fall transients.

There are four mid-winter records: Santa Ynez River mouth 30–31 January 1971, Montecito Country Club and Santa Barbara 30 January–28 February 1971, Santa Barbara 5 February 1991, and Goleta 16 January 1998.

One in Santa Barbara 6–10 March 1988 was exceptional, and also difficult to categorize.

There are 39 spring sightings (involving 64 individuals) along the coast (ph. *AB* 35:863) between 11 April (2021, Point Conception) and 5 June (2007, near "boathouse," south Vandenberg SFB (2), and 2025, Goleta Beach Park). Earlier individuals were at Devereux Slough 29 March 2000 and Goleta Point 23 March 2006. A total of 4 in the Goleta area 28 April–18 May 2002 was a good count; a total of 9 along the South Coast between Point Conception and Carpinteria 26 April–7 May 2004 and a total of 14 there 11 April–12 May 2021, which included 4 over Santa Barbara 29 April and 6 from Point Conception 18 April, were exceptional; and 4 flew by Point Conception 27 April 2024. One near San Miguel Island 21 May 1976, another in the western Santa Barbara Channel 22 May 2004, and 1 near Santa Cruz Island 24 May 2019 (ph. SBMNH) are the offshore records. Later birds include a one-year-old at Santa Barbara Harbor 14–15 June 1976, 1 at Gaviota 18 June 1995, and 1 in Santa Barbara 14 June 2005 (ph. SBMNH).

Records of single adults in Goleta 21 June 1979 and 22 June 2015 and at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 June 1983 and 26 June 1988 (ph. SBMNH), and single immatures near Santa Maria 30 June–4 July 1998 and in Goleta 26 June 2006, are difficult to categorize. A bird of uncertain age was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 July 2023. There is also one late-summer record of a probable very early migrant: Santa Ynez River mouth 4 August 1974.

One at Lake Cachuma 23 November 1979 and 1 at Twitchell Reservoir 8 May 1999 are the only records for District I.

Heermann's Gull (*Larus heermanni*)
Common transient and winter visitor along the coast and offshore, uncommon in late winter and spring. Casual in District I.

Heermann's Gulls are found in nearshore waters, in the vicinity of the Channel Islands, along rocky and sandy shores, and at coastal lagoons and river mouths. Large numbers of northbound Heermann's Gulls can be seen moving up the coast beginning in June, following nesting in Mexico; 150 at Santa Barbara Harbor 1 June 2013 was a large count for so early in the month. Numbers of adults may appear as early as April in years with large-scale breeding failure. The maximum counts at a single locality include 650 at the Santa Maria River mouth 22 July 1980, 1250 at Santa Barbara Harbor 30 August 2000, 1200 in Santa Barbara 15 July 2004, and 1400 at Mission Creek outfall, near Santa Barbara Harbor, 21 December 2004. The first fresh juveniles may arrive by late July. The species remains common until late February along the South Coast, but it is uncommon to fairly common along the North Coast by late January. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 2182 individuals (5 January 2008), though some duplication is possible. A count of ca. 9000 individuals along the north Vandenberg SFB coast 29 December 1990 was exceptional; North Coast CBC maxima include very large totals of 11,000+ and 8600+ on Santa Maria–Guadalupe 29 December 1996 and 22 December 2002, respectively, although most counts there involve far fewer birds; and totals on the La Purisima CBC have not exceeded 125 individuals. The species is in its lowest numbers from late March through May when it is breeding in the Gulf of California; up to 50 during this period at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in 1981, 50 at the Santa Maria River mouth 19 April 2003, and 50 in Carpinteria 20 May 2004 were high counts.

Heermann's Gulls are not found on most freshwater lakes near the immediate coast frequented by other gulls (e.g., Laguna Blanca). They are rare at Goleta and Devereux Sloughs but are fairly common at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Singles at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 23 September 1982 and 15 September 2000, and another at the nearby former Betteravia sugar settling ponds 11 October 1985, were all 9 mi (15 km) inland.

None were seen more than several miles seaward of the Channel Islands during one study of those waters (Harrington 1975); however, a single individual was seen 50 mi (80 km) west of Point Conception 20 October 1971 (Jehl 1973), a small number have been seen up to 20 mi (32 km) seaward of the Channel Islands and North Coast on multiple dates since the 1980s, 10 were well offshore at Arguello Canyon 23 August 1985, and 10 were over deep water between W of San Miguel Island and San Juan Seamount 23 July 2011.

There are two records for District I: 1 (adult) at Lake Cachuma 11 January 2007 and 1 there 15 October 2008.

Short-billed (Mew) Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*)
Formerly a locally common transient and winter visitor in District C, now fairly common; casual in summer. Rare but somewhat regular in District I at Lake Cachuma, casual elsewhere.

Short-billed Gulls occur in large numbers rather locally, with the largest concentrations noted at coastal sloughs and river mouths, sewage treatment ponds, and in kelp beds just offshore. They also are found in waters surrounding the Channel Islands. Small numbers occur in flooded fields. They are rare at landfills. Freshwater lakes up to several miles from the coast are frequented for bathing and drinking purposes, moderate numbers may be seen as far from the coast as at the Santa Maria, Laguna County, and Mission Hills sewage treatment ponds, a high count of 178–250 birds were at flooded fields 9-1/2 mi (15 km) inland near Santa Maria 20 January–10 February 2019, and a small number have been seen as far as 16 mi (25 km) inland at the Santa Maria landfill and 8-1/2 mi (13 km) inland at the Vandenberg Village golf course. Otherwise, the Short-billed Gull is one of the more strictly coastal gulls. And while it is found

regularly in nearshore waters around the northern Channel Islands, it does not occur far offshore (there was only one record during a study well to the west of Point Conception; Harrington 1975). It is also one of the latest gulls to arrive in fall, with the first individuals typically appearing in late October. One 11 October 1970 vic. Santa Barbara and 1 on 12 October 1982 in Goleta were somewhat early, but a juvenile at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5 September 1996 and an adult 25 September 1984 at the Santa Maria River mouth were exceptionally so. Large numbers occurred through the early 1990s along the South Coast in winter, particularly in the Goleta area. Santa Barbara CBCs recorded a maximum of 1712 individuals (3 January 1981), but totals of under 500 during this period were more typical. These counts were greater than those farther to the south. Numbers along the South Coast declined substantially after the mid-1990s. Only 131 were counted on the 2 January 2010 Santa Barbara CBC, for example. Along the North Coast, 263 near Santa Maria 28 February 2011 and 217 there 24 February 2016 were good recent counts.

In spring, most Short-billed Gulls have departed by the beginning of April and the species is rare by mid-April. Late-spring individuals after early May (all involving immatures) have lingered as follows: Goleta 9–13 May 1981, Santa Ynez River mouth 13 May 1981, Santa Barbara 14–16 May 1977, Carpinteria 21 May 2004, Goleta April–27 May 1975, and Santa Barbara 28 May 2018 (ph. SBMNH; and see below).

Summer records include: Santa Barbara 23–30 June 1977; Goleta 30 June–12 September 1979 and 1 July–2 August 1979; (second-cycle bird) near Santa Maria 2–12 June 1981; Santa Maria River mouth 2 June–24 July 1981; Goleta 24 April–5 June 2015 (ph. SBMNH) and 18–19 June 2020; 1 near Santa Barbara Harbor 13 August–7 October 2018 was likely the same bird as seen there 28 May; and near Santa Barbara Harbor 20–30 July 2024. A worn second-cycle bird in Santa Barbara 17 September 1981 may have summered locally.

In District I, Short-billed Gulls are rare but somewhat regular in winter at Lake Cachuma. First recorded there on 25 February 1979, this species has been recorded in small numbers most winters since the late 1990s, with reports spanning 22 November (2008) and 3 March (1996) and with exceptional high counts of 50 birds on 2 February 2000, 40 on 9 January 2003, and 27 on 2 March 2008. Recent counts have not exceeded 2 individuals. The only records elsewhere in District I are of 12 birds at a pond near Santa Ynez 17 February 2000, 3 birds at the River Golf Course in Solvang 26–29 February 2004, and 1 in Buellton 2 December 2023.

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C, rare in summer. Locally uncommon to fairly common in District I, rare in summer. Very rare in District V.

Ring-billed Gulls frequent all major fresh- and salt-water habitats along the coast. They are also commonly found in agricultural areas, flooded fields, on golf courses and playing fields, and in urban areas, especially at shopping-mall and fast-food parking lots. They also frequent landfills but are less common there than Western and California Gulls. This species is not found far offshore but stays very close to the mainland at all times. Most undocumented reports from beyond a couple miles offshore are probably in error. Fall migrants arrive beginning in early August; a single adult and juvenile were in Goleta 25 July 1993, another juvenile was in Santa Barbara 25+ July 2004, and a juvenile was at Lake Cachuma 29 July 1992. This species is more numerous along the South Coast than along the North Coast. Maximum winter counts are up to 1000 individuals on the South Coast versus only 100 on the North Coast. A total of 2100 reported on the 31 December 1966 Santa Barbara CBC was likely in error. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 29 birds (27 December 2000). It is rarely recorded in District I away from the large reservoirs.

Most summering birds are not found at coastal estuaries and beaches, in contrast to most other gulls, but rather at lakes and parks near the coast. High counts never exceed single digits. This species is over-reported in summer, often erroneously confused with much more numerous immature California Gulls. In District I, a few individuals summer only at Lake Cachuma.

In District V, 8 flying southward to the east of New Cuyama 16 November 1980 and 2 in Cuyama 28 November 2008 were followed by more regular sightings following the construction of sewage treatment pond in New Cuyama, with multiple sightings of 1 or 2 birds between 2018–2025, and with highs of 11 birds on 19 November 2018 and 12 on 15 October 2020.

Banding recoveries include individuals banded in Alberta (4), Washington (4), Idaho (1), and Montana (1).

Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*)

Common resident in District C, with numbers augmented during fall and winter. Fairly common breeder along the North Coast. (Also nests commonly on the Channel Islands.)

Western Gulls are found in all marine environments, including offshore pelagic waters, coastal sloughs and lagoons and freshwater lakes near the coast (used for drinking and bathing). Large numbers frequent coastal landfills, as well as parks and parking lots. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1800 individuals; a total of 4900 on the 31 December 1966 CBC would be exceptional if correct. High counts along the North Coast are usually fewer than 600–800 birds, with 1230 reported (if correct) on the La Purisima CBC 19 December 2004; 586 individuals (22 December 2002) is the maximum on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC.

This species formerly did not travel as far inland in District C as some other gull species. During the past several decades, however, this has changed, as it has in other Southern California counties. In Santa Maria, the species was first reported at Jim May (formerly River Oaks) Park, ca. 12 mi (20 km) from the coast, in 2006. Western Gulls now occur there regularly in small numbers, as well as at several other sites in the Santa Maria area as far inland as Highway 101. The first records east of Highway 101 at the Santa Maria landfill, located 16 mi (25 km) inland, were on 7 January 1994 and 28 May 2006. The species now occurs there somewhat regularly. A count of 26 birds was made at the Lake Canyon ponds, north Vandenberg SFB, 17 February 2012 some 5.3 mi (8.5 km) inland and where the species may prove regular. Western Gulls also now occur regularly in moderate numbers in the Lompoc area as far inland as River Park, 10 mi (16 km) from the coast. (There are, however, still no valid records for District I.) Along the South Coast, a bird at Lake Los Carneros 31 December 2002, a mere 2 mi (3 km) from the beach, was farther inland than usual, although the species is common at Laguna Blanca, located 1.5 mi (2.4 km) inland.

This species occurs regularly at sea out to about 50 mi (80 km) west of the North Coast and seaward of the Channel Islands, but it is rarer farther out (Harrington 1975); although increased coverage of far-offshore waters have produced a fair number of reports out to 75 mi (120 km) off the North Coast and as far SW as the San Juan Seamount; and several birds were noted over 100 mi (160 km) SW to W of San Miguel Island 14–18 January 2020 and 1 was ca. 138 mi (220 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 2 December 2024.

Western Gulls are common nesters along the coast north of Santa Barbara County and on the nearby Channel Islands (e.g., ca. 2300 breeding individuals on San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and Anacapa Islands, 1976–1979 (Sowls et al. 1980); 13,572 in 1991 (Carter et al. 1992)). They were very uncommon and local breeders, however, on mainland Santa Barbara County through the early 1990s. The only definite nesting evidence during that period was from the Vandenberg SFB area. One pair nested at Purisima Point in 1980 and 1981, and 3 pairs were there in 1982; 2 pairs nested at Point Arguello in 1980 and 1981, 3 pairs were there in 1982, and 1 to 3 pairs raised young annually between 1989 and 1993. A study by Carter et al. (1992) estimated a 1989 breeding population of 7 birds at Mussel Rock, 6 at Point Sal and Lion Rock, 7 at Purisima Point South, 6 at Point Arguello, and 2 at Point Conception. Since then, the nesting population on Vandenberg SFB has increased, with ca. 25 birds in 2000, and ca. 80 birds in 2005 and 2012 (Robinette et al. 2012b), with about half these birds breeding in the Rocky Point area in

a colony situation unlike the many scattered individual pairs found over most of the remainder of the Vandenberg coastline.

An immature gull inland in District I at Solvang on 17–18 May 2026 appeared to be a likely hybrid involving a Western Gull.

In addition to the many banding recoveries of birds banded in California, there are also local recoveries of individuals from Washington (2), Oregon (1), and Mexico (2).

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C, fairly common to locally common in summer. Uncommon transient and winter visitor and very rare summer visitor in District I. Very rare in District V and casual in District M.

California Gulls frequent all major bodies of water in District C, including the open ocean well offshore, harbors, sloughs, river mouths, lagoons, lakes, ponds, and flooded fields. This species also frequents landfills (where it is very common), playing fields, and, less often, parking lots. The first migrant adults return by mid-July (e.g., 10 adults at Lake Cachuma 13 July 1981); the first juveniles appear in latter July (exact early arrival uncertain). High counts from shore include 700 at the Santa Maria River mouth 30 November 1979, 1280 in Carpinteria 4 October 1996, 1760 in Carpinteria 20 February 2000, 1538 on the La Purisima CBC 18 December 2005, 1147 on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 22 December 2013, up to 1230 on Santa Barbara CBCs, and 1300 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 31 January–7 February 2026; a total of 2400 on the 2 January 1966 CBC may or may not have been correct. Numbers drop off between late March and May. Large movements of spring migrants were noted flying past Point Conception in 2021, with 1575 birds on 11 April and 1580 on 1 May.

During migration and winter, this may be the most common gull in the Santa Barbara Channel. Although Harrington (1975) stated that it is usually rare beyond the islands, this species has been recorded out to and slightly beyond the shelf edge on numerous occasions. In fact, California is often the most numerous gull well beyond the islands and ca. 30–60 mi (50–100 km) off the North Coast. Records especially far offshore include 90 mi (145 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 3 August 1991, up to 70 mi (110 km) W of San Miguel Island 9 February 1992, up to 79 mi (127 km) W of Point Arguello 6 February 1993, 5 near Arguello Canyon 30 April 2011, up to several near Rodriguez Dome on multiple occasions, 1 ca. 134 mi (215 km) W of Point Arguello 2 April 2017, and a high count of 60 birds ca. 50–55 mi (85–95 km) W of the North Coast 15 April 2013. Several birds were noted over 100 mi (160 km) SW to W of San Miguel Island 14–18 January 2020.

Large numbers of non-breeders (mostly immatures) summer along the coast, with many concentrated at river mouths, sloughs, harbors, and several lakes (e.g., Andrée Clark Bird Refuge). High counts have reached 200+ birds. There are only two early-summer records away from District C (see below).

Inland, California Gulls are most often seen on the larger lakes in District I from late July to May. The maximum count there is 90 on Lake Cachuma 11 December 1978, although maxima since the 1990s have not exceeded 30 birds. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 28 individuals (30 December 2004). The species is very rare elsewhere in District I. The only definite summer records are of 7 at Lake Cachuma 1 June 1976 and 4 there during summer 1982. In District M, a flock of 137 birds flew over San Marcos Pass 24 January 2016. This species is very rare in District V: flying southward to the east of New Cuyama 16 November 1980; near Cuyama 5 November 2005, 9 June 2013, and 3 on 9 December 2019; and at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 12–16 May 2018, 16 September 2018, 20 March 2019, five dates between 18 August–27 November 2019, 15–22 May 2020, 14 September 2020, and 18 August 2021.

Banded birds recovered include individuals from Alberta (1), Saskatchewan (2), Washington (3), Montana (4), Wyoming (3), Utah (3), Colorado (1), and Nevada (1).

American Herring Gull (*Larus smithsonianus*)

Very uncommon to locally fairly common transient and winter visitor in District C, casual in summer. Uncommon but regular winter visitor at Lake Cachuma in District I.

American Herring Gulls occur in both offshore and nearshore waters, at coastal sloughs and river mouths, at landfills, and locally in flooded dirt fields and at freshwater lakes. They are seen most regularly at estuaries, harbors, and landfills. Along the North Coast, single early adults were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 September 2014 and at the Santa Maria River mouth 23 September 1986, 5 were present at the latter site 25 September 2006, and 3 were there 26 September 1984. The earliest arrival dates for the South Coast are 26 September 2018 UCSB beach (adult) and 20 October 1983 Santa Barbara (juvenile). Along the North Coast, American Herring Gulls are locally fairly common, with high counts of 150 at the Santa Maria River mouth 4 December 1984, 200 near Lompoc 5 February 1985, and 200 at the Santa Maria landfill 2 December 1989. More recent highs there have been much lower (e.g., 42 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 January 2016). The species is decidedly scarcer along the South Coast; fewer than 5 individuals per day in the Santa Barbara area during winter is typical. Santa Barbara CBCs usually find fewer than 12 individuals; a report of 140 on the 31 December 1966 CBC is certainly in error.

This is sometimes one of the more numerous *Larus* gull well offshore (50–150 mi [80–240 km] out) and away from the Channel Islands during the late-fall and winter months (Harrington 1975), with numbers peaking during February followed by a rapid decrease from mid-March into April. Briggs et al. (1987) noted the species as "numerous west of the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge." Deepwater pelagic trips have failed to record more than single digits, however. More recently, 2 birds were seen ca. 100 mi (160 km) SW and W of San Miguel Island 17–18 January 2020 and 2 were ca. 138 mi (220 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 2 December 2024. Late dates offshore are 30 April 2011 near Arguello Canyon and 9 May 2012 ca. 40 mi (65 km) W of Point Conception.

Spring migration takes place in March and April. During this period, there is a noticeable movement of birds up the coast; for example, 61 were seen passing Goleta Point during spring 1978 (one-day high counts from there are 16 on 3 March 1977 and 24 on 28 March 1977), 60 were seen moving up the coast at Vandenberg SFB 6 March 1988, and 43 were seen from Point Conception 11 April 2021.

There are only three spring records after early May along the South Coast (15 May 1991, 18–19 May 2016, 29 May 1981, all in Goleta), although small numbers have been found lingering along the North Coast into late May on a number of occasions, including even a few adults. In addition, up to 5 were at the Santa Maria River mouth 6 May–12 June 1981, and 1 was there 3 June 1990. An adult at UCSB 21 June 2007 is the only record for that month along the South Coast. The only mid- or late-summer records are all from the North Coast: single immatures at the Santa Maria River mouth 25 August 1979 and 31 July 1980, an adult there 20 May–7 September 1981 (ph. SBMNH), a one-year-old there 4 July 1989 (ph. SBMNH), and 2 adults at Jalama Beach County Park 4 August 1991.

Inland, American Herring Gulls were first discovered wintering at Lake Cachuma in January 1977 (Hamber 1977); and fewer than 10 regularly occurred there, November–March through the 1990s. Cachuma CBCs reported as many as 25–30 individuals through the 2000s (e.g., 27 December 2001 and 28 December 2007), though some duplication is possible; most counts find fewer than a dozen birds, and fewer than 5 individuals during the past decade. The earliest arrivals are 4 October 2009 and 7 October 2007.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides thayeri*)

Rare to locally uncommon transient and winter visitor in District C. Casual in District I.

Iceland Gulls in Santa Barbara County are of the subspecies *L. g. thayeri*, the "Thayer's" Gull, lumped with Iceland Gull in 2017. They are found in all marine environments, including

well offshore, although they are most regularly encountered at river mouths and at coastal landfills. They are also found at several coastal freshwater lakes (e.g., Laguna Blanca and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge) and in flooded dirt fields, and they occur up to 15 mi (25 km) inland in District C at the Santa Maria landfill. A very large percent of the records involve first-cycle birds. The first county record was of a specimen from vic. Santa Barbara dated 12 December 1912 (*MVZ).

This species arrives beginning in early November (earliest arrival dates: 21 October 1981 Laguna Blanca, 24 October 2020 Coal Oil Point, 26 October 2024 South Vandenberg SFB). The larger numbers occur along the North Coast. The most frequented sites are the Santa Maria landfill, the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths, and the Lompoc Valley. Counts of 50 at the Santa Maria landfill 3 January 1985 and up to 75 (including 5 adults) near Lompoc 26 January–8 February 1985 were exceptional; single-day counts in those areas since the late 1980s have not exceeded 5–10 individuals (e.g., up to 8 in River Park, Lompoc, 17 February–1 March 2009, 8 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 16 January 2012, 10 there 8 February 2024), except for 12 at River Park 25 March 2012. Along the South Coast, wintering numbers usually do not exceed 2–3 individuals. A total of 8 on the Santa Barbara CBC 2 January 1983 and 10 on 1 January 2011 were very high counts; a total of 7 were in Goleta and Santa Barbara December 2014–January 2015. One adult returned for eight winters in a row to Alice Keck Park in Santa Barbara, 2012–2013 to 2019–2020.

Three birds were well offshore at Arguello Canyon 25 November 2000 and 1 bird was particularly far offshore ca. 138 mi (220 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 2 December 2024.

Iceland Gulls have largely departed by the beginning of April. One was in Goleta 5 April 1978. One flew past Point Conception on 24 April 2022. The species has lingered into May on the North Coast: 7 May 1981 and 7 May 1989 north Vandenberg SFB, and 6–22 May 1981 Santa Maria River mouth (2).

There are seven records in District I: Lake Cachuma 26 January 1983, 21 February 1989, 23 November 1991 (adult), 24–29 February 1996 (adult), 6 December 2001, 11 February 2023, and 27 December 2023–15 January 2024.

A first-cycle bird photographed extensively at River Park, Lompoc, 10 February–8 March 2009 (ph. SBMNH) showed many of the characters of *L. g. kumlieni*, but the record was not accepted as that taxon by the CBRC.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Casual fall and winter visitor in District C.

An adult or near-adult was seen at the Santa Ynez River mouth 23 December 2015 and what was very likely the same individual (based on unique appearance) was there again 26 February 2017 (ph. SBMNH), 13–17 February 2019 (ph. SBMNH), 19–26 December 2020 (ph. SBMNH), and 11 October 2022–17 March 2023 (ph. SBMNH). Another adult was there 23 September 2020. A first-cycle bird was near Santa Maria 10 February 2019 (ph. SBMNH), a second-cycle bird was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 26 April 2023, and a first-cycle was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 18 February 2024 (ph. SBMNH). [A report of one at Goleta Beach Park 18 January 2006 was not accepted by the CBRC.] This species has occurred much more frequently in the state, though mostly inland, since the late 1990s.

Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*)

Uncommon to fairly common transient and winter visitor in District C, with the highest numbers present along the North Coast. Rare in early summer, very rare in late summer. Casual inland.

Glaucous-winged Gulls are found along beaches and rocky shores, at harbors, river mouths, and landfills, and locally at coastal freshwater lakes (e.g., Laguna Blanca, Andrée Clark Bird Refuge). They also occur less frequently in flooded dirt fields in the Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys and occur regularly up to 15 mi (25 km) inland in the Santa Maria Valley at the Santa Maria landfill and up to 10 mi (16 km) inland in the Lompoc Valley at River Park. This species

is also recorded regularly in small numbers well out at sea between late fall and early spring (e.g., ca. 55 mi [88 km] SW of Santa Rosa Island 21 November 1992 and multiple records west to the Santa Lucia Escarpment and Rodriguez Dome). One seen 229 mi (370 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 30 January 1994 is the farthest from shore.

This species typically arrives during late September or early October, with the first birds appearing during mid-September (i.e., single adults 17 September 1981 in Santa Barbara, 18 September 1980 at Point Sal, and 19 September 1979 in Goleta; and see below). During winter, the largest numbers are found along the North Coast. During several winters (e.g., 2008–2009) unusually large numbers have been present. Fifty-six on the Santa Barbara CBC 2 January 1983 and 147 there on 3 January 2009 were very high counts for the South Coast; the report of 240 on the 29 December 1963 CBC is very likely in error.

In spring, most individuals have departed by mid-April. An adult in Goleta 18 May 1994 was late for that age. Usually, a small number remain through May and into June, particularly along the North Coast (20 in the Santa Maria/Vandenberg SFB area in late June 1981 was a very high early-summer count); almost all of these individuals are immatures in worn plumage. Numbers decline further during July; 5 on Vandenberg SFB during late July and early August 1982 is a high count for so late in the season. Only a very few individuals have remained through August and into early September. There are five summer records of adults: Goleta 2 September 1976, Point Sal 23–31 July 1981, Santa Maria River mouth 8–14 August 1993, Santa Barbara Harbor 24 August 1993, and Santa Ynez River mouth 27 August–15+ September 1993; some of these birds were possibly very early migrants.

There are two records from District I: an adult was at Lake Cachuma 29 January 1983 and an immature was there 1 March 1989.

Hybrids involving Glaucous-winged X Western and Glaucous-winged X American Herring Gulls occur fairly regularly though in small but variable numbers from year to year during the non-breeding season. The number of the latter combination, mostly first-cycle individuals, has clearly increased during the past couple decades, whereas the number of the former seems to have remained flat. Some Glaucous-winged X American Herring Gulls may be misidentified as "Thayer's" Gulls. An adult Glaucous-winged X Western/American Herring Gull was early at Lake Los Carneros 18 September 2021. A first-cycle Glaucous-winged X American Herring at Lompoc 8 February 1985 had been banded in Alaska in late July 1984.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

Very rare winter visitor in District C. Casual in summer.

Glaucous Gulls are found primarily at areas frequented by large numbers of gulls, including beaches, river mouths, harbors, and landfills. They also have occurred well offshore. Almost all records have involved first-cycle birds. The first county record was from Santa Barbara 4 April 1939 (Rett 1939; *SBMNH). Since then, there have been 59 records (only 21 since 1994) of first-cycles between 27 November (2007, Goleta; ph. SBMNH) and 18 April (1977, Santa Barbara; 1981, Goleta [ph. *AB* 35:863]). A total of 5 in the Lompoc area 26 January–3 March 1985 was an unprecedented concentration. A total of 9 in the county December 1990–February 1991 was also a very high count.

Late individuals (first-cycle birds) were at Santa Barbara Harbor 1 May 2009 (ph. SBMNH) and the Santa Ynez River mouth 2–8 May 1999. In addition, a second-cycle bird was near Lompoc 26 January–February 1985 (ph. SBMNH) and a fourth-cycle or adult individual was at the Santa Maria landfill 30 January 1986 and 24 January 1987. An adult on north Vandenberg SFB 26 November 1989 was not only unusual because of its age, but it also represents the earliest arrival date for the county.

Not listed are a number of published records that lack adequate documentation. Many reports from early in the 20th century (particularly those for late spring and summer) almost certainly

pertain to pale (worn) Glaucous-winged Gulls. A bird photographed at Jalama Beach County Park 3–24 July 1982 (ph. SBMNH) was published as a Glaucous Gull; however, the plumage is so worn that the identification is not certain. One Glaucous clearly summered at the Santa Maria River mouth 3 June–22 September 1997 (ph. *FN* 51:1053, SBMNH).

A number of birds believed to be Glaucous X American Herring Gull hybrids have been recorded, including 1 at the Santa Maria landfill 19 February 1979, 2 near Lompoc 31 January–11 February 1985, 1 in Goleta 23 December 2004, and 1 in Goleta 29 June–23 August 2008 (ph. SBMNH) (particularly unusual in summer).

TROPICBIRDS (PHAETHONTIDAE)

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*)

Rare late-summer and early-fall visitor offshore. Casual at other seasons.

This warm-water species is most likely to be found well offshore—from near the Channel Islands to beyond the shelf edge (particularly between the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge and San Juan Seamount [Briggs et al. 1987])—between mid-July (earliest: 25 June 2024 between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount, and 13 July 1992 147 mi (235 km) W of San Miguel Island) and early October (e.g., 5 October 1992 52 mi [83 km] SW of Santa Rosa Island). Records for this period include the following: 8 birds along south side of Santa Cruz Island 8 September 1974, 1 seen 37 mi (60 km) and 2 seen 69 mi (110 km) SW of Point Arguello 30 September 1979, ca. 10 sightings south and west of the islands between 1975–1982 (Briggs et al. 1987), 4 in San Juan Seamount area 22 August 1985, 1 bird ca. 150 mi (240 km) SSW of Point Conception 14 September 1987, 30 records of single individuals between 1990–2025 (ph. *NAB* 61:640), plus high counts of total of 12 birds between Arguello Canyon and San Juan Seamount 4 September 2013 and a total of 10 birds in same area on both 3 September 2014 and 6 September 2023. Briggs et al. (1987) mapped one record from inside the Santa Barbara Channel sometime between 1975–1982. Additional singles in the Santa Barbara Channel 12 August 1997 (ph. SBMNH), 13 September 1997, 13 September 2001, and (slightly late) 13 October 2014 were also closer to the mainland than usual. Singles 93 mi (150 km) and 95 mi (155 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 17 November 1989 were late.

Two birds seen (1 photographed–SBMNH) one mile off the Santa Barbara Harbor 1 October 1956 (first county record) were very unusual this close to the mainland (and see below).

There are a least seven spring records: only 3 mi (5 km) off Santa Barbara 16 May 1970; N of San Juan Seamount 25 April 2003 (plus 2 "tropicbirds sp."); single birds 30 mi (48 km) SW of San Miguel Island, 35 mi (56 km) W of San Miguel Island, and 40 mi (64 km) SW of Point Arguello, all on 7 May 2014; and 3 north of San Juan Seamount 8 May 2024; and an early sighting ca. 73 mi (117 km) SW of Santa Rosa Island 16 April 2018.

Two winter records: 119 mi (190 km) W of San Nicolas Island 29 January 1994 and 63 mi (101 km) W of San Miguel Island 17 March 2026.

An oiled individual was picked up on East Beach in Santa Barbara "probably in March" 2001 and taken to a rehabilitator, where it died and was kept frozen for many months (*SBMNH); unfortunately, the exact date the bird was found was never recorded, and March would be a very unusual time of year.

Red-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon rubricauda*)

Casual visitor well offshore, mostly in fall.

All 10 records are from pelagic waters far off the mainland: singles ca. 115 mi (185 km) WSW of Point Arguello and 150 mi (240 km) SW of Point Arguello 8 October 1979, ca. 81 mi (130 km) SW of San Miguel Island 29 January 1994, ca. 100 mi (160 km) WSW of Point Arguello 25 November 1995, ca. 225 mi (360 km) SW of Point Conception 10 October 1996, ca. 214 mi (345 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 9 November 2005, ca. 178 mi (286 km) WSW of

Point Conception 17 August 2008, ca. 217 mi (350 km) WSW of Point Arguello 20 November 2014, ca. 227 mi (365 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 28 November 2014, and ca. 208 mi (335 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 29 November 2014. [A report of a bird just off south Vandenberg SFB 10 September 1998 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

LOONS (GAVIIDAE)

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*)

Fairly common to common transient and winter visitor along the coast, occurring almost exclusively near shore. Rare in summer. Casual in District I.

This is often the most numerous species of loon seen from shore in fall and winter because it prefers shallow waters. From fall through spring, it is also a rare visitor to sloughs, lakes, and reservoirs on the coastal plain as far as two miles inland at Lake Los Carneros (e.g., 28–31 December 2015, 16 May 2016, 15 May 2017, 14 February–4 April 2026) and Laguna Blancs (e.g., 2 May 2023). It also may be found in small numbers in protected waters surrounding the Channel Islands, but it is otherwise rare at sea more than a few miles offshore, mostly in migration, but where likely over-reported. Fall migrants appear beginning in mid-October. At times, it can be common along the coast; 220+ in the Santa Barbara area during early January 1966 is a very high count for the South Coast, if correct. The Santa Barbara CBC has recorded almost 100 individuals, although some duplication in counting is likely. This species can be particularly numerous along the North Coast between the Santa Maria River mouth and much of Vandenberg SFB, where single-day totals may reach 200 individuals, and where exceptional totals of ca. 600 and 1500 were estimated 12 January 2011 and 26 January 2014, respectively. Migration in spring is much more pronounced than in fall, and peaks between late March and late April. Spring migration (March–May) totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	3175	5355	2746
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

A few non-breeders rarely can be seen moving north until mid-June. Through the early 1990s, up to 11 individuals had summered annually between mid-June and August along the North Coast; up to 8 had summered along the South Coast. Since then, only a few birds, at most, are seen each summer, and some years pass with none.

There are six records for District I: Lake Cachuma 10 March 1980, 27 March 1983, 17 February 1986, 21 January 1989, and 9 February 1993; and found alive on the roadside near Los Alamos 11 December 1988.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

Fairly common fall transient and uncommon winter visitor along the coast, predominantly offshore. Abundant spring transient both offshore and nearshore. Rare in summer. Very rare to casual inland.

This is the most numerous species of loon in the offshore waters, but it is generally uncommon during fall and winter close to shore, particularly along the South Coast. It is very rare on lakes, reservoirs, and sloughs on the coastal plain, with most sightings being of sick, injured, or oiled birds. Fall migrants appear beginning in early or mid-October, and moderate

numbers are still flying south through early December. Although small-to-medium-sized southbound flocks are regularly seen from shore in fall along the North Coast, fewer are seen along the South Coast. Hundreds along the Vandenberg SFB coast during fall 1989, 5000 estimated passing by off south Vandenberg SFB 7 December 2014 (2014–2015 was an exceptional season for Pacific Loons—see below), ca. 5600 passing Point Conception 4 December 2022, and 8300 passing there 7 December 2024 are the largest counts for this season. South of Point Conception, it is likely that most transients pass farther offshore, such as the 500 seen between Santa Cruz Island and the mainland 16 November 1989. Even much farther offshore were the 4 birds 231 mi (372 km) SW of San Miguel Island 4 November 1990 and 11 birds 111 mi (179 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 14 November 1990.

In winter, most individuals are believed to be offshore, with small flocks seen flying along the North Coast on a somewhat regular basis. Totals of 108 and 190 were reported on the La Purisima CBC 20 December 2009 and 14 December 2014, respectively. Along the South Coast, the species is uncommon most winters within sight of land. A count of 75 in Goleta 22 December 2002 was larger than normal. The Santa Barbara CBC recorded 125 birds on 5 January 2013 and an exceptional 412 birds on 3 January 2015, a winter in which substantially larger-than-normal numbers of Pacifics were present (e.g., single flock of 75 feeding close to shore off the Mesa in Santa Barbara 1 January 2015).

This is by far the most abundant loon from April to mid-June, when large numbers migrate north along the entire coast and farther offshore. Peak abundance occurs during the latter half of April. Spring migration (early April –early June) totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	29,672	22,700	35,093
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

Some peak counts include 1200 in 15 minutes on 18 April 1998, 46,000 in a mere two hours 18 April 2000, and 11,000 in under two hours 14 April 2016. On 21 April 1984, 11,000 were seen passing Point Conception in four hours, and 19,280 were tallied there in four hours on 18 April 2021, probably an indication of the number of birds passing this location in spring. Northbound migrants are common near the Channel Islands, when hundreds or perhaps thousands may concentrate in the passes between islands, with smaller numbers seen beyond them as well. Off the North Coast, small numbers may be seen up to 45–55 mi (70–90 km) offshore. Non-breeders (basic plumage) continue to migrate up the coast in small numbers through mid-June, and 3 birds flying past Goleta Point 23 June 1977 were probably such very late migrants.

An alternate-plumaged bird on a small pond in Waller Park, Santa Maria, 8 May 1995 and 1 at a flood-control basin in Santa Maria 6 December 2011 were at odd locations as much as 11 mi (18 km) from the ocean.

Non-breeders formerly summered in moderate numbers along the North Coast, bordering on fairly common; but the species is now uncommon to rare there. Before the 1990s, the high count was 222 between Point Sal and Point Arguello during summer 1980. Most counts since then have been well under 20 individuals, except for 60 at Vandenberg SFB 7 July 1990. The few North Coast summer records before the late 1970s were certainly the result of very limited observer coverage. Along the South Coast, Pacific Loons are now decidedly rare in summer; but they were formerly uncommon to rare (through the 1980s), with season totals ranging between 0 and 36 individuals. Four flocks totaling 18 birds were flying west past Goleta Point on the odd date of 21 August 1977.

The Pacific Loon is very rare to casual inland. There are 10 records from Lake Cachuma between 5 November (2017) and mid-April, and three records involving summering birds: 2 from 6 June–23 July 1980, 1 there 2–20 July 1982, and 1 on 6 July 2004.

Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)

Fairly common fall transient and winter visitor, and common spring transient, along the coast; rare but regular there in summer. Inland, an uncommon transient and winter visitor at Lake Cachuma, rare in summer; casual elsewhere.

In District C, this species is a fairly common transient and winter visitor along the entire coast, frequenting nearshore waters, protected bays, harbors, and, more rarely, slough channels and lakes. Common Loons also may be found in protected waters surrounding the Channel Islands. Migrants may be seen well offshore in both spring and fall, such as at Rodriguez Dome 15 November 2009. They arrive beginning in early October. Fall migration from shore is less noticeable than spring, with most individuals probably passing farther offshore; the movement in fall is more apparent along the North Coast than along the South Coast (where 36 at Gaviota State Park 12 November 2025 was a good count). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 49 individuals, but only a single bird was reported on the count 5 January 2019. High single-site totals were 44 at Gaviota State Park 24 January 2025 and 49 there 5 February 2026. From late March to mid-May (peak movement in April) larger numbers can be seen as the species migrates north, close to shore and even high over the coastal plain and foothills (see below). They are also seen rarely but regularly on lakes and reservoirs on the coastal plain, as well as farther offshore out to a distance of 25 mi (40 km). Spring migration (March–May) totals from Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	1763	4891	477
Hours of Observation	83	68	107

A few non-breeders move up the coast through early June.

The spring flight over the coastal plain along the South Coast included high counts of 261 flying west over the lower foothills and inner coastal plain in Santa Barbara and Goleta during overcast weather on 18 April 1981 and also of 260 birds on 18 April 1981 and 253 on 17 April 2020.

In summer (mid-June to early September), Common Loons are rare but regular along the coast. Annual totals for the North Coast range from 0 to 13 individuals and for the South Coast from 0 to 8 individuals; the largest concentrations include 12 off Mussel Rock 5 August 2007 for the North Coast and 5 together off Goleta 26 August 2000 along the South Coast. Numbers of summering loons along the coast have generally declined since the 1980s.

Inland, this species was an uncommon transient and winter visitor and rare summer visitor at Lake Cachuma through the early 2000s. The maximum counts were 16 on both 12 November 1986 and 2 February 1988. Summer totals reached 8 individuals in 1980 and 5 in 1982, but usually averaged around 2 birds. Prior to 1978, there were only three records for the lake: 3 July 1968, 10 November 1968, and 31 October 1971. This change in status probably reflects better observer coverage. Numbers have declined recently, however, and the species is now only a not-quite-annual spring and fall migrant. There are only six records for District I away from Lake Cachuma: singles at Jameson Lake December 1978 and 30 May 1990 and up to 2 there 27 December 2014–11 January 2015, a loose flock of ca. 40 flying near Little Pine Mountain 22

April 1989, 1 at Los Alamos 20 April 2019, and 1 at Gibraltar Reservoir 30 December 2023. (Gibraltar Reservoir and Jameson Lake may support Common Loons somewhat regularly, but these lakes receive little observer coverage.)

In District M, 21 spring migrants passed over San Marcos Pass 25 April 1997, 6 did so 4 April 2020, and 2 were there 22 April 2026.

There is one record for District V: 9 migrants flying high over the Cuyama Valley 15 April 1982.

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*)

Casual winter visitor.

One was at Goleta Beach Park 23 February–12 April 1982 (ph. *AB* 36:330, SBMNH); on the latter date it was found beached and died in captivity later that day (*SBMNH). An immature was at Santa Barbara Harbor 11 December 1992 (ph. CBRC 2007, SBMNH). [One reported flying by Goleta Point 14 May 2003 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

ALBATROSSES (DIOMEDEIDAE)

Laysan Albatross (*Diomedea immutabilis*)

Rare but regular late-fall, winter, and, especially, spring visitor to the offshore waters well to the west and southwest of the county. Casual in summer and in the Santa Barbara Channel.

With an increase in the number of research cruises, pelagic trips, and cruise-ships to deep waters well to the west and southwest of the county beginning in the late 1980s has come a substantial increase in the number of Laysan Albatross sightings. A growing breeding population off Mexico may also be playing a role in this increase. The records include: 2 birds ca. 35 mi (57 km) W of San Miguel Island 15 March 1949, singles 52 mi (83 km) W of Point Conception 26 March 1968 and 82 mi (132 km) W of Point Arguello 12–13 May 1975, and then approximately 205 individuals from west of Point Arguello to beyond the islands between 1980 and 2026 (ph. Howell 2012), mostly between mid-November and mid-May (peak numbers likely in late winter and early spring). High single-day counts were of 6 between San Miguel Island and San Juan Seamount on both 18 April 2003 and 22 April 2006. An oceanographic cruise tallied 23 birds between 13–18 January 2020 from ca. 15 mi (25 km) S and 173 mi (279 km) SW of San Miguel Island to ca. 193 mi (310 km) W of Point Arguello. (This overall total includes those Laysans reported from CalCOFI oceanographic cruises between 35–230 mi (55–370 km) offshore between SW of San Nicolas Island (Ventura County waters) and WSW of Point Sal as follows: November 1987 (8), November 1989 (3), April 1990 (2), March 1991 (21), February 1992 (11), January 1993 (3), and January 1994 (9)). Unseasonal was a summer bird 15 mi (24 km) W of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011. One bird with a leg band ca. 28 mi (45 km) SW of Point Arguello 9 September 2015 had been banded at the nesting colony on Guadalupe Island, Mexico, the likely source area for many of the Santa Barbara County reports since the 1980s or 1990s.

Records from within the Santa Barbara Channel are near Santa Rosa Island 15 November 1980, only 10 mi (16 km) off Goleta 24 November 1987, in the Channel 3 February 1996, 5 mi (7 km) N of Santa Rosa Island 16 May 2001, and north of San Miguel Island 3 January 2025. Single beached specimens in relatively good condition were found in Goleta 21 October 1989 (*UCSB) and at Mussel Rock near Point Sal 21 March 1993 (*SBMNH).

Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*)

Uncommon to fairly common late-winter, spring, and summer, and uncommon fall and early-winter, visitor to waters well offshore. Casual inside the Channel Islands. One record from shore.

Records for Black-footed Albatross are from essentially throughout the year, but the species is most numerous between the very late winter and early summer. It may even occur in large

numbers, especially between February–May. It is most numerous well west and southwest of the county, near San Miguel Island, and near the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge. A study well west and southwest of San Miguel Island in 1949 (McHugh 1950) revealed a total of 108 between 15 March and 2 April. A total of 60+ were between 108 mi (174 km) W of San Nicolas Island and 186 mi (300 km) SW of San Miguel Island 6 March 1991. At least 20–25 birds were seen between Point Conception, Arguello Canyon, and San Miguel Island 30 April 2011. Otherwise, most high counts at this season have not exceeded 19 individuals per day. The maximum mid-summer count is of 12–14 birds W and SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011 and 11 birds between vic. Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 31 July 2010. The maximum fall counts are of 13 between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and San Miguel Island 5–6 November 1983, 12+ between San Miguel Island/Rodiguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 5 September 2018, and "dozens" to as many as 40 between Arguello Canyon and Rodriguez Dome 25 November 2000. In winter, the high count is ca. 84 birds well SW and W of the mainland between 1–11 February 1992, including one-day totals of 25 birds well W of San Miguel Island on 10 February and 40 well W of Point Arguello on 11 February.

The only records from inside the Santa Barbara Channel are of single individuals ca. 5 mi (8 km) N of Santa Cruz Island 12 July 1970 (*UAZ), N of Santa Rosa Island 25 April 2003, near west end of Santa Cruz Island 17 May 2003, 8 mi (13 km) S of Goleta 21 July 2007, N of Santa Rosa Island 9 August 2008, in Channel 15 May 2009, between San Miguel Island and Point Conception 16 May 2009 (2), in Channel 8 July 2013, and 3 in western Santa Barbara Channel on both 3 January 2025 and 11 December 2025. A beached specimen in very poor condition was found at Purisima Point 7 April 2004.

The only record from shore, and one of only a handful of such records south of Point Conception, was from Coal Oil Point 1 March 2020.

An individual banded in the Hawaiian Islands, where the species breeds, in January 1961 was recovered at an unspecified site on the North Coast in October 1961.

Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*)

Apparently, a former visitor offshore. Only three or four recent records.

The only older reference to the Short-tailed Albatross occurring in Santa Barbara County waters in historical times is of it being "near Santa Barbara" in the 1800s (Streator 1886). This species was once relatively common and was recorded during the 1800s on a number of occasions off the Ventura County coast (Evermann 1886). Also, bones belonging to this species have been found in Indian middens excavated at three sites on Vandenberg SFB (Guthrie 1990), as well as at Point Mugu, Ventura County, and on the Channel Islands. There was a large decline in the species' population and there were only a few sightings well off the West Coast of North America through the mid-1990s. The population, which nests on islands off southern Japan, is slowly recovering and the number of sightings off the West Coast has increased as well. The only recent local records are of a bird just off Prisoner's Harbor, Santa Cruz Island, 6 July 2005 (ph. *NAB* 59:654, SBMNH), 1 seen 80 mi (130 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 20 January 2023 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 bird 6.6 mi (10.6 km) S of the west end of San Miguel Island 7 May 2025; in addition, 1 was very close to Santa Barbara Island 19 February–22 March 2002 (ph. SBMNH). [A report from 63 mi (102 km) WNW of Point Arguello 9 October 1993 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

SOUTHERN STORM-PETRELS (OCEANITIDAE)

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*)

Casual visitor offshore.

There are ten records: 2 mid-way between Point Conception and San Miguel Island 18 September 1987, 1 off Point Conception 20 August 1988, 1 only a mile off Santa Cruz Island 5 September 1997, at least 3 birds ca. 6 mi (9 km) W of San Miguel Island 28 September 2002, 1 bird 32 mi (51 km) off Point Sal 29 September 2015, 1 seen ca. 36 mi (58 km) W of San Miguel Island 7 September 2016, 1 ca. 22 mi (36 km) W of Point Sal 22 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH), 1 at San Juan Seamount 4 September 2019 (ph. SBMNH), 1 in mid- Santa Barbara Channel between Santa Barbara and Santa Rosa Island 2 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 SW of Santa Rosa Island 5 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH). In addition, there is a report of 2 birds 200 mi (325 km) W of San Miguel Island on the very late date of 17 November 2008, although other species of white-rumped storm-petrels might be considered.

NORTHERN STORM-PETRELS (HYDROBATIDAE)

Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates furcatus*)
Very rare visitor offshore. Most records have come from late winter and spring; only a few summer and fall occurrences. Several individuals seen from shore.

The status of the Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel off Santa Barbara County is unclear. It is very irregular in occurrence off Southern California as a whole. There are a number of sight records prior to the 1970s for the county (including counts of up to 25 individuals), particularly during the late summer and fall period. These reports lack adequate documentation and have not been included. Briggs et al. (1987) mention several undated records between 1975–1978 as far west as Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount.

The definite spring records are: 92 mi (148 km) W of Point Arguello 12 May 1975; an incursion during May 1976, with 28 in the Santa Barbara Channel 17–30 May and 1 seen from Goleta Point 20 May; 5 mi (8 km) off Santa Barbara 5 April 1985 (*UCSB); 1 found dead at Refugio State Beach 7 April 1985 (skel. LACM); 3 birds S of Santa Cruz Island 13 May 1995; Santa Barbara Channel 1 March 1998; from Goleta Point 3 March 1999; ca. 46 mi (74 km) W of San Miguel Island 3 May 2003; a small flight in 2006, with 7 birds between San Miguel Island and San Juan Seamount 22 April (ph. SBMNH), 2 individuals N of Santa Cruz/Santa Rosa passage 27 April, and 5 near San Juan Seamount 28 April; 1 in western Santa Barbara Channel 27 April 2013; and total of 9 between 23 mi (37 km) WSW of Point Sal and 22 mi (35 km) SSW of Point Arguello 10–11 May 2017 (an incursion year off Central California).

In winter, 1 was near Santa Cruz Island 10 January 1984; in early 1990, an incursion brought up to 4 to Santa Barbara Harbor 14–16 February, 1 off Point Arguello 16 February, 2 off the Santa Maria River mouth 18 February, and 3 off Santa Barbara 18 February; and 1 was 173 mi (278 km) SW of San Miguel Island 29 January 1989, a total of 10 were seen ca. 166 mi (267 km) SW of San Miguel Island 21 January 1991, 2 were 202 mi (325 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 31 January 1994, and 1 was near east end Santa Cruz Island 9 February 2020.

One near the Santa Lucia Escarpment 14 September 1985 and 1 well off Point Conception 6 August 1990 (very early) are the only fall records.

One seen only one-quarter mile off Goleta 10 July 1981 was especially unusual in mid-summer.

Ringed Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates hornbyi*)
Accidental.

One bird photographed 13 mi (21 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 2 August 2005 (ph. CBRC 2007) established the first record for North American waters.

Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates leucorhoa*)
Uncommon to common visitor to deep waters well offshore, late spring through fall; uncommon to rare in winter and early spring. (A small number breed on Prince Islet, San Miguel Island.)

Leach's Storm-Petrels frequent deep waters and there are no documented records from well inside the Santa Barbara Channel or otherwise close to the mainland. They are most often encountered in the waters near San Miguel Island (a breeding site) and farther offshore, as well as in an arc from San Miguel Island south and east to the Cortes Bank (Briggs et al. 1987). A large majority are light-rumped individuals, particularly in the more northern waters. The maximum one-day counts for various seasons include: Summer/Early Fall—300+ ca. 123 mi (200 km) SW of Point Conception 17 August 1980, 200 (including ca. XX dark-rumped [ph. Howell 2012]) between San Miguel Island and San Juan Seamount 21 July 2007, 280 (including 6 dark-rumped) there 12 June 2010, and 185 (including 20 dark-rumped [ph. Howell 2012]) there 31 July 2010; Mid-to-Late Fall—15 birds 55+ mi (90+ km) W of Purisima Point and Point Sal 30 November 2002, 40 between 185 mi (295 km) W of San Miguel Island and 155 mi (250 km) W of Point Arguello 9 October 2005, and 10 individuals well SSW of San Miguel Island 12 November 2005; Winter—50 well WSW of San Nicolas Island 3 March 1991, 170 well W of San Miguel Island 10 February 1992, 55 well W of Point Arguello 11 February 1992, 12 in Arguello Canyon area 20 January 2001, and total of ca. 35 over 100+ mi (160+ km) W and SW of San Miguel Island 14–18 January 2020; and Spring—309 well SW of Point Conception 25 May 2002.

Small-to-moderate numbers of more southerly (Mexican)-breeding, dark-rumped individuals (*O. l. chapmani*) are seen between mid-summer and fall (July to mid-November); 65 and 100 individuals seen between off Point Conception and San Juan Seamount on 14 July 1992 and 21 July 2012, respectively, are high counts. Also see above.

In 1991, 7 Leach's were captured on Prince Islet, of which 1 was dark-rumped (Carter 1992). That same study estimated a breeding population of 114 individuals based on response rates to taped calls of the species.

Townsend's Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates socorroensis*)

Probably a rare to uncommon post-breeding visitor to waters south of Point Conception during summer and early fall. Status not well known.

An uncertain number of Mexican-breeding Townsend's Storm-Petrels, taxonomically split from the similar looking Leach's Storm-Petrel in 2016, have likely occurred. These include a specimen (*MVZ) 12 mi (19 km) SW of San Miguel Island 20 August 1938; and (probables) 2+ birds north of San Juan Seamount 21 July 2007 (ph. Howell et al. 2009, Howell 2012), uncertain number between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 9 September 2009, 49 mi (79 km) SSW of Santa Rosa Island 12 June 2010, as many as 6 birds vic. San Juan Seamount 3 September 2014, ca. 22 mi (36 km) S of Santa Cruz Island 12 July 2015 (ph. SBMNH), 2 birds ca. 60 mi (100 km) SSW of Santa Rosa Island 9 September 2015, total of 6 birds between ca. 37 mi (60 km) SW of San Miguel Island and ca. 46 mi (74 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 7 September 2016, total of 5 birds between ca. 80–100 mi (130–160 km) SW of Santa Rosa Island 6 September 2017 (ph. SBMNH), east of San Juan Seamount 5 September 2018, at least 2 birds in Santa Cruz Basin 14 July 2019 (ph. *NAB* 72:42, SBMNH), total of 6 well SSW of San Miguel Island 4 September 2019, total of 8 between Rodriguez Dome and near San Juan Seamount 9 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH), total of 14 between 50–205 mi (80–330 km) SW of Point Arguello and San Miguel Island 27–31 July 2021, an exceptional 33 birds reported from between S of Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 8 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH), 18 between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 7 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH), 18 in vic. Santa Cruz Basin 5 August 2023, and 3 birds N of San Juan Seamount 6 September 2023. This species is most likely to occur between (mid-) July and (early) September, perhaps in variable numbers from year to year, well off southwestern Santa Barbara County.

Ashy Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates homochroa*)

Fairly common spring, summer, and fall resident and visitor offshore. Possibly breeds at Vandenberg SFB. (Breeds on San Miguel and Santa Cruz Islands.) Casual in winter. Several records of individuals seen from shore and several of birds found inland from the beach.

Ashy Storm-Petrels are encountered most regularly in the western section of the Santa Barbara Channel and farther offshore. This species begins arriving during April and is fairly common by May. The earliest arrival date is 3 April 1916 in the Santa Barbara Channel. The greatest numbers (presumably mostly San Miguel Island breeders) occur during May and again in late summer and early fall, especially along the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge to 30 mi (50 km) south of San Miguel Island and in the western Santa Barbara Channel (Briggs et al. 1987). The maximum counts are: up to 50 per day in Santa Barbara Channel during May 1976, 200 between Goleta and San Miguel Island 28 August 1977, 200+ off Point Conception 19 November 1990, 236 off Point Conception and in the Santa Barbara Channel 10 August 1992, 68 in western Santa Barbara Channel 31 July 2010, 120 there 7 August 2010, and 160 in northern Santa Cruz Basin 7 August 2025. In the eastern Santa Barbara Channel, this species is probably most likely to be seen during late summer and early fall (late July to early September).

The breeding population on the Channel Islands was estimated to be 800+ individuals on San Miguel Island (Castle Rock and Prince Islet) in 1976–1977 and 76+ individuals on Santa Cruz Island (Scorpion and Willows Anchorage rocks) in 1976–1977 (Sowls et al. 1980), and ca. 1500 birds at San Miguel and ca. 250 individuals on Santa Cruz in 1991 (Carter et al. 1992). A small number of birds may possibly breed on small islets along the Vandenberg SFB coast (Brown et al. 2003).

Substantial numbers may still be encountered during late October and November (e.g., 40+ in Santa Barbara Channel 23 October 1966 and the November 1990 record above). Late fall dates are of 1 well west of Point Conception 25 November 1995, 1 found dead at the Santa Barbara Harbor 26 November 1973 (*SBMNH), and 2 birds 69 mi (110 km) W of Point Sal 30 November 2002.

This species is probably rare to very rare in winter well offshore, particularly to the west and southwest of the mainland. The only winter records, however, are of 11 netted on Prince Islet off San Miguel Island the night of 8–9 January 1991, 1 well SW of Point Conception 9 February 1992, 14 between Point Conception and San Miguel Island 22 January 1993, 1 west of San Miguel Island 23 January 1993, 8 well west of Point Arguello 25 January 1993, 7 ca. 21–71 mi (33–115 km) W of Point Arguello 6 February 1993, and 1 well W of San Miguel Island 3 February 1994.

There are four records of birds seen from shore: Goleta Point 23 May 1978 (during strong westerly winds); Coal Oil Point 24 November 1983; 2 Goleta 9 November 1984; and Goleta Point 25 July 1992. Singles were found dead on the beach in Carpinteria 5 May 1915 (Dawson 1916) and Santa Barbara 10 August 1964 (*Peabody Museum, Yale University). Single freshly dead birds were found up to one-half mile inland on streets in Goleta 5 November 1962 (*UCSB) and 9 November 1979 (*SBMNH) following nights of dense fog. Another individual was found alive (but later died) at Pershing Park, Santa Barbara, 1 September 1991 (*SBMNH). One was found at the UCSB main campus Recreation Center 8 November 2012 (*UCSB).

Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates tethys*)

Casual late-summer and fall visitor offshore.

There are three records: ca. 60 mi (95 km) SSW San Miguel Island 5 October 1993, ca. 28 mi (44 km) SW of San Miguel Island 31 July 1996, and ca. 150 mi (240 km) WSW San Miguel Island 30 July 2021 (ph. SBMNH). [Reports of 3 birds ca. 120 mi (195 km) SW San Miguel Island 9 May 1987, total of 4 individuals ca. 80–102 mi (130–165 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 11 May 1987, and single birds 64 mi (104 km) SW of Santa Rosa Island 5 October 1992

and ca. 33 mi (53 km) SW of San Miguel Island 6 September 1997 (ph. *WB* 33:23–24) were not accepted by or submitted to the CBRC.]

Black Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates melania*)

Fairly common to common summer visitor offshore, May–October. Peak numbers are usually encountered in late summer. A small number of birds have been seen from shore off the South Coast.

Black Storm-Petrels begin arriving in late April or early May (earliest arrival date: 28 April 1974 off Santa Barbara (2)) in the Santa Barbara Channel, but not until later in May off the North Coast. They can be quite common by mid-May (e.g., 200 between San Miguel and San Nicolas Islands 14 May 1978). This is usually the most numerous storm-petrel in the Santa Barbara Channel. In mid-summer, 350 were in the Channel 3 July 2010. The largest numbers are present during late summer (e.g., 600 between Goleta and San Miguel Island 28 August 1977, 400 in western Santa Barbara Channel 7 August 2010) and early fall (e.g., 450 in northern Santa Cruz Basin 5 October 2019); 500 counted S of the west end of Santa Cruz Island 14 October 2006 was a large count especially for so late in autumn. Most birds are seen over shelf waters, whereas the species is very uncommon to rare farther offshore in deep water beyond the shelf edge (e.g., 140 mi (225 km) SW of San Miguel Island 9 July 1992). Briggs et al. (1987) noted that they were found mostly within 30 mi (50 km) of the mainland, with one offshore exception being along the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge. The latest records are of 2 between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and San Miguel Island 5–6 November 1983, 1 north of San Juan Seamount 6 November 1993, 1 off Point Conception 19 November 1990, and 2 well W of Point Sal (possibly in San Luis Obispo County waters) 30 November 2002.

There are a number of records of Black Storm-Petrels seen from shore along the South Coast; the highest counts include 20+ from Santa Barbara Harbor 26 July 1983, 6 from Carpinteria 2 September 1984, and 5 from Goleta Point 17 June 1992. In 1992, with El Niño conditions farther to the south and offshore, small numbers of Black Storm-Petrels were seen daily from shore at Santa Barbara and Goleta during June and July.

At Prince Islet, San Miguel Island, single Black Storm-Petrels were seen or heard at night in response to taped calls on 8–9 and 10–11 July 1991. Although those birds may have been non-breeders, a few pairs of Black Storm-Petrels may breed there (Carter 1992).

[Tristram's Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates tristrami*)

A bird observed east of San Juan Seamount 21 July 2007 was probably this species, but the record was not accepted by the CBRC due to the brevity of the sighting.]

Least Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates microsoma*)

Probably an irregularly rare to uncommon late-summer and fall visitor offshore. One tentative winter report.

Least Storm-Petrels have been recorded only rarely off Santa Barbara County. This is almost certainly the result of being overlooked; however, some reports of Leasts from far offshore or at odd times of the year (see below) may have involved dark-rumped Townsend's Storm-Petrels. Leasts are most numerous in late summer and early fall, particularly during years with warm-water conditions. During other years, they may be absent.

The first county records were of 1 off Goleta 28 August 1977 and 100 between Santa Barbara and San Miguel Island 16 September 1978. Most records since then have fallen between mid-August and 23 October, with 1 seen 220 mi (350 km) W of San Nicolas Island 1 August 1991 and 1 noted 110 mi (180 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 3 August 1991 being the earliest. One south of Rodriguez Dome 6 November 1993, 6 seen 114–138 mi (185–220 km) SW of San Miguel Island 14 November 1990, and 1 observed 132 mi (215 km) WSW of San Miguel Island

18 November 1990 were late, although it is very possible that some of these late records involved small, dark-rumped Townsend's or Leach's Storm-Petrels from the south. In 1992, with El Niño conditions to the south, there were six records of Leasts offshore between 6 and 25 July, including a large concentration of 200 in the western Santa Barbara Channel 12 July; high counts later that season were 26 between Santa Barbara and San Miguel Island on 25 July, 183 between Santa Barbara and Point Conception on 10 August, and 33 in the Channel on 12 September.

One seen 58 mi (93 km) W of San Miguel Island 9 February 1992 is the sole winter record. However, at that time the small, Guadalupe Island- breeding Leach's/Towmsemd's may not have been considered.

PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS (PROCELLARIIDAE)

Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*)

Principally a fall through spring visitor offshore. Rather rare within sight of shore. Numbers fluctuate greatly from year to year, and it may be common one year and absent the next. Very rare in summer.

Northern Fulmars occur in highly variable numbers from year to year; they are rare or uncommon many years, common in some, but completely absent in others. A clear majority (ca. 75 percent) of the birds are dark morph, with the remaining quarter split between intermediate (ca. 15 percent) and light morphs. Fulmars normally arrive off the coast during the late fall (October–November), although presumed arrivals from the north, rather than locally over-summering birds, have been noted in September, especially during years with high abundance. The earliest arrival dates include 16 September 1985 near Rodriguez Dome and 25 September 1983 near San Miguel Island, and probably also include birds on 3 September 2019 well SW of San Miguel Island, 7 September 2005 between Point Conception and San Juan Seamount, and 5 individuals on 9 September 2004 vic. northern Channel Islands. A total of 100 birds were around the northern Channel Islands 20 November 2005. Fulmars are most numerous in the cooler waters west of the county, but coverage there was relatively poor until the late 1990s. Two hundred were seen between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge 22–23 October 1983 and 175 were between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and San Miguel Island 5–6 November 1983. Since the 1990s, as many as 500 were between Arguello Canyon and Rodriguez Dome 25 November 2000, 325 were between Rodriguez Dome and San Miguel Island 1 March 2009, and 180 were west of Point Conception and San Miguel Island 15 November 2009.

During some years in late autumn and winter (e.g., 1971–1972, 1975–1976, 1981–1982, 2000–2001, 2008–2009, 2021–2022) fulmars have been particularly numerous offshore, with substantial numbers coming to nearshore waters and a few individuals found around piers and harbors (e.g., 6 at Santa Barbara Harbor 23 December 1911, 27 at the Santa Barbara breakwater 8 November 1971, total of 20 in the Santa Barbara Harbor area 28 October–7 November 1984, and up to 10 off Goleta Beach Park in early November 1984). A few dead birds are often found on beaches during and immediately following such flights.

Numbers often begin to decline by February or early March, and most fulmars are gone by mid-spring. Primarily following flight years, good numbers may still be present in spring, particularly in cooler waters off the North Coast and San Miguel Island (e.g., 445 between San Miguel Island and Rodriguez Dome 1 March 2009, 110 in Santa Barbara Channel to W of San Miguel Island 16 May 2009, 44 seen from Point Conception 2 April 2022).

A few individuals have lingered into early summer (high count: total of 12 seen from Goleta Point during early June 1976); and there are at least 27 records between early July and the beginning of September (high counts: 4 between Point Conception and San Juan Seamount 25 July 2009, 5 there 23 July 2011, and 8 in Santa Cruz Basin 5 August 2023), both offshore and from shore. Some August and early September records may represent very early arrivals from

the north. One found alive on the beach at Point Sal 23 July 1980 was not only the first mid-summer record for the county but it also did not follow a flight year for the species.

Murphy's Petrel (*Pterodroma ultima*)
Uncommon to rare spring visitor well offshore, casual in late winter.

A surge in spring records off the Central California coast beginning in the 1980s was largely the result of better coverage of the waters well offshore, primarily by oceanographic cruises. Four individuals were about 45–58 mi (72–93 km) NW of Point Conception 11 April 1986. A total of 8 were between 230 mi (270 km) WSW of San Miguel Island and 45 mi (75 km) W of Point Arguello 10–12 May 1987. Single records from 98 mi (160 km) SW of San Miguel Island and 180 mi (285 km) WSW of Point Arguello on 26 & 29 April 1989, respectively, were not officially submitted. In 1990, 1 was 170 mi (275 km) WSW of San Nicolas Island 21 April, 6 were 45–90 mi (75–145 km) W of San Nicolas Island 25 April, 1 was 171 mi (275 km) SW of San Miguel Island 26 April, and single individuals were 114 mi (183 km) and 152 mi (245 km) SW of San Miguel Island 27 April. In 1993, 2 were seen well WSW of Point Conception 12 April. In addition, a dark *Pterodroma* sp. was seen 145 mi (235 km) SW of San Miguel Island 27 April 1990.

An increase in the number of spring deep-water pelagic trips (since the late 1990s) and in the popularity of cruise-ship "repositioning cruises" (mostly since 2013) resulted in a further increase in the rate of records. One Murphy's was 64 mi (105 km) SW of Point Arguello 27 April 2002. In 2003, record numbers of Murphy's Petrels totaled 56+ birds on three dates between 18–26 April in the waters well west and south of San Miguel Island, with the high of 39 individuals on 18 April and the closest birds some 35 mi (55 km) from San Miguel. Nine birds were tallied between San Miguel Island and San Juan Seamount 15 April 2005. One NW of San Miguel Island 1 May 2010 was in only 200 fathoms (ca. 1200 feet) of water. One or 2 birds were ca. 44 mi (70 km) SW of Point Arguello 30 April 2011 (ph. *NAB* 65:517). A total of 10 were ca. 45–58 mi (75–93 km) offshore from SW of San Miguel Island to the north end of the county 15 April 2013, a total of 6 were in that same area 7 May 2014, 2 were off Point Arguello 6 May 2015, 2 were 37 mi (61 km) WSW of Point Arguello 24 April 2016, 1 was ca. 120 mi (193 km) W of Point Arguello 2 April 2017 (possibly in San Luis Obispo County waters), and 3 were well off the North Coast 2 May 2018. In 2022, some 14 Murphy's were reported between 12 April–12 May well off the North Coast (ph. SBMNH). In 2023, 3 were seen there between 27 April–3 May.

One 183 mi (295 km) W of San Miguel Island 10 February 1992 and total of 3 seen 82–91 mi (132–146 km) W of Point Arguello 11 February 1992 were somewhat early.

Mottled Petrel (*Pterodroma inexpectata*)
Casual visitor well offshore.

There are seven records: 142 mi (228 km) SW of San Miguel Island 15 November 1989, 70 mi (113 km) W of San Miguel Island 17 November 1989, 125 mi (200 km) and 82 mi (132 km) W of Point Arguello 11 February 1992, 152 mi (245 km) SW of San Miguel Island 1 December 2005, 208 mi (335 km) SW of San Miguel Island 16 November 2008, and 166 mi (267 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 27 November 2008.

Hawaiian Petrel *(Pterodroma sandwichensis*)
Rare to very rare spring, and casual late summer and early fall, visitor well offshore.

Formerly a casual visitor well offshore, an increase in the number of spring deepwater pelagic trips and especially in the recent popularity of spring "repositioning" cruises has shown that this species is likely a rare but regular visitor to the deeper waters well off the North Coast from mid-April through mid-or late May. One was ca. 33 mi (54 km) SW of Point Arguello 28

April 2001, 1 was 138 mi (220 km) SW of Point Arguello 23 April 2012 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was over outer Arguello Canyon (WSW of Point Conception) 15 April 2013, 1 was 50 mi (80 km) W of San Miguel Island 30 April 2014, 1 was 43 mi (69 km) W of Point Arguello 7 May 2014, 1 was 38 mi (62 km) WSW of Point Arguello 24 April 2016, 2 were well off Point Arguello 26 April (ph. SBMNH) and 3 were there 12 May 2022 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was 51 mi (82 km) W of Point Arguello 25 April 2023, 2 were ca. 100 mi (160 km) W of San Miguel Island 24 April 2024, total of 4 were between well SW of San Miguel Island and well SW of Point Arguello 8 May 2024, and total of 4+ were well W of San Miguel Island and Point Conception between 27 April–4 May 2025. [Single individuals reported more than 100 mi (160 km) off Point Arguello on 14 and 16 April 2010 were not accepted by the CBRC.]

Records from late summer through early fall are: 2 ca. 28 mi (44 km) SW of San Miguel Island 31 July 1996, 1 ca. 119 mi (190 km) W of Point Arguello 25 July 2001, 1 at uncertain location well W or SW of mainland 6 September 2006 (ph. Howell 2012), 1 individual 33 mi (54 km) W of Point Conception 5 September 2012, and 1 bird 29 mi (47 km) off Point Conception 29 September 2015.

Cook's Petrel (*Pterodroma cookii*)

Rare, occasionally fairly common, spring and summer visitor well offshore; very rare in fall, and casual in winter.

This species frequents deep water and, thus, was rarely recorded off the county before the improved coverage of the waters well offshore by CalCOFI cruises before the late 1990s, by NOAA cruises, by one-day pelagic trips since the late 1990s, and by cruise-ship "repositioning cruises" since 2012). It is now known to be somewhat regular in occurrence, especially from mid-April to late May and from mid-July to late August. The first record was ca. 104 mi (167 km) SW of San Miguel Island 17 August 1980. From then through 1994 there were 14 records involving 97 individuals well offshore between 27 April and 8 September (plus several unidentified *"Cookilaria"* petrels). The largest concentrations were 20 seen 125–150 mi (200–240 km) SW of San Miguel Island 18 August 1988 and 25 at a chum slick well WSW of San Miguel Island 23 August 1993. The closest Cook's to the mainland was 36 mi (57 km) SW of San Miguel Island 19 August 1984.

Since 1996, records have come from between 9 April (2018; off North Coast (3)) and 27 October (1996; trip to Arguello Canyon (2)) and totaled ca. 375 birds through 2026 (but excluding 2009 and 2010), with highs of 31 birds between 35 mi (57 km) W of San Miguel Island and 50 mi (81 km) W of Point Arguello 24 April 2016, 59 birds south of Santa Cruz Island 15 July 2018, and 28 between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount 7 September 2022. These totals were eclipsed by the large numbers in 2009 and 2010: total of 120 seen S and SW of San Miguel Island 25 July 2009 (ph. *NAB* 63:668–671, Howell 2012), 63 were W of Point Conception and San Miguel Island 1 May 2010, and 192 were between the northern Channel Islands and San Juan Seamount 12 June 2010. All these birds were well off the North Coast southeastward, beyond the islands, to the deeper waters of the Santa Cruz Basin. The closest birds to land have been 20–21 mi (32–33 km) SW of San Miguel Island 7 September 2005 and 25 July 2009; several birds were in water fewer than 200 fathoms (1200 feet) and 400 fathoms (2400 feet) deep near San Miguel Island on 1 May and 12 June 2010, respectively; several were only 7–10 mi (11–15 km) south of Santa Cruz Island 15 July 2018 (see above); and 2 were only ca. 8 mi (13 km) SW of Santa Rosa Island 28 July 2021.

In winter, there have been ten records involving 22 individuals between 16 January and 17 February, 1992–2026, from well WSW of San Nicolas Island to well WNW of Point Arguello.

Stejneger's Petrel (*Pterodroma longirostris*)

Casual visitor well offshore.

One was seen 175 mi (280 km) SW of San Miguel Island 14 November 1990, 1 was 218 mi (350 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 10 July 1992, and 1 was 92 mi (150 km) SW of Point

Conception 14 April 2010. [A record of 4 birds ca. 140 mi (220 km) WSW of Point Conception 10 October 1991 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

[Jouanin's Petrel (*Bulweria fallax*)
Accidental.

One was photographed at Arch Point, Santa Barbara Island, 1 June 2016 (ph. *NAB* 70:388, *WB* 49:247). This established the first record for continental North America.]

White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*)
Accidental visitor offshore.

One was seen 6.5 mi (10.5 km) N of San Miguel Island 6 September 2011 (ph. *NAB* 66:200, SBMNH). This established the second record for California.

Streaked Shearwater (*Calonectris leucomelas*)
Casual visitor offshore.

One bird was studied 5–6 mi (7–9 km) S of Santa Cruz Island 7 September 2002, another was in this same general area on 1 October 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 was ca. 5 mi (8 km) SSW of Santa Rosa Island 10 August 2024. It is uncertain if any of these involve the same individual. These are three of only a handful of state records south of Monterey County. [A report of another individual in the Santa Barbara Channel ca. 7 mi (11 km) S of Santa Barbara 26 October 2002 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Ardenna pacifica*)
Accidental visitor offshore.

One bird was photographed ca. 5.1 mi (8.2 km) NNE of the east end of Santa Cruz Island on 17 October 2025.

Buller's Shearwater (*Ardenna bulleri*)
Uncommon but irregular autumn visitor well offshore, though twice in exceptional numbers. Casual from shore. One mid-winter record.

Through 1993, there were a mere 17 offshore records, including the following high counts: total of 14 on 19–20 October 1971 well off Point Arguello and Point Conception (Jehl 1973), an exceptional 1300+ near San Miguel Island during August 1976 (Briggs et al. 1987) and 2000 just south of San Miguel Island 26–28 September 1976, and a total of 44 in the Arguello Canyon region 22–23 August 1985. With increased observer coverage of waters west of the county (from southwest of San Miguel Island northwards) in fall, this species has proven to be fairly regular most years in at least small numbers between August and mid-November. One seen ca. 17 mi (28 km) W of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011 and another in the western Santa Cruz Basin 12 July 2020 were early. One in the Santa Barbara channel N of eastern Santa Cruz Island on 28–29 June 2022 was exceptionally so. A total of 1250 during a trip to Arguello Canyon 27 October 1996 was exceptional; a single flock of 85 birds seen 23 mi (39 km) SW of San Miguel Island 8 September 2007 and 360 in the San Juan Seamount area 7 September 2022 were unusual. A total of 65 were seen between S of Santa Rosa Island, San Miguel Island, and San Juan Seamount 4–5 September 2018, 175 were tallied between W of San Miguel Island and near San Juan Seamount 9 September 2020, and 155 were well off the North Coast 29 August 2025. Twenty-six birds between 17–52 mi (28–83 km) W and SW of San Miguel Island 12 November 2005 and 30 birds west of Point Conception and San Miguel Island 15 November 2009 were high counts for later in the season. The latest reports are 25 November 1995 west of Point Conception/San Miguel Island and 25 November 2000 ca. 5 mi (7 km) W of San Miguel Island (2). Sightings farther east and south are fewer and typically involve just single or a few individuals each; a total of 30+

between Santa Barbara Harbor and Santa Rosa Island 28 August 1999 and 85 birds S of Santa Rosa Island 8 September 2007 were large counts for these waters. One seen only 4 mi (7 km) off Santa Barbara 15 November 2014 was also closer to the mainland than usual.

In addition, single individuals were seen from shore at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 October and 2 November 1985 and 2 September 2000.

The only winter record is of a bird ca. 80 mi (128 km) W of Point Arguello 24 January 2023.

Short-tailed Shearwater (*Ardenna tenuirostris*)

Very rare visitor offshore, November–March, though probably more regular at this season than the relatively small number of records indicate. Seen from shore on two occasions. One spring record.

All but two of the certain records are between late October and early March. It is during this period that the species may be somewhat regular, with the few records that exist being a function of the relatively poor coverage and the difficulty in differentiating this species from Sooty Shearwater. A number of published records of Sooty Shearwaters in winter through the early 1970s lack adequate details; some of these may pertain to Short-tailed Shearwaters. In addition, there are a number of winter records of birds identified only as Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwaters.

The "definite" records of Short-tailed are: NW of San Nicolas Island early January 1976, found dead on beach in Santa Barbara 13 December 1977 (skel. SBMNH), S of Santa Cruz Island 26 February 1978, and 29 records involving 59 individuals offshore, 1980–2026, between 25 October (2007, between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands) and 1 March. One seen 30 September 2007 NE of Santa Rosa Island was very early. Two seen from shore at Goleta Point 2 March 1976 were present during strong southwest winds associated with a storm, and 1 from Coal Oil Point 24 November 1983 immediately preceded a storm.

Two Short-tailed Shearwaters observed 36 mi (57 km) SW of Point Conception 29 April 1990 were out-of-season.

Sooty Shearwater (*Ardenna grisea*)

Common but declining visitor offshore, spring through fall, though abundance and distribution may vary from year to year. Often visible close to shore. Rare but probably regular in winter.

The Sooty Shearwater is typically the most numerous species of shearwater in our region during spring and summer. It prefers the coastal upwelling zone out to the central continental slope rather than waters farther offshore in the California Current; thus, relatively few birds are seen more than 60 mi (100 km) offshore (Briggs and Chu 1986). This species arrives beginning in late March (possibly earlier—see below) and generally departs by late November. Peak numbers may occur south and east of Point Conception during April–June (with a reduction of more than 50 percent thereafter), but between late May and August from San Miguel Island and Point Conception northwards. It may occur in large, though formerly immense, flocks in summer that are often visible from shore, particularly along the North Coast. Older maxima include 500,000 from the Santa Maria River mouth 13 July 1979 and 100,000 there in thirty minutes 30 May 1985. A count of 120,000 off north Vandenberg SFB 27 August 1989 was a high count for late in summer. Since the 1990s, the huge flocks have appeared less often; peak counts have typically not exceeded a few thousand individuals, except for 100,000, 92,000, 50,000, 100,000, and 50,000 off the Santa Maria River mouth on 13 August 2000, 12 September 2000, 31 August 2002, 27 August 2006, and 31 August 2008, respectively. Veit et al. (1996) stated that the numbers of Sooty Shearwaters off Southern California declined by as much as 90 percent between the late 1980s and mid-1990s, associated with warming sea-surface temperatures.

Numbers may fluctuate greatly from year to year, especially along the South Coast: 18,200 were seen from Goleta Point during April and May 1976, but only 1 was seen from there during the same period in 1977. Large numbers have been seen from shore along the South Coast on only several occasions since the mid-1980s (e.g., up to 14,000 off Santa Barbara late May–17 June 2008).

A total of 117 well off Point Conception and San Miguel Island 19–21 October 1971 (Jehl 1973), 120 between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and San Miguel Island 5–6 November 1983, 400 well off Vandenberg SFB 19 November 1989, and about 125 between Santa Cruz Island and Port Hueneme, Ventura County, 12 December 1988 are the highest pre-1990s counts after September. Since then, the high is up to 1000 during a trip to Arguello Canyon 27 October 1996; otherwise, a mere 20+ between Arguello Canyon and San Miguel Island 25 November 2000.

In winter, this species was first recorded at Goleta Point 1 March 1976. By 1994, there had been only 11 records for this season (including *DMNS), most involving single individuals or very small flocks. Sixty between SW of Santa Rosa Island and Anacapa Island 8 February 1992 and 22 near Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands 22 January 1993 are very high winter counts. This species probably occurs in small numbers every winter offshore, particularly off the North Coast and beyond San Miguel Island, but coverage at this season is poor. Since 1994, there have been only 11 winter records (involving 15 individuals). A number of earlier records at this season were not properly documented and may have involved Northern Fulmars or Short-tailed Shearwaters. In addition, there are a number of winter records of birds identified only as Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwaters. Four Sooty/Short-taileds off Goleta Point 11 March 2002 were possibly very early spring-arriving Sooties, as was a definite Sooty near Santa Cruz Island 8 March 2020.

Pink-footed Shearwater (*Ardenna creatopus*)
Common visitor offshore, late April–October, although numbers may vary from year to year. Very rare in winter. Rarely seen from shore.

Pink-footed Shearwaters arrive during April, exceptionally at the end of March (earliest arrival dates: 23 March 2024 ca. 27 mi (43 km) W of Point Arguello, 28 March 2024 ca. 21 mi (34 km) WSW of Point Sal, 29 March 2019 eastern Santa Barbara Channel). One near Santa Cruz Island 8 March 2020 could have been either wintering locally or an extremely early spring arrival. Large numbers are regularly encountered offshore, particularly in the western Channel, off the south sides of the northern Channel Islands, and along the Santa Rosa–Cortes Ridge (e.g., 1000+ between Santa Barbara and San Miguel Island 28 August 1977, exceptionally ca. 3500 south of Santa Cruz Island 20 May 1979, and 1000 in eastern Santa Barbara Channel 31 August 1996). In fall, numbers decline during October. A count of 250 on a trip from Santa Barbara to Arguello Canyon 26 October 1996 was a high total for so late in the month. Sixty-five between the Santa Lucia Escarpment and San Miguel Island 5–6 November 1983 was a large number for that month. At least 10 were seen between Rodriguez Dome and San Miguel Island 25 November 2000 and 4 were seen from Point Conception 3 December 2022.

The 22 winter records are: from Goleta Point 1 March 1977, 100 birds S of Santa Rosa Island and vic. 8 February 1992 (an exceptionally high count at this season), and 20 records (involving 56 individuals) since 1993, with a high count of 11 birds ca. 52 mi (83 km) W of the North Coast 15 February 1993 and four offshore reports totaling 17 individuals between 11 December 2025–15 January 2026.

Unlike the Sooty Shearwater, this species is somewhat rare from shore east of Point Conception. In summer 1992, however, a year characterized by warm El Niño waters farther offshore and colder waters in the Santa Barbara Channel, Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen daily from shore, with high counts from Goleta Point of 48 on 15 June, 70 on 25 July, and 55 on 29 July. Perhaps more expected were the 38 birds seen from Point Conception 2 May 2021 and 66 counted there 10 April 2022. Singles and small numbers have been seen from shore on a fair number of occasions along the North Coast.

Flesh-footed Shearwater (*Ardenna carneipes*)
Very rare visitor to offshore waters, primarily in autumn. One record from shore.

Records through the mid-1990s are as follows: 41 mi (67 km) W of San Miguel Island 21 October 1971 (Jehl 1973), S of Santa Rosa Island 19 June 1975, near San Miguel Island 14 May 1978, only 3 mi (5 km) off Goleta 29 May 1981 (ph. SBMNH; very unusual this close to shore), only 4 mi (6 km) off Goleta 18 September 1981, near San Miguel Island 1 September 1982, and total of 2 between Santa Lucia Escarpment and San Miguel Island 5–6 November 1983. With the increase in coverage of the waters well west and southwest of the county, there have been some 23 records of 1–2 birds between 1994–2026, all falling between 10 April (2026, 11 mi [18 km] S of Santa Rosa Island), 15 April (2005, 52 mi [83 km] SW of San Miguel Island), and 20 April (2006, between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands), all early, and 25 November (2000, near Rodriguez Dome), with most during autumn (October–November). In addition, a total of 7 birds during a trip west to Arguello Canyon 27 October 1996 was an exceptional count, as was 5 near the northern Channel Islands 20 November 2004.

The only record from shore is of 1 from Point Conception 24 October 2021.

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)

Very rare visitor offshore.

There is a record of a white-vented "Manx-type" shearwater (*Puffinus* sp.), "probably not *P. opisthomelas,"* seen near Santa Rosa Island 10 September 1975. The first record of a definite Manx was of 1 seen from the Santa Maria River mouth 8 September 2002. Additional records include 1 ca. 8 mi (13 km) off Carpinteria 2 March 2007, 2 in Santa Barbara Channel 23 September 2007, 1 seen 3-1/2 mi (6 km) N of Santa Cruz Island 25 April 2008, 1 off Goleta 27 August 2022, 1 bird S of Santa Cruz Island 6 September 2022, 1 near Santa Cruz Island 30 October 2022, 1 in mid-Santa Barbara Channel 26 August 2023, and 1 near Santa Cruz Island 16 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH). Surprising for California waters, a substantial number of the county's reports are from summer: 1 seen 7 mi (11 km) NW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011 (ph. SBMNH), 1 seen 8 mi (13 km) N of Santa Rosa Island 23 July 2013 (ph. SBMNH), 1 ca. 5 mi (8 km) SSW of Summerland 21 July 2014 (ph. SBMNH), 1 in eastern Santa Barbara Channel 9 July 2017 (ph. SBMNH), 1 bird ca. 4.5 mi (7.5 km) SE of Santa Cruz Island 14 July 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 off northeast Santa Cruz Island 11 June 2026. [Singles reported S of Santa Cruz Island 20 September 1998 and 25 October 2003 were not accepted by the CBRC.]

Black-vented Shearwater (*Puffinus opisthomelas*)

Uncommon to fairly common fall and winter visitor, sometimes in large numbers. Irregular in occurrence. Often seen close to shore. Very rare in spring and summer.

Black-vented Shearwaters frequent nearshore waters and are often seen from shore. They are most often observed during the late fall and early winter. Numbers vary from year to year, with the species being common some years and absent others. The earliest fall record prior to 1990 was from the Santa Barbara Channel 28 August 1977. In 1990, this species arrived in numbers early, with 300 off the Santa Maria River mouth 4 August and 7 near Santa Cruz Island 5 August, increasing to 7000 off north Vandenberg SFB 18 August, 35,000 there 25 August, and 75,000, the record county total, off the Santa Maria River mouth 21 September. Other large counts are mostly from the North Coast and include 5000 off the Santa Maria River mouth 2 November 1985, 7400 off south Vandenberg SFB 20 December 2009, and 29,000 off north Vandenberg SFB 2 September 2017. (For high counts in summer, see below.)

Along the South Coast, the maximum fall and winter counts are lower than from along the North Coast. Some have come from the Santa Barbara CBC (e.g., 1993 individuals on 30 December 2006 and ca. 2000 birds on 31 December 2016); others include 4400–5000 off Refugio State Beach 2–11 November 2002, up to 4000 off Santa Barbara and Goleta 28 October–13 November 2004, 1150 in western Santa Barbara Channel 15 November 2009, ca. 15,000 near Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands 15 November and 2000 off Gaviota State Park 12 November 2016; whereas 456 from Goleta Point 3 March 1999 and 464 there 20 March 2003 were good counts for so late in the season.

Small numbers may linger past early April. Prior to 1997, 8 birds were near Santa Cruz Island 28 April 1990; singles were off Santa Barbara 16 May 1970, 20 May 1972, and 21 May 1978; and 2 were south of Santa Cruz Island 20 May 1978. Since then, such reports have increased somewhat in frequency, one of which was from north of Point Conception of a single bird 19 mi (30 km) W of Purisima Point 11 May 2017; a high count is 122 from Point Conception 22 April 2026.

In 1992, with El Niño conditions to the south, Black-vented Shearwaters arrived early, with a total of 1050 seen from Goleta Point 6 July–3 August; offshore Santa Barbara Channel totals of 75 on 9 July, 20 on 11 July, 110 on 12 July, and 110 on 10 August; and 25 off the Santa Maria River mouth 26 July. In 1993, 1 was at Point Arguello 30 June and 7 were off the Santa Maria River mouth 14 August. In 1997, the species also arrived early and was present in large numbers by August (e.g., "thousands" in Santa Barbara Channel 17 August). Since 2005, such summer and early fall occurrences involving small and moderate numbers have increased, mostly beginning in mid-July, and include some from farther offshore to ca. 10 mi (16 km) beyond the Channel Islands. Reports from June and early July include 1 in eastern Santa Barbara Channel 30 June and 1 off Santa Maria River mouth 4 July 2015, 60 in Santa Barbara Channel 2 June 2017, and 1 in eastern Santa Barbara Channel 16 June and 4 there 24 June 2018, and singles there 28 June 2022 and 2 July 2026. High summer and early fall counts include 700–800 in the western Santa Barbara Channel 29 July, 3000 in one hour off the Santa Maria River mouth 10 August, "several thousand" off north Vandenberg SFB 25 August, and 1200 off Carpinteria 27 August 2014; 1500 in western Santa Barbara Channel 29 August and ca. 4000 birds there 8 September 2015; and 500 off Gaviota 23 August 2018.

Farther offshore, 1 bird was ca. 60 mi (95 km) from land near the Santa Lucia Escarpment 5 November 1983, 1 was seen 15 mi (24 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 2 September 2014, 30 birds were found ca. 17 mi (27 km) W of San Miguel Island 29 September 2016, ca. 75 were tallied between ca. 10–30 mi (20–50 km) SW and S of Santa Rosa Island 15 January 2020, 8 were in the northern Santa Cruz Basin 4 November 2023, and 6 were there 27 November 2023. This species is most apt to occur well offshore during warm-water years.

STORKS (CICONIIDAE)

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)

Casual visitor along the South Coast.

Until the early part of the 1900s, Wood Storks occurred regularly at coastal sloughs and lagoons north at least to Ventura County. There were only several definite records, however, for Santa Barbara County during this early period: 1 in Santa Barbara in 1872 or 1873 (Cooper 1887), up to 3 in the Devereux Slough area 15 August–19 September 1934 (Rett fieldnotes), and 1 there for several days through 25 August 1938 (Rett fieldnotes). Since that time, the only records are: Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 21 August 1953; Goleta Slough 12 December 1964–14 February 1965 (ph. SBMNH); Goleta Slough 15 October 1965 and then at Carpinteria Salt Marsh through 12 January 1966; Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 15 August 1975; and Carpinteria Salt Marsh 5 June–1 August 1983 (ph. SBMNH).

FRIGATEBIRDS (FREGATIDAE)

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*)

Formerly a rare summer visitor—late June to early September—along the South Coast; casual along the North Coast. Numbers varied from year to year. Also recorded once each in spring and late fall. One record in District V. Substantial drop-off in occurrence after late 1990s.

The Magnificent Frigatebird is a warm-water species and was formerly a rare but somewhat regular summer visitor along the South Coast. Almost all the records fell between late June and the end of August, with a few individuals seen in early September (e.g., 8 September 1983 Santa Barbara). Early sightings included singles off Santa Barbara Harbor 11 June 1985 and in Santa Barbara 5 June 1988, and the Santa Ynez River mouth record (below). A very early individual was in Goleta 22 May 1993, and what was probably the same bird was caught the following day on a fishing boat just west of Goleta and sent to a wildlife rehabilitation center (ph. SBMNH). Numbers varied from year to year, with none seen some years and as many as 18 seen in one season (1979). Most birds were seen along the immediate coast or over the nearby coastal plain, with one or two records from the lower foothills (e.g., 3 miles inland in Santa Barbara 23 August 1969). Most records involved single individuals, although there were several sightings of small groups (the largest being 5 over Montecito 20 July 1979). The first county records were of 1 in Carpinteria 12 August 1912 and 1 near Goleta 27 August 1912 (Dawson 1912). One was 5 mi (8 km) west of Gaviota 11 July 1941 (Bond 1941b). The South Coast summer (late June–early September) totals between the 1960s and 1998 are as follows: 1966: 1, 1967: 1, 1968: 1, 1969: 2, 1971: 3, 1972: 10, 1975: 1, 1976: 6, 1977: 10, 1979: 18, 1980: 9, 1981: 4, 1983: 3, 1985: 2, 1987: 2, 1988: 7, 1989: 2, 1990: 2, 1991: 1, 1993: 3, 1994: 1, 1997: 1, 1998: 6.

There was a sudden halt in records after 1998. This species became extremely rare throughout California over the ensuing ca. 15 years, with a slight uptick in sightings commencing around 2012+. In 2015, 4 birds were seen in the county, with 2 over Goleta 22 June (accepted only as frigatebirds sp. by CBRC), 1 near Santa Cruz Island 7 July, and 1 in Goleta 29 July (all ph. SBMNH). In 2016, what were probably the same 2 individuals were in Goleta (ph. SBMNH) and then at Hollister Ranch 31 July. One was at Santa Barbara Harbor 18 July 2022.

There have been only four records for the North Coast: 2 at Point Arguello 18 July 1980, Santa Ynez River mouth 10 June 1992 (early), near the Santa Maria River mouth 9 July 1992, and Jalama Beach County Park [uncertain date] summer 1998.

Only a very few records come from truly offshore: e.g., 3 mi (6 km) off Santa Rosa Island 2 August 1997, San Miguel Island below, Santa Cruz Island above.

There are only three records of adult birds: a male at Carpinteria 5 August 1968, a female at Rincon Point 25 July 1980, and a report of a female near San Miguel Island on 6 April 1976. The latter record was very unusual both in terms of date and age but was unaccompanied by details that would help eliminate other possible frigatebird species, so it should be considered a "frigatebird sp."

Truly unseasonal records include the San Miguel Island female mentioned above, an immature near Gaviota 2 November 1971, and a frigatebird sp. at Refugio State Beach 12 March 2019.

This species is accidental inland, with one record from District V: near Cuyama 22 July 1980.

GANNETS AND BOOBIES (SULIDAE)

Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*)

Casual visitor offshore.

Separate individuals were 40 mi (65 km) S of San Miguel Island and 34 mi (55 km) SW of San Miguel Island 12 October 2022. One was 228 mi (367 km) SW of San Miguel Island 16 January 2026. One was in the Santa Barbara Channel south of Goleta 18 June 2026. [One was at

Santa Barbara Island 13 August 2026.] [A Masked Booby reported at San Miguel Island 11 January 1993 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

Nazca Booby (*Sula granti*)
Very rare visitor offshore.

All records are recent. An adult was 19 mi (30.5 km) S of the east end Santa Cruz Island 10 June 2017 (ph. SBMNH), and singles were W of San Miguel Island 5 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH), 128 mi (205 km) SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2019 (ph. SBMNH), only 4 mi (6.5 km) NW of Point Conception 25 July 2019 (ph. SBMNH), perhaps the same bird only 10 mi (16 km) away at Point Arguello five days later on 30 July 2019 (ph. SBMNH), San Juan Seamount 9 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH), 2 there 8 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH), well S of Santa Rosa Island 6 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH), 7-1/2 mi (12 km) W of San Miguel Island 7 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH), ca. 19 mi (30 km) W of Point Sal 18 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH), 1 bird S of Santa Rosa Island 1 October 2022, total of 6 well SW of San Miguel Island 12 October 2022 (ph. SBMNH), singles near Santa Cruz Island 9 August and 14 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH), 1 at San Juan Seamount 6 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH), 1 ca. 206 mi (331 km) SW of San Miguel Island 15 April 2026, and 1 near north shore of Santa Cruz Island 7 August 2026. [In addition, there are records from the immediate vicinity of Santa Barbara Island.]

Masked/Nazca Booby
Very rare visitor offshore.

Individuals involving this species-pair were ca. 26 mi (43 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 16 July 1996, near San Miguel Island 16 February 1998, ca. 7.5 mi (12 km) SSE of Santa Barbara 26 May 2020 (ph. SBMNH), from shore at Goleta 25 August 2020 (ph. SBMNH), S of Santa Cruz Island 3 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH), ca. 18 mi (30 km) WNW of Point Sal 18 September 2022, and 4 were well SW of San Miguel Island 12 October 2022. [In addition, there are records from the immediate vicinity of Santa Barbara Island.]

Blue-footed Booby (*Sula nebouxii*)
Casual visitor, with most records associated with a single invasion event.

Prior to 2013, there was just one record of an individual seen off Coal Oil Point 1 September 1971; this was an invasion-year for this species into (mostly interior) Southern California. In autumn 2013, an unprecedented invasion to coastal and interior California brought many individuals and groups to the state, with small numbers to mainland Santa Barbara County and the Channel Islands. An exact count of birds is impossible to determine due to the presence of both through-migrants and long-lingering individuals. As many as 7 individuals were seen along the mainland South Coast: up to 2 off Goleta Beach Park 16–17 September, 1 off Gaviota 18 September, up to 2 off Shoreline Park, Santa Barbara, on three dates between 20 September–2 October, and 2 off Carpinteria Bluffs 25 September and 3 October. One was seen along the North Coast: Point Pedernales, south Vandenberg SFB, 24 September (ph. SBMNH). In addition, 1 that flew past Point Conception on 16 May 2024 (ph. SBMNH) was exceptional as to date and being unassociated with a regional incursion. [Also associated with the unprecedented invasion along the West Coast in fall 2013, up to 2 were seen on several dates around the east end of Santa Cruz Island 18 September–16 November (ph. SBMNH) and 1 was there 7 March 2014, possibly associated with a dwindling flock roosting on nearby Anacapa Island, and 1 was at Prisoner's Harbor 17 November (ph. SBMNH), and singles (same?) were at Santa Barbara Island 20 September and 2 November. Also present at Santa Barbara Island 29 August–6 October 2018 and 12 October 2019–3 October+ 2020 (ph. SBMNH) when discovered paired

with a Cocos Booby on Sutil Island and with nest and chick/fledgling, June–October 2020, the young bird seen there again from 7 September–2 October 2021 (ph. SBMNH), on 6 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH), 9 October 2024, and 13 August 2026. In 2021, a pair of adult Blue-footed Boobies there 31 July (ph. SBMNH) were attending a large chick, the first "pure" nesting record for the United States; the adults were still present 2 October 2021 (ph. SBMNH), 5 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH), and 25 August–11 October 2024, with 1 on 23 December 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and 13 August 2026.]

Cocos (Brown) Booby (*Sula brewsteri*)

Formerly casual, but recent increases and now a rare and regular visitor. [Recent nesting on Sutil Island, off Santa Barbara Island.]

One was reported without details at San Miguel Island 10 July 1956 (CBRC 2007). One was at Prince Islet off San Miguel Island each summer from 1961 through 1968 and was also seen over the waters immediately surrounding the island. Since the 1980s, this species has become a more regular visitor to Pacific Ocean waters along the West Coast, with an additional, larger increase commencing in the 2010s. Between 1997–2026, there were approximately 33 records (involving 52 individuals) from near to well S and WSW of the northern Channel Islands between May and mid-November, as well as a very large concentration of 37 birds at a feeding frenzy ca. 34 mi (55 km) SW of San Miguel Island 12 October 2022. The first individual to be found closer to the mainland was a bird in the Santa Barbara Channel ca. 14 mi (22 km) SSW of Santa Barbara 31 August 1996 (ph. *WB* 32:20). One was ca. 10 mi (16 km) S of Goleta Point 8 September 2012 (ph. SBMNH), 3 birds were ca. 7 mi (11 km) SSE of Goleta 5 July 2016, and singles were in eastern Santa Barbara Channel 31 July 2016, 25 May 2017, 21 September 2019, and 14 August 2021.

One was found roosting on a pier near Sandpiper Golf Course, just west of Goleta, 13 March–23 May 1999 (ph. SBMNH), still the only onshore South Coast record. Onshore along the North Coast, 1 was at Point Pedernales, Vandenberg SFB, 4 June 2003, and 1 was seen from Point Conception 21 April 2024. One was just off the Santa Maria River mouth 15 August 2014.

Winter records are few: 1 was ca. 4 mi (6 km) NE of Santa Cruz Island 27 February 2016, 1 was at Point Conception 7 January 2017, [1 was well northeast of Santa Barbara Island 23 January 2019,] and 1 was off east end Santa Cruz Island 29 January 2019.

[There are also multiple records of up to 4 individuals from Santa Barbara Island (particularly Sutil Island) and nearby waters beginning 1984+ (ph. SBMNH), increasing to 10–23 individuals there between 21 August–18 October 2014; exceptionally up to 170 individuals present July–October 2015; from 99–106 birds between 7 October–3 November 2017 which included up to 4 active nests 28 October–3 November, the first such nesting for the U. S. West Coast waters; 68–105 birds between 29 August 2018–8 September 2020, including a single nestling on 25 August 2019 and several nests between February–July 2020; 146–148 birds there 7 September-2 October 2021; 158 on and near the island 6 September 2022; a record-high 190 there 5 September 2023; 130 on 23 December 2023; 180 on 25 August 2024; but only 37 tallied 31 December 2024; and 150 on 13 August 2026.]

Cocos Booby was only split very recently from Brown Booby (*S. leucogaster*), and almost all records from Santa Barbara County were undifferentiated, although Cocas Booby is the expected species in the northeast Pacific.

Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*)

Very rare visitor offshore. Almost all records are recent.

The only record prior to 2018 was of 1 was photographed *(AB* 46:333) ca. 185 mi (300 km) WSW of San Nicolas Island 1 February 1992. [Outside the area covered by this publication, but inside "Santa Barbara County" waters, was a bird 1.7 mi (3 km) E of Santa Barbara Island 11 October 1987.] Starting in 2018, offshore records quickly accrued, with most sightings occurring between late August–late October: 1 was ca. 94 mi (152 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 5

October 2018 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was on a buoy in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel ca. 11 mi (17 km) south of Goleta 26 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 was in the Santa Barbara Channel between Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz Island 24 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH); a record 5 individuals were seen in 2022: near Santa Cruz Island 28 August (ph. SBMNH), close to shore off Santa Barbara 5 September (ph. SBMNH), off Santa Rosa Island 6 September (ph. SBMNH), near Rodriguez Dome 7 September (ph. SBMNH), and near Santa Cruz Island 10 October (ph. SBMNH); in 2023, singles were near the east end of Santa Cruz Island 4 October and 26 October (ph. SBMNH). At other months, 1 was off eastern Santa Cruz Island 21 November 2018, 1 was 91 mi (146 km) SW of San Miguel Island 24 November 2024, 1 was 43 mi (69 km) WSW of Point Arguello 13 April 2024, and 1 was probably disoriented in the fog over Surf Beach, Vandenberg SFB, 3 June 2024. [Outside the area covered by this publication, there are multiple records from on and around Sutil Island and three different sightings involving an uncertain number of different individuals E of Santa Barbara Island between 29 August–11 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH), and a total of 3 there between 7 September–2 October 2021.]

One onshore in Santa Barbara Harbor 2 October 2023 (ph. SBMNH) had likely ridden a boat into port.

More unusual in winter, 1 was just N of Santa Cruz Island 4 January 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

[One individual reported as this species in the Santa Barbara Channel ca. 14 mi (22 km) SSW of Santa Barbara 31 August 1996 was later re-identified as a Cocos Booby (see that species).]

CORMORANTS (PHALACROCORACIDAE)

Brandt's Cormorant (*Urile penicillatus*)

Common to very common winter visitor and transient along the coast and offshore. In summer, common along the North Coast but uncommon along much of the South Coast. Local nesting on the mainland coast. (Breeds commonly on the Channel Islands.)

Brandt's Cormorants are restricted to ocean waters. They occur commonly along the length of the coast, October–May, sometimes in large feeding flocks made up of several hundred individuals. The largest numbers are encountered just offshore (e.g., in and near kelp beds) and near the Channel Islands; they are uncommon to rare on the open ocean up to ca. 25 mi (40 km) beyond the islands and 45 mi (75 km) off the North Coast, although numbers occur somewhat regularly in the northern Santa Cruz Basin [and perhaps in waters off Santa Barbara Island]. They commonly roost on buoys and offshore rocks (e.g., Lion Rock), as well as on rocky headlands along the North Coast. High counts along both the North Coast (especially) and South Coast may reach 1000–1500 birds, with ca. 2500 at Goleta Point/Goleta Beach Park 1–11 April 2026. Along the South Coast, the only known roosting sites onshore are the bluffs at More Mesa in Goleta and, possibly, the bluffs at the Santa Barbara Cemetery in Montecito. A year-round roost exists on offshore structures off Sandpiper Golf Course just west of Goleta. This species is uncommon but regular inside the Santa Barbara Harbor, and it occurs at the mouths of sloughs or on lagoons inside the beach only when sick, injured, or oiled.

Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1480 individuals (3 January 2015), although some amount of duplication is likely. Large numbers can be seen moving north in February and March, but exact counts are difficult to obtain because locally feeding birds move up and down the coast.

In summer, numbers are reduced along much of the South Coast, where the Brandt's is mostly uncommon. A count of 300 in Goleta 24 June 1982 was very high for that season before the establishment of "Bird Island" (see below). Along the North Coast, it remains common, although there were no nesting records there until 1995 (see below). The maximum summer count is 650 at Lion Rock, Point Sal, 31 July 1980.

Estimates made in 1977 of the breeding populations on the Channel Islands were of 3710 individuals on San Miguel Island, 1400 individuals on Santa Rosa Island, 84 individuals on Santa Cruz Island, and 4 individuals on Anacapa Island (Sowls et al. 1980). In 1991, these estimates were of 15,700 individuals on San Miguel, 4650 birds on Santa Rosa, 3140 individuals on Santa Cruz, and 63 birds on Anacapa (Carter et al. 1992). In 1995, this species was discovered breeding on the Santa Barbara County mainland coast for the first time: 2 active nests at Point Arguello 5 May. This number rapidly increased to 30 nests in spring 1997, 8 of which were still active in mid-July. Nesting was also documented in 1997 along the South Coast with the discovery of 37 nests at an abandoned pier in Ellwood, just west of Goleta; 10–15 nests were there in May 2001, and 49 nests were surveyed in May 2002 (Capitolo et al. 2008). The pier was demolished in 2005 but replaced with cormorant-friendly structures known variously as "Sandpiper Pier," "Sandpiper Pier Foundation," or "Bird Island," still active in 2020, and which hosted the following counts of peak breeding-season (late April–late May) nests and individuals as counted via shore-based surveys—2005: 37 nests, 161 individuals; 2006: 75 nests, 196 individuals; 2007: 85 nests, 221 individuals; 2008: 123 nests, 237 individuals; 2009: 112 nests, 209 individuals; and 2010: 114 nests, 224 individuals (Radasky 2011). A summary of annual 1979–2011 cormorant nesting, as counted via airborne surveys and photographs, and published in Capitolo et al. (2012) included the following (north to south) sample of select years, illustrative of widespread population increases in California:

Point Sal/Lion Rock: 1 nest in 2004, 4 nests in 2007, and 102 nests in 2009

Destroyer Rock: 8 nests in 2011

Point Arguello/Rocky Point: 15 nests in 1995, 2 nests in 1997, 25 nests in 1999, 52 nests in 2005, 100 nests in 2009, and 159 nests in 2011

Point Conception: 16 nests in 2008, 12 nests in 2011

Sandpiper Pier Foundation: 37 nests in 1997, 5 nests in 1998, 17 nests in 2000, 96 nests in 2005, 136 nests in 2010, and 125 nests in 2011.

Estimates by Robinette et al. (2012b) of nesting birds along the entire Vandenberg SFB coastline included ca. 10 birds in 2000, ca. 90 birds in 2005, and ca. 370 birds in 2012.

Pelagic Cormorant (*Urile pelagicus*)

Uncommon to common transient and winter visitor along the entire coast and just offshore. Fairly common summer resident along the North Coast, where small numbers are known to nest; rare in summer along the South Coast. (Breeds commonly on the Channel Islands.) One record "inland" in District C.

The Pelagic Cormorant is restricted to ocean waters and is the least numerous of the three cormorants. It is locally common along the North Coast and uncommon to fairly common along the South Coast. Prior to the mid-1990s, the largest groups usually did not exceed 25 individuals on the North Coast and 5–10 birds on the South Coast. A total of 370 were reported near San Miguel Island 16 September 1978. Like the Brandt's Cormorant, this species is regularly encountered perched on buoys offshore and on rocky headlands along the North Coast (e.g., Point Sal area, Purisima Point, Point Pedernales, Point Arguello, and Point Conception). It is uncommon inside Santa Barbara Harbor and rare on the open ocean well away from the mainland or the Channel Islands.

Most Santa Barbara CBCs record fewer than 20 individuals; the maximum of 57 reported on 2 January 1966 may be in error and have partly involved misidentified Brandt's Cormorants.

A small northward movement past the coast is evident in spring. Counts made (March–May) from Goleta Point include the following:

	1976	1977	1978
Total # Individuals	132	89	54

Hours of Observation	83	68	107

In summer, moderate and mostly increasing numbers breed at some of the rocky headlands along the North Coast. The specific sites and estimates of their population sizes in the 1980s were as follows: Mussel Rock (9 birds in 1989, 2 pairs in 1990), Point Sal (Lion Rock: single pairs in 1980 and 1990, 4 birds in 1989), Purisima Point South (7 birds in 1989), Point Arguello (30 individuals in 1980, 92 birds in 1989), and Point Conception (6 individuals in 1979) (Sowls et al. 1980, Carter et al. 1992). More recently, nesting population estimates for the entire Vandenberg SFB coastline include ca. 50 birds in 2000, ca. 70 birds in 2005, and ca. 160 birds in 2012 (Robinette et al. 2012b). This nesting population is augmented by a number of summering non-breeders; for example, a total of 65 individuals were estimated to be present between Point Sal and Point Arguello during summer 1980. This species also breeds on the Channel Islands; estimated population sizes were 290 individuals on San Miguel Island in 1977, 72 individuals on Santa Rosa Island in 1977, 150 individuals on Santa Cruz Island in 1976, and 14 individuals on Anacapa Island in 1977 (Sowls et al. 1980); and, in 1991, 691 individuals on San Miguel, 1162 birds on Santa Rosa, 460 birds on Santa Cruz, and 328 individuals on Anacapa (Carter et al. 1992). Along the South Coast, where Pelagic Cormorant does not breed, the species is much less common in summer, with only 1–5 individuals seen there annually at that season.

An individual 9 mi (15 km) inland at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 30 September 2007 (ph. SBMNH) was exceptional.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Nannopterum auritum*)

Common transient and winter visitor in District C and inland on the larger reservoirs in District I. Uncommon to locally fairly common in summer; uncommon to rare at this season inland. Local nesting along South Coast. (Breeds commonly on the Channel Islands.) Very rare transient in Districts M and V.

The Double-crested Cormorant inhabits nearshore waters, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and sloughs. It is only rarely seen offshore well away from the mainland and the immediate vicinity of the Channel Islands. One was slightly beyond the islands in the northern Santa Cruz Basin 3 October 2020. It is common between August and April in District C, although more so along the South Coast than along the North Coast. It is particularly common between Goleta and Carpinteria; 350 were in Santa Barbara 31 December 1977, and Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 608 individuals (5 January 2008; duplication in some counts likely, however). The totals of 1200 and 1049 individuals reported on the CBC 30 December 1962 and 29 December 1979 were probably in error and partly involved misidentified Brandt's Cormorants. Singles at estate reflecting pools in Montecito 8 February 1987 and 19 March 1994 and 1 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 10 September 1990 were at atypical localities.

It is difficult to census migrating cormorants in spring because so many birds move up and down the coast when feeding. Small flocks also migrate west high over the coastal plain along the South Coast during April.

Numbers decrease by May. It is an uncommon summer visitor along much of the South Coast away from the few nesting sites (see below), although scattered individuals may be seen anywhere along the coast. Small groups are present regularly at several favored sites, which include the UCSB Lagoon, Santa Barbara Harbor, Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. The species is uncommon in summer along the North Coast, with the favored site being the Santa Ynez River mouth. Adults seen in the Santa Barbara area in July (e.g., 12 July 1980 Goleta (2)) may have already returned from the islands or the north.

The breeding population on the Channel Islands was estimated to be 150 individuals on San Miguel Island in 1976–1977 and 132 individuals on Anacapa Island in 1979 (Sowls et al. 1980).

In 1991, 230 nests were on San Miguel Island and the Anacapa Island population had increased to ca. 720 individuals (Carter et al. 1992). In 2001, Double-crested Cormorants were discovered nesting for the first time in mainland Santa Barbara County: up to 8 nests were in eucalyptus trees at the border between the Santa Barbara Zoo and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 13 June–8 July. At the time, this was the only mainland nesting site between Shell Beach and San Diego. In 2002, that number had increased to 18 nests 25+ April; in July 2003 and 2004 it was up to 21–23 nests; in 2007 there were 31 nests; in 2009 there were 66 nests; and in May–July 2011 some 88 active nests were tallied there (Capitolo et al. 2012). In 2012, 84 nests were documented in eucalyptus trees along the shore at Ortega Hill in Summerland during May–July, but these birds probably had moved there from the Santa Barbara Zoo site, where deterrent (tree-pruning) activities forced the abandonment of that colony. In June 2013, 141 nests were counted at the Summerland site, 143 nests were there in late May 2014, 121 nests were tallied in June 2015, 107 nests were there in June 2016, 83 nests were counted in May 2017, 98 active nests in June 2018, 83 in June 2019, and 101 nests in May 2020. But that site was abandoned thereafter due to Highway 101 construction, and 60 nests were found in vic. Channel Drive X Butterfly Lane in Montecito on 1 June 2021. In 2008, Double-crested Cormorants were confirmed breeding in eucalyptus trees at the Southern California Gas Company property north of the Goleta Slough mouth, with up to 12 nests during May–June; nesting has continued there during most years through 2026, with 11 nests in 2009 and 13 nests in 2011 (Capitolo et al. 2012), 37 in 2012, 26 nests with nestlings in 2014, 24 nests with incubating/brooding adults in 2015, just 2 successful nests in 2016, 32 nests with adults tending (25 with nestlings) in 2018, 26 occupied nests 19 June 2019, 12 nests in both 2024 and 2025, and 8+ nests in 2026. In addition, yet another (albeit ephemeral) breeding site was discovered when a single active (but ultimately unsuccessful) nest was found in a dead eucalyptus at the UCSB Lagoon 3 April–3 July 2002, but not subsequently. And in 2022, 4 active nests were discovered at Devereux Slough between 9 June-20 August 2022. Nesting has continued there annually through 2026, with 8 nests in 2024 and 6 nests in 2025.

In District I, this species occurs on the larger reservoirs, including Lake Cachuma and Twitchell and Gibraltar Reservoirs, where it is a fairly common to common winter visitor and uncommon migrant. High counts at Lake Cachuma before the mid-1990s were of up to 180 birds (2 February 1988), with more recent totals of up to 309 (27 December 2001) on Cachuma CBCs. A steady decline at the lake since that time has resulted in some very low CBC totals (e.g., 20 in 2013 and 17 in 2015). A small number of individuals have over-summered on Lake Cachuma during most years; 60 there 29 July 1992 is a very high count for that season. Elsewhere, a high of 21 were at Gibraltar Reservoir 14 December 2011, and 4 summer birds were there 9 July 2010; 12 were at Jameson Lake 8 November 2009, and a summer bird was present 25 July 2019. Nesting was documented on the San Luis Obispo County side of Twitchell Reservoir beginning in circa 2000, with 30 active nests counted on 31 May 2011. This species is also found rarely elsewhere in District I along the Santa Ynez River and at various smaller reservoirs and ponds, with a high count of 12 at a Santa Maria Mesa Road pond 30 January 2019.

In District M, there are several spring records of migrants flying overhead, including 1 getting slightly late at Figueroa Mountain 12 May 2012. In addition, 1 was seen flying near Madulce Peak 6 February 1984. In fall, a flock of 10 were flying west to east over the foothills at Aliso Canyon Road, Sierra Madre, 18 November 2019.

In District V, singles were in New Cuyama 15 November 2018, 5 March 2020, 6–9 November 2020, and 3 May 2025; and singles were in Ventucopa/Quatal Canyon 27–30 August 2019, 18 September 2020, and 30 August 2021. In winter, singles were seen near New Cuyama 2 January–15 February 2021 and another was standing in a farm field south of Cuyama 21 January 2023.

An individual banded in Washington on 27 June 1981 was recovered in Santa Barbara County 15 November 1981.

Neotropic Cormorant (*Nannopterum brasilianum*)
Casual visitor in District C.

An immature was present at several sites in Goleta (i.e., Devereux Slough, UCSB Lagoon, Goleta Beach Park) from 31 May–30 September 2019 (ph. SBMNH); another was there (and also including Lake Los Carneros) from 20 March–30 May 2020 (ph. SBMNH); singles (different?) were at Devereux Slough 3 July 2020 (ph. SBMNH) and 16 August 2020 (ph. SBMNH); up to 2 adults were at Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 4–8 August 2020 (ph. SBMNH) and 1 was there 22 June–9 August 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and then moved to Devereux Slough through 30 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH); and 1 was at vic. Devereux Slough and Goleta Beach Park 23 July–23 August 2026.

IBISES (THRESKIORNITHIDAE)

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*)
Accidental.

An adult was present at "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 23 September–5 October 2012 (ph. SBMNH).

[Glossy Ibis (*Eudocimus falcinellus*)
Accidental.

An adult was at Goleta Slough from 3–6 May 2024 (ph. SBMNH). This record was not accepted by the California Rare Birds Committee.

An individual showing characters of a hybrid Glossy (*P. falcinellus*) X White-faced Ibis was described at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 May 2004.]

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*)
Uncommon to rare but regular, and increasing, transient in District C; rare in winter and summer. Formerly nested locally. Very rare in Districts I and V.

During much of the 1900s, the White-faced Ibis declined throughout Southern California as a result of the loss of much of its preferred habitat: freshwater marshes, sloughs, and reed-lined lakes and ponds. Four specimens from vic. Santa Barbara come from 28 April 1863 (*MVZ) and 6 May 1919 (*WFVZ). Early in the 1900s, Dawson saw it regularly and in numbers around Santa Barbara. Willett, however, in 1933, called the species "rather rare" in Santa Barbara County. A small number were known to nest in the formerly more extensive marshes in the Goleta area (such as in "Campbell Marsh" just north of Devereux Slough) into the 1930s or 1940s (W. G. Abbott pers. comm.). Rett (fieldnotes), however, after seeing 1 in Goleta from 1–8 August 1939, noted that "the last time I saw an ibis here was ten years ago." But beginning in the 1980s there has been a marked increase in the overall White-faced Ibis population throughout the West, and records in Santa Barbara County have increased as well, most notably since the late 1990s.

Between the 1950s and mid-1990s, most records involved single individuals or very small flocks (up to 7 individuals) between early September and late November. The earliest were 21 August 1953 Santa Barbara and 22 August 1992 Santa Ynez River mouth. Between the early 1970s and 1994, there were some 39 records of fall transients (involving a total of 131 individuals). The largest counts were of up to 19 near Santa Maria 11 September–19 October 1980, 22 there 7–8 October 1988, 13 over Goleta and then at Laguna Blanca 7 September 1993, and 14 in Lompoc and then west of Buellton 22 September 1993. Three additional individuals occurred between mid-December and early January but not thereafter: Goleta 30 December 1967, Santa Barbara 11 November 1978–10 January 1979, and near Santa Maria 18 December

1988. Two were in Goleta 15–20 February 1984. The only individuals known to have remained all winter were in Goleta October 1977–March 1978 and at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 December 1988–3 February 1989. One was at the latter locality 8 February 1994. The only spring records during these years were from Goleta 19–20 April 1980, 23 in Goleta 13 April 1983 (the highest count), Goleta 18 May 1988, 9 near Santa Maria 20–23 May 1988, and Santa Barbara 3–7 June 1992. The only report of birds clearly summering locally was of up to 3 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 18 May–21 September 1968. The only other summer records between the late 1940s and 1994 were of 1 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh in June 1946, 2 on north Vandenberg SFB 10–29 July 1990, 1 at Goleta Slough 28 July 1993 (perhaps an early fall migrant), and 1 in Goleta 2 July 1994.

Between 1995–2026, the frequency at which this species occurred in District C increased substantially. It occurred individually and in small flocks up to several times annually each spring (mid-March–May) and autumn (August–November). One near Guadalupe 6 March 2021 was probably an early spring migrant. Spring and fall maxima include— (North Coast spring:) 20 over Santa Maria 16 May 2013 and up to 22 near Santa Maria 30 April–11 May 2019; (North Coast fall:) up to 28 at the Santa Maria River mouth and in the nearby Guadalupe area 10–29 September 2012; 38, 33, and 43 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 20 September 2014, 11 September 2016, and 27 September 2022, respectively; and 32 near Guadalupe 5 October 2017; (South Coast spring:) 38 over Goleta 3 May 2011, 38 over Goleta 1 May 2013, 52 off Refugio State Beach 24 May 2019, 50 over Santa Barbara 10 April 2020, 45 at Goleta Slough 13 April 2020, and 52 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 25 April 2020; and (South Coast fall:) 32 over Carpinteria 27 August 2015, 40 at Goleta Slough 13 August 2019, 46 at Goleta Slough 15–26 August 2024, as well as the summer records below. During winter (December–February), there were some 51 records involving ca. 232 individuals to 2025 (high counts: 19 near Guadalupe 8 December 2006, 25 at the Santa Maria River mouth 2 January 2015, 15 over Goleta 31 December 2016, 16 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 5 February 2019, 21 near Santa Maria 29 December 2025). In summer (June–July), there were 64 records involving 168 birds to 2026, plus a flock of 54 in Goleta 24 July 2006 (probably early fall migrants)—the largest concentration for the county.

An independent juvenile at Goleta Slough 1 June 2005 was seemingly early for such an age well away from known breeding areas.

Three individuals seen flying 3 mi (5 km) off Goleta 11 September 1981, 1 bird south of Santa Cruz Island 16 October 2005, 1 observed ca. 14 mi (22 km) SW of Point Arguello 7 September 2016, 1 seen S of Santa Cruz Island 5 October 2019, and a flock of 8 at Rodriguez Dome 6 September 2023 were unusual offshore records.

In District I, the relatively few records are of up to 2 at Lake Cachuma 1–18 November 1991, with 1 remaining through 17 February 1992, 1 near Buellton 9 May 1992, 1 at Lake Cachuma 3 November 1992, 15 near Los Alamos 23 October 1996, and then at least 29 records (involving ca. 160+ individuals) since 1998 between 14 August and 3 June, with highs of 20 at Lake Cachuma 16 September 2017 and 34 there 16 September 2022. One at Jameson Lake 2 April 2018 was at a slightly more unusual site. In mid-summer, up to 2 were at Lake Cachuma from 24 June–6 July 2020 and up to 4 were along the Santa Ynez River near Solvang 17 June–7 July 2025.

In District V, 6 were near Cuyama 12 May 2010, 2 were there 15 June 2011, 1 was present 20 July 2012, and up to 29 were near New Cuyama 17 September–1 October 2015. With the construction of a new sewage treatment pond in New Cuyama in 2017, that site has hosted more than 20 records between 15 March (2026) and 24 October (2019), with a high count of 20 on 3 September 2020. A few additional records are from elsewhere in the valley, including 6 birds near Ventucopa 13 November 2022 and 4 at the Caliente Ranch Wetland 19 April 2025. Winter records are from New Cuyama 17 February 2019 and 4 December 2022.

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*)
Casual late-summer and fall visitor to the South Coast.

The two county records are 2 in Goleta Slough area 30 July–14 September 1973 (ph. SBMNH) and 1 at Devereux Slough 12 September–5 October 1977 (ph. CBRC 2007, SBMNH).

PELICANS (PELECANIDAE)

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)
Rare transient and winter visitor in Districts C and, especially, I. Has become fairly regular at Lake Cachuma. Very rare in summer.

American White Pelicans frequent lakes, reservoirs, and sloughs. Since the early 1990s, they have become somewhat regular at Lake Cachuma, with a further increase county-wide beginning around late 2001. Early arrival dates in late summer and early autumn are somewhat difficult to determine because of the irregular summer presence of presumed non-breeders and failed breeders (e.g., particularly at the Santa Maria River mouth, and which have arrived as early as late June; see below). Certainly, numbers may begin to build starting in early or mid- August.

Cachuma CBCs have recorded up to 41 birds (26 December 2003); in addition, other totals there of more than 40 individuals include 47 tallied 17 December 2004, numbers built up to 60 on 10 November 2005, 75 were present ca. 28 December 2006, 64+ were there 20 October–12 November 2016 (high count of 123 on 20 October), and a record 134 were tallied 14 January 2017. Earlier representative maxima include 12 on 21 April 1956, 20 on 3 December 1988, up to 21 from 1 December 1991–10 February 1992, and up to 30 from 8 November 1993–21+ February 1994. Elsewhere in District I, 4 were on Twitchell Reservoir 12 December 1995 and high counts of 52 and 19 were there 11 August 2012 and 26 November 2017, respectively; among the records from Gibraltar Reservoir were highs of "a few dozen" present 22 November 2016 and 86–90 tallied from 18–31 December 2016, as well as 23 there 1 January 2022; 9 were at Jameson Lake 10 December 2020; and there are a small number of records involving fewer than 10 individuals from scattered sites elsewhere since 2012, mostly involving fly-overs, and with a high of 23 near Santa Ynez 7 November 2016. Most birds depart Cachuma during February and March; spring records after mid-April include 2 on 24 April and 4 on 20 May 2004, and 1 there 23 May 2010. The only inland summer records from June–July are of 1 at Lake Cachuma 16 July 2002, up to 4 there 20 June–10 July 2004, 1 on 4 June 2016, up to 5 seen 10–29+ July 2016, and 1 on 9 July 2022. Fall migrants may begin arriving by the end of July or early August.

Along the South Coast, the preferred sites are Laguna Blanca and the Bird Refuge in Santa Barbara. Most records are for late fall and winter. This species may arrive by early October (e.g., 3 October 2016 Carpinteria (20)) exceptionally in late August and September (i.e., 28–30 August 1993 Santa Barbara, 19 September 1934 Goleta, and the 27+ September 1980 record below). The maximum counts are 39 in Santa Barbara 2 January 1977, 103 flying from Goleta to Carpinteria 2 December 1985, and 76 over Goleta 26 October 2002. Wintering birds have lingered into March and April, and probable spring migrants have occurred February–early May, casually to late May (e.g., 28 May 2021 Carpinteria (3), 29 May 2022 Goleta). There is only one May record prior to the 1990s: 12–26 May 1970 Santa Barbara. Two individuals remained to over-summer: 1 in Goleta 20 November 1978–21 October 1979 and a tame bird which frequented the Santa Barbara Harbor area for almost two years (27 September 1980–May 1982) and was seen flying just offshore in Santa Barbara and Goleta with Brown Pelicans on several occasions. The only other summer-season records along the South Coast are Santa Barbara 18 July 1998, Goleta 30 July 2015, 4 in Goleta 1–2 July 2016, 3 in Goleta 25 July 2021, 2 there 4 June 2022, and 1 on 11 July 2022, and 1 in Santa Barbara 8 August 2022.

All of the many North Coast records date from 1986+, mostly between August and late May (i.e., 24 May 2013 Santa Maria River mouth (8), with 1 lingering to end of month). The maximum counts include 40 at the Santa Maria River mouth 23 December 2012, 40–51 birds there 6–22 August 2020, and 54 there 1 January 2026; and 40–67 at Jim May Park, Santa Maria, 24–25 November 2018. In summer, there are now 14 records, all since 2002, a number of which involved long-staying individuals or small flocks, and which include maxima of 23 at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 June 2009, 27 there 27 June 2012, and 45 present 16 June 2016, as well as numbers from June-early August 2022 peaking at 47 birds on 9 July at Jim May Park.

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Common year-round visitor along the coast, less common in late winter and early spring. (In Southern California, nests commonly on several Channel Islands. Many individuals occurring in Santa Barbara County nest in Mexico.) Very rare visitor to District I and casual in District M.

Brown Pelicans frequent open nearshore waters and protected bays and harbors. Numbers along the mainland coast build rapidly beginning in late May and early June, arriving earlier in years when there are widespread breeding failures. Brown Pelicans scatter along the entire coast; larger numbers regularly congregate at a number of resting sites, especially at the Santa Maria River mouth, Purisima Point, and the Santa Barbara Harbor. The following high counts are indicative of the preferred roosting sites and of the increase in the overall pelican population during the past several decades. During the 1980s and early 1990s, highs included 1200 at the Santa Maria River mouth 27 July 1985, 500 there 2 July 1981, 350 there 24 July 1980, 350 at Point Sal 2 July 1981, 410 at Purisima Point 16 August 1995, and 300 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 18 August 1987. Since 2000, maxima include 1500+ Santa Barbara Harbor 5 March 2001, 4000 there 20 November 2008 and 3500 on 3 January 2009, and a total of 4958 birds on the Santa Barbara CBC 3 January 2009 (some duplication likely). Numbers recorded on the two North Coast CBCs are much lower and are highly variable from year to year, with the maxima of 660 birds (17 December 2006) on La Purisima and 552 individuals (27 December 2009) on Santa Maria–Guadalupe. Some 550 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5 December 2024. At other seasons, highs were of ca. 2000 at vic. Santa Maria River mouth 29 August 2008 and 800 there 12 October 2018.

Small numbers have been seen up to 27 mi (43 km) west of the North Coast and seaward of the Channel Islands; a bird ca. 52 mi (83 km) W of Point Arguello 20 January 2001, another in 2000-fathom (ca. 12,000-foot) water west of Point Conception 15 November 2009, a flock of 40 near the shelf edge ca. 38 mi (61 km) SW of San Miguel Island 23 July 2011, 1 near there 21 July 2012, singles ca. 41 mi (65 km) SW of Point Arguello and 35 mi (55 km) W of San Miguel Island 26 October 2012, and 1 south of Rodriguez Dome 6 September 2023 were farther offshore than usual. They occur “inland” only as far as river and slough mouths and on lagoons just inside the beach. One flying east over the foothills in Goleta 24 July 1992 and another at the Guadalupe sewage treatment ponds 16 July 2006 were farther inland than normal; even more exceptional were individuals at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 28 February 2012, at Blosser X Canal in Santa Maria 11 July 2012, over southeastern Santa Maria 25 July 2021, some 9, 11, and 15 mi (14, 18, and 24 km) from the coast, respectively, and an unhealthy bird at the A Street ponds 11 May 2024. In May 2022, a widespread, major movement of birds into Southern California included a substantial number of stressed and dying individuals, which also resulted in numbers of birds being found at inland sites, such as over 20 birds on the coastal plain in Goleta between 12–21 May, and see below.

Although this species can be considered common year-round, numbers are lower in the late winter and early spring when many birds are at breeding sites on the Channel Islands and in Mexico. Between the 1950s and early 1970s, Brown Pelican numbers were reduced locally; low nesting success resulted from eggshell thinning because of pesticide contamination. Up to 160 individuals were nesting on Scorpion Rock at Santa Cruz Island in 1972, 1974, and 1975. The breeding population on the Channel Islands was only 76 pairs in 1977 but had increased to 2516

birds on Anacapa Island in 1979 (Sowls et al. 1980). In 1986, there were 5908 pairs on Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands. In 1991, ca. 10,680 breeding birds were on Anacapa Island (Carter et al. 1992). Numbers have continued to increase since that time. From 1886–1939, Brown Pelicans bred regularly on Prince Islet, San Miguel Island (Carter et al. 1992); they were there also in the early 1960s; and they recolonized that site in 2006 only, with 102 nests in May, but most abandoned in June (Capitolo et al. 2008).

Brown Pelican is a very rare visitor to Lake Cachuma in District I, with all 10 records since 2000: 16 September 2000; mostly-devoured carcass 17 November 2001; 24 May 2002 (2); 26 June 2004; 7 April, 2 June, and 20–22 July (when found dead) 2006; 29 April 2007; 7–14 September 2008; and up to 3 from 16 May–9 June 2022. Even more unusual was a bird seen flying along Highway 246 near Buellton 15 September 2009, 2 birds at Jameson Lake on 22 May 2022 (associated with the May 2022 event), and an immature standing in a pasture in Santa Ynez 1 May 2026.

Also associated with the May 2022 event were 2 birds over Painted Cave in the Santa Ynez Mountains on 14 May 2022.

One bird at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 July 2019 had been banded as a second-year near San Francisco 10 years earlier in September 2009.

HERONS (ARDEIDAE)

Least Bittern (*Botaurus exilis*)

Rare to very rare visitor and resident in District C, though many individuals are undoubtedly overlooked. Exact status unclear because of secretive habits. Most reports are for the South Coast. Several definite nesting records. Casual visitor offshore and in District I.

Least Bitterns are very secretive and frequent dense stands of bulrushes and cattails surrounding freshwater lakes and marshes. Most of the records come from Punchbowl Pond, Lake Canyon, and the Waterfowl Management Ponds on north Vandenberg SFB, Lake Los Carneros, Laguna Blanca (formerly), and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. High single-site counts are of up to 5 individuals. The species is probably a more regular visitor than the relatively small number of records indicates.

South Coast records in spring include: Goleta 3 May 1912, Santa Barbara and Goleta 5 May 1913, and Goleta 29 May 1915 (Dawson 1912, 1916b); Devereux Slough 21 May 1935 (Rett fieldnotes); Goleta 1 June 1975; Goleta 15 May 1979 (found standing in a parking lot, later died; ph. and *SBMNH); and then perhaps 1–4 birds during many springs and summers between 1981 and circa 2000 (including 1 found dead in Santa Barbara 31 May 1983 (*SBMNH)), followed by a decline in the early 2000s and no birds between 2013–2017. See below. Fall records include: Santa Barbara 23–26 September 1963, Santa Barbara late August 1966, Goleta 26–27 October 1977, Goleta 4 November 1979, and reports of 1–2 birds most autumns from 1981 through the early 2000s. Since then, they have been very rare, with early individuals at Lake Los Carneros 27 July+ 2024 and at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 9 August 2020 and 31 July 2025. In addition, there is an undated record of an individual collected vic. Santa Barbara 1872–1873 (Cooper 1887).

Dawson (1923) wrote that the Least Bittern “undoubtedly breeds at Santa Barbara” but he cites no definite evidence. One summered at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 23 June–10 October 1980. Up to 2 were there 28 April–late September+ 1981 and nesting was confirmed in early September when a juvenile was seen being fed by an adult. Up to 2 individuals were again present through summer 1982. In 1992, up to 4 were at Lake Los Carneros 13 June–26 October. In 1994, up to 3 were present from April–August. An adult with 2 young were there April+ 1995, and 1 bird was found dead 13 June (*SBMNH). Two pairs and an additional male were

present during June–July 1996, with one of the pairs accompanied by 2 fledged young on 5 July. Breeding was confirmed there again in 1997. Since then, there were summer records at Lake Los Carneros many years until about 2012, then again April–October 2018, 2019, June–July 2020, and on 16 June 2021; and at Goleta Slough 24 May–10 August 2019 and two juveniles together there 14 July 2024.

Least Bitterns are rare to very rare in winter. First recorded at that season in Goleta 30 January 1980 and at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge through 16 December 1981, they were then found once or twice most winters (with a high count of 4 individuals during winter 1994–1995) through circa 2000—particularly at Lake Los Carneros, at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, and formerly at Laguna Blanca—then rarer thereafter and missed most years since 2012.

Along the North Coast, Least Bitterns are rare. Most reports involved single birds between 1982 and circa 2000, during the same period of higher abundance as along the South Coast, between 26 April and 28 June, at several Vandenberg SFB lakes, such as those in Lake Canyon, the Waterfowl Management Ponds, and, especially, at Punchbowl Pond; a high count of up to 3 individuals was at Punchbowl Pond during early June 1996. Few records after 2000. In addition, a desiccated specimen was found at the Santa Maria River mouth 27 June 1985 (*UCSB), and single birds were along the Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc 7 May 1990 and near the Santa Ynez River mouth early June 1996, 20 August 2006, and 28 May 2011. This species may have been a rare but regular summer resident in some of these areas, but its current status is uncertain. Its late-fall and winter status there has always been poorly known; 2 were at "Triangle Pond" along San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB, 9 March 1982, 1 was at Lake Canyon on 29 March 1997, and 1 was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 18 February 2009.

Most unexpected were single birds offshore: on Platform Irene, about 7 mi (11 km) off south Vandenberg SFB between Point Arguello and Point Conception, 26 May 1999 (ph. SBMNH) and another on nearby Platform Hermosa, 6.8 mi (11 km) offshore, 6 October 2010 (*SBMNH).

There are two records in District I: near Twitchell Reservoir 9 May 1998 and 2 at Lake Cachuma 12 August 1999.

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)

Rare to very rare transient and winter visitor in District C; very rare inland. Declining in numbers. Casual in summer; one definite nesting record.

American Bitterns have decreased throughout the county and elsewhere because of the loss of extensive freshwater stands of bulrush and cattails and saltwater marshes. The sites this species still frequents from time to time include several locales in the Santa Maria Valley near Santa Maria and Guadalupe, San Antonio Creek and several ponds on Vandenberg SFB (all at least formerly), vic. Santa Ynez River mouth, Lake Los Carneros, Lauro Reservoir, and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Almost all records at a given site involve just 1 or 2 birds; up to 3 were at ponds on north Vandenberg SFB during winter 1999–2000 and 4 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5 December 2008.

Migrants normally begin to arrive in September (earliest dates: 19 August 1998, 20 August 2005, and 21 August 1996 all in Goleta, and 20 August 2011 Santa Maria River mouth). One in Goleta 25 July–autumn 1994 and 1 at Lake Los Carneros 11 August 2019 (ph. SBMNH) were possibly early migrants. Most Santa Barbara CBCs record only 1 or 2 birds, although 8 were reported on the CBC on 19 December 1971. Individuals often remain through late April, with the latest records 13 May 2000 and 13 May 2021 Goleta, 14 May 1981 Santa Ynez River mouth, 15 May 1983 Mod Pond (formerly Mod III Lake), Vandenberg SFB, 15 May 1999 Santa Barbara, and 18 May 1989 Goleta. An interesting record of a presumed migrant was of a bird flying over the Montecito foothills 21 March 2007. Inland, a presumed spring migrant was at Lake Cachuma 7 April 2022.

There are few summer records. A pair definitely nested at Lake Los Carneros during 1978, with a fledgling seen 18 May (ph. SBMNH); a pair was again present there during the same period in 1980, but no definite evidence of nesting was found. One was in Orcutt 26 June 2010

and another was at Goleta Slough 25 May–3 June 2019. In District I, single individuals were along the upper Santa Ynez River above Gibraltar Reservoir 19 June 1989 and 24 June 1990, 1 was vocalizing along the Santa Ynez River west of Buellton 14–21 July 1991, and 1 was at Lake Cachuma 6 August 1997 (possibly an early migrant).

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)

Very rare visitor in District C.

Little Blue Herons frequent sloughs and river mouths. Most records have involved adults. The eight spring sightings are: Goleta Slough 20–22 May 1965, mouth of Goleta Slough 14–21 May 1977 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 29 April 1978, Santa Ynez River mouth 7 May 1978, Goleta 10–29 May 1978 (ph. SBMNH), (immature) Goleta 15 April–10 June 1979 (ph. SBMNH), Santa Barbara 6 May 1981 which then moved to Goleta 7–14 May 1981 (ph. SBMNH), and Carpinteria Salt Marsh 13 May–4 June 2026. In summer, 1 remained at Carpinteria Salt Marsh from 22 May–4 August 1985, 1 was there 11 June 1997, up to 2 were present 14–24 June 1998, and 1 was seen 9–11 June 2002 (ph. SBMNH); and 1 was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 6–8 June 2015 (ph. SBMNH). There are nine late-summer and fall records: 2 at the mouth of Goleta Slough (Goleta Beach Park) 21 September 1965, Goleta 28 August–9 September 1974, Santa Ynez River mouth 23 July 1980, (immature) Devereux Slough 17 August–16 September 1986, (immature) Santa Ynez River mouth 22 August 1987, Goleta 3 August 1989, Carpinteria 24–25 August 1992, Goleta 13 July–5 August 2005, Santa Ynez River mouth 6 September 2015, and Goleta 3–15 August and again 5 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH). An immature at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 11 July 2004–18 May 2005 (ph. SBMNH) established the first record of a wintering bird, and this was followed by a long-staying bird at Goleta Beach Park and vic. from 16 February–13 November 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)

Casual visitor in District C.

Seven records from along the South Coast: Goleta Slough 9–10 November 1963; Devereux Slough 12 October 1975; another there 2 June 1977 (ph. SBMNH); over Santa Barbara 31 August 1978; Goleta Beach Park and sewage treatment plant 30 April 1981 (ph. SBMNH) and then at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 1 May 1981; and vic. Goleta Beach Park 12–21 May 2002 and 27 July–2 August 2024. One along the North Coast at the Santa Ynez River mouth 5–13 May 1987 was especially far north.

Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*)

Very rare visitor, mostly in summer and early autumn, in District C; single spring and winter records. Two records in District I.

The first record for Santa Barbara County was of an immature in the Goleta/Ellwood area 14 July–11 September 2001 (ph. SBMNH). Additional summer and early-autumn records accumulated quickly: Carpinteria Salt Marsh 4 July–5 August 2006 (ph. SBMNH) (and seen before and after in Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties); 1 that moved about Goleta/Santa Barbara area 7–14 July then relocated to Carpinteria Salt Marsh 17 July–10 August 2007 (ph. *NAB* 61:640, SBMNH); and 3 different individuals in 2008 mostly at vic. Goleta Beach Park (also Devereux Slough) 16 July–15 September (ph. *NAB* 62:617, SBMNH), another at Devereux Slough 5 August which joined the other bird for a few hours, and 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 July–19 September (ph. SBMNH; first record for North Coast). Since then, this species has been recorded almost annually in District C between mid-June (18 June 2015 Carpinteria Salt Marsh (ph. SBMNH)) and mid-October (through 18 October 2013 Santa Ynez River mouth (ph. SBMNH)), with approximately equal numbers between the South Coast and North Coast and totaling approximately 37 birds (some duplication likely). In addition, a uniquely-marked

individual was in Goleta (Devereux Slough) 2–3 July, then in Santa Barbara (Mission Creek outflow) 3 July, and then inland at Lake Cachuma (!) on 21 July 2019 (ph. SBMNH). A late-lingering bird was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 13 October–5 November 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

The only winter record is of 1 at Devereux Slough 7 January 2014 (ph. SBMNH).

The only spring record is of an adult at Devereux Slough 23 April-1 May 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Extraordinary was 1 in District I at Lake Cachuma 25 July–17 August 2010 (ph. SBMNH) and the 2019 bird, above.

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

Common transient and winter visitor along the South Coast, uncommon to fairly common in summer. Several nesting records. Uncommon and local along the North Coast and in District I. Very rare migrant and casual winter visitor in District V.

Snowy Egrets frequent most aquatic habitats in District C, including lakes, ponds, lagoons, reservoirs, sloughs, river mouths, and even harbors, rocky reefs (e.g., Purisima Point), and kelp-beds just offshore. They are rather common from Goleta to Carpinteria, August–May, but are uncommon elsewhere in District C. Maxima include up to 103 (on 30 December 1978) on the Santa Barbara CBCs (some duplication likely, however), 88 in Goleta Slough 22 September 1983, 85–99 there 13–25 August 2000, 92 there 3 September 2005, 85 at Devereux Slough 13–17 August 2007, 108–110 at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 20–21 October 2017, 95 at the UCSB Lagoon 28 November 2025, 118 at Goleta Slough 31 July 2026, and see below. More typical single-site counts do not exceed 40 individuals. The only regular locality for this species on the North Coast is the Santa Ynez River mouth area, where from 5 to 10 individuals usually can be seen (high counts: 16 birds on 19 December 2002, 30 birds on 10 September 2014). The species is very uncommon in the Santa Maria Valley (high 15 at the Santa Maria River mouth 29 July 2025). Returning birds begin appearing in mid- or late July, and the following records probably are of fall migrants: Purisima Point 10 July 1980 and the Santa Maria River mouth 19 July 1980. By late July, moderate numbers may again be present (e.g., 55 at Devereux Slough 26 July 2007, 114 in Goleta Slough 26 July 2026). Several late-July records from Lake Cachuma probably involved early arrivals as well. As numbers are reduced in late spring and early summer, this species is uncommon to fairly common along the South Coast, with rare concentrations of up to 40 birds noted. North of Goleta, small numbers (single digits) of non-breeders summer at the Santa Ynez River mouth, with a high of 10 on 19 July 2026 (possibly early fall arrivals).

Inland, Snowy Egrets occur regularly in small numbers only at Lake Cachuma, along nearby stretches of the Santa Ynez River, and possibly at Twitchell Reservoir; they are rare elsewhere in District I (e.g., Los Alamos, near Santa Ynez, Sedgwick Reserve, Solvang, Alisal Ranch, Jameson Lake). There are 10 spring records for District V: 1 near New Cuyama 20 April 2012 and nine additional records (involving 15 individuals) since 2018 between 1 April (2021) and 12 May (2019). The only fall records are of single birds at New Cuyama 27 September 2017 and 30 October 2019. And there is one winter record from the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond on 26 January 2025.

Breeding birds at Carpinteria Salt Marsh in 1966 (number of pairs unknown) was the only documented nesting record for the county until a total of 4 nests (2 failed) and 3 nestlings, associated with a night heron colony, were discovered at Cabrillo X Castillo Streets near the Santa Barbara Harbor 30 June–6+ July 2011. (This followed the presence of a single prospecting adult during June 2010.) In 2012, a total of 6 nests were present between 10 May–29+ July, producing some 13 young; in 2013, a total of 12 nests was tallied during late May–June and which produced 30 young; and since then, between 6 and 10 active nests have been found annually, with nestlings still in nests as late as early August 2021.

The status of the Snowy Egret in Santa Barbara County and throughout much of California and elsewhere in the United Sates has changed considerably over the past 100+ years. In the

early 1900s, Great and Snowy Egrets were hunted severely for their breeding plumes. Willett (1933) stated that it was a common winter visitant at Santa Barbara in 1885 but that it became very rare with no additional records until 2–4 May 1912 at Carpinteria (Dawson 1912). The first record of this species on a Santa Barbara CBC (begun in 1911) was not made until 1935, when 2 were seen in the Santa Barbara area 20 December. Single individuals were noted by Bartholomew (1940) at Gibraltar Reservoir on 7 September 1937 and at Mono Creek on 14 May 1939.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*)

A recent, rare-but-regular visitor along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast. One record in District V.

One sub-adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron roosting along Tecolote Creek, western Goleta, 29 January–25 March 2010 (ph. SBMNH) was a somewhat overdue first county record. Different immatures were found at Refugio State Beach 9–20 September 2014 (ph. SBMNH), at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 27 September–13 October 2014 (ph. SBMNH), and at the Santa Barbara Harbor 23 July 2015 (ph. SBMNH). This was followed by the presence of as many as 5 immatures in Carpinteria between 1 August–14 November 2015 (peak count: 22 August–16 October; ph. SBMNH); up to 3 birds at Carpinteria Salt Marsh and vic. 23–30 April+ 2016, increasing to 5 on 28 August, 6 on 18 December (including the county's first-ever adult), and then a high of 7 from 1 January–18 February 2017 (ph. SBMNH), declining thereafter, with the last individual remaining 3 April; 1 there 17 July 2017 increasing to up to 6 present from 16 August through November, up to 4 during December and up to 3 into February, decreasing to just 1 bird through 1 April 2018 (ph. SBMNH) but then a different bird 1 April–5 May 2018. Since 2018, this species has become an annual, expected visitor in small numbers in Carpinteria between mid-July (19 July 2020) and late April, with a few records into May (e.g., through 31 May 2025, 23 May 2026). The high count is of up to 17 between 3 August–30 November 2025 and up to 22 during August 2026. One unseasonal bird was present 30 May–21 July 2023 and up to 5 were there 4 June–18 July 2026. Also, from 2018+, birds were found along the South Coast west of Carpinteria. In 2018, Goleta Beach Park 2–15 August (ph. SBMNH); and annually thereafter, 2019–2026 (ph. SBMNH), between fall-spring (August–May) of 1 to 7 birds, and in summer of up to 4 birds from 2022–2026. From 2018–2024, other sites with records, including in summer, from east to west were: Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 25 August–21 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH) joined by another 15–21 September, 12 October 2018, 30 October 2023, and 20 August 2024; vic. Santa Barbara Harbor 11 August-16 October 2022 (up to 2), 18 May 2023, 18 August 2023, and 12 May 2024; UCSB Lagoon 27–28 January 2019 (ph. SBMNH) and up to 3 there 28 August–4 September 2023; Isla Vista 13–17 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH) and 6 July 2024; vic. Devereux Slough 7 July–19 August 2019 (up to 2, ph. SBMNH), 23 August–24 September 2021, 9–27 April 2022, 22–23 June 2022, 31 December 2022, 24–25 April 2023, up to 4 between 30 July 2023–19 January 2024, 1–2 June 2024, and 8 July-31 August 2024; Refugio State Beach 14 August–9 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH), joined by a second 16–17 August, 9–27 August 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and 23 August-21 October 2022; and Gaviota State Park 1–14 September 2023. From 2025+, additional records accrued, too many to list here. This surge in records is likely the result of successful nesting by multiple pairs at Point Mugu, Ventura County.

Single birds were slightly inland at "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 4 May 2023 and at Lake Los Carneros 16 May 2024.

The sole record for the North Coast was established by an immature at the Santa Ynez River mouth 17 August-19 September 2022.

Exceptional was a juvenile bird in District V at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 22 July 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Common, but rather local, permanent resident along the South Coast; numbers are augmented somewhat in winter. Uncommon and local along the North Coast and in District I, primarily from fall through spring. Very local breeder. Casual in Districts M and V.

Black-crowned Night Herons are somewhat local in distribution; they are common only between Goleta and Carpinteria. They frequent well-vegetated sloughs, reed-lined lakes, ponds, and creeks. For roosting, they frequent clumps of dense trees (particularly eucalyptus) near the larger coastal bodies of water. Frequented sites include: Tecolote Creek mouth, Devereux Slough, Lake Los Carneros, UCSB Lagoon, Goleta Slough, and Goleta Beach Park in Goleta; Andrée Clark Bird Refuge; and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. They also occur regularly at the Santa Barbara Harbor, where they frequent boat docks, piers, and barges. Single-site, non-breeding maxima do not exceed 32 individuals. Streator (1886) noted that this species was "Resident. The most common of all the herons; found in all parts of the city where there are large Cypress trees for them to roost in." One hundred seen by Rett roosting on the ocean bluffs at the present site of the UCSB campus on 3 March 1936 was a high count. The Santa Barbara CBC has recorded as many as 141 individuals (2 January 1983, some duplication likely).

Although this species regularly summers between Goleta and Carpinteria in good numbers and juvenile birds are often seen from June to August, there are only a handful of irregularly occupied nesting sites. Two adults were seen carrying sticks to the islands at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge on 14 June 1981, at least 1 active nest with 2 fledglings was there in late April and early May 1982, a begging juvenile was present 7 June 1986, and several nests and juveniles were there 27 June 1987. Up to 6 nests with nestlings were subsequently discovered on the adjoining Santa Barbara Zoo property in June 1994, and 1 or 2 nests were there during several years between 2001 and 2009. A small colony of birds with as many as 10 nests was discovered near the Santa Barbara Harbor (near Cabrillo X Castillo Streets) in April–June 2003, and it has been active almost annually ever since between March and July, with the number of active nests varying between a low of 8 in May 2020 to a high of 42 nests in May 2014 and 37 in May 2021. Two nestlings there 7 March 2017 were an early nesting. Up to 4 nests were discovered a block away along Bath Street in June 2019 and 2020. Two adults with a chick were at the dune pond west of Devereux Slough 5 July 2000.

Elsewhere, this species is uncommon to rare and occurs largely as a transient and winter visitor. It occurs regularly at the Santa Ynez River mouth, where up to 45 individuals have been seen and where small numbers (i.e., up to 12) have summered regularly. The species was found breeding in Waller Park, Santa Maria, during June 2002 (adults feeding a begging fledgling), in May–June 2005 (1 nest), and in March 2006 (2 nests). Inland, it is uncommon (rare but regular in summer) at Lake Cachuma; 20 there 17 November 1987 is the high count. Cachuma CBCs have recorded only as many as 6 individuals (27 December 2000), and half the counts miss the species altogether. Elsewhere in District I, this species is generally rare at all seasons and occurs only in small numbers.

One near San Marcos Pass 8 July 2006 was a first for District M.

The only records for District V are of single birds near Ventucopa 20 April 2004, near New Cuyama 2 June 2019, and at New Cuyama 18 October 2019.

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor in District C, formerly more numerous; uncommon in District I, very rare in District V, and casual in District M. Uncommon to rare in summer. Probably a rare but regular breeder in Districts C and I.

Green Herons are found at lakes, ponds, reservoirs, sloughs, and along rivers and creeks, and frequent less open areas than other herons. They are less common overall along the North Coast than along the South Coast in winter, but they may be more numerous there (and along rivers in District I) as a summer nester. Numbers are augmented by migrants and winter visitors

beginning as early as late July. Although widespread, this species usually occurs singly or in twos, so that counts are usually low. Perhaps the species is most frequently noted between August and November. The highest counts at one location not involving an active nest are 5 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 4 November 1979 and 10 along Atascadero Creek in Goleta 22 August 1983. The Santa Barbara CBC has recorded as many as 12 individuals (3 January 1998), though more recently counts have been as low as 2 birds in multiple years.

Inland, the Cachuma CBC has recorded only single individuals on three out of eleven counts.

In District M, 1 was at the Camino Romaldo Pond in the Santa Ynez Mountains 6 September 2017.

The only records in District V involve single birds in the Cuyama Valley 7 May 2010 and 30 August 2011, a single bird at Caliente Ranch Wetland 7 May 2010, and nine subsequent spring records since 2015 between 14 April (2020) and 15 May (2015 and 2025) and 28 May (2025).

Small numbers are seen between late spring and mid-summer at widespread locations in Districts C and I. The breeding status of this species, however, is unclear. Definite evidence for local breeding before the mid-1990s includes egg sets (WFVZ) from Buellton in April 1928 and the "Santa Ynez Valley" in May 1938, as well as references to "breeding in Santa Barbara" (Anon. 1921) and "found breeding near Santa Barbara and along the Santa Ynez River" (Willett 1933). Over the following several decades, 2 recently fledged young were at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in 1976 or 1977 and an adult was seen feeding recently fledged young there in July 1981; a nest with young was at Carpinteria Salt Marsh each summer from 1983 through 1986 and perhaps later; and another nest was at Carpinteria State Beach in June 1992; and in District I, a nest with 2 young was found along Mono Creek late May–early June 1990 and a nest was along the Santa Ynez River near Buellton in July 1994. Since that time, confirmed or strongly suggestive nesting has been documented as follows: District C (from southeast to northwest)—bordering Carpinteria Salt Marsh multiple years through at least 2007 and in 2020; Andrée Clark Bird Refuge July 2004 and July 2015; East Beach, Santa Barbara, May 1997; Atascadero Creek area (including Rancho Goleta Mobile Home Park), Goleta, June–July 2001, 2002, 2016, and 2017; Goleta sewage treatment plant July 2005; varying sites on main UCSB campus and Goleta Slough June 1995 and 1996, June 2001, June–July 2002, June 2003, July 2005, and May–July 2006; Lake Los Carneros 2015, 2017, and 2018; off Phelps Road, Goleta, August 1998 and June–July 2015; Devereux Slough and adjacent former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space) in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016; dune pond west of Devereux Slough April–May 1998 and August 2000; vic. Glen Annie Golf Course, Goleta, June 2008 and March 2020; and San Antonio Creek and Barka Slough in July 2013 and June 2024; and District I—Lake Cachuma June 2002, along Santa Ynez River west of Buellton June 2004, and Sedgwick Reserve June 2014, May–June 2016, and June 2024.

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Fairly common transient and winter visitor along the South Coast, August–April; uncommon there in summer, with several pairs found nesting. Very uncommon visitor along the North Coast, where rare in summer. Inland, it is an uncommon year-round visitor at Lake Cachuma, where it possibly breeds; rare elsewhere. Rare in District V and casual in District M.

Great Egrets frequent lagoons, sloughs, and river mouths, and are also seen regularly standing (feeding) on kelp beds just offshore along the South Coast. They are rather uncommon in fields and meadows, where they feed on small mammals. Along the South Coast, Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 76 individuals (5 January 2008), although some duplication is possible. Concentrations of 48 birds at Goleta Slough 3 September 2005, 82 at Devereux Slough 5 October 2005, and 47 birds at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 11 November 2017 were large for single sites. Along the North Coast, they occur in small numbers at a number

of locations but regularly only at the Santa Ynez River mouth, where sometimes in moderate numbers. Twenty-nine at the former Betteravia sugar ponds near Santa Maria 2 December 1989, 32 at the Santa Maria River mouth 16 February 1990, and 47 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 10 September 2014 were large concentrations for the North Coast. In District I, this species is mostly found in the Lake Cachuma area; high counts there are 15 on both 30 November 1979 and 10 February 1987, 12 on 7 August 1997, and 18 on the Cachuma CBC 30 December 2008. Twelve birds were at Gibraltar Reservoir 18 December 2016. Singles and pairs are seen rarely at widely scattered locales elsewhere in District I at ranch ponds and along the Santa Ynez River.

By late July, moderate numbers of returning birds may have arrived (e.g., 29 in Goleta 31 July 2005, 25 at Devereux Slough 27 July 2007), with 3 at Devereux Slough 21 July 2005 probably early fall arrivals. Spring migrants appear by late March. Five were near Santa Maria 26 March 1986, 1 was at Los Olivos 25 March 1987, and 1 was on Mono Creek 23 April 1991. The species becomes uncommon by early May as wintering birds and transients leave the county; 12 birds at Goleta Slough 11 May 2005 was a high count for that late in spring, and 18 at vic. Goleta Beach Park 13 July 2026 was a high count in summer. Prior to nesting (see below), an average of 1 to 3 non-breeding individuals usually remained in summer (June to mid-July) in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area. It is rare, though increasing, in summer along the North Coast; 18 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 17 July 2022 was a very high count. The first summer record at Lake Cachuma was in 1981; the species now appears there annually at this season, with a high count of 7 birds on 27 July 1994 (probably early fall arrivals). Elsewhere in District I, 2 were near Santa Ynez 24 June 2009 and there are several summer records along the upper Santa Ynez River.

A wayward spring migrant was well offshore ca. 26 mi WNW of Point Arguello 12 April 2024.

One adult in breeding condition standing on a nest in a small Great Blue Heron rookery on the north shore of Lake Cachuma 29 July 1992 represented possible breeding in District I. The first confirmed county breeding occurred in 2002 in District C, when a single nest was discovered in May in eucalyptus within the Great Blue Heron colony in the Goleta Beach Park area, and which subsequently fledged 2 young in July. Nesting has continued at this site most years, March–July, through 2021, with a single active nest there annually through 2006, increasing to 5 nests in 2007, 6 nests in 2014 and 2016, and 7 nests in 2019. Up to 3 nests were discovered at Devereux Slough between May–August 2020 (with 2 late large nestlings on 8 August). Nesting has continued there annually through 2026, with 3 or 4 nests in 2024, 5 or 6 in 2025, and 2 nests in 2026. Back in District I, an active nest with 2 nestlings was discovered at the east end of Lake Cachuma 31 July 2008, with 1–4 adults standing on nest(s) there 10 May–25 July 2009 and 24 April–8 May 2010, and another small "rookery" there 23 May 2021; and an active nest was observed on the San Luis Obispo County side of Twitchell Reservoir 31 May 2011.

In District M, single birds were at a small pond near San Marcos Pass 14 August 2004, occasionally between 26 September–21 October 2004, and on 15 May and 11 August 2010.

One in New Cuyama 10 November–13 December 2006 was the first for District V. Since circa. 2010 this species is proving to be a rare but regular migrant and very rare winter visitor, with most records between early March–mid-May and from late July–mid-November. Five birds at Caliente Ranch Wetland 23 March 2010 and up to 5 in New Cuyama during April 2020 are the high spring counts, whereas 19 birds at New Cuyama 5 November 2019 is the high count in fall. Four present at New Cuyama 24 May 2018 were presumably late spring migrants. In winter, 1 was at New Cuyama 14 January 2017; up to 4 were there and nearby through 7 December 2018; singles were near Ventucopa 27 November–1 December 2018 and 7 December 2019; singles were at New Cuyama 22 December 2020, 25+ February 2021 (early arrival?), 12–17 December 2021, 12 February 2022, 20 February 2023, and 25 January–23 February 2026; and 1 was over Aliso Canyon Road and then at the Caliente Ranch Wetland 25 January 2025; whereas 1 individual clearly over-wintered at New Cuyama 3 December 2019–26 February 2020.

Western Cattle-Egret (*Ardea ibis*)

First recorded in Santa Barbara County in 1967. Became a rare to uncommon transient and winter visitor in District C; very rare there in late spring and casual in summer. Very rare in District I and casual in District V. Since 1990s, substantial declines in numbers.

Western Cattle-Egrets frequent ponds, sloughs, golf courses, and fields and pastures, especially those containing livestock. They were first recorded in 1967 when 2 were in Goleta 8 February–21 April. Soon they became fairly regular in occurrence, although still considered a rare to very uncommon visitor. Fall migrants typically first appeared by early September, and wintering birds and spring migrants departed by early or mid- May. Numbers varied from year to year, the species was rare some years and [formerly] uncommon others, with sizeable flocks of up to 70 individuals seen on a few occasions, years ago. Most records come from the Santa Maria Valley (at least formerly), where usually seen in fields with cattle, and from the Goleta/Santa Barbara area, and occur between late August (see below for earliest arrival dates) and the beginning of May. The maximum winter counts through the early 1990s were: 53 near Santa Maria 23 December 1979, 60 in Santa Barbara 1 March 1983, 70 in Carpinteria 6 December 1992, and 69 at a roost at Laguna Blanca 2 January 1993. Thirty near Santa Maria 26 April 1981 was a high count for so late in the season.

Since the mid-1990s, numbers have declined substantially. Most high counts have not exceeded 20 birds except for 26 in Goleta 6 April 2001 and 22 there 26 September 2002. During some seasons, only several birds have been found in total, county-wide.

Through the mid-1990s, individuals found in late May and June included the following: Santa Barbara 21–24 May 1970, Santa Barbara 23 May 1971, 6–10 in Goleta 2–30 May 1975, 2 Goleta 9–26 May 1977, Goleta 23 June 1982, 3 near Santa Maria 26 May 1985, Santa Barbara 30 June 1994, and 2 Goleta 29 May 1995. In addition, up to 5 remained into late May or early June in the Montecito Country Club/Andrée Clark Bird Refuge area in 1981, 1982, 1985, and 1986; 2 were present through 12 July 1986; and 1 was there 27 June 1987. One was near Santa Maria 19 July 1989. The only record of birds that clearly summered during that period involved 2 in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area April–9 October 1970. Late-summer and early-fall records during this period included: up to 2 Goleta 7–17 August 1971, 5 Goleta 3 August 1978, Goleta 5 August 1993, Santa Barbara 28 July 1994, and seven records (involving 16 individuals) since 1995 from the South Coast between 15 August and 8 September, plus 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 31 July 1996. These records almost certainly pertain to early fall transients.

Since the mid-1990s, unseasonal records include: Late Spring—up to 3 Goleta 4–31 May 2005, 1 near Guadalupe through 24 May 2011, 1 in Goleta Slough 25 May–10 June 2019, and 1 near Devereux Slough 24 May 2021; and Summer—near Guadalupe 22 June 1997, 2 in Goleta 26 June 1998, Carpinteria 19 July 1998, up to 3 in Goleta 5–10 June 1999, up to 5 there 10–16 July 2001, 7 in Santa Barbara 28 July 2002, 2 in Santa Barbara 29 June 2004, up to 3 in Goleta 1–10 June 2005, Goleta 24 April–7 June 2008, Guadalupe 9 June 2008, Goleta 26 June 2011, Santa Ynez River mouth 28 July 2015, Goleta 10 July 2020, Carpinteria 12 June 2023, and 2 at Devereux Slough 16 June 2025. Probable fall migrants have appeared by mid-August (e.g., 17 in Goleta 13 August 2003).

A flock of 6 that landed on a boat ca. 92 mi (150 km) SSW of Point Conception 23 November 1987 was most unusual. A flock of 13 was watched flying in off the ocean at Goleta Point 11 March 2001.

There are only a small number of fall, winter, and spring records from District I at Lake Cachuma and the Santa Ynez Valley, with the largest counts being a flock of 45 near Santa Ynez 11 December 1978, 28 there 19 January 1993, and, more recently, 14 at Lake Cachuma 11 September 2004 and 10 there 1 December 2020.

Two in the Cuyama Valley 1 November 1979, 1 there 9 November 1991, 1 seen at Caliente Ranch Wetland 23 March 2010, and 1 at New Cuyama 18 August 2019 are the only records for District V.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

Fairly common to common permanent resident in Districts C and I. Known to nest at fewer than ten scattered small colonies. Rare in District V and casual in District M.

Great Blue Herons frequent lakes, ponds, reservoirs, sloughs, and river mouths. They are also seen regularly in fields and meadows, where they hunt for small mammals. Small numbers are also seen standing on kelp beds just offshore along the South Coast. They are fairly common year-round along the South Coast and locally in District I, primarily along almost the entire stretch of the Santa Ynez River. Overall, they are uncommon and more local along the North Coast; the Santa Ynez River mouth and Guadalupe area are the favored localities. Numbers are augmented slightly in fall and winter by migrants between late June and late April. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 81 individuals (30 December 1967), although the more recent high is 45 on 4 January 2020 (some duplication likely); totals on the Cachuma CBC are of up to 49 birds (29 December 1999), with 39 that date at Lake Cachuma alone, although some recent counts there have dropped to single digits.

Small numbers of Great Blue Herons breed in the county. They are colonial nesters, most often placing their nests in eucalyptus, pines, cypress, Coast Live Oaks, sycamores, and cottonwoods. Nests may be active by February. Egg sets (WFVZ) come from the Lompoc area in March 1877 and from Guadalupe in April 1894. Willett (1933) wrote that there were "two colonies, of about 15 pairs each, now nesting near Santa Barbara" and that eggs were laid in March. L.T. Stevens found nests in Refugio Canyon in 1928, in Goleta in 1937, and along the Santa Ynez River west of Lake Cachuma in 1954 and March 1955 (11–13 pairs; eggs WFVZ). There were five active colonies at Lake Cachuma in 1971 and at least four there in 1976 totaling up to as many as 25+ nests (Hamber 1977). County-wide colonies censused between 1980–1997 and their approximate maximum sizes at that time are as follows: District C—Barka Slough, Vandenberg SFB (6–9 nests through 1997; nesting trees had blown down by 2003); ca. 2 mi (3 km) from water at 13th & California Avenues, north Vandenberg SFB (single nests in pine annually 1995–1997); Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc (possible); Wood Canyon near Point Conception (6 nests); UCSB Lagoon, Goleta (colony active from at least 1963 to 1988 (9–10 nests) after which colony abandoned); Goleta Beach Park from 1989–1991 when colony shifted to nearby Southern California Gas Co. property on the N side of Goleta Slough mouth (6–9 nests); Andrée Clark Bird Refuge/Zoo (4–6 nests); Carpinteria Salt Marsh (1–2 nests), and Rincon Point (1 nest); District I—Santa Ynez River west of Buellton (1–2 nests); Lake Cachuma (up to five small colonies around the lake totaling approximately 12 nests).

More recent surveys have found the following representative totals: District C—Devereux Slough (1 nest in 2015, 2 nests in 2016, 4 nests in 2018, 3 nests in 2019, 7 nests in 2020, including one with a late large nestling 8 August, 2 nests in 2024, and 2 nests in 2025); SoCal Gas Co. property at Goleta Slough mouth (annual breeding, many years with 10–13 nests and highs of ca. 15 nests in 2006, 14 nests in 2009, and 18 nests in 2010, but only 7 nests in 2019); Pershing Park, Santa Barbara (1–5 nests most years between 2004–2018); W. Cabrillo Boulevard, Santa Barbara (3 nests in 2003 and 2004, 2 nests in 2016); Andrée Clark Bird Refuge/Zoo (last active nest in 1999); Carpinteria Salt Marsh area (2–4 nests in 1996–1999 and 2004, 1 nest in 2010 and 2011); downtown Carpinteria (single nests in 2013 and 2014); and Rincon Point (1 nest in 2010); and District I—Lake Cachuma and along Santa Ynez River immediately west of Bradbury Dam (breeds most years, with as few as 1–4 nests some years and highs of ca. 11 nests in 2007 and 14 nests in 2009), where numbers of all fish-eating birds are dependent upon stocking programs at the lake; Alisal Ranch (3+ nests in 2001, 1 nest in 2008, unknown number in 2013); and San Luis Obispo County side of Twitchell Reservoir (ca. 5 nests

in 2011 and 2012). One nest with two nestlings at Devereux Slough 20 August 2019 was a very late nesting record.

Singles were at the lower elevations of District M along the Sisquoc River 20 June 2012 and near San Marcos Pass 12 March 2022, another was at Aliso Park 12 November 2022, and 1 was east of Figueroa Mountain 28 May 2025.

In District V, records are of presumed spring migrants between 2 March (2018) and 28 May (2018), and of fall migrants between 23 June (2020) and 12 December (2018), as well as single wintering birds at Caliente Ranch Wetland in 2018–2019, 2019–2020, and 2020–2021 (same bird?).

NEW WORLD VULTURES (CATHARTIDAE)

California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)

Formerly a widespread resident. One final pair was resident in Santa Barbara County through the early 1980s. These birds were most frequently seen in Districts M and V. Subsequently extirpated from the county and all of Southern California; followed by captive-raised birds being released in to wild, and the first successful follow-up fledging of a young bird in 2018.

The endangered California Condor suffered a very serious and largely continuous population decline throughout its range at least since the latter 19th century. A great decline in numbers throughout its range undoubtedly occurred through the mid-1900s (J. Hamber in litt.). Condors formerly nested on the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains just north of Santa Barbara; nest sites included San Antonio Canyon in 1888, San Roque Canyon in 1897 and 1899, "two miles from Santa Barbara" in 1901, and Cold Spring Canyon in 1901 and 1902. There are no definite coastal-slope nesting records after 1902, although it is believed that the species may have continued to nest in this area as late as 1910. Five birds were counted at La Cumbre Peak in 1935. The population farther inland was formerly much larger, with the highest counts being 75 in Falls Canyon along the Sisquoc River in 1895, 32 there 24 June 1936, and 29 there 21 May 1937; 16 near the junction of Mono and Indian Creeks in 1921; 20 at San Rafael Peak 14–15 July 1940; 22 at Salisbury Potrero in mid-November 1945; and 11 at West Big Pine Mountain in August 1946 (records compiled by Carl Koford). Other nesting areas in Districts I and M included along Manzana Creek in 1897 and along the Sisquoc River possibly as late as the early or mid- 1960s (F. Sibley in litt.). By 1963–1964 the estimated county population was no more than 5 individuals. After that, the maximum count for the county was 6 in the eastern San Rafael Wilderness Area during February 1981. Three individuals, possibly the offspring of the Big Pine Mountain pair (see below), utilized the Sisquoc Condor Sanctuary over an extended period in 1984.

By the 1960s, this species was very rare west to the Figueroa Mountain area and it was casual in District I, in the Santa Ynez Mountains, and along the South Coast. Between 1966 and 1986, records from the latter three areas included: 2 in Los Alamos, San Marcos Pass, Buellton, and Figueroa Mountain in 1966; Pendola 18 February 1967; 2 in Los Olivos 29 November 1967; 2 in Happy Canyon, Santa Ynez Valley, 4 December 1967; Santa Ynez 30 July 1968; near Buellton 5 September 1970; 2 in Los Alamos 22 February 1971; Jameson Lake 2 December 1971; over downtown Santa Barbara 14 December 1973; 2 near Lake Cachuma 13 September 1975; East Camino Cielo, Santa Ynez Mountains, 12 March 1980; La Cumbre Peak 21 September 1980; and near Zaca Station Road one mile east of Highway 101 in 1983.

After 1975, just 1 pair of nesting California Condors was thought to remain in Santa Barbara County, although several additional birds from Ventura County would sometimes occur in Santa Barbara County as well. The nesting pair remained into the 1980s, and they roosted and nested in the eastern San Rafael Wilderness Area in District M. These birds were usually present from at

least November through April; they were present year-round if nesting locally. During this time, nesting attempts were recorded in the Big Pine Mountain vicinity in 1976, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, and 1985 (three attempts). The final successful nesting occurred in the Don Victor Valley area, east of Madulce Peak, in 1982. Roosting sites were located in large trees and on cliffs; nest sites were found on cliff ledges and in caves. Foraging took place over open grassland and rangeland in the Sierra Madre, over the Cuyama Valley, and outside the county (e.g., in Kern, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura Counties). Individuals of the nesting pair were occasionally seen southeastward to the Ventura County line in the Monte Arido/Old Man Mountain area. The female of that pair died in January 1986 and the male was captured (in Kern County) on 27 December 1986 (J. Hamber in litt.). The last wild condor was trapped on 19 April 1987.

A captive condor breeding program, managed by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, to release condors into the wild began in January 1992 at the Sespe Condor Sanctuary in Ventura County and was shifted to Lion Canyon in the Sierra Madre in the Santa Barbara County backcountry in December 1993. Releases first took place in Lion Canyon in 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1999, and they totaled some 36 individuals in all (including *SBMNH 2 June 1998). These birds were fed and foraged primarily along the Sierra Madre. One bird roosted at Madulce Peak on 13–14 March 1994 and then returned to the Sespe Sanctuary and was recaptured. A bird released in Lion Canyon in February 1995 was seen on Big Pine Mountain 11 July 1998, and another individual, released in September 1995, roosted on Big Pine 18–19 June 1999. Almost all condors released into the wild in Santa Barbara County, however, either died or were brought back in to captivity for behavioral reasons, a few being re-released in subsequent years at Castle Crags, San Luis Obispo County, and 1 taken to northern Baja California. A total of 4 or more of the Lion Canyon birds bred at Hopper Canyon in Ventura County from 2001 through 2011+. A trio of birds bred in Lion Canyon in 2001 but were unsuccessful. Releases starting in 2000 were made in Hopper Canyon and at Bitter Creek in Kern County, not in Lion Canyon. Since 2003, condors from the Ventana Wilderness Area release-site in Monterey County were fitted with GPS radios so that their activity could be monitored: a total of at least 11 individuals were plotted as occurring (flying through, some roosting) in many parts of the Santa Barbara County backcountry, on 2 to 10 days annually between 2003 and 2007, and with all such records falling between mid-March and mid-November. It is assumed that some or most of these birds were transiting between Ventana and Hopper Canyon. In June 2005, AC2, one of the male young of the last “wild” Big Pine Mountain pair, was released back into the wild at Bitter Creek and immediately resumed roosting in its former nesting territory in the San Rafael Wilderness of Santa Barbara County until its death in September 2005. One of the last chicks to be raised in the wild in Santa Barbara County was a male known as AC4, and which likely fledged in 1979 in the Logan Canyon area, northwest of Big Pine Mountain. Following decades in captivity, it was released back into the wild in 2015; and in November 2018, it and a mate fledged the first young bird in the county since the 1980s. The young bird persisted as of 2020. A pair was back in the Upper Sisquoc River area in 2020 but the nest failed during the egg stage. One bird was seen investigating a cave near Figueroa Mountain. The adults continued to travel back and forth between Santa Barbara County and Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge. The AC4 pair was still present 3 June 2024 when seen a few miles north of Alamar Saddle, putting AC4 at 44 or 45 years of age. GPS tracking has also shown other condors periodically moving into the county near Divide Peak, behind Carpinteria.

From 2006 through 2026, condors have been found from Monterey and San Benito Counties south to Los Angeles and Kern Counties, as well as in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Fresno and Tulare Counties. Many of the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service released birds (also fitted with GPS radios) have been recorded in Santa Barbara County, some in the interior of the San Rafael Wilderness and many in the Sierra Madre, used as a flyway between the Hopper and Bitter Creek refuges. GPS records and other sightings have come in from along the northern edge of the county near the Cuyama River and Ballinger and Quatal Canyons, west to the foothills east of

Foxen Canyon, south to the Santa Ynez River, and east to the Santa Ynez Mountains at the Ventura County border.

Threats to condors continue, and they include lead poisoning, ingestion of micro-trash, a possible decline in cattle ranching in the primary condor range, and residential housing expansion. (Janet Hamber, Condor Information System Archivist, in litt.)

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

Casual visitor in Districts C and I. Exact number of individuals uncertain.

Beginning in 2009, a series of sightings assumed to involve the same individual came from Goleta 10–13 September 2009 (ph. *NAB* 64:155, SBMNH) and then between western Goleta and El Capitan State Beach 18 July–6 November 2010 (ph. *NAB* 64:647, SBMNH) and also over Carpinteria 12 August 2010. (What was probably the same individual was seen in Ventura County during late November 2009–January 2010.) This established the first record for Southern California. One over Buellton 14 January 2011 (ph. SBMNH) was thought by the CBRC to be a different individual, however. A bird near Lompoc (Mission Hills/Vandenberg Village) 22 February 2011 was re-found there 21 September–16 December 2012 (ph. SBMNH). An individual at the same site in Goleta 16–22 April 2011 as the bird in September 2009 was thought by the CBRC, however, to be a different, new individual, but which was the same, very worn bird that had been photographed the previous month in San Diego County. One was seen near Lauro Reservoir in Santa Barbara 16 February 2012 (ph. SBMNH); it or another was back in western Goleta 17 March, 23 July (ph. SBMNH), and 22 September–29 November (ph. SBMNH) 2012; as was 1 in the Lompoc area 21 September–18 December 2012 (ph. SBMNH), thought to be a different individual. One was seen at Solvang 30–31 August 2015 (ph. SBMNH). A bird was again in Lompoc 31 October–2 November 2016. Many of the Black Vultures in California have been found associating with Turkey Vultures at or near nocturnal roosts.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Fairly common to common transient and summer visitor in Districts C, I, and V; uncommon to fairly common in District M, primarily at lower elevations. Somewhat local in late fall and early winter, when largely confined to Districts C and I. Few documented nesting records.

Turkey Vultures are found over open country. The larger concentrations are somewhat localized near roost sites, which are often located in large eucalyptus groves, as in the Santa Maria area, on Vandenberg SFB, near Gaviota, near Dos Pueblos Canyon, in the Goleta area (e.g., Bell and Winchester Canyons and Ellwood Mesa, irregularly along San Jose and Maria Ygnacio Creeks), and in the Santa Ynez Valley. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 177 individuals (on 5 January 2019 and 1 January 2022; although some duplication is very likely on many CBCs over the years). Maxima on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs include 70 (23 December 2007) and 102 (16 December 2012) individuals, respectively. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has reported up to 143 birds (27 December 2013; again, with some duplication likely). Wintering birds may aggregate here from a surprising variety of directions, as suggested by the individual that was banded to the east in northern Riverside County during the breeding season on 13 May 2008 and was subsequently found dead at Sandpiper Golf Course near Goleta 30 January 2010.

Spring migrants appear by late January and occur well into April, and the species is common in Districts C and I and fairly common in District V by late winter or early spring. Migrants are occasionally noted in small flocks (e.g., 54 over Bluff Camp near Big Pine Mountain 28 March 1983, 15 near Madulce Peak 3 February 1984, and 10 there 14 February 2017). It is uncertain whether one reported near Ventucopa 20 January 2016, 1 at New Cuyama 14 January 2017, 2 in Santa Barbara Canyon 28 January 2023, and 2 in the Cuyama Valley 25 January 2025 were very

unusual wintering birds for District V or if they were early spring migrants. Numbers of fall migrants have sometimes been noted moving east over the South Coast foothills during October.

This species is rare at the higher elevations of District M in summer (e.g., 1–2 birds recorded only four years between 1981–2022 on summer bird surveys at Big Pine Mountain) and in winter (e.g., vicinity Madulce Peak/Don Victor Valley 26 and 31 January 1984, Cachuma Mountain 13 January 2013).

Although this species is a fairly common to common summer resident (e.g., 90 between Goleta and Gaviota 30 July 2010) and young birds are seen regularly in late summer, there are few documented nesting records. Single egg sets (WFVZ) come from near Guadalupe 27 April 1895 and from Goleta ("in tunnel under pampas on hillside") 5–12 May 1928; a nest was found at Refugio 13 May 1928; and several nest records come from the Buellton area during the 1930s (eggs WFVZ) and 1 nest was there 17 May 1952. The only known breeding records between 1965–1995 involved an active nest used for several years during the 1970s (including 2 young fledged in 1977) northeast of Los Alamos and a chick in a nest in the upper Santa Cruz Creek drainage 20 July 1981; suspected nesting areas included cliffs near West Camino Cielo and on the north slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Since then, the only confirmed nesting involved a recently hatched nestling in a concrete drainpipe in Honda Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 22–23 May 2017; an active nest near Lions Head, north Vandenberg SFB, 10 June 2016; a nest with up to 2 large nestlings in the Santa Ynez Mountains behind Goleta/Ellwood 18 April 1999, 5 June 2018, 24 May 2019, 25 May 2020, and 21 May 2022; and a nest with 2 nestlings near Lake Cachuma 21–24 June 2019. In addition, suspected nesting was provided by the presence of 2 birds in June 2013 on a cliff face near Red Rock Mountain in the Purisima Hills, District I, but the site was on private land and not revisited.

Marked (wing-tagged) individuals were near Buellton 3 May 2020, at Gaviota Hot Springs 11 June 2021, in Goleta 26 October 2021, and in Carpinteria 15 January 2022; they had been tagged in Orange County in 2017, 2016, 2018, and 2019, respectively.

OSPREYS (PANDIONIDAE)

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Uncommon to (formerly) fairly common winter visitor at Lake Cachuma in District I, rare there in summer. Only one definite, recent nesting record. Uncommon to rare fall transient and winter visitor, spring transient, and summer visitor elsewhere in District I and in District C. Very rare transient in District M; casual in District V. The population has had major decreases and increases.

Ospreys are seen at lakes, ponds, sloughs, river mouths, and over nearshore ocean waters. The only consistent site where this species has been found over the past several decades is Lake Cachuma in District I, where as many as 22 birds (15 November 2002) have been counted between September–April. Mid-winter Osprey surveys at the lake produced totals as high as 29 birds (10 January 1998). In contrast, a steady decline in numbers on the lake resulted in only 3 individuals found during the Cachuma CBC 26 December 2014 (and 0 in December 2015) and only a single bird tallied during mid-winter surveys in early 2015, 2016, and 2017; but 5 were counted there on both 24 January 2020 and 5 December 2021. It is assumed that the declines at Cachuma are the result of possible changes in fish-stocking practices and/or drought. Such declines also occurred during this period in several species of diving ducks and in wintering Bald Eagle. Prior to the mid-1990s, the highest counts at Lake Cachuma were of 12 individuals during January 1990, 14 present during February 1991, and 17 on 7 December 1994. Before the late 1980s, maxima were only from 6–8 birds, and on only several occasions did birds linger into late spring (e.g., through 24 May 1966 and 28 May 1971). Four there on both 12 May 2009 and 9 May 2014 were large counts for so late in the season. One or 2 individuals summered at Lake Cachuma during nine different years between the 1960s and 1993: in 1976, 1980, 1982, 1983,

1984, 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1992; but no definite evidence of nesting was ever found. Since 1993, this species has continued to summer almost annually at Cachuma, with a single individual most years and 2 present in 2003, 2006, and 2007. Five there on 26 July 2026 likely involve some early-returning migrants. Elsewhere in District I, only single individuals are seen rarely at lakes and rivers. A presumed spring migrant was along the upper Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez Campground 10 April 1991. In addition, 1 was over the Santa Ynez River near Kelly Creek 31 May 1993. From 1994–2026, Osprey abundance increased slightly in District I away from Lake Cachuma. One lingered late at Sedgwick Reserve 13 April–14 May 2017. Summer birds are probably annual in District I away from Lake Cachuma as well.

The Osprey was formerly a common visitor—spring, summer, and fall—in the 1800s (Willett 1933, Grinnell and Miller 1944), but was much reduced in numbers by the early 1900s and termed "rare" by Willett in 1933. The species may have bred in mainland Santa Barbara County during the 1800s, but there is no direct evidence for this. It did breed on the Channel Islands at least through the early 1900s (Grinnell and Miller 1944).
Hamber (1977) stated that Osprey "formerly nested on the well tower…" along the south shore of Lake Cachuma and that the many summer records from the lake meant that it was "very probable that they nest in the area." Again, there was no direct evidence to confirm these statements, however. Recently, a pair slowly constructed nest structures at two sites, December 2023–July 2024, the second, more fully developed at that same intake tower site as in early years, although there was no evidence of any egg laying. In 2025, a pair finished a complete nest along the south shore but it interfered with lake operations; so a platform was built approximately 300 meters to the east and the nest material transferred to that site. Finally, in 2026, a pair successfully nested there between March–July, with incubation noted during June and a single fledgling observed 10–27+ July.

From the 1960s through 1993, Ospreys were mostly rare in District C. The earliest fall records were 2–3 August 1993 Carpinteria (2) and 4 August 1976 Santa Barbara for the South Coast, and 8 August 1993 Jalama Beach County Park for the North Coast; the latest were 15 November 1974 Goleta, through 15 November 1988 Carpinteria, and 30 November 1985 Goleta. Ten seen in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area during fall 1978 was the high count during that period. Most records at this season were of single individuals; 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 16–25 September 1992 were somewhat unusual. The species was very rare in winter in District C, seen only 12 times during 1971–1994 between early December and early February along the South Coast, and once along the North Coast: near the Santa Ynez River mouth 15 December 1991. Osprey was also very rare in spring, with only seven South Coast records between 9 March (1985, Carpinteria) and 18 May (1978, Goleta); as well as north Vandenberg SFB 26 April 1990 and Santa Ynez River mouth 17 May 1992. Summer wanderers or very early fall transients included individuals in Santa Barbara 14 July 1949, at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 28–30 July 1968, and 11 times between 1975–1994 in District C between 21 June and 4 August. Up to 2 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 17 May–13 July 1992 and 1 there 7 July–3 August 1993 clearly summered locally. Up to 5 individuals, including 3 juveniles (suggesting a family group), were in the Laguna Blanca/Hope Ranch area most of September 1992, evidence of possible local breeding; 1 individual had been seen there 29 June–7 July.

From 1994–2026, Osprey abundance increased in District C and the species now can be termed very uncommon. Some late-July and early-August reports probably pertain to early fall migrants, with the earliest being 19–21 July 2007 Goleta. The highest fall totals along the South Coast include 8 in 1994 and 9 there in 2007, 2012, and 2013, and the highest single-site total was of up to 5 vic. Goleta Beach Park 20 August–7 September 1999, 4 there 26 August 2000, and 4 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 4 November 2015; along the North Coast, both the autumn season-total and single-site maximum involves 4 birds between Surf Beach and Point Arguello 12 October 2003. In winter (December–February), Ospreys have become somewhat regular, with reports

along the coast averaging about 3–5 annually, and with a maximum of 5 along the South Coast during 2013–2014 and 2016–2017, 6 there during 2015–2016, and a single-site 4 birds at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 6 December 2018. There has never been more than a single bird reported annually in winter along the North Coast except for 2 each in 2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2017–2018. Spring migrants are rare but somewhat regular between early March and mid-May; 1 on 26 February 2006 in Goleta was probably an early spring transient, 3 in Goleta 17 April 2005 and 3 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh on both 4 March 2011 and 31 March 2017 were single-site maxima, and singles from 23–27 May 2007 in Goleta and from 24–30 May 2020 at the Santa Ynez River mouth, as well as up to 2 in vic. Coal Oil Point through 30 May 2020, were probably late spring migrants. Records of summer (June–mid-July) birds have also increased and total at least 54 along the South Coast and 14 along the North Coast between 1994 and 2025, with up to six reports each summer between 2010–2025 between Goleta and Carpinteria.

Very unusual was a bird far at sea and which briefly came aboard a cruise ship 40 mi (65 km) SSW of Santa Rosa Island 3 October 2012.

In District M, there were 21 sightings of spring migrants, most passing east to west at mid-elevations to the south of Big Pine Mountain, during March and April 1981–1985; a high count of 6 was made 13 March 1983. One was there 26 September 1982. Also in District M were 1 at Zaca Lake 28 October 1951, 1 over Figueroa Mountain 19 July 1989, 1 over San Marcos Pass 26 April 1990, singles over La Cumbre Peak 2 January 1999 and 23 March 2018, and 1 over Aliso Park 24 September 2021.

The only records for District V are of a presumed spring migrant near New Cuyama 19 March 2010 and single fall migrants there 17 September 2018 and 24 September 2021 and near Quatal Canyon 28 August and 18 September 2020.

KITES, EAGLES, AND HAWKS (ACCIPITRIDAE)

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

Uncommon, cyclically fluctuating, resident and local summer breeder in Districts C and I. Very rare visitor in District M. Very rare fall and winter visitor in District V. The species may be nomadic following crashes in prey populations.

White-tailed Kites are found in open country, preferring grassland areas and the upper sections of marshlands for hunting. They are also found less commonly over agricultural areas and along highway rights-of-way. The species is more numerous along the coast during fall and winter, especially in the vicinity of nocturnal communal roost sites in willow groves, oaks, avocado and citrus orchards, and eucalyptus. These roosts are established by late September and bring together birds that forage up to 7+ mi (11+ km) away (Waian 1973). Although roost sites may shift suddenly within and between seasons, most roosts on the South Coast between 1965–1994 were on or within one mile of More Mesa, on the border between Goleta and Santa Barbara. Other nocturnal roosts used included lemon orchards east of Ward Drive in Goleta (1972, 1985, and 1993–1994), northeast of Hollister and Los Carneros Roads (1985–1990, except for a brief period in 1987 at More Mesa), and Glen Annie Canyon (1968). By February or March, the roosts break up and the kites spread out singly or in pairs to other locations where territories are maintained. In general, fewer birds are seen between March and May. Nesting usually takes place from March to July, rarely as early as February. Between 1966 and 1968, Waian (1971) found more kites during summer than winter in the Santa Ynez Valley between Buellton and Lompoc, the opposite of the coastal trend.

The abundance of White-tailed Kites fluctuates substantially. During the first half of the 20th century, the species was quite rare. Willett (1933) wrote that it was a “formerly fairly common resident, now rare,” but that “ten pairs nested near Santa Barbara in 1928 and 1929”. A “large” concentration of 18 was in the lower Lompoc Valley 15 November 1942 (Wood 1943). The species increased beginning in the 1940s, and the largest number of birds occurred during the

mid-1970s, although numbers fluctuated as well within this period. The greatest concentrations during that latter decade occurred in the Barka Slough area bordering north Vandenberg SFB, where 100+ were counted (Dial and Pisapia 1980), and at More Mesa, where up to 110 individuals roosted during the late fall and early winter in 1978; the 3 January 1976 Santa Barbara CBC tallied 98 individuals. Between 1978 and 1992 there was a serious decline in numbers of White-tailed Kites both in the county and elsewhere in the state. The Goleta Valley winter roosts held from 40–80 individuals between 1980 and 1982, but only 18 in 1986–1987, 0 in 1990–1991 and 1991–1992, and 2 sporadically in 1992–1993. For the first time ever, the Santa Barbara CBC failed to record any kites in either 1991–1992 or 1992–1993. During December 1993–March 1994, however, up to 25 kites were found roosting in lemon orchards east of Ward Drive in Goleta. Nesting was not documented in the Goleta area between 1988 or 1989 and 1993, although a juvenile was found dead along Tecolotito Creek in Goleta 13 June 1993 (*UCSB). At least 4 pairs were nesting there, however, in late March and early April 1994 and another pair was near Santa Ynez. Further population increases were noted in subsequent years. For example, a winter roost of up to 42 birds was in a Goleta lemon orchard December 1996–January 1997, nesting occurred in Carpinteria in 1997, 14+ nesting pairs were along the South Coast in 1998, and 65 birds occupied a winter roost near Orcutt during January 2000. Drought conditions and further loss of habitat along the South Coast during the 2010s resulted in only 6 birds tallied on the 31 December 2016 Santa Barbara CBC. A mid-day gathering of 17 birds at Lake Los Carneros 4 November 2017 was unusual at that time of day; more typical timing were the 21 birds going to roost there in the evening on 12 October 2019.

Much less is known about White-tailed Kites away from the South Coast. Kites are found regularly, although in relatively small numbers, in the Santa Maria Valley and western Lompoc Valley. Eleven birds along the Santa Ynez River within 3 mi (5 km) of the coast 27 July 1993 was a high count for that period until the Orcutt roost (see above) was discovered in 2000. The two North Coast CBCs typically each record fewer than 15 individuals annually. In District I, Cachuma CBCs have recorded as many as 15 individuals (28 December 2006), although 0 were found there 26 December 2014. A relatively large roosting concentration of 30–44 birds were discovered on Sedgwick Reserve north of Santa Ynez 8–28 August 2011. A bird in juvenile plumage near Los Olivos 16 December 2015 was unusual for the date.

Records from District M include: 1 near Madulce Peak 9 February 1983, 1 near Bluff Camp 8 March 1983, 1 near Madulce Peak 15 February 1984, 2 over Potrero Seco 11 March 1984, 1 at Figueroa Mountain summit 22 May 1984, 1 on the lower slopes of Figueroa Mountain 20 April 1993, 1 near Little Pine Mountain 10 July 1994, up to 2 near La Cumbre Peak 26 December 2011–2 January 2012, 1 ca. 1 mi (1.6 km) SSW of Bluff Camp 21 June 2012, 1 near San Marcos Pass 24 August 2022, and 1 near Santa Ynez/Broadcast Peaks 29 June 2024. A number of these records were of transients over-flying the area.

In District V, there are a handful of records from the late 1970s and 1980s. More recently, up to 2 were near Ventucopa 8 November 2019–3 February 2020, singles were there 18 September 2020 and 16 January–9 February 2021, and 1 was at Caliente Ranch Wetland 23 March 2021.

Marked fluctuations in numbers of White-tailed Kites will certainly continue to occur, but many of the foraging and nesting areas they have used in the Goleta and Santa Maria Valleys and elsewhere are subject to loss, fragmentation, and more frequent disturbance. Thus, we are likely to see a general decline in the number of kites breeding and perhaps wintering near the more urban areas of Districts C and I.

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

Uncommon permanent resident in District M and very local in District I. Uncommon visitor in Districts I and V. Rare fall and winter visitor, casual in spring and summer, along the North Coast, where one or two pairs nest. Very rare to casual visitor to the South Coast.

Golden Eagles frequent open country and semi-open coniferous woodland. A very few pairs breed, or have bred, in the San Rafael Mountains (i.e., Big Pine Mountain, upper Mono Creek drainage, San Rafael Mountain, and, possibly, Figueroa Mountain) and in the Sierra Madre (nests were found along the edge of the Cuyama Valley in 1934, 1940 (eggs WFVZ), and 1945, and at several sites in the Sierra Madre between 1982 and 1992). In District I, a pair nested on a cliff bordering the Santa Cruz drainage on the north side of Lake Cachuma through at least 2003, there was a possible nesting pair on the south side of the Santa Ynez River southeast of Lompoc during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, and eggs (WFVZ) were discovered in Oso Canyon, bordering the upper Santa Ynez River, 29 April 2015. One individual was over Los Alamos 2 July 1984. In 2011–2013, it was thought that some 5 or 6 pairs were nesting in District M and at the upper elevations of District I in the general Santa Ynez Valley region (N. Todd, in litt.). One pair likely nested at least occasionally in the Zaca Station Road area near Los Olivos through 2024, and an active nest was found there during several years. Another pair nested at the Sedgwick Reserve in 2019. Daily counts away from nest sites in Districts M and V are fewer than 5 individuals, and usually, they do not exceed 2 or 3 birds. Totals of 6 and 7 birds reported on the Cachuma CBC 30 December 2005 and 27 December 2013, respectively, were high counts, though some duplication is possible.

Through the early 1990s, the Golden Eagle was believed to be a rare to very rare visitor to the North Coast in fall and winter (late September–March), with records primarily from the Santa Maria Valley and Vandenberg SFB. Two slightly earlier birds were near Santa Maria 31 August 1986. A few birds were seen through April, and late individuals were near the Santa Ynez River mouth 6 May 1985 and east of Point Sal 7 May 1991 and 9 May 1990 (possibly local breeders? see below). The few summer reports then included immature birds at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 June 1980 and near Santa Maria 29 July 1981 and 14 August 1982, and an adult near Lompoc 21 June 1986.

Sightings along the floor of the Santa Maria Valley have declined since then due to the loss of foraging habitat, but those from the interior sections of Vandenberg SFB and adjoining hills have increased somewhat. From one to perhaps a few pairs of Golden Eagles may nest occasionally in that area. There have been multiple sightings of single adults and sub-adults in the Casmalia Hills bordering north Vandenberg SFB since the mid-1990s, particularly in the Casmalia/Orcutt area; 3 were in the Oak Mountain area, southeastern Vandenberg SFB, during August and September 1990; and a more recent nesting pair was in the Tranquillon Mountain/Lompoc Hills area southwest of Lompoc through at least 2019. Foraging birds rarely range closer to the coast on Vandenberg SFB. Other summer sightings since the mid-1990s come from west of Lompoc 12 June 1996, just east of Santa Maria 17 July 1996, near Lompoc 13 July 2000, and at Guadalupe 8–16 August 2009.

Golden Eagles are very rare along the South Coast, though they may be somewhat more regular between Gaviota and Point Conception. There were approximately 39 fall and winter records (late September–late March) between 1970–2025; as well as additional records involving early arrivals (e.g., 8 September 2018 Goleta, 20 September 1999 Goleta) and late departures (e.g., 22 May 1985 Refugio, 27 May 1975 Hollister Ranch); and particularly unusual summer records of an adult over Hope Ranch 13 August 1980 and 1 in Goleta 26 July–3 August 1994.

Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and V; rare in District M. Uncommon summer resident along the North Coast; casual elsewhere (although possibly nests in District V).

Northern Harriers are found in open grassland, coastal sage scrub, marshes, and agricultural areas. This species summers in small numbers along the immediate coast from the Santa Maria River mouth south to at least Point Arguello. Adults carrying nesting material or with recently fledged young have been observed at the Santa Maria River mouth; Point Sal; near the mouth of Shuman Canyon and San Antonio Creek and near Barka Slough, north Vandenberg SFB; at the

Santa Ynez River mouth; and at Bear Creek and Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB. A probable nesting pair was somewhat farther inland at the Burton Mesa Preserve near Vandenberg Village 16 April 2019. One was near Garey 10 July 2020 and another was near Sisquoc 28 May 2021. Numbers along the North Coast are augmented by migrants and winter visitors, August–March.

Along the South Coast, in District I, and in much of District V, the Northern Harrier is a transient and winter visitor. The largest numbers occur in the Cuyama Valley, where up to 10 were seen in a day during the late 1970s. Along the South Coast this species usually appears by early September, very rarely during August (earliest: 4+ August 1982 Goleta, 4 August 2001 Carpinteria, and 7 August 2001 Goleta), and perhaps casually by late July (see below). Harriers appear to be declining somewhat as a wintering bird (and probably as a breeder) in Santa Barbara County and much of California due to a loss of habitat and, possibly, recurring drought. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 19 individuals (31 December 1994), but an average of from only 3 to 5 are now found most winters between Goleta and Carpinteria. The high count on Cachuma CBCs is 12 birds (28 December 2010). Adult males are scarce away from the North Coast.

Most individuals have departed by the end of March or beginning of April. Spring records along the South Coast after mid-April are: 30 April 1978 Goleta, 1 May 2019 Summerland, 3 May 2009 and 4 May 2025 Goleta, 10 May 1997 near Refugio, and 10 May 2014 Carpinteria Salt Marsh; in District I, Lake Cachuma 20 April 2007, Paradise area 19 May 2024, and Zaca Station Road 13 May 2025.

In District V, singles in the Cuyama Valley 9 May and 14 May 1994, 15 April 2009 and 4 May 2010 (both adult males), 26 April 2011, 4 May (2) and 26 May 2013, a total of 4 or more there between late April–15 August 2019 and during April–5 July 2020 (including a displaying male on 21 April), and singles there 28 May 2022, on 18 May,1 June, and 1 July 2024, 17 May 2025, and 1 July 2026 are suggestive of possible local breeding.

There are at least 18 summer (June–July) records away from the North Coast in Districts C and in District I. Along the South Coast: Goleta 21–29 July 1968; Gaviota 13 July 1970 (*SBMNH); Goleta 9 July 1971; Carpinteria 12–14 July 1985; Goleta 29 July 1994, 26 July 2000, 30–31 July 2007 (adult male), 28 June 2021, 3 July 2021, 17 June 2022, and 12 July 2022. In District I: Santa Ynez 10 June 1984 (*SBMNH); Lake Cachuma 20 July 1989 and 11 June 1997; Lake Cachuma 29 July 2006; Sedgwick Reserve 18 June 2008; near Los Alamos 3 June 2018 (adult male); and along Cuyama River east of Twitchell Reservoir 14 June 2026 (adult male). A male in District I along Figueroa Mountain Road 12 April 2014 and seen carrying prey for a long distance also may suggest local breeding.

Many of these and several other records from the last few days of July probably pertain to early migrants. In addition, daily sightings of both adults and immature birds near the Tajiguas Landfill, east of Gaviota, in 2002 beginning 9 July suggests that harriers may have nested somewhere nearby.

In District M, transients occur rarely, primarily over the mid-elevation potreros and meadows, with records for October–November and late February–March. The species' status there in winter is uncertain. One over chaparral near Cachuma Mountain 13 January 2013 was unusual, as was 1 near Big Pine Mountain 7 February 2013.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor in all Districts. Casual in summer; one probable nesting record.

Sharp-shinned Hawks frequent semi-open and wooded habitats and margins of open areas. They regularly hunt at bird feeders in residential neighborhoods. Numbers have declined since the 1980s. The first migrants appear beginning in mid-September (e.g., 10 September 2002 East

Camino Cielo, 14 September 1988 Goleta, 14 September 1993 Carpinteria), exceptionally 1 bird west of Refugio 30 August 2018 (ph. SBMNH). The species is most numerous during late September and October. During 1977 and 1978, a flight of individuals could be seen moving down the South Coast during late September; high counts were 20 in Montecito 28 September 1977 and 20 in Goleta 24 September 1978. More recent coverage of foothill hawk-watch sites produced a high count of 17 above Romero Canyon 25 September 2018. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 32 individuals (2 January 1983), with some decline since the 1980s. The Cachuma CBC high count is 8 individuals (26 December 2014). In spring, most Sharp-shinneds have departed by early or mid-April. Late spring records include 3 May 1997 near the Santa Ynez River mouth, 9 May 1998 near Lompoc, and, exceptionally, 12 May 2019 in both Goleta and Montecito, through 13 May 1995 Lompoc, and 16 May 1982 Figueroa Mountain. Due to the potential for confusion when identifying Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, some of these late dates may not be correct.

In summer, there are several sight reports of individuals along the North Coast and from the Santa Ynez Mountains, e.g., East Camino Cielo 1 June 2003, near San Marcos Pass 25 June 2005, and Vandenberg Village 26 July 2007. In addition, there is one probable breeding record for the county: a nestling found dead (*UCSB) on the ground at 1300ft elevation along East Fork Cold Spring Canyon above Montecito during spring 1991 was apparently this species and not the expected Cooper's Hawk. All reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk in the county between mid-May and mid-September need to be thoroughly documented.

A young bird banded at Hawk Hill, Marin County, 24 September 2008 was found in Santa Maria 27 October 2008, as were additional young birds banded there 13 September 2008 and found 4 March 2009 in Santa Barbara, banded 23 September 2010 and found 2 October 2010 near Los Alamos, and banded 22 September 2011 and found 18 February 2013 near Buellton.

Cooper's Hawk (*Astur cooperii*)

Fairly common transient and winter visitor in all Districts. Uncommon summer resident, with the breeding population much reduced during the latter 1900s, but substantial increases since then.

Cooper's Hawks frequent wooded and semi-open riparian habitats, residential areas, as well as some open areas including agricultural fields. The largest numbers occur during fall migration and early winter (September–January). Fall migrants arrive as early as mid- or late August (e.g., 16 August 2019 Quatal Canyon, 17 August 1988 southern Goleta). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 33 individuals (1 January 2011). The largest total on the Cachuma CBC, however, is only 8 birds (both 27 December 2013 and 29 December 2015). In spring, transients are seen as late as early April, and non-breeders and possibly even failed breeders may be seen away from breeding areas through May (e.g., Ballinger Canyon 18 May 2024). This species is scarce at the upper elevations in District M; only 1 or 2 individuals were seen on about half the near-annual summer surveys at Big Pine Mountain, 1981–2026. It may be absent between late May and mid-August from the floor of the Cuyama Valley.

Up until the mid-1900s, this species probably nested throughout much of Districts C, I, and M, but subsequent declines resulted in its breeding only locally in District M and very locally in Districts I and C. Egg data suggested that the Cooper's Hawk was fairly widespread as a breeder (April–May) in the lowlands through the 1950s. Nest sites (and years) include: Santa Barbara (1929), Carpinteria (1929), Cold Spring Canyon, Montecito (1947, 1951), and northern Goleta (1946, 1956) along the South Coast; and Alisal Ranch (1934), Buellton (1928, 1951), Solvang (1947, 1948), San Lucas Ranch (1959), and "Kelly's Canyon" on the north side of San Marcos Pass (1934, 1935, 1938, and 1940) in District I; as well as *SBMNH in vic. San Marcos Pass (1957). By the latter decades of that century, known nest sites were relatively few. In District M, eggs (WFVZ) were discovered in Pine Canyon near Madulce Peak 25 June 1982. In District I, 1 pair attempted to breed along Mono Creek near the upper Santa Ynez River in 1980; 2 or 3 other pairs were seen in the same area in 1980 and 1981 and 1 to 3 pairs were in the upper Santa Ynez

River/Mono Creek/Agua Caliente area from 1988 through 1993. One was seen along Kelly Creek near Paradise Road 31 May 1993. In District C, the species was an uncommon breeder in oak and, especially, riparian areas along the North Coast. It was a very uncommon to rare breeder along the South Coast, occurring principally in foothill canyons. It probably continued to nest in the Hollister Ranch area; 1 or 2 pairs nested in and along the northern Goleta foothills and riparian creeks every year between 1984 and 1993; and a single nest was noted in Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, during June 1975 and spring 1988 and 1989, with a displaying pair there in spring 1992. In late spring and summer 1994, adults were found along San Jose Creek (nest) in Goleta; in San Roque Canyon, Mission Canyon, Coyote Creek Canyon, and San Ysidro Canyon above Santa Barbara/Montecito; and in foothills above Carpinteria. One at Laguna Blanca 14 May 1994 may have been nesting nearby.

A substantial increase in the numbers of Cooper's Hawks began during the late 1990s, as the species began to adapt to foraging and nesting in residential areas and in small stands of trees (e.g., those along creeks and in parks) in otherwise urban settings. Formerly slightly less numerous than Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk is now much more numerous and ubiquitous in most areas. Along the North Coast, this species now breeds locally along a number of the rivers and creeks, including the Santa Maria River, San Antonio Creek, and Santa Ynez River. Along the South Coast, in 1997, new nesting sites included Atascadero Creek, Lake Los Carneros, and upper Devereux Creek in Goleta; in 1999, Ellwood Mesa and Romero Canyon were added; in 2001, Tecolotito Creek in Goleta and Arroyo Burro Road in Santa Ynez Mountains joined the list; also in 2001, more individuals without known nests were being discovered during summer at such localities as San Marcos Foothills, Earl Warren Showgrounds, and several sites in Montecito; and since 2002, additional new definite or likely breeding sites include Tucker's Grove Park near Santa Barbara (2002), Bohnett Park in Santa Barbara (2003), Isla Vista (2008), UCSB main campus (2013), and Santa Barbara City College (2013). In District I, Cooper's Hawks are now fairly widespread, though uncommon, in summer. In District M away from Big Pine Mountain, summer reports come from such sites as Davey Brown Campground, vic. Little Pine Mountain, and East Camino Cielo. Its nesting status in canyons along the north flank of the Sierra Madre is uncertain.

A fledgling banded in Oregon on 6 September 2008 was recovered in Los Alamos on 9 April 2010. An immature bird banded at Hawk Hill, Marin County, on 18 September 2008 was found near Buellton on 30 September 2008, and another banded there 30 September 2009 was hit by a car near El Capitan State Beach 14 October 2009.

American Goshawk (*Astur atricapillus*)

Casual winter visitor. At least one nesting record.

There are four winter records: an adult hit a window at Paradise, Santa Ynez Valley, 6 December 1972 and later died (*SBMNH), an immature was in the San Roque area of Santa Barbara 16–23 December 1972, an adult in the La Cumbre Peak/San Marcos Pass area 31 December 1982 hit a window and died (*SBMNH), and an adult was near Madulce Peak 1 February 1985. Published reports of an immature at Figueroa Mountain 6 April 1977 and of an adult near Twitchell Reservoir on the unprecedented date of 17 July 1985 have since been retracted by the observers. A report of 1 or 2 adults near the Lonnie Davis Campground in the San Rafael Mountains on 14 July 1971 (Dick Smith field journal) includes a photo of a Cooper's Hawk. [There is also one record of an adult from San Miguel Island on 12 November 1982 (Stewart and Delong 1984).]

In Southern California, this species is a very rare and irregular breeder on the high mountains in Ventura and Kern Counties, but it is casual elsewhere. In 2009, an active nest (ph. Gaede et al. 2010, *NAB* 63:655, SBMNH) was discovered on 13 June in the Big Pine Mountain area, and it subsequently fledged 2 young in July, both of which were still within ca. 0.5 mi (1 km) of the

nest on 27 July. This established the first nesting record for Santa Barbara County. In 2010, 2 birds were again near the previous year's nest-site from 12 June–7 July, 2 birds were in the general area between 15–17 June 2012, 1 was seen there 15 June 2013, and 1 was heard only 15 June 2014 and 12 June 2016.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Small numbers winter regularly at Lake Cachuma. A small number of nesting pairs in District I since 1989. Very rare elsewhere in the county at all seasons. The species was formerly a more widespread visitor and nested regularly in the county until the 1950s.

From 3 to 12 Bald Eagles (mostly immatures) winter, November–March, at Lake Cachuma. The maximum counts are of 18 during winter 1988–1989 and 15 during 1999–2000. The species typically arrives during November (early arrival: 14 October 1973 (2)). In spring, most depart by late March; 3 were still present 13 April 1979, as was 1 immature on 22 April 2020. A second-year bird there 3 May 1981 was late. A summary of the winter totals for Lake Cachuma since 1960 is as follows:

1960-1961: 4	1974-1975: 4	1985-1986: 4	1996-1997: 6	2010-2011: 8
1962-1963: 4	1975-1976: 2	1986-1987: 9	1997-1998: 12	2011-2012: 2
1965-1966: 1	1976-1977: 4	1987-1988: 14	1998-1999: 6	2012-2013: 5
1966-1967: 0	1977-1978: 2	1988-1989: 18	1999-2000: 15	2013-2014: 4
1967-1968: 3	1978-1979: 13	1989-1990: 8	2000-2001: 8	2014-2015: 4
1968-1969: 1	1979-1980: 7	1990-1991: 8	2003-2004: 5	2015-2016: 4
1969-1970: 2	1980-1981: 4	1991-1992: 7	2005-2006: 4	2016-2017: 4
1970-1971: 1	1981-1982: 6	1992-1993: 9	2006-2007: 7	2017-2018: 5
1971-1972: 5	1982-1983: 4	1993-1994: 8	2007-2008: 8	2018-2019: 4
1972-1973: 0	1983-1984: 4	1994-1995: 12	2008-2009: 7	2019-2020: 4
1973-1974: 2	1984-1985: 4	1995-1996: 10	2009-2010: 8	2020-2021: 8
				2021-2022: 9
				2024-2025: 6

Some of the differences between these counts prior to the late 1990s may have been a function of coverage. High counts there beginning in the late 1980s were made by boat and by multiple observers; duplicate counts of individuals are possible. Most of the totals prior to the mid-1980s were made from the south shore only and may have been underestimates.

Sightings in District I away from Cachuma through 2025 include (east to west): vic. Jameson Lake 1 November 2021, 12 June 2023, and 12 November–16 December 2023; just west of Jameson Lake 12 June 2023; Gibraltar Reservoir 2 January 1982, 31 December 1994, 31 December 2010, 18–29 December 2016, 17 January 2021, and 4 January 2025; 2 near there 10 October 2023; upper Santa Ynez River including Paradise area (possibly birds wandering east from Lake Cachuma) 2 January 1999, 3 January 2004 (3), 26 December 2004, 3 January 2009 (2), 18 September & 2 October 2010, 19 February 2021, and 1 January 2022; near Santa Ynez/Los Olivos 4 March–26 May 2005, 9 October 2005, and then 1–4 almost annually

thereafter; near Solvang 26 February 2015; vic. Buellton 9 January 2022 and late adults there 4 May 2011, 6 April 2013, 24 April 2016, 16 May 2017, and 21 April 2020; Twitchell Reservoir 25 February 1995; 1–3 in Sisquoc/Garey and Foxen Canyon Road area December 2019–January 2021; and Jaro Canyon southeast of Lompoc 31 January 2015. Some of these birds may be associated with nesting pairs not too far away (see below).

In 1989, a pair nested on the north side of Lake Cachuma, late winter–19+ July, with 1 young fledged by early July. In 1990, a pair nested there again and raised 2 young. No evidence of nesting was found in 1991. In 1992, up to 3 individuals (2 adults and 1 immature) were present in this area through early July and nesting was suspected. And in 1993, a nest with 2 eggs was present in March; 1 young fledged that summer. A pair was nesting again in early 1994 and a single juvenile was seen 25 June. Since then, 1 pair bred at this or a nearby site in a large Gray Pine near the Santa Cruz drainage from at least 1999 through 2004 (including up to 3 young observed in the nest) and in 2013 and 2021; with less direct breeding evidence obtained 2005–2026 around the lake, including the presence of 1 or 2 adult birds through spring and summer followed some years by 1 or 2 fledged young by late summer. A new breeding site was established in 2007 at Alisal Ranch near Solvang, with a pair at a nest from March–June most years through 2025; from 2008–2014 they hatched 2 young annually. Another nesting pair was at an undisclosed site near Santa Ynez/Los Olivos in 2007 and 2008; they may or may not have been actively nesting there again in 2009 and 2010; and 2 adults were there 10 June 2021. Singles were seen in that area 30 June 2011 and 28 July 2019, and up to 2 were there 7 March–30 May 2018. In addition, an active nest was present on the San Luis Obispo County side of Twitchell Reservoir in May–August 2011, March 2012, April 2020, February 2021, and May 2023. By 2012, it was thought that perhaps 4 pairs of Bald Eagles were nesting in the general Santa Ynez Valley area (N. Todd, in litt.). (Nesting eagles also have been re-established on Catalina and Santa Cruz Islands. Translocated birds began nesting on Santa Cruz Island beginning in 2006, the first such breeding on the northern Channel Island since 1949.)

An immature with a blue patagial tag, which had been released on Santa Cruz Island in 2003, was found at Lake Cachuma 8 July 2005 and later on the South Coast (see below); another bird with a blue tag was at Cachuma 23 September 2008; yet another marked Santa Cruz Island bird, released in 2006, was present on 20 March 2009 (and earlier in Goleta, see below); a sub-adult with blue tag was there 26 March 2013, another was there 5 July 2014, and 1 with a blue patagial tag near Los Olivos 18 October 2019 and 13 August–24 October 2021 had fledged on Santa Cruz Island in 2016.

Bald Eagles are rare to very rare visitors elsewhere. Records for District C since the late 1950s are: North Coast—Vandenberg SFB 29 February 1976, near Guadalupe 1 November 1991, Santa Ynez River mouth 2 December 1993–17 March 1994, and then 25+ records from 1997–2025 between 3 September and 29 May, plus earlier fall arrivals on 9 August 2020 at Jalama Beach County Park and 13 August 2024 at Minuteman Beach, and more unusual summer birds (north to south) near Casmalia 19 June 2026; on north Vandenberg SFB 2 June 1998, 6 June 2024, and 29 July 2026; at Jalama Beach County Park 9 August 2020; and just north of Point Conception 3 July 2024; South Coast—Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 9 November 1971, over Goleta 16 December 1975, and then 60+ records from 1983–2025 between 10 August–18 May. Summer records include (west to east) El Capitan State Beach 2 July 2023, west of Goleta 11 July 2016, northern Goleta 2 June 2023, eastern Santa Barbara 13 June 2017, and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 9 June 2022 and 21 June 2024. Individuals involved with the Channel Islands translocation program included 1 with a patagial tag from the Catalina Island reintroduction program in Isla Vista 21 September 1997, 1 with a patagial tag from Santa Cruz Island at Lake Cachuma in 2005 (see above) then appeared in Goleta 17 November 2006, another with a patagial tag in Goleta 22 March 2008, 1 with a patagial tag in Hope Ranch 8 August 2008, 1 with blue patagial tag from Santa Cruz Island in Goleta 6–9 February 2009, 1 with patagial tag in

Montecito 18–25 May 2009 had been released on Santa Cruz Island in 2005, 1 with patagial tag in Goleta 3 January 2011, and 1 with patagial tag in Hope Ranch 26 June 2014 had fledged on Santa Cruz Island in 2011. One individual tagged "A-17" moved from reservoirs near Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County, to near El Capitan and Refugio State Beaches between 9–16 August 2011 and subsequently to near the Santa Barbara Zoo on 30 August 2011. Another tagged bird was near Gaviota State Park 27 July 2012.

In District M, rare but multiple sightings in the Figueroa Mountain and Zaca Lake areas since 1990 may represent, in part, birds wandering up from Santa Ynez Valley nest sites. Elsewhere, 1 was at Refugio Pass 5 January 1975; singles were over La Cumbre Peak 2 January and 29 December 2016 and 4 January 2025; and 2 were near San Marcos Pass 22 February 2024 and 1 was there 18 May 2024.

In District V, an immature was at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 22 January 2019, 1 was near New Cuyama 17 November 2019, singles were along Cottonwood Creek at the border with District I on 7 January 2020 and 17 November 2024, and 1 was near Ventucopa 11 March 2020.

This species was formerly a more numerous permanent resident. It was abundant on the mainland of Southern California prior to 1876 (Henshaw 1876). Sixty years later, Willett (1933) said it was common only on the Channel Islands and was now rare on the mainland. The last known mainland nest sites (before nesting commenced again in 1989) were in the Santa Ynez Valley in 1935 (Rett fieldnotes), and near Carpinteria through the late 1930s and at Dos Pueblos Ranch, west of Goleta, until the early 1950s (Garrett and Dunn 1981). Other mainland county sightings that may have involved breeders were: (pair) Gaviota 1 May 1949, El Capitan State Beach 12 June–July 1949, and Santa Barbara 5–6 August 1950 and 19 March 1952.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

Casual visitor in Districts C and I.

There are five records: male shot 2 mi (3 km) "north" of Goleta 18 June 1933 (*FMNH; Willett 1933), 1 over Santa Barbara 3 June 1970, 1 near San Marcos Pass 27 May 2007 (ph. SBMNH), 1 at Alisal Ranch near Solvang 13–15 June 2018 (ph. SBMNH), and over the Mesa in Santa Barbara 17 June 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Gray Hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*)

Accidental.

An immature wintered along Highway 101 and Santa Claus Lane/Via Real in Carpinteria from 25 November 2012–16 March 2013 (ph. *NAB* 67:183, *WB* 45:261, SBMNH), establishing the first record for California. It returned in adult plumage the following winter, from 5 December 2013–22 March 2014 (ph. SBMNH) and again 29 November 2014–2 February 2015 (ph. SBMNH) but then disappeared and presumed perished.

Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)

Fairly common permanent resident in District I and along the South Coast, uncommon to fairly common along the North Coast, and uncommon at lower elevations of District M. Uncommon fall and winter visitor in District V, and rare in most of District M.

Red-shouldered Hawks frequent oak and riparian woodlands and are most numerous in District I and along the South Coast. They have adapted well to a moderate amount of human disturbance and inhabit well-vegetated residential areas. Numbers have increased over the past 30 years. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 106 individuals (4 January 1997). The maximum total on a Cachuma CBC is 10 birds (30 December 2008). Red-shouldereds are less numerous but widespread in natural habitat, particularly in riparian areas, along the North Coast. They avoid pure coniferous forests at the higher elevations of District M. One along Cottonwood Canyon Road along the north foothills of the Sierra Madre 4 June 2010 was somewhat unusual for the date. During fall and winter (as early as late July), there is some movement away from

breeding locales to semi-open country and agricultural areas throughout the county. A few may be found in the Cuyama Valley during this season (as early as 12 August 2020). There are a few records of transients at the higher elevations of District M, including a presumed dispersing juvenile near the summit of Big Pine Mountain 28 July 2015, as well as two or three winter records at elevations of 4000–5000 feet in the San Rafael Mountains between 1981 and 1985.

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)

Rare to very rare fall transient and casual winter visitor in District C; most records involve immature birds. Casual in Districts I and M, also in spring, and including several inferred, radio-tracked birds.

The first records of Broad-winged Hawk were of fall migrants in Montecito 28 September 1977, Goleta 6 October 1977, Santa Barbara 15 October 1979, and Goleta 29 October 1979. This was followed by 8 individuals during the 1980s, including the first record along the North Coast on 26 October 1980 near Guadalupe. Small numbers continued for the next two decades, including an exceptional (for the time) flock of 4 adults over Lake Los Carneros 8 October 2010 (ph. SBMNH).

The discovery during the 2010s of a viewpoint in the Montecito foothills for viewing small-but-regular numbers of migrating Broad-winged Hawks resulted in a total of 14 individuals in District C (13 along South Coast, 1 along North Coast) between 26 September–7 October 2012 and which included a flock of 9 birds over the Montecito foothills 4 October; a total of 14 birds in District C (13 South Coast, 1 North Coast) between 17 September–7 November 2016 and which included a flock of 9 birds over the Montecito foothills 1 October; a total of 17 birds over the Montecito foothills between 28 September–6 October 2017; a total of 12, mostly over foothills, between Santa Barbara and Carpinteria between 23–30 September and 1 additional bird near Dos Pueblos, west of Goleta, 1 October 2018; 1 at Jalama Road 23 September 2019 and a total of 5 between Goleta and Montecito between 3–19 October 2019; a total of 4 between Goleta and Montecito 11–17 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH) and 1 at Waller Park, Santa Maria, 13 October 2020; a total of 12 between Goleta and Summerland 27 September–11 October 2021; a total of 26 between Santa Barbara and Summerland between 24 September-9 October 2022, with highs of 6 birds on 4 October and 5 on 5 October, and near Lompoc 17 October 2022; a total of 22 between Goleta and Montecito (and including San Marcos Pass area) between 23 September–15 October 2023 including 11 over the Montecito foothills 23 September; a total of 21 between Goleta and Carpinteria between 24 September–13 October 2024 including 9 over the Santa Barbara foothills 5 October; but only 3 South Coast and 1 North Coast during 2025.

Between 1994–2015, 3 birds radio-tagged at the Marin Headlands hawk-watch site in Marin County by the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) were noted flying through Santa Barbara County. One tagged on 27 September 1994 was followed south to a roost site in Santa Maria late on 29 September, and then to near La Cumbre Peak on 30 September. Another fitted bird on 17 September 2012 was assumed to have passed through (probably interior) Santa Barbara County on 20 September, based on known locations in southern San Luis Obispo County late on 19 September and in Los Angeles County late on 20 September (GGRO 2013). A third radio-tagged individual was fitted on 23 September 2015 and was tracked to the Figueroa Mountain area, where it overnighted the night of 25–26 September; the bird then continued east and then south from there to near the Mexican border by 28 September.

Additional fall records in District I include 1 at Lake Cachuma 2 November 2013, a surprising 4 birds over Buellton 3 October 2017, 1 near Los Olivos 5 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 along the lower Sisquoc River 8 October 2022.

Single spring migrants were in District I near Los Prietos Ranger Station 20 April 2014 and in Colson Canyon (east of Santa Maria) 16 April 2016. At the lower elevations of District M,

individuals were in Bates Canyon in the Sierra Madre on 16 April 2016 and over East Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains on 14 May 2023.

The seven records of wintering birds are: Santa Barbara 12 March 1976, along Highway 101 in Montecito 23 January–14 April 1978 (ph. CBRC 2007, SBMNH), along Highway 101 near Carpinteria 28 January–13 April 1978 (ph. SBMNH), lower Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 30 December 1978–4 February 1979 (ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria 29 November–12 December 1982 (ph. SBMNH), near Los Alamos (in District I) 25 December 1982–6 March 1983 (ph. SBMNH), and near Carpinteria 2–15 January 2009. The number of wintering Broad-winged Hawks in California has declined substantially since the 1980s.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

Now a rare spring and very rare to casual fall transient. Casual in summer and winter. Formerly a rather common transient, often in large flocks, and probable local breeder, at least through the first half of 20th century. One or two recent nesting pairs in District V.

Swainson's Hawks frequent open country. There are old nesting records (eggs WFVZ) from "Santa Barbara County" on 19 April 1895 and from the Guadalupe area [possibly in San Luis Obispo County?] in [no date] 1896. Early in the 20th century, Dawson (1923) wrote that they were "a common migrant" and cited a record of 24 over Goleta 3 May 1914. At this time, spring transients were seen between mid-March and early May, whereas fall transients were encountered mainly during September and October. The species was believed to have nested in the Santa Ynez Valley (T. N. Metcalf pers. comm.). A decline in the number of birds migrating through and nesting in the state was noted by Willett (1933). This decrease became even more severe by the 1950s and continued through the 1980s. A notable increase in numbers, as well as increases in the number of winter records and of very early northbound migrants, began elsewhere in the state by the late 1990s.

Between the mid-1960s and mid-1990s, there were 18 county records. Single fall individuals were in Montecito 17 September 1974 (*SBMNH), Goleta 2 September 1976, Goleta 20 October 1982, Santa Barbara 23 August 1985, Lake Cachuma 29 October 1988, Goleta 20 August 1989, and near Santa Maria 19–25 September 1992 (ph. *AB* 47:147, SBMNH); an exceptionally late immature was near Santa Maria 2 December 1979. Single spring transients were in Goleta 23 May 1982, over El Capitan State Beach 30 March 1986, near Santa Maria 22–29 March 1987 (ph. SBMNH), at Los Prietos, upper Santa Ynez River, 21 April 1989, in Cuyama Valley 17 April 1990, near Santa Maria 7 April 1991, and near Lompoc 16 May 1991.

Since the mid-1990s, the number of spring records has increased, whereas fall reports have remained steady. During this period, some 19 birds were seen in spring along the North Coast (between 21 March and 21 May) and ca. 78 along the South Coast through 2017 (including a total of 30+ individuals at many sites in the county during 2011 and a total of 19 birds over Carpinteria 11–20 April 2016). A further increase in numbers along the South Coast resulted from the discovery and survey of a migration corridor along the Carpinteria, Summerland, and Montecito foothills, 2018–2025. Records are from as early as 8 March 2018 Carpinteria and as late as 25 May 2022 near Summerland. Exceptional counts include 17 birds above the Carpinteria foothills 2 April 2018, 11 there 20 April 2019, 16 near Summerland 15 May 2019, and a total of 27 birds between 10–18 May 2019 above the Montecito foothills, with a high there of 12 on 12 May, and a record 64 birds tallied between 4 April–4 May 2020, with a single-day high of 32 over Montecito 17 April. In District M, this same phenomenon brought 1 individual over West Camino Cielo 31 May 2025 (late) and 2 birds over East Camino Cielo on 23 April 2026.

In District I, 45+ birds were recorded since 1995, between 8 March and 30 May, with a single-site high of 9 at the Sedgwick Reserve 9 April 2021.

More than 35 spring migrants in District V (as early as 11 March 2019 and as late as 26 May 2019 (4)) are in addition to the flock of 40 near New Cuyama 6 April 2007, 16 there 26 April

2011, 38 tallied 16 April 2018, 12 on 17 May 2025, and a record 103 birds in the Valley on 1 April and 54 along Aliso Canyon Road 7 April 2021.

During autumn, only 5 were found along the North Coast (near Santa Maria 20 September 2015, Santa Ynez River mouth 28 August 2016, south Vandenberg SFB 21 September and 6 October 2019, Mussel Rock 3 September 2020), only 14 along the South Coast (7 in Goleta between 26 August 2023 and 3 November 2021, 6 at hawkwatch sites in the Montecito and Carpinteria foothills 2018–2025, and Gaviota State Park 21 August 2020); 2 in District I (near Lake Cachuma ca. 31 August 2011, Ballard 8 September 2011); 3 in District V (Cuyama Valley 15 September 2009, Aliso Canyon Road 22 August 2019, near New Cuyama 17 September 2025); and 2 in District M (over Figueroa Mountain 27 October 2002, over La Cumbre Peak 28 October 2012).

In summer in District C, up to 2 one-year-olds near Santa Maria 24 July–16 September 1982 (ph. SBMNH) represented one of the few contemporary mid-summer records for coastal Southern California. From 29–31 May 1988, 2 (adult and one-year-old) were seen near Guadalupe (ph. SBMNH); these birds were probably part of a summering concentration of 10 individuals (1 adult, 9 one-year-olds) just north of Guadalupe inside San Luis Obispo County 3 July–20 August 1988. Three of these birds crossed into Santa Barbara County on 5 and 8 July. An adult was near Santa Maria 25 June 1997 and an immature was near the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 June 1998. Along the South Coast, an immature was at Parma Park, Santa Barbara, 25 June 2018 (ph. SBMNH) and one of uncertain age was at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 2 July 2023. A huge surprise was a concentration of 30 birds over Ranger Peak in District M on 16 July 2023.

During summer in District V, 1 was in the Cuyama Valley 15 June 1998. A nesting pair was discovered just inside San Luis Obispo County in the Cuyama Valley annually from 2010 through 2015+, with 1 of the adults seen inside Santa Barbara County near New Cuyama 18 June 2011, up to 2 birds vic. Cuyama and New Cuyama 8 June–9 July 2014, up to 2 near Cuyama 19–25 April and 1 July 2015, a juvenile seen 6 August 2015, and 1 on 5 July 2020—all ca. 3–6 mi (5–10 km) from the San Luis Obispo nest site. In 2016, breeding was finally documented inside Santa Barbara County, with a pair, nest, and 2 fledglings between 6 April–9 August (ph. SBMNH). During August 2018, eight sightings involving 10 individuals at various sites in the Valley included an uncertain mix of local breeders and through-migrants. In 2019, a presumed returning breeding pair was found on 4 April and fledged two young in July–August; and they did so again 16 April–15 July 2020 and fledged two young in July. One near Ventucopa 3 August 2022 may have been a local breeder.

One in Goleta 1 February 1989 was unprecedented, as it represented one of only several winter records at the time for Southern California. More recently, early northbound migrants have begun to appear routinely this early in the state's southeastern deserts; thus, the 1989 bird's status as a true "winter" record is no longer certain. What was probably a very early northbound migrant was near the Santa Ynez River mouth 11 February 1996, whereas 1 near Cuyama 18 January 2004 may well have been attempting to winter locally.

Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*)

Casual fall and winter visitor in Districts C and I. One summer record in District M.

One was in the Riviera area of Santa Barbara 28 December 1993–10 January 1994 (ph. SBMNH). What was believed to be the same individual then became a winter fixture mostly in the Goleta area for the following 13 years, between winter 1994–1995 and 2006–2007 (ph. *NAB* 61:327, SBMNH); it arrived as early as 24 August (1994; though otherwise usually in late September or October) and departed as late as 4 April (1997; but usually in March). It was particularly fond of the area between North Fairview Avenue and Los Carneros Road, although on occasion it was noted wandering as far west as Refugio State Beach and as far east as the east

side of Santa Barbara city. Another bird was in both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties along Rincon Creek 6 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH). An immature was over the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 6 January 2020, 1 was in the Farren Road area, Goleta, from 22 October–1 November 2021 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was near Lake Los Carneros 22 February 2025, and probably the same bird was in the Casitas Pass Road area of Carpinteria the next day on 23 February 2025.

An immature Zone-tailed was seen inland near Santa Ynez 31 October 2010 (ph. SBMNH) and another bird was in the Happy Canyon Road area from 27 December 2024–9 January 2025.

A Zone-tailed Hawk was described from near Sheep Camp, western Sierra Madre, 30 June 2006.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Common and widespread year-round in all Districts. Numbers are augmented by transients and winter visitors.

Red-tailed Hawks are found throughout Santa Barbara County in open and semi-open habitats, but they are less numerous in chaparral and scarce in the most urban and heavily wooded areas. They usually occur singly or in small groups; only rarely are localized concentrations noted. Although the species is present year-round, there may be a substantial replacement of individuals on a seasonal basis. A noticeable increase in the number of birds from the north occurs from fall to early spring. This increase is most evident in areas where the species is uncommon or fairly common in summer (e.g., in agricultural and other disturbed areas in the Santa Maria Valley, between Refugio and Carpinteria, and in the Cuyama Valley). For example, 30 were in the Cuyama Valley 6 November 1977 and 7 January 1978, 15 were there 10 March 1979, but only 4 were seen 30 April and 19 May 1979. In the Santa Maria Valley, 25 were seen 2 December 1979, but summer counts are usually fewer than 5 individuals (high of 9 birds on 31 July 1980 and, exceptionally, up to 16 in a small area of high rodent density 24 July–16 September 1982). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 180 individuals (31 December 1966), although some duplication is likely. The Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 89 birds (29 December 2009). In contrast, this species remains relatively common in summer on Vandenberg SFB and in the Santa Ynez Valley. Summer surveys of the Big Pine Mountain area typically record no more than 3 or 4 individuals.

Unusual was a noticeable movement of this species in late November 1984, including 23 moving east over Carpinteria on 23 November and 15 in one hour moving east down the Santa Ynez Mountains near San Marcos Pass on 27 November.

Throughout much of the West, a high degree of plumage variability exists in this species, but we see little of that plumage variation locally. Most breeding birds are light morphs, with intermediate and dark morphs sprinkled throughout. A particularly interesting individual present near Santa Maria 8 December 1979 was very pale and may have been a “Krider’s” Red-tailed Hawk. There are three records of dark-morph “Harlan’s” Hawk (*B. j. harlani*): Goleta 15 November 1990, near Carpinteria 3 December 2004, and Carpinteria 3 January 2015 (ph. SBMNH); and one record of a light-morph Harlan’s: Goleta 17 November 2013 (ph. SBMNH).

A Red-tailed Hawk banded at the Marin Headlands in Northern California in October 2012 was found dead in Montecito on 6 January 2018.

Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*)

Formerly a very rare and somewhat irregular winter visitor in District V and a very rare and irregular fall transient and winter visitor to the Santa Maria Valley and Vandenberg SFB south to Point Conception in District C. Casual elsewhere in District C and in Districts I and M. Presently casual throughout.

Rough-legged Hawks frequent open country. They were seen most regularly in the agricultural areas of the Cuyama Valley, where small numbers (fewer than 5 individuals) were present (formerly) during many years between November and February. The high count there was 6 on 7 January 1978 (an invasion year). In the Santa Maria Valley, 1 was near Santa Maria 6

January 1965, up to 3 were near Guadalupe 2 December 1979–5 January 1980, single individuals were there 8 November and 23–28 December 1980, an early individual was near Santa Maria 26 October 1985, a late bird was there 29 March 1986, and a total of 4 were present 5 November–26 December 1988. Two were seen on Vandenberg SFB during winter 1977–1978, single individuals were near Point Conception 29 January 1987 and 11 January 1988, 1 was on north Vandenberg SFB 18 January–12 February 1988, and up to 2 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 December 1988–11 February 1989. During this same period, Rough-leggeds were casual elsewhere in District C and in District I; most records were of fall migrants associated with periodic flights from the north into California (e.g., in 1977–1978). The records were of single individuals in Montecito 21 November 1963, Goleta 10 December 1963, near Lake Cachuma 5 January 1976, Goleta 24 November 1977, another there 25 November 1977, near Paradise, Santa Ynez Valley, 31 December 1977, near Los Alamos 2 January 1978, and in Carpinteria 25 November 1984. In District M, singles were near Madulce Peak 24 January 1984 and 4 February 1984.

Since the 1980s, this species has declined throughout Southern California and is now of strictly casual occurrence in Santa Barbara County. One was reported near the Santa Ynez River mouth 2 March 1997, up to 2 were in the Los Alamos area between 20 December 2000–26 January 2001, and singles were in New Cuyama 11 December 2005 and 29 October 2006.

There are a number of other sightings of this species that lack adequate documentation and are not included. This species is often confused with the common and variably plumaged Red-tailed Hawk.

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)

Uncommon fall transient and winter visitor in District V and locally in the western section of District I and in the Santa Maria Valley in District C. Very uncommon on Vandenberg SFB and in the Lompoc area. Rare between Gaviota and Point Conception. Very rare elsewhere in Districts I, C, and M.

Ferruginous Hawks frequent open country and are most numerous in the grassland and agricultural areas of the Cuyama Valley, where they occur from October to early April. The maximum one-day count there is 15 in the Santa Barbara County section on 19 November 1978. The conversion of grassland, pastures, and alfalfa to row crops and orchards has resulted in mostly lower numbers since the 1980s (e.g., typically only 4+ seen per day, with 7 birds on 28 December 2014 and 12 February 2019, but perhaps as many as 21 during multi-day surveys 5–7 January 2024). The species is also found in smaller numbers during fall and winter in the Santa Maria Valley (where it also has declined substantially, but where 8 present in pastures near Guadalupe on both 2 December 2018 and 13 January 2020, and 11 tallied 1 December 2019); in the Vandenberg SFB/Lompoc/Point Conception/Hollister Ranch area; and in the Los Alamos area, near Buellton, and near Santa Ynez/Los Olivos (where much grassland has been converted to vineyards). In these areas, an average of 2–4 individuals can be seen in a day. The high count on the Cachuma CBC is 5 birds on 26 December 2014. A total of 20+ in the Lompoc/Vandenberg SFB area 15 December 1991 is a very high count. Seven were along Foxen Canyon Road 21 December 2019. Most interesting was the discovery of loosely-associated evening roosts in Los Alamos, with 15 birds counted on 12 January 1988, 14 seen 23 January 1993, and up to 6 tallied 16 December 2018–24 February 2019; as well as in Lompoc, almost annually since 1999–2000 and with a high count of 7 birds 15 December 2002; and in Orcutt for 9+ years since 2000 with as many as 24 birds tallied. These roosts may form as early as mid-October and break up by late January to early February.

One near the Santa Maria River mouth 12 September 2025, 1 at Sedgwick Reserve 17 September 2021, and 1 near Guadalupe 18 September 1979 (ph. SBMNH) were very early. Other individuals were somewhat early on 21 September 2004 Vandenberg SFB, 22 September

2018 southwest of Lompoc, 22 September 2020 Foxen Canyon, 25 September 2009 north Vandenberg SFB, 25 September 2018 Summerland foothills, 26 September 2000 and 26 September 2018 Cuyama Valley, and 26 September 2019 San Miguelito Road near Lompoc. The latest spring record in District C is 7 April 2012 Lompoc, and in District I it is 17 April 2019 near Buellton. Later still, in District V, singles were in the Cuyama Valley 22 April 2000 and 21 April 2021, and, exceptionally, 4 May 1996, 4 May 2010, and 9 May 1998.

This species is primarily a very rare fall transient and winter visitor along the South Coast east of Gaviota. One in Goleta 19 September 1985 was very early. There were approximately 18 fall (mid-October+) and 16 winter sightings between Gaviota and Carpinteria between 1961 and 1994, most from the area west of Goleta. One individual remained through 9 March 1985 in Santa Barbara. One in Santa Barbara in "late March" 1978 may have been a spring migrant. Between 1994 and 2025, there were just 10 South Coast sightings in autumn (earliest: 25 September 2018 Summerland foothills, 27 September 2021 Goleta, 29 September 2016 Gaviota) and 17 in winter. Earlier 20th century South Coast reports were: vic. Santa Barbara 30 November 1914, 21 December 1923, 26 December 1926, and 24 October 1964. This species likely was more regular in occurrence along the South Coast when more extensive grassland and pasture were present.

Single individuals near Bluff Camp, south of Big Pine Mountain (in District M), 18 October 1981 and 3 March 1982 were migrants. Two singles at eastern Sierra Madre potreros 25 November 2021 suggest that this species might occur somewhat regularly there.

An average of 1 dark-morph individual is seen every year, with most sightings coming from the Cuyama and Santa Maria Valleys.

A fledgling banded in southern Idaho on 23 June 2008 was recovered just east of Lompoc on 26 January 2009.

BARN OWLS (TYTONIDAE)

American Barn Owl (*Tyto furcata*)

Uncommon permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V; uncommon to rare in District M.

American Barn Owls occur in open country and in residential and urban areas. They are most numerous in grassland and agricultural areas and can be found roosting in isolated clumps of trees surrounded by open country, particularly in introduced palms and in riparian willows and oaks, and sometimes in holes and recesses in banks and cliffs. They generally avoid thick chaparral and the more heavily wooded areas. Overall numbers may fluctuate substantially, probably in response to prey abundance. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 12 individuals (3 January 2009). The high count inland on the Cachuma CBC is 9 birds (28 December 2010), but other totals on that CBC have been 0–4. A successful nest-box program has been at least partly offset by declines linked to loss of open-country habitat, high mortality from collisions with vehicles, and likely predation by Great Horned Owls. A census of road-killed birds and mammals along Highway 101 between Winchester Canyon and Gaviota State Park during 2003–2005 recorded a staggering 228 road-killed American Barn Owls during 165 round-trips, with peak numbers found during July (L. R. Ballard in litt.).

Reports of American Barn Owls flying over the ocean at night are especially interesting. One was seen flying by Platform Hondo located several miles off Refugio State Beach during December 1980; there are two sightings from 1–3 mi (2–5 km) off Goleta November 1980 and 30 April 1981; and 1 at Platform Harvest during fall 1991 was seen to catch migrant passerines.

In District M, American Barn Owls occur very locally in open grassland areas, such as near Figueroa Mountain or in the Sierra Madre. They are very rare in the San Marcos Pass area. Their true abundance in District M is uncertain.

In District V, American Barn Owls are uncommon to fairly common and widespread.

OWLS (STRIGIDAE)

Flammulated Owl (*Psiloscops flammeolus*)
Rare and local summer resident in District M.

A calling bird in pine-fir forest on Big Pine Mountain 21 April 1989 was followed by a total of 3 individuals recorded 21–22 June 1989, and then from 1–4 birds most, but not all, years during annual surveys in June or early July from 1990–2016. High counts were 6 individuals each 10–11 July 1998, 18–19 June 2004, and 13–14 June 2008. Since then, the only records are of up to 2 birds on 12 June and 17–18 June 2022, 2 birds on 27 June 2025, and 2 on 11 July 2026. (Fieldwork there prior to 1989 did not include playing taped calls of this species at night.)

Flammulated Owls are very local summer residents on the higher mountains in Southern California.

Western Screech-Owl (*Megascops kennicottii*)
Uncommon to fairly common permanent resident in Districts C and I, and at the lower elevations of District M including in canyons bordering District V.

Western Screech-Owls are found in woodlands, particularly those dominated by oaks. They are most numerous in foothill canyons along the South Coast and in dense oak woodland in District I, and they also occur in District M where oaks are fairly numerous (e.g., San Marcos Pass, Bluff Camp; a few as high as Bear Camp near Big Pine Mountain). A total of 16 birds along the north side of Refugio Pass 22 July 2010 was a high total for one area. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 11 individuals (28 December 2010). Screech-Owls also have been found in oak and pinyon-juniper woodland in canyons bordering the south and possibly the east sides of the Cuyama Valley (e.g., Bates Canyon, Aliso Park, Tinta Creek, Santa Barbara Canyon; and Ballinger Canyon 23 May 2022).

Along the South Coast, Western Screech-Owls also occur in rather small, isolated populations on the outer coastal plain in the more wooded residential areas. They are uncommon in oak woodland in Hope Ranch; small populations may persist locally in southern Goleta (i.e., near More Mesa) and in the Mesa area of Santa Barbara. One in downtown Santa Barbara at Canon Perdido X Garden Streets 24 February 2016 was at an atypical location.

This species is found locally in interior sections of the North Coast. A small number are known to be present in the oak woodland south of Casmalia, locally in the interior sections of north Vandenberg SFB, and in the Miguelito County Park area near Lompoc. One was in willow riparian 2 mi (3 km) east of the Santa Ynez River mouth, north Vandenberg SFB, 7 April 1996; and 1 was found dead in riparian containing very few oaks at Barka Slough, north Vandenberg SFB, 14 July 1996 (*UCSB).

In District I, 1 found dead near Los Alamos 31 May 1994 was in an area with very few oaks.

In District M, 1 near the summit of Big Pine Mountain 17 June 1996 was at a higher elevation than normal.

Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*)
Fairly common permanent resident in all Districts.

Great Horned Owls occur in a wide variety of habitats, from lowland open country to chaparral, deciduous and coniferous forest, pinyon-juniper woodland, and desert washes. Large trees or cliff ledges or cavities are needed for roosting and nesting. Although the species occurs fairly commonly in residential areas, it is largely absent from most urban centers. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 39 individuals (3 January 2009); the Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 19 birds (28 December 2010). Summer fieldwork in the Big Pine Mountain area has recorded this species during only about half the surveys, 1981–2026.

Northern Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*)

Uncommon permanent resident in District M and in the foothills of Districts C and I.

Northern Pygmy-Owls are most numerous in open woodland in canyons and, especially, on the higher mountains. They occur in coniferous woodland in District M and in oaks and sycamores in foothill canyons of Districts C and I and at the lower elevations of District M (including on the north flank of the Sierra Madre in Bates Canyon). A total of 6 in the Big Pine Mountain/Madulce Peak area 10–12 June 1993, 7 on the Cachuma CBC (both 28 December 2007 and 28 December 2010), and 7 individuals on the Santa Barbara CBC (3 January 1976) are the highest counts. The South Coast canyons occupied during the past 50 years include (from west to east) Arroyo Hondo, Refugio, Corral, El Capitan, Winchester, San Roque, Rattlesnake, Cold Spring, San Ysidro, Romero, Toro, Sutton, and Rincon. A few birds may be present also near the coast where suitable vegetation in canyons extends close to the ocean between Gaviota and west of Goleta and in the Rincon area. The only canyon bordering the North Coast known to support this species is Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc, where 3 birds present 19 July 1991, an active nest was found in May–June 1993, and 1 individual was noted 2 December 2000; also, 1 bird was in nearby La Salle Canyon 20 December 2015. One was at Los Flores Ranch near Sisquoc 25 February 2017.

Several sightings in late summer, fall, and winter from additional foothill canyons along the South Coast suggest limited, irregular downslope movement during these seasons; such reports come from San Antonio Creek near Highway 154, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden area in Mission Canyon (where also noted once in summer: 29 June 2004), the Foothill Road area in Santa Barbara, Parma Park, and lower Sycamore Canyon bordering Montecito. An additional summer record comes from Orpet Park on the Riveria 17 July 2025. Farther wanderings on two occasions have carried individuals onto the coastal plain in Santa Barbara: 1 was found next to a restaurant on lower Milpas Street near Highway 101 on 20 August 1976 (*SBMNH) and another was found in northwestern Hope Ranch 14 February 1977 (*SBMNH). Other presumably out-of-range individuals include 1 along the Santa Ynez River near Sweeney Road, east of Lompoc, 14 July 1991; what was presumably the same individual along San Antonio Creek near El Rancho Road on north Vandenberg SFB 27 December 1992–1 January 1993, 2 January 1994, and 1 January 1995; and 1 at the Harris Grade summit 11 February 2011.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

Now a rare transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and V; casual at the lower elevations of District M. Formerly common; decreasing in numbers at all seasons. Nearly extirpated as a nesting species; possibly persists as a breeder only in the Cuyama Valley.

Burrowing Owls frequent extensive dry or sparse grassland and agricultural areas. Ground-squirrel burrows, badger holes, and occasional diggings of other larger mammals are utilized for roosting and nesting. Roosting sites during the non-breeding season also may occur at drainage and irrigation culverts and at rock cairns. This species was formerly much more numerous. Streator (1886) noted that it was "common, breeds"; and Willett (1912) wrote that it was a "common resident from the coast to the base of the mountains." Bartholomew (1940) had seven sightings in 1937 and 1938 in the upper Santa Ynez River watershed and along the nearby crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Coinciding with the loss of grassland habitat, excessive rodent control, and the extensive use of pesticides, Burrowing Owls are now nearly completely extirpated. A pair nested on northeastern Vandenberg SFB in 1977, but Holmgren and Collins in 1999 stated that there were no known nesting records for the base for the "last 15 years." A high 4 pairs were found breeding in fields west of Santa Maria 7 June 1980, and 1 or 2 pairs persisted there through the early 1990s. Until the early 2000s, 1 or 2 pairs continued to breed sporadically in the Cuyama Valley (e.g., pair with juveniles 13 June 2008 and juveniles seen 15 June 2011); but their current nesting status is uncertain.

Numbers are augmented by wintering birds from elsewhere. Since the late 1970s, transients and wintering birds have been seen most regularly, October–March, in the Vandenberg SFB/Point Conception/Hollister Ranch areas and in the Santa Ynez Valley. On Vandenberg SFB, 31 separate localities supported 47 observations of Burrowing Owls between 1995 and 1997. Most sightings were associated with range management areas, and the remainder were in either coastal sage scrub or dune scrub (Whitney and Kudrak 1999). Since the mid-1990s, the high one-day count is an exceptional 13 birds on north Vandenberg SFB 15 October 1997; 9 were found on the La Purisima CBC 22 December 1996. The Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC has recorded the species annually, but never more than 7 individuals. Numbers have declined further. Seven were on north Vandenberg SFB 23 December 2011.

Along the South Coast, the earliest arrival dates are 16 September 1994 Goleta and 20 September 1993 Santa Barbara Harbor (see below). Prior to 1980, Santa Barbara CBCs recorded as many as 6 individuals (19 December 1971). The number of wintering birds has declined substantially since then, with an average of only 1–3 individuals seen each year along the South Coast east of Gaviota (high counts: 5 during winters 1998–1999, 2006–2007, and 2013–2014). Favored sites over the past three decades have been More Mesa and San Marcos Foothills (e.g., 3 present November–December 2006). One present offshore on Platform Harvest during October 1991 (*SBMNH) was seen to catch migrant passerines. One was there 16 October 2010. Another migrant in atypical habitat was on the Santa Barbara Harbor sandspit 20 September 1993. The latest departure dates are 2 April 1982 Santa Barbara, through 5 April 2021 near Devereux Slough, and 19 April 2000 Coal Oil Point Reserve (*UCSB). One in Santa Barbara from mid-July through mid-September 1994 was unusual.

In District I, the earliest fall migrant arrival is 27+ August 2013 near Santa Ynez. The Cachuma CBC has recorded Burrowing Owls on only half the counts, with a maximum of only 2 individuals. A recent high of 4 birds were in the Santa Ynez area during winter 2018–2019.

Two birds were in District M along East Camino Cielo 6 December 2011, and 3 were in the Sierra Madre at Santa Barbara Potrero 11 November 2019.

Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*)

Very uncommon permanent resident in Districts I and M. Very rare visitor to foothill canyons along the South Coast, and casual out onto the coastal plain.

Spotted Owls frequent cool canyons with a dense growth of oaks, alders, bays, maples, or sycamores. A small number also occur in dense oak-coniferous woodland in District M. This species is declining as a breeder where human intrusion occurs (e.g., Cold Springs Creek near Los Laureles Canyon, possibly lower Tequepis Canyon), and where Great Horned Owls are established. The effects of forest fires are not known in our area. Spotted Owls occur in the Santa Ynez, San Rafael, and Sierra Madre ranges, with more suitable habitat and more occurrences in the eastern portions of each. These sites, along with those in western Ventura County, form one of four major population centers between Monterey and San Diego Counties (Gould et al. 1987). Prior to 1987, nine sites in the Los Padres National Forest were known. In that year, only three of those sites produced owls, but 16 new sites were detected, many more than in any other forest district surveyed that year south of Monterey.

Surveys were repeated between 1989 and 1991 focusing only in the Santa Barbara Ranger District. In 1989, 47 owls were found at 10 of 17 known locations and at 8 new (since the 1987 study) locations (Winter and Sandburg 1989). It should be noted that not all known sites were covered, and many surveys were conducted during the daytime when detection is difficult.

Since 1989, sites for this species in the Santa Ynez Mountains are on the south slope—i.e., Rincon Creek and near Gobernador Creek—and in several of the larger drainages on the north slope, including Alder Creek, Escondido Canyon, Los Laureles Canyon, Tequepis Canyon, Quiota Creek, Refugio Canyon, and, formerly, Nojoqui Falls Park. Santa Barbara CBCs have

recorded as many as 6 individuals (5 January 2019). In the San Rafael Mountains, sites are north and east of the Figueroa Mountain and Ranger Peak areas, in tributaries of Manzana Creek, canyons near Big Pine Mountain and Madulce Peak, in the upper and middle Sisquoc, and the upper forks and tributaries of the Santa Cruz and Alamar drainages. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 3 individuals (28 December 2010). In the Sierra Madre, they have been found in Bates Canyon and Lion Canyon.

Seasonal movements occur between late summer and winter in District M, and very rarely individuals reach the South Coast foothills and coast. Single individuals were present at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in Mission Canyon 15 October–28 November 1975 and 19 January 1977. One was in Montecito 15 November–18 December 1981. One picked up at the Santa Barbara Municipal Golf Course, Santa Barbara, 2 November 2000 subsequently died (*SBMNH). One was in Tucker's Grove Park near Santa Barbara 14–17 November 2007. Even more unusual were single records well onto the coastal plain in Hope Ranch 31 December 1977 to mid-January 1978, 14 December 1980, and 23 October–9 December 1982.

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

Status unclear. A very rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C; casual in summer along the North Coast. Probably a rare to very rare transient, winter visitor, and irregular breeder in Districts I, M, and V. Formerly more numerous.

Long-eared Owls use riparian woodland (particularly dense groves of willows) or, in the Cuyama Valley, large trees and junipers, for nesting. Along the coast, they have been found roosting in more diverse situations, including in exotic plantings such as tamarisk and olive trees.

This species was formerly a locally common resident and breeder in bottomlands in coastal Southern California during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Eggs from the Guadalupe area (WFVZ) come from March 1896. A nest with 5 eggs (SBMNH) was in Goleta 3 April 1928 and an adult was seen there 14 January 1940. Another nest was inland in Aliso Canyon 17 March 1935. Grinnell and Miller (1944) cited a decline in numbers by the 1940s due, at least in part, to the loss of habitat. Additional losses are likely the result of substantial predation by Great Horned Owls. Additional nesting records through the 1960s included at least 2 nests near Buellton in March–April 1951 (eggs WFVZ), a nest with 5 young at Santa Rosa Park along the Santa Ynez River between Lompoc and Buellton April–May 1964, and nesting over several years in the mid-to-late 1960s along Zaca Creek Road, all in District I.

More recent records suggest that this species occasionally continues to breed in the backcountry, portions of which remain largely undisturbed. Nesting was confirmed in 1987 when a pair with 1 or 2 young was found along Mono Creek near the upper Santa Ynez River 2–3 May, with 1 still present 23 May; up to 3 were there 6–10 July 1990. One seen next to a possible nest along the Sisquoc River north of Figueroa Mountain 24–25 March 1982 (ph. SBMNH), a bird along the upper Santa Ynez River one-quarter mile east of Gibraltar Reservoir 18 April 1982 (ph. SBMNH), and another individual near Gibraltar Reservoir 7 July 1997. One bird was near Santa Ynez 1 May 2011. Bordering Districts M and V, at least 1 pair was known to nest annually just inside Santa Barbara County along Tinta Creek from 1957 through at least May 1980, when a nest with 3 young was only one hundred yards inside Ventura County (ph. SBMNH). An adult was seen again along Tinta Creek briefly in 1981 and a pair was present there from March–April 1982. Nesting also has been documented in Santa Barbara Canyon, with an adult photographed on a nest (located, atypically, on a small cliff) 12–13 April 1975 (ph. SBMNH). One was found in Ballinger Canyon 25 April 2008. Two were calling farther west just inside District M near Aliso Park 28 April–5 May 2014 and again 18 March–2 April 2017, a family group (2 adults, 4 juveniles) was there 14–24 June 2018, and 1 or 2 families were present 7 May–27 June 2019 and 13 March–14 June 2021. One was in Bates Canyon 14 October 2019 and 26 March 2020. Long-eared Owls have been found nesting somewhat regularly immediately to the north in southern San Luis Obispo County (northern Cuyama/Carrizo Plain area).

An individual seen at Barka Slough, north Vandenberg SFB, on the border between Districts C and I, 16 July 1980 was in appropriate nesting habitat. A juvenile was found dead near San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB, 5 June 2003 (*SBMNH) and another juvenile was found dead there 17 June 2017, and 1 live bird was seen there 27 November 2005.

There were 14 records away from possible breeding sites between 1960–1993. Twelve of those were from the South Coast as follows: Isla Vista 19 October 1962 (*SBMNH); Dos Pueblos Ranch, west of Goleta, 10 January 1967 "and thereafter" (at least three winters in a row), with 3 there during winter 1967–1968 (first appearing 3 October); near Devereux Slough 13 September 1976 and 27 October 1977; Hope Avenue, Santa Barbara, 25 February 1978 (*SBMNH); near Carpinteria in March 1978; Gaviota State Park 8–26 October 1979 (ph. SBMNH); Goleta Slough January–13 February 1982 and again 2 January 1983; Gaviota State Park 6 October 1985; and Goleta 29 January–7 February 1993. Along the North Coast, a roost of up to 10 was in the upper Miguelito Canyon area near Lompoc, 19 December 1992–3 January 1993 (ph. SBMNH), and 2 were there 6 November 1993. In District I, 1 was found dead at Lake Cachuma 31 March 1988.

Between 1994 and 2026, there have been some 29 additional county records (involving 46 individuals) during the non-breeding season: from Districts C (18 records), I (five records), M (two records, Manzana Creek 17 February 2018 and near Figueroa Mountain 19 March 2018), and V (four records)—between 10 October (2007, San Marcos Foothills, Santa Barbara [*UCSB]) and 4 April (2001, El Jaro Creek east of Lompoc, freshly dead)—and with high counts of 3 in upper Miguelito Canyon 16 December 2007, 4 in Santa Barbara Canyon 31 October 2010, 6 on north Vandenberg SFB 24–26 December 2011 and 3 there 23 December 2012, and 3 near New Cuyama 9–26 February 2019. Nine of these total records involved dead birds or partial remains (*SBMNH, UCSB), including four of the reports from the South Coast.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

Rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C. Casual in Districts I and V. Decreasing in numbers. One nesting record in District V.

Short-eared Owls are found in extensive grassland and marshland near the coast, less regularly in agricultural areas. Until the mid-1980s, they may have occurred somewhat regularly during fall and winter in the Santa Maria Valley—near Guadalupe and the Santa Maria River mouth—and on Vandenberg SFB and Hollister Ranch. Singles at the Santa Ynez River mouth 24–31 August 1989, near Santa Maria 30 August 1987, and near Point Arguello 31 August 2003 were early. Up to 25 in pastureland near Guadalupe 23 November 1979–January 1980 was an exceptional concentration. Between 1988 and 2025, there were some 12 records (involving 21 individuals) at the Santa Ynez River mouth between mid-November and late February, with up to 5 there 29 November 1988–2 January 1989. Otherwise, up to 3 were at Wall Beach, north Vandenberg SFB, 14–28 February+ 1998, 2 were there 16 December 2000, 1 was on south Vandenberg SFB 17 December 2000, 1 was at the Santa Maria River mouth 1 January 2008, 1 was on north Vandenberg SFB 21 September 2010 (early), and 1 was there 23 December 2012. A bird near Sisquoc 6 April 2010 was bordering District I and possibly a spring migrant.

Along the South Coast, the species was known to occur regularly at More Mesa bordering Goleta until the late 1980s, and again from 1993 through 2003, from 2011–2014, and from 2017–2026, with 1 or 2 individuals present most winters between November–March, with a very few records from October, none recent. The high count there was 5 during winter 1970–1971; a more recent maximum is of up to 3 birds during 1999–2000. The latest date is 9 April 2003. Away from More Mesa there have been relatively few records since 1970, with six or seven sightings for the Devereux and Goleta Slough areas; single specimens (at SBMNH) from Santa Barbara February 1970 and 11 November 1975; and singles at the Santa Barbara Harbor breakwater 11 October 1988, in Carpinteria 2 November 1997, at Ellwood Mesa 8 December

1999, at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 17 October 1999, 20 December 1999, and 30 November–3 December 2019, Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 31 October 2021, near El Capitan 25 November 2024, and near Gaviota 21 December 2025. A particularly interesting record is of a migrant that flew in off the ocean at Goleta Point 25 April 1997.

This species formerly occurred regularly in winter during the early 1900s at the old "Estero" in Santa Barbara and at Carpinteria Salt Marsh, at least from 1921 to 1929. There is also one old summer record for the "Estero" 2 July 1920.

Surprisingly, there are only two certain records from District I: near Santa Ynez 18 November 2014 and Sedgwick Reserve 17 December 2025. A Long-eared/Short-eared Owl was at Lake Cachuma 27 December 2018.

There are only five records for the Cuyama Valley: a concentration of 12 birds in one field 21 February 1981 and a single bird 8 April 2011, both near New Cuyama; the third record involved local nesting, with an adult and juvenile near Cuyama for about a week during mid-June (through 19 June) 2017; a single bird along Aliso Canyon Road 11 April 2018 (late); and 2 birds near New Cuyama 21 March 2021. This species is known to breed at least irregularly just to the north at the Carrizo Plain, San Luis Obispo County.

Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*)

Very uncommon and somewhat local permanent resident in District M. Probably a rare to uncommon and local resident along the North Coast and in District I. Range, abundance, and extent of seasonal movements (if any) still poorly known.

On the higher peaks in the San Rafael Mountains, Northern Saw-whet Owls are found in pine and fir forest (often with some oaks present), predominantly (and perhaps only formerly) on the north sides of Figueroa Mountain and nearby Ranger Peak (where probably rare and irregular); on San Rafael Mountain (Mission Pine Spring area), at least formerly; and on Big Pine Mountain (recorded on 9 out of 34 two-night summer surveys through 2026—as well as on 19 April 2025 and 3 on 27 June 2025). High counts include 4 calling on Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak 1 May 1976 and 4 at Big Pine Mountain on both 30 June 1981 and 18–19 June 1999. In the Sierra Madre, 3 were found in canyon and oak woodland in Bates Canyon 24 March 2007, an impressive 8 individuals were counted there in just a 1.4 mi (2.3 km) stretch between 3180–3725 ft elevation 22 November 2008, up to 4 were detected at 4500 ft between 11–25 June 2019, and singles were there 25 September 2019 and 16 July 2020. At nearby Aliso Park, 1 was heard 19 January 2020. Also, 1 was in Lion Canyon 2 April 2017, 1 was along the Judell Trail 18 April 2025, and 1 was near Nira Campground 10 May 2025.

In the Santa Ynez Mountains, this species is resident in several of the larger drainages on the north slope. As many as 3 or 4 probable breeding territories have been documented since March 2005 in the San Marcos Pass area between Cold Spring Canyon and Painted Cave Road, where the birds inhabit lush, north-facing canyon and oak woodland as well as canyon woodland along south-facing Painted Cave and Kinevan Roads (at least irregularly). A hatch-year bird was seen at the latter site 28–30 November 2010. Since May 2004, repeated detections of up to possibly 3 pairs on the north side of Refugio Pass, and several additional birds along West Camino Cielo just to the east of Refugio Pass 12 March 2011, strongly suggest that the species is resident in that area (and see below). Singles were farther east in vic. Tequepis Canyon, between Lake Cachuma and Broadcast Peak, 28 December 2010, 27 December 2011, 30 December 2020, and 2 February 2025. Single Saw-whets also have been noted in the area centered on the north side of La Cumbre Peak 16 July 2010, 29 October 2011, 6 December 2011, 5 January 2013, and 18 June 2017; with highs of 3 to 5 birds in that area or along nearby North Gibraltar Road 6–31 December 2011, 31 December 2016, and 4 January 2025. The Santa Barbara CBC has recorded as many as 8 individuals (4 January 2014).

The first evidence that this species may be a scarce resident along the North Coast was acquired when a family of 5 juveniles was found near Sweeney Road, just east of Lompoc, 11 June 1987. This was the first lowland record for the county and was also the first breeding record

along the mainland coast south of San Luis Obispo County. These birds were frequenting an area of dense oak and riparian woodland. In 1998, 3 birds were heard calling from eucalyptus groves east of the main airfield on north Vandenberg SFB 3 November, and another bird was in similar habitat along San Antonio Creek east of El Rancho Road 13 November. Single birds were also near the latter area 26 December 2005, 2 September–31 December 2023, 28 December 2024, 10 May 2025, 28 December 2025, and 29 April 2026. In 2011, the second North Coast breeding was confirmed when a very young fledgling was captured and released on north Vandenberg SFB 3 May; an adult was heard calling here as well. A bird was in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 18 December 2016, singles were near Casmalia 26 December 2021 and 29 December 2024, and at least 1 was on North Harris Grade near Vandenberg Village between 15 December 2024–20 February 2026.

In District I, from north to southeast: singles were in Tepusquet Canyon 25 February 2025; off Long Canyon Road near Sisquoc 18 January 2020; along lower Happy Canyon Road 27 December 2019; and along Alisal Road 29 January 2023 and 2–22 January 2026; 2 were along Quiota Creek on the north side of Refugio Pass 25 April 2008; and singles were along the upper Santa Ynez River near Paradise Road 2 May 2003, 1–14 May 2004, and 1 January 2011.

KINGFISHERS (ALCEDINIDAE)

Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*)

Fairly common transient and winter visitor and rare breeder in Districts C and I. Rare transient in District M and very rare in District V.

Belted Kingfishers are found at almost all major bodies of water from coastal sloughs and large lakes to smaller streams. They are uncommon at harbors and rare over nearshore ocean waters during calm conditions and at tidepools along rocky coasts. Fall migrants and local breeders may arrive at non-breeding localities beginning in late June, regularly by late July; thus, many records from that period do not pertain to locally breeding birds. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 48 individuals (31 December 1983). The species is uncommon along the North Coast in winter. Inland, Cachuma CBCs have recorded as many as 12 birds (28 December 2006). Most birds depart the coast by late April; the latest non-breeding coastal records are 18 May 1982 El Capitan State Beach, 18 May 2025 Devereux Slough, 18 May 2026 Lake Los Carneros, and 20 May 1984 Santa Barbara and 20 May 1991 eastern Goleta. One at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 4 June 1988 and singles at Santa Barbara Harbor 2 June 1995 and 5 June 2013 are difficult to categorize but may have been nesting locally (see below).

This species nests in dirt banks along streams and rivers. Nesting reports in District I come from the upper Santa Ynez River east of Gibraltar Reservoir; 2 pairs nested there in June 1979, 1 pair in 1980, 1 or 2 pairs in 1981, and 2 pairs in 1982. In addition, another pair was on the upper Santa Ynez River near Red Rock Campground 10–11 June 1982, and 1 bird was there 28 July 2007. At Lake Cachuma, 2 were at the east end 11 May–11 July 1976, 1 individual was seen 22 June 1980, a pair was at the west end 3 June 1982, a single individual was at the east end 18 June 1982, 2 were there 26 June 1987, a pair was on the north side of the lake 9 June–14 July 1992, and a pair was present throughout summer 2000. Single individuals were seen on three summer dates in 2008, 2009, and 2015 at the Sedgwick Reserve above Santa Ynez. A family group was along the Santa Ynez River at Refugio Road 30 May 2004 and a single bird was there 7 July 2011. Two pairs were along the Santa Ynez River near Buellton 1 June 1986, and singles were there 21 July 1991, 21 June 2000, 26 June 2011, and 11 June 2016. One bird was on the Sisquoc River near Sisquoc (on the border with District C) 29 April 1993.

In District C, 1 pair nested on the Santa Ynez River 2 or 3 mi (3–5 km) upriver from the ocean during 1980. Several other possible breeders were seen along the Santa Ynez River in

District C during July 1980, 1 was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 June 1987, and singles were along the Santa Ynez River near Lompoc 18 July 1992 and 15 June 1993. One pair nested on San Jose Creek in Goleta every summer between 1984 and at least 1987. Another pair definitely nested along lower Atascadero Creek near Goleta Beach Park in 1984, 1985, and 1989, and probably in 1987, 1992, and 1993; since then, a pair was at a nest hole or feeding juveniles during at least half the years between 2003–2026, with 1 seen entering a cavity on the very late dates of 9–10 September 2015. One pair nested at the UCSB Lagoon in Goleta in 1991 and a family group was there 24 July 1992; another pair was along the ocean bluff at UCSB in June 2001 and 1 bird was at a burrow there on 21 June (and before) 2003; and 1 was at the UCSB Lagoon 9 June 2016. Two pairs along lower Arroyo Burro, Santa Barbara, 16 June 1990 were possibly breeding locally. An adult was watched feeding 3 fledglings at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 21 June 1997 and a single bird was there 7 July 2001. One was along Carpinteria Creek 8 June 2024.

Belted Kingfishers were probably more widely distributed as a breeding species through the early 1900s. A nest with eggs (SBMNH) was found along the Santa Maria River 7 May 1894. Dawson (1923) wrote that the species bred south "regularly to Santa Barbara." An egg set was taken from along Nojoqui Creek, in District I, 8 April 1924 (Willett 1933).

In District M, 1 along the upper Sisquoc River 13 July 1971 may have been near a nesting site or, more likely, was an early migrant. One in Fir Canyon near Davey Brown Campground 1 December 2008 and another along Manzana Creek 13 January 2024 were at somewhat odd localities for the date.

In District V, the small number of records fall between 30 August (2021) and 20 April (2026).

WOODPECKERS (PICIDAE)

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)

Irregular fall transient and winter visitor in District I and probably in District M. Some years absent, other years uncommon. One summer record. Rare to very rare along the South Coast; casual along the North Coast and in District V.

Lewis's Woodpeckers are found irregularly in open oak savanna in the Santa Ynez Valley, where they occur mostly from early October through late April. In some years, they are absent; usually, they are present in very small numbers. High counts include 20+ in the Santa Ynez Valley 18 November 1929, total of 18+ there late October–December 1989, total of 30+ from late October 1993–March 1994, total of 21 there 15 September–18 November 2014, and total of 30+ during winter 2021–2022, with 13–18 at east end Lake Cachuma alone from 25 November–4 December 2021. This species arrives as early as late September (particularly during flight years); the earliest records in District I are 15 September 2014 near Los Olivos and 17 September 1978 southwest of Buellton. It lingers regularly until the end of April or first few days of May; the latest records are 9 May 2015 near Santa Ynez, 10 May 1964 near Santa Ynez, 17 May 1920 (exact location unknown), and, exceptionally, 23 May 2018 Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez.

In District M, high single-site counts include 15 on West Big Pine Mountain 13 November 1986, 25 passing between Monte Arido and Potrero Seco near the Ventura County line from 22–24 September 1989, and 19 at Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak 27 September 2003. And see below. Single late individuals were at West Big Pine Mountain 13 May 1987, at Miranda Pine Mountain 14 May 1994, and at Figueroa Mountain 22 May 2022.

Along the South Coast, Lewis's Woodpeckers are rare to very rare and irregular fall transients and winter visitors. The number of coastal records is difficult to determine as many of the records through the 1950s for the Santa Ynez Valley apparently were listed as "Santa Barbara." There were 21 such reports from "Santa Barbara" between 1936 and 1973. Two were

getting late, just west of Goleta, 30 April 1936 (Rett fieldnotes). There are some 62 South Coast records (involving 107 individuals) since 1954. High counts include a total of 11 individuals between western Goleta and Montecito during winter 2002–2003, 15 near Montecito 2 October 2021, and up to 5 birds at single sites on several occasions in other years. And see below. The earliest arrival is 18 September 1978 (5) Santa Barbara, and the latest records are through 1 May 1997 Montecito and through 4 May 2010 Lake Los Carneros.

Along the North Coast, the records include: Santa Maria 16 October 1981, north Vandenberg SFB 6 October 1989, 4 at Tranquillon Peak, south Vandenberg SFB, 7 October 2003, Santa Maria 17 October 2003, near Point Sal 14 October 2021, 6 along Jalama Road 15 October 2021, Barka Slough 9 March–4 April 2023, 2 over Orcutt 22 April 2023, and flock of 19 near Tranquillon Peak 4 October 2023. And see below.

In District V and bordering District M, up to 3 were at Caliente Ranch Wetland 23 October–28 December 2014, up to 2 were at Aliso Park/Aliso Canyon Road 23 November–25 December 2018, 2 were in Cottonwood Canyon 4 February 2020, singles were near New Cuyama 8 October 2020 and 24 April 2021, 1 was in New Cuyama 19 October 2021, 1 was along Aliso Canyon Road 18 April 2023, and 3 were along Wasioja Road 8 January 2024. And see below.

In autumn 2022, a record incursion brought 33 birds flying along at the base of the foothills in Montecito 25 September, with an amazing 156 there heading westward (including a single flock of 97) 7 October, and 20 heading west over the Carpinteria foothills 26 September; as many as 100 along Jalama Road between early October-November, including a single flock of 53 on 20 November, but where only 12 remained 15 December; 42 along Miguelito Road near Lompoc 17 October; 10 at Gibraltar Reservoir on 29 September, 9 at Sedgwick Reserve 5 October, 8–12 near Solvang 24 November-19 February 2023, up to 3 at La Purisima Mission 7 December–30 March 2023, and up to 2 near Casmalia 23–26 December; in the San Rafael Mountains, 10 at Zaca Ridge 6 October and totals of 48–52 birds at San Rafael Mountain 5–6 November; and in the Cuyama Valley, 2 along Wasioja Road 1 October.

There is only one documented summer record for the county: Santa Ynez 30 May–24 June 2022 (ph. SBMNH). Dawson (1923) stated, however, that the species occurred "casually south in summer to Santa Barbara," but this statement cannot be verified.

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*)
Accidental.

There is one record in District C: an adult was in Winchester Canyon, Goleta, 14 September 1988–23 April 1989 (ph. *AB* 43:53, CBRC 2007, SBMNH).

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)
Common permanent resident along the South Coast and in Districts I and M. Uncommon and local along the North Coast and near west end of District V.

Acorn Woodpeckers prefer oaks, particularly Coast Live Oaks. They are most common in mature oak woodland in the Santa Ynez Valley and in the foothills along the South Coast. They are also found commonly in oak-riparian woodlands with sycamores and in well-vegetated residential areas where there are oaks present, and they also occur locally in eucalyptus trees. Nests are found most often in Coast Live Oaks, less often in Western Sycamores, utility poles, cottonwoods, Valley Oaks, and palm trees. As many as 1026 individuals (3 January 2015) have been recorded on Santa Barbara CBCs. The Cachuma CBC has recorded up to 499 birds (29 December 2009). Along the South Coast, small groups also may occupy less prime habitat at such sites as the main UCSB campus, nearby Isla Vista, and along Cabrillo Boulevard bordering the Santa Barbara Harbor. In District M, this species is found primarily in oak-conifer forest (e.g., on Figueroa Mountain, on the lower slopes of Big Pine Mountain); it is rare to uncommon

in purer stands of conifers such as near the summit of Big Pine Mountain. Several isolated groups are found in foothill canyons along the north flank of the Sierra Madre, bordering the Cuyama Valley, such as at Aliso Park, Wasioja Road, along Cottonwood Canyon Road (including Bates Canyon) and possibly Dry Canyon; and near the west end of District V at the Caliente Ranch Wetland (irregular).

This species is absent from much of the North Coast, where suitable habitat exists only south of Casmalia and in the adjoining northeastern section of Vandenberg SFB and southern Orcutt, where it is uncommon. In April 1989, 1 was in the central section of the base and a pair was in Honda Canyon on south Vandenberg. A small number have been found in the Miguelito County Park area south of Lompoc and at River Park on the east side of Lompoc. La Purisima CBCs have recorded as many as 56 birds (17 December 1995), but most totals are fewer than half that. Small, isolated populations persist in oaks and pines at Pioneer Park and the Rancho Maria Golf Course near Orcutt and at Waller Park and Preisker Park and adjacent neighborhoods in Santa Maria. The high count on a Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC is 13 individuals (23 December 2012).

There are only five records well away from suitable resident habitat: 1 circling over the beach and ocean at the Santa Maria River mouth 4 November 1978, 1 on north Vandenberg SFB near Purisima Point 26 April 2010, 1 in Corralitos Cayon near Point Sal 16 November 2013, and singles in District V near Ballinger Canyon 11 November 2003 and in New Cuyama 3 November 2014–20 January 2015.

Williamson's Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*)

Rare or very rare migrant and winter visitor to the higher peaks in District M. Casual in Districts C, I, and V.

The status of the Williamson's Sapsucker is poorly known because Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak is the only conifer-covered peak that has been explored regularly in fall and winter. This species was recorded there 10 times between the mid-1970s and mid-1990s between early November and April and has remained as late as 15 April 1978. Since then, the only records are 26 January and 7 February 2013 and 10 November 2017 (ph. SBMNH). It is probably regular during fall and winter in very small numbers on San Rafael and Big Pine Mountains and Madulce Peak. One was found on Big Pine Mountain 2 December 1989, 1 was there 24 October 2023, 2 were on San Rafael Mountain on both 5 November 2022 and 24 October 2025, and singles were there 12 October and 6 December 2023. Lower in District M, a male was at San Marcos Pass 6 December 2003, a female was there 6–13 February 2004, a female was at La Cumbre Peak 18 November–5 February 2012 (ph. SBMNH), and another was there 3 January 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

This species is a casual fall and winter visitor to the lowlands: (male) Maria Ygnacio Creek, Goleta, 13 October 2003; (female) UCSB campus, Goleta, 3–19 January 2004, (female) Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara, 30 December 2006, (female) Quatal Canyon in the Cuyama Valley 17 December 2009 (ph. SBMNH), (male) Baseline X Linda Vista, near Santa Ynez 20–23 January 2013, and near Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History 25 December 2022–7 March 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)

Rare to very rare fall transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; casual in Districts M and V.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was first recorded in Santa Barbara County at Refugio State Beach 20 October–9 December 1978 and again 3–30 November 1979. From then through early 1994 there were 12 records for the South Coast between 3 October and 14 January, four records for the North Coast (Lompoc 4 November 1989, Orcutt 12 December 1989, Lompoc 29–30 November 1992, and near Lompoc 20 December 1992 (ph. SBMNH)), three records for District I (Lake Cachuma 5 December 1979–10 February 1980, near Solvang 7–26 January 1990, and near Santa Ynez 3–30 December 1992), and 1 from District V (Cuyama Valley 9 November 1991 (ph.

SBMNH)). From late 1994 through early 2026, an additional 111 records accrued: 52 from the South Coast (where latest departures were through 21 March 2002 Goleta and through 22 March 1995 Santa Barbara), 23 from the North Coast, 33 from District I (where there has been a substantial increase in observer coverage of sapsucker habitat during late fall and winter, and where the earliest arrival was 8 October 2018 near Santa Ynez and where the latest was there 22 March 2019), 2 from District M (Kinevan Road, San Marcos Pass, 24 November 2013 and Aliso Park 17 October 2019–18 January 2020), and 1 from District V (New Cuyama 12–20 December 2021).

Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*)

Rare fall transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I, casual in Districts M and V.

This species was split from the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker by the AOU [AOS] in 1985. It was first seen in the county in Santa Barbara 26 March 1942, and by early 1994 it had been recorded 50 times between early October and late March (also see hybrid discussion below). The only North Coast records were from Santa Maria 14 November 1990 and near the Santa Ynez River mouth for three consecutive winters between 1993–1994 and 1995–1996. One in the Don Victor Valley 31 January 1983 and 1 at San Marcos Pass 30 December 1989–5 January 1990 were the only records during that period for District M.

Between late 1994 and 2026, there has been a substantial increase in the number of records, with ca. 213 reports: 88 from the South Coast (including *SBMNH) and 87 from District I (including *LACM), but only 22 from the North Coast, 13 from District M, and 3 from District V (New Cuyama 29 October–13 December 2006 and 19 December 2021, near Ventucopa 21–28 January 2023). The earliest fall records are 11 September 1997 Santa Barbara (exceptional), 16 September 2003 Paradise area along upper Santa Ynez River, 17 September 1994 near Santa Ynez, and 20 September 1997 San Marcos Pass. In District I (where there has been a substantial increase in observer coverage of sapsucker habitat during late fall and winter), this species has been found to be particularly fond of exotic Peruvian Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle*); the Cachuma CBC has recorded 1 or 2 individuals on about half the counts, with an exceptional 6 birds on both 27 December 2013 and 26 December 2014, and a total of 5 birds were in the Santa Ynez area during December 2016–January 2017. Late dates in spring are uncertain past the end of March.

Apparent hybrid Red-naped X Red-breasted Sapsuckers have been reported more than 25 times, mostly from the South Coast and District I, also several times in District V, and 1 bird in Santa Maria 28 January 2006. One such hybrid remained late in Santa Barbara through 10 April 1987.

Red-breasted Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus ruber*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor in all Districts. Uncommon and local breeder on the highest peaks in District M, at least formerly.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers breed in coniferous woodland and winter in conifers, oaks, and a variety of deciduous and exotic trees (especially exotic Peruvian Pepper Trees [*Schinus molle*]). Migrants and wintering birds of the regularly occurring subspecies, *S. r. daggetti*, are found in all districts and arrive beginning in late September (early arrival dates: 10 September 1989 Santa Barbara and 13 September 1982 Santa Barbara), plus single exceptionally early birds (probably same?) at Lake Los Carneros 30 August–4 September 2014, 31 August 2015, and 12+ September 2016. Thirty-nine individuals on the Santa Barbara CBC 31 December 1977 is a high count; typical count totals are between 15 and 20 individuals; but only 4 were tallied on 1 January 2011. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 33 birds (29 December 2015). The species departs the lowlands largely by late March; the latest records are through 11 April 1982 near Lake Cachuma, through 11 April 2015 northwestern Goleta, 11 April 2025 Paradise

area, and 15 April 1982 Montecito. One on Figueroa Mountain, where the species does not breed, was late 16–29 April 2005.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers breed most years in pine and fir forest on Big Pine Mountain and vicinity: 12, including an adult feeding a juvenile, were seen there 29 June–1 July 1981; and the species has been recorded there annually in smaller numbers every summer since then through 2026, but most totals since 1995 have been of fewer than 5 birds except for 7 tallied 17–19 June 2001 and 10 on 13–15 June 2008. They probably bred in similar habitat, at least irregularly, on San Rafael Mountain (Mission Pine Springs area) during the 1980s, where 2 were seen 18–19 June 1982.

There are five records involving the more northern subspecies, *S. r. ruber*: Montecito 30 December 1983, Goleta 27 November 1997 and 25 January–12 February 2016 (ph. SBMNH), near Santa Ynez 11 January–9 February 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and Sedgwick Reserve 7 January–11 March 2026.

Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)

Fairly common permanent resident in District C, uncommon in District I and at the lower elevations of District M.

Downy Woodpeckers occur in oak and riparian woodland as well as in most residential areas. They are particularly numerous in willow riparian in District C and locally along the Santa Ynez River in District I. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 69 individuals (31 December 1983). In contrast, a maximum of only 8 birds (28 December 2010) has been found on the Cachuma CBC. This species is also found at the lower elevations of District M in oak and riparian woodland, including in the northern foothills of the Sierra Madre bordering District V, but it avoids the pure coniferous stands on the higher peaks. Overall, Downy Woodpeckers are more widespread than Hairy Woodpeckers and do not require trees as large as those frequented by the latter, foraging occasionally even on willow saplings and tule and corn stalks. In many areas, however, Nuttall's Woodpecker is now more numerous than Downy. Substantial seasonal movements, if any, are poorly known. There are no definite records for District V proper, where there are a number of unconfirmed reports.

Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttallii*)

Fairly common to common permanent resident in Districts C and I, and locally in District M; uncommon in District V.

Nuttall's Woodpeckers are most numerous in oak-riparian woodland, but they are also fairly common in well-vegetated residential areas, as well as in pure willow riparian along the North Coast and inland locally along the Santa Ynez River. In District V, they also frequent isolated trees and are fairly widespread. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 84 individuals (31 December 1994). The high count on the Cachuma CBC is 42 birds (28 December 2010). Numbers have increased somewhat since about 2000, and the species now occurs regularly in most residential areas.

This species is also resident in oak-coniferous forest, as on the summit of Figueroa Mountain. Two were on West Big Pine Mountain 25–26 June 1992, and 1–4 birds have been recorded during summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area most years at slightly lower elevation in the Alamar Saddle/Bear Camp area. None have been found in the pure coniferous forests near the summits of Big Pine and San Rafael Mountains.

A Downy X Nuttall's Woodpecker hybrid was in Isla Vista 15–19 January 2011 (ph. SBMNH) and again 9–22 December 2011.

Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*)

Fairly common permanent resident in District M, uncommon in Districts C and I. Some seasonal movements. Casual visitor in District V.

Hairy Woodpeckers occur in a variety of woodland habitats as a breeder, from coniferous and oak-coniferous forest in District M to oak and riparian woodland in Districts C and I. Several summer-survey totals in the Big Pine Mountain area have reached 15–26 individuals, with 30 tallied on 13–15 June 2008. Only 3 were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024. They are uncommon to rare in some of the north-facing Sierra Madre foothill canyons (e.g., Aliso Park/Aliso Canyon, Bates Canyon, upper Santa Barbara Canyon, possibly Dry Canyon/Tinta Creek). In the lowlands, the species is generally uncommon. Most nesting there occurs in riparian and oak-riparian canyons and along creeks that flow out onto the coastal plain (where the species is very uncommon, local, and possibly declining). A pair nesting in an agave stalk in Ellwood, Goleta, during April 2009 was at an atypical site. Additional nest records very close to the coast exist for Ellwood, More Mesa, and Rincon Creek, as well as for several coastal canyons near Gaviota. Along the North Coast, Hairy Woodpeckers breed uncommonly in the taller willow riparian, as found along San Antonio Creek (particularly in the Barka Slough area), the lower Santa Ynez River, and Honda Creek. One at Goleta Beach Park 16 July 1981 and another there 11 July 2007 were away from breeding habitat during the nesting season but likely involve local post-breeding dispersal. This species is much less numerous along the immediate coast south of Santa Barbara County.

In fall and winter, Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 29 individuals (4 January 2020). The Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 12 birds (28 December 2007). At these seasons there is some movement into the lowlands and to areas not frequented during the breeding season. For example, the sole records from District V involve 2 birds in Quatal Canyon 17 March 2018, 2 in Deer Park Canyon 1 March 2024, and 1 there 24 January 2026.

White-headed Woodpecker (*Dryobates albolarvatus*)

Uncommon and very local permanent resident on the highest mountains in District M. Casual fall and winter visitor elsewhere.

White-headed Woodpeckers are found in the coniferous forests of San Rafael Mountain, Big Pine Mountain, and Madulce Peak. Bartholomew (1940) saw up to 10 per day on Big Pine Mountain from 1937–1939. More recent high counts are of 16–19 in the Big Pine Mountain area during near-annual summer bird surveys, 1981–2014, with 24 birds on 16–18 June 2006 and 21 on 12–14 June 2009, but only 4 found in June 2014, 1 in June 2016, 3 in 2021, 4 in June 2022, 2 in June 2024, 4 in June 2025, and 9 on 12 July 2026. At other seasons, the high is 3 on 22 January 2025. Thirteen individuals were in the San Rafael Mountain area 18–19 June 1982, though just single birds were seen 10 September 2011, 21 March 2014, and 23 December 2020, 2 were found 5–6 November 2022, and 1 on 24 October 2025. Five were on Madulce Peak 20 July 1982, 1 was there 28 December 2024, and 2 on 5 June 2025. On Figueroa Mountain and Ranger Peak this species was formerly a rare visitor, where found primarily from fall through mid-spring (maximum count of 3 individuals/day). Between 1981–2011, White-headeds were recorded there about 23 times. Prior to 2011, the earliest fall record was 1 October 2000; the latest spring records were 22 April 1978 and 28 April 2006. One on 17 June 1981 was the only summer record until a pair was found nesting near the summit of Figueroa 8 June–11 July 2011 (ph. SBMNH) and again in June 2012 and in 2013 (ph. SBMNH), with up to 3 individuals continuing in the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area through January 2017.

Away from the San Rafael Mountains, the White-headed Woodpecker is strictly a casual visitor. Single individuals were in Mission Canyon in Santa Barbara 23 January 1920, San Marcos Pass 2 December 1961, and Mission Canyon 2 October 1975. In 1987–1988, an "invasion" of this species into the lowlands of Southern California resulted in the following Santa Barbara County records: District C—north Vandenberg SFB 24 August–24 September, Carpinteria 7 September–4 November, Hollister Ranch 19 September, Santa Barbara 11 November (*SBMNH), up to 2 Goleta 3 December–2 January, and Santa Barbara 22 February;

District I—Cachuma Lake Recreation Area 6 January–25 February (ph. SBMNH); and District M—near La Cumbre Peak 12 September and up to 2 along Camino Cielo near San Marcos Pass 5 December–16 March.

Another region-wide, though more minor, irruption in 1996–1997 produced singles at Figueroa Mountain 6–14 October, near San Marcos Pass 11 October, and at nearby Painted Cave 12 October, 2 at La Cumbre Peak 12 October–2 March, up to 2 in San Marcos Pass area 4 January–29 March, and 1 at Little Pine Mountain 5 May. One was in Dry Canyon in the eastern Sierra Madre 4 October 2000. A minor irruption in 2004–2005 produced a total of 3 birds each at Figueroa Mountain and in the Santa Ynez Mountains during late October–January (with 1 remaining late on Fremont Trail through 10 April), with more unusual records from the lowlands in Waller Park, Santa Maria, 1–9 December and in Montecito 11 December. One was at La Cumbre Peak 29 October–30 December 2006 and again 1 December 2007–12 February 2008, and 1 was there 29 December 2011. One was at several sites in western Goleta from 8 October 2022–17 March 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and again from 26 October 2023–10 February 2024 (ph. SBMNH). In District V, 1 was in Richardson Park, New Cuyama, from 6 February–23 March 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Fairly common to common transient and winter visitor and uncommon to fairly common summer resident throughout much of Districts C, I, and M. Possibly declining as a breeder. Uncommon transient and winter visitor in District V. Pure "Yellow-shafted" Flickers are very rare visitors in District C, casual in District I and M.

Northern ("Red-shafted") Flickers ("*cafer*" group) nest in coniferous, oak, and riparian woodland and in well-vegetated residential areas. They are less common in summer in open country and in most residential neighborhoods, although migrants and winter visitors are found there regularly. Summer totals in the Big Pine Mountain area have ranged between 7–31 individuals. The species is rather uncommon as a breeder along the North Coast. Bordering District V, this species summers in cottonwoods in Santa Barbara Canyon. Numbers in summer in many areas appear to have declined.

Numbers in fall, winter, and early spring are augmented by birds from the north. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 491 individuals (30 December 1989). The high count on the Cachuma CBC is 144 birds (27 December 2013). Exact arrival and departure dates for migrants are difficult to determine because of the presence of resident birds; however, in District V, where flickers do not breed, the records range between mid-October and late April.

A spring migrant was well offshore aboard a research vessel some 33 mi (53 km) W of Point Arguello 3 April 2024.

The "Yellow-shafted" form *("auratus"* group) is a very rare transient and winter visitor, October–March, in District C. There is an average of one or two records per year. Four reported in Goleta 29 November 1919 (Dawson 1923) is a high count. The true number of records is unknown because intergrades show many of the characters of "pure" Yellow-shafteds and are just as likely to occur. One such intergrade in Santa Barbara 5 August 2015 was unprecedented for that time of year. The earliest fall record of a "pure" Yellow-shafted Flicker is 30 September–4 October 1970 Goleta. The latest records are through 26 March 2006 near Santa Barbara and 26 March 2011 Goleta. There are only six records for the North Coast: near Santa Maria 6 March 1966, Santa Maria 31 January 1988, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 25 October 1994–14 January 1995 and 21 November 1995, in Santa Maria 4 November 1994, on north Vandenberg SFB 10 November 2000, and near Orcutt 23 December 2012. Inland, this form has been recorded 12 times in District I: in the Santa Ynez Valley during winter 1976–1977, at Lake Cachuma 13 December 1986, near Solvang 9 January 1990 and 5–18 October 2000, near Santa Ynez 13 February 2004, in Solvang 15 October 2012, near Santa Ynez 21 January 2013 and 10 December 2014, near Los Olivos 9 December 2015, in Buellton 28 February–3 March 2020, at Nojoqui Falls Park 12 January 2021, and at Lake Cachuma 22 January 2022; and twice in

District M on Figueroa Mountain 8 November 2015 and at Aliso Park in the Sierra Madre foothills 6 January 2024.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS (FALCONIDAE)

Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*)
Casual visitor in District C. True status clouded by issues concerning origin and the number of different individuals involved.

A Crested Caracara was found at Glen Annie Golf Course in Goleta 30 April 2002, and what was believed to be the same individual was present on north Vandenberg SFB 14–23 July 2002 (ph. SBMNH). One at Bixby Ranch near Point Conception 10 January 2006 was thought by the CBRC to probably be a new bird. A worn bird with a unique flight-feather pattern at More Mesa, near Goleta, 2–3 February 2007 (ph. SBMNH) was determined to be the same individual seen the previous several days at Hansen Dam, Los Angeles County, 29 January–1 February 2007, and then later at Pebble Beach and Moss Landing, Monterey County, 25 February–1 March 2007! One was over the Santa Barbara foothills 21 March 2008. A wandering bird first noted at Hollister Ranch 23 December 2023; then at Lake Los Carneros 3 March 2024, then in downtown Santa Barbara 5 March 2024, then 11 April at Devereux Slough, then 20 April near Point Conception, 27 April near Refugio, then back at Point Conception 2 May 2024; then near Refugio 22 April 2025; and then in the Point Conception and western Goleta areas on multiple dates between 4 March–8 May 2026. [A report from near Sheffield Reservoir, Santa Barbara, 9 October 2001 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)
Fairly common permanent resident in Districts C and I, uncommon in District M. Common in winter in District V, uncommon in summer. Numbers are augmented by transients and winter visitors.

American Kestrels are found in many types of open and semi-open country throughout Districts C, I, and V. They also occur uncommonly in the more open woodlands of District M, although they are absent from heavier forest and thick chaparral. Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area typically record 0–4 individuals. Kestrels are also less numerous in the more urbanized areas in District C, but they occur regularly and breed in residential areas. Local populations are augmented substantially during migration and winter (September–March). For example, 35 were in Cuyama Valley 7 January and 19 November 1978, 6 were there 10 March 1979, and only 2 were seen 19 May 1979. In the Santa Maria Valley, winter counts are regularly above 20 individuals per day, but in summer there are often fewer than 5 birds. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 193 individuals (30 December 1978), but only 38 were tallied in 2010. The high count on the Cachuma CBC is 41 individuals (29 December 2009 and 28 December 2010). This species is common in summer on Vandenberg SFB, in the Garey/Sisquoc area, and in the Santa Ynez Valley.

One interesting record is of an individual flying past Platform Holly located 3 mi (5 km) offshore near Goleta 21 July 1981.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)
Uncommon transient and winter visitor in District V, very uncommon in Districts C and I, and rare in District M.

Merlins are found in open country such as grassland, agricultural areas, sloughs, and over beaches and nearshore waters (where they hunt shorebirds). They are also found regularly in many of the more well-vegetated residential areas. The species is most consistently found in the

agricultural areas of the Cuyama Valley where up to 4 in a day have been seen in fall and winter. Overall, numbers have increased during the past two decades, and the first autumn arrivals have appeared earlier.

Migrants typically arrive beginning in early September (earliest arrival dates: 13 August 2011 (exceptional) Devereux Slough (ph. SBMNH), 21 August 2019 near Santa Ynez, 23 August 2003 Figueroa Mountain, 27 August 2012 Goleta), and up to 15 individuals (in 1994) have been seen per fall along the South Coast. They are slightly less numerous during winter, with an average of from 8 to 10 noted between Gaviota and Carpinteria annually at this season; 12 were tallied on the Santa Barbara CBC 2 January 2005. A communal night-time roost of 3 birds was discovered in eucalyptus along Arroyo Burro Creek in Santa Barbara during February 2000. Inland, the high count on the Cachuma CBC is 5 birds (29 December 2009). Most likely to be seen in District M in the Sierra Madre foothills; very rare elsewhere. Most individuals have departed by mid-April; lingerers or transients have occurred as late as 30 April 1989 at east end Gibraltar Reservoir (in District I), 30 April 2025 at Tajiguas, 1 May 1994 in Carpinteria, and, exceptionally, 15 May 1994 in Santa Barbara.

Singles seen 34 mi (55 km) W of San Miguel Island 26 October 2012 and 8 mi (13 km) S of Santa Rosa Island 7 September 2025 were well offshore.

Most records of Merlins are of the race *F. c. columbarius.* In addition, there is an increasing number of records of the dark race from the Pacific Northwest, *F. c. suckleyi* ("Black" Merlin). Specimens of this subspecies exist for Santa Barbara 28 October 1878 (Van Rossem 1934), Santa Barbara 6 April 1932 (Rett 1940b), Montecito 25 January 1940 (Rett 1940b), (1 of 2 shot) Montecito 14 September 1947 (Spaulding 1947), and Montecito 22 November 1951. In addition, there are approximately 17 sight records of *suckleyi* in District C, all since 1979 and most since the 1990s, between early October and late March, plus two such reports for District I (Lake Cachuma 2 September 2000, Los Alamos 10 February 2007). There are several records of the pale, "Prairie" race, *F. c. richardsonii*: several hundred feet inside San Luis Obispo County in Cuyama Valley 21 February 1981, Carpinteria 28 February 1983, near Cuyama 11 December 2005, near Santa Ynez 1 March 2012 (ph. SBMNH), and Goleta 12 December 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Presently an uncommon visitor and very local breeding resident in District C, rare in Districts I and M, and very rare in District V. Numbers are augmented somewhat in fall and winter. Formerly a rare transient and visitor in District C, and casual in Districts I and M.

Peregrine Falcons frequent open country such as grasslands, agricultural areas, ponds, sloughs, river mouths, seacoasts, and offshore for hunting. They are seen regularly hunting from offshore oil platforms, including at night. Nests are typically located on cliffs. Since about 2000, there has been an average of ca. 15–30 individuals per year in District C, primarily during fall and winter. This is an increase from the previous several decades. Along the South Coast, dispersing birds and migrants appear as early as August, perhaps in July, and remain as late as late April. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 7 individuals (5 January 2013 and 4 January 2014), though some duplication is possible. Late-spring and summer records began to accelerate in the late 1990s, and the species is now rare but regular at that season; up to 10 reports (with uncertain duplication) along the South Coast during June–July several years since 2010 are the high counts at this season.

Single birds were well offshore ca. 36 mi (58 km) W of San Miguel Island 3 October 2012, 41 mi (66 km) W of Point Sal to 22 mi (35 km) SW of Point Arguello 22 October 2018, at San Juan Seamount 6 September 2023, and 29 mi (46 km) W of Point Arguello 2 May 2024.

In District I, Peregrines are rare but regular in fall and winter, very rare in late spring and summer. Most sightings have come from the Lake Cachuma area. The Cachuma CBC reported a high count of 4 individuals on 29 December 2009. Away from there, the high is 3 unseasonal birds near Santa Ynez 28 June 2011.

In District M, 2 were at West Big Pine Mountain 4 September 2004, a possible breeder was there 11 June 2016, and 1 was there 17–19 June 2022 (and see nesting, below), 1 was at Figueroa Mountain 27 April 2012, 1 was at La Cumbre Peak 6 January 2014, 1 was in Lion Canyon 2 April 2017, 1 was at Santa Barbara Potrero in the Sierra Madre 26 November 2020, 1 was at Figueroa Mountain 18 December 2020, 2 were at La Cumbre Peak 11 November 2021, and 2 were in upper Santa Barbara Canyon 18 May 2024.

In District V, there were only a very few sightings before 2017 (e.g., Cuyama Valley 12 December 2006); but then several involving up to 2 individuals annually 2018–2025, between August–early May, perhaps associated with the construction of a new, large sewage treatment pond in New Cuyama. In summer, 1 was in New Cuyama 13 June 2020 and 1 was near Ventucopa 5 July 2020. A nesting pair was nearby in May 2024.

Between 1970 and mid-1994 there was a total of 106 Peregrine Falcon sightings in the mainland county. Fall migrants were seen as early as mid-August (e.g., 8–17 August 1993 (up to 2) and 15 August 1988 Santa Maria River mouth). Spring records included: Goleta 11–22 April 1965, 27 March 1970, 9–11 May 1971, and 6 April 1980; Carpinteria 27 April 1984; near Guadalupe 1 April 1986; and Santa Ynez River mouth 16 April 1988. Summer records included: Santa Maria River mouth 9 July 1980 and 10 July 1982, eight North Coast records between 1987 and 1993, Goleta 4 August 1991, Goleta 22 July 1992, and Santa Barbara 30 June 1993. The only reports from Districts M and I during that period were of single individuals at Madulce Peak December 1980–January 1981, West Big Pine Mountain 13 January 1984, Madulce Peak/Don Victor Valley 5–13 February 1984, and Lake Cachuma 25 August–2 September 1987 and 12 February 1994.

Between 1970 and the mid-1990s, there was an active program in California to reintroduce Peregrine Falcons to their historic range using captive rearing and placement (hacking) into former nesting areas. Between 1983 and 1988, 15 Peregrine Falcons were hacked at Gaviota Peak, and 6 were hacked on San Miguel Island between 1985 and 1987. A pair was believed nesting at the latter locality in 1988. One or more pairs have frequented Santa Cruz Island since at least 1984. This hacking program has likely been a major factor in the increase in the number of sightings in the region. As of 1988, however, there had still not been any proven, recent nesting attempts for coastal mainland Santa Barbara County (Collins 1988). In 1993, however, 1 pair was possibly nesting in the Point Arguello area on Vandenberg SFB, and these birds definitely began nesting there in either 1994 or 1995, with eggs found (WFVZ) in 1996, 1997, and 1998; an offspring of that pair was seen in Santa Barbara 23 June 1995 (ph. SBMNH). Another pair began nesting in the Point Sal area during the mid-1990s (N. Todd, in litt.). Birds were also released at a hacking site on Sudden Flats near the boathouse on south Vandenberg SFB between 1995–1998. A new nest was established near Lion's Head on north Vandenberg in 2011 and again in 2012. A possible active pair was in the area of Michelle Point, north of Point Pedernales, south Vandenberg SFB in 2012 (N. Todd, in litt.) and again in 2015 and 2016, with eggs found (WFVZ) in 2013. In 2012, a nesting pair was present near Lompoc during June, and again during April–June 2014 and in 2018–2020. A nest with chicks was discovered at the former Gaviota Pass hacking site in May–June 2001, and that nest was active again in at least 2004 and in that general area in 2018 and 2019. Farther east, nesting was documented in the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills behind Goleta during June 2014, possibly in 2016, and definitely in May–June annually from 2018–2024, and behind Montecito June–July 2014 and May–June 2021 and 2024; adults with a begging fledgling in downtown Santa Barbara 26 June 2017 was suggestive of local nesting. In District I, birds were at a hacking site in the Santa Rita Hills east of Lompoc between 1999 and the mid-2000s (N. Todd, in litt.), still present as of 2024. A pair may have been prospecting a nest-site at Lake Cachuma in spring 2004. In District M, a pair with a juvenile were at West Big Pine Mountain 9 July 2005; 1 to 3 birds were there again

annually in June or July between 2006–2009 and in 2012, 2014, 2016, 2021, and 2022; and 1 pair was nesting in the Sierra Madre foothills in May–June 2024.

Through the first half of the 1900s the Peregrine Falcon population was much greater throughout North America than during the late 1990s, and the species nested in a number of areas in the county and on the Channel Islands. A nest was found at "Arlington Crags" on 2 March 1917, another nest was in the Santa Barbara foothills in 1920, and 1 was on a cliff in the Goleta area 10 April 1929. The latter record was also mentioned by Willett (1933), who wrote that the species was found nesting along the "seacoast of Santa Barbara County" and that 2 sets of eggs were taken between Santa Barbara and Gaviota in 1929. Former South Coast nest sites included Gaviota Pass, San Onofre Canyon near Gaviota, Las Flores Canyon, upper Mission Canyon in Santa Barbara, and Santa Monica Canyon behind Carpinteria. Bartholomew (1940) reported single individuals at Big Pine Mountain 14 September 1937 and from Gibraltar Reservoir 12 December 1938. In addition, the species nested near the Boathouse on south Vandenberg SFB until the early 1960s and 1 pair was believed to be nesting in the San Rafael Wilderness Area in District M through the late 1960s. There was an unsuccessful nesting attempt near Jalama during the mid-1970s. The serious decline in the number of Peregrine Falcons during the second half of the 1900s was blamed on pesticides, shooting, and capture by falconers.

Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)

Uncommon permanent resident in District V and adjoining Sierra Madre, rare elsewhere in District M. Uncommon winter visitor in District I, rare in summer. Rare to casual transient and winter visitor in District C; formerly more regular.

Prairie Falcons frequent open country such as grasslands, agricultural areas, sloughs, and river mouths for hunting. The species is likely an uncommon permanent resident in the Cuyama Valley area and it nests in the nearby mountains (e.g., Sierra Madre); up to 4 individuals have been seen in a day and as many as 3 pairs may have been present in 2019. Its current breeding status there, however, is somewhat uncertain. Also in District M, 1 or 2 were seen in the Big Pine Mountain area during several summers in the 1970s and again on 13 June 2020, eggs (WFVZ) were discovered at Castle Rock near Hurricane Deck 5 May 1992, and the species may have nested in the western Santa Ynez Mountains at least into the early 1990s, with one confirmed nesting (eggs WFVZ) at "Santa Ynez Ridge" [presumably meaning Santa Ynez Mountains] near Santa Ynez 13 May 1986. In District I, an active nest with two chicks was along the upper Santa Ynez River near Lake Cachuma in March–June 2021 and 2022. Prairie Falcons have declined somewhat as local breeders since the early 1900s. There is one reference to the "regular nesting" of a pair around 1915 on the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains near Santa Barbara (Dawson 1916).

Three birds near Twitchell Reservoir 17 July 1985, 1 along Santa Maria River near Garey 18 June 1999, and 1 in Santa Maria 3 June 2006 were west of normal at this season. In District I, Prairie Falcons are very rare visitors along the northern half of the Santa Ynez Valley between Rancho Oso in the east and Cat Canyon in the west, with a juvenile near Santa Ynez 4 June 2014; and other records near Nojoqui Falls Park 27 May 2017 and 30 June 2024. Post-breeding dispersers may occur well away from breeding areas already by latter June.

Numbers are augmented county-wide somewhat in fall and winter. In winter, Prairie Falcons are very uncommon in the Santa Ynez Valley. The high count on the Cachuma CBC is 4 individuals (27 December 2013). Along the coast, the Prairie Falcon has declined as a fall and winter visitor and now is very rare almost throughout the district. It probably barely occurs regularly in the Santa Maria Valley, where formerly it was annual in small numbers (2 to 4 individuals) but where its current status is uncertain. The earliest arrival date for the North Coast is 23+ August 2000 near the Santa Maria River mouth; the latest records in spring are 14 May 1981 near Orcutt and 17 May 1993 near Guadalupe. One in Santa Maria 3 June 2006 and another in Lompoc 5 June 2023 are difficult to categorize, whereas 1 in Santa Maria 22 June 2019 was

perhaps an early post-breeding arrival. Away from the Santa Maria Valley in District C, Prairie Falcons were formerly rare or very rare but still somewhat regular fall migrants and irregular winter visitors from September–March, with an average of 1 or 2 individuals seen along the South Coast each winter. Up to 6 in the Goleta area during fall 1977 was a high count. The species has declined since then. By the mid-1980s, the very small wintering population in the Goleta area had largely disappeared. Its current status between Goleta and Carpinteria can best be termed very rare to casual. One at Tajiguas, east of Gaviota, 10 August 2002, 2 at Refugio 17 August 1992, and 1 in Goleta 29+August 1998 were slightly early; 1 in Goleta 16 May 1989 was late.

TYRANT-FLYCATCHERS (TYRANNIDAE)

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)
Casual late-fall and winter visitor in District C.

There are nine records: single individuals were along Maria Ygnacio Creek, Goleta, 5 December 1983 (ph. SBMNH); in Isla Vista 1 December 1985; along the Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc 31 January–9 February 1992 (ph. SBMNH); at what is now Evergreen Park (Evergreen Open Space) in northwestern Goleta 29 December 1992–2 March 1993 (ph. SBMNH); along Carpinteria Creek 12–13 April 1999 (though reported as early as 24 February as only "possible" or reported as an "Ash-throated" Flycatcher, and several additional reports as late as 22 May which all went undocumented [thus, only the dates of 12–13 April were accepted by CBRC, although it is acknowledged that this bird very likely had wintered at this site]); at La Mesa Park, Santa Barbara 10 December 2000–6 January 2001; along Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 31 December 2005–20 February 2006 (ph. SBMNH); at Storke Family Apartments, Goleta, 3 January–19 February 2015 (ph. SBMNH); and at Hollister Ranch 3 December 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)
Fairly common transient and summer resident in all Districts. Casual in winter in District C.

The Ash-throated Flycatcher is found in a variety of habitats during the nesting season, including open coniferous forest (e.g., on Big Pine and San Rafael Mountains and Madulce Peak), pinyon-juniper woodland, chaparral, semidesert scrub, coastal sage scrub, and oak and riparian woodland. A total of 72 were found in the Sierra Madre foothills and Cuyama Valley during concentrated surveys on 18–19 May 2024. Along the North Coast, the species is absent as a breeder from most cooler sections, is uncommon along the Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc, but is fairly common to locally common in the warmer, interior sections such as at Barka Slough (e.g., as many as 25 there 18 July 1980) and along upper Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB. Along the South Coast, a total of 16 individuals found near the coast between Goleta and Carpinteria 31 May–29 June 2007 was a surprise (no breeding was confirmed), as nesting there on the coastal plain (away from a few foothill locations such as Farren Road) is largely unknown, except for single family groups noted in residential Carpinteria in June 2017 and 2018.

Spring transients are widespread and begin arriving in late March or early April; the earliest arrival dates are 10 March 2017 West Camino Cielo, 12 March 1989 Pendola, and 15 March 2024 Sedgwick Reserve. A high count is 39 above Refugio Canyon 24 April 2020 (morning flight). A few continue through mid-May.

Fall migrants first appear at the end of July (e.g., 22 July 1979 coastal Goleta) and are fairly common through September. The species is rare after the beginning of October and very rare by the end of the month. There are 10 records of birds seen in November and early December, but

not thereafter. Only one of these was away from the South Coast: near Santa Maria 16 November 1985.

During winter months, the Ash-throated Flycatcher has been reported on a number of occasions, particularly on CBCs. Many of these records, however, lack sufficient details. The only well-documented records for this season are: Santa Barbara 23 December 1972 (only 1 individual); probably the same individual returning 10 winters to the same site along Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara, 1974–1975 through 1976–1977 and again 1981–1982 through 1983–1984, seen as early as 22 October (1975) and as late as 14 March (1982); returning individual off S. Pine Avenue in Goleta 15 December 1982–10 January 1983, 15 October 1983–7 January 1984, 8 December 1985–4 January 1986, and 3 January–6 February 1987; Goleta 13 November 1983–10 January 1984; Santa Barbara 3 February 1986; and Elings Park/lower Arroyo Burro Creek area, Santa Barbara 24 November 2024–4 January 2025.

Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*)

Casual fall transient.

The eight records are: off North Fairview Avenue in residential northern Goleta 27 September 1974; Santa Barbara Cemetery, Montecito, 13–14 October 1979 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria Creek 19–20 October 1984; near Guadalupe 4 October 1992 (ph. SBMNH); Gaviota State Park 3 October 1993 (ph. *AB* 48:152, SBMNH); Refugio State Beach 4 October 2014 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria 17–19 September 2017 (ph. SBMNH); and very late along lower Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 9–21 November 2021 (ph. SBMNH). [One reported from Montecito 22 September 1990 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*)

Accidental.

There is one record: San Jose Creek, Goleta, 21–24 October 1984 (ph. SBMNH). This was the first record at the time for coastal Southern California.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*)

Casual fall visitor.

There are four records: near Devereux Slough 6–9 October 1978 (ph. SBMNH), UCSB campus, Goleta, 23–28 September 1990 (ph. *AB* 45:177, CBRC 2007, SBMNH), Summerland 3 October 2005, and Carpinteria Creek 30 September 2016.

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)

Rare fall visitor in District C; rare in winter along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast. Two summer records.

The Tropical Kingbird was first recorded at Carpinteria Salt Marsh on 19 November 1966. Since 1966, it has been recorded most years during fall along the South Coast, with approximately 240 individuals found through 2025. The highest single-season counts are of 13 individuals in 1982 and 1992 and 12 birds in 2022; the average is around 5; and the highest single-site count is 4 birds at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 24 October 2007. An uncertain number of the autumn individuals are returning wintering birds; thus, the grand total is somewhat lower. Most of the records fall between late September and mid-November. The earliest South Coast records are 20 August 2023 near Lake Los Carneros (exceptional), 5 September 1986 Goleta, and 12+ September 2015 Carpinteria. In addition, 50 fall records come from the North Coast, all since 1988, with a high of 6 birds in 2020, and including an exceptionally early bird at the Santa Maria River mouth 18 August 2001.

The first wintering bird was at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh 19 November 1966–28 February 1967. Since December 1971 there have been ca. 105 additional individuals present between Goleta and Montecito between December–March (ph. *AB* 41:330). At least a third of these birds have returned or likely returned for from two to five consecutive winters; thus, the total number

of different individuals involved is fewer. Most of these records are from the Devereux and UCSB campus areas and from the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge area. High totals are of 8 birds during winter 2024–2025 between Goleta and Santa Barbara and of 9 birds between Goleta and Carpinteria during winter 2025–2026.

Most wintering individuals depart in either March or April. One remained at the UCSB main campus through 3 May 2018 and 1 was in Santa Maria 3–9 May 2026. One near Devereux Slough 30 November 1980–23 May 1981 (ph. SBMNH) and again 24 November 1982–8 June 1983 remained exceptionally late. One very late bird was near Hollister X Patterson Avenue in Goleta on 25 May 2025.

Along the North Coast in winter, 1 was on north Vandenberg SFB 24 December 1988–12 March 1989 and again 30 January–17 March 1991, 1 was in Guadalupe 26 December 2016, up to 2 were in Santa Maria 15 November 2019–18 April 2020 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was there 27 December 2020–15 January 2021 and again 28 November–7 December 2021, 1 was in Santa Maria 25 January 2023, 2 were in Santa Maria and Guadalupe between 1–11 December 2024, and 1 was in Santa Maria 26 December 2025–15 January 2026.

Exceptional were single mid-summer records, from waterfowl ponds near the Santa Ynez River mouth 10 July 1998 (ph. SBMNH) and in Winchester Canyon, Goleta, 1 July 2015.

Tropical Kingbirds are migrants from the south, and the South Coast of Santa Barbara County is a favorite area for the species. All records of Tropical Kingbirds are assumed not to involve the similar Couch's Kingbird (*T. couchii*), which has been recorded only several times in California. All individuals heard calling, including most wintering individuals found locally, have given vocalizations typical of Tropical Kingbird.

Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*)

Fairly common resident in District C; most numerous in winter along the South Coast. Uncommon but increasing transient and winter visitor, and rare breeder, in District I. Very rare or casual transient in District M, and formerly in District V, where recently increasing and breeding. Casual in winter in District V.

Cassin's Kingbirds frequent open and semi-open areas and are often found in eucalyptus when nesting. Many of the birds in District C are likely resident. Spring migrants occur predominantly between late March and late April, fall migrants between mid-August and early October. Early arrival dates in spring in District C are difficult to determine because of the presence of wintering and resident individuals.

Breeding by this species was formerly mostly restricted to District C. It is fairly common between Santa Maria and Lompoc and locally inland to the Garey/Sisquoc area and along San Antonio Creek to Barka Slough, both located at the edge of District I. Along the South Coast, Cassin's Kingbird was an uncommon to locally fairly common nester between Gaviota and Carpinteria through the mid-1990s, increasing in abundance thereafter. Stands of eucalyptus are the favored habitat utilized for nesting. A lone, recently fledged juvenile in Goleta 14 November 2009 (ph. SBMNH) suggests extraordinarily late nesting. This species was a rare and local breeder in District I. Five egg sets (WFVZ) were taken from the Santa Ynez Valley by L.T. Stevens between 1935 and 1938. Numbers have increased there over the past 30 years. Nesting has been documented during the 2000s east of Lompoc, in the Solvang area, and at Los Alamos.

Willett (1933) wrote that it "winters in small numbers north to Santa Barbara." Until the mid-1990s, the species was very uncommon to rare at this season along the South Coast, with an average of from 2 to 5 individuals found most years, and a high count of 10 in 1988–1989. Since then, there has been a substantial increase in the numbers of wintering birds, and Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 117 and 118 individuals (5 January 2019 and 4 January 2020, respectively). A single-site concentration of 55 birds was in Goleta 5 January 2019. Winter records exist as far west as Refugio. Along the North Coast, the first winter records involved 4

birds in the Santa Maria area during December 1979, 1 there 3 January 1982, 1 on north Vandenberg SFB 26 December 1989–5 January 1990, and 1 in Lompoc 15 December 1991. Other records of interest soon thereafter included 9 in the Santa Maria area during December 1992 (8 of these near Orcutt), 11 in the Orcutt area 6 February 1994, 1 near Sisquoc/Garey 17 January 2002, 1 in Lompoc 21 January 2004, and 6 there 27 November 2007. Numbers have increased further. The two North Coast CBCs have each recorded from 1–6 individuals most years since then, with high counts of 11 on both La Purisima and Santa Maria–Guadalupe on 14 December 2014 and 21 December 2014, respectively; and 25–30 were in Lompoc from 22 February–8 March 2021.

Before the mid-1990s, there were only two winter records for District I: near Paradise, Santa Ynez Valley, 31 December 1977 and total of 4 in Solvang 13 January–2 March 1993. Starting in 2003, and mirroring the increases in District C, Cassin's Kingbirds began to occur more often and are now regular in small numbers through winter in much of the Santa Ynez Valley as far east as the east end of Lake Cachuma (high counts of 6+ between Buellton and Santa Ynez during 2003–2004 and roost of 12 in Solvang 26 February 2007). On the Cachuma CBC, 2 birds were recorded the first year of the count (29 December 1999), 6 birds were tallied on 30 December 2008, but then 17 were counted on 27 December 2013 and 19 birds on 29 December 2015. First winter reports elsewhere in District I included up to 3 birds in Los Alamos most winters since early 2011, 2 birds east of Sisquoc 29 December 2012, and 1 near Garey 14–17 January 2015. East of Lake Cachuma,1 was in the Rancho Oso area 30 December 2023. The summer status of Cassin's Kingbird in District I is somewhat less certain, as there has been some degree of confusion with Western Kingbirds. It is at least a rare (and increasing?) breeder there.

In District M, 2 at San Marcos Pass 19 March 1989, 1 there 16 March 1996, and 2 along Alamo Pintado Creek near Ballard Campground 8 April 2025 were presumably migrants, whereas winter birds were at Painted Cave 9 December 2023 and 21 February 2025, and a summer individual was along East Camino Cielo 20 June 2024.

In District V, 2 were along Foothill Road 17 March 2018, 1 was along Cottonwood Canyon Road 18 March 2018, 2 were in Ballinger Canyon 2 May 2023, 1 was in Quatal Canyon 11 May 2023, 1 was at Caliente Ranch 18–19 May 2024. [Also, 2 birds were in the San Luis Obispo County section of the Cuyama Valley 30 April 1979.] In fall, 2 were in New Cuyama 16 September 2018 and a late bird was in Quatal Canyon 28 November 2024. Up to 4 along Cottonwood Creek Road through summer 2019; 2 in New Cuyama on 10 June 2022, at least 2 present 19–24 June 2025, and 2 there 19 June 2026; and up to 2 in Aliso Canyon from 3–15 June 2025 suggest this species may now be breeding there. Two birds in New Cuyama 6 January–15 February 2024 and 1 there 25–26 January 2025 and 12 February 2026; singles in vic. Caliente Ranch Wetland 29 January 2025 and 24 January–2 February 2026; and 1 in Quatal Canyon 4 February 2026 were a surprise in winter, although this species is increasing in other western desert areas in Southern California.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

Common summer resident in Districts I and V. Fairly common to common transient in District C, uncommon to rare there in summer. Uncommon migrant in District M. Only several valid winter records.

Western Kingbirds frequent open country. Nesting birds are found near clumps of tall trees, such as those found near ranch houses in the Santa Ynez, Los Alamos, and Cuyama Valleys. They first appear in mid- or late March (earliest arrivals: 6 March 2021 Solvang, 7 March 1970 Goleta, 7 March 2021 near Santa Ynez, 8 March 2012 Cuyama Valley), and most have departed by mid-September.

Along the coast, this species occurs primarily as a transient; it is uncommon and local as a breeder and early-summer visitor. The maximum spring concentrations are 41 in a one-acre area in Goleta 11 April 1982; flocks flying through San Marcos Pass (typically during and immediately following strong N or NW winds), including 75 on 9 April 1984, 60 there 7 April

1994, up to 90 on 3 April 1996, and ca. 125 on 12 April 1996; 75 at Laguna Blanca 26 April 2006; 40+ along one street in Carpinteria 1 April 2013; and an exceptional 284 over Santa Barbara 17 April 2020. Most transients have passed through by late April and the species is rare after the first week in May. The only spring records for the coast after mid-May not involving definite nesting birds are 21 May 1975 Carpinteria Salt Marsh (*SBMNH), 28 May 1987 near Santa Maria, and 6 June 1981 Goleta.

Fall migrants typically begin appearing in late July, very rarely in mid-July (earliest arrival date: 10 July 1986 Carpinteria (2)). Fall transients are less widespread than in spring, though numbers tended to concentrate at two particular sites, at least formerly, during late August and September: the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. From 10–20 individuals were present regularly for extended periods between late August and late September at these locations. Between late August and mid-September 1964, up to 100 were present in Santa Barbara, a high count. Most birds leave the county by late September, and the species is rare after the beginning of October and very rare in late October. The documented records past 20 October along the North Coast are 25 October 2023 Santa Maria and 29 October 2008 near Santa Maria. Those later than 30 October along the South Coast are from Goleta through 1 November 2025, through 4 November 1981 (ph. SBMNH), 5 November 2000, 2–5 November 2001, and 8 November 2017; and in Santa Barbara 4 November 2023 and 13 November 2017. A late bird in District I was near Santa Ynez 16 October 2013. One seen 5 November 2005 in District V near Cuyama (ph. SBMNH) was exceptional.

Western Kingbirds were documented nesting (eggs WFVZ) in Montecito 23 June 1883. They have been found breeding (1–4 pairs most years) along the South Coast annually beginning in 1979. Most such reports through the mid-1990s were from the northern Goleta area (e.g., Farren Road) east to the base of San Marcos Pass, although more rarely a few nests or summering birds have been found close to the coast, such as along lower Atascadero Creek near Goleta Beach Park and on the main UCSB campus. Other breeding records were from the Mesa in Santa Barbara (2 fledged young in 1986), Hollister Ranch (1 from 8–29 June 1984), and Carpinteria (2 present through 10 July 1986). There was one nesting record during this period for the North Coast: a pair with young at a nest near Santa Maria 12 June 1982. More recently, a pair with begging young were at the Santa Barbara Municipal Golf Course 17 June–7 July 2003, breeding was confirmed on Ellwood Mesa, west of Goleta, 20 June–13 July 2005, and where also likely in subsequent years, 1 was farther west at Hollister Ranch 14 June 2009, a pair with young were in residential Carpinteria June–July 2009, and up to 4 summered in vic. Devereux Slough in 2021. In addition, there are a number of early-summer individuals near the coast seen on one day only. Whether these birds are nesting nearby or are simply wanderers is unknown. A sampling of such reports includes coastal Goleta 24 June 1988, another there 19 June 2011, several sightings in the Casmalia area during June 2019–2023, Barka Slough 17 June 2023, and Elings Park 25 June 2025. Unfortunately, many reports from the immediate coast in early summer include no documentation and at least some of these likely involve misidentified Cassin's Kingbirds.

There are only 4 acceptable records for the county (and only a relatively small, but increasing, number for the state) between mid-November and the beginning of March. Numerous other winter reports of this species probably pertain to either Tropical or Cassin's Kingbirds. The documented records are: Laguna Blanca 8 December 1991–10 February 1992; Ellwood area, Goleta, 5–21 January 2002; Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara, 5 January 2008 (ph. SBMNH); and on North Coast in Jim May Park, Santa Maria, 20 December 2015 (ph. SBMNH).

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)

Very rare fall transient in District C; casual in late spring and early summer. Casual in District I.

First seen locally on 13 September 1923 at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in Santa Barbara (Hoffmann 1924), the Eastern Kingbird was recorded in fall along the South Coast almost annually between 1961 and 1995. This was probably the most consistent area in which to find this species during fall in California. The 45 fall records involving 59 individuals through 1995 fell between late August and early October. Extreme dates were 18 August 1978 Goleta and, exceptionally, 20 October 1971 Goleta. The Andrée Clark Bird Refuge was particularly attractive to this species; between 1961 and 1995, Eastern Kingbirds were recorded there 24 of 34 years, and up to 5 individuals occurred there in a single season (1980). Between 1996–2025, there have been only 23 additional fall records along the South Coast, and a mere 3 of these have come from the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge.

In contrast, there is only one fall record for the North Coast: Santa Ynez River mouth 4 September 2005.

There is also a single fall record inland in District I: near Santa Ynez 20 September 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

There are 12 records of late-spring/early-summer vagrants: Santa Ynez Campground along the upper Santa Ynez River (District I) 18 June 1982, Santa Barbara 29 June 1988, near Lompoc 25 June 1993 (ph. SBMNH) and 3–4 July 1993 (ph. SBMNH), south Vandenberg SFB 21 May 1997, near the Santa Maria River mouth 16 June 1997, Carpinteria 18 June 2004, near Santa Ynez (District I) 22 June 2006, Goleta 30 May 2007 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 26 May 2019, Lake Los Carneros 8 June 2023 (ph. SBMNH), and Carpinteria Salt Marsh 9–12 June 2025.

A published record for Santa Barbara 10 March 1959 is dismissed here; it lacks adequate documentation and is totally out-of-season for western North America.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)

Casual spring and fall visitor in District C, with also two summer and two winter records.

There are ten records covering a variety of seasons: Leadbetter Beach, Santa Barbara, 24 November 1963; east of Lompoc (on the border with District I) 6 September–13 October 1985 (ph. *AB* 40:160, SBMNH); Goleta 10 July 1986; UCSB campus, Goleta, 11 December 1992–5 March 1993 (ph. *AB* 47:301, CBRC 2007, SBMNH); near Devereux Slough 24–26 May 2000 (ph. SBMNH); Point Arguello 16 May 2003 (ph. SBMNH); near Devereux Slough 3 November 2010; near Goleta sewage treatment plant 14 July 2011; Vandenberg Village 20–27 January 2016 (ph. SBMNH); and Hollister Ranch 30 April 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*)

Accidental.

One was in vic. Lion's Head, north Vandenberg SFB, 22 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH), the fourth record for California.

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*)

Fairly common to locally common permanent resident in Districts C, I, V, and at the lower elevations of District M.

Black Phoebes are most frequently found in the vicinity of water. They are rare or absent from areas that lack standing water, such as semidesert scrub bordering the Cuyama Valley, dry chaparral hillsides, and drier, open coniferous forest, but they do frequent many residential areas. There probably is a winter influx of birds into the county; but migration is poorly understood in this species. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 416 individuals (2 January 2010). The Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 102 birds (28 December 2007). This species is somewhat more numerous and widespread in the Cuyama Valley during fall and winter (it is uncommon there in summer).

One in dry pine forest on Big Pine Mountain 1 July 1981 and another in that area 21 July 1993 were probably post-breeding, up-slope wanderers; but the species has been recorded in small numbers during several summer surveys of the Big Pine Mountain area in more mesic

situations at Alamar Saddle/Bear Camp and along the nearby upper Sisquoc River. A nest with eggs was found at Bluff Camp 13 June 2020. At a somewhat lower elevation, nesting has been documented along Manzana Creek near Nira Campground in 1999 and 2019 and at nearby Fish Creek in 1974, as well as in Bates Canyon Campground in the Sierra Madre in 2016, with additional breeding-season records nearby at Aliso Park and upper Santa Barbara Canyon.

Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*)

Very rare fall and winter visitor in District C; one spring record. Casual in Districts I, M, and V.

There are 38 fall and winter records from District C as follows: Santa Barbara 2–26 January 1976 (ph. SBMNH) and then 37 subsequent records (24 along South Coast, 13 along North Coast) through early 2026, with the earliest 17+ October (1988, Goleta) and the latest through 2 April (2025, Santa Barbara). These included single individuals that wintered three consecutive years at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge from 1988–1989 through 1990–1991 and at Jim May (formerly River Oaks) Park in Santa Maria from 2005–2006 through 2007–2008. Four birds in District C during winter 2010–2011 was a high season total. One near Garey 4 December 2011 (ph. SBMNH) and another near Sisquoc 20 November 2013 (ph. SBMNH) were at the border with District I.

The sole record involving a probable spring migrant was along Carpinteria Creek 8 April 2026.

In District I, single birds were at Lake Cachuma 2 December 1995 and 9–30 January 1999, along Sweeney Road east of Lompoc 28 February–13 March 1999, near Santa Ynez 17 October 2006 (ph. SBMNH), at Lake Cachuma 28 December 2010–9 February 2011 (ph. SBMNH), near Los Olivos 3 December 2015–22 January 2016 (ph. SBMNH), and near Santa Ynez 5 December 2016.

One along Kinevan Road at San Marcos Pass 20 November 2023 (ph. SBMNH) was a real surprise in District M.

A winter bird was found in District V at the Caliente Ranch Wetland on 25–26 January 2025.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

Fairly common to locally common transient and winter visitor in all Districts, avoiding only the more heavily forested and urban areas. Formerly a very rare breeder in Districts V, I, and C, but recent increases in breeding population in all districts.

Say's Phoebes frequent open country, including sloughs, grassland, semidesert scrub, agricultural areas, and parks. Fall migrants begin arriving in mid-September (earliest arrival dates: 6 September 1983 Goleta, 6 September 1987 Santa Ynez River mouth). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 102 individuals (2 January 1983). The Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 62 birds (28 December 2010). In spring, most birds except local breeders have departed the county by mid-March, with a very few as late as early April and exceptionally to mid-April.

The Say's Phoebe was a regular breeder through the early 1900s. Dawson (1923) wrote that it "breeds in the inner coastal ranges of Santa Barbara County," and Willett (1933) noted the species as a "fairly common breeding bird in foothill ranges of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties." Egg sets come from the Cuyama Valley area 16 March 1934 (WFVZ) and 4 May 1941 (SBMNH), and from District I along Santa Aguenda Creek, near Santa Ynez, 1 May 1946. The cause(s) of its apparent decline as a nesting species during the decades that followed are uncertain. By the latter half of the 20th century, Say's Phoebe had become merely a probable rare breeder in some of the dry canyons bordering the Cuyama Valley. A juvenile was at nearby Black Willow Spring in the Sierra Madre 18 July 1982. One was reported near Blue Falls, upper Sisquoc River, 14 July 1971. The species may also have nested during this period very rarely in Districts C and I. Evidence for this includes 2 in Santa Barbara all summer in 1975; 1 west of

Gaviota 28 May 1975; single individuals in the Mono Debris Basin area near the upper Santa Ynez River 17 June 1979, 16 June 1981, and 20 July 1982; a juvenile near Garey 17 July 1980; up to 2 near the Boathouse, south Vandenberg Air Force Base, 25 April 1983; 1 along lower Refugio Road 13 May 1987; and 1 near Lompoc 5 June 1988.

Since the mid-1990s, and especially since 2001, the number of records of probable or definite nesting Say's Phoebes has increased substantially. The summary below covers the period up to about 2018, as by then the number of late spring and summer sightings of single birds in Districts C and I became too numerous to list individually. Some of the late April and early May records listed below may involve very late spring migrants, however. Nesting has likely continued most years at one or more sites in District V, including Ballinger Canyon (adults were feeding 2 juveniles in Ballinger Canyon 25–26 May 1995, and 1 or 2 adults were there between late April and late July during at least 6 subsequent years through 2017), Santa Barbara Canyon (31 May 1998 (2) and 7 August 2011), New Cuyama (27 April 2008 and 1 May 2017 (3)), and Salisbury Canyon 24 April 2018 (nest). In District M, an active nest was found at Pine Corral Potrero in the Sierra Madre 2 May 2019. In District I, late spring and summer adults or independent juveniles have been seen along the upper Santa Ynez River (9 May 1998) and near Santa Ynez/Sedgwick Reserve (2 June 2004, and most years since 2009); 1 bird was on Sweeney Road east of Lompoc 28 June 2014 and 2 were there 20 June 2024; and singles were in Colson Canyon east of Santa Maria 6 June 2015 and 6 May 2020. Confirmed nesting was documented in 2011 at the Sedgwick Reserve with a pair feeding 2 fledglings on 14 May and 2 active nests on 11 June, as well as in 2013, 2014, and 2020. An active nest was near Lake Cachuma 5 May 2017. At the border between Districts C and I, 1 was in the Garey/Sisquoc area 22 July 1996, 2 pairs were there 7 May 1997, a nest was found 8–27 May 1998, a female was incubating 4 eggs 19 May 2001, and an adult was on a nest 2–3 June 2003. Along the North Coast, adults were in the Santa Maria area (22 July 1996, 16 July 2001 (2), 15 June 2004, 23 May 2009, 29 May 2009, 22 July 2011, and 24 June and 24–26 June 2020), south of Orcutt (1 June 2012 (2)), on north Vandenberg SFB (16 April 1996), on south Vandenberg SFB (27 April 2008), and near Lompoc (9 May 1998 and 13 April 2014). Nesting was confirmed at Jim May Park where 2 adults fed 2 juveniles 11 June 2011 and where a juvenile was found 8 June 2013, near Highway 101 and Betteravia Road in Santa Maria where a nest with nestlings 3 June 2012, at two sites in Santa Maria during June 2014, and a displaying pair there 30 April 2017.

The most substantial increase has been along the South Coast, particularly in the Goleta area. A few adults had been seen at scattered locations in Goleta (e.g., Farren Road, Brandon School, West Ellwood) during late April–late July since 1997. Nesting was first documented along Phelps Road in southwestern Goleta in 1998 with an adult and juvenile present in August, and in 2001 with an adult and 3 juveniles in July. In addition, a juvenile was at La Patera Ranch in northern Goleta 16 June 1998. Since then, the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space)/Phelps Road/Ellwood area saw confirmed breeding in 2002, 1 or 2 adults present in 2003 and 2004, and confirmed breeding in about half the years 2007–2024. An adult was feeding a fledgling at Storke Ranch 13 July 2003. Nesting was also confirmed at UCSB Storke housing in spring 2007 and 2008. These several areas, combined, then hosted 3 active nesting pairs in 2009; and in 2010, there were 7 active territories, with definite breeding confirmed at 3 of them. Up to 2 birds were nearby at UCSB's Coal Oil Point Reserve in summer 2012–2016, with nesting confirmed 2017–2019. In 2019, ca. 6 pairs summered in Goleta. One was along Farren Road on 23 August 2024. Farther east, 1 bird was at Lake Los Carneros 4 June 2009, 2 were in the Goleta Slough area 12 May 2017, and 1–2 in late spring thereafter, with confirmed nesting at the latter locality and adjoining UCSB campus property in May 2019 and 2020, and 2 were at the nearby Cabrillo Business Park May–June 2024. In Santa Barbara, a few scattered spring and summer reports of adults (e.g., near Turnpike Road, at transfer station (3), along Modoc Road, at Santa Barbara cemetery, near Municipal Golf Course) was eclipsed by documented nesting (pair with 2 fledged young) at the San Marcos Foothills in April+ 2002, 3 birds there 18 June 2016, an adult with 2 fledged young 25 May 2020, as well as sightings of 1

or 2 individuals in late spring annually between 2019–2022. Two birds at the Carpinteria Bluffs from 27–29 May 2013 strongly suggested a territorial pair; and singles at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh 27 July 2013, up to 2 there 7 April–12 August 2024, and singles elsewhere in Carpinteria 5 June 2012 and 4 June 2015 may have been local breeders. Elsewhere along the South Coast, 2 were near Point Conception 27 May 2018 and 1 was in Refugio Canyon 8 June 2020.

An individual banded in central Washington 4 June 1973 was recovered 7 January 1974 in coastal Santa Barbara County.

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

Rare to very rare but increasing visitor, primarily in fall and winter, in District C; very rare to casual in Districts I and V, and in spring. One record at sea. Casual breeder in Districts I and V and summer visitor in District C.

The first records of Vermilion Flycatcher were in 1907 and 1940 (see below). In District C, there are 36 records from along the South Coast during fall and winter through early 2026: Goleta 25 November 1971 and then 35 additional records between 1977 and 2026 between 7 September 2006 Goleta and 7–8 September 2018 Carpinteria and through 9 March 1986 and 1998 Goleta. In addition, a very early arrival was at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 4 August 2021. Several records involve wintering birds that returned multiple years, including a female near Devereux Slough in Goleta that returned for eight winters in a row. In 2024–2025, a notable spike in coastal-slope records throughout much of Southern California resulted in 4 birds during the winter along the South Coast, with 6 additional birds on the North Coast.

In addition, 12 individuals have been seen along the South Coast in spring only. Some of these records may involve wintering birds previously undiscovered, but most likely represent spring migrants: Santa Barbara 15 March 1907 (Torrey 1907); Carpinteria 7–9 April 1977; eight records in March since 2005; and Goleta 25 April 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and 30 April 2023.

There is also one exceptional summer record: male at Dos Pueblos High School in Goleta 10 June 2013 (ph. SBMNH).

Along the North Coast, 1 was near Guadalupe for three consecutive winters 15 December 1989–11 February 1990, 21 October 1990–13 January 1991, and 20 October 1991–25 January 1992; it was joined by a second bird 10–24 November 1990. Yet additional individuals were there 21 October 2004 (ph. SBMNH); for (presumably) five consecutive winters, from 23 December 2007–19 February 2008 (ph. SBMNH), missed 2008–2009, 25 October 2009–26 January 2010, 3 December 2010–28 February 2011 (ph. SBMNH), and 10 November 2011 (ph. SBMNH); and others on 16–17 November 2013 (ph. SBMNH), 29 October 2016 (ph. SBMNH), and 26 December 2016–1 February 2017 (ph. SBMNH). Singles were at La Purisima Golf Course near Lompoc 12 December 2005–10 January 2006; at River Park in Lompoc 18 November–2 December 2017 and again 27 September 2018–19 February 2019; along Tanglewood Road near Santa Maria 22–24 December 2017; at Rancho Sisquoc, near Sisquoc, 24 September–14 November 2018; and at the Santa Maria Country Club 28 January–6 March 2019 and again 14 October 2019–14 February 2020 and winter 2020–2021, with another there 30 September–6 October 2019. From 2020–2021 to 2025–2026, numbers in the Santa Maria/Guadalupe area had increased to the point that 3 to 5 individuals between September–March had become somewhat expected, with a late date through 2 April 2023 Guadalupe. Another was in Vandenberg Village on 25 December 2020 (ph. SBMNH). One at Preisker Park, Santa Maria, 26–28 March 2020 (ph. SBMNH) and 1 at River Park in Lompoc 22 April 2025 were probably spring migrants. Fall migrants were near the Santa Ynez River mouth 16–17 November 2015 (ph. SBMNH) at Preisker Park in Santa Maria 12 October 2017, at Jalama Beach County Park 4 October 2020 and 9–11 September 2021, early near Point Conception 3 September 2021, in Lompoc 26 October 2021, and in Vandenberg Village 29 September 2022. A very early juvenile was at Jim May Park, Santa Maria, 14 August 2016. Even

more unusual was a male along Telephone Road in Santa Maria from 30 May–10 June 2017, behaving territorially.

One landed aboard a research vessel ca. 18 mi W of San Miguel Island 11 May 2021.

In District I, presumed spring migrants were along the Santa Ynez River between Gibraltar Reservoir and Juncal Dam 7 April 1940 (Rett 1940a) and near Los Olivos 29 March 2019; whereas a presumed fall migrant male was near Los Olivos 2 November 2016. The Los Olivos bird(s) could be the same wintering male noted below from near Santa Ynez (site is actually about mid-way between Los Olivos and Santa Ynez), and it could also involve the same male of the breeding pair from 2012–2015 (see below). An early fall migrant was at Lake Cachuma 31 August–1 September 2024. Presumed wintering birds included 1 near Buellton 1 November 1994–13 March 1995 (ph. SBMNH), 1 near Santa Ynez 23 February 2010 (ph. SBMNH), 1 near Santa Ynez 14–27 December 2016 and again 26 October 2017–14 January 2018 and 13–27 December 2019, and 1 there 30 December 2025.

An early juvenile near Santa Ynez 26 August–19 October 2006 (ph. SBMNH) was suggestive of local breeding. Breeding was confirmed there (Baseline Avenue area) in 2012 when a pair was found 21 January–24 August (ph. SBMNH), with the female seen carrying food on 25 April and 2 fledglings noted on 13 July; the male remained through winter 2012–2013 and was joined by a/the female again 23 January+, they were seen feeding 2 juveniles 16–20 June 2013, were present through at least 2 November, with the male remaining through 27 December 2013; the pair may have been present throughout 2014 and possibly nested again, though reports are inconclusive; but they clearly continued during December 2014–March 2015 (ph. SBMNH). An immature was nearby 29 December 2015. Another breeding pair in 2019 (begging juvenile seen 2 July) in the Sisquoc area had been present for several years. A male was near Lake Cachuma 22 May 2021.

In District V, winter birds were at New Cuyama 10 January 2016 and at an unspecified location 11 January 2018; and presumed fall migrants were there 4 August 2017 (early; ph. SBMNH) and 22 September 2021. A pair nested in Santa Barbara Canyon bordering the Cuyama Valley from early May–June 1992, with 1 probably successful brood ("immature" seen 2 July) and an unsuccessful second attempt, with the female found dead (specimen, nest, and 2 of 4 eggs deposited at SBMNH). The male (ph. SBMNH) was last seen 29 June 1992. A female was in Santa Barbara Canyon 13 May 2020. In 1995, a pair was seen copulating in New Cuyama 14 July, with the male seen through 27 July. Another pair bred in the western Cuyama Valley 9 May–9 June 2019, with a fledgling seen on the latter date; one or two birds had been present for several years before then.

Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*)

As a summer resident, presently uncommon and declining in District M, rare and local in Districts C and I. Uncommon transient in District M, rare in Districts C, I, and V. Casual in winter.

The Olive-sided Flycatcher is most numerous as a breeder, mid-April–August, in the coniferous forests of District M. It was formerly locally numerous, as shown by a total of 30 in the Big Pine Mountain area 29 June–1 July 1981 and 27 on San Rafael Mountain 18–19 June 1982. Since then, this species has declined, and counts made during near-annual summer surveys on Big Pine Mountain through 2026 have typically been under 15 individuals (a couple even under 10), although 37 birds were reported 11–13 June 2010. Only 4 were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024. It is very uncommon at lower elevations in District M in oak and oak-riparian woodland that also contain some conifers (e.g., at Refugio and San Marcos Passes) or where scattered Bigcone Douglas-Fir [Bigcone Spruce] grow within montane chaparral (e.g., at Little Pine Mountain and along the north side of East Camino Cielo). June totals along East Camino Cielo have not exceeded 4 individuals. Breeding status in the Sierra Madre is uncertain. One near La Cumbre Peak 21 March 1985 was exceptionally early, whereas

1 there 5 April 2017 was slightly so. One at Figueroa Mountain 1–5 October 2000 was getting late.

A very small number of individuals also presumably breed in canyons on the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains. These birds frequent tall trees, particularly planted conifers and eucalyptus. Dawson (1916b) wrote that the species "breeds regularly on the seaward slopes of the Santa Ynez Range near Santa Barbara. We took a set of three eggs from a live oak tree in Los Canoes Canyon, 5 June 1915, at an elevation of about 2600 feet." In District C, there are a number of confirmed nesting records from the lower reaches of several canyons along the South Coast. Dawson (1923) wrote that "near Carpinteria [it] breeds almost to sea-level in [the] Upper Sonoran, non-coniferous association." A pair with 3 young were in Santa Barbara 29 August 1957; adults with 2 young were at the Botanic Garden 2 August 1961 and a nest with 4 young was there in 1970; another nest with 3 young was found in 1970 behind Carpinteria; a pair with several fledglings were in Romero Canyon in Montecito in late July 1993 (and during most previous summers since the mid-1980s) and a pair, nest, and 3 fledglings were there 15–17 July 2015; 1 was building a nest along lower Rincon Creek near Carpinteria 10 June–5 July 1999; and 1 calling along lower Cold Spring Creek (near Mountain Drive) in Montecito during June–July 2011 was followed by 3–4 birds there (presumably a family group) 29 July–1 August.

Additional evidence of presumed nesting in District C, particularly between Mission Canyon and Rincon Creek, comes from the sighting of (west to east): 1 along San Jose Creek in the foothills of northern Goleta 13 July 1982, with 2 there 18 July 1983; adults at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 26 July 1964, June–July 1975, most summers during the 1980s, 1 there 15 June 2011, and 1–2 there 24 April–28 June 2014; 1 at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History grounds, Mission Canyon, 25–27 June 1975; an immature in Mission Canyon 2 July 1975; 1 in Mission Canyon 4 July 1981; 2 in Rattlesnake Canyon 25 June 2013; singles in Cold Spring Canyon, Montecito, 28 July 1964, during summer 1987 and 1988, throughout June 1997, and 1–3 there probably during most years since then, but definitely in May 1999, May 2003, and May and/or June (sometimes in to late July) 2007–2013 and 2015–2018, with 4 present 23 July 2012; 1 at base of San Ysidro Canyon, Montecito, during most summers between 1981–1987 and in June 2015, as well as a pair there in July 1994; up to 2 pairs in Romero Canyon, Montecito, June–early July 1994, and singles singing there in May or June 1999, 2003, and 2013; singles in Gobernador Canyon, Carpinteria, 20 June 1985 and again in summer 1986, and on 18 June 2003 and 13 July 2011; 1 singing along Franklin Trail 11 June 2016; and singles at Rincon Creek in early June between 1990 and 1992, and up to 2 there 20–24 June 2004. There also have been several sightings on the coastal plain of single singing birds present for periods of time and assumed to be on territory: Montecito 6–21 June 1962; Montecito each summer from 1979–1982 and again from 1986–1988; Montecito 11 June 2025 (possibly a late migrant); and Hope Ranch 1–9 June 1981 and 8–29 July 1987.

A pair nested unsuccessfully in pines and eucalyptus on north Vandenberg SFB mid-June–5 August 1988, establishing the first breeding record for the North Coast. One was at the same locality 19 June 1990. Another was singing elsewhere on north Vandenberg 21 June 1997. This species might also breed occasionally in eucalyptus in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc, where up to several birds have been seen in spring.

In District I, single individuals were along Caliente Creek near Pendola and upper Mono Creek, both on 8 June 1991, 5 were along Kelly and Bear Creeks near Paradise Road 31 May 1993 (possibly late spring migrants), 1 was at Nojoqui Falls Park 27 June 1998, and 1 was in Colson Canyon 24 June 2014.

Transients are uncommon in District M and rare elsewhere. They are somewhat more numerous in spring than in fall. Spring migrants occur between mid-April and late May. The earliest arrival dates in all Districts are the 21 March record above, 3 April 1983 Santa Barbara, 5 April 2017 near Figueroa Mountain, and 9 April 2014 Santa Barbara. Fall transients occur

primarily from mid-August to late September. The species is casual after the beginning of October (e.g., 4 October 2028 Santa Barbara, through 5 October 2002 Santa Maria, 12 October 2009 Goleta, 6–16 October 2006 Carpinteria, and 19 October 2006 La Cumbre Peak).

There are six winter records (very unusual for the United States) along the South Coast: Montecito 13 December 1983; Arroyo Burro, Santa Barbara, 27 January 1984; the same individual returning for six consecutive years to Hope Ranch 1984–1985 through 1989–1990 (ph. SBMNH), present as early as 20 October in 1989 and as late as 8 April in 1986, and seen again 14 November 1993; Montecito December 1991–9 February 1992; Devereux Slough 25 December 2012–12 January 2013 (ph. SBMNH); and, particularly unusual in winter, La Cumbre Peak in District M 20–21 January 2013 (ph. SBMNH).

Greater Pewee (*Contopus pertinax*)

Casual winter visitor in District C.

What was almost certainly the same individual was present in the Hot Springs X Olive Mill Roads area in residential Montecito 10 November 1984–10 March 1985 and again 28 December 1985. A *Contopus* sp. seen at the same locality 31 December 1983 also was very likely this same individual. Another bird was in the Ennisbrook Open Space area in Montecito 17–19 December 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and again 14 December 2024–1 April 2025 and again 17 December 2025–26 March 2026.

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)

Uncommon to fairly common, but probably declining, transient and summer resident in Districts C, I, and M. Uncommon transient in District V. No mid-winter records.

The Western Wood-Pewee is most numerous as a breeder in coniferous and oak-conifer forest. Twenty-four on San Rafael Mountain 18–20 June 1982, 37 in the Big Pine Mountain area 19–22 July 1982, 36 there on both 17–19 June 2001 and 18–20 June 2004, and 30–56 birds (highest 15–17 June 2007) reported there annually on summer surveys between 2006–2026 were excellent counts. Only 6 were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024. Breeders also frequent oak-riparian canyons in the Santa Ynez Mountains (e.g., 18 along Kelly and Bear Creeks near Paradise Road 31 May 1993, though some of these birds may have been spring migrants). Small numbers have been found in summer in the Sierra Madre. It is—or was—an uncommon and declining nester along the upper and middle Santa Ynez River (e.g., 8 birds west of Buellton 2 July 1996) and tributaries, in well-vegetated residential areas (e.g., Montecito), and along riparian creeks that flow onto the coastal plain along the South Coast (e.g., Tecolote, San Jose, and Maria Ygnacio Creeks in Goleta, San Antonio Creek in Santa Barbara, Cold Spring Creek in Montecito, and Gobernador and Rincon Creeks in Carpinteria). The last definite summer records from several of these sites are uncertain but include 1990 along San Antonio Creek, 1997 along San Jose Creek, 1999 along Maria Ygnacio Creek, and 2009 along Cold Spring Creek; additional census work is needed. As of 2020, the species still bred along Tecolote Creek and Rincon Creek. This species avoids the cool, North Coast riparian habitat in summer; none were found there during breeding bird surveys conducted between 1980 and 1993 or in 1995 and 1996. One at Barka Slough 19 June 1988 and another in Miguelito Canyon 15 June 1993 were at warmer, interior sections of District C. One at Preisker Park in Santa Maria 27 June 2012 was at an odd locality for mid-summer.

Spring transients first appear in mid-April; the earliest arrival dates are 6 April 2012 Cachuma Campground, 9 April 2018 Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez, 11 April 1985 El Capitan, and 11 April 1987 Refugio. Several reports of particularly early birds, especially those which were heard only, were likely misidentifications. Small numbers of migrants continue to pass through into early June, with 10 birds at the Santa Barbara Cemetery in Montecito 6 June 2011 a high count. The latest record of a probable migrant is 13 June 1976 Santa Barbara.

In fall, migrants appear beginning in early August (e.g., 2 August 1992 and 3 August 2007 coastal Goleta), possibly in late July, and are most numerous from late August to early October.

Numbers drop off rapidly after that, and the species is very rare through mid-October. The latest records include: 20 October 1984 Carpinteria, 21 October 1984 Santa Barbara, and through 23 October 1984 Carpinteria. One along Carpinteria Creek 20–22 November 2011 (ph. SBMNH) and another along Maria Ygnacio Creek, Goleta, 3–6 December 2001 were exceptionally late and are two of the latest records for the state. A very late wood-pewee sp. was at La Mesa Park, Santa Barbara, 21 November 2006 (ph. SBMNH). A Western Wood-Pewee at Aliso Park in the Sierra Madre 18 October 2018 was late in District M.

Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*)
Accidental.

A singing Eastern Wood-Pewee was present in District M at Bear Camp, Big Pine Mountain, from 24 June–9 July 1994.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*)
Accidental.

One record: Carpinteria Creek 16 October 1987 (ph. SBMNH). This was the first record for Southern California.

Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*)
Casual fall transient.

Two records: Lake Los Carneros 30 September 2018 (ph. *WB* 51:244) and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 15–17 September 2025.

Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*)
Uncommon fall transient in Districts C, I, and V; rare in spring and in District M. Now an endangered, very uncommon, local, and declining breeder.

Willow Flycatchers are found most regularly in riparian vegetation, particularly willows. Fall transients are also seen regularly in weedy and brushy areas. The first fall migrants are usually noted during late August (earliest arrival dates: 11 August 2001 Goleta, 17+ August 1993 Carpinteria). Eight in Goleta 9 September 1982 is a high one-day count. The species mostly has passed through the county by the beginning of October. It is rare during the first half of October. The latest records are 18 October 1985 Goleta, 18–19 October 2018 Carpinteria, 20 October 1994 Goleta, 22–24 October 1992 Lompoc, and 27 October 1978 Santa Maria River mouth.

In spring, this species is a rare, late migrant; birds nesting farther to the north pass through during the second half of May and the first half of June. Birds that formerly bred more widely in the region arrived earlier in spring (as early as late April or early May—see below). Most records range between 15 May and 15 June, with an earlier bird on 8 May 2004 near Refugio State Beach and a later bird on 19 June 1999 in Goleta. The highest counts are of a total of 6 in Goleta 1–7 June 1982 and total of 10 there 6–7 June 1993.

In District M, spring migrants were along Camino Cielo 4 June 1986 and 21 May 2003, and 2 were near San Marcos Pass 23 May 1996; fall migrants were along Camino Cielo 11 September 2000 and 7 September 2002.

During the very early 1900s Willow Flycatcher was a “common summer resident from willow thickets of lowlands to no more than 5000 feet in mountain canyons” (Willett 1933). Several egg sets (WFVZ) were taken from unknown localities along the Santa Ynez River in June 1935 and one set came from Solvang 25 May. A large-scale decline in the nesting population in Southern California took place beginning in the 1920s and 1930s. The virtual elimination of this species throughout Southern California has been blamed on a combination of loss of habitat and intense brood-parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds (which first appeared in Santa Barbara County in 1911 and then rapidly increased in numbers). It is not known when the

"last" known pairs were recorded breeding, although Bartholomew (1940) reported up to 2 birds in the Gibraltar Reservoir area between late May and late August in 1937, 1938, and 1939.

The species was thought to be extirpated as a breeder until a small nesting population was discovered along the Santa Ynez River just west of Buellton in June–July 1986. Population estimates there were of 5 or 6 males in 1986, at least 4 singing males in 1987, 4 singing males in 1988, 7 individuals in 1991, at least 5 birds in 1992, 8 individuals and at least 2 nests in 1993, and 7 individuals in 1994, with an additional 12 birds found that year farther downriver in a stretch some 4–6 mi (6–10 km) west of Avenue of the Flags. Another population was found even farther west, in District C, along the Santa Ynez River between Lompoc and the Santa Ynez River mouth, with 1 bird on territory near Floradale Avenue 3–8 June 1990, up to 7 individuals between Lompoc and the Miguelito Wetland (35th Street) on Vandenberg SFB 16 May–30 June 1991, up to 11 present between Lompoc and the Miguelito Wetland 17 May–12 June 1992, at least five recorded there between 3 June–8 July 1993, 4 (2 pairs) present in 1994 (with an early arrival of the first bird on 6 May), 1 seen 17 May 1996, and a nest found 17 July 1998.

More concentrated flycatcher breeding surveys took place between Buellton and Vandenberg SFB between 1995–2000, and between only Lompoc and Vandenberg SFB between 2001–2003 (Farmer, Holmgren, and Rothstein 2003). Population estimates in the Buellton region were as follows—1995: 6–7 birds, 1996: 27–33, 1997: 23–25, 1998: 17–19, 1999: 13–15 (incomplete), and 2000: 27–30; subsequent single, brief, incomplete checks there produced 9 birds and 2 nests in 2004 and 3 territories in 2011; a more thorough search in 2012 produced only 5 territorial males, 1 pair producing just 1 chick, and the last bird on 9 August (*SBMNH); and single birds were found there 23 July 2017 and 15 June–19 July 2019. In the Lompoc/Vandenberg region the estimates were: 1995: 2 birds, 1996: 7, 1997: 3, 1998: 4, 1999: 3, 2000: 1, 2001: 1, 2002: 2, and 2003: 1; none were seen in this area during subsequent years through at least 2009. In 2019, Willow Flycatcher was discovered back along the Santa Ynez River in the Buellton area. In 2020, 2 individuals were there between 8 May–22 July; and in 2023, a pair was present May–June.

Elsewhere in District I, 2 Willow Flycatchers at Big Caliente Debris Dam near the upper Santa Ynez River 4 July 1989, up to 3 at upper Gibraltar Reservoir 3 June–13 July 1990, 1 at the latter location 13 May–9 July 1991, and up to 3 there annually in summer between 1992–1994 probably represented another small, local breeding population. Singles at Gibraltar Reservoir and Mono Campground 4 May 1993 were early arrivals and thus probably breeding locally. Reduced avian survey effort in that area since then has resulted in an uncertain status and no nesting records.

These breeding birds belong to the endangered subspecies *E. t. extimus* ("Southwestern Willow Flycatcher"). Brown-headed Cowbirds are relatively numerous in these areas and continue to pose a major threat.

Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*)

Very rare fall transient in District C. Casual in winter.

The fall records are: Point Conception 11 September 1974, Goleta 20–22 October 1975, Montecito 18 September 1977, [Santa Barbara 24 September 1979—report not accepted by CBRC], near Guadalupe 14–16 October 1981, Montecito 15 October 1981, Carpinteria 3 October 1984, Santa Barbara 4 October 1984, Refugio State Beach 18 October 1984, Carpinteria 28–29 October 1984, Carpinteria 16 October 1986, Goleta 13 October 1988, Carpinteria 20–21 September 1992, Goleta 9 October 1992, Carpinteria 26–29 October 2002, El Capitan State Beach 29 September 2003, Goleta 3 October 2004, Goleta 11 October 2013, Goleta 7–10 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH), and Point Conception 10 September 2022.

There are six records of wintering individuals: San Jose Creek, Goleta, 29 October 1982–27 March 1983; Carpinteria Creek 23 November 1982–15 January 1983; UCSB campus, Goleta, 29 October 1983–4 April 1984 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria Bluffs (Lagunitas Creek), Carpinteria, 11

January–18 March 2001; off S. Pine Avenue, Goleta, 25 December 2002–1 March 2003 (ph. SBMNH); and Santa Barbara Zoo 4 January 2003 (ph. SBMNH).

Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondii*)
Rare spring transient in all districts. Rare to very rare fall transient, with all records to date, except one, from District C. Casual in winter.

Hammond's Flycatchers are irregular in occurrence. During some spring seasons as many as 15 are seen along the coast; other years the species goes virtually unrecorded. In 1991, more than 35 individuals were seen along the South Coast during April and a total of ca. 50 were inland along the upper Santa Ynez River between 8 April–8 May. In 2020, 50+ were recorded in the county (ca. half along South Coast, the remainder spread between Districts I, M, and V), 2 April–15 May, and included highs in District V of 6 in Santa Barbara Canyon 21 April 2020 and a total of 16 district-wide between 11–25 April. Hammond's typically appears in early or mid-April (earliest arrival dates: 2 April 2012 Santa Barbara Canyon, 2 April 2020 Goleta, 3 April 2020 below Figueroa Mountain, 4 April 1991 near Gibraltar Reservoir, 4 April 2009 Lion Canyon near Cachuma Saddle, 4 April 2022 Refugio Canyon). It is very rare after early May; the latest records are 22 May 1982 Santa Barbara, 22–23 May 2004 Big Pine Mountain (vocalizing), 26–27 May 1982 Santa Barbara, and 27 May 2004 Goleta. The species is much scarcer along the North Coast than along the South Coast.

In fall, Hammond's Flycatchers are less numerous; for example, there were only about 38 acceptable records in District C between early September (e.g., 2 September 1997 Santa Maria) and the beginning of November through 2025. One in Santa Barbara on 17 November 2022 was slightly late. The only fall records elsewhere are from District M along Kinevan Road 11 October 2011 (ph. SBMNH), Bates Canyon Road (Sierra Madre foothills) 15 November 2020 (late), and Ranger Peak 30 October 2021 (ph. SBMNH). This might be the most likely empidonax to be found during October in District M.

One in Santa Barbara 16 December 1986 was probably an exceptionally late fall transient. Records of wintering individuals are: near Atascadero Creek in Goleta 25 December 1987–21 February 1988 and again 29 December 1988–29 January 1989; Preisker Park in Santa Maria 10 December 2003–20 January 2004; off S. Pine Avenue in Goleta 3 January 2004; Bohnett Park in Santa Barbara 27 January–10 April 2006 (ph. SBMNH) and again 28 December 2006–26 March 2007; and Arroyo Burro, Santa Barbara, 2 January–3 March 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

Gray Flycatcher *(Empidonax wrightii)*
Very rare spring and fall transient, primarily along the South Coast and perhaps in District V. Casual along the North Coast and Districts I and M. Casual in winter.

A total of 56 spring records for Gray Flycatcher through 2026 occurred between 13 April (1998, Santa Barbara) and 18 May (1998, Refugio Canyon). The first was 1 in Santa Barbara 5 May 1902 (*CAS). All other records date from 1968+. In addition, 1 in Winchester Canyon, Goleta, 1–2 April 2006 was very early. Three seen during morning flight above Refugio Canyon 24 April 2020 was a high count. Those away from the South Coast are: (North Coast) east of Santa Maria 29 April 1993, landed on a research vessel ca. 24 mi W of Point Sal 11 May 2021 (ph. SBMNH); (District I) Santa Ynez 27 April 1974, near Gibraltar Reservoir 23 April 1991, Sedgwick Reserve 1 May 2019, near Los Olivos 15 April and 22 April 2020, and Sedgwick Reserve 17 April 2024; (District M) near Figueroa Mountain 1 May 1986, near San Marcos Pass 30 April 1988, and La Cumbre Peak 1 May 2001; and (District V) Ballinger Canyon 14 April 1979, 29 April 1993 25 April 1995, and 8 May 2007, Deer Park Canyon 24 April 2024, and Santa Barbara Canyon (on border with District M) 21 April 2018 and 29 April 2020.

There are only 17 fall records, 14 from the South Coast, 2 from the North Coast, and 1 from District I. The South Coast records are Goleta 24 October 1971, 26 August 1973, and 9 October

1975; Gaviota State Park 19–22 September 1979; Montecito 14 September 1980; Carpinteria 15 October 1981; Carpinteria 22 September 1983; Goleta 28 September 1983; Goleta 1–3 October 1984; Santa Barbara 20 September 1985; Goleta 3 September 1988; the 2008 wintering bird below; Goleta 22 August 2009; and Santa Barbara 15–16 November 2022. Along the North Coast, 1 was at Point Arguello 19 October 2016 and 1 was at Waller Park in Santa Maria 25+ November 2017 (see below). Inland, 1 was in District I at Lake Cachuma 27 September 2024.

There are 10 winter records, 8 of those from District C: Guadalupe 23 December 1979–1 January 1980, Hope Ranch 29 December 1990–1 January 1991, Goleta 30 December 1999, Carpinteria Bluffs 11 January–18 March 2001, Goleta Cemetery in Santa Barbara (!) 5 January–24 March 2008 (ph. *AB/CBC* 62:100, SBMNH) and again 14 September 2008–5 January 2009, near Devereux Slough 30 November 2015–3 January 2016 (ph. SBMNH), Waller Park in Santa Maria 25 November 2017–28 February 2018 (ph. SBMNH), and northern Goleta 3–21 January 2025. In addition, singles were in District V along Quatal Canyon Road 7 December 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and along Wasioja Road near New Cuyama 25 January 2025.

This species is a local breeder in the Lockwood Valley area and west of Mount Pinos (on San Emigdio Mesa—*UCSB) in Ventura County, not far to the east of the Ballinger/Quatal Canyon area.

Dusky Flycatcher (*Empidonax oberholseri*)

Uncommon and very local summer resident in District M. Casual transient in District C. Four winter records from Districts C and I.

Dusky Flycatchers breed on San Rafael and Big Pine Mountains where they are found in open coniferous forest underlain by a dense growth of brush (particularly manzanita, Bitter Cherry, and Western Chokecherry). At least 7 were in the Big Pine Mountain area 29 June–1 July 1981, 14 were there 19–22 July 1982, and small-to-moderate numbers were there annually in summer thereafter through 2026 (numbers varied from lows several years of only 3 birds and none seen 24–27 June 2021, to highs of 18 on 13–15 June 1997 and of 20 and 27 birds on 13–15 June 2008 and 12–14 June 2009, respectively, following the large Zaca Fire in 2007). Sixteen were in the San Rafael Mountain area 18–19 June 1982, and 8 and 9 were there in June 1989 and 1990, respectively, but only 2 or 3 were found in June 2024 and 2025. The species has arrived as early as 21 April 1989 on Big Pine Mountain, although census work there in spring has been very limited. There are two records of spring migrants at the lower elevations of District M: near Cachuma Saddle (east of Figueroa Mountain) 3 May 1977 and Dry Canyon in the Sierra Madre 19 April 2009.

There are only two definite records of migrants for District C: Goleta 29 May 1980 and Carpinteria 6 September 1980. Dawson (1923) states that in the "great wave" during late April 1912 along the South Coast, Dusky Flycatchers "were a prominent factor." This statement likely pertains, in fact, to Hammond's Flycatchers.

There are four exceptional winter records: Miguelito Canyon, near Lompoc, 20 December 2000–21 February 2001, along the Santa Ynez River near Solvang 15 January–17 February 2002, in Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara, 5–16 January 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and at Bella Vista Open Space, Goleta, 2 January–14 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

Western Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*)

Fairly common transient and summer resident in Districts C, I, and the lower elevations of District M; uncommon at the higher elevations of District M. Transient in District V. Very rare in winter along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast and in District I.

As a breeder, Western Flycatchers are most numerous in canyon woodlands consisting of oaks, Western Sycamores, White Alders, and willows. They are also common in riparian woodland along the North Coast, although only uncommon to fairly common along the South Coast along creeks on the coastal plain and in well-vegetated residential areas. This species avoids pure coniferous forest in the breeding season and is uncommon in a mixture of oak and

pine (high counts during near-annual summer Big Pine Mountain surveys, 1981–2026, were of up to 12 individuals). In migration, the largest numbers are located in riparian and oak-riparian woodland.

Local breeding birds arrive in early March, very rarely in late February (as early as 22 February 2026 Goleta, 23 February 1980 and 23 February 1992 near Lompoc, and 23 February 2014 Goleta). The last of the spring migrants pass through during the first week of June.

Fall migrants appear beginning in early or mid-August and are most numerous during September. They are uncommon after early October, rare after the third week of that month, and very rare after the beginning of November. One in Buellton 9 November 2020 was especially late for the interior.

There are 36 winter records from the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria since 1979 (ph. *AB* 41:211,1326), but fewer than ten since late 2005. In addition, older specimens are dated 3 December 1918 from Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara (*FMNH) and 1 February 1978 vic. Santa Barbara (*UWBM). The only winter records from the North Coast are of singles in Honda Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 15 December 1991; Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 26 December 2000; and Lake Canyon, north Vandenberg SFB, 1 January 2002 (ph. SBMNH). Even more unusual were winter records from District I: Happy Canyon Road near Santa Ynez 27 January 2024 and Solvang 9 February 2025.

One banded in Oregon 10 June 1964 was recovered 10 May 1965 in Carpinteria.

***Empidonax* species?**

There are several interesting records of *Empidonax* flycatchers not identified to species. A "Gray?" Flycatcher was in vic. Santa Barbara 20 December 1929 and another was in Goleta 17–28 November 1997. An *Empidonax* giving a *whit* note (i.e., Willow, Least, Dusky, or Gray) but seen poorly was in Goleta 25 January 1980. A Least/Hammond's Flycatcher was along San Jose Creek in Goleta 4 January 2004. Single Least/Dusky Flycatchers were seen at Carpinteria Creek 21–25 September 2003 and at Refugio State Beach 8 October 2004. A "probable Dusky" Flycatcher was near Lompoc 17 December 2006 (ph. SBMNH). An *Empidonax* in Goleta 17 December 2011 was "not a Western, Willow, or Gray."

VIREOS (VIREONIDAE)

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)

Casual visitor in District C.

There are nine records. A territorial summering bird was along Maria Ygnacio Creek in northern Goleta 18 May–14 September 1982 (ph. *AB* 36:895, SBMNH); on several occasions, it was seen following a Hutton's Vireo. One along Atascadero Creek in Goleta 6 June 1993 was a late-spring vagrant, as were singles along San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB, 8–12 June 2000, along the Santa Ynez River at Lompoc 13–15 June 2002, near the Music Academy in Montecito 17 June 2009, and near UCSB housing in Goleta 20–27 June 2009 (ph. SBMNH); several of these birds appear to have held brief singing territories. A somewhat early bird was in Refugio Canyon 1 May 2018 (ph. SBMNH). One individual bordering Isla Vista 23–31 May then summered along Devereux Creek 3 July–5 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH). A fall vagrant was at Carpinteria Creek 21–30 October 1987 (ph. SBMNH), the first autumn record for the state. An early fall bird was along San Jose Creek, Goleta, 7 September 2016 (ph. SBMNH).

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)

Very local summer resident in District I. Formerly more widespread. Casual migrant and breeder in District C; three winter records.

The endangered "Least" Bell's Vireo (*V. b. pusillus*) breeds, or formerly bred, very locally in riparian habitat dominated by willow-cottonwood forest in the upper Santa Ynez River area, and formerly in more widespread willow river-bottom with a healthy understory. Nesting birds were sometimes noted in nearby oaks, and foraging individuals are occasionally seen in adjacent chaparral. This particular breeding area, rediscovered in 1978, was centered along lower Mono Creek and the Santa Ynez River near their junction east to Agua Caliente and west to the upper end of Gibraltar Reservoir, with individuals found between 1978 and 1982 along the Santa Ynez River as far east as Juncal Campground and as far west as Rancho Oso Campground in the Paradise area. One individual along Santa Cruz Creek on the north side of Lake Cachuma 15 April–24 June 1987 was farther west, as was 1 along Kelly Creek, near Paradise Road, 31 May 1993.

During spring and summer from 1979–1983 and 1987–1993, extensive field work was carried out in the upper Gibraltar Reservoir/Mono Creek/Agua Caliente area to determine the birds' habitat requirements, nesting success, and overall population size. Estimates made of the total population here (James M. Greaves pers. comm.) were:

1979: 56 males, 26 females, minimum 31 offspring (partial coverage only)
1980: 48 males, 43 females, minimum 85 offspring
1981: 53 males, 41 females, minimum 91 offspring
1982: 55 males, 42 females, minimum 90 offspring
1983: 43 males, 33 females, minimum 49 offspring
1987: 25 males, 17 females, minimum 63 offspring
1988: 22 males, 14 females, minimum 47 offspring
1989: 22 males, 15 females, minimum 42 offspring
1990: 21 males, 17 females, minimum 59 offspring
1991: 24 males, 17 females, minimum 56 offspring
1992: 20 males, 16 females, minimum 74 offspring
1993: 31 males, 29 females, minimum 69 offspring
1994: 18 males, 14 females, minimum 22+ offspring (partial coverage only)
1999: 18–20 adults, 7 territories, minimum 15 offspring
2000: 8–10 pairs
2001: 8 pairs, 2 additional males
2002: 7 males, 1 female

These nesting birds arrived during early April (earliest arrival dates: 26 March 1990 and 30 March 1989) and bred from April through July and—in 1991 and 1992—early August. Most departed by late August; late dates were 7 September 1988 and 1990. Interestingly, no individuals banded outside the study area were ever found in it, although at least 1 bird banded therein (as a nestling at the upper end of Gibraltar Reservoir in 1993) later nested along the Santa Clara River near Saticoy, Ventura County, during at least 1996. Three egg sets (WFVZ) from the Santa Barbara County study area were salvaged during 1982, and some 10+ additional eggs from there collected between 1979–1993 reside at SBMNH.

A fire in 1984 resulted in the substantial loss of habitat along Mono Creek (which had supported the most nesting birds) and a subsequent decline in the number of vireos there, which never recovered to pre-fire levels (J. M. Greaves pers. comm.). Other factors which likely played a role in further reductions included flood, drought, and a changing habitat from scrub-willow to mostly canopied cottonwood with little of the dense willow riparian understory that this species prefers. By circa. 2000, there were perhaps only about 6 pairs remaining along Mono Creek; in 2001, the area near the confluence of Mono Creek and the Santa Ynez River held just 1 confirmed pair plus 2 others suspected, plus several additional individual birds west to the upper end of Gibraltar Reservoir; and on 19 April 2004 only 1 active nest was found, and that at the upper end of Gibraltar (J. M. Greaves pers. comm.).

This species was formerly more common and widespread as a summer resident in Santa Barbara County and throughout much of coastal Southern California and the Central Valley. It

was known to occur in other parts of District I and along the South Coast. There is a record cited by Henshaw (1876) for Santa Barbara prior to 1876. Willett (1933) termed the species "common in summer in willow regions from coast to foothills." By the 1940s, however, Grinnell and Miller (1944) had noted a "noticeable decline" beginning some 15 years earlier. This decline was attributed to the loss of riparian habitat and heavy brood-parasitism by the Brown-headed Cowbird, numbers of which were increasing locally during this time. Bartholomew (1940) reported a maximum of 10 birds per day in the upper Santa Ynez River/Gibraltar Reservoir area from 2 April–12 September 1937, 4 April–2 September 1938, and on 6 April 1939. Lawrence T. Stevens and C. O. Reis found 3 nests at Kelly Creek (Los Laureles Canyon) on 17 June 1933 (eggs WFVZ) and a total of 3 nests along the Santa Ynez River in the Solvang area in 1933 and 1935. Rett (fieldnotes) collected 1 at Alisal Ranch near Solvang on 1 June 1937. Through the 1940s and 1950s, Bell's Vireos were still relatively numerous at several locations in inland Santa Barbara County. They were present along Manzana Creek (northeast of Figueroa Mountain) in May 1944 and "many" were in the nearby Davy Brown Campground area in 1952 (W. G. Abbott pers. comm.). Adults were seen feeding young along the Santa Ynez River near Paradise 22 July 1943. Egg sets (SBMNH) exist from the Solvang area 8 June 1946 and 7 May 1948 and from the "Santa Ynez River" (exact location not specified) 15 May 1954 (including 1 cowbird egg) and 8 May 1958. Two individuals were seen near Twitchell Reservoir (possibly in San Luis Obispo County) 14 July 1968. One was reported from the South Fork of the Sisquoc River in 1971.

Since the early 1990s, 1 was along the North Fork of La Brea Creek near Wagon Flat Campground on 8 May 1993; it could not be re-found. One was singing on the San Luis Obispo County side of the Santa Maria River just east of Santa Maria (in District C) 26–29 May 1993 and 2 were just inside San Luis Obispo County at Twitchell Reservoir 8 August 1993. Single singing birds were along the Santa Ynez River west of Buellton on 8 July and 10 July 1996, and singles were there 24 April 2016, 16 May–23 July 2017, and 22–28 June 2019; whereas there was a total of 7 territorial males between 19 April–15 May 2020; and 1 had arrived there 11 April 2021. Farther downstream, a pair was near Sweeney Road, just east of Lompoc (on the border with District C), 18 May 1997, and a single bird was near there 13 July 1997; 2 territorial males were in that same area between June–July 1998 and 1 was there 3 May 2002. Probable wandering migrants were along Manzana Creek at Nira Campground 8 May 2000 and bordering the upper Santa Ynez River along the north slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains 30 April 2014. One at Lake Cachuma 12 August 2021 was either a local disperser or a true migrant.

One singing bird in District C along the Santa Ynez River west of Lompoc 16 May–16 June 1991 was west of previous records, but clearly on territory. A pair along the Sisquoc River at Sisquoc, at the border with District I, during June–July 2001 attempted 2 nests but failed (nest to SBMNH); one of those birds had been banded in an earlier year along the Santa Clara River in Ventura County (J. M. Greaves pers. comm.). Some 7 pairs (11 males), of which 3 pairs had fledged young, were in the Santa Maria/Sisquoc area between 11 April–2 July 2023. Immediately to the west, dedicated survey work in 2020 along the Santa Maria River discovered a total of 6 singing males (with 4 nesting pairs, 2 fledglings) between Santa Maria and Guadalupe between 15 May–4 July.

Also on territory was a singing bird along Carneros Creek near the Santa Barbara Airport in Goleta 18 May–10 June 2005 (ph. SBMNH). Up to 2 birds were near Eagle Creek just west of Goleta from 27 April–17 May 2026 and included a nest. Spring and summer migrants and wanderers along the South Coast were found along Atascadero Creek in Goleta 12–15 May 2000 and 20 June 2002, in a residential yard in Carpinteria 4 June 2013, along San Jose Creek in Goleta 19 April 2023, and along Baron Ranch Trail near Gaviota 11 May 2023. Two birds at Gaviota State Park 28 August 2005 may have summered there.

Bell's Vireos are casual fall migrants in District C. Twenty such records are from the South Coast between August and early November: Storke Road, Goleta, 9 September 1982; Gaviota

State Park 21–24 September 1984; Craven's Lane, Carpinteria, 12 October 1984; Gaviota State Park 16–17 October 1984; Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 17 September 1985; Carpinteria Creek 24 August–1 September 1987; "Phelp's Ditch," Goleta, 22–23 October 1988; San Jose Creek, Goleta, 3 September 1989; Gaviota State Park 11 September 1991; Atascadero Creek 17 September 1992; Goleta 14 September 1997 (singing!); Santa Barbara 2 November 1997; near Atascadero Creek 3 September 1999; Gaviota State Park 18 September 2004; Laguna Creek, Santa Barbara, 21–22 September 2005; near Devereux Slough 4–5 August 2007 (very early); Carpinteria 13 September 2007; South Patterson Avenue, Goleta, 6 October 2013; Gaviota State Park 26 August 2014; Bella Vista Open Space, Goleta, 9–11 September 2016; and Carpinteria Creek 31 August 2024. In addition, singles were along the North Coast near Guadalupe 10 September 1990 and at Jim May Park in Santa Maria 12–14 September 2015 (ph. SBMNH). A juvenile at Jim May Park 28 July 2019 (ph. SBMNH) may have been an early fall migrant or had been raised at a nearby unknown breeding site.

These coastal birds in fall were probably all *V. b. pusillus,* except perhaps the October 1984 record from Gaviota State Park, which involved a more brightly plumaged bird suggesting a different race. The 1987 individual in Carpinteria had been banded as a fledgling that spring along the Santa Margarita River in San Diego County. The 1988 bird in Goleta had been banded as a fledgling in 1987 along the Sweetwater River in San Diego County. Several of these fall migrants have been found in tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.) trees.

There is also one record of a presumed migrant in District I: along Alisos Road near Santa Ynez 27 October 2017 (ph. SBMNH).

There are three records of wintering individuals: 1 bird (probably not *V. b. pusillus*) along a west branch of San Jose Creek bordering Camino Rioverde in northern Goleta 22 January–8 March 1981 and again 16 October 1981–15 February 1982; 1 in ornamental plantings along Woodley Road in Montecito 3 January–10 February 1987; and one particularly surprising bird in residential Santa Maria 29 December 2013–9 February 2014 (ph. SBMNH).

Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*)

Casual visitor in Districts C and V.

One bird at Elings Park, Santa Barbara 28 September 2019 (ph. SBMNH) established the first record for mainland Santa Barbara County. [There are also single records from Santa Cruz Island 24 September 1977 (*UCSB) and from Santa Barbara Island 17 September 2011 (ph. SBMNH).]

One singing in Deer Park Canyon in District V on 28 April 2024 (ph. SBMNH) was in appropriate breeding habitat but was not seen subsequently.

Hutton's Vireo (*Vireo huttoni*)

Fairly common permanent resident in Districts C and I, uncommon to fairly common in District M. Casual visitor in District V.

Hutton's Vireos are most numerous in oak and riparian woodlands in Districts C and I. They are also uncommon to fairly common in well-vegetated residential areas (e.g., Hope Ranch and Montecito) and uncommon along riparian creeks and more developed residential areas on the coastal plain. They nest as early as mid-February along the South Coast. Overall, the species appears to be declining since the mid-1980s. One possible cause is cowbirds. Many nests in Districts C and I have been found with cowbird eggs or chicks (J. M. Greaves pers. comm.). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 226 individuals (3 January 1981), but most counts since the 1990s have been much lower (under 100). The Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 40 birds (26 December 2003). The species is uncommon in oak-conifer woodland in District M (e.g., Figueroa Mountain; northern foothill canyons in the Sierra Madre, e.g., Bates Canyon, Aliso Canyon/Aliso Park, Lion Canyon). It was recorded on only nine summer surveys (high count: 3 birds) between 1981–2026 in the Big Pine Mountain area (mostly vic. Bear

Camp); and single individuals were at the headwaters of the Sisquoc River 20 July 1982 and 22 June 1989.

This species is mostly absent from the valley floor in District V except as a casual non-breeding visitor between September–March.

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)

Casual spring and fall transient in District C; two records in District I and one in District M, two of which are from summer.

There are 12 or 13 records to date. Six of these are from the South Coast: Pershing Park, Santa Barbara, 1 October 1985; w. Isla Vista 30 April 1987; San Pedro Creek, Goleta, 18–19 November 1987 (ph. SBMNH); San Jose Creek, Goleta, 1 June 1993; Carpinteria 6–15 October 1995; Isla Vista 13–15 May 2008 (ph. *NAB* 62:479), and Baron Ranch Trail near Gaviota 2 June 2023 (ph. SBMNH). Along the North Coast, 1 was near the Santa Ynez River mouth 9 June 1995 (ph. SBMNH) and another was at Waller Park in Santa Maria 2 November 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

A mid-summer vagrant was at Vandenberg Village 4–5 July 2004 (ph. SBMNH).

Inland, 1 was along Mono Creek at Ogilvy Ranch, in District I, 23 May 1992 (ph. SBMNH); and 1 present 3 mi (5 km) away at Mono Campground 26 June–1 July 1992 was possibly the same individual. A singing bird near San Marcos Pass 19 July–20 August 2010 [not 19 July only] (ph. SBMNH) was at the lower elevation of District M.

Cassin's Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*)

Rare to uncommon spring and rare fall transient in all Districts. Uncommon and local summer resident in Districts M and I; casual in District C. Very rare in winter in District C.

Cassin's Vireos are found during the breeding season in oak, oak-riparian, cottonwood-riparian, and conifer woodlands characterized by Ponderosa or Jeffrey pine, Bigcone Douglas-Fir, White Alder, Big-leaf Maple, California Bay, Goldcup Oak, Coast Live Oak, and Blue Oak. Transients and wintering birds are seen in a variety of woodland habitats, particularly riparian.

Cassin's Vireo breeds locally in District M. Summering locations since the 1980s include Zaca Lake, Figueroa Mountain (as low as Davy Brown Campground), McKinley Spring (west of San Rafael Mountain), San Rafael Mountain and Madulce Peak, the Big Pine Mountain area, and Little Pine Mountain in the San Rafael Mountains; Bates Canyon in the lower Sierra Madre; and the Refugio Pass and San Marcos Pass (irregular) areas in the Santa Ynez Mountains. Local breeders likely begin returning at the end of March, with 3 birds at Kinevan Road on 18 March in both 2015 and 2017 and 1 at Cachuma Campground on 18 March 2022 being particularly early, plus 1 near Figueroa Mountain 22 March 2015. No single breeding population was larger than 3 or 4 pairs, except for high counts of 11 and 10 individuals tallied in the Big Pine Mountain area 17–19 June 1996 and 13–15 June 2007, respectively. Seven birds along Kinevan Road 14 April 2001 possibly included a few migrants. Six birds at Kinevan Road/upper San Jose Creek 22 June 2019 was a high count for there in summer. One was singing along West Camino Cielo near Broadcast Peak 9 June 2023. A specimen (*UWBM) comes from the south side of Figueroa Mountain 26 May 2006.

In District I, multiple egg sets (WFVZ) exist for Bear Creek and Kelly Creek below San Marcos Pass in 1933, 1934, and 1945, and 4 individuals were there 31 May 1993. A single pair with 3 nests was found along Mono Creek May–June 1982 (ph. SBMNH), 12 pairs were in the upper Santa Ynez River/Mono Creek/Agua Caliente area during summers of 1987 and 1991, up to 10 males (and 1 nest to SBMNH) were there in 1988, a nest (to SBMNH) was there in 1992, and more than 20 pairs were there in 1993. The species probably breeds in one or more canyons bordering the Sierra Madre (e.g., near "Lazy Camp," La Brea Creek). Summer reports along Quiota Creek and Alisal Road/Nojoqui Falls Park near Solvang and in Miguelito Canyon south

of Lompoc suggest possible rare nesting in those areas. Local breeders have arrived on site as early as 24 March 2001 at Nojoqui Falls Park.

There are also a few reports of this species breeding in District C. Pemberton (1910) reported them "common in summer" along upper Rincon Creek (much of which is in Ventura County). A nest was found in Santa Barbara 6 May 1927, and 1 or 2 individuals were in Montecito 1 May–8 June 1955, 20 April–27 June 1956, and 24 April–14 July 1957.

This species is a very uncommon to rare transient throughout the county. Spring migrants are noted between late March (earliest arrival date: 16 March 1994 Carpinteria) and mid-May (latest dates: 22 May 2019 Carpinteria, 23 May 2015 and 27 May 1994 Goleta). Transients in fall pass through mostly between early September (earliest arrival dates: 30 July 1997 Preisker Park, Santa Maria (exceptional), 22 August 1983 and 24 August 1989 Carpinteria) and late October, and with an average of 1 individual seen every November. One near the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 November 1995 was particularly late for the North Coast.

There are 32 winter records from the South Coast: vic. Santa Barbara December 1962; Santa Barbara 31 December 1966; Santa Barbara 25 December 1969 (*SBMNH); and then 29 records between early 1980–early 2026. Five individuals during December 2011–January 2012 was a high count. There is only one winter record for the North Coast: Lompoc 19 December 1993; and one for the lower elevations in District M: Cachuma Campground, below Figueroa Mountain, 17 January 1999.

Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*)

Casual visitor in District C.

Blue-headed Vireo has been recorded seven times in fall: Carpinteria 22 September 1980, 21 November 1982, and 1 November 1985; Lompoc 30 October 1993; and Goleta 13–14 October 2015 (ph. SBMNH), (early) 10 September 2016 (ph. SBMNH), and 13 September 2017 (ph. SBMNH). [In addition, records of 1 in Carpinteria 30 September–5 October 1985 and of a very bright winter bird along Arroyo Burro, Santa Barbara, 7 January 1981 were not accepted by the California Bird Records Committee. A record of a bird published as a Blue-headed type in Bear Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 22 December 1996 was clearly either a Blue-headed or very bright Cassin's, but it remains formally unsubmitted.] The three members of the "Solitary Vireo complex" were split by the AOU [AOS] in 1997; many "Solitary Vireos" before then were not carefully differentiated.

Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*)

Very rare fall and winter visitor along the South Coast; casual along the North Coast. Casual fall transient in Districts I and V.

Plumbeous Vireos are very rare fall transients and winter visitors to the South Coast; they are casual along the North Coast. The species is casual in spring (but see below). The first county record was in Santa Barbara 22 September 1977 (*SBMNH). There are now 46 South Coast fall records, as early as 13 September. Along the North Coast, there are now 15 fall records between 8 September (2007, Santa Maria; exceptionally early) and 27 September (1997, near the Santa Ynez River mouth) and 21 November (1996, Santa Maria).

In District I, 1 was in Buellton 30 September 2018.

In District V, 1 was in New Cuyama 4 December 1982 (probably a late fall migrant) and 1 was near Cuyama 31 October 2010 (ph. SBMNH).

The winter records from the South Coast are as follows: 1 at Manning Park, Montecito, for three consecutive years, 29 December 1979, 30 December 1980–17 January 1981, and 18 October 1981; 1 in Goleta 3 January 1987; and followed by an additional 18 records between late 1987–early 2026. Wintering birds may remain well into April (e.g., to 16 April 2024 Santa Barbara).

There are just three North Coast winter records: near Santa Maria 22 December 1991, Lompoc 16 February–15 March 1992, and near the Santa Ynez River mouth 20 October 1995–24 March 1996.

The six "spring" records are of single individuals in Goleta 23 March 1984, 29 April 1984, 30 March–6 April 1985, 16–21 April 1987, 27 March 1994, and 4–5 April 1994. All or almost all of these records involved locally wintering birds that were not discovered until late in the season, as wintering individuals elsewhere in coastal Southern California routinely remain as late as mid- or late April, and spring vagrants typically do not appear until May. Some birds might well have been misidentified dull Cassin's Vireos.

The three members of the "Solitary Vireo complex" were not split by the AOU [AOS] until 1997; many "Solitary Vireos" before that time were not carefully differentiated.

Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*)

Casual fall transient in District C, and one exceptional winter record.

There are eight fall records: Carpinteria Creek 1 October 1986, Carpinteria 27 September–4 October 1997, Tecolotito Creek in Goleta 28 September 2003, Carpinteria Creek 25 September 2005, Lompoc 23 September 2005 (the only record for the North Coast), Carpinteria Creek 14 October 2005 (ph. SBMNH), Bella Vista Open Space in Goleta 25 September 2014, and (early) along Refugio Creek near Refugio State Beach 5 September 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

In addition, 1 in Winchester Canyon, Goleta, 14 February–17 March 1992 (ph. CBRC 2007, SBMNH) established only the second record at the time of an over-wintering bird in the U.S.A.

Western Warbling-Vireo (*Vireo swainsoni*)

Uncommon to locally fairly common summer resident in Districts C, I, and M; formerly more numerous and widespread as a breeder. Fairly common transient in all Districts. Very rare to casual along the South Coast in winter; one such record along the North Coast.

Western Warbling-Vireos breed primarily in riparian and oak-riparian woodlands. They are fairly common along the North Coast, in District I, and at the lower elevations of District M, but they are now uncommon as breeders along the South Coast and at higher elevations in the mountains. This species was most numerous along the upper Santa Ynez River and nearby Mono Creek, where 60 singing males were present during summer 1981. The population there in 1988, however, was only about half that, but it increased dramatically again in the early 1990s with the (temporary) end of drought. Also in District I, the species remains fairly common at Nojoqui Falls Park, along nearby Alisal Creek, and along Quiota Creek south of Santa Ynez. It is uncommon to fairly common at several other areas in District I including along the Cuyama River east of Twitchell Reservoir, along the Sisquoc River, in Drum Canyon south of Los Alamos, along Manzana and Cachuma Creeks near Figueroa Mountain, and along the Santa Ynez River near Buellton. Much additional riparian habitat in the backcountry of Santa Barbara County has not been adequately surveyed. In District M, this species breeds locally in oak-riparian and oak-madrone woodland. It is most numerous in the San Marcos Pass area (particularly along Kinevan and Stagecoach Roads), where it is fairly common. Some individuals in this area occupy almost pure stands of oaks. One at McKinley Spring (west of San Rafael Mountain) 18 June 1982 and up to 3–10 annually in the Big Pine Mountain area during summer surveys, 1981–2026, were at a higher elevation, where they were also largely found in oaks. A few also may be present in canyons along the north flank of the Sierra Madre. In District C, Western Warbling-Vireos remain fairly common in riparian areas in (mostly) interior sections of the North Coast. They are most numerous along the Santa Ynez River and at Barka Slough, Vandenberg SFB. Eighteen were along the lower Santa Ynez River between Lompoc and 13th Street on 30 June 1991. Smaller numbers are also present along the Santa Maria River, lower San Antonio Creek, and upper Honda Creek on Vandenberg SFB. Along the South Coast, this

species was formerly fairly common (e.g., 12 along upper San Jose Creek, Goleta, 18 July 1983) but it is now uncommon, with most breeders found in foothill canyons, along several creeks in northern Goleta (e.g., San Jose and Maria Ygnacio Creeks), and along Rincon Creek near Carpinteria. Farther out on the coastal plain, 1 singing along Atascadero Creek in coastal Goleta 25 June 1991, 2 singing there 13 July 2001, singles there 16 June 2022 and 10–15 June 2023, 1 singing along lower Carpinteria Creek 28 June 1996, 1 singing along Cieneguitas Creek in Santa Barbara 20 June 2016, 2 along Tecolotito Creek near Hollister Avenue 29 June 2022, and, especially, an adult feeding a fledgling along lower Atascadero Creek 9 August 2019 (late) were somewhat more unusual.

Western Warbling-Vireos were formerly more numerous along the South Coast and throughout much of coastal Southern California as a breeder. Willett (1933) and Grinnell and Miller (1944) termed them "common." Their decrease has been blamed primarily on the loss and degradation of riparian habitat and on brood parasitism by the Brown-headed Cowbird.

As a transient, Western Warbling-Vireos occur in woodlands throughout much of the county. Spring migrants, particularly regional breeders, appear in early March (e.g., along the South Coast, 7 March 1998 and 2009 Goleta; along the North Coast, 4 March 2012 Miguelito Park, Lompoc; in District I, 10 March 2002 Nojoqui Falls Park; in District M, 5 March 2015 and 7 March 2020 (3) along Kinevan Road). One in Carpinteria 22 February 2014 was probably an exceptionally early arrival rather than a locally wintering bird. High counts are morning-flight totals of 101 birds above Refugio Canyon 1 May 2020 and 211 there 2 May 2021, and 87 at Romero Saddle 4 May 2020. The latest transients continue to pass through as late as the first week of June (e.g., 3 June 2023 western Goleta). Fall transients occur mostly between late August (earliest: 9 August 2018 near Ventucopa, 13 August 2022 Waller Park in Santa Maria, and 16 August 2018 Isla Vista) and mid-October. The species is rare after mid-October and very rare during early November. The latest records of probable fall migrants are 16 November 1977 Goleta, 21 November 1993 Gaviota State Park, and 25 November 1982 Santa Barbara.

During true winter, the Western Warbling-Vireo is casual, with almost all records from the South Coast. One in Santa Barbara 13 December 1969–12 March 1970 clearly wintered locally. Up to 2 in Santa Barbara 2–22 January 1982 and 1 in Carpinteria 26 January 1984 very likely did so. One individual was on the Riviera in Santa Barbara 2–9 February 1985 and again 27 December 1985–17 January 1986 and 11 January–1 February 1987; probably that same individual was seen again 16–29 December 1990, 28 December 1991, 18 December 1992, and 31 December 1994—for a would-be total of 11 years! Also an individual was in Bohnett Park, Santa Barbara, for *13* winters in a row: 4 January–1 February 2014 (ph. SBMNH), 17 February 2015, 11 November 2015–2 January 2016, 19 November–31 December 2016 (ph. SBMNH), 19 November–30 December 2017, 25 November 2019–4 January 2020, 11 November 2020–2 January 2021, 20 December 2021–3 January 2022 (ph. *NAB* 73(2):61; SBMNH), 3 November 2022–12 January 2023 (ph. SBMNH), 30 October 2023–8 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH), 31 October 2024–7 February 2025, and 7 October–25 November 2025. Another bird was along the Santa Barbara waterfront 7–20 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH). Additional records are from early winter only and some may have involved exceptionally late fall transients: Santa Barbara 31 December 1966, Montecito 2 January 1971, Montecito 2 January 1978, Montecito 29 December 1979, Montecito 3 January 1981, Santa Barbara 4 December 1981, Goleta 31 December 1982, Santa Barbara 2 January 1983, up to 2 Carpinteria 13–14 December 1985, Goleta 3 January 1987, Montecito 2 January 1988, Santa Barbara 30 December 1988–2 January 1989, Carpinteria 8 January 1990, and Goleta 31 December 2017.

One in Lompoc 6 December 1991 is the only early-winter record for the North Coast. It is possible that the bird near the Santa Ynez River mouth 17–29+ February 1996 was an exceptionally early spring arrival, as perhaps was a bird in Waller Park, Santa Maria, 15 February 2024.

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)
Very rare fall and casual to very rare late-spring and summer visitor in District C. Casual in Districts I and M.

There are 33 fall records from along the South Coast: Santa Barbara 29 September 1970, Goleta 4 September 1972, then 29 records since 1978 between 22+ August (1985, Carpinteria) and 11 October (2024, Goleta), and single late birds in Goleta 8–25 October 1997 (also stayed unusually long), at Carpinteria Creek 29 October 2010, Camino Corto Open Space, Goleta, 24 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH), and western Goleta 30–31 October 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

Along the North Coast, singles were near Guadalupe 9 September 1990, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 13 October 1996 (slightly late), along Bear Creek, south Vandenberg SFB, 28 September 1997, west of Lompoc 16 October 1998 (slightly late), and near the Santa Ynez River mouth 12–19 September 1999.

One was singing near San Jose Creek in Goleta 17–22 June 1992 (ph. SBMNH). Other late-spring vagrants include Goleta 11 June 1995, Goleta 2–5 June 1998, Atascadero Creek in Goleta 23 June 2000 and 6 June 2017, Refugio Canyon 20 May and 14 June (ph. SBMNH) 2020, (hit window) Santa Barbara 28 May 2023 (ph. SBMNH), and Refugio Canyon 16 June 2024. One along Tecolotito Creek in Goleta 9 May 2005 was somewhat early.

One along San Jose Creek in Goleta 22 July 2017 (ph. SBMNH) and another in Isla Vista 8 July 2020 (ph. SBMNH) were summer wanderers. One in Montecito 9 August 1992 was in worn condition; it probably summered locally; as did a bird in Refugio Canyon 9–10 August 2020. One along San Jose Creek in Goleta from 2 June–22 August 2026 clearly summered.

Inland, 1 found singing in District M on Figueroa Mountain 20 May 1984 was at an unexpected location, as was 1 singing near Highway 154 X Paradise Road 1 June 2026; 1 singing along Kinevan Road near San Marcos Pass 13–24 June 2001 was in appropriate breeding habitat and apparently on territory. One in District I along the Santa Ynez River west of Buellton 13 August 1998 either summered locally or was a very early fall migrant; another inland bird in Solvang 19 September 2008 was on a typical date for a fall migrant.

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*)
Casual fall visitor in District C.

There are 13 accepted records, all from the South Coast: Gaviota State Park 8 September 1979, San Jose Creek in Goleta 11–12 October 1982 [only 1 of 2 individuals reported accepted by CBRC], Goleta 24 September 1988, Maria Ygnacio Creek in Goleta 7–8 October 2001, Lake Los Carneros 26–28 October 2003 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta sewage treatment plant 11 October 2004, City Hall tamarisks in Carpinteria 5–14 October 2008 (ph. SBMNH), near South Patterson Avenue, Goleta, 23 October 2011, found dead in a Goleta yard 26 October 2012 (*SBMNH), off South Patterson Avenue, Goleta, 4 October 2015, Refugio State Beach 8 October 2017, and western Goleta 21–23 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and 18–20 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH). [A report of 1 in Goleta 28 August 1997 (early), 1 on north Vandenberg SFB 30 October 2008, and 1 at City Hall tamarisks in Carpinteria 2–7 October 2014 were not accepted by the CBRC; the 2008 bird was either a Red-eyed or a Yellow-green.]

SHRIKES (LANIIDAE)

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
Declining. Formerly a fairly common permanent resident in District V and along the North Coast, a rare breeder along the South Coast between Point Conception and Gaviota and in District I, and a fairly common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I and at the lower elevations in District M. Currently a very uncommon migrant and winter visitor in Districts C

and I and at the lower elevations in District M, still fairly common in District V; an uncommon breeder in District V and the edge of District M, and probably a rare and irregular nesting species in Districts C and I.

Loggerhead Shrikes frequent a variety of open and semi-open habitats including semidesert scrub, grassland, savanna, coastal sage scrub, open riparian woodland, and agricultural areas. A lofty breeding-season total of 30 birds were noted in the Cuyama Valley 1 May 1979. A substantial decline in the numbers of both breeding and wintering birds was noted (particularly away from District V) by the late 1990s.

Fall transients typically arrive beginning in late June or early July, but there are a fair number of records for early and mid- June (e.g., 9 June 2022 More Mesa, 10 June 2025 Coal Oil Point, and see below). Such early-arriving birds may be the source of some erroneous reports of assumed "breeding" birds in several areas.

Prior to the mid-1990s, shrikes were fairly common by late August. The Santa Barbara CBC recorded as many as 77 individuals as recently as 31 December 1994. Apparent population declines occurred locally beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s, but with a brief increase from the mid-1990s until the mid-2000s, followed by declines. For example, only 12 were found on the 2 January 2010 Santa Barbara CBC, 10 were tallied on 3 January 2015, and a measly 5 were found 2 January 2016. Along the North Coast, 62 were still found on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 29 December 1996, but by 2000 numbers had fallen to around 15–25 annually, and more recently to 10–15 birds (high of 18 on 23 December 2011); whereas 68 were found on the La Purisima CBC 22 December 1996, but totals dropped to 8–20 annually after 2000. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied highs of 13 birds on 30 December 2005, 14 birds on 28 December 2010, and 11 birds on 27 December 2018. In District V, recent single-day totals include 18 birds on 16 January 2006. Peak numbers during the year throughout the county may occur during the late summer (August–September) rather than later in fall or during winter; for example, 11 were tallied on north Vandenberg SFB 4 September 2011 and 5–7 birds were seen daily on south Vandenberg SFB during September 2012. In District C, some additional recent representative maxima include 5 at the Santa Maria River mouth 3 September 2005, 8 on Vandenberg SFB in late August 2011, and 5–6 near Goleta 23–30 August 2011. Numbers decline further after February.

As a nesting species, Loggerhead Shrikes continue to breed regularly in District V as far west as Schoolhouse and Cottonwood Canyon areas, and to the adjoining edge of District M in foothill canyons of the Sierra Madre. Breeding Bird Surveys conducted in that district recorded 18 birds on 1 June 1996 and 21 individuals on 12 June 1999; the highest counts since then include 11 birds on 3 May 2002, 6–10 nesting pairs during 2018, and at least 4 pairs in 2019.

Through the mid-1990s, the species was rare in the Hollister Ranch area west of Gaviota during the late spring and early summer, although it probably bred in that area. It withdrew from the remainder of the South Coast and from most of District I by the beginning of April. The latest spring record from the South Coast was 17 April 1978 Goleta. One bird on 27 June 1981 along Happy Canyon Road, Santa Ynez Valley, was possibly a local breeder (same area where subsequently found nesting in 2003+). Several June records from Foxen Canyon Road in the Santa Ynez Valley and 1 in Los Alamos 16 June 1982 was additional evidence that this species probably continued to breed in very small numbers in District I, although migrants may return already beginning in mid-June. One was near Barka Slough 16 May 1985. One in Santa Barbara 10 June 1989 was difficult to categorize. A presumed non-breeder, or possibly an exceptionally early "fall" migrant, was in Goleta from 10 June through summer 1995.

Since the mid-1990s, evidence of breeding in District I was obtained by a pair present in lower Happy Canyon, Santa Ynez Valley, 24 April–17 May 2003 and seen feeding a juvenile 9–17 May; by a pair at adjoining Armour Ranch Road 21 March–July 2004 which fledged 2 young by 1 May and which bred there again April–May 2005 (seen carrying food on 15 May), and by a single adult there 31 May 2013; by a pair along Alisos Road near Santa Ynez 29 March–July 2004 which fledged 2 young by 27 April; and by an adult and 2 begging juveniles at

Lake Cachuma 10 September 2004 (late). Along the North Coast, a juvenile begging from an adult was in the main Cantonment Area on north Vandenberg SFB 7 June 1995, a nesting pair was on Sinton Road near Santa Maria 14 May 1999, and 3 juveniles were together on Burton Mesa, north Vandenberg SFB, 21 May 2004. A total of 4 birds on north Vandenberg SFB (near Shuman Creek, near Wall Beach) were suggestive. Surprising was the successful nesting along the South Coast at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh in 2004, where adults were found during spring–summer and up to 3 juveniles were present throughout July. There continue to be very rare one-time sightings of single individuals in District I and along both the North Coast and the South Coast between late April and early June. It is uncertain whether these birds represent stealth local breeders, wandering non-breeders or failed breeders, or, in some cases later in the period, very early post-breeding dispersers.

CROWS AND JAYS (CORVIDAE)

Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

Common permanent resident on the higher mountains in District M; uncommon and local at lower elevations in District M and upper elevations in Districts I and C. Recent resident range expansion locally to lower elevations in Districts I and C. Very rare visitor elsewhere in the lowlands.

Steller's Jays are common on the higher conifer-covered peaks (i.e., Figueroa, San Rafael, and Big Pine Mountains, Madulce Peak). Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area have recorded up to ca. 100 individuals (although 50–60 birds are more typical, and only 13 were tallied 17–19 June 2022). Only 4 were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024. The Cachuma CBC—which includes the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area—has recorded as many as 45 individuals (28 December 2010). This species is uncommon at slightly lower elevations in mixed oak-conifer forest, such as at Zaca Lake. Small, isolated populations are also found at the lower elevations of District M where conifers are found. Several individuals are present in Gray Pine at Cachuma Campground near Cachuma Saddle, southeast of Figueroa Mountain. In the Sierra Madre, this species is fairly numerous in upper Bates Canyon. Four were seen in upper Santa Barbara Canyon 4 April 1981 and there were multiple sightings there during the 2020s of up to 8 birds, 1 was at McPherson Peak 18 July 1982, 2 were at Cuyama Peak 20 October 2000 (a corvid invasion year), and 1 was in Pato Canyon 24 January 2026. In the Santa Ynez Mountains, up to 5 individuals were reported in the Cold Spring/Trout Club/Painted Cave/Kinevan Road area off and on between 1955 and the early 1980s; these birds were permanent residents during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Only single individuals were in that area 29 December 1989 and 5 April 1990, but then up to 7 were present beginning in late November 1990 to the present (with family groups there 19 July 1991, 19 August 1992, and 16 July 2020). Santa Barbara CBCs recorded as many as 15 individuals (4 January 2014), most of these birds from the San Marcos Pass area. Two at La Cumbre Peak 2 January 1989 were in or near isolated stands of Bigcone Douglas-Fir. Up to 2 were in upper Romero Canyon (at ca. 2500 ft elevation) August 1995–February 1996. Farther west, 1 was at 2250 feet at Refugio Pass 10 July 2011, and a high count of 6 birds were tallied in that area 23 June 2013. At the upper elevations of District I bordering the Santa Ynez Mountains, 6–8 were noted in Alder Canyon south of Jameson Lake 30 June 1979 and several were there 16 June 1992. Two juveniles were along Fox Creek southwest of Jameson Lake 15 June 1992.

This species was recorded only casually at elevations lower than 2000 feet through the mid-1990s. In District I, single individuals were in Foxen Canyon, Santa Ynez Valley, 2 April 1912 and 2 April 1914, and at Solvang 27 April 1912 (Dawson 1916); and up to 12 were at Nojoqui Falls Park 17 January–4 March 1962 (*UCSB). Up to 6 (including a family group) were along

upper Arroyo Burro (ca. 1500 feet) below East Camino Cielo 9 June–8 July 1993, where they became resident and were reported through at least May 2003. Along the South Coast, records included: Santa Barbara 29 March and 28 April 1913 (Dawson 1916); and Montecito 22 April 1954, 1 November 1961–16 January 1962, 23–27 March 1962, 25 November–30 December 1990 (up to 3), and 15–31 May 1993. An immature in Santa Barbara 20 July–15 August 1986 was particularly unusual for mid-summer. For the North Coast, see below.

Beginning around the mid-to-late 1990s, Steller's Jays appear to have spread locally to additional sites in the Santa Ynez Mountains (from Refugio Pass east to Romero Saddle), to lower elevations in District I, and to the South Coast in shaded canyons along the south-facing slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains. In District I (approximately from east to west) a sampling of initial reports include: 1 at Jameson Lake 14 December 2024–17 July 2025; a pair with fledglings at the junction of Mono Creek and the Santa Ynez River 22–28+ June 1997 and 2 birds were there 19 April 2004; 6 along the upper Santa Ynez River near Juncal Dam/Pendola 23–24 May 1999; 2 along the Santa Ynez River near Gibraltar Dam 29 February 2004; 1 at Los Prietos Ranger Station 8 March 2005; 2 at Horse Canyon near Lake Cachuma 25 June 2002 and 1 in nearby Santa Cruz Canyon 5 May 2004; up to 7 in Tequepis Canyon during the 2020s; 1 at 520 ft elevation near Bradbury Dam, Lake Cachuma, 18 December 2013; 1–4 at 550–690 ft elevation along Quiota Creek near Santa Ynez, first seen 30 March 2007 and continuously since, with breeding first confirmed in June 2013; an adult with 2 fledglings at ca. 1000 ft elevation along Happy Canyon Road near Santa Ynez 6 June 2009, a juvenile nearby at ca. 900 ft along Alisos Road 29 July 2013, and as many as 10 birds have been reported in that general area since; up to 4 at 730 ft elevation in Nojoqui Falls Park 25 November 2013–26 February 2014 and up to 3 there December 2024–June+ 2026; up to 3 in Los Alamos 7–21 November 2021; and up to 2 at 300 ft elevation near Santa Rosa Road ca. 5 mi (8 km) east of Lompoc 10 April 2010–9 April 2011. At the western edge of the species' range in the San Rafael Mountain foothills, as many as ca. 12 birds are resident on both sides of the summit along Tepusquet Road and Colson Canyon, east of Santa Maria.

Along the South Coast, from west to east, this spread may be summarized as follows: 1 on Hollister Ranch 4 November 2020; 1 at a mere 40-foot elevation along Arroyo Hondo, east of Gaviota, 14 April 2020; up to 4 along Tajiguas Creek 17–28 April 2025; 1 at ca. 325 ft elevation along southern Refugio Road 5 January 2017 and numerous sightings farther up the canyon of up to 3 birds in 2025–2026; 1 at Canada del Corral 24 November 2025; up to 2 at 150 ft elevation in Dos Pueblos Canyon 16–26 February 2022; singles between 120–350 ft elevation in northwestern Goleta (e.g., Tecolote Canyon, Glen Annie Canyon) 27 September 2015, 18–22 June 2016, 11 May 2018, 9 July 2020, 10 January–30 March 2021 (up to 2), and October 2021–June 2026+ (up to 4); 1 at 1000 ft elevation in upper Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, 29 August 2005 and 1 at ca. 700 ft there 21–22 February 2018; 1 at Rocky Nook Park 14 February 2026; 1 in Rattlesnake Canyon/Las Canoas Road March 2024–March 2026; 1 in upper Sycamore Canyon 4 January 2015; up to 6 down to an elevation of 750 ft along both Cold Spring and San Ysidro Canyons, behind Montecito, sporadically from 1997–2025; singles at ca. 550 ft along Ashley Road in Montecito 30 November 2013 and 14 November 2014; 1 in Romero Canyon 7 April 2000, 2 there 12 April 2013, 1 especially unusual in mid-summer on 17 July 2015, and then up to 10 there 27 July 2016+ with nesting documented in 2020 (pair with 2 fledglings 17 July); singles at Toro Canyon Park behind Summerland 23 January 2004 and up to 2 in that area 16 February–16 April 2025; and 1 at ca. 480 ft elevation in Gobernador Canyon, behind Carpinteria, 13 July 2011, 2 there 22 November 2014, an adult with 2 juveniles 14 May 2016, and up to 4 birds there at an elevation of only 85–225 feet in the Gobernador Canyon/Carpinteria Creek/Lillingston Canyon area between 26 November 2017–March+ 2026. Even more unusual was a bird in Montecito 11–21 April 2004 that was only a mile from the coast at 100 ft elevation, as well as one just inland from Highway 101near Casitas Pass Road in Carpinteria 22 September 2020.

The only records for the North Coast are of 1 in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 28 October 1990–1 January 1991, 2 near Orcutt 30 September 1999, 1 near Hancock College, Santa Maria, 21 December 2001, 1 at Miguelito County Park 1 November 2003, 1 in Waller Park, Santa Maria, 6 November–14 December 2008, at least 1 noted on several dates between December 2011–December 2017 at 255–275 ft elevation in LaSalle Canyon, on south Vandenberg SFB, 1 at 400 ft in Orcutt 29 November 2021–28 April 2022, and 1 at La Purisima Mission 20 September 2023.

Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*)
Casual fall visitor, with records from Districts C, I, and M.

Very infrequent fall invasions (e.g., in 1914, 1955, 2000) are responsible for bringing many, but not all, Pinyon Jays to Santa Barbara County. The records are: flock of 200 over Santa Barbara 9 October 1914, plus another large flock "a week previously" (Dawson 1916); 7 along East Camino Cielo, Santa Ynez Mountains, behind Montecito 8 October and "several" Santa Barbara early November 1955; Big Pine Mountain 7 December 1968; Goleta 18 October 1972; 30 over More Mesa/Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 19 September 1981; 17 over same area in Goleta 24 September 1987; ca. 20 near Santa Ynez (District I) 6 September 1996; 30–40 Dry Canyon 4–9 October, 8 Tinta Creek 8 October, and 8–9 Cuyama Peak 15 October 2000 (all in Sierra Madre); 18 near San Miguelito Canyon, near Lompoc, 9 October 2018 (the westernmost record); and 2 near La Cumbre Peak 13 October 2023.

[Island Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma insularis*)
Uncommon to fairly common permanent resident on Santa Cruz Island.

Island Scrub-Jays are non-migratory permanent residents in a variety of wooded habitats on Santa Cruz Island. They have never been recorded off that island.]

California Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*)
Common permanent resident along the South Coast, in District I, and at the lower elevations in District M. Uncommon to fairly common along the North Coast and at higher elevations in District M. Fairly common to common in District V.

California Scrub-Jays are numerous in oak and riparian woodland, residential areas, and urban parks, but they are less abundant in oak savanna, chaparral, and in oak-conifer woodland. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1318 individuals (3 January 1981), though only 370 were tallied 31 December 2016. The Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 501 birds (27 December 2013). Along the North Coast, this species is fairly common in oak woodland and well-vegetated residential areas and is uncommon in riparian habitats. Summer counts in the Big Pine Mountain area are typically between 3–10 individuals, with a high count of 14 on both 21–25 June 1988 and 12–14 June 2020; 6 were in the San Rafael Mountain area 18–19 June 1982; and 3 were at Madulce Peak 20 July 1982. These individuals frequented oak-chaparral habitat below the summits, avoiding the higher coniferous forest.

Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*)
Probably a very rare late-summer, fall, and winter visitor to the highest mountains in District M. Casual fall and winter visitor in District C.

Clark's Nutcrackers are resident in the Mount Pinos area of Ventura and Kern Counties, but they are only casual to very rare late-summer and fall visitors to the coniferous mountain areas of Santa Barbara County. They have been recorded very rarely in the San Rafael Mountains: Figueroa Mountain 25 March 1951 and 10 November 1968; Big Pine Mountain 24 September 1977; 2 at Figueroa Mountain late November 1977; 2 on Big Pine Mountain 21 August 1979; 1 there 14 October 1979; 4 at Madulce Peak 18 October 1981; Figueroa Mountain 9–18 November

1986; 2 on Figueroa Mountain 29 September 1996 (flight year); 3 at Ranger Peak 28 September followed by 100+ on Figueroa Mountain 6 October and 20 still there 8 October 2000; Figueroa Mountain 15 November 2004; 2 there 4 October 2007; Ranger Peak 19 February–13 March 2008; Figueroa Mountain 22 November 2011; total 6 at Mission Pine Trail 12–13 October 2023; and 6 on Figueroa Mountain 20 October 2025. Many (though certainly not all) of these records are unrelated to the periodic fall and winter invasions (e.g., 1950–1951, 1972–1973, late 1996, late 2000, late 2023), most of which take birds also to the Sierra Madre, Santa Ynez Mountains, and lowlands (see below); instead, they may represent a very limited but somewhat regular dispersal to the highest mountains.

Records in the Sierra Madre and Santa Ynez Mountains are primarily associated with fall/winter flights: 2 on Montecito Peak 15 September, East Camino Cielo at Gibraltar Road 27 September, and up to 9 at La Cumbre Peak 3–4 November, all in 1996; 29 at La Cumbre Peak 29 September, with 55 there 30 September, and 21 still present 5 October 2000; 15+ in Dry Canyon/Santa Barbara Canyon 4–22 October and up to 40 at nearby Cuyama Peak 15–20 October 2000, with 10 still present at the latter site 1 January 2001; and many flocks moving west along the Santa Ynez Mountains (mostly near La Cumbre Peak) between 13–31 October 2023, with a high count of 46 birds from La Cumbre Peak on 26 October. One at La Cumbre Peak 28 October 2004 was not associated with a flight-year.

In District C, Clark's Nutcrackers are casual fall and winter visitors, with most sightings associated with flight-years (see above). All except 1 of the sightings are from the South Coast. The records are: Montecito 28 January 1917, Montecito 15 October 1919, and total of 3 Goleta 24 September–19 November 1935 (Rett 1938b); Montecito 14–20 November 1950; near Lompoc fall and winter 1950–1951 (the only record for the North Coast); Santa Barbara fall 1961, with 2 present 30 December 1961; 7+ Santa Barbara and Montecito during the late fall 1972 (first seen 24 October in Montecito (2)), with 3 remaining in Hope Ranch into late April 1973; and Montecito 28 October 1979.

[Black-billed Magpie *(Pica hudsonia*)
Hypothetical.

A bird of questionable origin and perhaps uncertain specific identity (Black-billed [*Pica hudsonia*] versus Eurasian [*P. pica*] Magpie) remained on Santa Rosa Island from 15 June 2014–2 March 2015 (ph. SBMNH).]

Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nuttalli*)
Fairly common permanent resident in District I; uncommon and local at inland edge of the North Coast and at western edge of District V. Formerly more widespread. Formerly occurred on the South Coast, where now casual.

The Yellow-billed Magpie is most numerous in oak savanna and pastureland throughout much of the Los Alamos and Santa Ynez Valleys. It also frequents ranch yards, open oak and riparian woodland, and, occasionally, coastal sage scrub bordering this habitat. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 164 individuals (27 December 2013). Some 56 birds near Nojoqui Falls Park 19 August 2017 was a large concentration at a single site, particularly in recent years. Magpies are found to just west and south of Garey and Sisquoc (e.g., along Dominion Road); the probable northwestern border of its range in the county is near Corralitos Ranch inland from Point Sal, in the hills just southwest of the Rancho Maria Golf Course (where a maximum of 7–8 birds were present on both 23 December 2011 and 23 December 2012), and immediately south of Orcutt along Graciosa Road at Highway 1 & 135 (where 9 birds seen 6 June 2010). To the southwest, magpies still occur on oak-covered hills just south of Barka Slough, Vandenberg SFB (e.g., 8 on 29 July 2010, 2 seen 22 March 2011). One farther west on San Antonio Terrace, north Vandenberg SFB, 17 June 1991 and up to 5 there 22–24 November 2021 were outside the species' known range. Small numbers may also continue immediately east of Vandenberg SFB on hillsides between Honda and Miguelito Creeks; and just east of there were a flock of 8 along

San Miguelito Road south of Lompoc 16 December 2012 and 15 August 2023 and a single bird near Sudden Peak 21 June 2018. Two seen east of Lompoc near Canada de la Vina from 21 April 2018–15 March 2019 were ca. 8 mi (13 km) west of the known range. Slightly farther east, 3 were just west of Santa Rosa County Park 12 October 2018. South of normal, from west to east, 2–3 were at Jalama Beach County Park 5 July–22 November 2019, up to 2 were along Jalama Road 25 September 2021–21 April 2024, 1 was just north of Point Conception 21 April and 2 October 2024, 2 were along Highway 1 about 1.6 mi west of Highway 101 on 3 December 2020, and 1 was just north of Gaviota 10 April 2003 and 2 were there 11 June 2016. Several other small pockets of individuals are found in District I in ranchland in lower Tepusquet Canyon and along the Cuyama River (e.g., from north of Miranda Pine Mountain eastward) and, at the border between Districts M and V, bordering several canyons west of New Cuyama (e.g., along Cottonwood Canyon Road from Bates Canyon down to Highway 166, in Schoolhouse Canyon and along Wasioja Road, and east to Aliso Canyon Road/Aliso Park). Four reported from the "Cuyama Valley" 15 November 1953 may have come from these areas to the immediate west or south. The easternmost definite records involve a family group along Aliso Canyon Road near New Cuyama during 2018–2019 and likely earlier. The eastern edge of the species' range in the Santa Ynez Valley was formerly (through the early 2000s) near the east end of Lake Cachuma, but magpies appear there only irregularly in recent years, and the current consistent eastern edge may be in vic. west end Lake Cachuma and Happy Canyon Road. Farther east, there were irregular reports of as many as 14 birds in the Paradise area between 1993 and early 2014, 2 there 25 June 2026, and of 3 individuals at Upper Oso Campground 12 November 2014, the eastern-most modern-era report.

Magpies may range occasionally to the lower elevations in District M. More unusual, a flock of 10 were ca. 2 mi (3 km) from the summit of Figueroa Mountain 22 May 1984 and 1 bird was at Hurricane Deck 22 June 2019.

This species has declined in some areas and has been extirpated from the South Coast and all of Ventura County. Streator (1886) noted that in the Santa Barbara area it was "probably once common, but now rare." Dawson (1923) wrote that the Yellow-billed Magpie occurred "formerly to Santa Barbara, [now present only] north of Santa Ynez Range." He also noted that there were "only two records since 1887 in coastal Santa Barbara County," both near Gaviota (Bond 1941a). Willett (1933) echoed these authors by writing that it was "found numerous near Santa Barbara in early 1860s" with nearly fledged young noted, but that by the 1930s they still occurred only locally in northern Santa Barbara County. In District I, 1 was east of normal at Pendola 18 March 1939 (Bartholomew 1940). One was at Gaviota Pass 29 November 1924 (*MVZ). Yellow-billed Magpies were also noted "near Gaviota" during springs of 1935 and 1937 (Erickson 1946). A well-known population at Nojoqui Falls Park disappeared by the early 1990s, but with 1 bird seen there 17 December 2000.

On 3 July 1941, a flock of 8 was seen in northern Goleta (Erickson 1946). One or 2 on the Riviera in Santa Barbara 1 July–20 August 1945 (Erickson 1946) were somewhat out-of-range. Following the 1941 sighting in Goleta, a small population (fewer than 10 individuals) persisted for some 30 years in western Goleta foothill ranchland. One individual wandered slightly and was present on the coastal plain in Goleta 9 December 1966–9 March 1967. The last individual in northern Goleta was noted in 1973. A small population was in the Hollister Ranch area west of Gaviota at least into the mid-1970s: 4 were seen there in May 1975. A wanderer was near El Capitan 26 June 1989.

Since 1994, South Coast records include 1–2 at Bishop Ranch in western Goleta from August 1996–January 1997; 1 near Foothill X La Cumbre Roads in Santa Barbara during late September 1996 (origin?); 1 along Highway 217 near UCSB during February 1997; 2 near El Capitan Ranch Road 14 November 2000; 2–5 at Tajiguas Landfill and vic. Gaviota 2+ January 2004, 28 February 2014, and 30 August 2014; 1 near El Capitan Ranch Road 30 July 2010; singles

(same?) between Refugio and El Capitan Ranch Road 27–29 June 2019, 19 July 2019, 31 October 2019, 2 March 2022, 25 April 2023, and 19 November 2023; northwest Goleta 16 February 2024; and Hollister Ranch 7 December 2024. A likely escape, showing excessive feather wear, was off Garden Street in Santa Barbara 7 August 2005. Up to 2 unworn birds in the San Roque area 22+ September 2005, with 1 remaining through 4 May 2008, were possible or probable escapes.

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

Common to very common permanent resident in Districts C and I, and locally at the lower elevations in District M (e.g., San Marcos Pass, Aliso Park). Casual elsewhere in District M and in much of District V.

American Crows occur in a variety of habitats, from open oak and riparian woodland, oak savanna, agricultural areas, and grassland, to residential and urban areas. While always numerous, their numbers have increased even further during the past several decades, particularly near human population centers and in agricultural areas. They are often seen in small to medium-sized flocks, occasionally in large flocks (e.g., roosts containing up to 300 individuals are found in the Vandenberg SFB, Lompoc, Goleta, and Carpinteria areas, primarily during the non-breeding season, July–February). Counts of up to 1680 crows flying to a roost in Carpinteria were made 24 October–7 November 1984. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 2856 individuals (1 January 2022). North Coast CBC highs are 5057 on 1 January 1995 (Santa Maria–Guadalupe) and 674 on 18 December 1994 (La Purisima), although numbers on both counts abruptly turned much lower beginning in the late 1990s until after 2010. One roost near Lompoc contained ca. 1500 birds on 3 January 2016. The high inland total for the Cachuma CBC is 706 birds (29 December 2009).

In District I, crows have been recorded regularly east along the Cuyama River to the area north of Miranda Pine Mountain. In the Sierra Madre foothills bordering the Cuyama Valley, a few pairs nest in the woodlands at Aliso Park and perhaps at Cottonwood and Wasioja Canyons. These birds feed regularly in small groups in the adjacent pastures of District V. On occasion, individuals visit the lowest parts of the Valley, at Caliente Ranch, in Ballinger, Quatal, and Santa Barbara Canyons, and elsewhere. Very rarely, larger flocks of up to 15 to 40 presumably non-nesting birds can be seen in and bordering the Cuyama Valley between November and March (e.g., 15 in Salisbury Canyon south of New Cuyama 27 November 2004, 20 there 13 March 2006, 30 near Cuyama 19 February 2012, and 16 near New Cuyama 25 January 2025), at Aliso Park, and at the potreros in the Sierra Madre. These are apparently transient flocks whose origins are unknown. Up to 60 at Montgomery Potrero 18–19 July 1982 was unusual in summer. Accurate evaluation of the true status of American Crow in District V is hampered, however, by visiting observers who assume that crows are regular components of the local avifauna and who misidentify Common Ravens, which can be very numerous.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

Common permanent resident in District V, uncommon in District M. Formerly a rare visitor along the South Coast and in District I, now an uncommon resident. Formerly a very rare visitor along the North Coast, now a locally uncommon resident.

Common Ravens are common throughout much of the Cuyama Valley, with flocks of up to 50 individuals frequenting agricultural areas. The larger flocks are typically seen during fall and winter; e.g., a total of 225 were there 20 November 1982, ca. 800 were tallied 5 November 2005, and 500+ were present 5 November 2006. A total of 125 birds 1 May 1978 was a good count for latter spring. In District M, the species frequents open coniferous forest and chaparral; it is uncommon in the San Rafael and Sierra Madre Mountains and very uncommon in the Santa Ynez Mountains. Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area typically record from 1–6 individuals, with a few up to 10 birds, and a high count of 12 tallied 11–13 June 2010. Cachuma

CBCs (which includes the area around Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak) have recorded as many as 12 birds (28 December 2006).

Through the mid-1990s, only rarely did an individual move down to the upper elevations of District I; high counts were 5 at Lake Cachuma 11 December 1978 and 5 at Garey (bordering District C) 17 July 1980. The Garey individuals were at the western limit of the species' range in that part of the county. One near Buellton 14 March 1985 was farther out of range.

Through the mid-1990s in District C, Common Ravens were recorded almost exclusively along the South Coast. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, this species was seen on a regular basis in small numbers along Rincon Creek and in the Carpinteria foothills, more rarely out over the coastal plain. A pair with 4 nestlings was found using a hole in a Carpinteria coastal bluff during April 1994, and they continued to nest there most following years. Farther west, ravens occurred rarely between Santa Barbara and west of Gaviota, with most sightings in the foothills; they were strictly casual over the coastal plain in this area. Almost all such records occurred between early fall and mid-spring (e.g., 12 May 1992 Tajiguas beach). The only summer records west of Carpinteria were of 7 near Gaviota 3 July 1984 and 1 near El Capitan State Beach 21 July 1984. That this species was so rare along the coast in the Santa Barbara area was puzzling given that it was always resident on the Channel Islands and in moderate numbers in the dry hills bordering the coast in Ventura County west to the Rincon area at the Santa Barbara County line.

The spread of ravens in Santa Barbara County was first hinted at by the increase in numbers and early nesting in the Carpinteria area discussed above. Along the South Coast, 1996 brought reports from Carpinteria Salt Marsh and Padaro Lane near Carpinteria, Summerland, the Mesa in Santa Barbara, and Farren Road in western Goleta. In 1997, the species was also seen at Montecito and Gaviota. In 1998, there were sightings from upper Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, and in Goleta. And between 28 June–11 July 1999, adults with 4 juveniles were noted at the San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara, and adults were seen carrying food there in May 2000. Nesting was also documented near "Naples," west of Goleta, in 2000, at Gaviota State Park in at least 2003, 2006, and 2020, and at the nearby Arroyo Hondo Preserve in 2020. Since 2000, additional records have accrued at an increasing rate, including single birds well out on the coastal plain at More Mesa, along South Patterson Avenue, and over Atascadero Creek, Goleta, on 16 March 2001, 23 September 2001, and 24 February 2002, respectively. Sightings over the foothill regions along the South Coast have since become routine, though reports from well out over the coastal plain, such as near the immediate coast in Goleta and Santa Barbara, continue to be very rare and high counts do not exceed 4 birds. The highest pre-1990s Santa Barbara CBC total was 14 individuals (29 December 1984), although almost all other counts were below 5 birds. (A total of 450 reported on the CBC in December 1968 is certainly in error.) Since the mid-1990s, the highest count total is 13 birds on 5 January 2002. An exceptional 48 individuals were reported above Carpinteria 13 May 2018.

Along the North Coast, 2 at the Santa Maria landfill 27 March 1994 and 1 in Lompoc 25 November 1994 were the first, followed by 2 just south of Point Sal 24 March 1995. This was followed by 1996 sightings near Sisquoc and at Twitchell Reservoir in February, on south Vandenberg SFB 8 May, in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 9 June (2 birds), at the Santa Ynez River mouth 3 October (2), and at the Santa Maria River mouth 26 October (3). A pair carrying food was on the southeast side of Santa Maria 29 April 2000. There were three sightings involving at least 2 birds in Santa Maria between 31 December 2000–21 March 2001, and a high count of 6 at the Santa Maria landfill 21 March 2001 increased to a very impressive 31 birds on 26 March 2005, and with 20 present 28 May 2006. East of Santa Maria, a large total of 43 birds were along Santa Maria Mesa Road 12 May 2018. Farther south, 2 were near the Santa Ynez River mouth 14–23 July 2002, 2 were on north Vandenberg SFB 26 February 2004, and 1 was near Lompoc 21 May 2006. One bird was watched investigating an eroded bluff near Jalama Beach County Park 20 April 2006, perhaps searching for a nest site. By 2010, the species had

become an uncommon resident on north Vandenberg SFB, particularly in the hills above Casmalia, east to Graciosa Road, and south to hills bordering San Antonio Road south of Barka Slough and along Highway 1 near Firefighter Road; as well as along the south side of Lompoc. Five birds were closer to the coast above Minuteman Beach 4 July 2011. A small number of birds have likely become resident also on south Vandenberg SFB since 2010.

In District I, 4 birds were along the Santa Ynez River west of Buellton 10 July 1996 and 1 was along Highway 246 near Santa Ynez 19 February 2000. Records in that district have rapidly increased, as elsewhere, since at least 2010. Concentrations of 30 birds along Armour Ranch Road near Santa Ynez 15 April 2013, 59 birds there 26 February 2016, and 50 on 30 October 2018 are large counts outside District V. A pair at a nest were in Tepusquet Canyon 26 March 2017. One pair raised 3 young near Santa Ynez in 2019, at a lower nesting elevation than normal.

It is interesting that, until recently, the ranges of Common Raven and American Crow in Santa Barbara County were almost mutually exclusive.

VERDIN (REMIZIDAE)

Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*)

Casual visitor in District C.

A bird at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 21 December 2003–6 January 2004 (ph. SBMNH) and 1 bordering Carpinteria Salt Marsh 12 December 2012–6 January 2013 (ph. SBMNH) were real shockers. Perhaps even more so was the bird farther west at Little Cojo Beach near Point Conception 22 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH). There are only a handful of coastal-slope records farther to the southeast—a relatively short distance outside the species' normal range—and none as far out-of-range as these individuals.

TITS, CHICKADEES (PARIDAE)

Mountain Chickadee (*Poecile gambeli*)

Fairly common to common permanent resident on the higher mountains in District M. Rare, sometimes uncommon, and somewhat irregular fall and winter visitor to the lower elevations of District M and to the South Coast, where casual in summer. Very rare visitor in District I; casual along the North Coast and in District V.

Mountain Chickadees are fairly common in coniferous forests on Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak and Madulce Peak and common on San Rafael and Big Pine Mountains; totals of 160 and 247 birds in the Big Pine Mountain area 10–11 July 1993 and 18–20 June 2004, respectively, were very high counts; in contrast, other surveys there have produced as few as 35 individuals in both 2010 and 2012, and a mere 9 birds on 12–14 June 2020. Some 23 birds were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024 and 28 were there 12 January 2025. The Cachuma CBC, which includes the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area, has recorded as many as 50 individuals (28 December 2010). Away from these mountains this species occurs as a fall and winter visitor and frequents planted conifers or, more rarely, other woodland types with scattered conifers. In the Santa Ynez Mountains, it occurred "only in winter" (Dawson 1916); presently very small numbers are found there most falls and winters, particularly in the vicinity of San Marcos Pass. The first individuals may arrive as early as late August (e.g., 31 August 1999 San Marcos Pass (2)) and may remain until late March. One was seen near San Marcos Pass on the exceptionally late date of 31 May 1998. Most unusual was a summering bird near La Cumbre Peak 16 June–4 July 1994. In the Sierra Madre, the relatively small number of records includes 2 slightly late birds in Lion Canyon 24 March 2007, later still along Alamo Creek 18 May 2019 (3), and a summer bird at Tinta Campground 1 June 2015. Well to the west, 3 birds were at Miranda Pine Campground 4 October 2018.

In the lowlands, this species is present most winters along the South Coast, where numbers vary from year to year; it may be absent one year and uncommon the next. The coastal localities where it is most likely to occur include Hope Ranch and Montecito, although stands of planted pines in northern Goleta have also proven attractive. The earliest arrival dates well away from nesting areas are 21 August 1987 and 31 August 1984 Carpinteria, 4 September 1972 Hope Ranch. High counts include 19 in the Santa Barbara area 31 December 1966, up to 13 in Hope Ranch during fall and winter 1972–1973, an exceptional total of 51 on the Santa Barbara CBC 23 December 1972, and 14 in Santa Barbara 4 January 1997. The latest records in District C are 24 March 2005 Carpinteria and 5 April 2014 Montecito. Unique in summer was a bird in Hope Ranch 27 June–6 September 2006.

Mountain Chickadee is casual along the North Coast. The only definite records are 1 in Santa Maria 21 January 1988, 2 near Lompoc 16 December 1989, up to 2 near Orcutt 6 November–30 December 1996, 1 near Lompoc 22 December 1996, 1 near Casmalia 30 December 1996, 2 near Lompoc 11 December 2002–19 January 2003, 1 in Santa Maria 13 November 2004, and up to 3 in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 3 November–28 December 2015 and 1 there 16 February 2018.

This species is a very rare fall and winter visitor in District I. Two along Happy Canyon Road 23 March 2013 and up to 4 at Sedgwick Reserve 10–11 April 2013 were late.

There are four records from District V, all from the Ventucopa/Quatal Canyon area: 15 March 1993 (2), 5 November 2006, 1 November 2018–4 April 2019 (up to 2), and 21 January–18 February 2023 (up to 3).

Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*)

Locally common permanent resident along the North Coast. Uncommon and local along the South Coast and in District I. One record in District M.

Chestnut-backed Chickadees occur primarily in riparian habitat (mainly willows) along the North Coast south to south Vandenberg SFB. They were first recorded on 20 September 1967 when found in the Santa Maria area (exact location unknown). The next record was of a small flock at Guadalupe 27 August 1970. This species was first detected along the Santa Ynez River in 1977 and along San Antonio Creek in 1978. All of these areas received little or no observer coverage until 1978, so it is unknown whether the species spread south near that time or whether it was present previously. As of 1994, known areas that supported this species were: the Santa Maria River inland to the Guadalupe area; San Antonio Creek, Vandenberg SFB, inland to Barka Slough (at the border with District I); and the Santa Ynez River inland to its confluence with Salsipuedes Creek east of Lompoc (at the border with District I). Another 4 mi (6 km) to the south, two groups of birds were along Bear Creek, south Vandenberg SFB, 12 November 1990. Since 2000, the two North Coast CBCs typically each record between 15–35 individuals; 40 were tallied along the lower Santa Maria River 23 December 2006. Well inland, 2 were near Sisquoc 25 February 2017.

Through 1993, the only North Coast non-riparian locations where this species was recorded were in areas dominated by Monterey Pines at Waller Park and adjoining neighborhood in Santa Maria; a eucalyptus grove at Betteravia in the Santa Maria Valley; and primarily eucalyptus in the Vandenberg SFB residential area. More recently, chickadees have been found in other Santa Maria neighborhoods with Monterey Pine and in eucalyptus groves near the Santa Maria airport.

The first record of this species along the South Coast was from the Santa Barbara Cemetery, Montecito, 24 October 1975–10 March 1976, followed by a bird along San Jose Creek, Goleta, 6 September 1985. Up to 2 were along Carpinteria Creek 30 August–23 October 1994, and 1 was there 19 April–9 May and 12 September 1997–6+ March 1998. This was quickly followed by 1 in Goleta beginning 19 November+ 1994. Since then, the species has established a toe-hold at at least two sites in the Goleta area: along lower Atascadero Creek/gas company property and in the

Ellwood/Devereux Creek area. The first "gas plant" bird was detected on 4 September 1999 and again from 26 December+ 1999, increasing to 2 birds by August 2002; typical counts there and along adjoining Atascadero Creek have remained from 1–4 birds, continuing as of 2026. The first sighting in the Ellwood area was made beginning 10 October+ 2000, increasing to 2 birds by August 2002 and to 3 birds by December 2002, and a juvenile was seen 20 June 2008; typical counts there range from 1–3 birds, and they continue as of 2026. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 11 and 16 individuals (1 January 2011 and 4 January 2020, respectively).

Elsewhere along the South Coast through 2021, from west to east, up to 6 were just east of Point Conception September–November 2021, 2 were at the Gaviota rest stop 10 December 2002, 1 at nearby Gaviota State Park 26 February 2003 may have been 1 of these same birds and was followed by up to 3 there 21 September 2012–25 September 2013; 1 was at Refugio State Beach 5 September 2005; an active nest was along lower Refugio Road 19 April 2020; up to 3 at El Capitan State Beach 16 September–23 November 2003 was followed by a family group with 3 begging juveniles 15 May 2004 and 6 birds total on 6 November 2004, but only 1–2 seen from September 2005–March 2013; 7 in Eagle Canyon (between Dos Pueblos and Tecolote Canyons) 20 May 2011 and smaller numbers continued between Eagle, Tecolote (where nested), and Bell (since July 2007) Creeks into 2026; 2 along Dos Pueblos Creek 1.2 mi (2 km) north of Highway 101 on 14 February 2012 were farther from the coast than usual along the South Coast; 3+ bordering Devereux Slough 18 June 2008 and 2 there 24 June 2011 and 3 January 2015; 1 coming to a feeder in northern Goleta bordering Maria Ygnacio Creek 20 July 2025; 2 along Tecolotito Creek near Santa Barbara airport in Goleta 24 August 2016; 1 on main UCSB campus in Goleta 17 July 2006; 1 along Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 13 November 2002–4 January 2003 and up to 4 there 5 December 2010–1 January 2011; up to 2+ at "Douglas Preserve" on the Mesa in Santa Barbara 3 January 2013–2020, including documented nesting in April 2015 and April 2020; 1 along San Ysidro Creek in Montecito 21 July 2003; 1 along Padaro Lane in Carpinteria 29 October 2018; 1 at Carpinteria Bluffs 10 September 2016; up to 3 birds near Carpinteria City Hall 11 September 2014–21 October 2018; the Carpinteria Creek birds in the 1990s and additional singles there 24 September–14 October 2017 and 24 September–24 October 2018; 1 near "Lake Jocelyn" 5 July 2025; and up to 12 (a high count for the South Coast) along Rincon Creek at the Ventura County line 11 July 2019–January 2022+, where successful nesting was first documented in 2019 and 2020.

Since 2021, Chestnut-backed Chickadees have been found along the South Coast in small numbers at numerous sites on the coastal plain inland to foothill canyons between Gaviota State Park and Rincon Creek at the Ventura County line. Counts at these many sites have remained low, mostly between 1–3 individuals, with a few reports of up to 6 birds probably involving family groups.

In District I, Chestnut-backed Chickadees have spread east locally since the early 1990s and have now been detected much farther inland. From north to south, first reports included 1 along the Cuyama River at the east end of Twitchell Reservoir/Alamo Creek 21 May 1994 and 6 there 5 June 2010 (San Luis Obispo County side); 1 in Colson Canyon east of Santa Maria 28 November 2015 and 2 there 9 July 2020; 1 at Rancho Sisquoc winery 25 November 2018; up to 3 birds along San Antonio Creek in Los Alamos 13 June 2003–29 February 2004 (ph. SBMNH) and 2 in Los Alamos County Park 15 March 2017; 1 along Alamo Pintado Creek in Los Olivos 22 May 2015; 1 along the Santa Ynez River just east of Santa Rosa County Park (ca. 5 mi [8 km] west of Buellton) 2 July 1996; 1 along the Santa Ynez River just west of Buellton 17 June 2004 and an active nest found there 14 April 2020; the species is now resident along the Santa Ynez River near Alisal and Refugio Roads (near Solvang and Santa Ynez), with 2 at the latter site 2–22 November 2003, increasing to up to 5 present from 29 December 2003 through 2013+; 1 farther south along Refugio Road 19 May 2022; 1 along the Santa Ynez River even farther east near the Highway 154 crossing 1 November 2011 and 5 there 28 December 2012; and 4 found below Bradbury Dam at the west end of Lake Cachuma 28 December 2011 and singles there 27

December 2016 and 10 December 2019. Two were at Nojoqui Falls Park 16 February–19 April 2013, and up to four have been there through 2026.

In District M, 2 seen with Mountain Chickadees along the Fir Canyon Trail in the San Rafael Mountains 14 July 2012 (ph. SBMNH) were exceptional. There are also two or three undocumented reports from the San Marcos Pass area.

Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*)

Fairly common to common permanent resident along the South Coast, in District I, and at the lower elevations in District M. Uncommon to fairly common along the North Coast and at higher elevations in District M. Uncommon to fairly common in District V.

The Oak Titmouse is most numerous in woodland areas, particularly those characterized by oaks or a mixture of oak, riparian, and conifers. It is fairly common in the well-vegetated residential areas along the South Coast. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 452 individuals (2 January 1983). Small numbers may be found even in areas with very limited habitat, such as in Isla Vista and on the UCSB campus. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 363 birds (28 December 2010). Along the North Coast, it is fairly common, with most individuals found on oak-covered slopes and in oak-riparian woodland in more inland areas; it is uncommon in riparian areas near the coast. In District M, most birds are present where there is a substantial amount of oak present; they are uncommon to absent in pure coniferous stands on the highest peaks (e.g., on San Rafael and Big Pine Mountains). Most summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, record fewer than 12 individuals, a few counts reached 20 birds, and 32 were reported 23–25 June 1994; most of these birds were in the Alamar Saddle/Bear Camp area. A high total of 62 birds were in the Figueroa Mountain area 28 December 2010. This species is found in foothill canyons along the north flank of the Sierra Madre and along the Cuyama River east to ca. 6.5 mi (10 km) west of New Cuyama. Otherwise in District V it is found primarily in the fringing scrub habitats (e.g., Ballinger, Deer Park, and Quatal Canyons, Ventucopa, Santa Barbara Canyon, Aliso Canyon Road, Wasioja Road). There are also reports from closer to the valley floor in New Cuyama between September–April, with additional records there 13 June 2018 (2), 19 May 2019, and 12 August 2021.

LARKS (ALAUDIDAE)

Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*)

Fairly common to common transient and winter visitor locally along the North Coast and in District I; may be particularly numerous in District V; uncommon to rare along the South Coast. Fairly common summer resident in District V. Formerly fairly common but now local and declining as a breeder in Districts C and I. Uncommon and local in District M.

Horned Larks are found in open country with sparse vegetation. Habitats frequented include agricultural areas, dirt fields, short grassland, airports, and sand dunes. The breeding population is most numerous in District V, where it is common in the Cuyama Valley in short grass and agricultural fields.

Local movements bring individuals, including fledged juveniles, to localities where the species is not known to breed as early as July or August, exceptionally in June (see below). A high early-season count of 45 birds were in the South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields, Goleta, 21 August+ 1994. During migration and winter (September–early March), Horned Larks are more widespread and numbers are augmented by movement from elsewhere. They are most abundant in the Cuyama Valley, where several thousand were seen per day during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Changing agricultural practices there during the late 1980s resulted in fewer open-dirt and cut-alfalfa fields and thus fewer birds, although ca. 2350 were there 5 November

2006, ca. 2000 on 7 January 2007, 2600 on 17 November 2024, and an all-time high of ca. 9000 on 25–26 January 2025. Horned Larks are also common, but declining, in the Santa Maria Valley, where 500+ in a day could be seen through the mid-1980s, and in the Lompoc Valley. At the former location, only 200+ were found on Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBCs by the late 1990s, and most totals since 2000 have been under 100 individuals, except for 206 birds on 23 December 2012. The recent high counts from the North Coast come from the western Lompoc Valley, where 400 were seen 30 October 2005 and 500 were present 28 October 2006. The La Purisima CBC recorded 371 birds on 22 December 1996 and 318 individuals on 19 December 2004.

In District I, small-to-moderate numbers winter in the Santa Ynez Valley. The Cachuma CBC has found this species on about half the counts, but which included a high of 160 birds on 30 December 2008. Other high counts come from fields near Santa Ynez and include up to 400–500 between 12–19 November 2011, but only up to 125 there during 2013–2015.

Along the South Coast, the species is probably most numerous in the area west of Gaviota, and larger numbers are present during fall than later in winter. Small numbers formerly were found in ranchland in northern Goleta. The southern Goleta population did not typically exceed 50 individuals during the 1970s, and by the early 1990s, it seldom exceeded 15 birds annually (but see above). Santa Barbara CBCs failed to record this species after December 1989, except for a high total of 42 birds on 4 January 1997, 5 on 2 January 2005, and 20 birds (at the airport) on 1 January 2011. A recent high count is 45 birds at Elings Park in Santa Barbara 1 November 2024. The largest flock ever recorded along the South Coast was found at “La Patera Point” in Goleta in 1918 and consisted of only a small number of birds in early November, several hundred in early December, and then only 2 in mid-December (Willett 1933).

In District V, Horned Larks were formerly common breeders through the late 1900s but are currently only fairly common. A total of 72 were found there and in the Sierra Madre foothills during concentrated surveys on 18–19 May 2024.

Horned Lark nests only locally in Districts C and I. Along the North Coast, the species is uncommon in summer (formerly fairly common; e.g., 150 in Santa Maria area 21 July 1984), nesting in short grass and agricultural fields in the Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys, in grassland off Miguelito Road southwest of Lompoc, and in coastal sand dunes from the Santa Maria River mouth south to at least south Vandenberg SFB. It is now rare or absent at this season along the South Coast east of Gaviota. On 1 August 1915, van Rossem found the species to be “fairly common in Goleta along the beach and inland.” Rett (fieldnotes) found numbers routinely in the Goleta area in spring through the late 1930s. Habitat loss since that time reduced the population. In Goleta, this species formerly bred at the present site of UCSB and, into the 1980s, in the agricultural fields along South Patterson Avenue. It still summered at the Santa Barbara airport through the early 1990s, where up to 12 were seen in May 1992; the only breeding evidence at that site since then was a singing bird there on 22 June and 2 juveniles found 29 June 2007.

Many late June sightings at atypical locations likely involve post-breeding dispersers. A family group of 2 adults and 2 juveniles at Elings Park in Santa Barbara 5 June 2016 is suggestive of local breeding at that site; a single adult was there 5–19 June 2020, with 7 birds (including 2+ juveniles) on the latter date, and 2 were found 19 June 2024. One bird in Carpinteria 29 May 2013 was unseasonal in an area where not known to nest. Two independent juveniles were at Carpinteria Bluffs 17 June 2004, up to 8 birds (including 1+ juvenile) were there 19–26 June 2020, and 1 was seen 9 June 2022. Nearby, up to 1 adult and 2 juveniles were at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 21–23 June 2017, 2 were near there 3 July 2021, and 8 were found 15 June 2025. Two independent juveniles had arrived in Isla Vista, nowhere near a known breeding site, already on 26 June 2004, as did two adults with a juvenile at the Santa Barbara Cemetery in Montecito 19 June 2021, up to 4 juveniles at Coal Oil Point 8–15 June 2024, 4 at San Marcos Foothills 15 June 2024 and 1 there 10 June 2025, and single juveniles at the Andrée Clark Bird

Refuge 19 June 2024 and at Lake Los Carneros 16 July 2024. Five birds at More Mesa, Goleta, 29 July 2020 also probably had dispersed from breeding elsewhere.

In District I, the nesting status of this species is not well known. A nest was found under a cow chip at Santa Ynez 22 April 1933, and another nest was in Happy Canyon 29 April 1934 (Rett fieldnotes). Horned Larks have been found breeding in small numbers on a number of occasions in the Santa Ynez Valley since that time (e.g., along Armour Ranch and lower Happy Canyon Roads and off Baseline Avenue near Santa Ynez). A high summer total of 25 birds was along Armour Ranch Road near Santa Ynez 14 June 2015. Sightings elsewhere beginning already by the end of June may pertain to post-breeders on the move away from nesting areas. One bird on a mudbar in Jameson Lake 11 July 1938 (Bartholomew 1940) was at an odd locality.

This species probably breeds in the grassy potreros in District M. Bartholomew (1940) noted that the species was "probably resident on the larger potreros." Up to 25 were at Montgomery Potrero 18–19 July 1982. Eight were along Sierra Madre Road 15 June 2011. During May–June 2019, small numbers were seen at several sites between Montgomery and Santa Barbara Potreros, with a high 6 birds at the latter on 2 June. In addition, 2 individuals were seen flying over San Rafael Mountain 19 June 1982 and 1 was at a dry flat at 3000 feet near Big Pine Mountain 28 June 2009.

SWALLOWS (HIRUNDINIDAE)

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*)

Rare to very rare spring and fall transient in District C, casual in Districts I and V. Formerly bred at least along the South Coast and possibly in District I; only one recent summer record. Two late-winter records in District C.

Bank Swallows were rare but regular migrants through Santa Barbara County into the early 1990s, but they have declined somewhat since then, and today they are rare to very rare. Spring transients are typically seen between mid-April and mid-May. Between 1994–2026, a total of 46 individuals were found in spring along the South Coast, with a high of 6 birds in 2025, and 15 birds were reported along the North Coast. The earliest records since the mid-1900s are: 11–12 March 2018 Devereux Slough (ph. SBMNH), 27 March 2006 Goleta sewage treatment plant, 29 March 1960 El Capitan State Beach (2), 30 March 1977 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, 31 March 1959 near Santa Barbara (2), and 31 March 2008 Goleta sewage treatment plant (2; ph. SBMNH) along the South Coast; and 7 April 2006 Purisima Point, north Vandenberg SFB (2) along the North Coast. The maximum spring count since the mid-1900s is 10 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 May 1981; since 1994 no count has exceeded 3 birds except for 5 at Goleta Slough 19 May 2010. Individuals have been noted into late May (e.g., through 24 May 1996 near the Santa Ynez River mouth, 25 May 1986 Santa Ynez River mouth, 29 May 1989 north Vandenberg SFB, and see below). Singles 3 June 2007 at Devereux Slough, 4 June 1998 near the Santa Ynez River mouth, and 4–6 June 2011 at Goleta Slough were exceptionally late.

There are only six spring records since the 1930s away from District C: 2 at Lake Cachuma 9 April 1963, near Santa Ynez 6 May 1997, near Los Olivos 3 May 2007, and near Solvang 29 May 2011 (late) in District I; and at Caliente Ranch Wetland 25 April 2015 and in New Cuyama 27 April 2023 in District V.

Fall transients are typically noted between mid-August and early October. The earliest records include 30 July 1989 Santa Maria River mouth, 4 August 2007 Devereux Slough, and 4–5 August 2013 Santa Ynez River mouth (3). The fall maximum is 7 near Santa Maria 26 September 1980. Presently, the species has become very rare at this season, with a total of only 13 individuals along the South Coast and 12 individuals along the North Coast between 1994–2025. The latest fall record is 25 October 1982 Goleta. One seen far offshore, ca. 200 mi

(320 km) SW of Point Conception 25 July 2004, was at a very unusual location and was slightly early. The only recent fall records away from District C are of 1 in the Cuyama Valley 13 September 2012 and 1 in Buellton 12 August 2014. A number of early-autumn reports have involved misidentified juvenile Tree Swallows.

One present near the Santa Ynez River mouth 22–23 February 1997 (ph. SBMNH) was exceptional for winter, although it coincided with the arrival of several Cliff Swallows so it might have been an exceptionally early migrant. The same is true for another very early individual there 29 February–4 March 2000.

Bank Swallows no longer breed in Santa Barbara County or elsewhere in Southern California. Formerly they nested along the South Coast in colonies on the sea cliffs in the Santa Barbara area. One hundred were in the Santa Barbara area 5 May 1913 (Dawson 1913a). Approximately 25 pairs were found "in cliff rising above surf" in Goleta by van Rossem on 31 July 1915. Willett (1933) termed them a "fairly common summer resident in suitable localities in lowlands." Rett (fieldnotes) found an uncertain number of nesting birds on the sea cliff at More Mesa 1 May 1941, where he collected 6 birds. In District I, C. O. Reis reported finding a colony of 12 pairs in a cut made by the County Road Department in the San "Juhlehn" Valley (northwest of Gaviota?) on 17 May 1933. It is unclear when and why these breeding colonies disappeared. Since that time, there is one unusual record of 4 individuals that summered in Goleta 2 May–18 September 1971 (no evidence of nesting was found).

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

Common spring and rare to uncommon fall transient in much of Districts C, I, and V. Locally common in fall only in the Santa Maria Valley, where it is also uncommon to fairly common in winter. Also winters regularly at Lake Cachuma; very rarely elsewhere. Breeds along the North Coast, very locally in District I, and, recently, uncommonly along the South Coast.

Tree Swallows presently are fairly common but very local breeders along the North Coast and inland along the Santa Ynez River in District I. They breed in riparian (particularly tall willow and cottonwood) habitat along the larger watercourses, including the Santa Maria River inland to Guadalupe and locally to Santa Maria, San Antonio Creek inland to the Barka Slough area, and the Santa Ynez River inland to Lompoc (fewer than 10 pairs at the latter locality). A pair nesting in a metal pole at a school playground in Orcutt during May 2001 was at an odd location. Small numbers (probably fewer than 15 pairs in all) also breed at scattered locations along the Santa Ynez River farther inland, including near Buellton, near Solvang and Santa Ynez, and at Lake Cachuma. Twenty at the latter locality 2 July 1992 was a summer high count. One at Jameson Lake 27 April 1989 was frequenting dead snags and was possibly a local breeder. A pair with a begging fledgling were at the upper end of Gibraltar Reservoir 12 June 1993. Four individuals near Garey 17 July 1980 may indicate local breeding in that area where some suitable riparian habitat exists near the confluence of the Santa Maria, Cuyama, and Sisquoc Rivers. Determining this species' nesting status elsewhere inland is complicated by the number of late spring and summer reports that probably involve misidentified Violet-green Swallows. Adult Tree Swallows feeding fledglings at Preisker Park, Santa Maria, 1 August 2000 was a somewhat late nesting. Summer post-breeding concentrations are often noted at bodies of water close to nesting areas such as the Santa Maria River mouth, Santa Maria sewage treatment plant, and the Santa Ynez River mouth. The largest concentrations recorded during this season are 140 (including 60 juveniles) at the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 July 1980 and 125 at the former sugar settling ponds at Betteravia, Santa Maria Valley, 25 July 1988.

Given that this species breeds along the North Coast and in coastal Ventura County, it seemed odd that it did not do so along the South Coast until first found nesting there in 2000, when a pair was seen visiting a nest box on Glen Annie Golf Course, Goleta, on 2 June. That was followed by a pair using a nest box at Ellwood Mesa 20 May 2001, with a single bird near there 28 June 2003, another pair at a nest box on a ranch along East Fork of Maria Ygnacio Creek, Santa Barbara, 28 May 2003, and a pair feeding 2 young at a nest hole in a dead snag at Lake

Los Carneros 22 June 2005. In 2006 and 2007 single pairs nested on Coal Oil Point Reserve in the Devereux Slough area, with 5 eggs on 11 June 2006 and 3 eggs on 16 May 2007 and an adult feeding nestlings on 26 June 2006 and on 19 June 2007; breeding was documented there again annually from 2010–2020, with an average of ca. 5 pairs and from 14–43 young fledged, 2013–2015. A single pair was using a nest box at the UCSB Lagoon annually from 2016–2020. Three or 4 pairs nested in nest-boxes at Lake Los Carneros in 2008 (unsuccessful) and 2010–2015, with up to 27 young (2015) fledged annually. An adult was feeding a fledgling at Goleta Slough on 21 June 2019. Single pairs were investigating natural cavities in eucalyptus near the mouth of Goleta Slough 27+ April 2013 and 22 April 2018, and the species probably nested somewhat farther up Atascadero Creek during some years since. Two were at "Naples," just west of Goleta, 2 June 2011 and a nest was there 24 April 2020. Away from the Goleta area, a single adult was at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 24 June 2001 (close to the 2003 Maria Ygnacio nest-site), a nest with eggs was in a nest-box at Laguna Blanca 18 June 2019, and another nest was to the west at Canada del Capitan 4 May 2020. Since that time, breeding-season records have continued at a number of these sites and accrued at multiple additional South Coast sites between Hollister Ranch and Carpinteria.

This species was formerly a more common and widespread breeding species throughout Southern California. Willett (1933) termed it "common in spring and summer in willow regions of the lowlands." This reduction probably resulted from the loss of suitable riparian habitat for nesting and wetland habitat for foraging, and, possibly, competition from European Starlings for nesting cavities.

Spring migrants are fairly common to common near the coast along the length of District C, with the largest numbers noted around lakes, ponds, sloughs, and river mouths, particularly during inclement weather. Inland, the species is more local in occurrence and, again, is most often seen near bodies of water (e.g., Lake Cachuma). The first individuals typically appear in early February, rarely in late January (earliest arrival dates: 21 January 1971 Santa Barbara, 21 January 2023 Caliente Ranch Wetland west of New Cuyama with 4 there 25 January 2025). The largest concentrations recorded are 500 in the Santa Maria Valley 19 February 1979 and 800 there 7 March 1980; 400 were at Devereux Slough 24 March 1990. Concentrations of up to 100 individuals are noted regularly at Lake Cachuma during February; 200 were there 10 February 1987. The last of the migrants have passed through by the end of April.

Fall migrants, in contrast, are rather rare away from the Santa Maria Valley and occur primarily between August and early November, a few perhaps already in late July. The earliest records of definite fall transients are 10 July 2008 Carpinteria Salt Marsh and 20 July 2009 Cuyama Valley (5), with 1 in Quatal Canyon 1 July 2019 and up to 2 birds in that area 3–4 July 2020, and 1 in New Cuyama 4 July 2020 likely very early migrants. Probable local breeders may wander up to several miles from nest sites by early or mid- July (e.g., 6 at Goleta sewage treatment plant 15 July 2016). In the Santa Maria Valley, fall concentrations were noted regularly through the 1980s; the highest count was 350 at the Santa Maria River mouth 16 October 1981; more recent high tallies have not exceeded 100+ (Santa Maria River mouth 31 August 2002) except for ca. 300 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 2 September 2025. In 2018, this species was noted as fairly common inland in the Cuyama Valley (particularly at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond) between late August and late October, with a high of 25 birds on 3 October, and with a few remaining into November and 1 as late as 2 December. One or 2 birds remained into late November in 2019 and 2020 as well.

In late fall and winter, this species occurs only very locally. Through the mid-1990s it was found most regularly in the Santa Maria Valley when it was uncommon to fairly common in the Santa Maria River mouth area and at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant. Most Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBCs tally fewer than 100 birds, but 243 were seen 26 December 1999, 115 individuals were found 26 December 2010, and 169 were seen 23 December 2011. Elsewhere

along the North Coast, 265 were tallied on the La Purisima CBC 17 December 2000, but all other totals there have been under 100 birds, and most are under 30. The Cachuma CBC has recorded this species almost every year, with very high reported maxima of 267 birds on 30 December 2005 and 270 on 28 December 2010. Interestingly, the only winter records at the lake before the mid-1990s were of 5 individuals on 8 December 1979 and 10 present 30 November 1987 building to a high count of 50 on 14 December, whereas Violet-green Swallow was the much more expected swallow in early winter. Farther east, 1 was at Jameson Lake 19 December 2020.

Tree Swallows were recorded regularly (up to 60 individuals during late December) on Santa Barbara CBCs between 1911 and 1926 (see the appropriate issues of *Bird-Lore);* they may have been more regular as a winter visitant along the South Coast when the coastal marshes and estuaries in this area were more extensive. Between 1970–1994, there was a total of only 15 records (involving 55 individuals) between late November and early January from San Antonio Creek, the Santa Ynez River mouth, Mission Hills near Lompoc, Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria; a high of up to 25 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 26 December 1988–28 January 1989. Two in Goleta 15 January 1983 and 1 there 19 January 1993 were possibly very early "spring" transients. Between 1995–2026, there were over 35 records along the South Coast during this season, with high counts of 20+ at the UCSB Lagoon 15 December 1998 and 24 at Lake Los Carneros 3 December 2024.

The true status of Tree Swallows during summer, fall, and winter is somewhat clouded by identification issues involving misidentified Violet-green Swallows.

A nesting Tree Swallow near Devereux Slough in July 2024 had been banded as a nestling well to the south in Orange County in June 2019. And a Tree Swallow banded at Lake Los Carneros in 2022 was found nesting in Los Angeles County in June 2026.

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*)

Common summer resident in Districts I and M and along the South Coast. Fairly common to common spring transient in all Districts, uncommon in fall. In winter, occurs primarily in Districts I and M, where generally rare, though large concentrations have been noted; very rare elsewhere.

The Violet-green Swallow is a common nesting species in Districts I and M, frequenting coniferous forest, oak and riparian woodland, and oak savanna. Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, recorded highly variable numbers, with as many as 170 individuals (30 June–2 July 1981), many totals between 25–100 birds, and some as low as single digits. They nest in foothill canyons just south of the Cuyama Valley, but not in District V itself. Along the South Coast, this species nests in foothill canyons containing oak and oak-riparian vegetation. It breeds virtually to sea level and is most common in District C in many of the coastal canyons west of Goleta, west to Hollister Ranch and possibly near Point Conception. Along the North Coast, it possibly nests in very small numbers only very locally at several interior sites, including near Casmalia, at vic. Barka Slough, and at the Burton Mesa Preserve near Vandenberg Village. Individuals were away from known breeding areas in Hope Ranch 25 June 1980, May–21 June 1982 (up to 4), 20 May 1987, and 18 May 1994; at Purisima Point, Vandenberg SFB, 12 June 1981; west of Santa Maria 13 August 1981; at the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 May 2023 and 27 May 2026 (2); and near Point Conception 5 June 2023. The true number of additional reports from the outer coastal plain along the North Coast and between Goleta and Carpinteria between late May and early September are clouded by the likelihood of misidentifications with Tree Swallow. There are a few late-spring and summer records from areas bordering District V (e.g., Ventucopa area), which may represent foraging birds from the nearby District M foothills.

Spring migrants typically appear in early February, exceptionally in late January (earliest arrival dates: 20 January 2024 Lake Los Carneros, 21 January 1971 Santa Barbara (2), 24

January 2021 Goleta (2)). The species may sometimes be common during February and March, with the largest concentrations noted during cold or overcast weather (e.g., 200 in Montecito 12 March 1985, 250 at Lake Cachuma 20 February 2011, ca. 300 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 March 2014). The last of the spring migrants are usually seen during early May, with perhaps a few records into mid-May.

Fall migrants are less numerous and are normally seen during October and November following the passage of cold fronts. A few may be found as early as mid-September. At least 100 were at La Cumbre Peak 30 September 2000. The largest concentrations recorded along the coast in fall are 250 in Goleta 21 October 1979 and total of 200 between Lompoc and Guadalupe 17 October 1993. It is interesting to note that almost all individuals seen along the coast following cold fronts are moving west or north, up the coast.

From late November to late January, Violet-green Swallows are found sporadically in District I and at the lower elevations in District M. Although they are generally rare at this season, large numbers have been encountered on several occasions during cold or overcast weather: 225 at Gibraltar Reservoir 2 January 1977 and up to 200 at Lake Cachuma during the late fall and early winter 1978–1979. Since the 1990s, the maximum count is only ca. 40 birds at Lake Cachuma 26 December 2003. There is only one true winter record for District V: 4 in Cuyama Valley 7 January 1978.

The only late-fall/early-winter records for District C are of single individuals in Santa Barbara 19–24 December 1914 and 24 December 1918 (Dawson 1923, Willett 1933), 2 in northern Goleta 30 December 1967, 1 in Goleta 6 December 1970, and then 11 records (involving 19 individuals) along the South Coast and seven records (involving 14 individuals) along the North Coast since 1983 between early December and late January.

The true status of Violet-green Swallows during much of the year is somewhat clouded by identification issues involving misidentified Tree Swallows.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

Fairly common to common transient and summer resident in Districts C, I, and V. Uncommon migrant at the lower elevations in District M. Casual, but increasing, in winter along the South Coast, with two inland records.

Northern Rough-winged Swallows frequent areas near creeks, rivers, lakes, ponds, and coastal lagoons and estuaries. They nest in holes in steep banks and sea cliffs and under bridges and overpasses. This species breeds even in urban areas; e.g., several pairs can be found along Mission Creek as it winds through downtown Santa Barbara. It is somewhat less numerous along the North Coast than along the South Coast.

Although this species is fairly common during migration, concentrations typically do not exceed 25 individuals. Fifty in the Goleta area 25 August 1989 was a high count in fall. Most highs in spring are associated with inclement weather and include, coastally, 47–50 at Devereux Slough 16–17 March 2020, and, inland, 35 at Caliente Ranch Wetland west of New Cuyama 25 April 2015 and an exceptional 120 birds at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 25 March 2020. Spring migrants appear as early as mid-February (earliest arrival dates: 2 February 2008 Carpinteria, 8 February 1983 and 2015 (2) Goleta); fall migrants are probably on the move by mid-July. This species departs rather early in autumn (largely by mid-September); it is rare from late September through early October. The only records of fall migrants after mid-October are: 21 October 1979 Goleta (2), 21 October 2016 Carpinteria, 24 October 2007 Santa Barbara, 24–25 October 1970 Goleta, 28 October 2000 near Lompoc, 30 October 1993 Lompoc, 4–5 November 1979 Goleta, 20 November 2004 near Goleta, 26 November 2009 Goleta (2), 11–30 November 2020 Goleta, and 14 November 2020 Santa Ynez River mouth.

There are at least 10 winter records along the South Coast: 1 at the Sandpiper Golf Course, Goleta, 29 December 1992–2+ February 1993 and again 29 October 1993–6+ February 1994, 21

December 1994–5 January 1995, and 25 November 1995–6 February 1996; 2 at Devereux Slough 26 December 2004; 4 at Glen Annie Reservoir, Goleta, 2–3 January 2005; 4 at Devereux Slough 27 December 2005 and up to 6 (an exceptional winter count) at seasonal wetlands at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads, Goleta, 27 December 2005–8 February 2006 (probably involved same birds); up to 2 at Goleta sewage treatment plant/Goleta Beach Park/Goleta Slough/Lake Los Carneros 30 December 2009–16 January 2010; singles there 1 January–6 February 2011 and 29 November–31 December 2011 (probably involved same bird); 2 at UCSB Lagoon 4 January 2018; 4 at Glen Annie Reservoi 4 January 2020; in Goleta area 4 November 2020–9 January 2021; and up to 2 at Coal Oil Point/Devereux Slough 17–21 January 2024.

Exceptional was a single bird in District M at Jameson Lake on 19 December 2020 and 1 near Lake Cachuma 30 December 2025.

There appear to be no documented records for the higher elevations in the San Rafael Mountains in District M.

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*)

Uncommon and very local summer resident in District I, very rare in District M. Formerly more common and widespread. A very rare spring and fall transient in District I and along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast and in Districts M and V.

Purple Martins nest in cavities in sycamores and conifers in District I and, very irregularly, in District M. The only known consistent breeding site at present is at Nojoqui Falls Park, with recent nesting also in the nearby Solvang/Alisal Ranch area in the Santa Ynez Valley. Nojoqui Park (see below) had a population of 10–15 individuals in the 1980s through 1993 (high count: 17 in July 1983). More recently, the high counts at Nojoqui Falls Park have been 21–32 birds between 22 June–22 July 2013, up to 17 adults during April and 6 nests with 17 young during July 2016, 24 birds there 25 April 2017, 25 on 18 July 2018, a total of 32 birds (including juveniles) and involving 10 nests in June–August 2020, 14 active nests in 2021, 8+ young in 2022, active nests with 10–20 adults and juveniles in July 2024, 13–15 birds in July 2025, but only 3–4 nests in 2026. The maximum count at Solvang/Alisal Ranch through the early 1990s was just 6 birds, but 20 were observed between April–June 1996, 11 were seen 28 March 2008, and 16 were counted on both 4 April 2010 and 16 April 2012; 0 were seen at Alisal Ranch in 2013; but up to 10 birds, 4 nests, and 9 young were there in 2016, 4 birds and nests were found 18 July 2018, but no nesting in 2020+. These birds in District I primarily utilize holes in large Western Sycamores for nesting. The lowland breeding birds may arrive as early as mid-March (e.g., 11 March 1975 Nojoqui Park (4), 12 March 2017 Nojoqui Park (2), 13 March 1991 Lake Cachuma), although typically they are not seen until late that month. They probably depart the breeding areas by mid-August, with 15 birds still present 12 August 2014 and 4 there 13 August 2017.

There also have been several late-spring/summer sightings elsewhere in the Santa Ynez Valley, which suggest sporadic local nesting in these areas as well. These records are: 2 near Los Olivos during 1980; 1 near Santa Ynez in 1980 and 1981; 2 near Los Olivos in early July 1984; 4 near Santa Ynez 9 July 1986, 6 there 28 June 1992, 2 there (Happy Canyon Road) 18 May 2015, 4 (2 adults and 2 juveniles) present (Quiota Creek) 24 July 2016, and 1 near there 20 June 2021; and 1 near Los Olivos 2 June 2022.

Purple Martins also nested into the 1980s in the San Rafael Mountain, Big Pine Mountain, and Don Victor Valley areas in District M. One pair had a nest in a dead Jeffrey Pine at the summit of Big Pine Mountain during July 1979, and 2 pairs frequented a large, dead pine on West Big Pine Mountain 1 July 1981; none has been seen there during subsequent visits. Fourteen individuals were found nesting in dead Ponderosa Pines in the Mission Pine Basin area of San Rafael Mountain 18–19 June 1982 and 6 were there 10–12 June 1989. The only confirmed nesting record for Figueroa Mountain is recent and involved up to 6 birds and 1 nest 17 May–3 July 2026. Suggestive of possible nesting, 6 were in the Don Victor Valley east of Big Pine Mountain 29 April 1981 and at least 3 were there 3–15 May 1982; 1 was at East Pinery near

Figueroa Mountain 5 July 2015, 4 were at Figueroa Mountain 12 May 2019, and 1 was there 19 June 2021; and 2 were in the western Hurricane Deck area 22 June 2019. In the Santa Ynez Mountains, 2 were at Santa Ynez Peak 26 June 2005. Some of the above sightings may have involved birds that wandered up for the day from the Santa Ynez Valley.

This species was formerly much more widespread and numerous as a breeding species in Santa Barbara County and Southern California as a whole. In fact, by the 1930s it had spread somewhat from the forested interior to the coastal lowlands (Willett 1933) and was recorded nesting in urban areas; 12 were noted as nesting on the Federal Building (Museum of Art) in downtown Santa Barbara by Dawson (1923). Nesting was documented from a number of areas in the Santa Ynez Valley: eggs were collected (SBMNH, WFVZ) from the Solvang/Alisal Ranch area in 1928, 1932, 1935, 1936, and 1938; at Santa Ynez in 1928 (also *SBMNH); at Buellton in 1930; at Nojoqui Falls Park in 1932 and 1937; near Gaviota 21 May 1932; and in Foxen Canyon 13 June 1937. Several pairs were in Happy Canyon on 24 April 1934 (Rett fieldnotes). Bartholomew (1940) had seven records of 1–5 birds in the upper Santa Ynez River watershed area between 6 July and 1 September in 1937 and 1938. Three or 4 pairs were near Santa Ynez during May 1964 and 10 individuals were there 24 April 1965; up to 12+ were found nesting along Foxen Canyon Road northwest of Los Olivos during 1958, 1961, 1966, 1967, and 1969; and up to 3 were near Lake Cachuma 9 April–1 May 1968 and again in 1969. In District M, martins probably bred many years ago at Refugio Pass. One was reported on the north side of San Rafael Mountain on 13 July 1971. The serious decline in the breeding population of Purple Martins is probably due in part to competition for nest holes with the more aggressive European Starlings, which did not become common in Santa Barbara County until the 1960s.

As a spring transient, Purple Martins are now rare, with an average of one to three sightings per year along the South Coast between early April (e.g., 4 April 1999 Goleta) and mid-May. There is also an old report of multiple migrants in Goleta on the early date of 17 March 1938 (Rett fieldnotes). The high single-season count is 8 birds in 2007 (which included a flock of 5 near Point Conception 20 April) and 6 birds in 2020. Two near Rincon 24 May 2006 and 1 at Goleta Slough 26 May 2019 are the latest in spring along the South Coast since the 1950s. One was offshore in mid-Channel off Santa Barbara 14 May 2006. Migrants are very rare along the North Coast. Late-season reports include 2 over Lompoc 27 May 1995, 1 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 May 1996, and 2 at Barka Slough 30 May 2005 where nearby nesting is a possibility. One at the seacliffs on Point Arguello 12 June 1981 was very unusual and difficult to categorize. Spring migrants might also occur in District I away from nesting locales, but differentiating between transients and local breeders there is difficult.

Fall migrants along the South Coast are very rare, perhaps barely averaging one record per year, and since the late 1970s occur primarily between 16 August (1980, Goleta (2)) and 16 September (2018, Andrée Clark Bird Refuge (3)). A flock of 6 in Goleta 7 August 1998 were slightly early, as were 2 in Montecito 30 July–3 August 2016. Seven in Goleta 29 August 1978 and 7 there 10 September 1993 are high single-site counts for autumn; 8 is the high single-season count (2007 and 2020). One in Santa Barbara 24 September 1980 and 3 at Lake Los Carneros 25 September 2022 were slightly late; 1 at Devereux Slough 3 October 1983 was very late.

Fall records along the North Coast all come from the Santa Maria area and Santa Ynez River mouth: 2 near Santa Maria 25 September 1988 (late), Santa Ynez River mouth 14 September 1993, 2 there 15 September 1996, Santa Maria River mouth 31 August 2002, 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 September 2008, 1 there 1 September 2014, 3–4 present 15–16 September 2016, 1 seen 24 August 2018, a high 7 there 6 September 2020, 6 near Santa Maria 14 September 2020, 1 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 August 2021, 4 there 19 September 2022, and 2 there on 11 September 2025.

This species has been detected casually in the Santa Ynez Mountains in District M: late spring-summer-- West Camino Cielo 24 May 2001, East Camino Cielo near Painted Cave 3 June 2019, and the late June 2005 record above; and Fall-- 2 at La Cumbre Peak 29 September 2023.

The only records for District V are of 3 spring migrants over Deer Park Canyon 26 April 2011 and a fall migrant at New Cuyama 5 September 2018.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Fairly common to common spring and uncommon to fairly common fall transient in Districts C, I, and V. Fairly common but local nester along the South Coast, uncommon to fairly common along the North Coast, rare in District I. Formerly casual in winter, now rare though irregular. Status in District M is unclear.

Barn Swallows nest close to the coast (typically within a half mile). Along the South Coast, they are most numerous at harbors and near piers in the Santa Barbara and Goleta areas. A few pairs breed at the mouths of several of the canyons west of Goleta to Hollister Ranch, and also east to Carpinteria. An active nest in a horse barn bordering the foothills along the East Fork of Maria Ygnacio Creek, Santa Barbara, 28 May 2003 was farther from the coast than usual (ca. 3 mi [5 km]); possibly associated with this nesting were 2 adults two years earlier at the adjacent San Marcos Foothills 2 June 2001. Along the North Coast in summer this species has been seen in the Santa Maria Valley (where fairly common), at the Santa Ynez River mouth, and on south Vandenberg SFB. An active nest with two young in Santa Maria 3 September 2018 was exceptionally late.

In District I, definite breeding was first documented only in 2012 when 2 pairs were found nesting in Santa Ynez during late May–June. Two nests were discovered in the Los Alamos area May–June 2013, 1 nest was under construction there 3 May 2014, and 2 or 3 nests were found in May–July 2019 and 2020. As many as several pairs nested in 2013 and 2014 just south of Sisquoc, bordering District C. A pair was feeding juveniles along Alisal Road near Nojoqui Falls Park 17 June 2018, and a nest was there 8 July 2024. Prior to and since this nesting confirmation, there have been a small number of June and early July reports of one or a few birds from such sites as Garey, Sisquoc, Cat Canyon, Foxen Canyon, Los Alamos, Santa Ynez River near Buellton, Nojoqui Falls Park, Solvang, Quiota Creek, Santa Ynez, Sedgwick Reserve, and Lake Cachuma. Whether these individuals are nesting locally or are merely summer wanderers is unknown.

Spring transients arrive by late February and continue to move through the county through mid-May, with a few into late May. The earliest pre-1995 arrival date was 9 February 1991 near the Santa Ynez River mouth. An individual was well offshore beyond San Miguel Island 28 April 2006.

The first fall migrants appear during mid- or late July and are fairly common through mid-September. One at Aliso Park at the edge of the Sierra Madre 7 July 2021 was either early or a summer wanderer. Some 400 birds at the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 August 2016 was a high fall count. Numbers decline through early October and the species is rare after that time, although small concentrations have occurred in the Santa Maria Valley during October (e.g., 60 on 7 October 1979, 25 on 11 October 1980, 20 on 16 October 1981, and 35 on 17 October 1978). Such numbers were not seen elsewhere in the county this late in the season during this period. Through the early 1990s, the only county records in late-fall and early winter (after late October) were: 12 November 1988 Santa Barbara, 13 November 1981 near Santa Maria, 15 November 1964 Goleta, 27 November 1983 Carpinteria, 11 December 1983 Goleta, and 27 December 1969 northern Goleta.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, Barn Swallows began to occur somewhat regularly during early and mid- winter in small-to-moderate numbers throughout many areas along the Pacific Coast and in the Southwest. Earlier, 1 at Lake Cachuma 28 January 1989 was the first mid-winter record for the county, although it may have been an exceptionally early spring transient. In Santa Barbara County, the first clear sign of this shift in winter status occurred in 1994–1995 when up

to 3 and 6 individuals were near the Santa Ynez River mouth 7–18 December and 19 January, respectively, and 1 was in Goleta 19 January. This was followed in 1995–1996 by a total of 13 birds near the Santa Ynez River mouth and in Goleta between 2 December–6 February. In 1996–1997, some 19 birds were seen between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara between 29 December–5 January, and then 24 arrived near the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 January. Recorded most winters after that in varying numbers, high counts as years progressed included 16 on the Santa Barbara CBC 5 January 2002, up to 10 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 8 December 2002–1 January 2003, 23 on the Santa Barbara CBC 3 January 2004 and a 2003–2004 season total of 43 in District C; 14 on the La Purisima CBC 19 December 2004; 14 at Devereux Slough 28 December 2005; 25 at Mesa X Los Carneros Roads in Goleta 3 January 2006; ca. 22 birds in county (including 5 in District I) between 17 December 2016–21 January 2017; a total of 22 birds in county (including 2 in District I) between 24 December 2017–11 January 2018; 15–25 vic. Devereux Slough 18–20 January 2020; 14 on south Vandenberg SFB 18 December 2021; 21 on the Santa Barbara CBC 1 January 2022 (12 of those at Ellwood Mesa); 32 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 7 January 2023; a total of ca. 33 between Goleta and Carpinteria 3 December 2022–22 January 2023; and a total of as many as a hundred in District C between Santa Maria and Carpinteria during December 2023–January 2024 (high counts of 20 vic. Devereux Slough 20–25 January and 16 on North Vandenberg SFB 24 January). A recent single-site high count for the North Coast is 31 birds at the Santa Ynez River mouth 22 January 2026. The high winter count in District I is of 23 at Lake Cachuma 27 December 2023. The only winter records from District V are of singles at the New Cuyama sewage treatment pond 22 January 2021 (possibly an early migrant) and at the Caliente Ranch Wetland 4 December 2022.

The status of Barn Swallow in District M is unclear. It is probably an uncommon to rare migrant.

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

Common to locally very common transient and summer resident in Districts C and I; fairly common in Districts M and V.

Cliff Swallows nest in large colonies of up to 300 individuals on buildings, under bridges, and on rocky cliff faces throughout much of Districts C and I. Some 2000 birds were estimated at Refugio State Beach 18 April 1987. A total of ca. 800 at Lake Cachuma 13 June 2017 was a high summer count. They are less numerous in Districts M and V. For example, only 10 individuals were seen in the Big Pine Mountain area 29 June–1 July 1981 and 8 were there in late June 1988; these birds frequented the south-facing cliffs of West Big Pine Mountain. Most recent counts there during near-annual summer surveys through 2026 have been between 0–7 individuals, but 20 birds were tallied 13–15 July 1995. In the Sierra Madre, nests were discovered on a rock overhang at Montgomery Potrero 2 May 2019. In District V, nesting birds in Ballinger Canyon utilize a cliff face. Late-season active nests with nestling(s) were found in Goleta 17 August 1997, Santa Barbara 8 August 2008, and on north Vandenberg SFB 22 August 2018.

Spring migrants typically arrive along the coast by late February (earliest arrival dates: 2 February 2005 Lompoc, 7 February 2014 Goleta (4), 7 February 2025 Goleta (2), 8 February 1985 Santa Barbara). A total of ca. 550 passing through San Marcos Pass 21 April 1996, ca. 1330 in Santa Barbara 24 April 2021, and ca. 1000 at Lake Cachuma 13–18 April 2025 were large migration counts.

During fall, this species departs the county quite early. It is uncommon by late August and rare after the beginning of September. Records after mid-October are: 21 October 2009 north Vandenberg SFB (2), 23 October 2015 UCSB, 25 October 2002 Isla Vista (6), 26 October 2003 Carpinteria Salt Marsh (3), 31 October 1980 Santa Maria sewage treatment plant, 31 October 1997 near the Santa Ynez River mouth (3), 2 November 2014 Santa Ynez River mouth, and 4

November 1995 near the Santa Ynez River mouth (2). Any reports between late October and early February need to eliminate the similar Cave Swallow (*P. fulva*).

BUSHTIT (AEGITHALIDAE)

Bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*)
Common permanent resident in Districts C and I and at the lower elevations in District M. Uncommon to fairly common at higher elevations in District M and in District V.

Bushtits inhabit a wide variety of habitats, from oak, riparian, and pinyon-juniper woodland, to chaparral, coastal sage scrub, residential areas, and urban parks. In District M, they remain relatively common in the lower oak-conifer forest but become uncommon in stands of conifers bordering chaparral at higher elevations. Summer bird surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, recorded as many as 25 individuals, although some years none was seen. This species is typically found in flocks of 15–25 birds, rarely up to 60 individuals, except during the breeding season in late winter and spring when they are found in pairs and small family groups. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 3111 individuals (3 January 1981). The high count on the Cachuma CBC is 265 birds (28 December 2010). In District V, Bushtits are largely restricted to canyon woodland and shrub habitat; they are very rare visitors on the floor of the valley east of Caliente Ranch Wetland.

OLD WORLD LEAF WARBLERS (PHYLLOSCOPIDAE)

Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)
Casual visitor in District C.

There are a surprising three records: 1 was at the South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields in Goleta 22–23 October 1993; 1 was at the former waterfowl ponds near the Santa Ynez River mouth 31 October–3 November 1995 (ph. *FN* 50: 116, SBMNH); and 1 was in Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 6 October 2007 (ph. *NAB* 62:154, SBMNH).

SYLVIA WARBLERS AND ALLIES (SYLVIIDAE)

Wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*)
Common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and M. Uncommon to fairly common in District V. Sedentary.

Wrentits are found in areas of dense brush. They are most common in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and stands of poison oak scrub, and are uncommon to fairly common in riparian growth and well-vegetated residential areas. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 552 individuals (31 December 1983). A pair in a residential area in Carpinteria supporting minimal vegetative cover 18 June 2013 was somewhat unusual. A total of 78 were along West Camino Cielo, Santa Ynez Mountains, 15 January 2002. The species is uncommon to fairly common in riparian vegetation along the North Coast. A high count there is 204 birds on the La Purisima CBC 20 December 2009. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 138 birds (27 December 2013). Although it is uncommon in brushy areas found in conifer and oak-conifer forests at the higher elevations in District M, it is fairly common in chaparral near the summits of the highest mountains. Up to 20 individuals were found during most summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, but none in 2008–2010 and only 1 in 2012. In the Cuyama Valley, Wrentits are most numerous in fringing, canyon scrub but also occur locally near the valley floor.

WHITE-EYES (ZOSTEROPIDAE)

Swinhoe's White-eye (*Zosterops simplex*)
Exotic. Recently establishing itself in District C. One record in District I.

A rapidly expanding introduced species farther to the south in coastal Southern California, the Swinhoe's White-eye first appeared in Santa Barbara County in 2022 when up to 5 birds appeared in southeast Santa Barbara from 2–4 September, followed by one in downtown Goleta on 29 November-31 December. This was followed quickly by sightings of 1 to 8 birds at multiple sites between western Goleta and Carpinteria beginning in September 2023+. Away from the South Coast, 1 was in District I at Buellton 30 November 2023.

KINGLETS (REGULIDAE)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*)
Common transient and winter visitor in all Districts.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets are found in a variety of habitats including conifer, oak, and riparian woodland, shrubby areas, and residential areas and urban parks. This species arrives beginning in mid-September (earliest arrival dates: 19–21 August 2012 Santa Barbara, 27 August 2005 Goleta, 29 August 1997 Goleta, 30 August 1978 Santa Barbara, 30 August 2007 Goleta); although some unseasonal reports are fraught with uncertainty and may well involve misidentified Hutton's Vireos. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1543 individuals (3 January 1983), but most totals after 2000 have been closer to half that many. Some 193 were tallied in eastern Hope Ranch alone on 31 December 1983. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 250 birds (30 December 2005 and 27 December 2013). In spring, it is uncommon after early April and rare in early May. The latest dates are 10 May 1997 Carpinteria, 10 and 11 May 2003 near La Cumbre Peak, 12 May 1995 Figueroa Mountain, 13 May 2000 Cachuma Campground near Figueroa Mountain, and, exceptionally, 21 May 1995 Santa Maria River mouth and through 1 June 2026 in residential northern Goleta.

Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*)
Irregular fall transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and M; absent some years, uncommon others. Very local breeder in District M, at least formerly.

Golden-crowned Kinglets prefer conifers and are rare in oak and riparian woodland and in non-coniferous exotic plantings. The largest numbers are seen in District M and in the Goleta, Hope Ranch, and Montecito areas along the South Coast. They are irregular in abundance, being virtually absent some years and locally uncommon others. Migrants arrive beginning in mid- or late October (earliest arrival dates: 20+ September 1997 near San Marcos Pass, 30 September 2005 Waller Park, Santa Maria). The Cachuma CBC, which includes the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area, has found up to 24 birds (27 December 2013); 20 were at Ranger Peak 5 December 2007. The high count is 102 on the Santa Barbara CBC 31 December 1977 (25 of those in eastern Hope Ranch). Along the North Coast, the largest counts have not exceeded 20 individuals. It becomes less numerous during February and has largely departed by mid-March; 5 were still in Santa Maria 26 March 2006, 6 were along Kinevan Road the same day, and 4 were along West Camino Cielo 3 April 2011. The latest record for the lowlands is 9 April 1967 Refugio State Beach. One singing in a cedar grove at 2200 ft at San Marcos Pass 25 April 1987 was not seen again and is assumed to have been an extremely late migrant. The same is true for 3 singing on Figueroa Mountain 14 April 1989.

In 1981, this species was found summering in surprising numbers in the coniferous forest of the Big Pine Mountain area (particularly where White Fir is present). A total of 30 individuals (a high summer count anywhere in Southern California) were seen there 30 June–1 July, including 2 juveniles being fed by adults. This was the first confirmation of summering and nesting. Subsequently, the species was recorded there almost annually in summer through 2004, with most totals between 5–15 birds, and high counts of 31 on 21–24 June 1988 (*UCSB), and 20 on 23–25 June 1994. One bird was there 14 May 2004. Between 2004–2021 and 2023–2026, near-annual summer surveys failed to find any birds; but 2 birds were found 12 June 2022. In addition, 2 birds were on Madulce Peak 11 June 1993. None has been found in summer on San Rafael Mountain, an area containing very few White Fir.

WAXWINGS (BOMBYCILLIDAE)

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)
Casual fall transient and winter visitor, with records from the South Coast and District I—none recent.

Bohemian Waxwings are typically found in flocks of Cedar Waxwings. They are casual in occurrence throughout Southern California. During very infrequent flight years (e.g., early 1969) multiple sightings may occur. The records are as follows: 5 in Santa Barbara 4 December 1965, 5 in Buellton 23 February 1969, 18 in Santa Barbara 2–28 March 1969, Santa Barbara 3 April 1969, 2 in Santa Barbara 25 April 1969, Santa Barbara 21–23 May 1969 (exceptionally late), and Santa Barbara 2 January 1971.

Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)
Irregular transient and winter visitor in all Districts; on average, it is common, but it may be uncommon some years and very common others. The largest numbers occur along the South Coast. Casual in mid-to-late summer. One nesting record.

Cedar Waxwings are partial to berries, and the largest numbers of birds frequent toyon and exotic plantings (e.g., *Pyracantha* and *Cotoneaster* spp.) in residential areas, foothill canyons, and riparian woodland. They are also numerous in blooming eucalyptus. Smaller numbers occur in conifer forest (where rare) and in oak woodland. They typically begin arriving in September and October; earliest arrival dates include an exceptional 14 birds in Carpinteria 12 August 2023, 22 August 1963 Santa Barbara (2), and 22 August 1997 Goleta. It is not known whether single individuals 2 August 1983 Santa Barbara, 6 August 2016 Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, and 9 August 2020 Refugio Canyon were exceptionally early migrants or summer wanderers. Large numbers are not present until early winter; 25 in Goleta 1 September 2009 was a good count for so early in the season. One seen 45 mi (72 km) W of Point Conception 26 October 2012 was well offshore.

This species' abundance during winter is highly variable. On Santa Barbara CBCs, for example, only 34 were seen 30 December 1978 but 2236 were tallied 2 January 1982 and 8878 were recorded 31 December 1977 (4000 of which were in Hope Ranch). On the Cachuma CBC, numbers have ranged from a low of 44 on 28 December 2007 to highs of 356 on 26 December 2014 and 249 on 29 December 2015. There is often a notable late influx of birds beginning in late January or early February.

During spring, this species is often numerous through much of April, with a few individuals remaining well into May. Some years, medium-sized flocks may linger into late May, with a few birds still present in early June. Approximately 400 in Goleta 16 May 2007, 209 at Barka Slough 17 May 2015, 33 on UCSB campus 1 June 2002, 31 in Buellton through 1 June 2012, up to 75 in Goleta through 5+ June 1982, and see below, were high counts for so late in the season. The latest records for the county are: 12 June 1971 Santa Barbara (*UCSB), 12 June 2021 Vandenberg Village (22 birds), 13 June 2015 La Cumbre Peak, 15 June 2021 Goleta (2), 16 June

2000 near the Santa Ynez River mouth, through 17 June 1961 Santa Barbara ("a few"), 20 June 2019 Goleta, through 25 June 1990 Goleta (up to 6), and through 26 June 1971 Santa Barbara (6).

One near Santa Ynez (in District I) 19 July 1984 was out of season. In 2022, a group of up to 4 adults and 2 fledglings were observed along the North Coast in Vandenberg Village between 10–17 July (ph. SBMNH). This is an exceptional breeding record in Southern California.

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS (PTILIOGONATIDAE)

Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*)

Present throughout the year, at least locally, in District I, along the South Coast, and at lower elevations of District M. Uncommon and somewhat local in winter; uncommon and more widespread spring through fall. Uncommon to rare breeder on the North Coast, where casual at other seasons. Uncommon visitor in District V.

Phainopeplas frequent open oak woodland and oak-riparian woodland bordering chaparral; transients on the coastal plain occur in a variety of habitats, although open riparian woodland is favored. This species is particularly fond of the berries of mistletoe (*Phoradendron* spp.) and exotic pepper trees (*Schinus* spp.). It is somewhat irregular in occurrence throughout much of the county. In District I, this species has probably increased in numbers since the early 1980s and is now an uncommon permanent resident. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 28 individuals (29 December 2015); 15 were at Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 16 March 2012, and 10–15 were in Colson Canyon, east of Santa Maria, 4–18 June 2018. In District M, it is rare at upper elevations, where summer surveys of the Big Pine Mountain area found 1–2 birds during just 4 years between 1981–2026. Lower down, it probably nests in the Sierra Madre foothills at, for example, Aliso Canyon and Santa Barbara Canyon (see below).

Along the South Coast, it is most often seen between mid-April and mid-September in foothill canyons and locally along the inner coastal plain. Counts of up to 5 individuals are fairly widespread; some higher totals may represent drought-induced coastward movements, such as the highest totals of 10 on the inner coastal plain in Goleta 12 May, 10 at Farren Road in western Goleta 20 May, and 14 at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 21 May—all in 2018. Presumed nesting close to the ocean west of Goleta where foothill canyons reach the coast is suggested by many late-spring and early-summer sightings between Hollister Ranch and Farren Road in western Goleta. A high 5–6 pairs were at Hollister Ranch 14 June 2014 (possibly drought related), 13–14 birds were near Gaviota 2–4 June 2018, and 7 birds were along Farren Road 26 May 2015, where active nests were noted in 2009 and 2019. Farther east, small numbers likely breed, at least irregularly, close to the coast in the lower Arroyo Burro area in Santa Barbara. Three sets of eggs (WFVZ) were collected in 1927 in the Veronica Springs Road area, near where the species has summered more recently. A probable Phainopepla nest was along Rincon Creek near Carpinteria in May 2017. A family group of adults feeding two recently fledged juveniles were along lower Atascadero Creek in Goleta 19 July 2021.

This species is an uncommon and very local summer resident in the interior sections of the North Coast, including northeastern Vandenberg SFB, between Orcutt and Garey/Sisquoc, Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc, and upper Honda Canyon on south Vandenberg SFB.

Phainopeplas may be on the move by mid-summer (late June). During fall and winter, Phainopeplas are found most regularly in District I (where uncommon). Most records come from the Santa Ynez and Paradise areas. The maximum winter counts are 10 in the Paradise area 31 December 1988 and a total of 11 on the Santa Barbara CBC (which includes Paradise) 29 December 1990. The species has increased in the Paradise area since the early 1980s.

As a transient along the South Coast, this species is uncommon to rare on the outer coastal plain between Goleta and Carpinteria, occurring primarily during April and early May and from late August to early October; 9 in Goleta 4 September 1993 was a high count. It occurs very rarely away from possible breeding sites between mid-May and early August. It is irregular in winter in small numbers; up to 8 in northern Goleta (e.g., San Jose Creek, Lake Los Carneros) each winter from 1984–1985 through 1993–1994 were high counts.

Along the North Coast, Phainopeplas away from nesting areas are casual in migration and winter.

In District V, records come mostly from fall, winter, and spring. Counts higher than 6 individuals include: "numerous" in Santa Barbara Canyon 10 December 1998, 12 there 31 October 2010, and heavily fruiting shrubs in 2018 hosted 25–29 birds from 21 July–7 August, increasing to 45 birds on 15 Sep, then dropping to 10 individuals on 11 October. Multiple reports from a variety of sites through late May, with just a few sightings in June–July, suggest that this species may occasionally nest locally.

NUTHATCHES (SITTIDAE)

Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*)

Irregular fall transient and winter visitor in all Districts. Rare to fairly common summer resident on the highest peaks in District M, casual breeder elsewhere.

Red-breasted Nuthatches usually occur in conifers. Their numbers vary from year to year and they may be uncommon to fairly common one year and virtually absent another. High counts are 126 and 187 on Santa Barbara CBCs 23 December 1972 and 29 December 1979, respectively, with 96 of those on the latter date in eastern Hope Ranch alone. Approximately 100 were on Figueroa Mountain 12 December 2010, with 69 still there 28 December. Another high single-site count was 25 in Ortega Ridge pines in Summerland on both 14 December 2019 and 11 November 2023. During most winters, there are small numbers of individuals present, particularly in District M and in Hope Ranch and Montecito along the South Coast.

In fall, this species may arrive by mid-September, even in August during invasion years (e.g., as early as 13 August 2019 near Carpinteria, 21 August 1987 Santa Barbara, 26 August 2022 north Vandenberg SFB). A large invasion in 1996 brought scattered birds to the Santa Ynez Mountains and District C by the end of August, and an invasion in late 2023 brought the first individual near Lompoc 31 August. Early individuals in Goleta 31 July, 3 August, and 12 August 1997 did not precede an invasion, but, rather, followed one, so they may have represented an "echo-flight." The same is true for 1 bird in the San Roque area of Santa Barbara 1 August 2021. Some years, the species may be fairly common by late September. One was seen 5 mi (8 km) at sea off Point Arguello 15 October 2010. In spring, during non-invasion years Red-breasted Nuthatches are often not seen past the middle of March; but following winters of high abundance, small numbers may linger well into May. The latest in District C were Santa Barbara 26 May 1970, 2 in Santa Barbara 2 June 1980, north Vandenberg SFB through 27 May 1990 and 1 June 1991, Santa Barbara 28 May 1996, Miguelito Canyon 27 May 2018, Montecito 25 May 2020, Summerland 22 May 2020, Santa Maria 31 May 2020, western Goleta 25 May 2024, and Santa Maria 25 May 2024. In the Santa Ynez Mountains, 1 was at Painted Cave 1 June 2013.

In District V, this species is a casual visitor, with most records coming from November–early April, plus 1 in New Cuyama 30 September 2019.

Prior to 1981, there were no breeding or even early/mid-summer records for Santa Barbara County. During summer 1981, however, a small number of individuals were found in District M on Figueroa and Big Pine Mountains. Up to 6 were on Figueroa Mountain 23 April–27 June, and 6 were seen on Big Pine Mountain 30 June. From 4–24 birds were found in the Big Pine Mountain area annually in summer through 1997; subsequently, numbers have irregularly increased to between 10–36 birds, with 46 counted 18–20 June 2004 and 45 tallied 16–18 June

2006. Four were on Madulce Peak 20 July 1982 and 2 were there 11 June 1993; 2 on 20 April 2025 were likely local breeders. One was on San Rafael Mountain 8 June 2024. In 1989, following a weak flight the previous winter, 3 were on Figueroa Mountain 14 April–12 July and 2 were on San Rafael Mountain 10–12 June. Up to 6 were at ca. 3500 ft elevation in Fir Canyon on the north side of Ranger Peak 29 June–4 August 1991, up to 8 were there 14–28 July 1993, and 2 were present 14 May–16 July 1994. On Figueroa Mountain and vic., more recent summer sightings include from 1 to 3 individuals on some 13 dates between 1 June and 17 July between 1998 and 2026. Definite breeding evidence was finally obtained with the sighting of an adult feeding a juvenile in Figueroa Campground 19 May 2013. Even more unusual in summer were single birds at San Marcos Pass 30 July 1994 and 29 July 2007. Several sightings in the Figueroa Mountain area during mid- and late August possibly involve early arrivals (e.g., 2 there 15 August 2023).

Following the major winter invasion of 1996–1997, in District C a pair was watched excavating a nest hole at Marshalia Golf Course, north Vandenberg SFB, on 19 March 1997; and 2 individuals remained through summer on the UCSB campus in Goleta. These UCSB birds continued through the following spring; 1 was noted 9–29 July 1998; and in summer 1999, 2 pairs were confirmed nesting on the campus 27 April–17 June; breeding was confirmed there again in 2000 when a pair was seen carrying food to young 22 May and were present throughout summer; 2 individuals were seen 31 May 2001; and a pair were feeding a juvenile 27 April and 2 juveniles were seen 18 June 2003. Single birds were seen elsewhere in Goleta 3 June and 5 June 2002. The only other mid-summer records in District C are from Waller Park in Santa Maria 1 July 2021 and on north Vandenberg SFB 2 August 2024.

White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*)

Fairly common permanent resident in Districts I and M, uncommon in District C. There is some post-breeding movement into areas not frequented during the nesting season between late summer and early spring. Rare visitor in much of District V.

White-breasted Nuthatches are most numerous in dense and open oak, oak-riparian, and coniferous woodlands, and in well-vegetated residential areas (e.g., Hope Ranch, Montecito). They are somewhat more numerous in Districts I and M than in District C. Totals on the Santa Barbara CBCs have been generally increasing, with recent high counts set of 90 individuals on 2 January 2010, 139 on 5 January 2013, 164 on 5 January 2019, and 171 on 4 January 2020. The Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 136 birds (28 December 2010). This species was found to be fairly common during summer in the Big Pine Mountain area most years through 2026, with high counts of 30 on both 23–25 June 1994 and 10–12 June 2016, but fewer than 5 individuals were also recorded several years. It is also found locally in the northern foothills of the Sierra Madre and in District V east to the Caliente Ranch Wetland. During late spring and early summer, they are uncommon in District C along the inner coastal plain in and near foothills, less numerous at well-vegetated sites farther out on the coastal plain (e.g., Hope Ranch, coastal Montecito); they are rare and local on the outer coastal plain in the Goleta and Carpinteria areas and are largely absent from riparian vegetation west of Gaviota and along the North Coast (although they occur at that season on nearby oak slopes). Some individuals found at odd locations beginning already in late June may represent post-breeding dispersers rather than locally summering birds (see below).

Following the nesting season and outside of breeding habitats, this species is a rare to uncommon visitor between late July and mid-March. Records come from, for example, a variety of sites in southern Goleta, city parks in Santa Maria and Gudalupe, Bluegum Eucalyptus and other ornamental plantings in the Vandenberg SFB Cantonment Area, Jalama Beach County Park, Point Conception, Santa Barbara Canyon and Dry Canyon/Tinta Creek (eastern Sierra Madre), and multiple sites in the Cuyama Valley. The earliest dates for such records are 7 July

2021 Santa Maria, 10+ July 2024 north Vandenberg SFB, 17–22 July 2025 near Point Conception, and, in District V, 11 August 2018 Quatal Canyon and 12 August 2021 New Cuyama. One along lower Carpinteria Creek in June 1994 and 2 at Hollister Ranch 8 June 2019 may have summered locally.

Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*)

Fairly common permanent resident on the higher mountains in District M. Casual fall and winter visitor at lower elevations in District M and in District C. Single records in Districts I and V.

Pygmy Nuthatches are found in coniferous forests, especially those containing Yellow and Coulter Pines, on the highest peaks (i.e., Figueroa, San Rafael, and Big Pine Mountains, Madulce Peak). Most summer counts in the Big Pine Mountain area through 2026 have been between 20–55 individuals, with fewer than 10 birds detected on a few surveys (a low of only 4 on 12–14 June 2020), and as many as 80 and 177 individuals found 5–7 July 2000 and 18–20 June 2004, respectively. Only 3 were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024. The Cachuma CBC, which includes the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area, has tallied as many as 29 birds (28 December 2007), but some years the species is missed. Numbers on Figueroa Mountain seemed fairly stable through the 1990s, but since then they have had substantial ups and downs, with numbers varying between 40 (8 November 2011) and 0.

Away from these higher mountains, they are casual in occurrence. Lowland birds have been found primarily in planted conifers. The only records for the Santa Ynez Range before 1994 were of 2 at San Marcos Pass 3 September 1955 and 2 at La Cumbre Peak 27 August 1991. Similar records in District C included: (unknown total) in the Santa Barbara area 29 August 1972–February 1973, with a high count of 30 on the Santa Barbara CBC 23 December; off Storke Road in Goleta 28 August 1978; and 3 Hope Ranch 10 November 1979–29 February 1980. A then-record "invasion" to the coast in 1987–1988 brought a total of 44 to the Santa Barbara/Montecito area 30 July–February, with 12 remaining in Montecito on 19 March and 6 on 31 March; up to 10 to north Vandenberg SFB 15 August–26 December; 6 near Lompoc 10 September; 1 to Gaviota State Park 14 September; up to 2 to Goleta 13 October–24 January; and total of 6 to the Carpinteria area 30 October–20 February. Up to 3 were in Montecito 4 February–5 March 1992.

Another invasion in 1996–1997 brought a small flock to near Lompoc in mid-August, followed by birds at San Marcos Pass 17 September (1), La Cumbre Peak 22 September (2), Santa Barbara 12 October (6), near San Marcos Pass 1–17 December (up to 2), Painted Cave 17 December (small flock), Santa Barbara area 4 January (16), and Santa Maria 16 January–16 February (2). A somewhat smaller flight in 2000–2001 brought birds to Montecito 23 August (5), Santa Maria 26 September–8 February (up to 3), La Cumbre Peak 29 September–11 November (up to 10), and near San Marcos Pass 3 October–23 November (flock) with 1 remaining 30 December. Another flight in 2002–2003 brought birds to Santa Maria 20 October–2 December (5), Lompoc 25 October–10 November (ca. 12), Santa Barbara 9 November (5), Montecito 9 November (6), Goleta 12 November–28 January (up to 6–7), and along East Camino Cielo 13 December (1). A small flight in 2015–2016 brought 1 to Waller Park in Santa Maria 15–16 August followed by up to 2 birds through 27 January, up to 4 birds to La Cumbre Peak 19 November–4 February, and up to 7 on Ortega Ridge near Summerland 25 December–6 January.

Miscellaneous records not associated with obvious flight-years include: up to 5 in Waller Park 20 October–2 December 2004, 5 there 23 February 2006, up to several there 29 September 2007–15 March 2008, and 1 there 3 November 2022; up to 5 at La Cumbre Peak 18 November–21 December 2011, up to 3 there 31 December 2013–11 January 2014, up to 3 from 15 October 2020–6 February 2021, 1 there 28 October 2022, and singles in that area 19 August and 23 September 2023; up to 4 near Summerland (Ortega Ridge) 17 October 2018–4 January

2019, 3 there 17 September 2019, and 2 there 15 December 2023; and 1 on the Mesa in Santa Barbara 22 February 2019.

The only record from District I is of 1 at Sedgwick Reserve above Santa Ynez 1 November 2012. The sole report in District V involves 2 birds in New Cuyama 19 January–25 February 2019.

TREECREEPERS (CERTHIIDAE)

Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)

Fairly common resident on the higher mountains in District M. Rare to uncommon transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I and at the lower elevations in District M, where casual in summer. Casual in District V.

Brown Creepers occur primarily in conifer and oak-conifer forests on Figueroa, San Rafael, and Big Pine Mountains, and Madulce Peak, where the species may be found year-round. Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area through 2026 have found variable numbers from year to year, with most such counts between 19–40 individuals, and high tallies of 53 on 23–25 June 1994, 49 on 10–12 July 1998, and 58 on 16–18 June 2006; but only 8 on 13–15 June 2014. Only 6 were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024. At lower elevation, 1 singing between Davey Brown and Nira Campgrounds 6 June 1997 may have summered locally. One summered in Bates Canyon in the Sierra Madre foothills 22 April–16 July 2020.

One along Kinevan Road near San Marcos Pass (at the lower elevations in District M) 26 April 2014; 1 on 20 July 2015; 2 there 3–7 April and 1 on 9 July 2016; a pair possibly investigating nest sites 18 March, still present 15 June, and 1 remaining 12 July 2017; 2 on 26 April and 1 from 18 June–9 July 2018; 1 present 18 March–15 July 2019; and 1 on 11 July 2023 were in a potential breeding area in the Santa Ynez Mountains.

Between mid-September and mid-March, migrants and winter visitors are found at lower elevations, in Districts C and I, frequenting oak and oak-riparian woodland, well-vegetated residential areas, and planted conifers. Migrants may appear as early as August (i.e., 14 August 1968 Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 22 August+ 2008 Devereux Creek in Goleta, 23 August 1994 Santa Barbara, and 24 August 1953 Los Olivos, 1+ September 2022 north Vandenberg SFB). Frequented localities in winter include Montecito and Hope Ranch, where the species is very uncommon. Creepers are rare elsewhere along the South Coast, along the North Coast, and in District I. Nineteen on the Santa Barbara CBC 3 January 1987 is the high count. Up to 4 in Toro Canyon Park near Summerland 4 December 2018–22 January 2019 is a high single-site count. The Cachuma CBC, which includes the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area, has tallied as many as 19 birds (28 December 2010). Late dates in early spring include 24 March 2001 Goleta, 28 March 2010 Lake Cachuma, 4 April 2016 Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc, and 6 April 2015 Alan Hancock College in Santa Maria.

One found singing in an area of conifers in Montecito 7 July 1981 and again during May 1982 indicates the possibility that this species may nest casually in appropriate habitat in the lowlands. Nesting was subsequently confirmed in 1994 when 2 adults were found feeding a fledgling in Waller Park, Santa Maria, on 1 July. This represents the first coastal nesting south of the Morro Bay area. Summering birds were again found in Waller Park in June 1996, although breeding was not confirmed; singles there 16 August+ 2008 and 6 August 2016 may have summered locally. One was on north Vandenberg SFB 12 July 2024. Single individuals in Montecito 26 July 1956 and 28 July 1962, and. One at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 2 August 2021 may have summered locally or have been a very early fall migrant.

One at the Caliente Ranch Wetland 7 March 2010 and 1 in Quatal Canyon from 26 September–24 November 2018 are the only records for District V.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*)

Uncommon to fairly common transient in Districts C, I, and V. Uncommon to fairly common in winter along the South Coast, uncommon along the North Coast and in District I, and very rare in District V and at the lower elevations of District M. Fairly common but local summer resident in Districts I, M, and V; uncommon and local in District C.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are found in open woodland, willow riparian, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, semidesert scrub, and other brushy areas as transients and winter visitors. Breeding birds occur in oak-riparian woodland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and even conifer forest. In general, this species is most numerous along the coast in fall and early winter, with a smaller number present in late winter, and only a few seen in spring away from breeding localities. Fall migrants arrive beginning in August (earliest arrival dates: 29 July 2026 near Devereux Slough, 1 August 2013 Carpinteria Salt Marsh). One along lower Atascadero Creek in coastal Goleta 3 July 2012 was either a very early post-breeding disperser or was a summer wanderer.

Wintering birds are fairly common along the South Coast. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 135 individuals (2 January 2000). They are uncommon during winter along the North Coast, where they frequent riparian areas. Prior to 2000, the high count was 5 on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 19 December 1982; but since then, totals include 15–20 on multiple La Purisima CBCs and with a very high 40 birds there 20 December 2009, and up to 14 individuals (23 December 2012) on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC. In District I, the Cachuma CBC has found as many as 19 birds (28 December 2010).

Winter residents and the relatively few spring transients have mostly departed by early April; 1 in Goleta 17 April 1994 was slightly late, whereas 1 at Devereux Slough 13 May 2014 was very late.

In summer, this species is typically absent along the immediate coast but is uncommon to fairly common from foothills to the mountains. In District M, it is fairly numerous along the crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains. For example, 6 were at Refugio Pass 8 June 1992; 15–20 were singing near Santa Ynez Peak during 1980; surveys along West Camino Cielo in 2010 and 2011 produced 16 and 13 individuals, respectively; and fewer than 10 were found between San Marcos Pass and the La Cumbre Peak many summers beginning in 1980. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers also summer in the coniferous, oak, and mixed forests of the San Rafael Mountains. For example, small numbers may be found in the Figueroa Mountain area, where an egg set was obtained (WFVZ) in May 1935. Summer fieldwork in the Big Pine Mountain area through 2026 has found this species almost annually since 1979, with most counts between 5–20 birds, and highs up to 40 and 41 individuals on 23–25 June 1994 and 15–17 June 2007, respectively, and 57 birds on 17–19 June 2022. Up to 12 birds were recorded on San Rafael Mountain during June 1982, 1989, 1990, and 1991. Seven were in vic. Madulce Peak 11 June 2022. And a total of 21 were tallied on a breeding-bird survey between Bluff Camp and south of Little Pine Mountain 13 July 1991. Gnatcatchers are likely fairly widespread in foothills of the northern Sierra Madre. At higher elevations, in the western Sierra Madre, 8 were seen 16 May 1993, and in the eastern Sierra Madre, 2 were at vic. Santa Barbara Potrero 29 July 2018. Individuals begin to arrive in District M during late March, with the earliest arrival 19 March 2017 near Figueroa Mountain. Departure dates in fall are uncertain. A few birds have been found in winter at the lowest elevations of District M (e.g., Sierra Madre foothills).

In District I, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is an uncommon to fairly common breeder in riparian vegetation bordered by chaparral and scattered oaks along the upper Santa Ynez River and nearby tributaries and on the north side of Lake Cachuma. For example, approximately 12 pairs (and 2 nests to SBMNH) were between Gibraltar Reservoir and Jameson Lake during summer 1988, and a high count of up to 70 were there in May–June 1993. One was in Santa Cruz Canyon

just north of Lake Cachuma 31 May 1990 and 8 were there 19 June 1992. An egg set (SBMNH) comes from oak-riparian woodland along Kelly Creek on the north side of San Marcos Pass 15 May 1932, and multiple nests were found at Kelly and Bear Creeks in May–June 1933 (WFVZ). Nine individuals were there 31 May 1993. Small numbers were found in summer in oak and oak-riparian woodland bordering the Santa Ynez River between Buellton and Lompoc on several occasions since 1991. After 2015, nesting-season records have become fairly routine and come from a wide variety of sites.

In District V, gnatcatchers are uncommon in spring and summer in semidesert scrub and pinyon-juniper woodland. Migrants are seen in a variety of habitats. Earliest arrivals are in late March. A high count was 25 birds in Santa Barbara Canyon 20 April 2019. A few birds have remained into winter.

There was only one definite nesting record for District C before 1994: adults feeding young in the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden during 1970. One was present near San Jose Creek in the foothills of northern Goleta 13 July 1982 (possibly an early post-breeding disperser). That the species may have bred in the Hollister Ranch area west of Gaviota was hinted at by the presence of up to 3 birds in late April/early May 1975 and 1976. Single birds in foothill Montecito and in both Mission and San Roque Canyons in Santa Barbara, all on 14 May 1994, were also somewhat suggestive of local foothill nesting. Since the mid-1990s, increased observer coverage of sage scrub, chaparral, and where sage scrub mingles with oak-riparian woodland has discovered many more breeding sites along the South Coast foothills. For example, from west to east and since 1996, reports between late May and early July come from Arroyo Hondo, between Refugio and Gaviota; Farren Road near Goleta, including a nest on 26 May 2015 and a high total of 10 birds on 15 May and a family group including 2 fledglings 28 May 2016; upper Glen Annie Creek; at 1900 ft near upper San Jose Creek behind Goleta; Tucker’s Grove Park; San Marcos Road; San Marcos Foothills; at 1500 ft north of Santa Barbara a pair nesting during June 1996; Stevens Park; along Jesusita and Rattlesnake Canyon Trails; Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 2 pairs nested in 2014, during drought conditions; Parma Park; Westmont College; San Ysidro Canyon where single pairs and family groups were found during June–July 1994 and 1997; Romero Canyon; near Toro Canyon Park behind Summerland where 8 pairs and 2 nests were discovered 28 April–6 May 1998; and along Franklin Trail. More unusual were apparent nestings out on the coastal plain, from west to east: Dos Pueblos High School in northwest Goleta where adult feeding juvenile 22 July 2017; Devereux Slough area where adult feeding fledgling 27 June 2020 and 1 on 25 June 2025; Lake Los Carneros where from 1–3 birds during summer annually between 2011–2016, nest building observed 8 April 2019, a pair feeding dependent juveniles 7 June 2015 and 29 June 2020, and family group of 5 on 16 June 2024; More Mesa, Goleta, where adult with fledgling 14 July 2015 and 1 bird 24 June 2016; nearby Atasacadero Creek where adult feeding fledgling 6 July 2019; and Elings Park, Santa Barbara, where pair nest building 14 May 2020 and 1 seen 9 June 2025. Starting about 2018–2020, nesting-season records from along the South Coast had become fairly routine.

Along the North Coast, a nesting pair in Lake Canyon (Pine Canyon) 29 March 1997 was a precursor to the discovery of many more breeding birds on Vandenberg SFB over the ensuing years, mostly found during concentrated bird-survey work during the latter 1990s. Almost all birds have been more than 3 mi (5 km) inland from the coast, most are in coastal sage scrub, with a few also in Burton Mesa Chaparral and in riparian vegetation where sage scrub is present as well. Sites are spread from the west end of the Purisima Hills, near Barka Slough, Lake Canyon, and south to Tranquillon Mountain and Oak Mountain; and although they are found in the Shuman, San Antonio, and Honda drainages, they apparently avoid the lower Santa Ynez River (e.g., 1 there 3 June 2026; 1 seen 2 mi [3 km] from the coast 27 July 1993 was probably an early fall disperser).

It is uncertain whether this increase in the known abundance and extent of the breeding population is simply the result of better observer coverage or if it reflects an actual increase in the local nesting population, or is a combination of the two.

California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*)
Accidental.

A California Gnatcatcher was at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park 22 August 2023 (ph. SBMNH). This was a real surprise because this species is resident, very rarely makes even relatively short-distance dispersals, and the closest populations are small and isolated in eastern Ventura County.

WRENS (TROGLODYTIDAE)

Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)
Uncommon permanent resident in District V and locally in District M, uncommon and local along the North Coast and in District I; very rare in summer along the South Coast. Rare to uncommon fall transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and M.

Rock Wrens are found on rocky outcroppings, cliffs, and rock dams, in rocky washes and boulder fields, and on ocean bluffs. Numbers in fall and winter are augmented by migrants from the north. Cachuma CBCs have recorded as many as 17 individuals (29 December 2015). In District V, 14 in the entire Cuyama Valley area were tallied 25 January 2025. In late spring and summer, they are found most regularly in District V and in the north-facing Sierra Madre foothills in District M (high count: 6 in Santa Barbara Canyon 3 July 2011). Small numbers breed and are likely resident in foothills in District I, including perhaps irregularly at Colson Canyon, Old Sierra Madre Road, and the Sedgwick Reserve, and more regularly along the upper Santa Ynez River from Lake Cachuma eastward (high count: 5 near Red Rock Campground 11 June 1982 and an exceptional 36 birds along the low-water, rocky shores of Lake Cachuma 13 June 2017). This species is a permanent resident very locally along the North Coast, with the known sites being the cliffs and railroad cuts on north Vandenberg SFB between Point Sal and Shuman Canyon, and at Point Pedernales, near Rocky Point, and in La Salle Canyon on south Vandenberg SFB; and near Jalama Beach County Park. Two birds were in upper Miguelito Canyon 12 May 2023. Rock Wrens have been recorded only several times on the La Purisima CBC. They also may be resident on cliffs along the Santa Ynez River east of Lompoc at the border with District I (e.g., along Sweeney Road), where there are multiple summer records.

The species' status in District M is not well known. Away from the north-facing Sierra Madre foothills, it is probably an uncommon to rare migrant and winter visitor in the Santa Ynez Mountains, San Rafael Mountains, and remainder of the Sierra Madre. One at Figueroa Mountain 3 May 1977, single juveniles collected (*UCSB) at West Big Pine Mountain 24 June 1988 and west of Ranger Peak 20 August 1988, 10–12 in 2 family groups at West Big Pine Mountain 27 June 1992, and 1 or 2 there on about half the near-annual summer surveys, 1981–2026, indicate local breeding in the San Rafael Mountains. Breeding was documented in the Santa Ynez Mountains when a family group of 4 were found along West Camino Cielo 4 June 2018 and another family with fledged young were at Montecito Peak 31 July 2022. Singles were near La Cumbre Peak 16–24 June 2010, nearby along Gibraltar Road 24 June 2010, at western West Camino Cielo 3 June 2018 and 21 July 2020, and near Gaviota Peak 9 July 2024. One at Painted Cave 12 September 2023 may have been an early fall arrival.

Along the South Coast, Rock Wrens are primarily rare fall transients and winter visitors (October–March). Most records near the coast come from ocean bluffs in the Hollister/Bixby Ranch area west of Gaviota, the bluffs west of Devereux Slough, at More Mesa, at Hope Ranch, and at Carpinteria. The earliest arrival dates are 11 September 2019 Romero Canyon, behind Montecito and 13 September 1976 Montecito. As many as 7 birds at San Marcos Foothills in

Santa Barbara 20 February 2010 (and during much of winter) was a high count. One in Goleta 2 April 1984 was slightly late. One on Hollister Ranch 27 May 1975, 2 in Las Varas Canyon, west of Goleta, 8 June 1983, a family group of 8 birds at 400 ft elevation near the Gaviota tunnel 1 May 2005, up to 2 along Tunnel Trail above Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 8–31 May 2010 and 1 there 13 August 2011, 1 seen entering a crevice along the beach in Carpinteria 20 May 2014, 2 near Arroyo Hondo, between Refugio and Gaviota, 25 June 2016, 1 along Tecolote Creek in the northwestern Goleta foothills 20 May 2017, a family group of 5 in Refugio Canyon May–June 2024, 1 in Hot Springs Canyon behind Montecito 9 June 2025, and 1 along Farren Road in northwest Goleta 12 June 2026 indicate that this species is a very rare breeder along the South Coast, particularly west of Goleta where public access is limited.

Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus*)

Uncommon to fairly common permanent resident along the South Coast and in Districts I and M. Casual along the North Coast. Little movement away from breeding areas.

Canyon Wrens frequent rocky areas in canyons, boulder fields, and cliff faces. They are resident in most of the foothill canyons along the South Coast. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 33 individuals (30 December 1978). They are found regularly down to the elevation of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in Mission Canyon. They have also been recorded on a number of occasions at an even lower elevation on the grounds of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and at Rocky Nook Park, and they were noted only one-half mile inland along Toro Canyon Creek between 1987 and 1989, 3 were at the Ennisbrook Open Space in Montecito 15 December 2018, and 1 was at the Greenwell Preserve in Summerland 8 May 2022–16 September 2023. An adult was feeding a fledgling at Tucker's Grove Park near Santa Barbara 25 July 2010. Farther west, this species is resident in appropriate habitat very close to the coast in the Gaviota area, such as immediately above the Highway 101 rest stop and at the Arroyo Hondo Preserve, as well as farther west on Hollister Ranch (several sightings) and farther east near Arroyo Quemada and in lower Dos Pueblos Canyon. One wandered onto the coastal plain in northern Goleta 26 July 1983, single individuals were in residential Carpinteria 2 August and 6–8 August 1993, 1 was near Los Carneros Road X Highway 101 in Goleta 12–13 July 2017 concurrent with a fire in the nearby Santa Ynez Mountains, 1 was in western Isla Vista 30 September–4 December 2018, 1 was off Los Carneros Road, Goleta, 18 August 2020, 1 was at Carpinteria Bluffs 7 October–4 December 2020, 1 was on the coastal bluffs at Arroyo Burro Beach 8 November 2024, and 1 was on the beach off Padaro Lane near Carpinteria 3 January 2026. Bordering Ventura County, up to 2 birds have been seen on multiple occasions since 2020 along the coast at Rincon Beach, including an adult feeding two fledged young on 26 May 2023, as well as along Bates Road.

In District I, the species is found most regularly on slopes bordering the upper Santa Ynez River from the Paradise area eastward and in foothills westward to Tepusquet Canyon just south of the summit. One singing at Bradbury Dam, Lake Cachuma, 18 February 1992 and another there 26 December 2017 were at an atypical location, although there are several reports from farther east near the lake. The Cachuma CBC has recorded 1 or 2 individuals on only several counts, with 4 birds on 26 December 2014.

At the higher elevations of District M, from 1–3 individuals were found on about half the summer surveys, 1981–2026, in the Big Pine Mountain area. The species was reported as fairly numerous in the Mission Pine Springs/San Rafael Mountain area in September 2011. Along the north flank of the Sierra Madre, Canyon Wrens have been found in Bates Canyon, Aliso Park, Lion Canyon, and upper Santa Barbara Canyon.

This species occurs casually along the North Coast. One was near Point Conception 29 May 1902 (*CAS). From north to south, 1 was on north Vandenberg SFB 16 February 2020; 1 was along a railroad embankment at the Santa Ynez River mouth 31 July 1980; 1 was just inland

from the Santa Ynez River mouth 10 September 2005; 2 were along Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB, 21 September 2019 and 1 was there 20 April 2024; a pair were at Tranquillon Peak, south Vandenberg SFB, during summer 1991, 1 was there 30 August 2009, and 1 was nearby 17 December 2023; and 1 was only one-half mile inland from Jalama Beach County Park 10 June 1989, 2 were there 17 March 1996, 1 on 4 May 2019 (railroad trestle), and 1 from 29 March–27 May 2024, as well as several reports farther inland along Jalama Road.

There are no records in District V.

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

Fairly common to common permanent resident in Districts C and I and at the lower elevations in District M. Uncommon at the higher elevations in District M and in District V.

Bewick's Wrens are fairly common to common in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland, semidesert scrub, riparian woodland, residential areas, parks, and brushy areas found in oak and coniferous woodland. They are less numerous (uncommon to fairly common) at the highest elevations of District M and they avoid areas of open forest with little growth of shrubs; summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area recorded as many as 20 birds through 2000—with high counts of 29 and 25 birds on 10–11 July 1993 and 23–25 June 1994, respectively—but only single digits since then through 2026, but 16 individuals on 13–15 June 2014. As many as 396 individuals (31 December 1983) have been recorded on Santa Barbara CBCs, but some CBCs record only 125–150 birds, and only 72 were tallied 31 December 2016. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has recorded up to 46 birds (29 December 1999). Drought conditions may result in suppressed populations in some areas. Although this species is a permanent resident in many areas, some seasonal movement does occur. In District V, it is typically found at the western end of the valley and in canyon habitat bordering the valley, but there are also scattered records from the valley floor, mostly during the non-breeding season.

Northern House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

Common summer resident along the South Coast and in Districts I and M; uncommon along the North Coast. Uncommon to fairly common transient in all Districts. In winter, fairly common along the South Coast, very uncommon along the North Coast and in District I, and very local in District M.

Northern House Wrens are most numerous in thickets and brushy areas found in riparian, oak, and coniferous woodland. They reach their maximum abundance in oak-riparian canyons and are most commonly found between mid-March and July when singing. They are rare or absent in open, dry chaparral. This species is common along the South Coast in summer, but it is uncommon along much of the North Coast. The only North Coast area with a substantial population is Barka Slough, Vandenberg SFB. It is somewhat local in District M, where its presence depends on a good understory of brush. Thus, it is uncommon on the more open Figueroa and San Rafael Mountains, but is fairly common to common in the brushier Big Pine Mountain area where high totals of 115 birds were found on both 25–27 June 1992 and 23–25 June 1994, although most totals there are of 15–46 individuals.

In winter, this species is fairly common only along the South Coast. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 104 individuals (31 December 1983), although some counts have been under 30 birds. It is uncommon in District I; Cachuma CBCs have tallied up to 14 birds (28 December 2010). Along the North Coast, it is decidedly uncommon, with only single-digits found in riparian areas there most winters; the high counts on the two North Coast CBCs are 16 on Santa Maria–Guadalupe 20 December 1998 and 13 on La Purisima 14 December 2008, but most tallies there are of fewer than 7 individuals.

In areas where the species does not typically winter, such as in District V, much of District M, and parts of District I, most records span mid-March to mid-November. In District M, there are a number of records into December and early January, with a later individual at Madulce Campground 26 January 2025. In District V, 1 was in New Cuyama 24 January 2026. Where the

species does not breed, such as in most of District V away from the Sierra Madre foothills, the latest spring record is 10 May 2020 Quatal Canyon and a very late bird in New Cuyama through 2 June 2019, and the earliest fall records are from early August (e.g., 5 August 2028 New Cuyama).

Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*)

Uncommon to rare fall transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and M. One nesting record.

Pacific Wrens frequent dense thickets, with most individuals found in shaded canyon areas. They are most often recorded in Districts C and M in areas that support an extensive growth of ferns, poison oak, blackberry, and/or dense willow riparian, and in brush piles. The Kinevan Road area at San Marcos Pass is a particularly favored site, where single counts have reached 8+ individuals, although 1–3 birds are typical. Along the North Coast, the species is very uncommon and is found primarily in riparian vegetation. In areas supporting little such habitat, it is very rare. This species typically arrives during late September and October (earliest arrival dates: 1 September 1992 south Vandenberg SFB, 4 September 1983 Carpinteria, and 5 September 1981 Carpinteria). Numbers vary somewhat from year to year. The highest season total is 23 along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria during winter 1980–1981. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 14 individuals (31 December 1983). Single-digit seasonal totals along the South Coast have become typical in more recent years. Inland, the Cachuma CBCs have found only 1 or 2 individuals on fewer than half the counts.

One near Figueroa Mountain 8 April 1990, 1 at Kinevan Road 8–14 April 2001, and 1 remaining in Colson Canyon through 18 April 2021 were late. A single individual seen along Kinevan Road near San Marcos Pass 7 April 1984 was followed by an adult feeding a fledgling there on 5 May. This establishes the only nesting record for the county and one of the southern-most in the state. One in Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, 17 August 2004 was either an exceptionally early fall arrival or had summered somewhere locally.

This species was split from Winter Wren in 2010 (see below). All records of "Winter Wren" prior to then are assumed to have involved Pacific Wren unless noted otherwise.

Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hyemalis*)

Casual late-fall and winter visitor in Districts C and M.

One individual was found bordering the Santa Barbara Music Academy in Montecito 3–21 January 2009 (ph. *WB* 42:155, SBMNH). One was present along Kinevan Road at San Marcos Pass 14–26 November 2011 (ph. SBMNH). One was along Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 19 November 20212–20 March 2023 (ph. SBMNH). One was on UCSB West Campus, Goleta, 4 December 2024–12 January 2025. [In addition, a bird giving the calls of this species was heard at the gas company property off Atascadero Creek in Goleta 2 January 2000, but the report was not accepted by CBRC.]

This species was split from Pacific Wren by the AOU [AOS] only in 2010 (see above). All records of "Winter Wrens" prior to the 2009 bird are assumed to have involved Pacific Wrens.

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus stellaris*)

Accidental.

One bird was at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 13 October 2004 (ph. *NAB* 59:150, *WB* 37:76, SBMNH).

Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*)

Fairly common transient and winter visitor in District C, uncommon in District I, and rare in District V. Fairly common but local summer resident along the North Coast; casual in summer along the South Coast and in District I.

Marsh Wrens are found primarily in stands of bulrush and cattails, although some breeding birds are present in riparian areas with only very small clumps of rushes present. This species breeds at several locations in the Santa Maria Valley west of Santa Maria, along San Antonio Creek inland to Barka Slough, at multiple other ponds on north Vandenberg SFB, and along the Santa Ynez River inland to Lompoc. Transients and winter visitors also frequent salt-marsh vegetation (e.g., Salicornia). They occur rarely in wet thickets, clumps of tall grass, agricultural fields, and residential areas, and then generally only as migrants. Fall transients arrive beginning in August, very rarely as early as mid-July (i.e., 13 July 2024 Goleta Slough, 15 July 2003 Lake Cachuma, and see below), and they are fairly common by the beginning of September. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 51 individuals (29 December 1979), but some recent counts have found only single digits (e.g., 7 birds on 9 January 2019). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to just 7 birds (30 December 2005). There are several winter records in District V. In spring, most birds have departed by mid-April, and the species is rare during the second half of that month and the first week of May.

There are few records away from the North Coast after mid-May: 1 at Goleta Slough 20 June 1987, another in Goleta 16–21 May 1988, 1 singing at Laguna Blanca 17 June 1993, 1 along Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 3 June 1999, and up to 2 at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge through 27 May 2012. Single birds were found at North Campus Open Space near Devereux Slough 17 May–19 June 2019 and 6–14 June 2021, and 1 or 2 were at Lake Los Carneros during late May or June in 2018 and 2023. Two at a pond half way between Lompoc and Buellton 27 June 2024 would be the first suggestive breeding evidence in District I. Singles in Goleta 8 July 1996 and 7 July 2003 were either record-early arrivals or had summered somewhere locally.

MOCKINGBIRDS, THRASHERS (MIMIDAE)

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)

Casual visitor in District C. One summer record. One record in District I.

There are 12 records of migrants and wintering birds in District C. In fall, they are from along Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 16 October–3 December 1971, the Mesa in Santa Barbara 27–28 October 1975, near Guadalupe 5 October 1990, Gaviota State Park 3–8 November 2018 (ph. SBMNH), Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 18–24 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH), Arroyo Hondo near Gaviota 13 September 2021 (early), Hollister Ranch 4 December 2022 (ph. SBMNH), and Lake Los Carneros 20–23 October 2025. A wintering bird was in Isla Vista 18 November 2017–28 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH). And in spring, singles were near Guadalupe 25 April 1982, in residential northwestern Santa Barbara 18–20 May 2017 (ph. SBMNH), and at Santa Barbara City College 19–20 April 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Unique was a mid-summer bird in Tecolote Canyon in Goleta 1 July 2021.

The only inland record is from the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 21 October-4 November 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*)

Very rare fall and winter visitor, casual in spring, with all records to date except one from along the South Coast.

Of the 23 South Coast records (most of which occurred between 1968–1982), all but 4 or 5 are from fall and winter. They are as follows: Santa Barbara 10–18 December 1941, Carpinteria "mid-April" 1968, Santa Barbara 28 April–2 May 1968, Santa Barbara 22 January–10 May 1969, Santa Barbara 25 April 1969, Santa Barbara 2–16 January 1971, Goleta 13 October 1971, Goleta 7 November 1973, Santa Barbara 11 November 1973, Santa Barbara 15 November 1974, Hope Ranch 31 December 1977–18 March 1978, residential north Goleta 8 December 1979–23 March 1980, Gaviota State Park 29 September 1980, near Devereux Slough 28 October 1981–8 March 1982, Montecito 31 October 1981, Santa Barbara 3 November 1981, Montecito 14

January 1982, Montecito 10 March 1982, Goleta 18–23 October 1989, El Capitan State Beach 22 December 2005–9 February 2006, Ellwood Mesa 14 September 2009 (early), near Gaviota 1–5 October 2014 (ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria 5 November 2015, Stow Grove Park, Goleta, 3–21 January 2025, and Carpinteria 17 April 2025.

Along the North Coast, 1 was near the Santa Ynez River mouth 14–15 November 1998 (ph. SBMNH).

Bendire's Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*)

Casual fall and winter visitor.

There are five records: El Capitan State Beach for several days in October 1966; South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields, Goleta, 25–29 August 1979 (ph. SBMNH); up to 2 Winchester Canyon, Goleta, 11 January–19 February 1984 (ph. SBMNH); residential northern Goleta 21 December 1984–23 January 1985; and Gaviota State Park 16 September 1988.

California Thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*)

Fairly common permanent resident in Districts C and I and the lower elevations in District M. Uncommon in District V and rare to uncommon at the higher elevations of District M. Rather sedentary.

California Thrashers frequent areas with dense brush. They are most numerous in chaparral and are also fairly numerous in denser riparian areas, coastal sage scrub, and well-vegetated residential areas. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 198 individuals (2 January 1983). (A total of 900 reported on the count 29 December 1979 is certainly in error.) The Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 86 birds (28 December 2010). A total of 51 were tallied along West Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains 15 January 2002. The species occurs uncommonly in semidesert scrub in District V and is uncommon at the higher elevations of District M. Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, typically recorded from 1 to 3 individuals, with a high count of 8 on both 15–17 June 2007 and 14–16 June 2013, but none found several years. California Thrashers are found only locally on the coastal plain in such areas as southern Goleta where suitable habitat is limited.

LeConte's Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*)

Two definite reports from Santa Barbara County. Presumed former rare resident in District V, now extirpated.

LeConte's Thrasher was a former resident of the Cuyama Valley, where its presence was closely tied to stands of Mormon Tea *(Ephedra californica)* and saltbush *(Atriplex* spp.). There are only two known sightings from the Santa Barbara County section of District V: a singing male was noted one mile southeast of the Ventucopa Ranger Station in [uncertain date] May 1969 (Sheppard 1973), and a calling bird was seen just east of Highway 33 and south of the San Luis Obispo–Santa Barbara County line (north of the mouth of Ballinger Canyon) on 4 August 1992 (S. D. Fitton in litt.). Historically, this species occurred on alluvial fans supporting stands of *Ephedra* and saltbush along the northern edge of the Cuyama Valley, in San Luis Obispo County, until about 1990 (C. Marantz and T. Edell pers. comm.), but the species was likely extirpated from there and throughout the Valley soon thereafter as a result of habitat conversion. The site of the August 1992 record was characterized at the time by fingers of sparse vegetation dominated by *Ephedra.*

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)

Very rare transient and winter visitor. Most sightings are from along the South Coast; casual along the North Coast and in Districts I and M. May be rare but regular in District V.

Sage Thrashers may be rare but regular visitors during fall, early winter, and, especially, late winter and early spring to the semidesert scrub and agricultural areas in District V. First seen in that District near the base of Santa Barbara Canyon 26 April 1979, there are now (through early 2026) approximately 38 records (involving ca. 79 individuals) between 17 September (2015) and 26 April (1979) through 2024, plus a strong season in early 2025 with ca. 20 birds between 20 January–1 February. The largest flocks included 7 birds in the Cuyama Valley 24 January–21 February 1981, 10 in Ballinger Canyon 9 March 1996, and 8 near Cuyama 24 March 2018.

First recorded on 3 November 1957 at Carpinteria Salt Marsh, this species has now been recorded 27 times along the South Coast in fall (through 2025) between 7 September and 4 November (2018, Gaviota State Park). The North Coast's eight fall records are from the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 24 September 1987, 10 September 1988, and 30 September 1993, Point Conception 2 November 1991, south Vandenberg SFB 10–22 October 2015, Santa Ynez River mouth 26 September 2021 and 26–29 September 2024, and near Guadalupe 10 October 2024. In District I, 1 was at Sedgwick Reserve above Santa Ynez 1 November 1998, 1 was near Santa Ynez 19 November 2006, others were there 17 September 2009 and 21 October 2012, 1 was near Los Olivos 20 September 2016 (and see below), and presumably the same individual was at Sedgwick Reserve 31 October+ 2015, 14 October+ 2017, 6 November+ 2019, and 28 October+ 2020 (see below). And in District M, 1 was near Bluff Camp for a week in October 1981, 1 was near Madulce Peak 10 October 1982, and 1 was along East Camino Cielo near Painted Cave 24 November 2011.

Winter reports away from District V include from Santa Rosa Park between Lompoc and Buellton (District I) 17–26 January 1965; "the Mesa" in Santa Barbara 1 December 1967–6 January 1968 (ph. SBMNH); Goleta 8 January 1991; near Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 2 January–22 February 2000; Vandenberg Village 14 December 2007; Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez (District I) 31 October 2015–25 March 2016 and again 14 October 2017–28 March 2018 and again 6 November 2019–8 April 2020 (ph. SBMNH) and again 28 October–4 November 2020 (ph. SBMNH); Santa Barbara 26–27 December 2016; Gibraltar Dam (District I) 30 December 2017 (ph. SBMNH); east of Lompoc 18 December 2022; near Santa Ynez 13 January 2023; Elings Park in Santa Barbara 10 December 2024–5 January 2025; and Sedgwick Reserve 12 January–7 February 2025 and 12 December 2025–23 January 2026.

Spring migrants appear early, and most sightings beginning already in late January probably involve such transients. Along the South Coast, singles were at the Mesa in Santa Barbara 13–18 March 1978 (ph. SBMNH), in Montecito 17 February 1980, in Goleta 12 February 2012, on UCSB West Campus 3–4 February 2014 (ph. SBMNH), at the Santa Barbara Cemetery in Montecito 29 January 2018, at Refugio State Beach 19–28 February 2018, and at Lake Los Carneros 9 April 2018. One near Devereux Slough on 7 May 2025 was exceptionally late. Along the North Coast, singles were in Lompoc 8–9 March 1991, near Point Conception 13 February 2025, at the Santa Ynez River mouth 17 February 2025, and near Lompoc 6 May 2025 (exceptionally late). In District I, singles were near Santa Ynez 3 March 2007, 4–5 February 2012, and 10 February 2017. In District M, 1 was along West Camino Cielo 22 February 2025.

In addition, a very late spring vagrant was in Honda Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 15 May 1988.

Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Common permanent resident along the South Coast, fairly common in District I. Uncommon to locally fairly common along the North Coast and in District V. Very rare visitor in District M.

Northern Mockingbirds are most numerous in areas altered by humans, including residential areas, ranch yards, and orchards. They have increased in numbers because of human settlement and the growing of exotic vegetation. This increase had already been noted by Willett (1933). At present, this species is common along the coast from Goleta to Carpinteria and is locally fairly common west from there along the South Coast; it is fairly common in much of District I. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 447 individuals (2 January 1983). Inland, the Cachuma

CBC has noted a steady increase in numbers and has found up to 32 and 30 birds, 26 December 2014 and 29 December 2015, respectively.

Along the North Coast, this species is less numerous, being fairly common only in the more urbanized sections, such as in Santa Maria, Orcutt, Vandenberg Village, Vandenberg Air Force Base residential areas, and Lompoc. It is rare away from these areas. For example, the only records away from residential areas in the western Santa Maria Valley between 1978–2003 were from Betteravia 27 August 1980, 14 August 1982, and 22 December 1991. Similarly, on Vandenberg SFB the only such records during this period were of 2 birds near Point Arguello 23 June 1981 and 1 along the Point Sal Road 24 March 1995. Since that time, reports at scattered sites on Vandenberg SFB away from developed areas have increased somewhat, including sightings from Lompoc Canyon on south Vandenberg SFB during the late 1990s, and birds found on repeated occasions in dune scrub near the main airfield and Purisima Point (high count of 3 near the latter site 2 September 2010).

In District I, Mockingbirds are very rare in the upper Santa Ynez River drainage east of Gibraltar Reservoir. One was along Mono Creek 26 July 1989 and there are several other undocumented reports from that area.

In District M, mockingbirds occur somewhat regularly in the San Marcos Pass/Painted Cave area. Elsewhere, they are very rare visitors, with several reports from the La Cumbre Peak area, from Figueroa to Cachuma Mountains, and from a number of the foothill canyons in the Sierra Madre. Even more unexpected was 1 at Montgomery Potrero in the Sierra Madre 26 November 2020.

Individuals in District V are mostly restricted to the vicinity of ranch houses and the town of New Cuyama, but a high count of 10 were noted in Ballinger and Deer Park Canyons 26 April 2011.

STARLINGS (STURNIDAE)

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Introduced. Common to very common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V, and very locally at the lower elevations in District M.

European Starlings are most numerous in areas close to human settlement, including all urban and residential areas, parks, campgrounds, and agricultural and livestock areas. Concentrations of up to several thousand individuals have been noted at livestock pens in the Santa Maria Valley; 4900 were tallied on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC 26 December 2010. A total of 10,000+ on the La Purisima CBC 19 December 2004 would be extremely high, if correct. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 3800 individuals; 10,000 were reported on the 3 January 1965 CBC, a very high count if correct. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has found up to 2276 and 4160 birds (26 December 2014 and 29 December 2015, respectively), and ca. 3000 were associated with a night-time roost on the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 3 December 2016 and ca. 8000 were there 18–27 September 2024. In District V, ca. 1000 were at a dairy operation near Cuyama 19 February 2020 and ca. 8000 were in the Cuyama Valley 25 January 2025. The species is fairly common in lowland areas away from human settlement. It is not found at the higher elevations in District M, in dense chaparral, or in the semidesert scrub of District V; and it is uncommon at the lower elevations in District M. An outlying breeding pair was at Montgomery Potrero 7 May 2018.

One was seen well offshore ca. 30 mi (48 km) SW of Point Conception 16 November 1990 and a flock of 15 was 39 mi (63 km) W of San Miguel Island 26 October 2012.

Following its introduction to the eastern United States in 1890, this species appears to have arrived in Santa Barbara County in 1957. It was still unknown in the county as of 1956 (T. N.

Metcalf pers. comm.), but there are published records of 38 birds in Santa Barbara 10 December 1957 and 100+ near Santa Maria 16 March 1959. The first nesting record involved 2 nests in the Santa Ynez Valley 13 May 1959. It rapidly increased in numbers during the following years and had become very numerous by 1964. Since that time, it has had a dramatic effect on a number of cavity-nesting species that use holes large enough for starlings to enter. Notable declines in Acorn Woodpecker, Purple Martin, and Western Bluebird populations have been attributed to competition with starlings for nest sites. Starlings have also been seen harassing several other cavity nesters, including Downy Woodpecker and Tree Swallow.

DIPPERS (CINCLIDAE)

American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*)

Status unclear. Formerly a rare and irregular resident in District M and in the foothills along the South Coast; presently possibly extirpated. Somewhat more widespread (though still scarce) during fall and winter of years with adequate stream flow. Casual fall and winter visitor in District I.

American Dippers are found only along streams, particularly those with a year-round flow of water. Most records are from the fall and winter months along the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains. In the past, a small number of individuals remained year-round and bred along permanent streams there and in the San Rafael Mountains.

In District C, this species was once thought to be almost entirely a fall and winter visitor. Dawson (1916b) wrote that it was a winter visitant only, that it occurred "casually, or at any rate not at present time, vic. Santa Barbara," and that it had been seen in Mission Canyon and in Tecolote Canyon 10 November 1915. It was found nesting at an elevation of 525 ft in Gobernador Canyon behind Carpinteria in 1921 (nest with young on 21 April; Hoffmann 1921a). In District I, a bird was along the upper Santa Ynez River 2 December 1945. For the next 20+ years, until 1968, the species went unrecorded in Santa Barbara County, probably the result of limited observer coverage.

During the 1970s and 1980s, there were numerous sightings on a number of creeks on the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains down to foothill canyons bordering Santa Barbara and Montecito residential areas. The most regularly frequented localities were Rattlesnake, San Ysidro, and Cold Spring Creeks above Santa Barbara and Montecito, and near the "Trout Club" along upper San Jose Creek just below San Marcos Pass. Nesting was confirmed along San Ysidro Creek in May–June 1979 (1 nest) and 1981 (2 pairs present in May and a juvenile seen in June) and along Cold Spring Creek in March 1984. Also, a few fall and winter sightings were made along upper Mission Creek south to the Natural History Museum. Farther west, there were two records from the 1970s near the bottom of Refugio Canyon. There are a number of other suitable creeks along the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains that have received little or no observer coverage. This includes Gobernador Canyon, which was known to support American Dippers in the early 1900s (see above); 1 was seen there 13 October 1970.

Inland, American Dippers were along the south fork of the Sisquoc River north of San Rafael Mountain 21 October 1970 (2), 14 July 1971, 18 October 1977, and 15 August 1978 (2); at the headwaters of the Sisquoc River 19 July 1982; along Santa Cruz Creek just west of Bluff Camp 25 July 1981 and 23 June 1989; along Indian Creek south of Big Pine Mountain 26 May 1979, where also a specimen from 23 May 1897 (*CAS); and along Manzana Creek 29 May 2005 and 1 December 2008 (Nira Campground). These areas have received very limited observer coverage. On the north slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains, 1 was along Tequepis Creek 13 March 2007.

Prolonged drought in the late 1980s and early 1990s dried many creeks for extended periods of time. Its impact on the poorly-known Dipper population in Santa Barbara County was likely significant. None was seen for several years along South Coast streams until September 1994.

Several reports were again received from the "Trout Club" area along upper San Jose Creek during fall and winter between 1994 and early 2006. Breeding was confirmed again (for the first time since the mid-1980s) along San Ysidro Creek in 1997, with the discovery of an adult with a juvenile on 15 July; this was followed by 2 adults with 2 young birds there 30 August–16 September 1999, a nest as well as young being fed March–May 2000, and a single bird on 27 July 2002. Suggestive of local breeding were a single individual along Arroyo Hondo east of Gaviota 19 June 2001 and a juvenile in upper Mission Canyon 25 August 2005. More unusual were single sightings at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in Mission Canyon 20 November 2001 and 30 November 2008. One was in Gobernador Canyon 1 March 2002. Dry conditions after about 2010 have resulted in, again, a dearth of sightings through 2026.

In addition to drought, reduction in the duration and extent of perennial stream flow because of water diversions is an ongoing threat to American Dippers.

THRUSHES (TURDIDAE)

Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*)

Common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and M; uncommon in District V. Some additional movement onto the coastal plain takes place between late summer and early spring.

Western Bluebirds are most numerous in open conifer forest, oak savanna, ranch land, orchards, and open riparian woodland. They also frequent golf courses, parks, cemeteries, and some residential areas. Numbers of permanent resident birds in Districts C and I have increased substantially since the mid-1990s, especially in suburban and urban-park settings, a phenomenon which has taken place in other parts of coastal Southern California as well. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 263 individuals (3 January 2015). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 427 birds (27 December 2011). Summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, have recorded as many as 48 individuals (both 18–20 June 2004 and 14–16 June 2013). In District V and along its border with District M, the species occurs in pinyon-juniper woodland and sagebrush (e.g., Ballinger Canyon, Deer Park Canyon, Ventucopa area, base of Santa Barbara Canyon) and in oak and riparian canyons (e.g., Aliso Canyon). There were no records for the valley floor in the Cuyama Valley until 1 was found in New Cuyama 20 April 2003; but as elsewhere, the increase in numbers has resulted in almost annual occurrence there since at least 2006, between late September (possibly as early as August) and April, as well as providing for the first nesting records for the valley floor: Richardson Park, New Cuyama, 2 April 2016 and 10 May 2018, and thereafter.

Nesting was formerly (through the early 1990s) somewhat localized in District C. Along the South Coast it was known to summer in a number of foothill canyons between Hollister Ranch (west of Gaviota) and Carpinteria, and well out on the coastal plain in some areas (e.g., in several areas of western Goleta). One seen entering a nest cavity along Atascadero Creek near the mouth of Goleta Slough 29 April 1990 was unusually close to the coast. The species also may have bred then in the Veronica Springs area in Santa Barbara. Along the North Coast, this species was locally uncommon year-round. Since 1979, several were present somewhat regularly in grassy pasture bordering riparian woodland near the Santa Maria River mouth. Small numbers were also noted at scattered locations on Vandenberg SFB: family groups were noted in 1980 in the Barka Slough area (at the border of District I), small numbers soon became resident bordering the main airfield and nesting was documented there in July 2008 and 2011, several were subsequently seen in open oak woodland bordering San Antonio Creek, and single individuals or small groups were then noted somewhat regularly within 1–2 mi (2–3 km) of the coast near Shuman Canyon, near Purisima Point, around the main Cantonment Area, along lower Bear Creek, and upper Honda Creek.

Between late summer and early spring (early August to April), there is some additional movement onto the coastal plain along the South Coast. For many years before the species' spread, small numbers were noted somewhat regularly in southern Goleta, at the La Cumbre Country Club golf course in Hope Ranch, at the Santa Barbara Cemetery in coastal Montecito, and in coastal Carpinteria. Western Bluebirds are now regular permanent residents in these and many additional coastal areas.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)

Uncommon to fairly common but irregular winter visitor in District V. Rare to irregularly uncommon fall transient and winter visitor in District I; rare along the North Coast, very rare along the South Coast, and casual in District M.

Mountain Bluebirds frequent open country, with large numbers occurring irregularly in extensive agricultural areas of the Cuyama Valley; sometimes they are found in open pinyon-juniper woodland. In Districts C and I, they have been found in short, open grassland. They may arrive in the Cuyama Valley during late October and have mostly departed by mid-March (latest: 20 March 2012 (3), 21 March 2021, 24 March 2018). Numbers may vary substantially from year to year; the species may be very common one year (e.g., 1000 on 16 November 1980) and virtually absent the next. With changing agricultural practices, more recent high counts have not exceeded 330 and 400+ individuals, on 27 November 2003 and 27 November 2004, respectively, except for a two-day survey on 6–7 January 2024 which produced 424 birds.

Since 1994, better coverage in District I has found this species to be of somewhat regular occurrence in the Santa Ynez Valley. They have been found most winters in small-to-moderate numbers during the late fall and winter, particularly in the Santa Ynez area, with the largest counts being 100 birds 25 February 2001, up to 100 present 5–6 January 2007, and 100 on 21 December 2018. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 72 individuals (27 December 2013). The early arrival date is 14 October (2007, Lake Cachuma); departures are mostly by early March, with the latest being 27 March 2012 near Santa Ynez.

Earlier in District I, through 1994, 1 was near Lake Cachuma 25 January 1981; the 1984–1985 incursion brought 5 near Solvang 9 December; 6 were near Santa Ynez—soon to become a somewhat regular wintering site for this species—1 November 1987, 3 were there 6–14 December 1988, and 3 were present 28 January 1990; 8 were below Figueroa Mountain 29 November 1993; and up to 25 were near Santa Ynez mid-January–25+ February 1994.

Away from District V and the Santa Ynez Valley, Mountain Bluebirds are rare and irregular in occurrence. Sizeable movements into the county occurred in 1945–1946, 1961–1962, and 1967–1968 (the details of which are not well known.); and in 1984–1985, with a smaller flight in 1999–2000.

Records from the South Coast through the early 1980s included: singles in Goleta 21 and 23 November 1918 (*FMNH); 10–15 Goleta 18 December 1945–19 January 1946 (Mansfield 1946); up to 30 Goleta late November 1961–12 February 1962, with 7 still present 30 March 1962 (late); 21 vic. Santa Barbara 30 December 1967; Santa Barbara 14 January 1969; and Goleta 20 October–13 December 1977. A record movement into the county occurred in 1984–1985: total of 50 birds at three locations in Goleta 16 November–5 March, total of 7 in Santa Barbara 16 November–15 January, 17 in Carpinteria 30 November, 1 near Gaviota 20 December, and 3 birds west of Gaviota 3 January. One was in Santa Barbara 9 February 1989, a non-flight-year. There are a number of additional records from more wooded areas (atypical habitat) in District C that have not been included and probably involve misidentifications.

Mountain Bluebird remains a very rare visitor along the South Coast, where there were just 16 records between 1994 and 2026, between 18 November 2017 vic. El Capitan State Beach (4) and 22–27 February 2001Carpinteria, with a high count of up to 9 at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 5 December 2009–2 January 2010.

Before 1994, along the North Coast, small to moderate numbers (up to 60) were found 6 out of 15 Decembers (1979–1993) from near the Santa Maria River mouth south to the Mussel Rock

area; 10 were near Lompoc 15 December 1984 during an incursion; 8 were on north Vandenberg SFB 30 November 1986–1 January 1987 and up to 12 were there 18 December 1988–5 March 1989; and 14 were near Lompoc 18–19 December 1993.

Along the North Coast, 1994–2026, this species was recorded just 14 times, with high counts of up to 25 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 29 January–1 March 2000, up to 35 near the Santa Maria River mouth 19–24 December 2006, 75 east of Santa Maria 17 December 2011 (a record count for District C), and 25 near Point Sal 7 February 2023. The earliest arrival date was 30 October 2004 near Lompoc, and the latest departure was through 12 March 1995 near the Santa Maria River mouth (3).

The only record for District M through the 1980s was of an unknown number near Madulce Peak 16 February 1986. A male near Figueroa Mountain 21 April 1995, a pair there 5 May 2001, and a male at Ranger Peak 6 May 2001 were not only unusual in District M, but they also established the latest spring records for the county.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

Uncommon to rare transient and winter visitor in District M; very rare in the foothills along the South Coast and bordering District V, and in District I; casual elsewhere, including one offshore. Casual in summer in District M.

Townsend's Solitaires frequent open conifer woodland, where more isolated, large conifers (e.g., Bigcone Douglas-Fir) extend down canyons to lower elevations, and montane chaparral in District M. They occur regularly in small numbers in the San Rafael Mountains and are very uncommon in the Santa Ynez Mountains where most consistently found in the La Cumbre Peak area (where 1–3 birds winter most years, October–April). The earliest arrival date for District M is 15 September 1977 West Big Pine Mountain. Bartholomew (1940) recorded 1 at an unknown location on 13 September 1938. Numbers vary from year to year. A high count of 9 birds were found on the Santa Barbara CBC 19 December 1971, and 8 and 6 birds were at just La Cumbre Peak 23 December 2011 and 3 January 2019, respectively. The Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 6 birds (27 December 2013). A total of ca. 10 birds were at Figueroa and San Rafael Mountains during the incursion year of 2022, between 29 October-30 November. Solitaires also may prove to be somewhat regular in fall and winter in pinyon-juniper woodland bordering Districts M and V (e.g., Tinta Creek/Dry Canyon, Santa Barbara Canyon), but these areas have received very limited observer coverage; a high count of 6 were there 8 October 2000. Also, 1 was in Cottonwood Canyon west of New Cuyama 2 March 1985 and 1 was in Bates Canyon 23 January 2026. This species lingers in District M regularly into mid-April, very rarely to late April. The latest spring records are 1 May 1976 Figueroa Mountain (2) and 12 May 2012 Figueroa Mountain.

Along the South Coast, most records have come from the foothill canyons in the Santa Barbara area, primarily San Roque, Mission, Rattlesnake, and Sycamore Canyons. Records for these sites include: 16 February 1949, 17 March–11 April 1952, 16 April 1958, 22 December 1968, 28 December 1968, 22 February 1969, 12 April 1969, 16–22 April 1969, 12 April 1970 (3), 11 March 1972, 22 March 1982, and 23 December 2017. An early arrival was at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 26–27 September 2022. In addition, 1 was at San Marcos Foothills 28 December 2014–21 February 2015. One on the Riviera in Santa Barbara 22 September 1981 was slightly farther away from the foothill canyons. This species is casual on the coastal plain, with only five such records known: Hope Ranch 21 February 1971; the Mesa in Santa Barbara early 1972; southern Goleta 15 November 1972; near Arroyo Burro, Santa Barbara, 26–29 March 1982; and the Mesa 27 December 1990.

Along the North Coast, solitaires are casual in occurrence: south Vandenberg SFB 23 November 1991, Vandenberg Village 4 November 2005, Honda Creek on south Vandenberg SFB 27 November–14 December 2014, Miguelito County Park near Lompoc 3–6 November

2015, Vandenberg Village 12 February 2016, Miguelito Canyon Park 9–15 December 2019, and, totally out of season, Tranquillon Peak, south Vandenberg SFB, 29 June 2007. In addition, one was offshore, landing on a research vessel ca. 22 mi SW of Point Arguello 11 May 2021.

There are only 10 records for District I since the 1970s, most of them from the upper Santa Ynez River watershed: Mono Creek 18–20 April 1982, upper Santa Ynez River 29 December 1984, near Upper Oso 16 April 1999, Red Rock 19–22 December 2003, near Lower Oso 24 March 2014, Red Rock 13 November–6 December 2022, and Paradise 31 December 2022; elsewhere, near Santa Ynez 29 December 2022, Los Alamos 17 February 2023, and lower Refugio Road 14 April 2023; and a late bird at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 10 May 2023.

In District V, 1 was along Aliso Canyon Road 3 December 2018.

Single individuals on Big Pine Mountain 19 June 2004, 12 June–8 July 2010, and 5 June 2025 established three of the four summer records in the county. This species is known to breed on the higher peaks in northern Ventura/southern Kern Counties.

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)

At present, a fairly common summer resident locally along the North Coast. Uncommon spring transient and summer resident locally along the South Coast and in Districts I and M; rare in fall. Uncommon spring transient in District V. Formerly more common and widespread. No valid winter records.

Swainson's Thrushes nest in riparian and mixed oak-riparian woodland. They breed commonly only along the North Coast and are most numerous along the Santa Maria River west of Guadalupe, San Antonio Creek inland to Barka Slough, and the Santa Ynez River inland to the Lompoc area (east to vic. Sweeney Road). Fifty along the Santa Ynez River between Lompoc and 13th Street on 30 June 1993 was a high count. Small numbers also occur in Corralitos Canyon; along lower Shuman Creek, Bear Creek, and Honda Creek, all on Vandenberg SFB; along Davis Creek at Vandenberg Village Golf Course; and along Miguelito Creek south of Lompoc. These local breeders may arrive in spring much earlier than do migrants continuing farther north: 31 March 2002, 1 April 1995, and 4 April 1997, all near the Santa Ynez River mouth. Small numbers may be present in mid-April (e.g., 3 in La Salle Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 15 April 2004, 7–8 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 April 2000).

At the border with District M, this species continues to breed in the Santa Ynez Mountains near Refugio Pass. Up to 15 individuals were recorded annually in June during the 1980s and early 1990s at mid-elevations on both sides of the pass; counts there during the 2000s through 2015 have been only in the single digits. One was in nearby Escondido Canyon 18 June 1992. It formerly summered (through the early 1990s) along Kinevan Road near San Marcos Pass, but there do not appear to be any recent summer records in that area except for 1 bird at Painted Cave 11 July 2012. One bird in the Sierra Madre foothills at Aliso Park 9 June 2018 was in appropriate nesting habitat but easily could have been a late spring migrant.

It is uncommon to fairly common, but very local, as a breeder in District I. Several nests were found along the Santa Ynez River at Solvang between 1928 and 1948. Bartholomew (1940) termed it "a moderately common summer resident along the larger streams" in the upper Santa Ynez River watershed. At least 12 singing birds were present along the upper Santa Ynez River and Mono Creek in 1981, only 3 were there in summer 1988, but approximately 12 pairs were present in 1991 and approximately 30 individuals were there in 1993. Up to 13 were counted along the Santa Ynez River west of Buellton annually since first being discovered in 1986 through at least 2011. Also, 1 was in Drum Canyon, south of Los Alamos, 16 June 1982; 3 were at Gaviota Hot Springs, south of Buellton, 7 July 1982; 1 was along Quiota Creek, near Santa Ynez, 28 June 1992; 1 was along the Santa Ynez River at Sweeney Road, near Lompoc, 1 July 2000; 1 was at Nojoqui Falls Park 22 June–1 July 2013; 9 were counted in Colson Canyon, east of Santa Maria, 10 May 2014 and 1 was there 8 July 2019; 1 was along Salsipuedes Creek,

southeast of Lompoc, 20 June 2015; 2 were singing along Jalama Road 19 June 2019; and 1 was at Sedgwick Reserve 26 June 2019.

Along the South Coast, this species has declined as a breeder. It formerly nested in many of the foothill canyons and possibly along a number of creeks on the coastal plain. At least 6 egg-sets collected in Goleta between 1925 and 1931 are known (4 at SBMNH). Fledged young were present in Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, during late June 1976. One was in Toro Canyon above Summerland 8 July 1982. One was in Gobernador Canyon above Carpinteria 16 June–24 July 1985. Up to 7 were along Rincon Creek near Carpinteria, within one mile of the ocean, during June and July in 1986 and 1990–1993, with 1 seen carrying a fecal sac 4 June 1992. Probable breeders farther out on the coastal plain were single birds singing along Tecolotito Creek 7 June 1981 and San Jose Creek 10 June 1987 in Goleta; 1 in Goleta 13 June 1984; 3 east of San Ysidro Road in Montecito 12 July 1982; and 2 along lower Carpinteria Creek 6 July 1991 and 1 singing there 9 June 1993. More unusual was 1 that sang far from a riparian creek in a residential yard in Carpinteria from 2–31 May 1991. By the mid-1990s known sites were very few (e.g., San Ysidro and Gobernador Canyons, Rincon Creek). It is unclear how many pairs continued to nest then in the coastal canyons, although the species was certainly rare. The causes of this local decline, if other than simple habitat loss, were also uncertain.

Since the mid-1990s, breeding or probable breeding along the South Coast was documented multiple years out on the coastal plain in Goleta in willow riparian along and near Atascadero Creek, off South Patterson Avenue: 1 or 2 singing birds were there in early summer annually from 1996–2014, with 3–5 total birds in 2007, 2011, and 2014, as well as single females with brood patches caught and banded 4 July 2001 and 2 July 2002, and 2 birds 17 June 2023. As noted above, local nesting birds arrive earlier than more northerly migrants: 1 at the nesting area near Atascadero Creek on 27 March 2002 was exceptional. Breeding was also documented or suggested by the presence of 2–3 birds thought nesting at Gobernador Canyon 18 June 2003, 2 singing there 17 June 2008, 1 seen carrying food 13 July 2011, and 1 singing 29 June 2021. One was singing along Rincon Creek 21 April and a pair was likely nesting there 25 June 2006, another was singing from 4–6 June 2014, and up to 3 were there from both 11–19 July 2019 and 6 June–11 July 2020, with 1 bird 2–29 June 2026. In addition, likely territorial birds (from west to east) included 2 on Hollister Ranch 14 June 2014; El Capitan Ranch 8 July 2019; 2 along Tecolote Creek 30 June 2019, 2 there 1 July 2021, and up to 2 from 7–28 June 2022; 2 singing along upper San Jose Creek, Goleta, 18 May–8 June 2014; 2 along Maria Ygnacio Creek, Goleta, 15 June 1999; 1 along Arroyo Burro, Santa Barbara, 1 July 2018; 1 singing at Rocky Nook Park in Santa Barbara 18 July 2016; 1 in Montecito 29 June 1999; and 1 singing along lower Carpinteria Creek 28 June 1996, where also singles noted 8 July 2004, 28 June 2012, 29 June 2021, 14 June 2022, and 7 July 2023.

Over much of Santa Barbara County, Swainson's Thrush is now primarily an uncommon spring migrant, occurring between late April and the beginning of June. The earliest arrival dates of likely through-migrants are 17 April 1964 Santa Barbara (*SBMNH) and 21 April 1979 Santa Barbara. The largest numbers of migrants are seen in canyon areas and along riparian creeks; the high count is 8 birds in Goleta 15 May 2010. The latest date for a probable transient is 7 June 1992 Goleta. This species is rarer in fall than in spring, or at least it is detected more rarely. High single-site counts have not exceeded just several individuals. A total of 12 between Goleta and Carpinteria during fall 1984 was a high season count. Several birds were in Quatal Canyon in District V between 26 September–7 October 2018. Fall transients occur between late August (e.g., 19 August 2016 Goleta, 20 August 1982 Goleta) and mid-October; exceptionally late records are 29 October 1974 Santa Barbara (dead on road—skel. SBMNH) and 4 November 1978 Santa Maria River mouth (San Luis Obispo County side).

Swainson's Thrushes have been reported on a number of occasions during late fall and winter. None of these records has been properly documented and they almost certainly represent

misidentified Hermit Thrushes. (There are only several documented winter records in the state.) Three specimens located at SBMNH are labeled with the dates December 1971 (Santa Barbara), February 1969 (Montecito), and 26 March 1969 (Santa Barbara). They are all properly identified but the dates of collection cannot be verified and are probably in error.

Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and the lower elevations of District M; uncommon to fairly common at higher elevations in District M and in District V. Very rare and local breeder in District M.

Hermit Thrushes are found in a variety of woodland and brushy habitats (particularly where berries are present), including coniferous, oak, and riparian woodlands, chaparral, residential neighborhoods, and parks. They arrive as early as late September (earliest: 21 September 2004 south Vandenberg SFB, 21 September 2022 Baron Ranch Trail), with even earlier birds on 15 September 2015 in Goleta and 19 September 2016 near San Marcos Pass. Numbers vary somewhat from year to year. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 414 individuals on 30 December 1989 and 694 on 29 December 1990, but only 128 were counted 28 December 1991. A high 60 birds were in eastern Hope Ranch 31 December 1977 and 34 were in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 2 December 2017. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 164 birds (29 December 2015). This species is uncommon after early April and very rare after the beginning of May. The latest records are 5 May 1964 Montecito, 7 May 1967 Zaca Lake, 11 May 1984 Goleta, 12 May 1995 Figueroa Mountain, and, exceptionally, 20 May 2018 Arroyo Hondo near Gaviota (ph. SBMNH).

Hermit Thrushes have been found summering at two locations near the crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains and nesting has been documented at both. An uncertain number of individuals were present on the north side of Refugio Pass (bordering District I) during June 1979 and 1980, 6 were there 9–30 June 1981 and 1 bird was observed defending a nest on 30 June, up to 5 were singing in that area 9 May–7 July 1982, at least that many were present 4 July 1984, 4 were found 9 June 1993, 7 were noted during summer 1996, at least 2 birds were singing 24 June 2010, and 1 was there 10 June 2023. The second site was in the Kinevan Road area near San Marcos Pass where at least 2 individuals were singing 14 June–2 July 1981, but the species was not recorded at that location during subsequent summers until 1 was found singing 27 May–8 June 1996, up to 5 were present 5–25 June 2017, up to 3 were detected 3 May–8 July 2018, up to 2 were heard 25 April–23 June 2019, up to 3 singing and a successful nesting by a pair between 26 April–16 July 2020, documented by the finding of a fledgling on 16 July, up to 2 singing there 24 May–6 June 2021, and up to 3 present 26 April–26 June 2022. Another individual was singing along nearby XXXX 19 July 1998. Refugio Pass and Kinevan Road are characterized by cool, shaded canyon woodland containing Tanbark Oak, White Alder, California Bay, and Madrone. These are the only breeders near the coast south of Monterey County.

In the San Raphael Mountains, a Hermit Thrush was singing on the north slope of Big Pine Mountain 20 June 1986 and 1 was singing there 11 June 1993. None was recorded there in subsequent years until single singing birds were found 18 June 2006 near Bear Campground and 15 June 2007 near the summit, and 1 was near Alamar Saddle 14 June 2014. A Hermit/Swainson's Thrush was on Big Pine Mountain 12 June 2010. Habitat and elevation suggest the Big Pine birds are *C. g. sequoiensis* rather than *C. g. sleveni,* the probable subspecies breeding in the Santa Ynez Mountains, but subspecific identities have not been determined.

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)

Accidental.

An individual remained at Waller Park in Santa Maria from 10–12 November 2005 (ph. *NAB* 60:140, *WB* 38:184, SBMNH).

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

Common, irregularly very common, winter visitor in Districts C and I, fairly common in Districts M and V. Locally fairly common summer resident along the South Coast, uncommon in Districts I and M and along the North Coast, very rare in District V.

During the breeding season, American Robins are found primarily in gardens, orchards, meadows, and streamsides (particularly where sycamores are present). Breeding birds on Vandenberg SFB also frequent eucalyptus groves. In winter, these same habitats are frequented, as well as areas supporting both native and introduced berry-producing vegetation. This species is only infrequently seen locally on lawns. Migrant and wintering individuals arrive beginning in mid-September, and the species is locally common by late October (somewhat earlier during years of high abundance). The largest numbers usually occur along the South Coast in foothill canyons and residential areas where the supply of berries is the greatest. During some winters, they are only fairly common, while in other years they are numerous (e.g., 1000 in eastern Hope Ranch 31 December 1977, 7066 on the Santa Barbara CBC 5 January 2002). Along the North Coast, 600 were flying over Orcutt to an evening roost 25 December 2014. Inland, Cachuma CBCs have tallied up to 867 birds (29 December 2015), plus an exceptional 2684 birds on 26 December 2014, though also as few as 49 (30 December 2008), and 1300–1750 were seen leaving a roost at dawn near Lake Cachuma 29 December 2022–21 February 2023 (2022–2023 was a major incursion year elsewhere in Southern California). During winter, most individuals withdraw from the highest mountains. In District V, 400 near Ventucopa 10 November 1990 was a high count. Most transients and winter visitors have departed by mid-April; 1 in Deer Park Canyon in District V on 26 April 2011 was somewhat late.

As a local breeding species, the American Robin has become more numerous and widespread in the lowlands, particularly along the South Coast. Willett (1933) stated that it nested "rarely in [the] foothill region." With increased human settlement during the 1900s, summering robins increased in numbers in the coastal canyons and then moved onto the coastal plain. The first nesting away from the canyons took place May–June 1951 in Alameda Park in downtown Santa Barbara (Rett 1952a). The species nested again in central Santa Barbara in 1952. By 1966 it was also found nesting along Carpinteria Creek. Beginning in 1980, several pairs were found nesting along riparian creeks on the coastal plain in Goleta. By the 1990s, it was fairly common as a breeding species in the Santa Barbara area, with the largest numbers present in the foothill canyons, Hope Ranch, and Montecito. By 1999, it was found in summer in Isla Vista. Since the early 1990s, small numbers have been found in summer at a number of sites farther west, between Goleta and Gaviota. Along the North Coast, it was still quite rare as a summer resident through the 1980s: several pairs summered in Santa Maria during 1980 and 1981, 2 birds were in upper Honda Canyon during 1980 (the only individuals found that summer in the Vandenberg SFB area despite concentrated avian surveys), 2 or 3 pairs bred in the north Vandenberg SFB residential area by 1987, and 1 pair was in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc in 1993. Numbers have increased, and by the mid-1990s robins were fairly widespread breeders in the Santa Maria area, with nesting documented since that time at Waller, Preisker, and Grogan Parks, at several golf courses, at Alan Hancock College, in older neighborhoods with shade trees and other mature landscaping, and in riparian along the Santa Maria River. They are also found regularly in summer in Miguelito Canyon.

In District I, summering robins remain local in distribution. In District M, summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area through 2026 typically recorded 3–10 individuals, with a high count of 12 between 11–13 June 2010. It is uncommon in summer in the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area. Its breeding status in many other parts of the San Rafael Mountains and Sierra Madre is poorly known. Two were in Bates Canyon 16 May 2026.

In District V, robins are presumably migrants and winter visitors only, although 1 or 2 birds in the Ventucopa area during May–June 2018–2026 may have been breeding locally. A juvenile

along Aliso Canyon Road 5 August 2018 had dispersed an unknown distance from where hatched.

An individual banded in southern Santa Barbara County 2 March 1942 was recovered in British Columbia in June 1943.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)

Irregular transient and winter visitor, usually very uncommon and local, with most sightings in Districts M and I and in the foothills of District C. May be locally fairly common during flight years. Rare and irregular visitor in District V. Three summer records.

Varied Thrushes frequent conifer forest and well-shaded oak and oak-riparian canyons. They typically arrive beginning in mid- or late October (earliest arrival dates: 2 October 2011 near Buellton, 4 October 1964 Santa Barbara). One early individual was far out at sea ca. 43 mi (69 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 9 October 2023, but which had come aboard the boat two days earlier at an unknown distant location. The larger numbers of Varied Thrushes during flight years are not seen usually until November. The most consistent locality in which to find this species is along Kinevan Road near San Marcos Pass, where at least several individuals are present most winters. Overall, this species is uncommon and somewhat local: during some winters, no individuals are found away from Kinevan Road; other years it may be fairly common and relatively widespread. During flight years (e.g., 1972–1973, 1977–1978, 2014–2015) large numbers of birds occur in the mountains, coastal canyons, North Coast riparian woodland, and well-vegetated residential areas along the South Coast. The maximum counts, by far, are 200 on Figueroa Mountain 5 November 1977, 355 on the Santa Barbara CBC 31 December 1977, and 200 on the Santa Barbara CBC 3 January 2015 (98 of which were in Hope Ranch). A total of 26–36 birds in Waller Park, Santa Maria, 18 November–5 December 2014 and 43 in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc (and 84 on the entire La Purisima CBC) 14 December 2014 were high single-site counts for the North Coast and bordering District I. In District I, 65 were found during the Cachuma CBC 26 December 2014; in contrast, that CBC has otherwise tallied only as many as 10 birds (29 December 1999). Through 1993, there were only about six records from the extensively birded southern Goleta area (an area largely lacking in suitable habitat), all of which came during fall and winter months during invasion years; during the next 20 years there were only ca. 3 additional records there, all unrelated to invasions, until the invasion of 2014–2015.

Most individuals have departed by mid-March, and a few may linger to early April. The high April count following the 2014–2015 invasion was 12 in Waller Park, Santa Maria, 8 April. The latest records are 17 April 1973 vic. Figueroa Mountain, 2 May 2026 Sedgwick Reserve, 6 May 1982 Santa Barbara, 7 May 2011 Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc, 9 May 1991 Aliso Park west of New Cuyama, 9 May 1994 Goleta, 10 May 2002 Nojoqui Falls Park, and, exceptionally, 25 May 1994 near Figueroa Mountain.

There are three very unusual summer records: male near Bear Campground, Big Pine Mountain, 11 June 1993, 1 at Sedgwick Reserve above Santa Ynez 25 July 1995, and 1 along Davy Brown Trail near Figueroa Mountain 11 June 2014.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS AND ALLIES (PASSERIDAE)

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Introduced. Common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V.

House Sparrows are found only in the vicinity of human habitation; the largest numbers are present in the major urban and residential zones. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1021 individuals (4 January 1986). CBC trends are difficult to discern; the species is notoriously under-counted because the areas frequented by the most birds are avoided by most count participants. In places with limited human development, such as along the upper Santa Ynez River (east of Rancho Oso, unrecorded east of Red Rock) or in District M, they are rare or

absent. Bartholomew (1940) noted a total of 6 birds at Mono Guard Station between April 1937 and April 1939. In District V, a high 150 were at the Cuyama dairy 9 January 2015.

This species was introduced into the eastern and midwestern United States in the 1850s and 1860s and rapidly spread west. A subsequent introduction was made in San Francisco in 1871. It was first recorded in Santa Barbara County at Santa Barbara during summer 1909 (Torrey 1909c).

WAXBILLS (ESTRILDIDAE)

Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*)

Introduced. Uncommon to fairly common but local resident along the South Coast. Rare but increasing along the North Coast and in District I, casual in Districts M and V.

Scaly-breasted Munia (briefly known as Nutmeg Mannikin) was accepted as established in Southern California by the CBRC in 2013. It is found in weedy agricultural fields, ditches, and creek beds, in residential areas, and at feeders. Nesting has been documented almost throughout the year. Their spread in Santa Barbara County can be seen from the following discussion:

They were first noted bordering lower Atascadero Creek in Goleta *circa* 2000 (perhaps early 1999), with up to 20 that year during May–September and where they "previously bred"; 25 were there 24 September 2001. They were noted as spreading in 2002, with the first birds along San Pedro Creek in Goleta 28 April (*SBMNH); at Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara in August, but then 40+ there 2 December; 1 at UCSB campus 14 September; 2 in Montecito 14 November; and 2 adults with 3 juveniles along upper San Jose Creek in Goleta 18 November. In 2003, ca. 30 were in the South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields 12 October. By the late 2000s, they were found at a number of sites in Goleta and western Santa Barbara, in Isla Vista, and west to the Ellwood area. The only record west of Ellwood was of 5 birds at Refugio State Beach during September 2006. The first sighting at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge was probably in November 2008, though the species did not become regular there until mid-2012; the first in Carpinteria was not until October 2010. They have become somewhat regular in residential Montecito since 2012. By late 2015, munias were found at many sites between Goleta and Carpinteria, though mostly in small to moderate numbers, and occurrences were often ephemeral. High counts of up to 150–175 were tallied in the Hollister Avenue X Turnpike Road area in Goleta during September 2008 and 2011, with ca. 200 there on both 13 September 2009 and 8 September 2013, 250 on 3 September 2015, and ca. 400 on 10 September 2016; 150 were in the South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields 9 September 2012; 117 were at a private residence near Mission Canyon in Santa Barbara 21 February 2016; and 125 were at "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 7 September 2016, but most high counts elsewhere are in the 20–30 range. The Santa Barbara CBC has recorded as many as 462 individuals on 2 January 2016. West of Goleta, up to 8 were at Refugio State Beach 17 October 2015–1+ November 2016, and then fairly regular thereafter in the Refugio/El Capitan area. Farther west, munias were first seen at Gaviota on 30 September 2018, with up to 30 there through November 2022.

In District I, 1 was in Solvang 15 July 2013, becoming of regular occurrence since November 2013, and with a high count of 6 birds on 16 February 2014 and 1 building a nest 13 September 2015; 2 were in Los Olivos 11 September 2014; several were near Santa Ynez 9 November 2014, the Cachuma CBC recorded 30 individuals in the Santa Ynez area 26 December 2014, and 11 birds were there 19 November 2016. A high 40 birds were tallied at Cachuma Lake Recreation Area 23 March 2017. It appears that munias have become locally established in the Santa Ynez Valley, at least in the Santa Ynez/Solvang/Los Alamos area. Elsewhere, 6 were at the Sedgwick Reserve 7 June 2023, 1 was at Rancho Sisquoc Winery 14 October 2023, and 4 were at Nojoqui Falls Park 3 February 2026.

Until late 2014, munias were still thought absent from the North Coast, even though appropriate habitat exists and the species was found locally to the north in San Luis Obispo County. Finally, on 26 October 2014, 2 were found in Santa Maria. The high count in the Santa Maria Valley was only up to 4 at Jim May Park in Santa Maria from 9 September–14+ November 2015 until 27 were seen in Santa Maria 25 November 2019 and 30 were there 15 December 2024–20 April 2025. Farther south, 5 birds were in Vandenberg Village 5 January 2015, the first record for the Santa Ynez River mouth area came on 31 October 2015 (4), the first in Lompoc was of 30 birds on 21 October 2018, and up to 6 were at Jalama Beach County Park 20 October–15 November 2022.

In District M, 2 were in the San Marcos Pass area 30 September 2007 and up to 3 were there 8–31 October 2022.

In District V, 7 were in New Cuyama 8 November 2019, 1 was west of there 19 October 2020, up to 3 were in lower Santa Barbara Canyon 2–3 November 2021, and 2 were in New Cuyama 12 November 2022.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS (MOTACILLIDAE)

Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*)

Accidental.

One bird was present in agricultural fields along South Patterson Avenue in Goleta 1–2 September 2008 (ph. *NAB* 63:187, SBMNH). There are only a handful of records from Southern California, likewise all in early fall.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)

Casual visitor in District C.

There are six records. White Wagtails occurring in western North America have variously been treated as one species or as two, currently treated as just two separate subspecies: *M. a. ocularis* and *M. a. lugens.* An immature at Devereux Slough 9–11 October 1978 (ph. SBMNH) was subsequently identified as belonging to the subspecies *ocularis*, the "White" Wagtail in the narrow sense. Another immature at the Laguna Sanitary District sewage treatment plant near Santa Maria 27 December 2009–2 [not 9] January 2010 (ph. *NAB* 64:323) was identified as belonging to the race *lugens*, the "Black-backed" Wagtail. A bird believed to be *ocularis* was on the beach near Santa Barbara Harbor 7–8 November 2020 (ph. SBMNH). A bird with a foot injury at the Santa Ynez River mouth 19 November 2020 (ph. SBMNH) was probably the same individual with a similar injury later found wintering in Los Angeles County and determined to be of the race *lugens*. One was on the beach west of Devereux Slough 27 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH) and another was there 11 October 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and identified as *lugens*.

Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*)

Very rare fall transient in District C.

First recorded on 12 October 1978 near Devereux Slough, this species was recorded a total of 26 times (involving 30 individuals) in fall through 1993. Of these records, 7 came from the Santa Maria Valley and River mouth area between 5 and 31 October, and 14 came from Goleta, especially in the agricultural fields along South Patterson Avenue, between 1 October and 6 November. In addition, 1 in Goleta 24 September 1980 and 1 there 16 September 1993 were early, and another there 4–15 November 1986 was slightly late. An exceptionally early individual, and the only record clearly involving an adult, was at the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space) 9–11 September 1981. One was observed from a research vessel 80 mi (128 km) SW of San Miguel Island 21 October 1988.

Since the mid-1990s there has been a decline in numbers—with one notable exception—in the Goleta area where the amount and quality of the agricultural habitat used by this species have

declined. Between 1994–2025, there was a total of 18 records (involving 27 individuals) in District C, of which 3 came from the Santa Maria Valley/Santa Maria River mouth, 6 from the Lompoc Valley/Santa Ynez River mouth, 8 from Goleta, and 1 from Elings Park in Santa Barbara 5–7 October 2003. The earliest dates were 22 September 2013, 24 September 2017, and 28 September 2003, all in Goleta; the latest was 2 November 2003 Goleta and 2 November 2018 near Lompoc. Fall 2003 was particularly good for this species in the county and in much of California, with 8 individuals occurring along the South Coast that year, including a concentration of 5 birds in the South Patterson agricultural fields 28 September–1 October. In 2008, 4 were together there 19 October (ph. SBMNH).

American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and V; uncommon transient in District M. One summer record.

American Pipits are found in short-grass habitats (e.g., pastures, golf courses, cemeteries, playing fields, etc.), in agricultural areas, along the shores of lakes, ponds, and sloughs, and on upper beaches. They are particularly numerous during fall in the agricultural areas of District V (e.g., 2000 in the Cuyama Valley 6 November 1977) and the Santa Maria Valley, at least formerly. This species typically arrives in late September (earliest arrival dates: 9 September 1984 and 10 September 1990 (2) Santa Maria River mouth, 12 September 2008 Goleta, and 17 September 2006 Santa Barbara) and is common by the middle of October. One was riding a cruise ship from 27 mi (43 km) SW of Point Conception to 44 mi (71 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 5 October 2023. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 583 individuals, exceptionally 1017 on 31 December 1983. Cachuma CBCs have tallied up to 253 birds (29 December 2015). In spring, it is uncommon after the beginning of April and rare after the middle of the month. Twelve near Figueroa Mountain 27 April 1985, 4 in Lompoc 29 April 2021, and 4 at Lake Cachuma 29 April 2022 were getting late. One was far offshore beyond San Miguel Island 28 April 2006. Four were still in Goleta on 4 May 2025. The latest records are 7 May 1994 near Santa Maria (2), 8 May 1993 near Guadalupe, 8 May 2024 north Vandenberg SFB, 11 May 1970 Summerland, and 12 May 1999 near Santa Maria.

Exceptional was a mid-summer alternate adult at Devereux Slough 6–19 July 2013 (ph. SBMNH), one of only a very few summer records for the lowlands in California.

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*)

Casual fall transient in District C.

There are two records, both from the South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields in Goleta: 21–22 September 1984 (ph. SBMNH) and 5 October 1987. [An earlier report from Goleta 8 October 1964 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

FINCHES AND ALLIES (FRINGILLIDAE)

Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)

Very rare, irregular, and declining fall and winter visitor in Districts C and M, casual in District I. Casual spring visitor in all Districts. Casual in summer in District M.

The Evening Grosbeak is an irruptive species, absent most winters but having occurred in small numbers during several years (e.g., 1972–1973, 1977–1978, spring 1991, 2012–2013). The frequency of these irruptions in Southern California and elsewhere appears to have declined in recent decades. Most of the records from District C come from along the South Coast, as follows: vic. Santa Barbara December 1961, 6 in Santa Barbara 28–29 October 1972, southern Goleta 30 October 1972, up to 40 in Santa Barbara 16 December 1972–January 1973 (ph.

SBMNH), Goleta 1 January & 28 January 1976, total of 25 between Goleta and Montecito November 1977–January 1978, up to 4 in Montecito 23 November–25 December 1979, Montecito 27 January and 24 February 1980, Goleta 17 November 1984, 2 in Montecito 4 February 1988, Goleta 21 March 1991, Santa Barbara 20 October 1996, Montecito 24 October 1996, Santa Barbara 5–7 November 2000, and Goleta 26 December 2014.

Along the North Coast, 1 was on north Vandenberg SFB 18 October 1987; even more unusual, a late lowland bird was there 15–18 May 1988.

In District I, there are only three records: up to 10 in Santa Ynez 15 March–1 May 1991, 1 there 13 November 1996, and 1 near there 10 November 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

There are 11 fall, winter, and early-spring records from District M: 6 on Figueroa Mountain 21 March 1971, ca. 15 near Bluff Camp 18 October 1981, up to 25 on Figueroa Mountain 9–15 November 1986, 1 on Big Pine Mountain 3 December 1989 (*UCSB), 2 on Figueroa Mountain 18 April 2006, 2 on Ranger Peak 1 November 2010, 2 on Figueroa Mountain 14 November 2010, up to 7 at La Cumbre Peak 28 October–2 November 2012, 15 on Ranger Peak 24 November 2012, and singles on Ranger Peak 20 October 2015, on Figueroa Mountain 27 October 2015, and along East Camino Cielo 23 March 2023.

In late spring and summer, 2 were on Figueroa Mountain 17 June 1981, 4 were at West Big Pine Mountain 1 July 1981, 2 were on Figueroa Mountain 15–16 May 1982, 3 were at Big Pine Mountain 10 July 1998, and 6 were there 17 June 2006. Evening Grosbeaks are not known to breed any closer to Santa Barbara County than the Sierra Nevada.

In District V, 8 at Ventucopa 20 April 1991 (ph. SBMNH) were getting late.

[Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)

An individual which came aboard a shipping vessel off South Korea on 11 May was still on board when the ship was at the west end of the Santa Barbara Channel 17 May 2016, en route to Los Angeles. This record was not accepted by the CBRC on the basis of questionable natural occurrence.]

House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

Very common permanent resident throughout much of the county, except at the higher elevations in District M where uncommon. Most numerous in Districts C and I.

House Finches occupy a wide variety of habitats including urban areas. Large flocks are regularly encountered. Santa Barbara CBCs recorded between 2700–4000 individuals between 1961–1966, counts of up to 3337 birds in the early 1980s, but then no more than ca. 2000 birds since then. The Cachuma CBC has recorded as many as 808 birds (26 December 2014). This species is least numerous in dense forests, continuous chaparral, and semidesert scrub. In coniferous forest at higher elevations it is uncommon; from 1–5 individuals were found in the Big Pine Mountain area during summer surveys in 8 different years between 1981–2008, including a juvenile 30 August 1989 (*UCSB); followed by 21 there in June 2009, very soon after the large Zaca Fire in 2007 (declining to only 5 birds in both June 2010 and 2014, but 11 in June 2012 and 30 in June 2013, but just 2 in 2016). On San Rafael Mountain, 19 were seen 18–19 June 1982.

Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*)

Fairly common though somewhat irregular permanent resident in Districts C, I, and M. Some movement into the lowlands during fall and winter. Very rare visitor to District V.

Purple Finches breed in oak and oak-riparian canyons throughout the county (including in the Sierra Madre foothills), in conifer and oak-conifer woodland in District M (where locally common—e.g., many summer counts of 40–60 in the Big Pine Mountain area, with several tallies of 80–91 birds, and an exceptional 112 birds on 17–19 June 2001, but only 31 found on 13–15 June 2014 and 23 on 10–12 June 2016, and only 3 on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024), in riparian woodland, and in the well-vegetated residential areas along the South

Coast (e.g., Hope Ranch and Montecito). They are rare in summer well out on the coastal plain in Goleta. Along the North Coast, this species occurs in most riparian areas (e.g., Santa Maria River, San Antonio Creek, Santa Ynez River, Honda Canyon) and is most numerous at Barka Slough.

During fall and winter, there is an influx of individuals into the lowlands, with the species occurring uncommonly onto the coastal plain in areas away from breeding localities. The number of birds present varies from year to year. In years of higher abundance, Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 426 individuals (30 December 1989); in contrast, a mere 8 individuals were tallied 31 December 2016. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 106 and 185 birds (30 December 2008 and 28 December 2010, respectively).

This species is a very rare visitor in District V well away from the Sierra Madre foothills, primarily in late fall and winter, as late as April.

Cassin's Finch (*Haemorhous cassinii*)

Very uncommon and irregular visitor and probably a casual breeder at the higher elevations in District M. Very rare visitor at the lower elevations in District M; casual in Districts C, I, and V.

Cassin's Finches are found in conifer forest (particularly the drier and more open sections) on the highest mountains in District M. This species is most regular in occurrence on Big Pine Mountain and possibly on San Rafael Mountain and Madulce Peak, but data from the latter two sites are limited. It is rare on Figueroa Mountain. It is a rather common permanent resident on the higher mountains in Ventura/Kern Counties. An irregular fall and winter movement into the mountains of Santa Barbara County may occur: on Big Pine Mountain, 30 were counted 19 November 1976, 13 were there 7 February 2013, 5 on 22 January 2025, and 4 on 22 October 2025; and on San Rafael Mountain 1 was seen 12 October 2023, 2 were there 6 December 2023, 6 on 12 January 2025, and 2 on 24 October 2025.

The summer status of this species in these areas is still somewhat unclear. Summer surveys on Big Pine Mountain through 2026 have recorded single digits most years, with as many as 16 individuals (18–20 June 1999), and as few as 0. On 10–12 July 1991, a female with up to 4 begging juveniles were seen there; on 12 June 2010, two adults with a fledgling; and on 25 June 2021, an adult with a begging fledgling. Nine were seen in the San Rafael Mountain area 18–19 June 1982 and 2 were there 10–12 June 1989. Two were on Madulce Peak 20 July 1982. On Figueroa Mountain, this species is usually absent; 2 were there 17 June 1981.

This species is a very rare to casual—and irruptive—visitor away from the higher San Rafael Mountains, including to the lowlands, with most records from periodic invasion years. Notable irruptions were as follows:

1922–1923: 8–20 birds in Carpinteria 3 February–8 April (*MVZ; Hoffmann 1924);

1972–1973: 6 in Montecito during November;

1996–1997: 1 near San Marcos Pass 26 October, 3 at La Cumbre Peak 3+ November, up to 5 at feeder in Orcutt 2–20 November, 3 in Lompoc 22 December, total of 54 on Santa Barbara CBC from La Cumbre Peak to the coastal lowlands 4 January, 25 in Painted Cave/San Marcos Pass area 12 January, 1 in Santa Barbara 23 March, 2 near Bates Canyon (Sierra Madre) 5 April, and 1 near San Marcos Pass 7 April;

2000–2001: La Cumbre Peak 29 September–31 October with high count of 26 birds on 29 September, Santa Barbara Canyon/Dry Canyon/Tinta Creek (Sierra Madre foothills) 9 October–19 November with high count of 45 birds in Santa Barbara Canyon and 30 in Dry Canyon and along Tinta Creek 20 October; 2 on Figueroa Mountain Road 14 February; and 1 along West Camino Cielo 10 March;

2007–2008: Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak 4 October 2007–10 April with 5 there 4 October, up to 75 (a record total) present 5 December–24 February, 20 still present 9 March, 8

on 25 March, and 2 on 10 April; 4 in Santa Barbara 5 January, 1 there 5 February, and 1 seen 17 March.

Several other fall and winter records at Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak have occurred during non-invasion years to the lowlands: 3 May 1975, 3 on 1 April 1977, 17 on 9 November 1986, 6 October 2003, 2 present 2 November 2003, 1–30 December 2004, up to 22+ birds there 31 March–16 April 2005 with 1 remaining 29 April, 5 found 28 December 2010, 31 October 2012, up to 2 there 26 October–8 November 2015, 6 on 10 November 2019, and up to 2 from 27 October–1 November 2023. Three were along Tinta Creek 8 October 2018.

In the Santa Ynez Mountains, Cassin's Finches have occurred during non-invasion years as follows: 1 at San Marcos Pass in late March or early April 1990, 2 near La Cumbre Peak 15 November 1998, 2–5 there 28 October–18 November 2012, up to 3 there 26 October 2014–3 January 2015, up to 7 from 23–27 March 2023, and up to 6 from 16 October–6 November 2023.

In District V, 1 was in Ballinger Canyon 2 February 2011.

Elsewhere in the lowlands, 1 was in Hope Ranch 29 December 1984, 1 was in Santa Ynez (District I) 10 February 2004, total of 6 were in Buellton (District I) 27 November 2020–12 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH), with 1 remaining through 29 March, and 1 was near Santa Ynez 13 January 2021.

A published sighting from the Santa Maria CBC *(AB* 34:666) near Guadalupe 23 December 1979 lacked sufficient details.

Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

Rare to very rare and irregular visitor fall through spring. Virtually all of the records to date have been from Districts C and M; casual in District I and only one record from District V. Very rare to casual in summer.

Red Crossbills are found almost exclusively in conifers. They are most apt to be seen during the late fall, winter, and early spring, although there are also a number of late-spring and summer records. Absent many years, they occur singly or in small flocks. The earliest fall records before 1984 were from Figueroa Mountain 9 November 1975 (15), 9 November 1986 (2), and 9 November 1990 (16). Through 1982, there were 19 records from along the South Coast between 24 November and 31 March. The largest flock was 30 in Hope Ranch January–March 1971. [There is also a later, undocumented report from Lompoc 21 April 1971 (Metcalf 1972).]

During 1984–1985, an incursion brought a record total of approximately 135 birds to District C between 24 October and 9 March, 20 to Figueroa Mountain on 3–4 November, up to 12 there from 26 January–2 February, and 6 near Madulce Peak on 26 January; late lingerers were 1 in Goleta 12 April and up to 2 in Santa Barbara 27 March–17 May 1985. An even larger incursion during 1987–1988 brought a record total of ca. 178 birds to District C between 11 November and 14 April; late lingerers included 3 in Santa Barbara through 30 April and 2 in Goleta 15 May. At least 12 on Figueroa Mountain in late May 1988 were thought to be paired, with the males singing from the treetops; none, however, was seen there on 4 June. The next year, up to 12 individuals on Figueroa 26 December 1988–24 March 1989 included singing individuals and pairs, with 6 still present 14 April and 2 there 23 April. The next major flight occurred in 1996–1997, with the first bird on 1 October (early) in Goleta, followed by totals through late fall and winter of approximately 8 in the Santa Ynez Mountains, 100+ along the South Coast, and 44 along the North Coast, and late-lingering birds through 10 May in Santa Maria (2), through 14–20 May in Montecito (up to 4), and on 3 June on Figueroa Mountain (2). This was followed by an incursion in 2004–2005, beginning with 8 at La Cumbre Peak on 30 October, small flocks in Santa Maria and Lompoc through December, 21 in Goleta and Santa Barbara through January, and 2 on Figueroa Mountain through 16 April. A flight in 2012–2013 brought the first bird to Lompoc 18 September (early), small numbers subsequently in District C (maxima of 9 in Goleta 18–21 December and 9 on north Vandenberg SFB 18 January–25 March), and high counts of 27 near Ranger Peak 31 October, 21 vic. La Cumbre Peak 12–13 November, and up to 22 there 5 January–5 February 2013; small numbers remained through March; 2 were in Goleta 1 May and

up to 18 (“Type 2”) on the Mesa in Santa Barbara remained through 12 May; and 3 in Cuyama 4 May provided the first record for District V. A small flight in 2015–2016 brought some 43 birds to the county, including a high count of 20 in Summerland 21–30 December. A moderate flight in 2019–2020 brought a few birds to District C and more to District M, with a high of 47 at Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak 4 February. Another flight in 2023–2024 brought multiple reports of small groups, primarily to District C, beginning 11+ November, with high counts of up to 20 birds at a couple sites, 27 at Maramonte Park in Santa Maria 26 December, and 36 at Alan Hancock College in Santa Maria 10 February; plus 4 birds inland at Buellton 1–8 December.

Since 1994 there have been several additional records in the Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak area during years that were not characterized by widespread invasions: ca. 5 in December 1994–February 1995, up to 20 from January–March 1998, total of ca. 30 between November 2001–5 May 2002, total of 40 from December 2007–January 2008 and 12 still present 28 April 2008, and 2 in November 2010. Also, 13 were at La Cumbre Peak 25–30 December 2006, 16 were along West Camino Cielo 28 March 2008, and 4 were at La Cumbre Peak 6–7 February 2021.

Miscellaneous records in District C include 12 on north Vandenberg SFB 12 November 1990–18 February 1991 with up to 10 remaining through 13 May, 4 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 10–18 November 2000, 2 in Montecito 9 December 2010, 1 somewhat early bird at Refugio State Beach 7 October 2017, a total of 17 along the South Coast between 26 October–20 November 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and up to 12 at Ortega Ridge in Montecito/Summerland 19 January–19 April 2021. In spring, this species has also occurred in Santa Barbara 20 April 1961 (2), 10 May 1964 (2), 20 April–15 May 1973 (18), 12 April 1976 (24), and the 1985, 1988, 1989, 1991, and 1997 records listed above.

Surprisingly, there are only five records for District I: 25 near Los Olivos 8 December 1960, 1 near Santa Ynez 3 November 1984, 4 near Santa Ynez 17 December 2015, 10 near Buellton 23 April 2021, and the December 2023 record listed above.

Red Crossbills are very rare in summer, with almost all records from District M, including 2 at Big Pine Mountain 21 July 1982; Figueroa Mountain 6 July 1983 and 26 July 1984 (2); individuals collected on Big Pine Mountain 22 June 1988 (*SBMNH), 23 June 1988 (*UCSB), and 21 June 1989 (*SBMNH); 3 collected near Ranger Peak 7 August 1988; and 16 on San Rafael Mountain 17–18 June 1990. A minor incursion into the mountains during summer 1993 included: 1 Big Pine Mountain 23 June (*SBMNH), 14 there 10–11 July (*UCSB), and up to 16 Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak 14–28 July (with up to 30 still present 21 October 1993–26 February 1994). None of the birds collected were in breeding condition. Associated with the summer 1993 flight was an especially surprising individual along the coast in Goleta on 14 August. Since then (through 2026), singles have been recorded in the Big Pine Mountain area during summer surveys only three times: 22 June 2003, 9 July 2005, and 8 July 2010.

Most Red Crossbills are presumed to be “Type 2” birds, although there is little direct hard evidence. “Type 4” birds were documented in Summerland 11 November 2023 (2) and at UCSB from 3–5 December 2023, and a “Type 3” bird was at Elings Park in Santa Barbara 28 December 2023.

Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*)

Irregular fall, winter, and early-spring visitor in all Districts, although most regular and numerous in District M and along the South Coast. Casual in summer.

Pine Siskins are found primarily in conifers, eucalyptus, Liquidambar [Sweetgum] *(Liquidambar styraciflua)*, alders, willows, and sycamores; they are less numerous in weedy fields and at feeders. They occur irregularly, being rare some years and fairly common in others. The largest numbers occur during fall and early winter. The first birds may arrive as early as mid- or late September (earliest arrival dates: exceptionally 31 August 2007 Goleta feeder; also

15 September 1976 West Big Pine Mountain, 15 September 1984 Carpinteria), although they usually first appear during October. They become fairly numerous during invasion years after mid-October. Flocks or loose concentrations of up to about 50–80 birds have been recorded on occasion in all districts. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 375 individuals (31 December 1983), with 286 on 3 January 2015 the more recent high, while other counts have recorded as few as 1 bird. The Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 72 birds (26 December 2014), but the species has gone unrecorded on about half the counts. A flock of 200 on north Vandenberg SFB 17 October 1987, 325 in the Cuyama Valley 9 November 1992, 329 at Red Rock along the upper Santa Ynez River 1 January 2013, and 150 near Santa Ynez 26 January 2021 were very large single-site totals.

Following winters of high abundance, good numbers of individuals may linger well into April (e.g., 50+ at Figueroa Mountain 29 April 2005, 60 at Nojoqui Falls Park 10 April 2016, 125 in New Cuyama 5 April 2020) and even into mid-May. The latest records are: 20 May 1995 (6) and 24 May 2021 (5) north Vandenberg SFB, 29 May 2015 near San Marcos Pass, through 1 June 2015 Solvang, 27 May–2 June 2018 Santa Ynez (2), and 8 June 2021 Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara (3).

There are three summer records: Figueroa Mountain 24 June 1981 and 4 June 1988 (2), and even more unusual in the lowlands were up to 2 diseased birds in Solvang that remained through 17 June 2018. This species breeds irregularly in the Mount Pinos area in Ventura/Kern Counties, and casual nesting on the highest mountains locally is a possibility.

Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*)

Common permanent resident in Districts C and I and at the lower elevations in District M. Uncommon to fairly common at the higher elevations in District M and in District V, from where it may partly withdraw in winter.

Lesser Goldfinches occur in a wide variety of open and semi-open habitats, including open riparian, oak, and coniferous woodland, at the edges of the more heavily forested areas, and in weedy fields, chaparral, and residential areas. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1051 individuals (2 January 1983). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has found up to 354 birds (27 December 2001). A single-site high was 180 birds at the Sedgwick Reserve, near Santa Ynez, 18 December 2019. At the higher elevations of District M, summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area recorded only 1–6 birds on 14 different years, 1981–2026, with higher counts of 14 individuals on 23–25 June 1994, 18 on 12–14 June 2009 (following the Zaca Fire of 2007), and 14 on 15–17 June 2012. This species probably withdraws from the coldest areas of the county during the late fall and winter. It is less numerous, though still present, in the Cuyama Valley and probably at most higher elevations in District M from November through January.

Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Spinus lawrencei*)

Erratic in occurrence, especially during fall and winter. Somewhat predictable during late winter, spring, and summer when locally uncommon and occurring in all Districts.

Lawrence's Goldfinches occur in a variety of open and semi-open habitats, including willow riparian, oak woodland, open coniferous forest, and around ranch houses. They are found regularly in more arid areas, particularly near limited water sources. Foraging individuals also frequent grassland, weedy areas, and chaparral and other scrub. This species is most consistently found between mid-February and July at breeding sites.

Small to moderate numbers are widespread most years between February–early June in District V and in the lower foothills of the adjoining Sierra Madre in District M, as well as between February–early May along the North Coast (particularly in the Santa Maria Valley), with a high 30 at Vandenberg Village 19 February–26 March 2007. The high counts in District V and bordering District M foothills include an exceptional ca. 100 birds in the Santa Barbara Canyon area 31 May 1998, ca. 180 there 20 April 2019, and a total of 161 in the Sierra Madre foothills and Cuyama Valley during concentrated surveys on 18–19 May 2024. Early- and mid-

summer records involving nesting birds along the North Coast are rarer. Also, small numbers occur regularly in summer in chaparral and drier pine woodland locally in District M and in the foothills of District I. Larger numbers have been found during the several years immediately following large fires. For example, 50 were on the north side of Ranger Peak 16 July 1994 following the Marre Fire; and in the Big Pine Mountain area, most summer surveys recorded fewer than 10 individuals on about two-thirds of the censuses, 1981–2007 and 2012–2016; but immediately following the 2007 Zaca Fire, 37, 114, and 86 birds were tallied in June 2008, 2009, and 2010, respectively. In District I, 83 were at Sedgwick Reserve 22 February 2017 and 100–115 birds were there 28 March–4 April 2025.

Lawrence's Goldfinches occur fairly regularly in small numbers along the South Coast and in the Santa Ynez Valley between mid-February and early April. High counts for the South Coast are up to 34 in Goleta February–April 1982 and 20–50 at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 22 January–20 February 2010. They are rare on the coastal plain after the beginning of May. A few birds are found very rarely and irregularly along the South Coast in summer, usually in the foothills, less often on the coastal plain. There are two nesting records for Montecito during June 1954 and 1959 and a family group was in Romero Canyon 13 June 1996.

During fall and winter (through January), this species is very erratic and may be largely absent during many years. It is most often recorded at this season in Districts C and I. A fall arrival was in Goleta 12 August 2000. Some years it goes unrecorded, while during rare years, large flocks are present locally (e.g., 75 along Refugio Road near Santa Ynez 22 September 2013). The highest count in fall and winter is 208 on the Santa Barbara CBC 23 December 1972. A flock of 20–40 in Goleta 1 December 1970–17 February 1971 is the largest winter total for an extended period. Since the mid-1980s, this species has been found even less frequently in District C, with relatively few individuals seen most years. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has recorded this species on slightly fewer than half the counts, with a high of just 18 birds (30 December 2005); and in District V, Lawrence's Goldfinch is very rare before February, with a high of up to 12 near New Cuyama 14 December 2019–2 January 2020; whereas 86 in the Cuyama Valley and Sierra Madre foothill region on 24–25 January 2026 probably involved a number of early arrivals.

American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*)

Fairly common to irregularly common fall transient and winter visitor in District C, uncommon and local there in late spring and summer. Uncommon in Districts I and V in fall, winter, and early spring; rare or absent in summer. Very rare in District M.

American Goldfinches are most numerous in and near riparian areas, particularly those dominated by willow, cottonwood, or sycamore. During fall and winter, this species is also found in flocks in weedy fields, in Liquidambar [Sweetgum] *(Liquidambar styraciflua)* and eucalyptus trees in parks and residential areas, and occasionally at feeders. Medium-sized to large flocks, rarely of up to 150 birds (e.g., South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields 20 August 2006), may form at this season. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 673 individuals (31 December 1977). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has found up to 100 birds (28 December 2010). In contrast, summer records in District I are relatively few and there are very few breeding records. It is likely that a fair number of reports from a wide variety of inland sites at all seasons are inaccurate, as many observers do not appreciate the scarcity of this species inland. American Goldfinch is a very rare visitor in District M, even at lower elevations such as at San Marcos Pass. Very few have been reliably reported in the Figueroa or Big Pine Mountain areas. In District V, there are no valid records between late April and mid-September.

It is possible that this species has declined as a breeder since the late 1900s, although hard data are limited.

Determining accurate arrival and departure dates of migrants is difficult, although they probably do not appear in fall until mid- or late September, and most are gone in spring by mid-April, with a few lingering into early May.

LONGSPURS (CALCARIIDAE)

Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*)

Very rare to rare fall transient in District C and, probably, District V; casual in District I. Casual in winter. One spring record in District M.

Lapland Longspurs are found in fields of dirt and very sparse, short grass, often in flocks of Horned Larks. The first record for Santa Barbara County was 26 October 1971 off South Patterson Avenue in Goleta. Since then, it was recorded 27 times through 1993 in District C. These records were from the Santa Maria Valley (13), the Goleta area (13), and Carpinteria (1). Most fell between 15 October and 20 November. Earlier records included 9 October 1981 Santa Maria River mouth, 9 October 1990 Carpinteria, and 10 October 1985 Goleta. The latest records were of 1 that lingered near Guadalupe through 23 December 1980 and 1 in Goleta 22 December 1984. One individual at sea ca. 155 mi (250 km) WSW of Santa Rosa Island 14 September 1987 was not only at an unusual locality but was also very early. During this period there were also three records for the Cuyama Valley: 3 December 1972 (3), 19 November 1978, and 20 November 1982.

Between 1994–2025, there were 33 records (involving 45 individuals) in District C, of which 22 were from the North Coast (in both the Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys) and 9 were from the South Coast (5 from Goleta, 1 in Carpinteria 31 October 2007 (ph. SBMNH), and singles in Santa Barbara 23 November 2015 and 17 October 2016 (ph. SBMNH)). These reports fell between 1 October (2006, Santa Maria River mouth) and through 28 November, except for later birds in Goleta 13–26 December 1998 and 15 December 2005, 2 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 16 December 2001, 1 near Lompoc 9 December 2022 and 2 there 10 December 2023, up to 3 in vic. Devereux Slough 1–3 December 2023, and 1 near Lompoc 29 December 2024.

One bird landed on a cruise ship off vic. Monterey County 12 October 2022 and was still aboard later that same day off western Santa Barbara County (ph. SBMNH).

In District I, 1 was near Santa Ynez 15 November 2004 (ph. SBMNH); up to 6 birds (29 January 2012) wintered along Armour Ranch Road near Santa Ynez 6 November 2011–24 March 2012 (ph. SBMNH), with 3 remaining on 30 March; 1 was again at the latter location 24 February–13 March 2013; up to 3 were there 1–30 November 2013; and 1 was found 18 December 2014.

In District V, singles were near New Cuyama 27 November 2004, near Ventucopa 5 November 2006, and along Foothill Road 12–20 November 2022. Additional coverage of that area may show this species to be somewhat regular in late fall.

There is also one very unusual record of a presumed spring migrant in District M: near Madulce Peak 14 March 1985.

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*)

Very rare fall transient in District C and, probably, District V. Recently discovered wintering very locally some years in District I; casual in District V.

Chestnut-collared Longspurs are found in dirt, agricultural, and short-grass fields containing somewhat heavier cover than those preferred by other longspurs. They occur singly as well as in flocks of Horned Larks. The first records were 25 October 1971 at the Santa Barbara Harbor breakwater and 26–31 October 1971 off South Patterson Avenue in Goleta (up to 3). This species was subsequently recorded 16 times (involving 23 individuals) through 1993 in District C between 4+ October (1980, Goleta) and 15 November. These records were from the Santa Maria Valley (4) and the Goleta area (13). Between 1994 and 2024, there were an additional 11 coastal

records (involving 25 individuals), 5 from the North Coast and 4 from the South Coast between 19 October and through 28 November (2024, Elings Park, Santa Barbara), plus an individual offshore ca. 46 mi (75 km) SW of Point Arguello 20 October 2009 and a late-lingering bird at Elings Park 19 November–31 December 2006 (ph. *NAB* 61:330, SBMNH). A flock of up to 13 at the former waterfowl ponds near the Santa Ynez River mouth 19–25 October 2003 was a high count.

There are six records for the Cuyama Valley, five in fall and one in winter: 19 November 1978, 1 November 1979 (4), 9 November 1992, 27 November 2004, 5 November 2006, and 27 December 2020–8 February 2021 (up to 5; ph. SBMNH).

Beginning in November 2006, Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found wintering some years in small-to-moderate numbers in the Santa Ynez Valley centered in the Armour Ranch Road area near Santa Ynez. Up to 2 birds from 12 November 2006+, increased to up to 75 from 6–15 January 2007, with 25+ remaining 1 March and 7 on 17 March 2007. In early 2008, up to 32 were found there 24 January–26 February (ph. SBMNH); followed by up to 40 present 27 November 2008–8 January 2009, up to 20 from 1 November 2009–31 January 2010, up to 25 between 26 October–28 December 2010, up to 15 between 5 November–27 December 2011, up to 35 between 7 November 2012–24 February 2013 (ph. SBMNH), and with 1 remaining 5 March, but only up to 2 there 10–29 November 2013, and just single birds on 6 November 2016 and 21 December 2018.

Thick-billed [McCown's] Longspur (*Rhynchophanes mccownii*)
Casual visitor in Districts C, I, and V.

There are five records. One off Black Road west of Santa Maria 30 November 1979–18 February 1980 frequented a sparse, short-grass sheep pasture in the company of a large number of Horned Larks. One was in District V near Cuyama 6 January 2007. Three were in District I along Armour Ranch Road near Santa Ynez 19 November 2011 with 2 remaining through 30 March 2012 (ph. SBMNH); a total of 3 were there again between 28 December 2012–13 March 2013 (ph. SBMNH); and 1 was found 19 January–10 February 2015. [One reported in the Santa Ynez Valley near Santa Ynez, with Chestnut-collared Longspurs, 12 December 2006–9 January 2007 was not conclusively documented.]

NEW WORLD SPARROWS AND ALLIES (PASSERELLIDAE)

Cassin's Sparrow (*Peucaea cassinii*)
Accidental.

One was singing in upper Miguelito Canyon south of Lompoc 9 May 1987 (ph. *WB* 25:16, SBMNH).

Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)
Uncommon and local summer resident in Districts C, I, and M; rare in winter. Very rare transient and winter visitor away from breeding localities.

Grasshopper Sparrows frequent large grasslands, often those with springs and seeps nearby, or smaller grasslands with a mosaic of sparse and dense grasses with widely scattered low shrubs used as perches. Their numbers have probably declined throughout Southern California because of the fragmentation and loss of this habitat due to development, over-grazing, and other factors. In contrast, reports have increased greatly since the 1980s, but this is almost certainly the result of increased observer coverage of Grasshopper Sparrow habitat. Numbers also may vary substantially from year to year at specific sites in response to rainfall amounts and grazing pressure. In many areas, it is not clear whether most birds migrate out of the county for the

winter or whether they are largely permanent residents which remain undetected through most of the non-breeding season until they start singing again in early spring.

In District C, they are known to breed on the grassy hillsides in the Casmalia Hills in the Point Sal/Corralitos Canyon area and on nearby north Vandenberg SFB (e.g., San Antonio Terrace, possibly Burton Mesa). This population was not discovered until 1981; a census of the area between late April and June 1981 produced at least 30 individuals, and 19 were found 5 April 1987. The population there declined in subsequent years (e.g., up to 8 singing from 4–28 June 1990, 1 seen 13 May 2000, 2 singing 2 June 2006, 5 singing 16 June 2012, 5 singing 15 June 2014, 1 on 21 June & 7 August 2023), but 12 singing birds were near Corralitos Creek from May–July 1991, 15 were in the Point Sal/Corralitos Canyon area 29 June 2018, 14 were there 26 May 2024, and 13 on 5 May 2025. If migratory, "returning" breeders probably arrive beginning in March (e.g., 8 March 1996 north Vandenberg SFB (2), 23 March 1990 near Point Sal) and most have probably departed by September. Two were at Point Sal 14 October 1991.

Other localities in Districts C and I that support probable or definite breeders—from north to south and west to east—(and with maximum counts) include:

- Graciosa Road south of Orcutt (2 singing 30 March 2011);
- hillsides bordering Barka Slough and the western Los Alamos Valley (up to 6 during the early 1990s, 5 on 21 June 2022);
- along Foxen Canyon Road (3 on 4 April 2001);
- Los Flores Ranch Open Space (4 on 3 July 2025);
- north side of the Santa Ynez River mouth (1 on 15 May 1987, 23 March 2026);
- Surf Pasture, south of Santa Ynez River (3 on 16 June 2023);
- just east of Lompoc (1 during June 1987);
- near the south gate, south Vandenberg SFB (4 on 7 July 1991, 3 on 16 June 2023);
- upper Honda Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB (1 on 25 June 1988);
- east of Tranquillon Peak (large count of 27 territories 6–13 May 2011);
- Miguelito Canyon and Road area southwest of Lompoc [bordering District C] (up to 8 during the early 1990s, 24 singing May 2011, up to 5 singing variously April–July 2012–2026);
- vic. "La Tinta Basin" near upper Jalama Road in western Santa Ynez Mountains (large count of 19 birds 11 May 2024);
- Ytias Creek, southeast of Lompoc (1 found 7 June 1988);
- Santa Rosa Hills, southwest of Buellton (4 noted 9 May 1985);
- Armour Ranch Road near Santa Ynez (2 during spring 2011 & 2026);
- Alisos Road near Santa Ynez (up to 3 from 23–25 March 2013);
- Jalama Beach County Park (singing 21 March 2017);
- Cojo Ranch/Point Conception area (10–15 birds on 20–21 May 1989, 18 on 21 May 2024);
- Hollister Ranch (1 on 28 May 1975);
- near Refugio (2 seen 28 March–18 April 1985, 1 found 28 May 1994, 2 heard in spring 2011);
- Las Flores Canyon/Ocean Mesa (1 on 21 April 1988, 2 on 25 May 2022);
- Gato Canyon, west of Goleta (3 present 27 April 1977 (*UCSB), 2 seen 21 April 1979, 1 there 25 March 1997);
- Las Varas Canyon area, west of Goleta (1 noted 2 June 1985, 5–6 found 5 May–22 June 2001);
- Santa Barbara Ranch, west of Goleta (5 singing 25 May 2011);
- "Naples" area, near Goleta (3 on 10 March 2015, 1 on 16 June 2025);
- Farren Road, western Goleta (up to 3 present May–June 1993, and 2–4 most years thereafter through 2026);

- Ellwood Mesa, western Goleta (24 April–10 May 1991, 1–2 annually 2009–2012, 6 territories in both 2013 and 2014 [25+ March], up to 3 adults 18 March–13 June with 2 fledglings 14–23 May 2015, up to 3 birds from March–May 2016, 2 on 27 June 2017, up to 3 from 21 June–17 July 2018, 1 on 21 April 2019, 1 on 27 June 2023);
- More Mesa in Goleta/Santa Barbara (singing 10–11 July 1977, May–early June 2004 (up to 3), 22 May–10 June 2007, 29 June 2013 (4), 7 May–2 June 2015 (up to 7), and 6 April–7 July 2022);
- San Marcos Foothills, near base of San Marcos Pass in Santa Barbara (5+ present 17 April–June 1982, 2 there 13 March 1983, up to 5 seen March–May 1985, 2 there April 1998; full surveys beginning in 1999 produced 25 during May 1999, with several fledglings June–July, 11–12 birds in April 2000, 7 birds as early as 17 March and peaking at 47 birds 12 May 2001, but only 6 there 19 May 2002 during a dry year, 6–7 adults and 5–6 juveniles 7 July 2003, 7–8 present in 2004 and 2006, 4 in 2007, but only single birds most years thereafter).

One bird frequenting saltmarsh vegetation at Goleta Slough 22 June 2007 was at an odd location for the date.

Grasshopper Sparrows were formerly more widespread as breeders along the South Coast. They were recorded as "breeding on the coast near Santa Barbara in 1875" (Henshaw 1876, Willet 1910b). In 1910, the species was a "common summer resident in the vicinity of Santa Barbara, California, where a nest with eggs and several nests with young were found that summer" (Bowles 1911a). One was on "Mission Hill" in Santa Barbara 5 May 1913. It was still being recorded regularly in the Santa Barbara area as of April 1917.

At the lower elevation of District M, Grasshopper Sparrows breed at scattered locations on extensive grassy slopes south and west of Figueroa Mountain. And they tend to winter annually where those grasslands are infused with springs and seeps. Breeding areas include: at ca. 2400 ft elevation in the vic. De la Guerra Spring along upper Happy Canyon Road southeast of Figueroa Mountain (nesting-season birds first found in 2001 but known there in winter since mid-1980s [see below]; singing birds noted as early as 12 March (2005) along Figueroa Mountain Road at Tunnel Road and to the west of Figueroa Mountain (where 1 or 2 singing 2 May 2009); and on the adjacent upper slopes of Sedgwick Reserve in District I (family group(s) 12 July 1995, and annually since at least May 2007, with 6–8 singing there in 2010 but only 2 in 2013, and as late as 25 September 2001). These sites were undoubtedly occupied before the years of discovery. One or 2 adults with juveniles were seen at 3700 ft elevation along East Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains June–July 1974, and 1 was heard in that general area 11 May 2003. This species may also breed in some of the grassy potreros in the Sierra Madre, but these areas have received little or no observer coverage.

In late fall and winter, 1 was at Hidden Potrero, near Upper Oso, 15 November 1938 (Bartholomew 1940), and 1 was west of Hidden Potrero 9 December 1992. Beginning in 1985, to the present, Grasshopper Sparrows have been found in winter where they are known to breed on grassy slopes near De la Guerra Spring at the lower elevation of District M: up to 22 were there 16 November–December 1985 (*UCSB), an exceptional total for this season; other winter totals at that site do not exceed 3–4 individuals. The Cachuma CBC, which includes this area, has found 1–3 individuals there on about half the counts, although such CBC searches are typically brief and incomplete. Nearby, 2 were along upper Figueroa Mountain Road west or southwest of Figueroa Mountain 11 December 1992, 1 was there 31 December 2025, and 2 were seen 16 January 2026; and 1 was at Figueroa Mountain Road at Tunnel Road 8 February 2004, also areas where the species is known to breed. In District I, single birds were seen at multiple sites in the Santa Ynez area (e.g., Sedgwick Reserve (mostly), San Lorenzo Seminary) during fall and winter: 17 January 1999, 17 February 2002, 7 November 2006, 4 February–11 March 2012, 16

October 2013, 16 February 2014, 1–22 November 2014 (up to 2), 9 November 2015, 30 December 2020, 9–11 February 2022, 30 September 2022–3 March 2023, 22–25 December 2023, 20 November–11 December 2024, and 19 November-30 December 2025 (up to 3); and 1 was at Storke Flat at Lake Cachuma 11 February 2023 and 1+ was along eastern Alisos Road 27 December 2024.

Along the North Coast, winter reports from north Vandenberg SFB cited in Holmgren and Collins (1999) are of 6 in fields on the south side Barka Slough 10 January 1996, 1 south of Wall Beach 16 February 1996, and 1 south of Pine Canyon 1 March 1996. On south Vandenberg SFB, 1 was along Arguello Road 14 December 2014. One individual near Orcutt 22 December 2013 was not at a known breeding site.

Along the South Coast, a fairly regular wintering site is the San Marcos Foothills (where the species breeds, see above). The first winter bird there was discovered perhaps as early as 1983 (see above), but definitely by winter 1998–1999, with singles there also in 1999–2000, 2006–2007, 2007–2008, 2008–2009, and in early 2013, 2014, 2021, and 2023; and with 2–3 found during December 2000, December 2001–January 2002, 28 December 2003, December–January 2013–2014 and 2014–2015, and 20 January 2022. Another winter record from a breeding site comes from Ellwood Mesa on 4 February 2023. Single birds away from known nesting locales were at Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 15 September 2014–6 January 2015 and 8 December 2018.

Grasshopper Sparrows are very rare migrants away from the breeding and wintering areas. There are 23 records of fall transients in District C, only 3 of which are from along the North Coast: Goleta 21 September 1972 and 2–10 November 1979 (ph. SBMNH); Montecito 29 October 1982; Goleta 30 September–7 October 1984, 14 September 1986, 24 October 1986, 6 October 1987, and 13 October 1990 (*UCSB); near the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 November–1 December 1995; Goleta 8 October 2002; Carpinteria Salt Marsh 6 October 2007, 3 October 2009, and 10 October 2010; Goleta 27 October 2013; Carpinteria 7 October 2014; agricultural field near Lompoc 30 September 2018; Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 6–7 September 2019; on beach at Jalama Beach County Park 29 November 2020; Carpinteria Creek 12 October 2021; Carpinteria Salt Marsh 27 November 2021; near Devereux Slough 28 October 2022 and 14–17 November 2023; Point Conception 30 October 2023; and Elings Park 5 November 2024.

One singing in a small grassy plot off Turnpike Road X Highway 101 in Santa Barbara 29 April 1987 is the only definite record of a spring transient well away from breeding sites.

Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*)

Uncommon and local summer resident in District V, where very rare in winter. Very rare fall migrant, casual winter visitor, and casual spring visitor elsewhere. One summer record in District M.

Black-throated Sparrows breed in small numbers in semidesert scrub in Ballinger, Deer Park, and Quatal [mostly Ventura County] Canyons bordering the Cuyama Valley, where first discovered during the late 1970s. Five were in Ballinger Canyon 14 June 1977. The high counts there since the mid-1990s are of 4 in Deer Park Canyon 4 August 2017, up to 4 there 28 May–9 June 2018, 7 there 16 June 2021, 4 there 19 June 2026, and see below. There is also a record of a bird where Santa Barbara Canyon Road crosses the Cuyama River in May 1994, of 2 birds in Santa Barbara Canyon 28 May 1994, and 1 there 5 April 2008. These sites are at the northwest limit of the species' range in California. These birds are thought to arrive by late March (1 there 9 March 1996 was very early) and depart mostly by late August (e.g., 27–28 August 2019 Deer Park Canyon). One at the base of Ballinger Canyon 10 November 1990; up to 3 in Deer Park Canyon 20 January+ 2020 (ph. SBMNH), with 5 there on 1 March, 3 there 24 October 2020, 1 on 9 February 2021, up to 3 from 6–27 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH), 1 on 15 November 2024, and up to 2 on 25–26 January 2025; and 1 in Ballinger Canyon 25 January 2026 were more unusual for late fall and winter. Singles in farmland south of New Cuyama 21 March 2021 and 11 March 2024 were at atypical locations, and the latter was early.

The fall records away from District V are as follows: South Coast—Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 16 August–6 September 1981 and then 22 additional records between Gaviota and Carpinteria through 2025, between 28 August (2015, Lake Los Carneros) and 10 October, plus a late bird in Goleta 20 November–21 December 1987; North Coast—Jalama Beach County Park 24 September 1996, near Sisquoc 20 September 2020; District I—base of Little Pine Mountain 3 November 1988, Solvang 8 November 1991, near Santa Ynez 28 August–5 September 2002, 1–2 September 2006, and 20 August–2 September 2013 (up to 2), Lake Cachuma 20 September 2005, and Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 11–12 September 2018 and 19 August 2022; and District M—up to 3 near La Cumbre Peak 16 November–5 December (late) 1971 and 1 off Figueroa Mountain Road 19 August 2026.

In winter, 1 was near Lake Cachuma 7 November 1997–3 April 1998, 1 was at Twin Lakes Golf Course in Goleta 5 January–19 February 2008 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was at Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 7–9 December 2008 (late fall migrant?) (ph. SBMNH), and 1 was near Sisquoc 14 December 2020–26 February 2021.

The only spring reports away from District V are at Mono Guard Station 5 April 1939 (Bartholomew 1940), Carpinteria 18 May 1968, San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 12–14 May 2001, Carpinteria 27 March 2005, Montecito 13 May 2006, and near Maria Ygnacio Creek in Goleta 28 April 2011 (ph. SBMNH).

Very unusual in summer and in District M was a bird along West Camino Cielo 4–13 June 2018.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

Fairly common to common permanent resident in all Districts, least numerous in the more developed areas of District C. An influx of birds occurs during fall and winter. Possibly declining along the South Coast.

Lark Sparrows are found in grassland areas (particularly grassland mixed with oaks) locally throughout the county, and in orchards and agricultural fields (primarily fall through spring). They are very rare at feeders. Breeding areas include the foothill region along the South Coast (particularly from Goleta west); open, grassy areas along the North Coast (where some individuals range into nearby riparian habitats); the Santa Ynez and Los Alamos Valleys; the more extensive grassy areas throughout much of District M, including those found in open coniferous forest (e.g., Figueroa Mountain); and in canyons and foothills bordering the Cuyama Valley (where 25 were noted 1 May 1979). The species was absent from the Big Pine Mountain area, however, except for 3 there 15–16 June 2012 and 8 found 14–16 June 2013. Several late-spring and summer birds have been found well out on the South Coast coastal plain at Ellwood Mesa and UCSB's West Campus; 2 adults at a nest near Devereux Slough 8–9 May 1994 and a family group at Ellwood Mesa 22 June 2018 were more unusual, and pair copulations have been noted at Ellwood Mesa in in spring 2020 and at North Campus Open Space in spring 2018 and 2020. Post-breeding dispersal may commence already in latter June, however, as evidenced by a juvenile bird at Alice Keck Park in Santa Barbara 19 June 2019.

During the non-breeding season, ca. 250 in Salisbury Canyon in the Sierra Madre foothills 13 March 2006 and ca. 200 near New Cuyama 14 November 2019 were very large single-site counts. Cachuma CBCs have found up to 332 birds (28 December 2010). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded up to 203 birds (28 December 1991), though very few other totals have exceeded 100 individuals, and a mere 17 birds were found 31 December 2016. This species is uncommon to rare on much of the outer coastal plain between Goleta and Carpinteria, where it occurs primarily in fall and winter (late July through March; earliest arrival date: see above; late departure: 12 May 1991 Atascadero Creek, Goleta). Along the North Coast, a recent high count was 32 birds in Orcutt 14 September 2024.

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)

Very rare fall transient along the South Coast. Casual along the North Coast, in District I, and as a spring migrant in Districts I and V. Casual in winter in Districts C and V.

The 25 fall records along the South Coast include: 3 in Santa Barbara 20 July 1905 (early) (Mailliard 1905); Goleta 23 September 1978, 3–5 September 1979, 19 September 1979, 14 September 1982, 5 October 1982, 4–9 October 1984, 6–7 September 1985, 27–28 September 1987, 12 September 1988, 6–12 October 1988, 22–23 October 1988 (ph. SBMNH), and 22 September 1989; Gaviota State Park 9–13 September 1992 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria 30 September 1996; Goleta 21 September 1998, 19 September 1999, 5 September 2003, 3 October 2003, and 9 September 2007; Carpinteria 10 September 2008; Goleta 29 September 2011 (ph. SBMNH); Refugio State Beach 17 September 2015 (ph. SBMNH); Point Conception 15 October 2022; and More Mesa, Goleta, 25–27 November 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

One bird which appeared on the main UCSB campus in Goleta on 21 November 2017 subsequently wintered at that site and was last seen 25 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH). Another was at the border between Isla Vista and UCSB West Campus from 4 January–22 March 2025.

The only records for the North Coast are from the Santa Maria River mouth 6 September 1997 and Jalama Beach County Park 1–5 October 2024.

The only records in District I are of a bird near Solvang 16 October–9 December 2014 (ph. SBMNH) and a spring vagrant at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 24 March 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

In District V, three records are from spring: singing male in Ballinger Canyon 9 May 1982, 1 near New Cuyama 16–18 April 2010, and another in Ballinger Canyon 26–28 April 2011. Also two winter birds: near Cuyama 28–30 January 2025 and Wasioja Road 21 December 2025.

Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)

Uncommon summer resident in District M, rare in Districts C and I. Uncommon to rare transient in Districts C, I, and M; fairly common in District V. Uncommon and very local winter visitor along the South Coast and in Districts I, M, and V.

Chipping Sparrows breed in open conifer and oak woodland underlain by grass. They are uncommon and local on the highest mountains but are rare in the Santa Ynez Mountains. Almost all recent records are from the Big Pine Mountain area, where summer surveys, 1981–2026, typically recorded 4–15 individuals, and it was missed several years, but also with high counts of 30–37 birds on 6–7 June and 25–27 June 1992. Formerly recorded in the Figueroa Mountain area, the only breeding-season records there since 2000 are from Manzana Trail 28 May 2012, Ranger Peak 20 August 2021 (possibly an early fall transient), and Figueroa Campground 5 June 2026 (2). Elsewhere, 1 was in Bates Canyon in the Sierra Madre on 16 July 2020. In the Santa Ynez Range, a small number of birds were seen in May and June during the 1980s and 1990s in the Refugio Pass area (summit area and down the north slope; maximum count of 5 birds 9 June 1993); a specimen was taken there 1 May 1965 (*UCSB). Eggs were collected at Bear Creek and at Kelly Creek on the north side of San Marcos Pass, at the border with District I, 14 May 1933 (WFVZ), 21 May 1933 (CAS), and 17 June 1933 (SBMNH).

In District I, this species bred on the Sedgwick Reserve above Santa Ynez in at least 2019 and 2020. Several individuals have been seen in June and early July near the Santa Ynez River bridge on Refugio Road, as well as during multiple years at Nojoqui Falls Park and nearby Alisal Road where an adult was feeding a juvenile 1 July 2017 and where 3 juveniles were seen 29 June 2018. One was found freshly dead near the Santa Ynez River 5 mi (8 km) west of Buellton 10 June 1993. One was singing in oak grassland south of Paradise Road on 31 May 1993.

In District C, 2 in the Hollister Ranch area west of Gaviota 1 May 1975 and 1 in Gato Canyon (west of Goleta) 27 April 1977 (*UCSB) may have been transients or coastal breeders (suitable oak woodland and grassy hillsides exist in these areas). One definite nesting record was provided by a pair with at least 1 fledgling in vic. Stow Grove Park in northern Goleta 3–11 June 2010 and again 7 June 2020, with 1 adult there 18 July 2023. One was singing near Glen Annie

Canyon 9 June 2023. Two were near Gobernador Canyon in Carpinteria 24 July 2020 and 2 were singing along Foothill Road in Carpinteria 13 June–6 July 2025. A few pairs formerly bred in Santa Barbara between the 1890s and at least the early 1930s (*CAS); 1 was reported in Montecito 12–16 July 1956.

In District V, 1 in Ballinger Canyon 14 June 1977 was unseasonal.

In winter, this species occurs singly and in small flocks in parks and around ranch yards in Districts I and V and very locally in orchards and short-grass environments (e.g., golf courses, parks) in District C. In District I, most winter reports have come from the Santa Ynez/Los Olivos area. A count of ca. 100 at the Sedgwick Reserve 17 January 2024 was very high. The Cachuma CBC has found this species on most counts, but the maximum is only 10 birds (28 December 2010). In District V, a two-day survey in the Cuyama Valley 6–7 January 2024 produced the local high of 14 birds. In District M, 15 were counted along Catway Road/Zaca Ridge Road near Figueroa Mountain 26 February 2024. At this season, it is very rare in District C away from just a handful of mostly ephemeral (lasting just several years) locations. Since the early 1980s, such coastal sites have included Waller Park (up to 25 birds most years, 1960s–2000, lower numbers and irregular since through 2025) and the Rancho Maria Golf Course near Santa Maria (at least 2008–2023, with 26 birds there 23 December 2017); several foothill ranches (e.g., La Patera Ranch) in northern Goleta; agricultural fields bordering San Jose Creek in Goleta (during late 1990s, now developed); San Marcos Pass Golf Course in Santa Barbara (before it was developed in the late 1980s); Santa Barbara Municipal Golf Course (many years, with high counts of 20 birds on 2 January 2016 and 16 on 4 January 2025); Alameda Park in Santa Barbara (between 1996–1999 and again in early 2016); and Westmont College in Montecito (through the 1990s, only very rarely and irregularly since). A long-lasting site has been “Fairview Gardens” in northern Goleta, which hosted birds almost every winter from 2000–2001 through at least 2015–2016 (high count 15–25 birds on XXXX, declining to just 1–5 individuals annually during the late 2000s). The total population at these various sites usually has been between 5 and 20 individuals. The highest Santa Barbara CBC totals since the 1980s are of 25 birds on 5 January 2002 and 24 on 2 January 2016; but only a single individual was found on 4 January 2014. Prior to the 1980s, a flock of up to 30 wintered in Oak Park in Santa Barbara every year between 1959 and 1966. A total of 46 were reported on the Santa Barbara CBC 30 December 1967 and 37 were reported on 29 December 1979. Most wintering birds depart by mid-April.

As a transient through the lowlands, this species is very uncommon in fall (late August to early November) and rare in spring (March–early May), occurring primarily in weedy areas along creeks and in fields, on lawns, and in orchards. During fall and away from probable wintering localities, Chipping Sparrows are most regularly found in the Goleta area and in the Cuyama Valley (where up to 20 have been seen in a day). The earliest arrival date of a definite fall transient is 16 August 2013 Santa Ynez River mouth. In spring, 1 on north Vandenberg SFB 27 April 1991 was particularly unusual for the North Coast; 1 there 8 March 1996 was also a presumed spring migrant. One in Deer Park Canyon in the Cuyama Valley 17 May 2025 is the latest record of a certain migrant.

Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*)

Rare fall transient in District C, casual in Districts I and V. Very rare in winter. Two records of spring migrants.

Clay-colored Sparrows have been found primarily in brushy and weedy areas along the coast. The first record for Santa Barbara County was 7–8 November 1971 at Goleta Slough. Through 1993, there was a total of 101 fall records from District C between 1 September and 16 November. All but five of these records came from along the South Coast. One along Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 20 August–2 September 1988 was very early. The high season total was an exceptional 25 birds in 1989; the next highest was 11 individuals in 1993. Up to 2 in Goleta

12–22 November 1987 and up to 2 in Lompoc 13 November–2 December 1993 were late. Between 1994–2025, an additional 170 fall individuals accumulated in District C (135 South Coast, 35 North Coast) between 27 August (1994, Goleta) and 24–26 November (2005, Santa Maria) and 1 December (1994, near the Santa Ynez River mouth). Totals of 7 along the South Coast in 1994 and 8 there in 2015 were high counts for that period; 4 at Jim May Park in Santa Maria 3 November 2013 was an exceptional single-site concentration.

In District I, single birds were in the Santa Ynez area 30 September–16 October 1994, 22–26 September 2002, and 18 September 2004; near Los Olivos 9 October 2005; near Nojoqui Falls Park 29 November 2012; near Santa Ynez 28 September 2016 and 1 October 2019; and at Lake Cachuma 24–29 September 2025.

In District V, singles were at Richardson Park in New Cuyama 2–16 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH) and at New Cuyama 12 November 2020.

Winter records through early 1994 were: Montecito 5 November 1975–13 February 1976 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 3 January–24 March 1987 and again 2 January 1988, Lompoc 12 November 1990–20 January 1991, Goleta 28 December 1991–3 March 1992 (ph. *AB* 46:317, SBMNH), and Santa Barbara 11 December 1992–13 January 1993. Between late 1994 and early 2026 there were an additional 24 winter records along the South Coast, 5 of which were found during 2001–2002 and 4 each in 2011–2012 and 2023–2024; as well as 11 winter records from along the North Coast, as far inland as near Sisquoc (on the border with District I) 17 January–31 March 2007 (ph. SBMNH); and three from District I at Buellton from 5 December 2020–7 January 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and near Santa Ynez 29 December 2022 and 21 December 2023–22 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH). Single (same?) birds at Waller Park, Santa Maria, remained through 9 April 2000 and 11 April 2002. Exceptional was a bird in the San Roque area of Santa Barbara from 6 December 2001 which remained through the very late date of 13 May 2002. Individuals in northwest Goleta 7 April 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and in vic. Santa Barbara City College 12–14 April 2023 (ph. SBMNH) presumably wintered locally.

The only records involving likely spring migrants are of an injured bird found on a Santa Barbara street in early May [exact date uncertain] 1990 and 1 in residential northern Goleta 5 May 2026.

Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*)

Uncommon to fairly common summer resident in District M and very locally in Districts C and V and at the upper elevations of District I. Casual transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I.

Black-chinned Sparrows breed in open chaparral in the Santa Ynez, San Rafael, and Sierra Madre Mountains. They were most easily found along East Camino Cielo (at least formerly; but sporadic during the 2000s, with a high of 4 individuals from 2–4 June 2013), along West Camino Cielo (e.g., 4 at Santa Ynez Peak 25 April 2014), in the Little Pine Mountain area, on the lower, south-facing slopes in the Big Pine Mountain area, and in much of the Sierra Madre westward to just west of Miranda Pine Mountain. Small numbers are present regularly down to the upper elevations of District I and near the border with District V in the northern Sierra Madre foothills (e.g., Dry Canyon, upper Santa Barbara Canyon, Bates Canyon—where 14 were tallied 18–19 May 2024); and very rarely down to the upper elevations of District C along the South Coast west to Gaviota. The highest counts are 30 along East Camino Cielo in May 1971 (but where there has been a slow decline over the past 25+ years and the species is now scarce and irregular) and 23 in the Big Pine Mountain area 6–7 June 1992 (but where none recorded most years between 1981–1991, and 7 or fewer recorded only some years since, through 2026). A singing bird and nesting pair in chokecherry and manzanita thickets near the summits of Big Pine and West Big Pine Mountains 10–12 June 1993 were at slightly higher elevations than normal. Overall numbers were substantially higher in 1992 and 1993, for example, following wet winters.

This species arrives beginning in late March (earliest arrival dates: 16 March 1984 near Don Victor Valley and 24 March 1993 near Los Prietos). At least 10 were in the La Cumbre Peak area 6 April 1984. Most individuals probably have departed by mid-August.

In District V, Black-chinned Sparrows are found regularly in Ballinger, Deer Park, and Quatal [mostly Ventura County] Canyons, with a high count in Ballinger of 8 birds on 28 April 2024, whereas up to 5 birds have been tallied in Deer Park Canyon, including one individual carrying food 14 May 2020.

In District C near the western limit of the species' range, and at low elevation, (from east to west), 1 was along Baron Ranch Trail 28 May 2018, 4 were near Gaviota Pass 23 May 1999, 2 were there 28 May 2018, and 3 on 17 June 2021, 1 was on Hollister Ranch west of Gaviota 1 May 1985, 1 was along Sudden Road on south Vandenberg SFB from 12–27 May 2018, 5 were found singing in upper Honda Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 14 May 1988, and 2 were there 30 May 2021. More unusual was a bird on the north side of the Santa Ynez River mouth, only 3 mi (5 km) from the ocean, 8 May 1996.

There are very few records away from breeding areas. All such reports, except three, are from along the South Coast, primarily in foothill canyons. Fall records are: Santa Barbara 8 August 1964, 2 in Santa Barbara 13 October 1964, Santa Barbara 21 September 1984, and coastal Goleta 17 September 1989. The only coastal records involving likely spring migrants are from Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, 6 April 1968 and Rattlesnake Canyon, Santa Barbara, 31 March 1969. A spring bird near Devereux Slough 15 May 2007 was exceptional, both in terms of location and the fairly late date. Singles in District I at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez on 2 December 2020 (ph. SBMNH) and 15 November 2023 (ph. SBMNH) might have involved the same individual, with also 1 there 3 September 2025.

In winter, this species has been recorded twice in Santa Barbara, 2 on 13 January 1966 and 1 on 22 January 1970; and once in District I along Alisos Road in the Santa Ynez Valley 20 January 2025. This species is very rare anywhere in California in winter.

Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)

Very uncommon to rare summer visitor in District V, where also very rare in fall and winter. Rare fall and casual spring transient along the South Coast, very rare in District I, and casual along the North Coast and in District M. Casual in winter along the South Coast and in District I.

Brewer's Sparrows are thought to possibly breed very locally in the semidesert scrub in the Cuyama River Valley and adjacent canyons. One was singing in Ballinger Canyon 14 June 1977, 12 were there 1 May 1979, up to 25 were present 1–9 May 1982, and the species has continued to be reported there almost annually in spring since the 1990s to the present, with a high of 10 tallied 23 April 2005; also 1 individual recently in summer from 4–6 June 2024. Three birds were in BLM scrubland north of Ballinger Canyon on 17 May 2025. A total of 9 were in Deer Park Canyon and along the Cuyama River near Ventucopa 4 April 1992 and 1 was there 4 May 2001, and 1 was in lower Quatal Canyon 9 May 1992. Four were singing in Santa Barbara Canyon 27 April 2008, 1 was singing there 21 April 2022, and 1 was present 15 May 2023. Although many of these birds were presumed to be on territory, actual nesting has never been proven. Brewer's are also very uncommon migrants. The species' status in District V during late fall and winter is unclear; records from near Cuyama and New Cuyama include 3 birds on 20 November 2013, up to 4 through 25 November 2019, up to 5 from 29 December 2020–8 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 on 11 March 2024; up to 14 in the extreme southeastern Cuyama Valley south of Ventucopa 5 October 2018–22 April 2019 (ph. SBMNH), 2–3 there again 5 December 2019–14 January 2020 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 on 6 January 2024; 7 in scrubland just north of Ballinger Canyon 16 November 2024; January 2024; 1 in Ballinger Canyon 25 January 2025; and up to 4 in Deer Park Canyon 6–27 January 2024.

As a fall transient, this species is rare but regular along the South Coast in brushy and weedy areas. Most records come from southern Goleta. It occurs between the end of August (earliest arrival dates: 16–17 August 2004 Goleta, 26 August 1981 Goleta) and late October (latest dates: 22 October 1977 Goleta, 27 October 2023 Carpinteria Salt Marsh, and see below). The maximum season total has not exceeded 10 individuals; from 2 to 3 birds is average since the 1990s; and between 1994 and 2025 there were approximately 58 such records.

Along the North Coast, 1 was in Lompoc 3 September 1997, 1 was near the Santa Ynez River mouth 24 September 2005, 1 was at the Santa Maria River mouth 1 October 2006, 1 was at the Santa Ynez River mouth 27–30 September 2017, and 2 were at the Santa Ynez River mouth 15–16 September 2019.

In District I, single birds were near Santa Ynez 21 September 1996, 9 September 2007, 18–20 September 2009, 19 September 2012, 2 were there 17–18 October 2013, singles were seen 23 September 2016, 27 October 2017 (somewhat late), and 19 September 2018, 2 were there 30 September 2020, an exceptional 6 were at Lake Cachuma 19 September 2020, with 1 on 26 September 2022, 1 was at the Sedgwick Preserve 18 October 2023 and another was there 24 September–8 October 2025, and up to 2 were at Lake Cachuma 24 September–2 October 2025.

In District M, 1 was in chaparral near Madulce Peak 11 September 1982, and 1 was along West Camino Cielo 7 September 2002.

Brewer's Sparrows are strictly casual in spring away from District V. Singles were at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 19 April 2005 (ph. SBMNH), La Mesa Park in Santa Barbara 5 May 2007, near Devereux Slough 7 May 2007, Ellwood 21 April 2019 (ph. SBMNH), above Refugio Canyon 24–25 April 2020, and in Toro Canyon near Summerland 28 April 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

There are two winter records in District C: 1 with Chipping Sparrows in Alameda Park, Santa Barbara, 3 January–12 March 1998 and 1 near South Patterson Avenue, Goleta, 5 January 2013 (ph. SBMNH).

There is one winter record in District I: Casey Road near Santa Ynez 30 December 2020–6 January 2021.

Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*)

Uncommon to fairly common transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and M. Rare in District V. Uncommon and local summer resident at the highest elevations in District M. The different subspecies groups are discussed below.

Wintering Fox Sparrows are most numerous in chaparral at the lower and mid- elevations of District M (e.g., along East Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains and in the Cachuma Saddle area in the San Rafael Mountains) and in coastal foothills. They are uncommon in the lowlands in dense brushy areas bordering oak and riparian woodland and in well-vegetated residential areas. Most lowland birds belong to the "Sooty" (*unalaschcensis*) group, whereas individuals of the "Slate-colored" (*schistacea*) and "Thick-billed" groups are most numerous in montane chaparral. For example, birds in oak and riparian woodland, parks, and residential areas mostly belong to the Sooty group, whereas Slate-coloreds are rare and Thick-billeds very rare there; but in montane and foothill chaparral throughout much of the county, Sooties are joined by substantial numbers of Slate-coloreds and Thick-billeds, although the accurate relative abundance of these two latter taxa is uncertain. There are also several sightings of birds appearing intermediate between Slate-colored and "Red" Fox Sparrows (likely *P. i. altivagans*)—see below. Breeding birds—*P. i. stephensi* (part of the "Thick-billed" group)—are found at high elevations in thickets of manzanita, willow, Bitter Cherry, Western Chokecherry, and currants.

Migrant and wintering Fox Sparrows begin arriving at the end of September or in early October. Earliest arrival dates: (uncertain subspecies) 12 September 2017 La Cumbre Peak, 15 September 2016 San Marcos Pass (2), 15 September 2018 Santa Barbara Canyon, 17 September 1990 San Marcos Pass, 20 September 1961 Montecito, and 20 September 1992 Carpinteria; ("Sooty") 10 September 2020 Kinevan Road (very early); ("Thick-billed") 15 September 2018

Santa Barbara Canyon, 17 September 2022 near Gaviota (2); and ("Slate-colored") 19 September 2018 Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez and 20 September 2019 Bates Canyon in Sierra Madre (2). Specimen evidence suggests that one of the most common subspecies of Sooty is *P. i. sinuosa* (*CUMV, MVZ), whereas the evidence for Slate-colored suggests that *P. i. canescens* (*MVZ) occurs regularly. The first Thick-billeds are believed to arrive somewhat earlier than do Sooties and Slate-coloreds, and records before the last week of September probably mostly involve Thick-billed Fox Sparrows. Specimens of all three subspecies of Thick-billed exist from fall and winter, including a number of *P. i. megarhyncha* (*CAS, FMNH, MVZ), at least two identified as *P. i. brevicauda* (*MVZ; Santa Barbara 9 December 1912), and several involving *P. i. stephensi* (*FMNH, MVZ). Three Thick-billeds on south Vandenberg SFB 1 November 2020 was a high count in District C.

Many *stephensi* depart the region during winter; its status after November is somewhat uncertain, although at least small numbers appear to remain. One winter specimen identified as *stephensi* comes from La Cumbre Peak 11 January 1913 (*MVZ). Most locally occurring Thick-billeds in winter are likely *P. i. megarhynca,* which nests farther to the north than does *stephensi,* as well as a few *brevicauda*.

Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 172 Fox Sparrows (29 December 1990); in contrast, a mere 8 individuals were found 31 December 2016. The Cachuma CBC tallied a very high 205 birds on 27 December 2012. During winter 2012–2013, exceptional numbers of Fox Sparrows were in montane chaparral, with 98 counted between Ranger Peak and Davey Brown Campground on 27 December and 90 tallied from Cachuma Saddle to 6 mi (10 km) to the southeast on 13 January; most of these birds were Slate-colored and Thick-billed. Seven birds at Orpet Park, Santa Barbara, 9 January 2008 was a high concentration for a single site along the coast and presumably were all or at least mostly Sooty individuals.

In spring, most individuals have departed by early April, with scattered records into mid-April and a few in late April (e.g., "Sooty" Orcutt through 20 April 2022; "Thick-billed" Carpinteria foothills 22 April 2018 and Refugio Canyon 27 April 2021; "Slate-colored" along Cachuma Creek in Lion Canyon 17 April 2022; and uncertain subspecies at Figueroa Mountain 21 April 2022, Orcutt through 21 April 2023, Gibraltar Reservoir 29 April 1991, and West Camino Cielo 29 April 2014).

Fox Sparrows of the subspecies *P. i. stephensi* are local summer residents in the higher mountains of Southern California. They breed in the San Rafael and Big Pine Mountain areas. Bartholomew (1940) found them nesting "in numbers" on Big Pine Mountain in 1938, 11 were seen there 29 June–1 July 1981, and near-annual summer surveys since then (through 2026) have typically recorded 8–16 individuals, with a high tally of 22 on 13–15 June 2014 but only 2 tallied 12–19 June 2022. Twenty-six individuals were found in the San Rafael Mountain area 18–19 June 1982, 16 were there 10–12 June 1989, but only 6 were seen in both June 1990 and 1991 and only 1 in June 2025. There is also a specimen of *stephensi* from Little Pine Mountain 30 August 1910 (*UCLA). These summer residents are present between mid-April and early September.

There are 14 records of individuals belonging to the "Red" group (almost certainly *P. i. zaboria*), all but 4 from District C: Santa Barbara 1 January 1911 (*UCLA; Bowles 1911b), Santa Barbara 25 December 1974–3 April 1975, near Point Sal 1 January 1980, Goleta 2–16 January 1982, Lompoc 21 December 1993–9 January 1994 (ph. SBMNH), north Vandenberg SFB 28 December 1998, Santa Barbara 10 November 2013–4 March 2014 (ph. SBMNH), Isla Vista 24 November–1 December 2013 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 24–30 November 2013 (ph. SBMNH) and again 23 October–15 December 2014 (ph. SBMNH) and 10 December 2015 (ph. SBMNH), and Santa Maria 22 December 2019; 3 different birds in District I near Santa Ynez 13 April 2011 (late), from 28 November 2011–7 March 2012 (ph. SBMNH), and 11 November 2015 (ph. SBMNH); and 1 from District M along Gibraltar Road 23 March 2018. Some reddish birds appear intermediate between "Red" and "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrows and may be

referable to the form *altivagans*; perhaps, for example, a bird at Santa Ynez 11 January 2010 (*SBMNH) and 1 in Santa Barbara 10 January 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*)
Casual visitor in District C; accidental in District I.

There are eight records, seven in fall from District C: Lake Los Carneros 8 November 1979, near Guadalupe 11 October 1980, Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 14 October 1994, Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 29 October 1995, south Vandenberg SFB 4 November 1995, Santa Ynez River mouth 20 November 1995, and Gaviota State Park 10–12 November 2013 (ph. SBMNH). In addition, 1 was especially unusual in March inland at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 6–21 March 2024. The mid-October records are early for coastal Southern California, where the species is casual.

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)
"Oregon" Junco is a common transient and winter visitor in all Districts, although there is some withdrawal from the highest elevations in winter. Common summer resident in District M, uncommon to fairly common in Districts C and I. "Slate-colored" Junco is a rare-but-regular fall and winter visitor, whereas "Pink-sided" and "Gray-headed" Juncos are very rare to casual.

Dark-eyed Juncos nest predominantly in coniferous and oak woodland. In District C, they also breed in eucalyptus groves. Wintering birds are found in these same habitats, as well as in a variety of short-grass environments near cover (e.g., golf courses, parks, etc.), in riparian woodland, and locally in residential areas. Flocks of rarely up to 150 individuals form during the late fall and winter. Four subspecies or subspecies groups of Dark-eyed Junco have occurred: the "Oregon" Junco (*J. h. oreganus* group), "Slate-colored" Junco (*J. h. hyemalis* group), "Pink-sided" Junco (*J. h. mearnsi)*, and "Gray-headed" Junco (*J. h. caniceps*).

"Oregon" Juncos of the race *thurberi* breed locally, and this subspecies group makes up the overwhelming majority of the Dark-eyed Juncos present during the year. Juncos were formerly restricted to the higher mountains in summer (where common; e.g., up to 80–103 recorded during near-annual summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026). Since the 1930s, however, they have spread out as a breeder into the lowlands. Eggs were collected from the north side of San Marcos Pass 28 May 1933 (Willett 1933). The first known nesting in District C took place in Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, in 1936. By 1965, it was nesting in all the foothill canyons. The first breeding record on the outer coastal plain came from the main UCSB campus in May 1963 (nest with eggs SBMNH). During the 1970s it was discovered breeding in well-vegetated residential areas (e.g., Hope Ranch, Montecito) and in eucalyptus groves along the coast on Vandenberg SFB and in Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria. Along the North Coast, it is a summer resident in stands of eucalyptus, on oak slopes, and in Bishop Pine. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 2324 individuals (29 December 1984). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has found up to 1121 birds (28 December 2012). Transients and wintering birds in the lowlands begin arriving in late September and have mostly departed by early April. They include a number of subspecies from farther north (e.g., *shufeldti*). A flock of 17 Oregons in Ballinger Canyon in District V 16 April 2016 were late, and 2 near Ventucopa through 8 May 2018 were especially so.

The "Slate-colored" Junco is a rare but regular winter visitor and occurs in flocks of Oregon Juncos in all Districts. From 5–8 individuals were typically reported annually in late fall and winter through the early 1990s. Records occurred between late October (e.g., 24 October 2015 Goleta) and mid-March (latest record: 23 March 1977 Santa Barbara). As many as 12 individuals (2 January 1988) were reported on Santa Barbara CBCs. Since then, the number of reports declined many years to ca. 1–3 birds per season, perhaps the result of fewer observers carefully sifting through winter junco flocks, or in their not reporting their sightings of this subspecies. Three together at Waller Park in Santa Maria 27 November 2009, 3 at Ranger Peak 16

November 2013, and 4 at the Santa Barbara Municipal Golf Course 17 December 2015 are the high single-site counts; totals of 9 and 8 were reported county-wide during winters 2017–2018 and 2018–2019, respectively. Singles in Refugio Canyon 7 April 2021 and at Carpinteria Salt Marsh Preserve 9–10 April 2022 were late.

Individuals appearing intermediate between Slate-colored and Oregon Juncos have been observed on a number of occasions. Whether such birds represent true *J. h. cismontanus* ("Cassiar" Junco), which breeds primarily in interior British Columbia, or are intergrades between the two groups, or are merely browner, duller extremes of female Slate-coloreds or are very dull Oregons, is uncertain in many cases. Adult male Cassiar Dark-eyed Juncos--with full blackish hoods contrasting with a lighter gray backs and gray flanks--have been documented only four times: collected in Carpinteria 27 January 1927 (Hoffmann 1927, Grinnell and Miller 1944), photographed at Nojoqui Falls Park 9–27 February 2018 (ph. SBMNH) and in Montecito 5 January–18 March 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 in Santa Maria 26 December 2021.

The "Pink-sided" Junco, regular in small numbers in southeastern California, has been found with certainty only 11 times: Lake Cachuma 19 November 1980, Santa Barbara 27 December 1990, Miguelito County Park near Lompoc 24 November 1999, La Cumbre Peak 25 November 2013 (ph. SBMNH), Lake Cachuma 11 January–1 February 2014 (ph. SBMNH) and 14 November 2015–22 February 2016, Preisker Park in Santa Maria 28 December 2017–20 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 22 November 2018, Wasioja Ranch near New Cuyama 8 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH), and nearby at Aliso Park 30 December 2020 (ph. SBMNH) and 28 November 2024. Many additional sightings are fraught with uncertainty, as this race is often confused with Oregon Junco. One bird at Waller Park 27 October 2007–15 March 2008 (ph. SBMNH) appeared to be a Pink-sided X Gray-headed intergrade, as did one along San Antonio Creek in Goleta 5 March 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

The "Gray-headed" Junco is a very rare fall transient and winter visitor, with records from all Districts. It occurs in flocks of Oregon Juncos. It was first recorded on the grounds of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in 1961 or 1962 (record destroyed in Museum fire). There were 13 records (involving 14 individuals) for the South Coast through 1993 between 21 October and 4 March. Since that time, there have been only 9 additional reports in District C, including 2 from the North Coast: Lompoc 20 October 2007 and Rancho Maria Golf Course, near Orcutt, 27 December 2015. Other records are: District I—Nojoqui Falls Park 3 February–18 March 1978 (ph. SBMNH); Paradise area 3 January 1981, 2 January 1983, and 12–20 October 2002; Santa Ynez 26 October 2014; Lake Cachuma 18 December 2020; and Nojoqui Falls Park 12 January 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and 21 October 2022–18 March 2023; District M—near La Cumbre Peak 16 November 1971 and 20 October 2015, near San Marcos Pass 9 January 2001, near Figueroa Mountain 27 December 2023, and Aliso Park 28 November 2024; and District V—Quatal Canyon 3 December 1972. This subspecies occurs regularly in small numbers in southeastern California and, to a lesser extent, along the coast to the south of Santa Barbara County.

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)

Very common transient and winter visitor in all Districts except at the highest elevations in District M, where uncommon. Common permanent resident along the North Coast. Casual in summer along the South Coast and in District I. Several subspecies occur and are discussed separately below.

White-crowned Sparrows are found in a wide variety of brushy and weedy areas, in open habitats adjacent to cover, and at feeders. Examples of habitats utilized include open chaparral, margins of riparian and oak woodlands, coastal sage scrub, semidesert scrub, orchards, fields, parks, and residential areas.

The most abundant and widespread subspecies, *Z. l. gambelii,* occurs throughout the county primarily between September and April. Another subspecies, *Z. l. pugetensis,* occurs commonly

during the same period, although on average it probably arrives slightly earlier in fall and departs slightly earlier in spring; it is restricted to District C. Wintering flocks of *gambelii* and *pugetensis* are often segregated from each other. These wintering subspecies begin arriving in mid-September (earliest arrival dates: 5 September 1979 Goleta [immature], 7 September 2020 Carpinteria (uncertain subspecies), 9 September 1979 Goleta [yellow-billed adult, probably *pugetensis*], and 9 September 2003 Carpinteria, as well as a 11 September 1981 specimen [*CAS] of *gambelii* from Lompoc) and are common by early October. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 4272 individuals (31 December 1977), although "only" 1407 were tallied on 5 January 2019. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 1241 birds (29 December 2015). A very high ca. 1500 were in pistachio groves in the Cuyama Valley 10 March 2018. In spring, White-crowned Sparrows are still common in mid-April but numbers decrease rapidly after that and they often go unrecorded after the end of the month. They are very rare during the first half of May. The latest spring records are: 18 May 2020 Goleta and Santa Barbara and through 27 May 2017 Carpinteria; and see below.

Exceptional was an injured *gambelii* that remained in Goleta through 18 June 1978, and what may have been the same individual singing on the UCSB campus, Goleta, 16–18 June 2010 (ph. SBMNH), 22–24 June 2011, 31 May–1 June 2012, and 23–31 May 2013 when found dead on the latter date (*UCSB). Another *gambelii* was near Turnpike Avenue X Calle Real in Goleta 31 July–1 August 2015 (ph. SBMNH). And one *gambelii* summered in Carpinteria from at least 24 April–15 August 2017. Other summer White-crowneds not identified to subspecies were found in Santa Barbara 28 July and for the following 3 weeks in 1997, in Goleta 14 July 1998 and 27 June 2007, in Santa Barbara 17 July 2016, and near Devereux Slough 4–8 July 2024.

A resident subspecies, *Z. l. nuttalli*, is common along the coast south to Point Conception. In summer, it is most numerous in coastal sage scrub, and rather rare in riparian habitats. It occurs inland only 1 mile from the Santa Maria River mouth area; up to 7 mi (11 km) to Grant Road and along San Antonio Creek to the crossing of Highways S20/1 on north Vandenberg SFB; and up to 8 mi (13 km) in the Vandenberg Village and Lompoc areas (at least occasionally to about 13 mi (21 km) inland along the western part of Sweeney Road). A pair with 3 juveniles in Drum Canyon, between Lompoc and Buellton, 2 July 1996 was an additional 7 mi (11 km) farther inland. There is one old nesting record for this subspecies in Goleta 21 May 1910 (2 pairs, with 1 feeding "bob-tailed young"; Bowles 1911b). There are 4 other definite records for the South Coast. A specimen labeled as *Z. l. nuttalli* was collected at Goleta Beach 15 December 1938 (*MVZ), and 3 separate singing *nuttalli*, seemingly on territory, were along coastal bluffs in late spring: UCSB Lagoon area, Goleta, April–26 May 1981 and again 19 March–16 April 1982; Shoreline Park, Santa Barbara, early May–2 June 1981; and Santa Barbara City College campus, Santa Barbara, mid-May–3 June 1982. In addition, an early immature at Gaviota State Park 26 August 2019 (ph. SBMNH) was probably *nuttalli*.

A yellow-billed White-crowned Sparrow, either *pugetensis* or *nuttalli*, was present inland and on the very late date of 1 June 2015 along West Camino Cielo near Broadcast Peak. Neither subspecies typically occurs in this area at any season. Another yellow-billed bird was inland near Santa Ynez 13 July 2020.

There are 20 records in Districts C, I, and V of dark-lored individuals, mostly from spring, and probably involving *Z. l. oriantha* from the interior West, although *Z. l. leucophrys* from much farther east is remotely possible. The records are: residential northern Goleta 22 December 1979–15 April 1980, 12–13 April 1980, and 22–30 October 1980; New Cuyama 15 May 1983; Carpinteria 26 April 1992, 21–27 April 1993, 24 April 2000, and 3 May 2003; Goleta 18–21 April 2003 (ph. SBMNH); the Mesa in Santa Barbara 16 December 2006–25 April 2007 (ph. SBMNH); UCSB campus, Goleta, 5–23 February 2008 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria 28 April 2009; near Nojoqui Falls Park 25 November 2013 (ph. SBMNH); Buellton 10 April 2016 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria 18–20 April 2017; Carpinteria 25 April 2019; Goleta 28 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH); Solvang 5–10 October 2020; and Santa Maria 11 October 2025 and 14 December 2025. Subspecies *oriantha* is a later migrant in spring than is *gambelii*, and on several occasions

the former has been found after all the Gambel's had departed. Although undoubtedly rare, the relatively few records of these dark-lored birds is partly the result of the lack of attention paid to White-crowned Sparrow subspecies.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)
Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I and at the lower elevations in District M; uncommon migrant and rare winter visitor in District V. Two summer records.

Golden-crowned Sparrows are most numerous in brushy areas bordering oak and riparian woodland, in chaparral, and in coastal sage scrub. They are uncommon in residential areas and at feeders. They are often more numerous than White-crowned Sparrows in chaparral but are far outnumbered by the latter in more open areas such as fields, orchards, parks, and residential areas. This species typically begins to arrive in late September (earliest arrival dates: 12 September 1973 Goleta (2 birds; *UCSB) and 19 September 1974 Summerland) and is common by mid-October. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 1146 individuals (29 December 1984). The highest total on a Cachuma CBC is 443 birds (26 December 2014). In spring, it is uncommon after mid-April, with a few individuals regularly lingering through the first few days of May. A total of 6 seen at three sites in the county 8 May 1999 was a high count for so late in the season. The latest spring dates include 14–18 May 2008 Lompoc, 21 May 1997 near Lompoc, 23 May 2025 Goleta, 19 May 1983 and 28 May 1984 San Marcos Pass (same individual?), and, exceptionally, 28 May–2 June 1996 Santa Barbara.

In summer, 1 was along Rincon Creek, near Carpinteria, 1–23 June 1998 and a slightly injured bird was at Lake Los Carneros 2 July–17+ September 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

A hybrid White-crowned X Golden-crowned Sparrow was in District I at Nojoqui Falls Park 30 January 2023.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)
Very rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C, with most records from the South Coast, and casual in Districts I and V.

Harris's Sparrows are found in flocks of White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows in brushy or weedy areas or at feeders. The first record for Santa Barbara County was 20 March 1945 in Santa Barbara (Erickson 1945). Between then and early 1994, the species was recorded 29 times, with the majority of these birds having wintered locally, although very few wintering birds have ever returned in subsequent years. The only records away from the South Coast were of 1 in Solvang 22 October 1984, 1 in the Cuyama Valley 10 November 1990, and 1 in Lompoc 11 December 1993. From 1994 through early 2026, there have been fewer reports, with a total of just 17 individuals (ph. SBMNH) along the South Coast (1 of which returned three consecutive winters to Carpinteria from 2012–2013 to 2014–2015 (ph. SBMNH)); plus 4 along the North Coast (Lompoc 9 February–4 May 1997 (ph. SBMNH), Santa Maria 18 January–12 April 1998, Orcutt 27–29 October 2015 (ph. SBMNH), near Lompoc 27 November 2020 (ph. SBMNH)); and 3 in District I (Santa Ynez 25 December 2013–27 February 2014 (ph. SBMNH) and near Santa Ynez 10–11 November 2015 (ph. SBMNH) and 12 December 2022–6 January 2023). The earliest fall records are 22+ October 1979 Goleta and the Solvang record (above). Wintering birds have remained as late as 1 May (1980, Goleta), 4 May (see above), and 4 May (2015, Carpinteria; ph. SBMNH).

White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*)
Rare-but-regular fall transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I; very rare at the lower elevations in District M, casual at higher elevations, and casual in District V.

White-throated Sparrows are most often seen in flocks of White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows in a variety of brushy areas and at feeders throughout much of Districts C and

I and very locally in District M. This species was first recorded in Santa Barbara 8 December 1915 (Dawson 1916). Typically first seen beginning in late October. One in Goleta 2 October 2002 was somewhat early; whereas one reported in Montecito 7 September 1999 and 2 at Nojoqui Falls Park 16 September 2013 were exceptionally so. Totals of 10, 11, and 12 birds in the county during autumns of 2015, 2017, and 2018, respectively, were high totals for that season. But those were eclipsed by the season total of 33 birds recorded county-wide in autumn 2022, which included 17 along the South Coast, 8 along the North Coast, 6 in District I, 1 at Munch Canyon in the San Rafael Mountains 23 October, and 1 well offshore aboard a cruise ship ca. 37 mi (60 km) W of San Miguel Island 12 October. One at Ranger Peak 8 November 2015 was at a higher elevation than normal, and 1 at Aliso Park 6–22 February 2019 was in the Sierra Madre; whereas almost all other records from District M are from the San Marcos Pass area.

Many of the birds seen in fall have remained through the winter, and those that wintered have often remained well into April and even into the beginning of May. Several individuals have returned for as many as 4 or more winters. One site in Lompoc hosted fall and/or winter White-throated Sparrows for 28 consecutive years, with up to 3 birds there at once. The highest pre-1994 winter and early spring totals were of 16 individuals along the South Coast during 1983–1984, 16 in District C in 1991–1992, and 20 in the county in 1993–1994. Since 1994, the maxima have been 27 in the entire county (13 South Coast, 7 North Coast, 6 District I, 1 District M) during 2021–2022, 51 there (31 South Coast, 12 North Coast, 8 District I) during 2022–2023, and 52 there (35 South Coast, 8 North Coast, 8 District I, 1 District M) during 2023–2024. The winter and early spring average during this period was closer to 9–12 birds, although during a few years only several were seen. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 13 individuals (5 January 2002). The Cachuma CBC has tallied a high of 3 birds (29 December 2009 and 26 December 2014). Six at feeders near Santa Ynez during December 1990 and 5 at Miguelito County Park 1 December 2022 are the high counts for a single location. One at Aliso Park near New Cuyama 6–22 February 2019, up to 2 there 27 December 2019–30 January 2020, and 1 there 29 November 2024 were at the border between Districts M and V.

It is not known whether birds seen almost every year only in April or early May are spring migrants or merely locally wintering individuals that had not been detected previously. One such record is from District V in New Cuyama 15 April 2023. Over-wintering birds are known to remain into late April and even early May. The latest individuals have remained through 8 May 1984 Goleta, 8 May 2026 Solvang, 11 May 1983 San Marcos Pass, and 11 May 1999 Goleta.

Sagebrush Sparrow (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*
Casual visitor in District V and accidental in District C.

The first county record of Sagebrush Sparrow—a species recently split from Bell's Sparrow as part of the Sage Sparrow complex— was surprisingly from District C at Jim May (River Oaks) Park in Santa Maria on 28 October 2006 (ph. SBMNH). More expected, a total of four apparent Sagebrush Sparrows were found in semi-desert scrub in District V between 16 November 2024–30 January 2025. This particular year was a very good one for this species in much of Southern California, so its true status in District V is still a work in progress. The status of this species in much of southern California is still uncertain, although most records are from the desert in winter.

Bell's Sparrow (*Artemisiospiza belli*)
Fairly common permanent resident in District V and locally along the North Coast, very uncommon in Districts M and I, and very rare along the South Coast.

Bell's Sparrows—recently split from Sagebrush Sparrow as part of the Sage Sparrow complex—are a fairly common resident in the semidesert scrub in District V (i.e., in Ballinger, Deer Park, and Quatal [mostly Ventura County] Canyons, the Cuyama Riverbed, and base of Santa Barbara Canyon). High counts are of 30 birds in Ballinger Canyon on 14 June 1977 and 40

birds there 1 May 1979. Since then, high totals in spring and summer have been substantially lower. A recent high in winter was of 41 birds in the entire Cuyama Valley 25 January 2025. These individuals are of the interior subspecies, *A. b. canescens.*

A smaller number of birds of the nominate subspecies *A. b. belli* are largely resident in chaparral in District M. They have been found along East Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains, at least formerly, eastward to at least Montecito Peak. Santa Barbara CBCs recorded as many as 5 individuals (30 December 1989) there, but most counts found only 1–3 birds and many have missed the species entirely (including almost all counts since 2000). Nesting season highs were of up to 5 birds (2 June 1980); the only post-2000 summer sighting there is of 1 on 15 June 2011 and 2 nearby at 2200 feet (680 meters) at the upper end of Cold Spring Canyon 2 Jun 2025. Farther west, 1 was in the Santa Ynez Mountains near Refugio Road 9 May 2015. In the San Rafael Mountains, Bell's Sparrow also occurs in the Little and Big Pine Mountain areas, in Mission Pine Basin, near Madulce Peak, and at McKinley Spring; and in the Sierra Madre near Salisbury Potrero (several flocks on 12 August 1978), in vic. Painted Rock Campground (28 April 2018), and between McPherson Peak and Miranda Pine Mountain down to the upper northern foothills. Two individuals were seen in dry, open pine forest with scattered manzanita on Big Pine Mountain 30 June 1981, singles were in a chokecherry thicket there 21 June 1989 (*SBMNH) and 27 June 1992, 4 juveniles were there 9 July 1994, and 1 bird was found 16 June 2007; single birds were in the West Big Pine area on 28 June 1994 and 17–19 June 1996. Following the large Zaca Fire in 2007, 11 birds were tallied in the Big Pine Mountain area 12–14 June 2009 and 9 were found 11–13 June 2010, but then dropping to 0–3 annually through 2026. One was along Manzana Creek near Nira 18 July 2014 and a high 15 were there 30 July 2016. Two or three were between McKinley Spring and San Rafael Mountain 7 June 2024. Some of these summer birds may have been post-breeding upslope wanderers. Two were at De La Guerra Springs near Figueroa Mountain 29 January 1991, and 2 were along Catway Road at Figueroa Mountain 12 May 2012. In the Sierra Madre, at the western edge of their foothill range, up to 8 were in the hills above Colson Canyon 21 September–22 October 2018. Dedicated surveys in the Sierra Madre on 18–19 May 2024 produced a high 22 birds.

Small numbers may occur locally on sage-covered slopes in adjoining District I, such as those above Lake Cachuma, bordering the upper Santa Ynez River (e.g., Sage Hill and Fremont Campgrounds), and above Mono Debris Basin (e.g., near Little Caliente Hot Springs), particularly during years following fires. A juvenile at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 20 May 2026 had probably wandered at least a short distance from more typical nesting areas.

Along the North Coast, singing individuals were in coastal sage scrub at Point Sal 13 May 1981, 26 May 1989, and 4 June 1990 (3) and undoubtedly breeding locally. This species (involving nominate *belli)* was discovered in the late 1980s to be an uncommon to locally fairly common resident in maritime chaparral habitats near the Vandenberg SFB residential area, Vandenberg Village, and La Purisima Mission State Historic Park. The maximum early count was 7 on north Vandenberg SFB 11–15 September 1991. A detailed study of the Vandenberg SFB area in 1995 and 1996 (Holmgren and Collins 1999) discovered far more birds and additional sites occupied. Most of the birds were around the main developed areas on north Vandenberg, particularly areas burned within the past 15 years. More recent studies (M. Ball in litt.) have found this species in Burton Mesa chaparral habitat that has been burned within about 20 years, more rarely in more mature stands of chaparral. The highest density populations occur on the terrace east of Wall Beach, north of the Santa Ynez River, south of the Vandenberg Cantonment Area, and west of Highway 1. Also, birds present in the vicinity of Brown Road, on the ridge of the Purisima Hills at the headwaters of Santa Lucia Canyon south of Barka Slough, and along Bishop Road southeast of Casmalia near the Vandenberg tracking station. One seen off Arguello Boulevard X Lompoc Valley Road on south Vandenberg SFB was farther south than usual.

Along the South Coast, single individuals were in the Hollister Ranch area west of Gaviota 29 April and 2 May 1975, and the species has been found on several occasions in the foothills above Gaviota.

There are three records of migrant "Sage Sparrows" along the coast well away from breeding sites, and from before the taxonomic split was made: Goleta 4 November 1972, 14 September 1982, and 27 October 1994. It is uncertain to which taxa these reports are referable, including whether Sagebrush Sparrow might be involved. Further work on diagnostic field identification criteria is ongoing.

Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*)

Uncommon transient and winter visitor in District V and very locally in District M, very uncommon in District I. Rare fall transient and very rare winter visitor in District C; one late-spring record.

Vesper Sparrows occur in grassland areas, weedy agricultural fields and alfalfa, and in semidesert scrub. They are most easily found between late September and late March in the Cuyama Valley area, in the Sierra Madre foothills, and locally in the Santa Ynez Valley. One in Aliso Park 12+ September 2021 is the earliest arrival in those areas. The maximum count in the Cuyama is 30 birds on 10 March 1979 and 24 tallied during a thorough survey on 25–26 January 2025; more typical counts are from 5–15 individuals per day or weekend. The latest rcord of a presumed wintering bird is 12 April 2025. This species is probably locally uncommon in winter in District I, mostly in the Santa Ynez/Los Olivos area; some higher counts include 4 near Santa Ynez 28 January 1971, 6+ there during winter 1993–1994, up to 16 and 9 birds (27 December 2000 and 28 December 2010, respectively) on the Cachuma CBC, 15 near Santa Ynez 14 January 2011 and 10 there 8 February 2015, and 6 along Happy Canyon Road 13 February 2016.

Fewer than 5 individuals are seen annually during fall in District C, usually in the Goleta area, and mostly between late September (earliest arrival dates: 4+ September 2025, Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 6 September 1984 Carpinteria, 9 September 2007 Goleta) and early or mid-November (e.g., 11 November 2012 Santa Barbara); a high total is 5 during autumn 2007. Very rare along the North Coast. In District M, 1 was in chaparral near Madulce Peak 20 September 1982.

The species is very rare from late November through March in District C, with only ca. 1 to 3 individuals seen most years; 5 at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 25 December 1997–6 January 1998 and 4 there 19 March 2000 were high counts. A presumed wintering bird was singing there 9 April 2000. Along the North Coast, it is even rarer in winter and early spring; recent records are from San Miguelito Road near Lompoc 24 March 2019 and near the Santa Maria River mouth 11 December 2021.

The only records after early April away from District V are 21 April 2021 Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez (District I), 1 May 2024 Point Conception, 3 May 1975 near La Cumbre Peak (District M), and, exceptionally, 25–26 May 1982 at More Mesa, Goleta.

LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammospiza leconteii*)

Accidental.

One was found at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in Santa Barbara on 10 December 2017. Given that it could not be re-found on subsequent dates, it is assumed to have been a very late fall migrant.

Nelson's Sparrow (*Ammospiza nelsoni*)

Casual fall and winter visitor in District C.

The nine fall records are: Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 2–4 October 1988; Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 4–6 October 1988; South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields (atypical habitat), Goleta, 17 October 1988; Atascadero Creek 3–4 October 1989; Santa Maria River mouth 30 September 2005 (ph. SBMNH); Lake Los Carneros 5–16 October 2007 (ph. SBMNH); South Patterson

agricultural fields 13 October 2013 (ph. SBMNH); Jalama Beach County Park 17 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH); and Lake Los Carneros 1–2 October 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

There are two winter records: an individual at Lake Los Carneros 31 December 2014 (ph. SBMNH) was present just the one day, despite the late date, and up to 4 birds clearly wintered at the Santa Ynez River mouth from 5 December 2022–6 May 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

Common transient and winter visitor in Districts C, I, and V; uncommon and local in District M. One or two subspecies are permanent residents locally in District C.

Migrant and wintering Savannah Sparrows occur in a wide variety of grassland habitats (particularly shorter grasses), weedy agricultural fields, in saltmarsh vegetation, and, less commonly, along the upper sections of beaches. A resident and endangered subspecies, *P. s. beldingi* (and possibly *P. s. alaudinus* (= *bryanti*)) is restricted to coastal marshes dominated by *Salicornia* (pickleweed).

Fall transients (comprised of a number of northern and interior subspecies; e.g., *P. s. nevadensis*) begin to arrive in mid-August (earliest arrival dates: 9–10 August 1992 Goleta (up to 3), 10 August 1998 Goleta) and may be locally common by the end of the month. A few fall migrants have been recorded offshore from boats. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 554 individuals (31 December 1977), most from the Goleta area. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 275 birds (29 December 2015). In District V, 200 were in the Cuyama Valley 10 November 1990. In District M, small numbers occur regularly in grassy potreros. In spring, the transient subspecies are uncommon after mid-April and unrecorded after the first week of May, except for an exceptionally late individual at the San Marcos Foothills, Santa Barbara, 19 May 2012.

P. s. beldingi is a fairly common but very local permanent resident in the coastal salt marshes along the South Coast. The population decreased during the 1900s because of a loss of habitat. This subspecies is still relatively common at two localities: Goleta Slough and Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Focused spring or early summer surveys of the population in Goleta Slough (Zembal and Hoffman 2010) counted 50 territories in 1973, 28 in 1977, 50 in 1986, 81 in 1991, [at least 69 pairs in 1992 (Holmgren and Burnell 1992),] 48 territories in 1996, 68 in 2001, 52 in 2006, and 55 territories in 2010. An even more intensive survey in 1994 estimated 128 pairs during May (Holmgren and Kisner 1994). Similar surveys of the population at Carpinteria Salt Marsh found 100 territories in 1973, 34 in 1977, 74 in 1986, 52 in 1991, 64 in 1996, 75 in 2001, 53 in 2006, and 46 in 2010 (Massey 1979, Zembal and Hoffman 2010). A more recent "colonization" occurred at Devereux Slough, where up to 2 were first discovered 25–30 June 1990; up to 5 were there March–June 1991–1996, with a juvenile seen in 1992 and 2 juveniles in 1996; and 1–5 birds or 1–2 pairs were there most, though not all, years thereafter through 2026. Successful nesting is probably irregular at Devereux due to the unstable water levels during the breeding period, although successful breeding was also documented there in both 2014 and 2015. Single birds have also been seen on several occasions at the nearby Coal Oil Point area in upper dune habitat. A pair with a juvenile was along lower Atascadero Creek just east of Goleta Slough on 26–27 May 1993, 5 individuals were there in March 1994, and 2 were found 30 June 2025. There are also spring and summer reports from the limited Salicornia habitat along the lagoon shoreline and bluffs near Goleta Point on the main UCSB campus, including adults with fledged young; these birds had probably dispersed from nearby Goleta Slough.

Savannah Sparrows are also permanent residents in the saltmarsh vegetation at the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez River mouths. Surveys at the latter site in 1995 and 1996 found an average of 157 adults and from 22–39 juveniles (Holmgren and Collins 1999). The subspecies present there, however, is uncertain. Although *alaudinus* is the most likely candidate (it is known to breed south to Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo County), intermediates between it and *beldingi*

are possibly involved. Holmgren and Collins (1999) found that these birds matched those from Morro Bay in terms of plumage and morphometrics. There are several older reports of *alaudinus* (=*bryanti*) for the South Coast, including 1 collected at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 23 December 1912 (Brooks 1913) and "several others a few days later in Santa Barbara." Dawson (1923) wrote that *alaudinus* occurred "irregularly south in winter, at least as far as Santa Barbara." Grinnell and Miller (1944), however, cast doubt on the subspecific identification of these individuals and stated that variants of *beldingi* were probably involved.

P. s. rostratus (the "Large-billed" Sparrow) formerly was a regular winter visitor to the marshes along the South Coast from its breeding grounds in the Gulf of California, Mexico (Dawson 1923, Willett 1933). Bowles (1911b) reported that "these sparrows were common on the dock in Santa Barbara" in winters of 1909–1910 and 1910–1911. It was recorded almost annually on Santa Barbara CBCs between 1912 and 1939, with a maximum count of 12 in 1912, but with only 1 to 3 individuals per year after 1917. Single specimens were collected at vic. Santa Barbara 12 September 1911 (*UCLA) and 17 September 1911 (*DMNS, UCLA) and at "La Patera Point" (Goleta) on 24 October 1918 and 10 November 1920 (*FMNH). Rett (fieldnotes) reported singles in Goleta 19 November 1935 and Carpinteria 7 November 1939. There were no subsequent reports until singles were discovered at the Santa Ynez River mouth 28 November–3 December 1990 (ph. SBMNH), 4 September 1991, 4 September 1992, and 21 November–1 December 1992. Between 1994–2025, 17 additional individuals were found at that site between 25 August (2014) and 27 December (2013). Mid-winter birds there are far rarer: 31 October 1998–20 February 1999, 10 February 2001, 1 January 2003, 14 January 2018, and 17 January 2019. Also along the North Coast, 2 birds were elsewhere on Vandenberg SFB 21–30 November 2024 and 1 was found 19 November 2025; singles were at the Santa Maria River mouth 14 September 1997, 8 October 2000, 15 September–1 October 2005, 12 October 2008, 19 October 2013, 29 August 2019, and 7 October 2020–11 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH); and up to 2 were there 11 December 2024–7 February 2025. Along the South Coast, singles were at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 3 December 1994, 3 January 2007, 30 September 2007, and 24 August 2014. Even more unusual, habitat-wise, were singles at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 13–15 September 2005 (ph. SBMNH) and 25 August 2014, as well as on the beach at Refugio State Beach 10 August 2024 (earliest arrival date in county) and at Goleta Beach Park 8 October–7 November 2024.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)

Common to locally very common permanent resident in Districts C and I, uncommon at the lower elevations in District M. Migrant and winter visitor in District V, where also a very local breeder.

Song Sparrows frequent mesic brushy areas along creeks and ditches and bordering oak woodland and chaparral, residential areas with adequate shrubbery, stands of bulrush and cattails, freshwater and the margins of salt-water marshes, *Atriplex* stands found on coastal bluffs, and the brushy borders of fields and pastures. Numbers are augmented in winter, and the species is somewhat more widespread at this season. They reach their maximum abundance during fall and winter in the major riparian areas and vegetated ditches along the North Coast. They are uncommon at feeders. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 666 individuals (3 January 1976). Inland, Cachuma CBCs have tallied a maximum of 42 birds (28 December 2010). In District M, this species is largely absent from the higher elevations; for example, during summer bird surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, it was recorded only five times (2 on 15–16 June 2012, singles on 15–16 June 2013, 11–12 June 2016, and 23–28 May 2025, but also an adult and juvenile 28 July 2015). The only known breeding site of Song Sparrows in District V is in vic. Caliente Ranch Wetland.

The breeding subspecies is *M. m. heermanni.* Additional subspecies may occur as fall and winter visitors from farther north (e.g., *M. m. montana* and *M. m. fisherella*). There are several records of especially dark and/or rusty individuals, likely belonging to *M. m. merrilli,* between

mid-October and January, mostly along the coast, with also 1 apparent *merrilli* in the Cuyama Valley 27 November 2004 (ph. SBMNH). There is one record of the subspecies *M. m. clementae,* which breeds on Santa Rosa Island and formerly bred on Santa Cruz Island: 1 collected in Santa Barbara 20 November 1918 (Willett 1933). Very little work has been carried out on the status and distribution of the different subspecies of Song Sparrow in mainland Santa Barbara County.

Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*)

Fairly common transient and winter visitor in Districts C and I, uncommon in District V and at the lower elevations in District M.

Lincoln's Sparrows frequent mesic brushy areas, particularly those adjoining marshy areas and along streams and ditches. To a lesser extent, they are found in weedy fields, orchards, and residential areas. They are uncommon at feeders. The species arrives beginning in mid-September (earliest arrival dates: 1 September 1979 Goleta, 1 September 1994 Goleta) and is fairly common by mid-October. Totals on the Santa Barbara CBC of 197 on 3 January 1976, 174 on 31 December 1977, and 170 there 31 December 1983 are high; more typical counts are between 50–90 individuals, and only 38 were tallied on 5 January 2019. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has found as many as 34 individuals (26 December 2014), though the next highest count there is only half that at 17 birds (29 December 1999). In spring, it is rare after mid-April. The latest records are 1 May 1981 and 2016 Goleta; 2 May 2025 Point Conception; 5 May 2007 La Mesa Park in Santa Barbara; and 1 May 2018, 3 May 2021, and 9 May 2022 Refugio Canyon.

Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*)

Rare fall transient and winter visitor in District C; casual in District I.

Swamp Sparrows are most often seen in wet brushy areas and in bulrushes and cattails along creeks and bordering ponds and sloughs. This species was first recorded on 19 November 1972 in Goleta. Between then and the mid-1990s it was found almost annually in small numbers. By early 1994, more than 135 records had accumulated between mid-October and late March, with the majority of these from the late fall and winter (late October to mid-February). The earliest arrival dates were 27 September 1982 Goleta Slough, 7–12 October 1992 Goleta, and 9+ October 1980 Goleta. The maximum fall totals were 15 individuals during both 1991 and 1993. Fourteen seen along the South Coast during winter 1987–1988 and 18 in District C during 1991–1992 were high counts for that season. The Santa Barbara CBC recorded up to 7 individuals (2 January 1988) during this period. Up to 6 at Laguna Blanca from October 1993–January 1994 and 4 along San Antonio Creek, Vandenberg, SFB, from October 1980–January 1981 were high counts for single localities. One wintering individual in Santa Barbara remained through 24 March 1987.

After about 2000, however, numbers in District C have declined slightly. Some 64 birds (43 South Coast, 21 North Coast) were found in fall, 1994–2025, and 113 in winter (90 South Coast, 23 North Coast) through early 2026. The autumn maxima have not exceeded 6 birds along the South Coast (2018) and 4 birds along the North Coast (1999 and 2012). However, an incursion during autumn 2022 produced 12 birds in District C, including a very high 6 birds at Gaviota State Park 31 October and 3 at the Santa Ynez River mouth 19 November. The maximum winter totals were 8 birds along the South Coast in 1995–1996 and 9 in 2017–2018, and 4 along the North Coast 1999–2000. One in Goleta 2–8 October 2016 was the earliest in fall. The latest wintering individual remained through 31 March 2000 near the Santa Ynez River mouth and 6 April 2018 at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge.

The only spring records are from Goleta 12 April 1975, near Devereux Slough 2 April 2000, and Waller Park in Santa Maria 9 April 2000. It is unknown whether these individuals wintered locally (most likely) or were spring migrants.

Elsewhere, there are 11 fall and winter records in District I: Lake Cachuma 9 January 1999; along the upper Santa Ynez River at Los Prietos 20 December 2000; near Solvang 31 October 2012; Lake Cachuma 14 February 2015; Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 17 November 2021–11 March 2022, 26 October 2022–29 March 2023, and 30 December 2024–8 January 2025; near Buellton 26 November 2023; Lake Cachuma 29 November 2023; up to 2 near Buellton 2–9 December 2023; and at least 1 at Lake Cachuma 16 November–27 December 2024.

California Towhee (*Melozone crissalis*)

Common permanent resident in Districts C and I and in most of District M. Fairly common in District V. Quite sedentary.

California Towhees occur in a wide variety of brushy habitats (and at the edges of nearby open fields and lawns), including those found in oak and riparian woodland, chaparral, semidesert and coastal sage scrubs, and throughout residential areas and urban parks. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 949 individuals (2 January 1983). The Cachuma CBC maximum is 167 birds (27 December 2013). Although this species is fairly common near the crest of the Sierra Madre, it is rare at the higher elevations in the San Rafael Mountains (e.g., typically absent from Figueroa and Big Pine Mountains). Three seen on the north side of Alamar Saddle near Big Pine Mountain 19 July 1982, 4 on West Big Pine Mountain 16 June 2007, and 1 in that area 17–19 June 2022 were at the highest elevation the species has been recorded in Santa Barbara County. It is somewhat scarce in many of the dense riparian areas along the North Coast (although it is fairly common on the nearby slopes). In District V, most individuals are found in the pinyon-juniper and semidesert scrub in the canyons bordering the upper Cuyama Valley (e.g., Ballinger, Deer Park, and Santa Barbara Canyons), although a few may be found on the open valley floor (e.g., New Cuyama sewage treatment pond).

Rufous-crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps*)

Uncommon to fairly common permanent resident in District M, uncommon to locally fairly common in Districts C and I. Casual visitor outside regular resident range.

Rufous-crowned Sparrows are found in more xeric, open, and rocky chaparral and grassland habitats and locally in coastal sage scrub. They are most numerous in District M (where counts of up to 25 have been made along East Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains; but where the species has slowly declined over the past 20+ years, and recent June surveys have tallied between 5–14 individuals, 2006–2012). Also found at the upper elevations in Districts I and C. A total of 55 individuals on the Santa Barbara CBC 2 January 1983 was exceptional; most Santa Barbara CBC totals are of 5–25 birds. Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied up to 22 birds (29 December 2015). Along the North Coast, the species is a fairly common resident in coastal sage scrub and sage-scrub/grassland mix on moderately steep west- and south- facing slopes along the coast in the Point Sal/north Vandenberg SFB area (Casmalia Hills) and in the hills southwest of Lompoc (e.g., Sloan Canyon, Honda Ridge, Sudden Peak to Oak Mountain, and near Jalama Beach County Park). Holmgren and Collins (1999) found a surprising number of territories in this region in 1995 and 1996. One was along San Antonio Creek 11 June 2024. A small number breed under one mile from the coast in the Point Conception, Hollister Ranch, Gaviota, Refugio, and El Capitan areas, and in the coastal foothills just west of Goleta. At the highest elevations in District M, the species is rare in the Big Pine Mountain area, where it has been recorded on only three summer surveys, 1981–2026.

Two were in an isolated patch of coastal sage scrub on “the Riviera” in Santa Barbara 11–13 January 1994. The only records on the coastal plain between Goleta and Carpinteria are of multiple sightings in “canyon habitat” in Elings Park, Santa Barbara, from 20 February 2001+ and 2 at the Greenwell Preserve in Summerland 3 April 2024; singles even farther from typical habitat at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 12–22 September 2007 and bordering the coastal bluffs at More Mesa on 4 January 2014, 17 November 2018–1 January 2019, and 1 January 2022; and 2 juveniles at North Campus Open Space near Devereux Slough 5 August–24 November 2020.

There is a similar old record from A.B. Howell of an individual on the "shore bluffs west of Santa Barbara" 15 August 1916.

Although this species is an uncommon resident of the foothill canyons along the north flank of the Sierra Madre (e.g., Aliso Canyon, Santa Barbara Canyon, Pato Canyon), bordering District V, the only report from the latter is of 2 birds in Deer Park Canyon 13 April 2025.

Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*)

Very rare fall and casual winter and spring visitor, primarily along the South Coast; casual in Districts I and V. Casual in District M, including in summer.

Green-tailed Towhees frequent brushy areas and, occasionally, feeders. Through 1993, they were recorded 22 times as fall transients between Goleta and Carpinteria, between 17 August (1979, Carpinteria) and 7 December. One in Santa Barbara 29 July 1974 was exceptionally early. One in Lompoc 16–22 October 1993 was the only record during this period for the North Coast. From 1994–2025, there were an additional 23 fall records along the South Coast, between 4 September (2007, Trout Club, below San Marcos Pass (ph. SBMNH)) and 2 December (1994, Goleta), which included 2 together in Santa Barbara from 27 September–1 October 2016. Along the North Coast, 1 was near Point Sal 5 September 1994, 1 was in Santa Maria 15 October 2008 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was in Lompoc 24 September 2019, and 1 was in Miguelito Canyon 24 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH). In District I, the only fall records are from near Santa Ynez 4 October 2012 and 9 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH), at Jameson Lake 18 November 2018 (ph. SBMNH), in Solvang 19–20 November 2022, and at Sedgwick Reserve 11 September–12 October 2024 and 2–4 October 2025. In District M, 1 was near Cachuma Saddle 7 September 2011, 1 was at San Marcos Pass 18 September 2016, and singles were at Aliso Park 18 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and 28 November 2024.

In winter, the species has been recorded as follows: South Coast—Goleta 5 February 1951; Santa Barbara 28 January 1954, 29 March 1957, 3 January 1965, and 30 December 1970; Goleta 29 December 1972; Santa Barbara 14 December 1974; Santa Barbara 10 December 1985–27 March 1986 and again 4 January 1987; Goleta 7–27 January 1996; Carpinteria 22 March 1996 (possibly an exceptionally early spring migrant); Montecito 24 November–5 January 2008; near Carpinteria 14 December 2019; Goleta 1 January–27 February 2022 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria 27 December 2023–11 April 2024 (ph. SBMNH) and 16 December 2024–15 April 2025; and Goleta 23 February 2025; North Coast—Lompoc 15–16 December 1994; District I—Santa Ynez 30–31 December 2008 (ph. SBMNH) and "during the previous two winters," and Santa Ynez 30 December 2020; District M—East Camino Cielo 15 January 1972, San Marcos Pass 20 February–15 March 1989, and Figueroa Mountain 18 February 1995; and District V (or M?)—Santa Barbara Canyon 19 November 2023–6 January 2024.

There are five records of spring migrants near the coast: Santa Barbara 18 May 1970 (*SBMNH), Goleta 13–20 April 1987, w. Isla Vista 29 April–1 May 1987, Goleta 2 May 1989, and Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 5 April 1997. One seen on Little Pine Mountain 26 May 1967 may have been attempting to breed locally.

Bartholomew (1940) found this species in summer on Big Pine Mountain in 1938, with 5 birds seen in chokecherry thickets there on 7 June and 7 July. No Green-tailed Towhees were found on Big Pine or San Raphael Mountains during summer visits there 1981–1990 despite the continued presence of suitable breeding habitat and that it nests fairly commonly in nearby Ventura and Kern Counties. The continuing Big Pine surveys through 2026 finally did locate single birds on 27 June 1991, 6–7 June 1992, and 12 June 1993; and 3 individuals on 10 July 1993; but then none since. One there 29 August 1989 (*SDNHM) may have been a fall migrant.

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)
Fairly common to common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and M; withdraws from the higher elevations in winter. Uncommon in District V.

Spotted Towhees are found in a variety of brushy habitats including those found in conifer (local), oak, and riparian woodland, chaparral, around ranch houses, and in residential areas. They are most numerous along the South Coast, at the lower elevations in District M, and locally in riparian vegetation along the North Coast and in District I. Numbers are augmented slightly by migrants in fall and winter. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 484 individuals (2 January 1983). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has found up to 171 birds (26 December 2014). This species is also fairly common in coastal sage scrub and Bishop Pine forest along the North Coast and in shrubby areas (particularly manzanita) at the higher elevations of District M. It is common in the San Rafael Mountain area, where 40 were seen 18–19 June 1982. Near-annual summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, typically recorded between 20–76 individuals, with high counts of 82–88 birds.

At the border between Districts V and M, this species may be a fairly numerous breeder in pinyon-juniper and sagebrush bordering the Cuyama Valley, such as in upper Santa Barbara Canyon, along Aliso Canyon Road and Wasioja Road, and in Cottonwood Canyon. Although a few individuals (including young) have been found in summer in similar habitat just inside Ventura County in upper and middle Quatal Canyon, there are only a small number of breeding-season reports from the lower, Santa Barbara County sections of Quatal, Deer Park, or Ballinger Canyons and from scrubland just north of Ballinger.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (ICTERIIDAE)

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)
Now an uncommon summer resident and rare transient along the North Coast and in District I, rare transient and summer resident along the South Coast. Casual in Districts M and V, and in winter.

Yellow-breasted Chats breed in dense riparian vegetation (particularly willows). As a nesting bird, it has declined markedly in Santa Barbara County and throughout much of Southern California since the early 1900s and is now found only very locally during summer. Willett (1933) termed it a “common summer resident in willow regions of the lowlands,” and Grinnell and Miller (1944) called it “fairly common to common as a summer resident.” Several egg sets (WFVZ) come from the Goleta area during the 1920s, where now essentially extirpated as a breeder.

The local breeding birds arrive beginning in early or mid- April (e.g., 4 April 1989 Mono Creek, and 5 April 2015 and 11 April 1982 Barka Slough). Through the early 1990s, it continued to be fairly common in the Barka Slough area on Vandenberg SFB, uncommon along the Santa Ynez River just west of Buellton, and fairly common along the upper Santa Ynez River at and above Gibraltar Reservoir and along nearby Mono and Agua Caliente Creeks. The upper Santa Ynez population was estimated at 30 pairs in 1980, 40–50 pairs in 1981, about 30 pairs in 1988, and at least 50 pairs in 1993. Eleven were at the Buellton site 1 June 1986 and 8 were there on both 21 July 1991 and 20 June 1992, 1 bird was carrying food 11 June 2017, 4 were counted in 2023, but just 1 in 2024. A 2020 survey of the Santa Ynez River tallied 33 chats. Ten were along lower Santa Cruz Creek on the north side of Lake Cachuma 19 June 1992, where 1 bird was feeding a juvenile Brown-headed Cowbird. The species was also uncommon along lower and middle San Antonio Creek near and west of Barka Slough and rare along the Santa Ynez River below Lompoc. In addition, 1 or 2 pairs formerly bred in a small, swampy riparian area northwest of Los Alamos, and 2 probable breeders were along the Sisquoc River near Sisquoc 29 April 1993. More recently, 2 were singing at Lake Cachuma 24 June 2020 and 1 was there June–August 2022, 1 was singing along Gaviota Creek in 2023, and 1 was at River Park near

Lompoc 9 June 2024. One singing near Cachuma Campground, southeast of Figueroa Mountain, 29 May 1995 was on the border with District M.

This species formerly bred in lower Refugio Canyon along the South Coast, where 1 or 2 singing males were noted regularly in June until the early 1980s, but only rarely since then (most recent report: adult carrying food 3 June 2020). It may continue to breed, at least irregularly, in the Hollister Ranch and Gaviota areas and in several canyons between there and western Goleta. A few pairs bred in several of the foothill canyons between Goleta and Summerland through the 1960s, but are not known to do so since the 1970s except for a pair in Toro Canyon in 1988. More recent breeding has been confirmed along Rincon Creek where 2 birds were found 9 June 1990, up to 3 were there 4–29 June 1991, up to 4 were present during May–26 July 1992, 2 were there in May 1993, 2 pairs nested during May 1996, a high 6–7 birds were found 9 May 1998 (possibly including migrants, in part), and 2 were singing 15 May 2000. A pair was seen carrying nesting material on the Ventura County side of the creek 9 June 1990. In addition, birds possibly or definitely on territory were present, west to east, as follows: 2 at Glen Annie Reservoir through 7 June 2013, 1 singing at Coal Oil Point 1–8 June 2026, 1 singing along San Jose Creek 7–14 May 1991 and singles there 8 June 2024 and 24 June 2026, 1 along San Antonio Creek 15 June 1994, 1 present there 9 June 1996, 2 singing along lower Atascadero Creek 17–25 May 2009 and singles singing there 16–23 June 2022 and 8 June 2024, 1 near there 19 June 2009 and 17 June 2010, 1–2 birds singing along Cieneguitas Creek in the San Marcos Foothills during late April–July in 2012, 2013, and 2014, 1 along Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 5 July 2008 and 1 there May–7 July 2023, Up to 2 at a debris basin in Steven's Park, Santa Barbara, 11 June–6 July 2014 and again 31 May–1 June 2015, 1 was in Gobernador Canyon above Carpinteria 16 June–24 July 1985, 1 was at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 7–10 June 2025, and 1 was at "Lake Jocelyn" 1 June–5 July 2025. One in residential Montecito 21 June 2004 was in atypical summer habitat, as was a bird at Carpinteria Salt Marsh from 7–10 June 2025.

As a transient, the Yellow-breasted Chat is rare. An average of 1–3 individuals are seen in both spring and fall away from potential nesting sites along the South Coast; the maximum season total is 7 between Goleta and Carpinteria in spring 1984 and 10 individuals between Gaviota and Carpinteria during autumn 2020. Spring migrants occur primarily between mid-April (earliest arrival dates: 13 April 2021 Toro Canyon, 14 April 1970 and 14 April 1972 vic. Santa Barbara) and mid-May (latest date: 19 May 1977 Goleta (*UCSB)). Unusual was a bird well offshore aboard a research vessel some 26 mi (42 km) NW of Point Arguello 20 April 2024. Fall migrants occur between late August (earliest arrival dates: 14 August 2020 Carpinteria, 18 August 2018 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge) and early October (latest dates: 27 October 2017 Goleta, 26–29 October 2020 Carpinteria, 21–31 October 2003 Goleta, and, exceptionally, 13–16 November 2020 Carpinteria Creek, 17 November 1989 Goleta, and 26 November 2020 Andrée Clark Bird Refuge). Along the North Coast, a very late individual was in Santa Maria 10–27 November 2020.

In District M, a singing bird along Cachuma Creek below Lion Canyon was at the border with District I, 1 was at San Marcos Pass 28–29 September 2002, and a late spring bird was along West Camino Cielo 29 May 2017; whereas the sole record in District V is of a spring migrant near Ventucopa 8 May 2018.

There are five winter records: San Jose Creek, Goleta, 11 December 2000–13 April 2001, residential Carpinteria 1 December 2010–17 March 2011 (when found sick and taken to rehabber; ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park 20 December 2016 and again 8 February 2018, residential Montecito 8 January–19 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH), and Carpinteria Creek 15 December 2024–15 March 2025. Few individuals have been found in winter in the state.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)
Very uncommon spring and rare fall transient in District C; very rare winter and casual summer visitor. Uncommon spring and very rare fall transient in District V. Very rare transient and winter visitor in District I. Formerly nested along the South Coast early in the 20th century.

Yellow-headed Blackbirds frequent marsh vegetation (e.g., bulrushes and cattails), wet meadows, and agricultural areas. They occur most regularly in the Santa Maria Valley (e.g., Santa Maria sewage treatment plant, Guadalupe pastures), Lompoc Valley (e.g., Lompoc Prison dairy), Goleta (several wetland sites), and Cuyama Valley (e.g., Cuyama dairy) as a spring and (less often) fall transient. Spring birds occur primarily during April and early May. The earliest arrival is 18 March 1883 in Santa Barbara (Jeffries 1889); 1 was near Guadalupe 21 March 2007. The maximum spring counts include 60 in Goleta 16 April 1971, 27 near the Santa Ynez River mouth during May 1996, 30 in Goleta 4 May 2005, 106 at Mesa X Los Carneros Roads in Goleta 27 April 2007, 74 there 11 May 2012, 62 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 8 May 2007, 50 at Girsch Park, Goleta, 8–9 May 2014, and 54 and up to 55 at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 10 May 2017 and 30 April–3 May 2021, respectively. One was well offshore 26 mi (43 km) WNW of San Miguel Island 2 May 2013. The latest spring records are through 27 May 1991 Goleta, 29 May 2019 Goleta, 30 May 2022 Goleta, and through 31 May 2008 near Santa Maria ("a few") and through 4 June 2021 there (12). In District V, this species is probably fairly regular in small numbers between mid-April and mid-May (high count: "many" on 5 May 2007, up to 12 during May 2011), particularly at a large dairy operation near Cuyama. In District I, there are surprisingly few records in spring; reports include Rancho Oso at upper Santa Ynez River 23 March 2005, unknown number in middle Santa Ynez Valley in spring 2007, near Santa Ynez 26 May 2008 (late), Sedgwick Reserve 26 April 2016 and 7 May 2021, and near Los Alamos 19 May 2021.

Fall transients are less numerous and are typically found between mid-August (early arrival dates: 1 August 1980 Santa Ynez River mouth, 1+ August 2021 Lake Los Carneros, 2 August 2018 Carpinteria, and 5 August 2008 Goleta)—possibly already in July (see below)—and late October; the maximum count at this season is 9 in Goleta on both 13 September 1983 and 26 August 1984. Three individuals were far at sea ca. 120 mi (195 km) SW of Point Conception 17 August 1980, 1 was seen from a pelagic trip 6 September 1996, and 1 landed on a boat in the Santa Barbara Channel 28 September 1999. The only inland records in autumn (through beginning of November) are of: (District I) 1 near Santa Ynez 6 September 1994, 2 there 18 September 2009, singles 28 September 2016 and 25 October 2018, and 3 on 21 November 2022 (and see winter, below), and singles near Los Olivos 11 September 2011 and 22 October 2017; and (District V) singles near Cuyama 26 September 2007 and 30 September 2008, in New Cuyama 29 September 2019, and along the Cuyama River 2 November 2019.

This species is very rare between early November and mid-March, with only 18 records from late 1960s–early 1994, and a total of 109 birds between late 1994–early 2026, of which 15 were found in 2020–2021, 11 in 2021–2022, and 17 in 2023–2024. In District C, these reports have come from the Santa Maria Valley, Casmalia, Lompoc/Santa Ynez River mouth area, and Goleta; plus singles in Santa Barbara 9 January 2002, at the "Trout Club" below San Marcos Pass 1 January 2011 "and previously" (ph. SBMNH), along Jalama Road 15 November 2012, and in Carpinteria 8 November 2019; and 6 near Sisquoc 30–31 January 2021. A substantial number of the winter records have actually come from District I: near Santa Ynez 3 January 1995, 3 there 12–29 November 2005, 1 from 27 October–12 December 2006, 5 there 12 November 2011, 1 from 2–4 November 2015, up to 3 from 5 November 2017–24 January 2018, 1 on 27 December 2018, and 3 on 21 November 2022; singles at a blackbird roost on Sedgwick Reserve above Santa Ynez 28 December 2010–13 January 2011 (ph. SBMNH) and 13 December 2012 and up to 4 there 14–18 February 2024; 4 birds east of Sisquoc 29 January 2011; 1 at Cable

Corral Road 2 November 2019; 7 along Foxen Canyon Road 13–14 December 2019; up to 3 near Los Olivos 21 November–12 December 2022; 9 birds district-wide between 22 December 2023–18 February 2024; 6 near Santa Ynez 27 December 2024; and 1 near Los Alamos 26 February 2026.

There were only six summer (June–July) records through the mid-1990s: Santa Barbara 20 July 1961; Goleta 19 July 1977; Goleta 12 June 1982, 7 June 1986, and 25 June 1991; and near Santa Maria 27 July 1993 (3). From 1995–2026, another 17 birds were seen: 1 in Santa Maria (26 July 2022), 11 in Goleta, 2 in Carpinteria (25 July 1998, 24 July 2006), 2 at Lake Cachuma (17 July 2005, 6 June 2010), and 1 near Cuyama (20 July 2012). Mid- and late- July birds are probably early fall transients.

Dawson (1923) reported this species as a "breeder, at least irregularly, in the Goleta marshes." This is the only evidence of nesting in Santa Barbara County.

Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)

Formerly rare, now very rare, fall transient in District C, with most records from the Goleta area. Casual late-spring visitor. Three records in District I.

Bobolinks frequent tall weedy grasses (e.g., Barnyard Grass *(Echinochloa crus-galli))* in agricultural fields and along creeks and ditches. A lion's share of the records come from Goleta, with a majority of these at Atascadero Creek and the nearby agricultural fields along South Patterson Avenue (ph. *AB* 34:203). This species was not recorded in Santa Barbara County until 3–11 October 1970 when 11 were seen along Atascadero Creek in Goleta. Since 1970, it was recorded almost annually, often in substantial numbers through the 1980s, from early September (earliest arrival dates: 15–27 August 1993 Lompoc and 24 August 1979 Goleta) to late October (late dates: through 3 November 1983 Goleta, 3–8 November 1984 Goleta, and 10–18 November 1990 Lompoc). The highest one-day counts were a very impressive 60 individuals on 25 September 1979 and 70 birds on 20 September 1981. These are some of the highest totals ever recorded in California. The Atascadero Creek and South Patterson Avenue sites, which were not birded regularly in fall until 1976, often continuously held birds from early September to late October during the late 1970s and 1980s. The probability of some daily turnover makes it difficult to determine the total number of individuals involved in a given season and most estimates were likely low. The total number of birds seen during this 25-year period is estimated at ca. 710+, with a summary of the number of individuals seen in Goleta as follows: 1970: 11, 1971: 2, 1974: 1, 1975: 16, 1976: 35, 1977: 3, 1978: 61, 1979: 110, 1980: 39, 1981: 115, 1982: 65, 1983: 43, 1984: 50, 1985: 15, 1986: 22, 1987: 16, 1989: 37, 1990: 12, 1991: 1, 1992: 4, 1993: 13, 1994: 6, and 1995: 14. Records away from Goleta during this period came from near Guadalupe (3), near the Santa Ynez River Mouth (3), Lompoc (4), Gaviota State Park (2), Santa Barbara (1), and Carpinteria (8).

Numbers in autumn have continued to fall off dramatically since their peak during the late 1970s and 1980s. Much of this decline has been the result of the loss of most Barnyard Grass and other seedy grasses at the two prime Goleta locations beginning in the late 1990s. From 1996–2025, a total of 211+ individuals were found in Goleta between 2 September (2000) and 20 October (2001). The highest single-season totals were of 20+ birds in 1998 (20 seen on 25 September alone) and 16 individuals in 2006. A recent hotspot for this species has been the Lompoc area (total of 43+), including the all-time early fall arrival for the county on 11 August 2019, and with high counts of 8 on 10 October 2020, up to 12 there 23 September–4 October 2021, and 13 present 24 September 2023. Birds found elsewhere in District C during this period were at a sewage treatment plant pasture near Guadalupe (9; high count 5 on 23 September 2008), in or near Santa Maria (6), waterfowl ponds near the Santa Ynez River mouth (5; with an early bird 30 August 1996, and the latest 13 October 1996), Gaviota State Park (1; late, 7 November 2018), Santa Barbara (3), and Carpinteria (6; including a very early individual 19

August 2003). One near Santa Ynez 20 September 2002 and 2 near Nojoqui Falls Park 16 September 2013 (ph. SBMNH) are the only fall records in District I (but see below).

Spring vagrants are casual, and they have been recorded as follows: south Vandenberg SFB 12 June 1991; former waterfowl ponds near the Santa Ynez River mouth 14 May 1992, 21 May 1995 (the only spring female), 4 June 1995 (ph. SBMNH), and 20 May 2000; Goleta Slough 9 [not 11] June 2000; Goleta Slough 14 May 2013 (ph. SBMNH); and UCSB Lagoon 11 June 2024; and in District I along Figueroa Mountain Road near Los Olivos 26 May 2013.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)

Fairly common to common transient and winter visitor and uncommon to fairly common, but declining, summer resident in all Districts.

Western Meadowlarks are found predominantly in grassland and agricultural areas. They also occur in saltmarsh vegetation during winter. Overall numbers have declined since the mid-1980s, probably the result of the conversion of much grassland habitat to non-attractive agricultural uses and to residential development. Between late September and March, this species is much more numerous and widespread than as a local breeder. Early migrants may be seen in non-breeding areas as early as late July, possibly even earlier (e.g., 6+ July 2007 Carpinteria Salt Marsh, 7 July 2003 San Marcos Foothills (5)). One at Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 10 June 2020 may have been an exceptionally early post-breeding disperser from elsewhere, as was 1 at Lake Los Carneros 11 June 2023. Moderate-sized flocks form during the non-breeding season, particularly towards dusk near night-time roosts. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 909 individuals (3 January 1981); but since 1994, most totals have not exceeded 400 individuals. Declining numbers in the Santa Maria area are illustrated by the 200–300 annually on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC during the late 1990s, with 503–505 birds there on both 26 December 1999 and 23 December 2001, but only 125–250 birds there since that time. La Purisima CBCs have recorded as many as 448 individuals (17 December 2000). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 740 and 909 birds (27 December 2000 and 28 December 2012, respectively). A two-day survey in District V on 6–7 January 2024 produced 385 birds.

Away from breeding locales, spring birds are rare in May, with late birds at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 16 May 2021 and at Carpinteria Salt Marsh 28 May 2023. Single spring migrants were noted well offshore aboard a research vessel some 24 mi (39 km) NW of Point Arguello 1 April 2024 and (same?) some 33 mi (53 km) W of Point Arguello 3 April 2024.

As a breeder, meadowlarks had become uncommon along much of the South Coast by 1990, and soon after 2005 they were probably largely extirpated as a nesting species east of Goleta. Recent nesting sites in Goleta are uncertain, but may include More Mesa, Ellwood Mesa (e.g., 14 June 2024), and Farren Road (e.g., 20 May 2026). West of Goleta, meadowlarks are currently thought to be very uncommon, local, and irregular breeders, but public access to much of the appropriate habitat there is limited. Up to 9 birds at Hollister Ranch 2 June–18 July 2018 was a good summer count. This species remained a fairly common breeding species along the North Coast and in District I through the mid-1990s, and presently it is probably an uncommon breeding species along much of the North Coast. In District M, it also remains uncommon to fairly common (e.g., 15 at Santa Barbara Potrero, Sierra Madre, 29 July 2018). In District V, it probably is uncommon.

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*)

Very rare fall and winter visitor along the South Coast, casual in spring and along the North Coast.

Orchard Orioles are found in a variety of woodland habitats; wintering individuals are found primarily in exotic plantings (particularly blooming eucalyptus trees and Cape Honeysuckle hedges) and occasionally at hummingbird feeders in residential areas between Goleta and Carpinteria. The first record for Santa Barbara County was an adult male in Montecito 2 November 1963–5 April 1964. There were no county records away from the South Coast until

1996. Most records since the late 1970s have been of immature or female-plumaged birds; most of the earlier sightings were of adult males. Thus, the species was very likely overlooked before the 1970s (see also Hooded Oriole account).

There were 39 fall (1 September–late November) records along the South Coast between 1963–1993, with a single-season maximum of 5 birds in 1987. The autumn total from 1994–2025 was 37 birds, with the earliest 10 September (2009, Goleta), as well as an exceptionally early molting one-year-old male in Orcutt from 14–25+ August 2024, and a high single-season total of 6 birds in 2023. Records along the North Coast were: Jalama Beach County Park 24 September 1996, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 1 October 1998, Santa Maria 7–11 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH), a very early adult male in Orcutt 13–14 August 2021 (ph. SBMNH), near Lompoc 8 October 2023 (ph. SBMNH), and the 2024 Orcutt bird.

In winter (December–early April), 32 individuals were recorded along the South Coast between 1963–early 1994, and 50 were found from late 1994–early 2026. The highest season totals were of 5 birds in 2009–2010, 2010–2011, and 2019–2020, and a record 13 birds along the South Coast in 2023–2024 including 4–6 on the UCSB campus 17 December–March (ph. SBMNH) and a total of 4 in Isla Vista 15 December–15 February. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 4 (29 December 1984) and 5 (1 January 2011) individuals. The exact number of wintering birds over the years is impossible to determine because some individuals return multiple years, with 1 returning for perhaps eight consecutive winters in Carpinteria between 2017 and 2025. Wintering birds have remained as late as through 26 April 2022 (ph. SBMNH) and 29 April 2019, 2021, and 2024 (all same bird) UCSB campus, and 2 May 2018 and 2025 Carpinteria.

The following records may have involved spring vagrants, although they may have wintered undetected somewhere locally: Santa Barbara 12–20 April 1974 and near Devereux Slough 18 April 1982 (singing first-year male).

There is one record of a late-spring vagrant: Montecito 7 June 1966.

Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*)

Fairly common to common summer resident along the South Coast, fairly common but local along the North Coast and in District I, and uncommon and local at the lower elevations in District M; very rare in District V and casual at upper elevations in District M. Rare to very rare in winter along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast and in District I.

Hooded Orioles are found in areas of exotic plantings in residential areas and at hummingbird feeders, as well as in riparian woodland where they are less numerous. Wintering individuals are particularly fond of blooming eucalyptus trees and feeders. They prefer fan palms (*Washingtonia* spp., particularly *W. robusta*) for nesting sites, but they also nest in eucalyptus, oak, and pepper trees. This species is most common in residential areas along the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria where it has probably increased greatly in numbers over the past 100+ years as a result of the planting of exotic vegetation. It was known to be present in the Santa Barbara area in 1913 and was recorded in District I at Santa Ynez in 1917 (Dawson 1923). During the past several decades, Hooded Orioles have increased in numbers in urban and residential areas along the North Coast (though not close to the coast) and in District I and are now fairly common but local. Along the upper Santa Ynez River, 1–2 at Mono Guard Station between April and June 1937–1939 and 1 at Juncal Campground 18 June 1992 were at odd localities for this species, which normally is not found east of Rancho Oso. In District M, it is found in very small numbers at the lowest elevations (e.g., San Marcos Pass area, Sierra Madre foothills) and is casual higher still; a pair was in oaks at an elevation of 3550 ft near Little Pine Mountain on 21 June 2012 and 1 was at Figueroa Mountain 19 June 2021. Its status in District V is uncertain, but generally thought to be a rare visitor, April–August, and uncertain breeder; it is more frequent in foothill canyons immediately to the south, such as at Aliso Park (in District M).

A late nesting record occurred at the Botanic Garden in Santa Barbara where young fledged on 10 September 1965, and another late nesting involved adults feeding young in Carpinteria 1 September 1994.

The first spring arrivals, typically adult males, formerly arrived in mid-March, but during the 2000s they have become routine at the beginning of March and even at the very end of February along the South Coast; the earliest arrival dates are 25 February 2017 and 2026 Carpinteria, 27 February 2017 and 2021 Goleta, and 27 February 2022 Santa Barbara. Early dates away from the South Coast include 28 February 2020 at Buellton in District I and 7 March 2015 in Santa Maria along the North Coast. Late dates of migrants in spring are unknown.

In fall, the species has largely departed by mid-September, is rare after late September, and is very rare after mid-October.

During winter months, this species has been seen between Goleta and Carpinteria almost annually since 1960–1961. Before the 1970s, however, yellowish orioles in winter were likely almost all reported as Hooded, whereas it was later learned that many such birds are, in fact, Orchard Orioles. Thus, the Santa Barbara CBC total of 4 individuals on 19 December 1971 is somewhat suspect. Through the mid-1990s, the highest accurate winter total was 6 birds during both 1977–1978 and 1983–1984; from late 1995–early 2026 the high there was also 6 birds, in both 2020–2021 and 2023–2024, whereas 2 or 3 individuals is typical. One seen in blooming eucalyptus trees near San Marcos Pass 29–30 December 1979 was at a higher elevation than is typical at this season. Singles in Lompoc 12 November–16 December 1989, 23 November 2002–late winter 2003, 7 December 2005, 19 January 2014, and 21 December 2025; and up to 2 in residential Santa Maria 22 December 2016–21 February 2017 (ph. SBMNH), 11 November 2017–26 January 2018, and 21 December 2020–1 January 2021 (ph. SBMNH) are the only North Coast records at this season. In District I, 1 was at Santa Ynez 31 December 1996, 1 was in Solvang 20 January 2007 “and previously” (ph. SBMNH), 1 was near Santa Ynez 30 December 2008, and 1 was in Buellton 3 December 2023.

Hooded Orioles are a favored host of the Brown-headed Cowbird and suffer one of the higher rates of nest parasitism of any South Coast species (S. Rothstein pers. comm.).

Bullock’s Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)

Fairly common transient in Districts C, I, and V, and uncommon in District M. Fairly common summer resident in Districts I and V, uncommon and local in District C. Very uncommon in winter along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast and in District I.

Bullock’s Orioles breed in broadleaf deciduous woodland (e.g., cottonwoods and sycamores) throughout much of District I and locally in plantings around ranch houses in District V. They are uncommon and local in District C as breeders, often found nesting in eucalyptus. According to *Audubon Field Notes,* a nest found at El Capitan State Beach 5 June 1958 was the “first recorded nesting on the ocean side of the coast range between Ventura and Gaviota.” “First” nestings along the South Coast include: at least 2 pairs bred in Refugio Canyon through the early 1980s and in 1992; 1 pair nested in Tecolote Canyon just west of Goleta in 1973; at least 1 pair nested in northern Goleta (e.g., along Farren Road) beginning in 1982 and up to 3 pairs were there during most summers thereafter; single pairs were in southern Goleta May–June 1982 and 1993 and at least 2 pairs were there in 1992 (along lower Atascadero Creek and in Ellwood); and adults feeding fledged young were at Lake Los Carneros on the early date of 15 May 1992. Small numbers also may have bred regularly during the 1990s in several of the foothill canyons behind Carpinteria and west of Goleta, but this was not confirmed. Two were along Rincon Creek near Carpinteria 29 June 1991. Along the North Coast, this species is a local breeder at warmer, more interior sites, with the westernmost at upper Shuman Creek (2008) and Terra Road (2006) on north Vandenberg SFB, and at Surf Pasture (1999, 2023) on south Vandenberg SFB. A singing male in oaks near Bear Camp, Big Pine Mountain, 15 June 1997 and a pair there (plus 2 other individuals elsewhere in the Big Pine Mountain area) 15–16 June 2013 were probably on

territory at a higher elevation than usual in District M (and see below). Individuals (especially adult males) begin to depart from nesting areas in early July.

Spring transients begin arriving in mid-March (earliest arrival dates typically involve adult males: 1 March 1996 Santa Barbara, 3 March 1996 Goleta) and most have passed through by early May; a few individuals linger into late May. Thirty in Winchester Canyon, Goleta, 10 April 1984, 35 in one section of San Jose Creek, Goleta, 4 April 2006, and 30 along a half-mile of Refugio Canyon 29 March 2020 were high counts. The latest records of probable transients are 4 June 1982 Goleta and 12 June 1982 Santa Maria River mouth. One was offshore aboard a research vessel some 26 mi (42 km) NW of Point Arguello 20 April 2024.

Fall transients appear in mid-July (earliest arrival dates: 1 July 1981 Big Pine Mountain—where possibly just an upslope wanderer—and 11 July 1977 Goleta). They are fairly common during late August and September. The species has been recorded only casually away from the South Coast after early October. An adult male along West Camino Cielo near San Marcos Pass through 2 November 2019 was late in District M.

With increased observer coverage of the residential areas between Goleta and Carpinteria beginning in the late 1970s, Bullock's has proven to be a very uncommon but regular winter visitor. The highest winter total was an exceptional 42 birds during 1983–1984, but usually between 15 and 20 individuals were found through the mid-1990s. Numbers have fallen most years since then, with an average of about 10 individuals between 2000–2021 but including single-season maxima of 19 in 2017–2018 and 21 in 2018–2019, but only 3 individuals during 2011–2012. Santa Barbara CBCs recorded as many as 24 birds (31 December 1983); high counts since the mid-1990s have been lower, with only single digits most years and highs of 12 birds on 5 January 2002 and 13 birds on 3 January 2015. Most individuals at this season are seen in blooming eucalyptus trees. One at Gaviota during winter 1971–1972, 2 at El Capitan State Beach 28 November–1+ December 1993, 1 there 22 December 2005, and 1 at Hollister Ranch 11 January 2014 are the only winter records for the South Coast west of Goleta (Tecolote Canyon).

For the North Coast, there are only ca. 12 late-fall and winter records: 1 near Santa Maria 19 December 1981 (atypically in a stand of bulrushes with a flock of blackbirds); 1 on north Vandenberg SFB 20 January 1990; 1 in Lompoc 6–9 December 1991; 1 at unspecified location during 1994–1995; presumably the same returning adult male in Preisker Park, Santa Maria, 19 December 2002, 9 November 2003–23 January 2004, and 17 November 2004; another there 8–9 December 2008; 1 elsewhere in Santa Maria 23 January 2006; 1 in Lompoc 19 December 2010; up to 2 in Santa Maria 26 December 2016–21 February 2017 (ph. SBMNH); 2 in Santa Maria 31 January 2023; 1 there 15 February 2024; and 1 in Lompoc 24 December 2025. In addition, a Bullock's/Baltimore Oriole was heard in Santa Maria 23 January 2006.

Winter records in District I come from the Buellton area 25 January 2019 and in 2023–2024 when a total of 4 birds were there between 3 December–10 February, and 1 at Nojoqui Falls Park 1 January 2026.

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)

Very rare fall and winter visitor along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast and in District I; casual in spring and summer, when also one record in District M.

The Baltimore Oriole frequents the same habitats as the Bullock's. All records, except seven, are from the South Coast. It is a rare but somewhat regular fall and winter visitor (most records are from late September–late March) and casual spring visitor. It was first recorded 7 October 1961–16 January 1962 in Montecito; this individual returned to the same feeder for an additional seven winters (it appeared as early as 20 September and departed as late as 16 April). One along San Jose Creek in Goleta 22 August 1977 was exceptionally early and represents the only fall record before 3+ September (2013, Goleta). Five along the South Coast during fall 1983 is a high count for that season. The fall total through 1993 is uncertain. From 1994–2025, some 42

individuals were tallied along the South Coast during autumn, some of which then remained into winter. There are just four fall records along the North Coast: near the Santa Ynez River mouth 17 October 1998 and 6 October 2000, north Vandenberg SFB 13 October 2011, and Santa Ynez River mouth 10 October 2022.

In winter, the maximum is an impressive 9 birds during 1982–1983, 3 were seen on the Santa Barbara CBC on 2 January 1983, but 1 to 3 individuals each winter is more typical. Between 1994–1995 and 2025–2026, a total of 51 winter individuals were found, with high single-season counts of 5 birds in 2013–2014 and 6 in 2014–2015. The exact number of wintering birds over the years is impossible to determine because some individuals return multiple years. Several have remained into at least mid-April. A number of additional reports April of birds not known to have wintered locally were, however, likely just that: Santa Barbara 6–10 April 1969 and 3–11 April 1971; Goleta 17 April 1980, 12 April 1981, 16 April 1984, 14–21 April 2003, 8 April 2006, 11 April 2013, 13 April 2013, 10 April 2015, and 10–18 April 2024; and Santa Barbara 24 April 2019.

There are six records between late April and early May involving likely spring migrants: Honda Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 3 May 1977, Goleta 1–6 May 1982, Carpinteria 25 April 1999, Montecito 21 April 2018 (ph. SBMNH), northern Goleta 6 May 2024, and Goleta 8 May 2024. A male in Ellwood 12 April–25 May 2019 (ph. SBMNH) may have wintered locally and remained exceptionally late, or it may have been a spring visitor that then remained for an extended period on territory. There are 10 South Coast records of clear late-spring migrants: Goleta 23 May 1980, Goleta 21 May 1982, Santa Barbara 22 May 1982, Goleta 18 May 1983, Goleta 17 May 1998, Carpinteria 23 May 1998, "Trout Club" below San Marcos Pass 4 June 2009 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 25–26 May 2015, and Santa Barbara 8 June 2019; a male near Atascadero Creek in Goleta 30 May–18 June 1999 appeared to be on territory.

In summer, 1 was on Hollister Ranch, west of Gaviota, 25 June 2011 and 1 was at Santa Barbara Shores, Goleta, 22 June 2017 (ph. SBMNH). Singles along Carneros Creek in Goleta 27 July 2015, along Devereux Creek in Goleta 1 August 2015 (ph. SBMNH), and in northwest Goleta 24 July 2019 are difficult to categorize.

The only record for District I is of a fall migrant in Buellton 17 October 2017, and the only record in District M is in spring from near Refugio Road X West Camino Cielo 7 May 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

There are two or three winter records of presumed hybrid male Bullock's X Baltimore Orioles from the South Coast.

Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*)

Uncommon and local summer resident in District V. Very rare fall and winter visitor along the South Coast, casual there in spring, on the North Coast, and in District I.

Scott's Orioles were first detected breeding in the semidesert scrub and pinyon-juniper in Ballinger, Deer Park, and Quatal [mostly Ventura County] Canyons bordering the east side of the upper Cuyama Valley in 1969. The species was recorded annually from the late 1970s (high counts: 8 birds on 10 July 1978 and 15 on 1 May 1979) through the mid-1990s; with fewer reports since about 2001 to the present, and with only as many as 4 birds (3 May 2009) and 5 birds (Deer Park Canyon, 14 May 2020). This is the northwest limit of the species' range in California. They are typically scarcer west of the Cuyama River in Santa Barbara Canyon (bordering District M), where Breeding Bird Surveys during May since the 1980s have detected 1 or 2 birds most years, and where a high total of 9 individuals were found 12–16 May 2020, 7 of which were in a single side canyon on 12 May. A few (up to 4) birds have been seen even farther to the west as far as Aliso Canyon between 2018–2020 (where high count of 4 birds 18 April 2018). Individuals begin arriving in early April (earliest arrivals: 27 March 1997 Quatal Canyon, 28 March 2024 Ballinger Canyon). There are few records after June and they have presumably mostly departed by mid-August, with no fall or winter records there.

Along the coast, this species was first reported in Montecito in [no date] 1913, 1957, and 1958 (Metcalf 1972). There are three records of fall vagrants: Montecito 3 August 1961 and 28 September–2 October 1961, and Carpinteria Creek 13–24 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH). Most coastal records are of presumed wintering birds, which are found primarily in blooming eucalyptus trees and small patches of prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* spp.). A total of 53 individuals were found from 1960–1961 through 1993–1994 along the South Coast and on the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The winter total from 1994–1995 through 2025–2026 was 44 individuals. The number of different wintering birds over the years is impossible to determine because many individuals return multiple years, especially those at the "Trout Club," in foothill Montecito, and, recently, along Farren Road in northwest Goleta; thus, these totals are clearly inflated. Most records have come from the Santa Barbara and especially Montecito foothills and from the lower San Marcos Pass area (i.e., Trout Club); there are only a few records from the Goleta and Carpinteria foothills, although the Farren Road area has become a regular wintering site for 1–3 birds most years between 2016–2025. A male arrived exceptionally early at the Trout Club 23 July 2007, and another was there 20+ August 2014; the next earliest arrival is 8 September 2012. Another early arrival was a male at Farren Road from 23+ August 2024 and again 2+ September 2025. The maximum count is up to 5 at the Trout Club 9 January–23 February 1998. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 3 individuals (3 January 1987). In addition, 2 were in Refugio Canyon 19 February–mid-March 1978 (ph. SBMNH). Two remained late at the Trout Club through 5 April 1999 and 1 remained through 7 April 1982. As a result of (mostly) loss of favored wintering habitat (blooming blue gum eucalyptus trees) at several of the favored sites, this species has declined, with only two birds since early 2018 at its former favored haunts in foothill Santa Barbara and Montecito (Santa Barbara "Riviera" 8 January–12 March 2020, Montecito 6 February 2023).

One in Lompoc 4 November–15 December 1991 and 1 near Orcutt 27 December 2020 (ph. SBMNH) are the only records for the North Coast.

There is one record of a spring vagrant along the coast: Santa Barbara 7 May 1913 (Dawson 1913a).

A spring vagrant near Santa Ynez 2–6 April 2012 is the sole record for District I.

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

Common permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V. Numbers are augmented substantially during fall and winter. Status in District M uncertain.

Red-winged Blackbirds breed in bulrushes and cattails in marshes, in wet thickets, and in wet meadows in Districts C, I, and V. They occasionally nest in fields that lack standing water. Away from breeding localities, they occur in a wide variety of open habitats including agricultural areas, fields, parks, open riparian woodland, and feeders. Large flocks form during fall and winter and are often mixed with other blackbirds. The largest counts have come from the Santa Maria Valley and Vandenberg SFB (where a large roost of up to 3000 individuals was present at Mod Pond (formerly Mod III Lake) during winter 1981–1982). The 27 December 1969 Santa Barbara CBC reported 13,000 individuals; CBCs since 1990 have failed to record more than 456 individuals (4 January 1997). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has logged as many as 852 birds (28 December 2010), and 2500 were estimated at an evening roost on the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 3 December 2016 and ca. 2000 were there 18–25 September 2024.

One rode a cruise ship from at least ca. 47 mi (76 km) W of Point Arguello to ca. 44 mi (71 km) SSW of Santa Rosa Island on 12 October 2022.

In District M, Red-winged Blackbirds have an uncertain status. An unknown number were reported at Zaca Lake 17 June 2012, 1 flew through San Marcos Pass 5 May 1984, 2 birds flew over West Camino Cielo near Refugio Pass 5 June 2014, and 2 were at Santa Barbara Potrero 28

May 2025. Migrants might occur rarely in open, wet areas at higher elevations, but data are lacking.

The status of "Bicolored Blackbird" (*A. p. californicus*), a resident of Central California, locally is uncertain. It may be a rare fall and winter visitor, but many birds identified as this subspecies are actually just variants of more regular occurring Red-winged taxa.

Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*)

Uncommon, very local, and decreasing resident in Districts C, I, and V. Somewhat irregular in occurrence, particularly during fall and winter.

Tricolored Blackbirds breed, April–July, very locally in colonies located in dense stands of bulrushes and cattails in the Santa Maria Valley, on north Vandenberg SFB, along the Santa Ynez River, and in the Cuyama Valley. Summer foraging takes place in nearby agricultural areas, fields and pastures, and short-grass habitats such as golf courses and airports. Colonies are irregular in occurrence, and they may contain several hundred individuals. The status of most nesting colonies since the late 1970s is unclear; some current and historical information on Tricolored colonies in Santa Barbara County and in California as a whole is available through http://tricolor.ice.ucdavis.edu/. Post-breeding dispersal may commence already by late May, so birds seen then and during June are not necessarily local breeders.

The most consistent breeding since the late 1970s has taken place in District V. More than 1200 were nesting at stock/irrigation ponds in the Cuyama Valley 21 July 1979. Large numbers have been found in late winter and spring associated with a large dairy operation near Cuyama, with ca. 1000 there 20 March 2005 and ca. 6000 tallied 18 April 2006; although spring totals there between 2010–2016 were typically between 400–500 birds, with 600 on 6 April 2016; and then fewer still in 2017–2025 (e.g., only 80 on 8 May 2019), although ca. 1200+ present 19 February 2020. Much smaller numbers of birds are seen elsewhere in the Valley at this season (e.g., 125 in Quatal Canyon 4 April 2019). A nesting colony was located at Caliente Ranch Wetland in 2005 and May 2020 (<20 adults) and at a stock pond near there in May 2024 (48+ birds) and April–June 2026 (up to 70). A colony with 20–25 breeding pairs was near Ventucopa 28 April 2021. During the late 2010s, many of the stock ponds in the valley had their vegetation removed and were lined with plastic, undoubtedly greatly reducing the numbers of nesting Tricoloreds. In late summer, the recent high is 200 tallied in the Valley 20 July 2009. The highest late-fall and early-winter counts for the Cuyama Valley are 400 on 15 November 1953 and 300 on 10 November 1990, and 200 at the dairy on 11 November 2025.

Along the North Coast, a colony probably existed along the Sisquoc River near Sisquoc (on the border with District I) in 1993, and a definite colony of ca. 100–200 birds was at a sand-and-gravel quarry there on both 9 June 1997 and 19 May 2000. Some 25 birds were in that area 17 April 2014. Approximately 100+ adults and 40 juveniles were feeding at Guadalupe 27 June 2012 and 700 were nesting there 19–25 April 2014. Grisingher Pond, along Highway 1 west of Orcutt, supported a Tricolored colony in at least 2005. Another colony has been active at vernal pools along Telephone Road southeast of Santa Maria. Breeding was documented at Punchbowl Pond on north Vandenberg SFB in May 1996, when 100+ nesting pairs and 75+ fledged young were discovered (Holmgren and Collins 1999). Thirty birds carrying nesting material were at Highway 1 and Santa Lucia Canyon, near Vandenberg Village, 24 March 1996 and up to several hundred were there 23 May 1997, up to 150 were in a nesting colony at Highway 1 and Tularosa Road near Lompoc in spring 2001, and 100 were at Guadalupe 14 June 2013 and 10 were near there 13 June 2019.

Along the South Coast, the species is no longer known to nest in Goleta, where it formerly bred (until at least the early 1980s) at Lake Los Carneros (e.g., 1000+ birds present 27 April 1971), in Goleta Slough, and adjacent to the Goleta sewage treatment plant. Twenty birds were found in Carpinteria 14 June 1981, nesting status uncertain. Spring and early-summer records from Goleta since the mid-1990s total just eight: 1 with nesting Red-winged Blackbirds along Atascadero Creek 8–24 May 1997, 3+ on UCSB campus in late June 2000, 1 at Santa Barbara

airport 2 May 2001, 1 at Goleta Slough 24 May 2006, 1 singing at Los Carneros X Mesa Roads 17 May 2007, 2 at sewage treatment plant 15 July 2015, 1 at Lake Los Carneros 21 June 2019, and 1 near Farren Road 5 April 2020. In addition, 13 were at San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 30 April 2002 and 12 were at Hollister Ranch 2 June 2018. In much earlier times, Dawson found 1000 Tricoloreds between Goleta and Carpinteria on 5 May 1913.

In District I, a colony with 3000 nests was found near Los Alamos 18 May 1936, and single large colonies probably existed along the Santa Ynez River somewhere between Solvang and Lompoc during the 1980s and west of Buellton in the early 1990s. Colonies were confirmed in this area on 1 May 2001 (50–150 birds) and 10 April 2006 (10 pairs). Possible local nesting was suggested by up to 30, 125, and 500 birds at Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez during March 2004, March 2005, and on 30 July 2010, respectively, then confirmed by a colony of ca. 100 birds 19 April 2014 and again 16 March–1 June 2016, up to 600 birds in early April 2017, only 40 on 8 May 2019, but 200 adults and 50 fledglings between 15 March–27 May 2020, ca. 300 birds nesting there April–May 2021, up to 50 birds during June 2024, and up to 150 birds during May 2025 and April 2026. Also, 9 birds at Storke Flat at Lake Cachuma 29 May 2009 and confirmed nesting near the east end of Lake Cachuma when 50 adults including females carrying food found 4–23 May 2010 and at least several fledglings present 6–12 June (this latter site may have been active since the 1990s). Another, small colony continued active for a number of years at a small pond near Happy Canyon Road, near Santa Ynez, with, most recently, 44 females there 17 April 2011. A small colony of ca. 15 birds was along Zaca Station Road, near Los Olivos, 9 May 2015, a colony was there 23 May 2019, and 22+ adults were doing much commuting along Old Careaga Ranch Road near Los Olivos 14 April 2020. A total of 300 birds were along Foxen Canyon Road near Los Olivos 11 May 2017. A few pairs northwest of Los Alamos 22 May 2019, 3 along El Jaro Creek 28 May 2020, and 40 west of Los Alamos 20 June 2024 may have been early post-breeding dispersers.

From mid-summer through late winter this species frequents agricultural areas, cattle pens (particularly at dairies), pastures, other short-grass habitats, and landfills. Through the early 1990s, the largest numbers congregated in the Santa Maria Valley (where appropriate habitat has declined) and at Vandenberg SFB. A total of 5000 were in the Santa Maria Valley from November 1980–January 1981 and 1500 were seen leaving a roost at Mod Pond (formerly Mod III Lake) on north Vandenberg SFB 19 December 1981. Along the South Coast, a total of 2200 birds on the 27 December 1969 Santa Barbara CBC was exceptional (also a record year for Red-winged Blackbirds). The largest counts in fall and winter in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area during the 1970s did not exceed 500 individuals, and by the 1980s those maxima were fewer than 50, except for the 50 birds on 2 January 1983. Up to 100, however, were roosting at Laguna Blanca during September 1992.

Since 1994, total counts in the Santa Maria Valley have very rarely exceeded 1000 individuals. The Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC, however, recorded a county-high 10,440 birds on 31 December 1995, as well as 2308 on 29 December 1996, and 1050 individuals 26 December 1999. Since 2000, CBC totals have ranged from fewer than 50 birds to several counts between 500–815 birds and 1100 on 23 December 2012. Some 700 were at a single site just west of Santa Maria 21 December 2014. Some 800, 1000, and 500 birds were high counts on 11 November 2018, 13 January 2019, and 28 February 2025, respectively, at a favored pasture near Guadalupe where good numbers have been found almost annually in fall and winter since at least 2007; late in the season, 300 were there 20 March 2018. Some 800 were at the Casmalia dairy 19 November 2024. Elsewhere along the North Coast (north to south), 200 were near the Santa Maria landfill 5 February 2017, 250 birds were at a pond east of Sisquoc 30 January 2011, 400 were on north Vandenberg SFB in late summer 1996, 600 were there 21 October 2018, a high ca. 6000 were found along El Rancho Road 26 December 2021, 693 were there 29 December 2024, 500+ were in Lompoc both 8 December 2013 and 15 December 2017, and 110–500 were west of

there 1 October–1 November 2015 and 500–900 from 6–8 November 2025. During the 1990s, La Purisima CBCs recorded highs of 556 birds on 18 December 1994, 518 on 17 December 1995, and 855 individuals on 22 December 1996, but most counts since then have been under 100, except for 308 and 523 birds on 18 December 2005 and 15 December 2013, respectively. Two along Jalama Road 4 May 2019 were late, if not breeding somewhere locally.

Since the early 1990s along the South Coast, most of the very few wintering birds in the Santa Barbara area frequented Goleta Beach Park and the transfer station (dump) in western Santa Barbara. In 1998, up to 11 were at the latter site in December. During the following period, the CBC totals dropped further to single digits and then to just 1–3 birds most years through 2012–2013 (all at the transfer station; high count of 6 birds on 5 January 2008, low of zero in 2010–2011 and 2013–2014 through 2025–2026). Winter birds and transients in both fall and spring along much of the South Coast are currently very rare or casual. One at Lake Los Carneros 16–17 July 2018 was a post-breeding disperser. A male at Lake Los Carneros 27 May 2019 was either a wanderer or an early post-breeding disperser.

In District I, the Cachuma CBC has recorded this species only three times in 12 years: 100 birds on 30 December 2008, 5 on 28 December 2010, but 800 at an evening roost at Sedgwick Reserve 26 December 2014. Up to 50 birds frequented Zaca Station Road during winter in both early 2016 and 2017. The Sedgwick Reserve roost totaled ca. 600 birds on 6 March 2021 and 250 on 28 February 2025.

In District V, a recent high of 1260 were present at a dairy near Cuyama 19 February 2020, but since then the winter highs are 600 on 21 March 2021 and 200 on 18 February 2023.

The species may be absent for periods of at least several months from many of the areas they frequent most regularly.

A bird banded in Lompoc in 2006 was recaptured at Delevan NWR in Colusa County in 2009, and another bird banded at Delevan NWR sometime between 2007–2009 was sighted near Los Olivos on 13 March 2016.

Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)

Fairly common to locally common at all seasons in Districts C and I, and at all seasons except summer in V, when uncommon. Less widespread in fall and winter. Rare or absent in winter in District M, and at all seasons from areas with little or no human settlement or grazing activities. Increased greatly in numbers since the early 1900s, then possible declines more recently.

Brown-headed Cowbirds breed in a variety of habitats during spring and summer, primarily in riparian woodland and in residential areas. They also can be found in lower densities in freshwater marsh, grassland, oak woodland and savanna, coastal sage scrub, and coniferous forest. Breeding areas become more available if foraging and gathering areas occur within several miles of habitats that support host species that they parasitize. Cowbirds forage primarily where stock animals are present and in agricultural and residential areas (particularly on lawns and at feeders). During the early- and mid-morning hours in spring and early summer, Brown-headed Cowbird pairs disperse in riparian woodland where they maintain breeding home ranges in areas supporting ample numbers of those preferred passerine breeding-species. For the remainder of the day, most breeding individuals shift to their preferred foraging areas and occur in social groups. They occur in these latter habitats almost exclusively during fall and winter, often in mixed flocks with other blackbirds.

During spring and early summer, this species is most numerous along the South Coast, locally in the Santa Maria Valley, and in the riparian habitats and more settled sections of the Santa Ynez Valley. It is uncommon in District V, in the upper Santa Ynez River region, and away from riparian habitat on Vandenberg SFB. Some 300 were estimated still present at a Cuyama Valley dairy feedlot 18 April 2025. At least 15 at Montgomery Potrero in the Sierra Madre 18–19 July 1982 were accompanying cattle. The species is generally rare in the conifer forests at the higher elevations in District M. However, 2 were at McKinley Spring near San Rafael Mountain 18 June 1982; up to 6 were near Alamar Saddle in the Big Pine Mountain area

19–20 July 1982; and 1–4 individuals were in the lower Big Pine Mountain area (e.g., Bear Campground) on about half the summer surveys between 1983 and 2026.

During fall and winter, cowbirds are less widespread, occurring in flocks locally in Districts C, I, and V. Maximum fall and winter counts for different areas include 246 on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe CBC (29 December 1985), but only up to 131 (22 December 2013) there since the late 1990s; 2618 (22 December 1996), 2203 (21 December 1997), and 4017 (19 December 2004) birds reported on the La Purisima CBC; 300–500 west of Lompoc 6–8 November 2025; 285 on the Santa Barbara CBC (4 January 1986), but with only 19 found 31 December 2016; up to 75 (29 December 2009) on most Cachuma CBCs, but with 647 on that count 30 December 2008 and 805 there 26 December 2014, mostly associated with a large blackbird roost on Sedgwick Reserve, near Santa Ynez; 800 at a dairy feedlot in the Cuyama Valley 14 February 2009 but only up to 100 there recently in winter; and 250 in Goleta 11 September 2011. In many areas, however, totals do not exceed double digits.

This species is encountered fairly regularly at sea within 25 mi (40 km) of shore during the late summer (beginning in July) and fall. One flew by an oceanographic vessel 80 mi (130 km) SW of San Miguel Island 3 August 1991, another was 137 mi (220 km) W of San Nicolas Island 9 July 1992, 1 was ca. 61 mi (98 km) SSW of San Miguel Island 3 September 2014, 1 was south of Rodriguez Dome 6 September 2023, and 1 was aboard a cruise ship ca. 63 mi (101 km) W of Point Arguello to 52 mi (84 km) SW of San Miguel Island 29 August 2025. In spring, 2 were well beyond San Miguel Island 28 April 2006 and 1 was 35 mi (55 km) SSW of Point Arguello 2 May 2013.

Brown-headed Cowbirds were not recorded in Santa Barbara County until the beginning of the 20th century. The first records were 28 October 1911 Goleta, 13 September 1912 Carpinteria, and 25 August 1915 Goleta (a juvenile) (Dawson 1916). Since then, they became more numerous and widespread with the increase in human settlement and agricultural and ranching practices. They were well established throughout much of the coastal lowlands of Southern California by the 1930s (Willett 1933). One or 2 birds were at Mono and Pendola Guard Stations in May 1939 (Bartholomew 1940).

The Brown-headed Cowbird is a brood parasite, whose young are usually raised at the expense of some or all of the host species' brood. The substantial increase in cowbird numbers during the 1900s was almost certainly one factor in the reduction in the breeding populations of a number of passerine species. Most severely affected in Southern California have been Willow Flycatcher, Bell's and Western Warbling- Vireos, and Northern Yellow and Wilson's Warblers. Hooded Orioles are also heavily parasitized. Other host species favored by cowbirds locally are Common Yellowthroat and Song Sparrow.

Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*)

Casual fall and winter visitor, primarily in District C. One spring record.

Rusty Blackbirds are most often found in flocks of Brewer's Blackbirds, typically in association with fresh-water, such as along the edges of streams and ponds, in flooded fields, and at sewage treatment plants, but also on park lawns, at shopping-mall parking lots, and at a refuse facility. All but one of the records are from District C, and that single inland report was the first for Santa Barbara County: 2 along the Santa Ynez River near Solvang 8–12 January 1974. The fall and winter records from the South Coast are as follows: Goleta sewage treatment plant 20 December 1974–4 March 1975 (ph. SBMNH); Goleta sewage treatment plant 2 January–23 March 1977 and again 10 December 1977–17 March 1978 (ph. SBMNH); Refugio State Beach 1 November 1978; Santa Barbara 22–29 January 1979 (ph. SBMNH), which frequented park lawns and playing fields; Goleta 4 January 1980; Carpinteria sewage treatment plant 13 January–17 February 1980; Carpinteria sewage treatment plant 4–21 February 1984; Goleta 24 January–15 February 1996 (ph. SBMNH), which frequented park lawns; Santa Barbara transfer

station (dump) 6 December 1998–18 January 1999; a bird which returned for at least 4 consecutive years to the Camino Real Marketplace *(aka.* Costco parking lot) in Goleta 31 January–13 March 2000 (ph. SBMNH), 18 December 2000–11 March 2001 (ph. SBMNH), 8 December 2001–8 March 2002, and 5 December 2002–8 February 2003 (ph. CBRC 2007, SBMNH); amazingly, presumably a different bird 7 years later at the same, improbable site (and at nearby Ellwood School) 14–19 November 2009 (ph. SBMNH) and another there 16 December 2013 (ph. SBMNH); private property in northern Carpinteria 18 February–5 March 2013 (ph. SBMNH); and Carpinteria State Beach 5 November 2019 (ph. SBMNH). Those from the North Coast are: near Guadalupe 8 November 1980, near Santa Maria 21 November 1995, near Guadalupe 7–13 November 2010 (ph. SBMNH), Santa Ynez River mouth 1 January 2014, and Waller Park in Santa Maria 8 February–8 April 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

There is one spring record: South Fairview Avenue, Goleta, 12 April 1977 (ph. SBMNH). This individual was seen eating french fries at a fast-food restaurant! (It was not the same bird that wintered earlier in the year at the Goleta sewage treatment plant.)

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

Common, though possibly declining, permanent resident in Districts C, I, and V, and locally in District M.

Brewer's Blackbirds occur in a wide variety of habitats including residential and urban areas, grasslands, savanna, marshes and river mouths, agricultural areas, and the edges of forested areas bordering these open habitats. They mostly avoid areas of dense coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and woodland. Flocks form during fall and winter, particularly at pastures, stock pens, city parks, sewage treatment plants, shopping-mall parking lots and restaurant patios, landfills and other refuse facilities, and at evening roost sites. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 2800 individuals (31 December 1966); 4600 were seen on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe count 23 December 1979 and 1500 were there 23 December 2007; and the high on the Cachuma CBC is 2360 birds (28 December 2007). Numbers appear to have declined somewhat in parts of California, and Santa Barbara CBCs during the past 10 years have recorded between 204–464 individuals.

In District M, this species is found in open grassland habitat, such as that found locally in the Figueroa Mountain area and in the Sierra Madre potreros and foothills bordering the Cuyama Valley. One reported by Bartholomew (1940) on Big Pine Mountain 29 June 1937 was more unusual.

One bird was 5 mi (8 km) at sea off Point Arguello 15 October 2010.

Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*)

Casual fall and winter visitor in District C.

One wintered in the Santa Barbara transfer station (dump) area, Santa Barbara, 29 December 1987–2 March 1988 (ph. SBMNH). One was in Lompoc 3 January–4 March 1999 (ph. SBMNH). And another was near there bordering south Vandenberg SFB 5–7 November 2025.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

A fairly recent colonizer. Now an uncommon to fairly common but local resident in Districts C and I, uncommon in District V. Formerly a very rare vagrant. Casual in Districts M.

Great-tailed Grackles nest primarily in freshwater marshes, particularly in stands of cattails, less frequently in ornamental trees such as pines. They forage in a variety of open habitats including agricultural areas and livestock pens, parks, lawns, harbors, and shopping center parking lots. Some seasonal movements between these habitats have been noted.

This species was first recorded in 1978 when 1 was at Jalama Beach County Park 12 September–early November (ph. SBMNH). By the beginning of 1994 there were 15 records: near Lake Cachuma 12 May–late June 1979 and again 6 May–November 1980, Gaviota State Park 2–7 July 1979, Goleta 16 October 1980 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 23 April 1982, Goleta 8

September 1982 (ph. SBMNH) and then at Refugio State Beach 14 September 1982, Santa Barbara 14 October 1982–14 January 1983, Goleta 6–16 July 1986, Goleta 15–16 July 1987, Santa Barbara 22 December 1988–5 February 1989, Goleta 20 May 1989, near Santa Maria 4–8 May 1993, Carpinteria 20 July 1993, Santa Maria River mouth 8 August 1993, and Carpinteria 14 September 1993. This species expanded its range throughout much of the interior southwestern United States including southeastern California beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, and it expanded into the coastal sections of San Diego and Ventura Counties during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Between 1994–1999, many additional records accumulated. The first year brought more sightings in Goleta (several sites, up to 3 birds each, annual and increasing thereafter), Santa Barbara (annual and increasing thereafter), Carpinteria, and Lake Cachuma. In 1995, Lompoc, the Santa Ynez River mouth area, and Santa Maria were added to the list. In 1996, so was Gibraltar Dam (2 birds from 19–21 July). In 1997, came Vandenberg Village (5 birds during the autumn season). As the species consolidated its numbers and range, individual sightings were no longer submitted from most areas after 1998 or 1999.

Between 1996–2000+, this species established breeding colonies as follows (presented mostly in chronological order):

Lake Los Carneros, Goleta—3 nests and fledglings being fed from 26 June–1 July 1996 established the first confirmed nesting record; high counts since then included up to 12–15 birds in 1998, 30 in fall 1999, 25–32 between 8–24 February 2007, and 18 from 3–31 January 2015;

Lake Cachuma—2 adults with 2 juveniles being fed in July 1997; 10 birds there October 1998, 29 during fall 1999;

Andrée Clark Bird Refuge—2 juveniles being fed during July–August 1998; 12–15 birds through May 1999;

Preisker Park, Santa Maria—3 adults carrying food to nestlings in May 1999 (no longer nests there); and

Santa Barbara Harbor area—pair carrying nesting material in February 2000.

In 2014, nesting was suspected at Carpinteria State Beach where 2 fledglings were seen 26 June; and in 2020, nesting was possible in vic. “Lake Jocelyn,” Carpinteria.

The increase along the South Coast also can be seen through the trends on the Santa Barbara CBC: none until 2 January 1983, not annual until starting 30 December 1995, but then a quick increase so that 17–66 individuals were tallied yearly through early 2013 and 72–73 birds were found in early 2014 and 2015. A total of 45 at Laguna Blanca 8 December 2012 was large for that site. Despite the increases, Great-tailed Grackle is still a very localized species along the South Coast, with only a handful of consistent sites. The only long-term established population west of Goleta is a small one found at Refugio State Beach since about 2010. Scattered records of single or a few birds, including some involving food carries and fledged juveniles still begging from adults, come from a fair number of other, mostly ephemeral sites between Gaviota and Carpinteria. Also, numbers appear to have declined, at least temporarily, at the major South Coast nesting sites, however, probably the result of low water levels and/or the periodic cutting of cattails at Lake Los Carneros, Laguna Blanca, and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Only 8 individuals were found on the Santa Barbara CBC 2 January 2016, and 24–26 birds at Laguna Blanca 3 December 2023–1 January 2024 may represent the largest recent population (and see Lake Cachuma, below).

Along the North Coast, moderate numbers are resident in the Jim May (formerly River Oaks) Park area in Santa Maria, where the species also currently nests (since approximately 2005). A count of 57 individuals there in September 2012 included about 75 percent juveniles; some 95 birds were tallied 25 August 2018. Counts since then have not exceeded about 70 individuals but still include many juveniles. Small numbers of birds are found periodically at a number of ponds and parks scattered elsewhere in the Santa Maria Valley, south to Orcutt and east to Sisquoc,

with a high count of 25 birds at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 5 December 2016. A female was likely feeding young at the Santa Maria sewage treatment plant 19 June 2017. Farther south, La Purisima CBCs have recorded as many as 33 individuals (20 December 2009), and one consistent site for this species—River Park in Lompoc—has hosted as many as 38 birds 18 February 2012.

In District I, most sites host only a small number of birds and are ephemeral. One of the more sizeable and long-term colonies was located at Cachuma Lake Recreation Area. The resulting totals on the Cachuma CBC from 1999–2014 varied from a low of 5 birds to a high of 52 (26 December 2003). (Low lake water levels and the temporary closing of the marina snack bar may have been the cause of 0 birds found on the 2015 CBC.) The recent high there at any season is of approximately 20 birds. Small numbers continue to breed. Elsewhere, 25 birds were in Solvang 14 January 2004, approximately a dozen were in Buellton 23 January 2016, but ca. 80–100 were there between 16 March-28 July 2025 and 138 were tallied 29 January 2026. Small numbers have been recorded at multiple other sites in the Santa Ynez Valley, including likely nesting at vic. Solvang wastewater treatment plant in May–June 2013. Since the 1996 Gibraltar Reservoir birds, the only records east of Lake Cachuma might be the single individual at Rancho Oso Campground 24–25 March 2017 and 4 birds at Jameson Lake 25 July 2019.

The first record in District M was established by a bird at San Marcos Pass 14 May 2006; the only report since is from Aliso Park, Sierra Madre, 18 April 2020.

The first reports from District V were in 2008: near New Cuyama 23 March, 6 in Cuyama 5 April, and 2 near New Cuyama 26 April. In 2010, Great-tailed Grackles nested for the first time in District V, with 3 pairs carrying food in Quatal Canyon on 10 May. High counts were established by 25 birds at a farm pond along Foothill Road 1 June 2013 and 24 birds at a dairy near New Cuyama 28 December 2014; more recently the high is 21 birds on 7 January 2024. Most counts are only in the single digits.

A Brewer's Blackbird X Great-tailed Grackle hybrid was at Preisker Park, Santa Maria, 8 May–5 July 1999 (ph. SBMNH) and again 13 April–13+ May 2000.

NEW WORLD WOOD-WARBLERS (PARULIDAE)

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)

Casual spring and early-summer, and very rare fall, visitor in District C. Casual in District I. One winter record.

The first county record was, surprisingly, from District I near Los Olivos 13 May 1928 (Hoffmann 1928); the second, atypically, was offshore when 1 landed on a boat in the Santa Barbara Channel 21 May 1967. Since then, the seven spring records from District C are: Montecito 24 May 1968 (*SBMNH); Santa Barbara 28 May 1968 (*SBMNH); Goleta 6 June 1972 (*SBMNH); and Santa Barbara 5 June 1979, 20 June 1981 (*SBMNH), 15 June 1983 (*SBMNH), and 4 June 1999. One banded near Atascadero Creek in Goleta 23 June 2000 was a late-spring vagrant, but 1 singing in Rattlesnake Canyon behind Santa Barbara 11–24 June 2001 was apparently on territory. One found dead for an uncertain length of time on the UCSB campus 26 June 2026 was late. Inland, 1 was at Cachuma Campground, near Figueroa Mountain (on the border between Districts I and M), 10 June 1996.

The 27 fall records from District C are: 24 from the South Coast between 7 September and 15 November—Santa Barbara October 1970, 28 September 1971 (*UCSB), 27–28 September 1973 (ph. SBMNH), and 20 October 1973; Goleta 15 November 1979 (*UCSB); Santa Barbara 17–18 October 1980 (ph. SBMNH); Montecito 26 October 1980; Carpinteria 21 October 1982; Santa Barbara 28 September 1990 (*SBMNH); and then 15 additional South Coast records, 1990–2022, between 7+ September (2018, Goleta, ph. SBMNH) and 1 November (1998, Goleta)—1 very late bird in Carpinteria 6 November–4 December 1983; and 2 from the North

Coast near Santa Maria 29 September 1986 (*Alan Hancock College) and Santa Maria 6–7 October 1993. Many of these specimens are window-kills.

One was in District I near Los Olivos 18 October 2015.

There is one winter record: near Biltmore Hotel, Montecito, 26 December 2009.

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*)

Casual fall and winter visitor in Districts C and I. One record in spring.

The fall records from District C include: Pershing Park in Santa Barbara 30 September–3 October 1977, Goleta 9–17 September 1982, Goleta 21–22 August 1985, Carpinteria 16 August 1993 (early), near the Santa Ynez River mouth 5 November 1996, Carpinteria 25 August 2005, and Goleta 5–12 September 2019 (ph. SBMNH). [Another in District I along Manzana Creek north of Figueroa Mountain 1 November 1981 was not accepted by the CBRC.]

Singles on "the Riviera," Santa Barbara, 3 January 1981; inland at Nojoqui Falls Park 1 December 1984; at Lower Manning Park, Montecito, 26 December 2000; and along Carpinteria Creek 26 September–25 November 2002 may have been attempting to winter locally or they could have been exceptionally late fall transients. Singles along San Jose Creek, Goleta, 23 December 1983–11 March 1984; at the Music Academy in Montecito 1 January–12 March 1994 and returning 24 October 1994–18 March 1995; on the UCSB campus, Goleta, 30 November 2001–12 January 2002; and at the Santa Barbara Cemetery, Montecito, 2 January–18 March 2005 (ph. *NAB* 59:326, SBMNH) clearly wintered locally.

There is one spring record: Maria Ygnacio Creek, Goleta, 29 May 1982.

Louisiana Waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*)

Casual visitor in District C.

One was present at Miguelito County Park near Lompoc 23 November–6 December 2000 (ph. SBMNH). One was along Atascadero Creek in Goleta 21–22 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)

Rare fall transient along the South Coast; casual in winter, in spring, and along the North Coast and in District I.

This species was first recorded 8 September 1971 at Goleta Slough. Through 1993, a total of 102 South Coast individuals were found between 16 August (1973, Santa Barbara) and 15 October. Most of these birds occurred in September and almost all were from along creeks. One in Carpinteria 21–22 November 1982 and another there 20–23 November 1989 were late. Another in Goleta 12 November 1987 was not only late but it frequented a row of tamarisk trees, very atypical habitat. From 1994–2025, there were 125 additional birds along the South Coast between 22 August and 22 October (2011, Santa Barbara), with single-season high counts of 9 in 1997 and 2005 and 10 individuals in 1998 and 2020; and a late bird at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 1 November 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

Surprisingly, the only sightings along the North Coast are from Lompoc 12 September 1992, Santa Maria 20 September 1996, Santa Ynez River mouth 9 September 2000, Santa Maria 1 September 2007, Orcutt 20 September 2014, Santa Maria 13 September 2015 and 6 September 2016, and total 2 near Lompoc 4–24 September 2022.

One at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 14 December 1988 was the first "winter" record for the county, but it was not re-found. Subsequently, single individuals were found along Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 30 December 2001–3 February 2002; at Santa Barbara Zoo 5 January 2002; and along Devereux Creek, near Goleta, 5 January 2002. Sightings at the Santa Barbara Zoo 31 December 2005 and at the adjoining Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 30 December 2006 and 31 December 2008–11 January 2009 may have all involved the same individual. One was along

lower Arroyo Burro 15 September–31 December 2011 and again 19 October 2012–5 January 2013 and 29 September 2013–18 January 2014. One was at Carpinteria Creek 21 November 2019–2 March 2020 and again 8 October 2020–23 April 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and 25 September 2021–10 March 2022 (ph. SBMNH). One was at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 12 January 2026. Also, a "waterthrush sp." was near Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 27 December 2002. One at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge 4–30 April 2018 (ph. SBMNH) had likely wintered locally.

There are five records of spring vagrants: San Ysidro Creek, Montecito, 3 June 1979, Lake Los Carneros 17 June 1992, Carpinteria Creek 1 May 1994, Atascadero Creek 13 May 2000, and Carpinteria Creek 22 May 2007.

The only inland record is from District I at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 28 September 2016.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)

Casual fall and spring visitor in District C. One winter record.

There are three records of fall vagrants—Cold Spring Canyon in Montecito 23–24 October 1960 (*SBMNH), Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 22–23 October 1982, and El Capitan State Beach 19–20 September 1992 (ph. SBMNH)—and one in spring: Carpinteria Creek 1–2 June 1984.

Exceptional was a female that wintered at Miguelito County Park near Lompoc 23 November 2000–2 March 2001 (ph. SBMNH), one of very few individuals ever to do so in the USA.

Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)

*Accidental***.**

One was along Carpinteria Creek 13–15 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)

Rare fall and winter visitor in District C, casual spring migrant and summer visitor. Casual inland.

Black-and-white Warblers typically occur in woodland habitats, particularly oak and riparian, and in exotics such as *Tipuana tipu* trees. The species was first recorded 9 January 1920 in Carpinteria. It has been seen regularly in small numbers since the 1960s, mostly in fall and winter.

The first fall records for the county were from Santa Barbara 11 September and 8 October 1947. The species was next recorded in September 1960 and was first recorded along the North Coast in 1967. The earliest arrival dates include 14–18 August 1982 Goleta, 18+ August 2012 Lompoc (bordering District I), 19 August 2007 Goleta, 20 August 1988 Summerland, and 20–22 August 1989 Carpinteria. In addition, probable fall transients were in Santa Barbara 9 August 1981, in Santa Barbara 6 August 1990, at San Marcos Pass 31 July–3 August 1992, and at El Capitan State Beach 6 August 1992; these dates are unusually early for transients in the West. Between 1960–1993, there were 182 fall records between early September to mid-December; the largest single-season totals were 14 in 1981 and 15 in 1984. From 1994–2025, the total number of autumn individuals in District C was 213 (192 South Coast, 21 North Coast), with the largest single-season tally of 14 birds in 1997. The earliest arrival date was 24+ August 2022 western Goleta.

During winter, Black-and-white Warblers are regular in very small numbers. Winter records include: Carpinteria 9 January 1920 (Henderson 1920), Santa Barbara 28 February 1963, and a total of 53 individuals between 1977–early 1994 and a total of 119 individuals between late 1994–early 2026 along the South Coast. A total of 7 along the South Coast during both 1983–1984 and 2013–2014, 10 there during 2015–2016, and 8 during 2023–2024 were winter high counts. One individual returned for five consecutive winters to Carpinteria Creek between 1979–1980 and 1983–1984; several additional wintering birds have returned multiple years. Wintering individuals have remained as late as mid-April (and see below). The only winter

records for the North Coast are of 1 near Guadalupe 19 December 1981 and six sightings between late 1994–early 2026.

Spring records from District C include 2 birds that very likely wintered locally (Carpinteria 1–15 April 2006, Santa Barbara 16 April 2016); 4 from late April (Carpinteria 20 April 1921 (Hoffmann 1921c), Santa Barbara 24 April 1965, Carpinteria 23 April 2005, and Refugio Creek 20 April 2023) which involved either late-lingering winter birds or early spring migrants; and 10 sightings of more typical spring vagrants in May and early/mid- June (2 in Santa Barbara 1–3 June 1973; Goleta 7 May 1987; Santa Barbara 20 June 1988; Goleta 7 May 1991 and 15 June 1991; Carpinteria 19 May 1995; Trout Club, below San Marcos Pass, 17 June 1998; Goleta 3 May 2007; Goleta 24 May 2017; and Refugio Canyon 17 May 2026).

There are 11 records involving very late spring vagrants or summering individuals: Santa Barbara 26 June 1971 (ph. SBMNH), Tepusquet Canyon east of Santa Maria (in District I) 7 July 1974, Garey (on the border of Districts C and I) 17–19 July 1980, Goleta 8 June–10 August 1981, Goleta 14 July–10 September 1987, east of Point Sal 3 July 1991, Santa Barbara 5–13 July 1992, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 30 June 1996, Goleta 16 July–1 September 1998, Santa Barbara 21 June 2025, and western Goleta 8–23 August 2026.

Inland, the spring, summer, and fall vagrants have been seen in Districts I and M as follows: singing male on Figueroa Mountain 23 April–2 May 1981, Refugio Road south of Santa Ynez 4 June 2000, Cachuma County Park 11 October 2002, singing male near San Marcos Pass 15 July 2005, San Marcos Pass 17 September 2005, singing male near West Camino Cielo 17 May 2012, La Purisima Mission near Lompoc 18–21 August 2012, and Nojoqui Falls Park 7 September 2020.

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)

Very rare fall and casual spring visitor in District C. Two winter and two summer records. One record in District I.

First recorded 25 May 1953 in Santa Barbara (*SBMNH), surprisingly the second record was of an exceptional wintering bird in Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara, 30 December 1978–10 March 1979 (ph. SBMNH), one of only a small number of winter records anywhere in the U.S.A. Through 2025 in District C, fall birds (33) far outnumbered those from spring (3). The former include Gaviota State Park 20–28 September 1979 (ph. SBMNH) and then 24 additional reports along the South Coast between 19–21 August (1993, Goleta) and through 9 November (2025, UCSB campus), including an astonishing 3 birds together at El Capitan State Beach 27 September 1999, plus a long-staying bird at Refugio State Beach 19 September–13 October 2012 (ph. SBMNH). Fall records along the North Coast are: near the Santa Ynez River mouth 11 October 1995, 13 September 1998, 24 September 2000, 1 October 2009 (ph. SBMNH), and 23–28 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH); Waller Park, Santa Maria, 4–10 October 2003; near the Santa Maria River mouth 1 October 2009 (ph. SBMNH); and a late bird found dead at the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 November 2022 (ph. SBMNH, *SBMNH). The second winter record was established by an individual in downtown Carpinteria from 7 December 2025–10 January 2026.

There are only 4 additional spring records since the 1953 bird: San Jose Creek, Goleta, 2–3 June 1982 (ph. SBMNH), Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 11–13 May 2001, especially late along San Antonio Creek on north Vandenberg SFB 24 June 2020, and near Isla Vista 25 May 2026.

One that possibly over-summered along Carpinteria Creek 22 July–19 August 1993 was unprecedented at the time anywhere in the state. One at Lake Los Carneros 16 July 2023 (ph. SBMNH) is difficult to categorize and was probably a summer wanderer.

Inland, 1 was in District I at Nojoqui Falls Park 11 September 2009.

Tennessee Warbler (*Leiothlypis peregrina*)
Formerly a rare but regular fall transient in District C, now rare to very rare. Very rare winter visitor along the South Coast. Casual spring and summer visitor. Single records in Districts I and M.

Tennessee Warblers are found in a variety of woodland habitats near the coast, particularly in riparian, as well as in exotics such as *Tipuana tipu* trees. During early fall, they also occur in patches of blooming Sweet Fennel *(Foeniculum vulgare).* Wintering birds often frequent blooming eucalyptus. This species was first recorded 10–27 November 1962 in Montecito.

Fall migrants occur primarily between mid-September–early December. The earliest records include 28 August 1992 Goleta, 29 August 2025 northern Goleta, 1 September 1986 Carpinteria, and 1+ September 2023 Goleta. Fall stragglers may occur well into December and even into early January, so distinguishing some fall transients from truly wintering birds and assigning late dates for fall migrants is difficult. Between 1962–1993 there was a total of 179 fall records (early September–mid-December) in District C. The single-season maxima were an impressive 22 birds in 1980, 23 in 1981, and 20 in 1982. Several individuals were present for up to 3 weeks in September or October but then disappeared. In contrast, the number of fall records between 1994–2025 was 161 (150 South Coast, 11 North Coast), with high single-season totals including 11 birds in 2024 and 12 birds in 2025, except 2022. This decline is mirrored in the overall population declines noted in several species of "Spruce Budworm specialists" (e.g., Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted Warblers), but which increased again between 2010–2025, including the recent high count in 2022 of 26 birds in District C (22 South Coast, 4 North Coast) between 8 September-26 November (and see below).

Exceptional was a fall migrant at Santa Ynez Peak in District M 29 September 2018.

Also impressive was the total of 69 individuals found in winter between late December through late March, from late 1977 through early 1994, although only about half of these birds were known to be present after mid-January. All of these records were from the South Coast between Goleta and Carpinteria. The latest wintering individuals were present through 27 March (1983, Goleta). Notably fewer individuals have been found since the mid-1980s (see above). The total number of winter birds between late 1994–early 2026 was only 28 individuals, with high counts of 4 during 2013–2014 (ph. SBMNH), 2023–2024, and 2025–2026. But in winter 2022–2023, following the autumn 2022 influx, a total of 10 birds were found along the South Coast, although half of them were not seen after early January; one remained to 5 April in Carpinteria. Another wintering bird remained in Goleta through 7 April 2024.

Single birds in Goleta 11 April 1982, Santa Barbara 14 April 1987, Carpinteria 23 April 2005, and Goleta 30 April 2019 may have wintered locally or could have been exceptionally early spring migrants.

There are 13 records of spring and early-summer migrants in District C: singing male in Isla Vista 24 June 1977 (late); Goleta 16 May 1989; Goleta 25 May 1991; Goleta 7 June 1993 and 2 June 1995; near the Santa Ynez River mouth 4 May 1996 (early); Goleta 9 May 1998 (early), 12 May 2007, 3 May 2022 (early), and 22 May 2022 (ph. SBMNH); Gaviota State Park 17 May 2023; Refugio Canyon 14 May 2025; and residential northern Goleta 2 June 2026. In addition, 1 was reported in District I near Santa Ynez 12 May 2000.

In mid-summer, singles were present along Carpinteria Creek 9–10 July 1989 and at Stow Grove Park in Goleta on 12–13 July 2025.

Orange-crowned Warbler (*Leiothlypis celata*)
Fairly common to common summer resident in Districts C, I, and M, and throughout all Districts as a spring and fall transient. Fairly common to common in winter in District C, uncommon in District I and at the lower elevations in District M, casual in District V.

Orange-crowned Warblers are found in a variety of woodland vegetation, including oak, oak-conifer, and riparian, as well as in residential areas. They occur in shrubby habitats (e.g., chaparral) adjoining these areas, particularly as transients and winter visitors, as well as in a

variety of exotic vegetation. During late summer and early fall, they are common in blooming patches of Sweet Fennel. In winter, they can be numerous in blooming eucalyptus and, especially, Cape Honeysuckle hedges. Birds start singing and defending territories beginning in February. During summer and winter months, this species is most numerous along the South Coast. Along the North Coast, it is uncommon in the major riparian areas, but fairly common in the more marginal riparian and on nearby oak-covered slopes. As a breeder in District M, this warbler varies in abundance from uncommon (e.g., on Figueroa Mountain) to fairly common or common (e.g., on Big Pine Mountain and vicinity, where highs of 42, 56, and 35 were counted 6–7 June 1992, 10–11 June 1993, and 23–25 June 1994, respectively).

Fall migrants begin to arrive by the end of July; the earliest record of a definite transient is 24 July 1977 coastal Goleta. In winter, Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 361 individuals (30 December 2006). Inland, the Cachuma CBC has found only up to 7 birds (28 December 2010). In District M, most birds in winter are found at lower elevations, but there are several reports at this season from Figueroa Mountain. In spring, migrants are likely on the move by mid-March. A large morning-flight total was 237+ passing the Painted Cave area in the Santa Ynez Mountains 23 March 2021. Most migrants have moved through the county by the end of April; late migrant departure dates are unknown in most areas given the large numbers of resident breeders. But in District V, where the species neither typically winters nor breeds, they have appeared in spring as early as 7 March 2010 Caliente Ranch Wetland (2) and remained as late as 13 May 2019 near Ventucopa. Fall migrants have been found there as early as 18 August 2014, although they probably appear earlier. The only winter reports are from 26 January 2022 and 25 January 2026.

Well offshore, 1 was 22 mi (35 km) W of Point Sal 22 September 2018 and 1 was 26 mi (41 km) WNW of Point Arguello 20 April 2024. An unseasonal bird was reported 12 June 2010 between Rodriguez Dome and San Juan Seamount.

L. c. lutescens is the breeding subspecies in most of Santa Barbara County and is also a transient and winter visitor. *L. c. sordida* breeds on the Channel Islands and possibly at scattered locations along the coast (and perhaps inland); it occurs along the mainland coast between late July and April (latest: 23 April 2004 vic. Santa Barbara [*MVZ]). Many specimens (e.g., *CAS, FMNH, MVZ, SBMNH) from the Santa Barbara area are identified as *sordida.* The gray-headed Great Basin/Rocky Mountain race, *L. c. orestera,* is probably a rare but somewhat regular transient and winter visitor. The status of the northern-breeding *L. c. celata* is uncertain; it is probably a very rare transient and winter visitor [and has been collected once on Santa Cruz Island (*SDNHM)]. Field identification of some Orange-crowned Warblers to subspecies is clouded by individual variation and the presence of intergrades.

Lucy's Warbler (*Leiothlypis luciae*)

Very rare fall transient along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast and in winter; two early-spring records.

Lucy's Warblers occur in willow riparian, exotic vegetation such as tamarisk and *Tipuana tipu* trees, as well as in in brushy areas where often found in blooming Sweet Fennel. The species was first recorded 7 September 1977 bordering Goleta Slough. Through 1993 there were 25 fall records along the South Coast between 25 August and 11 November (1979, Gaviota State Park). One of these individuals remained for an extended stay, from 31 August–26 October 1987 in Carpinteria. In addition, 1 at Gaviota State Park 15 August 1988 was slightly early. One at the Santa Ynez River mouth 15 September 1989 was the only record during this period for the North Coast. Between 1994–2025, an increase in occurrence resulted in an additional 55 South Coast individuals between 20 August (2023, western Goleta) and 12 November (2022, western Goleta). One in Goleta 22 July 2004 and another in residential northern Goleta 28 July 2019 were presumably very early fall migrants. High single-site totals are of up to 3 birds at Refugio State

Beach during 13 September–20 October 2000, 3 near Laguna Street X railroad tracks in Santa Barbara 5–7 September 2005, 3 at Goleta Slough 16 September 2005, and 3 in western Goleta 7 October 2023. One of the Santa Barbara birds remained unusually long, from 3 September–11 October. The single-season maxima are 8 birds in 2005 and 9 birds in 2024. One in Goleta 25 November 2011 was late. The four North Coast records during this period were from the former waterfowl ponds near the Santa Ynez River mouth 6 November 1999, 19 September 2002, and 12–23 November 2007 (late; ph. SBMNH); and from Santa Maria 23 September–7 October 2023.

There are 30 winter records along the South Coast: Goleta 9 December 1980–9 January 1981, Santa Barbara 30 December 1989–21 January 1990, Goleta 22 November–23 December 1990, and then 27 additional records between 2000–2026, with a high 7 birds during 2024–2025, and the latest individual remaining through 11 March 2006 Goleta.

The only winter record along the North Coast is of 1 at the former waterfowl ponds near the Santa Ynez River mouth 6 November 1999–1 March 2000.

One in Goleta 11–17 March 1989 may have wintered locally or have been a spring migrant. One at Jim May Park in Santa Maria 1 April 2017 (ph. SBMNH) was likely a spring migrant.

Nashville Warbler (*Leiothlypis ruficapilla*)

Fairly common spring transient and very uncommon fall transient in all Districts. Very rare to rare in winter, with all records at this season, except eight, from along the South Coast. Rare in summer in District M.

Nashville Warblers are most numerous in District C during spring migration, particularly in riparian vegetation. In fall, most coastal birds frequent riparian areas but also occur regularly in blooming patches of Sweet Fennel. Wintering birds frequent riparian and exotic plantings (particularly blooming eucalyptus and *Tipuana tipu* trees).

Spring transients appear beginning in early April (earliest arrival dates: 24 March 2009 Goleta, 25 March 1995 Carpinteria (2), 26 March 2006 Carpinteria, and 26 March 2017 Tepusquet Canyon) and are most numerous during the second half of April. Forty in Goleta 16 April 1988, a total of 80 between Goleta and Carpinteria 13 April 1991, and 45 above Refugio Canyon 24 April 2020 (morning flight) were high counts. Numbers decline rapidly after late April, and the species is rare after the first several days of May. The latest records are through 18 May 1983 Goleta, 19 May 2019 Isla Vista, and 20 May 2003 Goleta. One was offshore aboard a research vessel some 26 mi (42 km) NW of Point Arguello 20 April 2024.

Fall transients arrive beginning in late August (earliest arrival dates: 4 August 2001 West Camino Cielo, 7 August 1996 Goleta, 12 August 2009 Goleta, 13 August 1996 Carpinteria), and most have passed through by early October. The species is rare after mid-October. One near the Santa Ynez River mouth 22 November 1998 and singles in Santa Maria 27 November 2003 and 30 November 2005 were especially late for the North Coast.

Between the late 1970s and mid-1990s, as many as 13 birds were seen along the South Coast (almost all between Goleta and Carpinteria) annually during December and early January, although fewer than 6 individuals were more typical. Since 1995, the winter maxima are 10 birds in 2010–2011, 9 in both 2017–2018 and 2018–2019, and 12 in 2023–2024. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 9 individuals (2 January 1983). Some December birds, however, are probably late-fall transients, as there are far fewer winter records after early or mid- January. Wintering birds have remained as late as mid-March. The only winter records away from the South Coast include seven from the North Coast and one from District I: north Vandenberg SFB 20 December 1987–2 January 1988, Lompoc 23 December 1989, Lompoc 1 February 1992, near the Santa Ynez River mouth in December 1999, and Santa Maria 3 December 2011, 15 February 2014, and 10 March 2017; and inland along Casey Avenue near Santa Ynez 30 December 2020.

A total of 4 (including 2 juveniles) were found in the Big Pine Mountain area 21–22 July 1982, representing the first summer and presumed nesting record for the county. Three were there 19–20 June 1983, a singing male was seen 30 May 1985, 1 was present 22–23 June 1990, 4

were there 26 June 1991, and 5 were seen 25–27 June 1992. In 1993, 9 were counted on 11 June, and 4 (including 1 juvenile) were seen 10–11 July. Since then, continuing near-annual summer surveys at Big Pine Mountain through 2026 have recorded Nashville as follows: 1994: 6, 1995: 4, 1996: 4, 1997: 3, 1998: 3, 2000: 1 (juvenile), 2001: 1, 2004: 4 (on 22 May; included 3 singing males), 2005: 2, 2006: 9 (record high count), 2009: 1, and 2013: 3. This species is a rare summer resident and breeder on some of the higher mountains of Southern California.

Virginia's Warbler (*Leiothlypis virginiae*)

Formerly a rare but somewhat regular fall transient along the South Coast, now very rare. Single winter and spring records. Casual along the North Coast and in Districts I and M.

Virginia's Warblers occur in brushy areas and are most often found in blooming Sweet Fennel; tamarisk trees (formerly) and willow riparian are also frequented. The first sighting was made 4 October 1969 in Goleta. Then, through the early 1990s, this species was found in small numbers virtually every fall, primarily during September (earliest arrival date: 20 August 1994 Goleta). Between 1969–1994 there were 82 individuals found along the South Coast in September and early October, with a high single-season tally of 8 in both 1979 and 1985. Since the early 2000s, however, this species has declined in fall along the entire Southern California coast. The South Coast total between 1995–2025 was 73 birds; the single-season maxima were 7 birds in 2000 and 5 in 2002, 2005, 2018, and 2022. Virginia's Warbler is casual after early October. Later records are 11 October 2020 Goleta, 10–12 October 2011 Goleta, 10–13 October 1985 Carpinteria, 13 October 2021 Santa Barbara, 14 October 2015 Goleta (ph. SBMNH), 18–20 October 1974 Goleta, 7–9 November 1974 Goleta, and, exceptionally, 7 December 1976 Goleta.

There have been only 17 individuals along the North Coast: near Guadalupe 4 September 1978, 9 mi (15 km) inland near Santa Maria 12 September 1986, Lompoc 7–12 September 1992 (ph. SBMNH), near Point Sal 10 September 1994, Lompoc 2 October 1994, south Vandenberg SFB 2 September 1996, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 12 September 1998, a high count of up to 3 there 28 September–6 October 1998, 1 there 9 September 2000, near the Santa Maria River mouth 14 September 2001, Lompoc 2 September and 11 September 2002, and 2 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 18 September 2004 and 1 there 7 September 2022. This species is much rarer in Central California than in Southern California.

A bird near Santa Ynez 27–28 September 1990 and 1 near Los Olivos 29 August 2004 establish the only records for District I. In District M, 1 near San Marcos Pass 14 September 1991 and another along West Camino Cielo 25 September 2002 were unusual at that elevation.

One individual returned for four consecutive winters to Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara, 2–4 January 1983, (missed in 1983–1984), 29 December 1984–13 February 1985, and 30 November 1985–4 January 1986. There are only a small number of winter records in the state.

One in Santa Barbara 17 April 1983 and another along Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 3 May 2007 were exceptional. There are very few documented records of spring vagrants anywhere on the state's coastal slope, and the species is likely over-reported as a spring migrant anywhere in the state.

Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*)

Casual fall transient in District C.

One was off South Patterson Avenue in Goleta 28–30 September 1990. Another was in residential Santa Barbara 15–17 October 2004. And a third was along San Antonio Creek on north Vandenberg SFB 22–23 September 2020 (ph. *WB* 53(2):136, SBMNH). [A published report of 1 at Carpinteria Creek 25 September 1983 was not accepted by the CBRC and remains inconclusive.]

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*)

Very uncommon spring and uncommon fall transient in all Districts. Casual in winter along the South Coast. Casual in summer in District M; confirmed nesting at one site.

MacGillivray's Warblers are most often found in brushy habitats, particularly in riparian woodland. Spring migrants usually appear in early April (earliest arrival dates: 30 March 1971 Los Alamos (*SBMNH) and 1 April 1969 and 1981 Santa Barbara). The last spring transients typically are seen in mid-May; the latest records are 27 May–1 June 1982 Carpinteria and 1 June 1996 Santa Barbara.

This species is slightly more numerous in fall than in spring, particularly in District C. Fall transients move through mostly between late August and mid-October. The earliest arrival dates are 11 August 2007 Carpinteria, 12 August 2002 Santa Barbara, and 14 August 1984 Goleta. MacGillivray's Warblers are casual after the beginning of November. Single individuals in Santa Barbara 18 November 1979, in Goleta 18 November 1981, and in Santa Maria 6 November 2020 were presumed late transients. One in Santa Barbara 21–27 December 1970, 1 in Montecito 31 December 1977–3 January 1978, and 1 in Santa Barbara 5 December 1992 may have been exceptionally late transients or been attempting to winter locally.

There are four records of wintering birds: near south Fairview Avenue in Goleta 28 December 1979–17 March 1980; along West Fork of San Jose Creek in Goleta 15 January–10 March 1981 and again late October 1981–4 March 1982; near western Hollister Avenue in Goleta 11 October 2020–10 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH) and again 24 September 2021–28 February 2022 (ph. SBMNH) and again 29 September-31 December 2022 (ph. SBMNH); and Isla Vista 30–31 December 2022 and again 14–31 December 2023 (ph. SBMNH).

Two singing males were found on Big Pine Mountain 30 June–1 July 1981, 1 was there 7 June 1992, a singing male was present 15 June 2007, and another was found 28 July 2015, all indicating the possibility of local breeding. These birds were present in areas of moist deciduous Bitter Cherry and Western Chokecherry in coniferous forest. A juvenile at Kinevan Road, San Marcos Pass, 3 August 1985 was most unusual and probably indicated local nesting. In 1992, a pair with a juvenile was at the same locality 4–19 June, with at least 1 bird remaining through 31 July. In 1993, a pair was there again 1 May–15+ June. In 1994, the pair included the female seen carrying food 2 June. In 1995, the species was present beginning 5 April, with an adult carrying food 12 June, and 2 males seen 9 July. In 1996, up to 3 were present mid-April through at least 25 July, with an adult carrying food 11 May.

Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*)

Casual fall transient in District C.

There are 15 records, only 4 since 1991: Carpinteria Creek 20–23 September 1980, Carpinteria 6–7 September 1981, Refugio State Beach 17 September 1981, Goleta 23 September 1982, Carpinteria 24 September–4 October 1982, Carpinteria 17 September 1984, Goleta 26 September 1985, Goleta 15–16 September 1988, Gaviota State Park 13 September 1990, Carpinteria 23 September 1990, Goleta 13 September 1991, Goleta 18–20 October 2020 (ph. SBMNH), Point Conception 10 September 2022, western Goleta 16 September 2025, and Carpinteria Creek 18–22 September 2025. [One reported at Gaviota State Park 13 September 1989 was not accepted by the CBRC, nor was one reported in Carpinteria 24 October 2016.] Most of these birds frequented dense riparian undergrowth.

Kentucky Warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*)

Casual spring, summer, and fall visitor in Districts C and I. One winter record.

There are six fall records along the South Coast: a bird that struck a window in northern Goleta 14 October 1980 (*SBMNH); and singles in Carpinteria 22–23 August 1985; at Gaviota State Park 3 September 1992; in Goleta 12 September 1993; along Arroyo Hondo, between Refugio and Gaviota, 2 October 1999; and Goleta 28 September 2004. Spring records include

one that struck a window in Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara, 24 May 1994 (ph. SBMNH) and 1 in Santa Barbara 9–10 June 2002.

In District I, 1 was present near Santa Ynez 15–18 October 2012 (ph. SBMNH).

In District M, 1 was near East Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains on the early date of 19 August 2020 (ph. SBMNH).

In 1992, 1 in Carpinteria 16 May was followed by an incredible minimum of 11 individuals (apparently all or virtually all males) inland in the upper Santa Ynez River watershed as follows: Cameusa Creek near Gibraltar Reservoir 24 May, at least 3 in P-Bar Flat area 28–29 May (ph. *AB* 46:501, *WB* 27:11, SBMNH), at least 3 at Juncal Campground 10 June–11 August (ph. SBMNH), Mono Creek 11 June (ph. SBMNH), at least 2 in P-Bar area 15–18 June (ph. SBMNH) and 3 August, and Mono Campground 22 June (ph. SBMNH). No direct evidence of nesting was found. This invasion was part of a region-wide phenomenon involving several species of "Southeastern" breeding passerines during summer 1992 (Patten and Marantz 1996).

One along San Jose Creek, Goleta, 17 November 1983–16 March 1984 represents one of the few winter records for the state.

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)

Locally fairly common resident in District C, and uncommon to fairly common in District I; numbers are augmented during migration and winter. Uncommon transient and possible local summer resident in District V, casual in winter. Rare transient in District M.

Common Yellowthroats breed in dense vegetation found in fresh and brackish marshes (such as bulrushes and cattails) and in wet brushy areas and willow thickets. As a transient and winter visitor, it also occurs in salt-marsh vegetation, is more numerous in riparian areas, is regularly found in small numbers in some agricultural fields and in patches of Sweet Fennel, and it frequents some residential areas. Transients usually move through the county from mid-March to mid-May and from early August to early November. The largest numbers in summer occur along the North Coast (i.e., in the Santa Maria Valley, along San Antonio Creek, and along the lower Santa Ynez River). Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded up to 361 and 340 individuals (29 December 1979 and 30 December 2006, respectively); CBCs in the Santa Maria–Guadalupe area have tallied up to about 50 individuals; and the Cachuma CBC has found as many as 14 birds (28 December 2010).

At sea, one was in the Santa Cruz Basin 8 September 2020 and another was 30 mi (48 km) SW of Point Arguello 28 September 2024.

Summer reports from District M are of 1 at Davy Brown Campground 10 July 2019 and 2 along nearby Manzana Creek 13 July 2025. The only summer records in District V are from New Cuyama 2 June 2019 and several reports from the Caliente Ranch Wetland.

Singles seen in District V near Caliente Ranch Wetland 18 December 2006 and several times in winter between 2018–2025, with 4 birds on 26 January 2025, were probably unusual in that part of the county at that season. Singles were in lower Santa Barbara Canyon (District M?) 21 January 2020 and 24 December 2020.

Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*)

Very rare visitor in Districts C and I; casual at the lower elevations in District M. One definite nesting record. One winter record.

The first record, 29 May 1970 at the Goleta sewage treatment plant, was followed by birds in Montecito 17–19 May 1981, Goleta 3 May 1985, Goleta 16 May 1987, and then 10 additional South Coast records in spring and early summer from 1993–2026, between 22 May and 20–21 June (2002, Goleta). In addition, North Coast records at this season include single birds in Lompoc 30 May 1987, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 2 June 1995 (ph. SBMNH), on south Vandenberg SFB 3 June 1998, on north Vandenberg SFB 10 June 2013, and near Tranquillon

Mountain, south Vandenberg SFB, 2 June 2026; in addition, an amazing 4 singing males along Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB, 27 May 2005 had dropped to just 1 bird on 16 June. In District I, 1 was along Refugio Road near Santa Ynez 13–14 May 2000 and another was at the Sedgwick Reserve 27 May 2026.

A singing male on territory along lower Mono Creek 23 June–9 July 1982 (ph. SBMNH) was the first mid-summer record for Southern California. An unprecedented 5 Hooded Warblers were seen during spring and summer 1992 as follows: Quiota Creek near Santa Ynez 26 April (ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria Creek 13 May, Goleta 16 May, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 16 May–22 July (on territory), and Juncal Campground along upper Santa Ynez River 16 June–27 July (on territory). This mini-invasion was part of a region-wide phenomenon involving several species of "Southeastern" breeding passerines during summer 1992 (Patten and Marantz 1996). One at Davy Brown Campground 10 September 1992 may well have been part of this same invasion.

Subsequent mid-summer records include 1 on territory bordering Atascadero Creek in Goleta 28 June–3 September 1998, 1 at Vandenberg Village 4–5 July 2004, and 1 at Quiota Creek near Santa Ynez 9 July 2018; as well as a bird in District M along Kinevan Road, San Marcos Pass, 22–29 July 2007 (ph. SBMNH).

Exceptional was the (unsuccessful) nesting of Hooded Warblers near Atascadero Creek in Goleta during 2004: the pair was present 21 June–17 July, with a nest with 3 warbler and 2 cowbird eggs discovered 3 July, when the cowbird eggs were removed; the nest with eggs (to SBMNH) continued through 14 July but had been abandoned by 17–18 July; the male remained through 9 August.

In fall, the relatively few records include: Montecito 22 August–4 September 1979 (ph. SBMNH), Santa Barbara 17 October 1984, Goleta 13 October 1987, El Capitan State Beach 30 September 1997, Refugio State Beach 6 September 2007, and Santa Barbara 30 October 2007 (ph. SBMNH). One was in District M at San Marcos Pass 18 September 2008 (ph. SBMNH).

One bird at Camp Lorr in Montecito 30 December 1995–1 January 1996 is unique for winter.

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

Rare fall transient in District C; very rare in winter, spring, and early summer; casual in mid-summer. Casual inland.

American Redstarts frequent woodland habitats, particularly riparian, and exotic plantings. The species was first recorded 8 September 1957 in Montecito. With the increase in observer coverage beginning in the late 1960s, this species has been reported annually, primarily during September and October. Following eight fall records between 1957–1968, an additional 145 autumn reports (early September–November) quickly accrued in District C between 1970–1993. One in Goleta 19–20 August 1988 and another near Guadalupe 24–25 August 1991 were slightly early. The single-season maxima were 18 birds in 1981 and 13 in 1984. The total number of autumn individuals found in District C between 1994–2025 was 134 (117 South Coast, 17 North Coast), with the earliest arrivals on 8–9 August 2019 Montecito, 14 August 1995 near the Santa Ynez River mouth, and 18 August 1996 Goleta, and a single-season maximum of 7 along the South Coast in 2001. The species is very rare after late October. One seen 13 November 2000 in Lompoc was particularly late for the North Coast.

The winter (December–April) records are: Dos Pueblos Ranch, west of Goleta, December 1971–22 April 1972; and then 14 additional records through early 1994, of which just two (Lompoc 12 January 1975 and 4 January–23 March 1994) were away from the South Coast. One individual returned for three consecutive winters in Montecito. Wintering birds remained as late as 20 April (1979, Goleta) and 22 April (1972 record above). One in Carpinteria 13 April–3 May 1991 may have wintered locally. During the period late 1994–early 2026, there were an additional 16 winter records along the South Coast (maximum 4 during 1998–1999), plus two from along the North Coast near Lompoc 17 December 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and 28–30 March 2026.

In late spring, there are 27 records since 1972 (20 since 1995) along the South Coast between 11 May (2002, Goleta) and 26 June (2004, Goleta); the only North Coast sightings at this season are from south Vandenberg SFB 12 June 2001 and the Santa Ynez River mouth 23 May 2026.

One in Garey, east of Santa Maria, 17–23 July 1980 likely summered locally.

Farther inland, the only records are of a probable early-fall migrant along the Santa Ynez River west of Buellton (District I) 20 August 1998, a typical fall migrant at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 15 September 2023, a very late fall straggler at San Marcos Pass (District M) 7 December 2010, a winter bird in Buellton 21 January 2024, a late-spring migrant along Quiota Creek near Santa Ynez (District I) 7 June 2010, another near Nojoqui Falls Park 18 June 2026, and a summer bird near San Marcos Pass 20 July–30 August 2015.

A bizarre-looking warbler in Goleta 10–12 September 1987 may have been a hybrid American Redstart X Nashville Warbler.

Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*)

Casual fall transient in District C. Casual in winter.

The fall records are: Point Conception 13 September 1974; Gaviota State Park 15–19 October 1978; Gaviota State Park 28 September 1979; Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara, 13 October 1981; Lake Los Carneros 30 September–1 October 1992 (ph. *AB* 47:151, SBMNH); Devereux Creek, Goleta, 15 September 2012; Lake Los Carneros 3 October 2012; and Santa Monica Creek, Carpinteria, 19 September 2023 (ph. SBMNH). This "Spruce Budworm specialist" declined after the 1980s, both overall and as a vagrant to California, but increased again from 2011+.

One wintered on the main UCSB campus 29 December 1979–13 April 1980 (ph. SBMNH) and another was at Alan Hancock College in Santa Maria 23 November–23 December 2023 (ph. SBMNH). One along San Jose Creek in Goleta 9–23 April 1988 probably wintered locally.

Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*)

Very rare spring, summer, and fall visitor in Districts C and I; casual in winter and in District M. Several definite nesting records.

The Northern Parula was first recorded 25 September 1972 in Goleta. Eight in the county during spring 1992 was a high count before 1994. A total of 12 birds between 23 May–23 July 2000 was an exceptional count and included multiple summering birds and a breeding record in District I (see below). Another incursion occurred in June–July 2026, with a total of 8 birds in Districts C and I.

In District C, through 1993, Parulas were found a total of 20 times in fall and 17 times in spring; autumn records fell between 24 August (1991, near Guadalupe; early) and 26 October; spring dates were from 21 April to 12 June, plus a later bird 23 June 1992 in Santa Barbara.

Long-staying summer birds included a singing male present on the Mesa in Santa Barbara 30 April–14 July 1981. During much of this period, it was seen repeatedly performing display-like behavior to a summering Yellow-throated Warbler at the same location. No evidence of nesting was found. One was in Santa Barbara 19 July–27 September 1986. A male along San Jose Creek in Goleta 14 July–16 August 1987 was joined by a worn female 18 July–23 August; no evidence of nesting was found.

Between 1994–2026 in District C, a total of 56 individuals (48 South Coast, 8 North Coast) were found in fall but ca. 75 birds (60 South Coast, 15 North Coast) were tallied in spring and early summer, between 21 August (2016, near Lompoc) and 28 November (2025, Goleta), and between 28 April and 3 July (2025, Carpinteria), respectively. Seven individuals along the South Coast during autumn 2012 was a high count. There was also one confirmed nesting record (below). A very early spring individual was at Barka Slough, north Vandenberg SFB, 9 April 2004. Some of the early-summer birds were singing males that appeared to set up territories for

several days to well over a week (e.g., Carpinteria Creek 1–16 June 2000, Rincon Creek 18–26 June 2000 and 25 June–2 July 2005, Stow Grove Park in Goleta 2 May–22 June 2017, Gaviota State Park 16–29 June 2026). A later bird was a female in Carpinteria 14 July 2002. A singing bird along Carpinteria Creek from 31 August+ 2024 may have summered locally.

A singing male at Tucker's Grove Park near Santa Barbara 6 June–5 July 2010 was joined by a female 8 June–1 July, but no nesting evidence was obtained. From 17–28 June 2012, a pair was present along lower Carpinteria Creek, with nest building observed 23–24 June, and the female subsequently was seen incubating, but then the nest failed. A singing male was found along San Jose Creek in Goleta on 24 June 2026, joined by a female on 28 June, but only the male was noted thereafter to 12 July.

One along San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB, 19 December 1981 and another in residential northern Goleta 22 December 2022 were perhaps exceptionally late fall migrants. One in residential Goleta 3 March 2011 had probably wintered locally. A bird at the Santa Barbara Zoo 7 February–30 March 1999 and another in Goleta 31 December 2020–2 January 2021 (ph. SBMNH) clearly were wintering locally.

This species has been noted ca. 46 times in District I, almost all in spring and summer. These include four reports from the upper Gibraltar/Mono Creek area along the upper Santa Ynez River between 18 May–1 July, 1980–1992; 21 individuals from Nojoqui Falls Park and vic. (as far as Alisal Ranch) between 28 April–31 July, 1988–2026 (also see nesting, below); and 11 from the Quiota Creek/Santa Ynez area between 30 April–28 June, 1992–2026. A total of 5 singing males at the latter two sites—along the base of the north side of the Santa Ynez Mountains—during May 2000 alone was unprecedented. Other sites with mid-summer records include near Buellton (9 June–29 July 1998), east of Lompoc, Colson Canyon near Sisquoc, and Los Alamos. There is also one fall record from Nojoqui Park 7 September 1980, which conceivably involved a bird that summered locally.

Documented nesting in District I includes a singing male first discovered at Nojoqui Park on 9 June 1993 and joined by a female 13–31 July, and both birds fed 2 fledglings during that period. A singing male at Gaviota Hot Springs 17 June–29 July 2000 was joined by a female 7–31 July which was seen feeding a chick 22–23 July (ph. SBMNH); a young bird there 15 August was presumably that same chick. A pair was present along Alisal Road near Nojoqui Falls Park 8 June–25 July 2020.

In District M, single birds were in the San Marcos Pass area 1 May 1985, 4 May 1989, 13–15 June 1993, 2 June 1994, 13–14 June 2001, 29 May 2006, and 8–20 September 2015; along West Camino Cielo 19–23 June 2002; at Cachuma Campground near Figueroa Mountain 8 May 1993; and, even more unusual, on San Rafael Mountain 17 June 1990.

Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*)

Very rare fall transient in District C. Casual in winter and spring.

The first record of Magnolia Warbler was 24 October 1971 near Devereux Slough in Goleta. A total of 29 fall records for the South Coast accrued between 17 September and 11 November through 1993. Four North Coast records during this same period included 1 near Guadalupe 9 October 1981, 1 near Vandenberg Village 30 September 1990, 1 near Guadalupe 30 October 1993, and see below. Between 1994–2025, some 26 individuals were discovered in fall along the South Coast between 10 September (2011, Carpinteria; ph. SBMNH) and 8 November; along the North Coast, 1 was near the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 October 1996, 1 was in Santa Maria 1 October 2005, and 1 was near the Santa Maria River mouth 18 October 2018 (ph. SBMNH).

One near the Lompoc sewage treatment plant 18 November–7 December 1990 was exceptionally late. One on the UCSB campus, Goleta, 2 November 2004–11 February 2005 established the only record of a definite over-wintering bird.

A late-spring vagrant was along Atascadero Creek in Goleta 16 June 1997. It is uncertain whether a male at the Santa Barbara Zoo 22 April 2006 had over-wintered locally or if it was a very early spring vagrant.

Bay-breasted Warbler (*Setophaga castanea*)
Casual fall transient in District C; one winter and two spring records.

The fall records are: Goleta 21–27 October 1977, Gaviota State Park 17 October 1978, Montecito 13 October 1979, Goleta 4–10 September 1982 (early), Carpinteria 16 November 1983, Refugio State Beach 3–4 October 2001, Carpinteria 19–20 November 2017 (ph. SBMNH), Goleta 6 October 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and western Goleta 1–2 November 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

One in Santa Barbara 4–12 December 1981 and another in Goleta 17 December 1983 may have been very late fall migrants, whereas 1 along Padaro Lane in Carpinteria 16 December 2023–26 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH) was clearly attempting to winter.

One in Goleta 10 April 1982 was unprecedented: The bird, a female in alternate plumage, was not seen at this site during winter and it appeared during a major movement of western migrants. Thus, it may have wintered elsewhere in California or in northwestern Mexico. Other records of spring migrants in the state fall between late May and early July. A female near More Mesa, Goleta, 11 June 2009 (ph. SBMNH) fits that pattern of late-spring vagrancy.

Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*)
Very rare fall transient in District C. One spring and two early-winter records. One record in District I.

This species was first recorded 20–22 October 1970 in Goleta. This was followed by 23 records through 1993 from District C between 17 September and 4 November (1981, Goleta); only two of these were from the North Coast. Between 1994 and 2025, an additional 32 individuals were found in District C (22 South Coast, 10 North Coast), between 11+ September (2016, Goleta) and 6 November (2025, south Vandenberg SFB), plus 1 in Goleta 15–21 November 2020, with a high 4 birds along the South Coast in 2017.

The only fall record inland is of a bird at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez 5 October 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

A singing male on south Vandenberg SFB 7 June 1997 is unique for spring.

One along Devereux Creek near Coronado Drive, Goleta, 18–26 December 2001 and 1 along Padaro Lane in Carpinteria 22 December 2017–6 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH) were exceptional; there is only a small number of winter-season records in the U.S.A.

(Northern) Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)
Common spring and fall transient in all Districts. Fairly common to common summer resident along the North Coast and in District I, uncommon to fairly common along the South Coast and at the lower elevations in District M. Rare to very rare in winter, with almost all records from the South Coast.

(Northern) Yellow Warblers breed primarily in riparian woodland containing willows, Black or Fremont Cottonwoods, California Bay, Big-leaf Maple, California Sycamore, or White Alder. They also have increasingly bred in non-riparian situations (e.g., in oaks) in at least Goleta and Santa Barbara. Migrants occur in a variety of woodland habitats, including tamarisk trees and other exotic plantings such as *Tipuana tipu* trees, and in some shrub habitats such as blooming Sweet Fennel. Wintering individuals are found in willow riparian and several species of ornamental plantings, including blooming eucalyptus, *Myoporum laetum*, and *Pittosporum* spp.

Spring transients occur predominantly from mid-April to late May. The local breeding population, however, arrives as early as the end of March (e.g., multiple records 28+ March, plus 20 March 2001 near the Santa Ynez River mouth, 24 March 2020 near Santa Maria River mouth, 26 March 2013 Quiota Creek near Santa Ynez). Sixty were along the upper Santa Ynez River 11 April 1981. The highest spring counts of migrants involve morning flights above Refugio Canyon: 56, 74, and 59 birds on 3 May 2020, 15 May 2020, and 20 May 2021, respectively. The

last spring migrants are still passing through the first few days in June (and see below). Fall migrants appear beginning in late July, possibly even earlier, and are most numerous during September. The species is rare after October. (Unrecorded in Districts M or V after mid-October.) Small numbers of migrants have been seen offshore during pelagic trips in both spring and fall.

As a breeding species, (Northern) Yellow Warblers have declined somewhat in numbers, though they are still locally fairly common to common along the North Coast and in District I. Along the North Coast, this species is most numerous along the Santa Ynez River (e.g., 38 tallied between Lompoc and 13th Street on 30 June 1993) and at Barka Slough, is fairly common along the Santa Maria River and lower San Antonio Creek, and is uncommon along Shuman and Honda Creeks, Vandenberg SFB. In District I, it is still common along the upper Santa Ynez River and nearby Mono Creek (e.g., 34 tallied on 22 May 2013) and it is locally fairly common at many other locations along the length of the Santa Ynez River and elsewhere in District I (e.g., Quiota Creek south of Santa Ynez, Cuyama River, Sisquoc River, Manzana and Santa Cruz Creeks). Some breed in oak woodland where there is only a small amount of riparian vegetation present. In District M, (Northern) Yellow Warblers breed along creeks supporting riparian vegetation, such as in vic. Davy Brown and Nira Campgrounds and along Cachuma Creek near Figueroa Mountain and along Kinevan and Stagecoach Roads near San Marcos Pass. A total of 7 individuals found in June during near-annual summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, were likely post-breeding upslope wanderers or unseasonal migrants.

Termed "common" by Willett (1933) and Grinnell and Miller (1944) as a breeding bird in the lowlands, this species was uncommon along the South Coast through the 1980s (e.g., 13 along upper San Jose Creek, Goleta, 18 July 1983), with smaller numbers present since the 1990s. Most territorial birds and nesting records are from foothill canyons between Gaviota and Carpinteria and along several riparian creeks that flow out onto the coastal plain (e.g., Devereux, San Pedro, San Jose, Maria Ygnacio, and San Antonio Creeks in Goleta), and increasingly from some more urban settings or parks. A total of 11 birds along Tecolote Creek in northwest Goleta 9 July 2020 and 6 singing birds and one fledgling along lower Atascadero Creek 10 June 2017 were high recent counts. An increasing number of summer records from the South Coast have involved breeding or breeding-season reports from in or near poor-quality riparian habitats, or away from such areas altogether. Most are from where conditions may have provided the ecological requirements of breeding, including the presence of a water source (such as through irrigation of lawns and ornamental vegetation or agriculture), the presence of a suitable habitat structure from exotic plants, or the presence of a food source from infested exotic plants such as *Myoporum laetum* and *Tipuana tipu*. Two fledglings with an adult female at the Biltmore Hotel in Montecito 5 September 2007 was a very late nesting.

The decline in the breeding population throughout much of Southern California has been linked to the degradation of riparian habitats and to intense brood-parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

The first (Northern) Yellow Warbler detected over-wintering was in 1976–1977, when 1 was present at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 7 December–28 February. The only previous winter-season record for the county was of 1 in Goleta 6 December 1970 only. Since 1976, it has been found annually in very small numbers along the South Coast. The maximum winter count through 1994 was an exceptional 11 between Goleta and Montecito in 1980–1981 (including 5 on the Santa Barbara CBC 3 January 1981), of which 8 definitely wintered. The maximum since 1994 is 8 individuals during 2018–2019. The average count at this season is ca. 4 individuals. Several (Northern) Yellow Warblers have been found at the same locations for two, three, or four consecutive winters; 1 or 2 individuals wintered at the Goleta sewage treatment plant every year between 1976–1977 and 1984–1985.

There are only 14 winter records for the North Coast (where also several late-November individuals not seen thereafter): Guadalupe 5 January 1980 and again 23 December 1980–1 January 1981; Lompoc 26 November–16 December 1989, 13 December 1997, and 17 December

1998–6 February 1999; near Guadalupe 27 December 1998; Lompoc 18–19 December 2004; Santa Maria 17 January 2009; south Vandenberg SFB 18 December 2011; Santa Maria 22 December 2013–18 January 2014; Santa Maria 9 December 2017–10 February 2018; Guadalupe 11 November 2018–1 February 2019; Santa Maria 4 December 2022 (late fall migrant?); Jalama Beach County Park 6 December 2025 (late fall migrant?); and 2 in Santa Maria area 28 December 2025–13 January 2026.

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*)
Very rare fall transient in District C; casual in late spring, summer, and winter. Single records in Districts I and M.

This species was first recorded 6–13 October 1963 in Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara. Between 1968–1993, there were 34 fall records from the South Coast between 9 September and 8 November. The only North Coast records during that same period were near Guadalupe 9 September 1990, in Santa Maria 29 November 1990 (late), and in Lompoc 12 September 1992 (ph. SBMNH). One in Goleta 7 December 1991 was probably a very late migrant. Between 1994–2025, an additional 86 individuals were found in autumn along the South Coast between 7 September (2002 and 2020, Carpinteria) and through 18 November (2012, Carpinteria) and 20 November (2015, Santa Barbara), including high season totals of 6 in 2008 and 2022 and 8 in 2017, plus a late bird in Carpinteria 30 November–1 December 2006; and a total of 13 along the North Coast between 11 September (1997, Santa Maria) and 25 October (2020, near Lompoc).

In District I, 1 was at Nojoqui Falls Park 28 September 2019.

In District M, 1 was near San Marcos Pass 20 September 1997.

In winter, 1 at the Santa Barbara Cemetery in Montecito 26 February–15 March 1983, was followed by singles in downtown Santa Barbara 23 November 1995–21 April 1996, along Tecolotito Creek, Goleta, 23 December 2000–16 March 2001, near Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 5 January 2002, Santa Barbara Zoo 13 December 2023, Santa Barbara waterfront (e.g., Chase Palm Park) 14 December 2023–18 April 2024 (ph. SBMNH) and again 7 November 2024–19 January 2025, and Padaro Lane in Carpinteria 17 December 2023–12 March 2024. One in Rocky Nook Park, Santa Barbara, 11–21 April 1988 probably had wintered locally.

One along Rincon Creek, near Carpinteria, 19 June 1995 and 1 in Refugio Canyon 16 June 2024 are the only records of late-spring vagrants, whereas 1 in residential Carpinteria near Santa Monica Creek 13 July 2020 is the sole mid-summer record.

Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*)
Rare fall transient in District C. One record of a summer wanderer offshore.

This species was first recorded 27 September 1963 in Santa Barbara. Between then and 1993 it proved to be a somewhat regular fall transient in small numbers near the coast, with a total of 164 individuals found in District C. The records extended from 5 September to 30 October. The single-season maxima were 21 in 1979 and 20 in 1981; annual totals since the 1980s have typically been substantially lower, likely the result of a combination of overall population declines associated with declining Spruce Budworm outbreaks (reversed somewhat between 2010–2014) and the loss of leafhopper-infested tamarisk trees along the South Coast. Between 1994–2025, a total of 177 individuals (142 South Coast, 35 North Coast) were found in District C between 5 September (2007, Refugio State Beach) and 13 November (2007, near the Santa Ynez River mouth (2)). Maximum counts include up to 7 near the Santa Ynez River mouth 16 September–13 October 1998 and South Coast season totals of 10 birds in 2009 and 16 birds in 2012. In addition, a very early bird was in Goleta 23 August 1994, and a very late bird was at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 22–23 November 2005.

An exceptionally late individual was in Santa Barbara 5–13 December 1987.

A banded individual observed in Goleta 19 September 1981 would have revealed interesting migration information if it had been captured.

One bird seen in mid-summer far offshore ca. 80 mi (130 km) W of San Miguel Island 23 July 2001 was totally lost.

Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*)

Very rare fall transient in District C; several winter records. Casual in District I.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler was first recorded on 20–21 October 1948 on the grounds of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (Abbott 1949). Between 1967–1993, there were 19 fall records in District C between 21 September and 3 November. Between 1994–2025, only 11 additional individuals were discovered there in autumn between 23 September and 3 November. One landed on a boat ca. 6 mi (10 km) off Guadalupe Dunes on 11 October 2024.

One near Point Sal 23 December 1979 and 1 in Miguelito Canyon near Lompoc 4 December 2022 were probably very late fall migrants. One along Arroyo Burro in Santa Barbara 15 January–16 March 1982 clearly wintered locally. Single individuals at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Santa Barbara, 30 November 1986–4 January 1987 and on "the Riviera" in Santa Barbara 2–13 January 1988 were probably attempting to winter locally; and 1 in Stevens Park, Santa Barbara, 19 March–16 April 2003 had almost certainly wintered locally.

In District I, 1 was near Santa Ynez 26–27 November 2001 (ph. SBMNH).

Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*)

Rare but regular fall transient in District C, rare to very rare visitor in winter, and casual in spring. Casual inland.

This is probably the most numerous "vagrant" warbler species during fall most years. It is usually found in open, shrubby and weedy areas. Palm Warbler was first recorded 18–20 November 1963 at Gaviota State Park (2). Fall totals are higher in Santa Barbara County than in most areas to the south. Most individuals are seen between the end of September and mid-November (earliest arrival dates: 12 September 1998 Goleta, 19 September 2007 Carpinteria). Between 1963–1993 there were some 387 individuals found in District C during autumn (late September to mid-December), with single-season maxima of 60 birds in 1979 and 56 in 1993 (both exceptional), and 30 in 1987. Between 1994–2025, the total number of fall birds in District C was 343 (269 South Coast, 74 North Coast), with a single-season maximum of 23 birds in 2003, including a total of 10 near Lompoc and up to 8 together in the South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields, Goleta, during October–November 2003; and 23 birds in 2018. At least 5 were together at the Santa Ynez River mouth 12–31 October 2012. Most individuals are seen within one mile of the coast; 3 have occurred well east of the beach on the North Coast: 8 mi (13 km) inland in the Santa Maria Valley near Orcutt 28 October 1978, 6 mi (10 km) inland on north Vandenberg SFB 21 November 1988, and 9 mi (15 km) inland near Santa Maria 9 November 1991. Three birds were seen 5 mi (8 km) at sea off Point Arguello 15 October 2010.

In winter, through early 1994, a total of 61 individuals were tallied in District C between mid-December and April. The maximum winter count was 8 in the South Patterson Avenue area November 1987–April 1988, with 7 seen together on 3 January. Another 85 birds (74 South Coast, only 11 North Coast) were found at that season between late 1994 and early 2026, with 7 birds during both 2005–2006 and 2018–2019 the high season totals. Some of the county's wintering birds have clearly lingered well into April (latest dates: through 26 April 1984, 26 April 1995, and 4 May 1994, all in Goleta, and through 28 April 2018 Carpinteria).

Seventeen records between mid-March through late April, but not earlier, probably pertain to individuals that wintered locally. It is possible that there is a habitat shift in late winter and spring from fields to other habitats such as blooming exotics. For example, 5 birds together along Maria Ygnacio Creek, Goleta, 24 April 1994 were comprised of 2 birds that were known to have wintered there, plus 3 new birds that were assumed to have wintered nearby; 2 of these birds remained through 4 May. Other records that may have involved actual spring migrants are: Santa

Barbara 4 May 1975 (*SBMNH); near Gaviota in April 1977; Goleta 22 April 1979; Guadalupe 20 April 1980; Goleta 18 April 1989, 19 April 1989, and 16 April 1993; Santa Barbara 24 April 1991; Goleta 20 April 1997; Goleta 25 April 2004; Santa Barbara 5 May 2005; Goleta 4 May 2006; and Goleta 15 April 2013.

There are eight records in District I: six from fall (near Los Olivos 21 November 2003, Nojoqui Falls Park 24 October 2010, Santa Ynez 27 October 2012, Los Alamos 19 October 2020, midway between Buellton and Lompoc 20 November 2023, and Lake Cachuma 30 September 2025); one in winter (near Santa Ynez 28 December 2016); and, especially unusual, one in spring (near Santa Ynez 19 May 1995).

There is also one record from District V: Richardson Park, New Cuyama, 11 October 2018.

There are a surprising seven records of the "Yellow" Palm Warbler (*D. p. hypochrysea*) from the more eastern part of the species' range: Goleta 25 November 1981; north Vandenberg SFB 21 November 1988; 1 that came aboard a ship 180 mi (290 km) WSW of San Miguel Island 18 November 1989, spent the night on board, and was seen departing on 19 November when ca. 30 mi (50 km) off the Santa Maria River mouth; Goleta 30 December 1989–1 April 1990; Goleta 27 November 1993; Goleta 26 December 1999–17 January 2000; and Goleta 30 December 2017.

Pine Warbler (*Setophaga pinus*)

Very rare fall and winter visitor.

There are 12 or 13 fall records: 4 from Gaviota State Park when that site supported large numbers of leafhopper-infested tamarisk trees—15 October 1979, 30 October 1986, 1 November 1986, and 5 November 1987—an extraordinary 2 or 3 individuals within a half-mile of each other on north Vandenberg SFB on 13 October, 19 October, and 30–31 October 2006; 1 in atypical eucalyptus habitat in Goleta 4 November 2012; 1 in Carpinteria 27 October 2015 (ph. SBMNH); 1 on the Mesa in Santa Barbara 10 October 2021 (ph. SBMNH); a phenomenal up to 3 birds together at the Santa Maria Cemetery in Santa Maria from 13–17 November 2021 (ph. SBMNH); 1 at Waller Park in Santa Maria 2 November 2022 (ph. SBMNH); and up to 2 at Alan Hancock College in Santa Maria 23–29 November 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and again 26–27 October 2024.

The 17 winter records are: Hope Ranch 31 December 1988–28 February 1989; another there 12–16 December 1991; Bella Vista Open Space, Goleta, 26 December 1991–16 February 1992 (ph. SBMNH); Hope Ranch 1 January–6 February 1994; Bella Vista Open Space 29 December 1999–21 January 2000; Elings Park, Santa Barbara, 30 December 2001–28 February 2002; Waller Park, Santa Maria, 26 February–18 April 2006 (ph. SBMNH); near Storke X Hollister Avenues, Goleta, 9 November 2007–14 January 2008 (ph. *NAB* 62:305, SBMH); Santa Barbara Municipal Golf Course 2 February 2009; Alan Hancock College, Santa Maria, 25 November–31 December 2010 (ph. SBMNH); Waller Park 2–3 February 2011; Montecito 10 January 2011; Santa Barbara Cemetery in Montecito 30 December 2017–5 February 2018 (ph. SBMNH); Rod Rodenberger Park, Santa Maria, 25 January–23 February 2020 (ph. SBMNH); Miramonte Park, Santa Maria, 6–8 January 2023 (ph. SBMNH); Allan Hancock College 9–23 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH), and Waller Park 10–13 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH).

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*)

Common to abundant transient and winter visitor in all Districts (largely withdraws from the highest elevations in District M in winter). Uncommon and local summer resident at the highest elevations in District M. "Myrtle" Warblers are uncommon to locally fairly common migrants and winter visitors, with one exceptional late summer record.

The Yellow-rumped Warbler is one of the most numerous species in Santa Barbara County from mid-October until early April. This species occupies a wide variety of habitats, including woodland, brush, and even open country (e.g., agricultural areas, golf courses, etc.). It is

particularly abundant during the late fall and winter in groves of blooming and lerp-infested eucalyptus trees, as well as in *Tipuana tipu* trees. Breeding birds are found in high-elevation coniferous forests. Two subspecies occur locally, *S. c. auduboni* and *S. c. hooveri.*

The "Audubon's" Warbler (*S. c. auduboni*) is by far the more numerous of the two and makes up more than 95 percent of the Yellow-rumped Warbler population in the county. It arrives beginning in mid- or late September (earliest arrival dates: 29 August 2024 western Goleta; 2 September 2012 Elings Park, Santa Barbara; 4 September 2021 Santa Ynez River mouth; and 6 September 2021 Goleta) and is common by early or mid-October. In winter, up to 6622 individuals (3 January 1981) have been recorded on Santa Barbara CBCs, although only 1365 were tallied 31 December 2016. Some 900 birds were in eastern Hope Ranch alone on 29 December 1979. As many as 494 birds (28 December 2010) have been found inland on the Cachuma CBC. Its status in the higher mountains between late fall and early spring is uncertain, although small numbers appear to occur regularly on Figueroa Mountain/Ranger Peak and there are several winter records from San Rafael and Big Pine Mountains. In spring, it is common county-wide until mid-April. The principal northward movement appears to take place between mid-March and mid-April. A slightly early migrant was at sea, 63 mi (101 km) W of San Miguel Island, on 8 March 2026. A high morning-flight count was 306+ in the Painted Cave area, Santa Ynez Mountains, 23 March 2021. It is rare in early May and very rare in mid-May. The latest records include a couple as late as 18 May and, exceptionally, 26 May 1986 Goleta, 26 May 2009 north Vandenberg SFB, 27 May 1982 Santa Barbara (*SBMNH), and 1 June 2022 Lake Los Carneros (ph. SBMNH). In addition, a worn-looking female in Goleta 8–9 June 1985 was unprecedented. Small numbers of migrants have been seen offshore during pelagic trips in both spring and fall.

"Audubon's" is an uncommon and local breeder found only on San Rafael and Big Pine Mountains and on Madulce Peak. Bartholomew (1940) noted 1 on Big Pine Mountain 29 July 1937; 8 singing males were recorded in the Big Pine Mountain area 29 June–1 July 1981; and 6, including 2 juveniles, were there 21–22 July 1982. Near-annual summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area through 2026 averaged 2–6 birds, with none several years, 8 birds twice, and an exceptional 17 tallied on 12–13 July 1991. A total of 16 individuals, including 2 family groups, were in the San Rafael Mountain area 18–19 June 1982 and up to 5 were there in June 1989 and 1991. Three birds, including 2 juveniles, were on Madulce Peak 20 July 1982. (This species breeds fairly commonly to the east on the highest peaks in Ventura and Kern Counties; see Lentz 1993.) A singing male on Figueroa Mountain 16 May 1982 and another there 20 May 1984 were either late transients or possibly on territory, whereas 1 singing there 14 June 1998 was likely on territory. There is also an old summer record well away from appropriate breeding habitat at the "headwaters" of the Santa Ynez River at an elevation of 2500 ft (probably in Ventura County) 3 July 1909 (Pemberton 1910).

The "Myrtle Warbler" (presumably *S. c. hooveri*) is an uncommon to locally fairly common transient and winter visitor. Most individuals are found in riparian areas and in wet, brushy oak woodland, especially where there is a growth of Poison Oak. It may actually outnumber "Audubon's" Warblers in some of these areas, especially on the North Coast. A total of 176 in willow riparian on south Vandenberg SFB 15 December 1991 was a high count. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 447 individuals (31 December 1983). The Cachuma CBC has tallied as many as 60 birds (29 December 2009). Myrtles may outnumber Audubon's along the upper Santa Ynez River during spring. The earliest arrival dates are 12 September 1993 Gaviota State Park and 14 September 1972 Goleta. The latest spring dates are 7 May 1981 Santa Barbara, 15 May 2007 Goleta, and, exceptionally, 25 May 2015 Santa Ynez River mouth, 31 May 2011 north Vandenberg SFB, and 1 June 2026 Lake Los Carneros.

A Myrtle Warbler in Orcutt from 3–31 August 2021 (ph. SBMNH) was exceptional for the date and might represent a first summering record for the region. Even an "Audubon's" on this date in the lowlands would be very noteworthy.

There are a small number of sightings of likely Audubon's X Myrtle intergrades.

A singing individual of uncertain subspecies was unusual on Ranger Peak, San Rafael Mountains, 1 June 2015.

A hybrid Myrtle X Townsend's Warbler was present in Carpinteria 23 November–3 December 1983 (*Carnegie Museum Natural History, Pittsburgh).

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Setophaga dominica*)

Casual visitor in District C; one record each in Districts I and M. One record of a summering individual.

The fall records are: former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space), Goleta, 16–19 September 1976, Gaviota State Park 24–25 October 1979 (ph. *AB* 34:203, SBMNH), and Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 24 October 1993. Spring records include: [Santa Barbara 9–14 June 1979 (report not accepted by CBRC),] Carpinteria Creek 2–3 June 1984, Refugio State Beach 12–26 May 2001, Goleta 23 May 2002, north Vandenberg SFB 20 April 2011, Gaviota State Park 19–20 May 2019 (ph. SBMNH), and Isla Vista 29 May 2019 (ph. SBMNH).

In District I, 1 was along the Santa Ynez River near Paradise X Stagecoach Roads 23 May 2024 (ph. SBMNH).

One along West Camino Cielo in the Santa Ynez Mountains behind Goleta 10 May 1981 was in District M.

The first record of a summering Yellow-throated Warbler in California involved an individual at the "Love Foundation" on the Mesa in Santa Barbara 11 May–20 September 1981 (ph. SBMNH). This bird (probably a female) associated with a male Northern Parula present at the same location from May to mid-July; no evidence of nesting was found, however.

All records have involved the white-lored race, *S. d. albilora.*

Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*)

Very rare fall transient. Casual in winter. All records are from District C, except one in District I.

This species was first recorded 8 November 1971 at Goleta Slough. Through 1993 there was a total of 15 records in District C between 26 August (1990, near Guadalupe) and 8 November (above). This was followed by an additional 33 coastal individuals from 1994–2025, between 5 September and 30 November (2001, near Casmalia), with an early individual in western Goleta 21–22 August 2022 (ph. SBMNH). Some 6 individuals during autumn 1996 was a high season count. One individual along Devereux Creek, Goleta, 9–16 December 2000 was very late.

One near the Lompoc sewage treatment plant 17 January–28 February 1999 (ph. SBMNH), 1 along Santa Claus Lane in Carpinteria 10 December 2013–11 March 2014 (ph. SBMNH) and again 2 January–23 February 2015 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 at Lake Los Carneros 27 December 2016–8 January 2017 (ph. SBMNH) are the only mid-winter records.

One bird in District I at Lake Cachuma 2–5 December 1979 (ph. SBMNH) was both late and very unusual at an inland locality.

Grace's Warbler (*Setophaga graciae*)

Casual fall and winter visitor in District C. One record in District M.

There are 11 records. Eight individuals wintered locally, 6 of these returning for multiple winters. All birds frequented planted conifers (especially Monterey Pines). One was along Oak Road and vic., Montecito, for nine consecutive years, starting 6 January–2 April 1980 (ph. SBMNH) and arriving eight additional winters as early as 28 September and departing as late as 1 April, and last seen 10 December 1987. Singles were also along Padaro Lane, near Carpinteria, 24 February–11 April 1980 (ph. SBMNH), and again 22 February–21 March 1982 (its being unrecorded during 1980–1981 was certainly the result of very limited coverage), 24 October

1982–12 March 1983, and 22 October 1983–27 March 1984; Summit Road, Montecito, 21 December 1984–25 February 1985 and again 10 November 1985–21 February 1986 and 19 October 1986–11 January 1987; and San Leandro Lane, Montecito, 23 September 1990–25 February 1991 and again 6 October 1991–17 February 1992. A second bird accompanied the Padaro Lane individual on 11 January 1983. One was at Waller Park, Santa Maria, 22 February–27 March 2006 (ph. *NAB* 60:284, SBMNH) and again 30 September 2006–19 March 2007. One returned for at least five winters to Bella Vista Open Space, Goleta, 3 January–10 March 2009 (ph. *AB/CBC* 63:101, SBMNH), 21 October 2009–15 February 2010 (ph. *AB/CBC* 64:85, SBMNH), 26 September 2010–4 April 2011, 26 October 2011–26 February 2012 (ph. SBMNH), and 28 October 2012–30 January 2013 (ph. SBMNH). One was at the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space), Goleta, 6 November 2013–9 March 2014 (ph. SBMNH) and again 7 November 2014–10 March 2015 (ph. SBMNH) and 18 November 2015–13 February 2016 (ph. SBMNH). One was at Carpinteria Valley Memorial Park from 12 December 2025–23 January 2026.

The only records of presumed fall migrants are of 1 in tamarisks near City Hall in Carpinteria 12–13 October 1984 and 1 at the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course (North Campus Open Space), Goleta, 5 November 2011 (possibly attempting to winter locally, as the individual did there in 2013–2016).

Exceptional was the discovery of a fall bird in District M on Figueroa Mountain 5 October 2003.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

Uncommon to fairly common transient in all Districts. Uncommon and local summer resident in District M. Rare but regular winter visitor along the South Coast, casual elsewhere.

The Black-throated Gray Warbler occurs in a variety of woodland habitats as a transient and winter visitor, although it is most numerous in oak, oak-conifer, and oak-riparian woodland, and in exotic plantings in parks and residential areas. Breeding birds in the San Rafael Mountains are found mostly in a mixture of oaks and conifers, whereas the Santa Ynez Mountain population inhabits oak-madrone woodland.

In spring, this species arrives beginning in late March (earliest arrival dates: 15 March 2008 Santa Maria, 21 March 2014 Lake Cachuma, 21 March 2026 West Camino Cielo, 22 March 1966 Montecito, and 22 March 1970 Santa Barbara). One had arrived at a breeding site in District M at McKinley Spring west of San Rafael Mountain 23 March 2014. Single birds in Santa Maria 15 March 2008 and 3 March 2012 had not been detected during winter. This species is probably most numerous at this season in District M; 50 on Figueroa Mountain 2 May 1982 was exceptional. Morning-flight highs were 45 above Refugio Canyon 22 April 2020 and 54 there 24 April 2020, and 35 near Painted Cave, San Marcos Pass, 22 April 2020. The species is rare after early May; the latest records are near the Santa Ynez River mouth 21 May 2007, 1 found dead (for an uncertain length of time) in Goleta 22 May 1977 (skel. SBMNH), and 1 in Mission Canyon in Santa Barbara 26 May 2025. In fall, migrants typically appear during mid-August (earliest arrival dates: 30 July 1980 Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB, and 2 August 1982 Santa Barbara). One at Arroyo Hondo Preserve between Refugio and Gaviota 19 July 2019, 1 in Rocky Nook Park 19 July 2021, and another at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 22 July 2013 were either summer wanderers or more likely very early fall migrants. Black-throated Grays are rare after the beginning of November. One was somewhat late in District V at New Cuyama 5 November 2005. Several individuals may linger annually well into December and even until the beginning of January but are not seen thereafter and therefore it is not known if they wintered locally. A few clearly remain annually through winter along the South Coast (see below). A few migrants have been seen offshore during pelagic trips.

With the increase in coverage since the late 1970s of the South Coast in winter, a small number of wintering Black-throated Gray Warblers have been found to occur regularly. Some of the records from the first half of December likely involve late fall migrants. Through early 1994,

the high count was an exceptional 18 between Goleta and Montecito during winter 1979–1980, although fewer than half of these were seen after early January. Most winter counts are between 4 and 7 individuals. Between 1995–2025, the high season count was 15 birds in both 2017–2018 and 2019–2020, but most winter totals are only about half that many, and only 1 was seen during 2025–2026. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 12 individuals (3 January 1981). The 12 winter records away from the South Coast are: North Coast—along San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB, 5–19 December 1981, near Lompoc 22 February 1992, on La Purisima CBC 19 December 2004, south Vandenberg SFB 17 December 2017, Santa Maria 26 December 2017, and near Lompoc 17 December 2023; District I—Paradise area 31 December 1977; Cachuma Lake Recreation Area 17 December 1987 (late fall migrant?); near Santa Ynez 30 December 2011, 28 December 2015, and 8 January 2017; Sedgwick Reserve 6 December 2023–23 February 2024 and again 4 December 2024–11 March 2025; and near Paradise 5–16 December 2023; and District M—Painted Cave, Santa Ynez Mountains, 4 January 2020 and Figueroa Mountain Road 22 December 2023. In addition, 1 in District V in Santa Barbara Canyon 16 December 2019 was probably a very late fall migrant.

The Black-throated Gray Warbler is a local summer resident and breeder in District M. In the Santa Ynez Mountains, eggs were taken at Kelly Creek on the north side of San Marcos Pass 28 May 1933 (Willett 1933); single individuals were at Refugio Pass 18 June 1980, 9 June 1981, 14 July 1991, 18 June 2010, and 30 May 2019, and 6 were there 9 June 1993; 1 was near there 10 July 2024; a pair was present in vic. San Marcos Pass late May–late June 1981 and during June 1992, and single individuals were seen at different sites in that area at least a dozen times between 2002–2026; and 2 were at La Cumbre Peak 27 June 2018. In vic. Figueroa Mountain and Ranger Peak in the San Rafael Mountains (particularly at Sawmill Basin, Figueroa Campground, Pino Alto, and Fir Canyon), 3 were present 17 June 1981, 2–3 were there 5 June 1982, 1–3 birds were seen on about twelve dates in June–mid-July between 2006–2026, and there is an older record for 6–7 June (year unspecified). Very early nest building was observed 11 April 2008. Near Figueroa Mountain, a family group was present along Sunset Valley Road near Davy Brown Campground 12 July 1977 (*UCSB), single birds were in the Davey Brown area 17 June 1950 and 11 June 2014, 2 were there 31 May 2015, and 2 were along Cachuma Creek near Lion Canyon 9 July 2015. One was on Little Pine Mountain 2–3 July 2005. In the Big Pine Mountain area, high counts during near-annual summer surveys (1981–2026) are of 17 birds—on 19–22 July 1982, 13–15 June 2008, and 11–13 June 2010; although 5–12 individuals are more typical. Six were in the San Rafael Mountain area 18–19 June 1982, whereas 15 in the McKinley Spring area 18 June 1982, 12 in the McKinley Spring/San Rafael Mountain area between 7–9 June 2024, and 10 there 12 June 2025 are the largest summer concentrations noted away from Big Pine Mountain. Three were at Madulce Peak 20 July 1982, 3 were there 11 June 2022, and 3 on 5 June 2025. In the Sierra Madre, a few have been found in summer above Bates Canyon Campground 2019–2021, 1 was at Aliso Park 10 June 2021, and several were between upper Santa Barbara Canyon and Madulce Peak 1 June 2024.

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*)

Fairly common transient in all Districts. Fairly common to locally common winter visitor along the South Coast; uncommon to fairly common at this season along the North Coast, in District I, and at the lower elevations in District M; rare at the higher elevations in District M and casual in District V.

Townsend's Warblers occur in a variety of woodland habitats but are most numerous in oak woodland and conifers, as well as in riparian and in a variety of exotic plantings (e.g., *Tipuana tipu)* during the winter season. Fall transients appear beginning in late August (earliest arrival dates: 13 August 2023 Ranger Peak, 14 August 1985 Goleta, 14 August 2009 north Vandenberg SFB, 14 August 2016 Montecito, 15 August 2013 Carpinteria, 15 August 2023 Ranger Peak (2)).

Most transients pass through the county by late October, with a few continuing through much of November. Two at Madulce Peak 13 November 1986 were probably late migrants, as it is doubtful that they would winter at this elevation.

Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 491 individuals (4 January 2014), although only 91 were tallied 31 December 2016. Most locally wintering birds have departed by mid-April. Along the North Coast, most wintering birds are found in introduced conifers and in riparian areas; CBC maxima there are 37 on Santa Maria–Guadalupe 21 December 2003 and 60 on La Purisima 16 December 2001. Up to several individuals have been found at this season routinely through the winter in the San Marcos Pass area, well into December in the Sierra Madre foothills and at other lower elevations in District M, more rarely later in winter as high up as the summit area on Figueroa Mountain and Ranger Peak. The Cachuma CBC has found up to 6 birds (twice); 25 there 30 December 2005 were exceptional and included a surprising 10 and 5 birds on Figueroa Mountain and Ranger Peak, respectively. One was at McKinley Spring 21 December 2020. In District V, 1 was in New Cuyama 20 December 2021.

Most spring transients pass through the county between mid-April and early May. The largest numbers probably pass through District M. The highest counts are 60 birds at Romero Saddle 2 May 2020 and 101 there 4 May 2020 (morning flight). Smaller numbers continue through mid-May; the latest spring records are 30 May 1982 Goleta, 30 May 2008 north and south Vandenberg SFB, 2 June 1980 near La Cumbre Peak, 2 June 1998 near the Santa Ynez River mouth, 3 June 2002 north Vandenberg SFB (2), and 3 June 2011 Montecito. Small numbers of migrants have been seen offshore during pelagic trips.

Hybrid Townsend's X Hermit Warblers were in Goleta 13 December 1984–29 March 1985 and again 20 August–November 1985, at Gaviota State Park 13 September 1987, in Santa Barbara 30 August 1992, on Figueroa Mountain 12 September 1992, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 11 October and 16 October 1998, near Santa Maria 21 December 2007 (ph. SBMNH), in Isla Vista 19 January 2014, in Goleta 18 September 2018, above Refugio Canyon 3 May 2020, at Nojoqui Falls Park 7 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH), in Goleta 31 December 2020, above Refugio Canyon 27 April 2021, in Carpinteria 4–8 October 2022, at the Santa Ynez River mouth 27 September 2022, in Waller Park, Santa Maria 2–3 November 2022, and in Santa Barbara 31 December 2022.

Hermit Warbler (*Setophaga occidentalis*)

Rare to uncommon transient in Districts C, I, and V; uncommon to fairly common in District M. Rare but regular in winter in District C, casual elsewhere. Two summer records in District M.

Hermit Warblers are found primarily in conifers or in oaks with scattered conifers present; they are rather rare in riparian vegetation and non-conifer exotic plantings. Spring migrants appear beginning in mid-April (earliest arrival dates: 30 March 2021 Painted Cave, 2 April 1984 Santa Barbara, 3 April 2015 Carpinteria, and 3 April 2020 Figueroa Mountain). They are rare to uncommon in the lowlands. The highest lowland count is a total of 15 in Goleta 12 May 1987; but they can be fairly common in the coniferous and oak-coniferous forests of District M (e.g., 20 on Figueroa Mountain 3 May 1977) and during morning flight, such as 35 at Romero Saddle 4 May 2020, 27 over West Camino Cielo 26 April 2021, and 21 above Refugio Canyon 2 May 2021. Most spring transients have passed by mid-May; the latest records are 28 May 2008 north Vandenberg SFB, 28 May 2018 near Guadalupe, 29 May 1982 Goleta, and 31 May 1971 La Cumbre Peak (2). A few migrants have been seen offshore during pelagic trips.

Fall transients move through primarily between August and mid-October. This species may be most numerous in District M (e.g., 6 in Mission Pine Springs area during early September 2011), but data for fall in the mountains of Santa Barbara County are limited. In the lowlands, it is most regular, but very uncommon, between Goleta and Carpinteria. The earliest arrival dates are 29 July 2000 near San Marcos Pass, 29 July 2001 La Cumbre Peak, and 30 July 1980 Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB. High single-site counts at lowland sites during fall have not exceeded several individuals; a total of 14 along the South Coast during autumn 1996 was a high

seasonal count. This species is rare after mid-October, with a few late transients lingering into late November or early December.

During winter, Hermit Warblers are rare but regular in the Santa Barbara area. The most consistent area for this species was Hope Ranch, where up to 6 individuals formerly were found annually in winter between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s in the introduced conifers (mostly) and oaks. It also may have been somewhat regular in very small numbers during this same period in the Montecito area, where 1 or 2 were found during approximately half the winters between the late 1970s and mid-1990s. Santa Barbara CBCs recorded as many as 5 individuals (2 January 1982). Only 1 to 3 birds have become a more typical winter count along the South Coast since the 1980s, coincident with the death of many introduced conifers (particularly Monterey Pine) beginning in the 1980s. The only South Coast winter records of Hermit Warblers west of Goleta come from El Capitan State Beach and Refugio Canyon. Along the North Coast, only several individuals were found at this season through early 1994—San Antonio Creek, Vandenberg SFB, 5 December and 19 December 1981 (different individuals), Guadalupe 19 December 1981, Santa Maria 3 December 1982, and north Vandenberg SFB 18–31 December 1988 and 1 January 1990—but since that time this species has proven to have a winter status comparable to that presently along the South Coast, with 1–2 birds most years. The highest counts since the 1990s are of 9 birds along the North Coast in 1999–2000, 6 birds along the South Coast in 2012–2013, a record 18 birds during 2011–2012 (10 South Coast, 8 North Coast), and 8 individuals in 2022–2023 (6 South Coast, 2 North Coast).

There are only a small number of late-fall and winter records in Districts I and M: Paradise area, Santa Ynez Valley, 2 February 1970, Lake Cachuma 9–13 January 1999 and 22 January 2000, near Santa Ynez 27 December 2013, Nojoqui Falls Park 22 February 2014, Buellton 18 January–17 March 2019, and Sedgwick Reserve 22 November 2023; and near San Marcos Pass 4 January–early February 1983 and 3 January 1987, and on Figueroa Mountain 11 February 1983, 28 January 1990, 7–26+ November 1993, 6 January–30 March 1996, 17 January 1999, 12 March 2011, 27 November 2011, and 11 March 2012 (same?).

Two singing males on Big Pine Mountain 15 July 1995 and 1 singing there 14 June 2014 were exceptional. This species is a local breeder in the highest mountains of Southern California. The mid-July date is possible for exceptionally early fall migrants, but the singing behavior strongly suggests the birds summered there.

Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*)

Very rare fall transient in District C; casual in winter and spring.

The 23 fall records include: Santa Barbara 29 September 1974; Goleta 4 October 1974, 6 December 1976 (late) (ph. SBMNH), 25 October 1979, and 4–5 November 1979; Santa Barbara 10 November 1979; north Vandenberg SFB 15 October 1980; Carpinteria 10–13 October 1985; near Guadalupe 16 October 1988; Lompoc 18 November–5 December 1990 (late); Carpinteria 13 September 1993 (early); near the Santa Ynez River mouth 2–5 November 1995, 17 October 1998, and 2 there 23 October with 1 through 29 October 1999; Goleta 11–12 November 1999, 14 November 2001, 2–3 December 2001 (late); 2–14 October 2002 (adult male), 2 October 2003, and 23 October 2004; Santa Maria 6 November 2004; and Carpinteria 11 October 2013. In addition, 1 was at sea well W of San Miguel Island on the very early date of 8 September 2021 (ph. SBMNH).

Even more unusual were winter birds near South Patterson Avenue in Goleta 22 December 1978–24 February 1979 (ph. SBMNH); along San Jose Creek, Goleta, 11 February–27 March 1983; near Atascadero Creek, Goleta, 19 December 1995–4 January 1996; at Stow Grove Park and vic., Goleta, 25 December 2006–17 March 2007 (ph. *NAB* 61:328, SBMNH); and at Allan Hancock College, Santa Maria, 16–22 December 2007 (ph. SBMNH).

Single, exceptional spring vagrants were near San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB, 25 May 1995 (ph. *FN* 49:310), at Barka Slough, north Vandenberg SFB, 1 June 2013 (ph. SBMNH), and in Refugio Canyon 8 May 2023.

Canada Warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*)

Very rare fall transient in District C; one mid-winter record. Three records in District I.

The first record was 11 October 1943 in Santa Barbara (Cogswell 1944). From 1972–1993, 18 fall records accrued along the South Coast between 30 August (19XX, XXXX) and 30 October (1979, Gaviota State Park). In addition, singles were along the North Coast in Lompoc 3–5 September and 25 September 1993. Between 1994–2025, an additional 15 individuals were found in District C (13 South Coast, 2 North Coast), between 2 September (2006, Refugio State Beach) and 26 October (2010, Goleta).

An exceptionally late bird was near Guadalupe 10 December 1998. A mid-winter bird along San Jose Creek in Goleta 15 January 2024 (ph. SBMNH) could not be re-found. There are literally no records of clearly over-wintering Canada Warblers in the USA.

In District I, 1 was at Nojoqui Falls Park 9–12 September 2009 (ph. SBMNH), 1 was along Alisos Road near Santa Ynez 12 October 2017 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 was at Nojoqui Falls Park 7 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH).

Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*)

Fairly common to common transient in Districts C, I, and V; uncommon in District M. Locally common breeder along the North Coast, rare in Districts I and M and along the South Coast; formerly more widespread. Very uncommon to rare in winter in District C, casual in District I.

Wilson's Warblers breed in riparian vegetation, particularly among dense willow growth. Transients and wintering birds are found in a variety of woodland vegetation but are also most numerous in riparian growth.

Spring migrants begin to arrive by mid- or late March (earliest arrival dates: 4 March 1999 Carpinteria, 5 March 1986 Santa Barbara, 6 March 1988 Montecito). High counts are during morning flight, with 111 at Romero Saddle 2 May 2020, 89 there 4 May 2020, and 84 above Refugio Canyon 3 May 2020. They continue to pass through into late May, rarely well into the first week of June (late date: 10 June 2019 Goleta Slough). Fall migrants are found primarily between mid-August and mid-October, with a few arriving by late July. The earliest arrival dates are: 8 July 1982 (2) upper Santa Ynez River, 16 July 2016 residential Santa Ynez, and 17 July 2016 Ellwood. The species is rare after late October. One at Kinevan Road 20 November 2019 was late for the lower elevations of District M. Small numbers of migrants have been seen offshore in both spring and fall.

Wilson's Warblers still breed commonly along the Santa Maria River west of Guadalupe, San Antonio Creek (including Barka Slough), and the Santa Ynez River between Lompoc and the Santa Ynez River mouth (e.g., 46 were between Lompoc and 13th Street on 30 June 1993). The species is uncommon to fairly common along Honda Creek, south Vandenberg SFB. A very small number also summers locally in District I along the Santa Ynez River to vic. Santa Ynez. Rett (fieldnotes) found a nest with "three young warblers and one cowbird" along the Santa Ynez River at Solvang on 1 July 1934. The species was breeding there again, with several nests found by Stevens and Reis, in May 1935, May 1936, and June 1937. Five individuals were found between Lompoc and Buellton during summer 1980, up to 7 were just west of Buellton in June 1986 and 1987, 1 was present 21 July 1991, 5 were seen 20 June 1992, a pair was feeding a cowbird there 2 July 1996, a high 14 individuals were tallied 26 June 2011 (including a begging juvenile), 1 or 2 were there in June 2023 and 2024, and 1 was singing at Santa Rosa Park 11 June 2017. There have been several summer sightings involving as many as 4 individuals along Quiota Creek south of Santa Ynez. There are several mid-June–mid-July sightings at Nojoqui Falls Park in 1995, 2018, and 2019, and 1 was nearby along Alisal Road 15 June 2018, 2 were there 10 June 2020, and 1 near Solvang 16 June 2026. One was along Foxen Canyon Road 21

June 2017. Surprisingly, this species is not known to breed in the extensive riparian habitat along the upper Santa Ynez River east of Solvang to the Ventura County border or on nearby Mono and Agua Caliente Creeks. Single individuals were near the upper Santa Ynez, however, 30 June 1984 and 17 June 2017, and 2 were at Gibraltar Reservoir 6 July 2025.

Very small numbers may breed locally and irregularly in District M, mostly in the Santa Ynez Mountains. One was at Refugio Pass 4 July 1984, and up to 4 were noted along Kinevan Road, San Marcos Pass, during June and early July from 1985 through at least 1987, and 1–2 birds were there again in June–July between 1992–1996 and 2015–2016. Oddly, this species has never been found breeding along high-elevation creeks and rivers of the San Rafael Mountains, although 1 was seen in the main chokecherry thicket on Big Pine Mountain 19 June 2004 (singles there 21 July 1993 and 28 July 2015 could easily have been early fall migrants, see above). In the Sierra Madre, singles were in Aliso Park 9 June 2018 and 24–26 June 2019 and nearby in Bates Canyon 2–25 June 2019.

Along the South Coast, this species is a rare and local breeder. From 1985–2000, summer (through mid-July) records were as follows, listed from west to east:

San Pedro Creek, Goleta: pair 28 June 1997;

San Jose Creek, Goleta: 1 from 13–18 June 1992, 1 there 26 June 1996, juvenile found 18 July 1997, 2 singing 20 June 1998;

Lower Atascadero Creek, Goleta: up to 2 from 25 June–25 August 1991, 3 singing 31 May 1998, 2–3 singing during June–July and a female with a brood patch on 27 June 1999, present 4 June 2000;

Upper Atascadero Creek, near base of San Marcos Pass, Santa Barbara: pair 13 July 1999;

Carpinteria Creek: adults and juveniles June–July 1985, a pair 9 June 1993, 1 bird 28 June 1996, and a pair 3 July 2000;

Gobernador Canyon, Carpinteria: adults and juveniles June–July 1985;

Rincon Creek, near Carpinteria: 8 present 9 June 1990; up to 6 there 4–29 June 1991; 4 seen 4 June 1992, and nest with young 30 April 1994.

Since 2000, the few summering birds along the South Coast have been largely confined to Atascadero and Rincon Creeks and perhaps also Refugio Canyon and Tecolote Creek. At Atascadero Creek, in addition to one or two adults, single begging juveniles were found 6 June 2017 and 23 May 2020; 3 singing males were found 17 June 2006; several birds singing there both 26 May 2007 and 28 May 2011 were suggestive of local breeders rather than late migrants; and a high 6 were tallied 18 June 2014. At Rincon, in addition to single birds, begging fledglings were found 14 July 2000, 1 June 2005, and 22 May 2010; 2–3 birds were seen, including a male carrying food, 25 June 2006; an agitated bird was present 12–15 June 2023; 4 birds were tallied 18 June 2025; with 3 on 28 June 2026. Elsewhere along the South Coast (from west to east), singing birds were along Arroyo Quemada/Baron Ranch Trail (west of Refugio) 25 July 2001, 2 July 2022, 2 on 21 June 2024, 8–15 June 2025, and up to 2 from 3–21 June 2026; in Refugio Canyon 5 June 2014, 11 June 2017, 23 June 2023, 18–20 June 2024, 2 singing 4 July 2025, and 14–27 June 2026; in Las Varas Canyon 5 July 2019; and 3 near Haskell's Beach 19 June 2025. A high 8 birds were singing along Tecolote Creek near Glen Annie Road in Goleta 30 June 2019 (following 1 bird there 7 July 2015), 8 were also there 9 July 2020, with 1 nesting pair detected, 5 birds (4 singing) were found 1 July 2021, an adult with a fledgling were seen 7 June 2022, and 1–3 were present between June–July 2024–2026. Singles were along San Jose Creek in Goleta 28 June 2014, 5–23 June 2024, and 1 July 2026; and a pair was nest building there 10 April 2018 and 29 March 2019. One was along Arroyo Burro Creek in Santa Barbara 20 June 2016, with nest building there 19 April 2018, a pair with a begging fledgling 25 July 2020, 1 on 1 July 2023, 2 on 23 June 2025, and 1 from 26 June–6 July 2026. Singles were at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 16 June 2012 and 22–28 June 2015, along Santa Monica Creek in Carpinteria 14 June

2021, and along Carpinteria Creek 28 June 2012. Some single birds may have been summer wanderers (e.g., in residential Santa Barbara 19 June 2020).

This species formerly bred more regularly along the South Coast. Willett (1933) termed it a "common summer resident" in the lowlands of coastal Southern California. A nest was found in Goleta by L.T. Stevens on 29 April 1932. Egg sets (SBMNH, WFVZ) exist for Refugio 25 May 1930, Goleta 29 April 1932 and 1 June 1938 (contained 1 cowbird egg), and Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, 3 May 1928 and 1 May 1942. Grinnell and Miller (1944) called it "common as a breeding species." Its decline as a breeder is probably due to the degradation of riparian habitat and to heavy brood-parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

In winter, Wilson's Warblers are uncommon and local in riparian vegetation along the North Coast, where up to 13 individuals have been found in a season, although no concerted effort to census wintering birds there has taken place since the 1990s. The maxima on the Santa Maria–Guadalupe and La Purisima CBCs since the mid-1990s are 12 on the former 29 December 1996 and 11 on the latter 18 December 1994. The species is rare but regular along the South Coast at this season (typically fewer than 5 annually through the mid-1990s, 4–9+ annually thereafter); a total of 15 during 2009–2010 and 16 during both 2011–2012 and 2020–2021 are high counts. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 12 individuals (31 December 2011), though just several birds is the norm.

The only winter records away from District C are from the "Santa Ynez Valley" 29 December 1963; presumably the same returning individual along the Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez 23 November–22 December 2002, 23 November 2003–26 January 2004, and 28 November 2004; Lake Cachuma 16 December 2010; 2 along the Santa Ynez River near Solvang 6 February 2011; near east end Lake Cachuma 18–26 December 2014; and Santa Ynez River near Buellton 21 February 2021.

Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*)

Casual fall and, mostly, winter visitor in District C. Single records in Districts I and M.

The winter records are: 1 on the grounds of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Santa Barbara, 12–14 January 1951 (Rett 1951) and 2 there 9 October 1951 and "for about a week previous" (*SBMNH; Rett 1952b) which probably included a returning bird that was attempting to winter there again; Rocky Nook Park, Santa Barbara, 11 November 1982–12 March 1983 (ph. SBMNH); Waller Park area, Santa Maria, 18 November 1987–7 March 1988 (ph. SBMNH) and again 22 October 1988–5 March 1989; El Capitan State Beach 2 October 1995–18 February 1996 and again 3 October 1996–9 March 1997 and 28 September 1997–24 January 1998; UCSB campus 22 November 2006–21 March 2007 (ph. SBMNH); residential Montecito 23 February 2007 and again 27 November 2007–21 February 2008; Rocky Nook Park 2 January–10 March 2015 (ph. SBMNH) and presumably same bird again 28 September 2015–15 January 2016 (ph. SBMNH); Foothill Road in Carpinteria 14 December 2019–16 January 2020 (ph. SBMNH); and Rocky Nook Park 11 December 2021–16 March 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

Autumn migrants that did not winter locally include: Cold Spring Canyon in Montecito 27 August 1956, Hope Ranch 21 September 1987, Carpinteria Creek 11 October 1993, El Capitan State Beach 31 October–2 November 2002, vic. Refugio State Beach 15–28 October 2014 (ph. SBMNH), and western Goleta 1–27 November 2022 (ph. SBMNH).

Inland, 1 was at Zaca Lake (in District M) 19 October 1984 and one was near Lake Cachuma (in District I) 29 October 2024.

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES (CARDINALIDAE)

Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*)

Casual winter visitor along the South Coast.

A male returned for at least 12 consecutive winters to the Rocky Nook Park area in Santa Barbara 11 November 1982–26 March 1983 (ph. SBMNH), 25 November 1983–8 April 1984, 27 February–9 April 1985, 16 November 1985–17 February 1986, 7 December 1986–13 January 1987, 29 December 1987–6 February 1988, 5 November 1988–18 March 1989, 10 November 1989–1 April 1990, 23 October 1990–3 April 1991, 23 December 1991–27 March 1992, 13 November 1992–5 March 1993, and 9 November 1993–31 March 1994. Another male was in the Willowglen area of Santa Barbara 29 November–29 December 1990. A female was in the Franceschi Park area on "the Riviera" in Santa Barbara 3 January–13 February 1993. It is uncertain whether a male there as well 29 December 1993–1 January 1994 and again 11 November 1994–2 January 1995 and 4 December 1995–13 February 1996 was the Rocky Nook Park bird or another, new individual. One was at Evergreen Park (Evergreen Open Space) in Goleta 19–20 December 2023 and again 12 October 2024–19 April 2025 and 5 November 2025–11 February 2026.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

Rare fall transient and winter visitor along the South Coast; casual along the North Coast; very rare to casual spring and summer visitor. Casual in Districts I, M, and V.

Summer Tanagers are found in a variety of woodland habitats and in exotic plantings (particularly blooming eucalyptus trees) in residential areas. This species appears to be increasing in frequency as a visitor along the coast, particularly in winter, as it is farther to the south. A very large percent of the records come from the South Coast.

Through 2003, there were 46 fall records between 15 August (1998, Carpinteria) and 28 November. Singles near Guadalupe 7 September 1987, at Vandenberg Village 7 September 1992, in Santa Maria 21 November 1996, and vic. Lompoc 15 August 1998 (early) and 14 September 2001 were the only sightings at this season for the North Coast. Between 2004–2025, there were an additional 100 fall records along the South Coast, as early as 3 August (2019, Santa Barbara) and 15 August (2014, Carpinteria), and with a high total of 8 birds in 2001, 2019, and 2022; plus five North Coast records from the Lompoc area, 1 in Santa Maria 8 September 2012, 1 at Rancho Sisquoc 20 September 2018, and 1 in Santa Maria 18–20 September 2020. A specimen (*SBMNH) comes from Santa Barbara 22 November 2007.

Inland, singles were in District I at Buellton 19 November 2023, in District M at San Marcos Pass 30 August 2016 and in Aliso Park 20 October 2022, and in District V at New Cuyama 5 November 2006.

In winter, the species was recorded in Santa Barbara 7 March 1943 (Rett 1943), in Montecito 3 December 1962–23 March 1963 (up to 2), and then a total of 40 times between 1970–1994 from Goleta to Carpinteria. The South Coast winter total (through mid-April) between late 1994–early 2026 was 162 individuals, with high totals of 11 birds in 2022–2023, 14 birds in 2023–2024, and 15 birds in 2025–2026. Santa Barbara CBCs have recorded as many as 4 individuals (2 January 1988). Wintering birds have remained as late as 20 April 2014 Goleta.

Singles near Santa Maria 17 December 1989, in Lompoc 4 December 1994, in Santa Maria 18 December 2003, near Lompoc 6 January 2005 and 13 March 2016, on north Vandenberg SFB 13 December 2022–1 February 2023, and in Lompoc 30 January 2023 and 29 December 2024, as well as 1 bird inland in Buellton 8 December 2023, are the only winter records away from the South Coast.

In spring, 2 (1 collected) were in Santa Barbara during "spring" 1885 (Dawson 1923), a total of 13 were recorded between 1970–1993 along the South Coast between 5 May and 13 June, and another 21 were found there from 1994–2026 between 13 May and 17 June. One in Refugio Canyon 14 April 2026 was too early for a spring migrant and is of uncertain status. Single individuals were along the North Coast on north Vandenberg SFB 11–12 May 1991 and 15 May

1993, near Lompoc 21 May 1994, on south Vandenberg SFB 27 May 2005, on north Vandenberg SFB 14–15 May 2018, and at Vandenberg SFB 24 May 2023.

In District I, singles were along Mono Creek near the upper Santa Ynez River 14 May 1988, along San Antonio Creek near Los Alamos 25 May 2003, at Mono Creek 17 May 2008, and near Santa Ynez 20 May 2013.

In District M, singles were at Davy Brown Campground, northeast of Figueroa Mountain, 15 May 1974, on Ranger Peak 21 May 2023 and along Manzana Creek near Nira Campground 22 May 2026.

The summer records along the South Coast include: Santa Barbara 3–5 July 1976; Goleta 19 July–13 September 1982; up to 2 at Rocky Nook Park, Santa Barbara, 15 July–5 September 1985, with 1 there again early May–29 September 1986 and 29 July–30 August 1987; and then 16 additional records from 1995–2026 between 22 June and 12 August, and that included a bird which remained "late" in Goleta from 3 July through 12 October 2011.

Elsewhere, singles were along the Santa Ynez River just east of Lompoc 30 June 1991, in Santa Maria 26 July 2001, at Nojoqui Falls Park 28 June 2005, along Kinevan Road at San Marcos Pass (District M) 29 July 2007, near the Santa Maria River mouth 8 July 2012, near Sisquoc 19 June 2017, at Barka Slough, Vandenberg SFB, 14 July 2017, and on north Vandenberg SFB 18 July 2018 and 3 July 2023.

In addition, 1 at Nojoqui Falls Park (in District I) 11 August 1983, 1 in Santa Barbara 9 August 1985, up to 2 along Carpinteria Creek 19 August–25 September 1986, 1 in Montecito 1 August 1993, and 1 at Carpinteria Creek 7 August 1993 may have summered locally or have been very early fall migrants.

All except one of the coastal records of Summer Tanager in California for which specimens exist are of the nominate race, *P. r. rubra.* The collected individual in Santa Barbara 7 March 1943 was published as the Southwest breeding subspecies, *P. r. cooperi* (Rett 1943); subsequently the specimen was re-examined and found to be *rubra.* The spring 1885 individual was also called *cooperi* (Dawson 1923), but the specimen has been lost and *rubra* may not have been considered. One found dead in Santa Barbara 6 October 1985 (*SBMNH) has been identified as *rubra.*

Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)

Very rare to casual fall visitor in District C; one record in District I. One spring record.

The 13 fall records in District C include: UCSB campus 12 November 1976, Lake Los Carneros 14–19 September 1977 (early), Carpinteria 22 September 1980, Goleta 17–18 November 1981, Carpinteria 14 September 1982 (early), Santa Barbara 6–7 October 1985, Goleta 10–12 November 1987, Goleta 12 November 1987 (*UCSB, ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria 2 November 1997, El Capitan State Beach 22–25 October 1999, Goleta 14–17 November 2001 (ph. *NAB* 56:107), and Goleta 28 October–4 November 2007 (ph. SBMNH). [One reported in Goleta 20 October 1980 was not accepted by the CBRC.] One at Alan Hancock College in Santa Maria 15–16 December 2007 (ph. SBMNH) was somewhat late.

The only record for District I is of a late migrant near Santa Ynez 4–5 December 2016 (ph. SBMNH).

The only spring record is from Refugio Canyon 31 May 2026.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

Fairly common to common transient in all Districts. Fairly common to locally common summer resident at the higher elevations in District M. Very rare in early summer in the lowlands. Rare but regular in winter along the South Coast, casual along the North Coast and in District I.

Western Tanagers breed in coniferous and oak-conifer woodland at higher elevations in the San Rafael Mountains (e.g., near-annual summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area, 1981–2026, typically recorded between 20–35 individuals, with several totals of 45–57 birds, and high counts of 89 and 82 on 15–17 June 2007 and 12–14 June 2009, respectively, but only

14 tallied on 13–15 June 2014). Only 5 were found on San Rafael Mountain between 7–9 June 2024. They breed more rarely in pure stands of oaks. In the Santa Ynez Mountains, 1 was near Refugio Pass 4 July 1984, a pair was carrying food there 20 June 2010, and singles were found 2 July 2016, 30 June 2020, and 23 June 2023. At San Marcos Pass, a "small number" summered in 1961 but no nest was found, 1 was present 18–25 June 1992, nesting was finally confirmed there along Kinevan Road in 2001, with up to 2 pairs and 1 nest during June, and single birds were there 8 July 2018 (possibly an early fall migrant), 23 June 2019, and 18 June 2022. One was at La Cumbre Peak 15 June 2017 and one was farther east along East Camino Cielo 14 June 2020. In the Sierra Madre, an adult was feeding 2 fledglings along Bates Canyon Road 12 July 2019 and 1 bird was there 21 June–7 July 2020, and a single bird was at Aliso Park 4 July 2020.

In District I, a pair was at Juncal Camp, upper Santa Ynez River, 4 June–1 July 1992 and again in June 1993; and a territorial pair was there 5 June 2019. A pair with a nest was at nearby Alder Creek 16 June 1992. Another pair was at the Pendola Debris Basin in June 1993. One pair was at Nojoqui Falls Park 25–30 June 2018. A single bird was in Colson Canyon, east of Santa Maria, 9 July 2020, and 1 was near Sisquoc 29 June 2021.

In District C, they were found "during the summer of 1910 in the little canyons just outside of town [Santa Barbara]. They were undoubtedly breeding, although lack of time prevented my locating a nest in the dense live-oaks which they frequented" (Bowles 1911b). There were also single low-elevation nesting records in the "upper Sonoran" of "Los Canoes Canyon" near Santa Barbara 9 June 1915 (Dawson 1923) and involving a pair with a failed nest at 1500 ft elevation behind Santa Barbara 11 June 1996. Summering individuals were found in Gobernador Canyon behind Carpinteria 27 June–13 July 1968 (up to 2), in Montecito 20 June–22 July 1974, and at Lake Los Carneros 2 June–3 July 2021. Other summer-season stragglers were, from west to east, along Baron Ranch Trail 21 June 2024; in Ellwood 22 June 2019; in Goleta 22 June 1977, 22 June 1982, 22 June 1998, 4 July 2009 (singing), 4 July 2019 (singing), and 9 July 2020 (singing); in Santa Barbara 25 June 1988 and 29 June 1989; and in Montecito 4 July 2017. Additional coastal summer reports are accompanied by little to no documentation.

Spring transients occur throughout the county between mid-April and the beginning of June. The earliest arrival dates, all typically involving adult males, are 7 April 1968 Santa Barbara, 7 April 2016 Goleta, and 9 April 1985 Santa Barbara (3). A few spring migrants have been recorded well into June (e.g., 11 June 1999 Santa Maria, 12 June 1984 Goleta, through 12 June 1994 Goleta (up to 2), 12 June 2024 Refugio Canyon, 13 June 2021 Goleta, 13 June 2021 Montecito (2), 14 June 2011 Goleta (UCSB), 14 June 2020 Refugio Canyon, 14 June 2024 Rattlesnake Canyon, Santa Barbara, 15 June 1999 Goleta (2), 15 June 2019 Quatal Canyon, 16 June 2020 northern Goleta, 17 June 2023 Barka Slough, and 18 June 2011 Vandenberg Village). The number of spring transients seen along the coast varies markedly from year to year. During some years, the species is very numerous (e.g., 100 per day were in Santa Barbara in late April and early May 1912 (Dawson 1923), 100 were in a several-acre area in Goleta 9 May 1977, and ca. 200 were in northern Goleta in early May 1991; along the North Coast, 76 birds were in Preisker Park, Santa Maria, on 29 April 2022). Substantial early-morning, up-slope flights have been noted on several occasions during late April and early May at Figueroa Mountain and bordering canyons and passes in the Santa Ynez Mountains (e.g., Refugio Canyon, San Marcos Pass, Romero Saddle).

Fall transients may arrive as early as mid-July (earliest arrival dates: 3 July 2014 Goleta [possibly a summer straggler], 10 July 1996 Montecito, and 11 July 1974 Summerland (2)) but are not fairly common until late August. The species has occurred in exceptional numbers during fall on one occasion: 300+ were at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in "one hour" on 31 August 1957. It is uncommon after early October and rare after late October. One in Lompoc 14 November 2008 and another nearby in Miguelito Canyon 14 November 2013 were late for the North Coast, as was one in District V at the Caliente Ranch Wetland through 22 November 2020.

Although the Western Tanager has been recorded in winter along the South Coast since up to 12 were in Montecito November 1930–10 February 1931 (Spaulding 1931), only with the increase in observer coverage beginning in the 1970s has it proven to be regular in small numbers. All South Coast wintering birds except 1 have been found between Goleta and Carpinteria, usually in blooming eucalyptus trees. Numbers were higher through the early 1990s compared to more recently, probably the result of habitat degradation and loss. The highest winter season total is 38 in 1986–1987; Santa Barbara CBCs have tallied as many as 28 individuals (29 December 1984). Most seasonal totals through the mid-1990s were between 15 and 20 individuals; since then, they have averaged between 8–10 birds, with highs of 13 in both 2011–2012 and 2015–2016 and 14 birds in 2017–2018, but only 5 found in 2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2019–2020.

There are just five winter records for the North Coast: Lompoc 17–26 December 1993 and 7 February 2019, Orcutt 2 January 2022, Santa Maria 10–20 December 2023, and near Lompoc 21 December 2025; two from District I: Los Olivos 15 January 2011 and Solvang 29 December 2024; and one at the border with District M: San Marcos Trout Club 30 December 2023.

[Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

A presumed escape involving a female of the Southwestern subspecies *C. c. superbus* was obtained in Santa Barbara on 22 April 1898 (*CAS; Hamilton et al. 2007).]

[Pyrrhuloxia (*Cardinalis sinuatus*)

Accidental.

One was present on San Miguel Island 19–23 July 1990. There are no records from mainland Santa Barbara County, and this is one of the very few accepted records from along the state's coastal slope.]

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

Rare to very rare spring, fall, and winter visitor in District C, very rare in District I. Casual in summer.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks occur in a variety of woodland habitats and exotic plantings, and they also regularly frequent feeders. This species was first recorded in 1963 in either Santa Barbara or Montecito [exact date and location uncertain]. By the end of 1993, a total of 63 autumn records had accumulated in District C between 1 September–early December, with all but 4 from along the South Coast. The high count was 8 individuals during fall 1982. Reports of flocks of 6 males in 1963 and 12 males in 1968 (Metcalf 1972) need confirmation. The autumn total along the South Coast between 1994–2025 was 60 individuals, with the earliest on 18 August 2020 Santa Barbara, 20 August 2020 Santa Barbara, 27+ August 2019 Santa Barbara, and 30 August 2005 Carpinteria. The highest single-season total was 5 birds in 1999. Single individuals in Santa Barbara 17–28 August 1978; at Rincon 8 August 1988; in Carpinteria 14 August–16 September 1988, 19 August–10 September 1988, and 15 August 1993; and at Refugio State Beach 16 August 2009 were very early and may have summered locally.

The fall records for the North Coast are of 1 found dead in Santa Maria 3 September 1987 (*SBMNH) and then 23 additional records, 1989–2025, between 30 August (1992, Santa Maria (ph. SBMNH)) and 5 December (1999, Santa Maria), with a high of 6 birds in 2022.

One bird came aboard a cruise ship off vic. Monterey County on 12 October 2022 and was still on board later in the day off western and southwestern Santa Barbara County.

Away from the lowlands in District C, 1 was at the Trout Club below San Marcos Pass (at the border between Districts C and M) 18 November 2005, 1 was in District M at San Marcos Pass 15 September 2016, and singles were in District I near Santa Ynez 17–23 October 1996, at Lake Cachuma 21 November 2001 and 24 September 2005, at Nojoqui Falls Park 9 September 2009, and near Santa Ynez 3 September 2022.

In winter, this species is as likely to occur as Black-headed Grosbeak. Until the late 1970s, many observers were not aware of this winter status; thus, a number of earlier winter records of Black-headeds may have involved Rose-breasteds. Some records of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks have involved groups of up to 3 individuals, and some individuals have returned for at least four winters. South Coast winter records are as follows: total of 47 birds between 1968–1969 and 1993–1994 (high season total of 4 birds in multiple years), and a total of 49 between 1994–1995 and 2025–2026; the highest single-season total was 5 birds in both 1996–1997 and 2008–2009. The Mission Canyon area in Santa Barbara was a particularly good area for this species in winter during the 1970s and early 1980s. Several wintering individuals have remained into mid-April, the latest staying through 25 April 1979 in Santa Barbara (2); singles near Santa Barbara 15 April 1984 and near Goleta 28 April 2001 probably wintered locally.

There are only six winter records from the North Coast: Santa Maria late March 1985; Lompoc 19 December 1992, 15 December 1994, and 13 January–29 February+ 1996; Orcutt 4 January 2016 (ph. SBMNH); and Santa Maria 25 November–12 December 2016 (ph. SBMNH).

In District I, 1 was in Buellton 17–20 December 2006 (ph. SBMNH); the same bird returned for three consecutive years near Santa Ynez 13–20 February 2009, 23 November 2009–3 January 2010, and 8 January–25 February 2011 (ph. SBMNH); and 1 was near Santa Ynez 5 December 2016.

Two were at the border between Districts C and M at the Trout Club 9–30 December 2006. In District M, 1 at a feeder along West Camino Cielo 12 April 2018 (ph. SBMNH) had probably wintered somewhere locally.

As a late-spring visitor, the Rose-breasted Grosbeak occurred 20 times, 1973–1994, between mid-May (e.g., 15 May 1994 Goleta) and late June in District C. One in Honda Canyon, south Vandenberg SFB, 3 May 1977 was early. Between 1995–2026, the coastal spring and early-summer total was 54 birds (39 South Coast, 15 North Coast), as early as 8 May 2016 Santa Barbara. A specimen (*SBMNH) exists from Santa Barbara 26 May 2007.

In District I, singles were along the upper Santa Ynez River 19 June 1979, 25 May 1981, and 17 June 1999; at Nojoqui Falls Park 2 June 2002; along Mono Creek 17 May 2008; in Buellton 18 June 2011; in Santa Ynez 22–25 May 2013 (ph. SBMNH); at Nojoqui Falls Park 19–27 May 2017 and 31 May 2018; in Buellton 8–9 June 2019 (ph. SBMNH); and in Paradise area, upper Santa Ynez River, 25 May 2022. Singles along East Camino Cielo 8 June 2006 and 2 June 2018 and at East Pinery near Figueroa Mountain 9 June 2022 were in District M.

This species also has occurred in July and early August as follows: District C—Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History 1–2 August 1968, Goleta 14 July 1977, Goleta 6 July 1980, near Lompoc 21 July 1980, Goleta 26 July 1981, Santa Barbara 5 July 1983, near Lompoc 18 July 1998 and 2 July 1999, in Goleta 4 July 2001, in Orcutt 27 July and 29 July 2013, in Santa Barbara 17 July 2015, and in Goleta 14–19 July 2016, 4 July 2019, and 2 July 2020; and in District I—near Santa Ynez 4 July 1992 and 4–8 July 2016, and Nojoqui Falls Park 12 July 2016.

A hybrid male Rose-breasted X Black-headed Grosbeak was on the Mesa in Santa Barbara 13 July 2015 (ph. SBMNH) and another was at Refugio State Beach 19 September 2015.

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)

Fairly common to common summer resident in Districts C and I, uncommon to fairly common in District M. Uncommon to fairly common transient in all Districts. Very rare winter visitor along the South Coast, casual elsewhere.

Black-headed Grosbeaks breed in riparian and oak woodland. Migrants and wintering individuals are also found in exotic plantings and at feeders. The highest counts in summer may occur in District I, where, for example, 13 were at one site near Nojoqui Falls Park 12 July 2016. In summer in District C, it is less numerous and more localized along the North Coast than along

the South Coast, generally preferring the warmer, more inland areas of that region (e.g., Barka Slough, upper Honda Canyon). They are less numerous in conifer and oak-conifer woodlands at higher elevations in District M (e.g., totals during near-annual summer surveys in the Big Pine Mountain area through 2026 were mostly between 10–30 birds, with several higher counts of up to 42, and an exceptional 66 birds on 23–25 June 1994). In District V, 1 was near Ventucopa 13 June 2019.

This species arrives as early as late March (earliest arrival dates: 16 March 2016 Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez, 17 March (year?) Paradise area, upper Santa Ynez River, 17 March 2020 Goleta) and is common in the lowlands by mid-April. High counts in spring include 24 birds along lower Mono Creek 22 May 2013, 25 at one site along San Jose Creek, Goleta, 4 April 2006, 20 at single site in Montecito and 19 at single site near Refugio State Beach both on 18 April 2020, and 34 above Refugio Canyon 1 May 2020 and 89 there 2 May 2021 (morning flight, in part). Late dates in spring are difficult to determine given that the species is a widespread breeder; however, 1 was in Ballinger Canyon, where it does not nest, 31 May 2011.

Early arrival dates of fall migrants are difficult to determine given the widespread presence of local breeders. The species is uncommon until early October and very uncommon through late October. It is rare in early November and very rare thereafter. One during November 1995 near Lompoc was particularly late for the North Coast, as was one in District I in Solvang 20 November 2022.

This species is very rare during winter. One was in Santa Barbara in late December 1915 (Dawson 1923). Between 1964–early 1994 there were 32 winter records for the South Coast; the total between late 1994–early 2026 was 38 birds. The highest single-season total was 5 birds in 2002–2003; and 3 were together at Lake Los Carneros 11 December 2010. Additional winter records have come from: North Coast—north Vandenberg SFB mid-December 1987–3 January 1988; vic. Lompoc 6 February 1996, 8 December 2004–8 January 2005, a high 3 on 15 December 2024, and 21 December 2025; and Orcutt 24 January–29 March 2025; and District I—Los Alamos 20 January 1983, near Buellton 7 December 2013; Santa Ynez 6 January–10 February 2017, up to 2 there 27 December 2017–27 January 2018 (same?), 1 there 26 December 2019 (same?), and 1 near there 15 February 2021 (ph. SBMNH); Solvang 11 January 2026; and Buellton 13 February 2026. In addition, there are several records that lack adequate documentation and should be considered "*Pheucticus* sp." because they may have involved Rose-breasted Grosbeaks: vic. Santa Barbara 28 December 1968, 2 in Santa Barbara 27 December 1969, and 3 in vic. Santa Barbara 3 January 1976.

Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)

Uncommon summer resident in Districts I and C, and very locally in District V. Uncommon fall transient in District C, very rare there as a spring transient; casual transient in District M. Casual in winter.

Blue Grosbeaks breed, late April–August, and are most numerous in riparian and brushy areas bordering weedy fields and pastures in the Santa Ynez and Los Alamos Valleys. They are perhaps most numerous (fairly common) in the Barka Slough area (on the border with District C) where a high 12 birds were reported 23 May 2025. The earliest arrival dates are 8 April 1995 near San Antonio Creek, north Vandenberg SFB; 11 April 1996 near Lompoc; 11 April 2015 Barka Slough and near Sisquoc; 14 April 1991 near Nojoqui Falls Park; 14 April 2001 near De la Guerra Spring (at border with District M); and 14 April 2002 Montecito.

Other representative known or potential breeding sites in the interior occupied between mid-May and mid-July since the 1960s, roughly from the north(west) to south(east), have included near Caliente Ranch Wetland west of New Cuyama (District V), Howard and Cat Canyons near Los Alamos and the general Los Alamos area, bordering the Santa Ynez River between Buellton and east side of Lompoc, along Jalama Road, along El Jaro and Salsipuedes Creeks southeast of Lompoc, Gaviota Hot Springs, Los Olivos, Sedgwick Reserve, Quiota Creek/Refugio Road, Mills Preserve near Santa Ynez, and Lake Cachuma area. Surprisingly, the only known records

for the upper Santa Ynez River area are from Pendola 21 April 1951 and 20–28 June 1989; none was found in that area during intensive riparian surveys conducted during summers of 1979–1983 and 1987–1993.

Along the North Coast, possible or probable breeding sites, in addition to Barka Slough, have included, Casmalia Hills east of Point Sal, multiple sites on north Vandenberg SFB, near Vandenberg Village, and near Lompoc, near Jalama Beach County Park, and north of Point Conception. Singles near the Santa Maria River mouth 4 July 2007 and at Jim May Park in Santa Maria 7 July 2014 were either summer wanderers or early post-breeding dispersers.

Along the South Coast, potential or definite breeding areas, from west to east, have included Hollister Ranch, many sites between Gaviota and western Goleta (Farren Road, vic. Devereux Slough), and, more irregularly farther east:

- Lake Los Carneros (adult feeding fledgling 6 July 2020);
- near Goleta Slough (2 young males and 1 female 21 June 1995, singing 29 June+ 2007);
- along lower Atascadero Creek in coastal Goleta (up to 3 present 20 June–17 July 1984, 1 singing 20 June 1993, pair 17 June–1 August 1997 seen carrying nesting material and later carrying food);
- More Mesa, Goleta (many records since 2000);
- San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara (multiple years 2010–2025)
- Cieneguitas Creek area in Santa Barbara (pair 24 June 2012);
- Elings Park, Santa Barbara (19 June 2020);
- Douglas Family Preserve, the Mesa (14 June 2024);
- Carpinteria Salt Marsh (2 on 8 June 2013);
- "Lake Jocelyn," Carpinteria (up to 2, June 2022, 2024, and 2025);
- Carpinteria Bluffs area (female with fledgling 16 July 2004, pair with 3 juveniles 30 June–26 July 2005, singing male 8–15 July 2007).

Some July records, however, probably involve early fall transients or birds that moved relatively short distances from nearby nesting locales (e.g., up to 3 in Carpinteria 18–29 July 1984, 1 there 19 July 2013, UCSB main campus 15 July 2008, 2 young birds Lake Los Carneros 27 July 2020). Other individuals out on the coastal plain included singles in Goleta 17 June 1996 and 9–19 June 1997.

As transients, Blue Grosbeaks frequent brushy and weedy areas, particularly along creeks and ditches. Almost all of these records are from along the South Coast during fall. The most frequented site through the 1990s was in the Atascadero Creek/South Patterson Avenue area of Goleta, but the subsequent loss of most Barnyard Grass (*Echinochloa crus-galli*) and other seedy grasses there has dropped the grosbeak and bunting numbers substantially. Fall records are primarily from early August (e.g., 2 on 2 August 1977 and 10+ birds there 10 August 2000), rarely already in late July (e.g., 25 July 1992 Lake Los Carneros, 25 July 1997 Atascadero Creek, and see above) to early October and averaged about 10 individuals annually through the mid-1990s. More recently, 20 birds there on 20 August 2006 was exceptional. The species is rare after the beginning of October and very rare after mid-October. A fully blue-bodied male in Goleta 20 October 1982 was late. The latest fall records are 8 November 1975 Santa Barbara, 8 November 1997 Santa Barbara, 13 November 1983 Goleta, 16 November 1971 Santa Barbara (not Goleta, as published elsewhere), 9–18 November 2021 Goleta, and 19 November 1989 Goleta.

The only records of fall transients along the North Coast are of 1 west of Santa Maria 5 September 1980, total of 3 in Lompoc 7 August–6 September 1993 (probably bred nearby), and near Santa Maria 23 October 2020 (late). The sole fall record in District V is from New Cuyama 29 September 2019.

In spring, this species is a very rare transient away from breeding sites along the South Coast, the records falling between 20 April (1996, Goleta) and 8 June (1977, Devereux Slough; 2013, Carpinteria Salt Marsh (2 first-year males)). Along the North Coast, 1 was southwest of Santa Maria 13 May 2011. In District V, Blue Grosbeak is a rare migrant, with the latest record of 1 singing in Ballinger Canyon 23 May 1993.

In District M, 1 was at Zaca Lake 15 June 1996.

One at "Lake Jocelyn" in Carpinteria 3 December 2023 (ph. SBMNH) and another on private property in Carpinteria 8 December 2024 may have been exceptionally late fall transients. One bird near Santa Ynez 29 December 1999–9 January 2000 (ph. SBMNH), another on the UCSB campus 24 December 2004 (ph. SBMNH), and 1 at Elings Park in Santa Barbara 3 December 2017–12 January 2018 (ph. SBMNH) are the only true winter records for the county, and three of only a small number for the state.

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*)

Fairly common transient and summer resident in Districts C, I, and M, but local along the North Coast. Solely a transient in District V. Two winter records along the South Coast.

Lazuli Buntings breed primarily in open oak and riparian woodland and brush bordering grassy and weedy areas, and in open chaparral (particularly where grassy areas are present). Numbers may be particularly high a year or two following a fire. Along the South Coast and in District I, they breed mostly in foothill canyons and on chaparral hillsides with areas of grass. Singles at More Mesa 16 June 2021 and 25 June 2025 were farther out on the coastal plain than usual in summer. Along the North Coast, they breed at many canyons and springs away from the outer coast in interior Vandenberg SFB, possibly as close to the ocean as just east of Point Sal. In District M, this species is widespread in open chaparral. In 1992, when Lazuli Buntings were especially numerous in much of the backcountry, a total of 10 were on Big Pine Mountain, where normally rare, from 6–27 June; and following the large Zaca Fire in 2007, numbers quickly jumped from 25 birds in June 2008 to 108 in June 2009 but then had dropped back to 73 in June 2010, 38 in June 2012, 32 in June 2103, 14 in June 2014, and 12 in June 2016. Another example of high abundance following burns was the 60 birds on the north side of Ranger Peak 16 July 1994 following the previous year's Marre Fire. This species nests in canyons and on lower slopes of the Sierra Madre bordering District V, but it is not known to nest in District V proper.

As a spring transient, the Lazuli Bunting is uncommon to fairly common, sometimes common, occurring away from breeding areas primarily between mid-April and mid-May. The earliest arrival dates are 27 March 2025 Elings Park in Santa Barbara, 2 April 2020 Aliso Park in the Sierra Madre foothills, 2 April 2021 Montecito (2), and 2 April 2026 Refugio Canyon. High counts include an exceptional "hundreds or thousands" along the Santa Barbara coast during one day in spring 1912 (Dawson 1923). A single-site 55 birds were at vic. San Marcos Foothills in Santa Barbara 24 April 2007. A strong migration in 2025 produced high counts of 218 during morning flight at Refugio Canyon 28 April, 38 at San Marcos Foothills on 30 April, 59 along Happy Canyon Road near Santa Ynez 30 April, and 38 along Farren Road in western Goleta 10 May. The latest records of migrants are 23 May 1982 Goleta and 30 May 2015 More Mesa.

In fall, the majority of individuals are found in District C in weedy and brushy areas in agricultural fields and along creeks and ditches. Transients appear as early as mid- or late July, possibly even by early July. One was in coastal Goleta 4 July 1984 (numbers had built to 6 by 15 July) and another was there 3 July 1997; a different bird there 29 June 1997 may have been an exceptionally early fall migrant. Up to 8 were in the Goleta foothills beginning 15 July 1988. Sixty-five along Atascadero Creek in Goleta 18 August 1983 and 60 there 2 August 1992 were very high counts, but the subsequent loss of most Barnyard Grass and other seedy grasses there has dropped the bunting numbers substantially. Most individuals have departed by early October. The species is rare in District C in mid-October. A late bird in District I was at Lake Cachuma 13 October 2025. A late adult male was in Goleta 23 October–1 November 1990. One individual was at Gaviota State Park 1 November 2022. Single birds 7 November 1980 Goleta, 8 November

2015 Goleta, 13–14 November 1993 Lompoc, and 14 November 2004 Goleta were very late. One was offshore, 22 mi (35 km) W of Point Sal 22 September 2018.

Re-analysis of the photos taken of a winter bird present along the railroad tracks east of State Street in Santa Barbara on 9–10 January 1993 determined that this bird was not an Indigo Bunting, as identified at the time, but was a Lazuli Bunting. Another Lazuli was off south Fairview Avenue, Goleta, 2 January 1998. These constitute two of very few records of Lazuli at this season anywhere in the state.

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*)

Rare fall transient, primarily along the South Coast; casual along the North Coast and in District I. Very rare spring and casual summer visitor, casual in District M. Casual in winter.

Indigo Buntings frequent weedy and brushy areas, particularly along creeks and ditches and bordering open riparian woodland. They also have been seen very rarely in residential areas. This species was first recorded 19 September 1970 along Atascadero Creek in Goleta (2). Since then, it has proven to be annual in small numbers between mid-August and early November. Several of the older fall totals are the highest for any area in coastal California. From 1970–1993 there were 155 individuals found along the South Coast. The earliest records were 5 August 1983 Goleta and 9 August 1984 Carpinteria; the latest was 19 November 1975 Santa Barbara; and most were from the Goleta (especially) and Carpinteria areas. The maximum single-season totals were 20 birds in 1979, 14 in 1982, and 16 in 1983. The subsequent loss of most Barnyard Grass and other seedy grasses in those areas has dropped the bunting numbers substantially after the 1990s. The South Coast fall total from 1995–2025 was 73 birds, but 39 of these were between 1995–2000 (maximum single-season totals were 9 birds in 1995 and 10 in 1997); the earliest bird was 1+ August 1997 Goleta, and the latest were 15 November 2009 Goleta, 15 November 2010 near Arroyo Hondo Creek between Refugio and Gaviota, and 29 November–2 December 2008 Goleta.

Fall reports from District C but away from Goleta and Carpinteria come from the Santa Maria Valley (6), near the Santa Ynez River mouth (1), Lompoc (6), south Vandenberg SFB (1), Gaviota Rest Stop (1), Gaviota State Park (1), Arroyo Hondo (1), Refugio State Beach (2), Dos Pueblos Canyon (1), and Santa Barbara/Montecito (8).

The only fall report from District I is from near Santa Ynez 25 September 1996.

This species is a very rare spring (May–mid-June) visitor: District C—Jalama Beach County Park 22 May 1977, Point Sal 13 May 1981, Santa Barbara 13 May 1983, Carpinteria 1 June 1986, near Lompoc 5 June 1988, Goleta 11 June 1995, near the Santa Ynez River mouth 1–11 June 1997, south Vandenberg SFB 30 May 2001, Goleta 11 May 2002, Farren Road in Goleta 28 May–8 June 2017, and Orcutt 3 June 2019 (ph. SBMNH), plus early individuals at Barka Slough 23 April 2008 and in Santa Barbara 30 April 2024; District I—upper Santa Ynez River 25 May 1987, near Buellton 20–21 May 2008, and Pendola Station 31 May 2008; and District M— up to 2 East Camino Cielo 20 May–12 June 1990 (on territory?), East Camino Cielo 3 May 2000, and Refugio Pass 3 May 2009.

In late spring and summer, a singing male appeared for 5 consecutive years on north Vandenberg SFB: 21 May–6 July 1993 and again 15 May–26 June 1994, 29 May–14 July 1995, 14 May–7 July 1996, and 9 May–25 June 1997. In the nearby Barka Slough area, up to 2 males were singing 13–19 June 2012; 4 birds (2 males, 2 females) there 17 May 2013 had quickly dropped to just 1 male soon thereafter through 15 June. A bird summered at Jim May Park in Santa Maria 29 June–23 September 2014. Other mid-summer records in District C include Goleta 26 June 1990, north Vandenberg SFB 26 June 1997, and Hollister Ranch 3 July 2023. In District I, singles were near Gibraltar Reservoir 3 June–early July 1990, near the upper Santa Ynez River 1 July 1992, and at Lower Oso 19 July 2014 (apparently paired with a female Lazuli). In District M, singles were near San Marcos Pass 1–4 July 1988, along West Camino

Cielo near Broadcast Peak from 18 June–13 July 2010, and near the summit of Big Pine Mountain 13–15 June 2014 and 13 June–7 July 2022. Beginning in the late 1900s, Indigo Bunting increased as a summer resident and breeder in the interior of the western United States, and future breeding in Santa Barbara County is a possibility.

Additional mid- and late July records include: District C—Goleta 23 July 1977; Goleta 11–17 July 1979; Carpinteria 29 July–25 August 1984; up to 5 Glen Annie Canyon, Goleta, 22 July–11 September 1988 (a high count for the season), singing male there 8–23 July 1989, with up to 5 present 25–29 July (high, again); Goleta 24–30 July 2005; and Carpinteria 18–20 July 2013; and District I— upper Santa Ynez River 22 July 1980; El Jaro Creek southeast of Lompoc 26 July 1988; Santa Ynez River near Santa Ynez 26 July 2003; and near Casmalia 26 July 2025. Most of these records, especially those from late July along the coast, probably involve early fall transients that did not summer locally.

There are seven definite winter records: near Devereux Slough 17 February 1976, male at feeder on the Riviera in Santa Barbara 28 January–4 April 1982 (ph. SBMNH) and again 9 November 1982–24 February 1983, Goleta 26–27 December 1982, Goleta 10 February 1988, Lompoc 30 January–3 February 1999 (ph. SBMNH), Montecito 12–18 March 2023 (ph. SBMNH), and west side Santa Barbara 3–16 February 2025. In addition, an Indigo/Lazuli Bunting (probably an Indigo) was at Lake Los Carneros 5 December 2022. The identity of an individual in Santa Barbara 9–10 January 1993 (ph. SBMNH) was later reassessed—see under Lazuli Bunting.

Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*)

Accidental.

One was at Gaviota State Park 3 November 2018 (ph. *WB* 51:250, SBMNH), the westernmost record in the state.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

Very rare fall transient along the South Coast; casual there in winter, along the North Coast, and in District I.

There are 23 fall records, all but one from the South Coast: Atascadero Creek in Goleta 17–26 August 1983 (ph. SBMNH); Goleta 3 October 1983; Gaviota State Park 1 September 1986; near Guadalupe 8 September 1987 (only North Coast fall record); Goleta 21 November 1987 (ph. SBMNH); Goleta 4–5 November 1988; Carpinteria 15–17 September 1989; Goleta 18 September 1989; Goleta 2–3 September 1992 (ph. SBMNH); Carpinteria 13 September 1997; Goleta 31 August–1 September 1999, 29 September 2004, 10–11 September 2011 (ph. SBMNH), 3–6 October 2012, 7–12 September 2013 (ph. SBMNH), 26–27 September 2013 (ph. SBMNH), and 11 September 2015 (ph. SBMNH); Refugio State Beach 12–13 September 2016 (ph. SBMNH); Gaviota State Park 8 November 2018 (ph. SBMNH); Point Conception 10 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH); and Gaviota State Park 13–17 October 2024, 14 September 2025, and 29–30 September 2025. Many of the Goleta records through the early 1990s were from Atascadero Creek when that area supported large amounts of weedy grasses (e.g., Barnyard Grass) and other buntings.

[Single adult males at Santa Barbara feeders 14 February–9 April 1989 (ph. SBMNH) and 3–5 November 1991, at a Goleta feeder 9–11 April 1995, at a different Goleta feeder and then at nearby Atascadero Creek (where multiple accepted records of immatures originate) 5–10 September 1995, and at a Carpinteria feeder 24 February 2018 (ph. SBMNH) were thought to involve probable escapes and were not accepted by the CBRC, although some may have been legitimate vagrants.] Single female-types were along Tecolotito Creek in Goleta 30 December 2005 and at the A Street Pond in Santa Maria 9–17 December 2023 (ph. SBMNH), and a clean adult male was along Carpinteria Creek 15 December 2023–6 March 2024 (ph. SBMNH) and again 25 October 2024–9 March 2025.

In District I, a female-type in winter was a big surprise at Los Alamos on 23 December 2025.

Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*)

Very rare fall transient in District C; casual along the North Coast and in District I. One winter and two late-spring records.

Dickcissels are usually found in weedy and brushy areas and have occurred primarily between late August and mid-October. This species was first recorded near Devereux Slough 3 October 1971. From 1971–1993 there were 34 records for the Goleta area between 23 August and 21 October, more than from any other area in the state. Almost all of these were from the Atascadero Creek and South Patterson Avenue agricultural fields. Additional records were: Summerland 26–28 August 1972, found freshly dead in Santa Barbara 6 October 1982 (*SBMNH), Carpinteria 19–24 September 1984, and a slightly late individual in Santa Barbara 29 October 1993. A published record of 1 flying over the Santa Barbara Harbor 9 August 1976 (exceptionally early) should now be treated as tentative. From 1994–2025, the number of reports in Goleta dropped to a mere 9 individuals, between 8 September and 21 October, the lower numbers largely the result of the loss of most Barnyard Grass and other seedy grasses beginning in the late 1990s. In addition, singles were in Santa Barbara 17–18 September 1996 (ph. SBMNH), Carpinteria 26 October 1997, Carpinteria 24 September 2011, Santa Barbara 29 September 2020 (ph. SBMNH), and Point Conception 10 September 2022 (ph. SBMNH). A bird at a feeder in residential northern Goleta 22 November 2000 was very late.

The only fall records along the North Coast come from near the Santa Ynez River mouth 16 September 1998 and near the Santa Maria River mouth 24 October 2015 (ph. SBMNH) and 30 September 2017 (ph. SBMNH).

The only inland records are of singles in District I near Nojoqui Falls Park 16 September 2013 (ph. SBMNH) and in Santa Ynez 14–16 October 2017 (ph. SBMNH).

One in winter at the Goleta sewage treatment plant 19 January–23 March 2016 (ph. SBMNH) was exceptional.

There are two records of spring vagrants: male at a feeder in Carpinteria 6–7 June 1989 (ph. SBMNH) and singing male near Lompoc 14–15 May 1994 (ph. SBMNH).

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APPENDIX I.

THE SPRING COASTAL SEABIRD MIGRATION, 1970s–1980s

Considerable research has been conducted world-wide on the subject of avian migration. In general, this work has focused on the issues of navigation and the physiological responses to migration, with the emphasis upon landbirds and waterfowl. Relatively little research has been directed to marine species; in particular, the seabird migration along the North American Pacific Coast has scarcely been studied (see, however, Russell and Lehman 1994).

The northward migration of Pacific coastal seabirds occurs from the end of February through the beginning of June. During this period spectacular numbers of Brant, scoters, loons, cormorants, gulls, and terns may be observed from certain coastal promontories as they head north toward their breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, regular observations of this spring migration were conducted at two California localities: Pigeon Point in San Mateo County and Goleta Point in Santa Barbara County. Observations have also been made at Point Dume and Point Vicente in Los Angeles County and at the mouth of the Columbia River in Washington. It is hoped that a network of observation stations along the entire Pacific Coast may one day make possible a more complete understanding of the factors influencing the coastal seabird migration. My work, confined to Goleta Point, one of the best promontories from which to observe the spring migration of seabirds in Southern California, was carried out during the spring seasons of 1976, 1977, and 1978. During these three years, I spent 83, 68, and 107 hours respectively on the point censusing the coastal seabirds. In addition, simple weather data were collected to permit analysis of the possible effects of weather conditions on spring seabird movement. The species totals for the three years of observation are summarized in the species accounts of each of the relevant species.

During spring, an extraordinary number of seabirds pass Goleta Point. Virtually all of these birds are assumed to have wintered to the south, along the coast or farther out at sea. Certainly, a good number winter off Southern California; but it is probable that the majority winter in areas around Baja California, and perhaps still farther south. The coastal lagoons of Baja California are heavily used wintering areas for many of the same species observed at Goleta. It is probable that the majority of Brant seen migrating past the point wintered in these lagoons; a high percentage of the total Pacific Loon population is believed to winter off Baja California.

It would seem that larger numbers of seabirds should be observed along the coast in the fall, before winter mortality takes its toll on the population. But during the autumn, only small numbers of seabirds are noted from Goleta Point. Two factors may explain this dramatic discrepancy: the duration of migration and the configuration of the coastline. For most of the species under consideration, the fall migration through Southern California lasts from late September until late December—a period of three months—with a more or less even rate of passage throughout. In spring, the migration extends from the end of February through the beginning of June, a period comparable to that of the fall migration. In the spring, however, most of the species move through in large numbers during only a brief part of that three-month period. For example, all three species of loons may be noted at any time from early March through May; but more than 90 percent of these birds pass through between early April and early May. Similarly, the big push of Brant occurs in a relatively short period between late March and late April.

During spring, seabirds move in a northerly direction toward their breeding grounds. But from southern Los Angeles County to Point Conception, the California coastline trends in an almost east-west direction, causing seabirds heading north to encounter a coastal barrier on a broad front. As a result, many birds closely hug the coastline until they clear Point Conception, when they may once again proceed in the preferred northerly direction. The influence of the coastline configuration and its concentrating effect may be seen by comparing the data from Goleta Point with those from several other localities in Southern California. Because the majority of these seabirds presumably winter in the Baja California area, it would seem that localities in San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties would produce approximately similar counts. This is not the case, however. La Jolla, in San Diego County, has much smaller flights than Goleta Point, as does Dana Point in Orange County. Point Dume in Los Angeles County, on the other hand, approaches Goleta in volume of passing birds.

The northward concentrating effect must certainly continue west of Goleta Point, and it seems probable that such sites as Gaviota and then Point Conception would produce even larger numbers of birds than Goleta. Indeed, on one of the very few days until very recently that observers visited Point Conception in spring (21 Apri1 1984), 11,000 Pacific Loons were seen passing by in four hours. Dedicated spring seabird surveys there commenced in 2021 and 2022, however, and this work is quickly shedding important light on the passage at that critical site.

Not all seabirds migrating north from wintering grounds to the south will pass by Goleta Point, and certainly many of those that do are missed. Large numbers of migrating Pacific Loons and scoters may be observed well offshore, flying north of northwest between Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands and between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands. The former birds would seemingly be headed for a "collision" with the mainland coast in the Santa Barbara area. Conceivably, however, these birds could veer to the northwest before reaching the coast and would thus be missed at Goleta. All of the latter birds would presumably be missed at Goleta Point.

In fall, most individuals pass farther offshore. Whereas only a small number of migrants are seen from Goleta Point during the fall, more limited coverage of the North Coast of Santa Barbara County at this season has produced some substantial numbers. For example, hundreds of loons and scoters have been seen passing by the Santa Maria River mouth in a single morning during late October and early November many years.

In addition to the configuration of the coastline, the frequent afternoon westerly winds may work to keep birds along the coast. At Goleta, these winds are regularly in excess of 15 mph (25 kph). Also, the regular passage of weather fronts through the area may be accompanied by strong west or northwest winds. Pelagic species such as Red-necked and Red Phalaropes, Sabine's Gull, and some alcids are most often noted during days when strong winds blow from between the southwest and northwest. Large numbers of many coastal seabirds are seen at Goleta Point on days with little or no wind, however. In fact, the largest Brant and Surf Scoter counts have been made in calm weather.

Relatively little is known about the influence of weather on seabird migration. Large-scale autumn bird movement is often initiated by the passage of a cold front, with its falling temperatures and northwest winds, whereas spring pushes often accompany warm fronts, with their higher temperatures and south or southwest winds. Unfavorable weather conditions during migration may cause a temporary cessation of movement, with migrants piling up along the route. This damming up of migrants may not occur so readily in seabirds as in landbirds. Physiologically, seabirds are better equipped than most landbirds for long-distance flight under unfavorable migration conditions, such as headwinds and rain. Such species as Brant, once launched on a long-distance flight, may not stop. On several occasions, large flocks of Brant were observed moving past Goleta Point into strong winds and rain.

Among some spring migrant seabirds, weather factors appear to have effects on the abundance and timing of movements, although the exact nature of the influence is not fully understood. Weather conditions have been shown to trigger the fall movement of Brant (Palmer 1976), and this phenomenon could be important in spring as well. Perhaps coincidentally, the high Surf Scoter counts were noted on days with high Brant abundance (all were during periods of clear, calm weather), suggesting that similar causative factors may be at work. To test the hypothesis of weather-triggering, a detailed analysis should be made of the weather conditions existing in areas such as Baja California where the seabird migration is initiated. Goleta Point census data could then be correlated with weather data from these more southerly localities for the days immediately preceding the seabird counts.