

## INTRODUCTION

Kern County is located in southern California and the desert portion of the county has become an increasingly popular birding destination. Over the years, a small number of observers have found an inordinate number of rare birds here. This, and the large population center of Los Angeles and its environs, make the region a common destination on many itineraries. More importantly, from a scientific perspective, this area also serves as a great place to study migrants during all seasons.

This birding hotspot is largely untouched by the available literature. Further, finding current and accurate information on the status and distribution of birds in California is harder to find than it should be. Grinnell and Miller (1944) remains the single best book to aid California birders in this regard, but is not specific enough to be of much help for this region and is obviously out of date. Garrett and Dunn (1981) was excellent but is in need of revision and covered only part of the State (and Kern County was barely covered). Small (1994) is more recent but either does not have enough detail for this limited area or has too many errors to meet the need. Further work is necessary to update these works with an emphasis on being more inclusive and more accurate.

The focus of this book is on species recorded in the eastern part of Kern County (referred to as the Kern desert or the region). The area covered is primarily the desert east of the mountains (Tehachapis, Piutes and Sierra Nevadas) but includes the canyons that lead from these ranges. The most common sites are well known to most southern California birders: Butterbrecht Spring, California City, Galileo Hill Park, Mojave, China Lake, Edwards AFB and various private ranches scattered about the area. See the map (X) for further detail. Although the geographical region is rather limited, the majority of these birds are widespread migrants. Therefore, the specific detail should be helpful well beyond the county borders.

## BIRDING THE REGION

I believe the spectacle of migration is one of the greatest phenomena that we can enjoy and study. Migration is a year-round event and offers us both a tremendous learning opportunity and a great way for amateurs to contribute to this knowledge base.

In January, the first spring migrants are generally found, although most of the birds seen are those remaining in the region from the winter. Tree Swallow, Turkey Vulture, and Cinnamon Teal generally represent the first of the migrants. Swallows of various species are increasingly detected during February as are slight increases in Yellow-rumped Warbler and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. March is a transition month with some of the winter birds (ducks, geese, etc.) leaving the area and a great variety returning to (or through) the area. Audubon's and Myrtle Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow and various shorebirds are increasingly evident during March and some ducks, for example, Cinnamon Teal, start building towards their peak. April is a wonderful month as flowers are still usually in view and the variety of birds is high. The middle of April usually brings some of the flycatchers and most of our regularly occurring warblers. By the end of the month, Black-headed Grosbeak, Warbling Vireo, Western Tanager and Wilson's Warbler are often seen in great numbers. From a species diversity perspective, the peak is from 25 April to 5 May. During a weekend at this season, covering all habitats, over 145 species have been recorded, although 130 might be a more typical count for the period. By mid-May, one gets the sense that most migration is past with a few days of waves remaining. Of course, by this time, "vagrant season" has arrived, along with the majority of birders. Days can be pretty empty in the latter portion of May, but the sprinkling of vagrants will make it worth it for many.

Additionally, occasional waves of migrants can occur late in the season (for example, 800 passerines flying past Butterbrecht Spring on 25 May 1997). Early June is another transition with few birds still moving, although there are always Willow Flycatchers around. By the middle of the month, birding is exceedingly slow when virtually any migrant passerine is of interest. At the same time, the first shorebirds, in the form of Wilson's Phalarope, are already returning south. The end of June finds a number of shorebirds returning from their northerly breeding grounds and, occasionally, the odd passerine will be found.

July starts out with not much more than shorebird movement but by the middle of the month, a number of passerines are already on the move. Most of these migrants are adult males, at least in species that are distinguishable (Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, etc.). Passerine numbers continue building in August, but there is a bit of a lull in early August with shorebirds, as many of the adults

have come through with juveniles not yet arriving. By the end of August, fall migration is in full swing (although the conditions are summer-like). September is a great month. Shorebirds are good early in the month as are passerines. Passerines build through the middle of the month with the last half of September arguably providing the best birding in the region. Warbler migration is at its peak, as are flycatchers and vireos with thrushes, sparrows, hawks and ducks just starting to arrive in numbers. Early October can be excellent, although diversity is notably down. Shorebirds are in far lesser numbers and the variety of insectivorous passerines (warblers, flycatchers, vireos, etc.) drops off rapidly. Mid-October is the best time for sparrows and still holds promise for vagrants, but by the beginning of November, most of the show is over. A few birds of interest are found in November and it is a wonderful time to find late migrants that might be trickling through. Ducks are in strong numbers and the geese return in numbers. Swans, rare in the region, are most often encountered near the end of November into December. Late arriving visitors, like Harris's Sparrow and Northern Shrike, are typically not detected until November or December. Birds are moving in and through the region throughout the year.

Weather plays a major role in bird numbers, as well as how easy it is to find them. The Kern desert is a windy place and more than half of the birding days will have moderate to heavy winds. (The local joke is that the Ridgecrest Wind Festival runs from 1 January to 31 December, annually.) No doubt, the blowing wind can make it difficult to detect passerines and there is a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy. As the harder conditions drain energy from birders, who are seeing less than normal, it is easier to cut things short, see less birds and give up quicker. Wind, not heat, cold, or the rare precipitation, is the biggest natural factor birders must overcome in the region.

The typical spring weather pattern is a series of (usually dry) fronts that move through the region every few days. Early on in spring (March and April) wind is to be expected. Once the front passes wind will usually subside for a day or two, if no other front is near the region. Even on many of these days, calm mornings are turned into windy afternoons, although these winds are typically from the southwest as opposed to west or northwest. By mid-May the fronts are less frequent and the days are warmer. Annually, late fronts, sometimes bringing moisture and cold weather occur in late May, occasionally early June, and as late as mid-June. These fronts often coincide with good bird finds and the cooler temperatures are usually a welcome relief.

During fall, temperatures are typically hot through August and into early September (highs near 100°), but wind is usually restricted until the afternoon. The first front is usually felt near mid-September with slightly cooler temperatures. Irregularly at first and then every three to four days by early October, fronts will come through lowering temperatures and bringing high winds.

In general, calm conditions yield the best birding, but no doubt some of this is due to the relative ease with which birds are found. For peak numbers of migrants in spring, ironically, a strong cold front seems to deliver the largest fallouts. Specifically, the largest waves passing through Butterbredt Spring occur as birds flying north (or northwest) from Mexico (presumably on the back side of a high pressure system over southern Arizona or New Mexico) run into a front coming across California. The result is often the presence of a few thousand passerines migrating through Butterbredt and adjacent canyons. A day after such a movement is typically a slow one from a migrant perspective as the advancing front seemingly shuts the door on movement to the south. Fronts are often the most important factor for finding shorebirds, ducks and gulls. During these fronts, heavy winds from the west or northwest seemingly down birds as they move north. For example, most records of Brant, spring Sabine's Gull, spring Red Phalarope, etc., are during, or immediately after high winds. Once these birds are grounded, they may stay in the area for a few days. For vagrant passerines in late spring, the preferred weather seems to be warm, southerly air flow.

In fall, calm, warm days seem to provide the best flow of birds and the highest prospect for vagrants. But, the effect of weather on bird numbers is less pronounced and less understood at this season. After the passage of cold fronts during October, noticeable changes occur in the form of flocks of White-crowned Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Violet-green Swallows and Black-throated Gray Warblers.

A few comments on vagrants occurring in the region: First, most vagrants stay for multiple days. In fact, during fall, many stay four to five days after being found. Although some of these birds can be hard to relocate, approximately 75% of fall vagrants are found on multiple days. This number is slightly less in spring but still, more than half of the spring vagrants remain for at least a second day. Also, an interesting note on vagrants at Butterbredt Spring: almost every vagrant found at this location has stayed in the area at least during the day it was found. Compare this to the regular migrants, as over 90% of them typically move through the area, and most of these are identified as they fly up the canyon. Vagrants, as a rule, do not seem to do this. Many probably arrive at night to be found singing at dawn or arrive a couple hours after dawn as they work their way up from the bottom of the canyon. But, none of the most active Kern birders have had more than one vagrant in 1000-plus man-hours move through this canyon. The underlying theme here is that most vagrants remain for others to study. Of course, some birds do fly through and some might be in the area but evade detection.

The following locations are the most popular in the region:

Butterbredt Spring- perhaps the best place to witness spring migration of passerines in the entire State. Although most of the birds fly past the spring, plenty stay for more leisurely study. The reason this place gets so many passerines is not entirely understood, however, there seems to be some funnel effect of northbound migrants moving up to the mountains. The entrance to Jawbone Canyon, which leads to Butterbredt, has a northwest entrance and may provide a more natural flyway than the western entrances of other canyons. Counts done in adjacent canyons by Richard E. Webster (one ridge to the south in Hoffman Canyon, for example) show that birds coming via Jawbone Canyon use different paths to continue their migration. One key factor of watching migrants in spring is that over 90% of the day's birds are seen in the first two or three hours of the day. Butterbredt Spring does not get much coverage in fall although small numbers of migrants do occur there.

As much as I hate the wind, there is one place I welcome it: Butterbredt Spring. Most days are windy at Butterbredt Spring and the wind is often fierce. The biggest reason I do not mind the wind there is that birds pour through the canyon on many windy days. Further, there are large trees offering a wind break so many of the birds can be viewed in relative comfort. Do not let this otherwise bothersome condition deter a morning at this wonderful location.

Galileo Hill Park- This private ranch is a mixture of ponds, trees and lawns and is a magnet for migrants at all seasons. Although it has been more productive in fall some of this is due to coverage. During spring, since Butterbredt Spring is best at dawn, most birders do not get to Galileo Hill Park until late morning or afternoon. Conversely, this is a traditional starting point in fall and thus is covered at the best time of the day.

California City- Although this is where the serious birding in the region began, it has grown significantly since then and, at the same time, the habitats have gotten worse. The hotel and park are run down and many of the trees of Central Park are dead. Yet, the large body of water, extensive trees and shrubs still must act like a magnet to birds flying overhead. It does not get the coverage of the other two sites, but still yields good numbers of migrants.

China Lake- The sewage treatment ponds at the China Lake Naval Weapons Center is the best area for waterbirds in the region. Unfortunately, access is restricted and not open to the general public. The water is deeper here than at Edwards Air Force Base and has more breeding ducks and migrant gulls.

Edwards Air Force Base- The sewage ponds at Edwards are smaller and more shallow than the preceding location. Numbers of certain shorebirds (for example, Baird's Sandpiper) are higher here and, for reasons unclear, all records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Heermann's Gull are from here. This area is also restricted and unavailable for the general public. Further, the future of these ponds is uncertain, but may be in the process of being abandoned.

Ranches- There are a number of ranches near California City and near Cantil in the Fremont Valley. All are private and some are extremely sensitive. Access to some of the ranches has been lost due to the number

and behavior of birders. As tempting as these green areas might be, any ranch should be birded only after receiving permission from the owner.

Mojave- a number of reports, particularly from the 1980s and early 1990s are from Mojave. The large Department of Water and Power yard, which used to be excellent, is now off limits and completely fenced off. The golf course to the south of town is another area where access has been lost.

## DATA

This book includes records through 1999. Most of these data have been gathered since 1982 when a small group of observers started to bird Kern consistently. In the past few years, a much larger group of birders started covering the area. Some of these birders send reports to me, and many of these reports are included. American Birds/Audubon Field Notes/Field Notes and now North American Birds (hereafter AB/AFN/FN or NAB) reports dating back almost forty years have been reviewed, but few published records for the region precede 1980. Most of the available literature has been sifted through to find relevant records. There are a number of reports from Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) but many of these lack the necessary details to be considered valid.

A few observers have spent fifty to eighty days per year (or more) birding in the region. Although coverage biases occur, there are multiple data points for almost every date of the year. I have spent almost 900 days in the field, amounting to approximately 7000 hours. When I add in data supplied by others, there are over 2000 days in the field. Because of this rather extensive coverage, one must keep in mind that the likelihood of seeing a particular species might be impacted by the amount of time s/he is in the field. The purpose of this work is to give an overview on when to expect the various migrant species in the area, but all species recorded in the region are covered.

Although our knowledge on the identification of birds has continually improved, I believe too many people fail to understand how tricky field identification can be. To help in this regard, where appropriate, I have cited additional literature to direct those readers wanting more information on the identification of a particular species. But, it is beyond the scope of this book to treat identification problems. Knowledge of identification criteria is critical for accurate reporting. Equally critical, I believe, is an understanding of status and distribution. Too often, birders report species not appreciating how unexpected that species would be (at a location or season). If one knows a bird is not suspected, I believe they would take greater pains to ensure the claimed identification is correct. Although a number of books have addressed this problem, there is still not enough detail to help birders thoroughly understand the complexities involved.

Determining which reports should be included is a difficult task. I often refer to records that are or are not "documented." I define a documented record as a sighting which is accompanied by enough detail (photographs, video or audio tape, sketch, description, etc.) to safely reduce the probability of error to an acceptable level. (I maintain a large file of descriptions, pictures and all AB/AFN/FN Seasonal Reports for interested parties.) Obviously, decisions on what comprises documentation is a subjective tool and many people define these words differently. Many observers report birds either not understanding the significance of their claim or do not feel they need to substantiate their claims. Further, many birders seem to be particularly sensitive to questioning, placing ego above the scientific value. As I have written before (for example, Heindel and Garrett, 1995), I hope more birders can appreciate their roles in supporting the science of status and distribution and realize that this is a far more important goal than the acceptance or rejection of a particular sighting. Some readers will find accounts where they feel their reports should have been included. Be aware that I am as critical with my records; the careful reader will note that some of my own published records have been omitted. I believe it is far better to err on the side of excluding ten good reports than including one bad one. Although some people disagree with this, too often I feel one bad (that is, wrong) report, unintentionally inspires another bad report, and so on. Spring reports of Virginia's Warbler (see account) provide a great example. Additionally, some people take a strong position that the people making these subjective decisions do not know it all or see it all. Obviously, this statement is true. My decisions do not reflect what has happened with regard to birds in the region; it reflects what I believe

has been proven to occur to a satisfactory level of detail to spare future researchers the laborious task of studying all reports for themselves. Wherever observers feel there has been a mistake, inquiries are welcome. Further, it is my hope that any sightings outside of the parameters under each species are given the extra attention needed so that they can be included at some future point.

For those species that are reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC), the relevant citations are included. The CBRC reviews species that are generally seen in the State fewer than four times per year. Unfortunately, there is no formal review mechanism for species that may be regular along the coast, but casual inland. Examples might include Red-throated Loon, any of the jaegers, Least Flycatcher, Blackburnian Warbler, etc. Nevertheless, those species recognized as being particularly scarce in California are generally covered by the CBRC and I follow their decisions (unless specifically noted). For further information, see the CBRC website at <http://www.wfo-cbrc.org> or write the current Secretary, Michael Rogers at PO Box 340, Moffett Field, CA 94035-0340.

Taxonomy follows the A.O.U. (1998) and incorporates a number of changes at the species level and in the order in which these birds are presented.

## **SPECIES ACCOUNTS OVERVIEW**

Each species account will give the reader a basic overview of the species' status in the region. The presentation will vary so the reader can most easily understand the bird's movements. So, although most birds which pass through our area are presented by first discussing their spring migration, and then fall, summer and winter visitors are presented by arrival and departure dates. Similarly, if a species is primarily a fall visitor, this aspect is covered first. Date extremes are included for the relevant season(s). If extreme dates seem to be outliers, the next most extreme date (or dates) is included. In this way, readers should be able to get a better sense of when the species is passing through and not be misled. When extreme dates for a given season (for example, latest record in fall) are close together, only the most extreme date is included as the small gap (typically one to three days) is insignificant. Also included are comments on the peak of migration and other information that will help the observer in determining their pattern of occurrence. In general, readers should infer a bell-shaped curve when interpreting migration data herein. That is, in the absence of outlier dates, most records of a given species will be in the center of the date span with a rather even increase and decrease to and from the mean. When the number of records for a given species or season is few (typically 3-4), these records will be individually cited. The abundance terms are defined as:

**COMMON-** Expected daily in the proper habitat, usually in moderate to large numbers.

**FAIRLY COMMON-** Expected daily in proper habitat in small, and occasionally, moderate numbers.

**UNCOMMON-** small numbers detected but generally not expected to be encountered daily.

**RARE-** Expected almost annually in small numbers, but may be missed entirely in some years.

**CASUAL-** Generally, less than ten records, not expected annually and almost always seen singly.

General terms used to describe a bird's status include summer visitor, winter visitor, permanent resident, migrant, vagrant and dispersant. Many species are local, irruptive or irregular, making classification in any one category complex. To the extent possible, I elaborate in the species accounts to clarify this.

Terms that often cause confusion are "migrant" and "vagrant." Although both terms refer to birds moving to or away from breeding areas, typically, vagrant is used to denote a species that has wandered out of its normal migratory range. Of course, this is complex as ranges are fluid and poorly understood at the fringes. While some examples lend themselves to rather easy classification (for example, Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Cerulean Warbler), others are far more difficult (for example, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Jaeger, Palm Warbler and even Red Crossbill). Most of the region's vagrants normally occur in the eastern US and I will note from where these vagrants originate if their range is different than this, but, there are some examples that will defy simple classification. To the extent possible, I elaborate to provide clarity. On occasion, I use "dispersant" which refers to birds thought to move north after breeding, but otherwise would not be expected in the region. Examples include Brown Pelican and Laughing Gull.

"Local" refers to a species that is not found throughout an area and instead is restricted to particular areas within the region. "Irruptive" refers to species like Red Crossbill or Red-breasted Nuthatch whose presence fluctuates dramatically from year to year. "Irregular" refers to species that may be hard to find for much of the time and yet, on occasion, are either found consistently or in large numbers. American White Pelican is a good example of an irregularly occurring migrant.

In discussing seasonal terms, I use a floating definition, intended to depict the actual behavior of the intended species. For example, female Wilson's Phalarope in mid-June are treated as fall migrants as they are headed south. At the same time, the last Yellow Warbler or Willow Flycatcher is moving northward on its spring migration. Although there are problems with any definition, I believe this is the most intuitive and user friendly.

For records individually cited, I provide the initials of the observer who found and identified the species, if it is known to me. In some cases, more than one person will be credited. I believe, however, that the inclusion of initials will help the interested reader as many of us, upon hearing of a rarity, are instantly interested in who found the bird.

#### **OBSERVERS**

Marge Anderson, Keith Axelson, Bob Barnes, David V. Blue, Richard L. Breisch, Judy Breitenstein, N. Bruce Broadbrooks, Hank and Priscilla Brodtkins, Mark O. Chichester, Ryan Chornock, Dan Cooper, Brian Daniels, Jim Danzenbaker (JDa), Jon Dow (JDo), Jon L. Dunn, Tom Edell, Richard A. Erickson, Jon Fisher, Teri Gallion, Kimball L. Garrett, Karen Gilbert, Rick Hallowell, Rob Hansen, Joan Hardie (JHa), D. Mitch Heindel, Jo Heindel, Matt T. Heindel, Rob Hewitt (RHe), Charles Hood, Andrew Howe, Vern Howe, John Hunter (JHu), Curtis Johnson, Howard King, Lee Jones, Brenda Larison, Denise LaBerteaux, Steve Laymon, Paul E. Lehman, Anna Martyn, Guy McCaskie, John Mariani, Bob Meade, Ralph Michels, Terri Middlemiss, Don Moore, Bill Moramorco (BMo), Michael A. Patten, Dharm Pellegrini, Gary Potter, Sean Rowe, Jim Royer, Mike San Miguel, Larry Sansone, Rick Saval, Brad Schram, Joyce Seibold, Arnold Small, Mark Stacy, Susan Steele, Lee Sutton, Scott B. Terrill, Steve Tucker, Jerry Tolman, Richard E. Webster, John Wheeler, Dour Willick, John C. Wilson, Peter Woodman, Tom Wurster, Cal Yorke.

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A number of birders are very helpful in providing their data on a consistent basis. Most of the observers cited in the species accounts send information to me, for which I am grateful. Richard E. Webster and David V. Blue have been incredibly helpful giving me copies of almost every trip they have made in the region. Additionally, John C. Wilson, Barbara Maxwell, Vern and Andrew Howe, Charles Hood, Guy McCaskie, Richard Erickson, Michael Patten, Brian Daniels, Hank and Priscilla Brodtkins, Susan Steele, Terri Middlemiss, Jon Fisher, and Jon L. Dunn routinely provide me with notes on their sightings. I have benefited tremendously from the teaching and discussions with a number of birders. Jon L. Dunn was instrumental in my formative years, instilling in me the need for caution and skepticism, and at the same time, the pleasure available by paying attention to the fine details of identification, status and distribution. Additionally, Guy McCaskie, Kimball L. Garrett, Richard A. Erickson, Michael A. Patten, Peter Pyle, Steve N. G. Howell, Paul E. Lehman, David V. Blue, and John C. Wilson, have had a significant impact on my life and I extend my thanks to them.

This book started out as an article and thanks to the encouragement and comments from Tom and Jo Heindel, Michael Patten and Phil Unitt, it has evolved into this book. Jon L. Dunn, Michael A. Patten, David V. Blue, John C. Wilson, and Tom and Jo Heindel have offered very valuable feedback on a draft of this book. Words cannot adequately express my feelings and gratitude to Tom and Jo, parents and best friends. Ann, my wife and best friend, has been and continues to be everything I could want, and this book would not have happened without her help and encouragement.

Joe Morlan has offered to place this book on his website and I appreciate his help in offering this new avenue.

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata*. There is one record: 22 October 1995 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AFN 50:115). There is an additional record from Lake Isabella, a few records just to the north in Inyo County (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.), and one to the east in Victor Valley (Michael A Patten, pers. comm.), indicating that future records are expected.

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*. There are two records: a bird picked up on a highway near Ridgecrest 30 October 1991, was released on the ponds at China Lake where it remained until 2 November 1991 (AB 46:147). An early transient was at China Lake 2 October 1999 (JCW). Given the number of records in nearby Inyo County (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.) and Victor Valley/Apple Valley (Michael A Patten pers. comm.), this species seems under-recorded.

Common Loon *Gavia immer*. A rare migrant at both seasons, primarily in spring. There are 21 spring records ranging from 13 April to 31 May that generally fall into two categories: April records (and one early May record) are of breeding-plumaged birds; and, mid to late May records are of birds in basic plumage, probably pertaining to non-breeding lingerers. A flock of 17 alternate-plumaged birds at China Lake on 22 April 1999 (MTH) is the largest concentration of loons in the county. They are rare in fall with thirteen records from 23 September to 25 December. Almost all records are from the larger bodies of waters at China Lake and Edwards AFB, although they have been noted at private ranches and California City.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*. A fairly common breeding bird with known breeding localities including California City, near Cantil and occasionally, China Lake and Edwards AFB. They are known to breed throughout much of the year with juveniles noted from January to at least August. Migrants are occasionally noted at Galileo Hill Park but using these occurrences to attempt to gauge migration is difficult. They are most often seen away from breeding grounds in September and October and again from April to early May. Individuals seen away from breeding sites during the summer months cloud the picture somewhat and may pertain to birds wandering from local breeding areas.

Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*. A casual migrant in the region with four spring records from 28 February to 25 May and six fall records from 18 October to 30 November. There is one winter record (MTH, 23 January 1990 near Cantil) and the earliest spring record, 28 February 1987 (MOC, AB 41:327) probably also pertains to a bird spending the winter, as this is prior to when they are encountered at Salton Sea (Michael A Patten, pers. comm.). The three May records were alternate-plumaged birds. In fall they have been found with the large number of Eared Grebes that often come through the area. Eared Grebes are quite variable and observers should be careful when identifying basic-plumaged Horned Grebes. See Kaufman (1992) for information on the identification of this species.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*. Fairly common to common migrant, winter visitor and summer visitor. Numbers of this species vary tremendously and generally, they are present in the region throughout the year. Typically, it is a fairly common breeder at China Lake, sometimes with up to 100 pairs breeding. Smaller numbers have bred at Edwards AFB and near Cantil, but they do not breed at each location annually. This species is a common fall migrant with numbers building from early September and peaking in October. Hundreds have been noted at this time. Their winter numbers also vary but usually a dozen or more can be found at China Lake or Edwards AFB. Another passage is evident in spring: most movement seems to be from mid-April to early May but large numbers have been seen as early as mid-March. Observations of single birds at Galileo Hill Park have occurred primarily during the above-mentioned migration periods, but also at odd times such as mid-summer indicating some movement may occur throughout most of the year. See the note under the previous species regarding potential identification problems.

Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis*. An uncommon migrant at both seasons, almost entirely at the larger bodies of water (China Lake and Edwards AFB). Spring records range from 29 April to 13 June, with most occurring during May.



There are two records of individuals spending the summer, but in general they are unexpected at that time of the year. Fall migrants have been noted from 3 August to 1 December with most birds being detected from late September to late October. There are no winter records for this species in the region. Typically, they are seen in small numbers (one to three per day). The identification of *Aechmophorus* grebes is often difficult; see Kaufman (1990) for further information.

Clark's Grebe *Aechmophorus clarkii*. Much like the previous species, this is an uncommon migrant at both seasons. In spring they have been seen from 29 April to 25 May with no noticeable peak. Fall records range from 7 July to 19 December; most are noted from late September to late October. Numbers are similar to Western Grebe although perhaps slightly fewer in an average year. See the note under the previous species regarding potential identification problems.

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*. An irregularly fairly common to common migrant, usually seen in fairly large flocks as they pass through the region. Flocks of 30-100 (or more) are occasionally found (particularly near dusk) at China Lake. These flocks often leave the next day but have been known to stay longer. Spring migrants have been noted from 3 March to 22 June with a peak from April to mid-May, although a flock of 180 was noted on 22 March 1996 at China Lake, DVB. Fall birds have been seen from 20 July to 22 December with peak passage from mid-September to late October. They can be numerous earlier in fall (for example, eighty on 22 August 1992 at China Lake, DVB) and they have lingered quite late, although there are few records past November. On rare occasion, the flocks have been very large, for example 1,000 estimated on 5 October 1998 near Inyokern (AM). Thirteen on 29 November 1988 at China Lake (DVB) is a rather late concentration. One bird spent the winter at Galileo Hill Park; the fact it subsequently died suggests its staying might have been due to poor health.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*. Casual late summer vagrant. There are two records of immatures, both from China Lake: 21 August 1981 (RLB, AB 36:217) and 23-25 August 1990 (DVB, AB 45:150). Presumably, these individuals are part of the movement that brings large numbers of the species from the Gulf of California to the Salton Sea in southeastern California during summer.

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*. A fairly common migrant, but somewhat irregular. Spring records range from 6 March to 12 June with a peak from late April to mid-May. Numbers are usually small (one to ten per day) but on rare occasion dozens may be encountered at China Lake. There are a number of summer records, typically of single, subadult birds. Fall records range from 10 July to 10 November with September to early October being the peak. Numbers seen are similar to those in spring with the maximum being 70 at China Lake on 30 September 1989 (DVB). There are five winter records of single birds, mostly from China Lake.

American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*. A rare migrant and winter visitor with records from 19 October to 5 June. One can often be found in the reeds at California City during winter but, otherwise, this species can be difficult to find. Migrants are found at odd places, including out in the open at parks and golf courses; typically these lost birds are found late in spring, mid- to late May.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*. A casual migrant to the region. In spring there are six records from 26 May to 12 June, a rather narrow window for multiple records. This species has been found breeding to the north of the region near Billy Lake, east of Independence (Kirk 1996); perhaps this explains in part the five records in the past seven springs. There is a record from 20 July 1994 at China Lake (BM) that may pertain to a fall migrant.

There is also an interesting record from winter just over the county line from China Lake: 3-18 December 1988, in San Bernardino Co. (JLD, AB 43:1135). Whether this species would spend the entire winter in this cold climate is unknown.

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*. Present almost year-round, most numerous as a fairly common migrant. Numbers of migrants peak in April and again August to September. Juveniles are typically seen in June (and have been recorded as early as 26 May) but they are not known to breed in the region. High counts even

during migration are rarely above a dozen. Numbers taper off in October but a few will stay through the winter.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*. A fairly common migrant and rare winter visitor present through much of the year. Spring records range from 30 March to 15 June with a peak from late April to mid-May. In fall they have been noted from 22 July to 17 December with a peak from mid-September to mid-October. At both seasons, typical daily numbers are low (two to five), but fifty were noted on 29 September 1995 at various locations (MTH). There are occasional winter records of single birds, which complicates late fall and early spring dates.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*. Status is similar to the previous species: fairly common migrant present through much of the year. Spring records are from 31 March to 24 June with most occurring from late April to mid-May. Fall records range from 2 August to 10 November. The peak of this passage is mid-September to mid-October. As with the Great Egret, typical daily numbers are two to six, but 22 were seen near Cantil, 27 May 1994 (MTH). There are two winter records: 8 January 1994 and 20 December 1998, both at China Lake (DVB).

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*. Casual vagrant with two records: An adult 10 May 1986 at California City (RS, AB 40:523), and an immature 19-22 December 1992 at California City (MTH, AB 47:300). The latter record is particularly unusual given the season and the cold temperatures it endured.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*. An irregular, uncommon migrant, bordering on rare some years. They are typically seen later in migration than other herons and egrets at both seasons. Spring records are from 17 March to 18 June with most records from May. In fall there are records from 24 July to 6 December, most of which come from October to early November. A flock of 35 on 11 September 1992 at China Lake (DVB) is the largest number recorded in the region. A flock of fourteen at California City, 23 November 1984 (MTH) is impressive for both the number of birds and the late date. A fresh specimen at California City 18 January 1985 (MTH) represents the only winter record in the region.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*. An uncommon migrant and rare winter visitor with records ranging from 20 July to 18 June. It is most numerous as a migrant in fall. They typically are not encountered until late August (the next earliest record is 2 August) and are most numerous during September. In an average winter, one to two might be found at places like California City, China Lake, Galileo Hill Park, etc, but this species may be absent entirely. In spring migration picks up during April and trickles into late May. Single birds have been noted at Butterbrecht Spring on a number of occasions taking advantage of the limited habitat. There are only a few records for June and most of these come from the first week of the month. The next latest record is 10 June.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*. An uncommon to fairly common migrant and rare summer visitor with records from 12 March to 10 November. There are small flocks encountered during April and early May, but a group including nine adults on 12 March 1985 (MTH) indicates that some migration is quite early. They have been found in summer at Galileo Hill Park, near Cantil, and China Lake and have been known to breed on occasion (for example, June 1993 at China Lake). In fall numbers increase from September to mid-October. There are no winter records for the region.

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*. A fairly common to common migrant. In spring they have been noted from 22 April to 9 June with most records from May. Most of the ibis at this season are reported from China Lake and Edwards AFB, but occasional flocks are found elsewhere (for example, near Cantil). Typically, numbers are moderate at this season (five to twenty), but up to 65 have been seen in late April and May. A juvenile has been seen as early as 15 June at China Lake, although they are not known to breed in the region. Otherwise, fall migrants have been noted from 18 June to 24 November, with the peak of passage from August to late September. The latest date is almost a month past the next latest record of 27 October. Numbers are slightly larger in fall (versus spring) and small groups are more likely to be encountered at places like Galileo Hill Park or California City during this season. Numbers at China Lake have been as high as 100 (*contra* Small 1994 where they are classified as rare).

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*. Present in various numbers almost throughout the year, primarily as a common migrant. Due to some winter birds possibly remaining through the period and their extremely early migration dates, deciphering spring arrival dates is impossible. Northbound flocks have been seen in early January and thus 9 January is a reasonable date for use as a starting point for migration. Five on 22 December 1988 at China Lake (DVB) and seven on 22 December 96 near California City (MTH), however, were moving north as if on migration, but the possibility that these birds were wintering locally cannot be discounted. They are most numerous in spring from March to mid-May with some migrants seen into early June.

Small numbers are seen through the summer in the Ridgecrest area. They may breed nearby but this has not been proven. Otherwise, migrants are noted moving south as early as 4 August. The peak is mid-September to mid-October, particularly the first week of October. At this time, hundreds may be seen sitting in the tops of cottonwoods at California City, Galileo Hill Park, etc. They usually take off mid-morning; large kettles of 200-300 may be seen at this time. Occasionally, midday flocks can be seen coming from the northwest (apparently many of these birds are being seen at Kelso Valley in mid-morning) and then an additional wave of birds arrives in the late afternoon. A large total for so late in the year is 380 at Galileo Hill Park 15 October 1992 (MTH). Numbers drop drastically by the end of October and in general they are not expected past early November. There are records from late November and early December but it is uncertain whether these birds are spending the winter or moving through late. There are a few records on China Lake CBCs but most of these are for late December or early January and thus may pertain to spring migrants. Since two of the records are early (for example, 14 December 1991 China Lake CBC, AB 46:968), however, it is best to assume that a small number might be found during some winters.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*. This is a casual vagrant to the region. There is one spring record: 16 May 1986 at California City, three birds (JCW, AB 40:523). There is another spring record on 24 May 1970 (AFN 24: 643) from a "California City" but the citation says SLO Co., so probably does not relate to Kern County.

There is one fall record: 20 August 1988 at Edwards AFB, two birds (MTH, JCW, AB 43:167).

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*. A rare to uncommon migrant, primarily in fall. Fall records range from 15 September to 4 November, primarily from late September to mid-October. Typically, flocks encountered are of a dozen or fewer birds, although 48 were at China Lake 19 September 1998 (DVB).

There are at least six records for winter, primarily from China Lake CBCs.

Spring records range from 12 February to 24 May, with most of these from March to mid-April. The latest record for spring is one of few for May. The largest spring flock was of 26 birds on 12 February 1989 at California City (MTH). On a few occasions, single birds have stayed with the domestic geese at California City for multiple years.

Snow Goose *Chen caerulescens*. A common winter visitor with records from 30 September to 30 March. A flock of 500 typically winters at China Lake *contra* Small (1994) where they are stated to be rare. Smaller numbers might be found near Cantil. First arrivals are generally encountered by mid-October but most birds do not arrive until the end of that month. Numbers decrease by early March and almost all are gone by the middle of March. Single birds have taken up residence with the domestic geese flock at California City. One to three "Blue" Geese are found annually with the flock of Snows at China Lake.

Ross's Goose *Chen rossii*. A fairly common and surprisingly numerous winter visitor to the region with records from 16 October to 18 March. The timing of their arrival and departure closely mirrors that of its more common congener. The winter population of Ross's near Ridgecrest has been as high as 100 birds, but is more typically one or two dozen. Small numbers (three to seven) are occasionally encountered near Cantil, California City, etc, particularly in late fall. Single birds have stayed with the domestic geese flock at California City for multiple years.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*. A fairly common winter visitor to the region with records from 15 October to 27 April. Arrivals are not expected until the end of October and they remain numerous into early

March. Numbers are generally limited to a few dozen or fewer, but rarely a larger flock will come through the region.

There are three records from the summer and one of these records pertains to a pair that unsuccessfully nested near Inyokern in 1998.

There are small birds showing the characteristics of *minima* that have been noted annually, primarily in late October and November. Solitary geese have joined the domestic flock at California City and remained for years.

Brant *Branta bernicla*. Casual spring vagrant. There are twelve records from 30 March to 31 May. Two of the records are of large flocks: 25 on 11 May 1991 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 45:495), and thirteen on 27 April 1996 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AFN 50:332). It was first recorded in the region 30-31 March 1985 at California City (JH, AB 39:349). During the springs of 1996 and 1998 there were three and six records, respectively. Two of these birds lingered into the summer (for example, 29 June 1996 at Edwards Air Force Base, MTH, AFN 50:996).

No doubt these birds are moving north from the Gulf of California and/or the Salton Sea. Most records are found during or immediately after high winds.

Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*. A rare winter visitor, bordering on uncommon at China Lake. The earliest record is 30 October but more typically swans are not encountered until mid-November. During most years few (one to three) are noted; occasionally small flocks of six to seven are seen. China Lake is the only reliable location in the region for this species although they have been seen at California City, near Cantil, Koehn Dry Lake, Galileo Hill Park and Edwards AFB. Most reports are from early in the winter (November and December) perhaps indicating that birds coming this far south are still wandering, and do not remain through mid-winter. The one-day presence of swans at California City, and Galileo Hill Park in late December (for example, 30 December 1989 at Galileo Hill Park, MTH, AB 44:328), supports the notion that these birds are still on the move. The latest record is 17 February.

There is one record of a Bewick's Swan, *C. c. bewickii*: 30 October 1991 at China Lake (DVB, AB 46:148).

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*. A rare migrant to the region. Spring records range from 14 March to 16 June, when it is recorded almost annually, but generally no more than one to two are noted per season. In fall they are slightly more numerous, bordering on uncommon with records from 29 July to 30 October. Most of the reports are from mid-August to September. In an average fall, two to three are seen with more occurring on occasion (for example, five at Galileo Hill Park 8 October 1995, MTH). There is at least one winter record: 23 January 1993 near Cantil (MTH).

There is one record for summer: a pair was seen in June and July 1990 near Cantil (MTH, AB 44:1186). Breeding was suspected, but not confirmed.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*. Fairly common to common resident. One of the region's most numerous breeding ducks (*contra* Small 1994) with thirty to fifty pair breeding at sites like China Lake, California City, Edwards AFB, and near Cantil. Numbers vary somewhat but they breed annually. Chicks have been seen as early as late May, but more typically are seen in June. Some movement occurs and they are seen at Galileo Hill Park (where breeding is not suspected) from July through April, particularly in October. During winter, dozens may be found at China Lake and Edwards AFB, with smaller numbers at California City and near Cantil.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*. Casual vagrant to the region. There are five fall records from 9 October to 20 December as follows: a male 9-15 October 1988 at China Lake (RH, AB 43:167) (this bird was also seen in San Bernardino County), a female 18 October-3 November 1990 at California City (JLD, AB 45:151), an immature male 9 November 1993 at California City (MAP, AB 48:152), a female 5-6 October 1996 at California City (JLD, AB 51:120) and an immature (presumably a female) 3-6 November 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH). There is one winter record: 18 December 1983, two males on the China Lake CBC (DM, AB 38:780).

There is one spring record: an immature male seen 29-30 April 1995 at China Lake (MTH, AB 49:309); this record is noteworthy given the paucity of records of spring migrants in the State.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*. A fairly common migrant and winter visitor to the region with records from 2 August to 7 June. Most fall arrivals are not seen until late September or October, but in some years flocks are noted earlier. Numbers vary but twenty to fifty are usually seen at California City through the winter with similar numbers at China Lake. Migrants are noted again from March to mid-April with an obvious decrease by the end of April. Only stragglers are encountered in May and they are unexpected by the end of that month.

There are a few summer records (at Edwards AFB, near Cantil and China Lake), typically of single birds, and breeding has not been suspected.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*. A common duck in the region, present throughout the year. Small numbers are found anywhere there is water and breeding is known from almost any location with water. The largest breeding concentration is at China Lake (where average numbers are approximately 200-300 birds). Migrants are noted at Galileo Hill Park, particularly in late September and October. Hybrids with Northern Pintail have been documented in the region on three occasions. A variety of domestic ducks (a.k.a. 'yuck ducks') thrive wherever there is water and range from looking like Mallards to looking nothing like them.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*. A fairly common fall migrant, rare spring migrant and rare summer visitor. In spring this is a rare migrant with records from 8 March to 16 June, uncommon some years. A slight majority of the records are from late May to early June.

There are a number of records from summer (indeed, they are almost annual) and most of these records are of pairs. Yet, breeding has not been confirmed nor, for the most part, even suspected.

In fall they are more numerous, being fairly common, and have been recorded from 10 August to 31 October, with most records from mid-September to mid-October. They are easily confused with Cinnamon Teal at this season and this may make the actual numbers hard to determine. In general, Blue-wingeds become more numerous in late September and early October, when Cinnamon Teal are near the end of their migratory push. Unfortunately, both can be numerous in late September when forty to fifty of each species may be seen. At this time, the numbers are likely rather even between the species, but it is wise to leave many of them unidentified to species.

There are four records of male hybrids recorded in the region: 8 April 1989 at Edwards AFB (MTH), 1 June 1995 at Ridgecrest (JWh), 20-23 April 1998 at China Lake (MTH) and 19 May 1999 at California City (MTH). Most of these looked similar showing a dark head with white crescent on a cinnamon body with a white flank patch. It is a stunning plumage and not easily overlooked.

Cinnamon Teal *Anas cyanoptera*. A common migrant and fairly common breeder. Spring migration is usually most noticeable in March and April but some birds, primarily males, come through much earlier. Males at California City or near Cantil in early January (for example, 2 January) are suspected migrants and their numbers slowly increase through January and early February. The largest concentration was 500 on 7 April 1998 at China Lake (MTH). Numbers decrease by the beginning of May and birds seen after this point are generally presumed to be breeders. Adult males at Galileo Hill Park (where they do not breed) in late May and early June might pertain to post-breeding wanderers.

They breed fairly commonly at China Lake, Edwards AFB and near Cantil. The largest breeding population of approximately ten to twenty pairs is at China Lake. Chicks are first noted in late May and early June.

In fall numbers build rather quickly with August and September representing their peak migration period. See the discussion under the previous species to better understand fall migration timing and identification problems. By mid-October this species is unexpected with the latest migrant being 30 October.

Single adult males are found almost annually in November and December, particularly on China Lake CBCs. Most of these are assumed to be stragglers or wintering birds but some of the late December or early January records from China Lake more likely pertain to early spring migrants. A flock of seven (five males) 25 December 1990 near Cantil (MTH) are most likely "spring" migrants as no November or December record pertains to more than one bird.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*. Common migrant and winter visitor. In addition to being our most common wintering duck, this species stays in the region for most of the year. Fall migrants have been noted as early as 4 August, but more typically they occur around mid-August (for example, 450 on 16 August

1997, MTH). Numbers build steadily through August into September and remain high through the winter. Both China Lake and Edwards AFB hold thousands of shovelers in an average winter. Numbers remain constant through mid-April and it is not until early May that they are no longer common. Small numbers stay through that month with a few (three to six) seen to 10 June. A few have summered at China Lake, near Cantil and Edwards AFB, but breeding has not been confirmed. During the summer of 1998, at least ten shovelers remained through the summer and although some were paired, no breeding evidence was found.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*. A fairly common migrant and winter visitor and a casual breeder with records from 8 August to 2 June. In most years 20-40 are seen during late August to early October and again from late March through April at China Lake and Edwards Air Force Base. Occasionally, flocks of over 100 have been noted, but this is the exception. Generally, this species is unexpected after mid-May. There are a few records of birds spending the summer with breeding confirmed on at least two occasions, at China Lake in 1990 (DVB), and at Edwards AFB in 1998 (MTH). For the latter record, at least three females successfully raised young, the largest clutch being nine ducklings. Another interesting event occurred during the summer of 1998. On 17-18 June, more than forty Northern Pintail were seen at China Lake and Edwards AFB (MTH). Given the unprecedented nature of these sightings, it brings into question whether they bred early and moved south or were prevented from breeding due to inhospitable breeding grounds to the north.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*. Casual vagrant with two records of this Asian stray, both from a private ranch near Cantil: 30 September 1990 (MTH, AB 45:151, Heindel and Garrett 1995) and 28 September-1 October 1995 (MTH, AFN 50:115, Garrett and Singer 1998). Both records appear to pertain to immature males and thus could not pertain to a returning bird. See Jackson (1992) for information on identification of Garganey and other teal.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*. A common migrant and winter visitor and rare breeder in the region. They are most numerous from September to April with migrants noted from 20 August to 10 June. Fall arrivals usually occur in early September, becoming common in the middle of that month. Winter populations at China Lake usually exceed 100 birds. Numbers decline during April with only a few migrants expected past early May. They are rare breeders in the region with young seen at Edwards AFB, near Cantil and China Lake. In an average season, only two to four pairs are thought to breed.

Canvasback *Aythya valisineria*. An uncommon winter visitor, this bird is, on rare occasion, fairly common. Records range from 27 September to 14 June but usually occur from late October to March. Small numbers winter at California City and occasionally at the larger bodies of water at China Lake and Edwards Air Force Base; these latter locations are more often used as migration stopovers. In spring they are rare and not expected after April. The latest record, 14 June 1996 at China Lake (SS), is two weeks later than the next latest record of 1 June. A female observed 12 July 1999 at China Lake (SS) is the only summer record.

Redhead *Aythya americana*. A fairly common resident present throughout the year in varying numbers. They breed at China Lake, near Cantil and Edwards AFB with the five to ten pairs at China Lake being the largest breeding population. Some fluctuation in numbers occurs with birds being seen at non-breeding locales such as Galileo Hill Park and California City in September and October. They are most numerous in spring indicating some migration takes place, when up to 100 have been noted at China Lake.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*. A fairly common migrant and winter visitor with records from 2 September to 10 June. Fall arrivals are expected near the end of September and rarely earlier. They are fairly common (six to twenty birds being typical) from mid-October and remain so through the winter. At times, up to 100 have been noted. Numbers remain until early April and then drop steadily, becoming scarce by mid-May. Annually one to two are found lingering to the end of May and rarely into June. On two occasions, birds have spent the summer. In one case, a pair was monitored near Cantil, but breeding was not confirmed.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*. A casual migrant, primarily in fall. There are nine fall records, almost all of single birds (non-adult males) from 28 October to 24 November. In spring there are three records from 9 to 16 March. The spring birds have been seen with larger numbers of Lesser Scaup during extremely high winds, assumedly downing migrants as they moved north over the desert. Reports of this species should be well documented to eliminate the more likely Lesser Scaup.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*. An uncommon migrant and winter visitor, occasionally fairly common, with records from 29 September to 4 June. The early date is an outlier compared to the next earliest of 8 October. They are generally not expected until late October and typically only small numbers are seen during the fall and winter. They are most numerous, but irregular, during high winds in March and April when flocks of 30-50 have been seen. In general, they are not expected in May but one to four might be found in late May and linger into June. May 1998 was persistently cold and windy; 10-15 were seen past mid-May, for an unprecedented tally.

There are four records of scaup spending the summer at either China Lake or Edwards AFB; these records contain multiple birds (for example, five on 3 July 1998 at China Lake, DVB). A record from China Lake on 2 September 1997 (DVB) is likely a leftover from summer, as it is over a month before most scaup appear. Observers should identify this species with caution during September, as some reports have pertained to the slightly more expected Ring-necked Duck.

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*. Casual migrant, primarily in fall. There are eight fall records from 5 October to 3 November. Included in this total are two records from China Lake 22 October 1971 (JDo, AB 26:120) and 29 October 1972, 2 birds (JDo, AB 27:120). The citation says Inyo County, but all appropriate habitat is in Kern County so these birds were probably seen in Kern. There are two spring records: 22 April 1989 at China Lake (DVB) and 19-24 May 1989 near Cantil (JCW, AB 43:536).

White-winged Scoter *Melanitta fusca*. Casual fall migrant. There are two records: an immature female 26 November 1988 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 43:167), and a specimen of an immature female from near Cantil. The latter bird was shot in the fall sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s, but there is no more specific information available. There is a report from 16 December 1973 on the China Lake CBC (AB 28:514), but the editor of California CBCs wrote "no description" so it is not included as an accepted record. Given the few records for Inyo at this season (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.) the report is probably accurate.

Oldsquaw *Clangula hyemalis*. Casual migrant with two fall records for the region: 8 December 1990 near Cantil (MTH, AB 45:320) and 1-28 November 1991 at China Lake (DVB, AB 46:148).

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*. A fairly common migrant and winter visitor. Fall arrivals have been seen as early as 3 September but usually are not noted until October (there are only a few records before late September, with 9, 13 and 15 September being the next earliest dates). This species is usually seen in small numbers (three to eight) at this season and through the winter. In spring occasional migrant flocks of twenty to thirty are encountered. Most Bufflehead are gone by early April with few records after early May. Most lingering birds are immatures, the latest record of an adult male is 14 May 1995 near Cantil (MTH). The latest records are 30 and 31 May and 19 June. Given recent nesting of this species in adjacent counties (San Miguel 1997), these extremely late records might pertain to birds breeding to the south of their normal range.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*. This is a rare migrant not seen every year with records from 31 October to 28 April. Most reports are of single birds from mid-November to mid-December, but up to six have been recorded. The latest record is of a female from China Lake 28 April 1991 (DVB), the next latest date is 26 March.

Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica*. Casual migrant with one record of a female: 19 December 1992 near Cantil (MTH, AB 47:300), seen with two Common Goldeneyes. A report of this species from China

Lake on 15 November 1990 was not sufficiently documented to exclude the more likely Common Goldeneye.

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*. A casual migrant and winter visitor. Spring records range from 9 March to 24 May with six records, although some records include multiple birds. In fall they are only slightly more numerous with eight records from 2 to 29 November. There are six winter records.

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser*. A fairly common winter visitor with records from 27 October to 5 May. They usually do not arrive until mid-November and are rarely seen after early March. Winter numbers at California City, for example, are typically small (four to twelve birds).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*. A rare migrant, primarily in spring, with 22 records from 25 March to 1 June. The recent average has been two per season. There are two summer records, both from China Lake (DVB). There are thirteen fall records from 2 October to 10 December with an average of one per season.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*. A common resident with increased numbers during winter. Breeding occurs at China Lake, California City, near Cantil and Edwards AFB and the total breeding population must surpass 100 pairs. They are most numerous during winter when a few thousand can be found at China Lake and Edwards AFB with small numbers at other bodies of water. This increase in numbers starts in September and extends into early April.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*. An uncommon migrant in the region. In spring they have been recorded from 9 March to 2 June. Most of the passage occurs from mid-April to early May. They are slightly more numerous in fall when records range from 30 August to 6 November. At this season they are more likely to linger a few days at California City or Galileo Hill Park, for example. At both seasons, most sightings are of single birds.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*. Rare to uncommon migrant and casual breeder. Status complex, due to its presence at various points in the year and its relative scarcity. It is most numerous as a fall migrant but is barely annual at this season with records from 2 August to 21 October. Rarely are more than two to three seen per season. There are a few winter records but, in general, they are unexpected at that season. They are rare in spring with records from 8 May to 4 June. They are slightly less numerous in spring than fall and are not seen every year. They have summered on two occasions with one breeding record near Cantil in 1993 (MTH, AB 47:1149).

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. A rare bird in the region, seen almost annually. They have been recorded from 18 October to 25 February, but most records are from mid-November through December and pertain to immature birds.

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus*. Fairly common migrant and winter visitor, and rare breeder. Present throughout the year, most numerous from September to March when it is fairly common. During fall and winter they are found throughout the region in small numbers. From mid-March, numbers decrease leaving only the few pairs that will stay to breed. They breed annually near Cantil and sporadically elsewhere in the region, often depending on habitat availability. They typically breed near wet marshes and alfalfa fields, habitats which are somewhat variable from year to year.

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*. An uncommon fall migrant and winter visitor, less numerous in spring with records from 1 September to 15 May. They are most numerous from mid-September through October and some years border on being fairly common. They are less numerous in winter but still uncommon. After mid-March their numbers thin dramatically and are generally unexpected after mid-April. Identification of *Accipiters* is difficult and the separation of this species from the usually more numerous Cooper's Hawk is not always easy. See Kaufman (1990) and Clark and Wheeler (1995) for more information on the identification of this genus. Many *Accipiter* need to be left unidentified to species.



Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*. An uncommon migrant and winter visitor with records from 29 July to 23 May. As with the previous species they are most numerous in fall from mid-September through October when they border on fairly common. Although winter numbers are somewhat fewer, they are still easy to find until late March. At this point, they become rare and remain that way through the summer. One to two are found annually during mid-summer; most of these are subadults but adults have been known to occur. During the summer of 1993, a territorial bird chased birders in Mojave, but breeding was not confirmed (MTH).

Cooper's Hawks generally outnumber Sharp-shinned Hawks in the region although that may not be the case on a particular fall day. See the note on the previous species regarding the caution needed in identifying members of this genus.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*. There is one record for the region: an immature 31 October 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (KG). There are a few reports for adjacent areas, such as one near China Lake 21 November 1965 in San Bernardino Co. (AFN 20: 91) and there are other records of late fall birds from Harper Dry Lake to the southeast and Inyo County to the north.

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*. An uncommon fall and winter dispersant to the region, primarily in fall. Records range from 6 May to 24 February, but few of these records are prior to late June. In most years, arrivals are noted during mid-July or August. They are most numerous during August to mid-September when four to six may be tallied at various locations. Nearly all of these birds are immatures, although adults are annual. Numbers decline by October and this species is generally unexpected by late November, but some birds have lingered well into winter.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*. Casual vagrant to the region with three records: 2 October 1983, an adult near Cantil (MTH, AB 38:246), 8 May 1988, an adult near Cantil (PEL, AB 42:481), and a juvenile at Galileo Hill Park 24 September 1999 (MTH).

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*. Rare to irregularly fairly common migrant, almost entirely in spring. They have been noted in spring from 25 March to 10 June with the peak passage from mid-April to early May. Most spring sightings are of single birds but flocks occur at times and sometimes these flocks are fairly large (for example, fifty on 22 April 1995 near Cantil, MTH, AB 49:309).

They are rare in summer and have bred near Cantil and in the northern Antelope Valley. Whether they do so annually is not known.

They are rare in fall with records from 8 August to 7 October, mostly from mid- to late September. On average two to four are seen per season, invariably single birds. Remarkably, two immatures were photographed in late December 1999 in the northern Antelope Valley (TW). Their presence through the end of the year suggests they wintered at this site.

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus*. Casual vagrant with one record for the region: 26 May 1994 at California City (CJ, JT, AFN 48:340, Howell and Pyle 1997). A report from Butterbredt Spring on 8 May 1993 was rejected by the CBRC (Erickson and Terrill 1996) and one from Butterbredt Spring 16 December 1995 (AFN 50:816) is under review. Both reports lack convincing details, although the spring record was supported by enough detail to suggest it was probably correct. There is another Kern record from nearby Kelso Valley 3 October 1994 (TG, SR, AFN 49:100).

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*. A fairly common migrant and winter visitor and uncommon breeder in the region. They are most numerous in fall when twenty or more may be recorded by touring the region. Numbers of this species increase in September and stay high until March. Small numbers stay to breed and a thorough search would likely yield ten pairs or so. But on a regular birding day, only one to two pair are likely to be seen.

The "Harlan's" Hawk, *B. j. harlani*, has been recorded near Ridgecrest almost annually since 1987. It is assumed to be the same bird returning for over ten years. This is the only documented record of this race in the region. The date range for its visits is 21 November to 9 February.

Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis*. An uncommon winter visitor to the region with records from 3 September to 1 April. Arrivals usually occur in the latter half of September but are rarely noted before the 10<sup>th</sup>. They are most numerous from late October through mid-February, although even at this season one should expect no more than two to three per day. There are few records for March or later, although occasionally there are undocumented reports from mid- to late May. These late spring reports probably pertain to immature Swainson's Hawks, which appear quite white below. The latest record for the county is 20 April 1998 (BB), from just outside the region in Kelso Valley.

Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus*. A rare winter visitor to the region and generally not expected. Records range from 12 November to 5 March. Rarely does more than one Rough-legged spend the winter in the region; how much this relates to a lack of habitat is uncertain. This species is more numerous just to the north in Inyo County (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.). They are also more numerous in the Central Valley portion of the county and have been noted through March in that area.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. An uncommon resident in the region present throughout the year but in small numbers. There is a slight increase in fall (September and October).

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*. An uncommon breeder and fairly common migrant and winter visitor. They are most numerous in fall with an increase evident by mid-August. They remain fairly common through winter into early March when numbers decrease. By mid-April, they are only found in their breeding areas (for example, California City, Ridgecrest, etc.).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*. An uncommon fall migrant and winter visitor, much rarer in spring. They are seen annually near the middle of September and have been recorded as early as 10 September. They are most numerous from late September to early November but rarely would more than two or three be seen in a day. By late February they have become quite scarce as it seems the wintering birds have departed. Spring migrants are rare and in general not encountered after March. The latest record in the region is 24 April, although one was seen just outside the region in Tehachapi on 27 April 1984 (MTH). Almost all records pertain to *columbarius* (or *bendirei* by some authors). The pale *richardsoni* has been recorded almost annually in fall or early winter. The dark *suckleyi* has been recorded once at California City (30 October 1998, MTH). Identifying Merlins to race is not always straightforward and observers should be cautious.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*. A casual migrant in the region with three spring records from 4 to 14 May and seven fall records from 25 August to 6 November. There are two summer records, both from China Lake: 30 July-1 August 1998 at China Lake (SS), and 25 July 1999 (DVB). All records are since 1990 and this may reflect the population increase this species has been experiencing.

Prairie Falcon *Falco mexicanus*. An uncommon resident with an increase in numbers from September to February. Even during mid-summer, two to three might be encountered. During fall, in particular, twice this number is more likely. They are often seen perched atop telephone poles, at sewage ponds pursuing shorebirds or ducks, or in alfalfa fields going after Horned Larks.

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*. A fairly common resident at scattered locations throughout the region. This introduced bird is most well known from Galileo Hill Park, as many birders go there specifically for this species. Apparently, at least some of these birds are released by hunters, thus bringing into question the establishment of these populations (Bill Principe, pers. comm.). Their presence at Galileo Hill Park is somewhat erratic and unpredictable but usually small groups can be found. At times, dozens walk through the campground. They are spread throughout the mountains being found in Butterbredt, Short and Sand Canyons, for example. They are also found in smaller ranges surrounding Fremont and Indian Wells Valleys. On occasion, they have been seen in the city of Ridgecrest, sitting atop houses, demonstrating both their widespread nature and tolerance of humans.

Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*. Status of this introduced bird is uncertain. In the 1980s, pheasant were regularly found, primarily near Cantil and east through the Fremont Valley. Hunting clubs

were no doubt responsible for these introduced populations. But, pheasant hunting seemed to have largely stopped in the region and there were no reports for a decade. Surprisingly, on 6 June 1998 a freshly killed female was found 13 miles south of Inyokern (MTH). This is not near any towns and an obvious release source is unknown. It is still more likely to be a product of a recent release, and may indicate that some local populations still exist.

Mountain Quail *Oreortyx pictus*. This montane quail occurs in the region via a fairly healthy breeding population in and near Butterbredt Spring. Small numbers (four to twenty) are fairly reliable in most years and they are quite vocal from mid-March through early May. Occasionally, they are still heard into early June, but this seems to occur in colder years, perhaps meaning their breeding cycle is delayed. Young chicks have been encountered from mid-May to early June. Once this species becomes silent, they are extremely difficult to find. Populations should be looked for in some of the other higher canyons in the area.

California Quail *Callipepla californica*. A common resident present throughout much of the region. They are more numerous than Mountain Quail in the Butterbredt Spring area and are the only quail expected on the lower reaches of the canyon. Large populations occur in small foothills, ranches (for example, near Cantil) and Edwards AFB. They should be expected anywhere there is water away from large human populations. They are rather scarce at places like Galileo Hill Park, China Lake and California City.

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii*. Status uncertain, but probably a rare resident, the result of introduced populations. Whether this species has ever occurred naturally in the county is unknown. There are records from various places in the eastern mountains of the region and it is possible that a natural population exists in the northeastern part of the county, but they are currently treated as introduced. There are known introductions of this species in east Kern and in light of the fact they were not reported from Grinnell and Miller (1944), this suggests it is more prudent to assume they are not native to the region. One such introduction took place at Edwards AFB near Los Angeles Co., where forty were seen 10 August 1984 (MTH, AB 39:102). In addition, one of the ranches active in pheasant hunting during the early 1980s reported a release in the mountains bordering the Fremont Valley. Gambel's Quail have been reported from these mountains by hunters and birders and there remains a possibility that a native population exists. But, given what is known of their introductions and the lack of continuous range leading to known "good" populations, it will be difficult to conclude this positively. Recently, one has taken up with a flock of California Quail in Ridgcrest (BM), which seems more likely than not to be an unnatural occurrence.

Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola*. An uncommon migrant and rare winter visitor to the region. Due to its secretive habits, this species is not encountered often. There is little appropriate habitat and most records come from few areas (for example, California City, Edwards AFB, and near Cantil). They are more numerous in fall than winter or spring with records from 17 September to 22 May. They have been found in odd locations with reports from Galileo Hill Park and another at Butterbredt Spring. The bird at Butterbredt Spring arrived in mid-May and was seen as late as 29 June 1996 (MTH), for a strange summer record, particularly given the limited habitat. They have also been noted near China Lake in July 1988, so perhaps future summer records can be expected

Sora *Porzana carolina*. More numerous than the previous species, it is still uncommon as a migrant and rare in winter. Records range from 23 July to 12 May. The majority of fall passage is from mid-September to early November. At least one of the three July records (24 July 1993, DVB) pertains to a juvenile. A few birds might stay through the winter at California City and Edwards AFB, for example. An increase in numbers during spring is evident from early April to early May.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*. A rare species, may be present at anytime during the year, but known to breed on only two occasions (near Cantil in 1993 and California City in 1996, MTH). They are usually seen singly at California City or China Lake, but have also been encountered at smaller ranches from the northern Antelope Valley to ranches near Cantil.

American Coot *Fulica americana*. A common resident present throughout the year. Breeding occurs at China Lake, California City, Edwards AFB and various ranches. Small numbers are occasionally seen at

Galileo Hill Park but breeding has not yet been suspected from this area. Large numbers augment this breeding population in winter with a notable increase from September through early April. The movements of this species are quite interesting and even occur in mid-summer; there remains much to learn about this common species.

Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis*. A casual migrant through the region. There are two fall records: 22 November 1989, eight birds (MTH), and 28 September 1994, three birds (MTH), both near Cantil. In addition, there is a spring record from Ridgecrest 16-25 April 1998 (JWh, FN 52:390).

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*. An uncommon migrant, generally more numerous in fall. Spring records range from 11 March to 10 June. At times, particularly in heavy north or west winds during April, flocks of ten to twenty may occur. Otherwise, they are seen in small numbers (two to six). In nearby Lancaster (LA Co.), over 100 have been noted in these conditions so perhaps larger flocks might be encountered. The later birds are invariably first-alternate birds and are assumedly not making it to the breeding grounds.

Fall records range from 14 July to 27 November. Adults are most numerous in late July and August and may linger into September but are usually noted in small numbers. Juveniles have been noted from 8 September with a peak from mid-September to mid-October. Groups of four to twelve are the norm. There are two records from mid-February, for example, 16 February 1991 at Edwards AFB (JCW, AB 45:320), which either pertain to early migrants or birds spending the winter.

American Golden-Plover *Pluvialis dominica*. A casual migrant, primarily in fall. There are ten fall records from 29 August to 4 November. All records are of juveniles and most are from late September to late October. In spite of increasing coverage, only one of these records is since 1991.

In spring there is one record: 12 June 1993 at China Lake (DVB, AB:47:1150).

There are no records for the Pacific Golden-Plover (*P. fulva*) for the region. See the note in Appendix A under that species.

Snowy Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*. Fairly common breeder and migrant and rare winter visitor. Present year-round but most numerous in migration when flocks augment the breeding population. Migrants have been detected from 24 March to 20 October, but these extreme dates are somewhat hard to determine due to the presence of wintering birds. Key breeding areas are Edwards AFB and China Lake and they are fairly common as breeders. They should be looked for on dry lakebeds throughout the region. Chicks are usually noted from early May through June, and occasionally into July and August. Small numbers are seen during some winters at Edwards AFB and China Lake. The extent these records pertain to residents or are of birds replacing breeding populations is unknown.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*. Fairly common migrant, primarily in spring. Spring records range from 14 April to 7 June. Most records are from late April to mid-May and during high winds, 40-50 might be seen. They are generally unexpected after 20 May with only two records for June (the other being 3 June).

They are less numerous in fall and less likely to be seen in large numbers (typically two to four), yet 21 were seen on 6 September 1997 at Edwards AFB (MTH). Records range from 14 July to 3 December. Adults are most likely in late July and early August. Juveniles are most numerous from mid-August to mid-September, although they have been recorded as early as 2 August. They are unexpected after mid-October and other than the late record from December, there are only three early November records.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*. Present year-round with breeding throughout the region. Small numbers breed at Edwards AFB, California City, Galileo Hill Park, near Cantil, China Lake, Ridgecrest, etc. Chicks are seen from early May through July. This species is most numerous in fall (August and September) when 50-100 may be present at China Lake or Edwards AFB. Most of these birds pass through the region but small numbers remain through the winter.

Mountain Plover *Charadrius montanus*. A rare fall migrant, not encountered every year. There are fourteen fall records from 10 August to 15 November. Most of these records are juveniles during October. The early

record from 10 August 1991 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 46:149) is more than a month earlier than the next record (13 September). They have not been found to winter in the region, although they have been found to the south near Lancaster, to the north at Owens Lake (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.), to the east at Harper Dry Lake, and in the Central Valley portion of the county. At some point, a winter record of this species is expected.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*. A common migrant and summer visitor with records from 18 February to 24 October. They breed at China Lake, Edwards AFB, California City and occasionally at private ranches in the region. Spring migrants are usually noted by late February with a peak from March to mid-April. Occasionally, large flocks show up in mid-May, assumedly these are late migrants forced down by high winds. Smaller numbers are found in early and mid-June away from breeding areas, indicating some birds are moving through quite late, or have already completed breeding. In fall large numbers occur from mid-August through September. Most are gone by the first of October. There is a recent winter record from China Lake during December and January 1997-98 (DVB).

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*. The general pattern of occurrence mirrors that of the previous species, but the avocet is more numerous. Spring arrivals are noted by late February (and as early as 10 February) and this species is common through mid-May. Small numbers are sometimes seen at desert oases in late May and early June, probably the result of late migrants. Breeding localities are the same as with the stilt with China Lake being their largest breeding area (50-100 pairs in good years). Numbers remain high through September but drop rather quickly in October. Generally, they are unexpected by November with few records from mid-November to the latest record of a presumed migrant on 8 December. There are four winter records from 15 December to 23 January, all at China Lake. Given their more frequent occurrence to the north at Owens Lake (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.) at this season, future winter records are expected.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*. A fairly common migrant at both seasons, more numerous in fall and rare at other seasons. Spring records range from 26 February to 1 June with the bulk of passage from April to early May. A yellowlegs seen after mid-May is likely this species in first-alternate plumage and is probably not migrating all the way to the breeding grounds. A few such birds have been seen throughout June, which complicates migration dates. Fall arrivals have been noted as early as 24 June, but it is usually the first week of July before they are noted in most years. Adults come through during July, lingering into August. Juveniles are most numerous from mid-August to mid-September. By October, most yellowlegs have departed with the latest suspected migrant recorded on 31 October. They are local and uncommon during winter with records from China Lake, near Cantil and Edwards AFB. In some winters they might prove hard to find but, in others, up to six in one locale might be seen.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*. Fairly common migrant to the region. Generally, this species is far less numerous than the Greater Yellowlegs, but exceptions will occur. In spring it is uncommon to fairly common at China Lake, rare everywhere else. Records range from 31 March to 18 May. Typically, singles and occasionally two to four are seen. A large concentration at China Lake was sixteen seen 23 April 1998 (MTH). In fall it is more numerous with records ranging from 27 June to 5 November. Adults come through in July and early August but are not numerous. Juveniles peak from early August to mid-September and can be quite numerous (up to thirty). The maximum recorded was 62 on 11 August 1995 (JS) at China Lake. There is one documented winter record from near Cantil (winter 1992-1993, MTH). A report from 18 December 1983 of two birds on the China Lake CBC (AB 38:780) lacked details and is regarded as possibly pertaining to the more likely Greater Yellowlegs.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*. Rare to uncommon migrant, primarily in fall. This species is a rare spring migrant recorded from 12 April to 17 May. Generally, they are seen singly but occasionally they are uncommon with four to eight in a season. Most records are for the first third of May.

They are more numerous in fall when they might border on being fairly common in some years, with records from 18 July to 14 October. Most records are from mid-August to mid-September and four to six have been seen in one day at this time. In general, they are scarce by the end of September and any October record is noteworthy.

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*. Rare to fairly common migrant, primarily in fall. A rare spring migrant, occasionally uncommon with records from 27 April to 5 June. Most spring records are from early May but only two to three are seen in an average season; nine on 30 April 1995 (DVB) is exceptional both for the number and the relatively early date. Late birds, from late May into June, are typically in first-alternate plumage, presumably non-breeding birds.

They are more numerous in fall being uncommon with records from 21 June to 7 September. Adults come through from early to mid-July, with juveniles seen from 19 July. Most records are from August and four to six, sometimes more, might be seen together at this time. The maximum is 26 on 2 August 1989 at China Lake (DVB).

There is one winter record from China Lake on 20 December 1987, two birds (AB 42:1094). Given that they have wintered at Owens Lake to the north (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.), more winter records might be expected.

Wandering Tattler *Heteroscelus incanus*. Casual spring migrant with two records of this coastal bird: 4 June 1993 at China Lake (MTH, AB 47:453) and 6 May 1998 at Edwards AFB (MTH, FN 52:390). Both birds called and were in breeding plumage allowing an easy identification. Since there is a record of Gray-tailed Tattler (*H. brevipes*) from nearby Lancaster on 23 July 1981 (JLD, AB 35:978), any tattler in the region should be well documented to ascertain specific identity. See Paulson (1993) for more information on the identification of tattlers.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*. Primarily a fairly common to common migrant, but status complex due to their presence almost year-round. They are most numerous as a spring migrant when they are common. Records range from 14 April to 19 June. The peak of this passage is late, typically in mid-May. At this time, 100 or more might be encountered at various locales and sixty have been seen in a single locale (for example, at Galileo Hill Park). Numbers drop from early June but lingering birds are found annually to the middle of the month.

Fall migrants are typically first noticed in mid-July (the earliest record is 4 July). They are fairly common in fall but not seen in the large numbers mentioned for spring. Juveniles are noted as early as 19 July. The peak passage occurs from mid-August to mid-September, and most of these birds appear to be juveniles. Adults in alternate plumage are occasionally encountered in late August and one was seen 1 September. Numbers drop from early October and they are rare by November. Lingering birds might be found at China Lake and Edwards AFB in November and the latest record of a presumed migrant (or straggler) is 24 November. There are at least four records of single birds spending the winter months in the region.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. Uncommon to rare migrant, primarily in spring. An uncommon spring migrant, irregularly fairly common when large flocks are noted. The records range from 11 March to 16 June with the peak passage being mid-April to mid-May. Although huge flocks (1000 birds) occur just to the south at Lancaster sewage ponds, these birds seemingly fly northwest to Mojave and then move west to the Central Valley. This 'flyway' has led to a number of flocks noted flying near Mojave and yet otherwise, Whimbrels are not seen in large numbers in the region. Other than the occasional group of 40-50 seen in Mojave, they are usually seen in small numbers (two to six) at Edwards AFB and they are even more scarce at China Lake. A record from China Lake 23 June 1994 (DVB) is hard to categorize, but probably pertains to an early fall migrant.

In fall they are rare, irregularly uncommon, with two distinct passages. Adults are usually seen in July with records from 11 July to 1 August. Rarely are more than two seen per season but they are annual. They are slightly more numerous in September when the juveniles come through. Yet, typically they are still rare with records from 4 September to 7 October. Away from Mojave, Edwards AFB and China Lake, this bird is unexpected and should be documented carefully.

There is a record of the "Siberian" Whimbrel, *N. p. variegatus*, from China Lake 9-16 June (Heindel, 1999). This is only the third record of a white-rumped bird for California and was quite unexpected. See Paulsen (1993) and Heindel (1999) for further information on this Asian vagrant.

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*. A difficult species to categorize, generally an uncommon migrant, occasionally fairly common, at both seasons with records from 26 March to 13 October. Most spring migrants are noted from mid-April to early May. They are rare by the end of May with the latest record of a presumed migrant 12 June. There are a few mid- and late June records that are hard to decipher as these may be either late or early migrants or non-breeding birds; this needs further study. Fall records range from 23 June to 13 October with most reports coming from August and September. They are uncommon with most tallies being in single digits. They are rare by early October. Although this species can be found in winter in the Antelope Valley (LA Co.), there are no winter records for this region.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*. A rare migrant in spring, uncommon in fall. Spring records range from 1 April to 11 June with the peak being from late April to mid-May. In most years, only two to four are seen in spring.

They are uncommon in fall with records from 4 July to 27 November, although this last date is far later than the next latest dates of 6 November and 13 October. Adults come through during July and juveniles are most numerous from mid-August to mid-September. Generally, they are more numerous in fall (versus spring) but usually seen in single numbers, although 22 were seen 12 September 1996 at Edwards AFB (MTH). They are rare after September, with only a few October records and the outlier dates of 6 November 1999 at California City (MTH) and 27 November 1998 at China Lake (DVB).

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. A casual migrant through the region at both seasons. There are nine spring records from 28 April to 12 May, a rather narrow window for so many records.

There are sixteen fall records from 14 July to 8 September. Adults account for the early records and have been recorded to 19 August. Six records are of juveniles from 28 August to 9 September. All records are from Edwards AFB and China Lake.

Black Turnstone *Arenaria melanocephala*. Casual migrant with two records: 29 May-4 June 1988 China Lake, with two birds on 29 May (DVB, AB 42:481), and an adult at Edwards AFB 1-2 September 1996 (MTH, AFN 51:120). Any Black Turnstone inland is an excellent record but the adult in early September is particularly interesting, given the paucity of records inland in the western United States during this season, as well as the fact that a juvenile might be more expected.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*. This is primarily a casual fall migrant with seven fall records. One record pertains to an adult: 14 July 1989 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 44:1186). The other six fall records range from 19 August to 22 September and are believed to pertain to juveniles. Some juveniles are poorly marked and require close views to separate from a basic-plumaged adult. There is one spring record: 12-13 May 1990 at Edwards AFB (JLD, AB 44:496). Given that this species is common as a spring migrant in Salton Sea (MAP, pers. comm.), having only one spring record is surprising.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*. An uncommon migrant, irregularly fairly common. Spring records range from 28 April to 3 June with the largest numbers occurring in mid-May. Flocks of twelve to eighteen are encountered during mid-May under extreme wind conditions, primarily at Edwards AFB. A record from China Lake on 11 March 1994 (DVB) is so early that the fact it might have wintered must be considered. In fall, passage is split based on age. Adults, which are rare at this season, have been recorded from 13 July to 23 August, with most reports prior to 7 August. Juveniles, which are uncommon, have been noted from 19 August to 1 November. Most records of juveniles occur from late August to late September. Small numbers continue into early October in some years and in general they are not found beyond the middle of that month.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*. A casual spring and rare fall migrant. There are eight spring records from 27 April to 26 May; most of the records are before mid-May. In fall there are 32 records from 14 July to 7 September. Adults are casual, recorded from 14 to 29 July.

Most records pertain to juveniles, which have been recorded from 2 August to 7 September. In an average fall, one to two are seen, but seven were recorded in 1992.

Other than one spring record near Cantil, all records are from Edwards AFB and China Lake. See Jonnson and Grant (1984) and Paulson (1993) for more information on identifying peeps.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*. A common migrant and rare winter visitor. This species is found in the hundreds at Edwards AFB and China Lake, with small numbers elsewhere. In spring migrants have been recorded from 9 March to 27 May with the peak passage from mid-April to early May. More than 1,000 are recorded during these peaks. Small flocks (20-50) have been noted flying up Butterbrecht Canyon at this time. By mid-May their numbers drop and they are rare by the end of the month. Each summer a small number of birds can be found throughout June. These are birds in first-alternate plumage and are probably not making it to the breeding grounds in the Arctic.

Fall migration commences early with adults found in late June, the earliest record being 24 June. Adults are common from mid-July through early August. Juveniles are found from early August (28 July is the earliest date) and are common from mid-August to mid-September. By early September, most of the Western Sandpipers in the region are juveniles, although typically 10% of the flocks are molting or basic-plumaged adults. By late September, numbers drop sharply and they become uncommon by the first of October. In most years, this species is hard to find after mid-October; in others, they can be numerous into November. This species is rare, irregularly uncommon in winter, with a few found at China Lake or Edwards AFB and this complicates some of the migration dates.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*. A fairly common migrant, generally outnumbered by Western Sandpiper, except during winter. Spring records range from 3 March to 4 June with the peak passage occurring during April. By early May, their numbers decrease dramatically and they are rare after mid-May. There are only three records later than 25 May. They seem to be slightly more numerous at China Lake where there is more vegetation and shallow water, as opposed to the bare-sloped sewage ponds at Edwards AFB.

In fall they have been recorded from 30 June to 8 October. Adults become fairly common by mid-July but are almost always outnumbered by Westerns (where both species are common). Juveniles occur from early August and are at their peak from late August to mid-September. Their numbers fall off by the end of September and by October most of the birds seen will stay for the winter. They are uncommon in winter, irregularly fairly common, and vastly outnumber Westerns at this season. This species is much more likely to be recorded at the desert oases (such as Galileo Hill Park) than Western Sandpiper.

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*. A fairly common fall migrant and casual spring migrant. Relatively large numbers of this species are found in the region during fall when records range from 13 July to 6 November. Most records are of juveniles and their peak passage is from mid-August to late September. Typically, 15-30 are tallied on an average peak day, but over forty have been recorded at one locale. Numbers drop by early October but annually a straggler or two is found in mid-October. In multiple years, late birds have occurred, including the latest record of 6 November 1994 from Edwards AFB. Given their scarcity in the western states during spring, the spring records are of particular interest. There were four spring records between 1988 and 1997 from 13 April to 26 May, each of single birds. During the spring of 1998, a spring marked by cool temperatures and constant wind, up to seven were at Edwards AFB 27 May to 13 June (MTH, FN 52:390). The presence of so many Baird's and at such a late date are of interest. The birds appeared to be in first-alternate, perhaps indicating that they were not moving all the way to the breeding grounds. Regardless, the unprecedented nature of these sightings is significant.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*. A fairly common fall migrant in some years, uncommon in others. Adults have been seen as early as 14 August and as late as 12 September, but they are rare and not seen annually. Juveniles have been noted from 24 August and are most numerous from mid-September to mid-October. In a typical year, 10-20 are recorded but a high count of 34 (at one locale) demonstrates how numerous they can be. By the latter part of October they are usually rare and yet twelve were seen on 27 October 1996 at Edwards AFB (MTH). The latest record is 4 November 1991 at China Lake (DVB, AB 46:149).

There is one spring record for the region: 28 May 1999 at China Lake (MTH).



Dunlin *Calidris alpina*. An uncommon migrant, irregularly fairly common, and uncommon winter visitor. Spring migrants are recorded from 11 March to 27 May. Their peak passage occurs during the latter half of April and in good years they number in the dozens. In most years, small numbers (four to twelve) are recorded. By mid-May they have largely disappeared with few records from the last week of the month. Fall arrivals are not typically encountered until the last third of September but have been recorded as early as 7 September. The latest record of a presumed migrant is 1 November. Most of the fall birds seem to be juveniles; yet small numbers winter in the region and it seems implausible that most wintering birds are juveniles.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*. A rare fall migrant and casual spring migrant. In fall there are fifteen records from 22 July to 17 October. Two of these records pertain to adults during July; the remainder are juveniles with most records occurring from late August to mid-September. In 1997, seven were seen in the region during fall, almost doubling the number of records. There is one spring record: 3-8 May 1998 at China Lake (MTH, FN 52:390).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*. Casual vagrant to the region. There are three fall records from 5 to 16 September, all from Edwards AFB as follows: 5 September 1988 (JLD, AB 43:168, Pyle and McCaskie 1992), 16 September 1989 (BD, AB 44:161, Patten and Erickson 1994), and 16 September 1990 (MTH, AB 45:151, Heindel and Garrett 1995). All records pertain to juveniles. Significantly, there is a late spring record, almost unprecedented in the western United States: 3-9 June 1990 Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 44:496, Patten and Erickson 1994).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. A casual vagrant, primarily in fall. There are four fall records from 20 July to 22 November as follows: adult male 10 September 1988 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 43:168), one of unknown age and sex 22 November 1990 at China Lake (DVB, AB 45:151), adult male 20 July-16 September 1992 at China Lake (DVB, AB 46:1178), and a juvenile female 8-19 September 1992 at China Lake (DVB, AB 47:149). There is one spring record: a female 11 May 1991 at China Lake (MTH, AB 45:496).

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*. A rare to fairly common migrant. Spring records range from 31 March to 26 May, when it is rare, irregularly uncommon. Most records are from mid- to late April, but no more than one to two are typically encountered at this season. Fall records range from 8 July to 21 October. Adults are uncommon and are most expected in July and early August. Juveniles are more numerous, but still uncommon, irregularly fairly common, from mid-August to early September. Average numbers during this peak are small, but occasionally 10-20 are found. Numbers drop after the first week of September and they are rare after mid-September. There is only one record for the last week of September (the 27<sup>th</sup>) and the latest date of 21 October is of a juvenile near Cantil. Of note, it was still in complete juvenal plumage, as this species apparently undergoes its molt once reaching its wintering grounds.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*. A fairly common to common migrant and uncommon winter visitor. Spring migrant records range from 9 March to 28 May and they are most numerous from April to early May. The region does not get the hundreds sometimes reported just south of the county line (for example, at Piute Ponds), but dozens, and occasionally a hundred or so do occur. By mid-May this species is unexpected with only a few records for the last part of the month. They are slightly more numerous in fall with records from 30 June to 7 November. Adults are most numerous from mid-July to early August. Juveniles are generally not detected prior to mid-September, but have been seen as early as 5 September. They are more likely in late September to mid-October, a season when Short-billed Dowitchers are not expected. This dowitcher is an uncommon winter visitor with a few occasionally seen at China Lake or Edwards AFB.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. An uncommon migrant and winter visitor to the region with records from 6 August to 27 May. In most years, the first fall migrants are detected near the end of September and other than the earliest date above, the only other early records are 20 August and 14 September. Small

numbers (two to four) are found near water at China Lake, California City, Galileo Hill Park, various ranches, etc. They are most numerous during October but a few are found through the winter. Numbers slip away during March and in general this species is not expected after mid-April. There are a few records from late April to mid-May but they are casual then. There are two late spring records of single birds from Galileo Hill Park and Butterbrecht Spring on 26 and 27 May, respectively.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*. A common migrant and casual breeder in the region. Spring migrants are typically encountered in early April but have been seen as early as 24 March. Their peak passage is mid-April to early May and they usually number in the hundreds. By mid-May, numbers drop and they are in single digits by the end of the month. A few linger into June but it is unclear as to how these records should be classified.

They have bred on at least one occasion (1997 at China Lake, MTH) and might do so annually as pairs are noted in late May and early June.

Fall migration is early with small flocks of females noted as early as 10 June. More typically, this southbound movement is closer to (or just after) mid-June but they are common by the end of the month. They remain common through July and number in the hundreds, and occasionally more than 1,000 into late August. Juveniles start arriving prior to August, the earliest recorded is 14 July, and account for most of the birds seen by late August. By mid-September their numbers drop and they are rare by the last week of September. The latest record is 10 October.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*. A common migrant at both seasons. Spring records range from 13 April to 18 June with a peak from late April to mid-May. Almost annually, 200-300 are noted at Edwards AFB or China Lake at this time, particularly during high winds. Numbers drop the last week of May and they are casual after the first week of June, with other late dates of 9 and 12 June.

In fall they are later in arriving than Wilson's Phalarope but there is substantial overlap. Records range from 10 July to 23 November. Adults are fairly common in August becoming most numerous in late August and early September. Juveniles are noted during late August and account for most records past early September. Although not seen in the high numbers mentioned for spring, it is not unusual to see 100 or more, primarily juveniles. Late records of 19 November 1999 and 23 November 1996 from China Lake (SS), are the only records past 1 November.

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicaria*. Unrecorded until 1988, this has proven to be a rare, irregularly uncommon fall migrant and a casual spring migrant. There are 41 fall records from 4 August to 31 October. Almost all records are juveniles from mid-September to mid-October. The earliest juvenile was noted at Galileo Hill Park 2 September 1988 (JLD, AB 43:168). There is a very late record of 27 November 1997 at China Lake (SS).

There are seven spring records from 17 to 21 May, three records from 1996 and four from 1998, demonstrating that these records were part of a wider-scale phenomenon that infrequently occurs. The spring records are from the large bodies of water at China Lake and Edwards AFB, but the fall records have been seen at various locations including Galileo Hill Park, California City and near Cantil.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*. Casual migrant with one record: a juvenile 2 September 1989 at China Lake (MTH, AB 44:162). There is some controversy over this record as it is extremely early for a juvenile. Juvenile Pomarines are unexpected in the Lower 48 prior to October. This bird was well-studied at close range repeatedly while it sat on the water and in flight. It is possible this might have been a one-year old bird, but showed many characters of a juvenile.

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Casual migrant with one record: a juvenile 19-22 September 1989 at China Lake (DVB, AB 44:162). A well-studied bird seen over a few days and at close range. The sharp tail projections and plumage made for an easy (and uncontroversial) identification.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus*. Casual migrant with one record: an adult 23 August 1994 at Edwards AFB (MTH). This bird flew into the ponds, circled once and left, spending no more than one minute. There are three records of juveniles from the Central Valley portion of Kern from 31 August to 6 September and records to the north from Inyo and Mono counties.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*. Casual dispersant with one record for the region: an adult 19 July 1997 at Edwards AFB (JCW, FN 51:1053). There are two other records for Kern (from Bakersfield and Lake Isabella) and a couple of questionable reports from the desert. The earlier reports from China Lake, for example, more likely pertain to Franklin's Gulls, whose first-summer plumage can closely match this species. Observers should carefully document any claim of Laughing Gull in the region.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*. An uncommon migrant in spring, casual in fall. There are 96 spring records from 5 April to 9 June. Most of these records are during May and higher counts occur during high winds, perhaps grounding some of the northbound birds. China Lake gets the majority of records. An average total per spring is five to eight, but twenty were seen during the spring of 1997.

There are fourteen fall records from 23 July to 8 October and they are not encountered annually. Most records are from late August and pertain to juveniles. One juvenile was seen 25 July 1989 at China Lake (DVB, AB 43:1368), for an early record of a bird in this plumage. The 8 October date is an outlier with the next latest record being 4 September.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*. Casual vagrant with three records all from China Lake: a 2<sup>nd</sup> summer bird 4-6 May 1996 (TM, AFN 50:332), an adult 29 August-1 September 1997 (MTH, FN 52:126) and a 1<sup>st</sup> winter bird 18 April 1999 (TM). The first record for the county is from Tulare Lake in the Central Valley 27 September 1987 (Pyle and McCaskie 1992).

Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia*. An uncommon migrant at both seasons, irregularly common in spring. In spring they have been noted from 8 April to 13 June with a peak from late April to mid-May. Highest counts are typically seen during high winds, although many of these birds will stay for a week or more, once grounded. Typical counts are small (four to eight), but high counts are 40-70. A few are found in early June but these are all immatures. Annually, one to two of these immatures spend the summer.

This is a late arrival in fall with records from 21 October to 22 December. They are encountered less often and in smaller numbers than in spring.

Heermann's Gull *Larus heermanni*. Casual dispersant with four records for the region, all from Edwards AFB. There are two spring records: an adult 16 June 1990 (MTH, AB 44:1186-87), and another adult 10-11 May 1997 (MTH, AFN 51:928). The two fall records are an adult 29 October 1994 (MTH, AFN 49:101), and a first-winter bird 7 October 1995 (MTH, AFN 50:115).

Mew Gull *Larus canus*. Casual migrant with two records for the region: a juvenile near Cantil on 10 October 1992 (MTH) and an adult at Edwards AFB 30 October 1999 (MSM).

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*. Fairly common migrant but status complex as they are present year-round. Spring passage is evident from mid-April to mid-May when they are fairly common. Flocks of 30-80 are routine at this time, but not encountered daily as they continue to pass through the region. Numbers drop by late May, leaving us rather ratty immatures that spend the summer.

Fall migrants are noted from mid-July; the earliest record of a juvenile is 14 July. More typically, they are encountered in late July. Most of the passage occurs during August and September when they are fairly common. Numbers fluctuate through the fall, presumably as flocks move through the region. Small flocks (6-15) may stay through the winter at China Lake or Edwards AFB.

California Gull *Larus californicus*. Fairly common to common migrant, present year-round. In general, this species is more numerous than the previous species and borders on common for much of the year. Spring migrants are most obvious from mid-April to mid-May and these flocks are more likely to reach over 100. These gulls are sometimes noted moving north into strong winds during the spring. By late May, most of the remaining gulls are ratty and this summering population is much larger than the Ring-billed summering population, accounting for over 75% of the gulls in an average summer.

Fall arrivals are typically encountered by the end of July and occasionally by the middle of the month. The earliest juvenile was seen on 11 July. They are fairly common from August to October and at times flocks of 40-100 are encountered. As with the previous species, numbers fluctuate throughout the fall and winter

as birds fly back and forth across the desert. Small winter flocks of 10-20 are regularly seen at Edwards AFB and China Lake.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. A rare migrant through the region recorded annually in small numbers (one to two per season). Spring records range from 26 April to 23 May and records are divided between various ages of gulls.

In fall they are slightly more numerous but still rare with records from 16 September to 18 December. The next latest record is 3 December. Most records at this season are of immatures. An adult at China Lake 1 January 1997 (DVB) is the only winter record for the region. Although most records are from China Lake and Edwards AFB, they have been seen at Galileo Hill Park, California City, and near Cantil.

Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*. Casual migrant with one record: a worn second-winter bird at China Lake 26 May 1998 (MTH, FN 52:391).

Western Gull *Larus occidentalis*. Casual migrant with one definite record for the region, an adult 17 April 1988 at Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 43:171). Another dark-mantled gull in third-winter plumage 13 April 1990 Edwards AFB (MTH, AB 44:497) was most likely this species.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*. Rare fall and casual spring migrant. In fall this species is rare with 46 records from 24 August to 8 October. A slight majority of these records are of juveniles, primarily from mid-September through the end of that month.

There are five spring records from 3 to 26 May, four of these records pertain to adults. A record from 26 May 1998 at Edwards AFB (MTH, FN 52:391) pertains to a first-summer bird. Recalling the pattern for Red Phalarope, these records come from two records in 1996 and three records in 1998.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. Casual migrant with one record of a first-year bird picked up near Inyokern, 11 December 1987. This is specimen number 87.94.1 at the Maturango Museum in Ridgecrest.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*. An uncommon migrant at both seasons, irregularly fairly common in spring. Spring records range from 31 March to 9 June with the peak from mid-April to early May. Flocks of 30 on 6 April 1991 at China Lake (DVB) and Edwards AFB on 9 May 1998 (MTH) are impressive concentrations and might have been due to the extreme winds in the area. Records for late May are scarce and generally they are unexpected in June.

Early fall migrants are a bit hard to discern as some records may pertain to late spring birds or summer lingerers. A 13 June record fits in this uncertain category but a flock of 10 adults 15 June 1996 at Edwards AFB probably pertains to non-breeders (or unsuccessful breeders) or, more likely, fall migrants. Sightings increase in late June with July to mid-August being the peak. By late August numbers decrease and they are rare after the first of September. The latest record is 6 October.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*. Rare fall and casual spring migrant. This species is rare in fall with 47 records from 6 July to 22 October. Most records are from mid-September to mid-October and the recent average has been two per fall. On three occasions, the total for fall was much higher than average with totals ranging from nine to twelve in a season. The earlier records (July and August) are typically adults; the later records are of first-year birds.

They are casual in spring with six records from 29 April to 5 June and other than a flock of three at Edwards AFB 5 June 1988 (MTH), all records are of single birds.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*. A casual migrant through the region. Four spring records range from 3 to 18 June, all from China Lake or Edwards AFB. A fifth record is very early: 7 May 1999 at China Lake (DVB). There are five fall records from 16 to 30 September; four of these from the last few days of the month and only one record pertains to an adult.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*. An uncommon migrant, occasionally seen in small flocks. Spring records range from 9 April to 15 June. The majority pass through from late April to mid-May but even then, only

two to six are typically seen at once. By late May they become rare and there are only a few records after the first week of June.

Fall migrants have been detected from 12 July to 23 October. Most of the passage takes place from August to early September. A tern seen in late September (or October) is more likely to be a Common Tern. High counts are 25 on 23 August 1997 at Edwards AFB (MTH) and 24 one week earlier at China Lake (MTH). The second latest record of 13 October 1997 was of an adult with a begging juvenile, quite an unusual scenario given the date and the lack of nearby breeding areas.

Least Tern *Sterna antillarum*. Casual spring migrant with eight spring records from 12 May to 23 June. Most records are from late May to early June, all pertain to adults and all but one were only seen on one day.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. An uncommon migrant, irregularly common in spring. Spring records range from 27 April to 11 June with most encountered from early to mid-May. At times, large numbers are noted such as eighty on 8 May 1993 at Edwards AFB (JCW, AB 47:453), but more typically four to twelve are seen. By late May, they become rare and there are only a few June records. Two at China Lake 24 June 1989 (DVB) are unseasonable and may pertain to the earliest southbound birds.

In fall they are also uncommon and, while they might be seen in small flocks, numbers invariably are less than a dozen. Records range from 9 July to 21 September with most of the passage in August. They are rare after the first week of September.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*. Casual dispersant with one record of two adults: 28 July 1990 at China Lake (MTH, AB 44:1187), which was totally unexpected.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*. A common introduced resident throughout populated areas of the region. Occasionally, flocks of "racing" pigeons fly over Galileo Hill Park and small numbers fly up Butterbredd Canyon.

Band-tailed Pigeon *Columba fasciata*. A rare wanderer to the region with fourteen spring records from 26 April to 13 June. Most records are from May.

There are eight fall records from 25 July to 24 October with most records from mid-September to mid-October. The late July record is unusually early, the next earliest being 21 August 1993.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*. This introduced species has been recorded in the southern part of the region in the Antelope Valley (Kimball Garrett, in litt.). The extent of this population is unknown.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*. Generally, a rare migrant at both seasons. There are fourteen spring records from 8 May to 9 June. In recent years, one to two have been seen annually during summer in the Ridgecrest area. There are sixteen fall records from 1 September to 5 November; the majority of records are from September.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*. A common resident with some withdrawal in winter. Mourning Doves are most numerous in the populated areas of California City and Ridgecrest where they number in the hundreds throughout the year. In other areas, such as near Cantil, Galileo Hill Park, etc., they are common as breeders but are much less numerous, or absent in winter. Spring migrants are noted in February at areas where they do not winter and numbers build through March and April. They are most abundant at some of the ranches during August when totals of 1,000 have been encountered. Uncannily, they start clearing out around the first of September, which coincides with hunting season. They are still common at this time but their numbers drop by 90% during September away from populated areas. From November to late January they are rarely encountered in most of the region away from cities.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*. Casual migrant with two records: a calling bird 12 May 1996 at Mojave (MTH, AFN 50:332), and another vocal bird at California City 10 October 1999 (BMo).

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*. A casual migrant. There are three records in fall from 6 to 17 October: 12 October 1990 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, AB 45:152), 17 October 1991 near Cantil (MTH), and 6 October 1996 at Mojave (AH, VH, AFN 51:120).

There is one spring record: 23 May 1992 at Butterbrecht Spring (MTH, AB 46:481). A ground-dove sp. was seen too briefly at California City 6 October 1996 to be certain which species was involved (JCW, DVB). Identification of ground-doves is not always straightforward and observers should document any ground-dove in the region. See notes on identification under the following species.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti*. A casual migrant to the region. There are four fall records from 30 September to 15 November: 30 September 1990 near Cantil (MTH, AB 45:152, Heindel and Garrett 1995), 21 September 1991 near Cantil (BD, AB 46:149, Patten et al. 1995), 17-18 October 1991 near Cantil (MTH, AB 46:149, Patten et al. 1995), and 6-15 November 1996 in Ridgecrest (LS, AFN 51:120). There is one record of a wintering bird: 3 February-4 April 1992 in Ridgecrest (MA, AB 46:315, Patten et al. 1995).

A report from Ridgecrest 29 September 1990 was rejected by the CBRC (Heindel and Garrett, 1995); although the details were rather brief, the claim may have been correct. Another report from Galileo Hill Park on 21 September 1999 was thought to be a Ruddy, but was not well documented at the time. There is not yet evidence as to which *Columbina* is more expected; any claim needs to be well documented to ensure the identification is correct. See Dunn and Garrett (1990) for information on the identification of ground-doves.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*. A casual migrant to the region. There are six spring records from 26 May to 13 June; only two records are from May. There are two fall records: 11 September 1992 at Galileo Hill Park (DVB), and 23 August 1997 near Cantil (MTH, FN 52:126).

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus*. An uncommon species in the region scattered sparsely throughout. They are most reliably found in Butterbrecht Canyon in spring as their calls and bill-snapping give away their presence. Otherwise, birders might encounter them in small numbers (one to two) at places like Galileo Hill Park, California City, etc., but it is a difficult bird to find if specifically looking for it.

Groove-billed Ani *Crotophaga sulcirostris*. Casual vagrant with one record of this southern stray: 14-15 October 1988 at Galileo Hill Park (JCW, AB 43:169, Pyle and McCaskie 1992).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*. An uncommon resident in the region. There is some seasonal movement with the largest numbers seen during the fall and winter. The presence of birds at Butterbrecht Spring is sporadic and they are not thought to breed there. They can be found wherever there are large trees and favored areas include California City, near Cantil, Galileo Hill Park, Ridgecrest and Mojave. In some winters a dozen might be encountered in California City or other areas. Breeding areas seemingly change from year-to-year. The hotel area of California City is a favored site, but not used annually. It is assumed they breed in the Ridgecrest area annually. They have also bred at Galileo Hill Park and near Cantil.

Flammulated Owl *Otus flammeolus*. Casual migrant with one record: 17 October 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (LS, MTH, NAB 53:104).

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*. Generally an uncommon resident in the region, present year-round. They breed almost annually in or near Butterbrecht Spring. They have bred at California City, Ridgecrest and near Cantil, but whether they do so regularly is unknown. Migrants are seen in September and October so some movement occurs. Juveniles are usually seen during May.

Northern Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium gnoma*. Casual vagrant with one record for the region: a silent bird 22 August 1992 at Butterbrecht Spring (JCW, AB 47:150). Although generally believed to be sedentary there are at least three records away from breeding grounds in Kern County outside of the region (Kern River Valley and Bakersfield).

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia*. Local and uncommon resident. A decreasing species in the region encountered more frequently during the 1980s. It is uncommon but generally not seen by visiting birders as these owls are typically found in the desert away from human disturbance. A pair breeds near Galileo Hill Park and is sometimes seen in the area. Otherwise, a few are seen near Mojave, near Cantil and near Ridgecrest.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*. Status complex but primarily an uncommon, irregularly fairly common, migrant and winter visitor. Fall birds are routinely encountered in September but typically in small numbers (one to three). Occasionally a dozen or more may be seen later in the fall. Small flocks often take up winter roosts; for example, a flock is routinely seen on the China Lake CBC (35 seen 20 December 1992, AB 47:939). They are more scarce in spring but have bred near Cantil and at Butterbredt Spring. Unfortunately, these latter birds were shot and replacements have not yet arrived.

Short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*. Status complex as it may be present year-round, but primarily an uncommon winter visitor. An uncommon bird and rarely encountered. A small population may be resident near Cantil (JLD, 26 May 1986 Fremont Valley, AB 40:1256) and other summer reports come from areas near California City. An area on the north side of Koehn Dry Lake holds a few birds during the winter (for example, 8 on 20 November 1993) and one to two are sometimes seen in the Ridgecrest and China Lake area.

Northern Saw-whet Owl *Aegolius acadicus*. A casual migrant to the region. There are three spring records: 3 May 1993 at Butterbredt Spring (REW), 20 April 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, FN 52:391) and 21 May 1998 near Inyokern (SS). There are two late fall or winter records: 28 November 1990 at China Lake (JS, AB 45:152), and 4 January 1997 in Inyokern (AFN 51:608).

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis*. A common summer visitor to the region with records from 14 April to 30 October. Spring arrivals generally occur in late April and they are common by mid-May. Due to their crepuscular habits, they may not be seen by visiting birders who do not specifically look for them. But, staying out at dusk near water (for example, California City or China Lake) will yield 50-200 birds from late May through the summer.

Fall arrivals start to slip away in early September but they remain fairly common until the end of that month. They become rare after the first week of October and unexpected after the middle of the month. The 30 October record is ten days after the next latest.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*. A casual migrant in the region. There are eight spring records from 2 to 17 June. Most records are from China Lake but there are records from near Cantil and California City. There are ten fall records from 24 August to 21 September. Up to three have been seen at once (AB 47:150). Identifying nighthawks can be extremely difficult and any record of a Common Nighthawk should be carefully documented.

Common Poorwill *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*. Status uncertain but, at the least, an uncommon and local breeder. Most often encountered by campers near Butterbredt Spring, but it is not known how extensive the population is nor if they breed there annually. Poorwills are not thought to nest on the desert floor in the region, but should be looked for in foothills and canyons.

Up to 1996, there were no records of fall migrants from the well-worked oases. From 27 September to 1 October of that year, migrants were found at California City and near Cantil, with up to four present at the latter locale. Why they were easy to find in the fall of 1996 and not recorded before or since is a mystery. They likely spend the winter, at least rarely, although doing so in a state of torpor. There are two early December records: 13 December 1990 at Randsburg (DVB, AB 45:321) and 8 and 22 December 1994 Ridgecrest (DVB, AB 49:198). These records probably pertain to birds that spent the winter but were able to feed late into the season due to the warm conditions at the time.

Black Swift *Cypseloides niger*. A casual migrant almost entirely during the spring. There are five spring records from 17 May to 7 June. One of these records pertains to thirteen birds (SBT, 21 May 1993)

Butterbredt Spring AB 47:453) but since they were seen flying past Butterbredt Spring en masse, it seems more prudent to consider it one record.

There is one fall record of a bird flying over (and past) China Lake 14 September 1996 (MTH, AFN 51:120). Although an excellent record and the first fall record for the region, it was not the first in fall for Kern as stated in AFN, as there are fall records from other parts of the county.

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*. Casual vagrant to the region. There are three spring records from 11 May to 5 June as follows: 11 May 1990 near Cantil (MTH, AB 44:497), 5 June 1993 near Cantil (MTH, AB 47:453), and two birds seen together 25 May 1997 at California City (MTH, SBT, AFN 51:928). An earlier record, 10 May 1985 at California City (AB 39:350), is best considered probable and not included with the accepted records.

There is one fall record: 14 September 1996 at China Lake (MTH, AB 51:120).

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*. A fairly common migrant but sporadic. These swifts are usually seen in flocks or as part of a movement of swifts seen through the day. Thus, when they are coming through, they seem common, yet, they are not seen on most days during the course of migration. Spring records range from 21 April to 26 May. Most records are during the first half of May and typical daily numbers are 10-30, although more than 100 have been noted.

They are less numerous in fall with records from 18 August to 18 October. Most records are from September. Typical numbers are smaller than those of spring, although there are days when waves come through which total 100 birds.

White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis*. Uncommon to fairly common migrant but status complex as it may be present at any time and numbers vary tremendously. Most often seen over water or at Butterbredt Spring during migration periods, particularly May and again from mid-September to mid-October, when it is fairly common. They are also noted during summer over water near Cantil but these are likely wanderers from the mountains as they are common breeders just to the west of this region. They are least numerous during winter but small numbers have been seen then. Overall, it is the most expected swift and the only one seen reliably outside of the typical migration dates.

Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cynanthus latirostris*. Casual vagrant with one record: 18 April 1982 at Short Canyon (RH, AB 36:1017, Morlan 1985). Since most records of this species are from fall or winter, a spring record is particularly interesting. There are two other records for Kern just outside of the region.

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri*. A fairly common summer visitor with records from 26 March to 6 October. First arrivals are usually seen in early April and they are on territory by May. Reports from late February and early March from Ridgecrest need to be documented as this is earlier than they would be expected this far to the north. They are surprisingly scarce as spring migrants away from breeding areas, usually not seen at Butterbredt Spring or Galileo Hill Park during spring, for example. They breed in Ridgecrest, Mojave, California City, near Cantil, and no doubt elsewhere in the region.

In fall they are seen at Galileo Hill Park in small numbers during August and September. Adults (especially males) tend to leave early and are unexpected by September (although occasionally one will frequent feeders in Ridgecrest later than normal). The species becomes rare by mid-September with few records near the end of that month.

A report from winter, 14 December 1991 China Lake CBC (AB 46:968) was noted as having "no details" by the editor. Given the lack of records for this species in winter from anywhere near this region, the identification problems with hummingbirds, and the fact this species is frequently misreported at this season elsewhere in southern California, the report is not considered valid and most likely pertained to a Costa's Hummingbird.

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna*. A fairly common resident and migrant. This species breeds at Butterbredt Spring, California City, Ridgecrest, Mojave, and occasionally near Cantil (and probably elsewhere). Breeding at California City, for example, takes place early, from January to April, whereas at Butterbredt Spring breeding is typically in May. In general, they are outnumbered in summer by Costa's and Black-chinned, depending on breeding locale, but are the expected hummingbird in winter.



Fall migrants are noted in August and September at Galileo Hill Park. From October, they are seen in small numbers at California City and Ridgecrest, but are generally absent from the rest of the region until spring. Birds suspected of being Anna's X Costa's hybrids have been seen in Ridgecrest.

Costa's Hummingbird *Calypte costae*. A fairly common breeder and rare and local in winter. Records range from 17 March to 10 October although a small number winter in the Ridgecrest area, complicating arrival and departure dates. Migrants are typically encountered in late March or early April but in some years they do not reach Butterbredt Spring until May. They breed in a variety of foothills and canyons. Butterbredt Spring is always home to two to three pairs. In Ridgecrest, they have been known to raise up to four broods starting as early as February (RH).

Adult males seem to leave the county early, being rare after July. The latest migrant adult male was seen 7 September 1995 (MTH). Migrants are occasionally noted at California City and Galileo Hill Park during August and September but they are rare by the end of September.

A small number have been found to winter in Ridgecrest since 1988 (AB 43:366). A number of adult males have been photographed coming to feeders in the area but it is unclear how large this winter population is. Current estimates are 10-20 birds, which is remarkable given the cold temperatures and lack of nearby wintering populations.

Calliope Hummingbird *Stellula calliope*. Generally a rare migrant but occasionally more numerous near Butterbredt Spring. Spring records range from 24 March to 27 May with most records from late April to mid-May. They are most frequently seen in small numbers (one to four) at Butterbredt Spring or Butterbredt Canyon; in some years, dozens might be seen, such as on 7 May 1988 Butterbredt Spring (PEL, AB 42:482).

There are six fall records from 30 August to 23 September; most records are from mid-September. They are generally unexpected and given the difficulty with identifying female hummingbirds (adult males are unrecorded in fall), any claim should be well documented.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus*. A casual migrant to the region and one that poses serious identification problems. There are three spring records: an adult male 11 May 1986 California City (JCW, AB 40:524), a female that nested at California City in May 1991 (MTH) for an intriguing record, and a female 4 June 1999 in Jawbone Canyon (RC). The nest of the May 1991 record, which was abandoned, and two dead chicks were taken to L. A. County Natural History Museum. The chicks also appeared to be *Selasphorus* but the concept of a breeding record for a species that is virtually unrecorded (and not known to breed in the immediate vicinity) is amazing.

The status in fall is uncertain. There is one well studied female 7 September 1991 at California City (SBT). There is another report from 10 August 1984 at California City (AB 39:103) that is best left as probable. Any report should be well documented, and a report of a female would require extensive supportive details.

Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus*. An uncommon spring migrant and fairly common fall migrant. Spring records range from 11 February to 4 June but they are recorded rather sparsely at this season and usually recorded in small numbers (one to two). Most records are from late March to early May. Fall records range from 9 July to 18 October. Numbers fluctuate from year-to-year but they are typically fairly common with 5-15 being average numbers. In some years, the numbers approach 60-80 at places like California City or Galileo Hill Park. Most records are from mid-August to mid-September and almost all are of non-adult males. An adult male at Galileo Hill Park 20 September 1997 (MTH) is late for a bird in that plumage. Although it is possible that some fall *Selasphorus* might pertain to Allen's Hummingbirds (*S. sasin*), their identification under field conditions is unlikely. See the note under that species in Appendix A.

Belted Kingfisher *Ceryle alcyon*. An uncommon migrant and winter visitor with records from 1 July to 4 June. They are encountered by late July in most years and sometimes much earlier. They are most numerous in fall from mid-August to early October when three to eight may be found, and during some years border on fairly common. During the rest of the winter and spring, numbers are typically smaller (one to three). In spring they become rare by mid-May and are casual at the end of that month.

Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis*. Rare fall and casual spring migrant. They are rare in fall with records from 3 September to 13 October. They are not recorded every year but when they do occur multiple individuals are usually seen. In an average fall, two to three are seen, but up to a dozen have been noted. There are two spring records from 5-6 May, both records occurred after years when fall birds were seen.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*. A rare wanderer to the region. Spring records range from 20 April to 10 June with most records from early May. The average is one to two per season. In fall they are slightly more numerous, but still with an average of just two per season with records from 20 August to 18 October.

Williamson's Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus thyroideus*. Casual fall migrant. There are four records from 30 September to 25 November: a female 30 September 1988 at Butterbredt Spring (MTH, AB 43:169), a male 7 October 1990 California City (DMH, AB 45:152), a female 7 October 1990 at Mojave (JCW, AB 45:152) and a female at Galileo Hill Park 1-2 October 1998 (DP, NAB 53:105).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*. Rare fall vagrant and casual winter visitor. There are 22 fall records from 2 October to 24 November. Most records are from late October or early November and more than half of these are juveniles. There are six records of birds spending the winter, although the latest record is 13 February, perhaps indicating these birds eventually continue moving through the region.

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*. An uncommon fall migrant and winter visitor, casual in spring. Records range from 4 September to 7 May, but this species is most numerous in fall from late September through October when three to six might be seen in a day. During winter, one to two are usually found in the residential areas like Ridgecrest and California City and in some years, four to six might be noted. They are quite scarce in spring and generally unexpected.

Red-breasted Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus ruber*. Uncommon migrant and winter visitor, casual in spring. Less numerous than the previous species, it is uncommon to rare from 20 September to 11 May. Most reports are from October but rarely is more than one per day seen. They are rare in winter and almost nonexistent as a spring migrant.

Hybrid sapsuckers are encountered with some regularity and much is still to be learned regarding the identification of hybrids. There is some likelihood that some of the reported hybrids are well-marked Red-breasted Sapsuckers. Until this problem is better understood, observers should be cautious identifying birds in this complex.

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Picoides scalaris*. Fairly common resident scattered throughout the region. They are reliably encountered at Butterbredt Spring and up the canyon in Joshua Tree habitat, extending to similar areas along the remainder of the eastern slope of the mountains. Small numbers are found near Mojave, California City and Galileo Hill Park. They are generally outnumbered at California City by Nuttall's Woodpeckers in fall and winter and are not yet recorded at ranches near Cantil. There is some movement with this species; for example, 2-3 recently arrived at Galileo Hill Park, but this is poorly understood.

Nuttall's Woodpecker *Picoides nuttallii*. An uncommon and local winter visitor with records from 4 June to 24 April. Most records are from August to November and come from California City and near Cantil. A male spent the spring of 1999 at Butterbredt Spring and appeared to be with a female Ladder-backed. The migrant distribution of this and the similar Ladder-backed Woodpecker is unclear. While Ladder-backed is much more likely in spring and summer, Nuttall's is more numerous in fall and winter on the desert floor. In addition, for unknown reasons, Nuttall's are not known from Galileo Hill Park and Ladder-backed have not been recorded near Cantil. More needs to be learned about the distribution of this complex.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*. An uncommon fall migrant and rare winter visitor with records from 25 August to 17 March. Most records are from September and October but even at this peak no more than two are expected in a day. In most winters, one can be found at California City, Ridgecrest, or Mojave.

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus*. Casual fall migrant and winter visitor with eight records from 12 September to 1 January. It is much less expected than the smaller Downy Woodpecker and all reports should be documented. There are three spring records: 12 April 1988 (TM), 13 April 1996 at Butterbred Spring (MTH) and 10 June 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH). The latter record is particularly unusual in that it is at a time when they should be in breeding habitat.

White-headed Woodpecker *Picoides albolarvatus*. Casual fall migrant with five records from 23 August to 10 October. In spite of increasing coverage, only one record is since 1988 (23 August 1995 at Ridgecrest, JS, AB 50:116).

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*. A common fall migrant and fairly common winter visitor and spring migrant with records from 19 July to 6 June. Fall arrivals are typically noted in early or mid-September but some first-year birds have been noted in late July. They are most numerous from late September to late October and at times 40-50 might be seen. Numbers decline from November but they remain fairly common through the winter. There is no real push of spring migrants, they just seem to become rare by late April. There are a handful of records in summer and this may make some of the late spring or early summer records hard to categorize.

The "Yellow-shafted" Flicker is a rare fall migrant with twenty records from 22 September to 27 October. There is one winter record for this subspecies: 4 January 1997 at China Lake. Recently, the average has been two per fall. Intergrades are far more numerous than pure Yellow-shafted Flickers and observers should be cautious in reporting pure birds. The recent average of intergrades is five to eight per fall. There are no records of Gilded Flicker (*C. chrysoides*) for the county, nor is the species expected; reports of this species have proven to be hybrids.

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*. Uncommon to fairly common migrant. This is a fairly common spring migrant from 21 April to 13 June. The majority pass through near the middle of May. This is a rather conspicuous bird, due to its habit of perching on exposed branches.

In fall it is uncommon, seen from 30 July to 29 September, with late August to early September being the peak. Rarely are more than two or three seen per day even during this 'peak.'

Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus*. Fairly common to common migrant. A common spring migrant from 18 April to 25 June. From mid- to late May, they can be quite numerous, numbering in the dozens. Unseasonal cold-fronts moving through the area in early to mid-June may yield large numbers: examples include seven on 16 June 1995 (MTH) and eighteen on 15 June 1997 (MTH). In the absence of these fronts, only one to two per day would be expected after 10 June.

They are fairly common in fall from 27 July to 19 October. The peak at this season appears to be from early to mid-September. Daily totals are less than average counts in the spring, but might still be a dozen or more.

Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*. Casual vagrant with one spring record: 10 June 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, FN 52:391). This bird looked and sounded like an Eastern, although it did not give the full song of this species. This record comes from a year when something significant happened with this species as there were a half dozen reported in California and several in Arizona. One was seen and heard singing throughout the summer of 1998 just outside the region in the Kern River Valley.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris*. Casual fall vagrant with at least five records from 7 September-1 October, a high number given their scarcity in the State. The CBRC has accepted the following records: a calling bird at Galileo Hill Park on 27 September- 1 October 1989 (JLD, AB 44:162, Patten and Erickson 1994), 11 September 1996 at Galileo Hill Park (JLD, AB 51:120), 21 September 1997 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, FN 52:126), and 24 September 1997 near Cantil (MTH, FN 52:126). All of these records are accompanied by photographs. One at California City 7 September 1998 (Matt T. Heindel, NAB 53:105) is currently under review and another report from Galileo Hill Park 26 September 1999 was thought to involve this species. The identification of *Empidonax* in general, and this species in particular is quite complex. See Whitney and Kaufman (1986b), Kaufman (1990), Pyle (1997) and Heindel and Pyle (1999) for more information.

Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum*. Casual vagrant. There is one record of a singing bird at Butterbredt Spring 30 May 1992 (MTH, AB 46:481, Heindel and Patten, 1996). The bird sang and called for over an hour at dawn.

A Traill's Flycatcher, thought possibly to be an Alder, was at Galileo Hill Park 7-10 October 1998 (NAB 53:105). Photos show a relatively dark headed Empid with a fairly noticeable eyering. Calls were somewhat ambiguous and the record is under review by the CBRC. In addition, there have been a number of calling birds, giving notes that, at the time, were thought to be diagnostic for this species. Spring reports (at least two) come from late May and there are several fall reports from September (see for example, Howell and Pyle 1997). See Heindel (1997) for a discussion on the problems with identifying vagrant Alder Flycatchers based on call-note alone. Although extreme notes ("whit" for Willow; "peek", "pik", or "bik" for Alder) are likely diagnostic, Willows can give a hard note, which might be interpreted as one of those described for Alder. None of the reports of calling birds are considered to definitively pertain to Alder Flycatcher. See Whitney and Kaufman (1986a) and Kaufman (1990) for more information.

Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*. A common migrant in the region, but a late one in spring from 7 May to 1 July. Although there are reports from late April (including a believable one from the breeding area in the Kern River Valley), the earliest documented record for the region is 7 May. In some years, they are not seen until the 14th or so. In late May and early June they can be quite numerous, (for example, twenty or more per day). There are a few records for late June to 1 July at various locales; these are suspected to be late birds, but in general, this species has passed through by 20 June.

In fall they have been noted from 28 July to 31 October. The latest record was 30-31 October 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (TW); the next latest is 18 October. Most of the fall passage is from mid-August to early September, when dozens are occasionally seen. Numbers decrease by the end of September and they are rare after the first week of October.

Least Flycatcher *Empidonax minimus*. Casual fall vagrant. There are five documented records from 22 September to 6 October. There are other reports from fall that lack documentation, and given the identification problems posed in this genus, only those records with convincing details are included. See Whitney and Kaufman (1985) and Kaufman (1990) for more information on identifying this species.

Hammond's Flycatcher *Empidonax hammondi*. Uncommon to fairly common migrant. Fairly common in spring recorded from 1 April to 4 June. It can be common in some years from late April to early May, when dozens (or more) move through Butterbredt Spring, with high counts over 100. There are only a few records after 25 May. On average, they outnumber Dusky Flycatcher in spring three or four to one. It has been noted in fall from 16 August to 2 November. It is uncommon at this season, and in some years few are noted. There is no obvious peak, although most reports are from mid-September to early October, and, other than Pacific-slope Flycatcher, it is the most likely Empid seen after early October.

Gray Flycatcher *Empidonax wrightii*. An uncommon migrant to the region. In most springs, this is an uncommon migrant with records from 14 April to 2 June, most passing through in early May. In some years, it is fairly common with four to eight in a day.

In fall it is less numerous when it borders on rare. They have been seen from 7 September to 12 October. No more than one per day is expected at this season, and most records are before the end of September. There is one record of a wintering bird near Cantil 23 November-31 December 1992 (MTH, AB 47:301).

Dusky Flycatcher *Empidonax oberholseri*. Generally an uncommon migrant. In spring they have been recorded from 13 April to 2 June. In exceptional years, it is fairly common and in early May 1990, up to twenty were noted in one day (when many other Empids were moving through the area). The peak of migration is late April to mid-May.

In fall it is uncommon, bordering on rare, recorded from 2 September to 5 October. In some years it is virtually absent. Most records are from the middle of September. At both seasons, this species is usually outnumbered by Hammond's Flycatcher.

Pacific-slope Flycatcher *Empidonax difficilis*. An uncommon to fairly common migrant. A fairly common spring migrant, recorded from 24 March to 28 June. Most are seen from late April to mid-May, but in some

years they can still be seen in good numbers in late May. Generally, this is east Kern's most numerous *Empidonax* at this season, although after 20 May, it may be outnumbered by Willow Flycatcher. It is rare after the first week of June and yet, as an example, four were seen at Galileo Hill Park 28 June 1996 (MTH), demonstrating that they can linger late into the season.

It is less numerous in fall and varies between uncommon and fairly common with records from 21 July to 26 October. If there is a peak, it occurs in September, but daily totals are usually two to three.

There are no records of the Cordilleran Flycatcher (*E. occidentalis*) and a report without sonograms would not likely be accepted. Vocalizations of Pacific-slope vary more than many observers realize and odd-calling birds are more likely to pertain to the expected species. In addition, there has been some suspicion that the vocalizations are not diagnostic. Further research is clearly necessary. With that said, in spite of the thousands of field hours, none of the active Kern birders have heard what they believe pertains to a Cordilleran.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*. An uncommon, local breeder which makes its exact migratory status difficult to judge. But, numbers do seem to increase in September and October when it is fairly common. It is an uncommon breeder with representative locations including California City, Mojave, near Cantil, and China Lake. It is least numerous during mid-winter. The spring passage is not well understood. Lone individuals are sometimes encountered at Butterbred Spring from mid March to late May, indicating some passage takes place at this time. A record from there 11 July 1999 (MTH) probably pertains to a fall migrant. More needs to be learned about the movements of this regularly occurring species.

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*. Casual fall vagrant with four records: 23 October 1987 at California City (PEL, AB 42:137), 12 November 1992 at California City (MTH, AB 47:150), 16 October 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (TW, NAB 53:105), and 4 November 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (Matt T. Heindel, NAB 53:105). A report from California City on 4 May 84 (AB 38:961) should be disregarded; there are no well documented records from late spring in interior California.

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*. An uncommon local breeder and fairly common winter visitor, masking the exact arrival and departure dates. There is an increase in winter at least from October to March, when it is fairly common. It is a slightly more widespread breeder than the Black Phoebe and may require less water than that species. Fledged juveniles have been seen by mid-May.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*. Status complex but primarily a rare migrant and rare breeder. This species has recently been found to be breeding in Ridgecrest, present from 5 March to 31 October. Currently, two to three pairs seem to be breeding annually. Breeding has also been noted elsewhere (for example, California City, Mojave and near Cantil), but it is not certain if breeding is annual at these latter locations.

In addition to these breeding birds, it is rare but seen annually in small numbers (one to four) during both spring and fall. Spring dates away from breeding sites range from 20 April to 23 May. Fall records range from 3 September to 1 December.

There is a recent winter record from January 1999 in the northern Antelope Valley (KG).

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens*. An uncommon summer visitor and fairly common migrant. This species has been recorded as early as 30 March and is fairly common from late April to early May. It breeds in Butterbred Canyon and is suspected to breed near Cantil and likely elsewhere. It is more numerous, however, as a migrant.

In fall it is uncommon, irregularly fairly common from mid-July to August, but rare by mid-September. There are a couple of late September records but, in general, it is hard to find at this time. Two first-year birds were near Cantil 14 October 1997 (MTH); the next latest record for the region is 2 October.

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*. Casual fall vagrant with two records: 23-27 September 1989 at Galileo Hill Park (JCW, MTH, AB 44:163, Patten and Erickson 1994) and 4 October 1996 near California City (JLD, AFN 51:120, McCaskie and San Miguel 1999).

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans*. Casual migrant with one possible breeding record. There are only eight records for the region, six in spring and two in fall. The spring records range from 4 April to 12 June with most occurring during May. A 1998 record pertains to two birds and breeding was suspected but not confirmed (PEL).

The two fall records are 29 July 1989 near Cantil (MTH, AB 43:1369) and 18 September-2 October 1987 at Galileo Hill Park (JCW).

This species is generally unexpected and casually reported by some visiting birders who do not realize the significance. Any claim of this species in the region should be documented.

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*. A common summer visitor and migrant, recorded from 12 March to 31 October. In an average spring, the first arrival is closer to 20 March. It is most numerous from mid-April to mid-May. In late May, small numbers (4-10) are still seen wandering up Butterbredt Canyon. Whether these are local breeders or stragglers is not known.

Western Kingbirds breed in residential or park-like habitats such as California City, Ridgecrest, and Galileo Hill Park, as well as in Joshua Trees. Birds are usually on nests by mid- to late May but have been noted building nests as late as early June.

In fall they are common from mid-July to mid-August, but leave the area quickly. This species is uncommon past early September, and casual past the first week of October. The latest record of 31 October 1991 near Cantil (MTH) was of a bird missing its tail, perhaps explaining its tardiness.

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*. Casual vagrant at both seasons. There are four spring records ranging from 27 May to 12 June: 3-4 June 1989 at China Lake (MTH, AB 43:537), 27-29 May 1991 at Galileo Hill Park (MS, AB 45:497), 12 June 1994 at Inyokern (TM, AFN 48:989), and 29-30 May 1997 at Galileo Hill Park (MAP, FN 51:928)

There are four fall records from 1 to 11 September: 11 September 1993 near Cantil (DVB, AB 48:153), 1 September 1994 at China Lake (DVB), 10 September 1994 near Cantil (REW) and 18 September 1998 at California City (MTH).

A summer record from 6 July 1999 near Ridgecrest (PW) is hard to categorize.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*. Casual vagrant with two records, both from China Lake: 7 August 1992 (DVB, AB 47:150, Heindel and Patten 1996) and 28-30 May 1996 (PW, AFN 50:332). There is an additional record from the San Joaquin Valley (6 September 1992, AB 47:150, Heindel and Patten 1996), but this species seems under-recorded in Kern given the number of records from Inyo County, for example.

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*. This resident is fairly common in the region inhabiting parks, Joshua Trees and fairly open desert. In fact, in light of the difficulties this species is having in much of its geography, shrikes are doing quite well in eastern Kern County. There is an increase in numbers during the winter period, as higher counts are seen from November through February.

Northern Shrike *Lanius excubitor*. Casual fall migrant and winter visitor with eight records from 3 November to 14 March. Most records involve immatures that were first noted in late November and December, and only one record pertains to a bird seen after early January (AB 43:367). Ridgecrest and China Lake account for most records.

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*. Casual spring vagrant with six records for the region: 14-17 May 1992 at Butterbredt Spring (MTH, AB 46:481, Heindel and Patten 1996), 23 May 1993 near Inyokern (H&PB, AB 47:454, Erickson and Terrill 1996), 28 May 1994 at Galileo Hill Park (JF, AFN 48:341-42, Howell and Pyle 1997), 26 May 1997 near Cantil (MTH, FN 51:928), 29 May 1999 at California City (Matt T. Heindel, NAB 53:330), and 25 June 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH).

Bell's Vireo *Vireo belli*. A casual migrant in the region with three spring records (of four birds) from 4-10 May: 8-9 May 1987 Butterbredt Spring (2) (JCW, AB 41:489), 10 May 1987 Jawbone Canyon (PEL, AB 41:489), and 4 May 1990 Mojave (MTH, AB 44:497). Reports from mid- or late March from the Ridgecrest area might be correct as this coincides with when this species arrives in Arizona. Reports from

late May are usually found to pertain to worn Cassin's Vireos. All claims of this species need to be well documented.

Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus*. A casual spring migrant, uncommon fall migrant and rare winter visitor. There are five convincing spring records of this Great Basin species from 5 May to 12 June. Although reported *multiple times each year*, these invariably prove to be dull *cassinii* that appear to be all gray, (see Heindel 1996 for help identifying this species).

In fall Plumbeous Vireo is uncommon with records from 10 September to 14 November. Most records are after late September when they are as numerous as Cassin's Vireo. A few *plumbeus* have stayed for the winter, and may be annual in the region, making late fall and early spring dates hard to assess.

Cassin's Vireo *Vireo cassinii*. Uncommon to fairly common migrant. In general, a fairly common spring migrant with records from 21 March to 16 June. They are most numerous from mid-April to early May, although even in peak years, daily totals are usually less than a dozen or so. Almost all spring records from the Solitary Vireo complex are Cassin's.

In fall this species is uncommon and much less numerous with records from 2 September to 6 November. Most reports are during the latter half of September and it becomes rare after early October. At this season, the number of records between Cassin's and Plumbeous Vireo is similar.

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*. Casual fall vagrant with at least five acceptable records from 6 to 23 October. This species' migration is much later than that of Cassin's and is not expected before October. The identification of the "Solitary Vireo" complex is not always straightforward and caution should be used when considering a report of this species, (see Heindel 1996 for more information on the identification of this species).

The record from AB 47:150, published as 23 September 1992, pertains to a bird seen on 23 October. Although spring reports are occasionally claimed, none of these are documented well enough to support their inclusion. Male Cassin's can be quite bold and observers are urged to be cautious with this identification. Some identifications of birds in this complex, which are likely Blue-headed, should be left unidentified.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*. There are two records for the region: 26 May 1999 in Jawbone Canyon (MTH, NAB 53:330), and 9 October 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (VH, AH). There is one other record for the county: 7-30 July 1994 from the Kern River Valley (AB 48:989).

Hutton's Vireo *Vireo huttoni*. A casual migrant in the region and one that must be identified with caution. There are two documented records from spring: 24 April 1977 Butterbredt Spring (RH, AB 31:1048), and 8 May 1987 Butterbredt Spring (JCW, AB 41:489).

There are seven 'fall' records ranging from 31 July to 1 December. Four of the records are from late September to mid-October, perhaps indicating a peak in their migration. This species is extremely rare in the desert and all claims should be well documented.

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*. Fairly common to common migrant. This species is a common spring migrant recorded from 24 March to 23 June. They become more numerous by mid-April and are common from late April to mid-May and occasionally later. High counts at Butterbredt Spring number in the hundreds. They are usually absent after the first week of June.

In fall they are less numerous and considered fairly common. They have been recorded from 9 July to 19 October, with the peak being mid-August to early September. They are rare after the first of October with only a few records after the 10th.

Philadelphia Vireo *Vireo philadelphicus*. Casual fall vagrant with seven records ranging from 12 September to 22 October. Most records are for early to mid-October.

These records are all from a "perfect" window for this species, fitting well the established pattern of records in California. Warbling Vireos can be quite brightly-colored in fall and caution must be used when identifying this species. See Kaufman (1990) for further information.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*. Casual vagrant at both seasons. There are eight spring records from 23 May to 10 June. There are seven fall records, six from 2 to 29 September, and a very late bird 23 October 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH).

Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavescens*. Casual vagrant from the south with two records: 21-26 September 1995 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, AFN 50:117, Garrett and Singer 1998), and 6 October 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, NAB 53:105). Some first-year Red-eyed Vireos can be bright below so observers should use caution in identifying this species. See Terrill and Terrill (1981) and Pyle (1997) for more information.

Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri*. This is a casual wanderer from the mountains; all records are from the Ridgecrest area. There are at least five records (sometimes of multiple birds) ranging from 23 September to 4 January.

Western Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma californica*. This is an irregularly occurring wanderer, absent in most years, uncommon in some. It has been recorded from 21 August to 22 May, with the majority of records from September to November.

Further work is necessary, but initial indications are that both coastal and interior races are represented. Spring records, particularly so for birds seen in the canyons (for example, Butterbredt), seem to be from coastal populations (*californica* group). In some falls (for example fall, 1997), most records pertain to interior birds (*woodhouseii* group).

Pinyon Jay *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*. Local and uncommon resident and casual wanderer. They are most expected in the region in Butterbredt Canyon where they have been found at all seasons (although they are much scarcer here in mid-summer). It is doubtful that they breed in Butterbredt Canyon as the habitat is more typical of their winter haunts. It seems more likely that this habitat is used for foraging at various times of the year. Their presence in similar areas (for example, in Walker Pass) mirrors this pattern. Away from the mountains, there are seven fall records of birds wandering down to the desert from 11 September to 15 October. These records are associated with irruptions of this species elsewhere in the State. After irruptive falls they have been noted in the following spring. In spring 1997 (which followed records from fall 1996) small parties were noted in May at Galileo Hill Park, Ridgecrest, and Indian Wells Canyon (FN 51:926). These three records, which pertain to flocks of six to 23 birds, are the only spring records for the region away from known areas of occurrence.

Clark's Nutcracker *Nucifraga columbiana*. Casual wanderer with the region's only records from the fall invasion of 1997 (AFN 51:119). At least four individuals were seen at Galileo Hill Park, California City, and Ridgecrest, from 20 September to 2 November.

Black-billed Magpie *Pica pica*. Casual wanderer with three records, all from the Ridgecrest area: 2 January 1966 (AFN 20: 364), 29 December 1968 (AFN 23: 408), and 30 December 1972 (AB 27:505), a record of three birds. These records were in magpie "invasion" years when large numbers appeared elsewhere in the State.

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*. A rare, irregularly occurring migrant, absent in some years. It is rare in spring, recorded in less than half of the years, with records from 25 March to 5 April. Most spring records are of single individuals.

It is much more reliable in fall but still not recorded every year, with records 17 September to 27 November. Most records are from October to mid-November. Usually it is seen singly, but small groups of two to three have been noted. There have been two records of crows wintering in the region.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*. A common resident present throughout the region. This species breeds throughout the region using cliffs, trees, telephone poles, etc. There does not appear to be any significant migration, but birds seem to collect in groups in late summer and early fall when dozens (or more) may be seen together.



Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*. A common resident, present year-round. Numbers notably increase in winter from October to November when, in some years, thousands are found in alfalfa fields. They breed early in the year with juveniles seen by late April in some years, May to June in others. Whether juveniles seen in fresh plumage in September and October are evidence of second or third clutches, or of migrants from more northerly populations needs further study. Given that this species is not thought to migrate until it molts out of juvenal plumage (Pyle 1997), this suggests that this species has a very protracted breeding season.

Purple Martin *Progne subis*. An irregularly occurring migrant, generally rare and not recorded every year. In spring it has been recorded as early as 25 March and as late as 3 June. The region averages about one per spring, with eleven records. A slight majority of records are from the middle to latter part of May. The status is similar in fall with nine records from 6 August to 25 September. The majority of fall martins appear to be immatures with an average of just less than one per fall.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*. A common migrant in the region and present virtually throughout the year. Spring migrants are detected by the end of January, with the bulk of passage being from mid-March to mid-April. It has been recorded as late as 8 June, but is rare after mid-May. Fall birds have been detected by 30 June. From late July to early September, they are common, at least at locations where swallows congregate (for example, China Lake). In general, they are rare after mid-November and casual in December and January. Since there have been the odd wintering individuals at Edwards AFB, for example, exact late fall and early spring dates are difficult to discern.

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina*. A fairly common migrant at both seasons. It is rarely seen in the numbers of its congener and large numbers of this species are usually related to inclement weather. Spring extreme dates are 16 February to 16 June, with mid-March to mid-April representing the peak. There are a small number of records from late June and early July that are hard to categorize. They could pertain to spring or fall migrants, non-breeders, or wanderers from nearby mountains. On multiple occasions, pairs have spent a few days near Cantil at this season, but there was no activity to suggest breeding was attempted, nor would the habitat seem appropriate. In fall the date extremes are 25 July to 10 November, but they are rare before late August. In general, they are uncommon, except during or immediately after the passing of a cold front (primarily from late September to mid-October) when they can be fairly common.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*. Uncommon to fairly common migrant and casual breeder. This species is a fairly common migrant in the desert but is most often seen in single-digit numbers. The earliest record is 14 February, with the peak occurring from mid-March through April. It is rare after late May, with records extending to 8 June. There are recent breeding records near Cantil (1993 and 1995) which makes late spring records a bit more difficult to categorize. In fall it has been recorded from 30 June to 24 October with juveniles seen by mid-July. They are fairly common from late July through August and they are rare after mid-September, with only a few records after the first of October.

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia*. In general, an uncommon migrant, irregularly fairly common. Spring extreme dates are 25 March to 16 June, with most records falling between mid-April and mid-May. Most often, small numbers (2-5) are seen amongst large flocks of swallows near water. In fall it has been recorded as early as 4 July and it is most numerous from late July to late August. Peak numbers are found at China Lake during August when 20-40 might be found. Elsewhere, it is decidedly less numerous. It is rare after mid-September, with few records after that month. The latest record is 26 October, 12 days after the next latest.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*. A common migrant at both seasons. In spring it has been recorded from 1 February to 8 June. There seems to be two different passages. The majority of birds move through during March and April when hundreds may be noted during bad weather. In general, they are rare after mid-May, but annually, small flocks occur in late May and early June, often during inclement weather. It is interesting to ponder from where these birds are coming, as it is much later than they are thought to migrate

in this area. Some of these late spring birds are hatch-year birds, perhaps suggesting these late birds are already migrating away from where they were born a month or two earlier. In fall they are noted from 25 June, becoming common in most years by the end of July through mid-August. This is one of the earliest passerine species to depart in fall and they are rare after early September. Occasional birds are noted later in fall with the first of October generally representing the end of their passage. The latest record was on 23 October 1997, when four were near California City (MTH), all moving north into a wind, much like they are noted in spring. This record defies simple explanation. A hybrid Cliff X Barn Swallow was well described near California City 5 October 1997 (JLD, pers. comm.).

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. A fairly common to common migrant at both seasons. Of the more numerous species of swallows, it is the latest spring arrival with a peak from mid-April to mid-May. The extreme dates are 25 February to 30 June, although it is rare after the first of June. In early to mid-May, dozens, and occasionally, more than 100 are seen flying up Butterbrecht Canyon. Fall dates span from 21 July to 24 November. It is rare before early August, with the peak from mid-September to mid-October. At times, hundreds are present. In general, it is rare after the first of November, but almost annually one to two birds linger at this time. There is one winter record: 9 December 1992 to 23 January 1993 near Cantil (MTH).

Mountain Chickadee *Parus gambeli*. A rare fall migrant and casual winter visitor, not seen every year. Records range from 8 September to 14 February. Irregularly, when there is a bit of an irruption, they may be uncommon with two to four at one locale. There are six winter records, primarily from the Ridgecrest area.

Oak Titmouse *Baeolophus inornatus*. Rare wanderer in fall and winter, casual in spring. Another irruptive species, but one much less understood. They are absent in most years, yet when recorded, they are often seen in multiple locations and numbers. They are best considered an irregularly rare winter visitor with records ranging from 6 September to 25 March. There are two intriguing spring records: 26 May 1994 at Cow Heaven Canyon (LS), and 23-26 May 1999 at Mojave (DC). Whether breeding was involved is unknown.

Juniper Titmouse *Baeolophus griseus*. Casual winter visitor with one record: 24 February 1999 at California City (MTH). This individual called repeatedly, allowing for an easy identification. Prior to this record all reports were thought to pertain to the coastal species, but less attention was no doubt given to records in this complex prior to its being given specific status. It is possible that some records, particularly those from the Ridgecrest area, could pertain to the interior species. Future records should be scrutinized to better understand the distribution of this complex.

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps*. A fairly common, but somewhat local permanent resident. In no one spot are they particularly numerous and their preferred habitat of desert scrub is not the place where most of the birding hours are spent. In addition to their "traditional" habitat, they have been observed to breed at man-made locations, such as California City and Galileo Hill Park. They do not appear to withdraw in winter and in fact, have been seen using nests, presumably for shelter, at this season.

Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus*. A casual winter visitor, but when they do occur, it is usually in a flock of 3-20 birds. Records exist from 8 August to 12 April, but most sightings are from October to December. Most records identified to race have been from the coastal group. Records from the fall of 1999 from Ridgecrest, California City, and Galileo Hill Park, all pertained to interior populations. Future records should be studied closely to better understand the distribution of the various races. In March 1997, a pair was seen nest-building near Butterbrecht Spring (REW, pers. comm.), but it is unknown whether this nest was successful.

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis*. An uncommon, irregularly fairly common migrant and winter visitor. Most records of this species are of fall migrants and winter visitors when they vary from fairly common to uncommon, with records from 25 August to 16 June. The passage occurs primarily between mid-September and mid-November. The first fall in memory to have no Red-breasted Nuthatches in the

region was in 1997. In approximately half of the good years a few will winter. In general, however, they are rare in mid-winter.

Their status in spring, like winter, is primarily dependent on how much movement occurred the previous fall. In good years, they will be uncommon, but in other years they are virtually or entirely absent. Even in years with strong movement, they are generally unexpected after May.

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*. An uncommon fall migrant and casual winter visitor. Most records are from mid-September to early October, with a date span of 10 August to 10 November. Based on call, four of these have been assigned to *tenuissima*, an interior race (although conceivably they could pertain to *nelsoni*, a race from the southwest); three of these four records are from September. Although they are generally less numerous than the previous species, they are a bit more consistent from year-to-year. There are four winter records from 30 December to 17 March. There are no spring records.

Pygmy Nuthatch *Sitta pygmaea*. Casual fall wanderer with six records for the region from 12 August to 14 September. This is an irruptive species and future records should be expected.

Brown Creeper *Certhia americana*. An uncommon fall migrant, casual winter visitor and spring migrant. They have been recorded from 4 October to 1 January, but most records are from late October to mid-November. It is casual in spring with four records from 11 March to 19 May. Given the decreased coverage in winter it is possible this species may be more regular in winter than shown. A record from mid-summer, 19 July 1997 from California City (JCW), is particularly odd (FN 51:1054) and defies simple explanation.

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*. An uncommon to locally fairly common resident in the region. It is most numerous on the eastern slope of the Sierra from Walker Pass south. They are restricted by habitat but can be found in good numbers in Butterbredt Canyon, near Mojave and in the southwestern portion of the region near Willow Springs (MOC, pers. comm.). It is quite local away from the mountains as its habitat is largely lacking on the desert floor in the region. There has been no evidence that its status in breeding areas changes during the year. Specifically, this species is quite evident in Walker Pass even in mid-winter.

One to two have been noted on occasion at China Lake during fall and winter. Whether these are wanderers from nearby breeding areas (Walker Pass is just barely more than ten miles away) or migrants from farther afield is unknown. Regardless, some movement is undertaken by this species, but from where and how extensive is currently unknown.

Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus*. Uncommon to locally fairly common resident. This species is most often found in canyons, hills, or surrounding areas (for example, Butterbredt Canyon). They are generally uncommon but certain canyons yield four to five pairs, or more. Although some of these birds are sedentary, there is an increase in numbers at desert oases during September and October, indicating some movement is taking place.

Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus*. This resident species barely gets into the region. It is apparently absent from well-worked Butterbredt Canyon and is unrecorded in adjacent canyons. They have been noted in the Kern portion of Sand Canyon (Tom and Jo Heindel, pers. comm.) and are likely to occur in Short and Indian Wells Canyons.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*. Uncommon migrant and summer visitor, rare in winter. This species breeds in the wetter parts of canyons, for example, at Butterbredt Spring and adjacent areas. They border on fairly common here, but they are extremely local. Away from breeding areas, they are most numerous, but still uncommon, as fall migrants from late September to early November. They are uncommon in winter, bordering on rare. The date span of migrants is 11 August to 6 April. The lack of records later in spring brings into question the regularity with which this species migrates through the area at this season (although spring birds recorded at Butterbredt Spring would easily be ignored as migrants, as one could assume they are part of the breeding population).

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*. Status complex as they are present almost year-round, but primarily an uncommon to fairly common migrant. Although primarily encountered as a migrant, more complete coverage has resulted in records throughout the year. This is a fairly common spring migrant recorded from 26 February to 16 June. Most of the migration takes place in April and it is rare after the first part of May. In fall it is also fairly common, recorded from 4 July to 1 November. This migration peaks from mid-August to mid-September. It is rare after the first week of October.

There is one recent winter record for the region near Cantil; reports from the China Lake CBC (for example, AB 49:794) have lacked details, but might indicate this species can be expected rarely at this season. Also, two pairs successfully bred in Mojave in 1995 but no further breeding evidence has been found.

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Rare fall and casual spring migrant. Rare in fall, averaging two to three per season, with 31 records from 2 September to 12 November. This bird is casually reported by some visiting birders. Most of these reports are probably correct, but given the number of erroneous reports and the lack of documentation, only records with supporting details are included.

In spring there are six records from 22 April to 2 June. Prior to the spring of 1999, when there were four records, there had been only two records: 1 June 1990 Mojave (TE, AB 44:497), 2 June 1991 Butterbredt Spring (AH, VH). It is interesting to note the late nature of the June records as wintering birds along the coast of southern California are usually on the move much earlier. Similarly, to the north, spring migrants have been noted in Inyo from February to April (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.).

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*. A local but fairly common breeder, present year-round. Known nesting localities include Edwards AFB, China Lake, near Cantil and California City, although they do not breed in each area every year. Migration is difficult to decipher as only Galileo Hill Park gets a number of known migrants (as they do not breed there). Spring migration is hard to detect but seems to be mid-March to mid-April. In general, they are unexpected away from breeding areas after the first of May, although one was seen at Galileo Hill Park 15 May 1997 (MTH). Another record from Galileo Hill Park on 16 June 1994 (MTH) is bizarre and makes one ponder its subspecific identity.

In fall the earliest arrivals are from 29 August and 1 September, but generally, migrants are not expected until closer to 10 September. By mid-September small numbers (two to six) are routinely seen at Galileo Hill Park and this continues until mid-October. They are fairly common in winter at all breeding localities; the extent that these are residents or replaced by migrants is unknown.

Golden-crowned Kinglet *Regulus satrapa*. An uncommon fall migrant, casual in winter and spring. Fall records range from 21 September to 30 December with most passage occurring from mid-October to mid-November. In some years they border on fairly common.

This species is casual in spring with records from 11 March to 23 May. Although small numbers (up to four in a day) were noted during April 1999, this species is entirely absent during most springs. It is possible some of the March birds wintered in the area.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*. A fairly common to common migrant and winter visitor in our area with a date range of 4 September to 27 May. In fall it is rare before mid-September, but is usually common from the end of September to early November. There is an unconfirmed report as early as 18 August, so observers should be on the lookout for earlier arrivals of this species.

In spring there is a noticeable increase from mid-March to mid-April, and occasionally to the end of April. On rare occasion, they pass through Butterbredt Spring in the hundreds. They are rare by mid-May with few records after the 20th.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*. Casual vagrant with one record of this Asian stray: 4-5 October 1997 near California City (MTH, FN 52:127). See Leader (1994) to learn more about the identification of this and similar species.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila caerulea*. Uncommon migrant and rare summer visitor, but status complex. This is a difficult species to categorize, due in part to its irregular patterns of occurrence. In general, it is rare in spring with records from 21 March to 12 May. They have bred in the Butterbredt Canyon area and have likely done so in adjacent canyons also. At least

two nests have been parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds. These birds have been seen on nests from early May to early July.

It is more numerous in fall but still uncommon from 18 July to 1 October. Most records are from August and September.

There are four records from Ridgecrest in late December. Whether these are wintering birds or late fall migrants is not known. In addition, there are three reports of Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (*P. melanura*) on China Lake CBCs, a species that is unlikely given its sedentary nature and the lack of nearby populations. Assuming these reports pertain to Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, they may be more regular in winter than noted above.

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana*. A rare transient in the region and the less expected of the two bluebirds. There are twenty records in fall from 21 October to 17 November, a surprisingly narrow window for multiple records. At least one of these birds was known to stay into the winter at Ridgecrest, 20 December 1996 to 21 January 1997 (JS).

There are five spring records from 10-25 May. In addition, they have nested at Cow Heaven Canyon (20 May 1990, DM) and might do so in other canyons.

There are reports from the region, particularly the Ridgecrest area in fall and, more significantly, winter, which may be valid but the significance was not understood at the time by the observers. These reports are certainly plausible, but it is not the expected bluebird in our region during winter. Observers can help clarify this situation by documenting records of this species.

Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides*. A fairly common but local winter visitor, recorded from 10 October to 14 April. Most migrants are detected from late October to early November, but these are usually seen in small numbers (one to four) at places like Galileo Hill Park. To see larger numbers one should check the alfalfa fields in mid-winter. Numbers vary from year-to-year but range from dozens to hundreds. After early March they are not expected in their wintering areas but single birds, on rare occasion, might be found in Butterbredt Canyon or other mountain areas.

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi*. An uncommon migrant in the area, but usually more numerous in fall, casual in winter. Fall records range from 29 August to 10 November with most occurring from late September to mid-October. There are four records of birds spending the winter in the region.

In spring, it borders on rare, but can be plentiful in some years (for example, twelve on 4 May 1990, MTH). The date span ranges from 9 March to 10 June, but there are only two records after late May. At this season, it is difficult to determine if there is a peak to their migration as there are not enough data points, but initial indications suggest it is mid-April to early May.

Veery *Catharus fuscescens*. Casual vagrant with one record: 19-24 September 1991 at Galileo Hill Park (RAE, AB 46: 150, Patten et al. 1995). Two reports (25 Oct 1992 at Galileo Hill Park and 28 May 1993 at Butterbredt Spring) were rejected by the CBRC (Heindel and Patten 1996, Erickson and Terrill 1996). Identification of *Catharus* thrushes can be quite difficult and some individuals might not be safely identified in the field. See Phillips (1991), Patten (1997) and Pyle (1997) for further information on this species.

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*. Casual fall vagrant with two records: 14-18 September 1989 at Galileo Hill Park (JLD, AB 44:163, Patten and Erickson 1994), and 9 October 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, NAB 53:105). See the above-mentioned references for more information on *Catharus* identification.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*. Common spring migrant, rare in fall. This species is common in spring with records from 26 April to 16 June. It is rare before the first of May, but common from the 10th or so until the end of the month. Daily totals of over 100 are regular at this season. There is a summer record from 10 July 1993 near Cantil (MTH) that is a bit difficult to categorize, but it probably is either a late spring migrant or a non-breeder. A few records of birds from the cool olive races (*swainsoni* or *almae*, for example) have been seen, but nearly all birds are warm brown and indeed have been the source of many reports of Veery.

In fall this is a rare migrant. In some years, none are reported and in good years, only a few are seen.

Records range from 2 September to 10 November, but this latter date is three weeks beyond the next latest date. In addition, the November bird was one of the cool, olive birds, which is less than annual in fall.

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*. Fairly common migrant and uncommon winter visitor. Most numerous in spring when it is a fairly common migrant. The bulk of passage is from early April to early May. It is rare after mid-May and the latest date is 12 June.

In fall they are less numerous but still fairly common. They have been noted as early as 2 September, but in general are not expected until after mid-September. Most of the passage is noted during October. In winter the numbers vary, being uncommon in most years, but virtually absent in others.

There is much to be learned regarding the different timing of the various races. To simplify things, these will be split into brown (*guttatus* or *nanus*, for example) and gray (*polionotus* or *sequoiensis*, for example) groups. The gray group is uncommon in fall and is generally outnumbered by members of the brown group. Much of their migration probably takes place through the mountains and they are unrecorded after the first week of October. The gray group is fairly common in spring with records from 28 April to 12 June.

The brown group is the more expected one in fall and winter. They have been recorded as early as 14 September, but in most years are not detected until later in the month. They are common during April and early May, but are not expected after mid-May.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*. Casual vagrant with two records: 10-13 October 1998 at California City (TW, NAB 53:105) and 16 June 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (KG).

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*. Status complex, present year-round in varying numbers as an uncommon summer visitor, fairly common migrant and winter visitor. It is an uncommon breeder, found in man-made locations such as California City, Ridgecrest, etc. Other than this, they are generally a fairly common winter visitor with records ranging from 23 August to 28 May. In most years, they are not recorded away from breeding areas until late September, with the peak of migration during October and early November. Winter numbers vary, but it is only the unusual year when they are hard to find in residential areas. Spring passage is less visible, but there is detectable movement from mid-March to mid-April. Late birds are found annually flying up Butterbrecht Canyon in May.

Varied Thrush *Ixoreus naevius*. Uncommon fall migrant, rare in winter and spring. This species is irruptive and numbers vary from year-to-year. It has been recorded as early as 27 September, but is rare before the 10th of October. Most records are from late October to mid-November. The latest record of a presumed migrant is 18 December. During most falls, two to four might be seen. In some years, twenty or more might be noted. There are a few winter records from China Lake, near Cantil and Butterbrecht Spring. On one occasion, six were seen near Ridgecrest 31 December 1977 (AB 32:857).

It is rare in spring and generally unexpected with 14 records. Its presence in spring is strongly correlated to its status the previous fall and winter. Records range from 10 March to 24 May, but it is unexpected after the first of May.

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*. Casual vagrant with eight records. Two records are from spring: 5 June 1987 at Mojave (RS, AB 41: 489, Langham 1991), and 1 June 1991 in desert scrub in Butterbrecht Canyon (DVB, AB 45: 497, Heindel and Garrett 1995). There are six fall records from 30 September to 31 December. Four of these fall records are from the fall of 1998, when California was saw an influx of almost twenty Catbirds throughout the State.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*. A locally fairly common resident. This species breeds in both Joshua Trees (for example, Butterbrecht Canyon) and residential areas. They are increasingly easy to find in summer and this species seems to be thriving. There may be some form of withdrawal in mid-winter as they are less numerous at this season, but more work is necessary to validate this impression.

Sage Thrasher *Oreoscoptes montanus*. An uncommon migrant in the region, but occasionally more numerous. In spring migration, it has been noted from 23 January to 30 May. The bulk of migration is from late February through March. Early flocks have been noted, such as five in Ridgecrest 24 January 1999 (JS). They are rare after April and the second latest record is 18 May.

In fall they have been noted from 28 August to 31 December. The peak, if there is one, is late September to mid-October with the highest count being five at China Lake on 9 October 1989 (DVB). They have been suspected of wintering on rare occasion: In addition to the 31 December record, there was one on 5 January 1991 at China Lake (DVB), and this would make these extreme dates less reliable.

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*. Casual vagrant, primarily in fall. There are three spring records: 6 May 1986 at Mojave (JLD, AB 40:525), 12-24 May 1988 at California City (MOC, AB 42:482), and 13-14 May 1989 at Mojave (MTH, AB 43:538).

There are eight fall records from 29 September to 23 October.

Bendire's Thrasher *Toxostoma bendirei*. Casual migrant and summer visitor. There are ten-plus records from the Kelso Valley (just west of the region) and adjacent Butterbredt Canyon area. It is known to have bred there and, based on singing birds in May, may do so regularly. They have been noted from 3 April to 10 July. There was also one seen at Butterbredt Spring on 27 April 1995 (MTH). This latter individual is assumedly one of the nearby breeders wandering from its territory, but could pertain to a bird just arriving into the area. There are three records on the desert floor of note: a spring migrant at California City on 4 April 1981 (GP, AB 35: 864), another spring migrant near Cantil on 11 May 1995 (MTH) and a winter record from Randsburg on 1 January 1966 (Garrett and Dunn 1981).

California Thrasher *Toxostoma redivivum*. This locally uncommon resident is restricted in this region to the wetter canyons of the mountains in the western part of the region. Although they breed annually in Butterbredt Canyon, for example, they might not be seen on every trip. They are found in similar canyons (Sand Canyon, for example) but have not been noted on the desert floor.

Le Conte's Thrasher *Toxostoma lecontei*. A fairly common though somewhat local resident. This species is found in a variety of habitats, including sage, creosote, and Joshua Trees. They are found on the desert floor, canyons and mountain ranges, including the Rand and El Paso Mountains. A half-day scouting trip in the region would turn up well over a dozen individuals. Thorough searching could yield a similar number in Butterbredt and Jawbone Canyons alone, an area where they are quite reliably seen. The average trip through the area, assuming one does not look hard for this species, would likely result in one to two birds being seen, leaving observers with the sense that they are 'uncommon' but this is not the case. In fall there may be some local movement to slightly wetter areas as the only records from the desert oases themselves are September to November.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. A common bird, although somewhat local. It breeds in almost all residential areas. They are most numerous in fall when they flock by the dozens and sometimes in the hundreds. Migration is noted in spring with small flocks seen flying up Butterbredt Canyon, and in fall, with larger flocks at various locations.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*. Casual fall vagrant with two records of this Asian stray: 20 September 1991 at China Lake and 22 September 1991 at California City (MTH, AB 46: 151, Patten et al. 1995). These records were during a year that featured dozens of reports in the state, including other inland records (at Furnace Creek Ranch, Inyo Co., for example).

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*. A common winter visitor to the region with a date span of 6 September to 11 June. It is rare before mid-September and usually is most numerous from late October to late November, at times numbering in the hundreds. Winter numbers seem to vary somewhat, but they can always be found in good numbers (dozens) in alfalfa fields, or near water. Spring passage is hard to detect as numbers from winter just seem to drop off. A notable exception is a group of 130 at China Lake on 13 April 1998 (MTH). More typically, numbers decrease during April and they are often absent after early May. There are few records after mid-May. Other notably late dates in spring are 25 and 27 May, and 3 June.

Sprague's Pipit *Anthus spragueii*. Casual vagrant with one record: 20-22 October 1996 at China Lake (DVB, AFN 51:120, McCaskie and San Miguel 1999).

Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*. There is one definite record: a specimen found near Inyokern on 11 January 1987 (Maturango Museum # 91.56). A report of three from China Lake on a Christmas Bird Count, 23 December 1967 (AFN 22: 379) is likely correct but there are no details, nor was this an invasion year.

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*. A fairly common migrant and winter visitor with records from 22 August to 17 June. Numbers vary from year-to-year, but they are usually numerous in the region. In fall the peak is from late September through October. In winter it is uncommon and local in most years and typically found only where there are large ornamental plantings in Ridgecrest and California City. It is most numerous during spring when flocks are often encountered from early April to early May. It is annually recorded in small flocks (for example, 6-15) through the end of May and a few birds trickle through until early June.

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens*. An irregularly occurring migrant that is somewhat difficult to categorize. They are reliable in spring with records from 28 March to 17 June. In some years they are uncommon, but in most years they are fairly common. Small flocks of five to ten can routinely be seen in mid-May flying up Butterbredt Canyon. In 1995 they bred in many areas near Ridgecrest and Butterbredt Spring. They are less reliable in fall, rare half the time and uncommon the other years. Records range from 19 July to 16 December with no particular peak.

There are at least four records for winter but late and early migration dates make these somewhat difficult to decipher.

Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora pinus*. Casual vagrant, primarily in spring. Kern County has done remarkably well with this vagrant with six spring records from 9 May to 10 June: 25 May 1984 at California City (JCW, AB 38:962, Bevier 1990), 9 May 1987 at Butterbredt Spring (JCW, AB 41:489, Langham 1991), 29-30 May 1987 Butterbredt Spring (JLD, AB 41:489, Langham 1991), 22 May 1992 at Mojave (DVB, AB 46:481, Heindel and Patten 1996), 8 June 1997 at Butterbredt Spring (MTH, AFN 51:928), and 8-10 June 1999 at Butterbredt Spring (VH). In addition, Kern has one fall record: 24-27 September 1995 at Galileo Hill Park (SS, AFN 50:117, Garrett and Singer 1998).

Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*. Casual vagrant, primarily in spring. There are three spring records: a male 29-30 May 1987 at Butterbredt Spring (JCW, AB 41:489, Langham 1991), a female 21-22 May 1988 at Mojave (JR, AB 42:482, Pyle and McCaskie 1992), and a male 31 May 1997 at California City (ST, FN 51:928).

The male at Butterbredt Spring was seen with a female Blue-winged Warbler for a remarkable tandem. In addition, there is one fall record: 21-24 September 1995 at Galileo Hill Park (JHu, AFN 50:117, Garrett and Singer 1998) where it also shared the park with a Blue-winged Warbler.

Tennessee Warbler *Vermivora peregrina*. Rare vagrant. There are at least 32 spring records for the region from 14 May to 16 June. The recent average has been almost three per spring. There might be even more spring records as there are occasional reports that are not documented.

It is less likely in fall with fifteen records from 22 September to 22 November. Recently the average has been one per fall. At this season it is overreported as many visitors expect this to be as numerous as it is on the coast. Many reports actually pertain to "gray-headed" Orange-crowned Warblers. See Dunn and Garrett (1997) for more information on the plumages of Tennessee and Orange-crowned Warblers.

Orange-crowned Warbler *Vermivora celata*. A complex species to categorize as it may be present throughout the year, but most numerous as a common spring migrant. Spring arrivals have been noted from 8 March, but most of the passage is from late March to early May. On occasion hundreds have been counted flying through Butterbredt Canyon in a morning. This species is generally rare after the middle of May. The last adult in spring on the deserts is 9 June, but even this may apply to something other than a spring migrant.

If one considers juveniles as fall migrants, they have been noted as early as 10 May and have been recorded by early June in every year since 1988. All records of juveniles in late spring appear to be *lutescens*, except for a dull gray bird 13 June 1999 at Butterbredt Spring (MTH), which could not be confidently identified to



race. The first adults on the deserts in fall have been recorded on 13 July. They are most numerous during August and September, and 100 were seen on 1 October 1994. This is an exceptional concentration and a rather late date for such numbers. They are rare in winter with a handful of records, but in recent years are being found annually in Ridgecrest.

There is much to be learned about the different races in terms of migration. The bulk of early spring passage is with the bright race *lutescens*. The grayer birds (*celata/orestera* complex) are less numerous, but outnumber *lutescens* by early May. In fall it gets more complicated. The juveniles as well as early adults, appear to be *lutescens*. Although the grayer birds appear more numerous in fall, significant work is still necessary and identification must usually be left as only probable. The extent to which, or if, nominate *celata* occurs here is uncertain. *Celata* is a late migrant in the eastern US yet, so little is known of when birds migrate from Alaska, for example, and there is a specimen of *celata* from the Colorado River in Arizona in September (Rosenberg et al. 1991). Exceedingly pale birds have been noted in mid-September, before *celata* is generally expected to occur here. If some *orestera* are indeed this dull, it may not be possible to definitively claim *celata* on the Kern list. The winter records appear to represent both groups of birds.

Nashville Warbler *Vermivora ruficapilla*. Uncommon to fairly common migrant. A fairly common spring migrant recorded from 1 April to 19 June. Most of the migration occurs from late April to early May, but even big days at Butterbreed are only of 20-30 birds. They are rare after mid-May and casual after the first of June.

In fall they are uncommon, irregularly fairly common, and generally less numerous than in spring with records from 25 July to 28 November. Most of the migration is from August to early September. They are rare by the end of September and unexpected after late October, although there are now two records from the last week of November.

Virginia's Warbler *Vermivora virginiae*. Rare fall migrant with 22 records ranging from 4 August to 22 September. Note the early fall pattern of records with this species, consistent with records elsewhere in the California desert. In 1996 the region had eight Virginia's; one is a more expected average for fall, with almost all records occurring before the middle of September.

This is arguably the most frequently misreported bird in the region during spring. There are no well documented records for spring, yet, *two to four are reported annually at this season*. Most reports appear to pertain to extremely dull Yellow Warblers, immature female Common Yellowthroats and less frequently, dull Nashville Warblers. Many birders are not aware that, even though this is the desert, this species is quite scarce in Kern. Further, they migrate early and thus would not be likely candidates for late May, when the majority of birders report them. Any claim of this species in spring should be thoroughly documented.

Lucy's Warbler *Vermivora luciae*. Casual migrant, primarily in fall, with nine records for the region (and an additional record for the Kern River Valley). The first record, and the only one from spring, was a male at China Lake on 18 May 1991 (SBT, AB 45:497).

There are eight fall records from 19 July to 3 October. Most of the fall records are from July and August, which coincide with the departure dates from their breeding grounds. There are only two well documented records from September, with one lingering into October. Any report of this species after August needs to be well documented.

Northern Parula *Parula americana*. Rare spring and casual fall vagrant. This species has been recorded with a degree of reliability in spring with the average being approximately four per season. Spring records range from 3 May to 19 June and there are at least 54 records at this season. In the spring of 1992, a season when the State was inundated with a few species of vagrants and at least 138 Parulas (Terrill et al. 1992), Kern County had twelve Parulas, eight within this region!

It is casual in fall with nine records from 8 September to 15 October. Four records come from the fall of 1998, extraordinary in that this equaled the total for fall records up to that year.

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia*. Common migrant, particularly in spring. This is one of Kern's more abundant warblers in spring recorded from 6 April to 17 June. It is a late arrival, generally not recorded until after the 20th of April. It peaks in the middle of May and lingers into June, with small numbers seen to

the 10th of June. It has been noted on the 16th in different years. One record from 30 June was felt to more likely pertain to a lingering spring bird, although it is not definitively included as such.

A pair was seen copulating at Butterbredt Spring 10 June 1995 (MTH) but no nest was found, nor were any young observed.

In fall it is less numerous being fairly common to common. It is noted in late July annually and has been seen as early as 14 July. The peak is from the latter part of August past the middle of September. In general it is rare after the 10th of October and casual by the end of the month. It has been recorded as late as 24 November, with a few other early and mid-November records. A mid-winter bird was documented at Galileo Hill Park 14 January 1996 (JCW, AFN 50:225) for an unusual record. There is an undocumented report from Ridgecrest 29 February 1988, so perhaps future winter records will occur.

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Dendroica pensylvanica*. Rare vagrant, slightly more likely in fall. There are ten spring records from 23 May to 13 June and 22 fall records from 4 September to 2 November. During the fall of 1999, there were nine records which somewhat skews the total; one per fall is the average.

Magnolia Warbler *Dendroica magnolia*. This is a rare vagrant at both seasons, although it is more numerous in fall. There are 21 spring records from 10 May to 13 June. The recent average has been just over one per spring.

In fall there are at least 34 records, and perhaps more as some reports have no details. Records range from 13 September to 4 November, with east Kern currently averaging three per fall. Most records are from late September and early October.

Cape May Warbler *Dendroica tigrina*. Casual fall vagrant with two records: 25-26 September 1987 at Galileo Hill Park (JCW, AB 42:138), a first-year male, and 13 October 1990 at California City (MTH, AB 45:153), a dull first-year female. This species has become much more scarce in California in general over the last decade or so.

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Dendroica caerulescens*. Rare to casual vagrant, predominantly in fall. This is a casual vagrant in spring with only five records as follows: 4 June 1984 near Ridgecrest (LJ, AB 38:962), females 27 May 1989 at Mojave, (DW, AB 43:538), 15 May 1993 at Butterbredt Spring, (DVB, AB 47:454), and 5 June 1994 at Butterbredt Spring (MTH, AFN 48:342), and a singing male 26 May 1997 at California City, (JCW, AFN 51:928).

In fall it is a rare vagrant with 42 records. Recently, the region is averaging three per season. Although there is one early record from 12 August 1995 (DM, AB 49:102), the remaining range from 17 September to 7 November, with the majority from October.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata*. A fairly common to common winter visitor and migrant, most numerous in spring. The status of this species is quite complex due to its varying numbers through the seasons, different subspecies, etc.

In fall this is a fairly common to common migrant. Although this species has been recorded as early as 12 August, a bird appearing to be in its first-year, it is only rarely recorded before the 10th of September, with the majority of birds passing through during October. There is a notable decrease in numbers during mid-winter. At this season, it may be locally fairly common at places like California City or Ridgecrest, but uncommon or rare at less residential areas like Galileo Hill Park.

In spring this is one of Kern's most common warblers, but most pass through before the majority of birders venture to the desert. There is a noticeable increase in numbers by early March, late February in some years, and they are common through April. Over 1,000 in a day have been seen flying up Butterbredt Canyon in early and mid-April. By mid-May, this is an uncommon species and it is rare after the 25th. A few may be seen in early June, but it is casual by then. There is a late record from 16 June 1990 at California City (MTH). There is an odd mid-summer record from 3 July 1985 at California City (SL, AB 39:963) that is hard to explain.

The "Myrtle" Warbler has an interesting pattern of occurrence in the desert. It is uncommon in fall with birds seen from late September (the earliest being 22 September), but more regularly in October. After mid-November they are less numerous when, typically, only one to two per day are seen. In spring there is a noticeable increase from March into April. In some years, they are fairly common at this time, with a high

count of thirty. Numbers may remain high (four to eight per day) through April, but in general they are rare after the first part of May. Then, there is a small collection of records from late May and early June. These later birds are most likely “vagrants” in a more traditional sense, as they most likely represent lost birds.

Black-throated Gray Warbler *Dendroica nigrescens*. A fairly common migrant in the region during both seasons. On most days, however, it is usually seen in small numbers (two to eight) and in general, is not prone to be seen in large numbers as are some of the other western warblers.

In spring it has been seen as early as 26 March but in most years, is not seen until after the 5th of April. The peak passage is from after mid-April to early May. After the middle of May it is uncommon and rare by the 25th. It is casual in June, with only a handful of records. An extremely late record is one at Butterbredt Spring on 19 June 1993 (BB), nine days after the next latest.

In fall it has been recorded from 29 July to 11 November. It is most numerous from mid-September to early October, but it is rarely seen in numbers over ten at anytime. Small flocks (four to six) are regularly noted between 20-25 October, typically after the passage of a cold front, but then numbers drop quickly.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Dendroica virens*. This is a casual vagrant with three fall records and one spring record: 6 November 1983 at California City (JCW, AB 38:247), 18 October 1987 at California City (JCW), 6 November 1991 at California City (AS, AB 46:151) and 26 May 1995 at Butterbredt Spring (JCW, AFN 49:309). There are two additional reports which have either second-hand or brief details. The reports are most likely correct, but are not included because of the inadequate documentation. These reports come from Red Rock Canyon 11-12 November 1989 and Galileo Hill Park on 5 October 1990.

When considering a record of this vagrant, hybrid Hermit X Townsend's Warblers must be considered. These hybrids have been identified on at least five occasions and all reports seem to involve males. No doubt females and immature hybrids are being overlooked. See Rohwer and Wood (1998) for further information. Caution must be used when dealing with hybrids as their variability is poorly understood.

Townsend's Warbler *Dendroica townsendi*. Common spring migrant and uncommon fall migrant. In most years almost all of the region's Townsend's Warblers pass through during spring and most of these pass through the Butterbredt and Jawbone Canyon area. It is typically fairly common during spring, but each year waves occur with daily totals of over 100 being annual. The earliest it has been recorded is 9 April but more often it is the middle of April before they are seen. They are more numerous near the end of the month with a peak in early May. Depending on conditions, small waves pass through Butterbredt in mid-May, and at times these are impressive numbers, with over 300 recorded on one occasion. Although they are usually rare by the 25th, thirty were seen on 27 May 1995 (MTH). They are casual in June with the latest record being 12 June.

In fall this species is remarkably scarce, recorded from 2 September to 6 November. It is not unusual to spend 25 days in the field and see more American Redstarts. In recent years, the average has been approximately ten per fall, but sometimes as few as three are seen. Conversely, every third or fourth fall there is a noticeable increase with 20-30 recorded. It is likely that a majority of this migration occurs via the mountains. Most records are from late September to early October, but even then, this “western” warbler is uncommon. By the end of October, it is casual, with a few records for the first week of November.

Hermit Warbler *Dendroica occidentalis*. An uncommon to rare migrant. An uncommon spring migrant with records from 15 April to 9 June. It is most numerous in mid-May when small waves pass through Butterbredt Spring. These waves are much smaller than those of the previous species. Nevertheless, counts of 20-30 are almost annual on good days at this season. It is rare by the end of May. It should also be noted it is not numerous anywhere away from the Butterbredt Spring area, with single birds being the rule.

In fall this is a rare migrant. It is not unusual to entirely miss this species at this season. There are records from 2 August to 20 October, but in general, it is unexpected with an average of two to three per fall. Certainly, the preferred migration route for this species is via the mountains.

There are at least five reports of Townsend's X Hermit Warbler hybrids. Observers need to consider this possibility when identifying birds in this complex. See Rohwer and Wood (1998) for a discussion of these hybrids.

Blackburnian Warbler *Dendroica fusca*. There are two fall records from the region: 9 October 1993 at Galileo Hill Park (REW), and 11-12 September 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH). There are two other reports from the desert, but none of which are well documented. A singing male was in the Kern River Valley on 31 May 1991 (AB 45:497) for a rare spring record for the State. An immature female was in Bakersfield on 29-30 December 1991 (AB 46:316) for a late migrant record.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Dendroica dominica*. This is a casual vagrant in the region with two spring records and one fall record as follows: 14 May 1987 at California City (NBB, AB 41:489, Langham 1991), 28 May 1988 at California City (BS, AB 42: 483, Pyle and McCaskie 1992), and 22-24 September 1991 at California City (MOC, AB 46:151, Patten et al. 1995).

Prairie Warbler *Dendroica discolor*. This is a casual vagrant with three fall and two spring records. The three fall records are: 6 November 1983 at California City (JCW, MOC, AB 38:249), 29 September 1990 near Cantil (MTH, AB 45:153), and 30 September-1 October 1995 near California City (RHe, AFN 50:117).

The two spring records are: 8 May 1984 at California City (MOC, AB 38:962), and 26 May 1997 at Butterbredt Spring (SS, FN 51:928).

Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum*. Rare fall and casual spring vagrant. There are 23 fall records from 21 September to 24 October. Recent increases in coverage have proven this to be an almost annual species. There is one spring record: 27 April 96 at Galileo Hill Park (DVB, AFN 50:332). The timing of this record would suggest the bird wintered closer to our region as opposed to a vagrant in the traditional sense which would be expected later in the season.

Bay-breasted Warbler *Dendroica castanea*. A casual vagrant with five spring records and four fall records. The five spring records range from 23 May to 10 June and four fall records range from 21 September to 20 November. The fall records are as follows: 20 November 1976 northern (Kern) Antelope Valley (KLG, AB 31:224), 28 September 1989 at Galileo Hill Park (GMcC, AB 44:164), 3 October 1990 at California City (CH, AB 45:153), and 21 September 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH).

Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata*. A rare fall vagrant and casual spring vagrant. There are three spring records as follows: 15-17 May 1988 at California City (RS, AB 42:483), 27-30 May 1988 at California City (MTH, AB 42:483), and 17 May 1993 at Butterbredt Spring (REW, AB 47:454).

East Kern has 45 fall records from 1 September to 23 October, and has recently averaged three per season. The majority of these records have been from mid- to late September.

Cerulean Warbler *Dendroica cerulea*. Casual vagrant with one record: a singing male at California City on 17 May 1985 (JCW, AB 39:351, Dunn 1988) is Kern's only record.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*. Rare migrant at both seasons. This is a rare migrant in spring when the region averages six per season. It has been recorded as early as 6 April (but in general is not expected before the 20<sup>th</sup>) and as late as 13 June. Most records are during May. There are currently 85 spring records for the region.

It is less numerous in fall but still averages about three per season with 41 records. The dates range from 20 August to 28 November; the majority occur from mid-September to early October. A singing bird from Galileo Hill Park 19 July 1998 (MTH) is hard to categorize. It might be an early fall migrant (as they are on the move this early in parts of their breeding range) or it may represent a summering individual. Other than the latest record of 23-28 November 1999 at California City (MTH), the next latest record is from 4 November.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*. Another rare migrant, bordering on uncommon in fall. Spring dates range from 4 May to 16 June, with most occurring from late May to early June. In spring the average is six per year, with 95 records for the region.

In fall they have been recorded from 23 August to 6 November, peaking in September. It is not unusual to record two to four in a day at the peak season. In fall the average is eight to nine per year with 130 records.

As noted under the Townsend's Warbler account, in many falls, this species is recorded as often as Townsend's Warbler. Additionally, it is more numerous than Hermit Warbler in fall. On 21 September 1995, an apparent hybrid between this species and Yellow Warbler was well studied near Cantil (MTH).

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*. This is a casual vagrant at both seasons. There are five spring records from 10 May to 8 June and eight fall records from 11 September to 21 October.

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorus*. This is a casual vagrant to the region with three spring records: 10 May 1987 at Butterbredt Spring (PEL, AB 41:490, Langham 1991), 25 May 1990 at Mojave (JCW, AB 44:498, Patten and Erickson 1994), and 24 May 1992 Butterbredt Spring (H&PB, AB 46:482, Heindel and Patten 1996). A report from 20 April 1999 at Butterbredt Spring, while possibly correct, was not sufficiently documented for such an early record.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus*. Rare vagrant, bordering on uncommon in spring. For unknown reasons, Kern gets far more than its share of this species. In spring the region has 70 records with a recent average of five to six per season. They have been noted from 7 May to 18 June, but most are found in the last third of May and early June.

In fall east Kern has seventeen records with an average of over one per fall (again, an impressive total given the paucity of records in adjacent areas at this season). Records range from 12 September to 24 October with most being from late September to early October. There is one summer record, 17 July 1983 at Butterbredt Spring (KA, AB 37:1028), that is difficult to classify.

Northern Waterthrush *Seiurus noveboracensis*. This is a rare migrant at both seasons. Spring records range from 26 April to 17 June, but they are most often seen in early to mid-May. The 17 June record seems late but there is another record from the 12<sup>th</sup>, perhaps indicating additional late records can be expected. The average is two per spring with 36 records.

It is slightly more numerous in fall with an average of four per season, with 61 records. The date range is 24 August to 21 October, but it is most numerous in early to mid-September. By 5 October it is unexpected with only two records after this, 10 and 21 October.

Louisiana Waterthrush *Seiurus motacilla*. Casual vagrant at both seasons. Kern has one spring record, 21 May 1990 from Mojave (CM, AB 44:498, Patten and Erickson 1994), and one fall record, 16-19 September 1994 from Galileo Hill Park (JHa, AFN 49:102, Howell and Pyle 1997).

Kentucky Warbler *Oporornis formosus*. Casual vagrant, primarily in spring. Kern definitely has had more than its share of this species, particularly from 1987 to 1992. There are seventeen spring records from 10 May to 9 June. Given that eleven of these records are from the springs of 1987 and 1992, it seems more prudent to classify this as casual, even though based on the numbers, it could be called rare.

It is far less likely in fall; there are four records from 22 September to 25 October as follows: 19 October 1984 at California City (JCW, AB 39:104), 25 October 1992 at Galileo Hill Park (H&PB, AB 47:151), 10 October 1993 at Galileo Hill Park (H&PB, AB 48:154), and 22-23 September 1994 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, AFN 49:102).

Connecticut Warbler *Oporornis agilis*. Casual vagrant with two records: 12 June 1999 at Butterbredt Spring (TW) and 7 September 1999 at Ridgecrest (JS). A report from Mojave 20 May 1990 was rejected by the CBRC (Patten and Erickson 1994). Another reported 19 September 1990 at Galileo Hill Park was also rejected by the CBRC (Heindel and Garrett 1995). Although quite likely correct, views of the Galileo Hill Park bird were brief and details were not complete.

Mourning Warbler *Oporornis philadelphia*. Casual vagrant at both seasons. This is a casual spring vagrant with four records: 16 May 1986 at California City (JCW, AB 40:525, Langham 1991), 20 May 1990 at Mojave (MAP, AB 44:498, Terrill and Erickson 1994), 22 May 1992 at Mojave (MTH, AB 46:482, Heindel and Patten 1996), and 26 May 1999 near Butterbredt Spring (REW).

In fall there is one accepted record: 16-19 September 1994 (MTH, JLD). A recent record from 25 September 1999 at California City (JLD, SBT) is under review. Separation of Mourning from MacGillivray's Warblers can be quite difficult, and may not always be possible in the field. MacGillivray's can have yellow throats which could easily lead to a misidentification and given intraspecific variation, some of these birds cannot safely be identified in the field. Annually there are reports from visiting birders; most of these are poorly documented and likely in error. See Pyle and Henderson (1990) and Dunn and Garrett (1997) for further details on the identification of species in this genus.

MacGillivray's Warbler *Oporornis tolmiei*. Uncommon to fairly common migrant. A fairly common spring migrant, recorded from 1 April to 10 June. It is most numerous from late April to late May and daily tallies during the peak are ten or more.

It is slightly less numerous in fall bordering on fairly common, noted from 1 August to 23 October. The peak at this season is the first half of September. In general, it is rare after September.

As noted above, many visiting birders report Mourning Warblers. Observers need to familiarize themselves with the entire range of plumages shown by this more expected species. To further complicate things, MacGillivray's can temporarily lose their eye arcs due to bathing. See additional notes under Mourning Warbler. Additionally, the unwary observer might confuse gray-headed Orange-Crowned Warblers with MacGillivray's, as they too have obvious gray hoods and partial eye rings. See Dunn and Garrett (1997) for more information.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*. Fairly common migrant at both seasons, but status is quite complex as it is present year-round. In spring the first migrants are typically noted after mid-March; the earliest record of a presumed migrant is 7 March 1997 at China Lake (DVB). There is a noticeable push from early April to mid-May and dozens might be found on a good day. It is rarely seen in June away from breeding areas but has been seen as late as 12 June. It has bred near Cantil, California City and Edwards AFB and should be looked for in other areas with acceptable habitat.

A female at Galileo Hill Park 11 July 1999 (MTH) is likely an early fall migrant, but might pertain to a non-breeder. Juveniles have been seen at Galileo Hill Park on 27 and 31 July of different years. They do not breed there but may come from a local breeding area (that is, one within 15-20 miles); regardless, these records should be considered migrants. In fall there is an increase from mid-August to mid-October, with a peak in September, with the latest record of a presumed migrant of 4 November. They are rare in winter with one to two birds being detected at this season; in some winters none are recorded.

Hooded Warbler *Wilsonia citrina*. Rare spring and casual fall vagrant. East Kern has done well with this species with 34 spring records from 18 April to 19 June. Although recorded almost annually, these numbers are greatly affected by substantial numbers in three years (six in 1992, eight in 1997, and five in 1998). In fall there are three records from 2 September to 14 October: 8-14 October 1988 at California City (MTH, JCW, AB 43:170), 22 September 1990 at Galileo Hill Park (AH, VH), and 3 September 1995 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, AFN 50:117).

Wilson's Warbler *Wilsonia pusilla*. A common migrant in spring, fairly common in fall. In spring they have been seen from 24 March to 17 June. The majority pass through from late April to mid-May with daily counts in the hundreds annually. Occasionally they are seen in large numbers at Butterbrecht Spring even late into May (for example, 500 on 25 May 1997, MTH). The 17 June record is seven days after the next latest date and, in general, they are unexpected after the first of June.

In fall they are fairly common, recorded from 25 July to 4 November. Most are seen from late August to September. High counts are significantly reduced from spring; more than twenty would be unusual. This species is rare by mid-October.

Canada Warbler *Wilsonia canadensis*. Casual vagrant, primarily in fall. There are six fall records from 20 September to 1 November, with most occurring in late September or early October. There is one spring record: 1-2 June 1996 at Galileo Hill Park (DVB, AFN 50:332).

Painted Redstart *Myioborus pictus*. Casual vagrant with two records: 4 May 1997 Butterbrecht Spring (JDa, AFN 51:929), and 15-16 May 1999 at Ridgecrest (RM).

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*. An uncommon migrant, more numerous in spring. Spring records range from 19 April to 16 June, with most recorded from late April to mid-May. They are usually gone before June, but occasionally are noted in the early part of that month. There is an unusual record from Edwards AFB on 29 June 1996 (MTH), a singing individual that seemed out of place given the limited habitat.

In fall this is an uncommon migrant, bordering on rare in some years. No doubt this impression is enhanced by their skulking behavior and their lack of singing, making them difficult to detect. They have been noted from 23 August to 13 October with no evident peak in migration, although most records are for September. The latest record, 6-13 October 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH), appeared to be an eastern bird based on plumage and its short tail.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*. Rare migrant at both seasons, primarily in spring. In spring there are 35 records spanning from 30 April to 20 June. The majority of records are for the last half of May and the extreme dates are more than a week beyond the next closest. The region averages two to three per spring. The 30 April bird certainly appeared to be *cooperi*, the race breeding just outside the region in the Kern River Valley, as one might expect for the early date. Many of the late spring birds, in particular, are felt to pertain to vagrants from the east.

This species is also rare in fall; there are fifteen records from 8 September to 16 November; but most are from September. Other than the 16 November 1988 record (JCW, AB 41:146-147), the next latest record is 10 November. It is uncertain how many of the fall birds pertain to the eastern nominate race. This species is casually reported in fall by observers unaware of its status. Given that some of these reports, at least, are probably accurate, it is likely more numerous than shown. At the same time, observers should understand that female Western Tanagers can have worn wingbars and may be a source of confusion. Documentation for fall records of this species is needed.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*. Casual fall vagrant with four records: 19 October 1990 at Mojave (MTH, AB 45:153, Heindel and Garrett 1995), 31 October 1997 at Ridgecrest (SS, FN 52:128), 1 October 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (DP, NAB 53:106), and 18 October 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH).

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana*. Fairly common to common migrant. This species is a common migrant in spring with daily counts in the hundreds on an annual basis. They have been recorded from 3 March to 16 June, with the peak occurring from late April to mid-May. They are rare before mid-April, (the early March record is the only record for that month, with 6 April being the next earliest record), but present annually into early June, although in small numbers by this time.

In fall adult males in particular are noted quite early, usually by late July. The date span is 9 July to 15 October with a peak from mid-August to mid-September. They are fairly common at this season, but high counts are usually less than ten birds. They are rare by the first week of October.

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus*. An uncommon migrant, possibly overlooked somewhat due to its secretive nature. In spring it has been recorded from 8 April to 10 June, with a majority seen from late April to mid-May. Most daily totals do not exceed one or two.

In fall it is less numerous than it is in spring but still uncommon, noted from 2 September to 11 October. One was noted at Galileo Hill Park, 24 November 1995-14 January 1996 (JCW, AFN 50:225) for the region's only winter record.

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*. Most numerous as an uncommon to fairly common migrant with small numbers spending the winter. Fall migrants are noted as early as 4 September but most arrivals do not occur until late September. On most days, one to two are seen with occasional counts of four to six. Numbers of this species decline by late October. In most winters a few can be found in greener areas, such as California City and Ridgecrest. An increase in numbers occurs in late March and continues through mid-April. As in fall, they are usually uncommon, but in good migrations, can be fairly common. They are generally unexpected after the first week of May and there are only a handful of records for late May and early June, with the latest record being 6 June.

California Towhee *Pipilo crissalis*. Local, fairly common resident. This species is almost entirely restricted to canyons draining from the west, such as Butterbrecht, Sand, and Short canyons. A report from AB 41:331 suggested that this species was recorded in the Fremont Valley, outside its known range, but this was a misunderstanding of the location and does not impact what is currently known of the range limitations of this species. A recent record from the mouth of Jawbone Canyon 23 April-25 June 1999 (MTH) is outside of its known range and is almost on the desert floor. More needs to be learned about this species' ability to wander.

Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps*. Casual vagrant with one record: 22 September 1997 at Galileo Hill Park (JLD, FN 52:129). This was a dull gray individual not looking as if it was from the brighter coastal race, which breeds just to the west of the region. It is interesting to speculate as to which race might be more expected but there is much to learn, both in terms of racial variation and movement of the races. There are occasional reports from the China Lake CBC (for example, AB 39:776) that are not documented. These records are not considered to be valid, but might pertain to birds found just to the west of the region, west of Walker Pass, as some of the early CBCs apparently used a count circle that went west of the ridge.

American Tree Sparrow *Spizella arborea*. Casual fall vagrant with eight records for the region recorded from 21 October to 23 November. Most records are for early November.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*. Fairly common migrant, present almost year-round. This species is most numerous as a spring migrant when it is fairly common. At times, they can be quite plentiful with daily totals in the dozens (at Butterbrecht Spring, for example). Migrants have been noted as early as 10 March and as late as 16 June. The peak is early April to early May, but occasionally they can still number ten or more into late May. Annually a few will be seen in early June and in several years they have stayed to the middle of the month.

An alternate-plumaged adult was at Galileo Hill Park 30 June 1995 (MTH) for an unusual record as this is the time of the year they have proven to be least expected.

In fall they are first detected in late July, 25 July being the earliest. They are most numerous from mid-August to late September. In most years they are fairly common, but numbers of *Spizella* vary tremendously from year-to-year. Usually a few are found daily, but in some years it may be dozens, and less often they can be almost absent. Small numbers linger into November and a few have been found during the winter months, but they are casual at this season.

Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida*. Rare fall and casual spring vagrant. This is a rare fall vagrant with records from 1 September to 26 November; most records are during September. East Kern averages two per fall with 25 records, but numbers vary tremendously from fall to fall. It is not unusual to record none during a fall and at the other end of the spectrum, in 1994, seven were noted. This bird is often erroneously claimed and caution is warranted in separating this from, primarily, bold Brewer's Sparrows. See Pyle and Howell (1996) for more details on the identification of *Spizella* sparrows.

The region has two spring records: 10 May 1987 at California City (JCW, AB 41:490) and 24 May 1992 in Butterbrecht Canyon (MTH, AB 46:482).

Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri*. Primarily a fairly common migrant at both seasons, rare in winter. In some years, this species can be quite numerous and on rare occasion they may be hard to find. In spring they have been noted from 21 March to 25 May, with a peak from mid-April to early May. They breed in Butterbrecht Canyon and adjacent areas and this may complicate late spring dates.

In fall it has been seen from 3 August to 11 November, with most coming through in September. In general they are not expected after early October.

The extent to which they winter in the region needs to be understood better. Small numbers may winter in the foothills to the west of the region (toward Onyx and lake Isabella). There have been reports from the Ridgecrest area on Christmas Counts (for example, AB 34:643), but only recently have any of these reports been documented. During the winter of 1998-1999, a few have been documented in Ridgecrest and near Cantil. This is likely a rare and perhaps locally uncommon species in winter.



Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla*. Casual vagrant with one record: 1-4 November 1998 at Inyokern (SS, NAB 53:106).

Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis*. Local and rare migrant, irregularly uncommon. This bird is primarily noted in Butterbrecht Canyon during May as they are occasionally heard singing. Spring dates range from 3 April to 3 June. They have bred on rare occasions, but this is the exception. There are only three spring records away from this area: 3 June 1988 at Jawbone Canyon (MTH), 24 May 1990 at Mojave (JM), and 9-11 May 1997 at California City (DVB). Any such sightings need to be well documented. There is a recent record from California City on 30 July 1999 (MTH) that is of note. This probably pertains to a fall migrant, but there are no other fall records for the region. Occasional reports of singing birds from Butterbrecht Canyon have proven to involve the more numerous California Towhee, so observers should be cautious when identifying this species by song in the region.

Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus*. Uncommon migrant and winter visitor with records from 1 September to 18 May. In most years, they are not seen until mid-September with the highest numbers from October to early March. They are unexpected after mid-April with only a few May records.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*. Status complex as it is present year-round as an uncommon breeder and migrant. It breeds in various areas (parks, residential areas, etc.) but does not breed at these localities every year. In general, this is an uncommon species, but can be fairly common at times. Juveniles are often seen by late May and may pose identification problems for those unfamiliar with this duller, more streaked plumage. In late summer and early fall small flocks of 10-20 might be encountered at, for example, Galileo Hill Park. There does not appear to be any withdrawal during winter.

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata*. Primarily a summer visitor when it is locally fairly common. Since small numbers winter in the area, arrival and departure dates are hard to discern. They are most numerous from March through August and their singing may make them seem common in April and May. In general, breeding birds are most often found around foothills, canyons, washes, etc., and less often on the flat open desert. A drive up Butterbrecht Canyon might result in a tally of twenty-plus birds depending on the year, but smaller numbers might be seen in other areas. In winter a few are occasionally seen around Galileo Hill Park and Ridgecrest, among other areas.

Sage Sparrow *Amphispiza belli*. A common resident in much of the region. In addition to the sage habitats used for breeding, they are often seen at park-like habitats, such as Galileo Hill Park. In fall there is often an increase as some of the birds withdraw from northern parts of their range; at times 100-plus can be seen collecting at water spots, such as Galileo Hill Park. Although it is premature to have much comment on racial distribution, it does appear that some of the northern birds, *A. b. nevadensis*, occur in fall and winter.

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys*. Casual fall vagrant with seven records from 28 August to 14 November with most records from September. There is one spring record: a singing male near Ridgecrest 27 April-13 May 1999 (PW).

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*. Common migrant and winter visitor, local and uncommon breeder. Local breeding populations have been detected at China Lake and near Cantil, and this may complicate dates of migrants. Away from breeding areas records exist from 23 August to 1 June, but the peak numbers occur from October to early April. It is common in alfalfa fields at this season, and smaller numbers can be found in parks, etc. In general it is not expected until the first week of September and it is unexpected away from breeding areas after April. Only a few records exist after mid-May. Significant work needs to be done to determine the racial identity of the migrants and wintering populations.

Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum*. Casual fall migrant with five records for the region from 19 September to 29 October: 7 October 1989 at China Lake (DVB, AB 44:165), 28-29 October 1989 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, AB 44:165), 11-13 October 1990 at Galileo Hill Park joined by a second bird on the latter date (JLD), and 19 September 1996 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, AFN 51:120).

Le Conte's Sparrow *Ammodramus leconteii*. Casual vagrant with two records: 27 November 1988-2 January 1989 at China Lake (DVB, AB 43:171, Pyle and McCaskie 1992) and 5 November 1989 China Lake (DVB, AB 44:165, Patten and Erickson 1994).

The first record was particularly unusual given the inland location for a wintering bird.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow *Ammodramus nelsoni*. Casual vagrant with two records: 13 May 1990 at Mojave (JDa, MTH, AB 44:498) and 20-24 May 1990 at Galileo Hill Park (H&PB, AB 44:498).

Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca*. The status of this species in the region is complex, but in general it is an uncommon migrant and winter visitor. Records range from 14 August to 27 May. Usually, they are not encountered until late September and are not noted after mid-May. A breakdown by 'group' might be helpful. There is considerable discussion as to how many species might be involved in this complex. Rising (1996) lists three species and following Zink (1994), I will separate this discussion into four groups, as that seems as likely an outcome of future taxonomic decisions.

- the gray "Slate-colored" *schistacea* is probably uncommon in spring but the number of definite records of this group is uncertain as their separation from other Fox Sparrows is tenuous. Spring records range from 9 March to 29 May. They are rare, occasionally uncommon in fall with records from 2 September to 15 October. In an average fall, only a couple are seen with most of the migration probably taking place through the mountains. *Altvigans*, which is usually placed with this group, or with the "Red" group, has an entirely different distribution. They are thought to be fairly common in fall from late September to early November, with small numbers spending the winter. The date range is 14 September to 4 May.

- the "Large-billed" *megarhyncha/stephensi* complex is uncommon in spring, occasionally fairly common. They are usually seen in greater numbers than *schistacea*. They have been detected as early as 23 January (with mid-February records also) but are not typically encountered until late March. This group accounts for almost all May records with the latest record being 27 May. They are rare in fall with the early date of 14 August but that is three weeks earlier than the next date. They are generally unexpected in fall as most passage is assumed to be through the mountains. The latest date is 2 October.

- the brown *unalaschensis* group (along with *altvigans* as mentioned above), are the expected races in late fall and winter. They are not encountered until late September. In some winters they may be almost absent; in others, five to ten might be found. They are noted through April, but are generally unexpected after early May. The latest record is 25 May.

- the red *iliaca/zaboria* complex is a casual vagrant with ten fall records from 6 October to 14 November. There are two spring records: 19-20 April 1993 at Butterbredt Spring (REW), and 30 March 1999 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH).

Identifying Fox Sparrows to race is difficult in many cases. In particular, fall birds can be confusing as many of the brown races show some gray to the plumage and many late fall birds are often reported as belonging to the gray subspecies. Any claims of Slate-colored or Large-billed birds after the first of October, or anything other than these birds after the first of May should be well documented. All claims of *zaboria*-type birds should be documented.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*. Primarily a fairly common winter visitor, and a local and uncommon breeder in the region. As a migrant it is local and uncommon in fall, fairly common in specific areas through winter and casual away from breeding areas in spring. It breeds uncommonly at China Lake, near Cantil, Edwards AFB, and occasionally, at California City, but might not breed at each of these locations every year. These populations are augmented in winter by arrivals from the north when it becomes fairly common. Away from these areas, they are remarkably scarce. They are only rarely noted as migrants at Butterbredt Spring, for example. An unusual record from that location is from 3-4 June 1993 (MTH), as that seems quite late. Similarly, there was a late individual (or a wanderer from nearby breeding areas) at Mojave on 7 June 1997 (MTH). In fall they are annual in small numbers at Galileo Hill Park, usually from mid-September to mid-October, but have been noted as early as 23 August.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii*. A fairly common migrant at both seasons and an uncommon winter visitor. In fall they are noted as early as 2 September and are usually found in the first week of September. They are most numerous from late September to mid-October when up to forty per day have been noted.

The latest date of a suspected migrant is 27 November. They are local and uncommon in winter at sites like California City and China Lake.

In spring a noticeable push occurs in mid-March and presumed migrants have been noted as early as 9 March. They are often seen in excess of a dozen birds from late March to late April. They are uncommon by early May and rare after the 20th. The latest record is 5 June.

Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*. Casual spring and rare fall vagrant. This species is most numerous as a fall vagrant with 28 records ranging from 22 September to 22 November. The recent fall average is two to three per season, most of which occur from mid-October to early November. There is one winter record: 12 January-23 March 1985 at California City (MTH, AB 39:211). In addition, there are eight spring records from 23 April to 19 May.

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*. Rare migrant to the region, primarily in fall. In fall east Kern averages two to three per season, with 50 records ranging from 30 September to 23 November. Most records are from mid-October to early November. Nine individuals were recorded during both 1990 and 1998, somewhat skewing the totals. There are two winter records with dates ranging from 8 December to 18 April.

In spring 15 records range from 28 April to 2 June with an average of one per season. During the spring of 1991, Kern recorded six individuals (AB 45:497).

Harris's Sparrow *Zonotrichia querula*. Casual migrant from fall, through the winter, into spring. This vagrant has been noted twenty times from 28 October to 18 May as follows: there are seven fall records from 28 October to 27 November; nine winter records from 16 December to 30 April; and four spring records from 30 April to 18 May.

On 30 December 1972, six were reported on the China Lake CBC (AB 27:505), a year when multiples were located at other areas (for example, Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley).

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*. A common migrant and winter visitor with records ranging 29 August to 13 June. The earlier records in fall are predominantly the dark-lored *oriantha* group but this race is rather scarce in fall and unrecorded after 2 October. *Gambelii* is rarely recorded before 10 September and is numerous by October, remaining so through March in most years. Migrant *gambelii* are usually fairly common through mid-April and in some years continue into May. *Oriantha* reappears in May (the earliest record is 28 April) and is more numerous at this season than they are in fall. By mid-May numbers of this species drop; they are rare after 25 May. Odd records of both races have occurred through the first week of June.

Golden-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia atricapilla*. An uncommon migrant and winter visitor with records ranging from 22 September to 4 June. In most years, it is not encountered until October with a peak from mid-October to mid-November. They are less numerous and border on rare during winter. From April to early May there is an obvious peak, and at times this species can be fairly common, particularly near Butterbrecht Spring. They are rare after 20 May and unexpected after that month.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*. A common migrant and winter visitor with records ranging from 30 August to 11 June. It is usually not seen until the latter third of September or encountered after 25 May. The peak period for this species is mid-October through March.

The various groups making up this complex are of note:

-the "Oregon" Junco is the common one, accounting for 98% of the records or more. The 30 August and early September dates are from this group, and the latest record in spring is 10 June.

-the "Slate-colored" Junco is an uncommon fall migrant, usually encountered in October and November (the earliest record being 22 September), with an average of six to ten per season. They are rare in winter but in most years at least one can be found and in some years six to eight are seen. They are rare after March with a few late April and mid-May records. An intriguing record is from 2 June 1990 from Galileo Hill Park (MTH).

-the "Gray-headed" Junco is the least expected of the three major groups. The region averages one to two per fall usually from mid-September through October. There are four spring records from 15 March to 11 June. There is a recent record from China Lake in winter on 4 January 1997 (DVB).

The "Pink-sided" Junco is a rare fall migrant but one whose identification is poorly understood, as it closely approximates some of the plumages of Oregon Junco. There are reports for at least a dozen per fall, even though no more than a few have ever been documented in a season. Identification of these groups is quite complex and variation between the races is poorly understood. Observers are encouraged to note the more obvious examples but beware of the pitfalls of being too certain.

McCown's Longspur *Calcarius mccownii*. Casual migrant with two records: 25-30 November 1988 near Garlock (MTH, AB 43:171), and 20-25 October 1999 at Edwards Air Force Base, 2 birds (MTH).

Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*. Rare fall migrant and casual winter visitor. This species is most often detected as a rare fall migrant with eighteen records ranging from 27 September to 22 November, with an average of one to two per season, although up to seven have been recorded in one season. Most records are from late October to early November. There are two records of wintering birds that have been noted until 12 February; no doubt they are more regular at this season than the above data shows.

Smith's Longspur *Calcarius pictus*. Casual vagrant with one record: 10 October 1996 at Galileo Hill Park (DVB, AFN 51:120, McCaskie and San Miguel 1996).

Chestnut-collared Longspur *Calcarius ornatus*. Rare to locally uncommon winter visitor and migrant. They have been noted from 21 September to 11 March, but most reports are from mid-October to November. Observers would be lucky to encounter this species one to two at a time, at Galileo Hill Park, for example. Diligent work in alfalfa fields throughout the region may yield a dozen birds or more with high counts of 25-30.

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*. Casual vagrant with one record of this Asian stray: 7-10 November 1993 near Cantil (MTH, AB 48:154, Erickson and Terrill, 1996). See Bradshaw (1991) for information on how to identify a species unfamiliar to many American birders.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. A rare vagrant at both seasons. In spring it has been noted from 8 May to 19 June with 45 records. The majority are seen from 20 May to 5 June with a recent average of three per spring. There is one summer record: 10 July 1993 at Galileo Hill Park (MTH, AB 47:1151).

In fall they have been recorded from 9 September to 28 November, with a total of 24 records. Most are seen from late September to early October with an average of two per season. Other than a lingering bird seen at Galileo Hill Park 14-28 November 1999 (TW), the latest record is 1 November. It is generally unexpected past the middle of October. There is a late record just west of the region in Onyx, from 1-2 December 1995 (DLB).

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus*. Common spring and fairly common fall migrant. This species is a common migrant in spring noted from 28 March to 19 June. It is most numerous from late April to mid-May with daily high counts over 100 on an annual basis. It is usually not noted until 7 April or so, and is typically hard to find after the first week of June. A few records from the end of June are likely to pertain to non-breeding birds.

In fall they have been noted from 9 July to 30 October, with the majority passing through from early August to early September. Over 24 were seen at Galileo Hill Park on 19 July 1997 (MTH), almost all of which were adult males, indicating how early in the season they can be numerous, as well as illustrating the different timing of migration based on age and sex. They are rare by late September, and unexpected after early October. Far beyond the latest date of 30 October, is a record from Ridgecrest on 4 December 1995 (JB).

Blue Grosbeak *Guiraca caerulea*. Uncommon migrant, bordering on rare in fall. This species is an uncommon migrant in spring, recorded from 13 April to 8 June. The peak passage is from late April to mid-

May, but on a daily basis, one would be lucky to see more than two. It nests at a couple of ranches in the desert with a breeding population of three to four pairs.

In fall this is an uncommon migrant, bordering on rare. The average is four to six per fall, irregularly more, and they have been seen from 24 July to 18 November. The 18 November 1990 record (H&PB, AB 45:153) is extremely late; our next latest date is a month earlier. The most likely time to see this species in fall is during September, usually in the first half of the month.

Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena*. Fairly common migrant at both seasons. A fairly common spring migrant, this species has been recorded from 14 April to 13 June. The peak passage is from late April to mid-May; daily totals are usually in the tens on good days. In most years they are only seen into early June and they are unexpected after the 5th. During the summer of 1992, a pair took up residence in Mojave but evidence of breeding, while looked for, was not confirmed (RAE).

In fall it is also fairly common, noted from 10 July to 16 October. The majority pass through from mid-August to late September; daily totals are usually less than ten. They are rare after the first of October and unexpected after the 7<sup>th</sup>. On occasion, presumed hybrids between Lazuli and Indigo Buntings have been encountered, but see Kroodsma (1975) to understand the problems with identifying presumed hybrids.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*. A rare migrant at both seasons. East Kern averages four to five per spring with 56 records ranging from 4 May to 16 June. Most are recorded from mid-May to early June. A pair set up territory near Cantil in June 1994, but breeding was not confirmed (MTH). Every few years, there is a real surge when eight to ten birds may be reported.

In fall the average is one to two per season with 24 records from 7 September to 1 November. Most records are from mid-September to mid-October, when Lazuli Buntings are becoming scarce. As noted above, presumed hybrids with Lazuli Bunting have been encountered, but see the note under the previous species on this topic. Additionally, identification of females during fall can be problematic and observers are urged to be cautious when identifying this species.

Painted Bunting *Passerine ciris*. Casual fall vagrant with seven records from 1 September to 7 October. All of these records pertain to green-plumaged birds, meaning they were not adult males. Any Painted Bunting record must be viewed with a certain skepticism as they are widely held as caged birds. See Pyle (1997) for an understanding of the molts this species undertakes to better understand the complications in confidently sexing and aging non-adult males.

More complicated, however, is an interesting report of an adult male 1 July 1996 from Ridgecrest (SS, AFN 50:998, McCaskie and San Miguel 1996). The CBRC has rejected this record based on the unprecedented nature of a summer male and the fact that birds in this plumage are commonly kept caged birds. Yet, there is a strong argument that a true vagrant in the summer away from major metropolitan areas could occur naturally. Indeed, had this been a report of almost any other vagrant passerine (for example, Rose-breasted Grosbeak or Scarlet Tanager), the record would be accepted without comment or concern. Making decisions on commonly held caged-birds is not easy and for records like the Inyokern bird, the truth will likely never be known, although I regard this as a valid record.

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*. Casual vagrant, primarily in fall. There are eleven fall records from 5 September to 3 October, including three each from 1997 and 1998. There are two records for spring: 18 May 1984 Ridgecrest (LJ, AB 38:963), and 30 May 1999 at California City (HK).

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*. Rare fall and casual spring vagrant. This species is most often seen in fall when it is rare with 44 records from 5 September to 31 October. East Kern averages two to three per season, mostly from mid-September to early October. They are unexpected after mid-October. There are eleven spring records from 8 May to 4 June, primarily of single birds. On 22 May 1999, a flock of five, including three males, were at China Lake (MTH, NAB 53:331).

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*. Present year-round as a common resident, but there is plenty of movement within the region. It is a common breeder at places like California City, China Lake, near Cantil, etc. They can be expected to breed where there is water and a large stand of reeds. A pair usually breeds at the tiny pond at Butterbredt Spring, showing how little habitat they need to establish residence.

Migrants are seen flying up Butterbrecht Canyon in spring and over Galileo Hill Park in fall. In winter there may be some withdrawal but they are still common. The extent to which these winter birds are residents or being replaced by migrants is unknown.

Tricolored Blackbird *Agelaius tricolor*. Status complex, but generally an uncommon summer visitor and rare migrant. This species is a sporadic and uncommon breeder in the region, including California City and near Cantil, although they do not necessarily breed at these places every year. Migrants are sometimes detected at Galileo Hill Park, for example, at any time of year, but they are generally rare away from breeding areas. They are least expected in winter, when they are casual.

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta*. Fairly common to common migrant and winter visitor. This species varies in numbers from year to year but is generally common from October to March. Breeding complicates the exact arrival and departure dates, but arrivals have been noted in early September and migrants have been noted moving up Butterbrecht Canyon in May. In general, it is a local and uncommon breeder, but at times, particularly when winter rains have been heavy, dozens of pairs may be breeding. Known nesting localities have included Edwards AFB, near Cantil, California City, China Lake, Butterbrecht Canyon, and on one occasion, Galileo Hill Park.

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*. A common summer visitor with records ranging from 10 March to 2 November. In spring passage usually occurs from April to early May and is usually in small numbers (two to six); 30 at Galileo Hill Park on 3 May 1996 (MTH) and 60 at China Lake 29 April 1999 (MTH) are large concentrations. They have bred at California City and near Cantil, although they need reeds for this, and on occasion, the reeds are cut as they are felt to be a nuisance. Adult males are leaving the breeding area by July and in general are rare there by late August. Fall birds pass through from August to mid-September (as early as 9 July), usually in small numbers (two to four). There are three winter records.

Rusty Blackbird *Euphagus carolinus*. Casual vagrant with six fall records from 16 October to 6 December. There is one winter record, a male at China Lake 1 January to 17 March 1990 (MTH, AB 44:331-332) that was heard singing on the latter date.

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*. A common resident present throughout the year. Migrants are noted flying up Butterbrecht Canyon in spring, however, the change in numbers from the rather large breeding populations is not apparent, which makes assessing their migration difficult.

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*. Casual vagrant with one record for the region: 29 October 1994 at Galileo Hill Park (CY, AB 49:103, Howell and Pyle 1997). A report from California City 13 May 1984 was rejected (correctly) by the CBRC (Dunn 1988). Another sighting from California City 21 May 1988 (AB 42:483) should be disregarded; the CBRC has not reviewed this record and the sighting appears to be brief.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*. Fairly common resident but some migration occurs. First recorded in 1984, this species has expanded swiftly in the region. It is a locally common breeder at California City, near Cantil, and China Lake. Migrant flocks or individuals have been detected at places like Butterbrecht Spring and Galileo Hill Park from April to May and August to October. In winter it is less numerous but still locally fairly common, particularly in California City where dozens may be found.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*. Casual vagrant with one Kern desert record: a male 5 June 1998 at Galileo Hill Park (SBT). The first Kern record was a female just outside of the region near Onyx 19-28 May 1994 (BL, AB 48:342).

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*. A fairly common to common migrant and summer visitor, recorded from 16 February to 20 October. They usually start to arrive in mid-March and are numerous by mid-April. This species parasitizes nests of birds throughout the region and they are seen widely through the summer. Numbers increase in early fall and they are plentiful from mid-August to mid-September. Numbers then

decline and they become rare by mid-October. There are a few recent winter records from Ridgecrest and it is possible small numbers winter annually.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*. Casual fall vagrant with ten records from 4 September to 31 October. Most records are from mid- to late September. A published report from late March (AB 39:351) should be disregarded as the details are not convincing, particularly given the paucity of spring records.

Hooded Oriole *Icterus cucullatus*. This species is an uncommon to rare migrant and casual breeder. In spring it has been recorded from 17 March to 12 June. East Kern averages six to ten at this season, but since 1996, the average has been 15-20, indicating that this species is probably fairly common. Whether this is a reflection of increased coverage, or an indication that this species is increasingly abundant is unknown. This species is suspected to breed annually and pairs have been seen in late May and early June in Butterbrecht Canyon, Ridgecrest, and near Cantil, but the frequency of breeding at these locations is not yet understood.

In fall they have been noted from 6 August to 17 September with an average of three to four birds per season. A late bird in Ridgecrest 8 October 1999 (JS) was thought to pertain a bird that hatched there earlier in the year.

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*. Casual vagrant with six spring records from 12 May to 2 June and four fall records from 14 September to 1 October.

Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii*. A fairly common migrant and summer visitor to the region with records from 5 March to 10 October. In spring it is most numerous from early April to early May when it is fairly common. It remains fairly common, but local, as a breeder at places like California City, Galileo Hill Park, near Cantil and Ridgecrest.

In fall it is on the move early, peaking from early August to early September. In some years, small flocks of adult males are found in mid- to late July. They are uncommon during September and unexpected after that month.

Scott's Oriole *Icterus parisorum*. Locally uncommon summer visitor and casual migrant. Rarely recorded on the desert floor, most reports are from the Butterbrecht Canyon area where it breeds. They can be expected in similar habitats along the edge of the mountains, from Walker Pass south. Records range from 27 March to 10 August. Migrants have been noted away from breeding areas from 27 March to 2 June, but these are scarce, averaging only one to two such birds per spring. There is a winter record (or late fall) from 19 December 1992 from Ridgecrest (AB 47:939).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch *Leucosticte tephrocotis*. Casual wanderer with one record: a flock of six birds was at Galileo Hill Park 12 November 1998 (MTH). This record was quite unexpected but there are two records from the desert of Inyo County at the same time of year (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.). Whether these birds came from the Sierra or Rocky Mountains is uncertain, although given the records of birds moving out of the Rockies regularly, this is probably the better explanation.

Purple Finch *Carpodacus purpureus*. A rare migrant at both seasons. It has been noted in spring from 30 March to 9 June with an average of three to five per season; most records are from mid-April to mid-May. In fall the average is two to four per season with a date span of 27 September to 7 November. Unidentified birds, pertaining to non-adult male Purple or Cassin's Finches, have been noted in December on occasion. See the identification note under the following species.

Cassin's Finch *Carpodacus cassinii*. This species is also a rare migrant, being slightly less numerous than the previous species. This is an irruptive species, much more so than the previous species, and on occasion large numbers are noted. In other words, while Purple Finch is more numerous in an average year, Cassin's are more likely to be found in large numbers, albeit this occurs only rarely. In spring it has been detected from 7 April to 27 May and in fall from 30 September to 12 November. Identification between Purple and Cassin's Finches is not always easy and some birds should probably be left unidentified. See Jaramillo

(2000) for information on their identification. See also the note under the previous species regarding some winter records of unidentified finches.

House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus*. This is a common resident present throughout the year and in a variety of habitats. Breeding commences as early as March and may continue into July.

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*. In general, an uncommon fall visitor, not present every year, most often seen in October and November. This species, due to its ability to wander and show up at any time of year, is difficult to categorize. It has been noted in every month of the year and has been known to breed at California City on at least two occasions (for example, AB 42:483). Migrants have been seen at Butterbredt Spring into late May.

Pine Siskin *Carduelis pinus*. An uncommon migrant and winter visitor. It has been noted from 19 September to 10 June with an obvious peak in fall numbers from late October to mid-November. Numbers vary tremendously from year to year. In most years they are rare after December. Spring records are usually dependent on how numerous they were in the prior fall or winter. Most spring siskins are detected from April to early May. There is one odd summer record: 25 July 1992 from Galileo Hill Park (MTH).

Lesser Goldfinch *Carduelis psaltria*. This species is primarily a fairly common summer visitor, present from 10 March to 27 November. It is annually found by late March and numbers are usually present until early November. A small number of birds have been found in winter, complicating exact arrival and departure dates, but they are generally rare at this season.

Lawrence's Goldfinch *Carduelis lawrencei*. Rather sporadic, varying from an uncommon to common summer visitor present from 10 March to 27 November. Its numbers seemingly increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s and many pairs (30-50) were thought to breed in the area. Known breeding localities include Butterbredt Spring, Mojave, California City, Galileo Hill Park, near Cantil, and Ridgecrest. In most years, they become less numerous by September, with daily totals numbering in single digits and, by October, they are rare. In some years, they may winter and during the winter of 1992-1993 the flock contained over eighty birds.

American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis*. This species is a fairly common, although local, winter visitor and migrant. Records range from 30 August to 7 June. In fall they are only rarely noted before October with only a few records prior to mid-September.

In spring they are rarely detected after the beginning of May. A family group of four was seen together on 23 May 1989 at Mojave (MTH), but the certainty of breeding was never established. An adult male was seen 7 June 1997 at Mojave (MTH) but was guessed to pertain to a wandering bird.

Evening Grosbeak *Coccothraustes vespertinus*. This is an irregularly occurring migrant, usually rare and sometimes uncommon. In spring records exist from 21 April to 1 June and in fall they have been noted from 3 October to 31 December. In most years, none, or one or two may be seen. Rarely, more than a dozen individuals may be involved.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. This introduced species is a common resident throughout the area in residential areas. In spring they are seen flying up Butterbredt Canyon, suggesting a regular migration occurs.

## APPENDIX A

The following species have been reported in Kern County but have not been recorded in east Kern.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisigena*. There are two records from Lake Isabella: 13-19 November 1993 (AB 48:151) and 26 November 1994 (AB 49:100).



Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*. There are two records: 5 August 1980 Mt. Pinos (AB 35:225), soaring with California Condors, and one at Lake Isabella during the fall of 1977. Although no specific data is available on the Lake Isabella record, a photograph showed an immature frigatebird.

Roseate Spoonbill *Ajaia ajaja*. There is one record from the Central Valley: 24 September-2 October 1966 Buttonwillow (AFN 21:77).

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*. There is a record from Buena Vista L. in the Central Valley: 11 May 1922 (Grinnell and Miller, 1944).

California Condor *Gymnogyps californianus*. Formerly an uncommon resident, then extirpated and now undergoing a reintroduction.

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator*. One from 22 December 1893 from outside the region at Buena Vista Lake (Central Valley) was rejected by the CBRC (Roberson, 1993).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*. There are three records: 15 January 1980 Cuddy Valley near Frazier Park (AB 34:306), 17-18 January 1993 Lake Isabella (AB 46:314), and 23 January-7 February 1998 Bakersfield (FN 52:256).

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis*. One record: 5 June 1992 South Fork Kern River Preserve (AB 46:480).

Blue Grouse *Dendragapus obscurus*. Rare resident in the higher parts of the mountains. Tracks left in the snow on recent CBCs in the Greenhorn Mountains indicate they are still present, but most scouting trips fail to produce any reports of this species. There were recent reports from near Mt. Pinos, but the population there must be small.

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*. This introduced species is local and uncommon primarily in the foothills west of the Sierra (for example, near the town in Woody) and in the Kern River Valley.

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*. There is one record for the county: an adult 31 August-2 September 1990 at Tulare L. north of Delano (AB 45:151) in the Central Valley. Additionally, an adult was photographed just south of the region near Lancaster 14 July 90 (AB 44:1186). Future records should be looked for; but observers should use caution in identifying birds in this complex. See Paulson (1993) for further information.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*. There is one record: 8-10 April 1984 Kern NWR, not 8-10 May as stated in AB 38:960. The early date and the spring occurrence of an inland Sharp-tailed is quite unexpected.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*. This is a rare winter visitor to the Central Valley with two to three being found annually near the Arvin dump from November to February.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*. There is one record: 19 December 1998 near Arvin.

Western Screech-Owl *Otus kennicottii*. There is an old report: 28 December 1986 China Lake CBC (AB 41:1277), but either this is not documented and might be in error or these birds were found just outside the region. There is a small population in Sand Canyon, but this portion is in Inyo County (Tom and Jo Heindel, in litt.). Any reports of this species in the region should be well documented, including ensuring the bird is not the more slightly expected Flammulated Owl.

Spotted Owl *Strix occidentalis*. This is a rare resident in the Sierra.

Allen's Hummingbirds *Selasphorus sasin*. There are a few records of adult males in late June/early July for the Greenhorn Mountains and for March in the Kern Valley. See note under Appendix B.

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*. A rare resident in the Greenhorn Mountains, although there is also a significant record of a wandering bird to Bakersfield 17 October-20 February 1993 Bakersfield (AB 48:152-53).

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus*. Rare summer visitor to the Kern River Valley area with a current estimate of three to seven breeding pairs.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*. There is one record: 22 September 1996 South Fork Kern River Preserve (AB 51:120).

Gray Vireo *Vireo vicinior*. Recorded historically in the mountains to the west of the region near Bodfish and south of Walker Pass. Although occasionally reported from the Kern desert, there are no reports that suggest this species has occurred in the past few decades.

Yellow-billed Magpie *Pica nuttalli*. A small population barely penetrates into the northwest corner of the county.

American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus*. An uncommon species found along the Kern River between Bakersfield and Lake Isabella and in the vicinity of Kernville.

Wrentit *Chamaea fasciata*. A fairly common resident of chaparral areas to the west of the region. This species is being found east of the Sierra in Inyo County (T and JH, pers. comm.) and should be looked for in some of the canyons that drain from the Sierra.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*. One record from Kelso Valley, just outside of the region, 23-27 December 1978 (AB 33:317).

#### APPENDIX B

These species have been reported within the region, but are not included as they are thought to either be in error, or not sufficiently documented.

Western Screech-Owl *Otus kennicottii*. See Appendix A.

Magnificent Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens*. There is one report: 24 April 1984 from Ridgecrest (AB 38:961). This record was rejected by the CBRC due to the unprecedented nature of this event (Bevier 1990). To date there are still no accepted records for California. The decision to reject this record was correct, but the description of the bird from close range indicates the report was likely correct.

Allen's Hummingbirds *Selasphorus sasin*. An adult male, presumed to be this species was near Inyokern 16-20 February 1999. This bird was photographed and seen well over a few days and the timing of this record coincides with this species' northbound migration. Rufous Hummingbirds have been shown to have green backs, however, and the tail feathers, the critical feature separating the two species, were not sufficiently studied to be certain of the identification (McKenzie and Robbins 1999). Non-adult males are not safely separated under field conditions and thus only records of well-studied adult males are likely to be considered valid.

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