

BIRDS OF THE SALTON SEA

ADDED SPECIES

The *Birds of the Salton Sea* (Patten et al. 2003) lists 413 species recorded within the below sea level area of the Salton Sink. Taxonomic changes and the documentation of additional species during the following 18 years increased that number to 456 with the addition of 43 species as follows:

TUNDRA BEAN-GOOSE

Anser serrirostris.

One record.

The Tundra Bean-Goose is one of two bean-geese nesting in northeast Asia, the other being the Taiga Bean-Goose *Anser fabalis*, with both recorded on islands in extreme western Alaska, with substantially more records of Tundra than Taiga, and as accidental stragglers elsewhere in Canada and the United States (Howell *et al.* 2014). One photographed with Snow Geese *Anser caerulescens* at Unit 1 of the Salton Sea NWR on 19 October 2013 (Rottenborn, et al. 2015) was the first to be identified in California. A bean-goose *Anser fabalis/serrirostris* at Unit 1 of the Salton Sea NWR 9 November 2010-12 January 2011 was seen and photographed by hundreds of observers, but the specific identification was never determined (Nelson, et al. 2013).

CAACKLING GOOSE

Branta hutchinsii.

Rare winter visitor (late-October through February); single records for April and early May; one record for summer.

The A.O.U. (2004) officially recognized the splitting of the Canada Goose *B. canadensis* into two species, the large forms *B. canadensis*, and the small forms *B. hutchinsii*. The latter includes, along with at least three other subspecies, *B. h. minima* and *B. h. leucopareia*, with both recorded at the Salton Sink. Records extend from 23 October (2007, four *leucopareia* at Fig Lagoon; G. McCaskie) through 24 March (2008, three *leucopareia* at Unit 1 of the Salton Sea NWR with one remaining to 24 March; Mike Sanders) and 2 April (2017, six *leucopareia* at Ramer Lake; G. McCaskie). Unusually late were a *minima* near Westmorland 16-30 Apr 1967 (G. McCaskie) and a *minima* at the Whitewater River mouth on 10 May 1986 (G. McCaskie). The only record for summer was provided by a *leucopareia* that remained with a Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* and domestic geese at Sunbeam Lake 01 November 2007-21 May 2010 (G. McCaskie).

TRUMPETER SWAN

Cygnus buccinator.

One record in winter.

An immature photographed at Unit 1 of the Salton Sea NWR 12 January-16 February 2013 (NAB 67:338) provides the only record for the Salton Sink. Reports of this swan have increased in California in recent years, and it is now of annual occurrence in the northern part of the state, with records from as far south as El Monte (an adult Legg Lake 1 January-15 March 1975) and Pico Rivera (an adult and immature Rio Honda Spreading Grounds 27 Dec 2019-9 Jan 2020) in

Los Angeles County, and on the Colorado River (an adult Palo Verde Ecological Reserve 15-24 Apr 2012) in Riverside County.

GARGANEY

Spatula querquedula.

One record.

The Garganey breeding throughout much of northern Asia and Europe, and is a long-distance migrant, wintering in Africa, India and southeast Asia. It is an exceedingly rare to casual straggler to North America, with most recorded in Alaska (Howell *et al.* 2014), but far fewer in the past two decades, coincident with declines in Asian populations. However, numbers reaching California may have been increasing since 2017 (Benson *et al.* 2021). It is considered exceedingly rare in fall, winter and spring in British Columbia and the Pacific States (Howell *et al.* 2014), with about 30 recorded in California. A female photographed at Salton Sea State Recreation Area 10 November 2019-30 March 2020 (Benson *et al.* 2021), returning 19 October 2020-10 Mar 2021 (Benson *et al.* pending publication), provides the only record for the Salton Sink.

MEXICAN DUCK

Anas diazi

Two records.

The A.O.U. (2020) now recognizes *A. platyrhynchos diazi* as a full species, separate from the Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*. A male photographed at the mouth of the Whitewater River on 11 August 2018 (Curtis A. Marantz – Benson *et al.* pending publication) and a male seen with Mallard on the south shore of the Salton Sea near the west end of Young Road on 22 August 2018 (Guy McCaskie – Benson *et al.* pending publication) provide the only two records as of 31 December 2020. However, there are multiple reports of Mexican Duck from the Colorado River between Parker Dam and Yuma (*eBird*), with some supported by photographs, including one of a male on the Arizona side of the Colorado River in Yuma on 10 September 2016 (David Vander Pluym and Lauren Harter). Intrinsicly, it is likely this duck has been overlooked, and the Mexican Duck is more numerous at the Salton Sink than the two records suggest.

RED-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps grisegena.

Four record for fall and one record for spring.

Although of rare but annual occurrence to Southern California in winter, with most on the coast, this large grebe is only of casual occurrence in southeastern California. One well described at the Torres-Martinez Ponds near the Whitewater River mouth 24 November 2007 (*NAB* 62:150) provided the first record for the Salton Sink. One photographed at North Shore 13-24 March 2012 (*NAB* 66:555), another there on 20 November 2014 (*NAB* 69:153), one photographed on Fig Lagoon 20-21 October 2012 (*NAB* 67:159) and a fifth at the south end of the Salton Sea near Obsidian Butte on 23 October 2015 (*NAB* 70:117) provide the only other records. This grebe has also been recorded as close to the Salton Sink as on Lake Perris, Riverside County, and once at Senator Wash Reservoir, Imperial County on 14 December 2006 (*NAB* 61:326).

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE

Streptopelia decaocto.

Common resident; increasing.

This non-native dove apparently reached southeastern California as a result of the species expanding its North American range westward from the West Indies and Florida. The first reported at the Salton Sink was a male paired with a Ringed Turtle-Dove in Brawley during July and August 1999, but the first endorsed by the California Bird Records Committee were up to 50 near Calipatria 4 May-28 December 2002 (Cole and McCaskie. 2004). This dove is now common and widespread at the Salton Sink, breeding throughout most of the Mexicali, Imperial and Coachella Valleys.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD

Cynanthus latirostris.

One record for spring.

An adult male photographed at a feeder 3 km southeast of El Centro 20-21 April 2006 (Heindel and Garrett. 2008) provides the only record. However, there are now well over 100 records for California, with most in the fall and winter along the coast of southern California. This red-billed hummingbird had previously been recorded as close to the Salton Sink as at Agua Caliente Springs (16 January-10 February 1977) and Borrego Springs (5 December 2005-8 February 2006, 27 May-24 June 2009 and 15 November 2013-17 January 2014) in eastern San Diego County, and at Chiriaco Summit (28-30 October 2012 and 22-23 May 2014) in southern Riverside County. Although anticipated to be found in the Salton Sink, the April date for the El Centro bird makes it one of only a very few in spring in California.

TAXONOMY. No specimen has been taken in California. However, the subspecies presumably involved is *C. l. magicus*, the form occurring at the northern part of this species range.

PIPING PLOVER

Charadrius melodus.

One record for fall/winter.

This small North American plover breeds along the Atlantic coast from Newfoundland south through North Carolina, and inland west to southeastern Alberta and southeastern Colorado (Paulson. 2005). This species has been recorded west to British Columbia (Delta 24-25 Aug 2017 – *eBird*), Washington (Rearden 13-16 Jul 1990 – Wahl et al. 2005), Oregon (Tillamook 6-8 Sep 1986 – *AB* 41:134, and near Florence 20 Aug 2012 – *NAB* 67:148) and along the coast of Southern California (Morro Bay, Goleta and Malibu – California Bird Records Committee 2007). Most winter along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts. An adult that remained around Red Hill at the south end of the Salton Sea 7 August-19 December 2006 (Heindel, et al. 2008) was well photographed. This is one of only four recorded in California, and the only one inland.

TAXONOMY. No specimen has been taken in California. However, the subspecies presumably involved is *C. m. circumcinctus*, the form breeding in the interior of North America.

MARSH SANDPIPER

Tringa stagnatilis

One record in late fall.

This Asiatic sandpiper breeds in the southern boreal forest and steppe from eastern Europe eastward to just east of Lake Baikal, and winters throughout sub-Saharan Africa, India, southeast Asia and sparingly in Australia (Paulson, D. 2005). One photographed at a hunting club pond 2 km south of Mecca on 26 October 2013 (Rottenborn, et al. 2016) provided the first record for California. One photographed at Estero Punta Banda, Baja California, 12-16 October 2011 (*NAB* 66:173-174 and 195), and another near Dixon, Solano County 9-13 April 2014 (Singer, et al. 2016), with presumably the same bird at the Vic Fazio Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, Yolo County 16-23 Apr 2016, returning 15-21 April 2018 (Benson, et al. 2020), and one photographed at the Kern National Wildlife Refuge on 29 March 2020 (Benson, et al. 2021), provide the only three other records in North America away from Alaska and Hawaii.

PURPLE SANDPIPER

Calidris maritima.

Two records, both in winter.

This sandpiper breeds in the Arctic from central Canada eastward across Greenland, Europe and western Siberia, and winters primarily on the Atlantic coast from Newfoundland to Georgia, casually west to the coast of Texas, and the coasts of western Europe (Paulson. 2005). Rare inland around the Great Lakes, and accidental westward to the Pacific coast. One at Salt Creek Beach 25 March-17 April 2016 (McCaskie, et al. 2018) and another at North Shore 30 December 2020-2 February 2021 (Benson, et al. 2021 pending publication) provide the only two records for California, and two of the very few in western North America.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER

Calidris acuminata.

One record for spring and two records for fall.

This Asiatic shorebird breeds in northern Siberia and winters primarily in Australia (Paulson. 2005). A regular fall migrant in western Alaska. A rare fall and casual spring migrant farther south along the Pacific coast of North America, and casual to accidental elsewhere in North America. One well photographed at the Whitewater River mouth 19-22 May 2005 (*NAB* 59:494-495) established one of only six spring records for this species in California. A juvenile at the east end of 68th Avenue southwest of Mecca 24 October 2016 (R. L. McKernan and C. McGaugh – *NAB* <https://wp.me/p8iY2g-aae>) and a juvenile photographed 1 km west of Westmorland 11 October 2019 (G. McCaskie – *NAB* <https://wp.me/p8iY2g-90n>) provide the two records in fall.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER

Tryngites subruficollis.

Two records for fall.

This long-distance migrant breeds in extreme northern Alaska and the Canadian Arctic, and winters in southern South America (Paulson. 2005). Two individuals with other shorebirds attracted to an irrigated field 6.5 km north of Calipatria on 15 September 2007 (*NAB* 62:152) and one photographed on the south shore of the Salton Sea near the New River mouth on the unusually late date of 17 November 2014 (*NAB* 69:154) provide the only two records for the Salton Sink.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Larus ridibundus.

Two records for winter.

This widespread Eurasian gull regularly wanders west to the Atlantic coast of Canada and the United States, and eastward to Alaska, and less regularly elsewhere throughout North America. More than thirty have been found in California, most along the coast in fall and winter, with one in Orange County during the winters of 1980-1981 and 1981-1982 (California Bird Records Committee. 2007) being the southernmost. A first-cycle bird associating with Bonaparte's Gulls was photographed in the vicinity of the Whitewater River mouth 15 January-9 February 2007 (Singer and Terrill. 2009). An adult in the same general area 8-14 January 2014 (Singer, et al. 2017), returning 30 December 2016-3 Mar 2017, 5-9 December 2017 (Singer et al. 2020), 3 January-16 March 2019 (Benson, et al, 2021) and 2 January-3 March 2020 (Benson, et al. pending publication) was presumed to be a different bird than that in 2007.

ROSS'S GULL

Rhodostethia rosea

One record for fall.

The main nesting range of this small gull is along the Arctic coast of Russia, but it also nests in small numbers very locally in Arctic Canada, and Greenland. It is believed to winter mostly in the western Bering Sea and the extreme northern Pacific and Atlantic Oceans (Howell and Dunn. 2007). Vagrants have been recorded well to the south in the United States, Europe and Asia. The first Ross's Gull to reach California, was an adult photographed at Red Hill 17-19 November 2006 (McCaskie. 2007). At that time this established the southernmost record for this gull, but one in Hawaii on 1 January 2020 was even farther south (Peter Pyle, pers comm.).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus marinus

One record in spring.

This large North Atlantic gull nests along the Atlantic coasts from northern Labrador in eastern Canada, eastward to Greenland, Iceland and Northern Norway, and southward along the coasts to North Carolina, the British Isles, northern France and Denmark. It also nests inland on the Great Lakes. Exceedingly rare to casual elsewhere in the interior of the United States west to Colorado. Accidental on the Pacific coast of Alaska and Washington (Howell Dunn. 2007). An adult photographed on the northwest shore of the Salton Sea at the east end of 84th Avenue on 1 and 5 May 2013 (Rottenborn. 2016) provides the only record for California.

BRIDLED TERN

Sterna anaethetus.

One record for summer.

An adult at Unit 1 of the Salton Sea NWR 7 July-24 August 2008 was photographed (Pike and Compton. 2010). This highly pelagic tern normally gets no closer to California than the tropical Pacific Ocean waters off Nayarit in west Mexico. One seen on the coast at Bolsa Chica in Orange County 17 July 1998 and 10 July 1999 (California Bird Record Committee. 2007), another photographed there 23 June 2015 (Searcy, et al. 2018) , and an adult at the Santa Margarita River mouth in San Diego County 14-23 August 2007 and 13 May-17 June 2008

(Pyle. et al. 2009) are the only others recorded along the Pacific Coast north of Nayarit. As such, the appearance of one inland at the Salton Sea was totally unexpected.

TAXONOMY. Photographs of the Salton Sea bird indicate it was of the east Pacific subspecies *nelsoni*.

BLACK-VENTED SHEARWATER

Puffinus opisthomelas.

One record in winter.

This truly pelagic bird nests on islands off the Pacific coast of Baja California. It forages over the Pacific Oceanic waters from central California south to Central America, including within the Gulf of California (Howell and Zuffelt.2019). Accidental inland. One well studied and described by Matt Anderson of Ohio as it sat on the water close to Obsidian Butte for nearly one-hour on 5 February 2014 (*NAB* 68:275). The only other record of this species in the interior is that of one in Arizona at the north end of Lake Havasu on 26 September 1997 following Tropical Storm *Nora* (Rosenberg. et al. 2011).

ANHINGA

Anhinga anhinga.

Two records, one each for spring and winter.

Anhinga breed no closer to the Salton Sea than southern Sonora (Russell and Monson 1998), with one vagrant recorded in Arizona (Tucson 12 Sep 1893; Brown 1906), and three more in California (San Francisco 2 Jun-16 Jul 1939, San Diego 4 Feb 1977-20 Jan 1979, and near Corona 27 Nov 1983-9 Jun 1984; California Bird Records Committee 2007). An adult male was at a large heron rookery at Ramer Lake 5 April-12 June 2003 (San Miguel and McGrath. 2005) and again 19 March-6 May 2004 (Cole, et al. 2006), a sub-adult male was at Fig Lagoon 8 November 2003-18 January 2004 (San Miguel and McGrath 2005), and what was presumed to be the same bird was reported soaring high over that lagoon 25 October 2004 (*NAB* 59:147 – not endorsed by the California Bird Records Committee).

HAIRY WOODPECKER

Picoides villosus

One record in winter.

This woodpecker is resident at the higher elevations of the mountains west of the Salton Sink. Small number occasionally move down-mountain into the coastal lowlands, very rarely to as far south as San Diego County, in fall and winter. One photographed along 81st Avenue in Oasis west of the northwest shore of the Salton Sea on 2 January 2012 (*NAB* 66:345) provides the only record for the Salton Sink and the entire lowlands of southeastern California.

GILDED FLICKER

Colaptes chrysoides

One record.

This slightly smaller version of the Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus* is a resident of the southwestern desert, nesting west to the Mojave National Preserve in eastern San Bernardino County, and along the Arizona side of the Lower Colorado River Valley. A male flicker photographed at Cattle Call Park in Brawley on 20 January 2013 by Linda LeRoy showed the features of a Gilded Flicker listed by Kaufman (1976). This flicker was perhaps present with

Northern Flickers since 28 December 2012 (G. McCaskie), and last reported there on 17 February 2013 (Todd McGrath).

CRESTED CARACARA

Caracara cheriway.

Four records in winter.

This distinctive falcon formerly occurred, at least occasionally in winter, west to the Rio Colorado delta in northeastern Baja California and the lower Colorado River valley in southwestern Arizona. There were no acceptable records for southeastern California until 1993, even though Grinnell and Miller (1944) stated that it “occurs with very little doubt from time to time as a vagrant from southward”. The record of one near Westmorland 14 December 1993, originally not accepted by the California Bird Records Committee, was reevaluated and endorsed (Heindel and Garrett. 2008), and a bird believed hatched in 2005 was well seen at Finney Lake 1 January 2006 (Iliff et al. 2007). Two occurred in the winter of 2014-2015, with what was believed to be the same adult first near North Shore 9 November, then at Rock Hill on the south shore of the Salton Sea 25-26 November, and near Signal Mountain on 9 December (Singer et al. 2017), followed by an immature frequenting an area along highway 115 east of Brawley/Calipatria 19 January-28 February (Searcy et al. 2018).

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER

Myiarchus crinitus

One record

The Great Crested Flycatcher breeds throughout the eastern half of the United States and winters in Central and South America. It has been recorded 64 times in California (California Bird Records Committee 2007 and Table of Updates

<https://www.californiabirds.org/publications.asp>), with all but one on Point Loma, San Diego County on 20 May 2009 (Pyle et al. 2011), having been recorded in fall between 6 September and 31 October. As such, one photographed at the Imperial Irrigation District Wetlands near Niland on 23 June 2021 (Curtis A. Marantz, pending CBRC endorsement) was unexpected.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER

Empidonax flaviventris.

One record for fall.

The Yellow-bellied Flycatcher has been recorded in California 30 times since the first was identified 16 September 1976 at Southeast Farallon Island (DeSante et al. 1985). Reports in California are increasing, with 17 recorded in the 2000's; this increase no doubt resulting from observers' improved knowledge of the field characteristics of *Empidonax*. The single record of one photographed at the Wister Waterfowl Management Area Headquarters 3-5 September 2004 (Cole, et al. 2006) falls within the date range (27 August through 16 October) established by others recorded in California.

HUTTON'S VIREO

Vireo huttoni Cassin, 1851

Two records for late fall-early winter.

Hutton's Vireo is resident west of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range, and a casual vagrant east to the Mojave Desert and the desert edge in San Diego County. One was well studied and

photographed in Brawley 30 October-15 December 2004 (*NAB* 59:150). A second was at Cattle Call Park in Brawley 8 February- 4 March 2017 (G. McCaskie). Earlier attributions to the Imperial Valley (California Department of Fish and Game. 1979, United States Fish and Wildlife Service. 1993) are best judged erroneous.

TAXONOMY. The nominate form, *V. h. huttoni* is the only race recorded in California. However, *V. h. stephensi*, resident in southeast Arizona, has been collected on the Arizona side of the lower Colorado River (Rosenberg et al. 1991).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO

Vireo flavifrons.

One record for fall and two records in spring.

The Yellow-throated Vireo breeds throughout most of the eastern United States, and winters in southern Central America and northern South America. It is a rare to casual vagrant west of the Rocky Mountains, with most occurring in late spring. Although well over 100 have been recorded in California, with about one third in fall, one seen 7 km. east southeast of Mecca on 11 October 2010 (*NAB* 65:164) was the first in the Salton Sink. The two in spring, both photographed, were at the same location 3 km southeast of El Centro 18-19 May 2011 (*NAB* 65:519) and 22 May 2019 (C. A. Marantz), occurring eight years apart.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO

Vireo philadelphicus

One record.

The Philadelphia Vireo nests across central Canada east of the Rocky Mountains, and winters throughout most of the southern half of Central America. It is an exceedingly rare to casual vagrant to the western United States, mostly in fall, with well over 100 recorded in California. The only one recorded within the Salton Sink was 1 km west of Calipatria on 15 December 2015 (*NAB* 70:233). It was well photographed (photo seen on back of camera by G. McCaskie), but the photo-card was corrupt and the photo lost. One north of the Salton Sink at Desert Hot Springs on 9 October 2011 (*NAB* 66:170) and another east of the Salton Sink at Gordons Well on 12 October 2011 (*NAB* 66:170) are the only others recorded in southeastern California.

CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAY

Aphelocoma californica

Two records, one in early fall and one in winter.

The A.O.U. (2016) officially recognized the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma woodhouseii* as separate from the California Scrub-Jay. Both species have occurred in the Salton Sink, with Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay a casual straggler in winter. The Woodhouse's Jay is fairly common throughout most of the southern half of the Great Basin east of the Sierra Nevada, and irregularly strays into the southwestern deserts. The California Scrub-Jay is common throughout most of California west of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range, resident as close to the Salton Sink as In-Ko-Pah in extreme southwestern Imperial County. A California Scrub-Jay in El Centro on 10 August 1989 (R. Higson; SDNHM 45999) and another near Holtville 27 August 2005-9 March 2006 (*NAB* 60:141 and 285) are the only two recorded within the Salton Sink. One in Yuma, Arizona 22 August 2016-16 May 2017 (Rosenberg et al. 2019) perhaps passed through the Salton Sink undetected.

PACIFIC WREN

Troglodytes pacifica

One record in winter.

The A.O.U. (2010) officially recognized the splitting of the Winter Wren into two species, the Winter Wren *Troglodytes hiemalis* occurring in eastern North America, and the Pacific Wren occurring along the Pacific coast of North America. The Winter Wren is exceedingly rare to casual fall vagrant and winter visitor throughout the interior southwestern United States. Both species are believed to be casual late fall and winter vagrants to the Salton Sink, but few were identified to species prior to 2010. Reports range from 20 November (1988, Finney Lake – B. E. Daniels) in the fall to 7 March (2015, Finney Lake – Matthew Grube - photo) in late winter. One vocal individual well seen along the New River west of Calipatria on 19 December 2000 (Brian E. Daniels) was identified by the observer as a Pacific Wren.

One vocal bird well seen in the Wister Unit near the intersection of Beach Road and Highway 111 from 5-22 December (K. L. Garrett – *NAB* 53:210), and another vocal bird at Finney Lake 4 January-7 March 2015 (J.V. Remsen - *NAB* 69:295) were identified as Winter Wrens, but neither record was endorsed by the California Bird Records Committee.

WRENTIT

Chamaea fasciata

One record

One seen in a stand of dense desert scrub adjacent to Buchanan Street immediately south of 72nd Avenue near the northwest corner of the Salton Sea on 11 November 2020 (Robert L. McKernan) provides the only record for the Salton Sink. This location is about 30 km east of the closest known range of the Wrentit in the Santa Rosa Wilderness. Two near Palm Springs on 1 April 1980 (*AB* 34:816) provide the only other report for the Coachella Valley.

RUFOUS-BACKED ROBIN

*Turdus rufopalliatu*s.

Two records, one each for fall and winter.

One photographed at the Wister Waterfowl Management Area Headquarters during its stay between 21 December 2004-20 January 2005 (Ilf, et al. 2007) provided the first record for a species believed long overdue in the Salton Sink. Less than two years later another was photographed just north of the Imperial-Riverside County line on the east side of the Salton Sea, 11 km east of Durmid, on 23 October 2006 (Heindel and Garrett. 2008). This tropical species had been found as close to the Salton Sink as Borrego Springs in east San Diego County (13 March-16 April 1996), Chiriaco Summit in Riverside County (29 October-9 December 2012), Cactus City in Riverside County (23 November 2003), and at Imperial and Laguna Dams on the Colorado River (17 December 1973-6 April 1974, and (2) 21-24 December 2002) was perhaps predictable.

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA

Lonchura punctulate

Four records, three for fall and one in winter.

This non-native species from Southeast Asia is now well established in the coastal lowlands of Southern California and eastward through the Greater Los Angeles Basin to Riverside. Two photographed at North Shore on 24 October 2018 (R. L. McKernan and C. McGaugh), six

photographed at the intersection of Davis and Schrimpf Roads on 19 January 2018 (R. Reed), one calling at Red Hill on 4 November 2018 (D. Cooper) and one photographed at the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge headquarters on 26 Nov 2019 (iNaturilist – rbhadury) are the only four reported to date in the Salton Sink. This small finch has now reached Borrego Springs in eastern San Diego County and much of the Coachella Valley in Riverside County. One at Desert Center In eastern Riverside County 9 Oct 2019 (A. J. Searcy – *NAB* <https://wp.me/p8iY2g-90n>) is the easternmost, so this species can be expected again at the Salton Sink.

WHITE WAGTAIL

Motacilla alba

One record.

White Wagtails are common and widespread birds breeding throughout Europe and Asia, with small numbers reaching extreme western Alaska (Alstrom and Mild 2003), and winters to the south into Africa, India and Southeast Asia. Vagrants are recorded virtually annually along the West Coast of North America in fall, winter and spring, with a total over 45 recorded in California. One photographed near the west end of 84th Avenue at the northwest corner of the Salton Sea on 2 June 2021 (Robert L. McKernan) provides the only record for the Salton Sink. White Wagtail was previously unrecorded in Riverside County, with the closest to the Salton Sea being one in Anaheim, Orange County 1-17 Feb 2017 (Singer et al. 2020) and another on Camp Pendleton, San Diego County on 18 Apr 2017 (Singer et al, 2020).

TAXONOMY. There are nine subspecies (Alstrom and Mild 2003), with two, *ocularis* and *lugens*, documented occurring in the western part of North America and California. The bird at the Salton Sea was an adult male of the black-backed subspecies *lugens*.

BELL'S SPARROW

Artemisiospiza belli

Winter visitor.

The A.O.U. (2013) officially recognized the splitting of the Sage Sparrow into two species, The Sagebrush Sparrow *Artemisiospiza nevadensis*, and the similar looking Bell's Sparrow. The Sagebrush Sparrow nests throughout most of the Great Basin and winters in the deserts of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. The Bell's Sparrow is mostly resident in California and the Baja California Peninsula, but the migratory subspecies *canescens* nests in the Mojave Desert and arid valleys of southern California, and winters in southeastern California and extreme southwestern Arizona. Dates of occurrence for "Sage Sparrow" within the Salton Sink range from 27 August (2000, Salton City – G. McCaskie) to 27 April (1999. Wister Waterfowl Management Area Headquarters – S. Guers). Both species are reported in winter in the Salton Sink, but characteristics (e.g. back streaking and malar) used for separating the two in the field remain questionable. However, *A. b. canescens* is believed to be more common. Photos from Covina Beach on 15 December 2015 (John Puschock – eBird list S50723779) suggest both species may occur together.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD

Euphagus carolinus

One record for winter.

This blackbird nests throughout most of the wet woodlands of Alaska and Canada, and winters in the eastern United States. With records from as close to the Salton Sink as the California side of

Colorado River in Imperial County on 26 February 1959 (Rosenberg et al. 1991), at Borrego Springs in San Diego County on 27 November 1964 (Unitt 2004) and Thousand Palms Oasis in Riverside County 7 December 2011-26 February 2012 (Nelson et al. 2013), this blackbird could be anticipated to occur. However, perhaps due to a major decline in the species' overall population, occurrences in California have decreased from more half-a-dozen a year in the 1970's to an average of between one and two a year today. As such, the photographing of a female with other blackbirds near the Calipatria State Prison 15-26 December 2008 (Pike and Compton. 2010) was not expected, and the only one recorded at the Salton Sink.

COMMON GRACKLE

Quiscalus quiscula

Two records, one each for spring and fall/winter.

This grackle is common throughout most of North America east of the Rocky Mountains and increasing in the West. California's first was record was on 20 November 1967, approximately ten had been recorded by the end of the 1970s, nearly 25 by the end of the 1980s, and virtually 50 by the end of the 1990s. One photographed at the Wister Waterfowl Management Area Headquarters on 27 March 2004 (Cole et al. 2006) and another seen 5.5 km west of Seeley 1-2 November 2006 and again on 20 January 2007 (Heindel and Garrett. 2008) are the only two recorded at the Salton Sink.

TAXONOMY. The nominate "Bronzed Grackle" *Q. q. quiscula* is the only form recorded in western North America, and the bird photographed at the Wister Waterfowl Management Area Headquarters shows the characteristics of this subspecies.

WORM-EATING WARBLER

Helmitheros vermivorus.

One record each for spring and fall.

One was photographed at the Salton Sea State Park 24 April 2010 (Johnson, et al. 2012). This was early for a spring vagrant anywhere in California, so conceivably may have wintered locally - previous records of presumed spring vagrants occurrences range between 22 April and 5 July. The other was photographed at Ramer Lake 26-27 November 2011 (Nelson, K. N. et al. 2013). This distinct *Parulidae* breeds throughout much of the eastern United States, and winters in the West Indies and Central America. One, presumably a bird wintering locally, was just outside the area of the Salton Sink near Ejido Jiquilpan in the Mexicali Valley on 3 March 2003 (*NAB* 57:261), and a fall vagrant photographed at Tamarisk Grove Campground near Borrego Springs 18-19 October 2007 (*NAB* 62:154) was only a short distance to the west of the Salton Sink.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER

Vermivora chrysoptera

One record for fall.

This uncommon and declining *Parulidae* nests in the northern United States and southward locally along the Appalachians, and it winters in the eastern part of southern Central America. It is a casual vagrant to California with most recorded in spring and fall. One photographed at Dos Palmas Preserve on 11 Sep 2019 (Benson, et al. 2021) provides the only record for the Salton Sink. A fall vagrant at Thousand Palms Oasis 3 Oct 1980 (California Bird Records Committee 2007) was only a short distance to the north of the Salton Sink, and the only other recorded in Riverside County.

KENTUCKY WARBLER

Geothlypis Formosa

One record for spring.

This somewhat secretive *Parulidae* nests throughout the southeastern United States of North America and winters throughout much of eastern Central America. It has been recorded in California well over 100 times, with most in spring and early summer. One photographed 3 km southeast of El Centro 9 May 2018 (K. Z. Kurland) provides the only record within the Salton Sink. One at Tamarisk Grove Campground in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 8 September 2013 (*NAB* 68:151) and another in Borrego Springs on 24 September 2014 (*NAB* 69:156) were only short distances to the west of the Salton Sink.

HOODED WARBLER

Wilsonia citrina

Two records for spring and one for winter.

This common *Parulidae* nests throughout the eastern United States, and winters throughout much of eastern Central America. It has been recorded in California well over 400 times, with most in spring and early summer, and with the occasional pair nesting. One in early winter at the zoo in Mexicali on 1 December 2007 (*NAB* 62:308), a female seen at Ramer Lake on 3 May 2005 (D. A. Easterla) and a male photographed 3 km southeast of El Centro 13 May 2010 (*NAB* 64:500) are the only three reported within the Salton Sink. However, just outside the Salton Sink, but still in Imperial County, one was seen at In-ko-pah on 28 May 2000 (M. A. Patten), and a male was photographed along the Colorado River at Laguna Dam on 21 December 2009 (*NAB* 63:500).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER

Setophaga virens

One record for winter and one record for spring

This common *Parulidae* breeds in the coniferous and mixed forests east of the Rocky Mountains in southern Canada and in the northeastern United States. It winters in the Caribbean and much of Central America, and is a rare to casual fall vagrant and winter visitor to California. One photographed 3 km southeast of El Centro 19-20 April 2008 (*NAB* 62:480) and another photographed in Brawley 13 December 2010-7 January 2011 (*NAB* 65:342) provide the only two records within the Salton Sink.

HEPATIC TANAGER

Piranga flava (Vieillot, 1822)

One record for winter.

A bird normally associated with the mountains of Mexico and Central America that reaches the mountain forests of Arizona, New Mexico, and southeastern California in summer. It is exceedingly rare in the coastal lowlands of California in winter. A male photographed at the Mexicali Country Club in Mexicali 9-22 January 2005 (*NAB*, 59:330) provides the only record within the Salton Sink. With records from as close to the Salton Sink as Agua Caliente Springs in Anza Borrego Desert State Park (27 Mar 1974. G. McCaskie *AB* 28:694) and Imperial Dam on the Colorado River (19 Dec 1973. J. L. Dunn - *AB* 28:694), additional records of this species can be expected.

TAXONOMY. The northern subspecies *P. f. hepatica* that breeds in the mountains of the southwestern United States of America is the only form recorded in North America.

SCARLET TANAGER

Piranga olivacea

One record for fall.

A relatively common summer resident throughout most of the United States and southern Canada east of the Missouri River that winters in South America. A rare vagrant throughout the western United States, occurring annually in small numbers in California in fall. It has been recorded as close to the Salton Sink as Jacumba on 22 October 2011 (*NAB* 66:172) to the west, and northwestern Sonora at El Doctor on 9 December 2001 (K. L. Garrett), the Colorado River Valley at Bard on 11 October 2011 (*NAB* 66:172) and at Desert Center on 8 October 2019 (Adam J. Searcy, *NAB* <https://wp.me/p8iY2g-90n>) to the east. An adult male photographed at Dos Palmas Preserve 12-13 October 2019 (Stephanie Stragier, *NAB* <https://wp.me/p8iY2g-90n>) is the only one recorded within the Salton Sink.

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