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Field Trips

The summer months are scanty as far as organized field trips go — the following trips are reprinted from the *June Gull*. There is a mini trip to Blake Gardens in Kensington being planned. Call the GGAS office (843-2222) for information.

Sunday, July 9 — Chimney Rock, Pt. Reyes. Meet at 9 a.m. at the National Seashore headquarters' parking lot. We will car pool to the parking lot at Chimney Rock for a two-mile walk out to the point to look for nesting Black Oystercatchers and gulls. Bring lunch. Leader: Barry Spitz (454-2769). (✓)

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 14-16 — from Tioga Pass east. A trip to explore alpine meadows, lush canyons, sagebrush hills and the western shore of Mono Lake. Short, leisurely hikes at 5,000 to 10,000 foot elevations. Final itinerary depends on snow and mosquito conditions at time of trip. Call leader in late June for further information. Meet on **Friday, July 14, at 2 p.m.**, and **Saturday, July 15, at 9 a.m.** at the intersection of Hwy. 120 (Tioga Pass Road leading through Yosemite) and Hwy. 395, just south of Lee Vining. Bring insect repellent, hiking shoes and camera for breathtaking scenery. Good campgrounds in Lee Vining Canyon; good motels in Lee Vining. Leader: Marie Mans (284-7681). (✓)

Carpooling: You can arrange for carpooling by calling Kate Partidge at 849-1951 (home) or 642-5784 (work: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.) for trips marked (✓). Passengers should be willing to share all expenses incident to the trips including mileage and any additional costs, such as bridge tolls, parking or entrance fees.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

April and Mid-May Observations

It was that fleeting time of the year. With luck and timing a birder out during a single day could catch the seam between the seasons and see more birds in that day than any other time of year, for winter seems to end in late April and summer begins — there can be a few weeks overlap — and if the winds bring the migrants, the makings of an extraordinary day are at hand.

Such a day occurred on April 29 in Southern California. The top-notch team of Jon Dunn, Kimball Garrett, Van Remsen and Richard Webster set the all-time record for a Big Day, officially and unquestionably, compiling a list of **231** species from the Salton Sea to the San Diego coast. A few days earlier, Jon and Van had set the all-time County Big Day record in San Diego County — 200 birds — in preparation for the assault on the previous record (207 officially; 229 from a Texas team that had disregarded the official American Birding Association rules). The result is spectacular and may never be equalled.

In our area the same seasonal forces were at work. Here is a sampling:

THE END OF A SEASON

A few of the winter's specialties lingered on before departing in April. Moss Landing's Emperor Goose remained through April 2 (E & AM). Then another Emperor appeared at Bodega Bay and remained through April 12 (PC, RS). Meanwhile, the three geese at Limantour were joined by a fourth on April 21 (RS), but none could be found subsequently. It is interesting that we knew of five Emperors at three locations for the winter and that five were grouped into two localities (one new) just prior to their flight far to the north.

Along the Pajaro River, the Black-and-white, Magnolia and Palm Warblers donned their bright spring garb (the Magnolia as a breeding plumaged male) by April 2 (E & AM).

The Saw-whet Owl at Coyote Hills departed April 12 (JS).

THE PASSING OF SPRING

Spring migration far offshore is always fascinating. Regular watches by Barry Sauppe and others from Pigeon Point, San Mateo County, have greatly increased our knowledge of this phenomenon. Again this year the observers documented the small but apparent spring movements of Manx Shearwaters and Arctic Terns past the coast; both species

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were previously thought to be quite rare in the spring. Arctic Terns were also reported in very small numbers on numerous pelagic trips. Because Common Terns are indeed common offshore at this time, only reports of Arctics by experienced observers are acceptable.

Pelagic trips were profitable. A few Short-tailed Shearwaters were recorded in Monterey and the Cordelle Banks out of Bodega Bay through mid-April (RS, BDP); these birds have not been previously thought to be present so late in the year. An Ashy Storm-Petrel was seen from shore at Monterey on April 29 (DD) and a pelagic trip following several days of strong northwest winds recorded 12 of these elusive waifs in Monterey Bay May 1 (DR).

But that was totally eclipsed by the **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** that pattered across in front of the bow May 1 (DR). The bird represents the first spring record for this casual visitor in California.

Observers at most promontories and on boats were treated to small numbers of Black-footed Albatross throughout the period. Numbers should continue to increase through June. A boat 50-70 miles off Half Moon Bay April 18-19 recorded two of the highly sought Laysan Albatross, and a third-hand report tells of photographing a young Short-tailed Albatross there on April 19 (*fide* VM, *fide* LCB). This spectacularly large bird, reduced to about 20 individuals in the 30s, has increased to several hundred today on its breeding islands off Japan as the result of stringent protection. Though the future appears bleak for the Condor — our other relic giant — perhaps we can look forward to the day when the Short-tailed Albatross will again be a regular visitor to our offshore waters.

A large movement of Sabine's Gulls occurred offshore the second week of May but they were otherwise absent. The high count was 140 passing Pigeon Point May 14 (BS). Two Ruddy Turnstones at Woodland April 3 (PW) and four Brant at Mendota, Fresno County, April 7 (KII) were normally littoral species straying inland where they are rare. Going the other direction, four Black Turnstones were seen toward the coast at Novato, Marin County, on May 7 (DS).

A Townsend's Solitaire was away from its mountain haunts at Vollmer Peak in Tilden Park May 4 (CG) and Lewis' Woodpeckers were widely reported moving through strange areas in mid-May. Most exciting of the migrants was a female **King Eider** found at Ano Nuevo May 5-7 (PM, BS, GA, LH). Presumably this bird, very rare in our parts, wintered somewhere to the south. None had been reported in California since 1974.

THE COMING OF SUMMER

A number of returning birds were of interest. An adult Little Blue Heron was watched at Palo Alto April 24 - May 13 (CH *et al*). One has

been seen in this area most springs since 1972 and the bird has defended nest sites at the Bair Island egret colony. An apparent hybrid Little Blue Heron x Snowy Egret was at Palo Alto in 1973, so this bird's activities should continue to be watched. The endangered California race of the Least Tern returned to Alameda South Shore April 26 (ER) — there are a few nesting colonies around the bay. The male Indigo Bunting returned to its territory on Limantour Road, Point Reyes, May 11 (A & WG). Still, no direct evidence of breeding or hybridization has ever been discovered in California, though a formidable circumstantial case can be made. Two Phainopeplas at Santa Rosa April 22 (BPD) couldn't have been heading much further north to nest.

The saga of California's first Blue-throated Hummingbird continues. The female, discovered in Tulare County around Christmas, subsequently built a nest, laid eggs and hatched young. Those babies were recently measured and were substantially intermediate in dimension between Blue-throated and Anna's, the suspected other parent (*fide* BB). So hybrids they be — but she isn't finished yet; at last word she was rebuilding her nest . . .

THAT MAGIC TIME

As I write this, vagrant season is beginning. Late May and early June is my favorite time of year. Desert oases and coastal vagrant traps attract our rarest visitors, often thousands of miles out of place, but in spring plumage and singing!

On April 25-26 a Brown Thrasher visited an Oakland yard (GP) and two Black-and-white warblers reached the southeast Farallon Island on May 9 (PRBO). I suspect that eastern species found in late April-early May wintered somewhere on the west coast, if not in California then not too far further south. But two Northern Parula Warblers at Mendoza Ranch, Point Reyes, May 18-19 (A & WG) fit the more typical vagrant pattern. With them was an outstanding find — a **White-eyed Vireo** (A & WG). It was California's third record; only last year the second recorded bird was found in the same trees on June 7-8. Vagrant season could hardly have started on a higher note.

Observers: Garth Alton, Bob Barnes, Laurence C. Binford, Pete Connors, Donna Dittman, Al and Wilma Ghiorso, Clark Gleason, Linda Hale, Keith Hanson, Calvin Hom, Eugene and Akiko Makishima, Peter Metropoulos, Joe Morlan, Victor Morejohn, Benjamin D. Parmeter, George Peyton, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Don Roberson, Elsie Roemer, Barry Sauppe, Dave Shuford, Janet Southworth, Rich Stallcup, Peter Willmann.

—DON ROBERSON, *Observations Editor*
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Finding California's Birds

The American Birding Association has just published *Birder's California: How to build a California Year List and an account of just such an undertaking* by Don Roberson. The field-guide size paperback describes the Year List written about in the April *Gull*, gives timing and directions to *all* of California's regular but hard-to-find species, summarizes the vagrant spots and is packed with photos, maps and useful birding hints. The book also contains reprints of *Birding* magazine inserts with detailed directions to 12 of California's best birding spots.

A must for every California birder at \$4.95 plus 50¢ postage and handling. Add another 65¢ if you want first-class mailing. Available from ABA sales, PO Box 4335, Austin, Texas 78765.

Conservation Notes

ALASKA LANDS IN SENATE. The U.S. House of Representatives on Friday, May 19, voted overwhelmingly to preserve 102 million acres of Alaska wildlands in wilderness, wildlife refuges and national parks. The bill was approved by a final vote of 277 to 31 and it is now in the Senate. Of the total 102 million acres — an area equal to all of California — 66 million would be designated "wilderness" to be kept as nearly as possible in its untouched virgin state.

The bill has claimed widespread popular support, but its fate in the Senate is uncertain. Further compromise and weakening attempts will certainly take place. Both Alaska senators strongly oppose the bill on the basis of so-called "lock up" of resources, and both senators — Republican Ted Stevens and Democrat Mike Gravel — have threatened to filibuster when it comes up. Senate Democratic leader Robert Byrd of West Virginia has said he does not plan to call it up over their opposition. This means in effect that the mining and energy interests may have their way after all and that the magnificent wildlands now preserved — mostly by the broad support of the American people — will be lost forever to development and exploitation.

We urge all those concerned for the environment and the future to continue to support a strong, uncompromised Alaska Lands Bill.

RARE II EIS DUE. The U.S. Forest Service will soon release its preliminary environmental impact statement (EIS) for the RARE II program in California. RARE II, or "Roadless Area Review and Evaluation," is designed to map and inventory roadless Forest Service areas in the state for possible inclusion later as wilderness. So far a total of 343 roadless areas have been identified in California. When released, the

draft environmental impact statement, with regional and state supplements, will provide the basis for critical public involvement leading to a final EIS and recommendations to Congress early next year.

When RARE II is complete, each roadless area will have been placed by the Forest Service into one of three categories:

1. "Instant Wilderness." FS support for Congressional wilderness designation.
2. "Further Evaluation." Possibility of wilderness option after more planning and consideration.
3. "Release Areas." Will not be considered further for recommendations as wilderness.

Slightly more than six million acres have been inventoried in California. It is important that conservationists work with the Forest Service as RARE II proceeds and that public support for wilderness designation be demonstrated.

Copies of the draft EIS are available from the U.S. Forest Service, 630 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111, or may be borrowed from the GGAS office.

Free Field Trips at Mono Lake

Spend a day exploring the geology, botany, zoology and human history of the Mono Lake region and learn how water diversion to the Los Angeles area is affecting this irreplaceable national treasure.

Field trips led by David Gaines and David Winkler are free but limited to 30 people. They are scheduled for July 22, August 6, August 19 and September 10.

Select a preferred as well as an alternate date. Send a self addressed stamped envelope to Mono Lake Field Trip, Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541. They will acknowledge your letter and tell you where to meet and what to bring.

Volunteers Sought for GGAS

Bay Shore Teaching Program

The GGAS Bay Shore Studies Program staff has announced that a new training program for new volunteers will be held this September. This field study program is presented at the Ft. Point Environmental Study Area in San Francisco for 4th through 8th grade students. The training program is designed to allow complete novices to participate in this weekly program throughout the school year. For further informa-

tion on the training program call the Audubon Whittell Center, Tiburon, at 388-2524 or the GGAS office, 843-2222.

Fall Pelagic Trips

Trips out of Monterey Harbor are scheduled for Sept. 17, Oct. 2, and Oct. 8. Reservations are \$15 per person. Send your check to GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705. Details of where and when to meet will be mailed to you with your confirmation. For further information call the GGAS office at 843-2222.

VOLUNTEER OFFICE ASSISTANTS NEEDED

GGAS needs committed volunteers to help out in the office. We would like to have a few responsible members volunteer for three to fifteen hours weekly to work on membership and related correspondence. Hours are negotiable. Please contact Vera at 843-2222 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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THE GULL

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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to the GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: third Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$15 per year (individual); \$18 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$3 per year; single issues 30¢. High school and college student membership \$8.50 per year. Senior citizen individual, \$12.00; senior citizen family, \$15.00.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The Gull deadline is the first of the month for the following month.