

2000 San Francisco Field Ornithologists Journal

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City Roundup, by Hugh Cotter and Mark Eaton

Petrels through Ducks

A dark *Pterodroma* seen Feb 14 from the Cliff House was likely a **Murphy's Petrel** based on the descriptions provided (AH, KMcK). Murphy's Petrel is a rare vagrant on the coast, usually seen only in or near storms. Black-vented Shearwater is an irruptive species, sometimes very common in fall, but not seen most years. The only report was of 2 birds seen from Ocean Beach on Nov. 20 (JW). Ross' Goose is rare in winter and spring; a single bird was present at Spreckles Lake from Apr 16 to at least Apr 29 (KMcK, PS). Brant is an uncommon winter and spring visitor, accidental in summer. A report was of two birds flying north past Fort Funston on July 7 (DM) was interesting.

Blue-winged Teal is a casual fall migrant, not seen every year. Singles were recorded at the South end of Lake Merced, Oct 8, and flying past the Cliff House, Oct 22 (KMcK), the first records in the city since 1998. **Harlequin Duck** is a vagrant winter visitor, not seen most years. A single bird was seen at the Cliff House, Jan 27 (JW), the first in many years. Long-tailed Duck is a rare winter visitor. Sightings included a single male was seen Feb 23 (SD) from Lands End, two, a male and female were present from Mar 7 to at least Mar 12 (ME, KMcK) off Crissy Field in the Presidio, and another was seen flying past the Cliff house during the San Francisco CBC, Dec 28 (JC).

Black Scoter is uncommon winter visitor, probably declining in the city. A high count was of 30 birds at Fort Funston on Jan 20 (AH) was notable. White-winged Scoter is regular in winter, but a high count was of 56 birds at Fort Funston on Jan 7 (SD) was notable. **Barrow's Goldeneye** is a vagrant winter visitor, not seen most years, so a single bird was seen at the Candlestick State Recreation Area on Jan 23 (ADiM) was particularly of interest. Common Merganser is casual, not seen most years. A flyover female near Lake Street on May 16 (JC) was the first since 1998.

Raptors through Shorebirds

Northern Goshawk is accidental, so an immature bird was seen at Mount Davidson on Nov 3 (PS) was the first report in many years and quite exciting. Broad-winged Hawk is a casual fall migrant, not seen every year. The only report was of a bird over Golden Gate Park on Sept 4 (AR). Swainson's Hawk is a casual spring and fall migrant, not seen every year. A spring report of one over Bayview Hill on April 28 (BF) was potentially the first spring report since 1990. A late report was of a single bird flying from the Marin headlands into the Presidio on Nov 17 (TB). **Ferruginous Hawk** is a vagrant in the city. Two birds observed flying from the Marin Headlands into the Presidio on Sept 23 (AH) were the first reported since 1997. This species is likely annual as many are observed at Hawk Hill in the Presidio and likely migrate across San Francisco on a regular basis.

Golden Eagle is a rare fall and spring migrant. A total of 4 were seen in 2000, the highest known total in San Francisco. Observations include an immature bird was observed flying over the Golden Gate Bridge on June 17 (DM) and a total of three individuals, all immatures, seen in the fall with singles observed on Oct 18 (KMcK), Oct 19 (AH) and Nov 3 (PS). Bald Eagle is a vagrant in the city; an immature was observed flying south from the Marin Headlands into the

Presidio on Nov 14 (TB), the first report since 1998. Care must be taken to eliminate regular escapees from the San Francisco Zoo.

Black-necked Stilt is a vagrant; the only report of the year was that of 5 birds just south of Candlestick SRA on Aug 27 (RF). Despite the abundant nature of this species all around the San Francisco Bay this species remains extremely rare in the City with an average of only one record per year. **Lesser Yellowlegs** is a rare vagrant; a single bird found at Heron's Head on April 11 (KMCK) was the first reported city record in 10+ years. Another was found in fall on Sept 1 (AH), also at Heron's Head Park. Hopefully this species will become more regular with the increase in wetland habitat in San Francisco.

Gulls through Doves

Long-tailed Jaeger is a rare vagrant from shore. A single bird seen Sept 15 (KMCK) from Ocean Beach was the first since 1998. Glaucous Gull is a rare winter visitor. A first winter bird was at Lake Merced from Jan 14-17 (TM, SD), a second winter was reported from Crissy Field on Feb 3 (JC). A confiding first winter bird that was present Nov 10 and 11 (SD, m.ob.) moved between Spreckles Lake, Golden Gate Park and Sutro Baths. Finally another was seen at Lake Merced, Dec 17 (JM, DS).

Arctic Tern is a rare spring and fall migrant. Two birds were seen Sept 15 (KMCK, ME) off Ocean Beach, while a first winter bird remained near the Boat House at Lake Merced, Oct 23 through Oct 29 (RS, m.ob.) Marbled Murrelet is uncommon in winter offshore. An interesting report was of up to 2 birds calling in flight over Western Addition, on Feb 13 (SD), approximately 3 miles from the ocean at 11.00 PM in inclement weather. Cassin's Auklet is rare offshore in spring. A single bird was seen from the Cliff House, Feb 18 (HC).

While Band-tailed Pigeon is a fairly common resident and migrant, movements of high-flying migrant flocks heading north of 226 on Feb 4, 403 on Feb 8 and 1075 on Feb 11 (PS, BF) were noteworthy. Black Swift is a rare spring and fall migrant. 2000 was a good year six birds seen over McLaren Park on May 26 (BF) and 17 birds (PS) observed moving north over Mount Davidson on May 29.

Hummingbirds through Flycatchers

Costa's Hummingbird is a rare vagrant. An immature male observed from Aug 18 though at least Aug 22 was the first known city record since 1978 and potentially only the third city record (PS, m.ob.). Rufous Hummingbird is an uncommon migrant in spring and fall, rare in winter. In spring four reports of single birds were noted. The only fall report was of an immature male at Mount Davidson on Dec 12 (PS). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is a casual winter visitor, not seen in most years. A juvenile bird was seen on Feb 4 (PS) on Mount Davidson. **Williamson's Sapsucker** is a very rare vagrant. Only the second known county record, a male was present in Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park from Nov 24 through at least Dec 18 (SG, SA; m.ob.). The previous known record in San Francisco was an immature female again in Golden Gate Park in Feb/Mar 1995.

Nuttall's Woodpecker is a casual winter visitor, not seen in most years. A single bird was seen Jan 21 until at least Mar 1 (BF, m.ob.), at the South end of Lake Merced. Least Flycatcher is a casual fall migrant, not seen every year. A single bird was observed from Aug 25 through 29 at Mount Davidson. (PS, DM). Dusky Flycatcher is a rare spring and fall migrant. The only spring

reports were of single birds on Mount Davidson on May 8 (PS) and June 16 in Lincoln Park (SD). In fall, three single birds were reported with one at Pine Lake Park, Aug 30, another at Lincoln Park on Sept 12 and another at Mount Davidson, Sept 13. (DM, SD, PS). These totals are some of the highest yearly totals known for this species in San Francisco.

Hammond's Flycatcher is a rare spring and fall migrant. Spring reports included a bird at Mount Davidson from May 12 to 24 (PS) and a single bird in Lincoln Park on May 21 (JC). In fall the only report was of one Sept 13 on Mount Davidson (PS). **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** is a rare vagrant. The fifth county record and first since 1997 was a bird at near the Archery Range, Golden Gate Park from Nov 1 to at least Nov 12 (KMckK, m.ob.). The previous four records were all in winter in 1989, 1994/1995, 1995/1996 and 1997. Tropical Kingbird is an uncommon fall migrant, rare in winter, rare in spring. 2000 was a good year for this species with a single bird first found Jan 3 remaining at the South End of Lake Merced until at least May 29 (BF, m.ob.), another at Aquatic Park on Mar 25 (AH) and fall migration saw a total of at least 4 birds with two remaining through the end of the year and apparently over wintering (BF, MMcC, AH, RF). The total of at least 6 birds is the highest known yearly total.

Vireos through Warblers

Red-eyed Vireo is a casual spring and fall migrant, not seen every year. Two birds were reported in the spring, one at Lincoln Park on May 22 (BF) and another calling at Middle Lake, Golden Gate Park on May 28 (ME, EP). Yellow-billed Magpie's status is unknown due to the possibility of escapees. The spring saw a number of reports of this species including 4 near Sutro Park on Mar 14 (AC) with presumably one of these four seen at the VA Hospital/ Fort Miley area on Mar 20. Another was seen at Bernal Heights on April 4 (DZ). In fall a bird was reported from the Hunters Point Shipyard around Sept 11 (AH). Reports of this species are still under review, as it is uncertain at this time whether these birds were truly wild individuals. However, the timing of the spring sightings coincides with that expected for spring vagrants.

Townsend's Solitaire is a spring vagrant. A calling bird was at Mount Davidson from April 12 until 14 (BF, PS), the first report since April 1998. Tennessee Warbler is rare in the city. A single bird continued from Dec 1999 through at least Mar 6 (PM, m.ob.) at Lake Merced. Again at Lake Merced, a single bird, possibly returning for another winter, was found Dec 24 and remained through into 2001 (PM). **Virginia's Warbler** is a rare vagrant. A single bird observed at Fort Miley on Sept 27 (KMckK) was the first city record possibly since 1992.

Northern Parula is a rare spring and fall migrant. Spring records included a singing male at Lincoln Park, May 27 (HC), a singing male at Pine Lake Park, June 3 to 5 (RF) and another at Lincoln Park from June 13 to 15 (SD). In fall, single birds were reported at Mount Davidson on Aug 8 and Sept 7 (CL, PS). Black-throated Blue Warbler is a rare fall migrant, accidental in winter. A female first found Dec 25, 1999 remained through at least Jan 28 in Golden Gate Park (AH, m.ob.). Chestnut-sided Warbler is an annual rare spring and fall migrant. A total of three birds were seen in fall, Sept 2 at North Lake Golden Gate Park, Sept 19 at the East Wash in Lincoln Park and the third was at Mount Davidson on Sept 30 (KMckK, RF, PS).

Magnolia Warbler is a casual spring and fall migrant, not seen every year. A singing male was present at Fort Miley on May 26 and 27 (KMckK). Palm Warbler is rare in fall, winter and spring, probably overwintering in small numbers along the coast. The first report of the year was of a single bird on Jan 8, in Aqua Vista Park (SD). One was present at Middle Lake, Golden

Gate Park, from March 12 to at least Mar 30, with another at Lake Merced Mar 17 to 19 (RF). Two fall records included a single bird at Lake Merced on Nov 19 and another at Fort Funston, date unrecorded.

Blackpoll Warbler is an annual rare fall migrant. A total of 3 individuals were seen, Sept 22 in Lincoln Park, Sept 30 at Mount Davidson and Oct 13 at Fort Funston (BF, PS, JW). Black and White Warbler is a rare annual visitor. An immature female was present at Mountain Lake Park from Mar 5 through at least April 7 (AR, m.ob.). American Redstart is an annual rare spring and fall migrant. Spring records included a total of 2 birds, both on June 14, both first year males with one at Lincoln Park (SD), the other at Mount Davidson (PS). In fall again two birds were found, the first Aug 29 in Lincoln Park, the other Sept 19 at the east Wash in Lincoln Park (KMCK, RF)

Prothonotary Warbler is casual in fall and spring, accidental in winter; and not seen every year. A male was found at Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park on Sept 23 (KMCK). Ovenbird is casual spring and fall migrant, accidental in winter. A singing bird was heard at Fort Miley, on June 5 (HC) and a single bird was found at Pine Lake Park on Sept 17 (DM). Northern Waterthrush is an annual rare fall migrant. A single bird was found Sept 7 at Mountain Lake Park in the Presidio (JW). Hooded Warbler is a rare annual spring migrant, accidental in winter. Three records in San Francisco were the highest know yearly total. A singing male was near Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park on May 27 and 28 (KMCK, m.ob.). A female was at Mount Davidson on May 29 (PS) while another, a male, was again at Mount Davidson on June 17 (CL).

Canada Warbler is a rare vagrant in the city. Two fall reports were the first San Francisco reports since 1993. A single bird was seen at the East Wash in Lincoln Park on Sept 18 (AH). A first fall female first found on Sept 21 at Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park was subsequently re-found at North Lake and remained through Sept 27 (SD, m.ob.). Yellow-breasted Chat is a rare annual spring migrant, casual in fall. Spring migration saw three reports of single birds at the Flycasting Pools, Golden Gate Park, May 8 and 9, Glen Canyon, May 14 and North Lake Merced on May 21 (RH, AH, RF).

Tanagers through Longspurs

Summer Tanager is a casual fall migrant, rare in winter. A male was observed at Elk Glen Lake in Golden Gate Park from Sept 3 to Sept 7 (AH). Another, a female/immature was found at Sutro Heights Park on Oct 5 (MU, KMCK). Clay-colored Sparrow is a rare annual fall migrant, accidental in winter. A single bird was in Golden Gate Park, Sept 23 (AH) while two birds together were at Fort Miley on Sept 30 (KMCK). Swamp Sparrow is a rare winter visitor. A single bird was observed at the North end of Lake Merced from March 8 through at least the 21 (KMCK, m.ob.)

Rose-breasted Grosbeak is a rare annual spring and fall migrant, casual in winter. Spring records included a singing male at Mount Davidson, May 31 to June 1 (KMCK) and another, a first year male in the Presidio on June 12 (JC). Two fall individuals were noted, both at Mount Davidson, one Sept 7 and another Sept 16 (DA, PS). Indigo Bunting is a rare fall and spring migrant. A first year male was present from June 13 to 18 in Glen Park (BF, MF). A flyover *Calcarius* on Feb 24 (PS), at Mount Davidson was believed to be a **Lapland Longspur**. This species is not yet on the City List.

Cited Observers

Alfredo Contreras (AC), Alan Ridley (AR), Alan Hopkins (AH), Al DiMartini (ADiM), Brian Fitch (BF), Calvin Lou (CL), Dan Armstrong (DA), Dan Murphy (DM), Dan Singer (DS), Debey Zito (DZ), Hugh Cotter (HC), Josiah Clark (JC), Joe Morlan (JM), Jay Withgott (JW), Kevin McKereghan (KMckK), Mark Eaton (ME), Mike Feighner (MF), Mac McCormick (MMcC), Myra Ulvang (MU), Peter Metropulos (PM), Paul Saraceni (PS), Rich Ferrick (RF), Ralph Hunter (RH), Steve Abbot (SA), Stephen Davies (SD), Steve Glover (SG), Tim Behr (TB), Todd Morris (TM).



Ash-throated Flycatcher at Fort Funston ©1999 Mark Eaton

A New Big Day Record in San Francisco, by Jay Withgott

S.F. Team Sets New Big Day Record "Young Turks" Raise the Bar By One

SAN FRANCISCO (AP), April 14 -- Fighting windy conditions and a near-total absence of migrant passerines, a persistent threesome yesterday broke the San Francisco Big Day record by a single bird, finding 135 species within the city limits. Their total tops the old mark of 134, set by nearly the same team one year ago.

This year's team of Paul "Davidson" Saraceni, Kevin "B2K" McKereghan, and "Big Day" Jay Withgott pulled off the record despite having lost last year's teammate Rich "Findemfast" Ferrick to last-minute scheduling problems.

Yesterday's effort by the team known as the "Young Turks" beats back an attempt last week by the so-called "Old Turks" (Luke Cole, Hugh Cotter, Mark Eaton, and Eric Preston) to wrest away the coveted Maltese Falcon award. That team finished with 125. "We're happy we've held on to the Falcon," Withgott said last night amid the cheering throngs at Lake Merced after the victory. "But no doubt the Old Turks will be back after it again in the future " 135 is surely a beatable total."

High winds, cold temperatures, and persistent cloud cover were severe challenges to yesterday's team, making for poor birding conditions, especially compared with the considerably better weather Thursday and today. "It's amazing they did so well under those conditions," said Big Day analyst Allen S. Hummer. "Landbird activity was minimal, and their scopes were so buffeted by the wind it's impressive they were able to see anything over the ocean."

A second challenge was a surprising absence of passerine through-migrants. Although the mid-April date precedes the peak of passerine migration, the team did not expect such a dearth of migrants. All they could come up with was one Pacific-slope Flycatcher, one Warbling Vireo, a few Wilson's Warblers, one American Pipit, and a handful of spring arrivals such as a Bullock's Oriole and two Hooded Orioles.

"The team should have waited another week," said Chris L. Thrasher of the American Birding Association. "They were worrying that the winterers might leave, and they just plain got scared."

But Saraceni said he'd had migrants like Western Tanager, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and Hermit Warbler already at Mount Davidson, and that the team had reason to expect they'd find more migrants. And McKereghan pointed out that waiting longer would probably have cost them species, since they found only singles of winterers such as Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, Ring-billed Gull, and Eared Grebe.

A crucial decision that helped lead to victory, according to sources familiar with the team's strategy sessions, was the choice to visit Pine Lake in mid-afternoon during one of the day's few sunny periods. Here the team picked up Bullock's Oriole and the exciting Black-throated Green Warbler found just days earlier by Withgott (though they could not turn up the Baltimore Oriole). Originally the team had decided to go well out of their way to visit Pine Lake in late morning, at the best time for finding the warbler, when the sun first falls full on the willows. But at 10:20 when they finished with Golden Gate Park, it was cool and cloudy, and the team judged

the trip to Pine Lake would be unwise. Put off until later, the afternoon sun brought birds down to the willows, where the trio enjoyed point-blank views of the cooperative eastern warbler.

Other highlights included several Great Egrets, Osprey, Peregrine and Merlin, California Quail, two rails and two owls, high shorebird numbers at Heron's Head, Heerman's Gull, Band-tailed Pigeon, Tropical Kingbird, Steller's Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and White-throated Sparrow.

Key misses included American Avocet, Cooper's Hawk, White-throated Swift, Bewick's Wren, Varied Thrush, and several duck species.

The celebrated and ridiculed White-fronted Goose of Lake Merced "thought to have flown the coop by last week's big day team" was located by a sharp-eyed Saraceni, who found the bird swimming near the reeds on the north edge of the north lake, having apparently reformed and given up prostituting itself for handouts with the local monster mallards.

The record-tying species came at dusk. Unable to find Wood Duck, Cinnamon Teal, or Common Yellowthroat at Lake Merced's south end, the group headed to the wooden bridge as light vanished. While they rather desperately played McKereghan's Yellowthroat tape, Saraceni looked up and spotted a Merlin (or was it a Maltese Falcon?) zipping by directly overhead, for number 134. Minutes later the Yellowthroat finally showed itself, giving them the record.



Eurasian Wigeon at Stowe Lake ©1999 Mark Eaton

The Y2K Big Year Competition, *by Harry Fuller and Mark Eaton*

Well, the crazed San Francisco birders are at it again...a citywide Big Year contest. There are seven contestants this time around, including three veterans of the 1998 showdown. Some people never learn. Harry's excuse: He finished last in '98 and had to do better this time. But Alan Hopkins won, and Dan Murphy, he got sucked in because it was his big idea to start the Millennium with a Big Year. He wrote:

"The purpose of this competition is to generate some competitive interest in birding in the city but to also improve on the understanding of species, distribution and occurrences within the city."

A modest proposal, that...

Official participants are Stephen Davies, Rich Ferrick, Harry Fuller, Alan Hopkins, Kevin McKereghan, Dan Murphy and Jay Withgott. Jay described himself as "new in town, having just moved up from Tucson AZ, and just gotten onto SFBirds [the email list]." Follow their adventures month-by-month below:

January:

Kevin is, uh, wiping everyone out at this point. Even more impressive that his 148 species in January (surely a city record), is a staggering 30 Early Birds, also easily a city record. Interestingly enough, the January cumulative is only 6 birds ahead of the '98 pace, which suggests that we'll still need a big fall to beat 243 for a single birder or 280 cumulative.

February:

February was extremely cold and windy in San Francisco. Nonetheless, several birders picked up quite a few species in February, with Jay picking up 19 species to lead all birders. Kevin continues to lead the way with a staggering 157 for the year and a February-best 4 Early Birds, but his lead has shrunk to only 14 birds due to the concerted efforts of Stephen Davies. Cumulatively, B2k is an amazing 13 birds ahead of the '98 totals. If we get a good fall, there's a good chance that at least one if not all of the '98 records will fall.

March:

The rains ended near the beginning of the month and March was mostly dry and warm. However, the B2K folks only added 13 birds to the year list, contrasting with 15 in '98. '98 Champion Alan Hopkins is roaring back into the thick of things with 21 new birds in March. Kevin continues to lead comfortably with a remarkable 171 species, an equally remarkable 92.43% of all seen. However, Harry had another good month with 20 new birds and now follows Kevin by a slightly less daunting 14 birds. However, there are five birders within 11 birds of each other, so the race for second is still pretty wide open. Kevin continues his Early Bird grand slam with five early birds in March.

April:

Same old story; Kevin out in front with a comfortable lead. The big news is that Rich had an outstanding month with a whopping thirty new species in the month of April, which vaulted him into second place. Congratulations to Rich! However, Jay is nipping at his heels with 174 and '98 survivor Harry Fuller is still in the thick of it with 171. Interestingly enough, the cumulative is now only *two* species ahead of '98, including the two mistakes I've found in Luke's list.

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May:

Kevin continues to amaze hitting the double century mark in May, surely the fastest ever (well, the fastest in two years :-). Rich continues his iron man assault and leads the way with 13 new species in May, but still isn't quite within striking distance of Kevin being 12 birds behind. However, Dan M. also manages a May-best 13 birds. Jay and Harry are still in the thick of it just five birds behind Rich. Interestingly, both Kevin and the B2k birders are but five birds up on Alan and the '98 birders; can they match up to the superlative fall that the '98 birders had? Interestingly enough, the spring of 2000 may be remembered for the year that the Fort Miley trees came into their own, with Kevin's MAGNOLIA WARBLER and Hugh's OVENBIRD (see June). What else will show up there?

June:

Zzzzz.... June was so exciting that four of the seven participants couldn't be bothered to submit their June sightings. Ho-hum; Kevin leads all others comfortably and is starting to open a bit of a window on Alan's '98 totals (though Alan had two year birds on 7.1.98). Rich was the only one to add an early bird in June, winning the increasingly dubious Early Bird award for June. Back to the Giants and the Tour de France... :-|

July:

July was another stultifying month in the B2k competition with *no* birds added to the cumulative list and the best that any person could do (four of them did it) was to add *one* bird to their year list. Obviously, there were no early birds in July.

August:

Finally, August provided some signs of life in the B2k competition. Murph took advantage of being on vacation to add nine birds to his year list to lead all competitors and six new birds were added to the cumulative list. Kevin and Dan M. both had two early birds for the month to share this coveted award for August. In the actual competition, Rich is going to need a Tonya Harding-like effort to pick up 12 birds on Kevin, who leads Alan's '98 effort by four birds.

Given that Alan was gone for a significant fraction of fall, the city record of 243 certainly appears to be in jeopardy. Kevin's 211 is a stunning 92%+ effort for the cumulative, which is certainly remarkable! However, the big news is that the B2k cumulative is now four birds *behind* the '98 effort. Given the superlative fall in '98 (almost 30 birds were added to the cumulative total in '98), the '98 cumulative record is going to be difficult to beat! Finally, in yet another metric of questionable value, the '98 folks have added more birds to the cumulative list in all but two months than the B2k folks. Does this mean '98 was birdier than 2000?

September:

Conventional wisdom is that March is the cruelest month. For B2k birders, September 2000 is the cruelest month. The month started out quite nicely, with Pectoral Sandpiper, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Broad-winged Hawk and Summer Tanager all in the first three days. However, then the weather started to clear and the vagrants went elsewhere. With the exception of a fine flurry late in the month when the fog returned, with Canada, Virginia's and Prothonotary Warblers all seen on the 27th, the month was eerily quiet.

'98 Champion and current big year record holder Alan Hopkins led the charge in September, racking up 14 new birds for the year and three early birds, no mean feat at this time of year. Kevin still has a comfortable lead on Rich, but now is a whopping seven birds behind Hugh's 98 total, and Hugh finished tied for second in '98! Confirming the famine of 2000 compared to the

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feasting in '98 is that the '98 Big Year is a full ten birds ahead of the 2000 total. While Kevin still has an outside shot at the individual record, it seems that the '98 cumulative record is probably out of reach.

October:

October was a good month, better than in '98. Of course, this might be just because Kevin continues his single-minded assault on the single year record. A lesser birder (and person!) would have thrown in the towel after September this year, and October was hardly a banner month weatherwise. Kevin's 9 Early Birds means that's he not letting other folks do his work for him, either.

November:

November is another slow month for birding in the city. Fortunately, Kevin managed to find a Dusky-capped Flycatcher to start of the month with a bang. The other highlight was Steve Glover and Steve Hampton finding the second city record for Williamson's Sapsucker. Kevin continues his inexorable quest for 240+, but is only two birds ahead of Hugh in '98 and three ahead of Alan. Perhaps more significantly, Alan had already picked up an additional four birds at the time of this update, while December is shaping up as another very slow month. At this point, he's going to need a very successful CBC or a significant change in the mild weather to get to 243+. Jay fared the best in November, adding six birds to his year list, while Kevin picked up the only early bird of the month.

December:

It's all over and Kevin has fallen just short. Seasoned observers can't help feel that '98 was a better year the 2000. But do the numbers bear this out? Without pending birds, '98 had ten more total species than 2000. While that doesn't sound like much, remember that Kevin found over 90% of all species found in the city in 2000. Add another nine birds to Kevin's total and you get 247! It's then hardly surprising that Kevin finished a whopping 19 birds up on second place Rich Ferrick. The final nail in Kevin's coffin was a desultory December wherein only a single species was added to the cumulative list, in marked contrast with the seven found in '98. Nevertheless, Kevin does become the first SF Birder to record over 90% of the species found in any calendar year, no mean feat. Stephen Davies must be singled out for special mention not bothering to submit any birds after May. :-)

Final B2K Results:

Birder	SD	RF	HF	AH	KMcK	DM	JW	First – Cum.	'98 Big Year Cum/JAH	
B2K Total	156	219	203	210	238	206	205	266	275	242
Pending	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
December	0	1	1	0	2	5	0	1	7	N/A
November	0	2	1	4	3	3	6	5	2	N/A
October	0	8	5	13	11	9	8	12	8	N/A
September	0	10	5	16	12	5	9	16	27	N/A
August	0	6	5	6	6	9	0	7	9	N/A
July	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	N/A
June	0	4	2	1	4	2	0	3	4	N/A
May	1	13	12	7	12	13	9	17	14	N/A
April	5	30	14	13	17	14	18	17	23	N/A
March	6	14	20	23	14	11	19	13	17	N/A
February	14	17	17	19	9	10	19	16	8	N/A
January	130	114	120	109	148	124	118	160	153	N/A
Percentage of Cumulative	58.7%	82.3%	76.3%	79.0%	89.5%	77.4%	77.1%	N/A	N/A	88.3%
B2K Total	156	219	203	210	238	206	205	266	274	0

Eaton

Possible	364	364	364	364	364	364	364	364	364	364
Percentage of Possible	42.9%	60.2%	55.8%	57.7%	65.4%	56.6%	56.3%	73.1%	75.3%	66.5%

***B2k Pending Approval Birds:** Dusky-capped Flycatcher

***'98 Pending Approval Birds:** Yellow-throated Vireo



Common Terns at the Coast Guard Pier, Crissy Field ©1998 Mark Eaton

Mt. Davidson in Detail, *by Paul Saraceni*

I have chronicled extensively the distribution of avifauna within a significant natural area in San Francisco. My surveys of Mt. Davidson found 125 bird species (plus 2 exotic species) and 3 mammal species (excluding the increasingly bothersome dogs and cats) over the course of 135 visits, mostly 1 to 1½ hours in duration, typically early in the morning. Below are the results for 2000, including a legend describing how to read the table.

<u>Species</u>	<u>First Date</u>	<u>Other Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Brown Pelican	11/9		15; fly-over
Double-crested Cormorant	3/8	5/20, 8/17, 9/6, 9/27	4 max. 8/17; fly-over
Great Blue Heron	6/10		1; fly-by; OFMD
Black-crowned Night-Heron	11/21		1 imm.; fly-by; OFMD
Turkey Vulture	11/24		2; fly-by; OFMD
Greater White-fronted Goose	11/3		18; fly-by; OFMD
Snow Goose	11/3		5; fly-by; OFMD
Northern Harrier	9/19	11/3	2 (imm.) max. 11/3; fly-over
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2/8	+ (-4/16); 9/8, + (-12/28)	2 max. 4/3, 9/29
Cooper's Hawk	1/12	1/16, 3/31; 8/12, + (-12/13)	1 max.
Northern Goshawk	11/3		1 imm.; fly-over
Red-shouldered Hawk	2/18	+ (-11/18)	1 max.
Red-tailed Hawk	1/3	+ (-12/28)	6 max. 11/3, 11/24
Golden Eagle	11/3		1 imm.; fly-by; OFMD
American Kestrel	1/3	+ (-5/9); 8/16, + (-12/28)	3 max. 10/20, 11/3; 1 ad. f. wintered -4/18, 8/16, + (-11/10); 1 ad. m. 1/8, 8/21, + (-12/28)
Merlin	1/26	+ (-3/15); 11/14, 11/21, 12/11, 12/28	2 (ad. m.) max. 2/27; 1 ad. m. wintered -3/15 (since 12/28/99), 11/21, 12/11, 12/28; 1 f. 11/14
Peregrine Falcon	4/8	11/3, 11/14, 11/18	1 max.; 1 ad. 11/14, 11/18; 1 imm. 11/3; fly-over
Mew Gull	2/20	2/27, 4/16	5 max. 4/16; fly-over
California Gull	1/3	+ (-12/28)	40 max. 3/8; fly-over
Herring Gull	12/11		1 imm.; fly-over
Thayer's Gull	2/20		1 1st-w.; fly-over
Western Gull	1/12	+ (-12/20)	6 max. 4/3; fly-over
Glaucous-winged Gull	1/12	+ (-2/27); 11/3, + (-12/13)	3 max. 11/3; fly-over
Glaucous-winged x Western Gull	11/24		1 imm.; fly-over
Caspian Tern	5/10	5/17	1 max.; fly-over
Rock Dove	1/3	+	22 max. 12/28; fly-over
Band-tailed Pigeon	1/16	+ (-12/28)	403 max. 2/8; 226, 2/4; 150, 10/13; 140, 11/3; 4 juv. 6/3, 6/8, 7/6; N
Mourning Dove	1/3	+	25 max. 7/7; N
Black Swift	5/19		17; fly-over

<u>Species</u>	<u>First Date</u>	<u>Other Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Vaux's Swift	5/19	5/20; 9/12, + (-9/30)	27 max. 9/18, 9/30; 11, 5/20; fly-over
White-throated Swift	4/23	5/14, 5/19; 9/13	12 max. 5/19; fly-over
Anna's Hummingbird	1/3	+	18 max. 4/26; N
Costa's Hummingbird	8/15	8/16-18, 21-22	1 imm. m.
Rufous Hummingbird	3/17	4/11	1 (ad. m.) max.
Allen's Hummingbird	1/26	+ (-7/17)	19 max. 7/12; N
Selasphorus sp.	7/17	+ (-10/13)	25 max. 8/15
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2/4		1 imm.
Red-breasted Sapsucker	2/15	10/4, 10/13	1 (ad.) max.
Downy Woodpecker	1/12	+	5 max. 7/4; N
Hairy Woodpecker	8/8	+ (-10/13)	2 max. 9/19; 1 m. 8/8, + (-9/19); 1 f. 9/12
Northern Flicker	1/3	+ (-4/14); 9/18, + (-12/28)	13 max. 10/23
"Red-shafted" x "Yellow-shafted" Flicker	11/2		1 f.
Olive-sided Flycatcher	4/26	+ (-5/24); 8/30, + (-9/29)	2 max. +
Western Wood-Pewee	5/13	+ (-6/1), 6/13-15, 7/4-7; 8/15, + (-9/23)	3 max. 5/19, 5/24
Willow Flycatcher	6/14	6/15; 8/29-30, 9/8	2 max. 8/30
Least Flycatcher	8/25	8/29	1 imm.
Hammond's Flycatcher	5/12	5/13, 5/20, 5/24; 9/13	1 max.
Dusky Flycatcher	5/8	9/13	1 max.
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	5/8	+ (-6/1), 6/15; 8/17, + (-10/13)	6 max. 6/15, 9/4, 9/6
Black Phoebe	1/8	+ (-2/24); 9/12, + (-12/28)	2 max. +
Say's Phoebe	1/12	9/27-29, 10/4, 11/2	1 max.
Ash-throated Flycatcher	6/14	6/15	2 max. 6/14
Western Kingbird	9/19		1
Cassin's Vireo	5/8	8/16, 8/30	1 max.
Hutton's Vireo	6/21	8/8, + (-11/2)	2 max. 8/18, 10/13
Warbling Vireo	5/8	+ (-5/24), 6/21-28; 8/2, + (-10/3)	40 max. 9/6; 32, 5/19, 9/12
Western Scrub-Jay	1/3	+	14 max. 8/2; PN
American Crow	1/3	+	14 max. 12/13
Common Raven	1/3	+	16 max. 11/24
Tree Swallow	2/8	2/18, 4/3	2 max. +; fly-over
Violet-green Swallow	3/17	+ (-6/10); 8/17, + (-10/17)	55 max. 9/30; 40, 8/17; 8, 4/3; fly-over
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	8/8		1; fly-over
Barn Swallow	4/3	9/4	1 max.; fly-over
Cliff Swallow	4/3	4/26	1 max.; fly-over
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	1/3	+	11 max. 7/4; N
Bushtit	1/8	+ (-11/24)	20 max. 11/14; PN
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5/19	9/12, + (-10/17)	2 max. 9/29, 10/17
Pygmy Nuthatch	1/3	+	15 max. 2/20; N
Brown Creeper	8/15	8/29, 9/18	1 max.
Bewick's Wren	2/11	9/4, + (-12/13)	1 max.
House Wren	1/3	+ (-4/14); 9/12, + (-12/20)	2 max. 9/28, 10/3, 10/18, 11/14; wintered (since 10/8/99)
Winter Wren	1/3	+	9 max. 12/28; N
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	8/15	8/18, 8/25, 10/9	2 max. 8/15, 8/18

<u>Species</u>	<u>First Date</u>	<u>Other Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10/9	10/11, + (-11/16)	16 max. 11/6; 11, 10/13
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1/3	+ (-4/14); 9/18, + (-12/28)	15 max. 12/28; 11, 10/18
Townsend's Solitaire Fitch 4/12)	4/14		1; heard-only (found by B.
Swainson's Thrush	5/8	+ (-6/1), 7/4; 9/16	8 max. 5/17, 5/19
Hermit Thrush	1/8	+ (-4/26); 9/21, + (-12/28)	8 max. 3/22, 9/29; wintered
American Robin	1/3	+	87 max. 11/10; N
Varied Thrush	1/12	+ (-4/3); 9/30, + (-12/5)	58 max. 10/13; 44, 10/11; 16, 3/22; wintered
Northern Mockingbird	1/3	+	11 max. 7/4; NN
European Starling	1/3	+	40 max. 2/12; NN
American Pipit	10/11	10/13, 10/31, 11/16, 11/18	3 max. 10/13; fly-over
Cedar Waxwing	1/8	+ (-5/22); 8/31, + (-12/28)	64 max. 10/17; 60, 12/20
Northern Parula	8/8		1 f.
Yellow Warbler	5/13	+ (-5/27); 8/15, + (-10/3)	36 max. 9/12; 6, 5/19
Chestnut-sided Warbler	9/30		1 imm.
Orange-crowned Warbler	1/8	+ (-9/29)	6 max. 5/15; 3 imm. 7/4-17; N
Nashville Warbler	9/19		1 imm.
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1/3	+ (-4/26); 9/8, + (-12/28)	60 max. 10/13
Black-throated Gray Warbler	9/4	+ (-10/4)	2 max. 9/13, 9/19
Townsend's Warbler	1/3	+ (-5/22); 8/16, + (-12/28)	16 max. 9/27; 12, 1/8
Hermit Warbler	1/8	1/16, 3/1 , + (-5/19); 8/2, + (-11/18)	2 max. 4/24, 5/15, 5/19, 9/4; 1 imm. f. wintered -4/24 (since 12/10/99)
Blackpoll Warbler	9/21	9/22	1 imm.
American Redstart	6/14		1 1st-spr. m.
MacGillivray's Warbler	8/24	8/29, 9/4	1 (imm.) max.
Hooded Warbler	5/27		1 1st-spr. f.
Common Yellowthroat	9/12	9/13-14	1 (imm. m.) max.
Wilson's Warbler	4/3	+ (-9/28)	20 max. 8/31; 12, 5/19; 1 juv. 7/4; N
Western Tanager	5/8	+ (-6/1); 8/14, + (-10/17)	90 max. 9/6; 85, 9/4; 60, 8/30; 13, 5/15
Spotted Towhee	1/3	+ (-5/22); 9/26, + (-12/20)	3 max. 1/26, 1/28, 3/3; wintered (since 10/22/99)
California Towhee	6/10	+ (-11/14)	3 max. 7/12, 7/17
Chipping Sparrow	5/13	9/12, 9/21-23	3 max. 9/23; 1 ad. 5/13
Savannah Sparrow	8/25	9/23, 9/29, 10/6	2 max. 8/25
Fox Sparrow	1/3	+ (-4/11); 9/8, + (-12/28)	19 max. 10/5; wintered
Song Sparrow	1/3	+	28 max. 9/22; N
Lincoln's Sparrow	1/3	+ (-3/17); 9/18, + (-12/13)	4 max. 10/13, 10/23; wintered
White-throated Sparrow	10/9	10/17	1 max.
White-crowned Sparrow	1/3	+	41 max. 12/28; N
Golden-crowned Sparrow	1/3	+ (-5/8); 9/21, + (-12/28)	30 max. 10/13; 2 ad. 5/8
Dark-eyed Junco	1/3	+	30 max. 10/13; N
Longspur sp.	2/24		1; fly-over; dry rattle call (prob. Lapland)
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	6/1	9/16	1 max.; 1 imm. m. 9/16; 1 ad. m. 6/1 (found by K. McKereghan 5/31)

<u>Species</u>	<u>First Date</u>	<u>Other Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Black-headed Grosbeak	5/8	+ (-6/1), 6/13-15; 8/15, + (-9/29)	20 max. 5/14; 18, 5/15
Lazuli Bunting	5/3	+ (-5/29), 6/23; 8/30, + (-9/29)	10 max. 5/9-10; 1 f. 6/23
Red-winged Blackbird	10/11		2 m.; fly-by; OFMD
Western Meadowlark	2/11	3/22; 9/30, + (-11/3)	7 max. 10/20; 4, 10/23
Brewer's Blackbird	1/3	+	80 max. 2/11; NN
Brown-headed Cowbird	4/11	+ (-7/12)	4 max. 7/4; N
Hooded Oriole	6/6		1 m.; calling fly-by
Bullock's Oriole	5/8	+ (-5/15); 8/2, + (-9/4)	4 max. 5/9; 2 imm. 8/2
Oriole sp.	1/3		1; heard-only; chattering call (prob. Bullock's)
Purple Finch	2/4	+ (-3/1); 8/14, + (-12/13)	21 max. 10/13; 12, 10/20, 10/23
House Finch	1/3	+	52 max. 8/8; N
Red Crossbill	2/8		1 f., 1 imm.
Pine Siskin	1/3	+ (-12/28)	80 max. 10/20; 70, 10/13; 56, 7/12; 44, 7/17; 11, 6/8
Lesser Goldfinch	1/3	+ (-11/10)	48 max. 6/30; 40, 6/28; PN
American Goldfinch	9/18	9/23, + (-11/18)	11 max. 10/13
House Sparrow	1/8	+	15 max. 6/10; NN

Total Species: 125

Exotics:

Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	11/3		2; fly-over
White-winged Parakeet	11/3		1; fly-over

Codes:

“N” = evidence of nesting within park boundaries of Mt. Davidson

“PN” = probable nesting within park boundaries of Mt. Davidson

“NN” = nesting in neighborhood surrounding park boundaries of Mt. Davidson

“OFMD” = observed from, but not on or over, park boundaries of Mt. Davidson

Non-avian Observations:

Striped Skunk

Western Gray Squirrel

Botta's Pocket Gopher [5/14: picked up, then dropped, by imm. Red-tailed Hawk]

Banana Slug

Census Dates:

January 3, 8, 12, 16, 26, 28

February 2, 4, 8, 11, 12, 15, 18, 20, 24, 27

March 1, 3, 8, 15, 17, 19, 22, 29, 31

April 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29

May 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 29

June 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 21, 23, 28, 30

July 4, 6, 7, 12, 17

August 2, 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31

September 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

October 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 31

November 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 16, 18, 21, 24
December 5, 11, 13, 20, 28



Sanderling on Ocean Beach ©1999 *Mark Eaton*

Declining Species in San Francisco, by Dan Murphy

San Francisco lost another species in the year 2000. Wrentit joined a very long list of species extirpated from the City. The event passed without fanfare or news coverage. Perhaps a dozen people are even aware of the passing of Wrentit from the city's avifauna. It is in the memory of the Wrentit that the Golden Gate Audubon Society prepared this list of San Francisco's own recently extirpated and endangered species.

The City of San Francisco boasts a bird list of 364 species. That is an incredibly large number of birds for a peninsula with an area of approximately 49 square miles. Most of the species on our watch list are not threatened with extinction. They are doing as well as any organisms faced with the overwhelming tide of urbanization and the environmental impacts that accompany it. What has happened and continues to happen in San Francisco can be expected to happen elsewhere as urbanization changes our natural world. Unless we change the way we interact with the environment, the slow death of our natural world will spread until it finally comes to the public eye that little remains of what was once a natural abundance. Strategies must be developed now to enable wildlife to coexist within the almost perpetual wave of urbanization that is covering California.

There are factors we have not mentioned specifically, but which most certainly carry the potential for reducing our bird population. Migrating birds no doubt fly into lighted towers as they do elsewhere in the U.S. where tower kills are well documented. Pesticides, herbicides and other poisons have probably taken a toll. The failure to protect our backyard habitat from concrete, brick and rock factors into the equation.

The city of San Francisco was urbanized between the California gold rush that began in 1848 and the early 1950's. During that period the footprint of the city covered what had been natural habitat. In just over 100 years most of the natural habitat was lost and the new urban habitat was developed. During the second half of the 20th Century, San Francisco's footprint did not change substantially. One might think the changes brought about by such a dramatic change would stop when the last sections of the Sunset District were built after World War II. That has not been the case.

The following is a list of 33 birds. Seven species no longer inhabit San Francisco during part or all of the year. Those birds are now extirpated, or locally extinct. Six additional species are under such pressure that it is very likely they will join the list of extirpated species in the foreseeable future. An additional 20 species are so vulnerable to extirpation that if a catastrophe impacts their limited habitat in San Francisco they will lose their tenuous foothold.

EXTIRPATED: These are species of birds that no longer regularly occur in San Francisco during all or part of the year. They have been lost during recent years. Many other species were extirpated during the initial stages of urbanization in San Francisco. The birds mentioned here were lost during the post urbanization period. This is a period we view as being changed from the natural environment of San Francisco, but one in which the environment is fairly stable in its own right.

American Bittern

Status in San Francisco: The population of American Bittern in San Francisco was never high. This species was extirpated from Lake Merced during the late 1970's during a period of drought when the lake's level dropped and the marshes in which it resided were stranded above water level. There were single sightings in 1996 and 1998. Reports from outside San Francisco indicate the species is not as common as it once was. There are no San Francisco nesting records.

Conservation: Preservation of expanses of bulrush is critical for this species if it ever returns to San Francisco. Lake Merced is the only site in San Francisco, which provides habitat suitable for American Bittern.

Wood Duck

Status in San Francisco: Formerly wintered in Golden Gate Park in numbers of up to 50 per winter. The population dropped during the mid 1970s. There are single records each year in Golden Gate Park and at the San Francisco Zoo, but most are spring and fall migrants. There are no San Francisco nesting records.

Conservation: It is probable the loss of this species is related to the loss of nesting habitat outside the City. It appears habitat in city parks is relatively unchanged since these ducks were regular winter residents. The placement of nest boxes in lakes in Golden Gate Park and at the San Francisco Zoo might have the potential of extending the breeding range of this species to San Francisco County.

Loggerhead Shrike

Status in San Francisco: Formerly occurred in open areas such as Lake Merced, Golden Gate Park, McLaren Park and Candlestick Park. There are no nesting records for San Francisco County. It is now accidental, occurring some years but not all. During the past year they were reported from Candlestick Park and Golden Gate Park Buffalo Paddock.

Conservation: Restoration of this species is unlikely. Its habitat requirements seem inconsistent with dense urbanization, even with parklands that are available in San Francisco. The mesa at Lake Merced once supported a wintering shrike. It's occurrence stopped when trees were planted to screen the open area from the Lake Merced Blvd. The marginal numbers of birds at Candlestick Point were lost when the State Park was developed.

Horned Lark

Status in San Francisco: This species occurred in small numbers in dirt parking lots at Candlestick Park. It was never a breeding species in San Francisco. 10+/- birds were resident in the dirt parking lots near Candlestick Park. The population declined when Candlestick State Park was developed. It was always marginal at best, but appears extirpated now.

Conservation: The loss of this species will probably not be mitigated. Its habitat needs for large expanses of open ground would appear not to be available in San Francisco.

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Status in San Francisco: This formerly common breeding species in our forested parks is now extirpated during the nesting season. Since it is an irruptive migrant, fall records varying from a few birds to hundreds that remain into winter.

Conservation: Habitat loss due to forest maturation and competition with European Starling, Pygmy Nuthatch and other cavity nesters are the most likely causes for the loss of this species. One of the last 2 known nests (early 1980s) was lost when the Monterey cypress in which it was nesting was cut by Rec and Park crews. A second nest was lost when the pinaster pine in which it was located blew down during an unseasonable storm.

Wrentit

Status in San Francisco: extirpated in 2000. This is a non-migratory, limited range, species that inhabits coastal scrub and other shrub lands.

The Presidio of San Francisco and Lake Merced where the last places Wrentits seemed to remain in San Francisco. The Baker's Beach population has been noted for several years, but it has not been reported in the 2000 season. The Lobos Creek population was found during the past 5 years but has not been noted for at least 2 seasons. The Lake Merced population was most likely a single bird that was heard singing at the northeastern area of the lake in 1997, 1998 and 1999.

McLaren Park: A single bird was observed in a cypress tree in the spring of 2000. The bird was not found after the initial sighting.

Conservation: This species' decline is most likely due to loss of habitat in terms of total area and fragmentation. As the coastal scrub and willow habitats in which it can be expected to reside were destroyed for urban development and naturalistic parklands the remaining population of this species was isolated and apparently reached the threshold beyond which it could not sustain itself.

Yellow Warbler

Status in San Francisco: Singing males have been noted at Lake Merced through the nesting season in the past. There is no recent evidence of breeding. It is uncertain whether local conditions or a range wide population decline are the reason for the probable loss of this breeding species. None have been reported in recent years. This is a common migrant in fall and it is uncommon in spring. It is a rare winter resident that has been recorded regularly at Lake Merced.

Conservation: Preservation and restoration of riparian habitat may enable this species to return at some point.

HIGH EXTIRPATION POTENTIAL: The following species have very low populations and appear to be losing numbers. It is likely they will join the extirpated list if radical action is not taken to protect them and their surroundings and to increase their habitats.

Snowy Plover

Status in San Francisco: A wintering flock of 15+/- can be found on Ocean Beach between Sloat Blvd. and Lincoln Way during the period of July through April. There are no breeding records

for San Francisco County. Single birds have been noted at the beach at Crissy Field, though not in the past few years. It is likely they use beaches or uplands away from Ocean Beach during winter storm tides.

Conservation: The single flock of Snowy Plovers is subject to impacts from off leash dogs, people walking and running on the beaches, natural predators such as gulls, hawks, etc., and most recently from National Park Service vehicles which patrol Ocean Beach.

California Quail

Status in San Francisco: Nearing extirpation. The Presidio of San Francisco appears to hold the last viable California Quail population. The few birds in Golden Gate Park are restricted to the Arboretum. The Fort Funston population has been noted during the spring for the past 2 or 3 years. The species has not been noted in 2000. It is likely there is a remnant population in the Olympic Club Golf Course. A few birds were released near the Rod and Gun Club at Lake Merced during the fall of 1999, but they have not been reported since early spring 2000.

Conservation: Cat and dog predation appear the most likely cause of the population decline. Quail consistently disappeared from parks as cat colonies were established. They also disappeared from parklands as unleashed dog walking became a common practice in parks such as Fort Funston and Sigmund Stern Grove. Predation by Scrub Jay has been observed in the Arboretum. Predation by other corvids is likely. The recent appearance of red foxes in San Francisco poses another serious threat to our remaining quail. Habitat seems relatively unchanged since there were hundreds of birds. It is likely restoration of native scrub habitat would benefit the species.

Hutton's Vireo

Status in San Francisco: Nesting remains probable in Golden Gate Park, Land's End, the Presidio, Mt. Davidson, McLaren Park and Glen Park. Fewer than 10 probable nesting pairs are reported each year.

Conservation: Habitat is limited because of limited use of oaks in San Francisco parks. Air pollution is a limiting factor in lichen growth, necessary for nest building. This seems less a problem than in the past. This species is subject to Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism.

Bank Swallow

Status in San Francisco: It is listed as threatened by the State of California because of habitat loss in the Central Valley. Once widespread on the coast it is now limited to 2 confirmed colonies. Habitat for this colonial species is sand bluffs in close proximity to fresh water marshlands. This species breeds at a single site in the exposed bluffs of the Merced Formation at Fort Funston facing the ocean. Their sole feeding site is at Lake Merced and its vicinity.

Conservation: Limited habitat make the Bank Swallow subject to any of a number of environmental impacts including but not limited to unseasonable storms, landslides at the colony site, vandalism of the colony, predation by ravens and other predatory birds, destruction of the food source at Lake Merced, and pesticide use at nearby golf courses. Protection of the nesting cliffs at Fort Funston is critical for the continued existence of Bank Swallows in San Francisco.

Bewick's Wren

Status in San Francisco: Birds have been extirpated from the entire City except for the west side of Lake Merced and Fort Funston where it is known to breed. There are probably fewer than 10 pairs remaining. Status in winter may be higher due to migratory birds.

Conservation: Habitat loss is the most likely reason for the loss of this species. It is abundant elsewhere, but lack of habitat in San Francisco is an identifiable problem. Removal of exotic trees and shrubs at Fort Funston would most likely cause the extirpation of Bewick's Wren from San Francisco.

Spotted Towhee

Status in San Francisco: The population is rapidly declining and extirpation is imminent. This species remains wide spread but in continually declining numbers. They were noted during the spring of 2000, on Mt. Davidson, above Baker's Beach in the Presidio, and it is likely other birds remain in the oak woodlands in the eastern part of Golden Gate, McLaren and Glen Parks.

Conservation: Habitat loss appears to be a major factor in the loss of this species. The removal of dense ground vegetation in De la Veaga Dell in Golden Gate Park ended this species' use of that area. It is likely that is the cause of its disappearance elsewhere in San Francisco. Its decline parallels the increase of off leash dog walking and feral cat feeding. It is likely uncontrolled pets have a significant impact on this species.

VULNERABLE TO EXTIRPATION: The following species are not imminently threatened with extirpation, but their numbers are few and/or their habitat is limited, so a single event could eliminate them from the San Francisco avifauna.

Double-crested Cormorant

Status in San Francisco: This species is resident throughout the year. It has only nested at Lake Merced since about 1995. There is a large colony on the underside of the San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge that straddles the county line. They can be found in all lakes, the bay and the ocean.

Conservation: This species is threatened by reconstruction of the San Francisco Bay Bridge. The Lake Merced population is threatened by fishermen who are frequently seen throwing rocks or shooting at them with slingshots from fishing beaches. The possibility of impacts from tree trimming, or actual tree removal, in the eucalyptus groves adjacent to Skyline Blvd. must be considered a serious threat to Double-crested Cormorant.

Brandt's Cormorant

Status in San Francisco: This species nests on Seal Rocks and perhaps on Alcatraz. It is also breeds on the Farrallon Islands and elsewhere along the coast. It is present throughout the year. Brandt's Cormorant is highly variable in numbers. Nesting appears related to food sources so its status from year to year is in question.

Conservation: Brandt's Cormorant is subject to the same impacts as other coastal nesting species. Oil spills are primary among these. Impacts from commercial fishing and jet skis have been observed.

Pelagic Cormorant

Status in San Francisco: A few pairs probably breed on the cliffs just north of Sutro Baths. Small numbers can be found in San Francisco coastal water throughout the year.

Conservation: Subject to impacts from oil spills and perhaps people climbing on the cliffs near nesting or roosting sites.

Great Blue Heron

Status in San Francisco: Individuals are regular in San Francisco during the non-breeding season. Non-breeding birds remain in the City during the nesting season. During the past several years a colony has been established at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park and 2 colonies have been established at Lake Merced. In all there are presently about a dozen nests in San Francisco.

Conservation: Great Blue Heron appears to be doing well in the Bay Area. The problem for the San Francisco population is the impact of urbanization. The birds at Stow Lake are subject to impacts from park crews who may trim trees too close to the nesting trees or who may cut trees with nests. There are potentially the same impacts for the Lake Merced colonies. The Golden Gate Park population is also subject to nest loss from over aged trees that may blow down in a storm. This is less likely for the Lake Merced population which nests in eucalyptus that are not as old as the Golden Gate Park trees. Both populations are subject to impacts on food availability such as might occur with lake restoration projects.

Green Heron

Status in San Francisco: All known breeding records are from Lake Merced. Migrants are recorded annually in Golden Gate Park and Pine Lake.

Conservation: This species appears stable in San Francisco. Any projects that increase or decrease water levels at Lake Merced, cuts willow stands, or removes large amounts of bulrush should consider impacts on this species.

Peregrine Falcon

Formerly listed as endangered by the Federal Government.

Status in San Francisco: Peregrine Falcon nests on the underside of the Bay Bridge. One pair apparently feeds in downtown San Francisco and hunts from tall buildings. Over wintering birds feed along the bay and ocean coast of San Francisco.

Conservation: Nesting birds could be impacted by construction on the San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge. Any loss of coastal wetlands could have an indirect impact on this species.

Virginia Rail

Status in San Francisco: Present through much of the year at Lake Merced and infrequently in wetlands elsewhere. Virginia Rail is not known to breed in San Francisco. Any major project that would destroy the marsh would seriously impact this species and perhaps drive it to extirpation. A sewage spill in Lake Merced would also have the potential for catastrophic impacts on this species.

Conservation: This species appears stable in San Francisco. Any projects to increase or decrease water levels at Lake Merced, or to remove large amounts of bulrush should consider impacts on this species.

Sora

Status in San Francisco: Present through much of the year at Lake Merced and infrequently in wetlands elsewhere. Sora is not known to breed in San Francisco. Any major project that would destroy the marsh would seriously impact this species and perhaps drive it to extirpation. A sewage spill in Lake Merced would also have the potential for catastrophic impacts on this species.

Conservation: This species appears stable in San Francisco. Any projects to increase or decrease water levels at Lake Merced, or to remove large amounts of bulrush should consider impacts on this species.

Pigeon Guillemot

Status in San Francisco: A few pairs probably breed on the cliffs just north of Sutro Baths.

Conservation: Subject to impacts from oil spills and perhaps people climbing on the cliffs.

Black Oystercatcher

Status in San Francisco: The population is limited to a single pair that breeds on Seal Rocks and perhaps a one or two others on the cliffs at Land's End. The species is present throughout the year.

Conservation: Subject to impacts from oil spills and predation from Western Gulls.

American Avocet

Status in San Francisco: This species is regular, though low in numbers along the bay shore of San Francisco. The breeding population is limited to a couple of pairs that may breed at Pier 98/Heron's Head Park. Individuals are noted annually at other sites along the Bay and at Lake Merced.

Conservation: Major threats would be from off leash dogs or from people walking on nests. Gull or Raven predation may also be a problem.

Barn Owl

Status in San Francisco: This species has been noted most recently at Lake Merced. Reports of Barn Owls in the trees near the maintenance buildings at Harding Golf Course are made annually. There have been recent reports from around Hunter's Point. The Golden Gate Park population seems to be extirpated. They roosted in the trees across the street from Mallard Lake, but since the trees were trimmed several years ago there have been no reports and their pellets are no longer found in the area.

Conservation: The San Francisco population is limited and poorly understood. It is certain Barn Owl is marginal as a San Francisco species.

Western Screech-Owl

This is a nocturnal owl that resides in oaks and associated woodlands.

Status in San Francisco: Populations have been recorded in the eastern end of Golden Gate Park and near the Arguello Gate of the Presidio.

Conservation: The very low numbers of this species and the limited knowledge we have of them make their situation difficult to assess. They may have been displaced from de la Viegas Dell when the Aids Memorial Grove renovation took place. Care of oak woodlands and their understory are critical to the continued existence of this species in San Francisco.

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Status in San Francisco: Olive-sided Flycatcher nests in parklands with mature stands of trees such as Golden Gate Park, the Presidio of San Francisco and on golf courses around Lake Merced. The population is highly variable apparently because of impacts on the wintering grounds in northern South America.

Conservation: Tree cutting in sensitive areas should be restricted to the period of August through February. Removal of mature trees where this species is known to nest should be minimal.

Cliff Swallow

Nests in colonies on the sides of buildings. They feed over lakes, wetlands and parklands.

Status in San Francisco: Nests in colonies on the concrete bridge at the south end of Lake Merced and on stable buildings in Golden Gate Park. It is probable other nest sites occur in San Francisco. The Lake Merced colony is experiencing a drop in numbers from 48 in 1997, to 39 in 1998 and 1999, and down to 8 in 2000. The number of lost nests suggests the number of nesting attempts approached that of previous years, but many nests were broken. It is unknown whether this was done by predators or vandals.

Conservation: This species is threatened with loss through nest destruction by people. San Francisco State University cleared the library building of a colony a number of years ago. There is no suggestion or indication they did so during the nesting season. Swallow colonies are messy and bothersome to some, so there is pressure to remove them. They are also subject to vandalism. Existing colonies should be identified and protected. As new ones are developed they should be protected as well.

Marsh Wren

Status in San Francisco: Inhabits marshes all year. All breeding records are for Lake Merced so any major work that would destroy the marsh would seriously impact this species and perhaps drive it to extirpation.

Conservation: This species appears stable in San Francisco. Any projects to increase or decrease water levels at Lake Merced, or to remove large amounts of bulrush should consider impacts on this species. A sewage spill from the pipeline that crosses the southern end of the lake or from the storage box beneath John Muir Dr. could seriously impact Marsh Wrens.

Common Yellowthroat

Status in San Francisco: Inhabits marshes and nearby uplands all year. There is some post breeding movement, so in fall migrant birds are often seen in Golden Gate Park and other places where they are not known to nest. All nesting records are from Lake Merced so any major work that would destroy the marsh would seriously impact this species and perhaps drive it to extirpation. Common Yellowthroat is subject to Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism.

Conservation: This species appears stable in San Francisco. It is listed as a species of special concern by the federal and state governments; the Lake Merced population appears stable. Any projects that increase or decrease water levels at Lake Merced, or remove large amounts of bulrush should consider impacts on this species. A sewage spill at Lake Merced could seriously impact this species.

Savannah Sparrow

Status in San Francisco: Breeds at Pier 98/Heron's Head Park in very small numbers. Wintering birds of several subspecies are uncommon at grassy and wetland parklands.

Conservation: Weedy shoreline vegetation forms the habitat base for this species. Habitat restoration may enhance its presence in San Francisco. Restoration to other habitat types could threaten this species with extirpation as a breeding bird in San Francisco.

White-crowned Sparrow

Widespread in parks and yards. Nests in low shrubs.

Status in San Francisco: The population of this species has crashed in recent years, particularly in Golden Gate Park. Documented problems include the increase of feral cats in many city parks, parasitism by cowbirds and the loss of scrub habitat. The recent appearance of red foxes in San Francisco is likely to put more pressure on this species. The population is enhanced by an influx of large numbers of over wintering birds.

Conservation: Loss of habitat and the presence of feral cats appear to be the primary problems for this species. Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism may be significant as well. White-crowned Sparrows have done well in restoration areas such as the north end of Fort Funston and above Baker's Beach.

Dark-eyed Junco

Status in San Francisco: The population of this ground nesting species appears to be in decline during recent years, particularly in Golden Gate Park. Problems include the increase of feral cats in many city parks and the loss of ground cover such as fallen branches under which juncos nest. Newly arrived red foxes may well be a serious threat to this species. The population is enhanced by an influx of large numbers of over wintering birds.

Conservation: Loss of habitat and the presence of feral cats appear to be the primary problems faced by this species. Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism may be significant as well. It is likely the population at Lake Merced/Harding Golf Course will be impacted by redevelopment of the golf course.

Photo Highlights, *edited by Mark Eaton*

This section shows photo highlights of the year 2000 in the City of San Francisco. All photos are ©2000 by the respective photographers.



This oiled Northern Fulmar was on Ocean Beach on October 29th ©2000 *Calvin Lou*.



This Ross's Goose was at Spreckels Lake on the 20th of April ©2000 *Calvin Lou*.



This female Long-tailed Duck was at Crissy Field on March 10th ©2000 *Mark Eaton*.



This Costa's Hummingbird was on Mt. Davidson on or about the 22nd of August ©2000 *Alan Hopkins*.



This Williamson's Sapsucker was at Strybing Arboretum on the 27th of November ©2000 *Stephen Davies*.



This Glaucous Gull was at Spreckels Lake on the 10th of November ©2000 *Stephen Davies*.



This Dusky-capped Flycatcher was at the Archery Range in Golden Gate Park on the 7th of November ©2000 *Stephen Davies*.



This Swamp Sparrow was near the wooden bridge at Lake Merced on the 10th of March ©2000 Mark Eaton



This Great-tailed Grackle was near the concrete bridge at Lake Merced on the 4th of October ©2000 Mark Eaton