

SPRING ARRIVAL OF SUMMER RESIDENTS IN THE BERKELEY AREA, CALIFORNIA

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Bird students are usually only vaguely aware of the orderly sequence of arrival dates of summer-resident birds in a given area. They know merely that certain species may be expected to appear at certain times each year. If data are compiled and graphically presented, it becomes possible to evaluate year-to-year differences within one species and to make comparison between species.

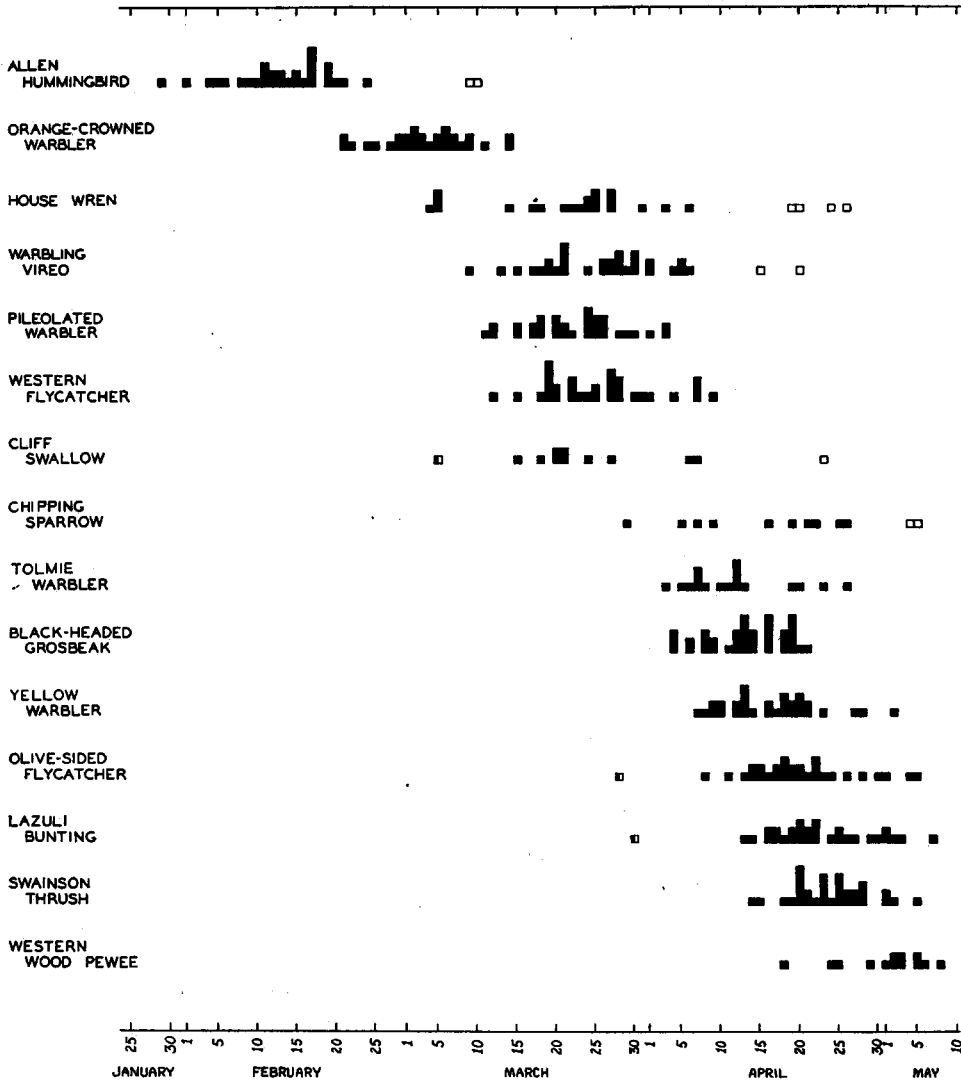


Fig. 21. Comparison of dates of spring arrival of summer residents in the Berkeley area, California. Solid black squares indicate first-seen records; half-black squares, probable early vagrants; open squares, doubtful first-seen records.

In figure 21, I have recorded graphically the dates of the first-seen records for the fifteen most common summer residents in the Berkeley area, on the east side of San Francisco Bay opposite the Golden Gate. All records shown are based on observations and field notes of various ornithologists. The years 1911 through 1947 are covered. My own observations for the last three of these years have been included.

I have a complete record for the 37-year period for only one species, the Black-headed Grosbeak. Nine other species are recorded for 30 or more years; the remaining five for less than 30. These latter five species, the House Wren, Cliff Swallow, Chipping Sparrow, Tolmie Warbler and Wood Pewee, have been recorded fewer times for various reasons. The Cliff Swallow, for example, has been erratic at times, failing to appear in Berkeley in certain years. The other four species are either secretive in their habits or appear only in low numbers most years. Consequently, they are not always recorded at the time of first arrival. On rare occasions certain species have been recorded much earlier than they normally appear in Berkeley; in instances of exceptionally late records, it has been assumed that actual first arrivals were overlooked or not sought out.

It is hoped that this article will stimulate other students to record data on migration in a form more usable than is commonly done today. Many amateur ornithologists have such data buried in field notes. Presenting these data as I have done here will enable others to benefit from them and will call attention to problems which field observers can help to solve.

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