

The SKIMMER



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, November 19, at 6:00 p.m., in the Hoffman Room of the San Diego Foundation Building, 2508 Historic Decatur Road. Going south on Rosecrans St. in the Midway area of town, turn left on Roosevelt Rd. into Liberty Station and proceed a couple of blocks to Decatur. Park in the lot to the left or find street parking.

Program: Bring your popcorn, because this month's program is a movie, "Ordinary Extraordinary Junco" (see the poster).

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, December 10, same time, same place.

Note the earlier date! Our annual Holiday Party will run from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. SDFO will supply the food and beverages. Plan on lots of bird pictures, a quiz or two and recap of the 2013 birding year.

SDFO Annual New Year's Day Pelagic Trip Now Accepting Reservations

Sign up now for SDFO's annual trip to sea. \$28.00 gets you a ticket for an adventure on the *Grande*, leaving the pier at 8:00 a.m. and returning at 1:00 p.m. Great time to get your first sea birds of the New Year. Call Point Loma Sportfishing (619) 223-1627 for your reservation. The price will go up on December 12th, so call now; remember last year we sold out.



**ORDINARY
EXTRAORDINARY
JUNCO**

Remarkable biology from a backyard bird
A modular feature-length documentary film

Premieres December 11th, 6:30pm
Indiana University Cinema

SDFO News (continued)

Barbara Carlson Sets County Big Year Record

Barbara Carlson recently recorded a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker for her 370th San Diego County species this year, passing Jay Keller's previous Big Year record of 368 species, set in 2009, all this while working full time! Congratulations, Barb, for undertaking such an endeavor and success. And there's still a month and a half to go!

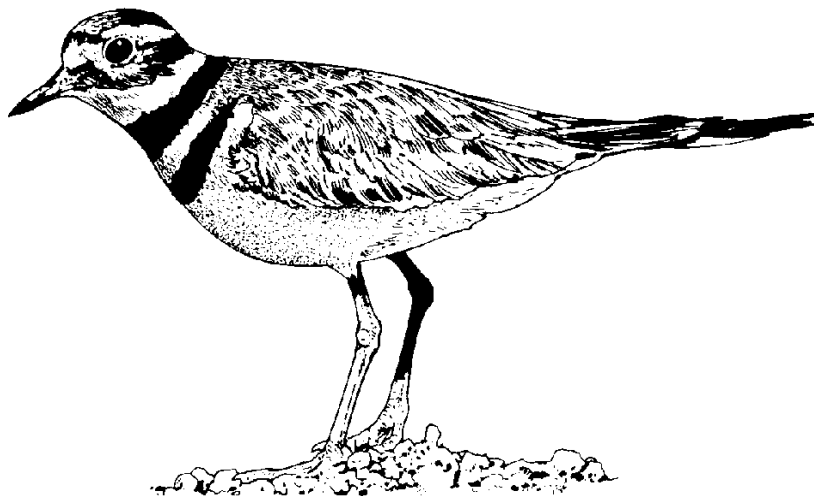
SDFO Launches Birding Listserv

Responding to problems with the existing SDBirds listserv, SDFO has formed a new birding listserv (SanDiegoRegionBirding). We will have a discussion on the "nuts and bolts" of the operation and plans for the future at the November meeting.

Christmas Bird Counts

Here is a list of this year's Christmas Bird Counts in the county:

Saturday, Dec. 14	San Diego	Steve Ritt Chris Smith	stevenmritt@gmail.com stlbirdman64@yahoo.com
Sunday, Dec. 15	Borrego	Bob Theriault	roberttheriault@juno.com
Monday, Dec. 16	Lake Henshaw	Gretchen Cummings	gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net
Saturday, Dec. 21	Oceanside	Tim Burr Andy Mauro	tburr@san.rr.com akamauro@cox.net
Saturday, Dec. 28	Escondido	Kenneth Weaver	gnatcatcher@sbcglobal.net
Saturday, Jan. 4	Rancho Santa Fe	Robert Patton	rpatton@san.rr.com



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS

OCTOBER 2013

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

October produced **two** additions to the list of birds recorded in San Diego County. First, during the 13 October boat trip exploring the ocean waters off San Diego, a most cooperative **Great Shearwater** was found and well photographed amongst Pink-footed Shearwaters accompanying feeding dolphins at the 9-Mile Bank (12.3 miles west of Pt. Loma)

(PEL). Great Shearwater is a casual straggler to the Pacific Ocean, but at least 14 have been documented in California waters. Second, Terry Hunefeld found and photographed a **Le Conte's Sparrow** (see p. 5) along the edge of a pond at a golf course in Borrego Springs on 25 October. Le Conte's Sparrow is a very rare to casual straggler to

the western United States in fall and winter with 35 documented records in California. The addition of these two increases the number of species recorded in San Diego County to **514**, one more than are recorded in Los Angeles County. However, the Los Angeles County list does not include Ring-necked Pheasant, a non-native species that according to Kimball L. Garrett was never established in Los Angeles County. In San Diego County, the Ring-necked Pheasant appeared to be established in the Oceanside/Vista area through the 1950's and into the 1960's but, with the urbanization of that area, now is probably gone. As

such some think it is time to remove Ring-necked Pheasant from the San Diego County list, leaving San Diego and Los Angeles Counties tied at **513**.

October is the month that wintering geese arrive in San Diego County. Up to six Greater White-fronted Geese near Del Mar at the Fairbanks Ranch horse pas-



Great Shearwater at the 9-Mile Bank.
Photo by Tom Blackman

tures 14 Oct + (GCH, JR), five Snow Geese at Sweetwater Reservoir 19 Oct (PEL), thirty migrating Brant about 3 miles off Pt. Loma 5 Oct (PEL), and single Cackling Geese at the Tijuana River mouth 3-11 Oct (MS, EAE) and on Camp Pendleton 16 Oct (KL) were the earliest this fall/winter. The male Eurasian Wigeon first seen near the San Diego River mouth on 26 Sep was still present 31 Oct (JP), and is the only one reported so far this fall/winter.

A Black-footed Albatross, scarce in San Diego County waters, was 15 miles off San Diego 13 Oct (PEL). Northern Fulmars appear to be pushing south into southern California waters in larger than normal numbers this winter, with 12 off San Diego on 5 Oct (PEL) considered early for such numbers, and 70-75 seen during one-day boat-trips off San Diego after mid-October (PEL, DP). A Flesh-footed Shearwater, very rare in San Diego County waters, was well photographed at the 9-Mile Bank on 5 and 13 Oct (PEL, PAG). An impressive 5,000 Least Storm-Petrels were "rafting" with an equal number of Black Storm-Petrels only 1-2 miles outside San Diego County waters at the 30-Mile Bank 16 Oct (PEL). A Red-billed Tropicbird 25 nautical miles off Mission Bay 5 Oct (PEL) was the latest of those found in our waters this summer. A Guadalupe Murrelet 21 nautical miles west of Pt. Loma on 16 Oct (GG) was only the second known in San Diego County waters this year, and Craveri's Murrelet sightings continued into October, with two 25 nautical miles west of La Jolla on 5 Oct (PEL) and two more along with 7 unidentified *Synthliboramphus* murrelets in that same area on 15 Oct (JLD).

Single Blue-footed Boobies seen from shore at the Tijuana River mouth on 3 Oct (PEL), 5 Oct (BR) and 6 Oct (GMcC), along with one at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 3 Oct (SW), were all no doubt associated with the "invasion" of this species into California in early September. Three Brown Boobies 3-5 miles southwest of Pt. Loma on 5 Oct (DP, GMcC) were the only ones of this species reported this month. At least one Reddish Egret remained at the mouth of the Tijuana River south San Diego Bay at the end of the month (PEL), and the two adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were in their expected roosting trees at the adjacent Imperial Beach Sports Park through 31 Oct (GMcC). The two adult Harris's Hawks, one missing an eye, were still present in Jacumba at the end of October (EGK), but one of this year's young was killed on the highway by a vehicle, and the other was evidently captured by a local falconer (EGK). An immature Broad-winged Hawk was photographed at Whelan Lake near Oceanside on 5 Oct (AH).

A hybrid American x Black Oystercatcher has been present with up to three Black Oystercatchers at the entrance to San Diego Bay since 5 Oct (MSa, PEL). A migrant Pacific Golden-Plover was seen in flight at the Tijuana River mouth on 12 Oct (JLD), and another in Del Mar 21 Oct + (PEL) is the same bird present here through the past two winters. The latest of the fall migrant Solitary Sandpipers was one at the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley on 14 Oct (BS). One of the two Pectoral Sandpipers at the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside remained through 11 Oct (KW), one at the AG sod farm in the Tijuana River Valley in late September was last seen on 10 Oct (JTS), and another was at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton 19-20 Oct (AB). Single South Polar Skuas, rare in San Diego County waters, were over the 9-Mile Bank off Pt. Loma on 5 Oct (GMcC) and 15 Oct (JTS) along with two there on 13 Oct (MSa). A Black Tern was found 25 nautical miles west of La Jolla on 5 Oct (PEL).

Unexpected, and certainly out of place, was a Short-eared Owl flying east over the open ocean 25 miles off San Diego on 15 Oct (MSa). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Tierrasanta on 24 Oct (PEL) was the only one reported so far the fall/winter. An adult Crested Caracara in the southeast corner of the Tijuana River Valley on 10 Oct (GN) was probably the same bird first seen here on 9 September 2006 and sporadically each year since.

A Great Crested Flycatcher at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 9-15 Oct (GN) was the 7th to be documented in San Diego County. Tropical Kingbirds remained less numerous than expected, with single birds at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 12-17 Oct (GN), at the San Luis Rey River mouth 3-4 Oct (PJF) and at widely separated locations in the Tijuana River Valley on 6 Oct (PEL) and 13 Oct (GN), bringing the fall total to only six. The Thick-billed Kingbird present at the lower end of Poggi Canyon in Chula Vista during the past three winters had returned on 18 Oct (RN) and remained through the end of the month. Most interesting was a Bell's Vireo of the nominate

form *bellii* well photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 28 Oct (GN)—there are less than ten documented records of this vagrant in California. A Yellow-green Vireo at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 9-15 Oct (GN) was the 3rd at this location this fall, and one of an unprecedented **15** in California this year.

A cooperative Golden-crowned Kinglet at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 25-31 Oct + (GN) was the only one that I know of on the coast of Southern California this fall. Six somewhat early Mountain Bluebirds near Ramona 29 Oct (JMcM) were hopefully the first of additional wintering birds to follow. A Gray Catbird, a rare visitor to California, at a private



residence in Borrego Springs 31 Oct + (BT) is the 1st to be found in the Borrego Valley. Up to three Red-throated Pipits were with American Pipits at the polo field in Del Mar 9-10 Oct (SB, MB), and up to two more were with American Pipits at the AG sod farm in the Tijuana River Valley 16-26 Oct (GMcC, PEL) bringing the 2013 fall total in this county to eight. The only longspurs were up to five Lapland Longspurs with Horned Larks at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay 12-31 Oct + (DH, PEL).

The number and variety of Wood-Warblers found in October was somewhat disappointing as well illustrated by the presence of only one Palm Warbler—an individual at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 12-20 Oct (MT). In addition eight apparent migrant Black-and-white Warblers and only four American Redstarts reported during October are average numbers at best. Expected vagrants such as Ovenbird, Tennessee Warbler and Blackpoll Warbler, along with the hoped-for birds like Blackburnian Warbler and Prairie Warbler were never found this month. Short-staying vagrants included a Lucy's Warbler at a resort on Mission Bay on 10 Oct (PEL), a Virginia's Warbler at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas on 15 Oct (JMcM), a Chestnut

-sided Warbler at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 4-10 Oct (RN), a male Black-throated Blue Warbler at a private residence in Imperial Beach 24 Oct (SY), and single Painted Redstarts at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 4 Oct (SES) and near Nestor Park in Nestor on 24 Oct (RTP). Individuals known returning from last winter include a Northern Waterthrush at the Dairy Mart Ponds 7 Sep-31

LeConte's Sparrow at Borrego Springs.
Photo by Matt Sadowski.

Oct + (JK), an American Redstart near Nestor Park 2-31 Oct + (SBM), a Chestnut-sided Warbler at the intersection of Wilson Ave. and 22nd St. in National City 24 Oct (PEL), a female Black-throated Blue Warbler at a private residence in San Carlos 28-31 Oct + (JRM) and a Grace's Warbler at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego 6 Oct (TRS). A Northern Waterthrush at the river crossing on Saturn St. in the Tijuana River Valley 21 Sep-31 Oct + (JK) and a second bird at the

Dairy Mart Ponds 5-6 Oct (JK) may also be wintering locally, and the same can be said for the Northern Parula at Rohr Park in Chula Vista 27-31 Oct + (DDiT).

A handful of Green-tailed Towhees include single birds at a private residence in Imperial Beach 27-30 Oct + (SY) and at Lake Murray 27-29 Oct (SW), along with one returning for a 4th winter at the Tijuana River Estuary Visitor Center in Imperial Beach 28 Sep-25 Oct + (JB). An impressive nine Clay-colored Sparrows were present this month, with up to two at a private residence on Pt. Loma 3-16 Oct (SBM), single birds at two different locations along the north side of Mission Bay on 4 Oct (PEL) and 23 Oct (PEL), single birds at three separated locations in the Tijuana River Valley 8-24 Oct (PEL), 12-23 Oct (PEL) and 19 Oct (TF), and up to two at the Public Works Building in Del Mar 21-29 Oct (PEL). A White-throated Sparrow at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 31 Oct (GN) was the earliest this fall.

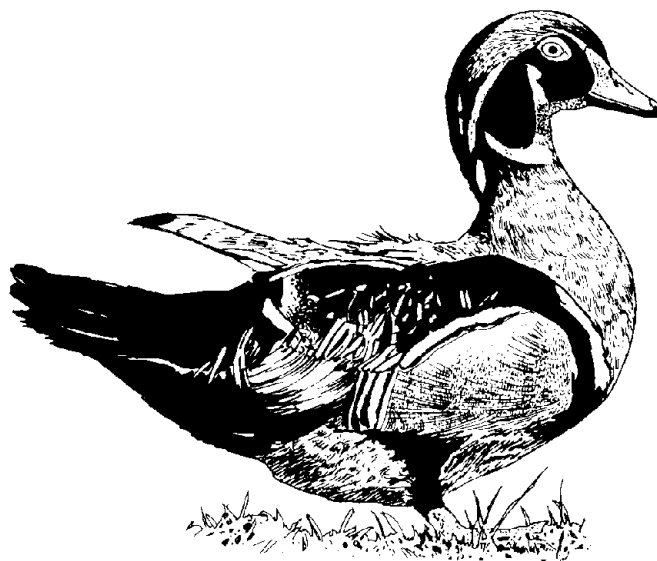
A male Summer Tanager in Jacumba 7 Oct (EGK) was somewhat unusual, but six, including known wintering birds, in and around San Diego during October were as expected. Two Scarlet Tanagers were found with a hatch-year male at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 12-13 Oct (JK, JP) and another hatch-year male near Nestor Park on 25 Oct (MM). An adult male

Painted Bunting photographed at the Dairy Mart Ponds 3-4 Oct (J-AD, CA) showed no signs of having been in captivity. A Bobolink, now much scarcer in San Diego County than in the 1960s, was in Borrego Springs 2-3 Oct (TH). A Baltimore Oriole near Famosa Slough in Ocean Beach 4 Oct (BLC) was the only one reported.

Listed observers: Christopher Adler, Jennifer Baldwin, Alex Bairstow, Mathew Bins, Steve Brad, Barbara L. Carlson, Jan-Anders Dalenstam, Dean DiTommaso, Jon L. Dunn, Elias A. Elias, PJ Falatek, Tom Frankenberg, Greg Gillson, Peter A. Ginsburg, Ann Hanna, Gjon C. Hazard, David Holway, Terry Hunefeld, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Paul E. Lehman, Sara B. Mayers, Marcy Mason, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorrان, James R Morris, Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, Dave Povey, Bruce Rideout, Jim Roberts. Matt Sadowski (MSa), Ben Sandstrom, Susan E. Smith, Justyn T. Stahl, Trent R. Stanley, Monte Taylor, Bob Theriault, Stanley Walens, Shannon Walsh, Kenneth Weaver, Susan Yamagata.

Literature Cited

Unitt, Philip. 2004. San Diego County Bird Atlas. *Proc. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist.* 39. San Diego Nat. Hist. Mus., San Diego.



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