

The **SKIMMER**



Volume 41, Number 3—March 2014

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 25, at 6:00 p.m., in the Hoffman Room of the San Diego Foundation Building, 2508 Historic Decatur Road. **Note: This is a week later than usual!** 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. Parking is available on the street or in the adjacent parking lots.

Program: Dr. Joel E. Pagel will speak on “Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle mortalities at wind energy facilities in the contiguous United States.”

Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles are among a plethora of avian species known to have been injured/killed at wind power facilities in the United States. Because of a raptor’s penchant to course and soar over the landscape where electricity generation via wind is possible, they are vulnerable to collisions with horizontal axis wind turbines. Recently, Pagel, Kritz, Millsap, Murphy, Kershner, and Covington (2013) reported that between 1997 to mid 2012, at least 85 eagles were killed at wind generation facilities in the US. The authors also reported that this was likely a substantial undercount. Dr. Pagel will discuss eagle ecology and how this relates to mortalities at wind facilities. The findings and conclusions within the paper, and at this presentation are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Jeep Pagel has been a raptor ecologist with the federal government for over 30 years, currently with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He has specialized in Peregrine Falcon ecology, concentrating on research and management of the species in the Pacific Northwest, California, and several national parks. His work has included almost 1,000 nest entries to band peregrine young, collect contaminant samples and enhance nest ledges. He currently works to help understand and subsequently lessen the impact of renewable energy, habitat loss and human disturbance to Golden Eagles and other raptors. He received a doctorate in Ecology from UC Davis, and very much enjoys being in the backcountry of the Pacific Northwest watching peregrines and other raptors.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, April 15, same time, same place. James Maley will present his ground-breaking genetics research on species limits in the Clapper/King Rail complex. Look forward to hearing about what’s been discovered about these enigmatic rails and upcoming potential changes to your birding checklist of species!

SDFO News (continued)

Speakers Wanted!

Want to recommend an SDFO monthly meeting speaker? We are always looking for good presentations on topics such as advancing bird identification skills, learning bird sounds, in-depth reports on species or sites of local conservation importance, and exciting field trips that we wish we could go on. Please send recommendations to our Program Chair Gary Nunn (garybnunn@gmail.com).

Last Call for 2014 Dues

If you still haven't renewed your SDFO membership for 2014, see Membership Chair Mike Goldhamer at the meeting, or mail him your renewal. See the last page for details. We will publish a current membership list in next month's *Skimmer*.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, FEBRUARY 2014

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

The earliest of the spring migrants have arrived, with three Elegant Terns at the Tijuana River mouth on 26 Feb (MSa), a Pacific-slope Flycatcher photographed in Presidio Park on 26 Feb (CAn), 15 Cliff Swallows at a known nesting location in La Jolla on 25 Feb (TM), and an adult male Hooded Oriole in Rancho Penasquitos on 23 Feb (KP). In the first half of March observers should watch for the first Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Western Kingbirds, Bell's and Warbling Vireos, Lucy's Warblers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Bullock's Orioles and Black-chinned Sparrows. Keep in mind, the earliest arrivals are invariably adult males in full color, so when seeing such species as a Yellow Warbler (earliest of the spring migrants not expected until the end of March) or a Western Tanager (earliest of the spring migrants not expected until early April) in other than bright summer plumage, remember that they are more than likely birds that wintered locally—it is important to know the status and seasonal occurrence of the birds in the area one is birding, and Unitt (2004) certainly contains this information for San Diego County.

The birding highlight in February was the finding of three **Clark's Nutcrackers** on the west side of Laguna Meadow in the Laguna Mountains on 16 Feb (DK) that remained through the end of the month to many observers' delight (MSa). The Clark's Nutcracker is an irregular vagrant to San Diego County, with most during times of major movements spurred by food shortages within the species' normal range in the high mountains of the West—last fall numbers were moving into areas of Arizona outside the species' normal range. The most recent such movement of these birds into San Diego County occurred during the winter of 2000-2001 (Unitt 2004).

A Greater White-fronted Goose at Lindo Lake in Lakeside since 2007, and the Cackling Goose at the Scripps Ranch Library near Lake Miramar since 2008, were both present at the end of February (JBa), and a flock of 13 Greater White-fronted Geese at the polo fields in Del Mar on 13 Feb (SB) were likely spring migrants. The only Eurasian Wigeon known at the end of the month was the male present at the San Diego

River mouth since 26 Sep (JP, *fide* PEL). Two White-winged Scoters, rare in San Diego County since the 1970s, flew past Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 9 Feb (SW), one was on Mission Bay 27 Feb (PEL) and another was at the pier in Imperial Beach at the end of the month (*fide* PEL). Four Black Scoters remained on south San Diego Bay most of the month, but two were at the pier in Imperial Beach on 27 Feb (*fide* PEL) and three (2 males and 1 female) remained on the bay at the end of the month (*fide* PEL). An Ashy Storm-Petrel seen from Pt. La Jolla 28 Feb (GMcC) is one of

only a few seen from shore in San Diego County, but with most during stormy weather in the fall and winter. Reports of Brown Boobies from shore in Imperial Beach between 10 Feb and the end of the month (PEL) are believed to involve a single adult female patrolling this stretch of the

coast; in addition, an immature was attracted to a boat a little farther off Imperial Beach on 15 Feb (DP), and another immature was seen from the Silver Strand State Beach 27 Feb (BJS). At least one Reddish Egret was present on south San Diego Bay through 28 Feb (SR) – birds wintering locally normally move south in the late winter/early spring to breeding locations in Baja California. Two pairs of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, one present since June 2005, were at last year's nest-sites at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach at the end of February (GMcC), so can be expected to be on eggs in the near future.

The Zone-tailed Hawk roosting with Turkey Vultures at Safari Park near Escondido since at least 9 Nov

(MD) has not been reported since 1 Feb (GG). A Black Oystercatcher, virtually unrecorded locally this winter, was at Pt. La Jolla 9 Feb (SW) and another was on the Zuniga Jetty at the entrance to San Diego Bay 15 Feb (DP). The first-winter Glaucous Gull found at the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside 17 Dec (KW) was still present at the end of this month (SB), and remarkably a second-winter bird photographed in flight at the San Diego River mouth 12 Feb (TAB) had been seen at south San Diego Bay earlier that day (MSa). The Inca Dove found at the Roadrunner



Clark's Nutcracker at Laguna Meadow, Laguna Mountains. Photo by Tom Blackman.

Club in Borrego Springs on 15 Dec (PEL) appears settled and still present 28 Feb (TH). One of the presumed wintering Short-eared Owls at south San Diego Bay earlier this winter was still present 8-23 Feb (CKS, SR). A Lesser Nighthawk flushed at Mission Trails Regional Park 22 Feb (CHe) most likely wintered locally, as the earliest of the spring migrants are

not expected before the last week of March. Three of the eight Lewis's Woodpeckers found in Pamo Valley 28 Dec (CAd) were still present 28 Feb (SC), and one was at Laguna Meadow in the Laguna Mountains 16-28 Feb (MSa). A female Williamson's Sapsucker at Paso Picacho Campground in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park 29 Jan-13 Feb (BMu, MSa) was joined by a male on 10 Feb (PP), and as many as three (one male and two females) were at Laguna Meadow 16-28 Feb (MSa, MSt); this species is normally quite rare in San Diego County, so five individuals in one month was more than expected. A first-winter Yellow-bellied

Sapsucker found at Western Hills Park in Clairemont 18 Feb (JBr) was still present 28 Feb (SBM).

A Hammond's Flycatcher found near the intersection of Beyer and Del Sol Blvds. in San Ysidro on 14 Dec, and still present 23 Feb (SR), along with a Gray Flycatcher at Upper Otay Lake on 9 Feb (MSa), were the only two wintering *Empidonax* known along the coast, though a couple of Gray Flycatchers were wintering east of the mountains around Borrego Springs where expected at this time of the year. A Tropical Kingbird photographed at Famosa Slough in Ocean Beach on 23-28 Feb (CAn) may have been the same bird here in September, having gone undetected through the winter. The Thick-billed Kingbird near I-805 and Main St. in Chula Vista since 18 Oct (RN) was still there 28 Feb (MSt) – it can be expected to remain through March as in the previous three winters. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher on Crest Dr. in Cardiff-by-the-Sea was also still present on 28 Feb (GNe). The only Plumbeous Vireos known in February were single wintering birds at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego 12 Nov-28 Feb (JZ, MSa), the Admiral Baker Golf Course near Tierrasanta on 4 Feb (PEL), and in residential Coronado on 13 Feb (PEL). A Cassin's Vireo, rarer locally than Plumbeous in winter, was at Famosa Slough in Ocean Beach 17-28 Feb (PEL, JBr). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma, first seen on 25 Oct, were still present at the end of February (GNu), two more along Crest Dr. in Encinitas since 25 Dec (GNe) were still there 28 Feb (GNe), and one was at Rohr Park in Chula Vista 1-22 Feb (PEL, NC). A Townsend's Solitaire at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs 5-10 Feb (SBM, BMo) was at an unexpected location. A Sage Thrasher in Imperial Beach 11-12 Feb (PEL, MA) was the only one reported from along the coast, and likely a spring migrant. Three Lapland Longspurs, present at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay since mid-October, and still there at the end of February (PEL), are the first known to have remained in San Diego County through a winter.

Noteworthy wood-warblers this month included the Bay-breasted found on Executive Dr. in University City 28 Nov (PEL), a female Black-throated Blue Warbler present for its second winter in San Carlos since 16 Dec (JRM), the female Pine Warbler present for its second winter at Greenwood Cemetery since 16 Nov (MSt), and the Grace's Warbler there since 6 Oct (TRS) for its third winter, were all four still present 28 Feb. In addition, the Northern Parula at Rohr Park since 27 Oct (DDiT), the Chestnut-sided Warbler present for the second winter at Pantoja Park in downtown San Diego since 31 Dec (PEL), and the Black-throated Green Warbler found at Greenwood Cemetery on 13 Nov all remained through February. Two wintering Northern Waterthrushes were still present around the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley into March (SR). Three Black-and-White Warblers were known present, with one in University City since 24 Nov (DH) still there 2 Feb (PEL), another at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach since 14 Dec (CHa) still present at the end of February, and the third found near the intersection of Beyer and Del Sol Blvds. in San Ysidro on 23 Feb (SR) remained through the end of the month. The Tennessee Warbler found at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 15 Dec (GNu) was last seen on 8 Feb (MSa), and another was seen along Muirlands Dr. in La Jolla on 16 Feb (PEL). A Palm Warbler seen in Greenwood Cemetery on 9 Feb (AH) was likely the same bird found there in November, and another found near the intersection of Beyer Way and Picador Blvd. in San Ysidro on 14 Dec (SR) was still present at the end of the month; a third was well photographed on Sunset Ave. in the Tijuana River Valley 30 Jan-4 Feb (JMCM), and a fourth was near the entrance to Border Field State Park 25 Feb through the end of the month (CR, EB). The Painted Redstart found on Park Blvd. in Balboa Park on 20 Dec (JB) was still present at the end of the month (PU).

At least one of the wintering Green-tailed Towhees at the Tijuana River Estuary Visitor Center in Imperial Beach was still present 28 Feb (SR), and another pre-

sent at a private residence in Imperial Beach since 27 Oct remained into March (SY). A Clay-colored Sparrow found near the intersection of Beyer and Del Sol Blvds. in San Ysidro on 9 Jan (SR) remained through the end of the month. Three Nelson's Sparrows, present since 1 Jan (GG), continued to draw birders to San Elijo Lagoon through the end of the month (MSt). Single wintering Swamp Sparrows were at Lindo Lake in Lakeside from 14 Nov to 25 Feb (CHa), at the Aviara Resort in Carlsbad from 21 Dec to 22 Feb (SB) and at Tecolote Canyon in San Diego from 11 Jan to 27 Feb (*fide* PEL). Two White-throated Sparrows at a private residence in Leucadia since 17 Nov were still there 23 Feb (KA), one found at the Episcopal Church in University City on 28 Nov was still present at the end of February (PEL), one of the two at Ft.

Rosecrans National Cemetery in December was still there on 1 Feb (JR), another was photographed in Mira Mesa 4-8 Feb (JM, TG), a sixth was found along the northern part of Mission Bay on 18 Feb (PEL) and a seventh was seen at Lake Hodges 27 Feb (PT).

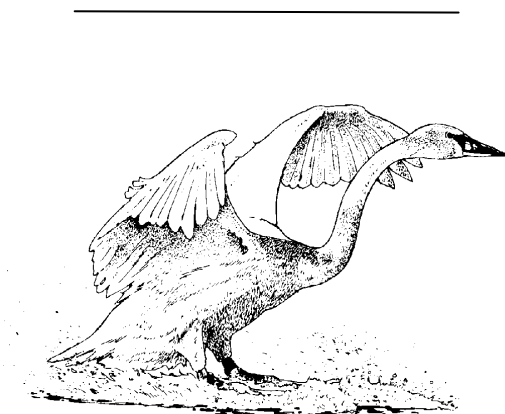
A female Hepatic Tanager along Crest Dr. in Encinitas on 6 Feb (SES) no doubt wintered in that area; the male present for its 3rd winter at the Marston House in Balboa Park since 23 Nov (CAn) was still there 6 Feb (PEL), and another male present for its 8th winter at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach since 1 Dec (DK), remained through the end of the month (SR). At least four known wintering Summer Tanagers in the area between San Ysidro and Encinitas remained well into February. The female Orchard Oriole found at the Botanical Garden in Encinitas on 3 Jan remained through 3 Feb (SES), and an obvious wintering Hooded Oriole

first seen at west Mission Bay 4 Oct was still present 24 Feb (PEL). The only Baltimore Oriole was a female at Rohr Park 1-19 Feb (PEL, MM). Two male Scott's Orioles present in Jacumba off and on since 30 Nov were still present 13 Feb (EGK). An estimated 50 Cassin's Finches around Laguna Meadow 15-28 Feb (MSa) was a significant number for San Diego County.

Listed observers: Christopher Adler (CAd), Kathy Aldern, Caron Andregg (CAn), Marc Arndt, Nancy Christensen, Jennifer Baldwin, Jessie Barry (JBa), Eddie Bartley, Thomas A. Blackman, Steve Brad, John Bruin (JBr), Stephen Chang, Dean DiTommaso, Mike Dow, Greg Gillson, Tito Gonzalez, David Holway, Christine Harvey (CHa), Charley Herzfeld (CHe), Alfred Hochstaedter, Terry Hunefeld, Eric G. Kallen, Dan King, Paul E. Lehman, Marcie Mason, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Tom Meixner, Jeffrey Miner, Bill Moramarco (BMo), James R. Morris, Brennan Mulrooney (BMu), Gretchen Nell (GNe), Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn (GNu), Jim Pea, Kevin Pickard, Dave Povey, Phil Pryde, Casey Richard, Steve Ritt, Jim Roberts, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Christopher K. Smith, Susan E. Smith, BJ Stacey, Trent R. Stanley, Mark Stratton (MSt), Peter Thomas, Stanley Walens, Philip Unitt, Susan Yamagata, Jim Zimmer.

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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