

The **SKIMMER**



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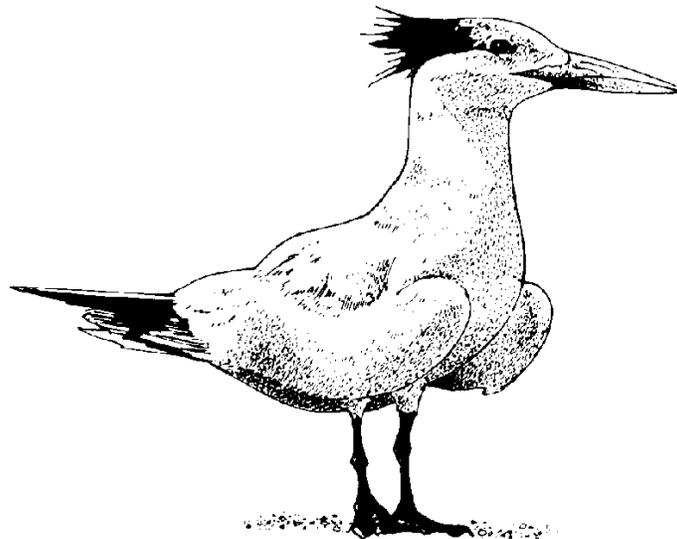
SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, August 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. Parking is available on the street or in the adjacent parking lots.

Program: “An Accidental Big Year.” A presentation by record-breaking Big Year birder Neil Hayward. Experience one year of birding condensed into one hour! I'm exhausted just thinking about it!

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, September 16, same time, same place. Program: “Remarkable Red Crossbills,” by Lance Benner.



Fifty-Fifth Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds Makes Minor Changes to Local Bird Names

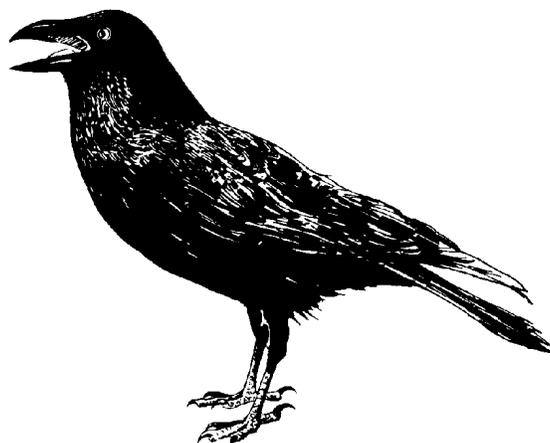
After the wholesale reshuffling of avian orders and families published in recent years, it is refreshing that the latest pronouncements by the Gods of the List, the American Ornithologists' Union, are mostly restricted to dotting *i*'s and crossing *t*'s, at least as far as local birders are concerned. The 55th Supplement makes only two changes that affect our county list.

After learning about potential splits in the Clapper Rail/King Rail complex from our April speaker, James Maley, we now find that the AOU has gone along with part of his recommendations and split the Clapper Rail, *Rallus longirostris*, into three species (the King Rail, *R. elegans*, remains unaffected so far). Our local Light-footed Clapper Rail becomes Ridgway's Rail, *R. obsoletus*, along with the California Clapper Rail from the Bay Area north of here and the Yuma Clapper Rail from the Colorado River. "Clapper Rail" now refers to the eastern rails from the salt marshes of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, *R. crepitans*, while the freshwater rails of the Mexican highlands and points south become Aztec Rail, *R. tenuirostris*.

The other local species with a new name is the introduced Nutmeg Mannikin, *Lonchurus malabaricus*.

Everywhere else in the world where it occurs (it is native to southeast Asia, but has been widely introduced into subtropical and tropical areas such as Puerto Rico), it is known as Scaly-breasted Munia, and the AOU has gone along with this common name. This will be my fourth name for this bird, as when I started birding in Hawaii in the 1970s, it was known as Rice-bird and then Spotted Munia. One benefit of the name change is the elimination of confusion between "mannikin" and the completely unrelated "manakins" of the Neotropics.

As usual, there are numerous other minor changes, mostly of tropical birds that don't occur locally. One interesting split is the Guadalupe Junco, *Junco insularis*, formerly considered a subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco but now raised to a full species. It is restricted to Guadalupe Island off the Pacific coast of Mexico. Several of the Old World warbler species that occur accidentally in places like the Aleutian Islands have been rearranged, and several of the South and Central American parrot species get new names. You can read the full account at the AOU web site, aoucospubs.org/doi/full/10.1642/AUK-14-124.1



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JULY 2014

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

A Cackling Goose at Sweetwater Reservoir 23-31 Jul + (PEL) was probably present here all summer. A White-winged Scoter at Imperial Beach 7-9 Jul (R & GW) no doubt spent the summer locally, providing one of less than half a dozen recent records for this time of the year in San Diego County (Unitt 2004). Likewise, a Bufflehead on Lower Otay Lake 23-31 Jul + (DP, PEL) was most likely present all summer—summer stragglers are found in San Diego County on an average of less than one a year (Unitt 2004).

The presence of up to five Northern Fulmars off Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla 2-3 Jul (PEL, SW), two found dead on the beach in Coronado 4 Jul (KR), one at the 9-Mile Bank off San Diego on 13 Jul (DP) and three in that same area on 15 Jul (DP) indicates a few were attempting to summer locally, as is often the case following winters with large numbers in our offshore waters. July saw impressive flocks of 25,000-30,000 or more Black-vented Shearwaters, along with large numbers of Brown Pelicans, cormorants, gulls and terns, feeding on large schools of anchovies along the immediate coast, with these birds in the breaking waves at times – amazing spectacles that enabled birders to study these birds from dry land. An immature frigatebird, probably a Magnificent Frigatebird, videotaped off Pt. La Jolla on 1 Jul (BM) appears to be the only frigatebird seen in California this month—peak numbers formerly occurred along the coast and at the Salton Sink in July and August. A Blue-footed Booby flew north past Pt. La Jolla on 23 Jul (PEL). With 105 Brown Boobies counted at Los Coronados Islands on 15 Jul (DP), it is no surprise that the number seen in San Diego County waters is increasing, with 17 reported during this month (GN, SW, PEL, SB and

RTP), highlighted by **10** seen from Pt. La Jolla on 23 Jul (PEL).

Single adult Reddish Egrets were still present at the Tijuana River mouth through at least 13 Jul (GMcC) and on south San Diego Bay through 31 Jul (GMcC), and an immature was at the Santa Margarita River mouth on Camp Pendleton 18-26 Jul (JB). Three young Yellow-crowned Night-Herons left the nest at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach 6-8 Jul (GMcC, SBM), and the presence of four adults there on 10 Jul (VM) establishes the fact that two pairs are still in the area. A Zone-tailed Hawk near the Oceanside Golf Course on 31 Jul (JP) provides an unusually early date for the coastal lowlands.

Unusual numbers of Pectoral Sandpipers were reported from locations in California north of San Diego County in the latter half of July, so an adult in the salt ponds at south San Diego Bay 24-26 Jul (RTP) came as no great surprise. A Red Phalarope in the salt ponds at south San Diego Bay 4-5 Jul (MS) was at an unusual location on an unexpected date. A South Polar Skua at the 9-Mile Bank off San Diego on 15 Jul (DP) was between typical peak periods of May-June, and September-October. An alternate-plumage Common Murre at Pt. La Jolla on 20 Jul (SW) had likely summered locally. Craveri's Murrelets have clearly moved north into California waters this summer, as is evident from well documented sightings from as far north as the waters off San Mateo County; locally two were 5 nautical miles west of Pt. Loma on 6 Jul (GN), two were on the 9-Mile Bank off San Diego on 13 Jul (DP) and two more were 6 nautical miles off Mission Bay on 15 Jul (DP). Single Laughing Gulls, rare along the coast, were on the beach at Border Field State Park on

4 Jul (AS), and as “fly-by’s” at Pt. La Jolla on 11 Jul (PAG) and 24 Jul (SW)—these three coincide with the timing of post-breeding birds moving north from the Gulf of California into the Salton Sink. A Least Tern at Guajome Regional Park east of Oceanside on 2 Jul (AG) was somewhat farther inland than expected. Up to two Black Terns on south San Diego Bay 4-5 Jul (RTP, NC) were early fall migrants.

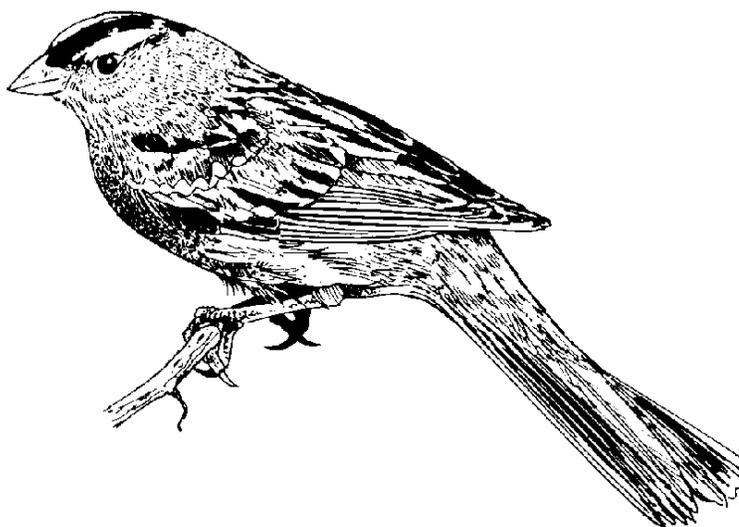
The Inca Dove at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs fledged two young from a nest on 14 Jul (RT and TH), but unfortunately the identity of the other parent was never determined—Common Ground-Dove? Brown-crested Flycatchers were still present at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs on 24 Jul (AH). A Red-eyed Vireo photographed in residential Point Loma on 4 Jul (KA) appeared to be a lost spring migrant on the move. A White-breasted Nuthatch at Pt. La Jolla on 10 Jul (GN) was on the immediate coast where rare. A hatch-year Black-throated Spar-

row at Torrey Pines State Park on 29 Jul (LM) was on the coast where rare but almost annual in the late summer and early fall. A territorial male Indigo Bunting was in Jacumba 4-19 Jul (TRS, EGK).

Listed observers: Kris Alberts, Shane Blodgett, Justin Bosler, Nancy Christensen, Peter A. Ginsburg, Anthony Gliozzo, Alfred Hochstaedter, Terry Hunefeld, Eric G. Kallen, Paul E. Lehman, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Lindsey Mercer, Vic Murayama, Brennan Mulrooney, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jason Pietrzak, Dave Povey, Kerry Ross, Matt Sadowski, Trent R. Stanley, Annie Stockley, Robert Theriault, Robyn and Gary Waayers, Stan Walens.

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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