

The **SKIMMER**



Volume 43, Number 6—June 2016

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 21, 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.

Our annual business meeting and election of officers for 2016-17.

The following candidates have been nominated so far:

President: Dave Povey

Vice President: Justyn Stahl

Secretary: Paula Theobald

Treasurer: Conny Jamison

Membership Chair: Nancy Christensen

Appointed positions:

Program Chair: Justyn Stahl

Editor, *The Skimmer*: John Walters

Webmaster: Gary Nunn

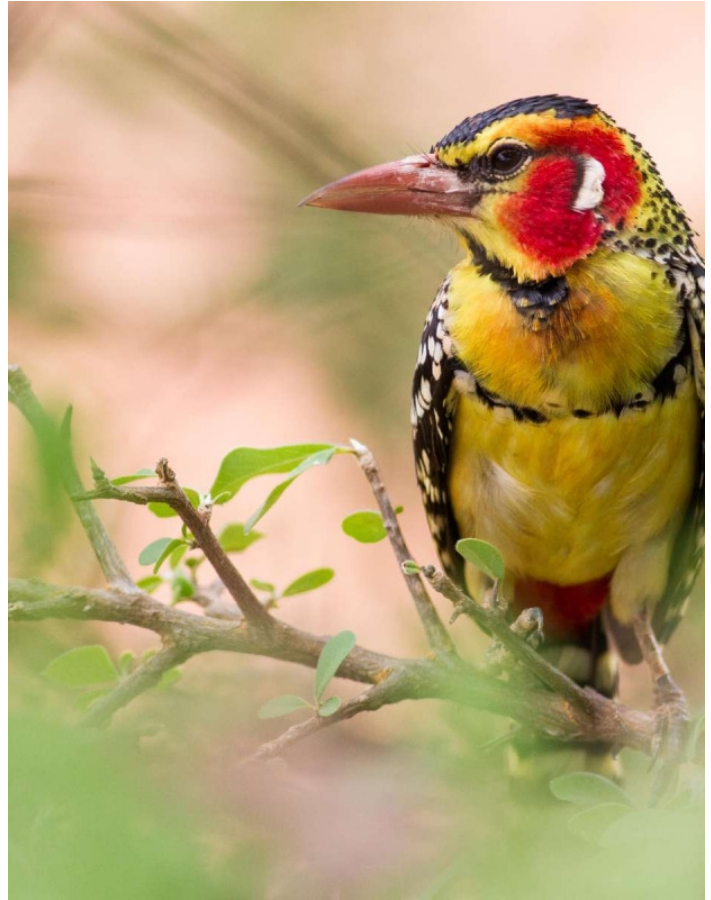
We welcome additional nominations from the floor.

Program: "Ethiopia: Birding the Roof of Africa," by Gary Nunn.

Ethiopia is a country of natural extremes, from towering high mountain plateaus to lowland desert savannas. Located at the nexus of Africa's rift valley and influences from the Palearctic regions, the country possesses an enormous diversity of birds. This presentation will take viewers on a 4000 kilometer tour of Ethiopia's top birding destinations, highlighting the enigmatic, much-sought-after birds found there and the situations one finds oneself in pursuing them. Colorful, secretive, rare and difficult-to-identify birds will be discussed, ranging from the astonishing Prince Ruspoli's Turaco, to the inquisitive Stresemann's Bush-Crows, as well as little-known species such as the Scarce Swift. Over a period of 20 days, in April-May 2016, Gary Nunn and a team of other birders and guides together found a total of 536 bird species, including all seventeen endemics occurring in Ethiopia.

SDFO NEWS (cont.)

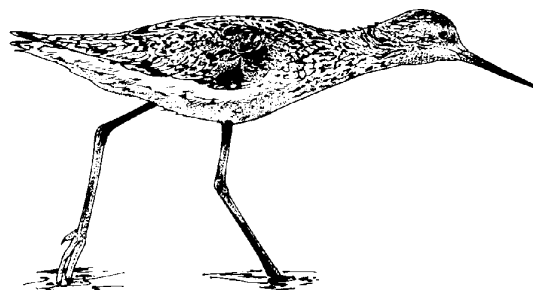
Gary Nunn hails from England originally, where he grew up birding from a young age, chasing rarities in the crucible of twitching—the county of Norfolk. He holds a B.Sc. in Biological Sciences, and Ph.D. in Genetics, both from the University of Nottingham, England. Gary completed research into the evolution and phylogeny of seabirds while he was a Chapman Postdoctoral Fellow at the American Museum of Natural History and a Molecular Evolution Postdoctoral Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution. He is now a professional scientist working in the life sciences industry in San Diego. He has traveled to more than thirty countries world wide birding but also has a great interest in “patch birding”. Gary currently resides with his wife and young family in Pacific Beach, which he notes is exactly halfway between his two favorite birding patches: Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery and Point La Jolla.



Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, July 19, same time, same place. Program to be announced.

Barbara Zepf (1936-2016)

Long-time SDFO and San Diego Audubon Society member Barbara Zepf died on May 6, 1980, at the age of 80. Ill health in recent years had kept her out of the field, but when I moved here in 1986, Barbara was a gregarious and active birder and led many of the SDAS weekend field trips. She was sharp-eyed and knowledgeable, and I learned a lot from her about our local birds. She still occasionally showed up at SDFO meetings with Paul until recently. She is survived by husband Paul, four children, ten grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.



SDFO NEWS (cont,)**Treasurer's Report for 2015-16**

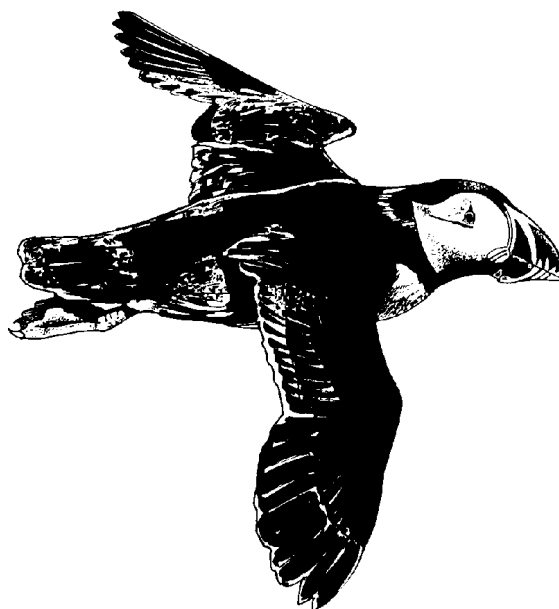
Treasurer Rich Breisch submitted the following summary of club finances. This includes everything except the check for last month's speaker honorarium, which had not yet cleared:

INCOME

2016 dues	2340.00
Interest Income	2.88
Other Income	523.01
TOTAL INCOME	2960.89

EXPENSES

Bank charge	27.45
Equipment purchase	0.00
Food	790.17
Insurance	569.00
Misc.	10.00
Speakers' honoraria	1340.00
Speakers' travel	0.00
Speakers' dinners	378.16
TOTAL EXPENSES	2914.78
 OVERALL TOTAL	 46.11
BALANCE	6697.24



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MAY 2016

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

The late staying female Black Scoter at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge 28-30 Apr was last reported on 2 May (PEL). A Red-necked Grebe at Los Penasquitos Lagoon 9 May through the end of the month (SP) was not only at an unusual location, but also establishes the latest date of occurrence in San Diego County—the previous latest was one in Oceanside 24 Mar-15 Apr 2009. A Horned Grebe on south San Diego Bay on 14 May (GMcC) establishes one of the latest dates for a wintering bird/spring migrant in San Diego County. A Black-footed Albatross, rare in San Diego County waters, was 25 nautical miles west of Mission Bay on 21 May (DP). After only six Black-vented Shearwaters were reported during the 21 May pelagic birding trip off San Diego, the presence of “hundreds” off La Jolla on 30 May (GN) suggest nesting failed and that these were failed breeders dispersing northward from the nesting islands in Mexico – successful breeders would not be expected until late August or September. A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, rare this far south, was associating with feeding Black Storm-Petrels off Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla 1-2 May (GN). An immature Magnificent Frigatebird at Torrey Pines State Beach and La Jolla on 31 May (TAB) was exceptional since late June to mid-September is the time of year when most have been recorded. Numbers of Brown Boobies off San Diego appear to be declining as suggested by 20 counted on 4 Mar, 12 on 18 Apr and only four on 21 May (DP).

Two Reddish Egrets, now expected in San Diego County, were present on south San Diego Bay at the end of May (GMcC). Two pairs of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were attending nests at the Imperial Beach Sports Park in May, with two fully grown young out of



This Red-necked Grebe, photographed on 14 May 2016, was found at Los Penasquitos Lagoon on 9 May and was still present at the end of the month. *Photo by LeRoy Dorman.*

one nest on 31 May (GMcC). A Swainson’s Hawk at Jacumba on 17 May (EGK) was exceptionally late for a migrant. A South Polar Skua, rare in San Diego County waters, was 13.5 nautical miles west of Pt. Loma on 21 May (DP). A Pigeon Guillemot, rare but of annual occurrence in late spring, was seen flying past



This Magnificent Frigatebird appeared overhead at Torrey Pines State Park on 31 May 2016 at about 11 a.m., and was last seen heading southward towards Mt. Soledad about two hours later. *Photo by Thomas A. Blackman.*



One of the long-staying Clark's Nutcrackers in the Laguna Mountains on 28 May 2016.
Photo by Mel Senac.

nest there at the end of the month (JP). A Gray Vireo photographed at Point Loma Nazarene University on 17 May (AAA) provides one of a very few records of a migrant away from known nesting areas and wintering locations in California. The wintering Plumbeous Vireo near the Nature Center at San Elijo Lagoon remained to the record setting late date of 10 May (SES). At least four of the Clark's Nutcrackers near Morris Ranch Rd. in the Laguna Mts. in April were still present at the end of May (MS, JW). A Brown Thrasher at San Dieguito Lagoon on 7 May (PEL) had either wintered undetected locally or was an early spring vagrant.

La Jolla on 30 May (GN)—one of these years this species may attempt nesting on the cliffs in La Jolla. A Tufted Puffin in alternate plumage that flew around the *New Seaforth* sport fishing boat anchored two miles off La Jolla on 20 May (CE) is only the second live bird known in San Diego County waters, the other being one seen from shore in La Jolla on 14 Jul 2011 (*North American Birds* 65:688). An adult Laughing Gull, rare in San Diego County, was well photographed about 3 miles off Del Mar on 16 May (CE). Even rarer at this time of the year was an adult Franklin's Gull photographed on the beach near the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside on 31 May (DT).

A White-winged Dove in Sorrento Valley on 29 May (CH) was on the coast where rare. Four Black Swifts flying over the McCain Valley on 20 May (DG) were the only migrants known in San Diego County this spring. A Chimney Swift was over Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River Valley on 30 May (GMcC)—most of the very similar Vaux's Swifts pass through San Diego County between mid-April and mid-May, whereas records of Chimney Swifts range from 21 May to 22 August (Unitt 2004), so any *Chaetura* in late May should be well studied. The first of a pair of Brown-crested Flycatchers returned to the traditional nesting location at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs on 15 May (PA) with both building a

Noteworthy wood-warblers included single Ovenbirds at the Point Loma Nazarene College 15-16 May (AAA) and at Tamarisk Grove in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 22 May (RT); single



This singing male Hooded Warbler, photographed on 22 May 2016, was found in the riparian growth at the upper end of Los Penasquitos Lagoon on 21 May and was still present at the end of the month. Photo by Tito Gonzalez.

Black-and-white Warblers in Jacumba on 10 May (EGK) and at Point Loma Nazarene University on 19 May (CJ), and a singing male Hooded Warbler near the upper end of Los Penasquitos Lagoon 21-31 May+ (PGN, JP). A presumed wintering White-throated Sparrow in the residential area around Silvergate Ave. and Dupont St. on Pt. Loma 22 Apr-1 May (DB) was later than most. A pale-lored White-crowned Sparrow, presumably *gambelli*, at a private residence along Albion St. on Pt. Loma 9-12 May (SBM) was quite late—this is the time of the year when the black-lored *oriantha* White-crowned Sparrows should be considered. A young male Summer Tanager at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 14-15 May (GMcC) was clearly a spring vagrant. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was east of the mountains at Vallecito on 9 May (BLS), and an additional six males were reported along the coast from Pt. Loma to the upper end of Los Penasquitos Lagoon after 14 May. An adult male Indigo Bunting near Three Sisters Falls in the Laguna Mts. on 1 May (ND) could have been on territory, but a first-year male at Point Loma Nazarene University on Pt. Loma on 22 May (JTS) was on the move. A Baltimore Oriole in the residential area of Pt. Loma on 12 May (PAG) was the only one reported this month.

Listed observers:

Alex A. Abela, Paulette Ache, Dave Batzler, Thomas A. Blackman, Nicole Desnoyers, Cody Ebbert, Peter



This male Rose-breasted Grosbeak east of the mountains at Vallecito on 9 May 2016 was followed by seven more along the coast by the end of the month. Photo by Britta Lee Shain.

A. Ginsburg, David Goodward, Charley Herzfeld, Charles Jackson, Eric G. Kallen, Paul E. Lehman, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, P. Gretchen Nell, Gary Nunn, Jim Pawlicki, Steve Perry, Dave Povey, Mel Senac, Britta Lee Shain, Susan E. Smith, Justyn T. Stahl, Robert Theriault, Dave Trappett, John Walters.

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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Your contributions to *The Skimmer* are appreciated. Submit articles and notices by the first of the month of publication by mail to John Walters, 5552 Horse Ridge Way, Bonita, CA 91902, or by e-mail to johnfwalters5552@gmail.com

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Dues for Calendar year: \$25.00, including all renewals. Add \$10.00 for each additional member in same household. **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO SDFO** and mail or give check to Membership Chair: Mike Goldhamer, 1231 Myrtle Ave., San Diego, CA 92103. For membership information, call Mike at (619) 888-6183.

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