

The *SKIMMER*



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, February 20, at 6:00 p.m., in the Hoffman Room of the San Diego Foundation Building, 2508 Historic Decatur Rd. 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: This month we get two programs for the price of one! First, we have Tom Blackman describing “Photographing the Cahow on Bermuda.”

In 1951 fifteen year old David Wingate took Robert Cushman Murphy, a researcher from the American Museum of Natural History, and local naturalist Louis S. Mowbray out to Long Rock in Turtle Bay Bermuda. There they rediscovered the Bermuda Petrel (Cahow), thought to be extinct for over 300 years. Last November Tom traveled to Bermuda to meet David Wingate OBE, see and photograph the Cahow, and visit one of their nesting islands. This is a short presentation showing the birds and the efforts on Nonsuch Island to rehabilitate this petrel.

A Point Loma native, Thomas A. Blackman graduated from SDSU with a B.S. in Zoology. Always interested in birds and photography (including having a darkroom in the spare bath while in high school and birding in

local canyons), he has continued with these endeavors into retirement. His professional life included Professional Baseball Umpire, Insurance Broker and Risk Manager in Structured Risk practices. He has birded and photographed birds worldwide including Madagascar, Uganda, Australia, Argentina,



SDFO NEWS [cont.]

Africa, New Zealand and many pelagic trips in the Pacific, Atlantic and Southern Oceans. A specialist in pelagic photography. Tom currently serves as President of Western Field Ornithologists and is Past President of San Diego Field Ornithologists. His work has been published in periodicals, magazines and scientific papers, and can be viewed at obeach.smugmug.com

Next, Gary Nunn will present “San Diego County eBird Focus: Ten Troublesome Birds.”

No doubt if you are using eBird and live in San Diego County you have heard from the local eBird review team about your checklist submissions. Don't panic! Even eBird reviewers have to carefully document their reports. In this talk Gary will present ten troublesome birds that we frequently see misidentified in checklists from San Diego County. He will go through the documentation best practices we recommend for these trouble-makers in your checklists. Look out for photographic tips, vocalization cues, status and distribution pointers, and a step-by-step guide how best to avoid getting nagged by the review team!



OK, what is it?

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, California. He has traveled to more than thirty countries worldwide birding but also has a great interest in “patch birding”. Gary currently resides with his wife and young family in Pacific Beach, San Diego County, California, 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, March 20, same time, same place. Hank Ingersoll will discuss “The Breeding Bird Survey: Local, National and International.”

Have You Paid Your 2018 Dues Yet?

If not, see Membership Chair Nancy Christensen at the meeting, or use the information on the last page of *The Skimmer* to renew your membership.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JANUARY 2018

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

At least four Eurasian Wigeons were present, with single males at the San Diego River mouth 30 Sep-31 Jan+ (JB, *eBird*), on San Elijo Lagoon 29 Nov-14 Jan (JMcM, *eBird*), along the lower Sweetwater River in Chula Vista/National City 16 Dec-23 Jan (DJ, *eBird*) and along Highland Valley Rd. near Ramona on 15 Jan (BP). Up to two adult male Black Scoters remained off Grand Caribe Shoreline Park on south San Diego Bay from 11 Dec through 28 Jan (BLC, *eBird*). The female Long-tailed Duck found along the lower Otay River in Imperial Beach on 9 Dec moved into the adjacent South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge where still present on 23 Jan (DB, RTP). A Red-necked Grebe, rare as far south as San Diego, remained around Shelter Island on San Diego Bay 19-31 Jan+ (SJ, *eBird*).



The adult Red-necked Grebe on San Diego Bay at the Shelter Island Fishing Pier on 26 January 2018. *Photo by Charles Jackson.*

What may have been the Pacific Golden-plover at the Tijuana River mouth 21 Aug-27 Nov was photographed with roosting Black-bellied Plovers near the southwest corner of the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 3 Jan (PM). The Mountain Plover found on Mission Bay's Fiesta Island on 14 Nov remained through 1 Jan (GN, *eBird*). A first-winter Laughing Gull off Sunset Cliffs was the highlight of the annual 1 January boat trip off San Diego (DP). A first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull was photographed at the San Diego River mouth on 17 Jan (JCS). Two of the four adult Nazca Boobies present in mid-December remained on south San Diego Bay through 31 Jan+ (PEL, *eBird*). Also noteworthy was an adult female Brown



The first-winter Laughing Gull over the open ocean a short distance off Sunset Cliffs in Point Loma on 1 January 2018. *Photo by Bruce Rideout.*



The adult Harris's Hawk in flight along Montecito Way near the Ramona Airport on 2 January 2018. Photo by Mel Senac.

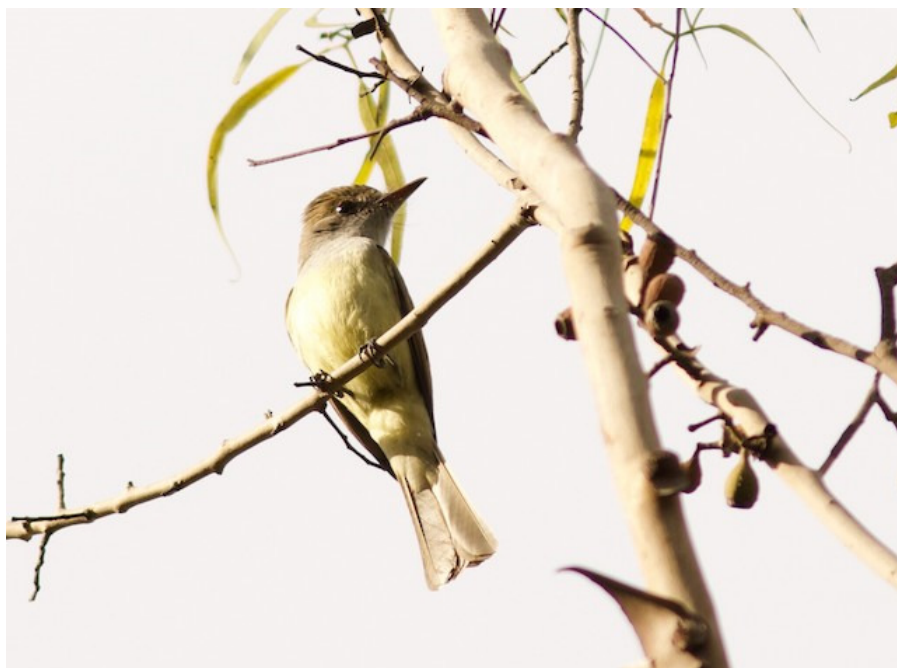
Booby present on south San Diego Bay 1-30 Jan (*eBird*). The immature Tricolored Heron found on south San Diego Bay on 1 Oct was last reported on 11 Jan (BF, *eBird*) but could easily be overlooked if it is frequenting closed areas along the south shore of the bay or in the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and the other, found at the mouth of the San Diego River on 13 Oct, was still present 31 Jan+ (LR, *eBird*).

The adult Harris's Hawk of unknown origin found near the Ramona Airport during the 30 December Escondido Christmas Bird Count was still present 31 Jan+ (SP, *eBird*). Up to two adult Zone-tailed Hawks were at and around the San Diego Safari Park near Escondido through 24 Jan (KW, *eBird*), an adult has been seen sporadically around the Ramona Grasslands and nearby Ramona 21 Oct-31 Jan+ (DW, *eBird*), and another adult was photographed at Lake Jennings 13-31 Jan+ (NO'B). The Short-

eared Owls discovered on Mission Bay's Fiesta Island on 23 Oct remained through the winter, with one still present 31 Jan+ (MSa, *eBird*).

The Greater Pewee found at the western edge of Balboa Park near the intersection of 6th Ave. and El Prado on 5 Dec is clearly settled for the winter and still present 31 Jan+ (JP, PEL, *eBird*), this being the 13th known in San Diego County, some of which returned for multiple winters (California Bird Records Committee 2007). At least three Gray Flycatcher were known west of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, with one each at Montclair Park in San Diego 16 Dec-26 Jan (RA, *eBird*), in the northeast part of Clairemont 4-7 Jan (JSt, BLC), and at the Ramona Grasslands 31 Jan+ (MN, *eBird*).

A Pacific-slope Flycatcher photographed on Wing St. in San Diego on 6 Jan (MH) and another seen at the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley on 25 Jan (DJ) were both likely wintering locally—the earliest of the spring migrants are not expected until March (Unitt, 2004). The elusive Dusky-



The Dusky-capped Flycatcher at Berry Park in Nestor on 26 December 2017. Note the apparent small size, narrow long pointed bill and the lack of rufous on the outer tail feathers. Photo by Andre Moncrieff.



The wintering Red-throated Pipit at Berry Park on 19 December 2017. Note the prominent streaking on the crown and mantle, and the fact that the legs are pale pink. *Photo by Eric G. Kallen.*

capped Flycatcher found near Berry Park in Nestor on 15 Dec was last reported 12 Jan (PEL, *eBird*) and probably still in that area. An Ash-throated Flycatcher, rare in winter, was at Montclair Park 24-27 Jan (MSt,



The Grasshopper Sparrow at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay in San Diego on 20 January 2018. Note the lack of markings on the underparts, the pale eye-ring on an otherwise somewhat blank looking face, and the whitish median crown stripe. *Photo by Daniel Tinoco.*

eBird), and another was at Nestor Park in Nestor 25-26 Jan (CO, JSp). At least three Tropical Kingbirds were known present, with one found at Dairy Mart Pond on 18 Nov still in that area on 27 Jan (TH, *eBird*), one present near the intersection of 6th Ave. and El Prado in Balboa Park 4 Dec-31 Jan (TRS, EC) and a third photographed on Pear Tree Dr. in Carlsbad on 28 Jan (TG). The Thick-billed Kingbird spending its 8th winter at the lower end of Poggi Canyon in Chula Vista was still there on 31 Jan+ (PEL, *eBird*). In addition, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, present for its 2nd winter at the same location in Poggi Canyon, remained through 31 Jan+ (DP, *eBird*).

The Bell's Vireo, very rare in winter, found along Coronado Ave. in Coronado on 14 Dec was still present 31 Jan+ (PEL), and a second was along the San Diego River in Mission Valley 2-28 Jan (PEL). Two Cassin's Vireos were found this month, with one photographed near the University of California in La Jolla on 1 Jan (JP) and the other frequenting the willows at the north end of Nestor Park in Nestor 20 Oct-7 Jan (PEL, *eBird*). In addition, three Plumbeous Vireos, now normally outnumbering Cassin's Vireos in winter, included single birds around 28th and Ash Sts. at the southeastern corner of Balboa Park 28 Oct-12 Jan (TC, *eBird*), at the San Diego Safari Park near Escondido 30 Dec-1 Jan (TF, *eBird*) and along the east side of Mission Bay on 5 Jan (PEL). A Warbling Vireo, exceptional anywhere in California in winter, was found in the residential area of Pt. Loma on 27 Jan (PEL).

The wintering Red-throated Pipit found at Berry Park in Nestor on 16 Dec has not been reported since 25 Jan (AL, *eBird*) despite much looking, so is likely with American Pipits somewhere else in that general area. The only Clay-colored Sparrow known lo-

cally is one with Chipping Sparrows at San Diego's Hollywood Park 16 Dec-20 Jan (RA, *eBird*). A Grasshopper Sparrow, not often detected in winter, was well photographed at the unexpected location of Fiesta Island on Mission Bay 20



The Chestnut-sided Warbler at Pantoja Park in downtown San Diego on 3 February 2018. Note that "soiling" distorts the true shape of the bill, and that the lack of obvious chestnut on the sides suggests it is a female. Photo by Charlotte Morris.

Jan (TF-H). As many as three Nelson's Sparrows were seen along the McCoy Trail at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Imperial Beach in November, and at least one was still present at the end of January (NC) when forced from the saltmarsh vegetation by the super high tides. Three of the four White-throated Sparrows known locally are frequenting feeders at private residences, with one each in Leucadia (KA), the area of Tecolote Canyon in San Diego (MM) and near Ramona (NC); however, the fourth was in Dos Picos Park near Ramona 3 Dec-21 Jan (JSt, RA), so certainly available to all.

Along with small numbers of wintering Bullock's Orioles in and around San Diego, the adult male Orchard Oriole photographed along the North Island Naval Air Station and Coronado fence line on 18 Nov was still present 31 Jan+ (BF, PEL), and a somewhat cooperative female Orchard Oriole was present at Nestor Park in Nestor 1-31 Jan+ (TRS, *eBird*). Single female Hooded Orioles were near the entrance to the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park 30 Dec-2 Jan (EGK, PEL), at a private residence in Encinitas (SC) and at Berry Park in Nestor on 13 Jan (EC). The only Baltimore Orioles known locally are the long-staying adult male at Nestor Park 14 Oct-31 Jan+ (PEL, *eBird*) and another male at De Anza Cove on Mission Bay on 5 Jan (PEL). Unexpected on the coast was an adult male

Scott's Oriole photographed at Berry Park on 13 Jan (RTP).

Single Black-and-white Warblers at Nestor Park in Nestor 23 Sep-14 Jan (GDeL, *eBird*), in the area of 28th and Ash Sts. at the southeastern corner of Balboa Park 28 Oct-31 Jan+ (MA, *eBird*) and at a private

residence in Encinitas on 1 Jan (SC), and an unprecedented seven Nashville Warblers at scattered locations along the coast between Encinitas and the Palm City neighborhood in south San Diego in January, were present with the more numerous Yellow, Black-throated Gray and Wilson's Warblers, wintering in the County. A Lucy's Warbler sporadically visited a private residence in Coronado 29 Dec-31 Jan+ (EC). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was reported along State St. in downtown San Diego on 2 Jan (RF) and a female was in nearby Pantoja Park 28-31 Jan+ (PEL, *eBird*). Three Palm Warblers were reported, with one around 28th and Ash Sts. 30 Dec-13 Jan (EGK, *eBird*), at Vacation Village on Mission Bay on 2 Jan (NJD) and at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 5 Jan (WB). Two Painted Redstarts are known wintering locally, with one returning from the last two winters present along West Shepherd Canyon in Tiersanta from 19 Oct-31 Jan+ (PEL, *eBird*) and the other present for a second winter along the northern edge of Mission Bay at Crown Point 24 Oct-31 Jan+ (PEL, *eBird*).

Along with multiple Western Tanagers, at least eight Summer Tanagers were seen, including single birds at the western edge of Balboa Park near the intersection of 6th Ave. and El Prado 4 Dec-31 Jan+

(TRS, *eBird*), in Nestor Park in Nestor 9 Dec-31 Jan+ (GMcC, *eBird*), at Sunnyslope Park in Nestor 12 Dec-20 Jan (PEL, EGK), at Speckles Park in Coronado 14 Dec-31 Jan+ (PEL), up to two at the Old Trolley Park in Mission Hills 2-12 Jan (PEL, EGK), one at Vacation Village on Mission Bay on 2 Jan (NJD) and another at Kimball Park in National City on 12 Jan (PEL). An adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was along West Shepherd Canyon in Tierrasanta 26-31 Jan+ (PEL, *eBird*), and single Black-headed Grosbeaks were at a private residence near 31st and Quince Sts. in San Diego 26 Dec-31 Jan+ (BM) and in a residential area of La Jolla on 29 Jan (PEL).

Listed observers: Kathy Aldern, Ryan Andrews, Marc Arndt, Dylan Beyer, Will Brooks, John Bruin, Steve Cameron, Barbara L. Carlson, Nancy Christensen, Tim Cooper, Elizabeth Copper, Gail DeLalla, Nicole J. Desnoyers, Brian Flick, Thomas Ford-Hutchinson, Tiffany French, Robert Furrow, Tito Gonzalez, Michelle Haglund, Terry Hurst, Dan Jehl, Storm Jensen, Eric G. Kallen, Paul E. Lehman, Albert Linkowski, Paul Marvin, Marcie Mason, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorrان, Barbara Morton, Mike Nelson, Gary Nunn, Nancy O'Bryan, Cheryl Overend, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Bill Pelletier, Steve Perry, Dave

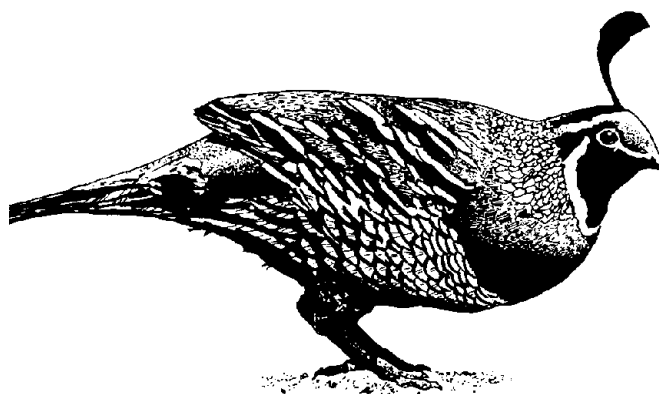
Povey, Lisa Ruby, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Jeff Spalding (JSp), Trent R. Stanley, John C. Sterling, Jeremiah Stock (JSt), Mark Stratton (MSt), Douglas Warner, Kenneth Weaver. Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying and last reporting each species, these mostly reported on our local website SanDiegoRegionBirding@yahoo.com. Observers reporting additional sightings to *eBird* are not listed but acknowledged. A "+" following 31 Jan indicates known presence into February.

Literature Cited:

California Bird Records Committee (Robert A. Hamilton, Michael A. Patten and Richard A. Erickson, editors). 2007. *Rare Birds of California*. Western Field Ornithologists, Camarillo, CA.

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

I thank Sara Mayers for reviewing and editing the report.



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