

The **SKIMMER**



Volume 46, Number 11—November 2019

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 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: “Interpreting What You Hear: How To Better Understand Bird Sounds in San Diego,” by Bruce Rideout. The focus will be on understanding the significance of specific vocalizations, and how that can give us deeper insights into the natural history of the species we observe. Bruce will be sharing a number of recordings he has made in the county this year, quizzing audience members on the species represented, and showing how to interpret the vocalization in context.

Bruce Rideout is a pathologist and disease investigation specialist for the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park, where he is director of Disease Investigations. He received his DVM and PhD degrees from the University of California, Davis, completed a pathology residency at the National Zoo in Washington D.C., and is board certified in veterinary pathology. He is also a Research Fellow of the Peregrine Fund and participates in a variety of conservation efforts, including recovery programs for California Condors, Mojave Desert tortoises, Hawaiian forest birds, and Hirola antelope in Kenya. His research focuses primarily on infectious diseases of wildlife, avian embryo pathology, and disease risk assessments for reintroduction programs.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, December 10, same time, same place. **Note that this is a week earlier than usual!** Our annual Holiday Party: Celebrate the festive season with your favorite birding buddies.

Christmas Bird Count Schedule

Saturday, December 14: San Diego
Justyn Stahl Justyn.stahl@gmail.com
Sunday, December 15: Anza-Borrego
Jim Dice dicej@uci.edu
Monday, December 16: Lake Henshaw
Gretchen Cummings Gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net

Saturday, December 21: Oceanside
Tim Burr tburr@san.rr.com
Saturday, December 28: Escondido
Ken Weaver gnatcatcher@sbcglobal.net
Saturday, January 4: Rancho Santa Fe
Robert Patton rpatton@san.rr.com

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, OCTOBER 2019

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

A flock of eight Brant seen on south San Diego Bay from Chula Vista on 20 Oct (LW) were the earliest of the fall migrants/wintering birds reported locally. The only Eurasian Wigeon reported as of the end of October was a male at Famosa Slough on 17-28 Oct (PEL, *eBird*)—likely the same bird present at this location last winter. A White-winged Scoter, now much rarer in Southern California than formerly, was seen flying south with Surf Scoters off Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 12 Oct (SE), and another was seen in flight with Surf Scoters off Imperial Beach on 24 Oct (DJ). Two female Black Scoters, rare but annual in very small numbers, were with southbound Surf Scoters off Pt. La Jolla on 27 Oct (AG), a male was there on 28 Oct (GN) and a female was there on 29 Oct (JD). A Long-tailed Duck, also rare but annual in very small numbers locally, was reported at the same location on 27 Oct (SW).

An Inca Dove, a casual straggler to the coast, was at the North Island Naval Air Station 25-28 Oct (BCF, *eBird*). Three White-winged Doves were reported along the coast this month, with single birds at a private residence in Solana Beach 8-9 Oct (EL), at the Community Gardens in the Tijuana River Valley on 22 Oct (JP) and at Ballast Point on Point Loma on 23 Oct (CJ).

The Pacific Golden-Plover present at the Tijuana River mouth since August was still there on 22 Oct (RTP) and is expected to remain through the winter as in past years. A Mountain Plover, now no more than a very rare to casual straggler to San Diego County, was at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay on 14 Oct (DH), and another was photographed at Camp Pendleton on 23 Oct (RS). The only Pectoral Sandpipers this month were up to three at San Dieguito Lagoon 6-15 Oct (DK). The Little Stint photographed in the restricted area of the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 12 Oct (NF and AN) is assumed



This photo of the basic-plumaged Little Stint within the restricted area of the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 12 October 2019 shows the lack of webbing between the toes and a suggestion of the “split supercilium,” along with the short fine-tipped bill associated with this “peep.” Photo by Andrew Newmark.

to be the same one found and photographed there on 2 Aug (PEL), so is likely wintering locally. It may well be the same bird that spent last winter at this location; it is extremely difficult to separate from the abundant and very similar basic-plumaged Western Sandpipers. A somewhat late Solitary Sandpiper was at San Dieguito Lagoon on 6 Oct (DK).



This immature Broad-winged Hawk over Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 9 October 2019 was one of two in San Diego that day. Adults have prominent white tail bands and a more noticeable dark line along the trailing edge of the wings. *Photo by Alison Hiers.*

A well described hatch-year Laughing Gull was at Chula Vista's Marina View Park on south San Diego Bay on 12 Oct (JS). What appears to be a hatch-year Franklin's Gull was photographed in the restricted area of the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 12 Oct (NF). What is undoubtedly the same adult Lesser Black-backed Gull present on the beach at Coronado's Hotel del Coronado last winter had returned by 23 Oct (NF). An unusually late-staying Gull-billed Tern was in the restricted area of the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 16 Oct (JP).

Two highlights of the Buena Vista Audubon Society 13 Oct pelagic trip off San Diego were two Least Storm-Petrels with "rafting" Black Storm-Petrels on the 30-Mile Bank (NC), these being the only Least Storm-Petrels known in California's oceanic waters this year, and a near-adult Nazca Booby over the 9-Mile Bank (DP). A Masked/Nazca Booby was within the Oceanside Harbor on 13 Oct (BT). A Tricolored Heron at Chula Vista's Bayside Park on 30 Oct

(KR) was at the nearby Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge on 31 Oct (JM) so will hopefully remain in this general area through the winter.

The only Broad-winged Hawks reported were single hatch-year birds, one photographed over Clairemont Mesa on 9 Oct (JP) and the other photographed over Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma the same day (AH). An adult and an immature Zone-tailed Hawk present around the San Diego Safari Park near Escondido since 1 Oct (KR) are clearly wintering locally, an

adult at Lake Henshaw 3-17 Oct (KR) may well be wintering locally, but an immature over Chula Vista's Marina View Park on 26 Oct (GMcC) was moving northward. A Short-eared Owl over the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge on 24 Oct (DJ) was the earliest of the small number expected wintering locally.



This Eastern Phoebe was photographed on the second day of its stay at Tamarisk Grove campground in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park 27- 28 October 2019. Note the dark head and contrasting white throat that separate it from the somewhat similar Black Phoebe. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

A Brown-crested Flycatcher was seen at the Community Gardens in the Tijuana River Valley on 22 Oct (PEL). This large flycatcher is an accidental to casual straggler to the coast of California with only two previous coastal reports for San Diego County, both from Pt. Loma, one on 9 Jun 1991 and the other on 13 Oct 2001 (Unitt 2004). Eight Tropical Kingbirds were reported, with single birds frequenting North Island Naval Air Station Coronado 22 Sep-27 Oct (BCF, PEL), near the San Diego River mouth on 28 Sep-3 Oct (CS, MM), at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 11 Oct (TF) and 17 Oct (JP), in San Diego's Greenwood Cemetery on 12 Oct (JTS), at Pt. Loma's Liberty Station 15-21 Oct (PEL, *eBird*), along the east side of Mission Bay on 17 Oct (PEL) and at Famosa Slough on 18 Oct (CP). The Thick-billed Kingbird that has spent the past nine winters at the Poggi Creek Greenbelt in Chula Vista was back for a 10th winter on 31 Oct (DJ). The Least Flycatcher found in Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 28 Sep (GN)



This Red-eyed Vireo photographed at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 3 October 2019 was found during a search for the now more commonly occurring Yellow-green Vireo known present. Note the bold face pattern and lack of yellow on the sides of the breast and along the flanks. *Photo by Charlotte Morris.*



This somewhat nondescript Chestnut-collared Longspur, photographed at the North Island Naval Air Station on 12 October 2019, blends well with its surroundings. *Photo by Brian C. Flick.*

remained through 6 Oct (*eBird*). An Eastern Phoebe, a rare fall migrant and winter visitor to California, was at Tamarisk Grove Campground in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park 27-28 Oct (RT, *eBird*).

A Red-eyed Vireo, now much rarer than 20 years ago, was at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 2-6 Oct (ES, *eBird*). The Yellow-green Vireo found at the Bird & Butterfly Garden on 27 Sep (JP) remained through 2 Oct (*eBird*) and another, the fifth locally this fall, was in residential Coronado on 27 Oct (AG).

A Verdin, common in the desert east of the mountains but unexpected on the immediate coast, was at the San Diego River mouth 4-13 Oct (JRM, *eBird*). A Golden-crowned Kinglet, a rare and sporadic fall and winter visitor to the coastal lowlands, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 20 Oct (SMcG). A Townsend's Solitaire, rare on the immediate coast, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 11 Oct (TE). A Varied Thrush, always un-



This long-staying Magnolia Warbler, photographed on 16 October 2019, remained at Bayside Park in Chula Vista for a full week. *Photo by Andrew Newmark.*

expected, was at the Bird & Butterfly Garden on 22 Oct (JP), another was at the El Camino Memorial Park in Sorrento Valley 25-26 Oct (SES, *eBird*), and a third was in the desert, where much rarer than elsewhere in San Diego County, at Tamarisk Grove Campground in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 26 Oct (AN). The only Sage Thrasher reported from along the coast this



This Blackburnian Warbler, photographed on 21 October 2019, remained in Point Loma Heights for six days. Although similar to a Townsend's Warbler, it lacks the prominent facial pattern, has an orangish tone to the yellow, and (not shown in this photo) has obvious stripes on the mantle. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

fall was one at North Island Naval Air Base on 12 Oct (BCF).

Eight Cassin's Finches, an irregular winter visitor to our mountains, were near the Laguna Mts. Visitor Center on 17 Oct (NC); two more in that same general area on 27 Oct (SMcG) suggest we can expect some in our local mountains this winter. Red Crossbills continue to be seen in the Laguna Mts., with a high count of 16 near the Laguna Mts. Visitor Center on 17 Oct (NC).

A Lapland Longspur was photographed at North Island Naval Air Station on 21-23 Oct (JTS, BCF) and another there on 27 Oct (BCF). A Chestnut-collared Longspur was at North Island Naval Air Station 12-20 Oct (BCF), followed by three together there 27-30 Oct (BCF); single birds were at Fiesta Island in Mission Bay on 21 Oct (JP) and at Whelan Lake in Oceanside 26-28 Oct (AW).

Four Clay-colored Sparrows were present this month, with one at the Jamul Ecological Reserve on 7 Oct (JM), a long-staying bird at Crown Point on Mission Bay 8-24 Oct (M & PT, *eBird*), another at Doyle Community Park in University City on 27 Oct (BS) and the fourth at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas on 31 Oct (PGN). A well-described Harris's Sparrow was at a private residence in Del Mar on 24 Oct (RTu). Extreme high tides forced a Nelson's Sparrow into view at Kendall-Frost Marsh in Mission Bay 28-31 Oct (KR, *eBird*), this likely being the

same bird at this location last winter; another was along the McCoy Trail at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge on 29 Oct (DP).

A Bobolink photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 14 Oct (RA) is the only one found in San Diego County this fall. A female Orchard Oriole near the golf course in Coronado on 26 Oct (PEL) is probably attempting to winter locally.

The only Baltimore Oriole reported this month was a female elsewhere in Coronado on 20 Oct (PEL), also probably attempting to winter locally.

An Ovenbird at an undisclosed location at Mission Bay on 27 Oct (PEL) appears to be the only one in San Diego County this year. The only Northern Waterthrush reported was one on the Tijuana River at Saturn Blvd. on 20 Oct (DP). At least nine Black-and-white Warblers were in the coastal lowlands, including one at 28th and Beech Sts. in Balboa Park 28 Sep-14 Oct (LW, *eBird*), believed to be the same bird present there last winter, and another in residential southern Carlsbad 22-29 Oct (TG) that is also likely wintering. A Tennessee Warbler at Whelan Lake in Oceanside on 4 Oct (GA) and another at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas on 13 Oct (LW) were followed by three, all found on 27 Oct: single birds at San Diego's North Park Community Park (JTS), at an undisclosed location on Mission Bay 27-31 Oct (PEL), and along the western edge of Coronado 27-29 Oct (AG, *eBird*). A Lucy's Warbler at Bataquitos Lagoon on 5 Oct (SS) was the only one found this fall. A Virginia's Warbler in San Diego's University City neighborhood 10-11 Oct (PC, *eBird*) was the third this



This Chestnut-sided Warbler, probably a hatch-year female, was at a private residence in Ocean Beach on 2 October 2019. Note that the tail is cocked up, a feature often noted on this species of wood-warbler. Photo by Cindy Pencek.

fall. The only American Redstarts were one at the Bird and Butterfly Garden on 1 Oct (DP), another at Spreckels Park in Coronado on 26 Oct (PEL) and an adult male at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas on 31 Oct (MB). A long-staying Magnolia Warbler was at Chula Vista's Bayside Park 16-22 Oct (JP) and another was at Solana Highlands Park in Del Mar 29-30 Oct (AA, *eBird*). Single Blackburnian Warblers were at a residential area in Pt.

Loma Heights 21-26 Oct (PEL, *eBird*) and at Solana Highlands Park 29-31 Oct (AA, *eBird*). The Chestnut-sided Warbler photographed at a private residence in Ocean Beach on 30 Sep (CPe) remained through 3 Oct (CPe). Only two Blackpoll Warblers were found this month, with one at Whelan Lake in Oceanside on 2 Oct (EM) and the other at Stagecoach Park in Carlsbad on 3 Oct (JMcM). A Palm Warbler photographed at a private residence in Vallecito on 15 Oct (BLS) is one of a very few found in the Anza-Borrego desert. Along the coast, where expected in very small numbers during October, six Palm Warblers were found, with single birds at Nobel Athletic Fields in University City on 19 Oct (JD), at Chino Farms east of Del Mar on 19 Oct (GCH), at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 20-26 Oct (AP, *eBird*), at nearby Cabrillo National Monument 24 Oct (BG), at the Sunset Ave. ballfields in the Tijuana River Valley on 24 Oct (TAB) and at the nearby Community Gardens on 25 Oct (PEL). Single Prairie Warblers were photographed at San Elijo Lagoon on 20 Oct (TG) and at La Jolla Colony Park in La Jolla 22-24 Oct (JD). The Grace's Warbler found at Villa La Jolla Park in La Jolla on 27 Sep (AA) was still present on 23 Oct (*eBird*) so clearly wintering for a third year at that location. Another

was nearby at La Jolla Colony Park 22-23 Oct (JP), and a third was near the intersection of Charles St. and Silvergate Ave. on Pt. Loma on 24 Oct (PEL). A Painted Redstart at a private residence on Vulcan Ave. in Leucadia 29 Sep-1 Oct (DC) was followed by single birds at Whelan Lake in Oceanside 2 Oct (EM), at a private residence in Rancho Bernardo 2-3 Oct (MH), at a private residence in Coronado on 13 Oct (LN) and somewhat inland at Aubrey Park in Poway on 15 Oct (NC).

At least ten Summer Tanagers were found along the coast in October, from the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley northward to Buddy Todd Park in Oceanside, with some expected to remain through the winter. A Scarlet Tanager was at Point Loma Nazarene University on Pt. Loma on 21 Oct (PEL). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak in the Burlingame area of San Diego on 21 Oct (MS) is the only one reported this fall. Following two Dickcissels in September, an additional seven were found, with two together at the mouth of the San Diego River 3-4 Oct (MM, *eBird*), one at North Island Naval Air Base on 6 Oct (BCF), another at Crown Point on Mission Bay 7-15 Oct (JTS), a long-staying bird at the Sunset Ave. ballfields 14-24 Oct (JP, *eBird*), and single birds along the eastern stretch of the Tijuana River on 19 Oct (PEL) and at San Dieguito Lagoon the same day (LD), for a total of nine this fall.

Listed observers: Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying and/or last reporting each species.

Observers reporting additional sightings to *eBird* are not listed but acknowledged.

Alex Abela, Ryan Andrews, Gavin Aquila, Maryanne Bache, Thomas A. Benson, Dave Carey, Paul Chad, Nancy Christensen, Linda Daily, Jay Desgrosellier, Steve Ellis, Truitt Ellis, Brian C. Flick, Nathan French, Teale Fristoe, Brett Gleitsmann, Tito Gonzalez, Aaron Gyllenhaal, Gjon C. Hazard, Alison Hiers, David Holway, Mark Hostetter, Charles Jackson, Dan Jehl, Dan King, Paul E. Lehman, Eric Lodge, Eve Martin, John Martin, Marcie Mason, Guy McCaskie, Sia McGown, Jimmy McMorran, James R. Morris, P. Gretchen Nell, Andrew Newmark, Gary Nunn, Lewis Nygard, Cindy P., Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Cindy Pencek, Aaron Polichar, Dave Povey, Kerry Ross, Britta Lee Shain, Christiane Shannon, Eric Sibbald, Rachel Smith, Susan E. Smith, Bridget Spencer, Justyn T. Stahl, Jeremiah Stock, Mark Stratton, Stephen Summers, Robert Theriault (RTh), Millie and Peter Thomas (M & PT), Bobbie Tilmant, Robert Turner (RTu), Stan Walens, Adam Weiner, Lindsay Willrick.

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Literature Cited:

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



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