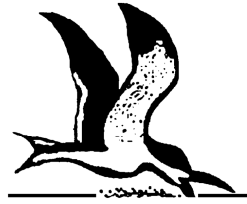


The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 18, 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.

Our annual Business Meeting and election of club officers for 2019-2020. Following the business meeting, our featured speaker will be Rustom Jamadar, presenting “Birds of India.”

Rustom Jamadar is a San Diego resident who has been travelling to India each year for the past three years and birding in different regions there. Rustom grew up in India and first birded there in 1982. He was introduced to birding when he was in college in Texas and cut his birding teeth in the Rio Grande Valley. Over the last seven years Rustom has been birding regularly in the San Diego area as well as in other parts of the U.S., in Central and South America and in India. Rustom has been a Life Member of the Bombay Natural History Society and a member of the National Audubon Society for over 30 years. In recent years he has joined the local Audubon chapters: Palomar, San Diego and Buena Vista, and can be spotted on their field trips.

Next month’s program: Tuesday, July 16, same time, same place. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee John Martin will present a discussion on San Diego National Wildlife Refuge and its role in bird conservation.

Guy McCaskie Reaches a Milestone

The following item was published by Ted Floyd on the American Birding Association’s “aba blog”

<http://blog.aba.org/2019/05/amazing-milestone-for-guy-mccaskie.html>

How many bird species are on the official list of your state or province? If you’re an ABA member, there’s a decent chance that total is somewhat less than 500. Okay, now how many species have been reported from your county? There are a tiny handful of outliers, but the vast majority of U.S. and Canadian counties are well shy of 500. Needless to say, individual birders’ county lists are lower still.

With one notable exception.

On Monday, May 27, 2019, legendary birder and field ornithologist Guy McCaskie saw a Hudsonian Godwit on the tidal mudflats at the mouth of the San Diego River, San Diego County, California, the

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500th species he's recorded in the county.

Birders love to dissect and analyze things, and, no doubt, an analysis of McCaskie's astonishing attainment is forthcoming. But not now. We're still at the stage of awe and amazement. Like Babe Ruth's "called shot," Guy McCaskie's 500th species in San Diego County is an instant, immortal classic.

Congratulations, Guy, on your supreme achievement—and good luck, from all of us at the ABA, as you get to work on your next 500!

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MAY 2019

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

This was a somewhat lackluster month, with unusually cold, wet and windy weather, less than the expected number of our regular migrant passeriforms along the coast, and only a handful of vagrants. An addition to the County bird list was the one "bright light."

Three Greater White-fronted Geese flying northwestward over Marina View Park at the west end of J Street in Chula Vista on 8 May (GMcC) were believed to be exceptionally late spring migrants. A Black Swift over Oceanside on 15 May (JR) was followed by small flocks totaling **75** flying northward over Mt. Soledad in La Jolla between 1:40 and 5:00 p.m. on 19 May (JD) and six near Kate Sessions Park along with **31** flying over Mt. Soledad the following day (GN and BM).

A male **Hudsonian Godwit** in alternate plumage was found at the mouth of the San Diego River on 27 May (DH) (see next page). It remained there and at adjacent Mission Beach through 31 May+ (*eBird*) and establishes the 524th bird species to be recorded in San Diego County. Reports of 55 Hudsonian Godwits in California through 2018 have been accepted (California Bird Records Committee, 2007 and

https://californiabirds.org/cbrc_book/update.pdf). Most were in fall, but 14 were in spring, with most in May and three in June, on dates between 9 May and 18 June. Most in spring were at inland locations. However, four were on the coast, with three in Humboldt County (Arcata and Clam Beach) and one on San Francisco Bay (Alviso). As such, the occurrence of the Hudsonian Godwit in San Diego falls close to the middle of the known dates for spring migrants, but is only the fifth on the coast at this time of the year.

A Pigeon Guillemot in alternate plumage in flight over the San Diego Trough off La Jolla was the most unusual bird seen during the 12 May Buena Vista Audubon Society's pelagic bird trip (DP). An adult Franklin's Gull in alternate plumage at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge 19-21 May (PEL, *eBird*) was one of very few found along the coast of California this spring. Unexpected at this time of the year close to the coast was a Red-billed Tropicbird about five miles off San Diego on 3 May (PAG). Unprecedented numbers of Black Storm-Petrels were visible from shore at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla in late May, with at least **1800** estimated visible on 22 May (SW, PEL). One of the two Neotropic Cormorants at Lake Cuyamaca 4-9 Apr (JP) was still present on 8



The photo of the male Hudsonian Godwit on the shore in Mission Beach on 28 May 2019 shows the size difference between it and our familiar Marbled Godwit. The flight photo, taken at the San Diego River mouth 27 May 2019, shows the diagnostic narrow white wing-stripe and conspicuous white rump. Photos by James R. Morris (standing) and Alison Davies (flight).

May (PC). A pair of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at a nest near the Public Works buildings in Del Mar 12-30 May (GCH) establishes the third location in San Diego County where this heron breeds—the other two locations being in Imperial Beach and around the San Diego River mouth. The long-staying Harris's Hawk of unknown origin in Ramona was still present on 31 May (*eBird*).

(Jorgensen and Theriault, 2013), two females at Borrego Springs on 26 May (GG) were unexpected but probably forced from the mountains by this month's unseasonal cold and windy conditions. A Gray Catbird, a casual straggler to California, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 11 May (JP). Single American Pipits at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 11 and 18 May (JP and RN) were late migrants

The presence of single Acorn Woodpeckers at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 5-10 May (NC, *eBird*), at San Elijo Lagoon on 13 May (PCK) and in residential Pt. Loma on 19 May (EGK) suggests some are moving westward from known areas of occurrence. An Eastern Kingbird at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 4-10 May (PR, *eBird*) is one of very few found in San Diego County in spring and appears to be one of the earliest, if not the earliest, ever documented anywhere in California in spring. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that paired with a Western Kingbird and fledged young at Twin Trails Park in Rancho Penasquitos in 2016 returned for a fourth summer by 2 May (BR) and was still present on a nest on 31 May (*eBird*). A few Clark's Nutcrackers are still present in the mountains as evident by one at Stonewall Mine in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on 29 May (HB) and another at the Burnt Rancheria Campground in the Laguna Mts. on 31 May (AN). Since few if any Purple Martins have been recorded in the lowlands of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

—Unitt (2004) lists 21 May (in 1984) as the latest in San Diego County.

The Nelson's Sparrow found at San Elijo Lagoon on 30 Apr (BM) remained through 7 May (JMcM). As pointed out a month ago, wintering Nelson's Sparrows are known to stay into March, possibly later (California Bird Records Committee, 2007), and vagrants have been recorded through May, including one photographed at Mariner's Point in Mission Bay on 20 May 2007 (*North American Birds* 61:514). The Harris's Sparrow at a private residence in Sabre Springs since November was last seen on 2 May (LR). The latest of the wintering White-crowned Sparrows were single birds at a residence in San Diego and at Lake Hodges on 26 May (DR and KH), and the latest Golden-crowned Sparrow was one at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 4-7 May (GN, *eBird*). Both White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows have been recorded into June (Unitt 2004). An adult male Baltimore Oriole in Jacumba on 24 May (PEL) was an obvious spring vagrant.



The adult Franklin's Gull at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 20 May 2019. The prominent white eye-arcs and large white tips on the primaries help to separate it from the similar but larger Laughing Gull. Photo by Sia McGown.

Only two Black-and-white Warblers were reported, with single birds at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 4 May (PR) and on 15 May (NF). A singing Hooded Warbler was along Tecolote Canyon in Bay Park on 3 May (KR), and a most cooperative male was at Agua Caliente County Park in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 6 May (NC). Different American Redstarts visited dripping water at a private residence in Vallecito along the eastern edge of San Diego County on 4, 15 and 16 May (BLS), and single birds were along the coast at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas on 6 May (SES) and in residential Pt. Loma 25-27 May (AA, *eBird*). Three Northern Parulas were reported, with single birds at Florida Canyon in Balboa Park on 14 May (NF), at Point Loma Nazarene University on 23 May (PEL) and at the extreme western end of Otay Valley Regional Park on 25 May (CGE). A Chestnut-sided Warbler at the De Anza Country Club in Borrego Springs on 10 May



This adult Red-billed Tropicbird was only five miles off San Diego on 3 May 2019. Photo by Jimmy McMorran.



The Eastern Kingbird at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery associated with migrating Western Kingbirds on the exceptionally early dates of 4-10 May 2019. Photo taken on 5 May by Eric G. Kallen.

(PA) appears to be only the second ever in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (Jorgensen and Theriault, 2013). They are somewhat regular in very small numbers along the coast, and one was in residential Pt. Loma on 14 May (PEL). Small numbers of Palm Warblers regularly winter along the coast of California, but few are recorded in spring, so one at Stonewall Mine in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on 3 May (GCH) and another at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma on 5 May (JP) were unexpected, especially so the one in the mountains where very few have been found.

One or two Summer Tanagers were along San Felipe Creek at Scissors Crossing, a known breed-

ing location, since 23 Apr (DLaB). Five others, four along the coast and one far inland, were likely spring vagrants rather than birds that had wintered locally. They were at a private residence in Oceanside on 5 May (MM), at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 6-7 May (NF, *eBird*), at Villa La Jolla Park in La Jolla 13-14 May (TG, *eBird*), in residential Pt. Loma 19 May (EGK) and inland at Ranchita on 3 May (GCH). Spring vagrant Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in the coastal lowlands at Florida Canyon 16-17 May (NF, *eBird*), along Monument Rd. in the Tijuana River Valley on 21 May (PEL), in residential Pt. Loma on 26 May (PEL) and at a private residence in Rancho Santa Fe on 27 May (SY); another was well inland in Jacumba on 25 May (TRS). The male Indigo Bunting at Paso Pichaco Campground in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park since 27 Apr (EGK) was still present 25 May (*eBird*), and another adult male was photographed at Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley on 30 May (SMcG).

Listed observers: Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying and/or last reporting each species, these mostly reported on our local listserv



This unmistakable male Hooded Warbler at Agua Caliente County Park on 6 May 2019 was one of two found in San Diego County this month. Photo by Nancy Christensen.



This showy male Chestnut-sided Warbler was at De Anza Country Club in Borrego Springs on 10 May 2019. Photo by Robert Theriault.

SanDiegoRegionBirding@groups.io. Observers reporting additional sightings to *eBird* are not listed but acknowledged.

Alex Abela, Paulette Ache, Hal Benham, Paul Chad, Nancy Christensen, Jay Desgrosellier, Claude G. Edwards, Nathan French, Greg Gillson, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Gjon C. Hazard, Keith Herman, Daniel Hite, Eric G. Kallen, PC Koger, Denise LaBerteaux, Paul E. Lehman, Michael Martin, Guy McCaskie, Sia McGown, Jimmy McMorran, Brennan Mulrooney, Andrew Newmark, Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Jim Pawlicki, Dave Povey, Denise Riddle, Peter Roberts, Bob Rodrigo, Kerry Ross, Jim Rowoth, Lisa Ruby, Britta Lee Shain, Trent R. Stanley, Stanley Walens and Sandy Yayanos.

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