



SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, August 13, 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. **Note that this is a week earlier than usual!** Our usual date was unavailable.

Program: Susan Farabaugh, Ph.D., Associate Director, Recovery Ecology, San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research, will present “Of Aga and ‘Alalā—Conserving Endangered Corvids on Pacific Islands”.

San Diego Zoo Global’s Hawaiian Endangered Bird Conservation Program (HEBCP) has been active in conservation breeding of critically endangered Hawaiian birds since the mid-1990’s. It began with a rear-and-release program to augment the wild population of ‘Alala, or Hawaiian Crow, but soon it grew to incorporate two conservation breeding centers in Hawaii—one on the Big Island and one on Maui. Beyond the flagship species of the ‘Alala, these facilities bred or are now breeding several other species (e.g., Nene, Puaiohi, Palila, Kiwikiu, ‘Akikiki, and ‘Akeke’e) to provide a secure conservation population and to provide individuals for release to the wild. In 2015, we expanded beyond Hawaii to take on a rear and release effort for the Aga, or Mariana Crow. Aga is now found only on the island of Rota after being extirpated on Guam



by the introduced brown tree snake. This talk will cover an overview of the HEBCP and then focus on the two corvids: ‘Alala which are finally being released to the forests of Mauna Loa, and Aga which has now completed two seasons of rearing and one release on the island of Rota.

Susan Farabaugh grew up in Southern California and was first introduced to the fascination of birds at Occidental College under Dr. Luis Baptista. She obtained her PhD from the University of Maryland College Park studying duetting behavior of tropical *Thryothorus* wrens in Panama and Venezuela. As a

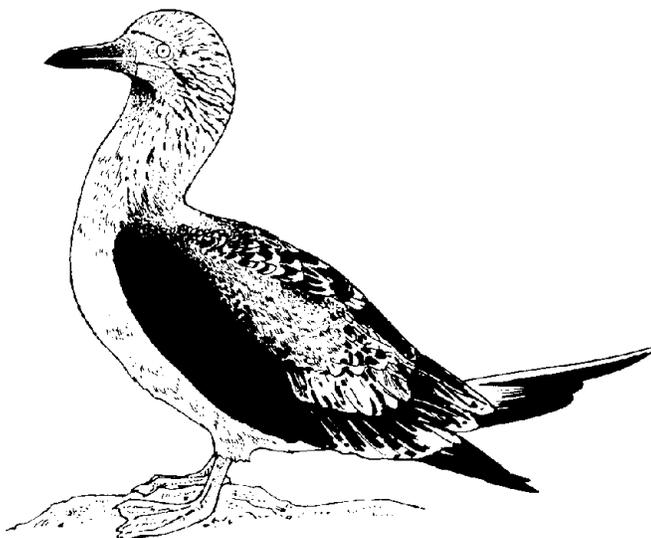
SDFO NEWS [cont.]

postdoc, she worked on song sharing in group-living Australian Magpies in New Zealand and Australia. It is worth noting that on the way to New Zealand, she stopped in Hawaii to visit a friend who had recently been hired to manage the small breeding colony of 'Alala, then located at Pohakuloa on the slopes of Mauna Kea. While analyzing magpie song back in Maryland, she became involved in research of perception and neurobiology of vocal learning in birds. This led to a postdoc on neural control of learned vocalization in parrots and songbirds at Auckland University in New Zealand. On her return to the USA in 1997, she took what she thought was a short-term job with the San Diego Zoo assisting the HEBCP with behavioral monitoring of breeding of 'Alala. This proved to be a major change of direction, and she joined the permanent effort of conservation breeding of the San Clemente Loggerhead Shrike in 1999 and has been managing the shrike program since 2006. In 2015, she became an Associate Director and now manages both Shrikes and the HEBCP.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, September 17. Charlene Glacy will tell us what it's like to count albatrosses on Midway Island.

SDFO Still Looking for a Vice-President

Nobody stepped forward to fill the Vice-President position at last month's annual business meeting, so we still need a Brave Volunteer. The duties aren't onerous; the Vice-President mostly fills in for the President when she is out of town for our monthly meeting. There is also the opportunity to contribute your \$0.02 at the monthly board meetings. If you are interested in helping out, contact President Nancy Christensen; her contact information is on the last page of the newsletter.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JULY 2019

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

The Horned Grebe first seen on south San Diego Bay 3 Jun (PEL) was still present on 17 Jul (MSa), so obviously summering locally. A vocal Yellow-billed Cuckoo, now very rare in San Diego County, was in riparian habitat along the east shore of Lake Henshaw on 20 Jul (GN). A pair of Spotted Sandpipers with a recently hatched chick at Lake Henshaw on 26 Jul (GN) were at the southern limit of this species' known breeding range (Unitt 2004). A juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 26 Jul (PEL) was one of more than half-a-dozen juveniles reported along the coast of California at this time. The earliest juvenile Semipalmated Plover and Western Sandpiper were present on 29 July (PEL) and the earliest juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher was here on 31 July (PEL). The presence of a juvenile Red-necked Phalarope at San Dieguito Lagoon on the early date of 22 Jul (PEL) suggests this species was able to successfully nest sooner than expected this year.

Small numbers of Common Murres in the waters off San

Diego County, with an estimated 50+ flying south off Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla since the end of June as indicated by two or three seen there on most days in July (mob), along with single birds from boats off Mission Bay on 26 Jul (DP) and off La Jolla on 24 Jul (OG), were likely failed breeders dispersing southward.

Nearly all of the Common Murres nesting along the northern coast of California to as far south as Point Arena apparently failed to produce young (*vide* Craig Strong, Crescent Coastal Research), and this species nests no closer to San Diego than coastal southern Monterey County (Roberson 2002). Some Craveri's Murrelets have moved northward into the waters off extreme southern California, as indicated by eleven off San Diego on 7 Jul (DP), two there on 21 Jul (GG) and two more there on 23 Jul (MSt).



The sub-adult Masked/Nazca Booby on the beach at Camp Pendleton on 23 July. *Photo by Dan Biteman.*

Four adult Sabine's Gulls 5 miles west of Mission Bay on 26 Jul (DP) were the earliest reported locally this fall. Likewise, four Common Terns on south San Diego Bay (Marina View Park) on 23 Jul (PEL) were the first this fall. A Laysan Albatross photographed from a whale watching boat over La Jolla Canyon off La Jolla

on 31 Jul (*San Diego Whale Watch*) was unusually close to shore. An adult black and white booby reported from Pt. La Jolla on 27 Jul (DJ) was likely the same adult Nazca Booby well described from there on 28 Jul (PEL) and seen again on 1 Aug (PEL). A sub-adult Masked/Nazca Booby was photographed on the beach at Camp Pendleton on 23 Jul (DB). Distinguishing immatures of these two species prior to their acquiring adult-like bill coloration is problematic, and to identify those that have acquired adult-like bill coloration, observers must be close enough to determine the color.

At least one Reddish Egret has been present on south San Diego Bay through July (GMcC). An adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Batiquitos Lagoon on 25 Jul (SB) was the first to be found this far north in San Diego County. However, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons are now regularly found in small numbers in coastal Orange, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Coun-



Part of the Scott's Oriole family at the feeders near Ramona on 22 July 2019. Photo by Nancy Christensen.

ties, with nesting documented in Orange County, and a large resident population is established near Pt. Mugu in coastal Ventura County.

A pair of Brown-crested Flycatchers at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs through the summer (RT), and another pair near Scissors Crossing since 19 Jun (NC) were at known nesting sites. A Scott's Oriole, rare on the immediate coast, was at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River valley on 18 Jul (NF), and a family group of four visiting feeders near



The two male Indigo Buntings at and near the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley—the male with white feathering in the underparts photographed on 21 July 2019 (l.), and the second male photographed on 28 July 2019 (r.). Photo by Alison Davies (l.) and Lisa Ruby (r.).

Ramona after 14 Jul (NC) were somewhat west of the species' known breeding range (Unitt 2004). A singing male Northern Parula close to the western edge of Balboa Park near the intersection of Juniper St. and El Prado on 28 Jul (JP) may have been the same bird present a short distance away near the Old Globe Theater in Balboa Park 24-26 Jun (TRS, *eBird*).

Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported this month, with single males at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas on 1 Jul (EM), near Scissors Crossing on 9 Jul (NC) and near Ramona on 20 Jul (CW). The male Indigo Bunting at Paso Pichaco Campground in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park since 27 Apr (EGK) was still present through 3 Jul (*eBird*). Following the photographing of a male and female Indigo Bunting near the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 6 Jul (NF), it became evident from photos that that two first-summer males, one with white on the belly, and two females were present, with all four reported on 14 Jul (PR), at least three reported on 17 Jul (A & SB) and at least one still there through the end of the month (*eBird*).

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

these mostly reported on our local listserv **SanDiegoRegionBirding@groups.io**. Observers reporting additional sightings to *eBird* are not listed but acknowledged.

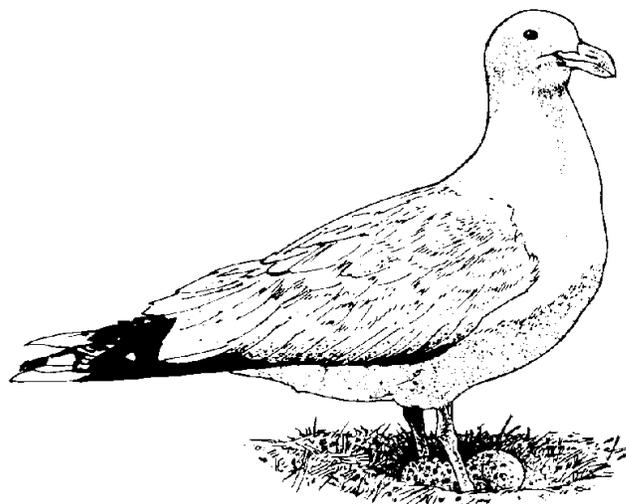
Dan Biteman, Allen and Susan Bond (A & SB), Steve Brad, Nancy Christensen, Nathan French, Olivia Glassford, Greg Gillson, Dan Jehl, Eric G. Kallen, Paul E. Lehman, Eve Martin, Guy McCaskie, Gary Nunn, Jim Pawlicki, Dave Povey, Peter Roberts, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Trent R. Stanley, Maria Stager (MSt), Robert Theriault, Catherine Werth.

Acknowledgements: I thank Paul E. Lehman for providing useful comments on the draft of this report.

Literature Cited:

Roberson, D. 2002. *Monterey Birds*, second edition. Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society, Carmel, California.

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



SAN DIEGO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

President	Nancy Christensen (760) 788-8180 nancy.r.christensen@gmail.com
Vice-president	Vacant—please volunteer!
Secretary	Charlene Glacy (619) 851-1917 cglacy@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Conny Jamison (619) 269-3264 cmjamison@cox.net
Program Chair	John Bruin (505) 401-3022 johnrbuin@gmail.com
Membership Chair	Barbara Carlson (858) 268-1937 barbarac2003@yahoo.com
Publishing <i>Skimmer</i> Editor	John Walters (619) 267-1821 johnfwalters5552@gmail.com
Webmaster	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybunn@gmail.com

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

San Diego Field Ornithologists
c/o Barbara Carlson
11192 Portobelo Dr.
San Diego, CA 92124

JOIN SDFO

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: Barbara Carlson, 11192 Portobelo Dr., San Diego 92124. For membership information, call Barbara at (858) 268-1937.

Visit our website at

www.sandiegofieldornithologists.org

