The **SKIMMER**

Volume 40, Number 1—January 2013

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

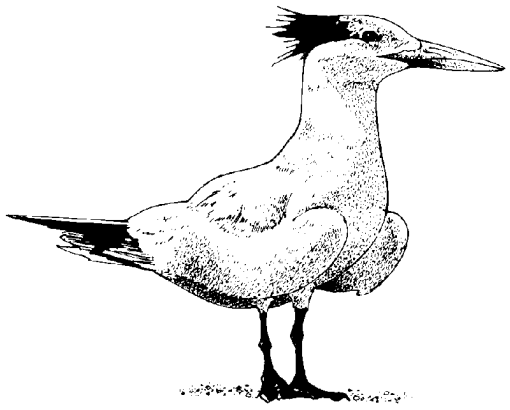
Tuesday, January 15, at 6:00 p.m., in the Hoffman Room of the San Diego Foundation Building, 2508 Historic Decatur Road. Going south on Rosecrans St. in the Midway area of town, turn left on Roosevelt Rd. into Liberty Station and proceed a couple of blocks to Decatur. Park in the lot to the left or find street parking.

Program: Lori Hargrove and Phil Unitt will discuss "Predation on nesting Gray Vireos in San Diego County." Lori is our local expert on Gray Vireos, and Phil is our local expert on Everything Else.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, February 19, same time, same place. Dave Pearson will describe "My favorite birding areas in the world."

2013 Dues Are Due

Time to re-up. If you haven't done so already, see Membership Chair BJ Stacey. Details are on the back page of the newsletter.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, DECEMBER 2012

Compiled by Gary Nunn

Rare wintering waterfowl were sought after around the county during the month with some notable finds. These included 3 Greater White-fronted Geese at different localities, at least 7 Cackling Geese at four localities, including 4 together in Ramona, two Snow Geese at different localities, and 4 Ross's Geese at three localities including 2 together feeding among surprised players on a baseball field at Robb Field, Ocean Beach 8 Dec (GN). Eurasian Wigeon reports grew in number to at least 8 individuals at favored localities. One White-winged Scoter continued in South San Diego Bay 15 Dec (CM, JD), in addition to a new report of this species from Oceanside 20 Dec (KW). Up to 5 Black Scoters continued in San Diego Bay through 12 Dec (MS, CM) while 2 females were observed flying south past Pt. La Jolla among Surf Scoter flocks on 18 Dec (MS, JK). One Common Merganser was at San Elijo Lagoon 22 Dec (CBC obs.), and a female type was at Lake Henshaw on 23 Dec (GN). An impressive 19 Hooded Mergansers, including 4 adult males, were in the San Dieguito River Valley 22 Dec (PU). Finally, well watched at very close range by many observers was a Red-necked Grebe in the Embarcadero, downtown San Diego 4-15 Dec (DA, JK).

Great-winged Petrel at La Jolla Cove.

Photo by Gary Nunn.

Expectations among seabird enthusiasts watching the ocean from Pt. La Jolla might never be the same again following the discovery and photographing of an adult Great-winged Petrel there on 18 Dec (GN). There are only five accepted records of this *Code 5: Accidental* species in the ABA area, with one more under consideration. All records are from California, the nearest to San Diego County coming from Monterey County. Quite remarkably this is the first sighting from shore of this highly pelagic tubenosed seabird anywhere in North America. Evidence from the photographs—generous pale peppering around the bill base—points to this bird being a form of Great-winged Petrel known as "Grey-faced" Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*), from New Zealand-Australian waters, the same as previous California records. This well-documented extreme vagrant seabird adds another species (#508) to the recorded avifauna of San Diego County.

Other seabird reports included 9 Northern Fulmars offshore on 12 Dec (TH, PEL), 11 seen from Pt. La Jolla on 14 Dec, increasing to 17 there on 15 Dec (SW). Also from shore, an unusually close Short-tailed Shearwater was at Pt. La Jolla 19 Dec (BR).

A black-and-white Masked/Nazca Booby was spotted offshore from Point La Jolla 23 Dec (BR, SW); its identity could not be established. Reddish Egrets continue around South San Diego Bay with as

many as 4 there through 16 Dec (JK, MS, GMcC, JW). Three adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons also continued in Imperial Beach though 15 Dec (GMcC).

Still present in Jacumba were three Harris's Hawk on 29 Dec (EK). Difficult to find in the county-was an adult Zone-tailed Hawk in Santee through 27 Dec (SM, BM), with another adult seen in the San Pasqual Valley 29 Dec (GN, SW).

Present for a second winter, a Pacific Golden-Plover continued at San Dieguito Lagoon, Del Mar 22 Dec (PEL). Found on isolated rocks north of the tide-pools were 2 Black Oystercatchers at Cabrillo National Monument, Pt. Loma 9 Dec (GN). An adult Laughing Gull was a notable find at Oceanside marina 7 Dec (KW). Cassin's Auklets remain abundant in county waters this month: 12,000 were estimated offshore 11 Dec (PEL). At least 1200 Common Murres were counted passing Pt. La Jolla during a morning 3.5 hour seawatch 27 Dec (PEL, GN). Ancient Murrelets were also seen at this location, 1 on 9 Dec, 26 on 15 Dec, and 4 on 28 Dec (SW, DWA).

Broad-billed Hummingbird in Mission Valley. Photo by Gary Nunn.

Single White-winged Doves were at Nestor 15 Dec (PEL) and Cabrillo National Monument 15 Dec (JW), and another in the Pt. Loma residential area 24 Dec (JK). A notable influx of Short-eared Owls continues to be noticed and included 1 at the Tijuana River mouth 1 Dec (ME), 1 on South San Diego Bay 9-15 Dec (SR), and 1 in the San Pasqual Valley 20 Dec (PT, MT). Continuing its second winter visit a Broad-billed Hummingbird frequented feeders at a residence in Mission Valley for much of the month, seen through 31 Dec (MP, JK, GN). A Lewis's Woodpecker continued at Los Peñasquitos Canyon through 2 Dec (JL, JK). Notable by its occurrence on the desert valley floor, an Acorn Woodpecker was in Borrego Springs 16 Dec (SM, SR). Williamson's Sapsucker trickled in to favorite haunts with a continuing bird at Rancho Cuyamaca SP through 22 Dec (CA), while a new female was discovered in Palomar SP on 25 Dec (JK). Scarce in the coastal lowlands, a Hairy Woodpecker was notable in Western Hills Park, San Diego on 26 Dec (TB).

Scarce wintering tyrant flycatchers included some new discoveries this month. Notable was a rare wintering Dusky Flycatcher found in Nestor, seen 15-22 Dec (PEL, GMcC). A continuing Gray Flycatcher was in National City through 15 Dec (PEL) while a second was discovered there on 8 Dec (JD). A Western Flycatcher was noted in Balboa Park on 15 Dec (PG). Vermilion Flycatchers seen this month included continuing birds in the Tijuana River Valley through 15 Dec (DP, PEL, GMcC) and 1 in Nestor on 15 Dec (PEL), while new birds included 2 in Jamul 20 Dec (JM), 1 in Encinitas 22 Dec (PEL), 4 in Bonsall on 30 Dec (CBC obs.),

and 1 in Escondido 29 Dec (PU). One Ash-throated Flycatcher continued in the Tijuana River Valley through 8 Dec (EE, PEL), while a new bird was in Chula Vista 15 Dec (SR), both probably wintering individuals. Still present in Chula Vista on its third winter visit was a Thick-billed Kingbird through 15 Dec (EA, JK), and an exciting discovery was a new bird found at the Del Mar Polo Fields seen 22-31 Dec (PU, JZ). Up to 2 Tropical Kingbirds were on Coronado Island through 12 Dec (SR, EC, RP), while a new bird was also at the Del Mar Polo Fields, seen 22-31 Dec (PU, JZ). Unusual wintering records were 1 Western Kingbird in the Tijuana River Valley 7 Dec (CM) and another on Coronado Island 28 Dec (JM).

A rare Yellow-throated Vireo was seen by lucky observers on Coronado Island 15-29 Dec (RP, JS, JK, EC). Plumbeous Vireos were quite numerous this month with at least 7 individuals reported throughout the county, all coastal except for 1 in Borrego Springs on 16 Dec (PEL). By contrast, only 1 Cassin's Vireo was reported, in Solana Beach on 2 Dec (PEL).

A much-sought-after Clark's Nutcracker was observed in the mountains near Julian 17 Dec (RP). A continuing Oak Titmouse, rare in the coastal lowlands, frequented Balboa Park throughout the month (EC, PU). Mountain Chickadees were also found at several previously reported locations, while a new bird was at Greenwood Cemetery 15 Dec (JZ). Established pine groves still harbor good numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the costal lowlands, and White-breasted Nuthatches were noted at several localities. The diminutive Brown Creeper delighted several observers this month: individuals were noted at Pt. Loma 15 Dec (GN), La Jolla 17 Dec (WP), Coronado Island 29 Dec (JM), and 2 in Borrego Springs 16 Dec (PEL). The continuing Pacific Wren, best located by its scolding chatter, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 2-8 Dec (GN). A wintering Swainson's Thrush was noted in Chula Vista 8 Dec (JD). Lapland Longspurs continued on Fiesta Island, Mission Bay; as many as 6 could be found among flocks of more numerous Horned Larks 1-6 Dec (PEL, RMcN).

This month saw some notable new discoveries of rarer parulid wood-warblers, as well as growing numbers of scarce wintering species. These included 2 Northern Waterthrushes, 9 Black-and-white Warblers, 4 Nashville Warblers, 2 American Redstarts, 24+ Yellow Warblers, 4 Palm Warblers, 3 Pine Warblers, 29+ Black-throated Gray Warblers, 6 Hermit Warblers, 17+ Wilson's Warblers, and 2 Chestnut-sided Warblers, including a notable San Diego downtown bird in Pantoja Park 7 Dec (PG, PU). Photographed at a residence in Pt. Loma, a Lucy's Warbler was a good find 13 Dec (PS). Other rarer finds included a Northern Parula near Escondido 29 Dec (BM), a continuing Magnolia Warbler in Mission Valley through 11 Dec (SR, CA, JL), a female Bay-breasted Warbler that delighted crowds at Lower Otay Lake, Chula Vista 30-31 Dec (JS, MS), joined at the same location the next day by a glowing adult male Prairie Warbler 31 Dec (BJS), a female Black-throated Blue Warbler at a residence in San Carlos 16-31 Dec (JRM), and two Grace's Warblers, one continuing at Greenwood Cemetery throughout the month, and a new bird in Spring

Bay-breasted Warbler at Lower Otay Lake.

Photo by Gary Nunn.

Valley 24-31 Dec (RN, BJS). The peculiar looking hybrid Townsend's X "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler continued in Pt. Loma through 9 Dec (BC, PEL), while a hybrid Hermit X Townsend's Warbler, possibly a back-cross with Hermit Warbler, was a new find in Balboa Park 6-7 Dec (SM, JN, GN).

Prairie Warbler at Lower Otay Lake. Photo by Gary Nunn.

Rarer sparrows this month included sightings of 4 Green-tailed Towhees, an impressive 6 Swamp Sparrows, and a generous 8 White-throated Sparrows at various localities. A single Clay-colored Sparrow continued in Nestor through 21 Dec (MSt, BM), while as many as 4 Nelson's Sparrows continued to delight many observers at Kendall-Frost Marsh, Pacific Beach through 28 Dec, and inland 2 Harris's Sparrows, 1 adult 1-4 Dec and 1e immature 1-14 Dec, were found at a residence in Borrego Springs (MC).

Wintering records of tanagers were quite a bounty this month with 2 Hepatic Tanagers, 21 Summer Tanagers, and more than 27 Western Tanagers scattered throughout suitable coastal lowland locations. As well as two Black-headed Grosbeaks noted in the county this month, an immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeak continued on Coronado Island through 6 Dec (JK, PM, PP), while a new female of the latter species was in Balboa Park 4 Dec (PEL). An adult male Blue Grosbeak was a colorful find in Chula Vista 9 Dec (MS). A male Indigo Bunting, scarce here in winter, was in Rancho Bernardo 20-22 Dec (AB).

Colorful members of the Icteridae this month included a new female Orchard Oriole, only the second reported this winter, in Solana Beach 2-22 Dec (PEL), 6 Hooded Orioles, 19+ Bullock's Orioles, 4 Baltimore Orioles, and 2 adult male Scott's Orioles in Jacumba through 29 Dec (EK).

As many as 3 Red Crossbills were in Rancho Santa Fe 22-28 Dec (PG, JL), good numbers of Pine Siskins persisted throughout the county, and a well-watched Evening Grosbeak satisfied many observers by coming to a water feature at a residence in Jacumba 4-31 Dec (EK, VM).

Listed observers: (CA) Christopher Adler, (DWA) Douglas W. Aguillard, (DA) Dan Airola, (EA) Eitan Altman, (AB) Allen Bond, (TB) Terry Brashear, (BC) Barbara Carlson, (MC) Mary Ann Cincotta, (EC) Elizabeth Copper, (JD) Jay Desgrollier, (EE) Elias Elias, (ME) Michael Evans, (PG) Peter Ginsberg, (TH) Terry Hunefeld, (EK) Eric Kallen, (JK) Jay Keller, (PEL) Paul E. Lehman, (JL) Josh Lietzow, (JL) John Luther, (GMcC) Guy McCaskie, (JMcM) Jimmy McMorran, (RMcN) Robert McNab, (CM) Curtis Marantz, (JM) John Martin, (PM) Paul Marvin, (SM) Sara Mayer, (JRM) James R. Morris, (BM) Brennan Mulrooney, (VM) Vic Murayama, (JN) Jan Nordenberg, (RN) Rich Norgaard, (GN) Gary Nunn, (RP) Robert Patton, (WP) William Perrin, (MP) Mark Polinsky, (DP) Dave Povey, (PP) Phil Pryde, (BR) Bruce Rideout, (SR) Steve Ritt, (MS) Matt Sadowski, (PS) Patricia Simpson, (BJS) BJ Stacy, (JS) Jeremiah Stock, (MSt) Mark Stratton, (MT) Millie Thomas, (PT) Peter Thomas, (PU) Phil Unitt, (SW) Stan Walens, (KW) Kenneth Weaver, (JW) Joe Worley, (JZ) Jim Zimmer.

SAN DIEGO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

President	Tom Blackman (619) 222-2630 obeach@cox.net
Vice-president	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybnunn@gmail.com
Secretary	Ann Hannon (760) 602-0030 afhannon@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer	Sara Mayers (619) 225-1217 mayerss@cox.net
Program Chair	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybnunn@gmail.com
Membership Chair	BJ Stacey (619) 596-8133 finaticphoto@gmail.com
Skimmer Publishing Editor	John Walters (619) 267-1821 john-walters@cox.net
	Herb Young (858) 622-0337 coulterpine@juno.com
	BJ Stacey (619) 596-8133 finaticphoto@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 **john-walters@cox.net**

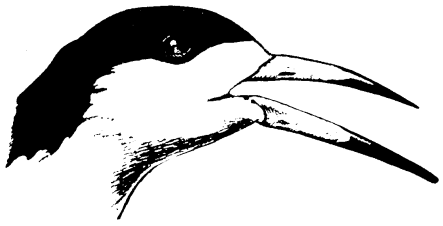
JOIN SDFO

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: BJ Stacey, 9407 Domer Rd., Santee, CA 92071. For membership information, call BJ at (619) 596-8133.

Visit our website at

www.sandiegofieldornithologists.org

or on Facebook at

tinyurl.com/3rrpm76

San Diego Field Ornithologists
c/o BJ Stacey
9407 Domer Rd.
Santee, CA 92071