



SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 19, 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 any of several parking lots or on the street.

Program: Vic Leipzig will discuss “Factors Impacting the Salton Sea.” Vic is an author and teacher who lives in Huntington Beach (he was mayor of the city in 1995); he offers the following field guide entry:

Behaviors & Field Marks:

- **Distribution:** Wide distribution, frequent migrations, resident of Huntington Beach, CA; seen widely throughout coastal, mountain, and desert regions of Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Bernadino, and Imperial Counties
 - **Reproductive Status:** Mated for life to Louann Murray, PhD, a writer, photographer, and birder; courts throughout the year; two offspring, both fledged
 - **Physical Description:** A lean, lanky species with thin legs, long wings, and sparse feathering. Buff rump is rarely seen
 - **Calls:** Yes, accepts calls as long as they aren't collect
 - **Song:** A quiet species, sings only when bathing
- Habits:** Loves to lecture other members of the species; no bad habits except for compulsive birding

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, April 16, same time, same place. Program to be announced.

One Last Time

If you still haven't renewed your membership, see BJ Stacey. Details on the back page.

[cont. on p.4]

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, FEBRUARY 2013

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

By far the most significant bird to be found this month was the **White Wagtail** of the black-backed subspecies *Motacilla alba lugens* photographed on Bay Blvd. in extreme southwest Chula Vista on 10 Feb (MSa). Despite the mid-winter date, this bird quickly vanished high in the sky to the south and was never relocated. Twenty-eight White Wagtails have previously been recorded in California, involving the subspecies *ocularis* and *lugens*, with at least one each found in all of the Southern California coastal counties to the north of San Diego, as well as in Baja California to the south of us, so this first for the County was long overdue.

The earliest of the spring migrants have arrived, with an Elegant Tern at the San Diego River mouth on the near-record- etting date of 24 Feb (BJS), a Cliff Swallow in Imperial Beach 16 Feb (MSa), and an adult male Hooded Oriole at the Point Loma Nazarene University 27 Feb (BLC). In the first half of March observers should watch for the first Gull-billed Terns, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Western Kingbirds, Bell's and Warbling Vireos, Lucy's Warblers, Bullock's Orioles and Black-chinned Sparrows. Remember, the earliest to arrive are invariably adult males in full color, so when seeing such species as a Yellow Warbler (first not expected until the end of March) or a Western Tanager (first not expected until early April) in other



White Wagtail in Chula Vista.

Photo by Matt Sadowski

than full color, keep in mind that they are more than likely birds that wintered locally—every birder should know the status and seasonal occurrence of the birds in

the area he or she is birding.

A Greater White-fronted Goose present at Lindo Lake in Lakeside since 2007, and another at Lake Miramar since 2008, along with the Cackling Goose at the Scripps Ranch Library near Lake Miramar since 2008,

were all three still there in mid-February (BJS and

GG). The only Eurasian Wigeon known present were a male on the lower Sweetwater River 12 Oct-24 Feb (BJS) and another on south San Diego Bay 7 Nov-11 Feb (PU). Of more interest was a female White-winged Scoter on Glorietta Bay 27 Jan-27 Feb (M & PT), and a male Long-tailed Duck at the extreme south end of San Diego Bay 23 Jan-21 Feb (MSa), both species now rare in San Diego County. A Short-tailed Shearwater was well seen from Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla 20 Feb (PEL). In addition, a Manx Shearwater was well photographed with a feeding flock of Black-vented Shearwaters 3-4 miles off Coronado 14 Feb (DP), and what proved to be another was equally well photographed in the same general area 17 Feb (JK), bringing the total number recorded in San Diego

County waters to seven. At least one Reddish Egret was present on south San Diego Bay through 28 Feb (SR), and another was at the harbor in Oceanside 2 Feb (HW) – birds wintering locally normally move south in the late winter/early spring to breeding locations in Baja California. A pair of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, present since June 2005, was at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach through the end of February (JN), and will likely start nest building in the near future.

A pair of Harris's Hawks along with a "helper" remained around Jacumba through the month (EGK) and is suspected to be nest building. A Zone-tailed Hawk roosting with Turkey Vultures at Safari Park near Escondido 1 Sep-16 Feb (BLC), and another in the eastern part of El Cajon January-11 Feb (YT, NB) were the only two reported this month. The wintering Solitary Sandpiper found at the Polo Field near Del Mar 21 Jan was last reported 7 Feb (DH, SB). The wintering Short-eared Owls appear to have left south San Diego Bay, but one was over Batiquitos Lagoon 22 Feb (WD). At least one of the Lewis's Woodpeckers found near Julian in January was still present 18 Feb (BJS). A male Williamson's Sapsucker at Paso Picacho Campground in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park 26 Feb (GLR) was the only one found in the County this winter.

Wintering *Empidonax* include a Hammond's Flycatcher near the Marston House in Balboa Park 3 Jan-27 Feb (GCH, BLC), a Gray Flycatcher at Morley Field in Balboa Park 14 Jan-28 Feb + (LS, BLC) and a Pacific-slope Flycatcher at Kate Sessions Park in La Jolla 12 Feb (JN). We have more than our share of Eastern Phoebes, with one near the San Diego Mission in Mission Valley 28 Dec-2 Feb (PEL, JK), another at Collier Park in Ocean Beach 19 Jan-13 Feb (MSt, SBM) and a third at the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley 28 Jan-28 Feb + (JP, CS). Wintering Vermilion Flycatchers close to the coast were still present at the ball fields in the Tijuana River Valley 28 Feb (JN) and at Nestor Park in Nestor 21 Feb (EA), but of extreme interest is the fact that the pair at

Crown Point on Mission Bay since 13 Jan (BS) is now building a nest (TC). The Thick-billed Kingbird found at the polo field near Del Mar 22 Dec (PU) was still present 28 Feb (JW), and the other known present near I-805 and Main St. in Chula Vista since 14 Oct (RN) was still there 28 Feb (SS) – both can be expected to remain through March. The Yellow-throated Vireo found in Coronado 15 Dec (RTP) was again seen and photographed on 24 Feb (BJS). The only Plumbeous Vireos known present in February were one in residential Del Mar 23 Oct-14 Feb (SES) and another at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego 31 Oct-3 Feb (BM, GMcC). A Cassin's Vireo, rarer than the Plumbeous in winter, was in residential La Jolla 17-28 Feb + (EGK). The Verdin found in the Tijuana River Valley at Border Field 13 Jan (JK) was seen again 12 Feb (JMCM), and the Pacific Wren found at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 20 Oct (GN) was still present 27 Feb (BLC).

An impressive variety of wintering wood-warblers remained into February. Topping the list are the Bay-breasted and Prairie Warblers together at Lower Otay Lake since 30 Dec (JS) and 31 Dec (BJS), and a female Black-throated Blue Warbler in San Carlos since 16 Dec (JRM), all still present at the end of February, followed by the Pine Warblers on Margarita Ave. in Coronado 25 Nov-28 Feb + (EC) and at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego 1 Jan-28 Feb + (MSa), and the Grace's Warblers at Greenwood Cemetery 31 Oct-6 Feb (BM) and on Cliffside Ave. in Spring Valley 24 Dec-18 Feb (RN). The Chestnut-sided Warbler remained at Pantoja Park in downtown San Diego through February (PAG, PM), and three Palm Warblers were known present, with one at the southwest corner of Montgomery Field in Kearny Mesa 4 Dec-28 Feb + (PEL), near the Bali Hai on Shelter Island 9 Jan-22 Feb (BS) and a new one at the San Ysidro athletic area 24 Feb (GMcC). Four Black-and-White Warblers remained into February, with one in a residential area of Pt. Loma 27 Nov-25 Feb (SBM), at Pantoja Park 9 Dec-28 Feb + (PEL, PM), in the northeast corner of Balboa Park 20 Nov-5 Feb (PEL, BLC), and around Nestor Park in Nestor 9 Dec-24 Feb (PEL,

CAM), but with the adult male American Redstart around Nestor Park 4 Nov through February (PEL) being the only one known present.

Two wintering Green-tailed Towhees are known to have remained into February, with one at the west end of Monument Rd. in the Tijuana River Valley still present 17 Feb (MSa), and the other at the Tijuana River Estuary Visitor Center in Imperial Beach last seen 22 Feb (CS). An elusive Clay-colored Sparrow found at Nestor Park 23 Nov (MSt) was still present 26 Feb (BLC), and is the only one known present in San Diego County this winter. At least two of the known wintering Nelson's Sparrows at the north end of Mission Bay were seen during the high tide of 9 Feb (JP). A Swamp Sparrow found at Famosa Slough 31 Oct (PEL) was still present 22 Feb (MSt), and another found in Jacumba 17 Nov (GN) remained through February (JK). The wintering White-throated Sparrow at Pantoja Park since 17 Dec, and another at a private residence in Clairemont since 26 Jan, were both still present at the end of February (PM, MM), and a Harris's Sparrow was found with White-crowned Sparrows in another residential area of Clairemont 9-12 Feb (DH, JN).

The Hepatic Tanager present for its 2nd winter at the Marston House since 30 Oct (SES) was still present 23 Feb (TC), and the other present for its 6th winter at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach since 12 Dec (MSt) remained through the end of the month (SR). At least

nine known wintering Summer Tanagers were seen from Imperial Beach and Nestor north to Rancho Santa Fe during the month, and another was found near Bonsall 23 Feb (KW). Wintering Hooded Orioles included a female in the western part of Balboa Park 4 Dec-5 Feb (PEL) and a male in extreme southwestern Chula Vista 10 Feb (MSa). The only Baltimore Oriole reported this month was the adult male at the southeast corner of Balboa Park 20 Nov-16 Feb (PEL, BJS). A male Scott's Oriole near Fallbrook 5 Feb (KW) was unexpected. The female Evening Grosbeak found in Jacumba 4 Dec was still present at the end of February (EGK).

Listed observers: Eitan Altman, Nick Basinski, Steve Brad, Barbara L. Carlson, Travis Cooper, Elizabeth Copper, William Duncan, Peter A. Ginsburg, Gary Grantham, Gjon C. Hazard, David Holway, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Paul E. Lehman, Curtis A. Marantz, Paul Marvin, Marcie Mason, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, James R. Morris, Brennan Mulrooney, Jan Nordenberg, Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, David Povey, Steve Ritt, Geoffrey L. Rogers, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Ben Sandstrom, Steve Sosensky, Chris Smith, Susan E. Smith, BJ Stacy, Jeremiah Stock, Mark Stratton (MSt), Bruno Struck, Lea Squires, Millie and Peter Thomas, Yvonne Trahan, Philip Unitt, Ken Weaver, Jim Wilson, Harley Winfrey.

SDFO News [cont.]

Claude Edwards on the News

Local birder Claude Edwards was recently featured in a news story on local TV, NBC San Diego, Channel 7. You can watch the clip on <http://vimeo.com/61234939>

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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

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