

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday May 21st 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: SDFO President Tom Blackman will discuss “New Zealand's South Island and the Subantarctic Islands.”

South and east of the New Zealand's South Island is one of the richest areas of seabird life in the world. Tom's recently completed trip encompassed 2,718 nm with visits to nine islands or outcroppings and yielded 110 species of birds. This included 9 species of penguins, 14 species of albatrosses and a total of 44 species of tubenosed seabirds. Highlights of the trip included close-up views of nesting albatrosses and penguins while dodging the pinnipeds.

A native Californian, Tom went to local schools and graduated from San Diego State University with a B.S. Zoology. This education suited his first career in professional baseball umpiring in the Pioneer (A), California State (A) and Texas Leagues (AA) finishing in the American Association (AAA). Then began a second career in risk management, beginning with an insurer including positions as claims adjuster, liability underwriter and property underwriter. Tom joined the brokerage side of the business and became a partner in a large regional firm. He sold his interest and joined an international firm and pioneered the structured finance aspects of risk management such as environmental, bondable leases, and *force majeure*.

Retiring in 2002, Tom embarked full time upon his passion of birding and photography. This took him to various worldwide locations including Finland, Kenya, Uganda, Madagascar, Peru, Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Australia, New Zealand and other places. Tom specializes in pelagic photography and is regularly off shore on the West and East U.S. coasts. In 2010 he completed the Western Pacific Odyssey, and the Subantarctic islands in 2012/2013. Most recently was a team member on Peter Harrison's expedition to New Caledonia to gather data on the "New Caledonia" Storm Petrel. His images can be seen at obeach.smugmug.com.

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SDFO NEWS (continued)

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, June 18, same time, same place. Our annual business meeting and election of club officers. Neil Solomon continue the pelagic theme with photography from his recent trip: "Birds of the Falkland Islands".

Club Officers Needed

As noted above, we will be electing club officers for the coming year at our June meeting. We usually publish a proposed slate of officers provided by our Nominating Committee; however, they haven't provided your editor with a list yet. In particular, after several years as Secretary and the past four years as Treasurer, Sara Mayers will not be running again this year. Anyone interested in running for Treasurer (or any of the other club offices) should contact one of the current officers.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, APRIL 2013

Compiled by Sara Baase Mayers

Highlight of the month: Two first-cycle Broad-winged Hawks flew together over the Dairy Mart Pond area in the Tijuana River Valley 30 Apr (GN). Broad-winged Hawks are now rare in California. When seen in San Diego County, they are likely to be migrating along the coast in fall. There are only three prior spring records for the county, all inland.

The Greater White-fronted Goose at Lindo Lake since 2007 remains as of 20 Apr (JK, BJS), and the Cackling Goose at the Scripps Ranch Library pond since 2008 remained 27 Apr (GG). Another Cackling Goose was at Webb Park in Rancho Bernardo 25–27 Apr (HB, GG). Twenty-five Brant at Lake Sutherland 6 Apr (JSto) were slightly outside the usual migration route. An immature male Long-

tailed Duck at the salt works on south San Diego Bay since 23 Jan was last reported 5 Apr (MSa), and a female was in Oneonta Channel near the Tijuana River mouth 21 Mar–20 Apr (MSa, CZ). A female Hooded Merganser stayed late, moving between two sites in and near Del Mar 1–6 Apr (PEL). A Pacific Loon in Jacumba 9–30 Apr (EGK, JSz), unusual inland, seemed to be having trouble taking off from the small pond. A Black Storm-Petrel seen from Pt. La Jolla 8 Apr (MSa) was the earliest this year. Three Brown Boobies, all immature, were seen this month: one from land at Pt. La Jolla 9 Apr (PEL) and two from aboard the *Grande* 13 Apr—one 5 miles southwest of Pt. Loma (TRL) and one on Zuniga Jetty (GMcC).



Broad-winged Hawk in the Tijuana River Valley.

Photo by Gary Nunn.

Up to three Reddish Egrets (two adults and one immature) continued in San Diego Bay 17 Jun–20 Apr (JK, MSa, GMcC). Two pairs of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons attended nests in Imperial Beach 30 Mar–28 Apr (GMcC). Yellow-crowned Night-Herons have nested there regularly since a pair arrived in 2005.

Up to three Harris's Hawks, in Jacumba since 2011, remained through 27 Apr (EGK, MSt). Two Merlins on 13 Apr—one in South Park in San Diego (TC) and one in Oceanside (EW)—were somewhat late. In recent years, a small number have been seen through early April.

A Pacific Golden-Plover spent its second winter at San Dieguito Lagoon in Del Mar 13 Nov–3 Apr (PEL). One Black Oystercatcher was on the rocks near La Jolla Cove 9–10 Apr (ARe, CZ), and two were in the tidepool area of Cabrillo National Monument on Point Loma 23–24 Apr (BJS, SBM). A Solitary Sandpiper was at Camp Pendleton 16 Apr (JMcM). An estimated 2000–3000 Red-necked

Phalaropes passed Pt. La Jolla 8 Apr (GN)—an impressive number for early April. They were, unexpectedly, flying south. The first-cycle Laughing Gull found at the San Diego River mouth 30 Mar (GN) stayed until 28 Apr (PEL), and an adult Franklin's Gull was at Sweetwater Reservoir 20 Apr (BEC). The first Least Terns of this spring showed up 13 Apr, one in Chula Vista and five at the 9-Mile Bank off San Diego (RTP, MSa).

Two stray migrating White-winged Doves came early to the coastal area, with one at an Imperial Beach residence 19–21 Apr (SY) and one at a Pt. Loma residence 22–29 Apr (SBM). The *San Diego County Bird Atlas* reports the earliest date for spring migrants at the coast as 30 Apr. A very large number of Vaux's Swifts circled and dove into a chimney to roost near 9th Ave. and E St. in downtown San Diego

17 Apr (CA). This is a good year for Calliope Hummingbirds in San Diego. First seen 14 Apr at Point Loma Nazarene University (TRL), they continued, mostly in Pt. Loma, through the month. The peak this month was at least five at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 17 Apr (GN).

The first migrant Gray Flycatcher this spring was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 19 Apr (GN). A Dusky Flycatcher, rare on the coast, was in the cemetery 20 Apr (GN). Only one of the two wintering



Red-necked Phalaropes at Pt. La Jolla.

Photo by Gary Nunn

Thick-billed Kingbirds was reported this month—in the Chula Vista neighborhood near Main St. and I-805 for its third winter, 14 Oct–14 Apr (RN, CAM). The pair of Vermilion Flycatchers at Crown Point on Mission Bay 13 Jan–25 Apr (BStr, PEL) succeeded in fledging two young, seen on 13 Apr (MSt). This site is new to the short list of breeding sites near the coast.

A Plumbeous Vireo at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 25 Mar–20 Apr (GN, MSa, CZ) probably wintered locally. A Cassin's Vireo singing on territory in the Laguna Mountains 7 Apr was the earliest this spring (EA). Two male Purple Martins near Potrero 21 Apr (DWA) were rare migrants. The Pacific Wren wintering in Ft.

Rosecrans National Cemetery remained 20 Oct–7 Apr (GN, PEL). A male Lapland Longspur was in Borrego Springs 23 Apr (CD, RT). Lapland Longspurs are especially rare in spring, with only one spring record mentioned in the *San Diego County Bird Atlas*.

Three wintering Black-and-white Warblers stayed into April: one (male) at the Bird and Butterfly Garden 21 Oct–20 Apr (RN, JK); one in the northeast corner of Balboa Park for its third winter, 20 Nov–13 Apr (PEL, TPP); and one (male) at a Pt. Loma residence for its third winter, 27 Nov–23 Apr (SBM). The one that wintered in Pantoja Park, downtown San Diego, was not seen in April. The first MacGillivray's Warbler was seen at Agua Caliente 7 Apr (GN), but the big day was 17 Apr with an exceptional 33 (SES). A male Hooded Warbler was at Agua Caliente the same day (PM). A female Magnolia Warbler at Pantoja Park 27 Apr (PEL) might have wintered locally. Spring records range from late May through early June, so it would be exceptionally early as a spring vagrant. However, it is also quite rare for Magnolia Warblers to winter in the county. The Chestnut-sided Warbler wintering in Pantoja Park stayed 7 Dec–13 Apr (PAG, MSt). The female Bay-breasted Warbler continued at Lower Otay Lake 30 Dec–13 Apr (JSto, MSa), molting out of its very drab plumage in mid-April. One Palm Warbler was in the vicinity of Dairy Mart Pond 25 Apr (BLC) and another in Sorrento Valley 27 Apr (PAG). A male Pine Warbler continued on Margarita Ave. in Coronado 25 Nov–10 Apr (EC, JP), and the Grace's Warbler at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego for its second winter remained 31 Oct–10 Apr (BM, PM). A Hermit Warbler wintered at San Diego Botanic Gardens in Encinitas 22 Dec–7 Apr (SES, SW).

Though rare at the coast, one Brewer's Sparrow was at Torrey Pines 19 Apr (ARa), and another was at Ft.



Calliope Hummingbird at Pt. Loma.

Photo by Gary Nunn.

Rosecrans National Cemetery 23 Apr (BJS).

A male Lark Bunting was in Jacumba 24 Apr (TO). Two Swamp Sparrows continued into April: one at Famosa Slough 31 Oct–9 Apr (PEL, ARa) and one in Jacumba 17 Nov–14 Apr (GN, TRS). A White-throated Sparrow wintered at Pantoja Park 17 Dec–14 Apr (DN, JSte). Three additional White-throated Sparrows appeared, one each at Agua Caliente 20 Apr (MSt), Upper Otay Lake 21 Apr (TPP), and San Diego Botanic Gardens 25 Apr (SES). A pair of Dark-eyed Juncos built a nest in the Bird and Butterfly Garden 14 Apr (MSa), much farther south than previously known coastal breeding sites.

A male Hepatic Tanager spent its third winter near the Marston House in Balboa Park 18 Oct–09 Apr (MSa, ME). A small number of Hepatic Tanagers have wintered in San Diego County for up to four years in the past, but the record holder is the male spending its 7th winter at the Imperial Beach Sports Park 9 Nov–4 Apr (BM, PEL). Also at the Sports Park this winter was a female Summer Tanager 9 Nov–20 Apr (BM, CZ). A male Summer Tanager wintered on West Ln. in Rancho Santa Fe 16 Feb–2 Apr (PEL, CH), and a female showed up at Point Loma Nazarene University 13 Apr (JW). A Blue Grosbeak arrived early at Mission Trails Regional Park 9

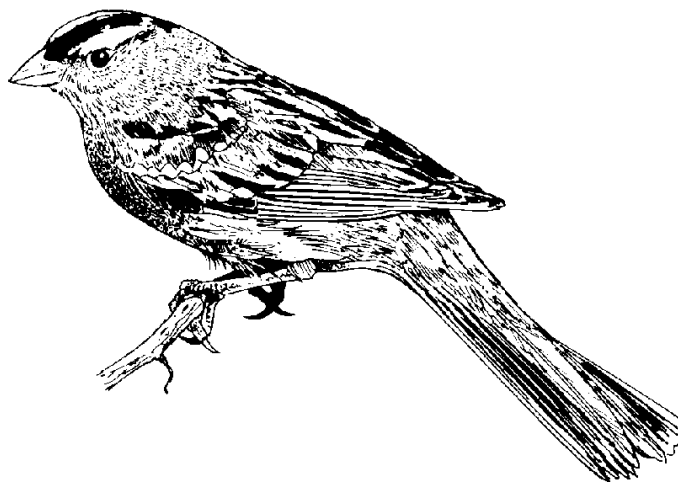
Apr (CH). Four Yellow-headed Blackbirds appeared near the coast: one at Lake O'Neill at Camp Pendleton 12 Apr (PAG) and three at the Tijuana River Estuary 18 Apr (AA). Up to twelve Red Crossbills continued in Jacumba 23 Mar–15 Apr (BJS, EGK), and up to four Evening Grosbeaks were in Palomar State Park 12–21 Apr (DM, TSk).

Observers: Christopher Adler, Douglas W. Aguillard, Eitan Altman, Arlene Arnold, Hal Benham, Barbara L. Carlson, Tim Cooper, Elizabeth Copper, Chris Duthie, Mike Evans, Peter A. Ginsburg, Gary Grantham, Christine Harvey, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Paul E. Lehman, Tony R. Leukering, Curtis A. Marantz, Paul Marvin, Sara Baase Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Brennan Mulrooney, Dian Musinski, Richard Norgaard, Dick Norton,

Gary Nunn, Tom Oberbauer, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, Tyler P. Pockette, Andy Rathbone, Anne Reilly, Matt Sadowski, Tiana Skrivseth, Susan E. Smith, BJ Stacey, Trent R. Stanley, John Sterling, Jeremiah Stock, Mark Stratton, Bruno Struck, Julie Szabo, Robert Theriault, Shannon Walsh, Elsa Weber, Joseph Worley, Susan Yamagata, Catherine Zinsky.

Reference: Philip Unitt, *San Diego County Bird Atlas*, San Diego Natural History Museum, 2004.

The author thanks Guy McCaskie for his extensive notes and Paul Lehman for his comments)



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

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

