

The **SKIMMER**



Volume 41, Number 2—February 2014

SDFO NEWS

Monthly meeting

Tuesday, February 18, 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 on the street or in any of several parking lots nearby.

Program: “Baffling Birders and Bedeviling Biotas: Avian Invaders in California,” by Kimball L. Garrett.

Few areas of North America are as prone to the release and establishment of non-native bird species as California. Whether introduced purposefully or by accident, these avian immigrants include some of our most familiar bird species (think House Sparrow, European Starling and Rock Pigeon), a whole suite of additional species whose status is ever-changing, and a seemingly never-ending parade of escapees that send us running for our foreign field guides when we encounter them. Invasive introduced plant and animal species pose serious ecological threats worldwide, but which of our bird species merit the “invasive” label? How do we keep track of them, and how do we decide which species “count” on avifaunal lists? And how do we identify those odd escapees that could have come from anywhere?

Spending a lifetime birding in the Los Angeles area, Kimball Garrett has (figuratively) developed a stomach for introduced bird species and has been at the forefront of efforts to document their status in California. His talk is a light-hearted look at a serious subject, with the goal of enlisting more birders in the effort to monitor the non-native species that are becoming an increasing component of our avifauna.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, March 25, same time, same place. **Note that this is a week later than usual.** Booking problems mean the room isn’t available at our usual time of the month. Speaker and program are still being negotiated.

SDFO Dues are Payable

If you haven’t renewed your SDFO membership yet this year, see Membership Chair Mike Goldhamer at the meeting, or send him your check. See the back page of the *Skimmer* for details.

More SDFO News

Rancho Santa Fe Christmas Bird Count

In addition to the earlier Christmas Bird Counts reported last month, here is a brief summary of the Rancho Santa Fe CBC held on January 4, compiled by Robert Patton:

Thanks to all who participated in over 32 groups on this year's RSF CBC. Preliminary results look good with 190 species recorded plus three subspecies, plus four additional species seen within the week of the count. (The average number of species for this count has been 174, with range 145 to 202).

Black-throated Green Warbler and Nelson's Sparrow are new to the count. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher had only been reported the week of the count previously.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JANUARY 2014

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Four Eurasian Wigeons are known present, with single males near the San Diego River mouth 26 Sep-27 Jan (JP and DC), on the Sweetwater River near the Highland/4th Avenue bridge 20 Nov-11 Jan (SR and JE), at the J Street Marina in Chula Vista 19 Dec-21 Jan (AB and GMcC) and on a small pond at a winery in Escondido 26 Dec-10 Jan (EH). The three Black Scoters, two males and a female, first seen on south San Diego Bay 11 Nov (PEL) remained close to the Coronado Cays through 29 Jan (RN). A Long-tailed Duck seen flying south off Imperial Beach on 2 Jan (MSa) was the only one this month.

A Red-billed Tropicbird 4.5 miles southwest of Pt. Loma on 4 Jan (RH) was not only unusually close to the coast, but unexpected in January. No sightings of Blue-footed Boobies off Imperial Beach have been reported since the end of December even though about 20 were still present on the Los Coronados Islands at the end of January (MSa and DWA). A Brown Booby off Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla 16 Jan (StW) and an adult female photographed 3 miles off Mission Beach 30 Jan (DWA) were the only two seen. A Reddish Egret was still present on south San Diego Bay 25 Jan (GMcC), and four adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach at the end of January (GMcC). A young Bald Eagle, rare on the immediate coast of San Diego County, was at south San Diego Bay on 2 Jan (RTP) and another was well studied at San Elijo Lagoon on 15 Jan (SBM). The only Zone-tailed Hawks known present this month were the adult around the Safari Park in Escondido 9 Nov-

31 Jan (MD and CHag) and another reported on the Rancho Santa Fe Christmas Bird Count 4 Jan (CGE).

The wintering Pacific Golden-Plover present in Del Mar since 21 Oct (PEL) was still present 23 Jan (CAM). A Black-legged Kittiwake, remarkably scarce in Southern California waters this winter, was off Pt. La Jolla 13 Jan (MSa). Mew Gulls are decidedly scarce along the San Diego County coast in winter, and much rarer inland, so a first-winter bird on Lake Murray 26 Dec-5 Jan (JRM) is of note. A first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull photographed on south San Diego Bay 3 Jan (MSa) was only the 5th to be found in San Diego County. The first-winter Glaucous Gull at the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside since 17 Dec (KW) was still present 31 Jan + (CAM), and another was photographed on Lower Otay Lake on 1 Jan (BJS).

The Inca Dove found at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs 15 Dec (PEL) was still present 31 Jan + (BT), and the adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird found at nearby Rams Hill 15 Nov (CD) was still present 17 Jan (TH). Up to 8 Lewis's Woodpeckers were still being reported from Pamo Valley 31 Jan + (DN) after the first were found there on 28 Dec (CAd). A Williamson's Sapsucker at the Paso Picacho Campground in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on 29 Jan (BM) was in an area where one or two are present most winters, but a female photographed at the Safari Park 21 Jan (DM) was in the coastal lowlands where unexpected. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found along Silvergate Ave. in residential Pt. Loma 11 Dec (GN) remained through at least 21 Jan (SBM). A Crested Caracara near the J Street Marina 7 Jan

(FB) was likely the same bird seen off and on around the Tijuana River Valley since September 2006.

Besides one or two Gray Flycatchers in the desert around Borrego Springs, two species of *Empidonax* were known present in the coastal lowlands, with single Hammond's Flycatchers near the intersection of Beyer Way and Del Sol Blvd. in San Ysidro 14 Dec-19 Jan (SR and JTS) and near the intersection of Caminito Claro and Caminito Viva in La Jolla 12 Jan (PEL), and single "Western" Flycatchers were at Lindo Lake in Lakeside 31 Dec-19 Jan (CKS) and along Sunset Dr. in Rancho Santa Fe 4 Jan (MSa). A Tropical Kingbird near the sod farm in the eastern part of the Tijuana River Valley 10 Jan (JS) is likely wintering in that general area. The Thick-billed Kingbird present for its 4th winter at the lower end of Poggi Canyon in Chula Vista since 18 Oct (RN) was still present 30 Jan (MW). A Western Kingbird, very rare anywhere in California in winter, remained at Lake Murray 24 Dec-29 Jan (JRM) and another was in the area of the intersection of Cardiff and Crest Drives in Cardiff-by-the-Sea 26 Dec-20 Jan (PEL and RTP). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in the area of the intersection of Cardiff and Crest Drives in Cardiff-by-the-Sea 4-30 Jan (SES and TL) was likely the same bird photographed at the nearby Manchester Preserve on 28 Nov (GNe).

A Cassin's Vireo was found at Stagecoach Park in Carlsbad on 4 Jan (JMcM). Three Cliff Swallows in flight over Leucadia on 18 Jan (JMcM) were likely remarkably early migrants as this swallow is not known to have wintered in California. At least one of the Brown Creepers present in Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma since 23 Nov (JB) was still present 30 Jan (PC), and wintering Golden-crowned Kinglets were still present in Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 30 Jan (PC), in residential Pt. Loma 1 Jan (MSa) and along Crest Dr. in Encinitas on 27 Jan (GNe). A Varied Thrush, a scarce visitor to San Diego County, at Doane Pond on Palomar Mountain 31 Jan (RA) is likely wintering in that area. A Sage Thrasher in Jacumba 28 Jan (EGK) was no doubt a spring migrant—numbers of spring migrant Sage Thrashers in San Diego County peak in February (Unitt 2004). Three Lapland Longspurs, known present at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay since mid-October, were still present 31 Jan + (PEL and GMcC) and another was at the Naval Outlying Field in Imperial Beach 5 Jan (GNu)—Potentially wintering Lapland Longspurs are previously unrecorded in San Diego County later than mid-January (Unitt 2004).

An impressive variety of wood-warblers remained into and through January. The Bay-breasted Warbler discovered on Executive Dr. in University City 28 Nov (PEL) was still present 31



Since being found along Crest Drive in Cardiff-by-the-Sea during the Rancho Santa Fe Christmas Bird Count, this most attractive Scissor-tailed Flycatcher has remained there with Cassin's Kingbirds through January – photo taken 5 Jan 2014 by Steve Brad.

Jan + (DN) so can be expected to stay for the rest of the winter. The same can be said for the female Black-throated Blue Warbler that arrived at a private residence in San Carlos 28 Oct for a 2nd winter, and was still present 31 Jan + (JRM), and the male Grace's Warbler in San Diego's Greenwood Cemetery on 6 Oct (TRS) for a 3rd winter, and still present 29 Jan (MP). Other rarities for winter include a Tennessee Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 15 Dec-31 Jan + (GNu and JR); the male Northern Parula at Rohr Park in Chula Vista 27 Oct-31 Jan + (DDiT and PEL); the Chestnut-sided Warblers returning for their 2nd winters to near the intersection of Wilson Ave. and 22nd St. in National City 24 Oct-11 Jan (PEL) and Pantoja Park in downtown San Diego 31 Dec-19 Jan (PEL and SBM); a female Pine Warbler spending its 2nd winter in Greenwood Cemetery 16 Nov-29 Jan (MSt and MP); a male Black-throated Green Warbler near the intersection of Sun Valley Rd. and Camino Ynez in Solana Beach 26 Dec-13 Jan (PEL, RTP); and the attractive

Painted Redstart on Park Blvd. near the entry to the Naval Medical Center in Balboa Park 20 Dec-23 Jan (JB and PJF). More regular in winter are the two Northern Waterthrushes at the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley 7 Sep-15 Jan (JK and SR); single Black-and-white Warblers at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 6 Dec-23 Jan (GGr and CAM), the Sports Park in Imperial Beach 14 Dec-8 Jan (CHar and MM), in Pantoja Park in downtown San Diego 12 Jan (MM), at the western edge of Mission Bay 29



Oct-29 Jan (PEL), and near the intersection of Greenwich Dr. and Shoreham Pl. in University City 24 Nov-31 Jan + (PEL); the male American Redstart spending its 4th winter near Nestor Park in Nestor 2 Oct-24 Jan (SBM and NC); and single Palm Warblers near the intersection of Beyer Way and Picador Blvd. in San Ysidro 14 Dec-18 Jan (SR and JTS) and near the east end of Sunset Ave. in the Tijuana River Valley on 30 Jan (JMCM). Add to this single Nashville Warblers in San Ysidro, Chula Vista, National City and Leucadia (PEL) and a Hermit Warbler in Leucadia (JMCM), a handful of Yellow, Black-throated Gray and Wilson's Warblers, and the four common wintering species of wood-warblers, and we have an impressive total of 22 species known present in January.

At least one Green-tailed Towhee was still present at the Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center in Imperial Beach 15 Jan (SR), another remained at a private residence in Imperial Beach through 31 Jan (SY), and a third was at Lake Murray 27 Oct-22 Jan (ShW and PP). A Clay-colored Sparrow found near the intersection of Beyer Way and Del Sol Blvd. in San Ysidro 9 Jan (PEL) was still present 18 Jan (SR). After one Nelson's Sparrow was discovered near the southwest corner of San Elijo Lagoon on 1 Jan (GGi) up to three were seen there at subsequent high tides through 31 Jan + (MSt) and can be expected to stay into March. Up to two Swamp Sparrows were at the Aviara Resort in Carlsbad 21 Dec-27 Jan (SB), at least one has been along the drainage ditch in Tecolote Canyon 11-31 Jan + (JS, PEL) and another has been frequenting the east end of Lindo Lake in Lakeside 14 Nov-25 Jan (SS and CZ). Three White-throated Sparrows were known present during January, with one at the Episcopal Church in University City 28 Nov-12 Jan (PEL), a second at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery

When found in University City on 28 November, this Bay-breasted Warbler was missing feathers around the lower neck and upper breast. Those feathers have now been replaced by the next generation of feathers, which in this case are the reddish-brown feathers of the alternate-plumage. Do not expect additional alternate-plumage feathers to show until around early April, the time of year Bay-breasted Warblers normally molt into summer dress – photo taken 1 Feb 2014 by Mark Stratton.

3 Dec-31 Jan + (GNu and JR), and the third near the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside on 1 Jan (GGi).

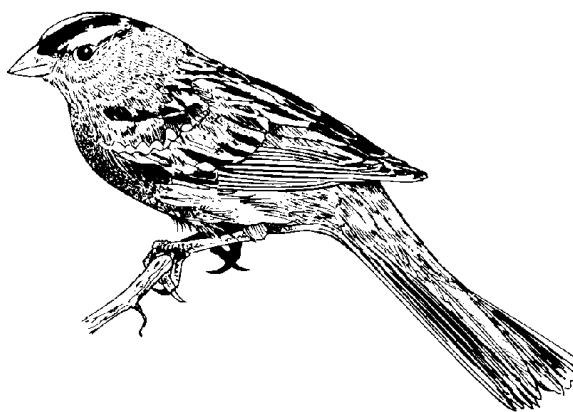
The male Hepatic Tanager known present since 23 Nov (CAn) for its 3rd winter in the area of the Marston House in Balboa Park was still present 23 Jan (PJF) and another present since 1 Dec (DK) for its 8th winter at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach was still present 24 Jan (NC). At least eight Summer Tanagers were known in the coastal lowlands from Cardiff-by-the-Sea southward through Otay Mesa in January, and the number of Western Tanagers was likely higher. The adult male Orchard Oriole found near the intersection of Arden and Santa Fe Drives in Encinitas 27 Dec (PEL) could not be found after 4 Jan (JMCM), but a female is known present at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas 3-29 Jan (SES). Single Hooded Orioles, decidedly rare in winter, were near the intersections of North and South Lanes in Rancho Santa Fe 26 Dec-9 Jan (PEL and SB) and near the intersection of Cardiff and Crest Drives in Cardiff-by-the-Sea 8-27 Jan (PEL and GNe). Two adult male Scott's Orioles in Jacumba 28 Jan (EGK) may have wintered locally, but could also have been exceptionally early spring migrants.

Listed observers: Christopher Adler (CAAd), Caron Andregg (CAn), Ryan Andrews, Douglas W. Aguillard, Fred Baker, Jennifer Baldwin, Abe Boker, Steve Brad, Nancy Christensen, Peter

Crosson, David Crouch, Dean DiTommaso, Mike Dow, Chris Duthie, Claude G. Edwards, Jeff Ebright, P. J. Falatek, Greg Gillson (GGi), Gary Grantham (GGr), Charity Hagen (CHag), Ed Hall, Christine Harvey (CHar), David Holway, Rich Horwitz, Terry Hunefeld, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Dan King, Paul E. Lehman, T. Loeffke, Curtis A. Marantz, Debbie Marlow, Marcie Mason, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Sara B. Mayers, James R. Morris, Brennan Mulrooney, Gretchen Nell (GNe), Richard Norgaard, Dick Norton, Gary Nunn (GNu), Michael Parks, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, Phil Pryde, Steve Ritt, Jim Roberts, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Steve Shunk (SS), James Smith, Susan E. Smith (SES), BJ Stacey, Trent R. Stanley, Justyn T. Stahl (JTS), Mark Stratton (MSt), Bob Theriault, Stanley Walens (StW), Shannon Walsh (ShW), Torin Waters, Kenneth Weaver, Mike Wittmer, Susan Yamagata, Catherine Zinsky.

Literature Cited:

Unitt, Philip. 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	Tom Blackman (619) 222-2630 obeach@cox.net
Vice-president	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybnunn@gmail.com
Secretary	Conny Jamison (619) 269-3264 cmjamison@cox.net
Treasurer	Rich Breisch (858) 278-6280 rsbreisch@san.rr.com
Program Chair	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybnunn@gmail.com
Membership Chair	Mike Goldhamer (619) 888-6183 mikeegee@cox.net
Skimmer Publishing Editor	John Walters (619) 267-1821 johnfwalters5552@gmail.com Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybnunn@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

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*San Diego Field Ornithologists
c/o Mike Goldhamer
1231 Myrtle Ave.
San Diego, CA 92103*

