The **SKIMMER**

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, October 17, at 7:00 p.m. This month's meeting will be held jointly with the Buena Vista Audubon Society in Oceanside, at the Buena Vista Audubon Society Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Hwy. Going north on I-5, go west on Vista Way and then south on S. Coast Hwy. The Nature Center is on the left just before reaching Buena Vista Lagoon.

Program: Steven Shunk will present "Tongues, Toes, and Tails—Our Amazing Woodpeckers." Imagine for a moment slamming your face into a brick wall at 16 miles per hour. This self-destructive (and foolish) act would require about 1,200 g of force, almost certainly resulting in your death. Yet, a Pileated Woodpecker exerts the same force up to 20 times per second, and as many as 12,000 times per day, pounding its head into trees! The woodpecker anatomy is perfectly suited for its climbing and excavating lifestyle. Some woodpecker species also possess adaptations for aerial acrobatics, for drilling sap wells, or for extracting ants from underground burrows. And woodpecker adaptation goes well beyond the anatomy. Cavity excavation, drumming, and food storage are just a few examples of their amazing specialization.

Join Oregon naturalist and North American woodpecker specialist Stephen Shunk for a thorough discussion on woodpecker anatomy and adaptation. Currently residing Sisters, Oregon, Steve began bird ing in1989 in San Jose, California. He started teaching birding classes in 1992, and through his company, Paradise Birding, now leads tours across western and southern North America, as well as the Mediterranean land of Sicily. Steve co-founded the Oregon Birding Trails program and coordinated its flagship project, the Oregon Cascades Birding Trail. He co-founded the East Cascades Bird Conservancy and served as its first President, and he recently completed the Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America.

As documented in San Diego County Bird Atlas (Unitt, 2004), thirteen species of woodpeckers are on the county bird list. While many can be found easily in appropriate habitat and season, several species are considered irregular migrants or are found only in very restricted habitats. As a follow-up to his program on woodpecker adaptations at our October General Meeting, Steve Shunk will lead a special BVAS/SDFO birding trip to Cuyamaca Mountain on Saturday, October 20 (See the Buena Vista Audubon Society web page for details). Join us for a San Diego County woodpecker hunt with a real expert.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, SEPTEMBER 2012

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Wood Sandpiper at Camp Pendleton.

Picture by Jimmy McMorran.

Highlights amongst the pelagic birds reported were a Wilson's Storm-Petrel 14 nm west of Ocean Beach on 3 Sep (TMcG), a Red-billed Tropicbird only 6 nm northwest of Pt. Loma on 30 Sep (GN), a subadult Red-footed Booby well photographed 3 miles off Mission Bay on 23 Sep (MG), and two Craveri's Murrelets seen from shore at Pt. La Jolla on 18 Sep (SW) along with fourteen 5-10 miles off La Jolla on 23 Sep (DP). The sighting of single Broad-winged Hawks in the Tijuana River Valley on 27 Sep (RN), and over Pt. Loma on 27 Sep (SES) and 28 Sep (MM) pales in comparison to the numbers reported to the north – an unprecedented **295** counted over the Marin Headlands at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge on 27 September (Allen Fish). The Crested Caracara frequenting the east end of the Tijuana River Valley 2-12 Sep (GN, KR) was almost certainly the same individual present here off and on since 9 September 2006.

The finding and photographing of a juvenile **Wood Sandpiper** on Camp Pendleton 23 Sep (JM, BM, AF) adds another species (#507) to the list of birds recorded in San Diego County. There is only one previous record of this sandpiper in California—one at China Lake in Inyo County 22-23 May 2007. Elsewhere on the Pacific Coast of North America south of Alaska single birds were at Masset on Queen Charlotte Island 3-9 November 1994, Reifel Refuge in Ladner, British Columbia, 12-16 October 2010, on the Samish Flats in Washington on 5 August 2011, Fern Ridge Reservoir in Oregon on 26 Sep 2008, and at Lagunas de Chametla at the southern end of the Baja California Peninsula through the winters of 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. Other shorebirds of note reported during September included a juvenile American Golden-Plover near the Tijuana River mouth 13-16 Sep (MSa, RTP), the only Pacific Golden-Plover so far this fall/winter being one at San Elijo Lagoon 11 Sep (SW), at least a dozen Solitary Sandpipers along the coast from the San Luis Rey River mouth to the Tijuana River Valley, and three Baird's Sandpipers lingering within the south San Diego Bay salt works ponds to 16 Sep (RTP), but only nine Pectoral Sandpipers with up to five of these at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton on 16-25 Sep (MSt, PAG).

The only Tropical Kingbird was one in the Tijuana River Valley 28-30 Sep + (DP, JP). The summering White-eyed Vireo at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery

American Golden-plover at the Tijuana River mouth.

Photo by Matt Sadowski.

on Pt. Loma completed its late summer molt and was last reported on 23 Sep (EGK). A Blue-headed Vireo was photographed at Lake O'Neill on 11 Sep (JM, BM). A well photographed Yellow-green Vireo remained in Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 26-27 Sep (SES, GN). As elsewhere throughout California, numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches are evident in areas well away from the species' expected range, with as many as three at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery after 22 Sep (GMcC, SES) and singles elsewhere in the San Diego County coastal lowlands through the end of the month. Possibly associated with the nuthatch movement is the major flight of Red Crossbills bringing large numbers to the coast north of San Diego County, up to three at Friendship Park in Chula Vista 14-15 Sep (BJS, MSa) and at least ten on Pt. Loma 27-29 Sep (JK, GN, SES) locally, along with eight in Jacumba 22 Sep (JK).

Twenty-six species of wood-warblers were found during the month. Along with the eleven expected West Coast breeders, and the three relatively common vagrants to California (3 Northern Waterthrushes, 4 Black-and-white Warblers, and 8 American Redstarts), single Ovenbirds were at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 15-19 Sep (GN, SBM) and 27-30 Sep (TRS, MSt). A male Prothonotary Warbler was photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 19 Sep (DA). The only Tennessee Warbler reported was one at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton on 20 Sep (PAG), as was the only Lucy's Warbler 15-19 Sep (PAG, JK). A female

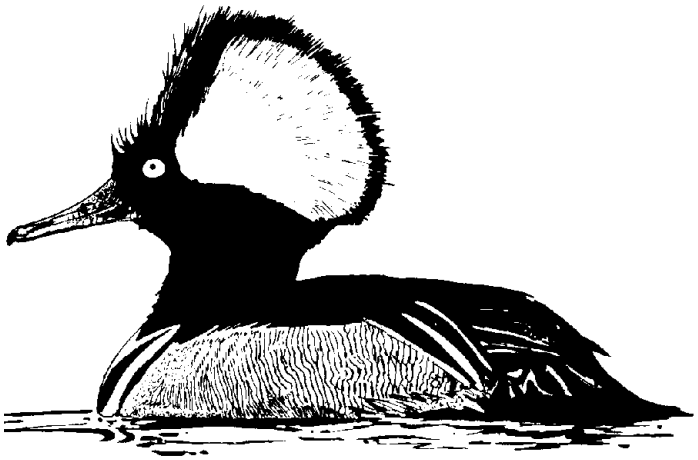
Yellow-green Vireo at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery.

Photo by Gary Nunn.

Hooded Warbler bathed at a private residence on Pt. Loma 11 Sep (SBM), and a Northern Parula was well inland in Jacumba 22 Sep (JK). A single Magnolia Warbler was at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in The Tijuana River Valley 27 Sep (RN) and a Blackburnian Warbler was nicely photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 26 Sep (JK). Up to two Chestnut-sided Warblers were at Lake O'Neill 18-25 Sep (CAM, SBM). Only three Blackpoll Warblers were reported, with one at Friendship Park 12-14 Sep (MSa), another at Lake O'Neill 12-20 Sep (PAG) and the third at Solana Highlands Park in Del Mar 26 Sep (JK); likewise, the only Palm Warblers were one at Lake O'Neill 16-17 Sep (JC, PAG) and at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 28-31 Sep + (JW, EGK), but a male Canada Warbler at Lake O'Neill 15-19 Sep (PAG, JK) was certainly the most popular amongst the crowd.

Less than expected were only three Clay-colored Sparrows, with one in the Tijuana River Valley 8 Sep (BLC), and single birds at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 12-14 Sep (EGK, GN) and 23-29 Sep (EGK, DWA). A somewhat elusive Lark Bunting was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 26 Sep (GN), and an unexpected Grasshopper Sparrow was at the same location 14 Sep (GN). Acting much like sparrows were single Dickcissels at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 11 Sep (GN) and 16 Sep (GN). Other sightings of note were those of single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, all on 15 Sep, in residential Pt. Loma (SES), at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery (SES) and at a residence near Batiquitos Lagoon (PW), and single Baltimore Orioles at the Aviara Resort in Carlsbad 28 Sep (SB) and the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park 30 Sep (KR).

Listed observers: Douglas W. Aguillard, Dennis Ancinec, Steve Brad, Barbara L. Carlson, Jeff Coker, Andrew Fisher, Melissa Galieti, Peter A. Ginsburg, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Curtis A. Marantz, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Todd McGrath, Jimmy McMorran, Brennan Mulrooney, Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, Dave Povey, Kim Roth, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Susan E. Smith, BJ Stacy, Trent R. Stanley, Mark Stratton (MSt), Stanley Walens, Phil White, Joseph Worley.



SAN DIEGO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

President	Tom Blackman (619) 222-2630 obeach@cox.net
Vice-president	Gary Nunn 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 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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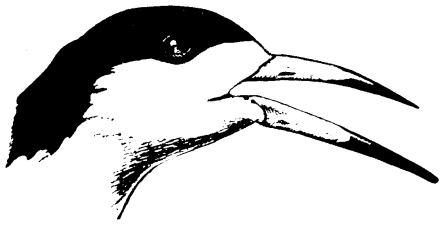
San Diego Field Ornithologists
c/o BJ Stacey
9407 Domer Rd.
Santee, CA 92071