

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

The July meeting will take place on July 17th. Once again we will be meeting in the Hoffman Room of the San Diego Foundation Building, 2508 Historic Decatur Rd. at **6:00 p.m.** when we will be treated to a presentation about Birding in Cuba.

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.



Burrowing Owls in Otay Mesa



Gull-billed Tern being chased by a Least Tern in Imperial Beach

Photos by BJ Stacey

We are looking into adding member photos of rare birds from San Diego County to the SDFO web site. Please contact BJ if you are willing to offer the use of some of your photos.

San Diego Field Ornithologists Web Site
<http://sandiegofieldornithologists.org/>

San Diego Field Ornithologists on FaceBook
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San Diego County Bird Observations
June 2012

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Numbers of Black-vented Shearwaters off La Jolla in early June declined from those reported in late May, but built up to an impressive 25 at Point La Jolla on 26 Jun (PEL). Fifteen Ashy Storm-Petrels counted between 8 and 24 nautical miles off San Diego 27 Jun (TAB, PAG, PEL and DP) was more than normally encountered in these waters. Noteworthy numbers of Black Storm-Petrels feeding within sight of shore off La Jolla included at least 80 at Point La Jolla on 30 Jun (PEL). An adult Red-billed Tropicbird was well photographed only 23 nautical miles west of Point Loma 27 Jun (PEL) – most off Southern California remain west of the Channel Islands. A first-year Brown Booby 17 nautical miles west of Ocean Beach 27 Jun (PEL) most likely came from the nearby Los Coronado Islands.

The presence of two American Bitterns at Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River valley 10 Jun (MS, JK) strongly suggests nesting at this location - there remains only one confirmed record for nesting in San Diego County (Unitt 2004). Two Reddish Egrets were known present, with one at the Santa Margarita River mouth most of June (ST) and the other on south San Diego Bay 17-19 Jun (JK, DL) - this species has now expanded its area of regular occurrence northward from northern Baja California to include San Diego and Orange Counties. Numbers of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons continue to increase, with two pairs attending nests each containing three young in Imperial Beach (JP, GMcC) and another pair attending a nest at Seaworld in San Diego (JP). The pair of Harris's Hawks, along with a "helper" (the young bird fledged last summer), fledged three young in Jacumba at the end of the month (EGK).

Summering waterbirds were almost non-existent as indicated by only two Brant on San Diego Bay, and exceptionally few scoters and loons anywhere. However, a basic-plumage **Curlew Sandpiper** on south San Diego Bay 16 Jun + (PEL) was certainly the most noteworthy shorebird known present – it is believed to be a one-year old bird, so likely been present since late May or early June, and spending the summer with other non-breeding shorebirds on the bay. Other summering shorebirds on south San Diego Bay in mid-June included about 150 Black-bellied Plovers, 170 Semipalmated Plovers, 150 Willets, 25 Marbled Godwits, 15 Ruddy Turnstones, four Black Turnstones, 40 Red Knots, 30 Western Sandpipers and 100 Short-billed Dowitchers. Some of Willets were likely failed breeders returning south early as supported by the presence of one inland on Sweetwater Reservoir on 16 Jun (PEL), and a Lesser Yellowlegs on "south bay" 16 Jun (PEL) was most likely a failed breeder going south early. Twenty-nine Wilson's Phalaropes on one of the south bay saltworks ponds 16 June were obvious fall migrants.

An alternate-plumage Common Murre at Pt. La Jolla 30 Jun (GN) was probably a failed breeder moving south, but provides one of a very few records in San Diego County in summer. Also of note were single Pigeon Guillemots at Pt. La Jolla on 18 and 29 Jun (SW and JK) - San Diego County is south of this species' normal range, but it has been recorded south to the Los Coronados Islands. With the upcoming "split" of the Xantus's Murrelet into

the Scripp's and Guadalupe Murrelets, we now need to determine how late Scripp's Murrelets *Synthliboramphus scrippsi* remain in San Diego waters, and when the first Guadalupe Murrelets *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus* reach our waters. A Scripp's Murrelet 18 nautical miles off Point Loma 27 Jun (TAB et al) and another at Point La Jolla in La Jolla 29 Jun (PEL) are suspected to be late. Four Rhinoceros Auklets off San Diego 27 Jun (TAB et al) were evidently summering locally – this alcid nests no farther south than Point Conception.

A calling Flammulated Owl on Mt. Palomar 27 May-16 Jun (JK) was likely on breeding territory, though nesting within this county has yet to be documented. A Pinyon Jay was still present at Wooded Hill in the Laguna Mountains 16 Jun (GLR) – the first ever in San Diego County in June. As many as three pairs of Brown-crested Flycatchers are believed nesting in Borrego Springs along with two more pairs along San Felipe Creek near “Scissors Crossing” (JK). In addition two pairs of Summer Tanagers in the same area along San Felipe Creek 3-23 Jun (JK) were no doubt nesting; a singing male in the San Pasqual Valley near Ramona 19 Jun (CGE) was likely a lone bird soliciting a mate, while a young male at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery on Point Loma 12 Jun (GN) and a female in the nearby residential area 18 Jun (BLC) were late spring vagrants.

A Red-eyed Vireo photographed on the Otay River in Nestor 24 Jun (JK), a Northern Parula on Mount Palomar 7 Jun (SB) and an American Redstart near Wooded Hill in the Laguna Mountains 9 Jun (GN) were all likely late spring vagrants, as was a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery on Point Loma 12 Jun (GN). A singing male Indigo Bunting on Hot Springs Mountain 16 Jun (JK) acted as if defending a nesting territory, and a male Hermit Warbler near Wooded Hill in the Laguna Mountains 9 Jun (GN) was in suitable breeding habitat, but well south of the southern most known nesting localities in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Listed observers: Thomas A. Blackman, Steve Brad, Barbara L. Carlson, Claude G. Edwards, Peter A. Ginsburg, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Paul E. Lehman, Darlene Luckins, Guy McCaskie, Gary Nunn, David Povey, Jim Pea, Geoffrey L. Rogers, Mark Stratton, Steve Tucker and Stanley Walens.

Literature Cited:

Unitt, Philip. 2004. San Diego County Bird Atlas. Proc. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist. 39. San Diego Nat. Hist. Mus., San Diego.

Guy McCaskie
4 July 2012

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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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