

# The **SKIMMER**



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## SDFO NEWS

### Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, February 17, 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. Parking is available on the street or in the adjacent parking lots.

Program: Jenna Stanek of the Southern Sierra Research Station, Weldon, CA, will discuss “Yellow-billed Cuckoo response to riparian habitat restoration: We built it; did they come?”

The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a California endangered species and a recent federally listed threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The western cuckoo population has declined dramatically over the last 100 years due to extensive loss or degradation of suitable breeding habitat, primarily riparian forests and associated bottomlands dominated by willow (*Salix* spp.), cottonwood (*Populus* spp.), or mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.). The loss of riparian forest habitat has been mainly due to dam construction, water regulation, industrial agriculture within former floodplains, and residential development. Like many rivers in the west, the Lower Colorado River over the past century has been transformed by dams to a string of storage pools, and vast areas of flood plain have been converted to agricultural fields and urban settlements. In 2005, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program was created to protect, maintain, and create wildlife habitat for yellow-billed cuckoos, and other threatened and near-threatened species occurring within the historic lower Colorado River flood plain. The revegetation efforts on the historical LCR flood plain have thus far created successful yellow-billed cuckoo breeding habitat and have proven to be an inspiration for restoration efforts.



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Jenna Stanek earned a B.A. in Environmental Policy and Spanish at Albright College in 2000, a B.S. in Biology/Ecology from Western State College of Colorado in 2005, and an M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from Clemson University in 2010. She is mainly interested in community ecology, specifically stream ecosystems. She has worked on a variety of vertebrate projects studying Least Terns, salamanders, wood frogs, Mountain Yellow-legged Frogs, rosy-finches, Flammulated Owls, and Yellow-billed Cuckoos. She has a background in multivariate statistics and is involved in data analysis for the research station.

**SDFO NEWS (cont.)**

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, March 17, same time, same place. Program: "The coastal California Gnatcatcher controversy and how we determine distinctness of biological units," by John McCormack, Moore Laboratory of Zoology.

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## **SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JANUARY 2015**

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

The male Tufted Duck found by Matt Sadowski at Upper Otay Lake on 24 Dec was still present at the end of January (PEL). Multiple Brown Boobies continue to be seen from shore at the Tijuana River mouth (GMcC) and Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla (SW), along with up to five frequenting the buoys at the mouth of San Diego Bay (DWA). A noteworthy five Yellow-crowned Night-Herons that include four adults and a bird hatched in 2014 are roosting at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach (PEL). A Red-necked Grebe, exceptionally rare in San Diego County, photographed at the mouth of San Diego Bay on 7 Jan (MS) was remarkably the second known locally this winter. A flock of 14 Swainson's Hawks that spent the night of 28-29 Jan at Borrego Springs (PA, HC) was the earliest of the spring migrants reported this year. Up to two Zone-tailed Hawks were seen around Ramona 14 Dec-23 Jan (GG, JBe) and another was photographed at Lindo Lake in Lakeside 4 Jan (TF). The Pacific Golden-Plover wintering at the Tijuana River mouth was still present 31 Jan (JBr) and the other in Del Mar remained through January (PEL). Ancient Murrelets continued present along the coast as indicated by up to ten off Oceanside through 26 Jan (JMCM).

A Hammond's Flycatcher photographed near the Marston House in Balboa Park on 23 Jan (CZ) was likely the same bird present here during the winter of 2012-2013, but missed last winter. A Dusky Flycatcher, very rare locally in winter, was well photographed at Lake Hodges on 19 Jan (JK). A most cooperative Eastern Phoebe found by visiting birder Cynthia Berg near the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 1 January remained through the end of the month (PEL). Single Tropical Kingbirds were present in Presidio Park 1 Jan (PU), in Coronado/North Island Air Station through 15 Jan (PEL), at Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River Valley through 12 Jan (JMCM) and at Liberty Station on Pt. Loma through the month (NK). The Thick-billed Kingbird spending its 5<sup>th</sup> winter at the lower end of Poggi Creek in Chula Vista remained through January (TM), and can be expected to stay well into April based on its behavior in previous

years. A somewhat elusive Bell's Vireo found by Paul E. Lehman at Nestor Park in Nestor on 8 November was known present through 29 Jan (CAM). A Cassin's Vireo, far less common in winter locally than the Plumbeous Vireo, was in residential Pt. Loma 19 Jan (SBM). A Townsend's Solitaire photographed at Lindo Lake on 10 Jan (MN) was at an unexpected location. Varied Thrushes continue to be seen throughout the mountains and coastal lowlands. A Gray Catbird discovered coming to roost in the yard of Paulette Ache in Borrego Springs in mid-January was still present at the end of the month (PA), and a Brown Thrasher frequenting feeders at the home of Cynthia Burnham in Descanso since mid-November also remained through January (CB).

Noteworthy wood warblers include a known wintering Northern Waterthrush at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas through 28 Jan (PGN) and another found on the San Diego River in Mission Valley on 22 Jan (PEL); six Black-and-white Warblers between University City and the Tijuana River Valley, including the long-staying bird at Nestor Park known present through January (TM); a Tennessee Warbler photographed in Cardiff on 3 Jan (JMCM); and single Palm Warblers in San Ysidro through January (PEL), at the west end of Monument Rd. in the Tijuana River Valley still present 25 Jan (LR) and in residential Imperial Beach 3-5 Jan (GMcC). In addition, the Black-throated Green Warbler found on 29 October by Matt Sadowski spending its 2<sup>nd</sup> winter at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego was confirmed present at the end of January (CAM). An immature Harris's Sparrow found by Paul E. Lehman on 12 January along Leon Ave in Nestor has remained with the same flock of White-crowned Sparrows through the end of the month (PEL). The elusive Hepatic Tanager known wintering near the Marston House was still present 4 Jan (NC). At least ten Summer Tanagers were known present locally in January. The Orchard Oriole found by Jeanie Anderson at the edge of Balboa Park on 20 December remained through 4 Jan (JBr), the one found by Paul E. Lehman in Carlsbad on 23 December also remained through 4 Jan (TG), and a third frequented Leon Ave. in

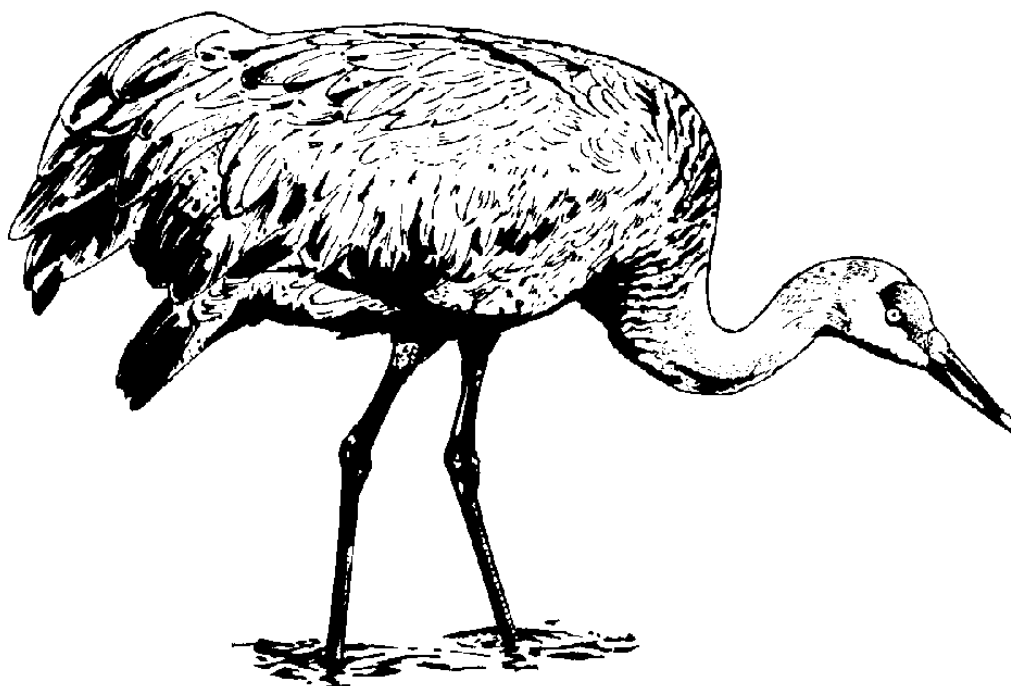
Nestor 12-24 Jan (PEL, PAG). Only three Baltimore Orioles were known present in January with the female found by Paul E. Lehman on 8 November in Nestor Park still present 29 Jan (PEL), the female found by Paul E. Lehman in Carlsbad on 23 December remaining through 4 Jan (TG), and a male seen in La Jolla on 25 Jan (PEL).

Listed observers: Paulette Ache, Douglas W. Aguillard, Josh Beck (JBe), John Bruin (JBr), Cynthia Burnham, Nancy Chris-

tensen, Hal Cohen, Tom Frankenberger, Greg Gilson, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Jay Keller, Nick Komar, Paul E. Lehman, Curtis A. Marantz, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Thomas Myers, P. G. Nell, Mike Nelson, Lisa Ruby, Matt Sadowski, Philip Unitt, Stanley Walens, 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.



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