The **SKIMMER**

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 16, 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: "Singing With Feathers: The Fabulous Courtships of Woodstars and Other 'Bee' Hummingbirds," by Dr. Christopher Clark, Assistant Professor of Biology, University of California, Riverside.

Dr. Clark has traveled to 12 countries in North, Central and South America to study various species of hummingbird. His particular focus as been courtship displays that males produce for females. Every species has unique ornaments and flies in unique patterns. Dr. Clark will play some of the more fantastic displays he has recorded, and tell stories about doing research in Brazil, Cuba and Guatemala. He will also describe some of the more interesting aspects of how feathers have evolved to generate sound.

Dr. Christopher J. Clark taught himself to birdwatch at age 15 in the Seattle Arboretum. Among his wintertime Seattle favorites were the male Anna's Hummingbirds that held breeding territories despite 16 hour nights and sub-freezing temperatures. His decision to study hummingbirds crystallized after he graduated from Washington State University in 2001 with a degree in Zoology. He attended graduate school at UT Austin and then UC Berkeley, performing his dissertation on hummingbird tail morphology.

In 2008 his publication of a paper "The Anna's Hummingbird chirps with its tail" made headlines from India, Australia, and the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle.* After completing his Ph.D. in 2009 Dr. Clark has continued his research on how bird feathers make sound as a postdoc with Richard Prum in Yale University's Peabody Museum. He was a featured scientist in a PBS documentary "Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air" that aired Jan 10, 2010. He presently studies how feathers of all kinds make sounds, with an emphasis on hummingbird courtship displays. A world expert on hummingbirds, he has traveled extensively in Latin America attempting to

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record the courtship displays of Sheartails, Woodstars, and other rare hummingbird species. He has authored 20 scientific papers and has recently joined the faculty in the Biology department at UC Riverside.

In addition to the program, we will also conduct our annual business meeting and elect club officers for the coming year. The current office holders have all agreed to serve for another year:

President: Gary Nunn

Vice President: Dave Povey

Secretary: Conny Jamison

Treasurer: Rich Breisch

Program Chair: Gary Nunn

Membership Chair: Mike Goldhamer

Skimmer Editor: John Walters

We also encourage additional nominations from the floor.

Next month's meeting; Tuesday, July 21, same time, same place. Program to be announced.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MAY 2015

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

A Horned Grebe was still on San Dieguito Lagoon in Del Mar on 28 May (SBo), and another on Whelan Lake on 6 May (SBM) was not only somewhat late, but at an unexpected inland location—one on San Diego Bay on 4 June 1967 appears to be the latest staying in the County other than a likely summering bird on Mission Bay 11-18 July 1967 (Unitt 2004). A **Laysan Albatross** was photographed at the northern end of the 9-Mile Bank on 3 May (DP), and what was likely the same bird in that same area provided the highlight of the organized pelagic birding trip to the 30-Mile Bank off San Diego on 16 May (DP), following the boat to within 5 miles of Ocean Beach—Unitt (2004) lists no records for live birds in San Diego

Laysan Albatross at the Nine-Mile Bank. Photo by Tom Blackman.

County waters, though two dead and partially decomposed carcasses have been recovered on our beaches. In addition, Jorgensen and Theriault (2012) list three records for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, and a fourth was recovered there on 24 December 2013 (*North American Birds* 68:275). Two Black-footed Albatrosses, now somewhat rare in San Diego County waters, were seen during pelagic birding trips off San Diego on 3 and 16 May (DP) with a high count of 4 there on 12 May (DP). Brown Boobies continue to be seen off-shore (DP) through May—no surprise with nearly 300 suspected present on the Islas Coronados (*fide* SW). A sub-adult Reddish Egret, present since at least 19 February, was still present on south San Diego Bay 25 May (GMcC)—adult birds wintering locally normally move south in the late winter/early spring to breeding locations in Baja California. Two pairs of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were attending large

Wilson's Plover at Sweetwater Marsh, Chula Vista. Photo by Robert Patton.

young in the Imperial Beach Sports Park at the end of May (GMcC), and up to four, two adults and two sub-adults, have been in the area of Famosa Slough/Sea World through at least 4 May (TM); the adults could well have a nest in this area as in past years.

A Harris's Hawk in Jacumba on 16-18 May (EGK) appears to be the first in California in well over a year. A first-summer Broad-winged Hawk, very rare locally in spring, was photographed over Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River Valley on 9 May (KeH). Although one or two Zone-tailed Hawks regularly spend the winter at and around the San Diego Zoo Safari Park near Escondido, an immature there on 16 May (KW) was unexpected. At least one of the wintering Black Oystercatchers was still at the entrance to San Diego Bay (Pt. Loma and the Zuniga Jetty) on 16 May (DP), and one was photographed on the beach at Torrey Pines on 14 May (LS). A Wilson's Plover, a visitor from the south that is now found almost annually in San Diego County, was associating with nesting Least Terns at the Sweetwater

Yellow-throated Vireo at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, Point Loma. Photo by Gary Nunn.

Hooded Warbler at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, Point Loma. Photo by Gary Nunn.

Marsh in Chula Vista on 12 May (RTP). An adult Long-tailed Jaeger, normally encountered in San Diego County waters only as a rare fall migrant, 8.6 nm off Pt. Loma 12 May (DP) provides one of less than half a dozen records for spring. A South Polar Skua 16 nm off Ocean Beach on 3 May (DP) was the only one encountered in San Diego County waters this spring.

Inca Doves, our most recent established resident species in this County, were still present at the Roadrunner Club on 31 May (NC). A Merlin at the Tijuana River mouth on 3 May (PEL) was late—Unitt (2004) lists 26 April as the latest date for a wintering bird/spring migrant in this County. Presumed territorial pairs of Brown-crested Flycatchers, a species first recorded in San Diego County in 2000, were along Coyote Creek in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 28 May (KC) and at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs on 31 May (NC). A Yellow-throated Vireo, a casual straggler to San Diego County, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 30-31 May (GN).

Reports of wood-warblers considered rare in California included an Ovenbird that hit a window in Borrego Springs on 8 May (KaH: specimen at San Diego Natural History Museum); single Black-and-white Warblers at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 12 May (GN), 27 May (GN) and 31 May (RN), and at Kate Sessions Park in La Jolla on 27 May (RC); a Tennessee Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 12 May (GN); a singing male Hooded Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 12 May (GN); single American Redstarts in Balboa Park on 23 May (PU) and at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 30-31 May (*fide* GN); a singing male Chestnut-sided Warbler at

Chestnut-sided Warbler at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, Point Loma. Photo by Catherine Zinsky.

Canada Warbler banded at Cabrillo National Monument, Point Loma. Photo by Suellen Lynn.

Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 30-31 May (GN, CZ); an unusually late Palm Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 31 May (MS); and a Canada Warbler banded at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma on 26 May (SL). An "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler in Santee on 25 May (RN) and a "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler on Pt. Loma on 31 May (MS) were both late for wintering birds or spring migrants; however, stragglers have been recorded away from the local mountains into the first week of June (Unitt 2004).

The male Summer Tanager found in Jacumba 30 Apr (EGK) was joined by a female in May with both birds believed still present at the end of the month (EGK), and single vagrants were in Leucadia 25 May (SBr) and in Coronado 26 May (EC). Four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found, with single males at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 13-17 May (GN), in Leucadia 18 May (JMcM), at Jacumba 26 May (EGK) and along Coyote Creek in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 28 May (KC). Single male Indigo Buntings were seen in Jacumba on 1 May (EGK) and 20 May (JCS), and a female was photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 30 May (GN). A fast moving female Orchard Oriole photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 18 May (GN) provides one of a very few documented records for a spring vagrant in San Diego County. A stunning adult male Baltimore Oriole remained around Lake Murray 13-26 May (MM, JRM). The female Evening Grosbeak, present in Jacumba since 16 Feb, was last seen on 6 May (EGK).

Observers: Susan Bond (SBo), Steve Brad (SBr), Nancy Christensen, Ross Christie, Kevin Clark, Elizabeth Copper, Kevin Hamm (KeH), Kate Harper (KaH) Eric G. Kallen, Paul E. Lehman, Suellen Lynn, Michael Matherly, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, James R. Morris, Thomas Myers, Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Dave Povey, Matt Sadowski, Lea Squires, John C. Sterling, Phil Unitt, Stanley Walens, Kenneth Weaver, Catherine Zinsky.

Literature Cited:

Jorgensen, Paul and Robert Theriault 2012. *Birds of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park*. California State Parks, Sacramento.

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

Baltimore Oriole at Lake Murray. Photo by Jim Morris.

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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 **johnfwalters5552@gmail.com**

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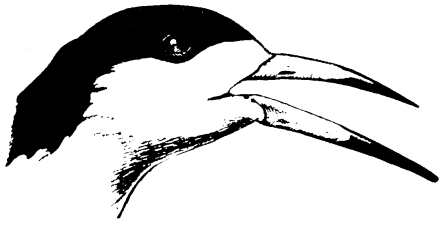
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