The SKIMMER

Volume 42, Number 11—November 2015

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, November 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: "eBird: Innovating Citizen-Science, Big Data Research, and Bird Conservation," by Brian L. Sullivan and the eBird Team.

In our fast-paced world, birds serve as an unrivaled window for studying and assessing environmental change: literal canaries in coal mines. eBird is a network of human observers spread across the planet collecting millions of data points each month, combined with the power of remote sensors that collect real-time environmental data, spun together through innovative computer science and modeling efforts that ultimately achieve real-world conservation outcomes for birds. Today eBird is arguably the fastest-growing biodiversity network in existence. Find out how we've taken a novel approach to crowdsourcing and turned the birding community's global passion for birds into a vast data resource for science and conservation.

Brian Sullivan has conducted fieldwork on birds throughout North America for the past 25 years. Birding travels, photography, and field projects have taken him to Central and South America, Australia, Antarctica, the Arctic, and across North America. He has written and consulted on various books including popular and scientific literature on North American birds. He is a co-author of several books including: *Better Birding—Tips, Tools, and Concepts for the Field*; *Offshore Sea Life ID Guide: West Coast*; *Offshore Sea Life ID Guide: East Coast*; *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors*; and the forthcoming *Princeton Guide to North American Birds*. He is currently project leader for eBird (**www.ebird.org**) and photographic editor for the *Birds of North America Online* (**http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/BNA/**) at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. He also served as photographic editor for the American Birding Association's journal *North American Birds* (**http://www.americanbirding.org/pubs/nab/index.html**) from 2005 to 2013.

SDFO NEWS (cont.)

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, December 8, same time, same place. **Note the changed date!** Our annual Holiday Bash.

Christmas Bird Counts Are Coming!

Here is a list of dates and contact information for the local Christmas Bird Counts:

San Diego Sat Dec 19th Steve Ritt stevenmritt@gmail.com

Anza-Borrego Sun Dec 20th Bob Theriault rtheriault@uci.edu

Lake Henshaw Mon Dec 21st Gretchen Cummings gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net

Oceanside Sun Dec 27th Andy Mauro akamauro1@gmail.com

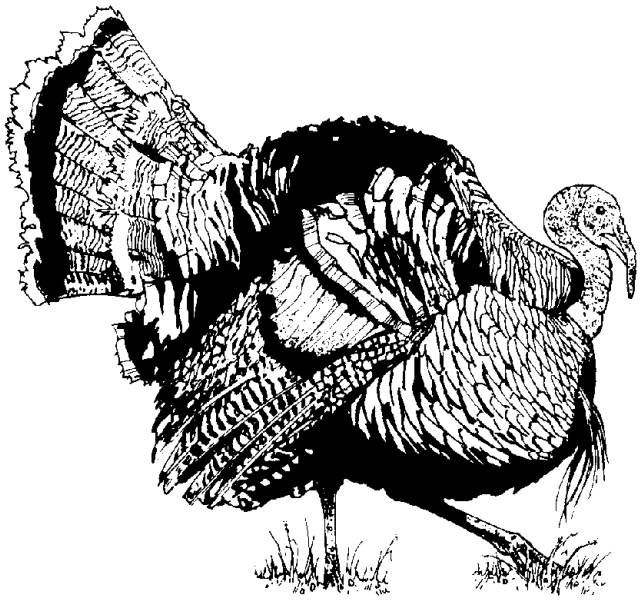
Rancho Santa Fe Tue Dec 29th Robert Patton rpatton@san.rr.com

Escondido Sat Jan 2nd Ken Weaver gnatcatcher@sbcglobal.net

SDFO New Year's Day Pelagic Trip

The San Diego Field Ornithologists New Year's Day Pelagic will be aboard the *Sea Adventure 80* out of H&M Landing in San Diego Bay. The trip will sail at 8 a.m., and return at 2:30 p.m., Jan. 1, 2016. Cost is $40, and this trip has no non-paying leaders. Fifty-seven spots are open to all SDFO members, their families, and friends. Leftover spots will sold in December.

Please make your reservation with me at my e-mail dpovey@nethere.com , give the name of each person going and a contact phone number. Payment will be made to SDFO on the morning of the trip. We cannot take credit cards.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, OCTOBER 2015

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Two potential additions to the list of birds recorded in San Diego County were reported this month. The first was a sub-adult **Nazca/Masked Booby** found on 20 October by Curtis A. Marantz, first feeding with Brown Boobies around two sport-fishing boats about half a mile off Sunset Cliffs, then perched on the back of a small lobster-pot boat that came as close as a quarter-mile from shore. This booby was certainly the same suspected Nazca Booby held by the International Bird Rescue Center in San Pedro between 1 and 9 October. The age of the San Pedro booby was the same as that of the Sunset Cliffs booby. In addition, the Sunset Cliffs booby was seen to be wearing a shiny band on its left leg, and when released, the San Pedro booby was fitted with a standard U.S. Fish & Wildlife band on its left leg. This booby was first captured in Newport, Oregon on 11 September, held in Oregon until 1 October, then flown south by Alaska Airlines to Los Angeles and held in San Pedro to 9 October, when it was released off the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Since blood was taken for DNA sequencing or stable isotope analysis, the true identity of this booby will be known. However, to me, the record is tainted by the long periods in captivity and transportation across state lines. The specific identity of a similar aged Nazca/Masked Booby taken to Project Wildlife from the Oceanside Harbor on 30 October by Michael Martin should also eventually be determined. The second potential addition was an **Indigo/Varied Bunting** at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay on 13 October. When found by Matt Sadowski, this bunting was extremely secretive, flying from one spot to another, and remaining out of view except for a few seconds. Matt managed to get a couple of photos of the bunting, believing at the time that it was an Indigo Bunting. However, upon studying the images, it is clear that this bunting has a noticeably curved culmen, a characteristic normally associated with the Varied Bunting. In addition, this bunting lacks the diffused streaking on the flanks normally present on Indigo Buntings, and it is not clear if there is in fact any diffused streaking anywhere on the underparts. Also, the indistinct markings on the wings of this bunting closely match those of a known immature Varied Bunting at Horse Thief Springs in the San Bernardino desert 10-12 October 2012. It will be the responsibility of the California Bird Records Committee to determine if it is indeed an acceptable Varied Bunting record.

An apparent Varied Bunting at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay on 13 October 2015. Photo by Matt Sadowski.

An adult male Eurasian Wigeon along with a hybrid Eurasian x American Wigeon arrived at Famosa Slough in Loma Portal on 9 Oct (JB) and appear settled for the winter. A male Hooded Merganser at Sweetwater Reservoir on 31 Oct (PEL) establishes one of the earliest dates for a fall migrant in San Diego

A Short-eared Owl at the Tijuana River estuary on 28 October 2015.

County. Most unusual was an adult Red-necked Grebe at the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley 5-14 Oct (GG and PEL), as most of the few found in Southern California are on salt water, and the species has been found only once in Mexico. A Blue-footed Booby was reported off Sunset Cliffs on 19 Oct (KR). High counts for Brown Boobies included 32 during the 11 October Buena Vista Audubon Society pelagic bird trip off San Diego aboard the *Grande* (DP), and at least 40 from Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 18-19 Oct (SW & PEL). The Neotropic Cormorant photographed on Lake O'Neill at Camp Pendleton 30 Sep was still present on 25 Oct (AB). The immature Reddish Egret, present on south San Diego Bay since 19 February, was last reported on 8 Oct (GMcC). Up to five Yellow-crowned Night-Herons continue to be seen around the Tijuana Slough NWR (GMcC). An adult Broad-winged Hawk remained for about half an hour over Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma on 27 Oct (SBM). Black Oystercatchers appear settled around the southern part of Pt. Loma for the winter, with a high count of six there on 11 Oct (GG). The Pacific Golden-Plover first seen at the San Dieguito River mouth on 9 Sep was still present 24 Oct (PEL), and the other found at Border Field State Park on 27 August was still present 23 Oct (PEL), both being birds known present at these locations last winter. A Mountain Plover, now very rare anywhere on the coast of Southern California, was at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay 16 Oct (GN). Two Ruffs were found in the County this month, with one at Goat Canyon in the Tijuana River Valley 10-11 Oct (DP & GMcC) and the other along La Media Rd. near the truck crossing on Otay Mesa 21-31 Oct (PEL), the latter appearing settled for the winter. A Pectoral Sandpiper on Camp Pendleton on 9 Oct (BM) was the only one known in the County this month. An adult Sabine's Gull was at the Chula Vista Wildlife Reserve on San Diego Bay on 2 Oct (RTP), and an immature was even farther from the open ocean at Lower Otay Lake on 17 Oct (JSt). The only White-winged Dove reported along the immediate coast was one at Famosa Slough on 18 Oct (PEL). A Short-eared Owl, now a somewhat rare win-

A Mountain Plover, now a rare to casual visitor to San Diego County, at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay on 16 October 2015. Photo by Gary Nunn.

A juvenile Ruff with a Long-billed Dowitcher in Goat Canyon at the southwestern corner of the Tijuana River Valley on 10 October 2015. Photo by Alex Abela.

ter visitor anywhere in the County, was well photographed at the Tijuana River estuary on 28 Oct (JRM).

Two Tropical Kingbirds near the Sail Ho Golf Course at Liberty Station on 14 Oct (PEL) were still present at the end of the month and can be expected to remain into the winter; an Eastern Kingbird with them 14-25 Oct (PEL) establishes the latest date ever for this species in California—most have departed the United States for southern wintering grounds by early October. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, always an exciting bird to find in California, was at the eastern edge of San Elijo Lagoon on 12 Oct (RTP). A Bell's Vireo at Nestor Park in Nestor on 21 Oct (GMcC) may have been the same bird present here last winter—time will tell. A Yellow-throated Vireo, the 4th to be found in San Diego County this year, was also at Nestor Park 21-22 Oct (PEL). An impressive seven Plumbeous Vireos were found in and around San Diego this month, with some if not most expected to remain into the winter. A Golden-crowned Kinglet, a scarce wanderer to coastal San Diego County, was at Ft. Rose- crans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 25 Oct (MSt). A Gray Catbird was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 15-17 Oct (MSa). Four Sage Thrashers were reported, with single birds at Cabrillo National Monument on 3 Oct (TJ), along San Mateo Creek on Camp Pendleton on 5 Oct (BM), at the south San Diego Bay salt works on 13 Oct (MSa), and in the area of the intersection of Ponto Dr. and Avda. Encinas in southwestern Carlsbad 24-31 Oct + (SB). Red-throated Pipits were known present at two locations, with up to three at Fiesta Island 1-20 Oct (DH), and up to two in the area of the intersection of Ponto Dr. and Avda. Encinas 3-31 Oct + (PGN). A Lapland Longspur, the only one found this fall, was at Fiesta Island 3-12 Oct (JR). Up to four Chestnut-collared Longspurs were at Fiesta Island 17-28 Oct (GN), two were found at the Ramona Grasslands Preserve near Ramona on 20 Oct (JMcM), and another was there on 21 Oct (JMcM). A McCown's Longspur, the rarest of the three species of longspur recorded in San Diego County, was at Fiesta Island 13 Oct (MSa).

The late staying Eastern Kingbird along Woodworth Way at Liberty Station on 17 October 2015. Photo by Thomas A. Benson.

One of the Red-throated Pipits in Carlsbad on 25 October 2015. Photo by Tito Gonzalez.

A Northern Waterthrush frequenting the river at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 13 Sep-9 Oct (MSa and RA) appears to have moved elsewhere, but one along Escondido Creek in Encinitas 17 Oct (GCH) and another at the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley after 16 Oct (RA) could well stay through the winter. At least 21 Black-and-white Warblers were reported from as many locations along the coast between Encinitas and the Tijuana River Valley this month, with most anticipated to attempt wintering locally. Four Tennessee Warblers were reported, with single birds at Kimball Park in National City on 10 Oct (PEL), along the northern edge of Mission Bay on 12 Oct (PEL), near the intersection of I-5 and I-15 in south San Diego on 20 Oct (PEL) and at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas on 31 Oct (PGN). The only three American Redstarts reported were all in the Tijuana River Valley, with one at the Bird & Butterfly Garden 28 Sep-3 Oct (DT), another there on 26 Oct (MSe) and the third along Monument Rd. on 13 Oct (PEL). A Northern Parula was at North Island Naval Air Station on 23 Oct (JMcM). A Chestnut-sided Warbler at Lake O'Neill 28 Sep-9 Oct (PAG) was joined by a second on 2 Oct (PAG), and a third was at Kimball Park on 23 Oct (PEL). A Blackpoll Warbler at North Island Naval Air Station on 8 Oct (JMcM) was only the second reported in San Diego County this fall—certainly far fewer than expected at this time of the year. Half of the six Palm Warblers found this month were a little farther inland from the coast than expected, with one at Singing Hills Memorial Park in El Cajon on 6 Oct (DB), another at a private residence in Jamul 19 Oct (JM) and the third at a private residence in El Cajon on 23 Oct (CKS); the remaining three were single birds at Cottonwood Park in Encinitas on 8 Oct (GCH), at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay on 14 Oct (MSa) and near the Dairy Mart Ponds on 16 Oct (BM). The Black-throated Green Warbler known present at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego through the past two winters was again present 16 Oct through the end of the month (MSa). A Painted Redstart was present on Mission Bay 13-14 Oct (RTP).

Noteworthy sparrows reported this month included single Clay-colored Sparrows on Gage Dr. in residential Pt. Loma 12-15 Oct (PEL) and along Monument Rd. in the Tijuana River Valley on 21 Oct (PEL), a Lark Bunting at Fiesta Island 28-30 Oct (PEL), single Grasshopper Sparrows at Fiesta Island 12-15 Oct (PEL) and on 16 Oct (MSa), a Nelson's Sparrow at the Tijuana River estuary on 27 Oct (PEL), a Swamp Sparrow along La Media Rd. near the truck crossing on Otay Mesa on 21 Oct (PEL), and single White-throated Sparrows in Jacumba on 9 Oct (EGK), near the entrance to the Mission Bay Golf Course at the northern edge of Mission Bay on 15 Oct (PEL), at Point Loma Nazarene University on Pt. Loma on 15 Oct (MSa) and at a private residence along the rim of Tecolote Canyon in Clairemont 27-31 Oct (MM). The only Summer Tanagers reported were a female at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 23-24 Oct (JTS), an adult male at the Seascape Apartment complex in Carlsbad on 25 Oct (PGN), a female at Rohr Park in

Bonita on 28 Oct (BM) and another female at the lawn bowling field in Balboa Park on 31 Oct (PEL), which is far fewer than expected. Five Rose-breasted Grosbeaks was close to the expected number at this time of the year, with single birds at Kimball Park in National City on 10 Oct (PEL), in the Mission Hills area of San Diego 11-15 Oct (JSc), at Friendship Park in Chula Vista on 20 Oct (MSa), adjacent to the Sail Ho Golf Course 20-21 Oct (GMcC), and near Famosa Slough on 26 Oct (PEL). The only Indigo Buntings were one associating with sparrows adjacent to the Sail Ho Golf Course 21-23 Oct (PAG), and another at a private residence on Mount Ashmun Dr. in Clairemont on 22 Oct (TC). A green Painted Bunting was well photographed in the area of the Dairy Mart Ponds on 10 Oct (MD & AC). A Bobolink, now much rarer in San Diego County than in the 1960's and 1970's (Unitt 2004), was at Fiesta Island 13 Oct (BLC). Three Orchard Orioles, including an adult male at the Seascape Apartment complex in Carlsbad on 17 Oct (TG) and single females in south San Diego on 23 Oct (PEL) and at Kimball Park on 23 Oct (PEL), along with six Baltimore Orioles, including two together adjacent to the Sail Ho Golf Course 15-28 Oct (GMcC), one at the Seascape Apartment complex on 24 Oct (TG), another near the entrance to the Mission Bay Golf Course on 24 Oct (GN) and up to two at Rohr Park in Bonita 28-31 Oct (BM), are all likely to remain well into the winter. Birds reaching us from the high mountains to the north of San Diego County included a Cassin's Finch at a seed feeder in El Cajon 12-13 Oct (CKS), a Red Crossbill at a thistle feeder on Mt. Soledad in La Jolla on 24 Oct (EP), and two Evening Grosbeaks at a residence in Jacumba 13-16 Oct (EGK).

The short staying McCown's Longspur at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay on 13 October 2015. Photo by Catherine Zinsky.

Observers: Ryan Andrews, Alex Bairstow, Dave Batzler, Steve Brad, John Bruin, Barbara L. Carlson, Alejandra Cedillo, Travis Cooper, Manuel Duran, Greg Gillson, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Gjon C. Hazard, David Holway, Terry Jennings, Eric G. Kallen, Paul E. Lehman, John Martin, Marcie Mason, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, James R. Morris, Brennan Mulrooney, P. Gretchen Nell, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Ethna Piazza, Dave Povey, Jim Roberts, Kerry Ross, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Jill Schmidt (JSc), Mel Senac (MSe), Christopher K. Smith, Justyn T. Stahl, Jeremiah Stock (JSt), Mark Stratton (MSt), Robert Theriault, Diane Trappett, Stanley Walens.

Literature Cited:

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

SAN DIEGO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

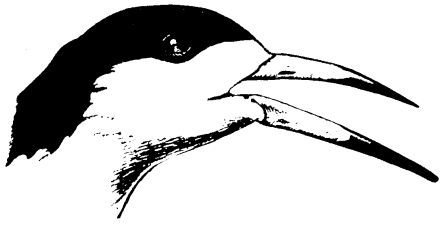
President	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybnunn@gmail.com
Vice-president	Dave Povey (619) 972-3098 dpovey@nethere.com
Secretary	Conny Jamison (619) 269-3264 cmjamison@cox.net
Treasurer	Rich Breisch (858) 278-6280 rsbreisch@san.rr.com
Program Chair	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybnunn@gmail.com
Membership 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**

JOIN SDFO

Dues for Calendar year: $25.00, including all renewals. Add $10.00 for each additional member in same household. **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO SDFO** and mail or give check to Membership Chair: Mike Goldhamer, 1231 Myrtle Ave., San Diego, CA 92103. For membership information, call Mike at (619) 888-6183.

Visit our website at

www.sandiegofieldornithologists.org

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