



SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, May 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: Dr. Robert Fisher will describe “Golden Eagle Research in Southern California: The Eagle Telenovela.” He writes, “San Diego has had a long legacy of Golden Eagle research, and I will first review the published literature to set the stage for the new work we initiated. In fall 2014, trapping was conducted to capture primarily adult Golden Eagles to better understand their movement biology as it relates to human use of the landscape in southern California. To date 28 different eagles have been captured across three counties (Orange, Riverside, San Diego), 22 of which were from San Diego County. The captured eagles are tagged and given solar GPS backpacks, from which they transmit 15 min. or in some cases 30 sec. 3-D location data. The altitude data is very important in knowing how they are crossing certain landforms, both natural and urban. The data is also informing mate selection, territory use, and foraging habitat. Modeling from this movement data is helping to delineate the remaining habitat that might be available to eagles in this landscape. Some of these models will be shown as will animations based on the real movement data from individual birds so that landscape usage is easier to understand. Sources of mortality will be discussed as will the nest site occupancy study initiated this winter. If genetic analysis is completed, these results will also be discussed that they should highlight relatedness between the individual birds captured to date.”



Robert Fisher received his B.S. from UC Irvine (1988), Ph.D. from UC Davis (1995), postdoc at UC San Diego, then Research Scientist position at USGS since 1998. Work in Robert’s lab consists of research throughout southern California on the effects of urbanization on biodiversity and testing the

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SDFO NEWS [continued]

effectiveness of the Habitat Conservation Plans initiated in the early 1990's. Significant work has been completed on the 2003 and 2007 San Diego fires and 2009 Station Fire in Los Angeles. Much of the work by his lab focuses on reptiles and amphibians, including several critically-endangered frogs. To understand the landscape ecology of southern California there was a critical need to look at species with large movement ranges, so our focus on mountain lions, bobcats, and now golden eagles helps fill that gap. Additional research programs focus on baseline biodiversity surveys and inventories in the Pacific Basin including the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Samoa.

June Election of Club Officers

Here is the slate of SDFO officers for the coming year:

Elected Officers

President: Dave Povey

Vice-President: Justyn Stahl

Secretary: Paula Theobald

Treasurer: Conny Jamison

Membership Chair: Nancy Christensen

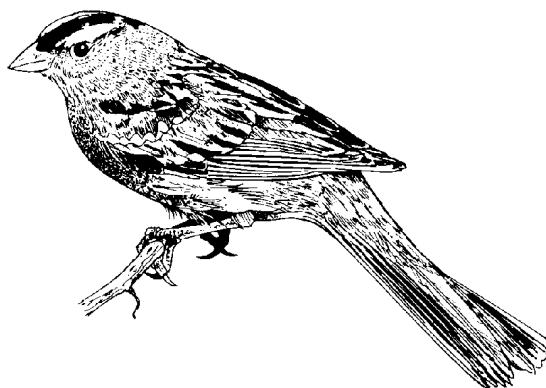
Appointed Positions

Program Chair: Justyn Stahl

Editor, *The Skimmer*: John Walters

Webmaster: Gary Nunn

We will vote on these nominees (plus any additional nominees from the floor) at the June meeting. Be sure and attend!



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, APRIL 2016

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

By far the most unexpected bird of the month was a **Swallow-tailed Kite** well seen moving northward low over the northern part of the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge, west of Ream Field, between 9:34 and 9:37 am on 22 Apr (DD), disappearing from view over Imperial Beach north of the Imperial Beach Sports Park. What was undoubtedly the same kite was then seen about 60 miles to the north near the intersection of Las Pulgas and Stuart Mesa Rds. on Camp Pendleton four hours later (JRu and SV). A Swallow-tailed Kite photographed near Granton in Sonoma County on 4 October 2007 provides the only record for California. If endorsed by the California Bird Records Committee, this will be the 2nd recorded in California and an addition to the birds of San Diego County.

A Brant in Borrego Springs 17-22 Apr (WTH) had most likely been “grounded” by adverse weather when migrating northward from wintering grounds in the Gulf of California. A female Black Scoter at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge 28-30 Apr (MS, JPa) could be attempting to summer locally as most scoters migrated

northward from San Diego in March—could this be the same bird present here in November and December 2015? An exceptionally late-staying Hooded Mer-

ganser present on the San Diego River near I-8 was in worn plumage on 29 Apr (JPe), so may attempt to summer locally. A total of seven Common Loons seen flying westward over the McCain Valley on 7 and 8 Apr (DG) were migrants from the Gulf of California heading northwestward towards the Pacific coast.

A Black-footed Albatross, rare in San Diego County waters, was 19 miles west of La Jolla on 30 Apr (PEL). Two Manx Shearwaters were identified from



This short-staying first-winter Glaucous Gull was at Marina View Park in Chula Vista during part of the afternoon on 3 April 2016. The characteristic black tipped pale pink bill is mostly hidden in this photo. *Photo by Dean DiTommaso.*

Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 11 Apr (PEL). Over 300 Black Storm-Petrels visible from Pt. La Jolla was far more than previously reported from shore, and an es-

estimated 5000 “rafting” over the 30-Mile Bank on 18 Apr (DP) was an exceptional number for this time of the year. An estimated 45 Ashy Storm-Petrels off San Diego on 18 Apr (DP & PEL) appears to be the highest single-day number recorded in San Diego County waters. Even more unexpected was a Least Storm-Petrel photographed at the 30-Mile Bank on 18 Apr (CAM). This more southerly species does not normal-

Borrego Springs 11-19 Apr (HC, RT), and another was photographed in Ramona on 25 Apr (NC). Single immature Zone-tailed Hawks were in Fallbrook on 10 Apr (KW) and at Torrey Pines on 15 Apr (MaL). Single Solitary Sandpipers, rare as spring migrants in San Diego County, were at Borrego Springs 9-10 Apr (AM, NC), at Famosa Slough in Ocean Beach on 16 Apr (GN), and at San Elijo Lagoon 16-19 Apr (SB, MN).



This immature Lesser Black-backed Gull, photographed on 22 April 2016, was present at the mouth of Los Penasquitos Lagoon 19 to 25 April. Note the somewhat dark coloration on the mantle, the mostly pale head with dark markings around the eye, the somewhat slender all black bill, and the long wings, all typically seen on first-winter birds. *Photo by Tito Gonzalez.*

ly reach the waters off California until August; the previous earliest record was 35 off San Diego on 2 June 1984 (Unitt 2004). A Red-billed Tropicbird was three miles off Mission Bay on the unexpected date of 22 Apr (CK, captain of the *Privateer*).

An adult Tricolored Heron visible from Marina View Park in Chula Vista on 18 Apr (DDiT) is the first to be found in San Diego County since May of 2011. At least one Reddish Egret was present on south San Diego Bay through 27 Apr (SBM). Yellow-crowned Night-Herons are still seen around the northern part of the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge and the Imperial Beach Sports Park (GMcC), and at least one has been reported in Ocean Beach at Famosa Slough since 10 Apr (CZ). A Harris’s Hawk was present in

A South Polar Skua 11 miles southwest of Pt. Loma on 30 Apr (PEL) was not only early in the year for this species in California waters but was also closer to shore than expected. A Sabine’s Gull seen from Pt. La Jolla on 11 Apr (PEL) established the earliest date for a spring migrant in San Diego County. A first-winter plumage Little Gull at the mouth of Los Penasquitos Lagoon on 7 Apr (BM) was only the third to be recorded in this county (Unitt 2004). An immature Laughing Gull, rare anywhere on the coast of California, was well described at the mouth of the San Diego River on 24 Apr (TR). An adult Franklin’s Gull, a scarce migrant throughout most of California in spring, was well seen flying north off Pt. Loma on 3 Apr (DDiT), and another was present off and on at the mouth of Los Penasquitos Lagoon 18-19 Apr (TG, JB). A late lingering first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull at the mouth of Los Penasquitos Lagoon 19-25 Apr (JPa, MS) adds one more to the ever increasing number now recorded in San Diego County. A somewhat late first-cycle Glaucous Gull was photographed at Marina View Park in Chula Vista on 3 Apr (GMcC). What appeared to be a Sandwich Tern with Elegant Terns at Marina View Park in Chula Vista on 17 Apr (MS) had more yellow at the tip of the bill than expected on a typical Sandwich Tern, with that



San Diego County's third Little Gull, showing the prominent "W" wing-pattern expected on first-winter birds, was present at the mouth of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon on and off throughout most of 7 April 2016. *Photo by Charles Jackson.*

yellow tinged orange, a short stripe of orange along the upper mandible, and a small patch of orange at the base of the bill, suggesting the bird was either a hybrid Sandwich x Elegant Tern or an Elegant Tern with an extreme amount of black on the bill.

A White-winged Dove in Santee at Santee Lakes on 27 Apr (IH) was close to the coast where rare. The only Calliope Hummingbird reported locally this spring was a female at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas on 14 Apr (SES). A Merlin in University City along Rose Canyon 29 Apr (JRo) establishes the latest date for a wintering bird or spring migrant in San Diego County. The wintering Tropical Kingbird along Woodworth Way at Liberty Station was last seen on 19 Apr (PEL). A flock of up to 13 Clark's Nutcrackers, unexpected in San Diego County at any time, near Morris Ranch Rd. in the Laguna Mountains 2-24 Apr (MC, JPa) "mirror" a similar flock reported

there by Fortiner almost 100 years ago 31 May-1 Jun 1920 (Unitt 2004). A Varied Thrush photographed at El Prado Campground in the Laguna Mountains on 22 Apr (KB) was unexpectedly late. A long-staying wintering Northern Waterthrush was on the Tijuana River at Saturn Blvd. through 3 Apr (JPa), and another was nearby at the Bird and Butterfly Garden on Hollister St. on 15 Apr (NC). A wintering Black-and-white Warbler adjacent to the Nature Center at San Elijo Lagoon was last reported on 11 Apr (CJ), and single birds were seen in residential Pt. Loma on 4 Apr (SBM), near the power plant in Carlsbad on 21 Apr (PAG) and in San Diego's Tecolote Canyon on 23 Apr (AK). Single singing Northern Parulas at San Elijo Lagoon near Rios Ave. on 21 Apr (KK) and at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas on 22 Apr (SES) were early spring vagrants. The male Black-throated Green Warbler spending its 3rd winter in San Diego's Greenwood Cemetery was last seen on 3 Apr (TH).

A Clay-colored Sparrow was well described from along the Santa Margarita River on Camp Pendleton on 20 Apr (MiL). Brewer's Sparrows have been far more numerous than expected in the coastal lowlands this spring, as indicated by such reports as at least nine at the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Miramar on 13 Apr (PU). A Black-throated Sparrow at Border Field State Park on 19 Apr (MS) was on the coast where rare. A Lark Bunting was found on Otay Mesa near Brown Field on 13 Apr (JM). The wintering White-throated Sparrow in Jamul was last reported on 6 Apr (JM), and a singing adult was near the intersection of Dupont St. and Silvergate Ave. in residential Pt. Loma 22-30 Apr (DB, MaL). A male Blue Grosbeak photographed at Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve on 5 Apr (CJ) establishes the earliest arrival date for this species in San Diego County—Unitt (2004) lists 16 April as the previous early date. An Orchard Oriole in El Cajon on 20 Apr (CKS) probably

wintered locally. An adult male Baltimore Oriole at De Anza Cove on Mission Bay on 10 Apr (JB) may have been an early spring vagrant. Up to at least 10 Cassin's Finches remaining around Cottonwood Campground in the McCain Valley through at least 8 Apr (DG) were well away from the closest known breeding areas in the San Jacinto Mountains of Riverside County. Three Red Crossbills at the Del Mar Hills School in Del Mar on 11 Apr (AJS) and one in Jacumba on 16 Apr (EGK) were most likely associated with the major movement of Red Cross-



This brightly colored adult male Baltimore Oriole was photographed at De Anza Cove on Mission Bay on 10 April 2016. *Photo by Gail DeLalla.*

West last fall. Small numbers of Pine Siskins continue to be found at scattered locations throughout the coastal lowlands.

Listed observers:

Dave Batzler, Steve Brad, John Bruin, Kevin Burns, Nancy Christensen, Hal Cohen, Mauro Colabianchi, Dean DiTommaso, Daniel Driscoll, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, David Goodward, Iunona Harris, W. Terry Hunefeld, Terry Hurst, Charles Jackson, Eric G. Kallen, Anitra Kaye, Cristin Kelly, Katie Koch, Paul E. Lehman, Max Leibowitz (MaL), Michael Lester (MiL), Curtis A. Marantz, John Martin, Sara B.

Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Alan Miller, Brennan Mulrooney, Mike Nelson, Gary Nunn, Jim Pawlicki (JPa), Jim Pea (JPe), Dave Povey, Jim Roberts (JRo), Joe Russell (JRu), Tuck Russell, Matt Sadowski, Adam J. Searcy, Christopher K. Smith, Susan E. Smith, Robert Theriault, Philip Unitt, Shelly Vogel, Kenneth Weaver, 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.

CORRECTION

In last month's Bird Report, the photo of the Ancient Murrelets was incorrectly attributed to Curtis A Marantz. The picture was actually taken by Matt Grube. We regret the error; this was the editor's rather than the author's mistake.

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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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