The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, November 15, 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: "DIY Birding in and around Thailand," by Christopher Adler.

Thailand is one of the most easily accessible tropical birding destinations in Asia for the do-it-yourself birder, even if travelling on a shoestring. The country spans nearly 15 degrees of latitude, with habitat that serves wintering Himalayan and Palearctic migrants, as well as resident Sundaic and Indochinese species. Christopher presents a photographic tour of the mainland Southeast Asian avifauna, drawing on recent trips in the winter and spring of 2013 and the summer of 2016 to central, western, and north-east Thailand with stops in Laos and northern Malaysia. His talk will include discussion of the re-sources available that make Thailand an easy and productive destination for the independent birder, as well as his observations of local human impacts on birds and habitat.

Christopher Adler moved to San Diego in 1999 to join the faculty at the University of San Diego where he is now Professor of Music and affiliated faculty with the Asian Studies Program. He works as a composer and performer of contemporary chamber music, and researches and performs traditional

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musics from Thailand, Laos and Okinawa. He began birding in 2002 and has travelled extensively throughout Thailand and neighboring countries, appending birding to research trips whenever possible.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, December 13, same time, same place. Our annual Holiday Party. **Note the earlier date** (moved forward a week so as not to interfere with the Christmas Bird Count schedule).

Christmas Bird Count Schedule

Here is the CBC schedule for San Diego County and vicinity:

Saturday December 17, 2016

San Diego Circle

Compiler: Justyn Stahl

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Sunday December 18, 2016

Anza-Borrego Circle

Compiler: Bob Theriault

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Monday December 19, 2016

Lake Henshaw Circle

Compiler: Gretchen Cummings

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Tuesday December 20, 2016

South end Salton Sea Circle

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Friday December 30, 2016

Oceanside Circle

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Saturday December 31, 2016

Escondido Circle

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Tuesday January 3, 2016

Rancho Santa Fe Circle

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, OCTOBER 2016

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Seven Brant at Marina View Park on south San Diego Bay on 30 Oct (GMcC) were the earliest of the wintering birds this fall—Unitt (2004) lists 28 October as the earliest ever date for the arrival of wintering birds in San Diego County. The only Eurasian Wigeon reported is one present at Famosa Slough since 21 Sep (M & PT)—when looking for this bird observers must be warned that a hybrid Eurasian x American Wigeon is also present at this same location. A migrant Common Loon in Borrego Springs on 15 Oct (TH) was inland where scarce in fall. Numbers of Brown Boobies found along the coast are dramatically lower than a year ago, with four off San Diego on 21 Aug (DP) being the largest number reported from offshore pelagic birding trips this fall, and two off San Diego on 19 Oct (DP) being the largest number this month—this change probably related to lowering ocean water temperatures off Southern California. A **Red-footed Booby**, normally associated with warm ocean temperatures, landed on the sport-fishing boat *Daily Double* when 1 to 2 mi. off Pt. Loma on 3 Oct, remaining there being fed sardines for four days as the boat went out to sea twice a day until captured on the boat by Project Wildlife on 7 Oct and taken to SeaWorld where it is now being cared for. A Neotropic Cormorant at Lake O'Neill since 16 Oct (SB) is believed to be the same bird present at this location during the past two winters.

An immature Reddish Egret at the Tijuana River mouth since 24 Jul (DDiT, PEL) and two more immatures at the mouth of the San Luis Rey River in Oceanside since 18 Sep (SB) are the only three reported locally this month. At least one Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was still present at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge on 16 Oct (PEL)—the recent removal of many trees, along with major pruning of the few remaining trees at the Imperial Beach Sport Park and adjacent apartment complex has evidently forced this small population of night-herons to relocate. A wintering adult Zone-tailed Hawk at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park near Escondido is the only one reported this month (KW).

This Crested Caracara was at the Naval Outlying Field in Imperial Beach on 16 October 2016. The cream-colored face and brown streaking on the breast show this bird is an immature. *Photo by Nicole Desnoyers.*

Up to four Black Oystercatchers have been frequenting the mouth of San Diego Bay through at least 19 Oct (DP), being reported on the jetty at North Island, at Ballast Point at the Naval Reservation, and around the tidepools at the tip of Pt. Loma. The presumed wintering Pacific Golden-Plover at the Tijuana R. mouth since

This Philadelphia Vireo spent most of 2 October 2016 in one tree at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma. Although somewhat similar in appearance to a Warbling Vireo, note the dark line through the lores, and that the yellow on the underparts is most obvious on the throat and breast. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

An Eastern Phoebe, a rare fall migrant and winter visitor to San Diego County, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 22-25 Oct (GN). Seven Tropical Kingbirds were reported present this month, with single birds at Famosa Slough 5-16 Oct (JB), along Woodworth Way at Liberty Station 6-30 Oct (JG), in Nestor 13-29 Oct (PEL), at Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River Valley on 17 Oct (PEL) and at Lake Miramar on 27 Oct (TM), and two together at the Seascape Apartments in Carlsbad 14-15 Oct (TG)—one or two of these will likely remain through the winter. The Thick-billed Kingbird present at the lower end of Poggi Canyon in Chula Vista during the past six winters had returned on 16 Oct (RN) for a 7th year. A Plumbeous Vireo well photographed at Villa La Jolla Park in La Jolla 19-24 Oct (CJ) was the only one positively identified locally this month. However, photos of a "Solitary Vireo" at Kit Carson Park in Escondido show that it could be a Plumbeous or Cassin's Vireo; in addition, photos of

25 Aug (RTP) was still there 31 Oct (CB). The latest Craveri's Murrelets noted off San Diego this fall were eight there on 9 Oct (DP). A Common Murre photographed in flight over the 9-Mile Bank off San Diego on 9 Oct (NC) was the earliest of the fall migrant/wintering birds in our waters this year. A young Sabine's Gull, normally found only offshore in San Diego County, on Lake Henshaw on 1 Oct (JS) provides one of less than half-a-dozen truly inland records in this county. A somewhat late migrant young Franklin's Gull at the San Diego River mouth on 29 Oct (PEL) is the only one reported in this county this fall.

This Eastern Phoebe, found and photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 22 October 2016, remained through 25 October. Note the white chin and throat that eliminate it from the somewhat similar Black Phoebe. *Photo by Gary Nunn.*

An immature Crested Caracara with Turkey Vultures at the western edge of the Naval Outlying Field in Imperial Beach on 16 Oct (P & KM) showed no obvious signs of having been in captivity. As happens every fall, small numbers of White-winged Doves stray westward to the coast, with single birds reported in El Cajon 21-27 Oct (CKS) and Nestor 29 Oct (GMcC) this month. A Lewis's Woodpecker, an uncommon winter visitor to the mountains and foothills of San Diego County, near Jamul on 2 Oct (JM) was the earliest reported this fall.

The Gray Catbird at Famosa Slough on 22 October 2016. Note the black cap and dark beady looking eye in an otherwise unmarked face. *Photo by Justyn Stahl.*

another "Solitary Vireo" at Famosa Slough 15-22 Oct suggest it was a Cassin's or Blue-headed Vireo. A cooperative Philadelphia Vireo remained all day at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 2 Oct (GN) was a "county bird" for many of our local birders.

A Varied Thrush, a scarce migrant and winter visitor to San Diego County, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 22 Oct (GN), and another was in Jacumba on 24 Oct (EGK). A Gray Catbird, a rare vagrant to California, remained in the willow thickets at Famosa Slough 21-29 Oct (GR). A Sage Thrasher at the tide pools on Pt. Loma 20-26 Oct (TF) was on the immediate coast where noteworthy. The only Red-throated Pipits reported this fall were one at Mission Bay's Fiesta Island on 4 Oct (MS) and another with American Pipits at the now abandoned sod farm in the Tijuana River Valley on 26 Oct (DP). A Lapland Longspur was with Horned Larks in the Tijuana River Valley on 24 Oct (PEL), and a Chestnut-collared Longspur at Fiesta Island 3-7 Oct (MS) along with at least one more there on 19 Oct (NC) were the only longspurs found this month.

Single Northern Waterthrushes at San Elijo Lagoon since 7 Oct (AB), the Tijuana River crossing on Saturn Blvd. in the Tijuana River Valley since 4 Sep (JP) and around the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley since 23 Sep (RF) are all likely the same birds present at these locations last winter. Likewise, single Black-and-white Warblers at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley since 23 Sep (M & PT), at Nestor Park in Nestor since 30 Sep (NC), in Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas since 3 Oct (GCH), at San Elijo Lagoon since 4 Oct (NC), in the Golden Hill section of Balboa Park since 6 Oct (MA) and in Ocean Beach near Famosa Slough since 12 Oct (PEL) are also likely the same birds present at these locations

The hatch-year male Pine Warbler at Buddy Todd Park in Oceanside on 12 October 2016. Note the unmarked olive-brown upper-parts, lack of prominent white fringes on the tertials, and the long tail that separate this bird from the similar Blackpoll and Bay-breasted Warblers. *Photo by Tito Gonzalez.*

last winter, but one at Famosa Slough since 22 Oct (JB) appears new. Three Tennessee Warblers were found this month, with one each in National City's Kimball Park on 13 Oct (PEL), Chula Vista's Friendship Park on 13 Oct (PEL), and at Famosa Slough 14-15 Oct (JB). The only American Redstarts reported this month were a likely wintering adult male at Oceanside's Whalen Lake 6-8 Oct (PJ), one at Encinitas's Cottonwood Creek Park on 11 Oct (GCH) and an obvious migrant in Jacumba on 13 Oct (EGK). A short staying Northern Parula was at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 9 Oct (SES), and single Magnolia Warblers were at Guajome Regional Park in Oceanside on 2 Oct (GCH) and at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 15 Oct (JL). A Blackburnian Warbler found at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 30 Sep (NC) remained to 1 Oct (RA), and another was reported in Guajome Regional Park on 2 Oct (GCH). A somewhat late Chestnut-sided Warbler was found at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton on 31 Oct (PAG). A few Palm Warblers were found scattered along the coast with up to three in a day at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery since 8 Oct (GN), one in Oceanside's Buddy Todd Park on 14 Oct (SB), another in La Jolla's Villa La Jolla Park on 19 Oct (RT), single birds at the now abandoned sod farm in the Tijuana River Valley 24-29 Oct (PEL) and at the nearby ball fields on Sunset Ave. on 30 Oct (EA), and three together at Sweetwater Reservoir on 30 Oct (JP); one at Ram's Hill in Borrego Springs on 23 Oct (TH) was along the eastern edge of the county where most unusual. A well photographed hatch-year male Pine Warbler in Buddy Todd Park 11-13 Oct (GN) appears to have moved on rather than remaining for the winter. The female Black-throated Green Warbler present in San Diego's Greenwood Cemetery through the past three winters had returned on 20 Oct (DDiT) for a 4th year. A Canada Warbler, one of the scarcer vagrant wood-warblers, was in Nestor Park on 30 Oct (RN). A Painted Redstart frequenting Shepard Canyon in Tierrasanta since 18 Oct (PEL) is the same bird present here last winter, but one in Villa La Jolla Park on 18 Oct (EA) was clearly on the move, and the status of another photographed at a private residence in Tierrasanta some 2 miles from Shepard Canyon on 25 Oct (M & PT) is unknown.

This Clay-colored Sparrow at Lake Calavera Preserve in Carlsbad on 1 October 2016 well showed the bold white malar and chin, gray nape, white median crown-stripe, and warm buffy wash on the breast that separate it from the similar looking Chipping and Brewer's Sparrows. *Photo by Tito Gonzalez*

Six Clay-colored Sparrows were reported this month, with two together at the Lake Calavera Preserve in Carlsbad on 1 Oct (TG) along with single birds at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 9 Oct (GN), at a private residence in Santee on 11 Oct (AS), along the San Diego River near Sea World on 26 Oct (TG) and at the ball fields on Sunset Ave. in the Tijuana River Valley on 28 Oct (GMcC). A male Lark Bunting along the San Diego River near Sea World on 26-28 Oct (JB) appears to have been the same bird photographed nearby on Fiesta Island on 23 Oct (DH). As anticipated at the peak of a super high tide in late fall and winter, a Nelson's Sparrow was forced out of the cover of

This Lark Bunting was photographed along the San Diego River adjacent to Sea World on 28 October 2016, the third day of its stay at that location. The amount and extent of black on the face and the prominence of the white on the wings show it to be a male. *Photo by Charles Jackson.*

Kendall-Frost Marsh at Mission Bay on 17 Oct (ND). Three White-throated Sparrows were found with White-crowned Sparrows at Fallbrook's Los Jilgueros Preserve on 24 Oct (KW), at a private residence in San Diego on 28 Oct (RG) and near the eastern end of Lake Hodges on 31 Oct (PJ).

Summer Tanagers appear scarcer along the coast than in previous years, with only four known in the county this month, those being a male at the Seascape Apartments in Carlsbad after 14 Oct (TG), a male in Buddy Todd Park on 28 Oct, a female at Lake O'Neill on 31 Oct (PAG), and a male far from the coast in Jacumba 24-25 Oct (EGK). The only Rose-breasted Grosbeaks known were a female along Escondido Creek in Encinitas on 9 Oct (GCH), a young male in Jacumba on 18 Oct (EGK) and another young male near Jamul on 30 Oct (JM). A Dickcissel found in Jacumba on 30 Sep was still present on 1 Oct (EGK). Three Orchard Orioles were reported, with single females at Bay Park in San Diego on 1 Oct (KR) and along the eastern fence-line of North Island Naval Air Station on 28 Oct (PEL), and an adult male photographed within North Island Naval Air Station on 31 Oct (JG). The only Baltimore Orioles reported locally were single adult males in Nestor Park 13-16 Oct (RN) and along Woodworth Way at Liberty Station after 15 Oct (PEL), an immature male in Buddy Todd Park on 12 Oct (SES) and a female along the eastern fence-line of North Island Naval Air Station on 28 Oct (PEL).

Listed observers: Eitan Altman, Ryan Andrews, Marc Arndt, Andrew Beamer, Steve Brad, John Bruin, Chris Brown, Nancy Christensen, Nicole Desnoyers, Dean DiTommaso, Rob Fowler, Tom Frankenberger, Johnny Galt, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Richard Griebe, Gjon C. Hazard, David Holway, Terry Hunefeld, Charles Jackson, Paul Jeffs, Eric G. Kallen, Paul E. Lehman, Josh Lietzow, Patrice & Kurt Marks (P & KM), John Martin, Guy McCaskie, Tom Meixner. Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Dave Povey, Gene Revelas, Matt Sadowski, Alison Sample, Christopher K. Smith, Susan E. Smith, Jeremiah Stock, Millie and Peter Thomas (M & PT), Richard Trissel, Kenneth Weaver.

Literature Cited:

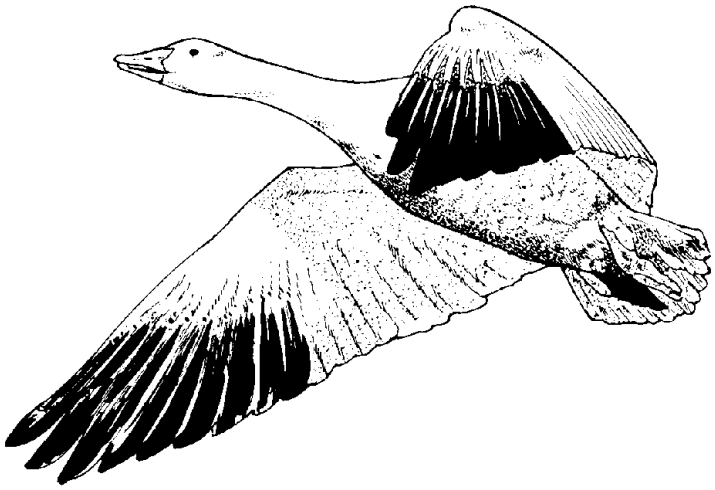
Unitt, Philip. 2004. *San Diego County Bird Atlas*. Proc. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist. 39. San Diego Nat. Hist. Mus., San Diego.

Addendum:

Of interest to those of us following the "numbers competition" between San Diego and Los Angeles Counties is the fact that the California Bird Records Committee recently endorsed the identity of the near-adult "Masked/Nazca Booby" photographed on the party boat *Hornblower* 7 miles wsw of Pt. Loma on 1 September 2015 as a Nazca Booby. This increased the number of species now recorded in San Diego County to 522, which is the same number as recorded in Los Angeles County.

—Guy McCaskie

Nazca Booby 7 mi. wsw of Pt. Loma. Photo by Scotty Schmidt.



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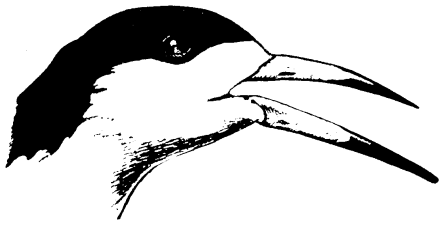
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