

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 6:00 p.m., Hoffman Room of the San Diego Foundation Building located at 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 Historic Decatur Road. Parking is available on the street or in the adjacent parking lots. Click here for a [Map](#).

Program

Changes in Bird Status in California's Central Valley Since 1944

By John Sterling.

1944 marked the date of the last summary of bird distribution and status in the Central Valley with publication of “The Distribution of the Birds of California” by Grinnell and Miller. Since then much has been learned by birders. With the nadir of natural habitat loss, the period since 1944 has seen a rebound of habitat restoration, an increase in human population, changes in agricultural crops and practices, and the nearly complete management of all water and wetlands. John will discuss how these and other factors have influenced the negative and positive changes in many species’ status and distribution in the Central Valley.

John Sterling is an independent ornithologist, tour leader, wildlife photographer, instructor and conservation biologist. He has been birding very actively since 1971, and embarked on a career in ornithology while as a student at Humboldt State University in 1979. John was an avian ecologist for nearly 10 years at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in Washington DC, with many additional years working for



research labs of the US Forest Service (Redwood Sciences Lab and PSW Fresno), H.T. Harvey and Associates, Arizona State University, Oregon State University, and many other organizations in Latin America and California. As an avid California county birder, he has accumulated detailed knowledge of bird distribution and status throughout the state. As an ornithologist and environmental consultant, John has studied the ecology and conservation of birds as well as the regulatory processes that seek to preserve them. His website is www.sterlingbirds.com.

Next month our August speaker is still to be announced. Stay tuned for an update.

San Diego County Bird Observations June 2016

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

The Red-necked Grebe found at Los Peñasquitos Lagoon on 9 May was last reported on 14 June (NC), so certainly establishes the latest date of occurrence in San Diego County – the previous latest was one in Oceanside 24 Mar-15 Apr 2009. Most unusual was a Laysan Albatross seen flying south from shore in Solana Beach on 27 June (BM). A Black-footed Albatross, always rare in San Diego County waters, was 23 nautical miles west of Point Loma on 27 June (PEL). As indicated by a worn and bleached Northern Fulmar off San Diego on 25 June (NC) and two more there on 27 June (PEL), small numbers are attempting to summer locally. A Manx Shearwater with a flock of Sooty Shearwaters 14 nm west of Ocean Beach on 12 June (DP) provides the first summer record for San Diego County.



This Manx Shearwater off Ocean Beach on 12 June provides the first documented record for San Diego County waters at any time of the year other than in February and March. Photo by Thomas A. Blackman.

A Red-billed Tropicbird, always an exciting bird to see, was 23 nm west of Point Loma on 12 June (GN). Two additional Magnificent Frigatebirds were photographed, with one over the entrance to San Diego Bay on 25 June (NC) and the other over Point La Jolla in La Jolla on 28 June (PEL).



This immature Magnificent Frigatebird that appeared over Point La Jolla on 28 June was the second found locally in a four-day period. Photo by Gary Nunn.

At least three Reddish Egrets, now expected in San Diego County, were present on south San Diego Bay in June (PEL). One of the two pairs of Yellow-crowned Night-herons at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge was attending two full-grown young at a nest in the Imperial Beach Sports Park at the end of June (PEL). A Swainson's Hawk photographed near Barrett Lake on 9 June (DDiT) may well have been attempting to summer locally.



Most unusual was this Sora at the San Luis Rey River mouth on 30 June. Photo by Ginger Spinelli.

A Sora at the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside on 30 Jun (GS) provides one of a very few June-July records in this County – Sora is not known to have nested in San Diego County in the past 60 years, and the earliest of the fall migrants are not known before 7 and 15 August (Unitt 2004). Since Black Oystercatchers are not often reported in summer, one at the entrance to Mission Bay on 3 June (CE), and another frequenting the tide pools at Point Loma and nearby Ballast Point at the entrance to San Diego Bay 4-25 June (SM, MS, NC) were noteworthy.



This adult male American Golden-Plover at the mouth of Cockleburr Creek on Camp Pendleton on 16 June had an entirely black face, unlike the adult female at Lindberg Field three days earlier. Photo by Matthew P. Brinkman.

Most unusual was an adult female American Golden-Plover at San Diego's Lindberg Field on 13 June (EC) and an adult male at the Cockleburr Creek mouth on Camp Pendleton 16-30 June (MPB) – were they very lost spring migrants or exceptionally early failed breeding fall migrants? A Wilson's Phalarope at San Dieguito Lagoon on 5 June (SP) was likely a fall migrant – the females of this species leave the breeding grounds immediately after laying eggs so are the earliest of the fall migrant shorebirds to reach San Diego County. A Pigeon Guillemot seen flying past Point La Jolla in La Jolla on 5 June (GN) was the second report of this species at this location within that week. Once again Craveri's Murrelets moved northward into the waters off San Diego County in June, with two 7 nm southwest of Point Loma on 12 June (DP) being the earliest, and 17 counted between the 9-mile and 30-Mile Banks on 27 June (PEL) documenting an increase in numbers. A very bedraggled Laughing Gull was at Marina

View Park ("J" Street) in Chula Vista on 20 June (DP).

A White-winged Dove in North Park on 16 June (MS) was in the coastal lowlands where rare. A pair of Brown-crested Flycatchers were still at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs on 25 June (PA). Two Clark's Nutcrackers were still present near Morris Ranch Road in the Laguna Mountains on 20 June (LK), and another was seen at Cuyamaca Peak in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on 12 June (AP). Two noteworthy wood-warblers were reported this month, with a Northern Waterthrush photographed from a boat 4-5 miles west of Point Loma on 8 June (DWA) and a badly worn American Redstart photographed at Paradise Point on Mission Bay 4-5 June (PAG, MaL). The singing male Hooded Warbler discovered near the upper end of Los Penasquitos Lagoon on 21 May (PGN) was last reported on 5 June (MaL). Also of note was the presence of a pair of Wilson's Warblers at the San Mateo Creek mouth on 23 June (BM), and two or three, including a fledgling, along the Santa Margarita River on Camp Pendleton this month (BS, MiL), indicate a few pairs still breed in San Diego County. As pointed out by Unitt (2004), San Diego County is the "southern tip" of the Wilson's Warbler's breeding range. Single first-summer male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were attending seed feeders in Mission Valley on 8 June (RM) and at a private residence on Point Loma 12-23 June (PR). A singing adult male Indigo Bunting was photographed at Paso Picacho Campground in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on 11 June (JB).

Listed observers: Paulette Ache, Douglas W. Aguiard, Jim Beckman, Matthew P. Brinkman, Nancy Christensen, Elizabeth Copper, Dean DiTommaso, Cody Ebbert, Peter A. Ginsburg, Logan Kahle, Paul E. Lehman, Max Leibowitz (MaL), Michael Lester (MiL), Richard Miller, Shawn Miller, Brennan Mulrooney, P. Gretchen Nell, Gary Nunn, Steve Perry, Aaron Polichar, Dave Povey, Pamela Reynolds, Matt Sadowski, Ben Sandstrom, Ginger Spinelli, Mark Stratton.

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

Guy McCaskie
6 July 2016

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