The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, September 20, 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: Steve Shunk will discuss "Threatened Woodpeckers and Habitats of California."

The official California bird list includes 17 woodpecker species, 15 of which breed in the state—more than any other state or province in North America. However, 2 species rank as endangered by California Fish and Game (Gila Woodpecker and Gilded Flicker); and at least 10 species are listed at some level of conservation concern by Partners in Flight. As primary excavators, all woodpeckers play a keystone ecological role within their respective ranges. And if we are concerned about woodpeckers, what happens to the other 20+ cavity nesters in California that depend upon woodpeckers to make their nest cavities? If the desert woodpeckers decline, what happens to the Lucy's Warbler and Ash-throated Flycatcher? If the montane woodpeckers decline, what happens to the Mountain Bluebird and Flammulated Owl? Join Oregon naturalist and North American woodpecker specialist Steve Shunk for an expert analysis of woodpecker conservation issues in the state and the trickle-down impacts on California's other cavity-nesters.

Steve Shunk started birding in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1989, and he moved to central Oregon's "Woodpecker Wonderland" in 1997, where 11 woodpecker species breed annually in an area less than 1% of the size of San Diego. For the last 18 years, Steve has closely studied the woodpeckers of Oregon and across North America. He has carefully documented woodpecker use of burned forests in central Oregon; he recently spent three seasons as a field biologist studying Black-backed Woodpeckers in California; and he has traveled from Texas to Florida to observe eastern woodpecker species. Steve's long-awaited Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America was released in May 2016, and he now lectures and leads birding tours across North America and beyond.

SDFO NEWS (cont.)

Next month's program: Tuesday, October 18, same time, same place. Program: Alvaro Jaramillo will speak on a topic to be announced.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, AUGUST 2016

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Attracting the most attention this month was an adult male **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** attracted to feeders at the home of Debbie Dobson at Rey River Ranch near Lake Henshaw 13-20 Aug. Although there have been three or four undocumented reports of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds in San Diego County, the only valid record was that of an adult male well photographed during its 10 to 18 September 2006 stay at the hummingbird feeders of Gretchen Cummings around her home along the western edge of Ramona.

The adult male Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Rey River Ranch near Lake Henshaw on 18 August 2016. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

Most unusual was a Wood Stork watched flying eastward along the San Dieguito River Valley in Del Mar 10 Aug (SES) —the most recent occurrence in this county was that of a long-staying adult around the San Diego Wild Animal Park near Escondido in 2010**,** and the species is now virtually gone as a summer visitor to the Salton Sink. The number of Reddish Egrets around San Diego has now increased to at least seven, with at least two adults around south San Diego Bay (GMcC, PEL), and two adults along with a hatch-year bird at the Tijuana River mouth (RTP, DDiT). Up to five Yellow-crowned Night-Herons continued in the area of the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge through August (GMcC). A Zone-tailed Hawk near Jamul 16 Aug (JM) was presumably the earliest of the now expected small numbers found in the coastal lowlands in winter. A migrant light-morph Swainson's Hawk over Batiquitos Lagoon 28 Aug (TG) was unusually close to the coast.

A Pacific Golden-Plover at the Tijuana River mouth 25-26 Aug (RTP) was presumably the same bird present here last winter. Six Solitary Sandpipers reported along the coast at locations from the southwestern corner of Camp Pendleton south to the Tijuana River Valley between 13 and 31 Aug (GMcC, DB, BM, PAG, TB and CJ), along with three together at Lake Henshaw 13 Aug (GN) was more than expected. A juve-

nile Stilt Sandpiper at Lake Henshaw 28 Aug (GN) and up to three juveniles at Sweetwater Reservoir 27-29 Aug (MS, DP) were a pleasant surprise since this shorebird is rare in fall, averaging only one or two each year (Unitt 2004). More than the average number of juvenile Baird's Sandpipers are being found this fall, with single birds near the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside 21 Aug (TG) and at the southwestern corner of Camp Pendleton 25-26 Aug (PAG), at least 15 individuals in the closed areas on south San Diego Bay between 4 and 28 Aug (RTP), including 8 on 27 Aug (RTP), and two at Lake Henshaw 18 Aug (GN) followed by up to nine there 27-28 Aug (GN, GG). Single juvenile Semipalmated Sandpipers were in the closed areas on south San Diego Bay 3-5 Aug (PEL, GMcC) and 28 Aug (RTP) with two or three there 14-21 Aug (RTP and LS), and another was on Lake Henshaw 18 Aug (GN). A Wilson's Snipe at the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside 10 Aug (DR) was the earliest this fall.

Two of three juvenile Stilt Sandpipers at the upper end of Sweetwater Reservoir on 27 August 2016 *Photo by Justyn T. Stahl.*

The highlight of an otherwise uneventful pelagic boat trip exploring the waters off San Diego on 21 August was eight Craveri's Murrelets (DP). A Black Tern at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla 24 Aug (GN) was of note because this tern has become much scarcer as a fall visitor to San Diego County in recent years. An Elegant Tern at Lower Otay Reservoir 4 Aug (JP) was of note since this tern rarely ventures inland, and never before this far from the coast.

This juvenile Baird's Sandpiper at the San Luis Rey River mouth in Oceanside on 21 August 2016 was one of close to 30 reported in the County this month. *Photo by Tito Gonzalez.*

Noteworthy Passerines included an Eastern Kingbird, a casual fall vagrant to San Diego County, briefly at Dairy Mart Pond 28 Aug (AP). A Northern Waterthrush, the earliest of the expected fall migrants/ winter visitors of this species, was photographed at the upper end of Los Penasquitos Lagoon 27 Aug (JP). An unusually early Vesper Sparrow was at Borrego Springs 31 Aug

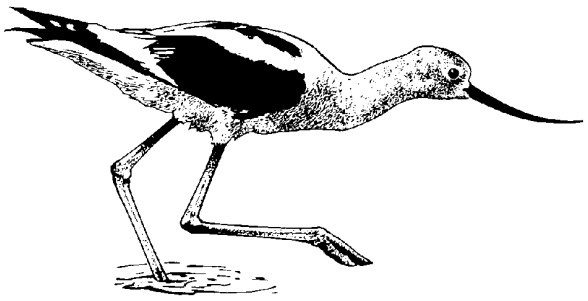
(JM)—Unitt (2004) lists "late September" as the arrival date for fall migrants in San Diego County. A Lark Bunting in the northwestern part of the Tijuana River Valley 14 Aug (PEL) provides one of a very few recent records for the coastal areas of San Diego County. Two Summer Tanagers at Guajome Regional Park 27 Aug (PCK) were either exceptionally early fall vagrants or, more likely, summered undetected locally. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a private residence in San Marcos 9-11 Aug (DM) had most likely spent the summer locally. A green Painted Bunting showing no feather wear was at the Community Gardens in the Tijuana River Valley 1 Aug (PEL) and believed to be a genuine vagrant—this is the time of the year when small numbers regularly occurred in the lowlands of southeastern Arizona. However, the same cannot be said about the "ratty looking" adult male at the adjacent Bird and Butterfly Garden 31 Aug (JZ).

A nice comparison of this juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper with two similar-aged Western Sandpipers within the saltworks at the south end of San Diego Bay on 22 August 2016. *Photo by Robert T. Pattom.*

Listed observers: Tom Baxter, Drew Beamer, Dean DiTommaso, Greg Gilson, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Charles Jackson, P. C. Koger, Paul E. Lehman, John Martin, David Mathis, Guy McCaskie, Jackson Mesick, Brennan Mulrooney, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Aaron Polichar, Dave Povey, Denise Riddle, Matt Sadowski, Susan E. Smith, Lea Squires, Jim Zimmer.

Literature Cited:

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



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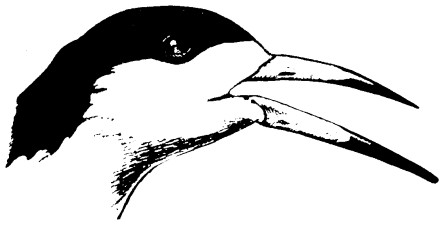
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