The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Monday, October 16, 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. **Note the changed date!** We ran into a scheduling problem for the Hoffman Room this month.

Program: Dr. Ryan Terrill will discuss "Evolutionary Interactions of Feather Molt in Birds."

The evolution of feathers was a key innovation for birds. The many functions that feathers provide have allowed birds to diversify into myriad habitats and styles of life. However, feathers are lightweight and break down, and must be replaced regularly in a process known as molt. The patterns and timing with which birds molt varies within and between species, and these different strategies are likely a product of the different ways birds use their feathers and the uneven distribution of resources available for molt in time and space. So far, no studies have attempted to place these strategies into an evolutionary framework. In my dissertation research, I used phylogenetic comparative analyses combined with molt, phenotype, ecology, and spatial data to investigate how and why birds have evolved such a diverse array of molt strategies. I studied how molt affects the evolution of flightlessness and seasonal dichromatism in birds, as well as latitudinal gradients in the pace of feather growth. I found that molt strategies have profound effects on the evolutionary trajectories of birds. My major findings are that simultaneous wing molt facilitated and perhaps accelerated the evolution of flightlessness in birds, and that a secondary molt that evolved to replace worn feathers can serve as a preadaptation for phenotype alteration. I also found feather growth rate increases with latitude within bird species. Overall, feathers are integrally important to the biology

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of birds, and it makes sense that the patterns and strategies that birds use to replace their feathers are guided by and influence their evolutionary histories. This dissertation research provides some of the first evidence into the details of how molt strategies interact with other aspects of avian evolution.

Ryan Terrill is a NSF postdoctoral fellow at the Moore Lab of Zoology at Occidental College. He is a California native and birder, and has recently completed a Ph.D. at the Museum of Natural Science at Louisiana State University. His research focuses on the evolution of feather molt strategies in birds, as well as natural history and distributions of Neotropical birds, and he is an author of the field guide to the birds of Bolivia. Ryan will be presenting findings from his dissertation research on how molt strategies interact with other aspects of macroevolution and life history strategies in birds.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, November 21, same time, same place (back to our usual schedule).

Program to be announced.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, SEPTEMBER 2017

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

A male Eurasian Wigeon photographed at the San Diego River mouth on 30 Sep (JB) is the earliest this fall/ winter and likely the same male present here last winter. At least 12 White-winged Doves reported from multiple locations between Encinitas and the Tijuana River Valley in September is more than expected on the coast in a single month. An adult male Broad-tailed Hummingbird visiting a feeder along the eastern edge of Encinitas 2-13 Sep (AHa) provides the 3rd well documented record for San Diego County.

This adult male Broad-tailed Hummingbird frequented feeders at the home of Anita Hayworth in the eastern part of Encinitas, San Diego County, between 2 and 13 September 2017, was photographed here on 10 September. *Photo by Eric G. Kallen.*

The Pacific Golden-Plover that returned for another winter to the area around the mouth of the Tijuana River on 21 Aug was known present through 17 Sep (LS), and one at the South San

Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge (salt works) 25 Sep (AM) was likely a different bird. At least nine Baird's Sandpipers were known present this month, with up to two at Camp Surf in Imperial Beach 25 Aug-4 Sep (MSa, CA), another there on 18 Sep (MSa), single birds a little farther south at the Tijuana River mouth on 7 (MSa) and 15 Sep (MSa), one at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge (salt works) 9 Sep (RTP), another at San Elijo Lagoon on 17 Sep (AHi), and up to two far inland at Rams Hill in Borrego Springs 7-10 Sep (WTH) establishing only the 2nd record for the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (Jorgensen and Theriault. 2013). However, only one Pectoral Sandpiper was reported, a juvenile at the San Diego River mouth on 26 Sep (MSa). The latest occurring Semipalmated Sandpiper this fall was one at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge (salt works) 9 Sep (RTP), and the only Solitary Sandpipers reported this month were one at the Rancho Jamul Reserve in Jamul on 1 Sep (JMa) and another calling in flight over Leucadia the same day (JMcM). A Franklin's Gull, unusually scarce in Southern California this fall, was photographed at the San Diego River mouth on 4 Sep (JPe). A flock of six Black Terns, now scarce in San Diego County, flew past Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 3 Sep (GN), and another individual remained around the fishing pier on Shelter Island 11-19 Sep (SJ).

Tropical Storm Lidia pushing northward off the coast of Baja California was no doubt responsible for an immature Magnificent Frigatebird at Pt. La Jolla on 3 Sep (JPa), and an adult male and female together around Pt. Loma on 4 Sep (GN and SW), along with two distant unidentified frigatebirds off La Jolla on 3 Sep (GN). Along with the expected reports of Brown Boobies from along the coast north to La Jolla, including up to 12 off the Tijuana River mouth on 10 Sep (GMcC), an adult Masked Booby was seen flying south past Point La Jolla on 22 Sep (SW and BM), San Diego County's 2nd Nazca Booby, a near adult, was well photographed over the 30-Mile Bank 26.5 nautical miles off La Jolla during the organized pelagic bird boat-trip on 24 Sep (GN), and a stunning adult white-morph Red-footed Booby was photographed from shore at the Tijuana River mouth 8-10 Sep (JC, MSa). Two Brown Pelicans well inland on Lake Henshaw 27 Sep (JPa) had most likely flown northward from the Gulf of California rather than inland from the San Diego coast.

This adult female Magnificent Frigatebird spent most of 4 September 2017 with an adult male over Point Loma and the adjacent part of San Diego Bay, San Diego County. *Photo by Alison Sample.*

An immature Zone-tailed Hawk over Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma 17 Sep (JPa) was an obvious migrant, but an adult frequenting the area around the San Diego Safari Park and nearby Escondido 21-23 Sep (KW, TH) was likely one returning for another winter. A Ferruginous Hawk along Rangeland Rd. near Ramona on 29 Sep (TS) was the earliest in the County this fall/winter. A Plumbeous Vireo in San Diego's Greenwood Cemetery on 30 Sep (LS) was most likely the same bird present here last winter. A short-staying Yellow-green Vireo was photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 20 Sep (ND). A Chestnut-collared Longspur, a somewhat

This near-adult Nazca Booby was by far the most exciting bird seen during the Buena Vista Audubon Society's sponsored pelagic boat trip on 24 September 2017. *Photo by Justyn T. Stahl.*

This adult white-morph Red-footed Booby that irregularly frequented the waters off the mouth of the Tijuana River between 8 and 10 September 2017 was well photographed from Border Field State Park on 10 September 2017. *Photo by Matt Sadowski.*

regular fall vagrant in very small numbers, was at Fiesta Island in Mission Bay 27-29 Sep (MSa, JB). The only Clay-colored Sparrows reported so far this fall are single birds at Famosa Slough in Ocean Beach, at Harry Griffin Park in La Mesa on 26 Sep (MSa), at Fiesta Island in Mission Bay 26 Sep (MSa) and at the Public Works Buildings in Del Mar on 30 Sep (GCH). Single Black-throated Sparrows, rare on the immediate coast, were at the Cactus Garden in Balboa Park on 3 Sep (CW) and at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 8 Sep (GN). A Bobolink at the wastewater treatment plant in Borrego Springs on 19 Sep (NC) appears to be only the 3rd to be found in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (Jorgensen and Theriault 2013). Remarkably, since we have become accustomed to more, the only Baltimore Oriole reported to date was a female photographed at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 18 Sep (GN).

We had a nice variety of the scarcer and rare wood warblers in the County this month as follows: A Northern Waterthrush first seen in the Tijuana River Valley on the Tijuana River at Saturn Boulevard on 4 Sep (TRS) was still present on 23 Sep (MSe), and probably settled for the winter. At least Eight Black-and-white Warblers were found this month, with single birds at Villa La Jolla Park in La Jolla, 11 Sep (TG), in residential Pt. Loma 13 Sep (SBM), at Harry Griffin Regional Park in La Mesa on 16 Sep (JPa), at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 24-30 Sep (TH, GR) and at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton on 30 Sep (RA), along with one each at Famosa Slough on 29 -30 Sep+ (DJ), Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas after 17-30 Sep+ (GJH) and another at Nestor Park in Nestor after 23 Sep (GDeL), all three almost certainly returning wintering birds. A Prothonotary Warbler, always a surprise to find, was at Lake O'Neill 29-30 Sep+ (PAG, RA). A Tennessee Warbler photographed in residential Pt. Loma on 24 Sep (EGK) and another photographed at Lake O'Neill on 30 Sep (RA) are the only two reported in San Diego County so far this fall. A Lucy's Warbler, a rare fall straggler to the coast of California, was at Villa La Jolla Park in La Jolla 18 Sep (TG) and another was at Guajome County Park in

Oceanside on 23 Sep (GCH). A Virginia's Warbler, formerly a much more numerous straggler to San Diego County (Unitt 2003), was at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas 23 Sep (GPN) and another was photographed at a private residence in La Mesa on the same day (AB). By far the rarest was the Kentucky Warbler, the first in San Diego County more than ten years, at the Point Loma Nazarene University Campus on Pt. Loma 20-23 Sep (GN). Single "female" American Redstarts at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 4 Sep (RN) and at the Point Loma Nazarene University Campus 23-25 Sep (GN, MSa) were the only two found. The only Blackpoll Warbler was a fairly cooperative individual at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 21-23 Sep (EGK). A Grace's Warbler at Villa La Jolla Park 28-29 Sep (NC, BF) was evidently on the move rather than settled for the winter. A Black-throated Green Warbler, probably a hatch-year female, was at the Point Loma Nazarene University Campus 23-26 Sep (TAB, BLC).

This Chestnut-collared Longspur, probably a hatch-year female, remaining in the southwestern part of Fiesta Island in Mission Bay, San Diego County, between 27 and 29 September 2017 was well photographed on 29 September. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

This somewhat secretive Kentucky Warbler present along the eastern edge of the Pt. Loma Nazarene University Campus on Pt. Loma, San Diego between 20 and 23 September 2017, was on the ground in the open when photographed on 23 September. *Photo by Eric G. Kallen.*

A brightly colored adult male Summer Tanager within the area of the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park on 15 Sep (TRS) and three (1 male and 2 "females") together at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 30 Sep (EGK) was less than expected at this time of the year. Only two female Indigo Buntings were found, with one photographed in Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 16-21 Sep (GN, EGK) and the other photographed at the Community Gardens in the Tijuana River Valley on 16 Sep (PR). The female or young male Painted Bunting found at the Community Gardens on 28 Aug remained through 18 Sep (JMi), being, joined by a drabber green immature 7-9 Sep (EGK, RF) and an adult male on 10 Sep (PT), probably the same adult male seen nearby along Saturn Blvd. on 8 Sep (MM). A "flock" of three unsettled Dickcissels in Ft. Rosecrans National

Cemetery were present for only a very short time before flying off on 24 Sep (SES)

Listed observers:

Christopher Adler, Ryan Andrews, Thomas A. Benson, Anthony Breise, John Bruin, Barbara L. Carlson, Juli Chamberlin, Nancy Christensen, Gail DeLalla, Nicole Desnoyers, Richard Fisher, Brian Flick, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Anita Hayworth (AHa), Gjon C. Hazard, Tracy Henchbarger, Alison Hiers (AHi), W. Terry Hunefeld, Terry Hurst, Dan Jehl, Storm Jensen, Eric G. Kallen, John Martin (JMa), Marcie Mason, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Alex Merritt, Bob Miller, Jeff Miller (JMi), Gretchen P. Nell, Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki (JPa), Jim Pea (JPe), Peter Roberts, Geoffrey Rogers, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Mel Senac (MSe), Susan E. Smith, Lee Squires, Trent R. Stanley, Thomas Stark, Paula Theobald, Stanley Walens, Kenneth Weaver, Catherine Wertis.

Literature Cited:

Jorgensen, P., and R. Theriault. 2013. *Birds of Anza -Borrego Desert State Park. A Birder's Checklist.* Second Edition. California State Parks.

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

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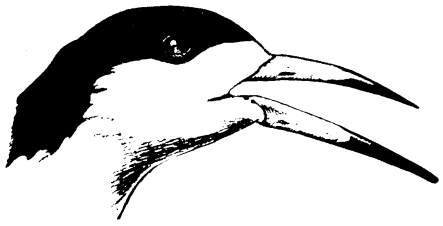
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