The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, April 18, 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: Bruce Rideout will discuss "Translocation of the Rimatara Lory in the South Pacific: Success or Failure?"

The Pacific islands harbor some of the most interesting and beautiful birds in the world, but many species have gone extinct since the arrival of Polynesians and Europeans, due to hunting, habitat loss, and the impact of introduced predators and diseases. Those that have survived are among the most endangered birds in the world. In 2007, a small population of Rimatara Lories was translocated from the island of Rimatara in French Polynesia to Atiu in the Cook Islands in order to establish a second population as a hedge against extinction. In 2016, the original translocation team revisited Atiu to assess the success of this effort by conducting a survey of the translocated population and evaluating progress in the eradication effort for introduced mynahs. In this presentation, Bruce will provide a brief background for this conservation effort, present the conclusions of the program assessment, and share photos and recordings of the birds of Atiu.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, May 16, same time, same place. Michael Hilchey will discuss the Sandia Crest Rosy-Finch Project.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MARCH 2017

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

As of January 2017, the sequencing of species in these monthly bird observation reports will follow that listed in the Fifty-seventh Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union *Check-list of North American Birds* (*The Auk*: Ornithological Advances 133:544-560).

The dates of the first spring migrants/summer visitors reported in March of this year, along with the "early arrival dates" published by Unitt (2004), include: Black-chinned Hummingbird (15 March) at Mission Trails Regional Park on 31 March (TD); Gull-billed Tern (1 March) at the Tijuana River mouth on 17 March (LS); Elegant Tern (3 March) at the Tijuana River mouth on 10 March (MSa); Hammond's Flycatcher (20 March) at McGinty Mountain on 29 March (JM); Pacific Slope Flycatcher (3 March) in the Tijuana River Valley on 11 March (EC); Ash-throated Flycatcher (17 March) at Tamarisk Grove Campground on 15 March (PC); Western Kingbird (6 March) in Imperial Beach on 6 March (MHi); Bell's Vireo (13 March) at the Lower Willows and Carrizo Marsh in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 11 March (RP and CHas); Gray Vireo (14 March) along Kitchen Creek Road on 20 March (MSa); Warbling Vireo (15 March) at Tamarisk Grove Campground on 22 March (NC); Nashville Warbler (21 March) at Marian Bear Park in University City on 19 March (RB); Black-throated Gray Warbler (24 March) Borrego Springs on 22 March (FK); Wilson's Warbler (6 March) at San Elijo Lagoon on 14 March (RTP); Black-headed Grosbeak (27 March) along the Banner Grade east of Julian on 25 March (MSt); and Bullock's Oriole (5 March) in the Tijuana River Valley on 11 March (EC).

The second-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull with Ring-billed and California Gulls at a flooded portion of the Tijuana River along Dairy Mart Road on 5 March 2017. Photo by Matt Sadowski.

A Vaux's Swift flying north over Carlsbad on 31 March (TG) was exceptionally early if indeed it was a migrant rather than a bird that wintered locally—Unitt (2004) lists 4 April as the earliest known date for a spring migrant, and also states that it is "annual in winter". A Western Tanager at Agua Caliente County Park on 31 March (NC) was clearly a migrant since it was an adult male at a location unsuitable for wintering—this establishes the earliest date for a spring migrant in San Diego County, with the previous early date of 3 April considered exceptional (Unitt 2004).

The White-winged Scoter found at Glorietta Bay in Coronado was last reported on 5 March (DB). A female Black Scoter photographed flying north past

Crystal Pier in Pacific Beach on 11 March (ED) and a male at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 24 March (PEL) were the only two reported this month. The young male Long-tailed Duck known wintering on San Diego Bay at Delta Beach was still present at the end of March (ND) and, based on the condition of its plumage, may stay into the summer. An adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird photographed in Blair Valley at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 30 March (KS) provides one of only a few spring records of this rare to casual straggler to California. Three Black Oystercatchers first reported at Pt. La Jolla on 23 January were still present at the end of March (PEL). The wintering Pacific Golden-Plover at the Tijuana River mouth was still present on 15 March (MSa). A Pigeon Guillemot in alternate plumage at Pt. La Jolla on 22 March (TM) was a little earlier than previous reports from San Diego County waters. Following the late February reports of Ancient Murrelet off San Diego, four were together 4.5 miles west of Mission Bay on 4 March (MaL) and three more were seen in flight at Pt. La Jolla on 24 March (PEL). A first-winter Laughing Gull at the mouth of the San Diego River (Robb Field) on 18 March (GN) may have been the same bird seen on south San Diego Bay in February. The adult Lesser Black-backed Gull within the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge at the south end of San Diego Bay in February was last reported on 5 March (MSa), and a well-marked second-winter bird was with other gulls in the Tijuana River Valley at the Tijuana River and Dairy Mart Rd. 5-6 March (JP). Noteworthy were two sub-adult Neotropic Cormorants perched on floating driftwood at Lower Otay Lake on 6 March (MSa) – numbers of this cormorant found away from the Colorado River valley and the Salton Sink increase every year. The immature Tricolored Heron present around the Tijuana River mouth since the day of the San Diego Christmas Bird Count was last reported on

Two Neotropic Cormorants on a floating branch at Lower Otay Lake on 6 March 2017. *Photo by Matt Sadowski.*

One of the two wintering adult Zone-tailed Hawks over the San Diego Zoo Safari Park on 2 March 2017. *Photo by Mel Senac.*

15 March (MSa). The migration of Swainson's Hawks through the area around Borrego Springs has been impressive, with the number counted this spring approaching **12,000** at the end of March (HC). At least one of the two Zone-tailed Hawks wintering in the area around the San Diego Zoo Safari Park near Escondido was still present on 20 March (CHag). A Long-eared Owl roosting at Tamarisk Grove Campground in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park since at least early March attracted many local photographers and birders through the end of the month (BLC).

The Gray Flycatcher found wintering at Mast Park in Santee in February was last reported on 19 March (TH). The Dusky-capped Flycatcher at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas remained through March (SES). Two of the wintering Tropical Kingbirds were still present into March, with the one at the ball fields on Sunset Ave. in the Tijuana River Valley remaining through 5 March (GMcC), and the other at Famosa Slough in Ocean Beach still there at the end of the month (MHa). In addition, the Thick-billed Kingbird, present for its 7th winter at the lower end of Poggi Canyon in Chula Vista, was still there at the end of March (BLC). A Cassin's Vireo along Flintkote Ave. at the Torrey Pines State Reserve 2-6 March (JB, TG) most likely wintered locally, as did the one at Nestor Park in Nestor 29 January to 25 March (RB, MHi), but one at Vallecito County Park in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on 26 March (MHa) and another in Kate O. Sessions Park in San Diego on 27 March (HI) were the first of the spring migrants.

The Long-eared Owl at Tamarisk Grove Campground on 22 March. *Photo by Mel Senac.*

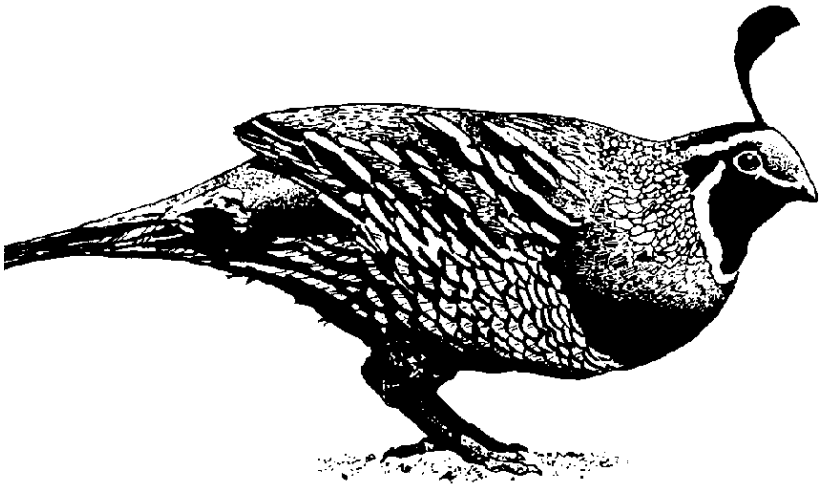
Four long-staying Black-and-white Warblers remained into March, with one in Carlsbad since September and another at San Elijo Lagoon since October both still present at the end of March (SB and CHaw); one in Nestor since the end of September last reported on 29 March (RC) and the fourth at Famosa Slough since January last reported on 23 March (AR). The MacGillivray's Warbler found wintering near the power plant in Carlsbad was still present on 25 March (SB). A female Blackburnian Warbler, exceptional anywhere in the United States in winter, known present at Vacation Island on Mission Bay 20-26 March (MHi, PEL), had no doubt been present since last fall. The Chestnut-sided Warbler wintering along Corte Del Abeto in Carlsbad has not been reported since 5 March (TG). A Palm Warbler found at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas on 29 March (MB) most likely spent the winter in that general area. The Black-throated Green Warbler spending its 4th winter in San Diego's Greenwood Cemetery was last reported on 11 March (RA), and the Painted Redstart at Crown Point on Mission Bay remained through 25 March (PEL). The White-throated Sparrow at private residences in Ocean Beach was still present on 1 March (GJ), and

another was found at the De Anza Resort in Borrego Springs on 16 March (PA). The Hepatic Tanager spending its 6th winter near the Marston House in Balboa Park remained through 22 March (DPo). At least four Summer Tanagers were known present around San Diego in March, with single wintering birds in Nestor and the North Park district of San Diego present through 29 March (RC) and 5 March (BM), along with one at Presidio Park in San Diego on 3 March (DPa) and another in the central part of Balboa Park on 29 March (CJ). The adult male Baltimore Oriole wintering at Nestor Park in Nestor was last reported on 26 March (MiL), and a female found dead near Bird Rock in La Jolla on 15 March (PU) had no doubt been present since the fall.

Listed observers: Paulette Ache, Ryan Andrews, Dave Batzler, Mathew Binns, Steve Brad, Richard Breisch, John Bruin, Barbara L. Carlson, Nancy Christensen, Hal Cohen, Peter Colasanti, Elizabeth Copper, Richard Cuthbertson, Tucker Davidson, Emily Davis, Nicole Desnoyers, Tito Gonzalez, Charity Hagen (CHag), Marty Hales (MHa), Casey Hase (CHas), Caleb Hawley (CHaw), Michael Hilchey (MHi), Hank Ingersoll, Charles Jackson, Ginger Johnson, Florinus Kooyman, Paul E. Lehman, Max Leibowitz (MaL), Michael Lester (MiL), John Martin, Guy McCaskie, Tom Meixner, Barbara Morton, Gary Nunn, David Palmer (DPa), Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Ryan Pottinger, Dave Povey (DPo), Andy Rathbone, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Karen Soltis, Lea Squires, Mark Stratton (MSt) and Philip Unitt.

Literature Cited:

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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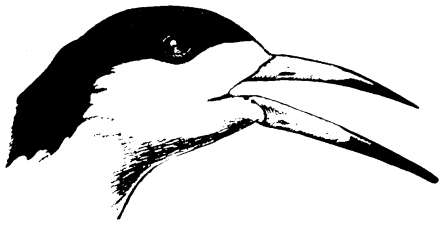
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