The **SKIMMER**

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, December 12, 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: Our annual Holiday Party. The dinner will be cold cuts of meats and cheeses for sandwiches on Con Pane artisan breads, salads, a fruit tray, drinks and desserts. Tom Blackman is putting a loop of members' interesting bird photos to run on the big screen while we eat. Paul Lehman will give the 2017 list of notable species by month. A reminder that we will all vote for the top 5 or 6 species of 2017 before the January 2018 meeting. Justyn Stahl will give an updated list of possible future county birds. We could use any and all volunteers to help set up, carry trays from the Von's nearby, and clean up.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, January 16, 2018, same time, same place. John Sterling presents "Birding in Paraguay," including photos from the dry Chaco in the west to the Atlantic rainforests of the east. John will discuss new opportunities for birding ecotourism in this South American country.

New Year's Day Pelagic Trip

The New Year's Day pelagic trip will be aboard the 65-ft. *Dominator* out of Point Loma Sportfishing. SDFO has chartered the boat, so reservations will need to be made through the club, **not the landing**.

The trip departs at 8 a.m. and will return at 2 p.m. (plan on arriving an hour ahead of departure). Cost will be $52.00 to members and each of their guest, payable by cash or check made out to SDFO, payable before boarding. Credit cards cannot be accepted. Sign up by contacting dpovey@nethere.com. or sign up at the December meeting. I need one name for each one of the 40 spaces on the boat. You may also pay your 2018 dues New Year's morning if you wish. Open signup will be available to the public if space allows after Dec. 27th at $70.00 each.

Gray Whales will be in migration, and the regular winter species of birds are expected. This has been a fun way to start off the New Year, and once in a while we pick off a nice bird.

SAN DIEGO BIRD OBSERVATIONS, NOVEMBER 2017

Compiled by Sara Baase Mayers

This photo of the Groove-billed Ani, taken 19 Nov, shows the grooved bill and the forward and backward toes typical of birds in the cuckoo family. More than 200 birders from San Diego and farther away have come to see the ani in Encinitas Community Park. Photo by Eric G. Kallen

Again this month, San Diego County has a new bird species (assuming acceptance by the California Bird Records Committee): **Groove-billed Ani**—bringing the county total to 523. A birder from England found it. Claudia Dias and her husband were visiting family in Encinitas, and Claudia saw the bird while on a morning walk in Encinitas Community Park on 19 November. She didn't find the species on a list of birds in southern California, so she posted it to eBird along with several photos, and San Diego birders learned of it from eBird alerts. The bird generally moved around in the open in low bushes and small trees, often eating grasshoppers, in easy view of crowds of birders. The 12 previous records of Groove-billed Anis in California include several in nearby counties, but except for one recent record, they were all in 1998 and earlier [CBRC]. The ani was present through the end of the month and might stay through the winter, as did a few others recorded in the state. Other birds this month notable for both rarity and their long stay in locations easily accessible to birders include a Mountain Plover, Tricolored Heron, Bobolink, Hooded Warbler, and Painted Redstart. All but the Bobolink continued past the end of the month; details are below.

The male Eurasian Wigeon at the San Diego River mouth 30 Sep-3 Nov (JB, SBM) is probably the same bird there last year. A second male was photographed at San Elijo Lagoon on 29 Nov (JMcM) and seen past the end of the month (CR). Two male White-winged Scoters flew by Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla, one on 15 Nov (SW) and another was photographed there on 27 Nov (GN). A female or immature White-winged Scoter flew past Encinitas on 27 Nov (JMcM). A male Black Scoter was seen from Pt. La Jolla on 5 Nov (JTS). Two Pacific Loons at Lake Cuyamaca 10-11 Nov (TF, JB) are notable because this species is rarely seen away from the ocean. A **Red-necked Grebe** at Famosa Slough in Ocean Beach (San Diego) 2-7 Nov (LH) spent much of its time with its head tucked but raised it occasionally for clear identification. Three White-winged Doves strayed through the coastal lowlands this month: one at Doyle Community

The male Broad-billed Hummingbird, photographed 3 Nov in Mission Trails Regional Park, is stunningly colorful, while the field marks of the female, photographed 11 Nov in Vista, are more subtle. Photos by Chris Adler and Terence Brashear

Park in the University City neighborhood on 4 Nov (JD), one in the Normal Heights neighborhood on 19 Nov (RM), and one near a residence in El Cajon 27-30 Nov (CKS).

Broad-billed Hummingbirds are rare visitors to San Diego, and we had two this month. The stunning adult male found at the east border of Mission Trails Regional Park in Santee on 31 Oct (JS) remained until the morning of 4 Nov (RA), and a female visited a feeder in Vista 11-28 Nov (JRy). A Pacific Golden-Plover at the south end of Seacoast Dr. in Imperial Beach, first recorded 21 Aug (CB), was present 27 Nov (RTP) and is likely to stay into early April. A juvenile **Mountain Plover** stayed in the dog run area of Fiesta Island in Mission Bay 14-30 Nov+ (GN, PP); decades ago, Mountain Plovers regularly wintered in plowed fields and short grass in San Diego County, sometimes with more than a hundred present, but since 1991, with the decrease in agriculture, there have been only a few instances of indi-

This photo, taken 15 Nov, of the Mountain Plover at Fiesta Island shows how well the colors of the bird blend with its surroundings. Photo by Gary Nunn

vidual birds and one instance of six [Unitt, eBird]. Two Ancient Murrelets were seen at Pt. La Jolla on 4 Nov (GN, JP). Two Brown Pelicans were unusually far inland at Lake Henshaw 27 Sep-1 Nov (JP).

Two hatch-year **Tricolored Herons** are likely wintering, one in south San Diego Bay 1 Oct–29 Nov (JGa, MW) and one that moves between Famosa Slough and the San Diego River channel near Robb Field, observed 13 Oct-30 Nov+ (LR, JB). An adult Reddish Egret was at the Tijuana River mouth 12-16 Nov (PEL); an immature bird showed up in San Diego Bay in Chula Vista on 11 Nov (GMcC), and an adult was there 28 Nov (GMcC). An adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, one of the many descendants of two that arrived in San Diego in 2005, was at Vacation Village on 3 Nov (PEL); another or possibly the same bird was reported at Famosa Slough on 11 Nov (JL). The adult Zone-tailed Hawk that has been frequenting the area of the San Diego Safari Park near Escondido since 21 Sep (KW) was seen through the end of the month (AS), and an adult (perhaps the same one) flew high over Collier Park, a few miles away in Ramona on 26 Nov (GG). The Short-eared Owl first seen flying on Fiesta Island 23 Oct (MS) stayed through the end of the month (MC). A hatch-year Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was photographed in Presidio Park in San Diego on 12 Nov (CZ).

Down from eight in October, only two Tropical Kingbirds were reported this month: one in Nestor Park in Nestor 14 Oct–16 Nov (PEL, EGK), presumed to be the same bird there last year, and one at Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River Valley from 18 Nov through the end of the month (THu, JGu), likely returning for its third winter. The **Thick-billed Kingbird** wintering in the Poggi Greenbelt in Chula Vista for the 8th year was present 23 Oct past the end of November (PEL, TR). Although San Diegans might look on this bird as a "regular," the species is an A-rated rarity in the county, and there had been no others for several years; thus another photographed at the San Diego Botanic Garden on 1 Nov (JQ) is notable. A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** at the Poggi Greenbelt area 27 Oct (DP) through the end of November (TR), sometimes perching in a tree with the Thick-billed Kingbird, has returned for its second winter.

The nine reported Plumbeous Vireos, probably attempting to winter locally, include one in Doyle Community Park since 29 Oct (JD) still present 28 Nov (PEL), one at the east border of Mission Trails Regional Park on 4 Nov (RMcN), one on Hilltop Dr. in Chula Vista on 6 Nov (PEL) and two in Heritage Park in Chula Vista the same day (PEL), one in south San Diego on 14 Nov (PEL), one near the San Diego River west of Mission Center Rd. on 21 Nov (CKS), one in La Jolla on 22 Nov (PEL), and one in El Cajon on 29 Nov (CKS). A Verdin, unusual near the coast, was in San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas 2-6 Nov (PGN, SES). Three Brown Creepers were in the coastal lowlands where they also are unusual: up to two at Lindo Lake in Lakeside 19-26 Nov (RB, CKS) and one at a private residence in Encinitas on 20 Nov (SC).

After the irruption of Varied Thrushes in the county in 2015, when dozens were here, the numbers returned to a more typical low level; this month there were two, one at Roberts Ranch near Descanso 29 Oct –2 Nov (CKS) and one at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton on 13 Nov (PAG). A **Gray Catbird** at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas 12-25 Nov (EM, SS) sometimes rewarded patient and persistent birders with brief views. A female-type **Evening Grosbeak** was heard and seen in a canyon, then flying over an industrial area, north of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar on 6 Nov (JMcM). At least three Purple Finches at a residence in the Clairemont neighborhood of San Diego 7-17 Nov (RB) were unusual because in the coastal lowland. Larger than usual numbers of Cassin's Finches continue in the mountains from Palomar State Park to the Laguna Mountains, with a high of 16 near Pine Valley on 24 Nov (GN).

Up to two Lapland Longspurs were on Fiesta island 3-4 Nov (GN); one of them spent 4-6 Nov (GN, TG) on the east side of Crown Point at Mission Bay in San Diego. Two Clay-colored Sparrows were report-

The Bobolink and Lapland Longspur at Crown Point, on the north side of Mission Bay, often fed near each other on the grass as shown in this 4 Nov view. Photo by Matthew Grube

ed this month: one in the northeast corner of Balboa Park (Morley Field area) in San Diego 30 Oct–2 Nov (NJD, EGK) and one at the Sunset Ave. ball fields in the Tijuana River Valley 2-5 Nov (PEL, GMcC). Three Vesper Sparrows, rare along the coast, were near Dairy Mart Rd. in the Tijuana River Valley on 2 Nov (PEL), and another was near the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge visitor center on 19 Nov (DH). Only one Nelson's Sparrow was reported this month; it was at the Kendall-Frost Mission Bay Marsh Reserve in San Diego on 6 Nov (JB), when the high tide was 7.0 feet. The only Swamp Sparrow found this fall continued at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas 14 Oct–4 Nov (GCH, TG). There were ten White-throated Sparrows this month, with single birds in Leucadia 14 Oct through the end of November (KA); near Ramona 7-29 Nov (NC); at Lake Cuyamaca on 11 Nov (THu); at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 12 Nov (GN); at Valecito, near the east edge of the county, on 12 Nov (BLS); near Tecolote Canyon on 13-23 Nov (MM); in El Cajon on 13 Nov (CKS); near Encinitas on 13 Nov (AH); in Jacumba on 24 Nov (GN); and in Doyle Community Park on 30 Nov (JRo). The White-crowned Sparrows abundant in San Diego in winter are mostly of the subspecies *gambelii* and have white lores; black-lored White-crowned Sparrows are rare here and occur mostly as spring migrants [Unitt]. Thus, the presence of five of the latter in the county this month was unusual. Single birds appeared at Coronado on 5 Nov (PEL), Lake Cuyamaca on 8 Nov (JRM), the Community Gardens in the Tijuana River Valley on 8 Nov (PEL), Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 12 Nov (GN), and Cleator Park in Ocean Beach on 28 Nov (PEL).

Very few **Bobolink**s have passed through San Diego County in recent decades since a large reduction in agricultural fields in the Tijuana River Valley

where the species was once common, so three this fall were quite unusual. The one present this month, at Crown Point along Mission Bay 4-13 Nov (GN), was most cooperative and enjoyed by numerous birders. It fed on the grass, sometimes with the Lapland Longspur that was there for a few days, and perched in trees—the latter somewhat uncharacteristic behavior for Bobolinks. It was also uncharacteristically late, as they have generally come through in September and October.

A female Orchard Oriole at Sun Valley Rd. in Solana Beach on 7 Nov (JMcM) was presumably the same bird at that location last year; an adult male and a female were at North Island Naval Air Station on 18 Nov (JGa); and an immature male was at a University of California San Diego (UCSD) housing complex in La Jolla 22 Nov (PEL). A male Baltimore Oriole, returning for its second winter at Nestor Park, was seen 14 Oct–23 Nov (PEL, GMcC); a female was at UCSD on 22 Nov (PEL).

This male Hooded Warbler was actively feeding and moving all around a condo complex in Del Mar. Photo taken on 28 Nov by Eric G. Kallen

Up to eight Black-and-White Warblers were known present this month: one at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas, returning from last year, seen 17 Sep through the end of November (GCH, NO); one in its sixth winter in the northeast corner of Balboa Park 30 Oct–2 Nov (NJD, EGK); a male in San Dieguito County Park 4-26 Nov (SB, TG); one at the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park 7-12 Nov (TRS, MC)—also a returning bird; one in a residential area of Pt. Loma on 10 Nov (GN); one in Tecolote Canyon near Genesee Ave. in San Diego on 11 Nov (TR); one at Coronado Ave. and 8th St. in Coronado on 12 Nov (JTS); and one seen near the southeast corner of Balboa Park 29-30 Nov (EGK, AS). A male **Hooded Warbler** showed up at the Ruette le Parc condo complex in Del Mar on 28 Nov (SES) and stayed past the end of the month, later than the small number of previous fall migrants [Unitt]. A female or immature Northern Parula was along the San Diego River west of Mission Center Rd. 21-24 Nov (PEL, TR). Two Blackburnian Warblers appeared in Pt. Loma on 5 Nov, one at Point Loma Nazarene University (JK) and one at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery (GN). A male Chestnut-sided Warbler was photographed in San Dieguito County Park on 4 Nov (SB). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was in the vicinity of the intersection of I-5 and I-15 on 6 Nov (PEL). At least 13 Palm Warblers were seen in the county this month—a higher than usual number. All but two sightings were in the first half of November; four were in the Tijuana River Valley, and the others ranged north to San Elijo Lagoon. Two **Painted Redstarts** returned, one for its third stay in West Shepherd Canyon in the Tierrasanta neighborhood of San Diego 19 Oct–3 Nov (PEL, BLC) and one for its second year at Crown Point

along Mission Bay 24 Oct-29 Nov (PEL, SB). The latter bird, along with the Bobolink and Lapland Longspur in the same area for several days together this month, made up a trio of rare birds that attracted and pleased many observers and photographers.

This Blackburnian Warbler at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery 5 Nov, one of two in the county this month, fed in the grass with two Palm Warblers and several Yellow-rumped Warblers. Photo by Eric G. Kallen

Eight Summer Tanagers were reported this month: a male near the Marston House at Balboa Park 3 Oct-24 Nov (VA, THy, CA), a female in the northeast corner of Balboa Park 30 Oct–2 Nov (NJD, EGK), a male at Harry Griffen Park in La Mesa 12 Nov (JP), a female at Villa La Jolla Park in La Jolla 13 Nov (TG), a female at a UCSD housing complex on 22 Nov (PEL), a female in the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 25 Nov (AJ), a male in San Dieguito County Park 26 Nov (GJH), and a female on McCall St. in the La Playa section of Pt. Loma on 28 Nov (PEL). Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, all immature males, were photographed, one in West Hills Park in the Clairemont neighborhood of San Diego on 9 Nov (JB) and two in Vallecito 9-11 Nov and 27 Nov (BLS). A male Blue Grosbeak photographed at Famosa Slough 12 Nov (GF) was very late; they are rare by late September [Unitt]. **Painted Buntings** have been more numerous this year than usual with three in September and two this month. As they are very popular cage birds in Baja California, it is difficult to distinguish vagrants from escapees, but vagrants are known to occur in fall [Unitt]. The two Painted Buntings this month were a female near the Bird & Butterfly Garden 4-5 Nov (PEL, EJ) and a male at a feeder in Encinitas on 8 Nov (AM).

Observers cited: Chris Adler, Kathy Aldern, Van Allen, Ryan Andrews, Steve Brad, Richard Breisch, Chris Brown, John Bruin, Steve Cameron, Barbara L. Carlson, Nancy Christensen, Mauro Colabianchi, Jay Desgrosellier, Nicole J. Desnoyers, George Fiore, Too Fly, Johnny Galt (JGa), Greg Gillson, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Jonah Gula (JGu), Lesley Handa, Gjon C. Hazard, Dennis Heinemann, Alison Hiers, Terry Hurst (THu), Theresa Hyde (THy), AJ (full name not known), Eduardo Jimenez, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Joe Leeak, Paul E. Lehman, Eve Martin, Marcie Mason, Andy Mauro, Sara Baase Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Robert McNab, Richard Miller, James R. Morris, P. Gretchen Nell, Gary Nunn, Nancy Overholtz, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Dave Povey, Phil Pryde, Jo Quinn, Jim Roberts (JRo), Lisa Ruby, Carly Rush (name uncertain), Tuck Russell, Jim Rylander (JRy), Matt Sadowski, Britta

Lee Shain, Christopher K. Smith, Susan E. Smith, Jeff Spaulding, Justyn T. Stahl, Trent R. Stanley, Susan Steele, Andy Stepniewski, Stan Walens, Kenneth Weaver, Martha Wild, Catherine Zinsky.

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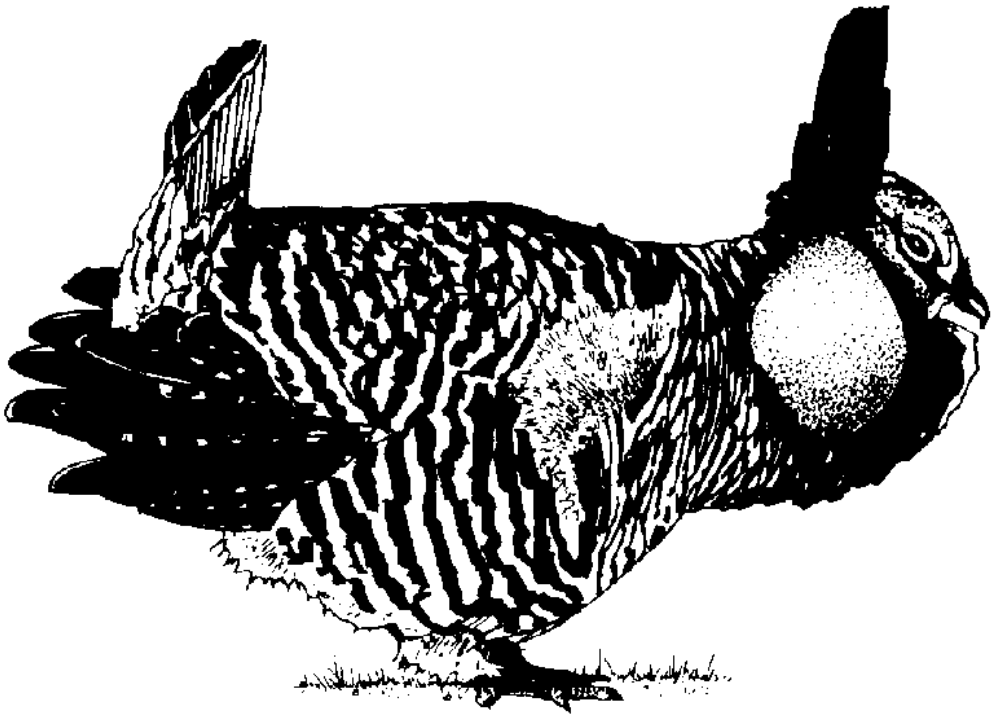

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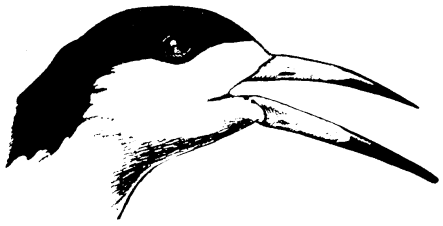
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