

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 20, at 6:00 p.m., in the Hoffman Room of the San Diego Foundation Building, 2508 Historic Decatur Rd. 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: “The Breeding Bird Survey: Local, National, and International,” by Hank Ingersoll.

The nationwide Breeding Bird Survey recently passed the 50-year landmark. These surveys are done during the breeding season along secondary roads, using a precise point count protocol. Hank will talk about the history of the survey, the protocol, and some results at a national level and results for his routes done in San Diego County and Ontario.

Henry G. Ingersoll, M.D. was introduced to bird-watching at an early age with his father in Delaware. Hank started doing Breeding Bird Surveys in 2003 and has completed 35 surveys in San Diego County and Ontario, Canada. He is a Past President of the San Diego Field Ornithologists. Hank is a retired physician-cardiologist who spent his professional career with Sharp Healthcare. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the U.C.L.A. School of Medicine. He lives in La Jolla with his wife, Marsha. They have 3 children and 4 grandchildren, none of whom are birders.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, April 24, same time, same place. **Note the changed date!** Jay Shepard will describe his work on LeConte’s Thrashers and preview his forthcoming book, *The Biology of a Desert Apparition*.

Last Call for 2018 Dues!

If you *still* haven’t paid your 2018 SDFO dues, do it immediately if not sooner. See the last page of the newsletter for details, or hit up Membership Chair Nancy Christensen at the monthly meeting.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, FEBRUARY 2018

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

As in past years, many of the known wintering “rarities” remained into March.

We can anticipate the first (FOS) of some of the early spring migrants in March. Virtually all will be adult males, with most singing on territory at nesting locations. These include Pacific-coast Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Bell’s Vireo, Gray Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, Black-chinned Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, Hooded Oriole, Bullock’s Oriole and Scott’s Oriole. Since Unitt (2003) lists early and expected arrival dates, I recommend observers read his species accounts to determine these dates and use caution before reporting “FOS” for those species known to winter locally: Western Tanager don’t arrive in March.

The four Eurasian Wigeon present through January remained into February, with single males at the San Diego River mouth 30 Sep-25 Feb (JBr, *eBird*), on San Elijo Lagoon 29 Nov-12 Feb (JMcM, *eBird*), along the lower Sweetwater River in Chula

Vista/National City 16 Dec-11 Feb (DJ, *eBird*) and along Highland Valley Road near Ramona on 15 Jan-28 Feb+ (BP, *eBird*), with a previously unreported male near the Oceanside entrance to Camp Pendleton on 20 Feb (PAG). Up to four Black Scoters remained off Grand Caribe Shoreline Park on south San Diego Bay from 11 Dec through 28 Feb+ (BLC, *eBird*), and a female found off the mouth of the Tijuana River on 16 Dec (PEL) was still present 10 Feb (DJ). The female Long-tailed Duck found along the lower Otay River in Imperial Beach on 9 Dec (DB) was still present 28 Feb+ (*eBird*), and a second was seen in the adjacent South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge (saltworks ponds) 22-28 Feb+ (GCH, MSa). The Red-necked Grebe, rare as far south as San Diego, remained around Shelter Island on San Diego Bay 19 Jan-28 Feb+ (SJ, *eBird*).

A White-winged Dove in a residential area of Encinitas 5 Feb (AH), along G St. in Chula Vista on 11 Feb (CGE) and a third at Whelan Lake in Oceanside on 22 Feb (DE) were all close to the coast where unexpected. An adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird photographed at a private residence in Mis-



These two photos taken of the Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel off San Diego, San Diego County on 25 February 2018 not only show the pale gray coloration of the bird, but also the diagnostic blackish on the lesser coverts on the upper side of the wings, and the dark underwing coverts. Photos by Thomas A. Blackman (upper-side) and Gary Nunn (under-side).

sion Valley on 27 Feb (MMcC) was an exciting “one-day wonder”.

The Pacific Golden-Plover that arrived at the Tijuana River mouth 21 Aug was still present 28 Feb+ (*eBird*) and anticipated to stay into April. Four Scripps’s Murrelets off San Diego on 17 Feb (DP) were the earliest reported this year, but were undoubtedly present much earlier. An Ancient Murrelet, rare this far south, was at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 23 Feb (MSa). Two Black-legged Kittiwakes at Pt. La Jolla on 19 Feb (BMu) followed by eight there on 23 Feb (MSa) when strong winds were blowing from the northwest, were unexpected, since virtually none were being reported in Southern California waters this winter, and none were seen during the San Diego Bird Festival boat trips on 24 and 25 February; a sick Black-legged Kittiwake at Lake Murray on 23 Feb (JP) provides only the fourth inland record for San Diego County (Unitt 2003). An Elegant Tern at Camp Pendleton on 27 Feb (JMcM) was the earliest this spring.

The most notable bird on the San Diego Bird Festival boat trips was a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel photographed 11 nm southwest of Pt. Loma a 25 Feb (PEL). Two of the four adult Nazca Boobies present in mid-December remained on south San Diego Bay through 28 Feb+ (PEL, *eBird*). Also noteworthy was an adult female Brown Booby present on south San Diego Bay 29 Dec-28 Feb (OD, *eBird*). The immature Tricolored Heron found on south San Diego Bay on 1 Oct was still present on 28 Feb+ (BF, *eBird*) but is easily overlooked if it is frequenting closed areas along the south shore of the bay or in the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and the other, found at the mouth of the San Diego River on 13 Oct, was still present 28 Feb+ (LR, *eBird*). Single Reddish Egrets were still at the Tijuana River mouth and on south San Diego Bay at the end of February (PEL, GMcC, *eBird*), and up to three adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were near the Imperial Beach Sports Park at the end of the month (GMcC, *eBird*).

The adult Harris’s Hawk of unknown origin found near the Ramona Airport during the 30 Decem-

ber Escondido Christmas Bird Count was still present 28 Feb+ (SP, *eBird*). Two Swainson’s Hawks over east El Cajon on 2 Feb (CKS) and one with Turkey Vultures at the San Diego Safari Park near Escondido on 7 Feb were the earliest this spring, followed by a



This photo of a sapsucker on El Secreto in Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego County on 4 February 2018 shows that the entirely white chin and throat are framed by unbroken black sub-malar stripes, and that golden-buffy markings are still present on the mantle, clearly showing it is a female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Photo by Sandy Yayanos.

flock of 19 at Borrego Springs on 11 Feb (MJ). Up to two adult Zone-tailed Hawks at and around the San Diego Safari Park through 22 Feb (KW, *eBird*), an adult seen sporadically around the Ramona Grasslands and nearby Ramona 21 Oct-26 Feb (DW, *eBird*), and another adult at Lake Jennings 13 Jan-08 Feb (NO’B) were no doubt wintering locally, but single adults at Stonewall Mine in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on 6 Feb (EGK), over Oceanside on 10 Feb and at Valley

Center on 25 Feb (RA) appeared to be on the move. The Short-eared Owls discovered on Mission Bay's Fiesta Island on 23 Oct remained through the winter with at least one still present 26 Feb (MSa, *eBird*). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found along El Secreto in Rancho Santa Fe on 4 Feb remained through 28 Feb+ (SY, *eBird*), and is the only one reported in this County this winter.

The Greater Pewee found at the western edge of Balboa Park near the intersection of 6th Ave. and El Prado on 5 Dec is clearly settled for the winter and still present 28 Feb+ (JP, PEL, *eBird*), this being the 13th known in San Diego County, some of which returned for multiple winters (California Bird Records

Committee 2007). Three Gray Flycatchers were reported present west of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, with one each at Montclair Park in San Diego 16 Dec-19 Feb (RA, *eBird*) and at the Ramona Grasslands 31 Jan-9 Feb (MN, *eBird*) and the the 3rd east of Lower Otay Lake at Pio Pico Park on 7 Feb (DP). A Pacific-slope Flycatcher at Hilltop Park in Chula Vista on 10 Feb (PEL) had no doubt wintered locally—the earliest of the spring migrants are not expected until March (Unitt, 2004). The Ash-throated Flycatcher found at Montclair

Park 24 Jan was still present 15 Feb (MSt, *eBird*), and another found at Nestor Park in Nestor 25 Jan was still present 25 Feb (CO, *eBird*). The Tropical Kingbird found near the intersection of 6th Ave. and El Prado in Balboa Park 4 Dec was still present 20 Feb (TRS, *eBird*). A Cassin's Kingbird, unexpected anywhere east of our mountains, was well photographed at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs 15-25 Feb (RT, *eBird*), and the Thick-billed Kingbird, spending its 8th winter at the lower end of Poggi Canyon in Chula Vista, was still there on 28 Feb+ (PEL, *eBird*). In addition, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, present for its 2nd winter at the same location in Poggi Canyon, remained through 28 Feb+ (DP, *eBird*).



This photo of the Red-throated Pipit at Berry Park in Nestor, San Diego County on 18 February 2018 well shows the diagnostic boldly striped upper-parts. Photo by Curtis A. Marantz.

A Cliff Swallow at Santee Lakes in Santee on 3 Feb (RA) was the earliest of the spring migrants/summer visitors reported this year. A Brown Thrasher was well described at Kit Carson Park in Escondido on 16 Feb (SM), but never seen again despite much looking by local birders. The Bell's Vireo, very rare in winter, found along Coronado Ave. in Coronado on 14 Dec was still present 4 Feb (PEL). Two Cassin's Vireos were known present this month, with one frequenting the willows at the north end of Nestor Park in Nestor 20 Oct-25 Feb (PEL, *eBird*) and the other along Gage St. on Pt. Loma on 17 Feb (PEL). In addition, three Plumbeous Vireos, now outnumbering Cassin's Vireos in winter, included single birds in residential

La Mesa 1 Dec-11 Feb (MSa), at the San Diego Safari Park 30 Dec-7 Feb (TF, *eBird*) and along El Secreto in Rancho Santa Fe 14-24 Feb (NC, *eBird*). The wintering Red-throated Pipit found at Berry Park in Nestor on 16 Dec (AL) reappeared 18-26 Feb (CAM, *eBird*) after having gone elsewhere since 25 Jan.

A Clay-colored Sparrow photographed near the airport in Ramona on 11 Feb (KBu) was the only one known present in February. The Grasshopper Sparrow found at Fiesta Island on Mission Bay 20 Jan was still present 17 Feb (TF-H, *eBird*). A Nelson's



The hardy MacGillivray's Warbler at Doane Pond on Palomar Mountain, San Diego County, photographed on 18 February 2018. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

Sparrow along the McCoy Trail at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Imperial Beach on 3 Feb (NC), believed to be one of the three seen there in December, had been forced from the saltmarsh vegetation by the super high tides and is likely still present. Three of the six White-throated Sparrows known locally are frequenting feeders at private residences, with one each in Leucadia (KA), the area of Tecolote Canyon in San Diego (MM) and near Ramona (NC) remaining through February; in addition one was in Dos Picos Park near Ramona 3 Dec-28 Feb (JS, *eBird*), another at a residence in Carmel Valley 1 Feb (DT) and the sixth in a residential area of Coronado 4-28 Feb+ (PEL, EC).

Along with the expected small numbers of wintering Bullcock's Orioles in and around San Diego, the adult male Orchard Oriole photographed along the North Island Naval Air Station and Coronado fence line on 18 Nov was still present 20 Feb (BF, PEL), and the somewhat cooperative female Orchard Oriole at Nestor Park in Nestor remained through February (TRS, *eBird*) along with a

female at Cottonwood Park in Encinitas 9 Feb (PEL), another female along West Shepherd Canyon in Tierrasanta on 14 Feb (PEL) and an immature male along Camino Del Prado in Carlsbad on 24 Feb (TG). Single wintering Hooded Orioles were at the Botanic Garden in Encinitas 28 Dec-6 Feb (RC, *eBird*), at the Seascape Apartment complex in Carlsbad 2 Feb (TG), along 27th St. in San Diego on 4 Feb (EH), in Cottonwood Park on 9 Feb (PEL) and along West Shepherd Canyon on 14 Feb (PEL). Three Baltimore Orioles were known in February, with the long-staying adult male at Nestor Park 14 Oct-28 Feb+ (PEL, *eBird*), the adult female reported at Rohr Park in Bonita on 16 Dec (JP) seen again on 10 Feb (PEL), and a brightly colored female along Coronado Ave. in Coronado on 4 Feb (PEL). A male Scott's Oriole photographed at a private residence in southeastern El Cajon on 6 Feb (JBe) and another along Black Canyon Rd. near Ramona on 25 Feb (JR) were both well west of the mountains where rare.

Four Black-and-white Warblers included long-staying birds at Nestor Park 23 Sep-28 Feb+ (GDeL,



This female American Redstart photographed at Dos Picos County Park, San Diego County on 26 February 2018 was well showing its yellow and blackish tail pattern. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

eBird) and in the area of 28th and Ash Sts. at the southeastern corner of Balboa Park 28 Oct-28 Feb+ (MA, *eBird*), along with one at Harry Griffin Regional Park in La Mesa 4-5 Feb (KK, *eBird*) and the fourth at a private residence on Pt. Loma on 20 Feb (SBM). Single Nashville Warblers on Idle Hour Ln. in residential La Jolla 25 Dec-28 Feb+ (PEL) and at Presidio Park in San Diego 11 Feb (PEL) were present along with the more numerous Yellow, Black-throated Gray and Wilson's Warblers wintering in the County. A Lucy's Warbler visited a private residence in Coronado 29 Dec-31 Jan+ (EC). Remarkable was a MacGillivray's Warbler at Doane Pond in Palomar Mountain State Park 14 Nov-18 Feb (NC)—not only is this species unexpected anywhere in California in winter, it also chose a location high in the mountains where temperatures dropped below freezing. The Hooded Warbler found at a private condominium complex in Del Mar on 28 Nov was still present at the end of February (SES). A female American Redstart at Dos Picos County Park 23-28 Feb+ ((BT, *eBird*) undoubtedly spent the winter locally. The Chestnut-sided Warbler found at Pantoja Park in downtown San Diego on 28 Jan was still present 23 Feb (PEL, *eBird*). Two Palm Warblers were reported, with one around the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley on 11 Feb (DJ) and the other along Camino De La Reina in San Diego's Mission Valley on 24 Feb (KBr). A Grace's Warbler, a casual straggler to California, was at Crest Canyon in Del Mar 5-28 Feb+ (PEL, *eBird*). The two Painted Redstarts known to be wintering locally, with one returning for a third winter along West Shepherd Canyon in Tierrasanta since 19 Oct (PEL) and the other present for a second winter along the northern edge of Mission Bay at Crown Point since 24 Oct (PEL), were both still present at the end of February (*eBird*).

Along with multiple wintering Western Tanagers, at least six Summer Tanagers were present in

February, including single birds at the western edge of Balboa Park near the intersection of 6th Ave. and El Prado 4 Dec-23 Feb (TRS, *eBird*), in Nestor Park in Nestor 9 Dec-28 Feb+ (GMcC, *eBird*), at Spreckles Park in Coronado 14 Dec-4 Feb (PEL), at the Old Trolley Barn Park in Mission Hills 2 Jan-26 Feb (PEL), along West Shepherd Canyon in Tierrasanta 6-25 Feb (NC, *eBird*) and at De Anza Cove at the north end of Mission Bay on 11 Feb (PEL). An adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was along West Shepherd Canyon in Tierrasanta 26 Jan-14 Feb (PEL, *eBird*),



This photo of the Grace's Warbler at Crest Canyon in Del Mar, San Diego County taken on 11 February 2018 shows the short broad yellow supercilium and lack of the bold black facial markings that differentiate it from the somewhat similar Yellow-throated Warbler. *Photo by LeRoy Dorman.*

and a Black-headed Grosbeak remained at a private residence near 31st and Quince Sts. in San Diego 26 Dec-25 Feb (BMo).

Listed observers: Kathy Aldern, Ryan Andrews, Mark Arndt, Josh Beck (JBe), Dylan Beyer, John Bruin (JBr), Kyle Bryan (KBr), Ken Burton (KBU), Rita Campbell, Barbara L. Carlson, Nancy Christensen, Elizabeth Copper, Gail DeLalla, Claude G. Edwards, Olaf Danielson, Diane Etchison, Brian Flick, Tiffany French, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Erin Harold, Gjon C. Hazard, Angelique Herman,

Thomas Ford-Hutchinson, Dan Jehl, Storm Jensen, Mark Jorgensen, Eric G. Kallen, Kenny Kimbrough, Paul E. Lehman, Albert Linkowski, Curtis A. Marantz, Susie Martin, Marcie Mason, Sara Baase Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Mike McClintock, Jimmy McMorran, Tina Mitchell, Barbara Morton (BMo) Brennan Mulrooney (BMu), Mike Nelson, Nancy O'Bryan, Cheryl Overend, Jim Pawlicki, Bill Pelletier, Steve Perry, Dave Povey, Jacob Roalef, Lisa Ruby, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Christopher K. Smith, Susan E. Smith, Trent R. Stanley, Jeremiah Stock, Mark Stratton (MSt), Robert Theriault, Bill Thompson III, David Trissel, Douglas Warner, Kenneth Weaver, Sandy Yayanos. Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying and last reporting each species, these mostly reported on our local website **SanDiegoRegionBirding@yahoo.com**. Observers reporting additional sightings to *eBird* are not listed but

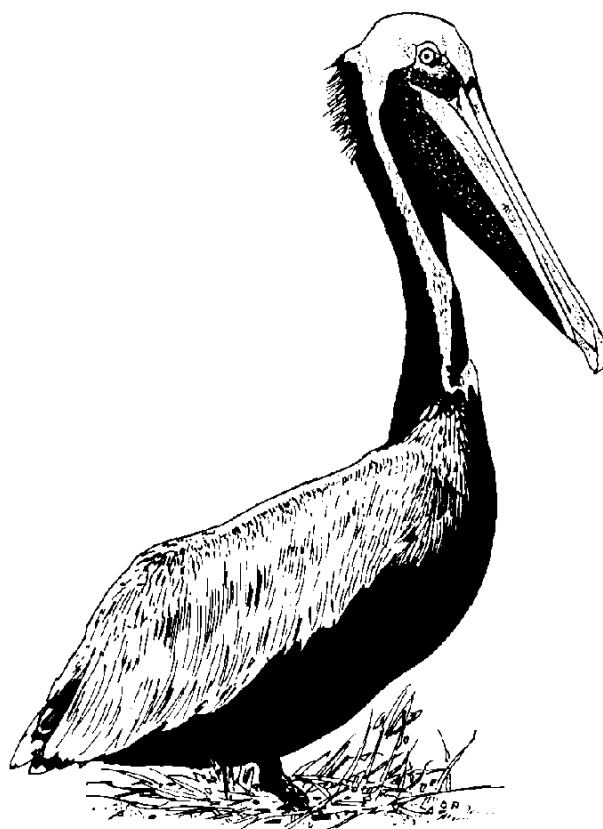
acknowledged. A "+" following 31 Jan indicates known presence into February.

Literature Cited:

California Bird Records Committee (Robert A. Hamilton, Michael A. Patten and Richard A. Erickson, editors). 2007. *Rare Birds of California*. Western Field Ornithologists, Camarillo, CA.

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