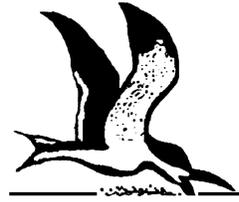


# *The* **SKIMMER**

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## **SDFO NEWS**

### **Monthly Meeting**

Tuesday, August 21, 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: Meghan Flaherty will discuss “Restoring a lost piece of California’s wild coastline: ReWild Mission Bay.”

Over the course of the last century, Mission Bay has lost nearly 95% of its historic wetlands. This has driven a sharp decline in the ecological services and habitat value of the remaining wetlands, and has pushed many threatened and endangered birds to the disturbed edges of a shrinking marsh.

Cue ReWild Mission Bay, a project of San Diego Audubon, our partners and the community to expand and restore the remnant wetlands in the northeast corner of Mission Bay. Kicked off in 2014, this project has engaged with a multitude of local stakeholders, federal agencies and the City of San Diego, with the final result being a Feasibility Study to inform future restoration efforts.

This presentation will cover the history of Mission Bay’s once expansive wetlands, the processes that drove the urbanization that we see today, and the future for wetlands and wetland-dwelling inhabitants that this project envisions. It will also include an update on where the project is currently, and what local community members can do to help lead the fight to protect Mission Bay’s wetlands.

Megan Flaherty is San Diego Audubon's Restoration Program Manager, overseeing habitat restoration programs in Mission Bay and San Diego Bay and supporting advocacy efforts throughout the County. Megan holds a Master's degree in conservation biology from Trinity College, Dublin, and obtained her undergraduate degree in Ecology, Behavior and Evolution at UC San Diego. She has overseen coastal dune restoration projects for several years, with a focus on the endangered California Least Tern, and has a broad interest in shorebirds. Megan is also a Board member with the Friends of Famosa Slough, and you can find her at their every-other-month work parties.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, September 18, same time, same place. John Bruin will present “Birding in Indonesia: From Borneo to Papua.”

# SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JULY 2018

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Edited by Sara B. Mayers

A White-winged Dove in residential Leucadia 27 Jul (JMCM) was the earliest of the expected late summer/fall vagrants that wander west to the coastal lowlands.

A Stilt Sandpiper at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 6 Jul (PEL) was an early fall migrant; they are rare to casual anywhere in California away from the south end of the Salton Sea. A Dunlin at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 19 Jul (DJ) was no doubt summering locally, since the earliest of the fall migrants do not reach San Diego County until mid-September, and most arrive in



The Solitary Sandpiper in flight at Los Penasquitos Lagoon on 16 July 2018 shows the diagnostic black and white barring on its tail, along with its prominent white eye-ring and lack of wing markings. *Photo by Mel Senac.*

October. A Baird's Sandpiper at the Ramona Pond in Ramona on 29 Jul (NC) was an adult as expected this early in the fall—the first of the juveniles will probably reach California during the second week in August because the start of nesting was believed delayed by snow cover remaining at the Alaskan/Canadian tundra into late May and early June this spring. A Semipalmated Sandpiper at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge 7-8 Jul (PEL) provides one of very few records, if not the first, of an adult in fall in San Diego County. Juveniles have been recorded as early as 28 July (Unitt 2004) but not normally until the first week in August, and they arrive later in years when snow remains late on the Alaskan/Canadian tundra as was the case this year. A Solitary Sandpiper at Los Penasquitos Lagoon 15-16 Jul (TA, *eBird*) and another



Guadalupe Murrelet 29 Jul 2018, 23 nm west of La Jolla. *Photo by Gary Nunn.*



This confused adult Heermann's Gull in the northeastern part of Mission Trails Regional Park on 28 July 2018 should have been on the immediate coast rather than in open grassland 15 miles inland. *Photo by Peter Roberts.*

er at Lake Henshaw 21 Jul (GN) were both likely adults since the earliest of the juveniles are not expected until early August. Two Red Phalaropes off San Diego on 29 Jul (DP) were, in my opinion, unusually early—substantial numbers are not normally encountered until the latter half of September, with most in October. (I question the report of Red Phalarope being “abundant offshore” San Diego on 23 July 1935 [Miller 1936].)

Single Common Murres continued to be reported in flight at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla through 12 Jul (JTS, GN, DJ,

PEL)—the waters off San Diego County are the extreme southern limit of this alcid's winter range (Unitt 2004), and it is unexpected in summer. A Guadalupe Murrelet, a regular post-breeding visitor to the waters well off California, was photographed in flight at 23 nautical miles (nm) west of La Jolla 29 Jul (GN). Ten Craveri's Murrelets 16–26 nm off La Jolla on 1 Jul (PEL) were the earliest this year, and ten more in the same area on 29 Jul (DP) appear to be the only ones reported to date in California waters in 2018. This species disperses northward after nesting on islands off the west coast of Mexico.

A Heermann's Gull photographed standing in the dry grassland at the northeastern part of Mission Trails Regional Park on 28 Jul (PR) was certainly out of place. Surprising was



The fact that this fourth-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull at Crown Point on Mission Bay on 28 July 2018 appears to have completed its head and body molt but retained its badly worn flight feathers suggests it summered locally. *Photo by Millie and Peter Thomas.*

a near-adult Glaucous-winged Gull at Crown Point on Mission Bay 28-31 Jul (M & PT, *eBird*), since very few were along the coast of Southern California this past winter, and they are always unexpected in summer. A Black Tern, now rare to casual in San Diego County, was found in the mountains at Big Laguna Lake on 29 Jul (JS). A sub-adult Common Tern, showing the diagnostic blackish carpal bar, on south San Diego Bay 4 Jul (PEL) was the earliest of only five reported through the end of the month (*eBird*).

A boat-trip from San Diego to the 30-Mile



This silent Red-eyed Vireo was along San Felipe Creek upstream from Scissors Crossing on 3 July 2018. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

Bank on 29 Jul produced, along with expected pelagic birds, two Black-footed Albatrosses at the 30-Mile Bank, an obvious summering Northern Fulmar 5 nm west of Mission Bay, and three Townsend's Storm-Petrels—one each photographed 19 nm west of La Jolla, 26.5 nm west of La Jolla and on the 30-Mile Bank (DP and GN).

Eight Reddish Egrets were reported along the coast as far north as Oceanside, with an immature at the Tijuana River mouth after 1 Jul (LR, *eBird*), an immature and an adult on south San Diego Bay most

of the month (MA, PEL, *eBird*), an immature at the San Diego River mouth since 23 May (ML, *eBird*), one at Penasquitos Lagoon 31 Jul (SES), one at Baticuitos Lagoon 7-8 Jul (TG), one at San Elijo Lagoon 8 Jul (GCH) and the eighth near the pier in Oceanside 10 Jul (BT). This heron now occurs regularly north to Orange County, with a few moving farther north to coastal Ventura County and, irregularly, to Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons continued through July at the Imperial Beach Sports Park and the adjacent Tijuana Slough

National Wildlife Refuge and in the area around the San Diego River mouth (*eBird*).

The pair of Brown-crested Flycatchers at the traditional nest site at the Roadrunner Club in Borrego Springs was still present 20 Jul (*eBird*), and another pair was along San Felipe Creek upstream from Scissors Crossing 3-21 Jul (BLC, *eBird*).

A Red-eyed Vireo, a rare to casual straggler to California, particularly so in summer, was well photo-

graphed at Scissors Crossing on 3 Jul (NC).

A dead Nashville Warbler photographed in La Mesa on 16 Jul (*inaturalist*) is of interest because this species nests no farther south than in the San Bernardino Mountains and is unrecorded in the coastal lowlands of San Diego County in July. Unfortunately, it appears no information is available as to how long the bird had been dead, so it is of little or no scientific value.

The only Summer Tanagers reported in July were at least one pair along San Felipe Creek upstream from Scissors Crossing 3-16 Jul (BLC, *eBird*).

An adult male Western Tanager near the Convention Center in San Diego on 9 Jul (DR) was an obvious early fall migrant – Unitt (2004) lists 3-6 July 2001 at Scissors Crossing as the earliest. The previously reported territorial male Indigo Buntings near Paso Picacho Campground in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park remained into July, with the one having extensive white feathering around the vent present through 5 Jul (CKS) and the other through 20 Jul (CKS).

Listed observers: Ty Allen, Marc Arndt, Barbara L. Carlson, Nancy Christensen, Tito Gonzalez, Gjon C. Hazard, Dan Jehl, Paul E. Lehman, Max Leibowitz,

Jimmy McMorran, Gary Nunn, Dave Povey, Daniel Raleigh, Peter Roberts, Lisa Ruby, Christopher K. Smith, Susan E. Smith, Justyn T. Stahl, Jeremiah Stock, Millie and Peter Thomas (M & PT), Bobbie Tilmant.

Literature Cited:

Miller, L. 1936. Some maritime birds observed off San Diego, California. *Condor* 38:9-19.

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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## 59th SUPPLEMENT TO THE AOS CHECKLIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS LEAVES SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRDS PRETTY MUCH ALONE

Each summer the birding community anxiously awaits the annual revision of the American Ornithological Society's *Checklist of North American Birds* to see the Latest & Greatest changes to the bird names we all use. This year sees some significant changes to the Latin names of many of our birds, but only two minor changes to the English names of birds we are likely to encounter. Let's get them out of the way first: The White-collared Seedeater has been split, so that little finch occasionally seen in the Tijuana River valley is now the Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater. Farther afield, if you find yourself up in the north woods, the Gray Jay is once again the Canada Jay.

The seedeater story is complex, and I'm not sure I have it all worked out. Most North American field guides show the White-collared Seedeater (*Sporophila torqueola*) as crossing over the river from Mexico into the lower Rio Grande valley. Locally, our White-collared Seedeater is an escaped cage-bird population from central Mexico that is noticeably more colorful than the birds in the field guides. Turns out that this is now considered a separate species, Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater. It retains the original Latin name, *S. torqueola*, while the Texas birds are now called Morelet's Seedeater (*S. moreletii*).

Older field guides called *Perisoreus canadensis* the Canada Jay, but it was changed to Gray Jay in the 1957 *Checklist*. Clearer heads have finally prevailed, and it's back to Canada Jay. Not a bird you're likely to see in San Diego, but they get into northern California, at least.

There have been a number of taxonomic revisions at the level of family and genus, especially in the tropics. The storm-petrels have been split into a northern family Hydrobatidae and a southern family Oceanitidae. The woodpeckers in the genus *Picoides* have all been moved to the genus *Dryobates* except for the Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers. The raptor family Accipitridae is now divided into three subfamilies; Elaninae, including White-tailed Kite, Gypaetinae, including Swallow-tailed Kite, and Accipitrinae, including everyone else. The sparrow genus *Ammodramus* now contains only the Grasshopper Sparrow, *A. savaannarum*; the new genus *Centronyx* contains Baird's Sparrow, *C. bairdii*, and Henslow's Sparrow, *C. henslowii*; and genus *Ammospiza* contains LeConte's Sparrow, *A. leconteii*, Nelson's Sparrow, *A. nelsoni*, Seaside Sparrow, *A. maritima*, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow, *caudacuta*. These Latin names don't get used much by most of us, but they will be showing up in your next field guide.

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