

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

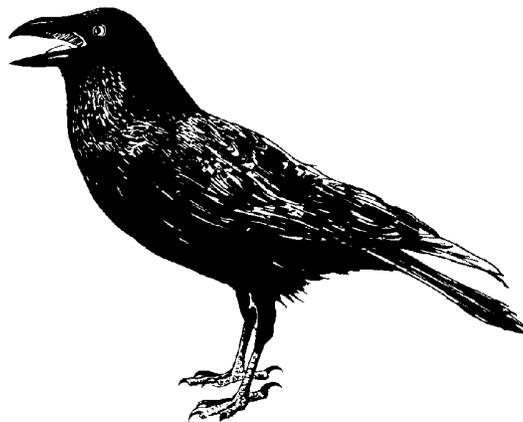
Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, September 17, 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: “Midway Atoll: The 2014 HY Count & what it’s like to count over 420,000 Albatrosses,” presented by Charlene Glacy. In 2014, Char went to Midway Atoll for three weeks along with 17 other volunteers to conduct the hatch-year count of nesting Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses. Her presentation will describe what it’s like to participate in the count, getting to Midway, staying there, as well as other wildlife on the atoll.

Char has been a birder here in San Diego more than a decade. She is a member of the Western Field Ornithologists and Secretary of the San Diego Field Ornithologists. Her travels both for birding and culture have taken her far afield, sometimes for several months at a time including three months traveling around the Silk Road and another three months exploring Southern Africa. She winces that none of those trips were focused on birds, though she did pick up a few here and there.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, October 15, same time, same place. Program: Gary Nunn will make a presentation called “China Bird Racing.”



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, AUGUST 2019

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Single White-winged Doves at a private residence in Leucadia on 7 Aug (JMCM), at a private residence in Tierrasanta on 25 Aug (M & PT) and at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 30 Aug (AG) were the earliest of those that wander west to the coast each fall.

An apparently pure American Oystercatcher was well photographed at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma on 30 Aug (CC). This oystercatcher had a clean line of demarcation between the black breast and the unmarked white underparts, clean white undersides to the wings, a prominent white wing stripe and a white rump and base of the tail—all supporting American Oystercatcher over a hybrid Ameri-

can x Black Oystercatcher as outlined by Joseph R. Jehl Jr. (Jehl 1985). The Pacific Golden-Plover present at the Tijuana River mouth since 1 Aug (RTP) was still present 28 Aug (*eBird*) and expected to remain through the winter. A juvenile Baird's Sandpiper at San Elijo Lagoon on 2 Aug (JMCM) was followed by up to five within the closed area of the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge after 13 Aug (MS) and single juveniles at Batiquitos Lagoon on 11 Aug (SS) and 25 Aug (TG), one at Border Field State Park on 21 Aug (NV) and two together at the San Diego River mouth on 30 Aug (MS). An adult Little Stint retaining some alternate plumage at the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 2 Aug (PEL)



The American Oystercatcher with two Black Oystercatchers at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma on 30 August 2019. Note the clean separation between the black breast and white underparts along with the extensive amount of white on the underwings. *Photo by Craig Chaddock.*

was assumed to be one of the two present here last winter and, if so, should be looked for with wintering “peeps” in this area. Seven Solitary Sandpipers were reported during August, with the earliest near Fallbrook on 15 Aug (SM) followed by two together at Borrego Springs on 16 Aug (TB), single birds at Lake O’Neill at Camp Pendleton on 18 Aug (PAG), at the San Diego River mouth on 22 Aug (NF), at San Dieguito Lagoon 24-25 Aug (DK, *eBird*) and the seventh at Santee Lakes on 26 Aug (JS).



This adult Nazca Booby with a pinkish-tinged bill was photographed over the 9-Mile Bank off San Diego on the same day, 18 August 2019, that a similar looking Nazca Booby was photographed about 15 miles farther to the southwest. *Photo by Margaret Viens.*

The continued presence of Craveri’s Murrelets in San Diego County’s offshore waters was confirmed by the presence of six near the 30-Mile Bank on 18 Aug (DP). A Black Tern, much rarer in San Diego

County than it was 30 years ago, was photographed at the Tijuana River mouth on 22 Aug (AL) and another was seen over the open ocean five miles west of Mission Bay on 25 Aug (JTS). A Townsend’s Storm-

Petrel photographed well offshore near the 30-Mile Bank on 18 Aug (GN) was the only one reported in San Diego County waters so far this year.

Single adult Nazca Boobies were well photographed 26 nautical miles west of Pt. Loma on 18 Aug (JMCM), off San Diego over the 9-Mile Bank on 18 Aug (MV) and on the beach of North Island Naval Air Station on 26 Aug (JW), the latter taken to Sea World the following day (*fide* Marilyn Dudley) where it died. In addition, a sub-adult black and white booby off Pt. La Jolla in La



This adult brown-morph Red-footed Booby was 22 nautical miles west of Pt. Loma on 18 August 2019. Note the powder-blue bill and pinkish-red at the base of the lower mandible. *Photo by Gary Nunn.*



This Red Crossbill, photographed on 1 September 2019, was one of at least three frequenting the upper end of Agua Dulce Creek in the Laguna Mts. since mid-August. *Photo by Lisa Ruby.*

Jolla on 24 Aug could be identified only as a Masked/Nazca Booby. Distinguishing immatures of these two species prior to their acquiring adult-like bill coloration is problematic, and to identify those that have acquired adult-like bill coloration, observers must be close enough to determine the color. An adult brown-morph Red-footed Booby was well photographed about 22 nautical miles west of Pt. Loma on 18 Aug (GMcC).

At least one Reddish Egret has been present around the Tijuana River mouth and on south San Diego Bay through most of August (*eBird*), one has been at the San Diego River mouth since 22 Aug (NF) and another was at the Santa Margarita River mouth on 20 Aug (GCH). Up to five different Yellow-crowned Night-Herons have been as far north on the San Diego County coast as Batiquitos Lagoon since 25 Jul (SB); one at the harbor in Oceanside on 17 Aug (BR) was even farther north. Those

recently reported at Dana Point in Orange County could also come from the San Diego population.

A Cactus Wren photographed at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge on 4 Aug (DS) had wandered some distance west from the nearest known nesting location. At least three Red Crossbills have been frequenting the area at the upper end of Agua Dulce Creek in the Laguna Mts. since 18 Aug (MT, *eBird*). Above-average numbers have been present in the mountains of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties to our north this summer. An adult White-crowned Sparrow well photographed at Kit Carson Park in Escondido on 22 Aug (LD and DE) was exceptionally early for a fall migrant (Unitt 2004 lists 7 September as the earliest date for a fall migrant), suggesting it may have spent the summer undetected locally.



This adult White-crowned Sparrow at Kit Carson Park in Escondido on the unprecedentedly early date of 22 August 2019 appears to be of the subspecies *gambellii* that winters locally. *Photo by Diane Etchinson.*

A male Hooded Warbler well described at Wing St. Canyon in Loma Portal 22-31 Aug+ (MH, *eBird*) and a female Canada Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 31 Aug (GN) were the earliest of the vagrant wood-warblers locally this fall. A male Summer Tanager was at Villa La Jolla Park in La Jolla on 28 Aug (AA). The latest of the four Indigo Buntings known present near the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley in July was one there on 11 Aug (DJ).

Listed observers: Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying and/or last reporting each species, these mostly reported on our local listserv **SanDiegoRegionBirding@groups.io**. Observers reporting additional sightings to *eBird* are not listed but acknowledged.

Alex Abela, Steve Brad, Tim Burr, Craig Chaddock, Linda Daily, Diane Etchison, Nathan French, Peter A. Ginsburg, Tito Gonzalez, Aaron Gyllenhaal, Michelle Haglund, Gjon C. Hazard, Dan Jehl, Dan King, Paul E. Lehman, Albert Linkowski, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Stephen Myers, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Dave Povey, Becca Reeves, Matt Sadowski, Daniel Sloan, Justyn T. Stahl, Jeremiah Stock, Steve Summers, Millie and Peter Thomas (M & PT), Manolo Turner, Margaret Viens, Nick Vinciguerra and Jane Whittle.



This Canada Warbler, probably a hatch-year female, was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 31 August 2019. Photo by Mel Senac.

Acknowledgements: I thank Sara B. Mayers and Therese R. Clawson for providing useful comments on the draft of this report.

Literature Cited:

- Jehl, J. R., Jr. 1985. *Hybridization and evolution of oystercatchers on the Pacific coast of Baja California*. Ornithol. Monogr. 36:484-504.
- Unitt, P. 2004. *San Diego County Bird Atlas*. Proc. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist. 39. San Diego Nat. Hist. Mus., San Diego.

60TH REVISION OF THE AOS CHECKLIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS PRODUCES FEW CHANGES

Each summer the American Ornithological Society publishes the latest update to their *Check List of North American Birds*, the generally recognized authority on what to call the birds. Most of the changes in this year's revision are based on new DNA studies; a few changes were made for consistency's sake. Only a couple of the changes in this year's revision should affect local birders, at least as far as the common English names are concerned.

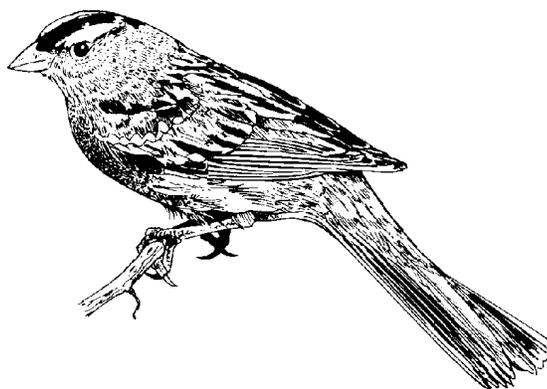
The only species commonly occurring in San Diego County that is affected this year has only a minor change. The Common Ground-Dove loses its hyphen and becomes merely Common Ground Dove (this also applies to Ruddy Ground Dove, which has occasionally showed up in the county).

A few hummingbird species get name changes, notably the Blue-throated Hummingbird *Lampornis clemenciae*. It and the closely-related Amethyst-throated Hummingbird *L. amethystinus* from farther south now become Blue-throated Mountain-gem and Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem. All the other *Lampornis* species were previously called Mountain-gems, so this is a consistency change.

We get a few White-winged Scoters every winter on San Diego Bay, so it is worth noting that this species is now split into three species. Our scoter remains White-winged Scoter *Melanitta deglandi*, while the Old World equivalents are now Velvet Scoter *M. fusca* and Stejneger's Scoter *M. stejnegeri*. The Old World species occur occasionally in areas like the Bering Sea and around Greenland, so it is worth keeping an eye out for them.

Most of the other changes involve scientific names and species orders, which are probably of less interest to all but the True Believers. Wood warblers in the genus *Oreothlypis* are all moved to the genus *Leiothlypis* except for a couple of Mexican species; this includes Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Colima, Lucy's, Nashville, and Virginia's Warblers. The storm petrels in the genus *Oceanodroma* are lumped with the previously mostly Old World genus *Hydrobates*. There are changes to the sequences of species of frigatebirds, *Charadrius* plovers, swallows and sparrows, again reflecting new understanding of the relationships within these groups.

So hang onto your old field guide—no need to trade it in yet!



SAN DIEGO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

President	Nancy Christensen (760) 788-8180 nancy.r.christensen@gmail.com
Vice-president	Vacant—please volunteer!
Secretary	Charlene Glacy (619) 851-1917 cglacy@yahoo.com
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Program Chair	John Bruin (505) 401-3022 johnrbuin@gmail.com
Membership Chair	Barbara Carlson (858) 268-1937 barbarac2003@yahoo.com
Publishing <i>Skimmer</i> Editor	John Walters (619) 267-1821 johnfwalters5552@gmail.com
Webmaster	Gary Nunn (650) 305-0029 garybunn@gmail.com

Your contributions to *The Skimmer* are appreciated. Submit articles and notices by the first of the month of publication by mail to John Walters, 5552 Horse Ridge Way, Bonita, CA 91902, or by e-mail to johnfwalters5552@gmail.com

San Diego Field Ornithologists
c/o Barbara Carlson
11192 Portobelo Dr.
San Diego, CA 92124

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