

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, February 18, at 6:00 p.m., at the Pacific Beach/Taylor Library Community Room, 4275 Cass St., San Diego. Directions: From I-5 south or north, take the Balboa/Garnet exit. Follow Garnet until it turns into Grand Ave. Turn left on Dawes St., then right onto Thomas Ave. From I-8 west, take the W. Mission Bay Dr. offramp. Continue north onto Ingraham St. Turn left on Reed Ave. Parking is either on Thomas Ave. or Reed Ave.

Program: “The Restoration of Lake Apopka and surrounding North Shore Wetlands,” by David Walker.

The restored wetlands around the north shore of Lake Apopka are now listed as the number 1 birding hotspot by *eBird* in the state of Florida (353 species). Just over 20 years ago, this area was intensively farmed agricultural land. This talk covers the restoration of Lake Apopka, remediation of pesticide contaminated soils, wetland restoration efforts, recreational opportunities and the beginning of the North Shore Birding Festival by the Orange County Audubon Society (January 16-20, 2020). All located just northwest of Orlando, FL.

While David Walker’s education includes a B.A. in Economics and Environmental Studies and a M.S. in Environmental Science, both from Indiana University, he has worked on bird research at Indiana University, Cornell University (Trinidad & Tobago) and the University of Washington. After completing work on his M.S., he worked in the research program at Everglades National Park studying nutrient dynamics in the freshwater marshes and then studying micro-invertebrates as part of a larger food web study. For most of his career, he worked at the St. Johns River Water Management District, primarily in project and program management as Basin Program Manager for the Upper Ocklawaha River and Lake Apopka Restoration Programs. These programs include restoration of over 45,000 acres of wetland habitat and 60,000 acres of lakes that form the headwaters of the Ocklawaha River. Among his many pursuits, David is also a Master Sand Sculptor and still plays in the sand.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, March 17, at 6:00 p.m., at the Mission Valley Public Library Community Room, 2123 Fenton Parkway, San Diego. Rick Halsey will present “Understanding the environment and rediscovering ourselves in the Chaparral.”

Time to Pay SDFO Dues for 2020

If you haven’t yet renewed your membership in SDFO, see Membership Chair Barbara Carlson at the next meeting, or put a check in the mail. Her contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JANUARY 2020

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

January is a time of year when we confirm the continued presence of known wintering birds and find a few new rarities.

The adult male Eurasian Wigeon at Famosa Slough/San Diego River mouth since 17 Oct (PEL) was still present on 31 Jan (*eBird*), the adult male on San Elijo Lagoon since 9 Dec (RTP) was still there on 13 Jan (RTP) and a female was photographed at Marina View Park (J St.) in Chula Vista on 24 Jan (LH). A male Eurasian Green-winged Teal found at Marina View Park on 14 Jan (DJ) was still present on 28 Jan (*eBird*). This Eurasian form of Green-winged Teal is reported in California most winters but irregularly as far south as San Diego County

(Unitt 2004), the last being at the San Diego River mouth 13 Jan-5 Mar 2001 (*N. American Birds* 55:227). The only White-winged Scoter was a male photographed off Imperial Beach on 19 Jan (AN), and the only Black Scoter was a male photographed in flight with Surf Scoters at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla on 9 Jan (GN).

A White-winged Dove in Imperial Beach since 3 Dec (TRC) was still present on 31 Jan; a second joined it 30 Dec and remained into January (TRC). At least 12 Vaux's Swifts in flight near El Prado bridge in Balboa Park on 6 Jan (NF) were no doubt part of the 26 reported there on 29 Dec (TF-H).

The Pacific Golden-Plover first seen at the Tijuana River mouth on 1 Aug (RTP) was still present on 26 Jan (RTP). The adult Lesser Black-backed Gull



The male Eurasian Green-winged Teal at Marina View Park in Chula Vista on 20 January 2020. Note the prominent white horizontal bar framing the back and the lack of the white vertical bar framing the breast. The buffy-white facial stripes are also more obvious. *Photo by Jim Pawlicki.*

found near the Hotel del Coronado in Coronado 23 Oct (NF) was still present on 26 Jan (*eBird*), spending its second winter at that location. A Short-tailed Shearwater seen from shore at Pt. La Jolla on 19 Jan (MSa) is the only one reported to date this winter. An adult Masked Booby was photographed during a *Hornblower* Whale and Dolphin Cruise half a mile west of Pt. Loma on 18 Jan (PN). It does not appear to be the rehabilitated subadult released by SeaWorld on 10 December. An adult Neotropic Cormorant found with Double-crested Cormorants on the San Diego River in Mission Valley on 7 Dec (PEL) appears settled in the area, most recently during the day at Santee Lakes 15-24 Jan (BM, *eBird*) and at night roosting with Double-crested Cormorants on utility lines high over the San Diego River south of Friars Rd. through 31 Jan (*eBird*).

The long-staying Harris's Hawk of unknown origin, first reported in Ramona on 6 Dec 2018 (NC), was still present on 31 Jan (*eBird*). Since the 1970s and early 1980s when small numbers of Broad-winged Hawks were seen infrequently in California in winter, they have been very rare at this time of year, and most winter records were first-year birds (California Bird Records Committee 2007). Thus an adult photographed in flight over Balboa Park on 3 Jan (NF) was a big surprise; it may well be wintering locally. The continuing adult and first-winter Zone-tailed Hawks were reported at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park and around nearby Escondido through January (*eBird*). Three additional adults were reported: one over the pond at the eastern edge of Ramona on 1 Jan (RG), believed to be the same bird photographed there on 15 Dec (ChM); one over the San Luis Rey River Park near Bonsall on 16 Dec (AM), seen again on 5 Jan (AM); and another photographed over Lindo Lake in Lakeside on 10 Jan (MW).

A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at the North Clairemont Community Park in Clairemont 5-29 Jan (TF-H) is obviously settled for the winter, and another around the Geisel Library at the University of Califor-



The Neotropic Cormorant with a Double-crested Cormorant on utility lines high over the San Diego River at Friars Rd. on 18 December 2019. The glossy black coloration along with the obvious white feathering bordering the gular pouch and the white plume on the side of the head show that it is an adult in alternate plumage. *Photo by Dan Jehl.*



The adult Masked Booby half-a-mile off Pt. Loma on 18 January 2020. Note the bill color shows it to be a Masked rather than a Nazca Booby, and the unmarked white body shows it to be an adult. *Photo by Patti Nisbet.*

nia San Diego, in La Jolla 18-25 Jan (ChM, *eBird*) is also likely wintering locally.

The Thick-billed Kingbird spending its 10th winter at the Poggi Creek Greenbelt in Chula Vista was still present 31 Jan (*eBird*) and is expected to stay into April. The adult Scissor-tailed Flycatcher spending its fourth winter at the Poggi Creek Greenbelt was still present 31 Jan (*eBird*), and another found in Coronado during the San Diego Christmas Bird Count on 14 Dec was at Spreckles Park in Coronado on 20 Jan (RA), so clearly wintering locally. The Greater Pewee found at the western edge of Balboa Park on 25 Nov (NF) was still present on 22 Jan (*eBird*); it is believed to be the same bird here during the winter of 2017-2018 but not detected the following year. A Gray Flycatcher in the coastal lowlands at Lindo Lake in Lakeside 1 Dec-31 Jan (THur, *eBird*) and another photographed at Batiquitos Lagoon in Carlsbad on 21 Dec-13 Jan (PEL, *eBird*), along with a third in the desert at Rams Hill in Borrego Springs on 12 Jan (THun), were the only ones reported this month. A Pacific-slope Flycatcher photographed in Tecolote Canyon in Bay Park 3 Jan (LE) and another reported at the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park 15 Jan (CiM) were both likely present since fall. The Eastern Phoebe found at the east end of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve on 17 Dec



The Eastern Phoebe near the eastern end of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve on 21 December 2019. *Photo by Tuck Russell.*

(RP) was still present on 24 Jan (*eBird*), so settled for the winter.

A Cassin's Vireo, rare in winter, was at a private residence in Encinitas on 1 Jan (GCH), and another was photographed at the Rancho Bernardo Community Park in Rancho Bernardo on 4 Jan (CA). Single Plumbeous Vireos, more numerous in winter than Cassin's Vireo, were at Wing Street Canyon in Loma Portal 22 Dec-26 Jan (MH), Big Rock Park near Santee on 18 Jan (EA), Harry Griffin Park in La Mesa on 21 Jan (KW) and along the San Diego River near Allied Gardens on 31 Jan (ABa). A Verdin, unexpected along the coast, found at the San Diego River mouth in Ocean Beach on 4 Oct (JRM) was still present on 23 Jan (*eBird*).

Evening Grosbeaks were still to be seen near Big Laguna Lake in the Laguna Mountains but in smaller numbers than in November, with 15 present on 20 Jan (MiS) and two on 31 Jan (BM). Cassin's Finches persist in the Laguna Mts. in small numbers, with four reported along Los Huecos Rd. on 1 Feb (AD) and six near Big Laguna Lake on 1 Feb (AD).



The female Lark Bunting in Jacumba on 20 December 2019. The white on the wings of males in winter is normally much more obvious than on this bird. *Photo by James A. Morris.*

The presence of seven Red Crossbills along Los Huecos Rd. on 1 Feb (AD) and four near Big Laguna Lake on 31 Jan (BM) indicates small numbers remained in the Laguna Mts. through January.

The Lark Bunting found in Jacumba on 17 Dec (PEL) was still present on 30 Jan (*eBird*), so expected to remain through the winter. Single White-throated Sparrows were frequenting feeders at Mussey Grade in Ramona 11 Nov-21 Jan (NC), adjacent to Tecolote Canyon in Bay Park 17 Nov-30 Jan (MM) and along Lyons Valley Rd. in Jamul 12 Dec-25 Jan (JM). Another was associating with White-crowned Sparrows at North Clairemont Community Park in Clairemont 2-24 Jan (JB, *eBird*). The wintering Nelson's Sparrow,



The well-marked basic-plumaged Rusty Blackbird at Robb Field in Ocean Beach on 6 December 2019. *Photo by Thomas A. Blackman.*



The first-winter male Orchard Oriole at Robb Field in Ocean Beach on 25 January 2020.
Photo by Mel Senac.

first seen at Kendall-Frost Marsh in Mission Bay on 28 Oct (KR), was again forced out into view by the extreme high tide of 24 Jan (*eBird*), so clearly settled for the winter.

The Rusty Blackbird found with Brewer's Blackbirds at Robb Field in Ocean Beach on 30 Nov (KG) continued there and in parking lots along Sports Arena Blvd. through 18 Jan (*eBird*). A first-winter male Orchard Oriole found at Robb Field on 7 Jan (EM) remained through the end of the month (*eBird*). Five wintering Hooded Orioles were known, including one present since November along the western edge of Balboa Park still there on 19 Jan (*eBird*), another at a private residence in Leucadia on 7 Jan (JMCM), two together at a private residence in San Diego on 11 Jan

(JP) and a first-winter male at a private residence in Hillcrest 30-31 Jan (ME). The earliest of the summer visitors are not expected before mid-February and will be brightly colored adult males. A female Baltimore Oriole found in Solana Beach on 27 Dec (PEL) remained through at least 13 Jan (*eBird*).

Seven Black-and-white Warblers included one spending its fourth winter near the intersection of 28th and Beech Sts. in Balboa Park 28 Sep-15 Jan (LW, *eBird*). The others were along Crest Dr. in Encinitas 12 Nov-31 Jan (SC, *eBird*), near the intersection of Manzano and El Arbol in Carlsbad 21 Dec-15 Jan (PGN, *eBird*), at Harry Griffin Park in La Mesa 23 Dec-24 Jan (KK, *eBird*), at Wing Street Canyon in Loma Portal 26 Dec-21 Jan (MH), near the Nature Center at San Elijo Lagoon on 23 Jan (DPa) and somewhat inland along Poway Creek in Poway on 18 Jan (ABO). A Tennessee Warbler photographed in Tierrasanta 4-5 Jan (NAB, *eBird*) is probably wintering locally. Single Nashville Warblers, rare in winter, were at Marston Canyon in Balboa Park 14 Dec-11 Jan (ABa, *eBird*), near the intersection of Faraday and Rutherford Sts. in Carlsbad on 4 Jan (TG), along Eastgate Mall in La Jolla on 5 Jan (JD) and at the North

Clairemont Community Park in Clairemont on 18 Jan (JD). An adult male American Redstart along the Bernardo Bay Trail at Lake Hodges 3-4 Jan (LR) was the same bird present here during the past two winters. Two Palm Warblers were known, with one on Fleet St. in Carlsbad 20 Dec-31 Jan (PEL, *eBird*), and the other around the intersection of Thorn and Bancroft Sts. in North Park 1-27 Jan (MSt, *eBird*). Single Grace's Warblers on Crest Dr. in Encinitas 9 Nov-6 Jan (TG, *eBird*) and along Crest Canyon in Del Mar 24 Nov-5 Jan (DK, *eBird*) are both birds returning after wintering at these locations previous years. A Hermit Warbler, rare in winter, found at Torrey Hills Park in Del Mar on 6 Dec (EM), was last photographed on 3 Jan (ML) and is likely still present. A Painted Red-



A first-winter Hooded Oriole in Hillcrest on 30 January 2020. This oriole is noticeably larger than the similar first-winter male Orchard Oriole and has a longer downward curved bill. Photo by Michael Evans.

start continues for its second winter along the Allen Rd. nature trail in Mission Hills 22 Nov-8 Jan (NF), and another in Tierrasanta 25 Dec-8 Jan (PEL, *eBird*) is no doubt settled for the winter, with both expected to remain into March.

The female Hepatic Tanager found on private property in Del Mar on 31 Dec (PEL) was still present on 4 Jan (EC), and another found at the North Clairemont Community Park in Clairemont on 1 Jan (JD) was still present on 29 Jan (*eBird*). At least five Summer Tanagers were reported during January in the coastal lowlands between Nestor in the south and Carlsbad in the north, along with a male somewhat inland at Jesmond Dene Park in Escondido on 24 Jan (JMcM).

Listed observers: Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying and/or last reporting each species. Some sightings reported to *eBird* are included without specific attribution.

Christopher Adler, Russell Allen, Eitan Altman, Nicolas A. Barber, Alex Bartolo (ABa), Allen Bond (ABo), John Bruin, Steve Cameron, Nancy Christensen, Therese R. Clawson, Elizabeth Copper, Alison Davies, Jay Desgrosellier, Larry Edwards, Michael Evans, Thomas Ford-Hutchinson, Nathan French, Karl Garrett, Tito Gonzalez, Rick Groves, Michelle Haglund, Gjon C. Hazard, Louis Hoeniger, Terry Hunefeld (THun), Terry Hurst (THur), Dan Jehl, Kenny Kimbrough, Dan King, Paul E. Lehman, Max Leibowitz, Eve Martin, John Martin, Marcie Mason, Jimmy McMorran, Alan Miller, Charlotte Morris (ChM), James R. Morris, Cia Morrow (CiM), Brennan Mulrooney, P. G. Nell, Andrew Newmark, Patti Nisbet, Gary Nunn, David Palmer (DPa), Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, Ryan Pottinger, Dave Povey (DPo), Kerry Ross, Lisa Ruby, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Mike Sanders (MiS), Mark Stratton (MSt),

Kat Wendel, Lindsay Willrick, Mike Wittmer.

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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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