The SKIMMER

Volume 48, Number 6—June 2021

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 15, at 6:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting, using the Zoom app, which you can download beforehand. Members will receive an email invitation with directions to click on a link, which will open a window in the Zoom app, and you can join the meeting. If you have never used Zoom before, you will be asked to download the application for Zoom. You do NOT need to "sign up" for Zoom, just download the application. It is best to use a desktop or laptop computer, as their larger screen is preferable to a phone or notepad device.

Our annual business meeting and election of club officers for 2021-2022, The following people have volunteered to serve as club officers:

President: Nancy Christensen
VP/Programs: Rick Grove
Treasurer: Conny Jamison
Secretary: Char Glacy
Membership: Barbara Carlson

We encourage additional candidates to volunteer. Many of our officers have served for several years and would be happy to hand their positions over to new blood.

Program: Adrian Binns will present "Tanzania's Ngorongoro Crater: Africa's Garden of Eden."

The Ngorongoro Crater, in northern Tanzania, is one of the world's greatest natural wonders for good reason. The massive, unbroken caldera teems with an abundance of wildlife, including endangered black rhinos and a large number of hyenas and lions. Join senior tour leader Adrian Binns for a virtual safari through one of East Africa's most incredible landscapes.

Adrian Binns has been a professional guide for three decades, leading birding and wildlife tours across six continents. He joined Wildside Nature Tours in 2007, guiding safaris in Africa, India, Brazil and beyond. He is especially passionate about owls, migration, and big cats. Maised in Morocco and England, Adrian is active in his local Philadelphia birding community, presenting programs, and encouraging young birders. He is happiest leading people on safari to explore, discover, and enjoy the wonders of wildlife!

[continued]

SDFO NEWS *[cont.]*

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, July 20, same time, same place. Kevin Burns will be presenting: "What's happening to my life list?: Potential taxonomic changes coming for North American birds"

SDFO LOSES TWO VETERAN BIRDERS

Joe Worley (Nov. 12, 1933—June 28, 2020)

The past year's lockdown has caused us to lose track of many of our birding friends, and I only recently became aware that Joe Worley had passed away last June 28. Joe worked as a pharmacist, but he had many other interests, including birding. Joe was an expert on birding around Point Loma, where we often encountered him combing the nooks and crannies of Point Loma Nazarene University or Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. Sara Mayers recalls, "When someone in the Wednesday group mentioned, a few days ago, that Joe had died, several people commented "He showed me my first ..." Joe showed me my first Dusky-capped Flycatcher and my first Broad-winged Hawk, both at Fort Rosecrans, his regular 'patch.'"

Don Adams (Jul. 8, 1939—May 12. 2021)

We regret to pass on the news that long-time birder and San Diego Field Ornithologist member, Don Adams, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on May 12, 2021, after a series of debilitating strokes. Don served as past SDFO president from 2000-2001, and as SDFO's Treasurer for many years from the late 1990s through 2006. He also led the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon (and adjacent river drainage areas) Monthly Bird Survey for many years. Funeral Service will be held on May 19, 2021 at 11:00 am at El Camino Memorial--Sorrento Valley, 5600 Carroll Canyon Rd, San Diego, CA. Graveside Service will be held on May 19, 2021 at 12:30 pm at El Camino Memorial-- Sorrento Valley, 5600 Carroll Canyon Rd, San Diego, CA. Our hearts go out to his wife, Billye, and the rest of the family.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MAY 2021

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

Landbird migration during May 2021 in San Diego County was fairly good during much of the month. It was an especially strong period for Black Swifts, Olive-sided Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Purple Martins, Swainson's Thrushes, and Yellow, Townsend's, Hermit, and Wilson's Warblers. The period of 16-24 May was characterized by many days with inclement weather, cool temperatures, and/or north winds, and as a result a very impressive total of at least *158* Black Swifts were tallied between the Mexican border and Carlsbad (m.obs), with most birds seen from Mt. Soledad in La Jolla; the grand total for the entire month was *166* birds. Olive-sided Flycatcher is a scarce-but-regular spring migrant through the lowlands, but this year saw approximately *82* birds tallied between 12 April-2 Jun (eBird), which must be a record total—at least during this century. Following an excellent April for Purple Martins, which followed a record-setting fall of 2020, May was very good for martins as well, with some 18 lowland migrants seen, which brings the two-month total to an exceptional *40* birds. A concentration of some *30* Swainson's Thrushes was at the Bird & Butterfly Garden on 4 May (DJ).

Black Swifts put on an exceptional show this month, with some 160 individuals reported, including this bird over Mt. Soledad on 17 May. *Photo by Nancy Christensen.*

This oystercatcher at La Jolla in mid-May was believed to be a hybrid American X Black Oystercatcher. Note the messy breast-band and mostly darkish rump. *Photo by Derek Hameister.*

These Craveri's Murrelets on 12 May on the 30-Mile Bank established a new early arrival date for San Diego County. Note the dark extending under the chin, the longish bill, the cocked tail, the dark breast 'spur,' and the mostly dark underwings. *Photos by Matt Sadowski.*

This very rare Manx Shearwater on the lower Nine-Mile Bank off Imperial Beach on 28 May occurred later than almost all other county records. Note the white curl behind the auriculars and the white undertail coverts. *Photo by Owen Sinkus.*

Another theme of the landbird migration of May 2021 was that many regular-occurring western species of passerines were present in larger-than-typical numbers very late into the month. One good example of this phenomenon were the 23-24 May morning-flight totals at Mt. Soledad of 73 Warbling Vireos, 70 Yellow Warblers, 105 Townsend's Warblers, 80 Hermit Warblers, 125 Wilson's Warblers, and 19 Lazuli Buntings (JD, PEL). Other species that were found late included a female Calliope Hummingbird at Jacumba on 22 May (PEL) and, even more unusual, a male at San Diego State University 22-23 May (JR); single Ash-throated Flycatchers in Coronado on 27 May and at Point Loma Nazarene University from 29-31 May (PEL); Hammond's Flycatchers through 23 May; multiple migrant Cassin's Vireos through 24 May and one exceptionally late in La Jolla on 1 Jun (BS); Red-breasted Nuthatches through 25 May; and 50 Barn Swallows (with approximately 1500 resident Cliffs) along Sunset Ave. in the Tijuana River Valley on 28 May (PEL). Also a Hermit Thrush in the Tijuana River Valley on 21 May (TC); a migrant American Robin at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 20 May (PEL); Cassin's Finches in the mountains through 1 May and a desert stray at Vallecito on 8 May (BLS); Pine Siskins at several sites through 25 May, with up to two at Vallecito through 29 May (BLS); migrant Chipping Sparrows through 23 May; a Vesper Sparrow in the Tijuana River Valley on 1 May (PEL); a White-crowned Sparrow there on 15 May (LN); migrant Green-tailed Towhees through 17 May, with later birds in the desert at Agua Caliente County Park on 20 May (NC) and at Vallecito on 23 May (BLS); a MacGillivray's Warbler at Harry Griffen Regional Park 31 May-1 Jun (EA); and one Hermit and four Townsend's Warblers still in the desert at Agua Caliente/Vallecito on 30 May (DT). A surprising concentration of 35 Violet-green Swallows at Mission Trails Regional Park on 21 May (EA) may have been the result of cold, inclement weather forcing birds out of the mountains. Late-lingering non-passerines included single Greater White-fronted Geese at Carlsbad through at least 18 May (TG), at Los Penasquitos/ Torrey Pines on 21 May (ML), and over San Diego NWR, near Sweetwater, on 27 May (JMa); single

Canvasbacks at Big Laguna Lake on 5 May (KB) and at Mission Trails on 10 May (THr); a Hooded Merganser at West Meadow in the Laguna Mts.through 8 May (MWd); a Mew Gull at Los Penasquitos/ Torrey Pines through 14 May (BS); a record-late, worn "Thayer's" Iceland Gull there through 28 May (DS); and a Merlin at Guajome Regional Park on 1 May (P&DT).

Following a winter in which small numbers of Northern Fulmars were present offshore, this individual performed well during the 15 May pelagic trip. *Photo by Alison Davies*.

The most surprising rarities of the month included an adult Wood Stork back for its second year at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park near Escondido, perhaps on its way to Riverside County for the summer (as in 2020), this year being seen sporadically from 4-31 May+ (FL), and also present at nearby Lake Hodges on 2 Jun (BC). This site also hosted the continuing, *nesting* Glossy Ibis through at least 5 May (JL), up to two Neotropic Cormorants through 1 Jun+ (JH), and a very unseasonal one-year-old Zone-tailed Hawk on 27-28 May (MWr), presumably a bird that wintered at that site. The wintering Little Stint at the South Bay Salt Works was last seen on 4 May (m.obs). Two Craveri's Murrelets some 33 miles west of Pt. Loma on 12 May (PEL, MS) established a new all-time early arrival date for the county. A Manx Shearwater photographed about 10 mi. off Imperial Beach on 28 May (OS) was later than almost all other county records, which are mostly concentrated between mid-February and late April. A very rare Red-eyed Vireo was on private property in coastal San Diego County on the slightly early date of 14 May (PEL). Other unexpected finds included a Laughing Gull at Los Penasquitos Lagoon on 11 May (HZ); single Franklin's Gulls seen briefly at Oceanside on 13 May (MS), at the salt works on 15 May (RTP), and off Torrey Pines on 23 May (BS); and an Ashy Storm-Petrel seen from shore at La Jolla on 21 May (MS). Several Bank Swallows were found coastally through 16 May, a Townsend's Solitaire lingered at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery through 8 May (m.obs), and nine Red Crossbills were at the unusual location of Boulevard on 6 May (AH). Continuing the good showing since fall, a dark-lored White-crowned Sparrow was at La Costa on 11 May (KO) and another, conjunctivitis-stricken, record-late individual was in Vallecito on 29-

This adult Wood Stork was seen sporadically at the Safari Park from 4-29 May. It is assumed to be the same individual present there for a few days in spring and fall 2020 and which summered just to our north in Riverside County. *Photos by Alison Davies.*

This Vesper Sparrow in the Tijuana River Valley on 1 May established the second-latest spring record for the county. *Photo by John Dumlao*.

Several pairs of Mountain Chickadees were found nesting in recesses under tile roofing in residential Carlsbad during May. *Photo by Jane Mygatt.*

and five Indigo Buntings (all coastal and including returning breeders; JMc, AN, DT).

Strays to the coast included an Acorn Woodpecker at San Elijo Lagoon on 10 May (EM), a Black-chinned Sparrow in residential Pt. Loma on 21 May (AA), and a Scott's Oriole in Manzanita Cyn. in San Diego on 21-22 May (MWd). Inland oddities included two exceptional Royal Terns at Lower Otay Lake on 31 May (JP, MS) and the desert's first spring-migrant Dunlin at Borrego Springs on 2 May (THn).

Several pairs of Mountain Chickadees were found breeding in a new lowland area in residential Carlsbad, where they have chosen recesses under tile roofing as their nest sites (KA, JMy). An active Lark Sparrow nest in International Park bordering the Tijuana River Valley on 27 May (JP) was very unusual close to the coast.

A count of 10,000 Sooty Shearwaters in less than two hours off La Jolla on 23 May (JD) was a high count in recent years, but pales in comparison to the numbers routinely found through the 1970s or early 1980s.

Acknowledgments: Many thanks to Sara B. Mayers and Guy McCaskie for their careful editing.

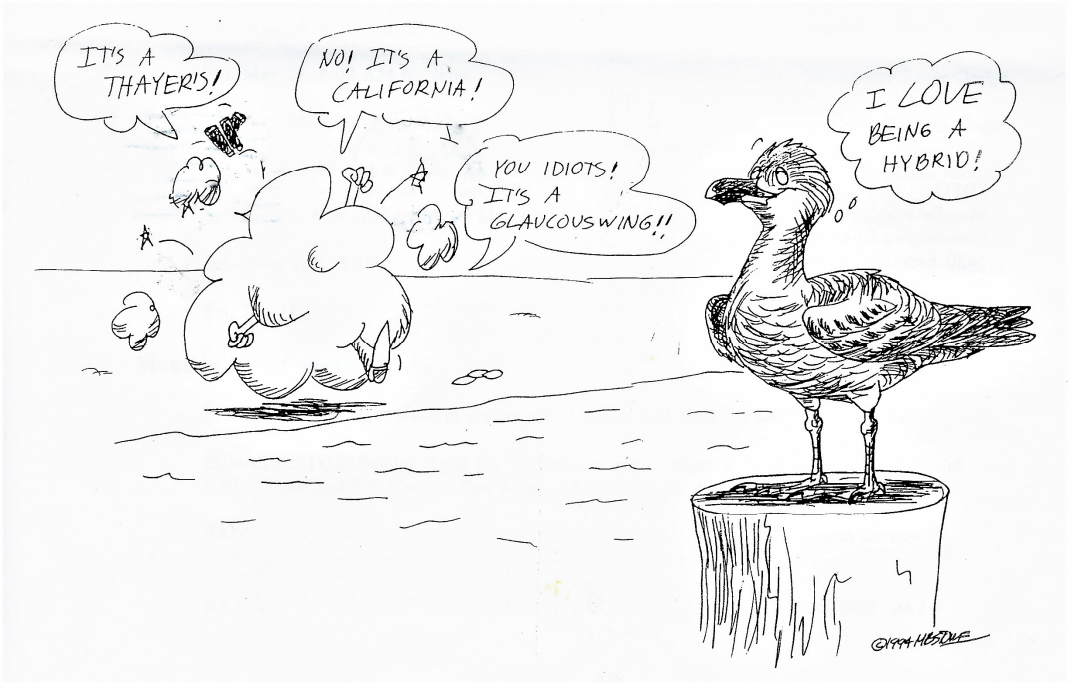
30 May (BLS). "Typical" eastern vagrants for late spring included an Ovenbird at Agua Caliente County Park on 19-20 May (KW), a Black-and-white Warbler in Del Mar on 9 May (DAK), single Tennessee Warblers in residential Pt. Loma from 26-29 May (AA) and at Lower Otay Lake on 31 May-1 Jun (JP), a Northern Parula in Vallecito on 13 May (BLS), three coastal Summer Tanagers (PEL, CM, DT), a healthy *six* Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (one coastal, three interior valleys, two desert; KA, MJ, EL, LR, BLS, AW),

Cited 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. Alex Abela, Kathy Aldern, Eitan Altman, Kevin Burns, Brian Caldwell, Nancy Christensen, Troy Corman, Jay Desgrosellier, Tito Gonzalez, Alexander Harper, Gjon Hazard, James Hully, Terry Hunefeld (THn), Terry Hurst (THr), Dan Jehl, Mary Johnson, Dan A. King, Paul E. Lehman, Max

Leibowitz, Josh Lietzow, Fatima Lujan, Eric Lutomski, Eve Martin, John Martin (JMa), Jimmy McMorran (JMc), Charlotte Morris, Jane Mygatt (JMy), Andrew Newmark, Lewis Nygard, Kasia Obrzut, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Juan Ramirez, Lisa Ruby, Matt Sadowski, Britta Lee Shain, Dessi Sieburth, Owen Sinkus, Bridget Spencer, Paula & Dave Theobald, David Trissel, Alexis Wallick, Kathryn Wendel, Martha Wild (MWd), Mike Wittmer (MWr), Hanna Zhao.

m.obs = many observers

Territorial Indigo Buntings returned for their second year to the Bird & Butterfly Garden area in the Tijuana River Valley, with as many as three birds (two males, one female) present during May. *Photo by Andrew Newmark.*



Former SDFO member Mary Beth Stowe drew this cartoon for *The Skimmer* back in 1994. It's a topic that never grows old!

Some Nice Hummingbird Photos

The bird photographs we publish in *The Skimmer* are mostly of rare or unusual species. But when our members submit excellent photos of more common species, we can't ignore them! New SDFO member Sandeep Dhar sent us three lovely photos of a nest of Black-chinned Hummingbirds. He writes,

> "Attached are photos of a BCHU nest that I tracked for about a month, from the female working on the nest to the hatchlings and finally as fledglings. What was incredible about this nest was that it was just below waist level and only a few feet away from a wire fence separating a busy train, yet passersby were oblivious to the presence of the nest. I was visiting this nest once a week and managed to take some nice photos and videos; a few are submitted for consideration for the next issue of *The Skimmer* magazine.
>
> "I learned about this nest from Saraa Mayers on a chance encounter at the Bird and Butterfly garden as I recounted my dismay of following two other nests, only to have the chicks predated when they were ~ 1 week old. When I visited again on 5/23 I saw an empty nest, and my heart sank thinking that the chicks did not make it. But I do agree with Sara that they likely fledged
>
> "I am a SDFO member (joined this year and enjoying the monthly presentations). The nest location was here (32.8410515, -117.0379176)."

We are always looking for interesting content for the newsletter, especially as relating to birds and birding in San Diego County. See the back page for directions on submission.

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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**

JOIN SDFO

Dues for Calendar year: $25.00, including all renewals. Add $10.00 for each additional member in same household. **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO SDFO** and mail or give check to Membership Chair: Barbara Carlson, 11192 Portobelo Dr., San Diego 92124. For membership information, call Barbara at (858) 268-1937.

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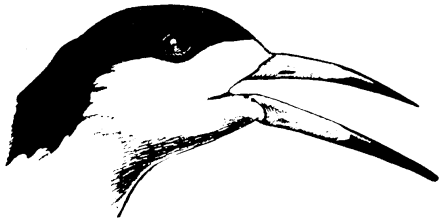
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