The SKIMMER

Volume 48, Number 11—November 2021

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, November 16, 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.

Program: Dr. John McCormack will describe "The Moore Lab Mexican Bird Resurvey Project."

How can old natural history collections and modern eBird records combine to tell a story of change to a country's birdlife? In 1933, one of the most ambitious efforts ever to catalog a country's birdlife began when Robert T. Moore—a poet, mountain-climber, businessman, and ornithologist—set out to describe the birds of Mexico. From 1933 to 1955, he employed local Angeleno Chester C. Lamb to traverse Mexico collecting birds. By the time he was finished, Lamb had collected 40,000 birds for Moore from 300 localities blanketing the country. Even in the 1950s, Lamb noticed that the landscape was changing. He often returned to old collecting sites, and his field notes record evidence of logging, dam construction, and new power plants. By the 1980s, the Mexican landscape was radically transformed. Meanwhile, Lamb's specimens represent a snapshot in time of Mexico's birdlife prior to major habitat changes.

The Moore Lab of Zoology at Occidental College has a 5-year project, funded by the National Science Foundation, to resurvey the birds of Mexico to see how the birds have changed over the last 100 years. Join us as Dr. McCormack relates this fascinating scientific effort.

SDFO NEWS *[cont.]*

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, December 14, same time, same place. Our annual Holiday Party.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 18 - **San Diego** - Justyn Stahl (justyn.stahl@gmail.com)

Sunday, December 19 - **Anza Borrego** - Jim Dice (dicej@uci.edu)

Monday, December 20 - **Lake Henshaw** - Gretchen Cummings (gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net)

Sunday, December 26 - **Oceanside** - Jane Mygatt (jane.mygatt@gmail.com)

Sunday, January 2 - **Escondido** - Ken Weaver (gnatcatcher@sbcglobal.net)

Thursday, December 30 - **Rancho Santa Fe** – Robert Patton (rpatton@san.rr.com)

NEW YEAR'S DAY PELAGIC TRIP IS ON

We have reserved the *Legacy* for our annual trip. More details at the November or December meetings, or in next month's *Skimmer.*

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, OCTOBER 2021

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

The three rarest species found in San Diego County during October 2021 were seen by remarkably few birders. A Broad-tailed Hummingbird appeared only briefly at a Chula Vista feeder on 2 Oct (AN). It established only the fifth county record. A freshly dead Cassin's Sparrow found in a residential swimming pool in Allied Gardens on 22 Oct (JA, *SDNHM) had apparently suffered prior wounds from a predator before presumably being dropped in the pool. There are only several prior county records. A Red-faced Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery (hereafter FRNC) on Pt. Loma on 9 Oct

This Broad-tailed Hummingbird made only a brief appearance at a private yard in Chula Vista on 2 Oct. Note the even throat-stippling and dark 'wedge' in front of the eye. *Photo by Andrew Newmark*

Being the bridesmaid rather than the bride, this Red-faced Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 9 Oct was the *second* this season and thus gained relatively little fanfare! *Photo by Gary Nunn*

This cooperative Wilson's Storm-Petrel was at the 30-Mile Bank/The Corner and was the highlight for many observers on the scheduled pelagic trip on 3 Oct. Note the wing shape and the feet projecting beyond the tail. *Photo by Andrew Newmark*

(GNu) was the *second* this season and seen only by the finding observer. This is a later date in fall than is typical for this casual vagrant.

Other high-end rarities recorded this month and seen by many observers included a Wilson's Storm-Petrel at the 30-Mile Bank/"The Corner" on 3 Oct (BVAS); the continuing and returning Little Stint at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works through the month (MS); a very late Semipalmated Sandpiper there from 1-5 Oct (MS); and the Wood Stork at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park from 12-18 Oct (KC), returning south from summering again in the Riverside County area through early October. Two separate Masked Boobies were seen near the Nine-Mile Bank on the 3 Oct pelagic trip (BVAS), a Masked/Nazca Booby was at the 30-Mile Bank on 16 Oct (v.obs), and a Red-footed Booby was seen at La Jolla on 11 Oct (GNu). A group of eight Harris's Hawks continued in Jacumba through the month (PEL). A single Harris's Hawk along the coast in Bay Park, San Diego, on 2 Oct (KR) is somewhat problematic as to origin, but it might be a legitimate wanderer given the mini-incursion just to the east. The Greater Pewee was back for its fourth winter in Balboa Park, but so far has been seen only on 4 Oct (MH). A Dusky Flycatcher in the desert at Butterfield Ranch on 20 Oct (JP) was a very rare fall migrant. The first Worm-eating Warbler in the county in more than 12 years was on private property in Encinitas from 7-16 Oct (KA). A Pine Warbler was at Montgomery Waller Park in Otay Mesa on 31 Oct-2 Nov (DTi), and a Black-throated Green Warbler was at North Island Naval Air Station on 10 Oct (BCF). Especially rare inland, a Canada Warbler was in Rancho Bernardo from 14-17 Oct (AA). A Hepatic Tanager at San Dieguito County Park in Solana Beach from 7 Oct-2 Nov+ (GH) appears to be wintering locally. A Scarlet Tanager, virtually annual in late fall, frequented Balboa Park from 14 -17 Oct (JB). Returning, wintering warbler rarities included a Painted Redstart in UTC from 7 Oct+ (JR) and three of last winter's four Grace's Warblers: Encinitas from 11 Oct+ (SES), Vacation Isle in Mission Bay

Most Semipalmated Sandpipers are seen between late July and the beginning of September, so this juvenile at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works from 1-5 Oct was very late. *Photo by Matt Sadowski*

from 17 Oct+ (JP), and residential Pt. Loma from 28 Oct+ (SM).

This fall's bumper crop of eastern warblers continued throughout much of October. The year's champion was Blackburnian Warbler, with seven additional individuals this month, bringing the season total to *17* birds! Other species in above-average numbers included October totals of seven Black-and-white Warblers, seven American Redstarts, five Magnolia Warblers (MT, EM, KA, P&DT) including one in the desert at Borrego Springs on 18 Oct (EM), five Chestnut-sided Warblers (BS, MS, PEL, GH, TH), 10 Blackpoll Warblers, and 11 Palm Warblers. Three Ovenbirds were singles in Tierrasanta 2-6 Oct (PEL), at the San Diego Zoo 8 Oct (TS), and in Encinitas 9 Oct (GNe). The single September Black-throated Blue Warbler was followed by an exceptional four October birds: Robb Field from 2-7 Oct (CL), Solana Beach from 5-9 Oct (PS), Point Loma Nazarene University from 10-12 Oct (GNu), and in the desert at Tamarisk Grove Campground on 9 Oct (RT). Two Tennessee (NF, KR) and two Lucy's Warblers (JP) were about average. In contrast, only a single Northern Waterthrush was found (continuing and presumably wintering at the Dairy Mart Ponds—DJ). Other species seen in above-average numbers included 10 Tropical Kingbirds, 14 Plumbeous Vireos, 10 Clay-colored Sparrows, seven Summer Tanagers, and four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

A highlight of the 3 Oct pelagic trip was the two separate Masked Boobies, this bird at the Nine-Mile Bank. *Photo by Nancy Christensen*

A group of eight Harris's Hawks took up residence in Jacumba during September and October. *Photo by Paul Lehman*

This Worm-eating Warbler frequented a private yard in Encinitas from 7-16 Oct, the first in the county since 2009. *Photo by Kathy Aldern*

This Hepatic Tanager was a great find at San Dieguito County Park in Solana Beach from 7 Oct-2 Nov+. Note the bill shape and color, that the brightest color is on the throat and crown, and the dull flanks. *Photo by Sean Buchanan*

Other miscellaneous rarities included a slightly early southbound White-winged Scoter at La Jolla 11 Oct (GNu), single Broad-winged Hawks at Mt. Soledad on 1 Oct (PEL) and in Nestor 31 Oct (DT), a Swainson's Hawk at Whelan Lake in Oceanside on 12 Oct (JMy, KA), at least one Zone-tailed Hawk continuing in the usual Safari Park/ Escondido/Valley Center area (m.obs) as well as singles in and around Lake Cuyamaca from 23 Oct-2 Nov+ (RW) and at Agua Dulce on 31 Oct (KF), and a Short-eared Owl at Safari Park on 29 Oct (EL). Shorebird highlights included a surprising five Pacific Golden-Plovers at the Tijuana River Estuary on 22 Oct (RTP), as well as two last-of-season Baird's Sandpipers at the Salt Works through 5 Oct (MS) and the last Pectoral Sandpiper on the early side on 10 Oct (v.obs). The returning Lesser Black-backed Gull remained in Coronado through the month (v.obs), and another adult was at the Salt Works on 1 Oct (MS).

An Eastern Phoebe was in the desert at Agua Caliente Co. Park on 20 Oct (JP). Single Lapland Longspurs were at Fiesta Island in Mission Bay on 21 Oct (PC) and 29 Oct (JR), and single Chestnut-collared Longspurs were there from 14-22 Oct (GNu) and at Borrego Springs on 19 Oct (JP). A "Red" Fox Sparrow at Vallecito on 26 Oct (BLS), a dark-lored (presumably *oriantha*) White-crowned Sparrow at Camp Surf from 22-27 Oct (PEL), and a *pugetensis* White-crowned in Coronado on 19 Oct (PEL) were all rare to very rare in the county. Single Swamp Sparrows were at Borrego Springs on 20 Oct (JP) and at FRNC on 27 Oct (JP), and two White-throated Sparrows turned up at month's end (ML, NB). Four Bobolinks were discovered in Rancho Santa Fe on 2 Oct (GH), and singles were at Harry Griffen Park on 4 Oct (EA) and at Miramar on 5 Oct (MS). The only Orchard Oriole this month was in the Tijuana River Valley on 5 Oct (PEL), the only Baltimore Oriole was at FRNC on 6 Oct (JP), and the sole Indigo Bunting was there from 7-9 Oct (PEL).

One theme of this month was late-lingering flycatchers, headlined by Western Wood-Pewees. Fol-

A total of three Ovenbirds were discovered during October, this individual in Tierrasanta. *Photo by Barbara Wise*

lowing a high county-wide total of 29 pewees between 7-9 Oct (m.obs), multiple late-lingerers remained through 24 Oct, with later individuals on 26 Oct at Villa La Jolla Park (PEL) and in the Tijuana River Valley on 29 Oct (SES, KA), and record late at Presidio Park from 27 Oct-1 Nov (NF). Very late Willow Flycatchers were found through 16 Oct at both Jacumba (PEL) and Whelan Lake (LB), on 17 Oct at Guajome Regional Park (P&DT), and on 27 Oct at FRNC (JP). Four Western Kingbirds remained into late October county-wide. Also late were the single Black-chinned Hummingbirds in Rolando Park through 8 Oct (BW) and in Tierrasanta through 12 Oct (PEL), a Swainson's Thrush at Agua Dulce on 31 Oct (KF), and a Yellow-breasted Chat at Agua Caliente Co. Park on 27 Oct (AA). Two Craveri's Murrelets and a Least Storm-Petrel on the 30-Mile Bank on 16 Oct (v.obs) were on a near-typical departure date. On the flip side, early arriving were a Snow Goose at the San Diego River mouth on 8 Oct (JB), two Cackling Geese at Mission Bay on 14 Oct (GNu) and four Cacklings along the Silver Strand on 15 Oct (MS), and the "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Junco at Camp Pendleton on 13 Oct (JMc)

Locally out-of-place rarities included a wandering Acorn Woodpecker in the desert at Vallecito on 4 Oct (BLS), multiple

A good season for Black-throated Blue Warblers produced a total of five individuals county-wide, including this bird in the desert at Tamarisk Grove Campground on 9 Oct. *Photo by Robert Theriault*

desert White-breasted Nuthatches and Oak Titmice (v.obs), a slightly wandering Downy Woodpecker at Veteran's Park in residential Chula Vista on 2 Oct (MS), and a coastal Brown Creeper at Robb Field on 5 Oct (CM).

Irruptive species were relatively few but clearly included Lewis's Woodpeckers, which were widely observed in small numbers in the mountains and inland valleys, with up to two coastal birds at Greenwood Cemetery in San Diego from 17-19 Oct (JP) being especially unusual.

An incredible 17 Blackburnian Warblers were found during September and October, including this bird at Santee Lakes on 29 Oct. *Photo by Tammy Kokjohn*

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

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, Joe Alsadi, Eitan Altman, Linda Baade, Nick Barber, John Bruin, Buena Vista Audubon Society pelagic trip, Kelly Carlin, Paul Chad, Dean DiTommaso, Kyle Fischer, Brian C. Flick, Nathan French, Michelle Haglund, Gjon Hazard, Terry Hurst, Dan Jehl, Paul E. Lehman, Max Leibowitz, Chris Lindsey, Eric Lutomski, Eve Martin, Sara Mayers, Jimmy McMorran (JMc), Charlotte Morris, Jane Mygatt (JMy), Gretchen Nell (GNe), Andrew Newmark, Gary Nunn (GNu), Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Jim Roberts, Kerry Ross, Matt Sadowski, Britta Lee Shain, Patrico Shipley, Susan E. Smith, Bridget Spencer, Trent Stanley, Paula & Dave Theobald, Robert Theriault, David Trissel, Manolo Turner, Robyn Waayers, and Barbara Wise.

v.obs = various observers

m.obs = many observers

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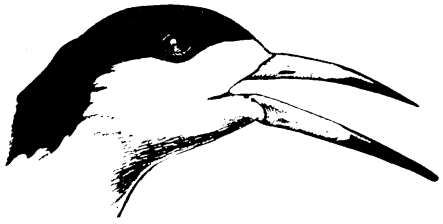
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