The **SKIMMER**

Volume 49, Number 1a—January 2022

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, January 18, 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: "ARGENTINA, BOTTOM TO TOP!" by Nancy Christensen

In 2019, Nancy and her husband Russ visited a few select areas of Argentina. Following their trip to Antarctica, Nancy and Russ stayed a few extra days to explore Argentina. They saw 182 species of birds in that short week. They were impressed with the wide diversity of habitats and life contained within this country. Five days was not enough to satisfy, but was enough to build a desire to return and see more of this lovely country!

Nancy Christensen was born and raised in San Diego. She has had a lifelong interest in wildlife. Nancy studied art and photography at UCSD. For many years she was very active with the local Photonatural ist Camera Club, and eventually went on to have over 2,000 published images. Nancy spent time at the San Diego Natural History Museum examining the skins of extinct bird species, then painting images of them. In 2012, Nancy took up the hobby of birding, and has been on the run ever since. Since retire ment in 2015, birding has become a consuming passion.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, February 15, same time, same place. Program to be announced.

SDFO Annual Dues Time Is Here!

It's that time again. See the last page for details on renewing your membership in SDFO.

Special Christmas Bird Count Supplement Coming Soon

Since Christmas Bird Count reports are still coming in, we will publish a separate issue in a few days.

SDFO NEWS *[cont.]*

Matt Sadowski Sets San Diego County Big Year Record, by Paul Lehman

In 2021, Matt Sadowski recorded 398 species in San Diego County. This sets a new one-year record for not only San Diego but for ANY single county in the United States. This total includes only those exotic species broadly agreed to be properly established in the state, not any of those additional species that appear on lots of eBird lists, etc., that are provisional species not shown to yet be established or that are clearly escapes. (Matt also does not presently count the "Eastern Towhee" at Jacumba, awaiting that record's adjudication. And a couple additional exotic species that he has seen are currently being deliberated by the CBRC for possible addition to the state list.) Matt set not only a new record in 2021 but was out finding many of the birds himself. He freely admitted that this Big Year birding is not his style and that he would rather be out exploring and finding stuff than chasing stakeout after stakeout--but such is what is needed to set new records! A new record in San Diego County has been set three different times in just the recent past: a few years ago by Barbara Carlson at 387, and then in 2020 by Nancy Christensen at 393. And in 2021 several additional birders also worked very seriously on a San Diego County year list and ended up in the upper 380s and low 390s:

394 Jim Pawlicki [new second-best ever]
388 David Trissel
387 Nancy Christensen
387 Paul Lehman
386 Barbara Wise
385 John Dumlao

In previous years, the highest were 393 by Nancy Christensen and 387 by Barbara Carlson.

Congratulations to Matt!

The San Diego County Avian Database 2002-2021, by Paul Lehman

For the past two years I have been working on a "San Diego County Avian Database 2002-2021." With extensive assistance provided by Guy McCaskie and Phil Unitt, and also with much input from many additional San Diego County birders, past and present, a third updated version of this missive has now been posted on-line. This database includes avian records from late 2002 through the end of 2021 es sentially since the pre-publication cut-off date of records for the *San Diego County Bird Atlas* by Philip Unitt (2004). Also included are many pre-2002 records of interest not found in, or data corrected from, Unitt (2004) and Unitt (1984, *The Birds of San Diego County*).

The data include those involving rarities, unseasonal records, high counts, early and late dates, specimens of interest, range expansions and contractions, and some other significant population trends. Each species entry is divided into four "sub-regions" of the county—coast, inland, mountains, and desert—and these sub-regions are further subdivided into three seasons—migration, winter, and summer/breeding.

With much-appreciated assistance provided by Jane Mygatt and Natalie Shapiro, the latest updated database has now been posted in a WORD version on the "Birding Resources" page of the Buena Vista Audubon Society website: **https://bvaudubon.org/birding-resources/**

SDFO NEWS *[cont.]*

Once on the site's Birding Resources page, scroll down to "Bird Lists, Checklists, and BVAS Monthly Bird Count Lists." You should be able to view and download this WORD version, which should be SEARCHABLE, for ease of finding particular species, observer names, locations, or whatever. Incidentally, the publication found on the Birding Resources page next to the database is Unitt's *San Diego Bird Atlas.*

I plan to continuously update this database, and to post updated versions approximately every five or six months. If anyone is interested in the most current version at any time between those intervals, feel free to contact me privately. And please do let me know about any errors or omissions you might find. No correction is too minor!

CBRC Adds New Species to the California State List, by Justyn Stahl

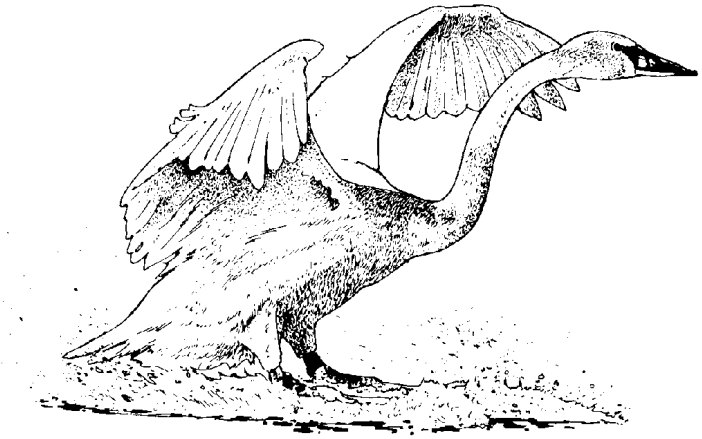
The California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) has recently added Mitred Parakeet (*Psittacara mitratus)* and Lilac-crowned Parrot (*Amazona finschi*) to the official California state list as naturalized non-native species. Because Lilac-crowned Parrot is well established in San Diego (perhaps even outnumbering the already naturalized Red-crowned Parrot), it is now officially added to the county bird list as well. Mitred Parakeet, to my knowledge, has not been sufficiently documented to occur in San Diego and is clearly not established here.

The CBRC is currently reviewing the status of Red-masked Parakeet (*Psittacara erythrogenys*) in California, and by extension San Diego. Other records, currently being discussed, which would add to the San Diego County list, include: a Mexican Duck (*Anas diazi*) from Lower Otay Lake (29 Dec 2018-11 Feb 2019) and the multi-year Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) at the Safari Park (7 Mar 2019, 22 June -11 July 2020, and 25 Mar-5 May 2021).

Additional records of note, not yet circulated, include another Mexican Duck from Lindo Lake (2 Dec 2019), the Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) from Jacumba (6-8 Nov 2021), and the Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) from ~9mi west of Sunset Cliffs (1 Jan 2022).

The CBRC encourages direct submission of any photos, audio, or written details you have pertaining to the last three records mentioned. https://www.californiabirds.org/report_sighting.html

A common question, "What about Swinhoe's White-eye?" can be answered by saying that published genetic work is needed, as we do not know that the *Zosterops* spreading throughout Southern California is, in fact, *Z. simplex*.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, DECEMBER 2021

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

As 2021 came to a close, there were some "old wintering friends" present, much as they were found here a year or more ago: the Little Stint at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works (MS), multiple Pacific Golden-Plovers in the Tijuana River mouth area (MS), an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull in Coronado (DP), two Zone-tailed Hawks in the Safari Park/Escondido area (m.obs), Tropical Kingbirds on North Island Naval Air Station (hereafter NASNI; BCF) and at the Dairy Mart ponds (JPa), the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Poggi Greenbelt (PEL), a Greater Pewee (MH) and Hammond's Flycatcher (CA) in Balboa Park, a Gray Flycatcher near Ramona (AHe), an Eastern Phoebe in City Heights (KT), a Nelson's Sparrow at Crown Point (MS), a Hooded Oriole at Sunnyslope Park (PEL), single Grace's Warblers in Encinitas (SES) and Del Mar (DAK), and a Painted Redstart in Tierrasanta (PEL). Not to mention multiple returning Black Scoters, Plumbeous Vireos, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Green-tailed Towhees, American Redstarts, and Hermit Warblers.

This Nelson's Sparrow continued into early January at Crown Point, Mission Bay, seen during very high tides to the enjoyment of many observers. *Photo by Hannah Zhao*

One of multiple Grace's Warblers to return for an additional winter, this individual is in Del Mar for its fourth year. *Photo by Jane Mygatt*

Up to eight Harris's Hawks continued through Dec at Jacumba (PEL), and news of additional birds recently came to light, with possibly as many as 10 in Shelter Valley south of Scissors Crossing since mid-Nov (HH), and of two along the coast

This Painted Redstart has returned for its third winter to Tierrasanta. *Photo by Nick Barber*

do border from 11-30 Dec (PK, SMc), an Eastern Phoebe in Balboa Park from 17 Dec-2 Jan+ (JTS), a Brown Thrasher on NASNI from 4-6 Dec (PEL), a Yellow-breasted Chat at San Elijo Lagoon on 13 Dec (PK), a MacGillivray's Warbler in Imperial Beach from 9-20 Dec (GHa), a much-watched Bay-breasted Warbler in Allied Gardens from 1-8 Dec (JCs), single Chestnut-sided Warblers at San Diego State University on 17 Dec (NB) and in Chula Vista on 18 Dec (TF-H), single Pine Warblers in Santee on 8 Dec (BM) and in Chula Vista from 18 Dec-3 Jan+ (JD), and a female Painted Bunting at a Chula Vista feeder on 24 Dec (SYm).

Other fresh highlights included a fly-by Long-tailed Duck at La Jolla on 5 Dec (GN), single Vaux's Swifts at San Mateo in San Ysidro for the past couple months (AA). A Zone-tailed Hawk continued to 4 Dec at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (RW), and one was in the El Cajon/Lake Jennings area from 15-23 Dec (ER). The much-enjoyed White-headed Woodpecker at Palomar Mt. (MS, DJ) was still present 18 Dec, the Thick-billed Kingbird in the Tijuana River Valley (JPa) remained through 13 Dec but then vanished, and the much-ogled Varied Thrush continued at Lindo Lake (CM) through 12 Dec. One or two Lapland Longspurs continued at Crown Pt./Fiesta Is. (EM, PEL) through 7 Dec. The male Hooded Warbler was still in Hillcrest on 4 Dec (DTa) and the wintering Magnolia Warbler continued at San Dieguito County Park in Solana Beach (DAK, SYy) through the month.

This White-headed Woodpecker continued since November at Palomar Mt. and was enjoyed by many observers. Here on 4 Dec. *Photo by Curtis Marantz*

December 2021 produced its own suite of newly found rarities. Headliners included a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Juniper Canyon near Balboa Park from 18-23 Dec (D&MM), an Olive-sided Flycatcher at Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove on the western Escondido border from 11-30 Dec (PK, SMc), an Eastern Phoebe in Balboa Park from 17 Dec-2 Jan+ (JTS), a Brown Thrasher on NASNI from 4-6 Dec (PEL), a Yellow-breasted Chat at San Elijo Lagoon on 13 Dec (PK), a MacGillivray's Warbler in Imperial Beach from 9-20 Dec (GHa), a much-watched Bay-breasted Warbler in Allied Gardens from 1-8 Dec (JCs), single Chestnut-sided Warblers at San Diego State University on 17 Dec (NB) and in Chula Vista on 18 Dec (TF-H), single Pine Warblers in Santee on 8 Dec (BM) and in Chula Vista from 18 Dec-3 Jan+ (JD), and a female Painted Bunting at a Chula Vista feeder on 24 Dec (SYm).

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Lesser Black-backed Gull in Imperial Beach 21 Dec (GHe), Short-tailed Shearwaters at La Jolla on 4 Dec (GN) and 24 Dec (PEL, SW), and single late Elegant Terns at Cardiff on 13 Dec (RTP), La Jolla 14 Dec (JPa), Oceanside 21 Dec (KWv), and San Mateo Point 23 Dec (MS). Unusual boobies occurred in the form of a Masked/Nazca at La Jolla on 26 Dec (MS) and at Torrey Pines/Cardiff on 30 Dec (SW, PEL), and a total of at least two Red-footeds at La Jolla on 7 & 14 Dec (DTr, PEL, GN). Very rare along the coast, up to two Bald Eagles were at Sweetwater Reservoir from 17-20 Dec (JPa) and another was at Batiquitos Lagoon from 27 Dec-1 Jan (DM). Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were at Santa Ysabel 28 Nov (AHi) and at Western Hills Park 7 Dec (JB), and coastal-slope Lewis's Woodpeckers were at Mission Trails Regional Park from 31 Oct-2 Jan+ (WE, JPe), at Los Penasquitos Canyon from 23 Nov-2 Jan+ (EF), and in Rose Canyon in University City from 19 Dec-2 Jan+ (CH).

Present since late November, this Thick-billed Kingbird along Monument Rd. in the Tijuana River Valley was last seen on 13 Dec. *Photo by John Dumlao*

This Magnolia Warbler at San Dieguito County Park from November through December represents one of the few winter records in the county. *Photo by Gjon Hazard*

An Ash-throated Flycatcher in Rolando on 27 Dec (CD) was almost certainly the same bird seen there in Dec 2019. A Tropical Kingbird was at Nestor Park on 2 Dec (PEL), single Hammond's Flycatchers were discovered at NASNI from 1 -18 Dec (BCF) and in Chula Vista on 18 Dec (PC), and new Gray Flycatchers were at Guajome from 11 Dec-2 Jan+ (SD) and in Escondido from 30 Nov-2 Jan+ (TO). A Cassin's Vireo was at Whelan Lake from Oct-1 Jan+ (v.obs). Up to three Violet-green Swallows at Santee Lakes on 9-10 Dec (BM) were rare for South County. Lowland Golden-crowned Kinglets were in Del Mar (up to three) from 4 Dec-2 Jan+ (RF) and at La Costa 28-30 Dec (JA). A Sage

Thrasher was at Doyle Community Park in University City on 8-9 Dec (JCp), and coastal Mountain Bluebirds were discovered in Clairemont 6-22 Dec (SD) and Chula Vista (two) from 18 Dec-3 Jan+ (TF-H). Rare sparrows included single Grasshopper Sparrows on Camp Pendleton 26 Dec (PU) and bordering the Tijuana River Estuary on 31 Dec (JPa) and a total of four *pugetensis* White-crowned Sparrows in the Del Mar/Torrey Pines and Montgomery Field areas between 25-29 Dec (MT, PEL). A Swamp Sparrow at Borrego Springs from 19-22 Dec (MS) was possibly the same bird

One of the best new finds on the San Diego CBC on 18 Dec was this Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Juniper Cyn. near Balboa Park. *Photo by Haim Weizman*

(Left) Brown Thrashers in California are always an exciting sight, although this bird unfortunately frequented restricted-access North Island Naval Air Station during early Dec. *Photo by Johnny Galt*

(Above) The late-fall surge of Bay-breasted Warblers continued with this individual at Allied Gardens Community Park from 1-8 Dec. *Photo by Trent Stanley*

seen at the same site in October. Rare orioles included an Orchard at NASNI from 4-7 Dec (PEL) and a Baltimore at Montgomery Waller Park on 8 Dec (PEL). Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were in Chula Vista on 18 Dec (PEL). A Tennessee Warbler was in Nestor from 16-18 Dec (PEL), and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at NASNI on 4 Dec (PEL). Unusual so close to the coast, Oak Titmice were at Presidio Park (two) from 3 Nov-26 Dec+ (MS) and in San Carlos from 10-13 Dec (CA).

Some impressive totals of normally scarce species included the continuing 42-52 Greater White-fronted Geese at Sweetwater Reservoir through the month (KWn), some nine Black and five White-winged Scoters county-wide (v.obs), 10 Black Oystercatchers at La Jolla from 14-31 Dec+ (DTr), 18 unseasonal Scripps's Murrelets offshore on 12 Dec (PEL, GN), an amazing southbound flight of *475* Rhinoceros Auklets at La Jolla on 31 Dec (PEL, DJ), and 8-10 Northern Rough-winged Swallows in Santee from 25-28 Dec (TP). Some select passerine totals for Decem-

One of several Gray Flycatchers found during the month was this bird at Kit Carson Park in Escondido. *Photo by Tsaiwei Olee*

A remarkable 11 White-throated Sparrows were found county-wide during December, including this individual at Questhaven. *Photo by Kathy Aldern*

ber include five Pacific-slope Flycatchers, six Green-tailed Towhees, six Black-and-white Warblers, *eight* American Redstarts, four Palm Warblers, five Hermit Warblers, and 20 Summer Tanagers. The total of 11 White-throated Sparrows may be a new one-month county record. A fine total of 12 Plumbeous Vireos was highlighted by a montane individual at West Meadow in the Laguna Mts. on 22 Dec (AN), and a Western Tanager continuing at Palomar Mt. from 27 Nov-3 Dec (PT) was equally unexpected in the mountains this late in the season.

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. Jenna A., Christopher Adler, Julien Amsellem (JAm), Andrea Ashbaugh, Nick Barber, John Bruin, Sean Buchanan, Jocele Capaldo (JCp), Jonathan Casanova (JCs), Paul Chad, Cynthia Daverin, Jay Desgrosellier, Scott Dietrich, Wendy Esterly, Rob Farber, Ellen Feeney, Brian C. Flick, Thomas Ford-Hutchinson, Richard Garrigus, Michelle Haglund, Gjon Hazard (GHa), Grigory Heaton (GHe), Alison Helm (AHe), Hannah Hernandez, Charley Herzfeld, Alison Hiers (AHi), Dan Jehl, Dan A. King, Patti Koger, Ethan Lai, Paul E. Lehman, Donna Mancuso, Derrick & Mandy Matthews, Stacy McCline, Eddie Monson, Charlotte Morris, Brennan Mulrooney, Jane Mygatt, Andrew Newmark, Gary Nunn, Tsaiwei Olee, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki (JPa), Jennifer Percival (JPe), Dave Povey, Tony Provenzano, Emily Routman, Matt Sadowski, Susan E. Smith, Justyn T. Stahl, Dawn Tagburt (DTa), Paula Theobald, Knut Tjelmeland, David Trissel (DTr), Manolo Turner, Phil Unitt, Robyn Waayers, Stan Walens, Ken Weaver (KWv), Kat Wendel (KWn), Susan Yamagata (SYm), and Sandy Yayanos (SYy).

v.obs = various observers

m.obs = many observers

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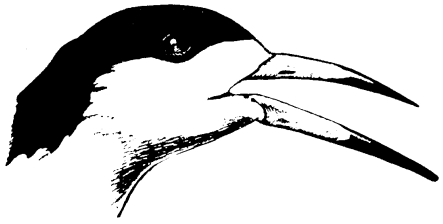
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