The SKIMMER

*Volume 49, Number 6—June 2022*

# SDFO NEWS

## Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 21, 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 2022-23. Our current officers have agreed to serve an additional year, and Eve Martin has agreed to serve as Membership Chair. Additionally, if you would like to run for one of the offices, now is the time to volunteer.

Program: Dr. Lance Benner will discuss "Red Crossbills in Southern California."

Lance Benner is a planetary scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where he specializes in radar imaging of near-Earth asteroids. He studied physics at Cornell University as an undergraduate, did a Ph.D. in Earth and Planetary Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis in 1994, and has been at JPL since 1995. He has been leading field trips for Pasadena Audubon since 2005 and has recently begun leading trips for Los Angeles Birders. His principal areas of bird expertise are owls and nightjars; montane and chaparral species of southern California, Red Crossbills, and recording bird sounds.

This talk will describe Red Crossbill biology, the different flight call types, their geographic distributions, and will present recordings of each one. Lance has been recording Red Crossbills around North America since 2011, with a particular emphasis on southern California and the Sierra Nevada.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, July 19, same time, same place. Program TBD.

# SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MAY 2022

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

Landbird migration through both coastal and desert sections of San Diego County during Spring 2022 was probably close to the recent average for numbers, with the expected slow or otherwise lackluster periods punctuated by pulses of good numbers of birds. But unlike in 2021, large numbers of birds did not continue into the latter half of May. Passerine rarities during the month were headlined by the county's first-ever MOURNING WARBLER in spring, a bird caught and banded at a banding station in the Tijuana River Valley on 27 May (SL). Runner-ups for the period included a Yellow-throated Vireo in Carlsbad on 15 May (TG) and another Yellow-throated Vireo found dead in eastern Pt. Loma on 26 May (K&JM), a Gray Catbird in residential Pt. Loma from 27 Apr-6 May (HM, BN), a Brown Thrasher in the desert at Vallecito on 21 May (BLS), a Prothonotary Warbler at Robb Field on 29-30 May (JA), and a Kentucky Warbler on private property in Coronado on 24 May (PEL).

Yet two more Palm Warblers—at Vallecito County Park on 6 May (NK) and in residential Pt. Loma on 15 May (AA)—bring the 2022 season total to a record-high *five* spring migrants. Other notables included a coastal White-winged Dove at NAS North Island on 22 May (JG), single Black-and-white Warblers at Vallecito on 8 May (BLS) and in Coronado on 27 May (JTS), a Northern Parula in residential Pt. Loma from 25-29 May (NC, SES), multiple dark-lored White-crowned Sparrows in Vallecito early in the month (BLS) and one near the coast at Lower Otay Lake on 18 May (BMu), *seven* coastal Summer Tanagers between 6-30 May (BSw, LC, NF, SES, JP, JK), and *six* Rose-breasted Grosbeaks between 15-31 May (AH, DMR, PEL, JD, MMs, AA). A singing male Indigo Bunting in the Bird & Butterfly Garden area of the Tijuana River Valley from 4 May-4 Jun+ (MMs, SMa) is presumably the same territorial individual present during previous years, whereas single migrants were in Vallecito on 26 May (BLS) and at Santa Ysabel on 28 May (SMc). Single Bank Swallows were at Santee Lakes on 2 May (BMu) and at Lake Murray on 13 May (JP).

This male Mourning Warbler was caught and banded in the Tijuana River Valley on 27 May. It establishes the first spring record for the county. *Photo by Suellen Lynn*

Non-passerine highlights during May included a casual-in-spring Baird's Sandpiper at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works on 4 May (MS) and a well-watched Neotropic Cormorant at Guajome Regional Park from 9 May-2 Jun+ (CH). Two Nazca Boobies were flying around South San Diego Bay on 1 May (PEL)—perhaps having recently escaped off an arriving banana boat from Central or South America—and a single Nazca was seen from a whale watching boat 7

or 8 mi. off Oceanside on 25 May (CM). The American or hybrid American x Black Oystercatcher at Cabrillo National Monument since 26 Mar (MH) was still present 29 May. Three Black Terns together in the San Diego Trough some 17.7 miles off Pt. Loma were one of the highlights of the 14 May pelagic trip (BVAS), and a single bird was in the mountains at Big Laguna Lake on 29 May (EW). The long-staying Harris's Hawks continued at Shelter Valley (up to three) through 25 May+ (eBird) and at Jacumba (up to five) through 25 May+ (PEL).

There were a fair number of late-lingering species of note found during the month. The most unusual were the adult male Rufous Hummingbird in Fallbrook on 18 May (KW), a male Calliope Hummingbird in eastern Oceanside on 17 May (P&DT), a Sharp-shinned Hawk on Mt. Helix on 4 May (EA), and the wintering Lewis's Woodpecker at Mission Trails Regional Park through 11 May (eBird). Also somewhat unseasonal were a male Wilson's Phalarope at San Elijo Lagoon on 27 May (SB), a Parasitic Jaeger off La Jolla on 29 May (PEL), single Bald Eagles continuing at both Sweetwater Reservoir and Lower Otay Lake on 2 May (PEL), and a continuing Zone-tailed Hawk in the Escondido area through 3 May (MW). Following the winter incursion, a few Northern Fulmars were still present at month's end (v.obs). A Western Kingbird in Coronado, where not known to breed, on 28 May (PEL) was presumably a late migrant. A Violet-green Swallow at the San Diego R. mouth on 30 May (BSp, TSw) was out of season for the coast. A Pine Siskin at Vallecito on 16 May (BLS)

This Yellow-throated Vireo in a tipu-laden parking lot in Carlsbad on 15 May unfortunately did not remain long. *Photo by Tito Gonzalez*

was quite late, as were single, apparently injured "Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrows in El Cajon through 16 May (CKS), at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery from 11-13 May (eBird), and in residential Pt. Loma on 17 May (SMa), with another at Los Penasquitos Canyon on 21 May (JMi), and perhaps most surprising, a Gambel's White-crowned still in mostly immature plumage at Miramar Lake on 20 May (BMo). A Golden-crowned Sparrow lingered atop Mt. Soledad in La Jolla through 13 May (PEL), a

The second Gray Catbird record this spring involved this individual in a residential Pt. Loma backyard from 27 Apr-6 May. *Photo by Holly McMillan*

A casual spring vagrant, this Brown Thrasher was in the desert at Vallecito on 21 May. *Photo by Britta Lee Shain*

Always an exciting find, this Prothonotary Warbler was at Robb Field in Ocean Beach on 29-30 May. *Photo by Joe Alsadi*

A surprising five migrant Palm Warblers were found in San Diego County during April-May, including this bird photographed at the Bird & Butterfly Garden on 1 May. *Photo by Andrew Newmark*

This Indigo Bunting, facing off with a White-winged Dove at a water drip in Vallecito on 26 May, was one of three individuals in the county this month. *Photo by Britta Lee Shain*

Baird's Sandpiper is casual in spring. This individual was at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works on 4 May. *Photo by Matt Sadowski*

late Green-tailed Towhee was at Mission Trails Regional Park on 16 May (MF), and a "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler was off Los Huecos Rd. in the Laguna Mts. on 18 May (TSt).

Lingering waterfowl included a Greater White-fronted Goose at Batiquitos Lagoon through 5 May (TG); single tame Cackling Geese at Lake Murray through 2 Jun+ (TH), in Coronado from 1-5 May (FD), and at the San Diego R. mouth from 8-11 May (PEL); a pair of Blue-winged Teal at Borrego Springs on 28 May (RT); single Canvasbacks at Batiquitos Lagoon from 5-8 May (PGN) and at Lake Cuyamaca on 7-8 May (KZ); and two Ring-necked Ducks at 4S Ranch through 30 May+ (SB). An immature "Thayer's" Iceland Gull at the J St. mudflats in Chula Vista on 22 May (PEL) was very late, whereas a Herring Gull at the Nine-Mile Bank on 14 May (BVAS) was slightly so.

May miscellanea included a Pigeon Guillemot at La Jolla on 30 May (MA), up to two returning American Bitterns at San Elijo Lagoon from 7-19 May (DAK), and a coastal Swainson's Hawk over Mission Trails Regional Park on 22 May (JS). A late Brant was at Borrego Springs from 15-28 May (BSp, RT), an Elegant Tern was at Sweetwater Reservoir on 8 May (JS), and up to two Brown Pelicans were at Lake

Hodges from 19-30 May (MMr)—all unusual inland. A Brown-crested Flycatcher and Summer Tanager at Vallecito on 27 May (BLS) and a Lucy's Warbler there on 6 May (BLS) were not at a known breeding site. Near the coast, an Acorn Woodpecker atop Mt. Helix on 6 May (EA) was out of range. A juvenile Lark Sparrow at Jacumba on 25 May (PEL) was probably an early post-fledging disperser from somewhere not too far away.

Nazca Booby sightings off California increased substantially beginning in the mid-2010s. This adult was seen during a whale watching trip off Oceanside on 25 May. *Photo by Carla Mitroff / OceansideWhaleWatching.com*

A singing first-year male Painted Bunting at the community gardens in the Tijuana River Valley on 31 May-2 Jun (PEL) showed extensive feather damage and loss, and thus presumably escaped from captivity—despite being found at the best site in the county for presumed wild vagrants in the early fall.

This Neotropic Cormorant was seen by many observers at Guajome Regional Park between 9 May-2 Jun+. *Photo by Geoff Veith*

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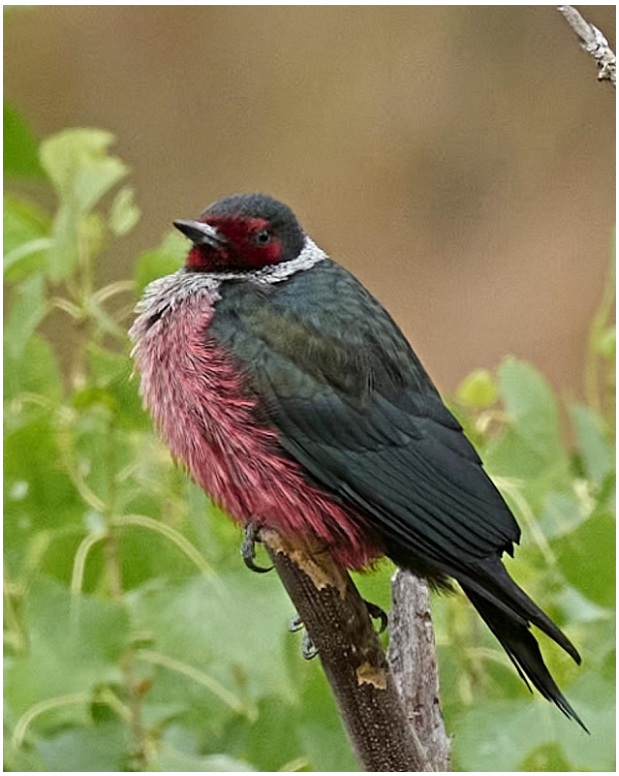
***Cited observers:*** Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying, and/or last reporting each species. Some sightings reported to *eBird* are included without specific attribution. Alex Abela, Joe Alsadi, Eitan Altman, Mike Anderson, Sean Buchanan, Buena Vista Audubon Society pelagic trip, Nancy Christensen, Lucas Cinus, Jay Desgrosellier, Fred Dexter, Michael Force, Nathan French, Johnny Galt, Tito Gonzalez, Carl Haynie, Alison Helm, Terry Hurst, Matt Hysell, Dan A. King, Joel Knapp, Nicole Koeltzow, Paul E. Lehman, Suellen Lynn, Michael Martin (MMr), Marcie Mason (MMs), Sara Mayers (SMa), Stacy McCline (SMc), Holly McMillan, Kris & Jim McMillan, Jeffrey Miner (JMi), Carla Mitroff (Oceanside Adventures), Barbara Morton (BMo), Brennan Mulrooney (BMu), Jane Mygatt, P. Gretchen Nell, Bonnie Nickel, Jim Pawlicki, D. Michael Ray, Matt Sadowski, Britta Lee Shain, Susan E. Smith, Bridget Spencer (BSp), Jonny Sperling, Justyn T. Stahl, Trent Stanley (TSt), C. K. Staurovsky, Tim Swain (TSw), Barbara Swanson (BSw), Paula & David Theobald, Robert Theriault, Ken Weaver, Erin Whitaker, Barbara Wise, Mike Wittmer, and Katherine Zhang.

casual = fewer than a dozen records
v.obs = various observers
m.obs = many observers

One of the highlights of the 14 May pelagic trip was this Black Tern, one of three present, in the San Diego Trough. *Photo by Sean Buchanan*



This wintering Lewis's Woodpecker at Mission Trails Regional Park remained late until 11 May, here on 8 May. *Photo by Michael Evans*

This tattered Painted Bunting at the Tijuana River Valley community gardens from 31 May-2 Jun had almost certainly escaped from captivity, despite being found at a site that has produced multiple fall vagrant Painteds. *Photo by Paul Lehman*

A leftover from April, the returning, wintering Little Stint at the Salt Works remained through 25 Apr, here on 13 Apr at which time it had attained a fair amount of alternate plumage. *Photo by Matt Sadowski*

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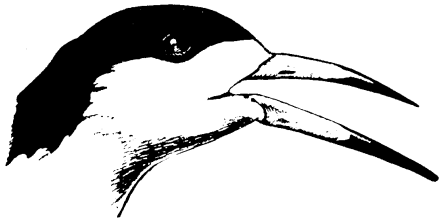
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