The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, July 19, 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: SDFO's own Paul Lehman will present "Rare Birds & Rare Bird Chasing in California, 1960s to 2010," an informative and entertaining look at significant records and the pursuit of rare birds in California beginning in the 1960s.

Paul Lehman began birding at the age of 9 in the New York City suburbs. At 18 he moved to Santa Barbara, where he remained for 20 years before returning east in 1994 to live in Cape May, New Jersey, for 14 years, and then migrated back west to San Diego in 2008. Given his interests in geography, bird distribution, and working on bird lists in every state and province, he has traveled extensively throughout virtually every nook and cranny of North America.

Paul has written many articles and papers on avian distribution and identification. Formerly a lecturer in physical geography and environmental studies at the University of California Santa Barbara, and past editor of the American Birding Association's *Birding* magazine for nine years, Paul has given talks on weather, bird distribution, migration, and vagrancy, topics that are of special interest to him. Paul also led bird tours throughout North America for Wings, Inc. He was an associate editor for *North American Birds* magazine, and he has been a principal consultant on several popular field guides, most recently as chief consultant for the range maps in the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and *Complete Birds of North America*, The Sibley *Field Guides to Birds of Eastern and Western North America*, and several of Roger Tory Peterson's field guides.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, August 16, same time, same place. Justin LeClaire will speak on "Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries."

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, JUNE 2022

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

The most mind-blowing record of the month (and the year?) involved this Cook's Petrel inland at the Safari Park near Escondido on 10 Jun. *Photo by Geoff Veith*

One of the more amazing avian events in San Diego County in many years took the form of a Cook's Petrel found well inland at the Safari Park near Escondido on 10 Jun (KM, GV). The bird frequented a small pond for just a minute or two and then flew off. It appeared to take a brief bath during very warm weather conditions, and may have also grabbed a food item during its brief stay. There are several previous inland records during summer at the Salton Sea, which almost certainly involve northward-moving birds that became "trapped" in the Gulf of California and then continued over land. Perhaps the Safari Park bird had continued northwestward from there. That route is much more likely than if the bird had moved eastward from the immediate San Diego coast.

A male Cape May Warbler in Solana Beach on 26 Jun (SPe) is unprecedented for the summer season. The several previous spring records were from the peak vagrant season in late May and early June. This bird likely represents an especially late individual. Other high-end rarities were well represented during June. A Flesh-footed Shearwater was at the Nine-Mile Bank on 26 Jun (DJ). A Manx Shearwater was there on 12 Jun (BVAS), a time of year when there are only a couple previous records. Unfortunately, the bird was not identified except from photos right after it had flown off. A one-year-old Mississippi Kite was over Kit Carson Park in Escondido on 26 Jun (ID), a fairly typ-

Another view of the Safari Park Cook's Petrel, a species not often seen alongside Snowy Egrets! *Photo by Kris McMillan*

ical date for this casual visitor. An occasionally singing Yellow-throated Vireo was at Border Field State Park from 25-27 Jun (MSa). One is found in the county during summer every few years. The second Prothonotary Warbler this spring was a long-staying bird in residential Encinitas from 9-19 Jun (NG), and the second Hooded Warbler was in residential Coronado on 12 Jun (EC).

This stunning male Cape May Warbler in Solana Beach on 26 Jun was a very late spring vagrant. *Photo by Haim Weizman*

Additional rarity highlights included the continuing, sporadic American or hybrid American X Black Oystercatcher in the Pt. Loma/Ocean Beach area through 11 Jun (MHy, KR), a very late golden-plover sp. at San Mateo Pt. on 9 Jun (DE), two southbound Pigeon Guillemots at La Jolla on 20 Jun (PEL), and a single adult Laughing Gull along the Chula Vista bayshore on 5 Jun (JA) followed by up to two adults in the Los Penasquitos Lagoon/La Jolla area between 14-22 Jun (SB, MSe). These gulls likely represent northward post-breeding dispersers from the Gulf of California. A Nazca Booby flew by La Jolla on 9 Jun (PEL), and two Nazcas were together at the Nine-Mile Bank on 26 Jun (MSa). A fine showing of three Neotropic Cormorants included a continuing bird at Guajome Regional Park through at least 3 Jul (CH) and new individuals at the Safari Park on 3 Jun (MA) and in Del Mar from 27 Jun-4 Jul+ (DAK). Up to three of the long-staying Harris's Hawks were still in Shelter Valley on 5 Jun (NC). Two Red Crossbills, the first of that species to be found in the county in over a year, were at Lake Cuyamaca on 26 Jun (TW).

With the addition of up to two Summer Tanagers in the Tijuana River Valley from 3-5 Jun (PEL) and one in Carlsbad on 6-7 Jun (BR), the coastal total of *ten* individuals this spring set a new record. Additional Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 5 Jun (JTS), in University City on 9 Jun (BS), in Coronado on 16 Jun (EC), and inland at Ramona on 7 Jun (DG) bring this year's May-June total to a record *ten* individuals. The returning, territo-

This Manx Shearwater, with Sooty Shearwaters, at the Nine-Mile Bank on 12 Jun was unfortunately not identified until just after it had flown off. Note the bird's clean white undertail coverts. *Photo by Li Yinan*

This immature Mississippi Kite flew over Kit Carson Park in Escondido on 26 Jun. *Photo by Isabelle Davignon*

rial male Indigo Bunting continued in the Bird & Butterfly Garden area through 3 Jul+ (MM, SM), and a female was there from 25 Jun-3 Jul+ (BW). The presumed escaped young male Painted Bunting remained at the adjoining Community Gardens through 10 Jun (PEL).

Very rare or casual in summer, a tame Cackling Goose was still at Lake Murray through 30 Jun+ (BW); a Hooded Merganser was at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton 21 Jun (PAG); a Rhinoceros Auklet and an adult Sabine's Gull were present 12 Jun near the Nine-Mile Bank and at the 30-Mile Bank, respectively (BVAS); and a first-cycle Herring Gull was on South San Diego Bay on 6 Jun (PEL). Following a winter incursion, small numbers of Northern Fulmars lingered offshore through June, with a high count of nine birds on the 12 Jun pelagic trip (BVAS). Merely "rare" this month were a Lesser Scaup at Batiquitos Lagoon on 19 Jun-4 Jul+ (PEL); a Red Phalarope off Pt. Loma on 5 Jun (MSa); single southbound Common Murres at La Jolla on 11, 13, & 18 Jun (PEL); up to two early one-year-old Common Terns on South San Diego Bay from 6-14 Jun (PEL); and a continuing American Bittern at San Elijo Lagoon through 10 Jun (DAK). The long-staying male scaup at Santee Lakes, considered a Greater ever since its original discovery in June 2020, continued through this month (m.obs) but is now beset by identification concerns and best considered a "Greater/Lesser" Scaup.

The second Prothonotary Warbler in the county this spring frequented residential Encinitas from 9-19 Jun. *Photo by Neal Glasgow*

The first of two or three records of Laughing Gull this month involved this adult in Chula Vista on 5 Jun. *Photo by Joe Alsadi*

Otherwise, the numbers of summering waterfowl and loons were well below average. The four Brant seen along the coast were bested by the late-lingering desert bird at Borrego Springs through 12 Jun (BS, RT). A male Wood Duck on Lower Otay Lake 17 Jun (PEL) was likely an early post-breeding disperser. A male Blue-winged Teal was at Famosa Slough from 9-Jun-1 Jul+ (JA), lingerers into early June included up to three American Wigeon at the San Diego River mouth (PEL) and a Green-winged Teal in Chula Vista (JSp), and single Northern Pintails were found at San Elijo Lagoon, Lindo Lake, and Lake Murray/Santee Lakes (v.obs). A Bonaparte's Gull on South San Diego Bay during early June (MSa) was the lone individual found.

A total of ten Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in the county during May and June set a new all-time record for spring, and they included this female in University City on 9 Jun. *Photo by Bridget Spencer*

In recent years, Craveri's Murrelets have become expected offshore already throughout much of June, with a high count this year of 20 birds on the 12 Jun pelagic trip (BVAS). A northbound alternate-plumaged Pacific Loon at La Jolla on 5 Jun (PEL) was a somewhat typical late date, but single Warbling Vireos near Famosa Slough on 15-16 Jun (SES) and along Kitchen Creek Rd. on 15 Jun (MA) were later still, whereas up to two or three at Palomar Mt. from 25 Jun-1 Jul+ (SPl) was at a site of almost annual occurrence in summer. A Vermilion Flycatcher along the Embarcadero in downtown San Diego on 6 Jun (MHa) was at an odd, non-breeding location for the date. A Cedar Waxwing at Vallecito on 5 Jun and a Western Tanager there on 8 Jun (BLS) were late for the desert, and a Brown-crested Flycatcher there through 8 Jun (BLS) was not at a known nesting site. A singing Swainson's Thrush along the San Diego R. near the San Diego Mission on 8 Jun (PEL) was at the southern limit of this species' breeding range.

Very unusual east of the mountains, at least three Band-tailed Pigeons wandered to the San Felipe Valley from 26 Jun+ (SV). Casual inland, two Black Skimmers were at Lake Murray on 1 Jun (EA). Also unusual was the Brown Pelican at Lake Hodges on 19 Jun (BMM). In contrast, a White-winged Dove in Carlsbad on 7 Jun (BR) had wandered west to the coast. Two immature Bald Eagles continuing from winter at Sweetwater Reservoir through 4 Jul+ (PEL) were unexpected near the coast. Two Acorn Woodpeckers at Mast Park in Santee from 22 May-4 Jul+ (JSt) and a Western Tanager in Valley Center on 26 Jun (TL) were at atypical locations.

West Ski Island, a small islet in Mission Bay near Crown Point, has recently become a major nesting site for terns. A 27 Jun survey tallied at least 54-58 Black Skimmer nests, 38-40 Caspian Tern nests and broods, and 19 Forster's Tern nests and broods (JJ).

Perhaps it is only fitting that this June report ends with mention of the start of "fall" migration. An

Returning now for several summers, this male Indigo Bunting has been a popular attraction in the Bird & Butterfly Garden area, photographed here on 7 Jun. *Photo by John Dumlao*

alternate-plumaged Willet at the San Diego River mouth on 15 Jun (MSe) was the first of a steady increase in southbound-arrivals of this species and was a few days early. An adult Lark Sparrow at NAS North Island on 29 Jun (BF) was very likely a post-breeding disperser.

Casual in summer, this Hooded Merganser was a real surprise at Lake O'Neill on Camp Pendleton, 21 Jun. *Photo by Peter A. Ginsburg*

This Rhinoceros Auklet and adult Sabine's Gull seen during the 12 Jun pelagic trip were both very rare in June. *Photos by Hanna Zhao*

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

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. Joe Alsadi, Eitan Altman, Mike Andersen, Sean Buchanan, Buena Vista Audubon Society pelagic trip, Nancy Christensen, Elizabeth Copper, Isabelle Davignon, John Dumlao, Brian Flick, Peter A. Ginsburg, Deborah Grover, Neal Glasgow, Michelle Haglund (MHa), Carl Haynie, Matt Hysell (MHy), Jennifer Jackson, Dan Jehl, Dan A. King, Paul E. Lehman, Trysten Loefke, Marcie Mason, Sara Mayers, Kris McMillan, Ben Martin Mortimer, Jane Mygatt, Steve Perry (SPe), Stan Plante (SPl), Blanche Ramswick, Kerry Ross, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Mel Senac (MSe), Britta Lee Shain, Susan E. Smith, Bridget Spencer, Jonny Sperling (JSp), Justyn T. Stahl, Jeremiah Stock (JSt), Robert Theriault, Sally Veach, Geoff Veith, Barbara Wise, and Tracy Wu.

Casual inland, these Black Skimmers were at Lake Murray on 1 Jun. *Photo by Eitan Altman*

This Black Phoebe returned repeatedly to an impromptu perch-of-choice at La Jolla Cove on 5 Jun. *Photo by Paul Lehman*

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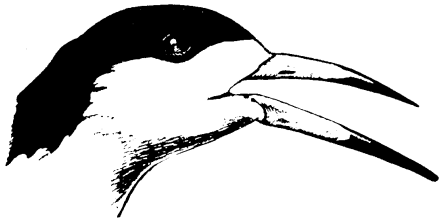

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