The SKIMMER

Volume 49, Number 11—November 2022

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, November 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.

Program: "A new migration spectacle: Spring land birds at Bear Divide, Los Angeles County, CA," with Dr. Ryan Terrill.

Bear Divide is a narrow pass in the San Gabriel Mountains just outside of Los Angeles that is home to spectacular dawn flights of migrating birds in the spring. With thousands of migrants funneling through a narrow divide, this is truly a unique biological phenomenon.

In 2021, the Moore Lab of Zoology at Occidental College began a regular count to quantify the numbers and identities of birds migrating through Bear Divide. Join Dr. Ryan Terrill as he updates us on the status of spring migration across the Divide and learn how you can participate!

Dr. Terrill holds a B.S. from UC Santa Cruz and a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University; he is an Associate Professor at CSU Stanislaus and studies the evolution of bird molt, an incredible adaptation that allows birds to drop and regrow worn feathers each year. As the lead on the Mexican Bird Resurvey Project, he is using big biodiversity data and genomic tools to understand how a century of human-caused change has impacted bird communities. Dr. Terrill is an expert on local birds and is on the California Bird Records Committee, the group which compiles the state bird list and rules on new records.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, December 13. Our annual Holiday Party—see below for details.

SDFO NEWS (cont.)

FINALLY: A SDFO IN-PERSON MEETING!

The SDFO annual Holiday party will be held IN PERSON on Tuesday December 13th. This is a week earlier than we usually meet, but we try to not meet during the CBC season. Our event will be held at the Nobel Recreation Center, 8810 Judicial Drive, San Diego. More details will be coming soon, but for now, we will plan to gather at 5:30 and eat around 6:00. We will see the Year in Review photos, and enjoy each other's company after so many months apart. Hope to see you there!

2023 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Membership renewals for 2023 are being accepted now. Annual membership is $25.00 for single plus $10.00 for each additional person in the same household. Please make out your checks to SDFO. Checks may be sent to: Eve Martin, 1155 Camino Del Mar, Suite 102, Del Mar, CA 92014.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, OCTOBER 2022

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

Following what was perhaps an "average" September for rarities in San Diego County, October 2022 was exceptional in terms of both variety and volume. Leading the way was the alternate-plumaged adult Swallow-tailed Gull photographed by two visitors with their phone at St. Malo Beach in southern Oceanside on 25 Oct (JC). This establishes the fourth California and fifth United States record of this denizen of the Galápagos region, ranging regularly from Colombia to Peru and rarely south to Chile and north to Central America. The three previous state records are all from Northern California, and the other is from Washington.

An emaciated Yellow Rail was found by a homeowner at Crown Point, Mission Bay, on 21 Oct, establishing just the second record for San Diego County. The bird subsequently died in rehab (fide PU, *SDNHM). The first record was also of a specimen, found on a Santee street in 1998. Another surprise specimen this month was the injured juvenile Black Storm-Petrel found *inland* in a Kearny Mesa parking lot on 17 Oct (fide PU, *SDNHM). There are several previous inland specimens of juveniles in fall.

One of the rarest birds ever recorded in San Diego County, this adult Swallow-tailed Gull was photographed using an iPhone along St. Malo Beach in southern Oceanside on 25 Oct. *Photo by Janet Cavallaro*

The first Great Crested Flycatcher in the county in nine years was this bird in residential Pt. Loma on 26 Oct. It also established the latest fall record. *Photo by Lisa Ruby*

This Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery from 5-7 Oct proved extremely popular amongst birders and was the third record for the county. *Photo by Gary Nunn*

Land bird highlights were led by a Great Crested Flycatcher in residential Pt. Loma on 26 Oct (PEL), the first in the county in nine years; a cooperative Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery (hereafter "FRNC") from 5-7 Oct (GN), only the third county record; and two separate Philadelphia Vireos, one at FRNC on 10-11 Oct (PEL) and the other in Balboa Park on 24 Oct (PEL). Honorable mentions include a long-staying Least Flycatcher at FRNC from 5-14 Oct (GN) and another at Doyle Park in University City on 11-12 Oct (BSp); a Blue-headed Vireo in residential Pt. Loma on 10-11 Oct (AA, NK); a Red-eyed Vireo at Buddy Todd Park in Oceanside from 16-18 Oct (RG); single Yellow-green Vireos bordering the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley on 22 Oct (BC, KS) and at Robb Field in Ocean Beach on 23-24 Oct (JP); and an excellent three Gray Catbirds, at FRNC on 11 Oct (SE), at the Bird & Butterfly Garden on 21 Oct (PM), and, very cooperative, at FRNC from 22-27 Oct (GN).

"Eastern" warblers were so well represented that many species will need to be grossly summarized here rather than listed individually as they would be in a more typical year. The rarest was the Kentucky Warbler at FRNC on 11 Oct (DH) followed by what was

Two Philadelphia Vireos were discovered this month, the first at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 10-11 Oct (left) and the second in Balboa Park on 24 Oct (right). *Photos by Barbara Wise (left) and Nathan French (right)*

This long-staying Least Flycatcher at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery from 5-14 Oct proved very popular and was one of two in the county during the month. *Photo by Mark Stratton*

This very rare Red-eyed Vireo at Buddy Todd Park from 16-18 Oct was slightly later than most fall records in the state. *Photo by Steve Brad*

One of three Gray Catbirds found, this individual at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery from 22-27 Oct was especially cooperative. *Photo by Andrew Newmark*

This male Pine Warbler delighted many observers at Buddy Todd Park on 22-23 Oct. *Photo by Terry Brashear*

very likely the same individual immediately downslope at Naval Base Point Loma on 21 Oct (M&TR). A Bay-breasted Warbler was in University City from 23-29 Oct (JR); single Pine Warblers were at Buddy Todd Park on 22-23 Oct (TG) and at Hilltop Park in Chula Vista on 24 Oct (BH, MS); a Prairie Warbler was in Solana Beach from 6-9 Oct (PS); single Black-throated Green Warblers were at FRNC on 9 Oct (HW) and at Santee Lakes from 17-23 Oct (JSt); and three separate Canada Warblers were at Lake Murray from 3-9 Oct (MS), in Carlsbad on 3 Oct (GH, *SDNHM), and at Cabrillo National Monument on 15 -16 Oct (JP). A late Virginia's Warbler was at Naval Base Point Loma on 26 Oct (BSt).

Leading the warbler charge in the "too many to mention" category was the incredible *30* Tennessee Warblers during the month, all of them coastal save the one bird in Escondido from 7-11 Oct (JP), which when combined with the five September individuals brings the season total to *35*, by far an all-time record. Other large October totals included four Ovenbirds (K&SM, JDi, TB, LR); 15 Black-and-white Warblers; 11 American Redstarts; four Northern Parulas (JTS, BSp, GV); a record *12* Magnolia Warblers; *nine* Blackburnian Warblers; *12* Chestnut-sided Warblers including one in the mountains at Santa Ysabel on 30 Oct (SES); *five* Black-throated Blue Warblers (JR, DT, ND, SBe, JDe); and 14 Palm Warblers. In contrast, the two Northern Waterthrushes (JB, SBu) and

five Blackpoll Warblers (MS, DAK, PEL) were merely pedestrian by comparison.

Other rare passerines included a migrant Dusky Flycatcher at FRNC on 6 Oct (CAM); an Eastern Phoebe in Ocean Beach on 24 Oct (BW); a Sage Thrasher at FRNC from 1-5 Oct (GN); single dark-lored White-crowned Sparrows in the Tijuana River Valley on 4 Oct (JA) and in University City on 31 Oct

This absurdly cooperative Canada Warbler at Cabrillo National Monument on 15-16 Oct was one of three individuals discovered during October. *Photo by Derek Hameister*

An exceptional 30 Tennessee Warblers were tallied in the county during the month, bringing the Fall 2022 total to 35 birds, by far a record count. This individual was in Leucadia on 3 Oct. *Photo by Jimmy McMorran*

(BSp); an Orchard Oriole in northern Balboa Park on 1 Oct (ND); a Baltimore Oriole at FRNC on 22-23 Oct (GN); single Scarlet Tanagers at Whelan Lake in Oceanside on 9 Oct (early, TG), in University City on 18 Oct (JDe), in eastern Encinitas on 22 Oct (BM), and at Buddy Todd Park from 23-25 Oct (JMy, PEL); and a Painted Bunting in Carlsbad on 2 Oct (TG). Ten Tropical Kingbirds, 13 Plumbeous Vireos, up to four Lapland Longspurs (GV), 12 Clay-colored Sparrows, three White-throated Sparrows (one of which rode a cruise ship into port on 13 Oct), at least eight Bobolinks, *31* Summer Tanagers, and *six* Dickcissels were tallied. And the *eight* Rose-breasted Grosbeaks included one individual that rode a cruise ship into port on 13 Oct (v.obs) and up to three birds together at a feeder in residential La Jolla from 15-20 Oct (EB).

Returning wintering land birds of note included the Greater Pewee for its fifth year to Balboa Park from 18 Oct+ (PEL), single Hammond's Flycatchers to Liberty Station from 3 Oct+ (JA) and in University City from 11 Oct (JDe) (both for their third year), an Eastern Phoebe at San Miguel Ranch from 24 Oct+ (JSp) (also for its third year), a Nelson's Sparrow at Crown Pt. on Mission Bay from 27 Oct+ (NC), and single Hepatic Tanagers in Tierrasanta from 24 Oct+ (PEL) and at San Dieguito County Park from 26 Oct+ (PGN) (for their fifth and second years, respectively). Zone-tailed Hawks returned to the Safari Park/ Escondido (MJH), Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (JSp), and Oceanside/Camp Pendleton (FR) areas.

A Guadalupe Murrelet rode a boat from somewhere between Avalon and San Diego into San Diego Harbor on the morning of 16 Oct (SBa). A Red-necked Grebe was at Agua Hedionda Lagoon from 28 Oct-1 Nov+ (MS). A very rare migrant American Bittern was at Lake Murray on 4 Oct (TH), whereas the individual at San Elijo Lagoon on 29 Oct-1 Nov+ (JSt) was much more expected. Miscellaneous non-passerine land birds of note included continuing Harris's Hawks at both Jacumba (PEL) and Shelter Valley (NC); Broad-winged Hawks at Lake Murray (up to four, NF), including an exceptional dark-morph bird on 4 Oct (MS), at Mt. Helix (PEL), and on outer Pt. Loma for several days (JP); a Swainson's Hawk in Oceanside from 19-24 Oct (TG, SV); and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Harry Griffen Regional Park from 27 Oct-1 Nov+ (EA).

Shorebirds were highlighted by up to three Stilt Sandpipers at Sweetwater Reservoir from 3-10 Oct (PEL). The last Baird's Sandpiper was on 9 Oct (KF), the final Pectoral was on 15 Oct (SBu), and the hybrid American X Black Oystercatcher continued in the La Jolla area through 10 Oct (v.obs). Up to four Pacific Golden-Plovers at the South San Diego Bay

Salt Works (PEL) and one at nearby Silver Strand State Beach (NB) may have included individuals that normally roost at the Tijuana R. mouth. A count of 42 Surfbirds in Coronado on 14 Oct (DJ) is very high in fall.

Rare boobies were headlined by the casual Blue-footed Booby photographed at the Tijuana R. mouth on 23 Oct (YG). Three Nazcas were seen offshore during the 1 Oct pelagic trip (BVAS) and singles were there 2 Oct (v.obs) and 22 Oct (BVAS); sightings from shore were made at La Jolla on 16 & 19 Oct (BG, RI). A Masked/Nazca was at the mouth of Mission Bay on 22 Oct (EL). Red-footed Boobies were also seen offshore, on 1 Oct (BVAS) and 22 Oct (BVAS), and one was seen riding a fishing boat into San Diego Bay on 13 Oct (v.obs).

Irruptive species included up to eight Pinyon Jays along Los Huecos Rd. in the Laguna Mts. from 18-30 Oct (NC), small-to-moderate numbers of Lewis's Woodpeckers, Cassin's Finches, and Red Crossbills in the mountains (m.obs), and at least *seven* Townsend's Solitaires near the coast (MS, LR, BSp, CA, RTP) and one at Jacumba (PEL). One Lewis's Woodpecker was near the coast at Mission Trails Regional Park on 18 Oct (GR).

The most notable irruption of the season, however, was that involving Greater White-fronted Geese. Part of an almost-statewide phenomenon, they first appeared in San Diego County on 10 Oct, their numbers quickly swelled, and for the remainder of the month flocks were found at many locations, some as large as 30-65 individuals, and the largest including 78 birds over eastern Carlsbad on 10 Oct (BM), 140-150 at Sweetwater Reservoir from 14-30 Oct+ (PEL), and 97 at Lake Murray on 17 Oct (MS). Small numbers of Cackling Geese were associated with this flight, including a slightly early bird in Santee from 12 Oct+ (EA) and a high of 12 at Sweetwater Reservoir on 14 Oct (PEL).

Unusual at their respective sites inland, the summering Brant was still in Borrego Springs on 4 Oct (BSp, CD), a Common Tern was at Lake Murray on 7 Oct (MS), a Brown Pelican was at San Vicente Reservoir on 6 Oct (JMc), and an eastward American Crow was in Jacumba on 31 Oct (PEL). Unusual along the outer coast, an Acorn Woodpecker was at FRNC on 2 Oct (PEL).

Great-tailed Grackle is not normally thought of as a migratory species in San Diego County, but dispersing or migrant individuals are noted from time to time at sites away from normal occurrence, such as at outer Pt. Loma, and a flock of six flying east to west high over Jacumba on 31 Oct (PEL) were clearly on the move.

American Bitterns are now very rare migrants anywhere in the county. This individual was at Lake Murray on 4 Oct. *Photo by Terry Hurst*

Early arrivals included a Snow Goose at Batiquitos Lagoon on 14 Oct (TG) and a Williamson's Sapsucker near Mt. Laguna on 8 Oct (DA). Late-lingering species included Black-chinned Hummingbirds in Tierrasanta through 15 Oct (PEL); an Olive-sided Flycatcher in San Ysidro on 25 Oct (PEL); sin-

gle Western Wood-Pewees at Harry Griffen Regional Park on 25 Oct (EA), in San Ysidro on 27 Oct (PEL), at NAS North Island through 29 Oct (PEL, JTS), and at Wing Street Canyon, Pt. Loma, on 30 Oct (MH); single Willow Flycatchers in Vista on 19 Oct (SV) and in University City from 15-27 Oct (JDe, PEL); and a Yellow-breasted Chat at FRNC through 15 Oct (GN). A continuing Cassin's Kingbird at Jacumba, where the species does not winter, on 31 Oct (PEL) set a new local late date. A Wilson's Phalarope remaining at the Salt Works through 30 Oct+ (PEL) is possibly a returning wintering bird.

A cooperative immature Broad-winged Hawk remained on outer Pt. Loma from 11-15 Oct, much to the delight of many previously Broad-winged-cursed birders. *Photo by Barbara Wise*

Exceptional anywhere in California away from the Marin Headlands hawk watch site, this *dark*-morph Broad-winged Hawk was at Lake Murray on 4 Oct. *Photo by Matt Sadowski.*

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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, Chris Adler, Joe Alsadi, Eitan Altman, Dorian Anderson, Steve Backus (SBa), Nick Barber, Sonja Beeve (SBe), Eric Bischoff, Terry Brashear, John Bruin, Sean Buchanan (SBu), Buena Vista Audubon Society sponsored pelagic trip, Brent Campos, Janet Cavallaro, Nancy Christensen, Chris Dean, Jay Desgrosellier (JDe), Nicole Desnoyers, Jane Dittmyer (JDi), Steve Ellis, Kyle Fischer, Nathan French, Rodney Gast, Brian Gibbons, Tito Gonzalez, Yibo Guo, Michelle Haglund, Derek Hameister, Mary Jo Hayes, Gjon Hazard, Bonnie Henson, Terry Hurst, Robert Irwin, Dan Jehl, Dan A. King, Nicole Koeltzow, Paul E. Lehman, Eric Link, Curtis A. Marantz, Paul Marvin, Keith & Sara Mayers, Jimmy McMorran (JMc), Betsy Miller, Jane Mygatt (JMy), P. G. Nell, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Michael & Tara Ray, Fred Roberts, Jim Roberts, Geoff Rogers, Lisa Ruby, Matt Sadowski, Kristin Sesser, Patrick Shipley, Susan E. Smith, Bridget Spencer (BSp), Jonny Sperling (JSp) Justyn T. Stahl, Brandon Stidum (BSt), Jeremiah Stock (JSt), David Trissel, Phil Unitt, Sally Veach, Geoff Veith, Haim Weizman, and Barbara Wise.

m.obs = many observers

v.obs = various observers

*SDNHM = specimen to San Diego Natural History Museum

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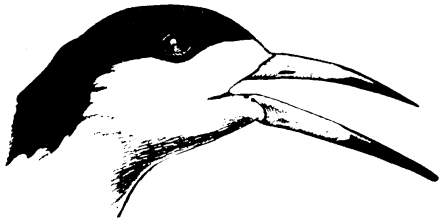

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