

The **SKIMMER**



Volume 32, Number 12—December 2005

SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, December 20, at 7:00 p.m., at the Tecolote Nature Center, at the east end of Tecolote Road, off I-5.

Our annual Holiday Potluck. Bring your favorite goodie, and celebrate your favorite December holiday (Christmas, Hanukkah, Eid, Kwanzaa, Solstice, Day of the Ka, or whatever) with your fellow birders. Supreme Power rest you merry, Gentlepersons/ Let nothing you dismay...After we've all overindulged to our hearts' content, Ken Fink will present "Exotic Aves" to those still conscious. What do the following birds have in common: Kagu, Sunbittern, Shoebill Stork, Hammerhead Stork or Hamerkop, and Limpkin? Ken will have the answer.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, January 17, 2006, same time, same place. Program: "The 2004-2005 Great Grey Owl Irruption in Pictures," by Neil Solomon.

Christmas Bird Count Schedule

Saturday, December 17: San Diego

Compiler: Dick Hodges (619) 283-0818 rrhodes1@cox.net

Sunday, December 18: Anza-Borrego

Compiler: Bob Theriault (760) 767-1312 roberttheriault@juno.com

Monday, December 19: Lake Henshaw

Compiler: Gretchen Cummings (760) 789-5938 (home) gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net

Thursday, December 22: Rancho Santa Fe

Compiler: Robert Patton (858) 560-0923 rpatton@san.rr.com

Wednesday, December 28: Oceanside

Compiler: Dennis Wysong (760) 754-1264 dwysong1@cox.net

Saturday, December 31: Escondido

Compiler: Ken Weaver (760) 723-2448 gnatcatcher@sbcglobal.net

SDFO News (continued)**New Year's Day Pelagic Trip**

There IS going to be a January 1, 2006 pelagic trip, on the *New Seaforth*, out of Seaforth Sportfishing, 1717 Quivira Road, in west Mission Bay. The boat will leave the dock at 8:30 a.m., return at 12:30 p.m. Be at the dock by 8:10 a.m. Cost is \$17, same as last year. Make checks payable to SDFO.

Hawkwatch at Ramona Grasslands

Sponsored by the Wildlife Research Institute, Hawkwatch 2006 happens every Saturday in January and February from 9am to noon. Meet at 9am at WRI Headquarters, 18030 Highland Valley Road, intersection of Rangeland and Highland Valley Road. You will observe wintering and resident hawks, owls, and eagles. Learn identification and life histories of birds of prey from a WRI biologist. You might see up to 13 different species of raptors.

Hawkwatch is free to the public. Only heavy rain cancels. Bring binoculars and scopes if you have them. Recommend you layer your clothing and wear walking or hiking boots. Directions: Take Highway 67 to Ramona and turn North (NW) on Highland Valley Road for 2 miles. Look for the WRI sign on the right.

Address Update

E-mail change:
Oz Osborn osbornn7045f@yahoo.com

FROM 10,001 TITILLATING TIDBITS OF AVIAN TRIVIA

by Frank S. Todd

1527. What did the founder of the Tabasco hot sauce company, E. A. McIlhenny, have to do with birds?

8628. Do all grebes breed on fresh water?

1115. Very few Southern Hemisphere breeding birds migrate to the Northern Hemisphere, but which group of birds is an exception?

3780. During spring aerial waterfowl surveys in Alaska, how can a Trumpeter Swan nest be differentiated from a superficially similar Tundra (Whistling) Swan nest?

5548. After what animals were the Canary Islands named?

3517. Do Turkey Vultures make good pets?

[answers on p. 5]
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SAN DIEGO RARE BIRD ALERT REPORT, NOVEMBER 2005

Compiled by Mike Evans

COMMON NAME	NO	PLUM	OBS DATE	LOCATION	REPORTER
Red-necked Grebe?	1		11/9/05	San Diego R Floodway, far E-end	Grantham, G.
Wood Stork	1		11/24/05	San Diego Wild Animal Park	Hunefeld, T.
Reddish Egret	1	Imm	11/21,22,27/05	San Diego Bay, S Bay NWR (salt works)	Altman, E., 2 other birders
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	2		11/6/05	Imperial Beach, roosting in eucalyptus, apartment complex, E of Tijuana Slough	Young, H.
Greater White-fronted Goose	1	Juv?	11/19/05	San Elijo Lagoon, along N shore, E of I-5,	Smith, S.
Ross's Goose	1		11/24,28,30/05	Mission Bay, S of visitor center	Goldhammer, M., 2 other birders
Cackling Goose	1		11/24,27,28/05	Mission Bay, S of visitor center	Goldhammer, M., 2 other birders
Cackling/Canada Goose	1	Ad	11/28/05	Mission Bay, S of visitor center	Billings, M. J.
Cackling Goose	2?		11/30/05	Mission Bay, S of visitor center	Churchill, M.
Eurasian Wigeon	1	M	11/9,17/05	Peñasquitos Sough, along Carmel Valley Rd.	Smith, S., Roberts, J.
Eurasian x American Wigeon	1		11/14/05	San Elijo Lagoon, along Rios Ave trail	Patton, R. T.
Eurasian Wigeon	1	M	11/22/05	San Diego Bay, S Bay NWR (salt works)	Myers, T.
Greater Scaup	1	M	11/22/05	San Diego Bay, S Bay NWR (salt works)	Myers, T.
Greater Scaup	1		11/27/05	Tijuana Estuary, at river mouth	Hunefeld, T.
Hooded Merganser	2	M+F	11/25/05	Santee Lakes, lake before RV park	Goldhammer, M.
Harlequin Duck	1	F	11/11/05	MEX: Baja CA: La Joya	Myers, T.
Zone-tailed Hawk	1-2		11/1,20,24,27/05	San Diego Wild Animal Park, Escondido	Claypool, M., several other birders
Zone-tailed Hawk	1		11/6,17/05	SR 78, near Pine Hills egg stand	Altman, E.
Zone-tailed Hawk	1		11/21/05	Fallbrook, 1727 Via Gianni-Turko, off Reche Rd.	Lyle, J.
Zone-tailed Hawk	1		11/28/05	Escondido, Via Rancho Parkway, W of I-15	Billings, M. J.
Baird's Sandpiper	4		11/21/05	Sweetwater Marsh NWR, Salicornia marsh	Martin, J.
Pacific Golden-Plover	2-3		11/20,21/05	Tijuana Estuary, S end, barrier dune	Miller, R., Altman, E.

*Eurasian Collared-Dove	5		11/7/05	Borrego Springs, Borrego Springs Country Club	Jorgensen, P.	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1		11/9-25/05	Lindo Lake Park, Lakeside, E-end, E lake	Altman, E., several other birders	
Thick-billed Kingbird	1	1st yr	11/28-30/05	Del Dios, near Lake Hodges: SE of the intersection of Lake, Rancho & Fremont	Smith, S., 2 other birders	
Eastern Phoebe	1		11/15/05	Tijuana R. Valley, W of Dairy Mart Rd., near Metro Stowe, M. B. Wastewater revegetation		
Eastern Phoebe	1		11/30/05	Tijuana Estuary, N of river mouth	Stanley, T. R.	
Gray Flycatcher	1		11/10-25/05	Lindo Lake Park, Lakeside	Myers, T., several other birders	
Vermilion Flycatcher	1-3	1 M Ad, 2 M Imm	11/2-25/05	Lindo Lake Park, Lakeside	Wesner, M. L., several other birders	
Vermilion Flycatcher	2	M/1st +F1st	11/16/05	Tijuana R. Valley Regional Park, athletic fields S of Sunset Ave., E of Hollister St.	Myers, T.	
Mountain Bluebird	14-80		11/11,19,24/05	Anza Borrego DSP, Blair/Little Blair playa	Thériault, R.	
Sage Thrasher	1		11/18/05	Cabrillo NM, Myoporum grove, dripping faucet	Murayama, V.	
Sage Thrasher	1		11/19/05	Anza-Borrego DSP, Little Blair Playa	Thériault, R.	
Brown Thrasher	1		11/1-10/05	Cabrillo NM, Myoporum grove, dripping faucet	Top, J., several other birders	
Gray Catbird	1		11/1/05	Cabrillo NM, Myoporum grove, dripping faucet	Top, J.	
Plumbeous Vireo	1		11/10,15/05	Lindo Lake Park, Lakeside	Altman, E., Rogers, G.	
Plumbeous Vireo	1		11/17,25/05	Santee Lakes, Lake 4	Roberts, J., M. B. Stowe	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1		11/22,23/05	Ft. Rosecrans NC, W side	Ginsburg, P., Carlson, B.	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3		11/29/05	Pine Valley, Pine Creek Trail, off Old Highway 80	Stowe, M. B.	
Prothonotary Warbler	1	M/Ad	11/5-12/05	Point Loma residential area	Smith, S., several other birders	
Painted Redstart	1	M	11/1-19/05	San Diego Zoo, S of Hunte Amphitheater	Hodges, R., several other birders	
Grace's Warbler	1	F/Ad	11/5/05	Ft. Rosecrans NC, N of fence	Heindel, M. T.	
Grace's Warbler	1	M/Ad	11/5, 6, 21,22/05	Ft. Rosecrans NC	Heindel, M. T., several other birders	
Palm Warbler	1		11/1/05	Tijuana R. Valley Regional Park, Bird & Butterfly Garden	Heindel, M. T.	
Palm Warbler	1		11/6/05	Famosa Slough, S end	Myers, T.	
Black-and-white Warbler	1	F	11/5/05	Pt. Loma residential area	Smith, S.	
Black-and-white Warbler	1		11/27/05	Veteran's Park, Imperial Beach Blvd.	Hunefeld, T.	
American Redstart	1	M/HY	11/5/05	Tijuana R Valley Regional Park, Bird & Butterfly Garden	Heindel, M. T.	
American Redstart	1		11/10/05	Pt. Loma residential area	Norton, R.	

White-throated Sparrow	1		11/29/05	Point Loma Nazarene Univ., path between Dupont St. & Lomaland Dr.	Johnson, G.
Baltimore Oriole	1	M/Ad	11/2,6,17/05	Santee Lakes, Lakes 3 and 4	Murayama, V., 2 other birders
Baltimore Oriole	1	M/HY	11/6/05	Pt. Loma residential area, Cedarbrae, 100 m E of Catalina	Martin, J.

“WHITE-CHEEKED GOOSE” IDENTIFICATION AIDS

The split of Canada Goose into the larger Canada Goose and the smaller Cackling Goose has created a major identification challenge (opportunity?) for local birders. Last February, *The Skimmer* reported on a couple of web sites treating the problem, including David Sibley’s web site www.sibleyguides.com/canada_cackling.htm and Harry Krueger’s IdahoBirds site www.idahobirds.net/identification/cackling.html (Note: this URL is a little different than in the original article, but seems to be the current correct address.). A recent examination of this latter site shows that it

has been extensively expanded and has excellent photographs of most of the subspecies of Canada and Cackling Geese. Another interesting site I encountered recently is the Colorado Field Ornithologists site cfo-link.org. A recent photo quiz, #126, featured a “white-cheeked goose,” and the discussion of the answer contained a potentially useful distinguishing feature that I hadn’t seen before, involving the shape of the neck in a bird grazing with its head down. Check it out, and we’ll see if it proves useful in the field.

ANSWERS TO 10,001 TITILLATING TIDBITS OF AVIAN TRIVIA

[see p. 2]

1527. In 1892, McIlhenny created Bird City at Avery Island, Louisiana. Egrets were extremely scarce at the time, and he brought in eight Snowy Egrets, and from this stock developed an enormous nesting colony, one of the largest American rookeries.

8628. Yes.

1115. The petrels: Wilson’s Storm-petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Short-tailed Shearwater, etc. The 21,000-mile annual migration of the Short-tailed Shearwater, for example, assumes a figure-of-eight course from southern Australia to the North Pacific and back

again.

3780. Trumpeter Swans construct huge nests in the water, but Tundra Swans nest ashore, often some distance from water.

5548. The wild dogs that occurred there (from the Latin *canis*).

3517. Yes, the vultures make surprisingly good pets, following their owner about like a dog.