

# The **SKIMMER**



Volume 37, Number 11—November 2010

## **SDFO NEWS**

### **Monthly Meeting**

Tuesday, November 15, at 7:00 p.m., at the Liberty Station Command Center Building, 2640 Historic Decatur Rd. Going south on Rosecrans St. (in the Midway area of town), Turn left on Roosevelt Rd. into Liberty Station and then left again on Decatur.

Program: Allison Shultz will speak on “Avian Coloration: A Bird’s-Eye View.” Birds see the world differently than you or I do. Allison is a graduate student at San Diego State University; she plans to enter the Ph.D. program next year.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, December 21, same place but possibly a different time. “Not Your Ordinary Potluck!” Details in next month’s *Skimmer*. See also the item below.

### **December Holiday Meeting**

We are going to try something a little new at the upcoming December 21 SDFO meeting, which is our annual Holiday get-together. Food will be partly provided by SDFO rather than being largely a potluck affair. And we are planning some entertainment, such as a photo quiz (with possible audience-team competition) compiled by Terry Hunefeld, and a 2010 wrap-up of San Diego County highlights and predictions for 2011 led by Paul Lehman. Details will appear in the December *Skimmer*. —Paul Lehman

### **Christmas Bird Counts in Our Area**

**Salton Sea:** Tuesday, December 14  
Oscar Johnson (805) 276-8878

**San Diego:** Saturday, December 18  
Phil Unitt [punitt@sdnhm.org](mailto:punitt@sdnhm.org)

**Anza-Borrego:** Sunday, December 19  
Bob Theriault [roberttheriault@juno.com](mailto:roberttheriault@juno.com)

**Lake Henshaw:** Monday, December 20  
Gretchen Cummings [gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net)

**Rancho Santa Fe:** Tuesday, December 28  
Robert Patton [rpatton@san.rr.com](mailto:rpatton@san.rr.com)

**Oceanside-Vista:** Thursday, December 30  
Terry Hunefeld [thunefeld@gmail.com](mailto:thunefeld@gmail.com)

**Escondido:** Sunday, January 2  
Ken Weaver [gmatcatcher@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gmatcatcher@sbcglobal.net)

## SDFO NEW YEAR'S DAY PELAGIC TRIP

The annual SDFO New Year's Day pelagic trip will be on *Grande* departing from Point Loma Sportfishing at Fisherman's Landing.

Tickets are \$50.00 the day of the trip. Pre-registration is \$40.00. Early-bird registration is \$35.00 through December 8. Current SDFO members will qualify for an on-board \$10.00 rebate, resulting in a bargain early-bird price to SDFO members of only \$25.00 (see details below).

*Grande* will board at 7:20 a.m. We will return promptly at 1:30 p.m. This 5.5 hour trip allows ample time to check the bait barges, jetties and Ballast Point for rocky shorebirds and Long-tailed Ducks before heading out to the Nine Mile Bank to look for shearwaters, alcids, jaegers, phalaropes, dolphins and whales.

To register, call Point Loma Sportfishing (619) 224-1629. Tell them you wish to register for the New Year's Day birding trip on *Grande*. SDFO representatives will be on board *Grande* on New Year's Day to reward your SDFO membership with a crisp Andrew Jackson.

We recommend arriving at 7:00 a.m. to allow 20 minutes to park your car and obtain your boarding pass at the Point Loma Sportfishing ticket window before we board

at 7:20 a.m. The gate to the docks will be CLOSED AND LOCKED at 7:45 a.m.

Please arrive in plenty of time to park, get your gear organized, obtain a boarding pass and sign the manifest (security is tighter at Fisherman's Landing because it is supervised closely by the Coast Guard and Homeland Security). We will be back at the dock and disembark promptly at 1:30 p.m.

More information including trip particulars, directions, boat food, registration, parking and how to prepare is available at [www.SoCalBirding.com](http://www.SoCalBirding.com).

### **\$10 SDFO MEMBER REBATE:**

Current and paid up (2011 dues) SDFO members will receive a \$10.00 cash rebate while aboard *Grande*, resulting in a bargain net-price to SDFO members of only \$25.00 if you take advantage of the early bird registration. We will have a list of 2011 members onboard. To be eligible for the \$10.00 rebate, you must be on the list or present a check made payable to the SDFO for 2011 membership dues. An excuse of "the check is in the mail" will not be sufficient to qualify for the rebate. Alternatively, you may waive the \$10.00 rebate and know that the \$10.00 went to a good cause: the SDFO.

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### **AN IMPRESSIVE OWL VIDEO**

I ran across this video the other day on the Yahoo group Bird-Pix (thanks to Stan Walens to clueing me in on this group a while back). It is an extreme slow-motion video of an Eurasian Eagle-owl landing on a perch. VERY impressive—the last thing the mouse sees. Watch it at:

[www.twincitiesnaturalist.com/2009/12/flying-eurasian-eagle-owl-video.html](http://www.twincitiesnaturalist.com/2009/12/flying-eurasian-eagle-owl-video.html)



## SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, OCTOBER 2010

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

A flock of 23 Greater White-fronted Geese at Sweetwater Reservoir 31 Oct (JK) is one of the largest in the County in modern times. A male Eurasian Wigeon at the Wild Animal Park near Escondido 16 Oct (KR), and two White-winged Scoters at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla 17 Oct (JR) were the earliest this fall for both species. Close to 100 Blue-winged Teal in the San Diego River Floodway 28 Oct (JP) was an impressive number. A Flesh-footed Shearwater, decidedly rare in San Diego County waters, was about 13 miles west of Pt. Loma 4 Oct (BT). Numbers of Least Storm-Petrels remained high off San Diego at the Nine- and Thirty-Mile Banks through 9 Oct (PEL). The only Brown Boobies reported this month were two together 24 miles west of Pt. Loma 4 Oct (BT). The only Reddish Egrets reported this month were two continuing adults in Imperial Beach from 1 Sep through 31 Oct (GMcC), and the only Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were a hatch-year bird photographed in Encinitas 5 Oct (SBr) and two adults at the Sports Park in Imperial Beach through 31 Oct (GMcC).

A Harris's Hawk at Borrego Springs 6-24 Oct (SBi) generated much interest—this bird probably originated from Baja California population as have others in the past twenty years. A migrant adult Broad-winged Hawk was watched moving south near Boulevard 4 Oct (BM)—this species is much scarcer in southern California today than 30 years ago though still seen in impressive numbers at the Marin Headlands north of San Francisco. A few Swainson's Hawks have been seen moving south at Borrego Springs through the month, with 160 26-27 Oct (PJ) being the largest flock. An imm. Zone-tailed

Hawk at the Wild Animal Park 4 Oct (KR) is the only migrant/wintering bird reported in the County this month.

The wintering Pacific Golden-Plover first seen at the Tijuana R. mouth 26 Aug was still present 14 Oct (RTP, MSa); a juvenile photographed in Coronado 12 Oct (MSa) was likely a migrant. Two Pectoral Sandpipers at Lake O'Neil on Camp Pendleton 11 Oct (PAG), one at Lake Hodges 14 Oct (PEL) and another in Del Mar 21 Oct (PEL) were the latest of the few fall migrants noted locally this year. A concentration of 40 Sabine's Gulls 13 miles west of Pt. Loma 2 Oct (PEL) was an impressive number for San Diego County waters. A Long-tailed Jaeger 30 miles west of Pt. Loma 9 Oct (PEL) was at the western extreme of San Diego's offshore waters.

A White-winged Dove at Famosa Slough 2 Oct (CM) and another in Cardiff 3 Oct (JMcM) were west of the mountains where rare. A carefully identified Black-chinned Hummingbird at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma on 16 Oct (MSa) establishes one of the latest dates for a fall migrant in San Diego County — the last of the females; immatures are usually gone from California by the end of September while the adult males are gone a month earlier.

A late Western Wood-Pewee was in Ocean Beach 20-21 Oct (PEL). A Gray Flycatcher at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 16-31 Oct (MSa, GLR) may be attempting to winter locally. A presumed migrant Vermilion Flycatcher was on the coast at Famosa Slough 2 Oct (JR), while a male in Nestor 27 Oct (DWA) and another male at the ball-fields in the Tijuana River Valley 30-31 Oct

(CGE, GMcC) were back for their 4<sup>th</sup> winters. The only Tropical Kingbirds were one at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 5 Oct (SES) and another with other kingbirds in Presidio Park 18-23 Oct (JP, PEL). Up to two Western Kingbirds with Cassin's Kingbirds in Presidio Park 21-30 Oct (JP, JK) and another in Coronado 28 Oct (PEL) should be monitored as they could be attempting to winter locally—Western Kingbird is very rare in California in winter. A Varied Thrush photographed in Carlsbad 4 Oct (MH) evidently established the earliest date for a fall migrant in San Diego County, and is the only one reported. A Gray Catbird was well described from near Descanso 26 Oct (GW).

A hatch-year Red-throated Pipit with American Pipits in the Tijuana River Valley 11-31 Oct (MSa, GMcC) was joined by an adult 14-19 Oct (PEL). However, it was Sprague's Pipits on Fiesta Island in Mission Bay that drew the crowds, with one there 20-21 Oct (PEL) and a second there 30-31 Oct (PEL, PU), these being the first in San Diego County since two at this same location on 19 Dec 1977. Three species of longspurs were together on Fiesta Island, with a Lapland Longspur there 19-27 Oct (MSa), joined by a second 24-25 Oct (SBM) which was probably the one seen nearby at the Model Airplane Field 22-23 Oct (JM); a Chestnut-collared Longspur on Fiesta Island 19-20 Oct (PEL), followed by a second there 24-31 Oct (SH, PU) with two there 31 Oct (PU), and a fourth in the Tijuana River Valley 27 Oct (MSa). The star attraction however, was a hatch-year female McCown's Longspur on Fiesta Island 19-31 Oct (MSa, PU)—the first in San Diego County since 1991.

Even though regular occurring west coast migrant wood-warblers remained scarce, a nice variety of stragglers normally found farther to the east were present, including single Tennessee Warblers at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 23-24 Oct (JK, GMcC) and at the Point

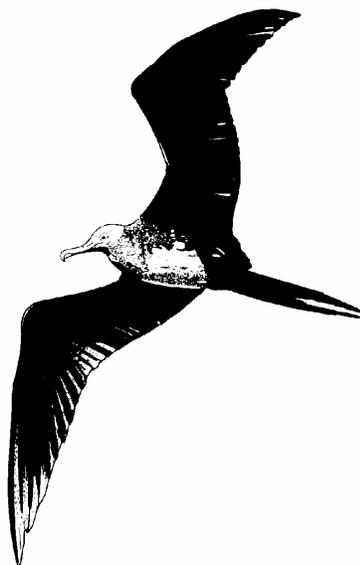
Loma Nazarene University 24 Oct (MJB), a Northern Parula near Mission Bay 18 Oct (PEL), a Chestnut-sided Warbler along the San Diego River in Mission Valley 7-10 Oct (PEL), a female Black-throated Blue Warbler in Sorrento Valley 24-25 Oct (PEL, JK), a male Black-throated Green Warbler near Mission Bay 27 Oct (PEL), a Prairie Warbler in Ocean Beach 7-10 Oct (PEL), single Palm Warblers at widely separated locations in the Tijuana River Valley on 1 Oct (MSa) and 11-14 Oct (MSa), and a third near Cannon Park in Carlsbad 29 Oct (PEL), an Ovenbird near Descanso 7-9 Oct (GW), and a Northern Waterthrush at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas 29-31 Oct (PEL, FW). In addition four Magnolia Warblers were found with single birds in Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 3 Oct (EGK), along the San Diego River in Mission Valley 7 Oct (PEL), near Mission Bay 18-21 Oct (JN) and at Viewpoint Park in Encinitas 24-26 Oct (JMCM, WTH). Two Blackpoll Warblers were far less than expected, with one in Ocean Beach 7 Oct (PEL) and the other banded at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma the same day (*vide* TAB). A long-staying Lucy's Warbler found in Ocean Beach 30 Sep was last seen 21 Oct (PEL). Four of the seven Black-and-white Warblers found this month were believed present last winter, those being a female in residential Pt. Loma 6-23 Oct (JN, PEL), a female and a male in Ocean Beach 8-31 Oct (GMcC, PEL) and 23-31 Oct (PEL), and one near the San Diego Mission in Mission Valley 9 Oct (CH), while one in Westminster Park on Pt. Loma 23 Oct (PAG), another at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 28-30 Oct (FW, CGE) and one at the northern edge of Mission Bay 30 Oct (JK) could also be wintering locally. On the other hand only one of the five American Redstarts reported was known to be one returning from last winter, that being a male at Viewpoint Park in Encinitas 24-27 Oct (JMCM, GMcC), the other four being

single birds at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 6 Oct (MSt), in Ocean Beach 14 Oct (PEL), in residential La Jolla 18 Oct (JK) and near downtown San Diego 26 Oct (EA). The Painted Redstart, back on Pt. Loma (Dudley and Albion) for its 5<sup>th</sup> winter, arrived 9 Oct and was still present 30 Oct (JK).

A Clay-colored Sparrow with other sparrows in Jacumba 31 Oct (PEL) was only the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the County this fall. A Grasshopper Sparrow near Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River Valley 10 Oct (MSa) was at an unusual location. A White-throated Sparrow at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 31 Oct (JN) was the first locally this fall. It is a challenge to differentiate between late migrant and wintering Summer Tanagers at this time of the year. However, single adult males in Ocean Beach 28 Sep-31 Oct (BLC, PEL) and near 6<sup>th</sup> and Laurel in Balboa Park 26 Oct (EGK) are certainly birds present at these locations last winter; in addition a female was in Ocean Beach 14 Oct (PEL) another was in residential Pt. Loma 14-20 Oct (MSa), one (sex unknown) was at Viewpoint Park in Encinitas 24 Oct (JMCM) and a third female was in Tierrasanta 25-30

Oct (JK). A hatch-year male Rose-breasted Grosbeak accompanied by a Black-headed Grosbeak in Presidio Park 24-26 Oct (EGK) may be attempting to winter locally, but an Indigo Bunting at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 27 Oct (PEL) was clearly on the move. The only Baltimore Oriole reported this fall was a female in residential Pt. Loma 10 Oct (DWA). Two Pine Siskins in residential Pt. Loma 24 Oct (MJB) may be the first of many as this species is on the move to the north of San Diego County this fall.

Listed observers: Douglas W. Aguillard, Eitan Altman, Mark J. Billings, Steve Bier, Thomas A. Blackman, Steve Brad, Barbara L. Carlson, Claude G. Edwards, Peter A. Ginsburg, Christine Harvey, Marilyn Hendron, Scarlet Howell, W. Terry Hunefeld, Paul Jorgensen, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Paul E. Lehman, Callie Mack, John Martin, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorrان, Brennan Mulrooney, Jan Nordenberg, Richard Norgaard, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, Jim Roberts, Geoffrey L. Rogers, Kim Roth, Matt Sadowski, Susan E. Smith, Marie Stewart, Bill Tweit, Philip Unitt, Frank Wong, Gail Wynn.





## MEET A MEMBER: MICHELLE MATSON

by BJ Stacey

Michelle was a Physics and Oceanography teacher for 20 years before becoming a High School Counselor. Though she started school as a Biology major, Michelle states “I changed majors, but never lost the love for being outside and learning about nature. “ Before she started birding, her vacations were centered on great diving locations but now they are centered on great birding locations. Michelle has a passion for exploring new places, getting to know people, and simply taking the most she can out of every day. As an example of this, she says “I can be sitting in my house, hear a White-crowned Sparrow sing in the yard, and find joy in the experience.”

*How long have you been birding?*

Not very long compared to many birders, I started Jan 1, 2006 after seeing Winged Migration on DVD.

*Do you have a favorite birding experience that you would like to share?*

I thought my heart would burst while watching a male singing Black-capped Vireo. He was so beautiful as he flew back and forth with nesting material. He was about 10 feet away from me. I have no idea why that bird touched me so, but it did. My most unusual memory was watching a flock of Lesser Goldfinch surround a bright male who had been hit by a car. They all dropped their heads to the ground at the same time and then flew off.

*Do you have a favorite bird species? If so, what is it and why?*

Toss up... Black Skimmer, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Cerulean Warbler. What is there not to love about these birds?

*Are you a lister?? If so, care to share your numbers?*

I stopped listing a while ago (my computer crashed and I hadn't backed it up in a while). I keep records, but not numbers. I am somewhere over 400 for the county, but that is all I know anymore. I think I am a more re-

laxed birder because of it. I still feel the excitement of chasing a bird; however, I am easier going about a miss. Sometimes you win, sometimes the bird wins.

*What is your favorite San Diego birding location and why?*

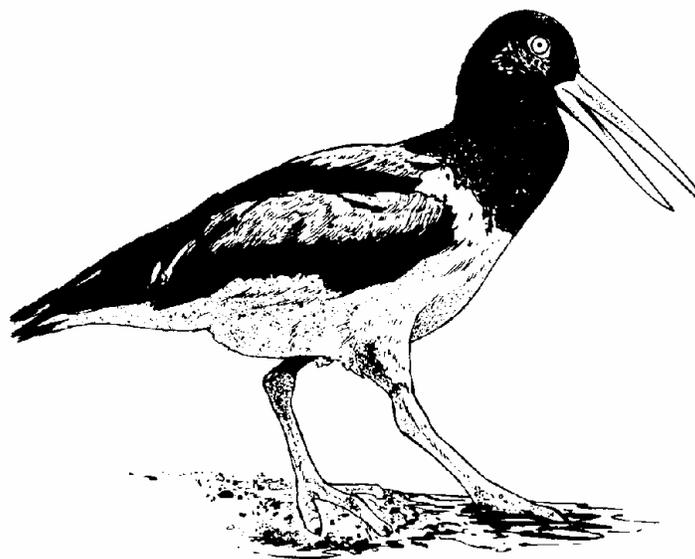
The San Diego Flood Channel. I lived in OB for quite a while and I used to be able to ride my bike there and bird. I could unwind after a hectic day. There is always something entertaining to watch there.

*What is the best advice that you can give to a beginning birder?*

Don't be afraid to ask questions. There is such a tremendous resource of birder knowledge in San Diego. I am still asking questions today, and I find that people are generous with their knowledge and time. It is one of the things I love about birding.

*What is the craziest thing that you have done to see a bird?*

I hitch-hiked across Newfoundland. Crazy... but an incredible experience.



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## JOIN SDFO

Dues for Calendar year: \$25.00, including all renewals. Add \$10.00 for each additional member in same household. **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO SDFO** and mail or give check to Membership Chair: BJ Stacey, 9407 Domer Rd., Santee, CA 92071. For membership information, call BJ at (619) 596-8133.

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