

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

SDFO HOLIDAY PARTY Tuesday, December 13, 2011 Tecolote Nature Center 6:00 – 8:30 PM

The December SDFO monthly meeting will be our annual holiday party, and it will take place on the **SECOND**, not third, Tuesday. (Also note the earlier start time!) SDFO will provide turkey and ham sandwich makings, salads, coffee, and punch. If you have other drinking preferences, please bring (though be aware that alcoholic beverages are not permitted at the Tecolote Nature Center). Feel free to bring a dessert, if you would like. Entertainment will be provided. Our SDFO president, Paul Lehman, will follow the meal with a review of the year's best bird sightings in the county. News about upcoming Christmas Bird Counts can be shared. We will also design a short-but-challenging ID quiz. Photos from some of San Diego's best photographers will be shown in the background throughout eating time. (We ask photographers to bring up to 100 of their best 2011 shots to share. Please put the images in a slideshow format [PowerPoint] with 5-second interval, or feel free to contact Tom Blackman for details.)

Come eat, laugh, and groan with your fellow birders!

All SDFO members and their spouses/significant-others are welcome. If you are not a member, feel free to sign up on the spot!

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, January 17, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., at the Tecolote Nature Center. Program to be announced.

Time to Pay Your 2012 SDFO Dues!

And if you'd like to save \$10.00 on the New Year's Day pelagic trip (see next item), do it now! See the back page for details, or hit up Membership Chair BJ Stacey at the December meeting.

Start 2012 with the SDFO Pelagic Trip

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

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SDFO NEWS (cont.)

Tickets are \$50 the day of the trip. Pre-registration is \$40. Early-bird registration is \$35 through December 8. SDFO members will qualify for an on-board \$10 rebate, resulting in a bargain early-bird price to SDFO members of only \$25 (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. On Wednesday Dave Povey reported that the crew at Fisherman's Landing recently saw of a pod of Orca Killer Whales attacking a Blue Whale near the Coronado Islands. The water was red. You never know what we'll see out there.

FULL DETAILS: <http://socalbirding.com/upcomingtrips/sandiegojan12012.html>

To register, call Point Loma Sportfishing (619) 223-1627. 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 \$10 bill the dock prior to boarding.

We recommend arriving slightly before 7:00 a.m. to allow at least 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 7:40 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 hate leaving people behind, but it happens. 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 <http://socalbirding.com/upcomingtrips/sandiegojan12012.html>

\$10 SDFO MEMBER REBATE: SDFO members who have paid in full for 2012 will – upon request - receive a \$10 cash rebate at the dock resulting in a bargain net-price to SDFO members of only \$25 if you take advantage of the early bird registration. We will have a list of 2012 members onboard. To be eligible for the \$10 rebate, you must be on "paid in full 2012" list. An excuse of "the check is in the mail" will not be sufficient to qualify for the rebate – so send in your dues today. You must be present in person and claim the \$10 rebate at the dock prior to boarding. Alternatively, you may waive the \$10 rebate and know that the \$10 went to a good cause: the SDFO.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, NOVEMBER 2011

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Twenty-two Greater White-fronted Geese at Sweetwater Reservoir 19-30 Nov + (PEL) was one of the largest flocks in San Diego County in recent years. Single Cackling Geese were at the San Diego River mouth 18 Nov (GN), at Sweetwater Reservoir 19-30 Nov (PEL), and on the Aviara Golf course in Carlsbad 20-30 Nov + (BT, SB). At least four Eurasian Wigeon are known in the County, with a male at the San Diego River Flood Control Channel adjacent to Sea World 6 Nov + (GN, JP), two males on the Sweetwater River west of “the 805” 18 Nov + (MSa, PEL), and at Batiquitos Lagoon 29 Nov (SR)—hybrid Eurasian x American Wigeon are known, so observers are asked to consider this possibility when reporting this species. An adult male Long-tailed Duck at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge 11-19 Nov (DDiT) drew much attention. A spectacular sight was the presence of “thousands” of Black-vented Shearwaters off La Jolla at the end of the month (SW)—this species regularly winters along the coast of S. California, but was virtually absent last year. Two Reddish Egrets were still present on south San Diego Bay through 25 Nov (DWA), and an immature was at the Chula Vista Nature Center 13-30 Nov + (GMcC, SR). The two long-staying Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were at the Imperial Beach Sports Park through the end of the month (GMcC). The Wood Stork present at the San Diego Wild Animal Park was found dead on 8 Nov (KR)—this bird was an adult when it arrived with another in the late 1980’s, so clearly lived for more than twenty years.

The presence of **six** Harris’s Hawks together in Jacumba at dawn on 1 Dec (JFG) indicates a small number of these birds are in the area, probably since at least mid-October, but have a habit of “disappearing” during most of the day. A dark-morph Swainson’s Hawk over Rohr Park in Chula Vista 20 Nov (DDiT) was late for a migrant. What may have been the adult Zone-tailed Hawk present off and on at the San Diego Wild Animal Park since 22 July was photographed over Iris Park in Escondido 30 Nov (ELaC). The wintering Pacific Golden-Plover that arrived at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge 14 Aug was still present 15 Nov (MSa). Common Murres continue at Pt. La Jolla in La Jolla, with Stanley Walens reporting seeing some 2000 flying south past there since mid-July—are these birds continuing south into Mexico, or does the number include birds repeatedly passing the point and returning north farther off shore? The only White-winged Doves reported on the coast were one at San Dieguito Lagoon 7 Nov (SB) and another in Coronado 26 Nov + (EC). Short-eared Owls are being seen at dawn and dusk at Fiesta Island in Mission Bay 20 Nov + (GN) the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge 24 Nov + (JK).

An Eastern Phoebe, a rare to casual winter visitor to the County, was at the Dairy Mart Ponds in the Tijuana River Valley 28-29 Nov (RP, EGK). Two Vermilion Flycatchers remained at the east end of Sunset Ave. in the Tijuana River Valley through November (SR). A Tropical Kingbird, also rare to casual in winter, was in the Golden Hill section of Balboa Park 27 Nov (M & PT). The Thick-billed Kingbird present in

Chula Vista since 25 Oct (RN) was still at its favorite place on the lower stretch of Poggi Canyon 23 Nov (AE). A Western Kingbird in Presidio Park 30 Nov (PEL) was an exceptionally late migrant if not attempting to winter locally. A Plumbeous Vireo at Famosa Slough 20 Nov (JP), Santee Lakes in Santee 7-17 Nov (PEL) and another in Del Mar 21 Nov (SES) were all likely wintering locally. A Blue-headed Vireo on San Gorgonio St. on Pt. Loma 20-30 Nov + (PEL) was undoubtedly the same bird present here last winter. Pinyon Jays continue to be seen in the Laguna Mts. through 13 Nov (GN), along with up to 20 at Stonewall Mine in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park 10-22 Nov (SJ, MSa, JK), and remarkably three at only 800 ft. elevation in Bitter Creek Canyon 3 miles west of Yaqui Wells (PP).

A Golden-crowned Kinglet at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 7 Nov (RN) was on the coast where rare. A few Mountain Bluebirds are present inland, especially so around Ramona, but single birds in the Tijuana River Valley 3 Nov (PEL) and along the San Diego River Flood Control Channel adjacent to Sea World 18-19 Nov (JMCM, JK) where rare. A male Varied Thrush at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 7-9 Nov (JW, JP) was the only one reported so far this fall-winter. A Sage Thrasher at Chollas Park in San Diego 24 Nov (TC) was unexpected. A Red-throated Pipit with American Pipits at the east end of Sunset Ave. 21 Nov (LH) may have been the same one present in October having gone unreported for three weeks. The presence of a McCown's Longspur at Fiesta Island in Mission Bay 11-19 Nov (JMCM, GMcC) along with two Lapland Longspurs 15-21 Nov (GN, MSa) suggests we had overlooked this area for pipits and longspurs prior to last fall.

A Northern Parula at Rohr 19-30 Nov + (PEL), and a Chestnut-sided Warbler at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River

Valley 5-13 Nov (GLR, TRS) may both be attempting to winter locally. Single Palm Warblers, rare but of annual occurrence at this time of the year, were at the San Diego River Flood Control Channel adjacent to Sea World 11-30 Nov + (JK MJB), at the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge 19 Nov (SR), at Westminster Park on Pt. Loma 20-30 Nov + (PEL) and in Imperial Beach 23 Nov (AE). A Black-and-white Warbler in Balboa Park 23 Nov (PEL) was in the same area where one spent much of last winter, and another was in the residential area of Pt. Loma 26 Nov (SBM). Following a flurry of sightings in October, the only American Redstarts this month were one at the Bird & Butterfly Garden 11-13 Nov (RN, EGK) and another at the nearby Dairy Mart Ponds 15 Nov (BM). A flashy Painted Redstart at Rohr Park 19-30 Nov + (RP) preformed well for photographers.

A Lark Bunting in Jacumba 5 Nov (PEL) was the second to be found in the County this year. A Grasshopper Sparrow at the San Diego River Flood Control Channel adjacent to Sea World 21-23 Nov (JMCM, GN) was at an unexpected locality. Six White-throated Sparrows were present on the coast, with single birds at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 29 Oct-27 Nov (GN), San Elijo Lagoon 14 Nov (JP), San Dieguito Park 16 Nov (JS), Solana Beach 19 Nov (JK), the Nazarene University on Pt. Loma 20-30 Nov + (PEL), in residential La Jolla 19-20 Nov (JF) and in residential Del Mar 21 Nov (SES), along with one in the desert at Borrego Springs 24 Nov (SES).

A Hepatic Tanager, present for its 2nd winter, was at the Marston House in Balboa Park 30 Oct-30 Nov + (SES, DJ), and the male at the Imperial Beach Sports Park returned on 12 Nov (MSt) to spend its 6th winter. At least 15 Summer Tanagers were reported from locations in Carlsbad south along the coast to the Tijuana River Valley—a good start for the winter. Single Scarlet

Tanagers at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 7 Nov (GMcC) and 27 Nov (GN) and in the western part of Balboa Park 23-30 Nov + (PEL, AR), added to the four found in October brings the total in the County this fall to a remarkable seven. A male Lazuli Bunting frequenting a feeder near Rancho Bernardo 6-11 Nov (JN) provides one of a very few November records in the whole of California. The only Orchard Oriole was a female on Leon Ave. in Nestor 19 Nov (JK). However, three Baltimore Orioles, all probably attempting to winter locally, were known present with single birds at Rohr Park 19-30 Nov + (PEL), Sunnyslope Park in Nestor 26 Nov (MSt), and Presidio Park in San Diego 30 Nov (PEL).

Listed observers: Douglas W. Aguilard, Mark J. Billings, Steve Brad, Elizabeth

Copper, Tim Cooper, Dean DiTommaso, Andrew Engillis, John Flaskerud, John F. Green, Laurens Halsey, Diana Johnson, Steve Jorgensen, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Erik LaCoste, Paul E. Lehman, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Brennan Mulrooney, Sara B. Myers, Jan Nordenberg, Richard Norgaard, Gary Nunn, Pam Palette, Jim Pea, Rick Phillips, Andy Rathbone, Steve Ritt, Kim Roth, Geoffrey L. Rogers, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Susan E. Smith, BJ Stacy, Mark Stratton (MSt), Trent R. Stanley, Joe Sweeney, Millie and Peter Thomas, Bill Thompson, Stanley Walens and Joseph Worley.

Literature Cited:

Unitt, Philip. 2004. *San Diego County Bird Atlas*. Proc. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist. 39. San Diego Nat. Hist. Mus., San Diego.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE

Saturday, Dec. 17. **San Diego**
Phil Unitt punitt@sdnhm.org

Sunday, Dec. 18. **Anza-Borrego**
Bob Theriault roberttheriault@juno.com

Monday, Dec. 19. **Lake Henshaw**
Gretchen Cummings gretchen.bc@sbcglobal.net

Tuesday, Dec. 20 **Salton Sea**
Oscar Johnson henicorhina@yahoo.com

Monday, Dec. 26. **Oceanside**
Terry Hunefeld thunefeld@gmail.com

Saturday, Dec. 31 **Escondido**
Ken Weaver gmatcatcher@sbcglobal.net

Monday, Jan. 2 **Rancho Santa Fe**
Robert Patton rpatton@san.rr.com



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Your contributions to *The Skimmer* are appreciated. Submit articles and notices by the first of the month of publication by mail to John Walters, 5552 Horse Ridge Way, Bonita, CA 91902, or by e-mail to john-walters@cox.net

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