

# The **SKIMMER**



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## **SDFO NEWS**

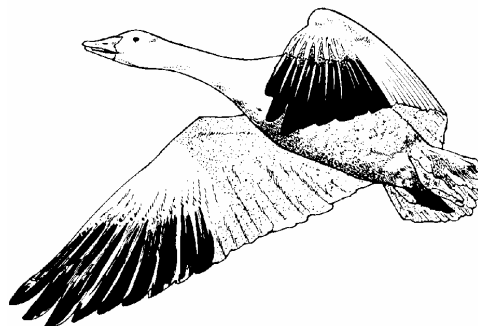
### **Monthly Meeting**

Tuesday, May 17, at 7:00 p.m., at the Tecolote Nature Center, at the east end of Tecolote Road, off I-5.

Program: Ned Brinkley will discuss "Miss Hathaway and Her Kind: Images of birders in U.S. popular culture." From the first days of cinema to the latest television sit-com, birders have been on-screen since the beginning of moving pictures. But how do we look? What sort of roles, appearances, and plot functions do birders have, and how might these influence the perception of birders (and, by extension, bird conservation) in U.S. culture generally? Ned Brinkley, formerly a professor of literature and film studies at University of Virginia, has spent a decade researching these questions and presents his thoughts on the subject, with extensive clips of media from 1930 through 2005. We guarantee an evening with at least a few laughs and groans.

Ned Brinkley, current editor of *North American Birds* journal and author of countless birding articles and books (including the *National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, is a vagabond-birder who changes employment more often than wardrobes, having worked as bartender, paperboy, candy maker, professor, factory manager, librarian, b&b innkeeper, birding guide, research associate, author, and shoe critic. Currently in recovery for gadfly petrel addiction, he lives in Cape Charles, Virginia, with a beagle and a feral cat.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, June 21, same time, same place. Annual election of SDFO officers. Program to be announced.



## SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, APRIL 2011

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

Participants in the "America's Birdiest County" competition recorded 267 species Apr 23-25. A Masked/Nazca Booby and a Curlew Sandpiper had to be the most unusual birds found, but I have questions as to the validity of Black Swift being on the list. The immature **Masked/Nazca Booby** seen from Point La Jolla 25 Apr (SW, BR) provides the 3rd record for this "either/or" complex in San Diego County, and the 11th in California--characters used to separate immatures of these two species have yet to be determined. It is of interest that San Diego County's only Masked Booby was a near adult at Pt. La Jolla 30 Dec 2001-10 Jan 2002 (Unitt 2003). A **Curlew Sandpiper** photographed at the J Street Marina in Chula Vista 24 Apr (JML) was later relocated within the closed-to-the-public South Bay Saltworks where still present 27 Apr (RTP, MS)--this is the 5<sup>th</sup> Curlew Sandpiper to be found in San Diego County, but the first in spring.

An impressive **271** Red-throated Loons off North Island Naval Air Station east of Zuniga Point 16 Apr (MS) leaves all previous high counts in the dust. A wintering adult Reddish Egret remained at the Sweetwater River mouth through 9 Apr (MS), a second-year bird in the San Diego River Flood Control Channel 7-19 Apr (JP, PEL) was joined by an adult 17-19 Apr (JK, PEL), and a second-year bird was at the J Street Marina in Chula Vista 24 Apr (DWA). At least one of the long-staying adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons in Imperial Beach was still present 23 Apr (GMCC), and an adult at Famosa Slough was probably a bird

seen here and in the adjacent San Diego River Flood Control Channel, April-July of the past five years.

A Harris's Hawk in Borrego Springs 11-12 Apr (WTH), two near Jacumba 18-28 Apr (TC, SR), the one near Jamul 22 Mar-21 Apr (*fide* SBM) and another near Boulevard last month, along with three elsewhere in southeastern California, suggest a movement of these birds from the Baja California Peninsula northward into southern California. A migrant Zone-tailed Hawk was at Borrego Springs 11 Apr (HC). A Merlin on Otay Mesa 25 Apr (BM) was late, missing the latest date for the County by only one day--see Unitt 2004.

The Pacific Golden-Plover at the Tijuana River mouth since 26 Aug was still present 28 Apr (MS), another at San Dieguito Lagoon 8 Apr (BF) was probably a migrant. A Solitary Sandpiper, much rarer in spring than in fall, was seen at two different locations in Borrego Springs on 11 and 13 Apr (PA, WTH). A Whimbrel near Escondido 5 Apr (PEL) was inland where exceptionally rare, but with most of the few recorded in spring in April--at this time of year (March and April) large numbers migrate through the Salton Sink, then on northward, possibly through the Antelope Valley, avoiding most of inland San Diego County. Two breeding-plumage Franklin's Gulls were at the J Street Marina in Chula Vista 8 Apr (JP) with what may have been one from the previous day there 9 Apr (ME). A late-staying Thayer's Gull was at the San Diego River mouth 19 Apr (PEL). A Glaucous Gull photographed near the San Mateo Creek mouth

23 Apr (DB) was unusually late, and a second-year bird rather than the more expected first-year bird. The earliest of the summering Least Terns were seven at the Santa Margarita River mouth 13 Apr (CMM), matching the expected arrival date published in Unitt (2004).

A few of our wintering "rarities" remained well into April, with the Thick-billed Kingbird found in Chula Vista 16 Dec still present 23 Apr (GMcC), the male American Redstart known present at Viewpoint Park in Encinitas since 24 Oct still there 17 Apr (EGK) and the male at the San Diego Zoo since 18 Dec still there 24 Apr (TRS); the Ovenbird found at West Hills Park in Claremont 20 Feb was last seen 21 Apr (EGK) when in full song, and the male Summer Tanager in n. Balboa Park since 2 Nov remaining through the very late date of 26 Apr (WL). A Plumbeous Vireo at San Elijo Lagoon 19 Apr (PAG) may have wintered nearby: wintering birds in s. California are known to remain to the third week of April--e.g. one at a private residence near El Centro almost daily between 14 Oct 2005 and 20 Apr 2006.

April saw the earliest Vaux's Swift (Scripps Ranch 9 Apr--GG), Western Wood-Pewee (Point Loma 20 Apr--EGK), Ash-throated Flycatcher (Old Mission Dam 7 Apr--EGK), Gray Vireo (Buckman Springs 2 Apr--EGK), Swainson's Thrush (Del Mar 28 Apr--SES), Nashville Warbler (Kitchen Creek 2 Apr--EGK), Yellow Warbler (Old Mission Dam 6 Apr--EGK), Yellow-breasted Chat (Old Mission Dam 13 Apr--MB), Blue Grosbeak (Old Mission Dam 15 Apr--MS) and Lazuli Bunting (Old Mission Dam 7 Apr--EGK) in the County this spring/summer. However, numbers of Calliope Hummingbirds were far below expected, and

landbird migration was in general lackluster to poor during the first three weeks of April.

Three Black Swifts over Del Mar 30 Apr (JMCM) establish one of the earliest dated for arrival in California. A singing male Vermilion Flycatcher in Jacumba 23 Apr (JK) suggests the possibility of nesting locally. A pair of Oak Titmouses at a nest in Jacumba 23 Apr (PEL) extends the breeding range for this species in San Diego to the extreme southeast corner of the County. A male Northern Parula in Jacumba 23 Apr (JK), a Black-and-white Warbler at San Elijo Lagoon 19-22 Apr (PAG), a male Hooded Warbler at the Bird & Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 30 Apr (EC), and a male Baltimore Oriole in the residential area of Pt. Loma 22-25 Apr (PEL) were all four probably early spring vagrants. Two Black-chinned Sparrows banded on Pt. Loma 27 Apr (*vide* JW) were on the immediate coast where rare. One or two Yellow-headed Blackbirds associating with nesting Tricolored Blackbirds in Jacumba 23 Apr (PEL) should be monitored--nesting is a possibility.

Listed observers: Paulette Ache, Douglas W. Aguiard, David Batsler, Michael Beeve, Hal Cohen, Tim Cooper, Elizabeth Copper, Michael Evans, Peter A. Ginsburg, Gary Grantham, W. Terry Hunefeld, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Jeri M. Langham, Paul E. Lehman, Wendy Lemlin, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Carol M. Manning, Brennan Mulroony, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pea, Bruce Rideout, Steve Ritt, Matt Sadowski, Susan E. Smith, Trent R. Stanley, Mark Stratton, Stanley Walens, Joe 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.

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