

The **SKIMMER**



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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 21, at 7:00 p.m., at the Tecolote Nature Center, at the east end of Tecolote Road, off I-5.

Annual SDFO Business Meeting and Election of Officers for 2011-2012.

Our current officers have all agreed to serve for an additional year:

Paul Lehman, President

Tom Blackman, Vice-President

Michelle Matson, Secretary

Sara Mayers, Treasurer

BJ Stacey, Membership Chair

Any additional candidates can be nominated from the floor. If you would like to serve, we encourage you to step forward, as many of our officers would be delighted to retire.

Program: Douglas Altshuler will discuss “Studying the Mechanics of Flight.”

One of the most remarkable adaptations in animals is the ability to fly. Birds, bats and insects are among the most successful of terrestrial organisms, and their colonization of diverse habitats and ecological roles provides a rich context for studies of animal behavior and ecology. The study of how animals fly is an intrinsically multidisciplinary field that involves aspects of aerodynamics, physiology, and neuroscience. In my laboratory, we aim to integrate approaches ranging from laboratory experiments to evolutionary comparisons because understanding the mechanisms of flight control also requires understanding the historical forces that have shaped it.

Doug Altshuler began his academic career studying the history of religion with a special emphasis on the Indian subcontinent. He spent his junior year abroad at the University of Delhi and graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1992. At the very end of his undergraduate studies, Doug took a field course in tropical biology and realized that although biology poses simpler questions than religion, it also provides more tractable answers. He was awarded an M.S. in biology from Purdue University in 1994 and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas in 2001. He joined the faculty at UC Riverside in 2006 as an assistant professor of biology, where he studies the integrative biology of animal flight.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, July 19, same time, same place. Peter Ginsburg will talk about Colombia.

MEET A MEMBER: KENNY KIMBROUGH

by BJ Stacey



Kenny Kimbrough at Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida

Kenny Kimbrough is 16 years old and goes to Valhalla High School, where he plays soccer, tennis, and runs cross country. He has two sisters, Allison and Marilyn. Both of his parents work at SDSU and teach in the geology department there. His dad, Dave, is a common companion on Kenny's birding trips.

Kenny has been to a few birding camps in the past few years to Colorado, southeastern Arizona, New Jersey, and even here in San Diego. Each time "I have been generously sponsored by the ABA or the Palomar Audubon Society," Kenny says. "My latest birding adventure was to central and southern Florida this spring."

How long have you been birding?

I have been birding since the 4th grade when my teacher got me interested after taking us to see the birds at a local park. I later went to Australia and got a bird book, then started to pick it up there too.

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

My favorite birding experience was in Madera Canyon in southeast Arizona. It was when two Elegant Trogons were calling and flying around my dad and me. I had really bad views of one earlier and this one was just full on perching right in front of us about 10 yards away. Probably one of the most amazing birds I have seen too.

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

I don't have a favorite bird species. There are too many to choose from!

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

I do list and my ABA life list is exactly 540 birds.

What is your favorite San Diego birding location and why?

My favorite birding location in San Diego is Kitchen Creek Road by far. I just love the good mix of desert and sage scrub birds that you can see there. Every time I'm there, there's always an abundance of birds calling and moving around.

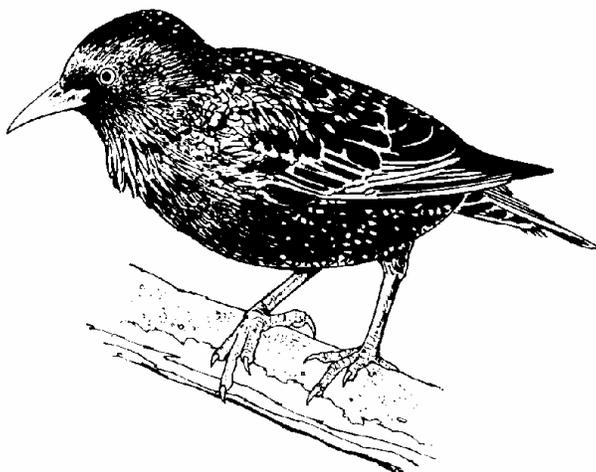
What is the best advice that you can give to a beginning birder?

The best advice I can give is just to

keep staying active and birding around town. I think the fastest way to learn is to get out there and gain field experience.

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

The craziest thing I have done to see a bird was to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and drive to the Salton Sea to see the Bean Goose. But once we observed the bird for about 20 minutes we had to drive straight back to San Diego so I could make it to school in time since it was a Monday!



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MAY 2011

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

A boat trip exploring San Diego County waters on 14 May produced at least five Black-footed Albatrosses, with four behind the boat on two occasions (WTH), a Flesh-footed Shearwater at the Nine-Mile Bank (GMcC), and a South Polar Skua about 20 miles west of Point Loma (WTH). Single Brown Boobies in San Diego County waters on 28 and 30 May (WTH) add to the ever-increasing number recorded north of the Coronados Islands.

A “booming” American Bittern at Dairy Mart Pond in the Tijuana River Valley 13

May (EGK) suggests nesting at that location—the lower stretch of Las Flores Creek is the only site in San Diego County where nesting has been confirmed (Unitt 2004). An adult Tricolored Heron at San Elijo Lagoon 9-15 May (LC, SB) was the first in the County since the winter of 2007-2008, and the only one in California since one in Ventura County 7-21 May 2009. Three adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were still present in Imperial Beach 30 May (MSt), two adults frequenting the area of Famosa Slough/Sea World since 28 Apr (JP) are probably nesting locally, and a second-year bird has been seen in Del Mar since 6 May (PEL, EW, SB).

A Harris’s Hawk in the McCain Val-

ley near Boulevard 5-9 May (SR) adds to the number believed to have moved north into southern California from the Baja California



Flesh-footed Shearwater at Nine-Mile Bank. Photo by BJ Stacey.

Peninsula, while the two found in Jacumba 18 Apr were still present 22 May (GMcC), and the one found near Jamul 22 Mar was seen again 26 May (*fide* SBM).

An adult Franklin’s Gull one mile off Pt. Loma 6 May (PAG) and another adult at Lower Otay Lake 7 May (PEL) were obvious spring migrants. A Black Tern at the Nine-Mile Bank off San Diego 14 May (BM) and another at the Chula Vista Wildlife Preserve 31 May (MSa) provided the only records of spring migrants in the County this year.

Every year one or two White-winged Doves reach the coast in spring, with single birds at Mt. Soledad in La Jolla 3 May (PEL), Mission Trails Park near Santee 6 May (MP) and on Pt. Loma 21 May (JR,

MSt) this year. As is probably the case every year, Black Swifts pass through San Diego County in May, with most going undetected--reports this spring include three together at Tierrasanta 11-12 May (JK), a total of seven (two photographed) at Mt. Soledad in La Jolla on four days between 18 and 27 May (PEL, JS, MMcC, AR) and one photographed along the lower portion of Kitchen Creek Road 22 May (EGK).

A pair of Vermilion Flycatchers in Jacumba after 23 Apr (JK, PEL) and another at the Admiral Baker Golf Course in Mission Valley 31 May (AA) provide new nesting localities in the County, and a young male at Oak Hill Cemetery in Escondido 15 May (DF) could be summering locally. The presence of at least two Mountain Chickadees in Guajome Regional Park 28 May (DM) suggests nesting at this low elevation locality. A pair of Oak Titmouses at a nest in Jacumba 23 Apr (PEL) establishes the southeastern most breeding locality in San Diego County. A female Varied Thrush at the Point Loma Nazarene University 8 May (DDiT) was the only one reported in the County this year, and on an unusually late date.

In general the passage of spring land-bird migrants through the County was uneventful, with peak numbers for most species about a week later than expected, and some species such as Western Tanagers still present in numbers at the end of the month. Very few passerines that normally migrate well to the east of California reached San Diego County this spring, but did include a male Tennessee Warbler photographed at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma 27 May (MSt), a singing Northern Parula at Poinsettia Park in Carlsbad 1-2 May (EK, PAG) and another at the University of California in La Jolla 6 May (JK), a male Black-and-white Warbler at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma 8 May (EGK), a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Tierrasanta 31

May (JK) and a male Indigo Bunting in Jacumba 12 May (ML), these five species being found in small numbers in California each spring. However, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma 25 May (JN) provides only the 5th to be found in San Diego County at this time of the year.

A Vesper Sparrow in Borrego Springs 18 May (WTH) establishes by far the latest date for this species in San Diego County--see Unitt (2004). A rather late Lincoln's Sparrow was in the residential area of Pt. Loma 9 May (PEL); another at the upper end of Agua Dulce Creek in the Laguna Mountains 21-31 May (GLR) was no doubt the same territorial male present here in June 2010, and likely the same bird here in June 2005 (*North American Birds* 59:656). A White-throated Sparrow at Cabrillo National Monument on Pt. Loma 1 May (KK) was unusually late--the latest being one on Pt. Loma 12 May 1988 (Unitt 2004).

Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Lindo Lake in Lakeside 3 May (BD), at the Bird and Butterfly Garden in the Tijuana River Valley 4 May (PM) and on Ream Field in Imperial Beach 9 May (PEL) are best considered migrants, but at least one in Jacumba 23 Apr-7 May (PEL) and another in Campo 13 May (SR) were in the general area of suspected nesting sites -- see Unitt (2004).

Listed observers: Arlene Arnold, Steve Brad, Lori Chamberlain, Bill Denton, Dean Di-Tommaso, David Furseth, Peter A. Ginsburg, W. Terry Hunefeld, Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Eric Kershner, Kenny Kimbrough, Mark Lee, Paul E. Lehman, Peggy Marlow, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie, Mike McClintock, Dominik Mosur, Brennan Mulrooney, Jan Nordenberg, Robert T. Patton, Miles Pitcairn, Jim Pea, Anne Reilly, Steve Ritt, Jim Roberts, Geoffrey L. Rogers, Matt Sadowski, Mark Stratton, Joe Sweeney, Elsa Weber.

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