

The **SKIMMER**



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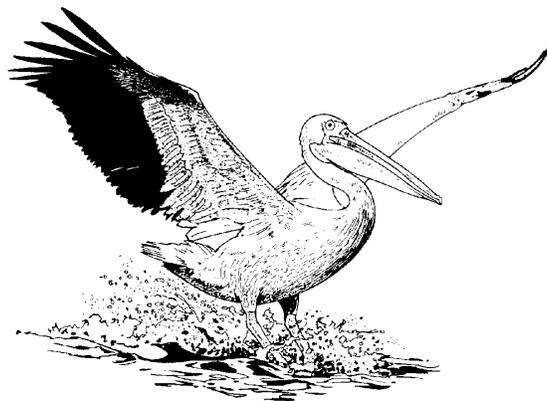
SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

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

Program: Bruce Rideout will speak on the topic, “Translocation of the Rimatara Lory: Managing Disease Risks.” Bruce is a pathologist and disease investigation specialist for the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park, where he is now head of the Wildlife Disease Laboratories. He received his D.V.M. and Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis, completed a pathology residency at the National Zoo in Washington D.C., and is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists. He is also a Research Fellow of The Peregrine Fund and participates in a variety of conservation efforts, including recovery programs for California condors, desert tortoises, and Hawaiian forest birds. His research focuses primarily on the infectious diseases of birds, avian embryo pathology, and disease risk assessments for reintroduction programs.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday, October 18, same time, same place. Program: Lori Hargroves will speak on a topic to be announced.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, AUGUST 2011

Compiled by Guy McCaskie

The long-staying Greater White-fronted Goose at Lake Miramar, and the equally long-staying Cackling Goose at the nearby Scripps Ranch Library were both still associating with domestic waterfowl at these locations at the end of August (JK).

Three Northern Fulmars at the 9-Mile Bank west of Pt. Loma 7 Aug (PEL) probably summered locally--wintering birds from the north do not normally reach Southern California waters until mid to late October. Observers on the double overnight pelagic trip aboard the *Grande* recorded a Wilson's Storm-Petrel 17.5 nm west of Pt. Loma 15 Aug (PEL)--only the 7th recorded in San Diego County waters. Only one Least Storm-Petrel could be found in a raft of about 1500 Black Storm-Petrels at the 9-Mile Bank 15 Aug (MSa)--a far cry from the numbers off San Diego at this time last year.

Two adult Reddish Egrets remained on south San Diego Bay through August (GMcC)--the normal range of this species has now expanded northward to include coastal San Diego and Orange Counties. At least two adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were still present in Imperial Beach at the end of August (MSt), but the birds around Famosa Slough/Sea World disappeared in August, with the last seen near Famosa Slough 22 Aug (JPe). The pair of Harris's Hawks at Jacumba were with a flying "chick" out of the nest 28 Aug (SS).

A Pacific Golden-Plover returned to the Tijuana River mouth 14 Aug (JPa) for yet another winter. A Semipalmated Plover, scarce away from the coast, was at Lake Henshaw 6 Aug (JK). Two close to "pure"

American Oystercatchers were with an obvious hybrid American x Black Oystercatcher and a Black Oystercatcher at Ballast Point on Pt. Loma 15 Aug (PEL). A Solitary Sandpiper was at the pump station in Sorrento Valley 9-13 Aug (JMCM), and up to three were at Lindo Lake in Lakeside 22 Aug through the end of the month (EGK). The only Semipalmated Sandpiper reported was a juvenile on south San Diego Bay at the north end of 7th street in Imperial Beach 8 Aug (PEL). At least six juvenile Baird's Sandpipers were found, with single birds at the San Diego River mouth 6-7 Aug (GN) and 24 Aug (MSt), at the north end of 7th Street in Imperial Beach 6-7 Aug (PEL) and 13 Aug (GN), within the area of the saltworks on San Diego Bay 7 Aug (RTP), and two together inland at Sweetwater Reservoir 27 Aug (JK).

Jaegers were reported seen from shore in La Jolla and at the Tijuana River mouth through much of August, but the most unusual was an adult Long-tailed Jaeger photographed flying south from San Diego Bay over Imperial Beach 3 Aug (JPa). An early juvenile Sabine's Gull was with three adults at the 9-Mile Bank off Pt. Loma 7 Aug (PEL). Totally unexpected was a Xantus's Murrelet frequenting the Otay River in Imperial Beach 9-13 Aug (MSa)--there appear to be only one or two previous records for this small alcid at such "inland" locations.

A Vermilion Flycatcher photographed at the north end of 13th Street in Imperial Beach 21 Aug (M & PT) was far from any known nesting locality so presumed to be an early fall migrant. A Red-breasted Nuthatch in Imperial Beach 29 Aug (SY) was

clearly a migrant--could this be the first of some moving out of the mountains into the coastal lowlands this fall? A Northern Waterthrush hit a window at the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park 29 Aug (BR: specimen at SDNHM). A Large-billed (Savannah) Sparrow at south San Diego Bay 7 Aug (RTP) was the earliest reported this fall. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak photographed at San Elijo Lagoon 13 Aug (JR) may have summered locally, possibly the male present here 6-7 July. The appearance of a drab green Painted Bunting at the Community Gardens in the Tijuana River Valley 20 Aug (PEL) coincided with an influx of Painted Buntings

into southeastern Arizona. A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at south San Diego Bay 10 Aug (RTP)--small numbers of this species reach the coast every fall.

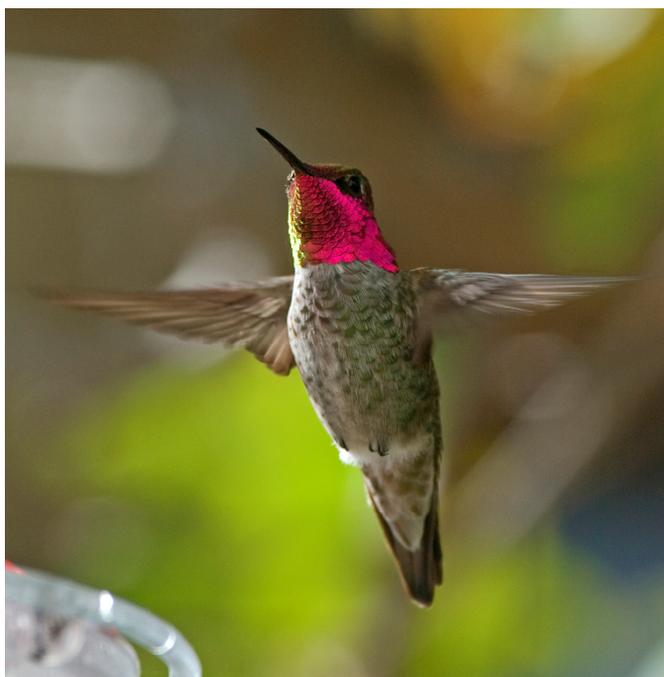
Listed observers: Eric G. Kallen, Jay Keller, Paul E. Lehman, Guy McCaskie, Jimmy McMorran, Gary Nunn, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Jim Pea, Bruce Rideout, Janet Roxzburn, Matt Sadowski, Steve Sosensky, Mark Stratton, Millie and Peter Thomas, Susan Yamagata.

San Diego Natural History Museum (SDNHM).

NEW STUDY SHOWS HOW HUMMINGBIRDS “SING” WITH THEIR TAIL FEATHERS

In a paper published in the journal *Science* this week, Christopher Clark *et al.* examine the courtship sounds produced during high-speed aerial maneuvers by Anna’s Hummingbird and 13 other hummingbird species. He took individual outer tail feathers and placed them in a wind tunnel, using a Doppler vibrometer (an instrument used in the aerospace industry to study destructive vibrations in critical parts) to study the feathers’ behavior at various wind speeds. At typical diving speeds of 7 to 20 meters per second, the feathers vibrated to produce the characteristic “chirp” so often heard in Anna’s Hummingbird courtship flights. The bird can turn the sound on or off by rotating the feather in or out of the air stream. The adjacent tail feather acts as an amplifier, increasing the volume of the sound by up to 14 decibels. Other hummingbirds, including Allen’s, Costa’s, and Black-chinned, also pro-

duce similar, if less noticeable sounds. [Watch a video in which Clark explains his findings and plays sounds made by the birds' tail feathers.](#)



Anna's Hummingbird “sings” with its tail. Photo by Jeanie Anderson.

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