The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, May 16, at 6:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting, using the Zoom app, which you can download beforehand. Members will receive an email invitation with directions to click on a link, which will open a window in the Zoom app, and you can join the meeting. If you have never used Zoom before, you will be asked to download the application for Zoom. You do NOT need to "sign up" for Zoom, just download the application. It is best to use a desktop or laptop computer, as their larger screen is preferable to a phone or notepad device.

Program: Patricia Simpson will discuss "Attracting Birds to Your Yard with Native Plants"

Patricia is a Vegetation Technician at Cabrillo National Monument, where she runs the native nursery. She specializes in habitat restoration, which includes plant identification, seed collection and storage, and plant propagation, installation, and maintenance. Patricia is also passionate about San Diego's terrestrial invertebrates and leads a group of volunteers for a citizen science project which aims to catalogue native bees and flowering plants in various sections of the park from March to September (study supervised by Keng-Lou James Hung). Prior to working at Cabrillo National Monument, she worked and volunteered with Project Wildlife, where she specialized in pre-release rehabilitation of insectivorous birds (and other specialty birds) and squirrels for 9 years.

Next month's meeting: June 20, same time, same place. Our annual business meeting and election of club officers for 2023-24. Program: "Wader Quest," by Rick Simpson.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, APRIL 2023

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

San Diego County's second-ever Hudsonian Godwit turned up at drawn-down Lake Hodges from 25 Apr-1 May (SL). This bird appeared a month earlier than San Diego's first bird, at the San Diego River mouth and Mission Beach in late May 2019. Most spring records in California are from May. A Pigeon Guillemot at La Jolla Cove from 3-5 Apr (PEL) was especially unusual because it lingered for several days and was unusually early. Most records are of fly-bys between mid-May and early July (especially in June). Perhaps it was the same unseasonal individual that was seen swimming in the Cove on 17 Jan? A Tufted Puffin was photographed only 3-1/4 mi. off Mission Bay on 2 Apr (BB, NS), the second report this year of this casual species. The adult Wood Stork returned for a spring visit to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park near Escondido for the fourth year in a row from 20-23 Apr (EL), and what was presumably the same individual also made a sizeable jaunt over to Lindo Lake from 24-26 Apr (AD). A Red-footed Booby was 3.4 mi. off Pt. Loma on 15 Apr (JTS, ND). A Lark Bunting in Jacumba on 22 Apr (PEL) fit the pattern of spring occurrences inland. And a long-staying, singing male Hooded Warbler was along the edge of Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma from 24 Apr-1 May+ (PEL).

A male Black-throated Green Warbler was present in Chollas Heights from 2 -16 Apr (BW). This bird very likely wintered locally, as almost all spring passerine vagrants are typically found between the

San Diego County's second Hudsonian Godwit was an apparent first-year female present at Lake Hodges from 25 Apr-1 May, here with a muddy face. *Photo by Tsaiwei Olee*

This adult Word Stork at Lindo Lake from 24-26 Apr, where seen carrying sticks, was very likely the same individual that also frequented the San Diego Zoo Wild Animal Park to the north, for its fourth spring. *Photo by Jonathan Casanova*

Hooded Warblers average about one record per spring. This singing male was along the edge of Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery from 24 Apr-1 May+. *Photo by Nancy Christensen*

This male Black-throated Green Warbler at Chollas Heights from 2-16 Apr (here 2 Apr) had likely wintered locally. Casual spring vagrants are not typically found in California until May or early June. *Photo by Barbara Wise*

end of April and mid-June. The same is true of the Swamp Sparrow at Santee Lakes on 4 April (BM) and the Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Vista on 5 Apr (EM). A fair number of our known wintering rarities each year remain well into April, some into late April. This year, for example, lingerers included Tropical Kingbird at Robb Field through 12 Apr (v.obs); Plumbeous Vireos in Loma Portal through 22 Apr (MHa) and at SDSU through 21 Apr (NB), plus new birds in Carlsbad (PLa) and San Clemente Cyn. (JR) on 10 Apr and at Santee Lakes on 18 Apr (GZ); Swamp Sparrow at Famosa Slough through 10 Apr (IS); Green-tailed Towhees at Lake Murray through 13 Apr (MS) and in University City through 16 Apr (BSp); and Orchard Oriole at Crown Pt. through 11 Apr (RC). The Northern Waterthrush remained at Dairy Mart ponds through 8 Apr (JTS, NG). Single Black-and-white Warblers were at Harry Griffen Regional Park through 16 Apr (CAM), at the Bird & Butterfly Garden through 19 Apr (v.obs), in Carlsbad on 22 Apr (TG), in Presidio Park 23 Apr (DW), at Batiquitos Lagoon 29 Apr (SBe), and at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 30 Apr (NT); only the last bird is almost certainly a spring migrant. A Tennessee Warbler in Carlsbad remained through 18 Apr (TG); an American Redstart near Montgomery Field was still present 23 Apr (PEL); a Northern Parula was in University City through 6 Apr (BSp, JR); a Chestnut-sided Warbler in Mission Valley was last seen 28 Apr (LS); and several wintering Summer Tanagers remained through mid-Apr (v.obs). Up to two singing Nelson's Sparrows were at San Elijo Lagoon from 26 Apr-1 May+ (JMc) and presumably wintered there. These follow a similar late April-early May individual in 2019. Wintering Nelson's in their regular range often remain as late as May. A female Hepatic Tanager returning for its second year to San Dieguito County Park went unreported since late October until seen again between 24 Mar-14 Apr (PGN).

After going A.W.O.L. since the beginning of February, the Little Stint at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works was refound on 19 Apr when in partial alternate plumage (MS). Other lingering winter rarities included the Long-tailed Duck on Mission Bay through 28 Apr (m.obs), the returning Red-necked Grebe near the mouth of San Diego Bay through 11

Every year, a fair number of wintering landbird rarities remain into April, some to late April. This male American Redstart near Montgomery Field was still present 23 Apr (here 22 Apr, singing). *Photo by Larry Edwards*

Apr (PEL, M&TR), a White-winged Dove in Poinsettia Park through 11 Apr (TG), the duo of Inca Doves at Borrego Springs to at least 8 Apr (MW), and up to two Pacific Golden-Plovers at the Tijuana R. mouth through 1 Apr (RTP) and one at the Salt Works through 16 Apr (PEL). Up to two Neotropic Cormorants remained at both the Safari Park through 28 Apr+ (v.obs) and at Lake Murray through 30 Apr+ (MS). New Neotropics were up to two at Famosa Slough and the adjoining San Diego River channel from 10-30 Apr+ (M&TR, NG) and singles in Borrego Springs on 14 Apr (PA), at Santee Lakes from 21-23 Apr (CMs), and at Sweetwater Reservoir from 28-30 Apr (BM). Single Zone-tailed Hawks lingered near Ramona through 5 Apr (BM) and slightly late at the Safari Park through 21 Apr (GV), as did the small number of semi-resident Harris's Hawks at both Shelter Valley and Jacumba, which were still present 24 Apr and 1 May, respectively (v.obs). Wintering Lewis's Woodpeckers regularly linger well into April, and this year's coastal bird at Santee Lakes was still present 2 May (m.obs). A wintering lowland Brown Creeper at Marston House in Balboa Park remained late through 7 Apr (NF, JB).

On the other hand, some rare spring vagrant species found already in latter April could be early migrants that wintered perhaps in northwest Mexico, although they could also just as easily be locally wintering birds that just shifted slightly and were finally discovered. Examples of these occurrences included a Clay-colored Sparrow at Lake Murray on 16 Apr (MS), a Tennessee Warbler in Mission Valley on 16 April (IS), and single Palm Warblers at the Dairy Mart Ponds on 16 Apr (ARa) and on nearby Spooners Mesa on 22 Apr (DO).

Following the Greater White-fronted Goose invasion of 2022-2023, several singles and small flocks remained into early Apr (v.obs), with a high of 17 still in Nestor on 5 Apr (v.obs) and a group of four lingering in the Batiquitos area through 14 Apr (v.obs). The notable influx of Black-legged Kittiwakes during February fizzled after early March, except for one seen at La Jolla on 5 Apr (CMw). Following this winter's American Robin infestation, numbers dropped off substantially beginning in late February and early March, with a few mid-sized flocks to late

In California, Summer Tanagers are only very rarely noted at seed and suet feeders, but this young male in Vista from Jan-Apr (here 3 Apr) preferred just that. *Photo by Sonja Beeve*

Up to two Nelson's Sparrows, at least one singing, at San Elijo Lagoon from 26 Apr-1 May+ had almost certainly wintered at that site. *Photo by Max Leibowitz*

March, but only very small numbers to the beginning of April. Lingering migrant-types were at Vallecito on 21 & 30 Apr (BLS) and Jacumba on 23 Apr (DT), and a singing bird on territory was south of usual near the Bird & Butterfly Garden throughout April to 3 May+ (PEL). Three new White-throated Sparrows found during early April were presumably locally wintering birds, bringing the record season total (since December) to a lofty *73* individuals. One additional Summer Tanager brought its record total of wintering birds to

The late-lingering Long-tailed Duck on Mission Bay became more and more bedraggled into late April and thus not a good candidate for long-distance migratory flight. *Photo by Terry Hurst*

The returning, wintering Red-necked Grebe near the mouth of San Diego Bay remained through 11 Apr (here), by which time it had acquired breeding plumage. *Photo by Andrew Newmark*

76. A few of the record-numbers of wintering Townsend's Solitaires and White-throated Sparrows continued into mid-April (v.obs), as expected, with the latest solitaire through 24 Apr in Fallbrook (MK) and the latest sparrows (two) through 30 Apr in residential Pt. Loma (PEL, JP). White-throated Sparrows often remain later in spring than do almost all White-crowned Sparrows. A new, slightly late White-throated was at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery from 30 Apr-3 May (NT).

The American X Black Oystercatcher present off and on in the Cabrillo National Monument area for perhaps several years was still present on 30 Apr (v.obs), also seen copulating with a Black Oystercatcher on 5 Apr (MHo). This individual also bred with a Black Oystercatcher in 2022, the first documented nesting record of any oystercatcher in the county.

Rare but somewhat regular spring visitors included a Black Scoter in Oceanside on 17 Apr (BF), single Solitary Sandpipers at San Elijo Lagoon from 8-11 Apr (RG) and on 30 Apr (SBu), and two Black-footed Albatrosses during a 15 Apr pelagic trip (m.obs). Two Bank Swallows were at Sweetwater Reservoir on 30 Apr (PEL), another two were at Lake Hodges the same day (TEW), a Purple Martin was in Carlsbad on 1 Apr (TG), and single Northern Parulas were in Kearny Mesa on 15 Apr (JSk), in Oceanside on 17 Apr (RPo), and at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery from 28 Apr-1 May (PEL). Morning-flight highlights at Mt. Soledad included a Purple Martin on 20 Apr (DT) and two there on 21 Apr (PEL), and a Townsend's Solitaire on 21 Apr (JD). Totals for some of our scarce-but-regular migrants included nine Calliope Hummingbirds, just one coastal Gray Flycatcher, two desert dark-lored White-crowned Sparrows, and one coastal migrant Green-tailed Towhee.

Migrant Swainson's Hawks had an excellent season in the Borrego Springs area, with an all-time-record February-April total of 16,181 birds and a one-day count of 2546 on 1 Apr (HC). The previous season maximum was 11,690 in 2017. West of the mountains, there were the usual scattered sightings of one or two birds each, with high counts of 16 over Lake Murray (MS) and 14 over Fallbrook (KW), both on 6 Apr.

Small numbers of Cassin's Finches and a few Red Crossbills continued in the mountains to month's end (m.obs). Very rare outside the mountains, multiple Cassin's Finches continued at Vallecito through 14 Apr (BLS), three were in Jacumba on 1 Apr (PEL), and up to four were at Scissors Crossing from 8-19 Apr (SL). Two Red Crossbills were at Jacumba from 1-4 Apr (PEL).

Casual in the desert, a Lewis's Woodpecker was in Borrego Springs on 1 Apr (CW). Single Brant

A pair of Inca Doves took up residence at the Borrego Springs Resort from 7 Jan to at least 8 Apr. *Photo by Bridget Spencer*

The popular, photogenic, and very rare coastal Lewis's Woodpecker continued at Santee Lakes. First found on 6 Nov, it was still present 2 May. *Photo by Barbara Swanson*

were there 4-5 Apr (ARe) and 14 Apr (PA). A rare-in-desert Cassin's Kingbird was at Vallecito 7 Apr (BLS). A flock of 52 Brant, one Red-breasted Merganser, and nine Common Loons were at Lake Henshaw 14 Apr (KF); single Brant were also inland at Jacumba 12 Apr (TB) and at Sweetwater Reservoir 14 Apr (PEL); and a Red-breasted Merganser was at San Vicente Reservoir 24 Apr (SL). Very rare inland, two Elegant Terns were at Lake Murray 13 Apr (JP) and two were at Sweetwater Reservoir on both 17 Apr & 30 Apr (PEL), where also a Pacific Loon 17-27 Apr (PEL).

West of normal, at least one singing Canyon Wren was at Torrey Pines State Reserve from 5-7 Apr (TO). Single Band-tailed Pigeons were at Los Peñasquitos Cyn. (AN) and at Mission Trails Regional Park (v.obs) on 8 Apr; and single White-winged Doves were in residential Pt. Loma 24 Apr (S&KM), at Lindo Lake 26 Apr (NC), in Solana Beach on 30 Apr (SP), and in Oceanside 30 Apr (PB). An Acorn Woodpecker was at Torrey Pines State Reserve 7 Apr (MT) and up to two were at San Elijo Lagoon 9-29 Apr+ (DAK). Single Brewer's Sparrows were at Mount Helix 16-17 Apr (BW) and in Coronado 18 Apr (BSp). A westerly Bald Eagle was at Lake Hodges, where found sporadically since 2012, on 6 Apr (PEL).

A proportionately larger percentage of Greater Scaup typically linger well into April than do Lesser Scaup. From 14-16 Apr there were 150-250 Greaters and 90-220 Lessers remaining on South San Diego Bay (PEL).

A Snow Goose at Lake Cuyamaca through 29 Apr+ (v.obs) and a Hooded Merganser at Camp Pendleton on 28 Apr (PAG) were somewhat late. A Eurasian Wigeon lingered at San Elijo Lagoon through 29 Apr (KA) and it or another was at Batiquitos Lagoon on 30 Apr (PLa), setting a new all-time late date by one day. Late-lingering raptors included a Sharp-shinned Hawk in Carlsbad on 25 Apr (TG) and a Mer-

Casual in spring, this Clay-colored Sparrow was at Lake Murray on 16 Apr. It is uncertain whether it was a spring migrant or if it wintered locally. *Photo by Matt Sadowski*

lin at the Dairy Mart Ponds through 27 Apr (PEL). A "Sooty" Fox Sparrow at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 28 Apr (PEL) was fairly late for that subspecies group.

A continuing pair of vocal American Bitterns were present 2 Apr-3 May+ at the upper end of San Elijo Lagoon (DAK), the only known breeding site in recent years.

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Cited observers: Observers listed are limited to those finding, identifying, and/or last reporting each species. Some sightings reported to *eBird* are included without specific attribution. Paulette Ache, Kathy Aldern, Nick Barber, Sonja Beeve (SBe), Joshua Berman, Bo Bockman, Pat Brown, Sean Buchanan (SBu), Timothy Burkhardt, Nancy Christensen, Hal Cohen, Richard Crossley, Alphonsus Deodatus, Jay Desgrosellier, Nicole Desnoyers, Beth Fife, Kyle Fischer, Nathan French, Rodney Gast, Peter A. Ginsburg, Nathan Goldberg, Tito Gonzalez, Michelle Haglund (MHa), Marti Horman (MHo), Miranda Kennedy, Dan A. King, Patti Langen (PLa), Paul E. Lehman, Steven Lima, Eric Lutomski, Curtis A. Marantz, Eve Martin, Sara & Keith Mayers, Jimmy McMorran (JMc), Charlotte Morris (CMs), Caitlin Morrow (CMw), Brennan Mulrooney, Jane Mygatt (JMy), P. G. Nell, Andrew Newmark, Tsaiwei Olee, Dory Owen, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Stephen Perry, Ryan Pottinger (RPo), Amy Rangel (ARa), Michael & Tera Ray, Anne Reilly (ARe), Jim Roberts, Matt Sadowski, Lexine Schroeder, Britta Lee Shain, Natalie Shapiro, Bridget Spencer (BSp), Justyn T. Stahl, Jeremiah Stock (JSk), Ian Swirka, Nick Thorpe, David Trissel, Manolo Turner, Geoff Veith, Ken Weaver, Catherine Wertis, Barbara Wise, Mike Wittmer, Duwayne Worthington, Thomas E. Wurster, and Gena Zolotar.

m.obs = many observers

v.obs = various observers

The highlights of a 15 April pelagic trip were two very well seen Black-footed Albatrosses, including this bird only 10 mi. offshore. *Photo by Dean Budd*

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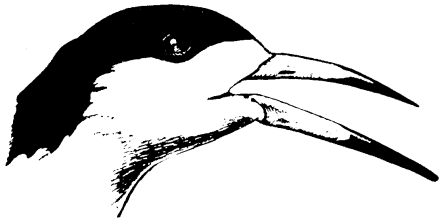

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