The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 20, 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.

Our annual Business Meeting and Election of Club Officers for 2023-24.

Program: Rick and Elis Simpson will present "Wader Quest."

[*Ed. Note: In this part of the world we usually use the term "shorebird."*]

Rick and Elis Simpson set up Wader Quest in 2012, initially in tending a year-long fundraising event in support of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. The dedicated duo travelled the world to see as many wader species as possible.
As they travelled, they discovered just how many problems wad-ers face across the globe and decided to continue to raise money and awareness to support wader conservation.
Roll forward a few years and the charity is in full swing with a team of volunteers, a Board of Trustees and an Executive Com-mittee to drive the development of the charity to increase its ef fectiveness.

Their program will introduce the organization through the beauty and diversity of the waders to be found around the world; some of which are quite surprising. This talk is liberally scattered with stunning photos and information about the birds and includes some amusing personal anecdotes from Rick and Elis' travels to see waders. It is both entertaining and informative while empha-sising the acute crisis that is facing wader conservation and how we can all help to combat it.

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, July 18, same time, same place. Program to be announced; see the July *Skimmer* for details.

SDFO NEWS [cont.]

Business Meeting and Election of Officers

It's that time of year again, folks. Our current slate of officers (see last page of the newsletter for their names and contact information) have all agreed to continue in office if the club agrees, but we encourage interested members to step forward and present an alternative candidate if they wish. If you're interested, contact President Nancy Christensen ahead of the meeting.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MAY 2023

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

Despite a lackluster migration for many of our regular western species, May 2023 was truly excellent for rarities in San Diego County. A Mexican Whip-poor-will was heard by many at Noble Canyon/Pine Creek Road in the Laguna Mts. from 16-23 May (DH). This was presumably a returning bird that was present at the same location in May 2020. The only prior county record is from Julian in July 1971. A casual Inca Dove appeared on Navy property at Point Loma from 25-31 May+ (M&TR), one of very few coastal records. Amazingly, *two* White-eyed Vireos were present from 27-31 May only five miles apart, one at Lake Murray (MS) and one along Chollas Creek in City Heights (LH). A female Golden-winged Warbler was at private residences in coastal San Diego on 20 May (PEL), the county's fifth or sixth. A heard-only Prairie Warbler was recorded singing at Proctor Valley near Jamul on 23 May (PM), the first spring record for San Diego County and one of exceedingly few spring and early summer records for the entire state. Establishing only the third and fourth county records of spring vagrants, a male Black-throated Green Warbler was at Point Loma Nazarene University from 21-23 May (JA) and a different male was nearby in residential Pt. Loma from 24-26 May (PEL). A male Scarlet Tanager on southeast Pt. Loma from 28-31 May+ (C&RB, M&TR) is the fifth ever in spring. A Dickcissel at the Borrego Springs settling ponds on 3 May (NC) establishes one of the very few spring records.

A tale of two White-eyed Vireos, 27 May+. At Lake Murray (left) and along Chollas Creek (right). *Photos by Matt Sadowski (left) and Nathan French (right)*

A late Red-necked Grebe was in the Torrey Pines area from 4-6 May (DAK). One in that same area in 2016 remained into June. A spring Semipalmated Sandpiper was at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works on 1 May (MS). A Tricolored Heron was at multiple sites around South San Diego Bay between 13-15 May (PEL). This species occurs about every other year in the county, although most records are from fall and winter. A Yellow-throated Vireo delighted many observers at Wing St. Canyon in Loma Portal from 8-10 May (MH). A Gray Catbird was at Agua Caliente County Park on 10 May (NC). A pair of Lark Buntings was on private property in the Warner Valley on 1 May (AF). Clay-colored Sparrow is much rarer in spring than in fall, so one at NAS North Island on 7 May (BF) was an excellent find. In Coronado, an Ovenbird was discovered 15 May (EC), and another made a lengthy spring stay at Point Loma Nazarene University from 16-22 May (PEL). A female Hooded Warbler at Liberty Station on 21 May (JA) was especially unusual given that most records are of males.

A female Golden-winged Warbler at private residences in coastal San Diego on 20 May established the fifth or sixth county record. *Photo by Barbara Wise*

A "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Junco at Torrey Pines State Reserve on 13 May (MM) set a new all-time late date for the county by a *full month*. The previous latest was 8-12 Apr 1984 on Pt. Loma. A one-year-old Common Tern at the Salt Works on 11 May (MS) was early for a bird of that age.

Offshore, a rare Cook's Petrel at the 30-Mile Bank on 23 May (DI) sets the second-earliest arrival date for the county (earliest: 21 May 2017). Also there that day was a pair of Craveri's Murrelets, establishing the third May record, as well as a getting-late Northern Fulmar and a somewhat early one-year-old Common Tern (PEL).

Northern Parulas were in record numbers this spring, with the total of 14 individuals: Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 28 Apr-1 May (PEL), residential Pt. Loma 12-16 May (up to two; JP, AA), Mira Mesa 16 May (KF), Tierrasanta 20 May (BLC), University City 21 May (BSp), UCSD 23-24 May (TSw), Tecolote Canyon 25 May (DW), Bird & Butterfly Garden 26 May (JP), San Dieguito County Park 29-30 May (DAK), and Point Loma Nazarene University 29-31 May (DW), and inland in Proctor Valley near Jamul 23 May (PM), at Felicita County Park in Escondido 24 May (PLa), and along the San Luis Rey R. near Lake Henshaw 30 May (TC). Following last fall's bumper

This male Black-throated Green Warbler at Point Loma Nazarene University from 21-23 May became only the third county record of a spring vagrant. *Photo by Joe Alsadi*

crop of Tennessee Warblers, this spring continued the trend with six birds found: two or three in residential Pt. Loma/Point Loma Nazarene University 13-28 May (AA) and singles at Hillcrest 15 May (TR), NAS North Island 15 May (BF), Carlsbad 22 May (GV), and Leucadia (JMc). With a spring record 13 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in 2001, May 2023 was not far behind with a total of 12. They included singles at NAS North Island 15 May (BF), near San Elijo Lagoon 19-22 May (PLa), in Linda Vista 23 May (JB), in residential Pt. Loma 23-24 May (HM), in residential La Jolla 24 May (ES), in the Tijuana River Valley 24 May (JA), on eastern Pt. Loma 25-26 May (M&TR), and in Sorrento Valley 26-27 May (LD), and up to two together at both Vallecito 25-29 May (BLS) and residential Pt. Loma 26-29 May (PEL). An above-average three Baltimore Orioles were found in Carlsbad 20-21 May (TG), at UCSD 23 May (TSw), and on eastern Pt. Loma 25 May (M&TR). Another excellent showing involved nine coastal-slope Summer Tanagers, with birds at Harry Griffen Regional Park 10 May (BW), Point Loma Nazarene University/ residential Pt. Loma 15-29 May (total four; NT, JA, PEL, BW), San Diego Zoo Safari Park 21 May (AH), Mission Bay 23 May (NT), NAS North Island 24 May (BF), and SDSU 30 May (NB).

Tricolored Heron averages about one record every other year, mostly in fall and winter. This spring bird was at multiple sites on South San Diego Bay between 13-15 May. *Photo by Nancy Christensen*

Other rare but somewhat regular spring migrants included three Bank Swallows (PEL, DAK), single Northern Waterthrushes at the San Diego Zoo 11 May (TSt) and at Agua Caliente County Park 14 May (BP), a Black-and-white Warbler in Solana Beach 23 May (SB), and single American Redstarts at Agua Caliente County Park 4 May (NC) and in Del Mar 21 May (DT). A hybrid Hermit X Townsend's Warbler was at Buddy Todd Park in Oceanside on 12 May (PLa). A territorial male Indigo Bunting was present for the fifth year in a row at the Bird & Butterfly Garden area 2-29 May+ (DT), and up to two male In-

Records of Yellow-throated Vireo average about one every other spring and early summer. This individual was in Wing St. Canyon in Loma Portal from 8-10 May. *Photo by Michelle Haglund*

This Ovenbird at Point Loma Nazarene University from 16-22 May was a long stayer and one of two individuals found this spring. *Photo by Sally Veach*

digos were along Peñasquitos Creek in Carmel Valley 25-29 May+ (SL).

Continuing from the previous month(s), the worn-and-tattered wintering Long-tailed Duck on Mission Bay was still present 13 May (m.obs); at least one American Bittern continued through the month at the upper end of San Elijo Lagoon (v.obs); wintering Tropical Kingbirds remained at Robb Field through 4 May (MS) and exceptionally late at NAS North Island/ Coronado through 25 May (PEL, NB, BF); and the singing Hooded Warbler bordering Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery stayed from 24 Apr-4 May (PEL). Two wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers remained to 6 May in the Tijuana R. mouth area (RTP, MS) and another was still present at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works on 5 May (PEL, JTS). Lingering Neotropic Cormorants included a single bird at the Safari Park through 21 May (TF-H) and up to two birds at both Lake Murray through 31 May+ (MS) and Famosa Slough/San Diego River channel through 31 May+ (M&TR, NG), as well as a new bird at Lindo Lake from 28 May+ (BR). The wintering Lewis's Woodpecker at Santee Lakes was last seen 7 May (m.obs), one of the latest to remain in spring, perhaps bested only by the bird a year earlier at Mission Trails Regional Park through 11 May. Up to two Nelson's Sparrows remained at San Elijo Lagoon through 8 May (JMc), where one bird similarly lingered to 7 May in 2019. A wintering White-throated Sparrow remained slightly late to 6 May in residential Pt. Loma (PEL, AA) and another bird was at Ft. Rosecrans National

Northern Parulas were in record numbers this spring, with a total of 14 birds during May, including this individual inland at Felicita County Park on 24 May. *Photo by Patti Langen*

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in near-record numbers, with a May total of 12 birds, including this female in residential Pt. Loma from 26-29 May. Note the bird's breast pattern and bill color. *Photo by Barbara Wise*

Cemetery from 30 Apr-3 May (NT). The small surge in Calliope Hummingbirds at the end of April was short-lived, with none found after 2 May (v.obs). Small numbers of Red Crossbills continued in the mountains, with the latest report of seven birds at Stonewall Mine 30 May (TH).

The continuing hybrid American X Black Oystercatcher at Cabrillo National Monument was again paired with a Black Oystercatcher, with an active nest confirmed for the second year in a row from 13-31 May+ (TLa, AN, MS). Two or three continuing Harris's Hawks at both Shelter Valley and Jacumba during the month (v.obs) included a pair conducting a nest exchange (incubating?) at the latter site on 19 May (PEL), one of a very few breeding records for the county.

Late-lingering waterfowl included a Canvasback at San Dieguito Lagoon on 7 May (DM), as well as a few of the more expected scattered Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, and Buffleheads to mid- or late May. The long-staying, tame Cackling Goose at Lake Murray performed a massive northward migration and turned up for two days at Santee Lakes 28-29 May (SH, DP), where it undoubtedly arrived exhausted and with its fat reserves depleted, before returning to Lake Murray. A late Sharp-shinned Hawk was along Kitchen Creek Rd. on 6 May (CA, LR), and an immature Zone-tailed Hawk at the Safari Park on 7 May (KM) was presumably a late-lingering wintering bird. Passerines on the slightly late side included a Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Harry Griffen Regional Park through 10 May (BW), a Hermit Thrush in residential Pt. Loma through 7 May (HM), an American Pipit at Border Field State Park on 6 May (MS), a Savannah Sparrow at Sweetwater Reservoir on 5 May (PEL), a Golden-crowned Sparrow at Echo Valley near Jamul on 13 May (KG), and a migrant Lazuli Bunting on Mt. Soledad on 30 May (PEL). Following the winter irruption, late American Robins were in the desert at Vallecito on 3 May (BLS), at Agua Caliente County Park on 4 May (NC), and at the Borrego Springs Resort on 10 May (NC); a presumed migrant was along the coast at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on 21 May (JA); and one bird continued on territory south of normal in the Tijuana River Valley through 31 May (PEL).

Hybrid Hermit X Townsend's Warblers average one or two sightings per year. This individual was at Buddy Todd Park on 12 May. *Photo by Patti Langen*

One of two sites to support singing male Indigo Buntings this month was Peñsquitos Creek in Carmel Valley from 25 May+. *Photo by Steven Lima*

Very rare inland, up to two Elegant Terns frequented Sweetwater Reservoir for an unusually long period between 30 Apr-22 May (PEL). Even one just slightly inland at the Dairy Mart Ponds on 31 May (PEL) was rare. Conversely, rare but somewhat regular near the coast, single White-winged Doves were at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery 13 May (TLo), in the Tijuana R. Valley 15-18 May (NT), in Mira Mesa 18-21 May (EF), and in residential Pt. Loma 23 May (M&TR); and single Swainson's Hawks were in the

Tijuana River Valley 3-5 May (PLa) and at Mount Soledad 12 May (NT).

A few Red-shouldered Hawks wander eastward every fall and winter, but one in Borrego Springs on 5 May (TLo) was more unusual in spring. Also rare in the desert, a Cassin's Kingbird was at Clark Dry Lake on 11 May (SV), whereas a dark-lored White-crowned Sparrow (presumably *Z. l. oriantha*) at Vallecito from 2-15 May (BLS) was a scarce but likely somewhat regular spring migrant there. A Lucy's Warbler at Vallecito on 3 May (BLS) was close to appropriate breeding habitat.

Five Reddish Egrets at J St. in Chula Vista on 14 May (NC) was a large single-site concentration. In addition to several reports of migrant Purple Martins (including a high 11 birds at Mt. Soledad on 6 May (JD)) as late as 20 May, an incredible concentration of *95+* martins was documented at Lake Cuyamaca—a known nesting area—on 1 May (MF), by far the largest total recorded during modern times in San Diego County.

After a slow start during much of April, the number of Calliope Hummingbirds picked up for a short period in late April and the beginning of May. This male was in Presidio Park. *Photo by Nathan Goldberg*

Dark-lored White-crowned Sparrows are likely scarce-but-regular spring migrants through the desert well into May. This bird lingered at Vallecito from 2-15 May. In addition to the black lores, note the slightly darker bill compared to the typical "Gambel's" White-crowned. *Photo by Britta Lee Shain*

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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. Alex Abela, Christopher Adler, Joe Alsadi, Nick Barber, Cathy & Ron Bondy, John Bruin, Sean Buchanan, Barbara L. Carlson, Nancy Christensen, Travis Cooper, Elizabeth Copper, Linette Davenport, Jay Desgrosellier, Matthew Fedder, Ellen Feeney, Kyle Fischer, Andrew Fisher, Brian Flick, Thomas Ford-Hutchinson, Kandace Glanville, Nathan Goldberg, Tito Gonzalez, Michelle Haglund, Lesley Handa, Steven Haupt, Alison Hiers, David Hogan, Terry Hurst, Daniel Irons, Dan A. King, Ty Lamar (TLa), Patti Langen (PLa), Paul E. Lehman, Steven Lima, Trysten Loefke (TLo), Donna Mancuso, Paul Marvin, Marcie Mason, Holly McMillan, Jimmy McMorran (JMc), Kiandra Mitchell, Jane Mygatt (JMy), Andrew Newmark, Robert T. Patton, Jim Pawlicki, Beth Pearson, Deborah Porter, Michael & Tera Ray, Beverly Reynolds, Lisa Ruby, Tuck Russell, Matt Sadowski, Britta Lee Shain, Ethna Sinisi, Bridget Spencer (BSp), Justyn T. Stahl, Trent Stanley (TSt), Tim Swain (TSw), Nick Thorpe, David Trissel, Sally Veach, Geoff Veith, Dave Weber, and Barbara Wise.

m.obs = many observers

v.obs = various observers

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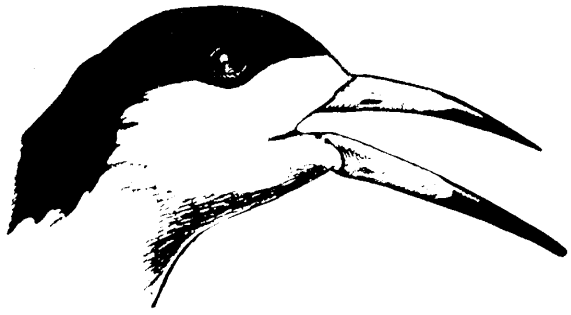
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