The SKIMMER

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SDFO NEWS

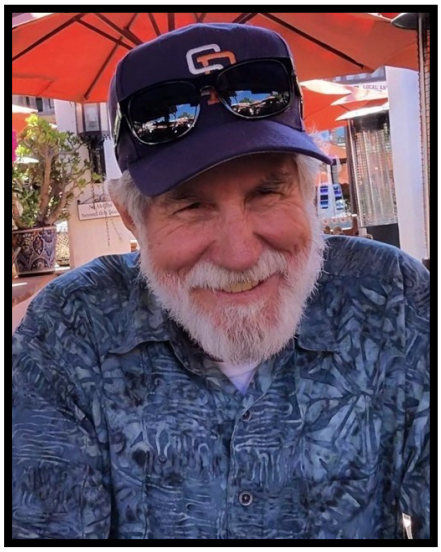
Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, April 15, 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: Our Program Chair advises me that the April program is still up in the air. Show up and see what we have—it'll be a surprise!

Next month's meeting: Tuesday, May 20, same time, same place. Yet another surprise—see next month's newsletter for details.

David Povey by Rick Grove



SDFO and the larger birding community lost a dear friend on March 24th. Dave Povey most recently served as our President from June 2016 through 2018, but the majority of people probably associate him with pelagic birding, which he facilitated on behalf of Buena Vista Audubon and the San Diego Bird Festival and Christmas Bird Counts in San Diego and Oceanside for years. I recall clearly the first time I met Dave in September 2014 while chasing the Eastern Kingbird at the Presidio.

Dave Povey was a skilled birder, a gentleman, and a friend. Dave was generous with his time and resources. I recall many conversations where he sought to ensure that those who wanted to participate in a trip but couldn't afford to were afforded the opportunity. He served his country, he served others, and he served us.

Friends of Dave are invited on a 2-3/4-hour offshore memorial boat trip aboard "Legacy" from Seaforth Sportfishing at Mission Bay on Sunday, April 13. The trip will depart at 6:45 AM and return at 9:30 AM. This trip is very generously being offered free of charge to all by Dustin Hackman and Seaforth Sportfishing, in recognition of Dave's longtime working relationship and friendship with the Seaforth staff. During this trip, some of Dave's ashes will be spread, and we will bring a large supply of popcorn which we will invite each attendee to, in a private moment, take a handful and toss off the stern, as

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Dave did for decades. We hope that you can join us.

Pelagic birding in San Diego will continue, but the gulls and I will miss him every time we leave the landing.

For additional information about Dave and memorial services, please visit:
https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/bonita-ca/david-povey-12308938

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS, MARCH 2025

Compiled by Paul E. Lehman

A Tufted Puffin was photographed from a private vessel 4.9 miles NW of La Jolla on 1 Mar (MM, BB). A Dusky Flycatcher at Kimball Park in National City from 15-30 Mar+ (PEL) establishes only the fifth record of a wintering bird in San Diego County. The earliest of the very rare spring migrants do not arrive until the third week of April. A very unusual spring migrant Eastern Phoebe was at Jacumba on 29 Mar (NH, DS), where recorded once before in spring, also on 29 Mar (in 2013). A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Ocean Beach on 19 Mar (CP) was almost certainly a bird returning for its second winter. A new Hepatic Tanager was seen inland in Jamul on 22 Mar (JMa). An Indigo Bunting at an Escondido area feeder on 6-7 Mar (PP) was a casual winter visitor. Spring migrant Indigos do not arrive until early May.

Additional newly discovered species included a migrant Solitary Sandpiper in Del Mar on 27-28 Mar (MH, LR) and single "Prairie" Merlins (*F. c. richardsonii*) at Lake Murray from 6 Feb-17 Mar (BW) and along Rangeland Road on 15 Mar (SL). This subspecies is a very rare but annual visitor. A Bank Swallow at Lower Otay Lake on 28 Mar (MS) was rare and early. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at the Tijuana River Valley Community Gardens from 1-30 Mar+ (m.obs) was at the same site where a similar-looking bird was seen in late November, and another Rose-breasted was at El Monte County Park, east of Lakeside, on 4 Mar (BLC).

A nice surprise was this Tufted Puffin seen from a private vessel 4.9 miles northwest of La Jolla on 1 Mar. *Photo by Noemi Cabre*

The wintering Louisiana Waterthrush in Solana Beach was last reported on 19 Mar (JDe). Other continuing top-notch rarities included the returning Little Stint at the South San Diego Bay Salt Works

Casual in winter and very rare away from breeding sites, this Dusky Flycatcher was at Kimball Park in National City from 15-30 Mar+. It established only the fifth county record of a wintering bird. Note the rather dull plumage, weak eyering and wingbars, whitish loral spot, limited dusky-fleshy color on lower mandible, shortish primary extension, and longish tail with pale outer web. *Photo by Paul Lehman*

Also casual in winter, this male Indigo Bunting visited an Escondido area feeder on 6-7 Mar. *Photo by Patrick Pearce*

A wintering female Rose-breasted Grosbeak at the Tijuana River Valley Community Gardens from 1-30 Mar+ (here 2 Mar) may have been the same individual seen during late November. *Photo by Andrew Newmark*

This duo of Eastern Phoebes included a wintering bird at El Monte County Park from 25 Dec-23 Mar (here 2 Mar, above) and a casual spring migrant at Jacumba on 29 Mar (below). *Photos by Catherine Zinsky (above) and Drake Stallworth (below)*

"Prairie" Merlins average about two records per year. This bird was at Lake Murray from 6 Feb-17 Mar (here 17 Mar). Note the rufous coloration to the underpart streaking, weak mustache, and light brown upperwing. *Photo by Barbara Wise*

through 25 Mar+ (MS) and up to two wintering Solitary Sandpipers at Whelan Lake through 22 Mar (m.obs). A black-and-white oystercatcher present sporadically at La Jolla from at least 19 Jan-29 Mar+ (eBird, PEL) scores between a 28-31 on the "Jehl Scale" and thus is either a hybrid or a barely acceptable American. The long-staying duo of Tricolored Herons in the San Diego River mouth/Famosa Slough area were still present 31 Mar+ (m.obs). Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers remained at Borrego Springs from 15 Dec-16 Mar (PEL, BZ), at Lindo Lake from 29 Dec-24 Mar (v.obs), and in Ramona from 19 Feb-24 Mar (NC).

The Greater Pewee at Hilltop Park in Chula Vista was still present 31 Mar (BH), the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher back for its ninth winter bordering the Poggi Canyon Greenbelt in Chula Vista was last reported on 22 Mar (PEL, BA), the Hammond's Flycatcher back for its fifth winter in University City was last seen 22 Mar (v.obs), and the Eastern Phoebe at El Monte County Park lingered through 23 Mar (MD). A Lark Bunting on private property in Carlsbad was last reported 20 Mar (TG), the Clay-colored Sparrow at Colina del Sol Park in San Diego stayed through 6 Mar (PEL), and the Swamp Sparrow at Kimball Park remained through 23 Mar+ (JP, PEL). Up to two Orchard Orioles visiting a Carlsbad hummingbird feeder remained through 28 Mar (PLa), a pair of Orchards at Kimball Park lingered to 25 Mar+ (JP, NF) and the male Baltimore Oriole at Harry Griffen Regional Park remained through 25 Mar+ (JDu). The pair of Hepatic Tanagers in Tierrasanta were still present 22 Mar (PEL), as were the single male in Wing Street Canyon through 31 Mar+ (MH) and the female in Presidio Park from 2 Jan-16 Mar (WR, AHk).

This Lark Bunting in Carlsbad from 15 Feb-20 Mar (here 2 Mar) unfortunately decided to set up shop on private property. *Photo by Tito Gonzalez*

This immature female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was present in Ramona from 19 Feb-24 Mar (here 17 Mar). *Photo by Nancy Christensen*

The mini-onslaught of Neotropic Cormorants continued. Unusual along the immediate coast, one flew by La Jolla on 16 Feb (AC). As many as 15 individuals were noted countywide during March, eight continuing and seven new, with the most interesting new birds being one at 4S Ranch near Rancho Bernardo on 2 Mar (SB) and up to four at Borrego Springs from 12-29 Mar (BZ).

Also continuing from previous months were several Harris's Hawks at Jacumba and Shelter Valley, seen building nests at both sites, and a total of six Zone-tailed Hawks including single coastal birds in the Encinitas/San Elijo Lagoon area between 3-7 Mar (BS) and at Mission Trails Regional Park on 21 Mar (TB). More continuing birds were two Black Scoters, two Pacific Golden-Plovers, three Tropical Kingbirds, seven coastal-slope Gray Flycatchers, three Plumbeous Vireos, three coastal-slope Sage Thrashers, two White-throated Sparrows, six Green-tailed Towhees, and ten Summer Tanagers.

Ongoing wintering warblers included a Lucy's Warbler in Balboa Park through 9 Mar (PEL), a Palm

Very unusual along the immediate coast, this Neotropic Cormorant flew by the La Jolla shoreline on 16 Feb, here providing an excellent comparison with a Double-crested. *Photo by Andrea Carpio*

The winter-season influx of Sage Thrashers along the county's coastal slope continued into March. This individual was at 4S Ranch from 22 Feb-16 Mar (here 2 Mar). *Photo by Sean Buchanan*

One of two Palm Warblers in the county during late winter was this individual in residential Oceanside from 16-30 Mar (here 16 Mar). *Photo by Beth Fife*

A Hammond's Flycatcher back for its fifth winter remained in University City through 22 Mar (here 2 Mar). *Photo by Charley Herzfeld*

This male Purple Martin at Sweetwater Reservoir on 14-15 Mar set a new all-time early arrival date in the county by one day. *Photo by Barbara Wise*

Warbler at Liberty Station through 7 Mar (PEL), and a Painted Redstart in residential eastern Point Loma through 9 Mar (PEL). A new Palm Warbler was in residential Oceanside from 16-30 Mar+ (BF). March totals for our more regularly-occurring species included one Northern Waterthrush, five Black-and-whites, and five American Redstarts.

Unusual near the coast, immature Bald Eagles were at Torrey Pines 5 Mar (*fide* DM), San Elijo Lagoon 22 Mar (BMV), and Whelan Lake 29 Mar (SV). Single coastal Swainson's Hawks were over San Elijo Lagoon 10 Mar (JMy), Solana Beach 22 Mar (AHr), Rolando 22 Mar (BW, M&PW), Mira Mesa 23 Mar (RB), the Tijuana River Valley 24 Mar (DJ), and Santee Lakes 31 Mar (BM). The coastal Brewer's Sparrow at Harry Griffen Regional Park remained through 27 Mar+ (PEL), and another Brewer's was slightly west of normal in Escondido 30 Mar (MJH). A lowland Brown Creeper was at Lindo Lake 16-29 Mar+ (m.obs), and a Townsend's Solitaire was near Jamul 12 Mar (JMa).

Very rare well inland, a Brown Pelican flew over Fallbrook on 25 Mar (JH). Rare but annual inland, a Common Loon was at Lake Morena on 27 Mar (PEL), and a spring migrant Whimbrel at Lake Henshaw from 6-11 Mar (JP) was also slightly early. A migrant Surf Scoter in the desert landed in the road at Agua Caliente County Park on 22 Mar (CK, BP). Also presumably following an overland route from the Gulf of California to the coast, a flock of nine Surf Scoters were at Sweetwater Reservoir 28 Mar (PEL), as were a flock of eight Brant at Lake Morena from 28 Mar-2 Apr (MB) and two Brant at Lower Otay Lake on 31 Mar (MS). A spring migrant Hooded Merganser was very rare in the upper desert and was a local first at Jacumba on 29 Mar (NH, DS). Single Calliope Hummingbirds in Borrego Springs 29 Mar (CD), Vallecito 30 Mar (BLS), and Palm Canyon 31 Mar (PB); a Cassin's Kingbird at Agua Caliente 21 Mar (CK, BP); and an Oak Titmouse in Borrego Springs 16 Mar (BZ) were rare in the desert. A pair of American Crows at Jacumba from 27-31 Mar (PEL) were east of normal and were nest building, establishing the first breeding record for that site.

Miscellaneous high counts included nine Black Oystercatchers at San Mateo Point (at the border with Orange County) on 9 Mar (DE), the largest concentration recorded in the county away from La Jolla. Twelve Lesser Yellowlegs at the Salt Works between 5-9 Mar (MS) likely represent a mix of known wintering birds and a few early spring arrivals. A very good season overall for migrant Violet-green Swallows was topped by 175 birds at Lake Murray on 7 Mar (BW). A concentration of 54 American Goldfinches at Guajome Regional Park on 26 Mar (SV) was very high in spring, especially away from the Tijuana River Valley.

A Purple Martin at Sweetwater Reservoir on 14-15 Mar (BW) set the all-time early arrival date by one day. Four migrants at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park on 20 Mar (AHr, RW) were more typical arrivals, whereas one at Lake Cuyamaca on 26 Mar (TH) was perhaps slightly early for the mountains. An early Nashville Warbler was along Kitchen Creek Road on 22 Mar (NT), and an early migrant Western Tanager was in the desert at Vallecito on 29 Mar (BLS). A Vaux's Swift at Lindo Lake from 27 Mar-3 Apr (CB),

This alternate-plumaged male Western Tanager at Vallecito on 29 Mar was a clear spring migrant. There have been a number of late March records of migrants in the desert over the past decade, whereas the earliest arrival dates on the coastal slope are a week to ten days later. *Photo by Britta Lee Shain*

a Western Kingbird photographed at Santee Lakes on 4 Mar (eBird), a Cassin's Vireo in residential Point Loma on 19 Mar (PEL), and a Black-throated Gray Warbler along Kitchen Creek Road on 22 Mar (NT) were slightly early. It is also possible that the swift and vireo wintered locally. A Sora at Jacumba on 27 Mar (PEL) was a slightly early spring migrant in the mountains.

A pair of Pelagic Cormorants at a nest at La Jolla Cove from 7-31 Mar (MS) established the overdue first documented breeding record for San Diego County, and eggs were observed by the 23rd.

Acknowledgments: Many thanks to Sara B. Mayers and Guy McCaskie for their careful review.

Cited observers: Observers listed are limited to those finding and identifying each species. Some sightings reported to *eBird* are included without specific attribution. Braden Artzer, Patricia Bacchetti, Ruslan Balagansky, Tom Baxter, Christine Beck, Bo Bockman, Margaret Brown, Sean Buchanan, Barbara L. Carlson, Andrea Carpio, Nancy Christensen, Mark Dayton, Chris Dean, Jay Desgrosellier (JDe), John Dumlao (JDu), Diane Etchison, Beth Fife, Nathan French, Tito Gonzalez, Michelle Haglund, Justin Hartsell, Mary Jo Hayes (MJH), Natalya Hebert, Bonnie Henson, Alison Hiers (AHr), Adrian Hinkle (AHk), Terry Hurst, Dan Jehl, Christina Kidd, Patti Langen (PLa), Paul E. Lehman, Steven Lima, Donna Mancuso, John Martin (JMa), Manolo Mendieta, Brennan Mulrooney, Jane Mygatt (JMy), Jim Pawlicki, Patrick Pearce, Beth Pearson, Cindy Pencek, William Rockey, Lisa Ruby, Matt Sadowski, Britta Lee Shain, Drake Stallworth, Barbara Swanson, Nick Thorpe, Sally Veach, Betsy M. Vixie, Ron Wilson, Barbara Wise, Max & Popeye Wise, and Benjamin Zyla.

m.obs = many observers

v.obs = various observers

A pair of Pelagic Cormorants are nesting on a cliff at La Jolla Cove from 7-31 Mar+, establishing the first confirmed nesting record in the county. *Photo by Matt Sadowski*

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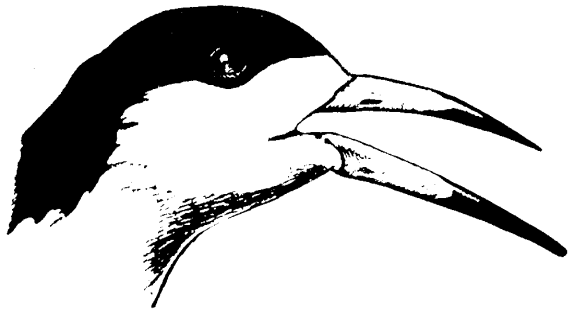
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