

16th ANNUAL ABF BIRDATHON

Bob Thériault / Retired State Park Ranger, Environmental Scientist



photo by Tom Blackman

The 16th Annual Anza-Borrego Foundation Birdathon on April 13, 2010 yielded 96 species of birds, all recorded within the boundaries of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, including Borrego Valley. The birding team members were Mark Jorgensen, Paul Jorgensen, Herb Stone and Bob Thériault. This year's event was the first to concentrate solely within the boundaries of the park. Previously the team rushed from the Salton Sea to the Pacific Ocean, but for the first time it was decided to highlight our local birds.

Birdathons fall into the category of the "Big Day". The single purpose of the Big Day is simply to record as many species of birds as possible in one day, in a given area. The challenge for us was to pick a date when most of our winter visitors are still here, balanced against predicting the occurrence of peak spring migration. Our timing was excellent!

We headed out at dawn for the Borrego Sink, the sole known nesting area in San Diego County for Lucy's Warbler, and the only place in the county

that I have seen the Crissal Thrasher, the rarest valley resident. We had scarcely arrived when eagle-eye Herb spotted a Crissal perched up on a bush, and not too much later Paul detected the first of several Lucy's Warblers in the mesquite forest.

The productive start continued in many of the locations we visited throughout the day. These stops included agricultural and golf course terrain, Clark Valley, Tamarisk Grove, Sentenac, Blair Valley, Culp Valley and Pena Spring. Do you wonder what kinds of birds yielded the most species? Sparrows came out on top with eleven species, followed by warblers (nine), flycatchers (six), ducks and wrens both with five. A complete list of the birds seen is presented on the following page.

A day spent in the park always presents an unexpected surprise or two, and this day was no exception. I remember Loggerhead Shrikes with a fresh kill in Font's Wash, and a gorgeous Gray Fox near Pena Spring.

A heartfelt thanks to our readers who generously pledged money towards this Birdathon which benefits our annual Anza-Borrego Desert Christmas Bird Count! If you would like to support the Birdathon and Christmas Bird Count, please download the Birdathon Pledge Form from the Anza-Borrego Foundation website.

RESULTS OF THE 16TH ANNUAL ABF BIRDATHON 4-13-2010

American Wigeon	House Wren
Mallard	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Cinnamon Teal	Hermit Thrush
Ring-necked Duck	Wrentit
Surf Scoter	Northern Mockingbird
Common Goldeneye	California Thrasher
Ruddy Duck	Crissal Thrasher
Mountain Quail	Le Conte's Thrasher 60
California Quail	European Starling
Gambel's Quail 10	Cedar Waxwing
Pied-billed Grebe	Phainopepla
Double-crested Cormorant	Orange-crowned Warbler
Green Heron	Nashville Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Lucy's Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Yellow Warbler
American Kestrel	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Virginia Rail	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Sora	Common Yellowthroat 70
American Coot	Wilson's Warbler
Killdeer 20	Yellow-breasted Chat
Spotted Sandpiper	Green-tailed Towhee
Rock Pigeon	Spotted Towhee
Eurasian Collared-Dove	California Towhee
White-winged Dove	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Brewer's Sparrow
Common Ground-Dove	Lark Sparrow
Greater Roadrunner	Black-throated Sparrow
Barn Owl	Savannah Sparrow 80
Great Horned Owl	Song Sparrow
White-throated Swift 30	Lincoln's Sparrow
Black-chinned Hummingbird	White-crowned Sparrow
Anna's Hummingbird	Black-headed Grosbeak
Costa's Hummingbird	Lazuli Bunting
Hammond's Flycatcher	Red-winged Blackbird
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Brewer's Blackbird
Black Phoebe	Great-tailed Grackle
Say's Phoebe	Brown-headed Cowbird
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Hooded Oriole 90
Western Kingbird	Bullock's Oriole
Least Bell's Vireo 40	Scott's Oriole
Warbling Vireo	House Finch
Western Scrub-Jay	Lesser Goldfinch
American Crow	Lawrence's Goldfinch
Common Raven	House Sparrow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	
Oak Titmouse	Total species 96
Verdin	
Bushtit	<u>Participants</u>
Cactus Wren	Mark Jorgensen
Rock Wren 50	Paul Jorgensen
Canyon Wren	Herb Stone
Bewick's Wren	Bob Thériault