

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

The Black-and-white Warbler differs from other warblers in its habit of creeping on trunks and large branches, like a nuthatch. Its range is largely east of the Rockies, but it is regular in small numbers in San Diego County. Seasonally, it is spread rather evenly. Annually, about four to five are reported each fall, three to four each winter, and two to three each spring. There are even a few summer records.

Winter: The Black-and-white is less concentrated along the coast than many eastern warblers; there are many reports from riparian woodland inland. In winter, however, the species is known from the coastal lowland only, inland as far as Kit Carson Park, Escondido (J11/K11), as from 3 December 1998 to 12 February 1999 (W. Pray). The atlas period from 1997 to 2002 yielded 14 wintering Black-and-white Warblers, with up to two together at the Dairy Mart pond, Tijuana River valley (V11) 19–26 December 1998 and 15 December 2001 (G. McCaskie).

Migration: In recent years, the number of Black-and-white Warblers reported in San Diego County each fall has ranged from two in 2002 to seven or eight in 2003. Thirteen Black-and-white Warblers were noted in spring 1997–2001, and the pace picked up subsequently, with six in 2002 and seven in 2003. Again, most records are for the coastal lowland, but a few are at higher elevations, such as one at Wynola (J19) 2 June 2000 (S. E. Smith). In the



Photo by Anthony Mercieca

Anza–Borrego Desert, one was in Borrego Springs (G24) 5 June 1990 (A. G. Morley, AB 44:1188, 1990), one was at Yaqui Well (I24) 23 April 1997 (P. K. Nelson), one was at Vallecito (M25) 12 May 1999 (M. C. Jorgensen), and one was at Canebrake (N27) 16 May 2002 (C. Smith).

Because the Black-and-white Warbler occurs in San Diego County at all seasons, its migration schedule can be determined only approximately. Fall migration begins by 6 September (1966, Point Loma, S7, AFN 21:79, 1967) and peaks from late September to late October. One Black-and-white Warbler near Mt. Woodson (L13) 15 April 1998 (P. M. von Hendy) was probably a spring migrant rather than wintering; the one at Yaqui Well 23 April 1997

certainly was. Spring records are scattered through June, with a few birds apparently remaining to summer. Sightings that might be considered summer records are of single birds at the east end of Lower Otay Lake (U14) 13 July–21 August 1975 (AB 29:1034, 1974), in the Tijuana River valley 17 June 1984 (G. McCaskie, AB 38:1063, 1984), in La Jolla (P8) 14 July 1986 (J. Moore, AB 40:1256, 1986), in San Diego 10–11 July 1991 (W. E. Haas, AB 45:1162, 1991), at Old Mission Dam (P11; singing male) 10 August 2000 (M. B. Stowe), on Villager Peak, Santa Rosa Mountains (C27), 17 June 2001 (R. Thériault, NAB 55:483, 2001), and near Scissors Crossing (J22) 23 June 2002 (J. R. Barth, NAB 56:487, 2002).

