

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*

The only thrasher breeding in the eastern United States is a rare vagrant to California. Though there are just 18 records for San Diego County, they are scattered through every month of the year. Nevertheless, the Brown Thrasher occurs primarily as a migrant and winter visitor between 20 September and 15 May, with only two known in summer.

Migration: There are six records of the Brown Thrasher in fall migration, four from Point Loma (S7), one from La Jolla (P7; 17 October 2001, F. A. Belinsky, NAB 56:107, 2002), and one from the Borrego Springs sewage pond (H25; 1 November 1992; A. G. Morley, AB 47:150, 1993). In spring, there are five records of birds not known to have wintered, two from Point Loma (5 April 1973, AB 27:821, 1973; 15 May 1979, AB 33:806, 1979), one from Pio Pico Campground (T15; 10 April 1981, D. W. Povey), one from Oceanside (H6; 24 April 1973, AB 27:821, 1973), and one from Borrego Springs (G24; 27 April 1998, P. D. Ache). One at Tamarisk Grove Campground (I24) 19–21 June 1988 (L. Walton, R. Thériault, AB 42:482, 1341, 1988) was also likely a late spring vagrant. However, one at Point Loma 24 July–10 September 2001 was in molt, as expected of the species in its summer breeding range (V. Conway, L. M. Dorman, NAB 55:483, 2001).

Winter: The Brown Thrasher has been recorded in San Diego County five times in winter; four of the birds were



Photo by Anthony Mercieca

known to have remained at least 11 days, on dates ranging from 15 October to 3 May. Four of the records are from parks and gardens in San Diego (Unitt 1984); one is from chaparral on the south side of San Elijo Lagoon (L7) 13 January–24 February 1996 (P. A. Ginsburg, NASFN 50:224, 1996).

Taxonomy: No specimen of the Brown Thrasher has yet been collected in San Diego County, but only the expected paler western subspecies *T. r. longicauda* is known from elsewhere in California and Arizona.