

TANAGERS — FAMILY THRAUPIDAE

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava*

The Hepatic Tanager enjoys a broad range, spreading from Arizona and New Mexico south to Argentina. In California, however, there are only a few breeding pairs, in the San Bernardino Mountains and the mountains of the eastern Mojave Desert. In San Diego County the species is a vagrant, with 22 reported so far, all in fall and winter.

Migration: Fourteen Hepatic Tanagers have been reported in San Diego in fall, 12 from Point Loma (S7), two from the Tijuana River valley. Dates for these are mainly in late September and October; one at Point Loma 10–18 September 1988 (J. Oldenettel, AB 43:170, 1989) was



Photo by Alan M. Craig

exceptionally early. One that returned three successive years to winter at Point Loma arrived as early as 4 October in 1985 (V. P. Johnson, AB 40:160, 1986). It also set the record for late departure, being seen as late as 8 April in 1985 (R. E. Webster, AB 39:351, 1985). Two early spring records are also of birds that possibly wintered locally: Point Loma 9 April 1966 (AFN 20:547, 1966) and Agua Caliente Springs (M26) 9 March 1974 (AB 28:694, 1974). A unique vagrant in late spring was at Point Loma 11 June 2002 (R. E. Webster, NAB 56:358, 2002).

Winter: Six Hepatic Tanagers are known to have wintered in San Diego County. At Poway (M11), one first seen 18 December 1960 was collected 31 December, providing

California's first record of the Hepatic Tanager and San Diego County's only specimen (SDNHM 30257, Huey 1961b). Other sites where the species has wintered are the grounds of the Rosicrucian Fellowship, Oceanside (H5; female in three consecutive winters, 1977–79; male in four consecutive winters, 1978–81), the Mission Hills area of San Diego (R8/R9; 1967–68, AFN 22:480, 1968), Point Loma (male in three consecutive winters, 1983–86), and Bonita (T11; 1987–88, G. McCaskie, AB 42:323, 1988).

Taxonomy: *Piranga f. hepatica* Swainson, 1827, is the subspecies of the Hepatic Tanager reaching California; it ranges from Arizona south through the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico.