

### Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

The Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers are very similar and have often been confused. Detection of the Semipalmated as a rare but regular fall migrant in coastal southern California began only when the identification criteria were well publicized in the late 1970s. In San Diego County, the Semipalmated Sandpiper has been seen mainly in wetlands of fresh or brackish water; it avoids the tidal mudflats of San Diego and Mission bays.

**Migration:** Since 1978, when it was first identified here, the Semipalmated Sandpiper has been found nearly annually in San Diego County, with up to six in the Tijuana River valley 10 August 1980 (AB 35:226, 1981) and three at Batiquitos Lagoon (J7) 15 August 1987 (J. O'Brien). The atlas period from 1997 to 2001 seems to have been typical, yielding four sightings, all of single birds at San Elijo Lagoon (L7): 26 August 1999 (P. A. Ginsburg), 10 August 2000 (G. McCaskie), 21 August 2000 (J. C. Worley), and 22 September 2001 (G. McCaskie). Published dates range



Photo by Richard E. Webster

from 28 July (1991, Batiquitos Lagoon, G. McCaskie, AB 45:1161, 1991) to 24 September (1983, Tijuana River valley, R. E. Webster, AB 38:246, 1984). All records so far have been of juveniles, all within 5 miles of the coast, except for one at the upper end of Lake Hodges (K11) 29 August 1981 (K. L. Weaver).