

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

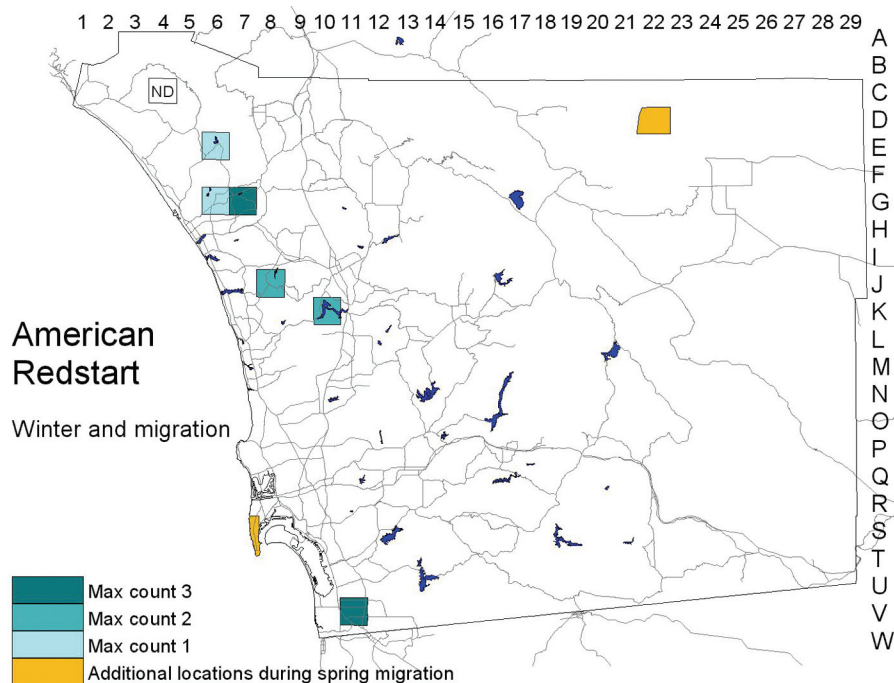
The American Redstart is traditionally regarded as the most frequent of the eastern warblers in California. With scattered pairs now breeding in the northern part of the state, and small numbers wintering annually in the Imperial Valley, the redstart's label as "eastern" is wearing thin. In San Diego County the species occurs most frequently in fall migration, with several found annually. But it is also regular in winter, with an average of about four per year, and in spring migration, with an average of about one per year.

Winter: In San Diego County the American Redstart winters in the coastal lowland, in both ornamental trees and native riparian woodland. The number seen each year through the atlas period varied from one in 1997–98 to nine in 1998–99. The maximum per site is three, at Guajome Lake (G7) 13 December 1998 (S. Grain, P. A. Ginsburg) and at the Dairy Mart pond, Tijuana River valley (V11) 15 December 2001 (G. McCaskie).



Photo by Anthony Mercieca

Migration: In migration redstart records are mainly from the coastal lowland, but there are also several from the Anza-Borrego Desert, for example, of one at Scissors Crossing (J22) 8 September 2000 and one at Lower Willows (D22) 27 May 1999 (P. D. Jorgensen). Fall occurrences begin 11 August (1987, Buena Vista Lagoon, H5, M. and M. Johnson) and peak from mid September through October.



Wintering birds have remained as late as 20 April (2000, Whelan Lake, G6, P. A. Ginsburg). Spring occurrences extend from 24 April (1964, Tijuana River valley, AFN 18:488, 1964) to 27 June (1987, Buena Vista Lagoon, D. B. King) and 30 June (1993, Encinitas, K7, B. E. Daniels, AB 47:1151, 1993), with a peak from mid to late May. Records later in the summer are of one at Point Loma (S7) 9 July 1967 (AFN 21:605, 1967), one at Old Mission Dam (P11) 17 July 1975 (AB 29:1086, 1975), one at Lake Henshaw (G17) 26 July 1998 (R. A. Hamilton, FN 52:504, 1998), and one that apparently returned two consecutive years to the Tijuana River valley, seen 30 July 1989 and 27 May–30 June 1990 (G. McCaskie, J. Oldenettel, AB 43:1369, 1989; 44:1188, 1990).