

Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata*

In the 1960s and 1970s the Blackpoll Warbler was one of the most frequent eastern warblers seen as a fall vagrant to San Diego County, so much so that a birder searching for land birds along the coast from late September to mid October could expect to see one or two. Since then the species' abundance has decreased precipitously, so that by the beginning of the 21st century the average for the county per year was just two to three.

Migration: Recent totals for the Blackpoll Warbler in San Diego County are one in 1999, one in 2000, five in 2001, three in 2002, and two in 2003. Like other eastern warblers, the Blackpoll has been found in the coastal lowland almost exclusively. The county's only fall records elsewhere are of one at Agua Caliente Springs (M26) 4 October 1977 (AB 32:263, 1978) and one at Lake Henshaw (G17) 7 November 1980 (AB 35:228, 1982). The species' fall dates range from 3 September (1973, Otay Mesa, V13, G. McCaskie) to 26 November (1987, Tijuana River valley, E. Copper, AB 42:138, 1988) and 2 December (2003, Guajome Lake, G7, P. A. Ginsburg).

In spring, the county has seven records, three for Point Loma (S7), 21 June 1966 (McCaskie 1970b), 13 May 1982 (R. E. Webster, AB 36: 895, 1982), and 8 May 1985 (R. E. Webster, AB 39:351, 1985), one for the Tijuana River valley, 24 June 1978 (AB 32:1210, 1978), one for Solana Beach (L7), 18–21 May 1991 (P. A. Ginsburg, AB 45:497,



Photo by Anthony Mercieca

1991), one for Santa Ysabel (J18) 21 June 1998 (S. E. Smith), and one for Carrizo Marsh, Anza-Borrego Desert (O29), 18 May 1994 (P. D. Jorgensen, NASFN 48:342, 1994). One at La Jolla (P7) 16–17 July 1998 (S. E. Smith, FN 52:504, 1998) probably never made it to its breeding range.

Conservation: The Blackpoll Warbler's decline in San Diego County may reflect a change in the breeding range. Data from the Breeding Bird Survey 1996–2001 suggest a decline in the breeding population in at least the western end of the species' range, in Alaska and British Columbia (Sauer et al. 2003).