

## NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES — FAMILY ICTERIDAE

**Bobolink** *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

When the Tijuana River valley was covered with alfalfa fields, the Bobolink was a regular fall visitor there. When these fields were abandoned, sightings of the Bobolink in San Diego County almost ceased. Bobolinks reaching the coast of California, however, may all be misoriented immatures; even the birds breeding in eastern Washington and eastern Oregon apparently head far to the east before turning south toward the winter range in South America.

**Migration:** In San Diego County, the great majority of Bobolinks have been seen in the Tijuana River valley. There are only a few records from other sites in the coastal lowland and only one from the Anza-Borrego Desert, of up to two at the Borrego sewage ponds (H25) 13–25 September 1997 (P. D. Jorgensen, FN 52:129, 1998). The Bobolink is, or was, most frequent in late September and early October; fall dates range from 3 September (1973, Tijuana River valley) to 13 November (1976, same location, G. McCaskie).

There are also four records in late spring and summer, one from Point Loma (6 June 1974, AB 28:854, 1974), three from the Tijuana River valley (3 June 1977, AB 31:1049, 1977; 25–26 July 1976, AB 30:1005, 1976; 24 June 1995, NASFN 49:983, 1995).



Photo by Anthony Mercieca

**Conservation:** In the 1960s and 1970s the Bobolink was irregularly common in the Tijuana River valley, with up to 60 between 26 September and 18 October 1969 (AFN 24:100c, 1970). In the 1980s the numbers dropped abruptly. From 1997 through 2003 the only record, besides that at the Borrego sewage ponds, was of three in a small tomato field in the Tijuana River valley (V11) 15 October 2001, with one remaining to 22 October (G. McCaskie).