

Northern Parula *Parula americana*

Unlike many eastern warblers, the Parula occurs in San Diego County at all seasons. It is now more frequent in spring (about two per year) than in fall (about one per year). There are seven winter records, including one of a bird that returned for four successive years. Most interesting, there are over a dozen summer records, of up to three individuals, part of the species' trend toward increase and colonization of California.

Migration: In fall the Northern Parula is rather typical of eastern warblers, occurring largely along the coast, with most records for Point Loma and the Tijuana River valley. Fall dates range from 17 August (1985, Coronado, S9, E. Copper) to 16 November (1975, Tijuana River valley, AB 30:129, 1976). In spring, however, the story is different. Most spring vagrants are late, occurring in late May and early June, but records of the Parula are scattered throughout the season, with several in April, and range from 24 March (Borrego Springs, G24, 24 March 1978, AB 32:1056, 1978) to 4 June (1989, Point Loma, D. M. Parker, AB 43:538, 1989). Most spring records are from Point Loma, but there are also three for the Anza-Borrego Desert, with one 2.5 miles south of Ocotillo Wells (J28) 5 May 2000 (J. R. Barth) and another in Borrego Palm Canyon (F23) 14 May 2001 (R. Waayers).

Breeding distribution: Even though the Parula has not been confirmed breeding in San Diego County, it has nested repeatedly along the coast of northern California and as near San Diego County as the San Bernardino Mountains (Patten and Marantz 1996, AB 46:1179, 1992). Since 1988, when one was near the Forest Service's San Luis Rey Picnic Ground (G16) 22 May (M. and B. McIntosh, P. Unitt), San Diego County has had at least 16 Parulas from June to mid July, all in native riparian or coniferous woodland. The species recurred along the San Luis Rey River near the Forest Service picnic ground in 2000 and 2001, with three singing males maintaining adjacent territories 10 June–4 July 2001 (W. E. Haas). A



Photo by Anthony Mercieca

pair was along Agua Dulce Creek, Laguna Mountains (O23), 11 June–4 July 1992 (T. Clawson, AB 46:1179, 1992). Nine additional locations for single individuals are scattered around the county from the San Luis Rey River near Pala (D10; 12 July 1991, E. R. Lichtwardt, AB 45:1162, 1991; 4–7 July 2000, D. Bylin, W. E. Haas) south to Jamul Creek (T15; 8 June 1999, P. Unitt) and east to San Felipe Creek at Scissors Crossing (J23; 5 July 2002, J. R. Barth, NAB 56:487, 2002) and La Posta Creek near La Posta Service (S23; 15 June 2000, L. J. Hargrove).

Winter: San Diego County's seven winter Parulas have all been in the coastal lowland. None was during the five-year atlas period, but one appeared the following winter at Santee (P12) 26 December 2002–2 January 2003 (M. B. Mulrooney, NAB 57:258, 2003). One returned to the San Diego Zoo (R9) for four consecutive winters 1988–91 (AB 45:322, 1991).

Conservation: Since 1972, the Northern Parula's frequency in California in spring and summer, like that of several warblers of the southeastern United States, has increased significantly. The Parula was a major participant in the irruption of southeastern warblers to California in 1992. Evidence for various factors explaining these events is still equivocal (Patten and Marantz 1996).