

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

The Red Phalarope is the most pelagic of the three phalaropes, rarely found on land except when driven onshore by storms. The Red Phalarope's abundance is notably irregular: usually the species is rare, but large flocks are occasional. Such concentrations may appear abruptly at any time in fall, winter, or spring.

Migration: In San Diego County the Red Phalarope occurs mainly from October to early May, but dates range from 23 July (1935, "abundant offshore," Miller 1936) to 29 May (1964, one on San Diego Bay, G. McCaskie). There are only a few inland records, of scattered single individuals, except on 11 November 1982, when 60 were on Lake Henshaw (G17; G. McCaskie) and over 100 were on Lake Hodges (K10/K11; K. L. Weaver, AB

37:224, 1983). The only Red Phalarope reported from the Anza–Borrego Desert was near Borrego Springs 7 March 1992 (K. Ellsworth, AB 46:480, 1992).

Winter: The Red Phalarope is just as frequent along San Diego County’s coast in winter as during migration. From 1997 to 2002 the only significant influx was in early January 2001. At least 5000 were on the ocean within 5 miles of La Jolla (P7) 1 January 2001 (S. Walens, NAB 55:228, 2001), and 80 were visible from Torrey Pines State Reserve (N7) 7 January 2001 (D. K. Adams). The species’ irregularity is exemplified by the results of San Diego Christmas bird counts. The Red Phalarope was noted on 30 of 50 counts 1953–2002 with a median of 2, a mean of 95, and a maximum of 2032, the last on 21 December 1963.



Photo by Anthony Mercieca