

WESTERN TANAGER



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EFFECTS ON BIRDS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S WILDFIRES

—BY PHIL UNITT

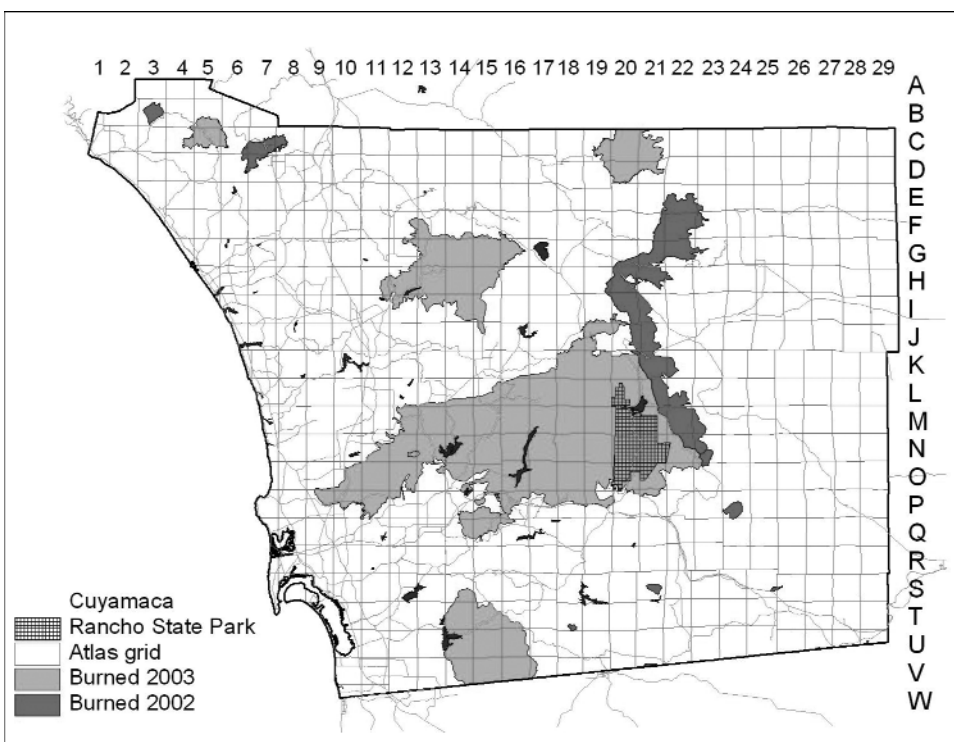


Fig. 1. Areas of San Diego County burned in 2002 and 2003.

Wildfires unequaled anywhere in California for at least a century struck San Diego County in 2002 and 2003, burning 738 square miles, almost 25% of the area of the county still covered by natural vegetation (see fig. 1).

The Pines fire of July/August 2002, at the time, the second largest fire in San Diego County history, which consumed 51 square miles

mainly on the east slope of the Peninsular Ranges.

Then in October 2003, the Paradise, Otay, and Cedar fires burned much of the coastal slope. The Cedar fire cut a swath 40 miles long from Miramar east to Mount Laguna, where it went out when it burned into the zone burned by the Pines fire the year before. The conflagrations killed 17 people, compelled the evacuation of thousands,

burned 2454 houses, and shut the business of the city of San Diego down for two days. From a human perspective the firestorm was the most pervasive disaster in San Diego County history.

Some of southern California's habitats, especially the chaparral, are adapted to fire. But our knowledge of the effects of fire on the region's native plants and animals are based on fires far smaller than those of 2002 and 2003. How do birds respond to an environmental upheaval covering hundreds of square miles?

The Pines fire burned shortly after the completion of the five years of field work for the San Diego County bird atlas, and the atlas serves as a standard for evaluating the fires' effects. Many of the volunteers participating in the atlas were interested in following up those effects in the areas they had so recently studied. We established 32 survey routes within the Pines fire's perimeter, plus 4 in unburned habitat nearby. The routes varied in length from about one to three miles, and each was walked in the same direction seven times a year (three in winter, four in the breeding season) on a regular schedule, almost always by the same observers. The routes

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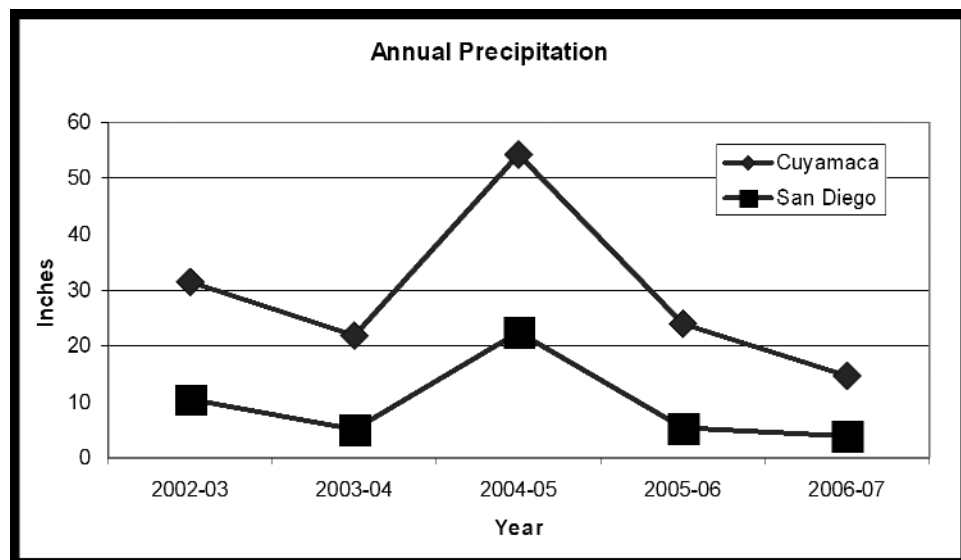


Fig. 2. Variation in rainfall, 2002-2007

covered primarily chaparral, oak woodland, and desert-edge scrub, but two had significant riparian woodland. We continued the surveys in the same way each year for five years. Thus, taken together, the results of the survey give a broad view of the effects of the fire over the short and medium term.

The Cedar fire burned the Cuyamaca Mountains almost entirely, skipping over only small enclaves. The coniferous forest in those mountains was almost completely isolated from other forests in southern California, so I suspected that the fire's effect there might be particularly severe. The forest was a habitat not well covered by the study of the Pines fire (its name notwithstanding), so we added five survey routes in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, plus one unburned route in Palomar State Park for comparison—there was no unburned area left in the Cuyamaca Mountains large enough to accommodate a survey route of an adequate length. We continued the Cuyamaca surveys for five years also, from 2004 through 2008. I also added three burned routes and one unburned route in chaparral

and oak woodland within the Cleveland National Forest, covering them for four years from 2005 through 2008.

In the short term, the fires changed the composition of the bird community radically. If the results of the study could be captured in a single sentence, though, it would be that almost every type of response imaginable was exemplified by some species or another. The species can be assigned to three broad categories: fire followers (species more numerous in burned habitat than in unburned), fire fugitives (species more numerous in unburned habitat than in burned), and fire neutral. The patterns of changes from year to year cut across those categories. Some species increased (recovered) over the study, others decreased, and many followed more complex patterns. For each species, I compared its patterns of change in the burned areas with its pattern in the unburned areas, to try to distinguish patterns of change related to postfire succession from patterns related to other factors like variation in rainfall. Strikingly, the number of fire-following species was roughly similar to the number of fire fugitives.

Understanding birds' responses in the years following the fires requires that the pattern of rainfall in those years be taken into account. The first winter after the Pines fire, 2002–03, was relatively wet; the next year, the first winter after the Cedar fire, 2003–04, was dry. Then 2004–05 was exceptionally wet, and 2005–06 and 2006–07 were dry, the last extremely so (see fig. 2).

Understanding birds' responses also requires an understanding of the diverse responses of the plants making up the diverse habitats burned. Riparian woodland was very quick to regrow. Most coast live oaks and Engelmann oaks, even if stripped of foliage, survived the fire and resprouted from their branches. In chaparral, in the first spring after the fire, fire-following herbs and subshrubs such as *Phacelia* species, deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), and golden eardrops (*Dicentra chrysantha*) proliferated, generating stunning displays of wildflowers. After two years resprouting shrubs began to dominate again, but in 2007, after two years of drought, many of these were dying back. In the coniferous forest, habitat change was profound. Nearly all conifers were killed, and the rate of resprouting was extremely low, as documented by the studies of Janet Franklin and her students at SDSU (Franklin et al. 2006). The trunks of black oaks were killed but the roots were not, and those trees resprouted from their bases—a process much slower than the resprouting of the coast live oak. In the first two years after fire the bare floor of the forest was colonized and dominated by the short-lived fire follower the sticky nama (*Turricula parryi*), then the large shrub *Ceanothus palmeri* took over, growing in vast impenetrable thickets under the dead trunks, which began gradually to fall. Thus the

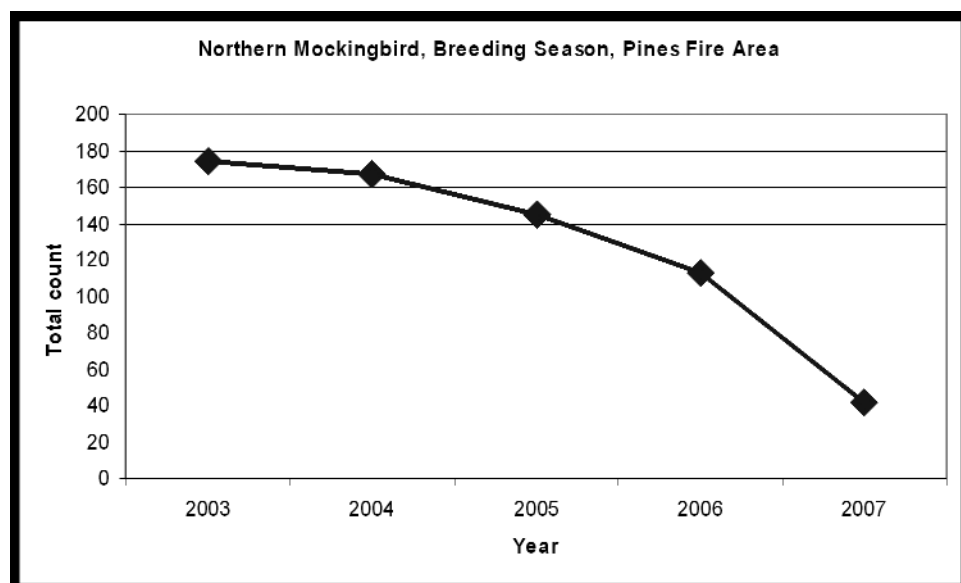


Fig. 3. Numbers of the Northern Mockingbird in the Pines fire area during the breeding season, 2003–2007

former forest of the Cuyamaca Mountains changed into chaparral.

We began the Pines fire study in December 2002, just five months after the fire and before any growing season had intervened. The ground was still nearly bare and birds were extremely few. But that winter brought adequate rain, growth of plants the next spring was vigorous, and good numbers of some species of birds moved in. The early colonizers included the Mourning Dove, Mountain Quail, House Finch, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Northern Mockingbird, and Lazuli Bunting. The dove, goldfinch, mockingbird, and bunting were their most abundant that first year, then dwindled away (see fig. 3). For a bird like the Mourning Dove that feeds on bare ground, there was more habitat in that first year, less as the shrubs regrew. Lawrence's Goldfinch prefers as a food seeds of plants of the family Boraginaceae, such as popcornflower (*Cryptantha* and *Plagiobothrys* spp.), which proliferated over the burned soil (see fig. 4). The sudden appearance of numbers of mockingbirds may surprise those who think of it as a sedentary species

of gardens and orchards, but there is precedent: after two wet winters in the 1950s, Gale Monson reported that in western Arizona "Mockingbirds, Western Meadowlarks, and other species appeared 'from nowhere' and nested abundantly" (Phillips et al. 1964). That mockingbirds were drawn into the burned area from a broad range is attested by an observation of one of our participants, Mary Beth Stowe: a mockingbird whose song included the characteristic "whit-wheet!" of the



Fig. 4. Lawrence's Goldfinch feeding on seeds of popcornflower.
Photo by Mary Beth Stowe.

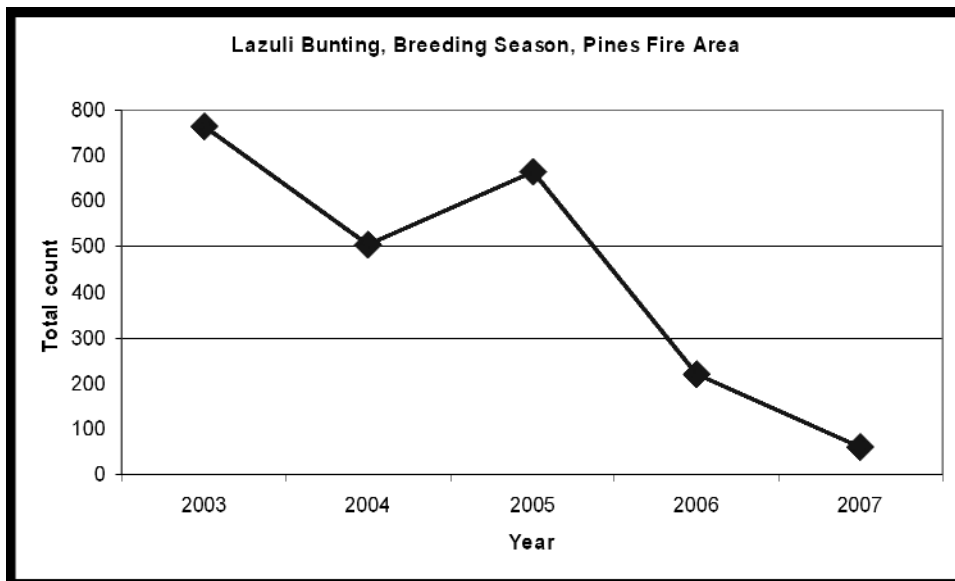


Fig. 5. Numbers of the Lazuli Bunting in the Pines fire area, 2003–2007.

Curve-billed Thrasher—resident only 125 miles or more to the east.

The Lazuli Bunting presents a paradox. Its migration is clearly driven by the calendar: every year the first birds arrive within a window of less than a week around 1 April. Yet large numbers colonized newly burned areas the first spring after each fire, as seen in 2003, 2004, and 2008. How does the Lazuli Bunting accommodate instincts both to migrate by the calendar and to search for newly burned habitat? And it must find that habitat quickly, since its breeding season is short. Other nomadic birds have far more flexible migration schedules. In chaparral, in both the Pines fire and Cedar fire areas, numbers of the Lazuli Bunting also declined in the years following the fire but not uniformly: there was a substantial jump up in 2005, after the wet winter (see fig. 5). Evidently the Lazuli Bunting's nomadism encompasses taking advantage of variation in rainfall as well as exploiting burned areas. In the burned forest of Cuyamaca, the Lazuli Bunting rose to become the most abundant species in 2005 and 2006, and by 2008 had dropped in rank only to number

three, after the House Wren and Lesser Goldfinch. Evidently the vast thicket of *Ceanothus palmeri* carpeting the burned forest met the bunting's needs longer than the burned chaparral.

Some other birds more abundant in burned chaparral took two or three years to reach their peak. These included the Loggerhead Shrike, Mountain Quail, and Rufous-crowned and Black-chinned Sparrows. The California Quail was apparently still increasing even five years after the Pines fire, becoming the most abundant bird in that area. The Black-chinned Sparrow increased spectacularly, going from only a few the first year after the fire to the fifth most abundant species just two years later. In 2006 and 2007 the Black-chinned Sparrow was the most abundant bird along the Cedar fire routes in the Cleveland National Forest. It became common in the stand of *Ceanothus palmeri* in Cuyamaca—where there were only a few before the fire.

In winter, the numbers of several species that preferred the burned habitats seesawed with rainfall. That

is, their numbers were high one year after a wet winter and low one year after a dry winter. Most of these birds were nomadic or migratory granivores: the Lesser Goldfinch and Lark, Savannah, White-crowned, Chipping, and Brewers' Sparrows. It makes sense that more seeds were left to sustain these birds in the winter after a good growing season. Interestingly, this pattern applies to the Yellow-rumped Warbler and House Wren also (see fig. 6). Lincoln's Sparrow followed a unique pattern, with a rise to a sharp peak in the winter of 2005–06 then decrease to almost nothing. We saw this irruption of Lincoln's Sparrows in all three study areas, including Cuyamaca. Previously, Lincoln's Sparrow was not known to winter in southern California at so high an elevation (4500–5500 feet), yet counts along a single Cuyamaca route ranged as high as 26 in February 2006. In any case, it appears that opportunism in taking advantage of wet years and opportunism in taking advantage of burned areas are linked.

Many species in diverse habitats, however, were affected adversely by the fires, being more numerous along the unburned routes than along the burned ones. In desert-edge scrub the negatively affected species included the Greater Roadrunner, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Scott's Oriole, and Cactus Wren. The poor response and poor recovery of the last became a much greater cause of alarm when the fires of 2007 consumed the core habitat of the San Diego Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis*) in the San Pasqual region of central San Diego County.

In chaparral, species that were affected especially negatively were the Bushtit, Wrentit, Bewick's Wren, and California Thrasher. One coarse

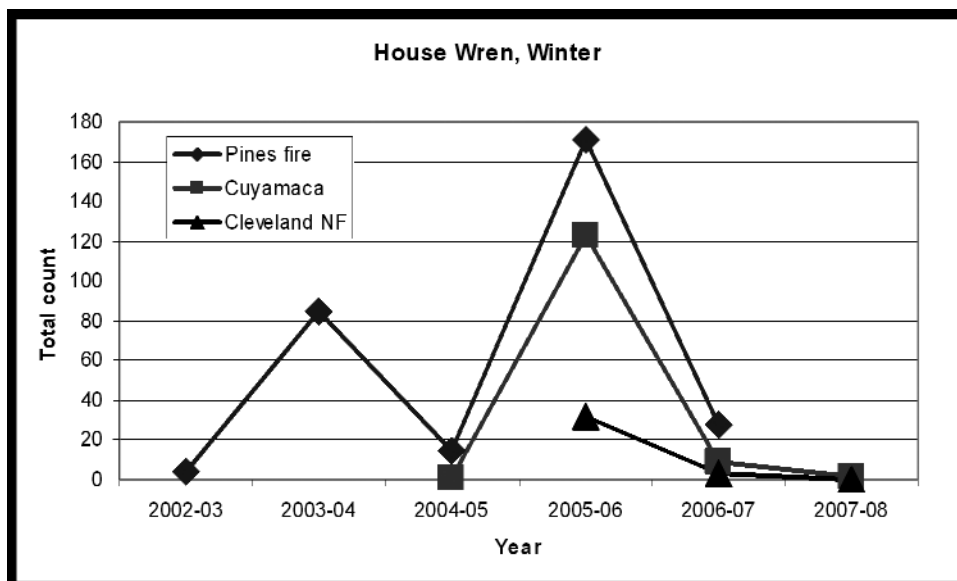


Fig. 6. Numbers of the House Wren in burned areas of San Diego County in winter, 2002-2008.

gauge of the fires' effect on these birds can be seen by comparing the number of atlas squares in which they were seen before the fire and each year subsequently (see fig. 7). The Pines fire study covered 17 atlas squares, and all four of these normally common and widespread species were found in all 17 before the fire. After the fire they were greatly reduced but recovered at different rates. Reoccupation of the range at the scale of an atlas square (three miles on a side), though, is far from complete recovery. After five years the numbers of each of these species was much less than expected in mature chaparral.

In oak woodland negatively affected species include the Acorn and Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Oak Titmouse, and Hutton's Vireo. The vireo is one of the worst affected of all species, with almost none reoccupying former habitat even five years after the fire.

Most birds of the coniferous forest canopy were affected negatively. Especially severe were the reductions of Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, and Pygmy Nuthatch. The last two,

once abundant, are almost absent from the burned forest. Certainly a species like the Pygmy Nuthatch, specialized for foraging in clusters of living pine needles, has no more habitat where living pine needles are almost totally eliminated. Species that nest in the canopy, such as the Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak, lack sites in which their nests can be concealed or shaded. They returned to their habitat the first summer after the Cedar fire in 2004, but their numbers dropped about in half the following year.

The Cuyamaca Mountains mark the southern tip of the range of the White-headed Woodpecker and Brown Creeper. Since the Cedar fire numbers of both have been very small, though continuous through five years. If they can not survive over the long term, however, it will mean a permanent contraction of their ranges. The tops of the Cuyamaca Mountains barely pierce the elevational breeding range of several species such as the Dusky Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, Fox Sparrow, and Red-breasted Sapsucker. Breeding populations of these were not

known from the mountains historically but only since the 1970s or 1980s. Possibly the increased density of a forest that had not burned in 100 years, with increased density of fire-intolerant trees like the white fir and incense cedar, allowed these birds to colonize lower than their normal elevational limit. A century of fire suppression may have facilitated their colonization. Now that the fire has come, their responses varied. The Red-breasted Sapsucker and Red-breasted Nuthatch were apparently eliminated, the Green-tailed Towhee and Fox Sparrow have become irregular, yet the Yellow-rumped Warbler and Dusky Flycatcher have persisted in small but apparently stable numbers.

Although much of the area within the fires' perimeters burned totally, small unburned or lightly burned enclaves were scattered within it. These may be critical to birds' survival through the fire and repopulation after the fire—they were often nuclei of bird activity. A more intensive study focusing on the role of unburned enclaves would be worthwhile.

At the end of the study in 2008, many species were not on a trajectory to recovery, their numbers having peaked in the third or fourth year after the fire rather than the last. Two successive years of drought took their toll on the birds as well as their habitat. This observation leads me to conclude that if the fires are contained within historical patterns of rainfall, their negative effects will at some point be made up. But if the fires mark a shift toward a drier climate, the numbers and in some cases the ranges of some species will be permanently reduced. Such a reduction will be even more severe if the fires are repeated at intervals as close as that between the wildfires of 2003 and

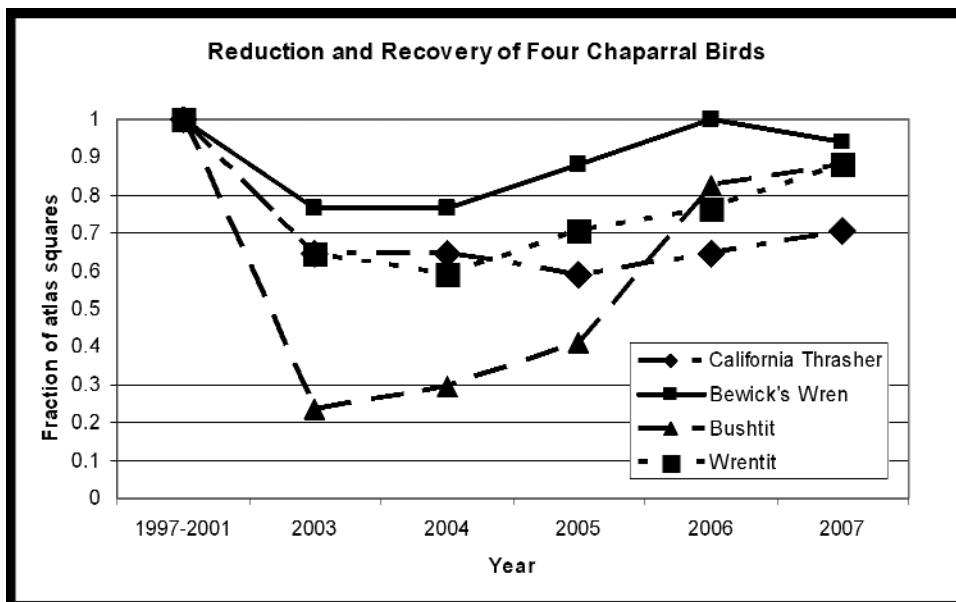


Fig. 7. Reoccupation of the Pines fire area by the California Thrasher, Bushtit, Wrentit, and Bewick's Wren on the scale of a 3 x 3-mile atlas square.

2007; the latter returned a substantial area burned just four years earlier.

Thank you to the sponsors of the study, the U.S. Forest Service, Joint Fire Science Program, and California State Parks. And thank you to the 40 volunteer observers whose dedication to a consistent effort over five years made the study possible.

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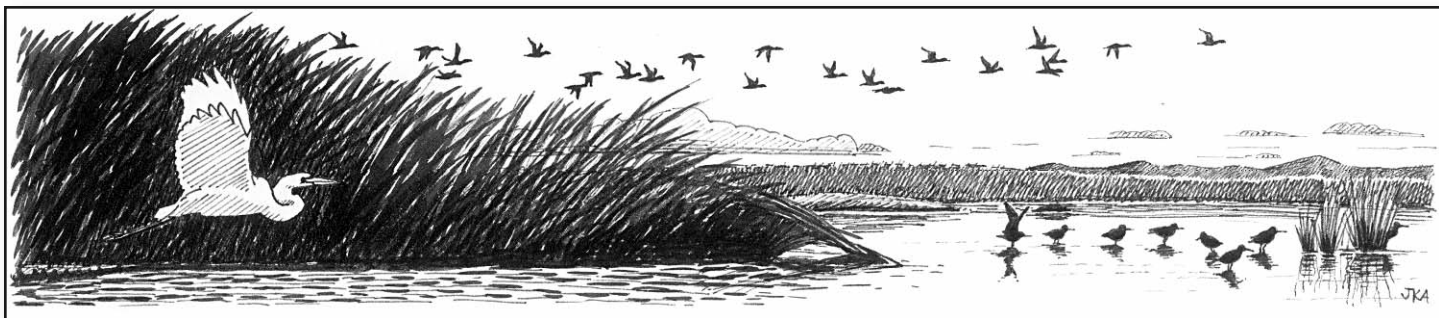
We are asking our friends and supporters to be on the lookout for new lodgings options for us! As we will be closing the bookstore, our new office requirements will be minimal: 150 sq. ft. of office space for two part-time staff and basic office equipment: two desks, two computers, a printer, a fax machine, a copy machine and a filing cabinet).

We are flexible and so can be creative! We would entertain: a small office space in a larger office building; a mother-in-law unit in a home; a converted garage; or, a room in a social club. Of course, free rent is a real plus, but not absolutely necessary!

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Mary Loquvam, Executive Director
Los Angeles Audubon



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

—BY GARRY GEORGE

ECONOMICS AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

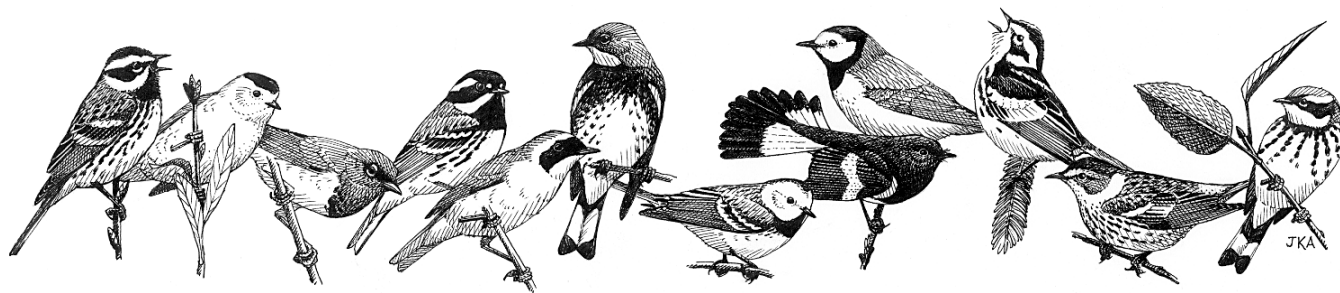
The current economic crisis has changed the equation on the environment. The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and Press, January 7-11 shows that protecting the environment as a priority has declined from 56% of people interviewed in 2008 to 41% of people interviewed in 2009. Protecting the environment has dropped as a priority to 16th place behind the economy, energy, health insurance, terrorism, jobs and other issues. Although that picture might be different in California where protection of the environment always ranks higher than in the U.S. at large, it does show a shifting priority that increases the challenges for those of us who are dedicated to protecting habitat and wildlife. The only good outcome in the current economic crisis is that Southern California sprawl has been slowed due to a drop in home buyers and available mortgages, but when the economy picks up again development will increase. Sprawl has also been dealt a blow by recent legislation SB375 (Steinberg) the “sustainable communities” law which encourages urban redevelopment near transportation sources over sprawl.

The Obama administration is focused on mitigating climate change

and reducing our dependence on foreign energy. The stimulus package extends tax breaks and funding for renewable energy that will accelerate the “green rush” we are already experiencing in wind, solar, geothermal and related transmission line and distribution infrastructure projects. What used to be a business of a few million has now grown to trillions of dollars in investment. While environmentalists applaud these projects to reduce green house gases and pollution from coal, the truth for Los Angeles Audubon is that the “environment” is more than clean air and clean water. The “environment” includes our habitat and wildlife in a diverse ecology, and Audubon is one of the few loud and clear voices to remind energy policy makers and developers that “going green” for us doesn’t mean “giving up green.” Our natural resources are finite and loss of habitat – pristine, natural, agricultural or seemingly “degraded” – is the number one cause of decline of birds and biodiversity. Here in Southern California we face a record 163 applications to the BLM for wind projects in the Mojave Desert on ridges that are also the home of 100 Golden Eagle nests, a species that is nest faithful and may need a 3 – 5 mile buffer zone to protect the fledglings from flying into turbines. The fledglings, poor flyers, use the

strongest wind currents when they are learning to fly. We face applications for huge solar plants in the Mojave and at Carrizo Plains. We face applications to build transmission lines to bring renewable energy to urban centers like Los Angeles through Big Morongo Canyon, Joshua Tree, Anza Borrego and other Important Bird Areas that we love. We also face a Governor who favors eliminating environmental review in order to speed up infrastructure projects. While we are all tightening our belts for a rough ride on the economy, let’s be careful not to trade our natural resources in the hopes of a quick fix to solve economic or global warming problems. Los Angeles Audubon’s mission is to enjoy and protect birds and other wildlife through recreation, education, conservation and restoration. We will continue to be strategic and work to find solutions to conflicts on a policy and advocacy level, but we will always advocate for what’s best to protect and nurture our natural world, especially our birds and their diminishing habitat.

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BIRDS OF THE SEASON

—BY JON FISHER

With 2008 under our belts, perhaps literally as well as figuratively, after the usual holiday food overload, it's time to look forward to a new year of birding—and to reflect on the last couple of months, of course...

Following a dry November with above average temperatures, the change of seasons boldly announced itself in early December with a surprisingly strong winter storm. Snow blanketed many low-elevation areas, snarled traffic and generally provided great fodder for local news outlets. In fact it really did feel like winter and looked like a promising start to the rainy season. Unfortunately, while temperatures remained seasonably cool in the ensuing weeks, minimal rainfall continued the pattern of the last few years.

Weather aside, the end of fall migration marks the beginning of the 'winter vagrant' season, in which lingering or wintering rarities continue to be discovered by industrious birders. As usual, this period produced an assortment of unusual warblers, flycatchers and others; many persuaded to stay by our mild climate and widespread exotic plantings. Added to this was the saturation coverage generated by Christmas Bird Counts which also turned up a handful of new and notable birds.

Of interest was the near total absence of irregular and irruptive species this fall and winter. Potential but unpredictable visitors such as Lewis's Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Mountain Bluebirds and Golden-crowned Kinglets went virtually unreported.

While each winter is different in subtle or significant ways from the last, it's a given that there will be plenty of interesting birds to be found...

Small numbers of geese other than ubiquitous Canadas were found. Three **Snow Geese** at the dry Rio Hondo Spreading Ponds on December 7 (Larry Schmahl) were the only new ones reported, while another individual continued in Willowbrook. As usual, a few **White-fronted** and **Ross's Geese** were in the county and over a half dozen **Cackling Geese** were also reported. Scarce in winter coastally was a single **Brant** at Marina del Rey on January 4.

A handful of **Eurasian Wigeons** typically occur in the county each winter. Reports included single birds at Castaic Lagoon on November 24 (Mike San Miguel), at Peck Pit in Arcadia from November 25-27 (Ed Stonick), along the LA River in Glendale from December 4-26 (Doug Martin) and at the Woodley Lakes Golf Course in Van Nuys from December 21-January 2. Virtually

all records are of males, though the easily overlooked females are undoubtedly present in small numbers.

Two remarkable waterfowl records came from Quail Lake near Gorman, a rather remote yet easily accessible reservoir that is a magnet for both common and rare birds. One was an overdue first verified county record of **Barrow's Goldeneye**. This bird remained at Quail Lake at least from November 28-30 among the dozens of Common Goldeneyes (Kimball Garrett).

Another very unusual discovery on the lake was a **Black Scoter** observed from December 4-19 (Jon Dunn). This significant record represents the first non-coastal record for the county. Elsewhere, three Black Scoters were much more expected at Marina del Rey from December 27-January 3 (Vic Warren, Martin Myers) and a single **White-winged Scoter** was off Dockweiler Beach in El Segundo from November 18-December 9 (Richard Barth).

Away from expected locations were a **Common Goldeneye** in Lincoln Heights from December 18-20 (Tom Miko) and a **Greater Scaup** at Hansen Dam on December 8 (Kim Hardesty).

Hooded Mergansers were present in good numbers and widely reported. There was also a notable

record of one hundred **Common Mergansers**- generally occurring only in small numbers on the coastal slope- at Morris Reservoir in San Gabriel Canyon on December 31 (Andrew Lee).

A **Pacific Loon** at Quail Lake from November 28-December 30 was the only one reported away from the coast (Kimball Garrett).

Several **Bald Eagles** were found in the county with one at Elizabeth Lake on December 7 (Nick & Mary Freeman), one and then two at Bonelli Park in San Dimas between December 14-29 (Rod Higbie), and the latest being one at Legg Lake in South El Monte from January 6-12 (Steve Wolfe).

Expected in the Antelope Valley but rare coastally was a **Ferruginous Hawk** back for a second winter in Arcadia as of November 23 (Andrew Lee). Surprisingly there were no subsequent sightings of this bird. Another returning Ferruginous was back in the Playa del Rey area on November 29 and remained through the period (Jonathan Coffin).

A **Prairie Falcon** at Castaic Lake on November 13 was the only report away from the deserts (Jim Hardesty).

Mountain Plovers continued to be reported in the Antelope Valley the fields along Ave. I east of 90th Street East. A high count of sixty-seven birds was made on December 29 (Andrew Lee).

Rare but regular in late summer and fall but rare so late was a **White-winged Dove** at a feeder in Baldwin Hills on November 25 (Ann & Eric Brooks).

A **Spotted Owl** found in Big

Santa Anita Canyon near Arcadia on December 20 was assurance that at least a pair or two persist here (Ron Cyger).

Four **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were present, with birds at the Village Green Condos in Los Angeles from November 17-January 4, at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood from December 30-January 4 (both Don Sterba), at Forest Lawn Glendale on December 12 (Richard Barth) and on the LA CBC on January 4 at Lindberg Park in Culver City (Lisa Fimiani, Tracy Drake).

While there are plenty of wintering yellow-winged intergrade Northern Flickers that show some "yellow-shafted" characters, very few are pure "**Yellow-shafted Northern Flickers**". However, one bird at Lower Arroyo Park in Pasadena on January 5 appeared to fit the bill (John Garrett).

Just a few *Empidonax* were around with a returning **Gray Flycatcher** continuing at Bonelli Park and two more on the Pasadena CBC on December 20; one at Hahamongna Watershed Park (Lance Benner) and one at Lacy Park in San Marino (John Garrett). A silent '**Western**' type **Flycatcher** was also on the Pasadena CBC at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino on December 20 (John DeModena). The most recent report was a **Hammond's Flycatcher** in Long Beach on January 3 (Kevin Larson).

Returning for its second winter at Creek Park in La Mirada was a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** present from November 25-December 16 (Jonathan Rowley).

With only a very few records for the county, an easy to see **Thick-billed Kingbird** at the South Coast

Botanic Garden (SCBG) from December 7-January 2 generated quite a bit of interest (Ed Griffin). **Western Kingbirds**, still quite rare in winter, were at Griffith Park on November 30 (Dan Cooper) and at Santa Fe Dam on December 13 (Andrew Lee).

Extremely rare in winter was a **Bell's Vireo** found at the SCBG on January 6 (Steve Wolfe). In addition, a number of expected **Plumbeous Vireos** were scattered around the coastal slope along with at least seven of the rarer- in winter- **Cassin's Vireos** reported. The most noteworthy of these was found on the chilly Lancaster CBC on December 20 (Mary & Nick Freeman).

A **Brown Creeper** at Elysian Park on November 18 and two there on December 30 indicated some movement away from known breeding areas (Richard Barth).

Only five **Varied Thrushes** were found, with two at Buckhorn on November 23 (Dany Sloan), two more in Malibu Canyon on December 14 (Richard Barth) and one at the SCBG on January 2 (Graham Langley).

A previously discovered **Red-throated Pipit** continued in the productive Santa Fe Dam basin through November 16 (Andrew Lee).

Always scarce in winter were two **Nashville Warblers**; one was at Castaic Lake on the December 28 Santa Clarita CBC and another was on the USC Campus on January 2 (both Kimball Garrett).

Hermit Warblers, rare but regular in winter, were at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino on November 23, at nearby Lacy Park on November 25 (both John Garrett) and at

El Dorado Park in Long Beach on December 31 (Mary Freeman).

A nice find was a **Pine Warbler** discovered on December 6 at the Whittier Narrows area in South El Monte remained to be included on the Pasadena CBC on December 20 (Andrew Lee).

Regular as a vagrant in spring and fall but a true rarity in winter was a **Yellow-throated Warbler** along the LA River in Glendale from December 14-January 5 (Mike San Miguel).

Other warblers of note included a **Palm Warbler** in Westlake Village from December 7-14 (Mark & Janet Scheel), a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** along San Jose Creek on the Pasadena CBC on December 20 (Jon Feenstra) and a **Magnolia Warbler** along the San Gabriel River in Downey from December 27-January 5 (Larry Schmahl).

Two **Black-and-white Warblers** were found, one at College of the Canyons on Santa Clarita CBC on December 28 (Bobby Walsh) and the other at El Segundo Library Park on January (Richard Barth).

Spending its fourth winter at Bonelli Park in San Dimas, the nearly impossible to miss **Painted Redstart** continued through the period, while a second Painted Redstart back for its fourth winter was at Monrovia Canyon from early November through January 1 (Terry Basey).

At least eight **Summer Tanagers** were reported during the period, all on the coastal slope.

Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale continued to produce interesting sparrows thanks to an abundance of

good habitat there this fall and winter. Two **Vesper Sparrows** and a **Swamp Sparrow** were there on December 13, while a **Clay-colored Sparrow** found earlier continued through November 16. Another Swamp Sparrow returning for a second winter at Bonelli Park was first seen on November 18 (all Andrew Lee).

White-throated Sparrows were at DeForest Park on January 3 and near Culver City on the LA CBC on January 4 (both Kevin Larson).

Among the many Oregon and fewer Slate-colored Juncos were single **Gray-headed Juncos** at El Cariso Park in Sylmar on November 26 (Doug Martin), at Bonelli Park on December 29 (Jon Fisher) and in Griffith Park on January 4 (Marie Vester).

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at Woodlawn Cemetery in Santa Monica on November 22 (Richard Barth). Another was found at the Arboretum in Arcadia for the Pasadena CBC on December 20 (Linda LeRoy) and a third turned up near Culver City on the LA CBC on January 4 (Dan Cooper). Common as a migrant and summer visitor, but quite rare in winter was a **Black-headed Grosbeak** at Greystone Park in Beverly Hills on December 8 (Richard Barth).

Baltimore Orioles were at the Los Angeles National Cemetery on November 29 (Richard Barth), in Culver City on January 4 (Mike San Miguel) and at West LA College on January 5 (Don Sterba).

There were only a couple of reports of **Red Crossbills** away from the higher mountains with twenty at Apollo Park on December 20 (Kimball Garrett) and ten at Pearblossom

Park in the Antelope Valley on December 29 (Andrew Lee).

As we start a new calendar year, so does a new bird year begin. After a brief respite, a number of birds will be on the move by late January while we're still technically in mid-winter. February and March will be a time to watch for early passerine migrants and a chance to see flocks of Swainson's Hawks passing overhead. With the exception of swallows, north-bound passerines won't appear in numbers until mid-March but after that the volume will only increase through late April.

Pacific Loons, Brant and Surf Scoters will be streaming up the coast and shorebirds will be seen in more colorful alternate plumages. Even dirt common Yellow-rumps look quite smart in their breeding colors.

As the spectacle of migration plays out, LA County birders will be scrambling to cover as much territory as possible in a few short months. From coastal promontories to desert oases there will be a wealth of birds to be found. With transients passing through, wintering birds departing, summer visitors starting to arrive and a few vagrants, spring offers a bit of everything.



BIRD WALK REPORTS

—BY ELEANOR OSGOOD

FRANKLIN CANYON

Sunday, January 11, was a beautiful day in this oak woodland riparian habitat. The clear, beautiful skies that Los Angeles had been experiencing for several weeks remained but temperatures were climbing. The shade of the trees and the protection of the canyon made for a very pleasant bird walk on side trails as well as around the lake and to the pond.

Adjacent to the parking lot, Acorn Woodpeckers were flying from tree to tree in their typical raucous manner flashing their white wing patches. In the same area, a male Anna's Hummingbird was flashing an iridescent red head and throat. Near the pond in a secluded spot under an old oak tree we could spot a covey of California Quail scurrying around in the brush; California Towhees, Song Sparrows, Western Scrubjays and Spotted Towhees were scratching for bugs and seed in the leaf litter. In the background we could hear the call of the Wrentit. In the past we have heard a California Thrasher singing in this area. The Wood Ducks are always a thrill to watch in the pond. On this day they were accompanied by several Ring-necked Ducks along with the usual Mallards and American Coots. The lake held Pied-billed Grebes and Ruddy Ducks. Usually we see herons and egrets but none appeared on this day.

The next walk will be in March when some of our resident birds will be engaging in courtship displays and song. We may even be able to observe nest building by some of our early nesting, resident birds.

KENNETH HAHN STATE PARK RECREATION AREA

The highlight of our walk on Saturday, January 17, was at the lake; we got a glimpse of two Pied-billed Grebes engaging in a partial courtship display, briefly intertwining their necks and spreading their wings after which they rapidly parted and returned to their solitary swimming. Sharing the lake with the grebes were two first year Double-crested Cormorants, a Great Egret and several Ring-necked Ducks along with the usual American Coots and motley Mallards.

On past walks we've seen the Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Herons, Snowy Egret and Great Blue Heron (On this walk the Great Blue Heron was quite a ways from the water resting in the protection of the brush on the outskirts of the park), and American Wigeon and Lesser Scaups.

This was a great day to practice "birding-by-ear"—many birds were more audible than visible. The Lesser Goldfinches were both calling and singing; Song Sparrows were singing practically everywhere; and of course Yellow-rumped Warblers were chipping all around us.

Other winter regulars seen on this winter walk were Northern Flicker, Western Meadowlark, Dark-eyed Junco, Ruby-crowned Kinglet along with the resident birds such Red-tailed and Cooper's Hawks, both Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, Black Phoebe and Say's Phoebe, California Towhee and Brewer's Blackbird.

We had to really work for our birds and we missed some expected species, but we had beautiful weather and a great walk.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Los Angeles Audubon to offer a 3 day **Beginning Bird Watching Class, May 2009**

Leader/Instructor:
Eleanor Osgood,
Los Angeles Audubon Society

WHEN, WHERE, HOURS

Saturday, May 2, 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.,
Workshop, Plummer Park, West Hollywood
Saturday, May 9, 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.,
field practice, Kenneth Hahn State Park,
Baldwin Hills
Sunday, May 17, 8:30a.m. - 11:00 a.m.,
field practice, Franklin Canyon

Sessions are geared towards participants with beginning and low intermediate bird identification skills.

Areas covered:

- Basic tools: Field Guides, Binoculars
- Field Identification: Bird Families, Field Marks, Habitat, Status and Distribution
- Conservation & Citizen Science

The class will include handouts, practice sheets, and a Los Angeles Audubon Nature Store coupon that is good for 10% off on non-sale items and 5% off on optics. Binoculars and field guides will be provided; bring your own if you have them.

Limited to 10 participants.
Pre-registration is required; full refund until April 15, after that a replacement must be found.

Fee:

- \$30.00 - **Members** of Los Angeles Audubon
- \$50.00 - **Non-members** (includes a new membership in Los Angeles Audubon.)

Write checks to Los Angeles Audubon Society and mail registration information to:

Los Angeles Audubon—Registration
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057

(Caution: Do not mail check to our street address!)

PLUMMER PARK BIRD SANCTUARY 70 YEARS AGO: FORMER LOS ANGELES COUNTY PARK



—BY ROBERT "ROY" VAN DE HOEK,
UNOFFICIAL HISTORIAN AND MEMBER OF
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON

Black & White photo of the headquarters of Los Angeles Audubon Society in Plummer House in the Plummer Park Bird Sanctuary, circa 1939. Notice the native plant —Toyon, bird bath, and the bird notes posted by the front door on the porch. Photo by Mary V. and A. W. Hood

In the late 1930s, some citizens residing in Los Angeles with an interest in birds established the headquarters for the Los Angeles Audubon Society at the foot of the Santa Monica Mountains. These citizens, mostly women, but including a few men, were successful in lobbying Colonel Plummer to donate some land for a bird sanctuary, nothing else, adjacent to Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles County near Hollywood. These women opened a nature center, staffed the center and office to answer questions and to hold their meetings, as well as to be a library and source of knowledge about birds and other wildlife and nature in Los Angeles County. They grew plants such as wild flowers, native plants, trees, and vines to provide food for local birds to eat during migration but also for the year-round resident birds of Los Angeles.

These 3 women planted "Toyon" also known as Holly Wood, a native plant for which Hollywood is named today. The "Holly" or "Toyon" which is a Spanish word for Holly, is also an important food for birds, particularly thrushes, such as Robins and Bluebirds. It is also food for some sparrows and Cedar Waxwings in winter, when the fruits turn red and ripen on the bushes. The plant was so popular to pick and

hang on doors and homes at Christmas, that the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles passed ordinances to make it illegal to pick Toyon.

Three women and one man decided to write an article together in 1939 for the magazine known as BIRD LORE, which is the official magazine for the National Association of Audubon Societies. The article appeared in July-August, 1940. The names of the three women were:

1. Mrs. Erna Comby
2. Mrs. Alma Stultz
3. Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon

These 3 women, wrote their article about 5 newly created bird sanctuaries in southern California, so naturally, they titled their article: "*Southern California Bird Sanctuaries.*" The five sanctuaries were as follows:

1. Plummer Park Bird Sanctuary
2. San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary
3. Tule Bird Sanctuary
4. Dorothy May Tucker Memorial Bird Sanctuary
5. Temescal Canyon Bird Sanctuary

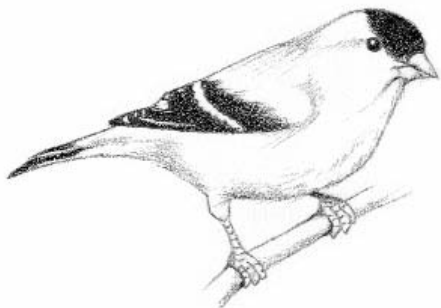
Printed below are the two excerpted paragraphs that discuss Plummer Park Bird Sanctuary in 1939:

"Located in the heart of Hollywood is the remnant of a large Spanish Rancho, whose buildings are just as they were seventy years ago. The old family home now houses the headquarters, library, and museum of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Here, the Society conducts botany and bird study classes. Among the majestic trees, Scout, Campfire and school groups gather to learn of the wonders of this peaceful spot, the Plummer Park Bird Sanctuary."

"With the arrival of spring their attention is directed to a pair of Arizona Hooded Orioles weaving their nest on the under side of a Washington Palm leaf, a San Diego Wren carrying nesting material to a gourd in a loquat tree, and to an Anna's Hummingbird feeding her young in a pepper tree. From a tall eucalyptus a Flicker calls and a Mockingbird sings brilliantly near his new nest in a Monterey Cypress. The bougainvillea vine over the old windmill keeps the California Towhee's nest well hidden. By then, Gambel's Sparrow and the Alaska Hermit Thrush, so frequently seen in winter at the feeding trays and fountains, have slipped away to nest in the Far North."

VOLUNTEER CORNER

—BY ELEANOR OSGOOD AND STACEY VIGALLON
ILLUSTRATIONS BY STACEY VIGALLON



Here are some great ways to get involved in Los Angeles Audubon volunteer programs this spring...

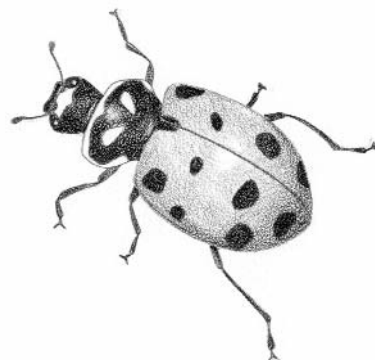
SNOWY PLOVER MONITORING AND DOCENT PROGRAM

We are always happy to welcome new volunteers to help survey for the federally threatened Snowy Plover in Los Angeles County. In addition to monitoring, there are also opportunities to help us educate the public about plovers and their important place in sandy beach ecology while also hanging out at the beach and watching plovers. If you are interested in participating in the Snowy Plover Program, please contact:

Stacey Vigallon
tern@laaudubon.org
(323) 481-4037)

LEAST TERN COLONY MONITORING

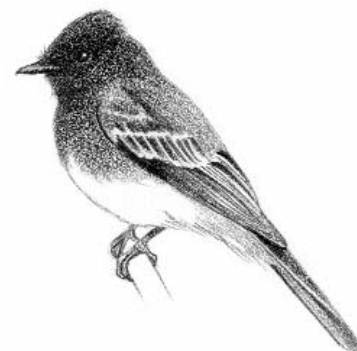
The endangered California Least Tern comes to Venice Beach to nest from April through August. Join the dedicated team of volunteers to help monitor these birds while they're here. Monitors spend one hour each week walking the perimeter of the colony, counting terns, nests, and chicks, making behavioral observations, and alerting biologists to potential hazards (such as



predators and unauthorized activities in the colony enclosure). It's a fantastic opportunity to get acquainted with an endangered species and watch the nesting season unfold at such an easy-to-observe site. If you are interested in participating in the Least Tern Colony Monitoring, please contact: Stacey Vigallon
tern@laaudubon.org
(323) 481-4037)

BALDWIN HILLS OVERLOOK PARK

This new state park is scheduled to open in April 2009, and we'll need motivated birders and nature-lovers interested in spending time as docents at this exciting new site. The site has a stunning view of the Los Angeles Basin (mountains to ocean!) and will have a native plant garden and interpretive center. In addition, the surrounding hillsides will gradually be restored to native coastal sage scrub habitat through hands-on projects conducted by interns from local high schools working with restoration ecologists. We are extremely excited about the tremendous interpretive and outreach possibilities at this site, and welcome any and all volunteers who want to share their love for the natural world with park visitors. Please let us know



if you're interested, and we will continue to keep you informed as the program takes shape. Be sure to check our website for information on habitat restoration events at the Baldwin Hills Overlook Park and at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

If you are interested in learning more about other, on-going volunteer opportunities, please contact: Eleanor Osgood, Volunteer Coordinator
volunteer@laaudubon.org.

"In my efforts to be an informed citizen, participating in Los Angeles Audubon volunteer events has been a great way for me to learn about ecology and conservation issues in my home town. As faculty advisor to my school's eco-club, I'm always looking for new topics to share with students and get them thinking about the bigger picture of environmental health. Los Angeles Audubon volunteer events have been a great, no-cost way to get students involved in hands-on outdoor activities like habitat restoration and wildlife-viewing."
- Robert Jeffers, teacher

MY PATCH



Red-winged Blackbird, Photo by Larry Sansone

THE MAGIC OF THE KERN RIVER VALLEY —BY LINDA OBERHOLTZER

“An astonishing variety of habitat types occur within a radius of 25 air miles of Audubon California’s Kern River Preserve Headquarters...” Bob Barnes from *“A Birder’s Guide to Southern California”* by Brad Schram

If I had a choice to go anywhere in the World-- Costa Rica, Ecuador, Thailand, Kenya, ...there is no place I would rather be than the Kern River Valley. None of these places holds a candle to the magic of the Kern.

In the Spring, flocks of migrating birds pass through the Kern River Valley. At the Kern River Preserve “Migrants Corner Trail” you might find lemon-yellow Lawrence’s Goldfinches, alongside flashy Blue Grosbeaks or dazzling Lazuli Buntings. Early in the morning and late in the afternoon the winnowing wing sound of Wilson Snipe can be heard.

Walking through an expanse of flatlands adjacent to Faye Ranch Rd. in Weldon, you might find a Vermillion Flycatcher, its bright orange standing out against the green backdrop of the Fremont Cottonwood trees’ heart-shaped leaves. The grasslands in this same area reveal such delights as Savannah and Lark Sparrows. Western Bluebirds. Because there are some wet areas where water gathers in small ponds, you have an equal chance of encountering a surprise like a Solitary Sandpiper. Every day there is a treasure to be found, as interesting migrating birds make a cameo appearance.

The night sky is clear and sprinkled with brilliant stars, a sight one rarely sees in Los Angeles. Out of the darkness one can hear the husky sound of a Great Horned Owl calling.

The Kern River Preserve is well-known for its signature bird, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo (mid-June through mid-August). Other target birds are Summer Tanager (late April through September) and Lawrence’s Goldfinch (mid April through mid-June). Out-of State birders love this area because they can sample various habitats all within a one day time period. Tricolored and Red-winged Blackbirds are visible at the entrance to the Kern River Preserve Headquarters in Weldon, Ca.

In the nearby Greenhorn Mountains, a Pileated Woodpecker swoops down with its raucous call from the Forest. A Northern Goshawk dives down from the sky to thrill us. A Pygmy Owl calls in the daytime as we walk along the forest trail. One might see a Townsend’s Solitaire perched on a stump.



Lazuli Bunting, Photo by Larry Sansone

Down at Terry Middlemiss' yard, which she has turned into a birding oasis, in Inyokern, a resident Le Conte's Thrasher mother transports some chicks from hiding.

A visit to Chimney Peak campground can add some singing Brewer's Sparrows, Green-tailed Towhee, or a White-breasted Nuthatch.

On the desert side-- on the road to Butterbrecht Springs, there are California Quail scurrying across the road.

"The clean, sharp smell of Great Basin Sage in the wind...a Scott's Oriole perched atop a Kern Joshua tree...fixed flocks of warblers foraging in a huge cottonwood...the call of a Wrentit bouncing over a dense stand of chaparral...the deep blue skies and towering pines of the Sierra Nevada....It is not unusual to encounter these things as you travel around California. It is unusual, however, to come across all of them within a few miles of one an-

other—but—that's exactly what you can do in the Kern Valley."

Most of these locations you can read about in detail in the "*Birders Guide to Southern California*" by Brad Schram.

This is just a sampling of the wonders of the Kern River Valley and vicinity.

Please come and join myself, Mary and Nick Freeman, Larry Allen, and Fred Heath (L.A. Audubon members assisting with field trips) this Spring at the Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival. April 29 through May 6th. Come visit "*America's Birdiest Inland County*" '04- '07, including the Globally Important Bird Areas of Sequoia National Forest, and South Fork Kern River Valley, +233 bird species seen during the festival! Trips spanning Central Valley, Giant Sequoias, Mojave Desert, Owens Valley.

Check website:

<http://kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm>.

Festival organized by Alison Sheehy. Field trips coordinated by Bob Barnes.



Tri-colored Blackbird, Photo by Larry Sansone

INTERPRETING NATURE

—BY STACEY VIGALLON, DIRECTOR OF INTERPRETATION

Students get involved in Los Angeles Audubon Programs...

In 2008, Los Angeles Audubon worked hard to get students of all ages involved in conservation and habitat restoration. Activities ranged from classroom visits to planting native species to bird surveys. We are extremely proud of these students, and we hope their accomplishments inspire readers to get involved too! Below are some of the highlights from 2008...

THE SNOWY PLOVER DOCENT PROGRAM

Los Angeles Audubon helped secure multiple years of funding for a Snowy Plover Docent Program to en-

deavor to help educate and involve the public in plover conservation in Los Angeles County. We are still in the midst of our first calendar year of the docent program, with lots of big plans for the future. However, we are very pleased with the level of student involvement already achieved in this short timeframe. Students from Los Angeles Valley College, Loyola Marymount University, UCLA, Cal State Dominguez Hills, Pomona College, Pepperdine University, Dorsey High School, and other local schools donated their weekends to spend time on the beach monitoring plovers in Los Angeles County. A huge thank-you goes out to the faculty and staff at these institutions who helped to get students interested and involved.

THE BALDWIN HILLS GREENHOUSE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In a fantastic partnership with EARTHWORKS Restoration, Inc., the first year of the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Internship Program commenced in the summer of 2008. Since then, five interns from Dorsey High School have been hard at work learning about coastal sage scrub ecology and conducting original native plant research to aid in the restoration of the Baldwin Hills. As of December 2008, EACH intern had invested over 90 hours in this program. Their research project topics include...

Students in the Restoration Leadership Program plant native species and lead volunteers at the Kenneth Hahn Native Plant & Wildlife Garden in November 2008.



- The vegetative reproduction of coastal prickly pear cactus, comparing plants that are pre-rooted with those placed on the soil surface and those placed directly in the soil
- The mortality rates of native bunchgrass under varying irrigation regimes
- Seed germination rate of prickly pear cactus under varying water constraints
- The effect of native and non-native plant fuels on the germination rate of prickly pear cactus seeds exposed to fire
- The development of an artificial nesting structure for the Cactus Wren that combines both the biological needs of the wren with the aesthetic concepts of sculpture in public settings

These students will be presenting the results of their research at the June general meeting, so please come out to support them.

The Baldwin Hills Restoration Leadership Program

We are extremely fortunate to be able to partner with EARTHWORKS Restoration, Inc. on this program as well. Since summer 2008, students in the Baldwin Hills Restoration Leadership Program have also focused on the ecology of coastal sage scrub as well as the Ballona corridor to the Santa Monica Bay. They have served as leaders for their peers and for the community in habitat restoration volunteer events. The seven current Restoration Leaders have planted hundreds of native plants, helped lead over 100 volunteers during a habitat restoration event at the Least Tern colony, and have birded a one-mile stretch of Ballona Creek. In addition to volunteer events, these students take on leadership roles at Dorsey High School, motivating and educating their peers in the eco-club. With



Bird drawing by a young science illustrator at Weemes Elementary

their help, and the help of the club's advisor, Robert Jeffers, the Dorsey Eco-club has participated in multiple habitat restoration events at the Least Tern colony and the Baldwin Hills.

The Kenneth Hahn Education Program

Just before the 2008 holidays, as part of our pilot season of the Kenneth Hahn Education Program, we visited a 3rd-grade class at Weemes Elementary School and a 6th-grade class at the New Los Angeles Charter School. Focusing on the native birds and plants of the Baldwin Hills, students learned about adaptations to living in the coastal sage scrub plant community. They observed herbarium specimens of native plants, and they all got a chance to use compasses and binoculars. We think they will make excellent naturalists during their visit to Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in the spring. The bird drawing you see in this article is courtesy of a young science illustrator at Weemes Elementary.

NATURE STORE NEWS

Los Angeles Audubon's NATURE STORE business hours are:

*Monday through Thursday
from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.*

We are also open the FIRST Saturday of each month:

*Saturday, March 7th and April 4th,
from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

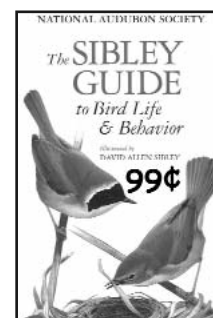
The monthly GENERAL MEETING is held on the *second Wednesday* of the month, (beginning at 7:30 p.m.). This is the perfect time to shop! We extend the NATURE STORE hours on that day remaining open both *before* and *after* the general meeting.

*Wednesday, March 11th and
Wednesday, April 8th,
from 9:30 a.m. to 9:45 p.m.*

In an effort to reduce the NATURE STORE's inventory, many items have been put on sale.

- All birdfeeders have been reduced 40% to 50%.
- Many children and beginner books also have been reduced 40% to 50%.
- The prices on many of our optics have also been reduced.

Come in and check out our sale items in person, or shop our ONLINE NATURE STORE sale pages.
www.losangelesaudubon.org/store



THANK YOU!!!

*The Membership Department wishes to thank all of our members and donors, both new and renewed!
Your memberships help us to fulfill our mission...*

***The mission of Los Angeles Audubon is to promote the enjoyment and protection of birds and other wildlife
through recreation, education, conservation and restoration."***

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South Brentwood
Homeowners Association

BIRD WALKS —MARCH/APRIL 2009

Upper Franklin Canyon (Sooky Goldberg Nature Center), Beverly Hills

Sunday, March 8, 2009

Sunday, April 12, 2009

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Eleanor Osgood

Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We are guaranteed to see the resident Wood Ducks and chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees, California Thrasher. Also expect to see some many of the wintering birds such as Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows. This canyon is a hidden treasure where the surrounding urban residences of Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills disappear from view. Meet in the parking lot of the Sooky Goldberg Nature Center and bird for a few hours in the cool of native trees and creek.

Directions: From the 101 Freeway, take Coldwater Canyon Blvd. south to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive. Make a 90 degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. There is no sign indicating the entrance to the park; the turn at Franklin Canyon Road reads "Road Closed 800 Feet" and "Sunrise to Sunset"; this is the park entrance. Do not make a U-turn as this will take you onto Mulholland Drive instead of Franklin Canyon. Stay on paved roads to reach the Sooky Goldberg Nature Center. From Sunset: take Coldwater Canyon to Mulholland Dr. Turn right on Mulholland. Make right turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. (refer to directions from 101 Freeway).

Binoculars provided.

If you wish to carpool, or for more information, contact:

Eleanor Osgood at
volunteer@laaudubon.org or call
(310) 893-5420.

Topanga State Park Birdwalk 1st Sunday of every month Leaders: Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin

Sunday, March 1, 2009

Sunday, April 5, 2009

Time: 8 a.m.

Ken and Chris will lead participants through this beautiful and diverse coastal mountain area. An ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new to the area. From Ventura Blvd, take Topanga Canyon Blvd 7 miles S. Turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into Trippet Ranch parking lot. From Pacific Coast Hwy, take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking fee.

Contacts: Ken: (310) 455-1401,

ksafarri@aol.com;

Chris: (310) 455-1270

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area

3rd Saturday of the month

Saturday, March 21, 2009

Saturday, April 18, 2009

Time: 8 a.m.

This trip covers landscaped parkland, a lake and natural coastal scrub habitats and is paced for beginning birders and members of the Baldwin Hills community. Come look for wintering birds such as Merlin, Hermit Thrush, White-crowned, Fox and Golden-crowned Sparrows, and ducks. The park entrance is off of La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$4.00 parking fee) turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces.

Binoculars provided.

If you wish to carpool, or for more information, contact Eleanor Osgood at
volunteer@laaudubon.org or
(310) 839-5420.

Ballona Wetlands Bird Walk 3rd Sunday of the month August through May, with the exception of December.

Sunday, March 15, 2009

Sunday, April 19, 2009

**Leaders: Bob Shanman and
Friends**

Time: 8 a.m.

Join us for a walk through L.A.'s only remaining saltwater marsh and the adjacent rocky jetty. Wintering shorebirds and terns should be present, plus the resident Black Oystercatchers frequent the rocky shores of Ballona Creek. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot. Take the Marina Fwy (90) to Culver Blvd and turn left for a mile. Turn right on Pacific Ave. The lot is on the right. Lot or street parking is usually not a problem. Three hour walk. 'scopes helpful.

Contact: Bob (310) 326-2473;

wildbirdbob@cs.com

Bird Walks are geared for the beginner/intermediate looking for an introduction to local birds or a less strenuous excursion. Appropriate for young bird watchers age 6 years and older. Carpooling is encouraged. Contact Eleanor Osgood at
volunteer@laaudubon.org or
(310) 839-5420 if you need a ride or are able to carpool.

**Binoculars are provided on some
walks as noted in text.**



FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip fees benefit Los Angeles Audubon's *Ralph M. Schreiber Research Grant fund*. Grants for avian research projects are given to students and non-professionals having limited access to research funding. Envelopes for voluntary donations to the fund will be distributed on some non-fee trips.

Saturday, March 14 –

Bonelli Regional Park

Leader: *Rod Higbie*. Bonelli Regional Park is a remarkable island of habitat. It has lake, coastal sage, and park habitats. Birds regularly seen in the past include California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, dancing grebes, and occasionally Golden Eagle. 200 other species throughout the year. From LA, take the 10 or 210 Fwy east towards San Dimas to the top stretch of the 57 Fwy. Proceed N from the 10, or S from the 210 on the 57 Fwy to the Via Verde exit just N of the 10/57 interchange (at the bottom of Kellogg Hill). If coming from the N, turn left onto Via Verde, and left into the "Park and Ride" lot. If coming from the S, take the Via Verde offramp and proceed Rt. to the "Park and Ride" lot on the Rt. We will meet here at 7:30 a.m. to carpool since there is a \$7.00/car park entrance fee. Rod will continue after lunch, if there is interest. There are picnic tables and facilities. Bring lunch, if you plan to bird past noon.

No limit, fee or reservation.

March 21 & 22 Weekend –

Anza Borrego

Birds, Butterflies and Beyond.

Leader: *Fred Heath*.

High points over the years: blooming desert evening-primrose and indigo bush, chuckwalla, collared lizard, desert bighorn (annual), Swainson's Hawks, LeConte's Thrasher, Long-eared Owl (hopeful). Suggested accommodations: Tamarisk Grove Campground (reserve through www.reserveamerica.com), or Stanlund Motel in Borrego Springs



Skyline of the Sierran mountains, Owens Valley Grouse Trip, Photo by Mary Freeman

(760) 767-5501. Anticipate a busy weekend, and reserve camping (up to 3 months early) and motels very early. Meet at 7 a.m. at Yaqui Wells across from Tamarisk Grove Campground. Pleasant to warm days, cool to cold nights (30-100°F!).

Limit (20 max.) Send SASE with phone number, e-mail and \$30 fee to LAAS to learn more details.

April 18 & 19 Weekend – Owens Valley Grouse Trip.

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman* lead. Greater Sage Grouse on the lek, Dusky Grouse hooting from the highest tree (but hard to see!), and some of the most breathtaking scenery in the country! Pinyon Jay, Golden Eagle, Swainson's Hawk all likely. Meet in Bishop both days; at Jack's Restaurant at 7 a.m. on Saturday, 6:30 a.m. on Sunday. Reserve rooms early.

Motel 6, Mountain View Inn, Bishop Elms are some of many hotels in Bishop.

Limit (20 max.) To sign up, send \$55 (Schreiber Grant Fund Raiser), phone#, and e-mail in a SASE to LAAS. More details in mailer.

April 25 & 26 Weekend – East Mojave Desert

Larry Allen will lead 15 durable birders in search of the four toughest California thrashers, as well as Scott's Oriole and other desert birds. Probably an excellent time for herps like Chuckwalla, Desert Iguana, Desert Tortoise, Horned Lizard. Lots of driving on paved and dirt roads, and some rock-hopping and hiking. Meet in Baker at 8:00 a.m. Dry camp Saturday in the desert. *High clearance recommended.* Bring enough gas, food, and water for the weekend.

Camping check list and trip overview returned in SASE. Participants are expected to be self-reliant in camp. *Limit (15 max.) Reserve with \$25, SASE and e-mail & phone. Provide LAAS with carpool information.*

April 29 through May 5 –

Kern River Valley

Spring Nature Festival.

Come visit "America's Birdiest Inland County", including the Globally Important Bird Areas of Sequoia National Forest, and South Fork Kern River Valley. About 230 bird species seen during the festival!

Trips spanning Central Valley / Giant Sequoias / Mojave Desert / Owens Valley. Check website: <http://kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm>.

Sunday, May 3 –

Big Morongo Wildlife Preserve.

Leader: *Dexter Kelly*. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the preserve parking lot, or 7:00 a.m. at Covington Park next door. Breeding desert and oasis birds such as Brown-crested and Vermilion Flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Scott's and Hooded Orioles, Yellow-breasted Chat and migrating *Empidonax* flycatchers. To get there, take the 10 Fwy E about 17 miles past Banning to Hwy 62 N. Pass through the town of Morongo Valley, take a right on East Dr., then a left into the preserve (or straight to Covington Park). Bring lunch, water, sensible clothing and sun block. Yucca Valley and Desert Hot Springs offer nearby accommodations, or camp at Joshua Tree NP.

No sign up, but provide LAAS with carpool information by telephone. Nominal donation suggested.

May 9 and 10 Weekend –

Galileo Hills and Butterbredd Springs.

Leaders: *Nick & Mary Freeman*. These are two of the best spring migrant traps in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! **Saturday:** Take Hwy 14 about 4 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops, turn left past the golf course on Randsburg-Mojave Rd., and veer right on 20 Mule Team Rd. Turn left at the Galileo Hills sign before the hill, take your first paved right, your first right again, into the Silver Saddle Country Club, followed by two paved lefts into the lot. Park and meet at 7:00 a.m. by the first pond. **Sunday:** Veer right heading north out of Mojave, take Hwy 14 for about 20 miles over the river bed to Jawbone Canyon Road on the left, and meet right at the turnoff at the ranger station parking lot at 6:30 a.m. We will carpool to Butterbredd Springs, and finish the day at California City or Piute Ponds. Reserve rooms (Motel 6 or other) in Mojave. Bring lunches, sun block. *Reserve with \$25, SASE and e-mail & phone. Provide LAAS with carpool information. Limit (12 max.)*

Saturday, May 16 –

Hansen Dam Riparian Birds

Leader: *Kimball Garrett*. An exploration of one of our region's premier "Important Bird Areas". Expect Bell's Vireos, Yellow-breasted Chats, Blue Grosbeaks and a variety of other birds of willow woodlands and mulefat scrub, along with numerous landbird migrants, waterbirds and marsh birds. We will be walking up to three miles, sometimes on narrow trails.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hansen Dam Recreation Center along Foothill Blvd., just west of the Osborne/Lake View Terrace exit off the 210 Fwy. For those coming from the 5 Fwy, exit at Osborne and go north on Osborne to Foothill Blvd.; turn right (east) on Foothill Blvd. and go about half a mile to the entrance to the Recreation Center. (*Note: Our meeting area is NOT the main Hansen Dam Park that is reached off Dronfield Avenue*). We should finish up around 11:00 to 11:30 a.m. *No limit, fee or reservation.*



Forest view, Quaking Aspen Field Trip, Photo by Mary Freeman

**Sunday, May 17 –
Santa Anita Canyon.**

Leader: *Mary Freeman*. Take the 210 Fwy toward Arcadia, and take Santa Anita Avenue N to the parking lot at the very end of the road. Meet at the Gabrielino Trail trailhead at the bottom of the lot. 4 mile RT moderately strenuous walk through oak and chaparral canyons. Good selection of breeding and migrating birds including warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Tanager, Band-tailed Pigeon, three hummers and Dipper likely. Pack in a lunch and water. *Meeting time 7:00 a.m.*

No sign up. Nominal donation suggested.

**Saturday, May 30 –
LA Audubon Annual Picnic
Chilao Campground.**

Sodas, water, bird walks and tall tales of birding adventures provided. The first bird walk will be at 7:30 a.m., and another will follow around 8:30 a.m. for latecomers. *Lunch around noon*, with possible birding options elsewhere later. Take the 210 Fwy to Angeles Crest Hwy (Hwy 2) in La Cañada, and head up the hill for about 30 miles. It's on the left side. Drive in, across the stream bed, past the visitor's center, left across the stream bed, and veer right until you see familiar faces on your left. The biker bar is too far. A **Forest Service Adventure Pass** is necessary.

**Sunday, May 31 –
Jawbone Canyon Lizards.**

LA Zoo herpetologist emeritus and LAAS member Harvey Fischer will lead our search for Leopard, Zebra-tailed, Desert Horned-Lizard and others seen in Jawbone Cyn. We will briefly bird Butterbrecht Springs, then look for lively lizards. *Meet at 8:00 a.m.* at the message board 100 yards W of the Hwy 14 intersection. Take

Hwy 14 out past Mojave and continue north on Hwy 14 about 17 miles to Jawbone Cyn. Rd. Head W to the message board. Anticipate heat, hunger, dirt roads and rock-hopping. Red Rock Cyn. State Park 5 miles N is good for camping. About 2 hours driving time from L.A. Bring lunch, liquids, lots of water, and FRS radio, if you have one. Carpool from Denny's at Roxford and 5 Fwy at 6:00 a.m. if you wish. Continue all day, or until it is too hot. Contact Nick Freeman at mnfreeman@earthlink.net to night-drive for snakes on Saturday, if you will be in the area.

Limited sign-up (15 max.) by phone with LAAS. Nominal donation suggested. Provide carpool information to LAAS.



*Jesse Grantham, Leader, Condor Field Trip,
Photo by Mary Freeman*

**Saturday, June 13 –
Condors at Bittercreek NWR.**

Jesse Grantham, California Condor Coordinator and team leader for the Condor Field Program in southern California with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, (and formerly a biologist with National Audubon for 24 years), will be leading this trip to view the reintroduction program of the California Condor. We should get good looks at California Condors, possibly Golden Eagles, and a number of other species. Biologists will give us an overview of the program, show us how radio telemetry and GPS tracking units are helping to save the bird, and talk about the future of the species in California. Bittercreek NWR was formerly the "Hudson Ranch" and a home of the original wild condors in the mid 1980's before all birds were taken into captivity. The observation site will be remembered by old timers as "The Sign" on Cerro Noreste Road. We will be west of Mt. Pinos and southeast of the Carrizo Plain, not too far from Maricopa. Today, all 43 condors in our wild population visit the area again. All new releases of condors into the wild population occur here. Take Interstate 5 north to Frazier Park exit. At the stop sign make a left and go under I-5. Meet in the parking lot of the "Flying A" gas station at 8:30 a.m. Finish at 3 or 4:00 p.m. Bring drinks, lunch, and FRS radio and a scope if you have them. *Reserve your place with LAAS by phone, stating phone # and email address, whether you have a high clearance vehicle that can accommodate at least 4 people total (priority) or you plan to ride with someone else. Wait for confirmation. No fee, but donations accepted to the Condor Survival Fund.*

**Saturday, June 20 –
Evening Montane Birds
with Owls**

Leader: *Raymond Schep*. Until dark, we will bird for montane specialties such as White-headed Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, Pygmy Nuthatch and Western Bluebird. After the sun drops, we hope to hear and maybe see Pygmy, Flammulated, Saw-whet, and Screech owls, as well as Poorwill. They're all up there, but no promises! Leave promptly at 3 p.m. from where the 210 Fwy and Angeles Crest Highway intersect in La Cañada. Exit the 210 at Angeles Crest Hwy N. About one block up is a frontage road on the right, where we will park and carpool. Finish before midnight. Bring a warm jacket, a full stomach, lots of snacks, and a **Forest Service Adventure Pass**.

Send \$15, phone number, e-mail address and a SASE to Audubon House to sign up. Limit (15 max.)

**Fri. through Mon., June 26-29
Southern Sierra
Extended Weekend.**

Leader: *Bob Barnes*. High deserts to High Sierra. The most diverse, species-rich region in the state. Likely: Goshawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Pileated Woodpecker and owls. 150 species likely in 4 days. Joint trip with our good neighbors in Sea & Sage AS. Dawn to dusk (and more) birding ideal for enthusiastic beginning to advanced birders. Meet Friday at Union 76 station in Inyokern. Reserve Fri-Sat-Sun night rooms in Kernville area early (listed in flyer). Lots of driving, so bring a friend.

Participation limited to (15 max.).

To reserve, and receive trip information, send SASE with e-mail, phone number and \$15 for each day attended (\$60 for 4 days).



**Thursday through Sunday, July 2-5
Quaking Aspen Camping Trip
for Owls.**

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Campground is above Springville, near Ponderosa in the southwest Sierras. A group campsite will be reserved. Owling by night, bird walks by day! Must be a night owl. We may also look at some butterflies! Hopeful birds: Flammulated, Northern Saw-whet, Spotted owls and others; Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Hammond's Flycatcher and more. Some meals will be potluck, others provided or eat out. Tentatively meet Thursday 3 p.m. at Quaking Aspen Campground (look for poster). *More details in flyer. Send SASE, phone, e-mail and \$70 to reserve. Limit (10 max., 4 min.) No small children or pets, please. Provide LAAS with carpool information.*



Forest view, Quaking Aspen Field Trip, Photo by Mary Freeman

Field Trip Reservation Instructions 2009

Before setting out on any field trip, please call the LAAS bird tape at (323) 874-1318 Option #4, for special instructions or possible cancellations that may have occurred.

SASE sign-ups (Self-Addressed Stamped Envelopes) mail to:

Los Angeles Audubon - Field Trips
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057

Include for each participant the following:

- 1) Fee or Donation
- 2) Phone # & Email address
- 3) Carpool Information*
 - (a) give a ride ____
 - (b) need a ride ____
- 4) I have a "high-clearance vehicle"
 - (a) Y ____ (b) N ____
 - (c) vehicle holds ____ # of passengers.

* Your ride-share data WILL BE SHARED with other participants as provided.

Los Angeles Audubon will provide in your SASE:

- (a) your confirmation, and/or
- (b) supplemental information

Phone Sign-ups:

Call (323) 876-0202, M-Th., 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m

Sorry, at this time we are unable to reserve field trips by credit card.

Note: DO NOT mail to our street address!



**NICK FREEMAN TO BE HONORED
WITH AWARD FROM
AUDUBON CALIFORNIA**

Los Angeles Audubon Field Trip Chair, Nick Freeman, will receive one of six Audubon California Chapter Volunteer Awards for Outstanding Service, in a special event at the opening of the Audubon Assembly at Asilomar in Pacific Grove in Monterey Bay, March 15-17, 2009.

Nick was nominated by Los Angeles Audubon's Board of Directors, for his twenty years of service as Field Trip Chair and for generously sharing his interest with the participants on his field trips on a broad range of biological and ecological topics from bird and reptile identification, to habitat requirements and niche behavior, and plant knowledge.

The award was initiated by the Chapter Committee of Audubon California Board of Directors in 2007, and will be presented at each Assembly to six outstanding volunteers nominated from their chapters.

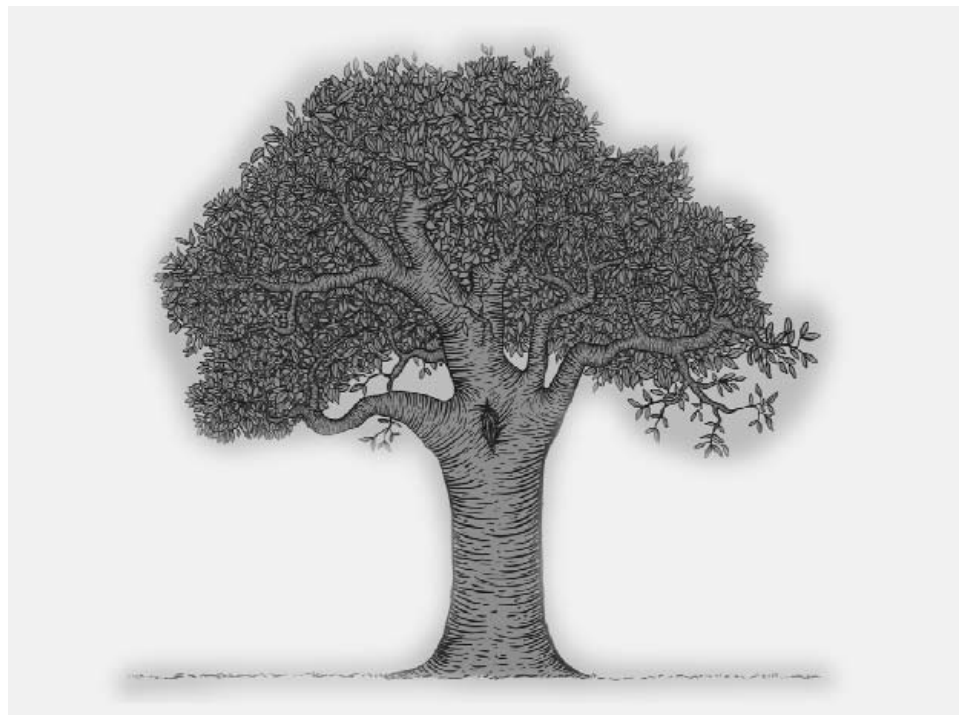
Congratulations to Nick and thank you from Los Angeles Audubon for your long service promoting the enjoyment and protection of birds and other wildlife through recreation, education, conservation and restoration.

CONSERVATION CONVERSATION CONT'D.

**TREE TRIMMING GUIDELINES
FOR LOS ANGELES**

Every spring Los Angeles Audubon responds to calls from concerned citizens regarding tree trimming and impacts on birds and nests. Eleanor Osgood and volunteers responded to aggressive tree trimming in Kenneth Hahn Recreation Area, and Garry George and California Fish & Game officers, responded to a mortality event and destruction of Black-crowned Night-Heron nests at the Port the Los Angeles. Conservation Committee members, Linda Navroth and Eleanor Osgood, decided that they needed to do more to try to prevent this destruction to our birds and have spent the last months creating a

booklet of Tree Trimming Guidelines for Los Angeles. Approved by the Board in the February Board meeting, the Conservation Committee will now try to get the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles to formally adopt the guidelines and include them with all contracts and sub-contracts with tree trimmers. Los Angeles Audubon will pay for an initial printing of the booklets. A digital file of the booklet can be downloaded at the Los Angeles Audubon website, www.laaudubon.org, for those of you who would like to share it with your local municipality, nursery or tree trimmer. Thanks to Eleanor and Linda for being pro-active!





2009 PELAGIC SCHEDULE



Our leaders come from the following roster of excellent and experienced pelagic birders:

Dave Compton, Jon Feenstra, Kimball Garrett, Todd McGrath and Dave Pereksta, assisted by Bernardo Alps, Wes Fritz and Terry Hunefeld.

Saturday, April 25, 2009

A deep water trip toward the San Juan Seamount

Departs 7 a.m. Santa Barbara Harbor

This trip departs from the Santa Barbara Harbor on the fast catamaran Condor Express at 7:00 a.m. and will return approximately by 8:00 p.m. We will cruise along the deep water shelf by the San Juan Seamount. Birds previously seen: Black-footed Albatross; Northern Fulmar; Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters; Ashy and Leach's storm-petrels; Pomarine, Parasitic and Long-tailed jaegers; Pigeon Guillemot; Xantus's Murrelet; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Uncommon species seen on prior trips: Laysan Albatross; Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel; Red-billed Tropicbird and Tufted Puffin. Rarity: Murphy's Petrel. There is a complete galley that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Leaders: *Jon Feenstra, Kimball Garrett, Terry Hunefeld and Todd McGrath assisted by Wes Fritz. \$195*

Saturday, June 6, 2009

Land on Santa Cruz Island for the Island Scrub Jay, and then out to sea.

Departs 8 a.m. Oxnard Harbor

This 8 hour trip departs from the Island Packer dock in the Oxnard Harbor at 8:00 a.m. on the m/v Vanguard. We will land at Prisoner's Cove where the endemic Island Scrub-Jay is easily seen. Then, we will cruise out to sea for pelagic birding, returning by Anacapa Island. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters; rocky shorebirds; South Polar Skua; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; Sabine's Gull; Pigeon Guillemot; Xantus Murrelet. Uncommon birds seen on prior trips: Flesh-footed Shearwater; American Oystercatcher; and Tufted Puffin. A Brown Booby has been seen on Anacapa Island. A box lunch, breakfast and dinner can be ordered at the dockside deli, Latitude 34 (805) 815-4131.

Leaders: *Jon Feenstra, Terry Hunefeld, Todd McGrath and David Pereksta. \$95*

Saturday, July 25, 2009

A deep water trip to the San Juan Seamount and Santa Rosa Ridge

Departs 7 a.m. Santa Barbara Harbor

This trip departs from Santa Barbara Harbor on the catamaran Condor Express at 7:00 a.m. and will return approximately by 8:00 p.m. We will cruise along the deep water shelf by the San Juan Seamount. Birds previously seen this time of year: Black-footed Albatross; Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed and Sooty shearwaters; South Polar Skua; Pomarine Jaeger; Black, Ashy and Leach's storm-petrels; Pigeon Guillemot; Common Murre; Xantus's Murrelet; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. This time of year Cook's Petrel and Red-billed Tropicbirds have been seen in the area. Mega-rarities to be looked for are Dark-rumped, Stejneger's petrels and Wedge-rumped Storm-petrels. There is a complete galley on board that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Leaders: *Jon Feenstra, Kimball Garrett, Terry Hunefeld, Todd McGrath and David Pereksta assisted by Wes Fritz. \$195*

Saturday, September 26, 2009

Around the Northern Channel Islands for rare Shearwaters

Departs 7:30 a.m. Santa Barbara Harbor

This 8 hour trip departs from the Santa Barbara Harbor at 7:30 a.m. on the catamaran Condor Express. Birds to be expected: Northern Fulmar; Sooty, Pink-footed and Black-vented shearwaters; Black, Ashy, and Leach's storm-petrels; cormorants (3); rocky shorebirds (up to 5); Red-necked and Red phalaropes; Pomarine, and Parasitic jaegers; Sabine's Gull; Royal, Common and Arctic terns. Uncommon species or rarities to be looked for: Buller's Shearwater, Least Storm-Petrel; Red-billed Tropicbird; South Polar Skua, Long-tailed Jaeger; and Craveri's Murrelet. Whales and dolphins can be seen this time of year. There is a complete galley that serves breakfast and lunch.

Leaders: *Terry Hunefeld, Todd McGrath and David Pereksta. \$115.*

Pelagic Reservation Instructions 2009

Option 1 –Mail

Mail your check or Credit Card information and a SASE (for trip confirmation and information flyer) for each trip requested to:

Los Angeles Audubon - Pelagics
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057.

Option 2 –Call, pay with Credit Card

Call Los Angeles Audubon at
(323) 876-0202
Mon. - Thur. 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Option 3 –Email or Fax, pay with Credit Card

E-Mail reservation request to:
laas@laaudubon.org
Fax reservation request to:
(323) 876-7609

You may now use
Mastercard | Visa | Discover cards
to charge your trip.
There will be a \$5 credit card fee.
Provide the cardholder's billing name, card number, expiration date, and the last 3 numbers (security code) from the reverse of your card.

Provide the name(s), mailing address, contact telephone number, and email address (if used) for each person requesting a reservation.

Notes:

*Insufficient Response Cancellations: If there is insufficient response 35 days before the trip departure, the trip will be cancelled.

*Destinations may be changed to maximize bird sightings, or minimize rough seas. With increased fuel costs there can be a \$5 to \$10 energy surcharge per person.

*Refund Policy: You may receive a refund less a \$4.00 handling charge if you cancel 31 days prior to departure, or if a paid replacement can be found.

*Before setting out on any LAAS Pelagic Trip, call (323) 874-1318 Option #4, for a recorded announcement of possible last moment changes or cancellations that may have occurred.

*For more information about other Southern California Pelagic Events please visit
<http://www.SoCalBirding.com>.

INTERNATIONAL BIRDING TOURS

THE BEST OF COSTA RICA

MARCH 6 TO 18, 2009

If you have been considering visiting and birding in Costa Rica, wait no longer! We have an itinerary that offers six of the major locations that are distinctive, each offering a marvelous profusion of tropical birds. Costa Rica has a well deserved reputation as a tiny country sincerely interested in conserving its natural resources, and one that is invariably on all birder's wish lists. Tropical forests harbor howler monkeys, Resplendent Quetzals, poison-dart frogs, giant morpho butterflies, over 830 species of birds, and the beauty of thousands of plant species.

Habitats encountered will range from semiarid ranch land, to misty cloud forest, the transition zone between the dry and moist forests of the Pacific lowlands, the treeless paramo, and what may well be the highlight of our trip, a visit to La Selva, a lowland rainforest where nearly 400 birds have been recorded. As part of our small group, enjoy some of the best tropical birding in Costa Rica, where you will be accompanied by outstanding leaders throughout. **Space is limited.**



Keel-billed Toucan, Photo by Herb Clarke

For information and itinerary, contact: Olga Clarke oclarketravel@earthlink.net

Los Angeles Audubon Travel Director 2027 El Arbolita Dr. Glendale, CA 91208-1805 Ph/Fax: (818) 249-9511

SOUTH AFRICA BIRDING EXPEDITION

SEPTEMBER 5 TO 20, 2009

Upon your arrival in Johannesburg, the country's largest city with ultra modern skyscrapers, you will be whisked away to a haven of peace and tranquility to a country lodge facing a lake, and find yourself in an unmatched environment, surrounded by countless species of birds. From then on, the excitement of enjoying not only the great infrastructure, but some of the most varied country on the continent—truly a birder's paradise. Spectacular scenery awaits you every day of this trip, along with the diverse wildlife and unusual species of birds. Experience untouched wilderness in Kruger National park, with the tradition of safari in the style of the past. Set on the banks of the Nwatswitswonto River. Views of long-lashed Ground Hornbills, plus comical birds with enormous yellow or red bills, hornbills not toucans, and colorful azure-winged beauties like the Lilac-breasted Rollers, to name a few of the common species.

The extension to Cape town offers incredible vistas of the Cape Peninsula, Boulders Beach, Table Mountain, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, along with specialties like Jackass Penguins, Cape Cormorants, Southern Black Korhaan, Blue Crane, Cape Sugarbird, and others too numerous to list here. Join us and see for yourself, South Africa, "A World in One Country."

The dates for the main tour are September 5/20, 2009, plus the Cape Town Extension from September 19th through 27th.



African Jackass Penguins, Photo by Herb Clarke

INTERNATIONAL BIRDING TOURS

PATAGONIA ARGENTINA OCTOBER 23 TO NOVEMBER 7, 2009 PRE & POST EXTENSIONS TO NORTHWEST ARGENTINA & IGUAZU FALLS



Iguazu Falls, Photo by Herb Clarke

First, enjoy cultured Buenos Aires before exploring Patagonia, a land of extremes, and bird species not found further north in South America, including about 50 endemics, Magellanic Woodpecker, Magellanic Plover, Magellanic Penguins to name a few. This southern most tip of the South American continent, has such diverse habitats as arid steppes, southern beech forests and sea shores of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. A unique opportunity to bird in superb destinations, framed by incredible landscapes, such as the Perito Moreno Glacier, the Beagle Channel and the steppes of Patagonia.

Northwest Argentina, our pre-trip extension to the Salta Province, closer to Bolivia and Chile, is a special itinerary presenting an enormous contrast to places visited in Patagonia on the main tour. Here, the Chaco avifauna is completely different and rich. From Yungas forests in the foothills near Salta to rugged country in the altiplano, birds and other wildlife await you.

Post Extension to renowned Iguazu Falls.

ECUADOR: BEST OF THE ANDES

DECEMBER 26, 2009 TO JANUARY 9, 2010

GALAPAGOS EXTENSION JANUARY 8 /13, 2010

Ecuador may be one of South America's smallest countries, but for phenomenal birding and spectacular scenery, its extreme biodiversity cannot be imagined. You must see for yourself the constant parade of unusual species of birds in these renowned highland birding areas, the Northwestern and Eastern slopes of the Andes. Visit seven zones of different regions on this serious but friendly excursion, accompanied by a local expert guide. Based at the famous San Jorge De Quito Eco-Lodge, only a 20 minute drive from the airport in Quito, we'll be birding the Yanacocha Reserve, Mindo, Tandayapa Valley, Milpe, Papallacta Pass, Yanayuca, the slopes of the Antisana Volcano, and more. Dozens of species of hummingbirds and fruit eaters coming to feeders.

On the Galapagos Extension, you'll walk some of the same trails that Charles Darwin did as a naturalist in 1831. With expert guides, see Galapagos Tortoise, Green Turtles, Galapagos Sea Lions, Chatham Lava Lizard, several types of reptiles, including the colorful Marine Iguana and the oversized Lava Lizard. Close views of Waved Albatross, Magnificent Frigatebirds, Galapagos Penguins, Blue-footed and Nazca Boobies, Brown Noddy Terns, Galapagos Hawk and several species of Finches. Great photographic opportunities throughout.



Pale-mandibled Araçari, Photo by Dr. Jorge Cruz

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

**MEET AT 7:30 PM IN THE COMMUNITY BUILDING IN PLUMMER PARK
7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA 90046**

Wednesday, March, 11, 2009

Paul Lehman presents:

Migrant and Vagrant Traps of North America

Join Paul Lehman on a slide tour of North America's migrant hot-spots, from eastern Newfoundland and the Dry Tortugas to the western Aleutians and the California coast--and everywhere in between. Topics covered include what makes for a good migrant/vagrant trap, when to visit, and characteristic and special birds found at many of the sites.



*"Pine Grosbeak - Silver Saddle Resort,
Galileo Hills, Kern County
November 2004.
Photo by Mary Freeman"*

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Guy Commeau presents:

California Wild Life

Guy is a long time birder and photographer over the years. His subjects are New Zealand to Nepal and Alaska, but he has recently admitted that California is the best single place to be for nature-lovers. The variety of habitats and wildlife are as good as anywhere on earth. In 1991 Guy wrote "*Mammals and Countries of the World - a Check List*", which organized the mammals of the world much as the famous Clements checklist did for birds. He is now retired from the restaurant business and is a docent at the Los Angeles Zoo when he is not on the road.



"Poppy Preserve, Antelope Valley, March 2008, Photo by Mary Freeman"

Los Angeles Audubon Society
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Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057

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MARCH/APRIL 2009

