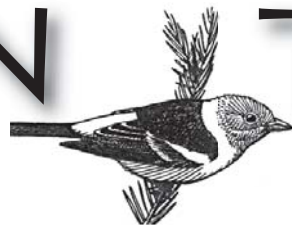


WESTERN Tanager



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Monthly Program Presentations at Audubon Center at Debs Park

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

David Bell presents:

eBIRD'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

eBIRD'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY IS THIS YEAR and what an amazing addition to the birding world it has been for both birders and bird scientists. Today eBird contains over 110 million sightings and almost 5 million more are added each month, making it among the largest citizen science projects in the world.



You will leave with a better understanding of what eBird is, why it matters and how it can help you become a better birder.

We will go over the basics and also more some advanced tips and tricks. Dave has worked full-time on eBird related work for the last three years creating the eBird data entry app BirdLog, so he can provide some inside knowledge on how eBird works and how to make the most of your eBird experience.

This will be a great opportunity to ask either basic or advanced questions about how to use eBird.

David Bell, Ph.D., is a life-long birder who was born and raised in Pasadena CA. He has spent his career running businesses devoted to improving the environment. His most fun project was helping to found the Reva Electric Car Company in India, which is now among the largest electric vehicle manufacturers in the world. Dave believes that eBird is critical to capturing biodiversity data now for driving good conservation decisions over the next decades. Dave feels incredibly lucky to be able to devote his time to working as President of BIRDS IN THE HAND, a maker of birding apps that work with eBird with the mission of getting as much high-quality data into eBird from as many birders as possible. He is an enthusiastic daily birder, and therefore a bit obsessive about app product quality and eBird data integrity.

Sheri Williamson presents:

SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA'S FIVE SEASONS

Each of southeastern Arizona's five seasons offers dramatically different experiences for birders and other nature lovers, from the colorful songbirds of spring and early summer, to the jewel-like hummingbirds and butterflies of the late summer "monsoon," to the majestic raptors, stately cranes, and skulking sparrows of fall and winter.

Sheri L. Williamson grew up in Texas with a passion for wildlife, chasing lizards from the time she could toddle and taking up birding at age 10. An Arizona resident since 1988, Sheri is co-founder and director of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory, former resident manager of The Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon Preserve, and author of the Peterson Field Guide to Hummingbirds. She moonlights as a freelance writer, tour leader, artist, and jewelry maker.



Patagonia, AZ, Photo by Mary Freeman

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON'S EVENING PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS are held the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and are over at 9:30 p.m. All are welcome! March and April meeting location: AUDUBON CENTER AT DEB'S PARK 4700 N Griffin Ave., Los Angeles CA 90031 (323) 221-2255

Audubon Docents: Beyond the School Bus Tours

By Cindy Hardin, Director Environmental Education Programs

Photography by Leslie Davidson

The docents that staff school field trips love their work and dedicate a significant amount of time to educating children about the ecosystems in our area. However, we also subscribe to the old adage regarding “all work and no play”—dull is a word we avoid at all costs in both our teaching methods and as a personal description! In order to keep things lively and interesting, we conduct several field trips for ourselves during the school year. These trips are designed to enrich our own knowledge, which we can pass on to visiting students. Just as importantly, they allow us to get together and relax, and have a little fun in our off hours.

We have already visited several interesting spots during the 2012-2013 tour season. In late September the Ballona docents headed south to the beautiful Bolsa Chica Wetlands in Huntington Beach. The weather was picture perfect, and many migratory species had already settled into their winter home. Ruddy Ducks, scaups, White-crowned Sparrows and many others were on display. The trip was well attended by both returning and new docents, some of whom had never been to the Bolsa Chica. This location is always a great place to visit for our “rookies”, as it gives them a chance to see a salt marsh with more water habitat, which opens up discussion about restoration and public access to environmentally sensitive areas. This year’s trip had a special relevance, as major restoration plans are currently in the works for Ballona. As we walked along the levees and into the upland habitat, we were able to see that both sections and their respective ecosystems are closely connected (literally and figuratively) and essential to each others’ functionality. We realized that the Osprey—high up in a snag—needed that perch to survey the waters below in its search for a slippery snack! Masses of Goldenbush were in full bloom in restored upland areas, with a cloud of pollinating insects hovering over them, and flitting Phoebes not far behind. This piqued our own “foraging instincts”. In addition to sharing a love of nature, Ballona docents are great cooks and have a love of food, so lunch is usually a feature when we go afield. That day we went for Mexican food.

The next excursion was closer to home and the antithesis of Bolsa Chica: Hyperion Sewer Plant, right down the road in El Segundo. This is a fabulous tour and free and open to the public. Our group was expertly led by long-time Public Relations Director,

Nancy Carr. We viewed a brief film about Hyperion and its processes. We learned that the amount of water handled daily would fill the Rose Bowl to the brim four times over! After the film it was time to don hard hats and board the trams to tour the plant. We made stops to see the screens that filter the sewage water as it first arrives, viewed the trucks being loaded with processed “material” that will be used to fertilize the county owned farm, Green Acres, located near Bakersfield, and saw the settling ponds where the natural separation of solids and liquids occurs. No lunch stop after this trip—time constraints and lack of appetite stimulation being two major factors! This trip really got people thinking about the precious resource of water, and how in the future we will need to get over the “ick factor” of gray water for gardening and other uses in order to sustain our ever growing population and its demands.

Our tour schedule falls off in December due to Winter Break for the schools, so it’s the perfect time for a docent excursion. This time our destination was another wetland of a completely different nature. We visited the Madrona Marsh, a freshwater marsh, nestled in the heart of Torrance. Surrounded on all sides by major roads and development, this island of habitat is historically (and still is) a vernal marsh. We were extremely fortunate to have Tracy Drake, Marsh Manager and naturalist extraordinaire, act as our tour guide for the morning. Madrona is anchored by an impressive



LAAS docents on excursion to Madrona Marsh, Winter 2012.

nature center, which is chockablock with information about wetlands and interesting exhibits. Five cases of realia highlight different species in their respective habitats that are found at Madrona. By the time we got outside for our tour of the wetlands, the rain of that morning had dissipated, leaving us to enjoy clearing skies and refreshing post-storm breezes. As we wandered through thickets of willows and ponds of water we were able to sight lots of avian activity. In the time that we were there we saw twenty-two species of birds, including a Peregrine Falcon perched high atop a nearby building, Black and Say's Phoebes, kingbirds, and of course a host of Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and other small birds, foraging for breakfast after the rains. Flickers were present as well, both the Northern and Yellow-shafted variety. Tracy also took us to the sump ponds that are used by the city of Torrance to handle run-off from the surrounding areas. It was a great lesson that illustrated how natural areas and urban development can exist side by side in a mutually beneficial manner. Habitat for animals is created and maintained, and pollutants are cleansed as the run-off passes through the marsh.

The Madrona Marsh field trip was extremely well attended, with about half of our volunteers from our active docent roster participating. A holiday luncheon for all followed our tour. We feasted on a Chinese food banquet at a nearby restaurant, which was recommended by Tracy. The Lazy Susan in the middle of the table was spinning with all kinds of deliciousness, and a festive time was an excellent caper to a day spent outside, admiring the jewel that is the Madrona Marsh.

Our last get-together for 2012 took place right at Ballona. We can't get enough of the place! Several of us got together between Christmas and New Year's Day to do a little restoration work at the wetlands. Although we all love hosting field trips for school children, there is a special quality to being out there with just ourselves. We were also able to really make a dent on removing some of the invasive plant species that crowd out the native plants essential to a high-functioning ecosystem. Our target species for this outing: the dreaded *euphorbia terrisima*. This prolific plant is trying to gain a toehold in the very rare coastal dune habitat at the saltmarsh—we spent the morning removing five wheelbarrows worth of the noxious weed. We were fortunate to be joined by three young women who were home for break from their studies at college. Emily, Joyce and Jessica are all graduates of Los Angeles Audubon's Greenhouse Program, and worked diligently at the day's task. It was delightful



LAAS Greenhouse Program graduates, working at restoration at the Ballona Wetlands, December 2012.

and inspiring to see these young people devote a day of their vacation to environmental work, and we were very appreciative of their efforts.

Staff field trips are not limited to the Ballona volunteers. In October the interns that handle tours for our program at Kenneth Hahn made a trip to the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum. The group toured the museum, with extra time spent in the Bird Hall. Species found at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area were the focus here. Viewing the specimens up close gives an invaluable lesson, and hones identification skills. This helps to prepare our interns to teach our young tour attendees about the abundant bird life found in the park. It was an especially appropriate time for such a lesson, as flocks of Cedar Waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warblers and other species had recently arrived to take up their winter residency in sunny Southern California. This trip was also well-attended, and a good time was had by all.

The busy time for school field trips has now commenced, and consequently the opportunity for docent field trips has diminished. However, Spring Break is not far off, and there are plans in the works to a special trip at that time. This excursion will bring together the hard-working staff from both the Ballona and Kenneth Hahn programs, for a destination that has yet to be determined. It will be sure to have all the components of the above trips—education, camaraderie and fun! Watch for the May/June issue of the *Western Tanager* to find out about our next adventure. And remember, if this all sounds too exciting to miss, and you have an interest in teaching children about the outdoors, we always welcome new docents to either program. 🐦

Snowy Plover Survey, First Quarter 2013, by Judy Thompson

I was carrying out the first quarterly snowy plover survey of 2013, Beach 8 in Malibu, from Malibu Colony Drive to the end of Malibu Road. Low tide was scheduled for 12:15 p.m. or so, and our start time was good because at medium to high tide, there is no beach at all, and even gulls would have found it hard going. My photographer husband was with me.

When you're with a group of people who know what they are doing, like Audubon Director of Interpretation Stacey Vigallon, it's so easy. She says, "That's a -----, and you'll see it running in and out of the surf / resting on rocks / flying over the beach. Remember that its winter plumage is different than it is now." No prob! Easy ID!

But when you are slogging along on Beach 8 by yourself, with only your field guide and no one to ask—it's aggravatingly difficult. What ARE those ubiquitous cute little things churning like mad back and forth in front of the lapping surf? Sanderlings or Western Sandpipers? The book says it should be a WS by size, but the coloring (winter, it would seem) has SANDERLING written all over it. Most Audubonians would know right off, and are at this minute thinking, "You dummy, it's a -----." But where were these experts when I needed them? I've settled on sanderling by reason of this little thing having no claw at the back of its ankle, a key for identifying this little bird. I await advice.

All of that aside, my husband and I had spent two hours walking this narrow beach, most of it wet sand right up to the KEEP OUT signs on the beach house pilings. No Snowy Plovers, but I hadn't expected any. Whimbrels, Marbled Godwits, Sanderlings or whatever they were, Western Grebes out there on the water, Black-bellied Plovers in winter dress (I think). We had brilliant blue skies, 68° (and it's JANUARY), no wind. Truly pacific. We decided to call it a day. But I could see a stretch of wider beach and open sand just ahead (beyond the survey boundary) and I said, "No – let's carry on a bit." Not 30 feet on, past sun bathers on blankets (and it's JANUARY), there they were! Little Snowy Plovers peeping out of depressions in the sand and poking about in dry sand just above the tide line, exactly where they were supposed to be. What a surprise, as they had shunned Beach 8 previously. I counted nine.

Triumph, for me and those little endangered birds, braving dogs, walkers, joggers, Pepperdine sun bathers, mothers with babies. Survey success! 🐦



Snowy Plovers, Beach 8 - Malibu, CA, January 20, 2013, Photo by Ward Thompson

Antelope Valley Field Trip Report, by Louis Tucker

The Antelope Valley, west side, was introduced to me via a phone call to LA Audubon asking about where can I find winter raptors in southern California? This phone call was made when I moved to LA back in January of 1987. And, I made the trip to the AV on January 17, 1987 where I got my life Ferruginous Hawks and Prairie Falcons. I was given a hint of a route to take, and I essentially followed Avenue D (Route 138) going west from Route 14 through the west part of the valley until it met with the on-ramp to the 5 Freeway. I was in raptor heaven with all of the winter butteos which normally winter there and with the incredible amount of Golden Eagles I saw along the way.

It must be noted that in 1987, there was much more agricultural land and open spaces. Open land with Joshua trees, desert bushes and cactus were so much more plentiful back then. Then in subsequent years, something happened. I call it the "Malling of America" which finally hit the Antelope Valley. The housing boom and commercial development went, I think, over the top. The open spaces began to disappear: fewer Joshua trees and desert bushes. The agricultural fields were beginning to vanish and the livestock on some of the farms were also disappearing. The prey began to disappear and so have the raptors.

On a typical day back in the late eighties, I could see as many as nine to a dozen Golden Eagles along Avenue D. And, with the exception of a surprise cameo appearance of a female Rough-legged Hawk in December 2011, that species vanished from the valley twenty years ago. There are no Golden Eagles in this area today. The eagles are on the Tejon Ranch, but they no longer venture out into the rest of the valley. There are a couple of reasons for this, I think—Golden Eagles love big open spaces to forage—those spaces are no longer as open. Rough-legs like remote places as well and also they can't compete with the more powerful Red-tails, which are like the coyotes of the bird of prey world. I find the Rough-leg situation interesting; being from New York, I remember seeing my life Rough-legs while driving north on the old West Side Highway in New York City and many more around the metropolitan New York area, foraging and not seeming to be bothered by the east coast bustling civilization.

But, I've digressed! There were fifteen participants: Amy Worrell, Wayne Schwartz, Don White, Norm Vargas, Sarah Shaw, John Lobel, Beatrix Schwarz, Derek and Dessi Sieburth, Bhaskar Krishnamachari, Tommye Hite, Jim Moore, Judy Matsucka and Evi Meyer. Some of these folks were "repeat offenders" which was great. This year we had a pretty brisk morning up there – very low temperatures for



Merlin, Photo by Bhaskar-Krishnamachari

California; which seems as though southern Cal is in the middle of a cold snap. However, for those who braved the early morning cold, there were some rewards. Around the Nebeker Ranch, here are some highlights: there were Ferruginous and Red-tailed Hawks, several Prairie Falcons and, in two different places, a male and female Merlin. Kestrels were around. Some wonderful looks at a male Harrier and a new species for this trip, at least when I have led it: a pair of Burrowing Owls. One kept itself well hidden in the brush and the other hunkered down and watched us as we watched it. There was a good number of Snow Geese and a flock of Canada Geese flying with one wayward Ross' Goose. Also, there was a very cooperative Loggerhead Shrike sitting on a wire.

Moving westward from the ranch, along Avenue A bordering and sometimes in Kern County, there were wonderful "pop ups" of Mountain Bluebirds in fields. Also, there was a sighting of the interior race of Sage Sparrow. Horned Larks were also around, but, not as plentiful as in times gone by. In one field, and in the sky above the field, there was a crazy gathering of Raven. There were at least two hundred in the sky and as many on the ground. Thoughts of Alfred Hitchcock were startling at that moment. There was also a spectacular soaring exhibition done by a dark morph Ferruginous Hawk—a stunningly chocolate bird which caused us to pause and watch for a while. We were on our way to Quail Lake, with a lunch stop at Holiday Lake. Holiday Lake had low water levels and not a lot of birds it once hosted. However, it did host some Canada Geese, Mallards, a nice number of Green-winged Teal and a

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Canvasback.
 And....wait for it..
 there is, or was, an
 incredibly busy and
 murderous owl on
 the premises. There
 was an owl pellet
 gathering by a few
 that was EPIC. It
 was hard to imagine
 and see so many
 pellets in one small
 area. If I were to
 guess, there must
 have been
 somewhere upwards
 of fifty pellets found
 by Sarah Shaw. That
 was impressive.

After lunch, we
 proceeded on to Quail
 Lake. Stepping out of
 our vehicles, we had a flyover of a Sharp-shinned Hawk,
 over the parking lot. Other highlights there, as the wind
 began to pick up were: Common Loon, some more Canada
 Geese, a good number of Buffleheads, Lesser Scaup, about
 two dozen Common Goldeneye, (some gave us stunning
 looks), Ruddy Ducks and Pied-billed, Eared, Western and
 Clark's Grebes. All through the day we had visitations of



Loggerhead Shrike, Photo by Amy Worrell

Northern Harriers. This was a beautiful day which started
 out quite cold and got warmer as we moved westward and as
 we saw more species. I thought it a good idea to move south
 of Quail Lake to see in the hills there that we might just have
 another cameo appearance of a Rough-legged Hawk like last
 winter. Unfortunately, no such luck. Some folks had to
 leave, and some of us were lingering, which proved prof-

itable. We had a royal
 guest appearance of
 an adult Bald Eagle,
 as we were about to
 exit south of Quail
 Lake. It flew up and
 settled in a tree just
 west of the lake. The
 great thing about big
 birds of prey is that
 they like to sit at the
 top of a tree. And,
 since this tree was full
 of leaves, we were
 grateful that it perched
 right on top. Al-
 though, it was some
 distance from us, we
 had great looks; and it
 was the last raptor of
 the day. What a won-
 derful sight to drive
 away from.



Merlin, Photo by Beatrix Schwartz

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It was a wonderful trip; but, it left me with mixed feelings. I wonder about the future of these fantastic raptors in the accessible parts of the Antelope Valley. One of my favorite "monster" raptors is the Golden Eagle, and this is the second winter in a row that I've not seen any there. Several winters before the last two, in 2009, we did have three. But, I think of 1987, when I just stumbled across good numbers of them almost at every turn, and I sigh. I take some consolation in knowing that they are in Tejon Ranch, and every time I've visited there, I've seen at least three on each occasion. The Rough-legs situation remains a mystery. I know they come down to the Carrizo Plain and some are seen down in Riverside near the San Jacinto Wildlife Area most winters. In the Carrizo, Rough-legs seem to disappear soon after December. As a general rule in raptor migration, the last to come down are the first to go back. I've always found those birds in December, and go back in January or February and don't see any. I also know that the Rough-leg is being pushed out on their breeding grounds by the "bird of prey coyote", the Red-tail. They have smaller and less powerful feet and can't compete with their more aggressive cousin. Whereas

there is little to no development in the Carrizo, the Antelope Valley had a development boom in the nineties that like everything else went bust.

So much of that area has been decimated by development. Vacant lots, which used to be full of so much desert flora and fauna, are becoming ugly dumping grounds for people to unceremoniously leave their unwanted garbage and belongings. So, a desolate desert spot is now a desolated, scattered "landfill". That would seem to be great for rodents; but, the rodents preferred the alfalfa fields of yore. If I am asked to lead next winter's trip to the AV, I will have to seriously rethink what to do. Perhaps an approach might be to do this trip in conjunction with the naturalists and biologists on the Tejon Ranch. You get the same variety of raptors, plus Golden Eagles and also a possibility of a Rough-leg, which did migrate through this past fall. You also get to see the growing Pronghorn Antelope herd—which is a very awesome sight indeed. You may miss all of the waterfowl down at Quail Lake—Oh well . . .

Cheers, Louis Tucker 



Bald Eagle, Photo by Sarah Shaw

Interpreting Nature

Bird Nerds Unite! By Monica Anderson, Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Intern

What kind of lasting impacts do Los Angeles Audubon programs have for students from the urban core? In her essay below, Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Intern, Monica Anderson, explains how she found out she was actually a bird nerd and how Los Angeles Audubon's programs have helped shape her goals...



Monica scans for birds at Jim Gilliam Park.

I'm a bird nerd; I just didn't know it until last year. Last year I started a project through the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program that asked, "How does bird abundance vary with human abundance within Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park (BHSO)?" After a school year spent hiking, scanning with binoculars, and analyzing data, I concluded that birds were more abundant in areas with fewer people and more vegetation. When I started, I knew nothing about birds, and I'd never thought I'd write about and study birds for a first job. Growing up in Los Angeles, prior to this program I'd only known of two bird species: pigeons and "seagulls." I'd NEVER imagined doing this kind of work. Of course, I wasn't completely oblivious and could assume there are more than two bird species within this whole wide world. But, a part of my study was to learn how to identify the birds of the Baldwin Hills. I can now identify over thirty bird species within the Baldwin Hills, and am proud to be called a bird nerd!

To help with identifying and actually learning how to key into these birds, my supervisor gave me a CD filled with the birdcalls of common birds at BHSO. That night, when I got home, I imported all of the songs onto my computer, and then synced them onto my iPod, with pictures matching the birds that I retrieved from the Internet. The sounds were alluring and intricate. I loved it. Then, I devoted my time to memorizing the tunes and the bird that

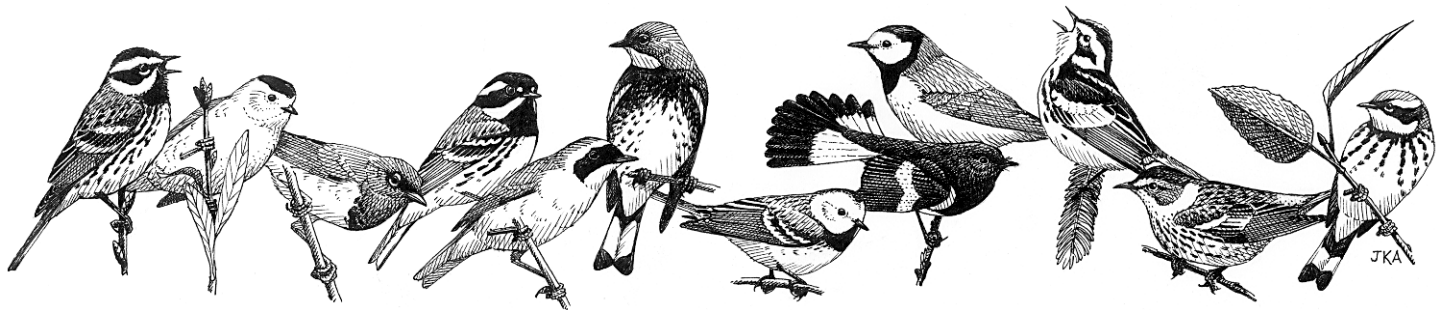
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matched. I love birds, and their songs inspired me to think about conservation in a new way. Now, I am in my second year as an intern for the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program, and while working on the same project, I've added a new component that involves music—how can music teach people of the importance of urban habitat for birds and just to be more sensitive to nature in general? With these new ideas, I plan to compose a song about birds and habitat conservation, and present it to three different audiences: Leo Politi Elementary, Dorsey High School, and Jim Gilliam Recreation Center's senior citizens. I love music, especially singing, so I thought a bird song would be awesome! Throughout this year, I've been learning about music theory and collaborating with a Greenhouse program graduate who plays guitar. I am currently working on a draft for my song. Hopefully, my song will impact people in a way that they would actually want to start being more aware of the natural environment around them.

I want the people to see that wildlife and plants are important to preserve, protect, and conserve. Plus, nature is a good way to escape from the urbanized world. Before this program, I'd barely been to a nature park, and now I work at one. Once the habitat is gone, it may not be back for years, or even generations! For example, the formerly common bird, the Cactus Wren, is now locally extirpated at the BHSO because of a dearth of cactus plants. Once you lose habitat, you lose animals, and nature. Developing a connection to nature permits a person to open up to another reality. Getting outside and out of the urban, fast lifestyle allows one to really slow down and appreciate the natural world. If people can appreciate nature, then they're steps closer to understanding the importance of conserving it. 🐦



Monica and Greenhouse graduate, Brian Young, collaborate to create a song about birds and conservation in Los Angeles.



BIRDS OF THE SEASON - FEBRUARY 2013, BY JON FISHER

Looking at any map of the greater Los Angeles area or driving one of our ubiquitous freeways, the uninitiated might imagine that hopes of finding a wide variety of birds here were overly optimistic. Concrete is pervasive, traffic noise seems omnipresent, and people are everywhere. But birders are well aware of the many strips, patches and pockets of viable habitat ranging from the coastline to the foothills—not to mention the comparatively undeveloped swaths encompassed by the San Gabriel Mountains and deserts beyond. Add to that the mild climate and substantial number of observers in the field and the number of species that makes us one of the “birdiest” counties in North America is no surprise.

The period from mid-October through early February highlighted this diversity with plenty of noteworthy birds among the many more common ones. Flycatchers and wood-warblers were both well represented. Among the array of lower end passerine vagrants, several species—including Palm Warbler, Swamp Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow—were present in well above average numbers. Added to that were some high end rarities and a first county record. No birder, from the casual to the extreme, was left wanting.

The period was also characterized by the appearance in the lowlands of higher than normal numbers of irruptive species such as Brown Creepers, White and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Pine Siskins. While none of these irruptions were major, they were nonetheless obvious.

After passerine migration was essentially over, new vagrants continued to turn up with regularity throughout the period and the LA County Christmas Bird Counts produced another set of good birds as usual.

Weather for the period was typical, with some chilly nights but generally mild temperatures and a number of fronts passing through the area. Few of these fronts

produced much in the way of precipitation however, leaving us once again well below normal rainfall.

Quite a rarity for the county was a **Trumpeter Swan** found at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB on January 20 (Don & Jill Davis). Constituting only the third county record, it was accompanied by a **Tundra Swan** making for a nice comparison of the two species. Both birds continued there through January 28.

Another **Tundra Swan** was seen flying over Lake Balboa on January 10 (Mike Stensvold). It later settled at Hansen Dam where it was rediscovered on January 12 and seen through January 18 (David Bell).

Returning for another winter was a **Eurasian Wigeon** on the LA River in Glendale from October 17–February 3 (Josh Chapman), while another was. Also recorded were hybrid **American x Eurasian Wigeons** at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook on December 6 (David Bell) and at Hansen Dam from December 22–January 13 (Kimball Garrett).

While not a species “tick” on any bird list, a **“Eurasian” Green-winged Teal** at the San Gabriel spreading basins in Rio Hondo from January 1–12 was a very good county bird and well worth checking out (Norm Vargas).

Away from regular areas of occurrence were single **Greater Scaups** off Santa Monica State Beach on November 18 (Richard Barth) and at La Mirada Park on February 4 (Roy van de Hoek).

White-winged Scoters were off Pt. Vicente on November 11 (Mark & Janet Scheel), at Cabrillo Beach on December 8 (Kris Ohlenkamp), at Pt. Dume on December 19 (Kerry Ross) and at Quail Lake from February 2–3 (Kimball Garrett). One or two **Black Scoters** were off Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo from November 14–February 7 (Richard Barth) and one

was off Will Rogers State Beach from November 26–January 29, with two birds present on the latter date (Richard Barth).

Long-tailed Ducks were off Santa Monica Beach from November 26–January 29, with a second bird there on January 14 (Richard Barth), along Ballona Creek below the Culver crossing from December 11–February 3 (Jonathan Coffin) and off Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo from January 7–9 (Richard Barth). Another two were found well inland at Quail Lake near Gorman from February 1–3 (David Bell).

Scarce inland was a **Red-breasted Merganser** in San Dimas Canyon and recorded on the Pomona CBC on December 15.

An **Arctic Loon**, almost certain to be accepted by the CBRC, was a new addition to the county list. First found by the Malibu Pier on January 12, it plied the waters in that area at least through at least January 15 (Kyri Freeman). Remarkably, another apparent **Arctic Loon**—possibly the same individual—was in the Ballona Creek channel on February 2 (Amanda Utzman). Though never before recorded in the county, records exist for Orange County and Baja California—thus it was inevitable that it be recorded in the county at some point. Obviously we should be scrutinizing each and every Pacific Loon that presents us an opportunity to do so. As for the many thousands that migrate along the coast, we can only guess at how many might be Arctics.

Scarce but regular inland were **Pacific Loons** at Jackson Lake near Wrightwood from November 4–12, at Castaic Lagoon on November 3 (Joshua Chapman), at Balboa Lake on November 12 (Mark Rosenstein), at Quail Lake near Gorman from December 4–February 1 (David Bell) and in San Dimas Canyon on December 15.

Short-tailed Shearwaters, difficult to separate from Sooty and always of interest when found close to shore, were at Cabrillo Beach—oiled and subsequently captured for rehabilitation—on December 8 (Lance Benner) and off Pt. Dume on the Malibu CBC on December 16 (Kimball Garrett).

A minor flourish of **Magnificent Frigatebirds** along the San Diego County coast in mid-October also resulted in one spotted off Pt. Dume in Malibu on October 18 (Kerry Ross).

Quite rare for the county was a **Brown Booby** off Pt.

Fermin from December 5–19 (John Lobel). This species is far less commonly recorded in LA County waters than statewide records would lead one to expect.

Two **American Bitterns** at Harbor Park in Harbor City on December 9 (Martin Byhower) and one at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB on January 26 (Roger Lewis, Maureen Sullivan-Lewis) were the only ones reported.

Bald Eagles were over Baldwin Park on November 8 (Tom Miko), at Bonelli Park in San Dimas— with a maximum of three present simultaneously— between December 3 and January 26 (Rod Higbie, Tom Miko), at Morris Reservoir in San Gabriel Canyon on December 13 (Robb Hamilton) and at Quail Lake near Gorman on from January 5–21 (Daniel Tinoco).

A few **Swainson’s Hawks** continued to trickle through in October and early November. Very late were two at Hansen Dam from December 2–3 (Kimball Garrett), and early was one in Claremont on January 27 (Tom Miko).

Rare in the county was a “**Harlan’s**” **Red-tailed Hawk** in the Antelope Valley on January 4 and present for several weeks thereafter (Frank & Susan Gilliland). On the coastal slope where they are scarce, a **Ferruginous Hawk** was in the Ballona Wetlands area from January 30–February 3 (Rick Pine).

Pale *richardsoni* **Merlins** were at Legg Lake on November 3 (Ed Stonick), at Hansen Dam from January 1–February 10 (Kimball Garrett) and at the Piute Ponds on January 26 (Adam Searcy) while at the other end of the *Falco columbarius* spectrum, one of the dark *suckleyi* subspecies was at Arcadia Park in Arcadia on November 15 (Mickey Long).

Shorebirds of interest included the usual **Mountain Plovers** in the east Antelope Valley, with a high count of sixty-three birds on January 26 (Susan Steele) as well as three late **Pectoral Sandpipers** at the Piute Ponds on November 26 (Thomas Drescher).

A **Scripps’s Murrelet** was out of season—typically quite scarce from October through December—off San Pedro on December 10 (David Bell).

A **White-winged Dove** in Rancho Palos Verdes on

November 6 was the only one reported during the period (Evi Meyer).

Common Ground-Doves still persist in the county in small numbers as evidenced by one in Powder Canyon in La Habra Heights on January 23 (David Bell) and up to eleven along the LA River in Bellflower from February 2–10 (Donna Bray).

Burrowing Owls on the coastal slope were at the Rio Hondo spreading basins in Pico Rivera on December 23 (Larry Schmahl) and at Del Rey Lagoon from January 15–24 (Roy van de Hoek). Perhaps more common than records indicate, but rarely recorded on the coastal slope, a **Long-eared Owl** was at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve on December 22. Also noteworthy were two **Short-eared Owls** at the Ballona Wetlands from October 26–November 1 (Jonathan Coffin).

A few **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were recorded, with one at Trippet Ranch in Topanga State Park on November 4 (Brittany O'Connor), three at Chumash Park in Agoura on November 5 (James Bailey), one in San Dimas from November 5–7 (Rod & Pat Higbie) and one at Temescal Canyon in Pacific Palisades from January 9–February 10 (Mark Conboy, Sarah Larocque).

Rare but occasional well away from their high elevation haunts, a **Williamson's Sapsucker** was at St. Andrew's Priory on November 10 (Lance Benner). About eight **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** and at least ten **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were found during the period—good counts for both species.

Low elevation **White-headed Woodpeckers** were at Mill Creek Station in the San Gabriel Mountains on November 1 (Robb Hamilton), at Pearblossom Park in the Antelope Valley from November 10–January 26, at Valyermo from November 10–January 26 and at St. Andrew's Priory on January 26 (both Lance Benner).

While intergrades are fairly common, pure **Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flickers** are not. Such birds were at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from October 30–January 19 (Dave Moody), at Loyola Marymount University from December 30–February 2 (Russell Stone), at the South Coast Botanic Garden on January 6 (Ron Bernal), at the LA County Arboretum on January 8 (David Bell) and at the Piute Ponds on February 10 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

Flycatchers put on a pretty good show and included a late **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino on October 28 (Elaine MacPherson).

A handful of wintering *Empidonax* were also discovered. A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was at Bonelli Park in San Dimas from December 11–January 25 (David Bell) and **Gray Flycatchers** were at Bonelli from October 11–November 28 (Rod & Pat Higbie) and at Cheseboro Canyon in Agoura on December 16 (Dan Cooper). Much less expected in winter was a **Dusky Flycatcher** along the Ballona Valley Riparian Corridor from December 5–January 21 (Dan Cooper). A **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was at Malibu Lake on December 16 (Cynthia Schotte) and a silent "**Western**" **Flycatcher** was at Lacy Park in San Marino on January 14 (Tom Wurster).

Several **Eastern Phoebes** were found, with one at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia from November 7–12 (David Bell), another at the similarly named Peck Park in San Pedro on December 23 (Dinuk Magamma) and one at the Los Angeles Country Club making a nice addition to the LA CBC on December 30 (Kimball Garrett).

Vermilion Flycatchers were at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area (EMJRA) in Willowbrook from October 17–January 24 with possibly the same bird seen at nearby Enterprise Park on October 30 (Richard Barth), and at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys from January 4–February 3 (David Bell).

Dusky-capped Flycatchers were at Veteran's Park in Bell Gardens from November 18 onward (Richard Barth) and at Creek Park in La Mirada as of December 13 (Jonathan Rowley), with both of these being returning wintering birds. Only slightly less rare in winter were **Ash-throated Flycatchers** at Ralph Dills Park in Paramount from November 2–18—though this may have been a very late migrant, at Jim Gilliam Park in Baldwin Hills on December 25 (both Richard Barth) and in the Sepulveda Basin from January 6–February 2 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

Tropical Kingbirds were at the Ballona Wetlands on October 9 (Tracy Drake), returning for another winter to Legg Lake in South El Monte as of October 15 (Mark Scheel), at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from October 21–23 (Jesse Ellis)—with what may have been the same bird still present on December 11 (Karen Gilbert), at

Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale on October 28 (Cathy McFadden, Paul Clarke), at the Las Virgenes Open Space Preserve near Woodland Hills on November 24 (Steve Zamek) and in Malibu on February 1 (Allen Chartier).

Far less expected was a **Thick-billed Kingbird** at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from October 19–25 (Karen Gilbert). If one doesn't count birds returning for successive winters, this is a very rare county bird with just seven records.

At least a half dozen late **Western Kingbirds** were reported between October 21 and November 12. Later still were presumably wintering birds at Santa Fe Dam on December 15 (Mark Hunter), in San Dimas Canyon on December 15 and in the Sepulveda Basin on January 6 (Mark & Janet Scheel). While definitely more regular than in the past—in fact twenty years ago, Westerns were unheard of in winter—care should be taken when separating any presumed Western from the expected Cassin's.

The usual small number of **Plumbeous Vireos** were present on the coastal slope, while a rarer—in winter at least—**Cassin's Vireos** were at the Village Green Condominiums on Los Angeles from November 28–January 16 (Don Sterba), at Hansen Dam on January 4 (John Oliver) and At Cheviot Hills Park in West Los Angeles on February 7 (Richard Barth).

An excellent find—and only the third ever recorded in the county—was a **Blue-headed Vireo** at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City found on January 13 and reported through January 23 (Steve Dexter). This was very possibly the same bird present last winter but whose identity—based largely equivocal photographs—could not be substantiated.

Two **Horned Larks**, no longer easy to find on the coastal slope, were at Santa Fe Dam between October 19 and early November (Andrew Lee) and at least three were at Malibu Lagoon on October 27 (Dan Cooper).

Pacific Wrens were at two locations in Big Santa Anita Canyon above Arcadia, one on November 2 (Darren Dowell) and the other from November 17–December 15 (Lance Benner).

California Gnatcatchers are generally sedentary, thus birds away from expected areas are always of

interest. One was along the Rio Hondo near South El Monte on October 26 (Dan Cooper, David Bell) and another continued from the previous year near the Whittier Narrows Nature Center through December 15 (Mickey Long).

Thrushes of interest included just one **Mountain Bluebird** reported on the coastal slope—north of Lake Balboa in Van Nuys—from December 26–January 15 (Daniel Tinoco), a **Townsend's Solitaire** above Altadena from December 15–January 27 (David Bell) and one at Veteran's Park in Sylmar on January 26 (Kimball Garrett). Also unusual was a rather late **Swainson's Thrush** at Alondra Park in Lawndale from October 11–18 (Dinuk Magamma). Lastly, at least seven **Varied Thrushes** were found between October 22 and February 3.

Another excellent find was a **White Wagtail** that undertook a reverse migration—heading southeast instead of southwest—and ended up at Cabrillo Beach from December 8–18 (Bernardo Alps). This was only the third ever discovered in the county. The two former wagtail species have of course been lumped under the single species name of White Wagtail, with this bird determined to be of the *ocularis* race that occurs in northeast Asia, with small numbers breeding in western Alaska.

Up to three **Chestnut-collared Longspurs**—scarce even in the Antelope Valley and much less likely on the coastal slope—were at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale from October 19–28 (Andrew Lee).

As we're covering the time frame from late October through early February, it's no surprise that wood-warblers were well-represented. No fewer than nineteen species—in addition to the regular half dozen or so that are regular in winter—were recorded over the period.

A **Northern Waterthrush** was at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on October 15 (Darren Dowell, Brendan Crill) while nine **Black-and-white Warblers** were found during the period.

Very unusual in winter was a **MacGillivray's Warbler** near Lacy Park in San Marino on December 19 (David Bell). Another—or perhaps the same bird—was present just a few blocks from this spot during winter of 2011–2012. Another remarkable winter find was a probable **Kentucky Warbler** along the Dominguez Channel in Carson on February 6 (Dinuk Magamma).

A **Tennessee Warbler** was at Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach from October 19–21 (Dinuk Magamma), a **Nashville Warbler** was on the Los Angeles CBC on December 30 and a **Virginia's Warbler** had returned to the VA grounds in Westwood as of October 24 where it remained through the period (Dan Cooper).

An **American Redstart** was at Alondra Park in Lawndale on October 13 (Robert Hargraves), while **Northern Parulas** included one returning to Legg Lake as of October 26 (Dan Cooper, David Bell), another at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on November 16 and was seen through February (Tracy Drake) and one at the EMJRA in Willowbrook from November 21 through January (Martin Byhower).

A **Magnolia Warbler** was at Apollo Park in Lancaster on October 13 (Kimball Garrett) and a **Blackburnian Warbler** was at Harbor Park in Wilmington from October 13–16 (Darren Dowell). **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood on October 23 (Richard Barth) and returning for another winter at Legg Lake in South El Monte as of November 20 (John Oliver).

A presumably continuing **Blackpoll Warbler** was at Creek Park in La Mirada through October 15 and at least twenty-two **Palm Warblers** were found between October 9 and January 29. **Pine Warblers** were at Creek Park in La Mirada from October 24–26 (Jonathan Rowley), returning for a third winter to Hansen Dam in Lakeview Terrace as of October 28 (Kimball Garrett) and at the EMJRA in Willowbrook on December 9 (Tom Benson). Another returning bird was in Palos Verdes Estates on December 23 (Jim Pike).

Rare but regular in winter were **Hermit Warblers** in Rolling Hills Estates on the Palos Verdes Peninsula on November 4 (Steve Wolf), at the EMJRA in Willowbrook on December 6 (David Bell) and at Dennis the Menace Park—yes that really is its name—in Downey on January 13 (Richard Barth), while a rarer **Black-throated Green Warbler** was in Pasadena on November 25 (John Garrett).

Vagrants of the genus *Cardellina* were represented by a **Canada Warbler** at Loyola Marymount University on October 20 (Russell Stone).

Painted Redstarts were at Alondra Park in

Lawndale on October 9 (Dinuk Magamma), at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood on October 23, with what may have been the same bird there on February 9 (Richard Barth) and at Lacy Park in San Marino from November 20–January (Darren Dowell).

Wintering **Green-tailed Towhees** were in Palos Verdes Estates on December 23 (Jim Pike) and at the Kenneth Hahn SRA on December 30 (Ann & Eric Brooks)

Clay-colored Sparrows were at the Eaton Canyon basin on October 17 (David Bell), at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia on October 21–22 (Mark & Janet Scheel), continuing at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through October 27 and at Pomona Cemetery on November 14 (Mike San Miguel Jr.).

Coastal slope **Vesper Sparrows** included one in the Eaton Canyon Flood Basin on October 17 (David Bell), three at Cheeseboro Canyon in Agoura, one at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve on December 22 and one in the Whittier Narrows area from December 15–January 15 (Mickey Long).

On the Malibu CBC, a timely find was a **Lark Bunting** at Cheeseboro Canyon in Agoura on December 16 (Dan Cooper).

Rare as a migrant was a **Grasshopper Sparrow** at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia on October 21 (Jon Fisher).

A “**Red**” **Fox Sparrow** at Grassy Hollow Picnic Area in the San Gabriel Mountains on November 4 was the only one reported (Mark & Janet Scheel).

At least a dozen **Swamp Sparrows** were found between October 15 and January 25, almost all on the coastal slope. Also relatively abundant were **White-throated Sparrows**, with a remarkable two dozen reported during the period.

Dark-eyed “Gray-headed” Juncos, rather scarce recently, were at Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach (Mark Conrad), at Ernest Debs Park near Highland Park on October 28 (Dan Cooper) and at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood on February 10 (Liga Auzins). **Dark-eyed “Pink-sided” Juncos**—historically very rare in the county—were at Pearblossom Park from November

10–13 (Darren Dowell), at West LA College on November 11 (Don Sterba), at Pearblossom Park in the south Antelope Valley on December 25 (Kimball Garrett), in Pasadena from at least mid-December (John Garrett), at Bonelli Park in San Dimas from January 13–January 25 (David Bell) and at St. Andrew's Priory near Valyermo on February 10 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

At least ten **Summer Tanagers** were found between October 25 and December 30, with some of these being returning wintering birds. A nice find was a much less expected **Scarlet Tanager** at Harbor Park in Wilmington from October 13–14 (Darren Dowell) and another killed by a cat in South Pasadena November 24 (Adam Stanford-Moore).

Ralph Dills Park in Paramount hosted a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** on October 18 (Richard Barth) and wintering **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were in Sierra Madre on December 19 (Mei Kwan) and in Laurel Canyon in the Hollywood Hills on January 21 (Dave Surtees)

Only three **Bobolinks** were found this fall, with the last one at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia on October 21 (Jon Fisher).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds, expected in spring but rather rare on the coastal slope in fall and winter, were at Peck Park in Arcadia on October 6 (Jon Fisher), at Loyola Marymount University on October 20 (Russell Stone) and at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on December 6 (Tracy Drake).

A **Hooded Oriole** was in Sherman Oaks from January 14–26 (Scott Logan). Other orioles included a **Baltimore Oriole** at Creek Park in La Mirada from October 8–November 13 and what was either **Baltimore** or a **Baltimore x Bullock's Oriole** at West LA College on December 12 (Don Sterba). A probable **Baltimore Oriole** was at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena on December 16 (David Bell) and a **Scott's Oriole** was at Bonelli Park in San Dimas from December 12–23 (Valerie Wheeler).

A few **Red Crossbills** at Pearblossom Park starting in early November (Steve & Becky Turley) had increased to over a dozen by late January. The

vocalizations of one or more were that of a Type 3 bird, heard occasionally but previously undocumented by recordings in the county (Lance Benner). This complex species—which will ultimately be split into six or more—presents a real challenge for birders. Structural and call differences are present, but absent recordings many are not identifiable beyond the current single species level. Kimball Garrett points out that the current defined subspecies do not correspond to the various call types, complicating the matter further.

Other crossbills away from the higher San Gabriels included one at Valyermo on November 10 (Lance Benner), four at Apollo Park on November 15 (Jimmy McMorrان), one at JPL in Pasadena on December 5 (Mary Freeman) and two in Altadena on December 23 (Luke Tiller).

There was no invasion of **Evening Grosbeaks**, but a couple of birds were found locally. One was along the Angeles Forest Highway north of Aliso Canyon Road on November 1 (Robb Hamilton) and another was over Tujunga on November 25 (Kimball Garrett).

Now that a very productive fall and winter have passed with what seems remarkable speed, spring has arrived. Well ahead of the official start of the season on March 20, deciduous trees are sprouting new growth long before most of the country has seen a glimmer of spring. Early migrants in southern California have already been passing through for a couple of months and breeding activity is obvious for a number of resident species. Speaking of breeding birds, eBird offers an easy way to document any such observations and users should be sure to take advantage of this feature.

While this time of year sees many birds heading north—waterfowl, loons, raptors and hummingbirds among them—mid March sees the onset of the most appealing aspect of spring for most birders—the arrival of an array of Neotropical migrants. There is no spectacle quite like spring songbird migration, and after their numbers have peaked in late April, May should bring the best chance for vagrants. In spring as in fall, virtually any spot can be worth checking. 🐦

BIRD WALKS CALENDAR

LAAS Bird walks are geared for the beginner/intermediate birders looking for an introduction to local birds and are interested in reducing their carbon footprint by birding relatively close to home. All are welcome, but no pets or small children, please. Appropriate for young bird watchers age 6 years and older. Binoculars are provided on some walks as noted. Bird walks DO NOT require advance sign-up, just show up at the specified meeting time and place.

For further bird walk information contact Eleanor Osgood at birdwalks@laaudubon.org or call her at (310) 839-5420. Carpooling is encouraged, call (323) 876-0202 to provide information to join the LAAS Carpool Database. We will attempt to connect you with other birders interested in sharing a ride to our events.

TOPANGA STATE PARK BIRDWALK

1st Sunday of every month

March 3 and April 7

Time: 8:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Leaders: *Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin*

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.

Directions:

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

UPPER FRANKLIN CANYON

SOOKY GOLDMAN NATURE CENTER

2600 Franklin Canyon Dr

Beverly Hills 90210

2nd Sunday of the month

March 10 and April 14

Time: 8:30-11:30

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 likely to see the resident Wood Ducks and as well chaparral bird species such as: California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees, and California Thrasher. Winter birds are still around in March—we will look for Ring-necked Duck, American Wigeon, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Fox Sparrow. In April—we will look for early spring migrants such as warblers and flycatchers.

Directions:

FROM THE 101 FREEWAY: follow Coldwater Canyon Blvd. south for several miles to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive (traffic signal). 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. Take Franklin

Canyon Dr down to park entrance, turn at first left into the parking lot.

FROM SUNSET BLVD: go north on N. Beverly Drive to Coldwater Canyon Dr to Mulholland Dr. Veer left on Mulholland Drive. At the next traffic signal, make a left turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. continue to first parking lot on the left. Meet in the main parking lot for the Sooky Goldman Nature Center.

If lost the morning of the walk, call (424) 298-1376 between 8-9:00 a.m. **Binoculars provided.**

BALLONA WETLANDS BIRD WALK

3rd Sunday of the month

(with the exception of December)

March 17 and April 21

Time: 8:00 a.m.-noon

Leaders: *Bob Shanman and Friends*

Join us for a walk through L.A.'s only remaining saltwater marsh and the adjacent rocky jetty. 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 wbutorrance@gmail.com

KENNETH HAHN STATE RECREATION AREA

4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles 90056

In the Baldwin Hills

3rd Saturday of the month

March 16 and April 20

Time: 8:00 a.m.-noon

Leaders: *Eric and Ann Brooks or Eleanor Osgood*

This trip covers landscaped parkland, a man-made lake and natural coastal scrub habitats within the Baldwin Hills. We are likely to see many of the resident birds such as Black and Say's Phoebes, Cassin Kingbirds, California and Spotted Towhee, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk. We will also look for wintering birds such as Merlin, Western Meadowlarks, Rufous-crowned, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows. In April we expect to see early migrants such as some warblers and flycatchers. Binoculars provided.

THE PARK ENTRANCE is off of La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$6.00 parking fee) turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR



Photograph by Liz Muraoka

Mary Freeman, LAAS Field Trip Leader &
Nick Freeman, LAAS Field Trip Chairperson.

FIELD TRIPS OFTEN REQUIRE MORE DRIVING AND TIME IN THE FIELD THAN DO OUR BIRD WALKS. No pets. No children under 12, without permission from leader please. When you sign-up by email, we will confirm your reservation and provide any supplemental trip information by reply email. If you do not have convenient email, you may mail us your reservation request and fee; include a SASE, so we may mail back your confirmation. Provide your: Name, Address, email address (if used), day-of-event phone number (cell), and an alternate phone number in case of emergency (home, work or friend.) For carpooling purposes for reserved field trips, your information may be shared with other confirmed participants—unless you specify otherwise at sign-up. When carpooling, remember to offer compensation to your driver in these times of spiking gas prices.

Mail reservation fees, separate checks per trip to:

Los Angeles Audubon - Field Trips
PO Box 931057
Los Angeles CA 90093-1057

email reservations to: membership@laaudubon.org
Phone: (323) 876-0202 (leave voice message if no answer.)

Please support LAAS field trips with your donations.

Share your photos and stories with other LAAS fans on Facebook and Twitter.

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[twitter.com / LAAudubon.](https://twitter.com/LAAudubon)

March

Saturday, March 2 Bonelli Regional Park NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Rod Higbie*. Bonelli Regional Park is a remarkable island of habitat. It contains extensive coastal sage habitat, along with a large lake surrounded by parkland. 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 \$10.00/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.

Sunday, March 17 Ventura County Game Preserve NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. The private duck hunting club in Ventura has a long history of producing the kinds of birds that most rich, well-birded and disappearing habitats can lay claim to, including Sora and Virginia rails, American Bittern, Eurasian Wigeon, dark morph Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, and one Lesser Sand-Plover. Emphasis on shorebirds for this date. GET TO THE PRESERVE by taking the 101 Fwy W to Rice Avenue S, following the Rice Ave. prompts to the T-intersection, then take Hueneme Rd. west just past the buildings on the right. Meet on the side of the road at 7:30 a.m. We will walk the property, so good hiking/mud shoes with energetic legs inside a plus. We may have one car. Scopes & FRS radios helpful.

Field Trips Continued next page

March cont'd.

March 23-24 Weekend. Anza Borrego Birds, Wildflowers, Insects, and More. \$20 LAAS FEE / \$40 FOR NON-LAAS, LIMITED SIGN-UP. Leader, *Kurt Leuschner*, is a Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert. He specializes in field ornithology, entomology, and desert natural history. On Saturday and Sunday we will car-caravan in and around Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. This is a peak time for both wildflowers and the annual migration of Swainson's Hawks! High points over the years include: hundreds of Swainson's Hawks in migration, LeConte's Thrasher, Bald Eagles nesting, Wild Turkeys, Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, Desert Lilies, Long-eared Owl, Chuckwalla, Baja Collared Lizard, Great Purple Hairstreak and Silvery Blue. Every year is different due to rainfall but there is always something interesting and exciting to see and it's a beautiful time of year to be in the Lower Colorado Desert and Julian. The sunrises and overall scenery are spectacular! SUGGESTED ACCOMMODATIONS IN BORREGO SPRINGS: Borrego Palm Canyon Campground in the State Park (reserve through www.reserveamerica.com), Hacienda del Sol motel (760-767-5442) is quite near our meeting point, Stanlund Motel (760-767-5501) and Palm Canyon Resort (800-242-0044) are just down the road. Anticipate a busy weekend and make your reservations months ahead of time. WE WILL MEET at 6:45 a.m. both days in the parking lot of the Borrego Desert Nature Center (address: 652 Palm Canyon Drive), just west of Christmas Circle in downtown Borrego Springs and next to Carlees. This is NOT the same as the State Park Visitor Center. We will finish up around lunchtime on Sunday. Net profits go to the Ralph Schreiber Grant Fund. **Limit 20 people.** RESERVE BY MAIL with \$20 fee for LAAS members / \$40 non-LAAS fee; cell #, and E-mail address to LAAS. E-mail attachments with MORE DETAILS WILL BE SENT LATER. Expect pleasant to hot days, cool to cold nights (40-100 degree range). On Friday night March 22 from 6-7:30 p.m., Kurt will be giving a lecture on bird migration at the Borrego Desert Nature Center (see above). General admission is \$10. It is sponsored by the Anza Borrego Desert Natural History Association www.abdnha.org All are invited.

April

Sunday, April 7. Malibu Lagoon and Points North NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP. Leader *Irwin Woldman* will be pointing out waterbirds, terns, gulls and shorebirds from the shore and at the estuary's two new viewing towers, continuing on to nearby Legacy Park. Thereafter on to Zuma Beach (1st restroom on Westward Avenue off PCH), then look for similar birds plus a better chance for migrating loons, sea ducks and alcids from Point Dume, if we have favorable onshore winds for seawatching. Zuma trailhead and Charmlee Park are other options. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Malibu Lagoon kiosk. To get here, take PCH N/W over the bridge in Malibu, and park free on either side of PCH after the estuary turn on the left, or turn right on Cross Creek Road for free parking along the road (near Starbucks), or turn left into the Malibu estuary lot to park for a fee. Cross PCH, and walk to the kiosk across from Cross Creek Road. Bring lunch, water, sunblock, and a scope if you have one, for a day of birding into the early afternoon.



Owens Valley, Photo by Mary Freeman

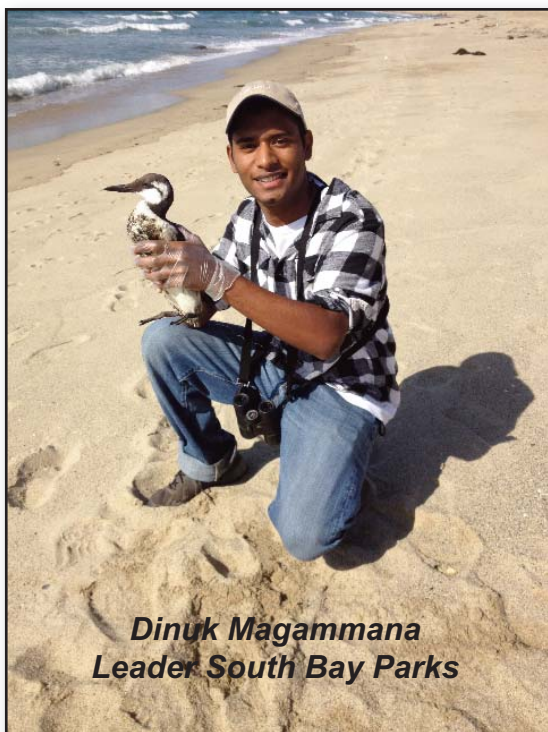
April 20 & 21 Weekend. Owens Valley Grouse Trip. \$55 FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP, 20 Max. *Mary and Nick Freeman* lead. Greater Sage Grouse on the lek, Sooty Grouse, Chukar, Swainson's Hawk, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, breathtaking scenery, more shorebirds and other migrants. Mary's 22nd year leading! MEET early Saturday and Sunday mornings in Bishop up Hwy 395, at Jack's Restaurant. **Limited to 20.** To sign up, send \$55 (Schreiber Grant fundraiser), phone#, and email to LAAS. RESERVE ROOMS EARLY. Motel 6, Mountain View Inn, Bishop Elms are some of many hotels in Bishop. More details in e-mailer.

Cont'd next page.

May

Saturday, May 4. South Bay Parks. NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE. Leader *Dinuk Magammanna* visits many of the South Bay parks regularly, including Madrona Marsh where he works. Colorful warblers and other passerines should headline. Dinuk will visit Alondra Park, Madrona Marsh, Sand Dune Park, and Wilderness Park if time allows. Start and finish at Alondra Park, for carpoolers. TO GET HERE, get yourself from the 405 Fwy to Redondo Beach Blvd. heading east. Turn left (N) into the large parking lot at Yukon Avenue, turn right and park by the concrete walkway. Walk just to the lake, where we will meet at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch, especially if you might carpool, as we may bird until 3:00 p.m.

May 11 & 12 Weekend. Mojave Area. SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE, 12 Max. Leaders: *Nick & Mary Freeman*. 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 into the golf course parking lot past the fenced driving range. Meet here at 6:30 a.m. **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 Butterbredt Springs, and finish the day at California City or Piute Ponds. LAAS SIGN-UP MANDATORY. **12 max.** Bring lunches, sun block. RESERVE ROOMS (Motel 6 or other) in Mojave.



Dinuk Magammanna
Leader South Bay Parks

Saturday, May 18. Small Owls of the San Gabriels. NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP, 10 Max. Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. We will be looking for Flammulated, Saw-whet, Northern Pygmy and Western Screech-Owls. Sign up, and meet at the bottom of Angeles Crest Highway at 5 p.m. TAKE THE 210 FWY TO LA CANADA, EXITING AT ANGELES CREST HWY, turn uphill, and turn right into the second small street, and quickly left onto the ACH frontage road. Meet along the first 50-yard stretch, fed and gassed up. Bring quiet cold weather gear (no nylon if possible), a small walking flashlight, binoculars, powerful flashlight optional. LAAS telephone or email sign-up mandatory. 10 max. Note: as of Feb 14th, this trip is fully booked, but wait list is begun for possible 2nd visit to this popular destination.

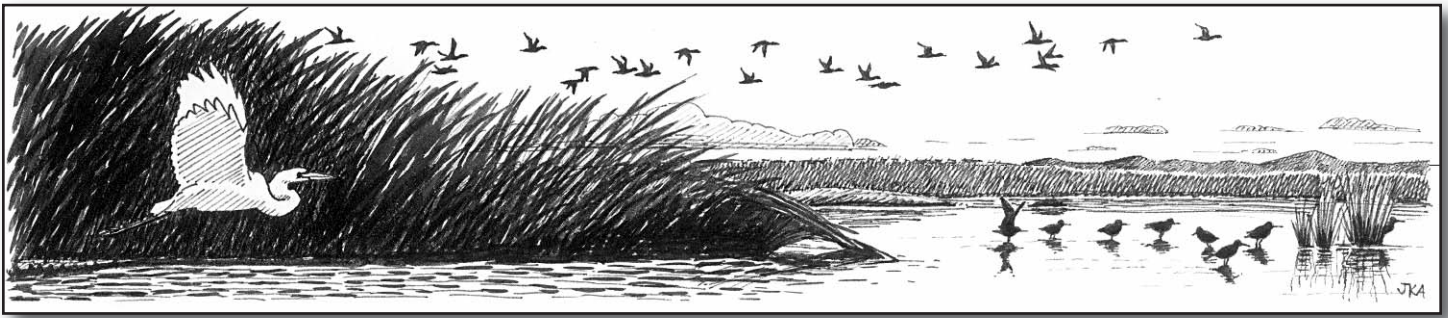


San Gabriel View, Photo by Heather Sabin

July

July 4-7 Long Weekend. Camp Nelson Cabin Owling. SIGN-UP (6 MIN / 8 MAX), \$100 – BUDGET PRICED! (3 NIGHTS CABIN, 1 HOT DOG BBQ DINNER, & OWLS INCLUDED.) Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Camp Nelson is above Porterville in the southwest Sierra. Owling by night, bird walks by day! Must be a night owl. We usually see (yes, see) Flammulated, Saw-whet, and Spotted owls. Days wandering in the Sequoias are delightful. We are still shopping around for a cabin, and are hoping to get one that sleeps eight. Our first dinner will be potluck, others provided or eat out. Meet Thursday 3:00 p.m. at the cabin (directions pending), finally leaving the mountains late Sunday morning. More details in flyer. To reserve, send phone, \$100 check for cabin, and e-mail. 8 sign-ups max. including leaders. The leaders pay too, to bring this price to you! No small children or pets, please.

Note: Bob Barnes has retired from leading his always-popular Southern Sierra Breeding Bird trip. We will miss you Bob!



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION, BY GARRY GEORGE

SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE AREA

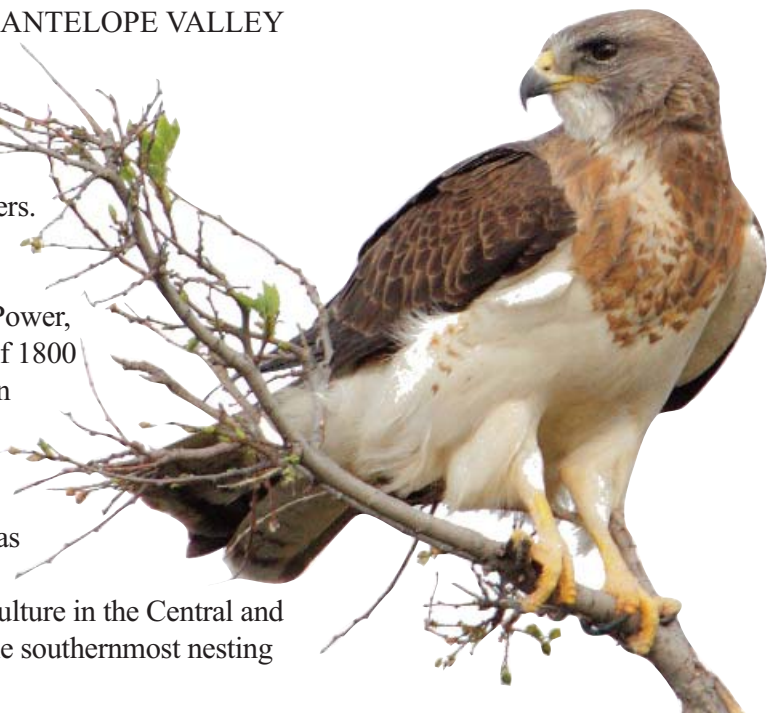
LA Audubon supported San Fernando Valley Audubon's Kris Ohlenkamp and Dave Weeshoff in their advocacy at the Army Corps of Engineers to take responsibility for their destruction of one of our favorite birding spots and a restoration project we have been involved in for over thirty years as a member of the Sepulveda Wildlife Basin Committee. Kris will bring all the Southern California chapters up to date at the Southern California Chapter Council meeting at El Dorado Nature Center on March 16, 2013, beginning at 9 am. All are invited to come and hear how we can support Kris and SFV Audubon as they work hard to restore what was lost.

MY BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

This winter we were pleasantly surprised to find that our 18 years of letting leaf litter stay on the ground is paying off in resources for wintering ground birds. Sooty Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, California Towhee and five White-crowned Sparrows were all seen in the backyard for the first winter in 20 years. They were all scratching in the ground along with Hermit Thrush. The wintering flock all bathe at least once a day: Blk-throated Gray, Orange-crowned, Townsend's, and of course nosy Yellow-rumped warblers along with a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a singing Bewick's Wren all inhabit the jungle that has grown in back and front. The resident Bushtits, W. Scrub-jay and Black Phoebe still visit. **KILL YOUR LAWN!**

SWAINSON'S HAWK HABITAT CONSERVED IN ANTELOPE VALLEY

In my role as Renewable Energy Director for Audubon California I have the opportunity to comment on solar and wind projects in California on behalf of Audubon and jointly with chapters. Our comments on a large solar project in the Antelope Valley and the cooperation of Kern County Planning Department and Renewable Resources Group and SunPower, the developers, have yielded mitigation in the amount of 1800 acres of permanent protection for prime ranch habitat on Portal Ridge, an LA County Sensitive Ecological Area (SEA), and more mitigation lands to come in Kern County. This was inspired by Pete Bloom's presentation at LA Audubon some time ago, and Pete has been a valuable partner in advising on conservation of this State threatened species which has adapted to agriculture in the Central and Antelope Valleys. The Antelope Valley population is the southernmost nesting population in California.



Swainsons Hawk, © Tom Grey

What does Earth Day mean to me?

By Carol Babeli,
LAAS Development Director

As I write this, I am watching the activity in my backyard - the hermit thrush rustling through the leaf clutter, the hummingbirds diving in arcs across the sky, the monarch butterfly that just emerged from its chrysalis yesterday! Earth Day for me is about taking that extra moment every day to stop and look closely at what nature is doing all around me, it's my de-stress button. I think of my childhood and how spending

time outdoors was a huge part of my day. But that's not the case for many of today's young people who face so many distractions and challenges. Finding ways to get young people outdoors and sparking a sense of excitement and respect for wild things is a goal of Los Angeles Audubon. I hope it's a goal for all of us. Share your love of nature with friends, family and the young folks in your life by enjoying Earth Day everyday by pointing out something awesome that each day holds. 🐦



Rainbow at Venice Beach, Photo by Carol Babeli



Los Angeles Audubon's New Development Director

Carol Babeli joined the Los Angeles Audubon team this month as Development Director charged with finding the funds that keep our education programs, presentations and community engagement aloft. Carol moved to the LA area three years ago from New York City where she was employed by Sony Music as VP of Strategic Marketing & Partnerships. Carol most recently served as Business Development Director for KCRW, the National Public Radio affiliate station in Santa Monica. While a long time member of Audubon, her introduction to the Los Angeles Chapter came as a result of her docent work in the Ballona Wetlands education program. Carol says, "I am honored to be working with the devoted team at Los Angeles Audubon who care so deeply about protecting the unique eco-system of our region and do so by empowering the youth of LA to accomplish great things." 🐦

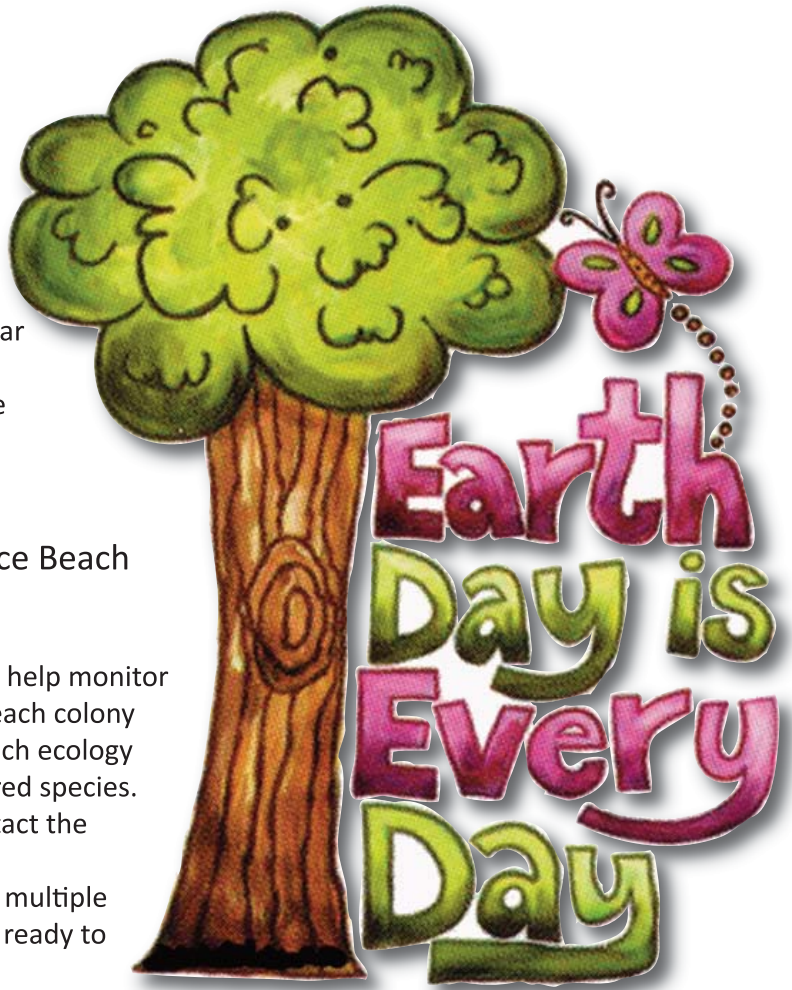
Volunteer Events

Native Plant & Wildlife Garden at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area

On Saturday, March 2nd and Saturday, April 20th we will host volunteer events at the Native Plant & Wildlife Garden at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. This is part of our fifth year of TOGETHERGREEN funded VOLUNTEER DAYS events. Those interested in participating are welcome to contact the volunteer coordinator for more information at tern@laaudubon.org or (323) 481-4037.

California Least Tern Monitoring at the Venice Beach Colony Enclosure

Beginning in April we welcome new volunteers to help monitor the endangered California Least Tern at the Venice Beach colony enclosure. This is a great way to learn about local beach ecology while helping to collect valuable data on an endangered species. Those interested in participating are welcome to contact the volunteer coordinator for more information at tern@laaudubon.org or (323) 481-4037. We will host multiple training sessions to get new volunteers informed and ready to make observations at the colony.



Membership

LAAS is grateful to all our many supporters and members of Los Angeles Audubon Society. Welcome, welcome back and thank you!—to these new and recently renewed supporters!

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Beverly Baker
Scott Baker
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WESTERN Tanager

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Articles, letters drawings and photographs concerning conservation, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for publication in the *Western Tanager*. Please send copy as Microsoft Word, RTF documents, or plain text files. Photos should be high resolution (300ppi) .jpg or .tif files. Submissions should be in the hands of the editor by the 1st of the month to be included in the following issue.

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON

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Mail this form, and include a check made payable to LAAS - Membership:

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P.O. Box 931057
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Los Angeles Audubon Society is non-profit organization and a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

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

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National Audubon Society
PO Box 422246
Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

Be sure to write "C3ZC030Z" on the NAS application to assure assignment to the Los Angeles chapter. For NAS renewals, use the form provided in the National Audubon magazine, "Audubon."

If you have any questions about membership renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Susan Castor at (323) 876-0202 or email her at membership@laaudubon.org.