

WESTERN Tanager



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The LA River at the Glendale Narrows, Photo by Leslie Davidson

Volunteering for Audubon: Keeping Us Young, Helping Us Grow

By Cindy Hardin, Director Environmental Education Programs
Photography by Volunteer, Leslie Davidson

As mentioned in previous articles, I oversee two environmental education programs as a Los Angeles Audubon employee. The intent of both programs is to educate local students about the environment through classroom visits and on-site field trips. The tour format is similar at both sites; attendees are taken on a nature walk that includes stops at various stations, where docents demonstrate and expand upon scientific concepts specific to the students' grade level. However, the two programs also differ in both setting and personnel.

The salt marsh education program at the Ballona Wetlands takes place on a designated Ecological Reserve, which has very limited public access. Our staff at Ballona is mainly retired individuals, many of whom are former school teachers. The Native Plant and Wildlife Garden Education Program at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area is located in a very public and heavily used park in the Baldwin Hills area. The majority of our staff at Kenneth Hahn consists of college interns, with a few "mature" volunteers sprinkled in for good measure. Both programs are dynamic and effective in exposing students from underserved schools to the natural habitats that are found in our city, and I find inspiration in each and every field trip that takes place. Unfortunately, due to conflicting geographic and scheduling situations, it is rare for personnel from each of these programs to engage with each other. Recently, a field trip to the LA River brought both groups together for the first time this year, giving us the opportunity to get to know each other a little bit and to exchange ideas and thoughts about our experiences as environmental educators.



A Great Blue Heron looking very at home in its urban habitat.



Our group is actually walking the soft bed of the day lighted stream at the North Atwater Extension!

We all met at the terminus of the Expo Line at 9 o'clock on the morning of Saturday, March 30th to board our chartered bus and begin a trip to the LA River. The plan was to visit two sites along the river that have seen restora-

More, including exclusive photos: losangelesaudubon.org Western Tanager Highlights



The LA River sounds like... a river!

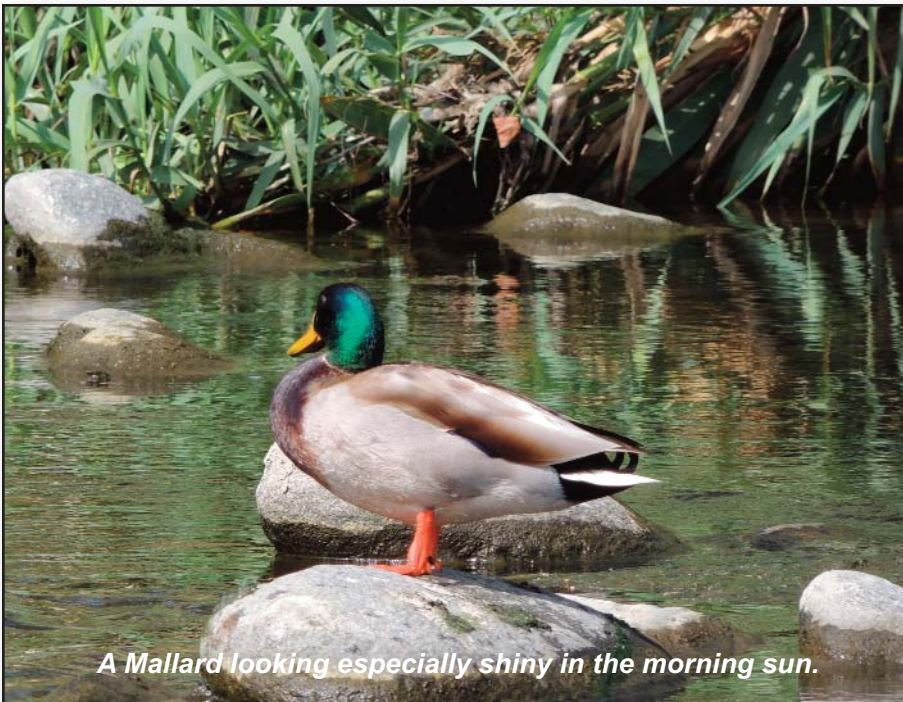
tion activity handled by both the city and several non-profits. However, activities for the day began before we even boarded the bus. Each intern or volunteer from the Kenneth Hahn program was paired with a docent from Ballona, with the purpose of interviewing each other. Each participant was given a list of questions to ask their partner. The idea behind the interview process was to help people get to know each other, but also to hear everyone's thoughts about their experiences working with Audubon, and how it has affected their lives. Little did anyone know that by signing on for this field trip they would also be helping me to gather material for an article for the *Western Tanager* newsletter!

Questions for interviewers and interviewees were more or less the same. Each person was asked how long they had been involved in their respective pro-

grams, and what they would say to a friend to persuade them to become a docent or intern. The questions for the mid-point of the interview did vary, however. The college interns were asked by Ballona docents to discuss what they had learned about themselves and/or the environment, and if their work with Audubon had influenced their post-college plans. The Kenneth Hahn interns had the chance to ask the Ballona docents if they thought volunteering kept one "young at heart". The consistent theme in the answers that were given was knowledge and learning. Both age groups stated repeatedly that they had learned many new things about themselves and the natural world during their time as nature interpreters for Audubon. The comments were fascinating, and included "I feel more connected to the environment, am proud of where I live and I can share knowledge wherever I go" and "being around young children/feeling their energy makes you feel young". Several of the interns did feel that their experience at Kenneth Hahn might change their career paths. One commented that she now considers teaching as a career; another said that she now realizes that she doesn't have to limit her future to a desk job. More than a few of the interns also added that their experience with Audubon greatly improved their skills in the realm of public speaking, and helped them to "overcome shyness and present and speak with confi-



Plenty of birds to be seen.

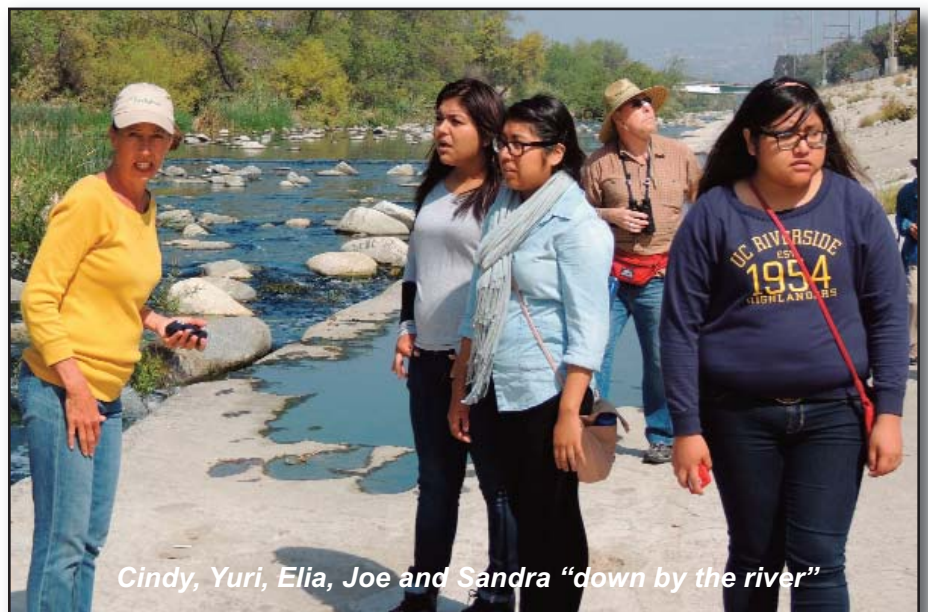


A Mallard looking especially shiny in the morning sun.

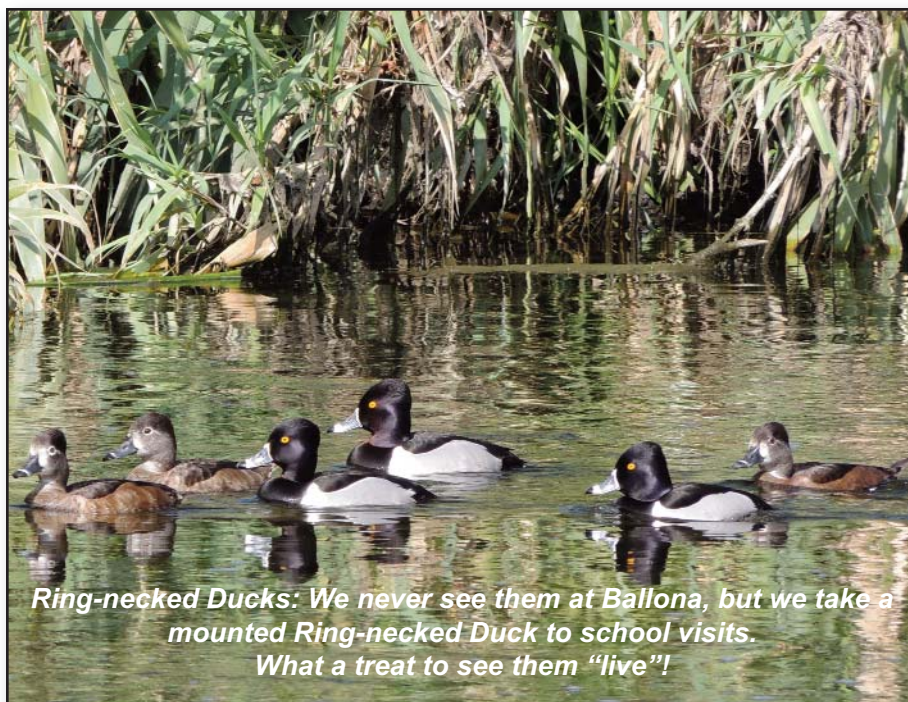
dence". Both groups discussed what they had learned about flora, fauna, and geology of our region, and how exciting that new found knowledge was to them. The Ballona group also commented repeatedly on how much they enjoyed meeting and making friends with like minded people. The social bonds they formed through volunteering have enhanced their lives and their experience working together as they educate the naturalists of tomorrow. The work does keep them feeling energized and youthful—"rewarding, purposeful and meaningful" were adjectives that appeared in several of the comments from the Ballona docents.

The results of the interviews clearly show that the environmental education programs that Audubon supports do more than educate schoolchildren about the natural world. These programs also provide lifelong learning opportunities for all age groups, and serve an important role in keeping everyone engaged with their community and nature. Avenues are opened and horizons broadened for all participants, with the added benefit of keeping those no longer officially in the working world productive on both a personal level and for the greater good. The interns are able to use their Audubon experiences as a springboard to help them qualify for other educational and professional opportunities. In fact, several of this year's Kenneth Hahn interns have used our references for employment and other internships to further their career paths. The value of these programs for all involved cannot be overestimated!

The interviewing process made our time in the bus fly as we chugged along to our first stop. Our destination was the North Atwater Extension in Glendale, which is located along a section of the LA River known as the Glendale Narrows. In this section of the river the water table was too high for the Army Corp of Engineers to line the river with concrete. Consequently, the river at this site still has a soft muddy bottom, with lots of vegetation and wildlife present. Willow trees, Mulefat and even a few Cottonwoods are found here, and the water eddies and flows like a natural river. Attendant wildlife included Great Blue Herons, American Wigeons, Great and Snowy Egrets, Mallards and Ring-necked Ducks. We were met at the park by Shelly and Bill from the fabulous Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR). They spent almost two hours with our group, describing how the city had worked to daylight a historic stream located here that empties into the river. By removing the stream from its concrete entombment, the city was able to plant species that are native to the habitat and create a soft bottom



Cindy, Yuri, Elia, Joe and Sandra "down by the river"

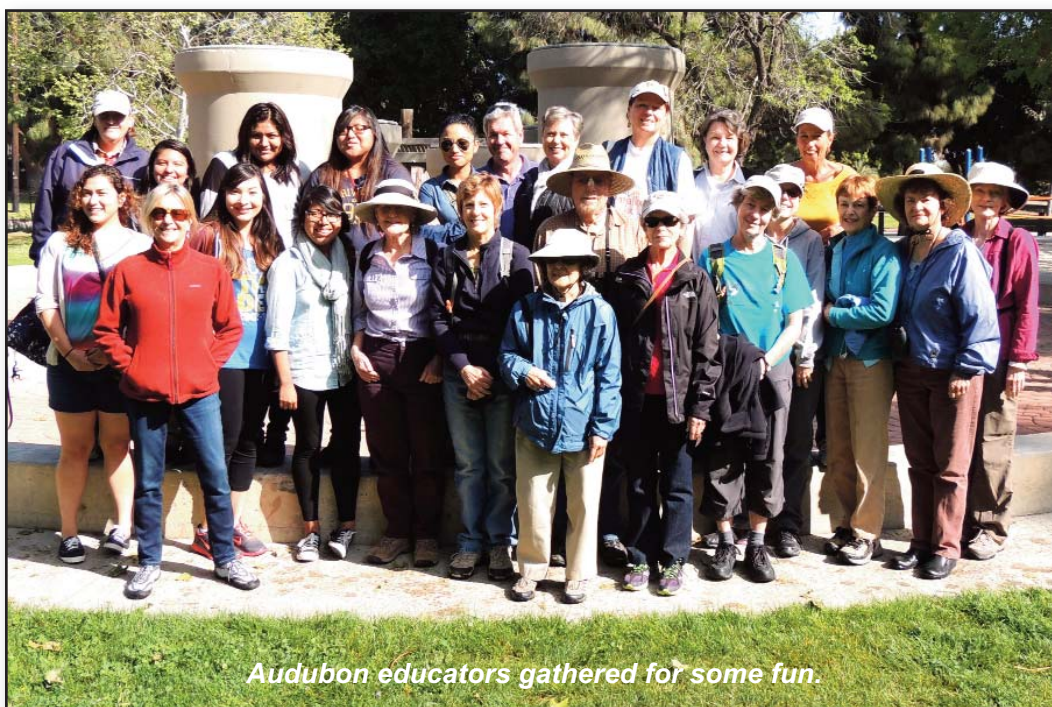


Ring-necked Ducks: We never see them at Ballona, but we take a mounted Ring-necked Duck to school visits. What a treat to see them "live"!

that helps to filter out pollutants before they have a chance to foul the river. Wildflowers were also present and in abundant bloom. California Poppies, Blue-eyed Grass and Buckwheat all glowed in the morning sun—and were seeing a lot of traffic from pollinating insects. Before we bid goodbye to Shelly and Bill, we all received T-shirts from FoLAR that featured a terrific graphic of the Red-legged Frog. This amphibian was present in the river for millennia prior to the paving of the river. One of the goals of the FoLAR group is to “bring ‘em home by 2020”, which in our minds is a fantastic mission.

Next stop was lunch. Those of you who have been reading about our field trips know that breaking bread together is almost always a feature of our travels, and much enjoyed by all. We went a few miles upriver to Bette Davis Park where we all picnicked under the shade of native Sycamore trees. Lunch was a brown bag affair, with home baked desserts and fresh fruit provided by Audubon for dessert. After lunch there was plenty of time to continue birding and walk along the river—some of us even took the opportunity to dangle our toes in the water. The soundtrack was the rush and babbling of the water, accompanied by the birdsong of warblers and the quacking of waterfowl. As some of the photos attest, this section of the river looks so natural that it is hard to believe that we were in the heart of the city.

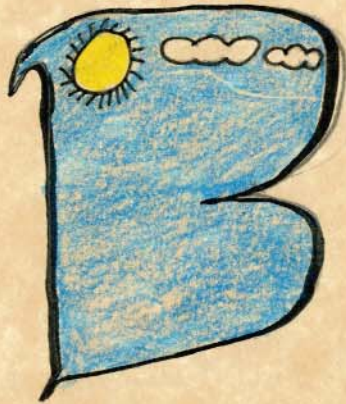
The bus ride home was quiet and filled with an air of contentment. Some of us dozed a bit, while others chatted or quietly contemplated the beauty that we had seen in the midst of the second largest city in the country. We all enjoyed the chance to meet some new friends and share our thoughts about our Audubon experiences, and everyone interviewed said they would have no hesitation in trying to recruit a friend to take advantage of an opportunity to become an Audubon educator. To quote one volunteer: “Come for a tour and you will stay as a docent”. As always, I welcome any of you reading this article to do just that! 🐦



Audubon educators gathered for some fun.

Join us for the Conservation Art Show!

An illuminated manuscript about the Burrowing Owl, calligraphy and illustration by a Politi illuminator.



Burrowing



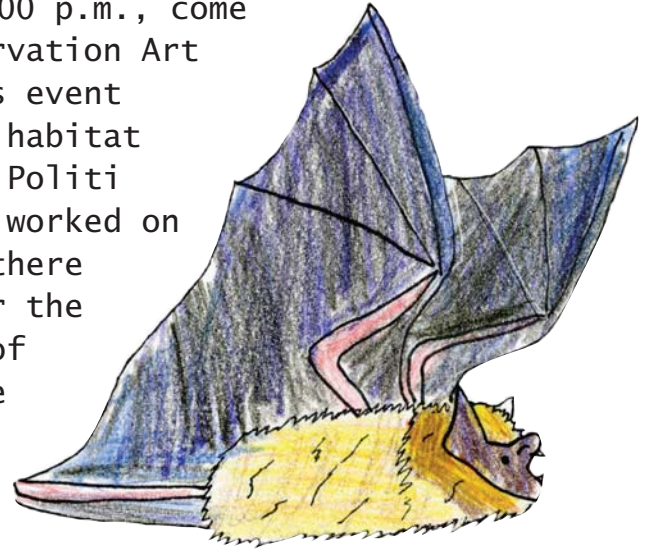
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is active during the day but it is not nocturnal. The Burrowing Owl lives in underground burrows.



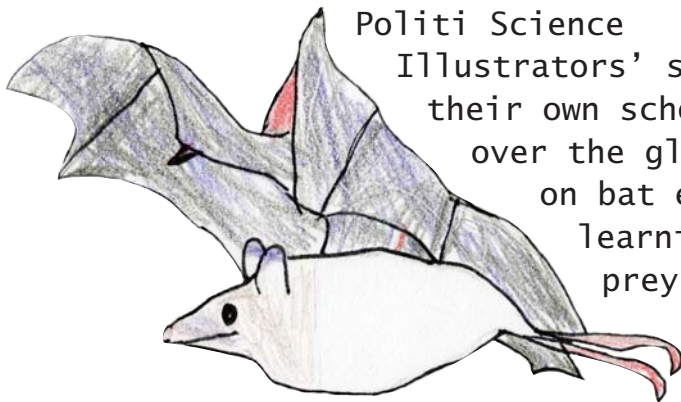
Amazing deep sea wildlife

On Friday, May 3rd from 5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m., come celebrate the fourth year of the Conservation Art Show at Politi Elementary School! This event showcases the science illustration and habitat restoration work that students at both Politi Elementary and Dorsey High School have worked on throughout the school year. As usual there will be lots of hands-on activities for the whole family like paper-making, tours of the schoolyard habitat, and art/science projects.

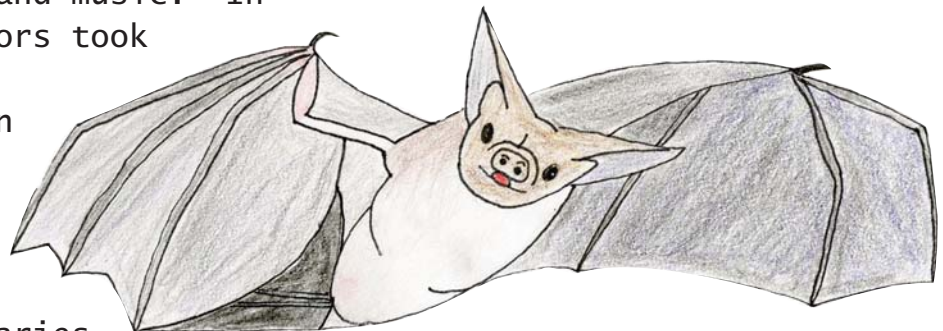


This year, the Politi Science

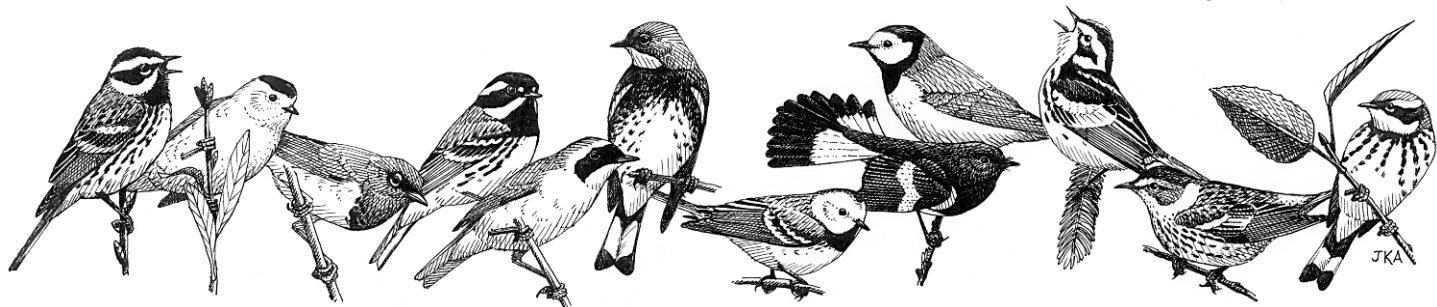
Illustrators' studies took them as close to home as their own schoolyard habitat to virtual trips all over the globe. In the fall, students focused on bat ecology, exploring cave habitats, learning how bats use echolocation to find prey, and studying the important ecological services that bats provide (like pollination and seed dispersal).



Students also explored how bats have inspired culture, including poetry, visual arts, and music. In the spring, illustrators took on the theme of great collaborations between art and science, where they examined cave paintings from 30,000 years ago, perused medieval libraries for illuminated manuscripts, and joined a bathysphere expedition in 1930s Bermuda to discover deep sea wildlife. We hope you'll join us for a fun evening of art and science.



Leo Politi Elementary School, 2481 W. 11th Street, Los Angeles CA 90006



BIRDS OF THE SEASON - APRIL 2013, BY JON FISHER

Plenty of states and counties have their own specialties and unique birds that make them a worthwhile visit for the avid birder. Some even offer an impressive variety of species. But when it comes to birds from a wide range of habitats at a latitude that offers a remarkable cross section of resident, summering, wintering and migrant birds, southern California—and especially LA County—has few rivals. Each season showcases the diversity to be found here and February through April was no exception.

Among our many regular species, plenty of wintering rarities continued into March and April and a number of new finds were made. February saw the return of a bird unrecorded for decades and March produced yet another new bird for the county list.

Our earlier passerine migrants- aside from the truly early swallows—arrived on schedule in March. By the middle of the month Western Kingbirds, Warbling Vireos and Bullock's Orioles among others were in widespread evidence. The tide of spring migration really began to surge in the first half of April with migrants being hard to miss wherever you were birding.

An aspect of spring migration that is both easy to overlook and often difficult to quantify in species that are both winter visitors and migrants is differentiating between the two. The push of birds is more obvious in species such as Lincoln's Sparrows whose numbers show an obvious spike as migrants pass through in March. It's worth watching for similar movements in other species, especially if you regularly work a specific "patch".

As winter progressed and spring began, a lack of precipitation continued, making this one of the two driest seasons of the last decade. But since people prefer to recreate in green places, most parks and residential neighborhoods benefit from plenty of artificial watering. That these areas tend to attract birds both in winter and during migration is no secret. Indeed drier years likely make these places even more appealing to birds, thus more productive for birders.

A number of **Snow Geese** were present in the Antelope Valley and single birds were on the coastal slope in Pico Rivera at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds on February 17 (Peter Sharp) and at the Rio Hondo basins on March 2 (Larry Schmahl). In addition to a handful of Cackling and Ross's Geese found on the coastal slope, ten **Ross's Geese** in the Antelope Valley on March 8 was a good concentration (David Bell, Darren Dowell).

Dabbling ducks included both a **Eurasian Wigeon** and a hybrid **American x Eurasian Wigeon** at Reseda Park from March 14-25 (Irwin Woldman).

A **Long-tailed Duck** near the Ballona Creek mouth in Playa del Rey continued through March 15, with what may have been a second bird not far away at Dockweiler State Beach on March 30 (Frederick Ruckersfeldt). Two more continued at Quail Lake near Gorman through March 21 as did a **White-winged Scoter** through at least March 26. Other White-winged Scoters were off the Palos Verdes Peninsula on March 1 (William Hull) and at the Ballona Creek mouth on March 23 (Kris Ohlenkamp).

Scarce away from the immediate coast were two **Red-breasted Mergansers** at Quail Lake from February 23–March 26 (Mark Scheel) and two more were at Bonelli Park in San Dimas from March 11–April 1 (Rod Higbie).

Always a nice find were **Red-necked Grebes** at the Ballona Creek mouth on March 14 (Karen Zumwalt) and off Leo Carrillo Beach on March 17 (Daniel Tinoco).

A **Manx Shearwater** a few miles south of Cabrillo Beach on February 12 added to the relatively few records of this species in LA County compared to the state as a whole (Bernardo Alps).

Remarkable was a probable **Magnificent Frigatebird**- with the far rarer Great Frigatebird also a possibility- at Malibu Lagoon on April 2 (Katy Delaney). This date is well outside the June through mid September window when the vast

majority of Magnificent Frigatebirds have been recorded in California and separating these two species can be problematic. While they shouldn't serve as the sole documentation for rarities, photos can prove essential in resolving records such as this one.

A **Brown Booby** at Long Beach Harbor on February 13 may have been the same bird present not far from there last December (David Bell).

An **American Bittern** at the Sepulveda Basin on April 6 was the only one reported during the period (Frank & Susan Gilliland). Also of note were ten **Cattle Egrets** at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve on April 14 (Arthur Langton).

White-faced Ibises were at Eldorado Park in Long Beach from February 16–22 (John Fitch), at the Piute Ponds on March 26 (Kimball Garrett) and there were up to three birds at the Sepulveda Basin from April 2–10 (Daniel Tinoco, Irwin Woldman). A good-sized flock of fifty was observed flying over the LA River near Glendale on April 16 (Andy Birch) and a lone bird was at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery on April 17 (Linda Navroth).

One of the reintroduced **California Condors** was spotted as it wandered by Quail Lake near Gorman on February 23 (Mark Scheel).

Bald Eagles continued at Quail Lake through February 23 and at Elizabeth Lake on the north side of the San Gabriels through February 23. One to two were at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas off and on through March 30 and another was at the Piute Ponds on March 8 (Darren Dowell).

Always rare in the county were pale *richardsonii* **Merlins** at Legg Lake in South El Monte on March 6 (David Bell) and at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook on March 3 (Kimball Garrett).

An excellent find was a **Wilson's Plover** at Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo on March 26 (Walter Lamb). Though there are now over twenty southern California records, this was the first for LA County. With well over a dozen found in San Diego County and multiple records from both Orange and Ventura Counties, this was a bird long expected in LA County. Though not a long distance migrant, its normal range includes much of coastal Baja California and Mexico's west coast, thus potential vagrants to coastal southern California needn't travel far.

The only spring **Solitary Sandpiper** reported thus far was at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh from April 11–17 (Don Sterba).

A push of **Red-necked Phalaropes** was noted in early April with twenty along Ballona Creek on April 8 (Moro Rogers) and thirty-eight on the lower LA River in Long Beach on April 9 (Richard Barth).

Three **Glaucous Gulls** were found in March—all of which presumably wintered farther south. Reports came from San Clemente Island on March 3 (Justin Stahl, John Garrett), along Ballona Creek near the 90 Freeway from March 18–19 (Jonathan Coffin) and at Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo from March 28–April 7 (John Garrett).

The first **Franklin's Gulls** of the season were two at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB on April 12 (Jim Moore).

A **White-winged Dove** was in Pasadena on February 17 (Jane Bork), a probable one was in Willowbrook on February 24 (Mark & Janet Scheel) with another in Claremont on April 10 (Tom Miko).

Common Ground-Doves, scarce and local in the county, included one at Powder Canyon in La Habra Heights on February 23 where they are regular and a small number continuing along the San Gabriel River in the Bellflower area.

Always rare, with a lack of suitable habitat being the primary culprit, a **Short-eared Owl** was fairly reliable at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh from February 17–April 5 (Bob Muenckler). More expected was a **Burrowing Owl** at Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo from February 22–March 13.

A **Lewis's Woodpecker** that continued at Temescal Canyon in Pacific Palisades through March 22 was the only one reported over the period.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included a continuing bird at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood through March 1, one at the South Coast Botanic Gardens in Rolling Hills Estates on March 3 (Dinuk Magamanna) and another at Castaic Lagoon on March 16 (Lance Benner). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** or hybrid **Yellow-bellied x Red-naped Sapsucker** was at Legg Lake in South El Monte through February 27.

White-headed Woodpeckers away from their regular higher elevation haunts included one continuing at Pearblossom Park in the Antelope Valley through February 23 and one at Vogel Flat in the San Gabriel Mountains on February 20 (Jon Fisher).

A **Yellow-shafted Flicker** continued at Madrona Marsh through April 19 in Torrance and a new one was at Whiting Woods near Verdugo City on March 5 (Kimball Garrett).

A wintering **Hammond's Flycatcher** was still at Bonelli Park in San Dimas as of March 22 and two **Gray Flycatchers**, scarce migrants on the coastal slope, were along the San Gabriel River in Duarte on April 17 (Robb Hamilton).

Probably wintering locally was a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood on February 22 (Richard Barth). Either wintering or an early migrant was another Pac-slope at Del Valle Park in Long Beach on March 9 (Andrew Lee).

Vermilion Flycatchers continued at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys through March 3 and at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook through March 9. New birds were found at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on April 8 (Darren Dowell) and at Legacy Park in Malibu on April 11 (Kathleen Waldron).

The **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** wintering at Veteran's Park in Bell Gardens remained through April 8 and another continued at Creek Park in La Mirada through March 20.

A wintering **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was found at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on February 15 (Tracy Drake). Others continued at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys through February 16 and at Ralph Dills Park in Paramount through March 3.

The **Tropical Kingbird** persisted at Legg Lake through April 7 and one was at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from February 19-20 (Becky & Steve Turley). A **Western Kingbird**, still quite rare in winter, was at the Arboretum in Arcadia on February 27 (Amy Williamson).

A **Northern Shrike** was found at Quail Lake on February 26 where it was reported through March 4 (John Sterling). This species was last recorded in the county in 1979 following a virtual invasion of six birds during the winter of 1977-78. As one would expect, the Antelope Valley has been the area where almost all have occurred, with an interesting anomalous record from Eaton Canyon in Pasadena in 1973.

Bell's Vireos had returned to Hansen Dam as of March 24 when five birds were already on territory (Kimball Garrett). By mid April they were widespread in appropriate habitat, continuing the remarkable recovery of this species.

Among a handful of continuing wintering birds, a surprising number of spring **Plumbeous Vireos** were found with birds at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles on March 23- with the same bird or a new one there on April 20 (Don Sterba, Richard Barth), at Wheeler Park in Claremont from April 3-10 (Tom Miko), at South Gate Park in South Gate on April 8 (Richard Barth) and at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia on April 16 (David Bell). The far rarer **Blue-headed Vireo** wintering at Harbor Park in Harbor City was reported through March 16.

A continuing **Pacific Wren** in Santa Anita Canyon through March 5 was the only one reported.

Newly discovered was a small population of **California Gnatcatchers** at the El Segundo Dunes on March 15, a previously unknown locality for this species (Tracy Drake).

Common on the deserts but quite scarce as a migrant on the coastal slope were **Sage Thrashers** at Hansen Dam in Lakeview Terrace on February 16 (Dessi Sieburth, Beatrix Schwartz) and at the Ocean Trails Preserve on the Palos Verdes Peninsula on March 1 (William Hull).

A **Lucy's Warbler** was found near Victory Park in Pasadena on February 16 (Gerald Orcholski). **Virginia's Warblers** included one continuing at the Veteran's Administration in West LA through March 13 and another found in Sycamore Canyon in Whittier on April 14 (John Fitch).

Black-and-white Warblers continued at El Segundo Library Park through April 17, at Legg Lake in South El Monte through March 30 and at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas through March 15. Others were at Alondra Park in Lawndale through February 19 (Dave Moody) and at Recreation Park in El Segundo from March 12-April 13 (Richard Barth).

A spring **American Redstart** was in Monterey Park on April 18 (Jane Strong). **Northern Parulas** continued at Legg Lake in South El Monte through March 30, at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through March 22 and at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook through March 9. A new bird was at Oak Park Cemetery in Claremont on April 15 (Tom Miko).

Also new—and presumably wintering locally even though discovered late in the season—was a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Heartwell Park in Long Beach from March 9–11 (Andrew Lee).

After a spate of reports in the fall and early winter, with a number of those birds continuing, another half dozen **Palm Warblers** turned up between February 25 and April 17. It was quite a year for this species in the county.

Far rarer were continuing wintering **Pine Warblers** at Hansen Dam through April 9 and at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation area in Willowbrook through March 31.

Also continuing was a **Painted Redstart** at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood through that was reported through March 4.

Quite rare in winter was a **Green-tailed Towhee** continuing at Kenneth Hahn Park through February 20 and one found at the El Segundo Dunes on March 15 (Tracy Drake).

Clay-colored Sparrows turned up at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena (David Bell) and at Maywood Riverfront Park in Bell (Richard Barth), both on April 12.

Extremely rare in winter—as well as difficult to detect when not singing, but probably more regular than records indicate—was a **Grasshopper Sparrow** found at Hahamongna Watershed Park on February 26 and seen again on April 8 (Darren Dowell). Another, this one almost certainly a spring migrant, was along the Santa Clara River in Valencia on April 11 (Jim Pike).

An additional handful of new **White-throated Sparrows** turned up, adding to those continuing and the already remarkable total for the winter.

Rare Dark-eyed Juncos included “**Gray-headed**” **Juncos** at Hollywood Forever Cemetery from February 10-12 (Richard Barth), a continuing bird at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood through February 22, one at Holiday Lake in the Antelope Valley on February 23 (Mark Scheel) and another at Cheseboro Park in Agoura Hills on March 25 (Scott Logan). “**Pink-sided**” **Juncos** were at Hollywood Forever Cemetery from February 10–12 (Richard Barth) and at St. Andrew’s Priory near Valyermo on March 31 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

Summer Tanagers were at the Los Angeles County Arboretum on February 27 (Amy Williamson), at West LA College on March 3 (Don Sterba), at Ed Vincent Park


in Inglewood from March 4-April 6 (Richard Barth) and in South Pasadena on March 17 (David Bell). A continuing male was in the Old Zoo area of Griffith Park through March 24.

Rare in winter was a **Black-headed Grosbeak**—present since December—that continued at Buena Vista High School in Los Angeles through February 22 (Garrett Lepper).

Once more regular—but now also quite rare in winter—was a **Hooded Oriole** at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino on February 15 (Dan Cooper). A **Baltimore Oriole** was at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia from March 16–April 19 (Mark & Janet Scheel) and another continued at La Mirada’s Creek Park through April 16.

A handful of **Red Crossbills** continued on the desert at Pearblossom Park through March 31. A dozen were at Holiday Lake in the west Antelope Valley from February 23–March 2 (Mark Scheel) and a few others remained at Apollo Park near Lancaster through March 2. Another dozen were at Castaic Lagoon on March 11 (Jim Hardesty).

Though the bulk of passerine migration will be over by mid May, an ever decreasing number of birds will be passing through even into early June. Desert localities such as Holiday Lake and Apollo Park and various ranches, windbreaks and other green patches will be worth checking for possible vagrants among the regulars. But rare birds will turn up elsewhere too. Coastal spots, urban and suburban parks and foothill canyons can all produce good birds as spring migration starts to wind down.

Birding the San Gabriels, worthwhile at any time, will become more productive into May and June once summer visitors have arrived in force and breeding activity there reaches its peak. Any of the numerous springs along Highway 2 and those requiring a hike to reach will be worth checking. Among the more regular nocturnal birds, Mexican Whip-poor-wills are to be listened for at higher elevations but are nonetheless extremely rare. The north slope between Angeles Forest Highway and Big Rock Creek is worth exploring for potentially breeding Gray Flycatchers and possible Gray Vireos, the latter unrecorded for many years but formerly somewhat regular there. A lot of territory inevitably goes uncovered in these mountains and there’s plenty for curious birders to explore. 

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
Attn: Susan Castor
PO Box 411301
Los Angeles CA 90041

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

Please support LAAS field trips with your donations.

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twitter.com/LAAudubon.

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 Wildemess Park if time allows. Start and finish at Alondra Park, for carpoolers. TOGETHER, 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.

Sunday, May 5 Hansen Dam Riparian Birds NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

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 a.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.

Saturday, May 18

Small Owls of the San Gabriels #1

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP, 10 Max. (filled, see June 1 for overflow).

June

Saturday, June 1

Small Owls of the San Gabriels #2

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP, 10 MAX. (overflow, also filled)

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. We will be looking for Flammulated, Saw-whet, Northern Pygmy and Western Screech-Owls. Sign up, and meet at 5:00 p.m. on the frontage road for Angeles Forest Hwy just north of the 210 Fwy in La Canada. Turn N on ACH, take the second right (Milmada Dr.), and a quick left (Flanders Rd.). Meet along the first 50-yard stretch, fed and gassed up, and we will carpool from here. Bring quiet cold weather gear (no nylon if possible), a small walking flashlight, binoculars, powerful flashlight optional. LAAS telephone / email sign-up mandatory. 10 max. As of Apr. 9, overflow trip is filled with wait list begun in case others cancel.

Saturday, June 22

Mt. Pinos. NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Matthew Page*. White-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hermit Warbler, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Quail. Hopeful Calliope Hummingbird and Northern Goshawk. Anticipate the elements, and bring a lunch. Take Hwy 5 N past Tejon Pass to the Frazier Park offramp, turn left, and follow Frazier Mountain Park Rd. bearing right onto Cuddy Valley Rd. Meet promptly at the "Y" formed by the junction of Cuddy Valley Rd. and Mil Potrero Hwy at 8:00 a.m., and park in the obvious dirt clearing. If time permits, we will also visit Cerro Noroeste (aka Mt. Abel).



Flammulated Owl in the southern Sierra
Photo by *Mary Freeman*

July

July 4-7 Long Weekend. Ponderosa Cabin Owling (aka Camp Nelson Cabin Camping). SIGN-UP (6 MIN / 10 MAX), \$100 – BUDGET PRICED! (3 NIGHTS CABIN, 1 HOT DOG BBQ DINNER, & OWLS INCLUDED)

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Ponderosa 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 have presently arranged for a nice big cabin. Our first dinner will be potluck, others provided or eat out. Tentatively 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 email. 10 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!

Saturday, July 13. Big Bear Lake Vicinity Field Trip. NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP.

Leaders: *Nick and Mary Freeman*. Meet in the Aspen Glen Picnic Area parking lot in Big Bear at 7:30 a.m. Take Hwy 18 or 38 to Big Bear Lake, then proceed about half way along the south side of the lake on Hwy 18 (Big Bear Blvd.) and turn south on Tulip Lane. The lot will be on the south side of this short street. Target birds include Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Calliope and Rufous Hummers, mountain finches and White-headed Woodpecker. Later, we may go to Arrastre Creek (east) or Upper Santa Ana River (south). It should be warm and there may be bugs, so come prepared. Bring lunch for a full day, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass. Those wishing to go owling with Mary in the evening (probably near Bluff Lake or Hart Bar Campground), plan to eat with us, and get a room for Saturday night as well.

Saturday, July 27. Piute Ponds. NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Jim Moore*. A good mix of shorebirds, with a chance at LeConte's Thrasher and Pectoral Sandpiper. Some amazing birds have been seen here over the years, including a Little Stint just two years ago! Possible extension to Lancaster Sewage Ponds or Apollo Park afterwards. Meet at the Avenue C gate at 7:30 a.m. To get here, take Hwy 14 N to Avenue D, head E to Sierra Hwy, head N to Avenue C, and go a block E to the gate at the end. Bring lunch, sunblock and lots of water. Likely hot weather, and possible afternoon wind. High clearance vehicles may be a plus. Cameras O.K.

AUGUST

Saturday, August 3

Lower LA River Shorebird Migration

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Larry Allen*. Larry will help us identify and age the various sandpipers and other shorebirds that use the lower Los Angeles River as a migratory stopover. Also expect various waterfowl, gulls, etc., and a few migrant and resident landbirds. A great opportunity to appreciate the variety of shorebirds as they hit the migration corridors in earnest. Take the 710 (Long Beach) Fwy S to the Willow Street offramp, head E over the LA River, and take the first left on Golden Ave, the first left on 26th, and follow this past the pump station onto DeForest Ave. Park near the river access by the bridge, meet along the river at 7:00 a.m., and bird until noon. We may caravan to at least one additional location farther upriver. Spotting scopes very helpful, although we will share..

Saturday, August 24

San Gabriel Mountains / Mt. Wilson Observatory TOUR FEE: \$10/head (\$8 over 62) payable at Mt. Wilson

LIMITED SIGN-UP 16 MAX.

Leaders: *Norman Vargas and Mary Freeman*. Meet at 7:00 a.m. on the frontage road for Angeles Forest Hwy just north of the 210 Fwy in La Canada. We will bird the morning away up in the conifers, then end up at Mount Wilson Observatory around noon, eat there at the Cosmic Café, and take the guided 2-hour tour around the grounds and facility, including an especially close look at the 100-inch telescope. The one-mile walking tour is unsuitable for individuals with respiratory and heart problems or with limited mobility. Please visit the observatory website at www.mtwilson.edu for more exciting and cautionary details before the trip. A Forest Service Adventure Pass is required. LAAS telephone / email sign-up mandatory—by August 21—with name, phone number, and email address and await confirmation. No sign-ups without tour, please. Meeting details next issue, July-August *Western Tanager*. 🐦

Audubon Film Fridays Summer 2013



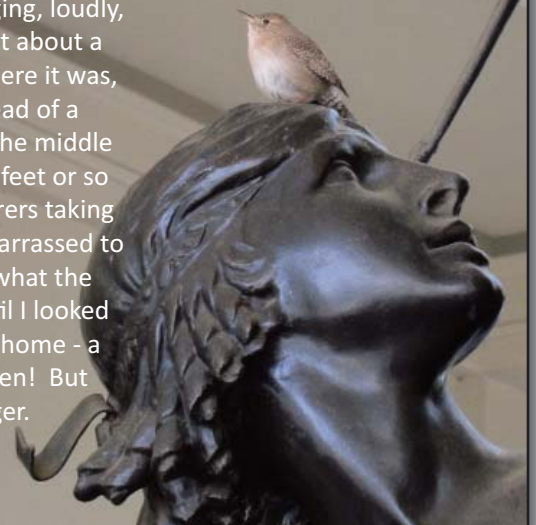
In partnership with The Audubon Center at Debs Park and Pasadena Audubon Society, LAAS is pleased to present Audubon Film Fridays.

Pre-film entertainment at 7:00 p.m., followed by a nature movie around 8:00 p.m. Last Friday of the month: June 28, July 26 and August 30.

Audubon Center at Debs Park
4700 N. Griffin Ave. | Los Angeles CA 90031
For more information please call (323) 221-2255

My husband and I were at the Huntington Gardens on Sunday, April 7. While entering the Scott Gallery we heard vigorous birdsong in the rotunda just outside, and the same bird singing, loudly, when we came out about a half hour later. There it was, perched on the head of a statue of Eros, in the middle of action just four feet or so above many admirers taking pictures. I'm embarrassed to say I didn't know what the little chap was until I looked him (or her) up at home - a humble House Wren! But what a joyous singer.

Judy Thompson



Monthly Program Presentations at Audubon Center at Debs Park

Wednesday, May 8, 2013

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Alvaro Jaramillo presents:

BIRDING SOUTH AMERICA'S SOUTHERN CONE



Flightless Steamerduck
Photo by Alvaro Jaramillo

The Southern Cone? Is that an Ice Cream place in Georgia? Nope, it is the triangle-shaped southern section of South America. The cone includes Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and the southern bits of Bolivia and Brazil.

What makes it special is that there are so many habitats and neat areas here, the Pampas, Patagonia, the Matorral, the Humboldt Current, Iguazu Falls, the Yungas, the Chaco - so many spots that are truly and uniquely South American. It is the land of Rheas, penguins, horneros, seriemas, as well as Southern Right Whales, Marine Otters, Viscachas and Vicuñas. A part of the world blessed with some enigmatic, unusual, beautiful and often rather unique creatures. But what absolutely is the icing on the cake is that the southern cone includes some of the most memorable and scenic parts of the Americas. This includes snow-capped volcanoes, huge granitic spikes, the big sky country of the Pampas and Patagonia and coastlines that are perhaps only rivaled by California and Alaska for their beauty. Come enjoy an evening exploring a gorgeous part of the world and its equally fantastic bird and wildlife through the eyes of a birder-biologist who has an unbridled passion for this part of the world.



LAAS PHOTO NIGHT AT DEBS PARK

Everyone is invited to show off their photos this night. We all have our favorite photos that we would love to share. Tonight is your chance to come in and share fond memories illustrated by a few of your own photos. If you'd like to participate, please bring five of your favorite bird photos. Humor, I.D. quiz, artistic composition, and serious bird photography of all levels will be welcome.

Send Mary Freeman an email at fldtrip@laaudubon.org if you intend to participate. Arrive at the meeting at 7:15 p.m., and bring your photos in [.jpg] format or PowerPoint Presentation, on a thumb drive or CD to show on a laptop. Be prepared to say a little something about each photo; such as species, time of year, location, photo equipment used, and amusing anecdote.

*THE LAAS OCTOBER 2013 MONTHLY PROGRAM PRESENTATION has been re-scheduled to **Wed., Oct. 16, 2013**. Join us this night for a joint chapter meeting with Pasadena Audubon Society at Eaton Canyon Nature Center located at 1750 North Altadena Drive in Pasadena CA 91107. Tom Stephenson presents his new publication *THE WARBLER GUIDE*, that he co-authored with Scott Whittle. Tom will also conduct a warbler vocalization workshop on Sat., Oct. 19, 2013 at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center. LAAS will sell *THE WARBLER GUIDE* at both events.*

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

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

May 5 and June 2

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

May 12 and June 9

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.

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)

May 19 and June 16

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 wbutorance@gmail.com

KENNETH HAHN STATE RECREATION AREA

4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles 90056

In the Baldwin Hills

3rd Saturday of the month

May 18 and June 15

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. *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.

BIRD WALKS & MEETUP.COM

BY CAROL BABELI, LOS ANGELES AUDUBON DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

As a member of Los Angeles Audubon, I love to introduce new people to the wonders of the natural world in the greater LA area. I recently tapped into MEETUP, an online social media network that helps people connect to various activities and groups in their local area. I posted LOS ANGELES AUDUBON - BIRD WALKS on the Meetup website and found that there are hundreds of people out there who love birds and nature, but who were reluctant to venture out on their own. Now, these folks are invited to participate in the walks, led by a group of knowledgeable bird experts, and learn about birds, native plants and the importance of protecting habitat. A heartfelt thanks to our Bird Walk leaders: Eleanor Osgood, Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin, Eric and Ann Brooks and Bob Shanman and Friends—who are so generous with their time and have opened the eyes of many to the joy of birding. If you haven't been on a bird walk lately, bring a friend or meet a new one at the next Bird Walk! Here's a lovely note from a recent new participant:

UPPER FRANKLIN CANYON BIRD WALK, 2nd Sunday of the month

It was the morning of April 14th, a cool overcast start to the day. Twelve intrepid birders showed up to meet bird walk leader Eleanor Osgood, ready to explore the feathered treasures in Franklin Canyon. Four hours later we'd seen 38 species, one possible Hutton's Vireo nest, and one healthy coyote—that did a lovely demonstration of downward dog. We'd heard and seen the secretive Sora Rail do its high-pitched call and we'd spotted three Great Horned Owl fuzz balls (young) staring intently at us while we struggled to see them tucked behind a mess of branches on the bough of a big old tree. Without doubt, this was the highlight for most, though without the eyes of many skilled birders, most of us would have missed this treat completely.

Hummingbirds are always entertaining as they buzzed over the pond, spiraled up making loops in the sky, only to come screaming down in a flashy display of acrobatics. Was it an Anna's, an Allen's, a Rufous? Two out of the three species possible, kept us all checking to see which of us had seen the green or the rufous colors.

We all learned a lot, and the peaceful calm that accompanies you while moving slowly along the trail—in no rush at all—is a pretty spectacular way to start the day.

Dawna Jones, LAAS Bird Walk Participant



Great Horned Owl Nestlings, Photo © Tom Gray

Dawna is a nomadic Canadian visiting LA for 4 months. Although she'd never claim to be a birder, she loves being in the bush. Her father lectured for the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY for 17 years and was a MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF CANADA for his work in conservation and education.

Members of Los Angeles Audubon Society are invited to the 2013 Annual Members Meeting.

MEETING LOCATION

Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook
6300 Hetzler Rd, Culver City, 90232

Saturday, June 15, 2013
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

LOS ANGELES
AUDUBON



For further information please visit our website at www.laaudubon.org
(323) 876-0202 | (323) 876-7609 | membership@laaudubon.org
Los Angeles Audubon P.O. Box 931057, Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057

Membership

L.A.A.S 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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What will your legacy be? Your bequest or planned gift will help Los Angeles Audubon make a lasting impact in protecting wildlife and habitat, while building your conservation legacy. Please consult with your financial planner and attorney to assure you receive the best financial advantages and that your intentions are carried out fully. You will find information on ways to include Los Angeles Audubon in your estate planning at our website under Planned Giving, at: www.laaudubon.org.

WESTERN TANAGER

Published by
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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Western Tanager, is the newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, published online in PDF format 6 times a year, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec, Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, July/Aug.

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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Editor	Linda Oberholtzer	westernanager@laaudubon.org
Editor Layout	Susan Castor	membership@laaudubon.org
Proofreader	Kimball Garrett	kgarrett@nhm.org



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

Los Angeles Audubon Society
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057
Attn: Membership

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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.

Los Angeles Audubon Society
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057
www.losangelesaudubon.org

(323) 876-0202	Main	Voice/Messages
(323) 876-7609	Administrator	Voice/Messages/Fax
LAAS@laaudubon.org	Administrator	General email

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Staff

<i>Development Director</i>	Carol Babeli	carolbabeli@laaudubon.org
<i>Environmental Education</i>	Cindy Hardin	cindyhardin@laaudubon.org
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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.