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WESTERN Tanager

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Male Rufous Hummingbird feeding on Pride of Madeira | Photo by Tom Grey



Los Angeles Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 411301
 Los Angeles, CA 90041-8301
www.losangelesaudubon.org
 (323) 876-0202
LAAS@laaudubon.org

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| | | |
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| Director of Environmental Education | Stacey Vigallon | tern@laaudubon.org |
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| Member Services & Website Liason | Susan Castor | membership@laaudubon.org |

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| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Editor | Linda Oberholtzer | westernanager@laaudubon.org |
| Design & Layout | Susan Castor | susancastor@laaudubon.org |
| Scientific Advisor | Kimball Garrett | kgarrett@nhm.org |

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On The Cover



Rufous Hummingbird | Photo by Tom Grey

Cover Photo: Hummers love the Pride of Madeira (*Echium candicans*) planted around the dog park at Ed Levin Park; this is where the Calliope Hummingbird was seen in Spring 2007. Camera: Canon EOS 1D, Canon EF 500mm f/4L IS USM

BRIEF BIO: Tom Grey is a retired Stanford law professor, who has been photographing birds since 2002. His photos can be seen at tgreybirds.com, and many of them have appeared in bird books and magazines. He served on the Board of Directors of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society from 2009 to 2018.

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INTERPRETING NATURE

Stacey Vigallon, Director of Environmental Education, and the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Interns

For the tenth year in a row, in May 2018 students participating in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program presented their research to the public. Hosted again this year at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park, this symposium provided students with an opportunity to share their knowledge with family and community members. Restoration Leaders discussed native plants and the concept of the watershed and taught audience members how to use binoculars and tie a climbing knot. Greenhouse Interns shared the findings of their research projects, with topics ranging from native plant germination to local sources of ocean pollution. Collectively, Greenhouse Program students spent over 3,200 hours learning about and conducting work in the Ballona Creek Watershed during the 2017-2018 school year. Below we are pleased to present the 2017-2018 Greenhouse Intern project abstracts.

Savannah House

Germination of California Black Walnuts in Hillside vs. Potting Soil in Greenhouse Conditions

The Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook is an important area to restore because native habitats are important to the ecology of the area and to human beings, psychologically and physically. My research tested the germination rates of refrigerated California Black Walnuts (*Juglans californica*) in hillside versus potting soil. I hypothesized that there would be greater germination of walnut seeds in potting soil than in hillside soil. However, my hypothesis was not supported by the data; greater germination was seen in hillside soil (37%) than in potting soil (33%). However, the difference between 33% and 37% is not large, and I recommend re-running the experiment. Future research should focus on transplanting the germinated walnuts to test whether hillside soil or potting soil is more effective in the long run. As well, the same process should be done with other species of native plants, such as Toyon or Elderberry, which are also part of the coastal sage scrub plant community. These results can be used as means of more effective restoration within the Ballona Creek Watershed.



Germination of native plant species has always been an important aspect of the Greenhouse Program. Interns plant black walnuts in two different soil types

Sidonie Horn

California Scrub Jay and Eastern Fox Squirrel Presence within the Baldwin Hills Area

I studied the relationship between type of landscape modification and the presence of two species, California Scrub Jays (*Aphelocoma californica*) and Eastern Fox Squirrels (*Sciurus niger*) in the Baldwin Hills area within Los Angeles. Four survey points were selected in each of three sites: Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, Culver City Park, and an adjacent residential neighborhood. I conducted a survey of each site one to two times a week, recording any animals I observed. I observed at each point for between 5-7 minutes, and surveys were conducted mainly between 2pm and 5 pm on weekdays. I used two methods to analyze the vegetation, structure, and level of landscape modification of each point: (A) on the ground assessment of vegetation type and structure, and (B) satellite images which established variations in type and density of groundcover. I observed jays only in sites that contained a shrub layer, but squirrel presence did not seem related to any specific makeup of vegetation and land use. Based on my observations, part of what encourages native species presence is variety in land cover. This is important to understand when creating urban parks that serve native birds. It is not enough to simply have open space and trees, there needs to be vegetation that creates areas inaccessible to humans and provides food and cover. Further research on this subject could look at overall differences in avian biodiversity, not just the differences between two species.



Intern Gerardo surveyed the park for authorized versus unauthorized trails as part of his research in developing a hiking guide to Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook.

Gerardo Jimenez

Tuning in and Hiking at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook

Brain activity is improved by a walk in nature and access to nature is beneficial psychologically and physically. In modern days, large portions of the human population live in cities, spending less time in nature, which can increase the risk of anxiety, depression, and other illnesses. A good way people can access nature is by hiking, even in urban areas. My project focuses on hiking at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, and during the 2017-2018 school year I gathered information to start creating a hiking guide to this park. I predicted that there would be more authorized than unauthorized trails, and this hypothesis was supported by my observations. On the northern side of the park and near the visitor's center, I observed 6 authorized trails and 4 unauthorized trails. From January to March 2018, I hiked Tuesdays and Fridays between 2-5pm. I completed seven themed hikes in an effort to view the park from different user perspectives. In my guide, I will emphasize the importance of remaining on authorized trails, as using unauthorized trails can damage habitat, disturb wildlife, and be a safety hazard. Next school year I will create my brochure.

Axel Maya

How Well Do Native Plants Germinate At The Baldwin Hills Greenhouse?

From January to March 2018, I studied the germination rate of native plants at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park in a greenhouse setting. Knowing the germination rate is vital for habitat restoration. I used seeds of Black Sage, White Sage, Deer Grass, and Laurel Sumac. I planted each species in a flat with potting soil in a non-climate controlled greenhouse. My hypothesis that there would be a difference in germination among the different species was supported by my data. However, overall germination was very low: 1.8% Black Sage, 1.2% Deer Grass, 0.8% White Sage, 0% Laurel Sumac. We observed a mouse in my flats, so it may be that the mouse ate the seeds as opposed to actual low germination of the seeds themselves. For the future, I would recommend to redo this experiment and provide better protection from rodents.



An intern counts seeds prior to planting in order to determine percent germination in the greenhouse.

Julia Adler

Assessing High-School Students' Knowledge and Perception of the Fire Cycle

The fire cycle is an integral part of natural habitats that has been altered by urbanization and global warming. In California, many native plants have developed adaptations and even a reliance upon the fire cycle. Despite wildfires playing a critical part in our ecosystems, the media tends to portray fires as universally negative and harmful. This can create a misinformed, fearful public. My survey-based project assessed the knowledge and perceptions about wildfires of three groups: Culver City High School students, students in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program, and adults. I hypothesized that high school students would answer fewer than 60% of questions correctly, and that the majority of high school students surveyed would have a negative opinion of wildfires. However, high school students had more knowledge and fewer negative opinions about fire than I predicted. The majority of all respondents scored higher than 60% on the knowledge-based questions and largely disagreed with the statement that all wildfires are bad. Analyzing the extent of knowledge and perceptions that high school students and adults have is significant, as their outlooks on the fire cycle have the potential to influence environmental policies at the local and possibly the national level.

Mohamad Lorenzani

Behavior Patterns of Park Visitors at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook

Access to parks and nature is important for both physical and mental wellness of communities. We surveyed three locations at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook Platform: the stairs, the overlook platform and the connecting trail. Over the spring semester of 2018, we surveyed observations of peoples' use of headphones, type of activity and social interactions. I hypothesized that I would observe more people wearing headphones than people not wearing headphones. At the three observation areas, an average of less than 50% of people were observed wearing headphones. At

the stairs and the connecting trail, on average only 2% of people were observed playing their music out loud. The majority of people at all three sites were observed at the park were alone. I hypothesized that I would observe people at the Overlook site committing to multiple activities with same level of frequency among all these activities. In fact, more people were found watching the view or walking through the area than participating in other activities. My hypothesis in which I would observe people walking, running, and biking on the trail that connects the Culver City Park to the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook was supported while observing these activities during my surveys.

Reginald Axel & Brandy Young

Is Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook a Source of Ocean Pollution?

Access to nature and outdoor spaces keeps communities fit and healthy, but can be hotspots for trash. Our project addresses trash at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. We hypothesized that plastic bags, bottle caps, food wrappers, both glass and plastic bottles, and cigarette filters will be found in the park. We surveyed four areas of the park: the road, back pavilion, bathroom area, and the parking lot. We found all hypothesized trash items, except for glass bottles. Out of all four sites we surveyed, the parking lot and the road had the most trash (39% and 34%, respectively). We suspect this is because trashcans are not especially accessible in these areas, in particular the road. Most of the cigarette butts that we found were located in the parking lot. Smoking isn't allowed at the BHSO due to fire hazard, so it is important that we documented this trash as evidence of this potential danger. We recommend installing additional trashcans along the road, installing recycle bins next to all trashcans in the park, and posting signage reminding people not to smoke due to fire hazard.

Racine Camara

Drip Irrigation System Vs Hand-Watering for Milkweed Species at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park

From January to April of 2018, I did research on the use of hand-watered plants and irrigated plants. I have planted 32 Milkweeds on the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook hillside, 16 are hand-watered and the other 16 are irrigated. Throughout these three months I have held four different weeding sessions and fixed basins as needed. The irrigation system building process took two days, January 9th and 12th of 2018. My hypothesis is that the hand-watered side would have a better survival rate because the Milkweeds would be directly watered and any problems would be sighted immediately. Since we do not have our own source of water in Los Angeles, this project will determine whether it would help save water and/or time using these methods. This project is important to me because I want to go into the field of mechanical engineering and this has helped me gain experience within the field such as; design and measurement skills which helped me determine how the drip irrigation would be placed on the hillside. My project would use the hand-watering and drip irrigation method for native plants since native plants do not require much water and are very beneficial for our environment. 🐦



Intern Racine installs an irrigation system he designed for an experimental plot at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook.

BOOK REVIEW

The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Santa Barbara County, by Nick Lethaby

Reviewed by Kimball L. Garrett, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Whether perched or in flight, the odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) inevitably catch the eye of birders with their bright colors and distinctive patterns, shapes and flight styles. Indeed it is often seasoned birders who become the most avid ode-watchers and record-keepers. To be sure, California isn't the mother lode of odes (as it is for birds within North America). It boasts a fascinating, yet still manageable, diversity of some 113 species, including 70 dragonflies, which are larger and perch with spread wings, and 43 damselflies, smaller odonates which usually fold their wings when perched. Excellent guides emphasizing field identification of California's odes include Tim Manolis's *The Dragonflies and Damselflies of California* (University of California Press, 2003), and Dennis Paulson's *Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2009), and a number of informative web sites exist, most notably "California Dragonflies and Damselflies"

<http://bigsnest.members.sonic.net/Pond/dragons/>.

So the dragonfly-watcher has good resources available for making field identifications, but there is relatively little published information on the details of local status and distribution. Perhaps inevitably, the burgeoning interest in ode-watching has led to increased knowledge of the biogeography, abundance, seasonal status and habitat preferences of the various species, and, as with birds, the county seems to be the geographical unit within California for which such data are amassed. Keen birder and ode-watcher (or is that "oder"?) Nick Lethaby has provided an admirable first step in sharing details of odonate distribution, seasonal status, abundance, and habitat preferences with his new book covering Santa Barbara County.

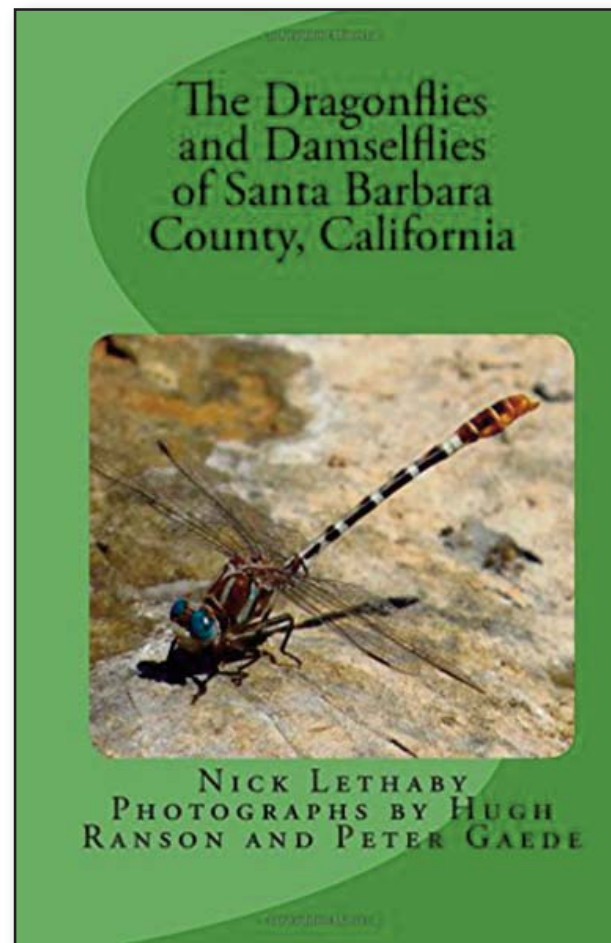
Introductory chapters treat Santa Barbara County geography, habitats, prime ode-watching localities, and patterns of odonate migration and vagrancy. Following are accounts for 53 species, with mention of over 20 additional species to be watched for in Santa Barbara County. The species accounts give details about flight periods, specimen documentation (including historical first records), key sites, habitats, and migratory movements. Status on the four Channel Islands assigned to Santa Barbara County is mentioned where applicable (and island status is conveniently summarized in an appendix).

Los Angeles County has some 58 odonate species documented within its boundaries; a couple of these (Neon Skimmer, Mexican Amberwing) are locally fairly common in L. A. but as yet unrecorded in Santa Barbara. Overall, the odonate faunas of the two counties are fairly similar, so the details Lethaby provides will prove useful in Los Angeles, Ventura, and other southern California counties. Most of the half a dozen species recorded in Santa Barbara but not Los Angeles are vagrants, suggesting that many could appear here as well. Some, such as Eight-spotted Skimmer, Great Pondhawk and Striped Saddlebags, were far from their expected range.

Documentation of the status and distribution of odonates on a massive amateur scale is in its relative infancy. Nearly a third of the species treated in the present book were unknown in Santa Barbara County prior to 2003. This growth in species numbers is surely attributable to the great increase in serious amateur odonate enthusiasts, marking a transition away from distributional data provided primarily by specimens collected by a handful of odonate specialists. Note how this parallels the changes, occurring many decades earlier, in the major ways bird distributions have been documented. Lethaby frequently cites odonate collections in the species accounts and their role in tracing historical distributions and range changes, and the role they continue to play providing vouchers for difficult to identify species.

Finally, it's important to mention that while this is not intended to be an identification guide, each species account includes a good (often stunning) photo taken within Santa Barbara County. So although species accounts don't include identification text, the photographs will suffice to allow users to put a name on most of the common odonate species.

This is a pioneering book in how it puts together information gathered by field odonate enthusiasts on a county scale; one hopes it will stimulate serious dragonfly and damselfly watchers to begin to put together such data for their counties. Anyone up for a Los Angeles County equivalent? 🦋



91 pages, 51 color photos
Available at Amazon for \$17.00:
<https://www.amazon.com/Dragonflies-Damselflies-Santa-Barbara-County-California/dp/153902105X/>

GREEN FEATHER AWARD WINNER 2018

“Let Her Play” by Aisling Murran (Polytechnic High School)



The Los Angeles Audubon Society was invited to sponsor the first GREEN FEATHER AWARD for eco-themed science fiction as part of THE TOMORROW PRIZE which challenges Los Angeles County teens to explore social, scientific, and environmental issues of today through science fiction short story writing. In all, more than 200 stories were submitted by 16 high schools for 2018. In May at LitFest Pasadena, celebrity guests dramatically read the top stories on stage, followed by awards presented to the winners and recognition of the finalists and honorable mentions.

Congratulations to the winners and to all of the students who participated.

Los Angeles Audubon wishes to thank the judges of the Green Feather Award: Jamie Lowry, Lynne Slattery Schroeder, Alice Hsieh, Mary Cruz, and Jane Beseda. And special thanks to Rosalind Helfand, organizer of the event.

WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL OF THE STUDENT WRITERS WHO PARTICIPATED.

TOMORROW PRIZE AWARD WINNER—2018

- “Microcosm” by Chelsea See (Glen A. Wilson High School)

TOMORROW PRIZE FINALISTS—2018

- “Relinquished Cities” by Arin Krausz (Grover Cleveland High School)
- “The Demiurge” by Bry LeBerthon (Westridge School)
- “Addiction” by Kalila Papanikolas (Westridge School)
- “Midas” by Audrey Wang (Westridge School)

TOMORROW PRIZE HONORABLE MENTIONS—2018

- “Espera” by Naomi Beach (Clark Magnet High School)
- “2084” by Kate Crowell (Westridge School)
- “The Vault” by Matthew David (Fairfax High School)
- “Desperate Measures” by Jake DeRiseis (Culver City High School)
- “Trash-O-Synthesis” by Charlotte Feit-Leichman & Nia Yick (Culver City High School)
- “Curing of an Illness” by Carlos Gonzalez (High Tech LA)
- “The Silo” by Alexander Hwang (High Tech LA)
- “Edos” by Julia Li (Polytechnic High School)
- “War of the Clouds” by Haley Pak (Westridge School)
- “Gray” by Subin Yi (Fairfax High School)

The Green Feather Award winner, Aisling Murrin is a junior at Polytechnic school in Pasadena. Aisling is an Irish-Armenian storyteller with three wonderful brothers. Her work is inspired by an unparalleled love of bio-ecology and behavioral science. A fervent advocate for pollinators, Aisling works as an ambassador for the Honeybee Conservancy and keeps multiple species of bees in her backyard. In her spare time, she researches drosophila fruit flies at the Dickinson Lab.

(Following is the Green Feather Award winning story, *Let Her Play*, by Aisling Murrin)



LET HER PLAY

By Aisling Murran

EVELYN, WHO PREFERRED EVIE, was six years old – and quite a little terror. She was absurdly curious and always running. Today was no exception.

At 6:35 am exactly, Evie zoomed into the kitchen and propelled herself up onto the countertop just in time to watch as a small yellow blip lit up the touch screen wall. Three small jars sitting next to the sink began to fill with honey from a tap. The yellow light spread until the whole wall glowed and then faded to reveal a glass panel. Evie sat mesmerized as bees crawled across beautiful comb behind the glass. To her dismay, the jars were soon filled, and the wall regained its normal, dull opacity.

But today, for whatever reason, Evie decided she wanted more than just five minutes of viewing time. She wanted to see the bees. She wanted to hear them; she wanted to watch them fly.

Climbing down from the countertop, she raced through the house, yelling out to her artificial attendant, “Missy! Where do the kitchen bees go?”

“The kitchen bees exit the building from the top of the exterior wall, so that they are near the fruit trees in the back, and the garden on the roof, Evie.”

“Thanks Missy! Um, how do I get up there, again?” Evie asked.

“I will turn on the magnetic lift for that wall. Exterior wall one lift is now on. Head to the corner of the house by the exterior wall one and step onto the illuminated circle.”

Evie shoved on her shoes, scrambled out the back door, and clambered up onto the roof. There, she stood in awe as the sun shone warmly against her back and reflected off the rooftop beneath her feet. She felt so small and light and powerful from this height. She could see the whole world for the first time: Like the navy blue solar panels on the roof of her mom’s car. She had never seen the roof of a car. And behind her, the swathe of clover lawn looked odd, like a quilt spotted with her brightly colored toys. She could see every one of her neighbor’s homes all lined up with their pale, whitewashed walls - soldiers trying to keep the California summer heat at bay.

Evie turned back to survey her own rooftop, which lacked any perceivable order. It was true horticultural chaos to Evie’s untrained eye, but there was a beautiful complexity to the nonlinear system. Evie carefully tread between alternating garlic and blueberries plants, a strange match made to accommodate their mutual love of acidic soil. In the corner, she saw the tendrils of baby pea plants crawling up tall corn stalks. The peas payed the corn for their terrace-like support in underground transactions as they infused the soil with nitrogen. Evie’s keen eyes moved on and traced the pea plants as they were replaced by more mature potatoes, then to cucumbers and eggplants, lettuce and chives – all set to benefit one another in polycultural spendor.

Little blue lights studded the dirt. They were sensors that watched water levels and wirelessly spoke with drip lines under the

surface, for conservative and wasteless water delivery. Evie picked one out of the ground, and, to her surprise, the little pea-sized sensor turned orange. She quickly push it back into the dirt and was relieved when the light faded to blue.

Still crouched by the plant bed, Evie couldn’t help but notice the abundance of whirring critters - electric and otherwise. Hovering bots expertly pulled up carrots and evicted squirming red worms from the soil. The worms dug channels to loosen the dirt, as they had been doing for thousands of years, and these new bots helped maintain these air pockets by taking to the sky. As a team, they worked quite nicely - symbiosis really. Pieces of a puzzle, bees in a hive.

She could hear them – the bees. The small tunnel inside the house, which she knew led down into the kitchen wall, was overflowing with bees going in and out, in and out.

Evie swung her legs over the side of the roof, and then, she watched them. She watched them touch noses and clean one another’s faces. She watched them circle, and she watched them fly. Oh, how they flew! They took off like helicopters! A beat or two and then a bumbling upward.

Rolling on to her stomach, Evie stuck her hand out under the exit, and the bees walked along her palm. Her tiny hand twitched as tiny legs crawled across and pushed off. Slowly she began to close her hand, entranced by the small bugs. She had heard them, watched them, felt them. Now she

wanted to have one, to keep it in her hands. She paused, gathered a little courage, and snapped her hands shut. For a moment she could feel its humming wings brushing up against her fingertips as the bee frantically scrambled in circles.

Downstairs, Evie's mom, Wren, had been trying to wake up. She was draped over a kitchen chair with a cup of black tea when Evie came running in the back door.

"Mom, Mommy! Mommy, one of the bees stung me... Mommy, it hurts."

"Oh! Evelyn Bluebell Frazier, how on earth did you manage that? You weren't on the roof, were you?"

"It's Evie! Evelyn is an old person's name – no offense, Nana!" Evie hastily added. Evelyn, the grandmother with whom Evie shared her name, sat in the living room, amusing herself with an old-fashioned laptop and eating her toast.

"None taken, sweetheart. I am pretty old," Nana replied, and she meant it. Evie's grandmother was a kind woman and relished her old age.

"I wasn't on the roof. I was just playing in the back and one of them stung me! I wasn't even doing anything," Evie lied.

"Honey, bees don't sting for no reason. Tell me the truth – were you playing on the roof?" Wren asked.

"No..." Evie replied sheepishly.

"Evie, you know better than to play with the organic bees. What's wrong with the VR bees I bought you? Does it hurt much? Here,

let me see. Play with those next time, Evie."

Evie's mother was tall and thin and rather tired, but she had a gentle face, and she loved her daughter more than anything. And she did have a point. You could see and hear and feel the virtual reality bees. You could hold them, crush them if you were so inclined. The VR bees didn't did fly around the garden, though.

As Wren tended to her daughter's bee sting, Evie's grandmother piped up from the sofa. "Put honey on that," she chimed in.

"What on Earth are you talking about?" Wren replied.

"Honey," Grandma Evelyn insisted. "Honey is good for bee stings."

"Oh, right. Honey fixes everything. That and Vaseline, no?" Wren jabbed. Evie sat on the countertop, happily bobbing her head to the banter.

"Don't mock me. I raised you, and you're fine," Evelyn retorted. "Well, sometimes you can be a little a—"

"Mother!" Wren interrupted.

"A little annoying. I was going to say annoying. And while we are on the subject, you should let Evie play with bees. Don't coddle her. She'll get stung a few times and figure it out for herself. She's lucky to have bees in the first place," Evelyn said.

"Mom," Wren replied.

"Wren," Grandma Evelyn interrupted, "I was alive when people were still scared of bees. 'Not in My Backyard' they'd say. Didn't

know what was good for them. No one batted an eye when the butterflies died. Wren, I couldn't even tell you what year that was. No one complained when they realized weed killers cause cancer, or when genetically "superior" crops wiped out plant diversity, or what little semblance of plant diversity we had left.

"I'll tell you what, though, people started to make a fuss when they were the ones starving. After the monocrop crash and Foul Brood epidemic? The global water crisis? Wren, you and your girl, sitting right there, you can't let your guards down. Not after all that my generation had to suffer to get you here. Just because things are stable now doesn't mean... Wren, it could always happen again."


"Mom, I know, but you're scaring Evie," Wren replied as she put a drop of honey on Evie's sting and sprayed it with a bandage.

"A little fear is good. It keeps you moving in the right direction. And Evie will protect us, huh? She'll keep an eye on the bees for us – won't you, darling?"

"Always," Evie replied.

"She could grow up to become an ecologist. Imagine that! They make good money, you know," Grandma Evelyn said with smile. "So if Evie here wants to play with the bee, that's fine by me. I say, let her play."

"Let her play?" Wren incredulously repeated.

"Yeah," Evie said with an impish grin. "Let her play." 

YOUNG BIRDERS

A New Discovery: Our Rufous Hummingbirds molt in the Mexican monsoonal region

By Dessi Sieburth



1) Perched male Rufous Hummingbird, photo by Tim Hopwood

Molt is crucial for the survival of birds. During molt, birds shed their old feathers and replace them with new feathers. Molt is necessary for migration, changes in plumage, camouflage, and to attract mates. Molt is especially important for migratory bird species because they are exposed to the sun during flight, and solar radiation causes bird feathers to become worn quickly.

Some North American hummingbirds travel over 2,000 km during their migration. Their feathers need to be in good condition to travel such distances, and therefore they need to molt. It was previously known that these hummingbirds undergo complete molts on their wintering grounds in Mexico, during which all their feathers are replaced. It was also known that during their first year of life, young males replace some throat feathers during

the fall, and replace them again during the complete overwinter molt.

In 2009, Dittmann and Cardiff discovered that molt in migratory North American hummingbirds is more complicated than simply the overwinter molt. They examined Ruby-throated Hummingbirds feeding in their yard during their fall migration on the Gulf Coast of Louisiana. They found that many of these birds were molting feathers. They called this limited molt an inserted molt, and they suggested that this molt was separate from the overwinter molt that was previously known.

Biologist Peter Pyle from the Institute of Bird Populations and I wondered if inserted molts might occur in other migratory North American hummingbird species. We looked for evidence of molt in the Rufous Hummingbird, a species that breeds along the northwestern coast and spends its winter in central and southern Mexico. We looked at 346 Rufous Hummingbird specimens from three specimen collections in California. We examined each bird for evidence of molt in four feather regions: the crown, the back, the underparts, and the throat. We considered a bird to show evidence of molt if we saw any replaced feathers contrasting with worn feathers, or if we saw pin feathers in any of the regions.

We found that the majority of the birds collected in the winter from southern Mexico showed signs of the complete molt which was known to take place on the wintering grounds. We also found evidence of molting in both young birds and adult birds during their southbound migration in fall. These limited inserted molts occurred in all four feather regions that we examined. Many molting specimens were from the Mexican monsoonal region located in northwestern Mexico. Rufous Hummingbirds are drawn to the monsoonal region due to the high flower abundance that occurs there. They may take advantage of this food supply to molt in this region.

We were surprised to see that the inserted throat feather molt in Rufous Hummingbirds differed significantly among ages and sexes. Adult males did not replace their iridescent throat feathers in fall. Some adult females and all young birds of both sexes replaced some throat feathers during the inserted molt. New iridescent throat feathers might help young birds to defend their territories. We don't know exactly why the Rufous Hummingbird undergoes an inserted molt. The inserted molt might be important for the highly



Female Rufous Hummingbird in flight, photo by Tim Hopwood

migratory Rufous Hummingbird because its feathers get very worn when it travels long distances.

The Mexican monsoonal region is an important stopover location for many migratory bird species on their way to their wintering grounds. For example, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Chipping Sparrow, in addition to Rufous Hummingbirds, molt in the monsoonal region during their fall migration. The Mexican monsoonal region faces several threats including deforestation and climate change. Deforestation, which results from agriculture, grazing, and logging, is prevalent in the Sierra Madre Occidental, the mountain range within the monsoonal region. Climate change has been attributed to a delay in the rain period from June and July to September and October (Cook and Seager 2013). Migratory birds will need to adapt their molts to coincide with the rains. This adaptation will be necessary because molting takes a lot of energy, and the rains bring flowers, which provide nectar and attract insects for the migratory birds to eat.

Since many migratory birds breed in the U.S, stop over in Mexico, and winter in Central and South America, international collaboration will be necessary to make conservation efforts successful. You can support migratory bird species by buying the Smithsonian certified Bird-Friendly Allegro coffee. This coffee comes from shade grown plantation, which support bird habitat in Central and South America. Look for the coffee with the

Smithsonian Bird-Friendly label at Whole Foods. This is currently the only coffee guaranteed to be organic and bird friendly. If you like to know more about how to help birds please visit my website:

<http://protectingourbirds.my-free.website/>.

To read the research article go to:


https://www.birdpop.org/docs/pubs/Sieburth_and_Pyle_2018_RUHU_Molt.pdf

Special thanks to Peter Pyle, coauthor of the paper in the Auk and my mentor, as well as the Institute for Bird Populations which supported our research.

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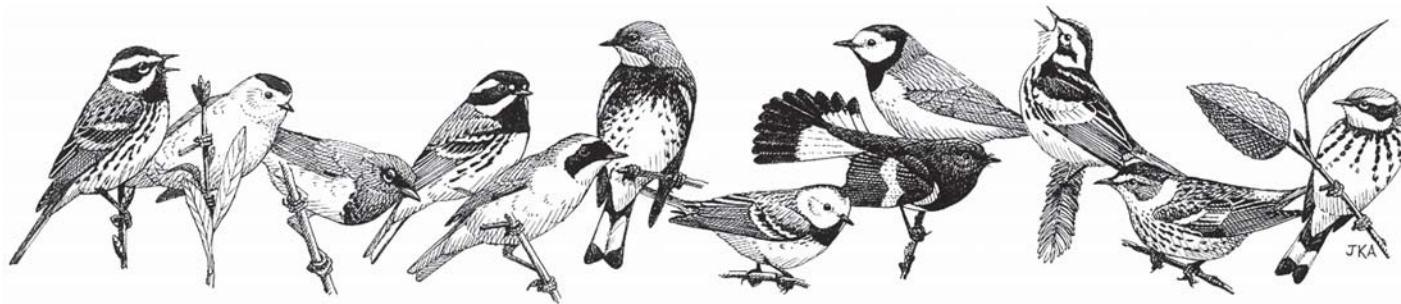
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Male Rufous Hummingbird in flight, Illustration by Dessi Sieburth



BIRDS OF THE SEASON June 2018, by Jon Fisher

For birders it's difficult to match the appeal of springtime. Pick any day and location and you are bound to find at least a few migrants, and perhaps many. Add to that the frenetic rush of breeding activity and observers are rewarded with an amazing spectacle from late winter through spring.

The period from mid-April through June was marked by generally pleasant weather and adequate number of rare and regular birds. Though it was not a remarkable spring for rare birds, they were far from absent. It should come as no surprise that San Clemente Island produced a disproportionate number of these, including a number of late regular migrants. The island has proven to be a remarkable vagrant trap.

Our America's Birdiest County event was held the last weekend in April. While we no longer compete with other counties across the country, it is still a challenge to see how many species can be recorded. As a bonus, we get a snapshot of what birds are present in the county. This year we found 263 species over the three day event, right about average for the fifteen years it has taken place.

Once early June was over, there was a noticeable and expected slowdown in reports. Spring mi-

grants had all passed through and fall birds were yet to appear. Breeding activity was in full swing however, adding an enjoyable dimension to time spent in the field.

Waterfowl included thirty **Brant** at the Piute Ponds on Edwards Air Force Base on April 26 (Chris Dean, John Birsner) and a rather late **Common Goldeneye** was at Lake Palmdale on April 17 (John Garrett).

Lake Hollywood hosted a **Red-breasted Merganser** from May 6–7 (Andrew Birch). Eight **Common Mergansers** were at Castaic Lake on May 13 (Jeffrey Fenwick), an area where breeding should be watched for. Late single birds were at Quail Lake on June 2 (Brad Rumble) and at Rowena Reservoir in Los Feliz on June 3 (Andrew Birch). Apparently summering was a worn bird on the LA River in Glendale on June 24 (Jon Fisher), possibly the same bird seen nearby on June 3.

At least one **Inca Dove** remained at Col. Leon H. Washington Park in Los Angeles through June 5, though numbers here have decreased since a tiny colony was discovered here in early 2014. **Common Ground-Doves** continued along the San Gabriel River in Bellflower with two observed there as recently as May 16.

Occurring as rare visitors from late May through summer only, **Chimney Swifts** were along the LA River in Atwater Village from May 21–26 (Andrew Birch), at El Dorado Park on June 2 (Lindsay & John Fitch), on San Clemente Island from June 4–6 (Nicole Desnoyers) and near Castaic Lake on June 9 (John Garrett).

A lone **Ridgway's Rail** continued at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh through April 12.

Still very rare but increasingly recorded in the county were **Masked Boobies** at the Port of Los Angeles on May 1 (Matt West) and at the southeast end of Santa Catalina Island on June 11 (Jack LaLonde). There was also a **Masked/Nazca Booby** off Pt. Dume on May 12 (Kimball Garrett). Good views are needed to assess bill color; without them the two species—formerly conspecific—are essentially inseparable.

The **Neotropic Cormorant** at Bonelli Regional Park continued to be reported from April 20–June 23.

There was a notable inland incursion of immature **Brown Pelicans** this spring. One was at Lake Balboa from April 25–May 8 (Jay Carroll), five were over the Arroyo Seco above Pasadena on May 2

(Grace Wong), one was at Wheeler Park in Claremont on May 2 (Tom Miko) and single birds were in Culver City on May 3, at Alondra Park on May 5–14, over the Santa Monica Mountains on May 8 and in Pacific Palisades on May 18. Most often it's a lack of food that drives events such as these.

Two **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** remained at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh through April 15, with one seen in the area through June 16. Another continued at Topanga Lagoon through April 21 and one was at Sim's Pond Bio Reserve in Long Beach from May 6–20 (Tracy Drake).

A rare occurrence in the county was an apparently pure—or nearly pure—**American Oystercatcher** at Long Beach Harbor on June 12 (Brandon Stidum).

Solitary Sandpipers were at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from April 4–24 (Tracy Drake), at the Piute Ponds on April 10 (Chris Dean, John Birsner) and again on April 25 (Jim Moore) and at Hansen Dam in Lake View Terrace on May 4 (Kimball Garrett).

Other shorebirds of interest were a **Whimbrel** at the Piute Ponds on June 1 (John Birsner, Chris Dean), a rare for LA County **Red Knot** at Del Rey Lagoon on May 5 (Barbara Johnson, Jim Moore) and a **Dunlin** at the Piute Ponds from June 7–8 (John Birsner).

Rare but regular at this time was a **Pigeon Guillemot** that flew past Pt. Dume on June 16 (Mark & Janet Scheel, Dessi Sieburth) and two there on June 17 (Kimball Garrett).

Gulls of interest included a late **Herring Gull** at Zuma Creek mouth on May 12 (Kimball Garrett), a **Glaucous-winged Gull** lingering at Lake Balboa through June 8 and a **Mew Gull** on the LA River in Vernon on June 24 (Richard Barth). Quite rare inland

was an **Arctic Tern** at the Piute Ponds on May 31 (Chris Dean, Merryl Edelstein).

Late inland **Common Loons** were at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from May 1–18 (Tom Miko), at Silverlake Reservoir on May 12 (Andrew Birch) and at Quail Lake near Gorman on May 13 (Stephen Bylin). Somewhat less regular was **Pacific Loon** at Hansen Dam on May 12 (Kimball Garrett).

Eight **California Condors** were along the Old Ridge Route near Castaic on May 19 (Naresh Satyan).

Scarce as a coastal migrant was a **Burrowing Owl** by Pier 400 at the LA Harbor on May 11 (Bob Schallmann).

Over a dozen **Vermilion Flycatchers** were present on the coastal slope where they have been slowly increasing in numbers.

Having spent the winter, but remarkably late in leaving were a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** at Ladera Park reported through May 27 and a **Tropical Kingbird** at Entradero Park in Torrance through May 29.

On the other hand, a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** seen from May 19–20 (Kathy Duret) and an **Eastern Kingbird** present from May 31–June 1 (John & Linda Mendoza) at the Piute Ponds were obviously spring migrants.

Most interesting was a singing **Gray Vireo** at Bob's Gap on the north slope of the San Gabriel Mountains from April 14–20 (Lance Benner). This was the first at this once fairly reliable locale since early 1992. The LA County Breeding Bird Atlas surveys in the late 1990s turned up another not far from this area. This area could benefit from more coverage by birders.

Rare as a spring migrant was a **Plumbeous Vireo** at Huntington Park Civic Park on April 29 (Jonathan Nakai).

Purple Martins, typically scarce spring migrants, were present in above average numbers. At least two dozen were recorded between April 16 and May 8. Two at the Piute Ponds on June 23 were likely dispersing post-breeding birds (John Birsner).

Rare on the coastal slope were **Bank Swallows** at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh near Playa Vista on May 21 (Kevin Lapp) and in the Sepulveda Basin on May 22 (Mike Stensvold).

A nice spring find was a **Brown Thrasher** at Lower Malaga Creek on the Palos Verdes Peninsula present from May 7–12 (Jun Wu, Bin Cao).

A very late **Varied Thrush** was at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on June 2 (Daniel Tinoco). It seems an odd year to have such a tardy migrant given that this species was virtually absent in the county this winter.

Phainopeplas appeared on the coastal slope in notable numbers this spring. This species breeds early in spring on the deserts and then these birds disperse toward the coast. For whatever reason they did so in greater than normal numbers this year.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets may breed regularly in very small numbers in the higher San Gabriels, but aren't frequently recorded. One along the Throop Peak trail on June 2 indicated possible local breeding (Lance Benner).

Scarce as a coastal migrant was a **Green-tailed Towhee** at Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach on May 6 (Jun Wu, Bin Cao).

Other seedeaters of interest included a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Rio de Los Angeles Park near Glassell Park from April 25–26 (Cuyler Staplemann) and a **Black-chinned Sparrow** at Forrestal Nature Preserve in Rancho Palos Verdes on May 8 (Peggy Gussman). Though a common breeder in the nearby San Gabriel Mountains, this species is rarely detected in the lowlands.

A wintering **Lark Bunting** continued at Agua Amarga Canyon on the Palos Verdes Peninsula through April 14 and a **Harris's Sparrow** that may have wintered continued at Hansen Dam through April 19.

In addition to a few continuing **White-throated Sparrows**, new birds were found at the Crystalline Country Club near Valyermo on April 14 (Ruth Gravance), at Cypress Park in Los Angeles on April 21 (Marcus England) and at the Piute Ponds on May 3 (Chris Dean, John Birsner). A very late **White-crowned Sparrow** of the dark-lored *oriantha* subspecies was on San Clemente Island on June 17 (Nicole Desnoyers).

Baltimore Orioles were on San Clemente Island on May 23 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers), on May 28 (Richard Hepner) and from June 1–5 (Steven Munoz). On the mainland, one was along the Playa Vista Riparian Corridor on June 1 (Don Sterba).

An **Ovenbird** was on San Clemente Island on May 23 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers) and **Northern Waterthrushes** were at the Piute Ponds on May 1 (Joe Lepisto) and from May 12–20 (David Bell) and at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on May 4 (Mark Rubke).

Black-and-white Warblers were at the Arboretum through April 11, at American Gold Star Manor in Long Beach on April 12 (Richard Barth), at

Madrona Marsh in Torrance through April 14, on San Clemente Island on May 23 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers) and at the Piute Ponds on May 28 (John Birsner).

Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach produced a **Hooded Warbler** which stayed from May 11–16. **American Redstarts** were in Claremont on May 26 (Tom Miko) and on San Clemente Island on June 4 (Justyn Stahl) and a **Northern Parula** was also on San Clemente Island on June 4 (Nicole Desnoyers)

Very rare was a **Grace's Warbler** found along Blue Ridge Road near Big Pines on May 5 (Cathy McFadden, Paul Clarke). Given the habitat—similar to that in southeast Arizona where this species is common—this species could potentially breed in this area, or elsewhere in the San Gabriels; though the likelihood of a pair intersecting is probably quite remote.

A **Hepatic Tanager** was at Chilao Flat in the San Gabriel Mountains on May 26 (Maggie Schedl, Devon DeRaad). There are records for the eastern portion of the range, but as yet no evidence of breeding. However breeding does occur in the eastern San Bernardino Mountains.

At least eight **Summer Tanagers** were recorded over the period, with two of those found in the Soledad Canyon riparian area on May 6 where breeding is likely (Bradley Hacker). The most recent was a bird on San Clemente Island on June 17 (Nicole Desnoyers).

A smattering of **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** turned up in late May and early June, with birds on San Clemente Island from May 25–June 6 (Justyn Stahl), at Leo Carrillo State Park on May 27 (Bhaskar Krishnamachari), at Portuguese Bend Reserve from May 27–28 (Jim Aichele, Cathy Nichols), at the

South Coast Botanic Garden on May 28 (Manuel Duran) and in Claremont on June 6 (James Hardiker). **Indigo Buntings** were on San Clemente Island on May 11 and from June 5–6 (Justyn Stahl).

Spring migration is barely behind us but already the earliest southbound shorebirds have shown up, soon to be followed by large numbers of their kin. While winter weather and precipitation is variable and often unpredictable, it's a very safe bet that our summer will be hot and dry. For me, shorebirds are the saving grace of those oppressive months of July and August. Not only are there plenty of birds to see, but vagrants are to be expected.

In addition to these birds, the foothills and mountains still offer good birding during this transition period. Breeding activity is much in evidence here. Clearly, with a Hepatic Tanager and a Grace's Warbler found in the mountains this spring, there is a lot of potential... and much underexplored territory.

Elsewhere, seawatching has the potential to turn up something interesting at any time, but one often has to endure many uneventful days between good birds. And if it's a bit slow right now, just wait a month. Fall migration will soon arrive in earnest.

For me, birding has many appealing aspects. Not the least of which are the experiences it offers. In a technology driven world where people seem to increasingly share the same experiences, birding continues to provide something unique every time we go into the field. This is true no matter what the time of year; no two days are the same. Even in well-settled Los Angeles County it's possible to find places to experience nature in relative solitude. 🐦

TEACHER COMMENTS ON LOS ANGELES AUDUBON'S BALLONA TOURS 2017-2018

By Cindy Hardin, Outdoor Education Director

As the school year ends it always gives me great pleasure to review the comments made by teachers who participated in our tours at Ballona. As usual, we were extremely busy! We did 49 field trips this year, and 2435 students were able to experience the wonders of Ballona under our tutelage. This is a summary of feedback received from the super teachers of Los Angeles.

Special thanks to The State of California Coastal Conservancy for their support of this program via the Explore the Coast grant.

1. What would you tell another teacher who asked you what you did on this trip?

- We got to experience a new world in the wetlands (4)
- Fully aligned to NextGen Science Standards (2)
- Stimulating hands-on experience learning about wildlife (4)
- Awesome field trip-great activities
- Learned why it is important to preserve wildlife (2)
- Fantastic way to have children experience Native Americans outside the textbook (3)
- Learned about native plants, birds and the ecosystem of wetlands (5)
- Excellent field trip
- Solid foundation of the watershed
- Students have nature as their classroom
- Experience was enhanced through the use of microscopes and binoculars



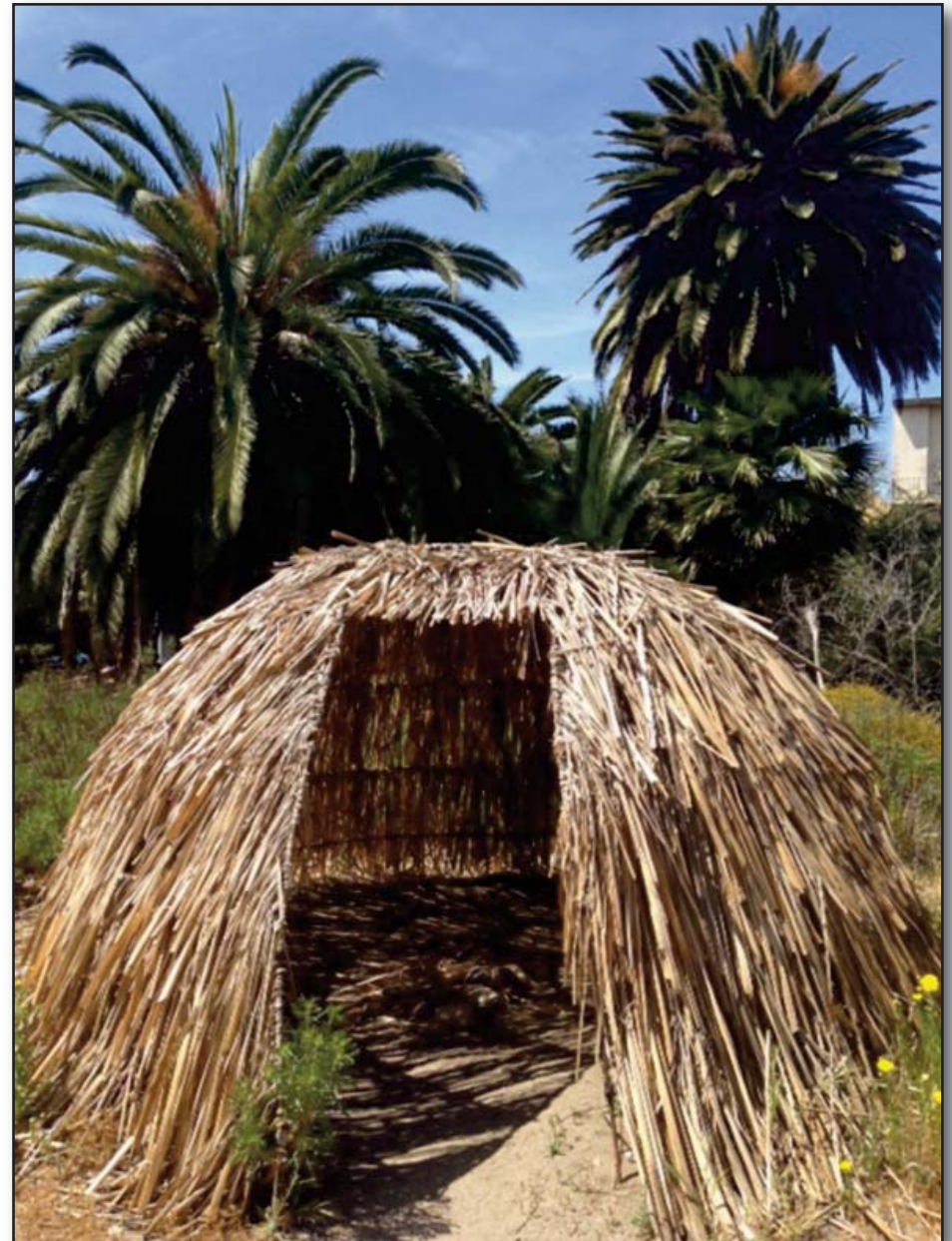
Ballona docent, Jamie, at Tongva table

2. What interested your students the most about the trip?

- Seeing the birds, using binoculars (13)
- Being in nature (2)
- Microscopes (2)
- Using the telescopes to see birds (2)
- They were excited to see animals they had learned about in real life (3)
- Hike and birdwatching (3)
- To get out of the classroom and explore
- Excited to learn about the wetlands
- Native American artifacts (4)
- Hands-on activities (3)
- Seeing the Great Blue Herons nesting atop the trees
- Instruments, knowledge of guides

3. Was your guide helpful, knowledgeable and informative? Please comment.

- Yes-very knowledgeable and patient (19)
- All three had good rapport with students
- Fantastic guide (2)
- Our guide was patient, kept a good pace, focused the students' attention on pertinent observation and respectful of their background
- Women and men who truly understood the environment (2)



Ballona Ki

4. What could be done to improve the program?

- Nothing! (14)
- Missed the station that showed the vanishing wetlands
- More time connecting to Native American History
- Resource activities online
- Develop an alternative component for students with special needs
- Thank you for making sure the trip was wheelchair/other needs accessible

5. Other comments

- We hope to go again next year
- Great, highly recommended
- We appreciate the docents-thank you!
- You run the best environmental trip around!

As we all know, this program is only possible through the work of all of our fabulous docents. The overwhelmingly positive response from our visiting teachers speaks volumes about the fine work that you do throughout our season. I hope you all have a lovely time during the summer and look forward to another great year of getting kids excited about nature at beautiful Ballona. On to the 2018-2019 school year! 🐦

Please support our **Outdoor Education Programs at Ballona** by donating online (<http://losangelesaudubon.org/donate>) or by check in the U.S. Mail. (Los Angeles Audubon Society, PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301)



Students touring the Ballona Wetlands



Cindy Hardin and the bus to Ballona.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*MIMUS POLYGLOTTOS*)

By Lou Tucker

"If that mockingbird don't sing, Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring".

Ha! A mockingbird not singing is like saying the sun never shines in sunny southern California. The Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), the Latin name meaning "many tongued mimic". There are birds that so totally amuse me. This is a species which does. It certainly is a bird I've seen all of my life; even though growing up in the northeast, I didn't realize that its population had decreased during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was because many people caught them, either as nestlings or even as adults and caged them, to have a bird singing in their houses. So, when I saw them as a child, their population was on the increase.

What gets me so amused is when people hear this songster all night. Family, friends and neighbors who know that I am a birder will ask me: "What's making that noise at night?" And, "what can I do about it to make it go away?" "That constant singing just drives me crazy". I remember some almost forty years ago when I was on a national tour with a Broadway show, when I was about to go to bed in my motel room, and some members of the cast were having a bit of a noisy party. They were playing their music so that the entire motel could hear it. And, it stirred a Mockingbird. This was around midnight in Fort Lauderdale Florida. So, it's warm and humid. And, many members of this cast didn't like

air conditioning; a phenomenon with which I am totally unfamiliar. Anyway, this bird starts singing. And, it sang all night. I remember just laughing; and actually laughing myself into slumber. That bird sang until dawn. And then after a half hour break, it began to sing again. This was before I became a serious birder. I just thought it was really funny. I really don't know whether the human music was responsible for getting that bird to go on and

on. The singing never bothered me. I just found it hilarious.

As I got more into the

"birding thing", I learned that usually it's the unmated and young males who tend to do this. I learned just by observing, how incredibly territorial these birds are. So, a male will sing to keep other males away. Or, if it is a non-breeding male, at night, it just sings and sings and sings. This is not good news for the light sleeper. One day, some thirty years ago, my brother called me to ask: "Do you know if we have

"nightingales"? I told him that it was most probably a mockingbird. My brother is agitated, because his wife is a very tightly, highly strung human being. She's a really light sleeper and hasn't been able to sleep, at all. He wanted to shoot it. That set me off laughing. I told him that he could probably go ahead and shoot it, but, before long, another one would come along and take its place. He didn't find that amusing. So, I told him to go out and buy some ear plugs.

Last year, a neighbor, over the divider wall that separates our two apartment



Northern Mockingbird | Photo by Mary Freeman

buildings, asked me the same thing. I told him that his only cure would be to buy some ear plugs. Again, I'm laughing the entire time. Maybe why I laugh is because I'm a musician, and to me, bird songs are music. And, the remarkable thing about this feathered songster is that they gain a repertoire of songs as they go through their lives. They can build a repertoire up to and more than two hundred songs. They mimic other birds and mimic the sounds that they hear. It's quite clever. And, since, by vocation, I'm also an actor, I love to listen and observe their behavior. It absolutely fascinates me.

There is another mockingbird in the neighborhood this year. And judging from his repertoire, he's a young bird. This one only has about two dozen to call on, so far. He will call with each one from two to five or six times. And, sometimes he only uses four or five different calls. I hope that this new bird continues to develop, because he is really loud. With the exception of police and fire sirens and the occasional helicopters circling overhead, I live in a pretty quiet neighborhood. I'm probably the noisiest one on the block, because of my incessant listening to symphonic and operatic music.

My first acquaintance with mockingbirds was when I was in elementary school. For summer breaks, my mother would take my sister and me down to Virginia to help out my great-grandfather on his farm. I would notice this gray and white songbird. I would also notice that this species was incredibly territorial. And, this bird would harass my great-grandfather's cats. This was a working farm. And, the cats kept the rodent population down. This is also long before I knew what devastation cats played as they prey upon birds

in North America, killing 2.4 billion birds a year.

Another instance of this bird's fearless nature was back-home in White Plains, New York, where my paternal grandmother had a gray combination Russian Blue and Persian cat named "Buttons". This animal was a true menace. And Buttons had climbed a tree and was about to wreak havoc on a mockingbird nest. Well, the bird parents had summoned every bird in the neighborhood and attacked Buttons. There were Blue Jays, Crows, blackbirds all coming to show this cat that it was not going to do any damage to the bird community. They chased Buttons out of the tree across the front yard. And, somehow Buttons made the decision that her only protection would be a drain pipe attached to the gutters of the house. How this massive cat managed to get into this pipe is just a mystery. Her bushy tail was the only thing that couldn't get into this pipe.

How do you get a rather large cat out of a drain pipe? Also, the birds haven't stopped harassing it. We humans aren't safe, as well. We were getting bombed by the feather brigade. They were relentless. This was species cooperation the likes I've never seen before. They had a sworn enemy: that damn cat! They were determined to keep it in that drain pipe until it died. And, the noise was not to be believed. They had set up post all along my grandmother's yard. And, they kept the noise up pretty much all afternoon. We did manage to get Buttons out of the pipe, unfortunately by pulling her tail and pulling her out. How she let us do that, I'll never know. She was pretty shaken—traumatized. She didn't go outside for a very long while after that. And, she actually kept away from harassing birds. I felt sorry for

her then. I think I was no more than 8 years old. I, very coldly, wouldn't feel sorry for her now; knowing what damage cats do to birds. I also try as best I can to tell people to keep their cats indoors. The Peta people would probably hate me for this; but, I am also in favor of rounding up all feral cats and euthanizing every one of them.

Meanwhile, back to my feathered heroes, I welcome the songs of every songbird. And, I'm not limited to just songbird calls. The call of any bird ignites something wonderful in my spirit. I feel like I've been treated to a "mini-recital", and I feel that it is very special. The funny thing about bird songs and bird calls is that although I've listened and played music literally all of my life. I'm really pretty terrible with bird calls. And, some species have some spectacular ones. Some make me laugh uncontrollably. And, some just cause me to stop in my tracks and take it all in. The Bald Eagle calling is possibly one of the funniest things I've ever heard in my life. I wonder how a bird as majestic and powerful as a Bald Eagle could have such a high cackle. And, it gives that cackle its all; sometimes by throwing its head in the air and just begins to make the silliest noise. Recently, around my apartment building, I heard an extended song that was so intriguing, that I rushed to the door and looked out. I could see this tiny brown bird going in and out of the hedge that goes along the redwood fence that divides the two apartment buildings. The little brown bird was a House Wren. I had never heard its extended song before, which is quite melodious and stunning.

The Red-tailed Hawk has a ferocious call. This also amuses me because whenever you see on film, footage of a Bald Eagle, whether it's a

TV show, movie or commercial, the sound people invariably play the call of the Red-tail. The mating call of the Atlantic Puffin is also something that gives me great amusement, because it sounds pretty much like a cow. Imagine a little, chubby 13 inch bird sounding like a cow. It's funny. My first visit to Yosemite, and walking through Dana Meadows searching for a bird sound that was so ethereal, it sounded so other worldly, to find a Pine Grosbeak perched slightly above its mate in a pine tree. He sang continuously, and I stood there watching him, transfixed. It was so beautiful. One of the features on my great-grandfather's farm in Virginia was the call of Bobwhite. They call out their name. Or, at night, you would hear in the woods the call of the Eastern Whip-poor-will. That was the serenade during the night on his farm. Back then, I don't recall Mockingbirds singing well into the night. And, at night, bathed in darkness, without street lights and just the stars; it was pitch black and very quiet otherwise.

There are other bird calls that fascinate me; the "poorly working clothesline" that Blue Jays in the east do, the low croaking of a Northern Raven, the single whistle like hoot of the Northern Pigmy-Owl. That same tone is sung by the Eared Quetzal when it's perched and content; and not the screech you hear on the bird call app which it does when it's alarmed. Walking through the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey and hearing a Yellow-billed Cuckoo make its elaborate call after a rain or going through the swamp and hearing the high squealing whistle of female Wood Ducks in flight, the soft cooing of the Northern Pintail and the deep cooing of Greater Roadrunners when mating. I happened to be at

"Bob's Gap" near dusk one spring evening and there was a pair of Roadrunners mating. It was quite a ritual.

Many in the Thrasher family have beautiful songs. I do remember, hearing an extended song of the Catbird one spring in my maternal grandmother's back yard. She had a pear tree in her backyard. And, I know that songbirds don't have very long lives; but, I do remember a Catbird singing in that pear tree every spring for about fifteen years. Robins carry on during breeding season and so do Baltimore Orioles. There are some birds that I never recognized signature voicings from until I moved to California. The three different goldfinches all have really pretty calls. It's interesting to hear the difference in the Eastern Song Sparrow, which is luxurious, from the dry Western version, which emphasizes that we are living in a desert.

But, the repertoire "king" of all of the songs is the Northern Mockingbird. They get the "best in show" award because they seem to be the only ones who can last all night long. They are definitely the "divas" of the feathered world. They sing from February until August. And sometimes they will sing right into fall. I do hope that this present creature will eventually broaden his scope. Although I love hearing him, and I don't want to "diss" him in any way, he needs to make some visits to other neighborhoods to try to pick up something new. I will give the little guy some encouragement. Maybe by the end of summer, he will pick up some new songs. And, maybe next year he will meet some female who will think he's "tops". Then, we will have to see who will drop in and give it a go. 🐦

HUSH, LITTLE BABY

*Hush, Little Baby, don't say a word,
Mama's gonna buy you a Mockingbird.
And if that mockingbird don't sing,
Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring.
And if that diamond ring turns brass,
Mama's gonna buy you a Looking glass.
And if that Looking glass gets broke,
Mama's gonna buy you a billy goat,
And if that billy goat won't pull,
Mama's gonna buy you a cart and a bull.
And if that cart and bull turn over,
Mama's gonna buy you a dog named Rover.
And if that dog named Rover won't bark,
Mama's gonna buy you a horse and a cart.
And if that horse and cart fall down,
You'll still be the sweetest little
baby in town.*

"Hush, Little Baby" is a traditional lullaby, thought to have been written in the Southern United States. Like most folk songs, the author and date of origin are unknown.

BUT WAIT ... THERE'S MORE ... AND THE MOCKINGBIRD SANG, AND SANG, AND SANG

By Lou Tucker

"Listen to the mockingbird, listen to the mockingbird - oh the mockingbird is singing oe'er her grave. Listen to the mockingbird, listen to the mockingbird—still singing where the yellow roses grow" — A Traditional Folk Song

These days, there are few things which cause amusement. We are being thrashed daily by a barrage of issues in our country that defy reason and imagination. Our nation has been demeaned, degraded, norms have been violated, tensions have been mounting to beyond boiling over; and there seems to be no end to the constant horror of some sort of macabre circus by this administration. And, this is just within our borders. Not to mention how the United States of America is being viewed and being dealt with by the rest of the world. There is a point to this. And, I will get there. You might just go and grab a cool drink and sit back and let me "let 'er rip"!

As lovers of the natural realm, we are outraged by the assaults that this administration is putting on our environment: the plans to take away our national monuments by allowing uranium mining, drilling for oil, resurrecting mining of coal (an industry which has long been declared dead). These plans will destroy sacred areas and artifacts of Native Americans. There are plans to allow hunting in our national wildlife refuges - planning to kill what were once protected animals. There are plans to allow mining in our national parks: the Grand Canyon is up for auction with that proposal.

Scott Pruitt, the wanton, scandal infested grifter and EPA administrator is threatening our air and water. He has wasted hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps millions on many of his petty,

greedy desires. Money that could go toward making the environment better. Money which should be invested in science and research to save us from the possibility of a real natural "doomsday". He's not a believer in climate science. Most all of the scientists who were committed to the cause of our environment for life, on staff, have been let go, or demoted, or quit in disgust. Corporate lobbyists are the new "scientists" whose only desire is big money to be had by fossil fuels and the like. The hurricane season has just started. The new tally on deaths from last season's devastating storm that destroyed Puerto Rico, instead of being 64, ended up being 4,600 plus. And, the island still has not fully recovered.

There are so many species in the natural realm which are near extinction and are on life support, in every life form; whether plant, animal, bird or insect. There are times when I frankly get distraught about all of this. I sign petitions. I call my representative - I am truly lucky that Ted Lieu is my congressional representative. We are in a sense truly blessed to be living in a state that cares. California has been upgraded to the fifth largest economy in the world. It was eighth. Things had and have to be done here. Steps had to be taken to clean up the air pollution problem. And, the air is better than say thirty years ago - thanks to stringent rules about emissions, and gas mileage. My huge personal problem here is that the water is horrible. But, the

reason for that is because this is a desert. And, the mineral deposits are in the drinking water. This really makes me miss New York, which may make you give a disgruntled sigh. But, New York has some of the best drinking water in this entire country. (And, I have toured this country.) I digress, a bit.

As the polar ice caps melt at a rapid rate, I think I've mentioned before in a previous article, the top predator in the Arctic has become Orcas. Polar Bears are now on the edge of losing themselves as a species. They can't go from ice floe to ice floe to hunt for seals; because the distance becomes too far, and these sturdy swimmers get exhausted and they drown. In northern territories around the globe, they are also hybridizing with Grizzlies or Brown Bears. This is the thing of horror movies. Only, it's real.

Another person of villainy in this administration is the Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke. As far as he's concerned, all of our public lands, national monuments, national refuges, and the like are "ripe for the picking". They are all up for leasing to the highest bidder. Even the most sacred of all American refuges, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, or ANWR, this monster wants to put up for oil leases. Through most of my adult life, this refuge has been fought over in Washington. When the Exxon Valdez oil spill scandal happened in the late eighties, I thought just maybe, maybe that bit of craziness would be put to rest. But, then, even during the

Obama administration, oil companies were trying to drill in islands off the north slope. Fortunately, the seas are too rough and the drilling mechanisms couldn't withstand the fury of nature. But, Zinke wants to broaden hunting of bears and wolves. This is a place where millions upon millions of birds breed, because of the abundance of food, at the outbreak of the summer solstice. Actually, the "state bird" at this time of year, in Alaska, is the mosquito, which is food for almost all of the bird hatches. This is also the place for the Porcupine Caribou to calve during the short but wonderful summer.

This administration and its minions have promised and are enacting the most severe roll back of laws, standards, protections, initiatives, and conservation efforts to preserve the incredible treasures, diverse life forms, and sensitive management of our natural realm that began in earnest over one hundred years ago - by a Republican, Ulysses S. Grant, in 1872, Yellowstone National Park. Some bird species gained protections, such as egrets and herons, because they were ruthlessly slaughtered when they produced their gorgeous breeding feathers, to be a vanity symbol on women's hats. Moving forward, pesticides were banned in the 1970's because of the inability of our birds of prey to produce a viable egg: most notably the Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and Ospreys for example. And, the following Endangered Species Act which not only protected birds of prey, but also, other apex mammals like Grizzly Bears, and Wolves, along with other life forms like plants, reptiles and amphibians. This was signed into law by Richard M. Nixon.

This means that there was a time, in this country, when conservative Republicans believed that natural treasures, landscape and wildlife needed to be protected. And, with those protections these various life forms have bounced back. But, human

beings are greedy, to an astonishing degree. Even though "Coal" is dead, fossil fuels are no longer the best way to go when it concerns issues like Climate Science, uranium mining and the mining of other minerals is a completely absurd, insane endeavor. Big corporations want to continue their rape, ravaging and pillaging of our natural resources and our natural beauty.

This is where I ask the "Dear Reader" to please indulge me as I take you on a little trip. You see, these laws, regulations and protections come out of years of negotiating and deep concern, so that we don't lose our unique, national treasures of the environment, biodiversity, and natural ecological flow. Rolling back these regulations will have negative consequences on American society as a whole. Our human diversity, different ethnic groups, religious groups, people with occupations that use the land for food, farming, ranching, folks who use it for recreation, as in camping and hiking and hunting, people who use the land in a way that does not conflict with natural order, with this administration, may see those things taken from them, by big corporations, who want to drill and do mining or make suburban sprawl in a way that cuts off the beauty and natural ecology of this magnificent country.

However, there are a great number of people in this country who will never have the opportunity to see any of America's splendors. Of course, there are some in this country who may not even care; and so these magical places will begin to disappear, without some people even taking notice. One of the insidious issues which play into this is the devaluing and degrading of what used to be our great educational system. I will admit that American education has always had its flaws; but, there was a time in America, when public education, particularly in certain areas of the country was first rate. The areas of the country where this would thrive would be areas

which were forward thinking. And, those areas had as its guide, something that the forefathers of this country wrote in the beginnings of this country: that "all men are created equal". It was a long and painful process to attain that; but, in certain areas of this country that became possible, especially in the middle to latter part of the last century.

There is an "onion" that has been thrown into all of this. And, that ingredient, in our society, causes a snag, a stalemate. The truth of the matter is that the "onion" was thrown into American society at the very beginning. This started when this was a British colony. It has long been known that America has an "original sin". Actually, this sin is in two parts. The first being the slow and persistently deceptive ways this land was stolen from the true Native Americans who were here. The second, which was just as heinous: the kidnapping of Africans and bringing them here and enslaving them to be a work force, on southern plantations, and were brutally, barbarically treated.

What makes this really ugly is that many of the British who came here to set up a colony were fleeing things like religious persecution, while others were looking for a better life. That's the underlying theme of this country "a way to a better life". But, that better life was not meant for people of different hues. As with all societies across the globe, a class system forms. This always has been the "natural" order of things: rich and powerful at the top, and descending from there to the least of these, the working poor. And, it has been America's natural resources that caused this country to thrive. Even taking natural plants like the tobacco plant from Native Americans and eventually turning it into one of the largest destructive industries this country and the world has ever seen. Native Americans didn't use tobacco the way the Europeans use it. It was for special times like ceremonies and special talks

among tribesmen. Instead, tobacco was extracted and polluted, and as that industry grew, was even injected with poisons to get people addicted. And, as learned in the middle of the last century causes harmful diseases and death.

As a nation, the learning curve, when it comes to using our natural resources, is rather steep. This brings us back to education. There have always been lessons to learn, not only here but around the globe. And, it takes us humans an incredibly long time to learn them. The learning process is also hindered by man's natural tendencies toward greed and corruption. There are great lessons from our various beliefs that try to steer us clear of these things; but, we just can't help ourselves. Of all of the ideas and practices that were stolen from Native Americans, we never learned how to use the land, so that it will always give bounty. This also comes from Judeo-Christian Biblical practices as well: when to sow, when to reap, how to be good stewards of the land. Deep in man's soul when wealth and power is the driver, there is no barometer to know and understand when there is enough. There is this powerful passion for excess.

So, what have we done? We've driven a number of species in all life forms into extinction - in each of those cases, they are not coming back. Big corporate industries have polluted our waterways, and our air. The parts of the country that produced coal, that land is not re-usable. Mountains have been flattened because of that industry. Mountains have been flattened because of mining. Uranium mining will leave the land completely sterile, unproductive, useless, and certainly not cleaner. The Grand Canyon.....Really? I return to education. One of the issues which separate Americans from most of the rest of the world is that Americans don't know their own history. Some of this is because most history books leave out the contribu-

tions of so many of the diverse cultures that make up this nation. And, another is that it just isn't taught. It is at once interesting and depressing to hear this particular president screw up historical things that have happened in this country. And, for someone who claims to be so wealthy, and claims to have gone to some of the best schools in the nation, he actually knows next to nothing.

That leads us down a really dangerous path. A nation's history is one of the things you build upon, along with the natural resources and the wealth of diversity in its peoples and other life forms. And, here we are with a leader who was afforded the absolute best in education and absorbed embarrassingly little. This means that he is surrounded by people, with the exception of a small few, who also know nothing. Science deniers are ignoring, what for so many of us can see as if it is in glaring neon lights, the rapid warming of this planet. It's alarming! The only redeeming factor about the Paris Agreement is that we are in it until after the next presidential election. Someone was thinking smartly about that. In other areas of this administration, with the possible exception of the heads of the Pentagon, people haven't been chosen for their expertise in their departments. The most glaring, I will mention again are the Environmental Protection administrator, the Secretary of the Interior, and to them I will add the Secretary of Education.

These departments are vital to our lives. The heads of these departments are in place, and each of them is even more responsible for the deterioration of the fabric of this nation. Let's start with education: how can one reason with a person, if a person is not open to important information and willing to learn about those missing parts of information that cause growth and the building of knowledge. Protecting the environment: shouldn't clean air to breathe and clean water to drink be a

top priority? How can runoff from industry and chemical runoff from farms lead us to clean water? Flint, Michigan is in its fourth year of foul water. That is criminal. The interior, public lands, national monuments, national parks, and wildlife refuges: it has been a real struggle to make clear to the powers that be that misuse of our nation's bounty means those future generations will not be able to use them; will not be able to enjoy them, will not be able to see them. And for what? Money? Nothing is sacred. It's depressing to think that the lesson might be learned when it's finally gone. This makes the Joni Mitchell song: Big Yellow Taxi, which rang in our ears in 1970, even more prescient. "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got till it's gone? They paved PARADISE and put up a parking lot. (My emphasis.)

This persists today. Native Americans were restricted to "reservations", and African-Americans after being set free from slavery had "Jim Crow" laws to contend with. There has been progress even to the point where this country had its first African-American president. And, the racial tensions which never went away mounted to gargantuan proportions because of that. The "white" side of the fence "wanted their country back"; and they seem to have gotten what they wanted in this president. The racial tensions have been boiling over. And, the Native Americans, who have so much of their culture in our designated National Monuments: sacred grounds, ancient dwelling places, have had their legacy snatched away. First by reducing, for example, Bears Ears, a gigantic tract of land, full of Native American history, to two small tracks; that, if you looked at a map would be the size of postage stamps.

Meanwhile, we have made enormous technical strides. Our lives are guided by cyber forces, which have made our society so much less civil. Cyber bul-

lying has caused the suicide rate to rise in young children, and violence perpetrated on citizens to completely explode off the charts. Very little is done "face to face" anymore. And, the cyber bullying has been given legitimacy by the chief executive of this country. He has demeaned and degraded civility. Perpetrators can hide behind a keyboard, an I-phone, an "Instagram". So much, not all good, happens "online": shopping, mailing, communicating, threats, bullying, cruelty. It has turned things benign or egregious into things which can be done with complete anonymity.

The week of May 25 to June 1, 2018 was a particularly insane and sickening week, in that regard. One comedienne, Roseanne Barr insults an African-American woman of national stature, Valerie Jarrett, and equates her to an ape, in a tweet. This vile comparison dates all the way back to the 17th century. Even the esteemed British publication, The Encyclopedia Britannica, had an article first printed in the 1700's about the "Negro". And, I can tell you honestly, because I have a copy, it describes the African the way a scientist would describe an animal. That assessment didn't leave that encyclopedia until sometime in the middle of the 20th century. Sane people were wondering: "where did that tweet come from?" ABC-TV acted immediately and fired Ms. Barr. They cancelled her show which was the number one show at the time on television; a real money maker. Cast and crew have lost their jobs - which ABC has promised they will find a place for each and every one of them. And, it confirms what some people already knew that Ms. Barr is a racist!

While this atrocity was going on, something cruel and atrocious is happening on our southern border. The administration announced curtesy of its Justice Department and by the Attorney General, that they will be extracting children from all immi-

grant parents who "cross our borders illegally." There are desperate people fleeing their countries of origin to come to the hope that is in the idea of the United States of America. And, the dear old USA has entered an era of darkness. This is something that ICE has been already doing; but, before the policy change in the Trump administration, families were not separated. Now, families from several "Central American" countries, fleeing violence, rape and murder, are having their children removed from their custody; one infant, while she was breast-feeding - because they come from "s__hole countries" and they are not desired here - as per this administration. This new policy has justifiably caused outrage and the administration has been pressured from both sides of the political aisle as well as from this entire nation. But, the hard truth is ICE, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Justice Department has not kept track of these "kidnapped" children. It will be a huge miracle if these children will be reunited with their birth parents, who were coming here asking for asylum.

As this was going on, the "first daughter", Ivanka Trump Kushner posted a rather sentimental picture of her nuzzling her toddler son. The insensitivity of this post caused another comedienne, Samantha Bee, to call Ms. Trump Kushner a vulgar name. I will not print the word here; however, I will say this: the British invented our language. And, they invented that word. The difference is that in the UK, that word is used constantly to call someone an idiot, a jerk, an a__hole, or just plain stupid. And, it has very little to do with female genitalia; because it can also be applied to men. And, Ms. Bee was born in Canada. That Ms. Trump Kushner was not aware of what her father's policy was and is, is simply preposterous. She's a senior advisor to the president. But, she doesn't deal well with criticism. At those points, she claims that she is the presi-

dent's daughter and how dare she be confronted with such criticism. What she doesn't realize is that she can't be both. If she is a senior advisor, then she can't pick and choose what she can or cannot be criticized for. If she's the first daughter, then she needs to pack up and go back to New York and keep her insensitivities to herself.

Such is the manner in which humans use sarcasm, snark, and other methods to mock humans - to varying degrees of failure or success.

Ms. Bee was not fired from TBS, and her show "Full Frontal" was not cancelled. In fact, that remark was not made on live TV. The show was taped. So, TBS and Ms. Bee were well aware of what they were doing. The comment wasn't "bleeped". It was intentional by Ms. Bee and her TV network. And, in Emily Jane Fox's new book, "Born Trump", in which she profiles each of the Trump children equally, a special mention is made about Ivanka; about her huge need for "daddy's" approval. And, this is why the platform which she announced she would be champion for, namely issues about women and children, about which she has never spoken, because "daddy" greatly disapproves.

I mention these events in an environmental magazine because they are examples of how in every area of our American civilization, we are frayed, frazzled, being pulled apart. We have lost the ability to be civil. And, that destruction begins at the top. We have a president who is incredibly destructive. He has set the tone. He has lowered the "bar". And, at this point, that bar is subterranean. We are allowing ourselves to be bullied. He is a bully - not to mention narcissist, greedy, illiterate, insecure, a coward. And, we are finding so many aspects of American life swiftly being corroded and eroded. Consequently, lack of civility, lack of education, anti-science, anti-literacy, anti-in-

formation has led to the purging of things which are beneficial and what we hold dear - as in learning, informing ourselves of other cultures, acceptance of other cultures, acceptance of all peoples, and acceptance of the fact that we humans have a responsibility to keep our environment as clean as possible. We should be putting so much investment into "green power", as well as those things which sustain and promote life.

This president's lust for power, his craving for authoritarian figures, his need to be the voice and the person to make all of the rules is going to have horrible ramifications. There was an incident that took place in an impromptu press conference on the White House lawn, which after all of this, brings me to my point during the week between May 25 and June 1, 2018. He was carrying on about the upcoming summit with Kim Jong-Un of North Korea. And, he had received an oversized envelope sent by an envoy, another one of Kim's strong men. And, Trump was literally going on and on about the envelope: calling it interesting, and "wouldn't you like to know what's in it?", he asked the press corps. Then he later admitted that he hadn't read the material. Ugh! (As an aside: I am not going to pull any punches. I will be bold and brazen. The birdwatchers and environmentalists, who voted for this man, are also responsible for the mess we are in. Hillary may have been horrible, and she was; but she wouldn't have led us to these crises.)

While this was going on, a bird was singing. Since I generally tune Trump out, I was just hearing the bird. And, it took me less than two seconds to figure out what the bird was. And, I laughed until my stomach hurt. In the background, unseen, was the melodious and endless serenade of a Mockingbird. I am a great lover of irony, and I thought: "How perfect!" What a perfect, natural, living metaphor for all of the stupidity, silliness, ineptitude

and incompetence that was spewing out of the "leader of the free world's" mouth. That was the perfect comment, especially for this nature lover. Comments from part of our lives this man wants to stamp out. I could not stop laughing. For me, there was such power in the "Mocker's" song. It seemed to say, at least to me: "Try as hard as you might; you will not have the power to snuff us all out!" Those

melodious songs gave me hope. My day brightened. The natural realm is powerful. It is certainly more powerful than fools. Let us guard it, because as well as religious beliefs, as in the sanctity of life, our natural realm is also sacred. So, sing on, Mockingbird, sing on. I rejoice with you, in your power, and with your song. 🐦



Northern Mockingbird | Photo by Jon Fisher

Field Trip Listings

Please visit www.laaudubon.org for updates to Los Angeles Audubon's field trip listings.

For more information: (323) 876-0202 or membership@laaudubon.org



Nick & Mary Freeman
Field Trip Chairperson
& Trip Leaders

Los Angeles Audubon's field trips often require driving to more distant destinations and more time spent in the field than do LAAS's local bird walks. No pets. No children under 12, without permission from leader please. *We do not sell, trade, or re-use contact information; cell and email simply improve our chances of contacting you at home and in the field.*

When you sign-up please provide complete contact information as stated in the write-up. Name, Address, City/Zip Code, Email address, Day-of-Event/Cell number, and an *optional/alternate* phone number— I.C.E., In Case of Emergency (home, work or friend.)

We confirm reservations and provide supplemental trip information by email reply. If you do not have convenient email, you may mail the reservation request (and fee if applicable); include a SASE; we will mail your confirmation.

CARPOOLING

For ride sharing purposes, your contact information will be shared with the other confirmed participants unless you specify otherwise at sign-up.

FEE REQUIRED RESERVATIONS

Make checks fees payable to Los Angeles Audubon (separate checks per trip)

Mail to:

Los Angeles Audubon

PO Box 411301

Los Angeles CA 90041-8301

MORE INFORMATION

Email: membership@laaudubon.org | (323) 876-0202

Wednesday thru Sunday, July 5-8 Owls & other Birds of the Southern Sierra \$140 FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP (Fully booked as of June 25)

Leaders *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Scheduled so you can light a few fireworks with the family! We will be renting a new summer home this year, which should be a bit nicer. Flammulated and Spotted Owls have been seen in multiples every year. Saw-whet (adult & juv.) and Pygmy Owl are less reliable, but we will look hard! During days, we will search out Pileated Woodpecker, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and perhaps Goshawk, Dipper or Evening Grosbeak! Meeting time and location in Ponderosa will be in upcoming newsletters. All beds are queens, so couples will be prioritized, and singles in sleeping bags will be wait-listed until reservations open up on June 15. Coordinate your contribution for the Thursday potluck with Mary. LAAS will provide a weenie roast one other night, and we always have plenty of left overs for a third dinner!

For more information call (323) 876-0202, leave voice message if no answer.



Saturday, July 21 Big Bear Area NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP FOR DAY BIRDING AND / OR NIGHT OWLING

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Get a hotel room for July 20 (or wake up really early), and a room for July 21 if you plan to dine and owl with the Freemans. Target birds include Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Calliope and Rufous Hummers, mountain finches, White-headed Woodpecker, and Mountain Quail. 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. Bring lunch for a full day, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass. SIGN-UP: Email sign-up mandatory. Send email to: membership@laaudubon.org. Provide •name(s) •email addresses, & •cell phone #s and wait for email confirmation.

Sunday, July 29 Lower LA River Shorebird Migration NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Larry Allen*. Shorebirds frequently stage in droves on this stretch of the river, with some exciting finds here in the past. 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 8:00 a.m., and bird until noon.

Field Trip Listings, Cont'd

Please visit www.laaudubon.org for updates to Los Angeles Audubon's field trip listings.

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Saturday, August 4

San Gabriel Mountains / Mt. Wilson Observatory TOUR FEE: \$15/head (\$12 over 62) payable at Mt. Wilson, SIGN-UP MAX: 16

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. We will bird the morning away up in the conifers, buy lunch at Newcomb's Ranch (the Biker Bar) and end up at Mount Wilson Observatory after noon, to take the 1 p.m. guided 2-hour tour around the grounds and facility, including the 100-inch telescope. The one-mile walking tour is unsuitable for individuals with respiratory and heart problems or with limited mobility. It will be hot, but not as hot as L.A! Please visit the observatory website at www.mtwilson.edu for more exciting and cautionary details before the trip. Forest Service Adventure Pass is required (\$5/day or \$30/yr). Meet at 7:00 a.m. along 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. Plan to stay out until 3 or 4 p.m.

Sunday, August 19

Salton Sea

\$15 FEE, SIGN-UP 8 CARS LIMIT

Leaders: *Nick and Mary Freeman*. Anticipate 95-105°F, and bring plenty of water. We will see Yellow-footed (only place in the U.S.) and Laughing gulls, Black Tern, Abert's Towhee, and Gila Woodpecker. We may also see Wood Stork, Lesser Nighthawk, and Stilt Sandpiper. Lots of driving, so come with a friend, as singles will be bumped if we fill up the trip. Reserve by e-mail; and mail \$15, cell# and address. Brawley Inn (760) 344-1199 offers a better continental breakfast, \$80, and there is a decent restaurant next door. America's Best Value Inn in Westmorland (760) 351-

7100 is \$70. Ask for AAA discount. Continental breakfast. Meet at Cattle Call Park at 5:30 a.m., and bird until about 3 p.m. Bring lunch, FRS radios, scope, sunblock, minimum 1 gallon of water each, and a big hat. Other lodging suggestions and information in e-mailer.

Saturday, August 25

Piute Ponds, Edwards AFB

NO FEE, 20 MAX SIGN UP, PERSONAL EAFB PASS REQUIRED!

Leader: **Jim Moore**. A good mix of shorebirds, with a chance at LeConte's Thrasher, and Pectoral and Baird's sandpipers. Some of the finest desert birding in LA County! Some amazing birds have been seen here over the years, including a pair of Hudsonian Godwits, and a Little Stint just four years ago! 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. Lunch and finish at Apollo Park. Bring lunch, sunblock and lots of water. Likely hot weather, and possible afternoon wind. High clearance vehicles may be a plus. E-mail LAAS to sign up. ***Talk with base biologist Misty Hailstone by phone at (661) 275-2435 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. before Aug 15 to arrange a required annual pass ***. Tell her your personal information (legal name, driver's license number and state issued, social security number, date of birth, email address, and phone number). Please do not e-mail or leave a message. Access for foreign nationals is trickier but still possible. Cameras O.K

After you obtain the personal EAFB pass, send an email to membership@laaudubon.org to be added to the sign-up list, (20 Max sign-up)

Sunday, September 16

Bolsa Chica Wetlands and Harriet Weider Park NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. At Bolsa Chica, flocks of shorebirds should be heading south, mixing with post-breeding terns and Skimmers, and a chance for American Bittern and Ridgeway's Rail. We will caravan to Harriet Weider park next, for passerines, flycatchers and such. For those wishing to picnic lunch, we will do so afterwards at the tables near the library about 1.5 miles north on PCH and one block toward the ocean. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Bolsa Chica parking lot on the north side of PCH, a block southeast of Warner Avenue. Bring a scope if you have one!



Giant Sequoia | Photo by Mary Freeman

Saturday, September 22
Mojave Area
SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE, 10 MAX

Leaders: *Nick and Mary Freeman*. Kern County has some of the best migrant traps in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! Dine out (then herp?) with leaders Saturday evening if you wish (Gloria's, 7027 CA City Blvd, 93505). Contact leaders if you plan to dine (mnfreeman@earthlink.net). Sunday, bird California City environs, and hit Apollo Park on our way south if we have time. To meet, 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 huge, fenced driving range. Meet here at 7:30 a.m. To reserve, either call (323-876-0202, leave voice message if no answer) or e-mail Audubon (membership@laaudubon.org) with •name(s), •cell number, and •e-mail address (for confirmation). Reserve a room at Motel 6 or other in Mojave, or the Best Western in CA City (across the street from the meeting spot). Bring lunches, FRS radios, sunblock, bird and reptile books.

September 26 – 30
Western Field Ornithologists Conference
Right here in Ventura! Check www.westernfieldornithologists.org for details. Whether beginner or field biologist, this event and the many field trips / workshops / lectures / quiz sessions are not to be missed!

Saturday, October 6
Coastal Santa Monica Hot Spots
NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leaders: Local docents and LAAS members, *Read Howarth & Ella Pennington*. Late passerines and shorebirds should be moving through coastal migration spots, mixed with early wintering birds. Possibly 80 species. Meeting site TBA in next newsletter. Meet at 8 a.m. for a full day of birding. There may be an access fee at Sycamore Canyon or elsewhere. Bring lunch, FRS radios, and a scope if you've got one.

Saturday, October 13
San Diego
REQUIRED SIGN-UP, NO LIMIT, NO FEE

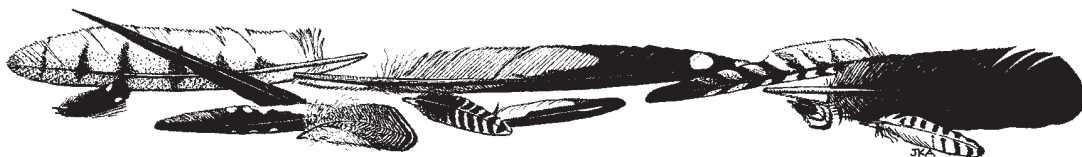
Leaders: *Mark & Camille Stratton, and Mary & Nick Freeman*. We will be sizing up migrating shorebirds and passerines, and chasing after myriad rarity reports that typically burn up the San Diego listservs this time of year. A good portion of the morning may be spent at Pt. Loma, depending on access. Other possible areas include Sunset Cliffs, Mission Bay, lower San Diego Bay and Tijuana River marshland. Bring lunch for a full day of birding. Take the 5 Fwy S about three miles past Route 52 to the Clairemont Drive off-ramp and head W into the small lot adjacent to the Mission Bay Information Center. Meet E of the kiosk at 8:00 AM. (On GPS, punch in: 2688 E. Mission Bay Dr. 92109).

Sunday, October 21
Oxnard Plain
NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leaders: Nick and Mary Freeman. Meet at the Hueneme ag fields at 8:00 a.m. to look for Red-throated Pipit, Golden-Plovers and longspurs. Later, we'll try to shake some late-migrating passerines—as well as a few eastern vagrants—out of nearby windbreaks. The tamarisks and eucalyptus rows on the Plain often concentrate migrants in the fall. From the 101 N, drive S on Rice Avenue, following the Rice Avenue prompts to the end, then turn Rt. on Hueneme Rd. Meet on the N (Rt) side of Hueneme Rd. a couple of blocks west of this turn, just after the first building and just before Casper Rd. On GPS, punch in: 276 Hueneme Rd. 93033.

Saturday, November 4
Newport Back Bay
NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet on the wooden boardwalk along the west side of the bay down from the end of University Drive at 8:00 a.m. for the 6.5' high tide, and a full day of birding in the area. High tide at the mouth is about 9:00 a.m., and may not peak in the back bay until after 10:00 a.m., so we will be in position when birds flush to higher ground. Ridgway's Rail, Sora, American Bittern, Peregrine Falcon, Blue-winged Teal and California Gnatcatcher are expected. Short-eared Owl (rare) will also be a target. We may finish up at San Joaquin Marsh, upstream. Take the 405 Fwy S to the 73 Toll Road (free this far) to the Campus Dr. exit. Turn right on Irvine Ave., then turn left on University Drive. Park beyond the Preserve HQ (2301 University Dr., Newport Beach 92660), and walk down the trail to where the boardwalk starts to curve. Compete directions next issue. Bring lunch. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.



Bird Walk Listings

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON'S bird walks are for those interested in reducing their carbon footprint by birding relatively close to home. Perfect for the birder looking for an introduction to local birds and habitat.

All are welcome, but no pets or small children please. These walks are 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. Read our FIELD TRIPS LISTINGS section for birding destinations a bit further afield.

CARPOOLING IS ENCOURAGED!

To provide your information to join the LAAS CARPOOL DATABASE membership@laaudubon.org or call (323) 876-0202 leave a message. 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
July 1 & August 5
8:00 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. 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

Open Wetlands at Ballona Salt Marsh

1st Saturday of the month (except August)
July 7, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Leader: *Cindy Hardin*

Take a break and enjoy some cool ocean breezes at our monthly Open Wetlands. We will be at Ballona from 9 am to noon the first Saturday of every month, and hope to see you there. This is a drop in event, so please come down anytime that morning.

Open Wetlands is at the Ballona Ecological Reserve, located in Playa del Rey. The entrance to the reserve is in the parking lot behind AlkaWater/Gordon's Market, in the 300 block of Culver, 90293. Enter through the gate in the northeast corner of the lot. For more information please contact Cindy Hardin at cindyhardin@laaudubon.org or (310) 301-0050.

Upper Franklin Canyon / Sooky Goldman Nature Center (2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills 90210)

2nd Sunday of the month
July 8 & August 12
Time: 8:30-12:00

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood*.

Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We will look for ducks, herons and grebes on the local pond and lake. Also we will also see resident chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Common Raven, Red-shouldered Hawk, Spotted and California Towhees, Song Sparrows and California Thrasher; Nesting season is coming to an end in the low lands; we will look for adults feeding nestlings and fledglings.

Meet in the main parking lot for the Sooky Goldman Nature Center
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. Binoculars provided.

Ballona Wetlands Bird Walk
3rd Sunday of the month (No walk in December)
July 15 & August 19
Time: 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: *Bob Shanman and Friends*.

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

Directions: Take the Marina Fwy (90) to Culver Blvd exit; turn left; continue on Culver Blvd until you reach a dead-end (about a 1.5 miles. Turn right on Pacific Ave. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot. Three hour walk. 'scopes helpful.

Contact: Bob (310) 326-2473; wbutorrance@gmail.com

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