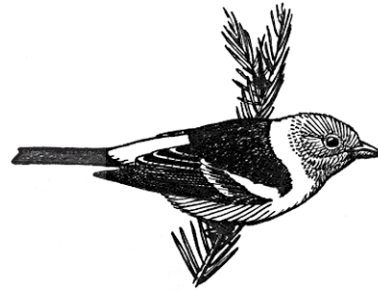


WESTERN TANAGER



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Interpreting Nature

By Stacey Vigallon, Director of Interpretation, and the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Interns

On June 10, 2012 students participating in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Internship Program presented their research to the public at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. Intern projects addressed real-world wildlife and habitat restoration issues, and the information obtained through their hard work will be used for the in-progress restoration of the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. We are extremely proud of the work they did during the 2011-2012 school year, and we're looking forward to working with a new group of Interns and Restoration Leaders during the 2012-2013 school year. We are pleased to present the 2011-2012 project abstracts...

Jessica Sosa

Can native plants from California help food plants grow?

For the third year of my companion planting project at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park (BHSO) I used California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) with chard. In 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years I used native perennials in a companion planting experiment, and this year's experiment focused on an annual native. There were a total of three treatments and a control group. Treatments had both California poppies and chard planted together in 15-gallon pots, but they varied in planting dates; control was chard only. Results indicated that chard in control had the highest survival and growth rate, while chard in the treatments had very low growth rate over the course of the experiment.



In addition, a similar project was set up at Leo Politi Elementary where students in the GATE program monitored and collected data from 6ft x 4ft beds where both poppies and chard were planted together. I conclude that California poppies and chard are not good companions in a small confined space. Gardeners that practice companion planting between natives and food plants may help provide wildlife corridors and provide highly nutritious food.

An intern project about companion planting between native and food plants was expanded to include an experimental plot at Politi Elementary School in addition to the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook.

Monica Anderson
What is the Relationship Between Bird Abundance and Human Abundance at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook?

Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park (BHSO) is largely fragmented coastal sage scrub habitat, inhabited by approximately 166 bird species (Molina 2001), and surrounded by urban areas, like Culver City, and Outer Los Angeles. During my surveys at BHSO, I viewed 24 different bird species. From November 2011 to April 2012, I surveyed for bird and human abundance at BHSO, twice weekly between 1:30 and 5:30pm. I targeted five way-points with a GPS for my surveys, spending 4-30 minutes surveying birds with binoculars and a field guide while also counting pedestrians, bikes, and cars that passed through my survey points. I hypothesized that bird abundance would vary with human abundance and vegetation type at BHSO, and my data supported my hypothesis. Within BHSO, bird abundance and species diversity appeared to be higher at the two sites with less human abundance and more established native vegetation. Whereas other sites, like along the trail, seemed to be more abundant with more pedestrians instead of birds. When surveying wildlife, future researchers should also consider more natural factors like the weather.

EJ Siufanua
The effects of roads and trails on wildlife mortality at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park

Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park is surrounded by a highly urbanized area, Inglewood, Culver City, and Los Angeles, California. The roads and the demand for building new trails may negatively affect wildlife at the park. November 2011 to April 2012, I surveyed roads and trails of the park for presence of roadkill from 3:30-5:00 two days a week. I surveyed a portion of the main road and two different trails. I also counted pedestrians, cars, and bikes that were also using the same road and trails. I surveyed a trail next to the Greenhouse and one by the park's Visitor's Center. Contrary to my hypothesis, there was slightly more roadkill on the trails than on the main road. The roadkill mainly consisted of invertebrates



Essential tools - a field notebook and a pair of binoculars were vital components to Monica Anderson's project about birds.

rather than vertebrates such as snails, bees, a grasshopper, pill bugs, a ladybug, and beetles. There were always a high number of dead snails on the main road and both trails. Next year I will be tracking the effects of weather on roadkill by checking weather summaries online.



A Greenhouse Intern, EJ Siufanua, records observations about roadkill in his field notebook.

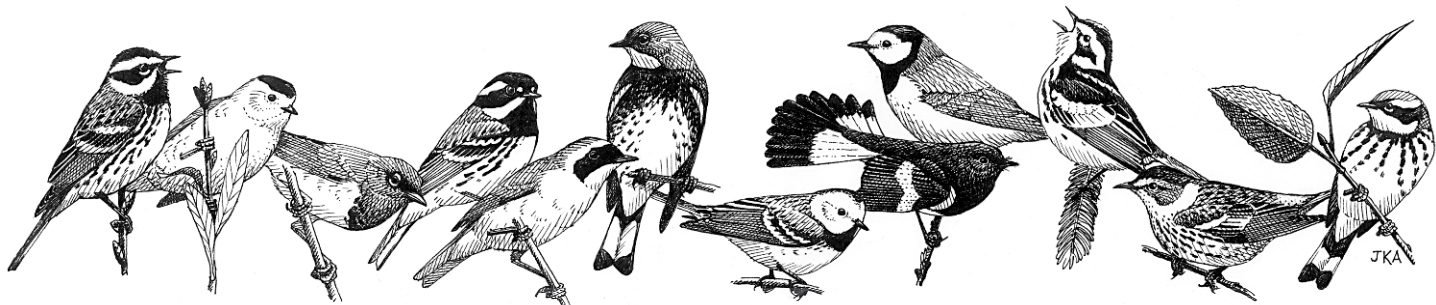


Images of mammals found at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook taken with a motion-sensitive infrared camera.

Chelsi Carr

Can cameras capture mammal activity at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook?

From November 2011 to April 2012 I studied mammals in coastal sage scrub habitat at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park (BHSO). January 10th 2012, I set up my first camera on an oak tree behind the greenhouse to test if there was mammal activity that could be captured on video. Toward the end of four months of camera set ups and trail surveys, throughout various sites in the park, my experiment showed that mammal presence can be caught on camera. Cameras caught the best footage on video during the night, and seldom captured mammals during the day. Presence of mammals is easily determined by visual evidence, such as scat, burrows, and tracks (Alden and Heath 2007) and I found clear evidence of their existence within BHSO. For future interns, I recommend setting up cameras at sites that have the most scat, tracks, and mammal-made trails with the very least human presence in the area. 🐾



BIRDS OF THE SEASON

— JON FISHER

The big news of spring migration was made by early May with two new species- a Field Sparrow and Common Redpoll- having been added to the Los Angeles County list in as many weeks. Not bad at all, but late spring and vagrant season- at least as far as what we normally expect- was underwhelming.

Eastern warblers were very scarce, with just a few recorded by mid May and almost none reported later in the month when they are even more likely. Other vagrant passerines were largely absent as well, but in spite of that there were a few good birds around.

Once most of migration was over, attention in June and July turned to the mountains where there was still ample bird activity and always the potential for something unusual. Indeed the mountains produced some interesting records during the period, including two Mexican Whip-poor-wills and breeding Long-eared Owls.

Though July might seem a rather slow time positioned between spring and fall migration, a number of birds were already on the move. As early as mid June a few Wilson's Phalaropes were passing through and these were followed in July by increasing numbers of Willets, Whimbrels, peeps and Long-billed

Dowitchers. The mountains were hosting southbound *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, while Belted Kingfishers, a few Common Terns and others signaled that "fall" migration for some is well underway by early summer.

At the other end of the spectrum, a few waterfowl lingered after most had long since headed north. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Harbor Park in Wilmington on May 30 (Martin Byhower) and an oiled **Brant** was found at Malibu Lagoon on June 4 (Roy van de Hoek).

A pair of **Blue-winged Teal** were along the LA River in the Sepulveda Basin on June 2 (Scott Logan), indicating some potential for local breeding. Single **North-ern Pintails** were along the LA River in Atwater Village on June 3 (Richard Barth) and along the lower LA River in Long Beach from June 16-July 17 (Jon Fisher).

Diving ducks included a **Bufflehead** on the LA River in Long Beach on June 15 (Jon Fisher) and a **White-winged Scoter** at Malibu Lagoon on June 18 (Irwin Woldman).

Provoking interest was a **Wild Turkey** found in San Gabriel Canyon near Morris Reservoir on July 1 (Ron & Susie Cyger). A small introduced population was

once in this area, with evidence of these birds being noted along the San Gabriel River's West Fork some thirty years ago. Yet as inaccessible and scarcely birded as much of this area is, it's conceivable that a few still persist here.

With very few records for the county, a **Manx Shearwater** well photographed off the Palos Verdes Peninsula on July 29 was a nice find (Bernardo Alps).

Scarce inland in the county was a **Brown Pelican** at Bonelli Park in San Dimas on June 25. It was joined by a second on June 27 (Rod Higbie).

Single **Cattle Egrets** were at Harbor Regional Park in Wilmington from May 27-30 (Ed Griffin) and continuing at Legg Lake in South El Monte through June 13. A few **White-faced Ibis** turned up on the coastal slope between May 23 and July 16 with the largest group a flock of twenty-three birds over South El Monte.

Generally absent after from May through July, a **Common Gallinule** continued along Ballona Creek through July 1 and another was at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through May 26 (Dinuk Magamana).

Shorebirds of interest included two **Solitary Sandpipers** at

Hansen Dam in Lakeview Terrace on July 22 which were the first reported this fall (Kimball Garrett). The first **Baird's Sandpiper** was in Lancaster on July 26 along with a **Ruddy Turnstone** (Jim Moore) and a **Sanderling** was at the ponds on July 28 (Kimball Garrett).

Summering **Glaucous-winged Gulls** were reported from Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo on June 11 (Moro Rogers) and along the LA River near DeForest Park in Long Beach through July 18 (Richard Barth).

Single **Common Terns** were found on the lower LA River in Long Beach on June 27 (Richard Barth), at the LA River mouth on July 14 (Jon Fisher) and on the river near the 405 Freeway on July 26 (David Bell). Regular on the deserts in spring but scarce on the coastal slope was a **Black Tern** at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas on May 23 (Rod Higbie).

River channels offer a convenient pathway for coastal birds to move well inland. One such example was a **Black Skimmer** on the LA River about nine miles from the coast on June 20 (Richard Barth).

Small numbers of **Pigeon Guillemots** persisted along the coast in the latter half of June (Bernardo Alps, Mark & Janet Scheel) and one was at the Ballona Creek mouth on July 25 (Bob Schallman).

Always a rare find in the county was a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at Ernest E. Debs Park in Los Angeles on June 25 (John Garrett). Given the locale this bird was certainly just passing through, but a probable cuckoo heard in the

Sepulveda Basin on July 10 was in an area where potential breeding habitat exists (Dan Cooper). One can always hope.

Owls in the San Gabriel Mountains have been of interest recently, especially in the areas of change wrought by Station Fire. On June 21, A **Barn Owl** was seemingly out of place near Upper Big Tujunga Canyon Road and the Angeles Crest Highway (Lance Benner). Even more intriguing was a pair of **Long-eared Owls**, first discovered in April and then confirmed breeding on June 26 also near upper Big Tujunga Canyon Road (Lance Benner). Formerly abundant in the Los Angeles basin, this species has been reduced to a rare migrant and winter visitor, though a few are still breeding on the deserts and along the Santa Clara River drainage.

A **Burrowing Owl**, first found last December, was back in a field near the Long Beach Airport on July 9 (Becky & Steve Turley)

Returning again this spring was a **Mexican Whip-poor-will** in the San Gabriel Mountains just east of Islip Saddle. It was present at least as of June 9 and heard through June 21 (Darren Dowell). More remarkable was the appearance of another- perhaps a fluke discovery of a migrant- calling in the front range near Brown Mountain Saddle on June 11 (Lance Benner). Naturally but unfortunately, night birding attracts far fewer birders than does daylight birding. One can only wonder what increased nocturnal coverage might turn up.

Following an absence of reports this spring, three **Black Swifts** were seen over Claremont

Wilderness Park on June 14, with at least two reported there through June 25 (Tom Miko). A probable **Chimney Swift** was near Union Station in downtown Los Angeles on June 18 & 20 (Tom Miko) and on July 16 one was confirmed along the river near the 110 Freeway crossing (Kimball Garrett).

Out of place was a singing **Bell's Vireo** in the Antelope Valley near the 14 Freeway at Avenue G. on May 28 where one was also found in 2006 (Jon Feenstra). Also of note- and away from regular breeding areas- was a pair of Bell's Vireos at Harbor Regional Park in Wilmington on May 28 (Ed Griffin) and an adult and juvenile at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena from July 15-29 (David Bell). For a bird that was present as a breeder at only a couple of sites in the county only three decades ago, this species' recovery and continuing expansion has been remarkable.

A **Bank Swallow** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on May 26 was the only report during the period (Dinuk Magammana).

An **Oak Titmouse** present at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles for two years was recently joined by another and confirmed breeding on June 30 (Don Sterba). While common in our local mountains, foothills and adjacent areas, there are few records of birds away from those areas. This and a few other recent records seem to indicate a modest range expansion.

Portending a possible irruption of **White-breasted Nuthatches** into the lowlands this fall were July reports from the Prado Basin in western Riverside County and

of two birds at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas on July 23 (Rod & Pat Higbie). Predicting such movements from such limited data can be tricky however.

Notable was a **California Gnatcatcher** carrying nesting material at Whittier Narrows on May 26 (Joyce Waterman). At least one bird was present here in (since?) the summer of 2010, but no breeding behavior had been previously documented. This sedentary species is limited almost exclusively to areas of relatively undisturbed coastal sage scrub.

Santa Catalina Island produced five **Cedar Waxwings** on June 15 (Robb Hamilton). Though this species is typically very early to arrive and late to leave, most are gone by the end of May.

American Redstarts were at Pt. Fermin Park in San Pedro from June 14-16 (David Ellsworth) and near Loyola Marymount University from June 17-18 (Don Sterba).

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in the Santa Monica Mountains on June 23 was interesting as they are not known to breed there, and this date should preclude a late spring migrant (Joyce Waterman).

A **Wilson's Warbler** at Dawson Saddle in the San Gabriel Mountains on June 31 (John Rogers) was of interest as it was away from expected breeding locales, though small numbers do breed in willow thickets above 2,000 meters. Another was at Lily Spring on July 7 (John Garrett).

Though more expected on the deserts than on the coastal slope, a **Green-tailed Towhee** at Pearblossom Park in Antelope Valley on May 27 was of interest (Jon Feenstra).

Lincoln's Sparrows are very scarce breeders in the San Gabriels, thus a singing bird at Lily Spring in the San Gabriel Mountains from June 1-July 7 was both noteworthy and at a new locale (Lance Benner).

Cardinalids included a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** near the Balona Freshwater Marsh from June 3-5 (Don Sterba) and a male **Indigo Bunting** continuing at Paramount Ranch in the Santa Monica Mountains through June 23. Another Indigo was at Towsley Canyon near Santa Clarita from June 13-17 (Doug Martin) and a fall migrant was at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on July 29 (John Garrett).


A remarkable- and quite late-spring vagrant was a **Dickcissel** at Hansen Dam on June 23 (Kimball Garrett).

A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** along the LA River in Long Beach on July 13 was likely an early fall migrant (David Bell). Single **Tricolored Blackbirds** were at Alondra Park in Lawndale on July 4 (Dinuk Magamma) and in El Segundo on July 22 (Mark Conrad).

Lawrence's Goldfinches continue to flourish following the Station Fire, being hard to miss almost anywhere in the burn area. Of note were about 100 birds present at Chilao Flat on July 7 (John Garrett).

Eight **Red Crossbills** near Blue Ridge in the San Gabriel Mountains on July 7 were the only ones reported (John Garrett). This nomadic and often difficult to detect species is undoubtedly more common than records indicate.

As we head into September we'll find out if the fall is kinder than spring in offering up wayward passerines. While vagrants are hardly the only reason we bird, they certainly add a very appealing dimension to the pursuit. In fall the potential for strays from Siberia, post-breeding wanderers from Mexico and eastern songbirds veering off course make birding especially attractive in California. Almost anything is possible. Add to that the host of regular migrants that autumn brings, the cooler nights and shorter days... there's truly no better time to be out in the field.

The deserts will still be hot but can often be rewarding while the coastal areas are productive and pleasantly cooler. Good numbers of migrants will be passing through the mountains in August and September and any patch of green on the coastal slope can attract birds. Many portions of the San Gabriel River and Los Angeles River offer great variety and will host migrants from waterfowl to shorebirds to passerines. But there's really no need to enumerate all the potential locations—in fall most anywhere can be productive. 

LAAS wishes to acknowledge these participants and supporters of Spring and Summer 2012 events, memberships and generous donations of time and money.

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CORINE BARSKDALE
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The Los Angeles Audubon Native Plant and Wildlife Garden Education Program Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area

By Jacqueline Li, LAAS Education Program Staff,
and Sharese Arzu, 2012 Environmental Education Intern

A Snapshot of the Past & A Glimpse of the Future

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area is a unique place that offers both a snapshot of the past and a glimpse of what the future could hold. The park, located in the Baldwin Hills area, is comprised of approximately 380 acres and is tucked in the foothills of La Cienega Blvd. Since the hills have been used for oil drilling and production since 1924, they have remained intact amid the vast urban development surrounding them. Consequently, a large area of natural open space has been preserved and is the only one left in urban Los Angeles.

The history of Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, its creation and the way people have used it since, speaks to an ever-changing relationship between humans and the environment. When the Baldwin Hills Dam collapsed in December of 1963, a 50-foot water wall burst down Cloverdale Avenue that killed five people and ripped apart the neighborhood below. The disaster raised a red flag about urban-area earthen dams and resulted in Division of Safety of Dams grasping tighter control of reservoirs across California. The 19-acre reservoir, created by the dam to supply drinking water for West Los Angeles residents, was never rebuilt. In 1968, County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn suggested it be turned into a park. By 1983, the Recreation Area was created and the empty lakebed was partially filled in to what is now referred to as Janice's Green Valley. Today, a visitor will find lawns and landscaped areas, a fishing lake, an industrial landscape, a Japanese garden and large areas of native coastal sage scrub habitat – all in the same park!

Although the natural habitats of the Baldwin Hills are at risk because they are isolated by urbanization, they represent the largest remaining portion of the coastal sage scrub plant community in the Los Angeles Basin. These native plants and the native wildlife that depend on them are unique to

Southern California and are all invaluable pieces of Los Angeles history and heritage. Given the existing healthy habitat still intact, Los Angeles has a rare and exciting opportunity to restore and revitalize important links between wildlife areas. After all, the vitality of these natural spaces and our relationship to them will tell an important story about the type of city we want to live in. A few threads of this story are already being woven at the Native Plant & Wildlife Garden in Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

The Native Plant & Wildlife Garden is an important refuge for wildlife species in the Baldwin Hills that cannot live in the surrounding citified areas. With over one million people living within a five-mile radius, the Baldwin Hills are nestled in the center of Los Angeles urban life. Centered in one of the most densely populated and ethnically diverse parts of California, the Los Angeles Audubon Native Plant & Wildlife Garden Education Program invites residents of all backgrounds to get curious about what's growing, buzzing and chirping in their backyards.

The program operates in the classroom in addition to local wildlife habitat and encourages elementary and middle school students in the Los Angeles urban core to think critically about the conceptual connections of biodiversity, water quality, and urbanization. The Environmental Education Internship is another major component to the program. Interns are young men and women from the community who lead the field trips and teach students about native birds, plants and other wildlife of the Baldwin Hills. They help students collect data during their field trip and guide them in the use of binoculars and compasses.

Sometimes interns enter the program with a lot of background knowledge about birds in the Los Angeles region or the ecology of Southern California. Other interns may have little experience, but they do have a strong desire to learn more about the place



Sharese Arzu, 2012 Environmental Education Intern for the Los Angeles Audubon Native Plant & Wildlife Garden Education Program. Sharese was one of six interns selected into the program this year.



A panoramic vista as seen from a walking trail in Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

where they live. Sharese Arzu, biology major at Santa Monica College, was selected to be an environmental education intern this year. Over the six-month internship, Sharese demonstrated tremendous growth and leadership potential. Read on as Sharese reflects on her experience as an intern.

rience as an intern, but I did not expect to learn how important parks like Kenneth Hahn are to our environment. I also did not expect my outlook on life to change as much as it did.

My first step towards appreciating native plants and wildlife was during my first visit to Yosemite National Park. I appreciated the beauty of Yosemite, but I did not realize how important the plants and wildlife species were. A few months after my trip to Yosemite, my friend informed me about an environmental education internship at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area with the Los Angeles Audubon Society, where they teach third and sixth graders about native plants and wildlife. I thought to myself, "How can I teach someone else about native plants and wildlife when I don't know anything about them myself?"

Despite my fear of not knowing anything about native plants and wildlife, I convinced myself to contact the program manager because interning at Kenneth Hahn Park would be an amazing opportunity for me. I was now interested to learn more about Kenneth Hahn Park. At the time, the only thing I knew was that it is surrounded by trees. I expected to learn a few things about myself during my experience



Interns visit the Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility.

Pictures from internship training.



Los Angeles Audubon Board Vice President & Chair of Education, Margot Griswold, gives a lecture on plant and soil ecology;



Interns and volunteers practice their compass skills in Janice's Green Valley at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area

During the internship training, we were provided with a binder filled with key information about the Native Plant and Wildlife Garden Education Program. I was surprised by how much information and curriculum was dedicated to program.

I was nervous for our first class visit, but seeing the third graders run down the ramp motivated me to make sure the students enjoyed themselves and learned about native plants and wildlife at Kenneth Hahn. By the last class visit of the season, we were used to the students

running down the ramp and were more prepared. By then we were acclimated to the questions students asked and we knew how to capture their attention. We knew how to make their visit exciting!

At the Native Plant Garden, we knew to compare the laurel sumac to a taco because the leaves are shaped like a taco shell, which helps the leaves to retain water.



Interns Valerie Serrano and Cehila Santiago lead students through a natural habitat hike at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

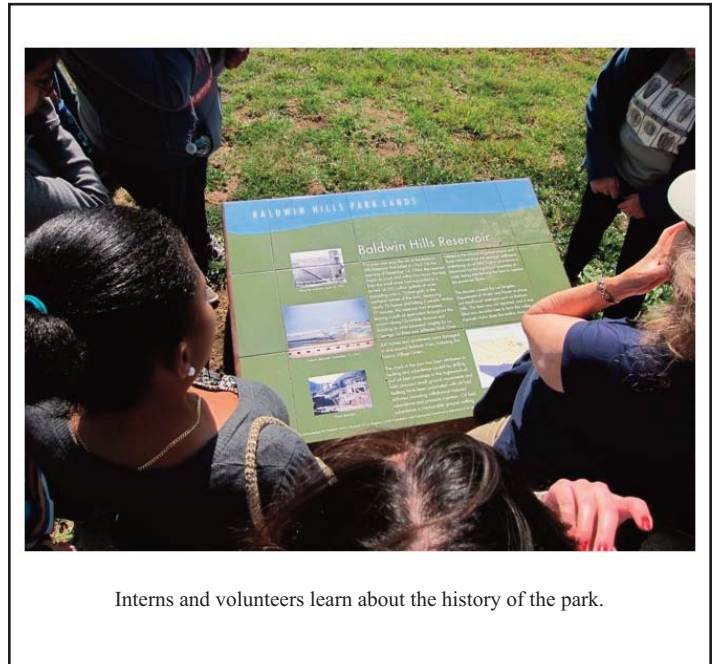


Third graders practice their bird watching skills at the Native Plant & Wildlife Garden.

We also knew to show how the native garden is important to our food web because the lizard that we see when the sun is coming out may get eaten by a snake, and that snake may get eaten by a Red-tailed Hawk.

At the Oil History/Natural Resources station, we informed the students about renewable and non-renewable resources. We also taught the students about the unintended consequences that led to the creation of the park, now an island of open space that wildlife and human beings both benefit from.

While interning at Kenneth Hahn, I learned a lot about birds, insects and wildlife in our backyards and I also learned how to interpret information and ideas to people. This skill has made me into a more confident speaker. After working with the students at Kenneth Hahn, I no longer believe that parks are only for the beauty of the planet. I am also more appreciative and aware of my surroundings. For example, I help to clean up parks and also plant trees for environmental benefits. I believe that interning for youth education programs such as this one prove to today's youth that the science we learn in school does not have to be boring and is very important. 🐦



Interns and volunteers learn about the history of the park.



Interns and volunteers work with elementary school students on their science illustrations at the Native Plant & Wildlife Garden.

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Judy Thompson is a member and volunteer of Los Angeles Audubon, participating in Snowy Plover surveys every quarter, Least Tern monitoring, and helping Stacey Vigallon and Dorsey Highschoolers' with research. Judy and her husband Ward (a keen photographer) went on August 4th's shorebird field trip on the lower LA River with LAAS Leader, Larry Allen, and a good many others." Please enjoy her description of her experience.

If you would like to share your articles and photos for use in the *Western Tanager*, please send them to our editorial staff at: membership@laaudubon.org or WesternTanager@laaudubon.org.

Lower Los Angeles River Shorebirds Field Trip, Saturday, August 4, 2012

Those birds had nothing on us, an eager flock of birders, foraging with a sharp eye along the river bank, 'scopes poised like beaks, at the ready to spear a likely target down there in the shallow water. After each satisfying snack of a sighting – a Wilson's Phalarope or an American Avocet – the flock moved further along the track and probed around for more.

All right, enough of that analogy.

Larry Allen, taking time out from preparing his *Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas*, led the group of about 15 aficionados hailing from as far afield as the Salton Sea. This interested person (me) came prepared with backpack, food, water, *National Geographic Field Guide*, husband, and binoculars for hours of trekking along the wild river. No such preparation was required, as our trek was quite civilized, a max of a half-mile along the top of the paved concrete river bank, more stop than stroll. But one learns for next time, and my goal was to be able to identify these shorebirds while doing my Least Tern monitoring early on Monday mornings this summer. There was a lot to look at down in that unlovely shallow and channelized river bed: American Avocet, Black-necked Stilts, chubby brown Dowitchers, Wilson's Phalarope, Killdeer, Elegant Terns, a solitary Solitary Sandpiper (which with its pronounced white eye ring everyone was very excited about), Orange Bishops – spectacular escapees from birdcages, now successfully breeding, and Western Sandpipers. My husband was the photographer, more interested in the Homo sapiens and cyclists than bird species; the pix were his contribution to the day.

After three hours, 7-10 a.m., we had learned so much from Larry's patient teaching and setting the 'scopes for us, and most were ready to call it a very valuable day of learning to identify shore birds.

Judith Thompson
LA Audubon Member
August 9, 2012



A flock of twitchers. Photo by Ward Thompson.



Larry Allen, Photo by Ward Thompson.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips often require more driving and time in the field than do our bird walks. No pets or children under 12 please. When you sign-up by email, we will confirm your reservation and provide any supplemental trip information by email. If you do not have convenient email, you may always US Mail your reservation request and fee; include a SASE, we will mail back your confirmation. Please provide complete contact information with your day-of-event phone number and an alternate phone number (I.C.E.) Contact information will be released to others inquiring about carpooling unless requested otherwise. Please support LAAS field trips with your donations. And be sure to share your photos and stories with other LAAS fans on Facebook and Twitter. [facebook.com / LosAngelesAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/LosAngelesAudubon) or [twitter.com / LAAudubon](https://twitter.com/LAAudubon).

Mail reservation fees to: Los Angeles Audubon, PO Box 931057, Los Angeles CA 90093-1057.

Email reservations to: membership@laaudubon.org

Phone reservations to: (323) 876-0202, leave voice message if no answer.

Sunday, September 9

Ventura County Game Preserve (Duck Club)

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. The duck club in Ventura has a rich history of excellent bird sightings including Sora and Virginia rails, American Bittern; Solitary, Pectoral and Baird's sandpipers, and single Lesser Sandplover and Wood Sandpiper. Perhaps we will have some warblers streaming through the willows. Get to the preserve by taking the 101 Fwy W to Rice Avenue S, carefully following the Rice Ave. prompts to the T-intersection, then take Hueneme Rd. west (right) to the first left turn on Casper Road, left through the gate at the far end, and park across from the barn on the road. Meet on the side of the road at 7:30 a.m. No sign-up required. Date has been confirmed with the club. We will walk the property, so good hiking/mud shoes with energetic legs inside a prerequisite. We may have one car on the grounds, weather permitting. Scopes & FRS radios helpful, and bring a lunch if you plan to bird into the afternoon with Irwin.

September 15 & 16

Mojave Desert Weekend (12 max.)

SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE

Leaders: *Mary* and *Nick Freeman*. Galileo Hills should be our first stop for the weekend. Galileo is arguably the best fall migrant trap in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! Take Hwy 14 about 5 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops, turn left past the golf course on Randsburg-Mojave Rd., and veer right on 20 Mule Team Rd. Turn left on Rutgers Rd. (paved) at the Silver Saddle sign before the hill, take your first paved right, your first right again, into the Silver Saddle Country Club, followed by two paved lefts to the lot between the HQ building and the second

pond. Park near the pond. A little over 2 hrs. driving time from L.A., and 40 minutes from Mojave. Bring lunch and sun block. Reserve a room in Mojave, or the new Best Western in CA City. Meet at 7:00 a.m. Saturday, and bird Galileo and elsewhere; meet 7:00 a.m. Sunday, and bird Apollo Park and (perhaps) Piute Ponds. TO RESERVE, either call Los Angeles Audubon at (323) 876-0202, or email membership@laaudubon.org with: name(s), phone number, and email address (for confirmation).

Sunday, September 23

Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Wetlands

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. Huntington Central Park is excellent for migrating songbirds. At Bolsa Chica, flocks of shorebirds should be heading south, with gulls starting to show up. Bring a lunch for a full day of birds. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the park parking lot on the south side of Slater Ave. just east of Golden West St. in Huntington Beach.

September 26-30

Western Field Ornithologists Conference in Petaluma, CA

This is a great time of year to bird nearby Point Reyes! If you like bird conservation, status and distribution, cutting-edge avian research, booths with birding hardware, etc., as well as photo I.D. and bird call I.D. panels; you should give this opportunity serious thought. Excellent field trips with excellent leaders, and many enthusiastic birders from all over the west attending. Details at: <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php>.

FIELD TRIPS, CONT'D.

Saturday, October 6

Malibu to McGrath Field Trip

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Barbara Johnson*. Late passerines and shore-birds should be moving through coastal migration spots, mixed with early wintering birds. Possibly 100 species. Take PCH N over the bridge in Malibu, and turn right on Cross Creek Road for free parking along the road (and Starbucks), or turn left into the fee lot. Cross PCH, and meet at the kiosk by the lagoon at 7:30 a.m. for a full day of birding. There may be an access fee at McGrath or elsewhere. Bring lunch.

Saturday, October 13

Sparrow Workshop (lecture)

SIGN UP LIMIT 80, \$20

Our speaker will be the amiable yet authoritative *Jon Dunn*, who leads field trips to far-flung locations including Alaska, Thailand, and California; presently sits on the California Bird Records Committee; is the primary consultant for the National Geographic Society's field guide to the Birds of North America; and has co-written two top-notch books on bird ID and distribution with our own Kimball Garrett, as well as his book on Gulls co-authored with Steve Howell. As such, he is extraordinarily qualified to speak on aspects of sparrows and many other North American bird families. Jon will cover all sparrow species routinely encountered in California, as well as most other US sparrow species. Binoculars are always a good idea for slide programs. Cookies and coffee. Meet at Eaton Canyon Nature Center, Pasadena, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Send \$20 with name, phone number, and e-mail (to confirm) to LAAS to reserve, and for directions. See listing for Jon's sparrow field trip below.

Sunday, October 14

Sparrow Workshop (field trip)

SIGN UP LIMIT 17, \$20

Jon Dunn will provide direction on sparrow identification in the field, applying information from the lecture. Some collateral identification of warblers and other families may also occur. Limited to prepaid lecture participants. Send a separate check for \$20 (\$40 total) with name, phone number, and e-mail (to confirm) to LAAS to sign-up. The 8:00 a.m. field trip location will probably be to Huntington Central Park, with directions handed out at the lecture. The field trip may involve a fair amount of walking. Finish up around 1 p.m. Bring



Photograph by Liz Muraoka

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

scopes if you can, sun block, a snack, and your favorite field guide.

Saturday, October 27

Oxnard Plain

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet at the Hueneme sod fields at 8:00 a.m. to look for Red-throated Pipit, Golden-Plovers and longspurs. Later, we'll try to shake a few migrating passerines out of nearby windbreaks. There may be eastern vagrants to chase in other local spots. 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.

Saturday, November 17 (tentative)

Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge

SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE

Refuge volunteer *John Nieto*, and *Nick Freeman* will drive up to 24 lucky participants around this prime limited-access wetlands / agricultural site where throngs of wintering shore-birds and numerous raptors are seen. Nelson's (Sharp-tailed) Sparrow and Pacific Golden-Plover are usually sighted. *The refuge is part of the Naval Weapons Station and requires the following from each visitor:* Last Name, First Name, Middle Name, Address, City/Zip Code, DOB, DL#, State, Citizenship. Provide LAAS with all information and phone numbers (phone #'s required) by **November 12**. Only LAAS-confirmed individuals of U.S. citizenship with photo ID allowed on base. No weapons. MEET at the main public lot at 800 Seal Beach Blvd. at 8:00 a.m. for a high tide of 6.1 feet around 11:00 a.m., and bird until noon. Take Seal Beach Blvd. S from the 405 Fwy, pass Westminster Blvd., turn left onto the base at the Forrestal Lane light, and left again into the lot. Spotting scopes and FRS radios helpful.

FIELD TRIPS, CONT'D.

Sunday, November 25

Lake Perris & San Jacinto Wildlife Area

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Howard King*. The Little Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls (2!), Short-eared Owls (2!) and Gyrfalcon of past years may not be back, but surely something will take their places! Take the 10 or 60 Fwy E to the 215 Fwy S, exit E at Ramona Expressway, continue E just past Perris Blvd., and meet at the Farmer Boys Restaurant on the S side of the road. Leave from here at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch, warm clothing and footwear for possible mud. We will try to carpool to defray the \$10 entrance fee for Lake Perris.

Saturday, December 15

Lancaster Christmas Bird Count

Contact compilers *Nick and Mary Freeman* at: (818) 247-6172 or mnfreeman@earthlink.net to be placed on a team or be given an area.

Sunday, December 16


Malibu Christmas Bird Count

Contact compiler *Larry Allen* at: (626) 288-2701 or larryallen@earlymusicla.org to participate.

Saturday, January 12

Newport Back Bay

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Mary Freeman*. Meet on the boardwalk along the NW bay at the “Sharp-tailed Sparrow Spot” accessible from the end of University Drive (small street) at 8:00 a.m. for the 6.7’ high tide (highest weekend of the season), and a full day of birding in the area. High tide at the mouth is 8:53 a.m., but may not peak in the back bay until after 9:30 a.m. Three rails, American Bittern; Nelson’s Sparrow and Short-eared Owl (both rare) will be target birds. Eurasian Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, California Gnatcatcher, and American Bittern expected. Take the 405 Fwy S to the 73 Toll Road (free this far) to the Campus Dr. exit, which becomes Bristol St. Turn right on Irvine Ave., drive 1.4 miles, then turn left on a small street called University Drive. Park at the end, walk down the hill, over the bridge, and to the end of the boardwalk. Bring lunch. ‘Scopes helpful. 

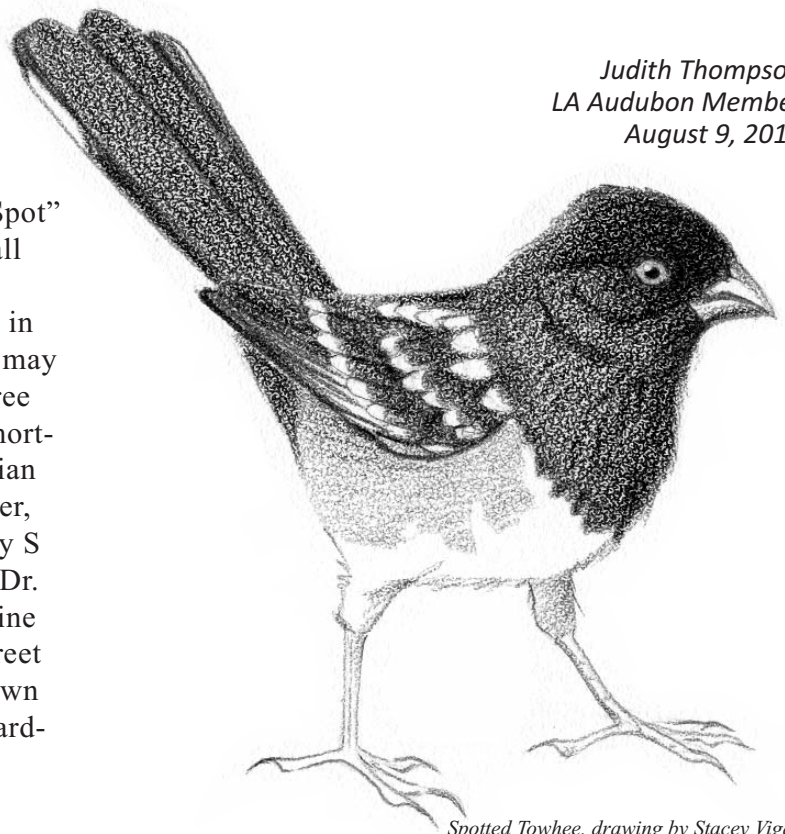
Curiouser and Curiouser

What was that insistent and loud “CHEEP! (pause) CHEEP! (pause) CHEEP! (pause) CHEEP!” in late afternoon?

Through my binocs I could see it was yet another brown bird. I delved into my Roger Tory Peterson’s *A Field Guide to Western Birds* and was pretty sure it was a California Towhee, the cinnamon tinge under the tail the giveaway. A Web search confirmed it.

He (or she) was in our garden all the time: as we sat out on the patio at lunch, or with friends at tea time, he was running back and forth energetically, always busy, a bird with a purpose. We became constant companions. He just had to explore the Havahart trap set out by my husband under the apple tree to catch squirrels (25 to date over the last three years; a distant neighborhood must now be noticing the influx of visiting squirrels) – he ran in and out of the trap, tasting the peanut butter at his leisure. But one time – snap! – he was trapped, and of course much distressed, as we sat nearby. We released him. This happened two more times, so now the squirrels have respite – no trap, and half-eaten apples lying everywhere. Investigating the peanut butter in the trap wasn’t enough. He had to check out our family room, which he did by entering the open screen door, twice.

He’s out there now, cheeping away and keeping a sharp eye out for peanut butter. Apples don’t seem to attract this one.



Judith Thompson
LA Audubon Member
August 9, 2012

Spotted Towhee, drawing by Stacey Vigallon

BIRD WALKS

LAAS Bird walks are geared for the beginner/intermediate birders looking for an introduction to local birds and are interested in reducing their carbon footprint by birding relatively close to home. All are welcome, but no pets or small children, please. Appropriate for young bird watchers age 6 years and older. Binoculars are provided on some walks as noted.

For further bird walk information contact Eleanor Osgood at birdwalks@laaudubon.org or call her at (310) 839-5420.

Bird walks DO NOT require advance sign-up, just show up at the specified meeting time and place. Carpooling is encouraged, call (323) 876-0202 to provide your contact information. We will share only with other birders interested in the same walk.

TOPANGA STATE PARK BIRDWALK

1st Sunday of every month

September 2 and October 7

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

Leaders: *Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin*

Ken and Chris will lead participants through this beautiful and diverse coastal mountain area. An ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new to the area.

Directions:

FROM VENTURA BLVD: take Topanga Canyon Blvd 7 miles S. Turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into Trippet Ranch parking lot. FROM PACIFIC COAST HWY: take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking fee.

Contacts:

Ken: (310) 455-1401,

ksafarri@aol.com

Chris: (310) 455-1270

UPPER FRANKLIN CANYON

SOOKY GOLDMAN NATURE CENTER

2600 Franklin Canyon Dr

Beverly Hills 90210

2nd Sunday of the month

September 9 and October 14

Time: 8:30-11:30

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood*

Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We are likely to see the resident Wood Ducks and as well chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees and California Thrasher. We will also look for south bound migrants such as warblers, vireos, and flycatchers.

Directions:

FROM THE 101 FREEWAY: follow Coldwater Canyon Blvd. south for several miles to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive (traffic signal). Make a 90 degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. There is no sign indicating the entrance to the park; the turn at Franklin Canyon Road reads "Road Closed 800 Feet" and "Sunrise to Sunset" — this is the park entrance; do not make a U-turn as this will take you onto Mulholland Drive instead of Franklin Canyon. Take Franklin Canyon Dr down to park entrance, turn at first left into the parking lot.

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

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

BALLONA WETLANDS BIRD WALK

3rd Sunday of the month (with the exception of December)
September 16 and October 21

Time: 8:00 a.m.-noon

Leaders: *Bob Shanman and Friends*

Join us for a walk through L.A.'s only remaining saltwater marsh and the adjacent rocky jetty. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot. TAKE THE MARINA FWY (90) to Culver Blvd and turn left for a mile. Turn right on Pacific Ave. The lot is on the right. Lot or street parking is usually not a problem. Three hour walk. 'scopes helpful.

Contact: Bob (310) 326-2473

wbutorrance@gmail.com

KENNETH HAHN STATE RECREATION AREA

4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles 90056

In the Baldwin Hills

3rd Saturday of the month

September 15 and October 20

Time: 8:00 a.m.-noon

Leaders: *Eric and Ann Brooks or Eleanor Osgood*

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

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

MONTHLY PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

WESTERN Tanager

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For address changes or subscription concerns call (323) 876-0202, email membership@losangelesaudubon.org, or write to Los Angeles Audubon, P.O. Box 931057, Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057.

Editor Linda Oberholtzer
Layout Susan Castor
Proofreader Kimball Garrett

Los Angeles Audubon's evening program presentations are held the 2nd Wednesday of the month (except for July and August). Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and are over at 9:30 p.m. All are welcome! Come early enjoy the nature, share your birding adventures with like minded birders. Then, stay and enjoy the evening's presentations. All are welcome!

For additional information please call (323) 876-0202 or email membership@laudubon.org

*Meeting location is the AUDUBON CENTER AT DEB'S PARK
4700 N Griffin Ave., Los Angeles CA 90031 (323) 221-2255*

Wednesday, September 12

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISLAND AND WESTERN SCRUB JAYS

Presented by Katy Semple Delaney

Katy will talk about her research project identifying morphological, behavioral, and genetic differences between Island and Western Scrub-Jays. She will also briefly present some results which showed that, even over a small geographic area in southern California, habitat fragmentation caused by urban sprawl altered the genetics of a common west coast endemic, the Wrentit.

Katy Semple Delaney is currently working as a wildlife ecologist for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the country's largest urban national park. Her projects include monitoring stream amphibians and invasive species, monitoring terrestrial reptiles and amphibians, and re-introducing the federally threatened red-legged frog to streams within their historic range in the Santa Monica Mountains. She also hopes to become a better birder so she can initiate a long-term bird monitoring project in the future.

Wednesday, October 10

DISCOVERING AND CONSERVING BRYAN'S SHEARWATER

Presented by Peter Pyle

In 2011 a new species of bird, Bryan's Shearwater (*Puffinus bryani*), was described by Peter and colleagues at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, based on a specimen collected in February 1963 on Midway Atoll, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. It had been misidentified as a Little Shearwater (*P. assimilis*) but genetically appears closer to the Newell's Shearwater (*P. newellii*) of the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands. During the winters of 1990-1991 and 1991-1992, a second Bryan's Shearwater was discovered calling in a rock crevice near the northeast corner of Sand Island, Midway, and photographed, videotaped, and audiotaped in December 1991. These two records likely represented prospecting individuals, and the locations of source colonies of Bryan's Shearwaters has until recently remained completely unknown. During the 1970-2000s there have been several reports of Little Shearwaters in the North Pacific that may or may not have represented mis-identified Bryan's Shearwaters.

Peter will present a history of the discovery of this new species along with updated information on its seasonality, breeding habitat requirements, and vocalizations based on the 1963 and 1991 records, will review potential at-sea records in the North Pacific, and will present recent exiting information on where Bryan's Shearwater colonies may exist. (Where? You'll just have to come to find out). Bryan's Shearwater is undoubtedly rare and, if extant, will require targeted conservation actions to increase it's population size. Peter will present ideas on the next conservation steps to protect this newly discovered seabird.



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

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