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WESTERN Tanager

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WESTERN Tanager

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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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Love and Thanks! Spring — Love is in the Air!

The buds are blooming, birds are singing - it's a joyful time to witness the magic of growth and renewal that mother nature bestows on us each year.

It's also the perfect time to give our **heartfelt thanks to you!** As a member of and contributor to Los Angeles Audubon, you have helped to sustain our environmental education programs, and contributed to the success of our conservation and restoration efforts. Our monthly program presentations, bird walks, field trips, and publishing of the *Western Tanager* continue into our organization's 2nd hundred years.

You are the heart of our organization and we simply couldn't achieve our goals without you.

We are so grateful that you value and recognize the importance of preserving and protecting birds, wildlife and the natural wonders here in our urban oasis of Los Angeles.

Thank you
for your on-going support!

Sincerely,

Carol Babeli, Development Director



Vacation Interrupted: A Campus CBC

By Brad Rumble

On a Sunday morning smack dab in the middle of a three-week Winter Break, school is probably the last place you'd expect to find students. Yet 16 of them bounded into Leo Politi Elementary in the Pico-Union neighborhood of central Los Angeles on the morning of December 29, 2013 to participate in the fourth annual campus Christmas Bird Count. They were joined by 15 parents and members of Los Angeles Audubon Society, including Vice President Margot Griswold and Brad Shaffer, Director of the La Kretz Center for California Conservation Science at UCLA.

An event called Christmas Bird Count would sound like a lot of fun to students who already have developed a love of birding, but the morning took on greater meaning as they gathered in the school library to read and discuss the event's origins. They also were impressed to learn of the record 250 species observed on December 19, 2006 during the Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh CBC and were eager to get out there and give it a go.

We prowled the eight-acre campus in one large group, thus fostering a sense of unity and collegiality. One of the beauties of birding for students is its social aspect. As an educator I appreciate the academic nature of their conversations on bird walks. The students' powers of visual

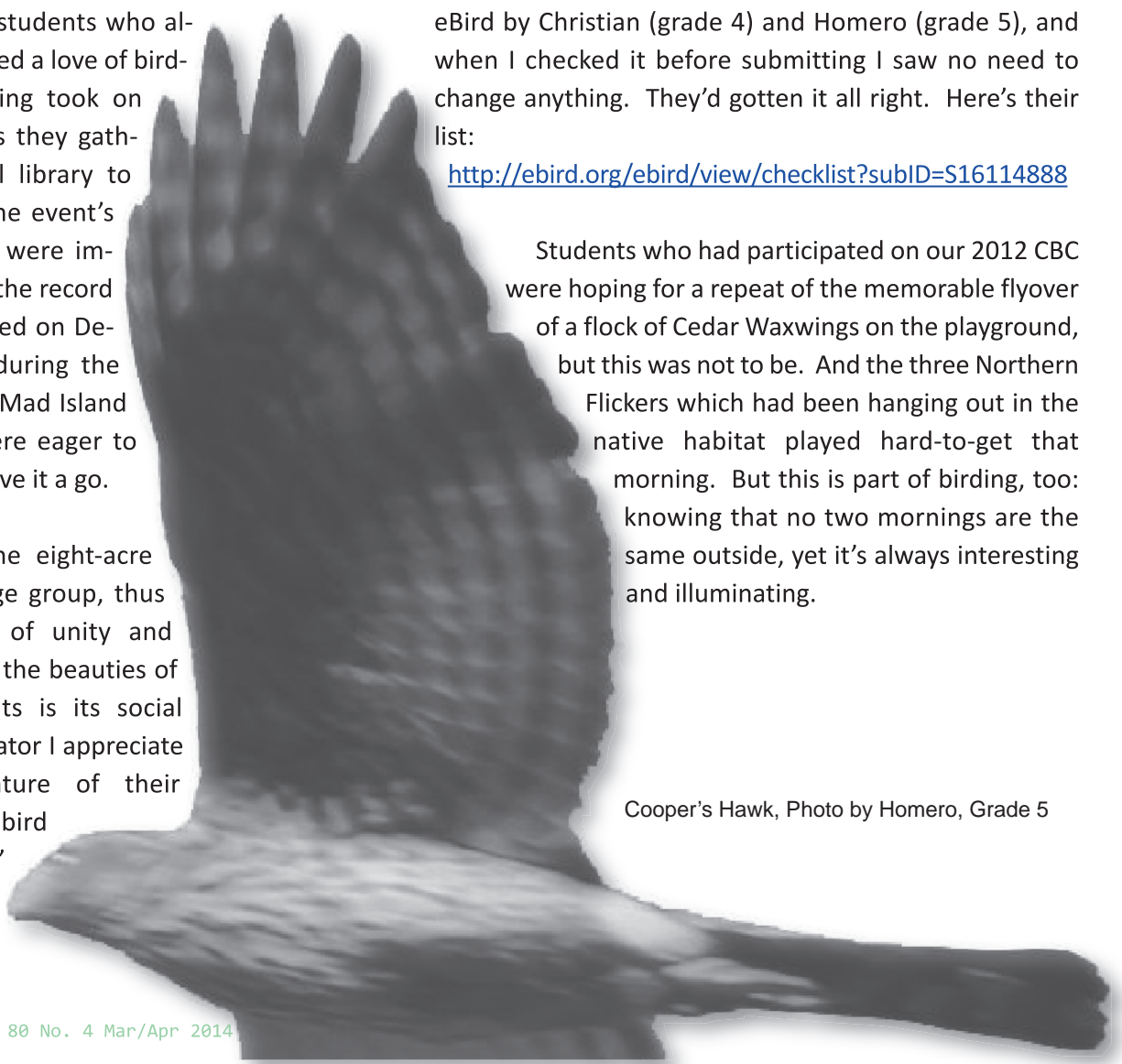
and aural observation are in full use. They debate their sightings and ask more senior birders nuanced questions, just as adult birders do. Several students and parents served as record-keepers on the walk.

We began and ended our walk at the school's native habitat behind the school library. Yellow-rumped Warblers abounded. In fact, 12 in total were observed on campus. In the course of our hour-long roaming we would observe an American Kestrel, a Cooper's Hawk, three Black Phoebes, 15 Mourning Doves, Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, and nearly as many Western Gulls (29) as Rock Doves (31). All in all, 16 species were observed and recorded by the students. The data was transposed onto eBird by Christian (grade 4) and Homero (grade 5), and when I checked it before submitting I saw no need to change anything. They'd gotten it all right. Here's their list:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S16114888>

Students who had participated on our 2012 CBC were hoping for a repeat of the memorable flyover of a flock of Cedar Waxwings on the playground, but this was not to be. And the three Northern Flickers which had been hanging out in the native habitat played hard-to-get that morning. But this is part of birding, too: knowing that no two mornings are the same outside, yet it's always interesting and illuminating.

Cooper's Hawk, Photo by Homero, Grade 5



Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area:

A park of the future that you should visit now!

By Cindy Hardin, Environmental Education

The Los Angeles Audubon Society has been involved with Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area since 2005. LAAS has worked diligently to install a native plant and education garden and to restore natural habitat in various sections of the park. We are continually working to expand areas of coastal sage scrub habitat, and to educate school children about its importance through our environmental education field trips. We work closely with the County and the Baldwin Hills Conservancy to make this park a better habitat for local wildlife and more interesting for visitors to the park. Recently, the County has made some significant improvements to the site that dovetail nicely with the work that Audubon has been doing for years.

The park is perched atop a section of the Baldwin Hills, on land that was reclaimed from industrial uses as oil fields, and probably most notoriously, as a reservoir. The dam for the reservoir failed in 1963, draining 290 million gallons of water in 77 minutes to the neighborhoods below. In 1979 the State of California granted \$1,775,873.00 to the County to acquire land for the Baldwin Hills State Recreation Area, and a new park, right in the middle of the city, was formed.

At that time the model for most parks was to provide lots of facilities for humans. Grass was planted, picnic pavilions, roads and bathrooms were built, and playground



Native Habitat replaces a Eucalyptus Grove and signage enriches the outdoor learning experience.

equipment and barbeque grills were installed. An artificial lake and stream were constructed, along with a Japanese Garden and Pavilion. The actual site of the reservoir was filled in and planted, and a paved trail was created along the perimeter. All of these features are still present in the park today, and enjoyed by many local residents.



Native sunflowers and deerweed brighten the Eastern Ridge Trail.



Too steep to mow! Toyon, Mulefat and Elderberry maintain a historical presence on the steep hillsides adjacent to the trail.

Fortunately for wildlife, several sections of the park included steep hillsides and small ravines that still had intact coastal sage scrub habitat. Walnut trees, Elderberry trees, California Sagebrush, Coastal Prickly Pear, Giant Wild Rye and Coyote Brush, among others, maintained a presence in these largely forgotten areas that were too steep to easily convert into manicured park space. In these sections of the park, wildlife continued to find shelter and fodder to survive. When visiting, we see many different birds, including Cedar Waxwings, Western Scrub Jays, Gnatcatchers, and several species of hawks, hummingbirds and warblers, to name a few. This past fall there were regular sightings of a Ferruginous Hawk! Skunks, possums, raccoons, lizards, and snakes all make homes for themselves as well. Spiders, insects and butterflies are found in abundance, too.

When Audubon started its work at the park the idea was to expand this existing natural habitat by replacing weedy areas and Eucalyptus groves with native plants. The first project was the Native Plant and Wildlife Garden, which continues to thrive. The garden is a wonderful outdoor learning lab, and includes detailed signage highlighting the plants and animals that can be found in the garden and at other spots in the park. There was no need to take up precious habitat space with a brick and mortar nature center; the signs and attendant wildlife in the great outdoors allow people to learn and discover on their own, in the habitat itself. Expansion and restoration of habitat continued with the removal of large areas of pampas grass, and this restoration is ongoing with recent native plantings. Some of the labor has been done by volunteers from the general public. However, much of what has been accomplished has been through the tireless efforts of our own Margot Griswold and Stacey Vigallon and students from Dorsey High



My kind of gym: California Sagebrush, a well maintained trail and an upper body work-out.

School, who are participants in Audubon's Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. The original plantings have by now really taken hold, and new areas continue to be converted to native plant zones. Most recently, the Dorsey crew installed over 200 native plants as part of a service day to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (See the MLK Service Days photos online at www.laaudubon.org)

The County has been appreciative and supportive of our efforts, but last fall they embarked on a project that beautifully complements our own work. They developed a brand new section of the park called the Eastern Ridgeline Trail, and it is fantastic. It takes advantage of a sweeping view of the LA Basin that includes the mountains and downtown. Most of us have seen that iconic shot of downtown Los Angeles with a winter backdrop of snow covered local mountains. This is the view that is embraced by the Eastern Ridgeline Trail. The trail itself is of porous material, allowing rainfall to percolate back into the earth. Best of all, minimal areas of grass have been planted-most of the green areas are filled with native plants found in a coastal sage scrub habitat! The project is temporarily being irrigated in order for the young plants to become established. So, in spite of the paucity of rain this year, bush sunflowers are already blooming, and some clumps of sagebrush have grown to waist high. The trail abuts some of those steep ravines that I mentioned, and many types of native animals, like birds and lizards, are now present and foraging amongst this new vegetation. High quality outdoor exercise equipment has also been installed at intervals along the trail. This is particularly significant for the local community, as the surrounding zip



All that one needs for an al fresco workout!

codes have some of the highest rates of obesity and diabetes in the region.

Los Angeles Audubon's environmental education program has benefited mightily from this new area, too. We use the trail as a staging area for tours that we provide for elementary school children. Students are able to compare the urban sprawl of Los Angeles to the natural areas that buffer the park. We teach them that loss of habitat is the number one reason for extinction or extirpation of a species. This part of the park allows students to learn first-hand about the importance of these "islands of habitat" within the urban core. They see local people using the exercise equipment, which brings home the point that the outdoors and outdoor activities are for people of all ages. We also ask the students if they would rather visit a park where they see only people, or if they would prefer to see some wild animals too. Seeing animals wins out by a large majority, and at Kenneth Hahn they are able to do just that.

There is increased interest and appreciation amongst the public for wild places that have become difficult to encounter as we go about our city lives. By bringing back habitat that was historically present in our region, we are creating a future model that allows space for ecosystems that have always been a part of Los Angeles. I think that many people would prefer to see wild habitat when they visit open space, especially those of us that live in urban areas. Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area is proof that human recreational activities can co-exist and even be enhanced by the presence of natural areas and indigenous



You can see why the Matillija Poppy is nicknamed the "Fried Egg Poppy"

plants and animals. Other benefits of this approach include less use of pesticides and fertilizers, and significant saving of precious water that will no longer be necessary to maintain vast expanses of lawn.

Now that I am a "Kenneth Hahn regular", I have noticed something quite interesting about this park. Although it is very centrally located, almost none of my friends and neighbors have visited. Many of them do not even know where it is! People that have taken me up on my suggestion to go see the park are now repeat visitors. The site has so much to offer. It is 401 acres in size, and if you have read this far into the article, you know about all of its fabulous features. I live in Playa del Rey, and it takes me about 17 minutes to reach the park, most any time of the day. For folks who live in Culver City or Mid-city it is even closer. There is ample parking throughout the park, with one caveat—there is a fee of six dollars per car that is charged on weekends and holidays. However, on weekdays access and all facilities are absolutely free! I urge everyone to take the time to come out and see this urban oasis. You can come on your own, participate in the monthly LA Audubon bird walks led by Eric and Ann Brooks and Eleanor Osgood on the third Saturday of the month, or tag along on one of our Audubon school tours.

It's well worth the visit. I hope to see you at the park! 🐦



Insects that are attracted to native plants provide plenty of lunch for the Say's Phoebe.

The Magical Tejon Ranch Tour

By Louis Tucker, Field Trip Leader

Saturday, January 4, 2014 was a date I had been looking forward to for a very long time. I was passionately invested in introducing participants from Los Angeles Audubon to winter raptor watching up at the Tejon Ranch. I had made a request to Scot Pipken who would then forward that request to Tejon officials for a possible raptor trip in the beginning of January. And, I wanted Scot to guide us around the ranch. He has such an incredible knowledge of the Ranch history, of its wildlife, plant life and what the climate is like up there. We started plans as early as the beginning of July 2013, so that the word could get out for publication in the Tanager. And, I thought it necessary to limit the participation to around a dozen people because I wanted the LAAS group to be carried around in the Tejon vehicles for safety measures; thinking that winter months in southern California make for wet and muddy and unsafe travel on dirt roads in the mountains.

Well, the fears of soggy, muddy, unsteady roads in the western end of the Tehachapi Mountains were quickly quenched as southern California is one of the driest places on earth this winter. So, there would be little danger of slipping and sliding. A bit of a footnote: had it rained, we would have to cancel. It was quite a beautiful day and only a bit chilly in the morning. As the sun rose, the weather was quite comfortable.

Tejon Ranch is, to me, a magical place. Not being a person who is “amused” in amusement parks, it is “Disneyland” for me. It is quite vast in terms of acreage. It is 270,000 acres and 420 square miles; which makes it about 40% the size of the state of Rhode Island and as big as the city of Los Angeles. It is approximately 60 miles north of LA and borders Interstate 5 as you’re going toward Bakersfield and stretches east towards the town of Lancaster. It is the northern end of LA County and most of it is in Kern County, with altitudes around 3,000 ft and going upwards of 6,000 feet. And with some of the roads there, you could actually think that you’re on an amusement park ride with some roads going almost vertically up and down like a roller coaster. There were more than a few moments like that.



Tejon Ranch Oak, Photo by Dessi Sieburth

The worry would be, since it has been so dry, what would the birding be like? No rain means no fertile ground and green grasses. That means the possibility of slim birding. With a lack of good vegetation, prey would also be limited. No rodents means very few birds of prey. This was to be a raptor trip, after all. I nervously didn’t want to disappoint our participants, although birding is a case of “sometimes you eat the bear and sometimes the bear eats you”. And, our participants were very eager to take this trip. Participating were: Tommye Hite, Beatrix Schwarz, Dessi and Derek Sieberth, Steve Bernal, Don White, Norm Vargas, Sarah Shaw, John Oliver, and Anne LaHue. We were guided by Scot Pipken and also aided by Chris Gardner, who drove the second vehicle.

Around 8:15 a.m., at the 300 St. West Gate, flocks of Horned Larks were flitting around blending so well with the

desert background. There were Savannah and Lark Sparrows as well. Not to mention big Raven to get everyone jittery, because they want to see a hawk. We loaded into the SUV's and headed to the Burrowing Owl Terrace, west of Big Sycamore Canyon around 8:45 am to search for Burrowing Owls. I should say owl; because that was all we were able to pull out from the area where their burrows are. We're seeing how dry this desert place really is. Usually, one can bet on almost half a dozen in this area. But, this solo was a welcomed appearance. It's a funny creature and perfectly blends in with its surroundings, and finally flew off. More Horned Larks were making themselves known. Around 9 am, we headed to Los Alamos Canyon which has a number of oaks. And, that yielded Band-tailed Pigeon, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Scrub Jay, Acorn Woodpecker, Oak Titmouse, some beautiful looks and sounds of Western Bluebirds, California Towhee, Vesper Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, House and Purple Finches. Although the start of the day was sort of slow, seeing these flashes of color against the desert backdrop perked us up a bit.



Ferruginous Hawk, Photo by Dessi Sieburth

Around 9:45 am came the first appearance of one of the “big boys”. A beautiful light race Ferruginous Hawk was flying around before us as we rode toward Western Avenue. Our largest buteo is always a wonderful sight. In the sun, as you look at the bird's back in flight as it is hit by the sun, shows the rust on the wings in contrast with the flashes of white that are in the flight feathers. Its pale head and the white at the base of the tail was just flashing at us. The hawk was not the only spectacle that caught our attention. On the hillside, a Greater Roadrunner was appearing and disappearing among the large rocks on the hill. The cartoonists are not that far off base as they characterize this unique cuckoo. You have to have a bit of a chuckle in you when you see it. There were more Horned Larks, Lark Sparrows and House Finches, as well as a large flock of blackbirds, with quite a few of Tri-colored with the Brewer's. It has been a while since I've seen Tri-colored Blackbirds and their appearance brought some optimism of good things to come.



Tejon Ranch Mountain Plover,
Photo by Derek Sieburth

Hope went rewarded, when around 10:15 am we began our climb into the hills to the Upper Terraces. The very reason I wanted to do Tejon this winter instead of the western end of the Antelope Valley paid off. In the sky, like a dark feathered airplane, soared our first Golden Eagle. We would see 3 up there. The absolutely majestic flight of this bird, on a thermal and hanging in the air and watching it soar so slowly is really

awesome. The eagles were pretty high up, and you at first had to rely on what its singular silhouette suggests. There was one Turkey Vulture soaring around as well, just trying to confuse the issue. In contrast was a flock of about 20 California Gulls in the air flying away from us. We were seeing wonderful contrasts: light and dark. There were more Acorn Woodpeckers, Western Bluebirds, a Spotted Towhee, White-crowned Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Our minds, however, stayed on the eagles.

Around 12 pm, we were in Big Sycamore Canyon and walking on the grounds, we had some good looks at a Red-tail, another Roadrunner, and our first appearance of a Lewis' Woodpecker. There are moments while writing this, I will find myself in trouble. This is one of those moments. Field guides, and I will salute all of the artists' renderings, just don't do this bird justice. And this is the thrill one gets from actually doing bird observations; it is very difficult to portray iridescence, and subtle color variations. The very dark green back and wings of this woodpecker changes with differences in light. There is a very red face, dingy white breast and collar, with a pink/rose belly. It is a stunning divergence from most of our black, white and red colored woodpeckers. Also popping up were a Loggerhead Shrike, White-breasted Nuthatch, more Western Bluebirds and Juncos.

Around 1 pm on the flats east of the 300th Street Gate afforded us with wonderful surprises. We were watching obviously birds of the plover family, and strangely not expecting Mountain Plovers, which turned out to be Mountain Plovers. Our guide Scot was heap big excited about that finding. So were we, to see half a dozen of them on the south side of the road.



Tejon Ranch field trip participants, Photo by Tommye Hite

And, on the north side of the road, were about half a dozen Mountain Bluebirds. OK! I'm really not trying to step on toes, but, the deep sky blue on the backs of the males, can only be captured when you go out and run into this species. When the sun hits the backs, it is positively electric! I think artists and photographers do a great job in the attempt to truly depict this bird; however, seeing it in the field, is almost shocking, this deep sky blue. It's an absolute stunner. And, more Horned Larks. Moving on farther in Antelope Canyon, around 1:10 pm gave up an elusive Sage Thrasher.



Tejon Ranch, Jan. 4, 2014 LAAS Group Shot, Photo by Beatrix Schwarz

At 1:45 with everybody's stomach making noises of a "rock band" of the individual's choice, we had lunch in an area where the indigenous people used rocks in the ground to grind herbs and herbal remedies for medicinal purposes. This proved to be a very active birding spot as well. We were pretty high up in altitude near an area which will be part of the Pacific Coast hiking trail which is in the process of being rerouted. There were some Red-tails, Acorn Woodpeckers, Lewis' Woodpeckers, Steller's Jays were heard, American Robin and more Juncos. And

the amazing soaring flight of 4 Golden Eagles. At least one juvenile was seen. We may have seen five to seven Golden Eagles. Some were “repeat offenders”.

All in all on the Golden Eagle count, we had eleven Golden Eagle sightings. And, yes some were repeaters. I don't think we saw eleven different birds. Although some predator species like Prairie Falcon and Merlin didn't show up, the eagle show was really worth it.

Now at 3:15 we were headed down the mountain to Gato Montes (Bobcat Canyon) to our beginning spot at the 300th St. Gate. This gave us a Ladder-backed Woodpecker, more House Finches and a Loggerhead Shrike, a gorgeous “Grey Ghost: (Male Northern Harrier), and two Ferruginous Hawks; the final one as we were outside the gate and gawking at this magnificent Buteo as it as perched on a low fence post. I think this trip had everyone really “amped”. And, although there were some big misses of common winter raptors at Tejon; missing were sightings of Prairie Falcon and Merlin, specifically, and the Pronghorn, the Antelope which gives Antelope Valley its name. Also, I thought I had staked out a dark race Ferruginous Hawk from the previous month, just beyond the Burrowing Owl Terrace. (Birds - they have wings and fly.....)The species list on Tejon only racked up about three dozen. In spite of that, the performances of these birds was really spectacular and brought big satisfaction. As I said, this is my “Disneyland”.

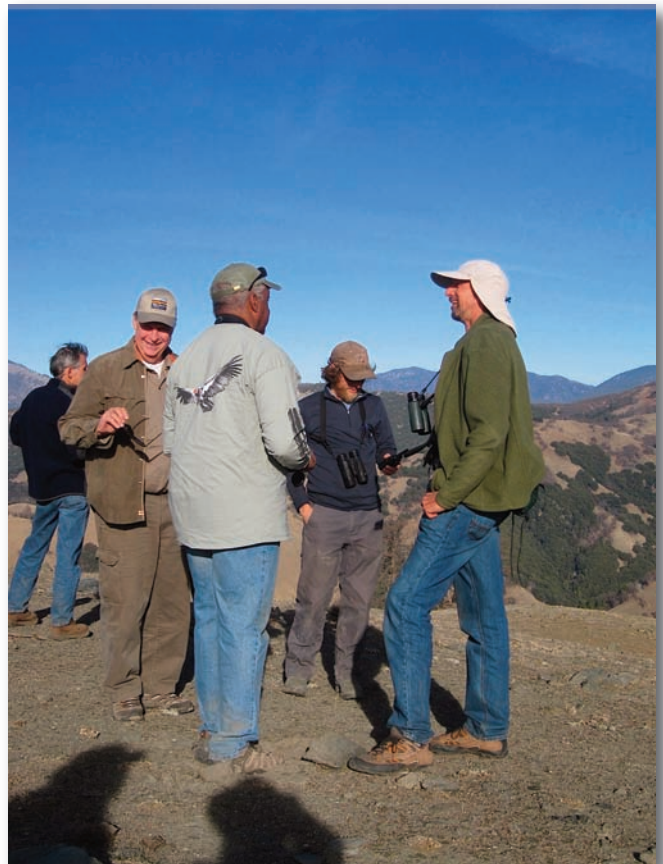
And, we weren't through. We made a stop at Quail Lake on our way out. The main target was to find the Common Golden-eye. We spent an hour there as the sun was setting and we racked up an additional seventeen species: Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed, Eared, and Western Grebes, Double-crested Cormorant, Great-blue Heron, another Northern Harrier, Common Yellowthroat, White-crowned Sparrows, plus the targeted Common Goldeneye, as Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Phainopepla were only heard. This was all with the magnificent backdrop of a multi-colored sunset.

This was a wonderful trip. Everyone wants to return, post-haste. I'm glad I made the gamble. This is magnificent country.

And, I don't want to spoil this report with a downer; but, we so need rain. We can argue until we're blue in the face about climate change. Something is happening out there; and as this trip was simultaneous with what is being reported about the air coming out of China, and that lately that grizzly air is reaching us in the latest newspapers - we must do something. Man is causing some monster problems. If you've seen the pictures of Beijing, it's as if that air makes pea soup look like clear broth. It's affecting everything. We've got a lot of pristine areas to protect, and, when you visit an area like Tejon Ranch which is really in our backyard, you really see how necessary it is to protect and preserve these wild areas. This is home to life that lifts the human spirit. It makes your heart soar like the eagles. We can't lose that. I look forward to more trips to Tejon.

Cheers

Louis Tucker 



Louis Tucker (center) and trip participants,
Photo by Tommye Hite

Interpreting Nature

Los Angeles Audubon Expands its Snowy Plover Field Trip Program

By Stacey Vigallon, Director of Interpretation

Los Angeles County beaches serve as important habitat to Western Snowy Plovers and California Least Terns. However, the fact that you can see these federally listed species on some of the busiest beaches in the nation is usually overlooked by most beach goers. Thanks to a California Coastal Commission Whale Tail grant Los Angeles Audubon received in partnership with Audubon California and San Diego Audubon, we are getting the word out! Through a combination of in-school presentations, printed educational materials, and school field trips to Dockweiler Beach, we are aiming to compliment our long-running monitoring programs and public beach walks with programming specifically geared toward youth. Fall, winter, and early spring are great times for wildlife watching at the beach, and we hope to instill an awareness of and pride in aspects of our natural history heritage found only along our coastal shores.

We have been leading school field trips to Los Angeles County beaches since 2007, but the new Whale Tail grant has allowed us to greatly increase the number of schools that participate. So far during the 2013-2014 school year over 300 students from six different LAUSD schools have learned about Snowy Plover and Least Tern natural history and conservation. Students leave their in-school presenta-



Students hit the beach in search of wildlife.



A science illustration so big, it couldn't be contained within a field notebook.

tions knowing more about plovers and terns than most adult Angelenos do, and they are fired up to do some wildlife watching during their beach field trip. For some students, not only is the field trip their first time seeing a Snowy Plover in person, it's also their first time ever going to the beach. Armed with binoculars and field notebooks, students are field biologists for the day, collecting data and completing science illustrations of beach wildlife and habitat. Students quickly go from being grossed out by those slimy piles of kelp to digging in, grabbing specimens to examine, and even wearing it as necklaces. Picking up tiny shell fragments becomes addictive, and students' pockets rattle on their walk back to the bus. It's usually windy, and huge jets roar overhead as they take off from adjacent LAX. There are shrieks when someone spots a dolphin offshore. And, oh yeah, there are the Snowy Plovers, hiding in the sand – just like students learned about during the presentation at school! In short, Snowy Plovers go from being a cute idea to being a real-live wildlife species that is connected to all the other tactile things that students experienced on the beach that day. The field trips hopefully serve as positive, kid-friendly outdoor experiences that help students (and teachers) connect with nature and gain an understanding about why wildlife and habitat are so important.

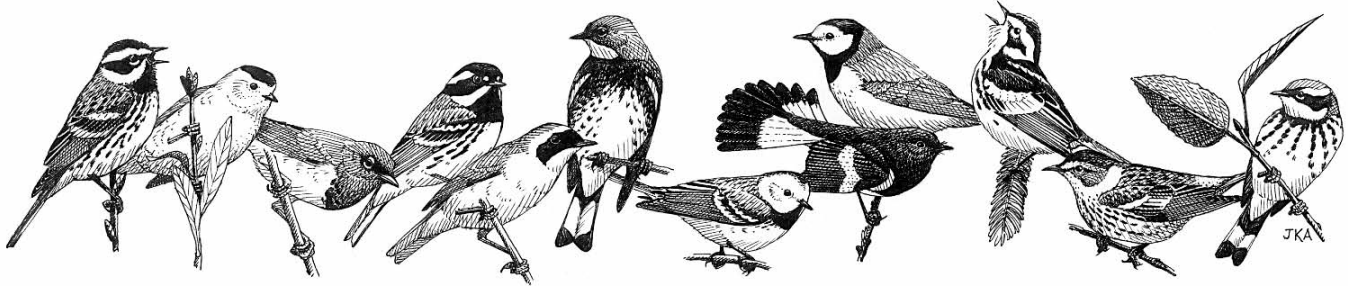


In a team effort, students attempt to untangle a kelp pile.



So many natural details to take in during the beach field trip.

We will be following up with these young field biologists back in the classroom, providing a series of science illustration workshops to help students create plover-themed conservation posters. Stay tuned for the artwork! In the meantime, here are a few photo highlights from recent field trips. 🐦



BIRDS OF THE SEASON — FEBRUARY 2014, BY JON FISHER

Winter is the time of year when the word “continuing” applies to most of our rare birds, many of which have been present for weeks if not months. But there are always exceptions and discoveries of new birds kept things interesting.

The vagaries of vagrants are such that new ones can be found throughout the winter in little-birded parks and elsewhere. Undoubtedly many are never discovered in the unbirded tracts of suburbia, many of which offer an appealing environment for wintering neotropical migrants.

Christmas Bird Counts as expected added a handful of good birds to the season’s list. Even though most CBCs lack truly sufficient coverage, the relatively intense saturation of their respective circles by birders on count day indicates much potential.

Lewis’s Woodpeckers continued to be the only species showing any real evidence of irruptive behavior as small numbers kept turning up here and there on the coastal slope.

January saw the earliest of north-bound migrants on the move, including Greater White-fronted Geese, Turkey Vultures and Allen’s Hummingbirds. Spring movements are nearly as protracted as are those of autumn, and birds will be still be passing through in early June. At this latitude, migration in its entirety takes place almost without pause.

It’s hardly news that we’re in the middle of a drought. As if two dry winters weren’t enough, the 2013–2014 “rainy” season saw December and then January pass by with relentlessly mild temperatures coupled with a near total absence of precipitation. The last three seasons have in aggregate left us over two feet of rainfall below normal. February began with only marginal improvement. Even so, deciduous trees began leafing out and the landscape turned at least somewhat green.

While sprinklers and irrigation keep many patches of habitat in good shape, natural areas are simply extremely dry. Nevertheless, dismal as it appears, plants and animals in southern California are adapted to periodic drought. A single wet season can affect dramatic change, though at best that will have to wait another year.

Here’s a look at birds of note in the county from mid December to mid February.

Ross’s Geese were at Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City on December 13 (Bruce Starrett), at Almansor Park in Alhambra from December 14–January 1 (Ed Stonick), at in Long Beach at Colorado Lagoon on December 22 (Robb Hamilton) and at El Dorado Park from December 22–25 (John Willis).

A half dozen **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at Harbor Park in Harbor City on January 1 along with five **Cackling Geese** (Ed Griffin), while two more of the latter were at Malibu Lagoon on the Malibu CBC on January 15 (Dick Norton).

Quite rare in the county was a one day **Tundra Swan** at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City on December 13 (Dan Maxwell, Matt Brady).

The lone **Eurasian Wigeon** reported was a continuing male along the LA River in Glendale through February 8. What is presumably the same bird has returned to winter here since 2008.

Returning for a second winter was a “**Eurasian**” **Green-winged Teal** in Pico Rivera from December 29–January 4 (Norm Vargas). Unfortunately the spreading basins where the bird was found quickly dried up and its whereabouts thereafter remain a mystery.

Sea ducks included three **Black Scoters** and a **Long-tailed Duck** off Will Rogers State Beach in Santa Monica on December 30 (Richard Barth). Another **Long-tailed Duck** was at the Ballona Creek mouth on January 1 (Alex Coffey) and what was probably the same bird was found upstream on February 9 (Martin Myers).

On the coastal slope where they are generally scarce, small numbers of **Common Goldeneyes** turned up in January. One was at Santa Fe Dam from January 14–22 (Mickey Long), another was at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh and then along Ballona Creek from January 20–February 2 (Kevin Lapp), and eight were on the LA River in Long Beach in Paramount on January 22 (Richard Barth), with two remaining through February 2.

At least one **Barrow's Goldeneye** was seen occasionally at Quail Lake, with reports on December 28 and January 19. It seems that at least three separate birds were present there this winter, though none was particularly easy to refind.

Scarce coastally were four **Common Mergansers** at Malibu Lagoon on December 17 (Mickey Long, Elaine MacPherson) and one at the Ballona Creek mouth on January 10 (Dany Sloan). Inland **Red-breasted Mergansers** were at Descanso Gardens in La Canada on December 22 (Will & Lois Fulmer), at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale on January 15 (Mei Kwan) and at Bonelli Regional Park on February 3 (Ira Blitz). A few others continued at Quail Lake near Gorman, though numbers there had diminished compared to earlier in the season.

Increasing off the California coast but still quite rare in Los Angeles County waters was a **Manx Shearwater** over the Palos Verdes Escarpment on December 22 (Kimball Garrett, Jess Morton).

Rare but regular inland was a **Pacific Loon** at Castaic Lagoon from January 1–23 (Mark & Janet Scheel). Two **Red-necked Grebes** were off Pt. Dume on December 15, with at least one remaining through December 31

(Kimball Garrett). Others were near the Ballona Creek mouth from December 16–23 (Bob Pann) and at Castaic Lagoon from December 22–February 1 (Kimball Garrett).

Following a spate of solid records in the latter part of 2013, the lone report after mid December was a **Brown Booby** off Redondo Beach on December 28 (Bernardo Alps). Though a number of **Blue-footed Boobies** persisted on Anacapa Island and two remained at Lake Skinner in Riverside County, all had apparently left LA County before the end of the year.

Brown Pelicans, unusual even a short distance from the coast, were at El Dorado Park on January 9 (Kim Moore) and over Pasadena on January 12 (Brendan Crill).

Reddish Egrets were at Malibu Lagoon on January 5 (Peter Haines) and at the Los Cerritos Wetlands—this one probably a continuing bird—on January 21 (Jon Feenstra). Also of note was **White-faced Ibis** at the Piute Ponds on the Lancaster CBC on December 14.

A few **Bald Eagles** were in the area, with one continuing at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas, another at Castaic Lagoon on December 22 (Kimball Garrett) and one over Lake Balboa in Van Nuys on January 14 (Daniel Tinoco).

Presumed late migrant **Swainson's Hawks** were reported in Long Beach on December 13 (Jan Wilson) and in Malibu on December 21 (Nikki Cross, Jacob Keen), while a bird at the Piute Ponds from January 18–27 may have wintered locally (Richard Sparks). The first spring migrant was a bird over Pasadena on February 7 (Luke Tiller).

The reliable "**Harlan's**" **Red-tailed Hawk** in the west Antelope Valley was reported through January 26. On the coastal slope where they are scarce, a **Ferruginous Hawk** continued at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in the Baldwin Hills through December 29.

Shorebirds included three **Lesser Yellowlegs** along the LA River in Long Beach from February 2–9 (Kimball Garrett), a very late **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the Piute Ponds on the Lancaster CBC on December 14 (Mary Freeman) and small but above average numbers of **Dunlins** along the lower LA River and at the Ballona Wetlands.

An interesting and perplexing find were three **Inca Doves** at Leo H. Washington Park in southeast Los Angeles on February 6 (Richard Barth). As it turned out, at least seven birds were present here, though their origin—naturally occurring or man assisted—must remain a mystery. Rare away from the Powder Canyon area where a few are resident, a **Common Ground-Dove** was at Hansen Dam on December 21 (Jim Moore).

Owls included a **Burrowing Owl** at the Ballona Wetlands that was seen off and on through January and a **Long-eared Owl** in the Arroyo Seco area of Pasadena present for most of December and January (Linda Zinn). Though known to occur only rarely on the coastal slope in winter, Long-eared Owls are probably more regular than records indicate. They are most often detected by chance when observant residents discover them roosting literally in their own backyards.

Quite unusual in winter was a **Rufous Hummingbird** at Zuma Creek on December 15 (K. Ross, A. Bevilacqua). An **Allen's Hummingbird**—abundant on the coastal slope but unusual on the deserts—was at Division St. and Ave. O in the Antelope Valley on December 31 (John Garrett). The resident subspecies *sedentarius* should be watched for on the deserts, with the caveat migrants of the nominate subspecies can appear by mid January.

Both a male and female **Williamson's Sapsucker** were reported off and on through January at Veteran's Park in Sylmar. Also continuing at there were a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** and **Red-naped Sapsucker**. With a bit of effort and luck it was possible to see all four sapsucker species here in a single day.

Elsewhere, a **Yellow-bellied x Red-naped Sapsucker** continued and caused some confusion at Legg Lake in South El Monte and **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were at Woodlawn Cemetery in Santa Monica from January 11–21 (Joyce Waterman), at Topanga Canyon on December 15 (Lance Benner, Kathy Ellsworth), in La Canada—two birds—from December through January (Linda Moore) and at Harbor Regional Park from February 1–9 (Ed Griffin).

Wrapping up the woodpeckers were seven **Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flickers** found between mid December and early February among the more numerous intergrades which show characters of both subspecies.

Always rare in winter were **Hammond's Flycatchers** at Rosie the Riveter Park in Long Beach on December 14 (Robb Hamilton), at Woodlawn Cemetery in Santa Monica on January 26 (Alex Coffey) and at

Lake Balboa in Van Nuys on February 7 (Lynda Elkin). More expected but still scarce, **Gray Flycatchers** were at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on February 6 (Darren Dowell) and continuing at Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena through February 7.

The **Eastern Phoebe** at Legacy Park in Malibu and the **Vermilion Flycatcher** at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook both continued through January.

Returning for another winter were **Ash-throated Flycatchers** at the Sepulveda Basin through January 2 and at Jim Gilliam Park in Baldwin Hills on December 28 (Richard Barth).

An unresolved find was a **Myiarchus flycatcher** in Atwater Village on December 15 (Jesse Moorman). While this bird looked good for a Brown-crested Flycatcher, it could not be re-found and photos did not rule out Ash-throated.

Tropical Kingbirds included one at the now closed Hollywood Park Racetrack in Inglewood on the December 29 (Jon Fisher), while others continued at Legg Lake in South El Monte, at Harbor Park in Harbor City and at El Dorado Park in Long Beach.

A nice find was a **Thick-billed Kingbird** at Horsethief Canyon Park in San Dimas reported from January 18 through February 3 (Eric Smith). This was the third found in this part of the county, the others being in Claremont in 1984 and in Pomona in 1993. This species exhibits a remarkable degree of site fidelity and the latter bird returned to the same spot for nine consecutive winters. The remainder of the few county records have been concentrated near the south coast and most have involved wintering birds.

Plumbeous Vireos appeared in fewer than usual numbers this winter. They included birds at the Baldwin Hills Recreation Center on January 8 (Richard Barth), at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook on January 17 (Richard Barth), at Veteran's Park in Sylmar on January 25 (Mark Hunter) and at Hermon Park near South Pasadena on January 28 (Richard Barth).

Less common were a **Cassin's Vireos** at Harbor Park in Harbor City through February 9 and in Rancho Dominguez on February 12 (Richard Barth), the latter likely a continuing bird. Also at Harbor Park was a far rarer **Blue-headed Vireo** back for at least its second winter and seen from December 13–January 5 (Dan Maxwell, Matt Brady).

Unseasonal was a **Cliff Swallow** at Hansen Dam on December 14, several weeks ahead of early spring arrival dates (Kimball Garrett).

Fairly common in the Antelope Valley but scarce on the coastal slope were five **Mountain Bluebirds** at LaVerne's Brackett Field from February 3–8 (Tom Miko). The only **Varied Thrush** of the period was at Whittier Narrows on December 14 (Amy Williamson).

Though they are common on the deserts as spring migrants, **Sage Thrashers** are rare on the coastal slope. One of them was in Sylmar on February 10 (Doug Martin).

In addition to a few continuing **Black-and-white Warblers**, new ones turned up at Harbor Regional Park on December 13 (Dan Maxwell, Matt Brady) and at Del Valle Park in Lakewood on December 14 (John Willis).

Rare in winter was a **Nashville Warbler** at the Palos Verdes Golf Club in Palos Verdes Estates on December 22 (Jim Pike) and a **Virginia's Warbler** returning for second winter at the Veteran's Administration in Westwood as of December 28.

An **American Redstart** that persisted at Harbor Park through February 8 was the only wintering bird reported.

Continuing at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh was a **Palm Warbler** reported through January. New Palms turned up along the LA River at Dominguez Gap from January 22–February 7 (Tracy Drake), at Harbor Park on December 23 (Dany Sloan), in Pico Rivera on January 4 (John Garrett), at LA State Historic Park near Chinatown from January 6–12 (Richard Barth) and at Elysian Park through January 22 (Frank & Susan Gilliland).

The **Pine Warbler** wintering at Hansen Dam in Lakeview Terrace was reported through January while the **Black-throated Green Warbler** near the Ballona Freshwater Marsh was not reported after January 3.

Rare in winter was a **Green-tailed Towhee** at the Parkway Nature Trail in Long Beach on December 14 (Robb Hamilton).

Clay-colored Sparrows were at Lacy Park in San Marino from December 13–February 11 (John Garrett), near the Whittier Narrows Nature Center on January 3 (Manuel Duran) and at Hansen Dam on January 18 along with two **Brewer's Sparrows** (Ron Cyger). Also of note was a **Black-chinned Sparrow** near Division Street and Ave. O in the Antelope Valley on January 22 (Dean Greenberg).

Swamp Sparrows were at Legg Lake in South El Monte from December 14–January 26 (Mark & Janet Scheel), at Harbor Regional Park on December 17 (Manuel Duran) and in the Sepulveda Basin on January 5 (Kris Ohlenkamp). Others continued in Culver City and at Hansen Dam.

Among a handful of previously reported birds, at least seven **White-throated Sparrows** were discovered between December 14 and January 8.

Dark-eyed "Pink-sided" Juncos were at Apollo Park in Lancaster on January 25 (Ron Cyger) and at Veteran's Park in Sylmar on January 28 (Brittany O'Connor).

A **Hepatic Tanager** continued at Gonzales Park in Compton through February 9, while more common were **Summer Tanagers** continuing at Creek Park in La Mirada through December 14, at West LA College through December 29, at Rancho Dominguez through February 12 and at the Bette Davis Picnic Area in Glendale through February 5. New **Summer Tanagers** were found along Ramirez Canyon Road in Los Angeles on December 15 (John Lobel, Louis Tucker) and at Ladera Park in Ladera Heights from December 26–February 3 (Richard Barth).

A **Black-headed Grosbeak** wintering in Beverly Hills continued through January and another was found in Westwood on January 29 (Jesse Ellis).

A male **Orchard Oriole** found at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia on December 14 drew many observers and was reported through February 7. **Hooded Orioles** were at West LA College on December 15 (Don Sterba) and at the Huntington Gardens in Pasadena on December 22

(Mark Hunter). A **Baltimore Oriole** was at the Bette Davis Picnic Area in Glendale on February 5 (Josh Chapman).

A lone **Red Crossbill** was at Chialo Flat in the San Gabriel Mountains from January 4–19 (Kimball Garrett), but none were detected in the lowlands.

By mid February, swallows will be moving through in numbers and the rest of our spring passerines won't be far behind. If there's one possible upside to the drought, it's that we expect migrants in dry years tend to in patches of good habitat. Those well watered green spots are all the more obvious in drier years and should attract plenty of birds.

Coastally, loons, scoters, brants and others will be visible as they stream northward—or as we're in LA County, westward. Shorebirds, while largely a summer and fall phenomenon at least as far as rarities are concerned, will be wearing alternate plumages and are to be looked for in all the usual places.

As with so many human pursuits, that which is rare is most prized. In the birding world, that means vagrants. Late May will offer the best chance for those, yet spring migration from start to finish is an amazing event to witness. There is enormous variety and much to learn about timing and distribution. It's also something that can be experienced by traveling thousands of miles or literally in your own yard. 🐦

Los Angeles Audubon Monthly Program Presentations

Wednesday, March 12, 2014
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

"Careful Learning and Teaching About Birds for All — Absolute Beginners to Amazing Experts"

Presented by *Bob Barnes*

This program is designed for all those interested in birds, from absolute beginners to amazing experts. In a comprehensive presentation, Bob Barnes will help attendees strengthen their foundations for observing birds, learning birds, learning bird vocalizations, leading field trips (especially for beginners), teaching bird/birding classes, backyard birding, rare bird observation, beginning birding, classroom teaching of birds and birding, and more. Please bring binoculars and a variety of field guides (e.g. Kaufman, National Geographic, Peterson, Sibley, Stokes, etc.) so YOU can decide through careful observation which guide is best at representing specific bird species. Success guaranteed for all attendees who participate! You can't beat that!



Bob Barnes at Migrant Corner, Photo by Mary Freeman



Coreopsis growing on Anacapa Island. Photo by Stuart Wilson

Wednesday, April 9, 2014
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Joan Lentz presents:

"A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region"

Discover the incredible diversity of the Santa Barbara region. This first-ever comprehensive nature guide to the region contains over 400 color photographs and illustrations, maps and charts, a species list, and sample field trips to entice the reader on a journey from tidepools to mountain peaks.

Explore the many habitats and their plant and animal life. The Santa Barbara region - including San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties - contains an extraordinary variety of plants and animals. Due to its Mediterranean climate and location along the California coast, our area is home to unique species found nowhere else. This book tells you what they are and where to find them. Learn from one of the region's most knowledgeable teachers.

Joan Easton Lentz is an author, teacher, and research associate at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. For over thirty-five years, she has been a serious student of the natural history of the Santa Barbara region.

Joan will be selling her book the night of the meeting.

Los Angeles Audubon's monthly evening program presentations are held the 2nd Wednesday of the month (except for July and August) at the AUDUBON CENTER AT DEBS PARK. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and are over at 9:30 p.m. Come early enjoy the nature, share your birding interests with like minded birders. Stay and enjoy the slideshow presentations.

All are welcome!

Audubon Center at Debs Park
4700 North Griffin Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90031
Phone: (323) 221-2255
<http://debspark.audubon.org>

MORE INFORMATION:
Call Los Angeles Audubon (323) 550-8533 or
email membership@laaudubon.org.

Drivers needed! Save the Earth and Carpool! Call (323) 550-8533 or email membership@laaudubon.org. If you are able to carry a passenger to the event, call with your City/Zip Code/Phone Number. We will add you to our carpool database and help coordinate a ride-share. Please leave a message if your call is answered by the machine.

Upcoming Annual LAAS Member's Meeting—Watch for announcement at www.laaudubon.org

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.

CARPPOOLING IS ENCOURAGED, call (323) 550-8533 to provide your information to join the LAAS CARPOOL DATABASE. We will attempt to connect you with other birders interested in sharing a ride to our events.

Topanga State Park Birdwalk

1st Sunday of every month
Mar. 2 and Apr. 6
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

2nd Sunday of the month
Mar. 2 and Apr. 18
Time: 8:30–noon

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 look for early spring migrants such as warblers, flycatchers, swallows, orioles. Resident birds have begun to nest providing a whole new way of watching birds.

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, 2600 FRANKLIN CANYON DR, BEVERLY HILLS 90210. 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
Mar. 16 and Apr. 20
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.

Directions: 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
3rd Saturday of the month
Mar. 15
Time: 8:00–noon

ALERT! The Kenneth Hahn Park bird walk will not be offered this **April** as the 3rd Saturday coincides with EARTH DAY celebrations throughout the county. We encourage you to participate in an activity in your community.

Leaders: *Eric & Ann Brooks, 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 and Cooper's Hawk. We will also look for wintering birds such as Merlin, Rufous-crowned, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows among others.

Directions: 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. KHSRA, 4100 S LA CIENEGA BLVD, LOS ANGELES 90056 **Binoculars provided.**

Bird Walk more information contact Eleanor Osgood at birdwalks@laudubon.org or (310) 839-5420.

Field Trip Listings



Photograph by Liz Muraoka

Mary and Nick Freeman

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.

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 may be shared with other confirmed participants unless you specify otherwise at sign-up. When carpooling, remember to offer compensation to your driver in these times of spiking gas prices.

'FEE REQUIRED' RESERVATIONS

Mail fees to: (separate checks per trip)

Susan Castor—LAAS Field Trips
PO Box 411301
Los Angeles CA 90041

'NO FEE' RESERVATIONS / MORE INFORMATION

Email: membership@laaudubon.org
Phone: (323) 550-8533

Please leave voice message if no answer.

Please support LAAS field trips with your donations.

*Share your photos and stories with other LAAS fans on
Facebook and Twitter.
[facebook.com / LosAngelesAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/LosAngelesAudubon)
[twitter.com / LAAudubon](https://twitter.com/LAAudubon).*

Saturday, March 1

Bonelli Regional Park

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Rod Higbie* is a resident of the park, and knows where all the birds are at! Bonelli Regional Park is a remarkable island of habitat. It contains extensive coastal sage habitat, along with a large lake surrounded by parkland. Birds regularly seen in the past include California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Greater Roadrunner, and occasionally Bald Eagle. 200 other species throughout the year. DIRECTIONS: From LA, take the 10 or 210 Fwy east towards San Dimas to the top stretch of the 57 Fwy. Proceed N from the 10, or S from the 210 on the 57 Fwy to the Via Verde exit just N of the 10/57 interchange (at the bottom of Kellogg Hill). If coming from the N, turn left onto Via Verde, and left into the "Park and Ride" lot. If coming from the S, take the Via Verde offramp and proceed Rt. to the "Park and Ride" lot on the Rt. We will meet here at 8:00 a.m. to carpool since there is a \$10.00/car park entrance fee. Rod will continue after lunch if there is interest. There are picnic tables and facilities. Bring lunch, if you plan to bird past noon.

Saturday, March 15

Small Owls of the San Gabriels

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP, 10 Max.

Leaders *Mary and Nick Freeman*. We will be looking for, Northern Saw-whet, Northern Pygmy and Western Screech-Owls. Sign up, and meet at the bottom of Angeles Crest Highway at 3 p.m. DIRECTIONS: Take the 210 Fwy to La Canada, exiting at Angeles Crest Hwy, turn uphill, and turn right into the second small street, and quickly left onto the ACH frontage road. Meet along the first 50-yard stretch, fed and gassed up. Dress accordingly in quiet cold weather gear - no nylon if possible. This trip is being offered earlier in the year than usual, so sub-freezing temps possible. Bring a brown bag dinner for up the hill, a small walking flashlight, binoculars, cameras OK, powerful flashlight optional. LAAS telephone / email sign-up mandatory. 10 max.

March 22 & 23 Weekend

Anza-Borrego State Park Birds, Wildflowers, Insects, and More

\$20 LAAS MEMBER FEE / \$40 FOR NON-LAAS, LIMITED SIGN-UP

Leader *Kurt Leuschner* is a Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert in Palm Desert. He specializes in field ornithology, entomology, and desert natural history. On Saturday and Sunday we will car-caravan in and around Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, from Julian to the desert floor. This is a peak time for both wildflowers and the annual migration of Swainson's Hawks! High points over the years include: hundreds of Swainson's Hawks in migration, LeConte's Thrasher, Bald Eagles nesting, Wild Turkeys, Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, Desert Lilies, Long-eared Owl, Chuckwalla, Baja Collared Lizard, Great Purple Hairstreak and Silvery Blue. Every year is different. Scenery is spectacular!

Suggested accommodations in Borrego Springs: Borrego Palm Canyon Campground in the State Park (reserve through www.reserveamerica.com), Hacienda del Sol motel (760-767-5442) is quite near our meeting point, Stanlund Motel (760-767-5501) and Palm Canyon Resort (800-242-0044) are just down the road. Anticipate a busy weekend and make your reservations months ahead of time. We will meet at 6:45 a.m. both days in the parking lot of the Borrego Desert Nature Center (address: 652 Palm Canyon Drive), just west of Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs. Finish up around lunchtime on Sunday. Net profits go to the Ralph Schreiber Grant Fund. Limit 20 people. Reserve by mail with \$20 fee for LAAS members / \$40 non-LAAS fee; cell #, and Email address to LAAS. Email attachments with more details will be sent later.

Field Trips Listings Cont'd.

Sunday, March 30

Wind Wolves Preserve

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP, 20 MAX.

Leaders: *Guy Commeau*, with a guide from The Wildlands Conservancy. The 95,000 acre preserve stretches from rolling grass and saltbush on the valley floor (west of Grapevine), to California blue oak and valley oak, transitioning to juniper, pinyon pine, and eventually ponderosa pine and big cone spruce. Some riparian habitat. The 200 elk that now roam the preserve may eventually expand to 2,000 animals, helping California Condors live in a more natural state. Guy has visited the Preserve many times, and is drawn to the spectacular and varied scenery. Resident birds such as Burrowing Owl and Golden Eagle, migrant songbirds, as well as real possibilities for big cats and other wildlife.

DIRECTIONS: I-5 north to Maricopa Hwy (CA-166) west for 10 miles, turn left at Preserve sign and continue for 3 miles, and turn right at sign and continue straight for 1.7 miles to the Preserve headquarters. Meet here at 8:00 a.m. Leave LA around 6:00 AM if you drive fast, or camp at HQ Saturday evening (well-equipped, visitor's center, small optional donation), or hotels in Lebec or Maricopa. Best Western Lebec is \$85-100 (good, but ask for away from Fwy), Motel 8 Maricopa (good reviews) is \$48. Limited to 20 participants. Sign up by phone, letter or email with LAAS. We will carpool into high-clearance vehicles. Bring FRS radios and lunch.

April 5 & 6 Weekend

Owens Valley Grouse Trip

\$55 FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP

Mary and Nick Freeman lead. Greater Sage Grouse on the lek, Sooty Grouse, Swainson's Hawk, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, breathtaking scenery, more shorebirds and other migrants. Mary's 23rd year leading! Early A.M. Sage Grouse this year for photos! Incredible scenic photo ops. Meet early Saturday and Sunday mornings in Bishop up Hwy 395, at Jack's Restaurant. Limited to 20. To sign up, send \$55 (Schreiber Grant fundraiser), phone #, and email to LAAS. RESERVE ROOMS EARLY. Motel 6, Mountain View Inn, Bishop Elms are some of many hotels in Bishop. More details later in emailer.

Sunday, April 13

Malibu Lagoon and Points North

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader, *Irwin Woldman*, will be pointing out waterbirds, gulls and shorebirds from the shore and at the estuary's two new viewing towers, continuing on to nearby Legacy Park. Thereafter on to Solstice Canyon. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Malibu Lagoon kiosk. DIRECTIONS: To get here, take PCH N/W over the bridge in Malibu, and park free on either side of PCH after the estuary turn on the left, or turn right on Cross Creek Road for free parking along the road (near Starbucks), or turn left into the Malibu estuary lot to park for a fee. Cross PCH, and walk to the kiosk across from Cross Creek Road. Bring water, sunblock, and a scope if you have one, for a morning of birding.

Saturday, April 26

Techniques for Better Bird Photography

Marina del Rey / Santa Monica

\$40 FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 10

Your workshop host will be *Christopher Taylor*, an accomplished and published local photographer who has conducted similar workshops here and back East. While Christopher is most experienced with Canon equipment, he'll provide techniques that will enhance your ability to capture outstanding images of birds no matter what brand you're using, and should be able to help reproduce camera effects on other brands.

During the field lab, shorebirds and gulls should highlight. Christopher will be addressing a basic approach to one of the most difficult arenas of photography. Christopher does not typically use flash at all, and he'll explain why, and how to compensate in various light and wind conditions. He'll also offer guidance on when it's best to hand-hold a shorter lens and when it is best to use a tripod and more magnification. He will discuss how to make your photographs more captivating by incorporating habitat into your frame. Learn how to use bokeh effects to help emphasize your subject. He will cover different aperture, lighting

and metering techniques to help make your photographs POP! Bring your DSLR camera and telephoto lens. DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot at 7:30 a.m. 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. Early morning lot or street parking is usually not a problem.

After a nearby lunch (with Christopher if you wish), we will meet in a classroom setting at a Santa Monica office, where Christopher will review basic post-production Photoshop techniques, and tips to make good photos great and great photos truly eye-catching. A charged laptop with Photoshop loaded, and the day's photos downloaded, is useful but not required. Office directions will be provided before the lunch break. Finish up around 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 3

South Bay Parks

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader *Tracy Drake* visits many of the South Bay parks regularly, including Madrona Marsh where she works. Colorful warblers and other passerines should headline. Tracy will visit Alondra Park, Madrona Marsh, Sand Dune Park, and Wilderness Park if time allows. Start and finish at Alondra Park, for carpools. DIRECTIONS: To get here, get yourself from the 405 Fwy to Redondo Beach Blvd. heading east. Turn left (N) into the large parking lot at Yukon Avenue, turn right and park by the concrete walkway. Walk just to the lake, where we will meet at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch, especially if you might carpool, as we may bird until 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 4

Hansen Dam Riparian Birds

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Kimball Garrett*. An exploration of one of our region's premier "Important Bird Areas". Expect Bell's Vireos, Yellow-breasted Chats, Blue Grosbeaks and a variety of other birds of winter woodlands and mulefat scrub, along with numerous landbird migrants, waterbirds and marsh birds. We will be walking up to three miles, sometimes on narrow trails. DIRECTIONS: Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hansen Dam Recreation Center along Foothill Blvd. just west of the Osborne/Lake View Terrace exit off the 210 Fwy. DIRECTIONS: For those coming from the 5 Fwy, exit at Osborne and go north on Osborne to Foothill Blvd.; turn right (east) on Foothill Blvd. and go about half a mile to the entrance to the Recreation Center. (Note: Our meeting area is NOT the main Hansen Dam Park that is reached off Dronfield Avenue). We should finish up around 11:00 a.m.

May 10 & 11 Weekend

Mojave Area

SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE

Leaders: *Nick Freeman and Don White*. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! DIRECTIONS: Saturday: Take Hwy 14 about 4 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops, turn left into the golf course parking lot past the fenced driving range. Meet here at 6:30 a.m. Sunday: Veer right heading north out of Mojave, take Hwy 14 for about 20 miles over the riverbed to Jawbone Canyon Road on the left, and meet right at the turnoff at the ranger station parking lot at 6:30 a.m. We will carpool to Butterbred Springs, and finish the day at Apollo Park or Piute Ponds. LAAS sign-up with cell # & email mandatory. 12 max. Bring lunches, sun block, FRS radios. Reserve rooms (Motel 6 or other) in Mojave, or Best Western in CA City.

Sunday, May 25

Santa Anita Canyon

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *David Koeppe*. DIRECTIONS: Take the 210 Fwy toward Arcadia, and take Santa Anita Avenue N to the parking lot at the very end of the road. Meet at the Gabrielino Trail trailhead at the bottom of the lot. 4 mile RT moderately strenuous walk through oak and chaparral canyons. This area was spared by the recent Station Fire. Good selection of breeding birds including warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Tanager, and Band-tailed Pigeon. Dipper possible. Pack in a lunch and water. Meeting time 7:00 a.m. A Forest Service Adventure Pass is necessary.

END FIELD TRIPS LISTINGS

CHAPTER MEMBERS — 'RARE AND LOCAL' TO 'ABUNDANT'

Chances are this article reached you through your chapter membership in the Los Angeles Audubon Society, your membership in the National Audubon Society, or both. With three pathways, things might get a little confusing. What's important is our shared interest in birds.

For those not already chapter members, we hope you will consider becoming a chapter member of Los Angeles Audubon Society. Your dues directly support the chapter's activities best summed up by our mission statement:

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

To become a chapter member, simply follow this link:

<http://losangelesaudubon.org/index.php/donations>

...and please consider sharing this article with like-minded folks.

Los Angeles Audubon Society encourages membership in the National Audubon Society, an organization which does so much good on a national level.

With your support and participation, Los Angeles Audubon Society chapter members will move from 'rare and local' to 'abundant.'

Sincerely,

Brad Rumble
LAAS Board Officer At-Large



LAAS MEMBERSHIP FORM

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
Mail this form, and include a check made payable to LAAS - Membership:

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

LAAS Membership Levels

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership ...\$25	\$ _____
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An introductory membership to the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:

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

Be sure to write "C3ZC03OZ" on the NAS application to assure assignment to the Los Angeles chapter. For NAS renewals, use the form provided in the National Audubon magazine, "Audubon."

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