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WESTERN Tanager

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"BIRDIES" OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER | YOUNG AUTHORS | DISNEY CONSERVATION HERO AWARD



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

Los Angeles Audubon Society is non-profit organization and a certified chapter of the National Audubon Society.

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

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Articles, letters drawings and photographs concerning conservation, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for submission. Please send copy as Microsoft Word, RTF documents, or plain text files to westernanager@laaudubon.org. Photos should be high resolution (300ppi) .jpg or .tif files. Submissions are due the 1st of the month to be included in the following issue. All rights reserved. All photographs are used by permission and are copyrighted material of the credited photographers.

Editor Linda Oberholtzer, westernanager@laaudubon.org

Design/Layout Susan Castor, susancastor@laaudubon.org

Scientific Advisor Kimball Garrett, kgarrett@nhm.org

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ON THE COVER

An elegant Snowy Egret carefully scans the lake water for food at the Marriott Manhattan Beach Golf Course in Manhattan Beach, CA. (photo courtesy of Marriott Manhattan Beach Golf Course and Audubon International) Story by Lisa Freeman on page 3.



THE BIRDS OF LOS ANGELES NEED YOU.

Become a member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society to directly help the birds of our region. Your membership supports the organization's efforts in the following areas:

- **RECREATION** Join other members of the local birding community on field trips, bird walks and trips for the beginning to advanced birder. Join us at the beach, the mountains and places in between.
- **EDUCATION** Our outdoor education program has become a national model. Thousands of urban youth gain valuable insight into local ecosystems, including the Ballona Wetlands, the Baldwin Hills and their own school yard habitats. Our research grants support university students in biology and environmental sciences. Our lectures, workshops and acclaimed *Western Tanager* newsletter serve nature lovers throughout Los Angeles.
- **CONSERVATION** Los Angeles Audubon Society leads Los Angeles County in citizen science to monitor and protect habitat for birds and other wildlife through federal, state and local policy, programs and partnerships. We help resolve conflicts between urban populations and wildlife via education, advocacy and action.
- **RESTORATION** Our revitalization projects are transforming urban wastelands, parklands and school yards into prime habitat for birds and wildlife. Our Audubon at Home program helps Angelenos create native plant gardens which attract and support birds.

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SANCTUARY GOLF PROGRAM NURTURES BIRDIES OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER

BY LISA FREEMAN

FOR MOST GOLFERS, THERE'S NOTHING MORE SATISFYING THAN bagging a few birdies on the golf course. But more and more, golfers are enjoying birdies of a different kind, thanks to programs like the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

A flash of yellow in a treetop; a shadow soaring overhead; a sudden splash in a pond. Those may be the sights and sounds of golf balls flying around your golf course... or they could be the sights and sounds of something a bit more unexpected: Yellow Warblers, Red-tailed Hawks or Mallard Ducks.

Some of my favorite bird sightings in the US mainland have been on golf courses: a pair of Western Tanagers at The Lakes Golf course in El Segundo, CA; Bluebirds at The Heroes Golf Course in West Los Angeles; Snowy Egrets at Marriott's Manhattan Beach Golf Club, Manhattan Beach and a variety of Hawks at Rancho Park Golf Course, Los Angeles.

The golf world has come a long way over the last decade to invite nature back to the golf course and reverse what was once a growing stigma about the over-use of fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals that were said to be polluting ground and surface water, harming wildlife and creating ill will with conservation-minded citizens and municipalities. Back in 2008, a report from the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) stated that the golf industry needed to act quickly to address the issues of water supply and conservation. Without action, it said, the industry would be left vulnerable to on-going damage to its reputation and increasing legislation from policymakers, municipalities and environmentalists.

Since that time, much has happened. From solar-powered golf carts to new technologies in turf grass, sprinkler systems and carbon-neutral engineering, the golf industry

has worked hard to develop a comprehensive sustainability agenda and a greener reputation.

Perhaps no program has been more integral to golf's "go green" success story than the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP). This program began as a cooperative effort between the United States Golf Association (USGA) and Audubon International, a non-profit that promotes ecologically-sound land management and the conservation of natural resources and wildlife.

Audubon International is an environmental non-profit that works with multiple industries to improve their environmental management. The golf industry represents the majority of its membership and golf courses in the program pay annual fees to support ACSP's voluntary mission-based educational programs.

"The USGA has been the perfect partner in helping us grow the sanctuary program," said Tara Donadio, Audubon International's program director. "Their funding was integral in building the resources we needed to kick-start the ACSP."

When the organizations first were introduced, the USGA was intrigued with Audubon's ideas of stewardship. They invited Ronald G. Dodson, ACSP founder and then president of Audubon International, to speak at a USGA educational session at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference. That conference led to the creation of the USGA-sponsored sanctuary program in 1991.

The USGA provided ACSP with over \$2 million in financial support to offset fees associated with administering the new program at golf courses. In addition, they partnered to create educational and communication materials for the ACSP.

Since then, nearly 3000 golf courses from 30 countries around the world have joined ACSP and more than 842 facilities in the United States have been designated



Flame-colored Tanager: Tanagers are some of the most colorful songbirds you might see on a golf course in southern California. This one was spotted at Alisa Viejo Country Club, a par 72 golf course in Orange County, CA (Photo courtesy of Tom Grey and Audubon International.)



as Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries.

Audubon International provides each golf course with one-on-one assistance in devising and sustaining an appropriate environmental plan. Courses certification can take, on average, up to three years. To receive certification, golf courses must fulfill requirements in six categories:

1. Environmental Planning
2. Wildlife and Habitat Management
3. Community Outreach and Education
4. Chemical Use Reduction and Safety
5. Water Conservation
6. Water Quality Management.

One of the biggest changes courses can make is to develop a comprehensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, minimizing fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, or using organic formulas.

“We get very positive comments from courses which have done this,” said Donadio. “Not only do they get see a return on investment in terms of money savings from reductions of chemicals, and an increase in wildlife, but they see a positive community reaction. We promote many fun ways to educate and engage the community in wildlife awareness experiences, such as working with schools to build bird boxes for the courses, or inviting the community to do bird sightings and species counts.”

The types and varieties of wildlife that can show up on a golf course vary with the region. Donadio reports that songbirds, herons, ducks, geese, hawks, osprey and eagles will often return year after year to certified courses. The courses attract species of the four-legged variety too, including coyotes in California, elk in Montana, foxes in New Jersey, and kangaroos in Australia.

“We’re proud that our work has helped thousands of golf courses world-wide to save water, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce chemical use,” added Donadio. “We believe that we’ve created standards for sustainability

that golf course property managers and designers will think about when they’re designing a new property. In fact, our Signature Program works with golf course architects to create sustainable plans that are ideal for their specific ecosystems.”

CALIFORNIA’S PROGRESS

Many of the best-rated golf courses in the world are ACSP courses. In California, a few of them include The Links at Spanish Bay and the Pebble Beach Golf Links in Pebble Beach, the PGA West Courses and La Quinta Resort and Club in La Quinta, and Furnace Creek Golf Course in Death Valley. Yet, currently there are only just over 60 golf courses in California that have been awarded certification by the ACSP. And with more than 900 golf courses in the state, that leaves a lot of work to be done.

The California drought is encouraging more courses to consider certification.

“While we want golf courses to come to us organically, sometimes it’s water management issues that trigger courses to call us,” Donadio said.

According to Donadio, 100 more courses in California currently are working towards certification, many due to regional water restrictions. The ACSP can work with the courses to provide helpful guidelines, such as having golf courses water greens at night, installing sprinkler systems that are customized to specific areas, and installing water-monitoring devices and moisture meters. * The program also provides guidelines for water reclamation and recirculation.

In the Los Angeles area, only one golf course has achieved ACSP certification to date: the Marriott Manhattan Beach Golf Course. This par 3 executive course in Manhattan Beach, with its palm trees and its lake, is like a tiny, green oasis in the middle of the sprawling Los Angeles concrete jungle.

The Marriott Manhattan Beach Golf Course has been certified since 2011, according to Valleycrest Golf



Killdeer with eggs | Photo by Laurie Dann



Eurasian Collared Dove | Photo by Tom Grey

Course Superintendent Seth Warden, who oversees maintenance of the course. Warden said that getting the certification was part of an overall strategy by Marriott Hotels to certify all of their golf courses and to better focus on conservation and resource management.

But for Ted Wells, Marriott Manhattan Beach Golf Course Manager and a longtime member of the NCGOA, there was another good reason to get certification: "It was just the right thing to do," said Wells.

"In Manhattan beach there's not much open land," Wells explained. "In the middle of an urban region it's nice to have a park-like area with water and wildlife. We are a refuge for geese, ducks, raccoons, skunks, possums, foxes and squirrels."

To make this transition from a typical urban golf course to a conservation-minded ASCP course was not all that difficult, Wells said, thanks to the guidelines provided by Audubon International's six-step program.

"We had to adopt a different mindset to change the way we did things," Wells said. "Most importantly, we have implemented an Integrated Pest Management approach which has significantly reduced our use of pesticides, herbicides, nitrates and other chemicals that are harmful to wildlife, people and the environment in general. When I was a kid people used DDT and you just can't do that anymore. We're very conscious of what we put in the ground and water. We use biodegradable and organic applications to manage the algae in our lake and streams. We also have a very hands-on approach to managing aquatic weeds."

"We're raking aquatic weeds to the sides and hand-pulling the leaves instead of spraying," said Warden. "It's labor-intensive but that's what we have to do. We have very limited pesticide and fertilizer applications."

In terms of dealing with the drought, Warden says the course has been using reclaimed water for six or seven years.

"One great thing about using reclaimed water is that the source is high in nitrogen, so when we're watering we're also fertilizing at the same time, which is a very sustainable approach," Warden said.

Another unique approach the course uses instead of pesticides is mosquito fish.

"Most courses that have lakes have mosquitoes," said Wells. "Our lake has mosquito fish! They're about the size of a guppy and they eat mosquitoes, so we never have to worry about using pesticides to control mosquitoes. LA County sometimes comes and harvests our mosquito fish to use elsewhere around the city. For some reason the mosquito fish thrive in our lake."


Another of the ASCP requirements was that the golf course develop habitat areas on the course.

"Our wildlife habitat areas have made a difference in our golf course appearance," Wells said. "They have also attracted waterfowl. Some of the geese and ducks have been coming here for years. We know it's the same birds; we can recognize some of them. There's one who has a bad leg; he's been coming back for a long time. We counted the geese three years ago and there were 182 that migrated in over the season. This year there were 75. It goes up and down. You can see the geese population falling off. But more have been coming in this year. For me, there's nothing in the world cuter than a baby goose."

Some golfers would take issue with having waterfowl on the golf course. Many feel that ducks and geese are a nuisance and leave the course unclean. Some courses control the problem with falconers and hawks, or radio controlled gliders. The Manhattan Beach Marriott has come up with its own unique way to ease the problem.

"Our golf course superintendent has a couple of herding dogs that keep our waterfowl within certain boundaries," said Wells. "The dogs just gently herd them off the greens and keep them near the water, so there is less damage to the course. Also, if guests express concerns about the geese making a mess, we explain to them about our certification and conservation efforts, and all of a sudden the geese are not a problem. They see the bigger picture and they feel proud to be golfing on a course that is involved in conservation."

"We hope that more people will appreciate it in the years ahead. The way urban areas are developing, there won't be any wildlife if we don't do something. It's up to us. It comes down to protecting natural resources and sustainability. Audubon International has been a source of motivation. Their program directs us in areas where we needed to be directed. Even though it might cost us more to be certified due to the many labor-intensive things we do, we're just not interested in irresponsible environmental practices; it's healthier for our golfers and our environment."

"We're treating the golf course like we would our own backyard. It really is our backyard. We take a walk every day and enjoy walking on the grass and seeing the birds and wildlife. It's the way to go – the right thing to do for now and the future." 

Lisa Freeman is a public relations professional, freelance writer, former editor-in-chief of Ladies Links Fore Golf magazine and a birding enthusiast who has travelled the world in search of exotic birds and birding adventures. You can reach Lisa at lisafreeman@verizon.net

INTERPRETING NATURE

From Los Angeles to California's wild landscapes, and back.

By Emily Cobar, Greenhouse Program Alumna, and Stacey Vigallon, Director of Environmental Education

THE BALDWIN HILLS GREENHOUSE PROGRAM IS NOW IN ITS eighth year, and we are thrilled to see our students move on to bigger adventures academically and career-wise. But, we're even more thrilled when they come back! Bringing new skill sets, ideas, and motivation as early-career professionals, our alumni have become an essential component to our environmental education, habitat restoration, and bird monitoring programs. Emily Cobar was a member of the very first cohort in the Greenhouse Program in 2008, spending her junior and senior years of high school in our program. She completed her undergraduate degree at UC Santa Cruz, served as an Environment for the Americas Shorebird Intern, and now works for Los Angeles Audubon. In the narrative below, Emily describes the role that nature has played in shaping her career goals.

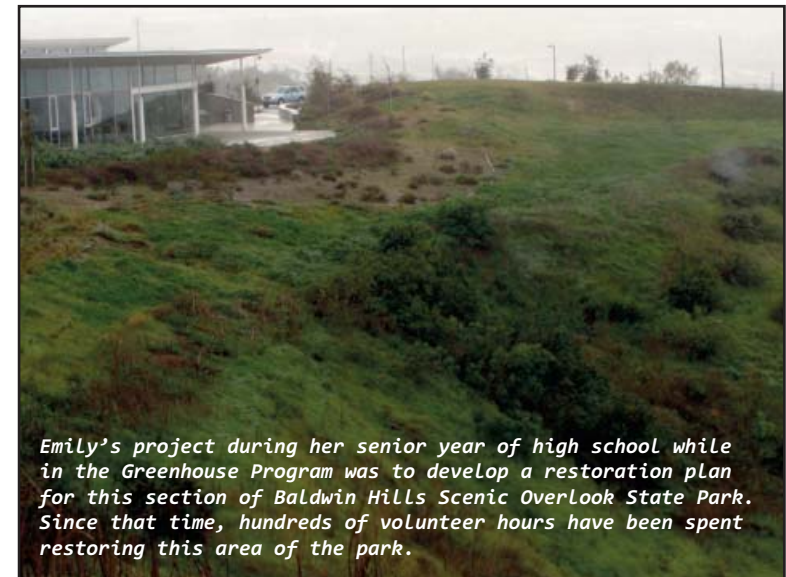
If I look at my drawings of what I wanted to be when I'm all grown up that I did at age eleven, I would see a lawyer, a model, and a photographer. Not either/or, but all of those professions at the same time. However, it all changed when I had my very first connection to the natural world. In eleventh grade, I had the opportunity to attend a backpacking trip at Yosemite with eleven other students. I was inspired by our two leaders who taught us how to survive in the wilderness and taught us the history of Yosemite. They were so knowledgeable and seemed so passionate about teaching students about nature. At the end of the trip, I remembered that I wanted to be just like them - bridging the gap between inner-city kids and their connection to nature.

I was born and raised in Los Angeles and have Guatemalan roots. When I think of my connection to nature during my childhood it would be roller-skating through an urban park with my brother and catching lizards in our backyard. We didn't do much camping or hiking, but we spent a lot of our time outdoors, stayed in the city. In high school, I became involved with the Eco-club where we ran an in-school recycling program and engaged in the school garden. Through this program, I developed a love for the environment and wanted to do as much as I could to keep it safe for both people and animals. The Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program got started my eleventh grade year. I applied to this competitive program and became an intern for two years until the end of my high school career. My first year I conducted an experiment on Prickly Pear Cactus seeds to study germination rates. My second year I developed a restoration plan for a site at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook Park with another intern. This was the first I was engaged with science and community and decided I wanted to go in the field of science.

In high school, I was heavily involved with many programs such as Upward Bound, Leadership, the Young Lawyers Program and also played tennis. I was always active and that habit stuck with me through college. Ever since I got to UC Santa Cruz I sought opportunities to volunteer, work, or study in the field. In 2011, I interned at the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, where I was later hired and worked until I graduated. While working at the Arboretum, I networked with staff and professors and other students. In 2012, the for-



Emily Cobar (on the far left) was part of the very first cohort of Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program Interns in 2008.



Emily's project during her senior year of high school while in the Greenhouse Program was to develop a restoration plan for this section of Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. Since that time, hundreds of volunteer hours have been spent restoring this area of the park.

mer director of the Arboretum, Brett Hall, advised me to apply for the California Naturalist Program. I was granted a scholarship for the program that engages the community, science, and environmental stewardship. We had fieldtrips following lectures on various topics, such as geology, ornithology, herpetology, hydrology, etc. I enjoyed learning about the natural world and I began using my naturalists skills every single day since the program, including observing, journaling, sketching and so on.

My third year in college I heard about Natural History Field Quarter that UCSC offers each spring. Students in this field-based class develop their naturalists skills while learning about California's flora, fauna, land, and resource management first hand. This was an amazing experience to enhance my naturalist skills with 27 other students with similar interests and values. We didn't just learn from nature and from our two wonderful professors but from each other. However, one thing I noticed from this group was that I was the only person of color. I also noticed that the UCSC Environmental Studies Department didn't have that many people of color either. One of my conclusions as to the reason for this was that not many urban people of color are exposed to the natural sciences or find their connection to nature. After I graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a B.A in Environmental Studies, I moved back to my hometown, Los Angeles, and aspired to inspire young naturalists.

Earlier this year, I was offered an internship with Environment for the Americas, an organization that focuses on migratory bird conservation and education, in partnership with Los Angeles Audubon. Through this internship I conducted shorebird surveys and outreached in community events about the importance of birds. I also guided nature walks in various locations including the LA Arboretum and my community's local

urban park, Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. The best part of this internship for me was networking with other LA-based organizations with the same interest and values. For example, I met people from East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and LA Rooted who fight for community health and the environment. One of my proud accomplishments would be guiding families from the Central American Resource Center in nature walks in Kenneth Hahn Park, Debs Park, Franklin Canyon, and the LA Arboretum. That way it wasn't only outreach to kids but their parents, most of whom grew up in rural areas in Central American countries. At the end of the day, we would reflect on the trip and parents had great appreciation for the natural areas within the city. Their words of gratitude always inspired me to continue in environmental education and outreach.

The internship ended at the end of July, and since then I have been working full-time with LA Audubon. I work with Carlos Jauregui, who was a former intern with Environment for the Americas and who I have also worked with at the Audubon Center in Debs Park's Summer Day Camp in 2013. We work on habitat restoration projects in Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook and Kenneth Hahn Park, conduct California Least Tern and Snowy Plover surveys, and work in environmental education. Every week we work with Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program students in habitat restoration and engage them in community events while connecting to the natural world. It is great to lead students in the program I once was part of and I really hope to help inner-city youth develop naturalist skills. When I was in high school, I saw nature as an escape from "reality" but now I see how nature is part of our reality and there are ways to connect with nature in the city. I feel blessed and am grateful for all the people I've met through my internships and jobs. 🐦



As an Environmental Studies major, Emily participated in UC Santa Cruz's competitive Natural History Field Quarter program. This program engages a small team of students in travel to and study of ecosystems throughout California, with students camping and backpacking for most of the quarter.



After graduating from UCSC, Emily was selected to participate in the Environment for the Americas Celebrate Shorebirds internship in 2015. Here, she is pictured at an Earth Day tabling event in Downtown Los Angeles with Los Angeles Audubon board member Robert Jeffers, Director of Environmental Education Stacey Vigallon, and Environment for the Americas Coordinator Natasha Kerr.

Young Authors

The California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*)

By Dessi Sieburth

THE CALIFORNIA GNATCATCHER MAY BE A DRAB LITTLE SONGBIRD, but it is of great importance in California. The California Gnatcatcher is an all gray bird with a black tail, which has white spots on the sides. The male has a black crown in breeding plumage. This gnatcatcher is very similar to the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher of Arizona and Mexico, and it can only be distinguished from the Black-tailed by range, a darker gray body overall, and less white in the tail. The California Gnatcatcher and the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher were once lumped into a single species until they were split in 1993. The California Gnatcatcher is also similar to the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, which is paler gray, lacks a black crown, and has much more white in the tail. The California Gnatcatcher is a secretive bird and forages in low shrubs. It can most easily be identified by listening for its distinctive falling, cat-like *meeew*. Because it is non-migratory throughout its range, it can be found year-round.

Four subspecies of the California Gnatcatcher are recognized: *californica*, *pontilis*, *margaritae*, *atwoodi*. The *californica* subspecies is also known as the Coastal California Gnatcatcher and is found here in southwestern California. The subspecies *pontilis* and *margaritae* are found in southern Baja, and the subspecies *atwoodi* is found just south of the U.S in northwest Baja.

Coastal sage scrub is the preferred habitat of the Coastal California Gnatcatcher. This habitat is primarily made up of sage brush, black sage, buckwheat, and cacti on hills along the coast of Los Angeles, with a few populations inland. I have seen it in Los Angeles at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Area. It also can be found near the Montebello Hills area.

The Coastal California Gnatcatcher has been on the endangered species list since 1993. There are approximately 3000-5000 breeding pairs in California. There are

two major threats to this bird. The first threat is loss of its coastal sage scrub habitat due to development. Over 70% of this rare habitat has been lost in total, and since 1993, over 33% has been developed. The second threat is Brown-headed Cowbirds, which are brood parasites. The cowbirds lay their eggs in gnatcatchers' nests, and the gnatcatchers raise the cowbird's young instead of their own.

The future of the Coastal California Gnatcatcher continues to be uncertain. Housing developers like to see this bird off the endangered species list so they can develop coastal sage scrub habitat. They argue that it may not be genetically different from the Baja California Gnatcatchers. Recently, scientists have been trying to settle this issue by studying the genetic differences between subspecies. Robert Zink from the University of Minnesota found no evidence that the Coastal California Gnatcatcher was a genetically distinct subspecies. However, James Maley and John McCormack from Occidental College here in Los Angeles, reanalyzed the data and found evidence that it was significantly genetically different from the Baja populations. Further studies need to be done to resolve this issue that may influence the survival of these birds.

Protecting the Coastal California Gnatcatcher means protecting one of California's rarest habitats, coastal sage scrub, as well as other declining species such as Cactus Wrens, which are also found in this habitat. Los Angeles Audubon helps restore coastal sage shrubs at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook and at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area and needs volunteers in spring and fall. Please email Carol Babeli at: carolbabeli@laaudubon.org for more information. It is important that we help protect this endangered bird and restore our coastal sage scrub habitat here in Los Angeles.



A male California Gnatcatcher in breeding (summer) plumage (illustration by Dessi Sieburth)



A California Gnatcatcher in its winter plumage, (illustration by Dessi Sieburth)

Los Angeles Audubon's Greenhouse Alumni Team Receives Disney Conservation Hero Award

By Stacey Vigallon

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT OUR Greenhouse Alumni Team members, Joyce Realegeno, Brian Young, Bryan Payes, and Joanna Ruacho, have been honored with a Conservation Hero Award from the Disney Conservation Fund. The award recognizes local citizens for their efforts to protect wildlife and wild places and engage communities in conservation. Recipients from around the world were nominated by nonprofit environmental organizations, and each honoree will share a \$1,500 award from the fund.

Stacey Vigallon, Environmental Education Director for Los Angeles Audubon said, "We view Joyce, Brian, Bryan, and Joanna as conservation leaders, demonstrated through the work they've done with Los Angeles Audubon and through the example they set in their everyday lives. Their achievements and diversity of interests – biology, education, art, and business – are true assets, as they allow these team members to connect with community members in a variety of ways. Not only are we extremely proud of these four alumni-turned-employees, but we count our organization as extremely fortunate to receive their time, talent, and motivation."

We've known Joyce Realegeno, Brian Young, Bryan Payes, and Joanna Ruacho since their high school days in our Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. It was their outstanding work as high school students that inspired us to establish the Greenhouse Alumni Team, a paid program that employs Greenhouse Program alumni to assist with habitat restoration, environmental education, and endangered species conservation within the highly urbanized Ballona Creek Watershed of the Los Angeles Basin. Though several alumni have gone through the program, these four individuals have been the backbone of the program over the past four years. They are the living example of what we hope to achieve in our environmental education programs for inner-city students in Los Angeles - young adults with a strong

connection to nature, who are committed to conservation, and who serve as environmental leaders within their community

Joyce Realegeno

Joyce has been closely involved in California Least Tern and Western Snowy Plover conservation for the past eight years – since she was a freshman in high school. For the past four years she has served as a field tech at the Venice Beach Least Tern colony, assisting with monitoring, nest counts, and banding of this endangered species. As a UC Santa Cruz student, she also concurrently became a Certified California Naturalist. Through the CA Naturalist Program she successfully secured a grant to study crow behavior at the Venice Beach Least Tern Colony, an extension of the research she had conducted as a high school student in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. Upon graduating high school, Joyce was part of a team of Greenhouse Program alumni who created the Kill Your Lawn Comic Book, a publication promoting the replacement of lawn with plants native to California and now used by nonprofits and garden clubs throughout Los Angeles. As a follow-up project, she then convinced her family to remove their lawn and create a native plant garden in their front yard. In June 2015, she graduated from UC Santa Cruz and returned to Los Angeles to continue working with us and pursue a career in environmental education and biology.

Brian Young

Since graduating high school and the Greenhouse Program in 2011, Brian Young has juggled part-time employment with us as well as college work. An art major, Brian has worked hard to integrate his love of both the environment and art into his school and work life. In addition to helping manage two of our greenhouse facilities and dozens of volunteer habitat restoration events,



Joyce Realegeno



Brian Young

he also assists with our after-school Science Illustration program for elementary school students, helped paint science-themed murals at one of partner schools, and has led and mentored younger students within three of our environmental education programs (including the Snowy Plover Field Trip Program). He has completed a summer internship through the Wildlinks Career Connection program at Yosemite National Park. In 2014 a poster he co-authored with teammate Bryan Payes about coastal sage scrub restoration techniques won the People's Choice Award at the California Naturalist Conference. Closer to home, he helped plan and implement water-wise and wildlife-friendly landscaping with California native plants at his church.

Bryan Payes

Shortly after graduating from the Greenhouse Program in 2010, Bryan Payes was hired by Northeast Trees to participate in their Youth Stewardship Program, planting hundreds of native plants over the course of the 6-month program. He reconnected with Los Angeles Audubon in 2013 to join the Greenhouse Alumni Team. Since that time he has juggled academic commitments and a position on his college's track and field team with his outstanding work in habitat restoration and environmental education. He has led volunteer groups from Yale, UCLA, and several local corporations during habitat restoration volunteer events, and has taught hundreds of students about the nature in their own city through our environmental education programs (including the Snowy Plover Field Trip Program). In October of 2014 he gave a presentation about his work at the California STEM Conference. Also in 2014, a poster he co-authored with a teammate Brian Young about coastal sage scrub restoration techniques won the People's Choice Award at the California Naturalist Conference. Career-wise, Bryan plans to enter the business world, with the goal of combining entrepreneurship with sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Joanna Ruacho

Joanna Ruacho is one of only a handful of students to have served three consecutive years in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. Since graduating in 2012, she has been one of the most reliable docents in our Native Plant and Wildlife Garden Education Program at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area and has been an outstanding mentor for students in our middle school summer camp program. Joanna was also part of a team of Greenhouse Program alumni who created the Kill Your Lawn Comic Book, a publication promoting the replacement of lawn with plants native to California and now used by non-profits and garden clubs throughout Los Angeles. She regularly assists with our after-school Science Illustration program, helps lead eco-art activities for our high school programs, and frequently assists with Spanish translation and parent outreach during our public school events (including the Snowy Plover Field Trip Program). In the summer of 2013 she was part of an alumni team that presented their outreach work for Snowy Plover and Least Tern conservation at the national Audubon Convention. Joanna is interested in pursuing a career in art education while also maintaining a connection to nature and environmental stewardship.

The Disney Conservation Fund focuses on protecting wildlife and connecting kids and families with nature. Since 2004, Disney has honored more than 100 Conservation Heroes from around the world for their extraordinary conservation efforts. 🐦



Joanna Ruacho



Bryan Payes

Grateful for Grants

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY strives to expose elementary school children to our local natural wonders through our education programs at the Ballona Wetlands and Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHSRA). The Kenneth Hahn program also serves to provide naturalist training and hands-on work experience to college students who participate as docent interns. These young adults attend a six week training program and then act as guides for students visiting the park on field trips. The interns also staff various stations during the tours, providing hands-on instruction and encouragement to our young nature enthusiasts. The interns are not only guides to the young students. In their eyes, they are “cool older kids” that teach them about animals and plants, and also role models. Some of our visitors tell us they want to work at the park when they grow up. At KHSRA we tell them if they do well in school and go on to college, they too can be an intern, just like their guide. Our college interns are an integral part of the program, and are part of a larger goal of creating a more diverse and younger demographic within the environmental movement.

The tours at KHSRA are becoming increasingly popular with local schools, with more and more classes attending each year. Much of this growth has come through word of mouth. Teachers and principals who spend a day with us at the park go on to refer others to the field trip, which is quite an endorsement of what we are doing. Usually the biggest obstacle a school faces when planning a field trip is finding a way to pay for their bus. Funding for transportation

within LAUSD has been cut to the bone, and some students do not have a chance to travel off-campus at all. To this end LAAS has established a bus scholarship fund for eligible schools. This is a costly but essential service. It's hard to communicate the wonder and necessity of open spaces if we can't get the students to the great outdoors.

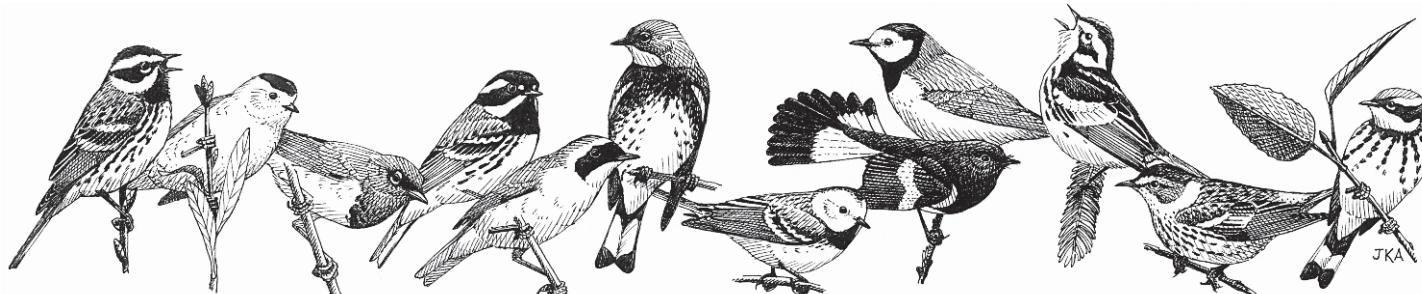
Fortunately, we have recently received a grant from California State Parks Foundation (CSPF). The grant has been earmarked to help pay for some of the buses that transport young inner city students to the KHSRA, and to provide interns with a small stipend that will help to defray their transportation costs to the park. CSPF does wonderful work in supporting our state parks and providing the little extras, like field trips for inner city students to these state treasures. The Los Angeles Audubon Society is honored to be recognized for the work that we are doing at KHSRA, and thrilled to have help funding our bus scholarship program. We would like to thank CSPF for their generosity and support.



CALIFORNIA
STATE PARKS
FOUNDATION



Interns and Staff at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area



Birds of the Season — December 2015, By Jon Fisher

AS ENTERTAINING FOR BIRDERS AS LATE SUMMER and early fall was, the final third of autumn migration most definitely did not disappoint. From mid-October to mid-December, we had the mild weather and excellent variety of vagrants that we expect. Unusual waterfowl, flycatchers, warblers, seedeaters and others combined with regular migrants to provide us with a satisfying mix of species.

Discoveries of unusual passerines slowed but did not cease after October. In fact, the two best finds of the fall turned up in late November. In spite of seemingly inexorable march of urbanization, the number of rarities found in the county continues to impress.

The sheer number of reports indicates not only that the birds were there but that observers were active, whether they were making new discoveries or chasing down those already found.

Madrona Marsh, Peck Road Water Conservation Park, Santa Fe Dam and the Piute Ponds were just a few of the birding locales that demonstrated their potential. San Clemente Island again showed off its geographic significance when it comes to attracting fall vagrants, adding a number of records to the list.

Red-breasted Nuthatches continued to show

evidence of a modest irruption and small numbers of Red Crossbills were also recorded away from their mountain haunts, primarily on the desert. In contrast, Varied Thrushes continued to be conspicuous by their relative absence following a major invasion of last fall and winter.

Returning for another winter was a **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera. It was first observed there on December 6 (Andrew Lee).

One to two **Black Scoters** were off Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo from November 17-29 (Richard Barth). **Long-tailed Duck** sightings included a male along lower Ballona Creek in Playa del Rey from November 7-December 8 (Lynn Bossone, Ulrike Mehler) and a female there on November 29- (Barbara Johnson, Irwin Woldman). An odd record was one at the almost completely drained Silver Lake Reservoir on December 7 (John Parent, Art Popp). What was apparently the same bird then moved to nearby Hollywood Reservoir where it was seen from December 9-13 (Sherman Suter).

Scarce coastally were seven **Common Mergansers** that overflowed the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on December 4 (John Garrett, Darren Dowell).

Rare inland were **Red-throated Loons** at Legg Lake in South El Monte from November 29-December 12 (David Bell) and at Lincoln Park in Los Angeles on December 4 (Ed Stonick). Somewhat more regular inland was a **Pacific Loon** at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera on December 11.

Red-necked Grebes were only recorded inland thus far with one at Castaic Lake from November 25-December 9 (John Garrett) and another at Quail Lake on November 27 (John Garrett).

Along the mainland coast, a **Brown Booby** was at Shoreline Aquatic Park in Long Beach on October 25 (Todd Wills) and one was off Pt. Dume in Malibu on November 7. Three more were at San Clemente Island on November 10 (Eric Lutomski).

An **American Bittern** continued at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh in Playa del Rey through November 5. Less expected, but already the second found in the county this year was a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** in San Pedro from November 12-December 12 (Bill Tweit, Dave Sonneborn).

Bald Eagles were at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas on October 29 and November 29

Bird of the Season cont'd.

(Rod & Pat Higbie) and at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on December 6 (Kris Ohlenkamp).

Harris's Hawks in downtown Los Angeles on November 5 (Axel Hellman) and at Hansen Dam near Lake View Terrace on November 21 (Kimball Garrett) were almost certainly escapees or lost falconer's birds.

Rare as fall migrants in the county were three **Broad-winged Hawks** over Pasadena on October 22 (Luke Tiller). Late **Swainson's Hawks** were at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on November 6 (David Moody, Tracy Drake) and over Whittier on November 14 (Linda Leroy, Jeff Allison). The only **Ferruginous Hawk** reported away from the Antelope Valley was near LAX on November 2 (Mark Rubke, Dave Domenico).

The section of Ballona Creek passing through Culver City produced a rare for the county **Sand-hill Crane** on October 28 (Walter Lamb).

In addition to the modest and ever-decreasing numbers that winter in the Antelope Valley, an unusual coastal slope **Mountain Plover** was at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale on October 26 (Joyce Brady).

Up to five **Marbled Godwits** were lingering late inland at Rosamond Lake in the Antelope Valley beginning on November 12 with two continuing through December 10 (Wayne Martin, John Birsner).

A **Red Knot**, scarce as a transient in the county, was along lower Ballona Creek on October 27 (Kevin Lapp). Late shorebirds at Rosamond Lake on Edwards AFB included a **Ruff**, a **Red Phalarope**, three **Baird's Sandpipers** and three **Pectoral Sandpipers** all on October 15 (Jon Feenstra).

Nearby at Big Piute Pond, a rare inland **Long-tailed Jaeger** made a brief appearance on October 15 (Jon Feenstra).

Unusual gulls included a **Black-legged Kittiwake** at Torrance Beach on December 8 (Jun & Bin Wu) and a **Glaucous Gull** seen briefly at Malibu Lagoon on November 30 (Kathleen Waldron).

One to two **Common Ground-Doves** were at the Linden H. Chandler Preserve in Rolling Hills Estates on October 29 (Philip Carnehl) and another was at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia from October 25-29 (Sandy Koonce, Catherine McFadden). A **White-winged Dove** was at Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro on October 14. It was joined by a second bird on December 3 and both continued through December 12 (David Ellsworth). Another one was over Pepperdine University in Malibu on October 21 (Dan Cooper).

A **Burrowing Owl** was at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on November 28 (Don Sterba) with what was probably the same bird at the Ballona Wetlands on December 1. Others were at Dockweiler State Beach on December 1 (Jonathan Coffin) and at the Kenneth Hahn SRA in Los Angeles on December 8 and apparently present for at least two weeks prior (Ann & Eric Brooks).

A rare coastal slope **Long-eared Owl** was at the Sepulveda Basin on October 23 (Daniel Tinoco), while **Short-eared Owls** were seen at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB on November 30 (Joe Lepisto Sr.) and flying over Rosemead on December 6 (Jon Fisher).

Lewis's Woodpeckers were present in modest numbers with about a dozen birds found over the period, split evenly between the mountains and coastal slope.

Veteran's Park in Sylmar is reliable spot for birders wanting to see sapsuckers. This fall a **Williamson's Sapsucker** was there from October 26 into December (Kris Ohlenkamp) and two **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were seen off and on from October 26-December 9 (Kris Ohlenkamp).

Among the widely encountered intergrade birds, pure **Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flickers** were at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena from November 12-19 (Tom Wurster), on Catalina Island on October 23 (David Rankin) and at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook on October 24 (Andrew Lee)

Rare away from the Antelope Valley was a **Prairie Falcon** at Malibu Creek State Park on October 18 (Art Langton).

Late or potentially wintering *Empidonax* flycatchers were well represented, with two **Hammond's Flycatchers** at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on November 28 (Andrew Lee) and another at Legg Lake in South El Monte from December 9-13 (Dan Cooper). **Gray Flycatchers** were at Santa Fe Dam on October 18 (Luke Tiller, David Bell) and at Gwinn Park in Pasadena on November 19 (Luke Tiller). Unexpected was a **Dusky Flycatcher** netted and carefully examined in Zuma Canyon on December 5 (John Garrett). Finally, **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** were at the George F. Canyon Nature Preserve in Rolling Hills on November 30 (Philip Carnehl), at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas on December 9 (Michael San Miguel) and at Pomona Cemetery on December 10 (Dan Guthrie).

Eastern Phoebe reports came from Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena where one was present October 22-25 (Luke Tiller) and on San Clemente Island- for only the third island record- from October 27 and 28 (Eric Lutomski). Others were

Bird of the Season cont'd. next page.

at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook on November 7 (Richard Barth), at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from November 21-December 12 (Tracy Drake) and at the Piute Ponds from December 5-10 (Mark and Janet Scheel).

At least seven **Vermilion Flycatchers** were in the county between October 16 and November 29, most of these on the coastal slope.

Late or wintering **Ash-throated Flycatchers** were at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from November 14-December 12 (Tom Benson, Tracy Drake), in the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on December 5 (Gerard van Heijzen) and at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia on December 5 (Jon Fisher).

Often, as in fishing, the ones that get away are often the most intriguing. So it was for a **Social** or **Rusty-margined Flycatcher** photographed by non-birders in El Monte and submitted for identification. The bird could not be re-found, nor could it be conclusively identified to species from the photos. Could such a bird, normally not found north of southern Sonora, arrive here naturally? That possibility can rarely be discounted, but the question of provenance would have likely kept this record from being accepted even if documentation had confirmed its identity to species.

The **Tropical Kingbird** continuing at El Dorado Park in Long Beach through November 29 was the only one reported during the period. A **Thick-billed Kingbird** that spent the last two winters at Horsethief Canyon Park in San Dimas was reported as back for a third go round as of November 1 (Eric Smith).

Among an increasing number of **Western Kingbirds** lingering well into October, a truly late bird was at Cal State Dominguez Hills on November 23 (John Thomlinson). A **Scissor-tailed Fly-**

catcher was at Woodlawn Cemetery in Santa Monica from November 11-December 12 (Kathleen Waldron).

Scarce as a migrant coastally was **Bank Swallow** at Del Rey Lagoon in Playa del Rey on October 21 (Dan Cooper). Also of interest was a very late **Cliff Swallow** at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on November 28 (Mike Stensvold).

But the major swallow news was indeed significant: a new bird for the county list. A **Cave Swallow** was found and photographed at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on November 28 (Andrew Lee). To date the only accepted records for the state have come from the south end of the Salton Sea. This species' occurrence elsewhere was not unexpected, as it has expanded in both range and numbers in Texas and in the northeast. If we weren't diligently checking Cliff Swallow flocks for errant Cave Swallows before, clearly we should be doing so going forward.

A **Canyon Wren** on San Clemente Island from October 20-21 (Eric Lutomski) had to be a vagrant from the mainland, as they are not resident on the island. That's quite a feat for such a sedentary species. **Pacific Wrens** were at Griffith Park in Los Angeles on November 10 (Octavio J), near Switzer's Camp on November 26 (Marcus England) and in Big Santa Anita Canyon above Arcadia from November 21-December 5 (Lance Benner).

Mimids of note included a **Brown Thrasher** on San Clemente Island from October 13-19 (Ben Sandstrom) and a **Sage Thrasher** at Alta Vicente Reserve on October 16 (Jun & Bin Wu).

Difficult to find anywhere in the county were three **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale from October 18-31 (Luke Tiller, David Bell). Two were also at this locale in Octo-

ber of 2012. A handful of all three longspur species likely pass through the county each fall. Complicating the task of finding them is that the places they are likely to occur are often difficult to survey due to accessibility or simply because of their size. Consider the challenge of the agricultural fields of the Antelope Valley.

A **Northern Waterthrush** at the Wilmington Drain in Wilmington on October 18 was the only one reported (Philip Carnehl). At least ten **Black-and-white Warblers** were present between October 16 and December 6.

A **Tennessee Warbler** was at Malibu Lagoon on November 14 (Merryl Edelstein, Kim Moore). Late **Nashville Warblers** were at DeForest Park in Long Beach from November 7-8 (Brendan and Paul Galvin) and at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on December 1 (David Moody).

A **Hooded Warbler** at Lake Palmdale on October 22 was a nice find at this restricted access locale (Cal Yorke). **American Redstarts** were at Banning Park in Wilmington on October 13 (David Ellsworth, Neil Multack) and at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera from November 27-December 12 (Dessi Sieburth).

A **Northern Parula**- probably a returning bird from last winter- was at Legg Lake in South El Monte on December 12 (Mark & Janet Scheel). **Blackburnian Warblers** were on San Clemente Island on October 17 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers) and at Buena Vista Park in Burbank on November 29 (Richard Barth).

Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena hosted a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** from October 15-18 (Darren Dowell). A **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was on San Clemente Island from October 26-27 (Curtis Twellman, Eric Lutomski).

After a very slow start, over a dozen **Palm Warblers** were found between October 19 and December 6.

Pine Warblers were at the Firestone Scout Reservation in Yorba Linda on October 18 (Larry Schmahl) and at Peck Road Water Conservation Park from October 20-28 (Elaine MacPherson, Steve & Becky Turley, Michael Long).

A **Prairie Warbler** at DeForest Park in Long Beach from November 7-8 was the third in the county this fall (Trish Gussler). **Black-throated Green Warblers** were at Quail Lake near Gorman on October 25 (Mark & Janet Scheel) and at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena from November 2-3 (Darren Dowell).

Rounding out the warblers was a **Painted Redstart** in Mar Vista from November 22-December 8 (Richard Hedley).

Over a half dozen **Clay-colored Sparrows** were found between October 24 and November 17, with a couple of these continuing through end of the period. A **Lark Bunting** on San Clemente Island on October 31 was the only one found during the period (Justyn Stahl).

Grasshopper Sparrows, only rarely detected away from breeding areas, were at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia on October 19 (Brittany O'Connor), at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from November 13-December 2 (Dinuk Magamma) and along the LA River in Atwater Village on November 15 (Jon Fisher).

A great find was a **Le Conte's Sparrow**- only the second ever recorded in the county- at Castiac Lagoon from November 22-December 13 (Luke Tiller, David Bell). Needless to say this sparrow attracted many birders- some of whom hadn't even been born when the county's first spent the

winter of 1992-93 at Malibu Creek State Park.

Swamp Sparrows included one at Juan Bautista de Anza Park in Calabasas from October 27-December 9 (Dan Cooper), with two there on December 9 (Kris Ohlenkamp). Others were at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia on October 28 (Darren Dowell), along the LA River in Atwater Village on November 28 (Jon Fisher) and at Wheeler Park in Claremont on December 5 (Tom Miko).

Five **White-throated Sparrows** were found between October 19 and December 6. An *oriantha* (**Mountain White-crowned Sparrow**) was at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia on October 25 (Kimball Garrett). Though "merely" a subspecies, this dark-lored type is quite rare in the county and worth separating from the abundant *gambelii*.

Also in the category of identifiable subspecies, **Dark-eyed "Gray-headed" Juncos** were on San Clemente Island on October 22 (Ben Sandstrom) and again on November 3 (Justyn Stahl), at the South Coast Botanic Garden in Rolling Hills Estates on November 8 (Manuel Duran, Alejandra Cedillo), in La Canada on November 26 (David Bell) and at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont on December 6 (Kurt Nguyen).

Summer Tanagers included a continuing bird in Ladera Heights through November 8 and two at West LA College on November 15, with one continuing through November 26 (Don Sterba). Far rarer was a **Scarlet Tanager** at DeForest Park in Long Beach from November 5-7 (Jeff Boyd).

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at Lancaster City Park on October 26 (Vern Benhart) and a late **Blue Grosbeak** was at DeForest Park in Long Beach on October 22 (Richard Barth).

Late was a **Lazuli Bunting** on San Clemente Island on November 1 (Justyn Stahl). Very late

was one at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from December 4-12 (Tracy Drake)

Two different **Dickcissels** were found on San Clemente Island, the first on October 31 (Justyn Stahl) and the second November 1 (Justyn Stahl, Ben Sandstrom, Eric Lutomski).

Lingering late was a **Hooded Oriole** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from December 1-11 (Tracy Drake). A **Baltimore Oriole** was at Holmby Park in Los Angeles from November 7-13 (Marc Better).

An **Evening Grosbeak** at Lake Palmdale on October 22 (Cal Yorke) seemed to offer some potential of others appearing this fall and winter, but none had materialized by mid-December... or if they did they were not found by birders.

Even with all of these records, it's a certainty that we miss far more vagrants than are ever found. Thus the birds in this column represent just a fraction of what's actually out there. The percentages change depending on the species involved. At least in areas that get covered by birders, Tundra Swans and Bald Eagles are hard to miss, whereas a Worm-eating Warbler or a Le Conte's Sparrow could easily spend all winter undetected.

In light of that, repeat visits to any birding spot- even on the same day- can turn up birds that would otherwise be missed.

The space between the end of fall migration and the onset of spring migration is brief indeed. Birders can occupy that time by participating in Christmas Bird Counts, studying female ducks, gulls and the often perplexing variety found in Fox Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. New vagrants will be found and old ones will be ticked again as soon as the new year begins. 🐦



Field Trip Listings

Nick Freeman, Field Trip Chair

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

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

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

CARPOOLING

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

"FEE REQUIRED" RESERVATIONS

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

Mail to:

Los Angeles Audubon
PO Box 411301
Los Angeles CA 90041-8301

'NO FEE' RESERVATIONS / MORE INFORMATION

Email: membership@laudubon.org
Phone: (323) 876-0202

Please leave voice message if no answer.

Saturday, January 9

Tejon Ranch

(This is is fully booked, with a wait list begun.)

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP REQUIRED (12 Max)

Leader: *Louis Tucker*. Visits to the Ranch are by special arrangement with escort only, as one could easily get lost on the web of gated dirt roads covering this huge working ranch. Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk all likely in the rolling hills of the ranch. California Condor and Lewis' Woodpecker also possible. Bring lunch, as we will be out most of the day. Take the 5 Fwy. north to the Roxford St. turnoff, and meet at the Denny's in Sylmar visible off the east side of the freeway (12861 Encinitas Ave., Sylmar). Be prepared to depart from here at 7:00 a.m. High clearance vehicles recommended, as we will carpool into these and ranch vehicles at the ranch. Rain cancels. Limit: 12 participants only. Please register with LA Audubon by phone (323) 876-0202 (or email to susancastor@laudubon.org) and provide phone number, e-mail, high clearance Y/N, #spare passenger seats. FRS radios and scopes useful.

Sunday, January 24

Newport Back Bay #2

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE, NO LIMIT

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet on the wooden boardwalk along the west side of the bay accessible from the end of University Drive (small street) at 7:30 a.m. for the 6.0' high tide (one of the higher tides of the season), and a full day of birding in the area. High tide at the mouth is 8:49 a.m., and may not peak in the back bay until after 9:25 a.m., but we want to be in position when birds flush to higher ground. Ridgway's Rail (previously some of the Clapper Rails),

Sora, American Bittern, Eurasian Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal and California Gnatcatcher are expected. Nelson's Sparrow and Short-eared Owl (both rare) will also be target birds. 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 (2301 University Dr., Newport Beach), walk down the hill, over the bridge, and to the end of the boardwalk. Bring lunch. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

January 30 & 31 Weekend

Carrizo Plain

FEE: \$20, LIMIT: 16

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet at 8 a.m. in Maricopa. Spectacular scenery. We will see Ferruginous Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Golden Eagles, LeConte's Thrasher, Merlin and pronghorn; with possible Rough-legged Hawk, Mountain Plover and Sage Thrasher. We will meet in Maricopa (vacant lot at 800 Stanislaus St., west of Shell station on south side of Hwy 166), drive around the Plain all weekend, then leave the Plain heading north via Bitterwater Road on Sunday before we away to LA. If possible, please carpool or avail your vehicle to others when you reserve. Your phone number will be released for carpooling unless you request otherwise. Mail reservation fee to LA Audubon, PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301 and provide your Name, phone number, \$20 per person, and e-mail address for exact directions and further information. Net profits go to the Schreiber Grant Fund. Reserve your own room in Buttonwillow for Saturday night. Motel 6 is one option here. FRS radios & 'scopes helpful. Limit: 16.

GULL STUDY WORKSHOP

\$20 FULL WORKSHOP FEE
LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 20

Friday, February 5 — LECTURE

Speaker, *Larry Allen*, will discuss most gulls that have appeared in North America – most of which have made it to California. So, you've been avoiding gulls for the last decade (if that's possible), hoping that they would migrate out of the Southern California region. Well, that's not going to happen. But Larry has a kind touch when it comes to Gull I.D., and will rapidly get you up to speed with how to evaluate and identify our gulls. Larry will specifically address general aspects of gull topography, the confusing (but orderly) logic of molt sequences, and the finer aspects of identification to age and species. Slides, study skins and handouts will be used. This is a Ralph Schreiber Grant fundraiser. Mail \$20 fee, phone number, E-mail to LAAS, which gets you the lecture & field trip, and e-mailer with directions and details. NOT OFFERED SEPARATELY FROM THE FIELD TRIP. Private residence in Altadena, from 7:30 - 10:00 p.m., with one refreshment break. 20 maximum.

Sunday, February 7 — FIELD TRIP

Leader: *Larry Allen*. Put your new knowledge to use in the field, perhaps even identifying immature California & Ring-billed gulls as they fly overhead! Meet in the field at 8:00 a.m. and ogle the gulls until we're all gull identification experts! Location will be confirmed during the lecture. We will likely go to Doheny State Beach in Orange County (34422 Park Lantern, Dana Point; then turn right into main the lot, and meet in SW corner by San Juan Creek). It is a fair drive to Doheny, but we have had large numbers of gulls on our workshops here, including Glaucous Gull twice, and a Lesser Black-backed Gull once! Maximum of 20 participants. Doheny Beach parking fee. Bring a lunch. NOT OFFERED SEPARATELY FROM THE LECTURE.

Mail reservation fee to:

LA Audubon
P.O. Box 411301
Los Angeles CA 90041-8301

NOTE: Provide your email address for a confirmation email with address, directions and details.

Sunday, February 14

Chasing Parrots in Pasadena **NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE**

Leader: *Larry Allen*. The famous "Temple City" parrots have moved to Pasadena! Join Larry as we follow the evening flock as it gathers members and moves to roosting sites in suburban Pasadena. Study and compare the looks and vocalizations of Red-crowned, Lilac-crowned, Red-ored, and Yellow-headed Parrots and perhaps other parrot and parakeet species as well. Bring scopes if you have them. We will meet at 4:00 p.m. and bird until dark. MEET AT La Pintoresca Park in Pasadena, at the northeast corner of Fair Oaks Ave. and Washington Blvd. Exit the 210 Freeway at Fair Oaks and proceed north about 1 ¼ miles. Park on the surrounding streets and gather around the small parking lot on the east side. Depending on the location of the roosts, we will either walk or drive from there.

February 20 & 21 Weekend **Salton Sea**

FEE: \$10, SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO LIMIT

Leaders: *Nick and Mary Freeman*. Large to huge flocks of Snow & Ross' geese, White-faced Ibis and Sandhill Cranes. Stilt Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Gila Woodpecker all possible to certain. This is the only place in the U.S. to see the impressive Yellow-footed Gull (likely)! *No Limit, but sign up by phone or email susancastor@laaudubon.org*. Provide your e-mail and cell ph# for more details. MEET AT 7:00 a.m. Saturday at Cattle Call Park south of Brawley (just downhill from 550 Cattle Call Drive, Brawley). Calipatria Inn (800) 830-1113, Brawley Inn (760) 344-1199, and Americas Best Value Inn

in Westmorland (760) 351-7100 are recommended. Arrive fed with full tanks, and bring lunches and snacks. Those who wish will eat together Saturday night. *Mail reservation fee to LA Audubon, P.O. Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301, Provide: Name, e-mail, \$10 fee, and cell phone # if possible. FRS radios & 'scopes helpful.*

Sunday, March 6

Ventura County Game Preserve NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP, NO LIMIT

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. The private duck hunting club in Ventura has a long history of producing the kinds of birds that most rich, well-birded and disappearing habitats can lay claim to, including Virginia rails, American Bittern, occasional Ruff, Solitary Sandpiper, and single Lesser Sand-Plover and Wood Sandpiper. Emphasis on this date will be late raptors and waterfowl, with shorebirds starting to move through. GET TO THE PRESERVE by taking the 101 Fwy W to Rice Avenue S, following the Rice Ave. prompts to the T-intersection terminus, then take Hueneme Rd. west (Rt.), take the first left turn, Casper, to the end, proceed through the gate and park across the street from the barn (6500 Casper Road, Oxnard). Meet here at 8:00 a.m. We will walk the property, so good hiking/mud shoes with energetic legs inside a plus. We may have one car. Scopes & FRS radios helpful. **There is a slight chance of cancellation, so please check the LAAS website for trip status the day before.**

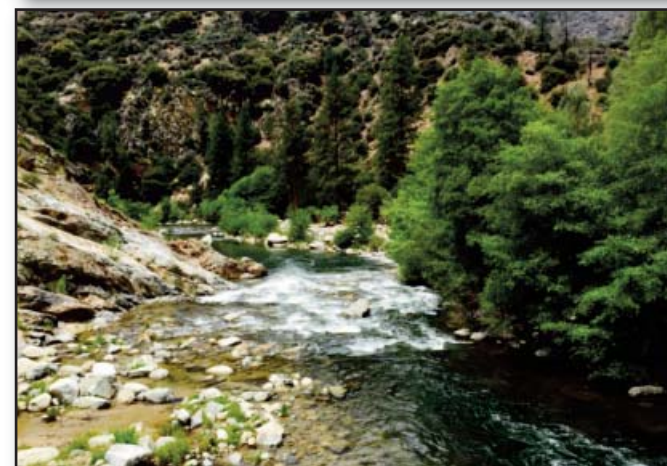
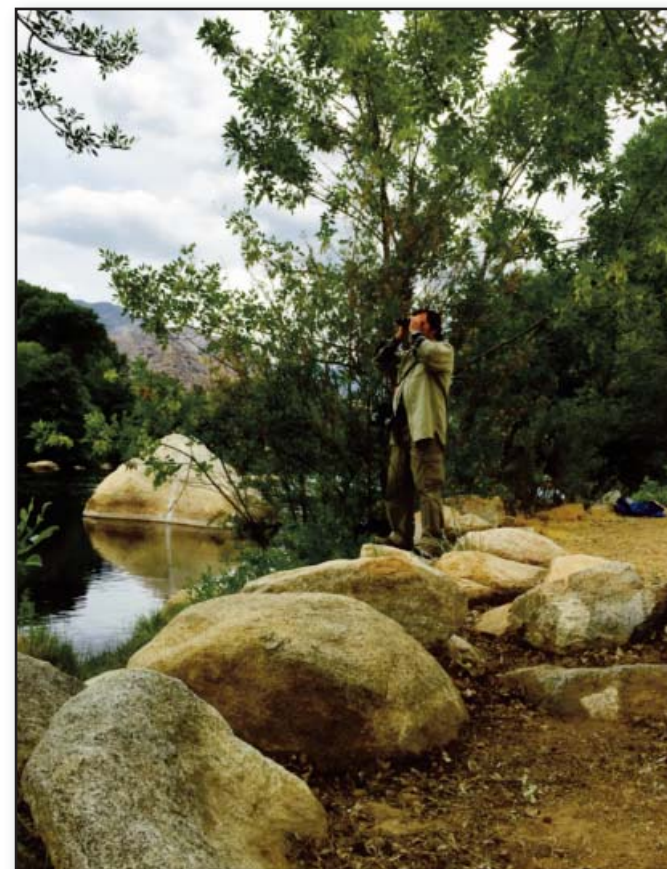
March 19 & 20 Weekend

Anza-Borrego State Park \$20 LAAS MEMBER FEE / \$40 FOR NON-LAAS, LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 20

Leader: *Kurt Leuschner*. Peak time for both wildflowers (did somebody say El Niño?) and Swainson's Hawk migration! Caravan from the Colorado Desert up to Julian, with short forays to take in the sights and the wildlife. Kurt is a professor of desert ecology, and knows all of our deserts very well. RESERVE YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS at Hacienda del Sol, Stanlund Motel or others in Borrego Springs months early! MEET AT the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (652 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs). *Reserve the trip by mail with \$20 LAAS / \$40 non-LAAS fee; cell #, and E-mail address to LAAS. Mail reservation fee to: LA Audubon, PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301. More details later.*

June 10 thru 13 Long Weekend Southern Sierra to Mojave Desert

Leaders: *John Schmitt and Bob Barnes*. Friday through Monday. Bob has shown off this most-varied region of our state for decades to birders, senators, biologists, and has gotten ranchers and environmentalists together for some amazing results. John lives full-time by Lake Isabella, knows all the birds and the spots, has logged decades as a raptor field biologist, and knows birds inside and out. John's masterful bird art can be seen in many books of fine art and prominent field guides. *Mark your calendars, no sign-ups yet, more details TBA by March.* —🐦



Bird Walk Listings

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.

Open Wetlands at Ballona

1st Saturday of every month
January 2 & February 6
Time: 9:00–Noon

Los Angeles Audubon Society hosts the ongoing 1st Sat. of the month “Open Wetlands” event at the Ballona Salt Marsh. Binoculars will be available to borrow, and volunteers will help visitors view aquatic invertebrates through microscopes, learn about the unique ecosystems found at Ballona, and view birds through powerful spotting scopes along Ballona Creek. Please drop-in!

ENTER THROUGH THE GATE located in the northeast corner of the parking lot behind Alkawater/Gordon’s Market, in the 300 block of Culver Blvd. in Playa del Rey. *No baby strollers please.* Please contact Cindy Hardin at cindyhardin@laaudubon.org or call (310) 301-0050 if you have any questions.

Topanga State Park Birdwalk

1st Sunday of every month
January 3 & February 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

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area

4100 S. La Cienega Blvd
Los Angeles 90056
3rd Saturday of the month
(Except for July and August)
January 16 & February 20
Time: 8:00–noon

Leader: *Eric and Ann Brooks, Eleanor Osgood* This trip covers landscaped parkland, a 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. We will also look for wintering birdssuch as Merlin, Rufous-crowned, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, Ring-billed Ducks and American Wigeons 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. | **Binoculars provided.**

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.

CARPPOOLING IS ENCOURAGED!

To provide your information to join the LAAS CARPOOL DATABASE membership@laaudubon.org or call (323) 876-0202 leave a message. We will attempt to connect you with other birders interested in sharing a ride to our events.

Upper Franklin Canyon Sooky Goldman Nature Center

2nd Sunday of the month
January 1 & February 7
Time: 8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood*. Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We are likely to see the resident Wood Ducks and as well chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees and California Thrasher. Winter birds have arrived; we will look for Ring-billed Duck, Hooded Mergansers, Merlin, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Fox Sparrow among others. This canyon is a hidden treasure where the surrounding urban residences of Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills disappear from view.

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 Dr. to Coldwater Canyon Dr. to Mulholland Dr. Veer left on Mulholland Dr. 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. **Binoculars provided.**

Ballona Wetlands Bird Walk

3rd Sunday of the month
(Except December)
January 17 and February 24
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 wbutorran@gmail.com