

Los Angeles Audubon Society | laudubon.org

WESTERN Tanager

September-October 2017 | Volume 84, Number 1





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

BOARD OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President	Margot Griswold	mgriswold@landiq.com
Vice President	David De Lange	dr.delange@social.rr.com
Treasurer	Robert Jeffers	jeffers@laaudubon.org
Past President	Travis Longcore	travislongcore@laaudubon.org
Directors at Large	Nicole Lannoy Lawson Brad Rumble	bradrumble@laaudubon.org

COMMITTEES

Conservation	Travis Longcore	travislongcore@laaudubon.org
Education	Margot Griswold	mgriswold@landiq.com
Membership	Brad Rumble	bradrumble@laaudubon.org

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Field Trips	Nick Freeman	nmfreeman@earthlink.net
Bird Walks	Eleanor Osgood	gardenbird1@att.net
Monthly Programs	Nicole Lawson	Position Open
Rare Bird Alert	Jon Fisher	JonF60@hotmail.com
Schreiber Grant Program	Ryan Harrigan	ryanharrigan@laaudubon.org

STAFF

Director of Communications and Development	Carol Babel	carolb@laaudubon.org
Director of Outdoor Education	Cindy Hardin	cindyhardin@laaudubon.org
Director of Environmental Education	Stacey Vigallon	tern@laaudubon.org
Volunteer Coordinator	Cindy Hardin	cindyhardin@laaudubon.org
Member Services & Website Liason	Susan Castor	membership@laaudubon.org

The Western Tanager is the chapter newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, published online bi-monthly in PDF format, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec, Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, July/Aug. Articles, letters drawings and photographs concerning conservation, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for 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

© 2017 Los Angeles Audubon Society

CONTENTS

Western Tanager

September/October 2017, Vol. 84 No. 1

Audubon Docents: The Things We Saw...3-6

Project Puffin:
 Audubon's Seabird Restoration Project on
 Maine.....7-8

Coots Make Me Smile.....9

Interpreting Nature:
 Aspiring Botanist Goes Plant-hunting from
 Baldwin Hills to Yosemite.....10-11

Birds of the Season – August 2017.....2-13

SCHEDULES

Bird Walks.....14
 Field Trips.....15-16
 Monthly Programs.....17

On The Cover

Shoreline, Crystal Cove

Photo by Leslie Davidson



Crystal Cove is located in Orange County off the busy Pacific Coast Highway. Crystal Cove State Park offers hiking in the deeply wooded canyons and water activities at the tide pools and sandy beaches.

My name is Leslie Davidson and I have been a docent at the Ballona Wetlands for the past 17 years. I enjoy photographing nature and love sharing my hobby with others.

Camera: Nikon Coolpix P510

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 | • EDUCATION | • CONSERVATION | • RESTORATION

Individual membership only \$25 per year. Join today at: laaudubon.org

AUDUBON DOCENTS: THE THINGS WE SAW

Photo Essay | By Cindy Hardin, Director of Outdoor Education

Photos by Leslie Davidson, LAAS Member and Volunteer

The wonderful volunteer docents and interns of Los Angeles Audubon had another busy year educating our future naturalists about local wildlife and habitats found at the Ballona Wetlands and Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Between the two programs, over 3500 school children participated in field trips to these sites during 2016-2017. An added bonus for our group is the amazing things that we see as we go about our work with the children, and during enrichment days that take us to various locations in Southern California. Here are some of the highlights.

CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK



We take several docent field trips every year, and one of the most popular is to Crystal Cove State Park. This spot is a great reminder of what all of coastal southern California looked like, not too long ago.



And can you believe a Roadrunner? This is one of a pair that we saw within moments of our arrival to Crystal Cove.



We finished off the day poking around the tide pools at the park. This Sea Anemone was a show stopper!

The wonderful rain that we experienced this season compelled us to check out **Serrano Canyon at Point Mugu State Park**. Water, wildflowers, butterflies and birds made for a very special day.



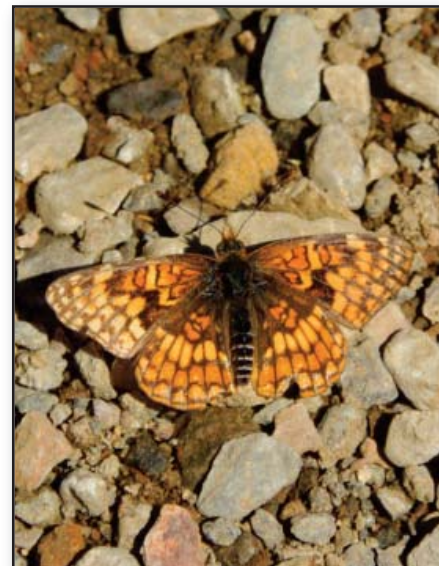
Intrepid docent, Joe Zell, tackles one of the many stream crossings we made during the hike. Normally dry creek beds were full of water and cascades.



Mariposa Lilies were found all along the stream.



Indian Paintbrush added lots of brilliant red color to the scenery



And the flowers brought out the butterflies, like this Callippe Fritillary.



And some color up above, courtesy of this Western Bluebird.

KENNETH HAHN STATE PARK & BALLONA WETLANDS

Of course, we see plenty of amazing sights when the school children visit Ballona and Kenneth Hahn. This is especially terrific, as it gives us a chance to show the students the wildlife that is present within the city limits. **Kenneth Hahn Park** is a real oasis of habitat, and we see some great birds there.



This Black-headed Grosbeak is resplendent in his breeding plumage



And this Song Sparrow was showing off amongst the abundantly blooming Toyon-fantastic bloom of various native plants were present in the park all spring.

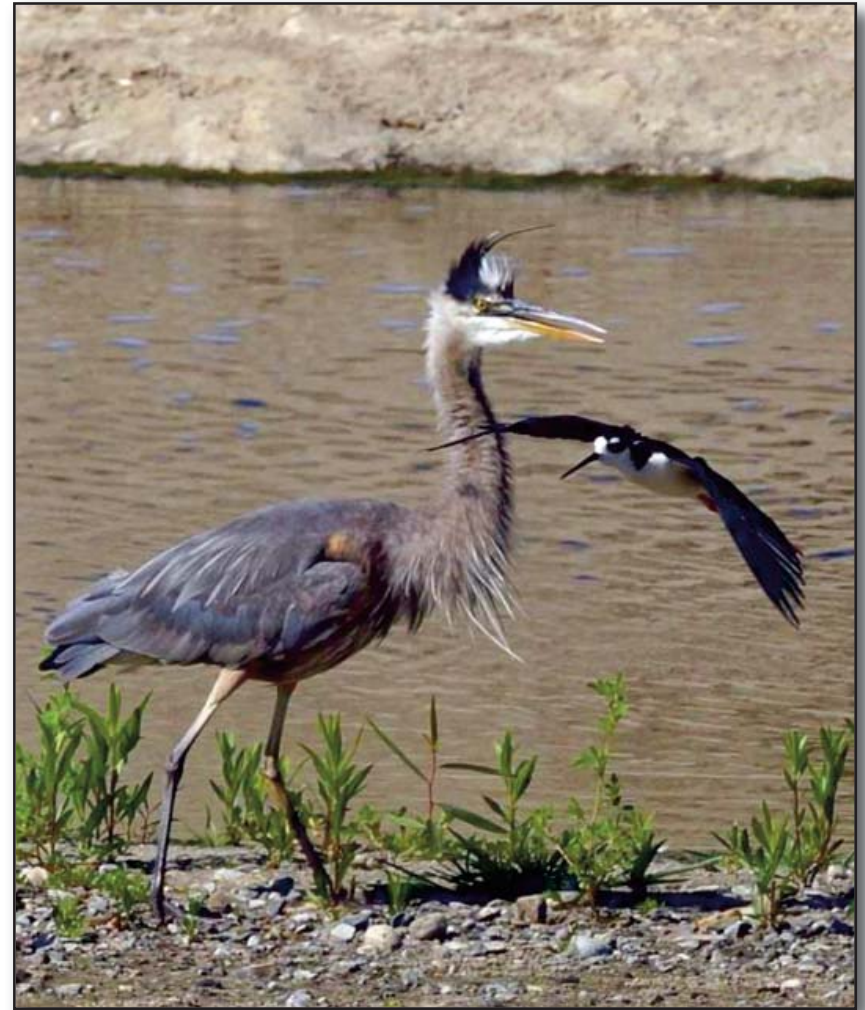
Ballona is always a reliable spot to see amazing nature, both during the student field trips and our monthly Open Wetlands. Once again, abundant rains made the wetlands truly wet, and brought out even more natural beauty than usual.



Can you believe that this Earth Star is a fungus? The spores explode out of the puffy center when it is ripe. Many of these popped up in the dunes this spring, and eagle-eyed volunteer Lorraine Cohen was the first to spot one.



This pair of juvenile Black-crowned Night-herons was not camera shy!



An electrifying moment for the Great Blue Heron during an unexpected encounter with the Black-necked Stilt.

These are just a few of the things that we have seen throughout the year, as we do our work educating the students (and ourselves!) of Los Angeles. We are always looking for volunteers to join us in these very worthwhile endeavors. Training for both programs will commence soon. We start our classes for volunteers at Ballona on Thursday, September 14th, and for Kenneth Hahn on Friday, September 29th. No experience is necessary; just a love of the outdoors and a willingness to work with children. If you are interested, please contact me at cindyhardin@laudubon.org or (310) 301-0050. 🐾

YOUNG BIRDERS

Project Puffin: Audubon's Seabird Restoration Project in Maine | By Dessi Sieburth



An Atlantic Puffin prepares to bring fish to its young at Eastern Egg Rock. Photo by Dessi Sieburth

From June 18th to June 23rd, I attended the Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens, a young birder Audubon Camp located at Hog Island, Maine. I received scholarships to attend this camp from the National Audubon Society and the American Birding Association. Hog Island is 330-acre

island located in the Muscongus Bay off the coast of central Maine. At the camp, I had the unique opportunity to learn about Project Puffin, a seabird restoration program, and I was able to observe a breeding colony of Atlantic Puffins at Eastern Egg Rock Island.

At camp, Steven Kress, the founder of Project Puffin, gave a presentation about the history of the project. In the 19th Century, Maine's Atlantic Puffin population was rapidly declining. Hunters killed puffins for meat and feathers and poachers took puffin eggs for food. By the late nineteenth century, puffins were only found on two islands in Maine. On Machias Seal Island, thirty pairs remained, and on Matinicus Rock, only one breeding pair remained. Puffins were extirpated from Eastern Egg Rock in 1885, when egg poachers had taken the last eggs. Puffins were not the only seabirds that experienced such rapid declines. Terns, gulls, and razorbills had also become very scarce in the state due to hunting and egg poaching. In 1918, egg poaching was banned in the United States through the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and measures were taken to prevent hunting of the puffins. However, the puffins did not return to the islands to nest, and nor did the terns and Razorbills. Only the Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls returned to the islands of Maine and thrived.

In 1969, biologist Steven Kress visited Eastern Egg Rock and was disappointed that there were no puffins. He had read about the history of Eastern Egg Rock and learned about the large breeding colony that used to be there. He had the idea to bring back the puffins to Eastern Egg Rock, and in 1973, he started Project Puffin. Kress brought nearly 1000 puffin chicks from Newfoundland, where the puffins were doing well. He introduced them to several islands off the Maine coast, where they had previously bred.



Atlantic Puffin at Eastern Egg Rock. The "3" sprayed on the rock helps biologists to keep track of where the puffins nest. Photo by Dessi Sieburth



Steven Kress transported the Puffin chicks from Newfoundland to Maine in this case. Photo by Beatrix Schwarz

Kress hoped that the puffins would start breeding colonies. It takes three to five years for puffins to mature and breed. For the first few years of the project, no puffins returned. In 1977, a few birds returned to Eastern Egg Rock, but they did not breed. Kress believed that the puffins were not breeding mainly because of the large number of gulls present the island. Gulls eat puffin eggs and chicks, and they compete with puffins for fish. To control the number of gulls, Kress re-established a breeding colony of terns on Eastern Egg Rock. Terns are highly territorial and drive gulls away from their breeding territory. Also, Kress placed puffin decoys and mirrors on the island to simulate an active colony.

He hoped puffins would see the decoys and stay on the island to breed. On July 4th, 1981, after over eight years of dedication, Kress's dream of having puffins breeding again on Eastern Egg Rock came true. He saw a puffin land on the island with a bill full of fish, disappear under a rock, and emerge soon after with an empty bill. This meant there were chicks on the island. Today, there are over 120 breeding pairs of Atlantic Puffins on the island. Other seabirds have also made a recovery, including three species of terns—Common, Arctic, and



One of the original decoys used by Kress, now displayed in the Project Puffin Visitor Center. Photo by Beatrix Schwarz

Roseate. Today, Eastern Egg Rock is home to nearly 70% of Maine's Roseate Terns. Razorbills have also made a comeback on several islands in Maine, though they have not been documented to breed on Eastern Egg Rock. Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls no longer breed at Egg Rock and no longer pose threats to the island's seabirds. The techniques that Kress used on Eastern Egg Rock are being used to restore seabird colonies throughout the world. Common Murres, the endangered Bermuda Petrels, and the critically endangered Chinese Crested Terns, which were once thought to be extinct, as well as 39 other species of seabirds, have benefited using Kress's methods.

At Camp, I had the special opportunity to visit Eastern Egg Rock to see the Atlantic Puffins and other seabirds. It took an hour by boat to get to Eastern Egg Rock. From the boat, I could see small groups of puffins swimming near the shore. At the island, we met several biologists who were studying the island's seabirds. They lead us to bird blinds, where we could closely observe puffins, Black

Guillemots, Common Eiders, and Common, Arctic, and Roseate Terns. Often, the puffins would fly in with fish in their mouth and disappear under rocks, where their nests were. After a few hours in the blind, I observed about 40 puffins, 250 Common Terns, 40 Arctic Terns, 40 Roseate Terns, and 45 Black Guillemots. It was interesting to see how aggressive the Common Terns were. They dove at peoples' heads, sometimes even knocking off their hats. At the end of the day, I saw one pair of Razorbills flying over the ocean.

Visiting Eastern Egg Rock was an experience I will always remember. I was very fortunate to learn about Project Puffin and see the success of the seabird restoration program at Eastern Egg Rock. Steven Kress succeeded because he persevered and overcame challenges. It is important to learn about successful conservation projects like Project Puffin because it gives us hope that we can be successful in our efforts to help bird populations.

Special thanks to National Audubon and the American Birding Association for providing me with scholarships for the camp at Hog Island.

To learn about how you can help birds visit my website: <http://protectingourbirds.my-free.website/>



An Atlantic Puffin flies over the ocean in the Muscongus Bay of Maine. Photo by Beatrix Schwarz

Coots Make Me Smile

By Contributing Author, Bev-Sue Powers, (www.BallonaPhotography.com)

American Coots always make me smile. At a glance, they're rather plain looking. But these very social ducks have their own beauty. They have more of a croak than a quack and a lot of personality! Their feet look like scalloped slippers to me, designed for support in soft, deep muddy conditions. And mud-running they expertly do! They love to be fed and race shamelessly towards you when they think you have some crumbs to share with them. They are surprisingly quick!

They keep close together, rarely venturing from the flock independently. One day, I saw one waddle up to a group of 2-3 others, stop, and just stand there with its head bowed low. "What was it doing?", I wondered. As I watched, others gathered close to the first, and also bowed their heads. But there was always at least one other who would start scratching those with bowed heads with its beak until they were satisfied. Then they would take turns scratching one another's heads. Bowing was a signal of wanting to get a head rub! I wonder if that would work for me, too, LOL!

They start arriving in the Ballona Wetlands in October, a few at a time. The flock usually grows to about three dozen over a few weeks' time. During the winter, you'll find them in the Del Rey Lagoon, the Freshwater Marsh, and in Ballona Creek. By April, they're gone, heading to Western Canada to breed. This time of year, I miss seeing them. 🦆



INTERPRETING NATURE

Aspiring Botanist Goes Plant-hunting from Baldwin Hills to Yosemite

By Arely Mendia Perez, Environment for the Americas Intern, and Stacey Vigallon, Director of Environmental Education

*Our guest author for this issue's Interpreting Nature column is Arely Mendia Perez. A Greenhouse Program alumna and a current Environment for the Americas intern with Los Angeles Audubon, Arely has a keen interest in both botany and creative writing. In the paragraphs below, Arely reviews Hope Jahren's 2016 memoir, *Lab Girl*, through the lens of her own love of botany, nature, and learning.*

LAB GIRL is an extraordinary story about Hope Jahren and her fascinating endeavors of following her dreams of being a scientist. As a young girl, Jahren found her identity of becoming a scientist, as her father was before her. Her father's lab was her playground, and as an adult her own lab became her solace and her happiness. Hope Jahren ties important aspects of her life to that of the life of plants.

Jahren is a scientist with a Ph.D. doing research in paleobiology. Recipient of three Fulbright Awards, and she is one of only four scientists (and the only woman) to have been awarded both the young investigator medals given in the earth sciences. Jahren does not fail to keep her readers engaged, she gives her audience lessons about science and botany and trails it off into memory lane for us to be captivated by her passion, her struggles, her beliefs, her fears, and her courage. Jahren helps her readers visualize that plants are in a certain way like humans. They grow, just as we do, and die, just as we do. Her visualization gives us a new way to view the world, to observe what we often fail to see. As looking at a leaf from a tree, she encourages her readers to explore and ask questions.

I really enjoyed this book because, in a way, I sensed that there was so much I had forgotten that Jahren helped me to remember. I remembered how alluring botany was when I first learned about it as a Greenhouse Program intern studying Janice Timbrook's *Chumash Ethnobotany*. That was all the push I needed to quickly enroll myself into a botany class once I started college. I can still remember the first



Arely Mendia Perez on her 18-day backpacking trip in Yosemite this summer. Arely was selected to attend this trip as part of Outward Bound's Pinnacle Scholars Program (photo credit Arely Mendia Perez).

conversation my classmates had when we first sat in the classroom filled with posters of flowers and leaves, parts specified in detailed, and a wide chalkboard greeting us upon entry. Almost as a unit, I can hear students presenting their names to each other and stating that the only reason they enrolled in the class was because this was the “easiest” class needed to complete their lab requirement. I fiddled with my sweater sleeves thinking about how the reason I enrolled in the class was to learn more about botany. It came as a big surprise to us all after the first few days to find that botany was not so easy. The study of plants is indeed more complicated than we thought. I wasn’t the smartest in that class, but I believe my curiosity and fascination are what actually made me worthy of getting a “B” from my professor. I never failed to start a long conversation with her about my own small garden. I wasn’t only satisfied with my letter grade but also that I learned so much and began to see the world differently. This made me happy, both as a student learning the little things that we take for granted and as a writer appreciating the wonders of the Earth. “Science has taught me that everything is more complicated than we first assume, and that being able to derive happiness from discovery is a recipe for a beautiful life,” Hope Jahren observed. She was right about this.

While reading *Lab Girl*, I was also surviving my first backpacking trip this summer – eighteen days in Yosemite as part of Outward Bound’s Pinnacle Scholars Program. It was my first time being in the wilderness, let alone the forest. I was excited mainly to look at the conifers and wildflowers. I wanted to explore the nature that I don’t get to see in Los Angeles. Jahren mentions in her memoir something that I deem important as well: “When you go into a forest you probably tend to look up at the plants that have grown so much taller than

you ever could. You probably don’t look down, where just beneath your single footprint sit hundreds of seeds, each one alive and waiting.” It is true that I mainly noticed the majestic trees as I hiked and got higher in elevation through the mountains. But, I remember being even more fascinated when seeing baby pines sprouting out of the soil that we stepped over, or noticing that odd wildflower known as Steer’s Head growing out of granite. I’m sure many in my group on that trip thought I was weird for shrieking in excitement when I noticed that small patch of lupine growing happily on the ground.

I would recommend Hope Jahren’s *Lab Girl* to young adults and older adults. Jahren pours love, delight, and science into her writing that will captivate readers chapter by chapter. This book will both keep you knowledgeable about botany and keep you amused. 🐦

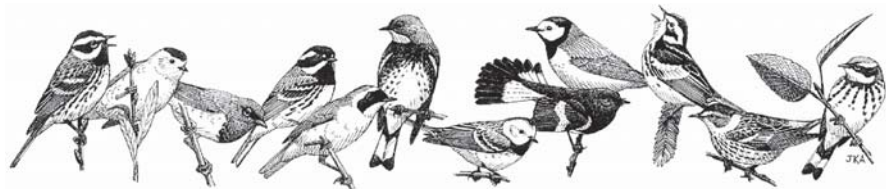


Arely Mendia Perez leads a team of high school students on a nature walk in the Baldwin Hills, as part of her Greenhouse Program internship when she was in high school (photo credit Stacey Vigallon)

BIRDS OF THE SEASON

August 2017

by Jon Fisher



Although summer is to me the least pleasant season in southern California, the birds don't leave much to complain about. Granted, it's a slower part of the year, but breeding activity continues, southbound shorebirds are present, early arriving fall songbirds begin to appear and there are always a few good rarities to be found.

Late May to early June and September through October are considered prime for vagrant songbirds, but this year several surprises turned up in late June and July this year.

Numbers of migrants are attracted to the San Gabriel Mountains in late July and August, as there they are afforded shelter, food and cooler temperatures. But birds are also passing through the lowlands in increasing numbers.

It's counterintuitive, but the concrete channelization of the lower LA River has turned it into one of the best places in the county to watch shorebirds, with many other species also be found there. No summer would be complete without at a few trips to the river to view significant numbers of common shorebirds and to get that annual "tick" of our scarcer migrants. As good as the river is, the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB is also excellent, and any coastal or wetland habitat also draws shorebirds.

Though most of the change we've seen in southern California has had adverse impacts on birds, some development has at least not been totally negative. Manmade ponds and reservoirs offer feeding and resting places for birds, as do windbreaks, ranches, well-watered yards and parks. These are especially beneficial to migrants for whom food, water and

places to rest are essential. They become even more important in late summer and fall when no significant rain has fallen for months.

As usual, there was good avian diversity, and that variety extended to the rare birds recorded from mid-June to mid-August.

Unusual in summer was a **Long-tailed Duck** on the LA River on Long Beach from July 23–August 14 (Jeff Boyd). Though it was regularly reported, its diving proclivities made it less than an easy find for many birders.

Common Mergansers included a summering bird along the LA River in Glendale from June 22–July 27 (Brad Rumble) and one at Quail Lake on August 6 (Kimball Garrett). A half dozen were at Castaic Lagoon on August 6, either early arrivals or possibly local breeders (John Kelly).

Scarce in summer- particularly inland- were **Red-breasted Mergansers** at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City from June 17–August 14 (Martin Byhower) and at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from July 14–August 11 (Chuck Burt).

The only **White-winged Dove** reported thus far was at Malibu Lagoon on July 18 (Hans Spiecker). The tiny colony of **Inca Doves** persisted in Los Angeles at Col. Leon H. Washington Park with reports continuing through July 29. **Common Ground-Doves** included a continuing bird at Linden H. Chandler Preserve through July 29 and another at the Azusa Pacific University on July 28 (Seth G.).

Rare as a fall migrant was a **Stilt Sandpiper** found on the LA River in Long Beach on July 23

(Kimball Garrett).

The first **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were along the lower LA River in Long Beach on July 22 (Jon Fisher, Sarah Ngo), with two there the following day (Kimball Garrett). Later, others were at the Piute Ponds on August 2 (Chris Dean, Dessi Sieburth) and along the LA River in Long Beach from August 6–7 (Jon Fisher) and in Cudahy on August 8 (Richard Barth).

Fairly common in adjacent counties but surprisingly scarce in the county, a **Red Knot** was near the Ballona Creek mouth on July 24 (Martin Meyers).

Unusual away from coastal waters was a **Pomarine Jaeger** that overflowed the Piute Ponds on June 26 (Jon Feenstra). Strong fliers, jaegers can turn up almost anywhere on the continent.

A nice find was an adult **Sabine's Gull** on the LA River in Cudahy that was present from August 10–15 (Richard Barth).

Unexpected inland were three **Least Terns** at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas on June 12 (Eric Smith Jr.).

Increasingly recorded in LA County waters but still rare was a **Brown Booby** off Pt. Fernin on June 27 (Bob Schallmann).

Unusual in summer was an **American Bittern** at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on July 30 (Dick Norton).

At least one **Reddish Egret** was observed at Malibu Lagoon off and on from June 20–July 21 (Lu Plauzoles).

Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were frequently reported in the Ballona area this summer, most often at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh. At least two immatures and one adult were present off and on from early July through August 13.

The Sepulveda Basin had a **Vermilion Flycatcher** on June 15 (Mike Stensvold) and others were along the LA River in Long Beach on June 23 (Andrew Lee) and at Castiac Lagoon from July 1–August 9 (Barbara Johnson). Several more continued at Oakdale Memorial Park in Glendora through June 24.

A singing **Red-eyed Vireo** at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles on July 7 must have been a late spring vagrant (Devin Peipert). Unfortunately it could not be refound.

Expected in very small numbers as a spring and fall migrant, a late or wandering **Purple Martin** turned up along the LA River in the Sepulveda Basin on June 22 (Daniel Tinoco). This species formerly bred commonly in the San Gabriel Mountains and even into the lowlands. It has since been extirpated, mainly by the spread of European Starlings which have aggressively usurped the cavities the martins require as nest sites.

A **California Gnatcatcher**- presumably a wanderer from nearby breeding areas- was at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on August 9 (Bernardo Alps) and a **Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** was on Edwards AFB on August 12 (Jon Feenstra). The latter species is regular not far outside the county, but rarely recorded within its borders.

Cedar Waxwings typically linger late in spring and appear early in fall, but a single bird at

Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on July 23 was outside the expected range of dates (Darren Dowell).

An **Ovenbird** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from July 28–30 was present at an odd date and may have summered or at least attempted to (David Moody). Its skulky behavior made detection a challenge, even once it was known to be present.

Another out of season vagrant was a **Tennessee Warbler** at the LA County Natural History Museum Nature Gardens from July 26–27 (Kimball Garrett).

Very rare was an unexpectedly late spring **Cape May Warbler** found at Wilson Cove on San Clemente Island on June 21 (Nicole DesNoyers, Justyn Stahl). This prized eastern warbler is detected less than annually in the county.

Far less rare, **Summer Tanagers** were at Apollo Park on June 14 and at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena on August 7 (both Chris Dean).

There's been little of the way of seedeaters to report thus far, but a few **Indigo Buntings** were recorded. Birds were on the San Gabriel River in South El Monte on August 6 (Larry Schmah), at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia on August 9 (Javier Vasquez, Grace Wong) and at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on August 11 (Daniel Tinoco).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds, typically occurring as spring and fall migrants on the coastal slope, were at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on June 30 (Lisa Fimiani) and on the lower LA River in Long Beach on July 4 (Becky Turkey) and August 1 (Richard Barth).

As we head into September, shorebird migration will continue and passerines will only increase in numbers. Though lesser in magnitude than spring migration, fall is nevertheless still very productive and loaded with potential.

Weedy areas in flood basins and river channels should be checked for sparrows, buntings and other seed-eating birds. Any wetland can turn up shorebirds and the mountains are worth birding through the fall. High desert spots can be great in fall as they are in spring. In short, almost any locale generally produces at least a few migrants.

In addition to all our regular species, September and October has the potential for vagrants from Siberia, eastern North America and Mexico. Among birders there is always a degree of anticipation for what rarities may turn up.

The latter half of September will see the arrival of the first of hordes of Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows as well as other wintering birds. To me their appearance signals the true beginning of autumn, a new set of birds and cooler temperatures.

As we experience migration, it's worth considering the obvious fact that most of these birds spend at least half the year to the south of us. As long as they keep returning in spring we may not give their wintering grounds that much thought. Yet their return each spring- at least in the long term- is in jeopardy. Songbirds and others face many threats and habitat loss remains the greatest challenge. It's with no small degree of concern that we contemplate the state of our avifauna in fifty or a hundred years.

Nevertheless, there are still a lot of birds out there and we're entering the peak of autumn migration. The most common problem, aside from fighting LA traffic, is finding enough time to get to all the places we want to.



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.

Open Wetlands at Ballona

1st Saturday of every month

Sept 2 & Oct 7

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

Sept 3 & Oct 1

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

3rd Saturday of the month

(Except for July and August)

Sept 16 & Oct 21

Time: 8:00–noon

4100 S. La Cienega Blvd
Los Angeles 90056

Leader: *Eric and 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 Phoebes, Cassin Kingbirds, California and Spotted Towhee, Red-tailed Hawk, and Cooper's Hawk.

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.**

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

Sept. 10 & Oct. 8

Time: 8:30 a.m.–12:00 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. We will also look for south bound migrants such as warblers, vireos, and flycatchers.

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

Sept 17 & Oct 15

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.

Field Trip Listings

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

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



Nick & Mary Freeman
Field Trip Chairperson
& Trip Leaders

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

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

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

CARPPOOLING

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

"FEE REQUIRED" RESERVATIONS

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

Mail to:

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

'NO FEE' RESERVATIONS / MORE INFORMATION

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

Sunday, September 10

Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Wetlands

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. Huntington Central Park should be catching early songbird migration by this date. At Bolsa Chica, flocks of shorebirds should be heading south, mixing with post-breeding terns and Skimmers, and a chance for American Bittern and Ridgeway's (a.k.a. Clapper) Rail. Bring a lunch for a full day of birds. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the HCP parking lot on the south side of Slater Ave. just east of Golden West St.

Sunday, September 24

Mojave Area

SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE, 10 MAX

Leaders: *Nick and Mary Freeman*. Kern County has some of the best migrant traps in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! Dine out (then herp?) with leaders Saturday evening if you wish (Gloria's, 7027 CA City Blvd, 93505). Sunday, bird California City environs, and hit Apollo Park on our way south if we have time. To meet, take Hwy 14 about 4 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops, turn left into the golf course parking lot past the huge, fenced driving range. Meet here at 6:30 a.m. To reserve, either call or e-mail Audubon with name(s), cell number, and e-mail address (for confirmation). Reserve a room at Motel 6 or other in Mojave, or the Best Western in CA City (across the street from the meeting spot). Bring lunches, FRS radios, sunblock, bird and reptile books.

Saturday, September 30

Malibu to McGrath Field Trip

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Louis Tucker*. Late passerines and shorebirds should be moving through coastal migration spots, mixed with early wintering birds. Possibly 80 species. Take PCH N over the bridge in Malibu to the stoplight, and park on PCH, or turn right on Cross Creek Road for free parking along the road (and Starbucks), or turn left into the fee lot (GPS: 3999 Cross Creek Rd. 90265). Cross PCH, and meet at the kiosk by the lagoon at 7:30 a.m. for a full day of birding. There may be an access fee at McGrath or elsewhere. Bring lunch.

Saturday, October 7

San Diego

SIGN-UP, \$10 FEE

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

Sunday, October 15
Oxnard Plain
NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

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

Saturday, October 28
(date confirmed, but no sign-ups until Sept. 1)

Condors at Bitter Creek NWR

**\$10 DONATION (OR MORE) SUGGESTED,
SIGN-UP REQUIRED, LIMIT 20**

Joseph Brandt, California Condor biologist, will be leading this trip to view the reintroduction program of the California Condor. We should get good looks at California Condors, possibly Golden Eagles, and a number of other species, from Cerro Noroeste Rd. and possibly a hillside near the hacking pen. Joseph will give us an overview of the program, show us how radio telemetry and GPS tracking units are helping to save the bird, and talk about the future of the species in California and elsewhere. We will be west of Mt. Pinos, not too far from Maricopa. All new releases of condors into the wild SoCal population occur here, and all 43 condors in our wild local population visit this area. Take Interstate 5 north to Frazier Park exit. At the stop sign make a left and go under I-5. Meet in the parking lot of the "Flying J" gas station at 8:30 a.m.

Finish at 3 or 4:00 p.m. Reserve your place with LAAS by phone, stating phone # and e-mail address, whether you have a high clearance vehicle that can accommodate at least 4 people total (priority) or you plan to ride with someone else. Bring drinks, lunch, and FRS radio and a scope if you have them. No fee, but \$10 donations (on site) accepted to the Condor Survival Fund.

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

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet on the wooden boardwalk along the west side of the bay 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 about 9:30 a.m., and may not peak in the back bay until after 10:00 a.m., so we will be in position when birds flush to higher ground. Ridgway's Rail (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. We may finish up at San Joaquin Marsh, upstream. Take the 405 Fwy S to the 73 Toll Road (free this far) to the Campus Dr. exit, 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 (2280 University Dr., Newport Beach 92660), walk down the frontage trail and over the little bridge, and to where the boardwalk starts to curve. Bring lunch. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

Sunday, November 19
San Jacinto NWR and Lakeview Area
NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leaders: *Nick and Mary Freeman*. Little Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gulls (2!), Short-eared Owls (2!) seen on past trips may not be back this year; but surely something will take their places, such as the Iceland Gull and Gyrfalcon seen here in recent years (but not on our trip)! Take the 10 or 60 Fwy E to the 215 Fwy S, exit E at Ramona Expressway, continue E just past Perris Blvd., and meet at the Farmer Boys Restaurant on the S side of the road (145A Ramona Expressway, Perris). Leave from here at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch, warm clothing and footwear for (hopeful) mud. We will try to carpool to defray the \$10 entrance fee for Lake Perris, if we go there.

Saturday, December 2
**West Antelope Valley Raptors and Less
Consequential Birds**
NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP

Louis Tucker will lead us from Quail Lake east, viewing the Antelope Valley through the warped lens of his raptor-loving mind. Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon likely, Golden Eagle possible. Wear warm clothing, bring lunch, and have a full tank of gas. Meet at Denny's at 6:45 a.m. to carpool. Take 405N to Roxford in Sylmar. Turn right, then right into the Denny's parking lot at 12861 Encinitas Ave, Sylmar, CA 91342. Trip leaves at 7:00 a.m. Rain in the AV cancels, as decided at Denny's by Louis. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

CHRISTMAS COUNT TEASERS:

Saturday, December 16 — Lancaster Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 17 — Malibu Christmas Bird Count

Tuesday, January 2 — Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count



Monthly Program Presentations



BIRDS IN THE CITY: Do resident and migratory birds prefer native trees?

Presented by: Eric M. Wood

Eric Wood is the principal investigator of the Wood Lab of Avian Ecology and Conservation at California State University Los Angeles. He and his students are researching the urban wilds of Los Angeles and untangling the mysteries of how the city could better support resident and migratory birds.

This presentation reports on work looking at tree species preferences of resident and migratory bird species in LA and lays out the ways in which the birding public and local students can contribute to urban bird conservation.

What: Public Lecture

When: October 11, 2017, 7:30 – 9:00 PM

Time: 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Where:

Audubon Center at Debs Park

4700 Griffin Ave

Los Angeles, CA

(323) 221-2255, <http://debspark.audubon.org/>

Parking available on site and transit is nearby.

Contact Carol Babeli: carolbabeli@laaudubon.org to RSVP or volunteer to help set up chairs in advance of the program.

Please visit www.laaudubon.org for updates on the Monthly Program Presentations.

September's presentation is to be announced soon.