

# WESTERN Tanager

## MONTHLY PROGRAMS



WORLD TRAVELS WITH PAUL  
(OR WHY BIRDING IS NOT JUST ABOUT BIRDS)

SPEAKER: Paul Fox

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

7:30 – to 9:00 p.m.

Paul Fox began his photography interests at age 8. Though he fought a friend who introduced him to birding tooth and nail, he began birding at age 37, but wishes that he had started that earlier. Paul was fortunate to have Arnold Small and Herb and Olga Clarke amongst others as his early birding teachers. Paul will to present a photographic tour of (some of) the world. Mostly birds, but he could not travel and not see what else there is to marvel at.

Nov. & Dec. 2017 MEETING LOCATION:  
Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park  
6300 Hetzler Road, Culver City, California  
*Parking available by the visitor's center.*



SEEING THE UNDERSEEN:  
USING ART TO TELL LOCAL STORIES ABOUT NATURE

SPEAKER: Elkpen

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

7:30 – to 9:00 p.m.

Elkpen is a Los Angeles-based artist looking for novel ways to talk about nature to a wide audience.

Employing context and site specificity, her premise is that seeing things in unexpected ways helps deepen a viewer's connection to content and hopefully builds bridges to conservation values. She creates messages about natural history stories using the shorthand of pictographs, graphic lettering arrangements, and humor in formats that range from match-books to street art to large scale wall drawings.



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*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 [westemanager@laudubon.org](mailto:westemanager@laudubon.org). Photos should be high resolution (300ppi) .jpg or .tif files. Submissions are due the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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## LOS ANGELES AUDUBON - 6 REASONS

6 GREAT REASONS WHY LOS ANGELES AUDUBON IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT GIVING OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESERVING NATURE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

- **Snowy Plovers** — Nesting on LA County beaches for the first time in 70 years! Your local LA Audubon team of biologists, students and specially-trained volunteers conduct research to protect and preserve threatened Snowy Plovers along our coastline.
- **Least Terns** — Your investment in LA Audubon's Conservation Programs improves habitat for the endangered California Least Tern, nesting at Venice Beach.
- **Education** — You are helping more than 5,000 under-served school children explore the wonders of nature through our environmental education programs, field trips, and schoolyard habitat outdoor classrooms every year!
- **Habitat Restoration** — Your support means that habitat restoration continues at the 58-acre Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park where students and community volunteers plant native species to improve open spaces where birds, wildlife and people can thrive.
- **Stewardship** — The Next Generation - You are contributing to our esteemed local high school and college fellowship programs that provide career development skills to shape tomorrow's environmental leaders. We are now partnering with West LA College!
- **You and your passion for nature!** — Expand your birding skills by participating in our exciting field trips, monthly programs and workshops, or join us for a bird walk held 5 times each month, or volunteer for a restoration project.

As an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Los Angeles Audubon must raise its own funding to support these local programs.

Thanks to supporters like you, we will continue to build these programs over the next year!

Learn more at [www.laaudubon.org](http://www.laaudubon.org).



**To support these local programs, please renew your membership and/or make a tax-deductible year-end donation.**  
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# What's to Become of the Ballona Wetlands?


By David DeLange, PhD, Vice President – Los Angeles Audubon

The long-overdue Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Ballona Wetlands, located just south of Marina del Rey, was released last month. The report presents some of the ways that these wetlands could be altered and analyzes impacts for each alternative studied. At stake is whether and to what extent the Ballona Wetlands' surviving 600 acres will be restored to a state of greater health or instead undergo creation into something new via removal and replacement of most of its existing habitat.

LAAS's seven member Board unanimously favors habitat restoration over habitat creation. The Board is actively studying ways in which we can support and gain governmental approval of an environmentally sound restoration plan. The well-being of a wide range of bird species who use Ballona for roosting, refueling and nesting will be significantly affected by the outcome of this environmental review process.

We encourage all our members to read the DEIR found at this website of the CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE:

Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project.

<https://cdfgnews.wordpress.com/2017/09/25/ballona-wetlands-restoration-project-draft-eir-released/> 



Great Blue Herons resting, Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, Photo By Jonathan Coffin  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/stonebird/17740858662/in/album-447673/>



# YOUNG BIRDERS

## The Western Bluebird Conservation Project | By Dessi Sieburth



A male Western Bluebird (Photo by Dessi Sieburth)

**W**estern Bluebirds (*Sialia mexicana*) are small thrushes which can be found year-round in Los Angeles County. Their primary habitat is open grasslands or parks, and their diet includes berries and insects. Western Bluebirds are cavity-nesters, which means that they make their nests inside cavities in hollow dead branches or trunks of trees. Bluebirds can not make their own cavities, as their bills are not strong enough to chisel out the wood. Instead, they rely on finding cavities that have already been made by woodpeckers. Woodpeckers have very strong bills and are excellent cavity makers. The woodpeckers use the cavities they make for nesting, and when they are done nesting, the cavity can be used by another cavity nester, such as a Western Bluebird. In fact, over 80 species of North American birds nest in tree cavities, highlighting the importance of dead trees and branches for birds. Unfortunately, we often cut down dead trees for safety or for aesthetic reasons, which destroys potential nesting sites for many species, including our Western Bluebirds.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Western Bluebirds were reported to be common summer residents from the foothills to the mountains up to 10,000 feet in Los Angeles County. However, Western Bluebirds started declining in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to habitat loss and the introduction of European Starlings and House Sparrows. The starlings and House Sparrows, which were introduced from Europe, are also cavity nesters and compete with bluebirds for nesting habitat. Both species have been known to kill both the adult and young bluebirds.

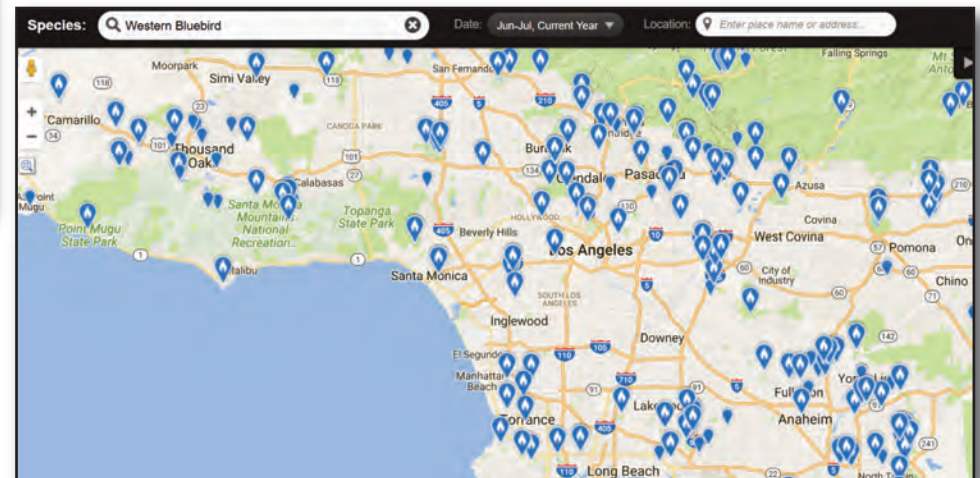


*A female Western Bluebird feeds her young (Photo by Dessi Sieburth)*

In recent decades, however, the Western Bluebird has made a comeback and is now a widespread and a common year-round visitor in Los Angeles, thanks to the Southern California Bluebird Club. The Southern California Bluebird Club was founded in 1984 by Dick Purvis and three other bluebird enthusiasts to provide nesting sites for bluebirds by hanging bluebird nest boxes in trees. Bluebird nest boxes are installed on tree branches about 10 feet high. They are made

of wood, and their entrance holes are small enough so that starlings can not enter. Bluebird nest boxes are mainly responsible for the increase in the Western Bluebird population in Southern California. The California Bluebird Recovery Project (<http://www.cbrp.org/>) keeps records of all the bluebirds raised in nest boxes throughout California, and last year, 11969 Western Bluebirds were raised.

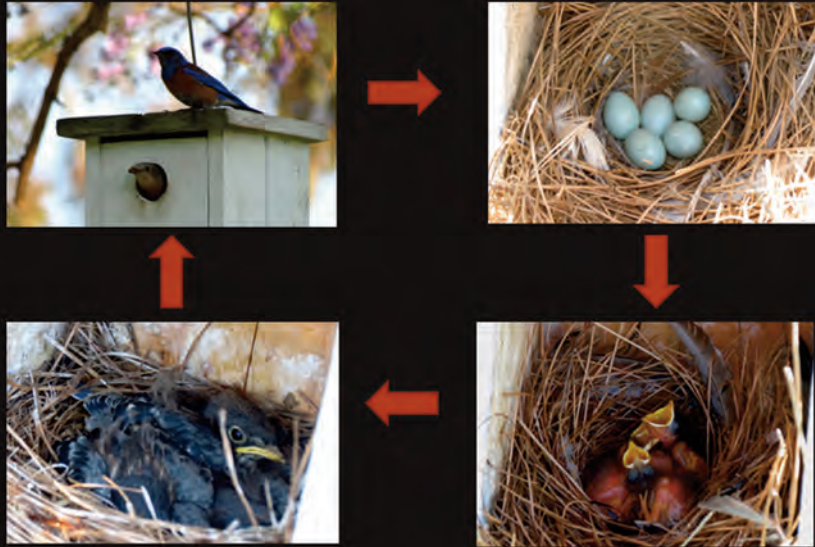
In 2013, my friend Norm Vargas and I decided to build and hang up bluebird nest boxes in Los Angeles County. First, I hung five boxes at an Equestrian Center in Sylmar. In 2014, I expanded my nest box project by installing more boxes at a local cemetery and around my neighborhood. I ended up with 22 nest boxes. During the breeding season, which goes from April to August, I monitor the boxes once a week by taking each one down and looking inside to count the eggs and young. If there are any House Sparrow nests I remove them. I found it amazing to see a bluebird pair build their nest, lay the eggs, and feed the young. Each week, I could see the young bluebirds inside the box gradually grow and mature. It takes 21 days for the young to fledge.



*The Western Bluebird is now a common breeder in the Lowlands and mountains of Los Angeles County (June and July 2017 map from ebird.org)*



## Monitoring the Nest Boxes



*This image shows the bluebird nest box cycle (by Dessi Sieburth)*

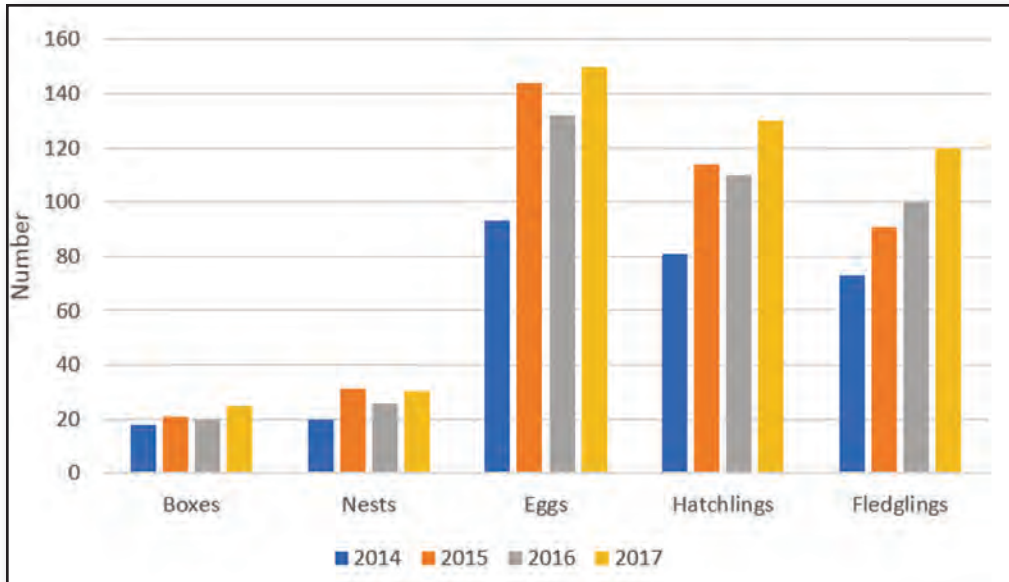
Bluebirds are socially monogamous, but the nests can sometimes have more than one male parent. Several times, I witnessed three bluebirds (usually 2 males and a female) all working together to raise a brood. The second male was likely from a previous brood. Once, when I opened a box to check it, a White-breasted Nuthatch, another cavity nester, was nesting inside the box. The nuthatch pair ended up raising four nuthatch fledglings in the bluebird nest box.

I have been monitoring the same bluebird nest boxes for five years, and I now have put up 22 boxes in three different locations. When I started in 2013, five bluebird fledglings were raised, and this year, 120 bluebird fledglings were raised in my boxes, with an increase in fledglings each year. The bluebird nest box chart shows my data from 2014 to 2017.

There are simple things we can do to help the Western Bluebirds in Los Angeles. First, we can help them by not using pesticides. Birds may ingest and swallow pesticides or bathe in poisoned water. Instead of using pesticides, you can plant native plants such as yarrows, California Buckeye, manzanitas, milkweed, wild lilac, and coyote bush to attract beneficial insects and keep your garden in a balance. Second, outdoor cats kill millions of birds each year, so keeping them inside is good for all birds, including bluebirds. Finally, if you have a dead tree or tree branch in your yard, consider not cutting it down entirely. Even leaving five feet of a stump or a few feet of a branch can be enough to provide nesting habitat for cavity nesters. Of course, it is important to consult an arborist about safety when leaving parts of a dead tree. To learn more about the management of dead trees please go to:



*This White-breasted Nuthatch was using one of my bluebird nest boxes (Photo by Dessi Sieburth)*



Western Bluebird nest boxes monitored by Dessi Sieburth in Los Angeles County

<http://cavityconservation.com/saving-dead-trees/>. If you like to learn more how you can help birds go to my website: <http://protectingourbirds.my-free.website/>.


Thanks to Norm Vargas for helping me with my bluebird nest box project, Gillian Martin for mentoring me on cavity conservation, Los Angeles Audubon Society for supporting my conservation efforts, and Pasadena Audubon Society for providing a grant to build the nest boxes.

For more information on bluebird nest boxes please visit:

<http://www.cbrp.org/SDBluebirds/nestboxes.htm>

References:

Allen, L.W. , K. L. Garrett, and M.C. Wimer. *Los Angeles County Breeding Atlas*. Los Angeles, California: Los Angeles Audubon Society, 1994. Print.

Olson, M. A., hole lotta love for the Western bluebird. *latimes.com*,16. July 2018. Web. 



Bluebird pair at a nest box (Photo by Dessi Sieburth)



A fledgling Western Bluebird. This fledgling is likely a male due to the deep blue tones in the tail and wings (Photo by Beatrix Schwarz)



# BALLONA CHRONICLES

*A Bicycle Built for Three*

By Bev-Sue Powers, [www.ballonaphotography.com](http://www.ballonaphotography.com)

A few weeks ago, a friend was watering her patio plants and was startled to discover a pair of mourning doves had built a nest in her bicycle's basket! Being able to witness wild birds so close is a thrill. Observing how they overcome environmental challenges is a wonder. Why did that Mourning Dove choose the bicycle basket as a perfect choice for a nest? As "wild" habitats disappear under asphalt and concrete, trees and bushes available for nesting also disappear. So, what's a bird to do? Improvise!

## Meet Mr. & Ms. Dove and Their Brood

Both parents build a loose and rather flimsy nest of twigs located from 5 to 25 feet up in a tree, a bush, or ledge. In this case, it was a well-hidden bicycle basket. I warned my friend that doves have been known to reuse the same nest for three or more broods in a single season!



August 8. During a rare break from being covered by one of their parent doves, I snuck a picture of their two perfect eggs. Dove eggs hatch in 14 to 16 days.



August 10. For 14 to 20 days, the Doves take turns incubating their eggs. Papa Dove takes the day shift, while Momma Dove takes the night shift.



Fast forward a couple weeks. My friend had just returned from a week-long trip to meet her newly born grand-daughter and discovered the Doves' babies had also hatched. She caught a cute pic of them "greeting" their momma/papa-bird for the first time. Here's a pic I caught of them a few days later.



August 21. Papa Dove warming up his brood.



August 24. Baby doves leave the nest 11 or 12 days after they hatch. Though wide awake, these little ones remained peacefully observing their surroundings without a peep.



August 25. As their little bodies start self-regulating their own body temperature, chicks are left alone for longer durations. When they finally can self-regulate their body temperature, the parents no longer covers them at night.

## Mourning Dove Facts

- Mourning Doves are known to mate for life.
- The oldest known Mourning Dove was a male, and at least 30 years, 4 months old when he was shot in Florida in 1998.
- If they migrate from Southern California, they migrate to north central USA and South Central Canadian territories.
- The peak of the breeding season is April – July although they may breed as late as October in some areas.





*August 25. Papa Dove covering and cooing at the chicks one of the last days before they fledged.*

*August 25. Mama Dove keeping a watchful eye nearby. If a baby is reluctant to leave the nest after 12 days, the parents will often keep watch nearby but refuse to feed it.*

*August 29. A reluctant empty nester.*



*August 29. The chicks hanging around the patio nursery one last time before parting into the great unknown (Ballona Wetlands).*

*This article is dedicated to my friend, Nena who graciously gave me a key to her place so I could capture this story with my camera as it unfolded whenever she was away. Much Thanks, Nena!*



# Los Angeles Audubon restoration program creates new opportunities for young people

*Baldwin Hills program gives young people hands-on training in science and restoration.*

By Natasha Khann



*Participants in Los Angeles Audubon's Baldwin Hills Restoration Program get to work in a habitat area. Photo: Los Angeles Audubon Society.*

Over the last 10 years, Los Angeles Audubon Society has built out a successful environmental science leadership program for youth from predominantly low-income communities of color. The Baldwin Hills Restoration Program serves students from Dorsey High School, John Marshall High School, Inglewood High School and Culver City High School.

“Many of the students are black and Latino,” explains Emily Cobar, who graduated from the first cohort of youth leaders in 2008. “Students receive hands-on training in habitat restoration at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park and the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.”

Cobar, who went on to earn her bachelor’s degree in environmental sciences from UC Santa Cruz, now works as the Education and Restoration Coordinator for the chapter’s program.

Participants in the program learn the basics about native plants, biodiversity,

water conservation and the development of education curriculum for elementary school students. Upon completion, students are given the opportunity to teach elementary school students about nature and environmental restoration.

“It definitely gives students the experience of having a job, which is something that they can put on their resume and something that their parents value,” explains Cobar, adding that the program has helped a number of students figure out their next steps in life. “We have a 100% admission rate into undergraduate college programs.”

The program provides a key pathway for students of color into the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. In recent years, Los Angeles Audubon Society has expanded the program to take students on field trips into wild spaces like Joshua Tree National Park, giving many students a first time experience in nature outside an urban setting. 🐦

You can help to support this program by donating to Los Angeles Audubon.

<http://losangelesaudubon.org/donate>

Your donation will:

- help more students gain knowledge and experience in environmental stewardship
- support job training for at-risk youth
- provide guidance and support for students’ higher education goals



*Youth environmental science leaders take a break on a recent work day. Photo: Los Angeles Audubon Society*

# INTERPRETING NATURE

## 2016–2017 Greenhouse Intern Project Abstracts

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

*In May 2017 students participating in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Internship Program presented their research to the public at a symposium hosted at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. Projects from last school year examined the effectiveness of high school students as environmental educators, irrigation system engineering, native species transplant survival, and more. Interns devote many hours to their projects over the course of the school year, and they have to first write a project proposal that includes relevant background literature, hypotheses, and a project budget. The information obtained through student research projects is available to California State Parks and the Baldwin Hills Conservancy staff, is used to inform habitat restoration at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, and serves as a foundation upon which new interns can build new projects. Below we are pleased to present the 2016-2017 Greenhouse Intern project abstracts.*

### Emely Perez

*Transplant survival of milkweed in gallon pots vs. 2-inch pots at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook*

Monarchs are important pollinators essential to nature, and they can't survive without milkweed (Monarch Joint Venture A, Sandoval 2015). We need pollinators for life to function properly (Black, Shepard and Allen 2001). To prevent further pollinator extinction we need habitat conservation and restoration. Transplant survival is essential to figuring out the survival rate of plants. I transplanted milkweed plants that had been in 2-inch pots and 1-gallon pots to the hillside and germinated *Asclepias fascicularis* and *Asclepius eriocarpa* seedlings in the spring and another batch in the fall to test how they germinate according to season. I hypothesized that the milkweed that had been in the 1-gallon pots would have a higher transplant survival rate than the in the 2-inch pots. I also hypothesized that the batch germinated in the spring would have a higher germination rate than the ones in the fall. Milkweed in the 1-gallon pots had a \_ transplant survival rate of 70%, but the milkweed in the 2-inch pots had a low 5% transplant survival rate (see graph 1). The milkweed seeded in the spring had a higher germination rate than the ones germinated in the fall.

*Emely Perez currently attends Cal Poly Pomona.*



*Interns set up an experiment on the greenhouse hillside to test transplant survival of milkweed species.*





*Intern Diana holds up food products created from native plants found in Baldwin Hills parkland.*

## **Diana Leal**

### *Food, Students, and Urban Nature*

Food, community, and nature are three things that are greatly impactful to everyone. The goal of my project was to help people make better and more educated decisions about their food because as humans we have a big impact on the natural world (Vitousek 1997). Our world helps us build connections, communities, houses, and grows our food (Vitousek 1997). I conducted a guided walk where I informed the Greenhouse Program students about edible plants around the park. My hypothesis that there would be an increase in knowledge among students in the Greenhouse Program after they participated in my lesson was supported by data: 100% of survey participants (n=26) reported that they felt they gained knowledge about plants in the park. Out of the 26 participants in the lesson plan, 22 tried an edible plant that I presented (85%). Over 85% of participants expressed an interest in possibly growing some of their own food or helping out in a garden. Next year I plan to further explore cultural and family eating patterns of students in the Greenhouse Program to better understand how these patterns relate to students' connection to nature.

*Diana Leal currently attends West Los Angeles College and is part of the bakery staff at the world-renowned Mozza Restaurant Group.*

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## **Hilary Alas**

### *Fiber Arts and Urban Nature*

I used three different plant groups (native, non-native, and food plants) to create dyes for wool yarn using the solarization method. I hypothesized that all six plants used would adhere to the wool fiber, which was proven correct. These dyes are sustainable, eco-friendly, and fairly easy to make, though they are very limited in color range. In addition to the dye aspects of my project, I also learned traditional handcraft skills related to fiber: knitting and spinning. These activities gave me greater appreciation towards my clothes because I was able to form a personal connection to the materials and tools that went into creating the garment. It also pushed me to think about sustainability and being more aware of the items I buy. In our current day it's extremely important to be informed about where our clothes come from and what impact it has on the environment. I recommend that the Greenhouse Program provide future students with the opportunity to learn these skills.

*Hilary Alas currently attends UC Santa Barbara.*





## Gerson Rivas

### *Irrigation Set-up and Consistency in Data Collection*

The Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (BHSO) is home to a variety of California native plants, which do not receive water for very long periods of time due to Southern California's low rainfall. Unlike agricultural and residential plantings, established native plants do not need to be irrigated during periods of no rain because these plants are well adapted into the environment. However, the lack of rainfall makes irrigation systems an essential tactic for habitat restoration sites because native plants still need water to become established. In my project I attempted to compare the growth rate and survival of plants using drip, ring, and hand water irrigation methods. Unfortunately, I was not able to test my hypotheses due to more-than-average rainfall during the winter 2016 and spring 2017. We did learn that with measuring tape, instructions, and the appropriate materials, high school students with very basic technical knowledge could set up working irrigation systems with minimal adult support.

*Gerson Rivas currently attends West Los Angeles College.*



*Intern Gerson measures a plant in one of his irrigation treatments at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook.*





Germination of native plant species has always been an important aspect of the Greenhouse Program. Intern Martin examined seedling survival in two different soil types.

## Martin Recendez

### *Transplant Survival of Three Native Plant Species in Two Soil Types*

The Baldwin Hills consist of a series of north-south trending hills; it's the biggest remaining expanse of space in the LA Basin (Molina, 2001). I studied transplant survival in the greenhouse of three native species in the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook: Black Sage (*Salvia mellifera*), California Bush Sunflower (*Encelia californica*), and California Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). I hypothesized that seedlings transplanted into native hillside soil would have a better survival rate than those in potting soil, and that transplant survival rate might not be the same for all species. I distributed them into plots of soil; when they became seedlings, I transplanted them into pots that either contained hillside or potting soil. Height then was measured in centimeters. I recorded measurements and survival rates of each species. California Buckwheat and Black Sage had better survival rates in hillside soil. California Bush Sunflower, however, had a higher survival rate in potting soil. The average height of the native plant species in hillside soil was larger than in potting soil. Through my research, visitors will understand that the species need their own type of soil. My project is important because it informs others about the native species of Baldwin Hills.

*Martin Recendez currently attends UCLA.*



## Behtsabe Lopez

### *Effectiveness of Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program Teenagers as Environmental Educators*

Nature can reduce stress levels in teenagers, and allowing teenagers to become environmental educators can keep them and younger children away from dangerous situations and can help teenagers develop public speaking skills, empathy towards teachers, and confidence towards teamwork. In this project I observed the relationship between teacher and student as well as student and nature. Two groups participated in this project: Esperanza Elementary students and the Baldwin Hills Green House Program (BHGP) teenagers. Elementary student participants took pre and post surveys for each training session. The BHGP teenager participants took pre and post surveys for each teaching session and an overall survey at the end of the project. All results were compared. The elementary school participants in the first session showed a great increase in knowledge and positive attitude towards nature, but in the second session there was a slight decrease in positive attitude towards nature. The BHGP teenager participants showed a percentage range of 90 to 100 percent of an increase in empathy for their teachers, confidence in public speaking, and confidence in teamwork. This study shows that teenagers and elementary students can benefit from cross-age teaching sessions that can help develop crucial lifetime skills for both ages.

*Behtsabe Lopez currently attends El Camino College.*

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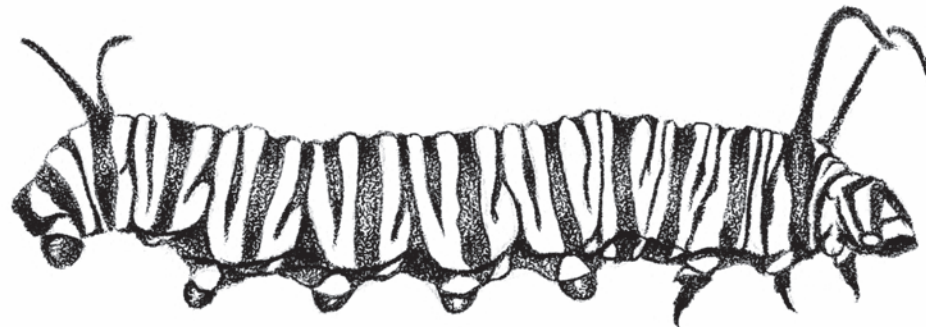
## Sidonie Horn

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

This study focuses on the relationship between California Scrub-Jays (*Aphelocoma californica*), Eastern Fox Squirrels (*Sciurus niger*), and Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) in the Baldwin Hills area within Los Angeles. These species were observed within neighboring parks: (1) the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (BHSO), a recovering natural habitat, and (2) Culver City Park (CCP), a manicured park designed for sports and recreation. To gain an understanding of jay and squirrel abundance and habitat use, surveys were conducted in both parks at sites with differing vegetative and human use characteristics September 2016 – February 2017. Jays were observed only within BHSO, at two of the four sites (Greenhouse and Parking Lot). Squirrels were observed in all three CCP sites and at the BHSO Greenhouse site. Similar to last year's pilot study, jays were seen only in areas with established native vegetation. The Greenhouse site is located where the two parks meet, and both squirrels and jays were seen at this site. Based on these results, it appears that jays and squirrels use different habitat despite having similar diets. Jays are an essential part of the local ecology and as wild spaces in LA continue to shrink it is important to find a way to make urban parks attractive to the remaining native wildlife.

*Sidonie Horn is currently a third-year Greenhouse Intern.*

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## Magaly Lopez

### *Better Germination in California Black Walnut*

I studied California black walnuts (*Junglans californica*), a native species of southern California, to learn under which conditions germination occurs best. Between fall 2014 and spring 2015, I observed germination between non-refrigerated and refrigerated walnuts collected in 2014. My data showed that refrigerated walnuts had greater germination than non-refrigerated walnuts. For fall 2015 to spring 2016, I compared germination of refrigerated and non-refrigerated walnuts collected in both 2014 and 2015. Data showed that overall refrigerated walnuts germinated at higher rates and walnuts that have been stored for over a year are still viable to plant. During fall 2016 and spring 2017, I compared the germination of refrigerated walnuts collected in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Although the sample size was small, more walnuts germinated in store-bought soil than hillside soil. The only walnuts that germinated in hillside soil were walnuts collected in 2016 and not any previous year. Based on three years of data, I recommend refrigerating seeds before planting, and germination may occur best in store-bought soil. Also, walnuts collected in previous years are still viable to plant, but I recommend planting walnuts collected during the same year or one year previous because they can yield better germination.

*Magaly Lopez currently attends UC Santa Barbara.*

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## Sindel Donaldson

### *Animation, Nature, and a Child's Mind*

Animated films are a huge part of children's lives and have a heavy influence on the way children think and act. They give children ideas that tend to stay with them throughout their lives (Goldman 2012). These ideas include ones about how they should view nature and different demographics of people. My project compares the way that a sample of animated films from the United States (*Disney*) and Japan (*Studio Ghibli*) portray nature and different groups of people to children. When viewing the films, I concentrated on which animals were portrayed as good or bad, how animals and humans interacted, and the antagonist's motivation. I also focused on the complexity of female characters, microaggressions, and the diversity of the cast. Between December 2016 and February 2017 I studied the ten films and filled my data sheets. I found that the American films portrayed nature as something to be controlled by humans and women as simple-minded people who only care about love and excitement, while the Japanese films portrayed nature as something to fear and respect and women as complex people who must often make complex decisions and combat strong emotions.

*Sindel Donaldson currently attends Amherst College.*

## Jose Rivera

### *Positive Effects of Nature and Meditation on Greenhouse Program Participants*

People living in the urban environment suffer from chronic stress more so than people living in a non-urban environment (Wolf 2013). My project focused on nature and meditation as a way for people to manage stress within the Greenhouse Program, engaging 38 participants in two styles of meditation: coloring and sitting in nature. I hypothesized that on a week-to-week basis participants will report no difference in stress levels, which was proven to be incorrect. The majority of participants showed a decrease in reported stress level after taking part in either form of meditation. The percent of positive emotions listed increased after mediation and negative emotions decreased. My second hypothesis that participants will, upon reflection at the end of all mediation sessions, report that meditation helped them manage their stress, was supported by the data collected. Of the 24 people who completed post-assessment forms about their experience, 88% said that their meditation experience was positive or helpful in some way, and 87% said that they would consider meditating on their own in the future. I would recommend studying how meditation benefits elementary students and I would recommend meditation being used frequently in the Greenhouse Program.

*Jose Rivera currently attends UC Merced.*



# Ballona to the Beach

By Carol Babeli, Director of Communications and Development

*Los Angeles Audubon Society was recently awarded a grant from The State Coastal Conservancy which will help to support our “Ballona to the Beach” programs.*

*“Ballona to the Beach” will connect thousands of students and members of the public to five unique coastal experiences through educational beach walks, school field trips, coastal habitat restoration, and science illustration - with emphasis on the importance of coastal conservation.*

**Los Angeles Audubon invites to you join us for:**

- **Monthly “First Saturdays” events (9am-noon) at Ballona Wetlands**
- **Beach walks at Dockweiler Youth Center 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m.) Nov. 18, Dec. 9, and Jan. 7th.**

The Ballona to the Beach programs include:

**Ballona Wetlands Programs** — the Ballona Wetlands is one of the last remaining coastal wetlands in California. Our monthly “First Saturdays” program and weekly school field trips bring thousands of students, teachers and members of the public to the coast where they become biologists and explorers for the day engaged in hands-on activities using microscopes, binoculars and spotting scopes to view wildlife and marine life. The wetlands programs are led by LAAS’ Outdoor Education Director Cindy Hardin, and a volunteer staff of 40+ specially trained docents. Coastal visitors explore 4 on-site education stations: Microscope Station to view aquatic samples and create science illustrations of what they see; Restoration Station


to learn about native coastal plants; Bird Station to view shorebirds along the tidal channel and learn how the wetlands are vital in providing food, shelter and serve as migratory resting areas; and, the Trestle Station which is an observation platform and place to discuss the history of the coastal area from the Tongva Indians to the dramatic shift of the LA River that once flowed through here.

**Dockweiler Beach Ecology** – LAAS Biologist/Environment Education Director Stacey Vigallon leads beach ecology field trips focused on shorebirds for public school students. Lessons include beach habitat (from dunes to the wrack line), the food web, and animal adaptations to living on the beach. Students learn to use binoculars, spot birds camouflaged along the beach and make drawings and written observations in field notebooks to further explore beach ecology back in their classrooms.

**Nest Colony Habitat Restoration** — The Federally Endangered California Least Tern has a protected colony/nesting site located on Venice Beach. Twice annually during the non-breeding season, biologists and LAAS staff open the colony to lead local community members, public school and college students on an education session on beach-nesting birds and beach habitat, culminating in the hands-on opportunity for participants to help remove trash and invasive plants species. It’s a unique opportunity for an inside peak at the 7.7 acres of coastal habitat that is generally off-limits to the public. Student-produced signage at the site provides beachgoers with information about the importance of the protected habitat area.

**Beach Walks** – In collaboration with beach recreation facilities, the public is invited to 3 guided beach walks – scheduled on Nov. 18, Dec. 9, and Jan. 7th) – will focus on beach ecology, shorebirds, and the Federally Threatened Western Snowy Plover. LAAS staff and college interns provide binoculars for attendees and enjoy pointing out all of the amazing bird and marine life that share the shores. Twice a year, at the Annenberg Community Beach House at Santa Monica Beach, LAAS staff, interns, collaborators from Santa Monica Bay Audubon, and Annenberg staff invite beach house members and the general public to an up-close look at beach ecology and a lesson in science illustration sketching birds and their beach habitat.

**Snowy Plover Monitoring Program at Santa Monica Bay** — LAAS staff and Project Coordinators provide specialized training for 30-40 community volunteers who devote more than 100 hours annually to monitoring Western Snowy Plovers. In partnership with Ryan Ecological Consulting, LAAS staff collates the citizen science data, to be shared with local, state, and federal agencies, other biologists, beach managers, and the public in the form on monthly and annual reports.

*Los Angeles Audubon thanks The State Coastal Conservancy for supporting these programs and for encouraging people of all ages to explore the coast!* 



# Dockweiler Youth Center Nature Walks with Los Angeles Audubon



## Fall 2017/Winter 2018 Walk Schedule

Saturday, Nov 18th  
Saturday, Dec 9th  
Sunday, Jan 7th

9am to 1030am

- Group sizes no larger than 15 people are ideal, and as few as two people are just fine
- The nature walk focuses on general beach ecology, with an emphasis on the federally threatened Snowy Plover
- Binoculars for the duration of the walk are provided
- Families are welcome, but children may need help from parents with using binoculars
- Nature walk participants meet at and return to the lobby of the youth center
- Walks typically last between 45-90 minutes depending on the interest level of the group, the amount of wildlife available for viewing at the site, and the weather



Dockweiler Youth Center  
12505 Vista del Mar, Los Angeles, CA 90245  
(Just south of the end of Imperial Highway at Dockweiler Beach)

For more information please call  
(323) 481-4037 or email [tern@laaudubon.org](mailto:tern@laaudubon.org)

Nature walks are FREE. If you drive, please enter the Dockweiler Youth Center facility to ask about a reduced parking fee. The youth center is also easily accessed by bike from the Marvin Braude Bike Trail.



First Saturday's Open Wetlands at Ballona



Tern Colony at Venice Beach with Stacey Vigallon

**CALIFORNIA LEAST TERNS NEST HERE!**

The California Least Tern is a long-lived migratory bird that nests on beaches from San Francisco to Baja. Adult terns forage for small fish in nearby waterways and the open ocean. At the end of the summer they depart for their wintering grounds in Central and South America.

**The California Least Tern is an endangered species.**

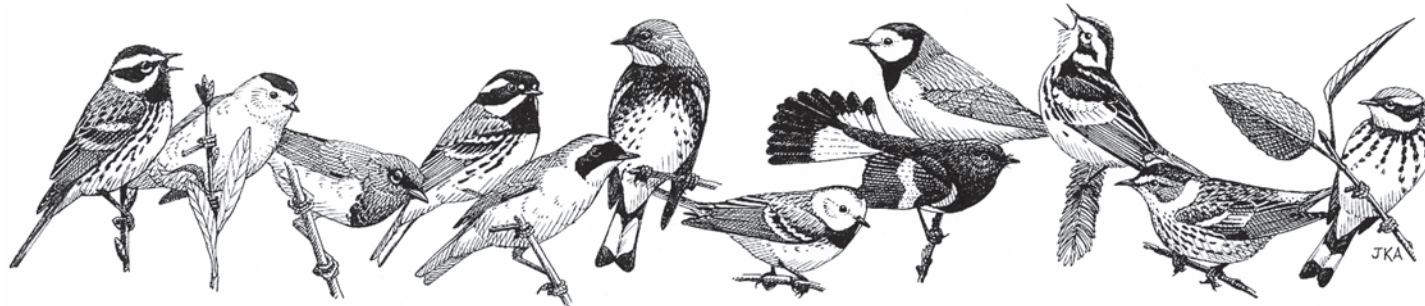
April through August, terns place their eggs in shallow scrapes directly on the sand. Their eggs and chicks are camouflaged, easily blending in with their sandy surroundings.

Q: Do you know what birds nest on beaches?  
A: California Least Terns!

Q: Do you know how Least Terns put their nests in the sand?  
A: They make shallow scrapes!

Q: Do you know how Least Terns camouflage their eggs and chicks?  
A: They blend in with the sand!





## BIRDS OF THE SEASON **October 2017**, by Jon Fisher

**A**s summer progressed, so did migration. In late August the focus began to shift from shorebirds to passerines. The often oppressive summer heat continued as birders blissfully stumbled into an early September that saw a remarkable flush of rare birds. Thus began an excellent period for vagrant warblers, with eighteen species recorded in addition to the nine or so regulars. And it wasn't merely the variety but the overall numbers that were impressive.

There were also above average numbers of normally scarce seedeaters, the usual mixed bag of other odds and ends, as well a few superb finds including two new species for the county.

Among the most productive spots this fall were Peck Road Water Conservation Park (WCP) in Arcadia, Madrona Marsh in Torrance, the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB and of course San Clemente Island.

While these spots were definitely "hot", vagrants were found throughout the county; though it's no surprise that in fall they were concentrated on the coastal slope. Here there are literally dozens of city, county and regional parks that can produce vagrants.

There was minimal evidence of irruptive species thus far, save for a dozen or so Lewis's Woodpeckers, mainly in the San Gabriel Mountains. That said, we shall see what the remainder of fall and winter have to offer.

Waterfowl of interest included a **Long-tailed Duck** continuing on the lower LA River in Long Beach through August 27. A likewise summering **Common Merganser** was along the LA River in Atwater Village through August 27 while a **Red-breasted Merganser** was at Castaic Lagoon on August 20 (Jeffrey Fenwick) and another continued through the summer at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City.

A sign of approaching winter was a **Red-necked Grebe** on the lake at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City from October 15–17 (Ed Griffin).

Expected in small numbers in late summer and fall, **White-winged Doves** were at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on September 7 (Tracy Drake), at Legacy Park in Malibu from October 4–14 (Ryan Terrill) and at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh near Playa Vista on October 7 (Lisa Fimiani). Outdoing the mainland by a wide margin were the dozen found on San Clemente Island during the period.

A late **Lesser Nighthawk** was flushed in Sycamore Canyon near Whittier on October 14 (Larry Schmah).

Also late was a **Rufous Hummingbird** at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on October 14 (Sarah Ngo).



A **Ridgway's Rail** at Legacy Park in Malibu on October 10 was an interesting find (Gabriel Gartner, Brooke Keeney). This bird along with another at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh last year shows that this species can turn up well away from expected areas.

Only the second ever found in the county was a **Bar-tailed Godwit** near the Ballona Creek Mouth on September 24 (Kevin Lapp); it was also the first in over forty years. Unfortunately for many interested birders, this one could not be refound.

Scarce in the county were **Red Knots** at Malibu Lagoon from August 28–September 6 (Daniel Tinoco) and near the Ballona Creek mouth from September 2–25 (Rebecca Marschall).

A **Stilt Sandpiper** at the Piute Ponds from September 2–3 was just the second found this fall (Ryan Terrill).

**Semipalmated Sandpipers** were at the Piute Ponds from August 19–22 (Mark Scheel), on the LA River in Glendale on August 22 (Ryan Terrill), on the LA River in Long Beach on September 27 (Jon Feenstra) and at the Piute Ponds on August 26 and on September 4.

A **Craveri's Murrelet** was spotted southeast of Santa Catalina Island on September 16 (Kimball Garrett).

Gulls of interest included a **Sabine's Gull** at Lake Palmdale on September 14 (Cal Yorke) and a **Franklin's Gull** at the Lancaster Water Treatment Plant from September 8–9 (Dessi Sieburth).

Pelagic birds of note included a **Cook's Petrel** and a **Red-billed Tropicbird** at Cortez Bank on September 3 (Joe Hanfman) and a **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel** at the Palos Verdes Escarpment on October 7 (Kimball Garrett).

A **Brown Booby** was at San Clemente Island on October 14 was the only one recorded for the period (Justyn Stahl).

One or two **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** continued at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh through October 7. Others were at the Cabrillo Salt Marsh in San Pedro on September 8 (David Ellsworth), at Malibu Lagoon on September 10 (James Maley) and on San Clemente Island from October 14–16 (Justyn Stahl).

Raptors of interest included a **Broad-winged Hawk** in the west Antelope Valley on September 24 (Anna Von Kovn), an early for the coastal slope **Swainson's Hawk** at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on August 26 (Michael & Jan Long) and a "**Harlan's**" **Red-tailed Hawk** in the east Antelope Valley on October 8 (Luke Tiller, David Bell).

The only owl of note was a **Short-eared Owl** in the west Antelope Valley on October 9 (Anna Von Kovn).

Even the most jaded birder must have done a double—or triple—take at the report of a **Eurasian Wryneck** on San Clemente Island on September 25 (Brian Flick). This old world species has never before been recorded outside of Alaska, with but two records there. Though it could not be found again, thankfully the record was supported by verifiable photographs—always nice to have for a sighting of this magnitude. Skeptics raised the possibility that this bird could have been ship-assisted, or even a complete hoax. Photos proved the second conjecture untrue and as a long distance migrant it's quite likely it reached the island without any assistance from man.

A **Lewis's Woodpecker** was in La Canada on October 3 (Mary Freeman) and one was at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia on October 18 (Kathy Harty, Jane Bork). Another ten or so were found in the San Gabriel Mountains from late September through mid-October. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at Maywood Riverfront Park in Maywood on October 11 (Richard Barth) and a **Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flicker** was at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on October 8 (Tracy Drake).

Scarce in the county was a pale **Richardson's Merlin** at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on October 14 (Mike Stensvold).

Rare as a late fall and winter visitor, a **Greater Pewee** was found in Rustic Canyon in Santa Monica on October 12 and continuing through October 16 (Steve Morris).

Ever productive San Clemente Island yielded a **Least Flycatcher** that was present from September 24–25 (Nicole Desnoyers).

About eight **Vermilion Flycatchers** either continued or were found on the coastal slope. This species definitely appears to be increasing away from the deserts where it was previously more expected.

**Tropical Kingbirds** were found at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City from October 1–16 (David Bell) and at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from October 8–14 (Mark & Janet Scheel) and San Clemente Island produced an **Eastern Kingbird** present from September 1–4 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers).

Very rare was an apparent nominate “**Eastern**” **Bell’s Vireo** was at Sand Dune Park on October 1 (Jun Wu, Bin Cao), while expected but late was a **Least Bell’s Vireo** at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia on October 10 (Dan Cooper).

**Gray Vireos** on San Clemente Island on September 24 and on October 7 marked the first records ever for the island (Nicole Desnoyers). A nice find was a **Yellow-Green Vireo** at Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach on October 4 (Jun Wu, Bin Cao).

Up to five **Purple Martins** were at Lancaster City Park in Lancaster on September 14–16 (Andrew Lee) and two more were at Santa Fe Dam on September 17 (Andrew Lee).

A **Pacific Wren** at Icy Springs in the San Gabriel Mountains on October 15 was the only one reported thus far (Lance Benner, Kathi Ellsworth).

A **Dusky Warbler** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from September 29–October 1 was the first ever recorded on the county (Tracy Drake). If that bird weren’t enough, a second Dusky was recorded on San Clemente Island on October 11 (Justyn Stahl). There are a remarkable twenty plus records for this old world species in California, yet until this fall we’ve merely been surrounded by counties where this species has occurred.

An early **Varied Thrush** was at Sand Dune Park on October 4 (Jun Wu, Bin Cao) and a **Red-throated Pipit** was on San Clemente Island on October 13 (Justyn Stahl).

Single **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** were at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale from October 3–6 (Jon Feenstra), on San Clemente Island on October 5 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers) and at the Piute Ponds on October 15 (Kimball Garrett). A **Lapland Longspur** was on San Clemente Island from October 8–14 (Nicole Desnoyers).

Seven **Green-tailed Towhees**, an above average number for fall, were reported on the coastal slope with another on San Clemente Island on August 30 (Brian Flick).

Also more common than usual were the six-

teen **Clay-colored Sparrows** found between early September and early October, almost all being on the coastal slope.

A **Black-chinned Sparrow** on San Clemente Island on September 4 was a very good bird for that locale (Nicole Desnoyers).

**Black-throated Sparrows** were on San Clemente Island on August 31 (Justyn Stahl) and on September 26 (Nicole Desnoyers, Justyn Stahl) and at Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach on September 10 (Jun Wu, Bin Cao).

**Lark Buntings** are quite rare in the county, thus the half dozen found over the period were notable. Single birds were on San Clemente Island from September 1–5 (Justyn Stahl) and again on September 26 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers) and at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale on September 9 (Andrew Lee). Two more were on San Clemente Island from October 5–6 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers) and one was at Agua Amarga Canyon on the Palos Verdes Peninsula from October 7–15 (Jun Wu, Bin Cao).

A “**Large-billed**” **Savannah Sparrow** was at Malibu Lagoon on September 10 (James Maley).

Rare as migrants were **Grasshopper Sparrows** at the Ballona Wetlands on September 29 (Jonathan Coffin) and at Peck Road WCP from September 30–October 5 (Jon Fisher).



Quite unexpected inland was a **Nelson's Sparrow** at the Piute Ponds on September 25 (many observers). Normally a rare to very scarce visitor to California's coastal marshes in winter, interior records are few and recent LA County records virtually non-existent.

Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena hosted a **Swamp Sparrow** from October 2–3 (Darren Dowell).

The first **White-throated Sparrow** of the fall was in Porter Ranch on October 13 (Ed Thomas).

Unusual was a hybrid **Dark-eyed "Gray-headed" x "Pink-sided" Junco** at Chilao in the San Gabriel Mountains on September 27 (Richard Armerding, Catherine Bourne). A pure **"Pink-sided" Junco** was at Apollo Park near Lancaster on October 9 (Chris Dean) and a **"Gray-headed" Junco** was on San Clemente Island on October 14 (Justyn Stahl)

A few **Bobolinks** were found this fall, with one at Hansen Dam on September 22 (Kimball Garrett), one at the Ballona Freshwater marsh on September 26 (Dean Schaff) and one or two at Peck Road WCP from October 2–9 (Tom Wurster). Small numbers were also recorded on San Clemente Island from late September through mid-October.

**Baltimore Orioles** were at Creek Park in La Mirada on September 26 (Andrew Lee) and

on San Clemente Island on October 1 (Justyn Stahl). Additionally, two were at Wardlow Park in Long Beach on October 14 (Tracy Drake)

The surprise summering **Ovenbird** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance continued through October 14 and was joined by a second individual for a day on October 10 (Eric Hansen). **Northern Waterthrushes** were on San Clemente Island from September 2–4 (Justyn Stahl) and at Creek Park in La Mirada on September 17 (Tracy Drake).

Over a dozen **Black-and-white Warblers** were tallied between September 3 and October 15, and just over a dozen **Tennessee Warblers** were observed during the period.

Far rarer was a **Prothonotary Warbler** discovered on San Clemente Island on September 20 (Justyn Stahl).

Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena held a **Lucy's Warbler** from August 24–29 (Luke Tiller) and another was at Agua Amarga Canyon on the Palos Verdes Peninsula from October 14–16 (Jun & Bin). About a dozen **Virginia's Warblers** were recorded during the month of September.

A **Mourning Warbler** at the Piute Ponds on September 10 was only the seventh ever found in the county (Jon Feenstra).

Six **American Redstarts**, generally one of our

more common "vagrants", were found between September 1 and 28.

**Northern Parulas** were at Madrona Marsh on September 20 (Becky Turley), at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles from September 21–22 (Don Sterba) and at Wilderness Park in Downey on October 2 (Jon Feenstra).

**Magnolia Warblers** were at Madrona Marsh from September 16–17 (Jim Hecht) and on San Clemente Island from September 23–26 (Nicole Desnoyers) and **Blackburnian Warblers** were at DeForest Park from September 11–17 (Andrew Lee) and at the Piute Ponds from September 23–26 (Cuyler Stapelmann).

Eight **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were found from September 4 to October 5 and likewise eight **Blackpoll Warblers** were detected in September.

**Palm Warblers** were on San Clemente Island on September 23 (Nicole Desnoyers), at White Point Nature Preserve on the Palos Verdes Peninsula from September 29–October 2 (Bas Van Schooten), at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia from October 8–12 (Lance Benner, Kathi Ellsworth), at Malibu Legacy Park on October 11 (Chris Dean) and again on San Clemente Island on October 16 (Justyn Stahl, Ryan Terrill).

A **Black-throated Green Warbler** was at Medea Creek in Agoura Hills on October 5 (David Koeppel).

Rare **Canada Warblers** were at LMU on September 16 (Russell Stone) and at the George F. Canyon Nature Preserve on the Palos Verdes Peninsula on September 23 (Sue Pastel).

Wrapping up the warblers was a **Painted Redstart** at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook/Culver City Park from October 10–13 (Emily Cobar).

**Summer Tanagers** were at Veteran's Park in Sylmar from September 17–October 1 (Nathan Barkley), at Malaga Dunes on the Palos Verdes Peninsula on October 10 (Jonathan Nakai), at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia on October 15 (Sarah Ngo), on San Clemente Island on October 15 (Justyn Stahl, Ryan Terrill) and on October 17 at Harbor Park in Harbor City (Philip Carnehl). Less expected was a **Scarlet Tanager** on San Clemente Island from October 13–15 (Justyn Stahl).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were in Baldwin Hills on September 15 (Eric Brooks), on San Clemente Island from September 22–26 (Justyn Stahl, Nicole Desnoyers), with two more were there on September 30 (Justyn Stahl), and in San Pedro on October 10 (Tom Kantor).

**Indigo Buntings** included single birds on San Clemente Island on September 14 (Brian Flick), at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia on September 18

(Tom Wurster) and several at Peck Road WCP from September 22–October 8 (Tom Wurster, et al).

Not content with the litany of rarities already noted, San Clemente Island held a **Painted Bunting** on September 25 (Brian Flick).

**Dickcissels** turned up at Pt. Dume on September 4 (Kimball Garrett), at Avalon on Santa Catalina Island from September 15–20 (Andrew Lee) and of course on San Clemente Island on October 8 (Nicole Desnoyers).

If this fall proved anything, it's that birding can be as unpredictable as it is predictable... we never know exactly what we're going to get.

Why was it such a good fall for vagrants? Since they originated from a different places, it's likely there was no single cause. Weather patterns likely played some role in the occurrence of some, increased breeding success in some species may have accounted for others.

As remarkable as the numbers of rare birds were this fall, one question always intrigues... if two Dusky Warblers were found, how many others passed through unseen? If eight Chestnut-sided Warblers and six Lark

Buntings were recorded, how many were missed? We can never know, but the number is certainly of some magnitude greater than what was actually seen.

While it's hard to imagine a period more dynamic than the past couple of months, good birds will continue to be found. Though fall songbird migration has essentially ended, other birds are still on the move. Numbers of wintering bird numbers— especially waterfowl— are increasing. Late or lingering rare passerines will continue to be found into and through the winter. Bird movements will slow for a few months, but never cease.

Thoughts will soon turn to winter birds and to Christmas Bird Counts. Even the most well attended count can benefit from further coverage. Birders are in the rare and fortunate position of being able to use their passion for birds to further scientific study. There's a level of satisfaction to be gained in using eBird, participating in Christmas Bird Counts and other citizen science efforts. Bird conservation is today more important than ever, and the data that birders are generating is very useful in that endeavor.





# Field Trip Listings

Please visit [www.laaudubon.org](http://www.laaudubon.org) for updates to Los Angeles Audubon's field trip listings.

For more information: (323) 876-0202 or [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto: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](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org)  
**Phone:** (323) 876-0202

## 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 of 20

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.

TO RESERVE: Email reservation requests to: [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org). For more information about LAAS field trips call: (323) 876-0202, and leave a voice message if there is no answer.

## 2017 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

**Saturday, December 16**

### Lancaster Christmas Bird Count

Contact compilers Nick and Mary Freeman at: (818) 636-4361 or [mnfreeman@earthlink.net](mailto:mnfreeman@earthlink.net) to be placed on a team or be given an area. Prairie Falcon, Mountain Bluebird, Greater Roadrunner, LeConte's Thrasher, and Burrowing and Long-eared owls usually reported by someone!

**Sunday, December 17**

### Malibu Christmas Bird Count

Contact compiler Dick Norton at: (310) 455-1138 or [richardjnorton@gmail.com](mailto:richardjnorton@gmail.com) to be matched up with a team or a survey area. Historically, our best-attended count!

**Tuesday, January 2**

### Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count

Contact compiler Daniel Cooper at: [lathrotriccus@gmail.com](mailto:lathrotriccus@gmail.com) to be matched up with a team or a survey area.

**Sunday, January 7**

### East Antelope Valley, including Piute Ponds

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

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Chance of LeConte's Thrasher, and occasionally Vermilion Flycatcher. Some of the finest desert birding in LA County! Some amazing birds have been seen here over the years! Continue to 110th St.

E, Apollo Park and possibly elsewhere afterwards. Meet at the Avenue C gate at 8:00 a.m. To get here, take Hwy 14 N to Avenue D, head E to Sierra Hwy, head N to Avenue C, and go a block E to the gate at the end. Bring lunch, sunblock and lots of water. Possible afternoon wind. High clearance vehicles may be a plus.

TO RESERVE: After you have the required annual pass, Send email reservation requests to: [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org). For more information call: (323) 876-0202, and leave a voice message if there is no answer.

*\*\*\*Talk with Misty Hailstone on the base by phone at (661) 275-2435 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. before Dec 20 to arrange a required annual pass \*\*\*.* Tell her your personal information (•legal name, •driver's license number and state issued, •social security number, •date of birth, •email address, and •phone number). Please DO NOT e-mail or leave a message for Misty! Access for foreign nationals is trickier but still possible. Cameras O.K.

**Saturday, January 13**

### Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area

#### **NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP**

Leader: *Kris Ohlenkamp*. "Freeway close" morning of birding. Kris has led this walk on-and-off for over 30 years, noting 240 species, and averaging 60-65 per walk. Osprey likely, Peregrine Falcon and American Bittern sometimes seen. Take the 405 Fwy N into the San Fernando Valley, turn W on Burbank Blvd. and N (Rt.) on Woodley Ave. to the second Rt., which is marked "Wildlife Reserve". Turn here and park in the lot at the end. Meet at 8:00 a.m., and bird until about 11:30 a.m.

## 2018 GULL STUDY WORKSHOP

### **\$20 FULL WORKSHOP FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP (20 Max.)**

**Friday, January 19 — LECTURE**

Speaker *Larry Allen* will discuss most gulls that have appeared in North America – the majority 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 identifying to age and species. Slides, study skins and handouts will be used. This is a Ralph Schreiber Grant fund-raiser.

Please register at [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org), •providing name(s), •cell phone number, and •e-mail address; and •mail a check for \$20 each to PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301, which gets you the lecture & field trip, and an e-mailer with directions and details. *Not offered separately.* Location at a private residence in Altadena, from 7:30 - 10:00 p.m., with one refreshment break. 20 maximum.

**Sunday, January 21 — 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 often go to Doheny State Beach in Orange County (34422 Park Lantern, Dana Point; then turn right into the main lot before the bridge, and meet in the SE 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. See above to reserve lecture & field trip. Doheny Beach parking fee. If goodly numbers of gulls are present around the Los Angeles Basin, we will assemble there instead. Bring a lunch.



## January 27 & 28 Weekend

### Carrizo Plain

**FEE: \$20, LIMIT: 16 Max**

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, Pronghorn, Elk 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 and email address WILL BE released for carpooling unless you request otherwise at time of sign-up.

Please register at [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org), •providing name(s), •cell phone number, and •e-mail address for exact directions and further information; and •mail a check for \$20 each TO: PO BOX 411301, LOS ANGELES CA 90041-8301. 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.

### Saturday, February 3

#### Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge

**LIMITED SIGN-UP REQUIRED (before Jan. 24th), NO FEE**

*Nick and Mary Freeman* and refuge volunteer *Carolyn Vance* will guide. We should have two short buses for our silly band of birders. Throngs of wintering shorebirds and numerous raptors will

be seen. Nelson's (Sharp-tailed) Sparrow, Peregrine Falcon and a few Pacific Golden-Plover are usually sighted. The refuge is part of the Naval Weapons Station.

Please send an email to: [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org) and provide your •ZIP Code, •first, •middle-initial & •last names, •DOB, •e-mail address, •home phone number, •cell ph# (optional but helpful;) by **JANUARY 24 (NEW DATE)** and wait for final confirmation email. Only LAAS-confirmed individuals of U.S. citizenship with photo ID allowed on base.

No weapons, camera OK.

Meet at the main public lot at 800 Seal Beach Blvd. at 8:00 a.m., bird through the morning as the high tide of 6.0 feet around 11:15 a.m. catches us at Hog Island, and bird until about noon. Take Seal Beach Blvd. S from the 405 Fwy, pass Westminster Blvd., turn left onto the base at the Forrestal Lane light, and left again into the lot. Spotting scopes helpful.

### February 10 & 11 Weekend

#### Salton Sea South

**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 e-mail to [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org). Also provide your cell phone number 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). Brawley Inn 760/344-1199, Calipatria Inn 800/830-1113, 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 to will eat together Saturday night. Please register with Susan at [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org), providing name(s), cell phone number, and e-mail address for exact directions and further information; and mail a check for \$10 each. FRS radios & 'scopes helpful.

### Sunday, February 18

#### Ventura County Game Preserve

**NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP**

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.

## Saturday, February 24

### Techniques for Better Bird Photography

#### Marina del Rey / Santa Monica

#### **\$40 FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 10**

Your workshop host will be Christopher Taylor. During the field lab, shorebirds and gulls should highlight. Christopher will be addressing a basic approach to one of the most difficult arenas of photography. Christopher will cover different aperture, lighting and metering techniques to help make your photographs POP! Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot at 7:30 a.m. with a DSLR camera and 300mm-plus telephoto lens (required). Take the Marina Fwy (90) to Culver Blvd and turn left for a mile. Turn right on Pacific Ave. Turn into the lot on the right. After lunch, Christopher will review basic post-production Photoshop techniques, and tips to make good photos great and great photos truly eye-catching. A charged laptop with Photoshop loaded is useful but not required. Finish up 3 or 4 p.m. Please register by email to: [membership@laudubon.org](mailto:membership@laudubon.org), providing • name(s), • cell phone number, and • e-mail address; and • mail a check for \$40 each. More details in the January newsletter.

## Sunday, February 25

### 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. Possible Red-crowned, Lilac-crowned, Red-lored, and Yellow-headed Parrots and perhaps other parrot and parakeet species as well. Bring scopes if you have them. We will meet

at 5:00 p.m. and bird until fully dark (about 6:30 p.m.). Meet at La Pintoresca Park at 45 E Washington Blvd. in Pasadena, at the northeast corner of Fair Oaks Ave. and Washington Blvd. Exit the 210 Freeway at Fair Oaks and proceed north about 1¼ miles. Park on the surrounding streets and gather around the small parking lot on the east side, off Raymond Ave. If you don't find the group there, look on the west side of the park. Depending on the location of the roosts, we will either walk or drive from the park.

## March 17 & 18, 2018 Weekend

### Anza-Borrego State Park

#### **\$20 LAAS MEMBER FEE / \$40 FOR NON-LAAS MEMBERS, LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 20 Max.**

Leader: *Kurt Leuschner*. Peak time for both wildflowers and Swainson's Hawk migration! Caravan through the State Park 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, as this is wildflower season too! Meet at the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (652 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs).

Please register at: [membership@laudubon.org](mailto:membership@laudubon.org), providing • name(s), • cell phone number, and your • e-mail address; and • mail a check for \$20 LAAS member / \$40 non-LAAS fee. MAIL TO: Los Angeles Audubon, PO BOX 411301, LOS ANGELES CA 90041-830.

More details later.



*Ocotillo Cactus at Anza-Borrego State Park | Photo by Tjie Poo*



# Bird Walk Listings

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

All are welcome, but no pets or small children please. These walks are appropriate for young bird watchers age 6 years and older. Binoculars are provided on some walks as noted. Bird walks DO NOT require advance sign-up, just show up at the specified meeting time and place. Read our FIELD TRIPS LISTINGS section for birding destinations a bit further afield.

CARPPOOLING IS ENCOURAGED!

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.



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**  
**Nov. 5 & Dec. 3**  
**Time: 8:00 a.m.**

Leaders: *Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin*

Ken and Chris will lead participants through this beautiful and diverse coastal mountain area. An ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new to the area. From Ventura Blvd, take Topanga Canyon Blvd 7 miles S. Turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into Trippet Ranch parking lot. From Pacific Coast Hwy, take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking fee.

Contacts: Ken: 310-455-1401, ksafarri@aol.com; Chris: 310-455-1270

**Open Wetlands at Ballona**  
**1st Saturday of every month**  
**Nov. 4 & Dec. 2**  
**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

# Bird Walk Listings, Cont'd

## Upper Franklin Canyon Sooky Goldman Nature Center

(2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills  
90210)

Second Sunday of the month

Nov. 12 & Dec. 10

Time: 8:30–Noon

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood*

Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We are likely to see the resident Wood Ducks and as well as chaparral bird species such as Spotted and California Towhee, Wrentit and California Thrasher. Winter birds have arrived; we will look for Ring-billed Duck, Hooded Mergansers, Sharp-shinned Hawk (rare), White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Fox Sparrow among others.

**Directions:** From the 101 Freeway, follow Coldwater Canyon Blvd. south for several miles to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive (traffic signal). Make a 90 degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. There is no sign indicating the entrance to the park; the turn at Franklin Canyon Road reads “Road Closed 800 Feet” and “Sunrise to Sunset”-- this is the park entrance; do not make a U-turn as this will take you onto Mulholland Drive instead of Franklin Canyon. Take Franklin Canyon Dr down to park entrance, turn at first left into the parking lot. From Sunset Blvd: go north on N. Beverly Drive to Coldwater Canyon Dr to Mulholland Dr. Veer left on Mulholland Drive. At the next traffic signal, make a left turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. continue to first parking lot on the left. Binoculars provided.

## Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area

(4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles  
90056)

3rd Saturday of the month

Nov. 18 & Dec. 16

Time: 8:00 a.m–Noon

Leaders: *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 Phoebe and Cassin's Kingbird, California and Spotted Towhee, Song Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk. We will also look for wintering birds such as Merlin, Rufous-crowned, White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Fox Sparrow, Western Meadowlarks, Ring-billed Ducks and American Wigeons among others.

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.

## Ballona Wetlands Bird Walk

3rd Sunday of the month **with the exception of December**

Date: November 19, 2017

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: *Bob Shanman and Friends*

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

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

