

Vol. 81 No. 1 September/October 2014

WESTERN Tanager

WWW.LOSANGELESAUDUBON.ORG

PUBLISHED BY LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY



Liberty Canyon, Photo by Mary Freeman

WESTERN Tanager

Published by

Los Angeles Audubon Society, Inc

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Western Tanager is the chapter newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, published online in PDF format 6 times a year, 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 publication in the *Western Tanager*. Please send copy as Microsoft Word, RTF documents, or plain text files. Photos should be high resolution (300ppi) .jpg or .tif files. Submissions should be in the hands of the editor by the 1st of the month to be included in the following issue.

Western Tanager is copyrighted © by the Los Angeles Audubon Society. All rights reserved. All photographs used in the *Western Tanager* are used by permission and are copyrighted material of the credited photographers.

Editor	Linda Oberholzer	westerntanager@laaudubon.org
Editor Layout	Susan Castor	membership@laaudubon.org
Scientific Advisor	Kimball Garrett	kgarrett@nhm.org



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

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

Los Angeles Audubon Society
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057
www.losangelesaudubon.org

(323) 876-0202	Main Administrator	Voice/Messages
(323) 876-7609	Administrator	Voice/Messages/Fax
LAAS@laaudubon.org	Administrator	General email

Board Officers 2014–2015

<i>President</i>	Travis Longcore	travislongcore@laaudubon.org
<i>Vice President</i>	Margot Griswold	mgriswold@landiq.com
<i>Treasurer</i>	Robert Jeffers	jeffers@laaudubon.org
<i>Secretary</i>	Garry George	garrygeorge@laaudubon.org
<i>At-Large</i>	Lisa Fimiani	lisafimiani@gmail.com
<i>At-Large</i>	Brad Rumble	bradrumble@laaudubon.org
<i>Past President</i>	David DeLange	not published

Committees

<i>Conservation Chair</i>	Garry George	garrygeorge@laaudubon.org
<i>Education Chair</i>	Margot Griswold	mgriswold@landiq.com
<i>Facebook Administrator</i>	Heather Sabin	hsabin40@hotmail.com
<i>Field Trips Chair</i>	Nick Freeman	fldtrip@laaudubon.org
<i>Bird Walks Chair</i>	Eleanor Osgood	birdwalks@laaudubon.org
<i>Monthly Programs Chair</i>	Mary Freeman	fldtrp@laaudubon.org
<i>Ornithology Consultant</i>	Kimball Garrett	kgarrett@nhm.org
<i>Rare Bird Alert</i>	Jon Fisher	JonF60@hotmail.com
<i>Schreiber Grant Program</i>	To be announced	To be announced

Staff

<i>Director of Communications and Development</i>	Carol Babeli	carolbabeli@laaudubon.org
<i>Director of Outdoor Education</i>	Cindy Hardin	cindyhardin@laaudubon.org
<i>Director of Environmental Ed.</i>	Stacey Vigallon	tern@laaudubon.org
<i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	Cindy Hardin	cindyhardin@laaudubon.org
<i>Administrator</i>	Martha Balkan	books@laaudubon.org
<i>Membership Services/Web Liason</i>	Susan Castor	membership@laaudubon.org

Facebook facebook.com/losangelesaudubon
Twitter twitter.com/laaudubon

LAAS MEMBERSHIP FORM

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Mail this form, and include a check made payable to LAAS—Membership:

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



New Member Renewal

Full Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

LAAS Membership Levels

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership ...\$25 \$ _____

Couple 1-yr Chapter Membership\$35 \$ _____

Family 1-yr Chapter Membership\$50 \$ _____

Tax Deductable Donation to LAAS \$ _____

Use donation towards? _____

Total \$ _____

An introductory membership to the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:

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

Be sure to write "C3ZC030Z" on the NAS application to assure assignment to the Los Angeles chapter. For NAS renewals, use the form provided in the National Audubon magazine, "Audubon."

If You Have the Urge To Visit the Metropolitan New York Area...

By Louis Tucker

This is a personal account of how I found surprises, wonder, joy, excitement, interesting discoveries, peace and serenity in the natural realm and more specifically — birding. And, this is about finding a place surrounded by sprawling metropolitan New York suburbia that is one of the gems of the National Wildlife Refuge system, and the appreciation of one of its species which inhabits this place. Although we'll get there in a round-about way.

I have to let out a family secret. My interest in birds started at a very young age; around five or six years old. Quite frankly, that's nothing really extraordinary. However, I grew up in a town called Greenburgh, which is adjacent to White Plains, New York. It's twenty miles north of Manhattan. It's a thirty minute train ride into the heart of NYC. I was a post toddler there in the 1950's. This is an area which is rich in ethnic diversity; in the 50's through part of the 70's, it was an area which had woods, rivers, creeks and strangely some swamp land. That means that there were plenty of animals, birds, and other critters in this suburban haven. The wonderful thing about growing up there was that it was incredibly safe. I don't remember my family locking doors at night. I think that that particularly necessary practice occurred in my town in the late sixties.

Safety is something that I think we all took for granted and never doubted. This assurance allowed me to independently do some exploration in these "wild" places; which I would escape, sometimes, for hours on end. I was also a trustworthy child and my mother would allow me this freedom to be by myself in these areas unsupervised for great lengths of time. This was a kind of "get out of jail free" card which I would use whenever my mom had to go shopping — that would be my personal "hell", or carry my

siblings to the doctor —another "Ugh" moment, or visit people for hours in their homes —that would make my five year old head explode.

In my explorations, I had become fascinated with birds, especially ducks. I loved the colors. I loved watching them squabble; ducks are a particularly contentious family group of birds. And there were waterways which had great concentrations of Mallards and Black Ducks. Sometimes a Pintail or Gadwall would show up. Now, all my mother had to do would be to say: "I'm going shopping", or one of the other flashpoints that I would find egregious, and I would ask: "Can you drop me off at the Bronx River?" This river flows almost parallel to the Bronx River Parkway. The river itself has its modern origin at the Kensico Reservoir and Dam in northern Westchester, continuing south through White Plains, Scarsdale, Tuckahoe and into Bronx County and empties into the East River at the area where it joins the Long Island Sound. The actual length is only about twenty-four miles. In White Plains, Hartsdale and Scarsdale, the river broadens out and forms a number of ponds. It is at these ponds where I sat and watched ducks and Canada Geese for hours. I would just sit and watch their behavior. The difference between the duck behavior and the stately Canada's is obvious. The only time I saw the geese be aggressive is when an animal like a dog or a rodent would encroach on their territory; and the Greater (sub-species) Canada is not to be messed with.

As I've said, I do all of this by myself. And I could watch for hours. It was much more preferable to shopping, sitting in a doctor's office with my sick siblings or sitting with adults in a house and being bored. Recently my mom and I were discussing this novel aberration.



Wood Duck Family, Arnold Small Photographic Collection
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County



Wood Duck, Photo by Don Sterba

Wood Duck, Photo by Don Sterba



Because it was so safe where we were at the time in Westchester County, there was absolutely no concern about leaving me at the ponds alone. We joke about that now. We laugh hysterically about it and have nervous sighs of relief that nothing happened. Interestingly enough, she couldn't do that with my siblings because they were unreliable as to doing and being where they said they would be. And, of course, now, Mom would probably be carted off to jail with the charge of childhood endangerment. In light of recent events where a mother, who was at work and trusted her nine year old daughter to play in a park, with her own cell phone in case of emergency, and was carted off to jail and fired; we were quite lucky.

I mention this because there is a little story to tell —totally true which happened some twenty-five years later. I met a wonderful woman in college, Kathleen, and we eventually married. And, during this marriage, my career as an actor began to unfold. I ended up being cast in a Broadway show, TIMBUKTU, with Eartha Kitt and when the Broadway run ended, we did a national tour. Tours go from being fun to being grueling. Since I was married, I didn't find the need to go out every night to restaurants or bars, so I would head back to the hotel and sleep. Most of the folks in the cast slept all day. I would find wild escapes during the day. The tour started in south Florida, so one of my bright ideas was to find a couple of interested people and we would do a road trip to the Everglades on our day off. The fever for birdwatching struck heavy and hard at that time. It only took some Ospreys, and a pair of Swallow-tailed Kites, an Anhinga and some herons and a few alligators, and I was hooked. So, for almost a year on that tour, I would take every leisure moment and visit wildlife refuges and all the wilderness areas I could. I just couldn't get enough.

When the tour ended and I was back in NYC, I would find those wilderness areas around metropolitan New York where I could flee to. My wife is from north-central

New Jersey; and I had been reading about a wildlife refuge in that area called the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Here's the deal: The Sullivan household was a pretty creative place. And, Kathleen and her mother did many things together on our visits. Some of this revolved around making spectacular meals. They were great in the kitchen. They would also look through magazines and source materials for changing up the decor. And there were the necessary errands to run. Her father also had work projects to tend to. So, one day on one of our visits, I asked: "Do you know where the Great Swamp is?" And, her father answered, or it could have been a chorus chiming in, I forget: "Right down the street". A couple of miles down the street as a matter of fact. It was so easy!

And, I discovered a place that is a treasure. However, this is a place that almost did not come into being. According to Laura and William Riley's book published in 1979, GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES, this area was rescued by more than six thousand private citizens and more than four hundred and sixty organizations. More than one million dollars were raised in 1960 to purchase three thousand acres and also later acquisitions raised that number to six thousand plus acres of wooded swamps, fresh water marshes, bogs and uplands. This land was spared from being metropolitan New York's fourth airport. I remember when I first started going there in 1980 things were pretty basic. It is a swamp, and I remember more often than not, slipping and sliding in ankle deep mud; always after a rain. Management has now spruced up the trails and put in boardwalks throughout the swampy areas of the trails. The wooded areas are pretty thick in spots and the water component is also pretty extensive. This area is surrounded by a lot of development —sprawling suburbia with all of its trappings: housing, malls, restaurants, coffee shops, etc.



Gadwall, Arnold Small Photographic Collection, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County



Mallard, Arnold Small Photographic Collection
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

The wonderful thing about it is that with all of this civilization around it, it's pretty wild actually. It lies at the edge of the Kittatinny Mountains migration route; so, some big birds may be seen soaring over —osprey, eagles, goshawks, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned. Red-tails and Red-shoulders are residents. There are also visitations by the gigantic White-tailed Deer, Black Bears are now common in the area, as well as fox, mink, river otters and muskrat. The perching bird occupation and visits are outstanding: most all of your eastern warblers Hermit and Swainson Thrushes as well as the beautiful Eastern Bluebird. Eastern Kingbirds, and other flycatchers abound. Woodpeckers are also around —Downy and Hairy, Northern Flicker, Red-headed, and two specialties there —Red-bellied constantly calling in the spring and Pileated. It's fun walking through those woods and trying to distinguish which woodpecker is tapping. And, after a rain, there is nothing more delightful than hearing the rantings of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo which can go on for quite some time.

Ducks and geese are also abundant. The stately Canada Goose, which in spring, parade their handsome brood. Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal are here as well as Mallards and Black Ducks. But, the crown jewel of the refuge is the charismatic Wood Duck. When I frequented the place in the eighties, they were doing quite well. The male which is so wonderfully colored with red, green, blue, white and black. A dark white spotted brick colored breast, dark beige sides, white belly and black and white stripes separate the colors of the breast and the sides. And, I cannot forget that red eye. The female is much more drab: grayish on the upper body. A bold teardrop white encircles the eye, with a much darker breast and it is streaked. Her only splash of color is a blue speculum. It is, however, her significance that I am going to point out. But, first, I have to mention the care and safety that the people who manage this refuge take to protect these ducks from marauding snakes and mammals. It's very simple actually. They've erected nesting boxes in a number of waterways with reversed cone

shaped metal a bit under the bottom of the of the boxes to deter egg and chick harassment and killing. Also, the Swamp has some really fantastic blinds where you can observe these creatures without even the smallest possibility of disturbing them.

It is in one of these blinds, one afternoon, for somewhere between two and a half to three hours I observed a Wood Duck family go through their extraordinary day. I entered the blind, having it all to myself and gazed out at the pond which in the early afternoon seemed quite serene. As I looked out, Red-winged Blackbirds were giving a Red-tailed Hawk a complete case of the "blues". They made that bird whimper. The Red-bellied Woodpeckers were calling. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was singing. An Eastern Kingbird was busy catching insects. And I was now being treated by a pond parade of Mrs. Wood Duck and her kids. She seemed to be very stately in leading her brood of twelve. The youngsters were occasionally feeding off of the vegetation in the pond. Nine of the ducklings would follow her closely in a tight line. It was a very impressive formation. But, I noticed that numbers ten, eleven and twelve didn't seem to receive the formation memo. They were chasing each other and doing little snipes at their siblings' tails; pretty much not paying any attention to this rather dignified procession. Consequently, they were always playing "catch up". They splashed the water getting around so much that I thought that "Mom" would have to come back and give them a bit of a scolding. It suddenly occurred to me that I was really watching a "cartoon". They were like "Donald Duck's" nephews: Hughie, Dewey and Louie. And this was like Saturday morning watching cartoons with my sister when we were kids. I have to tell you that I laughed so much watching this. They were pretty nuts, chasing each other around, when I noticed that the "Mom" got rigid and her neck extended straight up.

She sensed that they were not alone. The ducks were proceeding near an island in the pond with high grasses. That was when I noticed in the water something so sinister and dangerous that I hoped that her "Three Stooges" kids would finally pay attention.



Blue-winged Teal, Arnold Small Photographic Collection
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County



Alligator Snapping Turtle, Photo by Garry Tucker, USFWS

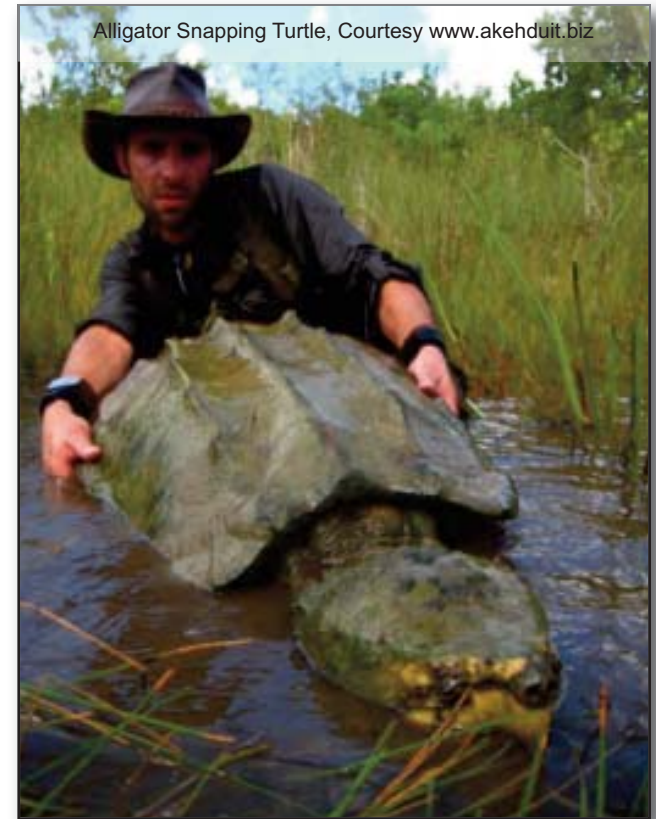
This creature's shell rose to the top of the water. The appearance of this shell is of a reptile so prehistoric, it's actually chilling to describe it. The shell was the size of an almost round coffee table in someone's home. But, the texture is somewhat like that of a dinosaur. The carapace itself looked like it could be some dangerous mountain range set in absolute order; nothing out of place. It is jagged and is a formidable piece of armor. I was just looking at part of the shell of an Alligator Snapping Turtle. The males can get somewhere between one hundred and fifty to sometimes over two hundred pounds. The head is massive and the beak comes to a sharp point; not unlike some birds of prey.

Now with this gigantic head and razor sharp beak, this monster can do some incredible damage. That bite can sever fingers, toes and definitely can chew up the little morsels that are swimming in the pond. Usually these snapping turtles lie in wait at the bottom of the pond; nabbing fish and other things which swim at the bottom of these waterways. They have in their mouth on the tongue, a lure, which they deceptively wiggle to attract fish and other curious underwater dwellers and as soon as the prey goes near, they strike. These turtles can stay submerged from thirty to forty-five minutes and then come up for air and go back to the bottom.

Now, I have an educated theory, that with the "crazy toon trio" causing such a disturbance on the surface, that the reptile sensed that his meal would come by him swimming just slightly beneath the surface and picking them off one by one. Mrs. Wood Duck, however, had other ideas and was very alert and quite diligent. As she approached the island, she began to make some guttural clucking noises. Obviously in "Wood Duck speak"; this was a signal for her brood to get out of the water and get into the high grasses. The scene now

becomes "Swamp Jaws" and the snapper is getting perilously close to Hughie, Dewey and Louie; and, this gets pretty scary. They are really having a grand old time, but, you want them to pay attention and get the heck out of that pond. The reptile continues to stalk and I am breaking out in a sweat. Mamma Duck continues to do these alarm sounds and her three recalcitrant babies are barely getting the HINT, when all of a sudden as the turtle is almost ready to grab a duckling tail, there was a flurry of splashing as the three left onto the island. That was close, too close!

Now Mom has some more work to do. She now must embark on



Alligator Snapping Turtle, Courtesy www.akehduit.biz



Alligator Snapping Turtle, Photo by Gary M. Stolz, USFWS



Wood Duck Family, Courtesy www.portlandbirds

saving her brood by leaving the ducklings hidden in the high grasses on the island. And luring the snapper to the opposite side of the pond, which is about an eighth of a mile away. Since the turtle has now missed what would have been appetizers, he now seems to want a meal and follows the mother more closely. It seems that this is happening at a faster pace. And, she leads him to where there is a small tributary that feeds water into this pond, but does not give her much wiggle room. She purposely hems herself in. Just when a strike is about to happen, she's up in the air. She flies over the pond, low enough to check that her babies are OK and then she flies into the woods. I'm watching the island and not one blade of grass even moves. These guys are absolutely still.

I'm now watching because she is gone for a good length of time; about forty-five minutes. Since I've seen this far, I have to watch this whole thing play out. There is absolutely no movement in the grasses. Everything is still. And, after about forty-five minutes, she comes flying out of the woods. She flies around the pond, I assume making sure there are no signs of the dinosaur menace. And, she flies over the island and finally settles in the water. She makes some different guttural sounds and her faithful nine come orderly out of the grasses. A few seconds later "the Marx Brothers" literally clumsily fall out of the grasses —splashing and thrashing. And, the cartoon continues.

I wanted to applaud. This was so fantastic. She heroically saved all twelve of her ducklings. I don't have any idea whether she was a new mom, or all of this is done by instinct, or it is her experience that this can be a dangerous place. They all live to see

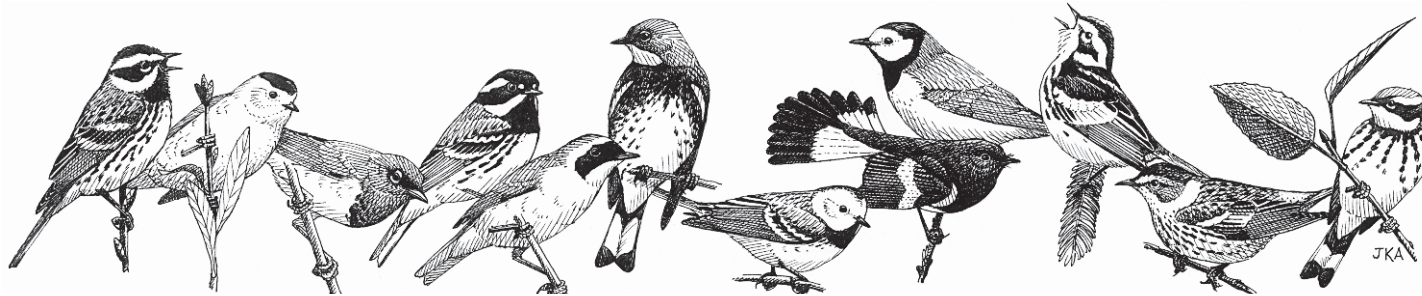
another day. That day they had a happy ending. I went from amusement to nervousness with the unfolding drama. It was also thrilling to see a part of the natural realm and what's at stake. It also reminded me of our life situations. I remember the year I taught school and you have an attentive class that is always interrupted by a couple of jokers. The difference is that kids in school aren't going to have the possibility of losing their lives for being the class clown compared to what might have been in store for these little ducklings.

I was spellbound for almost three hours. You can also guess that I'm not what you would call ADD or ADHD. The fascination with bird behavior is somewhat the same when I was five as it is now. I walked away from that wishing I had a movie camera. This was my own private little showing. The twenty-first century is an era of instant gratification. Technology has caused us to believe that all you have to do is press a button and you get instant results. There is no patience for watching a situation unfold and come to a natural conclusion. There have been some wonderfully gratifying moments just patiently watching things happen. There are times when the conclusions are good for all and there are times when things can be a little grim. Whatever the outcome, there are lessons and rewards stepping out of your world and watching life other than yours unfold. This is a memory of over thirty years ago and I still see it clearly and with wonder. I still go through the emotions I was feeling at that time watching this. Feelings that would have been non-existent had I just walked into the blind, saw the Wood Ducks, put a tick on the species list and left.

Oops! I completely forget that I have to get back to my in-laws for dinner. And, I'm really late! As I'm sure that dinner has been ready for quite some time. I'm not sure how my explanation is going to get over: "Uh, I was watching a duck family and a gnarly turtle?" Ugh!

If you get the urge to visit the metropolitan NYC area and you need a little taste of wilderness and swamp much akin to southern swamps, try an outing to the Great Swamp. At any time of year it is full of creature action. Many bird species nest there. Spring and Fall migrations are probably the best seasons to go, for physical comfort. Summer is amazingly hot and humid and the winters are really cold. But, there is never a dull moment. And, who knows you might get a surprising visitation that will get your juices flowing. And, it's less than an hour west of mid-town Manhattan. Trust me, it's worth a shot. 🐦

Louis Tucker was born in White Plains, New York. He got his college education at Boston University and Boston Conservatory of Music, Drama and Dance receiving a Bachelor of Music degree. He moved back to New York in 1974, in Manhattan and he did a little detour and started acting. He made his professional debut on Broadway in the musical TIMBUKTU directed by Geoffrey Holder and starring Eartha Kitt and was a principal understudy. Over the years he's made a ton of commercials and in 1987 moved to LA, being part of the entertainment scene and doing all the birding he can possibly fit in. His email address is: pazzoluigi@yahoo.com



Birds of the Season — August 2014, By Jon Fisher

Most birders end up being interested in many more subjects than birds alone. Plants and habitats, other animals, photography and environmental issues are a few that come to mind. Climate change is another, and one which will eventually affect many of the birds we pursue in some way.

While the primary cause of our current drought has been a persistent high pressure zone off California's west coast, climate change is expected to produce a future that is similarly warmer and drier. We don't yet know how profound the alterations will be, but birds will be a very observable barometer of their effects.

Studies have already shown that the ranges of many species are shifting northward as average global temperatures rise. Given the rapidity of these changes, it's questionable whether plants and habitats will adjust quickly enough to adequately accommodate the altered ranges of these birds.

It's plain that a lack of water is detrimental in both the short and long term, especially when it comes to reproduction. Less precipitation means less plant and insect biomass. This directly leads to decreased breeding success, a reduction in

breeding attempts or fewer eggs laid per clutch. eBird, ever more useful, will help measure population and distribution shifts.

On a lighter note, birding Los Angeles County can truly be an international experience. The mild climate of the coastal slope and available suitable habitat supports a number of well-established exotics in addition to many other escapees or semi-established species. Rosy-faced Lovebird, Bronze Mannikin, White-winged Widowbird, Yellow-collared Lovebird, Orange-cheeked Waxbill and the ubiquitous Orange Bishop (all from Africa), Saffron Finch (South America) and the widespread Scaly-breasted Munia (Asia; until very recently known here as Nutmeg Mannikin) were among those recorded over the period. That doesn't even include our many parrots and parakeets which originate primarily—though not naturally—from Mexico and South America.

While encouraging the introduction of non-native species is rarely a good idea, it's undeniable that these birds add more variety and color to birding in the county. Many of these birds may not survive—let alone become established—but documenting their occurrence is good practice. At one point in time Red-crowned Parrots and Yellow-chevroned Parakeets were considered a novelty.

Shorebird numbers were building in July and good numbers were appearing by the second half of the month in all the usual places. At this time of year and when practicable, it's worth checking these areas every day if not several times a day. Birds are arriving regularly and turnover can be significant.

A few late or summering passerine vagrants were also found over the period. As usual some fall migrants were evident by the latter half of July, with the volume of birds slowly increasing as the weeks passed.

Summer is not a great time to observe waterfowl in southern California, but a few interesting ducks were around. A **Surf Scoter** lingered along lower Ballona Creek through June 22 (Michael Zarky). **Common Mergansers** included one at Castiac Lagoon on July 11 (Julia Ray) and five there on August 2 (Mei Kwan, Beverly Chou). Another was at Cogswell Reservoir along the San Gabriel River's West Fork on August 6 (Jon Feenstra) and one was at Quail Lake near Gorman on August 12 (Daniel Tinoco). Breeding—documented for the first time in the county last year on the San Gabriel River—is to be watched for.

Generally scarce inland, but especially so in summer, was a female **Red-breasted Merganser** was at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from June 19–22 (Rod & Pat Higbie).

Also rather odd in summer was a **Horned Grebe** on the lower LA River in Long Beach on June 21 (Mark Scheel).

Regular off California yet still quite rare in Los Angeles County waters, a **Manx Shearwater** was spotted off Pt. Dume on July 6 (John Garrett, Mark Scheel).

A **Nazca Booby** about four miles off Palos Verdes on June 27 was a first county record (Tim Hammond). This “new” species, split fairly recently from the very similar Masked Booby, was also the first ever for the state. A 2001 ship assisted record from San Diego was not accepted by the CBRC. There are however a number of records of Masked/Nazca Booby not determined to species. It’s possible that Nazca Boobies may prove to be more regular.

There were a spate of **Brown Booby** sightings off the California coast this summer, but they were scarce off our local coast. Either one or two were observed at San Clemente Island on July 27–28 (Justyn Stahl).

A **Reddish Egret** was at Colorado Lagoon in Long Beach from July 5–9 (Keith Quinlivan). Though regular in both Orange and Ventura Counties, this species continues to be very rare in LA County, with a lack of suitable habitat being the significant factor. Raptors of note included a **Bald Eagle** over Mt. Wilson on July 21 (Norm Vargas) and a **Broad-winged Hawk**, first found on San Clemente Island in mid-May, was still present on July 11.

A **Sora** was at the Piute Ponds from July 5–13 (Mark Scheel).

The first **Solitary Sandpipers** of fall were two at the Piute Ponds on July 29 (Jon Feenstra), while two **Willetts** were unusual inland at Bonelli Park in San Dimas on June 22 (Rod & Pat Higbie).

A most interesting shorebird to date was a male **Ruff** on the lower LA River in Long Beach August 2–3 that drew many observers (Becky Turley).

More first of fall shorebirds were all adults and included two **Baird’s Sandpipers** at Piute Ponds on July 29 (Jon Feenstra), two **Pectoral Sandpipers** on the lower LA River in Long Beach on July 26 (Andrew Lee), a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at Piute Ponds on July 25 and 26 (Larry Sansone) and another there on August 12 (Jon Feenstra). This species was surprisingly scarce in the county last fall.

A **Laughing Gull** present since May 10 lingered on the lower LA River in Long Beach through August 13. Rare in summer were **Glaucous-winged Gulls** near the Ballona Creek mouth on June 22 (Dessi Sieburth) and in Santa Monica on July 13 (Amy Williamson).

Two **Least Terns** were unusual inland at the Piute Ponds on June 30 (Jon Feenstra, Dan Maxwell).

Craveri’s Murrelets, moving north into California waters earlier and in greater than normal numbers this year, included two south of Long Beach from June 28–August 8 (John Garrett, et al).

White-winged Doves, typically scarce late



Reddish Egret
Courtesy of dreamingup.blogspot.com

summer and fall visitors to coastal California, were in Downey on July 15 (Marcus England), in West Los Angeles from July 20–25 (Jesse Ellis) and at Leo Carillo State Park near Malibu on August 10 (James Bailey).

A single **Black Swift** was over Claremont on June 24 (Tom Miko) and three were there on July 11 (Amy Williamson);, these birds almost certainly breeders from nearby in the San Gabriels.

A **Hairy Woodpecker** at Limekiln Canyon on June 16 was at an unexpected location at this time of year (Michael Zarky).

Early was a **Willow Flycatcher** at Chilao Flat on July 31 (David Bell). **Vermilion Flycatchers** were at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on August 6 (Darren Dowell) and at the Piute Ponds from August 10–13 (Kimball Garrett).

Typically a late spring vagrant, an **Eastern Kingbird** was at Colorado Lagoon in Long Beach on July 6 and 7 (John Garrett, Mark Scheel), though this bird could have been present prior to those dates.

Red-eyed Vireos were near Loyola Marymount University on June 26 (Don Sterba), at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on July 20 (Darren Dowell) and at the Village Green Condominiums from July 23–August 6 (Don Sterba).

Three **Bank Swallows** were at the Piute Ponds on June 30 (Jon Feenstra, Dan Maxwell) and two were along the LA River in Long Beach on the more expected date of August 13 (Tom Miko).

A very rare wanderer to the coastal slope was a **Verdin** at Hansen Dam on July 23 (Kimball Garrett). The scattered coastal records for southern California indicate that this species may not be as restricted to the deserts as we presume.

Passerines on odd dates included a very late **Hermit Thrush** on San Clemente Island on July 5 (Nicole Desnoyers), a **Gray Catbird** there from July 8–26 (Nicole Desnoyers, Justyn Stahl), a **Sage Thrasher** at the Piute Ponds on June 23 (Wayne Martin, John Birsner, Horst Wetjen) and a **Cedar Waxwing** at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia on June 27 (Chris Dean)

Eastern warblers included an rare **Ovenbird** at Banning Park in Wilmington on



Vermillion Flycatcher, Arnold Small Photographic Collection
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

June 17 (Andrew Lee), a **Prothonotary Warbler** at Wilson Cove on San Clemente Island from June 29–30 (Justyn Stahl) and a remarkable summering **Tennessee Warbler** at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena from July 20–August 13 (Darren Dowell).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** of the coastal and Channel Island subspecies *sordida* was at the Village Green Condominiums on July 30 (Don Sterba).

Black-throated Sparrows, typically rare but regular fall transients on the coastal slope, included birds at Hansen Dam near Lake View Terrace (Kimball Garrett) and at Pt Dume (Cynthia Schotte), both on August 1.

An injured **White-crowned Sparrow** was in Pacific Palisades from June 15–17 (Maxine

Wolf) and three more were discovered in a backyard cage next to the LA River near Elysian Park on June 27. All of these birds had good reason not to leave to lowlands, but absent such extenuating circumstances this species is most unexpected in the summer months.

About a half dozen **Indigo Buntings** turned up on the coastal slope between July 13 and 31 among the more numerous Lazulis.

A **Tricolored Blackbird** was at the Village Green Condominiums on June 18 (Don Sterba) and **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were near the Ballona Creek mouth on July 4 (Mark Scheel) and along the LA River in Cudahy from July 17–18 (Richard Barth) and on the LA River in Long Beach on August 9 (Jeff Boyd).

Now we're in the thick of fall migration and birding can be productive almost anywhere. Coastal areas and patches of green vegetation on the desert tend to attract migrants and vagrants, especially so in this driest of years. So do the many city and county parks scattered throughout the coastal slope. Any body of water is worth a look. Irruptive species, if any are present this year, will make themselves known in September and October.

While the shortening days and cooler nights are welcome, it's the birds that make this the best season to be in the field. It's a time of year when we see a great variety of expected species, and one that's wide open for vagrants and some stunning surprises.



BIRDS, BALLONA AND BLOCK PRINTING

By Cindy Hardin, Director of Outdoor Education

I am listed on the Los Angeles Audubon website under two titles: Director of Outdoor Education and Volunteer Coordinator. Since I am a bit old-fashioned, and still enjoy a chat on my land line, my phone number is listed as well. As you might imagine, occasionally I receive some interesting inquiries via the telephone. Just such a call came in at the beginning of July. A gentleman named Loren Kantor contacted me, with the proposal of doing a bird oriented art project. Loren is a woodblock print artist of great talent. Now, if you have ever seen a woodblock print, you can probably imagine that it is an intricate process with many steps. First, an image must be drawn onto the block, and then painstakingly carved onto what can be a very unforgiving medium. After the carving is complete, the block is then dipped into some kind of coloring agent (usually ink) and then printed on paper. This is not an undertaking for the novice—sharp tools are in play, and the process is incredibly time consuming.

Fortunately, Loren and his wife Gabrielle know of a technique that creates a woodblock print effect that involves an easy to work with material and no tools with potential to cause a trip to the emergency room. They teach people how to carve on rubber blocks, and then make a print from the carved blocks. They have given classes to all sorts of groups, and Loren contacted me to see if anyone associated with Audubon would be interested in such a class, with bird images as a theme. Our roster of volunteer docents from our education programs at Ballona and Kenneth Hahn immediately came to mind. Summer, of course, is a quiet time for our group, as school is on break and there are no field trips to guide. This seemed like a perfect opportunity to check in with each other, and spend a morning at work on a fun project. I sent out an email to see if there was any interest, and the response from our intrepid crew was fast and furious—all open positions for the class were filled in 48 hours, and this over a holiday weekend!

Loren and Gabrielle met us at the wetlands equipped with a collection of 4x6 inch rubber blocks, upon which he had drawn images of different birds. They also provided carving tools and various colors of ink to be used after completing the carving of our masterpieces. Each of us selected a bird from Loren's collection—some

stylized, and others quite detailed and realistic. We then gathered around tables under the shade of the E-Z UP that was donated last year by our friends at Santa Monica Bay Audubon, and went-to-work. The work went quickly and easily, and Loren and Gabrielle were terrific teachers. We worked carefully with our tools, and soon texture and design began to come together. It was time for the next step: the inking of the blocks. Gabrielle set herself up inside the Ballona trailer with trays of ink and paper, and carefully rolled ink over our blocks and then imprinted them on paper. As the crackerjacks who completed their work quickly emerged with the first images, those of us who worked a little slower (I am speaking mostly of myself!) became quite eager to see the results of our own projects.

They did not disappoint! I can safely say that all who attended the class were able to produce lovely prints from their labors over the rubber, with a surprising minimum of frustration and time. As a bonus, we each now had a block to take home for future use to create greeting cards, framed prints as gifts—lots of possibilities here.

It was great fun to see our fellow docents, learn something new, meet some talented people and spend some time in the beautiful outdoor space that is the Ballona Wetlands. A big thanks to Loren and Gabrielle for taking the time to teach the class, and for the enthusiasm of all who participated: Frances Sotcher, Melinda Dickin-son, Beverly Kokin, Nancy Thompson, Christi Nash, Connie Semf, Pat Trujillo, Catherine Ronan, Gail Gentling, Marla Stevens, and Dixie Cleary.

We will all soon be seeing each other on a regular basis, as training for the Ballona program begins on September 11th, and for the Kenneth Hahn program on October 3rd. If spending time outdoors educating children about the wonderful nature that is found right here in Los Angeles, and working with a wonderful and talented group of people sounds appealing, please contact me at cindyhardin@laaudubon.org. Or, you could give me a jingle on my trusty land line at (310) 301-0050. I hope to hear from you!



Allen's Hummingbird, the smallest bird found at Ballona.



We don't see them often but we know they are present. Owls at Ballona leave their calling card in the form of owl pellets that we occasionally find in beneath trees in the saltmarsh.



Catherine Ronan displays her stamp with the image of a year-round Ballona resident: the Snowy Egret



Marla Stevens carved a Bluebird, often seen at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, where she is a loyal and fabulous volunteer.



Dixie Cleary with the more sedate Sanderling in black.



Leslie Davidson and Woodpecker in fire engine red



Snowy Egret, by Catherine Ronan



Bluebird, by Marla Stevens
This is how the blocks looked prior to inking.



Sanderling in black, by Dixie Cleary



Connie Semf chose to carve a Great Blue Heron—another “Ballona local”!



Great Blue Heron, by Connie Semf



Now that's a Raptor profile!, By Frances Sotcher



Frances Sotcher shows off her quite dramatic Red-Tailed Hawk.



Christi Nash with her Kingfisher—yes, a Kingfisher. I mentioned to Loren that this is one of the birds that we see at Ballona, but neglected to say Belted Kingfisher.



Close-up of the Kingfisher from the southern climes, by Christi Nash. As those of you who are fans of this diving pescatarian will know, the tropical varieties of kingfisher have a much larger bill than our local variety.

Interpreting Nature

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

On May 24, 2014 students participating in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Internship Program presented their research to the public at a symposium hosted by Politi Elementary School. This year, projects addressed topics ranging from noise pollution and student perceptions of nature to the effectiveness of a solar-powered birdbath. The information obtained through student research projects is available to California State Parks and the Baldwin Hills Conservancy staff and is used to inform habitat restoration at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. We are extremely proud of the work that interns did during the 2013-2014 school year, and we're looking forward to working with a new group of Greenhouse Interns and Restoration Leaders in this fall. Below we are pleased to present the 2013-2014 Greenhouse Intern project abstracts...

Monica Anderson

The Relationship Between Bird Abundance and Human Abundance at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook: A Three-Year Summary

Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park (BHSO) is largely fragmented coastal sage scrub, inhabited by approximately 166 bird species (Molina 2001), and surrounded by Los Angeles. In the years 2011-2014 from November to April, I surveyed bird and human abundance at BHSO, twice weekly between 1:30 and 5:30pm. I spent 4-30 minutes at each of five points, using a field guide and binoculars to help collect data. I hypothesized bird abundance varied with human abundance, and data supported my hypothesis, but each year, the trend has become weaker. Bird abundance and species diversity were higher in sites with less human abundance and more native vegetation. After the first year, bird and human abundance overall was lower. I viewed 36 different bird species during my project. I added a music component to my project to engage and teach people the importance of habitat sensitivity and awareness; and on February 15, 2014, I hosted an event at Jim Gilliam Park for the Great Backyard Bird Count that engaged 27 participants.

Diandra Dillon (Project 1 of 2) ***Urban students' connection with nature through sound.***

My project focused on Dorsey High School (DHS) students and their relationship with nature through sound. Many of the students that attend DHS were born in a highly urbanized area, which may influence their norms. None of my hypotheses were supported by the data I collected. This is actually a good thing, because it indicates that DHS students are more invested in nature than I initially thought. DHS students overall listed both nature and city sounds equally. The majority of students could identify by sound the crow, gull, and pigeon, but were unable to correctly identify the starling or the Black Phoebe. However, less than 40% of students affirmed having heard all five-bird species before, and only 13% affirmed having heard all except the Black Phoebe. Unlike what I predicted, it



Collecting data on noise levels at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park with a sound level meter

was English students who wrote more positive responses to a nature experience than did the Bio/Humanities group. Also surprising, it was the English students who referenced animals more frequently in their writing samples. A future research project could analyze the descriptions that the groups use as well as what they classify as nature vs. city sounds.

Diandra Dillon (Project 2 of 2) Noise levels at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook compared to Dorsey High

Noise pollution is a harmful and irritating sound that can negatively impact wildlife and human health. I measured sound levels and recorded the number of birds I heard at five different areas at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (BHSO) and two different sites at Dorsey High School (DHS). As I predicted, the entrance of the park was the loudest of the five sites, with an average sound level of 75.94 dB, likely due to constant vehicle traffic. Also as I predicted, I heard more birds on average per survey at lower use areas, like the site behind the parking lot where there is more established vegetation. My hypothesis for DHS was also supported: the average sound level at DHS (75.73 dB) was higher than the cumulative average for all sites at BHSO (73.12 dB). Even though this supports my hypothesis, there was not that much difference between the loudest site at the park and DHS. My research provides baseline information about noise level at BHSO and DHS. Future projects could focus specifically on bird nesting in high and low noise level areas of the park.

Ingrid Carrillo Will the season affect the presence or activity of pollinators at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook?

I examined seasonal presence of two types of pollinators, native bees and hummingbirds, at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook from October 2013 to April 2014. I made native bee nest boxes and placed them throughout BHSO. Overall occupancy of all the boxes was very low, possibly because the bees don't nest until the fall. I completed 24 hummingbird surveys during the course of my study at 4 different lo-



Building nest boxes for native bees at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park

cations in the park: greenhouse, visitor center, roundabout at the parking lot, and the parking lot itself. When I compared winter (Nov-Jan) hummingbird activity to spring (Feb-Apr), there was very little difference, likely due to very similar temperatures within those time periods. Average winter temperature was 18.7°C while spring temperature averaged 20.6°. For future students I think bee nest-boxes should be monitored through fall, giving bees more time to find and use the boxes. This information can tell us where to place the boxes in the future. My hummingbird project is useful because I'm studying patterns. Biologists would find it useful to know where and when hummingbirds are active. Also, our weather is changing dramatically so we need to know if bird activity will change, too.

Melvin Harris III Will surface type and ambient temperature affect the detection of Western Fence Lizards at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook?

I surveyed the presence of the Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) on paved and unpaved surfaces, in the greenhouse, and on park structures at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook from November 2013 to April 2014. I also collected temperature data to see if lizard sightings varied with temperature. This lizard is the most common reptile in the Baldwin Hills area and keeps us safe from Lyme disease transmitted by the Brown Legged Tick and caused by a bacterium called a spirochete. I encountered lizards more frequently on unpaved surfaces and structures than on paved surfaces. The Greenhouse had more lizard activity than any other of my survey sites. I encountered them more frequently in higher temperatures than in lower temperatures, supporting my one of my hypotheses. Also supporting one of my hypotheses, I encountered at least one other lizard species during my study. Contrary to what I predicted, it could be that lizards were found less frequently on paved surfaces because there was a lot of human activity that drove them away from those areas.



A Western Fence Lizard observed during a reptile survey at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park



Teaching elementary school students about pollinators as part of a project that incorporated both art and science

Ariam Arispe

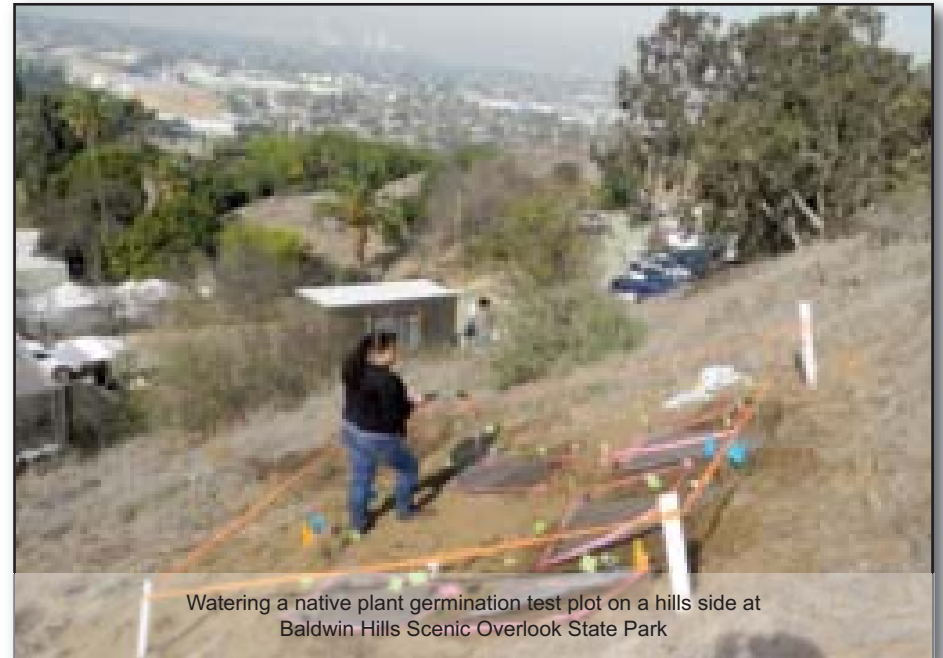
Will students know more about pollinators after participating in an art/science curriculum?

We can use art as a way to teach people about the importance of the ecosystem. I developed a curriculum that used art and science to teach students basic information about pollinators: why they are important, and how pollinators see the landscape. I used pre- and post- assessments to measure the change in student knowledge before and after they went through my curriculum. On March 13, 2014 I tested, taught, and trained 40 high school students in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. These students were trained to teach the curriculum to students at Politi Elementary School. On March 20 and 22, 2014 I supervised Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program students while they taught 31 Politi students and middle school aged alumni my curriculum. Both the elementary and the high school/middle school groups showed higher test scores after participating in my curriculum. Combining art and science into one curriculum to teach students about the importance of pollinators was effective in my study. Future interns could use this as a format to teach students about any nature-themed topic.

Sarai Panameno

Will germination and survival of native seeds differ between greenhouses and a hillside at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook?

From December 2013 to April 2014 I studied seed germination and seedling survival between greenhouses and the hillside at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. I recorded the germination and seedling survival at the Kenneth Hahn greenhouse, the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook greenhouse and the hillside for five different native species (Toyon, Bush Sunflower, California buckwheat, White sage, Black sage). My data support my hypothesis: overall native seeds in a greenhouse had higher germination and survival than native seeds on the hillside. Seed germination varied between the two greenhouses, likely because the one at KH was temperature-controlled while the one at BHSO was not. Toyon germination and survival in the BHSO greenhouse was very high. The low germination and survival of *Salvia* species across all treatments is consistent with interns Young's and Gonzales's projects in previous years. A good follow-up for my experiment would be to use native soil from the hillside in a greenhouse setting.



Watering a native plant germination test plot on a hillside at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park

Margaret Ramirez

How many birds and bird species will use a solar-powered birdbath at the Baldwin Hill Scenic Overlook?



Materials for assembling a solar-powered birdbath

Using a design from San Diego Audubon, I built a solar powered birdbath in November 2013 and monitored it until April 2014. Birdbaths provide an essential resource for birds in an urban setting during a drought year and can be a way people can connect with nature. My data showed that the birdbath was more effective at attracting birds when the water was running. Fewer birds used the birdbath during each observation session than I predicted: an average of 2.72 bird visits when the water was running vs. 0.67 bird visits when water was not running. As predicted, at least three different species visited the birdbath during the course of my experiment, and I actually had a total of at least seven species. When the water was running species diversity was higher than when the water was not running (averages of 1.22 species and 0.33 species, respectively). My experiment shows that birds are attracted to a birdbath with running water. For future research, it might be useful to compare running water and non-running water birdbath models side-by-side to see if birds have a more specific preference.

Natnael Hints

How do people interact with the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook?

A park offers opportunities to improve human mental and physical health. My project consisted of studying how people engaged with the park and each other. I hypothesized that most people visiting the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook would wear headphones, and that most people would visit the park in groups. Between November 2013 and April 2014 I observed people from three different locations: main entrance of the park, the bottom of the main staircase, and the visitor center where the restrooms and water fountains were located. I observed that on average at least 50% of people that visit the park wear headphones, over 85% of people wore exercise clothing, and at least half the people using the park arrive in a group. I conclude that most people visiting the park are primarily there to work out. My project is useful because it helps describe how people are using the park and how (if at all) they are connecting with nature and each other. Based on my project, follow-up studies should count the exact number of people who come to the park in groups and they should formally hypothesize about people wearing exercise clothing. 🐦



Volunteer Opportunities

Do you want to help preserve nature in Los Angeles? Here are a few ways that you can help.

Ballona Wetlands Volunteer Docent Training Begins September 11, 2014

Los Angeles Audubon is seeking volunteers to lead nature walks for schoolchildren at the Ballona Wetlands in Playa del Rey. Candidates must be available twice each month on Tuesdays or Thursdays for 4 hours (9am-noon) during the school year. No experience is necessary, just a love of the outdoors and a willingness to work with children. Naturalist training will be provided. The Los Angeles Audubon Ballona Wetlands Education Program was started in 1989 to introduce students to the wonders of wetland ecosystems. Our target audience is grades 3-5, with an emphasis on outreach to underserved, mostly inner city schools. This program serves over 2,800 students each year. On-site learnings include observations with binoculars and all the senses, plus these education stations:

- Ecology —learn about the tidal marsh ecosystem & wildlife that thrives here
- Microscope —view aquatic invertebrates and algae from the tidal channel, students create illustrations from the microscope viewing
- Migration Station —demonstration of the loss of wetlands and the role wetlands play in bird migration. Only 10% of California's coastal wetlands remain.
- Bird Station —observe shorebirds through spotting scopes and view the tidal channel

Contact Cindy Hardin at (310) 301-0050 or at cindyhardin@laaudubon.org

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area Volunteer Docent Training Begins October 3, 2014

Los Angeles Audubon is seeking volunteers to teach schoolchildren about the natural history and native habitats at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in the Baldwin Hills. Volunteers will lead young people on nature walks and help them to restore natural areas in the park, which is one of the great open spaces found within the city of Los Angeles. No experience is necessary, just a love of the outdoors and the energy and enthusiasm to educate others about the wonders of nature found within our city. Training will be provided. All programs take place on Fridays during the school year.

Contact Cindy Hardin at (310) 301-0050 or at cindyhardin@laaudubon.org

Donate Your Business Skills

If you'd like to help support our conservation and restoration efforts in other ways —web development, marketing, fundraising, business administration, we'd love to hear from you!

Please contact: carolbabeli@laaudubon.org



Business, Community & Alumni Groups Ongoing Restoration Work Scheduled Monthly

Los Angeles Audubon is seeking volunteers to assist with ongoing habitat restoration located at two of the last great open spaces surrounded by urban LA, Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park & Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

The restoration work is scheduled monthly with support from community volunteers, students and local business and alumni groups. Work includes the planting of native Coastal Sage Scrub, which has been reduced to only a fraction of its original distribution, largely due to urbanization.

The Baldwin Hills area represents one of the largest remaining open spaces in the Los Angeles Basin, the largest intact portion of Coastal Sage Scrub in the Los Angeles Basin, and the only remaining natural habitat in the middle portion of the Ballona Creek Watershed.

Habitat restoration in the uplands of Baldwin Hills will have a positive affect on species here and at the watershed level. The scrublands habitat at Baldwin Hills is vital to several rare and threatened species including the California Gnatcatcher. As the coastal sage scrub habitat is restored, we hope to see the return of the Cactus Wren, once a resident here, but not seen in decades.

Contact: carolbabeli@laaudubon.org

7 Summits Women's Team, By Carol Babeli

Los Angeles Audubon hosted a marvelous group of seven young women from Nepal on a tour of the Ballona Wetlands on July 20th. These seven Nepalese women are from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds coming together to create history. A mission to climb the highest mountain in each continent. Six done, one to go! They just completed a climb to the summit of Mt. McKinley/Denali, the 6th mountain of the mission on June 24, 2014 and their next journey will take them to Antarctica for the final peak. Their motto is "Together We Reach Higher".

We were truly inspired by their efforts and by their dedication to education, empowerment and the environment.

Leading the group on the tour of the Ballona Wetlands was Cindy Hardin, LAAS Outdoor Education Director, and a team of volunteer docents; Lynn Bossone, Emily Reed, Diana Spurlin, Connie Semf, Beverly Kokin, Dixie Cleary, Frances Sotcher and Christi Nash, along with Margot Griswold, LAAS Vice-President & Education Chair, and Carol Babeli, Communications & Development Director.

These seven mountaineers were very interested in learning about our area, and the Ballona tour provided insight into the makeup of the wetlands: exploring aquatic samples under microscope, viewing coastal habitat, bird and wildlife activity, and hiking out to the trestle and to the Ballona channel. It was a good day for bird watching too - we saw an oyster catcher, whimbrels, willets, black-bellied plovers, snowy and great egrets, great blue herons, cooper's hawks, Wilson's phalaropes, osprey, and a caspian tern, to name a few.

We were delighted to have met this wonderful group of young women who are being sponsored by the U.S. State Department on their tour of the U.S. between climbing expeditions.

If you'd like to follow their journey visit www.sevensummitwomen.org





Nick Freeman, Field Trip Chairperson
and Mary Freeman, Field Trip Leader

Los Angeles Audubon's field trips often require driving to more distant destinations and more time spent in the field than do LAAS's local bird walks. No pets. No children under 12, without permission from leader please.

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

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

CARPOOLING

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

"FEE REQUIRED" RESERVATIONS

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

Mail to:

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

'NO FEE' RESERVATIONS / MORE INFORMATION

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

Please leave voice message if no answer.

*Please support LAAS field trips with your donations.
Share with LAAS on Facebook and Twitter.
[facebook.com / LosAngelesAudubon](http://facebook.com/LosAngelesAudubon)
[twitter.com / LAAudubon](http://twitter.com/LAAudubon).*

Field Trip Listings

Western Tanager | Vol. 81 No. 1 September/October 2014

Saturday, Sept 6

Piute Ponds

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: Jim Moore. A good mix of shorebirds, with a chance at LeConte's Thrasher and Pectoral Sandpiper. Some amazing birds have been seen here over the years, including a Little Stint just two years ago! Possible extension to Lancaster Sewage Ponds or Apollo Park afterwards. Meet at the Avenue C gate at 7:30 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. Likely hot weather, and possible afternoon wind. High clearance vehicles may be a plus. Cameras O.K.

Saturday, September 13 (full with wait list)

Condors at Hopper Mountain NWR

DONATION SUGGESTED, SIGN-UP LIMIT OF 5 HIGH-CLEARANCE VEHICLES

Dan Teppe, Refuge Manager for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, will be leading this trip to view the reintroduction program of the California Condor at Hopper NWR from a nearby ridge – to prevent habituating birds to humans too much. We should get good looks at California Condors and possibly Golden Eagles. Dan will give us an overview of the program, describe how radio telemetry and GPS tracking units are helping to save the bird, and talk about the future of the Condor. All 43 condors in the California wild population visit this area again. All new releases of condors into our wild population occur here. Take Interstate 5 North to SR 126 West (in Castaic Junction) to Fillmore. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the front parking lot of the Super A grocery store which will be on the right, immediately after the light at "A" Street, and carpool from here at 8:00 a.m. Back in Fillmore by 1:00 p.m. or so. High clearance

vehicles are required, so bring one if you have one, and check the spare. These roads are not for the timid! 5 car limit. Some of us usually eat lunch in town afterwards. We have alternate viewing plans if the roads are inaccessible or the USFWS deems our presence a detriment to the birds on this day. Reserve your place with LAAS by phone, stating phone # (preferably cell) and email address, whether you have a high clearance vehicle that can accommodate at least 4 people total (priority) or you would like to carpool with someone else. Wait for confirmation. Bring drinks, snacks, and FRS radio and a scope if you have them. No fee, but donations accepted to the Condor Survival Fund (or get a cool T-shirt).

Sunday, September 28

Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Wetlands

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

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

September 20-21

Mojave Desert Weekend

NO FEE, SIGN-UP REQUIRED, SIGN-UP MAX: 12

Leaders: Nick Freeman and Don White. Kern County has some of the best migrant traps in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! Saturday, bird California City environs; and Sunday, clean up remaining California City spots and hit Apollo Park and Piute Ponds on our way south. Dine out (then herp?) with leaders Saturday eve

Field Trip Listings, cont'd

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

if you wish. 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 fenced driving range. Meet here at 6:30 a.m. both days. 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 new Best Western in CA City (across the street from the meeting spot). Bring lunches, FRS radios, sun block, bird and reptile books.

Saturday, October 4

Malibu to McGrath Field Trip

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: Barbara Johnson. Late passerines and shorebirds should be moving through coastal migration spots, mixed with early wintering birds. Possibly 100 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. 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 18

Santa Monica Mountains Bird Fest

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

This is a collaboration between the Park Service, Conejo Valley Audubon, Santa Monica Bay Audubon and San Fernando Valley Audubon. join us to celebrate birds and birding in the Santa Monica Mountains!

It will be held at the Visitor Center at Gillette Ranch.

(101 west to Las Virgines, turn left to Mulholland, left again and the entrance is the first gate on your right) Our one day (9:30 a.m. to 4:30p.m.) festival will

feature hourly bird walks (the first at 9:00 a.m) and hourly talks in the little theater. Topics will range from Condors to Beginning Birders, and the schedule will be posted nearer the time. There will also be a live bird display outside at lunch time.

Also come and support the many non-profits that will be exhibiting, from Heal the Bay and International Bird Rescue through the Resource Conservation District and the National Park Service.

There will also be an opportunity to spend money, items will be on sale from local bird stores and makers of bird related artifacts. There is even a book signing from Mathew Tekulsky, whose new book Backyard Bird Photography has just been published. Food will be available for purchase.

We haven't forgotten the children either, the 10:00a.m. walk is for children and families, while there will be many child centered activities on the tables.

Monthly Program Presentations

Los Angeles Audubon's monthly evening program presentations are held the 2nd Wednesday of the month (except for July and August)

AUDUBON CENTER AT DEBS PARK
4700 N Griffin Ave
Los Angeles 90031
323-221-2255

<http://debspark.audubon.org>

Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and are over at 9:30 p.m. Come early enjoy the nature, share your birding interests with like minded birders. Stay and enjoy the slideshow presentations.

All are welcome!

Please visit the website for the announcements of the topics and presenters of the September 10th and October 8th program presentations.

www.laaudubon.org



Bird Walk Listings

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

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

Topanga State Park Birdwalk

1st Sunday of every month

Sept. 7 and Oct. 5

Time: 8:00–11:30 a.m.

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

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

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

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area

4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles 90056

3rd Saturday of the month (Except for July and August)

Sept. 20 and Oct. 18

Time: 8:00–noon

Leaders: *Eric & Ann Brooks, Eleanor Osgood.* This trip covers landscaped parkland, a man-made lake and natural coastal scrub habitats within the Baldwin Hills. We are likely to see many of the resident birds such as Black and Say's Phoebes, Cassin Kingbirds, California and Spotted Towhee, Red-tailed Hawk and Cooper's Hawk.

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

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

CARPPOOLING IS ENCOURAGED!

To provide your information to join the LAAS CARPOOL DATABASE membership@laaudubon.org or call (323) 550-8533 leave a message. We will attempt to connect you with other birders interested in sharing a ride to our events.

More information on birdwalks contact Eleanor Osgood at birdwalks@laaudubon.org or (310) 839-5420.

Upper Franklin Canyon Sooky Goldman Nature Center

2nd Sunday of the month

Sept. 14 and Oct. 12

Time: 8:30–noon

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood.* Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We are likely to see the resident Wood Ducks and as well chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Common Raven, Red-shouldered Hawk, Spotted and California Towhees, Song Sparrows and California Thrasher. Meet in the main parking lot for the Sooky Goldman Nature Center.

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

FROM SUNSET BLVD: go north on N. Beverly Drive to Coldwater Canyon Dr to Mulholland Dr. Veer left on Mulholland Drive. At the next traffic signal, make a left turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. continue to first parking lot on the left. MEET in the main parking lot for the SOOKY GOLDMAN NATURE CENTER, 2600 FRANKLIN CANYON DR, BEVERLY HILLS 90210. If lost the morning of the walk, call (424) 298-1376 between 8–9:00 a.m. **Binoculars provided.**

Ballona Wetlands Bird Walk

3rd Sunday of the month (Except December)

Sept. 21 and Oct. 19

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