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Moon over Piute Ponds, 2013 Lancaster CBC, Photo by Mary Freeman

SOUND BITE OF THE WARBLER SOUND WORKSHOP 2013

By Linda Oberholtzer, Photos by Mary Freeman

HAVE YOU EVER DRIVEN AROUND IN YOUR CAR LISTENING TO bird sound CDs until your ears were ringing?

Have you ever hopelessly tried to memorize sounds by playing them over and over again, as if they would absorb into your brain by osmosis?

If you have, there is still hope!

I attended the Los Angeles Audubon Society Warbler Vocalization Workshop in October 2013 at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center in Altadena.

This article is just a small taste of the workshop, which was part of two days of programs, including an evening joint program with Los Angeles Audubon and Pasadena Audubon by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle, authors of “The Warbler Guide” by Princeton University Press

Tom Stephenson talked about a NEW WAY to memorize bird sounds. A new way for learning and listening and remembering in the field.

ALLOCATE TIME

You have to allocate TIME to learn the sounds. He recommends to study about ten minutes, two times a day for 30 days.

The listening must be ACTIVE. Try to recognize each sound that you hear. Distinguish between buzzy and clear, high and low, duration—short or long, pitch rising or falling. Mnemonics help.

Remember that visual images are stronger than words. The stronger the visual image—the better. Listening forces you to recall a memory and is an essential part of the name-song connection.

Start to hear a song when you hear pieces of the song. Reviewing and testing yourself is important. Pick about five to eight songs to learn at one time. Listen to them carefully, once or twice, one at a time and close your eyes while doing this.

Think, what do I picture when I hear this? Establish some image that connects the name to the sound for each species. For example, the rising and buzzy quality to the name of the bird.

Prairie Warbler has a long rising buzzy sound. Picture a long rising prairie filled with buzzing bees as you walk step by step up it.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler sounds like “I am laaaazy.” Picture a lazy person with a blue blazer and maybe a white handkerchief. The CRAZIER, the better.

Stop and do something else for five minutes and then go back and test yourself using active recall. The image you pick has to be personal and has to pop up for you when it comes up. You can use the shuffle feature on your iPod playlist to test yourself randomly. Don’t test on more than ten at one time. There is a program called “Audacity” that can remove the name off of an audio recording. It is ok to see the name but not hear it out loud. Use a random order of playback without the announced name.

Make a playlist of sounds that are similar—like scolds. When first starting to learn, don’t start with the similar sounding yet. Divide target sounds into playlists. Don’t listen to songs over and over. Study one page at a time.

CREATE A CONNECTION

This process is very personal. You have to tap into the creative side of the brain. It needs to create a picture—attach a name to the picture.

To illustrate the technique, Tom used birds of Thailand which were not familiar to everyone.

The Coppersmith Barbet sounds just like the name. It sounds like someone hammering on copper.

With the Golden-throated Barbet, the sound is going over the top. I had an image of Tarzan in a green outfit complete with red hat and green scarf jumping up and down in the jungle.

The Blue-throated Barbet sounds like it hits the roof and stops there. Like the sound bangs into the top. Picture a blue sound bar stopping at a line, bouncing back at the top of the range.

The clattery and repetitive sound of the Blue-eared Barbet give me an image of a train with a blue streak on its side, clattering on a train track with squeaky wheels.

A great emperor with a black crown and brown cape comes to mind when the sound of the Great Barbet is played. It sounds like "I am GREAT."

The tremulous echoing sound of the Lineated Barbet sounds like an alarm at the prison with "lines" (bars) going up. The audience participated and there were some creative images thrown out to the group.

Abbott's Babbler brings to mind the image of an Abbott singing and whistling, "Please wait for me" as the bride and groom wait at the Church for him to arrive.

The screechy and clear sound of the Puff-throated Babbler sounds like "come back here!" where a wife is calling to her husband to come back to the cream-puff section of the market.

For more details of visual and sound identification of Warblers, please see "The Warbler Guide" by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle printed by Princeton University Press.

Computer programs to use for learning sounds are your voice memo feature on the iPhone, Cakewalk software for PCs, Ravenlight by Cornell, Spectagram, and Audacity, among others. Also, he recommends use of a shotgun microphone to record sounds in the field (costs about \$400–\$500) or a parabolic microphone (more expensive, heavier to lug around) to zoom in on the sound. 🐦

Linda Oberholtzer is the Editor of the Western Tanager newsletter for the Los Angeles Audubon Society. She has observed over 42 North American Warbler species in the field.



L-R, Catherine Hamilton, illustrator, authors Scott Whittle and Tom Stephenson book signing at the workshop.



Participants keeping notes.



Birders waiting in line to get their books signed by the authors.

THE AESTHETICS OF GRASS

By Kreigh Hampel

“OH MAN, IF ONLY I COULD GET MY LAWN TO LOOK LIKE THAT!” My next door neighbor and I stared across the street at the newest lawn on the block, an exuberant carpet of fluorescent green. We were swept away.

As a boy I couldn't wait for the day my dad FINALLY LET ME cut the grass. I wanted to yank the rope, hear the engine growl and see the grey exhaust blow. My grass cutting dream came true as a kid and grew into adulthood. At nineteen, I cut golf course greens in Florida then laid down acres of turf around Oregon homes, businesses and freeways. I was working in a green industry and felt good using my muscles.

On this particular blue-sky afternoon, following a Los Angeles rain, that new lawn across the street peaked in pastoral, Photoshop perfection.

But over the next twenty years this young lawn will need some 800 mowings, drink 400,000 gallons of potable water, and generate some 14,000 pounds of grass clippings. Repeatedly, it will likely be de-thatched, edged, trimmed, fertilized, raked, and chemically treated for weeds, insects and disease.

Lawns define a mid twentieth century sense of place, a controlled architectural ideal where nature is an obedient servant. Domesticated plants are sheared into linear borders, columns, spheres or flat panels. Suburban landscapes were minimized in an engineered aesthetic of post-war industrial America. In spite of all the droughts, surface water pollutants, groundwater sins and ecological denial, the machined lawn aesthetic has remained. In fact, lawns are the largest irrigated crop in the U.S.

Southern California with its mild Mediterranean climate and twelve month growing season is an ideal market place for mass-produced grass. Unlike parts of the U.S.

with summer rains, Southern California is bone dry through the high-growth summer and fall. Droughts and watering restrictions aside, our industrial landscapes gulp about half of our cities' precious drinking water.

In good faith, engineers try to solve social problems with engineering breakthroughs. As a result we now have weather satellites linked to efficient digital irrigation controllers. In spite of the marriage between the space program and our carefree watering habits, broken and maladjusted sprinklers continue to flush a witch's brew of landscape chemicals, litter and microscopic vehicle dandruff down the streets and flood channels to our ocean.

With all this attention to growing lawns in the desert, we remain profoundly disconnected to them. I seldom see my neighbors spending time on their front lawns. Instead, it's only the gardeners who spread chemicals, replace broken sprinklers, mow, wack, edge, blow, dump and drive off.

For the past ten years I have worked as the recycling coordinator for the City of Burbank and I measure wastes. Our industrialized landscapes generate mythological amounts of clippings set on the curb for collection. About half of all landscape waste is grass and grass clippings contain a lot of nitrogen the same stuff for sale at the garden centers. If those clippings are left on the lawn, chemical fertilizers could be cut nearly in half.

Trash collection trucks weigh about 35,000 pounds empty and cost well over a quarter million dollars. They have a lot of fancy hydraulics, controls and GPS and get about 3–4 miles per gallon stopping and starting hundreds of times per day.

Wild landscapes will never need a recycling coordinator—nor will they ever rely on modern

engineering. The genius in wild landscapes is their diversity, self-regulation, and intelligent resiliency. Wild landscapes have no need for an trimmed industrial aesthetic or an enormous infrastructure to remove nutrients and soil-building organics.

All organisms necessary to process wastes and reabsorb nutrients are alive in our yard's topsoil. Landscape clippings hauled away are nutrients lost and soils depleted. Our natural landscapes have evolved over time to balance a very complicated agreement between life and death.

It's not in the lawn industry's best interest to promote self sustaining natural landscapes. They profit from millions of miles of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes and millions of power tools; plastic packages full of fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, snail bait, mulches, composts and potting soils; plastic pots, vinyl edgings, timers, valves, sprinklers, ornaments, lights, garden fashions, designer tools and outdoor sound systems. I don't blame anyone for making a living on all of these products, but eventually every one of them passes through the modern, engineered waste stream. That's what I measure.

Also, don't expect the recycling industry to help slow the flow of landscape waste. They own thousands of trucks, landfills, compost sites, recycling plants and international shipping routes. Each ton hauled means wages, mortgages and loans paid.

In contrast to the industrial, high-calorie aesthetic, a regenerative, honest and peaceful landscape aesthetic, one powered by sun, rain, wind and soil; one that supports wildlife and includes diverse cultural histories is re-emerging.

Landscape designers are shifting to native plant pallets, harvesting water, planting "cool islands", connecting wildlife corridors and bringing more nature into urban settings. Thanks to a growing coalition of volunteers, nonprofits and public agencies, LA has new parks, river regeneration plans and streets that harvest water and embrace native plantings. Colleges have improved campuses and

launched graduates with regenerative degrees. Students are getting hands on experience building rain gardens.

These initiatives start with gardening friends, inspirational classes and landscape professionals who understand the power and importance of native plants and habitats. Permaculture has gained recognition for exposing designs that link food, shelter, water, energy, wildlife and drastically reduce industrial drag.

Ecological designers measure success by the number of benefits linked in a system. A simple action like harvesting rainwater or mulching landscape clippings causes a cascading chain of positive results that are not always obvious.

With fourteen inches of annual rainfall, a 6,000 square foot lot will receive nearly 50,000 gallons of rain per year—roughly two swimming pools worth. With good design, rain can be held in the soil for weeks.

Rainwater directed to landscapes rather than streets can offset irrigation especially when the plants themselves know how to live on sips rather than gulps. With every gallon saved, water process chemicals, energy and emissions are saved too.

Every can of yard clippings that is spread as mulch rather than dumped at the curb will smother weeds, reduce labor and herbicides, slow water evaporation, return soil nutrients, reduce chemicals and cut our dependency on heavy trucks, big processes and bagged amendments.

Our landscape aesthetics once dependent on machines, engineering and big wastes no longer serve us. Our new landscape aesthetics: beauty, health, regeneration and a moral inheritance are ready—'It's time to embrace the new look. 🐦



Since 2003 Kreigh Hampel has served as the Recycling Coordinator for the City of Burbank and oversees the City's zero waste programs. He is passionate about regenerative designs, simplicity and community engagement.

INTERPRETING NATURE

How I became a Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Intern

By Melvin Harris III, Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Intern, and Stacey Vigallon, Director of Interpretation

The Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program is always looking to accept students with a wide range of interests in addition to science. Melvin Harris III is just such a student, and we're extremely glad that he decided to apply to be a Greenhouse Intern for this school year. A senior at Dorsey High School, Melvin has strong interests in music, film, vegan cooking, and wildlife science. His internship project addresses how the western fence lizard uses habitat at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. He is currently awaiting college acceptance letters and hopes to attend a university set amidst the redwoods. Below, he discusses how he became involved in the Greenhouse Program...



Greenhouse Intern Melvin Harris completes his California State University application during the Greenhouse Program's CSU Application Day event in October 2013.

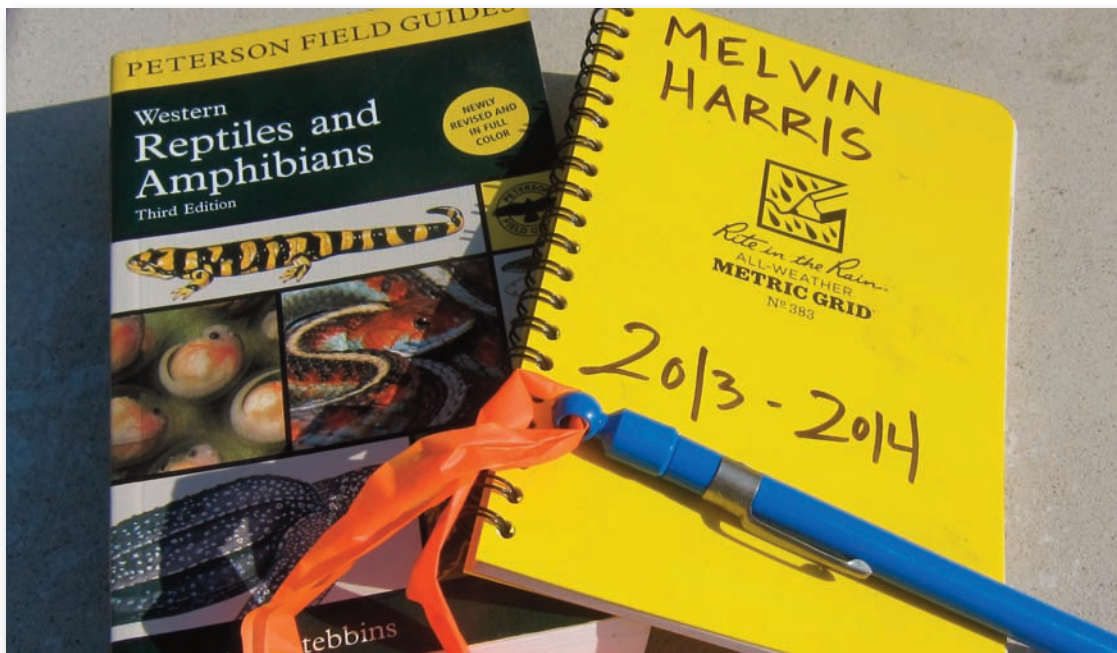
I DID NOT KNOW WHAT THIS "BALDWIN HILLS GREENHOUSE PROGRAM" WAS, BUT WHEN A MEMBER OF THE PROGRAM CAME TO my AP Biology class last year and talked about this cool poster he made about his research topic and his involvement, I was immediately interested in the program. Since being in the program, I have built a stronger interest in the science of the environment and nature. In an urban area like Baldwin Hills, many people do not know of the ways they can help not just their neighborhood but the environment. As a program, we help restore small habitats around in Los Angeles, learned the history of Los Angeles and the remaining nature in it, and we help kids from Politi Elementary School learn about the environment - including plants and animals. Politi Elementary School is full of kids who are interested, like I am, in learning about the environment. We have learned together about different bird species living in and around Los Angeles, like the Least Tern and Snowy Plover.

Along with playing guitar and taking environmental science, the Greenhouse Program is where I have discovered how working hard truly pays off. There are two parts of the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program: being a Restoration Leader and being an Intern. Being an intern is a little harder because of the required reading, research, and labor while holding the internship. Last year my Environmental Stewardship teacher, Mr. Jeffers, offered a volunteer opportunity to go to Venice Beach and work at the Least Tern colony to help take out this plant called "sea rocket" that was destroying their habitat. After that experience, I wanted to apply for the internship with the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. I applied for the internship near the end of my junior year and filled out an application. Later, me and many others were then interviewed by Mr. Jeffers and Stacey Vigallon, the manager of the Greenhouse Program. I went to do the interview with confidence and the hope that I'd get the internship position rather than the restoration leader position. When I found out that I got the Internship I was excited and felt that I was going to get the closer experience with the Greenhouse Program that I really wanted.

In college, I don't know what I want to major in, but I'm very interested in a science path towards something like game design and/or wildlife sciences. I want to open up my options and not just do one thing. I really want to take advantage of what is out there as a career besides just playing music or just science. 🐦



Greenhouse Intern Melvin Harris records audio interviews with elementary school students for a film project during a Snowy Plover field trip to Dockweiler beach.



Greenhouse Intern Melvin Harris's notebook and field guide that he uses for his research project at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook.

School Is Now In Session!

By Cindy Hardin, Environmental Education, Photographs by Leslie Davidson

The last time you heard about the Audubon Education Program volunteers we had taken a summer field trip to the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology. Well, summer is long gone, and our field trip season at Ballona and Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area is in full swing. However, before the student field trip visits begin, the docents in both programs spend the first part of the fall attending our annual Docent Training Programs. The trainings are a great way for all of us to recharge, see each other after a summer hiatus, and greet new Audubon volunteers and interns. The sessions feature guest speakers who cover various aspects of the unique habitats found at the sites of our programs. This year we were especially fortunate to have a terrific roster of speakers. Some were returning favorites, and others were brand new additions. All of our guest lecturers generously share their knowledge and enthusiasm about the natural world, and how to interpret this information to visiting schoolchildren.



Margot Griswold takes the time to discuss the virtues of a slow and thoughtful approach to habitat restoration.



As the pickleweed takes on its crimson hue of autumn, and the Black Phoebe searches for late season insects, Audubon Education Program docents return for Fall Training.

Audubon's own Margot Griswold did double duty, speaking to both the Ballona group and the crew at Kenneth Hahn. Margot has many years of experience doing large scale habitat restoration projects, and she spent time with us describing the goals and mechanics of the restoration process. For the Ballona group this included a walk through the wetlands and discussion of the essential role that native plants play in the functionality of a natural habitat. At Kenneth Hahn we were able to see firsthand the results of Margot's handiwork at the Native Plant and Wildlife Garden. The Kenneth Hahn volunteers also received instruction from Margot on how to test rate of drainage in different soil types. This is a demonstration that is part of the curriculum for all sixth graders who visit the park. It opens up discussion with the students about soil composition and origin, and its effect on determining the type of vegetation that will be found at a particular site.



I was very excited to have Larry Allen teach us about the wonders of the avian world!

Since Ballona is a designated Important Bird Area, it is a given that every year we have one of our training days devoted to birds and birding. This year we were lucky enough to have birder extraordinaire, Larry Allen, as our bird expert. Larry's vast knowledge of birding combined with his cheerful and encouraging demeanor served to inform and inspire even the most novice birders in our group. All of us were charmed by the Black Oystercatchers and their "glowstick bills" that were sighted on the creek as we walked with Larry. Egrets of both the Great and Snowy variety, Great Blue Herons and Red Tailed Hawks were all present to dazzle the crowd. It was great fun to see the reaction of some of the new volunteers, several of whom had never birded before, to these charismatic species. For several do-cents, the learning continued even after the session concluded, as there was a post-lunch expedition out to the breakwater to see the Blue Footed Boobies that had been hanging around the area during early fall.

We continued to take advantage of the knowledgeable folk of LA Audubon with a visit from Travis Longcore. Travis was kind enough to take time from his hectic schedule to teach us about the natural history of the Ballona Wetlands. We learned about estuarine systems, both open and closed (Ballona being in the latter category for hundreds of years), and the tricky business of restoring coastal wetlands in our state. A special emphasis was put on approaches to restoration processes this year at the Ballona training, as there are currently some

controversial plans in the works regarding the Ballona Wetlands. Presenting both the history of the site and examining restorations at other similar locations serves to inform our volunteer staff about the appropriateness of various proposals. Travis did an excellent job of enlightening us to the possibilities for Ballona's future.

Next up at Ballona was the always fabulous Tracy Drake, manager of the Madrona Marsh in Torrance. Tracy is tremendously skilled at interpreting nature to the public. Her energy is contagious! She is a presenter every year, and with good reason: she effectively conveys teaching techniques that make education fun for both the volunteer staff and the students that visit us. This year included a training exercise that broke us into small groups and required us to do an on the fly (pun intended!) presentation on butterflies. Long-time volunteer Lynn Bossone did an imitation of a butterfly that was particularly entertaining! As we all know, a little humor goes a long way in helping to educate people, and our morning with Tracy was filled with learning and laughs.



Tracy Drake oversees the volunteers as they prepare their butterfly presentations. The training sessions are always well attended, and we often run out of chairs!



Martina Ramirez helps us to scout arachnids in the field. Can you find the Crab Spider hiding in the Goldenbush?

Martina Ramirez, a faculty member at LMU, got us into a Halloween mood with her terrific talk on spiders. She always brings interesting items for viewing, like the large exoskeleton that was shed from a molting Tarantula. She also finds fantastic live specimens out in the field, and this year was no different. As we hiked through the dunes we found Crab Spiders, Trash Spiders and the very showy Orb Weavers that abound at this time of year. The big finish was watching one of the Orb Weavers trap an insect in its web and wrap it in silk, to be saved as a later snack. One of the intents of our spider training session is to de-mystify these fascinating creatures, and to help others appreciate, rather than fear, them. As I always say to the students, if you hate spiders, you must love flies!

Our last Ballona speaker was Greg Pauly, staff herpetologist at the Natural History Museum. There are loads of reptiles at Ballona, and we see lizards on almost every walk with the students. Therefore, it was high time to have an expert talk to us about lizards, snakes

and their ilk, and Greg fit the bill perfectly. He went into action with his telescoping lizard lasso, and it was something to behold. Greg was able to temporarily capture and display the three types of lizard common to Ballona: the Alligator, Western Fence and Western Side-blotched Lizard. It was a treat for the group to see and compare each of these up close, and also to observe Greg's prowess in lizard hunting. Greg is also promoting a new NHM program that relies upon citizen science to track the reptiles and amphibians that might be found in our own backyards. It is known as the RASCals project (Reptiles and Amphibians of Southern California), and has two goals. One is to find out how man-made change has affected distribution of species in our area, and the other is to discover and track introduced species of reptiles and amphibians in Southern California. Anyone who has a camera with a time stamp and e-mail capability can participate. If you would like to know more you can go to www.nhm.org/rascals.



Greg Pauly is the staff herpetologist at the Natural History Museum, and dazzled us with his proficiency at lizard catching. Here he displays a reluctant guest to the crowd.



Even if we don't actually see a lizard, we can find evidence of their presence. What is the evidence that Greg is holding in his hand? (Look for the answer at the end of the article).

Concurrent to the Ballona training were training sessions at Kenneth Hahn. As mentioned above, Margot Griswold spent a great morning with us at the park in the habitat garden. We continued to mine the vast knowledge of Audubon folk with a visit from Stacey Vigallon. Most of you are aware that Stacey is an incredibly talented artist, and she spent her time instructing us on the subject of Scientific Illustration. At Kenneth Hahn we have an Illustration Station that is a part of every student tour. The children observe flower and insect specimens, and then record their observations by drawing what they see. This exercise prompts students to think about the structure of an organism, and how these structures help them to survive in their habitat. For example, the long legs of a grasshopper enable it to leap away from predators, and the fuzzy leaves of the white sage allow the plant to trap moisture on foggy mornings. Our volunteer staff and interns were sent off into the field to make their own observations and drawings as part of this training, which helped all of us to find new appreciation for the habitat at the park. We also had our own project to take home, just like the students who experience our field trips.

Bob DeGroot, of the Southern California Earthquake Center, rounded out our speaker roster at Kenneth Hahn. The SCEC is the group that puts on the annual earthquake preparedness drill known as the Great Shakeout, and Bob has a vast knowledge of our local ge-

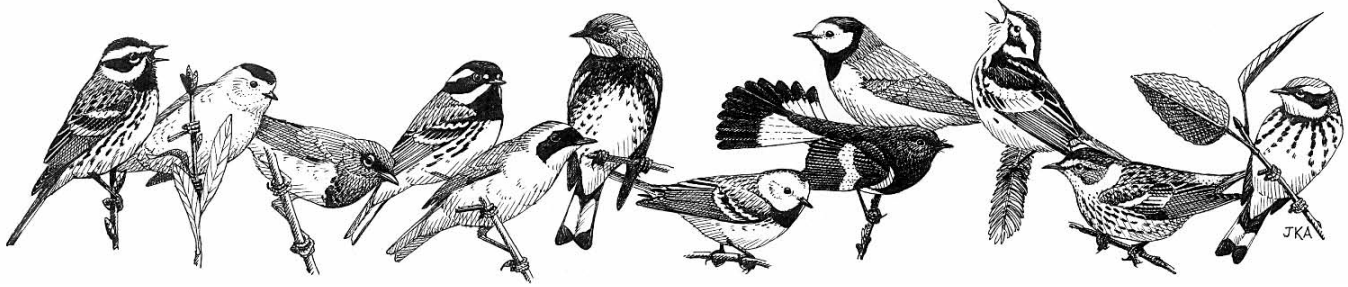
ology and its effect on our region. It is a particularly relevant subject for the program at Kenneth Hahn, as the park itself is perched directly upon the Newport Inglewood fault. The thrusting action of this fault has resulted in the uplift that created the Baldwin Hills, and the close to the surface presence of natural gas and oil in the area. The state science standards for sixth graders puts a heavy emphasis on natural resources, and the tectonic plate movement that creates and makes these resources accessible. Kenneth Hahn Park is a perfect living laboratory to illustrate this, and Bob helps us to translate it to the middle school set. His demonstration that utilizes an Oreo cookie to represent the movement of tectonic plates is effective and delicious!



Stacey Vigallon shows off some of the tools of the trade for our illustration training.

We were all grateful to have the chance to learn from such a varied and brilliant set of presenters. Although this year's training has concluded, we continue to educate ourselves by leading walks, asking questions, and keeping abreast of information that is continually being published both on-line and in print. If you have an interest in learning along with us, please feel free to come down to see a field trip in action at Kenneth Hahn or Ballona. All you need to do is contact me at cindyhardin@laaudubon.org. We'd love to see you!

Finally, have you guessed what the lizard left behind? Those are the part of the meal that the lizard could not digest: ant exoskeletons. 🐞



BIRDS OF THE SEASON — DECEMBER 2013, BY JON FISHER

When the Los Angeles County lines were drawn, it was simply by chance that its boundaries covered such a variety of habitats. Despite being far outmatched in size by San Bernardino County to the east, LA County's bird list of 513 species easily tops that of its much larger neighbor and of all other California counties save San Diego.

Unfortunately, as the population has exploded, the vast majority of the wetlands, riparian and coastal sage scrub once found in the LA basin and environs have vanished. But pockets of these habitats remain and new more or less artificial habitats have been created. Together with miles of coastline, offshore waters and islands these diverse features make for a very bird rich area.

In addition to geography and habitat, it takes all four seasons to record that many birds and autumn is one of the best of them. Between mid October and mid December as passerine migration slowly wound down, vagrant songbirds continued to keep things lively. Wintering water birds— ducks, loons and grebes— began appearing in greater numbers and also included some good rarities.

As winter approaches, there's been little evidence of any irruptive species and it's now getting late for any such movements to occur. The lone exception was Lewis's Woodpeckers, which appeared in fair numbers, mainly in and around the San Gabriel foothills. While not overwhelming, above average numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets were also detected in the lowlands.

Climate and weather often influence bird populations and movements, and the effects of an extremely dry 2012–2013 rainy season have been amply evident in the impact on habitat. We're definitely dry. The few fronts that passed through thus far this fall gave some hope for a wetter winter... but time will tell.

Among the small number of now resident **Ross's Geese**, a new bird turned up at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia from November 17–22 (Terri Chapman). **Cackling Geese** were along Ballona Creek on October 14 (Moro Rogers), at Alondra Park in Lawndale from October 9–17 (Roy van de Hoek), Woodley Golf Course in Van Nuys on October 24 (Irwin Woldman), at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia on October 20 (Jon Fisher).

The only **Eurasian Wigeon** reported thus far was one back for another winter on the LA River in Glendale as of November 3 (Julia Ray).

Diving ducks included two **Greater Scaup** off Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo on December 5 where they are somewhat regular in winter (Richard Barth). Also off Dockweiler was a female **Black Scoter** from November 7–25, followed by a male from November 22 (Richard Barth). Not far from there, a **Long-tailed Duck** was along Ballona Creek near Playa del Rey on November 30 (Jonathan Coffin).

Though there have been two recent records of single **Barrow's Goldneys** at Quail Lake near Gorman, these are still very rare birds in the county. They are becoming slightly less so however after our third and fourth— a male and female— were discovered at Quail Lake on November 25 (Jan Wilson). The female remained in the area through December 8, but the male has not yet been seen again, but either or both could show up again.

Red-breasted Mergansers, typically scarce away from the immediate coast, were surprisingly numerous at Quail Lake near Gorman with a maximum of fifteen there on November 30. In a reverse pattern, a **Common Merganser**— the far more common of the two inland— was along the coast in the Ballona Creek channel on December 7 (Mike Stensvold).

Also at productive Quail Lake was a **Pacific Loon** present from November 10–30 (Kimball Garrett) and a **Red-necked Grebe** from November 16–22 (Mike Huang).

An apparent **Yellow-billed Loon** was just offshore near Playa del Rey on November 1 (Bernardo Alps). This would be only the fourth ever recorded in the county, but the third in the last four years.

Pelagics included a **Red-billed Tropicbird** well offshore at Thirty Mile Bank on October 13 (Ray Duffy) and two **Masked Boobies** that continued off Long Beach Harbor through October 29, with at least one present through November 3. The big September invasion of **Blue-footed Boobies** receded somewhat, but up to six continued at Playa del Rey through end of November, with at least two remaining into December.

A lack of coastal salt marshes handicaps LA County as far as the occurrence of **Reddish Egrets** is concerned. In spite of that, one was present at the Los Cerritos wetlands in the extreme southern part of the region from November 4–5 (Bill Weber). More regular were single **Cattle Egrets** at Alamitos Park on November 1 (Jeanette Repp) and along Ballona Creek on November 25 (John Oliver).

Bald Eagles have become fairly regular in winter at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas and at least one bird was present there from December 3–8 (Rod Higbie).

Late **Swainson's Hawks** were recorded at Veteran's Park in Sylmar on November 16 (Bruce Mast) and over Pasadena on November 26 (Luke Tiller). Returning for another winter in the west Antelope Valley was a "**Harlan's**" **Red-tailed Hawk** first seen on October 22 (Luke Tiller, Catherine Hamilton, David Bell, Jon Feenstra).

Ferruginous Hawks on the coastal slope included two rare dark morph birds, one at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area from November 13–24 (Lynn Bossone), and the other over Ballona Creek on November 17 (Jon Fisher). More regular— but still scarce on the coastal slope— was a light morph bird at La Mirada's Creek Park on November 25 (Jonathan Rowley).

Mountain Plovers were in the Antelope Valley as usual, with a flock of thirty reported in the east valley on November 16 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

Ideal habitat created by the shrinking Lake Machado caused a late **Pectoral Sandpiper** to linger at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City from November 2–28 (Manuel Duran). Also of interest here was a concentration of **Wilson's Snipes** numbering at least four dozen.

A short-lived inland invasion of **Heermann's Gulls** included five birds at Lake Balboa on October 28 (Daniel Tinoco), two at Lake Calabasas on October 28 (Scott Logan) and two more at Quail Lake— an even less likely location— on November 10 (Kimball Garrett). None of these birds lingered however and no others were subsequently found away from the coast.

A **White-winged Dove** at Loyola Marymount University on October 26 was the only one reported (Russ Stone).

Burrowing Owl sightings on the coastal slope included returning wintering birds at the Ballona Wetlands back as of October 29 (Bob Pann) and at Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo from November 15 (Moro Rogers). A few **Short-eared Owls** were detected, with one well offshore at Thirty Mile Bank on October 15 (David Bell), one in Turnbull Canyon near Whittier on October 27 (Larry Schmahl) and another in the west Antelope Valley from November 1–2 (Jon Feenstra, David Bell).

This fall produced decent numbers of **Lewis's Woodpeckers**, with the first being one at Chilao Flat in the San Gabriels on October 13 (Hill Penfold). Following that two were in Cheeseboro Canyon as of October 30 (Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin), one was flying over Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena on November 1 (Luke Tiller) and four were near Barley Flats in the San Gabriels from November 12–17 (Jon Feenstra). Still later, one was in San Dimas Canyon on November 27 (Martha Estus) and at least five were at Wilson Canyon in Sylmar on December 5–6 (Doug Martin).

Williamson's Sapsuckers away from their usual higher elevation haunts included birds at Veteran's Park in Sylmar from November 7–27 (John Oliver) and at St. Andrew's Abbey near Valyermo from November 16–30 (Mark & Janet Scheel). Also of note were six **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** and at least eight **Red-naped Sapsuckers** found in the county during the period.

Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flickers were at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area in Van Nuys on October

23 (Georgia Doyle, Linda Elkin), continuing at Wheeler Park in Claremont through November 28 (Tom Miko), at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles from November 6–16 (Don Sterba, Lynn Bossone), at Lacy Park in San Marino on November 9 (Matthew Grube).

A dark *suckleyi* **Merlin**, rarest of the three subspecies in southern California, was at Hansen Dam on November 16 (Kimball Garrett).

Empidonax included a **Least Flycatcher** seen briefly at Roosevelt Cemetery in Gardena on October 14 (Richard Barth) and several late **Hammond's Flycatchers** between mid October and early November. Even later were Hammond's at Creek Park in La Mirada from November 25– December 6 (Jonathan Rowley) and at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on November 30 (Andrew Lee).

Gray Flycatchers, scarce but regular in fall and winter, were at Malibu Lagoon on October 29 (Dan Cooper) and at Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena from November 23–December 11 (Luke Tiller). Normally gone by mid October— and scarce on the coastal slope at best— was a **Dusky Flycatcher** was at Hansen Dam in Lakeview Terrace on October 23 (Kimball Garrett).

Usually absent after September, a **Willow Flycatcher** was at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia from October 14–17 (John Fitch, Bob Schallman). A silent “**Western**” **Flycatcher** was at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on November 30 (Andrew Lee) and a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was at the El Dorado Park Nature Center area on December 8 (Keith Quinlivan). Cordilleran and Pacific-slope Flycatchers are essentially indistinguishable when not vocalizing, though we presume most if not all birds in the county are Pacific-slopes.

New was an **Eastern Phoebe** was at Legacy Park in Malibu from December 11–12 (Joyce Waterman) while previously discovered **Vermilion Flycatchers** continued at Harbor Park in Harbor City through October 26 and at the Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook into December.

Returning for its sixth winter were a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** at Creek Park in La Mirada first detected on December 1 (Jonathan Rowley) and a returning **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was at Sepulveda Basin through October 25.

Tropical Kingbirds included one continuing through the period at Legg Lake in South El Monte, another at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from October 19–November 30 (Richard Barth, Jim Moore) and one at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City from November 11–December 8 (orig. obs?).

Noteworthy was a **Bell's Vireo** along the lower LA River in Long Beach on December 5 (Brian Daniels). There are only a very few late fall and winter records of this species in the county and they are rarely observed even in migration. Late **Warbling Vireos** were at the Bette Davis Picnic Area in Glendale on October 31 (Kris Ohlenkamp) and at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on November 3 (Tracy Drake).

Among the usual small number of **Plumbeous Vireos**, scarcer **Cassin's Vireos** were at the Bette Davis Picnic Area in Glendale on October 31 (Tom Wurster), at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood on November 18 (Don Sterba) and at the Dominguez Seminary in Rancho Dominguez on December 5 (Richard Barth). In the much rarer category, a **Philadelphia Vireo** at Legg Lake in South El Monte from October 26–31 was a nice find (Larry Schmahl).

Brown Creepers away from expected areas were at Legg Lake starting on October 27 (Jon Feenstra) and at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City on November 28.

Pacific Wrens were found in Big Santa Anita Canyon on November 23 (Lance Benner) and at Wilderness Park in Downey on December 2 (Tom Miko).

An interesting location for a **Mountain Bluebird** was at Shortcut Saddle in the San Gabriel Mountains on November 12 (Jon Feenstra). Despite its common name, this is not a species expected in the chaparral covered mid elevation slopes of the San Gabriels, though open patches anywhere may attract migrants. Away from the Antelope Valley where expected, one to two were at Lake Balboa in Van Nuys from November 10 (Daniel Tinoco), six were at Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena on November 29 (Luke Tiller) and two were near Santa Fe Dam on December 3 (Jon Feenstra).

A **Varied Thrush** at Switzer's Camp in the San Gabriels on October 18 (Tom Stephenson, Scott Whittle) was the only one reported thus far.

A rare **Red-throated Pipit**— the second in the county this fall— was at the Sepulveda Basin from October 24–November 3 (David Bell).

Always rare, a **Lapland Longspur** was in the west Antelope Valley from November 1–3 (Jon Feenstra, David Bell) and two in the east valley on November 19 (Dan Maxwell).

At least nine **Black-and-white Warblers** were present in the county during the period.

Tennessee Warblers were at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on October 22 (Tracy Drake), at Legg Lake in South El Monte from October 26–27 (Larry Schmahl), in Avalon on Catalina Island on October 27 (David Bell) and at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on November 29 (Jim Royer).

Lucy’s Warblers were at Creek Park in La Mirada on October 17 (Jonathan Rowley), at Malibu Lagoon on October 26 (Jon Fisher) and at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from November 23–29 (Tracy Drake), and a late **Nashville Warbler** was at Murphy Ranch Park on November 24 (Jonathan Rowley).

American Redstarts were at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City from November 10–26 (Martin Byhower) and at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys from November 29–December 12 (Jim Royer). A cooperative **Blackburnian Warbler** was at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia from November 2–3 (Darren Dowell) and **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles on October 23 (Don Sterba) and at West Creek Community Park in Valencia from October 26–29 (Judy Matsuoka).

The lone report of a **Blackpoll Warbler** was one at Legg Lake in South El Monte from October 22–25 (Dan Maxwell). **Palm Warblers** were less numerous than last fall, with eight recorded over the period.

Returning for its fourth winter at Hansen Dam in Lakeview Terrace was a **Pine Warbler** first observed on November 4 (Kimball Garrett) and a **Black-throated Green Warbler** was at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh from November 22–December 8 (Don Sterba).

A **Green-tailed Towhee** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on November 3 was the only one recorded in the lowlands this fall (Tony Strangarity).

Away from any expected areas were two **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** in the LA River channel in Long Beach on November 21 (Brian Daniels); quite an unusual record for such a sedentary species.

Vesper Sparrows on the coastal slope included one at Legacy Park in Malibu on October 22 (Dan Cooper), one at Hansen Dam from November 10–12 (obs?).

Extremely rare in the county was an **American Tree Sparrow** found at Quail Lake on December 8 (Mark & Janet Scheel). This was the first record of this hardy northern sparrow in the county since 2003.

Far more regular were **Clay-colored Sparrows** at Avalon on Santa Catalina Island on October 27 (David Bell) and at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on November 30 (Andrew Lee).

With Sage Sparrow having been recently split into Bell’s Sparrow and Sagebrush Sparrow— the former being the default one of the two in the county— it was only a matter of time before our “first” **Sagebrush Sparrow** was recorded. That bird was one observed and photographed in the west Antelope Valley on November 1 (Jon Feenstra, David Bell). At least until the status of Sagebrush Sparrow in the county is better understood, any suspected individual should be photographed if possible.

Swamp Sparrows were at Hansen Dam in Lakeview Terrace from November 2–9 (Kimball Garrett) and in Culver City from November 19–December 8 (Don Sterba).

At least nine **White-throated Sparrows** were found over the period, far fewer than last year’s unusually high number.

Rare Dark-eyed Juncos included a “**Gray-headed**” **Junco** near Mt. Wilson on November 6 (Norm Vargas) and a “**Pink-sided**” **Junco** at Veteran’s Park in Sylmar on November 29 (John Garrett).

A **Hepatic Tanager** had returned to Gonzales Park in Compton for a second winter as of October 17 (Richard Barth). **Summer Tanagers** included one returning to the Bette Davis Picnic Area in Glendale as of October 30 (Richard Barth), a male and female at West LA College on November 10 (Don Sterba), one at Creek Park in La Mirada on November 21 (Jonathan Rowley) and one at the Dominguez Seminary in the Rancho Dominguez area on December 5.

Late **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were at Gwinn Park in Pasadena on November 26 (Luke Tiller) and in Beverly Hills on November 29 (Scott Logan).

Rusty Blackbirds included a male at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City that lingered for a few days following its discovery on November 10 (Ed Griffin) and a female there from November 11–December 6. As if two weren't enough for a species so rare in the county, a third was at the California Country Club in La Puente from November 19–22 (Robb Hamilton).

Sunnyglen Park in Los Angeles hosted a **Baltimore Oriole** on October 18 (Sam Jojola) and another continued at Creek Park in La Mirada through October 24. Rare in winter was a **Scott's Oriole** at St. Andrew's Abbey near Valyermo present from November 16–30 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

Away from the higher San Gabriels where they are expected, three **Red Crossbills** of the expected "Type 2" were at Veteran's Park in Sylmar on November 29 (John Garrett).

Officially part of LA County, but inaccessible to all but a few researchers, San Clemente Island also produced many good birds over the period. Observers Justin Stahl, Nicole DesNoyers and Ben Sandstrom recorded the following: a Blackpoll Warbler on October and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on October 16, a Prairie Warbler on October 18, a Palm Warbler on October 20, a Black-throated Blue Warbler from October 22–24, a Red-eyed Vireo, Virginia's Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow and Yellow-breasted Chat on October 24, a Scarlet Tanager on October 30, a Green-tailed Towhee on November 26, another Palm Warbler

on November 30 and three Lapland Longspurs on December 2.

In spite of very limited coverage, Santa Catalina Island also showed its potential and the value of greater coverage there. Though access for much of the island is problematic, any coverage in fall would likely prove to be productive.

By the time it ended, this autumn offered more than enough great birds to satisfy just about anyone. But of course now we're changing seasons and winter continues to offer fine birding opportunities in the county. Typically chilly mornings give way to pleasantly cool days, ideal for extended birding excursions. Christmas Bird Counts will begin in mid December and these invariably result in the discovery of new rare birds.

The coastal slope can offer nearly as diverse a selection of Neotropic migrants as it does in April or September, though species are represented by far fewer individuals.

Areas along the coast have a lot of potential, yet just a few "hotspots" are covered regularly. Harbors and marinas get scant coverage. While not the easiest areas to access for birding, they can be worthwhile. In addition, seawatching from any coastal vantage point could turn up something of interest.

Winter is the time to study our regular gulls and search for rare ones. To date no Slaty-backed Gull has been found in the county, though there is an old record for Ventura. Ivory Gull has been recorded once in Orange County and though this is an extreme vagrant to California, it's clearly a possible one.

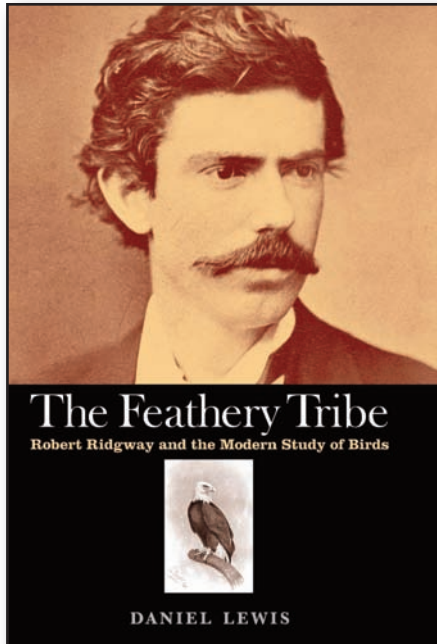
Though migration per se may have ended, birds are never truly static. Many will stay put for the season, perhaps not moving more than a hundred yards, but many others will not. That fact will continue to keep the next couple of months interesting. 🦉

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

Wed., Jan. 8, 2014

Dan Lewis presents:

"The Feathery Tribe: Robert Ridgway and the Modern Study of Birds"



Bird-watchers owe a hidden debt to history: the scientific study of birds took a specific route in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that dictated how birds were understood and enjoyed. For example, the ways that both common and scientific names were standardized caused a great deal of passionate argument. After Charles Darwin's work, everything changed, affecting our understanding of birds. Daniel Lewis will cover these developments in his discussion of *The Feathery Tribe* (Yale University Press), his biography of Robert Ridgway, the Smithsonian's first curator of birds. His new book traces key changes in ornithology leading to the present-and what it meant to be a natural scientist at the dawn of the 20th century.

A native of Hawaii, Dan is the Dibner Senior Curator of the History of Science and Technology at the Huntington Library in San Marino. He also teaches at USC and Claremont Graduate University. As the Huntington's chief curator of manuscripts, he also oversees a large department of 20 staff members and approximately seven linear miles of manuscripts. Dan's permanent exhibit at the Huntington, "Beautiful Science: Ideas That Changed the World," won the American Association of Museum's Grand Prize in 2009 as the best exhibition in the United States. His current book project is a history of extinction among Hawaiian birds.

Wed., Feb. 12, 2014

Jenna Stanek presents:

"Yellow-billed Cuckoo response to riparian habitat restoration: They built it, did they come?"



The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a California endangered species and is being considered for Federal listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The western cuckoo population has declined dramatically over the last 100 years due to extensive loss or degradation of suitable breeding habitat, primarily riparian forests and associated bottomlands dominated by willow, cottonwood, or mesquite. The loss of riparian forest habitat has been mainly due to dam construction, water regulation, industrial agriculture within former floodplains, and residential development. In 2005, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program was created to protect, maintain, and create wildlife habitat for Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and other threatened and near-threatened species occurring within the historic lower Colorado River flood plain. The revegetation efforts on the historical LCR flood plain has thus far created successful Yellow-billed Cuckoo breeding habitat and has proven to be an inspiration for restoration efforts.

Jenna has a wide range of wildlife biology experience; including work on Yellow-billed Cuckoos. She has taught Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo life history, survey methods, and habitat preferences as part of workshop presentations for the Southern Sierra Research Station. Additionally, she has worked on a variety of other projects studying Flammulated Owls, Least Terns, Brown-capped Rosy-finches, salamanders, wood frogs, and Mountain Yellow-legged Frogs.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR



Photograph by Liz Muraoka

Mary Freeman, LAAS Field Trip Leader &
Nick Freeman, LAAS Field Trip Chairperson.

FIELD TRIPS OFTEN REQUIRE MORE DRIVING AND TIME IN THE FIELD THAN DO OUR BIRD WALKS. No pets. No children under 12, without permission from leader please. When you sign-up by email, we will confirm your reservation and provide any supplemental trip information by reply email. If you do not have convenient email, you may mail us your reservation request and fee; include a SASE, so we may mail back your confirmation. Provide your: Name, Address, email address (if used), day-of-event phone number (cell), and an alternate phone number in case of emergency (home, work or friend.) For carpooling purposes for reserved field trips, your 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.

Mail reservation fees, separate checks per trip to:

Los Angeles Audubon - Field Trips
Attn: Susan Castor
PO Box 411301
Los Angeles CA 90041

Email reservations to: membership@laudubon.org
Phone: (323) 550-8533 Please leave voice message if no answer.

Please support LAAS field trips with your donations.

Share your photos and stories with other LAAS fans on Facebook and Twitter.

[facebook.com / LosAngelesAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/LosAngelesAudubon)
[twitter.com / LAAudubon](https://twitter.com/LAAudubon).

January

January 11 & 12 Weekend

Salton Sea

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

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 with phone, and send e-mail for more details. Meet at 7:00 a.m. Saturday at Cattle Call Park south of Brawley. Calipatria Inn (800)830-1113, Brawley Inn (760)344-1199, and Americas Best Value Inn in Westmorland (760)351-7100 are recommended. Arrive fed, bring lunches. Those who wish will eat together Saturday night. MAIL REQUEST TO LAAS with name, e-mail, \$10 fee, and cell phone # if possible. FRS radios & 'scopes helpful.

Friday, January 17

Point Mugu NAWS

\$5 DEPOSIT BUT NO FEE, LIMITED (12) SIGN-UP REQUIRED by DEC 27

Leader *Matthew Page* and base biologist *Martin Ruane* should find plenty of waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, gulls, scoters and other wintering birds to remark upon in this limited access tidal wetland area. During one visit we found a Masked Booby! Exit 101 fwy N onto Las Posas Road S in Ventura, to Hueneme Road west, to Wood Road south, across PCH, and meet in the main (#1) gate lot at 7:45 a.m. The attendance list must be submitted to the base, so sign up early; deadline December 27. Must be 16 years old, U.S. citizen, and no cameras or video recorders, please. Include in your reservation request letter, your citizenship status (U.S. only), phone number & email, full name with middle initial or NMN (to indicate no middle name), address with zip, Complete SSN, and a \$5 deposit check (to LAAS) to be refunded at the gate. Min 10 / Max 24.

Saturday, January 18

Antelope Valley

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Jim Moore*. We will be birding 110th Street East, Avenue A, Holiday Lake, Quail Lake, and spots in between. We will look for Mountain Plover, raptors, LeConte's Thrasher and other AV specialties. MEET AT the west end of the Avenue S Park-and-Ride just to the east of the Hwy 14 Avenue S offramp (next to Lake Palmdale). Leave from here about 7:30 a.m. If you wish

to carpool at Denny's off of Roxford in Sylmar, contact Susan at LAAS to share your contact info with others. Bring lunch and a full tank of gas for a full day of splendor in the alfalfa. No fee, no reservation. 'Scopes and FRS radios on 11-22 helpful.

Friday, January 24

Gull Study Workshop — LECTURE \$20 FULL WORKSHOP FEE, LIMITED (20) SIGN-UP REQUIRED

Speaker *Larry Allen* will discuss most gulls that have appeared in North America – most of which have made it to California. So, you've been avoiding gulls for the last decade (if that's possible), hoping that they would migrate out of the Southern California region. Well, that's not going to happen, but Larry has a kind touch when it comes to Gull I.D., and will rapidly get you up to speed with how to evaluate and identify our gulls. Larry will specifically address general aspects of gull topography, the confusing (but orderly) logic of molt sequences, and the finer aspects of identification to age and species. Slides, study skins and handouts will be used. NEW LOCATION is Larry's home in Rosemead. TAKE THE I-10 Fwy E (or W) to Del Mar Ave. S in Rosemead, turn E on Garvey Ave. and S on Denton Ave. to 2528 Denton on the E side. The lecture will be from 7 – about 9:30 p.m., with one break. 20 maximum. This is a Ralph Schreiber Grant fund-raiser. Mail \$20 fee, phone number, and email address to LAAS, which gets you the lecture & field trip, and emailer with directions. Field trip and lecture NOT offered separately.

Sunday, January 26

Gull Study Workshop — FIELD TRIP

Leader: *Larry Allen*. Put your new knowledge to use in the field, perhaps even identifying 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! 2 p.m. or so? Eat lunch there or split after that, so bring a lunch if you wish. LOCATION WILL BE DETERMINED AND COMMUNICATED DURING THE LECTURE. We will likely go to Doheny State Beach in Orange County, but perhaps elsewhere, depending on scouting. If we go to Doheny, it is a bit of a drive, but we have usually had very large numbers of gulls on our workshops here, including Glaucous twice and a Lesser Black-backed! Maximum of 20 participants. See above to reserve lecture & field trip. Doheny Beach parking fee of \$15 not included. Arrange carpooling from nearby lot during lecture?

February

February 1 & 2 Weekend

Carrizo Plain

FEE: \$20, LIMIT (16), SIGN UP REQUIRED

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet at 8 a.m. in Maricopa. Spectacular scenery. We will see Ferruginous Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Golden Eagles (maybe 20?), LeConte's Thrasher, Merlin and pronghorn; with likely Rough-legged Hawk, Mountain Plover and possible Sandhill Crane. WE WILL MEET in Maricopa, drive around the Plain all weekend, then leave the Plain heading north via Bitterwater Road on Sunday before we away to LA. If possible, please carpool or avail your vehicle to others when you reserve. Your phone number will be released for carpooling unless you request otherwise. Mail name, phone number, \$20 per person, and your email address for exact directions and further information. Net profits go to the Schreiber Grant Fund. Reserve your own room in Buttonwillow for Saturday night. Motel 6 is one option here. FRS radios & 'scopes helpful. Limit: 16.

Saturday, February 8

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. Peregrine Falcon seen about half of the time. 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.

Saturday, February 15

Sandhill Cranes at Pixley NWR & Kern NWR

NO FEE, SIGN-UP BY PHONE OR EMAIL

Leader: *Jim Moore*. Snow Geese, Burrowing Owls, raptors, Common Gallinules, up to 15 duck species, and up to 1,000 Sandhill Cranes in the alfalfa fields surrounding Pixley NWR. This long day trip into the San Joaquin Valley visits Pixley, Allensworth State Historic Park, and Kern NWR. The turkey farm nearby should have 1,000 Tricolored Blackbirds and a few Yellow-headed. Kern NWR has an auto tour route around shallow ponds and marshes that attract waterfowl, shorebirds and passerines. Meet at 5:30 a.m. at the McDonald's on Lake Hughes Road, off Interstate 5; or meet the group at 7:00 a.m. at the USA gas station on West Sierra Ave (J22), on the west side of Hwy 99. This is the second Earlimart

exit when driving northbound. There are several motels in Bakersfield area. Contact *Jim Moore* at jimmoore@socal.rr.com if you need more information. Free, but PLEASE SIGN-UP with LAAS by phone or email. Please provide your email address & phone numbers.

Sunday, February 23
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 Sora and Virginia rails, American Bittern, Eurasian Wigeon, dark morph Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, and one Lesser Sand-Plover. Emphasis will be on raptors and waterfowl for this date, with wintering shorebirds. 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. Meet here at 7:30 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 changes to trip status the day before.

Coming this Spring

Saturday, March 1
Bonelli Regional Park
NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

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

March 22 & 23 Weekend
Anza-Borrego State Park Birds,
Wildflowers, Insects, and More
\$20 LAAS MEMBER FEE / \$40 FOR NON-LAAS,
LIMIT (20) SIGN-UP REQUIRED

Leader *Kurt Leuschner* is a Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert in Palm Desert. He specializes in field ornithology, entomology, and desert natural history. On Saturday and Sunday we will car-caravan in and around Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, from Julian to the desert floor. This is a peak time for both wildflowers and the annual migration of Swainson's Hawks! High points over the years include: hundreds of Swainson's Hawks in migration, LeConte's Thrasher, Bald Eagles nesting, Wild Turkeys, Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, Desert Lilies, Long-eared Owl, Chuckwalla, Baja Collared Lizard, Great Purple Hairstreak and Silvery Blue. Every year is different. Scenery is spectacular! SUGGESTED ACCOMMODATIONS in Borrego Springs: Borrego Palm Canyon Campground in the State Park (reserve through www.reserveamerica.com), Hacienda del Sol motel (760)767-5442 is quite near our meeting point, Stanlund Motel (760)767-5501 and Palm Canyon Resort (800)242-0044 are just down the road. Anticipate a busy weekend and make your reservations months ahead of time. WE WILL MEET at 6:45 a.m. both days in the parking lot of the Borrego Desert Nature Center (address: 652 Palm Canyon Drive), just west of Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs. Finish up around lunchtime on Sunday. Net profits go to the Ralph Schreiber Grant Fund. Limit 20 people. Reserve by mailing \$20 fee for LAAS members / \$40 non-LAAS fee; provide your cell #, and email address to LAAS. Email attachment with more details will be sent later.

April 5 & 6 Weekend
Owens Valley Grouse Trip
\$55 FEE, LIMITED (20) SIGN-UP REQUIRED

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

BIRD WALKS CALENDAR

LAAS Bird walks are geared for the beginner/intermediate birder looking for an introduction to local birds and interested in reducing their carbon footprint by birding relatively close to home. All are welcome, but no pets or small children, please. 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.

For further bird walk information contact Eleanor Osgood at birdwalks@laaudubon.org or call her at (310) 839-5420.

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

TOPANGA STATE PARK BIRDWALK

1st Sunday of every month

Jan. 5 and Feb. 2

Time: 8:00–11:30 a.m.

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

Directions:

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

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

Chris: (310) 455-1270

UPPER FRANKLIN CANYON

SOOKY GOLDMAN NATURE CENTER

2600 Franklin Canyon Dr

Beverly Hills 90210

2nd Sunday of the month

Jan. 12 and Feb. 9

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 as well as chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees and California Thrasher. Winter birds have arrived; we will look for Ring-billed Duck, American Wigeon, White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Fox Sparrows among other possibilities.

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.

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

Jan. 19 and Feb. 16

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. TAKE THE MARINA FWY (90) to Culver Blvd and turn left for a mile. Turn right on Pacific Ave. The lot is on the right. Lot or street parking is usually not a problem.

Three hour walk. 'scopes helpful.

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

KENNETH HAHN STATE RECREATION AREA

4100 S. LA CIENEGA BLVD, LOS ANGELES 90056

3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

JAN. 18 AND FEB. 15

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. We will also look for wintering birds such as Merlin, Rufous-crowned, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows among others.

Directions:

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

WESTERN TANAGER

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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.

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



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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

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<i>Environmental Education</i>	Cindy Hardin	cindyhardin@laaudubon.org
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