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WESTERN Tanager

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©Mary Carmona Freeman

SUMMER 2015 AT BIG BEAR — BIRD AND OWLS | THE GOLDEN EAGLE IN DENALI NATIONAL PARK ALASKA



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

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

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The *Western Tanager* is the chapter newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, published online bi-monthly in PDF format.

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

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ON THE COVER
MARY FREEMAN AND HER LIFE WITH
BIRDING AND BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

Mary has been photographing since high school, but her interest in photographing birds began in the late 70s when she began using a 35mm Minolta film camera with a Sigma 300 lens. Mary's late brother gave her a digital camera, which she used mainly for landscape photography at the time. But as digital photography became more prevalent, Mary was introduced to digiscoping by her friend Tom Stephenson. With her Kowa spotting scope, this allowed Mary to shoot small subjects - from far away if necessary - for next to nothing! Mary's interest in photography hit a new plateau when she and Nick purchased their first Canon point & shoot camera. A couple of years later, they purchased an even better camera for their first bird trip to Peru in 2004, reading about its considerable capabilities on the plane ride down! Not only did Mary continue her love of landscape photography, digiscope photography was her constant companion when birding, with Nick - her other constant companion - carrying the scope!

Just three years ago, Tom introduced Mary to serious digital SLR photography, selling her his Canon DSLR D40 camera and her 300mm Canon autofocus lens came by way of St. Nick. A 1.4 teleconverter made a nice addition for small subjects. Nick was able to write off a number of presents (Christmas, birthday, Valentine's, Groundhog's Day) in the process. Mary claims she is not a photographer but thinks her photo collection may amount to 50,000 photos taken over the past 35 years. She has developed a pretty good handle on night photography, and has taken numerous outstanding photos of owls. The Northern Saw-whet Owl is one of her latest quests in owl photography, and is the featured photo for the latest LAAS newsletter. She feels the key to getting the "perfect



Fledgling Northern Saw-whet Owl, Big Bear, CA during the annual summer trip to Big Bear, CA—July 2015 | Photo by Mary Freeman

shot" of each owl species is to understand their individual personalities, in order to anticipate behavior. So far she's hoping to nab photos of Eastern Screech Owl, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, and Barred Owl to round out her U.S. owls, although there's always room for different and better shots! Though a challenge, Mary's enjoyment of owls is one of the birding highlights of her life.

Mary and her husband Nick, both Los Angeles County natives are long-time volunteers for LAAS. Mary led her first bird walk at age 19. They live in Glendale along with their 13-year old Pacific Parrotlet.

THE BIRDS OF LOS ANGELES NEED YOU.

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

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

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

INTERPRETING NATURE

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

Los Angeles Audubon's 2014–2015 Greenhouse Intern Abstracts

On May 9, 2015 students participating in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Internship Program presented their research to the public at a symposium hosted at Dorsey High School. This year, projects covered a wide range of topics from a three-year study of noise pollution to ecological awareness about spiders to native plant seed germination to poetry as a way to help students connect with nature. The information obtained through student research projects is available to California State Parks and the Baldwin Hills Conservancy staff, is used to inform habitat restoration at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, and serves as a foundation upon which new interns can build new projects. We are extremely proud of the work that interns did during the 2014-2015 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 2014-2015 Greenhouse Intern project abstracts...



Intern Diandra Dillon presents her research about noise pollution and students' connection to nature through sound. Diandra worked on her research for three consecutive school years. [photo credit Robert Jeffers]

Diandra Dillon (Project 1 of 2)

URBAN STUDENTS' CONNECTION WITH NATURE THROUGH SOUND

During the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, I examined several hypotheses about Dorsey High School (DHS) students' connection to nature through sound as evidenced in writing samples. I found that DHS students have some connection to nature despite living in the city. DHS students were able to identify by song more common birds than I hypothesized they would be able to, as crow, gull, and pigeon songs were easily identified by students. My hypothesis that students would use similar vocabulary to describe their nature experiences was supported: 42% of the students used vocabulary that fell within the Positive Mental category, indicating that they had positive opinions about nature. My hypothesis that students would have similar experiences in nature produced mixed results. Most student experiences fell within the categories of nature viewing, hiking/walking, camping, or beach activities (60.9%). However, 39.1% of the experiences described fell in the "other" category. Based on this study, I feel that if Dorsey students had more opportunities to spend time in nature, they would do so. DHS should consider reinstating the Humanities/Environmental Stewardship class to provide just such an opportunity.

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. Over the course of three school years 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 each year between (63.39-73.13 dB), likely due to constant vehicle traffic. Also as I predicted, I heard more birds at less-used areas, like the site behind the parking lot where there is more established vegetation, and over the course of three years I observed an increase in the amount of birds heard at all sites of the BHSO. My hypothesis for DHS was supported: the average sound levels at DHS (74.29-75.73 dB), which was louder than the loudest site at BHSO. 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.

Arely Mendia Perez

THE BALDWIN HILLS SCENIC OVERLOOK ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE PLANT GUIDE, PHASE 1

I started this project with the excitement of learning about plants and zombies and adding creative writing along with it. The zombie plant guide would awe and captivate young adults' interests in learning about the plants within the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook area. I selected 32 species of plants from the Baldwin Hills area and researched their uses in food, medicine, weapons, and shelter; of the 32 plants, 20 were native and 12 were non-native. In order to figure out if young adults would be interested in reading a plant guide with "zombie" on the title. I surveyed 126 students at Dorsey High School in February 2015. About 90% of the students indicated that they would be more interested in reading my plant guide, if I put "zombie" in the title. This proved my hypothesis correct. Phase 2 of this project will be completing my plant guide and publish it in digital and printed format.



Intern Arely Mendia Perez incorporated technology into her project about cultural uses for plant species found at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. She used an iPad to photo-document plant species and to organize digital notes for a plant guide she is creating. [photo credit Stacey Vigallon]

Margaret Ramirez

HOW MANY BIRDS AND BIRD SPECIES WILL USE A SOLAR-POWERED BIRDBATH AT THE BALDWIN HILL SCENIC OVERLOOK?

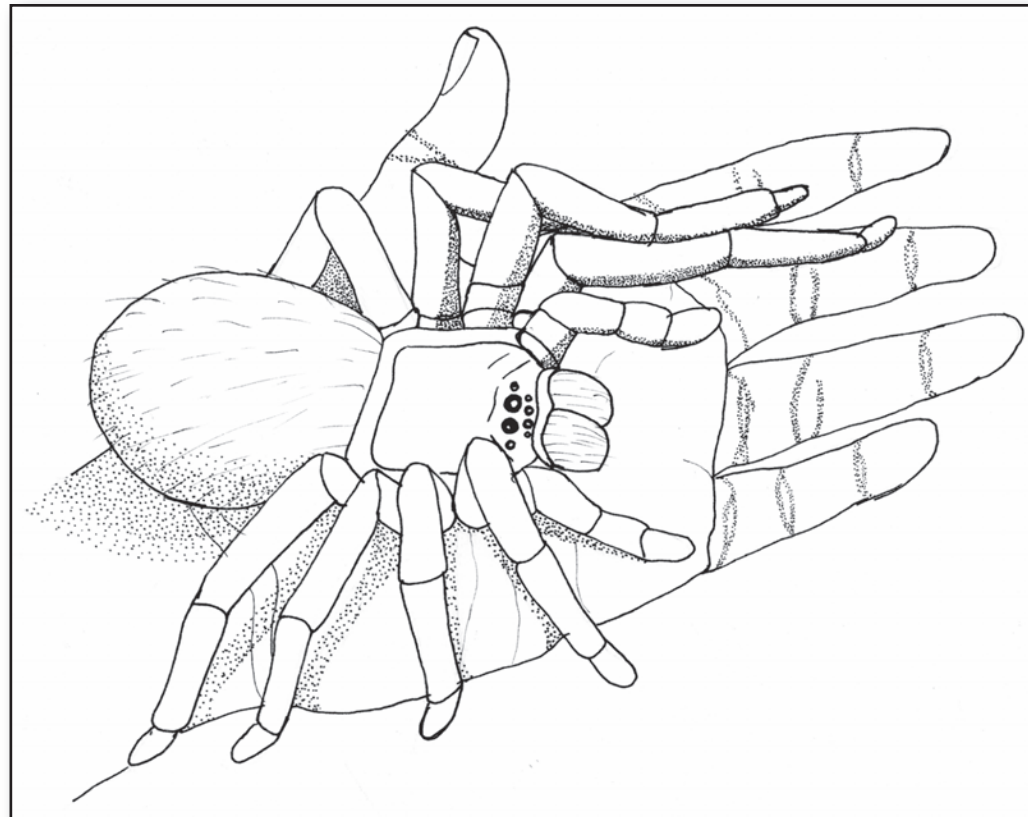
Using a design from San Diego Audubon, I built a solar powered birdbath in November 2013 and monitored it November 2013 - April 2014 and November 2014 - February 2015. Birdbaths provide an essential resource for birds in an urban setting during drought years and can be a way for people to connect with nature. My data showed that the birdbath was more effective at attracting birds when the water was running. Fewer birds used the birdbath during observation sessions than I predicted: an average of 2.72 bird visits when the water was running vs. 0.67 bird visits when water wasn't running. As predicted, at least three different species visited the birdbath during the course of my experiment. My experiment shows that birds are attracted to a birdbath with running water. During 2014-2015 school year, camera footage showed that birds used the bath more often when it was behind the greenhouse versus the hillside adjacent to the greenhouse, likely a factor of differences in vegetation cover between the two sites. 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.

Angela Mendia

SPIDER AWARENESS: WILL STUDENT'S ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE CHANGE?

I want people to overcome the fear of spiders by learning that spiders have an important role in our environment. I created a spider awareness presentation that included 13 original science illustrations I developed to help students be more focused and interested in my presentation. I gave my presentation to 50 high school students and 25 elementary students, having them take pre- and post-assessments to measure changes in their attitudes and knowledge about spiders as a result of my presentation.

As I predicted, elementary students showed a more positive attitude towards spiders than did high school students, but positive attitudes also increased among high school students. Students in both groups showed an increase in knowledge after my presentation as well. My research shows that it is possible for students to learn the importance of spiders in our environment, and that learning about them changes their attitudes about environmental stewardship towards spiders.



Intern Angela Mendia produced a series of science illustrations to use in her project, aiming to raise awareness about the ecological importance of spiders. [photo credit Stacey Vigallon]

Magaly Lopez (Project 1 of 2)

BETTER GERMINATION IN CALIFORNIA BLACK WALNUT

I studied germination of California black walnuts (*Juglans californica*) to learn under which conditions they germinate better to restore the natural environment the Baldwin Hills once had. I planted 98 walnuts that had been refrigerated for 4 months and 98 non-refrigerated walnuts in small pots, labeled individually. I hypothesized that the non-refrigerated walnuts would germinate at a faster rate and have greater success than the refrigerated walnut seeds. After planting the walnut seeds, I wrote any change observed. I recorded a germination event when a green stem or roots were visible. When the germinated walnuts grew roots I transplanted them into bigger pots. Of the transplanted walnuts, 39 were between 8 to 35cm tall by the end of my experiment. The 63rd day of my experiment, 20.4% of the refrigerated walnuts had germinated while only 18.4% of the non-refrigerated walnuts germinated. Day 119 was the last day of data collection, and by then 56% of the refrigerated walnuts germinated and 29% of the non-refrigerated walnuts had germinated. My project showed that walnut seeds exposed to colder temperatures are more likely to germinate.

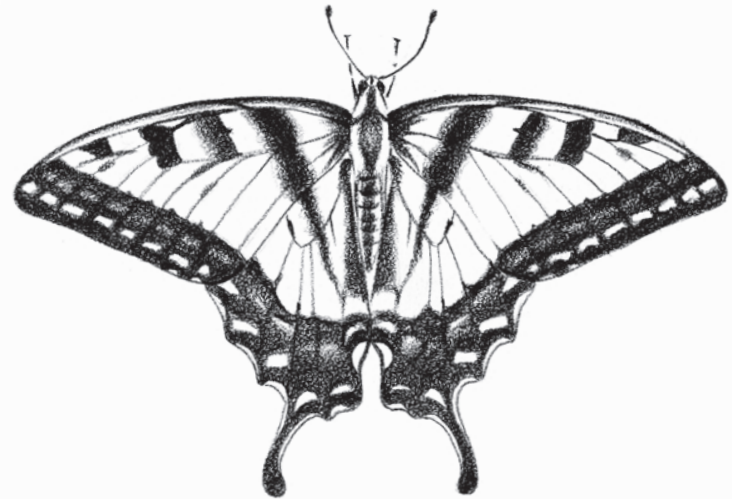
Magaly Lopez (Project 2 of 2)

OTHER USES FOR CALIFORNIA BLACK WALNUTS

I researched cultural uses of California black walnut (*Juglans californica*) to engage and intrigue people about native species of southern California. I created a game for elementary students using empty walnut hemispheric shell halves as dice, inspired by a traditional Chumash game. I also used the husk of California black walnuts to dye artificial and natural fibers, from both animals and plants. Bamboo viscose, an unbleached cotton bag, grey wool yarn, and silk were the natural fibers; the polyester ribbon was the artificial fiber. I hypothesized that the dye would fuse better to natural fiber than to artificial fiber. The husk was boiled with water, left to soak, and strained the next day. All fibers were soaked in water, placed in the dye bucket, and swirled within the bucket to evenly distribute the dye. Fibers were dyed on November 21, 2014 and removed and rinsed the next day. Another set of the same type of fibers were also placed in a hot dye bath. My results showed that the polyester ribbon, an artificial fiber, absorbed the dye the least, while silk and wool absorbed the dye best.



Intern Magaly Lopez prepares a dye made from native California black walnuts, which she then used on five different types of clothing fibers. [photo credit Stacey Vigallon]



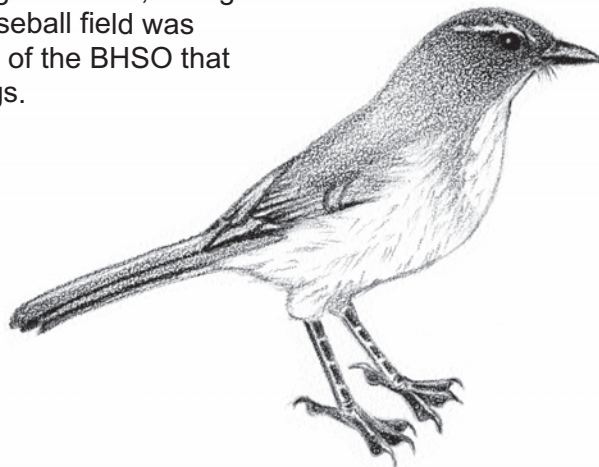
Robert Morales

LIGHT POLLUTION AND NATURE AT BALDWIN HILLS SCENIC OVERLOOK

From December 2014 to April 2015 I studied light pollution and wildlife at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (BHSO). Light pollution is an excessive and inappropriate artificial light, and damaging to human health and wildlife (International Dark-Sky Association 2014). I used infrared cameras to capture wildlife at night, and I surveyed for animal tracks in the park. I had technical difficulties with cameras and light level meters, but I still gathered useful information. We captured several species in different camera locations, including skunk, raccoon, possum, cat, White-Crowned Sparrow, Western Scrub Jay, and various insects. Using plaster of Paris to make casts, I collected dog, raccoon, cat, and skunk tracks. The camera also revealed human activity in areas we did not expect and showed the time that lights were on at the Culver City Park baseball field. On the evening of March 6th, 2015, we confirmed that there is light pollution at BHSO. As we expected, buildings in the park did have lights at night, such as the front of the visitor center and the maintenance building. However, the light from the Culver City Park baseball field was bright enough to affect areas of the BHSO that were far from lighted buildings.



In addition to studying park wildlife with infrared cameras, Intern Robert Morales also collected mammal track in the park using plaster of Paris casts. [photo credit Stacey Vigallon]



Intern Jose Rivera studied the effect that time spent in nature might have on student stress levels. [photo credit Stacey Vigallon]

Jose Rivera

STRESS AND NATURE AT THE GREENHOUSE PROGRAM AND DORSEY HIGH SCHOOL

Being outside in nature has shown to improve concentration and reduce stress. During the school year of 2014-2015, I collected stress data from two 10th grade English classes at Dorsey High School. Both classes had to take a pop quiz; one class took the test right after entering class, and the second class went for a walk outside then began the test. My first experiment had mixed results: the group taking the nature walk reported lower stress scores than the group that did not take a walk, but in both the walk and non-walk groups, there were large portions of the students who reported no change in stress level. My second hypothesis was proven correct with the data I collected. The interns reported to be less stressed at the Greenhouse than at home or at school. Next year, I suggest that whoever continues working on this project attempt to find a tool that will measure student stress without relying on students' own opinions of their stress levels.

Sarai Panameno

WILL GERMINATION AND SURVIVAL OF NATIVE SEEDS DIFFER BETWEEN GREENHOUSES AND A HILLSIDE AT THE BALDWIN HILLS SCENIC OVERLOOK?

In 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years I studied seed germination and seedling survival between greenhouses at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (BHSO) and Kenneth Hahn (KH) and the BHSO hillside. I recorded the germination and seedling survival for six native species (Toyon, Bush Sunflower, California buckwheat, White sage, Black sage, Isocoma menziessi). My data supported my native seeds hypothesis: those germinated in a greenhouse germinated and survived better than those on the hillside. Low germination of Salvia species across all treatments was consistent with interns Young's and Gonzales's previous projects and had high survival on the hillside in 2014-2015. Hillside seed germination and survival of Encelia and Eriogonum in 2013-2014 and Salvia species in 2014-2015 coincided with end of my experiment rain. Toyon had strong germination and survival rate in the BSHO greenhouse with potting soil but no germination using hillside soil. Lastly, I hypothesized that 2014-2015 germination would be higher because with new seeds as opposed to the 4-year old seeds used in 2013-2014. No notable increase in germination was recorded this year. I recommend Toyon be germinated in the BHSO greenhouse using potting soil, and species' like Encelia be grown directly on a hillside with regular water.

Chianti Warrior

POETRY IN NATURE:

ENGAGING URBAN STUDENTS IN WRITING HAIKU

My project is about Nature Writing, specifically Haiku poems. What drew my attention to pursuing such a project was the poetry component, and I was intrigued by how this project incorporated nature. In the beginning, I learned about the history and background of Haiku poetry because soon I would be teaching the content to two groups, elementary and high school students. First, I gave the students a summary of where Haiku poems originated and how to write one. Second, the students wrote their own Haiku poems and I answered any questions if needed,

with the help of Restoration Leaders. I collected 94 poems and I studied student word choice to determine whether the poems expressed positive, negative, or neutral feelings. Forty-eight percent of high school students expressed neutral feelings, which proved incorrect my hypothesis that high school students would express mainly negative feelings. My hypothesis that elementary students would express positive feelings was supported by my data – 50% of elementary school poems expressed positive feelings. In the future, I recommend adding a nature walk before students write their poems so that they will be able to gain a fresh experience or new view of engaging in their environment. 🐦



Intern Chianti Warrior presents nature poems written by elementary school students at the Conservation Art Show. These poems were produced as a part of her project exploring students' connection to nature through poetry. [photo credit Stacey Vigallon]



FIELD TRIP REPORT

The Summer of 2015 at Big Bear — Birds and Owls!

By Mary Carmona Freeman

On July 11, 2015, Nick and I led our annual summer mountain trip to the Big Bear vicinity. At an elevation of almost 7,000 feet, it was a welcome relief from the hot summer temperatures in the flatlands. We started off early in the morning at our meeting spot and continued up the dirt road on Mill Creek Road. The weather was great with some massive clouds in the distance. The area had received rain recently and over the recent past, which helped the habitat - and probably the birds - considerably. Louisa Serrano invited us to her forest cabin where her bird feeders attract the native montane birds: Dark-eyed Juncos, Mountain Chickadees, and Cassin's and Purple finches. We made a stop at Metcalf Meadow to see breeding Lincoln's Sparrow. They can be seen flying over the meadow and into the willows, singing from exposed willow branches. Red-breasted Sapsucker and Green-tailed Towhee are common here. We then moved up the road a bit to a spring where fragrant Lemon Lilies live. Here Golden-crowned Kinglet is sometimes seen in the treetops, but we were able to get great views of this handsome bird with its crown exposed at times.

We then made our way to the Bluff Lake "old cabin" trailhead at the northeast corner of the lake (not the Champion Lodgepole Pine trail), and had a male Williamson's Sapsucker in sight within five seconds of getting out of the cars - definitely a record for us! We wandered about the woods adjacent to this small parking lot, and scared up another male and a female, a pair of White-headed Woodpeckers, and a Hairy Woodpecker before settling down in a nearby amphitheater for lunch. We had a Townsend's Solitaire sallying about as we shared hummus and swapped stories. Walking west through the forest along the lake, we located Dusky Flycatcher for the day, duplicated a number of the birds we had already encoun-

tered, did some botanizing, and spent too much time figuring out a bunch of ratty eclipse-plumaged ducks (mostly Gadwall with some Mallard) on the lake.

Of note, there is heavy tree thinning going on for many square miles on this hill. I would say all of the way from the high ridge down to the highway in this area. The area around Bluff Lake was actually thinned about eight years ago, so the habitat has come around, and the area with the Williamson's Sapsuckers (further NE of the lake than the "old cabin lot") looks as if they left it alone.



Big Bear 2015, Photo by Mary Freeman

Nearly all participants were committed to heading down the hill as the afternoon wore on. Don White was enthusiastic to continue with the trip to its advertised end, so the three of us had dinner at an interesting spot in town, and headed back up Mill Creek Road to look and listen for owls. Nick and I have never figured out why we continue to strike out on Flammulated Owl in this area with seemingly perfect habitat, but the habitat up this road is changing rapidly. One area where we had a juvenile Northern Saw-whet Owl last year was right adjacent to some of the logging operation, and produced a possible brief, distant screech for two of us, but no owl would come in. One area further up the hill where we have had Saw-whet Owl in the past had been pretty well torn up, and had none on this night. The thickets that young birds tend to hide in had pretty well been demolished. Heading back down the hill, after trying a number of other “perfect looking” spots, we decided to try our original tentative spot again, and got a much better response! SST, SST, SST, the familiar insect-sounding call of a juvie Saw-whet. I call them the “chocolate teddy bear”. We still had to work a bit to get a visual, but we did all manage to see the bird, and even got a few photos and a video – something that has taken me many years to get the hang of! This encounter was the third year in the row of finding juvenile Saw-whets – what a record! In the six years we’ve added owl-ing to this trip, we’ve had five encounters but only one of an adult. We finally called an end to the field trip at midnight. After all, the trip was not advertised for July 12! I think we were all happy to call it a “day”. Look out for next year’s trip to Big Bear and the hope for more Northern Saw-whet Owl encounters! 🦉



*Juvenile Northern Saw-whet Owl, Big Bear
Photo by Mary Freeman*



Juvenile Northern Flicker on suet feeder. Photo by Mary Freeman



*Male Black-headed Grosbeak
Photo by Mary Freeman*



White-breasted Nuthatch Photo by Mary Freeman

Nature: A Powerful Childhood Influence

By Cindy Hardin, Director of Outdoor Education

I like to think of myself as a California Girl. However, like many of our state's residents, I too am a transplant from another place. In 1967, when I was five years old, our family re-located to Huntington Beach from St. Paul, Minnesota. My early childhood in the "Land of 10,000 Lakes" had a profound impact on my world view and relationship with wild places. In actuality, there are 11,842 lakes in Minnesota. Open space and rivers, ponds and freshwater wetlands are everywhere, and often abut or are contained within city limits, including the St. Paul/Minneapolis metropolitan area. Our home was on a half acre lot, and the back property line was delineated by a thick stand of woods. The centerpiece of these woods was a pond, and our cul-de-sac terminated at a lake. The house was a ten-minute drive from the heart of downtown St. Paul.

The neighborhood was a child's paradise. None of the homes were fenced, and we kids were welcome to roam through all of the neighbor's yards in the course of our daily activities and missions. Not surprisingly, two of our favored destinations were the pond and the lake, and the adults in our lives were frequently pestered to take us to these spots. My younger brother, Mike, and I, were always exploring the woods and its wonders. Summertime meant looking for blackberries and pollywogs. Fall saw great movements of yellow spotted salamanders, searching for warm places to burrow near our basement as they waited out the winter. As the days grew colder and shorter, the lake would ice over, and ice-skating would replace swimming. The Spring thaw would find us poking sticks into the muddy shore, trying to wake up the worms and other invertebrates that had spent the winter in a subterranean hunker down. The backyard bird feeder was kept full, and suet was put out in

the colder months for Cardinals, Blue Jays and Nuthatches and other year-round avian residents. My mother and I would spend many winter mornings at our kitchen table, watching these birds flock to the feeder, showing up brilliant red and blue against the snow. When the family would leave town for our annual January sojourns to warmer climes, my father would be sure to have a neighbor replenish the feeder and the hanging suet. "They come to depend upon this" my dad would say. "We want them to have an easy winter". By the time I was five I was able to identify twelve species of birds!

Our move to California was couched with tales of warm sunny winters and easy access to Disneyland. Although this was accurate, Mike and I were not prepared for the brand new subdivision where our parents had purchased a home. If there were any trees at all, they were puny Oleanders plunked down in the parking strips between sidewalk and street. The yards were considerably smaller, and strangest of all (to us) was the fact that each home was surrounded by fences on all sides. We were hemmed in. The spontaneous interaction we enjoyed in Minnesota as we found other neighborhood playmates in the connected backyards was no longer an option. Worse, there was no nearby natural attractant like a lake or a pond where other kids might be found. We learned to ring doorbells and ask if someone could come out

to play, or wait patiently for one of the neighbors with a pool to invite us over for an afternoon swim. My parents did make commendable efforts to get us outside. There were many days spent at the beach, trips to the tidepools in Laguna, afternoon surf-fishing expeditions with my father, and evening hibachi cook-outs at what is now Crystal Cove State Park. The catch was that all of these excursions required cooperation and transportation provided by adults, meaning that all nature time was not at our whim and was supervised.



May 1972, Cindy Rosene Hardin with brother Mike, Crystal Cove State Park

A few years later, freedom arrived in the form of two Schwinn Stingray bicycles. Equipped with two wheeled, independent transportation, my brother and I were now able to roam further afield, and on our own. To our delight, we could now get across the main road that led into our neighborhood and access a vast tract of nearby open land. At the time there were big plans for this parcel. Developers wanted to create a boat marina and build large homes on the site. Mike and I were oblivious to these plans; to us it was merely open fields and mesas, bordered on the west side with a marsh and then the ocean. This land was eventually to become the ecological reserve known as the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. We spent many afternoons exploring this place, looking for lizards, jumping our bikes off of hills and gazing at the great expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

A few years later the ocean became our favored hangout. My brother started surfing, and we could both be found at the beach whenever we had a free moment. If the waves were not suitable for surfing and bodysurfing, we were digging sandcrabs for bait to use for surf fishing. When the Santa Ana winds hit in the fall, we would hustle out of school and head directly to the beach to enjoy the warm afternoons and the offshore breezes. The outdoors and nature were an almost daily part of our routines.

The outdoors continues to be a constant factor in both our lives. My work for Los Angeles Audubon include overseeing two outdoor education programs, one at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, and the other at the Ballona Wetlands. I spend a lot of my free time swimming in the ocean or visiting

nature spots, including my old stomping grounds, the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. My brother, who now lives in San Francisco, continues to surf, fish from shore and from his kayak, free dive for abalone, and forage for wild mushrooms in the winter months. I have no doubt that our early and frequent forays into nature had a huge impact on our interest and understanding of the natural world.

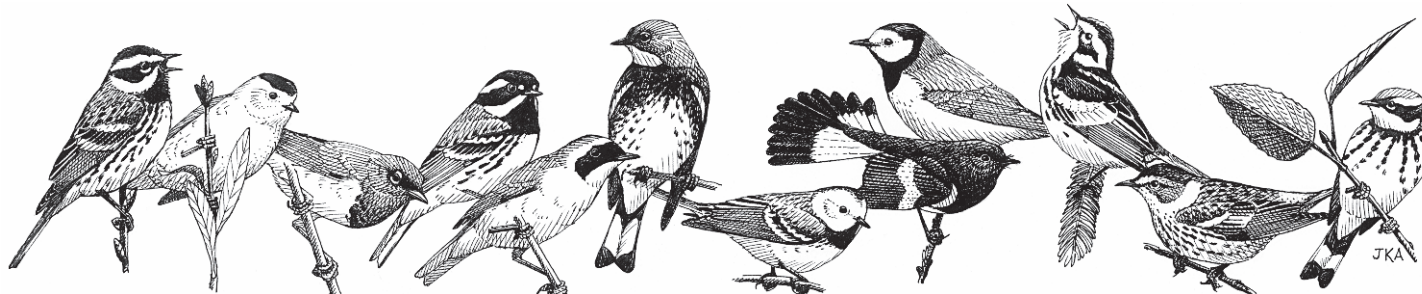
As you know, some of the children that live in the Los Angeles area are not as lucky as we were when it comes to access to outdoor space. Many live in the urban core, with little green space, and few nearby parks. Los Angeles Audubon's various education programs are an attempt to remedy this situation for these youngsters. Each year over 4,000 elementary and middle school students participate in field trips at Ballona and Kenneth Hahn. For some of these students, it is one of the few times they have the chance to experience nature first-hand. Each program is primarily staffed by volunteer docents and college interns. Docent training for Ballona will commence on September 10th, and we will begin training at Kenneth Hahn on October 2nd. We are always looking for new volunteers, and welcome anyone who has a love of nature and the willingness to share this enthusiasm with the

young people of Los Angeles. If you are interested in helping out, please contact me at cindyhardin@laudubon.org or give me a call at (310) 301-0050.

Oh, and that pond and lake in beautiful Minnesota that started it all: they are now federally protected wetlands! So wetlands have been a huge part of my entire life, including my current professional situation. Let's work together to inspire the future nature lovers right here in Los Angeles. 🐦



"My brother, Mike Rosene, enjoying the great outdoors, for 50 plus years. This Halibut was caught just off Crissy Field in San Francisco".



Birds of the Season — August 2015, By Jon Fisher

With the exception of shorebirds, June and July are comparatively slow months that lie between spring and fall migration, but this year they did emphasize quality over quantity. The period also brought some unusual weather. The remnants of tropical storm Dolores dropped an inch or more of rain on much of the southland in mid-July. It was a tiny fraction of what's needed, but still welcome.

The looming and potentially promising El Niño appears to be ever more certain. The experts predict it will be a major event, though that doesn't mean California will be enjoying a wet winter— although that could certainly happen. For birds and birders the above average ocean temperatures in the eastern Pacific will definitely mean one thing- unpredictability. Warmer water tends to decrease nutrients and thus available food and often causes birds to move in ways that are difficult to anticipate. Thus it could be that some unexpected birds turn up in LA County waters. The downside are the die-offs could also occur due to the lack of anything for seabirds to eat.

A couple of records— a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck in LA County and a Gray Thrasher in San Diego County— highlighted the question of origin. Fortunately the vast majority of vagrants leave little or no question as to their provenance, but for those that do, determining whether or not they are of natural occurrence is the cause of much debate.

Those kept as cage birds or in collections offer one challenge, while potentially ship-assisted land or sea birds offer another. The answers aren't always definitive, but the questions are taken quite seriously by birders.

Fortunately, aside from a few wildly off the charts strays, vagrancy in each species typically displays a pattern that helps in assessing problematic records. The condition of feathers and bare parts, coloration and behavior are also useful. More recently, most records also have the benefit of many good photos. The proliferation of digital cameras, from inexpensive point and shoot superzooms to DSLRs with high end telephoto lenses have been game changers, enabling ex-

perts from anywhere in the world to immediately review records and weigh in on the discussion. In most cases all this information leads to a consensus, and as with any such process, the conversation is often informative and engaging.

As usual, the lower LA River and Piute Ponds were the most productive locations for shorebirds from June and into August, but these weren't the only places to find them. While the above "hotspots" generally produce most of our vagrants, our more common species and an occasional rarity can be found at almost any wetland area, large or small.

Small numbers of passerines were also on the move and migrants, lingerers and wanderers made for a few interesting finds. Some regular birds were also found in odd places for this time of year. While migrants were obviously increasing in the lowlands by mid-August, numerically the show will really begin in September.

Quite a surprise was a **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** found at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas on July 2 (Rod Higbie). Though this species is one commonly kept in captivity, most evidence pointed to this bird being a naturally occurring vagrant. It had no leg bands and showed no signs of having been captive, nor was it suspiciously tame. It was also gone by the next day and this species known for its propensity to wander long distances.

Other unusual summer waterfowl included a **Lesser Scaup** at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys from July 19-29 (Mike Stensvold, Kate Rogowski), a **Canvasback** on the LA River in Long Beach through August 8 and a **Common Merganser** at the Piute Ponds from July 2-7 (Amy Williamson).

Summering **Common Loons** were at Quail Lake near Gorman from July 11-August 8 (John Garrett) and at the Piute Ponds from July 12-16 (Wayne Martin).

Rare in summer was a **Northern Fulmar** off San Clemente Island on July 16 (Justyn Stahl). Also unusual, but present in above average numbers in California waters this year, were up to ten **Buller's Shearwaters** off San Clemente Island between June 18 and 22 (Justyn Stahl, L. Ware).

A **Brown Booby** was a few miles south of Pt. Fermin on June 21 (Darren Dowell, Dessi Sieburth) and another was near San Clemente Island on June 23 (David Lumpkin).

The waters off Redondo Beach produced a **Magnificent Frigatebird** on June 21 (Eric

Combs) and a few others turned up elsewhere coastally and one was found at the Salton Sea during the period.

An apparent juvenile **American Bittern** along the San Gabriel River in South El Monte on June 26 may have been an indication of local breeding, or it may have simply lingered late or even summered locally (Jim Pike). The previously discovered **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** continued in the Ballona area through July 26, having moved from Del Rey Lagoon to the Ballona Freshwater Marsh.

Not particularly easy to find in the county were two **Cattle Egrets** at the Piute Ponds on July 27 (Jon Feenstra) and one at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys on August 5 (Alex Coffey).

The South Coast Botanic Garden in Rancho Palos Verdes produced a **Mississippi Kite** that was present from July 10-13 (Steve Wolfe). This species has been recorded in the county only about a half dozen times and remarkably half of those records are from this locale.

Very rare for us at any time— but even less expected in late spring— was an **American Golden-Plover** on Edwards AFB property from June 16-21 (Jon Feenstra). The majority of these birds occur in the state in September and October, with late spring and early summer records being virtually non-existent.

The earliest **Solitary Sandpipers** were one at Hansen Dam near Lake View Terrace on August 2 (Kimball Garrett) and one along the LA River in Cudahy on August 8 (Richard Barth).

The first **Semipalmated Sandpipers** of the fall were at Rosamond Lake on July 27 (Jon Feenstra) and along the lower LA River in Long Beach on July 27 (Andrew Lee) and in Vernon from August 1-2 (Richard Barth). Both of these birds lingered and may have involved more than one individual. Another was along the LA River in Maywood on August 9 (Tom Miko). A **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Piute Ponds on July 17 was also the first of the fall for that species (Jon Feenstra).

Two **Franklin's Gulls**, far less numerous in fall than in spring, were at the Lancaster Water Treatment Ponds on August 4 (Amy Williamson, David Hurst). The **Least Tern** continued nearby at the Piute Ponds through June 28, having been there since May 24.

A **Common Ground-Dove** at the Linden H. Chandler Preserve on the Palos Verdes Peninsula continued through July 22 and a **White-winged Dove** was in Quartz Hill in the south Antelope Valley from July 15-16 (Beverly Shoemaker).

Yellow-billed Cuckoos are rarely detected in the county, but one was found at the Piute Ponds on July 1 where it remained for six days (Jon Feenstra). It's perhaps unlikely but possible this species still breeds in isolated patches of suitable habitat within the county. They used to do so in abundance, along with a host of other riparian obligates before suitable habitat was nearly eliminated by development.

Three **Black Swifts** were above Claremont Wilderness Park on July 25 (Luke Tiller). They have been reliable in this area recently as they presumably return to nearby but yet undiscovered nest sites late in the day.

A **Lesser Nighthawk** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on July 5–19 has wandered unexpectedly far from breeding areas before expected to do so (Tracy Drake).

An adult and two immature **Vermilion Flycatchers**—scarce but regular breeders on the desert—were in the west Antelope Valley near Neenach from August 4–8 (Sarah Thomas, Adam Searcy). On the coastal slope, five of them, including three young birds that were the result of local nesting, continued at Oakdale Memorial Park in Glendora through August 9 (Rick Fisher).

Rather intriguing were single **Pygmy Nuthatches** at Pt. Dume on July 18 (John Garrett) and at the Piute Ponds on July 27 (Jon Feenstra). Perhaps this portends a dispersal away from expected areas this fall, as this species is entirely absent from the lowlands in most years. On the other hand no additional reports of them the lowlands followed.

A **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena on July 1 was notable (Tom Wurster). Though this species breeds just a relatively short distance away in the higher San Gabriels, a migrant in the lowlands at this date was a surprise.

The Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys produced a **White-crowned Sparrow** on the very unusual dates of August 5–7 (Alex Coffey). This is a full six weeks before the first fall birds are due to arrive. The fact that it was missing a tail and thus may have had other physical issues could have

prevented it from departing. Yet if so, one wonders how it remained undetected for so long in this well birded area.

Quite interesting was the discovery of both a male and female **Hepatic Tanager** along Blue Ridge Road near Wrightwood on June 20 (Jim Pike). Small numbers of this montane breeder occur in the eastern San Bernardino Mountains in similar habitat, thus breeding in the San Gabriels may be a possibility.

The genus *Piranga* was also represented by a migrant **Summer Tanager** at Switzer's Picnic Area in the San Gabriel Mountains on August 11 (Amy Williamson).

Spring **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** included a continuing bird near Playa Vista through June 20, one in Palos Verdes Estates on June 18 (Bob Shanman) and another in Rolling Hills Estates on June 20 (Randy Hayward). **Indigo Buntings** were in Big Tujunga Wash on July 12 (Jon Feenstra) and at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena from July 31–August 6 (Steven Goodman).

Coastal **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were in the Ballona area on June 21 (Bob Shanman) and again on August 1 (Walter Lamb, Bhaskar Krishnamachari).

Late July is an odd date for an **Orchard Oriole**, even more so for the pair that turned up on San Clemente Island on July 24 (Ben Sandstrom). One presumes at this date these are fall migrants but this is at least several weeks before they are expected.

Now as we're in the middle of fall migration, almost anything is possible. San Clemente Island has hosted some spectacular Asian vagrants over the years, such as Bluethroat, Red-flanked Bluetail and Stonechat. Any of these have the potential to turn up on the mainland. Dusky Warbler has been recorded near California City only a few miles outside the county and a Northern Wheatear was found at Malibu Lagoon just four years ago. These possibilities inevitably capture the imagination of birders. Rare shorebirds, wayward songbirds from eastern North America and "reverse" migrants from northern Mexico are also in the mix.

As far as birding goes, LA County offers excellent variety at any time of year and autumn is second to none. There will be a lot going on in the bird world over the next few months and many places worth visiting. Watching it all unfold is but one fascinating part of the enjoyment of birding. 🐦

Saturday, December 19

Lancaster Christmas Bird Count

Contact compilers Nick and Mary Freeman: (818) 636-4361 or mnfreeman@earthlink.net to be placed on a team or be given an area.

Sunday, December 20

Malibu Christmas Bird Count

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

Sunday, January 3

Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count

Contact compiler Daniel Cooper at: dan_cooper_90042@yahoo.com to be matched up with a team or a survey area.

YOUNG AUTHORS

The Golden Eagle in Denali National Park, Alaska

An Interview with Carol McIntyre about Golden Eagles and the Threats They Face

By Dessi Sieburth

I went on a birding trip to Alaska from July 4th to July 14th, 2015. I wanted to see species of birds which are special to Alaska and I also wanted to learn more about the Golden Eagle in Denali National Park. Golden Eagles are large and powerful raptors. Denali National Park is special because it is home to the highest density of nesting Golden Eagles in North America. Denali NP and Preserve is located in interior Alaska. It has the highest mountain in North America and it has a rich diversity of bird habitats. The habitat ranges from low meadows to alpine fields. The landscape was shaped by glaciers and erosion. Much of the mountainous regions of the Alaska Range is above the tree line and has vast open landscapes. This is perfect habitat for the Golden Eagles as they hunt in short vegetation with little tree cover, so they can see their prey easily. Golden Eagles mainly nest on cliffs and by April the female lays 1-3 eggs. Most young hatch by June and leave the nest after 70 days. Carol McIntyre is a national park service biologist in Denali and studies the reproductive success of the Golden Eagles. She uses a small helicopter to study the eagles, as getting to the nest sites is difficult. I met with Carol McIntyre and her colleague, Scott Weidensaul, to talk about Golden Eagles and threats that they face. I also was interested in what we can do to help the eagles.



A Golden Eagle soars over the mountains of Denali National Park | Photo by Dessi Sieburth

Following is the interview with Carol McIntyre:

Q: Are Golden Eagles increasing, declining, or stable in Denali NP?

A: We don't know in Denali National Park, but reproductive success is declining in the rest of the world.

Q: What is the main source of food for the Golden Eagle in Denali NP?

A: Food includes Snowshoe Hare, Willow Ptarmigan, and Arctic Ground Squirrel

Q: What are the major threats to Golden Eagles in Denali?

A: There aren't many threats to the eagles in Denali itself because the habitat is protected, but most Golden Eagles are migratory and they face threats outside of Denali. Those threats include habitat loss, wind turbines and electrical power lines.

Q: What can we do to help the Golden Eagle?

A: We can spread awareness of the Golden Eagle. We need to keep educating the public about these beautiful birds that people are willing to protect them and their habitat.

Q: What are the effects of climate change on the Golden Eagle?

A: Climate change could change vegetation patterns which may affect the Golden eagles prey. The tree line is moving up in the mountains due to warmer temperatures. This could have an impact on the Golden Eagles. They need open spaces to hunt as they rely on their eyesight to find food.

Q: Are you going to continue your Golden Eagle studies?

A: I will continue to study nesting sites, reproductive success, identifying more threats they face.

Thanks to Pasadena Audubon Society and Los Angeles Audubon Society for supporting my trip to Alaska. 🐦

Dessi Sieburth, a 12 year-old birder and conservationist, lives in Montrose, California with his parents. He has been birding and drawing birds since he was eight-years old. This year, Dessi participated in the ABA Young Birder of the Year contest. He also received a scholarship to attend the Western Field Ornithology conference in San Diego, California this October. He regularly participates in field trips with Los Angeles Audubon. At Dessi's young age, his life list is currently at 519 species!



A Golden Eagle soars over the mountains of Denali National Park | Photo by Kent Miller



The Willow Ptarmigan is one of the Golden Eagle's main source of food
Photo by Dessi Sieburth



Field Trip Listings

Nick Freeman, Field Trip Chair

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

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

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

CARPOOLING

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

"FEE REQUIRED" RESERVATIONS

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

Mail to:

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

'NO FEE' RESERVATIONS / MORE INFORMATION

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

Please leave voice message if no answer.

Sunday, September 13

South Bay Parks

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *David Moody* is a resident and frequent birder in the South Bay area, and knows where to find the birds at all of the local parks. In addition to Madrona Marsh, we may visit Wilderness Park, Alondra Park, or wherever the late migrants / rarities lead us. Fall songbird migration should still be strong, and we will be getting into the window for eastern rarities. Meet at Madrona Marsh Preserve headquarters (3201 Plaza Del Amo, Torrance, CA 90503) parking lot at 8:00 a.m., and bird until 1:00 p.m. or later, if enthusiasm persists. To get here, take the 405 Fwy to the Artesia Blvd W offramp in Torrance, turning S quickly onto Prairie Ave., which eventually becomes Madrona Ave. Take Plaza Del Amo E to the lot on the left. We will carpool here. Bring lunch if you wish to stay beyond a half day.

September 19-20

Mojave Desert Weekend

SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE, NO MAX

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

Sunday, September 27

Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Wetlands

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. Huntington Central Park is excellent for migrating songbirds. This large park sometimes holds unexpected vagrants during this part of migration. 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 8:00 a.m. in the HCP parking lot on the south side of Slater Ave. just east of Golden West St. in Huntington Beach.

Saturday, October 3

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 10

Oxnard Plain

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

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

Saturday, October 17

Condors at Bitter Creek NWR

DONATION SUGGESTED,
SIGN-UP REQUIRED, LIMIT 20

(Fully booked, wait list begun)

Joseph Brandt, California Condor biologist, will be leading this trip to view the reintroduction program of the California Condor. We should get good looks at California Condors, possibly Golden Eagles, and a number of other species, from Cerro Noroeste Rd. and the hillside opposite the hacking pen. Joseph will give us an overview of the program, show us how radio telemetry and GPS tracking units are helping to save the bird, and talk about the future of the species in California. We will be west of Mt. Pinos, not too far from Maricopa. All new releases of condors into the wild SoCal population occur here, and all 43 condors in our wild local population visit this area. Take Interstate 5 north to Frazier Park exit. At the stop sign make a left and go under I-5. Meet in the parking lot of the "Flying J" gas station at 8:30 a.m. Finish at 3 or 4:00 p.m. Reserve your place with LAAS by phone, stating cell phone # and e-mail address, whether you have a high clearance vehicle that can accommodate at least 4 people total (priority) or you plan to ride with someone else. Bring drinks, lunch, and FRS radio and a scope if you have them. No fee, but donations accepted to the Condor Survival Fund.

Sunday, October 25

Newport Back Bay

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

Leader: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet on the wooden boardwalk along the west side of the bay accessible from the end of University Drive (small street) at 7:30 a.m. for the 6.4' high tide (one of the higher tides of the season), and a full day of birding in the area. High tide at the mouth is 8:04 a.m., and may not peak in the back bay until after 8:25 a.m., but we want to be in position when birds flush to higher ground. Ridgway's Rail (previously some of the Clapper Rails), Sora, American Bittern, Eurasian Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal and California Gnatcatcher are expected. Nelson's Sparrow and Short-eared Owl (both rare) will also be target birds. Take the 405 Fwy S to the 73 Toll Road (free this far) to the Campus Dr. exit, which becomes Bristol St. Turn right on Irvine Ave., drive 1.4 miles, then turn left on a small street called University Drive. Park at the end, walk down the hill, over the bridge, and to the end of the boardwalk. Bring lunch. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

Saturday, November 28

San Jacinto NWR and Lakeview Area

NO SIGN-UP, NO FEE

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

Saturday, November 14


Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge

LIMITED (20) SIGN-UP REQUIRED (by Nov. 6th),
NO FEE

Refuge volunteer *John Fitch*, our own *Nick Freeman* and a refuge manager will drive up to 20 lucky participants around this prime limited-access wetland / agricultural site where throngs of wintering shorebirds and numerous raptors are seen. Nelson's (Sharp-tailed) Sparrow and Pacific Golden-Plover are usually sighted.

TO SIGN-UP: Call (323) 876-0202 or email membership@laaudubon.org to sign-up. The refuge is part of the Naval Weapons Station. Participants must provide: first, middle (or "NMI" if no middle name) & last names, DOB, e-mail address, home phone number, and cell phone number. *Sign-up by Nov. 6th and await email confirmation.*

Only LAAS-confirmed individuals of U.S. citizenship with photo ID allowed on base. No weapons. Camera OK.

MEET AT the main public lot at 800 Seal Beach Blvd. at 8:00 a.m. for a high tide of about 5.7 feet around 9:38 a.m., and bird until noon. Take Seal Beach Blvd. S from the 405 Fwy, pass Westminster Blvd., turn left onto the base at the Forrestal Lane light, and left again into the lot. Spotting scopes and FRS radios helpful. 

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT TEAM SCHEDULES

Details on page 15

LANCASTER — DEC. 19

MALIBU — DEC. 20

LOS ANGELES — JAN. 3

Bird Walk Listings

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

Open Wetlands at Ballona

1st Saturday of every month
September 5th & October 3rd
Time: 9:00–Noon

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

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

Topanga State Park Birdwalk

1st Sunday of every month
September 6th & October 4th
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)
September 19th & October 17th
Time: 8:00–noon

Leader: *Dick Barth*. 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 Nuttall’s Woodpecker, Black and Say’s Phoebes, Cassin Kingbirds, California and Spotted Towhee, Red-tailed Hawk, and Cooper’s Hawk engaging in nesting activities. Besides looking for spring migrants, we will search for summer visitors that nest in the park such as: Bullock’s and Hooded Orioles, Barn Swallow, Western Kingbird and Western Bluebird.

Directions: The park entrance is off of La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the

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

CARPPOOLING IS ENCOURAGED!

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

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.**

Upper Franklin Canyon Sooky Goldman Nature Center

2nd Sunday of the month
September 13th & October 11th
Time: 8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood*. Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We are likely to see the resident Wood Ducks and as well chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees and California Thrasher. We will also look for south bound migrants such as warblers, vireos, and flycatchers.

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 Dr. to Coldwater Canyon Dr. to Mulholland Dr. Veer left on Mulholland Dr. At the next traffic signal, make a left turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. continue to first parking lot on the left. MEET in the main parking lot for the SOOKY GOLDMAN NATURE CENTER, 2600 FRANKLIN CANYON DR, BEVERLY HILLS 90210. **Binoculars provided.**

Ballona Wetlands Bird Walk

3rd Sunday of the month
(Except December)
September 20th & October 18th
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

Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2015

Birding Alaska: Young Birder of the Year 2015, Dessi Sieburth, presents his Alaska Birding trip 2015



Young birder, Dessi Sieburth, who is 12 years old, has already birded in many States. This July [2015] he went to Alaska and this trip was for sure a highlight among his birding trips in the U.S. Dessi will present some photos and relate interesting facts learned about the birds he saw in Alaska. His goal was to see many specialty birds of Alaska such as: Gyrfalcon, Northern Hawk Owl and Ptarmigan. He started out his birding trip to Denali National park where he also got a chance to interview Carol McIntyre, a biologist who studies the reproductive success of Golden Eagles. Then, he travelled to Seward to find seabirds at Resurrection Bay. Black-legged Kittiwakes, Marbled Murrelet, Puffins, and Harlequin ducks were some highlights on his boat trip. After that, Dessi went to the Homer spit where he saw the Rock Sandpiper and more pelagic birds such as the Kittlitz's Murrelet. Dessi ended up with over 90 species including 23 lifers. At Dessi's young age, his life list is currently at 519 species! This year Dessi will participate in 2016 ABA young birder photography contest. Some of the photos taken during the Alaska trip will be part of the contest. Good Luck Dessi!

Dessi Sieburth, Alaska July 2015

LOCATION: 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.