

Los Angeles Audubon Society | laudubon.org

WESTERN TANAGER

March-April 2018 | Volume 84, Number 4



Owens River, April 2017 | Photo by Mary Freeman



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

BOARD OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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

COMMITTEES

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

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

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

STAFF

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

The Western Tanager is the chapter newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, published online bi-monthly in PDF format. Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec, Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, July/Aug. Articles, letters drawings and photographs concerning conservation, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for submission. Please send copy as Microsoft Word, RTF documents, or plain text files to westerntananger@laaudubon.org. Photos should be high resolution (300ppi) .jpg or .tif files. **Submissions are due the 1st of the month to be included in the following issue.** All rights reserved. All photographs are used by permission and are copyrighted material of the credited photographers.

Editor	Linda Oberholtzer	westerntananger@laaudubon.org
Design & Layout	Susan Castor	susancastor@laaudubon.org
Scientific Advisor	Kimball Garrett	kgarrett@nhm.org

© 2018 Los Angeles Audubon Society

CONTENTS

- 3 California Condor
- 6 Birding in Belize
- 9 Birds of the Season
- 13 Beautiful Ballona: What's Next
- 15 In Memory of Howard King
- 16 Field Trip Listings
- 19 Bird Walk Listings
- 21 Monthly Programs

On The Cover

Owens River, April 2017 | Photo by Mary Freeman



About the Photo

Photo taken with Sony Point & Shoot, model Cyber-shot DSC RX-100. The ISO was 400 on Program option under Picture Effect using the Retro setting. I like this camera as it offers different settings and photo options. I changed from film to 100% digital about 15 years ago after Tom Stephenson and Eddie Thomas gave a talk on digiscoping. Owens Valley and the Eastern Sierra are the perfect playground for stunning photos. Clouds almost always add flavors of texture, complexity, action and intensity to photos.

I've been a member of LAAS since I was 17. I grew up with the chapter and continue to be involved with leading bird trips that my husband (and LAAS Field Trip Chair) Nick organizes. Apart from scenic shots, I also love illustrating and photographing birds.

THE BIRDS OF LOS ANGELES NEED YOU.

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

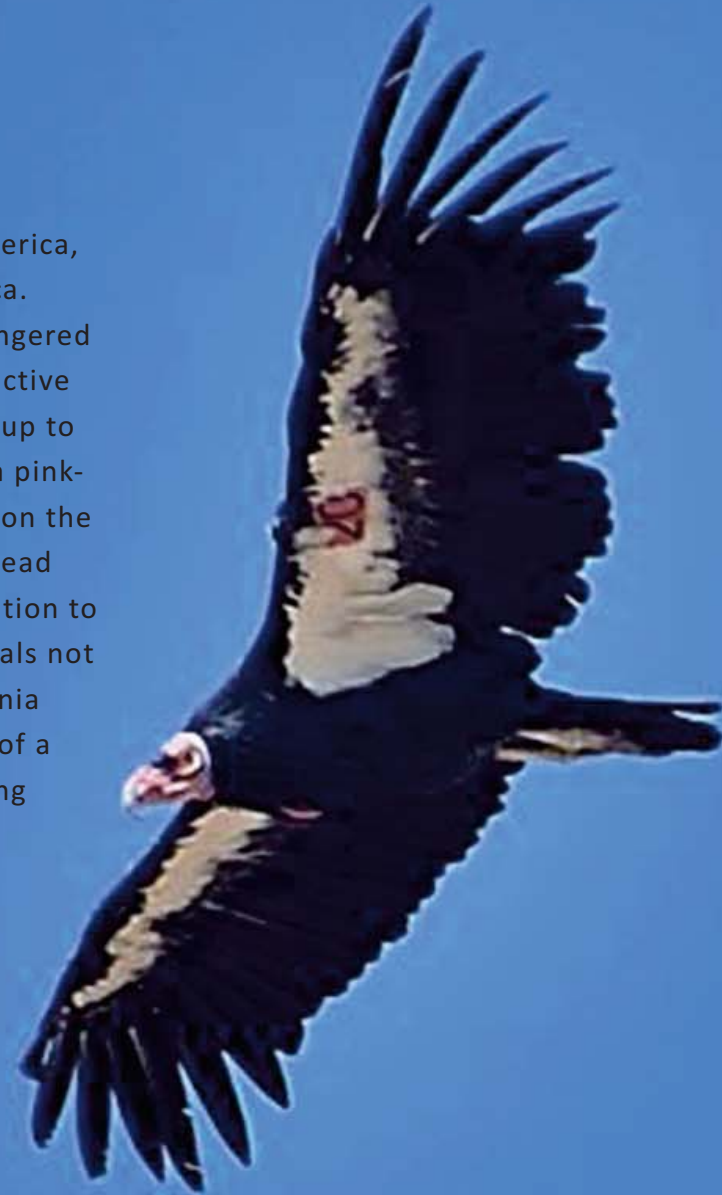
- RECREATION | • EDUCATION | • CONSERVATION | • RESTORATION

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

THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR

By Dessi Sieburth

The California Condor, the largest land bird in North America, once filled the skies throughout Western North America. Today, however, this magnificent bird is critically endangered and has a very limited range. The California Condor is a distinctive bird with a huge wingspan of up to 9.5 feet, allowing it to fly up to 150 miles in a day. The adults are almost entirely black with a pinkish, featherless head. They also have a large white “triangle” on the leading edge of the wing. Juveniles have a dark, featherless head with a less distinct “triangle” on the wing. The rate of maturation to adult-like plumage varies among condors, with some individuals not attaining adult plumage until they are eight years old. California Condors can weigh up to 20 pounds, nearly twice the weight of a Bald Eagle. They are generally silent, but they can make hissing noises when defending a nest site.

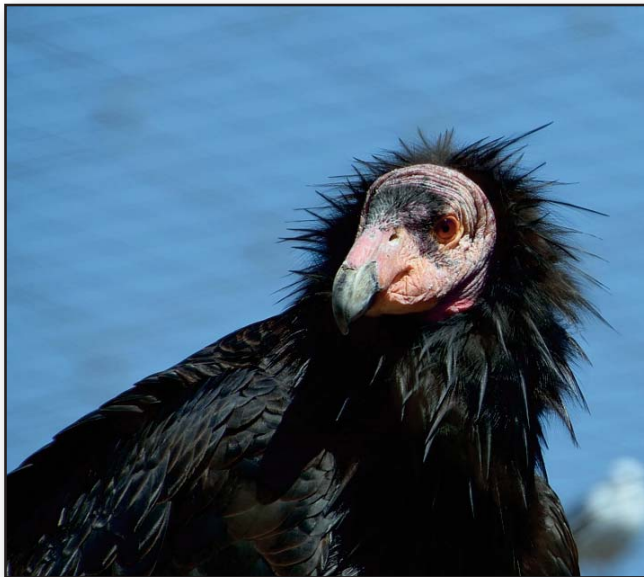


Like other vultures, California Condors are scavengers, primarily feeding on the dead carcasses of mammals. They primarily eat larger mammals, such as horses, cows, and deer, but have been known to feed on California Ground Squirrels and skunks. Historically, when condors were common in coastal areas, they fed on the washed-up carcasses of whales and sea lions. Today, the largest percentage of a condor's diet is cattle.

California Condors reproduce at a very slow rate. The adults only lay one egg in a single brood, and they typically breed only every other year. Condors need ledges or small caves in cliff faces to nest. The eggs are a dirty white and unmarked. Females incubate the eggs for about 60 days, and the chicks typically fledge when they are 5.5 months old. The fledglings are still dependent on their parents for another 6 months.

Historically, condors were found throughout western North America, from British Columbia to Baja California. The last record in Washington was in 1897, and the last record in Oregon was in 1904. Condors were extirpated from Baja California by 1930. In 1987, the condor population was down to only 27 individuals. Lead poisoning, hunting, and DDT were the biggest factors in the decline of the condor population. They were shot for sport and for museum exhibits. In the mid-1940s, farmers began to use the pesticide DDT, which damaged condor's egg shells, causing the eggs to break before the young were ready to hatch. A program to save the California Condor from extinction was started by biologists who captured all of the remaining condors and sent them to breeding facilities in the Los Angeles and San Diego Zoos. The captive breeding program was very successful, and in 1994, two California Condors born in captivity were released into the wild. This success was due to the fact that condors are relatively easy to breed in captivity. The first breeding in the wild was documented in 2006 at Big Sur. As of 2016, there were 466 California Condors. The wild population was at 276 birds with 166 of them in California. The captive population was at 190 birds.

Today, the range of the California Condor is still very limited. In California, they range south to Ventura County and north to Pinnacles National Park in San Benito. There are also isolated populations that have been reintroduced to the Grand Canyon, Arizona, Zion National Park, Utah, and Sierra de San Pedro Martir in northern Baja California. Condors are no longer seen regularly in Los Angeles County but can be encountered as vagrants in the northwestern portion of the



Adult California Condor at the Santa Barbara Zoo

county near Pyramid and Quail Lake. The closest locations for the public to observe Condors are at the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge sign off Hudson Ranch Road in Kern County, and Lake Piru in Ventura County.

Historically, California Condors were regular breeders in Los Angeles County. In 1908, Condors were reported breeding in Eaton Canyon above Altadena. In 1983, biologists found condor egg shell fragments of the 1908 Eaton Canyon nest. Here is an excerpt from an article from the 1992 Newsletter of the Eaton Canyon Nature Center:

“In 1908 the last nesting California Condors in the San Gabriel Mountains were in the rugged parts of upper Eaton Canyon. In June 1983, Mickey Long, Pat Sullivan and members of the Condor Recovery Team hiked to the site and, with photographs, located the nest cavity across the canyon. Team members climbed down to the nest cavity and carefully collected eggshell fragments from the cavity floor which they later confirmed were from condors. Among California Condor eggshells from central and southern California, the highest levels of lead were found in the oldest sample – fragments from the historic condor nest in rugged Eaton Canyon in the San Gabriel Mountains – more than 70 years after the nest cavity was last used.”

California Condors were also breeding in Beartrap Canyon near Pyramid Lake. Nesting at Trough Canyon in the Simi Valley continued through the 1970s, constituting the last known breeding record in the county.

Despite a large increase in the condor population, the species is far from safe from extinction. These condors still face many threats. Today, the primary threat to condors is lead poisoning. Since condors are scavengers, they often eat dead animals shot by hunters. If the condors eat a carcass shot with a lead bullet, they will get lead poisoning. As the lead accumulates in their system, they will get sick and die. Lead is a neurotoxin and affects the condor's ability to care for themselves and their young. Another major threat to condors is microtrash. Microtrash refers to small pieces of trash such as bottle-caps, nails, and other small metal, glass, and plastic pieces. Condors often mistake microtrash for pieces of bone, which they feed to their young for calcium. The chicks are unable to digest microtrash, and it accumulates in their stomachs, often leading to death. In 2013, a bill aimed at protecting the California Condor,



Adult California Condor at Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge

AB 711, was passed by governor Jerry Brown, banning hunting with lead ammunition in California. This bill will go into effect in 2019.

There are several things that we can do to help these endangered birds. We can help them by adopting “No Trace” ethics, not leaving any trash behind when visiting wildlife habitat. We can also help by joining “Friends of California Condors Wild and Free,” who organize microtrash cleanups, outreach, and fundraising events. For more information, email fccwf@friendsofcondors.org. We can also help condors by encouraging hunters to use alternatives to lead ammunition, such as copper ammunition. For more information on lead-free hunting go to

<http://www.huntingwithnonlead.org/>. Condor Watch is a citizen science project where you can identify the tags on the wings of condors and observe condor feeding behavior to spot signs of possible lead poisoning (<https://www.condorwatch.org/>). You can also record your condor observations and submit them into eBird (www.ebird.org). Finally, condors can be very curious, so it is important avoid feeding or approaching condors, as they need to stay wild and not become habituated to humans.


If you would like to learn more about how to help birds, you can visit my website: Protecting our Birds (<http://protectingourbirds.my-free.website>). All photos taken by Dessi Sieburth. Thanks to Susan Gilliland and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for providing me with opportunities to learn about California Condors.

References:

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

Arnold, C. (1993). *On the Brink of Extinction – the California Condor*, San Diego Harcourt Brace & Company

Finley, W. L. (1906). Life History of the California Condor. I. Finding a condor’s nest, *Condor* 8:135–142.

Snyder, N. F. R. and J. Schmitt (2002). California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*). In Poole, A. and F. Gill, editors. No. 610. *The birds of North America*. The Birds of North America, Inc.. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. 



California Condor at Bitter Creek National Wildlife Area

BIRDING IN BELIZE: A GUIDE SHARES HIS TOP FIVE SITES

By Lisa Freeman

Want to see toucans, trogons and tinamous all in one day? Then pack your bags and binoculars and head to Belize. This central American country, formerly known as British Honduras, is a bird lover's paradise. Belize is home to more than 600 species of birds, including permanent and migrant birds, as well as rare or accidental birds, according to a March 2015 report from *Bird Checklists of the World*. From Scarlet Macaws to Harpy Eagles to Jabiru Storks, the variety of birds is astonishing thanks to an array of habitats that include tropical rainforests, savannahs, wetlands, coastal plains and island cays.

Two additional characteristics that make Belize an even more exceptional spot for birders are its conservation efforts, and its size. Belize and its citizens are incredibly dedicated to conservation: Nearly half of the nation's land and adjacent waters are protected under forest reserves, marine reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and other protected-area designations. And since the entire country is only about the size of Massachusetts (8,867 sq. miles), the chance of seeing hundreds of different species in a short amount of time is extremely high.

On a recent visit to Belize, I had a chance to spend time birding with guide Basilio Mes at Mystic River Resort, overlooking the Macal River near San Ignacio, Belize. After asking us to provide a list of the birds we most wanted to see, Mes then set up a walking tour around the lush rainforest grounds of this exotic ecolodge. Within four hours we recorded nearly 50 species of birds. Afterwards, I sat down to talk with Mes about birding, and his top places to see birds in Belize.

Getting into Birding

Mes did his first stint in the Belize tourism industry in the 1990's, leading tours to see indigenous animals, such as tapirs and jaguars. He was excited to see how many tourists were into wildlife, but the rewards of actually spotting these elusive creatures were few and far between. "It's a lot easier to spot birds and share a great birding experience with visitors than to be able to show them the nocturnal animals of Belize," said Mes.

He began birding in early 2002 for fun, learning bird calls and the English names of birds, studying their behavior and reading bird books. With birding tours in growing demand, Mes eventually began getting calls from resorts to lead tours. In 2003, he became a member of the much-lauded Belize Audubon Society, and later received advanced field training through a scholarship with Belize Audubon and a local development bank. Through the years, he has continued advancing his field bird-guide training, studying bird biology, behaviors, identification, and migration routes.

Top Five Birding Sites

Today, Mes leads dozens of tours a year, specializing in small, intimate groups, no larger than five people, typically in the regions of southern Belize. He knows the trails and habitat where specific birds can be found. And he is prolific at finding them. Here are his top five favorite birding sites.

#1 COCKSCOMB BASIN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Mes has a special place in his heart for the Cockscomb Basin area of southern Belize, near where he grew up. In one full day around the Cockscomb Basin, a 100,000-acre forest and

wildlife preserve, he typically spots an average of 95 species a day, beginning around 6 a.m. and ending around 3 or 4 p.m. On a three-day birding trip, visitors can see as many as 250 different species of birds including toucans, flycatchers, trogons and motmots. "There is a wide range of habitat with many open trails," says Mes. "Not far from the forest are beaches and marsh, so you can see shore birds and waterfowl. Birders can see a lot of variety here." And while they're at it, they can keep an eye out for jaguar tracks. The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary is recognized internationally as the world's first jaguar preserve and offers sanctuary for these rare, nocturnal creatures and other indigenous animals of the area. To the delight of visitors, there are occasional sightings.



The beautiful Blue-gray Tanager, one of 200 species of tanagers in the world, can be seen in villages or around forest edges in Belize.



If you dream of seeing Scarlet Macaws, plan to visit the Mayan village of Red Bank during mid-December through mid-March, when they flock there in large numbers to feed.

#2 RED BANK

Mes grew up in the small Mayan village of Red Bank, which is famous for the Scarlet Macaws that flock there during seasonal migrations. These big, rowdy birds, which were once close to extinction, nest in Belize's largest national park, the Chicquibul National Park, near the Guatemalan border. They migrate to Red Bank between mid-December to Mid-March to feed on the fruits of the annatto and pole wood trees. They love the tiny seeds in the berry, Mes says. Red Bank also offers sightings of Blue-winged Teals, ospreys and other water birds along the river. But the people come mostly for the Scarlet Macaws.

#3 MAYA MOUNTAIN AREA

Mes says that most tourists come to Belize to see rare or exotic birds such as Keel-billed Motmots, Keel-billed Toucans, and trogons, and there's no better place to see them than the Maya Mountain region, with its forests and plentiful supply of fresh water. Mes became captivated by the area when his quest to find a special bird came true here. "I had been searching for 15 years to find the Tody Motmot," says Mes. "I used to spend days in the jungle looking for this bird. Years later, when I came to the Mystic River Resort as a bird guide, on the first day I arrived, I stepped out of the car and I heard his call. I was ecstatic!" These days, the persistent birder loves to show off the local Tody Motmot of Mystic River with visiting birders, giving them the experience of seeing a truly elusive bird.

Birders on a quest for toucans can fulfill their dreams in the Maya region also. The fanciful Keel-billed Toucan, the national bird of Belize, can be found here. Easily recognizable in flight, thanks to its bright greenish-yellow, banana-looking beak, it's an astonishing sight to see. Perhaps a less known, but equally magical toucan, the Collared Aracari can be seen putting on an early morning show at the fruit feeders at Mystic River Resort. During several morning breakfasts at the open dining room patio, visitors were delighted by these noisy and magical toucans. Distinguished by their black heads and brownish-yellow, saw-tooth patterned mandibles, these birds feed and even roost together. At Mystic River, as many as six Collared Aracari have been seen entering the same hole in a burrowed-out tree to roost there together.



The Rufous-tailed Jacamar breeds in the tropical regions of southern Mexico, Central America and South America, as far south as southern Brazil and Ecuador.

#4 HOPKINS

If you are into sandpipers, storks, kingfishers and other water birds, the town of Hopkins may be a good place to spend a few days. This small Garifuna fishing village is surrounded on one side by wetlands and on the other side by the Caribbean Sea. Spend a morning on the beach and you'll likely see an osprey dive into the sea and fly off carrying breakfast between its talons, or sandpipers skirting the fringes of the waves, and pelicans skimming the water in perfect formation. If you're lucky you'll spot a Magnificent Frigate bird riding the wind. You'll recognize these almost-prehistoric looking birds by their forked tails, wide wing span and slightly v-shaped wings. Wander the marshes near sunset and enjoy Great Blue Herons, Snowy Egrets, and Pygmy Kingfishers. If you're lucky you might see the Northern Jacana, otherwise known as the "Jesus Bird" for its habit of tiptoeing across the water on the leaves of lily pads.



#5 STANN CREEK DISTRICT SHRIMP FARMS

Shrimp aquaculture has become a huge part of the Belize economy, with the country producing millions of pounds of shrimp for export. Villages such as Independence and Placencia play host to shrimping enterprises that occupy hundreds of acres of land cleared and reconstructed as production farms. Shore birds, such as teals, ducks, egrets and other waders, as well as various migratory birds, cluster here by the thousands to feed off the shrimp residual.



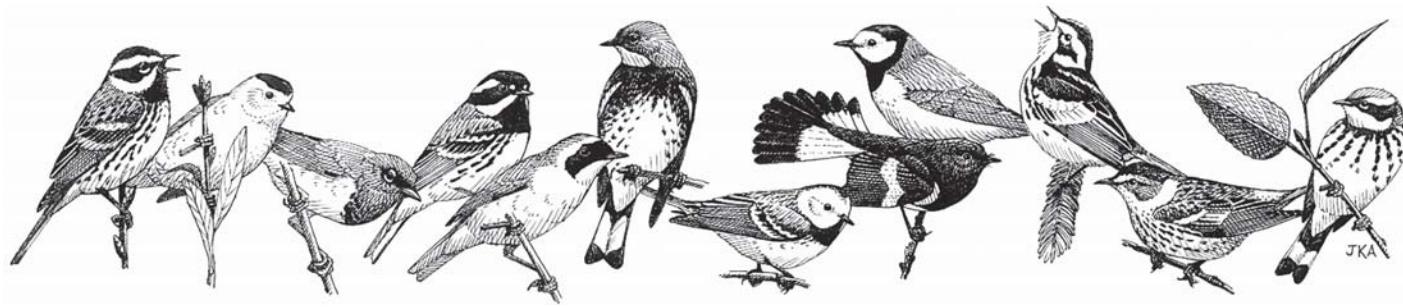
The Keel-billed Toucan, the national bird of Belize, is a magical site to see, and is easily recognizable in flight, thanks to its long, banana-shaped mandible and its bright and colorful plumage.

To go birding in Belize is to guarantee that you'll see some of the world's most spectacular birds. Whether you visit one or all of these sites, or go north to Crooked Tree Sanctuary, near Belize City, for Jabiru Storks and Peregrine Falcons, Belize will more than fulfil your quest to find the rare, the exotic and the beautiful.

Lisa Freeman is public relations professional, avid birder, and consummate adventure seeker. She lives in Los Angeles. Follow her on Twitter @lisafreemanPR, or on Facebook

Belize bird guide Basilio Mes can be reached at exoticbelize@yahoo.com.





BIRDS OF THE SEASON February 2018, by Jon Fisher

As far as birds were concerned, what was an exceptional fall was followed by a very satisfying winter as we moved into 2018. It was obvious—given the volume of records and rarities—that birders were out in force on a daily basis. Continuing vagrants were reported and re-reported at a dizzying pace and many new finds were made as well.

The last two months affirmed that there are many city, county and regional parks capable of attracting rare birds. With so many well covered “hotspots” in the county, often these parks barely make it onto the radar of most birders. That was certainly not the case this winter however.

There were no notable trends, irruptive events or anything particularly out of the ordinary, but there were a lot of good birds around. As usual, the coastal slope—with its mild winter climate and plethora of sources of food, water and shelter—was especially good for wintering Neotropical migrants.

Climatologists tell us that a La Niña following an El Niño tends to produce a warm and dry conditions. That turned out to be one major un-

derstatement this winter. In short order we’ve flipped from a “drought-busting” 2016–2017 season to conditions that set new records for a lack of precipitation and high temperatures.

With most of California’s reservoirs at or above average levels after last winter, human needs should be met for a while. But with Los Angeles County receiving a mere two inches of rain in the last 12 months, habitats have again suffered. This in turn will affect the numbers of birds present and breeding success this year.

Still it was clear that a lack of rain had little if any negative impact on vagrants; here’s a review of what was found between mid-December and mid-February.

The only **Tundra Swan** recorded was a continuing bird at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB that was reported through February 17.

Single “**Eurasian**” **Green-winged Teal** continued along the LA River in Glendale through February 17 and at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds through February 10.

Numbers varied during the period, but up to

three **White-winged Scoters** and six **Black Scoters** were observed in the waters off Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo through February 14 (Richard Barth).

Quite rare was a male **Barrow’s Goldeneye** on Lake Palmdale from December 24–26 (Kimball Garrett). The previous half dozen or so records are all from Quail Lake and all have occurred since 2008.

A **Red-necked Grebe** continued through February 10 at Castaic Lagoon where it was seen by many birders.

Quite rare these days was a **Spotted Dove** in Huntington Park from February 10–17 (Paul Contreras). Though apparently declining there, at least one **Inca Dove** remained at Col. Leon H. Washington Park in Los Angeles through February 16 and a **White-winged Dove** was there on February 2 (Jason Riggio). A **Common Ground-Dove** continued at the usual spot along the San Gabriel River in Bellflower through February 10.

The only shorebird of note was the **Pacific Golden-Plover** at Dockweiler State Beach in

El Segundo which was present through February 17.

Unusual in winter was a **Franklin's Gull** at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from February 15–17 (Rod & Pat Higbie).

Three **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were recorded. One was a continuing adult at the Rio Hondo spreading basins in Pico Rivera last reported on January 17. Nearby, a first cycle bird was at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera from January 15–21 (Dessi Seiburth). Another adult was at Cabrillo Beach on January 22 (David Ellsworth).

Also at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds was a **Slaty-backed Gull** from January 6–13 (John Garrett), likely a returning bird that spent last winter in the area. That bird was also the county's first. Also of note was a **Glaucous Gull** continuing at both the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds and nearby Rio Hondo basins through January 27.

A **Brown Booby** was in the Santa Catalina Channel on December 26 (Bernardo Alps) and two more were off Manhattan Beach on January 7 (Will Brooks).

A **Neotropic Cormorant** was at Peck Road Water Conservation Park (WCP) in Arcadia from December 24–January 21 (Darren Dowell, Mickey Long) and another—very possibly the same individual—was at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from February 11–17 (Rod Higbie, Tom Miko). This record, coupled with at least two at Bonelli Park in San Dimas in 2016 and 2017, almost certainly means that more will turn up. Any inland cormorant used to be considered a Double-

crested by default, but this is no longer a safe assumption.

An immature **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was at Topanga Lagoon from January 14–February 1 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

California Condors included one near Pyramid Lake on December 30 and again on February 4 (Nora Papian, Dessi Seiburth) and two were not far from there at Quail Lake on February 3 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

A **Short-eared Owl** was on San Clemente Island on December 27 (Brian Flick).

At least a half dozen **Lewis's Woodpeckers** remained at Chilao Flat in the San Gabriel Mountains through early February where up to two dozen had been since late October. In the lowlands, one was at the Los Angeles Country Club on January 2 (Chris Morris) and two were in Whittier at Rose Hills Memorial Park on February 10 (Larry Schmahl).

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included one continuing at Legg Lake in South El Monte through January 7 and another at DeForest Park in Long Beach from February 1–10 (Kim Moore, Merry Edelstein).

Scarce in the lowlands were **Williamson's Sapsuckers** at Griffith Park on January 16 (Andrew Birch) and continuing at Veteran's Park in Sylmar through January 18.

Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flickers were at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena on January 7 (Becky Turley), at Madrona Marsh in Torrance on January 12 (Tracy Drake), at Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles from

January 20–February 10 (Brad Rumble) and continuing at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena through January 21.

The Estates condominiums on the Palos Verdes Peninsula hosted a **Hammond's Flycatcher** on December 23 (Philip Carnehl) and about seven **Gray Flycatchers** were found during the period.

Pacific-slope Flycatchers included one continuing at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas through January 27, one at Hopkins Wilderness Park in Redondo Beach from December 23–January 25 and another at O'Melveney Park in Granada Hills on January 31 (Julia Ray).

Eastern Phoebes continued at Madrona Marsh through February 17 and at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas through December 31.

Dusky-capped Flycatchers were at Runnymede Park in Canoga Park from December 16–February 6 (Dick Norton), continuing at Ladera Park in Ladera Heights through February 17, at Creek Park in La Mirada through January 4 and at North Weddington Park in Toluca Lake from January 27–February 17 (Rebecca Marschall)

About equally rare in winter were **Ash-throated Flycatchers** at Griffith Park on December 22 (Evan Dalton), continuing at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through February 17, at Odd Fellows Cemetery in Los Angeles on January 13 (Richard Barth), at the Sepulveda Basin on February 8 (Daniel Tinoco) and at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh near Playa Vista on February 13 (Chezy Yusuf).

A **Tropical Kingbird** continued at El Dorado Park in Long Beach through December 24, while new birds were at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from January 17–21 (Tom Miko), at El Segundo Recreation Park on January 31 (Mike McLaughlin) and at Entradero Park in Torrance from February 7–17 (Charlie Keller).

Still quite rare in winter were **Western Kingbirds** continuing at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through January 2 and at Entradero Park in Torrance from February 8–10 (David Moody).

Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were along the lower LA River in Long Beach from January 6–15 and at a residence in Westchester on January 18 (John Peterson).

Extremely rare in winter were **Bell's Vireos** at Angels Gate Park in San Pedro on December 23 (David Ellsworth) and at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia from December 24–January 15 (Darren Dowell, Mickey Long).

Cassin's Vireos were at Rosie the Riveter Park in Long Beach on December 16 (Robb Hamilton), continuing at the West San Gabriel Parkway Nature trail in Lakewood through January 19, at Mountain View Park in Burbank from January 30–February 2 (Andrew Birch) and at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles from February 4–10 (Don Sterba).

A number of magnitudes greater in scarcity was an apparent **Blue-headed Vireo** along the LA River in Atwater Village from February 14–17 (Cuyler Staplemann). If accepted, this would be the county's first since the Harbor Regional Park bird in 2013. As with many CBRC review species, photos showing every angle of the bird and

recordings of any vocalizations can be most helpful in establishing a record.

Rare but regular in winter, **Pacific Wrens** were at Hoegge's Campground above Arcadia on December 31 (Dessi Sieburth), continuing in El Prieto Canyon above Altadena through January 27 and likewise continuing in Big Santa Anita Canyon through January 31. The most recent reports were of birds along the San Gabriel River's West Fork off Highway 39 on February 3 (Lance Benner, Kathi Ellsworth) and below Red Box on February 16 (Darren Dowell).

Sage Thrashers made a good showing on the coastal slope with at least eight individuals recorded. They are typically rare away from the deserts.

An **Evening Grosbeak** observed flying over Angeles Crest Highway near Big Tujunga Canyon Road on January 22 was the only one of its kind reported (Janet Cupples).

Wintering **Green-tailed Towhees** were at Portuguese Bend Reserve on the Palos Verdes Peninsula on December 23 (Bernardo Alps) and continuing at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino through December 29 and in Altadena through January 5.

Miscellaneous sparrows included a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Westchester Park from February 9–16 (Dan Cooper), a "**Large-billed**" **Savannah Sparrow** continuing at Cabrillo Beach through December 23, a **Swamp Sparrow** at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from December 23–February 8 (Michael San Miguel) and a "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** also at Bonelli in San Dimas on January 13 (Michael San Miguel).

Very rare in the county was a **Harris's Sparrow** at a residence on the Palos Verdes Peninsula from December 20–February 16 (Peggy Gussman). About a dozen of the closely related but far more expected **White-throated Sparrows** were noted during the period.

Rare dark-eyed Junco subspecies included "**Pink-sided**" **Juncos** at Gloria Heer Park on December 30 (Richard Barth) and at Chilao Flat in the San Gabriel Mountains on January 23 (Naresh Satyan). "**Gray-headed**" **Juncos** were found at King Gillette Ranch in Calabasas on January 1 (Daniel Tinoco), at Wheeler Park in Claremont on January 20 (Tom Miko) and at Chilao Flat in the San Gabriels on February 3 (Rick Fisher, Tom Miko).

Rare in winter was a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Lake Balboa in the San Fernando Valley on February 17 (Mike Stensvold)

On the coastal slope, six **Hooded Orioles** were discovered over the period and two **Baltimore Orioles** were at the Veteran's Administration's Japanese Garden in West Los Angeles; an immature male present from January 27–29 (Mark & Janet Scheel) and an adult male from January 25–February 18 (Richard Barth). A scarce visitor to the coastal slope was a **Scott's Oriole** at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from January 6–10 (Tom Miko).

The easy to find **Rusty Blackbird** continued at Almansor Park in Alhambra through February 17, but another along the LA River in Glendale adjacent to the Bette David Picnic Area on January 10 proved impossible to relocate (Andrew Birch).

A great winter find was an **Ovenbird** at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont on December 28 (Ken Watanabe). It was reported there through February 11.

At least eight **Black-and-white Warblers** were present this winter.

Lucy's Warblers were at Col. Leon H. Washington Park in Los Angeles on February 4 (Ryan Terrill, Adam Searcy, James Maley) and at North Weddington Park in Toluca Lake from February 10–17 (Sarah Ngo). **Nashville Warblers**—rare in winter—were at Marine Park in Santa Monica on December 21 (Larry Schmahl) and at DeForest Park in Long Beach on February 2 (Becky Turley, Kim Moore, Merryll Edelstein).

American Redstarts included one continuing at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas through January 30, while new birds were at Wilderness Park in Downey from January 15–February 8 (Gjon Hazard), at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from January 28–February 13 (Brian Daniels) and in Arcadia on February 16 (Stephen Knox).

Northern Parulas continued at Peck Road WCP in Arcadia through January 11 and at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas through January 13.

Palm Warblers were in Wilmington on January 6 (Tracy Drake), continuing at DeForest Park in Long Beach through February 13, at Entradero Park in Torrance from January 13–February 1 (Brooke Keeney, Gabriel Gartner) and in Long Beach from January 21–February 15 (Elias Zuniga).

Pine Warblers were at Runnymede Park in Winnetka from January 7–25 (Marc Better) and

at Sherman Oaks Park in Van Nuys from February 2–15 (Rebecca Marschall).

A **Magnolia Warbler** continued at Peck Road WCP through January 11 and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was near Wheeler Park in Claremont from January 21–February 15 (Tom Miko).

The lone **Painted Redstart** recorded was the continuing bird at Culver City Park which was reported through February 11.

Over a half dozen **Summer Tanagers** were recorded over the period.

The Veteran's Administration in West Los Angeles produced a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at the Japanese Garden on January 27 (Mark & Janet Scheel) and two **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were there from January 28–29, with one seen there through February 10 (Chris Dean, Dessi Sieburth). Other **Black-headed Grosbeaks** included a continuing bird in Sierra Madre through February 17 and one at Malaga Dunes in Palos Verdes Estates from January 25–February 7 (Philip Carnehl). Remarkable in winter was a female **Blue Grosbeak** at Entradero Park in Torrance on January 24 (Chris Dean).

Whatever the remainder of winter does or doesn't bring, in short order the landscape will turn green, birds will be streaming northward and birders will enjoy the great spectacle of spring migration once again.

Most passerines begin to arrive in March, and numbers will increase until they peak in late April. At the same time, waterfowl, shorebirds and many others are also on the move. Spring is a time of constant change, and birds on the move mean that vagrants can turn up at any time and place.

Though concerns about climate change, habitat loss and other threats to birds are fully justified, thankfully there are still a great number and variety of birds to be found in the county.

Though Los Angeles County isn't small, an hour and a half will get you just about anywhere within its borders—at least as long as you pick a time when traffic is light. But if time or other constraints dictate, nearly all of us have good birding spots just a few minutes from home, many scarcely explored. Whatever your means or preference, spring is sure to satisfy. 🐦



BEAUTIFUL BALLONA: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

By Cindy Hardin



gorgeous blossoms. After pollination by busy insects, the flowers will soon go to seed, and drift into the soil to await next year's rains and sprout anew. It's a great time to visit Ballona during our first Saturday Open Wetlands event. We will be there on March 3rd and April 7th from 9 am to noon—please come down to take a look.

On a larger level, the State recently published a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) that described plans by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for a “restoration” of the wetlands. Unfortunately, the proposal favored three alternatives that have caused serious concerns regarding the fate of the Ballona. During the month of January I was a part of a steering committee whose intent was to develop a well argued, cogent rebuttal to the State's plans. For me, it was an incredible experience. The group met weekly the entire month, and was composed of long-time Ballona activists who had way more knowledge than I of the history of the site, and how to effectively respond to a DEIR. Some of the things that I learned included:

The usual flurry of seasonal activity is happening at the wetlands right now. The migratory birds that have made Ballona their winter home are preparing for their spring journey to northern climes. The wildflowers are coming into bloom, in spite of our paucity of rain this year. Of course, the bloom is nowhere near as profuse as the one that burst forth during last year's abundant rains. But, our native plants are adapted to cope with drought years, and are displaying

- A DEIR must offer “a reasonable range of alternatives”. The three alternatives favored by the state were essentially three iterations of the same proposal. All three included removing at least part of the levees along the creek and flooding Parcel A, which is bordered by Fiji Way on the north and Ballona Creek on the south. This would convert what is currently upland habitat and seasonal freshwater wetlands into a full tidal wetland, permanently displacing many animals that currently reside in the parcel. As studies by our own Travis Longcore have shown, Ballona was primarily a closed, freshwater system, with only occasional full tidal inundation. None of the alternatives offered the option to enhance freshwater marsh area, so the DEIR did not offer that “reasonable range of alternatives”.

- The DEIR proposed massive removal of soil in Area A, and proposed to deposit 40 foot high mounds in Area C (east of Lincoln and north of Culver Blvd.) and to construct 20 foot high berms along sections of Lincoln, Culver and Jefferson, thus destroying scenic views that are mandated by the state to be provided at sensitive coastal locations like Ballona.

- Fuller tidal flow was also advocated for Area B (north of Culver, west of the ocean, and south of the creek), which would create saltwater incursion toward the beautiful riparian habitat at the base of the Westchester Bluffs. The Eucalyptus Grove at the base of the bluffs, which is used as a roosting and nesting area by the Great Horned Owl, would also be adversely affected.

- The State only permits restorations of sites like Ballona. Since there were no alternatives offered that included enhancement of historic freshwater marshland, the alternatives offered were more “creation” in nature, rather than restoration. In spite of this, throughout the document the project was referred to as “restoration”.

- A DEIR is intended to be a tool to inform the public in a reasonable fashion. The document, including its appendices, was almost 8,000 pages long, which for the average citizen is far from a reasonable amount of reading material to cover.

- When responding to a document like this, it is best to ask questions about points of concern. The State is required to respond to the questions posed by every individual who responds. This creates the need for the State to read the comments thoroughly and take note of the concerns of citizens.

The points listed above are but a few of the many flaws in the State’s proposals. It would take many pages to list all of the issues that are problematic. For me, it was a privilege to spend time with so many brilliant and well informed activists on a weekly basis and have the opportunity to learn how to push back on the content of a government document. I felt like I was attending a college level seminar whose subject was a place that is so near and dear to my heart. I would like to express a huge thanks to all who gave their time and generously shared information and strategies during the response period, including our own Board of Los Angeles Audubon.

I am newly inspired to try to make a difference on the management of this very special habitat that is in our midst. Although the public comment period closed on February 5th, it is still not too late to urge our elected officials to advocate for a different approach to Ballona. You can comment to any state politician of your choice, from your local city council person all the way to Senator Feinstein and Senator Harris. I urge you to do so-your voice matters, and so do the wetlands.



Ballona Burrowing Owl at entrance.



Ballona Brown Pelican..

IN MEMORY OF HOWARD KING

By Nick Freeman

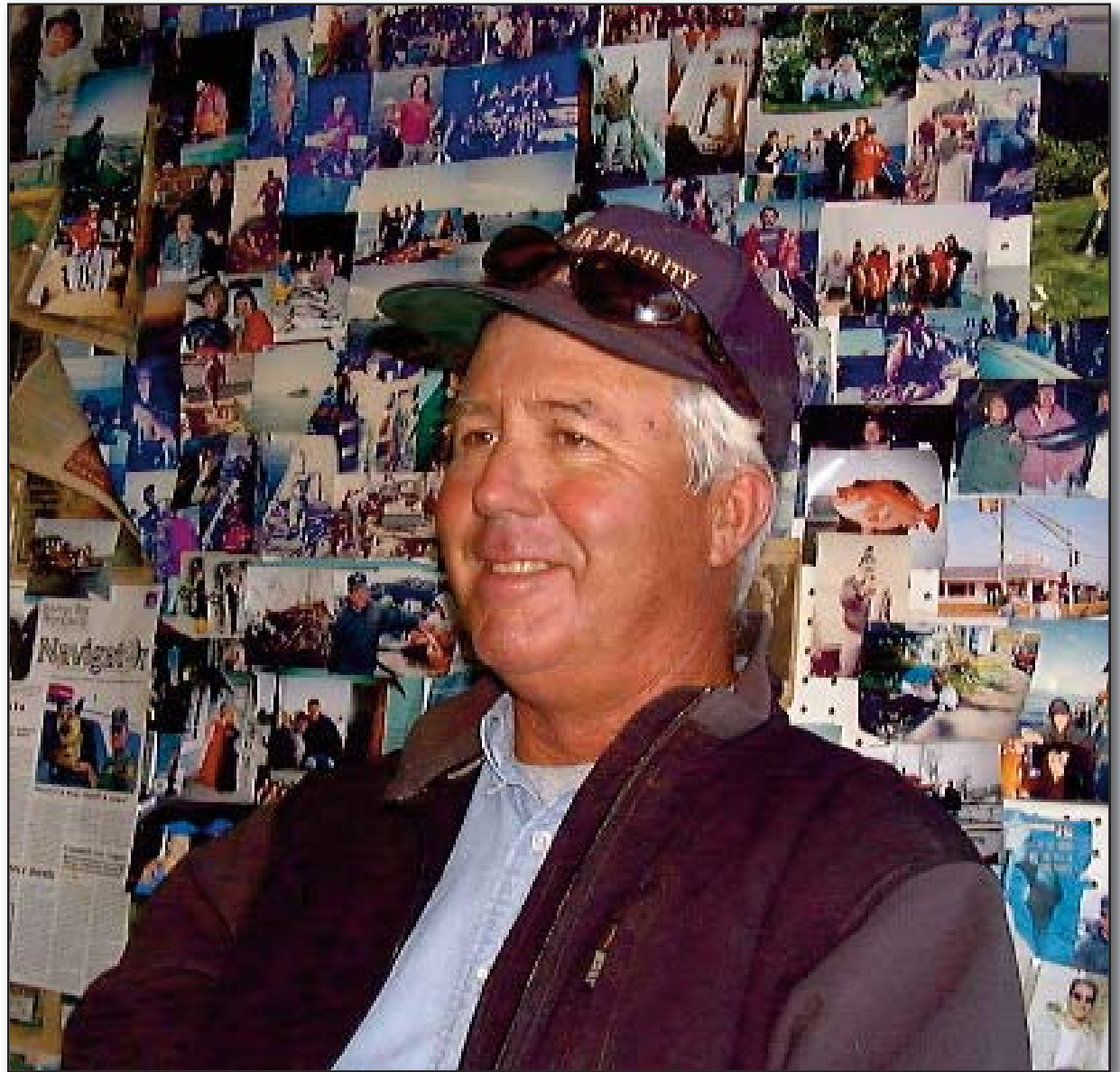
On February 27, the birding community of Southern California lost a true stalwart of the pastime, and an incredibly generous, thoughtful and witty fellow. Complications from cancer took Howard from us mercifully quickly, but all too soon.

His impressionable youth was spent seriously pursuing a very different pastime – technical rock climbing – where he made a significant mark, before becoming a soils and cement technician (kinda close), and an avid and passionate birder (not even close!).

Howard was the owner, and until six years ago chief moderator, of the inlandcountybirds list-serv which is a real-time dispersal site for rare and unusual bird sightings in the inland and Imperial counties. He has personally turned up scores of remarkable birds for our pleasure and study – including the rare vagrant White Wagtail that he recently found at Prado Regional Park – one of his favorite patches. He also enjoyed sharing the fine-points of identification with those coming up the ranks, leading many fieldtrips for LAAS over the years to San Jacinto Wildlife Area and Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. His citizen science involvement included many CBCs, including many years participating in our Lancaster CBC – a real slog for him, but he was always there to help out.

His principles sometimes got him riled, but he could not hold a grudge, and was usually sporting a smirk or a ridiculous grin. I can't claim to be among Howard's closest friends, his home in Riverside for the 30 years I knew him didn't help that – but during trips we took together and encounters in the field I truthfully cannot remember any time with Howard that did not feel enjoyable and well-spent. He was just that knowledgeable and, well, funny! And perhaps most importantly, he was always Howard. This and a few other details and traits of Howard and his life have also been mentioned in recent reminiscences by his many other good friends, but are too true to leave out here.

Hopefully, the White Wagtail came to escort Howard to a better place.



Howard King | Photo by Mary Freeman

Field Trip Listings

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

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



Nick & Mary Freeman
Field Trip Chairperson
& Trip Leaders

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

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

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

CARPPOOLING

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

FEE REQUIRED RESERVATIONS

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

Mail to:

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

Sunday, March 11

MALIBU LAGOON

NO FEE, NO SIGN-UP

Leader: *Irwin Woldman*. This transitional date should still see ducks, gulls, raptors, sparrows, and some early land migrants. Take PCH N over the bridge in Malibu to the stoplight, and either park on PCH, or turn left from PCH into the lagoon fee lot, or turn right on Cross Creek Road for free parking (and Starbucks) along the road, and cross PCH to meet at the kiosk in the lagoon parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Plan on a half day of birding here, and nearby Peppertine Ponds, and Legacy Park.

March 24 & 25 Weekend

ANZA-BORREGO STATE PARK

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

Leader: *Kurt Leuschner*. A good time to view both the wildflowers and Swainson's Hawk migration! Caravan through the State Park from the Colorado Desert up to Julian, with short forays to take in the sights and the wildlife. Kurt is a professor of desert ecology, and knows all of our deserts very well. Reserve your accommodations at Hacienda del Sol, Stanlund Motel or others in Borrego Springs months early, as this is wildflower season too! Meet at the Anza-Borrego Desert Nature Center (652 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs). Note: there will be a talk on Friday night, March 23, at 7:30 p.m. – The Hummingbird and the Ocotillo by James Cornett. Cost is \$10 at the door. For the lecture, meet at the Anza-Borrego Desert Nature Center – same place we meet Saturday morning.

PLEASE PRE-REGISTER BY EMAIL TO: membership@laaudubon.org. Provide name(s), cell phone number, and e-mail address; then mail a check for \$20 LAAS member / \$40 non-LAAS fee to: L.A. Audubon—Field Trips. PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041. For more information call (323) 876-0202.

SMALL OWLS OF THE SAN GABRIELS

#1 Fri., Apr. 20

#2 Fri. May 18

#3 Fri. June 22

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP (10 Max.), PLEASE REGISTER FOR ONE OWL DATE ONLY

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. We will be looking for Flammulated, Saw-whet, Northern Pygmy and Western Screech-Owls. Sign up, and meet at 6:00 p.m. on the frontage road for Angeles Forest Hwy just north of the 210 Fwy in La Canada. Turn N on ACH, take the second right (Milmada Dr.), and a quick left (Flanders Rd.). Meet along the first 50-yard stretch, fed and gassed up, and we will carpool from here. Bring quiet clothing for very cold weather (no nylon if possible), a small walking flashlight, binoculars, powerful flashlight optional. Photo ops possible.

SIGN-UP: Email sign-up mandatory. Send email to: membership@laaudubon.org. Provide name(s) email addresses, & cell phone #s and wait for email confirmation. (10 max.) Please allow others to attend this popular series by signing up for one date only. (Other dates: May 18, June 22) For more information call (323) 876-0202, leave voice message if no answer.

April 28 & 29 Weekend

OWENS VALLEY GROUSE AND MORE

\$55 FEE LIMITED SIGN-UP of 20 max.

Mary and Nick Freeman lead. Friday (April 27) evening in Bishop, a grouse biologist will hopefully be available to present a slide show on the Sage Grouse, at the BLM headquarters building. She's really knowledgeable! We will meet at the Crowley lek turnoff ("the Green Church" at 34 Benton Crossing Rd, Mammoth Lakes – GPS address) very early on Saturday for Sage Grouse photos and viewing, and later possible Black-backed Woodpecker and Evening Grosbeak! Sunday, plan to meet in Bishop at Jack's Restaurant (437 N Main St) for Sooty Grouse, Grey-crowned Rosy-Finch, Bank Swallow, and perhaps Chukar.

An e-mailer will be sent out to the participants who have signed-up (paid) for this trip, including some hotels. Arrange your own lodging in Bishop. Net profits go towards the Ralph Schreiber Grant Fund.

TO REGISTER: 1) Send email to: membership@laaudubon.org and provide names, cell phone number, Zip Code. 2) Mail \$55 per person check payable to: Los Angeles Audubon and mail to: Los Angeles Audubon, PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301. For more information call (323) 876-0202.

Sunday, May 6

MOJAVE AREA WITH BUTTERBREDT SPRINGS

SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE

Leaders: *Nick and Mary Freeman*. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles

may be encountered! To meet, veer right heading north out of Mojave, taking Hwy 14 for about 20 miles, just over the riverbed, and take Jawbone Canyon Road on the left. Meet right at the turnoff at the ranger station parking lot at 7:00 a.m. There is a restroom here. Birds start shooting up this canyon at first light, so even this will get us into Butterbredt a tad late, but if we happen to hit migration on the nose, it will be magical! We will carpool to Butterbredt Springs, back-track to California City environs for lunch and more birds, and possibly finish the day at Apollo Park. Bring lunches, sun block, FRS radios. Reserve rooms (Motel 6 or other) in Mojave, or Best Western in CA City.

TO SIGN-UP (MANDATORY): Send email to: membership@laaudubon.org. Provide: name(s), cell phone #. (12 max.)

Sunday, May 13

TEJON RANCH

\$20 FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP (SEE BELOW)

Leader: *Louis Tucker*. Visits to the Ranch are by special arrangement with escort only, as one could easily get lost on the web of gated dirt roads covering this huge working ranch. On this new date, hopefully the ranch will have dried out from the winter storms we've so desperately needed. This is spring bird migration peak time. This will be a great time to see various passerine species: warblers, flycatchers, bluebirds, and other songbirds. There are resident Red-tails, Burrowing Owls, Golden Eagles, and Prairie Falcons, which are all out there to be found. Even Swainson's Hawks may be passing through or nesting! California Condor is also a possibility if it's a bright sunny day. There also is a chance of catching sight of some Pronghorn Antelope. FRS radios and scopes useful.

We will meet at Denny's in Sylmar. Take the Roxford Exit off of the 5 Fwy. Denny's can be seen on the east side of the Fwy. 12861 Encinitas Ave. Sylmar. Be prepared to carpool and leave from there at 7 a.m. to be at the 300 St. West Gate at 8 am. At the gate at Tejon Ranch, we will transfer to the ranch vehicles, for a number of reasons - first and foremost, safety - as roads on the ranch can be treacherous. Bring lunch, as we will be out most of the day. Rain cancels, NO drop-ins.

LIMITED SIGN-UPS: 12 participants only. Youth (9th – 12th grades) will be prioritized for 6 slots, and adults for the other 6; adults will be wait-listed for the youth slots until they open up on May 1.

HOW TO SIGN-UP: Please pre-register by email sent to: membership@laaudubon.org. Then, mail the registration fee check (\$20 per person to: Los Angeles Audubon, PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301. The first 12 participants (see priority specified above) from whom we receive the fee will receive an email confirmation. (NO drop-ins.) Include the email address, cell phone number and Zip Code for each participant. For more information call: (323) 876-0202.



Tejon Ranch, Tree of Africa, Big Sycamore Canyon

Small Owls of the San Gabriels #2 – Fri. May 18
(see write-up Apr. 20)

Sunday, May 20

BIG MORONGO CANYON

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 15

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Meet at 8:00 AM in the preserve parking lot, or 7:00 AM at Covington Park next door. Breeding desert and oasis birds such as Brown-crested and Vermilion Flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Scott's and Hooded Orioles, Yellow-breasted Chat and late migrating Empidonax flycatchers. To get there, take the 10 Fwy E about 17 miles past Banning to Hwy 62 N. Pass through the town of Morongo Valley, take a right on East Dr., then a left into the preserve (or straight to Covington Park). Bring lunch, water, sensible clothing and sun block. Yucca Valley and Desert Hot Springs offer nearby accommodations, or camp at Joshua Tree NP. LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 15.

TO SIGN-UP: Send email to: membership@laaudubon.org, provide names(s), cell phone #'s and your Zip Code. For more information call (323) 876-0202. Contact information WILL BE released to others inquiring about carpooling unless requested otherwise.

SMALL OWLS OF THE SAN GABRIELS #3 – Fri. June 22
(see write-up Apr. 20)

Wednesday thru Sunday, July 5-8

OWLS & OTHER BIRDS OF THE SOUTHERN SIERRA

\$140 FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Scheduled so you can light a few fireworks with the family! We will be renting a new summer home this year, which should be a bit nicer. Flammulated and Spotted Owls have been seen in multiples every year. Saw-whet (adult & juv.) and Pygmy Owl are less reliable, but we will look hard! During days, we will search out Pileated Woodpecker, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and perhaps Goshawk, Dipper or Evening Grosbeak! Meeting time and location in Ponderosa will be in upcoming newsletters. All beds are queens, so couples will be prioritized, and singles in sleeping bags will be wait-listed until reservations open up on June 15. Coordinate your contribution for the Thursday potluck with Mary. LAAS will provide a weenie roast one other night, and we always have plenty of left overs for a third dinner!

For more information call (323) 876-0202, leave voice message if no answer.

Saturday, July 21

BIG BEAR AREA

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP FOR DAY BIRDING AND / OR NIGHT OWLING

Leaders: *Mary and Nick Freeman*. Get a hotel room for July 20 (or wake up really early), and a room for July 21 if you plan to dine and owl with the Freemans. Target birds include Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Calliope and Rufous Hummers, mountain finches, White-headed Woodpecker, and Mountain Quail. Meet in the Aspen Glen Picnic Area parking lot in Big Bear at 7:30 a.m. Take Hwy 18 or 38 to Big Bear Lake, then proceed about half way along the south side of the lake on Hwy 18 (Big Bear Blvd.) and turn south on Tulip Lane. The lot will be on the south side of this short street. Bring lunch for a full day, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass. SIGN-UP: Email sign-up mandatory. Send email to: membership@laaudubon.org. Provide name(s), email addresses, & cell phone #s and wait for email confirmation.

Bird Walk Listings

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

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

CARPPOOLING IS ENCOURAGED!

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

OPEN WETLANDS AT BALLONA **1st Saturday of every month** **Mar. 3 & Apr. 7** **Time: 9:00–Noon**

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

The migratory birds that have spent their winter at Ballona are getting ready to head north. Come on down to catch them before they leave! Native wildflowers are in full bloom too—it's a beautiful time to be at the wetlands!

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 BIRD WALK **1st Sunday of every month** **Mar. 4 & Apr. 1** **Time: 8:00–Noon**

Leaders: *Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin*

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

From Ventura Blvd, take Topanga Canyon Blvd 7 miles S. Turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into Trippet Ranch parking lot. From Pacific Coast Hwy, take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking fee.

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



Bird Walk Listings, Cont'd

UPPER FRANKLIN CANYON SOOKY GOLDMAN NATURE CENTER

2nd Sunday of every month

Mar. 11 & Apr. 8

Time: 8:30 – 11:30

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 Wrentit, California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees and California Thrasher. We will look for early spring migrants such as warblers, flycatchers, swallows & orioles. Resident birds have begun to nest providing a whole new way of watching birds.

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 until you have crossed the intersection; 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. and continue to first parking lot on the left. Binoculars provided. Contact info: Eleanor (310) 839-5420; gardenbird1@att.net

BALLONA WETLANDS BIRD WALK

3rd Sunday of the month

Mar. 18 & Apr. 15, 2018

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: *Bob Shanman and Friends*

Join us for a walk through L.A.'s only remaining saltwater marsh and the adjacent rocky jetty. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot. 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



KENNETH HAHN STATE RECREATION AREA


4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles 90056

3rd Saturday of the month

Mar. 17 & Apr. 21

Time: 8:00 – Noon

Leaders: *Eric and Ann Brooks, Eleanor Osgood*. This trip covers landscaped parkland, a man-made lake and natural coastal scrub habitats within the Baldwin Hills. We are likely to see many of the resident birds such as Black and Say's Phoebes, Cassin Kingbirds, California and Spotted Towhee, Red-tailed Hawk, & Cooper's Hawk. Many of which will be beginning their breeding cycle. We will continue to look for wintering birds such as Merlin, Rufous-crowned, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, and wintering ducks among others. Finally, we will look for early spring migrants.

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. Contact: Eleanor (310) 839-5420; gardenbird1@att.net 



Monthly Program Presentation



WHAT: Public Lecture

presented by Hartmut Walter

WHEN: March 14th

7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Baldwin Hills Scenic
Overlook State Park, 6300 Hetzler
Road, Culver City, CA 90232

The Antarctic is one the few remaining places where you are alone surrounded by penguins, seals and whales. It is as pure nature as you can get today; walking on an iceberg, cruising along glaciated islands occupied by shags, skuas and albatrosses, and standing in front of thousands of King Penguins. There is no bird there that is afraid of humans, and you are not likely to see another boat during your voyage. Revisiting the Falkland Islands, the cliffs and hills of South Georgia, and the Antarctic Peninsula during the southern summer season: a unique experience.

COMING IN APRIL:

*Apr. 11, 2018 - Dan Blumstein presents:
Ecotourism's Promise and Peril - Baldwin
Hills Scenic OverLook State Park*