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WESTERN Tanager

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Snowy Plover chick (right) with it's parent at Malibu Lagoon in the summer of 2017. Photo by Grace A. Murayama and Larry L. Loeher.



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CONTENTS

SNOWY PLOVER CONSERVATION PROGRAM FACES AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

SNOWY PLOVER CONSERVATION PROGRAM FACES AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

YOUNG BIRDERS

INTERPRETING NATURE

BIRDS OF THE SEASON

ALLOW ME THE HONOR TO INTRODUCE TO YOU: IRWIN WOLDMAN

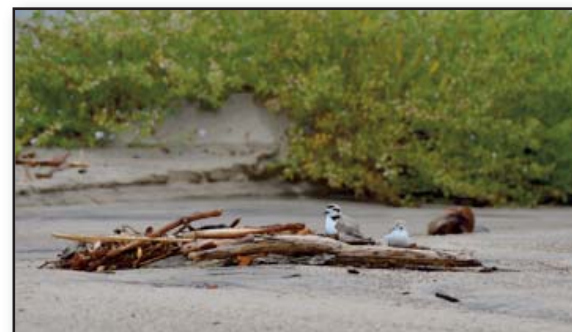
LEAST TERN MONITORING AT SEAL BEACH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

FIELD TRIP LISTINGS

BIRD WALK LISTINGS

SPEAKER SERIES - MAY 9, 2018

On The Cover



About the Photo

Cover Photo: One of our home-grown Snowy Plover chicks (right) with it's parent at Malibu Lagoon in the summer of 2017. Photo by Grace A. Murayama and Larry L. Loeher.

SNOWY PLOVER CONSERVATION PROGRAM FACES AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE (SEE STORY ON PAGE 3)

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SNOWY PLOVER CONSERVATION PROGRAM FACES AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Los Angeles Audubon's Conservation Program for the Western Snowy Plover, a Federally Threatened bird species found on Los Angeles County Beaches, faces an uncertain future. Federal funding that supported this program in the past, and appeared to be on track for a 2-year renewal starting in February 2018, has been unexpectedly cancelled.

Since 2007, project biologists Thomas Ryan (Ryan Ecological Consulting) and Stacey Vigallon (Los Angeles Audubon Society) have coordinated community-based conservation programs to monitor California Least Terns and Western Snowy Plovers on beaches in Los Angeles County, engaging volunteers in bird surveys, habitat restoration, and outreach opportunities. These collaborative projects built upon the observations painstakingly collected by members of Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society and Palo Verde/South Bay Audubon Society, and other local birders and biologists prior to 2007. We are fortunate to count these groups as current partners and collaborators to this day.

Information gathered by volunteers and biologists through the Snowy Plover Monitoring Program has helped to document the important role that beaches in Los Angeles County serve as wintering habitat for plovers. Approximately 190 to 330 Snowy Plovers overwinter in Los Angeles County each year, accounting for roughly 28% of wintering Snowy Plovers in Recovery Unit 6 and 7% of the California popula-

tion. Through this project, we have established positive working relationships with beach management agencies, resulting in seasonal plover enclosures at two beaches. Over 200 community volunteers have participated in plover conservation activities and thousands of local public school students have learned about plovers and beach stewardship through our outreach programs. This project has also helped us successfully partner with beach recreation facilities, allowing us to provide plover-themed beach walks for the public at the Annenberg Community Beach House and the Dockweiler Youth Center. In recent years, we have partnered with Sea & Sage Audubon to extend and synchronize Snowy Plover monitoring efforts in Orange County.

In 2017, plover conservation in Los Angeles took a leap. For the first time in nearly 70 years, Western Snowy Plovers nested on Los Angeles County beaches. This is a critical time for plovers and it's imperative that ongoing, uninterrupted data collection and public engagement is maintained to help support the survival of this threatened species.


We are seeking funding from several sources, including National Audubon and other grants as well as a crowdfunding campaign to replace some of the federal funds we lost for the Plover Conservation Program, but time is not on our side.

We urgently need \$25,000 to cover a por-

tion of one year's budget for Western Snowy Plover conservation efforts. The funds will pay for permitted biologists to conduct roost and nest surveys on a monthly basis targeting known plover roost sites in Los Angeles County. Should nests be detected, permitted biologists will coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to implement protective enclosures and install nest exclosures to keep dogs, people, and predators away from nests.

We believe that maintaining a consistent community-based monitoring program in Los Angeles County is one of the most effective ways to help Western Snowy Plovers: it directly engages the public in plover conservation and provides data to beach management agencies, biologists, and other Audubon chapters. We are extremely grateful to the Audubon chapters and community volunteers for their contributions to this program.

How can you help? You can help by spreading the word about the importance of the Snowy Plover Conservation Program to friends and associates, and by making a donation to <http://losangelesaudubon.org/donate>

Thank you. 

Cover Photo: One of our home-grown Snowy Plover chicks (right) with it's parent at Malibu Lagoon in the summer of 2017. | Photo by Grace A. Murayama and Larry L. Loeher.

YOUNG BIRDERS

A Striking African Bird in Los Angeles County: The Pin-tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*)

By Dessi Sieburth



Breeding male Pin-tailed Whydah, photographed by Kirsten Frost in its native range (Table Bay Nature Reserve, Western Cape, South Africa)

Los Angeles County is home to one of the greatest diversity of non-native species anywhere in the United States. This is largely due to the fact that it provides the ideal habitat for non-native species with its mild climate and abundance of exotic plants. The California Birds Records Committee includes 11 species of introduced birds that are considered to be “naturalized,” or common enough to sustain their populations, and nine of these species can be found breeding in Los Angeles County. Several additional introduced bird species are establishing populations here and are likely to become naturalized soon. Most of the non-native populations are thought to have started from small groups of released or escaped birds originally imported to Los Angeles through the pet trade. One species whose numbers have recently begun increasing throughout Los Angeles is the Pin-tailed Whydah, a songbird that became introduced by the pet trade because of its spectacular tail feathers.

The adult male Pin-tailed Whydah in breeding plumage is unmistakable, with its bright red bill and tail nearly twice the length of its body. The cap is black, and the rest of the head is white. Its back is black, and its wings and underparts are white. The tail is so long that in flight, it simply flops around in a circular motion. The females and nonbreeding males have black streaks in the head and back, with white underparts and a red bill.

In its native range, the Pin-tailed Whydah can be found throughout Africa, except in the Sahara Desert region. It is especially common in swampy or reedy areas in Eastern Africa. In its introduced range in California, the species was introduced to Los Angeles and Orange Counties in the early 1990s, but only a small number of sightings were reported before 2005. In 2005 the population began to increase, and the bird can now be regularly found in the southeastern portion of Los Angeles County, as well as along the Santa Ana River in Orange County. In 2013, a flock of 83 whydahs were seen in La Mirada, and a flock of over 100 were observed in Santa Ana. In Los Angeles County, the species can be found along weedy areas of the San Gabriel River, Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia, and Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena. This sudden increase in numbers suggested that the whydahs had established a local breeding population.

Pin-tailed Whydahs are brood parasites, meaning that they lay their eggs in the nests of other birds. The host bird takes care of the eggs and feeds the

young after they hatch, along with the young of their own species. However, taking care of the additional whydahs often means that some of the host's young do not get enough food and often starve. In their native range in Africa, they only parasitize other related Estrildid finches, such as the Common Waxbill and Bronze Mannikin, which construct domed nests with an entrance at the side. Since these species do not breed here in Los Angeles in large numbers, ornithologists wondered which local species the Pin-tailed Whydah parasitized to raise their young.

A research study by Garrett and Garrett in 2014 found that the whydahs parasitize the nests of Scaly-breasted Munias in Los Angeles County and Orange County. Like the whydahs, the munias are an introduced species, but their native range includes India and southeast Asia. This finding was perhaps not that surprising since whydahs have been known to parasitize Bronze Mannikins, a species very closely related to the Scaly-breasted Munia, in their native range. The Scaly-breasted Munia is the only species known to be parasitized by the whydah in Southern California. The increase in the whydah population is consistent with the increase in the munia population, suggesting that the whydah's existence in California is dependent on the population of Scaly-breasted



Breeding male Pin-tailed Whydah at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia, Los Angeles County, 8 August 2013, photo by Derek Sieburth



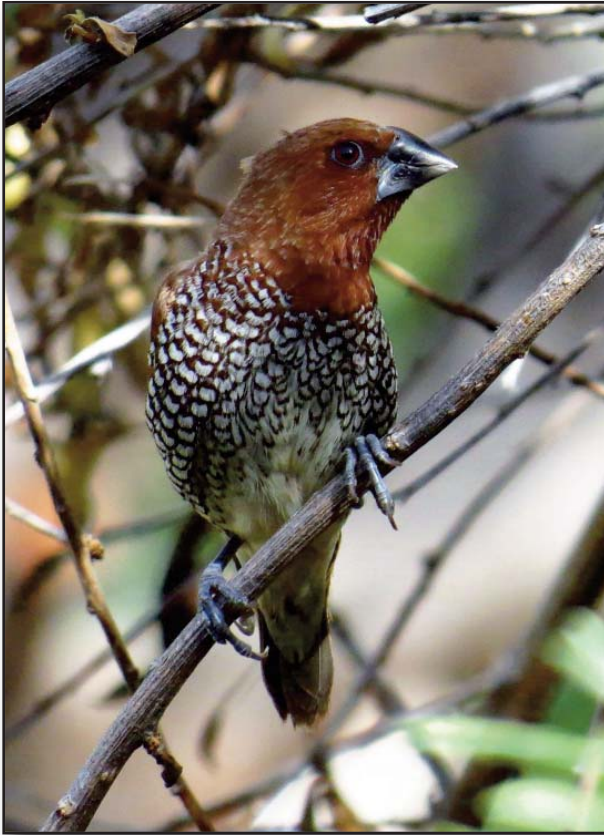
Scaly-breasted Munia feeding two fledged Pin-tailed Whydahs at La Mirada Creek Park, Los Angeles County, California, 11 August 2014 photographed by John Garrett

Munias. The study found no evidence that the Pin-tailed Whydah parasitizes any of our native species. Additional research will show if the Pin-tailed Whydah has an impact on native species.

Despite its appeal to the pet trade, the Pin-tailed Whydah is common in its native range in Africa. However, illegal pet trade is a serious threat for many species of birds in their native range. For example, our Red-crowned Parrots, which likely came to Los Angeles through pet trade, are endangered in their Mexican native range. Introduced established bird populations could possibly be used to repopulate their native range if they are endangered or get extinct. If you like to learn about what you can do to help birds locally and globally please visit my website: <http://protectingourbirds.my-free.website/>.

References:

Garrett, J. F., and K. L. Garrett (2016).




Adult Scaly-breasted Munia, host species for Pin-tailed Whydah in California, photo was taken in Montrose, Los Angeles County, 6 December 2015 by Derek Sieburth



Breeding male Pin-tailed Whydah, Illustration by Dessi Sieburth



Nonbreeding adult Pin-tailed Whydah at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia, Los Angeles County, April 1st, 2018, photo by Dessi Sieburth

The Pin-tailed Whydah as a brood parasite of the Scaly-breasted Munia in southern California. *Western Birds* 47:314–320.
Pin-tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*). In *Neotropical Birds*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology Ithaca, New York, USA 

INTERPRETING NATURE

By Stacey Vigallon, Director of Environmental Education



Greenhouse Program students work in teams to craft science fiction stories to submit to the Green Feather Award (presented by Los Angeles Audubon!) and the Tomorrow Prize, both writing competitions organized by the Light Bringer Project and Sci-Fest L.A.

Using science fiction to envision the future

In January 2018, students in the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program kicked off a semester of writing and art activities centered on science fiction. The short-term goal was to produce stories to submit to the Green Feather Award (presented by Los Angeles Audubon!) and the Tomorrow Prize, both writing competitions organized by the Light Bringer Project and Sci-Fest L.A. High school students throughout Los Angeles County were invited to submit work to these competitions, and we were also thrilled that a team of Los Angeles Audubon volunteers served as judges for the Green Feather Award. In addition to cash prizes for winning stories, selected stories will be performed live on stage at LitFest Pasadena in May. Engaging in this story competition gave us a great excuse to collaborate with 826LA, a non-profit writing and tutoring organization, to host a science fiction writing workshop at their Mar Vista center in February.

The longer-term goal for this writing and art project was more complex. Writing and visual arts pushes students to strengthen their communication skills – a benefit to them in any future academic and professional context. But, science fiction in particular provides unique opportunities for its creators to learn about and interpret current science, to envision the future, and to write themselves into an active role in crafting that future. We required that Greenhouse students incorporate the ecology knowledge they’ve gained through the Greenhouse Program into their stories to create a future where one or more major environmental crises have been solved. During the workshop with 826LA, we explored ideas and motivations of well-know authors of science fiction, like Octavia E. Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Douglas Adams, as well as contemporary artists, like Allison Warden and Ana Teresa Fernandez, who are using their media to envision the future. A quotation from Ursula K. Le Guin, given during her acceptance speech for the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters in 2014, served as a guiding principle:

“Hard times are coming when we will be wanting the voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now and can see through our fear-stricken society and its obsessive technologies to other ways of being, and even imagine some real grounds for hope. We will need writers who can remember freedom: poets, visionaries—the realists of a larger reality.”

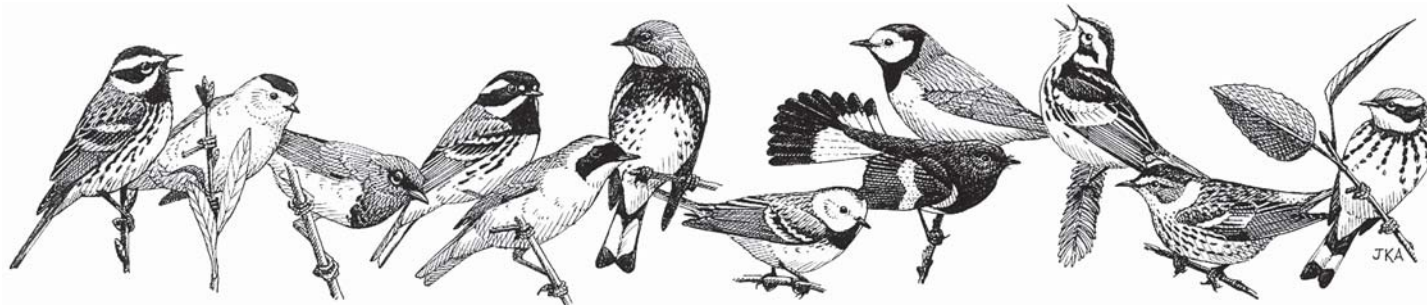
Greenhouse Program staff viewed this writing/art project as an antidote to solastalgia—essentially, a state of despair about environmental degradation. As the term’s originator, philosopher Glenn Albrecht, says, “Solastalgia is when your endemic sense of place is being violated.” Use of the term has moved beyond just philosophy and academic circles to now also be used in the medical and mental health professions. The interdisciplinary aspects of science fiction, the way it can combine elements of science and history, environmental and social justice issues, and deeply personal dreams and fears, empowers the writer to reframe the future for themselves and for their readers.

Greenhouse Program student writing and artwork will be featured in a publication produced by Los Angeles Audubon this summer.

Want to learn more about the concept of solastalgia? Check out this brief BBC article:

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20151030-have-you-ever-felt-solastalgia>





BIRDS OF THE SEASON April 2018, by Jon Fisher

Considering what capable fliers they are, it's remarkable how predictable birds can be. Their habitats, nest sites, behavior, migration routes and timing are well known and- for the most part- consistent. But there is also an element of unpredictability.

Only about twenty percent of the birds species recorded in California can be considered non-migratory. The vast majority exhibit noticeable seasonal movements, and the pattern and timing of these are varied and complex.

For example, all of our *Empidonax* flycatchers are migratory, with most spending the winter to the south. But each has its own unique status and distribution. Even within the same genus differences can be great. Hermit Thrushes are migrants and common winter visitors, with just a few breeding in the higher San Gabriel Mountains. Swainson's Thrushes are late spring migrants and uncommon breeders in low elevation riparian habitats, but they are entirely absent in winter; nearly the same pattern in reverse.

California's vagrants also exhibit complexity in their origins and patterns. Pyrrhuloxias are residents of the Arizona deserts and never get as far west as Los Angeles County; except when they do. There are two county records to date. Eurasian Wrynecks are an Asian species that have occurred in extreme western Alaska only twice, except when they accidentally end up on San Clemente Island, as one did last fall. These patterns of occurrence are endlessly fascinating and they are one of the most intriguing aspects of ornithology and birding.

Seasonal movements are not the only reason the county's avifauna is continually changing. As profoundly detrimental as man's activities have been to bird populations, some have been beneficial. This past winter demonstrated as clearly as ever that the non-native plantings and well-watered landscapes of the county's coastal slope are very attractive to Neotropical migrants. Our mild winters don't hurt either. While some of these birds are off-course vagrants, others are regular migrants that have elected to stay for the winter.

Also mitigated by man's handiwork are some of the challenges migrants face when passing through California's deserts. Ranches, towns and parks provide food, shelter and water for tired migrants.

As expected, a remarkable variety of regular and unusual birds were found in the period from mid-February through mid-April.

A continuing **Tundra Swan** remained at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB through March 14.

Dabbling ducks included an **Eurasian Wigeon** briefly at Hansen Dam on April 4 (Joachim Bertrands) and a "**Eurasian**" **Green-winged Teal** continuing on the Los Angeles River in Glendale through February 24.

Rare anywhere away from the immediate coast was a **Surf Scoter** at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City from March 25–April 6 (Mark & Janet Scheel). The waters off Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo continued to be good for scoters, with a high

count of two **Black Scoters** and six **White-winged Scoters** there on March 27.

Several **Common Ground-Doves** persisted along the San Gabriel River in the Bellflower area through March 4, while a lone **Inca Dove** stuck it out at Col. Leon H. Washington Park in Los Angeles through March 21.

A handful of **Calliope Hummingbirds** were recorded on the coastal slope away from the foothills where they are more expected in spring.

A **Ridgway's Rail** was again at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh from April 7–9 (Don Sterba).

The only **Red-necked Grebe** this winter was one continuing at Castaic Lagoon through March 28.

Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo hosted a wintering **Pacific Golden-Plover** through February 25.

A **Solitary Sandpiper** was on San Clemente Island on April 2 (Justyn Stahl).

A nice spring find was a **Stilt Sandpiper** at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB on April 5 (John Birsner). It was joined by a second bird from April 6–7 (Dwight Peake).

A distressed **Black-legged Kittiwake** found at Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo on March 3 unfortunately expired later that day (Tim Avery), but a second bird was present later in the day (Turley). Other gulls of note were a **Franklin's Gull** at the Ballona Creek

mouth in Playa del Rey on March 12 (James Fox) and a **Sabine's Gull** at the Piute Ponds on Edwards AFB from March 23–24.

Still rare but becoming less so was a presumably continuing **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera on March 15 (Jon Feenstra).

Rather rare inland was a **Red-throated Loon** at Castaic Lagoon from April 1–4 (John Garrett).

A **Neotropic Cormorant** lingered at Bonelli Regional Park through March 31. This species should be on the radar of birders as this species continues to expand its range.

Also slowly increasing in the county, **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** continued at Topanga Lagoon through April 4 and at the Ballona Wetlands from April 7–9.

An injured **Long-eared Owl**, rare on the coastal slope, was found at the El Dorado Park Nature Center area in Long Beach on March 9 (Kim Moore).

Lewis's Woodpeckers were scarce in the lowlands this year with just one report for the period; a continuing bird at Rose Hills in Whittier through April 3. But in the San Gabriel Mountains up to fifteen remained at Chilao Flat through April 4.

A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** continued at DeForest Park in Long Beach through March 9 and **Yellow-shafted Flickers** were at

Rosedale Cemetery through March 13—two there on that date—and continuing at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena through March 16.

Rare in the county was a pale "**Prairie**" **Merlins** of the *richardsoni* subspecies at Rancho Sierra Golf Course in Lancaster on April 8 (David Bell).

Wintering **Hammond's Flycatchers** were at the Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve on February 24 (Brooke Keeney, Gabriel Gartner) and at Whaley Park in Long Beach on March 14 (Richard Barth). One at Pan American Park in Long Beach from March 23-24 may have been an early spring migrant (John Fitch).

Other wintering *empidonax* on the coastal slope included the expected half dozen or so **Gray Flycatchers** and a continuing **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas reported through February 20.

The **Eastern Phoebe** at Madrona Marsh in Torrance was reported through March 20 and over a dozen **Vermilion Flycatchers** were recorded on or near the coastal slope over the period.

Four **Dusky-capped Flycatchers** were all continuing birds. They were at North Weddington Recreation Park through March 25, at La Mirada's Creek Park through March 8, at Runnymede Park in Winnetka through March 16 and at Ladera Park in Ladera Heights through April 3.

Wintering **Ash-throated Flycatchers** were at Dennis the Menace Park in Downey on

March 8 (Richard Barth), at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area through March 10 and at Madrona March in Torrance through March 30.

Also wintering were **Tropical Kingbirds** continuing at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through February 17, at Entradero Park through April 11 and at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City through March 19.

In addition to a dozen **Plumbeous Vireos**, a **Cassin's Vireo** continued at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles through March 4 and another was at Del Valley Park in Lakewood on March 14 (John Fitch).

Very rare was a possible **Blue-headed Vireo**—yet to be accepted by the CBRC—that continued along the LA River in Atwater Village through March 27.

Purple Martins included one on San Clemente Island on March 17 (Tawni Gotbaum), three at El Dorado Park in Long Beach on March 24 (Manuel Duran) and one at Charlton Flat in the San Gabriel Mountains on April 6 (John Garrett).

Scarce away from the deserts was a **Bank Swallow** at Pyramid Lake on March 25 (David Bell).

A **Pacific Wren** continued in Santa Anita Canyon above Arcadia through March 10 and another was found in the Kewen Canyon area of Pasadena on March 16 (John Garrett).

Though present for the past couple of years, a male **Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** carrying nesting material on Edwards AFB just inside the county line on March 29 marks the first documented breeding in the county (John Garrett).

Adding to the list of coastal slope **Sage Thrashers** this spring was one at Abalone Cove in Rancho Palos Verdes on February 24 (Andy Kleinhesselink) and another at Trump National Golf Club on March 17 (Mike Miller).

Green-tailed Towhees continued at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino through February 25, at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia through March 28 and in Downey (Cat and Robert Waters). Others were discovered at Magic Mountain in Valencia on March 12 (Luke Tiller) and at Ballona Discovery Park in Playa del Rey on March 31 (Jesse Ross).

The **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Westchester Park continued through March 19.

A **Lark Bunting** at Garvey Ranch Park in Monterey Park on April 5 was a nice surprise (Richard Barth). After a long lapse in reports, the **Lark Bunting** at Agua Amarga Canyon in Palos Verdes Estates was reported again from April 7–11.

The **Swamp Sparrow** at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas continued to be reported through March 3.

The usual handful of **White-throated Sparrows** were present through the winter, but a much more interesting—and far more rare—

was a **Harris's Sparrow** at Hansen Dam discovered on April 7 (Stavros Christodoulides). It remained for days and was eventually seen by quite a few satisfied birders. It's possible this bird was a spring migrant that spent the winter to our south; more likely it spent the winter here undetected.

A **Dark-eyed "Pink-sided" Junco** continued at St. Andrew's Priory near Valyermo through March 31.

The **Rusty Blackbird** wintering at Almanson Park in Alhambra was last reported on March 24.

Quite rare in winter were two **Orchard Orioles** at Loyola Marymount University in Westchester on February 24 and seen through March 3 (Russel Stone, Mark Scheel).

A **Hooded Oriole** was at Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach on February 18 (Jun Cao & Bin Wu).

A **Baltimore Oriole** continued at the Veteran's Administration in Westwood through February 18 and one was on San Clemente Island on April 4, a rather odd date for a migrant (Tawni Gotbaum).

Rare in winter was a **Scott's Oriole** at San Ramon Preserve in Rancho Palos Verdes on February 17 (Dan Cooper).

Following a long gap in sightings, the wintering **Ovenbird** at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont was reported again on April 9.

Black-and-white Warblers continued at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia through April 4, at Madrona Marsh through April 11, at El Segundo Recreation Park through March 27 and at DeForest Park in Long Beach through April 7.

A **Lucy's Warbler** continued at North Weddington Recreation Park in North Hollywood through April 1 and a rare in winter **Nashville Warbler** was at Huntington Park Municipal Park on February 25 (Dessi Sieburth). Along Encino Creek in the Sepulveda Basin a **Virginia's Warbler** was found on February 19 (Rebecca Marschall).

Extremely rare in winter was a **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City on March 5 (Philip Carnehl). Given the date, this bird certainly wintered locally.

American Redstarts included one continuing at El Dorado Park in Long Beach through April 11, one at Vernon Hemingway Park in Carson from February 26–March 7 (Richard Barth) and another continuing in Long Beach through March 4.

The **Chestnut-sided Warbler** near Wheeler Park in Claremont was reported through March 10. **Palm Warblers** included one continuing at DeForest Park in Long Beach through March 3, one at Columbia Park in Torrance on March 11 (Brooke Keeney) and two others

continuing at Entradero Park in Torrance through April 7 and in Long Beach through March 25.

The **Pine Warbler** at Runnymede Park in Winnetka continued through March 19. Another at Van Nuys-Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park was not reported again after February 19.

A great find was a **Grace's Warbler** at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont from April 7–8 (David Rankin). As this species typically appears in California in late spring and summer and as fall and winter vagrant, a bird on this date undoubtedly spent the winter locally.

The Culver City Park **Painted Redstart** remained through March 24.

About average were the half dozen **Summer Tanagers** present during the period.

Black-headed Grosbeaks, rare in winter, continued at the Veteran's Administration in Westwood through February 18, in Sierra Madre through March 19 and at Malaga Dunes on the Palos Verdes Peninsula through March 4.

As a birding neophyte, my perception was that migration took place in April and May and again in September and October. While those are the prime times for the passage of songbirds, I couldn't have been much more wrong.

No matter what the month, at least some birds are on the move in southern California. It's truly a year round event.

As this column is published, there will still be over a month of spring migration ahead. Though numbers will be decreasing, plenty of birds are still moving through the area, and May and early June are normally the best time for vagrant songbirds. But even before those possibilities have ended, the earliest of southbound shorebirds—Wilson's Phalaropes—will be arriving.

Aside from all the obvious and popular places to go birding, there are many areas in the county that are lacking coverage. Exploring these spots, especially during the breeding season, is a great way to fill in the gaps in our knowledge. The deserts and mountains especially are full of many often neglected places. While these may not be the best areas to search for rarities, you never know what you may discover.

One of the most appealing aspects of birding is the discovery of things new and unknown. As much fun as it is chasing vagrants, making our own discoveries can be even more rewarding. Even in a county as populated with birders as ours is, there is a great deal of potential out there. 🐦

ALLOW ME THE HONOR TO INTRODUCE TO YOU: IRWIN WOLDMAN

A profile and interview of a most humble, charismatic, engaging and witty, interesting and lovable figure of the Southern California birding community.

By Louis Tucker

It would really be quite presumptuous and arrogant of me to think that I am introducing a man who actually needs no introduction. Irwin is one of the pillars of the birdwatching community, here in Southern California. If you are new to birding, it wouldn't take you a long time to meet this gracious, open hearted gentleman. He is, in fact, one of the first birders I met back in January 1987, when I arrived in LA. Irwin has been an avid birder, except for the first decade of his life, all of his life. You may run into him while you're out somewhere in the field. He has led countless numbers of field trips for Los Angeles Audubon and other Audubon birding chapters. If you're new to birding, Irwin is the type of birder that you would want to know. He is incredibly welcoming and very open hearted. He also freely dispenses his knowledge and expertise of his more than seven decades of birding experience. He is well traveled, nationally and internationally.

As an aside, one of the things Irwin did for this interview was to give me a type written list of the places he has birded around the world, nearly two dozen places; also including some of the very special birding places in this country. He has made visits to 49 states, 6 Canadian Provinces; and he has traveled as far north as the Attu Island in Alaska, and as far south as an Antarctic Cruise to Antarctica, and basically every continent. The bulk of the international trips were made in the past thirty years, with one special stint in Australia for ten days back in 1957 when he was in the army. There are many impressive places: Kenya and Tanzania with his daughters and Park East Tours from December 22, 2000 to January 2001, the Pantanal, Brazil in December of 2003 with the Pantanal Bird Club led by Braulio A. Carlos, a one day birding tour in August of '05 with a local guide in Cuba, Northern China with Sunbirds with Paul Holt as a guide. The Antarctic Cruise was led by Noah Stryker in January of 2014. It must also be noted that his three daughters threw him a wonderful 80th birthday bash upon his return from the real "down under".

This, in a sense, is truly unfair of me to pick out a few spots, because all of them on this list are worthy of note.

How did this all begin? Irwin told me that his grandparents were originally from Russia; and the Russians, at the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries utilized "pogroms". Pogroms were a system used to wreak havoc, use violence even to the point of extermination against their Jewish population and communities. They would harass, chase, use violence against the Jewish population, pushing them out of their villages and make the villages Russian. It is interesting to note



Irwin, Birdwatching a few months ago. Photo by Sandi Logan



Photo by Debbi Wolman

that even before the maniacal plans of Adolf Hitler, Russia and some other nations used heinous means that were anti-Semitic in nature and deed. (As a side note, in world history, ethnic and religious differences have always been dealt with by one ethnic group trying to destroy another. In the 20th century, Adolf Hitler was certainly the most vile and notorious. But, Josef Stalin also persecuted and exterminated Jews in big numbers in Russia. That's in addition to Russia's history of centuries of atrocities against Jews.)

His grandparents made the decision to migrate west. And, they migrated west to the United States; boarding a boat from Russia to America. At first, to Bradford, Pennsylvania then traveling north some 78 miles and settling in Buffalo, New York. His father was a pharmacist and his mother was a housewife/home maker.

I asked him when he became interested in birds. And, he told me that he was in the Boy Scouts and the Boy Scouts have a system of goals and achievements that gives out merit badges as one accomplishes these tasks. One of the merit badges involved bird watching. (This is an early form of citizen science that, I think in the earlier years of the Boy Scouts helps to build character and along with the other number of tasks one has to do in that organization makes a well-rounded, solid, caring, responsible individual.)

Irwin did a birding outing with his troop, and at 12 years old became hooked. He says he was really excited about seeing birds and learning about birds. You have to know that back in the 1940's this was not something that many people cared about. For a while his older brother would go birdwatching with him and would drive him places. But, eventually his older brother was interested in other things and Irwin was on his own. In the beginning this hobby was something he would do on the weekends. And, this created a bit of conflict, because his mother wanted him to be in Hebrew school on Saturdays. This took some negotiating. After a time of satisfying his mom with the Hebrew studies, he was able to convince her to let him go birdwatch. It became his passion.

He went to college to become a pharmacist, and worked in his father's pharmacy in Buffalo. To this day, he has worked as a pharmacist. He works every other Saturday as a pharmacist. But, I'm getting ahead of myself with Irwin's story.

Irwin's parents met and got married in Buffalo. They had four children of which he is their second child. His older brother was a pharmacist, like his dad. And, after high school, Irwin went to school to become a pharmacist, as well. And, of course, after the training, he had to take state boards, become licensed. He took the boards in New York, and Washington, DC. The boards for Washington, DC made you eligible for every state, except New York, Florida, and California. Eventually, as he needed, he took the Florida and California boards.

In 1956, Irwin enlisted in the army, and did his basic training at Fort Dix, in New Jersey. And he was later sent to Fort Cronkite, in Marin County, in northern California. One of the “kicks” I get with Irwin is his freely using Yiddish with me, because of my background and the community I grew up in, in southern New York and New York City. So, he points out the word “Cronkite” because it sounds exactly like the Yiddish/German word “Krankheit” which means “sickness”. And, we chuckle. He was a medic and he was assigned to the Nike guided missile base. He would set up a first aid station whenever the missiles were being fueled and defueled.

Being in Marin County, he told me he was in a great place to observe birds on migration. He told me: “I noticed Golden Plovers flying through and I reported the sightings to the Golden Gate Audubon Society. And, they told me that they don’t get Golden Plovers, that I must be mistaken”. And, “Who are you anyway?” We laughed. He had a twinkle in his voice. And added: “Now they get them regularly.” (You must remember this is 1956). With Golden Gate Audubon he met the late Rich Stallcup’s parents. And, the Stallcups would take Irwin birding around the area. (Rich unfortunately passed away in December of 2012, after a long illness. He was one of the co-founders of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory).

Toward the end of his first year, he figured he needed to go overseas. He said: “If I didn’t do it at the time I would be stuck in a ‘suck’ job”. So he put in to go to Europe. However, a classification sergeant told him that an allocation for his MOS (military occupational specialty) was available in Hawaii. Irwin said: “Put me in!” He told me that he was all for Hawaii, rather than be stuck in the infantry in the winter in Europe. I joked a little with him, mentioning that in spite of his Russian ancestry, Russia having really cold severe winters, and being

from Buffalo, New York, one of the colder winter regions in the lower 48 states, he is a warm weather man.

So, he is then in the 25th Infantry at Fort Scofield on Oahu. He had continually harassed the sergeant who sent him to Honolulu. The classification sergeant in, Honolulu, realized that he was a pharmacist and wondered if he could type, which he could, so, he was spared the infantry. His office job was to assign soldiers to jobs according to their background. That was a bit out of sync when it comes to what he should be doing. He said he went on only one bird walk with Hawaiian Audubon. And, they took him to the central part of Oahu where they had keys to, as Irwin describes it, a miraculous tropical garden. It had roots shooting up twenty, even thirty feet in the air. And, it had bromeliads hanging down. The place was gorgeous, hot and humid.

During this time, he wanted to take a vacation, before he would be sent back stateside. He wanted to go to some place exotic. He decided against Japan, because it would be too cold in the winter. He put in an allocation for Australia. He would go there through the US government or the UK government which would go through London; but that came back negative. That route would stop at Christmas Island and they were doing atomic bomb testing there and no foreign nationals were allowed. So he went commercial all the way down to Fiji and was on “standby”. That held him up for five days. He then decided to go commercial all the way to Sidney. He “kicked” around Australia for two weeks by bus and at the end got a “hop” with British Hastings back to Fiji. This was his only time in Australia. And, he told me that the then current Australian bird guide was not a very big book at all - more like a magazine. From Fiji, he got a reservation on a cruise ship and went from Suva to Honolulu. He said he didn’t see a

lot of birds on the ocean. On the ship he met up with a Canadian and another American. And, they radioed ahead to rent three new Chevy convertibles. They went “joy riding” around and the group expanded to sixteen other travelers. At the end, they had to drop off two cars in Waikiki, and the sixteen piled into Irwin’s rental and as he dropped the gang off at their ship, he, of course, is caught by an MP, who asked: “Are you in the service?” Irwin replied: “Yes.” And, he wrote Irwin up; but, Irwin said that he was going to be rotated back to the states anyway.

Back stateside, he had done his New York and Washington, DC pharmacy boards for licensing. And, he went down to Florida and took those boards. When they shipped him back to California, he sent for his books to study for the California boards. He got his license to work in California. And, he worked part time in Oakland. Then they shipped him back to Hawaii. They allowed him to work in the pharmacy until the next state boards came around; but, he decided not to take them. “i had enough of those boards”, he said.

After being discharged, he went back to Buffalo and worked with his father in one of his father’s stores for two years. At this point, he decided that California was definitely calling and he told his family: “I love you” but he had to go to California. His parents didn’t understand this California “thing”. But, the first summer he was in California, his parents came out to see what the draw of California was. He took them around to all the sites. And, the second week, he took off, and drove them around, up the coast to Monterey, Carmel, San Francisco, Yosemite and Las Vegas. After that, they never questioned the California decision again. He’s been here ever since, except when his father had a heart attack, he went back to Buffalo one summer to work in his father’s pharmacy. And, then returned to California—he was not going to suffer any more Buffalo winters.

Irwin was married for nineteen years, in 1963 and divorced in 1982. He has three very accomplished daughters: Sandi Logan, a casting director; Debbi, who travels around the world hosting various corporations; and Tami, an educator in a private school in Los Angeles. After his divorce, he sold his pharmacy in 1983 and worked as a pharmacist part time. Meanwhile, he became a commercial real estate agent. First he worked as a business broker, selling business to business. Then he went into commercial real estate. He didn't want to do the home real estate business for a few reasons. He didn't want to deal with the petty haggling over things like: "I don't like the color of that fence" or, I don't like the fixtures in this place. And, he wanted his weekends to go birding.

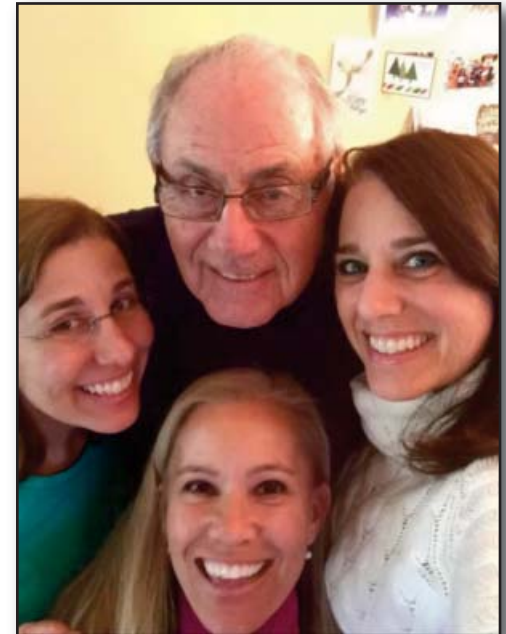
There are wonderful constants in Irwin's life: family, pharmacy, and let us not forget his passion for birding. I gather from our conversations that it really doesn't matter what birds he's watching - it's that he's watching creatures with feathers. He told me though, that lately because of little sight difficulties and he does favor things like gulls and terns. I've been out with him, on walks and field trips numerous times. I have carpoled with him on these trips numerous times; and he never lets us pay him for gas. He is a man who is generous on many occasions. I also remember sharing a tent with him in southeast Arizona, some eighteen years ago. We met up with a number of birders from around the LA area to scour as much of southeast Arizona as possible on a holiday weekend.

For this interview, or I have to admit, interviews, we first went to Malibu Lagoon. LA Audubon had purchased for this interview a digital recorder. And, when I picked Irwin up in Studio City, we started talking and the recorder was working and then for some reason, the recorder just stopped working. So, with much embarrassment, I asked if we could redo

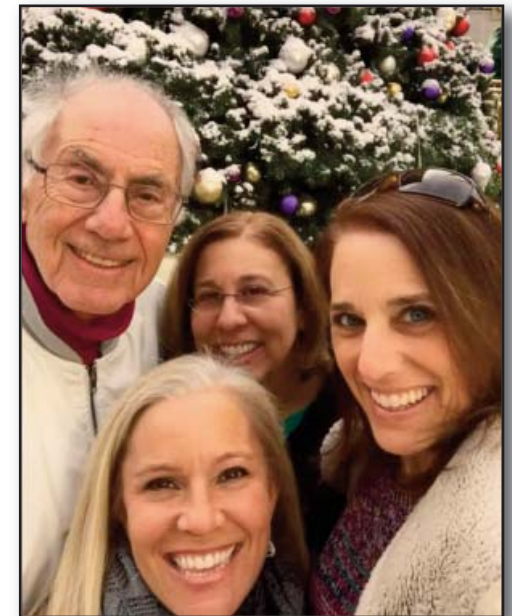
the interview. He was willing to do it again, and I chose to do it on the Ballona walk. I worked with the recorder. I even had a technician check it out. I was doing the right things with it. So, I picked him up several weeks later and we did the Ballona walk, which happens every third Sunday of the month. This time everything we talked about was recorded. And, both times this kind man took me to lunch. That's the kind of "mensch" Irwin is.

I would certainly be pretty remiss if I didn't mention Irwin's international birding travels. Already mentioned is the travel to Australia for 10 days in 1957 by himself. But, from January of 1990 to May of 2017, he has been to a lot of great birding spots around the globe. In January of 1990, in January, 2-10 he visited Attu Island and Anchorage, Alaska with ATTours. In December 2000 to January 2001 he was in Kenya and Tanzania with his three daughters with Park East Tours, led by Peter Kjuguno. In July of 2001 with a trip sponsored by Vent and led by Marshall Iliff and Bob Sunstrom, he observed Arizona Hummingbirds. In August of 2002 he did High Island and Bolivar Flats in Texas with Vent, with the same leaders. He's done Costa Rica, the Pantanal in Brazil, and the Dry Tortugas in Florida. He spent one day in Cuba. And in Panama, stayed at the Canopy Lodge, Canopy Tower in El Valle which was a Vent tour.

In May and June of 2007 found him in Northern China for three weeks with Sunbirds led by Paul Holt. December 21, 2008 to January 5, 2009, he was in South Africa on the Western Cape and Karoo with Rockjumpers led by Simon Bellingham. In May of 2011 for three weeks, he was in Vietnam from Ho Chi Minh to Hanoi, again with Vent led by David Bishop. His trip to Antarctica started in Buenos Aires, Argentina and then to Usuaia, Argentina where the group took boat trips to local islands and land nearby. That was January 7-9 and the January 10-19 in 2014 was the Antarctica Cruise with One Ocean Tours led



Irwin and his three daughters. Photo by Debbi Wolman



Irwin and his three daughters this past December. Photo by Sandi Logan

by the expert birder and author Noah Stryker. And, in his return to LA he was feted with an 80th birthday bash thrown by his daughters. In December 2014 to January 2015, he and other LA birders led by Jim Moore went to Bosque Del Apache, New Mexico. February 6, 2016 found him in the United Arab Emirates. Then he was on his way to Northern India for 10 days with Rockjumpers. And lastly, from April 30 to May 7 he went to Wild Spain, in 2017, with Birdquest led by Dani Lopez-Velasco.

He told me during lunch, that he would like to go to Iceland. Also, he doesn't get upset or troubled if he's on a bird tour, or on a walk if he misses seeing a bird. I get the feeling that he takes in what he can and has no regrets about what he doesn't see or doesn't do.

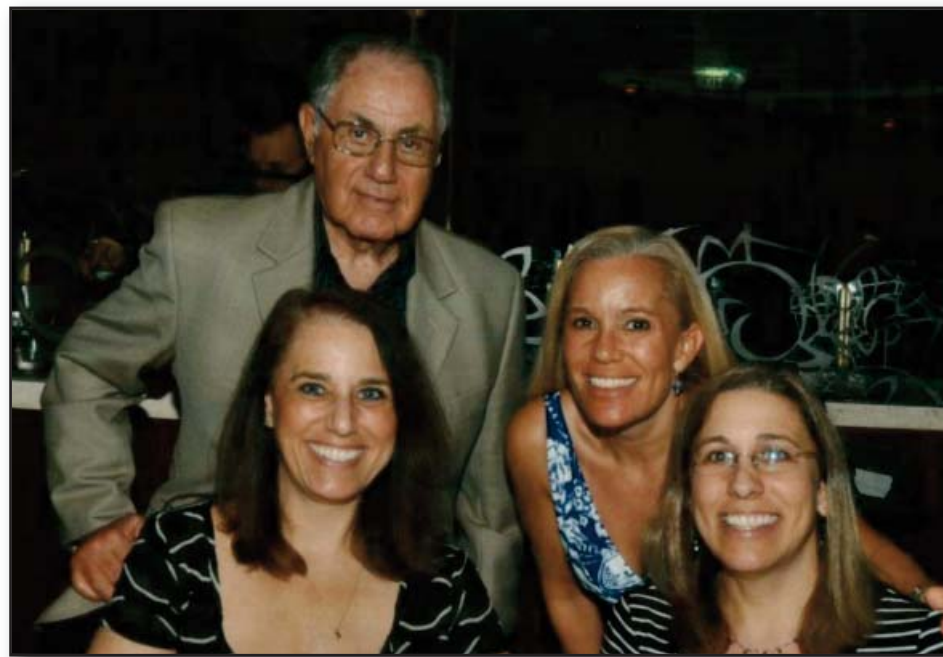
I don't know about you; but, I am impressed. When we were about to leave Malibu Lagoon, we met a young couple who had just gotten into birding. They were just starting their walk around the area. I watched Irwin's whole countenance light up. He talked to them about what we had already seen: the beautiful Osprey that was sitting on a small snag on a small island to the left of the path as you start out towards the beach. He mentioned the Gadwall pairs that were there and some of the other things around with Killdeer calling as we were talking. But, as I perceive his nature, he was filling them with the birding information of the day. And, he was giving them suggestions as to how to keep connected with these fine feathered creatures. And, the lovely couple was happy to receive the tips.

I will also add this: Irwin connects with new faces and invites them to join him, to follow along. He takes email addresses and for many years sends out birding information to those who wish to stay connected. He's been doing this for years. I privately call him our birding social director. He keeps up with many of the Audubon chapters around southern California. And, when he was driving, he would invite people to carpool with him. And, now that he has given up his car and driving altogether, friends come and pick him up; or, he uses Uber. He is out birding whenever possible. He is also faithful to his family, where he has relatives all over the country. And, he flies back and forth for family events, frequently.

There is another thing I admire about him: during lunch at Jerry's Deli in Studio City, while he was talking about his part time pharmacy work, some of which he does pro bono, the importance of keeping your mind active. He is constantly learning. And, that is great wisdom. I totally agree with this; because I also believe that when you stop taking in information, and augmenting your knowledge in some way, (constantly learning), you are dying, not only a physical death, but a death intellectually. Somehow you shut off your mind, and that is not necessarily a voluntary action. Whenever I've met up with Irwin, he tells me and shares with

others something new. I witness this when he, every month or so, hands me several birding and nature magazines. It's also apparent as he keeps up working even part time as a pharmacist. He shares a lot of this information freely.

He also has an incredible wit, an impish wit. And that wit gives way to more puns than you ever could imagine exists. He's a genuinely good natured guy, even in these days where he has a few physical challenges. He "soldiers" through. I don't think I've ever seen him depressed, or even down. He knows and accepts his limitations; but, he fights on. I love the fact that he's not "down and out". I, personally, have great admiration and respect for this man. He has a lot to give and we can learn so much from him; not only about birds, but, also about life. Because Irwin Woldman lives life, he's constantly searching and finding new things. I have witnessed his talking about a number of the trips he's taken around the world. One that really sticks in my mind was at his 80th birthday bash when he talked almost rapturously about his Antarctica trip, almost down to every detail. He tells a good story. And, it's a story that makes you want to get up and plan a trip to these places. I hope he gets to Iceland. And, I know, upon his return, there will be a wonderful recounting of what he experienced. It's an honor to know you, Irwin Woldman, and to be your friend. 🐦



Irwin with his three daughters. Photo by Debbi Woldman

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 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



Nick & Mary Freeman
Field Trip
Chairperson
& Trip Leaders

Sunday, May 6

Mojave Area with Butterbredt Springs

SIGN-UP REQUIRED, NO FEE, LIMIT 12 MAX.

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
(after May 1 to: mnfreeman@earthlink.net). Provide: name(s), cell phone #. (12 max.)

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.

*NOTE: Between May 1 & May 29, send email
sign-up or questions to:
mnfreeman@earthlink.net.*



The "Tree of Africa" at the mouth of Big Sycamore Canyon. The low angle of the rainbow is due to both the sun, low in the winter sky, and the distance between the photographer and the rain in the distance. Tejon Ranch

Sunday, May 13

Tejon Ranch

**\$20 FEE PROBABLY WAIVED FOR ALL,
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. The reason that we will (probably) access the Ranch for free this time, is that our group will also be keeping track of all birds sighted – which many birders do anyway – as part of the concurrent Bio-Blitz that day. Important Note: regarding last-minute jockeying for spots on May 1 or later, or other inquiries, contact head cat wrangler Louis Tucker at pazzoluigi@yahoo.com as Susan will be out of town much of May.

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 BEFORE MAY 1:

Please pre-register by email sent to: membership@laaudubon.org until May 1. Include the email address, cell phone number and Zip Code for each participant.

HOW TO SIGN-UP AFTER MAY 1:

To pre-register after May 1, contact Louis at pazzoluigi@yahoo.com.

Do NOT mail a check, as hopefully the trip will be free. In case the Bio-Blitz thing falls through, bring your checkbook and Louis will designate who to write and hand a check to (\$20 adult / \$10 youth). The first 12 participants will receive an email confirmation. (NO drop-ins.)

For more information email: pazzoluigi@yahoo.com

Friday, May 18

Small Owls of the San Gabriels #2

SEE PAGE ____

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. Contact information WILL BE released to others inquiring about carpooling unless requested otherwise.

Friday, June 22

Small Owls of the San Gabriels #3

SEE PAGE ____

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!

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.

Saturday, August 4

San Gabriel Mountains / Mt. Wilson Observatory

TOUR FEE: \$15/head (\$12 over 62) payable at Mt. Wilson, SIGN-UP MAX: 16

Leaders: Mary and Nick Freeman. We will bird the morning away up in the conifers, buy lunch at Newcomb's Ranch (the Biker Bar) and end up at Mount Wilson Observatory after noon, to take the 1 p.m. guided 2-hour tour around the grounds and facility, including the 100-inch telescope. The one-mile walking tour is unsuitable for individuals with respiratory and heart problems or with

limited mobility. It will be hot, but not as hot as L.A! Please visit the observatory website at www.mtwilson.edu for more exciting and cautionary details before the trip. Forest Service Adventure Pass is required (\$5/day or \$30/yr). Meet at 7:00 a.m. along the frontage road for Angeles Forest Hwy just north of the 210 Fwy in La Canada. Turn N on ACH, take the second right (Milmda Dr.), and a quick left (Flanders Rd.). Meet along the first 50-yard stretch, fed and gassed up, and we will carpool from here. Plan to stay out until 3 or 4 p.m.

Sunday, August 19

Salton Sea

\$15 FEE, SIGN-UP 8 CARS LIMIT

Leaders: Nick and Mary Freeman. Anticipate 95-105°F, and bring plenty of water. We will see Yellow-footed (only place in the U.S.) and Laughing gulls, Black Tern, Abert's Towhee, and Gila Woodpecker. We may also see Wood Stork, Lesser Nighthawk, and Stilt Sandpiper. Lots of driving, so come with a friend, as singles will be bumped if we fill up the trip. Reserve by e-mail; and mail \$15, cell# and address. Brawley Inn - (760) 344-1199 offers a better continental breakfast, \$80, and there is a decent restaurant next door. America's Best Value Inn in Westmorland - (760) 351-7100 is \$70. Ask for AAA discount. Continental breakfast. Meet at Cattle Call Park at 5:30 a.m., and bird until about 3 p.m. Bring lunch, FRS radios, scope, sun-block, minimum 1 gallon of water each, and a big hat. Other lodging suggestions and information in e-mailer.

September 26 – 30

Western Field Ornithologists Conference right here in Ventura!

Check www.westernfieldornithologists.org for details. Whether beginner or field biologist, this event and the many field trips / workshops / lectures / quiz sessions are not to be missed!

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** **May 5 & June 2** **Time: 9:00–Noon**

Los Angeles Audubon Society hosts the ongoing 1st Sat. of the month OPEN WETLANDS event at the BALLONA SALT MARSH. Binoculars will be available to borrow, and volunteers will help visitors view aquatic invertebrates through microscopes, learn about the unique ecosystems found at Ballona, and view birds through powerful 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** **May 6 & June 3** **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
May 13 (Mother's Day) & June 10
Time: 8:30 – 12:00

TAKE MOM FOR A BIRD WALK ON MOTHER'S DAY!

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood* Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban oak woodland nature preserve. We are likely to see the resident Wood Ducks as well chaparral bird species such as California Quail, Spotted and California towhees, Bewick's Wren, California Thrasher Song Sparrow engaging in spring activities such as singing, mating displays, nesting and feeding young. Many resident birds began nesting in early spring (March and April);, if we are lucky we may see some fledgling. We will also look for migrants such as flycatchers, vireos, warblers and orioles, grosbeak; some of these birds will be staying in Franklin Canyon to nest.

Meet in the main parking lot for the Sooky Goldman Nature Center.

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

BALLONA WETLANDS BIRD WALK
3rd Sunday of the month
May 20 & June 17 (Father's Day)
Time: 8:00 a.m.

TAKE DAD FOR A BIRD WALK ON FATHER'S DAY!

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; wbutorance@gmail.com



KENNETH HAHN STATE RECREATION AREA
4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles 90056
3rd Saturday of the month
May 19 & June 16
(no walks in July or August)
Time: 8:00 – Noon

Leaders: *Eric and Ann Brooks, Dick Barth*

This trip covers landscaped parkland, a man-made lake and natural coastal scrub habitats within the Baldwin Hills. It is spring and we are likely to see the resident birds such as Nuttall's Woodpecker, Black and Say's Phoebes, Cassin Kingbirds, California and Spotted Towhee, Red-tailed Hawk, 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 Hooded and Bullocks Orioles, Barn Swallow, Western Kingbird and Western Bluebird.

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. 🐦



Monthly Program Presentation

How cities affect evolution and behavior in the Dark-eyed Junco and the House Sparrow



Dr. Pamela Yeh will describe research from her laboratory at UCLA addressing if and how juncos and house sparrows change their behaviors in urban environments, and how that might ultimately affect their ability to survive and thrive in cities.

WHEN: Wednesday, May 9 at 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM

WHERE: Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook

ADDRESS: 6300 Hetzler Road, Culver City, CA 90232

Least Tern Monitoring at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge

By Carolyn Vance, USFWS Volunteer, Seal Beach NWR

Eyes on the Colony (EOTC), the Least Tern predator monitoring program, needs your help! Last year was not as successful as it could have been with no more than 16 fledglings ever seen at one time out of 120+ chicks. This was primarily due to all the predation by Peregrine falcons and Red-tailed hawks. After battling Great-horned Owls and Kestrels the last couple of years, and having a great 2016 year, we are dismayed with last year's results.

We need to document any predation to the terns. Permitting standards require that we thoroughly document and identify avian predators which are taking Least terns before requesting their removal. So, the Refuge needs more help observing avian predators at times when they are active.

If you can commit to a minimum of 4 hours a week to EOTC, or just want more information, please contact **Refuge Manager Rick Nye** via email at: Richard_nye@fws.gov. Historically, we watched in four hour shifts from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. You must obtain a badge from the Navy to access the Refuge by filling out some background paperwork and must be a U.S. Citizen. Training and equipment is provided.

I adore doing EOTC! A car is the best birding blind, and besides watching our wonderful Least terns going back and forth, you get up close looks at Belding's Savannah sparrows, swallows, and all the other birds and critters that call the Refuge home and/or breed here.