



Drawing by  
Guy Coheleach

# THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

**Pasadena Audubon Society**  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 61 — No. 5

To bring the excitement of birds to our community through birding, education and the conservation of bird habitats. November-January 2013-14



**Photo by Lance Benner**  
**Looks about the same in color! Check out [www.pasadenaudubon.org](http://www.pasadenaudubon.org)**

## American Dipper

Inhabitants of fast-moving streams, American Dippers are the only truly aquatic passerine in North America. Their name derives from their incessant bobbing motion when they perch. American Dippers feed primarily on aquatic insects and their larvae, and their presence is a sign of a healthy stream. If the water becomes polluted or clogged with runoff from logging or erosion, dippers will abandon it.

Dippers can swim on the surface, propelling themselves with their feet like a duck, and underwater, where they use their stubby wings like flippers. They can walk on stream bottoms while completely submerged. They can swim in streams with currents strong enough to knock over an adult human.

Why do dippers dip? The answer to this simple question is unknown. Curiously, among the five dipper species worldwide, only the species in North America and Eurasia regularly dip, but the two species in South America do not. The reasons for the difference are not understood.

Dippers in California occur from the Oregon border as far south as Palomar Mountain, where there's a small population primarily on one creek. Near Pasadena, dippers are local year-round residents in Big Santa Anita Canyon, in Eaton Canyon upstream from the bridge, in Big Tujunga Canyon, and along the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. American Dippers formerly lived in the Arroyo Seco upstream from Gould Campground, but they disappeared following the Station Fire in 2009.

American Dippers occur from Central America to northern Alaska, where some overwinter in unfrozen rivers. Dippers are adapted for very cold conditions because they have a large number of thick contour feathers, a low metabolism, and a high oxygen capacity in their blood. American Dippers in Alaska can survive temperatures as low as -57 degrees Fahrenheit.

*Lance Benner*

## President's Perch

Fall is my favorite time of the year. My reliable Ruby-crowned Kinglet has returned to my backyard, along with countless Yellow-rumped Warblers. I hope all of you been able to get out and bird during fall migration as well as to enjoy the cooler temperatures and fall colors. On the heels of the fall PAS will participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count — December 14th. CBC is an Audubon tradition that is over 100 years old. All levels of birders are welcome. For more info please read Jon Fisher's article on page 3.

Did you know that PAS is the envy of many Chapters? We have a large active group, excellent speakers, dedicated environmentalists, fabulous field trips, and an education program that is top notch. I would ask all of you to find a way to get more involved with PAS since we want to continue to grow and reach even more people in our community. There are plenty of opportunities for all... step up to the plate and lend a hand. Just ask any board member and I am sure we can find a fit for your talents!

Happy Birding,

*Deni Sinnott*

## In This Issue

|                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| <b>Programs</b>      | <b>2</b>    |
| <b>Conservation</b>  | <b>2, 3</b> |
| <b>Education</b>     | <b>3, 8</b> |
| <b>Sightings</b>     | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>Field Trips</b>   | <b>5, 7</b> |
| <b>Calendar</b>      | <b>6</b>    |
| <b>Announcements</b> | <b>9</b>    |
| <b>New Members</b>   | <b>10</b>   |

### November Program

#### Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey

Wednesday, November 20, 2013  
7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Khara Strum

The Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey (PFSS) helps guide the conservation of shorebirds and their habitats along the Pacific Coast of North America. In California, over 40 projects participate in this annual survey. Shorebird counts and habitat data, collected by professional biologists and over 300 Citizen Scientists, are compiled through online data entry in the California Avian Data Center.

Interactive user applications on the website ([www.prbo.org/pfss](http://www.prbo.org/pfss)) provide summaries of shorebird data at different scales, by habitat type, or by region. The PFSS will help us understand the needs of shorebirds in our changing environment. Come learn from Khara Strum, waterbird ecologist with Point Blue Conservation Science, how you can be part of the team and help count shorebirds!

### December Events

#### Christmas Bird Count Pre-count Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2013  
7:30 pm—9:00 pm

Take your claim to a territory in the Christmas Bird Count circle, or team up with another group. Newcomers are welcome and will get help joining a group.

#### Christmas Bird Count Dinner

Saturday, December 14, 2013  
6:00 pm—9:00 pm

Enjoy a catered dinner and beverages for only \$10.00 per person! Join your fellow birders for delicious food and great stories.

RSVP by December 9th. Mail checks payable to PAS to the address on page 10. Add "CBC" to the memo line of the check. For questions contact Chrystal Watson at 626-794-9233 or [xtiwatson@gmail.com](mailto:xtiwatson@gmail.com)

### January Program

#### Tales from an Urban Birder

Wednesday, January 15, 2014  
7:30 pm—9:00 pm

Richard Barth

For much of the past decade, birder Richard Barth has been concentrating his efforts on Los Angeles County and particularly the L.A. metropolitan area — combing the parks, rivers, and shorelines looking for extraordinary birds in ordinary places. Tonight Dick shares with us strategies for finding interesting birds during L.A.'s four birding seasons, photographs and other experiences of his favorite finds, other anecdotes from the field, and commentary on the life of birds and birders in the urban environment.

*General meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (address on back cover). Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm.*

### Christmas Bird Count

While children look forward to December 25th with great excitement, what gets most birders motivated at that time of year are Christmas Bird Counts. As the year draws to a close, what better way to end it than by participating in the Pasadena-SanGabriel Valley CBC? And after that you'll still have ten shopping days left.

Newcomers are always welcome on the Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley CBC. If you're new to birding or to Christmas Counts, this is a great opportunity to learn more about our local birds. We will team you up with more experienced participants, or you can cover an area on your own.

The Pasadena CBC has charted many changes in the birdlife of the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding areas over the years. Once common, Spotted Doves have virtually vanished. Loggerhead Shrikes have declined markedly, now being seen only as scarce winter visitors. On the other hand we have seen Great-tailed Grackles, Eurasian Collared-Doves and Allen's Hummingbirds increase dramatically. Species such as Cooper's Hawk and Merlin have increased on the count and regionally since the use of DDT has ceased.

The count has also helped document parrots and parakeets of more than a half dozen species as they colonized the area through releases and escapes since the 1970s. Similar but more recent is the story of Nutmeg Mannikins and Orange Bishops.

As one of about two thousand CBCs across the country, our Pasadena count data has tracked and corroborated these population trends. All sightings from every one of our counts reside in the CBC database where anyone can access it.

The center point of our circle is the intersection of San Gabriel Boulevard and Duarte Road. The territory covered extends seven and one half miles in every direction from that spot, thus making a circle fifteen miles in diameter. Aside from the notable man-made attractions of this area, including the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl, JPL, Cal Tech and the Mt. Wilson Observatory, the San Gabriel Valley and environs also host many species of birds. In fact, over 280 species have been recorded during the count's six and a half decades of existence.

Some of the important areas to be found within in the count circle include Big Santa Anita Canyon, all of the Whittier Narrows area, the San Gabriel River, Peck Road Water Conservation Park, Eaton Canyon, the Huntington Gardens, the L.A. County Arboretum and a portion of Santa Fe Dam. The northern border of the circle tops out at 5,700 foot Mt. Wilson; a location that offers the possibility of both regular montane species and higher elevation birds that may have moved downslope by late fall and early winter.

**Continued on page 3**

## Conservation

### Hahamongna Habitat Faces Doom

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works is releasing its long-awaited Environmental Impact Report for its enormous plan to remove 4.5 million cubic yards of sediment from Hahamongna Watershed Park. As I sit here writing this, they haven't released it yet, but word on the street is that it's bad. Very bad. Horrific, in fact. Could it be that despite countless comments from the public demanding an environmentally-friendly "forever plan" for sediment removal, the County is planning to scrape out 100 acres of habitat and keep it permanently plant- and habitat-free?

If this worst-case scenario turns out to be true, we need to mobilize to save our beloved Hahamongna. The County has three meetings at which they will present their EIR. Please attend one of these meetings:

Wednesday, November 6, from 6-8 pm at the Rose Bowl Visitor's Locker Room, 1001 Rose Bowl Avenue. Park in Lot F, enter at Gate A

Thursday, November 14, from 6:30-8:30 pm at Jackson Elementary School Auditorium, 593 West Woodbury Road, Altadena, Park in rear lot or on North Spaulding Place.

Saturday, November 16 from 2-4 pm at La Canada Flintridge Community Center, 4469 Chevy Chase Drive, La Canada Flintridge. Park in Community Center/pre-school lot.

For more information, visit [www.lasedimentmanagement.com/devilsgate](http://www.lasedimentmanagement.com/devilsgate)

Thank you for all you do!

*Laura Garrett*

### Los Angeles River Restoration—At Last!

After many years of feasibility studies, the Army Corps of Engineers is finally ready to begin some ecosystem restoration work on the Los Angeles River. This is a project of regional significance, restoring the River from Griffith Park to Downtown Los Angeles, and it will affect the Arroyo Seco as well, particularly at the confluence of the LA River and the Arroyo Seco. The ACOE developed many alternate proposals and has narrowed down its choices to four plans: Alternates 10, 13, 16, and 20. The Corps prefers Alternate 13, but we prefer Alternate 20 and ask that you support it during the public comment period.

Alternate 20 is the Cadillac of the four choices. While all four alternates focus on restoring habitat and providing habitat connectivity for wildlife, Alternate 20 provides the most of these. It includes the Verdugo Wash which connects to the San Gabriel Mountains and the Verdugo Hills. It connects the Los Angeles State Historical Park in Chinatown to the River with a wetlands interface. It restores more streams, including daylighting some which have been "lost" for years, thereby providing more habitat connectivity. It provides more acreage of habitat restoration in places like Elysian Valley, the confluence, and Piggyback Yard. It would provide many more places for us to go birding!

Yes, it is more expensive: a little over \$1 billion as opposed to almost \$500 million for Alternate 13. But this is a long-term regional project, one that would bring wetlands back to the LA River on a large scale. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we need to take it.

Please support Alternate 20 by writing to Josephine R. Axt, Ph.D; Chief, Planning Division; US Army Corps of Engineers; Los Angeles District; P.O.Box 532711; ATTN: Ms Erin Jones, CESPL-PD-RN; Los Angeles, CA 90053-2325. Or you can email comments to [lariverstudy@usace.army.mil](mailto:lariverstudy@usace.army.mil). The deadline for comments is Monday, November 18, 2013. Thank you!

*Laura Garrett*

### Christmas Bird Count, continued

From that list it should be obvious that there's plenty of diversity in the circle, and the fact that well over 150 species are routinely found on count day demonstrates it. Adding another dimension to the count are the unexpected vagrants that inevitably turn up. Some are discovered well in advance of the count but others surprise us on count day. Already- as of late September- the Tropical Kingbird that spent the last few winters at Legg Lake has returned and should remain for the count.

Each year is different from the last one in some way and sometimes in a number of ways. Thus far, there has been no significant movement of montane species into the lowlands. Birds such as Red-breasted Nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees, which were prevalent last fall and winter, have been absent or nearly so.

The 2013 Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 14. We'll have the usual pre-count meeting at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center on Wednesday, December 11 at 7:30pm. At the meeting there will be an overview of the count and checklists and other count materials will be available. We'll also review procedures and assign count areas. If you can't be at the meeting, you can still sign up for an area to count via e-mail.

As always, we will hold the traditional post-count dinner and wrap-up on count night. We'll not only have some good food, but be among the first to find out what interesting birds were found on the count. Check the Wrentit for details.

For additional information, please contact count coordinator Jon Fisher at [JonF60@hotmail.com](mailto:JonF60@hotmail.com).

*Jon Fisher*



Darren Dowell won the race to photograph the first White-crowned Sparrow of fall, on September 17. His prize: "Rare Bird Alert," a CD by Steve Martin and the Steep Canyon Rangers. Watch for another "race" contest this spring!

## Reports and Sightings

### Ventura County

Saturday, September 21, 2013

We had a fun and birdy trip to Ventura County, where we were accompanied by co-leaders Dave Pereksta and Larry Sansone, who shared with us their extensive knowledge of the local hotspots and the birds we found there.

We started with land birds: our first stop was Bob Kildee Park, which was alive with migrant warblers (Orange-crowned, Yellow, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, Wilsons, Yellow-rumped, Yellowthroat) and many Warbling Vireos.

Then on to the Laguna tamarisk grove, which often attracts strange migrants that have strayed from their usual paths. There we found John Garrett, who was on his way to his wintering grounds in Santa Cruz, and also several warblers and flycatchers. One bird was a possible Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, which is extremely rare in the West but unfortunately looks very similar to a Pacific-slope Flycatcher. Photos are still being reviewed to determine the identity of this bird.

The birdiest place we went was Marina Park, at the Ventura harbor. No question that the highlight was a pair of Boobies: a Brown Booby standing on a channel marker, and a Blue-footed Booby on the breakwater. Both were close enough to get great comparisons through a scope. We also found 3 species of Cormorant, Black and Ruddy Turnstones, Surfbirds, Wandering Tattlers, a few juvenile Short-billed Dowitchers, and a Red Knot. Black Oystercatchers were there too, along with an American x Black Oystercatcher hybrid. A sizable flock of Black-bellied Plovers and an even larger flock of a few hundred Sanderlings landed next to us on the beach. Not to be outdone, a Peregrine Falcon blasted through the flock, but came up empty.

The last stop was Arnold Rd. The sod farms were not as birdy as we hoped, but the small stream at the end of the road made the stop worthwhile: the last bird of the trip, and the 81st species of the day, was a Clapper Rail that walked out of the reeds almost directly beneath us as we stood on the bridge.

*Mark Scheel*

### Field Marks? What Field Marks?

A little quiz: Experienced birders might not need the field marks that are missing in this photo, but it'll puzzle some of the beginners. At least the photo reproduces well in black-and-white. Answer on page 9.



### A Trip to the Motherland

South Africa, 2013

I was born in South Africa and most of my family still lives there. I came to the U.S. in 1981 and married a U.S. citizen. Now I am a dual citizen. I was never a birder in South Africa. I would have considered it too boring and mundane. Back then I wanted to know about "culture," which I somehow thought South Africa was lacking.

In order to finish a requirement for my graduate degree in 2009, I had to study a science subject. My teacher for the science coursework introduced me to a group in Santa Barbara for beginning birders. We visited great areas, and slowly I became more and more interested. I think it filled a void, since I love the outdoors, and was trying to hook up my passion for the outdoors with an activity.

In summer 2013 I flew to South Africa for my high school reunion. I discovered that many of my classmates were birders. In fact one of my oldest friends (since elementary school) knew a lot about birds. I was there to see friends and family, but I took the opportunity to go birding on the side.

South Africa has a climate similar to Southern California and I visited during their mild winter. I was approaching birding there with excitement and mixed feelings, plus some guilt that I didn't know the local birds as well as I thought I should. Slowly, with a little persistence, I was able to recall. It is amazing how much one learns from culture and folklore and everyday conversation: My father complaining the "finches" got to the fruit; the "kwe" bird (Gray Lourie) named after its peculiar call almost as if teasing you with "come and get me!", and which is frequently featured in novels and other literature.



*Gray Lourie. Photo by Peter Giesler*

My first sighting, Hadeda Ibis, are bigger than chickens, hardly needing any introduction since they are so plentiful, and considered by many to be the "alarm clock" of Africa for their extremely loud and frequent call. At night they roost far away. Early in the morning they fly in V-formation similar to geese,

**Continued on page 7**

## Field Trips

### Elysian Park

**Saturday, November 9, 2013**

**7:30 am — noon**

We will search out residents, migrants, and vagrants (the feathered kind, that is) on this four and a half hour walk. Besides finding many of the expected woodpeckers and perching birds, some fall visitors may have arrived, including possibly a Redstart or two (Painted or American)! We will bird in Solano Canyon and other locations as time permits.

Take the Pasadena (110) Freeway south, exit on Academy Way and go straight about 0.3 mile to the traffic light (Park Dr/ Solano Canyon). Turn right and go about 0.3 mile to the parking area on your left.

*Sue Horton & Ron Cyger*



### Big Santa Anita Canyon

**Saturday, November 23, 2013**

**6:30 am — noon**

Join us for a fall hike into Big Santa Anita Canyon as we search for American Dpoper, Pacific Wren, Canyon Wren, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and other lower montane species. Pacific Wrens were present here in November of 2010, 2011, and 2012 and are probably regular fall/winter visitors.

We're planning to hike past Sturtevant Falls as far as the Cascade Picnic area for total of about six miles. Parking at Chantry Flats is often tight on weekends, so please carpool.

Bring sturdy shoes, plenty of water, some food, sunscreen, a hat, warm clothing, and an Adventure Pass for your car. Heavy rain cancels but drizzle does not. Expect to see some lovely fall colors and gorgeous scenery.

*Lance Benner*



### North Slope, San Gabriels

**Saturday, November 16, 2013**

**7:30 am — early afternoon**

We will explore areas on the northern slope of the San Gabriel Mountains, such as Grassy Hollow Visitor's Center, Jackson Lake, and locations in Valyermo. We will search for high-altitude species as well as wintering raptors.

Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, and Golden Eagle are possible, as are Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsuckers. Unusual species (e.g. Lewis's Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Swamp Sparrow) have been found in some years. Time permitting, we may look for Mountain Plovers or longspurs in the nearby Antelope Valley.

It may be cold, especially at higher elevations, so bring warm clothes. Also, bring lunch. We will meet in the eastern lot of the Park & Ride on Ave S. in Palmdale, just east of the 14 freeway.

*Mark and Janet Scheel*



### Newport Back Bay by Kayak

**Saturday, November 30, 2013**

**9:00 am — noon**

This is a beautiful, relaxing outing on the water cleverly disguised as a birding trip. We see dozens of species and often get dramatically closer looks than land-bound birders do. Wintering ducks, shorebirds, Black Skimmers, and many other species are well represented. This trip is timed to take advantage of mild currents, ending at low tide, when shorebirds take to the mud flats in large numbers.

Both single and double kayaks are available for rent at our launch point, Newport Beach Aquatic Center. I will also have a couple of loaner kayaks available. Trip size is limited, so please contact me for reservations and more info.

*Mark Hunter*

**Field trips continue on page 7!**

### Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk

**Sunday, November 17, 2013**

**Sunday, December 15, 2013**

**Sunday, January 19, 2014**

**8:00 am — 11:00 am**

Pasadena Audubon and Eaton Canyon Nature Center are cosponsoring monthly walks at Eaton Canyon. The walks are led by Hill Penfold, who has been leading them at ECNC for many years. Hill is wonderful with birders of all levels and Eaton Canyon is one of the best locations to learn the birds of the Pasadena area.

The walks are held on the third Sunday of each month. Meet at the flagpole: bring water, binoculars, hats, but no dogs.

*Hill Penfold*



### Hahamongna Monthly Walk

**Saturday, November 2, 2013**

**7:30 am — 11:30 am**

This monthly bird walk is for birders of all ages and experience. A good variety of birds should be in residence. Bring binoculars, birding guide, water and wear walking shoes. No dogs.

Exit the north 210 at Berkshire and make a right, then a left at Oak Grove. The Hahamongna Watershed Park entrance is on the right at the next stop light. Take the first left after entering Hahamongna, and park by the ballfield.

*Ron Cyger*



### Huntington Library Monthly Walk

**Sunday, November 24, 2013**

**Sunday, December 22, 2013**

**Sunday, January 26, 2014**

**8:00 am — 11:00 am**

A special benefit for Pasadena Audubon Society members is the chance to bird the Huntington Library grounds. Attendance is by reservation only and limited to 15 participants. Members may bring one non-member guest, space permitting. We thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible.

For reservations contact me (see page 7) by email (preferred), or by phone. Trip leaders vary.

*Mark Hunter*



WC = Wrentit Club!

**Calendar**

Submit material for the next Wrentit by January 1

WCC = Wrentit Club  
Count Circle!**November 2013**

|    |     |         |                           |     |                              |                        |
|----|-----|---------|---------------------------|-----|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2  | Sat | 7:30 am | Field Trip                | WCC | Hahamongna                   | Ron Cyger              |
| 6  | Wed | 7:00 pm | Board Meeting             |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Deni Sinnott           |
| 9  | Sat | 7:30 am | Field Trip                | WC  | Elysian Park                 | Sue Horton & Ron Cyger |
| 10 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                | WC  | Chilao Visitor Center        | Hill Penfold           |
| 16 | Sat | 7:30 am | Field Trip                | WC  | North Slope San Gabriels     | Mark & Janet Scheel    |
| 17 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                | WCC | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Hill Penfold           |
| 19 | Tue | 9:00 am | Magpie Study Group        | WC  | Santa Fe Dam                 | Julia Ray & Sid Heyman |
| 20 | Wed | 7:00 pm | General Meeting           |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Shorebird Survey       |
| 23 | Sat | 6:30 am | Field Trip                | WCC | Big Santa Anita Cyn          | Lance Benner           |
| 24 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                | WCC | Huntington Library & Gardens | Mark Hunter            |
|    |     |         | <i>(PAS members only)</i> |     |                              |                        |
| 30 | Sat | 9:00 am | Field Trip                |     | Newport Back Bay - kayaks    | Mark Hunter            |

**December 2013**

|      |     |         |                              |     |                              |                        |
|------|-----|---------|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 4    | Wed | 7:00 pm | Board Meeting                |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Deni Sinnott           |
| 7    | Sat | 7:30 am | Field Trip                   | WCC | Legg Lake                    | Ed Stonick             |
| 8    | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                   | WC  | Chilao Visitor Center        | Hill Penfold           |
| 10** | Tue | 9:00 am | Magpie Study Group           | WCC | L.A. County Arboretum        | Julia Ray * Sid Heyman |
| 11   | Wed | 7:30 pm | <b>CBC pre-count meeting</b> |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Jon Fisher             |
| 14   | Sat | All day | <b>Christmas Bird Count</b>  |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Jon Fisher             |
| 14   | Sat | 6:00 pm | <b>CBC Dinner</b>            |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Chrystal Watson        |
| 15   | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                   | WCC | Eaton Canyon Nature Center   | Hill Penfold           |
| 22   | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                   | WCC | Huntington Library & Gardens | Mark Hunter            |
|      |     |         | <i>(PAS members only)</i>    |     |                              |                        |

**January 2014**

|    |     |         |                           |     |                                  |                           |
|----|-----|---------|---------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 8  | Wed | 7:00 pm | Board Meeting             |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center       | Deni Sinnott              |
| 11 | Sat | 7:30 am | Field Trip                | WCC | Legg Lake                        | Ed Stonick                |
| 12 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                | WC  | Chilao Visitor Center            | Hill Penfold              |
| 15 | Wed | 7:00 pm | General Meeting           |     | Eaton Canyon Nature Center       | An Urban Birder           |
| 18 | Sat | 7:30 am | Field Trip                |     | Seal Beach Natl Wildlife Reserve | Frank and Susan Gilliland |
| 19 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                | WCC | Eaton Canyon Nature Center       | Hill Penfold              |
| 21 | Tue | 9:00 am | Magpie Study Group        | WCC | Peck Road Park                   | Julia Ray * Sid Heyman    |
| 26 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip                | WCC | Huntington Library & Gardens     | Mark Hunter               |
|    |     |         | <i>(PAS members only)</i> |     |                                  |                           |

**February events are not listed here, but check out "Salton Sea" on page 7 and the recurring field trips for Legg Lake, Eaton Canyon, Chilao, and Huntington Gardens**

**\* Trip Leader Information**

|                         |                                 |                                |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mark Scheel (chair)     | (626) 765-5408                  | scheel@tapir.caltech.edu       |
| Larry Allen             | (323) 288-2701                  | larryallen@earlymusicla.org    |
| Lance Benner            | (626) 791-1187                  | lbenner@charter.net            |
| Ron Cyger               | (626) 449-3625 (before 9:00 pm) | ron@cyger.org (preferred)      |
| Darren Dowell           | (626) 344-4003                  | dowell.darren@yahoo.com        |
| Kathi Ellsworth         | (626) 564-0652                  | pandionsky@yahoo.com           |
| Jon Feenstra            | (626) 319-4723                  | feenstra@alumni.caltech.edu    |
| Jon Fisher              | (818) 800-2776                  | jonf60@hotmail.com             |
| Frank & Susan Gilliland | (626) 441-8487                  | gillilandsusan@gmail.com       |
| Sid Heyman              | (626) 571-5991                  | sidheyman@sbcglobal.net        |
| Mark Hunter             | (818) 369-6627                  | mark.hunter@pasadenaudubon.org |
| Mickey Long             | (626) 285-8878                  | mlongbird@charter.net          |
| Hill Penfold            | (818) 352-4954                  | hpenfold@gmail.com             |
| Julia Ray               | (818) 314-5127                  | jraymusic@att.net              |
| Ed Stonick              | (626) 796-0595                  | edstonick@earthlink.net        |

**Field Trips, continued****Chilao Visitor Center****Second Sunday of every month****8:00 am — 10:00 am**

After a long closure, the Chilao Visitor Center re-opened in late May. The walks will continue each month, weather and road conditions permitting. (If things look rainy, snowy or brush fire-y, check first.)

Chilao is a good place to see woodpeckers and we often see four or more species on a walk. Mountain Quail are somewhat elusive but still seen or heard about half the time. You can also expect Purple Finches, Steller's Jays, Dark-eyed Juncos and several species of nuthatches and others totaling about 30 species during the 2-hour walk.

*Hill Penfold***Legg Lake & San Gabriel River****Saturday, December 7, 2013****Saturday, January 11, 2014****Saturday, February 1, 2014****7:30 am — 11:30 am**

These trips will cover some consistently good lake and park birding areas. Legg Lake has lots of water and scattered trees and has produced good waterfowl numbers and varieties as well as an impressive list of migrants and wintering birds. Time permitting we'll include the Pico Rivera spreading grounds or some other river locations, based on what's around. An excellent trip for beginning and young birders.

Meet in the Santa Anita Ave. parking lot, closest to the 60 freeway. Take the Santa Anita exit and turn south from the off-ramp (going south). The lake and parking lot will be on your right.

*Ed Stonick***Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge****Saturday, January 18, 2014****7:30 am — noon**

Be part of the lucky 20 to enter tidal salt marsh habitat in the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station. We'll look for several interesting species including Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Ferruginous Hawk, Light-footed Clapper Rail, Red Knot and others.

Sign-up is required. To reserve your space contact Susan at gillilandsusan@gmail.com before January 15, 2014 and provide the following information:

Full name (first, middle initial, last), address (street, city, state, zipcode) and home phone number.

Only US citizens are allowed (per Navy rules). Bring government-issued photo ID. Cameras are allowed but *only* for bird photography.

If you sign up and cannot attend, please let Susan or Frank know ASAP.

*Frank and Susan Gilliland***Salton Sea****Sat-Sun, February 1-2, 2014****All weekend**

The Salton Sea is a great way to get your year-list cookin'!

This is one of the premier birding spots on the continent. We will bird all day Saturday and half a day on Sunday, heading home after lunch. We usually find over 100 species for the weekend and over the years we have seen a lot of bird species, including: 27 geese & ducks, 13 hawks, 15 waders, 8 gulls, 6 terns, 11 flycatchers, 10 warblers and 16 sparrows.

This trip is only for Pasadena Audubon members and is limited to 12. (What? Not a member yet!? No problem, just download an application from our website and send it in today!)

To reserve a spot on the trip and get accommodation information and meeting location/times, please email the trip leader at ron.cyger(at)PasadenaAudubon.org.

*Ron Cyger***South Africa, continued**

descending on their place of choice (usually the same each day) where they scavenge in trash or look for food in people's lawns and gardens. They are not shy. Locals told me they build very sloppy nests.

**Hadeda Ibis. Photo by Peter Giesler**

I learned that in a way it was easier for me to bird in South Africa than in the US. It isn't "bottom up" birding! I could name the birds faster and retaining was easier, not really having grown up with much U.S. bird culture, except for the occasional red Cardinal on Christmas cards — an anomaly in South Africa because of season reversal. A Southern Masked Weaver (a yellow finch with black mask, a fruit eater) would have been a better choice for a Christmas card!

In the next issue of *The Wrentit*, I'll tell you more about my birding experiences in South Africa.

*Cecilia Lowenthal*

## Education

### A Young Birder's Log

*In early 2013 Pasadena Audubon offered a scholarship to help a young birder in the Bay Area to attend the conference of the Western Field Ornithologists in Olympia, WA. Here, in her own words, she describes her experience.*

**M**y name is Zoe McCormick. I am fourteen years old and I am the recipient of this year's Western Field Ornithologists Conference Youth Scholarship. I was excited when I heard that I received the scholarship. The scholarship made it possible for me to attend everything at the conference, including Mount Rainier and the Saturday banquet, which were two highlights of the conference. I would like to share some of my log from the weekend with you.



Thursday: I just arrived at the conference. I am officially excited. The lobby of the hotel is abuzz with birders. I keep going to check the board with the giant check list, to see what was spotted, today. I am excited about everything that is going to happen at the conference.

Friday: We all load into white vans. I am going on the Woodard Bay field trip. On this trip, we see trees full of cormorants, which is an amazing sight. There are two kingfishers having a territorial dispute--very entertaining. A little brown cowbird keeps following us around looking for food. I sort of dislike cowbirds because they are nest parasites,

although I find it interesting to wonder about why they are nest parasites. One has to admire them for that adaptation. And everyone on this field trip has to admit that this little begging cowbird is awfully cute.

Friday afternoon, I arrive at the Science Session early so I can have a front row seat. I am fascinated by all of the talks. They are all different, but they are all about birds, so you can't go wrong. I envision myself as a future field ornithologist, out there collecting data, and writing up the research. I hope that someday I will be presenting a paper at a WFO conference.

After the Science Session, it is time for the Sound Identification Team Challenge. I have really been looking forward to this! As I see the teams assembling, I decide it might be interesting to be on a team, so I ask the Earless Quetzals if I can be on their team. They graciously accept me as a team member. I am stumped by a lot of the sound challenges, but there are a couple that I have an idea about. My team came in 2nd, which is great. It was fun to be on team and the Sound ID Challenge has inspired me to work on my ear birding.

Saturday, we are off to McLane Nature trail. I am fortunate to have my professor, Joe Morlan, on my trip. We spot some great birds--Wood Ducks in eclipse plumage, which is interesting for me to see. The most exciting bird of the day is Pileated Woodpecker. She is so close, it takes my breath away!

The Saturday science sessions are captivating. I am fascinated by all of the findings. Once again, I find myself wishing that I could be out in the field doing research. The Photo ID Expert Panel is fantastic. I am amazed how good the experts are, and I learn a great deal about how to think through a tough bird ID.

The banquet and keynote address are terrific. It is awesome to be able to talk about birds all through dinner without having anybody's eyes glaze over. The keynote speaker is Dr. John Marzluff. He talks about his research on crows and ravens, which is fascinating. If you need to know how to get a crow into an MRI, you can ask Professor Marzluff!

Sunday is an early morning. A very early morning! We are off to Mount Rainier in search of Ptarmigans and other high altitude birds. We have quite a time finding the Ptarmigans, but by sharing information with other groups of birders, we find them. They are cleverly disguising themselves as rocks. It is amazing to be able to photograph them from ten feet away! I pick up some other life birds on Sunday: Mountain Bluebird, Mountain Chickadee, Sooty Grouse, Clark's Nutcracker, Cassin's Finch, and Evening Grosbeak.

All in all, it was an amazing weekend. It was cool to be with a hotel full of birders, where everybody was talking about birds 24/7. I look forward to seeing everybody from this year's conference in San Diego, next year. I will always remember this year's WFO conference. In addition to 63 state birds and several life birds, I am going home with new friends in the ornithology community, and strengthened clarity that I want to be an ornithologist.

*Zoe McCormick*



**OK, This is Cool**

Ventana Wildlife Society, Fedex, the Oakland Zoo, and Camzone have teamed up to create a thrilling webcam experience. In a remote compound in Big Sur, a group of California Condors are learning to make their way in the wild. The video quality is excellent, the scenery is beautiful, and the birds are awesome. Check it out. [http://www.ventanaws.org/condor\\_cam](http://www.ventanaws.org/condor_cam)



**Magpie Bird Study Group**

The group meets the third Tuesday of each month. We bird 9:00 am to about 11:30 am, have a sack lunch, and have a short business meeting. All PAS members welcome!



**Tuesday, November 19, 2013  
Santa Fe Dam**

**Tuesday, December \*10\*, 2013  
L.A. County Arboretum**

**Tuesday, January 21, 2013  
Peck Road Park**

*Trip leaders: Sid Heyman, Julia Ray*

**The Continuing Suet Saga**

Earlier this year I published a recipe for “suet” in the Wrentit. It has continued to attract birds, even during the summer months. House finches, scrub jays, and a family of five oak titmice came to nibble. A pair of mountain chickadees stayed nearby all summer and are still around.

Since one of the ingredients is lard, the hot weather melted it a bit, but a rectangle of foil on the bottom of the suet basket kept it from falling out.

We also managed to foil the pesky squirrels with an aluminum pie pan halfway down the pole. When they start to climb the pole, their view of the suet is blocked by the pan, so they give up and don't try to climb over it.

If you missed the recipe and want to try it, you can email me at [willo2001@earthlink.net](mailto:willo2001@earthlink.net).

*Lois Fulmer*



The mystery birds from page 4 wake up, and suddenly it's clear: Black-necked Stilt.

**DONATIONS TO PAS**

These PAS members and friends have recently made donations to our chapter: John Birsner & Pamela Stones, Victor Levine. Thank you for your generosity!

**Become a Chapter-only Member of PAS**

Local chapters of the National Audubon Society, such as Pasadena Audubon, receive only a small share of NAS membership dues. In order to finance our programs and services, including publication of *The Wrentit*, PAS offers Chapter-only memberships.

When it's time to renew your National Audubon membership, we invite you to instead become a Chapter-only Member of the Pasadena Audubon Society, or make a donation to our Chapter to support our programs. Chapter-only dues are \$20 per year or \$15 for seniors and students, all of which remains with our local chapter to fund our programs. We thank you all for your support!

**Chapter-only Membership Application**

Name ..... Phone .....  
 Address .....  
 City ..... State ..... ZIP .....  
 Email .....

If this is a gift, please also provide donor's information below:

Name ..... Phone .....  
 Address .....  
 City ..... State ..... ZIP .....

Yearly dues:

- \$20 (regular)                       \$15 (senior, or full-time student)
- \$35 (T-shirt or Birding Guide, plus a PAS pin)
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ (donation)

Make checks payable to, and mail to:

**Pasadena Audubon, 1750 N Altadena Dr, Pasadena, CA 91107**

**Pasadena Audubon Society Board**

|                   |                 |                |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| President         | Deni Sinnott    | (626) 233-4128 |
| Vice-President    | Mickey Long     | (626) 285-8878 |
| Secretary         | Kathi Ellsworth | (626) 524-0652 |
| Treasurer         | Grace Wong      | (626) 798-6500 |
| Conservation      | Laura Garrett   | (626) 564-1890 |
| Field Trips       | Mark Scheel     | (626) 765-5408 |
| Programs          | Darren Dowell   | (626) 344-4003 |
|                   | Susan Gilliland | (626) 441-8487 |
| Membership        | Lois Fulmer     | (626) 798-1606 |
| Education         | Ron Cyger       | (626) 449-3625 |
| Publicity         | Open            |                |
| Hospitality Chair | Chrystal Watson | (626) 794-9233 |

**Members at large:** Norm Arnheim (Grant Program), Susan Gilliland, Lance Benner, Will Fulmer, 1 open

|                         |               |                |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Website                 | Janet Scheel  | (626) 817-6322 |
| Hospitality             | Joanne Weigel | (818)790-4347  |
|                         | Lynne Osborne | (626) 403-9451 |
| Magpie Bird Study Group | Julia Ray     | (818) 314-5127 |
|                         | Sid Heyman    | (626) 571-5991 |

The Wrentit is published by the Pasadena Audubon Society  
 1750 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena, CA, 91107  
 WWW.PASADENAAUDUBON.ORG

Editor Mark Hunter (818) 369-6627  
 Printing Pasadena Print Stop (626) 577-0510  
 Pasadena Audubon Society Chapter only—\$20. Wrentit subscription only—1 year \$10. National Audubon Society membership fees—\$35. National members receive Audubon magazine and The Wrentit. Messages or queries for Pasadena Audubon may be left at (626) 355-9412. For change of NAS address call: (800) 274-4201.

**Pasadena Audubon Society**  
 1750 N. Altadena Drive  
 Pasadena, CA 91107

**DATED MATERIAL**

Non-profit Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
 No. 1880  
 Pasadena, CA



Printed on  
 50% recycled paper

**PAS Members Lend a Hand**

In September several PAS members helped the L.A. County Dept. of Parks and Recreation conduct the birdwatching activity for the SMORES introduction to the outdoors at Castaic Lake. Helping out were Ron Cyger (shown, in a photo by Helen Wong) John Oliver, Julia Ray, Liz Cordero, Grace Wong, and Mark Hunter.

Many of the kids attending the event, which featured an overnight campout, were experiencing their first camping trip. They also participated in fishing, hiking/wayfinding, live animal presentations, and entomology. Reactions to birding ranged from disinterest or preoccupation with cell phones to great enthusiasm, with most kids showing a good level of interest. All parties handled the 100-degree heat of Castaic fairly well, although it did slow down bird activity in the afternoon.

*Mark Hunter*



**New Members**

- ALHAMBRA:** Diane Bennett, Sylvia Sanchez;
- ALTADENA:** Annie Holt, Elizabeth Strong;
- ARCADIA:** Michael Allee, Angel Huang, Sylvia Miller; **BRADBURY:** Martha West;
- CLAREMONT:** Doris Popoff; **DUARTE:** Gail La Sota; **GLENDALE:** Anaïs Lignan;
- GLENDORA:** Richard Fisher; **LA CANADA:** Candace Dougherty, Carol & James Emerson;
- MONROVIA:** James Hinkley, Sharon Whisler;
- MONTEREY PARK:** Betty Flordelis;
- PASADENA:** Charlotte Bischel, Kathy Degner, Karen DeMott, Gail Geiger, Bob & Ashlee Jones, Sharon Joyce, Juliet Kane, Kelly Kane, Fred Lowe, Linda Mathews, Joen Mitchell, Lisa Quinn, Paul Scranton; **QUARTZ HILL:** John Birsner & Pamela Stones;
- ROSEMEAD:** Hilda Defendini; **SAN MARINO:** Dianne Claisse, Kathi Horgan, James Thompson; **SHERMAN OAKS:** Lynda Elkin, Jared Knickmeyer