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Founded 1904

Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 66 — No. 2

*To bring the excitement of birds to our community through
birding, education and the conservation of bird habitats.*

November 2017 - January 2018

Black-throated Gray Warbler

At Peck Road on a recent morning, I was scrutinizing a Northern Flicker on a far-away snag when a Black-Throated Gray Warbler flew into the field, photo-bombing my view so to speak. Of course, I turned my attention to the warbler, such a delightful little bird, with its distinctive black and white patterning on the head and vibrant yellow lores. It was flitting around on a sycamore tree and swallowed a caterpillar as I watched. A female, it did not have the eponymous black throat which only the males sport.



© Lois Brunet

Black-throated Grays are western warblers and range from British Columbia to the southern states of Mexico, and east to Colorado and New Mexico. We are fortunate to have them year round in LA County as they nest in the San Gabriel Mountains and some winter over.

These warblers are particularly abundant in spring and fall when they are migrating through, with peak numbers coming through the third week of April and the first week of October. Migrants and wintering birds can be found in wooded zones throughout our area.

During breeding season, search for this species around Mount Wilson, Charlton Flat or Chilao Flat, where you will hear its buzzy, musical song. They prefer Canyon Live Oak and Big-cone Douglas Firs which are plentiful in these areas.

The Black-throated Gray is rated of least concern although its numbers have sadly declined by 52% since 1966. Partners in Flight estimates a global breeding population of 2.4 million. Six individuals were found during the PAS Christmas Bird Count last year. How many lucky birders will find them this year?

Lois Brunet

President's Perch

Recently, I went on my first birding expedition in several months. It was only to Peck Road Water Conservation Park, but to me it was a Grand Adventure. I was outside in the sunshine with good friends, looking for Bobolinks and Grasshopper Sparrows. We didn't find them, but we did see lots of other sparrows and a female Blue Grosbeak. Lovely morning!

Besides the abundance of birds, I also appreciated the newest round of native plant landscaping, and it occurred to me how much Peck Park has improved in the last decade. Years ago, we primarily birded the lakes, but now, we find a variety of birds throughout the park. The park used to be a derelict haven for some pretty shady characters; it attracted birds despite its industrial ambience, but now it looks almost verdant and natural.

As we birded, we chatted about the cleanups that Pasadena Audubon now does there, and how lucky we are to have a strong team of volunteers, led by the extraordinary Kym Buzdygon, Kathy Degner, and others. Because of them, we can adopt Peck Park and improve it for both birds and birders.

How fortunate we are to have Peck Park so close by, and how grateful I am to all of you who have helped our chapter be the strong organization that it is today, whether by cleaning at Peck, leading a trip, bringing cookies to a meeting, staffing a table at an event, sending emails to an official, donating to our chapter, or any of the myriad ways you help birds and birders. Thank you for all that you do!

Laura Garrett

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MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

The Socorro Islands: Endemics on the Edge

November 15, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Loretta Williams

What does it take to return a bird extinct in the wild to its ancestral home? A small group of ornithologists have been working for more than three decades to return the Socorro Dove that went extinct in the wild in 1978, to home on an island off the Mexican coast. Last July, public radio journalist Loretta Williams spent a month on Socorro Island tracking the plans to return the dove to the island in the coming year.

Loretta Williams is an award-winning public radio journalist. She has worked on stories that range from wildlife conflict to cochlear implants to the mysteries and promise of genetic science. She is currently working on a book about the reintroduction of various birds back to their ancestral homes.

Christmas Bird Count Prep

December 13, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Jon Fisher

Attention all citizen scientists, the annual Christmas Bird Count is coming soon. Learn how you can participate at this meeting. See Jon's article on page 8, as well.

CBC Dinner

December 16, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

After the count, we join together to celebrate with a catered dinner and drinks. You'll also hear about what turned up, and how this compares to past years. The dinner is \$15 per person. Please RSVP by sending a check to our address (see back page) or making a PayPal payment on our website, with the mention CBC.

Monthly chapter meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (1750 N. Altadena Drive in Pasadena). Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Programs for youth begin at 6:30 pm.

California Birds Annotated in Haiku

January 17, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Kimball Garrett

Combine a self-professed competent birder and a lousy poet and you get January's quirky take on birds and birding in California. You'll hear selections from Kimball's work on California's birds, accompanied by his observations on bird and birder behavior that inspired his haiku. Kimball will illustrate his wry poetry with a selection of photographs of birds of California.

Kimball is the ornithology collections manager at the Natural Museum of Los Angeles County and has published several seminal works covering the birds of California, Warblers of North America and more. Many will also know him as the friendly face of eBird reviewing in Los Angeles County.

CONSERVATION

Big Dig Battle Shifts Direction

Responding to a court order, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works issued a revised environmental impact report for the Big Dig project that would excavate vast amounts of sediment from Hahamongna Watershed Park, behind Devil's Gate Dam. The public comment period is over. The next step for the revised EIR is a hearing before the Board of Supervisors so that it can be recertified. The attorneys representing Pasadena Audubon and the Arroyo Seco Foundation have found significant flaws in the revised EIR, so there will be a court hearing about those flaws. But the Big Dig battle will largely be waged for the attention of the County Supervisors, who can certify the EIR or can modify or kill the project.

The revised EIR still retains the negative features that made the Big Dig such a bad idea in the first place:

- It's too big. Far more sediment would be removed than is required for flood control purposes.
- It's too fast. Hundreds of diesel truck trips would be made every day for several years.
- It's too destructive. Nearly all vegetation and habitat in the basin would be destroyed, and ongoing work would destroy any regrowth every year.

Way back in 2014 the Pasadena City Council approved an alternate plan that would still accomplish flood control goals without the air pollution risks, traffic jams, and biological disasters of the Big Dig. The County ignored that plan. Now it's time for you to help by contacting your County Supervisor and protesting the Big Dig. Tell them to support the Pasadena plan instead.



Find out more about the Big Dig and the Pasadena plan by visiting www.Savehahamongna.org.

For most of our readers, the Supervisor to contact is:

Kathryn Barger
Fifth District
869 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-5555
kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov

Thank you for staying engaged with us in this critical fight.

Mark Hunter

CONSERVATION

Supporting Habitat for Migratory Birds with Bird Friendly Coffee

Dessi Sieburth

In December 2016, I went on a birding trip to San Blas, which is located just north of Puerto Vallarta on the Pacific Coast of Mexico. San Blas is a location in western Mexico where many of our migratory birds from the U.S. spend their winters. During my trip, I saw over 300 species in just over five days. I observed many migratory birds including Nashville Warbler, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Blue Grosbeak, and Dusky Flycatcher, all of which can be found in the Los Angeles area during summer, but winter in Mexico and Central America. Other highlights included both subspecies of the endemic Golden-cheeked Woodpecker (flavinuchus and chrysogenys) and the Northern Potoo, a poorwill-like nightjar. We also saw the Bumblebee Hummingbird, which is the second smallest bird in the world.



Many of our migratory bird populations have declined because of deforestation. In San Blas, I saw many migrants including orioles, tanagers, and warblers at “bird friendly” coffee plantations. At one tree at a coffee plantation, I saw 75 different species of birds! Bird friendly coffee plantations use native tropical forest trees to shade coffee plants, and consequently provide important habitat for migrating and endemic birds.

One way we can help migratory birds is to buy coffee that is grown at bird friendly coffee plantations. Coffee with the Smithsonian “Bird-Friendly” label is currently the only coffee guaranteed to be “Bird Friendly®” certified, organic, and Fair Trade. Coffee which is solely labeled as “shade -grown” is not necessary bird friendly, as non-native trees may be used to shade the coffee plants.

Now, you can buy Smithsonian certified Birds & Beans® coffee at our Pasadena Audubon Coffee Club. For more information on how to order your bird friendly coffee please visit pasadenaaudubon.org.

Tree Care for Birds and Other Wildlife

Carolyn Murphy

Pasadena Audubon Society sponsored a workshop, entitled Tree Care for Birds and other Wildlife, on September 27, 2017 at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center. Our very knowledgeable speaker, Gillian Martin, founder and director of the Cavity Conservation Initiative and co-founder of Tree Care for Birds and Other Wildlife, gave an excellent presentation on the best management practices for tree

trimming and removal while still protecting nesting birds.

Ms. Martin reviewed the various local, state and national laws governing tree trimming and tree removal emphasizing what is legally required and what is encouraged in the protection of nesting birds during the nesting season. She emphasized how important it is for those of us who are concerned about tree and habitat protection to work with our local governmental and private trimming companies so that all parties can cooperate in maximizing the best results for all concerned.

We had about 65 attendees including tree trimming employees and supervisors from Los Angeles County and the City of Pasadena as well as birders and volunteer gardeners from Debs Park and Eaton Canyon.

Special thanks to our team, Kathy Degner, Kym Buzdygon and Mickey Long, who worked so hard to make this such a successful event.

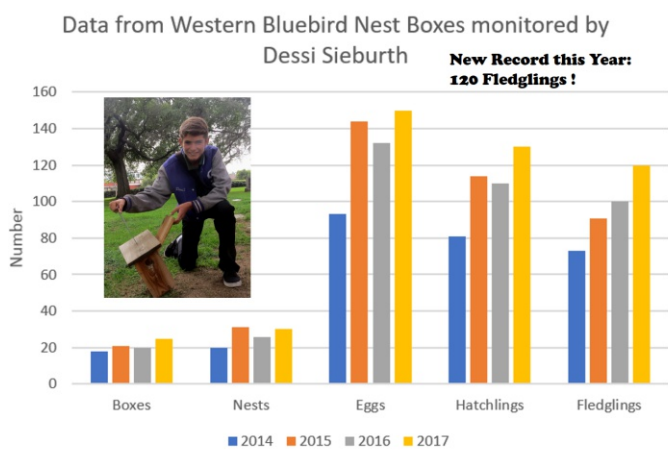
The Tree Care for Birds and Other Wildlife project is a state-wide partnership between volunteers of the arboriculture and wildlife communities of California. To learn more, go to Treecareforbirds.com.

Success with Western Bluebirds

Dessi Sieburth, PAS young birder, has been building, installing and monitoring Western Bluebird nest boxes since 2013 in Los Angeles County. Dessi monitors the boxes on a weekly basis from early spring to early summer. He collects and records data on each nest box. Dessi sends his data to the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) which uses the data for keeping track of populations of Western Bluebirds throughout California.

Dessi is a strong advocate for saving dead and dying trees, as these trees provide nesting sites and food for many species of birds and other wildlife. As the graph below attests, the numbers of fledglings have been rising steadily, a true conservation success.

Thank you, Dessi, for your commitment to the birds!



FIELD TRIPS

North Slope San Gabriels

Saturday, November 11, 7:30 am to 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.

Although we will get to higher elevations, all locations on this trip are accessible by car, and there is no strenuous hiking involved. It may be cold, so bring warm clothes. Also, bring lunch. We will meet at Pearblossom Park, which is at the corner of 121st st. East and East Avenue V14 in Pearblossom, just south of Hwy 138 (Pearblossom Highway).

Mark and Janet Scheel

Birding and Cleanup at Peck Road

Sunday, November 12, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

Peck Road Water Conservation Park is an especially good birding spot in Pasadena Audubon's local area. But its location, downstream from some flood control channels in urban areas, means that it collects trash that is harmful to the birds and other wildlife that live there.

There will be a bird walk first, at 8:00 am, where we hope to spot many species of interest. At 10:00 we'll begin our cleanup efforts. Gloves, tools, and bags will be provided. Then we'll have pizza and beverages at the picnic area around noon.

Join us, and give back to this park that has given birders so much! Wear sturdy shoes, clothes that can get dirty, and bring sun protection. To sign up, email Kym at kym.buzdygon@pasadenaaudubon.org.

Mark Hunter

Big Santa Anita Canyon

Sunday, December 3, 6:30 until noon

Join us for a fall hike into Big Santa Anita Canyon as we search for American Dipper, Pacific Wren, Canyon Wren, Rufous-Crowned Sparrow and other lower montane species.

We're planning to hike past Sturtevant Falls as far as the Cascade picnic area for a total of about six miles. Parking at Chantry Flat is often crowded 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.

Lance Benner

Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge

Sunday December 17, 7:30 until noon

Need a break from shopping and holiday parties? Join us at Seal Beach NWR. We'll look for several interesting species including Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Ferruginous Hawk, Ridgway's Rail, Red Knot and others. PAS Membership and sign-up is required. To reserve your space contact Susan at gillilandsusan@gmail.com before December 7, 2017.

Susan and Frank Gilliland

The Urban Core

Saturday, January 13, 7:30 am to 11:00 am

Birding is not what most people associate with MacArthur Park, an urban park which lies right in the middle of the crushing hardscape of the city, yet it is quite possibly the best place in the County to observe gulls. Iceland Gull, formerly known as Thayer's, is a regular winter visitor, and various and mysterious hybrids are also often present. Further, since it is the only park in a very urban landscape, it attracts a surprising diversity of waterfowl and passerines. The morning of birding will begin here then continue at Echo Park Lake, another urban refuge a few miles away, and maybe some scoping of Silverlake Reservoir, if we've still got time.

Meet at the Levitt Pavilion in the northwest corner of MacArthur Park. Metered parking there costs \$2 for two hours.
Jon Feenstra

Antelope Adventure

Saturday, January 20, 7:30 am to 1:00 pm

Join Luke Tiller for a tour of the Antelope Valley to look for a variety of wintering specialties. The agricultural fields around Lancaster are a great spot to see a diversity of interesting hawks, falcons and owls. In fact, this area may be one of the premier sites in the country to witness numbers of highly prized Ferruginous Hawks. As well as the wintering raptors, we will seek out a host of other exciting species including Tricolored Blackbird, LeConte's Thrasher and Mountain Bluebird. We will also look for uncommon winter wanderers out in the desert including 'Pink-sided' Junco, Red Crossbill and Mountain Plover.

Luke Tiller

Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park

Saturday, January 27, 8:00 am until noon

Come join us for a morning of birding in Bonelli Regional Park, an ideal spot for all levels of birders. We'll be on the lookout for Bonelli specialty species such as California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Bald Eagle, Greater Roadrunner, and Mountain Bluebird, as well as over-wintering vagrants. A spotting scope will be helpful.

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FIELD TRIPS: REGULAR MONTHLY WALKS

Legg Lake

**First Saturday or Sunday of the month, check calendar
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 at the Santa Anita Ave. parking lot. From the 60 freeway, take Santa Anita south a short distance to the lake and parking lot on your right.

Ed Stonick or Darren Dowell

L.A. County Arboretum

**Second Saturday of every month
8:00 am — 10:00 am**

This easy walk is for birders of all ages and experience levels. Meet on the steps leading to the entrance of the Arboretum. Admission is \$5 – free for members of the Arboretum or Audubon, and free for children under 12.

Katy Mann

Chilao Visitor Center

**Second Sunday of every month
8:00 am — 10:00 am**

The Chilao Visitor Center walks continue each month, weather and roads permitting. (If things look rainy, snowy or brush fire-y, check first.)

Chilao, 26.5 miles north of I-210 on Angeles Crest (State Hwy 2), 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

Magpie Bird Study Group

**Third Tuesday of most months
9:00 am until about noon**



November 21, Santa Fe Dam, meet at Nature Center
December 19, County Arboretum
January 16, San Gabriel Costal Spreading Basin

We bird until 11:30 and then have a sack lunch and a short meeting. All PAS members welcome!

Julia Ray, Sid Heyman

Eaton Canyon

**Third Sunday of every month
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 Eaton Canyon for many years. This is a wonderful walk for 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

Huntington Library

**Fourth Sunday of every month
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.

To reserve contact Mark at
mark.hunter@pasadenaudubon.org.

Mark Hunter



Red-shouldered Hawk at the Huntington Gardens © Jim Margitan

CALENDAR

November 2017

1	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garrett
4	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Legg Lake	Darren Dowell
8	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 9
11	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
11	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	North Slope San Gabriels	Mark & Janet Scheel
12	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip & Cleanup	WC	Peck Road Conservation Park	Mark Hunter
12	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
15	Wed	7:30 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Sorocco Island Endemics
19	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
21	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Santa Fe Dam	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
26	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

December 2017

3	Sun	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Legg Lake	Ed Stonick
3	Sun	6:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Big Santa Anita Canyon	Lance Benner
6	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garrett
9	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
10	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
13	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 9
13	Wed	7:00 pm	Pre-Christmas Bird Count Prep		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Jon Fisher
16	Sat	all day	Christmas Bird Count	WC		Jon Fisher
16	Sat	6:00 pm	Bird Count Dinner		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Jon Fisher
17	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
17	Sun	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Seal Beach NWR	Susan & Frank Gilliland
19	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	County Arboretum	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
24	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

January 2018

3	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garret
6	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Legg Lake	Darren Dowell
10	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 9
13	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
13	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Urban Core	Jon Feenstra
14	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
16	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	San Gabriel Costal Spreading Grounds	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
17	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	California Birds in Haiku
20	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Raptors in the Antelope Valley	Luke Tiller
21	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
27	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park	Norm Vargas, Dessi Sieburth
28	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

Trip Leaders

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Lance Benner	(626) 791-1187	lbenner@charter.net
Ron Cyger.....	(626) 840-2566	ron@cyger.org (preferred)
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Sid Heyman	(626) 571-5991	
Mark Hunter	(626) 344-8428	mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org
Mickey Long	(626) 285-8878	mlongbird@charter.net
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Julia Ray.....	(818) 314-5127	jraymusic@att.net
Ed Stonick	(626) 796-0595	edstonick@att.net
Luke Tiller.....		streatham2003@aol.com



WC Wrentit Club

The Wrentit Club is a special distinction for members who've seen 250 birds or more in L.A. County within the calendar year. The field trips designated WC are within L.A. County. Any birds seen on these trips count towards the Wrentit Club distinction. See our website for a listing of current and past members.

TRIP REPORTS

One Lost Bird

On our Fall Warblerama trip, we typically begin at DeForest Park, a top location for fall migrants, and then visit another migrant hotspot that has been particularly productive recently.

This year, after only 20 minutes at DeForest Park, we received word that a Dusky Warbler, found the previous day at Madrona Marsh, was still there and was venturing somewhat into the open. This was the first record of Dusky Warbler for LA County; Dusky Warbler breeds in Siberia and winters in Southeast Asia and is not often found on this continent. This was one lost bird; nobody on the trip had ever seen one in the U.S.

So we went to Madrona Marsh, where we joined 50 or so other birders already there, and we had multiple looks at the Dusky Warbler and even some photos. We also heard it calling repeatedly; a sound quite similar to the chip of Lincoln's Sparrow. Also at Madrona was a Black-and-white Warbler crawling on a trunk (at one point in the same binocular view as the Dusky Warbler), in addition to more common birds such as Lazuli Buntings, Orange-crowned Warblers, and triple digits of Scaly-breasted Munias. A large flock of American and Lesser Goldfinches also held a European Goldfinch, which allowed good looks as it munched on seeds. On two occasions a Rose-ringed Parakeet flew over us while calling, and an Orange-cheeked Waxbill did the same. A Blackpoll Warbler was seen briefly by only a few of our group.

Mark and Janet Scheel

Piute Yields over 100 Species

We met at dawn on September 9th, at the surprisingly cool Piute Ponds for a day of birding in the Antelope Valley. Unlike the previous few weeks, the temperature never got into the triple digits (but the number of bird species did).

As soon as we arrived at Piute Ponds we heard multiple Soras and Virginia Rails calling from the reeds, and both species came out into the open for close looks and photos. A Greater Roadrunner ran along the road in front of us, and stayed on the road long enough for us to get out of the vehicles and even get a few scopes aimed at it. We also found nine duck species (including Redhead and a male Ring-necked Duck), Caspian and Forster's Terns, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and a flock of Vaux's Swifts with the swallows (including one Bank Swallow). Warblers included Black-throated Gray, Yellow, Wilson's, Orange-crowned, and a single first-of-fall Yellow-rump. We stared at a roosting Great Horned Owl, who stared back at us while we enjoyed full-field looks in the scopes.

Shorebirds included Least and Western Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plovers, Dowitchers, Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs together, and a flyby Wilson's Snipe. A single Baird's Sandpiper was seen briefly by only a few people before it flew off with the flock of peeps and unfortunately could not be relocated. But our

unsatisfactory Baird's Sandpiper experience was rectified at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds. There we found eight juvenile Baird's at close range, with a few Least and Westerns for comparison. But the best bird at the sewage ponds was a first winter Franklin's Gull that had been reported there the day before, and again earlier the same day (both times by PAS birders, naturally). We had good looks at the Franklin's Gull, both sitting on the water and in flight.

We then had lunch at Apollo Park, where the northern goose trio (Snow, Ross's, and Greater White-fronted) still remain, looking for handouts with the domestic geese. Among the most abundant land birds at Apollo were Bell's Sparrows, which were practically underfoot as we walked the perimeter. We found roosting Barn Owls in two different trees; both were well camouflaged and high in the branches, but one of them could be seen well and almost unobstructed. Among the migrants were a Green-tailed Towhee, two Brewer's Sparrows, and a tailless Willow Flycatcher.

Special thanks to Misty Hailstone for escorting the group through Piute Ponds!

Mark and Janet Scheel



Birders at Apollo Park enjoying views of a Barn Owl © Lois Brunet

Shearwaters, Jaegers and Murrelets

Saturday September 16th saw Pasadena Audubon set out from Dana Point for their inaugural dedicated pelagic in LA and Orange County waters. With jumbo bags of popcorn at the ready we were soon chumming our way out to sea, a steady stream of Heermann's Gulls and Western Gulls following closely behind us.

Just off shore we were soon surrounded by our first "pelagic" birds of the trip, a nice stream of Black-vented Shearwaters. Among them other shearwaters could be found and we soon had a couple of Pink-footed following behind the boat too. Later we added a couple of Sooty Shearwaters for our third shearwater species on the day.

As well as the shearwaters, we were soon picking up our first jaegers of the trip too. Pomarines were most numerous and one

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley Christmas Count 2017

As things slow down following a remarkable fall migration, thoughts begin to turn to the holidays and to Christmas Bird Counts. How convenient it is that we have our own local count supported by Pasadena Audubon. The Pasadena CBC is a long running count and many dedicated local birders have been instrumental in making the Pasadena count what it is today. As the count began in 1946, this year marks its 71st anniversary.

If you're new to birding or just to Christmas Bird Counts, this is a great opportunity to learn more about the avifauna of the San Gabriel Valley and to meet others who share the same interests. You'll also be participating in a very worthwhile citizen science project.

On count day we'll record every species- whether native and introduced- and ultimately document population trends over years and decades. The mid-December CBC produces a snapshot of early winter birdlife in the San Gabriel Valley and local foothills. Over 280 different species have been recorded over the history of the count and the data from every count resides in the Audubon CBC database and is available to everyone.

Though some things have stayed pretty much the same over the years, there have been noticeable changes. Great-tailed Grackles colonized the area in the 1980s, while introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves have increased dramatically in numbers more recently. Anyone who lives in the San Gabriel Valley is aware of our noisy flocks of parrots and parakeets, but the introduction of these exotics didn't occur until the 1970s.

On the other hand, we've seen declines in the numbers of open country birds such as Loggerhead Shrikes, Western Meadowlarks and Savannah Sparrows. In addition to those changes, each year is different in subtle or major ways. To me this is what makes the CBC so intriguing.

The center of our count 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 to create the standard fifteen mile diameter count circle.

The northern border of the circle just reaches the top of Mt. Wilson at 5,700 feet, offering the potential for mountain birds. Williamson's Sapsuckers and Cassin's Finches have been recorded here. This variety of habitats produces well over 150 species on each count.

Adding diversity to the count are count areas such as Big Santa Anita Canyon, the extensive Whittier Narrows area, Henninger Flat, the San Gabriel River, Peck Road Water Conservation Park, Eaton Canyon, the Huntington Gardens, the Arboretum and a portion of Santa Fe Dam.

Well-established plantings in residential areas have also proved productive in the past, producing count records of Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler and others. It's clear that good birds can turn up almost anywhere.

The 2017 Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 16. We'll have the traditional pre-count meeting at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center on Wednesday, December 13 at 7:30pm. At the meeting we'll also review count rules and procedures and assign count areas. If you can't attend the meeting, you can sign up for an area to count via e-mail.

The post-count dinner and wrap-up will be on count night. Not only will we have a good dinner after a long day of counting, but we'll find out what birds turned up that day.

For additional information, contact count coordinator Jon Fisher at JonF60@hotmail.com.

Jon Fisher

Shearwaters, Jaegers and Murrelets, continued

very accommodating one decided to follow the boat for a while, allowing people to get good looks at both the structure, flight style and plumage of this rather magnificent avian pirate. We also added Parasitic Jaeger, though the real highlight was picking up two uncommon Long-tailed Jaegers to complete our jaeger sweep.

There were plenty of other species to look at as we motored along including the usual Elegant, Caspian and Royal Terns. More surprising were a couple of sizeable rafts of Common Terns. A couple of pretty Sabine's Gulls were a treat, as was a Black Storm Petrel.



Pomarine Jaeger © Luke Tiller

The highlight of the trip was finding a pair of much sought after Craveri's Murrelets. Craveri's Murrelet is one of those birds that is both difficult to find and tough to see well. Typical views are often unidentifiable ones of their rear ends, as they take off from the water in front of your boat and Sibley even illustrates them as such in his guide. Amazingly the two Craveri's we found decided to sit on the water in front of us for over five minutes allowing for amazing looks, photos and even amazing 'listens'! I think this was the first time most on the boat had ever heard the insect like twittering of these amazing little birds.

Thanks to our excellent boat captain and the fantastic leaders on the day: David Bell, Tom Benson, Kimball Garrett, Brittany O'Connor, Justyn Stahl and Luke Tiller. Keep your eyes open for news on future pelagic trips. Read a more detailed report and see photos on Luke's blog: www.underclearskies.com

Luke Tiller

YOUNG BIRDERS REPORT FROM THE FIELD

Camp Colorado II and How It Made a Difference

Justina Martelli, 14 years

A star hidden in the night glitters uniquely. The feeling of 4 am drowsiness. Spiced chai tea. I want to stay here, at my warm home, but a small urge for a new experience tugs at me. Clouds over the horizon, turbulence now and then. Old pine forests. A bird calls somewhere, lost.

We arrived at Estes Park, spines aching with the weight of our backpacks, but with tired, smiling faces. I knew I would enjoy this camp the second I arrived there. Camp Colorado was a beautiful experience for me, as well as a great opportunity to meet other young birders my age and from other parts of the U.S., and learn from them. The counselors were all very nice, and told us what we should be expecting the next few days, as we all settled in our dorms.

The next morning, we set out in the vans at 6:30 and went exploring around the area of Estes Park, to find an American Dipper, a lifer for most of us, and the American Three-Toed



American Dipper © Justina Martelli

Woodpecker, something all the young birders were looking forward to. At Beaver Meadows, we got a good view of the Mountain Bluebirds.

The next day, we went to the alpine environment, which can get up to elevations higher than 10,000 feet, and you can see the trees and shrubs reducing in size as you go higher. There were many spotted rocks on the alpines, where most of us lost hope in finding the White-Tailed Ptarmigan, a brown and black spotted bird that all the campers wanted to see. Fortunately, one birder spotted the Ptarmigan with two chicks wandering at a far distance up the mountain, and that was a big jaw-dropping moment for all the young birders. We also found many elk dwelling on the beautiful mountains, as well as Pika, a mouse-like mammal with round ears that call every now and then, echoing through the mountains. That evening we all gathered at a small area with bird feeders in the YMCA area, and Scott Rashid showed us how to band birds, and he let us set them free. There he banded Pine Siskins, Cassin's Finch, and both Rufous and Broad-Tailed Hummingbirds. Later we

found a pair of Red Crossbills on one of the feeders, as well as Calliope Hummingbird.

The next morning it was raining, and we all set out on a small hike in a spicy, pine-filled forest and found ourselves gazing at a Black Swift, circling the sky in such a joyful manner, in spite of the cold, wet rain. Another highlight was when we spotted three Moose, quiet and passing the forest like still, black shadows. After, we went to a small inn that had many hummingbird feeders, and we all paused to observe them, eyes sparkling with curiosity. The hummingbirds were very entertaining to watch, how they swooped upon each other and soared through the humid weather, playing and fighting. That evening, we set out to Beaver Meadows once again in search of owls. A talented young birder was calling, in hopes of hearing a Western Screech-Owl in reply. All we got was a small distant hoot from a Great Horned Owl.

The next day (a Camp Colorado annual big day) we were in the vans at 4:30 am and drove to large grassland fields, all yellow and dry, where we saw Common Nighthawks, Orchard Oriole, Burrowing Owls, Horned Larks, Upland Sandpiper, Mountain Plover, Chestnut-Collared Longspurs, and many Swainson's Hawks. We also found a Horned Lizard, spiky, with a hilarious look of annoyance on its face, and well camouflaged between the sandy ground with rocks, as well as an American Badger, running through the tall grasses, vivacious and free. We arrived at a large lake and found a couple of Bald Eagles, White Pelicans, and other shorebirds. Later that evening, all the young birders divided in groups in search for birds, all in different areas of the YMCA, and my group successfully found three Evening Grosbeaks, and I can see why they are named like that. The peachy yellow feathering is the sky, the black represents the silhouettes of the mountains, and the white is the sun, bright and setting. In the night, we all counted species and got 93, four less than last year's record.

At the last day, we traveled to Rabbit Mountain to find Lark and Lazuli Buntings, Rock Wrens, and a Blue Bunting. We also observed an interesting Rainbow Grasshopper, striped with black and neon orange, and a Checkerspot Butterfly. Later we all looked for Gray Catbirds in the Estes Park area, which have a call very much like a meow, and we also observed a Canyon Wren, which has a very rufous color and long bill. That night, all the young birders were interviewed about their experience, and we were all sad knowing that it was our last day.

The next morning, we departed for the airport, and in the airplane, I gazed at the Grand Canyon below, so red and standing out. How Camp Colorado made a difference, to all of us. We learned how to work as a team. How to help, support each other. And that led us to all the beautiful birds and wildlife we were able to see. And although we were adolescents, mature and strong... we were little kids, running barefoot in the rain, catching snakes hidden behind bushes, playing and laughing... learning. And still growing up.

CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER NEWS

Field Trips, *continued from page 4*

Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park

Bring lunch if you'd like and enjoy the day in the Park. Carpooling is encouraged as there is a \$10 per vehicle admission fee. We will assemble at the East Shore Parking Lot near Bathroom 11. From Pasadena, take the 210 East to the 57 South. Exit at Via Verde and turn east on Via Verde. Enter the park on Via Verde and follow the road to East Shore Drive. Turn left and follow East Shore Drive approximately one-half mile and find a large parking lot adjacent to the lake. Look for birders! Rain cancels the outing, but sprinkles do not.

Dessi Sieburth and Norm Vargas

Salton Sea

Saturday and Sunday, February 3 and 4

The Salton Sea Trip is a great way to get your year-list cookin'! The sea is one of the premier birding areas in North America, but is in major transition at this time. On the weekend we usually end up with over 100 species and a few surprises. We will bird all day on Saturday and through lunch on Sunday.

This trip is limited to 12 PAS members (it's easy to become a member on our website). Preference is given to those who were not on the trip the previous year and can do the entire weekend. Please email me to for more information or to make reservations (ron@cvger.org).

Ron Cyger

Thank You to our Generous Donors

Our thanks go to these PAS members and friends have recently made donations to our chapter.

WARBLER (\$5-\$99): Edwina Berg, John Birsner & Pamela Stones; Denise Castillo; Beth Gertmenian, Elliott Mazur; James Roombos; Lois Tandy; Grace Wong.

CALIFORNIA CONDOR (\$1000-\$1999): Chris Dean.

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER (\$2000+): Lance Benner.

New Member Reception

Did you join Pasadena Audubon in the last year? Then you're invited to our New Member Reception! Join us on Wednesday, November 8th, from 7:30 to 9:00 pm, at Deni Sinnott's home, 2066 Fletcher, South Pasadena. Good wine and yummy snacks will be provided. Meet other members, new and old, and find out more about what Pasadena Audubon has to offer.

RSVP to kym.buzdygon@pasadenaaudubon.org. We look forward to seeing you then!

Raptor ID Workshop in February

Tuesday, February 6, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm and Saturday, February 10 from 7:30 am to 12:30 am

Hawks can be challenging to identify and for that reason there are numerous field guides aimed solely at unravelling the mysteries of raptor ID. Join PAS board member and ex-professional hawkwatcher Luke Tiller for a two-part workshop looking specifically at this group of birds. We will look at how to identify hawks using plumage details as well as shape structure and flight style. Where possible we will look at aging and sexing birds, ascribing them to subspecies and contemplate color morphs. The workshop will involve an evening class and a field trip portion where we can put newly acquired ID skills into practice.

We are limiting this workshop to 12 participants in order to guarantee instruction in a small group setting. The cost is \$40. Contact Kym at kym.buzdygon@pasadenaaudubon.org to reserve your spot.

Luke Tiller



Ferruginous Hawk © Luke Tiller

Changes to our Bylaws

On May 3rd, 2017, the Board passed the following motion: "The Pasadena Audubon Society will add Outreach and Development Chairs as Board positions". The positions as defined for the bylaws are:

- Outreach Chair: The Outreach Chair will manage and oversee all community outreach events of the Society.
- Development Chair: The Development Chair will manage and oversee all fund-raising efforts of the Society.

This motion was announced at our October meeting and will be voted on by the general membership at our November 15th general meeting. If approved, the new positions will be added to the bylaws Article VI Section 3 which lists and defines the standing committees.

To read our bylaws in full, please visit our website, pasadenaaudubon.org, and look at the About PAS tab.

CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER NEWS

Pasadena Audubon Welcomes Young Birders!

The PAS Young Birders group invites kids who are interested in birds and nature to join. We have exciting field trips to places like the Moore Lab of Zoology or the California Condor Recovery program. No previous birding experience is required. All are welcome!

Young birders present on various nature related themes during our monthly meetings. While the topic is usually birds, we've also had presentations on starting a native garden to attract hummingbirds and butterflies; Monarch butterfly conservation; and viewing the total solar eclipse! You are guaranteed to learn something new.

Meetings are on the third Wednesday, September through November and January through May, from 6:45 pm to 7:30 pm, and are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center.

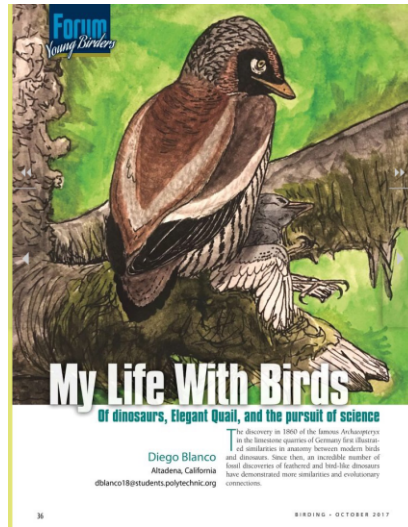


Jasmine, age 11, in condor wings

Birds 'n Beers

Good food, good beverages, and good bird talk at this casual monthly gathering led by Luke Tiller, Catherine Hamilton, and David Bell. Everyone is welcome! 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, the second Wednesday of each month, at Lucky Baldwin's at 1770 E. Colorado Blvd. in Pasadena.

Diego Blanco First Author on Scientific Article in *Western Birds*



The academic journal *Western Birds*, the quarterly publication of Western Field Ornithologists, has just published a research paper with PAS Young Birder, Diego Blanco, as first author. It is entitled “Geographic Variation and Intergradation in the Elegant Quail”. Diego conducted his research at Occidental College's Moore Laboratory of Zoology with Dr. James Maley and Devon DeRaad. Way to go, Diego!

In addition, the American Birding Association's magazine *Birding* has published an article and artwork by Diego in their October issue. Congratulations, Diego!



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 Wrenit*, PAS offers Chapter-only memberships.

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

Chapter-only Membership Application

Name Phone

Address

City State ZIP

Email

Yearly dues: [] \$20 (individual or family) [] \$15 (senior or student)
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Make checks payable to, and mail to:
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 Or pay with PayPal at www.pasadenaaudubon.org

To receive *The Wrenit* online, instead of on paper, check here and be sure to provide your email above.

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

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Members at large: Norm Arnheim (Grant Program), Lance Benner, Susan Gilliland (Young Birders), Mickey Long, Katy Mann

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Special Thanks to our Volunteers!

Volunteers who translated our brochure into Chinese and Spanish:

Carla and Myra Alvarado, Blanca Garcia, Amber Blanco, Nereida Heller, Daniel and Grace Wu

Volunteers who helped with the Heal the Bay Coastal Cleanup at the Arroyo on September 16th:

Wendy Gordon, Joan Sander, Carl, Learden, and Wolfgang Matthies, Kathy Degner, Lois Brunet

Our Huntington donor walk leaders:

Dan Lewis, Ron Cyger, Will and Lois Fulmer, Eileen Burton, Luke Tiller, Ira Blitz, Jon Feenstra, Larry Sansone, Katy Mann, Stephen Tabor

Welcome to our New Members

ALHAMBRA: Soledad Schroeder; ALTADENA: Fernanda Davis, Bruce Langedyke, Piri Mee, Ralph Perry, Javier Vazquez; ARCADIA: R. Maatz, Judith Wilson; AZUSA: Alex Bencomo; GLENDALE: Brandon Madison; HOLLYWOOD: Frances Perez; LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE: Anthea Hanniball, Frank Jordan, Dorothy Kanner; MONROVIA: Rebecca Elder, James Pan, Kay Tekle; MONTEREY PARK: Jeffrey Handleman, Laura Ramos; PASADENA: Joan Aebi, Bernard Beck, Eleanor Congdon, Molly Hill, Gary Izumi, Lonny Jacobs, Laila Karme, Renate Kerris, Cathy Knapp, Monte Laforti, David Meaden, Hector Ramos, Jane Sakamoto; REDONDO BEACH: Calvin Bonn; RIVERSIDE: Laura Martinez; ROSEMEAD: Faruk Aykol, William Coopee, Mae Ramirez; SAN GABRIEL: Imelda Bermejo; SAN MARINO: Clayton Braatz, Jeffrey Jasper; SANTA BARBARA: Elizabeth Downing & Peter Hasler; SIERRA MADRE: Samantha Carter; TEMPLE CITY: Angelina Iarossi; VALLEY GLEN: Lynda Fenneman