



Drawing by  
Guy Coheleach

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Founded 1904

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

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

September-October 2021

## Young Birders Flock to Hahamongna

After our relaunch in November 2020 the PAS Young Birders Club had run solely as a monthly online event. However that all changed on July 31st when about fifteen of the group met up for its inaugural field trip. We decided that we would start our field trip at perhaps Pasadena's premium birding site, Hahamongna Watershed Park. We are Pasadena Audubon after all!

During our trip we tallied a respectable 30 species of bird for a hot July day, with highlights including getting to see lots of baby Bluebirds, a pair of funky Phainopeplas and two species of Oriole: Bullock's and Hooded. As well as seeing a bunch of birds, we enjoyed a birding CSI when one of the group discovered a pile of feathers from an unlucky Cooper's Hawk. The Cooper's had probably been taken by one of the resident Great Horned Owls that calls Hahamongna home. The groups also rescued a California Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*) from a dusty path and

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*Kids and grown-ups out birding together, a beautiful sight to see! © Sean Doorly*

### PRESIDENT'S PERCH

It's the end of summer in my native plant garden, and I wouldn't blame you if you thought a lot of the plants were dead. The poppies are mostly barren sticks, the monkeyflowers look brown and desiccated, and the flowers on the California Buckwheat are turning a crispy russet. But if you look closely, you'll see that the poppies are sending up fresh green leaves that will fill the garden by winter, the monkeyflowers have tiny green leaves at the base of each shriveled brown leaf, and the buckwheat still buzzes with bees, butterflies, and funny little flies that shine a bright bottle-green. The manzanita and Engelmann Oaks are sending out new leaves, the coffeeberry is abundant with chocolate-cherry colored berries, and the goldenbush is about to explode into flaming yellow.

My garden is fully alive, but many of the plants go dormant in the summer in order to survive our intense heat. I don't blame them! Seems sensible to me.

My end-of-summer garden shows me that it's a good idea to look twice. One look at my garden says it's dying, but a second, more careful study says quite the opposite. I know I need to carry that realization into other aspects of my birding life. Our first look should not be our last.

For example, how many times have I looked at a Red-tailed Hawk and wondered what it was? Too often, I've been convinced that I'm seeing something new, but no, it's a Red-tail! They have so much variety that my first look can't be my last. I need to examine it more closely in order to see field marks that may not be as obvious as its not-always-red eponymous red tail.

I learned to look more than once again after our movie night on August 18, when many of us gathered together at Heritage Square to enjoy *Bird of Prey*, a documentary about the magnificent Philippine Eagle. The bird is facing horrific conservation challenges and we are sponsoring a matching grant to the Philippine Eagle Foundation in an effort to help. Of course I support such efforts, but as I drove home Wednesday night, I wondered about the efficacy of saving such a beautiful bird if it has no place to live. The film makes the point that most of the forests and jungles of the Philippines were clear-cut during the presidency of Fernando Marcos, so where are these birds going to go? The forests are gone. Aren't they?

I decided to look again. I was very relieved to see that a quick Google search showed that groups such as Tree Nation and One Tree Planted are working very hard to reforest the

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## MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### Mickey & Jon's Bird ID Quiz September 15th, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

In accordance with tradition, we kick off our fall season of meetings with Mickey Long and Jon Fisher hosting an evening of mystery bird photos! This famously challenging quiz will get you into the swing of fall migration, as our hosts offer expert tips and tricks for identification and differentiation.



No idea who this is? You're not alone. Mickey and Jon may be able to help. © Tom Cassaro

### The Science and Politics of California Wildfires

October 20th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm  
Chad Hanson

Natural fires are as essential as sun and rain in fire-adapted forests, but as humans have encroached on wild spaces, fear, arrogance, and greed have shaped the way that people view these regenerative events, and that in turn has given rise to a great deal of



How should we feel about this photo? Does it depend on when and where it was taken? Our guest speaker for the October chapter meeting, Dr. Chad Hanson, will help dispel common misconceptions about wildfires. © John McCogan

misinformation about wildfires. Fire ecologist Chad Hanson says the peril that these myths pose to forests is profound — affecting whole habitats and the wildlife that depend on them. Join Dr. Hanson as he explains why much of what we believe about wildfires is wrong.

Dr. Chad Hanson is a research ecologist and the director of the John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute, located in Big Bear City, California, and has a Ph.D. in ecology with a research focus on fire ecology in conifer forest ecosystems. He has published dozens of peer-reviewed studies on forest and fire ecology, and is also the co-editor and co-author of the 2015 book, *The Ecological Importance of Mixed-Severity Fires: Nature's Phoenix*. His latest book is *Smokescreen: Debunking Wildfire Myths to Save Our Forests and Our Climate* ([kentuckypress.com/9780813181073/smokescreen/](http://kentuckypress.com/9780813181073/smokescreen/)).

### Saving Priority Birds

November 17th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm  
Nicole Michel

In the past year or two there have been several comprehensive scientific studies on the population trends of North American birds. That the studies concluded many birds have declined was no surprise, but the extent and size of the drop has been shocking.

So, what now? National Audubon's new Priority Birds 2021 report looks at declining bird populations, but also at the steps needed to stop the decline, all in an effort to determine where conservation efforts will be most effective. Join one of the report's lead scientists as we discover how to get the most "bang for the buck" when fighting to save birds.

Dr. Nicole Michel is the Director of Quantitative Science for the National Audubon Society. In that role she oversees the ecologists who gather and analyze the mounds of data that has led to the Society's comprehensive reports on the fate of North America's birds.



While raptors and waterfowl have actually increased in number since 1970, grassland species like this Western Meadowlark have declined by nearly half. © Ira Blitz

Monthly chapter meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month. Until further notice, the meetings will be held remotely via the Zoom platform for video conferencing. The application can be downloaded free of charge to computer or smartphone at <https://zoom.us/download>. Chapter members will receive an email from PAS with a link on the day of the meeting.

### Upcoming PAS Board Meetings

The PAS Board meets from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month, between September and June. Contact Lois Brunet at [LoisB.PAS@gmail.com](mailto:LoisB.PAS@gmail.com) if you would like the Zoom link to attend.

September 1st, 2021  
October 6th, 2021  
November 3rd, 2021  
December 1st, 2021  
January 5th, 2022



## PAGE THREE BIRD

## California Towhee

We kick off this 70th volume of *The Wren* with one of the most familiar birds of the San Gabriel Valley, a common sight year-round in residential areas, parks, and hiking trails throughout most of the western half of the state and clear down to Cabo San Lucas. They're also (arguably) among the least ostentatious birds in our area: Predominantly brown, transitioning to buff sides and a light grey breast; dark red eyes and a russet patch under the tail are their most distinguishing features. Little wonder that California Towhees are not a target species on any of Pasadena Audubon's field trips, but like all of our feathered friends, they reward our attention.

California Towhees were christened, so to speak, in 1989, when the American Ornithologists Union determined through genetic studies that Brown Towhees were two distinct species. (The other half of the taxonomic split is the Canyon Towhee, which is slightly grayer and has a non-overlapping range to the east and south.) If you were trying to key out a towhee using Merlin Bird ID you'd size it between a sparrow and a robin, though as we know, towhees *are* a type of sparrow.

In Spring and Summer, I'm often awakened by the predawn *chip* notes of a California Towhee outside our window. The noise reminds me of a smoke alarm telling you its battery is low; it's not so ear-piercing, just jarring and persistent enough to end my slumber. At daybreak I'm usually downstairs enjoying a cup of coffee when I spy the first one sally forth from the *Pittosporum* across the street and barrel into the leaf litter of my front yard. For their size, California Towhees have long tails and short wings, which seem to make flight a bit challenging for them, especially sticking the landing.

Once back on *terra firma* California Towhees are more at ease, hopping around in characteristic sparrow fashion to forage for food. Like other towhees, California Towhees will claw at leaf litter with both feet simultaneously to uncover seeds and insects. It's not always a successful feeding strategy, of course, and when it isn't I like to imagine they're just doing a shuffle dance for my amusement.

Dancing is not part of the mate selection process for California Towhees, but singing is. Males establish territories and belt out a rapid series of *chip* notes to attract females; females flutter their wings to signal that they are indeed attracted. Newly-formed pairs sing duets to strengthen their bond. Nests are built low in shrubs by females while their partners pretend to be otherwise occupied. Once chicks hatch from 2-5 semigloss white eggs, males do help out with feeding and protecting them for three to four weeks until they can forage on their own.

As a whole, California Towhees are a species of low concern, though one subspecies, the Inyo California Towhee, is estimated at fewer than 200 individuals and is federally listed. Furthermore, climate change models are predicted to drive all California Towhees northward into Oregon. If recent weather events in The Beaver State are any indication, California Towhees may be not be any better off there. We'd do well to remember the sad history of birds like the Passenger Pigeon, and to bear in mind that just because a species is abundant now does not guarantee that it will remain so. Taking action to lower our carbon footprints and mitigate the effects of climate change is surely preferable to a *laissez faire* approach.

Carl Matthies



A California Towhee foraging at the LA Arboretum  
© Kathy Degner

## CONSERVATION

## Hahamongna News: Big Dig Completed

Los Angeles County Public Works announced in August the completion of the one-time, massive Devil's Gate sediment removal project (known to many as the "Big Dig"), one year ahead of schedule. L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger announced through Twitter just before the completion: "I'm eager to share that the Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project, an effort to remove 1.7 million cubic yards of sediment (enough to fill the Rose Bowl 3 times!) to restore flood protection for our communities, will conclude this month, more than a year ahead of schedule."

The announcement followed a presentation in late July at the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee meeting, in which Public Works staff reported that the project had hauled away 1.2 million cubic yards at that time, and that, "Based on updated quantity and survey - the project will be completed and meet the design contours permitted for the project... very likely by November 2021." Supervisor Barger added, "Thank you to our local partners who made this collaborative process safe, sustainable, and innovative and who continue to advocate for the region as we move into the next phase to restore native plants and habitats."

Even though sediment removal is complete for 2021, there will still be construction vehicles in the Hahamongna basin. According to the recent announcement, "Public Works team members will continue to perform finishing construction activities within the reservoir through November of this year. The habitat enhancement component of the project

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## FIELD TRIPS

### Frazier Mountain & Mount Pinos

On July 10th, ten birders joined Lance Benner and me on this field trip to the southeastern corner of the Los Padres National Forest. We met nice and early at the Flying J in Lebec, organized carpools and drove up to Frazier Mountain.

The birding got off to a good start at Chuchupate campground, with some nice looks at a few pale Bell's Sparrows in the sagebrush. Mountain Quail were calling from different directions, and most of the group got a glimpse of a small family of these birds before they disappeared in the scrub. A Lawrence's Goldfinch tinkled as it flew by, and an Olive-sided Flycatcher serenaded us throughout our stay here. From the campground, we drove toward the summit, stopping at a couple of springs along the road to look at birds that came to the water. Highlights included satisfying looks at a Thick-billed Fox Sparrow, several Cassin's Finches, a family of Brown Creepers, and White-headed and Hairy Woodpeckers. Lance rounded off this leg by finding us a couple of Northern Pygmy-Owls tooting in the distance.

From Frazier Mountain, we drove to the Mount Pinos Nordic Center parking lot, where there was a large gathering of amateur astronomers waiting for the night sky with some truly impressive telescopes. We had lunch at nearby Iris Meadow, surrounded by Thick-billed Fox Sparrows, Green-Tailed Towhees, Chipping Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and Dusky Flycatchers (as well as blooming irises). Violet-green Swallows put on a show above us. Somewhat odd here at 8300' was a California Scrub-jay, which we hypothesized was a young bird dispersing from its nest lower down the mountain.

The official field trip ended with lunch, but afterward a smaller group hiked to the summit of Mount Pinos (8847') at a leisurely pace and were able to listen to and get great looks at Green-tailed Towhees, Dusky Flycatchers, and Western Wood-pewees. It was nice to be able to look at the flycatchers at close range and think about the difficulties in identifying them. A big blob in the distance turned out to be a roosting Great Horned Owl. A large patch of flowering penstemons attracted a number of *Selasphorus* Hummingbirds, which were presumably all migrating Rufous Hummingbirds. We picked out one adult male with an all-orange back, and another adult male with an almost entirely green back (which we left unidentified). I had seen a Townsend's Solitaire earlier in the day and was disappointed that we weren't able to get everyone on it -- but just as we were saying goodbye, one flew in and perched in the open only a few feet from us. A nice way to end to the trip.

This field trip involved spending a little more time driving compared to field trips to the San Gabriel Mountains to look for montane birds, but we were able to explore different types of habitat and look at the birds that breed there. We didn't find anything rare, but we were treated to satisfying looks at the birds that specialize in these habitats. The slightly later timing of the trip meant that young juveniles of many species were out and about. I was excited to see lots of juvenile Green-tailed Towhees -- I don't think I had seen those before.

*Naresh Satyan*

### Summer Evening Quest for Niche Birds

Catherine Hamilton and I led a very fun and successful trip to Claremont and Duarte on Saturday, June 26th, seeking out two somewhat specialty L.A. County species: Black Swift and Lesser Nighthawk.

After hiking up to the bench above Claremont Wilderness Park we first had distant views of our first target species amongst a swarm of Cliff Swallows. After some patient waiting, we were eventually treated to a Black Swift flying directly overhead. We spent many minutes enjoying great views as it acrobatically hunted insects in the sky above us.

From Claremont Wilderness Park we drove back west, arriving at the San Gabriel River in Duarte just as the sun was beginning to set. Hiking the SGR bike trail we stumbled on a hunting coyote and four or five hunting and calling nighthawks. We enjoyed watching the bounding flight of these awesome nighthawks and even got to hear them give the odd rail-like call that I only rarely hear them give. As an added bonus I spotted a Peregrine Falcon just as the sun set, and as we returned to our cars Catherine spotted a Barn Owl flying south along the river channel. A wonderful end to a fantastic trip.

Again it was great to be out and enjoying nature with friends and it was especially fun to be joined on the trip by two young birders aged seven and nine.

*Luke Tiller*



*A Lesser Nighthawk, one of the target species of the crepuscular field trip in June, doing a very respectable impression of a bump on a log.*  
© Darren Dowell



*Some of the July 10th birders taking in the grand view atop Mt. Pinos, which can feature soaring California Condors but alas, not on this occasion. © Lance Benner*



## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

As fall migration moves into high gear Pasadena Audubon Society is looking to expand its field trip offerings. As many of you have noticed our regularly scheduled trips with partners at the Huntington, the Arboretum, and Eaton Canyon have, as of yet, not returned. We are currently working on all those trips and hope that those monthly events will be back up and running again during the fall season.

By mid-September we will also be relaunching our midweek "Magpie Study Group" events. I'm not sure where we came up with the name for this, but these midweek trips involve little studying and even fewer magpies. What they do offer is some easy paced birding, with generous later morning start times at sites that are picked for both the quality of birding and accessibility for birders.

As far as the longer day trips are concerned, September and October will include some classics from prior years as well as a couple of new adventures. These tours will include seeking out migrants in a host of local pocket parks, heading to one of the Meccas of local birding: Santa Fe Dam, undertaking a coastal migrant hunt in Malibu and a re-run of a trip out to the sod farms and parks of Ventura County for some rarity hunting! Exact dates, however, are as yet undecided.

Currently our longer day trips are filling up incredibly fast. This means that every trip has a long wait list of those hoping to join us. A request as Field Trip Chair, please sign up for trips only if you are definite that you can attend. If you do book onto a trip and a conflict arises which means you can't attend, please let the field trip organizer know as soon as possible so that they can offer your place to someone on the trip waitlist.

At the current time we are going to be asking PAS Field Trip participants to sign up online either with us or through our partner organization when applicable, and to also complete a waiver form. You can read our current guidelines here: <https://www.pasadenaudubon.org/Trip-Guidelines>. The promptest way to find out about upcoming trips will be electronically via our members' eblast. If you have not already signed up for those, we encourage you to do so. Email Lois Brunet at: [loisb.pas@gmail.com](mailto:loisb.pas@gmail.com) to be added to that mailing list.

If you have a suggestion for a field trip location, please email suggestions to myself at [luke.tiller@gmail.com](mailto:luke.tiller@gmail.com). Equally if you are interested in leading or co-leading trips for Pasadena Audubon please send me a message.

*Luke Tiller*



*Like other corvids, this Magpie is intensely curious...as to why PAS would name a study group after it.*

## CONSERVATION (CONT'D)

will continue though fall 2022." These activities include the removal of temporary facilities used by the hauling trucks and the last steps of shaping the center of the basin to achieve the "permanent maintenance" and "episodic maintenance" zones as in the project plans.

We can expect a new phase of Public Works operations in Hahamongna for 2022. On many weekdays, habitat restoration activities will continue; however, perimeter trails should remain open for birding and other recreation most of the time. We should see six acres recovered as part of the PAS/Arroyo Seco Foundation vs. L.A. County lawsuit settlement taking shape as riparian habitat, and we should see a change in reservoir draining policy so that some water is held into the summer if possible. And this will be the first year of Public Works' annual dam capacity maintenance program, with sediment removal on a smaller scale, based on need, confined to a few weeks in late summer/early fall (no longer colliding with the peak of bird nesting season), and with hopes of avoiding a future Big Dig.

*Darren Dowell*

## PRESIDENT'S PERCH (CONT'D)

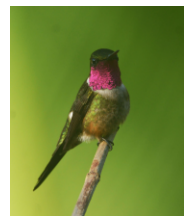
Philippines, and with much success. Whew! That means our donation to help these birds is money well-spent, and more importantly, it shows that people all over the world are becoming more aware of the incredible biodiversity of the Philippines, and they are working to protect it. And PAS is helping!

We are Pasadena Audubon, and our first look is not our last!

*Laura Solomon*

## We're Still Looking for a Few Good Bins

First, a rousing thanks to those of you who've dusted off and donated some of your old optics for this program. For the uninitiated, if you've got a nice old pair of binoculars or a spotting scope, still in good working order but no longer your equipment of choice in the field, please consider donating them to our "Bins to Peru" program. We're supplying kindred spirits in the *Club de Observadores de Aves de Perú* (COAP), based in Cusco, with quality birding gear contributed by our membership. Even mediocre optics are prohibitively expensive in Peru, and COAP President Saturnino Llactahuaman attests the local interest in birds far exceeds their resources. Contact Lois Brunet at [LoisB.PAS@gmail.com](mailto:LoisB.PAS@gmail.com) to arrange a donation and spread the joy of birding all the way to the southern hemisphere!



*Peruvian birds like this Amethyst Woodstar are best appreciated with binoculars!*

## A BIRD FROM AFAR

### Laysan Albatross Caps Kauai Trip

We made plans to go to Kauai, the garden island in Hawaii, not so much to see the birds, but to get away after the long pandemic winter. I'd been to Maui before and knew that the endemic Hawaiian birds had been decimated by human arrivals, first Polynesian and then European. With humans came chickens and avian diseases that the endemics were vulnerable to. Rats and other mammalian predators came along as well. The end result has been the loss of many unique species of songbirds. The Hawaiian Islands had seen magnificent speciation, similar to Darwin's finches on the Galapagos Islands, but in the 21st century, not much remains and those species that remain can only be found at altitude, where avian malaria in particular cannot thrive. On Maui I had seen none of the beautiful endemics.

Nonetheless, I studied my Hawaii birds and resolved to see



Resembling a bewhiskered mariner, this young Laysan Albatross waits patiently for a parent to return...and it had better bring some food.  
© Lois Brunet

whatever we could. One morning after we arrived, we took the long drive up Waimea Canyon into the clouds and at the very top, we saw not one but two endemics: The discreet, brown and grey Elepaio and the striking red Apapane.

These were reward enough but, in the end, it was the sea birds that made the trip. Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge is surrounded by a predator proof fence, crucial for the survival of ground nesting seabirds like Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. It also hosts a Red-footed Booby colony, which covered an entire hillside. But we came for the Albatross.

When I first heard there was a Laysan Albatross colony on Kauai, I couldn't believe our luck. I thought this mythical species only nested on Midway Atoll, a tiny speck at the outer western edge of the Hawaiian Archipelago. But there are a few exceptions, including a small colony on O'ahu and one on Kauai, at the Kilauea Point Refuge. These colonies are of utmost conservation significance. They're both high on bluffs above the shore, and should be safe from rising sea levels which will likely submerge Midway. Close to 500,000 breeding pairs nest annually, most of the population of the

species. The colonies in Hawaii represent a possible future for these birds when Midway disappears under the waves.

On arriving at the refuge, we were told that the Albatross viewing would be very limited. They nest on a hillside that is inaccessible to visitors. Also, by June, adults only visit rarely. By craning my neck I could just barely make out some large juveniles, waddling around in the fallen needles beneath the pines. The better show was put on by the Tropicbirds, both Red and White-Tailed, careening over the lighthouse with Red-footed Boobies and Frigatebirds. Only one adult albatross made an appearance. What a magnificent bird, incredibly long, narrow wings, that unmistakable pink bill and the elegant grey shadowing under the eyes. It soared and swooped over the refuge once or twice and then it was gone.

On the way out, we chatted with a docent at the gift shop who shared our passion for the albatross. He suggested we call Hob



A juvenile Laysan Albatross stretches the enormous wings that will soon enable its marathon oceanic flights. © Lois Brunet

Osterlund, author of *Holy Moli*, a love letter to the Laysan Albatross. She's a conservationist, a self-taught expert on the species, and also does a little guiding on the side.

Hob had just two hours to spare on the last day of our stay but that was enough. She took us to see three juveniles who were born in residential neighborhoods, right on people's lawns and in the planted center of a cul-de-sac. These birds were 4 ½ months old and were slowly losing their grey down as their flight feathers grew in. They were lackadaisical, poking around in the leaf litter, toddling about on their oversized feet, but generally staying very close to the mounded-up ground nests where they were born. They were totally indifferent to us, and we were able to watch them from a distance of twenty feet.

One looked like a great bearded Scandinavian, awaiting the return of a Viking vessel. In fact, he was awaiting the return of his parents. These sizeable youngsters are fed by their parents who only show up every couple of weeks! So they wait, they stretch their enormous wings and they get to know their surroundings. The wings are so long that they fold three times onto the bird's back, like a giant origami.

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## CHAPTER NEWS

## After a Terrific Tenure, Long Steps Down, and Weeshoff Steps In

At the end of July, Mickey Long stepped down from the PAS Board after 28 years of distinguished service, leaving behind grateful colleagues and big shoes to fill. Fortunately, Mickey will remain heavily engaged in various PAS programs and projects, including the hotly-anticipated *Guide to the Birds of the Greater Pasadena Area*. We are also very fortunate that Dave Weeshoff came along a week later wanting to get involved in PAS. After a pair of virtual meet-and-greets with Board members he was quickly voted in to pick up where Mickey left off as an At-Large Board Member. Here's a little background on Mr. Weeshoff.

Dave went from an illustrious career working for International Business Machines to volunteering for International Bird Rescue in San Pedro, where he eventually served as Chairman of the Board of Directors. While rehabilitating sick, injured, orphaned, and oiled aquatic birds, it became apparent to him that the water quality in our area was affecting the health of the animals. He responded by joining the Speaker's Bureau of Heal the Bay, an environmental organization dedicated to improving the water quality of the world's oceans, especially marine plastic pollution.

He is a frequent guest speaker to adult and children's groups on avian and environmental issues for International Bird Rescue, Heal the Bay, and Audubon. He is keenly interested in avian physiology, evolution, behavior, habitats, and especially Anthropogenic Climate Change, and is quite familiar with the National Audubon Society's Climate Change initiatives.

Dave travels frequently in search of interesting aquatic birds and mammals, including trips to the Antarctic, Iceland, Greenland, Nunavut (Arctic Canada), Galapagos, New Zealand, Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), Chilean Patagonia, Midway Atoll, as well as various USA destinations.



*Dave Weeshoff brings to PAS a wealth of experience in bird conservation, education, and advocacy, as well as a propensity for groanworthy puns*



*Polar bear! Sure, this is a birding newsletter, but let's face it, this shot from one of Dave's northern adventures is too amazing not to share. © Dave Weeshoff*

## PAS Board Holds In-Person Retreat for Strategic Planning

A shaded patio situated amid the native plant garden at Theodore Payne Foundation Nursery served as the setting for the Pasadena Audubon Society's annual Board retreat. Ashok Boghani of Jericho Road facilitated a visioning exercise on where board members thought PAS should be in five years, and he helped us work backward to decide on five essential strategies for achieving the vision. The following five strategies, each to be spearheaded by a PAS Board member, were chosen:

- 1) President Laura Solomon will lead the effort to "*Adopt best practices for non-profit governance.*"
- 2) At-Large Board Member Dave Weeshoff will lead the effort to "*Become a recognized regional leader in conservation.*"
- 3) Field Trips Chair Luke Tiller will lead the effort to "*Increase resources for birders.*"
- 4) Program Director Lois Brunet will lead the effort to "*Become a regional leader in environmental education.*"
- 5) Development Chair Sok Tng will lead the effort to "*Create a robust fund-raising program.*"

The visioning exercise was informed by recent interviews with PAS members and other stakeholders, as well as responses from last year's member survey. Our thanks to all who provided us with thoughtful input and great ideas.

After lunch, the Board held a "super-sized" monthly meeting to immediately begin tackling some aspects of the strategic plan. Highlights of the meeting included:

- Pursuant to the conservation and education goals, President Laura Solomon discussed the possibility of creating a nature center at Hahamongna.
- Treasurer Gary Breaux made a motion to double the donation match for the Phillipine Eagle Foundation from \$500 to \$1000, which passed by unanimous vote.
- President Laura Solomon announced two new sponsors for the Pasadena Birding Guide, Theodore Payne Foundation and Celestron.
- Programs Chair Chris Spurgeon volunteered to look into investing in a MOTUS wildlife tracking system, which has the potential to enhance data collection for wildlife researchers.

## In Memoriam: Don White

The Southern California birding community lost a dear friend this summer. Don White, who was a fixture on pelagic trips and a stalwart contributor to multiple Christmas Bird Count circles, died of a heat stroke while making preparations for the annual Big Horn Sheep census in Anza Borrego.

Los Angeles Audubon has created a memorial webpage for those wishing to share their fond memories of Don ([forevermissed.com/don-white/](http://forevermissed.com/don-white/)).

## PROGRAMS

### YOUNG BIRDERS (CONT'D)

released it back into some more suitable habitat.

We ended our day at Hahamongna Native Plant Nursery watching their hummingbird feeders and picking Bladderpod seeds! Though we enjoyed lots of great birds and nature, best of all was finally getting to meet everyone out in the field in person and just enjoy doing some bird and nature watching together!

Our Young Birders Club online meetings take place the second Wednesday of the month. You can register for those through the Young Birders section of our website, which is under the Events tab. We will aim to have Young Birders Club field trips at the end of each month.

Thanks to Kathy Degner for co-leading the trip and PAS Board members and staff that are involved in helping to produce our meetings: Laura, Lois and Kelsey. Finally, thanks to PAS members who help sustain this kind of programming with their memberships and support.

*Luke Tiller*

### A BIRD FROM AFAR (CONT'D)

The parents go on foraging trips over the open ocean to gather the seafood diet their young require, each trip covering up to 3,000 miles! Upon return, they greet their offspring, and then regurgitate the catch into the throat of the juvenile, and within a half hour, they're gone.

Laysan Albatross roam the open ocean, only returning to land to breed. They range over the entire North Pacific from British Columbia and Alaska to Northern Siberia and down to Japan. Their flight pattern, called dynamic soaring, is extremely energy efficient. They soar close to the water and use the wind off the waves for occasional lift, keeping their head even to the horizon while the body swings up vertically to turn and continue. With only occasional moments of rest on the water, most of life is lived aloft.

The juveniles were slowly preparing for their departure over the open water. One day, several weeks hence, these young birds were destined to take flight and head to an alien world made only of water and sky, where they'd live for 4 or 5 years before their drive to reproduce would lead them back to their birthplace to search for a mate. Five lonely years. It's hard to fathom.

Those who attended the screening of Albatross, by Chris Jordan two years ago at Eaton Canyon, will remember the danger plastic pollution represents for these birds. With climate change and rising sea levels looming, the future looks bleak. If you are moved to support conservation efforts for this magnificent species, go to [OceanConservancy.org](http://OceanConservancy.org).

*Lois Brunet*



*Young birders take turns peeking through the scope at Hahamongna Watershed Park. © Sean Doorly*

### To Do or Docent? *That is the Question*

As we continue to stand in the land of “what now?”, wouldn't a few hours a week with fellow lovers of nature, children, and conservation education feel like a mini-get-away? The answer is a definitive “Yes!”

In the Fall of 2019, several years into a glorious retirement, I decided to supplement my life with the PAS Bird Science Program Docent training. The training, and subsequent work with the children at Washington Elementary, was fun, enriching and enlightening.

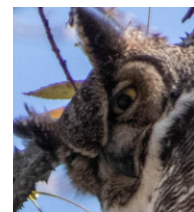
I encourage everyone to check out the wonderful BIRD SCIENCE PROGRAM page on the PAS website: [pasadenaudubon.org/bscience](http://pasadenaudubon.org/bscience). The pictures and positive energy you see there are the essence of the BSP, and if you happen to be searching for a fantastic internship opportunity, check this one out: [pasadenaudubon.org/internships](http://pasadenaudubon.org/internships).

No previous knowledge is necessary, just a love for birds and a desire to work with children. The docent and intern training occurs once a week for five weeks and covers local bird identification, familiarization with the STEM curriculum and protocol for classes/field trips. Learning how to handle educational owls is definitely a thrilling highlight of the course!

*Vicki Salmon*

### PAS Currently On A Coffee Club Break

Step right up! We are looking for a bird-friendly volunteer to manage member orders of bird-friendly coffee from Birds and Beans. As many of you already know, their coffee is delicious, fair-trade, and because it's shade grown, preserves vital habitat for birds. Email Lois Brunet at [loisb.pas@gmail.com](mailto:loisb.pas@gmail.com) if you're interested.



*Need...coffee...now.*



## GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT

### Thank you to our Wonderful Donors!

We are humbled once again by the generosity of our members and other supporters, and most grateful for their donations. A special note of thanks to those who rallied on behalf of the Phillipine Eagle Foundation (PEF) following the PAS screening of *Bird of Prey* at Heritage Square Museum on August 18th. With PAS pledging to match donations up to \$1000, we've now raised over \$2200! As you may have read in our emails, PEF has struggled to raise funds during the pandemic, because they've had to cease giving facility tours to the public. So y'all give yerselves a pat on the back!

ACORN WOODPECKER (\$250-\$499): Janet Owens, Terry Santos

CALIFORNIA THRASHER (\$100-\$249): Emily Allen, Gary Breaux, Sean Doorly & Denise Gretchen-Doorly, Ann Jopling, Becky Lynn, Carl Matthies, Diana Neder, Linda Othenin-Girard, Norm Vargas & Family, Dave Weeshoff

WRENTIT (\$5-\$99): Anonymous, Brian Biery, John & Judy Campbell, Kathy Crowther, Nena Davis, Joan Depew, Tricia Desmarais, Esther Edber, Nadine Ishizu, Rick & Marlene Jones, Joan Kaplan, David Kimball, Becky Kitto, Helen Parker, Lynn Peckham, Michael Perry, Richard Perry, Richard Redman, Shawn Sites, Elaine Tietjen, Sok Tng, William Tyrer, Jeff Utter, Everard Williams, Leandra Woods

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MEMORIAL & TRIBUTE GIFTS: Phillip Blum donated in memory of Judith Katherine Arnold Hernandez, and he writes, "Judy was my mother and served for quite a few years as the president of the Audubon Society of Mexico. She loved birds and was quite an advocate for protecting birds and their habitats."



*The majestic Phillipine Eagle.* © Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

### Become a Part of the Dawn Chorus

Consider joining our monthly donor program to provide ongoing support for all our programs and events. Sign up at [pasadenaudubon.org/donate](http://pasadenaudubon.org/donate). Dawn Chorus donors receive a beautiful enamel pin designed by PAS' own Patrick Walling and Graham Hamby!



*An American avocet promenades through a puddle at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline near Richmond, California.*  
© Christine Hessler



*A Common Yellowthroat appoints himself town crier, proclaiming the latest news about the "Wichity wichity wichity witch!"* © Jim Margitan

### Welcome to our New Members

Wow! So many new members we can't fit them all on the last page. Welcome, welcome, one and all!

ALHAMBRA: Margie Bueno, Elaine Lau, Tatsuo Minamoto, Maria Ontiveros, Eloise Ruiz, Arthur Vasquez; ALTADENA: Andrea Bonnett, Marjorie Briceno, Janis Buckingham, Vincent Carberry, Michel Choban, Barbara Hackerman, Daniel Macgregor, Vera Maciejowski, Greg Marquez, Madan Mukhopadhyay, Jeffrey Wagner, Paula Walker; ARCADIA: Norman Chan, Bobbi Gaffke, J. Johnson, Marlene McEntee, Lucia Morassini, Carol O'Toole, Aurelia Wesbroom, Edna White, Jennifer Wolfard, Gerald Wuenschell; AZUSA: Mercedes Banzon; DUARTE: Deborah Buckler-Rose, Deborah Justice, Sally Norton, John Uhlman; ENCINO: Marianne Davis; FOREST HILLS: Donna Schulman; LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE: James Allen, Kathleen Day, Sally Emerson, Anthea Hannibal, Barbara Rosenthal, Robert Scott; LA CRESCENTA: Daniel Lipton; LOS ANGELES: Ava Bise, Jennifer Croft & Boris Dralyuk; Sean Doorly & Denise Gretchen-Doorly, Claudia Holguin, Blair Lord, Sarahi Magallanez, Nisha Randhava, Joseph Weinberger;

*continued on page 10*

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PARK: Jihe Chen, Kathryn Ginoza, P. Murakami, Victor  
Olivas, Mae Young; PALMDALE: Becky Kitto; PASADENA:  
Laurie Bilotta, Meera Boghani, Jesse Bouwman & Kristine  
Haugen, Casey Chaney, Susan Coates, Bette Cooper, William  
Crowfoot, Josette Dorazio, Mark Evans, Gary Floyd, Margaret  
Ford, Robert Frampton, Grigory Heaton, Paul & Linda Muarin,  
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Mizukami, Diane Norton, Taylor Parker, Robin Paul, Lynn  
Pedersen, Leora Peltz, Ivan Semerenko, Esmerelda Sinclair,  
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ROSEMEAD: Crispin Crispin De La Cruz, Harriet Furin,  
Sidney Heyman; SOUTH PASADENA: Hanne Heltai; SAN  
GABRIEL: Michelle Bender, Patricia Bruce, Bernard Douglas,  
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Judith O'Keefe; SIERRA MADRE: Jeanette Bayer, Catherine  
Fickas, Daniel Golden; SOUTH PASADENA: Manickam  
Balasingam, Gary Breaux, Sequoia Ding, Usha McFarling,  
Karen Newlove & Craig Rettig; TEMPLE CITY: Theresa  
Bertuglia, Tatiana Fister, Helen Masuda, John Tadeo, Elaine  
Zhou

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