

Drawing by
Guy Coheleach

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Founded 1904

Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 63 — No. 1

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

September–October 2014

Common Raven

Common Ravens are among the most adaptable and intelligent birds in the world. Occupying habitats from the high arctic to the hottest and driest deserts of the southwest, they live in environments with temperatures that range from -50 to +45 C, one of the widest ranges of temperature for any bird. Formerly even more widespread, their range in North America contracted during the 18th and 19th centuries due to deforestation in the East and eradication of buffalo and wolves on the Great Plains. Recently their range has partially rebounded and they're now relatively common in reforested areas of northern New England and New York. In Southern California, they've expanded into suburban and urban areas and have experienced explosive growth in the Central Valley. Worldwide, the range of common ravens extends across much of North America, throughout Eurasia, and into northern Africa.

Common Ravens are omnivores that eat small animals and arthropods, carrion, and even grains. They prey on a number of sensitive species, most notably young desert tortoises, which has led to efforts to control their numbers in the Mojave Desert. They also prey on the eggs and young of Least Terns, Marbled Murrelets, and Sandhill Cranes. Although they scavenge regularly, they lack the bill strength to cut through large animal skins and rely on other animals such as coyotes and wolves to open some carcasses. Ravens have been known to guide ground predators such as wolves to large prey such as moose and then to scavenge the carcasses after the wolves leave.

They're the largest passerine (perching bird) in the world by weight. Often confused with American Crows, common ravens are larger, have more massive beaks, wedge-shaped tails, and deeper and more varied vocalizations. Ravens soar like hawks but crows do not.

Common Ravens have one of the most extensive vocal repertoires of any bird in our area but the purpose of many vocalizations is poorly understood. They produce loud guttural croaks, squawks, knocks, and many other sounds, and are thought to have local dialects. They regularly exhibit behavior that looks like play, including doing spectacular dives, twists, and barrel rolls in flight and pulling on the tails of dogs and coyotes. Genetic studies suggest that the ravens in our area are more closely related to the Chihuahua Ravens to our east than to the ravens in the Midwest, Northeast, and Asia.

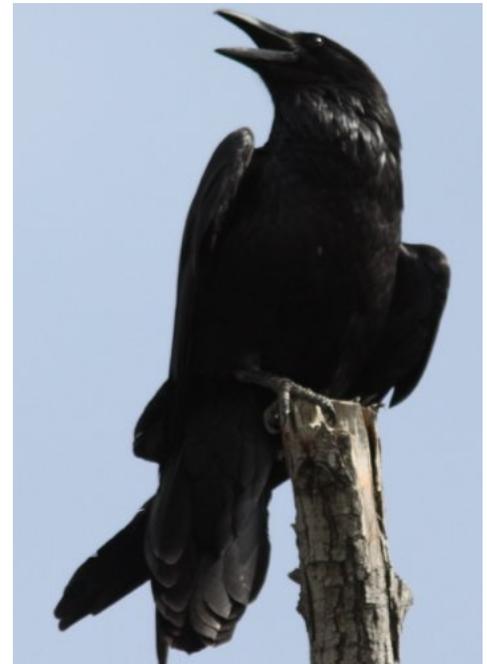


Photo by Lance Benner
See the photos in color - check out
www.pasadenaudubon.org

Lance Benner

President's Perch

Looking forward to getting started with a new “birding year” – launching into monthly meetings, regular field trips, and raising awareness of the wildlife habitats around us.

The board had an energetic and inspiring retreat over the summer. We all agreed that the momentum of Pasadena Audubon is excellent. With all the attention we are getting from our new members, our donation to Cottonwood Canyon, and our increased presence on social media, we are working to better serve the membership. That is where you, our members, can get involved.

Please come to our “Volunteer Raising” dinner on October 7th at 6:30 at Eaton Canyon. Become part of the fun – find out how you can keep the positive energy flowing. Even if you aren't sure about your schedule, come anyway and enjoy free food and drink! With your help we can keep PAS moving in the right direction.

Happy Birding,

Deni Sinnott

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September Program

Building Birding Skills

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

7:30 pm—9:00 pm

Jon Fisher and Mickey Long

Birders at all skill levels will enjoy Jon and Mickey rotating through illustrated examples of “easy”, “difficult”, and “diabolical” field ID challenges. Just when you think you know a species along comes an age, sex, or subspecies difference in plumage. As always, knowing where and when to expect the regularly appearing species helps greatly in being ready for the unexpected.

Shifting gears, the presenters will discuss how you can get the most out of birding by using eBird. They will cover the numbers game, and the value of estimating vs. dropping in an “X”, and how best to enter a confusing variety of birds (swallows for example). Included will be brief discussion of care needed when entering your birds, and tips for avoiding pitfalls (are Ladder-backed Woodpeckers moving into L.A.?).

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.

October Program

Cavity Conservation Initiative

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Gillian Martin

In our well-manicured urban areas, we have accepted the loss of dead and dying trees' valuable habitat to wildlife by providing nest boxes which, though compensatory to some species, are really only a stop-gap. The Cavity Conservation Initiative is a project created by Sea and Sage naturalist, Gillian Martin, under the umbrella of the Southern California Bluebird Club. Its goal is to change public perception of dying trees, to impact policies regarding snag management and also to provide youth with the information and skills to become snag advocates. Gillian will present a program on the ecology of snags and share how the SCBC is working on a long-term plan to help cavity-dwelling wildlife, particularly in developed regions.

November Program

What You See When You Go to Sea

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

7:30 pm—9:00 pm

David Pereksta

Southern California offshore waters are one of the last birding frontiers in the state. An exciting mix of local breeders, arctic nesting migrants, and austral migrants that are rarely if ever seen from land can be found at sea if you know when, where, and how to look for them. David Pereksta knows, and will share his knowledge and show us what experiences southern California pelagic birding trips offer with a selection of the thousands of bird and mammal photos he has taken. David has spent over 100 days at sea off southern California. He will describe the species that occur off our coast, where local pelagic trips go and how they operate, and how to best schedule a trip to see the birds (and marine mammals) you are looking for.

Conservation

Polystyrene and the Environmental Advisory Commission

The City of Pasadena prides itself on being a Green City; one way it illustrates its greenness is through the Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC). The job of the commission, made up of residents from each district, is to advise the City Council on environmental issues, and in order to do so, it gets reports from city staff and hears testimony from residents and stakeholders.

One environmental issue that is at the forefront of our work right now is our upcoming effort to ban polystyrene take-out containers and cups in Pasadena. 85 other cities in California have already banned this, and we would like to do the same as part of our efforts to keep the city, including its rivers, as clean as possible, and as part of our plan to reduce our solid waste headed to landfills to nothing by 2040.

A ban on polystyrene take-out containers and cups will benefit the environment, including birds, tremendously. Fewer polystyrene products mean less polystyrene on city streets, in landfills, in streams, and in the ocean. Polystyrene leaches incredibly toxic chemicals into the water and soil, wreaking havoc on endocrine systems of birds and people alike. It never biodegrades, but it does photo-degrade into ever tinier pieces

that birds and other animals often mistake for food. Banning it in Pasadena will be a huge step in the right direction.

Some folks worry that food prices at restaurants will skyrocket if merchants have to replace polystyrene with organic containers, but the market has changed considerably in the last few years. The price differential between organic and polystyrene containers is now about two cents, and more people are employed in the organic food container industry than in the polystyrene container industry. The manufacturers are ready for this transition!

So how can you help? You can write to your city councilmember and ask them to support a ban on polystyrene take-out containers and cups. You can come to an Environmental Advisory Commission meeting and tell us that you would like it banned. You can “like” the page Styrofoam Free Pasadena on Facebook. You can avoid purchasing all polystyrene products. The birds will thank you!

And if you ever have an environmental concern that you want to bring to the Pasadena City Council, a good place to start is with the EAC. We meet the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm in the Permits Building (175 North Garfield Ave., Pasadena, 91101) and the first item on the agenda is public comments for items not on the agenda. This means you can

Continued on p. 3

Saving Our Local Birds

Conservation

Did you know there are 500 different species of birds in Los Angeles? Los Angeles is unique as it offers a wide range of habitat for birds such as mountains, deserts, beaches, and wetlands. The Pasadena area, with its oaks and proximity to the mountains, supports many beautiful birds.



Barn Owl photo by Beatrix Schwarz

However, many of our local birds, such as White-crowned Sparrows, Yellow Warblers, and Barn Owls, are declining due to the impact of humans. Birds lose their habitat because of housing development and climate change. Many birds in our neighborhood get killed by cats, window crashes, and rat poison. You can help the birds by doing a few simple things in your house and backyard to make the Pasadena area a safer environment for birds.

Our cuddly kitties are the #1 predator of birds. Scientists from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the Fish and Wildlife Service estimate that cats kill approximately 2.5 billion birds and 12 billion mammals each year in the United States. You can help keep birds and other wildlife safe by keeping your cat inside. A cat's natural instinct is to hunt and, even if it is well fed, it will still kill. Cats kept indoors will usually live longer and they are less prone to fleas, mites, and diseases. Feral cats are also a problem to birds. If you see a feral cat, call your local shelter, and they will trap and neuter it. Keeping your cat indoors helps the birds and your cat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that about 1 billion birds are killed every year from flying into windows on our buildings. Windows are highly reflective and birds may not see them if they are reflecting trees and sky. Birds can fly extremely fast, some reaching speeds up to 200 miles per hour. Birds are fragile due to their hollow bones, and when they hit a window, they usually break their necks or injure their wings. There are things you can do help prevent window collisions. For example, you can make cut-outs of hawk shapes and paste them on your window. Just draw the outline of a hawk on black paper, cut it out, and tape it to the window. You can also move your bird feeders away from windows so birds have space to fly away safely when they get startled. You can help save many

birds by using these simple solutions.

Rat poison is another big threat to birds. It takes a rat four to ten days to die after ingesting the poison. Live rats are one of the main sources of food for hawks and owls. Owl and hawks eat the poisoned rats, which makes them die from internal bleeding. A study by the Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme in England found that 91% of dead Barn Owls had high levels of rat poison in them. Even poisoned dead rats are a threat to birds because birds eat the insects that decompose dead rats. When we kill our owls by poison, we are actually increasing the rat population, as the average owl eats up to 1,000 rats a year. Rats can be controlled by putting traps out and sealing all holes in the house. You can make a difference for birds and help decrease rat population by avoiding rat poison.

Many bird species are declining in recent decades in the United States and all around the world. The Pasadena area is no exception. We need to help the birds starting in our own neighborhood. Keep your cat indoors, prevent collision with windows, and don't use rat poisoning! The birds will thank you.

Dessi Sieburth

Dessi Sieburth is a Montrose resident and a 7th grader at St. Elizabeth School in Altadena. Dessi has been birdwatching and actively helping birds since he was 8 years old. He has given many presentations about bird conservation in schools.

Polystyrene, continued

speak to the commission first, and then leave the meeting and be home in time for dinner. It is a very effective way to bring issues to the commission—much more effective than sending me an email or calling me. The Commissioners need to hear from **you**. I invite you to participate at the level you feel comfortable. You never know what change you can effect!

Laura Garrett

Hahamongna Update

The Los County Department of Public Works will be doing an interim sediment removal project beginning in September. They will be removing sediment from right behind Devil's Gate Dam and storing it in Johnson Field. Because we had so little rain last year, very little sediment entered the basin, so they only need to remove about 5,000 cubic yards. The project will begin around September 15 and should take about two months.

In the meantime, we are waiting for the County to release its final Environmental Impact Report for the massive sediment removal project, which should release by the end of the year.

Laura Garrett

Cottonwood Canyon Kudos

AFC is deeply grateful to the Pasadena Audubon Society for taking the lead in supporting our Cottonwood Canyon project with a pledge of \$25,000. Just as individual donors are the life blood of AFC, we rely on conservation-minded community groups to be the backbone of our joint efforts to protect natural open spaces. The Pasadena Audubon Society has been essential in helping save wildlife habitats and corridors over the years, and now they have come through for conservation in a big way. Our gratitude knows no bounds.

...Arroyo & Foothills Conservancy Summer 2014 newsletter

An Active Summer

August 3rd found six young birders and their parents escaping the summer heat and taking to the cool ocean. With calm seas forecast, we eagerly boarded the noon boat out of Long Beach Harbor. We were not disappointed in our whale search, as we saw five Blue Whales! This was a first sighting of Blue Whales for most of the kids and their parents.

And it wouldn't be a PAS field trip if we didn't see some birds. Highlights were all the Black-vented Shearwaters, a few fast Cassin's Auklets, the aptly named Elegant Terns, and a single Black Storm Petrel.

PAS young birders (and their parents!) had a successful field trip and great time and they are ready to board the boat again,

Susan Gilliland



PAS Bylaws Changes

Members: please note we are making a change in the bylaws of PAS. This requires that we notify the membership via the newsletter and take a vote at the September general meeting. Here are the changes and reasoning behind them. Please be prepared to vote at the September general meeting on these items.

Discrepancies in the version of the bylaws posted on the Pasadena Audubon Society website (which is not dated) as compared to versions dated 8/2/2008 and 8/8/2008 were reviewed by Ira Blitz, Secretary. These were compared to the Pasadena Audubon Society minutes of August and September 2008. The discrepancies included differences in the number of

Education



Photo by Beatrix Schwarz

Photo by Kitty Cahalan

Bluebird Talk September 17

Dessi Sieburth will give a PowerPoint presentation about his Western Bluebird Conservation Project. It will be held from 7:00 to 7:30 pm in the small classroom, at Eaton Canyon just before the regular September general meeting. Both kids and adults are welcome to the presentation, which explains how Dessi makes, monitors, and records data from his Bluebird nest box project.

More Active Summer

On June 14th, 11 young birders and 5 parents, enjoyed a fantastic summer bird walk at Bonelli Regional Park. For most of the kids and parents, it was their first visit to Bonelli (but likely it won't be their last visit!)

Dessi Sieburth led 10 of his peers around the north end of the Puddingstone reservoir and the coastal sage scrub, some of the last remaining patches of this unique habitat.

We enjoyed several special treats including Western Bluebird adults feeding young and a beautiful male Wood Duck out of the water and walking around near us. This was a favorite bird for some. We hiked along the coastal sage scrub and found Cactus Wren and were able to spot one of their nests. It was a great morning for a bird walk and just having fun!

Susan Gilliland



Board Members-at-Large and the presence of the Past President on the Board. After discussion the following motion was made by Eileen Burton and seconded by Mickey Long: The bylaws version of 8/8/2008 which provides for 6 Members-At-Large on the Board in Article IV, Section 1 shall be kept. To this shall be added to Article VI Section 5 that the "Immediate Past President shall serve as a continuing Board member for one year after the term of being elected as President." The Board unanimously agreed to the above resolution.

After further discussion the following motion was made by Ira Blitz and seconded by Chrystal Watson: Article IV Section 3 shall read "A quorum of 50% of filled Board Positions shall be required to conduct business" The Board unanimously agreed to the above resolution.

Piute Ponds

Field Trips

Ballona Wetlands

Saturday, September 13, 2014



6:30 am — early afternoon

What do you find in September in a wetland oasis in the desert? Shorebirds! Join us for a hot day at the Piute Ponds and other nearby Antelope Valley locations where every year thousands of sandpipers and plovers stage during their southbound migration. We should find over a dozen shorebird species, and we may see Baird's or Pectoral Sandpipers. We will also look for desert birds such as Bell's Sparrow, and we may have a chance for LeConte's Thrasher.

Note: Piute Ponds are located on Edwards Air Force Base, which has restricted entry. Please email Mark Scheel if you would like to attend. The meeting time and place will be arranged.

Mark and Janet Scheel

Saturday, October 11, 2014



7:30 am — Noon

Join us for a walk around the Ballona Wetlands, which contains the only remaining saltwater marsh in LA. Meet at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (park on Jefferson Blvd just west of Lincoln Blvd) in Playa Vista. Afterward we will drive west to Del Rey Lagoon where we will park and bird the tidal saltwater lagoon, Ballona Creek and surrounding jetties.

Ballona specialties we should have good chances of seeing include Savannah Sparrow (large-billed), Cinnamon Teal, White-tailed Kite, Least Tern, Black Turnstone, Wandering Tattler, Pelagic Cormorant, Black Oystercatcher and much more.

Christopher Taylor ctaylor@kiwifoto.com

Legg Lake



Sunday, October 5, 2014

7:00 am — 11:00 am

Legg Lake is well known to many of us, and it can be magical during fall migration. We will assemble in the vicinity of Restroom 7 to the west of the Santa Anita parking lot, search the trees for migrants, then wander along the lakes to see what wintering birds have arrived. A portable scope can be handy for scanning the lakes. Depending on conditions here and elsewhere, we may extend the trip to another area site such as the San Gabriel River or Peck Road Park.

Legg Lake is within the Whittier Narrows Recreational Area. There are free parking lots off Santa Anita Ave. and Rosemead Blvd., both just south of the 60 Freeway; the Santa Anita lot is closer to Restroom 7. Google Earth coordinates: 34.0354, -118.0582

Darren Dowell

Huntington Beach Central Park

Sunday, October 19, 2014

7:00 am — 11:30 am

Central Park in Huntington Beach is a great place for migrant warblers and flycatchers, especially in the fall, and the large areas of un-manicured habitat in the park are surely a factor. Over 20 species of eastern U.S. warblers have been recorded over the years, and we'll hope to find a couple. There are also a permanent lake and an intermittent pond that can be good for water birds. The Park is not far from Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve — a great place to spend the afternoon after the guided part of the trip ends.

Take the 405 freeway south to Goldenwest and go south on Goldenwest. Make a left at Slater and then a quick right into the parking area on the north side of Central Park. Plan to arrive before 7:00 AM. Carpooling is encouraged.

Darren Dowell

Field trips continue on page 7!

Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk



Sunday, September 21, 2014

Sunday, October 19, 2014

Sunday, November 16, 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, September 6, 2014

Saturday, October 4, 2014

Saturday, November 1, 2014

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 Hahagmongna, and park by the ballfield.

Leaders vary; see calendar

Huntington Library Monthly Walk



Sunday, September 28, 2014

Sunday, October 26, 2014

Sunday, November 23, 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 bottom of calendar page) by email (preferred), or by phone. Trip leaders vary.

Mark Hunter

 = Wrentit Club!

Calendar

Submit material for the next Wrentit by May 1

 = Wrentit Club
Count Circle!

September 2014

3	Wed	7:15 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Deni Sinnott
6	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip		Hahamongna	Mark Hunter
13	Sat	6:30 am	Field Trip		Piute Ponds	Mark and Janet Scheel
13	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip		County Arboretum	Julia Ray
14	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip		Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
16	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group		Legg Lakes	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
17	Wed	7:00 pm	Kid's Corner		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Bluebird Nest Box Project
17	Wed	7:00 pm	General meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Building Birding Skills
20	Sat	Noon	Field Trip		Long Beach whale watch	Scheel/Benner
21	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
28	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip*		Huntington Library & Gardens	Mark Hunter

October 2014

1	Wed	7:15 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Deni Sinnott
4	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip		Hahamongna	Lance Benner
5	Sun	7:00 am	Field Trip		Legg Lake	Darren Dowell
11	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip		Ballona Wetlands	Christopher Taylor
11	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip		County Arboretum	Julia Ray
12	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip		Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
15	Wed	7:30 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Cavity Conservation
19	Sun	7:00 am	Field Trip		Huntington Central Park	Darren Dowell
19	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
21	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group		Lake Bonelli	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
25	Sat	4:00 pm	Field Trip		Mountain Owling	Lance Benner
26	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip*		Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

November 2014

1	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip		Hahamongna	t.b.d.
5	Wed	7:15 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Deni Sinnott
8	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip		County Arboretum	Julia Ray
9	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip		Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
15	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip		North Slope San Gabriels	Mark & Janet Scheel
16	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
18	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group		Santa Fe Dam	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
19	Wed	7:30 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	When You Go To Sea
22	Sat	6:30 am	Field Trip		Big Santa Anita Canyon	Lance Benner
23	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip*		Huntington Library	Mark Hunter
30	Sun	9:00 am	Field Trip		Newport Back Bay Kayaks	Mark Hunter

* - reservations required, PAS members only

* Trip Leader Information

Mark Scheel (chair)	(626) 765-5408	scheel@tapir.caltech.edu
Larry Allen	(626) 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@pasadenaaudubon.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**C'est Chouette - Owls in the San Gabriels****Saturday, October 25, 2014****4:00 pm — 11:00 pm**

Five species of owls regularly occur in the San Gabriel Mountains during the fall. This trip will start with a late afternoon hike to look for diurnal montane species before sunset and then owls after dark. We will hike up to five miles round trip on a wide path as we search for Spotted, Northern Pygmy, Western screech, Northern Saw-whet, and Great Horned Owls. After we return to the cars, we will drive to a few nearby spots to search for species we might have missed during the hike.

You must be able to hike 3-5 miles round trip with an elevation gain of up to 700 feet. Limited to 10 people. Please email me to reserve a spot.

*Lance Benner***North Slope San Gabriels****Saturday, November 15, 2014****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 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). Note that this is a different meeting place than for previous years' trips.

*Mark & Janet Scheel***Big Santa Anita Canyon****Saturday, November 22, 2014****6:30 am — 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. Pacific wrens have been present here for at least the last four winters and are probably regular fall/winter visitors.

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***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 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***Newport Back Bay by Kayak****Sunday, 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, terns, and many other species are well represented. This trip is timed to take advantage of mild currents during a moderately 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***Pelagic! (sort of)****Saturday, September 20, 2014****Noon — 3:00 pm**

Join us for a whale watch and pelagic birding trip. This is a public whale watch run by Harbor Breeze Cruises in Long Beach. Several experienced pelagic birders will be in the front of the boat to help identify what we see. This is a public whale watching trip, so we won't be the only people on the boat nor will we be able to stop for the birds, but we have a good chance for seeing many of the common fall pelagic species such as Black-vented, Sooty, and Pink-footed Shearwater; several gull species; all three cormorants; Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers; Red-necked and Red Phalaropes; Cassin's Auklets and Scripps' Murrelets; and, of course, whales, dolphins, sea lions, and seals.

Cost: \$50 regular, \$40 for seniors, and \$30 kids 11 and under. Two ways to pay: <http://2seewhales.com> (sometimes has discount coupons that are valid for only walk-up purchases), or you can buy tickets at the dock on the morning of the trip.

There's a "service" fee if you buy tickets online, but we don't think that's worth doing because the trips seldom sell out. The website above also includes driving directions. We encourage everyone to carpool and to arrive by about 11:30 am.

Mark & Janet Scheel, Lance Benner

In Praise of Patch Birding

The day I discovered that my dog didn't like romping in the off-leash portion of the dog park on Orange Grove, but was happy to stroll Vina Vieja Park's limited grounds on-leash I knew that my new Southern California birding patch had been born.

Patches are an all-important part of birding back home in the UK. They are that neighborhood spot where you earn your birding stripes watching Blue Tits, Blackbirds and European Robins for endless days on end in the hope that at some point you'll find something at least vaguely noteworthy that will bring you fame and ...well, not fortune, but fame at least among the local birding scene. I remember in South London a local birder joyously declaring that he'd finally produced a patch record nineteen Mallards that morning rather than his previous record eighteen, and it's that kind of small victory that should drive your passion for your patch (OK, even I think getting excited about nineteen Mallards is a bit sad.)

Here in the US, though, patch birding is becoming more popular, I'm not sure some birders have quite grasped patches as an idea. Here are the three keys to the concept as I see them: one, they can't already be heavily birded; two, they have to be local; and perhaps most importantly, three, they are supposed to be a little rubbish. I read a blog post recently where a transplanted California birder was talking about their new patch in Texas: a known site, with an eBird checklist of over 230 bird species including rarities like Tropical Parula included in that extensive list! The key to *real* patch birding is the excitement you get when you discover that you aren't looking at a House Finch or Mourning Dove for the millionth time that day.

The key to picking a patch is it has to have just enough habitat to make it intriguing but not enough to make it actually any good. In New York City my patch was a little sliver of park in among a sea of concrete next to Chelsea Pier. What it had in common with Vina Vieja Park was that almost any migrant bird that you dug out of there felt like a little treasure. This kind of birding helps even your most jaded birder find new value in the commonest of our feathered friends. There Downy Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees and Northern Cardinals, all non-breeders, took on a level of excitement that would have been hard to muster almost anywhere else.

Though Americans are generally more mobile than Brits (when I lived in the UK we used to visit my grandmother a couple of times a year as she lived an incredible 180 miles away!) I still believe the second key to patch birding is that it has to be local to your work or home. My personal preference has always been for spending time birding over spending time driving to where I am birding, so this suits me fine. In L.A. I don't want to drive anywhere anyway, at least during the majority of any weekday, and that's beyond any consideration of

conservation issues. So sorry, no, your patch can't be Apollo Park if you live in Pasadena.

The third important key, and another reason you can't pick Apollo Park, is that no one else should be going there much (at least at first). In the UK that's hard to do; there are more active birders and much less space to fit them in to. Here in the vastness of the US that feels much more achievable. I've always liked the idea of birding places that no one else is covering rather than the regular spots because it means that birds that otherwise wouldn't be found may be (and who knows what waif or stray might turn up in your little habitat oasis during migration), some fresh eBird data is being created and it may become somewhere that becomes of value for something like a Christmas Bird Count in the not-ever-so-distant future.

Of course there is always the chance your patch will start to become overrun with other birders. My first local spot in Connecticut was almost too good for my own good, and though just some ball fields and a community gardens, after a couple of years of solid birding it quickly became the go to place to find uncommon open country migrants in the county. The site became even more popular after I found Connecticut's first chaseable Harris's Sparrow for 20 years there. Luckily sharing is the best part of birding and I was just thrilled when friends found a Northern Wheatear there one morning – well at least after I skipped work and successfully twitched it.

Of course I haven't dug up anything quite as rare as a Harris's Sparrow at Vina Vieja yet; just a smattering of nice birds in the shape of a Brewers Sparrow or two, a Clay-colored, a Lewis's Woodpecker and a Swainson's Hawk. It's been cool to over time run into a few members of Pasadena Audubon that have taken notice of the spot. In fact, last winter, thanks to a somewhat regular Gray Flycatcher, I even ran into my first out-of-state visitors: from Ohio – I'm guessing they didn't fly in specially! I'm not sure about Northern Wheatear, but this fall it's Red-throated Pipit or bust!

Luke Tiller



Gray Flycatcher photo by Luke Tiller



Townsend's Warbler photo by Luke Tiller

PAS Funds Help Cavity Nesters

Did you know that one of the recipients of your Chapter’s community grants has been the Southern California Bluebird Club (SCBC)? In December 2013 you awarded the club \$900 for its Cavity Conservation Initiative (CCI), an innovative program to stem the removal of dead and dying trees. These trees are vital habitat to cavity-nesting birds and many wildlife species. Here’s a recent example of how the SCBC put your dollars to work.

In mid-June of this year, 270 Girl Scouts gathered for a day camp in the city of Orange. In groups of 30, Scouts attended a program titled The Wonderful Life of a Dying Tree, provided by SCBC volunteers. A fun project followed. Scouts created a large mural and several posters illustrating how dead trees not only help cavity-nesting birds but also add to habitat diversity. The mural, posters, and an educational handout allow Scouts to teach others what they learned.

Your grant also supports a program that brings snag ecology into elementary school classrooms. You can learn more by going to www.cavityconservation.com. However, you can do so in person by attending PAS’s monthly meeting on October 15. I will be our speaker that evening; I might even persuade you to replicate the CCI in Pasadena! All our tools are free to willing educators. Come see your funds at work, learn how the CCI is changing public perception of dying trees, impacting policies, supporting youth leadership, and preparing the next generation to be better stewards.

Gillian Martin

Central Valley Birding Symposium

The symposium runs November 20–23, 2014 in Stockton, CA. Enjoy keynote programs by Ed Harper, Nat Seavey, and Joel Greenberg; workshops by Joe Morlan, Jon Dunn, and Kimball Garrett, plus many others; vendors; socializing; and dozens of field trips to far-flung hotspots, led by experts. For further information see www.2013cvbs.org.

Announcements

New!

Monthly Arboretum Bird Walk

Julia Ray will lead a Family Bird Walk at the County Arboretum in Arcadia on the second Saturday of each month, beginning September 13. Walks start at 8:00 am and last two hours. Meet on the steps leading to the entrance of the Arboretum. Even non-Arboretum members get in for free!

DONATIONS TO PAS

These PAS members and friends have recently made donations to our chapter: John Birsner & Pamela Stones, Denise Castillo, Elizabeth Cordero, Beth Gertmenian, John Grula, Doris Popoff, George & Grace Wong, Linda Zinn. Thank you all!

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 Wren Tit*, 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, per family, 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
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If this is a gift, please also provide donor's information below:

Name Phone
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Yearly dues:

- \$20 (individual or family) \$15 (senior or 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

Magpie Bird Study Group

The group meets the third Tuesday of most months. 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, September 16, 2014

Legg Lake

Meet in Santa Anita Ave parking lot

Tuesday, October 21, 2014

Lake Bonelli

Meet at park HQ on Via Verde just outside park entrance.

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

Sante Fe Dam

At the entrance to the park off Arrow Highway, tell the attendant that you are meeting a group at the nature center, to avoid paying a fee. After entering the park, turn right and follow the road, curving back left to the nature center. We will meet in the nature center parking lot.

Trip leaders: Sid Heyman, Julia Ray

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REWARDS UNLIMITED**

*Let's make PAS even better!
Dinner and Drinks...all welcome*
Tuesday, October 7th @ 6:30 PM
Eaton Canyon Nature Center

*Please join us for
DRINKS/DINNER/OPPORTUNITY
WE NEED:*

**Leaders -- Helpers -- Teachers -- Cookie Bakers
Doers -- Conservationists -- Greeters -- Writers
Movers -- Shakers -- T-Shirt Sellers
& Everybody in between!**

RSVP to:
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**Giving Back:
The Importance of
VOLUNTEERISM**

New Members

ALHAMBRA: Charmaine Chui, Jason Meng, Karen Vrooman, Lee Wear; **ALTADENA:** Judy Cobb, Birthe Landerer, Mark Mariscal, Edward Motts; **ARCADIA:** Monica Salas, Ingrid Sullivan; **AZUSA:** Nicole Douglas; **LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE:** Gordon Crawford; **LA CRESCENTA:** Gina & Robert Harris; **MONROVIA:** Kris Fisher, Addie Kern Family, Kristen McCall, Donald Miller, Kyle Stevenson, Karen Suarez; **PASADENA:** Robert & Marilyn Burman, Kitty, Pat, Jack & Hannah Cahalan, Dolores Diaz-Carney, Jenna Dunaetz, Kevin Flood, Robert Gillespie, Debra Hori, Zachary Horn, Edward Kimble, Michelle Kuczma, Susan Mahlmann, Amy McLean, Kim Moise, Jane Phillips, Sharon Plotkin, Pamela Wald, Joanne Watchie; **ROSEMEAD** Filipina Delafuente; **SAN MARINO:** John & Louise Bryson, Frank Haag, Ronald McLean, Li Pan; **SOUTH PASADENA:** Nancy Spear; **TEMPLE CITY:** Webster Morton, Monica Tyre; **VALENCIA:** Cathy Karlin