



Drawing by
Guy Coheleach

THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 71 — No. 1

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

September-October 2022

Awards Banquet, Slide Show Cap Banner Year for PAS

After more than two years away, PAS members returned to the familiar surroundings of Eaton Canyon Nature Center for the traditional June banquet and slideshow. About 70 members were on hand for a delicious buffet provided by *Nancy's Greek Cafe* in Altadena and *Luna Grill* in La Cañada. Dinner was followed by the presentation of awards (see our heroes webpage at pasadenaaudubon.org/heroes). Technological savvy acquired during the pandemic allowed Executive Director Lois Brunet to present, via Zoom, a lifetime achievement award to Mickey Long, who was stuck at home with covid, and for Dave Weeshoff to award the Young Conservationist Scholarship to Ashwin Sivakumar, who was in Puerto Rico for the American Ornithological Society meeting (see story, page 4).

The ceremonial passing of the presidential gavel from Laura Solomon to Luke Tiller was next on the agenda, and the evening's finale was the parade of birders from age eight to eighty, stepping up to the podium to regale the assembly with their bird photos. As usual, many people contributed to create yet another special PAS event.



PAS President Luke Tiller takes the gavel from his jubilant predecessor, Laura Solomon. © Sean Doorly

more photos on page 7

PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Welcome one and all to another year of sharing in the excitement of birds with Pasadena Audubon Society. I'm PAS President Luke Tiller, and this is my inaugural Wrentit address. For those who don't know me, I look forward to meeting you, and in the meantime, I'm the guy in the upper right corner of this page. Just two months into my new role, I have several reasons to be especially excited about the year ahead.

Firstly, after a tough pandemic-induced hiatus of two and half years, in-person general membership meetings are coming back to Eaton Canyon Nature Center on a trial basis this fall. However, for those who feel more comfortable at home, or perhaps just need to multitask, we will be simulcasting the meetings on Zoom. Once again, Programs Chair Chris Spurgeon has lined up a great slate of speakers (see page 2). While we're on the subject of reviving in-person meetings, I'm also keen to bring back the PAS tradition of Birds 'n Beers, a midweek pub social that is every bit as fun and informal as it sounds. More details to come on that.

Secondly, as a professional birding guide, and Field Trips Chair for the last couple of years, it goes without saying I see field trips as a key aspect of Pasadena Audubon's offerings. So I'm happy to say I've left field trips in the very capable hands of Corey Husic. As some of you already know, he and I,

along with our other expert guides, have been busy this summer showing birders around hotspots from the mountains to the coast. And we're just getting warmed up. Overnight field trips, and perhaps even a pelagic field trip— which we've not done in years— could make their way on to the calendar in the months to come. If you haven't already, be sure to subscribe to pasadenaaudubon@groups.io email list to receive notifications for field trips and other events.

Finally, I'm excited about all our organization has going on in terms of outreach and education. Our *Birding Guide to the Greater Pasadena Area* has sold so many copies we've ordered a second printing. Folks on our Advocacy Committee met with state legislators to speak up for bird-friendly bills, and two of our members presented at the American Ornithological Society meeting in Puerto Rico (see page 4). The Washington Elementary STEM garden is flourishing under the stewardship of Garden Educator Evellyn Rosas, another shipment of donated birding equipment was delivered to our friends in Cusco, Peru, and Executive Director Lois Brunet is gearing up for Bird Science Program docent training, starting next week (see page 5)! Do you understand now why I'm so excited?

Luke Tiller

continued on page 5

MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Mickey & Jon's Bird ID Quiz
September 21st, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Eaton Canyon Nature Center & Zoom

If it's September that can mean only two things... 1) fall migration's in full swing, and 2) it's time for Pasadena Audubon's annual mystery bird quiz! Join our experts for an evening of photographic mystery bird identification challenges, as well as expert tips and tricks for IDing the mystery species involved.



What is this? If you know, keep it under your hat until the meeting!

CONSERVATION

Global Inspiration, Local Concentration

During my travels to Antarctica, the Arctic, Patagonia, Galapagos, and Alaska, my insights and appreciations for our natural world expanded to a passion for protecting the myriad of life forms on our amazing blue planet.

I've observed red algae growing on Antarctic ice, krill that eats that algae, penguins that thrive on krill, leopard seals and orcas that eat penguins. I've walked on the Arctic tundra and the Greenland ice cap, and snorkeled amid living coral, seals and penguins. I've sailed around ice in its many forms, including glaciers, bergs, fast ice and pack ice. I've seen whales, dolphins, turtles, marine iguanas, polar bears, walrus, narwhals, countless birds, and many other kindred species living in ancient, complex, and fragile food webs throughout the world's marine ecosystems.

The sum of these experiences, and many more, has transformed me, and infused me with a reverence and awe, and a passion to protect and preserve the physical elements, and all the life forms, of our world. This has motivated me to engage in conversations with friends

continued on page 5

The Role of Zoos in Conservation
October 19th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Susie Kasielke
Eaton Canyon Nature Center & Zoom

Experts say we are now in the 6th mass extinction event, with the rate of species loss not seen since an asteroid wiped out the dinosaurs (except the feathered ones) over 65 million years ago. Zoos and aquariums around the world are stepping up to help turn the tide of extinction through public education, research, funding for field programs, and direct action to support threatened and endangered species. In addition to well-known programs for the California Condor and Whooping Crane, zoos and aquariums in the US are working to recover numerous bird species from Great Lakes piping plovers to Guam rails.

Susie Kasielke started her career as an animal keeper at the Los Angeles Zoo. She worked with a variety of mammals and reptiles but specialized in birds, having earned a degree in Avian Sciences from UC Davis. As an assistant curator, she developed the propagation, egg incubation, and chick rearing protocols for California condors from the beginning of the program. She was curator of birds at the Zoo from 2001-2016. She also worked at Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida and for the Toledo Zoo & Aquarium. She teaches workshops on avian egg incubation for zoo and avicultural groups around the world and is currently an instructor at Moorpark College, teaching Applied Wildlife Conservation this fall.

We're Going Hybrid!

For a trial period this fall, we'll be holding our monthly chapter meetings in person back at Eaton Canyon Nature Center AND online via the Zoom platform for video conferencing. The application can be downloaded free of charge to computer or smartphone at <https://zoom.us/download>. Please register on the website to receive the meeting link.



Northern Cardinal x
Pyrrhuloxia. ©
Daniel Kelch,
Macaulay Library
ML310195511

Pigeon Watching: The Surprising Wonder of a Boring-seeming Bird
November 16th, 7:00 pm
Rosemary Mosco
Eaton Canyon Nature Center & Zoom

Rock Pigeons are everywhere. For most of us, they're a dull sight; they poop on our cars or clutter our eBird lists. But these birds are worth a second look. They have a 5000+ year history as companions to people, and that surprising relationship makes them fascinating to observe. With humor, research, and plenty of odd facts, author and cartoonist Rosemary Mosco of *A Pocket Guide to Pigeon Watching* will take you into a pigeon's world and help turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Rosemary Mosco makes books and cartoons that connect people with the natural world. Her *Bird and Moon* nature comics won the National Cartoonists Society's award for Best Online Short Form Comic, were the subject of an award-winning museum exhibit, and are collected in a 2019 American Literary Association Great Graphic Novel for Teens. She co-wrote *The Atlas Obscura Explorer's Guide for the World's Most Adventurous Kid*, a New York Times Best Seller, and wrote many other books for kids and adults. Her favorite glacial landform is the esker.



This ~~rat~~ with wings urban bird would like an image makeover. © Shutterstock

Upcoming PAS Board Meetings

September 14th, 2022
October 12th, 2022
November 9th, 2022

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

AVIANS AMONG US

The Owls of Brigden Road

One morning, while taking my morning coffee for a stroll through the backyard, I discovered a Western Screech-Owl, *Megascops kennicottii*, perched atop our fence. I had been casually glancing around at plants before I noticed the penetrative yellow eyes of this diminutive, camouflaged presence staring at me.

We live on a quiet street in the Brigden Ranch area of Pasadena. Although close to the foothills, our house is definitely located within the 'burbs. Even so, the nightly chorus of owl calls was and continues to be a delight, and this was my first daytime sighting of a Megascops in the neighborhood.

After observing this little guy, I knew what I wanted for my next birthday...an owl box.

My husband dutifully heeded my gift request and in late 2016 he installed an owl box designed specifically for Western Screech-Owls on a tree near where I had first noticed "our" owl.



The backyard bird that inspired a birthday bird box ©Susan Hopkins



Squirrel squatter! © Phil Hopkins



The owls occasionally gifted their hosts with squishy owl pellets filled with beetle legs and rodent body parts. © Susan Hopkins

For several years the box remained vacant. In 2021, a Fox Squirrel, *Sciurus niger*, family took up residence. Like many new homeowners they decided to remodel, and set about widening the opening by sharpening their teeth on the entry. The squirrels eventually moved out and I continued to maintain my optimism that some day a pair of owls would call the box their home.

Finally, last November, a pair of owls found the box and deemed it suitable for starting a family. In May we determined by the adult owls' behavior that eggs had recently hatched, and the parents were taking turns flying out to forage for the owlets. Almost daily we were rewarded with a parent's head

filling the entry hole of the owl box.

Within a month it became evident that the box was getting a little crowded. One of the parents would roost during the day in a near-by tree and often sported a spray of white owllet guano on its shoulder feathers.

By mid June the owlets had fledged, the Megascops family moved out and our owl box was once again vacant. At twilight we occasionally still see the owls hunting in the neighborhood and we enjoy listening to their calls throughout the night.



Guess hoo? ©Sally Huang



Silhouetted screech owls at sundown ©Susan Hopkins

The bottom line is that our patience with the owl box paid off. My fingers are crossed that either the parents or the kids return next year. We will happily renew their lease.

Susan Hopkins



Western Screech Owls pay rent by posing, hunting, hooting, and glowering. It's a great deal for everybody! ©Phil Hopkins

Avians Among Us is a Wrentit column devoted to hyperlocal birding. If you've chronicled some nifty bird activity in your yard, on your block, or at the neighborhood park, please let us know at pas.wrentit@gmail.com

CHAPTER NEWS

PAS, Other Local Chapters, & CA Audubon Flock Together for Advocacy Day

Advocacy Day, an annual event organized by California Audubon, gives birders from all across the Golden State an opportunity to meet with their representatives and voice their support for pending legislation that would directly or indirectly benefit birds.

Pasadena Audubon's contingent was among the largest of the state's forty-nine local chapters. Eight of our members participated in the meetings, which have been virtual since 2020. Most of our catchment area falls within Assembly District 41 and Senate District 25, currently represented by Assemblyman Chris Holden and Senator Anthony Portantino. Pomona Valley Audubon Conservation Chair Brian Elliot also attended, and as a District 43 constituent, PAS Vice President Dave Weeshoff met with Assemblywoman Laura Friedman as well. Using background info provided by CA Audubon, local chapter members advocated for several bills that will come before the legislature in the next session, including:

- SB 977, *The Conservation Ranching Incentive Program*, which would incentive ranchers to preserve habitat for grassland birds;
- SB 260, *The Climate Corporate Accountability Act*, which would strengthen regulation of commercial greenhouse gas emissions in the



A screenshot of the Advocacy Day Zoom chat with Rhiannon Ripley (top left), one of Senator Anthony Portantino's aides. © Evelyn Serrano

state;

- AB 30, *The Equitable Outdoor Access Act*, codifying as state policy a commitment to provide safe and affordable access to nature for every Californian;
- AB 2382, *Light Pollution Control*, requiring that most state-owned buildings install shielded and/or motion-activated exterior light fixtures.

PAS Members Share Research at Ornithology Conference in Puerto Rico

In late June, a pair of Pasadena Audubon's bright young scholars flew to San Juan, Puerto Rico, for a joint conference of the American Ornithological Society and Birds Caribbean. Kelsey Reckling and Ashwin Sivakumar attended the conference to present findings from fascinating research they've been conducting with investigators at Occidental College and Colorado State University, respectively.

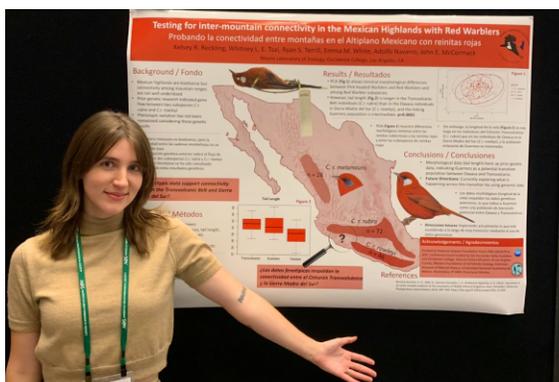
Kelsey Reckling is part of the research team at Occidental's Moore Laboratory of Zoology, led by Drs. John McCormack and Ryan Terrill, who are familiar to many of us as the duo behind the Bear Divide Migration Count. Her poster presentation, *Testing for inter-mountain connectivity in the Mexican Highlands with Red Warblers*, described genetic and phenotypic evidence she and her collaborators have developed of a hybrid zone between two subspecies of Red Warbler found

on opposite sides of the Sierra Madre.

Ashwin Sivakumar gave a talk titled *Weather surveillance radar reveals avian migratory behavior on short high-latitude nights*. He and his co-author, Dr. Kyle Horton, examined radar station data from subarctic Alaska to quantify the effect of night duration on migratory activity. The analysis revealed that nocturnal migratory behavior was more concentrated, and occurred sooner after sunset, where nights were shorter.

Their research contributes to our understanding of avian biodiversity and migration behavior. You make us proud, Kelsey and Ashwin!

Carl Matthies



Kelsey Reckling stands ready to drop knowledge on genetic and geographic variation in Red Warblers. © Kelsey Reckling



Ashwin Sivakumar explains to the audience how day length affects bird migration at northern latitudes. © Kelsey Reckling

CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

New Faces in PAS Leadership

Since last spring, a number of outstanding people have stepped up to fill critical gaps in PAS leadership. Without further ado, here they are!

Jamie Cho, Membership Chair

It wasn't until the infamous Covid-19 pandemic that Jamie's newfound passion emerged--stalking birds! From the tiny little birds chirping outside the window to the loud screechy sound of the ever-fascinating green parrots, Pasadena has introduced the wonders of birds to Jamie. As a newly hatched birder, Jamie likes to go on adventures with her bins and the new birders' Bible, PAS Birding Guide. When not birding, Jamie dedicates her time to food excursions discovering the hole-in-the-wall food places of different cultures.



Jamie Cho

Corey Husic, Field Trips Chair

Corey is a lifelong birder and naturalist who currently resides in Pasadena as he works toward a PhD in organic chemistry. He hails from the mountains of eastern Pennsylvania, a place that left him with an immense appreciation for nature and the environment. Over the years, Corey has worked with numerous local organizations to conduct ecological research as well as develop educational programs related to ecology, conservation, and natural history. Corey is also an eBird regional reviewer, an Audubon Christmas Bird Count compiler, and a member of the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee. Here in the Greater Pasadena area, Corey spends as much time as he can in the foothills and mountains, usually looking for or showing other people the awesome wildlife that lives so close to the big city. Corey began leading birding field trips at the age of 12 for his local Audubon chapter and hasn't stopped since. After a few years of leading birding and butterflying trips for Pasadena Audubon, it made sense for him to take on the role of Field Trips Chair. He aims to continue the organization's legacy of providing top-tier educational and accessible field trips so that everyone in our community can appreciate the incredible birdlife we have here in Southern California!



Corey Husic

Deborah Tammearu, Member at Large - Development

A transplanted New Yorker, Deb began her career as a junior high school science teacher. After teaching (and another degree), Deb was



Deborah Tammearu

ordained and served for thirty-six years as a priest in the Episcopal Church, retiring from active ministry and moving to SoCal in 2019. For nine of those years, Deb lived adjacent to an Audubon bird sanctuary in Dutchess County, NY, and a birder was hatched. Belonging to PAS, participating in citizen science and working to preserve and protect the beauty of creation: that's the perfect combination of her life's passions.

Evellyn Rosas, Washington Elementary Garden Educator

Evellyn Rosas is a first-generation college graduate and professional from the San Fernando Valley, now residing in the San Gabriel Valley. She received a B.A. in International Security and Conflict Resolution from San Diego State University. Since her undergraduate career, Evellyn has worked with students in K-12 and college through tutoring, after-school program development, and outdoor education. Fun fact: While spending summers in Mexico in her grandparents' garden, her grandpa showed her how to catch scorpions in a jar. Of course, she freed them shortly after. It was her pastime, you might say.



Evellyn Rosas

CONSERVATION (CONT'D)

and acquaintances, school children, civic groups and NGOs in both casual and formal settings.

The combination of my experiences, independent study and those conversations has made it clear that human-caused global warming leading to dramatic climate change is truly the existential threat to all life on our planet, including the microscopic algae and huge blue whales – whether they be covered with feathers, fur, skin, scales, or just a cell membrane. This mortal threat must be scientifically addressed and resolved through unified, global cooperation of all individuals, cultures and nations for the sake of our descendants and, indeed, for all species.

Recently I have been encouraged by local, state, and Federal actions toward reducing our use of fossil fuel and encouraging renewable energy, but we each must ask if we are doing all we can to reduce our “Carbon Footprint”.

Nevertheless my highest priorities with Pasadena Audubon are local issues – improving wildlife habitat, reducing and mitigating the impacts we humans have on our local wildlife (especially birds!), and attending to issues relevant to our treasured Hahamongna Watershed Park. These are important issues where we, as an influential conservation organization, can make an impact advocating for our fathered friends.

Please call me at (818) 618-1652 or email me at Dave.Weeshoff@sbcglobal.net with questions or comments about our Conservation/Advocacy activities and how you can help! There is a lot of work to be done.

Dave Weeshoff

PROGRAMS

Another Special Delivery for COAP

Over the summer, PAS member Sherra Fermino was asked to travel to Peru for work. She immediately saw the business trip as an opportunity to make a second Bins To Peru delivery, so in early August, she and partner Graham Hamby flew to Lima with more donated birding equipment in their baggage. Once there, they rendezvoused with Club de Observadores de Aves de Peru leader Saturnino "Sato" Lactahuaman to make the hand off, and then they did the only logical thing: They went birding!

We have since received this nice note from Sato: "In the name of COAP – Cusco, we are thankful to our partner Pasadena Audubon Society from USA, for your donations; your wonderful binoculars, spotting scopes, tripods and bird leader hats; stunning useful tools for new birdwatchers in Peru. The missions of Pasadena Audubon and COAP are perfectly aligned. We are both working to develop enthusiasm for birds and bird watching and channeling that to do critical conservation work. We will take care your donation and keep learning more about birds and their habitats."



Sherra Fermino and Sato Lactahuaman field-testing a new scope in the mountains outside of Cusco. © Graham Hamby

Washington Garden Volunteers Hard at Work

In addition to soil, water and sunlight, gardens need sweat equity! Many thanks to the volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to revamping our native habitat garden space at Washington Elementary STEM Magnet School! To prepare for the new school year, PAS' George Patton and Jerry Ewing helped build an arbor for Roger's Red grapes growing in the garden. PAS also teamed up with Outward Bound Adventures (OBA), inviting their Environmental Restoration Team to learn about how mulching can help suppress some of those pesky weeds, retain water moisture, and improve the soil. With the help of four OBA crew members, Jill McArthur, Lois Brunet, and Evvelyn Rosas improved the garden's look.



George Patton and Jerry Ewing assemble an arbor in the Washington Elementary STEM garden. © Evvelyn Rosas



PASADENA
AUDUBON
SOCIETY

DOCENT TRAINING

Our Bird Science Program incorporates hands-on outdoor activities and live educational owls to bring the excitement of birds to schools in our community. We're looking for enthusiastic educators to assist us as we guide elementary school students on field trips to explore our local flora and fauna through scavenger hunts, nature walks, and birding.

No prior experience needed. Interest in birds and conservation is desirable. You will learn Bird Science Program curriculum through hands-on activities. Classes will cover:

- an introduction to local birds and birding
- lessons on birds and botany
- how to safely handle educational birds

Training consists of five 3-hour classes: Thursdays from September 8th to October 6th, 9am-noon. Classes will meet at Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Peck Road Park. Fee is \$40 to help cover our costs, but no one will be turned away for inability to pay. Register at: pasadenaudubon.org/docent_training

Must be over 18, willing to take a TB test, and legally able to work with children. Contact Executive Director Lois Brunet at LoisB.PAS@gmail.com with any questions.



Veteran Bird Science Program Docents Kathy Degner and Viveca Sapin get to spend time with awesome owls and awesome kids!



Dave Jokes



Q: Why did George Frederic Handel give his chickens away?

A: Because they were always going on about "Bach, Bach, Bach!"

MORE BANQUET PHOTOS

Thank You To Our Wonderful Donors!

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MEMORIAL & TRIBUTE GIFTS:

Mary Ann & Jeff Laun donated in honor of Indigo Ramirez

DAWN CHORUS: Martin Bern, Lois & Pascal Brunet, David Campbell, Hannah Carbone, Kathy Degner, Gail Gibson & Connie Pearson, Sarah Hilbert, Jared Knickmeyer & Lynda Elkin, Alice Lewin, Kristen Ochoa & Shana Pallotta, Taylor Paez, Laura & Gavin Solomon, Chris Spurgeon, Elaine Tietjen, Patrick Walling, Dave Weeshoff

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. Dawn Chorus donors receive a beautiful enamel pin!



"I have to keep a straight face! But it's really hard when my customers have no idea what's coming! This morning, I secretly switched out their regular coffee for *Birds & Beans*, which I bought online from the PAS Coffee Club by going to the pasadenaudubon.org/coffee webpage. It's super convenient.

Once my patrons sample the delicious variety of brews, they'll be wild with curiosity, whereupon they'll discover that *Birds & Beans* coffee is shade-grown, certified bird-friendly by the Smithsonian Institute, and also fair trade, benefitting the workers, too."



Shana Pallotta (left), who showed slides from the family's popular "wildlifeofcottonwood" Instagram account, Kristen Ochoa, and Paloma Muniz-Ochoa © Sean Doorly



Terry Han and Roger Proffitt © Sean Doorly



Carolyn Ellis and Dee Dennis © Sean Doorly



(from left) Katarina Doorly, Emerson Walsh, Jordan Almeda, and Julian Ford pose after dazzling the audience with their bird photos. © Sean Doorly

Pasadena Audubon Society Board

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WANTED



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PAS THRIVES ON THE DEDICATION OF OUR VOLUNTEERS & THE GENEROSITY OF OUR DONORS. THERE ARE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH, EDUCATION, FIELD TRIPS, GARDENING, HOSPITALITY, ADMINISTRATION, & MORE!

IF YOU'D LIKE TO SEE WHERE YOU CAN FIT IN, PLEASE REACH OUT TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LOIS BRUNET, LOISB.PAS@GMAIL.COM YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID!