

the wren tit

PASADENA AUDUBON SOCIETY, FOUNDED 1904 | VOLUME 73 · NO. 2 | NOVEMBER 2024-JANUARY 2025



Red-crowned Parrot in La Cañada Flintridge, July 2024 © Shuxing (Miles) Wang

president's perch 

BIRDS, BYLAWS, AND NEW BEGINNINGS Luke Tiller

It's not all fun stuff like bird walk planning at Pasadena Audubon Society. These last few months we have been focused on things such as governance documents and recruitment of new staff and Board members.

I've been on the leadership team of several organizations before, but never one that didn't have term limits. It felt important to change this to give people on PAS' Board a definitive end date for their terms and help focus on set goals within those time limitations. It's also crucial to have new people and ideas come through. As part of our community, I'd like you to think about whether you might bring a fresh perspective or skillset to the Board or to one of our committees.

Bylaw changes at PAS require a vote from the general membership, and while it may not be the most critical vote you will cast in the coming months, I encourage you to exercise your democratic rights as a Pasadena Audubon member. A vote on the proposed bylaw amendments will be held at our Monthly Chapter Meeting on December 11 (more on page 9).

Since the last issue, Programs Coordinator

Jamie Cho and Garden Educator Evelyn Rosas have moved on to new jobs. Though we are sad to see them go, we are excited to see valued staff taking the next steps in their careers. The team enjoyed a goodbye lunch for these two much-loved colleagues at the end of August. That means we have two great new team members for you to meet going forward, our new Programs Coordinator Carl Matthies and Garden Educator Alexi Bolton (page 7).

Paradise for Raptor Enthusiasts

Onto fun things such as birding. As we roll into the winter season I have three things on my mind: parrots, hawks and the Christmas Bird Count.

Though introduced here, the parrots of Pasadena hold a special place in my heart. Their roosts are a cacophony of color and a great way to introduce people to the wonder of birds and birding here in L.A. Waiting at a roost as the birds come to you makes for an accessible birding option. It's also a great trip for kids as a little bit of enthusiastic chatter doesn't impact the birding experience. Keep your eyes open for

PAS roost trips over the holiday season.

The Antelope Valley from late fall is renowned as a location to encounter the spectacular Ferruginous Hawk. This bulky buteo is about as cool as they come. The species breeds on open treeless plains, and it would historically nest on the ground using a pile of bison bones in place of a traditional stick nest. It's hard to get much more rock and roll than that.

In most parts of the country, seeing one of these rare birds is a treat, but in the Antelope Valley I've often encountered a dozen or more in a morning's adventures. Add to that mix Mountain Bluebirds, Prairie Falcons, interesting subspecies of Red-tailed Hawks, among others, and you have a raptorphiles paradise.

You've probably heard me wax poetic about the Christmas Bird Count before (page 3). For me it's an integral part of the birding year and one of the events that makes Audubon the organization that it is. We hope to encourage more member participation this year and will be hosting a couple of events to support that goal. Keep your eyes out for more on that on e-blasts and social media closer to the date.

Monthly Chapter Meetings

► WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

Searching for Lost Birds with John Mittermeier

7:00-8:30pm, Online

(Zoom link at: <https://www.pasadenaudubon.org/meetings>)

John Mittermeier has made a career out of looking for the rarest birds on the planet. As head of the Search for Lost Birds Initiative, Mittermeier and his fellow researchers scour the globe, trying to find birds that no one has seen in at least ten years. It's taken him to some of the most remote and inaccessible spots on earth, and it's led him to some amazing discoveries.



This photo of a Black-naped Pheasant Pigeon (*Otidiphaps nobilis insularis*) is the first confirmed sighting of this bird in 140 years.

► WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

Christmas Bird Count Orientation and Bylaws Vote

In person at Eaton Canyon Nature Center

7:00pm CBC Orientation by Jon Fisher · 7:50pm Raffle featuring PAS swag

8:00pm PAS membership meeting to vote on amendments to bylaws

This special edition of our chapter meeting will have the organizational meeting for our 79th Christmas Bird Count (more on page 3) and also the membership vote on proposed amended bylaws (more on page 11). Refreshments will be served.

► SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT & DINNER

Count: 12:01am - 11:59pm · Dinner: 6:00-9:00pm at Eaton Canyon Nature Center

Read on Page 3

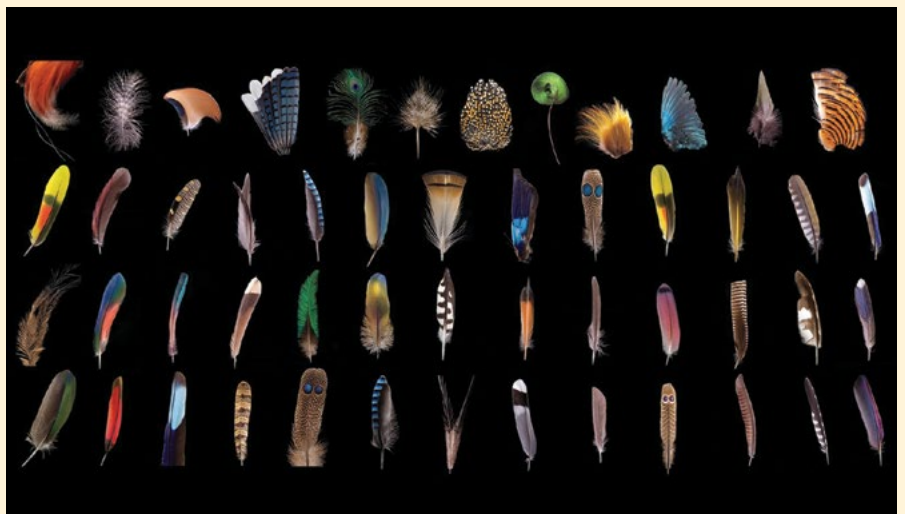
► WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Flashy Feathers to Microscopic Mechanisms: How and Why Birds are Colorful

7:00-8:30pm, Live at Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Online

(Zoom link at: <https://www.pasadenaudubon.org/meetings>)

Allison Schultz, associate curator of ornithology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, delves into the world of feathers and their colors. She will discuss how different forces have shaped the multitude of colors and patterns that we observe today (including some that humans can't see!), and describe some of her current work on the mechanisms underlying the great diversity of colors in birds. She will end her talk with an example of environmental pollution impacting bird feathers.



Social

► WEDNESDAYS, DECEMBER 18, JANUARY 22

Birds & Beers Holiday Edition 5:00-8:00pm,

Wild Parrot Brewing Co., 2302 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena

We're taking a break from Birds & Beers in November on account of Thanksgiving. However, in December we'll have a special holiday edition with a "White Albatross Sale" of re-gifting each other charming or chintzy, but not extravagant, avian-themed items we may have collected over the years! Bring 0-2 items, and there's no need to wrap 'em! And don't forget, Wild Parrot donates \$1 per pint to PAS!

Free Bird Walks

Check dates, places, and make reservations at:

www.pasadenaudubon.org/fieldtrips

It's in the coming winter months that Southern California birding really stands out. While much of the rest of the country is huddling for warmth, we'll be out in the field, busy as ever, checking out our favorite local sites and finding out what holiday gifts have arrived in the form of unusual wintering species.

PAS organizes half a dozen free bird walks and field trips every month in Pasadena and beyond. All ages and birding levels are welcome. PAS members also enjoy free monthly bird walks at The Huntington and Los Angeles County Arboretum.

Interested in Volunteering with PAS?

Fill out the Interest Form at <https://bit.ly/volunteerwithpas>

to receive our Volunteer Newsletter!



Upcoming PAS Board Meetings

► NOVEMBER 12, DECEMBER 10, and JANUARY 14 7:00-8:30pm

Contact pasadenaudubon@gmail.com if you would like the Zoom link to attend.



CALIFORNIA CONDOR IN ZION NATIONAL PARK

Phoebe, 13 years old

This summer my family and I went to Zion National Park, one of the places where California Condors can be seen. We were not there specifically for birdwatching, but I was hoping to see a condor. After a long day of hiking, we decided to go to an overlook that a park ranger had said was her favorite place in the park. We had had an exhausting day and were not sure if we wanted to go, but in the end we went.

The spot was beautiful. It had lots of large towering cliffs, in colors ranging from white to gray and from yellow to red. The cliffs were over 5,000 feet high and were illuminated by the setting sun. Above them flew a flock of Turkey Vultures looking no larger than specks of dust.

Then we saw the silhouette of a bird circling above the cliffs. It was probably higher than the vultures, but it looked at least twice as large. The bird's silhouette looked so similar to the vultures that at first we were not sure what it was. We could not get a very good look at it because of how close it was to the sun, but we managed to figure out that it was a California Condor. We had also been told that there were California Condor nests in the area, and we are pretty sure we saw one.

I am very thankful for the Young Birders Club and for the knowledge it has given me. I have learned so much about birds in the year that I have been a member, and I look forward to learning more in the future.



California Condor watercolor © Phoebe.

The club welcomes young birders of all levels and meets on the first Wednesday of the month, from 5:30 to 6:30pm. Sign up at www.pasadenaudubon.org/youngbirders

Join us for Christmas Bird Count on December 14

We hope you'll block this date on your calendar and join us for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count for Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley, a fun and super important citizen science event, followed by a celebratory dinner.

With 177 square miles to cover—some reopening for the first time since 2020—we definitely need your help. There will be opportunities for birders of all skill levels, and an introductory meeting will be held on December 11.

124 Years and Counting

The Christmas Bird Count, affectionately known as the CBC, will be 124 years old in 2024. It was created by ornithologist Frank Chapman as an alternative to Christmas "side hunts" where participants competed to shoot as many birds as possible.

Now under the auspices of the National Audubon Society, the CBC has over 70,000 participants in about 2,400 counts, most of these in the United States, but also in Mexico, Canada, and Central and South America.

Given the huge amount of data already gathered, the national count period will remain the same: December 14 to January 5. Each count picks one day within those dates to conduct its census.

Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley CBC

In 2023, the 78th Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley CBC found a respectable 164 species, though below the count high of 174 in 2018. The event is organized by Jon Fisher, who has been coordinating and compiling the count since 1992.

Among the 14,918 individual birds found in 2023 were many Neotropical migrants, such as flycatchers, vireos, and warblers, and some rarities, such as a Red-throated Loon, a Red-naped Sapsucker, and a Virginia Rail.

Surprising misses were Blue-winged Teal and Eared Grebe, but we hope you will come this year to help us find those and many more! For a complete summary of the CBC 2023, check out Jon Fisher's story in the April-May *Wrentit* (<https://tinyurl.com/5bejkum6>).



Have you seen these birds? Blue-winged Teal and Eared Grebe were missing from our CBC 2023.

CBC DATES

► WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

Orientation Meeting

7:00pm, in person at Eaton Canyon Nature Center

Jon Fisher will explain the event, one of the longest running citizen science projects in history. If you miss the meeting and still want to help out with the count, email Jon (jonf60@hotmail.com) or the Field Trip Committee (fieldtrips@pasadenaudubon.org) by Dec. 13 to volunteer for a counting site.

► SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

The Count & Dinner

Count: 12:01am to 11:59pm at various places

Dinner: 6:00-9:00pm at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center

The count starts no doubt promptly at 12:01 AM for the hardcore birders, and after sunup for the less avid. The Annual Christmas Bird Count Dinner, which culminates with Jon Fisher's riveting call and response species tally, will be held that same evening. Dinner will be Italian cuisine, with a vegetarian option. More details to come!

More details: <https://pasadenaudubon.org/cbc>.

HAGIOGRAPHY FOR A HUMMINGBIRD

Our reporter ventures through thick fog and cold to track down a rare bird in Colombia's Andes by Carl Matthies

High in the Central Andes of Colombia, there's a strange, fascinating biome called the *páramo*. It's a landscape frequently shrouded in fog and sometimes covered in snow, with Seussian vegetation adapted to tropical latitudes at 14,000 feet. It's a harsh environment, not a place you would readily associate with hummingbirds. However, it is home to a rather special one: The Buffy Helmetcrest.

It was a typical June afternoon when we arrived in Parque Nacional Natural Los Nevados, a 225 square-mile "sky island" of protected *páramo* habitat that encompasses all of the Buffy Helmetcrest's range. It was 39 degrees (°F) with less than one hundred feet of visibility. We, and by "we" I mean my usual *ornitholiday* companions, wife Learden and son Wolfgang, followed our guide and *querido amigo* Edwin Acevedo to the rear of the visitor's center. The back patio is an observation deck that must offer a stunning vista in fair weather, but in the pea soup of the moment we had it almost entirely to ourselves. Edwin pointed to an Andean Tit-Spintail and a couple of Brown-backed Chat Tyrants flitting about in shrubs, barely discernible through the mist. We had to take his word for it.

He sensed our discouragement at the birding conditions and joked that if we all blew as hard as we could the air would clear, but moments later a chill wind pushed an even thicker blanket of fog toward us. It was time to head inside with everyone else to warm up with an *aguapanela* (a hot sugar cane drink) and a pastry.

Reinvigorated, we left the visitor's center 15 minutes later and started down an adjacent trail. Some of the peculiar flora were now close enough to touch: dense green domes of star-shaped cushion plants, worts and mosses creeping on to the path, and the area's most conspicuous shrub, the *frailejón*. The Spanish word for these tall, spongy succulents of the genus *Espeletia* comes from their purported resemblance to hooded friars, and I had to admit, they did look like ghostly figures in fog.

I inspected them closely through binoculars because *Espeletia* is a favorite foraging plant of the Buffy Helmetcrest. These singular hummingbirds drink nectar from the yellow, daisy-like flowers of the *frailejón* before switching their trophic routine to glean insects from its desiccated blooms and even off the ground.



From left: Birding guide Edwin Acevedo, Learden Matthies, and Wolfgang Matthies looking less than thrilled with the visibility at Los Nevados National Park. © Carl Matthies

I put the glasses down and surveyed the area with the naked eye, and in short order spied something beige, perched not on *Espeletia*, but on the edge of an evergreen shrub about 30 feet away. When I pointed my bins in that direction, I gasped, then grinned ear to ear, then collected myself and snapped my fingers to alert the others, who were spread out along the trail looking in different directions.

It was a male. He had the eponymous head feathers, but he didn't evoke a Trojan warrior in the least. With his feathers fluffed up in the cold, damp air, he was more reminiscent of a rotund little Buddha. His dark brown face was offset by white leisure suit lapels. His long, tapered gorget was a green mouche atop an

iridescent purple beard. His eyes were half closed in an expression of sleepy repose. We all got to watch him for a ten count before he zoomed out of sight.

A good look at any bird in its element delights me. When I set eyes on a new life bird, I'm liable to get even more stoked. Seeing one of the estimated 1,000 remaining Buffy Helmetcrests, in the otherworldly environment that is the only place on the planet where they can be found? It's a bit overwhelming. Gratitude and reverence, combined with worry for the future of the species. Words can only go so far in describing the sensation, but I bet there are kindred spirits reading this who know just what I'm talking about.

Los Nevados National Park in Colombia does not sell commemorative patches. I was so moved by its endemic hummingbird, the Buffy Helmetcrest, that when I returned home, I designed one. © Carl Matthies



SOCIAL BIRDERS: Summer Birding Bonanza (With a Few Whales)

Words and photos by Sean Doorly

Late August brought a great day of birding as Luke Tiller, David Bell, Alex Zhao, and Darren Dowell led a Lower L.A. River field trip in search of migrating shorebirds. By the end of the day, 71 species were seen, with highlights including a Semipalmated Sandpiper and a surprise Bank Swallow.

In mid-September, Tiller and Mary Angel led the Pasadena Audubon Society Young

Birders Club on a three-stop adventure. The day kicked off at Peck Road Water Conservation Park, where the group spotted a flock of White-Faced Ibises. Next up, Arcadia County Park delivered a Vermillion Flycatcher and Western Wood-Pewee. The last stop was Arroyo Seco, where the young birders were treated to a Peregrine Falcon sighting.

The September pelagic trip from Dana Point was another unforgettable trip. Birders spent nine hours on the water spotting birds like Jaegers, Scripps's, and Craveri's Murrelets, plus a rare Red-billed Tropicbird—only the 7th recorded in Orange County. Bonus sea life sightings included Fin, Humpback, Minke Whales, dolphins, and a breaching Mola Mola.

Pelagic



Jonathan Feenstra provides tips about pelagic birding before everyone boards the boat.



Luke Tiller, Katarina Doorly, and Catherine Hamilton happily chat about pelagic birds.



A gaggle of birders at the boat's bow scan the sea for birds.

Young Birders



Scanning the skies at Arroyo Seco.



The Young Birders Club gathers for a photo at Peck Road Water Conservation Park.



Jordan Almeda spots a bird at Peck.

L.A. River



Karina Jimenez and Wendy Rosales lead the line of birders at the L.A. River.



Birders line the concrete banks of the L.A. River.



David Bell and Luke Tiller set up spotting scopes at the L.A. River.

FROM REPTILES TO RAPTORS: Tom Mills' Journey to Birding Fame

Words and photography by Sean Doorly

Tom Mills is a nature photographer and avid birder from Pasadena, California. You'll often find him in his favorite spot, Eaton Canyon, with a camera in hand, capturing the beauty of local wildlife. I had the pleasure of sitting with Tom in his home, nestled within a lush, certified wildlife habitat he affectionately calls the "Mills Sanctuary," to talk about his life and deep love of nature.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up on Long Island, in Huntington, on the North Shore, and I went to high school in Kings Park.

When did you move to California?

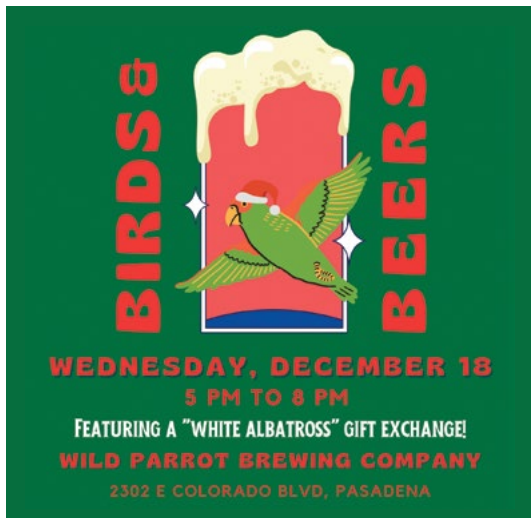
When I moved out here in 1988, I wanted to be as close to the mountains and the desert as I could get. So I rented a crappy little apartment in Tujunga. I was really into reptiles and snake hunting. So I would come home from work, change my clothes, get in my truck, and go.

Were your parents into nature?

Not at all. They grew up in Brooklyn. They were not outdoorsy. But when I was about 12, my parents sold our house and bought one further out on Long Island. We had an acre of property, and the woods went a couple of miles behind that. I was in heaven. My full-on nature boy came out.

So, when did you get into birding?

I wouldn't have called myself a birder until probably around 2019 – just before the pandemic. I got into it because I had a spotting scope, and I learned that you could attach your phone to it to take pictures. So I started doing that in the yard with the birds coming around.



And it was kind of fun, but I was too close. I needed to be further away. So, I went to Eaton Canyon, where this little pond is. I had my phone camera and the spotting scope and sat at a picnic table. And these little birds came. I didn't know what they were. I knew that they were exotic-looking, probably not native. Turns out, they were Scaly-Breasted Munias. There were five or six of them bouncing

around. I got some pictures and then looked at a field guide, but they weren't there because they're not native. So, I went online and found the Pasadena Audubon Facebook page. I put pictures up and said, "Hey, can you help me?" I was informed what they were, and from there, I got excited about birding.

When did you join the Pasadena Audubon Society?

It was probably 2019 or 2020. We may have gone on a field trip, but didn't know anyone yet.

What do you love about the Pasadena Audubon Society?

The main reasons are the people and the excitement of learning. My wife Simone and I learned from all these people. It's insane. People like Luke (Tiller, PAS president) know so much. They hear birds I don't even hear.

You mentioned a big birding event in your yard when we chatted earlier.

Yeah, I believe it was October 2020. My wife Simone is out in the yard, and I was inside making coffee, and she said, "There's a Broad-Billed Hummingbird on the feeder." I said, "Get out of here. You're crazy." And I can see the water moving when it is drinking. So I know there's a bird there; suddenly, it lifts its head. Sure enough, it's a Broad-Billed Hummingbird. We freaked out. We couldn't believe it and put it on the (PAS) Facebook group. We knew it was rare, but we didn't realize what would happen then, and word spread. It got onto the eBird rare bird alert. Hundreds of people wanted to see it, but it was during the thick of Covid, so we were scheduling people to come. We met so many birders. We met Luke (Tiller) and Catherine (Hamilton) that way; we had no idea who they were. So we met all these birders, and some of them, from what we understand, were the real people that the characters were based on for the movie "The Big Year."

Like the little old lady with the hummingbird in her backyard in the movie?

Right. But we made friends, and we were fellow birders.

What aspects of birding do you enjoy?

Seeing some new bird behavior. I'm sometimes a little disappointed in the birding books, which are mainly geared towards identification. I want to know more about birds' lifestyles and habits, where and what time of the year they nest, and how many eggs they have.

Check out some of Tom's amazing nature photography on his Instagram @tomills23.

MEET THE FLOCK: Four Unique Talents Join PAS Board

Tricia Desmarais, Kristen Ochoa, Alex Coffey, and Helin Jung bring a shared passion for birds, conservation, and community engagement to PAS

The Pasadena Audubon Society is excited to welcome four new members to its Board. Tricia Desmarais, now serving as Secretary, brings a lifelong passion for birding that began in her Connecticut backyard near the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. A lawyer by training, Tricia has a wealth of professional experience as business attorney and in-house counsel. Since moving to the San Gabriel Valley in 2021, she has actively participated in PAS field trips, and her dedication to birding extends to her travels, where she is known to seek out birding excursions. Her expertise in managing risk and organizational growth will be a valuable asset to PAS.

Kristen Ochoa joins as a Member at Large. A forensic psychiatrist and professor at UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine, Kristen has

been a member of PAS since 2019, leading field trips in Eaton Canyon and contributing to local conservation efforts. A passionate native gardener and UC Certified Naturalist, Kristen founded the Chaney Trail Corridor Project which works for habitat conservation in the region. Kristen's love for birds and commitment to environmental stewardship align perfectly with PAS' mission.

Alex Coffey, who also joins the Board as a Member at Large, is a lifelong birder and professional film producer with roots in web development, biology and social justice. Though originally from the east coast (New Haven and Baltimore), he has been a Pasadena and LA resident since 2012, and holds a personal best of participating in seven Christmas Bird Counts in one season. Alex regularly leads field trips

with PAS in the LA County area and can also be counted on at our monthly Birds & Beers events for film industry gossip and provocative sociopolitical takes.

Finally, Helin Jung, another Member at Large, brings a diverse background in writing, editing, and community volunteer work. Having worked in New York City for over a decade, Helin now focuses on ecological restoration efforts in Los Angeles, including lobbying to convert a city parcel in Eagle Rock into a native plant garden. Her volunteer roles with the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy and the Gamble House highlight her commitment to conservation and education. Helin's passion for creating wildlife habitats and fostering community engagement will be a tremendous asset to PAS.



New PAS Board members, Tricia Desmarais, Kristen Ochoa, Alex Coffey, and Helin Jung.

PAS has a new Programs Coordinator and Garden Educator

Firstwhile Board member and *Wrentit* editor Carl Matthies is back to Pasadena Audubon Society as its new Programs Coordinator. He will be doing his darnedest to fill the very big shoes of Jamie Cho, who moved to San Diego in August to start a new job with The Nature Conservancy.

When Carl is not coordinating programs for PAS, he loves birding (of course!), camping, hiking, soccer, and science fiction. He usually attends our evening events Birds & Beers at the Wild Parrot Brewing Company, and can otherwise be reached at carl@pasaudubon.org.

PAS also has a new Garden Educator. Alexi Bolton began her teaching journey as a bilingual elementary school teacher in Brooklyn, NY. After seeing the impact that hands-on, nature-based education had on her students, she decided to specialize in outdoor education.

She taught as a garden educator in upstate NY for several years and now, after moving to Los Angeles, is thrilled to join PAS as the new Washington Elementary STEM Magnet School garden educator. Alexi is stepping into the role previously held by Evelyn Rosas, who expanded the garden



New Garden Educator Alexi Bolton, left, and Programs Coordinator Carl Matthies.

educator role at WESM two years ago and has moved to a full time position at College Access Plan.

We warmly welcome Carl and Alexi, and send our best wishes to Jamie and Evelyn.

Saving Wildlife with Catos, Coastal Cleanups, and Smoke Study

Dave Weeshoff, Conservation Chair

Los Angeles Catio Tour

Along with habitat loss and window collisions, outdoor cats are a very serious threat to our wild birds. Again this year Pasadena Audubon Society was on the Planning Committee of the Los Angeles Catio (Cat + Patio) Tour. Nearly 100 folks visited the 12 catio tour sites last October, met with the home owners, and considered how they might construct a catio at their home.

PAS supported this special day with volunteers at various catio sites to explain the tragic impact of outdoor cat behavior. We also encouraged cat owners to provide an outdoor experience (a catio) without fear their cats will kill or injure wild birds or other wild critters as well as protect their pets from other threats such as coyotes, insects, diseases, etc.

Pasadena Humane's Wildlife Day

At the annual Pasadena Humane's Wildlife Day last October, PAS had an information table adjacent to the International Bird Rescue's table. We talked to the guests how wildlife rehabilitation and community outreach align with our mission to support wild birds.

As PAS Conservation Chair, I presented a talk entitled "Partners in Avian Wildlife Rehabilitation," detailing how and why wild birds are rehabilitated in Southern California, particularly in the Pasadena area. I also explained PAS' ability to advise callers on their individual situations when encountering a distressed bird.

Coastal Cleanup Day

For a third consecutive year PAS co-chaired the trash cleanup of the Lower Arroyo Seco during the International Coastal Cleanup Day last September. 136 volunteers from multiple organizations retrieved over 400 pounds of trash during the three-hour period. We were pleased so many young folks and families participated, got their school "community hours" credits, and enjoyed the experience.

Project Phoenix - Wildfire Smoke Impact Study

One of our members was interviewed for a promotional video for Project Phoenix about their experiences and enthusiasm for Project Phoenix as they study the effects of wildfire smoke on wild birds.

This community science program addresses the issue via voluntary, weekly, 10-minute reports, entered into the eBird system, with the species and number of birds they see in their chosen location, July through November, in Washington, Oregon and California. We applaud those PAS members who are already engaged in this effort. It is still possible to participate this year and get ready for next year's program. <https://www.project-phoenix-investigating-bird-responses-to-smoke.org/>



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (aka Bird Flu)

We continue to monitor the various HPAI reports for California and, more closely, Los Angeles County, to determine if this world wide threat to birds, wildlife and humans is occurring in our region. So far, thankfully, we've seen no significant activity. World wide, the impacts are tragically occurring in the Arctic (seabirds), Antarctic (penguins), and many locations elsewhere. Recent reports regarding HPAI issues in California dairy farms are quite concerning.

Please contact Dave Weeshoff, Conservation Chair, at weeshoff@sbcglobal.net or 818-618-1652 with any questions, comments, or to participate in any of our conservation efforts



Dave Weeshoff at Catio Tour, top, and Jared Nigro, PAS executive director, at Wildlife Day.

© L.A. Catio Tour

© Pasadena Humane

From Magpies to Spinning Wheel: A PAS Journey

Annabelle Aylmer

Pasadena Audubon Society (PAS) has been a source of information and camaraderie for many years ever since I would go out with the Magpies as it was known then. Hanging with my friend Ginny Heringer, I would follow along saying: “What’s that one called? Who’s that one?! Did you hear that?!?” Annoying I am sure, but the years have tuned my eyes and ears and I have gotten to know many birds and made great friends.

I began to volunteer after I retired, of course, and most recently with the Bird Science Program. I absolutely fell in love with the Washington Elementary school kids, little ones with the giant bins in their hands, some of them getting it right away and some just pretending that they could see something through the lenses. Then, leading a group around the paths at Peck Water Conservation Area, I would hear that sudden intake of breath, and a cry of “ooohhh! I see it!” It just charmed me to bits! And the look on their faces when Bob Everett would bring out the owls and we would march them around on our arms answering their questions, their eager hands reaching out, knowing that this would be an unforgettable experience for them.

For several years, I spent time at the tables at schools, science nights and the fairgrounds, with both Eaton Canyon Nature Center (docent class 2018) and PAS, watching kids and adults both fascinated by the feathers under the microscopes and the gorgeous taxidermy. I worked closely with

other docents leading nature journaling and bird drawing sessions at Eaton Canyon and Tom Sawyer camp. At one of these outreaches, Viveca Sapin and I watched as spinning the wheel of birds landed on the same bird one too many times and we decided we were going to do something about that. Viveca ordered a new wheel, and I got on the computer and lifted 12 local bird images, processed them on Photoshop, and we then glued them down and ta-da! We had a brand new wheel to play bird ID with at the outreaches.

Though I have traveled the world to bird, my favorite place to catch a glimpse of these amazing gorgeous creatures is wherever I stand carrying my bins.



chapter news

Notice of Proposed Amendments to PAS Bylaws

Membership vote scheduled for December 11, 2024

The Pasadena Audubon Board of Directors is proposing amendments to the Society’s current bylaws, which were last updated as of May 3, 2017. The proposed amendments clarify the functions of the Board, set forth in detail the nomination process for officer and appointed director positions and establish term limits for each, and expressly incorporate key statutory provisions that govern California nonprofits.

The goal is to provide greater transparency for Pasadena Audubon’s members into the Board’s responsibilities and processes, and to encourage participation from members who may wish to become a Board member or get involved with one of the Society’s various committees.

Pasadena Audubon’s current bylaws require all amendments to be announced in *The Wrenitit* and presented at a general meeting for a membership vote. Approval requires a plurality vote of the members attending the meeting.

The proposed Amended Bylaws are available to view at <https://pasadenaaudubon.org/bylaws>. Generally, they address the following topics:

- Updating the acceptable forms of notice for Society meetings, officer elections, and future amendments to include posting on Pasadena Audubon’s website and notice via email to the membership list;
 - Enumerating certain specific powers of the Board;
 - Specifying the composition of the Board of Directors: between 10 and 15 members, composed of Officers and Appointed Directors who may be either Standing Committee Chairs or Members-at-Large;
 - Providing procedures for the election and appointment of directors as well as the removal of directors and filling of vacancies;
 - Establishing terms for Officers (2 years) and Appointed Directors (1 year) as well as term limits for each (6 year limits);
 - Providing additional detail for meeting rules: i.e., participation by Zoom permitted and Board actions by unanimous written consent permitted;
 - Specifying voting requirements for different types of Board and membership actions: plurality vote required for members’ election of officers; majority vote required for members’ amendment of Bylaws and the Board’s appointment of directors; and two-thirds vote required for the Board’s removal of officers and appointed directors; voting by proxy not permitted;
 - Incorporating sections of the California Nonprofit Corporation Law addressing nonprofits’ indemnification obligations and annual reporting requirements.
- Your participation in the amendment process is strongly encouraged. Please join us at the upcoming December 11, 2024 Monthly Chapter Meeting at Eaton Canyon Nature Center to vote on the proposed amendments. On the same night, we will be host the organizational meeting for the annual Christmas Bird Count—we hope to see you there!

pasadena audubon society board & staff

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**PASADENA
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SOCIETY** Founded 1904

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

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► a warm welcome to our newest members!

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