



# Phainopepla

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*A Chapter of the National Audubon Society*

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## Monthly Program

### General Membership Meeting

Thursday, December 27, 2012

7:00 p.m. Social time; 7:30 p.m. Meeting

**TOPIC: The San Fernando Valley Bird Observatory**

**PRESENTER: Mark Osokow**

Mark Osokow first presented his vision for a San Fernando Valley Bird Observatory to our Board in 2009. His proposal was adopted and Mark subsequently established the first field station in the Simi Hills at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, former site of rocket engine testing, nuclear and other research. The land is owned by the Boeing Company.



The bird observatory was established for the purpose of systematically gathering information to fill in data gaps about population and distribution of birds throughout the San Fernando Valley and adjacent areas. A number

of SFVAS members and others help to do general site surveys, counts, and bird banding at the field laboratory.

Mark began birding over 40 years ago and received a Bachelor's Degree in biology, emphasizing behavioral biology with a particular interest in bird migration. His Master's Degree is also in biology and his thesis dealt with the effects of the Malibu lagoon restoration on water birds. *Photo: Canyon Wren*

## General Membership Meeting

Thursday, January 24, 2013

**Topic: Madrona Marsh Preserve**

**Speaker: Tracy Drake**

Tracy Drake, Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center Manager and Naturalist will present a program about this wonderful resource that is only about 30 minutes from the San Fernando Valley on a weekend morning.

The Madrona Marsh Preserve is one of the City of Torrance's finest achievements in the context of natural resource conservation. The Preserve is a



remnant of natural vernal wetland complex including ancient dunes, vernal pools and seasonal wetlands that was sustained by historic drainage from the San Gabriel Mountains. Between 17 and 20 acres of Preserve is vernal/seasonal wetland that fills in the winter and spring and is completely dry by late summer or early fall. The balance of the Preserve is sandy upland back-dune habitat with many vernal pools that fill with rainwater and dry completely in about one-to-four weeks.

*(Continued next page)*

**San Fernando Valley Audubon Society's General Membership Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (except July, August, and November). Join us at 7:00 p.m. to share in conversation, refreshments, and view our sales table, meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. We meet at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd. Encino. See Calendar of Events, pages 6-7, for directions.**

(Continued from previous page) This seasonal regime produces a unique ecosystem and its significance is evidenced by the diversity of life that resides there. Within the approximately 42.5 acres, over 250 species of plants, over 65 families of insects, two amphibians, three reptiles, about 260 species of native birds use the Preserve mostly during spring and fall migration. Also, at least three mammal species reside.

The land that is now the Preserve was dedicated to the City of Torrance in 1986. However, it was a tremendous struggle to save the land from development, but the effort was successful. Since 1971, intense conservation efforts were put forth by the Friends of the Madrona Marsh. It is their original passion that

“saved” the land from being developed into condos and that same passion continued to get the Nature Center built and dedicated in 2001. The passion remains as strong today as in the past as both City of Torrance employees and Friends of Madrona Marsh work to teach about and restore the natural resources of the Madrona Marsh.

The Madrona Marsh presentation is about the above story of the Marsh—but with more detail, interesting anecdotes and dozens of photographs that document the species that now make the Preserve their home or stopover spot during fall and spring migrations.



## Second Saturday Bird Walks For Families and Beginners

9:00—11:00 a.m.

NOW through March

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve (FREE)

San Fernando Valley Audubon will lead **bird walks for families and beginners on second Saturdays, NOW through—March 2013.** (Saturdays Dec. 8, Jan. 12, Feb. 9, and Mar. 9.)

Stroll through the lovely Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve with a guide, enjoying its trails and wildlife lake. Many birds come here in winter. Learn about the birds and why they come here.

### These Walks are for:

- Families with school-age children
- People trying their first bird walk
- Beginning birdwatchers

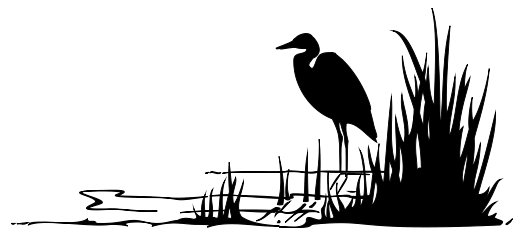
**Time and Meeting Place:** The Wildlife Area entrance and amphitheater are in the southeast part of Woodley Park. Meet at the amphitheater at 9:00 AM.

**Directions:** Turn north from Burbank Blvd. onto Woodley Ave., which is  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of the San Diego Freeway (I-405). Travel about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the second possible right turn and turn east (right) at the sign for the Wildlife Reserve. Bear right at the fork in the road and go east  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the Wildlife Area parking. Walk south past the monumental rocks and restroom building to the amphitheater.

**Equipment and Clothing:** Wear sturdy shoes and layered clothing. A cap or hat with a brim is suggested. We have binoculars to loan or you can use your own.

**More Information:** Muriel Kotin at 310.457-5796, Diana Keeney at 818.998-3216 or visit San Fernando Valley Audubon's website [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org).

Reservations are not needed except for large groups. **Rain cancels.**



## Renew Your SFVAS Membership Online!



Our SFVAS Website now accepts PayPal and Credit Cards for Memberships/Renewals, (click the *Join SFVAS* button). Save the stamp and envelope! Donations can also be made (click the *Donate* button). Check out our Website at [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org).

*Thank you for your support!*



## 2012 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT INFORMATION

### Saturday, December 22, 2012

In place of the Chapter's usual monthly field trip, The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society will once again join chapters across the country and in North and South America, Hawaii, and the Caribbean and take part in the National Audubon Society's 113th annual Christmas Bird Count. Count totals and data collected are forwarded to and analyzed by interested researchers in cooperation with the NAS and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

The bird count provides a measure of the nation's early winter bird populations including species composition, distribution, and population trends. Bird count numbers are often the only long-term, comprehensive information regarding local wintering bird populations. As this chapter continues into its second half century of bird counts, some trends are clearly evident. While the skill level of counters continues to improve and field guides are upgraded, some of our once common birds continue to decline in numbers while others, once considered rarities, are now common.

Members and friends of the chapter are encouraged to save the 22nd and join one of the count groups listed below as numbers of participants are crucial to the success of our count. The more eyes that take to the field, the more birds will be seen in both variety and number. Several of our count areas are underserved and can use all the help they can get.

Extensive birding experience is not a prerequisite, only a willingness to come out and count—wind, rain, or shine.

Those unable to join one of the count groups may assist by noting species and numbers of birds at backyard feeders local parks and neighborhoods provided such counts take place within a 7.5 mile radius circle from the count center at the intersection of Balboa and Nordhoff. Please report all such counts along with the time spent observing to the compiler by post, or e-mail ([jimmoore@socal.rr.com](mailto:jimmoore@socal.rr.com)) no later than and preferably before January 15, 2013.

Count participation is **FREE** and open to all

Traditional count sectors are listed below.

#### **Hansen Dam and Vicinity Meeting time: 7:00 a.m.**

From the intersection of Osborne and Glenoaks, go north on Osborne to Dronfield (signal), turn right on Dronfield and enter park. Proceed downhill to large parking lot. Look for counters with binoculars. Bring lunch, drink, and be prepared to walk. Leader: Jim Moore (661-317-1600)

#### **Bee Canyon and O'Melveney Park Meeting time: 1:00 p.m.**

From the intersection of Balboa and Rinaldi, go north to Balboa and Sesnon. Turn left (west) on Sesnon and continue 1/2 mile. Park is on the right. Meet in the parking lot. Leader: Ron Melin.

#### **Sepulveda Wildlife Basin & Lake Balboa . Meeting time: 7:30 a.m.**

Meet in the parking lot east of Woodley Avenue, north of Burbank Blvd. and south of the Tillman Water Treatment Plant. Bring lunch, drink. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp.

#### **Limekiln Canyon. Meeting time: 8:00 a.m.**

Meet on the southside of Chatsworth Street, a half block west of Tampa. Park on the north side of the street. Leader: Carolyn Oppenheimer.

Leaders are needed for other count areas including Pierce College, Valley Plaza Park, and Aliso Canyon Park. Contact Jim Moore, (phone (661) 298-1130) if interested.



## Beginning Birder Classes


Are you a new birder, are you finding it overwhelming? Do you have a lot of questions? Would you enjoy some time in a small group to learn the basics of the hobby? In January, we will have the class for you! It will run on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings.

We will start on Thursday, January 17 from 7—9 p.m. with a presentation by Karen Johnson, who has 20 years experience leading walks and running beginners' workshops, at Wildwings Bookstore on Woodman Avenue. On Sunday morning, January 20, a birdwalk will be led by board member Scott Logan at Ballona Wetlands and on Sunday morning January 27, a walk will be led by board member Carolyn Oppenheimer at O'Melveny Park. Karen will be back for the last session on Thursday, January 31, at Wildwings to answer questions and round up the experience.



We are limiting the number in the class to an absolute maximum of 10 and will be charging \$25 per person to cover expenses.

Those familiar with our program will also realize that we will be offering a Beginners' walk at Sepulveda Basin on January 12 and our monthly walk at the Basin on February third. Also, our General Meeting for January will be held on Thursday, January 24. These activities are free and will make an excellent addition to the course!

If you are interested, please e-mail [sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com). The first ten to enroll will be given a place, and we will take from a waiting list as needed.—submitted by Rose Leibowitz 


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## Monthly Field Trip Reports *by Richard Barth*

September 15 marked our trip to Huntington Central Park and the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, two outstanding birding spots in Orange County.

Huntington Central produced some terrific birds for us, including an eastern vagrant Canada Warbler which had been previously reported and was attracting lots of attention. We saw a beautiful adult male Summer Tanager and a rusty-plumaged hatch-year Blue Grosbeak. Our warbler list consisted of Nashville, Yellow, Wilson's, Orange-crowned and Common Yellowthroat—in addition to the Canada. An adult male Pin-tailed Whydah (escaped exotic) created some excitement, and we saw many Nutmeg Mannikins. Of further interest here were Great Horned Owl, Wood Duck, Downy Woodpecker, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Song Sparrow and Western Tanager.

The highlight of our visit to Bolsa Chica was a rare Reddish Egret, one of three present this year at the reserve. Interesting was a Herring Gull (early date) at the ponds below Harriett Wieder Park. Among the other special birds at the reserve were Red Knot, Long-billed Curlew, Eared Grebe, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Marbled Godwit, American Avocet, Ruddy Turnstone, Willet, Red-necked Phalarope, White-faced Ibis, Brown Pelican, Common Tern, Elegant Tern, and Belding's Savannah Sparrow.

On October 20 we birded El Dorado Park in Long Beach. The most notable sighting of our visit was a very rare Thick-billed Kingbird, just reported in the park the day before (our timing was excellent!). Other species of interest seen were Greater White-fronted Goose, White Pelican, White-faced Ibis, Belted Kingfisher, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch (irruptive this fall), White-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Western Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Bluebird, Western Meadowlark, Bullock's Oriole and American Goldfinch. Our raptor list featured Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel and Turkey Vulture. Our only warblers were Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's. 

## Join the Festivities at the 2013 Vallarta Bird Festival, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico!

—Article and photos by Greg R. Homel, SFVAS member

Less than a 3-hour flight from LAX is another world—at once familiar and exotic—where many of our most colorful summer birds migrate for the winter—*Puerto Vallarta*, in the beautiful State of Jalisco, Mexico!

Puerto Vallarta is well known as a beach paradise, but did you know it's becoming recognized as a full-fledged birder's paradise, as well, home to an alluring array of more than 400 species of colorful migratory, neotropical, and endemic birds?

A birding trip to Puerto Vallarta is like combining the best of Southern California (for its *pelicans, shorebirds and great weather*), Southeast Arizona (for *hummingbirds, trogons, flycatchers, orioles and warblers*), Ecuador's Galapagos (for its *Magnificent Frigatebird, Blue-footed and Brown Booby colonies*), South Texas (for its *Hook-billed Kites, Great Kiskadees, Green Jays, Groove-billed Anis, Tropical Kingbirds, White-tipped Doves and Red-billed Pigeons*), and Florida (for its *Roseate Spoonbills, Wood Storks, Limpkins* and lineup of exquisite *long-legged wading birds*, etc.)—then placing them all in a tropical environment similar to Hawaii's!

Add to this a dazzling lineup of superb Mexican Endemics—such as the incomparable *Russet-crowned Motmot, Orange-breasted Bunting, Red-breasted Chat, Golden-crowned Emerald and Lilac-crowned Parrot*—a healthy nesting population of spectacular *Military Macaws, striking Rufous-necked Wood-Rails and Boat-billed Herons*, and a constellation of neotropical *chachalacas,*



*jacanas, hummingbirds, trogons, parrots, woodcreepers, vireos, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks orioles, and euphonias* too numerous to name here, and you can begin to see why *Vallarta* (or *PV*, as it's known by the locals), is gaining fame in birding circles!

Puerto Vallarta, straddling a scenic sweep of Banderas Bay on the Pacific coast of Mexico, is in the near vicinity of the world's largest bay (site of the Marietas Islands Seabird Sanctuary, dubbed the "mini Galapagos" because of its flurries of nesting boobies, frigatebirds and noddies), some of the most extensive tropical palm, deciduous and thorn forests remaining on the West Coast of North America (the latter purported to be the most bird-rich habitat in Mexico), and pine-clad mountain peaks rising to 8,800' within the Sierra Madre Occidental.

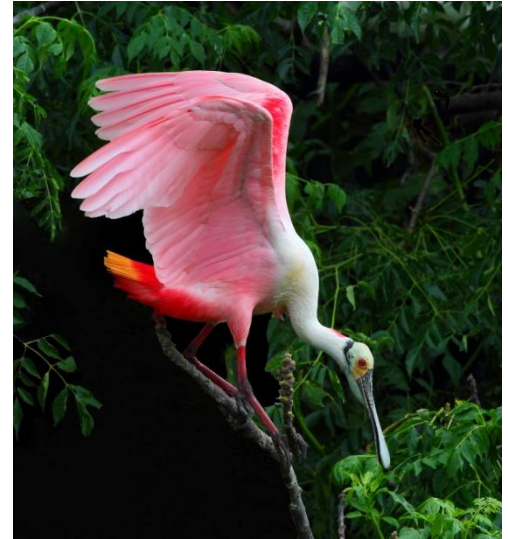
During the festival and its associated extensions, we will visit all these habitats and more in pursuit of a literal treasure-trove of birding sights and sounds.

Come discover this Mexican birding hotspot *first hand*, while also contributing to local bird conservation, by "following" *our* migratory birds south to their winter homes. Partake in the festivities, world-class lectures, and outstanding guided field excursions on offer at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Vallarta Bird Festival, which takes place March 7—10, 2013.

You'll be glad you did!

For more information please refer to the Vallarta Bird Festival's web site: <http://www.vallartabirdfestival.org/>

Or contact Greg R. Homel, Keynote Speaker and Professional Guide: [birdingadventures@mac.com](mailto:birdingadventures@mac.com)



Roseate Spoonbill

## Calendar of Events

### December

**Saturday, December 1. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

Directions: Take closest freeway to I-5 North and exit at Parker Road. Turn right and proceed to stop sign (Castaic Road), proceed to next stop sign (Lake Hughes Road), proceed to next stop sign (Castaic Lake Drive) and turn right. Entrance to the park is on the right. Parking is in Lot 4, so make a right turn after the kiosk, then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff at (661) 257-4050.

**Sunday, December 2. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at [kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org) or (747) 444-9683.

**Tuesday, December 4. Antelope Valley Audubon Committee will hold its Quarterly Meeting and Annual Holiday Potluck. 6:00 p.m.** The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve in the Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center, at 43201 35<sup>th</sup> Street W., in Lancaster. Bring a food item to share and join in the festivities. Contact Linda Edwards and Vern Benhart (661) 948-3524 for more information.

**Saturday, December 8. Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** Come on out for a fun bird walk at Sepulveda Basin! These popular walks, designed for beginning birders and school-age children, are resuming for the current cool season. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Diana Keeney, (818) 998-3216. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. **Rain cancels.** Please visit our website [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, December 8. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and continue about 1.5 miles to the park entrance. Turn right and park at the Nature Center. Various leaders. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

**Due to the Annual Christmas Bird Count there will be No Monthly Field Trip in December.**

**Saturday, December 15. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** Directions: Go north on I-5 through Santa Clarita, exit Calgrove and turn west (left) under the freeway and then left again on the Old Road. Watch for the sign, "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon." Turn right and park in the back lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 252-6187.

**Sunday, December 16. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton.

**Tuesday, December 18. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 118/Ronald Reagan Freeway and exit at Balboa Blvd. Turn north, driving two miles to Sesnon, turn left going west 0.6 miles, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. **RAIN CANCELS.** Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m.), or [carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, December 22. Christmas Bird Count. Join us** to count birds for the 113<sup>th</sup> Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, see page three for times and locations. Leaders are needed for count areas including Pierce College, Valley Plaza Park, and Aliso Canyon Park. Contact Jim Moore, (661) 298-1130, if interested.

**Thursday, December 27. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino. Located between Moorpark and Ventura Blvd., on the west side of Balboa, just south of the Presbyterian Church. **TOPIC:** The SFV Bird

Observatory **PRESENTER:** Mark Osokow. For more information see Monthly Program, page one.

## January 2013

**Saturday, January 5. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–12:00 a.m.**

See December 1 for details.

**Sunday, January 6. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See December 2 for details.

**Saturday, January 12. Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** See December 8 for details.

**Saturday, January 12. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See December 8 for details.

**Tuesday, January 15. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m.** See December 18 for details.

**Saturday, January 19. Monthly Field Trip: Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. 8:00 a.m.** Bring lunch and drinks. Allow about 1.5 hours driving time from the San Fernando Valley. Directions: Take the 405 Fwy. south into Orange County; exit Jamboree Road in the city of Irvine. Turn right (south) on Jamboree Road and proceed about 4 miles to San

Joaquin Hills Road, turn right and drive down to the bay. Park on San Joaquin Hills Road just before the dead end. In the afternoon we will bird the nearby San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, January 19. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** See December 15 for more details.

**Sunday, January 20. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See December 16 for more details.

**Thursday, January 24. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino. Located between Moorpark and Ventura Blvd., on the west side of Balboa, just south of the Presbyterian Church. **TOPIC:** Madrona Marsh Preserve **PRESENTER:** Tracy Drake. For more information see Monthly Program, page one.

**Monday, January 28. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Balboa Mission Town Hall, 16916 San Fernando Mission Blvd., at Balboa (southeast corner) in Granada Hills.


**Future Field Trips (details later):**

**February 16. Ventura Game Preserve**

**March 16–17. Morro Bay Weekend**

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## Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack


Please e-mail Alan Pollack, our Audubon-at-Home Chair, with any questions you have with regard to creating a wildlife-friendly garden that can be used for publication. Alan offers **FREE** consultation/landscape design to help you make your yard wildlife friendly. He also gives a **FREE**, PowerPoint slide show/lecture to community groups, high school, and college classes on attracting wildlife to your garden and sustainable gardening practices. He can be contacted at (818) 340-2347 or at [alan.pollack@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:alan.pollack@sfvaudubon.org). 

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## Phainopepla Photo of the Month by Susan Terry



Susan Terry provided the photo of the month for this issue. She used a Canon G12 with a Standard 6.1-30.5mm, zoom 5x15 to capture the Great Blue Heron at Descanso Gardens. Both the Great Blue and Susan are regular visitors to SFV Audubon's Descanso Bird Observation Station. Thanks, Susan!


Please submit your photos to [Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org). Only one picture per photographer per month please! Ideally, the picture will be taken within our area and the information will include the location and the date it was taken, what camera and lens was used, a short account of how the picture was taken, and profile of the photographer. Good shooting! Thanks, Lynn. 

### Help Bring Back the Catalina Christmas Bird Count

By Carolyn Vance, CBC Co-Chair, El Dorado Audubon

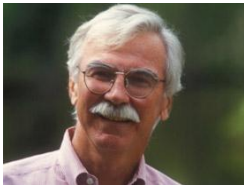
El Dorado Audubon is trying to bring back Christmas Bird Count to Catalina Island. It hasn't been counted since 2006. I am putting out feelers to those of us "mainlanders" to see if there is enough interest to set things up.

The Count has been scheduled for Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. However, we need to get over to the Island the day before, so plan on being gone the weekend. We need counters, drivers, spotters and talliers.

If you are interested, want to volunteer to do a unique location or just want more information, contact: Carolyn Vance, CBC Co-Chair, El Dorado Audubon 562-594-7589 or email: [drabduck@yahoo.com](mailto:drabduck@yahoo.com). 

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### 2013 San Diego Bird Festival February 28—March 3



John Fitzpatrick and Bill Thompson will be our main speakers in 2013. They will also be co-leading a bird trip and conducting a workshop.

**John Fitzpatrick** is the director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. His current research focuses on the ecology, conservation biology, and population genetics of the endangered Florida Scrub Jay. His book, Florida Scrub Jay: Demography of a Cooperative-breeding Bird earned him a William Brewster Award, the highest research award given by the American Ornithologists' Union.

**Bill Thompson** is the editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. He is the author of many books including The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of North America. He leads birding trips across North America and has birded in more than 25 countries. To register go to:



<http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org/index.php/events/bird-festival>

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Four-hundred thirty-three members now receive e-mail notification when the next copy of the *Phainopepla* is online. Ninety-eight have opted to read it online only to save the planet, paper and postage that way. If you wish to join that group, please e-mail us at [sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com). We also have 170 followers on Facebook.

## SAVE the DATE

2013 CONVENTION // JULY 12-15  
SKAMANIA LODGE // STEVENSON,  
WASHINGTON



### *Get your Audubon on!*

After 13 years, the Audubon Convention returns.

Join Audubon staff, volunteers, and Chapter leaders to learn about how our work contributes to Flyways conservation.

Experience four days of cutting-edge science, networking, birding and FUN in the Pacific Northwest.

For more information and to receive email updates visit

[www.audubon.org/2013convention](http://www.audubon.org/2013convention)



**VOLUNTEER FOR THE  
Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve  
Clean-Up and Habitat Restoration**

**Saturday, December 1, 2012 8:00AM—Noon**

Certificates of recognition will be awarded for participation!

**HELP PROTECT LOCAL WILDLIFE**

**Location:** The Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area hosts many riparian trees and shrubs, such as cottonwoods and willows. Songbirds forage and nest in the trees, while egrets and herons fish in the Wildlife Lake and Haskell Creek. Sadly it is infested with trash, and non-native invasive plants.

**Directions:** The Wildlife Area is on the east side of Woodley Ave. about a half mile north of Burbank Blvd. Turn east at the sign for the Japanese Garden (6100 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys, CA, 91406), stay to the right, and follow Wildlife Way about a half mile to the last parking area. Meet at the amphitheater behind the rock-faced restroom building.

**Equipment and Clothing:** You may get muddy or wet. Please wear appropriate work clothes and shoes. Bring work gloves if you have them. If you have a long handled rake or pool net it would be useful for reaching trash. We will have some tools and gloves to lend out if you don't own them.

**Rain cancels this event.** Check our Website for a notice if the weather is doubtful.

*Sponsored by San Fernando Valley Audubon's  
College Student Conservation Committee*

We offer VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in \*Nestbox Monitoring \* Community Outreach \* Habitat Restoration \* Wildlife Surveys \* Environmental Clean-ups

For more information visit [www.SFVAudubon.org](http://www.SFVAudubon.org)

SFVAS is a certified chapter of the National Audubon Society. Learn more about National Audubon at : [Audubon.org](http://Audubon.org).

**RSVP requested** (not required) to: Carolyn Oppenheimer,  
College Student Conservation Committee Chairperson at  
[carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org)

**Volunteers Needed Want to get involved?** Contact [Dave.Weeshoff@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Dave.Weeshoff@sfvaudubon.org)

- **Website Coordinator** – We need someone who can maintain/update our Website [www.SFVAudubon.org](http://www.SFVAudubon.org)
- **Translator** - We are looking for someone to translate our outreach materials into Spanish, and/or Farsi.
- **Press Releases** – Looking for someone skilled in writing press releases for local media.
- **Alan Pollack, Audubon-at-Home chair**, would like interested parties to contact him to learn about gardening with native plants so that they will be able to pass this information on to the community, and schools. He can be reached at (818) 340-2347 or at [alan.pollack@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:alan.pollack@sfvaudubon.org).

## IN MEMORIAM

### Jarron Lucas

1946 – 2012



Deep sadness, emptiness, and feeling of loss accompanied the news of the unexpected and untimely death of Jarron Lucas,

LADWP caretaker at

Encino Reservoir. While not a Chapter member, Jarron facilitated and contributed to our Christmas Bird Counts and field trips into Chatsworth Nature Preserve. With a primary and expert interest and knowledge of reptiles and amphibians, he was always willing to share his extensive and practical understanding of wild creatures and places with both the expert and novice, and the young and the old.

He was past-president and mainstay of the Southwestern Herpetologists Society, and for many years the organizer and leader of their junior herpetologist's trips into Chatsworth Preserve. These trips attracted not only the young and eager but also their parents as well as those not so junior amateur herpetologists who just wished to learn more about local reptile and amphibian species. Trips into the preserve documented the presence of at least seven species of snakes plus a variety of lizards, toads, skinks, and small rodents. A culminating highlight was the discovery of a Western Spadefoot Toad in May 2011 which attracted the attention of the *Los Angeles Times*, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. A few years ago Jarron was a consultant to the City in attempts to capture Reggie the Crocodile from Harbor Lake. He also excelled in the knowledge of the herpetology of the Southwest where he often led trips and tours.

With Jarron's permission, cooperation, and encouragement, the Society was able to piggy-back birding trips into the Preserve which coincided with the

dates and times of his junior herpers program thus reducing chances of disappointment to participants and reducing the time required of involving additional DWP personnel. While going separate ways on these occasions, the paths of birder and herpetologist would frequently cross permitting herpers to learn about native bird life and birders to study and observe the local lizards, snakes, toads, and frogs.

Jarron himself became sufficiently expert at local bird identification to assist with the annual Christmas Bird Count not only by opening the gates to the Chatsworth Preserve (with DWP permission), but also by submitting a count from Encino Reservoir and property, an area once part of our Christmas Bird Count prior to 9/11 and the onsite construction of a water treatment facility. On the heavy brush-covered hillsides Jarron located a bird species probably common but rarely seen in the Santa Monica Mountains, and difficult to see even under ideal conditions, which we simply referred to as "our children" in order to keep out trespassers and overeager bird listers. In my last conversation with Jarron, he reported "our children" were doing fine and must have enjoyed a successful breeding year as he had located three birds instead of the single pair.

His several contributions to our Chapter and others will be missed as well as his cheerful sharing of his intimate and personal insights into wild creatures and places and the inside workings of the LADWP. Also to be missed are the post Preserve lunches at the Baja Fresh at the corner of Topanga and Nordhoff where the day's findings were summarized, recorded, and in the case of the birds, counted and prepared for submission to California e-bird.

A memorial service was held for Jarron on October 13 within the Preserve he knew and loved so well and where his spirit and those he influenced and admired him so deeply were together once more in and among the creatures they all knew, shared, studied, and enjoyed so very much. —By Art Langton, Photo: Sharon Shingai



# SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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For Chapter leaders' e-mail addresses, see our Website:

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Articles, letters, drawings, and photographs concerning conservation, the science and ecology, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for publication in the *PHAINOPEPLA*.

Material from other newsletters or newspapers should include the source and date. Copy for the *PHAINOPEPLA* should be in the hands of the editor by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

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If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Rose Leibowitz at (818) 990-5405 or e-mail her at [rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org).



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**Membership** SFVAS is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope you will get involved with our many field trips and activities. Please contact Rose Leibowitz, Membership Chair, with any questions at [rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org).

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