



# Phainopepla

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## Monthly Programs

**Thursday, February 26, 2015**

**7:00 p.m. Social time, 7:30 p.m. Meeting**

**Encino Community Center**

**Speaker: Larry Wan**

**Topic: Seabirds and the Markham's Storm-petrel Project**



Although Larry Wan has a Ph.D. in Engineering and Applied Science and is a successful entrepreneur, his passion and pride is in being a naturalist, long time environmental activist and nature photographer. He is the Chairman and Founder of **WAN (Western Alliance for Nature)**, a conservancy dedicated to preserving critical ecosystems and biodiversity.

Larry is a National Geographic Photography Award Winner who describes his photographs as "certified organic" in that they are composed and captured through the lens as is, with no "artificial additions," i.e. no digital manipulation. They meet the authenticity requirements of natural science publications and are for purest art collectors who want to acquire and display the incomparable, unaltered artistry of nature.

Larry Wan's work has been presented in Birder's World, National Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Amicus-National Resources Defense Council, The American Bird Conservancy and many other publications. More information about his work can be found on his website: [www.wanconservancy.org/bio/\\_wan.php](http://www.wanconservancy.org/bio/_wan.php)

The Markham's Storm-petrel is a species endemic to the Humbolt Current which flows off the coasts of Peru and northern Chile. Very little is known about the bird's reproductive biology. In 2013 a team of Bird Observers from Chile found evidence of nesting colonies of Markham's Storm-petrel in Chile. This is the first evidence of the bird's breeding in Chile.

Because this species nests in underground cavities in desert regions where mining activity is present, there is great concern that additional mines could disturb or even destroy entire colonies. Looking for the Markham's Storm-petrel could also help in discovering breeding ranges for two other species of Storm-petrels, the Ringed and Elliot's Storm-petrel, which may also breed in this area. Because of the limited habitat and mining risks to these species, and the importance of finding out more about the Markham Storm-petrel's

breeding habits, the Western Alliance for Nature decided to sponsor on-going explorations in northern Chile. You'll learn more about the on-going explorations begun in 2014 during Larry Wan's presentation.

*Markham's Storm-petrel photo: by Steve Howell*

**Thursday, March 26, 2015**

**7:00 p.m. Social time, 7:30 p.m. Meeting**

**Encino Community Center**

**Speaker: Don Klabunde**

**Topic: "The Sound of Birds from A to Z"**



Don Klabunde is a retired Physicist, lifelong photographer, and chapter photographer for Conejo Valley Audubon Society. Some of his

interests include nature and astrophotography, animal behavior and evolution, gardening and observing the local wildlife.



**Program Description: The Sound of Birds --from Acorn Woodpecker to Zone-tailed Hawk.** Join us in celebrating the sonic and visual diversity of birds in this audio-visual tour of over 200 species. A short technical description of how birds vocalize and why is followed by a flash-card style

presentation of each species. First the bird's song & call, followed by Don's photographs as the species name is revealed. How many species can you get by calls and song alone? Audience shout-outs encouraged. Be prepared for a Big Day indoors!

Please join us for a fun-filled evening! As always, we'll have refreshments and a chance to chat and look at some bird-related items prior to the meeting.

**SFVAS General Membership Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (except July, August, and November). ALL ARE WELCOME. We meet at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd. Encino. See Calendar of Events, pages 5-7, for directions.**



## 2014 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

A cool morning led to a nice day, with mild, windless weather, resulting in perfect conditions to hold our 58<sup>th</sup> successive Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which started in 1957. Aided by 59 counters, including 16 count leaders, we covered 32 locations ranging from small parks to large natural areas like Sepulveda Basin, Balboa Park, and Hansen Dam.

Bird count and total individuals were down about 10% this year, reflecting the experience of other count circles in the area. While just speculation, the most often voiced reason is the continuing drought we've experienced the last few years. Certainly a drier climate makes for fewer food sources, whether it's seed, fruit, or small animals. Birds may have reacted by going elsewhere or producing less offspring.

The primary objective of the Christmas Bird Count is to assess the health of the bird population by comparing the total number of individuals of all species seen in a count circle with earlier counts. However, diversity is also an important factor, comparing the total number of species seen with past years. This year we counted 128 species and added six more seen during count week, giving us 134, down substantially from 145 seen last year. We counted 12,247 individual birds, which is down ten percent from 14,594 last year.

Uncommon birds included Red-throated Loon at Lake Balboa, the second in the history of the San Fernando Valley CBC. The first was recorded in 1957, the first year of the count. Also seen at the Sepulveda Basin were four Bonaparte's Gulls, last counted in 1994 and the second record of Thayer's Gull, last sighted in 2002. A Brewer's Sparrow was seen at Sepulveda Basin during count week, marking the first recorded in the circle. A Hooded Oriole was seen at a private residence in the north valley, marking only the fourth in count history.

Birds often seen, but missed this year included Snow Goose, Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier (a surprise), Black-necked Stilt, Western Sandpiper, Greater Roadrunner, Barn Owl, and

Western Screech-Owl. Yellow-bellied, Red-napped, and Williamson's Sapsuckers were missed at Veteran's Park although they have been reported there this season. Mountain Chickadee was also missed.

It's been an irruptive year for Varied Thrush. Several have been sighted in southern California this winter. We recorded five on the count, four at Veteran's Park and one at Caballero Canyon, a higher number than typical, however 19 were recorded in 1972.



Sepulveda Basin won the award for the most number of Unique Species. Kris Ohlenkamp, who has counted this sector continuously since 1982,

recorded 85 species, his highest total ever, with 15 unique species, including Ross's Goose, Mute Swan, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe, Green Heron, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Bonaparte's Gull, Thayer's Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Once again this year, the Department of Water & Power granted us access to count the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. This area gave us 63 species, including Gadwall, Lesser Scaup, Wilson's Snipe, Canyon Wren, and Vesper Sparrow not seen anywhere else in the circle.

Hansen Dam counted 67 species, included Redhead and American Pipit not seen elsewhere. Other unique sightings included a Sharp-shinned Hawk seen near Pierce College, a Merlin near Bull Creek, three Nanday Parakeets seen at Caballero Canyon, two Red-crowned Parrots seen at Oakwood Cemetery, our only Loggerhead Shrike at Pierce College, two Steller's Jays at Wilson Canyon, a Myrtle's Warbler and two Rufous-crowned Sparrows at O'Melveny Park and a Purple Finch at Jean Brandt's feeders.

*(continued next page)*

(CBC continued from previous page) As is shown each year, it's important to cover as much of the circle as possible. 39 species, an amazing 29% of all species recorded were observed at only one location.

This year's winner for the highest count was 1318 House Finches. Runner-ups included 960 Canada Geese, 942 American Coots and 725 Yellow-rumped Warblers, all down substantially from last year's totals.

This year we had the highest ever counts of Turkey Vulture (60), Eurasian Collared Dove (46), an expanding species and Northern Rough-winged Swallow (16). There were several common species with the highest count since 2000, including Northern Flicker (87), Hermit Thrush (47), American Robin (303) and House Finch (1318).

And, there were common species with the lowest count since 2000. These included Gadwall (1), Ring-billed Gull (23), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (5) a perceptible decline, European Starling (310), and Common Yellow-throat (8).

Of interest, there are the species that have been recorded on all 58 counts. These include Canada Goose,



American Wigeon, Mallard, Pied-billed Grebe, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Black Phoebe, Say's

Phoebe, Western Scrub-Jay, American Crow, Oak Titmouse, Bushtit, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Mockingbird, American Pipit, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Lesser Goldfinch, and House

Sparrow. What about House Finch? It missed in 1965 although 200 Purple Finches were recorded—probably a data entry error.

Notable misses of birds usually seen on the count include Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, Northern Harrier, Western Sandpiper, Spotted Dove, not seen since 2002 and Greater Roadrunner.

Thanks to the group leaders and counters who gave several hours of their holiday season to participate in this fun event.

*Photos of 2014 CBC by Jim Hanley at Chatsworth Nature Preserve*

## Thanks to all 2014 count participants

Dick Avery  
Pat Avery  
Dick Barth  
Pat Bates  
Jean Brandt  
Candice Byers  
Teri Carnesciali  
Jody Church  
Roxanne Correa  
Wanda Dameron  
Mary Ellen Dittmore  
Tracy Drake  
Debbie Drews  
Jim Estes  
Barbara Gaitley  
Wendi Gladstone  
Jim Hanley  
Jim Hardesty  
Barbara Heidemann  
Flurette Hershmann

Jerry Hershmann  
Kathleen Hood  
Judy Howell  
Gretchen Keeler  
Carmen Kelsey  
Allan Kotin  
Muriel Kotin  
Art Langton  
Rose Leibowitz  
Brett LeVine  
Rebecca LeVine  
John Lobel  
Scott Logan  
Judy Matsuoka  
Becky McDonald  
Dan McDonald  
Heather Medvitz  
Ron Melin  
Jim Moore  
Tom Morga

Claudette Newmann  
Dick Norton  
Ann Ohlenkamp  
Kris Ohlenkamp  
Carolyn Oppenheimer  
Mark Osokow  
Kathlyn Powell  
Judy Rothman  
Deloros Ruzicka  
Sharon Shingai  
Diane Smith  
Jane Stavert  
Dave Surtees  
Bob Weatherman  
Bonnie Weatherman  
Helen White  
Olivia White  
Jackie Wollner  
Amy Worell

## Results of the 2014 CBC

5	Greater White-fronted Goose	23	Ring-billed Gull	5	House Wren
3	Ross's Goose	8	Western Gull	34	Bewick's Wren
1	Cackling Goose (cw)	73	California Gull	5	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
960	Canada Goose	1	Thayer's Gull	61	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
1	Mute Swan	1	Glaucous-winged Gull	25	Wrentit
2	Wood Duck	117	Gull Sp.	84	Western Bluebird
1	Gadwall	491	Rock Pigeon	47	Hermit Thrush
381	American Wigeon	45	Band-tailed Pigeon	303	American Robin
419	Mallard	46	Eurasian Collared-Dove	50	California Thrasher
14	Northern Shoveler	620	Mourning Dove	56	Northern Mockingbird
11	Green-winged Teal	4	Great Horned Owl	310	European Starling
47	Ring-necked Duck	38	White Throated Swift	25	American Pipit
1	Lesser Scaup	123	Anna's Hummingbird	73	Cedar Waxwing
28	Bufflehead	54	Allen's Hummingbird	3	Phainopepla
38	Hooded Merganser	9	Hummingbird species	5	Orange-crowned Warbler
128	Ruddy Duck	2	Belted Kingfisher	8	Common Yellowthroat
28	California Quail	42	Acorn Woodpecker	725	Yellow-rumped Warbler
1	Red-throated Loon	7	Red-breasted Sapsucker	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle's)
1	Common Loon	27	Nuttall's Woodpecker	1	Townsend's Warbler
47	Pied-billed Grebe	2	Downey Woodpecker	51	Spotted Towhee
2	Horned Grebe	87	Northern Flicker (red-shafted)	2	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
12	Eared Grebe	9	American Kestrel	131	California Towhee
2	Western Grebe	1	Merlin	32	Chipping Sparrow
258	Double-crested Cormorant	1	Peregrine Falcon	1	Brewer's Sparrow (cw)
28	American White Pelican	2	Prairie Falcon	1	Vesper Sparrow
12	Great Blue Heron	3	Nanday Parakeet	249	Lark Sparrow
24	Great Egret	2	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	112	Savannah Sparrow
12	Snowy Egret	2	Red-crowned Parrot	6	Fox Sparrow
1	Green Heron	113	Black Phoebe	42	Song Sparrow
19	Black-crowned Night-Heron	37	Say's Phoebe	16	Lincoln's Sparrow
60	Turkey Vulture	28	Cassin's Kingbird	362	White-crowned Sparrow
3	Osprey	1	Loggerhead Shrike	37	Golden-crowned Sparrow
1	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Hutton's Vireo (cw)	322	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)
10	Cooper's Hawk	2	Steller's Jay	40	Red-winged Blackbird
6	Red-shouldered Hawk	124	Western Scrub-Jay	359	Western Meadowlark
50	Red-tailed Hawk	439	American Crow	170	Brewer's Blackbird
942	American Coot	16	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	55	Great-tailed Grackle
14	Killdeer	2	Tree Swallow (cw)	2	Brown-headed Cowbird
1	Spotted Sandpiper	2	Barn Swallow (cw)	1	Hooded Oriole
2	Greater Yellowlegs	33	Oak Titmouse	1318	House Finch
5	Least Sandpiper	242	Bushtit	1	Purple Finch
1	Long-billed Dowitcher	11	White-breasted Nuthatch	7	Pine Siskin
2	Wilson's Snipe	6	Rock Wren	251	Lesser Goldfinch
4	Bonaparte's Gull	2	Canyon Wren	115	American Goldfinch
				122	House Sparrow

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**134 Total Species**  
**12247 Individual Birds**

## Calendar of Events

### February

**Sunday, February 1. 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@sfaudubon.org](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sfaudubon.org) or (747) 444-9683.

**Saturday, February 7. 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, February 8. Wildwood Canyon Bird Walk, Burbank. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** Directions: From the I-5/Golden State Fwy. N: Take Exit 146A toward Olive Ave. merge onto E. Angeleno Ave. and turn left onto S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, then take the first right onto E. Olive Ave.

From I-5/Golden State Fwy. S: Take EXIT 146A toward Verdugo Ave. Turn left onto S. Front Street, which will become E. Verdugo Ave. Turn left at the first light onto S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street then take the 3<sup>rd</sup> right on to E. Olive Ave.

Continue 1.3 miles on E. Olive through downtown Burbank and up the hill. Turn left onto N. Sunset Canyon Dr. Go .5 miles and turn right onto E. Harvard. Drive .4 miles skirting the golf course and meet at the entry kiosk area. Extra binoculars are available. Leaders: Nick Wilhelm and Mike Mc Horney, (818) 845-0166.

**Friday, February 13—Monday, February 16. The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count.** Join in counting the birds you see in your neighborhood, for as little as 15 minutes, and submit your sightings to <http://www.birdsource.org/qbbc/howto.html>. For more information see page nine.

**Saturday, February 14. 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, have resumed 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.sfaudubon.org](http://www.sfaudubon.org).

**Saturday, February 14. 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.

**Sunday, February 15. 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, February 17. 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@sfaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfaudubon.org).

**Saturday, February 21. Monthly Field Trip: Ventura County Game Preserve in Oxnard. Meeting Time 7:45 a.m.** An excellent spot at which to observe a wide variety of birds including waterfowl, wetland birds and raptors. We will be birding the preserve entirely on foot. Covering the circuit will probably require 4+ hours. We will leave our cars on the left (north) side of the paved road outside the preserve compound. Directions: From the 101 Freeway take the Las Posas Road exit south (left), then Hueneme Road west (right) to Casper Road. Turn south (left) on Casper Road and continue to where the road eventually turns left through a large entrance gate and leads to the compound. We'll meet at the entrance gate at 7:45 a.m. and wait for the preserve manager to open up for us at approximately 8:00; we'll then drive to the compound. Bring lunch and drinking water. Allow one hour and fifteen minutes driving time from the Valley. Leader is Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, February 21. 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.

**Thursday, February 26. 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.

**Presenter: Larry Wan. Topic: Seabirds and the Markham's Storm-petrel Project.** For more information see Monthly Programs, page one.

**Saturday, February 28. Young Birders Group Walk: Franklin Canyon.** Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take the Ventura Freeway (101) or Ventura Boulevard to Coldwater Canyon Boulevard. Head south to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive. Make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. (This means crossing Mulholland) Road signs read "Road Closed 800 Feet" "Sunset to Sunrise"; this is the park entrance. Meet in the parking lot on the left. Allow some extra time, as Coldwater Canyon can be a slow road. For more information please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at [roselbirds@gmail.com](mailto:roselbirds@gmail.com), or call (818) 990-5405, or check out our website [sfvaudubon.org](http://sfvaudubon.org).

## March

**Sunday, March 1. 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, March 3. Antelope Valley Quarterly Bird Meeting. 6:30 p.m.** The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve in the Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center, at 43201 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Lancaster.

**Saturday, March 7. 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, March 8. Wildwood Canyon Bird Walk, Burbank. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** See February 8 for directions. Leaders: Nick Wilhelm and Mike Mc Horney, (818) 845-0166.

**Saturday, March 14. FINAL Beginners and Family Bird Walk of the season. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** These popular walks, designed for beginning birders and school-age children, have resumed 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, March 14. 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.

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**Tuesday, March 17. 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, March 21-22. Monthly Field Trip: Morro Bay Weekend!** The first day, Saturday, March 21, we will meet at 8:00 a.m. on the near (inland) side of Morro Rock. Park along the main road just before it swings around the side of the Rock. The second day, **Sunday, March 22**, we'll meet at the Montaña de Oro State Park Headquarters/Visitor Center at 8:00 a.m. Our species tally is usually very high on this trip. Pigeon Guillemot and Chestnut-backed Chickadee are expected. Directions from the San Fernando Valley: Take the 101 Freeway to San Luis Obispo and then follow Route 1 north to the town of Morro Bay. Allow at least four hours driving time from the Valley. Bring lunch and drinks. Be prepared for possible inclement weather, and remember that the central coast can be quite chilly in the mornings. Make camping or motel reservations as soon as possible. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, March 21. 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.

**Monday, March 23. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Wild Wings Nature Store. 4337 Woodman Ave., Sherman Oaks. (818) 995-0022. Please bring your own chair.

**Thursday, March 26. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Social time, 7:30 p.m. Meeting.** 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. **Presenter: Don Klabunde. Topic: "The Sound of Birds from A to Z"** For more information see Monthly Programs, page one.

**Saturday, March 28. Young Birders Group Bird Walk. Sepulveda Basin. 9:00 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. For more information on meeting location please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at [roselbirds@gmail.com](mailto:roselbirds@gmail.com), or call (818) 990-5405.

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

**April 25. Morongo Valley**

**May 9. Walker Ranch**

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## Monthly Field Trip Report *by Richard Barth*

On November 15 we enjoyed a beautiful morning of birding in Ventura County, at Ventura Harbor and the adjacent Water Treatment Ponds. Our highlight find of the day was a Common Goldeneye, a species not seen on this trip in recent memory. Mew and Bonaparte's headed our gull list and we saw two species of terns, Forster's and Royal. We did well with Surfbird; Black Turnstone and Ruddy Turnstone...our other shorebirds of interest were Black Oystercatcher, Whimbrel, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover and Spotted Sandpiper. Waterfowl diversity here was a little better than last year; of note were Canvasback, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, American Wigeon, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, Northern Shoveler, Red-breasted Merganser and Surf Scoter in addition to the goldeneye. The three expected cormorants were present. Other selected sightings: Belted Kingfisher, Common Loon, Brown Pelican, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Lark Sparrow, Townsend's Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. We missed Common Gallinule.

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## Birdathon 2015 *by Diana Keeney and Lynn Maddox*



Plans are underway for our annual Birdathon, which will take place during April and May of 2015. The Birdathon is our main fundraising event of the year and involves many activities, all aimed at spotting as many species of birds as possible and collecting donations from generous sponsors.

The funds generated by the Birdathon enable SFVAS to host 2,000 school children in the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP). Funds also allow us to contribute to habitat conservation efforts and to continue our mission to increase public awareness and broaden appreciation of wildlife and the natural environment.

Birdathon activities include many of the regularly scheduled monthly bird walks as well as several once-a-year marathon events, fondly known as "Big Days." The Birdathon leaders compete with each other and with themselves, trying to improve on the previous year's tallies! But everyone is a winner when the donations are received and SFVAS has funding to continue our important functions! Two Birdathon events begun recently will continue in 2015: the Children's Birdathon and the Big Sit. The Children's Birdathon is for junior birders who will tally bird species with their families on a special day and the Big Sit is for anyone who likes to sit still and let the birds come to them. Watch for details in the April/May *Phainopepla*, and please plan to participate in one or more event! In lieu of a separate mailing, all information, sponsor forms, and donation envelopes will be included in the newsletter and at our Website [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org).

## Regional Audubon Meeting January 17

We were honored to host the January meeting of all the Audubon Chapters in the Southern California area. It was very informative, wonderful to hear what other chapters are doing and a great experience for board members who do not usually attend. (It is a designated task of the first Vice President). Pictured are board members Jim Houghton, Kris Ohlenkamp, Mark Osokow, and Lynn Maddox.



## Phainopepla Photo of the Month

### Hooded Mergansers (male) by Lisa Negri



Location: Los Encinos State Historic Park, Encino Date taken 12/7/14

Camera, lens, settings: Canon EOS 70D, EF400mm f/5.6L, iso 640 f5.6 1/800

Our photo of the month comes from SFVAS Member Lisa Negri, a new birder and photographer who has come a long way in a short time. "I started birding in February of this year after being inspired through Pinterest, with the many beautiful bird photos a person can find there. I knew nothing about photography or birds when I began, but in a very short time it became the thing in life that I love to do more than anything

else! I found these gorgeous Hooded Mergansers at Los Encinos after doing a search for the species on eBird. It's a tiny little park, but a terrific spot for close up sightings of some pretty special birds. I have to say, these Hooded Mergansers are among the most beautiful species I have seen thus far!"

Lisa frequently posts beautiful bird photos to Facebook. Her photos have been selected as SFV Audubon's banner photo several times.

Do you have an interesting photo of a bird taken in/near the San Fernando Valley? Please submit your photos to [JackieWollner@gmail.com](mailto:JackieWollner@gmail.com). Or you can post to our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/sfvaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/sfvaudubon). Please include location, date, camera and lens info, a short account of how the photo was taken, and a profile of the photographer. Let us see your bird photos! Thanks, Jackie

## Young Birder Photo of the Month

### Osprey by Holden Mandell, age 13

Location: Sepulveda Wildlife Preserve Date taken 12/5/14

Camera: Nikon L820 on 30x zoom, 200 ISO

Holden Mandell visits Sepulveda Wildlife Refuge frequently and loves to document his birding with photography and eBird. "When I looked up and saw the Osprey gliding across the river I lifted my camera and ran up the riverbank and near the dam wall. My first attempts of photographing the bird failed when the bird glided out of sight heading towards Woodley lakes; but after waiting about five minutes the Osprey glided back and I captured the shot."

Holden, age 13, has been birding for two years. "I became interested in birding when my grandparents took me on a trip to Southern Africa on a safari. After viewing all the famous African mammals our guide started to point out birds. The birds were colorful and majestic. I started to ask the guide about birds and that's when I realized I wanted to see all the bird species. I was always into photography and I decided to photograph birds for documenting, fun, and capturing the special moments when I saw a new species."





## Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack

### Want Wildlife? Go Native!

California native plants are those which are indigenous to our state—they were here before the European settlers arrived. There are over 6000 species of California natives and another 6000 plus cultivars developed from those. There has been a rapid decline of our native flora as a result of massive development and as homeowners and landscapers import plant material from distant regions. The record drought in the mid-to late 1970s sparked interest in restoring and conserving our native flora and our current drought (now in its fourth year) should add further impetus to this trend if one is at all environmentally conscious and concerned.

In addition to the effort to conserve our natural flora, there are other good reasons to go native. Native plants are adapted to our climate because most have deep root systems. Most can survive drought, frost, wind, and fires (if they are not too frequent). Once established, many will survive on little or no irrigation. They are adapted to our generally poor soil. Amending the soil and fertilizing is not just unnecessary—will often kill the plant. Allowed to grow to their natural size and shape, they require less pruning, which may be needed only for aesthetic or health reasons or to rejuvenate the plant. And finally, native plants attract and support our native wildlife, including pollinators and insect predators, eliminating the need for environmentally harmful pesticides.

And then there are good reasons to avoid and, in some cases, eliminate non-native (aka, exotic) plants from our gardens.

*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@sfaudubon.org](mailto:alan.pollack@sfaudubon.org).*

### What is the GBBC?

The 2015 GBBC will take place Friday, February 13, through Monday, February 16. Please join us for the 18th annual count!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

#### GBBC checklists can be accepted from anywhere in the world!

Everyone is welcome—from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

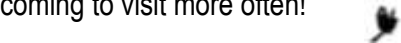
Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website, <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html>.

Removed from their natural habitats (where there are typically built-in controls to their growth) and planted in a strange, new habitat (where such controls often do not exist), non-natives may grow rampantly, displacing our native flora. Many are very thirsty and some pose an extreme fire hazard. Finally, they may offer little support to our native wildlife.

To learn more about native plants and how to use them in your garden, check out these Websites: California Native plant Society at [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org); [www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org); [www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com) (where you can search “plant communities by ZIP Code”, enter your ZIP Code, and at the bottom of the page, click on a list of plants native to your ZIP Code). Two excellent books are “California Native Plants for the Garden,” by Bornstein et al and “The Care and Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Garden”, by O'Brien et al.

As for purchasing, most of our local San Fernando Valley nurseries carry few, if any natives. Sperling in Calabasas has enlarged their native plant section. Bear State in Northridge carries drought tolerant natives and non-natives. Theodore Payne in Sunland is a retail native plant nursery and Matilija, though located in Moorpark and a bit of a drive, is a wholesale native plant nursery open to the public at certain times. Go to their Website ([www.matilijanursery.com](http://www.matilijanursery.com)) to find out how to get there and the hours they are open for the walk-in trade.

If you *Go Native*, our wildlife friends will thank you by coming to visit more often!



New participants must set up a free GBBC account to submit their checklists or use login information from an existing account for any other Cornell Lab citizen-science project. You'll only need to do this once to participate in all future GBBC events.

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see for the GBBC photo contest. Go to: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html> to sign up.

*The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada and sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited.*





### REGISTER FOR PLAN MEETING

Saturday, March 21, 2015 • 8 am – 3:30 pm

Location: Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL)



**Alan Salazar**, (spirit hawk), Native American consultant/monitor and Chumash/Tataviam Traditional Storyteller, will open the PLAN meeting with a story.

The main focus of this meeting will be the National Park Service's **Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study (ROV)** which describes the natural and cultural resource significance of the area known as the Rim of the Valley which includes the Simi Hills, the eastern Santa Susana Mountains,

the western San Gabriel Mountains (Angeles National Forest), the Verdugo Mountains and the Santa Monica Mountains. **Margie Steigerwald**, outdoor Recreation Planner with the National Park Service, has offered to discuss the progress of this congressionally mandated study, which was first initiated by Congressman Adam Schiff of Burbank.

Audience discussion will follow, led by **Dennis Arguelles** of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

Additionally, **David Dassler**, Boeing Corporation, host of the PLAN Meeting, has a wonderful video to show of wildlife in the SSFL: Mountain Lion and Raccoon meet to have a drink!

There will be a discussion led by **Clark Stevens**, Executive Officer, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM), about another important element to the ROV, the Liberty Canyon, Agoura Hills, Wildlife Crossing at 101 Freeway. Recently announced: The RCDSMM received grants and in-kind match of over \$1M for this first stage of wildlife crossing enhancements. The grants, provided by the California Wildlife Conservation Board, former LA County supervisor, Zev Yaroslavsky, with match by MRCA and a private landowner, will fund installation of vegetated corridors leading to (and through) the existing Liberty Canyon underpass and future wildlife overpass area for mountain lions, bobcats, and other wildlife to safely cross under the freeway.

After lunch there will be an open audience discussion on any topic of interest for PLAN attendees.

**2:00 pm:** Boeing has offered to provide a bus **tour of the Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL)**. If you have never been to the SSFL, the views are spectacular, from open grassland, rolling hills, native plants, magnificent boulders, oak woodlands, and Space Age Test Stands. Located in the Simi Hills, this open space is an integral wildlife corridor in the ROV.

**Registration is required by March 14:** [mail@ssmpa.com](mailto:mail@ssmpa.com). Attendees must carry a valid (state issued) ID at all times. For further information, directions, contact information, questions: [www.ssmpa.com/plan](http://www.ssmpa.com/plan)

**Sponsored by:** Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA)

## How many species of birds did you see in 2014?

Many birders enter the birds they see on eBird. Not only is it an easy way to keep a personal record of what one has observed, where, and when but it is also a valuable tool for conservation. The eBird entries are tallied and used to observe migration patterns and changes in bird populations. The top 100 birders in the State of California for 2014 have been listed and six of them have participated in one of more of our walks this year. Two are past Presidents of SFVAS.

So a big shout-out to the following in their order on the list:

4. Lynda Elkin 438 species
8. Brittany O'Connor 412 species
11. Jim Moore 382 species
14. Judy Matsuoka 376 species
17. Kris Ohlenkamp 368 species
56. Jared Knickmeyer 339 species

Also, well worth a mention is Dessi Sieburth of Pasadena Audubon Society, aged 12, who listed 351 species and plans to join one of our Young Birders' walks in 2015.

If you would like to use eBird but feel a tutorial would help before you leap in, e-mail Rose Leibowitz at [rosebirds@gmail.com](mailto:rosebirds@gmail.com) and we can plan a training session. Happy Birding 2015.

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## Olympic BirdFest 2015

April 10-12, 2015

Sequim, WA

Description: The festival with the most spectacular setting! Visit the rain shadow of the **Olympic Peninsula** to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker is Lynsy Smithson Stanley: "Climate change as a 'Bird Issue'." Join the Birdfest Pre-trip on April 8-9, 2015, two days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders. Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 12-14, 2015. Cruise registration: separately at

[www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon](http://www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon), Birdfest website address: [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org) E-mail address: [info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org). Contact name: Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, (360) 681-4076. [info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org) . PenAudubon Socie(360) 681-4076

# SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Youth Activities:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796

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

[www.SFVAudubon.org](http://www.SFVAudubon.org)



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Mail the form below, and include a check made payable to SFV Audubon Society:

P.O. Box 7769  
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Attn: Membership

### SFVAS MEMBERSHIP

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership...\$25	\$ _____
1-yr Chapter Membership (No paper copy of <i>Phainopepla</i> ).....\$20	\$ _____
Student 1-yr Chapter Membership...\$10	\$ _____
Tax Deductible Contribution to SFVAS	\$ _____
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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about SFVAS?  
\_\_\_\_\_

The *PHAINOPEPLA*, published six times a year, is the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409. San Fernando Valley Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, a non-profit conservation/education organization, and is dedicated to "the conservation of wildlife and natural resources."

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.

Membership in the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:

National Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 420235  
Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235

For renewals, use the form in the National Audubon magazine, "Audubon."

If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Lynn Maddox at (818) 845-4688 or e-mail her at [Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org).

# Phainopepla

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**Membership** Whether you belong to National or Local or both, remember you are always welcome on any of our activities and we have plenty to get involved in! Please contact Lynn Maddox, Membership Chair, with any questions at [lynn.maddox@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:lynn.maddox@sfvaudubon.org).

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