



Phainopepla

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San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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October / November 2012

Monthly Program

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 25, 2012

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

TOPIC: Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona

PRESENTER: Aaron Wells

Aaron Wells is a student of herpetology. He has been fascinated with all manner of reptiles and amphibians since childhood and continues his studies of herpetology today. In this program Aaron will show photographs from a July trip to Southeast Arizona where he attended the two-week Southwestern Herpetologist's Society Meeting. Here the group located and studied many of the indigenous reptiles and amphibians found in the differing mountain ranges and desert scrub. The group was fortunate to have the participation of Joe Banashek from Loma Linda University. Working under William Hayes, Joe studies Mojave Rattlesnake toxins. Mojave Rattlesnakes have a

unique type of neurotoxin that affects the brain, whereas most rattlesnakes carry a hemotoxin which affects the blood cells. During the two weeks, participants took DNA samples, measurements, weights, GPS location of specimens, soil, and venom samples. Scientists hope to learn more about the reasons for the varieties of venom in different species. Aaron will bring some non-poisonous California reptiles for our viewing as well. 🐍



New Feature!

SFVAS Now Accepts Credit Cards Online

You asked for it and we listened. Our SFVAS Website now accepts PayPal and Credit Cards for purchasing Banquet Tickets, (click the *Add to Cart* link-main page), Donations, (click the *Donate* button), and Memberships/Renewals, (click the-*Join SFVAS*



button). Check out our Website at www.sfvaudubon.org. *It's that easy!* 🐍

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.

Second Saturday Bird Walks For Families and Beginners

9:00—11:00 a.m.

October through March

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve (FREE)



San Fernando Valley Audubon will lead **bird walks for families and beginners on second Saturdays, October 2012—March 2013.** (Saturdays Oct. 13, Nov. 10, 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.

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

You are invited to the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society Awards Banquet

Saturday, November 3, 2012

12:00 (noon) raffle and silent auction

12:30 pm Buffet Luncheon

Japanese Garden, 6100 Woodley Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406

The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society has been an active part of the Valley community for over 100 years on local conservation and environmental issues. This year our Conservation Award Banquet will be a Luncheon in the Sepulveda Basin's Japanese Garden, benefitting our Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program.

We are very proud of our Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP), a wildlife education program for over 2,000 LAUSD school-age children. Each year we bring in classes of school children from all over Los Angeles to the Sepulveda Basin for a hands-on program about the natural environment in Los Angeles. We also sponsor a training program for their teachers.

This year we need financial help. Our main donor dropped out for economic reasons and we are raising much needed funds for SBEEP with our Conservation Award Luncheon, in the pavilion of the Japanese Gardens in the Sepulveda Basin.

Recipient of this year's Conservation Award is Alan Pollack, certified Wildlife Habitat Steward and chair of SFVAS' "Audubon-at-Home" program.

Our Featured Speaker is Steve Hartman, an active member of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee since 1986. He will be speaking on the History and Future of The Sepulveda Basin. Steve has been instrumental in expansions and habitat improvements of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve and Sepulveda Basin reach of Bull Creek.

RESERVE your tickets today! Send in the form found on the back page or pay online at www.sfvaudubon.org.

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.

Local:

Glen Dake
Walter Gibson
Elke Heitmeyer
Tracey Tanner

National:

Barbara Adams
Nabeel Adham
J. Anthony
Willy Asmussen
Lillian Barnes
Judith Belson
Charles Biles
Suzanne Blaine
Walter Blank
Thomas Blount
Sally Browder
Richard Burton
David Buxkemper
Colleen Caamano
Norman Carabet

Ronnie Cavalluzzi

Pauline Chang
Marylou Charlton
Erin Chianese
Douglas Cook
Lendy Dear

David Diamond
Christine Ditillio
Lisa Dorney
Joan Duffy
Stephen Dunwell
Gilberto Durso
Michael Dwyer
Jennifer England
Linda Feinfeld
Patricia Fiedler
Tracy Foster
Ursula Franck
Maryann Gayton
Oliver Glenn
James Gotcher

N. Gottlieb

Dorothy Green
Kim Gurnee
Guy Hallman
Patricia & Russell Hardwick
Christophe Harms
Alice Heaton
Cordelia Henson
Constanza Hwang
Mark Jeffares
Gwen Joyner
Laurie King
Alfred Liebman
Joan Lizer
Stewart Lovett
Glenda Lubas
Karryann Lutge
Katherine Magwene
Phillip Marshall
Patty Massey
R & D Menkus-Tlumak

Dixie Miller

J. Modjallal
Mary Morley
Keith Morrow
Allister Morton
Josephine Moukhtar
Matt Norton
Erin Oneil
Paula Orlovich
Mary Oslund
Hal Owen
Rose Rader-Jayah
Frank Randazzo
Rae Reed
Robert Rembert
Vicki Robinson
Rolando Rodriguez
Ray Rodriguez
Mary Ross
Joyce Roy
Susan Sarkisian

Brian & Alice Scanlon

Ronald Schmidt
Mendell Segesman
Carol Shelton
Toni Sherman
Herschel Shorr
Karen Simmons
George Simon
Carmela Skogman
Timothy Smith
Goran Sobel
Joseph Stellan
Joanne Vanburen
K. Wachsmuth
Gary Weinstein
Stephen Wolff
Beatrice Zwerdling



Expanding the Birding Experience *by Rose Leibowitz*

Are you a new birder? Or a not-so-new one who feels s/he could learn more? On the second Saturday of the month at 9:00 a.m., from October through March, we have **Families and Beginner's Bird Walks** at the Sepulveda Basin. Do check our walk listings in the Calendar Section of the *Phainopepla*. SFVAS members, led by Muriel Kotin, lead walks and lend binoculars to those who do not have them. The walks are FREE and open to all, although if a large group is expected, Muriel would like advance notice so that she can recruit more volunteer leaders!

In addition, SFVAS is planning to sponsor new classes to help people hone their birding skills!




The **Bird Photography Class** will be led by member Dave Collins (check out his website <http://davecollinsimages.com>). He has led Camera Safaris in a variety of settings. He will start the session with a 'get to know your camera' training and will follow it up immediately with hands-on experiences. A class will take half a day, and the numbers will be limited to five in a class. Once again, to cover expenses, there will be a fee. Dave normally charges \$80 a head, but will give us a \$10 discount for SFVAS members! The first class will be held at Sepulveda Basin **Sunday, October 28**. If the demand is high enough, Dave will run two classes that day.

The five session **Beginner Birder class** will be held early in 2013 (start date to be announced) for our members. It will start with a two hour classroom session, to be held at a site in the San Fernando Valley, taught by member Karen Johnson, a very experienced birder who led bird walks at Descanso Gardens for 20 years. This will be followed by three outings with our birding leaders on weekend mornings to local birding spots. The last session, at Wild Wings Bird Store on Woodman Avenue in Sherman Oaks, will sum up the course, share experiences and answer questions. (This is a total of five sessions of two hours each). Enrollment will be limited to eight in a class and, to cover our expenses, a fee (probably around \$50) will be charged.




Karen is currently running birding classes at Descanso Gardens for beginning birders who are Descanso Guild members. The fee is \$95 for four classes. If you are a guild member, do check it out!

If you are interested in enrolling in either of these classes, please e-mail us at sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com. Information will also be available at meetings, on our website, www.sfvaudubon.org and on our Facebook page.

We are also in discussion with a presenter about a **Bird Sounds** day workshop that we hope to sponsor next fall. There will be more information on that nearer the time. Watch this space! 

Monthly Field Trip Reports *by Richard Barth*

The first of our two montane birding trips this summer was to Mt. Pinos on July 21. This visit was not one of the birdiest we've made to the mountain over the years, but some neat finds popped up nevertheless. A juvenile Townsend's Solitaire gave us prolonged views near Chula Vista Campground and a juvenile White-headed Woodpecker entertained us on a gnarled tree stump off Iris Meadow. "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Brown Creeper and Western Wood-Pewee are always great to see up here. Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatches were scattered about and we managed to see one Red-breasted Nuthatch. We encountered no adult Cassin's or Purple Finches but did see a juvenile of that genus at the 8400 ft. level, likely a Cassin's if hatched at that elevation. Western Bluebird, Violet-green Swallow and Mountain Chickadee were present as expected. We tallied Steller's Jay (heard), American Robin, House Wren, American Kestrel (on the way back down the mountain), Cooper's Hawk, Northern Flicker, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Dark-eyed Junco. Target species missed on this visit were Dusky Flycatcher, Clark's Nutcracker and Green-tailed Towhee.

On August 18 we birded along the Angeles Crest in the San Gabriel Mountains—visiting Chilao, Buckhorn and Charlton Flat. Some special birds found on the trip were Green-tailed Towhee, White-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher and "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow. Warblers were well-represented this year with Hermit, Black-throated Gray, Wilson's, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned making our list. Plumbeous Vireo is extremely rare in the San Gabriels in August, but we believe we tallied one—unless it was a very dull Cassin's lacking any perceptible yellow and olive tones. White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, House Wren, Steller's Jay, Western Bluebird, Western Wood-Pewee and Dark-eyed Junco were reliably present. Other species of interest up here included Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren, Acorn Woodpecker, Northern Flicker (heard), Nuttall's Woodpecker, Western Scrub-Jay, Oak Titmouse and Spotted Towhee (heard). Among our misses were Brown Creeper, Purple Finch and Cassin's Finch. 

AUDUBON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNCIL MEETING by Heather Medvitz

September 8, 2012

Four San Fernando Valley Audubon Board Members, Kris Ohlenkamp, Mark Osokow, Rose Leibowitz and Heather Medvitz attended this meeting which was held at Madrona Marsh in Torrance. We carpoled in keeping with our ecological concerns and arrived in time to bird watch for over an hour. The bird walk was led by Tracy Drake, Manager/Naturalist of the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Tracy is a wonderful spotter, photographer and a great one to point out the identity of every species heard.

Brigid McCormack, the new Managing Director of Audubon California was introduced. She and Garry George, our Conservation Awardee from last year, spoke about the importance of focusing on the Pacific Flyway. The flyway reaches from the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to Patagonia. Twenty percent of all migrating birds go through the Pacific Flyway and rely on our IBAs (Important Bird Areas). It is important that our many chapters help in monitoring the flyways, particularly now because of global warming and developments that will impact migrating birds such as wind farms.

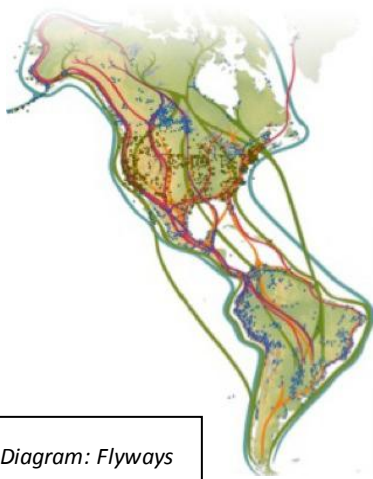


Diagram: Flyways

There is a proposal to build North Sky River Wind project, a wind farm in the migratory pathway near LADWP Pine Tree Wind Project that has the 2nd highest mortality of birds ever recorded in the U.S. and has killed nine eagles in the first two years of operation. It is near Butterbrecht Springs IBA. Kern Audubon is trying to prevent this project from going through in its planned location or, failing that, at least mitigating harm to migrating birds as much as possible. The project is currently in litigation, brought about by the Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife and others.

The San Bernardino Valley Audubon is also involved in a number of legal battles. The Cadiz Project involves a dry lake in the Mojave Desert. The nearby Cadiz Corporation wants to pump out 50,000 feet of water yearly to send to Orange County for housing developments. In addition to lowering the water table in the area, the water is laced with chromium 6, the carcinogen that Erin Brockovich worked to expose. Seth Shtier, another SFVAS Conservation Awardee, worked on this issue in his current role with National Park Conservation Association in Joshua Tree, and suit has been filed by the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society, Center for Biological Diversity and others.

Sea and Sage Audubon in Orange County has a Conservation Committee that has separate public meetings most months on a date that differs from that of the General Meetings. Because topics are announced in advance, they may have very different constituent groups from one meeting to the next. This enlarges the number of people involved in conservation issues in the area. Tasks can be assigned and updates can be given at these meetings so that the work continues uninterrupted between meetings and more can be accomplished in meetings just devoted to conservation issues.

In addition to conservation issues, many chapters reported on outreach programs to children and schools of all levels. Some programs coordinate regular clean-up programs through volunteers. Another successful program being done at two schools involves offering a Jr. Audubon Club that meets once a week before school for 45 minutes. This has been successful with 4th and 5th graders. 🐦

Calendar of Events

October

Saturday, October 6. 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, October 7. 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@sfsaudubon.org or (747) 444-9683.

Saturday, October 13. Season Opener! 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.sfsaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 13. 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.

Tuesday, October 16. 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@sfsaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 20. Monthly Field Trip to El Dorado Park in Long Beach. 8:00 a.m.

Directions: Take the 405 Freeway to the Studebaker Road exit in Long Beach. Go north on Studebaker to Spring Street, then turn east (right) on Spring to the park entrance. The parking fee is \$7. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot. Leader: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, October 20. 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, October 21. 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.

Thursday, October 25. 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:** Reptiles and Amphibians of

Arizona, **PRESENTER:** Aaron Wells. For more information see Monthly Program, page one.

November

Saturday, November 3. Annual Conservation Award Luncheon.

12:00 p.m. Japanese Garden, Sepulveda Basin, 6100 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys. Join us as we honor **Conservation Award recipient, Alan Pollack,** Audubon-

at-home Chair, along with **Guest Speaker, Steve Hartman**. 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 left to entrance for Japanese Garden. For more information see page three.

Saturday, November 3. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–12:00 a.m. See October 6 for details.

Sunday, November 4. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See October 7 for details.

Saturday, November 10. Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 9:00–11:00 a.m. See October 13 for details.

Saturday, November 10. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See October 13 for details.

Saturday, November 17. Monthly Field Trip: Ventura Harbor and Water Treatment Ponds. 8:00 a.m. Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take the 101 Freeway to the city of Ventura, exit Seaward Avenue, turn left over the freeway, then immediately left (south) on Harbor Blvd. to Spinnaker Drive and proceed to the

end. Look for birders in the last parking lot on the left. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, November 17. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m. See October 20 for more details.

Sunday, November 18. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See October 21 for more details.

Tuesday, November 20. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m. See October 16 for more details.

Thursday, November 22. NO SFVAS General Membership Meeting. Due to the Annual Conservation Award Luncheon and Thanksgiving we will NOT have a General Membership Meeting in November. **See you in December!**

Monday, November 26. 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):

No field trip in December due to Christmas Count January 19. Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary



Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack

Got rats?

Callers and "clients" living near open fields often complain to me about rodents—gophers, rats, mice, voles, and I often suggest installing a barn owl nesting box on the property. Barn owls are just about everywhere, but we usually don't see them because they are nocturnal, and they are one of the world's best rodent killers. A family of barn owls might consume 1,000 rodents during breeding season. One can find owl nesting boxes online, either readymade, in kit form or plans for do-it-yourselfers. It's advisable to have your box in place before nesting season begins around February, at least 12 feet above the ground and in an area protected from harsh sun and strong winds.

LADWP Rebate Program

LADWP has resumed its rebate program! Residential customers who replace water-thirsty lawns with low water use landscaping will now receive a \$1.50 per square foot rebate, versus \$1 under the prior Turf Replacement Program, for a maximum of \$3,000 and 2,000 square feet per project. Time to plant a wildlife friendly, native plant garden!

Go to: http://www.socalwatersmart.com/images/PDFs/mwd_rebate_form_turfremoval_ladwp.pdf for more information and to download a rebate form.

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




Thank You! Belated thank you's to Karen Johnson and Illece Weber, for Birdathon donations!

Where are You on the Flyway to the Phainopepla Club? *By Diana Keeney*



Swallow (50 species)
Finch (100)
Vireo (150)
Avocet (200)
Phainopepla Club! (250)

Many SFVAS members have already taken up the challenge to record their Los Angeles County bird sightings from July 2012 to June 2013 on **eBird** and travel the flyway to the **Phainopepla Club!** Now it's time to send in the evidence of your sightings and be acknowledged for your progress. Here's how:

1. Log your sightings at www.eBird.org .
2. Create a report by the following path:
 - a. Select **Explore Data** tab
 - b. Under **Summary Tables** at bottom right of page, select **My Observations**
 - c. Create a **Year Report** to start on **July 1, 2012**
 - d. Select the **LA County locations** of your sightings
 - e. Print or download the report showing the **Date and Total # of Species**
3. Bring report to Diana Keeney at the next General Membership Meeting or email to diana.keeney@sfvudubon.org.
4. Receive accolades and encouragement from fellow birders! 

Central Valley Bird Symposium

On November 15th-18th, 2012, the Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 16th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium at the Stockton Hilton Hotel, in Stockton, CA.

Please come and help us kick off this year's CVBS! Come meet the CVBS board & staff members! Reconnect with old friends! Meet new ones! Take advantage of the scrumptious hors d'oeuvres buffet & No Host Bar on Thursday night.


Thursday Night's keynote speaker is Ed Harper presenting a program on "Appreciating the Birds of the Central Valley". Come sit back and watch as Ed takes us on a photographic journey to catch a glimpse of the avian world of the Central Valley.

Friday Night's keynote program is by Sophie Webb on "Seabirds & Marine Mammals of the Tropical Eastern Pacific". Sophie will give us a wonderful glimpse into the natural history of the fascinating birds and mammals she has encountered on research vessels over the deep seas, emphasizing those that venture close to the California coast, especially during migration.

Saturday Night's keynote program is by Carlos Bethancourt on "The Natural Splendor of Panamá!" Join us as Carlos takes us on a photographic journey across Central Panama, where myriad tropical birds, bizarre mammals and unusual reptiles and amphibians are seen in their natural setting! From Toucans to hummingbirds, Mouse Opossums to tongue-wielding Orange Nectar Bats, Carlos will keep you spellbound with his stories of discovery and vivid images.

Come experience why Panamá is indeed the country of Natural Splendor!

Also on Saturday, Paul J. Baicich will present "Access Matters: Why Birders Should Care" Is access to birding locations important? Well, only if you want to see birds! Other events include a "Century of Field Identification" by Joe Morlan, Bird ID Workshop by Jon Dunn and a sketching workshop by Sophie Webb. Our field trips always turn up exciting birds. Add in the always entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful display of art and gifts for yourself or others at the Birder's Market and the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks, and you know you'll have a good time! There's something for everyone interested in birds. Come and join us to bird, learn, and just have fun.


To look over the line-up of speakers, workshops, and field trips check out our website at: www.cvbs.org. 

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 23rd. 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. 

I WATCH AN EMU LAY AN EGG

Article and photo by Mathew Tekulsky

Whispering Hope Ranch lies at the foot of the Mogollon Rim in central Arizona. Just drive a few miles past Christopher Creek and then a couple of miles down Colcord Road, and you arrive at a huge meadow surrounded by ponderosa pines. Enter the gate and drive (slowly!) up the dirt road to the main house and the outdoor animal enclosures.

Here (both inside and outside of the paddocks), you'll find donkeys, goats, cows, llamas, deer, horses, rabbits, pigs, sheep—and birds! Plenty of birds, including turkeys, geese, ducks, peafowl, chickens—and emus.

One day in late November, I had a close encounter with one of these emus, named Sandy. I had just arrived at the ranch, and as I entered Sandy's area, I noticed that she was squatting in a rather unusual way. I wasn't quite sure what to make of this, but after a few minutes, Sandy's secret was revealed as a dark bluish-green, grapefruit-sized object appeared from under her abdomen—an emu egg!



I picked up the egg, and it was still warm. Sandy didn't seem to mind the intrusion, nor did her mate Montana, who stood nearby and watched quietly as I placed the new egg back on the ground next to an older one, which looked drab and had dirt on it.

Meanwhile, Sandy moseyed over to me, and I put my hand on her neck to reassure her that I would do her no harm. Her body was as tall as my waist, and when she extended her neck, she easily reached my shoulder and we were practically looking eye-to-eye. Her head was only the size of my hand, but when she looked at me with those big, brown eyes, I fell in love with her.

Another emu named Emma resided in the next enclosure over, and I took a few photos of Emma as she drank water from a large plastic container and wandered around her domain. Then I visited another emu pair, the stubby-legged Skooter and his mate Shaboom.

But there were other birds at the ranch beckoning for my attention, including Pumpkin, a royal palm turkey, and his bronze mate Cranberry; Grayson and SiSi, the greylag geese; Jewel and Gracie, the swan geese; Huey, Dewey, Chewey, Louie, and Punker, the blind mallards; and a family of peafowl named Powder, Puff, Blush, and Primetime. All along, I was followed around by a black cat named Van Gogh, but he didn't bother the birds at all.

Now, the Whispering Hope Ranch was founded in order to create a place where special needs children and adults could interact with animals, in order to help them heal. But it works both ways, as many of the animals at the ranch were either injured or rescued from difficult situations. So the ranch is really a magical place, where animals and humans heal each other.

I certainly felt this spirit during my stay at the Whispering Hope Ranch—and I also got to watch an emu lay an egg!

Note: The emu is a flightless bird, also known as a ratite. Other large ratites include the ostrich of Africa; the rhea of South America; and the cassowary of Australia, New Guinea, and Indonesia. The emu is native to Australia and can reach six feet in height and over 120 pounds. It can run at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour, and it generally inhabits grassy plains and woodlands, foraging on grasses, flowers, seeds, fruits, and insects.

The emu builds its nest, consisting of grasses and weeds, on the ground. After laying anywhere from five to twenty eggs, the female abandons the nest and leaves the incubating duties to the male. After eight to ten weeks, the eggs hatch, and the male remains with the young birds for about 18 months.



Phainopepla Photo of the Month by Judy Matsuoka



Our photo for this issue comes from San Fernando Valley Audubon Society member Judy Matsuoka, who tells us, "This Scott's Oriole was taken at the Big Morongo Preserve feeders this past May. It was a SFVAS monthly trip and Birdathon event. I used a Canon Powershot SX10IS. I am a pretty new birder and have only been birding seriously for about two years." Thanks, Judy.

Please submit your photos to 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. 🐦

Three-hundred seventy-one members now receive e-mail notification when the next copy of the *Phainopepla* is posted on our website. Ninety-one have elected to read it online and to save the planet, paper, and postage that way! If you wish to join that group, please e-mail us at sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com. We also have 158 followers on Facebook!

Ivory-billed Woodpecker is extinct, say two teams of researchers

From Feb., 2012 issue of *BirdWatching* (formerly *Birder's World*)

Posted Thu, Feb 2 2012 10:50 AM by Matt Mendenhall

(Below: John James Audubon painted the Ivory-billed Woodpecker after collecting specimens. In *Birds of America*, he described the species as "common.")



261 Ivory-billed Woodpecker
Picoides pubescens (Audubon)

Two groups of scientists studying museum specimens and sightings of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker have reached the same disappointing conclusion: The iconic bird is extinct. Each team described their findings in papers in the February 2012 issue of the journal *Conservation Biology*. The first team, led by biologist Nicholas Gotelli of the University of Vermont, studied 239 Ivory-bill specimens collected from 1853 to 1932. The researchers concluded that the chance that the species persists today is 0.0064 percent. Said another way, the odds of finding a living Ivory-bill are less than 1 in 15,625.

Gotelli's specimen analysis also considered when the Ivory-bill would have gone extinct based on hypothetical population sizes from 1929 to 1932. A population of 100 birds would have lasted no longer than 1980, and a population of 1,000 birds would have gone extinct by 1996. To have survived until 2008, Gotelli suggests the population would have had to be 50,000 in 1932. Ivory-bill expert

James Tanner, in his seminal report *The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker*, estimated that the late 1930s population was in fact 22 birds. —Submitted by Linda Jones 🐦



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

www.SFVAudubon.org



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Save a tree! I DO NOT wish to receive a hardcopy of the *Phainopepla*; I'll get my news online.

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 3rd of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

An introductory membership to the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:

National Audubon Society
 Membership Data Center
 P.O. Box 422250
 Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

Be sure to write "C1ZC120Z" on the form to assure assignment to our chapter. 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 Rose Leibowitz at (818) 990-5405 or e-mail her at rose.leibowitz@sfv.audubon.org.



Phainopepla

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Conservation Awards Luncheon

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society Awards Banquet

Saturday, November 3, 2012 – 12:00 pm Silent Auction & Raffle 12:30pm Luncheon
Japanese Garden – Sepulveda Basin, Van Nuys, CA

Conservation Award Recipient: Alan Pollack, Audubon-at-Home, Chair
Featured Speaker: Steve Hartman

Name _____ Phone _____

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Please make check payable to: San Fernando Valley Audubon Society.

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New!! Or Pay Online via PayPal at our Website www.SFVAudubon.org

The cost is \$50.00 including tax and tip. Please list names of all guests in your party and mail in this form by October 19, 2012. THERE IS NO RESERVED SEATING. You will not receive a confirmation of your reservation. Reservations will be held at the door. For further questions call Ann Ohlenkamp, Treasurer, at (747) 444-9683.