



Phainopepla

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San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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October / November 2015

Monthly Program

Thursday, October 22, 2015, 7:00—9:00 p.m.

Remember our *NEW* location!

**San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center
18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana, 91356**

Directions: Located between White Oak and Reseda. In order to park, it is recommended to go on Etiwanda Avenue and turn into the parking area up the alley behind the center.



Photo: Juvenile and Mature Western Gulls at Morro Rock, by Richard Medvitz

TOPIC: "What Gull is That? Speciation Among the Larids"

SPEAKER: Larry Allen

Of course you know the names of most of the gulls you look at—at least the English names as found in your bird book. But the scientific names have been changed recently, and the sequence in which the birds are listed (a reflection of the chronological order in which each species is thought to have appeared) has been altered as well. Larry will use the scientific results supporting these changes as a stepping stone to explore the variation among some of our local gulls, and will provide some identification hints as well. Larry will distribute handouts summarizing the latest thoughts on gull relationships.

Larry Allen is Project Coordinator for and co-author of the forthcoming *Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas*, has conducted gull identification workshops for local Audubon chapters and the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, and has had a long-time fascination with gulls.

SFVAS General Membership Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (except July, August, and November). ALL ARE WELCOME to join us at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments; program begins at 7:30 p.m. We meet at the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center. See Calendar of Events, pages 5—7, for directions.

Thoughts for 2015 to 2016 by Rose Leibowitz, SFVAS President

Welcome back to the new year for our chapter. We are excited to welcome our new board members and to enjoy our new meeting place at the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center in Tarzana.

On the Board we welcome Travis Abeyta and Nathan Duvall. Travis works for Audubon California and lives in our area. We are thrilled that he will bring a bigger picture to our meetings. Nathan lives close to the Sepulveda Basin and became involved with us through his concern for the environment there. He arranged a very successful cleanup of the river with us last year including kayakers who brought up an amazing amount of trash. We also welcome two new committee chairs both longtime members and great birders. Pat Avery will be running the Birdathon this year and Helene White will be hosting the hospitality table at our General Meetings. We are also glad to announce that the Sales Table will come back into life thanks to Diana Keeney and Jeanne Kolasz. There are new beautiful t-shirts in stock.



Thank you all for coming forward to help us.



Although we will not meet in November (our meeting would fall on Thanksgiving Day), we hope to see you all **on Saturday, December 5 at the 2nd Annual Bird Fest at the Visitor Center at Gillette Ranch.** As with last year, there will be hourly presentations in the indoor theater, a live bird show, plenty of presenters to meet (and things to buy) and hourly bird walks. The official flyer will be published in the next copy of the *Phainopepla*.

Later, on December 19 will be the annual Christmas Bird Count. The next *Phainopepla* will have details of the count places and leaders.

Do be adventurous, this could be a chance to bird with a group, at an area that you do not normally visit. Spread out, look at the places and leaders and maybe contact someone you do not know to see if he or she needs help.

Photos from Bird Fest 2014.



Our Link with International Bird Rescue

Our Conservation Chair, Dave Weeshoff moonlights as a volunteer with International Bird Rescue in San Pedro. When birds are ready to be returned to the wild he sometimes drives them all the way up to the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve to be freed. On Labor Day he had two Canada Geese and a Black-Crowned Night Heron in the car. With help from a couple of families, they were sent on their way.



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 2015 - March 2016.** (Saturdays Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13 and Mar. 12.)

Stroll through the lovely Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve with a guide, enjoying its trails and wildlife lake. Many kinds of birds may be found here. Learn about the birds and why they come here.

These Walks are for

- Families with school-age children
- Beginning birdwatchers, including first timers

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 Bl. 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 at the end of the road. 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.**

Phainopepla Photo of the Month October/November 2015

by John Pham

Yellow Warbler

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve

Canon EOS 7D Mark II, Sigma 150-600mm zoom lens,
handheld. f/8.0, 1/1000, ISO 1000

John Pham has been an avid photographer for 15 years, but only took up bird photography in March of this year. His interest in avians was ignited when he attended the Bird Festival at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden sponsored by the Pomona Valley Audubon Society. "Ever since that day I've been hooked. Now I head out at least 2-3x per week for birding!" John, who lives in West Covina,



did some research on ebird.org and saw that the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve was one of the top five birding locations in Los Angeles County. He set out for the basin early on Sunday, July 5 and happened to cross paths with the SFVAS monthly walk. "Someone from the group pointed out where I could find the Yellow Warbler. I stood among the trees quietly listening for the bird before he showed himself briefly for the shot. His skulking nature proved to be challenging to get a clear shot. I found a spot where the sun was shining through clouds. Luckily the bird peeked out for a moment then I fired off a few frames."

John's story is a reminder to us all how "infectious" the love of birds is. This beautiful shot is surely the result of his artistry and skill as a photographer, but Pomona Valley Audubon, San Fernando Valley Audubon and eBird.org all played a part in it too.

Do you have an interesting photo of a bird taken in/near the San Fernando Valley? Please submit your photos to JackieWollner@gmail.com. Or you can post to our Facebook page: 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.

July and August Monthly Field Trip Reports by *Richard Barth*

On July 18 we birded Mt. Pinos on the Kern County/Ventura County border. Cloudy, windy, unusually chilly weather dominated the morning. Green-tailed Towhee, Dusky Flycatcher and White-headed Woodpecker were among the target birds found. "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow was glimpsed as a fly-by but we had good looks at Western Wood-Pewee, Orange-crowned Warbler, Pygmy Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, American Robin and Chipping Sparrow. We discussed the identification problems in separating Cassin's and Purple Finches. Western Bluebird, "Oregon" Junco and House Wren are a cinch to find on the mountain and it is fun to see a Yellow-rumped Warbler in its breeding finery. A Cooper's Hawk flew over the parking lot before the walk began and Northern Flickers were seen from the road driving up.

August 15 marked our trip to Chilao, Buckhorn and Charlton Flat in the San Gabriel Mountains. An out-of-control wildfire was reported below Islip Saddle this morning, and many folks might have been discouraged from coming up to the Angeles Crest area. Rose Leibowitz and I were the only participants on the trip. Our most exciting find was a female Williamson's Sapsucker at Chilao, a very low elevation for this species in mid-August. White-headed Woodpecker, Purple Finch, Mountain Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch and Steller's Jay were tallied. Our warblers were Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and Wilson's; our flycatchers were Pacific-slope and Western Wood-Pewee. Bewick's Wren, Western Bluebird, Spotted Towhee, Acorn Woodpecker and Northern Flicker also made our list.



Calendar of Events

October

Saturday, October 3. 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 4. 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 or (747) 444-9683.

Saturday, October 10. 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. Binoculars are available for loan. 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 see the attached flyer on page 3 for more information. Feel free to copy and hand out to new birders. Also visit our website www.sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 10. 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, October 11. 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. 1st 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. 1st Street then take the 3rd 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 0.5 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 McHorney, (818) 845-0166.

Saturday, October 17. Monthly Field Trip: 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 17. 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 18. 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, (818) 887-0973.

Tuesday, October 20. 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.

Thursday, October 22. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. NEW MEETING PLACE: San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, 18312 Oxnard St, Tarzana, 91356.

Directions: Located between White Oak and Reseda. In order to park, it is recommended to go on Etiwanda Avenue and turn into the parking area up the alley behind the center.

TOPIC: "What Gull is That? Speciation Among the Larids" SPEAKER: Larry Allen. Of course you know the names of most of the gulls you look at—at least the English names as found in your bird book. But the scientific names have been changed recently, and the sequence in which the birds are listed (a reflection of the chronological order in which each species is thought to have appeared) has been altered as well. Larry will use the scientific results supporting these changes as a stepping stone to explore the variation among some of our local gulls, and will provide some identification hints as well. For more information, see Monthly Program, page one.

Saturday, October 24. *NEW!* First SFVAS Hansen Dam Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m. We will walk along a dirt road at the base of the dam—exploring promising sites along the way. Meet at the lower parking lot, Dronfield Entrance. Directions: Take Osborne exit from Golden State (5) Freeway. Go northeast about two miles passing Glenoaks Blvd. Turn right on Dronfield to enter the park. Turn right at the end of Dronfield and then take a quick left and proceed downhill to the large parking lot. **Alternate directions:** Exit Osborne from the eastbound Foothill Freeway (210). At the off ramp, turn right onto Foothill. After a short distance, turn left on Osborne and then left on Dronfield. Follow above directions to the lower parking lot. Rain cancels. Leader: Pat Bates (818) 425-0962, pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 31. Young Birders Group Bird Walk: Sepulveda Basin. 9:00 a.m. The Young Birders Group walks are for young birders who are serious about birding, know some birds, and want to learn more. All are welcome to join. 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(s) Alexander and/or Olivia. For more information please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at roselbirds@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405.

November

Sunday, November 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 or (747) 444-9683.

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

Saturday, November 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. Binoculars are available for loan. 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.

Saturday, November 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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Phainopepla October /November 2015

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Saturday, November 21. 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 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, November 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, November 26. No General Membership Meeting in November – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Saturday, November 28. Young Birders Group Bird Walk: O'Melveny Park. 17300 Sesnon Boulevard, Granada Hills, CA 91344. The Young Birders Group walks are for young birders who are serious about birding, know some birds, and

are willing to learn. All are welcome to join! 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. Leader(s) Alexander and/or Olivia. For more information please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at roselbirds@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405.

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Future Field Trips (details later):

December. No Monthly Field Trip in December Due to Christmas Bird Count.

January 16. Upper Newport Bay & San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary

SAVE the DATE!

2nd Annual Bird Fest of the Santa Monica Mountains

Saturday, December 5, 2015

Location: Santa Monica Mountains Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch| [Map](#)

Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Fee Information: Free

Contact Email: samo@wnpa.org

Contact Phone Number: 805-370-2302

A day to celebrate the bird! Join us for guided walks, displays, and presentations on topics including a live bird presentation, creating a drought tolerant bird friendly habitat and more. FREE Bird walks, and activities for the whole family!



Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack SELECTING NATIVES FOR YOUR WILDLIFE GARDEN

A good way to start the selection process for your garden is to know what plant community you reside in and obtain a list of plants that make up that community. You can do that by googling “plant communities by zip code.” That will take you to the website laspilitas.com where you enter your zip code and at the bottom of the page that appears, click on list of plants. Click on the listing and up comes a good photo and a paragraph or two describing the plant and all of its needs. You needn't restrict your choices to just that one community, as some plants from other communities might also do well. For example, though most of Los Angeles is Coastal Sage Scrub, plants from Chaparral, Oak Woodland, and Desert habitats can do well here.



Photo from laspilitas.com: *Trichostema lanatum*, Woolly Blue Curls

Know what kind of soil is in your garden. Much of the San Fernando Valley has clay soil, but there may be pockets of sandy soil or loam, or a combination of any of the above. An easy test: grab a fist full of moistened soil and make a ball. If you can't make a ball at all, there is a lot of sand. If you make a ball and poke your finger into it and it crumbles readily, the soil is loamy. If the ball stays intact with the hole you poked, it's mostly clay. Knowing the soil type tells you something about the drainage, with sand being the fastest, clay the slowest, and loam in the middle. One can also dig a hole, fill it with water and see how long it takes for the water to absorb. Sand will not retain water at all and some clay will retain water for hours. Absorption within 30 minutes is

considered good drainage.

Observe the amount of sunlight each part of your garden receives: plants needing “full sun” require sun all or most of the day; plants needing “shade” require little or no sun; and those needing “half-shade” require sun for about half a day.

If you are adding a plant to an area that is already planted, consider its neighbors i.e., what plants are growing nearby and are the needs of the new plant the same as its neighbor's? For example, an established oak tree does not like much water, so one wouldn't put thirsty shrubs or perennials under an oak. Then, there are some trees, like the walnut, that are allelopathic: the roots secrete a substance that inhibits the growth of many plants in the root zone, while some other plants are able to survive.

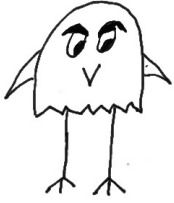
Help is available. Native plant nurseries have websites. I have already mentioned laspilitas.com; matilijanursery.com; Theodorepayne.org—to name a few. Lacnps.org is the Los Angeles California Native Plant Society's website. There are people at the nurseries who can give advice. And finally, there are books on the subject. A favorite of mine (considered the “bible” of native plants) is “California Native Plants for the Garden”, by Bornstein, Fross, and O'Brien.

Since it is always unpredictable if a given species of plant is going to do well in a particular location in your particular garden, it is monetarily wise to plant only two or three of any species at first to see how it does.

And for those looking to buy now, the California Native Plant Society is sponsoring their biannual Native Plant Sale at the Sepulveda Gardens, 16633 Magnolia near Hayvenhurst, Encino, on October 24 and 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. I will be tabling there so stop by and say hello! 🐦

*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.*

Join the Bird Nerd Club!



For the past few years, a number of you have participated in the Phainopepla Club birding challenge by keeping track of your Los Angeles County Bird sightings on eBird. At our June potluck, the participants have been awarded a pin and prizes based on the number of species seen from July to June. We are now replacing the Phainopepla Club with a new birding challenge: The **Bird Nerd Club!**

The **Bird Nerd Club** members will have a broader canvas in which to count birds. They will be able to include all the birds they see in California from July 1, 2015 through June 19, 2016. The award categories will be:

N: Nighthawk 100-199 species

E: Eagle 200-275

R: Roadrunner 276-350

D: Dunlin over 350 species.

N...E...R...D...Bird NERD!

Your 2015-16 California lists must be stored on eBird and you will be able to submit your total next June. Will you be among the bird nerds in our flock?

Come Celebrate Our 20th Annual Festival!

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival

January 15-18, 2016


MORRO BAY, CALIFORNIA – Come to where the birds are and join us for our 20th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway and one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots. The area is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified!

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival is sponsored by Morro Coast Audubon Society, California State Parks, the Central Coast State Parks Association, and the City of Morro Bay and gives you the chance to join local and national birding experts on a variety of field trips and workshops. Field trip group sizes are limited to maximize spotting and identification opportunities. The festival also offers workshops aimed at sharpening your birding skills, as well as evening programs with outstanding speakers.

Our keynote speaker Saturday, January 16th, will be John Marzluff on "Subirdia"—a very informed and entertaining view of living with humans—if you're a bird.

NEW THIS YEAR

- Expanded "Nature Track" events: climate change impacts, visit an oyster farm, learn about sustainable fishing, and more.
- "Youth Track": Special admission offers for youth aged 18 and under. (see website for details)
- Travel by Trolley: Check your registration info for trolley schedule to see if you can hitch a lift between the Community Center and your field trip.

To register and for more information about the Festival; check out our website at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org. Registration starts on November 7 and our brochure will be available then. The deadline for pre-registration is January 5, 2016 but early signups are encouraged as the most popular events fill up quickly. 

Chatsworth Nature Preserve

Did you know that the city of Los Angeles has one nature preserve designated by the city? It is in the far northwest corner of the San Fernando Valley and is the site of the old Chatsworth Reservoir. The preserve is full of life, and human access is limited to allow it to fulfill its purpose as a haven for nature. The avian life concentrates around an Ecology Pond created in the 1970s as a bird refuge. This summer the pond became a victim of the drought. The limited water supply of potable water to keep it full was cut off in order to meet water conservation restrictions, and it all but completely dried out causing mortality of the life within it. Thanks to collaboration between SFVAS, Chatsworth Nature Preserve Coalition and local residents, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP), which owns the property, saw the value of the pond and the need to meet past commitments. DWP undertook to keep some water in the pond using non-potable water. At a well-attended public meeting promoted by the local councilman, DWP promised to restore and maintain the pond while working out permanent solutions for providing water from non-potable sources. Thank you to Mark Osokow who led this conservation action for our chapter. (Note: For additional information, please see www.savechatsworthpreserve.org.)



Greater Sage-Grouse Listing Announcement



Greater Sage-Grouse. Photo by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

September, 22, 2015- The Fish & Wildlife Service made a major announcement about their decision not to list the Greater Sage-Grouse under the Endangered Species Act. This decision, which will also lock in new, more protective management plans on 65 million acres of public land across the West, promises new hope for conservation of the Greater Sage-Grouse and rests on years of work by state and federal agencies, Western governors, private landowners and conservation groups, including Audubon.

Everyone agrees that the Greater Sage-Grouse (and the whole fragile sagebrush ecosystem it represents in 11 Western states) needs help. The question is what to do about it. Putting the bird on the Endangered Species List is the most extreme measure the Federal government can take. That triggers an avalanche of regulations about how almost any plot of land will be used for decades to come. It drives landowners into hiding and ends any conversation aimed at serving mutual interests. And it would have a chilling effect on western state economies that would cause a massive backlash against both sage-grouse protections and

the Endangered Species Act itself.

A different approach started with Audubon a decade ago in Wyoming. Brian Rutledge, Audubon's VP/Central Flyway Policy Advisor, and his team worked with the governor and the administration to protect 15 million acres of sagebrush lands—home for more than 80% of the Greater Sage-Grouse in the state. We followed a vulnerable bird to a win-win solution ten years ago and we've done that again today.

The bottom line: with today's announcement, the Bureau of Land Management will expand a 15 million-acre win in Wyoming to a total of 65 million acres across Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and the Dakotas. And because 40 percent of remaining sage-grouse habitat in the U.S. is found on private lands, Audubon is a partner in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Sage Grouse Initiative, a powerful public-private cooperative effort that has worked with more than 1,100 ranches in 11 Western states to improve and protect 4.4 million acres with more than \$500 million in conservation investments on the ground. The vision and tenacity of our Audubon Rockies and DC policy teams, along with the passion and commitment of the entire Audubon network, have helped drive this success. Last December, 160 Audubon Chapters from 37 states sent a letter to Secretary Jewell in support of the unprecedented, collaborative effort to put plans in place to save the sage-grouse and its habitat — conservation plans that will also benefit 350 other bird and wildlife species dependent on the sage steppe landscape. The Endangered Species Act itself has also helped to fuel the success of this effort: it got diverse stakeholders to gather at the table, come together around their love for these Western lands and wildlife, and hammer out real, centrist solutions.

Of course, now all of these stakeholders have to fulfill their commitments in order to make today's decision stick, and Audubon will continue to play a central, pivotal role in ensuring this plan's future success.

For more info: <https://www.audubon.org/news/unprecedented-conservation-efforts-keep-greater-sage-grouse-endangered-species>

David Yarnold President & CEO National Audubon Society

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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*.

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INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

Thoughts for 2015-16-pg. 2
Wildlife Rescue-pg. 2
Beginner Bird Walk Flyer-pg. 3
Calendar of Events-pgs. 4—5
Photo of the Month-pg. 6
Monthly Field Trip Report-pg. 6
Bird Fest-pg. 7
Audubon-at-Home-pg. 8
Bird Nerd Club Members-pg. 9
Morro Bay Festival-pg. 9
Chatsworth Nature Preserve-pg. 10
Friends of Condors-pg. 10
Greater Sage Grouse-pg. 10
Chapter Information-pg. 11

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