

Phainopepla



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June/July 2009 Volume 60 No. 6

PROGRAM NOTES

Thursday, June 25, 2009. Annual Potluck and Members' Slideshow. 6:30 p.m.



Meet 6:30–7:00 p.m. for setup and social time, followed by dinner, installation of officers for 2009–2010, and program.

Culinary delights and photo adventures by SFVAS members for SFVAS members! Plan to join in the potluck by bringing one of the following: a main dish, salad, rolls, or dessert to serve 6–8 people. Bring your own plate, cup and eating utensils. Beverages will be provided.

The evening's program will feature presentations from our own talented photographer members sharing their best photos. All are invited to participate. Limit the number of images to 20 or less. Presenters must narrate. Possibilities are birds, nature, vacations, field trips, or backyard natural wonders.

Don't miss this always-enjoyable annual get-together of friends, food and photos as our activity year draws to a close. For more information, call Jeanne Polak-Recht, (818) 831-2438.

NO General Membership Meetings in July and August. Have a great summer.
See you September 27!





SPECIAL EVENT: Birding Southeast Arizona, July 25—August 1

SFVAS has organized a special field trip to search for specialties in southeast Arizona. Bird as much as you want, from one day to the entire week. The trip will be led by Michael McQuerry, a well known southern California birder who has spent several summers birding Arizona for its many species seen no where else in the United States.

The first four days of the trip, will be centered in Sierra Vista, followed by a travel day through the scenic Chiricahua Mountains with the final three days birding out of Portal.

Tentative itinerary includes:

Saturday, July 25: Miller and Ash Canyons visiting stocked hummingbird feeders with a night owling session.

Sunday, July 26: The Patagonia Loop, including Paton's feeders, the Nature Reserve, the famous roadside rest and Patagonia Lake.

Monday, July 27: Madera Canyon.

Tuesday, July 28: Fort Huachuca canyons for trogons and other canyon specialties

Wednesday, July 29: San Pedro Nature Reserve and Willcox Playa. Afternoon travel onward through the Chiricahuas to Portal.

Thursday, July 30: Portal area, including Stateline Road and Cave Creek. Evening owling.

Friday, July 31: Rustler Peak for high elevation Mexican specialties.

Saturday, August 1: A search for birds we missed as we start our return to California.

Travel and living accommodations are on our own. We will meet each morning at a defined location and time for the day's birding.

If interested in participating contact Jim Moore at 1-661-298-1130 or jimmoore@socal.rr.com. ♪



Birdathon by Rose Leibowitz

The Birdathon has finished and the next issue will include the list of the numbers of birds each group saw. A big thank you to everyone who participated as a birder, a donor, (or both!)

BIRDATHON 2009 by Jim Moore

Jim Moore together with six other intrepid birders including Dick Barth, Judy Howell, Kris Ohlenkamp, Rick Tallman, Bob Thille, and Mike Van Norman met at 5:30 a.m. on April 22, in Acton to start a day-long Birdathon that lasted until 8:00 p.m. and covered 225 miles. Ten sites were birded with 123 species identified.

The first stop, Lake Palmdale netted 16 species, including at least 150 Tri-colored Blackbirds, a good start for the day. This was followed by stops at the Joshua Forest in Palmdale, the Lancaster Sewage Ponds, and onward to Jawbone Canyon, with stops at the DWP house and Butterbredt Springs.

The afternoon included lunch at Central Park in California City and a two hour visit to the Silver Springs Resort in Galileo Hills. Then onward to Piute Ponds where, with daylight running out, we added 16 new species, bringing our total for the day to 117 species.

We reached our final stop at Apollo Park in Lancaster at 7:00 p.m. to get a look at the Lesser Night-Hawks which had been seen each of the previous three years. They didn't disappoint, with about twelve making their erratic flight pattern over the lake about ten minutes after sundown. They and five other new species increased our total to 123 species. ♪



OF TRASH AND CLEANUPS

Haskell Creek, flowing through the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve, looks wonderful following the SFVAS April cleanup!

The morning of Saturday, April 18, a team of 38 volunteers gave their time and efforts to rid Haskell Creek of trash. On a beautiful morning, they labored in and next to the creek, stuffing plastic shopping bags, Styrofoam and other junk into large plastic bags for the Department of Recreation and Parks to haul away.

In the process the volunteers got tired, dirty, and muddy. Some even fell into the creek. All volunteers detested the plastic bags and Styrofoam they found. Several opined that plastic shopping bags, foam cups, and food containers should be banned citywide or statewide.

The trash problem in Haskell Creek and this region's waterways is huge. Late this winter, the lower branches of willows and other trees lining Haskell Creek had become festooned in plastics, some from littering park users, most washed in from areas of the Valley north of Sepulveda Basin. The SFVAS creek cleanup followed several other cleanups, including one in March by 120 tenth graders from Brentwood School. At the start of our cleanup on April 18, there were many hard-to-reach sections still clothed in plastics. Now

Haskell Creek's reach between Wildlife Way and Burbank is beautiful, although the volunteers reported that there was more trash they could not remove.

Many students from Board Member Sara Huang's Biology 7 class at LA Valley College participated: Tatevik Aleksanyan, Rosie Aparicio, Gevork Arutyunyan, Nouran Felo, Eric Jusko, Abigail and Sarah Lamson, Daisy Murzllor, Gina Nalbandian, Armen Narimanyants and Christopher Vazquez. SFVAS members and their friends and family included Teri Carnesciali, Christine Cohn, Ashley Crary, Tom Doyle, David and Eve Gordon, Josh Kreisman, Laura LeFairre, Judy Howell, Sara Huang, Carol Johnson, Pamela Nissen, Kris Ohlenkamp, Ann and Kristy Pirone, Alan Pollack, Abby Wanamaker and Grace Wong. Kerri Barton represented Friends of Lake Balboa and Bette Simos the League of Women Voters. A Daily News article inspired Anne Abramson and Allan Horvath to help clean up the creek.

All who value the Wildlife Reserve thank the volunteers.

Please contact me if you are interested in developing a more frequent cleanup program at the Wildlife Reserve.

Muriel Kotin, Youth Activities Chair ✧

Audubon at Home

by Alan Pollack

Do You Have a Question About How to Create a Wildlife-Friendly Garden?

Alan Pollack would love to hear from you. Please e-mail him with any questions you have regarding creating a wildlife-friendly garden that can be used for publication.

Alan also 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 reached at alpat62@aol.com or (818) 340-2347 or at www.sfvaudubon.org. ✧



Calendar of Events

Tuesday, June 2. Quarterly Meeting of the Antelope Valley Audubon Group. 6:30 p.m. The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve at the intersection of Ave. K-8 and 35th Street W. in Lancaster. Meet for a Birdwalk in the Preserve at 5:15 p.m., followed by a brief business meeting at 6:30 p.m. The program for the evening will be a video entitled "Hummingbirds, Beauty and the Beast," by Thomas H. Karminski, which will engage us in the world of 57 hummingbird species including the 16 that breed in the U.S. Contact Bob or Bonnie Weatherman (661) 269-2051.

Saturday, June 6. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–11:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the Ventura Freeway (U.S. 101) at Las Virgenes Canyon Road and proceed north to the trailhead parking area at the end of the road. Please bring plenty of water and wear proper shoes. No toilets are available on site. Leader: Jim Hardesty (818) 346-6712, jnhardesty@att.net.

Saturday, June 6. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.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 of LA Co Parks at (661) 257-4050.

Sunday, June 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. For more information contact him at (818) 986-7785 or kris.ohlenkamp@sbcglobal.net.

Saturday, June 13. Monthly Field Trip to Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve (second Saturday). 7:30 a.m. We expect to see Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, orioles, flycatchers, raptors, possibly Grasshopper Sparrow. Directions: Take the Ventura Freeway (101) to the Lynn Road exit in Thousand Oaks. Go south on Lynn Road and proceed 5.3 miles to Via Goleta. Turn left at Via Goleta to the preserve entrance. The main gate officially opens at 8:00 a.m. but a ranger usually opens it much earlier. We will meet at the gate at 7:30, ready to drive down to the parking lot and get an early start. We will bird until about 11:30. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, June 13. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 9:00 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. Leader: Bob Fischer. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

Sunday, June 14. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the first wide place after entering the gardens. Admission is free for early birders. Located at 1418 Descanso Drive, La Cañada. Leader: Karen Johnson or Nancy Herron Knode. For more information, contact Karen at (818) 790-1687 or lv2bird@aol.com.

Tuesday, June 16. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 8:30 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 .6 mile, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. RAIN CANCELS. Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at, (818) 885-7493, with any questions (before 7 p.m., please) or CarolOpp@sbcglobal.net.

Saturday, June 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) 255-3606.

Sunday, June 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 \$10 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796, aKotin@earthlink.net and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

Thursday, June 25. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING. Annual Potluck and Members' Slideshow. 6:30 p.m. Everyone welcome. 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.

The evening's program will include the installation of new officers for the 2009-2010 year. It will also feature presentations from our own talented photographer members sharing their best slides, DVD's etc. All are invited to participate. Limit the number of images to 20 or less. Presenters must narrate. Possibilities are birds, nature, vacations, field trips, or backyard natural wonders.



Don't miss this always-enjoyable annual get-together of friends, food and photos as our activity year draws to a close. For more information see "Program Notes", page 1, or call Jeanne Polak-Recht, (818) 831-2438.

Sunday, June 28. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See June 14 for details.

JULY

Thursday, July 2—Sunday, July 5. Joint trip with Los Angeles Audubon. Quaking Aspen Camping Trip for Owls. Leaders: Mary and Nick Freeman. Campground is above Springville, near Ponderosa in the southwest Sierras. A group campsite will be reserved. Owling by night, bird walks by day! Must be a night owl. We may also look at some butterflies! Hopeful birds: Flammulated, Northern Saw-whet, Spotted owls and others; Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Hammond's Flycatcher and more. Family of weasels last year! Some meals will be potluck, others provided or eat out. Tentatively meet Thursday 3 p.m. at Quaking Aspen Campground (look for poster). More details in flyer. To reserve, send SASE, phone, e-mail, and \$70 to Los Angeles Audubon-Field Trips, P.O. Box 931057, Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057. Maximum of ten sign-ups, four minimum. No small children or pets, please. Contact LAAS to carpool.

Saturday, July 4. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. See June 6 for details.

Sunday, July 5. Sepulveda Basin. See June 7 for details.

Saturday, July 11. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m. See June 13 for details.

Sunday, July 12. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See June 14 for details.

Saturday, July 18. Monthly Field Trip to Mt. Pinos 8:00 a.m. Join us for summer montane species such as Fox Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Dusky Flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, Hairy Woodpecker and Clark's Nutcracker. Meet in the parking lot at Iris Meadows. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, insect repellent and lunch. Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take I-5 north to the Frazier Park exit. Go west through Frazier Park and continue for about 20 miles up Mount Pinos Road to the end (and parking lot.) Your vehicle must exhibit a National Forest "Adventure Pass" or Golden Age Passport in order for you to park and bird in this area. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, July 18. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m. See June 20 for details.

Sunday, July 19. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See June 21 for details.

Tuesday, July 21. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 8:30 a.m. See June 16 for details.

NO General Membership Meetings in July and August.
Have a great summer.
See you September 27!

Saturday, July 25–Saturday, August 1. Southeast Arizona Field Trip. SFVAS has organized a special field trip to search for specialties in southeast Arizona. Bird as much as you want, from one day to the entire week. The trip will be led by Michael McQuerry, a well known southern California birder who has spent several summers birding Arizona for its many species seen no where else in the United States. If interested in participating contact Jim Moore at (661) 298-1130 or jimmoore@socal.rr.com. For more information see write-up on page 2. ♯

Sunday, July 26. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See June 14 for details.

Future Field Trips: (Details later)

Aug 15. Chilao

September 19. Huntington Central Park/Bolsa Chica





Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

April 25 marked our visit to the high desert north of Palm Springs, with the trip doubling as a SF-VAS Birdathon. We tallied 63 species on a beautiful, mild day.

The morning was spent at Big Morongo Valley Preserve and adjacent Covington Park. We found most of our target birds plus had some very special sightings. A Townsend's Solitaire was the first in memory spotted on this trip. We saw a recently-reported White-throated Sparrow and were given directions to two families of Long-eared Owls! Expected favorites on hand were Brown-crested Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Costa's Hummingbird, Yellow-breasted Chat and Blue Grosbeak. Other birds of note were Swainson's Thrush, Mountain Chickadee, Verdin, Black-chinned Hummingbird and Rufous Hummingbird. Two Soras were heard calling from a riparian area. Black-

headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager and Hooded Oriole added excitement to the day. In addition to the chat, the warbler stand-outs were MacGillivray's, Nashville, Yellow, Townsend's and Wilson's. Hammond's and Pacific-slope Flycatchers provided good studies. Additional species that should be mentioned are Cooper's Hawk, Gambel's Quail, Phainopepla, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Lincoln's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Warbling Vireo and Western Bluebird. Somehow we missed Summer Tanager, Lazuli Bunting and Lawrence's Goldfinch this year.

After lunch we drove to Black Rock Campground in Joshua Tree National Park. Pinyon Jay (we got lucky), Black-throated Sparrow, Scott's Oriole, Ladder-backed Woodpecker and Cactus Wren were terrific finds there. ♣

BULL CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

—Submitted by Muriel Kotin

Many visitors and users of Lake Balboa are wondering about the major construction project that began last June in the western end of Anthony C. Beilenson Park, immediately west of Lake Balboa in the Sepulveda Basin. Inside the fenced off area is the 28-acre Bull Creek Channel Ecosystem Restoration Project. Completion is expected by the time the June–July 2009 issue of *Phainopepla* is mailed.

Excellent news for birdwatchers, walkers and the environment, the project was designed to restore native riparian and upland habitat to an area of Sepulveda Basin that had become severely degraded. The project creates a small wildlife reserve along much of the 3,000 feet that Bull Creek flows from the Orange Bus Line to the Los Angeles River.

Members of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee had been working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Los Angeles Dept. of Recreation and Parks to realize restoration of this stretch of Bull Creek since the early 1990s. Once a lovely riparian ecosystem, this part of Bull Creek gradually became inappropriately graded, highly disturbed, and dominated by invasive exotic plants, unable to support much native and migratory wildlife.

The Bull Creek restoration project is intended to “enhance and restore wildlife resources, reduce flooding and provide interpretative and passive recreational

amenities,” in the words of a June 2007 press release from Congressman Brad Sherman's office. Congressman Sherman secured \$4.9 million in federal funds for the project, with the remainder of the costs coming from the City of Los Angeles.

The creek channel was recontoured and exotic vegetation removed. An oxbow-shaped side channel was excavated to allow water to flow around a one-acre island thus created. Reclaimed water from Lake Balboa is now pumped into the upper end of the creek to supplement natural flows. Bridges and pedestrian trails have been built, similar in appearance to those in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve.

A meeting with Lake Balboa supporters was held this April 14 at the Sepulveda Garden Center. It was generally agreed by all attendees that the Bull Creek area should continue to be fenced off until sometime next spring, in order to give the new plantings time to become established.

Meanwhile, the rather bare-looking area is already supporting a significant amount of birdlife. Kris Ohlenkamp and I toured the area before the community meeting on April 14 and observed around 25 bird species in less than an hour. Beginning next spring we will be able to stroll along the pathways and perhaps lead bird walks there. ♣



JOIN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON

To get started with your membership,
use the following form and mail to:

SFV Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 7769
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Make all checks payable to SFV Audubon.

SFVAS Membership

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership....\$20 \$ _____
Student 1-yr Chapter Membership....\$10 \$ _____
Optional First-Class Postage.....\$5 \$ _____
Contributions to SFVAS..... \$ _____
Total..... \$ _____

New Member ____ Renewal ____ School ____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

How did you learn about SFVAS? _____

The PHAINOPEPLA, published ten times a year, is the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409, 818-347-3205. 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 newspaper 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 52529, Boulder, CO 80322. Be sure to write "C12" 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@sfvudubon.org.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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President:	Jim Moore	(661) 298-1130
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Birdathon:	Rose Leibowitz	(818) 990-5405
Christmas Bird Count:	Art Langton	(818) 887-0973
Community Outreach:	Sharon Ford	(818) 780-5816
Conservation:	Kris Ohlenkamp	(818) 986-7785
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Descanso Bird Station:	Dottie Ecker	(818) 790-0659
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Descanso Bird Walks:	Karen Johnson	(818) 790-1687
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Web Coordinator:	Jim Hardesty	(818) 346-6712
Youth Activities:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796

For Chapter leaders email addresses, see our web site:

www.SFVAudubon.org

CHAPTER PHONE (818) 347-3205

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Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
PO Box 7769
Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769

Please visit our website
to see this issue in full color!
www.sfvaudubon.org

Phainopepla June/July 2009



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Membership

SFVAS is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope you will get involved with our many field trips and activities. Please contact Rose Leibowitz, Membership Chair, with any questions.

New Local Members:

Patricia Bates
Christine Cohn
Thomas Conklin

Colin Cat
Jane & Ralph Costanzo
Polly Crawford
Deanna Crum

Carolyn House
Cindy Kalbern
Michael Kline
Josephina Lapuz

Denise Randel
Natalia Reagan
Geoff Regalado
Marta Schultz

New National Members:

Mildred Amaud
Fitzroy Barrett
Margaret Becker
Stephen Bedford
Margaret Bee
Bronte Berrel
Craig Boyer
Maria Caraveo

Roger Curtis
Nicola Dicarlo
Paulo Figueiredo
Elizabeth Fitzwater
Valerie Franklin
Barbara Garrett
Charles Gherardi
Toni Gordon
Nora Greer

Eugene Lew
Maggi Mahin
Arsenio Martinez
H. Mazur
Rae McDonald
Carolyn Monroe
Caroline O'Connell
Margaret Pinhey
Virgil Popescu

Julie Seltzer
Martha Spring
Stephanie Storey
Martine Torres-Coates
Thomas Tulloss
Alexander Viduetsky
David & Helen Walter
Bill Woodmancy

Student Memberships

San Fernando Valley Audubon offers student memberships for \$10 per year. This includes ten issues of the Phainopepla newsletter. It makes the perfect gift. See the form on page 7 and join today!