



Phainopepla

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April / May 2013

Monthly Program

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, April 25, 2013

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

Topic: The Big Picture in a Small Frame: The Natural History of Kern County including portions of Tulare and Inyo Counties in the Southern Sierra Nevada



Why does landlocked Kern County have such an impressive list of flora and fauna? A diversity of geology and biology unparalleled for any area in North America, north of Mexico is why. Come learn about the natural history of Kern County from its beginnings:

geology, tectonics, paleontology, Floristic Provinces, Native Americans, early settlers and about the diverse assemblage of flora and fauna in the modern day.

Presenter: Allison Sheehey

Ali Sheehey, aka, *Nature Ali* is an avid naturalist and birder. She has been involved with the Audubon Society in California since 1985. She is the former Outreach Director at Audubon California's Kern River Preserve, a habitat for over 230 species of birds. Ali's education about nature began with her explorations of the desert environs of Kern County's Temblor Range (the western border) where she fell in love with the intricacies of the geology, flora and fauna in a place many regarded as an ugly wasteland. Ali is a staunch advocate for the environmental protection of Kern County and the planet and prefers to quietly affect policy through education. Her extensive natural history Website can be found at www.natureali.org. Photo: Long-eared Owl, by Allison Sheehey

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 23, 2013

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

Speaker: Dave Collins

Presents: **The Wildlife Photography of Dave Collins**



Join us to gain some tips on wildlife photography and enjoy the stories and photographs of this professional photographer. Dave Collins was born and raised in the San Fernando Valley. During his childhood, Dave developed a strong fascination for nature and wildlife. His love of photography began during his teenage years. For many years photography remained a hobby that he practiced

intensively during his free time. In 2005, Dave embarked on a trip to Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming where he was able to photograph the infamous wolves. Using his first 'real' camera, he was able to capture some amazing photographs! It was during this trip that he became as passionate about photography as he was about nature. Dave currently leads photo expeditions throughout the Western United States and enjoys sharing his passion for wildlife photography with others. Dave's photographs may be viewed on the Web at davecollinsimages.com.



Dave recently taught a photography class for our chapter in which participants attended a get to know your camera session and then had follow up experiences putting their new knowledge to work in the field. Photo: White-tailed Kite, by Dave Collins

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 and view our sales table; program 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.



Birdathon 2013—The Fun Begins! *By Diana Keeney*

Taking place on various dates throughout April and May, the annual SFVAS Birdathon puts the “fun” in fundraiser! Birdathon leaders engage in friendly competition with each other and with themselves, trying to improve on last year’s species counts. But everyone is a winner when the donations are received and SFVAS has funding to continue its important functions. Anyone can participate in this important fundraising event by pledging sponsorship to one or more of the team leaders listed on the Pledge/Contribution form (page 3) and submitting donations to SFVAS.

You can also join in on several of the Birdathon events, lending your eyes and ears to maximize the species counts. Birdathon leaders welcome your participation in their efforts at O’Melveny Park on April 16 (Carolyn Oppenheimer), Malibu Creek State Park on April 21 (Art Langton), and Sepulveda Basin on May 5 (Kris Ohlenkamp). See the Calendar of Events for details on these regularly scheduled bird walks that will double as Birdathon Events.

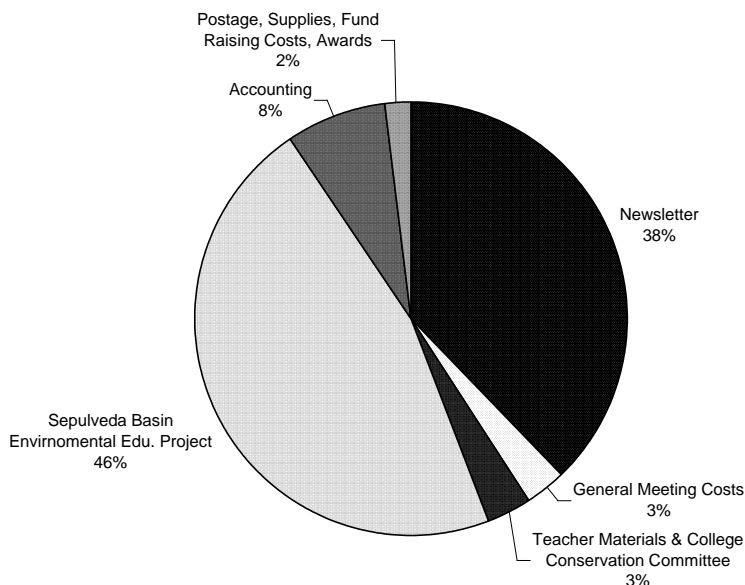
Linda Jones will lead the Big Sit at the Sepulveda Basin on Friday, May 10, once again proving that a good way to see birds is to sit still and let them come to you! Please join Linda at the first viewing area at the Wildlife Lake from 9 to 11 a.m. Bring a chair or cushion to the Big Sit if you wish.

The Children’s Birdathon is for junior birders who will participate with their families on Saturday, May 11. Details about the Children’s Birdathon and a special sponsor form are included in this newsletter. Please RSVP for the Children’s Birdathon to Diana Keeney at 818.998.3216, or diana.keeney@sfaudubon.org.

The funds generated by the Birdathon enable SFVAS to host thousands of school children in the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program, support the San Fernando Valley Bird Observatory, contribute to habitat conservation efforts, and continue the mission to increase public awareness and broaden appreciation of wildlife and the natural environment. Please contribute to the Birdathon as generously as you can! You can donate several ways; send in the enclosed envelope, use the sponsor form tear it out or make a copy and mail it in, or donate online at www.sfaudubon.org. Thank you for your support! Photo: Great Egret, Sepulveda Basin, 3/9/13, R. LeVine



SFVAS Expenses 2012-2013




Where Your Birdathon Donation Goes

—Ann Ohlenkamp, Treasurer

Your Birdathon donation is very important to San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (SFVAS). Most of our operating funds are donated through the Birdathon. The *Phainopepla* (our newsletter) uses 38 percent of our operating expenses, and is our second highest expense. Our newsletter informs you of our bird walks, monthly meetings, and items of interest to birders. Of your National Audubon dues, San Fernando Valley Audubon only receives approximately \$2.50 per membership. Ninety percent of the Audubon members that receive the *Phainopepla* are National Members only. We have worked to bring our expenses down by reducing the newsletter from ten issues to six a year. Mailing the *Phainopepla* to each member, National or Local, now costs SFVAS \$6.00 per year. The difference between the cost of the *Phainopepla* (\$6.00) and moneys from memberships (\$2.50) needs to be made up from donations.

Our largest expense is the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Project (SBEEP). Every year SFVAS brings in approximately 2,000 school children to study environmental education in a natural setting. SFVAS also facilitates a Teacher’s Program to supplement the children’s program. This program is funded from donations to SFVAS.

SFVAS is very active in your community, protecting habitats, educating about the environment, and providing recreation. We need your help to enable us to continue to do these important activities. Your donation is greatly appreciated. 

Birdathon 2013 Pledge/Contribution Form

1. Put an X in front of the team leader(s) you wish to support.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carolyn Oppenheimer | April 16, O'Melveny Park | Probable Species: 35-40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Karen Johnson | April 18, Angeles Crest Hwy Loop | Probable Species: 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art Langton | April 21, Malibu Creek State Park | Probable Species: 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Moore | April 24, Antelope Valley | Probable Species: 120 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dick Barth | April 27, Morongo Valley | Probable Species: 65-70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allan & Muriel Kotin | April 27-28, Greater Los Angeles Area | Probable Species: 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Osokow | May 3, Simi Hills/Santa Susana Mts. | Probable Species: 65-70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John & Andrew Willis | May 4 for Lori Willis Memorial Fund | Probable Species: 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kris Ohlenkamp | May 5, Sepulveda Basin | Probable Species: 65-70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Linda Jones | May 10, Sepulveda Basin "Big Sit" | Probable Species: 30 |
- Your Family Team Ask your family and friends to support your birding day! Sign up sponsors on the pledge form, have a "Big Day," and send in the pledges you collect.
- The "Mean" Team Don't like picking a favorite? We can let you know the average or "mean" number of bird species from all the Birdathon teams.

2. Choose your per species pledge.

25 ¢ 50 ¢ \$1 dollar \$2 dollars Other amount _____

3. How may we contact you?

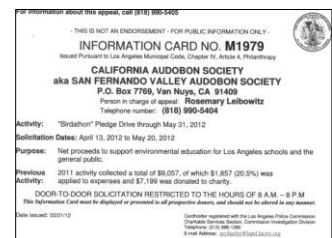
Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

4. **OR** send us a contribution now. You can designate it to a team leader if you wish. Make checks out to San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (SFVAS).
5. Send the completed pledge/contribution form to SFVAS, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769.
6. You can also DONATE to the Birdathon online at our Website www.sfvaudubon.org on the Treasurer's page.
7. To take part in a Birdathon Event check the Calendar Section, pages 5-6, for dates and meeting information.



For information about this Charitable Appeal please see our Website at www.sfvaudubon.org

Pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code, Chapter IV, Article 4, Philanthropy

April

Calendar of Events

Saturday, April 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, April 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@sfaudubon.org or (747) 444-9683.

Saturday, April 13. Clean-up of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area. 8:00—11:30 a.m. JOIN US! Volunteers needed for our 20th annual clean-up of Haskell Creek and the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. The Wildlife Area is on the east side of Woodley Ave. about a half mile north of Burbank Blvd. Turn east at the sign for the Japanese Garden (6100 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys, CA. 91406), stay to the right, and follow Wildlife Way toward the archery range for about a half mile to the last parking area. Meet at the amphitheater. See page 7 for more information on clothing and supplies.

Saturday, April 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, April 16. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m. Probable Species: 35-40. Directions: Take the 118/Ronald Reagan Freeway and exit at Balboa Blvd. Turn north, driving two miles to Sesnon, turn left going west 0.6 miles, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. **RAIN CANCELS.** Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m.), or carolyn.oppenheimer@sfaudubon.org.

Saturday, April 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, April 21. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Probable Species: 50. 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.

Wednesday, April 24. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Butterbredt Springs, Galileo Hills, and Piute Ponds. Probable species: 120. Meet at 5:30 a.m. at the McDonalds on Crown Valley Road in Acton, or 6:00 a.m. at the park-n-ride lot on the east side of Avenue S in Palmdale. We will then stop in Palmdale for a brief search for LeConte's Thrasher, then to Butterbredt Springs and onward to Galileo Hills, Piute Ponds and finish at Apollo Park in Lancaster. Leader: Jim Moore. Please advise Jim by e-mail, jim.moore@sfaudubon.com, if you plan to join him.

Thursday, April 25. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Join us at 7:00 p.m. for social time and shopping at our sales table. **TOPIC: The Natural History of Kern County. PRESENTER: Allison Sheehy.** 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. For more information see Monthly Program, page one.

Saturday, April 27. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Monthly Field Trip: Morongo Valley. 8:00 a.m. Probable Species: 65–70. This desert oasis offers great birding in the spring. Warblers, flycatchers, hummingbirds and orioles are among the birds expected. At least one pair of Vermilion Flycatchers has been seen every April in memory. Directions: Allow 2.5 hours to drive from the San Fernando Valley. Take Interstate 10 east to Route 62, which is past the Palm Springs turnoff. Go north to the tiny town of Morongo Valley and turn right on East Drive to the Big Morongo Preserve. Bring lunch and drinks. In the afternoon we will drive to Joshua Tree National Park to look for wildflowers, Scott's Orioles, Pinyon Jays, Brewer's and Black-throated Sparrows. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

May

Saturday, May 4. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–12:00 a.m. See April 6 for details.

Sunday, May 5. BIRDATHON EVENT. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Probable Species: 65-70. See April 7 for details.

Friday, May 10. THE "BIG SIT" BIRDATHON EVENT. Probable Species: 30. Please join Linda Jones at the first viewing area at the Wildlife Lake from 9–11 a.m. Bring a chair and join us at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve to help

raise money for youth activities. 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 right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant/Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Pledge form and more information can be found on page three.

Saturday, May 11. CHILDREN'S BIRDATHON EVENT. 9:00—11:00 a.m. Learn to identify birds and help support Audubon Youth Activities at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve! 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 right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant/Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Prizes will be given to the family/group that raises the most money. Pledge form and more information can be found on page four.

Saturday, May 11. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See April 13 for details.

Saturday, May 11. Monthly Field Trip: Walker Ranch and Whitney Canyon. 7:30 a.m. Meet at the Walker Ranch entrance. We will look for Costa's Hummingbird, Lazuli Bunting, flycatchers, warblers and much more. Directions: take the 405 Freeway or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon Road. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and proceed 3+ miles to the dirt parking area for Walker Ranch. We'll bird Walker Ranch in the morning, have lunch at Carl's Jr. just off the freeway in Newhall, then bird nearby Whitney

Canyon after lunch. Leader: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342. (Adventure Pass is NOT required for Walker Ranch and Whitney Canyon parking.)

Saturday, May 18. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00—10:00 a.m. See April 20 for details.

Sunday, May 19. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See April 21 for more details.

Monday, May 20. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Balboa Mission Town Hall, 16916 San Fernando Mission Blvd., at Balboa (southeast corner) in Granada Hills.


Tuesday, May 21. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m. See April 16 for details.

Thursday, May 23. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Join us at 7:00 p.m. for social time and shopping at our sales table. **Guest Speaker: Dave Collins. TOPIC: The Wildlife Photography of Dave Collins.** We will also hold our election for new board members. 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. For more information see Monthly Program, page one.

Future Field Trips (details later):

June 8. Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve

July 20. Mt. Pinos

August 17. Chilao 

Birds Can Save the World: Keynote Address at the San Diego Bird Festival

Presented by Dr. John Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell Lab of Ornithology —By Heather Medvitz


It was a pleasure to attend Dr. John Fitzpatrick's excellent and informative presentation on March 2, 2013 in San Diego. We were reminded of the rapid extinction of a number of bird species such as the Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet, and Eskimo Curlew. Dr. Fitzpatrick pointed out some of the rapid and recent declines in bird populations such as the Spoon-billed Sandpipers, of which there are only about 200 remaining and Indian Vultures, which had numbered 30 million not too long ago, but are now practically extinct. Our ability to track these rapid changes in bird populations is allowing us a brief window of time in which to try to affect environmental changes.

On a positive note, Dr. Fitzpatrick proposed a working hypothesis: Human cultures can grow side by side within an intact natural system. He states that birds can help get us there as they are the heartbeat of global annual cycles and they serve as models for how nature works. They help us listen to the world. Birds represent accessible and sensitive environmental indicators of environmental conditions and ecological change. To illustrate this, we have only to look back at Peregrines, Bald Eagles and Golden

Eagles, Brown and American White Pelicans that taught us that we were poisoning ourselves with DDT.

Today, thanks to the Internet and eBird, individual citizens have an opportunity to generate important population trend data. The use of eBird is growing from local to national to international, allowing individuals to serve as biosphere sensors. This data give us an opportunity to self-correct if we are willing to use it.

Dr. Fitzpatrick illustrated that by using eBird maps, one can review data on a particular species and learn trends. A bird's migratory movements from month to month can be tracked.

Project Feeder Watch and the Christmas Bird Count results are now tallied in eBird, combining information from all three sources into one stream. This greatly enhances our understanding of both trends in bird populations as well as changes in environmental conditions. If you're a birder not yet using eBird, I encourage you to start. eBird has online information on getting started, or if you're still feeling intimidated, ask an eBird user to help you get started. We have everything to gain from more participation in this user-friendly program. 

**20TH ANNUAL CLEAN-UP AT SEPULVEDA BASIN
WILDLIFE RESERVE
SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2013 - 8:00-11:30AM**

You can help protect local wildlife and enhance the pleasure of visiting the Wildlife Reserve. Please volunteer for San Fernando Valley Audubon's 20th annual spring cleanup at the Sepulveda Basin North Wildlife Reserve.

Haskell Creek, where it runs through lovely Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area, hosts many riparian trees and shrubs, such as cottonwoods and willows. Songbirds forage and nest in the trees, while egrets and herons fish in this heart of the Wildlife Area. Sadly it is infested with trash, including plastic bags and foam food containers. At the Wildlife Lake, abandoned fishing line and hooks create lethal hazards for birds. You can help change this.

This is often muddy and wet work, but satisfying. Please wear rugged clothing and shoes or rubber boots. If you have them, bring work gloves and long-handled tools to reach trash. We will have trash bags for you to use.

The Wildlife Area is on the east side of Woodley Ave. about a half mile north of Burbank Blvd. Turn east at the sign for the Japanese Garden (6100 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys, CA. 91406), stay to the right, and follow Wildlife Way toward the archery range for about a half mile to the last parking area. We will meet at the amphitheater behind the rock-faced buildings.

The event is appropriate for adults and older students. Students can get certificates and earn community service hours.

For more information phone Muriel Kotin at 310.457-5796 or Kris Ohlenkamp at 747.444-9683. **Rain cancels.**

Sponsored by San Fernando Valley Audubon. www.SFVAudubon.org

in conjunction with Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee

Above photo shows some of the trash in Haskell Creek on March 9, 2013, R. LeVine



Phainopepla Photo of the Month by Henry Bollinger



Our featured photo for this month is from Henry Bollinger of West Hills. He used a Fuji Fine Pix, S100FD with a Fujinon 12X zoom lens. He says:

"On January 25, 2013, while having breakfast I looked out our back sliding glass door in Woolsey Canyon in the Simi Hills and saw this Sharp-shinned Hawk sitting next to our bird feeder looking for his breakfast!"
Thanks, Henry!

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.



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)

Travel the flyway to the **Phainopepla Club** by recording your Los Angeles County bird sightings on **eBird** until June 20. Then submit a report of your sightings from July 2012–June 2013 and be acknowledged for your achievement!

Here's how to create a Year Report:

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. Send report to Diana Keeney at SFVAS, PO Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409 or e-mail to diana.keeney@sfvaudubon.org.
4. Reports received by June 20 will be acknowledged at the General Membership Meeting (Pot Luck) on June 27, 2013. 🐦

Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack, Photo by R. LeVine

An e-mailer recently wrote me curious about the swarms of hummingbirds devouring the sugar water she is putting out this time of year and it got me thinking about sharing some interesting things about hummers in the garden.

When preparing sugar water for them (1 cup of sugar to 4 cups of water), it's a good idea to use Baker's sugar instead of regular sugar. Because it's more finely ground, it dissolves in cold water so no heating is required. Red dye is unnecessary in a red colored feeder (and possibly harmful).

Hummers not only drink nectar, they also eat and collect bugs, especially during breeding season when bugs provide needed protein for growing nestlings. Did you know that hummers weave spider webs into their nests so that as the babies grow, the nest expands—kind of like Spandex? Despite that fact, with (typically) two nestlings becoming fledglings, one of them not uncommonly falls or gets pushed out of the nest. (This is common with other species too.)

And what to do if you find a baby bird on the ground? If it's an uninjured nestling, i.e., not fully feathered, try to put it back in its nest. If you can't find it or can't reach it, make an artificial nest from a small, e.g., cottage cheese, container, with some holes poked in the bottom and lined with some grass and tack it up as close to the original as you can put it. If it's an uninjured fledgling and there are no predators, e.g., cats, around, it can be moved to a sheltered spot. In both cases mother bird will hear its cries and feed it. If it's injured, it needs a rehabber's care.

As to the increased number of birds at her feeders, my consultants offer a number of possible explanations, such as a very successful breeding season last year, a loss of feeders and/or natural food sources in her neighborhood, or migrant hummers discovering her generosity. Whatever the cause, I hope she enjoys the show and doesn't go broke buying sugar!


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. 🐦



By the #'s: We have **231** friends on Facebook, **100+** members have opted out of snail mail, and **500+** members have given us e-mail addresses so that we can contact them and inform them when the *Phainopepla* is online. If you wish to do so, please e-mail us at sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com. 🐦

Monthly Field Trip Reports *by Richard Barth*

On January 19 we birded Orange County's Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Our species count for the day was eighty. Dunlin, Long-billed Curlew, American Avocet and Semipalmated Plover highlighted our shorebird list while waterfowl stand-outs were Redhead, Northern Pintail and Blue-winged Teal. Clapper Rails were heard by participant Dave Campbell before the walk began. A dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk gave us nice views low overhead. Other raptor sightings: Osprey, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel and Turkey Vulture. A bit unusual in Upper Newport Bay was a Pacific Loon. Tree Swallow was tallied, as was a single scarce-in-midwinter Barn Swallow. Other selected species of interest were White-faced Ibis, Black Skimmer, Belted Kingfisher, both pelicans, the expected five herons, Clark's Grebe, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and American Pipit.

On February 16 we were unable to do our planned birding at the Ventura County Game Preserve due to a scheduling miscommunication with the preserve manager. We instead birded Ventura Harbor and the Ventura Water Treatment Ponds, plus the Ormond Beach area. Our participants tallied sixty-two species. Loggerhead Shrike, Brant, Red-throated Loon, Blue-winged Teal, Red-breasted Merganser, Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird and Black Turnstone were good finds. Other birds of note included Horned Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, Willet, American Avocet, American Pipit, Tree Swallow, a probable Marsh Wren (heard), Savannah Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow. The Northern Harrier was in an attractive juvenile plumage—cinnamon underparts. 

Random Act of Birding Kindness

-by Tori Collender, original post on LACoBirds, reprinted with permission. Submitted by Muriel Kotin


On my way home I stopped by the Carpinteria Nature Preserve, made a loop through a dog friendly area. A well-groomed young man approached me with his dog.

He said, "Hey Birdwatcher, I'm sure you don't recognize me." He was right. "In 2006 you were at Harbor Park in Wilmington looking for some special bird, you had a Tilley hat and a smaller pair of binoculars." Definitely within the realm of possibility.

"I was living in the park and pointed you in a direction I'd seen people with binoculars. You had to pass me to get back to your car and you let me use

your binoculars to look at a bird, I told you I grew up in ranch country in Montana and liked to watch hawks." I did remember him.

He continued, "Looking at that little bird looking so big in the field glasses did something to me. I got straightened out. Been working the same place for four years and I'm getting a promotion next week. Thank you." The dog had had enough by that point and we parted company.

I almost always take my bins off to let bystanders try to see a bird. When I'm with other birders they often tell me I'm going to get ripped off someday. After today you better believe I'm going to keep letting people look through them. 

Board Nominations Announced *Submitted by the Nominations Committee: Pat Bates, Dottie Ecker and Muriel Kotin, Chair*

The Nominations Committee is pleased to announce the following slate of candidates to serve on the Board of Directors of San Fernando Valley Audubon Society for our 2013—2014 program year which begins on July 1, 2013.

Officers:

President: Dave Weeshoff

1st VP: Rose Leibowitz

2nd VP: Heather Medvitz

Treasurer: Pat Bates

Corresponding Secretary: Diana Keeney


Recording Secretary: Lynn Maddox

Board Members at Large:

3rd Year: Mark Osokow and Mathew Tekulsky (continuing)

2nd Year: Scott Logan (continuing) and Paula Orlovich

1st Year: Dave Collins and Ron Gotcher

Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor at the April 25 General Membership Meeting, provided such nomination receives the approval of the nominee and is supported by a written petition signed by five members of the Society. The election will be held at the May 23 meeting and installation will take place at the June 27 potluck meeting. We thank all SFVAS members who have served the chapter in any capacity. We invite those of you with an interest in becoming more active in chapter activities to let us know. 

THE AMERICAN CROW



I had been meaning to study the American Crow for quite some time, but somehow, I just never got around to it. Finally, I couldn't put it off any longer, so I headed out to Malibu Creek State Park in late December, in the hopes of attracting a few of these crows close enough to my camera so I could take a few good shots. My secret weapon: unshelled, unsalted, roasted peanuts.


I placed myself on the edge of a large, open field that lay in the center of a campground area. As always, there were about 15 crows hanging out at the deserted camping spots or in the trees, and every now and then, one of them would start cawing to the others. I dropped a few peanuts on the ground and returned to my camera, about 33 feet (ten meters) away.

The crows were extremely wary, and none of them approached anywhere near the peanuts. But they knew the food was there, because they started cawing to each other more actively. I pretended to leave the site by walking behind a large bush on the edge of the field, and suddenly, five or six of the crows flew directly over to the peanuts. I hurried back to my camera, hoping not to scare them off. Most flew off, but one or two aggressive ones remained near the peanuts and gradually strutted over to them, in that way crows walk.

After a while, the crows got used to me being there, and eventually, one of the more adventurous ones actually ate the entire peanut right in front of me, about 27 feet away. It takes a crow 17 or 18 pecks to extract one of the two peanut kernels from the shell—unlike the Common Raven, which pulverizes the peanut in two or three blows, or the Western Scrub-Jay, which might take seven or eight pecks before pulling the kernel out of the small hole he's made in the shell. I can only deduce from this that the crow's bill is too large to pick the kernel out of a small hole, and too small to pulverize the shell with a few good whacks. So he takes his time with the peanut, and believe me, he leaves nothing behind except a few pieces of the cast-off shell. (Like the scrub-jay, the crow holds the kernel with his foot and picks off pieces of the nut—unlike the raven, which swallows the kernel whole.)

At one point, the alpha crow strutted in front of me from left to right, with peanut in beak, and proceeded to press the peanut into the dirt until it disappeared. He was about 33 feet (ten meters) away from me. He then calmly walked back to the pile of peanuts, took another one, and flew off. I vowed that I could easily find this hidden peanut, but to no avail. I couldn't find it! Outsmarted by a crow, I thought. That's the way of the world.

Note: I learned that by walking over to the pile of peanuts and picking a few up and making a show out of dropping them again, I could entice a few of the crows toward the peanuts as I walked back to my camera. Sometimes, I just bent over the peanuts and pretended to be putting them down for the first time. Again, the crows flew over as soon as I turned my back on the pile. Maybe they thought I was taking the peanuts for myself. No matter. The crows had the last laugh. They ate all of my peanuts, and I left with an empty container.


—Article and photo by *Mathew Tekulsky*, SFFAS Board Member. Mathew is currently working on a book for Skyhorse Publishing entitled *Backyard Bird Photography: How to Attract Birds to Your Home and Create Beautiful Photographs*. 



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Save the dates of April 26—28th for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. For more information, visit: www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. 

Latest on Sepulveda Basin

SFFAS, with regards to the destruction at the Sepulveda Basin, is continuing its on-going discussions with the Army Corps of Engineers, the appropriate regulatory agencies, and legislators. Progress continues to be made each week. For the latest information, updates, links, and relevant documents please go to our Website www.sfvaudubon.org. 



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

www.SFVAudubon.org



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

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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@sfvaudubon.org.

Phainopepla

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2013 Audubon Convention / July 12-15

Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, Washington

For more information and to receive e-mail updates visit www.audubon.org/2013convention.

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:

Simone Best
Jody Church
Mary Gover
Gail Haney
James Quinn
John Moroney
Dennis Real
Herbert Ruderman
Ann Shabty
Carolyn West

National:

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Marilyn Aninger
Mary Armes
Jonathan Bagg
Regina Barnett
Carrick Bartle
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Dee Batis
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Meighan Blaine
Gail Brady
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Gayle Brohner

Glen Christensen
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Creta Council
Deborah Czech
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Gabor Danzi
Mark Dappen
Pat Davis
Gerald & Linda De Vita
Carole Dick
Janice Dougall
Jerry Ellingson
Martha Escruceria
Cheryl Foster
Lemuel & Victoria Franco
Anita Frost
Scott Ganyo
Carol Gillette
Susan Gillette
William Gorham
Victoria Guagliardo
Kathleen Hager
Julie Hamburg
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Mary Heiss
Jim Houghton

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Stacie Hutter
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Janice Kisch
Saisamorn Kon
Molly Laubenstein
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Patricia Lee
Linda Little
Phyllis Losie
Steven Louie
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Georgia Luisi
Lawrence Margo
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