



# Phainopepla

Published by the

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

*A Chapter of the National Audubon Society*

Vol. 64 No. 6

December 2013 / January 2014

## Monthly Programs

### SFVAS General Membership Meeting

Thursday, December 26, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Encino Community Center

### Topic: BIRDER'S: THE CENTRAL PARK EFFECT

In addition to viewing this fascinating film about the network of birders in Central Park, we will hear a brief overview of the results of the December 21 Christmas Bird Count.

### December 21 CBC Counters:

We will meet to share pizza, information, and counts at 5:00 p.m. at a valley location on December 21. Details will be sent to you by Jim Moore or otherwise look for a few lines on our Website and/or Facebook page.

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 4–5, for directions.

*Young elephant seals spar on the rookery at Point Piedras Blancas.  
Photo © Bernardo Alps/PHOTOCETUS. All rights reserved.*

Thursday, January 23, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Encino Community Center

Speaker: Bernardo Alps

Topic: The Birds and Mammals of Coastal San Luis Obispo County

San Luis Obispo County boasts 80 miles of diverse coastline ranging from white sandy beaches to rugged cliffs, much of it protected as state, county and local parks. Being situated



almost equidistant between the major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and San Francisco, it is relatively unspoiled and offers world class wildlife viewing opportunities.

The County bird species list stands at 455 and rarities show up often. Some recent visitors have included Ivory Gull, Arctic Loon, Black Vulture, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Brown Booby and Crested Caracara. There are also excellent whale watching opportunities in the area, southern sea otters are easy to find and seals and sea lions are everywhere. The northern elephant seal rookery at Point Piedras Blancas near Hearst Castle makes for an easily accessible wildlife spectacle that compares favorably with the most famous destinations on the planet.

Bernardo is a Research Associate at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro and a Seabird Field Technician for Point Blue Conservation Science (formerly Point Reyes Bird Observatory). He is also a social media consultant and an accomplished wildlife photographer. Bernardo is volunteer naturalist with the Cabrillo Whalewatch program and an animal care volunteer at the Marine Mammal Care Center at Fort MacArthur.





# 2013 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

## Saturday, December 21, 2013

### Birders Needed!

This year the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society will once again join chapters across the country and in North and South America, Hawaii, and the Caribbean to take part in the National Audubon Society's 114<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count.

The initial San Fernando Valley CBC was held in 1957 and this will represent our 56<sup>th</sup> successive CBC. Over the years there have been some interesting changes in bird populations in the count circle as it has transitioned into a more suburban area. Last year, thanks to helpful weather and the 42 counters, we tallied 140 species, our highest total since 1995, but well short of our record count of 160 species in 1993. To approach that record, we need more birders joining established count sectors.

Extensive birding experience is not a prerequisite, only a willingness to come out and count—wind, rain, or shine. Those unable to join one of the count groups may assist by noting species and numbers of birds at backyard feeders, local parks, and neighborhoods provided such counts take place within a 7.5 mile radius circle from the count center at the intersection of Balboa and Nordhoff. Please report all such counts along with the time spent observing to the compiler by post, or e-mail ([jimmoore@socal.rr.com](mailto:jimmoore@socal.rr.com)) no later than and preferably before January 14, 2014.

Count participation is FREE and open to all. Traditional count sectors are listed below.

#### **Hansen Dam and Vicinity. Meeting time: 7:00 AM**

From the intersection of Osborne and Glenoaks, go north on Osborne to Dronfield (signal), turn right on Dronfield and enter park. Proceed downhill to large parking lot. Look for counters with binoculars. Bring lunch, drink, and be prepared to walk. Leader: Jim Moore, [jimmoore@socal.rr.com](mailto:jimmoore@socal.rr.com) or (661) 317-1600.

#### **Bee Canyon and O'Melveny Park. Meeting time: 8:00 AM**

From the intersection of Balboa and Rinaldi, go north to Balboa and Sesnon. Turn left (west) on Sesnon and continue 1/2 mile. Park is on the right. Meet in the parking lot. Leaders: Ron Melin, [er2melin@gmail.com](mailto:er2melin@gmail.com) & Tracy Drake, [t Drake@torranceca.gov](mailto:t Drake@torranceca.gov).

#### **Sepulveda Wildlife Basin & Lake Balboa. Meeting time: 7:30 AM**

Meet in the parking lot east of Woodley Avenue, north of Burbank Blvd. and south of the Tillman Water Treatment Plant. Bring lunch, drink. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp, [kris.ohlenkamp@sfaudubon.org](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sfaudubon.org).

#### **Limekiln Canyon. Meeting time: 8:00 AM**

Meet on the south side of Chatsworth Street, a half block west of Tampa. Park on the north side of the street. Leader: Carolyn Oppenheimer, [carolyn.oppenheimer@sfaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfaudubon.org).

#### **Pierce College. Meeting time 8:00 AM**

Meet at the corner of Victory Blvd and DeSoto. Leader: John Lobel, [john.lobel@gmail.com](mailto:john.lobel@gmail.com).

#### **Chatsworth Reservoir. Meeting time 8:00 AM**

This sector is tentative, pending approval by DWP. Check with the leader before showing up. Meet at the gate on Valley Circle Blvd., just west of the junction of Plummer and Valley Circle Blvd. Leader: Art Langton, [wrentit@att.net](mailto:wrentit@att.net).

#### **Bull Creek & west of Balboa Park. Meeting time 8:30 AM**

Enter the park at the entrance road on the east side of Balboa Blvd, south of Victory Blvd. Meet in the small, paved handicapped and bus parking area in the dirt overflow parking lot between Balboa Blvd and Lake Balboa. Leader: Allan and Muriel Kotin, [akotin@earthlink.net](mailto:akotin@earthlink.net).

#### **Reseda Park & Los Encinos State Historic Park. Meeting time 8:00 AM**

Meet in the parking off Victory Blvd, at the east end of Reseda Park. Leader: Pat Bates, [pat.bates@sfaudubon.org](mailto:pat.bates@sfaudubon.org).

#### **Chatsworth Park, Oakwood Cemetery & other nearby parks. Meeting time 7:00 AM**

Meet at McDonalds on the corner of Roscoe and Topanga. Leader: Jim Hardesty, [jnhardesty@att.net](mailto:jnhardesty@att.net).

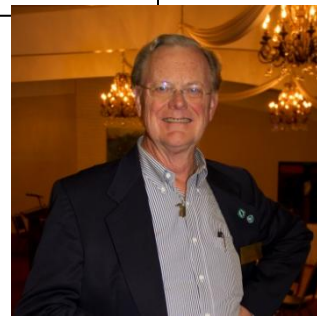


## Annual Awards Banquet

The Annual Awards Banquet was held at the Encino Golf Course on November 8. *LA Times* reporter, Louis Sahagun was presented the 2013 Conservation Award, by Kris Ohlenkamp. Guest Speaker Rosi Dagit gave a wonderful slideshow presentation regarding Antarctic penguins and Steelhead Trout. Thanks to Ann Ohlenkamp, for coordinating the Silent Auction and chairing this event and to Carolyn Oppenheimer, who again outdid herself on the raffle baskets. Thanks to everyone who came early to set up including, Diana Keeney, Pat Bates, and Rebecca LeVine. A delightful evening was had by all. Photos are by Mathew Tekulsky.



Photos clockwise: Ann Ohlenkamp; Kris Ohlenkamp & Louis Sahagun; Rosi Dagit; Mathew Tekulsky; Donna Timlin; Dave Weeshoff, guests, Alan Pollack, Carolyn Oppenheimer; Rebecca LeVine; Diana Keeney & Pat Bates.





## Calendar of Events

### December

**Sunday, December 1. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at [kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org) or (747) 444-9683.

**Saturday, December 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.

**Saturday, December 14. Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** Come on out for a fun bird walk at Sepulveda Basin! These popular walks, designed for beginning birders and school-age children, have resumed for the current cool season. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Diana Keeney, (818) 998-3216. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. **Rain cancels.** Please visit our website [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, December 14. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and continue about 1.5 miles to the park entrance. Turn right and park at the Nature Center. Various leaders. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

**Sunday, December 15. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton.

**Tuesday, December 17. Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 118/Ronald Reagan Freeway and exit at Balboa Blvd. Turn north, driving two miles to Sesnon, turn left going west 0.6 miles, turn right at

park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. **RAIN CANCELS.** Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m.), or [carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, December 21. 114<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count.** Join us to count birds for the 114<sup>th</sup> Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, see page two for times and locations. Afterwards we will meet to share pizza, information, and counts at 5:00 p.m. at a valley location. Details will be sent to you by Jim Moore or otherwise look for a few lines on our Website and/or Facebook page.

**Saturday, December 21. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** Directions: Go north on I-5 through Santa Clarita, exit Calgrove and turn west (left) under the freeway and then left again on the Old Road. Watch for the sign, "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon." Turn right and park in the back lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 252-6187.

**Thursday, December 26. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino. Located between Moorpark and Ventura Blvd., on the west side of Balboa, just south of the Presbyterian Church. **TOPIC: BIRDER'S: THE CENTRAL PARK EFFECT.** In addition to viewing this fascinating film about the network of birders in Central Park, we will hear a brief overview of the results of the December 21 Christmas Bird Count. For more information see Monthly Program, page one.

### January

**Saturday, January 4. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–12:00 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 at (661) 257-4050.

**Sunday, January 5. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at [kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org) or (747) 444-9683.

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

cool season. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Diana Keeney, (818) 998-3216. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. **Rain cancels.** Please visit our website [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org).

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**Saturday, January 18. Monthly Field Trip: Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary 8:00 a.m.** Bring lunch and drinks. Allow about 1.5 hours driving time from the San Fernando Valley. Directions: Take the 405 Fwy. south into Orange County; exit Jamboree Road in the city of Irvine. Turn right (south) on Jamboree Road and proceed about 4 miles to San Joaquin Hills Road, turn right and drive down to the bay. Park on San Joaquin Hills Road just before the dead end. In the afternoon we will bird the nearby San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, January 18. 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, January 19. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton.

**Tuesday, January 21. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 118/Ronald Reagan Freeway and exit at Balboa Blvd. Turn north, driving two miles to Sesnon, turn left going west 0.6 miles, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. **RAIN CANCELS.** Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m.), or [carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org).

**Thursday, January 23. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino. Located between Moorpark and Ventura Blvd., on the west side of Balboa, just south of the Presbyterian Church. **TOPIC: The Birds and Mammals of Coastal San Luis Obispo County. PRESENTER: Bernardo Alps.** For more information see Monthly Program, page one.

**Monday, January 27. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Balboa Mission Town Hall, 16916 San Fernando Mission Blvd., at Balboa (southeast corner) in Granada Hills.

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

**There will be no Monthly Field Trip in December due to the Christmas Bird Count**

**February 15. Ventura County Game Preserve**

**March 15–16. Morro Bay Weekend**



## **Phainopepla Photo of the Month by Gwendolyn Logan**



Gwendolyn Logan, 13, recently took a photo of this California Towhee in Franklin Canyon Park, using a Nikon D200 with Nikon 80-200mm lens. While waiting to go on a bird walk around the lake, she noticed a towhee fighting its reflection in a parked car's mirror. This image captured the bird resting in-between bouts. According to Scott Logan, many bird species have a strong sense of territory; if one of these birds accidentally sees its image in a reflective surface such as a window or a mirror, it perceives its reflection as a competitor and attempts to drive the "other" bird away.

Please submit your photos to [Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org). One picture per photographer per month, preferably of a native bird in our local area. Please include location, date, camera and lens info, a short account of how the photo was taken, and a profile of the photographer. Let us see your bird photos! Thanks, Lynn



## Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack

*Correcting a statement I made in last issue...After seeing some woolly yarrow and talking with Bob Sussman at Matilija Nursery, I realized that it is NOT a useful variety for mowing and using as a lawn replacement. Other varieties of Achillea millefolium, e.g., 'Island Pink' are more suitable.*

### The next chapter in gardening for wildlife...

#### Feed me.....feed me

This issue's article and the next issue's article will be about the basic elements needed for creating a wildlife habitat in your yard. Wildlife needs just about the same things that we humans need for survival: food, water, shelter and places to raise young. Of course we humans have some additional requirements—like our morning latte—first, then, is food.

Plants are the best source of food for (non-predatory) animals. They provide seeds, nuts, berries, nectar, foliage, and attract insects which are also part of the diet of many critters. Since critters may forage for food in specific locations (on the ground, in low shrubs and flowers, in tall brush and trees), it's wise to have food sources in all those locales. By providing a diverse plant community in your garden, you are most likely to achieve a balanced eco-system that will sustain itself. Plant sources can be supplemented with feeders of various types. Bird feeders should be cleaned regularly, placed where predators can be observed approaching and close to protective shelter should escape be needed.

Critters need water for drinking and bathing. Water sources can vary between the very simple and the very complex,

depending on your preferences, location and budget. A shallow dish or hollow rock sitting on a stump or hung in a tree is easily provided. Bird baths and water fountains require a bit more effort. Birds will come to still water, but are especially drawn to dripping or moving water. Birds need only about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep water, so if your water container is deep, adding some rocks will provide a standing surface for short-legged birds. Water will need to be changed at intervals so that it is clean. Clorox can be used to eliminate algae build up. More elaborate water features include streams and ponds, either natural (if you're lucky!) or man-made. These, of course, require more expense and care. With any source of water, care must be taken to avoid providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes, the carriers of West Nile Virus and other diseases. Mosquitoes can't breed in moving water. With still water during mosquito season, changing it often, adding fish, or mosquito dunks (a larvicide which does not harm other animals, available at garden nurseries) will eliminate the problem.

So, to borrow from a baseball phrase—feed and water them and they will come! Alan Pollack, M.D.

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](mailto:alan.pollack@sfvaudubon.org).



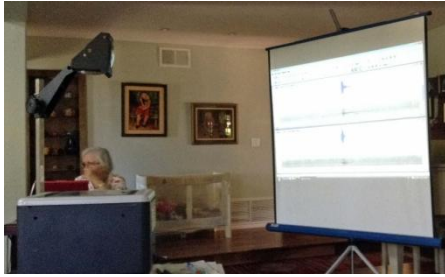
## Monthly Field Trip Reports by Richard Barth

On September 21 we visited two popular Huntington Beach birding spots, Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Huntington Central Park featured a previously-reported rare Blackpoll Warbler, fairly well seen by most of our group. Another recently-found rarity, a Yellow-green Vireo, was briefly observed by some of us at nearby John Baca Park. Our HCP list included Sora, Common Gallinule, Great Horned Owl, Red-shouldered Hawk, Bullock's Oriole, Hutton's Vireo, Western Wood-Pewee, Western Bluebird, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Exotics on hand were Pin-tailed Whydah, Orange Bishop and Nutmeg Mannikin. In addition to the Blackpoll, our warblers were Yellow, Orange-crowned, Townsend's, Wilson's and Common Yellowthroat. While searching for the Yellow-green Vireo at Baca Park we picked up Warbling Vireo. Highlights from Bolsa Chica proper and from the Harriett Wieder Park outlooks were Reddish Egret, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Cattle Egret and Belding's Savannah Sparrow. Other species of interest: Northern Harrier, Osprey, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Forster's Tern, Royal Tern, American Kestrel, and Say's Phoebe.

We birded El Dorado Park in Long Beach on October 19. Probably the bird of the day was a cooperative Tropical Kingbird, well seen by all and easily photographed. Brewer's Sparrow was an unexpected find and Judy Matsuoka got a photo of a Vesper Sparrow which we had overlooked in the Savannah flocks. Also of note on the walk was a Lincoln's Sparrow. Warblers present were Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned, Townsend's, Common Yellowthroat and a late-ish Yellow. Our raptor list featured Merlin, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Turkey Vulture. We saw Hermit Thrush, American Robin and many Western Bluebirds. Other species of interest: Western Meadowlark, American Pipit, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Flicker, Cassin's Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, Green Heron, and Black-necked Stilt.



## **Bird Sounds Workshop, October 5, 2013** by Rose Leibowitz




A lively and informative workshop entitled “An Introduction to Bird Sounds” was given by Sylvia Gallagher of Sea and Sage Audubon to fifteen of our members. She started by reminding us that ‘bird sounds’ does not just mean vocalizations! Among the examples of other sounds to be aware of were Woodpeckers drumming on trees, beaks knocking on seeds to break them open, Ruddy Ducks slapping their breasts with their bills when going across water, and sounds that birds make with their feathers in flight.

She offered us a new vocabulary to describe sounds birds make. She talked about amplitude (volume), pitch (high, low or varied), inflection (slurring up or down) and tone quality (clear versus harsh sounds for example). She used many recordings of bird sounds as examples to help us begin to train our ears.

Using Raven Lite, a program that can be downloaded free from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Website, Sylvia demonstrated how it is possible to see amplitude, inflection, rhythm of vocalizations and changes in pitch on the sonogram.

The learning curve was steep, but we all felt that we had embarked on a new way of listening to birds and have been given beginning tools to better appreciate and identify what we hear around us.

A big thanks to Sylvia for coming up from Orange County for the class and to Heather Medvitz for hosting it in her home.

I have now downloaded the program onto my computer and have started to use it in conjunction with CDs of bird sounds. So far, I have explored the sonograms of familiar songs and have found it beneficial to learning them to ‘see’ as well as hear! 

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## **Bird Banding Workshops at Starr Ranch Spring 2014**

### **Beginning & Advanced Banding Workshops March 8—9 and March 15—16**

Audubon California’s 4000-acre Starr Ranch Sanctuary in southeast Orange County invites you to our spring bird banding workshops for adults. Starr Ranch Bird Observatory runs two long-term bird monitoring programs, one in winter and one during breeding season in spring and summer. We operate mist nets throughout the winter in order to examine the over-winter survivorship of migrant and resident bird populations on the ranch. The MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) breeding season bird banding station is part of an international network of over 500 stations examining breeding bird populations. Because of the specialized nature of these workshops, we are asking that only serious students and potential Starr Ranch bird banding volunteers attend. The workshops will be taught by ornithologist Megan Garfinkel, a North American Banding Council (NABC) certified bird bander who has run three banding stations.

**Beginning Bird Banding Workshop** – This workshop is for those with little or no bird banding experience. Participants will learn mist-net set-up and operation and practice extracting songbirds from nets. They will learn how to hold, band, and take measurements on birds in the hand. Afternoon discussions will focus on bird identification, banding safety and ethics.


**Dates and Times:** March 8-9, 7:30 AM – 3:30 PM daily

**Cost:** \$160 or \$165 if camping (BYO lunch, morning coffee & bagels provided)

**Advanced Bird Banding Workshop** – This workshop is for more experienced banders who want to take their skills to the next level. Participants will focus mainly on advanced ageing and sexing of birds in the hand by plumage. Afternoon discussions will focus on detailed analysis and understanding of the molt cycle and bird plumage characteristics, as well as advanced use of the Pyle guide.

**Dates and Times:** March 15-16, 7:30 AM – 3:30 PM daily

**Cost:** \$160 or \$165 if camping (BYO lunch, morning coffee & bagels provided)

**Reservations and Questions:** Megan Garfinkel, [mbgarfinkel@gmail.com](mailto:mbgarfinkel@gmail.com); (949) 858-0309. 



## Other Birding News and Events



### Where are You on the Flyway to the Phainopepla Club?

Swallow	(50 species)
Finch	(100)
Vireo	(150)
Avocet	(200)
<b>Phainopepla Club!</b>	<b>(250)</b>

For the second year in a row, SFVAS has issued a birding challenge to its members to record their Los Angeles County bird sightings from July 2013 to June 2014 on **eBird** and travel the flyway to the **Phainopepla Club!**

If you're not already an **eBirder**, set up your account at [www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org). Then record your LA County sightings for inclusion in the final species count you will submit in June 2014. The common species and the rarities all count toward your final tally.

At our General Membership meeting in October, David Bell informed us how the biodiversity data captured on **eBird** can drive good conservation decisions over the upcoming decades.

Four SFVAS members achieved the coveted Phainopepla Club status last year! And fourteen other members were recognized for their progress toward that goal. Where will you be on the Phainopepla Club Flyway when the year ends in June?



*Ithaca, NY*—The BirdSpotter photo contest launched on November 6. The contest is sponsored by [Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods](http://www.bobsredmill.com) and offers weekly prizes for the photos that receive the most votes on the [contest website](http://www.birdspotter.com).

BirdSpotter is being run through the Project FeederWatch citizen-science project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. FeederWatch participants keep track of their feeder birds from November through April and report what they see online. This information helps scientists learn more about the changes in bird distribution and population numbers in North America over time.

Each Wednesday from November 6 through February 12, a new BirdSpotter photo theme will be posted, such as "birds in flight" or "birds eating." You can upload one entry per week and then vote for your favorite photo. The winner will be announced on Monday morning. Each weekly winner receives a package of Bob's Red Mill products and gifts from the Cornell Lab.

Voting for the top three photos from among all the weekly winners begins February 19. The grand prize winner gets a trip for two to Oregon to go birding with Bob, tour the Red Mill, and collect other great prizes.

See full contest rules and the list of prizes on the [contest website](http://www.birdspotter.com). You don't have to be a Project FeederWatch participant to enter—but if you do [sign up for the project](http://www.birdspotter.com) you'll be joining tens of thousands of other FeederWatchers who report their feeder visitors to help scientists learn more

about your favorite backyard birds. Visit [www.FeederWatch.org](http://www.FeederWatch.org).

### San Diego Bird Festival

February 27—March 2, 2014 at Marina Village at Mission Bay Park, San Diego, CA.



Friday's banquet keynote speaker will be James Currie, host of Nikon's Birding Adventures on NBC Sports Network. His passion for birding, adventure and remote cultures has taken him to nearly every corner of the globe. An

expert and an adventurer, he has been featured as a special guest and consultant in film, television, radio and print media. We are proud to have Mr. Currie at our festival as a speaker and field trip leader.



Our special Festival guest is Denver Holt, founder and president of the Owl Research Institute. Mr. Holt has researched owls in North and Central America since 1978, publishing about 90 papers and technical documents, including *Birds of North America*, and *The Handbook of the Birds of the World*, Volume 5, covering 189

species of the world's owls. His work with Snowy Owls has been featured in *National Geographic Magazine* and on television. He will be leading two owling trips and present a luncheon talk.

Up-to-the-minute information is available at [www.sandiegoaudubon.org](http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org).



## Raptors: Ospreys and Eagles

By Heather Medvitz

In 1972 an agreement was signed to outlaw the use of the pesticide DDT as its use was associated with a marked decline in the population of a number of bird species; notably, Ospreys, Bald Eagles, Brown Pelicans, Peregrine Falcons and several others. Birds that eat high on the food chain such as those subsisting primarily on fish and other birds tend to be most affected. The accumulation of pesticides in insects gets multiplied in the bodies of insectivorous birds. Rains wash pesticide residue into the water shed, bringing it to all the oceans, rivers, lakes and streams. These pesticides accumulate in the bodies of fish that are eaten by birds, raising their pesticide levels dangerously high. The result of DDT use was the thinning of egg shells in many species of birds which prevented young from being hatched. The impact was seen in a number of species such as the Bald Eagle and the Peregrine Falcon. In 1963 there were fewer than 500 pairs of Bald Eagles and in 1975 there were only 39 breeding pairs of Peregrine Falcons left.

In 1996 the Bald Eagle was down listed from endangered to threatened due to its increased numbers. We are now seeing greatly increased numbers of Brown Pelicans, other sea birds and many raptors that had been adversely affected. Once again, our wildlife served as bellwethers warning us of problems in the environment.



The **Osprey**, *Pandion haliaetus*, is a highly specialized bird, designed to dive for fish. In one taxonomy it is in a group of its own, in another it is grouped with kites in *Accipitridae*, while a third group of ornithologists believe it belongs with eagles. It is nearly the size of an eagle, 22-25" long, with long legs and wings and is usually found near water. Its

feet are adapted for catching fish in that its outer toes are reversible. The osprey circles and hovers above the water until it spots a fish, whereupon it dives, bringing its feet forward just before hitting the water and dives talons first, often completely immersing itself in water. Its diet consists

almost completely of fish which it catches live and transports head first and belly down.



Osprey photos by Richard Medvitz

When seen flying, the Osprey is often confused with gulls because it flies with angled wings like a gull with wrists projecting forward and hands curving back and down. The adult and juvenile Ospreys differ markedly in appearance. The adults have a white head with a dark brown central crown, black-brown median stripes and a black line running through the bright yellow eye. The back of the head shows a shaggy crest and the upper body is a solid dark brown. The immature bird differs from the adult in that it has white-tipped secondaries and tail which are visible in flight from above or below and can also be seen when perched.

Range: The Osprey is very wide spread and can be found on all continents except Antarctica.

**California Eagles:** For purposes of this article, only the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle will be covered as no other eagles are found in California and in fact, the Bald Eagle is the only eagle unique to North America. The **Bald Eagle**, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, 31-37" long, has a wingspan of 6' or more for the male and up to 8' for the female. Like the Osprey, it is a fish eating raptor, particularly during its breeding season. Unlike the diving Osprey, the Bald Eagle flies low along the water to catch fish that are swimming close to the surface. Its talons sweep in a low arc, coming up with the fish. It does not immerse its body in water. It will also pirate fish from an Osprey, but it has a more diverse diet which can include carrion and water fowl. Bald Eagles will hunt puddle ducks and can fly after flocks rising up from the water, easily picking one out of the air. They sometimes find a perch where they will remain and entire day, conserving energy while watching for prey. The bird mates for life and lives about 28 years in the wild and up to 36 years in captivity. The adults (*continued next page*)

spend one to three months building the nest prior to egg laying.

The adult Bald Eagle is easy to spot with its white head and tail and bright yellow bill. Both adults and juveniles have very large bills and short tails. Their feet and stubby legs are yellow and when perched, the wingtips do not reach the tip of the tail. The youngest juveniles are dark brown overall and can be confused with Golden Eagles. In years two and three they usually show quite a lot of white on the belly making their appearance ore suggestive of the Osprey.



Bald Eagle photo by Dave Weeshoff.

Range: Canada, Alaska and areas throughout the United States adjacent to bodies of water. Santa Cruz Island has newly reintroduced birds in the past decade.

The **Golden Eagle**, *Aquila chrysaetos*, 30-40" long with a wingspan of 80-88", hunts over open terrain, catching small mammals, snakes, birds and carrion. The Golden Eagle is our largest U.S. raptor and it can dive at speeds in excess of 150 miles per hour. The name "Golden" refers to the crown and nape coloring which does not change color throughout the life of the bird, although sun can cause some fading of the feathers. Since this golden feature can even be seen on immature birds, it is important in helping distinguish them from immature Bald Eagles.

Golden Eagles are among the "booted eagles," as their legs are feathered to the toes and they are often seen soaring or gliding. They resemble smaller buteos in flight but have proportionally longer wings. (Buteos are high-soaring hawks with broad wings and relatively short tails.) The Golden Eagle often soars with its wings slightly uplifted on a slight dihedral (V-shape) giving it an appearance that can be confused with the Turkey Vulture, but the Golden Eagle has relatively shallow, small wing beats, whereas the Turkey Vulture has slow, deep wing beats. The underside of the juvenile Golden Eagle in flight shows fairly discrete white wing patches at the base of the primaries and a whitish tail base. Compare this to the juvenile Bald Eagle's whitish feathers on the under wing coverts and axillaries.



Like Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles are monogamous and may mate for life. Their primary North American range includes the Western U.S. and Mexico. Those found in Alaska and Canada migrate south for the winter but those in the U.S. remain in their territories. A pair may govern a territory as large as 60 square miles.

Future articles will include information on Accipiters and Kites.

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We now have **591** people who receive notification by e-mail when the *Phainopepla* is online, **144** of them have opted to only receive it online and save us the paper and postage. **286** people are following us on Facebook. If you wish to be notified when the *Phainopepla* is online, please e-mail us at [svfadubonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:sfvadubonsociety@gmail.com).

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

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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*.

Material from other newsletters or newspapers should include the source and date. Copy for the *PHAINOPEPLA* should be in the hands of the editor by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

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

National Audubon Society  
Membership Data Center  
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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](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org).





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## Membership

A big thank you to the National Members who responded to last month's article by becoming local members too!

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

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