



Phainopepla

Published by the

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Vol. 65 No. 6

December 2014 / January 2015

Monthly Programs

Join us on December 20 for the Annual Christmas Bird Count followed by an End of the Day Gathering and Bird Count Pot Luck

Calling all counters and non-counters...Come join us for a get together at a member's home in Studio City. Meet the counting teams and individuals. If you've birded the morning or haven't birded that day, you are encouraged to bring a side dish to share. We'll tally bird counts for the day and have some appetizers, pizza, meatballs and gravy, and various side dishes. **All-day birders aren't expected to bring a dish to share...**we'll treat you! Coffee and hot apple cider will be provided. You are welcome to bring your own beverage of choice. We'll need a head-count so you will be sent the address and directions when you RSVP at SFVAudubonSociety@gmail.com. **Starting time: 5:30 p.m.**

NOTE: Thursday, December 25, 2014. No General Membership Meeting.

Thursday, January 22, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

Encino Community Center

Speaker: Dave Weeshoff

Topic: Audubon and Global Warming

"The greatest threat our birds face today is global warming."—Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham

Dave Weeshoff, SFVAS's Conservation Chair, will review the background and contents of the critically important 2014 National Audubon Report regarding Birds and Climate Change, including the report preparation, contents, results, and ways each of us can help protect our birds locally and nationally.

Using decades of Christmas Bird Count Observations and Breeding Bird Surveys, the Audubon Science Team created a

database of birds and their ranges, and forecast the results of various long-term climate change scenarios into future. The results are disheartening given current estimates of warming in the next few decades. Of the 588 bird species examined in the study, 314 are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe declines by 2050, and a further 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if global warming is allowed to erase the havens birds occupy today.

Climate is the most fundamental factor that determines birds' ability to thrive. While there are other factors—over hunting, habitat loss, etc.—that affect the health of the populations, birds can bounce back if the conditions are changed. But if the climate changes so much that the birds can no longer survive, they can't come back at all. And that includes changes in either their summer or winter ranges, or both.

Come hear the facts and the details, and make up your mind as to how you want to help mitigate the effects and change the prognostications.

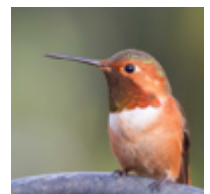


These photographs are of two the birds we have in California that National Audubon has made predictions about.

Burrowing Owl photograph by Dave Collins. This small raptor is expected to

lose 68 percent of its breeding range by 2050.

Allen's Hummingbird photograph by Richard Medvitz. By 2050 this hummer is projected to lose 67 percent of its current breeding range. Suitable climatic conditions will shift from the coast inland. However, we don't know if the nectar this bird needs will be available there.





2014 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, December 20, 2014

Birders Needed

Once again this year, the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society will join chapters across the country and in North and South America, Hawaii, and the Caribbean to take part in the National Audubon Society's 115th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC).

The initial San Fernando Valley CBC was held in 1957 and this will represent our 57th successive CBC. Over the years there have been some interesting changes in bird populations in the count circle as the valley has transitioned into a more suburban area. Last year, thanks to helpful weather and the 42 counters, we tallied 145 species, our highest total since 1994, 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 Jim Moore by post, or e-mail (jimmoore@socal.rr.com) no later than and preferably before January 14, 2015.

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 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 & Tracy Drake, tdrake@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@sbcglobal.net.

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: Rose Leibowitz, roselbirds@gmail.com.

Pierce College. Meeting time: 8:00 AM. Meet at the corner of Victory Blvd. and DeSoto Ave. Leader: John Lobel, 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.

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.

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, batesbird@gmail.com.

Chatsworth Park, Oakwood Cemetery & nearby parks. Meeting time: 7:00 AM. Meet at McDonalds on the corner of Roscoe and Topanga. Leader: Jim Hardesty, jnhardesty@att.net.

Veterans and El Cariso Parks. Meeting time: 7:00 AM. These birdy parks have traditionally been covered by Doug Martin, who recently moved away. Volunteers are needed to cover this area. Tentative leader is Dick Norton, n6aa@arri.org.

Wilson Canyon and nearby parks in the northeast section. Meeting time: 7:30 AM. Meet at the parking lot up the hill from the entrance to Wilson Canyon on Olive View Drive. Leader: Judy Matsuoka, judy.matsuoka@sbcglobal.net.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: A Historical Perspective *by Jim Moore*

- This will mark the 115th National Audubon CBC
- The San Fernando Valley CBC was started in 1957.
- This represents the 57 successive year of our count.
- 257 species have been recorded during the history of the count.
- We recorded the most species in 1993 – 160. (Last year – 145)
- The most individuals recorded were 65,644 in 1966.

This included 21,000 House Finches, 12,000 House Sparrows and 10,000 Brown Headed Cowbirds, and 10,000 White-crowned Sparrows

Population trends have changed over the years, most likely due to a reduction in natural habitat caused by a change in usage from residential, with substantial agriculture in the early years to mostly residential with substantial urban development now. Bird populations have also changed throughout the broader area.

Some early recordings, most likely extirpated from our area include:

- Ring-neck Pheasant, last recorded in 1988
- Spotted Dove, last recorded in 2003, with as many as 23 in 1993.
- Cactus Wren, last recorded in 1993

Birds showing a substantial decline in count include:

- Golden Eagle, not recorded since 1995
- Long-billed Dowitcher, not recorded since 2005, with early counts as high as 75
- California Gull, with four early counts in the thousands. I expect these are now undercounted.
- Prairie Falcon, not recorded since 1995
- Horned Lark, not recorded since 1997, with 570 counted in 1970.
- Tri-colored Blackbird, including several years with more than 100 recorded.

Birds showing a substantial increase in count include:

- Eurasian Collared-Dove, first recorded in 2008.
- Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, first recorded in 2000, with 35 seen last year.
- European Starling, not recorded until 1963, the invasion began in 1964 with high counts since.
- Great-tailed Grackle, first recorded in 1993.

Birds seen in every count include:			
Canada Goose	Ring-billed Gull	Bushtit	Song Sparrow
American Wigeon	Mourning Dove	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	White-crowned Sparrow
Mallard	Anna’s Hummingbird	Northern Mockingbird	Dark-eyed Junco
Pied-billed Grebe	Northern Flicker	American Pipit	Western Meadowlark
Cooper’s Hawk	American Kestrel	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Brewer’s Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Western Scrub-Jay	Spotted Towhee	House Finch*
American Coot	American Crow	California Towhee	Lesser Goldfinch
Killdeer	Oak Titmouse	Lark Sparrow	House Sparrow

* - Not recorded in 1965, although 200 Purple Finches were

(CBC Historical Perspective, continued from previous page)

Birds recorded only once include:		
Greater Scaup -1988	Caspian Tern – 1991	Chestnut-backed Chickadee – 6 in 1963. **
Red-throated Loon - 1957	Common Tern – 1959	Pygmy Nuthatch – 1981
Pacific Loon – 1983	Common Ground-Dove – 2013	Black-tailed Gnatcatcher – 1960 #
Least Bittern – 2002	Spotted Owl – 1993	Nashville Warbler – 1983
Northern Goshawk – 1962	Northern Saw-whet Owl – 1961	American Redstart – 1993
Bald Eagle – 1997	Black-chinned Hummingbird – 1970	Prairie Warbler – 1993
Wandering Tattler – 1976	Cockatiel – 1982	Yellow-breasted Chat – 1986
Whimbrel – 1959	Lilac-crowned Parrot – 2012	Albert’s Towhee – 5 in 1976 #
Hudsonian Godwit – 1957	Western Wood-Pee wee – 1960	Grasshopper Sparrow – 1995
Ruddy Turnstone – 6 in 1976	Tropical Kingbird – 1990	Hepatic Tanager – 1993
Sanderling – 1959	Western Kingbird – 1989	Eurasian Tree-Sparrow – 1996 #
Thayer’s Gull – 2002	Bell’s Vireo – 1993	

** - A doubtful sighting as the most southern population is now in Santa Barbara

- (Probably an erroneous sighting)

Annual Conservation Awards Banquet 2014



L to R: Lewis MacAdams, Conservation Award Recipient & Speaker, Dottie Ecker's son and granddaughter accepting her Service Award. Debbie Simpson, Rose Leibowitz & Heather Medvitz, Pat Bates, Sharon Ford. *Photos by Jeff Pollakoff*

Calendar of Events

December

Tuesday, December 2. Antelope Valley Audubon Committee will hold its Quarterly Meeting and Annual Holiday Potluck. 6:00 p.m. The Prime Desert

Woodland Preserve in the Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center, at 43201 35th Street W., in Lancaster. Bring a food item and any pictures, videos, or reports you would like to share with the group. Contact Linda Edwards and Vern Benhart (661) 948-3524 for more information.

Saturday, December 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, December 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@sfvadubon.org or (747) 444-9683.

Saturday, December 13. 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.sfvadubon.org.

Saturday, December 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.

Sunday, December 14. Wildwood Canyon Bird Walk, Burbank. 9:00–11:00 a.m. Directions: From the I-5/Golden State Fwy. N: Take Exit 146A toward Olive Ave. merge onto E. Angeleno Ave. and turn left onto S. 1st Street, then take the first right onto E. Olive Ave.

From I-5/Golden State Fwy. S: Take EXIT 146A toward Verdugo Ave. Turn left onto S. Front Street, which will become E. Verdugo Ave. Turn left at the first light onto S. 1st Street then take the 3rd right on to E. Olive Ave.

Continue 1.3 miles on E. Olive through downtown Burbank and up the hill. Turn left onto N. Sunset Canyon Dr. Go .5 miles and turn right onto E. Harvard. Drive .4 miles skirting the golf course and meet at the entry kiosk area. Extra binoculars are available. Leaders: Nick Wilhelm and Mike Mc Horney, (818) 845-0166.

Tuesday, December 16. 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@sfvadubon.org.

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

Saturday, December 20. 115th Annual Christmas Bird Count. Join us to count birds for the 115th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, see page two for times and locations. At 5:30p.m. we will meet to share pizza, and count tallies at a Studio City home. RSVP at sfvadubonsociety@gmail.com for address and directions.

Saturday, December 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, December 21. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton.

Thursday, December 25. Due to the holiday there will be NO SFVAS General Membership Meeting. Merry Christmas.

Saturday, December 27. There will be NO Young Birders Group Bird Walk this month. We ask that you join in the Christmas Bird Count on December 20. (See page two for times and locations). For more information on future walk locations please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at roselbirds@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405, or check out our website sfvadubon.org.

January

Saturday, January 3. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Directions: Take closest freeway to I-5 North and exit at Parker Road. Turn right and proceed to

stop sign (Castaic Road), proceed to next stop sign (Lake Hughes Road), proceed to next stop sign (Castaic Lake Drive) and turn right. Entrance to the park is on the right. Parking is in Lot 4, so make a right turn after the kiosk, then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff at (661) 257-4050.

Sunday, January 4. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at kris.ohlenkamp@sfgvaudubon.org or (747) 444-9683.

Saturday, January 10. 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.sfgvaudubon.org.

Saturday, January 10. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and continue about 1.5 miles to the park entrance. Turn right and park at the Nature Center. Various leaders. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

Sunday, January 11. Wildwood Canyon Bird Walk, Burbank. 9:00–11:00 a.m. See December 14 for directions. Leaders: Nick Wilhelm and Mike Mc Horney, (818) 845-0166.

Saturday, January 17. Monthly Field Trip: Upper Newport Bay & 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 four 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 17. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m. Directions: Go north on I-5 through Santa Clarita, exit Calgrove and turn west (left) under the freeway and then left again on the Old Road. Watch for the sign, "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon." Turn right and park in the back lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 252-6187.

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

Tuesday, January 20. 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@sfgvaudubon.org.

Thursday, January 22. 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: Audubon and Global Warming PRESENTER: Dave Weeshoff.** For more information see Monthly Programs, page one.

Monday, January 26. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Wild Wings Nature Store. 4337 Woodman Ave., Sherman Oaks. (818) 995-0022. Please bring your own chair.

Saturday, January 31. Young Birders Group Bird Walk. Sepulveda Basin. 9:00 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. For more information on meeting location please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at roselbirds@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405.

Future Field Trips (details later):

February 21. Ventura County Game Preserve March 21–22. Morro Bay Weekend

Bird Fest 2014



On October 18, the first Santa Monica Mountains Bird Fest came into being. Invited and led by Sophia Wong of the Western National Parks Association, the three Audubon Chapters that border the Santa Monica Mountains came together. They are the San Fernando Valley, Santa Monica Bay, and Conejo Valley chapters. We collaborated and created an amazing day! We were blessed with perfect



weather, which set the tone. We had nearly 900 visitors. The first indication that things were going to go really well was at 9 a.m. when around 50 people with binoculars streamed past the presenters, who were setting up, in order to go on the first bird walk.

The numbers were similarly high on the 10 and 11 a.m. walks. The 10 a.m. walk focused on children and families. There was no shortage of children and activities for them. The owl pellet dissection on our table was very popular!

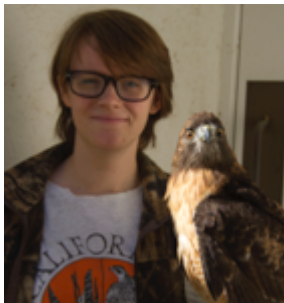


Meanwhile, back at base, the little amphitheater was full all day long with six different presenters, including Art Langton of our chapter who spoke on the birds at Malibu Creek State Park and Alan Pollack, our Audubon-at-Home chair, who encouraged people to create a bird friendly habitat. Outdoors, there was a Live Bird show, which allowed seating for 100 and was almost full. An Albino Raven and a tame Red-Tailed Hawk also drew a lot of attention (and photo ops!)

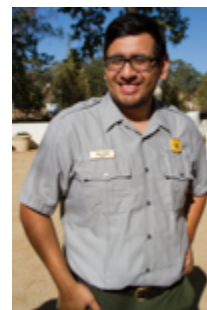


The tables covered a wide range of areas from Heal the Bay, through

the three Audubon groups to our local bird stores and artisans. There was a steady stream of visitors to all the tables throughout the day.



Feedback so far has been 100% positive (we will have more bird walk leaders available next year). However, the best thing was the chance to collaborate with neighboring chapters. Each chapter works in a slightly different way and it was a great opportunity to learn from each other and exchange ideas.



Photos Top l-r: Albino raven, Santa Monica Mountain Recreation Area, Art Langton, Muriel Kotin & Jean Kolasz, Michaela Maki with Red-tailed Hawk, Pat Bates & Scott Logan, from Wild Wings, Becky Arntzen & Alan Pollack, Adali Olivares, and Mathew Tekulsky. Thank you Mathew Tekulsky for the photographs!

Monthly Field Trip Reports *by Richard Barth*

On September 20 we birded Orange County's Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. At HCP most of us got looks at a rare American Redstart, pointed out by other birders in the park. Townsend's, Wilson's, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and Common Yellowthroat were the other warblers seen, and we had a Warbling Vireo. Hooded and Bullock's Orioles were found. Our woodpeckers were Downy, Nuttall's and Acorn. American Kestrel, Red-shouldered Hawk and Turkey Vulture made up our raptor list at the park, and introduced species Scaly-breasted Munia (aka Nutmeg Mannikin) and Northern Red Bishop received a lot of attention. Bolsa Chica produced some outstanding sightings: Ridgway's Rail (formerly Clapper Rail), Reddish Egret, Common Tern, Red Knot, Dunlin and out-of-season ducks Surf Scoter and Red-breasted Merganser. Forster's Tern and "Belding's" Savannah Sparrow were readily seen. A few other selected birds of interest at the reserve: Ruddy Turnstone, Long-billed Curlew, Osprey, Black Skimmer, Snowy Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Royal and Elegant Terns, Belted Kingfisher, Marbled Godwit and Greater Yellowlegs.

This year's trip to El Dorado Park in Long Beach took place on October 18. Our highlight bird at the park was a Common Poorwill, out on a lawn area in the middle of the day trying to get some shut-eye. Tropical Kingbird was another neat find; a returning bird from last winter. The raptors seen were Merlin, American Kestrel, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk and Turkey Vulture. A Red-breasted Sapsucker topped the woodpecker contingent with Acorn (unusual in Long Beach), Downy, Nuttall's and Northern Flicker also tallied. Notable were Western Kingbird (late-ish), Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Pelican fly-overs and Western Meadowlark. We should also mention Bewick's Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Say's Phoebe, Western Bluebird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Spotted Towhee, Cassin's Kingbird and Scaly-breasted Munia.



Phainopepla Photo of the Month:

Common Loon *by Pat Bates*



Location of Shot: Lake Balboa

Date: 11/1/14

Camera and Lens: Canon 7D with Tamron 150-600 mm zoomed to ~500mm. TV 1/1000, f 6.3, ISO 200

This month we have an excellent shot of an interesting bird taken in the heart of the San Fernando Valley.

"For a change, I am not the only common loon at Lake Balboa" joked

Pat Bates. Pat visits the Sepulveda Wildlife area and Lake Balboa frequently and shares many fine photos on the SFVAS Facebook page. Despite the name, Common Loons are uncommon in the San Fernando Valley. A quick search of eBird reveals that there are one or two sightings a year, mainly in November or December, in the Sepulveda area.

Clearly Pat was enamored enough to "photostalk" the bird. "I followed it around for a couple hours trying to get a shot of it with a fish. It was continuously diving - traveling about 50' underwater for 20-30 seconds, surfacing briefly before diving again. I ended up with about 100 shots of its rear end but never saw it with a fish. After doing some research - turns out - they can eat the fish under water. I know there were plenty of fish - the cormorants were having a fiesta."

Pat is an active member of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society and currently serves as Treasurer. In addition to photography she enjoys oil painting and travel.

Do you have an interesting photo of a bird taken in/near the San Fernando Valley? Please submit your photos to JackieWollner@gmail.com. Or you can post to our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sfvaudubon. Please include location, date, camera and lens info, a short account of how the photo was taken, and a profile of the photographer. Let us see your bird photos! Thanks, Jackie

Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack

A water-wise, wildlife garden - part 2

In addition to reducing or eliminating lawns (which I addressed in my last article), there are many other measures we can take to conserve precious water in our gardens.

Capturing rainwater and overhead sprinkler water:

Replace non-porous surfaces (concrete, asphalt, brick, etc.) with porous ones (decomposed granite, gravel, etc.). Instead of water running off into the street and sewer system (with its toxic brew of chemicals if you haven't eliminated those) it will percolate into your garden soil and into the water table. An added bonus: by removing materials that are heat trapping, you will lower the temperature around your home.

Create swales and dry streambeds which will act as collectors.

Place rain barrels under downspouts. (Since this water is acidic, it can be used for your acid loving plants or diluted with our alkaline tap water.

Using low-water-using plants: preferably native plants. (More on this subject in future articles).

Using drip, soaker hose, and hand irrigation:

These methods put water where it's needed, into the soil directly in contrast to sprinkler systems where much water is lost to evaporation and runoff. Where overhead sprinklers are used, they should be scheduled for the early morning hours, e.g., 3-6 a.m., and only for a long enough duration to irrigate without causing runoff. And if you want to drive me really crazy, water your lawn during or right after a heavy rain. Sprinkler control systems can and should be turned off during the rainy season...if we ever get one of those again.

I've come to regret putting in a drip system in a portion of my garden because some of the critters that are attracted enjoy chewing on the drip lines! I've decided sensibly used overhead watering is less troublesome and natives prefer it too.

Mulching:

A mulch is any material placed on the surface of the soil which helps to retain its moisture. In addition, a mulch suppresses weed growth (Mother Nature abhors bare soil the way she abhors a vacuum, leave it bare and something will grow...usually weeds), provides habitat for creepy, crawly things, and, if it's an organic material, its slow decomposition improves soil structure. The leaves and pine needles that fall from our trees are nature's mulch and can be left where they fall in your planting beds. Other organic mulches include grass clippings, bark chips, wood chips, straw and the compost that can be made from collected organic materials. The city of Los Angeles and some surrounding cities provide free mulch for the taking (check with the City website, Dept. of Sanitation in L.A., to get locations). Inorganic mulches are things like rock chips and gravel. A very low-growing ground cover can serve a similar purpose, though obviously requires some watering.

Use of gray water: where it is permitted. Gray water is the water that comes from your kitchen, laundry, bathtub and shower (i.e., all water sources other than the toilet). It takes some special plumbing, but it works.

So, which will you be? A water-wise gardener or a water-wasting one?

*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.*

New Bird Biology Website Awakens the Sense of Discovery

Enjoy interactive activities about bird song, feathers, and more

Ithaca, N.Y.—We know birds have feathers—but what are they made of, how do they work, and how many kinds are there? Birds sing songs—but how do they produce those sounds, what do they mean, and can you learn to identify birds by sound alone? If just knowing the name of a bird isn't enough, then it's time to make new discoveries at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [All About Bird Biology](http://biology.allaboutbirds.org) website. The new site is designed to appeal to anyone who's even a little bit curious about what makes birds tick.

"All About Bird Biology is all about inspiring people to find out what's

really going on in the lives of birds," says Cornell Lab eLearning specialist Mya Thompson, who says scientists, teachers, artists, designers, and programmers all played an important role in developing the site and making it so appealing. "The site contains a video library of eye-opening bird behaviors, along with self-paced interactive lessons, articles, and animations that make learning a blast!"

Chapters currently online go in-depth on feathers and bird song. Playing the "Bird Song Hero" game allows users to keep score as they gradually learn to recognize more than 50 bird species by sound. Educators and students surveyed after the website launch found that using birds to understand biology makes the learning go down easy. Visit the All About Bird Biology website:

biology.allaboutbirds.org

New Birders' Group

The next New Birders' group will begin in January 2015. This is the third time we have offered this introduction to birding and the feedback has been positive. Participants have felt that it is a good entry to the hobby and to SFVAS. It will consist of two meetings at Wild Wings Backyard Bird Store on Thursday's January 15 and 29 at 7:00p.m., and two weekend bird walks, the first being O'Melveny Park on Sunday, January 18 and Ballona Wetlands on Saturday, January 24. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged to cover expenses. If you wish to enroll and/or wish further information e-mail roselbirds@gmail.com.

The timing is planned to encourage participants to attend the Beginning Birders Walk at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve on Saturday, January 10, our monthly General Meeting on Thursday, January 22 and to graduate the following month to our general bird walk at Sepulveda Basin and our walk at Malibu Creek State Park!

2014 Lake Balboa & L.A. River Fall Clean Up The Wrap! –by Nathan D Duvall

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the 2014 Lake Balboa & L.A. River Fall Clean up sponsored by The SFV Audubon. We managed to haul away over half a ton of garbage from trails, the riverside, and the murky depths of the mighty L.A. River itself.

Seven grocery carts, clothes, misc. trash, and over a 100 plastic bags were gathered by folks ages eight and up with David Hernandez of Pacoima being the big winner of two tickets to Universal Studios. People from as far away as Oregon and Washington state participated.

A big thank you to Steve Appleton of LA River Kayak Safari for donating ten kayaks, truck, and team who hauled away most of the river waste. Steve's crew included Agnieszka Pietruszka, Grove Pashley, Jim Kermath, and Nathan D Duvall. They braved spiders and much more to remove some fierce eyesores.



Clean Up organizer
Nathan D Duvall

would like to thank: Muriel Kotin and Rose Leibowitz for helping sponsor the event. Carolyn Oppenheimer for her amazing custom "spear hooks". Diane Hartman, Fernando Gomez, and Walt Young at the MRCA for permission and permitting. Karin Flores, Karen Kardan, and Sara Ramos for rallying the troops. And to Jeremy Thomas and Jesse Casillas of LA City Recs & Parks for hauling the final loads to the dump!

Photos: With kayaks l-r: Jim Kermath, Doug Stanton, and Steven Appleton. On land l-r: Steven Appleton, Nathan D Duvall, and Grove Pashley

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

www.SFVAudubon.org



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

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

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1-yr Chapter Membership (No paper copy of <i>Phainopepla</i>).....\$20	\$ _____
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How did you learn about SFVAS?

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.

Membership in the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:

National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 420235
Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235

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 Lynn Maddox at (818) 845-4688 or e-mail her at Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org.

Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
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Membership 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 Lynn Maddox, Membership Chair, with any questions at lynn.maddox@sfvaudubon.org.

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Colin Melendez
Daila Melendez

National:

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Sylvia Ali
Albert Ambarchyan
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BirdsEye for Android

It's been in the works for years, and now the best bird finding app is coming to Android! BirdsEye uses your Android devices GPS and eBird data to show you what birds you might find nearby, or at any place in the world. Even more exciting is that BirdsEye for Android is launching as a **FREE app**. The free version of BirdsEye is limited to the 50 most common birds in your area. This is true for any location you are in the entire world - you'll see sighting maps, photos, bird finding and identification text, and sounds where available. Additional regional memberships are available to unlock ALL species being reported throughout a continent, or across the world. More info at <http://birdseyebirding.com/birdseye-android>

SFVAS General Membership Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (except July, August, and November). ALL ARE WELCOME. We meet at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd. Encino. See Calendar of Events, pages 4–5, for directions.