



Phainopepla

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June / July 2023

Annual Awards Luncheon - Date Change

Online General Membership Zoom Programs

We hope you will join us for our informative Zoom Programs. [CLICK HERE](#), to sign up and receive a link prior to all events.

Reminder: No General Membership Meetings June-August. See you in September!

Have a great summer

Birdathon

It's not too late to **DONATE!**

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 Thank you for your support!



ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

Honoring Kris Ohlenkamp

MORE INFORMATION IN
 AUGUST/SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Become a **NEW member**
 Your first year is **FREE!**
 Go to SFVAudubon.org

To reach an event leader or board member call our Chapter Phone Number

(747) 237-3720

Number is a Forwarding Message Service

Due to the road closure and repair work at the north entrance to Franklin Canyon, we are rescheduling the event to September or November. Please see the next issue for more information on how to purchase tickets.

Birdathon 2023 Is Almost Over

Thanks to everyone for keeping an eye out for us

By Richard Davis – Email: Birdathon@sfvaudubon.org

Birdathon, our major annual fundraising event for the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society runs from April 1 to May 31 so, we are almost done for this year. The list of Birdathon outings completed so far is shown in the table including the team leaders and number of species they spotted.

As of May 15, there are still two remaining Birdathon events. So, there is still a chance for you to join Dave and Kathy Barton in Malibu State Park or the Young Birders group with Luisa Bergeron and Rebecca Marshall at O'Melveny Park.



As part of the young birders event, we're planning to use a selfie stick to sneak a peek inside a bluebird nesting box or two to see what we can see. Come join us.

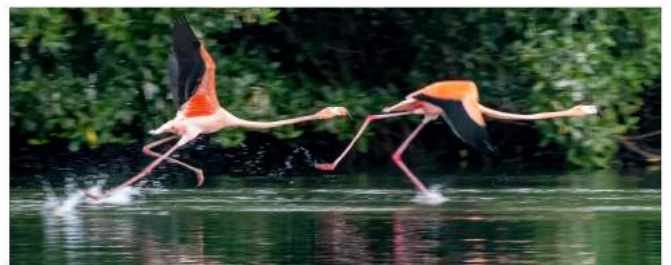
A BIG THANKS to all these team leaders who donate their efforts year after year. And of course, we want to thank all of you who have given your generous support.



Team Leader	Location	Date	Total Species
Carolyn Oppenheimer	O'Melveny Park	04/18/2023	33
Pat Bates	Hansen Dam	04/22/2023	54
Art Langton	Hwy 33 Ocean to Mountains	04/28/2023	90
Kris Ohlenkamp	Sepulveda Basin	05/03/2023	60
Muriel and Allan Kotin	Malibu & Nearby	05/04/2023	62
Charlie Wilken	Aliso Canyon Park	05/06/2023	30
John and Andrew Willis	Palos Verdes	05/06/2023	47
Paula Orlovich	Franklin Canyon Park	05/13/2023	37
Katheryn and Dave Barton	Malibu State Park	05/21/2023	
Luisa Bergeron & Rebecca Marschall	O'Melveny- Young Birders	05/28/2023	

If you haven't yet given, it is not too late. But **HURRY!!**

Make your Pledge or Donate Now by clicking [HERE](#) or by scanning the QR code (www.sfvaudubon.org/thank-you-for-supporting-birdathon/)



Calendar of Events

To reach an event leader you may call our forwarding message service at [\(747\) 237-3720](tel:7472373720)

JUNE 2023

Sunday, June 4. Sepulveda Basin. 8:00–11:00 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. Park in the lot and walk past the low, rock-faced buildings to our meeting place on the other side of the buildings. Leader: Alexander deBarros, Alexander.deBarros@sfvaudubon.org.

Thursday, June 8. A Bird Sit with Nature Journaling, O'Melveny Park. 10:00–11:30 a.m. If you would like to mindfully connect with birds



and all of nature, join us at O'Melveny Park—at the picnic tables near the bathrooms. (Rain cancels and moves it to the 3rd Thursday.) What to bring: a cushion or a comfortable chair, a beverage/snack, binoculars, a journal, and something to write/draw with. This event is limited to 10 people. To reserve a spot, contact Diana Keeney at diana.keeney@sfvaudubon.org

or Teri Carnesciali at teri.carnesciali@sfvaudubon.org.

Sunday, June 11. Franklin Canyon Park. 8:00 a.m. TENTATIVE due to possible road closure. Contact Paula before going. 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills. Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take the Ventura Freeway (101) or Ventura Blvd. to Coldwater Canyon Blvd. Head south to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive. Make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. Leader: Paula Orlovich. (747) 237-3720.

Sunday, June 18. Malibu Creek State Park. 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. Leaders: Katheryn Barton and David Barton. kathy.barton@sfvaudubon.org.



No General Membership Meetings June–August
Have a great summer!

Saturday, June 24. Hansen Dam Birding 8:00–11:00 a.m. 10965 Dronfield Avenue, Pacoima. Directions: Take the Foothill/Osborne exit from the 210 Freeway, go right (east) on Foothill, to Osborne (1st light), go left, then left again at Dronfield. Meet in the lower parking lot (down the hill from the Ranger Station). If the lower level or the gate is locked, park either on the upper level or street and meet at the Ranger Station. Accessibility is excellent for this site, which is entirely on a packed dirt road. Leader: Pat Bates, pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, June 24. Chatsworth Nature Preserve Earth Day Open House. NEW DATE & TIME. 4:00–8:00 p.m. This is the one day a year when the public is allowed in without the need of a special permit. Several environmental groups will have booths set up including SFVAS. Guided tours of the ecology pond will be provided. (See flyer, page 10, for more information)

Sunday, June 25. Young Birders Group. 9–11:00 a.m. This walk is recommended for young beginning birders. We will have binoculars to share, but if you have your own, don't forget to bring them! If you're planning on coming, please send us a quick e-mail at youngbirders@sfvaudubon.org so we have an idea of how many folks to expect. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions, suggestions for walk locations, or anything else. Please check our website for updates. E-mail Luisa and/or Rebecca at YoungBirders@sfvaudubon.org for more information and we will add you to our e-mail list.

JULY 2023

Sunday, July 2. Sepulveda Basin. 8:00–11:00 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. Park in the lot and walk past the low, rock-faced buildings to our meeting place on the other side of the buildings. Leader: Alexander deBarros, Alexander.deBarros@sfvaudubon.org.

Sunday, July 9. Franklin Canyon Park. 8:00 a.m. TENTATIVE due to possible road closure. Contact Paula before going. 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills. Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take the Ventura Freeway (101) or Ventura Blvd. to Coldwater Canyon Blvd. Head south to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive. Make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. Leader: Paula Orlovich. (747) 237-3720.

Sunday, July 16. Malibu Creek State Park. 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. Leaders: Katheryn Barton and David Barton. kathy.barton@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, July 22. Hansen Dam Birding. 8:00–11:00 a.m. 10965



Dronfield Avenue, Pacoima. Hansen Dam Birding is moving back to the Dronfield lot — near the Ranger Station! The lot is available again, and there is no street parking near the other location in the event the gate is locked. Directions: Take the Foothill/Osborne exit from the 210 Freeway, go right (east) on Foothill, to Osborne (1st light), go

left, then left again at Dronfield. Meet in the lower parking lot (down the hill from the Ranger Station). If the lower level or the gate is locked, park either on the upper level or street and meet at the Ranger Station. Accessibility is excellent for this site, which is entirely on a packed dirt road. Leader: Pat Bates, pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org.

Birdathon 2023 - Report from Hansen Dam from Pat Bates

The 2023 Hansen Dam Birdathon field trip began on a warm sunny April morning, only to get warmer as the time passed. We overcame a bit of initial confusion with the start location, and were soon on our way with a group of about eighteen. As it became warmer, the group dwindled.

Just for a bit of perspective - there was still a lot of water being retained in the Hansen Dam flood control basin during our walk. The month before we had Hooded Mergansers diving in one of the parking lots!! It was somewhat dried out but still, a very high lake level.

The group was a congenial mix of novice and experienced birders, and the birds did not disappoint! High points of the trip were the following: 14 Phainopeplas, two Yellow-Breasted Chats, three Western Tanagers, 12 Cedar Waxwings, two Warbling Vireos, at least eight Least Bell's Vireos, and much more, for a total of 54 species! Here's a [link](#) to the eBird list.

Thank you to everyone who attended and especially who donated to the SFV Audubon Birdathon! If anyone did not receive their eBird list please email me at pat.bates@sfaudubon.org (sometimes I cannot read my own handwriting). The photo is part of the expedition near Little Tujunga Creek enjoying some shade.



20TH ANNUAL LORI WILLIS MEMORIAL BIRDATHON BY JOHN WILLIS

We've completed our 20th Annual Lori Willis Memorial Birdathon in conjunction with the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. Our goal was to survey three points on the Palos Verdes Peninsula (Pt. Fermin, White's Point, and Pt. Vicente) and get close to fifty species. We got an early start on our tres puntas tour and checked out the beach and rocks below Pt.

Fermin. Lots of terns and gulls including Black Skimmers and a Bonaparte's Gull, a Pacific Loon, and an Eared Grebe, an assortment of birds in the trees but only one shorebird. Next stop was White's Point. Again, no shorebirds so we walked through the grass and shrubland around the nature center. There we were greeted with a singing Bell's Vireo, a rarity. We also saw and heard Lazuli Buntings, maybe the prettiest birds of the day. Our third stop was Pt. Vicente Visitor

Center. It's not the right time of year for whales, too late for gray whales and too early for blue whales. The only bird of note was a flock of Surf Scoters flying by offshore. It was a pleasant day, and the temperature was going up, creating a serious thirst so we stopped at Terranea Restaurant for

beer and tacos. Walking to the restaurant we observed White-throated Swifts, Cliff Swallows, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows flying overhead. When we were at the Pt. Vicente Visitor Center, we had hoped to see nesting Peregrine Falcons but were told that they had relocated to Pt. Fermin. So, after our lunch break, we headed back to Pt. Fermin. We had just given up hope of seeing the falcons and were headed back to our car when, looking up, we spotted a falcon circling lazily overhead. We had an outstanding view of this spectacular bird and then it put on a show of speed for us and zoomed away. It was a great ending to our day. Our total count for the birdathon was 47 species (48 if you count the peacock we heard).



Allan and Muriel Kotin's Malibu Area 2023 Birdathon Thursday, May 4

Earlyish Start: Getting up before 6:00am, I checked the iffy weather forecast and roused Allan after showering. While warming yesterday's coffee at 6:44, I watched a flock of **Brown Pelicans (#1)** fly upcoast over the shore. Many more flocks followed, several accompanied by gulls. At 7:10 an **American Crow (#2)** flew past. I phoned Judy Howell to confirm the Birdathon was on despite the weather forecast. We would meet at Malibu Creek State Park as planned.

So started our 2023 Birdathon, a 24-hour search for as many species of birds as we can find and identify. As always, ours is dedicated to raising money for San Fernando Valley Audubon's Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP).

Adventure Starts: We drove away from our townhouse at 7:20. Driving along Westward Beach under threatening skies, we saw a **Western Gull (#3)** resting on the sand, the first gull whose species we could ID. We continued along Westward Beach Road to as close to the headlands as you can drive. We saw **Whimbrel (#4)**, **Heermann's Gulls (#5)**, and **California Gulls (#6)** on the wet sand below the road. Driving Birdview Avenue up from the beach and along residences on Point Dume, a **Dark-eyed Junco (#7)** flew in front of my car. **Mourning Doves (#8)** and **House Finches (#9)** landed on phone wires.

8:00 AM, Pt. Dume Headlands and Disaster: As we arrived at the headlands, we found a **Cassin's Kingbird (#10)** sitting on a phone wire and parked. We were delighted to find an empty parking space. In fact, "all" of the usually scarce spaces were empty. The drippy skies, cool weather, and forecast for showers had deterred other visitors. Allan showed me to the start of a recently completed new pathway that leads to the path that overlooks the ocean. Unfortunately, we decided that the very low orange net across the entrance was there only to keep out vehicles and not pedestrians. Allan started to cross it and tripped. He sprawled face down on the dirt path. His left cheek was bleeding, two fingers were bleeding, and his right knee hurt, but he was fairly certain nothing was broken. He requested to be allowed to gather his bearings before standing up and for me to fetch clean tissues and bandages from the car. While I was getting the tissues (no bandages available), a pair of young men passing by helped him up. He dabbed at his face and fingers with the tissues and hobbled back to my car. After a bit of cleaning his wounds, Allan decided we should carry on. We did. We headed to our appointment with Judy Howell. Almost as soon as we began to pass homes, we saw crows harassing something on a roof. We looked closely and saw a **Red-tailed Hawk (#11)** that to our eyes blended in well with the vent it was perching on. It must have been more apparent to the crows than to us.



Ash-throated Flycatcher

8:35 AM, Malibu Creek State Park: We all arrived at the parking lot simultaneously. It was great to have Judy's company and help. We were greeted by a **California Towhee (#12)**. Then a **Western Bluebird (#13)**. A **Bewick's Wren (#14)** called. A **Turkey Vulture (#15)** soared above the dramatic peaks. We were able to ID a **Red-crowned Parrot (#16)** with the help of Allan's spotting scope. We found an **Ash-throated Flycatcher (#17)**, a tiny **Bushtit (#18)**, and a **Scrub Jay (#19)**, while **Violet-green Swallows (#20)** flew high in the sky. All this while we were still in the parking lot!

Judy had recently taught me how to use the Merlin App's ability to identify bird songs and calls to verify our IDs of bird sounds. We enjoyed its assistance. To be fair, when we used it to identify sounds, we could not ID ourselves, we only counted those birds if we then saw them.

We headed for the Braille Trail. Although we missed two blue birds we hoped to find there, (Lazuli Bunting and Blue

Grosbeak), we found lots of other birds: **Spotted Towhee (#21)**, **House Wren (#22)**, **Red-shouldered Hawk (#23)**, **Lesser Goldfinch (#24)**, **Acorn Woodpecker (#25)**, **Yellow Warbler (#26)**, **Anna's Hummingbird (#27)**, **Nuttall's Woodpecker (#28)**, a pair of beautiful **Western Tanagers (#29)** that landed on top of an oak tree, and a **Cooper's Hawk (#30)**.



House Wren

10:47 AM, King Gillette Ranch: After driving across Las Virgenes Road from Malibu Creek SP, we parked near the Interagency Visitor Center of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. King Gillette Ranch is endowed with beautiful early 20th century buildings from when the razor millionaire owned the property. The visitor center was repurposed from being elegant ranch stables, designed by Paul Williams. The photo (next page) shows part of the visitor center on the right and the most elegant restrooms you're likely to find in any natural habitat area on the left.

Before we left the restroom and parking area to stroll the nearby grounds, a flock of **European Starlings (#31)** flew by. Allan got a lovely photo of this tiny House Wren singing with a big voice in a beautiful valley oak.

In the native plant garden, we heard an **Oak Titmouse (#32)**, confirmed by Merlin.

Crossing one of the creeks to approach a lawn shaded by huge sycamore trees, we found (Continued next page)



Judy and Muriel Consulting Merlin



Visitor Center (Rt.) and Restrooms (Lt.)

an **Allen's Hummingbird (#33)**. While Judy walked ahead, Allan and I watched a **Great Blue Heron (#34)** move amazingly s l o w l y and s m o o t h l y along the grass in front of an imposing building now used for special meetings. Then it froze, neck outstretched. Suddenly it grabbed a mouse. A gopher? I think I saw a long tail and will call it a mouse. It flew with its lunch over to the nearest stream and washed the mouse before gulping it down. Allan was surprised to learn that herons are so fastidious about dining hygiene, but a friend informs me that herons do this to lubricate the fur so it will slide down the hatch more easily. Like most fishing birds, Great Blue Herons swallow their prey whole, whether it's a fish, rodent, or reptile. Birds don't have teeth and, except for raptors, don't have the "equipment" to hold their prey still while daintily tearing off bites.

Judy found a flock of **Nanday Parakeets (#35)** flying in the distance while the Kotins enjoyed the heron-mouse drama. We all saw a **Merlin (#36)** perched on the top of a tall tree, identifiable through Allan's scope. Merlins are a small species of falcon, a hunter of birds like the other falcons. A female **Mallard (#37)** swam into view, followed by a male, then a duckling, then another duckling. So cute! Less predictably

found, a **Black-chinned Hummingbird (#38)** landed on a low branch where it gave us good looks at its long bill and white spot behind the eye. We were pleased to spot and identify this summer visitor to the area.



Great Blue Heron with Mouse

11:43 AM, Las Virgenes Creek Restoration Project: We arrived behind the Starbucks on Agoura Road. Considering the dampness of the slope towards the creek and our general creakiness, we stayed on the upper walkway. Even so we saw a brilliantly yellow **Bullock's Oriole (#39)** land, singing high in a tree. A **Song Sparrow (#40)** also sang and posed. Swallows chased insects so high in the sky we couldn't identify their species. Hungry and tired, we headed for lunch in Malibu.

12:30 PM, Ollo: We saw a **House Sparrow (#41)** on the floor of the outdoor seating area while arranging to be seated. This year we ate indoors, so were lucky to find a restaurant bird here.

1:40 PM, Malibu Lagoon: There was much more water in the lagoon than we had been seeing since the fall and winter's heavy rains began. We suspected that the deep channel gouged through the beach by rainwater from the mountains rushing

to the ocean was starting to fill in with sand. This is a normal seasonal occurrence. We immediately found the **Osprey (#42)** that a dog walker at the creek restoration had told us about. It was perched on one of its favorite snags, along the side channel that runs near the Malibu Colony.



Osprey at Rest

A **Double-crested Cormorant (#43)** swam in the nearby channel, as were two kinds of dabbling ducks, **Gadwalls (#44)** and **Mallards (#45)**. Dabblers are waterfowl that specialize in eating plants and small invertebrates. **Barn Swallows (#46)** flew along the mud in goodly



A Small Fraction of the Pelicans, seen on Mud and Water and in Sky

numbers, even standing in it, to fill their beaks with mud. Mud is the favorite nest-building material of most swallows, sometimes reinforced with twigs and other plant material. They typically build their nests under bridges and the eaves of buildings so that the nests won't dissolve if it rains. You might not like to be a swallow, considering their only food is insects, they carry mud in their mouths from where they gather it to the nest-building site, and they have to migrate thousands of miles twice a year.

As we walked toward the platform overlooking the main channel, a solitary **Royal Tern (#46)** flew high over the water toward the Malibu Colony, going the opposite way from a flock of **Cliff Swallows (#47)**. A **Canada Goose (#48)** swam in shallow water connecting the side and main channels. As we neared the main channel, a **Black Phoebe (#49)** sat on the mud. Perhaps this resident flycatcher was resting before gathering mud for its nest of mud and twigs. (Continued next page)



Great Egret Preening its "Bridal Veil" Above, Intrepid Photographer Below



As we arrived on the observation platform, we saw tremendous numbers of Brown Pelicans, Gulls, Cormorants and other water birds on rocky and muddy areas in the channel. It looked like 2023 is an excellent year for Brown Pelicans to judge by the numbers at the lagoon. **Northern Rough-winged Swallows (#50)** flew around in pursuit of insects. **Ring-billed Gulls (#51)** and other gulls sat on the nearest rocky area in the channel. A **Great-tailed Grackle (#52)** flew onto a fallen log arching out of the water. **Elegant Terns (#53)** sat on the main rocky area. As we returned to the viewing area near the parking lot, we found a **Snowy Egret (#54)** fishing in the shallow channel. As we were taking leave of Judy who had given her all for the day, a small flock of gulls with black heads surprised us as they flew past, heading upcoast. Seeing **Bonaparte's Gulls (#55)** was a pleasant surprise. They are a species of gull we don't see very often in winter plumage and very rarely see with the black heads of their breeding plumage.

3:50 PM, Malibu Country Mart: We stopped near the nest trees near Cross Creek Road. There were cormorants in nests in the two Norfolk Pines but only one bird in the tree where we saw nesting herons and egrets that made such a mess last year. Apparently, they were finished nesting and either the rain or maintenance men had washed away almost all white "paint" from the pavement. The one bird there was a beautiful **Great Egret (#56)**.

3:50 PM, Legacy Park: We walked the path leading to the little pond. **Red-winged Blackbirds (#57)** flew into the bulrushes. As we neared the ocean side of the pond, begging Mallards and **Feral Pigeons (#58)** found us. Eventually a solitary **American Coot (#59)** showed up, surprisingly the first of the day.

The first heavy rain of our expedition happened as we drove home along PCH. We got there at 4:00. Our plan was to go out again after a brief rest for a brief walk in Zuma Canyon. I went over my notes and realized that I had skipped five numbers and that we had seen only 59 species, not 64. Oops. That took a short time to fix, but I must have drowsed afterwards. I realized it was 6:00 PM and went downstairs where Allan was at his computer, to arrange to go out again quickly. He complained he was having chest pains when he moved. We couldn't see any bruises on his chest, but he was not having any other symptoms of a heart attack and the pains seemed more from an injury, so we decided to carry on and to resume birding.

We left home at 6:15 PM and drove slowly through a very quiet Bonsall Drive to the Zuma Canyon open space.

6:30 PM, Zuma Canyon Trailhead: There were no other cars when we parked in the dirt lot.

Allan stayed in the car with the windows and a door open, to spot any birds that showed up, while I walked the main trail to where it intersects with a loop trail. I heard birds but saw few. Finally, an interesting bird sound caught my attention. Merlin said it was a Black-headed Grosbeak, one of our target species for this location, so I patiently waited for the bird to show himself in the tree the sound was coming from. He finally appeared, a male **Black-headed Grosbeak (#60)**, singing as loudly as he could. A little later, a small black bird that might have shown a patch of white on its wings flew into a distant leafless tree. After a long wait I got a good look at a male **Phainopepla (#61)** in perfect silhouette, pointed crest and all. Phainopeplas are San Fernando Valley Audubon's mascot. A bird with interesting behaviors, they winter in the desert where they raise their first brood of the year. Around the start of spring, they migrate toward the coast where they raise a second brood and stay into fall. They eat insects and berries, especially mistletoe berries. They end up farming mistletoes, as the seeds of the berries pass through their digestive tract and are then deposited/planted by the birds in the trees where mistletoes live. And there was one more bird we could tally. When I returned to the car, Allan announced he had heard the unmistakable call of a **Wrentit (#62)**. That was our total count.

The Expedition is Extended without Birds: As we left Zuma Canyon around 6:45 PM, Allan decided he should go to urgent care. UCLA's Malibu Immediate Care was open if we arrived by 7:30, so we headed to central Malibu. We arrived around 7:10. There was no waiting. Allan's EKG hadn't changed from those on record, and we noticed a pale bruise starting to show on his chest. An X-ray didn't show anything broken. The doctor diagnosed Allan with a bruised rib and prescribed a tetanus shot, icing a few times daily, coughing ten times every hour, and applying antibiotic ointment to his cheek.

9:00 PM, Home and Dinner: There were plenty of leftovers in the fridge. We were delighted to eat dinner, even if late.

Statistics: We drove 56 miles plus a 16-mile round trip to the immediate care and I walked 3.5 miles. Allan walked less for good reason. He had plenty of skin in the game. (He says he doesn't mind the not-so-funny pun.) Fortunately, two days later he felt well enough to go to an LA Phil concert and out to dinner and his cheek showed little sign of its encounter with the dirt path. We don't have Judy's statistics, but we greatly appreciated the boost from her birding skills and enjoyed her company.



Coot



and Red-winged Blackbird

All photos taken by Allan on Birdathon day, except those of him and the building at King Gillette taken on Muriel's iPhone. 📷

Art Langton Birdathon Report

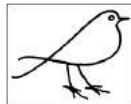
I've finished my 2023 Birdathon and enjoyed a great time doing so. I had the advantage of great weather and carpets of many different and varied wildflowers nearly everywhere I went.

I know I was initially skeptical as to whether or not I could meet my usual goal of 80 species considering the current and continuing closure of much of State Route 33. The road is closed with k-rails, locked gates, and human guards from Matilija Road to the Ozema Fire Station due to washouts, rock-slides, etc. This closure eliminated access to such regularly visited and birded locations of past birdathons as Wheeler Gorge, Rose Valley Lakes and Falls, Middle Fork Lions Campground. Even Foster County Park is closed to public access due to a layer of mud deposited from the adjacent Ventura River at flood stage. Hence, this year's count is deficient in certain bird categories including vireos, warblers, flycatchers. Each year seems to have a new challenge to contend with: drought, wildfire, covid, or flood. Abnormal seems to be the new normal along Route 33.

Somewhere I was taught that when one door closes another will open. This year's atmospheric rivers filled even the smallest creeks with water and created seasonal ponds and wetlands in areas usually dry during a normal year. In turn, these areas attracted and retained species not usually seen or included on my prior birdathon lists. So with time on my hands, I poked around in places usually skipped or overlooked and was amply rewarded for my efforts. Blind dumb luck always seems to have something to do with birding success. Being at the right place at the right time looking in the right direction and knowing what it is you're looking at are assets to be thankful for. All totaled, I identified 90 species. 🐦

Carolyn Oppenheimer Birdathon at O'Melveny Park

We got 34 species today. Most beautiful and plentiful were the Lazuli Buntings. Also seen were the Black-headed Grosbeak, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Townsends Warbler, and Hooded Oriole. My most exciting find was not even a bird. I saw a Blue-tailed Skink. I have never seen a lizard with a bright blue tail before. I could not believe my eyes. 🐸



Bird Sit Bulletin



Like any birding outing, the Bird Sit provides an opportunity for unexpected encounters—such as this Acorn Woodpecker along the trail in O'Melveny Park. The bird was so busy pecking that it was oblivious to the humans walking nearby and didn't notice Teri Carnesciali taking this close-up.

Other kinds of surprises abound at the Bird Sits, as Paula Orlovich describes in her reflection:

"The opportunity to sit and take notice has been an unexpected surprise. During the hour at the park, I know there are no expectations and so, I can just experience the sounds, activities of the birds, and enjoy the views of the plants and hillside. What I choose to draw and focus on changes each session. The surprise was how it affected me emotionally. I just felt uplifted and refreshed and in a very positive place."

There will be no Bird Sits with Journaling in July or August. We will come together again in September. *Come and join us!*



Birding in Trinidad and Tobago

By Marianne Davis

If you're looking to add to your life list of birds, "T&T" (as the locals call it) will up your count immediately. These islands are a birding hotspot (400+ species), with myriad experts available to take you around and show you where their exotic lovelies are hanging out. While the usual tourism centers on local celebrations of Carnival, Diwali, and calypso style music, birding is a new hospitality industry. But we were impressed with the deep experience of all the local guides we spent time with during the trip. The area is well known



for being a remarkable melting pot of cultures and is still part of the UK Commonwealth. The thing to remember is that it is truly a tropical climate, and there are basically two

seasons: hot and hot, and hot and wet. All the rooms we stayed in were air-conditioned, so you could cool down. Also, on our tour there was much (hot) hiking and long days on the bus, so you must be able to endure that. This was all spelled out in the itinerary, yet we still had a couple of folks who were hard pressed.

Our vendor was Naturalist Journeys, and our guide Hugh Simmons was an expert at photographing birds and



patiently shared his knowledge with us. The itinerary had us flying into Trinidad, going straight to an eco-resort area, and off each day to either hike or bus to a specific locale where the birds were known

to hang out. We took a short flight to Tobago and stayed at another eco lodge there to take in local birds, which are different than the bigger island of Trinidad. There are so many types of hummingbirds I lost count, and then you see really LARGE, turkey-like birds like the chachalacas and piping guans, many parrots (and spectacular macaws), as well as toucans and gorgeous manakins. We saw the oilbirds that nest in caves (at the famous Asa Wright Reserve), and the fabulous scarlet ibis. Several of the eco lodges we were booked into featured feeders that the birds came to regularly, so there were plenty of easy opportunities for photography. Waterfowl and seabirds are abundant, unique, and the guides know the good spots for observing them. One treat along the way was getting to watch leather-back turtles hauling out and laying eggs at the beach next to our hotel.

Each day we came back hot, tired, but inspired by the diversity of the birds we saw. The group had meals together, and every night would gather for a bird list meeting to make sure that everyone's list was up to date. Most of the other participants were keeping lists, but there were many like me, who just wanted to take in the experience and enjoy the wildlife. Please enjoy some of Richard's photographs!



April Earth Month Outreach Event "Wild for the Planet at LA Zoo"

Many community organizations associated with wildlife protection participated in this event. SFVAudubon brought in many new members during all the events of April. We tabled four Sundays at the zoo and on a Saturday, Earth Day FoLAR event, at the Sepulveda Basin. Member Art Langton brought seven or eight of his taxidermied birds to three of the four Sundays at the zoo which attracted a huge amount of interest to our table.



Art and Charlie at LA Zoo Wild for the Planet SFVAS Booth

Several board members and RCD educators assisted with the tabling. We got 43 paper registrations and handed out several hundred of our new business cards. These cards turn out to be great tools as they list not only contact information but all our monthly walks.



RCD educator, Jelly Kahler shares her enthusiasm for birds with the zoo visitors.

Our bird feather display attracted hundreds of youths who were able to observe, touch, and experiment on our legal feather



RCD educator, Brandon Austel, engaging some youths

collection. Youthful enthusiasts observed the feather parts, dropped water drops on them and flapped them as hard as they could to see if they would break.



Charlie Wilken and Jelly Kahler at LA Zoo Wild for the Planet SFVAS Booth

Every Sunday at the zoo we were able to interface with 4-5 thousand people coming in during the morning hours and then all leaving in the afternoon.

SFV Audubon's original Sharp-shinned Hawk

served to tell the story of many birds. The second leading cause of death of birds is flying into windows. Our hawk broke his neck in Woodland Hills years ago and his body was made into a display. The hawk and the windows of the display served to talk about this danger. Suggestions for mitigating glass strikes range from putting objects on your windows to give birds some warning to the superior method of putting dots in a 2-inch grid over your whole window. This bird also inspired member Art Langton to begin his collection of birds who had suffered accidental deaths and use them to build interest in protecting birds and wildlife.—By Charlie Wilken, SFVAS Outreach Chair



Sharp-shinned Hawk

Third Grade Adventures in the Santa Susana Mountains

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains (FPSSM) sponsors the Third Grade Interpretive Hike Program at Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park in Chatsworth. The park is rich in California history, geologic features, native plants and animals. Highlights of the program, which is centered around a two-mile hike in the park, include education stations which integrate with their third-grade curriculum. Our popular bird station is presented by volunteer Art Langton of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, and we invite a Native American to present stories and interactive songs. Our replica stagecoach is enjoyed by the students as they learn the history of the stagecoach trail through the park. Other stops include the quarry site and a talk about the railroad tunnels built in the late 1800s. Many of these students have never been on a hike or in a rural park. These outings provide the opportunity for our local youth to widen their horizons and open doors to experience the beauty of nature around them. We also aim to instill the importance of preserving our open spaces. This school year the program will host over 500 students. Our sincere thanks to Art for enhancing our program by generously volunteering his time and sharing his love of birds plus a portion of the mounted bird collection.

Third graders served by this program came from the following schools: Hart Street, Sierra Canyon, Germain Street, Chatsworth Park, Fulbright, Winnetka Avenue, and Canoga Park elementary schools. This program was funded, in part, through a grant from the California State Park Foundation, and ran from October through May.

—Dottie Acker

Chatsworth Nature Preserve

Earth Day Open House

Celebrate Earth Day at the only Nature Preserve in the City of Los Angeles

NEW DATE & TIME
Saturday, June 24, 2023 • 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Ceremony with Native American Blessing by the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
 Guided Nature Hikes • Live Animal Exhibitions
 Environmental & Community Resource Fair • Food Trucks

Event updates: ladwp.com/CNPEarthday

Bring hats, refillable water bottles, sunscreen and comfortable walking shoes.
 No dogs, drones, cigarettes of any kind, bikes or scooters.

Location & Parking:
 Entry gate on Valley Circle Blvd, west of Plummer St.

Map: bit.ly/2naHjvT
 Street parking available with limited on-site parking.

ladwp.com

Sign Language interpreters, Assistive Listening Devices, or other auxiliary aids and/ or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. Due to difficulties in securing Sign Language interpreters, five or more business day notice is strongly recommended. To request accommodation, please call 213-367-1076. TDD: 800 HEAR DWP (800 432-7397).

Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack

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) 425-0962 or at alan.pollack@sfaudubon.org.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEW Chapter Phone Number

To reach a board member or event leader you may now call our forwarding message service at **(747) 237-3720**

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<https://www.sfvaudubon.org/membership/>
It is fast, secure, saves time, and paper!

Or mail this form and include a check made payable to:
 SFV Audubon Society
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 P.O. Box 7769
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Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership.....\$25 \$ _____
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 (No paper copy of *Phainopepla*)
**FREE** for new members \$ _____
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If you want to join or renew by check, please be sure to include your e-mail address if you want to receive an acknowledgment. We can no longer thank you by regular mail. If you do not have an e-mail address, please know how much we appreciate your involvement with, and support of, 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 non-profit chapter of the National Audubon Society, and is dedicated to "Nature Education and the Conservation of Wildlife."

Articles, letters, drawings, and photographs concerning conservation, 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 to National Audubon is separate and can be initiated on the website www.Audubon.org.

If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Lynn Maddox at (818) 425-0962 or e-mail her at Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org.

For Chapter leaders' e-mail addresses, see our Website: www.SFVAudubon.org

Follow us on:



@sfvaudubon

Found an injured animal? Call Wildlife Rescue Center at (818) 222-2658

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Phainopepla

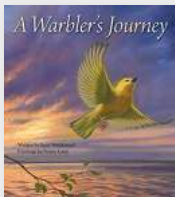
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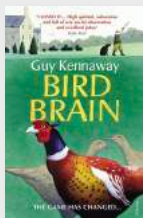
A WARBLER'S JOURNEY



Written by Scott Weidensaul, Painted by Nancy Lane

I found this title in a recent list of most popular books, and Weidensaul's name jumped out at me. This is Scott getting into kid lit, and it's really pretty, his choice of Lane as illustrator was spot-on. The story is straightforward, a Yellow Warbler makes the migration journey from Central Mexico up to the north territories in Alaska, interacting with three families along the way. It is a gentle way to introduce the migration concept, and I immediately bought (Amazon) several copies to share with young family readers.

BIRD BRAIN; THE GAME HAS CHANGED



By Guy Kennaway

This brilliant book was in the library of the Antarctica cruise ship we were on, and it had me laughing out loud. Most of the time we're told NOT to anthropomorphize animals, but Kennaway went in the opposite direction and ran with it. "Banger" Peyton-Crumbe (UK) is a fanatic wildfowl hunter and is only happy when he's out shooting something. One day he suddenly dies out on a hunt, and wakes up reincarnated as a pheasant. The UK raises hundreds of thousands of birds every year, "bred for the bullet," which is a big industry there. Having Banger on the other end of the stick is hilarious, and there are a lot of adventures and funny situations that come up. Now, this book is published by Vintage Books, a British publisher, and is NOT at LAPL. But I loved it so much I bought a used copy of it. If you want to read it just let me know, happy to share the fun. I did urge LAPL to get it into the collection, but that may take years...so it's here in Encino for you.