

# WESTERN TANAGER



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Los Angeles Audubon Society

## KILL YOUR LAWN

by Garry George

**F**all is the best time to consider converting your yard or garden space to native habitat for the benefit of resident and migrant species even in an urban environment. That lawn is useless. It provides habitat only for introduced isopods, requires noise polluting, dust generating, expensive gardeners, and is destructive to the southern California environment by using up water and generating chemical runoff from the pesticides and fertilizers needed to maintain it.

National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Program [www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/](http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/) suggests three important steps:

- 1) Assess your yard or garden space. You may already be providing some habitat for wildlife.
- 2) Provide the four basic elements for survival – food, water, cover and nesting sites.
- 3) Practice resource conservation in your own yard.

Big, old trees are ideal for southern California birds especially native oaks



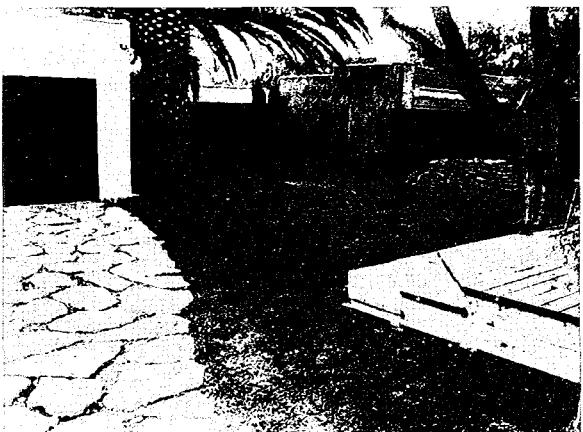
Front yard

and sycamores that provide food and canopy cover for nesting and perching above human habitat. Dead trees and limbs attract woodpeckers. Even introduced species such as jacaranda from Brazil produce canopy and blossoms that attract insects for warblers and flycatchers during migration. Ficus and other introduced species might provide nesting sites but little else. Native fruit and berry producing shrubs like toyon, *Mahonia aquiflora* (the root has actually been shown to contain high proportions of strong antimicrobial agents used to treat

a variety of skin disorders as well as digestive disorders and impure blood conditions), *Ribes* and even introduced pyracantha provide fruit for mockingbirds, jays, thrushes, and Cedar Waxwings which winter in southern California. Salvias, buckwheats, and grasses that produce seeds provide food for Mourning Doves and finches, and flowers for hummingbirds and butterflies.

Flowering plants, especially red tubular ones like low growing *Zauschneria californica mexicana* and Santa Cruz

Island snapdragon, acacia, *Ribes*, or introduced *Buddleja davidii*, attract hummingbirds which establish territories around their favorites. Santa Cruz Island lavatera does both with an abundance of insects and pink flowers. It's the favorite spot in my yard for insect eating birds every spring and fall, even though I have to stake up the trunk of the plant because the root system is adapted to clinging to rocky surfaces in strong wind rather than in soil. This backyard bonsai reminds me of Japan.



Backyard cleared – ready for planting – 1995

Species of *Ceanothus* (wild lilac) in various growing patterns (ground cover, mid-level, and tall shrub) and colors and mallows provide cover and the blossoms that bring insects, especially pollinators like butterflies and bees. We've even found Monarch Butterflies in the milkweed that grows in the driveway and Anise Swallowtails in the front yard. Research and buy plants and books at the Theodore Payne Native Plant Institute in Sunland and support this non-profit. [www.theodorepayne.org/](http://www.theodorepayne.org/)

Installation of a pond, water garden, stream, vernal pool, or birdbath is the most important element you can have in your garden. Recycling, gurgling water will attract the most birds, especially migrants that hear the water before they see it as they fly over, and resident birds will build a routine around your water. The sound of cascading water brings a calming element to any household, blocks street traffic sounds, and provides a visual element from windows behind which birdwatchers can be distracted for hours cataloging the passing parade of bathers and drinkers. Shelter over and near the water element provides a safe perch just before entering and for drying wings, and safety from predatory cats. A great source of inexpensive water elements easy to install is Avian Aquatics. [www.avianaquatics.com/](http://www.avianaquatics.com/)

Make a list of any structures that provide habitat elements, such as bird feeders, nesting structures, rock walls, or log piles. Install any of these elements if possible. Finally, consider the physical features of your yard such as sun and wind exposure and soil conditions. Augment your soil with a slightly sandy mix that might encourage the roots of natives to

establish better than they might in southern California clay. Plant in the fall and let the rains help establish the natives during this tenuous time. Don't worry about watering once they are established. Natives mostly don't need it except maybe some help in the hottest August or September. Warning: you will lose some!

Consider having your habitat certified by National Wildlife Federation so you can put a sign in your yard. Educate your neighbors. Keep data on what happens in your newly created habitat. Answer the questions of the kids that stop and wonder why you have such a weedy yard.



Just after planting

Since we converted our yard in urban mid-Wilshire in 1995 we have enjoyed 62 species of birds including Great Blue Heron and Great Egret (fishing for mosquito fish from County Mosquito Abatement Department), Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Red-tailed hawks, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant (escaped!), Western Gull, Rock Dove, pairs of Spotted and Mourning doves, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (!), Blue-and-yellow Macaw (!), daily flocks of Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, Great Horned Owl (in the eucalyptus down the street), Vaux's and White-throated swifts over the house, Black-chinned, Anna's, Costa's (this year!), Rufous and Anna's hummingbirds, Nuttall's and Downy woodpeckers, Northern Flicker (migrant), Pacific-slope

and Ash-throated flycatchers (migrants), nesting Black Phoebe, Northern Rough-winged and Barn swallows (migrants), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (migrant), Cedar Waxwings (winter), House Wren (migrant), Northern Mockingbird (resident), Swainson's and Hermit thrush (one Hermit wintered for three years in a row), Bushtit (flocks daily), noisy Western Scrub-Jays, Purple-backed Jay (!), American Crow, Common Raven, European Starling, House Sparrow, Cassin's and Warbling vireos (migrant), House Finch, Lesser, and American goldfinch, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, Hermit, MacGillivray's and Wilson's warblers, Western Tanager, California Towhee, White-crowned and

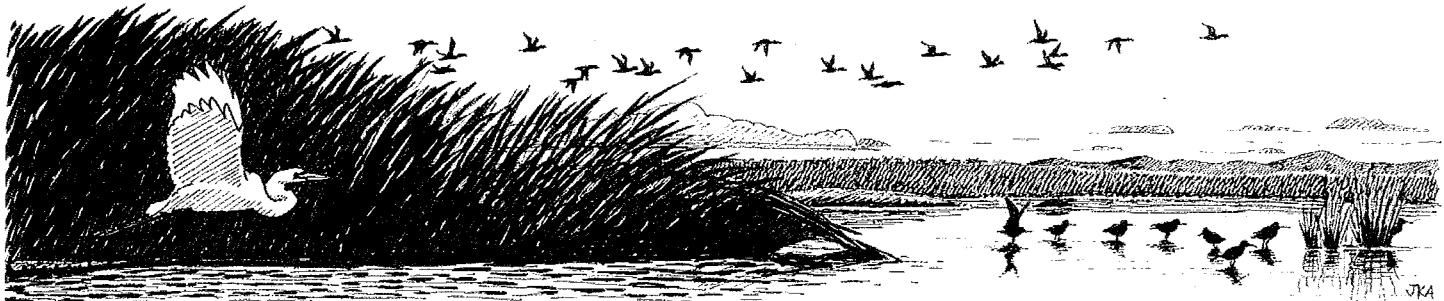
Song sparrows (what is that doing here for two days only?), Black-headed Grosbeak, Brewer's Blackbird and Bullock's Oriole. It's not the list that Olga and Herb Clarke have at their home in La Cañada (over 100 species), but for an urban environment we've really enjoyed spotting every species.

We have also found breeding San Diego Alligator Lizards on the rocks we brought in, and raccoons have tried to find fish in our pond but settled for earthworms. 'Possum and introduced rats and mice occasionally come through but don't stay. Feral and unlicensed cats are dispatched with by using a Hav-a-heart trap and a trapping permit. City animal control centers will spay or neuter and offer to find them a home.



photos by the author

Residential riparian habitat – 2002



# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

**F**riends, let's face the grim reality: we've never had it so bad. We are faced with an administration that is utterly opposed to an environmentally sound America. We have a President and Vice-President, selected by a majority of the Supreme Court, who occupy the White House illegally. Polls over the years indicate that most Americans want clean air and water, preservation of our forests, our wetlands, our wildlife. They expect the government to be the steward of the people's property, to protect it from being abused or stolen by unscrupulous private interests. After one and a half years of his term Mr. Bush has accumulated an incredible record of service to his financial supporters.

**OIL:** As both Bush and Cheney are former oil men it was natural for them to take care of their good friends in the business. Their powerful attempt to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge almost passed the Senate and we can be sure they'll try again. California won a court ruling that would prevent offshore drilling on old oil leases but Gale Norton, Interior Secretary, is fighting to eliminate the rule. And the administration is gung ho for drilling in national forests like Yellowstone and even relatively small ones like Los Padres in our backyard.

**COAL and OTHER MINING:** Bush cut off a program to require companies mining on federal land to clean up after they're through. There is little attempt by the administration in places like Appalachia, where whole mountain-tops are sheared off, to eliminate the practice of shoving the debris into the adjacent valleys.

**POWER PLANTS:** Bush went back on his campaign pledge to require power plants to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. His own EPA chief has supported the reduction.

**GLOBAL WARMING:** Now that even our government scientists have agreed that global warming is for real, another campaign pledge is broken. Yes, Bush said he'd take care of the CO<sub>2</sub> problem when he was elected and then disowned the Kyoto agreement to curb greenhouse gases; it was signed by 160 nations.

**PERSONNEL:** It's a fact that many of the managers and lobbyists of corporations that eagerly funded the George Bush campaign are now government employees where they may enthusiastically influence decisions favorable to their old buddies.

**GALE NORTON:** The Secretary of the Interior started her career with James Watt, the ultimate anti-environmentalist. She had been a vigorous advocate of the goals of big business in their opposition to environmental hurdles. Property rights were sacred and she became a perfect candidate for the new administration. In her appearances before congressional committees for confirmation she made these statements: "I intend to make the conservation of America's natural resources my top priority." "I support the Endangered Species Act and the preservation of endangered species." And "We encourage everyone to draw inspiration from our greatest national treasures...."

So, unlike Reagan's James Watt, who made no bones about his basic, religious opposition to public ownership of our "national treasures", Gale Norton spoke

softly and then carried a big stick. When Interior's scientists stated that drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would be bad for the wildlife, she demanded that their report be withdrawn and replaced by one she approved.

So we're faced with the worst of all possible worlds environmentally. One conservation organization is going to court to expose the administration's deliberate attempt to destroy the progress this nation has made to give us a cleaner, safer, more acceptable place to live.

## NOTES:

**AMAZON JUNGLE STILL TAKING A BLOW:** Though the loss of Amazon's forest is down from a high point in 2000, logging and fire losses last year have taken a toll of over 31% when about 6000 acres were destroyed. The Amazon rainforest provides habitat for close to 30% of the world's plant and animal life. This makes one wonder what the enormous fires in Arizona and Colorado are doing to our native species.

**CANADA ON THE WAY TO AN ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT?** The House of Commons of our northern neighbor recently passed the Species At Risk Act (SARA) which would protect endangered plants and animals. If the law passes the Senate it would protect over 230 species, some of which freely cross into the United States. It also protects critical habitat on federal lands. However it does not offer protection outside of federal lands, the northern territories, and native reserves. It's a start 

Press release:

## America's Birdiest City 2002 – San Diego!

The sightings have been recorded, the lists have been totaled, and the results are official: San Diego has emerged as America's Birdiest City for 2002, with 218 species recorded within the city limits during their 24-hour count period. Last year, in the first year of this informal competition, New York city was the winner with 188 species.

Trailing San Diego this year were New York, 205; Corpus Christi, 188; Boston, 152; and Milwaukee, 146. Both the San Diego and New York totals were new city records. A separate competition was held among smaller cities, and here the winner, with bragging rights as America's Birdiest Small City, was Duluth, (coincidentally, the city that so graciously hosted this year's ABA Annual Convention). Congratulations, Minnesotans! Trailing Duluth's 183, the other top small cities were Santa Cruz, with 170, and Newport Beach, 155. At the top of the Really Small Cities was Blythe, with 115 species.

All of the participating cities had interesting sightings. But in the case of the winning team, at least, some of the best birds were left off the list because of their origin or status. For example, the Big Avocado's most oddball sighting, a Curve-billed Thrasher, was not included because of the possibility that it was an escaped cage bird. Nor did they count the spectacular Black-throated Magpie-Jays, now resident near the Mexican border, presumed to be escapees and not yet deemed established. And San Diego recorded four species of *psittacines*, only one of which, Red-crowned Parrot, appears on the ABA Checklist and could be officially counted. Among Duluth's best birds were Snowy Owl (an amazing seasonal oddity), Snow Bunting, and Red-throated Loon.

If anyone is thinking, "Gee, my town could have topped those results," well, one of the competition's rewards is bragging rights. And you can't bray if you don't play! We'll look for your entry next year. We'd especially like to see such bird-rich cities as Houston, Los Angeles, and Tucson. Among the smaller cities, where were Brownsville, Galveston, Newburyport, Pensacola, and Show Low?

It should be emphasized that there

are practical applications for the ABC results, as well: as a tool to educate local residents about birds and birding, as the start of a time series of data on local spring season breeders and migrants, and (especially for the top cities) as a demonstration of the importance of local habitat protection. The San Diego effort was covered by the *San Diego Union-Tribune* as well as by local television stations, providing significant, positive publicity for birders and birding. Moreover, several of the cities combined their ABC effort with other worthwhile activities such as Audubon birdathons, International Migratory Bird Day, and local migratory hawk watches.

If anyone would like the complete results for any particular city, e-mail event coordinator Phil Pryde at the address below for information on reaching the contact person for that city (and to receive San Diego's results, if you would like them). Thanks again to all the teams that participated. It's not too soon to start organizing your 2003 campaign. Are you going to let San Diego and Duluth get away with this?

Phil Pryde — *PhilPinSD@aol.com*  
America's Birdiest City coordinator

Letter from Kimball Garrett:

## America's Birdiest City 2003 – Los Angeles?

a 24-hour total of 218 species. New York was second (205 spp.), followed by Corpus Christi (188), Duluth (183), Santa Cruz (170), Newport Bay (155), Boston (152) and Milwaukee (146). Los Angeles didn't even make the list because (to my knowledge) no effort was made.

This sort of count (which must be conducted entirely within city limits) is silly in many ways, but on the other hand even in Los Angeles there might be some political conservation clout in being able to say that "our city had the highest bird count in the country this year."

I suggest we L.A. birders consider jumping into the fray next year – probably in late April. I think that with about 30-40 parties we could really do well. Reaching 200 species should be fairly easy, and with some scarce migrants, lingering wintering birds, and good luck with seabirds and shorebirds, we might be able to match San Diego's total of 218.

We will be seeking help through L.A., P.V./South Bay, S.M.B., and S.F.V. Audubon chapters. Watch for further details in the next *Tanager*.

You were perhaps as chagrined as I to read that San Diego took the "America's Birdiest City in 2002" prize this spring, with

Consider that the following areas are ALL within the Los Angeles city limits. Of course if Valley secession passes in November, we can probably just forget about it . . . .

**COASTAL** – Pt. Fermin and offshore, Cabrillo Beach/L.A. Harbor, Terminal Island (western portion), San Pedro Parks: Peck, Leland, Averill, Friendship, Harbor Regional Park/Lomita Channel, Banning Park, Playa del Rey/Ballona Creek, Venice Beach (north to Santa Monica), Dockweiler State Beach (El Segundo Blvd. n), Will Rogers State Beach (w to Castellammare and to just e of Channel Rd.)

**L.A. BASIN and VICINITY** – Hahn State Recreation Area/Baldwin Hills, Village Green, Exposition Park/USC Campus, L.A. River: Griffith Park to Downtown, Elysian Park, Silver Lake Reservoir, Debs Park, Echo Park, Griffith Park, Forest Lawn Hollywood, Hollywood Reservoir, Franklin Canyon/Reservoir, Stone Canyon Reservoir, Rancho Park, Los Angeles Country Club, UCLA Campus, L.A. National Cemetery, Veterans Administration, Sullivan Canyon, Mandeville Canyon, Pacific Palisades, Temescal Gateway Park

### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY –

Sepulveda Basin, Encino Reservoir, Pierce College, Bell Canyon Park, Chatsworth Reservoir, Verdugo Hills (n slope, west of Lowell Ave.), La Tuna Canyon, Big Tujunga Wash, Hansen Dam, Veteran's Park, El Cariso Park, O'Melveny Park, Limekiln Canyon, Browns Canyon, Stoney Point

# WESTERN TANAGER

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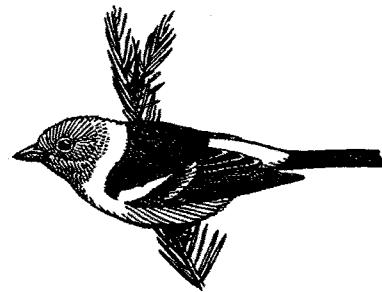


## DOES THE WESTERN TANAGER NEED A NEW NAME?

The Los Angeles Audubon Society's flagship and award-winning newsletter, the *Western Tanager*, is named after *Piranga ludoviciana*, the eye-catching songbird that serves as the chapter's logo. Standard field guides will tell you that the Western Tanager is one of four tanagers regularly occurring in North America, the tip of an iceberg that reaches its greatest development in the Neotropics (some recent guides will mention a couple of other species which straggle to the U.S., the Flame-colored Tanager and the Western Spindalis, the latter formerly known as the "Stripe-headed Tanager").

But what if our tanagers turned out not to be tanagers after all? A recently published study by two University of Michigan ornithologists sought to analyze the complex relationships of the "New World nine-primaried oscines", a huge radiation of songbirds including wood-warblers, tanagers, buntings, New World sparrows, blackbirds, orioles, and finches. These birds are sometimes all placed in a single family, the Fringillidae, or in a whole suite of related families, depending on the taxonomic authority one follows. They're particularly hard to scrutinize because of their apparently rapid and explosive evolutionary radiation; traditional taxonomic characters such as bill size and shape have proven to be unreliable indicators of evolutionary relationships, at best, so the Michigan authors used mitochondrial DNA to conduct their analysis.

Their results, many of which are corroborated by other molecular studies, show that the "tanagers" of the genus *Piranga* (as well as the ant-tanagers, *Habia*, and some other genera) are actually close relatives of the cardinals and grosbeaks, and not especially close to the vast diversity of Neotropical tanagers.

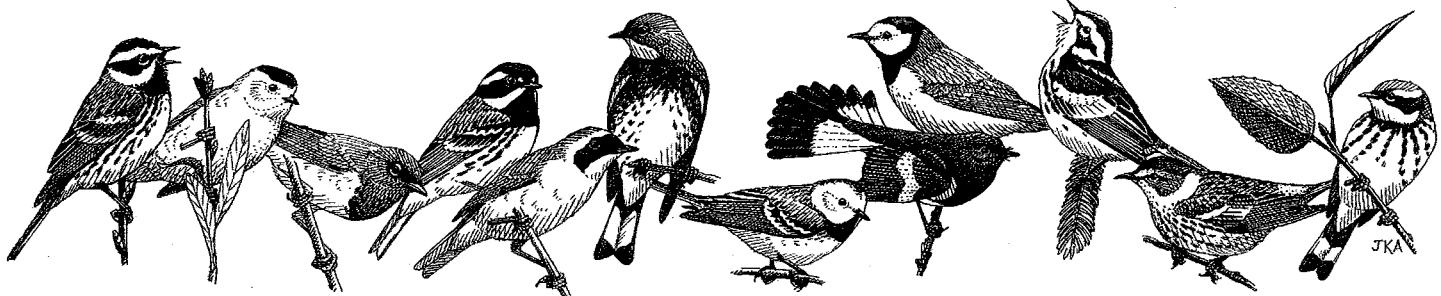


This same study suggests some additional surprising relationships that turns tanagerdom on its ear. The euphonias, bright little fruit-eaters of the neotropics, for example, cluster comfortably within a large group of finches including our goldfinches and the familiar Chaffinch and Brambling of Eurasia – it appears they're not tanagers after all. And in a bit of taxonomic *quid pro quo*, it turns out the the Brazilian Cardinal and its relatives in the genus *Paroaria* may not be cardinals after all, but tanagers! So is the Western Spindalis the sole remaining "true" tanager in the United States? Apparently not, as the molecular data show it to be closer to a different group of nine-primaried songbirds, perhaps the wood-warblers. In fact, it may well turn out that the only "true" tanagers to occur north of the Mexican border are the two species grassquits which have strayed to Florida (and once to Texas), birds which hadn't even been considered tanagers in the past!

So . . . are you looking forward to the next issue of our award-winning newsletter, the *Western Piranga*?

The complete study is by Tamaki Yuri and David P. Mindell (2002): Molecular phylogenetic analysis of Fringillidae, "New World nine-primaried oscines" (Aves: Passeriformes). *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 23: 229-243.

(Note: both the Editor and Kimball Garrett, who wrote the piece above, assure that there are no plans to change this newsletter's name!)



# BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Daniel S. Cooper, Audubon California

**M**id-summer birding Los Angeles this year was typically slow, with very few surprises. Kevin Larson's regular treks along the lower Los Angeles River in north Long Beach yielded excellent data on our locally-nesting shorebirds, which include Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Killdeer and, irregularly, Spotted Sandpiper. An unusual rain shower on 20 May raised the water level in the channel, inundating most of nearly 150 stilt nests. His early summer surveys also elucidated the late "off season" use of the channel by other species of shorebirds, which reaches a nadir in late May and early June. As most of these birds nest in the high Arctic (e.g. peeps, dowitchers) or the Great Basin (e.g. Wilson's Phalarope), the earliest returnees in June are thought to be those returning early after failed nesting attempts. However, it is likely that some may also be summering in small numbers within their wintering grounds, as other waterbirds like ducks and herons sometimes do. Scarcer early migrant shorebirds included three **Lesser Yellowlegs** along the river on 4 July and three **Surfbirds** on 16 June at the mouth of Ballona Creek (both KL). KL also obtained mid-summer records of several species of ducks believed to be absent or extirpated as nesters from coastal Los Angeles County, including Blue-winged Teal and Northern Shoveler.

Mid-summer seawatching from Leo Carrillo State Beach on 6 July (Kimball Garrett) yielded two species of alcids typically found farther north, two **Common Murres** and two or three **Pigeon Guillemots**, all in alternate ("breeding")

plumage. Guillemots nest commonly on the northern Channel Islands, but are rarely seen from shore in our area.

Another rare nester, **Least Bell's Vireo**, breeds here only in our larger flood control basins and river channels. KG was gratified to see five broods of juveniles

**R**ecords of rare and unusual birds reported in this column should be considered tentative pending review by the regional editors of *North American Birds* or, if appropriate, by the California Birds Records Committee.

Send observations with details to:

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on 15 July in the eight territories found this year along Big Tujunga Wash behind Hansen Dam, no doubt a direct result of the ongoing trapping of Brown-headed Cowbirds (which parasitize nests). Bell's Vireos were also found on territory along the Rio Hondo, singing in the willows at Peck Pit Park in El Monte on 30 May (Andrew Lee) and downstream at Bosque del Rio Hondo Park on 1 June (Larry Schmahl). Several **Yellow Warblers** were found at the former site, and three **Yellow-breasted Chat** territories at the latter, proving these scarce riparian obligates can set up shop given just a minimal amount of the wet willow habitat they require (including the Los Angeles River through Atwater, *fide* RB). A **Belted Kingfisher** at Peck Pit on 30 May (AL) is perhaps more interesting – though virtually unknown in recent times as a nester in the Los Angeles Basin, ample habitat (dirt banks of rivers and lakes) may exist within the gravel pits of nearby Irwindale and Azusa, which have always been off-limits to birders.

**Gray Flycatchers**, here at the southwestern edge of their breeding range, were on territory again along Ball Flat Rd. in the northeastern San Gabriel Mountains in late May (KG). Observers looking for these birds should also keep an eye (and ear) out for Gray Vireo, which breeds in tall, arid chaparral often mixed with pinyon pines. **Lincoln's Sparrows** were holding fast nearby at their only Los Angeles County nesting locale, the montane meadows at Big Pines (KG). **Grasshopper Sparrows**, very local nesters in extensive coastal-slope grassland, were detected in two

new areas this year, including birds singing on a grassy slope behind Forest Lawn Cemetery adjacent to Griffith Park from 12 June until the habitat was cleared in early July, ostensibly for fire control (Richard Barth). Too often, sensitive habitat within urban areas is destroyed even though it poses no threat whatsoever to human life or property. Ironically, brush clearance of chaparral in the San Gabriel Mountains no doubt "created" habitat for these semi-nomadic birds – at least two were heard buzzing on 22 and 23 June in a cleared area at 3200 feet, just above La Cañada (John Thompson). **Purple Finch**, which nests in the shady canyons of the San Gabriels and western Santa Monicas, were found unusually close to the central Los Angeles Basin this year, with a pair constructing a nest in the Fernell section of Griffith Park on the north side of Hollywood (RB). This perennial creek, currently degraded by chronic illegal activity and exotic plantings, has great potential as a natural area close to urban Los Angeles. An old sign declaring a portion of this area a "Bird Sanctuary" continues to intrigue newcomers, and why not?

A plea from KG for birders to submit all sightings of potentially-nesting **Purple Martins** and coastal-slope **Loggerhead Shrikes**, both of which have recently experienced catastrophic declines in our area, yielded disappointing (but predictable) results. Only two reports of martins and only a handful of shrike observations were received, including birds along the lower Los Angeles River (Cudahy, Bell Gardens and Long Beach); the San Gabriel River above Santa Fe Dam; Big Tujunga Wash above Hansen Dam; Ballona Wetlands; and on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Shrikes probably also persist as nesters in the Whittier/Puente Hills.

A handful of rare migrants was detected during what is usually the peak of spring "vagrant season" in California, late May and June. Two **Chimney Swifts** were seen in the skies over L.A. on 9 June, in north Long Beach (KL) and near the Baldwin Hills (RB). Were they returning to their downtown Los Angeles

roost for the summer? Northbound concentrations of Black Swift in southern California are expected, if irregular, so 12 at Hansen Dam on 25 May and 10-15 along Big Rock Creek at the northern base of the San Gabriels the next day (both KG) were noteworthy. The tail end of our "Calliope Spring" was a single male **Calliope Hummingbird** at a feeder in Tujunga on the late date of 25 May (KG). Vagrant warblers went virtually unreported, though a singing **Northern Parula** graced the wildlife area of Sepulveda Basin on 10 June (Dave Koeppel), and an **Ovenbird** was reported on 22 May from Banning Park in Wilmington (Tom Miko). An **Indigo Bunting** was apparently on territory at a pullout along Angeles Crest Highway 7 miles above La Cañada on 23 May (Barry Lyon) and a **Black-throated Sparrow** was either a very late spring migrant or a far-flung post-breeder at Malibu Lagoon on 4 June (RB).

Fall birding in southern California is now upon us, a time when each day can bring exciting vagrant species into our area. I cannot recommend strongly enough that readers purchase one of several reference books that include bar graphs showing the seasonal status of bird species, such as Schram's *Birder's Guide to Southern California*, Hamilton and Willick's *Birds of Orange County* or Cin-Ty Lee's *Bird-watching in Riverside California*. Birding with only binoculars and a field guide is like learning a new language with only a dictionary and no sense of grammar – you're only halfway there.

Starting as early as August, songbirds from the eastern U.S., such as Red-eyed Vireo, Hooded Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush (good luck!) are detected passing through the Southwest in small numbers, along with large numbers of western breeders (e.g. Warbling Vireo, Wilson's Warbler, and Willow Flycatcher). Shorebird migration will peak by mid-August, which is an excellent time to be on the lookout for those "rare-but-regular" migrants (e.g. Baird's Sandpiper). The end of August sees the first of the wayward taxa from the deserts that will continue through the

fall and winter, including White-winged Dove, Sage Thrasher, and maybe even Lark Bunting. This is also the time when seabirds from tropical zones push northward along the coast, resulting in the rare record of a frigatebird or a booby.

During the first week of September, Dickcissal and Bobolink may be flushed from weedy ditches and river channels along with multitudinous Lincoln's Sparrows. For the remainder of September through October, anything is possible virtually anywhere in southern California, from lingering summer breeders, migrants both eastern and western, and the vanguard of the winterers – a time to really scour your favorite patches for oddities and "old friends" alike.

Good birding! 



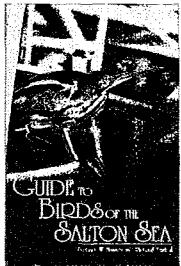
## Bird Tape (323) 874-1318

Please note that Jon Fisher is recording the Bird Tape again. Report birds to him at:

Jon Fisher  
(818) 544-5009 (work)  
Jon.L.Fisher@disney.com

# BOOKSTORE NEWS

Bookstore Toll Free Phone Number  
for Sales and Inquiries  
(888) LAAS428 or (888) 522-7428

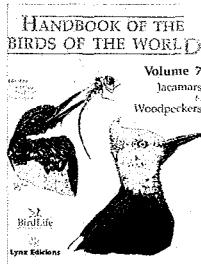


## *Guide to Birds of the Salton Sea*

The Salton Sea hosts more than 400 species of birds each year. This book includes maps and information of the best places for bird watching at the Salton Sea, and also has species accounts, information on nocturnal roosts, nesting, and rare species. (Soft)

Barbara W. Massey, Richard Zembal, 2002

\$24.95



## *Handbook of the Birds of the World, Vol 7, Jacamars to Woodpeckers*

Summary of Volume 7: Jacamars, Puffbirds, Barbets, Toucans, Honeyguides, Woodpeckers.

Includes a laminated index card of non-passerines.

310 x 240 mm, 613 pages, 70 color plates, 317 photographs, 408 distribution maps. (Hard)

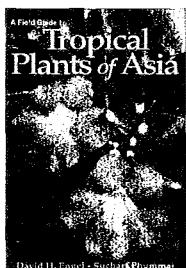
Edited by: Josep del Hoyo, Andrew Elliott, Jordi Sargatal, 2002

Pre-publication price (Limited quantity)

\$145.00

Regular price

\$185.00

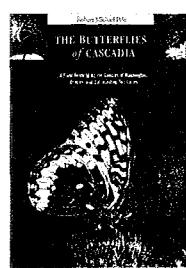


## *A Field Guide to Tropical Plants of Asia*

This field guide is organized according to the features of a plant you actually see. More than 300 color photographs. Species' scientific name, common vernacular names, and a brief write-up listing key facts and details. (Soft)

David H Engel, Suchart Phummai, 2000

\$19.95



## *The Butterflies of Cascadia:*

### *A Field Guide to All the Species of Washington, Oregon, and Surrounding Territories*

Covers every species and subspecies found in the Pacific Northwest, from southern B.C. to northern California and Nevada, from western Idaho to the Pacific, and all of Washington and Oregon. Illustrated by photographs from life, and also some color plates and full-color drawings. (Soft)

Robert Michael Pyle, 2002

\$29.95

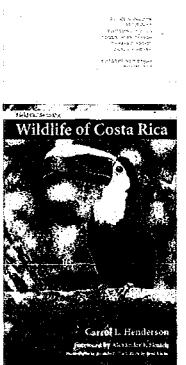


## *Jepson Desert Manual, Vascular Plants of Southeastern California*

The 128 color photographs, over 1000 line drawings allow for easy identification of California's desert plants. (Soft)

Margriet Wetherwax, Managing Editor Regents of the University of California, 2002

\$35.00



## *Field Guide to the Wildlife of Costa Rica*

This field guide presents nearly three hundred species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, moths, and other invertebrates. The author has chosen the species that ecotourists are most likely to see, along with a selection of rarer, sought-after animals. 345 pages, B&W photographs, B&W illustrations, and maps. (Soft)

Carrol L. Henderson; Illustrated by Steve Adams; Foreword by Alexander F. Skutch, 2002

\$39.95

# Orphan Birds

## Los Angeles Breeding Bird Atlas Species Need Sponsors

For an adoption fee of \$100 your name (or the name of your honoree) will be entered in the Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas. The donation will support the printing of the Atlas and is tax deductible. This is a very good way to honor a friend, dedicate a memorial, or just see your name in print. The following species have not been adopted.

Pied-billed Grebe  
Western Grebe  
Clark's Grebe  
Pelagic Cormorant  
Brandt's Cormorant  
Double-crested Cormorant  
White-faced Ibis  
Cattle Egret  
Green Heron  
Egyptian Goose  
Blue-winged Teal  
Cinnamon Teal  
Northern Pintail  
Northern Shoveler  
Gadwall  
Redhead  
Ring-necked Duck  
Bufflehead  
Ruddy Duck  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Swainson's Hawk  
Golden Eagle  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
Virginia Rail  
Common Moorhen  
American Coot  
Snowy Plover  
Killdeer  
Black-necked Stilt  
American Avocet  
Common Snipe  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Caspian Tern  
Elegant Tern  
Forster's Tern  
Xantus's Murrelet  
Rock Dove  
Band-tailed Pigeon  
Ringed Turtle-Dove  
Eurasian Collared-Dove  
Inca Dove  
Common Ground-Dove

Black-hooded Parakeet  
Blue-crowned Parakeet  
White-fronted Parrot  
Blue-fronted Parrot  
Yellow-headed Parrot  
Barn Owl  
Long-eared Owl  
Costa's Hummingbird  
Ladder-backed Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Western Wood-Pewee

Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
Brown Creeper  
Red-whiskered Bulbul  
Rock Wren  
Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
European Starling  
Nashville Warbler  
Yellow Warbler  
Black-throated Gray Warbler  
Hermit Warbler  
MacGillivray's Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Hooded Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Summer Tanager  
Chipping Sparrow  
Brewer's Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Blue Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Great-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Bullock's Oriole  
Purple Finch  
Cassin's Finch  
Red Crossbill  
European Goldfinch  
Pine Siskin  
Lawrence's Goldfinch  
House Sparrow  
Nutmeg Mannikin  
Zebra Finch



Willow Flycatcher  
Dusky Flycatcher  
Gray Flycatcher  
Ash-throated Flycatcher  
Cassin's Kingbird  
Western Kingbird  
Bell's Vireo  
Gray Vireo  
Cassin's Vireo  
Plumbeous Vireo  
Hutton's Vireo  
Warbling Vireo  
Purple Martin  
Tree Swallow

## PELAGIC TRIPS

### Saturday, September 7 –

#### Northern Channel Islands Monument Trip: Anacapa, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz Islands, toward San Miguel Island.

12-hour trip departs from the Oxnard Marina at 7:30 A.M. on the M/V Vanguard. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented shearwaters; Black, Least, and Ashy storm-petrels; cormorants (three); Sabine's Gull; Arctic Tern; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Common Murre; Craveri's, and Xantus's murrelets; Cassin's Auklet. Rarities: Buller's and Flesh-footed shearwaters; South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger. Blue, Finback, and Humpback whales have been seen on this trip.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, David Pereksta.** \$79 – Galley on board.

### Saturday, October 12 –

#### From Marina del Rey out to sea toward the Channel Islands National Monument. Twelve-hour trip departs from Marina del Rey at 6:00 A.M. on the R/V UCLA Seaworld. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, and Buller's (rare) shearwaters; Black, Ashy, and Least storm-petrels; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Rarities: South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger; Common Murre; Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kevin Larson and Bernardo Alps.**

\$50 – tea and coffee, no galley.

### Saturday, October 26 –

#### San Pedro Channel past the east end of Santa Catalina Island toward San Clemente Island.

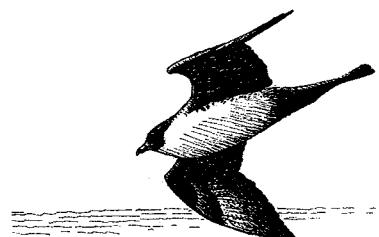
Twelve-hour trip departs from San Pedro at 6:00 A.M. on the R/V Vantuna. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Buller's and Pink-footed shearwaters; Black and Ashy storm-petrels; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Common Murre; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets; Xantus's Murrelet. Rarities: Long-tailed Jaeger; South Polar Skua; and perhaps Red-billed Tropicbird. Several species of dolphins as well as

Elephant Seals are seen on this trip.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kimball**

**Garrett, and Kevin Larson.**

\$59 – tea and coffee, no galley.



### Saturday, November 9 –

#### Ventura Marina toward San Miguel

**Island** on the new fast Catamaran M/V Islander. Nine-hour trip departs from Ventura at 8:00 A.M. and returns by 5:00 P.M. After dropping off campers on Santa Cruz Island, we have the boat to ourselves, and head toward the 1000 fathom water about 10 miles from San Miguel Island. Expected birds: Northern Fulmar; Black-vented, Sooty, and Pink-footed shearwaters; Black Storm-Petrel; South Polar Skua; Pomarine Jaeger; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Occasionally: Craveri's Murrelet; Rarities: Leach's Storm-Petrel; Flesh-footed and Buller's shearwaters; Black-footed Albatross; perhaps Layson Albatross.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kevin Larson, David Pereksta and Bernardo Alps.**

\$79 – full galley on board.

### REFUND POLICY FOR PELAGIC TRIPS

If a participant cancels 31 days or more prior to departure, a \$5 service charge will be deducted from the refund. There is no participant refund if requested fewer than 30 days before departure, unless there is a paid replacement available. Call LAAS for a possible replacement. Please do not offer the trip to a friend as it would be unfair to those on the waiting list.

*All pelagic trips must be filled 35 days prior to sailing. Please reserve early.*

## LAAS INTERNATIONAL TOURS

### THE BEST OF COSTA RICA – Febrary 23, 2003

Travel with the Los Angeles Audubon Society Birding/Wildlife Adventure. Resplendent Quetzal, Toucans, Antbirds, and lush tropical rainforests.

### AMAZON VOYAGE/PERU – June 14, 2003

MACHU PICCHU, extension.

One of the great voyages in Natural History, with exotic wildlife, and an abundance of birds in lush tropical wilderness.

### AFRICA/BOTSWANA – November 13, 2003

ZAMBIA extension.

Derek Solomon, local leader. An incredible safari to the Okavango Delta and Moremi Game Reserve. Victoria Falls, Luangwa National Park. See one of the richest concentrations of birds and wildlife in the world.

### FOR ITINERARIES and MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Olga Clarke, Travel Director

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Phone/fax: (818) 249-9511

e-mail: oclarke@earthlink.net

## FIELD TRIPS

*continued from page 12*

Take the Marina Fwy (90 W) to Culver Blvd. and turn left for a mile, turn right on Pacific Ave. The lot is on the right. Lot or street parking is usually not a problem. Three-hour walk. 'scopes helpful. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

### Sunday, September 15 – California City and Galileo Hills.

Leader: **Nick Freeman**. This location is a migrant magnet and vagrant vortex. Songbirds, flycatchers, etc. Take Hwy 14 about 4 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops and turn left on 20 Mule Team Rd. just past the Golf Course. Turn left at the Galileo Hills sign before the hill, take the first paved right, your first right again, into the Silver Saddle Country Club, followed by two paved lefts into the lot. Park by the pond. About 2 hours driving time from L.A. Phone sign-up with LAAS mandatory.

12 max. Bring lunch, sun block. Meet at 7:30 A.M., finish up 4-ish.

**Saturday, September 21 –  
Hansen Dam.** Leader **Dustin Alcala**. We'll search for migrant songbirds, early waterbirds, and lingering residents in the willow forest and other habitats that make the dam one of the best birding locales in L.A. County. Take the 210 E from Sylmar, exit Osborne Street going S, then turn left to stay on Osborne St. Turn left at Dronefield St. into parking lot with Hansen Dam Recreation Center sign. Long walk, bring water! Bird 7:00 A.M. until noon.

**Saturday, September 21 –  
Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.** Leader: **Raymond Schep**. This trip covers landscaped parkland and natural coastal scrub habitats, and is paced for beginning birders and members of the Baldwin Hills community. The park entrance is off of La Cienega Blvd., between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$3 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

**Saturday, September 28 –  
Malibu to McGrath.** Field biologist **Roy Van de Hoek** will lead. Passerines should be moving fast and furious through coastal migration spots. Late shorebirds as well. Probably over 100 species. Take PCH N over the bridge in Malibu, turn right on Cross Creek Road. Meet at the Starbuck's coffee house on the right at 7:30 A.M.

**Saturday, October 5 –  
Santa Barbara Area.** Local talent **Wes Fritz** leads. Coastal riparian migrant traps will be scoured for possible eastern vagrants among the western passerines. Possible stops include: Refugio and El Capitan State Beaches, Carpinteria Beach. Take the 101 Hwy N through Santa Barbara to the Los Carneros offramp, turn right (N), then right again just before the fire station into the free parking lot. Meet here at 8:00 A.M. Possible \$2 state park fee elsewhere. 1.5 hour drive from L.A. Bring a lunch.

**Sunday, October 6 –  
Topanga State Park.** Leader: **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See September 1 listing for details.

**Sunday, October 13 –  
Whittier Narrows.** Leader: **Ray Jillson**. Meet at 8:15 A.M. See September 8 listing for details.

**Saturday, October 19 –  
Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.** Leader: **Raymond Schep**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See September 21 listing for details.

**Sunday, October 20 –  
Ballona Wetlands.** **Bob Shanman** leads. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See September 15 listing for details.

**Sunday, November 3 –  
Topanga State Park.** Leader: **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See September 1 listing for details.

**Saturday, November 16 –  
Newport Back Bay.** Leader **Mary Freeman**. Meet at the "Sharp-tail Spot" on the NW bay at the end of University Drive (small street) at 7:32 A.M. for high tide.

## Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in Baldwin Hills Get Outdoors – Get Involved

The first Saturday of each month LAAS will sponsor a work project at the **Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area**.

Check in at the parking kiosk about 8:00 A.M. The attendant will give you directions to the current project and the \$3.00 parking fee will be waived. The park entrance is off La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St.

Please join us:

**Saturday, October 5**

**Saturday, November 2**

**Saturday, December 7**

### RESERVATION AND FEE EVENTS (Limited Participation) Policy and Procedure

Reservations will be accepted ONLY if ALL the following information is supplied:

- 1) Trip desired
- 2) Names of people in your party
- 3) Phone numbers:
  - (a) usual and
  - (b) evening before event, in case of cancellation
- 4) Separate check (no cash please) to LAAS for exact amount for each trip
- 5) Self-addressed stamped envelope for confirmation and associated trip information

Send to:  
LAAS Reservations  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694

If there is insufficient response, the trip will be cancelled two Wednesdays prior to the scheduled date (four weeks for pelagics). You will be so notified and your fee returned. Your cancellation after that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement. Millie Newton is available at Audubon House on Wednesdays from noon to 4:00 PM. to answer questions about field trips. Our office staff is also available Tuesday through Saturday for most reservation services.

### REFUND POLICY FOR PELAGIC TRIPS

If a participant cancels 31 days or more prior to departure, a \$5 service charge will be deducted from the refund. There is no participant refund if requested fewer than 30 days before departure, unless there is a paid replacement available. Call LAAS for a possible replacement. Please do not offer the trip to a friend as it would be unfair to those on the waiting list.

*All pelagic trips must be filled 35 days prior to sailing. Please reserve early.*

# EVENING MEETINGS

September 10, 2002      **Kathy Keane**  
Status of the Least Tern in California

The Least Tern of the west coast is an endangered subspecies which nests on only a few beaches and coastal wetlands. Kathy, a wildlife biologist who has worked with the California Department of Fish and Game on Least Tern conservation projects, will share information from her years of monitoring and research on the breeding biology of this species and the threats that its populations face.

October 8, 2002      **Kimball Garrett**  
What Museum Collections Teach Us About Birds and Bird Conservation

Kimball Garrett, Ornithology Collections Manager at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, will demonstrate how bird specimens are prepared and the wealth of information scientists gain from them, much of which is directly applicable to bird conservation.

**Meet at 7:30 P.M.**  
in  
**Plummer Park**

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard  
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694

## Meeting Raffle

To increase your chances of winning, visit the LAAS Bookstore and Headquarters either on meeting day or the Saturday immediately preceding the monthly meeting and receive an extra raffle ticket to submit at the meeting.

**Good luck!**

## F I E L D T R I P S

*Before setting out on any field trip,  
please call the LAAS bird tape at  
(323) 874-1318 for special instructions  
or possible cancellations that may have  
occurred by the Thursday before the  
trip.*

**Sunday, September 1 –**  
**Topanga State Park.** **Gerry Haigh** will lead participants through this diverse coastal mountain area. An ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new in the area. A biologist is often present. From Ventura Blvd., take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 7 miles S, turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into Trippet Ranch parking lot. From PCH,

take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking \$2. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

**Saturday-Sunday, September 7-8 –**  
**Salton Sea.** Leader **Howard King.** Meet at 9:00 A.M. at the Wister Headquarters, at Hwy 111 and Davis Rd. This is prime time for migrant landbirds and stray seabirds. Saturday night will be spent in Brawley. Reserve a hotel. Areas we may visit include Wister, NWR, Hot Springs Road, Brawley, and beyond. Be prepared for extreme birding in extreme heat. Your car must be reliable with good AC! Reserve by phone with LAAS. 12 max. No fee.

**Sunday, September 8 –**  
**Whittier Narrows.** Leader: **Ray Jillson.** View colorful resident and migrating birds, including the introduced Northern Cardinal. Take Peck Dr. off the 60 Fwy in South El Monte (just west of the 605 Fwy). Take the off ramp onto Durfee Ave. heading W (right) and turn left into the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave. \$2 donation. Meet at 8:15 A.M.

**Saturday, September 14 –**  
**Piute Ponds and beyond.** Local leader **Alan Brown.** A good mix of shorebirds, waterfowl and songbirds will be migrating through at this time. Bring lunch. Meet at 7:30 A.M., finish 3:00 P.M. or so. To reserve with LAAS and learn Rosamond meeting place, mail a SASE by September 6 for required, limited sign-up, including citizenship status, phone number, e-mail, and social security number. No drop-ins.

**Sunday, September 15 –**  
**Ballona Wetlands.** **Bob Shanman** will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland. Adult shorebirds will be numerous. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot.

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard  
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694

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*continued on page 11*