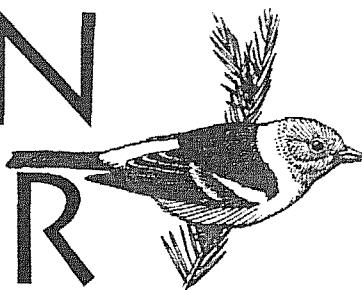


WESTERN TANAGER



Volume 70 Number 6 July/August 2004

Los Angeles Audubon Society

PREPARING FOR

WEST NILE VIRUS



by Jean Brandt

West Nile Virus (WNV) arrived in the Los Angeles area in a major way in 2003, sickening three humans in California, as well as several valuable horses. Many forget that the most numerous victims of WNV are birds, in particular corvid species (jays, magpies, crows, ravens). It kills almost 100% of crows that it infects, and within a few short years, a city's crow population may be decimated. Experience in other parts of the USA indicates that once WNV arrives, it is here to stay. So now is the time to prepare.



First, we should be prepared for the impact of WNV in 2004 to be much greater than it was last year. West Nile has been spreading westward from its initial introduction in New York City in 1999, and the leading edge of the invasion barely reached California late in 2003 near the end of the mosquito season. Mosquitoes are the only vector for transmission from one vertebrate host (bird) to the next; they acquire the virus by feeding on a viremic host, and transmit the virus with their saliva when taking a second bloodmeal on an uninfected host. West Nile is transmitted primarily by *Culex* mosquitos but has also been reported from 35 species of mosquitoes belonging to other mosquito genera, including *Aedes* and *Culiseta*. This broad vector host range is in part responsible



for the rapid spread of the virus across the United States. Mosquito species in the genus *Culex* typically wait up to seven days between bloodmeals. Thus, transmission levels may take months to build up to epidemic proportions.

To protect yourself and your family from West Nile Virus infection, remember:

- Avoid mosquito bites, in particular during the night when *Culex* are at their peak for biting.
- DEET-based repellants when used as directed are the most effective.
- Exposed skin should be covered when outdoors at night.
- Screens on windows should be repaired to avoid being bitten while asleep indoors.
- Ensure that any mosquito-breeding on your property is eliminated by keeping your gutters drained, and swimming pools and birdbaths cleaned and maintained.
- Turn containers upside down during rainy periods, etc.

Mosquitoes can and do breed in the smallest amounts of stagnant water. If there are permanent mosquito-breeding sites that concern you, inform the vector control authorities for your community. The Greater Los Angeles Vector Control

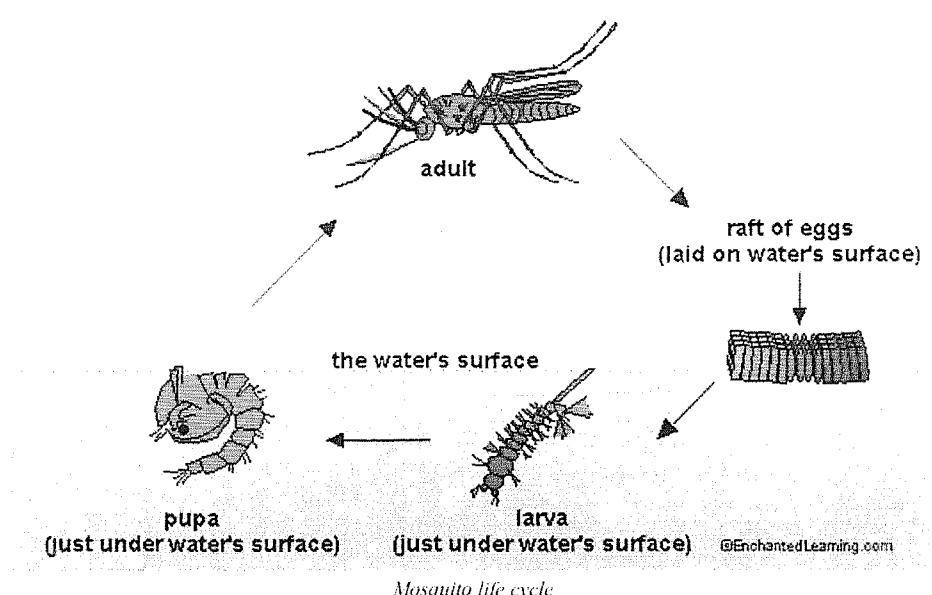
District may be contacted at www.glaevcd.org/ or (818) 364-9589. Remember that people over 50 years of age are at the greatest risk of developing severe neurological disease, which can lead to death. However, the typical disease affecting younger adults, a flu-like syndrome, can still be debilitating for several weeks.

According to government figures, in areas where the virus is established, about one percent of mosquitoes carry WNV. In humans, the numbers are not accurately known. In the United States last year there were almost 10,000 cases and 246 deaths. And, it is estimated that 99% of infections are asymptomatic. Only one to five percent of the remaining symptomatic human infections lead to severe complications including encephalitis and death. One positive outcome from infection is immunity. There is as yet no vaccine available for human use, although a candidate vaccine is currently in human trials and may be available by 2006.

Unfortunately, there is no way to protect wild birds from the effects of WNV infection. Mosquito control efforts by the authorities may have a small impact, but these are mainly directed to where people live. Right now, these efforts are benefited by early warning of West Nile Virus activity in new areas.

The best means of early detection of WNV activity is through reports of dead birds. The authorities may collect some specimens for WNV testing for tracking purposes. If you see a freshly dead bird (dead for one day or less), report it to the Department of Health Services at their hotline (877) 968-2473 (877) WNV-BIRD). Reports can also be submitted through the Department of Health Services website at www.westnile.ca.gov which also has other related information. The authorities will usually want to know the species of the bird. Remember not to touch a bird carcass with bare hands. If you need to dispose of a dead bird, wear disposable gloves or handle the bird through a plastic bag. First turn the bag inside out, pull the bag over the carcass and place the bag within a second plastic bag for disposal (or submission to authorities for testing). This is the same technique used for cleaning up after your pet.

If it were only our burgeoning crow populations that were at risk, we might see a bright side to this epidemic; however, corvids are not the only avian victims of WNV. Since 1999, over 200 species of birds have died in North America. Passerine birds such as House Sparrows and House Finches seem to be more affected than other orders of birds, but raptors (hawks and owls) have also been hit hard. Needless to say, conservationists are also worried about the plight of endangered



species in California, such as the California Condor, Least Tern, Least Bell's Vireo, California Gnatcatcher, Loggerhead Shrike (coastal race), and others.

We hope that the impacts of WNV will be minor in 2004, but we need to be prepared for the worst. As I write these words (5/25/04), news broadcasters are reporting that mosquitoes from Pico Rivera have tested positive for WNV, the first such laboratory results in Los Angeles County. This finding, combined with the discovery of several birds that died from the disease in recent weeks, prompted officials to warn residents that California could be in for a large number

of human cases this summer and that the chance of an epidemic of West Nile Virus occurring in Los Angeles and neighboring counties is high. ☠

This article was written with assistance from Dr. Nicholas Komar, WNV specialist for the Centers for Disease Control in Fort Collins, CO and reviewed by Ellen Strauss, PhD, Division of Biology, California Institute of Technology; co-author of Viruses and Human Disease.

In Memory . . .

We are saddened to learn of the passing, May 25, 2004, of Los Angeles Audubon member Pat Nelson.

Pat had served on the Board of Directors as Recording Secretary and was a volunteer for the society for more than thirty years, most recently at the Bookstore.

Her interest in birding was exemplified by extensive travel with her husband, Paul, throughout North America and abroad, her strong commitment to environmental causes, and her special interest in Audubon's educational programs.

Pat was a member of Southwest Bird Study Club and also volunteered at the Audubon Center in Debs Park. Her other passions included jazz festivals, gardening, cooking, and reading.

Contributions may be made in Pat's memory to the charity of your choice or to one involving children's welfare.

Pat will be greatly missed by us all.

We get letters:

Dear Editor:

In the May/June issue, Steve Sosensky credits the Hansen Dam Parks Advisory Board (HDPAB) with "getting the Water Quality Control Board and Senator Feinstein's office involved" in the lakes dumping dispute at Hansen Dam. The basis for this misperception presumably stems from Steve's comparatively distant perch.

Successfully taking on an entity like the Corps required thousands of hours of hard work, on the part of hundreds of citizens, over a period of years. The local environmental watchdog group that spearheaded this monumental effort was the Tujunga Watershed Council (TWC).

The TWC began working closely with the CA Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) in June 2002, eight months before the current HDPAB was formed. The TWC contacted Senator Feinstein's office in July 2002, seven months before the current HDPAB was formed, and we gave the first tour of Hansen Dam to one of Senator Feinstein's aides in November 2002. It was the TWC that organized campaigns that resulted in hundreds of letters being sent to various elected officials on behalf of the Hansen Dam lakes.

The TWC never wavered from our original observation that a Clean Water Act violation had occurred. Trying to raise the HDPAB's awareness of the CRWQCB's jurisdiction at Hansen Dam, we

repeatedly requested that the Board be invited to HDPAB meetings, and this finally happened (once) in late 2003.

It was the TWC that was invited to give testimony at the CRWQCB's Hansen Dam hearings, not only because the TWC had evidence to prove that illegal dumping had occurred, but because the TWC was not afraid to go on record in opposition to the Corps.

In November 2003, when Senator Feinstein called upon the Army Corps to clean up its mess at Hansen Dam, suddenly many people were eager to jump aboard the bandwagon. We're happy for all this new support, because (as Edward Abbey said) "The concept of wilderness needs no defense, but it does need more defenders." Thanks to a powerful wave of pro-environment momentum which has swelled up around the Hansen Dam lakes dumping issue, our community is stronger and better equipped to defend its open space and wildlife habitat against future abuses.

If you wish to help, or just to keep up with environmental issues at Hansen Dam or the surrounding Big and Little Tujunga Washes, please check our website for frequent updates.

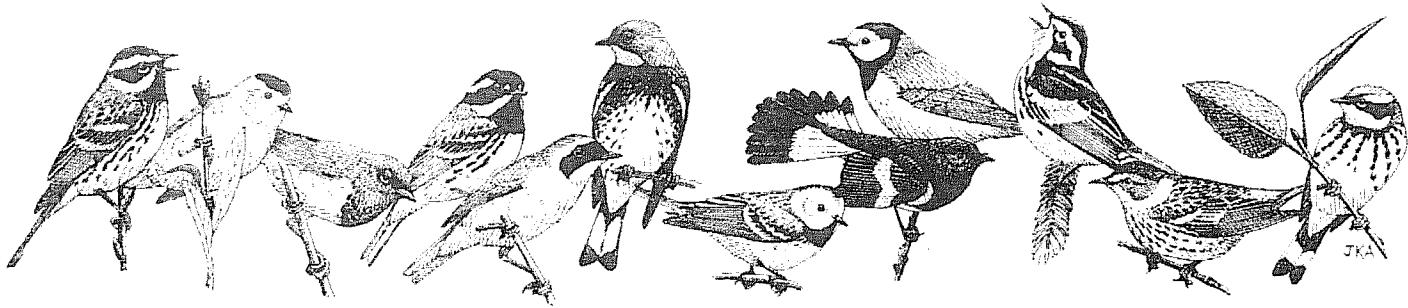
Thank you,
Deb Baumann
Tujunga Watershed Council & Stakeholders
www.tujungawatershed.org

LAAS INTERNATIONAL TOURS THE BEST OF COSTA RICA February 24 – March 8, 2005

This is a repeat of our highly successful 2004 trip to Costa Rica when we enjoyed spectacular scenery and recorded over 400 species of birds at a reasonable pace. Accommodations are first class with good food, while being accompanied by excellent, experienced guides and leaders. Come join us for an unforgettable adventure in a remarkably diverse, small country.

For information and itinerary, contact:

Olga Clarke, Travel Director, Los Angeles Audubon Society
Ph/Fax: (818) 249-9511 e-mail: oclarketravel@earthlink.net



BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Jon Feenstra

Another spring has sprung in Los Angeles and with it we have a mix of lingering winter birds and the arrival of those migrant species that we've been missing since last fall (and whatever lost friends came with them). Our rainy season lasted for a couple of weeks ending in early March and by the end of April we were cooking in record heat. However, it's spring, some of our birds departed, others came back, and we went out and saw them.

The biggest news of the spring was a possible **Glossy Ibis** (though a hybrid has not been ruled out). This alternate plumaged adult bird was found on May 12 with several White-faced Ibis at the Piute Ponds on Edwards Air Force Base in the Antelope Valley [MSM, CM]. There are only a handful of records of Glossy Ibis in the entire state. In addition to the ibis excitement, this year saw the appearance of numbers of **California Condors** in the San Gabriel Mountains beginning in March and continuing up to the writing of this article. The condors have been seen frequently relaxing on a microwave tower near Bear Divide above the San Fernando Valley [DA]. If you haven't gone looking for them yet, do it as soon as you're done reading this column, it's worth it. The condors frequenting the tower are a mix of gray-headed younger birds and orange-headed breeding adults. The total number has been estimated to run into the double digits!

In other bird news, a recurring wintering **Eurasian Wigeon** was last seen in the Sepulveda Basin on 3/15 [JB, PS]. Migrant **Swainson's Hawks** along the southern slope of the San Gabriels were noted on March 6 with 46 birds [JS] and

on March 13 with five [TM]. A little late for migrants, two Swainson's Hawks were seen together in a line of trees in the eastern Antelope Valley – perhaps they were looking for a place to start a family. They were seen on May 1 [RC, RF, MS, JF] and again on May 9 [JF, TM]. Swainson's Hawks have nested previously in the Antelope Valley, but not in several years. **Franklin's Gulls** were reported from both the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on April 12 [DQ] and from the Piute Ponds on May 1 [JF, RC, RF, MS], May 9 [MF], and May 12 [MSM, CM]. The Piute Ponds is probably the single best place to find this species in L.A. County in late April to early May.

A single **Black-legged Kittiwake** was seen on the LA Audubon pelagic from Marina del Rey on February 28. This irruptive species has not erupted into our near shore waters in a few years. Two **Stilt Sandpipers** at the Piute Ponds in early May provided an unusual spring record. These birds had been associating with the dowitcher flock for a couple of weeks [KGa, MSM, JF]. A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was also at Piute on May 1 [MSM] and another was at the "G-Spot" (the shallow pond east of the 14 Fwy between Ave. H and Ave. G) on May 12 [MSM, CM]. **Lesser Yellowlegs**, a scarce bird in the area outside of fall migration, was seen on March 13 in a flooded field in the Antelope Valley [JF]. **Ancient Murrelets** were almost common off the coast of the county this year with two seen on a trip around Redondo Canyon and another eight (or more!) from a trip off the Palos Verdes peninsula [KGa].

Despite the destruction (golf course) of the Big Tujunga wash, **Lesser Nighthawks** have returned to nest there

once again [KGa]. This is one of the last places on the coastal slope of L.A. where their breeding habitat hasn't been totally annihilated. This bird still nests locally in the Antelope Valley. Migrant **Black Swifts** were reported from Hermosa Beach on May 2 [LC]. The outstanding wintering bird of the year was an adult male **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** located last December on Pitzer College Campus in Claremont [JE]. The bird remained fairly easy to find for several months and was last reported on April 10 [TMi]. An influx of **Lewis's Woodpeckers** to the north slope of the San Gabriels last fall left double digits of them remaining through the winter and several remaining as late as May 1 on both N4 and Big Rock Creek Rd [JF]. **Gray Flycatchers** made a greater presence than usual this spring on the coastal slope with birds reported from Eaton Canyon on April 10 and April 23 [JF], Sand Dune Park on April 11 [LC], and El Dorado Park on May 2 [GP]. The wintering **Eastern Phoebe** at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area was last seen on April 2 [RM]. A migrant **Bell's Vireo** was seen at DeForest Park in Long Beach on March 21 and the wintering **Plumbeous Vireo** was last reported from there on April 10 [KL].

The **Prairie Warbler** that wintered in the Gardenia Willows was last reported on February 15 [DVP]. **Black-and-White Warblers** were prolific with wintering birds at Ladera Park [March 11; RB], Recreation Park in El Segundo [March 11; RB], and Sand Dune Park [April 10; MC]. A **Hermit Warbler** was reported from Sand Dune Park on March 17 [RB]. A wintering **American Redstart** at Hansen Dam was last seen on March 20 [KGa]. **Black-and-White, Hermit, and**

Pine warblers and an American Restart were part of a small warbler bonanza at Area 2 of El Dorado Park on February 25 [KGi]. Like last year, **Palm Warblers** had a strong presence here this spring with migrant birds observed at DeForest Park [April 5-10; RS, KL], Madrona Marsh [April 12; DM], El Dorado Park [April 12; KGi], and Harbor Park [April 15; KL]. A wintering **Palm Warbler** at Sepulveda Basin was last reported on May 1 [JG]. The warbler of the season (so far...) was a **Yellow-throated Warbler** at DeForest Park on April 25 [KL]. Another good find was a singing **Northern Waterthrush** on the Santa Clara River in Santa Clarita on April 29 [DW]. **Summer Tangers** wintered at several locations within the county this year including a female at Kenneth Hahn Park [March 11; RB], a first year male at El Segundo Library Park [March 17; RB], one at Banning Park [April 3; KL], and a female at Oak Park Cemetery in Claremont [April 5; JE]. A wintering **White-throated Sparrow** was at a feeder in La Cañada [April 1; MH] and a migrant was on the Pomona College Campus on April 21 [JE]. A migrant **White-crowned Sparrow** of the interior, black-lored oriantha subspecies, was found at Ballona Freshwater Marsh on April 27 [KL].

As seems to be usual (and frustrating for us shore-bound birders) San Clemente Island was Los Angeles County's migration outpost this season with a major

passerine fallout between April 22 and 27. In addition to the thousands of **Wilson's Warblers**, **Warbling Vireos**, and **Western Tanagers**, many **Cassin's Vireos**, **Townsend's** and **Hermit warblers**, and **Hammond's**, **Dusky**, and **Gray flycatchers** were also seen [BS]. Vagrants included two **Red-eyed Vireos** on April 23 [HC] and two **Brewer's Sparrows** on April 26 [BS].

A pretty exciting year so far and we've still got half to go. So what's next? Migration is far from over. In fact, fall migration for several species is underway in June. Many birds are on their breeding grounds right now here in LA County, singing loudly. Quite a few have already produced their first brood of new birds. So get up into the mountains, escape some of the heat, and go find a few of them. This can also be an exciting time to find an out-of-place bird. Coastal migrant traps and desert oases are always a good bet for lost and confused vagrants. Birds can be anywhere, of course, so don't forget to put time into your local patch. 

Records 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.

To report birds, send observations with as many details as possible to:

Birds of the Season,
Jon Feenstra at feenstra@its.caltech.edu

North American Birds, L.A. County
Kimball L. Garrett
Ornithology Collections Manager
Natural History Museum of L.A. County
900 Exposition Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90007
e-mail: kgarrett@nhm.org

California Bird Records Committee
Guy McCaskie
P.O. Box 275
Imperial Beach, CA 91933-0275
e-mail: guymcc@pacbell.net

To report birds for the tape, call:

Jon Fisher: (818) 544-5009 (work)
e-mail: JonF60@hotmail.com

DA = Dave Anderberg, RB = Richard Barth,
JB = Jean Brandt, HC = Heather Carlisle,
LC = Lori Conrad, RC = Ron Cyger,
JE = Josh Engel, JF = Jon Feenstra,
RF = Ralph Fielding, MF = Mary Freeman,
JG = Jim Garrett, KGa = Kimball Garrett,
KGi = Karen Gilbert, MH = Mark Hunter,
KL = Kevin Larson, CM = Curtis Marantz,
TM = Todd McGrath, RM = Robert McMorrann,
DM = Dave Moody, TMI = Tom Miko,
GP = Gary Peebles, MSM = Mike San Miguel,
PS = Phil Sayre, MS = Mark Scheel,
JS = Jane Strong, BS = Brian Sullivan,
DVP = David Vander Pluym, DW = Doug Willick

We are very pleased to have Jon Feenstra writing Birds of the Season. Jon currently is a graduate student in physical chemistry at CalTech and although he migrated from New Jersey four years ago, his L.A. County Big Year in 2003 was the highest ever recorded – 346 species!

Become a Docent at the Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is a fascinating place. Each of the halls and exhibits is full of interesting information. But do you read the information provided and want to ask a million questions? Docents have answers to many of those questions and help to bring the museum to life for hundreds of school children by introducing them to the museum's wonderful exhibits in one or more of 15 science and history halls.

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is seeking volunteer docents.

Docents can work in the halls of their choice.

The Great Bird Hall includes displays of over 300 local birds; rain forest and marsh habitats; and exhibits showing bird life history, seabirds, condors, and much more.

Our other collections include dinosaurs, Native American cultures, African and North American mammals, California and American history, gems and minerals, marine biology, and still more.

Extensive training (26 weeks) is provided. Commitment is one day per week (four hours) the first year. Many, many 'perks'.

We are now accepting applications for our fall training class. Please call (213) 763-3531 for additional information.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Conservation took the focus of recent Board meetings and activities in response to increasing threats to the Los Angeles environment by the Bush Administration, his corporate contributors, and political science. The Board took the following conservation actions:

The Board voted to add Los Angeles Audubon Society to the list of supporters of SB1477, the Clean Water Bill authored by state Senator Byron Sher (D) Palo Alto. Audubon California is lead supporter of the bill. L.A. Audubon co-hosted a political action workshop for southern California chapter activists at Debs Park on June 9.

LAAS Conservation Chair Sandy Wohlgemuth presented his annual conservation budget request to the Board and not only was it approved, but the Board voted to double the contributions requested to a total of \$7,000. These funds will support the work of national and grass roots organizations including Earthjustice, Endangered Habitats League, American Bird Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, The Wilderness Society, Northcoast Environmental Center, League of Conservation Voters, RARE Center, Pro Peninsular, Save the Redwoods League, SCOPE (Santa Clara River-Newhall Ranch), Center for Biological Diversity, California Wilderness Coalition and The Urban Wildlands Group. If you get a chance, let these groups know that you support them.

The Board voted to support the campaign to oppose ChevronTexaco's plan to put a floating LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) receiving terminal next to the Coronado Islands in Baja. The Coronados are the most important breeding colony of the northern subspecies of Xantus's Murrelets and host the southernmost colony of the rare Ashy Storm-Petrel and a significant colony of Black Storm-Petrels as well as other seabirds. The campaign is being led by Island Conservation in California and Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas in Baja, Pro Peninsular, Terra Peninsular, Pro-Sustainable Energy Coalition of Baja California, The Border Power Plant

Working Group, and the Pacific Seabird Group. Let ChevronTexaco know what you think by writing David J. O'Reilly, CEO, ChevronTexaco Corporation, 6001 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon, CA 94583. Mexican government officials respond only to Mexican citizens, so LAAS supports groups in Baja who lobby their own government.

The Board voted to file a written comment on a petition to remove the Pacific coast population of the western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Plants (List) pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. The petition was filed by Surf-Ocean Beach Commission of Lompoc and the City of Morro Bay who claim that beach closures for the nesting birds March through September hurt them economically and deprive citizens of their rights to beach access. The petition is based on one unpublished master's thesis that offers the opinion that the California birds are not different from the inland populations on the Great Salt Lake and other locations. National Audubon Society filed the lead comment with the help of AudCal's Director of Bird Conservation Dan Cooper and Chief Legal Counsel Julia Levin.

The Board voted to support the written comment prepared by Natural Resources Defense Council opposing the re-opening (yet again) of the determination of a distinct vertebrate population segment for the California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*). An article recently published in Conservation Biology written by biologists including J. L. Atwood, whose work in the 1980s identified the gnatcatcher as a separate species, reports that genetic research calls into question the status of the coastal subspecies. We await California Fish and Wildlife's determination 90 days after the closing date of May 26, 2004.

The Board voted to renew financial support to the gathering of important data by MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) bird banding station in Solstice Canyon headed by Walt Sakai.

Further information on any of these campaigns and events is available from First Vice President Garry George – garrygeorge@laaudubon.org, a member of Sandy Wohlgemuth's Conservation Committee.

EARTH DAY was celebrated around Los Angeles as Board member Garry George joined Audubon staff Susan Castor at ABC-TV, Bookstore Manager Martha Balkan promoted LAAS' programs at SONY PICTURES, and George, Balkan, and past President Fred Heath pulled weeds in Baldwin Hills at the Native Plant and Wildlife Garden Volunteer Weed Pull to kick off the LAAS co-sponsored project there.

International travel guru Olga Clarke handed a check for \$1,400 to the Board as proceeds and donations from her sold out LAAS sponsored trip to Costa Rica during which participants were lucky enough to see over 400 species of birds!

Interim Treasurer Pat Heirs proudly reported that two years of overdue tax returns have been filed with the IRS. Annual reports are surely on the way.

New Board members meet July 1 after a unanimous vote by Members on May 13. The slate had one opening as Richard Wegman, candidate for Treasurer withdrew just before the vote due to scheduling conflicts with a new job. As of this writing that position remains open. Isn't there is a birder in L.A. who can add 2 and 2? If so, please contact Audubon House and offer your services. New officers are Dexter Kelly, President; Garry George, 1st Vice President; Becky Schweibert, 2nd Vice President; Pat Heirs, Executive Secretary; Johanna Dawes, Recording Secretary; and Raymond Schep, Executive Past President. Thank you and congratulations to all of these volunteer Board members who take on the difficult and time consuming responsibility of running the business of the LAAS and its programs.

NEW AT THE BOOKSTORE

BUTTERFLIES AND THEIR FAVORITE FLOWERING PLANTS –

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Environs

This guide contains 286 color photographs of all 134 species and subspecies; 48 of immature stages, plus 146 photographs of caterpillar food plants and nectar plants – in all, 480 photographs taken in the wild in natural settings. Habitat guide to desert, chaparral, and montane locations; map, quick guide to butterfly families, butterfly biology, extensive food plant list. Intended for visitors to the area and the volunteer naturalists who work there, it is also useful to butterflyers for most species found in southern California.

Lynn and Gene Monroe

\$17.95

GARDEN INSECTS OF NORTH AMERICA –

The Ultimate Guide to Backyard Bugs

This comprehensive and user-friendly guide to common insects and mites affecting yard and garden plants contains full-color photographs and concise, clear, and accurate text of 1,420 species. Organized by plant affected, then by taxa. Photographs of various life stages with text on facing page; characteristic plant symptoms for key species. Management tips for damage caused to plants. Appendix of host plant genera and associated insects. Useful for amateur gardeners, insect lovers, and professional entomologists alike.

Whitney Cranshaw

\$29.95

PALE MALE DVD

Meet the Red-tailed Hawk that became an instant Fifth Avenue celebrity and captured New Yorkers hearts and imaginations. This documentary follows the progress of this bird of prey as he hunts, courts his mate, builds and defends a penthouse nest, and encourages his baby chicks to fly. From the award-winning PBS Nature series.

Narrated by Joanne Woodward.

Approximately 60 minutes.

\$20.00

WHOSE BIRD? – Common Bird Names and the People They Commemorate

Is Bonaparte's Gull named after Napolean? Is the Pallas Sandgrouse named for the same person as the Pallas Warbler? This book provides a mini-biography of every person after whom a bird has been named – some 1,400 individuals. Filled with fascinating stories about the life and times of naturalists – heroes, romantics, fanatics – this volume will intrigue readers at every level of interest in ornithology.

Bo Beolens and Michael Watkins

\$35.00

DIGIKLEAR – Digital Display Cleaning System

From the makers of the popular LensPen comes this instrument for the display screens on digital cameras, camcorders, PDAs, and cell phones. Specially shaped, non-scratching, self-replenishing cleaning tip; retractable brush. Removes fingerprints, cleans smudges, grease marks with ease. Environmentally friendly, wont spill or dry out.

Carson Optical

\$9.00

SAWYER PERMETHRIN TICK REPELLENT



Repels and kills ticks, chiggers, mites, and mosquitos.

For clothing treatment only. (Non-Aerosol)

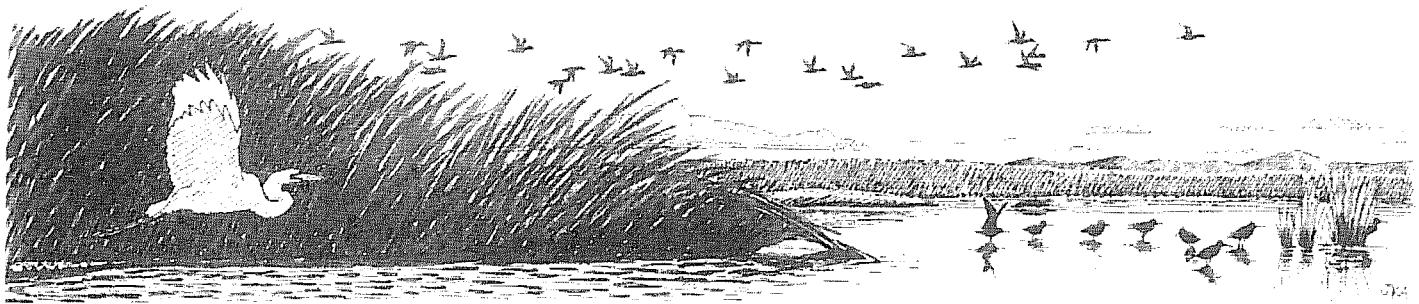
\$7.50

KIDS KORNER – OWL PUKE

This kit contains a 96 page, full color book packed with photographs, illustrations, charts, statistics, and little-known puke facts, a 100% genuine owl pellet guaranteed to contain at least one skeleton, and a sturdy divided sorting and storage tray. Be amazed! Be a scientist! Be grossed out! Ages 8-12.

Jame Hammerslough

\$13.95



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

NOTES:

MINING THREATENS CERULEAN WARBLER: Most of us have heard of mining for coal by shaving off the tops of mountains and shoving the debris down into the valleys after the valuable coal is collected. Streams and rich forests are destroyed and the lives of valley residents are permanently uprooted. The Bush Administration has promoted this brand of mining and continues to do so. In Appalachia during the next ten years 380,000 acres of high quality, mature deciduous forest will be destroyed. Led by the Environmental Protection Agency and including the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army Corps of Engineers, the impact of this mayhem on forest-dependent bird species is shattering. These include Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Wood Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Acadian Flycatcher. The Cerulean Warbler has suffered serious population declines over recent decades. The core of its breeding range coincides very closely with the area proposed for coal mining, and studies show that more than 137,000 breeding Cerulean Warblers will be lost in the next decade due to the mountain top removal process.

When the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published a powerful letter, signed by 50 conservation and bird-involved groups, was sent to the President, the Secretary of the Interior, EPA Administrator, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The groups demanded that such coal-mining practices cease until environmental concerns were addressed and a revised EIS had been re-issued for public comment. The Corps emphatically turned down any revision and two determined groups brought suit against it.

Fish and Wildlife wrote to everyone saying that publication of the draft EIS "will further damage the credibility of the agencies involved" and "offers only meager environmental benefits." Meanwhile, the destruction of precious bird habitat continues unabated.

WERE BUTTERFLIES BURNED INTO OBLIVION?: Illustrating the vulnerability of species whose numbers have fallen to dangerously low levels, researchers are worried that two of southern California's rarest butterflies, the Hermes copper and Thorne's hairstreak may have "become the first known species in the state to be driven into extinction after the sweeping autumn wildfires" says the L.A. Times (3/7). While the wildfires may have "provided the final blow", loss of habitat was the real cause of their endangerment and conservationists are angry because the US Fish and Wildlife service failed to implement the Endangered Species Act's strong habitat protections "despite decades of evidence chronicling the decline."

PUBLIC TO BE CONSULTED ON SPECIES LISTING: The Canadian government is maintaining that "consulting with landowners, ranchers, loggers, fishermen, trappers" before listing species is "a major step toward implementing the new Species at Risk Act" says the *Globe and Mail* (3/5). But environmentalists and some legislators contend that "inclusion of politics will taint the process and cause endangered species to become extinct." The Species at Risk Act is scheduled to be in full force in June and already lists 233 species

but scientists have determined that another 73 species including the wolverine, polar bear, woodland caribou, humpback whale, and spiny soft-shelled turtle are at risk of extinction and should be added. "The government's analysis of "costs and benefits" has no place in determining which animals are put on the endangered list" said the Canadian Nature Federation.

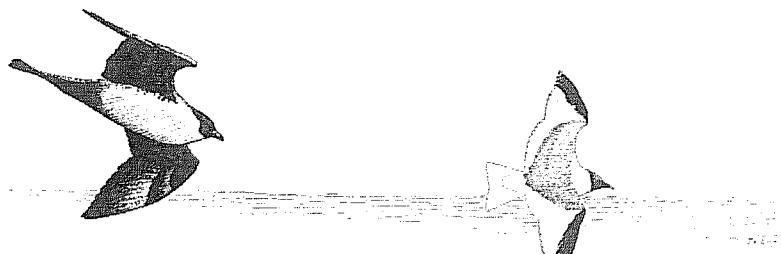
DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK RULES YELLOWSTONE

RULES YELLOWSTONE. At the bidding of the Montana Department of Livestock, National Park Service rangers are continuing to capture wild bison within Yellowstone National Park, turning over many for slaughter and bringing the number of bison killed this year to 136 says the Buffalo Field Campaign (3/4). This winter some 316 buffalo have been captured, prompting the BFC to comment that "it's time to replace the buffalo with the domestic cow on the Park Service badge, since cattlemen seem to be calling the shots in Yellowstone." The park's bison are descended from "23 buffalo that survived the mass eradication of the 19th century" and are the largest remaining population of genetically pure bison.

PINNACLES CONDORS DOING WELL

WELL: Six California Condors released in Pinnacles National Monument in December and January are "adjusting well, exploring distinctive rock outcrops" says the San Jose Mercury News (3/2). Two more birds have arrived at acclimation pens and four more are expected by the end of March as part of "the ongoing effort to restore 12 of North America's largest bird species back to the 2400 acre National Monument by year end." 

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



PELAGIC TRIPS

Saturday, September 11 –

A deep water trip toward **Cherry**, **Tanner**, and **Cortez Banks**. This 13-14 hour trip departs from Sea Landing in Santa Barbara Harbor at 7:00 AM on the fast catamaran Condor Express. It returns between 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM. This is the **Red-billed Tropicbird** trip. We will be far offshore in three counties, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles. Birds to be expected: Black, Least, Ashy, and Leach's storm-petrels; Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers; South Polar Skua; Sabine's Gull; Arctic Tern. Rarities: Black-footed Albatross; Buller's Shearwater; Craveri's Murrelet. Blue, Fin, and Minke whales as well as several species of dolphins are usually seen on this trip. Leaders: **Kimball Garrett, Todd McGrath, Mike San Miguel, and David Pereksta**.

\$165 – There is a full galley which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. A full bar is available.

Sunday, October 17 –

Northern Channel Islands Monument. **Anacapa, Santa Rosa, and Santa Cruz** islands toward **San Miguel Island**. This 10-hour trip departs from the Oxnard Harbor at 7:30 AM on the M/V Vanguard. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented shearwaters; Leach's, Least, and Ashy storm-petrels; cormorants (3); Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to 5); Common Murre; Craveri's and Xantus's murrelets; Cassin's Auklet. Rarities: Buller's and Flesh-footed shearwaters; South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger. In 2002, a Streaked Shearwater and in 2003, a Brown Booby and two Manx Shearwaters were seen.

Leaders: **Todd McGrath, Jonathan Feenstra, David Pereksta, and Michael San Miguel, Jr.**

\$95 – Limited galley. Box lunches may be ordered from a nearby delicatessen.

Saturday, November 20 –

Ventura Harbor toward and past **San Miguel Island** on the fast catamaran M/V Islander. Nine-hour trip departs from the Island Packers dock in the Ventura Harbor at 8:00 AM and returns around 5:00 PM. After dropping off campers on Santa Cruz Island we will have the boat to ourselves and head toward 1000 fathom water about 10 miles from San Miguel Island. Birds seen this time of year: Northern Fulmar; Black-vented, Pink-footed, and Sooty shearwaters; Leach's Storm-Petrel; South Polar Skua; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; rocky shorebirds (up to 5); Common Murre; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Occasionally: Craveri's Murrelet. Rarities: Flesh-footed and Buller's shearwaters; Black-footed Albatross. Leaders: **Todd McGrath, David Pereksta, Michael San Miguel, Jr., and Jonathan Feenstra**.

\$95 – Snack type galley with hot dogs, sandwiches, pizza and drinks available.

SAVE \$5
WITH AN
EARLY SIGN-UP
60 DAYS PRIOR
TO ANY TRIP

Please Note:

Destinations may be changed due to very rough seas, or to maximize bird sightings.

WESTERN TANAGER

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Headquarters, Library
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Tuesday – Saturday
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FIELD TRIPS

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.

Friday through Monday, July 2-5 –

Camp Nelson, Southwest Sierras

Relaxed Weekend. Leaders: Nick

Freeman, Irwin Woldman, Margo De

Grosse and Mary Freeman. An hour east of Porterville. Camp Nelson boasts some of the best Giant Sequoias anywhere!

Summer home rentals, fishing, book reading, and one or two optional bird walks in beautiful country each day. We hope to see Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Spotted and Saw-whet owls and many more. Limit 15; last two on sofas. We will eat in, dine out, potluck / fish fry per itinerary. \$52 each with SASE to LAAS covers three night's accommodations and paper goods. Meet there at noon Friday; details in flexible itinerary. Designate arrival time, phone number, and e-mail address when signing up. Contact info will be shared for carpooling, unless requested otherwise.

Sunday, July 4 –

Topanga State Park. Ken Wheeland

and **Chris Tosdevin** will lead participants through this beautiful and diverse coastal mountain area. An ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new in the area. 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 AM.

Friday through Monday, July 9-12 –

Southern Sierras. Leader: **Bob Barnes.**

High deserts to High Sierra. The most diverse, species-rich region in the state, and Bob knows it like few do. Likely: Goshawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Pileated Woodpecker, and owls. 150 species likely in four days. Participation limited. For information flyer, reserve with SASE. Fee: \$15 for each day attended (\$60 for 4 days). Dawn to dusk (and more) birding ideal for enthusiastic beginning to advanced birders. Reserve rooms in Kernville early (listed in flyer).

Sunday, July 11 –

Whittier Narrows. Leader: **Ray Jillson.**

View colorful resident 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 suggested donation. Meet at 8:15 AM.

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 P.M. 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 \$4 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.*

Sunday, July 18 –

Big Bear Lake Vicinity. Leaders: **Nick**

and **Mary Freeman.** No. Big Bear didn't

burn down! Meet in the Aspen Glen Picnic

Area parking lot in Big Bear at 7:30 AM.

Take Hwy 18 or 38 to Big Bear Lake,

then proceed about half way along the

south side of the lake on Hwy 18 and

turn south on Tulip Lane. The lot will be

on the SW side of this short street. Target

birds include Williamson's Sapsucker,

Calliope and Rufous hummingbirds,

mountain finches, and White-headed

Woodpecker. It should be warm and

there may be bugs, so come prepared.

Bring lunch for a full day, and a Forest

Service Adventure Pass.

Saturday, July 24 –

L.A. Audubon Annual Picnic.

NEW LOCATION: Chileo Picnic Area.

Bring a Forest Service Adventure Pass.

See page 12 for details.

Sunday, August 1 –

Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 AM. See July 4 listing for details.

Sunday, August 8 –

Whittier Narrows. Leader: **Ray Jillson.** Meet at 8:15 AM. See July 11 listing for details.

Friday, August 20 –

Shorebird Identification Workshop (lecture). Our speaker will be the amiable yet authoritative **Jon Dunn**, who leads field trips to far-flung locations including Alaska, Thailand, and California. Jon is presently on the California Bird Records Committee, is the primary consultant for the *National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, and has co-written two top-notch books on bird ID and distribution with our own Kimball Garrett. As such, he is extraordinarily qualified to speak on aspects of shorebirds and many other North American bird families. Jon will cover species routinely encountered in California, as well as west coast rarities; emphasizing

aging, distribution, and timing of occurrence. Binoculars are always a good idea for slide programs. Cookies and coffee. Meet at Eaton Canyon Nature Center, Pasadena, from 7:00 to 9:30 PM. Limit:80 signups. Send \$20 and a SASE to Audubon House to reserve, and for directions. See listing for Jon's shorebird field trip below.

Saturday, August 21 –

Shorebird Identification Workshop (field trip). **Jon Dunn** will provide direction on shorebird identification in the field, applying information from the lecture. Some collateral identification of other families may also occur. **Limited to prepaid lecture participants.** Send \$20 (\$40 total) in your SASE to LAAS to sign-up. Directions to the 8:00 AM meeting place (probably in Ventura) will be handed out at the lecture. Finish up around 1 PM. Limit:17. Bring 'scopes if you can, and your favorite field guide.

Saturday, August 28 –

Bolsa Chica / L.A. River. **Larry Allen** will leave no peep or tern unturned in these two areas known for shorebirds and

terns. Second stop flexible, depending on reports. Meet at 7:30 AM in the Bolsa Chica estuary parking lot off PCH. Larry will probably 'scope the tern nesting island, looking for the expected Forster's, Least, and Elegant terns and Black Skimmers; and also for the less common to very rare species including Royal, Sooty, and Bridled terns that have shown up here in the past. He will certainly identify and age the small sandpipers of the genus *Calidris*, seen elsewhere in the estuary. A good spot for Snowy Plover. Take the 405 Fwy to Seal Beach Blvd. to PCH, past Edinger. The lot is on the left. You will have to pass the lot and make a u-turn if driving southeast on PCH. Bring a lunch. Spotting scopes helpful.

Sunday, September 5 –

Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin**. Meet at 8:00 AM. See August 21 listing for details.

Saturday, September 18 –

Palos Verdes Peninsula. **Jon Feenstra** will be showing us some great birding spots in the Palos Verdes corner of Los Angeles County. We'll start at Banning

Park then head out onto the peninsula for a blend of local resident birds, and migrant seabirds and passerines. Meet in the parking lot on the south side of Banning Park at 7:30 AM, and finish up about 1 PM. Banning Park is located on the south side of Pacific Coast Highway one mile east of the 110 Freeway.

Saturday, September 25 –

Piute Ponds and Beyond. Local leader **Alan Brown**. A good mix of shorebirds, waterfowl and songbirds will be migrating through at this time. Official access pending to inner base ponds. Bring lunch. Meet at 7:30 AM, finish 3:00 PM or so. To reserve with LAAS and learn Rosamond meeting place, mail a SASE for required, limited sign-up of 12 by September 2, including citizenship status, phone number, and e-mail address. No drop-ins.

Saturday, October 2 –

Malibu to McGrath. Leader: LAAS President **Dexter Kelly**. Meet at the kiosk by the lagoon at 7:30 AM for a full day of birding. More details in the next *Western Tanager*.

Western Field Ornithologists

WFO announces its **29th Annual Meeting**, in conjunction with the annual meetings of the Western Bird Banding Association (WBBA) and Oregon Field Ornithologists (OFO), Hosted by the Klamath Bird Observatory

September 9-12, 2004
Ashland, Oregon

Jackson County, Oregon offers wonderful opportunities for birders to discover mountain and Great Basin bird species as well as migrant species in rural, urban, mountain, and wetland settings. The Cascade Range, the Great Basin desert, and the creeks, marshes, meadows, and agricultural fields of the Klamath Basin are some of the destinations of field trips planned for this meeting, to highlight the rich diversity of landscapes, habitats, and avifauna that southern Oregon has to offer.

The joint annual meeting will offer full-day field trips to the Klamath Refuges on September 9 and September 12, and local half-day field trips on September 9, 10, and 11. Other planned activities include banding workshops, photography and sketching workshops, evening field trips, afternoon science sessions on September 10 and 11, and a poster session (date TBA), plus our ever-popular expert slide identification and sound identification panels. WBBA will be offering its annual feather workshop during this meeting, as well. Social activities will include a welcoming reception, evening programs with noted speakers, and a combined annual dinner. As always, WFO welcomes all levels of birder, from beginner to seasoned veteran. A number of noted western birders, ornithologists, and professional field trip leaders are contributing their time and talents to ensure that meeting participants enjoy good science and good birding.

For additional information, contact WFO's representative for the 29th annual meeting, Rob Hewitt of LBJ Enterprises, at www.humboldt1.com/~lbjent, (707) 442-0339, or epannellwaters@yahoo.com, (562) 869-6718, or robbie22@pacbell.net.

EVENING MEETINGS

No Meetings are scheduled in July or August.

The LAAS Bookstore and Library will be open regular hours during the summer.

Check the LAAS Website or call the Bird Tape for information

Have a wonderful summer. We hope to see you at our very interesting fall programs.

Tuesday, September 14

Sylvia Gallagher Birds' Songs and Sounds

Tuesday, October 12

Todd McGrath Overview of the California Bird Records Committee Process

LAAS ANNUAL PICNIC

NEW LOCATION

Saturday, July 24, 8:00 AM

Chileo Picnic Area in the Angeles National Forest

We'll start at 8 AM with a bird walk expecting to see White-headed-Woodpecker, Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Townsend's Solitaire, Oregon Dark-eyed Junco, Thick-billed Fox Sparrow, and other mountain specialties. After the walk we will return to the picnic tables for a leisurely lunch. There will be a butterfly walk after lunch.

To get to Chileo Picnic area, take the Angeles Crest Highway north from La Cañada (off the 210 freeway and/or Foothill Blvd.), proceed about 26 miles, past Mt. Wilson, past Charlton Flats, past Chileo Campground, turn left on the road to the Chileo Visitor's Center. Go past the Visitor's Center about one-quarter mile to the picnic area on the left.

The early birds will try to stake out the shadiest table, but it's first come first served, so get there early. You will need an Angeles National Forest Adventure Pass. Passes cost \$5.00 per day, or \$30.00 per year. Call (626) 574-5200 or Google – Angeles National Forest Adventure Pass for complete information.

Bring a picnic lunch, hat, sunscreen, binoculars, walking shoes, a comfortable chair, and your attentive eyes and ears. LAAS will supply a cooler filled with non-alcoholic drinks.

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