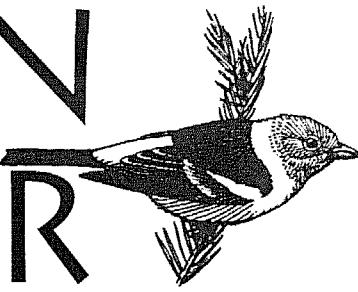


WESTERN TANAGER



Volume 71 Number 6 July/August 2005

Los Angeles Audubon Society

THE BIG DAY

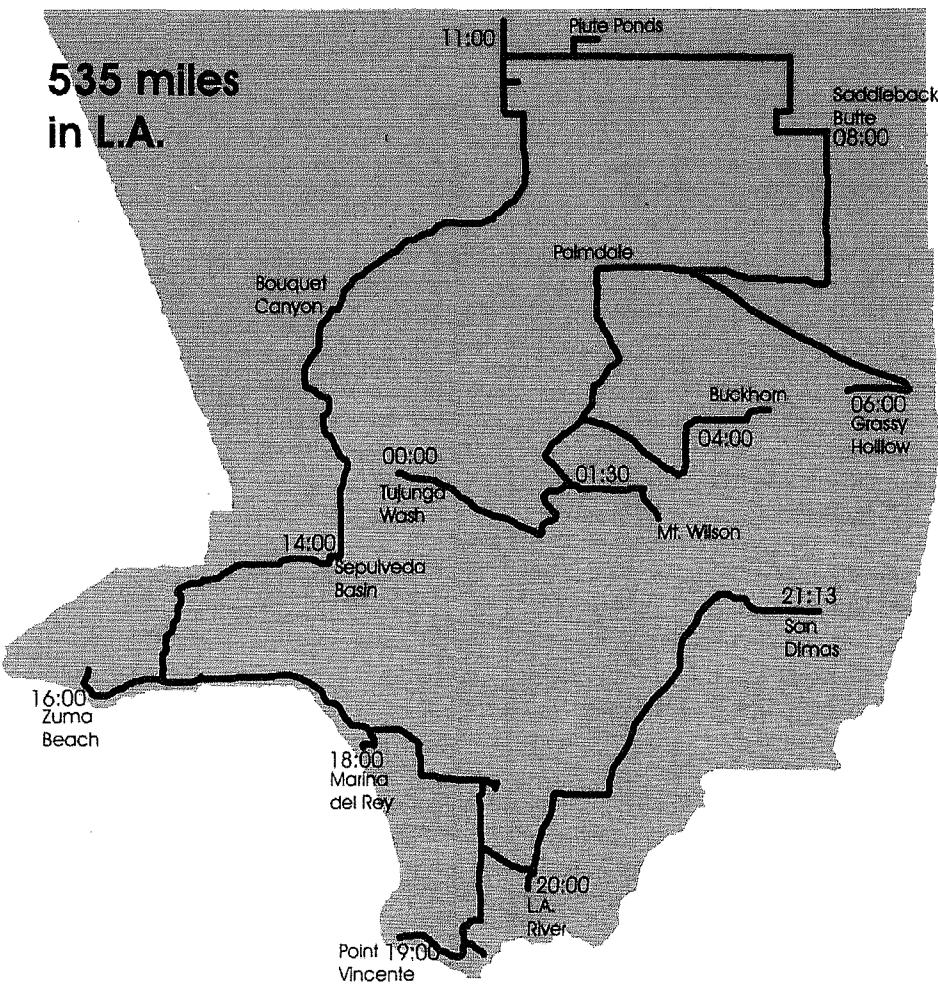
by Jon Feenstra and Mike San Miguel

With Los Angeles County's massive population, gridlocked freeways and out of control development encroaching into even the most remote corners it is nearly incomprehensible that a single team of birders could observe 215 species in one day without leaving its borders. But that is exactly what happened on April 24, 2005 when Jon Feenstra, Todd McGrath, Mike and Michael San Miguel logged 535 miles driving to the far reaches of the county to cover all of the diverse habitats that can still be found in Los Angeles. During a birding excursion earlier in the year the team began talking about trying to break the Los Angeles County record of 182 birds set by Kimball Garrett and Feenstra in October 2004. We had hoped to have Kimball on the team but prior commitments prevented him from participating, and we can only imagine how much his skill and knowledge of the County would have added to our effort.

Breaking a record of 182 species seemed certainly possible, and even approaching 200 was not believed to be beyond accomplishment. Several counties in California have big day lists greater than 200: Monterey (208), San Diego (206 [see below]), and Kern County (202). We thought that Los Angeles County with all its diverse habitats deserved to be among that group. The goal became clear.

However, such an objective would require intense planning, an efficient route (of course factoring in the issue of traffic in the LA basin), and thorough scouting. Of major concern was an

effective route through the mountains. Due to the second rainiest season on record, the Angeles Crest Highway was damaged in a number of places. We knew that the Crest was closed past Buckhorn, blocked



by six-foot snow drifts and major washouts. It was also closed just past Red Box from some rockslides. How were we going to get from the Angeles Crest in the west to the higher elevations near Big Pine/Wrightwood without spending too much time? A good deal of luck and decent weather were going to be necessary.

About two weeks before the big day, we met to develop a strategy that included a tentative route and schedule, a list of target species, and scouting assignments. This was going to be a serious big day, and any such effort must include well positioned stops in the mountains, the north montane slopes, the desert, waterfowl habitat, chaparral and the coastal plains, estuaries and open ocean. While we couldn't assume that any bird would be a slam-dunk, we compiled a list of all possible birds and sorted them into the three categories of "can't miss", "with some scouting we should see" and "maybe we'll get lucky". The total list included 244 species (only half of the 491 recorded in the County), and we had solid locations for 140 of them (the "can't miss" column). If we were to get to 200 we would need to stake out about 60 more species. Feenstra scouted the mountains and Antelope Valley, McGrath did the coast and ocean, and the San Miguels did everything in between. Our original plan to get from the desert to the coastal plain was the expected slog along State Highway 14 with no stops and a big chunk of unproductive and lost birding time. Instead, we decided at the last minute to get to the coast along Bouquet Canyon with several key stops and an additional 10 stake-outs. Another primary concern was how much time do we allow ourselves on the coast – once the desert was behind us we wouldn't be going back, and any missed birds would be gone for good.

At 10:00 PM we all met at San Miguel's in Arcadia to organize our gear and find some room in the 4-Runner for the mountain of food that McGrath brought (credit for the food mountain goes to Pam McGrath) – there would be no time for stops at McDonald's or Starbucks – and by 11:00 we were on our way to our first stop at Tujunga Wash at exactly midnight. Critical to a successful pursuit of 200 was strict adherence to a schedule; keeping careful track of each

The Route:

0:00 – 0:10	Tujunga Wash
0:30 – 1:15	lower San Gabriel Mountains
1:30 – 2:20	Mt. Wilson Rd.
3:36	Buckhorn Campground
4:00	Chilao
5:30	Arch Picnic Area near Big Pines
5:45 – 6:10	Grassy Hollow Visitor Center
6:15 – 6:45	Angeles Crest Hwy and upper N4
6:50 – 7:20	N4 to Valyermo
7:20 – 7:45	Ft. Tejon Rd. to Littlerock
8:05 – 8:27	Saddleback Butte State Park
8:35 – 9:10	eastern Antelope Valley ranch yards
9:30 – 10:22	Piute Ponds
10:35 – 10:50	Lancaster Sewage Ponds
10:53 – 11:05	private ranch yard
11:10 – 11:45	Apollo Park
12:00 – 12:05	Quartz Hill
12:40 – 13:14	Bouquet Canyon
13:45 – 14:20	Sepulveda Basin
14:38 – 15:00	Malibu Creek State Park
15:05 – 15:11	Tapia State Park
15:30 – 16:10	Bonsall Canyon, Zuma Beach, Pt. Dume
16:20 – 16:30	PCH pulloff near Malibu Seafood
16:40 – 16:55	Malibu Lagoon
17:35 – 18:10	Del Rey Lagoon, Ballona River Mouth
18:15 – 18:30	Ballona Freshwater Marsh
18:45	Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area
19:15 – 19:30	Point Vicente
19:40 – 19:45	Cabrillo Beach
20:05 – 20:20	LA River at Willow Street
21:13	San Dimas

bird seen and knowing in advance what was needed at the next stop on the route. Feenstra was assigned to keep time, McGrath was scorekeeper, Michael hung his head out the window listening for anything suspicious, and Mike did most of the driving. Most big days start with a search for owls and this one was no different, especially after we couldn't hear any nighthawks over the traffic around Tujunga Wash. Our first official bird of the day was a Northern Pygmy-Owl at 1:00 and at 3:00 standing next to 6 feet of snow with the full moon occasionally breaking through the clouds in the freezing cold wind we heard a Flammulated Owl. Just a few minutes later, one of the biggest surprises of the day was a Spotted Owl at a location they hadn't been reported from in many years. The only reason we stopped was the excuse "we've got a few extra minutes, what have we got to lose?" By the time we finished the night-bird portion of the trip we had already tallied six species of

owls and picked up Common Poorwill along the way – a great start to our day. We then spent an hour and a half driving the back roads through Pearblossom and Bob's Gap up to the Big Pines area. Normally, if the Angeles Crest Highway had been open, we could have gotten there in less than a half hour from Buckhorn. After surviving the 28°F temperatures and 20 mph winds while waiting for sunup at Grassy Hollow Visitor Center our first critical stake-out was Williamson's Sapsucker, and we nailed it. For the remainder of the morning things pretty much fell into place as we recorded nearly all of the expected species. While developing the strategy, we thought that if we left the desert with 150 species we'd be running strong for 200, so with 156 species as we departed the Antelope Valley and 164 after Bouquet Canyon we felt we were in very good shape. However, the nagging question was, have we allowed enough time to adequately cover the coast?

The Birds:

South San Gabriel's

Northern Pygmy-Owl, Western Screech-Owl, Great-horned Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Flammulated Owl, Spotted Owl, Common Poorwill
7 new, 7 total

North San Gabriels

Mountain Quail, Band-tailed Pigeon, Acorn Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, White-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Dusky Flycatcher, Gray Flycatcher, Stellar's Jay, Common Raven, Violet-green Swallow, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Bluebird, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Western Tanager, Green-tailed Towhee, Spotted Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-headed Grosbeak, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskin
33 new, 40 total

N4 to Valyermo

California Quail, Mourning Dove, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, Western Scrub-Jay, Oak Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, House Wren, Wrentit, Northern Mockingbird, California Thrasher, California Towhee, Black-chinned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, House Finch
15 new, 55 total

Abbey to Little Rock

Red-shouldered Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Black Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Northern Rough-Winged Swallow, Verdin, Bushtit, Cactus Wren, Phainopepla, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, Bullock's Oriole, Scott's Oriole, Lesser Goldfinch, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Rock Dove, European Starling, House Sparrow
26 new, 81 total

Saddleback Butte

Say's Phoebe, LeConte's Thrasher, Black-throated Sparrow
3 new, 84 total

Eastern Antelope Valley stops

Turkey Vulture, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Whimbrel, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark, Swainson's Thrush, American Pipit, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Tricolored Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Eurasian Collared-Dove
17 new, 101 total

Piute Ponds

Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Eared Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, White-faced Ibis, Northern Harrier, Sora, Common Moorhen, American Coot, Snowy Plover, Semipalmented Plover, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Spotted Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red-necked Phalarope, California Gull, Forster's Tern, Cliff Swallow, Marsh Wren, Sage Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow
41 new, 142 total

Lancaster Sewage Ponds

Black-bellied Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Herring Gull, Caspian Tern
4 new, 146 total

Apollo Park

Canada Goose, Cooper's Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Hammond's Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Townsend's Warbler, Great-tailed Grackle, Red Crossbill
8 new, 154 total

Central/Western Antelope Valley (Quartz Hill) - 2 stops

Burrowing Owl, Ring-necked Duck
2 new, 156 total

Bouquet Canyon Circuit

White-throated Swift, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, American Crow, Hooded Oriole, American Goldfinch
8 new, 164 total

Sepulveda Basin

Ross's Goose, Allen's Hummingbird, Bell's Vireo, Tree Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Blue Grosbeak
6 new, 170 total

Malibu Creek State Park, Tapia Creek State Park, Bonsall Cyn

White-tailed Kite, Hutton's Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-crowned Parrot
4 new, 174 total

Zuma Beach, Point Dume, pullout by Malibu Seafood

Brant, Surf Scoter, Black Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Common Loon, Western Grebe, Pink-footed Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Black-vented Shearwater, Brown Pelican, Brandt's Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant, Snowy Egret, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Sanderling, Parasitic Jaeger, Franklin's Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Heermann's Gull, Western Gull, Royal Tern, Elegant Tern
25 new, 199 total

Malibu Lagoon

Cattle Egret, Ruddy Turnstone
2 new, 201 total

Del Rey Lagoon, Marina del Rey, Ballona Creek Mouth

Greater White-fronted Goose, Great Egret, Black Oystercatcher, Wandering Tattler, Black Turnstone, Surfbird, Short-billed Dowitcher, Pomarine Jaeger
8 new, 209 total

Ballona Freshwater Marsh

Vaux's Swift, Chipping Sparrow
2 new, 211 total

Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area

Cackling Goose
1 new, 212 total

110 Freeway near the LA Harbor

Peregrine Falcon
1 new, 213 total

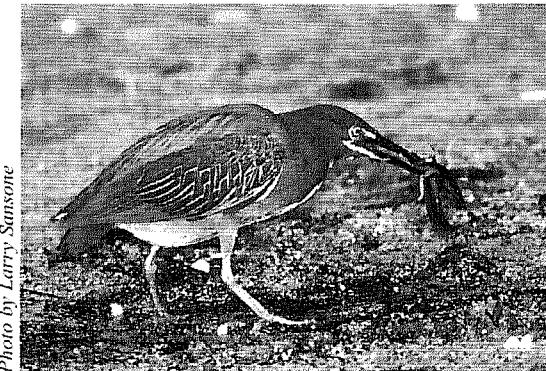
Cabrillo Beach

Black Skimmer
1 new, 214 total

San Dimas

Barn Owl
1 new, 215 total

We had several crucial stops in the coastal plain before we finally reached Zuma Beach at 4:00 PM. It was a big gamble to hope for a good seabird flight under pressure and on such a tight schedule. However, if six owl species 12 hours earlier was a fortunate start, then Zuma was magical because we didn't miss a single expected bird and we even found a Black Scoter, the "best bird" of the day. In rapid succession and in less than 30 minutes we observed 25 species. Strong northwest winds had driven the loons, shearwaters, jaegers, gulls and terns right to the coast and many of the birds, even the three species of shearwaters, were flying over the surf line. As we walked from the beach, Todd did a quick tally and announced we were at 199 species. What bird would put us at 200? Our next stop was Malibu Lagoon



Green Heron missed!

Photo by Larry Sansone

and number 200 was a Cattle Egret. It was not even 5:00 PM and we still had all the rocky shorebirds to pick up. Our good fortune on the coast continued at Marina del Rey with eight more species putting us at 209.

No big day is completed without a number of significant misses leaving us scratching our heads and wondering how on earth did we not see that bird? Our Big Day misses included Green Heron, Virginia Rail, Greater Yellowlegs, Rock Wren, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. We were also aware of other staked-out birds such as Common Merganser, Least Bittern, Osprey, Lesser Nighthawk, and California Gnatcatcher that we weren't able to get to. LA County isn't some nice compact little geographic entity with easy access and no traffic. Rather, it's big, 535 logged-miles of big, and

given the 24-hour constraint and only about 13 hours of daylight it is impossible to get to every known bird. Our strategy was to ration our time and that meant missing some birds if they were out of the way or took too much time from our very tight schedule. Maximizing probabilities of new species meant spending time where we might see several instead of traveling a long distance for a single guaranteed one.

As we had started that morning with owls, so did we end our evening. Our last bird was a staked-out Barn Owl on a nest in San Dimas. That put us at 215 species, far exceeding our most optimistic expectations. Although more birds were possible, and even with about two hours of official time remaining, the urge for some sleep and a break in the tension-filled day, the wish not to hear

Feenstra say "we gotta go" one more time, and the copious quantities of *Claratin-D*, *Mountain Dew*, *Full Throttle* power drink, and *Diet Coke* that had long ago ceased to function properly, we decided to call it quits.

As a postscript to our adventure, and testimony to the expression that "records are only made to be broken" our record for the most birds seen in any California County in 24-hours lasted all of a week. On May 1, 2005 a team of birders (Todd and David Easterla, Steve Glover, Gjon Hazard, and John Sterling) mostly from northern California did a big day in San Diego County and recorded an amazing 217 species. Still 215 species in Los Angeles County sounds really good, but knowing the competitive spirit that most birders enjoy, who knows for how long that record will stand or if the record for most in a California County will stay on the books at 217. With the same effort and good luck and a little more planning is 220-225 possible in Los Angeles County? Hmmm, how about next year? Naah!! We are not going to do that again are we?

Note: Big day rules established by the American Birding Association were followed.

We get letters . . .

To:
Mr. Todd McGrath and Mr. Jon Feenstra:

Congratulations on your fine *Western Tanager* article on pelagic birds. My own interest is in Western Gulls and other matters of the coast line – but they all tie in.

Our local interest is to determine the amount of sea rise per recent year. Locally, there seems to be no one willing to commit to real numbers.

Charts used in your article seem to illustrate the standard confusion. The "California Countercurrent" is frequently referred to, and has never been observed by me (unfortunately) since I am a sailor and have a distressingly frequent record of losing my mast and being swept by a California Current which I must say is opposite to your diagram.

Except for my tragic-comic experience, this would seem to be of little significance but it leads me to question that diagram and much more established data.

Your article mentions prevailing Northwest Winds. Also as a sailor, I can depend on almost never seeing a NW wind. Take 30 seconds – read the LA Times weather section. Winds in California are largely SW.

Getting back to my first question, can you place me in contact with the agency which can tell me the rate at which the ocean is rising?

Thanks,
Norman Cargill

Note: We expect the authors will reply to Mr. Cargill's letter in the next issue of *Western Tanager*.

Pelagic Birding in the Southern California Bight: Part II
will appear in the September/October issue of *Western Tanager*.

Request for Information: Yellow-chevroned Parakeets



Among the most dramatically increasing naturalized parrots in the Los Angeles region is the Yellow-chevroned Parakeet (*Brotogeris chiriri*).

This species was formerly known as the "Canary-winged Parakeet", but that taxon was recently split into the Yellow-chevroned and the White-winged Parakeet (*B. versicolorus*). A few White-winged Parakeets may persist on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and small numbers also occur in the San Francisco Bay area. The Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, through a procedural quirk, is on the *ABA North America Checklist* but not currently on any official state or provincial checklist. Although we cannot predict whether new information will support the addition of this species to the California list, it is certainly important to obtain such information.

We gathered fairly thorough information on Yellow-chevroned and White-winged Parakeets in the mid-1990s (see *Western Birds* 28[4]:181-195, 1997), but it is clear that Yellow-chevroneds are continuing to expand their range and numbers. It is time to get a good snapshot of the numbers and distribution of Yellow-chevroneds, and I ask for your help.

During the calendar year 2005, please e-mail me sightings of Yellow-chevroned Parakeets (and of White-winged Parakeets if you run across any) in the following format:

Your Name/Contact Info [presumably in e-mail signature]

Species: Yellow-chevroned Parakeet [or....]

Date:

Time of day:

Exact location [be specific - street intersection or address, park name, etc.]

Number Of Birds In Flock:

Flying? Direction?

Feeding? [tree species? Food type?]

Nesting? [give details]

Other Behavior:

Any Other Notes Of Interest:

Documentation [If you can obtain photos, feel free to send them]

Please DO NOT e-mail me directly with routine sightings of other parrots— you can continue reporting them through the California Parrot Project web site:

natureali.org/parrot_project/Parrot_Project.html

Kimball L. Garrett

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4th of July Butterfly Counts

Like Christmas Bird Counts, NABA (North American Butterfly Association) sponsors July 4th Butterfly Counts throughout North America. Unlike the CBC's, these counts are run over a much longer time period.

Count	Date	Contact
North Fork Kern River Valley	Saturday, July 2	Bob Barnes – bbarnes@lightspeed.net
Giant Sequoia National Monument (South)	Sunday, July 3	Bob Barnes – bbarnes@lightspeed.net
Santa Ynez Canyon, Pacific Palisades	Sunday, July 3	Walt Sakai – sakai_walter@smc.edu
Riley Park, Orange Co.	Saturday, July 9	Liz Cooper – Lizhikes@aol.com
El Dorado Nature Center	Saturday, July 9*	Donnie Haigh – DonnieLynn@aol.com
Limestone Canyon, Orange Co.	Sunday, July 10	Liz Cooper – Lizhikes@aol.com
Palos Verde Peninsula	Saturday, July 16	Jess Morton – jmorton@igc.org

For a special butterflying adventure, try the following which is usually in the top three in the nation in species count (90+):
Ramsey Canyon, Huachuca Mts., AZ Saturday July 30 Hank Brodkin – hbrodkin@cox.net

*date not confirmed

For information on any southern California Butterfly Count
please contact, Fred Heath fred.heath@earthlink.net

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker Rediscovered in Arkansas!

This astonishing headline appeared in news releases worldwide. A bird previously thought to be extinct in the United States had been found after years of careful searching. The following is an E-mail sent by Van Remsen to his colleagues in Louisiana which describes much of the background and why the secret was kept from all but a very few.

Subject: thoughts on Ivory-billed Woodpecker

From: James V. Remsen

Date: Sat, 30 Apr 2005 12:20:46 -0500

LABIRD: at the urging of my handlers and so I don't have to repeat the same stuff to everyone, here are some thoughts and comments on Ivory-billed Woodpecker rediscovery. You can get a lot of details from our website (www.ivorybill.org) and our Science paper online. (Search: www.sciencemag.org)

First, apologies to all of you for keeping this a secret, but I know you will all understand the need for utter secrecy while our little clandestine team organized an intensive search of the area to determine population size and so on, organized a land acquisition and protection program, and got the feds up to speed on our findings to give them lead time to establish a management and access policy. Trust me, there are lots of immediate family members, including some spouses, who found out only a few hours before the rest of the world, and many of us are in high-pressure patch-up mode.

Second, although part of the team (unofficially "Team Elvis"), my role was minor. The heroes in this are too many to list, but Gene Sparling of Hot Springs, AR, was the one who first spotted the bird and subsequently worked tirelessly on land issues in the area. Tim Gallagher and Bobby Harrison followed up on Gene's original sighting and confirmed it, and this catalyzed the "rest of the story." David Luneau, captain of our Pearl River search a few years ago, had the wherewithal to keep his video-camera running while canoeing and thus capture the only video footage we

obtained. [This became SOP for rest of search!] John Fitzpatrick had the profound courage to invest considerable resources in what is likely one of the best-organized, most thorough, most professional, and most secretive bird searches in history; Fitz also used his considerable skills and enviable energy to raise an unbelievable amount of money, all behind the scenes, for conducting the search and for land acquisition. Scott Simon of Arkansas TNC is one of the best leaders I've ever worked with; most of us would kill to have this guy as a boss. Scott and his TNC crew have worked wonders with land acquisition in the area. Martjan Lammertink (also a

See www.ivorybill.org for bio info on these guys and others on Team Elvis — these brief capsules inevitably produce omissions. Getting to know this great group through weekly conference calls was a pleasure.

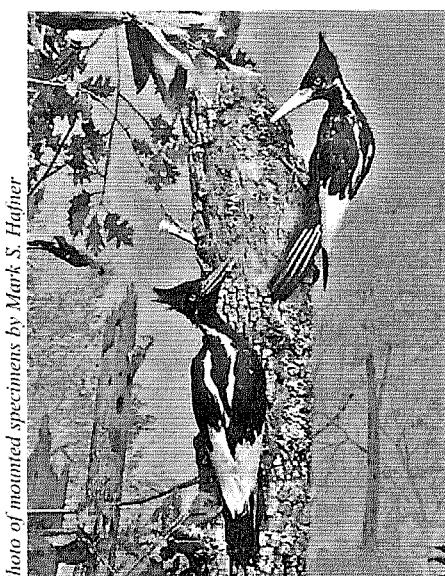
Some specific thoughts generated by the tidal wave of questions I'm getting:

1. David would be the first to poke fun at his own UFO-genre video, but for those who know birds and have seen the original on a good screen, it sends chills through spines. David maintained an admirably objective view of his own video evidence throughout.

2. A further paper on the acoustic evidence will be forthcoming, more was included in the first draft of the Science paper, but was pruned to focus on the video. Bird people appreciate sound evidence, but those not familiar with the robust ID evidence in audio-recordings often do not.

3. The sad part of the story is that after all the effort, we only have solid evidence for one bird, and this bird, Elvis, only uses the intensively searched area occasionally as far as we can tell. Where it spends its time, and whether others are out there in White River NWR and elsewhere remains to be determined. Most of us who have looked for the bird have never even glimpsed it. There will be some who will whine that it is futile to invest further resources in what might be a single bird or a genetically impoverished small population. Whether technically right or wrong, that position is morally indefensible. We as a society botched a chance in the 1940s to save this species. In spite of that, this species has somehow survived one of the most irresponsible episodes of habitat destruction in our history, the near elimination of the biotic splendor of the Big Woods that were a core part of the natural heritage of our South. Let's not blow it this time, and ALL of you can help. You have a miraculous second chance to restore that natural heritage. Anyone who sees Elvis's last magnificent stronghold without tearful remorse for what we've lost has no soul.

4. Access. Of course the knee-jerk reaction is to shut off any access to the



Ivory-billed Woodpeckers

Pearl River search veteran), Ron Rohrbaugh, Elliott Swarthout and Sara Barker, and Peter Wrege commanded and directed the field teams with remarkable persistence and devotion. Ken Rosenberg, whom many of you may remember from his days at LSU, had the thankless and delicate task of liaison with federal officials. Ken and the sound people at Cornell Lab of Ornithology spent some unbelievable number of hours going over the digital sound recordings made by the ARUs (see our web site). Tim Barksdale, a professional wildlife videographer, spent nearly a year in the area trying to get in blinds and atop an 85-foot boom.

region. If we found a breeding pair, then that strategy might be best. However, our team is unanimous in favoring continued but carefully controlled access to the region, including hunters and fisherman. If it weren't for the economic incentives of hunting and fishing to set aside places like White River NWR and Cache River NWR, Elvis would not have had a chance. The last thing this species needs at this point is to have those outdoorsmen consider Ivory-billed Woodpecker as a threat to their land use. Here's a chance for all those interested in saving wildlands to collaborate. Birder pressure and harassment might be a more severe threat. This is the birding community's chance to show their good side. Don't blow it. I'm proud to live in a state where birders are exceptionally well-behaved. A forthcoming issue of *North American Birds*, with Ned Brinkley leading the way, will focus on birder responsibilities. Just to make sure the bad apples don't mess it up for the rest of us, federal enforcement of access guidelines will be ferocious and well-funded. As for your chances, keep in mind that something like 100,000 hours of field time by skilled field people has yielded a grand total of probably less than a minute of cumulative observation time, and that only a handful of those people ever got a glimpse.

5. Louisiana. A nice benefit of the Arkansas finding is that those who have reported Ivory-billed Woodpecker here in Louisiana and elsewhere, and then had their integrity or competency questioned, should be feeling good. Let's not go the other way — 99% of the hundreds of "Ivory-billed" reports I've received are clearly Pileated or worse, but the David Kulivans and Fielding Lewis's of the world should get some renewed respect. I am as certain as I can be in the absence of tangible evidence that Ivory-billed still exists in Louisiana. Now, it's our turn to prove it. Just keep in mind that Elvis had parents and grandparents, all successfully reproducing decades after the species was declared extinct. Yet Ivory-billed Woodpecker was not included in our newest field guide series, the Sibley guides.

6. Pearl River. We conducted that search with the attitude that, regardless of how wary, Ivory-billed Woodpeckers would make enough noise (calls, double-raps, or bark-scaling) that the black-belt field commandos we used would find them just by getting within earshot. That attitude comes from plenty of experience with other rare and hard-to-find birds. Hard to see, yes, but nonetheless always revealing themselves by sound to those who tune in. However, if Arkansas Elvis is any indication, we could have missed dozens of birds in the Pearl. Elvis is not only incredibly wary, seldom allowing more than a glimpse before flying off not to be relocated, but astoundingly quiet. If our birds are like this, finding them will require the stealth skills of a turkey hunter (and remember what Kulivan was doing when he saw his pair!). It is tempting and perhaps reasonable to speculate that the last Ivory-billeds, under intense hunting pressure from humans, survived only because of the behavioral changes required to regard humans as deadly. If ducks and turkeys can develop such behaviors seasonally, longer-lived and probably smarter big woodpeckers could get this way fast.

That's all for now,

Van Remsen,
LSU Museum of Natural Science

J.V. Remsen is the McIlhenny Distinguished Professor of Natural Science at Louisiana State University, and he also serves as curator of birds for the university's Museum of Natural Science. Remsen, who was an organizer of the Zeiss Sports Optics search for the ivory-bill on the Pearl River in Louisiana and who serves as a compiler of all ivory-bill reports in Louisiana, has assisted in planning the search for the ivory-bill in Arkansas. A long-time friend of LAAS, he authored Species of Special Concern, California's Imperiled Birds (Western Tanager, Vol. 45, No. 8) and, along with Kimball Garrett, Jon Dunn, Richard Webster, and Terry Clark (recorder), participated in the biggest Big Day ever recorded in California back on 29 April 1978 – 230 species!



**Western Field
Ornithologists**
30th Annual Meeting
September 29 – October 1, 2005
The Radisson Hotel
Santa Maria, California

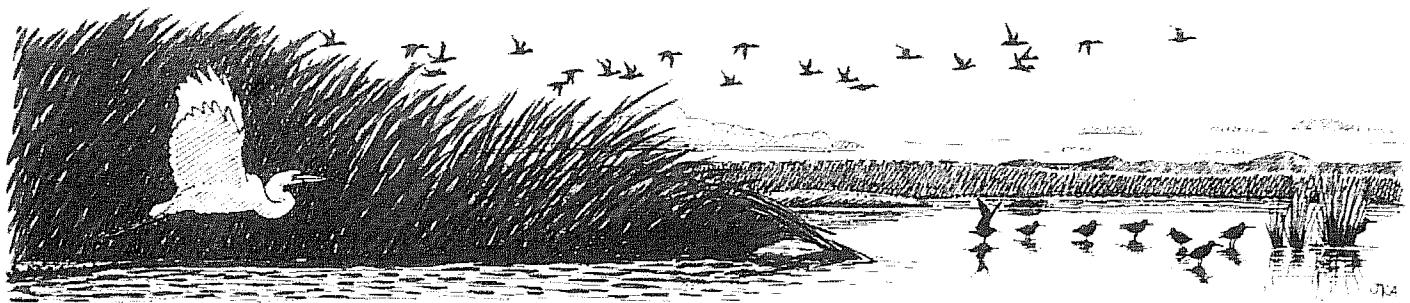
WFO announces that their annual meeting will be held at the Radisson Hotel, Santa Maria, California, Thursday, September 29 through Saturday, October 1, 2005. This is an opportunity to find out what is current in ornithology related field research.

Afternoon field ornithology science and poster sessions will be held on Friday and Saturday. There will be halfday field trips in the Santa Maria region Friday and Saturday with full day field trips being offered on Thursday. Field sketching and illustrating workshops will be offered on Friday and Saturday mornings. There will be evening programs designed to entertain and educate.

Western Field Ornithologists welcomes all levels and ages of birders, professional and amateur ornithologists and ornithology related scientific researchers. All are welcome to submit abstracts of posters and current research projects for consideration to Ted Floyd at tedfloyd@aba.org.

Featured presentations and speakers for this meeting will be Joe Morlan and Sylvia Gallagher moderating an experts' slides-and-sounds identification challenge on Friday evening. Brad Schram of *A Birder's Guide to Southern California* fame will be our keynote speaker on Saturday evening, at the annual banquet. Jack Laws will be presenting field illustrating and sketching workshops on Friday and Saturday mornings. Jon Dunn will be leading a shorebirds field identification workshop on Sunday, October 2.

For more information concerning meeting registration, hotels, and other topics write to: cpannellwaters@yahoo.com or visit the WFO website at: wfo-cbrc.org



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Garry George

Notes:

DWP Votes for Wind Project Near Butterbrett Springs

The DWP Board of Commissioners, appointed by Mayor Hahn, voted on April 19, 2005 to approve the Environmental Impact Report on the Pine Tree Wind Farm Development project just south of Butterbrett Springs in the Mojave. Los Angeles Audubon Society objected to the EIR's conclusion that the project will have no impact on avian populations on the grounds that the potential risk to migratory songbirds was not studied properly. The Biological Assessment for avian populations focused on raptors, and the biologist only visited the site once during the period from April 15 through May 30, and then for only one hour. Birders from LAAS and other organizations have visited Butterbrett Springs during that same "peak migration" period and found up to 6,000 birds in one day.

Board members Pat Heirs and Dexter Kelly traveled downtown to attend the important meeting along with Santa Monica Bay Audubon's Mary Prismon and Chuck Bragg. Our pleas to DWP Commissioners to follow protocol recommended by the wind industry and conduct proper migratory songbird studies "before construction" fell on deaf ears as Commissioners, supported by DWP staff and environmental organizations, including CEERT (www.ceert.org), Coalition for Clean Air (www.coalitionforcleanair.org), and Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (www.psrla.org), Global Green (www.globalgreen.org), and the Natural Resource Defense Council (www.nrdc.org), voted to approve the EIR and start the permitting process that will allow construction of roads and wind farms in the next few months. Los Angeles Audubon is not opposed to wind energy,

as long as the projects are done right and the proper studies are completed and included in the EIR for public review prior to construction. This site is of particular concern to our chapter due to our long history of over twenty years birding the area. Board member Pat Heirs sums up the sentiments of the Board when she states "We won't stop until we know for sure that these turbines aren't murdering millions of migratory songbirds, and it's the DWP's obligation to prove that to the public before they build them."

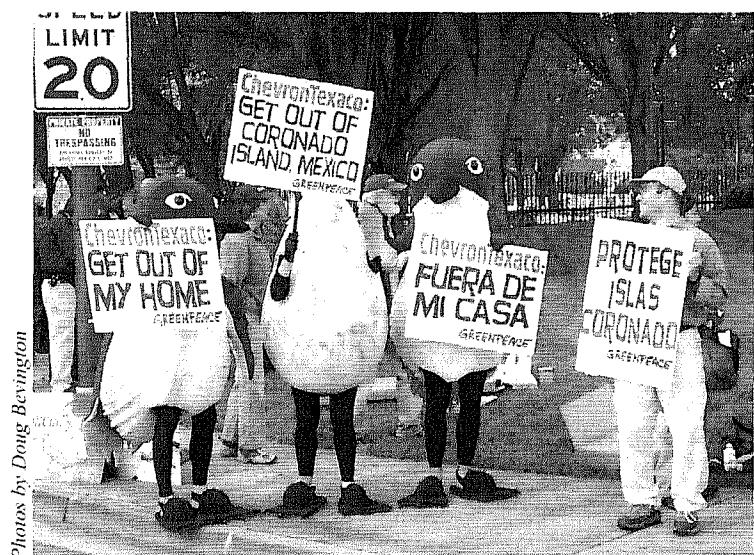
LA Audubon's next option is to file a CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) lawsuit against DWP objecting to the EIR. Stay tuned for developments in this important issue, the first case in California involving the potential harm of wind farms to migratory songbirds.

LAAS Joins Complaint Against Chevron LNG Plant

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation has agreed to review a complaint against the Chevron LNG plant near the Coronado Islands. The Commission is an advisory body established under NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), and has no power to halt the project, but if they

investigate the complaint and publish their findings, those conclusions could be persuasive to other agencies and ministries.

The complaint was filed by Greenpeace Mexico, Wildcoast, the Los Angeles Audubon Society, and four other US and Mexican groups who claim that Mexico's environmental secretariat wrongly made the assessment that the \$650 million industrial project anchored to the ocean floor eight miles off the Tijuana coast would not significantly harm bird, plant, and sea life, nor pose a safety threat to the San Diego-Tijuana region. The complaining groups claim that lights and activity at the terminal will threaten the breeding of the endangered Xantus's Murrelet and other species considered at risk, and that the Mexican government did not take into account the Coronado Islands' status as a specially protected area.



Photos by Doug Bevington
Protesting MURRELETS—Members of Greenpeace Mexico kept on Chevron as they traveled to the stockholder's meeting in San Ramon, California to protest the LNG plant.

Santa Clara River Endangered

The Santa Clara River in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties has been named by American Rivers as one of the ten most endangered rivers in the United States. This is largely due to the massive Newhall Ranch development proposed for its banks. Currently, the US Army Corps of Engineers is considering issuing permits for "buried bank stabilization" rather than avoidance of the floodplain — even though the Corps has not yet completed a comprehensive watershed study of the river begun last year. To find out more about the Santa Clara River and what you can do go to www.americanrivers.org click on "Updates and successes on the Endangered Rivers of 2005" and click on the Santa Clara River at number 10.

NOW FOR THE GREAT NEWS Audubon Kern River Preserve Doubled

Twenty-five years after conservationists started acquiring and restoring land on the South Fork Kern River, the purchase of the Sprague Ranch doubles the size of Audubon's Kern River Preserve, adding 1,662 acres of rare cottonwood willow forest to this mecca for birds and birders.

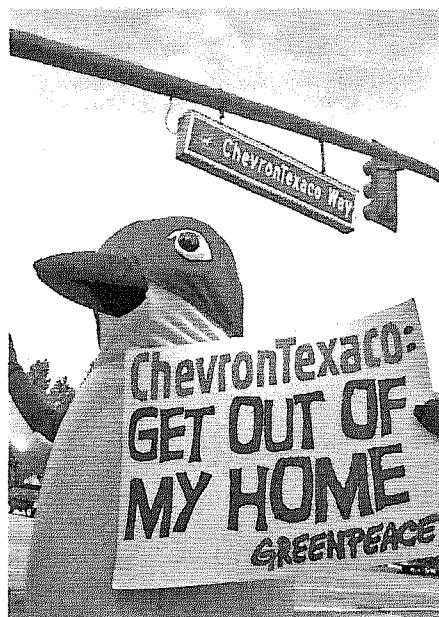
The 4,380 acres of the Sprague Ranch was acquired on March 31, 2005 for \$4,445,000.

1,662 acres will be incorporated into the National Audubon Society's Kern River Preserve and 2,718 acres was purchased by California Wildlife Conservation Board and will be managed by the California Department of Fish and Game.

The Army Corps of Engineers has established a \$3.2 million endowment to support restoration and good stewardship by Audubon and the California Department of Fish and Game.

"The addition of the Sprague Ranch is critical to conserving this valley's natural heritage, and I can't thank the Sprague Family enough for working with us over the past several years to complete this transaction," said Reed Tollefson, Audubon's Kern River Preserve Director.

The Sprague Ranch acquisition not only secures key habitat for the Willow Flycatcher, it also benefits more than a dozen other sensitive bird species,



including the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. The 15-mile-long riparian corridor that makes up the South Fork Kern River has been identified by Audubon as an Important Bird Area because it holds a globally significant population of Southwestern Willow Flycatchers.

The Sprague Ranch purchase will also provide other public benefits by increasing the US Army Corps of Engineers flexibility in operating Isabella Reservoir for water storage and hydropower production.

Funding for the acquisition was provided by the US Army Corps of Engineers with funds secured by Congressman Bill Thomas, California Wildlife Conservation Board through funds from Proposition 40 approved by California voters in 2001, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Conserving California's Landscapes Initiative, and the National Audubon Society.

It's important to note that funds from Proposition 40, passed overwhelmingly by voters in 2001, were vital to making this acquisition possible," said Glenn Olson, Executive Director of Audubon California. "California residents should be applauded for their role in this important conservation effort."

"Audubon is pleased to have worked with a broad range of partners on the Sprague Ranch purchase and to be part of the community in the Kern River Valley," said Olson.

WESTERN TANAGER

Published by
Los Angeles Audubon Society,
a chapter of
National Audubon Society.

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PELAGIC TRIPS: Phil Sayre
PROGRAMS: Mary Freeman
ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT:
Kimball Garrett
PRINTING: Holden Color Inc.

Opinions expressed in articles or letters herein do not necessarily express the position of this publication or of LAAS.

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Western Tanager subscription rates for non-members are \$9 per year for third class delivery or \$15 per year for first class delivery. LAAS members may receive first class delivery by paying an additional \$5. Make check payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

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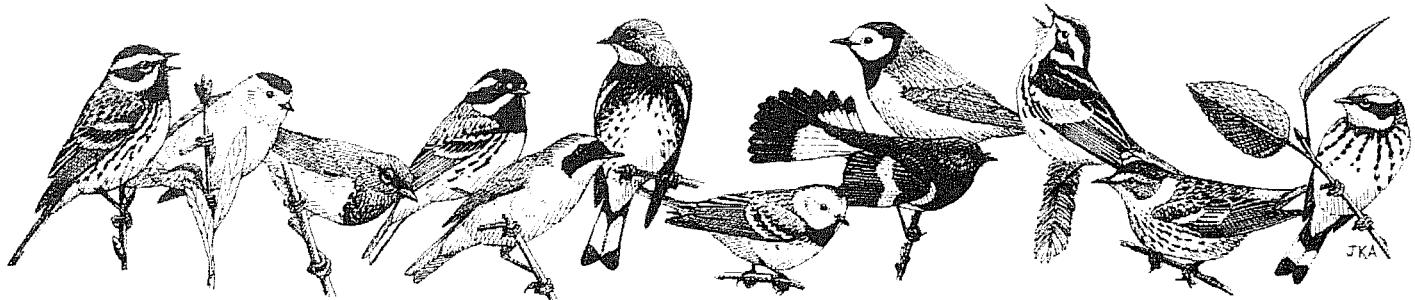
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BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Jon Feenstra

For those of a compulsive birding nature, this wasn't a particularly exciting season. Few vagrants made it here, and the ones that did were largely leftovers from last season. That archetype of birder-ness that commands us to lose sleep by chasing rarities could take a rest. And it is, of course, healthy to appreciate that first splash of oriole-orange or hear the local Yellow-rumps start to sing. All of our spring birds arrived as usual, some of them stayed to nest in our foothills and mountains while others kept right on flying to their northern haunts. The weather this season was fairly cool and humid with several extra rainstorms up into early May. The worry that migration was going to skip the coast in favor of the lush deserts doesn't seem to have occurred, and the effects of all that rain on the birds will probably remain unclear. Perhaps just the vagrants are skipping us? A few things showed up that were a bit out of the ordinary, but nothing that would endanger our careers or relationships.

Lingering winterers to spring migrants, this is what we saw:

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** has decided that Del Rey Lagoon is a nicer place than Canada and giant domestic geese are better company than others of its own species. It's been there since winter and continues as of the writing of this article [KL]. Likewise, two **Cackling Geese** hung on for a while in the South Bay area: one at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area on April 23 and another at

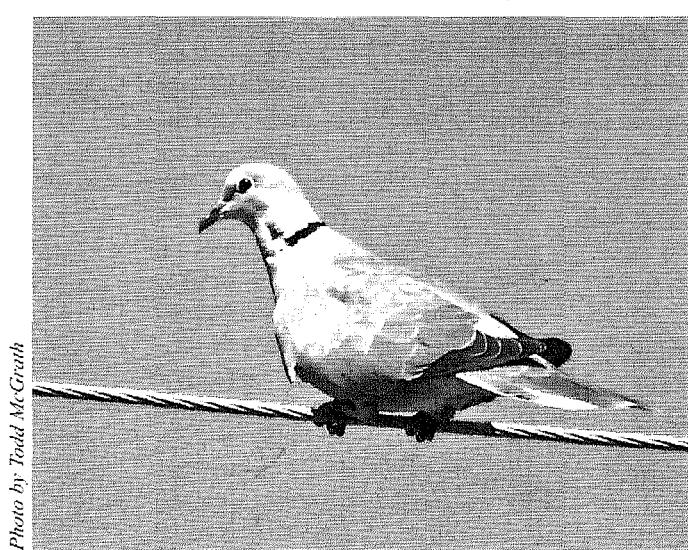
Cabrillo Beach on April 24 [KL]. **Hooded Mergansers** on April 6 were a notable find at the LA Arboretum [WF, LF]. This species typically departs in March. A pair of **Common Mergansers** in Castaic Lake up to May 11 was another mystery [MSM] – they have nested in that general area (Ventura County) in the past. Early in the season for this quite unexpected bird, a **Reddish Egret** was on the LA River on April 10 [RP] for a single day appearance. **Swainson's Hawks** are for the second year attempting to nest in a ranch yard in the eastern Antelope Valley [JFe]. Last year the nest was knocked out of the tree by wind. Let's hope they do a little better this time around. A **Ferruginous Hawk** was a little late on April 16 as it flew north over the Lancaster Sewage Ponds [JFe]. Unusual spring shorebirds (for now) were only represented by three species – a **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Hansen Dam on April 24 [KG], a **Solitary Sandpiper** at Madrona Marsh on April 15

[DM], and a **Red Knot** at Del Rey Lagoon on May 8 [MS, JFe] which lingered to May 12 [RB].

This season saw the inevitable change of status of **Eurasian Collared-Dove** in LA County. In the not too distant past (last year), Collared-Doves were tough to find locally. There were some out on Point Dume and a couple others scattered thinly around here and there. Now, we are under a nearly full occupation by this invading force. Just about every patch of trees in the eastern Antelope Valley has a pair or two. Santa Clarita is poised for an explosion and a few have been reported from the Ballona estuary. It's only a matter of time now before this bird won't even require a second glance. A sarcastic "Cheers!" is certainly in order. More typical as an early fall vagrant, a **White-winged Dove** at Sand Dune Park was a great bird on May 3 and takes some of the stigma off of Columbidae [WL].

After a strong showing last year, **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were relatively absent from the county this year except for a few at Soka University in Malibu which remained into May [RB]. Another was present near the Chatsworth Reservoir but hadn't been reported in some time. Probably the least expected of woodpeckers to show up in the middle of the desert, a **White-headed Woodpecker** on Edwards Air Force Base was a total shocker [SG].

Lingering empids from this winter were represented by the **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Village Green on March 20 [RB] and the



Eurasian Collared -Dove

Photo by Todd McGrath

annual **Gray Flycatcher** at Peck Road Park on March 26 [AL]. Shortly thereafter in April they were washed away by their migrating brethren. The winter fixture **Eastern Phoebe** at Sepulveda Basin was last seen on March 27 [JFi], and strangely another one, superb as a migrant, was seen and heard in Valyermo on April 16 – 17 [JB, KG]. The talk of the county this spring has certainly been our **Tropical Kingbirds**. The two found at West LA College in Culver City last fall [DS] had decided to remain through the winter – certainly not an unprecedented event. But unlike most other wintering Tropical Kingbirds, these two have decided to stay for the spring as well, last reported while this article was being written [DS]. No one will have any problems if they decide to stay the summer.

It's still a little early to make a solid comment but so far the vagrant warblers have been largely avoiding us. The **Pine Warbler** in El Dorado Park on March 19 was a treat from last season and so was a **Black-and-white Warbler** seen there on the same day [LS]. The only slightly unusual (but regular) migrants for this spring were a **Palm Warbler** at El Segundo Library Park on April 25 [RB] and a **Black-and-white Warbler** in a ranch yard in the eastern Antelope Valley on April 17 [KG]. Fingers are crossed that the next month brings in the good ones.

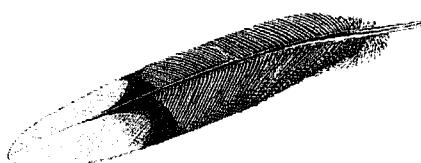
The last sign of the **Green-tailed Towhee** at Sepulveda Basin was March 27 [BP]. The **White-throated Sparrows** at Eaton Canyon were reported last on April 7 [TW]. A male **Indigo Bunting** there on May 1 [JFi] was the only one reported this season – after all the flooding and erosion it's doubtful that Eaton Canyon will host the bunting spectacle it exhibited last year. The two **Baltimore Orioles** at West LA College lasted until March 15 [DS].

On the finch front, the **Red Crossbills** that crashed at Apollo Park for the winter have decided to stay and multiply. Three recently fledged juveniles were observed there on May 8 [JFe] furnishing one of few breeding records for the Mojave Desert. That's it for birds.

By the time you're reading this, we'll know how spring vagrant season panned out. It's looking grim, but really such predictions are useless. As birders,

we love to claim an understanding of complicated phenomena like migration. It's true we have a pretty good handle on when we're likely to see our last White-crowned Sparrow and, when those breeding plumaged Yellow-rumped Warblers begin to appear. But predicting vagrants is something else entirely. The reports of past years' can be educational to find the most likely dates and places for rare species, but only by birding there, or by birding anywhere really, will the actual result be found. And unusual birds are exactly that – unusual. For every few that show up in some well known migrant trap, there's always one that shows up in someone's yard, or in an under-birded park, or in downtown LA. There are those among us who wouldn't mind being shoulder to shoulder with a fleet of birders to catch a glimpse of a Kentucky Warbler at Butterbredit Springs, but don't forget to check that local patch, or that park you've never been to, or that green square on the map. Because, you just never know. 

[RB] = Richard Barth
 [JB] = Jean Brandt
 [JFe] = Jon Feenstra
 [JFi] = Jon Fisher
 [LF] = Lois Fulmer
 [WF] = Will Fulmer
 [KG] = Kimball Garrett
 [SG] = Stan Gray
 [WL] = Walter Lamb
 [KL] = Kevin Larson
 [AL] = Andrew Lee
 [DM] = Dave Moody
 [BP] = Bob Pann
 [RP] = Rose Powder
 [MSM] = Mike San Miguel
 [MS] = Mark Scheel
 [LS] = Larry Schmahl
 [DS] = Don Sterba
 [TW] = Tom Wurster



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**Saturday
 July 9
 LA Audubon
 Annual
 Picnic at
 Charlton
 Flats**

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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:

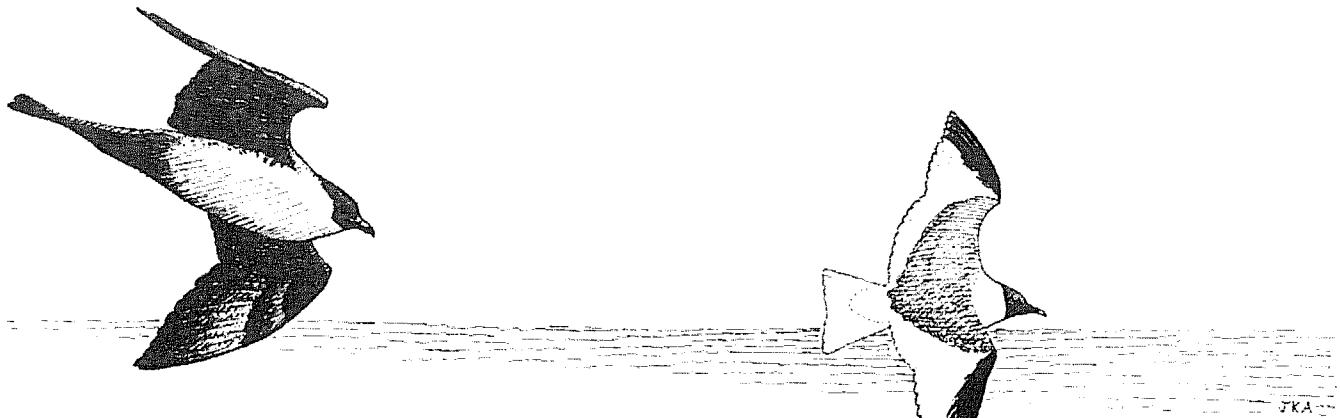
Birds of the Season,
 Jon Feenstra at feenstra@its.caltech.edu

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



PELAGIC TRIPS

Saturday, September 10 –

A deep water trip toward Cherry, Tanner, and Cortez banks. This 12-hour trip departs from Sea Landing in Santa Barbara Harbor at 7:00 AM on the fast catamaran the Condor Express. It returns approximately at 7:00 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, Jon Feenstra, and David Pereksta.**

\$185 – There is a full galley which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. A full bar is available.

Sunday, October 16 –

Northern Channel Islands Monument. This 10-hour trip departs from the Island Packer's dock in the Oxnard Harbor at 7:30 AM on the M/V Vanguard. We will take the Anacapa passage to Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands, cruise along the Santa Rosa Flats to the deep Santa Cruz Basin and return by Arch Rock at Anacapa Island. Birds seen in prior years: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented shearwaters; Leach's, Least, and Ashy storm-petrels; cormorants (3); Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; 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, David Pereksta, and Jon Feenstra.**

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

Saturday, November 19 –

Ventura Harbor toward San Miguel Island. This nine-hour trip departs from the Island Packer's dock in the Ventura Harbor at 8:00 AM on the fast catamaran Island Adventure, and will return around 4:30 PM. After dropping off campers on Santa Cruz Island we will have the boat to ourselves and head along the Santa Rosa Flats toward the 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: Buller's Shearwaters; Black-footed Albatross. In 2004 we saw five Flesh-footed Shearwaters, two Short-tailed Shearwaters, a pod of Orcas, and four species of dolphins.

Leaders: **Kimball Garrett, Todd McGrath, David Pereksta, and Jon Feenstra.**

\$95 – Snack type galley with drinks available.

Note: Destinations may be changed in order to maximize bird sightings, or minimize rough seas. In order to meet unexpected increases in fuel costs, there can be a \$3 to \$10 energy surcharge per person.

**SAVE \$5 – SIGN-UP
60 DAYS PRIOR TO ANY TRIP**

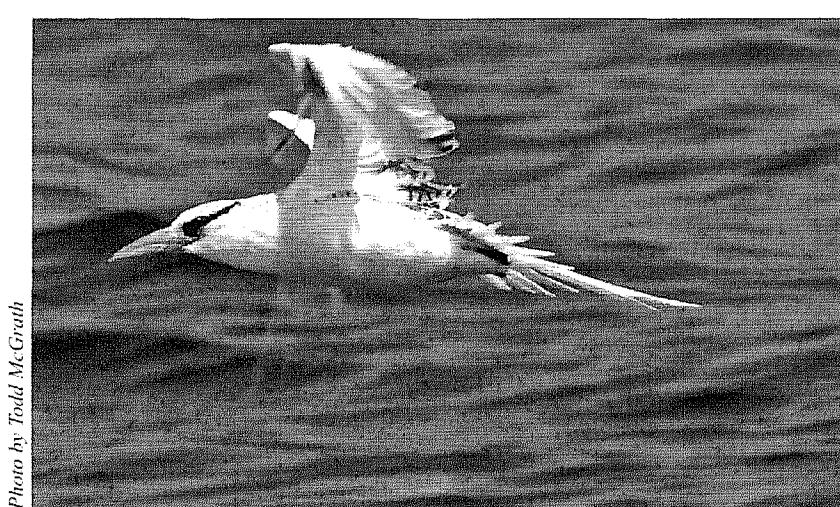


Photo by Todd McGrath

Red-billed Tropicbird

**Saturday
July 9
LA Audubon
Annual
Picnic at
Charlton
Flats**

**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.*

NEW AT THE BOOKSTORE

Where to Watch Birds in Peru

Peru is one of the most fascinating countries in the world for birds. With this book, a birder will be able to find a place where almost any species recorded in the country can be found. The directions are concise and accurate and the addition of well-presented maps makes this book a wonderful addition to Peruvian ornithology

Thomas Valqui

\$32.00

ON WINGS OF SONG

The Singing Life of Birds

Listen to birds sing as you have never listened before. Learn how each species acquires its songs and how songs vary from place to place. Listen to the mockingbird and count how many different songs it can sing. Marvel at the duet of a Wood Thrush as he uses his two voice boxes to accompany himself. Use these skills to listen anew to birds in your backyard and beyond and connect with nature in a whole new way. Hard cover, includes CD of bird song.

Donald Kroodsma, 2005

\$28.00

Birdsong, A Natural History

Why do birds sing and what do their songs mean? Follow the author from the woodlands of Martha's Vineyard to the tropical forests of Central America to unravel this ancient mystery. Why does the Chestnut-sided Warbler sing one song before dawn and another after sunrise? Why does the Brown Thrasher have a repertoire of two thousand songs and the Chipping Sparrow only one? This wonderful journey is recommended for all bird lovers, nature lovers, and science enthusiasts.

Don Stap, 2005

\$24.00

Why Birds Sing, a journey into the mystery of bird song

This book is a lyric exploration of bird song that blends the latest scientific research with a deep understanding of musical beauty and form. Drawing on conversations with neuroscientists, ecologists, and composers, this is the first book to investigate what bird song means to both human and avian ears.

David Rothenberg

\$26.00

CALIFORNIA NATURAL HISTORY GUIDES

Raptors of California

This book covers 27 species, 104 color drawings, photographs, range maps. The full-color plates show the various plumages, including rarities, and their appearance in flight.

Hans Peeters and Pam Peeters

\$17.95

Introduction to the California Condor

This engaging book, written by two scientists who were intimately involved with the Condor conservation effort, tells the full story of the bird's evolution and biology, to its captive breeding and subsequent releases, and to its uncertain future.

Noel F. R. Snyder and Helen A. Snyder

\$18.95

Introduction to California Birdlife

This is the first book on California birds that is based on habitats. It describes the representative birds in California's seven major bioregions: ocean, seashore, coastal ranges, Central Valley, mountains and foothills, Great Basin, and deserts. 150 color photographs, basics of avian biology, list of all species, and glossary of birding terms.

Jules Evens and Ian Tait

\$16.95

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.

Sunday, July 3 –

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 Cyn. Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking \$2. Meet at 8:00 AM.

Saturday, July 9 –

LA Audubon Annual Picnic. Sodas, bird and butterfly walks, and camaraderie provided. Bring a Forest Service Adventure Pass. The first bird walk will be at 8:00 AM, and another will follow at 10:00 AM for late-comers. There will also be a butterfly walk after the birds start thinning out. Lunch noonish, probable birding options elsewhere on the Angeles Crest later. Meet at Charlton Flats, but please check the web site as the date approaches for updated information.

Sunday, July 10 –

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.

Sunday, July 17 –

Big Bear Lake Vicinity. Leaders: **Nick and Mary Freeman.** 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. We may go to Arrastré Creek. It should be warm and there may be bugs, so come prepared. Bring lunch for a full day, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass.

Sunday, August 1 –

Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 AM. See July 3 listing for details.

Sunday, August 8 –

Whittier Narrows. Leader: **Ray Jillson.** Meet at 8:15 AM. See July 10 listing for details.

Sunday, August 14 –

Sweltering Salton Sea. **Nick Freeman** is too nice to dump this trip on another leader. Anticipate 95-115°F, sewer stench and dust-a-plenty. Don't show up without lots of water (1 gallon each), good health, and a reliable car with AC. This is the gauntlet of SoCal car birding. So why come? We should see Yellow-footed and Laughing gulls, Wood Stork, Black Tern, Lesser Nighthawk, Abert's Towhee, Gila Woodpecker, and possible Least Bittern, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, and Stilt Sandpiper. Perhaps most exciting is the slim but real possibility for real rarities such as Brown and Blue-footed boobies, frigatebirds, and even stranger birds that have popped up in August. Limit eight paid cars with two or more passengers each. Singles will be wait-listed until they can carpool. Send \$8 with a SASE per vehicle to Audubon House to reserve, and for the mailer with general, lodging, and meeting details. Camping is risky; it may not drop to 90°F. Meet near Brawley at 5:30 AM, and bird until noon or so. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

Saturday, August 20 –

LA River Shorebird Migration. **Larry Allen** will help us identify and age the small sandpipers of the genus *Calidris* seen this time of year in large flocks in

the shallows of the LA River. Larry will likely cast sidelong glances at other birds that may be encountered as well: such as terns, phalaropes, Avocets, and Peregrine Falcon. This is prime time for Baird's and Semipalmated sandpipers, although identifying the latter from the concrete river bank is a challenge. Possible second stop flexible, depending on reports. Take the 710 Fwy S to the Willow Street offramp, head E over the LA River, and take the first left on Golden Ave, the first left on 26th, and follow this around onto DeForest Ave. Park near the river access by the bridge, and meet along the river at 7:30 AM. Bring a lunch. Spotting 'scopes very helpful, although we will share.

Sunday, August 21 –

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. 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 AM.

Sunday, August 28 –

Private Duck Club. Leader: **Irwin Woldman.** This duck club is an excellent spot to observe migrating shorebirds. Some extraordinary shorebirds have turned up in this area over the years, including Mongolian Plover. We have seen Sora and Virginia rails here, as well. Get to the preserve by taking the 101 W to Las Posas Rd. S, then take Hueneme Rd. W to Casper Rd. Take Casper Rd. past the turn, and park and meet at 7:30 AM by the barn. Bird until about noon. Free phone sign-up with LAAS limited to 15. Bring lunch to eat afterwards, or not. 'Scopes, FRS radios, and bug repellent a plus.

Sunday, September 4 –

Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin.** See July 3 listing for details. Meet at 8:00 AM.

Sunday, September 11 –

Upper Franklin Canyon Birdwalk. Docent Steve Botts will be escorting us around this local bird haven, with Wood Ducks, migrating songbirds, and resident chaparral species expected. Franklin Canyon is located between Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills. Meet in the parking lot at 8:00 AM, and bird for a few hours. From the 101 Fwy, take Coldwater Canyon Ave. S into the hills. Immediately after Mulholland Dr. merges from the W with Coldwater Canyon Ave., make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. and continue west to the Sooky Goldberg Nature Center. The lot is through a gated drive on the left.

Saturday, September 17 –

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 at about 1:00 PM. Banning Park is located on the south side of Pacific Coast Highway one mile east of the 110 Freeway.

Saturday, September 17 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

Leader: Eleanor Osgood. Should be a good day for migrating songbirds. 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 (\$4 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. Meet at 8:00 AM.

Saturday, September 24 –

Piute Ponds and Beyond. Local leader **Alan Brown.** A good mix of shorebirds, waterfowl and songbirds will be migrating through at this time. Pectoral Sandpiper

hopeful. 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 20, including phone number, and e-mail address (optional). No drop-ins. High clearance vehicles may be a plus.

Saturday, October 1 –

Malibu to McGrath. Leader **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*.

Sunday, October 2 –

Santa Barbara Area. Local talent **Wes Fritz** leads. Late migration, with a focus on eastern vagrants. 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 AM. Check September listing.

LAAS INTERNATIONAL TOURS **BRAZIL'S PANTANAL AND IGUAÁU FALLS**

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Plus a 4-day Extension to Rio de Janeiro

Poca das Antas Biological Reserve, Tijuca

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Wildlife viewing on the Pantanal is likened to that on the plains of Africa. See Rheas, Seriemas, Jabirus, Plumbeous Ibis, Hyacinth Macaws, hummingbirds, Toco Toucan, among an extraordinary concentration of birds and other wildlife. Even a jaguar was seen on our last trip. This tour is climaxed by visiting the incomparable IguaÁu Falls, the largest waterfalls on earth.

Special price includes International Airfare from Miami and all internal flights within Brazil.

Space is limited!

THAILAND (March 2006) and COSTA RICA (April 2006)

Planning is underway for birding, natural history, and photography excursions to Thailand and new destinations in Costa Rica.

For information and itinerary, contact:

Olga Clarke, Travel Director, Los Angeles Audubon Society

2027 El Arbolita Dr., Glendale, CA 91208

Ph/Fax: (818) 249-9511 e-mail: oclarke@earthlink.net

EVENING MEETINGS

Meet at 7:30 PM in Plummer Park
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694

There are No Evening Meetings in July and August – Go Birding!

Tuesday, September 13

Stephen Rothstein presents "Cowbirds: why they are so maligned yet so interesting"

Tuesday, October 11

Kathy Molina presents "Black Skimmers in the West"

LA Audubon Annual Picnic
Saturday, July 9, 8:00 AM
Charlton Flats 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, Dark-eyed Junco, Thick-billed Fox Sparrow, and other mountain specialties. Another bird walk will start at 10:00 AM for late-comers. There will also be a butterfly walk after the birds start thinning out. Bring a picnic lunch, hat, sun-screen, binoculars, walking shoes, bug spray, a comfortable chair, and your attentive eyes and ears. LAAS will supply a cooler filled with non-alcoholic drinks.

To get to the Charlton Flats 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. Turn left into the road to Charlton Flats, and bear right to the picnic area. 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 or a Golden Age Passport.

Please check the web site as the date approaches for the latest information.

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

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