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# Pelagic Birding in the Southern California Bight – Part II

by Todd McGrath and Jon Feenstra

Part one of this article which appeared in issue 71:5 of *Western Tanager* described the oceanographic environment of the waters off southern California. The diversity of this habitat and, especially, its placement between southbound and northbound currents allows it to host over 28 regularly occurring species of pelagic birds. In addition, the Channel Islands and Islas los Coronados provide breeding habitat for multiple seabirds, several of which are either endemic to the area (e.g. Xantus's Murrelet) or are at the northern or southern limit of their breeding range (e.g. Black Storm-Petrel or Rhinoceros Auklet). A total of 53 pelagic species have been documented in the Southern California Bight. The following are individual accounts describing the status and occurrence of those species in the waters between Pt. Arguello and the Mexican border. There is still much to learn about the distribution of pelagic species in our region, but this guide should give those wishing to venture offshore a better idea of what, where, and when the various birds may be encountered.

**Laysan Albatross** *Phoebastria immutabilis* – Uncommon; Oct-May; usually well offshore near the continental shelf. Rare inside the Channel Islands. This species appears to be increasing in our region, and since the early 1980s has established breeding colonies on several islands off Mexico (Dunlap 1988). Guadalupe I. is the nearest breeding island to California (roughly 200 miles to the south), and this Mexican population is the likely source of many of the sightings in southern California waters.

**Black-footed Albatross** *Phoebastria nigripes* – Uncommon to rare well offshore over the California Current. May be absent in fall and early winter. Usually more common at the northern end of our area. This species declined substantially in southern California in recent years. The 112 seen off Pt. Loma, 6 Aug 1958 (Unitt, 2004) are more than one would expect anywhere in our region today, including at the edge of the continental shelf. It is possible this species has shifted its range northward as the warm water trend off southern California has reduced ocean productivity.

**Short-tailed Albatross** *Phoebastria albatrus* – Although common over 100 years ago, there are only three recent records south of Point Arguello. One roughly 90 nm west of San Diego 28 Aug 1977 was the first modern record for California (Luther, 1980). Another was off the NW tip of Santa Barbara I. 19 Feb-22 Mar 2002 (Cole & McCaskie 2004). One a few hundred yards from the Prisoner's Harbor dock on Santa Cruz I. 5 Jul 2005 is the most recent record for our area. Any albatross seen inside the Channel Islands should be closely scrutinized, as this is perhaps the most likely species close to shore. The continued recovery of this species should result in additional records for southern California waters.

**Northern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis* – Irregularly uncommon to common fall and winter visitor; (Oct-Apr). May be common well into summer after exceptional flight years. Fall of 2003 was the most dramatic recent flight year with hundreds visible from shore in October and November. 1976 was another very high flight year for the species (Garrett & Dunn, 1981) A few may be present well offshore at any season even in years when they are absent near shore. Most birds seen in our area are gray or brown birds, but white forms are seen occasionally.

**Murphy's Petrel** *Pterodroma ultima* – Irregularly uncommon to rare spring visitor well offshore; April-June. Recent high counts included 66 on 18-20 and 25 on 25-27 Apr 2003, and 10 on 15-16 Apr 2005. Occasionally seen just west of San Miguel I. or from other Channel Islands, but most often recorded in deep water over the continental shelf.

**Mottled Petrel** *Pterodroma inexpectata* – Very rare visitor Nov-Mar well offshore along the continental shelf. Extremely rare close to shore. Its true status is difficult to ascertain as few boats venture out to the continental shelf during the winter months. There are five accepted records: 30 Dec 1981 Pt Mugu VEN, 15 Nov 1989 123 nm SW of San Miguel I. SBA, 17 Nov 1989 61 nm SW of San Miguel I. SBA, 11 Feb 1993 193 nm NW of Pt Arguello SBA, 71 nm W of Pt. Arguello, and 1 Apr 1993 180 nm SW of San Nicolas I. VEN.

**Cook's Petrel** *Pterodroma cookii* – An uncommon to rare visitor to the deep waters off the continental shelf (Apr-Nov), with a peak in July and August. Numbers fluctuate year to year, and may not be present every year. This species is regular off western Mexico (Howell & Webb 1995), and southern and central California probably represents the northern edge of this species regular range.

**Stejneger's Petrel** *Pterodroma longirostris* – Very rare visitor to the ocean beyond the continental shelf. Probably most likely in late fall (Nov), but may also occur in early spring or summer. May be more common offshore beyond the 200 mile limit, but as with many of these deepwater species, the distribution is still poorly known. There are three records for our region: 14 Nov 1990 approximately 152 nm SW of San Miguel I. SBA, 4 July 1992 approximately 153 nm SW of San Nicolas I. VEN, and 10 Jul 1992 approximately 189 nm WSW of San Miguel I. SBA.

**Galapagos/Hawaiian Petrel** *Pterodroma phaeopygia/sandwichensis* – A very rare visitor Apr-Aug, with three records for our region: 31 Aug 1996 24 nm SW of San Miguel I. SBA, 28 Apr 2001 29 nm SW of Pt. Arguello SBA, and 25 Jul 2001 100 miles W of Pt. Conception SBA. Based on current knowledge it is not possible to separate these two species in the field, but Hawaiian may be more likely based on range. These two species were formerly known as Dark-rumped Petrel.

**Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii* – Very rare visitor to warm waters in our region. Two sightings: one not accepted by the CBRC and one pending. One, 10 Jul 1993 at the Whitewater River delta Salton Sea RIV was not accepted by the CBRC and would have been a first for North America (Patten et al. 2003). However the authors believe the details are sufficiently convincing to include here. Another seen 4 Sep 2003, 30 nm S of San Clemente I. is still circulating. There is one accepted record for California of a bird photographed on Monterey Bay 26 July 1988 (Erickson & Hamilton 2001).

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas* – One, 7 Sep 2002 4-5 miles S of Sandstone Pt. on Santa Cruz I. SBA is the only accepted record for the area (Cole & McCaskie 2004), but two other reports that same fall may also have been correct. Late August to mid October is the peak period of occurrence for this species in northern California.

**Pink-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus creatopus* – A common migrant and summer resident, with a few present all year, particularly around the northern Channel Islands. Pink-footed Shearwaters begin arriving in southern California in early April and numbers build through the summer, peaking in Sep-Oct, when thousands may be present around the northern Channel Islands. Some birds may linger through the winter. Often visible from shore, sometimes in the hundreds when wind conditions are favorable.

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes* – An uncommon fall, rare winter, and spring visitor. Most reports are in the area south of the northern Channel Islands, but occasionally seen in the Santa Barbara Channel. High counts include six+ in the San Pedro Channel 22 Nov 1968 (Garrett & Dunn, 1981) and five around the northern Channel Islands 20 Nov 2004. The high numbers on these late dates suggests late Nov may be a peak period for this species in our area.

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus* – Very rare fall visitor, should be looked for from Aug-Oct. There is only one accepted record for our region, a bird photographed 31 Jul 1988 at the mouth of the Whitewater River at the Salton Sea. Five additional reports for our area have been rejected by the CBRC. All three other accepted California records are from Monterey Bay, probably in part the result of the excellent coverage that area receives in the fall. The Salton Sea bird likely traveled up the Gulf of California, and was probably from the breeding population in Mexico. The provenance of birds further north is difficult to determine, and could be from Mexico, Hawaii, or one of the breeding colonies in the southern hemisphere.

**Buller's Shearwater** *Puffinus bulleri* – An uncommon to rare fall visitor from late Jul to early Nov, most records late Aug-mid Oct. Very rare at other seasons. Most common around the northern Channel Islands where fall counts of around a dozen are fairly typical. Becomes rare farther south and is seldom observed from shore.

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus* – Very common to abundant visitor primarily Apr-Nov, with numbers peaking in the summer months. Uncommon to rare at other seasons, with numbers fluctuating from year to year. Often visible from shore and may be present in the thousands in the Santa Barbara Channel. This species has declined dramatically off the southern end of our area in the last twenty years, probably as a result of reduced ocean productivity due to higher ocean temperatures. (Unitt, 2004) Population reductions have also been noted in the rest of California. Some of this reduction may be due to a northerly shift in the distribution of this species in the northern Pacific (Spear & Ainley, 1999), but there is also evidence of a general decline (Oedekoven et al, 2001).

**Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris* – A rare to uncommon late fall and winter visitor, but numbers vary greatly from year to year. The status of this species is difficult to assess due to difficulties separating this species from Sooty Shearwater, especially at

a distance. Not usually recorded before early Nov, and most are gone by the end of March, but single birds have been recorded to mid-April several times in the last few years.

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus* – Rare but apparently increasing visitor to southern California waters. Often found nearshore, but not as restricted to this zone as Black-vented Shearwater. The seven accepted records fall Sep-Mar, and several additional sightings for our region are pending. Locating this species among the thousands of Black-vented Shearwaters that may be present may provide even more regular records.

**Black-vented Shearwater** *Puffinus opisthomelas* – A common to abundant fall and winter visitor, (Sep-Apr) Rare at other seasons. In very warm water years the species may arrive as early as July. Black-vented Shearwaters frequent the shallow nearshore waters, and are often visible from land. May be seen in the thousands from places like La Jolla, Pt. Fermin, and Pt. Mugu during the fall and early winter. This species seems to be seen in increasing numbers off southern California, perhaps due to warming of the waters off Baja, Mexico, resulting in a more northerly dispersal of this species. Leucistic Black-vented shearwaters are frequently encountered in our area (Garrett 1990), and can be mistaken for rarer species by the unaware observer.



Laysan Albatross

Photos by Todd McGrath



Pomarine Jaeger

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus* – Rare late summer and fall visitor. (Aug-early Oct) This species is annual in small numbers off central California, but is seen less frequently in southern California. Eleven seen W of San Miguel I. SBA 28 Sep 2002 (NAB: 57:116) is the high count for our region.

**Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma furcata* – Rare but occasionally irruptive species. Most records are for late fall, winter or spring, but no clear pattern emerges from the records. Occasionally seen from shore during or after storms. This species appears to be a less frequent visitor to our waters.

**Leach's Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* – Common spring through fall (Apr-Oct) usually well offshore. The taxonomy and distribution of Leach's Storm-Petrels is a complicated matter in southern California and western Mexico. Although some controversy still exists, four subspecies are generally recognized (Power & Ainley, 1986) all of which may occur in our area. Nominate *O. l. leuchora* breed from Alaska to the Farallons, and may also be the subspecies present in the small breeding colonies on Prince I. off San Miguel I., and Santa Barbara I., the only known breeding locations in southern California. This subspecies almost always has an extensively white-rump, although there is some variation in the amount. *O. l. chapmani* breed on Islas los Coronados and Islas San Benitos off Baja, Mexico. Birds from the Coronados have highly variable rump colors, ranging from nearly as white as nominate birds to all dark. Most seem to have at least some small amounts of white. Birds from the

Isla San Benitos are almost all completely dark-rumped. Birds from these colonies can be observed in the southern part of our region spring through fall. A post-breeding dispersal northward results in large numbers of these variably dark-rumped birds present as far north as Arguello Canyon in August and September. There are also two subspecies that breed at different seasons on and around Isla Guadalupe, and some authorities believe that one or both of these subspecies should be elevated to full species status. The

winter breeding *O. l. cheimomnestes* is primarily white-rumped and there is no current criteria for separating this form from nominate Leach's at sea, therefore it's presence in California waters would be difficult to establish. Summer breeding *O. l. socorroensis* may be either light or dark-rumped, and average smaller than any other population of Leach's (Power & Ainley, 1986). A review of specimens at both the San Diego Museum of Natural History and the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History showed that the white rump patch on summer breeding birds was narrower, resembling the patch on Band-rumped Storm-Petrel. The overall coloration of this subspecies was a blackish-brown, noticeably darker than other white-rumped Leach's. Several reports of Band-rumped Storm-Petrel from California (including one accepted and then removed by the CBRC) were likely this form. Although no published criteria for separating this form at sea has been established, the smaller size, overall darker color and more restricted white rump may allow identification to subspecies of some birds by experienced observers. This subspecies should be looked for at the southern end of our region well offshore, primarily in late-summer. McGrath tentatively identified five individuals of this subspecies at the very southern end of the ABA area in early September 2003. Much more work is needed to clarify both the taxonomy and at sea distribution of this species off southern California.

**Ashy Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma homochroa* – Fairly common in spring through fall (Apr-Oct) mostly in the northern Channel Islands but declining. This species is one of the rarest storm-petrels in the

world, and essentially a breeding endemic to California. Roughly 40% of the world's known population breeds on the northern Channel Islands with substantial colonies near San Miguel I. at Prince I. (1154 birds), Santa Barbara I. (874 birds) and nearby Sutil I. (586 birds) (Carter, 1992). Over the past ten years this species has been recorded less frequently by pelagic birding trips in our region suggesting that the species is declining in our area, or has changed its preferred areas of feeding.

**Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma tethys* – A very rare summer and fall visitor with four records: 18 Aug 1976 20 nm S of Anacapa I. VEN, 23 Jul 1989 83 nm SW of San Nicolas I. VEN, 05 Oct 1995 52 nm SSW of San Miguel I. SBA, and 6 Sep 1997 approximately 33 nm SW of San Miguel I. SBA. The last record was not accepted by the CBRC, but published photos (Rogers & Jaramillo, 2002) were sufficient for the authors to include it here. The only California specimen was a bird found injured in a Carmel backyard 21 Jan 1969. The bird later died, and was found to be the small southern form breeding in Peru rather than the more northerly nominate form (Yadon, 1970), showing that the nearest populations are not always the source of vagrant records.

**Black Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma Melania* – Common spring and summer visitor (late Apr-Oct), a small breeding colony estimated at 274 birds on and around Santa Barbara I., is the only known breeding location in California. (Carter, 1992) This species is generally our commonest storm-petrel, and the one most likely to be seen from shore. There is a post-breeding dispersal northward from breeding islands off Baja, Mexico, and that accounts for the higher numbers seen during the summer and fall.

**Least Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma microsoma* – Irregularly rare to fairly common summer and early fall visitor (Aug-early Oct). Numbers vary from year to year, but usually a few present in the southern part of our region. Occasionally may be present in larger numbers such as during the El Niño event of 1998 when this species was regularly seen from shore in August and early September off San Diego and Orange Counties, e.g. 20 at the Newport Beach Pier on 1 Sep 1988 (NAB 53:103). Breeding range is similar to Black Storm-Petrel (although Least is absent as a breeder from the northernmost section of Black's breeding range).

**White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus*

– One record. One 24 May-23 June 1964 displaying to remote control gliders at Upper Newport Bay (Hamilton and Willick 1996) is the only record for California. The Hawaiian Islands are the closest breeding grounds for this species. Stalcup (1990) reports that there were several sightings of this species 300-500 miles off southern California in 1988, indicating this species might be expected again along the outer edge of the 200 mile limit of the ABA area.

**Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus*

– Uncommon summer and early fall visitor around the Channel Islands and further offshore. This species is present in small numbers around San Nicolas I. and south. Rare but regular to the northern Channel Islands. Is regular in spring at the very south edge of our region. (Multi-day trips out of San Diego in April have recorded this species in small numbers each of the last three Aprils.) A few may be present at the southern edge of our region year round.

**Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda*

– Rare but regular visitor well offshore Jul-Jan. About 14 records for our area, most in Aug-Sep, with a few in January. Most of the sightings for our area have been from research cruises more than 100 miles from shore, although there is a record from Bolsa Chica 10 Jul 1999. The most recent record was 6 Sep 2003 about 200 nm SW of San Clemente I. LA seen on a multi-day Searcher pelagic trip.

**Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* – Rare but increasing visitor. Most records from the coast or Channel Islands. Prior to 1992, there was only one Masked Booby record for our area. Since then there have been six additional records that are definitely this species and another four that were treated as Masked/Nazca booby. Bill color is currently the only known criteria for separating this recently split pair (yellow in Masked vs. orange in Nazca) and this bill coloration is not present in the first year, making young birds impossible to separate in the field with current knowledge. Although Nazca has yet to be recorded for certain in our region, an immature came aboard a fishing boat in Mexican waters 27 May 2001 and rode the boat back to San Diego, where the bird was placed into rehabilitation. (Garrett & Wilson, 2001)

**Blue-footed Booby** *Sula nebouxii* – A very rare late summer and fall visitor Jul- Dec.

Blue-footed Boobies breed in numbers in the Gulf of California, and irregularly disperse north to the Salton Sea, where as many as 40+ have been seen in a day during the largest invasion years 1971 and 1972 (Patten et al. 2003). During these invasion years, it is thought that some may continue north and traverse the San Gorgonio Pass to arrive at the coast (Garrett and Dunn 1981). Some 35 were recorded in coastal areas during the invasion year of 1971, but one or two along the coast is more typical during a year of incursion (Garrett and Dunn 1981). Although there have been a scattering of records at the Salton Sea in the 1990s, no major incursions have taken place since 1977. There are only three coastal records for our area since 1980. The first was seen off Oceanside, SD 26 March 1980 and is exceptional for the date. The second was captured at a school in Huntington Beach, ORA 7 Sep 1990 later died. (McCaskie & San Miguel 1999). The third was seen from West Cove Pt. on San Clemente I., LA 17 Nov 2002.

**Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* – Rare but increasing coastal vagrant. Now annual along the southern California coast primarily as a post-breeding wanderer in late Jul-Oct (most records Aug-Sep). Most are seen along the coast or on the Channel Islands. An abundant breeder in the Gulf of California, this species appears also to be expanding its range along the coast, and has now bred successfully on the Islas los Coronado's. This species was formerly most common in California at the Salton Sea, but has not been recorded there since 1990 (Patten et al. 2003).

**Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula* – Very rare vagrant with eight records for our region four in Oct, with one each for Feb, May, Aug, and Nov. This tropical booby breeds only as close as the Islas Revillagigedo in southern Mexico. All sightings have been coastal, around the Channel Islands, with a couple seen well offshore on research cruises. Both the white and brown color morphs have occurred in our region. There is about one sighting every three to four years.

**South Polar Skua** *Catharacta maccormicki* – Uncommon spring (May-Jun) and fall (Sep-early Nov) migrant. Rare summer visitor. This species is generally found well offshore, but may sometimes enter the Santa Barbara Channel when large numbers of tubenoses are present. Probably most common in late May to early June and mid-Sep

to mid-Oct. Typical single day counts of two to four birds can be expected at the peak of migration. Very rarely seen from shore, and observers must be careful to eliminate dark Pomarine Jaegers which can superficially resemble South Polar Skua.

**Pomarine Jaeger** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

– Common spring (Apr-May) and fall (late Aug-early Nov) migrant. Uncommon winter and rare summer visitor. Pomarine Jaegers are often the most common jaeger seen off southern California. They can sometimes be seen from shore, especially during periods when shearwaters are also visible from land. This species also ranges well out into the deep waters along the continental shelf.

**Parasitic Jaeger** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

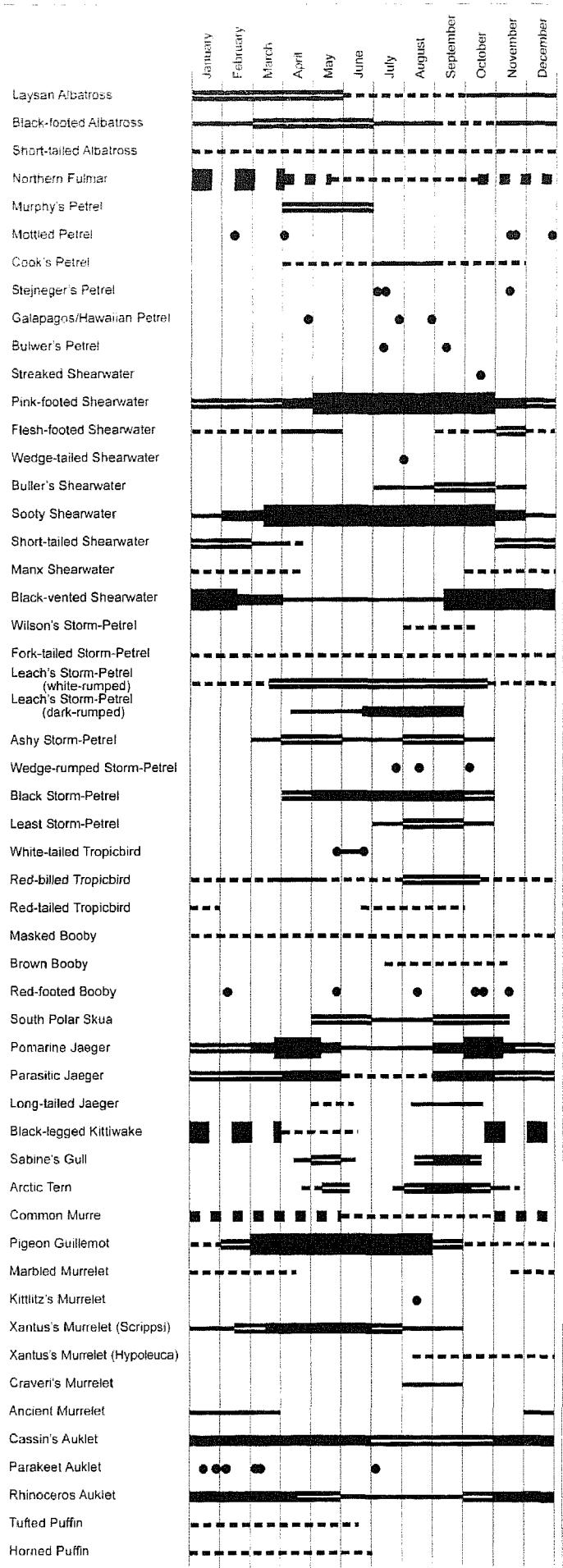
– Fairly common spring (mid Apr-late May) and fall (late Aug-Oct) transient. Uncommon but regular winter visitor. Rare in summer. The Parasitic Jaeger relies on Royal, Elegant, and Common Terns for food, so is often close to the coast, and is frequently seen from shore. A few migrants can generally be found well offshore, but this species is often absent from the zone of water in between. In winter is often seen around harbors, or estuaries where Royal Terns feed in numbers. As with Pomarine Jaeger, summering birds are likely non-breeding immatures.

**Long-tailed Jaeger** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

– Uncommon fall transient (mid Aug-early Oct) rare later in fall and very rare in spring (May). The Long-tailed Jaeger is the most pelagic of the jaegers and is rarely seen close to shore. It is often seen in the company of Arctic Terns (its main source of food). This species is often seen south of the northern Channel Islands or west of San Miguel I. in the northern part of our region. It is very rare in the Santa Barbara Channel. In the southern part of the region it may be seen inside the southern Channel Islands, but usually still well offshore. Typical single day high counts during the peak of fall migration would be five to ten, although numbers of about 20 have been recorded.

**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* –

Like the Northern Fulmar, the Black-legged Kittiwake is an irregular late fall and winter visitor (Nov-Mar) in our area. It may be present in large numbers or virtually absent. During “invasion” years they often are seen from shore in good numbers particularly in late-winter and spring. After good flight years some birds may linger along the coast well into summer.



**Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini* – Uncommon spring (mid-Apr–early Jun, most common in May) and fairly common fall migrant (mid-Aug–mid-Oct) offshore. This pelagic gull is rarely seen from shore along the coast, but is rare but regular inland in the fall. Seems to be seen more south of the northern Channel Islands, but is occasionally seen in the Santa Barbara Channel.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* – Common fall migrant (Aug–Sep) and uncommon to rare spring migrant in fall. Casual early migrants may be seen in late April or early May, and a few lingering fall birds may be found into October. Very rarely seen onshore and inland, and care must be taken to eliminate Common Tern.

**Common Murre** *Uria aalge* – Irregularly common to uncommon in winter and spring; Nov–May. It is an “invading” species with numbers fluctuating widely from one year to another. Breeding has been documented historically on the rocks near San Miguel I. and it breeds regularly to the north of our area on other offshore rocky cliffs. Winter sightings are typically close to the Channel Islands and occasionally from shore during migration. In some years Common Murres may linger in the area through the summer. Tens of thousands were present off southern California during the invasion of 1979–1980 (Garrett & Dunn, 1981).

**Thick-billed Murre** *Uria lomvia* – One record. A Thick-billed Murre photographed off the Palos Verdes Peninsula 21 May 1994 is the only California record south of Monterey Bay. All other accepted records for California fall mid-Aug–early Apr, with most records Sep–Dec.

**Pigeon Guillemot** *Cephus columba* – A breeding bird of the rocky cliffs of the northern Channel Islands and, at least historically, south to Santa Barbara I. and the rocky coast of the mainland. Birds are typically seen late winter to late summer near breeding grounds and in coastal waters north of Los Angeles County. Individuals largely leave the area in winter with only a few recorded along the coast in most years.

**Marbled Murrelet** *Brachyramphus marmoratus* – Breeding in the redwoods of the Pacific Northwest, Marbled Murrelet is a rare winter vagrant to southern California. Unlike most other alcids occurring here, this one is more likely to be found in sheltered coastal waters such as harbors and inlets. As with many other alcids a large invasion in the winter of 1980 resulted in many birds occurring along the coast. (Garrett & Dunn, 1981)

**Kittlitz's Murrelet** *Brachyramphus brevirostris* – One record. A juvenile plumaged bird was found on the beach in La Jolla SD on Aug 16, 1969. Its natural occurrence in southern California waters was initially considered questionable as the date is extremely early for the natural vagrancy of a juvenile alcid so far from its far northern breeding grounds. (Garrett & Dunn, 1981), but the bird showed no signs of being held in captivity and was later accepted by the CBRC (Binford 1985).

**Xantus's Murrelet** *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus* – One of the world's rarest alcids and an endemic breeder to the Southern California Bight. Two subspecies are represented – the northern *Endomychura hypoleuca scrippsi* and the southern nominate *Endomychura hypoleuca hypoleuca*. *E.h. scrippsi* breeds commonly on the northern Channel Islands and (mostly) Santa Barbara I. The species has made a striking comeback after intense rat eradication programs on Anacapa I. After breeding, in the summer,

birds disperse as far as British Columbia and central Mexico (Whitworth, 2000). In late summer and fall *E.h. hypoleuca*, which breeds primarily on Guadalupe I. off Baja California, is very rarely found in the waters beyond central California. Both subspecies nest in rock crevices under bushes. *E.h. hypoleuca* is best distinguished from *E.h. scrippsi* by a white area extending above the eye.

**Craveri's Murrelet** *Synthliboramphus craveri* – Irregularly uncommon to rare in late summer and fall (late Jul-early Oct) to waters far offshore. High counts of tens of birds typically occur in Sep with a recent showing of nearly 30, Sep 6, 2003 between the Santa Rosa-Cortez Ridge and Cherry Banks. Although, in many years none are seen. This species breeds off central Mexico. It is best distinguished from Xantus's Murrelet by gray underwings (white in Xantus's) that can be seen in flight. Vocalizations can also be useful when heard. Craveri's has a trill, where Xantus's Murrelet (*scrippsi*) has a six-eight note whistle.

**Ancient Murrelet** *Synthliboramphus antiquus* – A rare winter (Nov-Mar) visitor to nearshore waters of southern California. Although not regular, it has been recorded annually in recent years. During invasions, such as the 1979-1980 alcid influx, tens were seen along the coast between Santa Barbara and Orange Counties. (Garrett & Dunn, 1981) The most recent high count is of eight between the Palos Verdes Peninsula and Catalina I. LA. It is one of the few alcid species that is occasionally found inland (several records for the Salton Sea).

**Cassin's Auklet** *Ptychoramphus aleuticus* – Uncommon in summer and fairly common to common Nov-Jun beginning several miles offshore. This species is at the southern end of its breeding range in the Southern California Bight. Here it is a common nesting bird of the rocky slopes of the Channel Islands particularly Prince I. off San Miguel I. Breeding also occurs on the other northern Channel Islands and Santa Barbara I. Birds are often seen well at sea far from the breeding colonies. Wintering numbers irregularly fluctuate and vary with the number of birds arriving from the north. Migrants are occasionally seen from shore on good flight days.

**Parakeet Auklet** *Aethia psittacula* – Very rare winter visitor to southern California. Eight records: three birds found dead and

decomposed on the beach near La Jolla SD 28 Jan 1937, 3 Mar 1991 95 nm WSW of San Nicolas I. VEN, 6 Mar 1991 98 nm W of San Nicolas I. VEN, 1 Feb 1992 140 nm WSW San Nicolas I. VEN, 10 Feb. 1992 193 nm W of San Miguel I. SBA, 14 Jan 1993 155 nm SW of San Nicolas I. VEN, 18 birds on 25 Jan 1993 70 nm W of Pt. Arguello SBA, and 1 Feb 1997 on San Nicolas I. VEN. Records seem to indicate that this species may be fairly regular at the outer edges of our area over deep water.

**Rhinoceros Auklet** *Cerorhinca monocerata* – A common wintering bird in the northern waters of the Southern California Bight (Oct-May). Breeding grounds are mainly to the north of here but extend as far south as the rocks off San Miguel I. (McChesney et al. 1995) They are regularly seen on winter pelagic trips and can be seen from coastal promontories during major spring and fall flights with strong winds.



Rhinoceros Auklet

**Tufted Puffin** *Fratercula cirrhata* – Rare and irregular; (Jan-Jun). Breeding is known to have occurred historically on a number of the Channel Islands. The only currently known location is Prince I. and Castle Rock near San Miguel I. (McChesney et al. 1995) Recent records include single immature birds in May and June in 2002 and 2005, respectively, near Anacapa I. During the puffin invasion year of 1975 51 birds counted north of San Nicolas I. VEN 7-30 May which stands as the high count for the region. (Garrett & Dunn, 1981).

**Horned Puffin** *Fratercula corniculata* – An irregular and very rare vagrant in winter to late spring (Jan-Jun). Horned Puffins breed to the north of California. Invasion years have occurred in 1975 and 1976 which brought tens to hundreds of birds to the offshore waters and around the northern Channel Islands. Most records have been from May and June. (Garrett & Dunn, 1981) There have been no recent records of Horned Puffin for southern California. 

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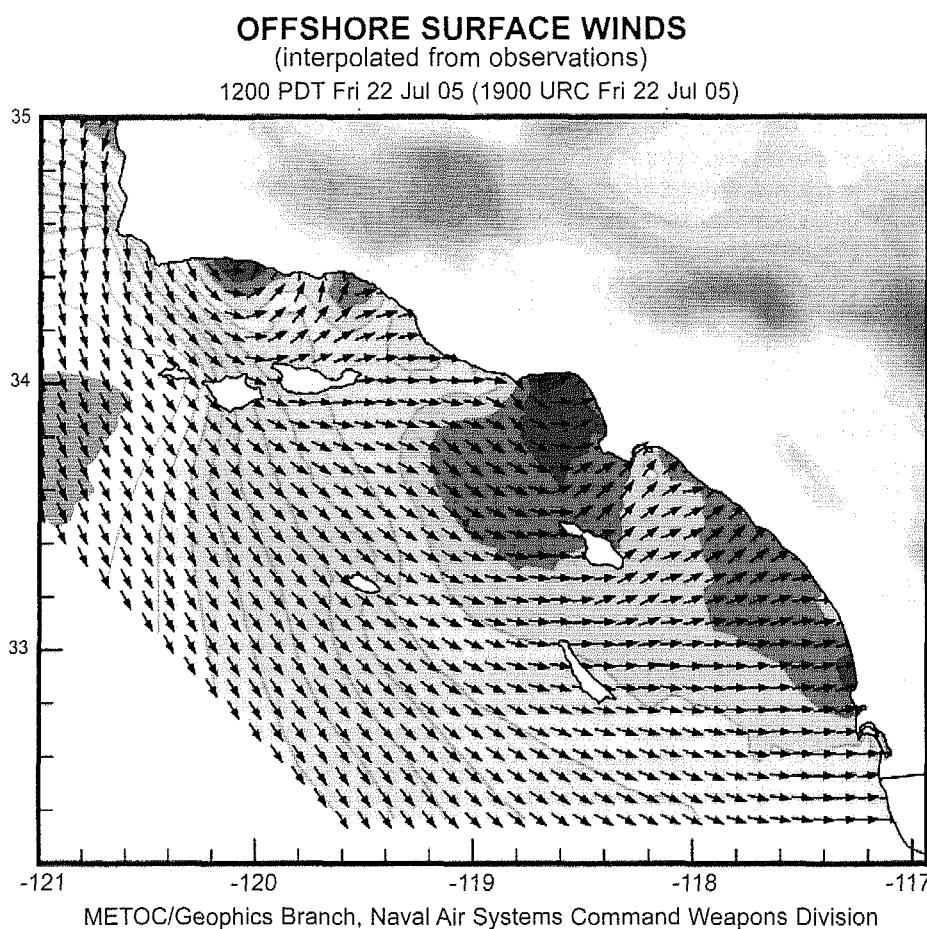
Mr. Norman Cargill,

To answer your primary question, we're not informed about ocean rise in local waters. There may be information relating this to the El Niño Southern Oscillation. Try searching the web to find the results of such research.

As far as northwest winds are concerned, they mainly parallel the California Current at the edge of the continental shelf. The heightened effect at certain times of the year (spring) forces the California Current toward shore cooling our near-shore waters.

The northwest direction of surface winds along the Southern California Bight can be seen in the diagrams provided online by the US Navy:

[www.nawewpns.navy.mil/~weather/mugu/mesodata/analysis.html](http://www.nawewpns.navy.mil/~weather/mugu/mesodata/analysis.html)

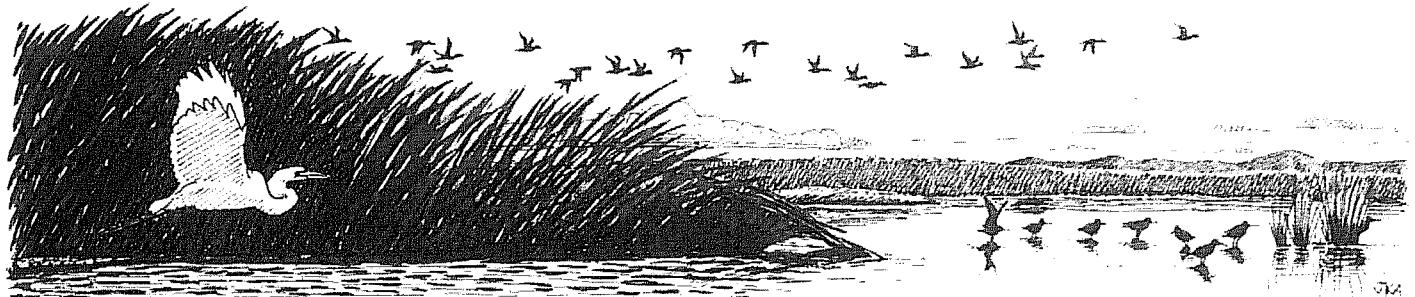


Visits to this web site at various times of the year consistently show the same general pattern of surface winds. It can be seen that closer to shore the wind scheme is more random with southwest winds being prominent in some areas (e.g. Long Beach).

On the subject of the Southern California Countercurrent as illustrated in Figure 1 of the article in the *Western Tanager* 71:5, it is merely an annual average of measured ocean currents. Those averages were calculated over the period of 1985-1990. Although we wouldn't expect any major deviations, such deviations undoubtedly occur (especially noting your experiences). Furthermore, according to Hickey (1992) the warm northward bound water is strongest 100-300 m below the surface. Slacking of the northwest winds leading to shift of the California Current westwards as well as upwelling of the warm water California Countercurrent in the autumn months are in part responsible for the change in seabird distribution seen in our area.

Sincerely,

Jon Feenstra / Todd McGrath



# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Garry George

## LA AUDUBON FIGHTS DEADLY WIND FARMS

LA Audubon and Kerncrest Audubon filed suit in Kern County Superior Court on June 1, 2005 against Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and other parties over the Pine Tree Wind Project in the Mojave Desert in Kern County. The suit claims that the environmental impact report (EIR) for the wind project failed to fulfill the minimum disclosure obligations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Board of Commissioners of LADWP, appointed by former LA Mayor Hahn, voted to approve the EIR created by the DWP and environmental consultant EDAW, Inc. on April 19, 2005, over the strong objections from Audubon chapters and others. Among those objections was the lack of definitive studies on the wind farm's potential threat to specific kinds of birds, especially migratory songbirds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The wind farm is planned to be the largest municipally owned wind farm in the US. The project is being developed by Wind Turbine Prometheus, LLC, a partnership between Zilkha Renewable Energy, LLC and Prometheus Energy Services, LLC. Zilkha parent company has recently been acquired by investment giant Goldman Sachs. The project seeks to utilize 80 of GE's 1.5-megawatt wind turbines installed on approximately 8,000 acres of land in Pine Tree Canyon and Jawbone Canyon located 12 miles north of Mojave, California between the Kern River and the Mojave Desert, a few miles from Butterbredit Springs, an oasis for spring and fall migratory birds.

LA Audubon joined National Audubon in the 1980s to sue LADWP over the impact of water diversion from Mono Lake on breeding populations of California Gull. That

suit was decided in favor of LA and National Audubons, in a landmark California Supreme Court decision ratifying the public's right to navigable waterways in a doctrine that is observed today by the State Water Resources Control Board, and saved Mono Lake.

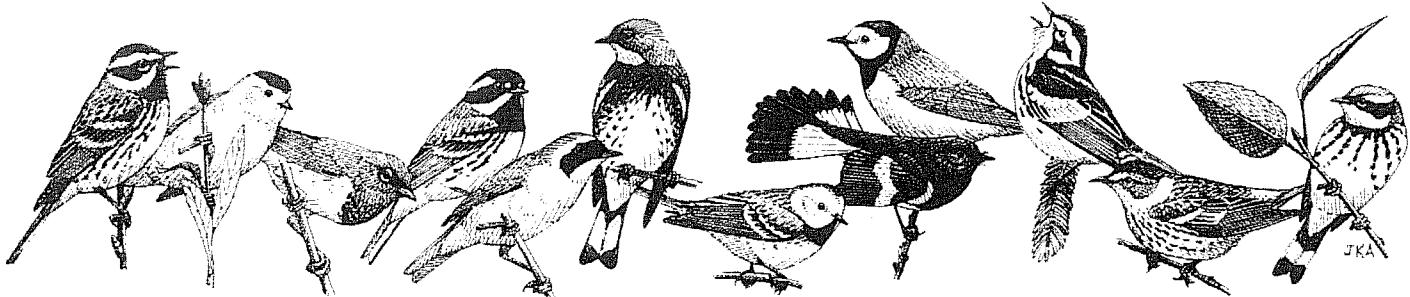
Meanwhile, Golden Gate Audubon, Center for Biological Diversity, and Californians for Renewable Energy, Inc. appealed the conditional use re-permitting of wind farms in the Altamont Wind Resource Area at the Board of Supervisors meeting of Alameda County on July 7, 2005. The wind farms are among the oldest in the state. A four year study by the California Energy Commission revealed that the farms were killing between 1,766 and 4,721 birds each year, with between 881 and 1,300 of those raptors such as Golden Eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls. An estimated 17,000 to 26,000 raptors have been killed since the construction of the wind farms in the 1980s. In a letter of comment dated July 7, 2005 to the supervisors, California State Attorney General Bill Lockyer commented, "the ongoing harm to protected bird species at the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area is serious and unacceptable. While we support the development of wind energy, wind production must be pursued in a manner that minimizes bird loss. Because the APWRA is the largest of its kind in the world, what happens here could set an important precedent for how these issues are addressed elsewhere in California and the United States." The letter suggested eight mitigation measures and protocol for ongoing studies and monitoring of the sites in order to reduce the mortality level by 85% in six years. One of the measures included turning all the turbines off from November 15 to February 28, the traditional season for migratory raptors.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to shut down only half of the turbines during that time in response to wind farm owners' claims of economic hardship. Wind farm owners, which include four major companies and several smaller operators, however, refused a request by supervisors to open their books.

On the federal level, House Resources Committee Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-Tracy) wrote a letter in October, 2004 to Interior Secretary Gale Norton asking her agency, overseen by Pombo's committee, to suspend environmental guidelines on wind farms in the Altamont pass. A few days later Pombo staff members confronted Fish and Wildlife Service officials about the guidelines and regulatory actions taken by the agency's Sacramento field office at Altamont. The LA Times then revealed in April that Pombo's father owns a 300-acre ranch in the pass and has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in royalties from wind producers over the last 17 years, much more than from cattle or ranching. Pombo told the LA Times that he was unaware of the letter to Norton and that it went out without his signature.

Pombo, 43, is the only current member of Congress who wears a cowboy hat in his official photograph, and he often targets the Fish and Wildlife Service in writings and speeches. He is a leader in efforts to overhaul the Endangered Species Act, which he and other critics believe has imposed an unjustifiable financial burden on ranchers and other landowners.

The Attorney General's letter and other documents referred to in this article are available from Conservation Chair—[garrygeorge@laaudubon.org](mailto:garrygeorge@laaudubon.org)



## BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Jon Feenstra

The month of June presents birders with both spring and fall migration here in southern California. In a single day (possibly even in the same place) one could catch the last of the Willow Flycatchers heading north and the first of the Wilson's Phalaropes heading south. June is also the month when spring vagrants from afar touch down and incite birder mayhem. This spring, like springs before it, saw the passage of the regular and some irregular migrants which were largely dealt with in the previous issue of the *Tanager*. But this time, the final curtain of spring migration exhibited some fantastic rarities. The deserts especially showed quality over quantity with several first county records. Los Angeles County even picked up a new bird in May. The LA Basin showed us weekend after weekend throughout June something interesting to see. DeForest Park in Long Beach and the Village Green apartment complex in LA showed their quality with multiple great birds.

Outside of Los Angeles, southern California hosted a few "megas" that are worth mentioning. A juvenile **Short-tailed Albatross** was seen just off Santa Cruz Island on July 6. Defying all justice in the universe, a **Brown Booby** was seen in the same place at the same time [SaS]. A **Mississippi Kite** was the only major vagrant produced by Furnace Creek Ranch this spring punctuating a rather boring period in the eastern deserts [RT]. An adult **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** at the Whitewater River mouth at the north end of the Salton Sea on May 18-19 [CMcG] furnished the first record for Riverside County (and the Salton Sink) as well as one of a handful of spring records for the

state. A **Red-necked Stint** at China Lake on June 13 could have snuck by us last fall as a juvenile and was returning to the Arctic [SuS]. A male **Scarlet Tanager** in Orange County [BD] and a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Butterbrot Springs in early June [ST] made up the short list of great eastern vagrants. But, southern California also experienced a small invasion from the southeast. A singing **Greater Pewee** was found in the Laguna Mountains of San Diego [TMe, BC]. Two **Red-faced Warblers** were present on Clark Mountain in early June [CC] but were not seen by subsequent expeditions. **Painted Redstarts**, however, decided to nest this year in the San Bernardino Mountains – two adults feeding two young were observed in early July [CJ, CL].

Los Angeles County saw one of its more exciting springs (and a little bit of fall) this year. **Greater White-fronted Geese** lingered on in Del Rey Lagoon until at least May 31 [RV] and at Santa Fe Dam until June 4 [AL]. The **Cackling Goose** remained at Santa Fe Dam, as well [AL]. **Spotted Sandpipers**, one on June 5 and two on June 12 were suggestive of local breeding [AL]. This is perhaps not a surprise after the amount of water we received this past winter. A **Franklin's Gull** at Del Rey Lagoon on May 16 was the last reported for the coast [LS]. A staggering 12 Franklin's Gulls were on the Lancaster Sewage Ponds the same day [PC]. Another, a non-breeding bird, was at the Piute Ponds on June 20 [MSM]. **Pigeon Guillemots** were fly-by's at Point Vicente on June 12 and July 4 (two birds) signifying possible breeding on one of the area's rocky islets [KL]. A **Common**

**Murre** also went by Pt. Vicente July 4 [KL]. The Los Angeles County List was raised to 492 species (including our beloved accepted exotics) with its first, and long overdue, **Gull-billed Tern** that flew by Venice Beach on May 19 [TR, LC]. It was not relocated.

**Inca Doves** were rediscovered in the Lake Los Angeles area on May 29 after a hiatus of several years [JF]. The famous wintering **Tropical Kingbirds** at West LA College made their last appearances in late-May after which it's believed they moved onto adjacent and inaccessible private property [DS]. An **Eastern Kingbird** showed up at the LA National Cemetery on June 4 [RB]. A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** flew over Banning Park on May 15 [TMi]. **Bell's Vireos**, although regular breeders at places like Hansen Dam and Santa Fe Dam, showed up at a few other places this spring. Singing birds were present at Harbor Park [KL] and Sepulveda Basin [BP, JB]. One on the east end of Lake Palmdale was less expected [SG]. A **Plumbeous Vireo**, casual at best as a spring migrant, was singing from sycamores in the Village Green apartment complex on June 12 [JF]. **Red-eyed Vireos** popped up at several locations in their typical June window: one at Madrona Marsh on June 8 [DM] and a second in DeForest Park on June 18 [KL]. A singing **Winter Wren** at Buckhorn Campground on May 17 was an unprecedented find at this time of year [NF, MF]. Winter Wrens are fairly common breeders in the wet coastal forests north of San Luis Obispo County but certainly not around here. The bird remained for nearly a week.

Twenty-two species of warbler have been reported from LA County so far

this year, and some of the best ones were from May and June. This spring was all about great eastern warblers. For example, a stunning male **Golden-winged Warbler** was found at DeForest Park on May 28-29 [KL] providing the seventh LA County record. **Northern Parulas** were widespread with reports from San Dimas on May 30 [AL], Madrona Marsh on June 14 [DM], Solstice Canyon on June 18 [DV, OJ], Descanso Gardens June 26 [KJ], and the LA Arboretum on July 1 [LF]. A **Magnolia Warbler**, much more likely in fall than spring, showed up at Madrona Marsh on June 7 [DM]. Another more typical fall bird with only a few spring records in the county was a singing male **Blackpoll Warbler** at DeForest Park on May 30 [MS, JS]. An adult male **Black-throated Green Warbler** spent a couple of days at Sand Dune Park beginning May 20 [KL]. The role continues with a **Grace's Warbler** that was singing at Charlton Flats Picnic Area on May 13-14 [DK]. The only **Black-and-white Warbler** reported was a singing first-spring male at Madrona Marsh on June 12 [KL, CS]. An **Ovenbird** spent four days singing at the Village Green apartment complex beginning June 9 [DS]. A singing male **Hooded Warbler** had been there the day before [DS]. Another Hooded Warbler was heard singing in Palos Verdes Estates on May 23 [KL]. Of anomalous occurrence was a male **MacGillivray's Warbler** singing at Santa Fe Dam June 12-26, a time when his brethren are defending willow patches at least a thousand meters higher up [AL]. A first spring male **Summer Tanager** was present in the heavily birded DeForest Park on June 18 [ALa]. And heavily birded for good reason, since a singing male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** had been there that very morning [KL]. An adult male **Indigo Bunting** was singing from the willow trees in the Eaton Canyon flood basin on July 3; the first fall vagrant of the year [JF]. **Red Crossbills** which have been absent from the San Gabriel Mountains for several years reappeared this spring in several locations in the high elevation areas between Buckhorn Campground and Islip Saddle [KG, WL]. Their presence between there and Grassy Hollow will

have to wait for confirmation as the Angeles Crest Highway heals from last winter's major snowfall.

And, welcome to fall. The terms we humans give to the seasons are all relative. In our "summer" when it's hot and horrible and acres of people are defending territory on the beach, many birds have already finished their business and are heading to their winter haunts. The hundreds of south-bound shorebirds present on the LA River by early July will become thousands in August as the ranks are swelled by young birds who needed a couple of extra weeks to learn how to fly the thousands of miles. Simultaneously, many of our local breeders like Western Tanagers and Black-headed Grosbeaks are wandering out from the breeding grounds in the mountains and foothills. Hummingbirds and buntings and Black-chinned Sparrows are at the peak of fall migration in our late "summer". Although it's uncomfortable for us humans to be outside, for birds it's business as usual. Time to get out there and take advantage of this because spring is only six months away. 

[RB] = Richard Barth  
 [JB] = Jean Brandt  
 [BC] = Barbara Colson  
 [LC] = Lyann Comrack  
 [CC] = Chris Conard  
 [PC] = Peyton Cook  
 [BD] = Brian Daniels  
 [JF] = Jon Feenstra  
 [MF] = Mary Freeman  
 [NF] = Nick Freeman  
 [LF] = Lois Fulmer  
 [KG] = Kimball Garrett  
 [SG] = Stan Gray  
 [KJ] = Karen Johnson  
 [OJ] = Oscar Johnson  
 [CJ] = Carole Jones  
 [DK] = Dave Koeppl  
 [WL] = Walter Lamb  
 [KL] = Kevin Larson  
 [ALa] = Andy Lazere  
 [AL] = Andrew Lee  
 [CL] = Cin-Ty Lee  
 [CMcG] = Chet McGaugh  
 [TMe] = Tom Meyers  
 [TMi] = Tom Miko  
 [DM] = Dave Moody  
 [BP] = Bob Pann  
 [TR] = Tom Ryan  
 [MSM] = Mike San Miguel  
 [JS] = Janet Scheel  
 [MS] = Mark Scheel  
 [LS] = Larry Schmahl  
 [CS] = Carol Selvey  
 [DS] = Don Sterba  
 [SuS] = Susan Steele  
 [SaS] = Sam Stuart  
 [RT] = Ryan Terrill  
 [ST] = Scott Terrill  
 [RV] = Robert van de Hoek  
 [DV] = David Vander Pluym

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

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

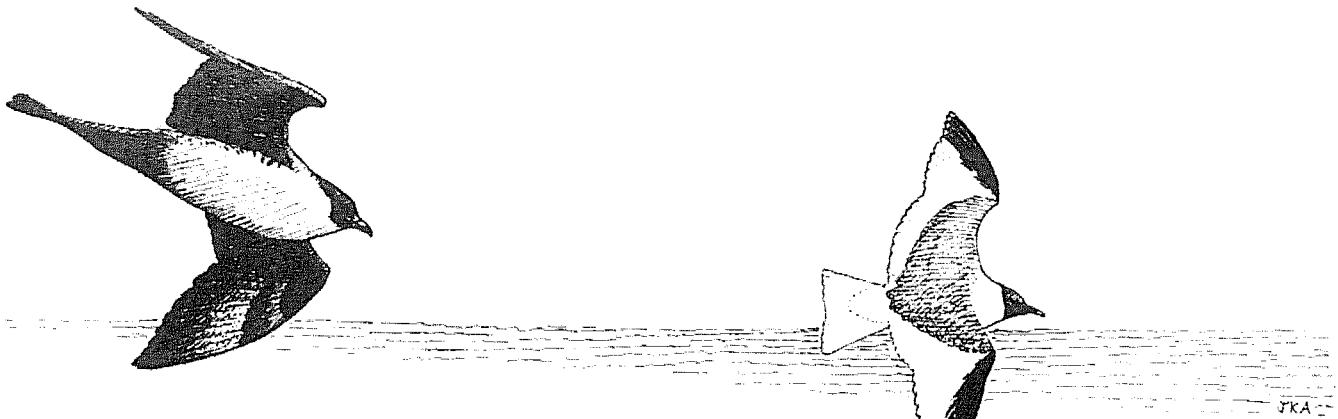
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 Jon Feenstra at feenstra@its.caltech.edu

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 Ornithology Collections Manager  
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*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.

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

*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.*

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

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

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

Send to:

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

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

### REFUND POLICY FOR PELAGIC TRIPS

If a participant cancels 31 days or more prior to departure, a \$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

## *The Ivory-billed Woodpecker*

This classic life history was originally published by National Audubon Society in 1942, when a few of the species could still be found in the cypress and bottomland forests of southern United States.

James T. Tanner 1942

\$12.95

## *In Search of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker*

The author's thirty-year search takes him from the United States to Cuba, flying over potential habitat, trudging through swamps, canoeing through isolated waterways, always hoping for a glimpse of this magnificent and elusive bird.

Jerome A. Jackson 2004

\$24.95

## *The Grail Bird: Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker*

The author heads deep into the swamps of the Mississippi Delta, wades through mud, canoes through bayous, until finally a huge woodpecker flies in front of the canoe and he cries "Look at the white on its wings!" "Ivory-bill!"

Tim Gallagher 2005

\$25.00

## *To See Every Bird on Earth, a Father, a Son and a Lifelong Obsession*

This book explores a lifelong crusade encompassing travel to sixty countries, all for the sake of making a checkmark in a notebook. Over twenty-five years, Richard Koeppel collected more than 7,000 species, becoming one of ten people ever to do so and also experiencing love, loss, and reconnection between father and son.

Dan Koeppel 2005

\$24.95

## *How to be a (BAD) Birdwatcher*

In this refreshingly irreverent introduction to the subject, birdwatching is made simple, and above all, enjoyable, and demonstrates why you don't have to have fancy binoculars or lifetime checklists to discover a new world.

Simon Barnes 2004

\$17.95

## *Voices from the Wild – Bird Sounds Volume I*

100% natural sound, uninterrupted by narration, 40 vocalizations including Northern Pygmy-Owl, Great Horned Owl, American Crow, and Common Raven.  
CD

\$16.00

## *Voices of the Night – the Calls of the Frogs and Toads of Eastern North America*

Cornell 1996

CD

\$12.95

Cassette – SALE

\$6.00

## *Frog and Toad Calls of the Pacific Coast*

Voices and choruses of 25 species of frogs and toads, plus 25 page booklet.  
Cornell

\$19.95

## *The Calls of Frogs and Toads*

The book covers 42 species of frogs and toads found east of the Great Plains, with information on appearance and behavior, explanation on how each call is used. Includes a CD with examples of advertisement calls, aggressive calls, release calls, ran calls, distress calls, countersinging, mixed species choruses, and more.

Lang Elliott 2004

\$19.95

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# F I E L D T R I P S

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

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

## Sunday, September 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.

## 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 Cyn. Ave. S into the hills. Immediately after Mulholland Dr. merges from the W with Coldwater Cyn. Ave., make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Cyn. Dr. and continue west to the Sooky Goldman 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 up around 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.

## Sunday, September 18 –

**Ballona Wetlands.** **Bob Shanman** will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland. Shorebirds in good numbers. 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.

## 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 optional e-mail address. No drop-ins. High clearance vehicles a plus.

## September 29 – October 1 –

**WFO Meeting.** A number of field trip leaders are planning to attend the Western Field Ornithologists' 30th annual meeting, which is being held this year in Santa

Maria, at the Radisson Hotel from September 29 – October 1. Check [www.wfo-cbre.org](http://www.wfo-cbre.org) for details. Worth considering! Everyone is welcome to sign up.

## Sunday, October 2 –

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

## Saturday, October 8 (Date Change!) –

**Malibu to McGrath.** Leader **Dexter Kelly.** Late passerines and shorebirds should be moving through coastal migration spots, mixed with early wintering birds. Possibly 100 species. Take PCH N over the bridge in Malibu, and turn right on Cross Creek Road. Meet at the kiosk by the lagoon at 7:30 AM. for a full day of birding. There may be access fees at Mugu and elsewhere.

## Sunday, October 9 –

**Galileo Hills.** Leaders **Nick & Mary Freeman.** This location is a migrant magnet and vagrant vortex. Songbirds, flycatchers, etc. Take Hwy 14 about 4 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops, turn left past the golf course on Randsburg-Mojave Rd., and veer right on 20 Mule Team Rd. Turn left at the Galileo Hills sign before the hill, take your first paved right, your first right again, into the Silver Saddle Country Club, followed by two paved lefts into the lot. Park by the first pond. About 2 hrs driving time from LA. LAAS phone sign-up mandatory. 12 max. Bring lunch, sun block. Meet at 8:00 AM, finish up around 4:00 PM.

## Sunday, October 9 –

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

## Saturday, October 15 –

**Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.** Leader: **Eleanor Osgood.** \$3 entry fee. See September 17 listing for details. Meet at 8:00 AM.

**Sunday, October 16 (Date Change!)** –  
**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. Possible \$2 state park fee. 1.5 hour drive from LA. Bring a lunch, and bird 'till you drop! Super 8 and Ramada motels in Goleta are reasonable.

**Sunday, October 16 –**  
**Ballona Wetlands.**

**Bob Shanman** leads. See September 18 listing for details. Meet at 8:00 AM.

**Saturday, October 29 –**  
**Oxnard Plains.** Leaders **Nick & Mary Freeman**. Meet at the Hueneme sod fields at 8:00 AM to look over the American Pipits for the red-throated variety, as well

as longspurs. There may be vagrants to chase. Mugu estuary, Sycamore Canyon, and Saticoy settling ponds are also possibilities. From the 101 N, drive S on Las Posas Rd., then turn Rt. onto Hueneme Rd. Meet on the N side of Hueneme Rd. about 1 mile W of PCH, and just before Casper Rd. 'Scopes helpful. Bird 'til we drop. Local restaurant at dusk, anyone?

**Saturday-Sunday, November 5-6 –**  
**First Annual Pasadena Audubon Society Bird Festival.** Check for details at [www.pasadenaudubon.org](http://www.pasadenaudubon.org).

**Sunday, November 6 –**  
**Topanga State Park.** Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin**. See September 4 listing for details. Meet at 8:00 AM.

**Saturday, November 12 –**  
**Lake Perris area.** Leader: **Howard King**. The Little Gulls, Ruddy Ground Dove, and Least and Vermilion flycatchers of recent years may not be back, but surely something will take their places! Take the 10 or 60 Fwy E to the 215 Fwy S, exit E onto Ramona Expressway, continue E just past Perris Blvd., and meet at the Farmer Boys Restaurant on the S side of the road. Leave from here at 8:00 AM. Bring lunch, warm clothing and footwear for possible mud. No fee for the trip, but possible entrance fee.

**Sunday, December 4 –**  
**Newport Back Bay.** Leader: **Mary Freeman**. Meet on the boardwalk along the NW bay at the "Sharp-tailed Sparrow Spot" accessible from the end of University Drive (small street) at 8:30 AM. for 6.3 foot high tide. Rails, California Gnatcatcher, and American Bittern will be target birds.

## LAAS INTERNATIONAL TOURS

### BRAZIL'S PANTANAL AND IGUAÇU FALLS

**October 15-24, 2005**  
**Plus a 4-day Atlantic Rainforest Extension**  
**(Only a few spaces available)**

### THAILAND BIRDING ADVENTURE

**March 3-19, 2006**

Our tour takes us from Bangkok to Kaeng Krachan National Park in the east, Khao Yai National Park in the west, and Chiang Mai in the north, all hosting unusual and diverse Oriental avifauna. Several species of hornbills, colorful malkohas, trogons, barbets, broadbills, minivets, leafbirds, laughingthrushes, sunbirds, and numerous others likely. An ideal introduction to Southeast Asia's biological riches. **Space is limited.**

### COSTA RICA – SOUTH

**May 1-11, 2006**

This is a completely new itinerary, featuring some of the best of Costa Rica birding in ideal locations away from the maddening crowds. From the Turrialba region of the Talamanca Mountains, to the southern Pacific coastal range near the Panama border, to Corcovado National Park the crown jewel of Costa Rica's rainforests. Join us for some exciting birding and nature viewing, surrounded by some of the richest and most varied habitats within the country. **Space is limited.**

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: [oclarketravel@earthlink.net](mailto:oclarketravel@earthlink.net)

# EVENING MEETINGS

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

**Tuesday, September 13**

**Dr. Stephen Rothstein**

**Cowbirds: Why they are so maligned and yet are so interesting to biologists.**



Parasitic birds, such as cowbirds and cuckoos and their hosts have long been subjects of great interest to biologists, especially those concerned with behavior, physiology, and evolution. In recent years, cowbirds have also attracted a great deal of attention from the conservation community because of potential effects on endangered host species. Dr. Rothstein will cover some parasitic bird research involving their co-evolution with hosts, the extent to which cowbirds threaten the survival of host species, and whether cowbirds should be killed to aid impacted host species. Dr. Rothstein is a Professor of Biological Science at UC Santa Barbara.

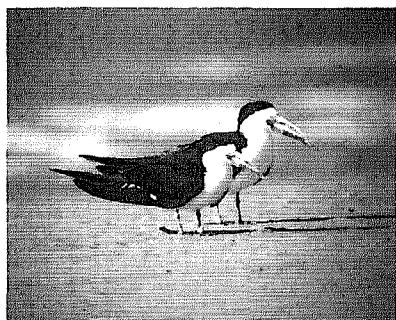
The amendments to the LAAS By-Laws passed in June will be voted on again, Tuesday, September 13, during the membership meeting.

These changes are posted on the website, are available from the Bookstore, and were printed in the May-June 2005 *Western Tanager*.

**Tuesday, October 11**

**Kathy Molina**

**Black Skimmers in the West: Their triumphs, travels, and tribulations.**



Kathy's program will focus on the breeding behavior at the Salton Sea of this highly gregarious species, which is a fairly recent arrival in California. She will also discuss their distribution patterns and behavior during winter in western North America and some of the challenges they face in the future. Kathy Molina has been studying breeding Black Skimmers and other waterbirds at the Salton Sea for over a decade. Over the last few years, with collaborator and husband Kimball Garrett, Kathy has migrated south across the border to examine the winter distribution and ecology of Black Skimmers and Gull-billed Terns in Mexico. She recently co-edited a volume of *Studies in Avian Biology*, a publication of the Cooper Ornithological Society, entitled *Ecology and Conservation of Birds of the Salton Sink: an Endangered Ecosystem*.

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## **Announcement**

Due to Labor Day weekend the September Los Angeles Audubon Society Board meeting will be in Audubon House, Plummer Park, on Thursday, September 8, 2005 7:00 PM.

All members are invited.