

WESTERN TANAGER



Volume 72 Number 2 November/December 2005

Los Angeles Audubon Society

ANNUAL REPORT

LAAS – From Here to 2010

Message from the President

Looking over the *Message from the Executive Director* (pg. 4), you can see how much has been accomplished over the past two years, even on our “routine” activities like membership meetings, field and pelagic trips, conservation and education funding, and the bookstore.

Our conservation efforts have expanded as we take a leadership role in saving habitat in Latin America and protecting our own migrating birds in California from wind farm massacre in Jawbone Canyon. The latter initiative may establish national standards for wind farms. This year we are launching an “Audubon at Home” project that will help transform our backyards and neighborhoods into habitat for birds and other (desirable) wildlife; it should make us less dependent on burning expensive gas to get to at least some of the birds we want to see. Our involvement with the close-to-home L.A. River project should accomplish the same goal.

We want to expand our education program to develop summer camps and weekend sessions for schoolchildren, similar to those run by Sea and Sage

Audubon in Orange County. And we should establish outreach programs for both children and adults in such locations as the Baldwin Hills and the restored L.A. River.

All these and other plans are leading up to our hundredth anniversary in 2010. By that time we would like to have a membership base of at least 10,000 (it's lower than 2,000 now), give annual conservation and research grants of at least \$100,000 a year, host several “Audubon at Home” programs, run a summer camp program for kids, and have a headquarters facility that can accommodate our activities, including book-store, library, and meeting space, preferably in a natural setting, at a location that allows easy access for our members and guests.

Whether any of this can happen, or whether we can even still be in existence in five years, all depends on you – those of our members who are at least

FINAL NOTICE

Effective January 2006 the *Western Tanager* will no longer be mailed to you UNLESS you notify Los Angeles Audubon Society in writing that you want to receive a printed copy. (If you have already done so, no further action is required).

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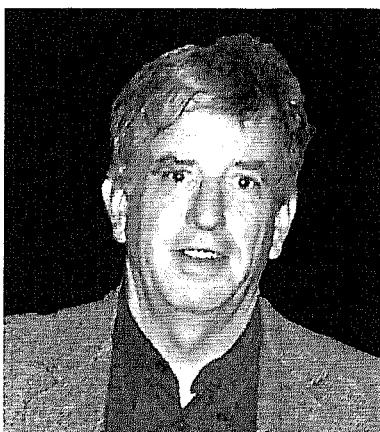
The *Western Tanager* is online at our website and you can be alerted by email as soon as it is posted by following the notification instructions on the website: laas@laaudubon.org.

concerned enough to be reading this article in the *Western Tanager*.

With the exception of the bookstore and some accounting functions, all of our programs and activities have been carried out by volunteers. Like Nick Freeman, who programs our field trips and coordinates the Lancaster Christmas Count; or his wife Mary, who engages world-class experts to speak at our evening meetings. Jean Brandt and Tom Frillman produce the award-winning *Western Tanager*. Millie Newton and Phil Sayre run our renowned pelagic trips. Olga Clarke runs our International Travel program and prepares the refreshments for our meetings. Pat Heirs, working with Bookstore Manager Martha Balkan, has reorganized and automated our accounting systems.

Without these and a few other volunteers, the Los Angeles Audubon Society would not exist. I hope they can keep up their enthusiasm and dedication, because at this time there is nobody lining up to replace them.

In recent years, we have been very lucky to have the help of Garry George, one of the most dynamic and imaginative volunteers Los Angeles Audubon has ever had. As a board member, conservation and communications chair, and webmaster, Garry has worked to bring L.A. Audubon into compliance with California corporate law for nonprofits; improved our fiscal accountability; expanded the funding and scope of our conservation programs, thus raising our public profile and leadership role in southern California environmental issues; established contacts with community



Dexter Kelly
President

leaders and forged alliances with other environmental organizations and government agencies; restructured our website and generated coverage of our programs in local papers and cable TV; produced the Ridgely fund-raising event; initiated our relationship with the California Community Foundation, which will allow us to establish an endowment for education and conservation while offering annuities and other fundraising incentives ... there is not nearly enough space here to list all his accomplishments.

Garry has given both time and funding support to LAAS. He has been able to put an average of six hours a week in as a volunteer, but we want him to do more, and better benefit from his energy and expertise. His fellow board members have therefore asked him to become a half-time paid executive director of the Society.

The Executive Director position is used by other large Audubon chapters, such as the Tucson and Golden Gate Audubon Societies. It will allow Garry to implement many of his most creative ideas, carry out the Audubon mission in a more complete manner, and raise our public profile so that we can attract more support for such projects as a headquarters and nature center.

But Garry's new position will not replace the role of volunteers. We can expect that with our new and expanded programs, the need for volunteers will increase greatly in the near future. One of Garry's projects during his first year of service will be to develop greater human and financial resources, and this will include the recruitment and training of volunteers.

Volunteering for Audubon is not necessarily an act of drudgery and sacrifice. It can be very rewarding and fulfilling. Chapters such as Portland (OR) and Sea and Sage have large numbers of volunteers, who truly enjoy their work. They know that they are not just working for Audubon but for themselves, to improve and enhance their own lives. It's not just about achieving society goals and increasing numbers. It's about creating a better habitat for birds, other wildlife, and people.



Pat Heirs
Treasurer
and
Membership Chair

Message from the Membership Chair

Shortly, we will be embarking upon a membership drive. The purpose will be to expand our membership, and our monetary and environmental constituency basis. With higher membership numbers we can have a greater voice in environmental policy, bird conservation and reach state and local decision makers.

When we counted it up we served several thousand members and non-members last year with education, field trip, pelagic, bookstore, conservation, communications, environmental advocacy, and other programs and services.

We need to do more.

New members must be recruited to join and become active on committees.

We also want to reach individuals who will become LAAS benefactors. It is our hope to grow the Society in a responsible and effective manner.

Through active membership, the Los Angeles Audubon Society can become the most respected and authoritative voice for birds and their environment in Los Angeles. We need your help. Please renew your membership in the envelope provided and ask a friend to join us also!

Los Angeles Audubon Society Financial Reports

For Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2005 and June 30, 2004

Message from the Treasurer

You will see by reviewing this financial report that your Society is financially sound.

Many thanks go to Martha Balkan in our Bookstore and Johanna Dawes on our Finance Committee for their hard work and intelligence in guiding me in this job.

To ensure that the monies you donate to LAAS honor the mission of the Society, we have established the *Los Angeles Audubon Society Endowment* with the California Community Foundation of Los Angeles. Our initial contribution is \$300,000 in funds restricted to education and conservation.

In addition to your membership dues, you will now be able to support your Los Angeles Audubon Society with donations of real estate, stocks, planned giving, living trusts, or by setting up an annuity. To make a contribution to our endowment, please contact Garry George, Executive Director, Los Angeles Audubon Society.

*Management of Sepulveda Basin Consortium Fund has been assumed by San Fernando Valley Audubon Society.

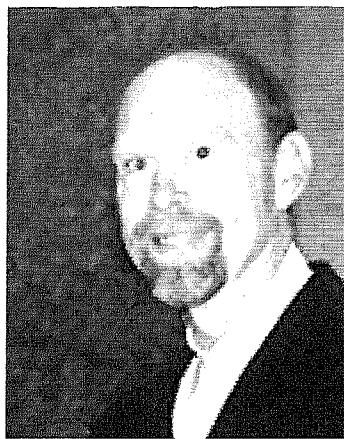
Financial Statements, Annual Reports, and tax returns were prepared by Takahashi Accountancy Corporation without audit.

	Year End 6/30/05	Year End 6/30/04
BALANCE SHEET		
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and equivalents	\$60,781	\$125,339
Accounts receivable	\$0	\$246
Inventory for sale	\$73,686	\$66,424
Investments	<u>\$721,107</u>	<u>\$751,000</u>
Total current assets	\$855,574	\$943,009
Fixed Assets (Net)		
Fixtures and Equipment	\$2,071	\$650
Security deposits	<u>\$1,200</u>	<u>\$0</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$858,845	\$943,659
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$0	\$436
Sepulveda Basin Consortium Fund*	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$34,442</u>
Total Liabilities	\$0	\$34,878
EQUITY		
Unrestricted funds	\$775,587	\$814,775
Restricted funds	<u>\$83,258</u>	<u>\$94,006</u>
Total Equity	\$858,845	\$908,781
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$858,845	\$943,659
INCOME STATEMENT		
REVENUE		
Contributions, gifts and grants	\$28,292	\$91,072
Program service revenue	\$34,777	\$26,047
Membership dues	\$9,866	\$1,644
Interest and dividends	\$36,247	\$22,318
Gain from sales of securities	\$1,878	\$7,285
Special event income	\$824	\$0
Bookstore gross profit on sales	<u>\$48,672</u>	<u>\$48,059</u>
Total revenue	\$160,556	\$196,425
EXPENSES		
Program services		
Bookstore	\$70,105	\$75,361
Pelagic, field and international trips	\$27,254	\$22,143
Conservation and research	\$42,063	\$23,535
Education program	\$19,549	\$24,230
Western Tanager	<u>\$24,464</u>	<u>\$21,762</u>
Total program services	\$183,435	\$167,031
Management and general expenses	<u>\$46,544</u>	<u>\$43,197</u>
Total expenses	\$229,979	\$210,228
NET DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	\$(69,423)	\$(13,803)

Message from the Executive Director

These past two years L.A. Audubon's Board, staff and volunteers:

- Created a junior naturalist curriculum for local area elementary school teachers for grades 3-5.
- Awarded grants totaling \$15,000 to ornithological research projects by college students in the L.A. area.
- Contributed over \$35,000 to conserve habitat for birds.
- Created the Arnold Small Award for conservation of birds.
- Provided over 200 field trips for members and non-members.
- Led 12 ocean voyages in California waters to watch seabirds.
- Gave 20 free educational presentations for adult members and non-members.
- Made over 1,000 titles available in our world famous bookstore.
- Provided comments for the public record on the impact on avian populations of land use and energy developments.
- Created a Native Plant and Wildlife Garden in Baldwin Hills Park using interns and volunteers from the community.
- Published 12 issues of the award winning newsletter *Western Tanager*.
- Began developing an "Audubon at Home" program to encourage home practices for clean air, clean water, and to attract birds.
- Continued to fund, support, and serve education programs at Ballona saltwater marsh and Sepulveda Basin that served more than 3,000 school children.
- Sponsored 6 international trips to study and enjoy birds.
- Advocated for native wildlife habitat and native plant revegetation in Los Angeles city parks and open spaces including California's newest state park formerly SOKA in the Santa Monica Mountains, Griffith Park, Elysian Park, Baldwin Hills Park, and the L.A. River.
- Advocated for conservation of birds and other wildlife by lobbying for clean water and clean air legislation and park and open space funding.
- Served Los Angeles birders and visitors with a birding hotline, L.A. County Checklist, and bird sighting board.



*Garry George
Executive Director*

Can we do more? Yes we can, and we intend to, as we set about in the new year to reach out to the Los Angeles community and connect people to nature by bringing nature education programs to urban school children, conserving and restoring habitat for native wildlife especially migratory birds, and building new programs that promote clean air, clean water, and more life.

We can't do it without you.

If you can't give financially please give your time by signing up for a volunteer newsletter on our website: www.laaudubon.org under e-mail reminders, or call our headquarters and tell us what you'd like to do.

Increase your membership level with the enclosed envelope.

If you are reading this online please click www.laaudubon.org homepage to donate and/or join now.

If you have a tradition of giving, consider including Los Angeles Audubon Society.

The Los Angeles Audubon Society is headquartered in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd, West Hollywood.

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Looking Backward – Looking Forward

As we move forward with the energy of a new year, a new Board, and new goals, let's take a look back at where we've been.

Los Angeles Audubon Society began with a small circle of bird lovers in Garvanza (near Eagle Rock) in 1907. The group formed the Society in March, 1910. Board meetings were held in locations that included the L.A. Public Library, the 8th floor waiting room of the Broadway Department Store, and the Edgewater Club in Santa Monica. Public meetings were held in Exposition Park and in library branches. On October 19, 1944, the Board voted to join the National Audubon Society.

In 1937, the County of Los Angeles offered a room at no charge in an old ranch house on property purchased from Señor Eugene Plummer. LAAS accepted, the building was renamed Audubon House, and the surrounding area was re-vegetated and turned into a bird sanctuary. Audubon House was the center of activity and an extensive collection of dioramas and displays until arson destroyed the structure on November 21, 1981. The Long Hall in Plummer Park replaced Audubon House as headquarters soon thereafter. The lonely, tattered, Passenger Pigeon still present in the Bookstore is a last remnant of L.A. Audubon's former collections. We still reside in Plummer Park as a result of that 1937 agreement, now under the city of West Hollywood which took on Los Angeles County's responsibility upon incorporation.

Bird conservation efforts began in 1927 when President Emeritus Carrie Fargo Bicknell launched a campaign to name a state bird that culminated in California Quail beating out Bullock's Oriole in a final vote. The Society went on record in 1931 supporting passage of Bill 776 naming the state bird. In 1936, L.A. Audubon joined a fledgling national campaign that eventually saved the Bald Eagle. The '70s and '80s were highlighted by the campaign to save California Condor, a project eventually successfully undertaken by National Audubon, and

now run by US Fish & Wildlife's Ventura County office. According to current project manager Jesse Grantham, without Audubon the bird would have gone extinct. Let us hope that current and past efforts to save California Gnatcatcher, Snowy Plover (including opposing de-listing), Xantus's Murrelet breeding colonies in Baja, Mexico, and future possible campaigns on Least Tern and Tricolored Blackbird are as effective.

Orange County were increased in size. LAAS participated as co-plaintiffs with National Audubon, the Mono Lake Committee, Santa Monica Bay Audubon, and Friends of the Earth in the epoch making long and successful lawsuit against LADWP that preserved Mono Lake.

Field trips have always been the backbone of L.A. Audubon. Trips to Griffith Park Bird Sanctuary were the most popular in early years, but also included locations that no longer exist such as Hazards Park, Selig Zoo, Audubon Glenn, and Mandeville Canyon Botanic Gardens. Early reports recorded discarded species names like Pigeon Hawk, Water Ouzel, Spurred and Anthony Towhees, and Magillary, Calaveras, and Lutescent warblers. The first Christmas Bird Count in the US was launched in 1901 by the Biological Survey of the

US Department of Agriculture, and was taken over by National Audubon in 1928. The first L.A. count was December 26, 1915 resulting in 131 species, a record. The first pelagic trip was to the Coronados Islands with the Natural History Museum of San Diego in May, 1938.

The first issue of the *Western Tanager* was distributed in 1934. The bookstore was created in 1965.

Old records in the library at Audubon House even revealed a 1936 letter from actress Joan Crawford offering "heartfelt congratulations" to the Society for all their work, and for helping her with her own bird sanctuary in her yard.

As we approach the 100th anniversary in 2010, we must remember the decades and hours and hours of volunteers and leadership, many of whom continue to advise and contribute to our organization today. Sandy Wohlgemuth, Fred Heath, Jean Brandt, Olga and Herb Clarke,



Early Los Angeles Audubon Society Field Trip

Conservation and restoration of habitat took a front seat at L.A. Audubon largely because of the leadership of President (1976-1979) and Conservation Chair (1979-2003) Sandy Wohlgemuth who re-shaped the society from a bird watching club to an environmental organization. Sandy and the Board led efforts and litigation that created the Whittier Narrows Nature Center, Malibu Lagoon, Santa Monica Mountains Parks, and Ballona freshwater wetlands. As a member of Coalition to Save Sepulveda Basin, L.A. Audubon and other chapters and organizations pursued fines against industrial polluters including Anheuser-Busch. These fines and funds from a park bond created the Sepulveda Wildlife Reserve. L.A. Audubon was appointed sole adviser by the California Community Foundation to direct dispersal of a sizeable Fund, and with LAAS' direction of those funds, both Whittier Narrows and Starr Ranch Sanctuary in

Looking Back continued

Phil Sayre, Millie Newton, Kimball Garrett, Nick and Mary Freeman, and Dexter Kelly continue to lead Board and LAAS members with the wisdom of decades of dedication to the Society. The contributions of those of us who are newcomers pale in comparison, and are inspired by what went before.

Looking backwards, much has changed. But much has remained the same. History repeats itself. We are still an organization of members whose lives have been changed dramatically by the awe and wonder of closely observing birds and nature. We are still an organization sharing that experience and the enormous

impact it has had on our lives with others. We are still an organization protecting the living objects of that experience not only for ourselves and future generations in Los Angeles, but the world. That hasn't changed.

Garry George
Executive Director

LAAS Conservation Support

Natural disasters, population pressures, exploitation of natural resources, energy demands, real estate development boom, invasive non-natives, and the Bush administration all launched assaults on the wildlife we love this last year.

I was most touched when Sandy Wohlgemuth, L.A. Audubon's Conservation guru for decades, unexpectedly handed me the baton in a Board meeting announcing his retirement. These are impossible shoes to fill, but inspired by Sandy's work, we immediately doubled his budget and signed on to or initiated

the following campaigns:

Against Chevron's plans to build an offshore liquefied natural gas plant next to the Coronados Islands near San Diego, the biggest breeding colony of the southern race of Xantus's Murrelet.

Against LADWP's plans to erect 90 wind turbines in the Mojave foothills near Butterbredt and Jawbone Canyons without adequately studying the site for the presence of migratory songbirds.

For protection of the Saltillo grasslands in Mexico, habitat of the Worthen's Sparrow.

For international laws banning parrot trade.

Most gratifying was the conservation event at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History with Robert Ridgely speaking eloquently on how the discovery of the Jocotoco Antpitta in southern Ecuador in 1997 transformed him from a scientist to a conservationist upon realizing that the bird would go extinct if he didn't save the small patch of native habitat in which it lives.

Garry George

Education

Our Junior Naturalist curriculum for grades 3-5, written by our consultant Robin Gose, was completed last year, and tested by Robin in her own classroom. It should be formally presented to LAUSD Science faculty at their annual conference next spring by Robin and Dexter. Drafts of the curriculum were distributed to science teachers at last spring's conference, and some expressed interest. The program was also submitted to the California State EPA, to be considered as a prototype for environmental education standards for elementary school grades. If it is endorsed by the EPA, it may be adopted by school districts all around the state.

We have supplied educational materials to Los Angeles teachers on an ad-hoc request basis. Robin Gose has suggested construction of kits containing materials that may be used in environmental

instruction, similar to those distributed by the L.A. County Museum of Natural History, for distribution to teachers. This year Robin has joined the LAAS board as Second Vice-President and Education Chair.

One pleasant outcome of our attendance at the Science Teacher's Conference this year was a request by a middle school teacher from San Fernando to guide her students on a field trip to Hansen Dam. On the recommendation of Kimball Garrett and Muriel Kotin of San Fernando Valley Audubon, the location was changed to Sepulveda Basin, and in April, 125 sixth-graders were shown through the wildlife area, under Muriel's coordination. The class was guided by Muriel, her SFVAS volunteers, and trip leaders from LAAS, including Richard Barth, Bob Pann, and Dexter Kelly. This event was in addition to the regular Sepulveda

Basin school program, which has been cosponsored by SFVAS and LAAS.

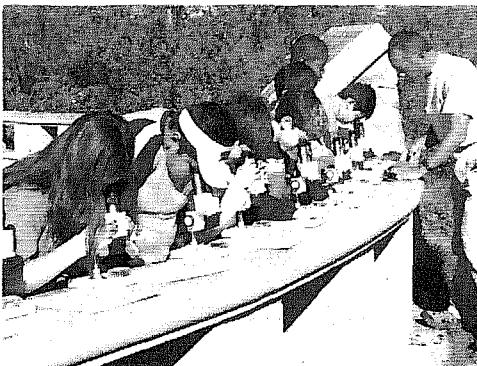
Los Angeles Audubon reassumed majority financial sponsorship of the Ballona wetlands school program this year, with additional support from Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society. Control was transferred from Audubon California. The Friends of Ballona Wetlands will administer the program, which was originally founded and funded by LAAS.

In the Baldwin Hills (Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, to be exact) Garry George served as Project Manager for the Native Plant Trail, which was inaugurated in the spring. We hope this facility and the natural areas within the Baldwin Hills will be used as a venue for educational programs at all levels. Eleanor Osgood currently leads bird walks there.

Sepulveda Basin Update

L.A. Audubon is a member of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Consortium formed to receive fines from actions against two industrial pollution events and to restore habitat for wildlife. Through the Consortium and an ongoing grant from the Johnny Mercer Foundation, Los Angeles Audubon provides crucial financial support to San Fernando Valley Audubon to conduct an environmental education program at the Sepulveda Basin Reserve to provide field trips for sixty classes from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Many of the nearly 2,000 children who participate at no charge are from low-income families and live in heavily urbanized areas in the San Fernando Valley and central city. For some of them, the program offers their first adventure into a natural environment. Each pair of classes is invited for a field trip at the reserve where they use binoculars to watch birds like American White Pelicans, cormorants, ducks, egrets, herons, and hawks, and use microscopes to view tiny



Nature students with microscopes on Sepulveda Basin field trip

organisms that live in the lake. They also learn about native plants and animals, ecological inter-relationships, the reclaimed water in the lake and creek, the riparian trees and shrubs, and the flood control basin surrounding them.

Our goal is to help these children become more knowledgeable about the natural world, more comfortable in it, more aware of their relationship to it, and more apt to care for it responsibly. For some students, the trip opens their eyes to the possibilities of scientific studies.

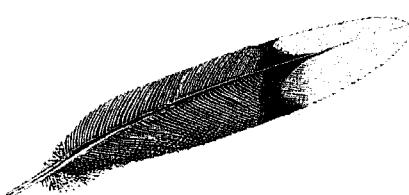
The Ballona Wetlands Program

We feel that The Friends/Audubon Ballona Wetlands Education program is unique in a number of ways. It is truly an "outdoor" program. We have no meeting room and each school tour takes place entirely outdoors, as does all of our docent training.

It is very hands-on; with binoculars, spotting scopes and microscopes provided for student use, as well as 15 minutes of habitat restoration. These seem to be positive things because our evaluations from the teachers stress how much the children enjoy the outdoors and hands-on aspects of the whole tour.

The docents have a great camaraderie

and love the program. One of the returning docents, in his self introduction at the first training session this year, stated that he had been a volunteer for ten years and those were the happiest ten years of his life. It seems to be the feeling of the majority of the docents, if not all. They often complain when we don't have a full tour schedule and organize restoration parties so that they can be together and on the wetlands. We also know that they like the feeling of making a difference at this unique place. These sentiments are also expressed by the two program co-managers, Cindy Hardin and Barbara Courtois.



WESTERN TANAGER

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Annual membership in both societies is \$35 per year and \$20 for new members for their first year. Members receive the *Western Tanager* newsletter and *Audubon* magazine, a national publication. LAAS Chapter memberships do not include *Audubon* magazine and are \$25, \$35, \$50, \$100, and \$250. Donations and memberships can be made online at www.laadubon.org

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.

Los Angeles Audubon Society
Headquarters, Library
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Message from the Field Trip Chair



*Nick and Mary Freeman
Field Trip and Program Chairs
A dynamic duo!*

The L.A. Audubon field trips put us in touch with those things that we profess to cherish. It is important that we value, and teach others to value, all things wild around us, whether nearby parks and smaller chunks of habitat like Kenneth Hahn Park and Whittier Narrows, or larger tracts of wild and semi-wild country like the Carrizo Plain, the southern Sierras, the Owens Valley, and the East Mojave.

Birds are easy target species to plan

field trips around, but our best sightings are not infrequently of mammals, snakes, butterflies, flowers, specific animal behaviors, or of breathtaking scenery.

As a leader, I only wish I could lead more trips. I rarely see new birds anymore, but on close inspection, new wildlife experiences abound; and finding and expounding upon new birds and wildlife sightings for less "jaded" birders definitely gives me a rush reminiscent of my baby birder days!

Message from the International Travel Chair

I started leading tours over three decades ago by taking friends in small groups to various parts of the world. About 10 years ago, under my direction as the Society's Travel Director, we began our international travel operation with two to three trips each year.

This program helps support the Los Angeles Audubon's conservation efforts,

as well as promoting ecotourism in many parts of the world. This also enhances our Society's reputation as a vibrant conservation organization.

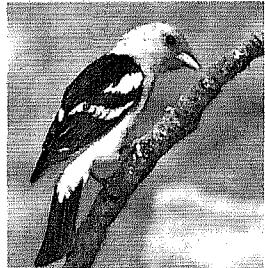
Our International Travel Program continues with trips to Thailand and Costa Rica in 2006. Join us for exciting birding and wildlife viewing.



*Olga Clarke
International Travel*

Message from the Tanager

It has been my very great pleasure to serve two terms as Editor of *Western Tanager*. My first issue was back in October 1990. At that time, LAAS published 10 issues per year. (In 1997, the Board voted to cut back to 6 issues per year as a cost cutting measure.) I remained Editor until summer 1996, when I turned the job over to the very capable hands of Fred Heath. Fred was Editor until his work took him to Switzerland in spring 1999. At that time I was asked to become Editor once again and have remained so until today. That is a total of 86 issues – not a bad record.



Over the years it has been my privilege to have worked with many authors – mostly personal friends – who were responsible for the interesting and informative lead articles. Again, friends supplied the photos when the authors couldn't. Sandy Wohlgemuth was Mr. Conservation for LAAS and wrote provocative essays in almost every issue. The *Birds of the Season* column has been written by many people and each of these dedicated birders has done a fine job in documenting records of rare and unusual birds and birding locations. Our Field Trip chair, Nick Freeman, has been a mainstay for LAAS. His trips are one of the things that make LAAS great. Phil Sayre, who schedules our pelagic trips, Olga Clarke who leads our International Trips, and Mary Freeman, who schedules our programs, are always dedicated to

their task. And let's not forget Jonathan Alderfer, who designed the beautiful art work that heads many of our columns.

I can't thank every author or photographer who has given us so much to enjoy. *Western Tanager* has always been recognized for the quality of its content and I am very proud of our reputation.

Tom Frillman is the Assistant Editor and is the person who makes the *Tanager* look so great. He is a good friend and very generous with his time and expertise. Working with him has been one of the reasons I have stuck around so long. Kimball Garrett is another. He is my conscience, my listening post, my support, and my friend.

Thank you one and all.

Jean Brandt, Editor

Message from the Library Chair



*Joseph Brooks
Librarian*

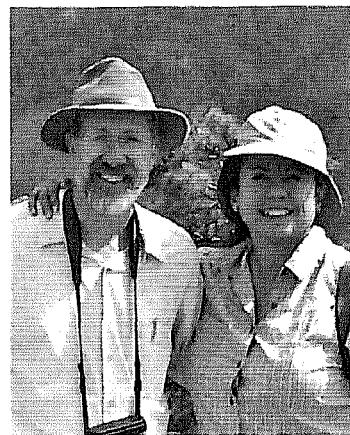
I've been using the Library at L.A. Audubon for twenty years and always considered it a great underused resource for birders and naturalists. There are some fantastic rare books that can't be checked out but you can sit at the Book-

store and look through them. The books that can be checked out by members are also mostly out of print and have some great information. I always spend a few hours in the Library when I am planning a birding trip.

Message from the Program Chair

For the past two years I've set up programs for the monthly meetings of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. They provide a focus for our local birding community, allowing us to reacquaint with friends and exchange stories. Members or guest lecturers often relate their birding adventures in an entertaining and informative travel log format, often with spectacular scenery and beautiful bird images.

Some speakers increase our knowledge of bird identification, behavior, or status and distribution. Others simply entertain us with breathtaking photos of birds in the wild. I personally enjoy planning programs; it gives me the opportunity to meet and deal with some of the more fascinating individuals in our common field of interest, including ornithologists, researchers, and photographers.



*Nick and Mary Freeman
Field Trip and Program Chairs*

Message from the Pelagic Trip Chair



*Phil Sayre
Pelagic Trips*

For over 30 years I have been privileged to schedule pelagic trips for L.A. Audubon Society. When the Society began this program, there were no regularly scheduled pelagic trips from Monterey to San Diego, and now there are many. Our prices are designed to give everyone the means to experience this habitat, and cover our expenses, and our experienced leaders have a wealth of knowledge about the sea, the birds, and the mammals that inhabit it.

With the help of Millie Newton, we run our trips for the novice as well as the

experienced birder who come to see species that can't be easily found anywhere else in the world. We have even had birders from as far away as Nepal.

Two of our most popular trips are the trips to Santa Cruz Island to see the endemic Island Scrub Jay, and the trip that has come to be called the Red-billed Tropicbird Trip, the only one day trip where this bird can be easily seen. Millie and I are very proud of how our pelagic trips have grown over the years and enriched the birding community.

Holiday Shopping

Please consider doing your holiday shopping at the LAAS Bookstore. The catalog will arrive soon or check us out on our website. Browse and buy.
It's for a good cause!

Debs Park Map

From Pasadena:

110 Freeway south

Exit Avenue 52

Make a left onto Avenue 52

Avenue 52 turns into Griffin Ave.

From Downtown LA:

110 Freeway north

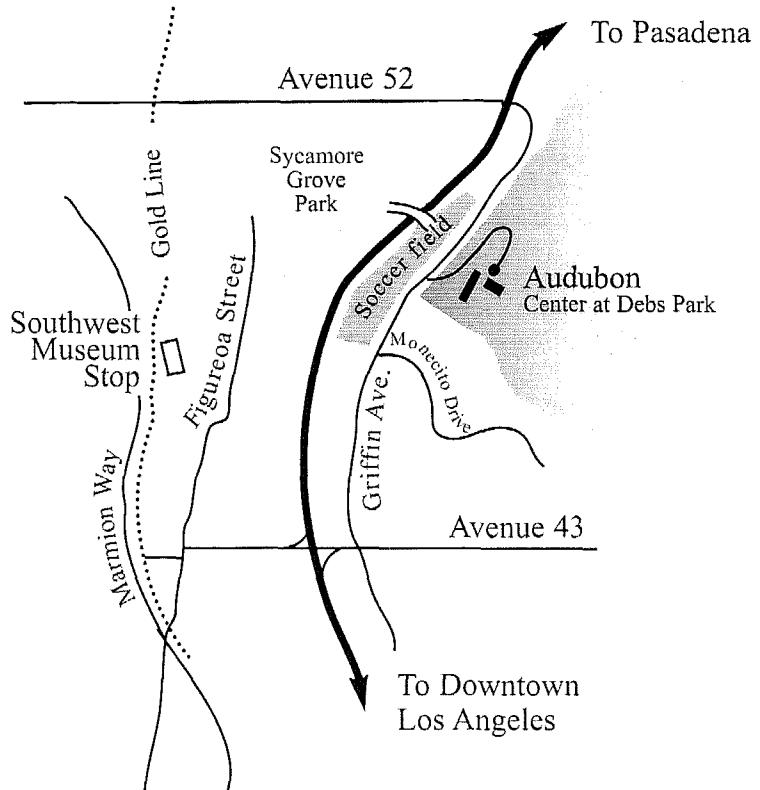
Exit Avenue 43

Make a right onto Avenue 43

Make a left onto Griffin Avenue

Easily accessible from the Southwest Museum Gold Line stop. Cross Sycamore Grove Park and foot bridge And you'll be at the gates of the Audubon Center.

The park entrance is across from The Montecito Heights soccer fields.



**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
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057

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.*

Ralph W. Schreiber Ornithology Research Awards

The LAAS, Ralph W. Schreiber Ornithology Research Award, presents annual research grants to support research relevant to the biology of birds. Named in memory of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Curator of Ornithology whose work contributed greatly to the conservation of California birds, especially the Brown Pelican. Award recipients must be students, amateurs, and others with limited or no access to major granting agencies and who reside in southern California (from San Luis Obispo, Kern, and San Bernardino Counties south) or are currently enrolled in a southern California academic institution.

There is no geographical restriction on the research area. One or more awards will be given this year, with a maximum individual award of \$2500. While ornithological research with a connection to conservation problems are preferred, the Awards Committee will interpret "conservation" in a very broad sense, and "pure, non-applied" researchers are encouraged to apply.

The application deadline for the year 2006 Schreiber Award is December 1, 2005; grants will be disbursed in April, 2006.

Get full application details at www.LAAudubon.org.



*Dr. Ralph Schreiber with a California Condor
Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History photo*

PASADENA BIRDFEST

November 5-6, 2005

Eaton Canyon Nature Center

Lectures, workshop and fair on the 5th.

Field Trips on the 6th.

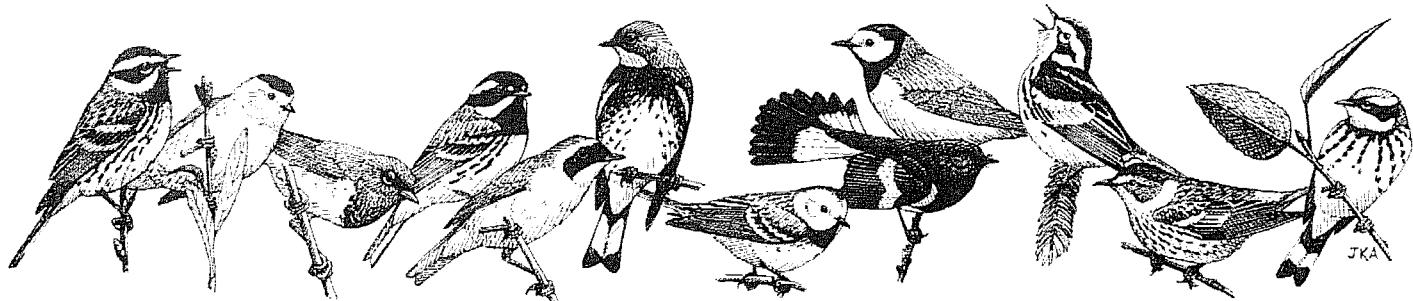
Explore the exciting world of birding in Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley.

Expert Plenary Speakers – Larry Allen, Jon Fisher, Kimball Garrett!

Raffle! Meet live birds up close! Used book sale! Hands on Workshops! Eagle Optics booth! Much more...

Visit: www.pasadenaaudubon.org for details and registration information: Act fast as space is limited.





BIRDS OF THE SEASON

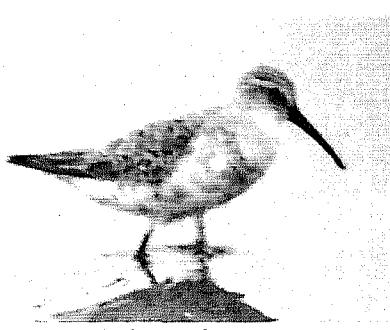
If it weren't for shorebirds, what would summer be? Where would the birders go instead of lining up along the concrete banks of the L.A. River? We would be lost. Summer, as we all know, is about shorebirds – thousands of them of 28 different species were seen around Los Angeles County in the last couple of months. The L.A. River was hopping (probably still is) with peeps, and some great rarities were turned up – including L.A.'s second record of Curlew Sandpiper. Thanks to great coverage there were reports nearly every day of the rare-but-regular species that dropped down into our beloved urban gutter. In another birding realm, this season has also been an interesting one at sea. Word trickled in from tuna-fishing boats of numbers of Cook's Petrels being seen off southern California near the continental shelf. Multiple were seen on a four-day pelagic trip in the second week of September and one was seen on Cortez Bank on September 10 on the LAAS Tropicbird Trip. The increased breeding success of Cook's Petrels on the islands off New Zealand may have played a role. And on the totally outrageous front, a Ringed (Hornby's) Storm-Petrel all the way up from Peru was seen off southern California in mid July for a first North American record (possibly a first for the Northern Hemisphere). The oceanographic features sending these southern Pacific birds up to us are raising expectations for this coming fall.

And all these things are tied together. A great late spring vagrant season followed by top-notch shorebirding and fantastic pelagic birds, and at the writing of this article things augur well for an interesting fall. What causes these trends in bird distribution that we describe as either

"slow" or "exciting"? There are some theories (and most birders each have their own), but we're mostly still in the dark and can only wait and see what happens. For what it's worth in defining some variables in the equation, this summer was hot after a great deal of rain this past winter. The wetlands in the Antelope Valley that frequently produce interesting shorebirds were dry by mid-August. Air masses from the southeast brought several days of clouds and uncomfortable humidity. The heat here in the basin was steady but finally broke in the second week of September with a nice front to begin our eight months of (hopefully) pleasant birding weather. But while it was hot, the birding was good, and here's what we saw.

The "big four" of uncommon fall shorebirds, Solitary Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Pectoral Sandpiper, were reported with regularity from the lower L.A. River thanks to the tireless efforts of Richard Barth and Kevin Larson. The reports multiplied as birders packed the bike paths throughout the month of August. The first report of **Solitary Sandpiper** from the lower L.A. River was on August 6 after which reports continued for the remainder of the month [RB]. Elsewhere, two Solitary Sandpipers also showed up at the G-Spot in Lancaster on July 22 [JFe]. One was on the L.A. River in Sepulveda Basin on July 24 [JFi] and still another Solitary popped up in Malibu Lagoon on August 6 [KG]. The first **Semipalmated Sandpiper** of the season (actually the first three Semi's of the season) was on the lower L.A. River on July 26 [RB, KL]. Reports rolled in of ones and twos between Willow St. and Del Amo Blvd. for the

next month. The last report came from August 24 [RB, KL]. Away from the mighty waterway, other Semi's were at the Piute Ponds on August 6 [JFe] and on San Clemente Island on August 11 [JM, EK] furnishing the first island record of this species. Juvenile **Baird's Sandpipers**, arriving on the lower L.A. River on August 6 [KL] increased in numbers to at least four before again becoming scarce in mid-September as the birds moved on. Other locations hosting Baird's Sandpipers were Malibu Lagoon on August 18 [JFi] and the San Gabriel River on August 28 [LS]. The **Pectoral Sandpiper** window in L.A. County, slightly later than the other sought-after shorebirds, was disrupted by the discovery of an adult Pectoral on the L.A. River on August 9 [RB]. The unusual species mentioned above are nearly always seen in juvenile plumage here with adults only occasionally found out in the Antelope Valley. An adult Pectoral in L.A. Basin was a rare treat indeed. Our standard juvenile Pectorals arrived August 28 [KL] and several were reported into September. Singles were also on the upper L.A. River in Burbank on September 3 [JFi] and on the San Gabriel River September 9 [MSM].

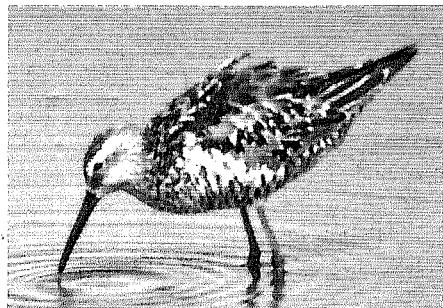


Curlew Sandpiper
Los Angeles River, 8/14/05

But top-notch shorebirding went beyond just our regular rarities – far beyond. L.A. County's second **Curlew Sandpiper** was found on the lower L.A. River on August 13 [RB]; a mostly basic-plumaged adult. It remained for another day before picking up and heading out. Looking for it could be frustrating as the shorebird flocks were constantly dodging the ever present Peregrine Falcon. But there was even more excitement in the shorebird sphere. **Red Knots** were found at Malibu Lagoon on August 6 [KG] and on the L.A. River on September 1 [RB]; not Curlew Sandpiper caliber, but certainly something out of the ordinary. Also, one more step out of the ordinary, were a few **Stilt Sandpipers**. It began with an adult on July 19 and 20 [RB] near the Willow St. crossing of the L.A. River. Then, in late August a juvenile and a molting adult were present [RB, KL]. It all rounds out a truly excellent sandpiper season.

On to other birds, if you will. **Pigeon Guillemots** make occasional forays in L.A. County waters in later summer as they disperse from their Channel Island breeding grounds. Not surprisingly, the place generating the most reports always seems to be the far northwestern coast – Pt. Dume and beyond. Two were reported there between August 18 and 21 [JFi, JFe]. An immature made it a bit further south and into the Marina on September 10 [DB]. In continuing alcid news, a **hypeoleucus Xantus' Murrelet** was found on Redondo Beach on August 12. Although not a chase-able bird at the time, it has been very cooperative recently and can be closely approached somewhere in the L.A. County Natural History Museum. This subspecies breeds off the coast of central Baja and very rarely wanders north into our waters.

Some birds prefer dry land, trees and shrubs even. Like **White-winged**



Stilt Sandpiper
Los Angeles River, 7/20/05

Photos by the Author

Doves. Not a particularly rare bird in L.A. County, but one that's worth reporting. Their southward passage brings these chunky desert doves to the coast during August and September. Although there were probably more than just these few around, these sightings are good examples of their typical occurrence. Single birds were at Pt Dume August 6/13 [KG, JFi], at Madrona Marsh on August 14 [DM], and along Mulholland Hwy in the Santa Monica Mountains on September 4 [JFe]. Two White-winged Doves were present at the South Coast Botanic Gardens on September 4 [RS, DS]. Although a local breeding bird in the county, **Common Ground-Doves** elsewhere in the L.A. basin are scarce migrants. One blew by Sepulveda Basin on September 12 for the only report this season [JB].

Although readers of this article will know how the fall is going for warblers, here in the past only speculation is permitted. It seems to be shaping up for a good one. Reports are already in for some of the earlier vagrant species. **Virginia's Warblers**, for instance, have been seen in Ballona on September 3 [DB], along the San Gabriel River on September 9 [MSM] and in Peck Rd Park on the same day [AL]. **Lucy's Warblers** made a strong showing. One hung around for nearly three weeks at

Sand Dune Park beginning August 9 [KL]. A second Lucy's joined it there on August 28 [KL]. Another was at Hansen Dam on August 20 [KG] and one more was along the San Gabriel River on September 9 [MSM]. **Black-and-white Warbler** had single representation with a bird at Banning Park on September 10 [KL]. While spoiled for many of us by the very cooperative one this spring at Village Green, an **Ovenbird** was still a great find at the mouth of Zuma Creek on September 3 [KG]. A visiting birder from the east coast snuck by us and unearthed a female **Hooded Warbler** at Descanso Gardens on September 3 [ReB]. But the warbler of the season was without a doubt the **Painted Redstart** found on September 13 at Madrona Marsh, of all places [DM]. A handful of records of this showy warbler exist for the county mostly from alpine habitat up in the San Gabriels.

Although fall is well underway – the first migrants began moving months ago – the season that brings the best chances of finding unusual species is upon us. There is, of course, that urge to go drive out into the desert and gawk at avian commuters struggling desperately to tank up before their next flight. With the petrol situation the way it is, maybe we're not so different. Migration happens right here, too. The L.A. River this summer was a great example – completely surrounded by inhospitable urban sprawl but still somehow clinging to its natural role. And it could be checked from Willow to Paramount even by the extremely natural resource conscious among us. So as the best land-birding of the year ensues, don't forget that there are birds around here too. 

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

[RB] Richard Barth

[ReB] Renee Baade

[JB] Jean Brandt

[DB] David Bell

[JFe] Jon Feenstra

[JFi] Jon Fisher

[KG] Kimball Garrett

[EK] Eric Kershner

[AL] Andrew Lee

[JM] Jimmy McMorrin

[DM] Dave Moody

[MSM] Mike San Miguel

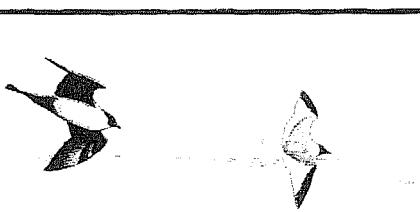
[LS] Larry Schmahl

[DS] Dorothy Stone

[RS] Russell Stone

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.



Saturday, October 29 –

Oxnard Plains. Leaders Nick & Mary Freeman. Meet at the Hueneme sod fields at 8:00 AM. 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 right onto Hueneme Rd. Meet on the N side of Hueneme Rd. about 1 mile W of PCH, and just before Casper Rd. Bird 'till we see all the birds. 'Scopes helpful.

Saturday–Sunday, November 5–6 –

Pasadena Audubon Society Bird Festival. See notice on page 12 or check their web site at: www.pasadenaaudubon.org

Sunday, November 6 –

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, November 12 –

Lake Perris area. Leader: Howard King. The Little Gull, 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.

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.

Saturday, November 19 –

West Antelope Valley Raptors and other wintering birds. Jean Brandt will lead us from Quail Lake east across the Antelope Valley. Ferruginous Hawk probable. Wear warm clothing, bring lunch, and have a full tank of gas. Meet at Denny's at 6:45 AM to set up carpools. Take 405 N to Roxford in Sylmar. Turn right, then right into the Denny's parking lot. Trip leaves at 7:00 AM. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

Saturday, November 19 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Leaders: Ann & Eric Brooks. This trip covers landscaped parkland and natural

coastal scrub habitats, and is paced for beginning birders and members of the Baldwin Hills community. The park entrance is off of La Cienega Blvd. Between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$3 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. Meet at 8:00 AM.

Sunday, November 20 –

Ballona Wetlands. Bob Shanman will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland. Ducks, gulls, shorebirds including Surfbird, and possible Large-billed Savannah Sparrow. 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, November 26

(Note Change of Date) –

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

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 the 6.3 foot high tide, and a full day of birding in the area. Rails, Swamp Sparrow, California Gnatcatcher, and American Bittern will be target birds. Take the 405 Fwy S to the 73 Toll Road (free this far) to the Campus Dr. exit, which becomes Bristol St. Turn right on Irvine Ave., drive 1.4 miles, then turn left on a small street called University Drive. Park at the end, walk down the hill, over the bridge, and to the end of the boardwalk. Bring lunch. 'Scopes helpful.

**Sunday, December 4 –
Topanga State Park.**

Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin**. See November 6 listing for details. Meet at 8:00 AM.

Saturday, December 17 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Leaders: **Ann & Eric Brooks**. Meet at 8:00 AM. \$3 entry fee. See November 19 listing for details.

Saturday, December 17 –

Lancaster Christmas Count. Contact compiler **Nick Freeman** if you want a chance to count Prairie Falcons, longspurs, Mountain Plover, Common Raven (somewhat more likely) in this fairly agricultural corner of the county. Network and reacquaint at lunch, and chase or visit Piute Ponds afterwards, as time permits. Contact Nick at: (818) 247-6172 or mnfreeman@earthlink.net to be placed on a team or be given an area.

Sunday, December 18 –

Malibu Christmas Count. Contact compiler **Larry Allen** to participate in this

well-attended and impressively productive count. Included in count blocks are oak and sycamore-lined canyons and shoreline. Contact Larry at: (626) 288-2701 or larryallen@earlymusicla.org.

Saturday, December 24 –

Whittier Narrows. No trip this month due to the holidays.

Sunday, January 1 –

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

Monday, January 2 –

Los Angeles Christmas Count. Compiler: Ray Schep. Contact Audubon House at (323) 876-0202, or check the webpage at www.LAAudubon.org as date nears, if you wish to participate.

Saturday, January 14 –

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area. Leader: **Kris Ohlenkamp**. "Freeway close" morning of birding. Kris has led this walk on-and-off for 20 years, noting 200 species,

and averaging 60-65 per walk. Take the 405 Fwy N into the San Fernando Valley, turn W on Burbank Blvd. and N (right) on Woodley Ave. to the second (right), which is marked "Wildlife Area". Turn here and park in the lot at the end. Meet at 8:00 AM, and bird until about 11:30 AM.

Saturday-Sunday, January 21-22

Salton Sea. Leader: **Nick Freeman**. Yellow-footed Gull, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Stilt Sandpiper all hopeful. Fee: \$10. No limit, but sign up with SASE for more details. Meet at 7:30 AM. Saturday. More details in January *Western Tanager* or in SASE flyer.

Friday-Sunday, February 3-5 –

Gull ID Lecture and Field Trip with Larry Allen. Mark on your calendars, see next newsletter for further details. Meet at Audubon House, 7-10 PM for lecture portion, with one break. Field trip Sunday to Doheny State Beach in Orange County. 20 maximum. \$15 fee with SASE mailed to LAAS covers lecture and field trip.

Please see page 12 for reservation information

LAAS INTERNATIONAL TOURS

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: oclarke@earthlink.net

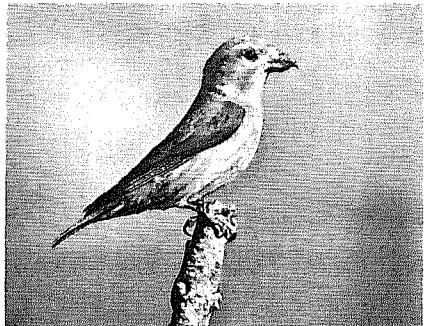
EVENING MEETINGS

**November Meeting Only: Meet at 7:30 PM at
Audubon Center in Debs Park
Directions and Map on Page 8**

Tuesday, November 8 – Debs Park

Kimball Garrett

What are those taxonomists doing to my bird list?



Taxonomy, the practice of classifying organisms, has stability in nomenclature as a fundamental goal, yet all birders know that “official” lists keep changing. Species are split or lumped, list sequences change, and nobody seems to agree on anything! This illustrated talk will explore the reasons for recent taxonomic changes, discuss the impact and interpretation of a new generation of molecular studies, and look a bit into the future (just what will the Los Angeles County bird list look like in twenty years?). Kimball Garrett is the Ornithology Collections Manager at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and, though not a practicing taxonomist, his position requires him to keep up with the changing taxonomic landscape.

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

Tuesday, December 13

Mike Prather

A river will run through it!

Re-watering 62 miles of the Lower Owens River – finally



Years of frustrating delays and broken promises have now given way to a court-ordered date for flows to begin down 62 miles of the thirsty Lower Owens River. From Aberdeen to the delta, a rich riparian habitat in an arid land will be created benefiting neo-tropical songbirds and other wildlife. An Inyo County Superior Court judge in July ordered the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) to have the Lower Owens River Project completed by July 2007 or face the shutting off of their second Los Angeles Aqueduct built in 1969. Until that date LADWP ground water pumping is reduced by one third and fines of \$5,000 per day are imposed. Mike Prather of the Owens Valley Committee will present the background of this historic effort. He will also update the huge migratory and nesting shorebird return to Owens Lake as an accidental result of the dust control efforts of LADWP.

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

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laas@laaudubon.org