

WESTERN TANAGER



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Los Angeles Audubon Society

The Evolving Los Angeles County Checklist

by Kimball L. Garrett

The Los Angeles Audubon Society last published the “official” checklist for Los Angeles County in the year 2000. In the intervening five years enough changes have accumulated to justify the publication of a new list (available early in 2006). Some changes, especially in list sequence, are the result of taxonomic revisions made by the American Ornithologists’ Union (AOU) in their check-list supplements published in *The Auk* in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. Other changes reflect new records obtained by an active birding community in our area. The new checklist acknowledges the inclusion of Santa Catalina and San Clemente Islands as part of Los Angeles County, and adopts a “nearest point of land (mainland or islands)” convention for determining county boundaries at sea. Active field work on San Clemente Island in recent years has resulted in the addition of several vagrants to the Los Angeles County list. Below I summarize the differences between the 2000 LAAS checklist and the new version. Several scientific names have been modified slightly by the AOU (these are not reflected in the list below, which only includes English names), and some changes have been made in species breeding codes (and their definitions) and the rarity codes.

LIST SEQUENCE – A number of systematic studies in recent years have confirmed what many ornithologists have long suspected – that the Anseriformes (waterfowl) and the Galliformes (chicken-

like birds) are each other’s closest living relatives, and this grouping (collectively called the Galloanseres) is evolutionarily basal to the all remaining modern birds except the ratites (ostriches, rheas, tinamous, etc.). To reflect this, both the waterfowl and the “chickens” have been moved to near the beginning of the American Ornithologists’ Union checklist (following tinamous) and, therefore, to the beginning of the L.A. County list.



Photo by Daniel A. Guthrie
Los Angeles County's first Elf Owl found in Whittier Hills, 29 September 2001

DELETED SPECIES – Although no species on the 2000 checklist have been lumped or deleted, one species that was added after that list was published (the Black-backed Wagtail *Motacilla lugens*, added on the basis of a bird along the lower L.A. River in Long Beach in fall 2003) has subsequently been re-lumped with White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*).

ADDED SPECIES (TAXONOMIC “SPLIT”) – The split of its smaller, fundra-breeding populations from the Canada Goose in the 2005 AOU checklist supplement adds a species, the Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsi*), to the Los Angeles County list. Cackling Goose is a scarce but regular transient and wintering species in the county.

OTHER TAXONOMIC CHANGES – A “split” of the Yellow Wagtail complex has resulted in the renaming of California’s vagrants as Eastern Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla tschutschensis*.

ADDED NATURALIZED SPECIES – Both the Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) and the Red-crowned Parrot (*Amazona viridigenalis*) have been added to the California list by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) since the 2000 checklist was published. Los Angeles County hosts perhaps as many as 2,000 Red-crowned Parrots (mainly in the San Gabriel Valley); small, scattered populations of collared-doves have become established and are likely to increase. Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*) is added on the basis of its population on San Clemente Island.

ADDED NATIVE SPECIES: Accepted records of several rarities in Los Angeles County in the past five years have added nine species to the county list. Murphy's Petrel *Pterodroma ultima* has been found far offshore several times, and Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* has been seen from shore (including from San Clemente Island) and with Black-vented Shearwater flocks in nearshore waters. A Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* was found well southwest of San Clemente Island in September 2003, and another

was found injured at Cabrillo Beach (specimen to the L.A. County Museum) in September 2005. A Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway* over the lower Los Angeles River in Long Beach recently was among a spate of coastal records of this species now accepted by the CBRC. A Little Stint *Calidris minutus* was on the lower Los Angeles River in August 2002. An Elf Owl *Micrathene whitneyi* was captured in the Whittier Hills (and subsequently rehabilitated) in September 2001. California's only Stonechat *Saxicola*

torquatus was photographed on San Clemente I. in October 1995 (though the record was not formally reviewed and accepted by the CBRC until this year).

Cassin's Sparrows *Aimophila cassini* appeared near Castaic in June 2001 and on San Clemente I. in November 2001. Finally, a Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* killed by a shrike on San Clemente I. in August 2003 was the first to have both identification and natural occurrence accepted in Los Angeles County. 

Los Angeles Audubon Society Field List of the BIRDS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Prepared by:
Kimball L. Garrett
and
Mike San Miguel
January 2006

This field list contains 491 bird species recorded in Los Angeles County, California, including Santa Catalina and San Clemente Islands and offshore waters (to the 200 mile limit) for which the nearest point of land is Los Angeles County. The list includes eight well-established non-native species that have been accepted to the California state list by the California Bird Records Committee; an additional 14 naturalized non-native species which have significant populations in Los Angeles County but are not accepted to the California list are listed in brackets [], as are two additional species, the Gambel's Quail and Northern Cardinal, which are native to California but introduced into Los Angeles County (bracketed species are not included in the 491 total above).

CHECKLIST SYMBOLS

- B currently a regular breeding species; but see (B)
- (B) currently a very scarce, irregular, or very localized breeding species
- (B/is) breeds only on Channel Islands (Santa Catalina and/or San Clemente)
- (B?) probable breeder, but positive evidence needed
- I introduced (naturalized, non-native) species
- (is) Channel Islands (Santa Catalina and/or San Clemente) only
- E completely extirpated from the county
- (e) extirpated breeder in the county, but still occurs as regular non-breeder
- (e)* extirpated breeder in the county; occurs now only as very rare visitor
- (r) reintroduction in progress
- * very rare; in general, not seen annually in the county
(or, only 1-2 birds per year)
- ** statewide rarity on California Bird Records Committee review list; send details to: Secretary, CBRC,
P O Box 275, Imperial Beach, CA 91933-0275

DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS

- Fulvous Whistling-Duck (e)*
- Greater White-fronted Goose
- Snow Goose
- Ross's Goose
- Brant
- Cackling Goose
- Canada Goose (B)
- Trumpeter Swan **
- Tundra Swan
- Wood Duck (B)
- Gadwall (B)
- Eurasian Wigeon
- American Wigeon
- Mallard B
- Blue-winged Teal (B?)
- Cinnamon Teal B
- Northern Shoveler (B)
- Northern Pintail
- Garganey **
- Green-winged Teal
- Canvasback
- Redhead (B)
- Ring-necked Duck
- Tufted Duck *

- Greater Scaup
- Lesser Scaup
- King Eider **
- Harlequin Duck *
- Surf Scoter
- White-winged Scoter
- Black Scoter
- Long-tailed Duck
- Bufflehead (B)
- Common Goldeneye
- Hooded Merganser
- Common Merganser
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Ruddy Duck B

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS

- Chukar I(is)
- [Common Peafowl I]

NEW WORLD QUAIL

- California Quail B
- [Gambel's Quail I(is)]
- Mountain Quail B

LOONS

- Red-throated Loon
- Pacific Loon
- Common Loon
- Yellow-billed Loon **

GREBES

- Pied-billed Grebe B
- Horned Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe *
- Eared Grebe (B)
- Western Grebe (B)
- Clark's Grebe (B)

ALBATROSSES

- Laysan Albatross
- Black-footed Albatross
- Short-tailed Albatross **

SHEARWATERS, PETRELS

- Northern Fulmar
- Murphy's Petrel *
- Cook's Petrel *
- Pink-footed Shearwater
- Flesh-footed Shearwater *
- Buller's Shearwater
- Sooty Shearwater
- Short-tailed Shearwater
- Manx Shearwater **
- Black-vented Shearwater

STORM-PETRELS

- Wilson's Storm-Petrel *
- Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel *
- Leach's Storm-Petrel
- Ashy Storm-Petrel
- Black Storm-Petrel
- Least Storm-Petrel

TROPICBIRDS

- Red-billed Tropicbird
- Red-tailed Tropicbird **

BOOBIES

- Masked Booby **
- Blue-footed Booby **
- Brown Booby **
- Red-footed Booby **

PELICANS

- American White Pelican
- Brown Pelican

CORMORANTS

- Brandt's Cormorant (B/is)
- Double-crested Cormorant (B)
- Pelagic Cormorant

FRIGATEBIRDS

- Magnificent Frigatebird *

HERONS

- American Bittern (e)
- Least Bittern (B)
- Great Blue Heron B
- Great Egret (B)
- Snowy Egret (B)
- Little Blue Heron *
- Tricolored Heron **
- Reddish Egret *
- Cattle Egret (B)
- Green Heron B
- Black-crowned Night-Heron B
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron **

IBISES, SPOONBILLS

- White-faced Ibis (B)
- Roseate Spoonbill **

STORKS

- Wood Stork *

NEW WORLD VULTURES

- Turkey Vulture (B)
- California Condor E(r)

HAWKS

- Osprey (e)
- White-tailed Kite B
- Mississippi Kite **
- Bald Eagle (e) (r/is)
- Northern Harrier (B)
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Cooper's Hawk B
- Northern Goshawk *
- Harris's Hawk **
- Red-shouldered Hawk B
- Broad-winged Hawk *
- Swainson's Hawk (B)
- Zone-tailed Hawk *
- Red-tailed Hawk B
- Ferruginous Hawk
- Rough-legged Hawk
- Golden Eagle (B)

FALCONS

- Crested Caracara **
- American Kestrel B
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon (B)
- Prairie Falcon (B)

RAILS, COOTS

- Yellow Rail **
- Black Rail (e)*
- Clapper Rail (e)*
- Virginia Rail B
- Sora (e)
- Common Moorhen (B)
- American Coot B

CRANES

- Sandhill Crane *

PLOVERS

- Black-bellied Plover
- American Golden-Plover **
- Pacific Golden-Plover *
- Snowy Plover (B)
- Semipalmated Plover
- Piping Plover **
- Killdeer B
- Mountain Plover

OYSTERCATCHERS

- American Oystercatcher **
- Black Oystercatcher (B)

STILTS, AVOCETS

- Black-necked Stilt B
- American Avocet (B)

SANDPIPERs

- Greater Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Willet
- Wandering Tattler
- Gray-tailed Tattler **
- Spotted Sandpiper (B)
- Whimbrel
- Long-billed Curlew
- Hudsonian Godwit **
- Bar-tailed Godwit **
- Marbled Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Black Turnstone
- Surfbird
- Red Knot
- Sanderling
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Western Sandpiper
- Red-necked Stint **
- Little Stint **
- Least Sandpiper
- White-rumped Sandpiper **
- Baird's Sandpiper
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *
- Rock Sandpiper *
- Dunlin
- Curlew Sandpiper **
- Stilt Sandpiper *
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper *
- Ruff *
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Wilson's Snipe
- Wilson's Phalarope
- Red-necked Phalarope
- Red Phalarope

SKUAS, GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS

- South Polar Skua
- Pomarine Jaeger
- Parasitic Jaeger
- Long-tailed Jaeger
- Laughing Gull *
- Franklin's Gull
- Little Gull **
- Black-headed Gull **
- Bonaparte's Gull

- Heermann's Gull
- Mew Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- California Gull
- Herring Gull
- Thayer's Gull
- Lesser Black-backed Gull **
- Yellow-footed Gull *
- Western Gull (B)
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Glaucous Gull *
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Sabine's Gull
- Gull-billed Tern*
- Caspian Tern (B)
- Royal Tern (B)
- Elegant Tern (B)
- Sandwich Tern **
- Common Tern
- Arctic Tern
- Forster's Tern
- Least Tern (B)
- Black Tern
- Black Skimmer (B)

AUKS, MURRES, PUFFINS

- Common Murre
- Thick-billed Murre **
- Pigeon Guillemot
- Marbled Murrelet *
- Xantus's Murrelet (B/is)
- Craveri's Murrelet
- Ancient Murrelet *
- Cassin's Auklet
- Rhinoceros Auklet
- Horned Puffin *
- Tufted Puffin *

PIGEONS, DOVES

- Rock Pigeon I
- Band-tailed Pigeon B
- Eurasian Collared-Dove I
- Spotted Dove I
- White-winged Dove
- Mourning Dove B
- Inca Dove (B?)*
- Common Ground-Dove (B)

PARROTS

- [Rose-ringed Parakeet I]
- [Blue-crowned Parakeet I]
- [Mitred Parakeet I]
- [Red-masked Parakeet I]
- [Black-hooded Parakeet I]
- [White-winged Parakeet I]
- [Yellow-chevroned Parakeet I]
- Red-crowned Parrot I
- [Lilac-crowned Parrot I]
- [Red-lored Parrot I]
- [Yellow-headed Parrot I]

CUCKOOS

- Yellow-billed Cuckoo (e)*
- Greater Roadrunner B
- Groove-billed Ani **

BARN OWLS

- Barn Owl B

TYPICAL OWLS

- Flammulated Owl (B)
- Western Screech-Owl B
- Great Horned Owl B
- Northern Pygmy-Owl B
- Elf Owl *
- Burrowing Owl B
- Spotted Owl B
- Long-eared Owl (B)
- Short-eared Owl
- Northern Saw-whet Owl B

NIGHTJARS

- Lesser Nighthawk B
- Common Nighthawk *
- Common Poorwill B
- Whip-poor-will (B?)*

SWIFTS

- Black Swift (B)
- Chimney Swift (B?)*
- Vaux's Swift
- White-throated Swift B

HUMMINGBIRDS

- Broad-billed Hummingbird **
- Violet-crowned Hummingbird **
- Black-chinned Hummingbird B
- Anna's Hummingbird B
- Costa's Hummingbird B
- Calliope Hummingbird (B)
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird *
- Rufous Hummingbird
- Allen's Hummingbird B

KINGFISHERS

- Belted Kingfisher (B)

WOODPECKERS

- Lewis's Woodpecker
- Red-headed Woodpecker **
- Acorn Woodpecker B
- Gila Woodpecker *
- Williamson's Sapsucker (B)
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *
- Red-naped Sapsucker
- Red-breasted Sapsucker B
- Ladder-backed Woodpecker B
- Nuttall's Woodpecker B
- Downy Woodpecker B
- Hairy Woodpecker B
- White-headed Woodpecker B
- Northern Flicker B
- Pileated Woodpecker *

FLYCATCHERS

- Olive-sided Flycatcher B
- Greater Pewee **
- Western Wood-Pewee B
- Willow Flycatcher (B)
- Least Flycatcher *
- Hammond's Flycatcher
- Gray Flycatcher (B)
- Dusky Flycatcher B
- Pacific-slope Flycatcher B
- Black Phoebe B
- Eastern Phoebe *
- Say's Phoebe B

- Vermilion Flycatcher (B)
- Dusky-capped Flycatcher **
- Ash-throated Flycatcher B
- Great Crested Flycatcher **
- Brown-crested Flycatcher *
- Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher **
- Tropical Kingbird
- Cassin's Kingbird B
- Thick-billed Kingbird **
- Western Kingbird B
- Eastern Kingbird *
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *

SHRIKES

- Loggerhead Shrike B
- Northern Shrike *

VIREOS

- White-eyed Vireo **
- Bell's Vireo (B)
- Gray Vireo (B)*
- Yellow-throated Vireo **
- Plumbeous Vireo (B?)
- Cassin's Vireo B
- Hutton's Vireo B
- Warbling Vireo B
- Philadelphia Vireo *
- Red-eyed Vireo *
- Yellow-green Vireo **

JAYS, CROWS

- Steller's Jay B
- Western Scrub-Jay B
- Pinyon Jay *
- Clark's Nutcracker B
- Yellow-billed Magpie E
- American Crow B
- Common Raven B

LARKS

- Horned Lark B

SWALLOWS

- Purple Martin (e)
- Tree Swallow (B)
- Violet-green Swallow B
- No. Rough-winged Swallow B
- Bank Swallow (e)
- Cliff Swallow B
- Barn Swallow B

CHICKADEES AND TITMICE

- Mountain Chickadee B
- Oak Titmouse B

VERDIN

- Verdin B

BUSHTIT

- Bushtit B

NUTHATCHES

- Red-breasted Nuthatch B
- White-breasted Nuthatch B
- Pygmy Nuthatch B

CREEPERS

— Brown Creeper B

WRENS

— Cactus Wren B

— Rock Wren B

— Canyon Wren B

— Bewick's Wren B

— House Wren B

— Winter Wren

— Marsh Wren B

DIPPERS

— American Dipper (B)

BULBULS

— [Red-whiskered Bulbul I]

KINGLETS

— Golden-crowned Kinglet (B?)

— Ruby-crowned Kinglet (B?)

GNATCATCHERS

— Blue-gray Gnatcatcher B

— California Gnatcatcher (B)

— Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *

THRUSHES

— Northern Wheatear **

— Stonechat (is) **

— Western Bluebird B

— Mountain Bluebird (B)

— Townsend's Solitaire B

— Gray-cheeked Thrush **

— Swainson's Thrush B

— Hermit Thrush B

— Wood Thrush **

— American Robin B

— Varied Thrush

BABBLERS

— Wrentit B

THRASHERS

— Gray Catbird *

— Northern Mockingbird B

— Sage Thrasher

— Brown Thrasher *

— Bendire's Thrasher *

— California Thrasher B

— Le Conte's Thrasher B

STARLINGS

— European Starling I

WAGTAILS, PIPITS

— Eastern Yellow Wagtail **

— White Wagtail **

— Red-throated Pipit *

— American Pipit

— Sprague's Pipit **

WAXWINGS

— Bohemian Waxwing *

— Cedar Waxwing

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS

— Phainopepla B

WOOD-WARBLERS

— Blue-winged Warbler **

— Golden-winged Warbler **

— Tennessee Warbler *

— Orange-crowned Warbler B

— Nashville Warbler (B)

— Virginia's Warbler (B)

— Lucy's Warbler

— Northern Parula

— Yellow Warbler B

— Chestnut-sided Warbler

— Magnolia Warbler

— Cape May Warbler *

— Black-throated Blue Warbler

— Yellow-rumped Warbler B

— Black-throated Gray Warbler B

— Black-throated Green Warbler *

— Townsend's Warbler

— Hermit Warbler (B)

— Blackburnian Warbler *

— Yellow-throated Warbler **

— Grace's Warbler **

— Pine Warbler **

— Prairie Warbler *

— Palm Warbler

— Bay-breasted Warbler *

— Blackpoll Warbler

— Black-and-white Warbler

— American Redstart

— Prothonotary Warbler *

— Worm-eating Warbler *

— Ovenbird

— Northern Waterthrush

— Kentucky Warbler *

— Mourning Warbler **

— MacGillivray's Warbler B

— Common Yellowthroat B

— Hooded Warbler (B)*

— Wilson's Warbler B

— Canada Warbler *

— Red-faced Warbler **

— Painted Redstart *

— Yellow-breasted Chat B

TANAGERS

— Hepatic Tanager *

— Summer Tanager (B)

— Scarlet Tanager **

— Western Tanager B

NEW WORLD SPARROWS

— Green-tailed Towhee B

— Spotted Towhee B

— California Towhee B

— Cassin's Sparrow **

— Rufous-crowned Sparrow B

— American Tree Sparrow *

— Chipping Sparrow B

— Clay-colored Sparrow

— Brewer's Sparrow (B)

— Black-chinned Sparrow B

— Vesper Sparrow

— Lark Sparrow B

— Black-throated Sparrow B

— Sage Sparrow B

— Lark Bunting

— Savannah Sparrow (B)

— Grasshopper Sparrow (B)

— Le Conte's Sparrow **

— Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow *

— Fox Sparrow B

— Song Sparrow B

— Lincoln's Sparrow (B)

— Swamp Sparrow

— White-throated Sparrow

— Harris's Sparrow *

— White-crowned Sparrow

— Golden-crowned Sparrow

— Dark-eyed Junco B

— McCown's Longspur *

— Lapland Longspur

— Chestnut-collared Longspur

— Snow Bunting (is) **

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS

— [Northern Cardinal I]

— Pyrrhuloxia **

— Rose-breasted Grosbeak

— Black-headed Grosbeak B

— Blue Grosbeak B

— Lazuli Bunting B

— Indigo Bunting (B)

— Painted Bunting *

— Dickcissel

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES

— Bobolink

— Red-winged Blackbird B

— Tricolored Blackbird B

— Western Meadowlark B

— Yellow-headed Blackbird B

— Rusty Blackbird *

— Brewer's Blackbird B

— Common Grackle **

— Great-tailed Grackle B

— Bronzed Cowbird *

— Brown-headed Cowbird B

— Orchard Oriole *

— Hooded Oriole B

— Baltimore Oriole

— Bullock's Oriole B

— Scott's Oriole B

FINCHES

— Purple Finch B

— Cassin's Finch B

— House Finch B

— Red Crossbill B

— Pine Siskin B

— Lesser Goldfinch B

— Lawrence's Goldfinch B

— American Goldfinch B

— Evening Grosbeak

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

— House Sparrow I

WEAVERS

— [Orange Bishop I]

ESTRILDID FINCHES

— [Nutmeg Mannikin I]

Thank You!

We want to thank Anne Eggleston and Karen Johnson for their years of service and loyalty to LAAS.

The new Bookstore hours have caused us to say goodbye to Anne Eggleston and Karen Johnson.

Anne began working with us in 1995. She has been in sales, prepared refreshments at our evening meetings and staffed booths at environmental events. Recently we have counted on Anne to run the LAAS bookstore on Saturdays.

Karen joined the LAAS staff in 1994 in the bookstore, helping countless people select books and optics, being research librarian, gifts administrator, manager of membership and subscription databases, and graphic artist.

We will miss them in person, on the phone, and seeing them in our daily lives at Audubon House.

Thank you Karen.
Thank you Anne.

Thank you.

NEW HOURS FOR THE BOOKSTORE

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or by appointment

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Stan Tekiela 2005

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Alan Tennyant

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For every nesting species there is an account that includes current (and often historical) distribution status, habitat requirements, adaptability to human-caused changes and easy to understand distribution maps.

John E. Hunter, David Fix, Gregory A. Schmidt, Jude Claire Power 2005

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The New World Tropics, an Introduction for Naturalists – DVD

Especially helpful for birders, naturalists, and out-of-doors enthusiasts, this DVD presents an abundance of colorful birds, dazzling butterflies, and orchids, all in the splendor of the rain forests of Belize, Costa Rica and Trinidad.

Richard K. Walton

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Ivory-billed Woodpecker Lapel/Hat Pin

Enameled, gold-plated pin issued in celebration of the re-discovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

While supply lasts.

\$3.99

Audubon House Is Getting A Face Lift

- native plant garden
- new lighting
- new flooring
- paint

Volunteers and staff installed a native plant garden including a water feature in front of Audubon House just before Thanksgiving. The garden is to attract birds and butterflies to Plummer Park, and to demonstrate the benefits of native plants to people and wildlife. The next challenges to be tackled will be lighting, flooring and a paint job. If you have any volunteer skills or available discounts in any of these upgrades, please contact Martha at the bookstore at (323) 876-0202.

Birding 101

Introduction to the Birds of Los Angeles County and How to Find and Identify Them

April 8 and 9 – Urban and Riparian Birds

April 29 and 30 – Chaparral and Mountain Birds

**Saturday Class Sessions at Debs Park Audubon Center
Sunday – Field Trips to Good Birding Sites**

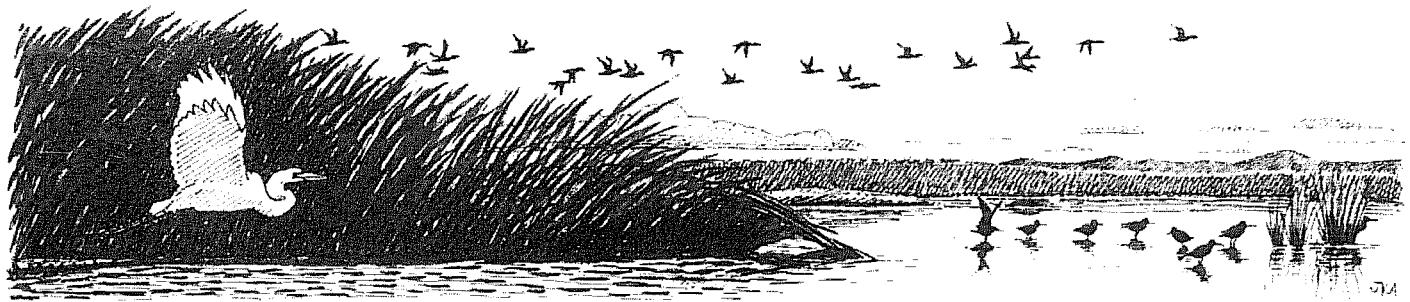
Instructor: Larry Allen

Once again **Larry Allen** is offering a course in Birding Basics for beginning and intermediate birders, with an introduction to finding and identifying the birds of our Los Angeles area. Class sessions will be offered at the Debs Park Audubon Center classroom on Saturday afternoons. The next day, all day Sunday, students will be taken out to see and hear the birds discussed in class the previous day. Two whole weekends of instruction and practice will ensure comprehensive coverage of our local birds.

This is a chance to learn birding techniques and skills from one of the top birders in California. A long-time field trip leader and count compiler, Larry Allen is the principal author of the upcoming *Breeding Bird Atlas of Los Angeles County*.

*Tuition: \$45.00 for L.A. Audubon members, and \$55.00 for non-members.
\$65.00 includes membership for non-members who wish to join before or during the course*

To enroll in *Birding 101*, call Audubon House at (323) 876-0202, or e-mail us at laas@laaudubon.org.



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Garry George

CORONADOS ISLANDS

On 3 May 2005, Center for Biological Diversity, Greenpeace Mexico, Alfonso Aguirre, Shaye Wolf, American Bird Conservancy, Los Angeles Audubon Society, Pacific Environment and Resources Center, and Wildcoast filed a submission with the Secretariat of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, an advisory body established under a side agreement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). We asserted that Mexico is failing to effectively enforce provisions of its environmental law by allowing the construction of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Re-gasification Terminal adjacent to the Coronado Islands and a breeding colony of Xantus's Murrelet, *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*, a seabird considered at risk (and on the Mexican list of endangered bird species).

Specifically, we asserted that Mexico's approval of the Terminal's environmental impact assessment constituted a failure to effectively enforce provisions of the General Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection Act (*Ley General del Equilibrio Ecológico y de Protección al Ambiente*—LGEEPA), the General Wildlife Act (*Ley General de Vida Silvestre*—LVS), as well as the National Biodiversity Commission's (*Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad*—Conabio) consideration of the Coronado Islands as an "Important Area for the Conservation of Birds" and a "Priority Maritime Region," and a resolution by the Mexican Congress (*Congreso de la Unión*) mandating the creation of a protected natural area for the Pacific islands off Baja California, including the Coronado Islands.

The Secretariat has ruled that the submission merits a response from the Government of Mexico.

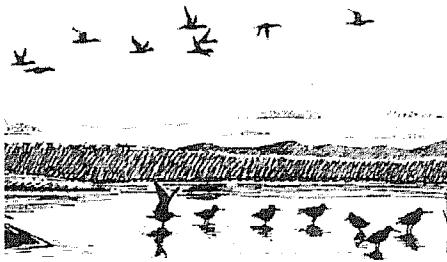
This is an important ruling for the Commission on Environmental Cooperation as well as for the murrelet, and congratulations to everyone who has been involved in this year long campaign of protest and process to protect the Coronados. I especially want to thank L.A. Audubon's Board of Directors for their support. We won one round, but the fight is not over.

SALTON SEA

The Salton Sea Coalition (including Audubon) is opposing the Salton Sea Authority's preferred alternative for restoration of the sea on the basis that the alternative does not improve air quality, fails to protect habitat especially for endangered species such as the desert pupfish, and is economically undefensible because it relies on 300 million dollars in state funds intended for environmental mitigation and restoration. The Authority's plan favors economic development of the north end of the Sea that includes a casino, a housing development, and tourist resorts, but no habitat protection or enhancement for the species of birds that rely on the Sea and the adjacent agricultural fields. One third of the population of Mountain Plover winter in the agricultural fields next to the sea. Fortunately, the California Resources Agency and a broad stakeholder Advisory Committee are focusing on developing a restoration plan that protects and restores habitat, addresses air quality and other public health issues and provides for long-term, stable economic growth in the region. Read more about Audubon and the Salton Sea (an IBA) process at ca.audubon.org/salton_sea.html

WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM PINE TREE

There is not enough data on the abundance and behavior of migratory songbirds in southern California, especially on the Pacific Flyway through the Sierra Nevadas and Mojave foothills and desert. It opened my eyes that not one birder could supply any written records from decades of trips to Butterbrett Springs. Finally, I did get a copy of a manuscript of Matt Heindel's publication *Birds Of Eastern Kern County* (fog.ccsf.org/~jmorlan/eastkern.pdf) which distills his data over decades of visits to Butterbrett and other locations in Kern County, and Matt has generously offered the underlying data as well, but this is the first real record of bird sightings offered to L.A. Audubon to help our litigation despite many public appeals. That lack of data makes our claims that the site is on a migratory pathway vulnerable to criticism by the wind industry. L.A. Audubon board and Conservation Committee member Pat Heirs did help early in the process by securing an analysis of Edwards AFB radar data that suggests the magnitude of migratory songbirds going through the Butterbrett area, and now other wind companies are beginning to follow our lead in using radar from Edwards AFB to determine the status of migratory songbirds on their site. Encouraged by this data, we are investigating the possibility of identifying the Pacific Flyway in southern California through analyzing years or decades of radar from Edwards, but such a task is beyond the capacity of L.A. Audubon and would have to be done by Audubon California, a research institution or a university. We think it would be useful to identify a "no build" or "turn off the turbines during migration" red zone for



wind developers in California.

The difficulty in getting data from birders like me made me ask myself if we shouldn't all be more diligent and scientific in recording our sightings on field trips to undeveloped habitat? Shouldn't we record the date, weather and wind conditions, time and number of individuals of each species sighted in case our sightings become citizen science? Shouldn't every trip be treated like a Christmas Bird Count or a Backyard Bird Count or a Partners in Flight project? Shouldn't we have this data accessible in electronic form in order to communicate it rapidly if needed? Isn't that just as important as updating our lists with new species? Should we be planning more field trips and gathering data in the Antelope Valley and Mojave foothills that are about to be overbuilt with a gauntlet of wind turbines? Or in other areas that might need protection? How will we measure the cumulative effects of wind farms or any other threat to birds if we don't have the baseline data?

AUDUBON HOSTS WIND CONFERENCE AT DEBS PARK ON JANUARY 10-11, 2006

The importance of citizen science data is only one of the questions I hope to ask federal and state agency, wind company and biological consultants when I attend a conference on wind and birds hosted by Audubon California on January 10-11, 2006 at Debs Park where I will speak about L.A. Audubon and Pine Tree. The entire wind industry in California will be watching, and waiting to see what kind of voluntary standards will emerge. Unfortunately, the public is not invited due to limited space, but I am arranging for the proceedings to be videotaped, and distributed on DVD to anyone who requests one. Please contact me if you would like to view this two day conference garrygeorge@laaudubon.org. I will report on the conference in my next column.

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- 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.

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 \$5 to \$10 energy surcharge per person.

WESTERN TANAGER

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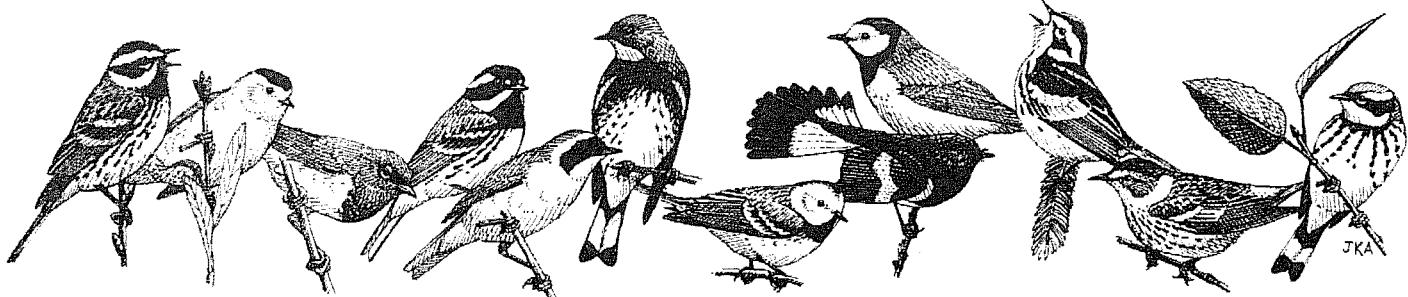
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BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Jon Feenstra

The fall season, September to November, is the time when birders go out in search (or in pursuit) of rare birds. Why? The philosophical part of this question I'll leave to each of you, but fall songbird migration is typically when most of the unusual strays from the south or east show up here. And of those, the vagrant warblers are the most sought after; the lively flashes of color that flit around our migrant traps prove that they didn't die of exhaustion unnoticed somewhere in our thick rind of deserts. A few may stay for the winter, but most for just a couple of days (if that). And as we all know, unusual birds have many grades of scarcity based on their charisma and the number of previous records. Something like a Chestnut-sided Warbler is a regular and expected fall vagrant with a few seen each year, seven this year. However, something like a Mourning Warbler comes along very seldom and is certainly not a bird that one would expect to see in any given year, we had one – a third county record. This fall, due to whatever biological and meteorological circumstances beyond our reckoning, the southern California coast was blasted by shotgun of vagrant birds. The inland deserts were reported quiet by those who frequently bird there, and the vagrant passersines largely ended up to the northwest and south of L.A. County, but 22 species of warblers were certainly welcome. Quality and quantity were both attained.

Skip ahead to the warblers if you'd like because from here to the end we're riding the taxonomy train. A male **White-winged Scoter** arrived on time with the Surf Scoter flock off Dockweiler State Beach on November 13 [RB]. It's possible that more White-wings and a Black Scoter or two will drop in there later in the

season. An extremely noteworthy find, an injured sub-adult **Red-tailed Tropicbird** was found in the L.A. Harbor on September 19 and taken in to the IBBRC in San Pedro for rehabilitation. Depending on your point of view, the story had a happy ending and California now has its first specimen of this gorgeous bird. Also of top-notch occurrence was an immature **Mississippi Kite** seen flying over the South Coast Botanic Gardens on September 18 [KL]. In typical vagrant raptor fashion, it just kept right on going. Likewise, coastal plain **Ferruginous Hawks** were flybys at Hansen Dam on October 13 [KG] and at Debs Park on October 14 [TM]. Since shorebirds were heavily covered in last issue's column I'll try real hard to keep it brief. A juvenile **American Golden-Plover** was a great find at Quail Lake way out in the NW corner of L.A. County on November 6 [MS, JS]. Solitary Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Pectoral Sandpipers were found in the early fall mainly along the Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River. Regular inland in the fall, single **Sabine's Gulls** were found at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on September 26 [TM] and October 12, and at the Piute Ponds on October 1 [TM].

The Malibu **Lewis's Woodpecker** has returned to the pole near the corner of Las Virgenes and Mulholland as of November 13 [AS]. Likely a few more will end up here in the lowlands before the winter is through. Higher up the rarity ladder was an immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Banning Park from November 11 to November 13 [KL]. One or more of them are usually found in the Antelope Valley each fall/winter, but on the coastal slope the record is even more significant. This season also saw

the arrival of a number of **Vermilion Flycatchers**: at Debs Park on September 22 [TM], Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area on October 17 [RB], Whittier Narrows on October 19 [PS], a pair in South El Monte on October 28 [RR], and one in Columbia Park in Torrance on October 30 [LC]. Some of these birds will probably spend the winter like they have in years passed. Another occasional wintering flycatcher, **Tropical Kingbirds** reappeared with one on the San Gabriel River on September 25 [JFi], one at Harbor Park on October 2 [KL], and one of the returning wintering birds at West L.A. College on October 27 [DS]. Eclipsing all its lowly cousins, a **Thick-billed Kingbird** appeared at Banning Park from November 10-15 [KL]. The last one seen in the county was the bird that spent multiple winters in Pomona ending in 2002, so at least there is precedent that this one could decide to spend some time with us. A very late **Western Kingbird** was seen at Whittier Narrows on November 6 [LA, ML]. We usually expect most Westerns to be out of here by the end of September or beginning of October. Quite rare as a migrant, a **Bell's Vireo** was found on the San Gabriel River on October 30 [JFi] and another, returning for a second winter, was at DeForest Park on October 11 [KL]. Several birders have commented on the relative abundance of **Plumbeous Vireos** this fall – there have been twelve reports from coastal L.A. County. The first one was seen at Hahamonga on October 1 [RC] and the most recent report was from Veteran's Park on November 14 [RB]. It's possible that several of these will remain through the winter. Cassin's Vireos, on the other hand, were all but absent as fall migrants.

On to the abovementioned warblers. **Tennessee Warbler**, a fairly regular fall transient, although scarce in recent years was represented by four records this fall: September 25 at Sand Dune Park [MC, LC], one at Exposition Park from September 28 to October 3 [KG], another in a yard in Claremont on October 8 [CM], and finally a bird that spent nearly two weeks beginning October 29 (it might still be there someplace) at the Village Green residential complex west of downtown L.A. [RB]. **Virginia's Warbler** showed up at Eaton Canyon on September 18 [JFe] and at Sepulveda Basin on September 27 [RB]. **Chestnut-sided Warbler** made a sizeable showing with seven reports beginning on September 24 where one was found at Hansen Dam [KG] and another in south Long Beach [RHa]. The latest report was from Malibu Creek State Park on October 16 [MK]. Other than one that remained for nearly a week at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood, September 29 – October 4 [RB], each sighting lasted for just a single day. There was one day this season (October 23) when all three of North America's "Black-throated" warblers could be found in L.A. County. Black-throated Gray is, of course, a common migrant but the **Black-throated Green Warbler** found at the South Coast Botanic Gardens on October 23 was the first one reported in a couple of years [KL]. Those, plus two **Black-throated Blue Warblers**: at Sand Dune Park from October 21 to 25 [KL] and in a Claremont yard on November 1 [CM]. Two **Blackburnian Warblers** were found in the county, one a fairly bright bird at Hansen Dam on October 15 and 16 [JFe, MSM] and another drab individual at Sepulveda Basin November 6 to 10 [JFi]. Like several mentioned above, this is another species that hasn't been reported in the county in a few years. Much more regular, albeit with only two reports, were **Palm Warblers** at Madrona Marsh on October 10 [TM] and at Lake Balboa on October 16 [AB]. **Blackpoll Warbler**, our prototypical fall vagrant warbler, came through with five reports: Banning Park on September 16 [MSM], Eaton Canyon on September 18 [JFe], DeForest Park on October 1 [KL], Hansen Dam on October 8 [KG], and Peck Pit on October 16 [JFi], making an excellent example of this bird's temporal

distribution. **Black-and-white Warblers** were even more widespread with seven single-day reports beginning on October 2 at South Gate Park [RB]. The latest report as of the writing of this article was November 13 at the El Segundo Library Park [RB]. It's probable that several more will be found in the coming weeks and some will remain for the winter. Only two **American Redstarts** were seen this fall, a female type at Sepulveda Basin on November 11 [ES, RG] and another at El Dorado Park on November 15 [MSM], a

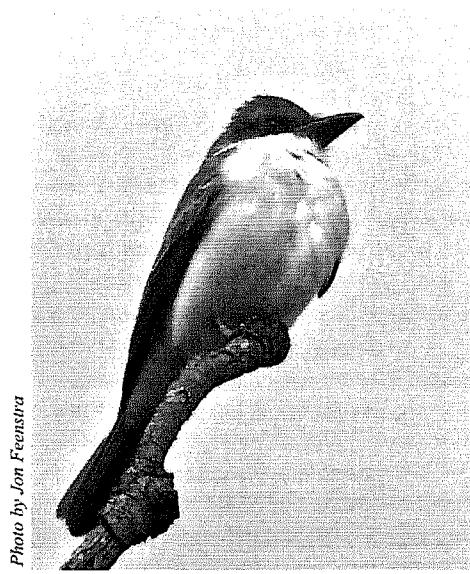


Photo by Jon Fennstra

Thick-billed Kingbird

little unusual as this is normally one of our most frequently seen vagrants. Likewise, one **Northern Waterthrush** was found – at Hansen Dam on September 24 [KG]. After mentioning the two American Redstarts found this fall, it seems strange to think that three **Painted Redstarts** have been located. The first was dealt with in the previous issue, but #2 and #3 popped up at Bonelli Park on October 22 [AL] and at Elysian Park on October 27 [RB]. Both continue to be seen as of the writing of this article. Continuing along with this theme of great rarities, L.A. County received its third **Mourning Warbler** – a fairly drab, but distinctive female. It was found at Sand Dune Park on October 24 [DB] and seen again briefly on October 25 [KL, TMcG]. And, since it didn't make it into last issue's report, a **Red-faced Warbler** was photographed at a bird bath in El Segundo on August 22 [JD, KD]. An excellent yard bird for those fortunate folks.

Migrant **Summer Tanagers** were found at Hansen Dam on October 16 [KG], in Playa del Rey on October 24 [DB], and in Elysian Park on October 27 [RB]. Two **Scarlet Tanagers** graced us with their presence, a female at Banning Park November 12 and 13 [MT, TW] and another female at the South Coast Botanic Gardens on November 13 [KL]. A large proportion of L.A.'s Scarlet Tanager records, at least in recent years, have been from Banning Park in November. **Clay-colored Sparrows** typically have a local presence in late September and early October and this year five were seen: September 18 at Green Hills Memorial Park in San Pedro [SS], September 23 at Madrona Marsh [DM], October 1 at DeForest Park [KL], October 2 at Harbor Park [KL], and at the L.A. Arboretum also on October 2 [AM]. The **Large-billed Savannah Sparrow** that spends the winter on the Ballona Creek Jetty in Playa del Rey was spotted again on October 6 [BJ]. A more frequent visitor to marshy areas, the fall's only **Swamp Sparrow** was seen at Peck Pit on October 30 [JFi]. A few more will probably be found before the year is out. **White-throated Sparrows** were in La Cañada on November 4 [MH] and in Eaton Canyon November 5 [KG]. Two **Bobolinks** were seen at the Green Hills Memorial Park on September 18 [KL], while singles were in Eaton Canyon on October 1 [MS, JS] and in Peck Pit on October 15 and 16 [ES]. And last, but certainly not least was a female-type **Orchard Oriole**, a nearly annual late fall vagrant, found near Ballona Lagoon in Marina del Rey on November 14 [DB].

It was a productive fall with a good amount of observer coverage. Our regular vagrant birds were mostly seen in numbers – some in better numbers than usual. Strangely, some things that are normally more common were encountered less this season. Although one may like to draw conclusions from this, the error bars on vagrant bird distributions are just too large. Scientifically speaking, we would need to spend a number of years mimicking our performance this year – spending the same amount of time observing in the same parks on the same days to collect the appropriate data. What are we waiting for? That aside, this was an exciting fall. In the coming months we can be

continued next page

hopeful that some of these birds will remain for the winter and that new interesting birds will be found as we birders shift our distribution from our fall spots to our wintering spots. 

Observers and contributors:

[LA] Larry Allen
[RB] Richard Barth
[DB] David Bell
[AB] Andy Birch
[PC] Paul Clarke
[LC] Lori Conrad
[MC] Mark Conrad
[RC] Ron Cyger
[JD] Jennice Dobroszczyk
[KD] Karl Dobroszczyk
[JFe] Jon Feenstra
[JFi] Jon Fisher
[RG] Ruby Gardner
[KG] Kimball Garrett
[RHa] Robb Hamilton

[RHi] Rod Higbie
[MH] Mark Hunter
[BJ] Barbara Johnson
[MK] Muriel Kotin
[KL] Kevin Larson
[AL] Andrew Lee
[ML] Mickey Long
[CM] Cathy McFadden
[TMcG] Todd McGrath
[TM] Tom Miko
[DM] Dave Moody
[AM] Al Moreno
[RR] Raul Roa
[MSM] Mike San Miguel
[JS] Janet Scheel
[MS] Mark Scheel
[AS] Adam Searcy
[PS] Peter Sharp
[SS] Steve Sosensky
[DS] Don Sterba
[ES] Ed Stonick
[MT] Monte Taylor
[RV] Roy Van de Hoek
[TW] Tom Wurster

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
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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

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.**

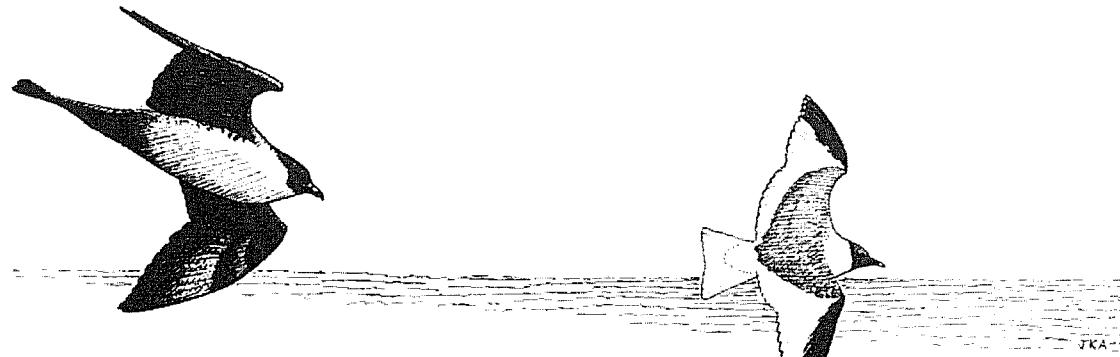
COSTA RICA – SOUTH

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: oclarketravel@earthlink.net



PELAGIC TRIPS

Saturday, February 25 –

Palos Verde Escarpment and Redondo Canyon. This 8-hour trip departs from Marina del Rey at 7:30 AM on the R/V UCLA Sea World. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar, Short-tailed, Black-vented, Sooty, and Pink-footed shearwaters, jaegers, rocky shorebirds (up to 5), Xantus's Murrelet, and Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Rare: Manx Shearwater. Occasionally: Ancient Murrelet. We often see Gray Whales and several species of dolphin.

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

\$65 - There is no galley, but coffee and hot water are available.

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

Saturday, April 22 –

Deep water trip toward Rodriguez Dome and the San Juan Seamount.

This trip will depart from **Santa Barbara Harbor** on the Condor Express at 7:00 AM and returns approximately by 8:00 PM. This is a **One-Day Murphy's Petrel Search!** We will cruise along the deep water shelf by the San Juan Seamount. Birds expected are: Laysan and Black-footed albatross, Northern Fulmar, Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters, Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Cassin's Auklet, and Xantus's Murrelet. Rare possibilities are Cook's Petrel and Red-billed Tropicbird. Leaders: **Kimball Garrett, Todd McGrath, Jon Feenstra, and David Pereksta.** \$198 – There is a complete galley that serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Sunday, June 4 –

Landing on Santa Cruz Island for the Island Scrub-Jay, then out to sea. This 9-hour trip departs from Island Packer's Oxnard dock in the Oxnard Harbor at 8:00 AM on the M/V Vanguard. We will land on Santa Cruz Island (for about an hour) at Prisoners Cove where the endemic Island Scrub-Jay is easily seen. Then we will go out to sea for pelagic birding, returning by Anacapa Island. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar, Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters, South Polar Skua, Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers, Sabine's Gull, rocky shorebirds (up to 5), Pigeon Guillemot, and Xantus's Murrelet. Rarities - Flesh-footed Shearwater. A Tufted Puffin was seen in 2002.

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

\$85 - A box lunch can be ordered from the adjoining dock-side deli, or bring a picnic lunch and drinks.

Saturday, September 9 –

Deep water trip toward Cherry, Tanner, and Cortez Banks.

This trip departs from Sea Landing in the Santa Barbara Harbor at 7:00 AM on the Condor Express and returns approximately at 8:00 PM. This is the **Red-billed Tropicbird** trip. We will be offshore in three counties, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles. Birds expected: Black, Least, Ashy, and Leach's storm-petrels, South Polar Skua, Parasitic, Pomarine, and Long-tailed jaegers, Sabine's Gull, and Arctic Tern. Rarities: Black-footed Albatross, Buller's Shearwater, Craveri's Murrelet, Blue, Fin, and Minke whales as well as several species of dolphin can be seen.

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

\$198 - There is a complete galley that serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Saturday, October 14 –

Northern Channel Islands Monument.

This 9 hour trip departs from the Island Packer's dock in the Ventura Harbor at 8:00 AM on the fast catamaran Islander. After dropping off campers on Santa Cruz Island, we will have the boat to ourselves and cruise around Santa Cruz Island to the Santa Cruz Passage by Santa Rosa Island and along the Santa Rosa Flats to the deeper water near San Nicolas Island. Then we will return by Arch Rock at Anacapa Island. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar, Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented shearwaters, Leach's, Least, and Ashy storm-petrels, cormorants (3), Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers, Sabine's Gull, rocky shorebirds (up to 5), Common Murre, Craveri's and Xantus's murrelets, and Cassin's Auklet. Rarities: Buller's and Flesh-footed shearwaters, South Polar Skua, and Long-tailed Jaeger. Blue, Fin, and Humpback whales have been seen on this trip. In 2002 a Streaked Shearwater was seen and in 2003 a Brown Booby and two Manx Shearwaters were seen. Leaders: **Todd McGrath and David Pereksta.**

\$110 - There is a snack type galley with beverages.

*Please see page 9 for
reservation information*

FIELD TRIPS

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

Sunday, January 1 –

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. Meet at 8:00 AM, Parking \$2.

Monday, January 2 –

Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count. Contact compiler **Ray Schep** at rayoohoo@yahoo.com 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.

Sunday, January 15 –

Ballona Wetlands. **Bob Shanman** will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland and adjacent rocky jetty. Good spot for Surfbird, Black Oystercatcher, gulls 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, January 21 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Leaders: **Ann and 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.

Saturday-Sunday, January 21-22 –

Salton Sea. Leader: **Nick Freeman.** Yellow-footed Gull, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Snow and Ross' geese, Sandhill Cranes, Stilt Sandpiper, and Gila Woodpecker all hopeful to certain. Send \$10, name, phone number, and a SASE to LAAS for info including the meeting place at the sea. No limit. Meet there at 7:30 AM Saturday. Calipatria Inn (800) 830-1113 and Brawley Inn (760) 344-1199 are recommended. FRS radios and 'scopes helpful.

Saturday, January 28 –

East Antelope Valley. Leaders: **Scott Harris** and **Stan Gray.** Beyond 50th Street East is uncharted territory for most birders. However, Scott has DFG oversight of the area, and Stan lives in Rosamond and birds the area extensively; they know that Mountain Plover, raptors, LeConte's Thrasher, and other AV specialties are sometimes easiest to find in the far eastern reaches of the valley. Take Hwy 14 N to Avenue S (next to Lake Palmdale). Drive into the Park-and-Ride just to the east of the offramp. Meet at 8:00 AM at the W end of the main lot. Bring lunch for a full day of fun in the field. No fee, no reservation. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

Saturday, January 28 –

Whittier Narrows. Leader: **Ray Jillson.** View colorful resident and migrating birds, perhaps 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.

Friday, February 3 –

Gull Study Workshop Lecture. Speaker **Larry Allen** will discuss most gulls that have appeared in North America – most

of which have made it to California. Larry will specifically address general aspects of gull topography, the confusing logic of molt sequences, and the finer aspects of identification to age and species. Slides, study skins, and handouts will be used. Meet at Audubon House, 7-10 PM, with one break. 20 maximum. \$15 fee, phone and e-mail numbers mailed to LAAS covers lecture and field trip. Park in the south lot, so you don't get locked in.

Sunday, February 5 –

Gull Study Workshop Field Trip. Leader: **Larry Allen.** Put your new knowledge to use in the field, perhaps even identifying California and Ring-billed gulls as they fly overhead! Meet at 8:00 AM at Doheny State Beach in Orange County, and study the gulls until we're all gull identification experts! If not attending the lecture, call Audubon House or call the tape (323) 874-1318 to confirm the meeting site, which could change. 20 maximum. SASE, \$15 fee, e-mail and phone number mailed to LAAS covers lecture and field trip and flyer with directions. Possible parking fee. Bring a lunch.

Sunday, February 5 –

Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 AM. See January 1 listing for details.

Saturday, February 11 –

Pt. Mugu NWS. **Irwin Woldman** and the base biologist will lead. After a long hiatus, Pt. Mugu is once again escorting weekend birding groups! We will carpool at the front gate. Peregrine Falcon and White-winged Scoter frequently seen. Rare birds like Tropical Kingbird, Oldsquaw, Black Scoter less frequent. *Early sign-up by Jan. 28 required.* Must be 16 years old, US citizen. No cameras allowed. Include SASE for confirmation. Include citizenship status, phone number, Social Security number and a \$5 deposit (refunded at the gate) for each person in your request. Sign-up limited to 16. Take the 101 Fwy W to Rice Ave. S, to PCH S onto Wood Rd. W, then head S on the frontage road to the lot at the main (#2) gate. Meet and carpool here at 8:00 AM.

Saturday, February 18 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Leader: **Karen Johnson.** Meet at 8:00 AM. \$3 entry fee. See January 21 listing for details.

Saturday, February 18 –

Parrot Search. Leader: **Larry Allen.** Come out to see up to six species of Amazon parrots, and three species of *aratinga* parakeets. Attend Larry's Parrot talk on the preceding Tuesday to get the whole "parrot package". Meet at 1 PM, and watch these well-established exotics until dusk – about 5 PM. Take the 110 Fwy to Orange Grove Blvd. in South Pasadena, turn south, and park on the west side of this small street just beyond the offramp.

Sunday, February 19 –

Ballona Wetlands. **Bob Shanman** leads. Meet at 8:00 AM. See January 15 listing for details.

Saturday, February 25 –

Whittier Narrows. Leader: **Ray Jillson.** Meet at 8:15 AM. See January 28 listing for details.

Saturday-Sunday, February 25-26 –

Carrizo Plain. Leaders: **Larry Allen** and **Mary Freeman.** Meet at 8:00 AM in Maricopa. Great scenery. We expect to see Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, LeConte's Thrasher, Merlin, and pronghorn antelope, along with possible Rough-legged Hawk, Mountain Plover, and Sandhill Crane. To spice up the trip, we will meet in Maricopa, access the Plain via Crocker Springs Road (as conditions allow), and stay in Buttonwillow Saturday night; then Sunday leave the Plain north via Bitterwater Road before we return to L.A. If possible, please carpool or avail your vehicle to others when you reserve. Your phone number will be released for carpooling unless you request otherwise. Send name, phone number, \$5 per person, and SASE to sign-up with Audubon House for exact directions and information. Reserve your own room in Buttonwillow for Saturday night (Motel 6 is there). FRS radios and 'scopes helpful. Limit: 14.

Saturday, March 4 –

Bonelli Regional Park. Leader: **Rod Higbie.** Bonelli Regional Park is a remarkable island of habitat. It has lake, coastal sage, mixed woodland, and riparian habitats. Birds regularly seen include California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Golden Eagle, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. 200 other species throughout the year. From L.A., take the 10 or 210 Fwy east towards San Dimas to the top stretch of the 57 Fwy. Proceed N from the 10, or S from the 210 on the 57 Fwy to the Via Verde exit just N of the 10 and 57 interchange (at the bottom of Kellogg Hill). If coming from the N, turn left onto Via Verde, and left into the "Park and Ride" lot. If coming from the S, be alert that the offramp comes up fast. Proceed right off the ramp onto Via Verde to the "Park and Ride" lot. We will meet here at 7:30 AM to carpool since there is a \$7.00/car park entrance fee. Rod will continue after lunch, if there is interest. There are picnic tables and facilities. Bring lunch, if you plan to bird past noon. No limit, but please call your name and phone number in to LAAS.

Sunday, March 5 –

Private Duck Club. Leader: **Irwin Woldman.** The duck club in Ventura has a long history of producing the kinds of birds that most rich, well-birded, and disappearing habitats can lay claim to, including Sora and Virginia rail, American Bittern, Eurasian Wigeon, dark morph Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, and one Lesser Sand-Plover. Get to the preserve by taking the 101 Fwy W to Rice Avenue S, then take Hueneme Rd. W. Take the first left at Casper Rd., continue past the turn, and leave your car across the street from the barn. Meet by the road at 7:30 AM. Free. No sign-up required. We will walk the property, so good hiking/mud shoes with energetic legs inside a plus. 'Scopes and FRS radios helpful.

Sunday, March 6 –

Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 AM. See January 1 listing for details.

Saturday-Sunday, March 11-12 –

Anza Borrego Birds, Butterflies and Beyond with Fred Heath. The spring explosion of desert flora and fauna should be well under way in the Colorado Desert, including butterflies, Desert Bighorn, herps, and early birds in the throes of breeding activity. Swainson's Hawk, Black-throated Sparrow, Scott's and Hooded orioles, and Chuckwalla all likely. Suggested accommodations: Tamarisk Grove Campground (reserve through www.reserveamerica.com), or Stanlund Motel in Borrego Springs (760) 767-5501. Anticipate a busy weekend, and reserve camping and motels very early. Limit 20 people. Send SASE with phone number and \$5 fee to LAAS to learn 7:00 AM meeting place and more details. Pleasant to warm days, cool to cold nights.

Saturday, March 25 –

Sparrow Identification Lecture.

Who better than **Jon Dunn** and **Kimball Garrett** to guide us through the nuances of sparrow identification? Both are superbly qualified to speak on this and most other topics in ornithology, making this a birding community event not to be missed. Covering *Ammodramus* to *Zonotrichia* (so to speak), including sub-species, as time allows! Eaton Canyon Nature Center in Altadena, 1 PM until 5:30 PM. One or two breaks. Send SASE and \$30 with phone and e-mail to LAAS to reserve, and for directions. Bring binoculars.

Saturday-Sunday, April 8-9 –

Owens Valley Grouse Trip.

Mary Freeman leads. Sage Grouse on the lek, breathtaking scenery, raptor-rich valleys. Meet early Saturday morning in Bishop. Limited to 20. To sign up, send \$20 and a SASE to LAAS. More details in mailer. Reserve rooms and trip early, for this immensely popular trip. Motel 6, Mountain View Inn, Bishop Elms are some of many accommodations in Bishop.

*Please see page 9 for
reservation information*

EVENING MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, January 10

Todd McGrath
Seabirds and Marine Mammals of the Southern California Bight



Photo by Todd McGrath

Put on your rain jacket, take your seasickness medication, and join veteran pelagic trip leader Todd McGrath for a journey to see some of the remarkable seabirds and marine mammals that call the waters off southern California home. As part of this journey we will see how the ocean topography and currents in the southern California Bight combine to provide the conditions for marine life to flourish. We will also examine some of the life histories of these fascinating birds and mammals.

Todd McGrath has spent nearly 200 days at sea off California, and regularly leads pelagic trips off both coasts of the United States. His interest in seabirds has taken him to Mexico, South America, Australia, South Africa, and Antarctica. When not out to sea, he can usually be found birding somewhere in southern California, or spending time with his wife Pamela and their twin daughters, Katelyn and Sarah. He serves on the board of directors for Audubon California and is a regular leader on LAAS pelagic trips.

Tuesday, February 14

Larry Allen
Urban Tropicana; The Parrots of Southern California

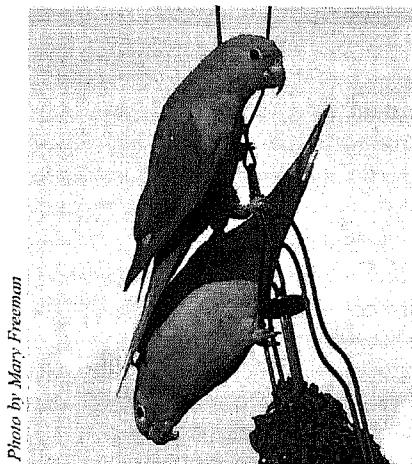


Photo by Mary Freeman

When you think of parrots, do you envision tropical jungles? The Australian outback? How about southern California suburbia? In fact, the southland is home to more than a dozen naturalized species of parrots and parakeets. Larry will discuss origins of the local flocks, the biological factors that help them succeed here, and the identification of our locally breeding species. A handout will supplement the lecture.

Larry Allen is Project Coordinator for the Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas and a member of the California Parrot Project. He conducts annual gull workshops for the Los Angeles Audubon Society and the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival. His research interests include gulls, psittacids, and desert birds.

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