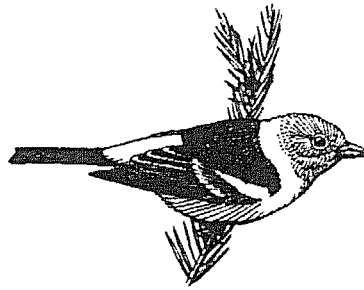


WESTERN TANAGER



A PUBLICATION OF LOS ANGELES AUDUBON

WWW.LAAUDUBON.ORG

Using eBird, An Easy Way to Make a Big Difference

BY TOM STEPHENSON

If you found \$50 on a deserted street, you'd most likely bend down and pick it up; Very little effort, nice benefit. If a neighbor said they'd collect your empty beer bottles and use the return money for a charity you'd probably say "Sure, why not"; Very little effort, nice benefit,helps clean up the clutter around the trailer.

Now suppose someone offered you free software to track all of your bird sightings, keep your state, county and life lists, see the status and distribution of any species from sightings by you or thousands of other birders; AND, by using this software, you'd be contributing valuable information that could help researchers all over the world.

Seems like a no brainer: No cost, little effort, many benefits.

Well the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and National Audubon Society are making this very offer. It's called the eBird project, located at www.eBird.org. By using their easy to operate online system, you can enter and keep records of your own sightings and at the same time help with important bird research and preservation efforts.

And it's all free.

WHAT IS EBIRD?

Sponsored by the Cornell Lab of

Ornithology, National Audubon, and the NSF, along with many other organizations, eBird's mission is to collect observational data from the millions of individual sightings made each year by all levels of individual bird watchers.

Their site provides all of the easy to use tools you need to enter your bird checklist data, just the way you might do when using paper checklists or birding software. It stores the data for you, and provides easy ways to look at your Life, County, State and other lists.

You can also view the sightings made by everyone else who uses eBird, info that shows when and where birds migrate, when they might be seen in your area, what birds have been seen in your favorite birding spots, where birds breed, and lots of other useful information.

And more importantly, all data are made available to a wide range of research and conservation organizations including larger world research databases like the Avian Knowledge Network.

HISTORY

The original eBird site was funded by the National Science Foundation and designed by academically

inclined scientists and engineers. The first iteration was a bit plain, and relied mostly on the good will of birders to input data with little hope of using it again or gaining other benefits from their effort.

A couple of years ago Brian Sullivan and Chris Wood joined the team. Brian had worked in the field for 12 years and wanted to find a project that could have a broader impact than the typically more isolated field research projects. Both brought a birder's perspective to the project and designed the features in the current Version 2 software that make it rewarding for not only the research analyst but also, and importantly, the birders gathering all of the data.

Their efforts brought about a 10 fold increase in sighting entries, from 3,500 to 35,000-40,000 submissions per month.

By the way, Brian and Chris are excellent birders and members of the Cornell team that has won the annual World Series of Birding event two years in a row. No small feat.

WHY USE IT?

Think of all of the bird sightings you have made over the years. Then add to your lists the lists of the

hundreds of thousands of other birders in the U.S.

That's millions of bird records per year. All these add up to very valuable information about bird distribution and abundance.

But by themselves, these millions of records are doing no good to anyone beyond the individual who made the sighting. This is valuable data sitting idle; data that could be of immense value in tracking presence of absence of species, showing population trends, migration paths, and breeding locations. Data that could be used to help direct and refine efforts to preserve breeding grounds, protect important fly ways and highlight species of conservation concern.

These data have a lot of value!

eBird's mission is to collect these records, use sophisticated data quality filters to help verify it, and then make it available in a usable form for both individuals and conservation and research organizations.

HOW THE DATA ARE USED

First and foremost, the data are made available to research organizations doing bird studies through applications like the Avian Knowledge Network <http://www.avianknowledge.net/>, The Nature Conservancy sponsored, Nature Serve, <http://www.natureserve.org/>, and other similar data sources for NGOs and researchers worldwide.

It also provides the data entry tools and reporting mechanisms for less well funded research organizations and field observers who can't afford to set up the systems themselves.

More specifically here are some recent ways the database has been used.

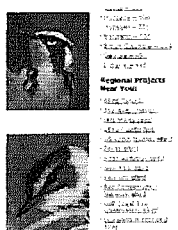
- eBird was helpful in a recent grassland conservation effort by the Bird Conservation Network in the Chicago area <http://ebird.org/BCN/>.

- eBird was used to help make projections for potential avian flu movements across the US.

- NASA has requested the data to predict bird traffic at their space shuttle launch site.

- In Virginia one of eBird's regional experts, while "vetting" submissions, found a report of a wood stork, contacted the submitter, verified the sighting with pictures, and was able to release the location so many birders could see this rarity.

More information about eBird-related projects is on their site.



SCOPE OF THE DATA AND THE PROGRAM

Currently eBird covers North America, the Caribbean and parts of Central America. Soon South America will be added for full Western Hemisphere reporting and listing.

So you may still need some other software to track your European, African and Asian birding treks. However an upcoming data importing/exporting feature will make interfacing with other programs possible, reducing any need for duplicate entries.

eBird must add regions slowly as it has very rigorous standards for filtering and verifying data, which often requires the use of local experts to help "vet" the data. This takes time and lots of initial ground work.

SO HOW EASY IS IT TO USE EBIRD?

I found eBird to be very intuitive

and simple to use. With just one quirk noted below, it was in some ways easier to enter a day's list in eBird than with any other bird-related software I've used in the past. Depending on your internet access speed, the system can be a bit slow to bring up location and bird sightings data. But once you have the reporting form for your location loaded, entering your own trip list is very fast.

Here are the basic steps for putting in your first list.

Creating your account

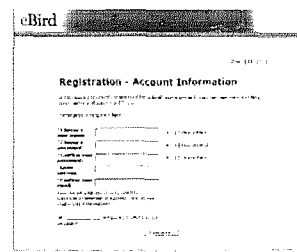
Just like any other internet site that collects personal data, you have to create an account. eBird makes this very easy.

Choose a user name, put in an email address and a password and you're ready to go.

No return emails to wait for to get complicated access codes; in fact, no waiting at all.

The email address is used to contact you in case you report a sighting of an unexpected species, as noted above in "How the data are used."

In a future version you will be able to opt to have people contact you for unusual things you have seen, and vice versa. The new version may even have a feature that will alert you when someone logs one of your target species....Wouldn't that be great?



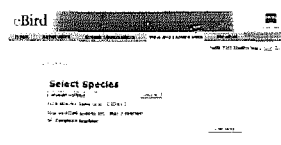
Checking out distribution statistics is straightforward.

eBird's data from all entered sightings are available on their site. You can look up the status and

distribution of any species covered by the system, including your own sightings or sightings from everyone else using the system. And you can see that data in many different formats from frequency plots on a map to graphs of individual sighting counts.

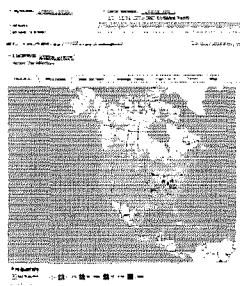
Here are the steps for checking out Cerulean Warbler.

Enter the species name

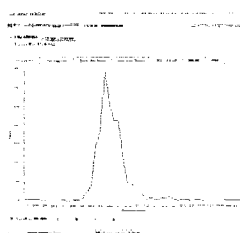


Choose the kind of information you'd like to see.

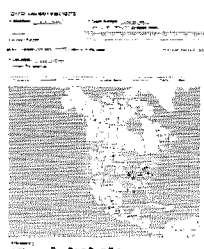
Here's a map of all sightings.



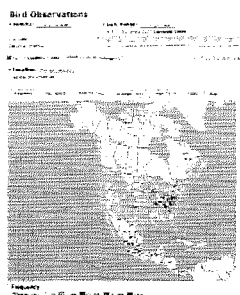
The totals tab shows you the total count of this species reported across N. Am. on all submitted reports.



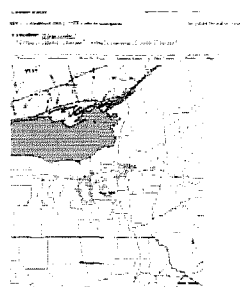
Find out where the warbler is seen in April



How about during breeding season?



Breeding season in certain counties where you bird?



As you can see, this is very useful information.

And of course to a research project it could be invaluable.

Using eBird to prepare for a trip to a specific location

I was going to bird Bashakill State Wildlife Management area. So I brought up and printed out a status and distribution list for all of the recorded sightings for this NY State "Hot Spot".

This is a very easy way to get a field check list for any location you may want to bird.

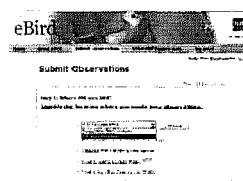
Date	Time	Location	Count	Observer
4/1/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/2/07	09:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/3/07	07:30	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/4/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	3	John D. Smith
4/5/07	08:45	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/6/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/7/07	08:30	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/8/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/9/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/10/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/11/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/12/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/13/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/14/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/15/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/16/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/17/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/18/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/19/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/20/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/21/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/22/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/23/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/24/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/25/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/26/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/27/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/28/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith
4/29/07	08:15	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	1	John D. Smith
4/30/07	08:00	Bashakill State Wildlife Management Area	2	John D. Smith

Entering your own sightings

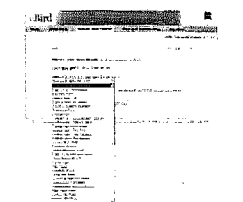
It's fairly straightforward and easy to enter your own sightings.

The first step is to pick a location, either from one of your previous locations, a supplied list of hot spots, or a new location.

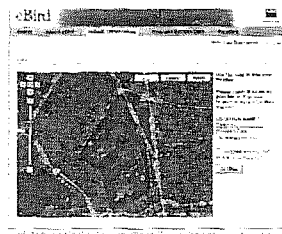
My locations:



Hot spots in NY State:



You can even use Google Maps to choose your location!

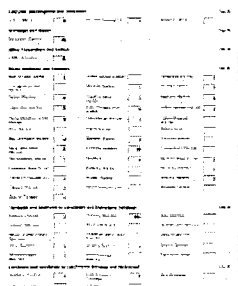


Choosing locations is one area that I did encounter a bit of an eBird quirk.

If I entered too much data (City and County and Zip), sometimes the system got confused and couldn't come up with any locations.

But if I limited the input to State, the system always worked and I was always able to then filter down the location either using eBird's hot spot location list or by using a map.

Once loaded, the entry screen is very fast to use. You just scroll thru the list and check off species seen, or preferably note the number of individuals of each species seen.

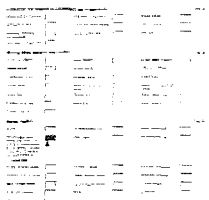


You're encouraged to enter every bird you encountered on your trip, even common species like European Starling... That helps with presence and also "absence" studies.... (Is there anywhere that starlings haven't invaded..? etc)

If you make a mistake and enter a bird that would be a really rare sighting, the software asks you to confirm your entry.

Here I accidentally entered Mississippi Kite instead of Osprey for Prospect Park in NY City... the software caught it and asked me if I was sure of that sighting..

If I had done the programming I might have used ruder language... But eBird is much kinder and gentler than I...



The basic entry list that comes up gives all of the expected species for the location. There is also a selection to show all rare species on the checklist form.

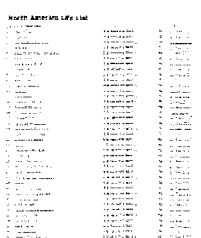
I needed this to enter the Curlew Sandpiper I saw during a recent trip I led around Forsythe NWR in NJ.

Again, eBird asked me to make sure I meant to check off this unexpected species. And this time I did!

You can also add comments for each species. I often use comments to record specific ID thoughts or other info about a species I noted in the field on that trip.

Checking out your lists

Mine is a bit paltry as I've only entered one trip so far. (But please note the Curlew SP....)



You can view multiple trip lists, month or year lists, and look at your data in a few different presentation formats.

HOW GOOD ARE THE DATA?

Of course the data entered into eBird are only as good and accurate as the skills of the person recording the data.

To help "vet" the data and ensure that it is as relevant and accurate as possible, eBird employs sophisticated filters based on a variety of criteria including input from local experts who know an area well. Sightings that are out of season for an area, very rare or unexpected are flagged as mentioned above.

Whenever possible, regional experts periodically review all of the sightings data for their region, and contact people who have reported any sighting that needs verification.

The goal, of course, is to be sure that the data are as accurate as possible.

IMPORTING YOUR OLD RECORDS

Currently you have to manually enter your records. However, eBird is working with the major bird listing software companies and an upcoming release, now at the end of a one year beta testing process, will allow importing records from their programs, as well as Excel and Access, making it easier for the entry of legacy lists.

BACKING UP YOUR DATA

It's very easy to download any trip list to an Excel file. It contains the trip dates and numbers seen. (I was a bit surprised that the lists don't contain the scientific names of the species.)

I haven't experimented with getting lots of lists out, but you can certainly capture your data for personal backup if you feel the need.

And of course the eBird data entered into the site is backed up very rigorously on their end.

HOW CAN YOU HELP OUT THIS IMPORTANT PROJECT?

Here are a few things you can do to help the eBird effort

- Use the software. It's an easy and convenient way to record and store your sightings.
- Add your records to those of others across North America and provide data that can help in conservation of species and habitats.
- Record every species, not just the special ones. For researchers it's very important to know all of the species that were present during your field time.
- Record the number of individual birds seen whenever possible.
- Visit the same sites often. Consistent reporting from one location gives much more complete and useful data. For example, it seems that Cerulean Warblers are reported only during migration season for several sites in NY State where I know they breed. No one has reported them out of the typical migration-time birding trips. (More motivation for me to get my sightings into the system...)
- Tell your friends about eBird. Also, the eBird team is looking for those special local birders who have great status and distribution knowledge for a specific area. If you are one of those people who know all of the first sighting dates for the last 20 years for any species, get in touch with eBird. You can help with the "vetting" process by contributing to the Advance Data Quality filters used by the system.

• Volunteer your time. Would you like to see 20 years of records of sightings from Gambell, Alaska? eBird could use some careful volunteers to enter lots of paper records from many interesting and important birding sites.

• Take a trip. There are many locations in the US that are very under-birded; areas with very few birders, or areas just birded during certain seasons. For example, N. and S. Dakota may have only a few active birders for the whole area. If you have the interest and time, look into adding data for areas that are now under reported. You never know what you might find, and your sightings could uncover important flyways or range expansions.

If you are interested in helping the eBird project, contact the team at EBird@Cornell.edu

SO GO AHEAD, GIVE EBIRD A TRY

Log on to www.eBird.org. Take a look at sightings data for species you are interested in; enter one or two of your trip lists. You'll see right away that the system is easy to use. And no doubt you'll get hooked immediately!

Brian and his team are working on many new features for Version 3. It's still a ways off but promises to make eBird even more fun to use and useful to us civilian birders.

But right now, the bottom line is that eBird is an easy way for civilian birders like us to play an important part for bird conservation.

© 2007 Tom Stephenson

*MARK YOUR CALENDAR
eBird--WHERE BIRDING MEETS
SCIENCE, with Brian Sullivan
Evening Program, Wed. Apr. 9th
7:30 (see back cover).*

Editor's note:

Tom Stephenson lives in Brooklyn, New York but travels frequently to Los Angeles and presents occasionally for Los Angeles Audubon. His last presentation was a Photoshop workshop in October, 2007, and a photo presentation on Madagascar before that.


This article was originally written for www.surfbirds.com and adapted for our Western Tanager.

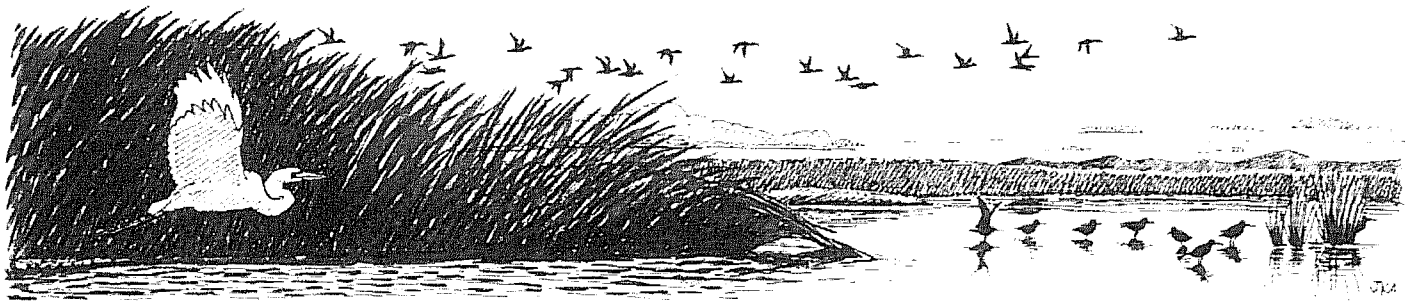
Tom's examples for "hot spots" and locations are in New York but Los Angeles birders can add to our knowledge of status and distribution of birds in Los Angeles County and California through two new California eBirds partnerships with Audubon California and California State Parks.

Audubon California encourages you to select one of the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in California and enter your records (for a list of IBAs go to www.ca.audubon.org/iba). You can also select any IBA site and learn about the birds others have seen at the site, times of year, abundances, and more. With your help, Audubon California can begin to paint a complete picture of how birds are distributed across the diverse California landscape and track what changes may be occurring in the future.

Visit the California eBird website (www.ebird.org/California) to read timely information on birds and birding news in California and try entering some bird data!

Los Angeles Audubon and California State Parks are partnering in studying bird usage of Los Angeles County parks, especially along the L.A. River and in Baldwin Hills where restoration projects might attract new species of birds. Help us add to our data by birding a California State Park destination and entering your data on eBirds.

Brian Sullivan, the California coordinator for eBirds, will give a presentation at Los Angeles Audubon on April 9, 2008. 



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

—BY GARRY GEORGE

A WIN FOR HERONS, EGRETS & CORMORANTS IN THE MARINA!

On Wednesday, January 9, 2008 the California Coastal Commission granted the strongest protections available to colonial roosting and nesting sites for Great Blue Herons, Snowy Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants, Black-crowned Night-Heron ibu and seconded by Audubon California Board Chair Steve Blank, the Commission sent the strongest message possible to Los Angeles County Beaches & Harbors to incorporate findings that the areas important to birds in the Marina are Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas as defined under the Coastal Act of 1972. The unanimous vote was a victory for environmentalists in Marina del Rey who had been fighting for years to protect the rookeries, and other areas of the Marina from the pressures of development. Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors administers the public land in the Marina for purposes such as recreation and leasing to commercial and residential development.

In making its determination, The Commission rejected Los Angeles County's plan to relocate nesting Great Blue Herons to man made



Marina Del Rey Herons, Photo by Lisa Fimiani

nesting platforms in another area of the Marina, and found that plan controversial, not peer-reviewed scientifically, and experimental. The Commission also rejected the County's report of the success of a relocation project at Long Beach Naval Station of Black-crowned Night-H erons from the Naval Station to Gull Park as controversial, and presented data from studies that actually showed that total active nests diminished from 503 to less than 250 in the year after the move. Although there was an increase in active nests the following year, the Commission rejected that data as inconclusive in that the nest counts didn't distinguish between relocated nests and already established nests in Gull Park. The nests were

abandoned totally in the next few years. The Commission also rejected the County's presentation of examples of successful Great Blue Heron relocation programs in other parts of the U.S., reporting that one of the County's examples was a rehabilitation of an existing site, not a relocation as represented. The Commission also showed that the "reports" calling the relocation projects a "success" were written by the company that manufactured the nesting platforms, and were not scientifically peer reviewed.

Los Angeles Audubon joined the fight to protect the Marina rookery, one of two coastal rookeries in Los Angeles County, almost two years ago. Then President Dexter Kelly and Treasurer Lisa Fimiani spoke publicly in support of the birds in hearings in the Marina. Then Board member Jason Stuck's photos proved that Great Blue Herons were nesting in sites unreported by Los Angeles County biologists. Audubon members in the Marina contacted Los Angeles Audubon's Urban Wildlife Task Force to report upcoming tree trimming of roosting and nesting sites and Lisa Fimiani protected the birds on site from aggressive trimming. Los Angeles Audubon's Larry Allen, co-author of

the upcoming Breeding Bird Atlas of Los Angeles County, provided crucial data from his species accounts, especially Great Blue Herons, that cleared up misconceptions of the breeding history of the birds in the Marina. According to the data, Great Blue Herons were not observed nesting in the Marina during the field survey period for the BBA, which ended in 1999. This was critical as Los Angeles County and the Coastal Commission had determined in 1995 that there was "no ESHA in Marina del Rey." The new circumstance of nesting by Great Blue Herons after 1999 allowed for a new determination to overturn the prior designation. This writer worked with Commission ecologist and also with Coastal Commissioners directly, and spoke at the hearing on January 9. Biologist Andrea Jones, Audubon California's Director of Important Bird Areas, worked with Commission ecologist on her findings. The Ballona Valley, not just the wetlands, is an Audubon California Important Bird Area.

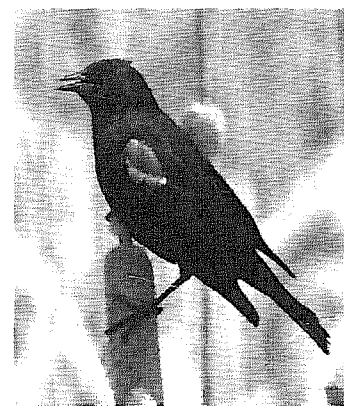
But it is the years of heroic efforts by new Los Angeles Audubon board member Dr. David DeLange and members Marcia Hanscom and Roy van der Hoek that set the stage for the final victory in the Coastal Commission hearing room. David's video footage of the destruction of Great Blue Heron nests by "tree trimmers" and his documentation of every attempt by developers to drive the birds from the Marina was worth a thousand words, and caused more than one Commissioner to sit up and take notice. His passion for the birds,

who roost and nest literally in his back yard, galvanized Los Angeles Audubon as well as the Commission into action.

Los Angeles County may decide not to follow the recommendations of the Coastal Commission in adopting the findings of ESHA in the Marina, but disregarding the Commission recommendations will cause problems for the County down the road as the County returns to the Commission for development permits on several large projects currently in the works. Destroying the habitat after the Commission's unanimous strong message would be an egregious act by the County. For now, the heron, egret and cormorant rookeries enjoy the strongest protections possible thanks to the hard work by passionate activists in the Marina and at Los Angeles Audubon, and the California Coastal Commission.

To view a video stream of the full Coastal Commission hearing of January 9, 2008 visit www.coastal.ca.gov click "Video archives" click January 9 COMPLETE.

The public testimony includes hours of public testimony on viewscape, boating, and other issues, but you can fast forward by dragging the small circle on the left under the video screen. David DeLange and this writer speak in the public comment period, and the Commission's motion to protect the birds and the unanimous vote follows public testimony. 🐦



VOLUNTEERS are needed for the 2008 Tricolored Blackbird Survey for one full day between April 25 to April 27th, 2008, coordinated by Audubon California in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This citizen-based, statewide survey provides critical information for determining the status of Tricolored Blackbird populations in California and is critical in conservation strategies to protect this species. The colony locations and numbers of Tricolored Blackbirds change from year to year, making it impossible to track without the help of volunteers across the state. Locating populations in Southern California is especially critical to their protection.

To volunteer for a Southern California survey contact leader Jon Feenstra
feenstra@alumni.caltech.edu

Sea & Sage Audubon is pleased to announce that David Sibley, renowned ornithologist, author, and gifted bird artist, will be the guest speaker at their Annual Dinner on March 21st at the Irvine Hilton. He will speak on "The Evolution of a Birding Field Guide." The evening's program will also include the presentation of their chapter's Fern Zimmerman Conservation Award and Letters of Commendation, a celebration to commemorate their 50th Anniversary, and a silent auction. On the following morning, Sibley will conduct a workshop to help birders improve their birding skills. Full information on these events and how to sign up for them can be found on the Sea & Sage website at: www.seaandsageaudubon.org.

THE OLGA REPORT

By Pete Bloom, Karyn Sernka, and Scott Thomas

Olga, a female red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), named in honor of Olga Clarke, was born in April 2007 at the Starr Ranch Audubon Sanctuary. Her nest was located in a sycamore tree within Bell Canyon where habitat consists of sycamore & oak riparian woodland. The elevation of this area is about 700 feet. On June 14, 2007, at an age of approximately 6.5 weeks, 1,200 grams and ready to fledge, Olga was banded and fitted with a satellite platform terminal transmitter (PTT) attached as a backpack.

The satellite transmitter, a solar-powered PTT-100 made by Microwave Telemetry, Inc., was donated by the Los Angeles Audubon Society in support of research on the movements of fledgling red-tailed hawks. Communications Specialists, Inc. contributed the funding for downloading data acquired by the satellite transmitter. Satellite telemetry enables the study of animal movement outside the confines of local study areas and the ability to compare dispersal patterns throughout the range of a species. The resulting data from this research will help determine migration behaviors, flight patterns, roost locations, and areas of foraging and habitat use throughout the seasons. This information may also be valuable for interpreting population trends and for identifying potential habitat conservation needs.

Data collection occurred daily as signals were transmitted from the transmitter to receivers aboard satellites orbiting the earth. The

information was then relayed from the satellites to an Argos ground station. Transmitted information included the date, time, location and altitude of the hawk as well as a measurement of location accuracy. For data analysis as well as map production we extracted the most accurate data. As a consequence some days were not represented by location data, thus resulting in gaps of time when the whereabouts of Olga were not documented.

Following her release, Olga remained in the vicinity of her nest site for only another 12 days, and then at an age of about 8 weeks Olga decided to take a flight beyond the local vicinity of her nest. On July 26th transmissions indicated Olga was northwest of Twenty-nine Palms, California, approximately 84 miles (135 km) northeast of her nest! By the next day, July 27th, Olga had flown an additional 218 miles (351 km) northeast and location data was transmitted from the Mohave Desert in the vicinity of Lida, Nevada.

The following day Olga continued north and by July 30th had flown approximately 324 miles (522 km) to the vicinity of Calcutta Lake in northwestern Nevada. She then changed direction slightly, bearing west, and continued another 25 miles (40 km) to arrive in northeast Oregon on July 31st. Still on the move, Olga flew 48 miles (78 km) northwest to the vicinity of Coyote Meadow on August 2nd, which would be considered the southeast end of her stop-over area, as she returned to this locale in the midst of her stop-over. The next location transmission was actually 36 miles (56 km) to the north on August 7th at her main roost location in the Fremont-Winema National Forests in Southern Oregon, 35 miles northeast of Klamath Falls, in the

neighborhood of Bly, where she would remain for about 5 weeks. In a little over a week at less than 2 ½ months of age Olga had traveled at least 735 miles (1,183 km)!

The habitat in this northernmost stop-over, Eastern Cascade foothill area consists of a mix of agriculture & pastureland, sagebrush, and juniper intermixed with grassland, ponderosa pine and other conifers. The Sprague River runs through the valley where Olga was mainly roosting. Elevations range from 4,500 feet at the valley floor to over 6,100 feet. During this stop-over the location data indicated Olga would travel up to 55 miles (88 km) in a day and then return to the main roost area. The circle on the map indicates the general area of Olga's northernmost stop-over location.

After a little over a month, on September 9th, Olga headed about 150 miles (241 km) south to Lassen Volcanic National Park. Elevations in this area range from 5,300 to over 10,000 feet with a number of diverse habitats, including coniferous forest, wetlands, moist and dry meadows, a number of rocky areas, and high elevation alpine environments. Olga remained in the Mount Lassen region from September 12th through September 27th. Several data locations were recorded in the vicinity of the entrance ranger station, food service and campground, suggesting that the human activity, which often attracts small mammals, possibly resulted in a food source for Olga.

As the season progressed Olga continued southeast on her journey, spending a week from September 28th through October 6th in the Indian Valley, which is an area of pastureland surrounded by the coniferous forests of the southern

Cascade Mountain Range near Greenville, Crescent Mills & Taylorsville. A relatively short trek of 33 miles (54 km) led her to the south end of Lake Davis on October 7th, and to her arrival in the Sierra Valley, California on October 8, 2007. Elevations in the Sierra Valley range from 4,500 to 5,500 feet. The natural vegetation is chiefly a mixture of sagebrush and grass, and marshlands run through the valley, which also houses the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Feather River. There is some pine and juniper on part of the western and southern slopes of the Sierra Valley and red-tailed hawks are reported to roost and hunt from the juniper perches.

Olga remained in the Sierra Valley until November 5th, 2007 when an inactivity signal was deployed. In accordance with statistics for approximately 85% of hawks, Olga likely did not survive her first year of life (unless the transmitter backpack somehow became detached).

This research demonstrated that Olga followed a similar pattern to other nestling red-tailed hawks recently equipped with satellite transmitters in southern California: she traveled north during the summer. Olga and other nestling red-tailed hawks are showing similar patterns of significant northward movement, in the range of 700 to 1000 miles, soon after fledging. Subsequently the hawks have typically remained at a northernmost stop-over location for several weeks, and then gradually migrated southward, stopping for one to two weeks in areas suitable for foraging as they travel south to their wintering locations. The results of this study are significant in that we are able to ascertain that these

northward movements of nestling and immature red-tailed hawks nesting in southern California appear to represent a pattern or possibly a life history characteristic and not simply an anomaly. Prior to current research, the movements of immature red-tailed hawks were not well understood or documented.

We would like to thank the Los Angeles Audubon Society for their generous contribution of the satellite transmitter and Spence Porter of Communications Specialists, Inc. for funding the downloads of data which made the Olga report possible, and to Pete and Sandy Desimone who support our research at the Starr Ranch Sanctuary. Currently the transmitter is buried under a blanket of snow in the Sierra Valley near Beckwourth, California. Our present goal is to retrieve the

transmitter following the snowmelt and to reattach the transmitter to another bird to continue research and build on the important data provided by Olga.

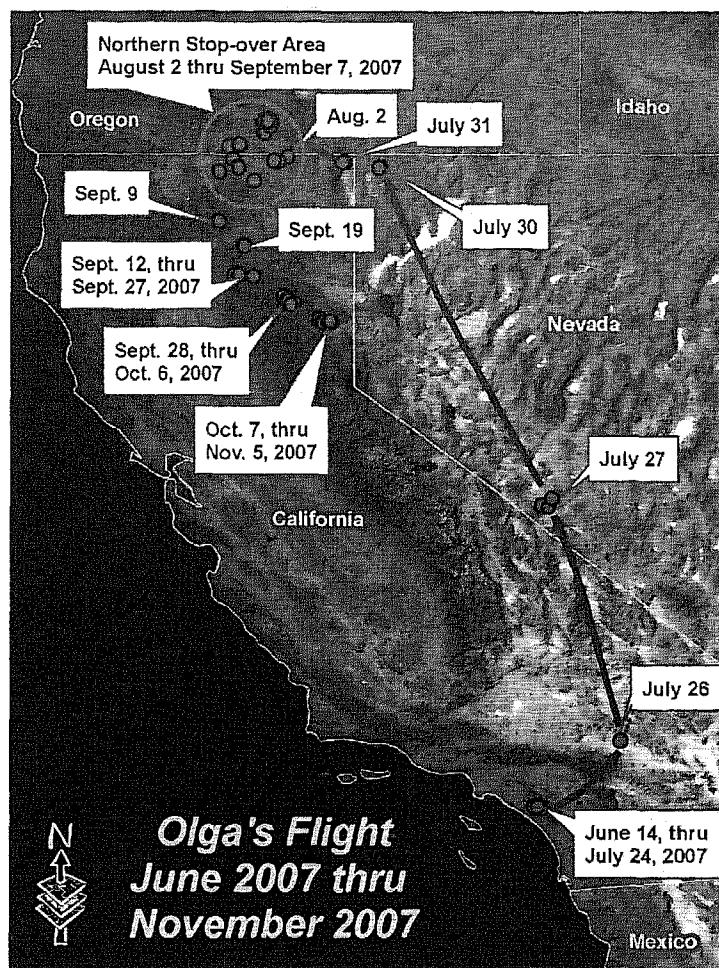
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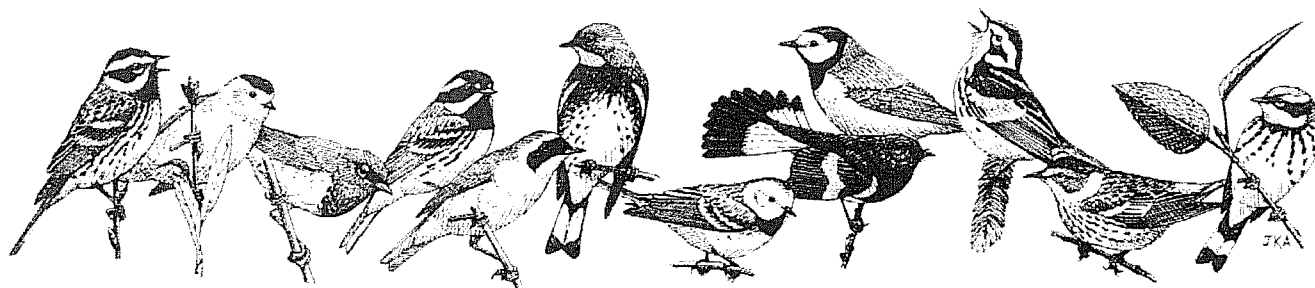
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BIRDS OF THE SEASON

BY JON FISHER

At last, there was rain. Several fronts passing through the area in November and December brought some precipitation, but a series of storms moving through in early January brought the first real relief from drought conditions. These fronts alone dumped more rain in three days than we've seen in nearly two years. If the trend continues, it bodes well for spring and summer with conditions much improved for breeding birds and other wildlife. Almost anything would be an improvement over last year.

Though often seen as a slow period following autumn migration, November and December were anything but dull in the county. While observers turned up plenty of birds on their own, several Christmas Bird Counts combined to produce some really good finds in the latter half of December.

While a smattering of Golden-crowned Kinglets, a few Red-breasted Nuthatches and a handful of other montane species were reported, in general there were no significant irruptions during the period, though some earlier fall reports suggested they might occur.

A few species did turn up in above average numbers. These included

Common Goldeneye, Lewis's Woodpecker and Western Kingbird.

Here's a review of reports from the middle of November through the first half of January.

Snow Geese are quite uncommon on the coastal slope, thus a bird at Legg Lake in South El Monte on November 27 (Rob Bates) was of interest. Three others kept company with four Ross's Geese at Malibu Lagoon from December 14-28 (Muriel Kotin) and another two were on the lower L.A. River on January 7 (Mike San Miguel).

A handful of **Cackling Geese** were scattered around the county, but ten along the San Gabriel River near South El Monte on December 11 was an high concentration in a small geographic area (Brian E. Daniels).

Eight **Tundra Swans**, a real rarity in L.A. County, were found on the Lancaster CBC on December 15 (fide Mary Freeman). One Tundra at Quail Lake on January 13 (Gary File) may have been from this group.

Also very rare was a returning **Eurasian Green-winged (Common) Teal** along the San Gabriel River near Whittier Narrows from November 18-December 15 (Jon Feenstra).

A few **Greater Scaup** are typically present on larger bodies of water in the interior, but thirteen at Quail Lake on December 8 was an above average number (Jon Feenstra).

Four **White-winged Scoters** at Quail Lake at the west end of the Antelope Valley on December 8 (Mary Freeman, Jon Feenstra) was a good record at this inland locale. At least three of them remained through January 6. Another White-winged graced Castiac Lagoon on the Santa Clarita CBC on December 29 (Kimball Garrett).

Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were found, with one at Zuma Creek lagoon on December 7 (Muriel Kotin) and another at Marina del Rey from December 30-January 12 (Larry Allen).

Common Goldeneye, usually present in very low numbers, were much more widely reported than usual this winter.

Quite a surprise was a **Red-necked Grebe** on the Santa Clarita CBC. This bird was found at Castaic Lagoon on December 29 (Kimball Garrett). While one bird in L.A. County does not constitute an invasion, three more Red-necked Grebes just next door in Kern County and one in Santa Barbara

County made this an above average year for this species in the region.

A count of 160 **Northern Fulmars** off Point Vicente on November 22 (Kevin Larson) was a good concentration close to shore.

Three **Brown Pelicans** over Bonelli Park in San Dimas on November 25 were well away from their usual coastal haunts (Rod Higbie).

A sub-adult **Bald Eagle**, first found on December 1, remained at Bonelli Park throughout the period. A few weeks after its discovery, two **Golden Eagles** showed up here on December 29 (Rod Higbie). Apparently the coots here still appeal to hungry Golden Eagles, just as they did last winter.

While regular and expected in winter in the Antelope Valley, several **Ferruginous Hawks** were recorded on the coastal slope where they are decidedly scarce. One was in Rancho Palos Verdes on November 22 (Pam Ryono), another was in Saugus on November 25 (Bobby Walsh) and a third was seen first at the El Monte Airport and then at Peck Pit in Monrovia from November 9-December 9 (Larry Schmahl, Andrew Lee).

As expected in winter noteworthy shorebirds were few, but one interesting sighting was of a rare leucistic oystercatcher seen at Point Vicente on November 3 (Mike San Miguel). Other reports included a group of 186 **Mountain Plover** in the Antelope Valley on January 4 (Mike San Miguel) and concentration of thirty-nine **Wilson's Snipe** at Ballona Freshwater Marsh on December 5 (Don Sterba).

Castaic Lagoon on December 29 offered a good mix of gulls that more typically occur closer to the coast, with a **Glaucous-winged Gull**, a **Mew Gull** and two **Thayer's Gulls** (Kimball Garrett). These were followed by a **Glaucous Gull** at Castaic on January 1 (Mark & Janet Scheel). Another Glaucous Gull, perhaps a first for the Antelope Valley, was at the Lancaster Sewer Ponds from January 2-4 (Mike San Miguel).

An impressive 164 **Rhinoceros Auklets** were off Point Vicente on December 16 (Kevin Larson). Quite rare was a very late **Craveri's Murrelet** at Point Dume on November 29 (Mike San Miguel).

A **Burrowing Owl**, typically a rare migrant away from the deserts, was midway between there and the coastal plain at Castaic Junction on December 29 (Dan Cooper).

Eurasian Collared-Doves appear to be undergoing population increases in very localized areas. Forty-five were in Pico Rivera on November 25 (Jon Fisher) and twenty-four were at Point Dume on December 16 (Kimball Garrett), but over much of the county they remain scarce.

Two **Vaux's Swifts** were at Point Dume on November 13 (Mike San Miguel) and five were at Santa Fe Dam on November 19 (Andrew Lee). Another six were at Echo Lake on December 20 (Judy Raskin) and a few were over Griffith Park in December as well (Dan Cooper). In the past this species has been irregularly common locally in winter, but recent years have seen a decline in winter records.

Lewis's Woodpeckers staged a small-scale invasion with at least three along upper Malibu Creek on November 19 (Kevin Pickard, Tom Halpin), one and then two in lower San Dimas Canyon from November 29 through December 15 (Dan Gregory, Tom Ryan), and three more in Glendora on December 10 (Dick Swinney). No fewer than eleven were tallied on the Claremont CBC on December 15 (fide Dan Guthrie). Finally, two were at the Cheeseboro Canyon trailhead on December 22 with one reported through January 1 (Jim Hardesty).

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included one continuing through the period at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood (Richard Barth), one at the South Coast Botanic Garden on November 25 (Kevin Larson) and two at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles on November 27 (Don Sterba), with at least one still there through the period. Single birds were also at Bonelli Park on December 12 (Ken Watanabe) and on the Claremont CBC on December 15 (fide Dan Guthrie).

Far from any area of normal occurrence was a **White-headed Woodpecker** at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from December 6-30 (Jeff Boyd).

A **Vermilion Flycatcher** found at Piute Ponds during the Lancaster CBC on December 15 (fide Mary Freeman) was the only one reported.

Five **Hammond's Flycatchers** was a decent number in winter, with one at Long Beach Recreation Park on November 13 (Brian E. Daniels) another at Peck Pit in Arcadia/Monrovia from December 2-22 (Andrew Lee) and one at Woodlawn Cemetery in Los Angeles on December 9 (Richard Barth). A fourth Hammond's was at Wardlow Park in Long Beach on December 29 (Robb Hamilton) and the last one was at Pacific Avenue Park in Burbank on January 2 (Richard Barth).

A total of seven **Gray Flycatchers**, the expected *Empidonax* in winter, were detected during the period.

A presumed but silent **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was along the Rio Hondo in South El Monte on December 9 (Jon Fisher). Another was discovered at the Arboretum in Arcadia on January 9 (Mike San Miguel) and a third was found on January 12 at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles (Don Sterba).

Tyrannids included a **Tropical Kingbird** present for the El Dorado CBC in Long Beach through at least December 29 (Robb Hamilton) and a **Thick-billed Kingbird** on November 23-January 13 that returned later than expected for its third winter at Banning Park in Wilmington (Kevin Larson).

Western Kingbirds put on a good show in early winter. One was at Woodlawn Cemetery in Santa Monica on November 29-December 22 (Richard Barth) and a second was at Bonelli Park on December 2 (Jon Fisher). Others were at the L.A. National Cemetery on December 9 and at Valhalla Memorial Park in Burbank on January 1 (both Richard

Barth). Formerly virtually unheard of after November, this species is becoming a rare but regular winter visitor. An increasing abundance of berry-bearing plants and also bees, a favorite kingbird food, may well explain the increase.

Single **Plumbeous Vireos** were widely reported, but five at Legg Lake in South El Monte on November 13 was an impressive number for one location (Mike San Miguel, Jon Feenstra).

Cassin's Vireos, expected but less common in winter than Plumbeous, were at Legg Lake on November 15 (Mike San Miguel, Jon Feenstra), at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood on November 19 (Richard Barth), at Heartwell Park in Long Beach from December 4-14 (Robb Hamilton) and at Sepulveda Basin on January 6 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

Very rare on the desert was a **Hutton's Vireo** found in September (Kimball Garrett) and remaining for the Lancaster CBC on December 15.

Conversely, a **Horned Lark**—common in the deserts but now quite scarce on the coastal slope—was observed flying over Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale on December 2 (Andrew Lee).

In addition to an October report of **Pygmy Nuthatches** in Griffith Park, a single additional bird was seen in Calabasas on November 15, well away from expected areas (Richard Medvitz).

Two **Mountain Bluebirds** at Santa Fe Dam on November 19 and three there on December 9 (Andrew Lee) were the only ones reported away from the Antelope Valley.

A **Galapagos Mockingbird** at the L.A. River mouth on December 8 was of course an escapee (Kevin Larson). This bird illustrates the potential for virtually any escaped exotic or legitimate vagrant to turn up in the county.

Two **Sage Thrashers** in the Antelope Valley on January 2 were too early not to have wintered, even for this early migrant (Mike San Miguel).

Quite rare was a **Nashville Warbler** found on the Lancaster CBC on December 15 (Pam Stones). More expected along the coast was a Nashville at the Los Angeles Country Club on the December 30 L.A. CBC (Kimball Garrett, Ken Kendig) and another on the UCLA Campus from January 4-13 (Richard Barth).

The Legg Lake area in South El Monte was a virtual gold mine for vagrants. The first good find here was a **Bay-breasted Warbler** seen from November 15-20 (Mike San Miguel, Jon Feenstra). More remarkable was a **Blackburnian Warbler**, found in the same general area on December 15 (Mark & Janet Scheel). Quite rare as a fall migrant, this early winter record is particularly notable. Other birds of interest in the vicinity were a **Hermit Warbler** from November 15-December 15 and a **Black-and-white Warbler** on November 13-December 22 (both Mike San Miguel, Jon Feenstra).

Other **Black-and-white Warblers** were at Taylor Yard Park in Glassell Park on November 22 (Mike San Miguel), at Occidental College in Los Angeles on January 6 (Maria Homiak) and at Loyola Marymount University on January 8 (Richard Barth).

A **Palm Warbler** seen briefly along the San Gabriel River in Pico Rivera on November 25 (Jon Fisher) was the only one reported in the period. This bird was still in the area through January 13.

Another nice warbler find was a **Grace's Warbler** in Rolling Hills on December 26 (Kevin Larson).

An **American Redstart** in Altadena on December 3 (John Garrett) was the only one reported. Two **Painted Restarts** at Monrovia Canyon on November 16 had apparently been present for some time (Terry Basey). One of these birds, and another at Bonelli Regional Park, were spending their third winter at their respective locations. Another Painted Redstart was in West Los Angeles from December 28-January 3 (Eleanor Pelcyger).

Along with the usual Westerns, over a dozen **Summer Tanagers** were present in the county during the period.

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** in Glassell Park adjacent to the L.A. River on November 27 (Richard Barth) was the only one reported. Also of interest was a very late female **Indigo Bunting** at Sepulveda Basin from November 23 through December 3 (Jim Royer, Jean Brandt).

Two **White-throated Sparrows** returned to winter at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena. The first was seen on November 26 (Mickey Long) and the second appeared on December 10 (Will & Lois Fulmer). The only other report of a White-throated was from DeForest Park on December 29 (Robb Hamilton).

A **Grasshopper Sparrow**, rarely detected in migration, let alone after mid-November, was at Santa Fe

Dam in Irwindale on November 19 (Andrew Lee).


A **Clay-colored Sparrow** found at Hansen Dam on December 2 was seen through January 12 (Kimball Garrett).

Orioles included a **Baltimore Oriole** at West L.A. College from November 18 through December 30, when it was joined there by a **Hooded Oriole** (Don Sterba). Another Baltimore was at the L.A. National Cemetery on December 2 (Richard Barth) and a third was at Heartwell Park in Long Beach on December 29 (Robb Hamilton).

A lone male **Cassin's Finch** was reported away from the mountains in Claremont on January 9 (Cathy McFadden).

Reports of **Red Crossbills** away from the mountains included a flock of thirty at Apollo Park on December 1 (Pat Heirs, Judy Howell). The Lancaster CBC on December 15 then recorded nine at Apollo Park and twenty-seven at the Antelope Valley Country Club.

As usual this winter we had a mix of neotropical migrants that never went south, wintering waterfowl from the north, a variety of exotics and plenty of rarities. Somehow they all flourish to an amazing extent given all the concrete and steel, endless traffic and an overwhelming human population.

We're fortunate to live in an area where good birding never seems to end, thanks in part to mild weather throughout the year and a wide array of habitats. While many of our birds are seasonal, birding itself is definitely not. Even before this issue comes out, a number of early migrants will already be northbound... 'spring migration' in southern California begins in mid-winter. 

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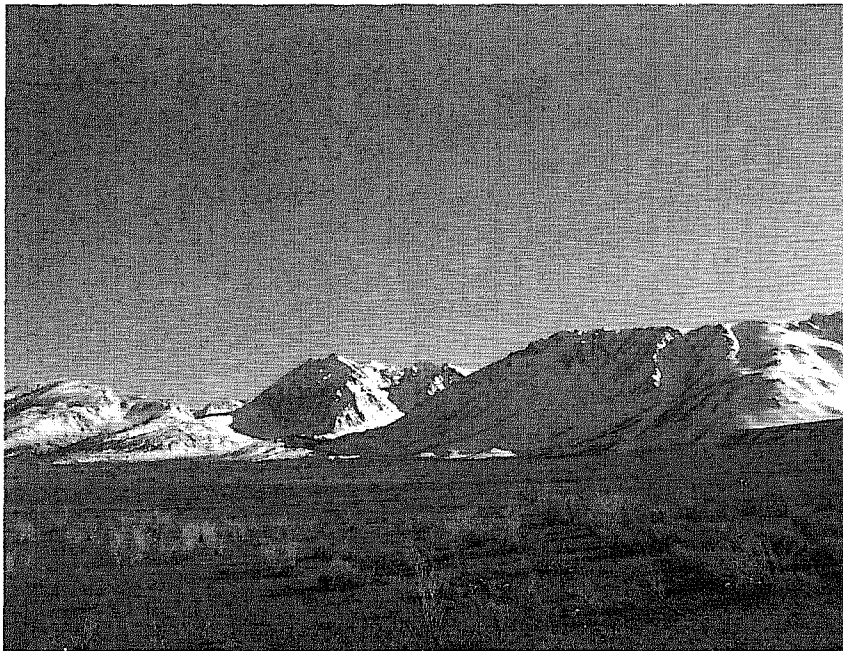
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OWENS VALLEY

—BY MARY FREEMAN



2007 Crowley Lake, Greater Sage Grouse Lek, photo by Mary Freeman

Certainly, everyone should experience the endless space and magnificent scale of Alaska at least once, but many people don't know that we've got a little bit of Alaska right here in California's Owens Valley. Sure, there's no tundra but this panoramic area approximately five hours north east of Los Angeles is flanked by huge, craggy mountain peaks that remind me of Alaska in beauty and grandeur, if on a slightly smaller scale. It is an area rich in geological history, much from recent geologic times – earthquake faults, volcanic eruptions, glacial moraines and ancient lakes and rivers. The upper Owens Valley lies between two major mountain ranges - the Sierra Nevada to the west, the White Mountains to the east. Various habitats exist from cottonwood riparian ravines, rolling

Great Basin sagebrush and rabbitbrush scrubs to montane meadow and coniferous forest. The beautifully austere east slope of the Sierra Nevada mountain range is often covered with snow even through the blazing summer months that cook the valley. In some areas of the east-facing side of the Sierra, remnants of glaciers still exist. The White Mountains, while less dramatic but still massive in size, lie in the rain shadow of the mighty Sierra and receive less rain and snowfall.

My first visit to the Owens Valley was back in 1985 on a Los Angeles Audubon trip led by the late David Gaines. I saw my first Blue and Sage Grouse - now changed to Sooty and Greater Sage, respectively. I recall how cold it was watching the Sage Grouse! The Sierra Nevada was

enchanting then and that first memory still holds.

2008 will mark the 17th year I've led this annual winter trip. I've nicknamed it the "Dancing Chicken Weekend".

Over the years, this trip has gained popularity with people wishing to find and watch Greater Sage Grouse and Sooty Grouse. The Sage Grouse come to their lek near Crowley Lake to perform their mating display in front of curious and selective females. Over the years we've counted from 60 to over 200 grouse dancing on the sage flats. They inflate and jiggle their air sacs in front of prospective females, and the sound is like that of boiling, bubbling water. It is a spectacle never to be forgotten. Not only is there the birds performing their traditional mating display, there is the adventure of getting to the area, all with the breathtaking backdrop of the eastern slope of the Sierra.

Typical of the Sierra Nevada mountain range, you must be prepared for adverse weather conditions no matter what time of the year. Even though Lake Crowley is at an elevation of 6,500 feet, some years heavy snows have kept us off the dirt roads to the lek and the lake as they are deep under the snow pack. I recall one year where I was a passenger in a 4x4 pick-up truck with Frank and Susan Gilliland. We drove out to see if the road was passable for participants in their passenger cars. Woo hoo! Off we went bouncing and sliding across the slush until we

banged into a frozen snowdrift. We had to turn back to the group to begin the walk to the lek. A couple of adventurers in their Jeep Wrangler came sloshing up the same road we had just tried, and suggested another road. Off we went to the new road, which was longer, but had more gravel and less snow. We managed to make it out to the dancing chickens just as they flew out from under the snow-covered sagebrush bushes and onto their dancing grounds. Huge birds, almost as big as a turkey! What fun!

Another year, a large storm came into the valley and we were on the verge of postponing the visit to the dance performance. The Saturday of that weekend trip, we were dodging snow flurries near Glacier Lodge and Westgaard Pass. That was the year I finally found Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches at Tollhouse Springs, east of Big Pine. But that night during dinner with the group, the winter storm watch was cancelled. Arriving at the lek the next morning, Nick exclaimed that the big birds took second place to the scenery which registered a resounding first. At -1°F, the entire Long Valley Caldera – from mountain top to Lake Crowley, to mountain top – was covered with a thick layer of fresh snow. It made for unforgettable and magnificent scenery. Though the snow was powdery, we were able to drive the road out, and witnessed some confused Greater Sage Grouse on the open ground. They were shuffling around, belly deep in snow, seemingly not sure what to do next! We counted about a dozen brave chickens making a go of it. Near steamy Crowley Lake, we saw Bald Eagles flying around the edge of the lake. This is also the time of the year to see migrating shorebirds at the lake's

edge, but I don't remember any skittering around on the icy edge that day.

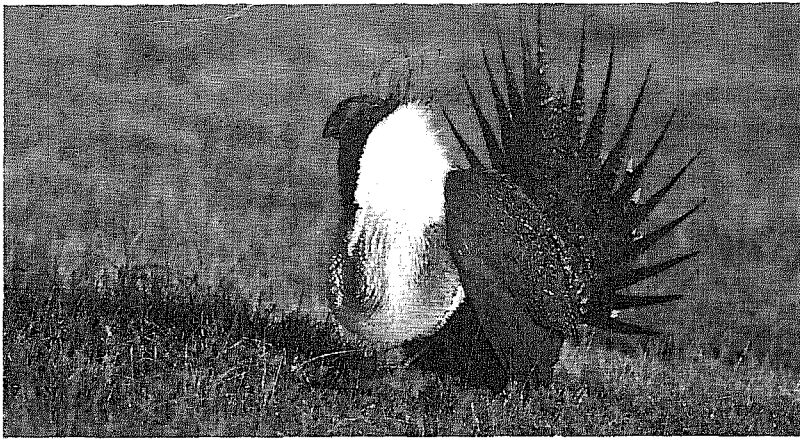
Then there was the year of the great Evening Grosbeak invasion. Having been shut out of the road to the lek due to snow and ice, we continued north to Mono Lake. Here to the south of the lake, we visit the Jeffrey Pine forest for Piñon Jay. We've encountered over the years uncommon birds such as Juniper Titmouse, Red Crossbill, Long-eared Owl, Williamson's Sapsucker and numerous other woodpeckers, and if we're lucky, a Northern Pygmy-Owl can be heard tooting away in the forest. This particular year as we stopped alongside the road, I was baffled by the deafening sound of chirping, rolling twitters from the trees. I couldn't identify the cacaphony of singing birds. Then Nick looked in the trees and counted close to a dozen Evening Grosbeaks in one tree! Many trees seemed to be

filled with grosbeaks, and when we walked into the forest, or drove down the road a mile, or two miles, it was always the same! As we kept looking all around us through our binoculars and scopes, we estimated we had what must have been thousands, or tens-of-thousands of Evening Grosbeaks covering the entire forest!

If you do not recall, two nearly identical species that vary not in general color, and are named by the synonyms sooty and dusky, recently replaced a grouse that is not blue. The Sooty Grouse, denizen of the coniferous canyons above Owens Valley, is another target species of the region. The road up Big Pine Creek out of Big Pine, terminates at Glacier Lodge; an area that is known to be a reliable haunt of this hard-to-find bird. Its deep low frequency booming hoot makes it quite the challenge to locate in the trees, as the sound is bounced off the canyon



2005 Big Pine Canyon, photo by Mary Freeman



Greater Sage Grouse, photo by Bob Steele / www.bobsteelephoto.com

walls. We've traversed over snow and ice and up the sides of the canyon to be rewarded with a view of a booming male perched high on a horizontal branch of a gnarled Jeffrey Pine crown.

One year we were rewarded with a Northern Pygmy-Owl experience. We were drawn to the mobbing sounds of chickadees and found the owl as it flew by with a chipmunk meal in its talons. Three years ago, we were unable to take our group here as that winter's snows brought down avalanches destroying picnic tables on the opposite side of the canyon! As we drove into the canyon to scout, remaining drifts as high as 15 feet remained on the side of the road and signs of "AVALANCE AREA" were posted. We can't imagine the sights and sounds of snapping trees and tossed dumpsters! This is also a reliable canyon for Dipper. They are usually seen flying up and down the stream, if you wait a while. Only one year, a peculiar year for weather, have we experienced fog and mist.

The Rosy-Finch is always a crowd pleaser. I feel it's one of the most beautiful birds in the US. Shades of pinks with splashes of black and gray—gorgeous! And they live in one of my favorite places of California, the

craggy glacier-cut eastern Sierra Nevada. They are truly the snowbird!

They normally follow the snowline up and down the mountains, as the seasons change. At the mountain hamlet of Aspendell during the late winter, snow is often covering the ground around the residential homes, the sides of the road and the adjacent mountains. I first met the late Virginia and Robert Wallace about 18 years back. My friend, the late Dan Williams spoke to them of my fieldtrip, and it was through Dan's "letter of introduction" to the Wallaces that I received an invitation into their home when I first visited here with Bob and Darlene Johnson, searching the neighborhood for feeders. The first year that I included this visit as part of the fieldtrip, Virginia and Robert welcomed me with open arms. The highlight of this visit began as we parked ourselves in the living room and watched the frenzied activity of the Rosy Finches at the feeders just outside of the window. I sat three inches away from one of my favorite birds! Even after many years of leading this trip and visiting this area, seeing the pink snowbirds is still a breathtaking experience. On one trip, a Black-Rosy Finch had been reported there in February of the same year. When I led my field trip later that winter, Nick suggested to the group keep an

eye open for a Black-Rosy. Minutes after his announcement, sure enough a male Black was feeding on the floor of the porch below the feeders. Amazingly enough, a detailed description submitted to the CBRC ascertained that this was a second bird!

The hawks of Chalfant Valley is the icing on the cake, often near the end of the trip. We have come to check over the alfalfa fields of this area northeast of Bishop. In one ranch along Highway 6, we've had up to two dozen Swainson's Hawks in different ages and color morphs. We've also found radio tagged Swainson's. Pete Bloom's crew of banders have given me the history and travels of some of these tagged birds. Added to this list of raptors are Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk and, becoming less common, Rough-legged Hawk.

As I continue to lead this trip, some years we've seen super cold temperatures, other years the weather has been balmy and we've birded around with t-shirts instead of our many layers of fleece and down. Twice we've had a comet in the night skies. It is my hope that the steep canyons of the eastern Sierra, and the wide open sagebrush habitat of the Greater Sage Grouse, will not be lost to development or overgrazing, so we can continue to experience these "Dancing Chickens" of the great Owens Valley and the scenery of the mighty Sierra Nevada, the patch that I call a little bit of Alaska in California.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Owens Valley Grouse Field Trip on Apr. 12th & Apr. 13th (see page 18).

Errata: Ferruginous Hawk photo on back cover of JAN/FEB Western Tanager is by presenter, Todd Battey, not Mary Freeman

THANK YOU!

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2007/2008

by Barbara Courtois


First, we want to thank all who contributed to the count in any way this year. There were more than 60 who were in the field on December 30. In addition to the people who were actually counting, there were people who helped get permission to various country clubs and other private property and former count compilers who shared their knowledge of areas to be covered. There were a number of people who drove in from great distances to help and one who helped start the project by sending maps of the

old sectors and regrets that she couldn't participate on the count day due to an out of state commute. We are also pleased that members of other chapters helped us. Specific names are not used because the writer knows that someone would be overlooked since all information is not available at this time.

Our goal was to cover all sectors of the count circle, which we did, thanks to ambitious people who, after lunch, covered some target areas that were on our "to do" list. Another goal was to get new people involved in our count. We feel that we were successful in this also. A number of novices called, and were assigned to teams of experienced birders. And, a great "thank you" to all

those experienced birders who got the beginners introduced to a count.

We do not have all the data in as of this writing, but there were over 160 species seen. The exact number of unusual sightings is also not known at this time, but Cackling Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Western Kingbird, Summer Tanager, Nashville Warbler and Common Poorwill are some of the candidates that may be added after the review of the write-ups.

We hope that all who participated had an enjoyable time while involved in "Citizen Science" and will be willing to be as helpful next year as they were this year. 

F I E L D T R I P S

Bird Walks are geared for the beginner / intermediate looking for an introduction or less strenuous excursion.

Field Trips often require more time or effort, and delve more deeply into identification, natural histories and interactions observed in the field. All are welcome on either type of trip. **Reserve** per directions in the gray box posted elsewhere. No pets or small children, please.

INCREASE IN PRICES: L.A. Audubon is increasing prices on longer trips to build up funds including the Schreiber Grant Fund, which is given out to deserving non-professional avian researchers who have limited access to funding. Envelopes for voluntary contributions will be distributed on some other trips.

Saturday, March 8 –

Upper Franklin Canyon Birdwalk.

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

**Sat., and Sun., March 15 and 16 –
Anza Borrego - Birds, Butterflies
and Beyond** Leader: **Fred Heath**

High points over the years: blooming desert evening-primrose and indigo bush, chuckwalla, collared lizard, desert bighorn (annual), Swainson's Hawks, LeConte's Thrasher, Long-eared Owl (hopeful). 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. Meet at 7AM at Yaqui Wells across from Tamarisk Grove

Campground. Limit 20 people. Send SASE with phone number, e-mail and \$30 fee (Schreiber Grant Fund Raiser) to LAAS to learn more details. Pleasant to warm days, cool to cold nights.

**Saturday, March 29 –
Bonelli Regional Park**

Leader **Rod Higbie**

Bonelli Regional Park is a remarkable island of habitat. It has lake, coastal sage, mixed woodland, park and riparian habitats. Birds regularly seen in the past include California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, dancing grebes, and occasionally Golden Eagle. 200 other species throughout the year. From LA, 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 10/57 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 Rt. 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 or reservation.

Saturday, April 5 –

Owens Lake & River Delta

Botanist and birder, **Mike Prather**, will be showing us the recently rewatered lower Owens River, which is another mitigation site for our DWP.

We may be able to see Le Conte's Thrasher in this area. In the river delta, there will be waterfowl, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and possible bitterns, falcons, and nesting harriers in the reeds, and Swainson's Hawks nearby. At the outflow, we should have a multitude of migrating shorebirds. If staying in Lone Pine, Olancha is 22 miles south. If staying in Mojave (Motel 6?), the drive will be more like 90 miles north. Meet at the Ranch House Café in Olancha around 7:30AM if you plan to eat here, and be ready to depart at 8:30AM. It may be hot or cool. Bring sunscreen, a large hat, a full tank of gas, (mud shoes?), lunch, FRS, and a scope if you have one. Reserve by phone with LAAS. Maximum 20. A \$10 (or greater) suggested donation to the Owens Valley Committee Foundation will get you a membership.

**Sat., and Sun., April 12 and 13 –
Owens Valley Grouse Trip**

Mary & Nick Freeman lead.

Sage Grouse on the lek, Sooty Grouse in trees, breathtaking scenery, raptor-rich valleys, early shorebirds heading

F I E L D T R I P S

north. Meet early Saturday and Sunday mornings in Bishop. Limited to 20. To sign up, send \$55 (Schreiber Grant Fund Raiser), phone#, and e-mail in a SASE to LAAS. 260 miles from LA, and 4.5 hours of driving (bring a driving buddy!). Reserve rooms and trip early, for this perennially popular trip. Motel 6, Mountain View Inn, Bishop Elms are some of many hotels in Bishop.

Saturday, April 19 –

First Ever – Owens Lake Big Day.

You are invited to participate in the first comprehensive census of this important and evolving birding area. Birders will spread out over the extensive dike system that covers the entire surface of Owens Lake in order to survey all habitats in a single day. We expect a total of 50,000 to 100,000 birds based on a partial survey last October. **Sunday** is open for exploring the southern Owens Valley or relocating any rarities found on Saturday. After orientation Saturday morning, groups will survey their assigned 'slice of the lake' followed in the afternoon by a tally and a big potluck. *Note: This is NOT the LAAS field trip (see April 5). To sign up for this historic conservation effort at a limited access area, or if you have questions, contact botanist and birder Mike Prather of Eastern Sierra Audubon. at mprather@lonepinetv.com (760)876-5807.*

Saturday, April 26 –

Big Morongo Wildlife Preserve

Leader: **Dexter Kelly.**

Meet at 8:00 AM in the preserve parking lot, or 7:00 AM at Covington Park next door. Breeding desert and oasis birds such as Ash-Throated and Vermilion Flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Scott's and Hooded Orioles, Yellow-breasted Chat and migrating

Empidonax flycatchers. To get there, take the 10 Fwy E about 17 miles past Banning to Hwy 62 N. Pass through the town of Morongo Valley, take a right on East Dr., then a left into the preserve (or straight to Covington Park). Bring lunch, water, sensible clothing and sun block. Desert Hot Springs offers the nearest accommodations, or camp at Joshua Tree NP. No sign up.

Sunday, April 27 –

Point Dume Seabird Watch

with **Kimball Garrett.**

We will be concentrating on how to identify loons, shearwaters, late gulls, and other migrating seabirds in flight and at a distance. Some may be near, and we may start with gulls on the beach by the meeting spot. Take PCH N to Westward Beach Road, turn left, and meet along the right side of the road before the restrooms to carpool. We will carpool up to the pay lot or street parking at the overlook. Spotting scope required. 8:00 AM until about noon.

Wednesday through Tuesday,

April 30-May 6 –

Bird Kern County Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival.

Come visit "America's Birdiest Inland County", including Sequoia National Forest and South Fork Kern River Valley, Globally Important Bird Areas. 242 species during 07 festival! Thirty-five+ birding trips with twenty+ excellent leaders set for 08 including Central Valley/Kern National Wildlife Refuge, Mojave Desert/Butterbrecht Spring, Kern River Valley/Kern River Preserve, and Sierra Nevada/Giant Sequoia National Monument. Go birding during a "Best in West" spring migration. Owling, art/photo contests, butterflies, dinner speakers, exhibitors,

and more. NEW in 2008: Owens Valley birding. Trip size restricted. FREE trip planning services. Area's spring birding featured in ABA's "A Birder's Guide to Southern California" 2007 edition. Contact: Bob Barnes, Field Trips Chair. E: bbarnes@lightspeed.net, P: 760-382-1260.

Saturday, May 3 –

Rancho Sierra Vista.

Biologist, birder and ex-docent **Scott Harris** will be traipsing through the tussocks in search of the elusive Grasshopper Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting as well as other foothill and grassland species. This is one of the few spots in the Southland that reports Grasshopper Sparrow on an annual basis. A visit to the Satwiwa Indian Cultural Center will follow, if it is open. Take the 101 Fwy west past Thousand Oaks just into Ventura County, exit south on Lynn Road for 5.2 miles, turn left on Via Goleta, and proceed to the last parking lot where the group will be meeting. Meet at 8:00 AM, and bird until noon. Moderate hiking in rolling hills. Have sunscreen & water on your person.

Sat, and Sun, May 10 and 11 –

Galileo Hills & Butterbrecht Springs.

Leaders: **Nick & Mary Freeman.**

These are two of the best spring migrant traps in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! **Saturday:** Take Hwy 14 about 4 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops, turn left past the golf course on Randsburg-Mojave Rd., and veer right on 20 Mule Team Rd. Turn left at the Galileo Hills sign before the hill, take your first paved right, your first right again, into the Silver Saddle

F I E L D T R I P S

Country Club, followed by two paved lefts into the lot. Park and meet at 7:00AM by the first pond. **Sunday:** Veer right heading north out of Mojave, take Hwy 14 for about 20 miles over the river bed to Jawbone Canyon Road on the left, and meet right at the turnoff at the ranger station parking lot at 6:30AM. We will carpool to Butterbrecht Springs, and perhaps finish the day at California City. LAAS sign-up mandatory. Fee: \$25. 12 max. Bring lunches, sun block. Reserve rooms (Motel 6 or other) in Mojave.

Saturday, May 17 –

Santa Anita Canyon

Leader: **Mary Freeman.**

Take the 210 Fwy toward Arcadia, and take Santa Anita Avenue N to the parking lot at the very end of the road. Meet at the trailhead at the bottom of the lot. 4 mile RT moderately strenuous walk through oak and chaparral canyons. Good selection of breeding and migrating birds including warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Band-tailed Pigeon, three hummers and Dipper possible. Pack in a lunch and water. Meeting time 7:30AM.

Saturday, June 7 –

Apple Valley Herps.

Leader: **Harvey Fischer.**

We will explore a small portion of open desert and poke around rocky desert outcrops searching for desert reptiles. "Feathered" reptiles will be included. Lunch at Morongo Preserve, followed by more exploration for critters. High clearance vehicles suggested but not mandatory. Meet at the San Bernardino County Museum parking lot at 8:00AM. Take 10 Fwy E past the 215 Fwy, take California Street N, Orange Tree Lane E, and turn into the museum lot on the left (N) side of the street. Come with lunch, plenty

of water, durable shoes, functioning AC, and FRS radio (we have extras).

Fri. through Mon., June 13-16 –

Southern Sierra Extended Weekend

Leader: **Bob Barnes.**

High deserts to High Sierra. The most diverse, species-rich region in the state. Likely: Goshawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Pileated Woodpecker and owls. 150 species likely in 4 days. Participation limited. To reserve, and receive trip information, send SASE with e-mail, phone number and \$15 for each day attended (\$60 for 4 days). Dawn to dusk (and more) birding ideal for enthusiastic beginning to advanced birders. Meet Friday at Union 76 station in Inyokern. Reserve Fri.-Sat.-Sun. night rooms in Kernville area early (listed in flyer). Lots of driving, so bring a friend.

Thursday through Sunday, July 3-6 –

Quaking Aspen Camping Trip for Owls

Leaders: **Mary and Nick Freeman.**

Campground is above Springville, near Ponderosa in the southwest Sierras. A group campsite will be reserved. Owling by night, bird walks by day! We may also look at some butterflies! Hopeful birds: Flammulated, Northern Saw-whet, Spotted owls and others; Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Hammond's Flycatcher and more. Some meals will be potluck, others provided or eat out. Tentatively meet Thursday 3:00PM at Quaking Aspen Campground (look for poster). More details in flyer. Send SASE, phone, e-mail and \$70 to reserve. 10 sign-ups max., no children or pets, please.

Before setting out on any field trip, please call (323) 874-1318 (Events & Announcements, #4). Special instructions or possible cancellations that may have occurred, by the Thursday before the trip, will be announced at this number.

RESERVATION & FEE EVENTS Policy and Procedure

(For Limited Participation
Field Trips & Pelagic Trips)

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) (c) email address (if used). 4) Separate check (no cash please) to LAAS for exact amount for each trip. 5) Self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) for confirmation and associated trip information.

Our Mailing Address:

Los Angeles Audubon - 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 Pelagic trips. Our office staff is also available Monday through Thursday 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.

B I R D W A L K S

Bird walks are geared for the beginner / intermediate looking for an introduction or less strenuous excursion.

Franklin Canyon/

Sooky Goldman Center

Leader: Irwin Woldman

Sunday, March 9 –

Time: 8:30

Join Irwin as he escorts us around this local bird haven, with Wood Ducks, and resident chaparral species expected. Franklin Canyon is located between Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills. Meet in the parking lot of the Sooky Goldberg Nature Center at 8:30 A.M and bird for a few hours. From the 101 Fwy, take Coldwater Cyn. Ave. S into the hills. Immediately after Mulholland Dr. merges from the W with Coldwater Cyn. Ave. make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Cyn. Dr. and continue west to the Sooky Goldberg Nature Center. From Sunset go N on Coldwater Canyon; turn left on Mulholland Dr. Remain on Mulholland. Immediately after passing Coldwater Canyon Dr. as it heads down into the valley, look on the left side for Franklin Canyon Dr. Turn left down Franklin Canyon Dr and park in the first parking lot on the left.

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area Bird Walk

Saturday, March 15 – Ann and Eric Brooks

Saturday April 19–TBA

Saturday May 17–Eleanor Osgood

Third Saturday (Sept. through Jun.)

Time: 8:00 a.m.

This trip covers landscaped parkland and natural coastal scrub habitats, and is paced for beginning birders and members of the Baldwin Hills community. The park entrance is off of La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the

entrance kiosk (\$4 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. Meet at 8:00 AM.

Debs Park Audubon Center

Leader: Jenny Jones

Saturday, March 1 –

Saturday, April 5 –

Saturday, May 3 –

First Saturday (September -July)

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Join Jenny for a leisurely morning walk through the diverse natural areas that surround the Audubon Center at Debs Park. A wide variety of birds of riparian, walnut woodland, and chaparral habitats can be found, including raptors. Meet at 9:00. The Center is located on Griffin Avenue on the west side of the park. From the south, take the Pasadena Fwy north to the Avenue 43 exit. Bear right on Ave. 43 up the hill to Griffin Ave. Turn left on Griffin Ave., and go about a quarter mile to the Center's driveway, which goes steeply uphill on the right. From the north, exit the Pasadena Freeway southbound at Avenue 52. Turn left on Ave. 52, and follow it across the freeway to where it becomes Griffin Ave. The driveway is a quarter mile on the left.

Contact Info: Jenny: (323)633-1920, redshoulderedhawk@earthlink.net

Topanga State Park Bird Walk

Leaders: Ken Wheeland & Chris Tosdevin

First Sunday of every month

Sunday, March 2 –

Sunday, April 5 –

Sunday, May 3 –

Time: 8:00 A.M.

Ken & Chris 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 S2.

Contacts: Ken: (310)455-1401,

ksafarri@aol.com;

Chris: (310) 455-1270

Ballona Wetlands Birdwalk

Leader: Bob Shanman

Sunday, March 16 –

Sunday, April 20 –

Sunday, May 18 –

Third Sundays (Aug – May)

Time: 8:00 a.m.

leads this trip to our nearest wetland and adjacent rocky jetty. Migrating shorebirds and terns should be coming through. 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.

Contacts: Bob: (310)326-2473,

wildbirdbob@cs.com

Whittier Narrows Bird Walk

Leader: park ranger Ray Jillson

Saturday, March 22 –

Saturday, April 26 –

Saturday, May 24 –

Fourth Saturday every month.

Time: 8:15 a.m.

View colorful resident and wintering birds, possibly 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. Meet at 8:15 AM.

Contacts: Ray:, odri@juno.com

2008 PELAGIC SCHEDULE



Saturday, May 3

A deep water trip toward the San Juan Seamount.

This trip departs from the **Santa Barbara Harbor** on the fast catamaran Condor Express at 7:00 a.m., and will return approximately by 8:00 p.m. We will cruise along the deep water shelf by the San Juan Seamount. Birds previously seen: Laysan and Black-footed albatross; Northern Fulmar; Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters; Parasitic, Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers; Ashy, Leach's and Fork-tailed storm-petrels; Pigeon Guillemot; Xantus Murrelet; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets; Tufted Puffin. Rare possibilities are **Murphy's Petrel** and **Red-billed Tropicbird**. **Leaders: Todd McGrath, Jon Feenstra, Kimball Garrett, Dave Compton and David Pereksta. \$198.** There is a complete galley that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Save \$5.00 with an early sign-up 60 days prior to the trip departure.

NOTE: Destinations may be changed to maximize bird sightings, or minimize rough seas.

With increased fuel costs there can be a \$5 to \$10 energy surcharge per person.

Saturday, June 7

Land on Santa Cruz Island for the Island Scrub Jay, and then out to sea.

This 8 hour trip departs from the Island Packer dock in the **Oxnard Harbor** at 8:00 a.m. on the m/v Vanguard. We will land at Prisoner's Cove where the endemic Island Scrub-Jay is easily seen. Then we will cruise 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; Xantus Murrelet. Rarities seen: Flesh-footed Shearwater and American Oystercatcher. A **Tufted Puffin** seen in 2002.

Leaders: Todd McGrath, Jon Feenstra and David Pereksta \$95. A box lunch and breakfast can be ordered from the adjoining dock-side deli. Galley onboard.

Look for more exciting new trips to be added to this Schedule!

Saturday, September 6

A deep water trip to Cherry, Tanner and Cortez Banks.

This trip departs from the **Santa Barbara Harbor** at 7:00 a.m. on the fast catamaran Condor Express and returns approximately at 8:00 p.m. We are far offshore in 3 counties Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles. Birds expected: Northern Fulmar; One **Cook's Petrel** was seen in 2005; Ashy and Leach's storm-petrels; South Polar Skua; Parasitic, Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers; Sabine's Gull; Arctic Tern. **Red-billed Tropicbirds** are usually seen on this trip. Rarities seen: Black-footed Albatross; Buller's Shearwater; Least Storm-Petrel and Craveri's Murrelet. Blue, Fin and Minke whales as well as several species of dolphins can be seen.

Leaders: Todd McGrath, Jon Feenstra, Dave Compton, and David Pereksta

\$198. The trip will be cancelled if there is insufficient response 35 days prior to departure. There is a complete galley that serves breakfast lunch and dinner.

INTERNATIONAL BIRDING TOURS

MOROCCO: FROM THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS TO THE SAHARA

April 19 - May 5, 2008

Post-Extension Tangier to Fes — May 5-10, 2008

The thought of Morocco brings visions of casbahs, deserts, minarets, camels, and Arabian nights. These sights, coupled with shopping excursions in Marrakech and Fes, will frame your experience, but the primary purpose of this trip is Morocco's birds. With its coasts, islands, wadis, plains, forests, mountains and deserts, Morocco is a birding wonderland—quite distinct from European habitats to the north.

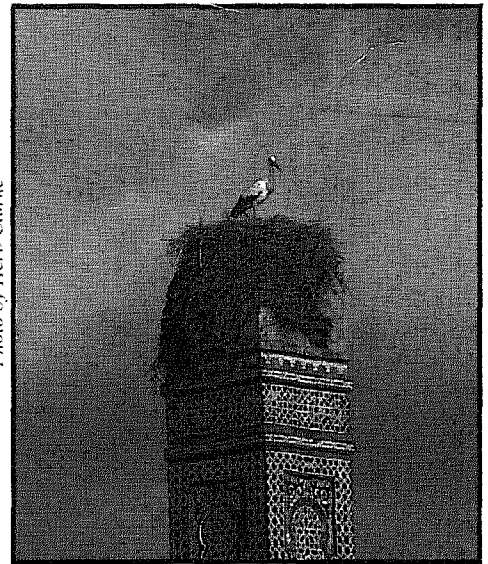
From the moment you arrive in Casablanca, you'll be on your way to look for the over 460 bird species that have been recorded in this country. We will visit numerous habitats to search for species such as Crested Lark, Fan-tailed and Sardinian Warblers, and migrants such as Olivaceous Warbler, Barbary Partridge, the rare Bald Ibis and the difficult-to-find Double-spurred Francolin, to name only a few. From a birder's point of view, we will be in

Morocco at probably the most interesting time of year. After the winter and early spring rains, hundreds of dayas (temporary ponds) form, and an abundance of flowers and lush green forests resound with birdsong. Beyond birds many natural wonders will be encountered: minerals from the Middle and High Atlas Mountains, fossils, orchids, mammals, herps and insects. Accommodations are outstanding, and the cuisine excellent. We will be accompanied by expert birding guides. **Space is limited.**

For information and itinerary, contact:

Olga Clarke
Los Angeles Audubon - Travel Director
2027 El Arbolita Dr.
Glendale, CA 91208-1805

Ph/Fax: 818-249-9511
e-mail: oclarketravel@earthlink.net



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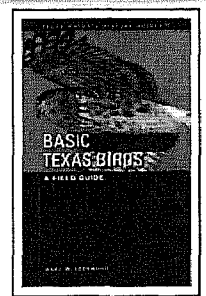
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for complete descriptions, or call 888.522.7428

PROGRAMS & EVENING MEETINGS

Meet at 7:30 at the Community Center in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd (at Martel between La Brea & Fairfax)

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

INLAND ISLANDS OF WOODPECKERS, with Steve Shunk

From the western Transverse Ranges north of Santa Barbara to the Laguna Mountains west of Anza Borrego, nine species of woodpeckers hold year-round territories in largely complimentary habitats. Winter brings an influx of flickers and sapsuckers to the region, when some of the resident species wander a bit. Some of Southern California's local woodpecker populations have developed uniquely specialized lifestyles suited to their preferred islands of habitat, and at least one endemic subspecies inhabits the region's pine forests.

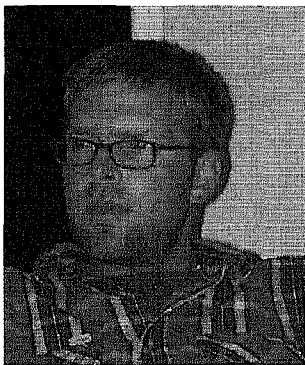
Join Oregon naturalist and woodpecker specialist Steve Shunk as he interprets the lives and times of our local woodpeckers. For the last 10 years, Steve has studied woodpeckers on the east slope of Oregon's Cascade Mountains, and he is nearing completion of the Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America. Steve will discuss natural history, adaptation, and hybridization among our resident and migratory woodpecker species, as well as potential identification challenges.



*White-headed Woodpecker,
photo by Steve Shunk*

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

eBird--WHERE BIRDING MEETS SCIENCE, with Brian Sullivan



Brian Sullivan

Find out how you can become part of the big picture! Brian Sullivan, eBird Project Leader, from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will demonstrate how eBird has revolutionized the way that birders report and access information about birds. The website www.eBird.org is amassing one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence. In 2007, participants reported more than 8 million bird observations across North America! In this talk you'll learn about the concept of eBird, how it works and how you can contribute your observations to help conserve birds and biodiversity.

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

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