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Founded 1904

Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 57 - No. 2

*To bring the excitement of birds to our community through birding,
education and the conservation of bird habitats.*

March - April 2009

March Program

What Gull Is That?

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Larry Allen

Of course you know the names of the gulls you look—at least the English names as found in your field guides. But the scientific names have been changed recently, and the sequence in which the birds are listed (a reflection of the chronological order in which each species is thought to have appeared) has been altered as well. Larry will use the scientific results supporting these changes as a stepping stone to explore the variation among some of our local gulls, and will provide some identification hints as well.

Larry Allen is Project Coordinator for, and co-author of, the forthcoming Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas, has conducted gull identification workshops for local Audubon Chapters and the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, and has had a longtime fascination with gulls. Larry will lead a gull-watching field trip on March 21.

April Program

The Top of Down Under

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Denise Goodfellow

Denise, former classical music teacher and buffalo shooter, gained a position of trust in the indigenous Kunwinjku (Freshwater People) of the Darwin area of Australia after her arrival in 1975. In 1983 Denise began working as a specialist birdwatching guide, mainly with Americans. She was also a biological consultant and surveyed birds, and other fauna and flora, across the Top End. In 2000 Denise's adopted Kunwinjku sisters asked her to help them start tourism in their country, and the Baby Dreaming tourism project was born.

Denise is now doing a PhD on American birdwatchers. She has fought for habitat conservation and for including the indigenous peoples' relationship with nature in school curriculums. She is the author of several books, including some used as university textbooks. Come listen to her numerous and wide-ranging tales.

May Program

Cape May

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Jon Feenstra et al

In September of 2008, Jon Feenstra led a group of PAS Board members on a birding field trip to Cape May, New Jersey. Cape May is a world-renowned hotspot for observing bird migration. Every fall millions of waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, and passerines funnel through the peninsula. Waves of migrants are pushed by passing autumn weather systems and settle to rest on the Point before long flights over the ocean. Their staging and passage coincidentally supplies an excellent opportunity for the birder. Jon and company will present a report of the trip with natural history, bird pictures, stories, and other interesting and amusing highlights.

**General Meetings Held At
Eaton Canyon Nature Center
1750 N Altadena Drive
Pasadena CA
Social 7:00, Program 7:30**

President's Perch

Way Out of Town

Lois and I just returned from a 17-day birding trip to India—it was awesome! In addition to a visit to the beautiful Taj Mahal and three encounters with tigers (we were on elephants), we saw almost 300 species of birds, of which 200 were “life” birds, including the elusive Black Bittern, the majestic Sarus Crane and the beautiful Greater Flameback Woodpecker. We found the people of India very friendly but the traffic was unbelievable. It was a

mix of people, cars, trucks, cows, bikes, scooters (and our small bus), all trying to occupy the same piece of road. Somehow, with much horn-honking, we were able to keep moving to our destination—slowly. I really enjoyed the trip except for the food (too much curry and hot spices on the veggies, and meat was seldom offered) but we survived. I recommend India.

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Conservation

2008 Christmas Bird Count

Forty-two birders participated in the 2008 Pasadena Christmas Bird Count, the annual census of early winter birdlife in the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding areas. With only a couple of exceptions we were able to cover all regular count areas. The weather also cooperated, being pleasantly cool with no rain. The last time we had significant precipitation on the count was in 2003. With heavy rain in the afternoon the total number of birds counted dropped forty percent below average.

While a high species count isn't the primary goal of the CBC, it's usually the first figure we look at. This year we managed to reach a very respectable 160—the third highest total ever. This indicates effective coverage of the count circle and a good ability to find the birds that are present. The most important data are the actual numbers of each species. Using this information we can track population trends and gather valuable information about local bird life over a significant span of time.

Variations in the count, in combination with a variety of vagrants, make each year interesting and different. The 2008 count was no exception, with some interesting low counts, a handful of good rarities and just a few misses of expected birds. Irruptive and invasive species were largely absent this year.

The count data sometimes illustrates the downside of conducting the census on a single calendar day; it's easy to miss a few relatively common birds or get unusual numbers depending upon the coincidence of bird and observer movements. Even taking this into account, over the years we generate a pretty accurate picture of

birdlife within the circle.

This year many waterfowl were present in unusually low numbers, though this was not necessarily the case elsewhere in the county. As an example we had only one **Northern Pintail** and three **Cinnamon Teal** for the entire count, but the lower LA River simultaneously hosted good numbers of both these species.

On the other hand, thirty-five **Canvasbacks** was a very good count and the most recorded on the Pasadena CBC since 1985. An ongoing turnover of birds in combination with the quality and quantity of available habitat accounts for some of the variation in numbers from year to year.

Other notable waterfowl this year included a long present **Ross's Goose** at Legg Lake, a **Cackling Goose** at the Arboretum and a **Common Goldeneye** at Lincoln Park.

Three **Northern Harriers** were the most found since 2000, but **White-tailed Kites** were missed for the fourth time in the last five years. Three **Merlin** was average and a single **Peregrine Falcon**, now regular on the count, was also tallied. (Between 1977 and 1997, there were only three records of Peregrines on the count, while in the last ten counts sixteen have been recorded.)

Shorebirds were generally in expected numbers and variety, but one highlight was twenty-nine **Wilson's Snipe** along the San Gabriel River, the most by far since 1998.

Gulls are becoming a bigger story each year on the Pasadena count. **Western Gulls** have been increasing dramatically inland since the start of this decade and 675 of them this year more than doubled any previous count. **Glaucous-winged Gulls** also increased, with seventy-nine recorded. The previous high count? A mere twelve in 2004.

We also had two **Thayer's Gulls** and

eighteen **Herring Gulls**. Most of these gulls were recorded along the San Gabriel River near the Valley crossing... a definite gull hotspot and one well worth checking throughout the winter months as long as water is present.

Eurasian Collared-Doves are also spreading through the county. With the first count records being single birds counted in 2006 and 2007, we had five this year. I suspect that next year their numbers will really take off... no pun intended.

Counts of **Red-crowned Parrots**, **Mitred Parakeets** and **Yellow-chevroned Parakeets** were also higher than normal. Two of the now rare **Yellow-headed Parrots** were also recorded. This species was once much more common in the San Gabriel Valley, but has declined markedly since the 1970s.

A **Spotted Owl** was found in the early morning hours on count day in Big Santa Anita Canyon for only the second count record in the last three decades. The other was found in 2007 during count week.

Allen's Hummingbird wasn't recorded on the count until the late 1980's, but over a hundred are now regularly recorded on the CBC. These counts are indicative of a major range expansion of this bird on LA County's coastal plain. The highest concentrations are at the Arboretum and Huntington Gardens, but they can readily be found in suburban areas and parks throughout the coastal slope.

Woodpeckers included a **Hairy Woodpecker** and **White-headed Woodpecker** at Mt. Wilson; both are species that can be hard to find elsewhere. A single **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found along with two of the more expected **Red-breasted Sapsuckers**.

(continued on page 4)

Victory at Annandale Canyon

On February 9, the Pasadena City Council voted to purchase 20.6 acres of open space in Annandale Canyon. This project has been almost ten years in the making, and demonstrates amazing cooperation between City staff, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the neighborhood association, the neighbors who voted to tax themselves a Benefit Assessment District, and the developer, John Head. This land will be developed with trails, and will be open to the public for birding, hiking and enjoying.

Laura Garrett

Open Space Update

The Open Space and Conservation Advisory Committee for the City of Pasadena needs your input. The Committee will be sponsoring a follow-up workshop to its February 28th Open Space and Conservation Fair on Saturday, May 2. You are all invited to attend a workshop and share your ideas about open space and conservation in the City of Pasadena.

You do not need to be a Pasadena resident to participate; all are welcome. Time and location are TBA.

The Open Space and Conservation Advisory Committee

meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 in the basement of City Hall. All are welcome. For more information, please contact Laura Garrett at purplecow@jps.net or (626) 564-1890.

In the Next Issue

Pasadena Audubon Society issues grants to worthy individuals and organizations. In the May issue we'll talk about how the Board evaluates grant applications and decides who will get our money. The Board invites your comments about our grant policy.

Trip Reports

Bolsa Chica

We had a very fun and birdy trip at Bolsa Chica on January 17. This location not only hosts a great variety and large numbers of water birds (we found 70 species Saturday), but also allows extremely close looks at many of the birds. Right from the start, Brown Pelicans dove for fish a few meters from the boardwalk, and Ruddy Ducks, Bufflehead, and Horned Grebes swam and dove almost underneath us. For those of us used to looking at Ruddy Ducks magnified through 8 power binoculars or 30 power scopes, it was fascinating to see how small they really are when up close.

Bolsa Chica can sometimes host rarities, and Saturday was no exception. If a single Reddish Egret isn't enough for you, on this trip we had two! At one point both of them jumped and danced together in front of us, stepping over Red-breasted Mergansers, and watched by a Great Blue Heron and Great and Snowy Egrets. An American Bittern also made an appearance, and was first seen stretched out, bill pointing at the sky, in the pickleweed. It then crouched back down, walked around the outside of the pickleweed clump and disappeared inside.

Besides the Surf Scoters that are often found at Bolsa Chica, there was also a White-winged Scoter that spent most of its time either underwater or in a crowd of Ruddy Ducks. But often patience pays off in birding: eventually it flapped its wings, showing the bright white secondaries. And of course there were shorebirds: Two Red Knots mingled with Dowitchers and Dunlin, and both Least and Western Sandpipers foraged just below the path, allowing

close comparison. Long-billed Curlew and Marbled Godwits also came very close to the path, and Snowy, Black-bellied, and Semipalmated Plovers picked in the mud.

There was no shortage of action as well: Besides the antics of the Reddish Egrets, we also watched a Peregrine



Photo by Mark Scheel

Falcon repeatedly dive at ducks, gulls, American Avocets, and even a Northern Harrier (which looked like it was flopping around in slow motion compared to the Peregrine).

And for those who like a challenge, we picked out a few Greater Scaup from the many Lesser Scaup present, and we found 5.5 species of Gulls (the 0.5 is for Western x Glaucous-winged hybrids) of various ages.

The best non-countable bird we had was a male Zebra Finch, presumably an escapee, that tried briefly to land on our scopes, sat on the ground for some time allowing approach within three feet, and finally flew off over the estuary.

Bolsa Chica is one of my favorite places to bird, and last Saturday's trip is a prime example of why.

Mark Scheel

Santa Fe Dam

Eight of us turned out on January 24 to brave the morning drizzle for the trip to Santa Fe Dam. The main objective for much of the morning seemed to be keeping our binocular lenses dry, but we managed find a nice mix of birds in the process.

Geese were well represented, with Canada, "Aleutian" Cackling, Greater White-fronted, Snow and Ross's all offering a good chance for study and comparison among the motley crew of domestic waterfowl. There were also a handful of Common Mergansers and several Canvasback mixed in with the usual assortment of ducks, herons and egrets. A single Glaucous-winged Winged Gull, a species that is staging a remarkable inland invasion this winter, was also seen.

In the open areas west of the lake, a pair of White-tailed Kites gave us good

scope views. Other raptors included Cooper's, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, Osprey, American Kestrel and a probable Peregrine Falcon off in the distance. Sparrows included White-crowned, Lincoln's, Song, Lark, Savannah, Chipping and of course a few Dark-eyed "Oregon" Juncos. Other birds included Cassin's Kingbirds (which seemed to be everywhere) and two Tree Swallows over the lake.

In spite of the persistent misty rain, it was a pleasant morning that showcased the variety of birds to be found in the Santa Fe Dam basin. The variety of habitats here is the key to the diversity of birdlife. While summer is to be avoided, anytime from September through May can be productive. Also, since the distances are often substantial, a spotting scope is very helpful for raptors, waterfowl and sparrows.

Jon Fisher

Salton Sea

Rain was predicted for February 7th. Usually we don't believe the forecasters, but this time they were right. We woke up on Saturday morning to rain. That meant mud, sticky, slippery mud. It also meant that we may not be able to get to some locations and certain target birds may be hard to find.

We made our first stop in the rain looking for the Bendire's Thrasher that had been reported in Calipatria, no luck. At the Wister unit we had a Vermilion Flycatcher and Phainopepla along with other expected birds. From there we made a try for pipits and longspurs, but as we drove on the muddy roads, we started to slip and slide and worried about being stuck in the mud. So we headed over to the SBSNWRHQ for grebes, gulls, geese and terns. We didn't find the Cave Swallow, but had a great time walking out to Rock Hill (the rain had stopped by now). We took a chance and drove the sea wall at Lindsay and then over to Unit #1, where we had many more geese, Sandhill Cranes, a White-tailed Kite, and a couple of Tundra Swans.

The next morning we began with a trip to Fig Lagoon and picked up a lot of American White Pelicans, a Ferruginous Hawk and a Peregrine Falcon. From there we covered some back roads and found Mountain Bluebirds. At Cattle Call

(continued on page 4)

Salton Sea *(continued)*

Park we had some Inca and Common Ground Doves, a Cactus Wren and a Great-Horned Owl (thanks Rob). After lunch we made one more stop at the sea and picked up some Stilt Sandpipers, Brown Pelicans and Long-billed Dowitchers.

All in all we had 116 birds for the trip. Not bad for a rainy weekend. And we all got a good start on our 2009 year lists!

Ron Cyger



In the Next Issue

The Fulmers underwent a Passage to India with jet lag as the only aftereffect. See Will Fulmer's photo of an Indian Gray Hornbill, at left.

Also, reports from the Great Backyard Bird Count. (Our Birdathon will happen too late in April to make it into the May issue.)

Christmas Count *(continued)*

Two **Gray Flycatchers** were recorded, one at Lacy Park in San Marino and the other at Hahamongna Watershed Park. Quite rare in winter was a "**Western**" **Flycatcher**—the first since 2004—at the Huntington Gardens. Presumably the birds that occur in winter here are Pacific-slope Flycatchers, but non-vocalizing birds are not separable from the nearly identical Cordilleran Flycatcher which may also occur as a vagrant.

In addition to five of the resident and expected **Hutton's Vireos**, other vireos included a single **Plumbeous Vireo** and two **Cassin's Vireos**.

Any swallow is rare on the count, though a few are inevitably recorded each year. This year the mix was six **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** and five **Violet-green Swallows**, all at Whittier Narrows.

Ninety-eight **Red-whiskered Bulbuls** was a good number between the Huntington and Arboretum. Once thought to be a potential agricultural pest, this introduced songbird has withstood past attempts at eradication and continues to thrive at these two locations. Elsewhere in the San Gabriel Valley wanderers have recently been expanding the species' range.

Of particular interest was a **California Gnatcatcher**—rare and very local in and around the San Gabriel Valley—observed in the Montebello Hills. A small population persists here, with two birds recorded at this location on the 2004 count.

A **Townsend's Solitaire** at Mt. Wilson gave the count its second in two years. Prior sightings included 1999 and 1988.

A few **Phainopepla** winter in the area, but this year's total of ten was a good number and the most since 2001.

Warblers were another group that got a lot of attention this year. The most noteworthy was a count first **Pine Warbler** near Legg Lake that had

been present for a few weeks prior to the count. Another good bird was a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** found along San Jose Creek producing the third count record. There were several record high counts for warblers; these included **Yellow Warbler** (eleven), **Townsend's Warbler** (forty-three) and **Wilson's Warbler** (eight).

Two **Western Tanagers**—one at the Huntington Gardens and the other at Occidental Collegewas less than usual, though this species has been declining on the count over the last two decades.

In addition to all the expected sparrows there were two **Vesper Sparrows** at Santa Fe Dam. This marks the third year in a row that this rather rare winter visitor has been recorded.

With the advantage of photos to review, a female grosbeak at the Arboretum was eventually identified as a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**. Any grosbeak in winter is quite rare and this nice find was the first Rose-breasted on the count since 1982.

Twenty **Tricolored Blackbirds** were counted at their long time reliable location at Legg Lake. This is the only count circle location I'm aware of where they can regularly be found.

Along with about average numbers of Purple Finches, a mere two Pine Siskins was the total for the entire count and a single **Cassin's Finch** was just inside the count circle at Mt Wilson—the first since 1992.

Rounding out the count were a couple of exotics; eleven **Red Bishops** were the first since 2002 and a single **Nutmeg Mannikin** was below the recent average number.

Despite changes in both habitat and birdlife, some things have remained remarkably unchanged. Most raptors, waterfowl, herons and egrets have actually been surprisingly consistent over the past few decades. The same holds true for such migrants as Cedar Waxwings and White-crowned and Chipping Sparrows. Warblers both

rare and regular have been on the increase, and that may largely be due to birders getting better at finding them, though an increase in exotic and non-native plantings may also be a factor.

Even though our count circle is landlocked, mild winters and varied habitats have made the Pasadena CBC a productive one. As it has been for many years, we're fortunate to have groups of dedicated participants who cover the same areas from year to year.

A perennial favorite statistic of mine is how many species were represented by just one individual. This year that number was twenty-two. How easily could many of those single birds been missed, and how many other single birds did we just miss seeing?

And what expected birds did we miss entirely? Aside from the aforementioned White-tailed Kite, birds that we at least had a good chance of getting but didn't included White Pelican, Spotted Dove, Costa's Hummingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Cactus Wren and the "Slate-colored" race of Dark-eyed Junco. Not much really, especially given how difficult it's becoming to find both shrikes and Spotted Doves in the San Gabriel Valley.

One other interesting statistic is the total number of birds found. While this normally fluctuates, the last five years have all generated numbers between 23,043 and 25,042; a range of just 2,000 and less than a ten percent variance.

Organizing and compiling the count over the last two decades has been a very informative and enjoyable experience. I'd once again like to give a sincere thank you to all the birders who make the count possible each year, and to those who helped with the traditional count night dinner. The Pasadena CBC has been running for over sixty years and that can't happen without a lot of dedicated volunteers.

Jon Fisher

Field Trips

Fish Canyon Private Access Sunday, April 5, 2009

8:00 am - noon

Fish Canyon is a lovely little canyon near Duarte with a permanent stream and a tall cul-de-sac waterfall. Although it's very close to civilization, it's seldom visited because a quarry completely blocks access to the canyon mouth. Hikers must take a long and steep detour over a thousand-foot ridge to drop into the canyon bottom upstream of the quarry. However, the quarry owner, Vulcan Materials, occasionally escorts private guests across its property, making trail access simple and easy.

PAS has made special arrangements for a visit. Our vehicles will be convoyed across the quarry to the trailhead on the far side. Be punctual and be prepared to carpool for the brief drive across the quarry. We'll see winter migrants and permanent residents in a pristine setting without the dogs, bicycles, and noisy folks usually experienced in our suburban canyons. Contact Mark Hunter (see page 10) to make a reservation.

Gull Chase

Saturday, March 21, 2009

8:00 am - noon

This field trip complements the gull ID information that Larry Allen will present at the March general meeting. Meet at the San Juan Creek mouth at Doheny State Beach. From the San Gabriel Valley, take any route to the I-5 Freeway, and continue south to the Pacific Coast Highway exit in Dana Point. Proceed west on PCH, turn left on Dana Point Harbor Dr, and left at the first signal into the state beach. Park in the lot on the right just before the bridge over San Juan Creek.

Larry Allen

Big Morongo Reserve

Saturday, May 9, 2009

8:00 am - 1:00 pm

This desert oasis and migrant trap offers great birding in the spring. Warblers, flycatchers, hummingbirds and orioles are among the birds expected. At least one pair of Vermilion Flycatchers has been seen every April in memory. Join us as we walk the trails in Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and into adjoining Covington Park, where you will enjoy one of the finest birding locations in the world, with over 250 species of birds making stops at the Preserve annually. Directions: Allow 2 hours drive from Pasadena. Take Interstate 10 east to Route 62, which is past the Palm Springs turnoff. Go north to the tiny town of Morongo Valley and turn right on East Drive to the Big Morongo Preserve at 11055 East Drive. Meet at the Information Kiosk at the south end of the parking lot. Bring lunch and drinks. Rain in Pasadena cancels.

Kathi Ellsworth

Piute Ponds

Saturday, April 11, 2009

7:00 am - 2:00 pm

Few locations in L.A. County can offer the species count, or sheer number of birds, found at Piute Ponds and nearby sites. This slightly surreal marsh in the middle of the Mojave Desert attracts thousands of migrating ducks and shorebirds, and many desert species (possibly Le Conte's Thrasher) live next door. It is located on Edwards Air Force Base and access is strictly controlled - early reservations are mandatory and trip size is limited to 12 participants. Contact the trip leader for reservations. Other sites to be visited include a private ranch, Apollo Park, and the inimitable Lancaster Sewage Ponds. Possibly Rosamond Lake. Meet at the park-and-ride lot in Palmdale, off Avenue S at Route 14, to carpool for the trip.

Mike San Miguel

Owens Lake

Saturday, May 2, 2009

7:30 am - 2:00 pm

This is a repeat of the successful field trip on 4/26/2008 where we observed over 10,000 shorebirds of 18 different species. While May 2 is slightly past peak of migration we can expect to see big number of shorebirds, gulls and waterfowl. Thanks to the efforts of the Los Angeles DWP, the Owens Valley Committee, and other environmental organizations, we will observe the continued recovery of this amazing wildlife resource after nearly a century of being a dried up dust bowl. Time permitting, we will also visit the Cartago salt works, Dirty Sock springs and other locations around the lake.

Meet at the Ranch House Café parking lot in Olancho. Driving time from Pasadena is about 3.5 hours. There are good hotels and restaurants, including a Best Western, in Lone Pine. Information on the history and some of the biology of the region is at:

WWW.OVCWEB.ORG/OWENSVALLEY/OWENSVALLEY.HTML. A checklist of the birds is also available at this web site.

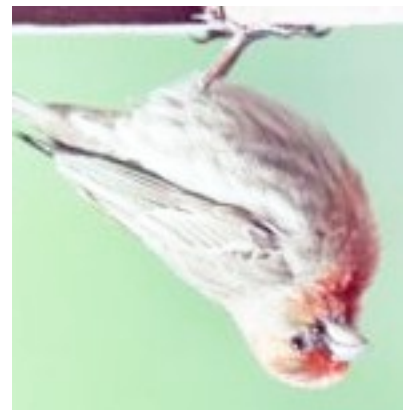
Spotting scopes recommended. Trip is limited to 12 persons. Reservations required; contact the trip leader.

Mike San Miguel

Find the House Finch and Win!

Somewhere in this issue of *The Wrentit*, we have hidden an image of a House Finch. Can you find it? If you can, tell us where it is and win a valuable prize!

Winners will be announced April 1st.



More Field Trips on Page 8

Calendar

Submit material for the next Wrentit by April 1st

Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Leader*
March 2009					
1	Sun	7:30am	Field Trip	Western Antelope Valley	Jon Feenstra
4	Wed	7:30pm	Board Meeting	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Will Fulmer
7	Sat	8:00am	Field Trip	Hahamongna Watershed Park	Ron Cyger
15	Sun	8:00am	Field Trip	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
17	Tue	9:00am	Magpie Study Group	Santa Fe Dam	Madeline West & Sid Heyman
18	Wed	7:00pm	General Meeting	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Program: Gulls
21	Sat	8:00am	Field Trip	Gull Chase	Larry Allen
22	Sun	8:00am	Field Trip (PAS members only)	Huntington Library Gardens	Elaine MacPherson
28	Sat	6:00pm	Field Trip	San Gabriels Owling	Lance Benner
April 2009					
4	Sat	8:00am	Field Trip	Hahamongna Watershed Park	Ron Cyger
5	Sun	8:00am	Field Trip	Fish Canyon, Duarte	Mark Hunter
11	Sat	7:00am	Field Trip	Piute Ponds	Mike San Miguel
15	Wed	7:00pm	General Meeting	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Program: Top of Down Under
19	Sun	8:00am	Field Trip	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
21	Tue	9:00am	Magpie Study Group	Rancho Santa Ana	Madeline West & Sid Heyman
24-26	Fr-Su	All Day	Birdathon!	America's Birdiest County!	
26	Sun	8:00am	Field Trip (PAS members only)	Huntington Library Gardens	Elaine MacPherson
May 2009					
2	Sat	7:30am	Field Trip	Owens Lake	Mike San Miguel
2	Sat	8:00am	Field Trip	Hahamongna Watershed Park	Ron Cyger
6	Wed	7:30pm	Board Meeting	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Will Fulmer
9	Sat	8:00am	Field Trip	Big Morongo Canyon	Kathi Ellsworth
17	Sun	8:00am	Field Trip	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
19	Tue	9:00am	Magpie Study Group	Lower Arroyo	Madeline West & Sid Heyman
20	Wed	7:00pm	General Meeting	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Program: Cape May
24	Sun	8:00am	Field Trip (PAS members only)	Huntington Library Gardens	Elaine MacPherson

*Trip Leader Information

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Lance Benner	(626) 791-1187	LBENNER@CHARTER.NET
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Kathi Ellsworth	(626) 564-0652	PANDIONSKY@YAHOO.COM
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Book Review

Birds in Flight: The Art and Science of How Birds Fly

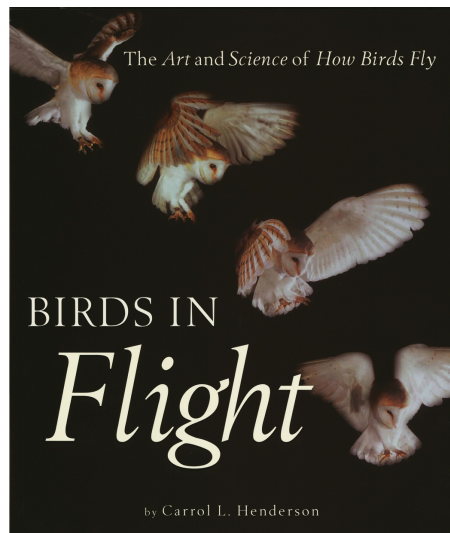
**Carrol L. Henderson, Voyager
Press 2008, \$25.00, 160 pages.**

*"I've wandered the world in search of life;
bird by bird I've come to know the earth..."*
Pablo Neruda, Art of Birds

In this lavishly illustrated volume, wildlife biologist and extraordinary photographer Carrol L. Henderson takes the reader on a journey that is filled with both the poetry of movement and the practical principles of aerodynamics.

As the author notes, one need not be a prize-winning poet to appreciate the beauty of birds in flight. Henderson has provided a selection of approximately 150 photographs that alone would be worthy of any coffee table tome. The book is divided into three parts with the introductory section dedicated to the artist aspects of flight.

While giving the reader ample



opportunity to appreciate the esthetic aspects of birds, in Parts II and III Henderson explains and illustrates the scientific principles of flight and basic laws of aerodynamics. It is in these sections that Henderson's knowledge and abilities as a naturalist shine.

Part II focuses on aerodynamics and the author manages to make the principles of physics accessible enough to allow the careful reader to amaze her colleagues with a new-found

understanding of Bernoulli's Principle, aspect ratio, and wing loading, not to mention thrust, drag and wingtip vortex! My favorite segment of Part II includes a detailed discussion of the types of feathers, wing shapes and tails and how they function in the complicated task of flight. Do you know that slotted wingtips, so conspicuous on hawks and vultures, also commonly occur on some migratory songbirds? More to the point, do you know why? Until reading that this characteristic helps reduce turbulence at the wingtip and make flight more energy-efficient, I didn't.

Part III completes the discussion of flight with a discussion of take-offs and landings and a very interesting explanation of the difference between soaring and gliding. After reading the author's segment on the principles of dynamic soaring you will come to understand how the wandering albatross is able to wander! This lovely book is a fine addition to any birder's library and is an accessible resource for anyone interested in the relationship of bird physiology to the physics of flight.

Karen L. Mateer

Field Trips (continued)

**Eaton Canyon
Monthly Walk**
Sunday, March 15, 2009
Sunday, April 19, 2009
Sunday, May 17, 2009
8:00 am – 11:00 am

Pasadena Audubon and Eaton Canyon Nature Center are cosponsoring monthly walks at Eaton Canyon. The walks are led by Hill Penfold, who has been leading them at ECNC for many years. Hill is wonderful with birders of all levels and Eaton Canyon is one of the best locations to learn the birds of the Pasadena area.

The walks are held on the third Sunday of each month. Meet at the flagpole: bring water, binoculars, hats, but no dogs.

Hill Penfold

Hahamongna Monthly Walk
Saturday, March 7, 2009
Saturday, April 4, 2009
Saturday, May 2, 2009
8:00 am – noon

This monthly bird walk is for birders of all ages and experience. A good variety of birds should be in residence. Bring binoculars, birding guide, water and wear walking shoes. No dogs.

Exit the north 210 at Berkshire and make a right, then a left at Oak Grove. The Hahamongna Watershed Park entrance is on the right at the next stop light. Take the first left after entering Hahamongna, and park by the ballfield

Ron Cyger

**Huntington Library
Monthly Walk**
Sunday, March 22, 2009
Sunday, April 26, 2009
Sunday, May 24, 2009
8:00 am – 11:00 am

A special benefit for Pasadena Audubon Society members is the chance to bird the Huntington Library grounds. Attendance is by reservation only and limited to 15 participants. We thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible.

Contact Elaine by email (preferred), putting "Huntington" in the subject line to avoid inadvertent deletion or by phone.

Elaine MacPherson

Thank You for Your Donations to PAS

These PAS members have recently made donations to our chapter: Ellen Rennick, Gayle Hackamack, Bob & Jan Stull. Thank you!

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John's Corner

Where to Bird: Lacy Park

Although I've known about Lacy Park in San Marino for many years, it wasn't until last autumn after I started "bigbying" (an acronym for Big Green Bird Year; basically a big year without carbon fuels) that I've been birding it regularly. I was surprised at some of the species of birds I could find here, and, along with the Lower Arroyo Seco, Lacy Park is now one of my birding "patches".

The park lies between St Alban's Road and Virginia Avenue, just north of Huntington Drive. There are two parking lots – one on the St. Alban's side and one on Virginia. Note that on weekdays, there is no cost to enter the park, but on weekends, the cost is four dollars, and you must park in the Virginia side parking lot.

My personal birdlist for the area is sixty-five – not particularly impressive. However, this is only since last October, and this total is bound to increase. Also, what perhaps matters more than quantity is quality. Some fairly interesting wintering birds have turned up here: Red-naped Sapsucker, Gray Flycatcher, Hermit Warbler, Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, and Purple Finch namely. Other birds that are more regular here include several raptors, parrots and parakeets, Western Screech-Owls, nesting Allen's Hummingbirds, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Hutton's Vireos, Mountain Chickadees, Red-whiskered Bulbuls, and several warblers and sparrows. Hermit Warblers can be surprisingly common in fall amongst the Townsend's and Black-throated Gray Warblers.

Most of these birds are easiest to find

in certain parts of the park, even though it is a very small park. The Gray Flycatcher currently wintering here, for example, is usually in the southwest corner of the park on a small lawn, separated from the main lawn. The Hermit Warbler also wintering here this year is pretty reliably found in a clump of conifers on the St Alban's side parking lot. Parrots and parakeets – including Red-masked Parakeet and Yellow-headed Parrot – tend not to stick around, and are usually flying over. For owls, come at night; the park closes at 10pm.

Lacy Park isn't particularly distinctive, proving that not much is required to attract a wide variety of bird species. Try finding a park close to you, and make it a habit to visit it regularly; you never know what you'll find.

John Garrett

New Members

PAS is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope you will get involved in our many activities.

ALHAMBRA: Judith Gilbert; Jason Hansen; Linda Huetinck; Tri Huynh;

James Rojas; Yvonne Tsai;
ALTADENA: Gordon Arnold; Theodore Clarke; Dave Taylor; **ARCADIA:** Yvonne Asenir; Lael Blocker; David Godden; Henriette Wymar; **AZUSA:** Karen Longman; **DUARTE:** Lois Rupp; **LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE:** Teresa Dvoracek; Robert MacMillan; Alden

Galbraith; Daniel Wu; **LOS ANGELES:** Carolyn Gurnan; **MONROVIA:** Mary Bonner; Kathleen Dwyer; June Pytel; Wendy Raymond; **MONTEREY PARK:** Rick Chang; Patricia Vazquez; **PASADENA:** Richard Bergman; Gene Burt; Marilyn Catrantzos; Nicholas ...continued on page 9