



Drawing by  
Guy Coheleach

# THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

**Pasadena Audubon Society**  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 66 — No. 4

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

April - May 2018

## Ancient Murrelet

The Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) is an occasional visitor to the Southern California coast during the winter, breeding off the Canadian and Alaskan coast. A thin, pale-tipped bill, prominent white streaks above the eye in breeding plumage, and gray upperparts set the Ancient Murrelet apart from the other North American members of its genus, the Guadalupe, Craveri's, and Scripps's Murrelets. The gray on the back and the white streaks above the eyes were thought to resemble the shawl and gray hair of an elderly person, leading to the common name.

Found across the entire span of the North Pacific, Ancient Murrelets also breed across the Aleutian Islands along to the coasts of Siberia, northern China, and Japan. The genus *Synthliboramphus* has one other member - the Japanese Murrelet - that breeds exclusively in Japan and Korea. It's thought that the Ancient Murrelet too had its origin in northern Asia, having only recently (on an evolutionary timescale) expanded its range to include North America. In fact, some populations of North American Ancient Murrelets still fly from their breeding grounds in Canada across the Pacific to winter in Japan and China, further supporting the idea that these birds originated in Asia and return to winter in their evolutionarily historic native range.

Ancient Murrelets breed and raise their young almost entirely on the water, with the chicks swimming out to sea to meet their parents just a short while after emerging from their nest burrows on land. In Los Angeles, Ancient Murrelets have turned up within the last three years in the Santa Monica bay, most frequently in the vicinity of Ballona Creek and Marina Del Rey, as well as farther south, in Long Beach, in prior years.

Diego Blanco



© Mark Scheel

## President's Perch

Happy Spring! Migration is in full swing, and I hope you're enjoying some quality birding. Pasadena Audubon offers truly excellent field trips led by the best leaders around, and our region is full of birdy places, so bird on!

One splendid way to see a lot of birds and support Pasadena Audubon at the same time is to get involved with Birdathon. I encourage you to find a way to join in the fun!

You can join a team that already exists, like the Big Sit, which meets at Legg Lakes for a lovely peaceful morning of birding, or you can start your own team. That's right, you can be the boss of your own Birdathon! In the past, we've had teams who birded by bike, teams who focused on one area, like Hansen Dam, or teams who birded for almost 24 hours straight. I know, right?! Birders are just a little bit crazy!

You can also get involved by collecting sponsors or by donating yourself. Think of Birdathon as a way to let people know about the excitement of birds! When my family and I did our first Birdathon in 2002, we asked just about everyone we knew to sponsor us, and we happily accepted every penny. No donation was too small, and we collected about \$1500 from over 90 sponsors. We gave everyone who donated a summary of our day and a list of the birds we found. Not only did we raise a lot of money, but we raised a lot of awareness too. Read page 8 for more details.

We're Pasadena Audubon, and we love birding!

Laura Garrett

### In This Issue

<b>Programs</b>	2
<b>Conservation</b>	2
<b>A Bird from Afar</b>	3
<b>Field Trips</b>	4, 5, 7
<b>Calendar</b>	6
<b>Birdathon</b>	8
<b>CBC Report</b>	9
<b>Announcements</b>	10 - 12

---

**MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**


---

## Amur Falcons: Living on the Edge

April 18, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm  
Catherine Hamilton

Catherine Hamilton was born in Altadena with a pencil in hand. She began birding at an early age with her father, developing a keen interest in both natural history and art, and started her first ornithological notebook at seven. Her talk will present her recent adventures in Nagaland, a far-flung corner of India that has only recently been opened to western visitors. There, in just the last few years, a conservation crisis and conservation miracle seems to have unfolded. Come discover the world of the amazing Amur Falcon. This species migrates from Southern Africa to Siberia and back again every year, including long voyages across the Arabian Sea.

Catherine will show some of her photos and incredible artwork.

*Monthly chapter meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (1750 N. Altadena Drive in Pasadena). Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Programs for youth begin at 6:45 pm.*

---

## CONSERVATION

### Continued Opposition to Cal Fire Plan

PAS has partnered with the Endangered Habitats League ([www.ehleague.org](http://www.ehleague.org)), which recently provided expert witness testimony that pointed out the flaws of Cal Fire's proposed Vegetation Treatment Plan. This plan would destroy large amounts of habitat, statewide, in an effort to prevent wildfire damage in urban and suburban areas. There are better ways to prevent such damage, ways that do not cause so much environmental harm. PAS and the Endangered Habitats League will continue to oppose the VTP as it moves through the review process, and will continue to recommend alternative methods of protection.

### Fees for Access to State Lands

New fees are being charged for entrance to previously free state lands managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, such as the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. You must purchase and carry a pass. You can buy a pass online, at retail businesses that sell fishing and hunting licenses, or over the telephone at (800) 565-1458.

More information is available on the web at [www.wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Lands-Pass](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Lands-Pass)

## Birds of Hawaii: An Unnatural History?

May 16, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm  
Dan Lewis

Dan Lewis takes us on a thousand-year journey exploring the Hawaiian Islands' beautiful birds and a variety of topics including extinction, evolution, survival, conservationists and their work, and, most significantly, the concept of belonging. Author Daniel Lewis, an award-winning historian and globe-traveling amateur birder, builds this lively talk around the stories of four species—the Stumbling Moa-Nalo, the Kaua'i 'O'o, the Palila, and the Japanese White-Eye.

Dan is the Dibner Senior Curator of the History of Science and Technology at The Huntington Library.

## Annual June Dinner

Saturday, June 9, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Come celebrate another great and birdy year with the Pasadena Audubon Society at our Annual June Dinner. We'll toast our accomplishments and enjoy a catered meal with beer and wine.



Share your best bird photos with the crowd. Bring them on a USB drive and you'll have five minutes of the undivided attention of folks who love looking at bird photos. How great is that?!

Dinner is \$25. To reserve, send a check to PAS, attention June Dinner, (address below) or pay online through PayPal at [pasadenaudubon.org](http://pasadenaudubon.org). RSVP by Sunday, June 3rd. We look forward to seeing you there!

## YOUNG BIRDERS

### The Young Birder Club

Young people interested in birds and nature are invited to join our Young Birders Club. Parents are encouraged to attend, too.

Monthly meetings are held just before the monthly chapter meetings, September through May, at 6:45 on the third Wednesday of the month. Field trips are organized regularly.

To find out more, please email Susan Gilliland at [gillilandsusan@gmail.com](mailto:gillilandsusan@gmail.com).



*Young birders joined forces with the Friends of California Condors Wild and Free for an outreach on a beautiful day at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. © Susan Gilliland*

Mark Hunter

## A BIRD FROM AFAR

## The Stripe-Cheeked Woodpecker

A couple of years back I read about a mind-boggling day of hawk migration in Panama City where they tallied an incredible two million migrating raptors during just one single day. This spectacular mass of birds closed the international airport for two whole days as many of the migrating Swainson's Hawks and Turkey Vultures, that made up much of the flight, roosted in the woods and forests that surround the capital overnight.

Photos from that day crystalized my desire to bring a tour group to visit Panama at that time of year, and late last Fall I found myself there hoping to witness that spectacular raptor migration for myself. That wish was fulfilled on October 31st when I was lucky enough to observe almost 900,000 migrating raptors blackening the skies of downtown Panama City and to share that spectacle with a group of birders from across the US and Canada.

Panama is a wonderful country for birding. Not only does it have lots of great birds, but it is also small and much of the best birding is easily accessible. The country also boasts good infrastructure and a wealth of excellent birding lodges. Though the country is not particularly rich in endemic species, it does claim a handful found nowhere else in the world and one of those is the species I have chosen to highlight: Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker (*Piculus collopterus*).

The Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker is a, dare I say, cute Downy Woodpecker sized bird which is mainly resident in humid foothill woodlands east of the canal in Panama and Darien provinces. In November, we were lucky enough to run into a couple at Los Altos de Cerro Azul, a popular birding spot that affords some elevation gain not far from Panama City. This gated community is a historically popular area for second homes for wealthy Panamanians. Locals and expats alike are drawn by the beautiful mountain vistas and the escape to cooler temperatures that elevation affords. The elevation gains



are what draws birders, too, as the spot attracts several hummingbirds, tanagers and other species not found at lower elevations around the canal.

This endemic woodpecker was once considered conspecific with White-throated Woodpeckers of South America. Much of their appeal to me personally is that they remind me a little of Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis* or Yaffle as it colloquially known), a childhood favorite from back in the UK. The brilliant greens, reds and particularly striking cobalt blue eye of this attractive species also add to the allure of this bird.

I'd only had relatively distant views of this bird on previous visits, so it was a real treat when we discovered one perched in a tree close to the road. This beautiful male (identified by the stunning complete red cap and malar) allowed for prolonged close views and some exceptional photo opportunities. A quick perusal of photographs online illustrates how uncommon good views of this species can be. Getting to see a wonderful bird that is found in such a restricted part of this earth and furthermore to get to share that amazing moment of discovery with others is one of the many joys of being a tour guide.

story and photo, Luke Tiller

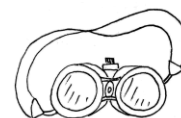
### New Member Reception

If you joined PAS in the last six months, you're invited to our New Member Reception! Meet other new members as well as Chapter Board Members and learn about all the wonderful activities PAS has to offer. Wine and snacks will be provided.

**When:** Wednesday, April 11th from 7 pm until 9 pm

**Where:** The home of President Laura Garrett.

Please RSVP to [kym.buzdygon@pasadenaudubon.org](mailto:kym.buzdygon@pasadenaudubon.org). Keep an eye on your inbox as all new members will also receive an emailed invitation.



If there's a Bird from Afar, that you saw and loved, we'd love to hear about it. Send your text and photos to the Editor at [pas.wrentit@gmail.com](mailto:pas.wrentit@gmail.com).

## FIELD TRIPS

### Bob's Gap

**Saturday, April 14, 7:00 am to 1:00 pm, heavy rain will cancel**

Found in the southern Mojave Desert not far from Valyermo, Bob's Gap Road goes through a gap in the desert foothills. This is one of the best and least disturbed areas for many of the desert elements in the San Gabriel Mountains. Spring wildflowers can be spectacular depending on rain. We will look for Mountain Quail, Scott's Oriole, Black-throated Sparrow, Black-chinned Sparrow, Prairie Falcon, Black-chinned Hummingbird and many others. Bob's Gap is historically important as a Gray Vireo breeding spot but, unfortunately, it has been many years since the last report. We will check previous locations, just in case! Please notify the leaders if you plan to attend but just show up if you forget.

Meet at Pearblossom Park: 121st St. East and Ave V-14 in Pearblossom. From there we will carpool/caravan to Bob's Gap which is south of Pearblossom Hwy, 165th Street becoming Bob's Gap Road. We will park near the Limekiln ruins on the east side dirt road.

*Kathi Ellsworth & Lance Benner*

### Big Santa Anita Canyon

**Saturday, April 21, 6:30 am until noon**

Santa Anita Canyon is one of our most gorgeous local canyons. We're going to explore it at a time of year when the spring migrants have arrived and many of the birds are most active. We will hike down into the canyon to Fern Lodge Junction, along the trail above Sturtevant Falls, through the slot canyon, back south along the Stock Trail, down into the main canyon, and then back up to the parking lot, about six miles in all.

Meet at Chantry Flat at 6:30 am. We're starting early to beat the heat and to avoid the crowds. Parking can be limited, so please carpool. Bring water, food, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, a hat, bug repellent, and an Adventure Pass.

*Lance Benner*

### Tejon Ranch

**Sunday, April 29, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm**

At 422 contiguous square miles, or 240,000 acres, Tejon Ranch is the largest piece of privately held property in California. Tejon Ranch is a hotspot of biological diversity and lies at the confluence of four major biogeographic regions. Birds and wildlife abound.

Trip requirements: a) be a PAS member b) sign up with [gillilandsusan@gmail.com](mailto:gillilandsusan@gmail.com) c) pay Tejon Ranch \$20 fee. Details and directions will be provided to registered participants.

*Frank & Susan Gilliland*

### The Big Sit at Whittier Narrows

**Saturday, April 28, 8:00 am until noon**

The Big Sit takes place on a lawn between two lakes at the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. We aim for a goal of 50 species of birds, and we often exceed that goal. It's a pleasant way to pass the morning, and most years we're entertained by multiple swallow species passing by low and close. Cormorants and herons will be nesting, quite visibly. We sight a lot of species from our lawn but sometimes we cheat and begin walking around the lakes, raising the count even higher.

Take the 60 freeway to Santa Anita Avenue, a little west of the 605. Go south on Santa Anita less than a quarter mile to a parking lot on the right. After parking, walk southwest about 200 yards, past Restroom 7, and on another 80 yards to the Lawn Between the Lakes. Look for birders - we dress funny. Lawn chairs, beverages, and snacks are useful.

*Mark Hunter*



*Canyon Wren at Big Santa Anita Canyon © Mark Scheel*

### Piute Ponds and Vicinity

**Saturday, May 5, 6:30 am until early afternoon**

In spring, Piute Ponds and nearby desert oases are full of northbound shorebirds, warblers, and flycatchers. We will start at Piute Ponds, where we will look for migrants as well as desert specialties such as LeConte's Thrasher. Piute Ponds sometimes hosts birds that are very hard to find elsewhere in the county, such as Bank Swallow, Black Tern, and Franklin's Gull. After Piute Ponds we will visit Apollo Park and, time permitting, the (in)famous Lancaster Sewage Ponds.

Note: Piute Ponds are located on Edwards Air Force Base, which has restricted entry. Space is limited, and Edwards needs advance notice of participants, so it helps to sign up early. Please email Mark Scheel [scheel@tapir.caltech.edu](mailto:scheel@tapir.caltech.edu) if you would like to attend. We will be meeting in the northern Antelope Valley. Meeting place to be arranged.

*Mark & Janet Scheel*

*Field trips continued on page 7*

---

**FIELD TRIPS: REGULAR MONTHLY WALKS**


---

## Hahamongna

**First Saturday of most months, check calendar**  
**7:30 am — 11:30 am**

Hahamongna is a wonderful trip for birders of all ages and experience. A nice variety of birds should be in residence, including Lawrence's Goldfinch, Yellow-breasted Chat, and various warblers and flycatchers.

Bring binoculars, water, walking shoes but no dogs. Enter the park at Oak Grove and Foothill Blvd. Take the first left and park by the ballfield.

*Darren Dowell*

## L.A. County Arboretum

**Second Saturday of every month**  
**8:00 am — 10:00 am**

This easy walk is for birders of all ages and experience levels. Meet on the steps leading to the entrance of the Arboretum. Admission is \$5 – free for members of the Arboretum or Audubon, and free for children under twelve.

*Katy Mann*



*Female Summer Tanager at the Arboretum © Kathy Degner*

## Chilao Visitor Center

**Second Sunday of the month, starting in March**  
**8:00 am — 10:00 am**

The Chilao Visitor Center walks resume in March, weather and roads permitting. If things look rainy, snowy or brush fire-y, check the website first.

Chilao, 26.5 miles north of I-210 on Angeles Crest (State Hwy 2), is a good place to see woodpeckers and we often see four or more species on a walk. Mountain Quail are somewhat elusive but still seen or heard about half the time. You can also expect Purple Finches, Steller's Jays, Dark-eyed Juncos and several species of nuthatches and others totaling about 30 species during the 2-hour walk.

*Hill Penfold*

## Magpie Bird Study Group

**Third Tuesday of most months**  
**9:00 am until about noon**



**April 17, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.** See admission policy at [www.rsabg.org/visit](http://www.rsabg.org/visit).

**May 15, Lower Arroyo Seco.** Park near casting pond.

**June 19, Descanso Gardens**

We bird until 11:30 and then have a sack lunch and a short meeting. All PAS members welcome!

*Julia Ray, Sid Heyman*

## Eaton Canyon

**Third Sunday of every month**  
**8:00 am — 11:00 am**

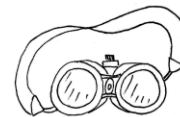
Pasadena Audubon and Eaton Canyon Nature Center are cosponsoring monthly walks at Eaton Canyon. The walks are led by Hill Penfold, who has been leading them at Eaton Canyon for many years. This is a wonderful walk for birders of all levels and Eaton Canyon is one of the best locations to learn the birds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



*White-breasted Nuthatch © Lois Brunet*

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

*Hill Penfold*



## Huntington Library

**Fourth Sunday of every month**  
**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. Members may bring one non-member guest, space permitting. We thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible.

To reserve contact Mark at [mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org](mailto:mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org).

*Mark Hunter*

## CALENDAR

## April 2018

4	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garrett
7	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Hahamongna	Darren Dowell
8	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
11	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 11
14	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
14	Sat	7:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Bob's Gap	Kathi Ellsworth, Lance Benner
15	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
17	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
18	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Catherine Hamilton
21	Sat	6:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Big Santa Anita Canyon	Lance Benner
22	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Katy Mann
28	Sat	8:00 am	Birdathon	WC	Big Sit	Mark Hunter
29	Sun	8:30 am	Field Trip		Tejon Ranch	Susan and Frank Gilliland

## May 2018

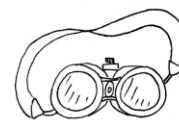
2	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garrett
5	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Hahamongna	Darren Dowell
6	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip & Cleanup	WC	Peck Road	Mark Hunter
5	Sat	6:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Piute Ponds	Mark & Janet Scheel
9	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 11
12	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
13	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
15	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Lower Arroyo Seco	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
16	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Dan Lewis
19	Sat	6:00 pm	Field Trip	WC	Owls in the San Gabriel Mountains	Lance Benner
20	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
27	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

## June 2018

2	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Throop Peak	Lance Benner
6	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garrett
9	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
9	Sat	6:00 pm	June Dinner		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	see page 2
10	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
13	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 11
17	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
19	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Descanso Gardens	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
23-24	Sat/Sun		Field Trip		Southern Sierra Nevada	Lance Benner & Kathi Ellsworth
24	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

## Trip Leaders

Mark Scheel (chair).....	(626) 765-5408	scheel@tapir.caltech.edu
Larry Allen .....	(626) 797-1810	larryallen@earlymusicla.org
Lance Benner .....	(626) 791-1187	lbenner@charter.net
Ron Cyger.....	(626) 840-2566	ron@cyger.org (preferred)
Darren Dowell.....	(626) 344-4003	dowell.darren@yahoo.com
Kathi Ellsworth.....	(626) 524-0652	pandionsky@yahoo.com
Jon Feenstra.....	(626) 319-4723	feenstra@alummi.caltech.edu
Jon Fisher.....	(818) 800-2776	jonf60@hotmail.com
Frank & Susan Gilliland .....	(626) 441-8487	gillilandsusan@gmail.com
Sid Heyman .....	(626) 571-5991	
Mark Hunter .....	(626) 344-8428	mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org
Mickey Long .....	(626) 285-8878	mlongbird@charter.net
Katy Mann.....	(626) 797-0307	katymann1960@gmail.com
Hill Penfold .....	(818) 352-4954	hpenfold@gmail.com
Julia Ray.....	(818) 314-5127	jraymusic@att.net
Ed Stonick .....	(626) 796-0595	edstonick@att.net
Luke Tiller.....		streatham2003@aol.com



WC Wrentit Club

The Wrentit Club is a special distinction for members who've seen 250 birds or more in L.A. County within the calendar year. The field trips designated WC are within L.A. County. Any birds seen on these trips count towards the Wrentit Club distinction. See our website for a listing of current and past members.

## FIELD TRIPS CONTINUED

## HISTORY

**C'est Chouette: Owls in the San Gabriel Mountains****Saturday, May 19, 6 pm to midnight**

Join us as we search for owls and nightjars in the higher areas of the San Gabriel Mountains. We'll start shortly before sunset when we'll look for Northern Pygmy Owl and diurnal montane species, and then after dark we'll look for Flammulated Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Western Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Spotted Owl, and Common Poorwill.

Limited to ten people. Each group limited to no more than three people. Please email the leader at [lbenner@charter.net](mailto:lbenner@charter.net) to reserve a spot.

*Lance Benner***Throop Peak****Saturday, June 2, 7:30 am - 1:00 pm**

Join us as we explore one of the highest altitude trails in the San Gabriel Mountains during the peak time of year for montane birds. We'll hike at a leisurely pace to the summit of Throop Peak (elevation: about 9100 feet) as we search for Golden Eagle, Williamson's Sapsucker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Dusky Flycatcher, Clark's Nutcracker, Townsend's Solitaire, Red Crossbill, Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskin, and other montane species.

Meet at Dawson Saddle at mile 69.6 on the Angeles Crest Highway, about 45 miles from I-210 in La Canada. Bring plenty of water, lunch, sunscreen, bug repellent, sturdy shoes, a hat, a coat, and an Adventure Pass. The hike is about four miles round-trip; a few sections are steep, and all of it is at altitudes in excess of 7900 feet. Please carpool and plan for about 90 minutes to drive up from Pasadena.

If the Angeles Crest Highway isn't open to Dawson Saddle, then we will post an update on the PAS list-serve and will hike from Islip Saddle to Little Jimmy Spring instead.

*Lance Benner***Southern Sierra Nevada****June 23-24, 2018**

Join us as we explore the southern Sierra Nevada at the Audubon Kern River Preserve, the Greenhorn Mountains, Trail of 100 Giants, Sherman Pass, and the Kern Plateau. Possible birds: yellow-billed cuckoo, summer tanager, brown-crested flycatcher, pileated woodpecker, Pacific wren, hermit warbler, sooty grouse, northern goshawk, black-backed woodpecker, hermit thrush, mountain bluebird, Pacific and "interior west" white-breasted nuthatches, red crossbills, owls, and more.

Limited to ten participants. Please contact the trip leader at [lbenner@charter.net](mailto:lbenner@charter.net) to reserve a spot and to obtain information on lodging and other logistics.

*Lance Benner & Kathi Ellsworth***The Wrentit Emblem and Guy Coheleach**

It seems like our chapter emblem has always been the Wrentit, and that the handsome little drawing that graces the front page of this newsletter has always been there, but our history is in fact, a little more complicated. The idea of publishing a newsletter first came up at the PAS Board Meeting of May 19, 1953. The decision was made to call it the Wrentit. Until 1970 however, there was no sketch.

In that year Elizabeth Manning, PAS President 1968-71, was spending part of the winter in New York City at Audubon House, the headquarters of the National Audubon Society. The editor of Audubon Magazine at that time was Les Line. Elizabeth asked him if he had suggestions for a masthead for our newsletter. After due consideration, Les contacted Guy Coheleach, an aspiring wildlife artist, and asked him to make a sketch of a Wrentit. He did so for about \$25. At the March PAS Board meeting following this it was decided to also use this emblem for our news releases and stationery.

Today Guy Coheleach is a renowned wildlife artist whose works have appeared in 32 museums and even in the White House. Visiting heads of state have received his American Eagle print. He has received the Society of Animal Artists Award of excellence an unprecedented eight times. He has been the subject of two films: "Guy Coheleach and the Bald Eagle" and "Quest: An Artist and his Prey". Articles about him have appeared in Reader's Digest, the Saturday Evening Post as well as various wildlife and art magazine. Several books of his works have been published.

Guy has been a generous supporter of conservation causes and established an endowment at the University of Tennessee for the School of Wildlife Management. At his many print and book signings a portion of the proceeds goes to conservation causes.

It goes without saying that the original Wrentit drawing made especially for us would be valued at far more than that original \$25. Where is it now? It is thought to have gone up in smoke along the rest of the PAS archives in the Eaton Canyon fire of 1993.

*Ira Blitz*

Drawing by  
Guy Coheleach

## SPRING IS HERE. TIME FOR BIRDATHON!

### What exactly is Birdathon?

Birdathon is a fund-raiser where teams collect "per bird species" pledges from their friends, family or anyone who wants to sponsor them. Pledges can be as little as 5 cents a species. Of course, the sky's the limit. Then teams go birding on either April 27, 28, or 29 and try to find as many bird species as possible. Sponsors then make donations to PAS based on the number of species found by the team they sponsored.

The team raising the most funds is honored at the June dinner with a hearty round of applause and a very birdy prize!

On a more serious note, we have timed this event at the end of April for maximum avian diversity: some wintering birds haven't left, some summer residents have arrived, and migrants abound.

### How can I participate?

- **Join an existing team or event;** see the list to the right. Email Kym for a pledge sheet and collect pledges. Then hit the trails with your team.
- **Form your own team.** Register with Kym by email and she'll send you the pledge sheet. Collect pledges and make a birding plan. You might want to bird at a single park, or stay within Pasadena city limits; some travel only by foot or bicycle, some count only birds that they photograph. A team can spend as little or as much time as they want, from watching backyard feeders for an hour to embarking on a 24-hour-long manic quest on a finely-tuned precision birding route. You're the boss.

### I don't want to bird. How can I pledge?

Pick a team, and email your "per bird species pledge" and contact information to the leader. They'll be happy to hear from you!! After the event, they'll be in touch with their results, and you can make your donation by check or through PayPal on our website.

#### Tips from Mark Scheel of Irritable Owl Syndrome

Sponsors can be anyone: friends, family, co-workers, even your boss. In addition to supporting PAS, sponsors learn about birds and bird habitat. Sponsors who are not birders are often amazed at the number of bird species that can be found here. But if you are a team member, don't surprise your sponsors too much --- give them an estimate of how many birds you expect to find before they pledge! After Birdathon, I send my sponsors a thank-you note, a species list, and a description of how the day went, including any surprises or amusing anecdotes.

Birdathon is a lot of fun, supports PAS, and educates non-birders about birds and the importance of habitat. So join a team or sponsor one!

### Birdathon Teams as of Print Deadline

**Team Verdin:** Dessi Sieburth, pictured below, 2015 ABA Young Birder of the Year and member of the Pasadena Audubon Society Young Birder's Club, takes up the challenge of photographing as many species as he can in a day. Contact Susan Gilliland to pledge, [gillilandsusan@gmail.com](mailto:gillilandsusan@gmail.com).

**Irritable Owl Syndrome:** Team Irritable Owl Syndrome starts just after midnight and sets a relentless pace across most of Los Angeles County, covering about 400 miles before finishing after dark. Last year, Team Irritable Owl Syndrome found 199 species. Contact Mark Scheel, [scheel@tapir.caltech.edu](mailto:scheel@tapir.caltech.edu), to pledge.

**The Ladybirders:** New this year, the Ladybirders are taking to the trails on Friday April 27th. Time and location TBD, but plan on meeting early and finishing mid-afternoon, for happy hour! Contact Lois Brunet, [pas.wrentit@gmail.com](mailto:pas.wrentit@gmail.com), to pledge or join. Sorry guys, this is a ladies only team.

**The Big Sit at Whittier Narrows:** Bring your lawn chair and do your birding with a like minded crowd. Contact Mark Hunter, [mark.hunter@pasadenaudubon.org](mailto:mark.hunter@pasadenaudubon.org), to pledge. No need to sign-up, just bring your binoculars. See page 4 for details.

**For team registrations and pledge sheets,** email Kym: [kym.buzdygon@pasadenaudubon.org](mailto:kym.buzdygon@pasadenaudubon.org). You can also download pledge sheets from our website, [pasadenaudubon.org](http://pasadenaudubon.org).



Dessi Sieburth continues his Big Photo Day for our annual Birdathon. Dessi and Team Verdin will be photographing as many bird species as they can in Los Angeles County during daylight hours. Dessi did his first Big Photo Day in 2014. Last year, Dessi and his team set a new record of 145 species photographed. © Beatrix Schwarz



## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT

**Pasadena San Gabriel Valley 2017 Christmas Bird Count Report***Jon Fisher*

The first Christmas Bird Count was held 117 years ago, and while not quite that old, our own Pasadena count has had a fairly lengthy run of its own since 1946. Given the level of interest in both birds and the CBC, its continuation is not in jeopardy. That's a good thing, because the count has created an important record of early winter bird life in the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding areas for over seventy years. On December 16, 2017, we added another year's worth of data.

Despite the fact that we had very dry conditions and were missing a few of our regular counters, we pulled off a successful count for 2017. The weather was quite pleasant, being neither too warm, cold nor wet. Almost all regular areas were covered, though additional counters are always useful.

Our total species count- including a number of introduced birds- was 162. This is about a half dozen fewer than has been typical recently, yet still quite good for an inland count. Though the count circle has seen more and more urbanization and development, there are many pockets of good and varied habitat. With a continuing increase in knowledge and experience we've managed to significantly increase the species count in recent decades.



*A rare "Red" Fox Sparrow found at Hahamongna © Darren Dowell*

Though we didn't find anything truly surprising in 2017, a few rare wintering birds were present and misses of expected or likely species were few. The misses this year included Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite and surprisingly Glaucous-winged Gull.

Waterfowl numbers were low overall. Suitable habitat was present with Legg Lake, Peck Road Water Conservation Park and other areas. The San Gabriel River though, quite good for ducks when water is present, was almost entirely dry. Hardly unexpected given that we had no rain since February 2017.

Birds such as Red-breasted Nuthatch and Varied Thrush were essentially absent this winter. Irruption events in these species

occur infrequently and often unpredictably. The fall and winter of 2014-2015 brought large numbers of Varied Thrushes into our area, with many recorded on the CBC, but very few have been noted since then.

Here's a look at the highlights and birds of interest on the 2017 count.

Among the more regular waterfowl, a Greater White-fronted Goose and two Snow Geese were at Legg Lake and a Hooded Merganser was seen during count week.

Two Mountain Quail, a species easily missed on the count, were found near Mt. Wilson.

Two Least Bitterns were at Legg Lake where they are regular but often difficult to see. Early mornings before sunrise are the best time to find - or at least hear - these birds. Also at Legg Lake was a Mew Gull. Six Iceland Gulls (formerly Thayer's Gull, but now a subspecies of Iceland) were also recorded on count day.

Due to a dedicated nocturnal birding effort, we did well with owls. Special thanks to Lance Benner and Darren Dowell. Three Northern Pygmy-Owls were found in foothill canyons and a Northern Saw-Whet Owl in upper Winter Creek. Sixteen Great Horned Owls and nine Western Screech-Owls were also found. Lance also recorded a Common Poorwill on count week on the Mt. Wilson Toll Road, well below Henninger Flat.

In the woodpecker category, one Red-naped Sapsucker was found at Legg Lake along with a half dozen of the more common Red-breasted Sapsuckers scattered throughout the circle. Two Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flickers were found among many of the Red-shafted variety.

Rather surprising is that only a single Merlin was found. Rare on the count- and on the coastal slope in general- was a Prairie Falcon at Santa Fe Dam. One Loggerhead Shrike was also seen there, about the most reliable place to find them in the circle.

A Plumbeous Vireo, rare but regular in winter, was at Live Oak Cemetery in San Gabriel. We did well with swallows with Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tree Swallow and a Barn Swallow (count week) recorded.

Miscellaneous passerines included two Pygmy Nuthatches found at Mt. Wilson. The three Pacific Wrens were recorded were well above the count average. Ever productive Legg Lake produced a single Golden-crowned Kinglet.

The only unusual warbler was a Black-and-white Warbler continuing at the Arboretum in Arcadia that was missed on count day but recorded on count week. We also recorded a Hermit Warbler and a Wilson's Warbler. Also of note were four

## CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER MUSINGS

### What a Hoot!

#### The PAS Outreach Team Visits the Field Elementary School Science Club

An unexpected rainstorm couldn't dampen the spirits of the third grade science club at Field Elementary School. Even though we couldn't go outside for our bird walk, the kids were still so energetic and excited to learn about birds! We talked about the food chain, what owls eat, and how rodenticides are dangerous for owls and other predators. Then we dissected owl pellets, which was a big hit.

The kids were excellent scientists who identified the bones in their pellet and pieced together the tiny skeletons. Some of them were a little squeamish at the start, but eventually everyone dug in. Finally, the kids decorated owl masks to take home. Everyone learned a lot- even some of the parent volunteers!

Thanks to Bas Van Schooten, Kathy Degner, Lois Brunet, and Susan Gilliland for all their help.



### We have a winner!

Our very own Teodelina Martelli, age 16, has won the Gold to become the 2018 American Birding Association Young Birder of the Year (age 14-18 year category).

This prestigious and challenging competition requires participants to submit an impressive body of work throughout the year, including photography, illustration, field notebooks, writing as well as community and conservation work.

Pasadena Audubon's Young Birders, mentored by Susan Gilliland, have done remarkably well in this competition.

Pictured above are Teodelina Martelli (center), Cayenne Sweeney (right) ABA Young Birder of the year 2017, and Justina Martelli (left) who was awarded Silver in the Field Notebook Module this year.

Bravo to our Young Birders. You make PAS proud!



Field Elementary School students with their owl pellets

### Ode to Birds

Birds are singing amongst the leaves  
Woodpeckers "tap tapping!"  
Chiseling the wood with ease  
A hummingbird sways  
on a branch in the breeze  
This is an ode to the birds of the trees

Many birds spend their days by the sea  
Cormorants diving are mini submarines  
A squadron of pelicans flies in a V  
This is an ode to the birds of the sea

A hawk like a king holds his head high  
A huge flock of starlings  
Dazzles the eye  
They paint twisting patterns  
Yet we do not know why  
This is an ode to the birds of the sky

The birds of the trees and the sky and the sea  
Make up an astounding variety  
From goldfinch to goshawk to godwit to gannet  
This is an ode to the birds of our planet

Aaron Gomperts, Young Birder age 11

## CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER NEWS

### Thanks to Our Generous Donors

Our thanks go to these PAS members and friends for their recent donations to our chapter.

WARBLER (\$5-\$99): Frank Burrows, Ann Carlton, Brack Duker, Doug Farr, Alan Harris, Dan Holguin, Michelle Kuczma, Fred Nelson, Mireya Parravincini, Michael Sovich, Javier & Debra Vazquez

ORIOLE (\$100-\$249): Norm & Anna Arnheim, Linda Donato, Kathi Ellsworth, Don & Scarlett Hibner, Marilyn & James Hildebrandt, Kathleen Linowski, Richard Luczynski, Ninarose Mayer, Kerry Morris, Henry & Loretta Selinger, G.N. & Gayle Van Essen

### CBC Report continued

Yellow Warblers along the San Gabriel River, a location where they are expected in winter.

Unusual in winter were two Green-tailed Towhees, one at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino and one in Altadena. A nice find along the San Gabriel River at San Jose Creek was a Swamp Sparrow.

A rare "Red" Fox Sparrow was at Hahamongna Watershed Park and two Vesper Sparrows, not often recorded on the count, were at Santa Fe Dam.

Four Western Tanagers- regular in small numbers in winter-were at the Huntington Gardens. Much less common, but also fairly regular there in winter was a Hooded Oriole.

Eight Tricolored Blackbirds were at their usual location at Legg Lake; this is usually the only spot in the count circle where they are found.

Only rarely recorded on the count was a Cassin's Finch at Mt. Wilson. This area offers the best chance for us to find higher mountain birds that may have wandered from their usual haunts.

As regular readers of the CBC summary will already know, one statistic that continues to interest me is how many species were represented by only a single individual. For 2017 there were fifteen such birds. Many of these are not rare, but they may be uncommon or just hard to find. Yet, without them we would have recorded only 147 species.

The Pasadena count is something many of us look forward to all year. No two years are exactly the same and we never know just what will be found. Everyone who devotes their time and effort to counting birds on the CBC is much appreciated. Without them, there would be no count, no data to enter and no scientific record represented.

But now, spring migration is upon us and winter birds are starting to leave. There's a great year of birding ahead. Don't forget to mark your calendar on December 15 for the 2018 count.

### Save the Date: Cleanup at Peck Rd May 6

Join us for our bi-annual cleanup at Peck Road Water Conservation Park. We'll do a guided bird walk at 8:00 am, cleanup from 10:00 am until noon, and then enjoy some pizza together under the trees. This communal effort benefits birds and birders alike. We hope to see you there.

### Birds 'n Beers

Good food and drink, and good bird talk at this casual monthly gathering led by Luke Tiller, Catherine Hamilton, and David Bell. Everyone is welcome! 5 to 8 pm, the second Wednesday of each month, at Lucky Baldwin's, 1770 E. Colorado Blvd. in Pasadena.

### Elections

Nominations for the 2018/2019 slate of officers will be accepted at the April general meeting. Voting takes place at the May general meeting. The current officers have agreed to stand for re-election.

### Join the Pasadena Audubon Society

Pasadena Audubon Society Chapter-only Membership provides important support for our conservation, education and outreach efforts. You'll also be the first to hear about our programs and field trips, and you'll receive a one-year subscription to our newsletter, *The Wrentit*.

Membership dues: \$20 for individuals or families, \$15 for seniors or students. Your information is never shared.

Make checks payable to PAS, 1750 N. Altadena Dr. Pasadena CA 91107

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I want to go paperless and read *The Wrentit* online.

Or join online and pay through PayPal at [pasadenaudubon.org](http://pasadenaudubon.org).

If you'd like to provide a gift membership, please contact our membership chair, Lois Fulmer, at [willo2001@earthlink.net](mailto:willo2001@earthlink.net).

*We thank you for your support!*

**Pasadena Audubon Society Board**

President	Laura Garrett	(626) 564-1890
Vice-President	Darren Dowell	(626) 344-4003
Secretary	Ira Blitz	(818) 802-5943
Treasurer	Eileen Burton	(626) 585-9076
Past President	Deni Sinnott	(626) 233-4128
Conservation	Mark Hunter	(626) 344-8428
Development	Chris Dean	(213) 484-1473
Education	Ron Cyger	(626) 449-3625
Field Trips	Mark Scheel	(626) 765-5408
Hospitality	Liz Cordero	(562) 923-3521
Membership	Lois Fulmer	(626) 798-1606
Outreach	Kathy Degner	(209) 481-7809
Programs	Luke Tiller	(203) 981-9924
Publicity	Carolyn Murphy	(909) 754-3335
Website	Janet Scheel	(626) 817-6322

Members at large: Norm Arnheim (Grant Program), Lance Benner, Susan Gilliland (Young Birders), Mickey Long, Katy Mann

The Wrentit is published by the Pasadena Audubon Society  
1750 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena, CA, 91107  
WWW.PASADENAAUDUBON.ORG

Editor: Lois Brunet [pas.wrentit@gmail.com](mailto:pas.wrentit@gmail.com)  
Printing by Print Spot (323) 269-4218

See chapter-only dues on previous page. Wrentit subscription only—1 year \$10. National Audubon Society membership fees—\$35. National members receive Audubon magazine and The Wrentit. Messages or queries for Pasadena Audubon may be left at (626) 355-9412. For change of NAS address call: (800) 274-4201.

**Pasadena Audubon Society**  
1750 N. Altadena Drive  
Pasadena, CA 91107

**DATED MATERIAL**

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
No. 1880  
Pasadena, CA



Printed on  
10% recycled paper  
FSC Certified

## Welcome to our New Members

ALHAMBRA: Daniel Adler, Margie Der, Patricia Fu, Carlos Martinez, Brittany Pergi; ALTADENA: Albert Proescholdt, Marilyn Sain, John Fleming, Frank Gomez, Alma Pena; AZUSA: Shirley Chan; DUARTE: Taylor Paez; LOS ANGELES: Laura DeNeui; MONROVIA: Pamela Albertson, Carol Rice; MONTEREY PARK: Mario Espinoza, Mancha Kurilich, Gail Neiman, Antonia Saavedra; MONTROSE: Jehanbux Bhadha; PASADENA: Graef Allen, Dan Beal, Bernard Beck, Phillip Blum, Riley Duren, Jay Goguen, Jeffry Jensen, Joseph Kountzman, Belle Mann, Nancy Miyamoto, Sharon Oliver, Ellen Osheroff, Jane Ross, Alezzandria & Dreon Ruválcabaj, Rita Ryack, Chelsea Squyres, Sheila Swift, Katie Volpe, Penny Weiss, Logan Wolf, Nora Zamichow; SAN GABRIEL: Michelle Almazan, Joan Mezor; SAN MARINO: Jack Hou, Lily Lee, Karen Smith; SIERRA MADRE: Monica Greening, Thomas Parys, Barbara Rounkle; SOUTH PASADENA: Hilda Blanco, Marelouis Boghossian, Gretchen Davidson, Sandri Kramer, Kathleen Takata; TEMPLE CITY: Tod Barry, Joanne Maxcy

## PAS Gear Now Available at Zazzle.com

Let the world know you're with Pasadena Audubon. Go to [www.zazzle.com/pasadena\\_audubon](http://www.zazzle.com/pasadena_audubon) for T-shirts, water bottles, luggage tags and more, all featuring our lovely wrentit logo.

## Get your Bird Friendly Coffee

Do you love coffee almost as much as you love birds? Then you won't want to miss out on the opportunity to join the PAS Coffee Club. Enjoy your morning brew knowing that you are helping protect important migratory bird habitat.

Birds & Beans® is the only U.S. coffee brand selling solely shade grown, organic, Fair Trade, Smithsonian 'Bird Friendly®' certified beans. Great for birds, family farmers and their workers and the Earth we all share. Great tasting coffee too! Go to our website, [pasadenaaudubon.org](http://pasadenaaudubon.org), for more information and to order.

## The Paperless Option

If you'd prefer to read *The Wrentit* online, let us know, by emailing your name and address to [paperless@pasadenaaudubon.org](mailto:paperless@pasadenaaudubon.org). You'll receive an email and link to the newsletter when each issue comes out. You'll also have our gratitude, as this will allow us to reduce our paper use and printing expenses. Plus, photos will be in living color, just like the birds we love!