

Phainopepla

January 2007

Web Edition

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*Steve Sosensky
will be turning over
Webmaster's duties
to Lorna Brown.*

*Let's wish all
the best to Steve
for his contributions,
and welcome our new
Webmistress on board!*

*Lorna can be reached
at (310) 207-3513.*

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society Awards Banquet

Friday, March 2, 2007 • 6:00 p.m. No host bar • 7:00 p.m. Dinner
Airtel Plaza Hotel 7277 Valjean Avenue, Van Nuys

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Enclosed is my check (\$50.00 / person) for \$ _____

Add'l Names _____

Add'l Names _____

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Mail to: Jeanne Polak-Recht, 11002 Garden Grove Avenue, Northridge, CA 91326*

Phainopepla



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Fall Festival in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve

Warm, clear sunshine on December 2 provided a perfect day for supporters of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve to introduce this favorite place to new visitors. Most of the event's participants were induced to come by announcements in local newspapers or a flyer passed on by their child's teacher.



*Kris Ohlenkamp and guests viewing a white pelican.
Photo by Rebecca LeVine*

Program. A member of the California Native Plant Society was on hand to point out native plants used to create habitat in the Wildlife Reserve.

In the amphitheater area, the Southwestern Herpetologists' Society displayed live reptiles and amphibians. The National Park Service brought their Mountain Mobile with many striking and interactive displays, while the Children's Nature Institute's Wonder Mobile provided appealing wildlife displays for children. The International Bird Rescue Research Center's elaborate display explained how they save oiled and sick birds.

San Fernando Valley Audubon had several special centers at the amphitheater. One had experts who explained

A fabulous team of 25 members and friends of San Fernando Valley Audubon Society came out to volunteer. They helped set up and staff displays in the amphitheater area. They led guided tours into the Wildlife Reserve. They showed people the magnificent birds around the Wildlife Lake, helping them view the birds with SFVAS's binoculars and their own spotting scopes. They explained about the fish and plankton in the lake, letting people look at plankton and other natural items through the microscopes SFVAS uses for the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education



Children viewing water samples. Photo by Rebecca LeVine

continued on page 2



Mark Osokow discussing feather design. Photo by Rebecca LeVine

Fall Festival continued from page 1

the differing feeding strategies used by the taxidermied birds on display. The kids' crafts table attracted a stream of children, where they learned about things like food chains. Another promoted gardening for wildlife.

Many of the kids attracted to the crafts table and other displays were the siblings of a group of scouts who held a soccer event on the grass adjacent to the amphitheater. Hopefully they will find the time later to visit the Wildlife Reserve itself, possibly on one of SFVAS's bird walks for beginning birdwatchers and families with school-aged children. Those walks are held on the second Saturday, October through March at 8:30 a.m. every year. 🌿



Allan Kotin helping participants view a Great Blue Heron. Photo by Rebecca LeVine



Muriel Kotin and Judy Howell. Photo by Rebecca LeVine

Program Notes



Puerto Rico is a Caribbean island about the size of Connecticut that has been isolated geographically since its formation millions of years ago. About 350 bird species have been recorded there and roughly 130 species breed there. Due to its isolation, Puerto Rico is home to at least sixteen endemic bird species. One species, the Elfin Woods Warbler, was discovered only 35 years ago, and another, the Puerto Rican Parrot, is among the most endangered birds in the world.

This talk will describe Puerto Rico's endemic and non-

DR. LANCE BENNER, TO SPEAK ON THE "BIRDS OF PUERTO RICO" AT JANUARY 25, 2007 MEETING

endemic birds, their geographic and seasonal distributions, birding locations, and tips for traveling to and within the island.

Dr. Lance Benner is a Research Scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory who specializes in radar imaging of near-Earth asteroids, which he conducts at the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico and at the Goldstone Solar System Radar in the Mojave Desert. He will bring some 3-D scale models of real asteroids, some meteorites, examples of research papers, all the major bird guides to Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, and other information about Puerto Rico. He has visited Puerto Rico more than 25 times and has become particularly fond of Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoos, Todies, and Screech Owls, all of which are common at Arecibo Observatory. 🌿

Monthly Field Trip Report *by Richard Barth*

November 18 marked our field trip to Ventura Harbor and Water Treatment Ponds. We found a nice variety of birds, under ideal weather conditions.

Surfbird, Ruddy Turnstone, Black Turnstone, Black Oystercatcher and Snowy Plover were special attractions with Willet, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Black-bellied Plover and Sanderling nicely rounding out our shorebird list. A Peregrine Falcon perched at strategic vantage points along the beach, a late-season Elegant Tern flew over the harbor, a resting Pelagic Cormorant gave us close-up looks on the near rocks, and we spotted a Common Loon from the picnic porch above the back harbor. We saw the usual five species of heron. The grebes on hand were Western, Eared and Pied-billed. Our duck list this year featured Surf Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Lesser Scaup, Cinnamon Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon and Ruddy Duck. Other species of interest included Forster's Tern, Brown Pelican, American Kestrel, Belted Kingfisher, Western Meadowlark, American Pipit, House Wren, Blue-gray

Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Townsend's Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler and Common Yellowthroat.

In the afternoon four of us birded the Ormond Beach area near Port Hueneme. Our highlights there were Snow Goose, Northern Harrier, Glaucous-winged Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Mew Gull, Turkey Vulture and Savannah Sparrow. 🌿



Turkey Vulture Photo by Steve Agrella

Awards Banquet

Friday, March 2, 2007 • 6:00 p.m. No host bar • 7:00 p.m. Dinner
Airtel Plaza Hotel 7277 Valjean Avenue, Van Nuys

FEATURED SPEAKER: LARRY ARBANAS
CONSERVATION AWARD RECIPIENT: TO BE DECIDED

Larry Arbanas is a bird filmmaker. He will present a program entitled "California and Western Birds in Motion". Come see his fascinating footage of Burrowing Owls at Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, White-tailed Kites near Mt. Diablo, Clapper Rails at Arrowhead Marsh, Brown Pelicans flying at the Marin Headlands, Barn Owls foraging at Pt. Reyes, the Tufa towers, Sage Thrashers and Ospreys of Mono Lake, birds of Bishop, and "dancing" Western Grebes on Clear Lake among others.

The buffet-style dinner will include selections for vegetarians and non-vegetarians. The cost is \$50.00 including tax and tip. Reservations must be made in advance. Please list names of all guests in your party and mail in the form on the back page by February 23, 2007. **THERE IS NO RESERVED SEATING.** You will not receive a confirmation of your reservation. Reservations will be held at the door. *For further information call Jeanne Polak-Recht, Chairperson, at (818) 360-1438.*



January 2007 Calendar

Saturday, January 6. High Desert Bird Prowl. 8:00 a.m. Here is an opportunity to seek out wintering hawks, owls, Mountain Plovers, Mountain Bluebirds, longspurs, sparrows, etc. Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Avenue S south of Palmdale and drive to the Park-n-Ride Lot just east of the off-ramp. We will meet at the west end of the lot and carpool for the morning. Bring snacks and beverages. Scopes and FRS radios will be helpful. We will return to the meeting spot by 1:00 PM. No fee, no reservation. Leaders: Jim Hardesty & Jim Moore. For more information, call Jim Moore at (661) 298-1130.

Sunday, January 7. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about 1/2 mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about 1/2 mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about 1/2 mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. For more information contact him at (310) 455-1827 or e-mail krisohl1@verizon.net.

Sunday, January 7. Chatsworth Nature Preserve/Reservoir. 8:00 a.m. Chapter members will again have the opportunity to join with the Southwest Herpetologist Society for a morning tour of the Preserve. Meet at the Valley Circle/Plummer Street gate approximately 1.5 miles west of Topanga Canyon Blvd., NOT the Fallbrook gate. Bring drinks, snacks, and scope if available, and be prepared to stay until noon, as the gate will be locked behind us. No smoking or pets, please. Facilities are limited and primitive. RAIN CANCELS. Leaders: Art Langton, Stuart Wells, and/or Mark Osokow. For additional information call Art Langton at (818) 887-0973.

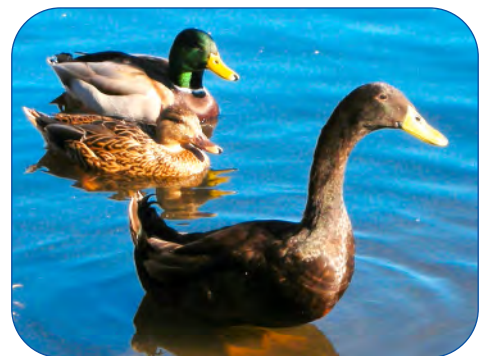
Saturday, January 13. Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 8:30–11:00 a.m. Come on out for a fun bird walk at Sepulveda Basin! These popular walks, designed for beginning birders and school-age children, are resuming for the current cool season. Directions: Same as for January 7, except walk across the road from the parking lot to the low buildings to meet. For more info, contact Muriel Kotin at (310) 457-5769 or aKotin@earthlink.net or Linda Jones at (818) 831-6061 or LJonesBird@aol.com.

Saturday, January 13. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the Ventura Freeway (U.S. 101) at Las Virgenes Canyon Road and proceed north to the trailhead parking area at the end of the road. Please bring plenty of water and wear proper shoes. Co-sponsored by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. Leader: Jim Hardesty (818) 346-6712, jnhardesty@adelphia.net .

Saturday, January 13. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docent's Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m. Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and continue about 1.5 miles to the park entrance. Turn right and park at the Nature Center. Leader: Bob Fischer. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

Sunday, January 14. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the first wide place after entering the gardens. Admission is free for early birders. Located at 1418 Descanso Drive, La Cañada. Leader: Karen Johnson or Nancy Herron Knode. For more information, contact Karen at (818) 790-1687 or lv2bird@aol.com.

Tuesday, January 16. Weekday Wanderers Bird Walk at El Cariso and Veteran's Parks in Sylmar. 9:00 a.m. This time we will begin at El Cariso Park at 13100 Hubbard Street. Directions: Exit the northbound 210 Freeway at Hubbard and turn right onto Hubbard. The park is just past L.A. Mission College; turn right into the third park entrance. Follow the entrance road back to the end of the lot and park. Rain cancels. Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer with any questions (before 7:30 p.m., please) at (818) 885-7493 or e-mail CarolOpp@aol.com.



Mallard Ducks Photo by Rebecca LeVine

Saturday, January 20. Monthly Field Trip: Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch and drinks. Allow about 1 1/2 hours driving time from the San Fernando Valley. Directions: Take the 405 Fwy south into Orange County; exit Jamboree Road in the city of Irvine. Turn right (south) on Jamboree Road and proceed about 4 miles to San Joaquin Hills Road, turn right and drive down to the bay. Park on San Joaquin Hills Road just before the dead end. In the afternoon we will bird the nearby San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Leader: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, January 20. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon.

8:00–10:00 a.m. Directions: Go north on I-5 through Santa Clarita, exit Calgrove and turn west (left) under the freeway and then left again on the Old Road. Watch for the sign, “Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon.” Turn right and park in the back lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 255-3606.

Sunday, January 21. Malibu Creek State Park Bird

Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$8 per car. Leader: Muriel Kotin (310) 457-5796, aKotin@earthlink.net.

Thursday, January 25. General Membership Meeting. 7:30 p.m.

Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino. Located between Moorpark and Ventura Blvd., on the west side of Balboa, just south of the Presbyterian Church. Come early for social hour. Our speaker, Dr. Lance Benner, Research Scientist from JPL, will speak about the “Birds of Puerto Rico” and discuss Arecibo Observatory and his research on near-Earth asteroids. Should be a fascinating evening. See “Program Notes” on page 2 for more information.

Sunday, January 28. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk.

See January 14.

Future Field Trips: (details later)

February 17. Game Preserve in Ventura County

March 17–18. Morro Bay Weekend 🌿

NOVEMBER IN CHATSWORTH NATURE PRESERVE *by Art Langton*

On Sunday, November 12, Chapter members joined with members of the Southwest Herpetologists Society for a second fall field trip and tour through Chatsworth Nature Preserve. Forty-eight bird species were recorded during the breezy but sunny morning. Highlights included three Hooded Mergansers on the pond plus equal numbers of American Wigeon and four species of herons and egrets. Raptors were represented by a pair of kites, a harrier, Cooper’s Hawks, and numerous Red-tails. Three Loggerhead Shrikes were recorded indicating the Preserve is a sanctuary for this increasingly scarce species. One lingering oriole, species unknown, kept birding interesting as did two separate sightings of Rock Wrens, a single Tri-colored Blackbird as well as the usual high numbers of Mourning Doves and Western Meadowlarks. The junior herpers flushed a Great Horned Owl during their survey, which yielded a rattlesnake and Western Fence Lizards. 🌿

ARE YOU LIVING WITH A KILLER?

By Alan Pollack, Audubon at Home Chair

The domestic cat, like its larger cousins in the wild, is a territorial creature. The size of its territory is a function of its food supply—the more food that is available, the smaller the territory needs to be. When food is available on a regular basis at the same place, as in a household, a cat’s territory is likely to be small areas within the house itself. Domestic cats then do not need to be wandering loose outdoors and there are some very good reasons to keep them indoors.

Roaming cats are food for larger predators, they are vulnerable to contagious diseases, and can be killed by

cars. They are also the greatest threat to our bird population killing HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of birds each year. Even well-fed cats will do this, as the instinct to hunt is distinct (in the cats’ brain) from the need to eat. The feral cat population can be kept in check if there are larger predators in the area, but if that is not the case and/or if well-meaning but uninformed people help to sustain the feral cat population, the problem for the birds worsens.

We can protect our feline friends and our birds by not letting kitty wander outdoors. A fresh-air experience can be provided, if necessary, by an outdoor enclosure, a screened porch or window, or training kitty to walk on a leash. Kitty and our birds will thank you! 🌿

Bird, Nature Lovers Unite

AV AUDUBON SOCIETY TO TAKE FLIGHT

The original story appeared in the Antelope Valley Press on Wednesday, December 13, 2006, and has been edited to fit this space. Retrieved from http://www.avpress.com/n/13/1213_s14.hts

By Brenna Humann, Valley Press Staff Writer

A group of concerned citizens gathered at the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve in Lancaster early this month to show that conservation is not just for the birds. About a dozen arrived at a meeting on Dec. 5 to discuss the formation of an Antelope Valley Audubon Society subchapter. "There are a lot of bird species here that are hard to find elsewhere," said Acton resident Jim Moore, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society treasurer. Moore and San Fernando Valley chapter President Kris Ohlenkamp offered to meet with area residents after they gave a summer bird walk at the preserve, where visitors expressed determination to form an area chapter.

"There's a lot of interest in preserving as much land as possible," Moore said before the meeting, noting that concern over housing development in the area partly has fueled the effort to draw the presence of Audubon. Moore said community growth actually might help conservation groups such as Audubon, adding, "There's a bigger population base to support this kind of interest now."

Prime Desert Woodland is unique among California natural areas for its biodiversity. The preserve features the California juniper and the Joshua tree naturally growing side by side—an unusual ecological arrangement, since the trees are native to different elevations.

Birdwatching, conservation and education, with an emphasis on involving youth and schools, are central objectives of Audubon, Ohlenkamp said during the meeting, inviting residents to have unique area goals in mind in conceiving their subchapter. The National Audubon Society once assigned Antelope Valley-area territory to the San Fernando chapter, but it stopped assigning the Antelope Valley to any particular chapter years ago, Ohlenkamp said. He said it is unclear what relationship any new Valley group would have with neighboring chapters, from San Fernando, San Bernardino or even Kern. San Fernando Valley's chapter would be glad to sponsor the Antelope Valley, Ohlenkamp said, providing access to its established

newsletter and environmental education programs. But, "We don't have facilities as nice as this one," he joked.

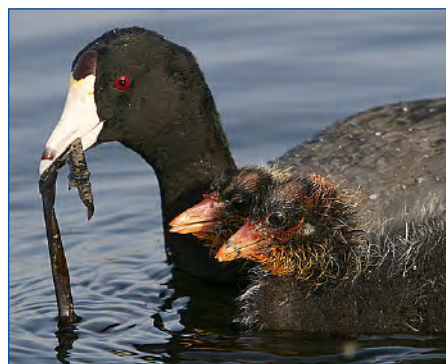
Eileen McAllister, a recreation leader at the preserve, said after the meeting that sufficient membership was achieved to form an Antelope Valley subchapter, exist-

"There's a lot of interest in preserving as much land as possible..."

ing in relationship with the San Fernando Audubon. For those interested in joining, the next meeting will be at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 2 at Prime Desert; meetings will con-

tinue the first Tuesday of the month thereafter. Membership, including a newsletter subscription, is \$25.

An independent Antelope Valley Audubon Society was not ruled out at the meeting, in which Ohlenkamp noted that goals directed toward influencing local environmental policy might be better served by an independent chapter. "I don't think the AV's going to get any smaller in size, and I don't think your environ-



mental issues are going to go away," he said. Ohlenkamp highlighted the social aspect of society gatherings, along with Audubon's reputation as "one of the most respected conservation organiza-

tions" in the nation. For information on monthly Audubon Society meetings and bird walks to come, call the preserve at (661) 723-6230.

Prime Desert Woodland Preserve's interpretive center, on 35th Street West and Avenue K-8 in Lancaster, is open 2 to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends. 🌿

Photo by Steve Agrella

JOIN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON

To get started with your membership, use the following form and mail to:

SFV Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 7769
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Make all checks payable to SFV Audubon.

SFVAS Membership

Regular 1-yr chapter membership\$20 \$ _____
 First-Class Postage\$5 \$ _____
 Contributions to SFVAS \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, ZIP _____
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The PHAINOPEPLA, published ten times a year, is the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, P. O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409, 818-347-3205.

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, a nonprofit conservation/education organization, and is dedicated to "the conservation of wildlife and natural resources."

Articles, letters, drawings, and photographs concerning conservation, the sciences and ecology, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for publication in the PHAINOPEPLA.

Material from other newsletters or newspapers should include the source and date. Copy for the PHAINOPEPLA should be in the hands of the editor by the 7th of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

An introductory membership to the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:

*National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center,
P.O. Box 52529, Boulder, CO 80322.* Be sure to write "C12"

on the form to assure assignment to our chapter. For renewals, use the form in the National Audubon magazine, *Audubon*.

If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Jim Van Beveren at (818) 998-4905 or e-mail him at jvanbeveren@vbandb.com.



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All phones are area code 818 unless otherwise noted.

For chapter leaders email addresses, see our Web site:

www.SanFernandoValleyAudubon.org/sfvas

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