

Phainopepla



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SFVAS RECEIVES COMMENDATIONS FROM CITY, COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS AT GALA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Reported by Carolyn Oppenheimer

Representatives from government lauded San Fernando Valley Audubon's contributions to the community over our 100-year history on March third at our Awards Banquet and Centennial Celebration. City Councilman Alex Padilla, on behalf of the entire Los Angeles City Council, presented commendations to the chapter. Assembly member Cindy Montané spoke eloquently praising the chapter's conservation efforts as she presented a certificate from the State Assembly. Assembly members Fran Pavley and Paul Koretz also sent in commendations. A deputy from Mayor Villaraigosa's office brought a certificate of commendation. Kris Ohlenkamp displayed a certificate from the State Senate signed by Richard Alarcon. Kris also read a letter, which accompanied a certificate from United States Representatives Howard Berman and Henry Waxman that praised our environmental education programs.

Los Angeles County sent a commendation signed by Supervisors Zev Yaroslavsky and Michael Antonovich.



Carolyn Oppenheimer, Centennial. Photo by Allan Kotin.

Jeanne Polak-Recht outdid herself with her arrangements for the event, which featured artistic balloon centerpieces. The conservation award was presented to Linda Jones for her superb work as *Phainopepla* editor. She graciously accepted and gave an interesting perspective on our Audubon history (See page 3). Well-known birding author Pete Dunne entertained the crowd of about 130 with his imagined conversation with the ghost of the father of modern ornithology, Alexander Wilson. The evening also featured an array of display boards on various historical involvements of our chapter prepared by

Carolyn Oppenheimer. For those of you who missed the banquet, these display boards will also be available for viewing at our June potluck. 🐦



From: Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

To: San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

Dear Friends:

Best wishes to everyone gathered at the 100th Birthday Celebration of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. We commend the staff, volunteers and friends of the SFV Audubon Society for their efforts to conserve and protect the natural habitat of bird life in the San Fernando Valley and the surrounding areas. We also appreciate the wonderful environmental education programs they provide children and families.

We have worked with the members of the Audubon Society in Washington and in California on many issues of mutual concern and have seen firsthand their many successes. The organization has helped make it possible to enjoy bird watching in the beautiful Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area, Chatsworth Reservoir, Malibu Creek State Park, Van Norman Wildlife Refuge, Hansen Dam, Big Tujunga Wash and Pierce College Canon de Lana.

Congratulations to the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society for 100 years of service. Enclosed is a Congressional Certificate of Appreciation as a small token of our gratitude.

Sincerely,

Howard L. Berman

Henry A. Waxman



Above: Kris Ohlenkamp, SFVAS President, and Cindy Montané, Assemblywoman.

Right: Jeanne Polak-Recht Banquet Chairperson.

Photos by Allan Kotin.

April 2006 Program Notes

NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES, AND HABITAT RESTORATION. MARTIN BYHOWER TO SPEAK AT APRIL 27 MEETING

Martin Byhower's talk will focus on California, but extend globally, discussing who the "good guys" and "bad guys" really are, in terms of invasive species of plants and animals (which next to habitat loss, are the greatest threat to biodiversity). Many people are surprised not only by which species are harmful but also by which species are not. Some native species are actually problematic due to overpopulation, and some non-natives are harmless or even beneficial. He will tell us how to get rid of Argentine ants in around our homes, guilt-free! The complex links and webs are amazing, such as pigs destroying coral reefs, lizards that keep us safe from Lyme disease and Endangered Species threatening other Endangered Species. Mr. Byhower will also talk about habitat restoration and the best habitat restorer of all, the coyote. Mr. Byhower is a science instructor at Chadwick High School, president of the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society, and director of Birding Southern California, a consulting business. Join us for an interesting and informative talk! 🍷

WHAT THIS CENTENNIAL MEANS TO ME by Linda Jones, 2006 Conservation Award Recipient

Thank you so much. This is indeed an honor. Everyone likes to be appreciated. But since this is our centennial, perhaps we should also thank those who made our chapter what it is: our founders and early leaders. I would like to say a few words on their behalf, in recognition of their pioneering leadership. Although everyone likes to be appreciated, we often overlook showing appreciation until those to be recognized can no longer hear us. Thank you for recognizing me while we are all still around to enjoy it together.

1886-1910 THE AUDUBON MOVEMENT

During the years shortly before and after 1900, important and interesting events were taking place:

- State Audubon Societies were beginning to be established.
- President Theodore Roosevelt established first National Wildlife Refuge, Pelican Island in Florida.
- Guy Bradley, early NWR warden was killed by poachers.
- Egret populations had reached all-time lows: Only 1,400 Great Egrets and 250 Snowies were found in a four-state survey.
- New York State passed the "Audubon Plumage Law" which crippled the plumage trade in fancy feathers for women's hats.



The California Audubon Society, which eventually became San Fernando Valley Audubon (and is still our legal name), was statewide in scope at that time, with districts around the state reporting to it.

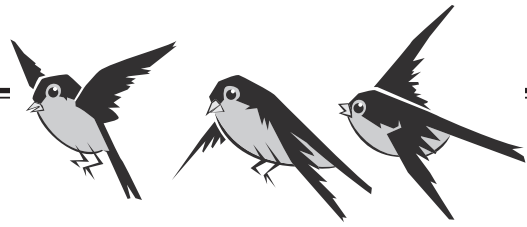
So, what was happening at California Audubon? Three related endeavors were undertaken:

1. Education of school children (Junior Audubon Clubs, school presentations, leaflets and picture packets.)
2. Lobbying Sacramento for laws protecting birds, with considerable success. The efforts of California Audubon Society (CAS) leaders helped convince lawmakers to pass a plumage law, to place many bird species under protection and to shorten certain game bird seasons.
3. Changing attitudes of farmers, ranchers and the general public.

The first two items are easy enough to visualize from our present perspective. The third, the changing of attitudes, may require a bit of explaining. An officer of CAS during the early years, Mrs. F.T. Bicknell, tells us that, "to the nature lover, all weeds are flowers, all feathered things birds, and all furry things animals. Not so with the ranchers and the general public however, who view with suspicion every wild flower beside the road, every bundle of fur that scampers in the field." Mrs. Bicknell concluded, "Educating the public to the economic value of our natural resources is the only value that seems to carry weight."

One of the leaflets devised for general distribution by CAS was entitled "The Value of Birds." It suggested "a reasonable way of viewing the relation of birds to the farmer is to consider them as servants employed to destroy weeds and insects." Thus, they should be protected and in some cases, allowed a small salary in fruit and grain.

continued on page 6



April 2006 Calendar

Saturday, April 1. Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve Trash Cleanup. 8:00 a.m.–Noon. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. Haskell Creek, which runs through the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area to the Los Angeles River, hosts many riparian trees and shrubs. Songbirds forage and nest in the trees and shrubs, while egrets and herons fish in this heart of the Wildlife Area. Winter rains have washed in hideous amounts of trash, especially plastic bags and Styrofoam. This is your chance to help restore the creek's beauty. **Equipment and Clothing:** Please wear rugged clothing, including water shoes or rubber boots, and sunscreen. If you have them, please bring gardening gloves and tools to help reach items. **Tours of the Wildlife Area:** Guided tours will be available at 11:00 a.m., primarily for participants who are not familiar with the Wildlife Area. **Directions:** Take Woodley Avenue (which is 1/2 mile west of the I-405 Freeway) north from Burbank Boulevard. Go 1/2 mile north to the signs for the Wildlife Reserve and Japanese Gardens. Turn east (right). Where the road forks, bear right. Continue east 1/2 mile to the end of the road. Sign in at the amphitheater, just beyond the large rock monuments and rock-faced buildings. **More Information:** The event is appropriate for adults and older students. It is **not appropriate for young children**. It is an excellent opportunity for students to earn **community service hours**. Rain cancels but light drizzle does not. If we are rained out on April 1, we will reschedule for Saturday, April 8. Other questions, contact Muriel Kotin at (310) 457-5796 or Linda Jones at (818) 831-6061.

Sunday, April 2. 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). (Due to the Persian New Year celebration at Lake Balboa, we suggest that you access Woodley Avenue from Burbank Boulevard). 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. Look for people with binoculars. Leader is Kris Ohlenkamp. For more information contact him at (310) 455-1827 or e-mail krisohl1@verizon.net.

Saturday, April 8. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon (Ahmanson Ranch) Bird Walk. 8:00–10:30 a.m. Join us as we enjoy this recent park acquisition while looking for seasonal birds. 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. Nearest public restroom facility is at Gates Canyon Park, about 1 mile east of Las Virgenes Canyon Road on Thousand Oaks Boulevard. Co-sponsored by the *Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy* and the *Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority*. Leader: Jim Hardesty (818) 346-6712.

Saturday, April 8. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' 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, April 9. 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.

Saturday, April 15. 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, April 16. 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.

continued on page 5

Tuesday, April 18. Weekday Wanderers Bird Walk at O'Melveny Park. 8:30 a.m. A BIRDATHON EVENT.

Directions: To reach the park, go north on Balboa Blvd. from the 118 Fwy. Turn left (west) on Sesnon Ave. The park is on the right about 1/4 mile past the turn. Meet in the parking lot. Call Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 with questions (before 7:00 p.m. please) or e-mail: CarolOpp@aol.com.

Wednesday, April 20. Birding Butterbredt Springs, California City, Galileo Hills and Piute Ponds. A BIRDATHON EVENT.

Meet at 6:00 AM at the park-n-ride lot on the east side of Avenue S in Palmdale. We will then stop in Palmdale for a brief search for LeConte's Thrasher, then on to Butterbredt Springs. Leader: Jim Moore. Approximate species: 90. Please advise Jim by email, jimmoore@socal.rr.com if you plan to join him.

Saturday, April 22. Monthly Field Trip to Morongo Valley. 8:00 a.m. A BIRDATHON EVENT.

This desert oasis 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. Directions: Allow 2 1/2 hours to drive from the San Fernando Valley. 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. Bring lunch and drinks. In the afternoon we will drive to Joshua Tree National Park to look for wildflowers, Scott's Orioles, Pinyon Jays, Brewer's and Black-throated Sparrows. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

Sunday, April 23. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. See April 9 for details.

Thursday, April 27. 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 time. Our speaker will be Martin Byhower, president of the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society, who will speak on native and non-native plant and animal species, and habitat restoration. See "Program Notes" on page 3.

Remember: We now meet on fourth Thursdays.

Future Fieldtrips:

May 13. Walker Ranch/Placerita Canyon (second Saturday)

June 10. Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve (second Saturday)

July 15. Mt. Pinos 🌿

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominations Committee (Muriel Kotin, Barbara Willahan, Jim Hardesty, Chair) is pleased to present you with the list of candidates for office on the Board of Directors of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society for the 2006-2007 program year.

President	Kris Ohlenkamp	Continuing Directors <i>not</i> requiring election are:	
1st Vice President	Donna Timlin	Treasurer	Jim Moore
2nd Vice President	Jim Van Beveren	2nd Year Director	Jon Fisher
Recording Secretary	Joyce MacKinnon	2nd Year Director	Chris Van Beveren
Corresponding Secretary	Sharon Ford	3rd Year Director	Carol Johnson
1st Year Director	Barbara Willahan	3rd Year Director	David Eisenberg
1st Year Director	John Dietz		

The candidate slate will be announced at the General Membership Meeting on April 27, the election will be held at the May 25 meeting and installation will take place at the June 22 meeting.

The committee would like to thank all those members who have served the chapter in some capacity. We invite those of you with an interest in becoming more active in chapter activities to let us know. 🌿

Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

On February 18 we visited a spacious game preserve on private land in southern Ventura County. The threat of showers held down participation a bit, but our fourteen birders encountered only one brief rain squall and tallied seventy-four species on the walk.

Waterfowl, shorebirds, herons and raptors dominated the scene while a nice selection of passerines vied for attention. The outstanding find of the day was a Stilt Sandpiper (!), occasionally seen in California as a fall migrant but extremely rare in winter and spring except at the Salton Sea. Also creating a good deal of excitement were Eastern Phoebe and Vermilion Flycatcher, and the hits just kept on coming with American Bittern, Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Ross' Goose, Brant, Wilson's Snipe, Virginia Rail (heard) and Sora.



Mention should certainly be made of Peregrine Falcon, White-tailed Kite, Long-billed Curlew, White-faced Ibis, American Pipit, Marsh Wren, "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Savannah Sparrow. No luck with Tricolored or Yellow-headed Blackbirds this year. Four species of swallows were present including Cliff Swallow which, as Jim Hardesty points out, was a full month early in terms of the well-publicized "Return of the Swallows" week-end at San Juan Capistrano. We were happy to see Loggerhead Shrike and Northern Harrier, both of which are on the decline in southern California. 🍷

Sora Illustration: Daniel S. Kilby

Centennial *continued from page 3*

The text of the leaflet went on to detail many examples of just how many harmful insects were eaten by various birds during certain time periods. One pair of grosbeaks fed their young 800 insect larvae in one day. One nest of baby wrens ate 600 insects per day. A single Yellowthroat ate 89 plant lice in a minute. The list goes on and on with cutworms, cotton boll weevils, potato beetles, flies, ants and rose beetles being scarfed up by the obedient servant birds. This list may be amusing to us nowadays, but it was meaningful to the farmers and lawmakers of that time and served the purposes of CAS precisely.

Aldo Leopold (1887–1948), who has been called the father of wildlife ecology, worked out a coherent philosophy of living in harmony with the land. In 1900, a boy shot the last wild Passenger Pigeon. In 1914, the last captive Passenger Pigeon, Martha, died in the Cincinnati zoo, was taxidermied and sent to the Smithsonian. In 1947, in reference to these events, Leopold said:

There will always be [Passenger] Pigeons in books and museums, but these are effigies and images, dead to all hardships and to all delights. Book pigeons cannot dive out of a cloud to make the deer run for cover, nor clap their wings in thunderous applause of mast-laden woods. They know no urge of seasons; they feel no kiss of sun, no lash of wind and weather; they live forever by not living at all. Our grandfathers... were less well housed, well fed, well clothed than we are. The strivings by which they bettered our lot are also those which deprived us of [Passenger] Pigeons. Perhaps we now grieve because we are not sure, in our hearts, that we have gained by the exchange... Because our sorrow is genuine, we are tempted to believe that we had no part in the demise of the pigeon. The truth is that our grandfathers, who did the actual killing, were our agents. They were our agents in the sense that they shared the conviction, which we have only now begun to doubt, that it is more important to multiply people and comforts than to cherish the beauty of the land in which they live.

Reference Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Pam Huffman and Carolyn Oppenheimer for finding and letting me use the annual reports and leaflets of the early California Audubon Society. The material about Aldo Leopold was found in the October 18, 1976 New Yorker magazine in the "Talk of the Town" column. Thanks to Sally Hall for sending it.

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 \$ _____
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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 Sonya Onderwyzer at (818) 841-1788 or email her at: skwiser28@cs.com. 🐦

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Treasurer:	Jim Moore	(661) 298-1130
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Carol Johnson	981-8457
David Eisenberg	247-4635
Jon Fisher	988-5047
Chris Van Beveren	998-4905

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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Descanso Bird Walks:	Karen Johnson	790-1687
Descanso Bird Walks:	Nancy Herron Knode	
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Phainopepla April 2006

BIRDATHON *Submitted by Donna Timlin*

It is April and Birdathon has officially begun. By now you should have received your pledge envelope in the mail. Birdathon is a competition that gives members the opportunity to support our volunteers and our education programs. A large portion of Birdathon funds goes towards outdoor field trips for Los Angeles students, and puts Audubon Adventures into classrooms. Birdathon also helps pay for our meeting hall rent, insurance, and newsletter.

Birdathon is a fundraising drive based upon your pledges for each species of bird found by our teams. Teams try to identify as many different species as they can on their Birdathon day. Some leaders use their regular bird walks, others form small teams in all-day bird marathons called "Big Days." You can contribute by coming to the open walks that are Birdathon events and helping build the species count or by making and sending in your pledges.

Didn't get a letter? Lost the envelope? Still want to help? Send your contribution, payable to SFVAS, P.O. Box 7769 Van Nuys, CA 91409. All contributions help. Thank you! See the Calendar section for directions and additional information or contact Donna Timlin at (818) 341-9354.

Leader	Place/Date	Probable Species
Carolyn Oppenheimer	O'Melveny/April 18	35
Jim Moore	Butterbrecht, Piute Ponds, Galileo Hills/April 20	90
Dick Barth	Big Morongo/Joshua Tree/April 22	65-70
Kris Ohlenkamp	Sepulveda Basin/May 7	50-75
Nancy Herron-Knode	Descanso Gardens/May 14	50
Mike McHorney	Stough Nature Center	35
Allan and Muriel Kotin	Greater Los Angeles Area	107
Jim Hardesty	Greater Los Angeles Area	125
Lori Willis Memorial	Greater Los Angeles County	100

The "Mean" Team. Don't like picking a favorite? We can let you know the average (mean) number of bird species from all the Birdathon teams. 🐦

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

- Gala Celebration Report - pg.1**
- Program Notes - pg.3**
- Calendar - pg.4**
- Nominations Report - pg.5**
- Monthly Field Trip Report - pg.6**
- SFVAS Info - pg.7**