

# Phainopepla



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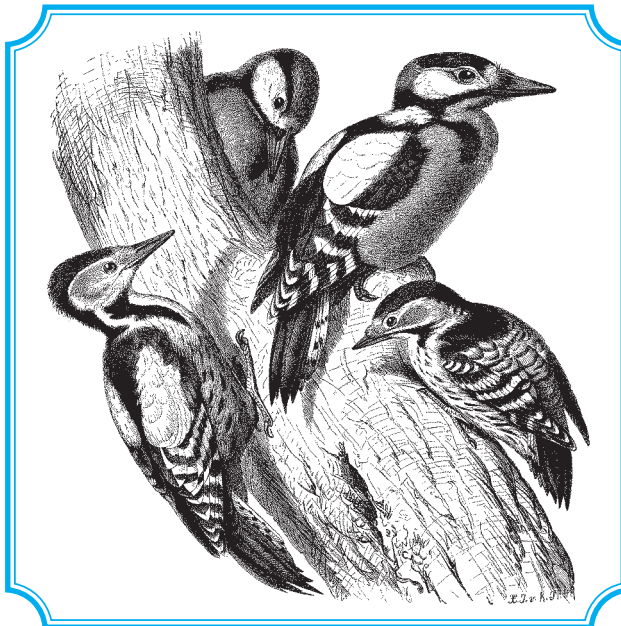
## Birdathon!

by Donna Timlin

It's springtime in the neighborhoods of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. The Red-winged Blackbirds are back at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area. American Goldfinches are shedding their winter feathers and bird songs are filling our hearts. When spring arrives our annual fundraising event, Birdathon, is not far behind.

Birdathon is our annual bird watching competition. Most of our yearly operating expenses are paid for with the money raised from this event. This competition gives our members an opportunity to show their support for our volunteers and our environmental education programs. The fundraising drive is based upon your pledges for each species of bird found by our teams. Our teams will try to find as many bird species as they can on their special day. Some Birdathon leaders use the bird counts from their regularly scheduled bird walks while others form special teams for all day birding marathons called "Big

Days." Those who come to any of the open walks that are Birdathon events will assist the walk leader by helping to build up the species count.



Funds from our Birdathon help pay for the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program of outdoor field trips for thousands of Los Angeles Unified School District students. Many students have NEVER visited a natural environment like the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area even though they live nearby. SFVAS also provides free classroom presentations and free Audubon Adventures newspapers to our local schools. Your contributions also help pay for the more mundane regular operating expenses such as our newsletter, rent on our meeting rooms,

and insurance for our walks.

Soon you will be receiving your Birdathon letter in the mail. There are many ways you can contribute. Please help. 🐦

## March 2006 Program Notes

### **PETE DUNNE TO LEAD BIRD WALK IN SEPULVEDA BASIN FOR THE BENEFIT OF SFVAS**

Here is your chance to learn great tips on bird watching from one of the foremost authorities on the subject in the United States while helping support our Audubon chapter. Learn from the master. Mr. Dunne has graciously agreed to lead a charity bird walk for the benefit of SFVAS the morning after his lecture at our Annual Awards Banquet. The walk will be held at 8:30 a.m. at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area on Saturday, March 4. We are asking for a donation of \$30 to SFVAS to attend. Participation will be limited to twenty-five people so reserve early. Coffee and nibbles will be available at the start of the walk. Reservations can be made with Chris Van Beveren via her e-mail address: [becktravel@yahoo.com](mailto:becktravel@yahoo.com). If you don't have e-mail you can reserve by phone at (818) 998-3122. 🐦

### **SFVAS BOARD DONATES TO PROTECT MIGRATING BIRDS**

*Submitted by Donna Timlin*

On November 28, 2005 the Board voted to donate \$500 to support the legal action being taken by Los Angeles and Kerncrest Audubon's to protect migrating birds from the establishment of a wind farm without proper environmental studies being done. The Pine Tree Wind Project, very near Butterbrecht Springs, an international important bird area, is planned as the largest municipally owned wind farm in the United States. The Biological Assessment of avian population done for the environmental impact report (EIR) was apparently based upon a one-time site visit between April 15 and May 30 of one hour and focused on raptors. The area is traditionally recognized as a migratory route for songbirds. According to Garry George of LAAS, "Birders from LAAS and other organizations have visited Butterbrecht Springs during that same "peak migration" period and found up to 6,000 in one day."

Pleas by various environmental groups to Los Angeles DWP to follow protocol for EIR's recommended by the wind industry prior to construction were not honored. As a result LAAS joined with Kerncrest Audubon to file a lawsuit against DWP to include better migratory bird studies in the EIR prior to construction, specifically the

lack of definitive studies on the potential threat to specific birds, especially migratory songbirds, covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Issues at stake in this and other wind farm actions include avian safety in the equipment chosen for use, placement of the turbines, and the time of day or night or seasons when they are used. Wind energy is an important alternative to fossil fuels and the realities of avian migration can be included as we harness this important alternative power source. 🐦

### **SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE RESERVE TRASH CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2006**

**8:00 a.m.-NOON**

Please help liberate lovely Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area and Haskell Creek from trash.

Haskell Creek, which runs through the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area to the Los Angeles River, hosts many riparian trees and shrubs, such as cottonwoods, willows and cattails. Songbirds forage and nest in the trees and shrubs, while egrets and herons fish in this heart of the Wildlife Area. Winter rains 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

*Program Notes* continued from page 2

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. 🌿

## **GET INVOLVED WITH WATERSHED RESTORATION!**

*Submitted by Jim Hardesty*

As many of you know, planning is currently underway for the improvement and revitalization of the Los Angeles River and the Tujunga Watershed. Information on the former is available at [www.lariver.org](http://www.lariver.org) and on the latter at [www.tujungawash.org](http://www.tujungawash.org).

There will be a Community Outreach meeting on the LA River Revitalization Master Plan on Saturday, March 25, 2006, at Birmingham High School, 17000 Haynes St, Van Nuys, CA from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. You are invited and encouraged to attend.

The Tujunga Wash Project is a watershed management project undertaken by The River Project, a non-profit organization, whose mission is to encourage responsible management of our watershed lands and revitalization of our rivers for the social, economic, and environmental benefit of our communities. Its aim is to develop a stakeholder-driven Tujunga Watershed Management Plan with goals of identifying opportunities to maximize water recharge, optimize water reuse, and improve water quality. In addition, it will look for other opportunities to benefit the watershed, such as improving wildlife habitat and increasing park space in underserved communities.

By sharing data, identifying goals and objectives, providing input and technical review, generating a range of actions and programs, and creating a plan to finance its implementation, stakeholders will work together to develop a sound, yet visionary plan for the future.

To encourage greater community participation, the project will be conducting Watershed U-Tujunga, an educational opportunity to learn more about watersheds in general. The Tujunga Watershed project will provide input into the processes of data collection, analysis, potential improvement and/or modification.

Watershed U-Tujunga will be held at Los Angeles Valley College on six consecutive Monday evenings, April 17

through May 22, 2006, from 6:30–9:30 p.m. The cost of \$30 includes materials and meals. Register online at [www.tujungawash.org](http://www.tujungawash.org) or by phone by calling (818) 980-9660 Ext.2.

Get active—join in this great opportunity to bring life back to our rivers and streams! 🌿

## **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY AND NATIONAL ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TO HELP COMMUNITIES REPLANT TREES LOST TO HURRICANE KATRINA**

Hurricane Katrina damaged many of the beautiful trees found on America's Gulf Coast. To help with the restoration, the National Audubon Society and The National Arbor Day Foundation have launched a special new campaign that will assist in the region's tree recovery efforts. Through the Katrina Tree Recovery Campaign, people across America will have the opportunity to replant trees in coastal Mississippi and Louisiana, and begin the reforestation of neighborhoods and cities across the region.

For every \$10 donated to the Katrina Tree Recovery Campaign, the Arbor Day Foundation will contribute 10 trees to be planted by Katrina victims. Audubon Mississippi's Coastal Project Office and its director, Dr. Mark LaSalle, who will work with Audubon Chapters and other civic and community groups in the region to distribute the trees, will manage distribution of the trees.

Audubon Mississippi's collaboration with The National Arbor Day Foundation is part of its overall initiative to promote the recovery of habitat for birds and other wildlife in areas stricken by Hurricane Katrina. The project, dubbed Operation Backyard Recovery, follows many of the themes of the Audubon at Home program, namely that by taking personal conservation action, everyone can improve the environmental health and habitat quality close to home and, collectively, over the larger landscape. More information about Operation Backyard Recovery can be found at [www.msaudubon.org/katrina/restoration.php](http://www.msaudubon.org/katrina/restoration.php).

To contribute to the Katrina Tree Recovery Campaign, people can send contributions to The National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410, or contribute online at [www.arborday.org/Katrina](http://www.arborday.org/Katrina). 🌿

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## March 2006 Calendar

**Friday, March 3. Centennial Celebration and Awards Banquet. 6:00 p.m. Cocktails, 7:00 p.m. Dinner.** Featured Speaker: Pete Dunne. Conservation Award Recipient: Linda Jones. Location: Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Avenue, Van Nuys. Chairperson: Jeanne Polak-Recht, (818) 360-1438.

**Saturday, March 4. Pete Dunne Charity Bird Walk. 8:30 a.m.** Mr. Dunne will lead a charity bird walk for the benefit of SFVAS. The walk will be held at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area, see March 5 for directions. We are asking for a donation of \$30 to SFVAS to attend. Coffee and nibbles will be available at the start of the walk. Reservations must be made with Chris Van Beveren via her e-mail address, [becktravel@yahoo.com](mailto:becktravel@yahoo.com) or by phone at (818) 998-3122.

**Sunday, March 5. 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. Look for people with binoculars. Leader is Kris Ohlenkamp. For more information contact him at (310) 455-1827 or e-mail [krisohl1@verizon.net](mailto:krisohl1@verizon.net).

**Saturday, March 11. 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, have resumed for the current cool season. Directions: Same as for March 5, 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](mailto:aKotin@earthlink.net) or Linda Jones at (818) 831-6061 or [LJonesBird@aol.com](mailto:LJonesBird@aol.com).

**Saturday, March 11. 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, March 11. Chatsworth Nature Preserve/Reservoir Field Trip. 8:00 a.m.** Pending DWP approval. Meet at the north end of Fallbrook Avenue just north of Roscoe Blvd.. Bring snack, drink, and scope, if available. Be prepared to stay until at least 12:30 p.m. as the gate will be locked behind us. No smoking or pets. Facilities are limited and primitive. Rain cancels with March 25 as backup date. Leaders: Mark Osokow, Stuart Wells, Art Langton. Be prepared to carpool during reservoir tour.

**Saturday, March 11. 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, March 12. 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](mailto:lv2bird@aol.com).

**Saturday, Sunday, March 18-19. Monthly Field Trip: MORRO BAY WEEKEND!** The first day, Saturday, March 18, we will meet in the parking lot on the near (inland) side of Morro Rock at 8:00 a.m. The second day, Sunday, March 19, we will meet at the Montana de Oro State Park Headquarters/Visitor Center at 8:00 a.m. Our species tally is usually very high on this trip. Pigeon Guillemot and Chestnut-backed Chickadee are expected. Directions from the San Fernando Valley: Take the 101 Freeway to San Luis Obispo and then follow Route 1 north to the town of Morro Bay. Allow at least 4 hours driving time from the Valley. Bring lunch and drinks. Be prepared for possible inclement weather, and remember that the central coast can be quite chilly in the mornings. Make camping or motel reservations as soon as possible. Leader is Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

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**Saturday, March 18. 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, March 19. 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 or e-mail: aKotin@earthlink.net.

**Tuesday, March 21. Weekday Wanderers Bird Walk at Cheeseboro Canyon Park. 8:30 a.m.**

Directions: From the San Fernando Valley take the Ventura Freeway (101) west to Chesebro Road. Exit and turn right. You will then be on Palo Comado Canyon Road. Proceed to Chesebro Road and turn right. Go about one mile and make a right turn into the park. Park in the farthest lot. Call Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 with questions (before 7:00 p.m. please) or e-mail: CarolOpp@aol.com.

**Thursday, March 23. NO General Membership Meeting. See you April 27th!**

**Sunday, March 26. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. – See March 12 for details.**

**Future Fieldtrips:**

**April 22. Morongo Valley (fourth Saturday)**

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

**June 10. Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve (second Saturday) ☺**



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**CONSERVATION FUNDING BOND ON NOV. 2006 BALLOT**

*Submitted by Jim Hardesty*

Audubon California and other conservation groups have submitted bond language to the California Attorney General to qualify a \$5.4 billion conservation and water quality funding bond for the November 2006 ballot. The bond contains substantial funding for most of Audubon’s conservation priorities, including \$47 million for Salton Sea restoration, \$108 million for San Francisco Bay, \$45 million for working landscapes, \$135 million for the Wildlife Conservation board, \$135 million for the Coastal Conservancy, and much, much more. You can view the full breakdown of funding categories at [http://ca.audubon.org/2006\\_Bond\\_Funding.htm](http://ca.audubon.org/2006_Bond_Funding.htm). We are also continuing to work on legislation, SB 153 (Chesbro – D, Arcata) which would provide legislative authorization for a second or substitute bond for the

November 2006 ballot, depending on what the final terms are in SB 153. Either or both conservation funding bonds will require organizing public support to ensure their passage next November. We will provide updates and campaign materials as we move forward.

You can help us in the important conservation effort by signing a petition to get on the November ballot. Watch for petition signature-gatherers in March and April. Also encourage your eligible family and friends to join this effort! ☺

**ADULT RESEARCH CAMPS AT STARR RANCH**

*Submitted by Caroline Lee*

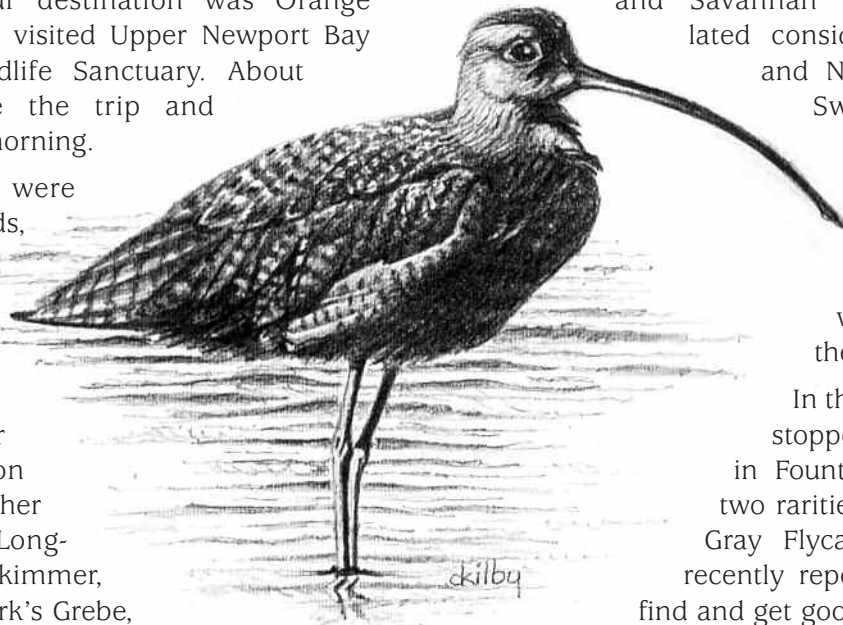
Audubon California’s Starr Ranch Sanctuary invites you to our overnight camps for adults. Join staff biologists for a peaceful weekend at beautiful 4000 acre Starr Ranch in southeast Orange County and experience nature hands-on as a wildlife researcher. Stay in our historic bunkhouse or camp. Two camps will be offered:

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# Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

On January 21 our destination was Orange County, where we visited Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. About twenty birders made the trip and enjoyed a crisp, clear morning.

Thousands of birds were seen—ducks, shorebirds, grebes, gulls, terns, marsh birds, herons, pelicans, raptors, various passerines, etc. Notable were sightings of Clapper Rail, Eurasian Wigeon and California Gnatcatcher while Dunlin, Sora, Long-billed Curlew, Black Skimmer, Common Moorhen, Clark’s Grebe, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, American Pipit



Long-billed Curlew

and Savannah Sparrow also stimulated considerable interest. Barn and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, scarce in winter, were spotted. A Rufous-crowned Sparrow seen at Upper Newport by Susan Gilliland was quite unexpected there.

In the afternoon a few of us stopped by Mile Square Park in Fountain Valley to look for two rarities, Harris’ Sparrow and Gray Flycatcher, that had been recently reported. We managed to find and get good looks at both birds—a nice way to top off a great trip. Our species tally for the day was ninety. 🐦

Illustration: Daniel S. Kilby

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### Bird Research Camp

The weekend will begin with a Friday night introduction to the birds of Starr Ranch. Then first thing Saturday morning, we’ll conduct our own breeding bird survey. The afternoon will be spent learning how raptor biologists use radio telemetry to study hawks’ movement patterns and will be followed by an evening “Owl Prowl.” Sunday morning, you’ll have a chance to see some of your favorite songbirds up-close and in the hand, as we participate in Starr Ranch’s bird banding program.

Dates and Times: 7 p.m. Friday, May 19 to noon Sunday, May 21

Cost: \$100/bunkhouse; \$90/camping (breakfasts and Sat. dinner provided)

### Wildlife Research Camp

On Saturday morning adult campers will use scent-baited stations (scent stations) placed in the wild and learn how to identify tracks and scat of large mammals that visit the scent stations. In the afternoon, campers will participate in a stream biosurvey where

they will take samples of aquatic invertebrates to assess stream water quality. That evening, campers will conduct a nocturnal wildlife survey during which we’ll explore Bell Canyon at night from benches in the back of a flat-bed truck, making stops to call for owls and coyotes. Sunday morning the group will learn how biologists monitor the reptiles and amphibians (herps) of southern California.

Dates and Times: 9 a.m. Saturday, June 3 to noon Sunday, June 4

Cost: \$80/bunkhouse; \$75/camping (Sat. dinner and Sun. breakfast provided)

Space is limited

Reservations: (949) 858-0131

Questions: (949) 858-0309

<http://www.starranch.org/> and click on “Adult Research Camps” 🐦

### BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT

For the latest information on Audubon activities in California, check out the e-Newsletter at <http://ca.audubon.org>. 🐦

**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 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

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](mailto:skwiser28@cs.com). 🐦

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

President:	Kris Ohlenkamp	(310) 455-1827
1st Vice President:	Donna Timlin	341-9354
2nd Vice President:	Sonya Onderwyzer	841-1788
Treasurer:	Jim Moore	(661) 298-1130
Recording Sec'y:	Jim Van Beveren	998-4905
Corresponding Sec'y:	Sharon Ford	780-5816

**DIRECTORS**

Margie Maseda	882-1214 x2680
Joyce MacKinnon	901-9234
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](http://www.SanFernandoValleyAudubon.org/sfvas)

**CHAPTER PHONE (818) 347-3205**

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Birdathon:	Donna Timlin	341-9354
Centennial:	Carolyn Oppenheimer	885-7493
Christmas Bird Count:	Art Langton	887-0973
Coord. Council. Rep.:	Jim Hardesty	346-6712
Conservation:	Kris Ohlenkamp	(310) 455-1827
Descanso Bird Station:	Dottie Ecker	790-0659
Descanso Bird Walks:	Karen Johnson	790-1687
Descanso Bird Walks:	Nancy Herron Knode	
Education:	Pat Jacobs	222-2456
Field Trips:	Richard Barth	(310) 276-0342
Finance:	Allan Kotin	(310) 457-5796
Hospitality:	Carol Johnson	981-8458
Layout & Design Editor:	David Aaron	825-8936
Library, Festivals:	Pam Huffman	342-2025
Malibu Crk. Bird Walks:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796
Membership:	Sonya Onderwyzer	841-1788
Phainopepla Editor:	Rebecca LeVine	776-0881
Programs, Publicity:	Jeanne Polak-Recht	831-2438
Sales & Services:	Carolyn Oppenheimer	885-7493
Scholarships:	Linda Jones	831-6061
Sepulveda Bird Walks:	Kris Ohlenkamp	(310) 455-1827
Web Master:	Steve Sosensky	508-4946
Youth Activities:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796



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**Phainopepla** March 2006



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