

Phainopepla

June 2007

Web Edition

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ATTENTION MEMBERS!

We still need your images!
Our newsletter is only as good
as the content you provide to us.

**We really need more of your
fine images of birds and other
wildlife-related things to help make
our newsletter more enjoyable to read.**

**Imagine the thrill of seeing your photos
in print! Well, it can be more than just
a dream, so shake the dust off those
digital cameras and start sending us
your shots! Photos should be in TIFF,
RAW or JPEG format, please.**

Please Note:

*There will be NO SFVAS or
Antelope Valley General
Membership Meetings
in July or August.*

Enjoy the summer!

Phainopepla



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President's Message by Kris Ohlenkamp

Who Is An Auduboner And What Do Auduboners Do?

Mostly we just do ordinary things. Some of us work to keep the Chapter running in a friendly and efficient manner, so that others can work to preserve and provide natural habitat for all creatures, so that others can have a place to teach the unenlightened about the wonders and values of habitat diversity. Most of us are reluctant enthusiasts, part-time crusaders, and half-hearted fanatics who are often disappointed in ourselves for not doing more, or getting more accomplished. But, we are doing something, and together we sometimes accomplish extraordinary things. For instance, just in the month of April we led 12 field trips introducing dozens of people to the wonderful diversity of bird life right here in southern California and furthering the education of hundreds more who frequent our walks on a regular basis. If you haven't joined us yet, why not? A friendlier group of birders you will never find, you are guaranteed to learn something, and you will be outside getting exercise.

Also in April we held our annual trash cleanup and Haskell creek rescue, one of our organized events to make restitution for the harm that man does to

nature. If you attended our General Meeting in April you heard about another way we can help you reclaim a little bit of nature for wildlife that is feeling the impacts of man's need to reproduce and abuse—Audubon-At-Home.

We have also been working hard at restoring the Los Angeles River and preserving the threatened riparian habitat that still exists along the Santa Clara River in Los Angeles County. We are now speaking in terms of ecological restoration, ecosystem functionality, wildlife corridors, habitat connectivity, and watersheds—terms we never used just 10 years ago. We are all learning and growing—and having fun doing it.

As our new Website (<http://www.sfvaudubon.org/>) develops over the next few months we will be better able to inform you of the opportunities to make a difference locally. Meanwhile, I encourage you all to check out Audubon California's Website (ca.audubon.org) for information about some of the major issues affecting California. 🌿

Monthly Field Trip Report *by Richard Barth*

Our April 28 Morongo Valley/Joshua Tree field trip doubled as a SFVAS Birdathon and produced 67 species.

We did well with our target birds in the Morongo area as Summer Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat, Brown-crested Flycatcher and Vermilion Flycatcher were obligingly on hand for us. Costa's Hummingbird and Lawrence's Goldfinch also did not disappoint. Some neat bonus finds were Gray Flycatcher, Hammond's Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo, Cassin's Vireo and Sharp-shinned Hawk. Greater Roadrunner was heard. Other selected birds of interest included Verdin, Gambel's Quail, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Hermit Thrush,

Western Bluebird, Western Wood-Pewee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Cassin's Kingbird, Phainopepla, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Yellow Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Hooded Oriole, Chipping Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting. A Barn Owl was pointed out to us roosting hidden in a tree at Covington Park.

After lunch we caravanned to Black Rock Campground in Joshua Tree National Park. One of the first species seen was Pinyon Jay, always on our wish list but sometimes missed. We were pleased to

also find Scott's Oriole, Black-throated Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow and Cactus Wren—all expected here. 🌿



Costa's Hummingbird Photo by Don Shoemaker

An April Tour Through Chatsworth Nature Preserve *by Art Langton*

Chapter members attending the April 29 tour and visit to Chatsworth Nature Preserve were treated to over seventy species of resident, summer nesters, and migrant bird species. Of special note and most unusual was a flock of eight Brant flying across reservoir grounds in the early morning plus several large to small flocks of seldom seen Yellow-headed Blackbirds around and near the permanent pond. Excellent views were enjoyed of a most cooperative Sora, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Warbling Vireos. Several Lazuli Buntings, two species of orioles, a Western Bluebird and five species of warblers added color to the day's viewing. Six species of herons and egrets were sighted around the pond: green, great-blue, and night herons, plus snowy, great, and cattle egrets. Lingering on the pond was a pair of Gadwalls, Mallards, American Wigeon, and Ring-necked Ducks. Flycatchers were much in evidence with Ash-throated and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Black and Say's Phoebes, and Western and Cassin's Kingbirds being seen on several occasions. Three species of swallows and an equal number of hummingbirds enhanced the day's totals. The only possible disappointment to the day's viewing was the absence of any tanagers or grosbeaks even though they have been reported in nearby neighborhoods. 🌿



Black-crowned Night Heron by Don Shoemaker

Feed me. . . feed me.

AUDUBON-AT-HOME *by Alan Pollack*

“Critters need water for drinking and bathing.”

THIS MONTH’S ARTICLE AND NEXT MONTH’S WILL BE ABOUT THE BASIC ELEMENTS NEEDED FOR CREATING A WILDLIFE HABITAT IN YOUR YARD.

Wildlife needs just about the same things that we humans need for survival: food, water, shelter and places to raise young. Of course we humans have some additional requirements—like our morning latte first, then food.

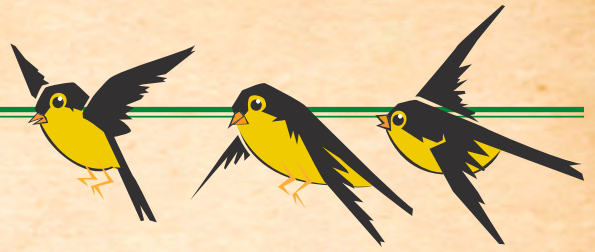
Plants are the best source of food for (non-predatory) animals. They provide seeds, nuts, berries, nectar, foliage, and attract insects, which are also part of the diet of many critters. Since critters may forage for food in specific locations (on the ground, in low shrubs and flowers, in tall brush and trees), it is wise to have food sources in all those locales. By providing a diverse plant community in your garden, you are most likely to achieve a balanced ecosystem that will sustain itself. Plant sources can be supplemented with feeders of various types. Bird feeders should be cleaned regularly, placed where predators can be observed approaching and close to protective shelter should escape be needed.

Critters need water for drinking and bathing. Water sources can vary between the simple and the very complex, depending on your preferences, location, and budget. A shallow dish or hollow rock sitting on a stump or hung in a tree is easily provided. Birdbaths



and water fountains require a bit more effort. Birds will come to still water, but are especially drawn to dripping or moving water. Birds need only about 3/4 inch deep water, so if your water container is deep, adding some rocks will provide a standing surface for short-legged birds. Water will need to be changed at intervals so that it is clean. Clorox can be used to eliminate algae build up. More elaborate water features include streams and ponds, either natural (if you’re lucky!) or man-made. These, of course, require more expense and care. With any source of water, care must be taken to avoid providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes, the carriers of West Nile Virus and other diseases. Mosquitoes can’t breed in moving water. With still water during mosquito season, changing it often, adding fish, or mosquito dunks (a larvicide which does not harm other animals, available at garden nurseries) will eliminate the problem.

So, to borrow from a baseball phrase—feed and water them and they will come! (For a free consultation/design on building your habitat, you can reach me via e-mail at alpat62@aol.com.) 🌿



Calendar of Events

Saturday, June 2. Night Owl Prowl. 5:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Join us as we search for Spotted Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Flammulated Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Western Screech Owl (easier), and Common Poorwill (easy to hear). Arrive early to leave promptly at 5:00 p.m. from where the 210 Fwy and Angeles Crest Highway (Hwy 2) intersect in La Cañada. Exit the 210 at Angeles Crest Highway heading north. About one block up is a frontage road on the right, where we will park and carpool. Finish around midnight. Bring a warm jacket, a full stomach, snacks, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass. Trip limited to ten (10). Call or e-mail the leader ASAP to reserve a space. Leader: Jim Hardesty, (818) 346-6712 or jnhardesty@roadrunner.com.

Sunday, June 3. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half 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 one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. For more information contact him at (818) 225-8348 or e-mail: Kris.Ohlenkamp@sbcglobal.net.

Tuesday, June 5. Antelope Valley Audubon Meeting. 6:30 p.m. The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve Visitor's Center, at 43201 35th Street, in Lancaster.

Saturday, June 9. Monthly Field Trip to Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve (second Saturday). 7:30 a.m. We expect to see Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, orioles, flycatchers, raptors, possibly Grasshopper Sparrow. Directions: Take the Ventura Freeway (101) to the Lynn Road exit in Thousand Oaks. Go south on Lynn Road and proceed 5.3 miles to Via Goleta. Turn left at Via Goleta to the preserve entrance. The main gate officially opens at 8:00 a.m. but a ranger usually opens it much earlier. We will meet at the gate at 7:30, ready to drive down to the parking lot and get an early start. We will bird until about 11:30. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, June 9. 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, June 10. 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.

Sunday, June 10. Chatsworth Nature Preserve/Reservoir Bird Walk. 7:00 a.m. Chapter members will again have the opportunity to join with the Southwest Herpetologists Society for a morning tour of the Preserve grounds and observe late spring migrants and nesting species. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Plummer-Valley Circle gate approximately 1.5 miles west of the intersection of Topanga Canyon Blvd. and Plummer, opposite 9439 Valley Circle, NOT at the Fallbrook Ave. gate. Bring drink, snacks, and be prepared to stay until approximately noon, as the gate will be locked behind us. No smoking or pets please. Facilities are limited and primitive. RAIN CANCELS. This will be the last Preserve tour until the fall. For further information, phone Art Langton at (818) 887-0973. Leaders: Art Langton and/or Stuart Wells.

Saturday, June 16. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. (Note: third Saturday) 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. No toilets are available on site. Leader: Jim Hardesty (818) 346-6712, jnhardesty@roadrunner.com.

Saturday, June 16. 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, June 17. 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.

Tuesday, June 19, Weekday Wanderers Bird Walk at Aliso and Limekiln Canyons in Northridge. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Aliso Canyon trailhead. To get there exit the 118 Freeway at Balboa Blvd. and go north. Turn left on Rinaldi Ave., which is the first cross street. Proceed on Rinaldi until you pass Zelzah Ave. The trail head is on the right about 1/4 mile past Zelzah Ave. Street parking is legal on the north side of Rinaldi anywhere from Zelzah up to the trailhead. We will continue on to Limekiln Canyon around 11:00 a.m. Call Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 with questions (before 7:00 p.m. please) or e-mail: CarolOpp@aol.com.

Saturday, June 23. Antelope Valley Field Trip. To be announced. Go to <http://www.sfvaudubon.org/> for the latest information on times and meeting place.

Sunday, June 24. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. See June 10 for details.

Monday, June 25. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Balboa Mission Town Hall, 16916 San Fernando Mission Blvd., at Balboa (southeast corner) in Granada Hills.

Thursday, June 28. General Membership Meeting. Annual Potluck and Members' Slideshow. 6:30 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. Meet 6:30–7:00 p.m. for setup and social time, followed by dinner, installation of officers for 2007–2008, and program.

Culinary delights and photo adventures by SFVAS members for SFVAS members! Plan to join in the potluck by bringing one of the following: a main dish, salad, rolls, or dessert to serve 8–10 people. Bring your own plate, cup and eating utensils. Beverages will be provided.

The evening's program will feature slide presentations from our own talented photographer members sharing their best slides. All are invited to participate. Limit the number of slides to 20 or less. Presenters must narrate. Possibilities are birds, nature, vacations, field trips, or backyard natural wonders.

Don't miss this always-enjoyable annual get-together of friends, food and photos as our activity year draws to a close. For more information, call Carolyn Oppenheimer, (818) 885-7493 or Jeanne Polak-Recht, (818) 831-2438.

Sunday, July 1. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. See June 3 for details.

Sunday, July 8. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. See June 10 for details.

Saturday, July 14. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. See June 9 for details.

Sunday, July 15. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. See June 17 for details.

Tuesday, July 17. Weekday Wanderers Bird Walk at Solstice Canyon. 9:00 a.m.—to allow extra travel time. Directions: Take the 101 north to Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon road. Turn left; go south to Pacific Coast Highway. Turn right on PCH and drive about two miles to Corral Canyon (just before the 76 Station). Turn right. Go about one block and turn left into Solstice Canyon Park. (Watch for speeding oncoming traffic around the curve.) Drive about a half-mile to the main parking lot. Call Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 with questions (before 7:00 p.m. please) or e-mail: CarolOpp@aol.com.

Saturday, July 21. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. See June 16 for details.

Saturday, July 21. Monthly Field Trip to Mt. Pinos. 8:00 a.m. Join us for summer montane species such as Fox Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Dusky Flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, Hairy Woodpecker and Clark's Nutcracker. Meet in the parking lot at Iris Meadows. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, insect repellent and lunch. Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take I-5 north to the Frazier Park exit. Go west through Frazier Park and continue for about 20 miles up Mount Pinos Road to the end (and parking lot). Your vehicle must exhibit a National Forest "Adventure Pass" or Golden Age Passport in order for you to park and bird in this area. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

Sunday, July 22. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. See June 8 for details.

Please Note: There will be NO SFVAS or Antelope Valley General Membership Meetings in July or August. Enjoy the summer.

Future Fieldtrips: (Details later)

August 18. Chilao

**September 15. Huntington Central Park/
Bolsa Chica** 🌿

BIRDATHON

by *Donna Timlin*

Birdathon 2007 officially began on Sunday, April 1 under the leadership of Kris Ohlenkamp, our SFVAS president and the leader of the “First Sunday” Sepulveda Basin bird walk. With the assistance of numerous walk participants constituting “Team Ohlenkamp,” Kris found 66 bird species, getting the Birdathon 2007 off to a fine start and outdoing his estimate of 60 for the walk. Carolyn Oppenheimer led her team of “Weekday Wanderer” stalwarts through a cool and misty Tuesday, April 17 morning through O’Melveny Park in the north valley area where the team found 40 bird species including a group of Lazuli Buntings feeding in the grass area behind the park residences. Hermit Thrush and Rock Wren were among the special birds found.

For the more adventurous birder, Jim Moore met with Richard Barth, Phil Booth, Jim Hardesty, Kevin Pickard, and Donna Timlin at 6:00 a.m. in Acton, on April 24, for a Birdathon adventure that included Lake Palmdale Park and Ride (Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Grackles), a Joshua Forest dirt lot in Palmdale which is unfortunately being used by some persons as a dump (Cactus Wren, did not see the hoped for LeConte’s Thrasher), Lancaster Sewage Ponds (a Franklin’s Gull in alternate plumage, Horned Larks, Snowy Plovers, Wilson’s and Red-necked Phalaropes, 40 species in all). This was followed by the drive to Jawbone Canyon, the DWP house, and IBA (Important Bird Area) Butterbrecht Springs (Sage Sparrow, Great Horned Owl,

Townsend’s Solitaire, Chukar). All that before noon.

The afternoon included lunch at Central Park, in California City, with 34 species. Followed by a two-hour visit to the birdy oasis at the Silver Springs Resort in Galileo Hills. There, 61 species were seen, with good looks at two Solitary Sandpipers, four empid species, including Hammond’s, Gray, Dusky and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, about 500 Horned Larks bathing in a mud puddle, and Varied Thrush.

The next stop, Piute Ponds, netted 57 species, including nine duck and nine wader species. The last stop, Apollo Park in Lancaster, at 7:30 p.m. yielded the sight of the day. No less than 24 Lesser Night-Hawks feeding over the ponds. Not a bad day. Jim Moore’s Birdathon ended at 7:50 p.m. with a total count of 132 species.

Team Hardesty, led by Past President Jim Hardesty, took off on April 26. Jim’s Team included himself, Pat Heirs, and Jim Moore. They covered Hansen Dam, Lake Balboa, Malibu Creek State Park, Malibu Lagoon, Reseda Park, Soka University, Walker Ranch, and Woodland Hills. In all they found 138 bird species in 15 hours of birding. Team leader Hardesty is still glowing from the superb day!

Richard Barth’s Morongo-Joshua Tree State Park Birdathon Team, April 28, included both regular SFVAS members plus several guests from the San Diego area and birder Dan from Pennsylvania. The weather was in the nineties, habitat in the area was very thin due to continuing drought, but the skillful birders were still able to net 67 species. Of special interest to many walk

participants was Jim Moore’s placing a nesting Red-tailed Hawk with downy chick in his scope for all to see.

Birdathon continues. During May, Team Kotin will have had a Big Day and Nancy Herron Knode will have led an annual Mother’s Day Birdathon at Descanso Gardens. Also, John and Andrew Willis have another “Lori Willis Memorial Birdathon” planned. Thank you to the many generous donors who have already given to the 2007 Birdathon. Your contributions will be noted in a later edition of the *Phainopepla*. If you have not already donated, and plan to do so, please send your check now to San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (SFVAS) at PO Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769, so that our treasurer can balance his fiscal year books, which ends in June. Please note the team you wish to acknowledge or just leave the team blank rather than pick a favorite. Money raised from the Birdathon is used to support our chapter’s many programs including our Sepulveda Basin Education Program, the *Phainopepla*, our insurance, rent for meeting space, and additional operating expenses. Any donation amount is appreciated. Thank you for your generosity. We truly have a very special Audubon chapter. 🐦



Nest of Eggs by Rebecca LeVine

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 _____
 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 Jim Van Beveren at (818) 998-4905 or e-mail him at jvanbeveren@vbandb.com.



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www.SanFernandoValleyAudubon.org/sfvas

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