

# Phainopepla



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## PROGRAM NOTES

### **OLGA CLARKE to Speak at Thursday, October 23 General Membership Meeting**



(c) Roberto Wesson

Olga Clarke, a world class birder, has led natural COSTA RICA BIRDING ADVENTURES history trips to many parts of the world, including numerous ones to Africa and most other continents over the past three decades. In addition, she served as Director of the Los Angeles Audubon Society's famous bookstore for almost 30 years, and now has assumed the position of that Society's Travel Director.

Olga will present highlights of Costa Rica, with views of the birds and other wildlife. Within habitats that range from semi-arid ranchlands, to misty cloud forests, lowland rainforest, and treeless páramo, share some of the experiences seen in that tiny country known by birders as one of the top destinations in the world. Costa Rica is an excellent introduction to Neotropical birding. ♀

## CARPOOL—SAVE FUEL

Members are encouraged to carpool to all field trips. Beginning this month, we will organize a voluntary carpool on our Monthly Field Trip. Three or four passengers per car will reduce travel expenses. Recommended contribution to the driver is \$5. Details are included in the field trip description, on page 4, of the Calendar Section.



**IMPORTANT! Please NOTE: Mark your calendars.** Our normal meeting schedule has been altered. Due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, we have canceled the normal November and December meetings and scheduled a combined November/December General Membership meeting for Thursday, December 4, 7:00 p.m.



# BIRD WALKS FOR FAMILIES AND BEGINNERS

**SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE AREA**

**SECOND SATURDAYS  
OCTOBER THROUGH MARCH  
8:30 – 11:00 a.m. (FREE)**

San Fernando Valley Audubon will lead free bird walks for beginning adults and families with school-age children on the second Saturday of each month, October 2008—March 2009. (Dates are Oct. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 13, Jan. 10, Feb. 14, and Mar. 14.)

Enjoy the lovely Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve, with its trails and wildlife lake. Many birds come here in winter. This is your opportunity to learn more about bird identification and behavior, while becoming acquainted with the Wildlife Area—its trees, plants, and water.

## **Who is this Walk Designed for?**

- o Anyone who has never been on a bird walk,
- o Beginning birdwatchers,
- o Families with school-age children.

**Time and Meeting Place:** The Wildlife Area entrance and amphitheater are in the southeast part of Woodley Park. Meet at the amphitheater at 8:30 a.m.

**Directions:** Turn north from Burbank Blvd. onto Woodley Ave., which is .5 mile west of the San Diego Freeway (I-405). Travel about .5 mile to the second possible right turn. Turn east (right) at the sign for the Wildlife Reserve. Bear right at the fork in the road and go east .5 mile to the Wildlife Area parking. Walk south past the monumental rocks and restroom building to the amphitheater.

**Equipment and Clothing:** Wear sturdy shoes and layered clothing. A cap or hat with a brim is suggested. We have binoculars to loan, but bring your own if you have them.

**More Information:** Muriel Kotin at (310) 457-5796 or Linda Jones at (818) 831-6061. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. Rain cancels. Please visit our website [sfvaudubon.org](http://sfvaudubon.org). ♀





## Membership

SFVAS is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope you will get involved with our many field trips and activities. Please contact Jim Moore, President, with any questions. ψ

Linda Jean Antonioli  
James Buck  
Fox Conner  
Zachary Counter  
David Dixon  
Lionel & Diana Friedberg

Marie Gaworecki  
Clare Given  
Laurie Kasowski  
Diane Keeny  
Madge Lillquist  
Laurie McPherson

Patricia Neason  
Ervin Polan  
Alan Pollack  
Joyce Schumann  
Marie Smith  
Dale Thayer

## You Are Invited October 30, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

### NICE EVENT–WORTHY CAUSE–TAX DEDUCTIBLE



I recently attended a twilight event at the Wildlife Waystation up the canyon road from Hansen Dam. This is a place which takes in unwanted wild animals and birds. It is amazingly large and cares for over 1600 animals. The owner Martine has had a difficult time satisfying the exacting demands of government regulators, due to budget shortfalls. In consequence, she is presently not allowed to bring in the paying public to see the animals, thus losing even more revenue in a catch-22.

There is one exception to the ban on visitors—she may have paying guests visit her home. She has set up a plan for groups of no more than 20 to come to her large patio, have a glass of wine or other drink, and feast on a big spread of hot and cold appetizers (enough to replace dinner.) After everyone has been fed and made comfortable, we are taken on a private tour of the grounds to see lions, tigers, chimps, and apes of many kinds, wolves, many birds, even a huge python someone discarded. She knows the story of how each and every animal came to live here. After the tour, we return to the patio, now lit by many candles, for a second glass of wine, more food and conversation.

The price for this experience is \$150 per person, fully tax deductible. It makes sense if looked at as a contribution to help keep this special place going. We have a tentative date of October 30, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., or so. If you would like to come, please call or e-mail me, Chris Van Beveren, at (818) 998-3122 or beck-travel@yahoo.com. You will be impressed and always remember the evening. Maximum of 20 guests. -Submitted by Chris Van Beveren, Photo: Cougar from Waystation, Terry Pierson / The Press-Enterprise. ψ

## SEAFOOD WALLET CARD Submitted by Chris Van Beveren

Audubon's Living Oceans group has produced a list of seafood ranked in order of least harmful to eat (green) to most harmful to eat (red.) The rankings are an evaluation of the health of the fishery, sustainable methods of fishing, how much bycatch of other species dies during fishing, and also levels of mercury and other heavy metals in the fish itself. The list is designed to be cut out and carried while shopping or ordering in restaurants. Find it online at [http://seafood.audubon.org/seafood\\_wallet.pdf](http://seafood.audubon.org/seafood_wallet.pdf). ψ



# Calendar of Events

**Saturday, October 4. SEASON OPENER! Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–11:00 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. No toilets are available on site. Leader: Jim Hardesty (818) 346-6712, jnhardesty@att.net.

**Saturday, October 4. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** Directions: Take closest freeway to I-5 North and exit at Parker Road. Turn right and proceed to stop sign (Castaic Road), proceed to next stop sign (Lake Hughes Road), proceed to next stop sign (Castaic Lake Drive) and turn right. Entrance to the park is on the right. Parking is in Lot 4, so make a right turn after the kiosk (\$8 fee?) then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. For information contact Linda of LA Co Parks at (818) 322-6997. Free parking for birders available only in the Department of Water Facilities just outside the park.

**Sunday, October 5. 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 one-half 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: Jim Hardesty. For more information contact him at (818) 346-6712 or e-mail: jnhardesty@att.net.

**Saturday, October 11. SEASON OPENER! Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 8:30–11:00 a.m.** Come on out for a fun bird walk at Sepulveda Basin! The White Pelicans are starting to return why don't you? These popular walks, designed for beginning birders and school-age children, are resuming for the current cool season. 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 one-half 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. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leader: Carolyn Oppenheimer. For more information, contact her at (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m., please). RAIN CANCELS.

**Saturday, October 11. 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, October 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.

## CARPOOL—SAVE FUEL

Members are encouraged to carpool to all field trips. Beginning this month, we will organize a voluntary carpool on our Monthly Field Trip. Three or four passengers per car will reduce travel expenses. Recommended contribution to the driver is \$5. Details are included in the field trip description below.

**Saturday, October 18. Monthly Field Trip to El Dorado Park (Long Beach). 8:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 405 Freeway to the Studebaker Road exit in Long Beach. Go north on Studebaker to Spring Street, then turn east (right) on Spring to the park entrance. The parking fee is \$6. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot. Carpool Directions: Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Woodley Park Park-n-Ride lot on the southeast corner of Balboa and Victory Blvd. Leader: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, October 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.

**Saturday, October 18. Antelope Valley Audubon Committee Bird Walk to Galileo Hills/California City. 7:00 a.m.** Directions: Meet at Lancaster City Park. East of the community building. Intersection of 10th Street west and Ave. K-8. Leader: Vern Benhart.

**Sunday, October 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: Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

**Tuesday, October 21, Weekday Wanderers Bird Walk at the Theodore Payne Foundation in Sun Valley. 9:00 a.m.** Directions: Exit the 5 Freeway at Sunland Blvd. and turn north on Sunland Blvd. Turn right at La Tuna Canyon, go one block and turn left on Wheatland Ave. Turn right on Tuxford and look for the entrance sign on the left at 10459 Tuxford. Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at, (818) 885-7493, with any questions (before 7 p.m., please.)



**Thursday, October 23. General Membership Meeting. 7:00 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 will be Olga Clarke who will speak on Highlights of Costa Rica. See "Program Notes" on page 1.

Sunday, October 26 Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See October 12 for details.

Saturday, November 1. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–11:00 a.m. See October 4 for details.

Saturday, November 1. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. See October 4 for details.

Sunday, November 2. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See October 5 for details. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp.

Future Field Trips: (Details later)  
November 15. Ventura Harbor and Water Treatment Ponds

(No trip in December due to Christmas Count)

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## Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth



White-headed woodpecker  
Dave Menke,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The first of our two summer montane field trips was to Mt. Pinos on July 19. Our group hiked from the 8300 ft. level at Iris Meadow to the 8800 ft. summit and found some good stuff. We tallied Townsend's Solitaire, Green-tailed Towhee, Hairy Woodpecker, White-headed Woodpecker, Dusky Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Brown Creeper, Pygmy Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Steller's Jay, "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Mountain Chickadee. Lark Sparrow is rarely seen at these elevations, but we found three individuals near the summit. Another nice surprise high on the mountain was a Cassin's Vireo. Western Bluebird, Violet-green Swallow and Dark-eyed Junco were the most abundant species on our walk. A backlit carpodacus finch could not be identified between Purple and Cassin's. Somewhat unusual was finding several Scrub-Jays up here. American Robin and House Wren were accounted for, and a Mountain Quail was spotted early AM on the drive up.

August 16 marked our trip to the San Gabriel Mountains where we birded the Chilao and Buckhorn areas at 5200 ft. and 6500 ft. elevation respectively. Among our target birds on hand were Green-tailed Towhee, Hairy Woodpecker, White-headed Woodpecker, "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow, Cassin's Finch and Purple Finch. The most abundant species for the day was Mountain Chickadee. We found Nashville, Black-throated Gray, Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers. Always a treat to see in the mountains are Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak, and reliably present were Band-tailed Pigeon, Steller's Jay, Western Wood-Pewee, Oak Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Acorn Woodpecker, Western Bluebird and Dark-eyed Junco. Black-chinned Hummingbird and Black Phoebe are not often seen on this trip, but were seen this time. Other species observed included Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Northern Flicker, House Wren, Red-tailed Hawk, American Robin, Anna's Hummingbird, Common Raven, Scrub-Jay, Brown-headed Cowbird and Spotted Towhee. ♫



## Audubon at Home by Alan Pollack

### PLANTING, CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF YOUR NATIVE, WILDLIFE GARDEN

Although one can plant at any time, the best time to plant natives (and non-natives, for that matter) is in the late fall, just before the rainy season. The cooler weather and winter rains minimizes the amount of watering necessary to help plants get established before the dry, hot summer.

Planting is pretty simple: dig a hole twice the width and twice the depth of the pot the plant is in. If the soil is dry, fill it with water one or more times before planting. Refill the hole with the same soil that was dug out so that the surface of the root ball is slightly higher than the surrounding soil. Remove the plant from the pot with as little disturbance to the root ball as possible. Obviously, if it is root-bound, one needs to scratch the surface of the root ball to free up the roots a little. With the plant placed slightly higher than surrounding soil, continue to refill with the original soil. With rare exception, DO NOT ADD ANY AMENDMENTS OR FERTILIZER. Use a chopstick or other poker to make sure air pockets are filled with soil. With leftover soil, create a basin wall at the drip line of the plant. Add a layer of mulch around the plant, but not touching the trunk/stem crown. Give it some more water to settle the soil and you're done.

Until they are established (usually two to three years), all natives require watering. If you've planted at the beginning of the rainy season, Mother Nature will take care of much of that. If there isn't much rain or you've planted in the dry season, then more attention must be given to water needs. A newly installed plant needs its root ball kept moist until its roots have extended into the surrounding soil (about two weeks). After that, many plants need watering only when the soil in the root zone is getting dry. Watering should be deep and the best way to accomplish that is with drip microemitter systems, or hand watering. Once established, not all natives are low water users and drought tolerant. Some will need little to no water; others will need occasional deep watering; and some like regular moisture (e.g., riparian species).



Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), common horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), and western virgin's bower (*Clematis ligusticifolia*). Photo: Drew Ready

Native species generally require little, if any pruning. Some species need to be cut back annually and any pruning beyond that is likely to be for aesthetic reasons or to remove diseased growth. The best time to prune is during the plant's dormancy or right after flowering. This brings up the fact that seasonal changes for many natives are the opposite of most non-natives. Winter rains stimulate growth which slows in the spring as flowers emerge. In the summer, dormancy begins as berries and fruits form. In the fall, berries and fruits have ripened, seeds are falling and most plants are fully dormant. ♦

Alan Pollack, Audubon-at-Home Chair, offers free consultation/landscape design to help you make your yard wildlife friendly. He also gives a free, PowerPoint slide show/lecture to community groups, high school and college classes on attracting wildlife to your garden and sustainable gardening practices. He can be reached at [alpat62@aol.com](mailto:alpat62@aol.com) or (818) 340-2347 or at [www.sfaudubon.org](http://www.sfaudubon.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	\$ _____
Optional First-Class Postage.....\$5	\$ _____
Contributions to SFVAS.....	\$ _____
Total.....	\$ _____

New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about SFVAS? \_\_\_\_\_

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 non-profit conservation/education organization, and is dedicated to "the conservation of wildlife and natural resources."

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

Material from other newsletters or newspaper should include the source and date. Copy for the PHAINOPEPLA should be in the hands of the editor by the 3rd 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 Moore at (661) 298-1130 or e-mail him at [jimmoore@socal.rr.com](mailto:jimmoore@socal.rr.com)

## SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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1st Vice President:	Seth Shteir	995-6429
2nd Vice President:	Chris Van Beveren	998-3122
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Recording Sec'y:	Donna Timlin	341-9354
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Dave Weeshoff	618-1652
Heather Medvitz	222-4430
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### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Antelope Valley Chair:	Bob and Bonnie Weatherman	(661) 269-2051
AV Newsletter:	Linda Edwards	(661) 948-3524
Audubon-at-Home:	Alan Pollack	340-2347
Birdathon:	Rose Leibowitz	990-5405
Christmas Bird Count:	Art Langton	887-0973
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Descanso Bird Walks:	Nancy Herron Knode	unpublished
Descanso Bird Walks:	Karen Johnson	790-1687
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*All Phones are area code 818 unless otherwise noted.*

For Chapter leaders email addresses, see our web site:

**[www.SFVAudubon.org](http://www.SFVAudubon.org)**

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

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# Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
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## Dated Material

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to see this issue in full color!  
[www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org)

# Phainopepla October 2008



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## News from the Antelope Valley Audubon Committee

—Submitted by Linda Edwards, AV Newsletter Chair

On September 9, our AV Audubon Committee met to discuss and review the following items:

Our Website will be up and running soon. Bob Weatherman and the Mooney's are still ironing out the details, but are welcoming local bird photos to share on the site. Send them to [actonbob@mac.com](mailto:actonbob@mac.com).

White Crowns will be the name of our Committee. Marcia Abbate is working on a logo.

A support letter for continued funding of the Armagosa Bike Trail was circulated and signed. Thanks to Dean Webb for this information.

Jim Dodson recommended the website [LACoBirds@yahoomailgroups.com](mailto:LACoBirds@yahoomailgroups.com) for anyone interested in on-going current sightings in the area.

Bonnie Weatherman discussed the following field trips for the fall season:

October 18. Galileo Hills/California City. Leader: Vern Benhart. Directions: Meet at Lancaster City Park. Intersection of 10th Street west and Ave K-8. East of the community building, 7:00 a.m. sharp!

November 8. Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden, UCLA. Details later.

Our topic for the evening was presented by Jim Dodson whose PowerPoint on the Tejon Ranch Project was thorough and engaging. The photos and maps of this vast area enriched Jim's personal understanding and appreciation of the monumental agreement that was reached recently between the Ranch and five environmental groups, one of which was the Audubon Society. Since Jim participated in these talks, we are grateful for the insight and perspective that he shared with us.

Our next meeting will be a Holiday Potluck on December 2 at 6:00 p.m., which will provide us with an opportunity to socialize and also to share pictures and experiences of nature or wildlife.