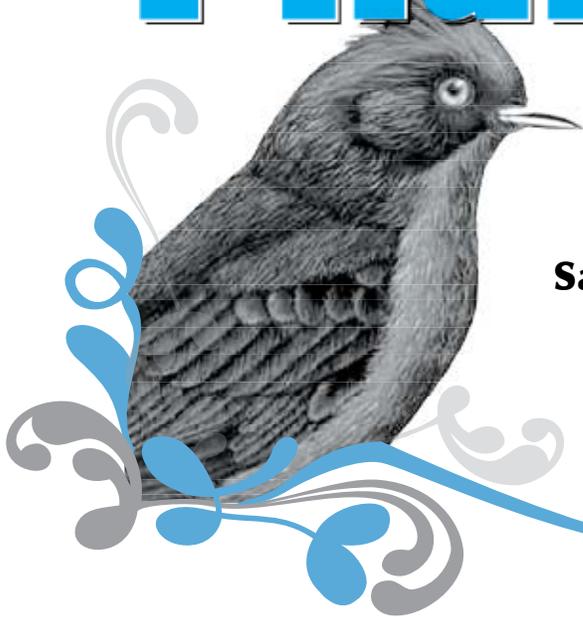


# Phainopepla



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## PROGRAM NOTES



Due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays there has been a change in our regular meeting schedule. The normal General Membership Meetings for November and December have been cancelled. Instead we are having a combined November/December General Membership Meeting on Thursday, December 4, 2008, 7:00 p.m. SFVAS Board member, Dave Weeshoff to speak at this event. His topic will be "Aquatic Bird Rehabilitation."

Dave Weeshoff, Docent with the International Bird Rescue Research Center in San Pedro, presents "Aquatic Bird Rehabilitation", a colorful slide presentation, describing in words and photographs how orphaned, sick, injured, and oiled aquatic birds (including pelicans, gulls, loons, grebes, terns, et al) are cleaned, rehabilitated, and re-

leased back into the wild, as well as what each of us can do to mitigate human impacts on our feathered friends. Dave's photography and entertaining style promise to bring these subjects to life.

Dave is on the Board of Directors of the International Bird Rescue Research Center and the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, and is a frequent guest speaker on environmental issues for Heal the Bay, an organization concerned with improving the water quality off the Southern California coast, and the Algalita Marine Research Foundation, concerned with the plague of plastic in the oceans. ♪





## Wandering No More: Weekday Wanderers Settle down at O'Melveny Park

By Carolyn Oppenheimer

Ten years ago I had a hankering to go birding on a weekday. With nothing scheduled during the week, I decided I would just have to create such a walk. I came up with the idea of the Weekday Wanderer's Bird Walk. We would meet at a different place near the Valley once a month. The first place I chose for the walk was my favorite Valley park, O'Melveny in Granada Hills. That walk was on March 24, 1998, and I enticed new participants with a blurb in the *Phainopepla* that read, "The early spring activities of the park's resident bluebirds should offer some fun sighting." And it was true. Bluebirds were abundant as were many other species.

Over the past ten years, a solid core of "regulars" has traveled with me to local birding spots, usually on the third Tuesday of each month. We may not always have had good birding or good weather but we always had a good time. All of us have put on a few years since then and most of us prefer a birding locale that offers better amenities than what some of the local canyon paths offer. A good variety of birds at a location is a necessity but so are even pathways, bathroom facilities,



and a few benches along the way to rest. My first and favorite spot fits this bill the best.

So from now on the Weekday Wanderers outing will be dubbed the O'Melveny Weekday Walk. We will still meet on the third Tuesday of the month and will still be having a great time no matter what the conditions. See you there. ♪

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## Project FeederWatch Benefits Birds and People

Ithaca, NY--More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing--benefiting themselves and the birds.

The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8 and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during

the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges--a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

"Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the world's largest database on feeder-bird populations," says project leader David Bonter. "We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows." Continued on backpage.



## 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. ♪

Helen Benedict

Kate Okatmoto

Norm Lockwood

Ken & Sharon Stevens



## The Future of Conservation 2009 Audubon California Assembly

The Audubon California Assembly is held every 18 months. All chapter leaders, members, and friends are invited to attend. The next Assembly is scheduled for:

March 15, 16 and 17, 2009  
Asilomar Conference Grounds  
Pacific Grove, California  
[www.visitasilomar.com](http://www.visitasilomar.com)

Register by December 11, 2008 and save \$50. <http://ca.audubon.org/docs/09AssemblyRegistration.pdf>. Speakers and workshops will focus on emerging strategies for conservation of birds and their habitat in the 21st Century. ♪

## Come Celebrate Our 13th Annual Festival! Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival January 16-19, 2009

Come Celebrate Our 13th Annual Festival!  
Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival  
January 16-19, 2009

MORRO BAY, CALIFORNIA – Come to where the birds are and join Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) for our 13th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway and one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots. The area is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified!

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival is sponsored by MCAS and gives you the chance to join local and national birding experts on a variety of field trips and workshops. Field trip group sizes are limited to maximize spotting and identification opportunities. The Festival also offers workshops aimed at sharpening your birding skills, as well as evening programs with outstanding speakers.

For more information about the Festival, check out our website at [www.morrobaybirdfestival.org](http://www.morrobaybirdfestival.org), or call (805) 772-4677. You can request that your name be added to the mailing list for our 2009 brochure, or register online. Both the brochure and online registration will be available in October 2008. The registration deadline is January 5, 2009 but early signups are encouraged as the most popular events fill up quickly. ♪



# Calendar of Events

**Saturday, November 1. 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, November 1. 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, November 2. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** (Remember Daylight Savings Time ends) 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: Kris Ohlenkamp. For more information contact him at (661) 229-6986 or kris.ohlenkamp@sbcglobal.net.

**Saturday, November 8. 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. Leaders: Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 and Linda Jones, (818) 831-6061. RAIN CANCELS.

**Saturday, November 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, November 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.

## Monthly Field Trip Carpool

Members are encouraged to carpool to all field trips. 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, November 15. Monthly Field Trip: Ventura Harbor and Water Treatment Ponds. 8:00 a.m.** Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take the 101 Freeway to the city of Ventura, exit Seaward Avenue, turn left over the freeway, then immediately left (south) on Harbor Blvd. to Spinnaker Drive and proceed to the end. Look for birders in the last parking lot on the left. Carpool Directions: Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Woodley Park Park-n-Ride lot on the southeast corner of Balboa and Victory Blvds. Leader: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, November 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, November 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.

**Tuesday, November 18. O'Melveny Weekday Walk (formerly Weekday Wanderer's) at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 8:30 a.m.** Directions: Take the 118/Ronald Reagan Freeway and exit at Balboa Blvd. Turn north, driving two miles to Sesnon, turn left going west .6 mile, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. RAIN CANCELS.



Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at, (818) 885-7493, with any questions (before 7 p.m., please) or CarolOpp@sbcglobal.net.

**Sunday, November 23. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See November 9 for details.

**Monday, November 24. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Balboa Mission Town Hall, 16916 San Fernando Mission Blvd., at Balboa (southeast corner) in Granada Hills.

Thursday, November 27. No General Membership Meeting. Happy Thanksgiving.

Tuesday, December 2. Antelope Valley Audubon General Meeting and Holiday Banquet. 6:00 p.m. The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve in the Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center, at 43201 35th Street, in Lancaster. You are invited to bring a food item and/or anything you would like to share from recent outdoor nature experiences. A media projector will be available. Contact Bob or Bonnie Weatherman (661) 269-2051 for more information.

IMPORTANT! Please NOTE: Our normal meeting schedule has been altered. We have canceled the normal November and December meetings and scheduled a combined Nov/Dec meeting for Thursday, December 4, 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 4. 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 Dave Weeshoff who will speak on Aquatic Bird Rehabilitation. See "Program Notes" on page 1.

Saturday, December 6. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–11:00 a.m. See November 1 for details.

Saturday, December 6. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. See November 1 for details.

Sunday, December 7. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See November 2 for details.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, December 27, for the San Fernando Valley Annual Christmas Bird Count. Details in the next issue.

Future Field Trips: (Details later)

(No field trip in December due to Christmas Count)

January 17. Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary

February 21. Private Game Preserve †

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## Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

September 20 found us in Orange County, birding Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.

A rare Northern Waterthrush was currently being seen at Huntington Central, and we happened upon the bird in a different area of the park than it had been reported. Some expected migrants moving through included Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Western Tanager, Yellow Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler (early-ish), Orange-crowned Warbler and Black-headed Grosbeak. We had Black-chinned Hummingbird, Downy Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren and Bullock's Oriole. Nuttall's Woodpecker is an uncommon dispersant to this coastal park. Great Horned Owl is reliably seen here, likewise Nutmeg Mannikin.

Our Bolsa Chica visit (which included scoping from Harriett Wieder Park) produced terrific results. A couple of rare Reddish Egrets had recently shown up at the reserve, and we managed to view one perched in a large leafless bush out in the wetlands. Highlights from our list of thirteen shorebird species were Dunlin, Semipalmated Plover and Long-billed Curlew, while Blue-winged Teal was probably the favorite among our waterfowl. Of interest were Belted Kingfisher, Loggerhead Shrike, Say's Phoebe, American White Pelican, Peregrine and Osprey. The terns on hand were Forster's, Elegant and Caspian, plus we spotted a nice flock of Black Skimmers loafing on the flats. On our way back to the cars we encountered a rare "Large-billed" Savannah Sparrow, possibly just arriving for the winter, foraging with a resident "Belding's" Savannah.

Our species tally for the day was 75. †



## Audubon at Home by Alan Pollack

### Maintenance of your Native Wildlife Garden: Pest Control

Ok—you have your new, wildlife friendly, native plant garden installed and you are happily watching it grow and suddenly your tranquility and pride are shaken by the presence of—BUGS! Quel horror!!! Rather than panicking, that is the moment to remember the following—a system called Integrated Pest Management or IPM. It is a system developed by growers who are, like you and me, concerned about the environment. In other words, it is an environmentally friendly approach to pest control.

The first question to ask and answer is, is there a problem? Insects are a normal part of a balanced ecosystem, providing pollination service and, in some cases, insect control. Many of these good bugs are attracted to native plants. Examples are: ladybugs, lacewings, hover flies, mantids, parasitic wasps, spiders, bees, and dragonflies. Some damage from insects is therefore to be expected and it is only when damage becomes excessive do we need to become concerned.

As with human disease, the best treatment for plant disease is preventative treatment. For the home gardener, preventative measures include selecting plants that are healthy to begin with and planting them in locations that will meet their basic sunlight/soil/drainage needs, followed by proper watering, proper pruning (if needed), and proper feeding (if needed).

Assuming preventive measures are met, and excessive insect damage is occurring, the control measures that are least damaging to the environment are physical. A strong spray from a hose can dislodge harmful insects; damaged or diseased parts can be pruned; or a diseased plant can be totally removed. The next, least harmful measure is biological. One can purchase and introduce good bugs into the garden to control the bad bugs, though you are more likely to keep the good bugs around if you have plants in your garden that attract them (examples: sages, yarrow, buckwheat, ceanothus, lantana, rosemary, and many herbs).

The insect eating birds that are attracted to your garden will also keep the bad guys in check. Last are chemical controls. The least harmful being a soap solution. There are many other common household products that will not harm the environment that can be used to combat weeds, animal pests (such as snails, deer, and rabbits), fungal diseases, as well as insects. The least desirable and most damaging to the environment are commercial, chemical pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides). Got weeds? Pull 'em, blow torch 'em, spray 'em with vinegar, and use lots of mulch on bare soil. Got rats? Hang a barn owl nest box in your yard.

Learn more about non-toxic, environmentally-friendly, sustainable gardening practices at [www.finegardening.com](http://www.finegardening.com) (click on pests and diseases) and at [www.wasteless.org](http://www.wasteless.org) (click on environmentally preferable purchasing and then on less toxic gardening/IPM).

Look after Mother Earth and she will nurture us and our wild friends.... ♪

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.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.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

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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2nd Vice President:	Chris Van Beveren	998-3122
Treasurer:	Mark Osokow	unpublished
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Corresponding Sec'y	Margie Maseda	880-2002

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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**

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

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## Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
PO Box 7769  
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**Phainopepla** November 2008



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Project FeederWatch, Continued from page 2

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely-seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project—part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colorado—the state's first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor'easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Massachusetts, the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to Project FeederWatch.

Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Once one of the most common species seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent, the grosbeaks are declining for unknown reasons.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights. ♪