



# Phainopepla

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**San Fernando Valley Audubon Society**

*A Chapter of the National Audubon Society*

Vol. 66 No. 6

December 2015/ January 2016

## BIRDS & BEER

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT WRAP-UP

**December 19, 2015 from 4pm to about 7pm**

Members and guests are welcome – counters and non-counters alike – don't let our Peregrine drink alone!

**At the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center**

**18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana, CA**

**Phone #818 697-5525**



A really informal gathering to swap Christmas Bird Count data, celebrate the holiday season and the coming start of 2016! The hour is early so all ages are welcome (but no beer for the kiddies).

We plan on providing pizza and salad (around 5pm), beer (\$5 donation appreciated), soft drinks, paper plates and plastic utensils. Also will provide projector for anyone wanting to show off photos—bring them on a flash drive.

Directions: Located between White Oak and Reseda. In order to park, it is recommended to go on Etiwanda Avenue and turn into the parking area up the alley behind the center.

Please RSVP to [Pat.Bates@sfvadubon.org](mailto:Pat.Bates@sfvadubon.org), (818) 425-0962 (so we know how much stuff to get)

## Monthly Program

**Thursday, January 28, 2015, 7:00—9:00 p.m.**

**SPEAKER: Kris Ohlenkamp**

**TOPIC: What it means to be a “good birder.”**

We all have our own definition and some may want to share theirs. Kris will be giving tips on how to locate and identify birds and his target audience will be everyone who has an interest in birds and wants to improve their knowledge, skills, and level of respect within the greater birding community.



Kris Ohlenkamp has led walks at Sepulveda Basin monthly for 35 years. His current USA life list is 715 and his current USA year list is 550 birds. If you're guessing from this year's number that Kris is doing a big year for the USA, you are correct. *Photo: King Eider by Richard Medvitz*

**SFVAS General Membership Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (except July, August, and November). ALL ARE WELCOME to join us at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments; program begins at 7:30 p.m. We meet at the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center. See Calendar of Events, pages 6—8, for directions.**

# Bird Fest

## Of the Santa Monica Mountains



**Saturday  
December 5  
9:00 AM–3:30 PM**  
**Santa Monica  
Mountains  
Interagency  
Visitor Center**

King Gillette Ranch  
26876 Mulholland Hwy  
Calabasas, CA 91302

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**9 AM–11 AM:** Guided  
Bird Walks

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**10 AM:** Hit the Ground  
Running: Roadrunners of  
Southern California

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**11 AM:** Providing for Wild  
Birds in Your Garden

.....  
**11 AM, 12 PM, 1 PM:**  
Live Bird Presentation

.....  
**12 PM:** Malibu Lagoon  
Birds: Present and Past

.....  
**1 PM:** The Effects of Climate  
Change on the Birds of  
North America: What  
You Can Do to Help

.....  
**2 PM:** Bird Photography:  
Tips & Workshop

.....  
For more info call 805-370-2302  
or e-mail [samo@wnpa.org](mailto:samo@wnpa.org)

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The Santa Monica Mountains  
Interagency Visitor Center  
is operated by Western  
National Parks Association, a  
nonprofit education partner  
of the National Park Service.

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Your purchases help support  
national parks across the West

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**A day to celebrate the bird! See live birds, listen to talks from local experts, take a guided bird walk, meet representatives from bird-friendly agencies, and more! Free event, free parking. Presented by Conejo Valley Audubon Society, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society, National Park Service, and Western National Parks Association.**

**Western**  
National Parks  
Association



## 2015 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

### Saturday, December 19, 2015

### Birders Needed!

Once again this year, the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society will join chapters across the country and in North and South America, Hawaii, and the Caribbean to take part in the National Audubon Society's 115th annual Christmas Bird Count. The initial San Fernando Valley CBC was held in 1957 and this will represent our 58th successive CBC. Over the years there have been some interesting changes in bird populations in the count circle as the valley has transitioned into a more suburban area. Last year, with 59 counters in 16 locations, we tallied 134 species, just about average for the last ten years, but well short of our record count of 160 species in 1993. To approach that record, we need more birders counting birds in their neighborhood and joining established count sectors.

Extensive birding experience is not a prerequisite, only a willingness to come out and count—wind, rain, or shine. Those unable to join one of the count groups may assist by noting species and numbers of birds at backyard feeders, local parks, and neighborhoods provided such counts take place within a 7.5 mile radius circle from the count center at the intersection of Balboa and Nordhoff. Please report all such counts along with the time spent observing to Jim Moore by e-mail ([jimmoore@socal.rr.com](mailto:jimmoore@socal.rr.com)) no later than and preferably before January 14, 2016.

Count participation is free and open to all. Traditional count sectors are listed below.

#### **Hansen Dam and Vicinity. Meeting time: 7:00 AM**

From the intersection of Osborne and Glenoaks, go north on Osborne to Dronfield (signal), turn right on Dronfield and enter park. Proceed downhill to large parking lot. Look for counters with binoculars. Bring lunch and drinks, and be prepared to walk. Leader: Jim Moore, [jimmoore@socal.rr.com](mailto:jimmoore@socal.rr.com) or (661-317-1600)

#### **Hansen Dam Golf Course & adjacent parks. Meeting time: 8:00 AM**

From the intersection of Osborne and Glenoaks, go southeast on Glenoaks to Montague and bear left. Proceed to the end of the road and park in the parking lot. Look for counters with binoculars. Bring lunch and drinks, and be prepared to walk. Leader: Heather Medvitz, [jhmedvitz@yahoo.com](mailto:jhmedvitz@yahoo.com) or (818-667-6658)

#### **Sepulveda Wildlife Basin & Lake Balboa. Meet 7:30 AM**

Meet in the parking lot east of Woodley Avenue, north of Burbank Blvd. and south of the Tillman Water Treatment Plant. Bring lunch, drink. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp, [kris.ohlenkamp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sbcglobal.net).

#### **Bull Creek & west of Balboa Park. Meet 8:30 AM**

Enter the park at the entrance road on the east side of Balboa Blvd, south of Victory Blvd. Meet in the small, paved handicapped and bus parking area in the dirt overflow parking lot between Balboa Blvd and Lake Balboa. Leaders: Allan and Muriel Kotin, [akotin@earthlink.net](mailto:akotin@earthlink.net)

#### **Reseda Park & Los Encinos State Historic Park. Meeting time: 8:00 AM**

Meet in the parking off Victory Blvd, at the east end of Reseda Park. Leader: Pat Bates, [PBates@lgshcpa.com](mailto:PBates@lgshcpa.com)

#### **Pierce College. Meeting time: 8:00 AM**

Meet at the corner of Victory Blvd and DeSoto. Leader, Jody Church, [jochurch@roadrunner.com](mailto:jochurch@roadrunner.com)

#### **Chatsworth Reservoir. Meeting time 8:00 AM**

This sector is tentative, pending approval by DWP. **Check with the leader before showing up.** Meet at the gate on Valley Circle Blvd. just west of the junction of Plummer and Valley Circle Blvd. Bring lunch and drink as the exit gate will be closed until 2:00 PM. Leader: Art Langton, [wrentit@att.net](mailto:wrentit@att.net)

#### **O'Melveny Park. Meeting time: 8:00 AM**

From the intersection of Balboa and Rinaldi, go north to Balboa and Sesnon. Turn left (west) on Sesnon and continue 1/2 mile. Park is on the right. Meet in the parking lot. Leader: Tracy Drake: [tdrake@torranceca.gov](mailto:tdrake@torranceca.gov)

#### **Veterans and El Cariso Parks. Meeting time 7:30 AM**

Meet at Veterans Park at the end of Sayre St in Sylmar. Turn left at the first intersection after entering and proceed to the western parking lot. Leader, Dick Norton, [n6aa@arrl.org](mailto:n6aa@arrl.org).

#### **Wilson Canyon and nearby parks in the northeast section. Meeting time 7:00 AM**

Take the Roxford exit from the 210 and drive a short distance north to Olive View Drive. Turn right and proceed just past Olive View Hospital and park on the street near the entrance to the east parking lot. Leader: Judy Matsuoka, [judy.matsuoka@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judy.matsuoka@sbcglobal.net).

#### **Limekiln Canyon. Meeting time: 8:00 AM**

Meet on the south side of Chatsworth Street, a half block west of Tampa. Park on the north side of the street. Leader: Rose Leibowitz, [roselbirds@gmail.com](mailto:roselbirds@gmail.com)

#### **Chatsworth Park, Oakwood Cemetery & other nearby parks. Meeting time 7:00 AM**

Meet at McDonalds on the corner of Roscoe and Topanga. Leader: Jim Hardesty, [jaybirder@gmail.com](mailto:jaybirder@gmail.com)

## **Phainopepla Photos of the Month December 2015/January 2016**

**By Stacey Rich Bergman**

### **Male Painted Redstart**

Newbury Park, October 5

Canon 60D with a 400mm 5.6 fixed lens; Aperture mode; Shutter speed 400, Aperture 5.6, ISO 1600, exposure compensation +1

"I have been lover of birds all my life and an avid birder for about the past seven years." says talented birder and photographer Stacey Rich Bergman. It took talent, determination and a little luck to capture this great shot of the rarely seen Painted Redstart. It hasn't been recorded in the area since 2013. For Stacey, as it

would be for many of us, it was a life bird. "Like most birders I know, I seek out life birds whenever possible and it's always a great satisfaction to get a photograph of a life bird!" Stacey is a member of National and Conejo Audubon as well as a key volunteer for Friends of the California Condors Wild and Free. News of the Painted Redstart spread quickly on a number of rare bird email alerts and Facebook pages. Make sure you are tuned in so you can learn about rare birds too!



### **Juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawk**

**By Richard Medvitz**

Calabasas, October 24

Camera 5D MarkII, 300mm lens, at 1/180, f4.5, ISO 100

"We have an abundance of House Finches, Sparrows and Juncos this time of year" says SFV Audubon member Richard Medvitz. So not surprisingly, visits from predators are expected. Juvenile accipiter's can be difficult to tell apart, but after careful research Richard concluded he was observing the less common Sharp-shinned Hawk. "The books show the Cooper's juvenile with an orange-buff head and thin streaks on breast. Not so with this bird. Please correct me if I'm wrong."

Do you have an interesting photo of a bird taken in/near the San Fernando Valley? Please submit your photos to [JackieWollner@gmail.com](mailto:JackieWollner@gmail.com). Or you can post to our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/sfvaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/sfvaudubon). Please include location, date, camera and lens info, a short account of how the photo was taken, and a profile of the photographer.



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**SAVE the DATE:** Our Conservation Award event has been relocated to March 5, 2016 and will be a lunchtime event. All information will be in the next copy of the *Phainopepla*.

## Bird Fest is Back Again, Bigger and Better!

Those who attended the Bird Fest at Gillette Ranch last fall gave us enough positive feedback that we are having the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual event on Saturday, December 5, 9:00am—3:30pm.

### The speakers this year are as follows:

**10:00 a.m. Mark Mendelson** of NPS on Roadrunners

**11:00 a.m. Scott Logan** of Wildwings Backyard Bird store on Bird Friendly Habitat

**12:00 noon Chuck Armdale** of Santa Monica Bay Audubon on Shore Birds

**1:00 p.m. Dave Weeshoff** of San Fernando Valley Audubon Society on the Effect of Climate Change on Birds

**2:00 p.m. Don Klabunde** of Conejo Valley Audubon Society on Bird Photography.

In addition, there will be an outdoor live Bird show from Nature of Wildworks that will be repeated three times.

There will be plenty of bird walks led by the Chapters, however experienced birders with their own binoculars may wish to arrive at 8:30 a.m. for an early bird walk. The actual event and all the tables will be open from 9:00 a.m. There will even be things to buy if you are looking for a birding Holiday gift for someone.

To get there, take the 101 west and exit at Las Virgenes Road, turn left and drive to Mulholland Highway. At Mulholland take a left and then the entrance is on the right.

**SEE YOU THERE**

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## September & October Monthly Field Trips (by Richard Barth)

On September 19 we visited Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Orange County. At HCP the warblers found were Wilson's, Yellow, Black-throated Gray, Orange-crowned, Townsend's and Common Yellowthroat but we missed a recently reported American Redstart. We had good comparative looks at Hutton's Vireo and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Western Tanager, Hooded Oriole, House Wren, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Green Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Goldfinch, Western Bluebird and Song Sparrow were present as well as exotics Scaly-breasted Munia and Northern Red Bishop in good numbers. A White-faced Ibis flock flew over the park in "V" formation. Bolsa Chica featured two very special birds for us, Ridgway's Rail and Reddish Egret. It also produced interesting fare like Sora, Horned Lark, Belted Kingfisher, Forster's Tern, Elegant Tern, Eared Grebe, Brown Pelican, American White Pelican, Say's Phoebe and Savannah Sparrow (including "Belding's"). Raptors seen were American Kestrel, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk and Turkey Vulture. Ducks of note were Northern Shoveler, Cinnamon Teal and Gadwall. High tide covered many of the mudflats and limited our shorebird observations, but we managed to tally Ruddy Turnstone, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Greater Yellowlegs (hidden, heard), Willet, Western Sandpiper, dowitcher (sp), Black-bellied Plover, Black-necked Stilt and American Avocet.

October 17 marked our trip to El Dorado Park in Long Beach. We were pleased to see Tropical Kingbird and Hairy Woodpecker, two target species having been recently reported in the park. There had also been a heads-up on Greater White-fronted Goose and Red-breasted Nuthatch, and indeed we were successful in locating them. We missed some other previously found notables but were happy to tally Belted Kingfisher, Green Heron, Hutton's Vireo, Western Meadowlark, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, Pacific-slope Flycatcher (heard), and Hermit Thrush. Our warbler list featured Wilson's, Townsend's, Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and Common Yellowthroat. Our raptor list: Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel and Turkey Vulture. Also of interest on the day were Western Grebe, Eared Grebe, Northern Flicker, Cassin's Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, Downy Woodpecker, House Wren, and Spotted Towhee. A gopher snake entertained us on the west edge of Area III. 

## Calendar of Events

### December

#### **Saturday, December 5. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.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, then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff at (661) 257-4050.

#### **Sunday, December 6. 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: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at [kris.ohlenkamp@sfaudubon.org](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sfaudubon.org) or (747) 444-9683.

#### **Saturday, December 12. Beginners and Family Bird Walk.**

**9:00–11:00 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. Binoculars are available for loan. 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(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Diana Keeney, (818) 998-3216. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. **Rain cancels.** Also visit our website [www.sfaudubon.org](http://www.sfaudubon.org).

#### **Saturday, December 12. Placerita Canyon Nature Center**

**Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 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. Various leaders. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

#### **Sunday, December 13. Wildwood Canyon Bird Walk,**

**Burbank. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** Directions: From the I-5/Golden State Fwy. N: Take Exit 146A toward Olive Ave. merge onto E. Angeleno Ave. and turn left onto S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, then take the first right onto E. Olive Ave.

From I-5/Golden State Fwy. S: Take EXIT 146A toward Verdugo Ave. Turn left onto S. Front Street, which will become

E. Verdugo Ave. Turn left at the first light onto S. 1st Street then take the 3<sup>rd</sup> right on to E. Olive Ave.

Continue 1.3 miles on E. Olive through downtown Burbank and up the hill. Turn left onto N. Sunset Canyon Dr. Go 0.5 miles and turn right onto E. Harvard. Drive .4 miles skirting the golf course and meet at the entry kiosk area. Extra binoculars are available. Leaders: Nick Wilhelm and Mike Mc Horney, (818) 845-0166.

#### **Tuesday, December 15. Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 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 0.6 miles, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. **RAIN CANCELS.** Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m.), or [carolyn.oppenheimer@sfaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfaudubon.org).

**There will be NO Monthly Field Trip in December due to the Christmas Bird Count.**

#### **Saturday, December 19. Christmas Bird Count.**

Come out to count birds for the 116<sup>th</sup> Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, all are welcome. See page three for meeting times and locations then join us at **4:00pm for Birds and Beer**, and compiling count data at the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, 18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana.

#### **Saturday, December 19. 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) 252-6187.

#### **Sunday, December 20. 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 \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

**Thursday, December 24. Due to the holiday there will be NO SFVAS General Membership Meeting. Merry Christmas.**

#### **Saturday, December 26. SFVAS Hansen Dam Bird Walk.**

**9:00 a.m.** We will walk along a dirt road at the base of the dam—exploring promising sites along the way. Meet at the lower parking lot, Dronfield Entrance. Directions: Take Osborne exit from Golden State (5) Freeway. Go northeast about two miles passing Glenoaks Blvd. Turn right on Dronfield to enter the park. Turn right at the end of Dronfield and then take a quick left and proceed downhill to the large parking lot. **Alternate directions:** Exit Osborne from the eastbound Foothill Freeway (210). At the off ramp, turn right onto Foothill. After a short distance, turn left on Osborne and then left on Dronfield. Follow

above directions to the lower parking lot. Rain cancels. Leader: Pat Bates (818) 425-0962, [pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, NO December Young Birders Group Bird Walk.** Please join us for the Christmas Bird Count on December 19. See page three for times and locations. For more information please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at [roselbirds@gmail.com](mailto:roselbirds@gmail.com), or call (818) 990-5405.

## January

**Saturday, January 2. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.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, then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff at (661) 257-4050.

**Sunday, January 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 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. Contact him at [kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org) or (747) 444-9683.

**Saturday, January 9. Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 9:00–11:00 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. Binoculars are available for loan. 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(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Diana Keeney, (818) 998-3216. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. **Rain cancels.** Please visit our website [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, January 9. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 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. Various leaders. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

**Sunday, January 10. Wildwood Canyon Bird Walk, Burbank. 9:00–11:00 a.m.** See December 13 for directions. Leaders: Nick Wilhelm and Mike Mc Horney, (818) 845-0166.

**Saturday, January 16. Monthly Field Trip: Upper Newport Bay & San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. 8:00 a.m.** Bring lunch and drinks. Allow about 1.5 hours driving time from the San Fernando Valley. Directions: Take the 405 Fwy. South into Orange Count; exit Jamboree Road in the city of Irvine. Turn right (south) on Jamboree Road and proceed about four miles to San Joaquin Hills Road, turn right and drive down to the bay. Park on San Joaquin Hills Road just before the dead end. In the afternoon we will bird the nearby San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, January 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) 252-6187.

**Sunday, January 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 \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

**Tuesday, January 19. Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 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 0.6 miles, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. **RAIN CANCELS.** Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m.), or [carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, January 23 Hansen Dam Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m.** We will walk along a dirt road at the base of the dam—exploring promising sites along the way. Meet at the lower parking lot, Dronfield Entrance. Directions: Take Osborne exit from Golden State (5) Freeway. Go northeast about two miles passing Glenoaks Blvd. Turn right on Dronfield to enter the park. Turn right at the end of Dronfield and then take a quick left and proceed downhill to the large parking lot. **Alternate directions:** Exit Osborne from the eastbound Foothill Freeway (210). At the off ramp, turn right onto Foothill. After a short distance, turn left on Osborne and then left on Dronfield. Follow above directions to the lower parking lot. Rain cancels. Leader: Pat Bates (818) 425-0962, [pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org).

**Monday, January 25. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Wild Wings Nature Store. 4337 Woodman Ave., Sherman Oaks. (818) 995-0022. Please bring your own chair.

**Thursday, January 28. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. SPEAKER: Kris Ohlenkamp. TOPIC: What it means to be a "good birder."** Kris will be giving tips on how to locate and identify birds. **Remember the new meeting place: San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, 18312 Oxnard St, Tarzana, 91356. Directions:** Located between White Oak and Reseda. In order to park, it is recommended to go on Etiwanda Avenue and turn into the parking area up the alley behind the center. For more information, see Monthly Program, page one.

**Saturday, January 30. Young Birders Group Bird Walk: Franklin Canyon Park, 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr, Beverly Hills.** The Young Birders Group walks are for young birders who are serious about birding, know some birds, and are willing to learn. All are welcome to join! Directions: From the San

Fernando Valley, take the Ventura Freeway (101) or Ventura Boulevard to Coldwater Canyon Boulevard. Head south to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive. Make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. (This means crossing Mulholland) Road signs read "Road Closed 800 Feet" "Sunset to Sunrise"; this is the park entrance. Meet in the parking lot on the left. Allow some extra time, as Coldwater Canyon can be a slow road. For more information, please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at [roselbirds@gmail.com](mailto:roselbirds@gmail.com), or call (818) 990-5405.

**Future Field Trips (details later):**

February 20. Ventura County Game Preserve

March 19-20. Morro Bay Weekend

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## **SFVAS Board of Directors by Muriel Kotin**

San Fernando Valley Audubon is an all-volunteer organization. We are looking for new volunteers who are interested in participating on our board of directors. Most board members start their service as chairs of our many committees or as elected board members at large. We also welcome members of committees as members of the team, although they are not members of the board.

Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a member of the team, whether as an elected board member, committee chair or committee member. We are volunteers, so you don't have to have prior experience. It is a wonderful opportunity to expand your knowledge and expertise while helping SFVAS to do its good work, to fulfill our mission: to preserve and enhance the natural habitat within our territory, to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of bird life and the natural environment, and to create a social environment that encourages individual development and participation.

Please phone me at my home: 310.457-5796 or email me at [akotin@earthlink.net](mailto:akotin@earthlink.net).

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## **UPDATE ON THE HIDDEN CREEKS ESTATES DEVELOPMENT by Mark Osokow**

The environmentally destructive Hidden Creeks Estates gated housing development proposed by Texas land and oil field developer, Forestar Group Inc., is presently being considered for approval by an Advisory Agency of the City of Los Angeles. A decision by the agency is expected on December 1. SFVAS opposes this development, which will involve construction of 188 large homes on a 245-acre site, currently in unincorporated county area, wedged between Browns and Mormon Canyons in the foothills of the Santa Susana Mountains north of Porter Ranch and near Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park at Joughin Ranch. SFVAS is strongly opposed to this development, which will require annexation of the development site by the City. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), the Sierra Club, and Santa Susana Mountain Park Association also oppose this development. Among the adverse impacts expected from the development are the outright destruction of more than 400 oak trees and the surrounding riparian and upland landscape, disruption of existing wildlife corridors, degradation of two perennial tributaries of the Los Angeles River (Browns and Mormon Creeks), increased erosion, interference with public access, a new major road fragmenting some of the finest remaining open space in the area, and the re-grading of an estimated 7.5 million cubic yards of soil in a seismically unstable area. The annexation will require a vote of the full city council. Tell your council representative you are appalled that this proposed development has gotten this far in the planning process and that annexation by the city must not occur. For additional information, please contact Mark Osokow or Dave Weeshoff through the [SFVAudubon.org](http://SFVAudubon.org) website. 

## A New Monthly Walk at Hansen Dam



Mark your calendars for the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month and head out to Hansen Dam for our new regular walk. As the area is so large, Pat Bates, the leader is planning two different walks and meeting places.



Some months we will meet near the Ranger Station and other months by the Equestrian Area. Check

before coming!!

Our first walk, advertised in the last copy of the *Phainopepla*, attracted a good group. It was hot and dry but we managed a good tally of birds including a Rock Wren, a Cassin's Kingbird, a covey of California Quail and a Nuttall's Woodpecker.

## **Audubon-at-Home** by Alan Pollack

### **Want wildlife? Go native!**

California native plants are those which are indigenous to our state—they were here before the European settlers arrived. There are over 6000 species of California natives and another 6000 plus cultivars developed from those. There has been a rapid decline of our native flora as a result of massive development and as homeowners and landscapers import plant material from distant regions. The record drought in the mid- to late 1970s sparked interest in restoring and conserving our native flora and our current drought (now in its fourth year) should add further impetus to this trend if one is at all environmentally conscious and concerned.

In addition to the effort to conserve our natural flora, there are other good reasons to go native. Native plants are adapted to our climate because most have deep root systems. Most can survive drought, frost, wind and fires (if they are not too frequent). Once established, many will survive on little or no irrigation. They are adapted to our generally poor soil. Amending the soil and fertilizing is not just unnecessary—it will often kill the plant. Allowed to grow to their natural size and shape, they require less pruning, which may be needed only for aesthetic or health reasons or to rejuvenate the plant. And, finally, native plants attract and support our native wildlife, including pollinators and insect predators, eliminating the need for environmentally harmful pesticides.

And then there are good reasons to avoid and, in some cases, eliminate non-native (aka, exotic) plants from our gardens: Removed from their natural habitats (where there are typically built-in controls to their growth) and planted in a strange, new habitat (where such controls often do not exist), non-natives may grow rampantly, displacing our native flora. Many are very thirsty and some pose extreme

fire hazard. Finally, they may offer little support to our native wildlife.

To learn more about native plants and how to use them in your garden, check out these websites: [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) (California Native Plant Society); [www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org); [www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com) (where you can search "plant communities by zip code," enter your zip code, and at the bottom of the page, click on a list of plants native to your zip code). Two excellent books are "California Native Plants for the Garden", by Bornstein et al. and "The Care and Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens" by O'Brien et al.

As to purchasing, most of our local (San Fernando Valley) nurseries carry few, if any. But the more people who request natives at their local nursery, the more likely the nursery is to start carrying them. Theodore Payne in Sunland is a retail native plant nursery and Matilija, though located in Moorpark and a bit of a drive, is a wholesale native plant nursery open to the public at certain times. Go to their website ([www.matilijanursery.com](http://www.matilijanursery.com)) to find out how to get there and the hours it's open for the walk in trade.

If you go native, our wildlife friends will thank you by coming to visit more often!

*Please e-mail Alan Pollack, our Audubon-at-Home Chair, with any questions you have with regard to creating a wildlife-friendly garden that can be used for publication. Alan 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 contacted at (818) 340-2347 or at [alan.pollack@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:alan.pollack@sfvaudubon.org).*



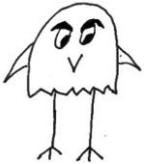
## Classroom Visits

This year Paula Orlovich has initiated a post visit lesson to the classroom for the students who have visited the Basin. During the visit students listened to a lesson about John James Audubon's keen observation as an ornithologist, his artistic talent and legacy as he has

inspired conservationists. Students were encouraged to use photos (taken by Pat Bates) and calendar photos of birds seen at the basin to draw their own images using oil pastels and crayons.



## Join the Bird Nerd Club!



For the past few years, a number of you have participated in the Phainopepla Club birding challenge by keeping track of your Los Angeles County Bird sightings on eBird. At our June potluck, the participants have been awarded a pin and prizes based on the number of species seen from July to June. We are now replacing the Phainopepla Club with a new birding challenge: The **Bird Nerd Club!**

The **Bird Nerd Club** members will have a broader canvas in which to count birds. They will be able to include all the birds they see in California from July 1, 2015 through June 19, 2016. The award categories will be:

**N:** Nighthawk 100-199 species

**E:** Eagle 200-275

**R:** Roadrunner 276-350

**D:** Dunlin over 350 species.

**N...E...R...D...Bird NERD!**

Your 2015-16 California lists must be stored on eBird and you will be able to submit your total next June. Will you be among the bird nerds in our flock?

# SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President: Rose Leibowitz (818) 990-5405  
 1st Vice President: Heather Medvitz (818) 222-4430  
 2nd Vice President: Diana Keeney (818) 998-3216  
 Treasurer: Pat Bates (818) 425-0962  
 Corresponding Secretary: Lynn Maddox (818) 845-4688  
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Dave Collins (661) 406-7689  
 Jackie Wollner (818) 989-4543  
 Jim Houghton (818) 784-4077  
 Jeanne Kolasz (818) 421-9807  
 Travis Abeyta (818) 648-4800

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Audubon-at-Home: Alan Pollack (818) 340-2347  
 Bird Observatory: Mark Osokow unpublished  
 Birdathon: Pat Avery (626) 840-8226  
 Christmas Bird Count: Jim Moore (661) 298-1130  
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 Community Outreach: Sharon Ford (818) 780-5816  
 Conservation: Dave Weeshoff (818) 618-1652  
 Descanso Bird Station: Dottie Ecker (818) 790-0659  
 Education Classroom: Dave Weeshoff (818) 618-1652  
 Education-SBEEP: Paula Orlovich (818) 728-9838  
 Field Trips: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342  
 Finance: Jim Houghton (818) 784-4077  
 Hansen Dam Rep: Dave Weeshoff (818) 618-1652  
 Hospitality: Helene White  
 Membership: Lynn Maddox (818) 845-4688  
 Phainopepla Editor: Rebecca LeVine (818) 776-0881  
 Programs: Heather Medvitz (818) 222-4430  
 Publicity: OPEN  
 Sales & Service: Diana Keeney (818) 998-3216  
 SSFL Public Participation Grp: Mark Osokow unpublished  
 Scholarships and Grants: Jim Houghton (818) 784-4077  
 Sep. Basin Steering Comm: Muriel Kotin (310) 457-5796  
 Social Media: Jackie Wollner (818) 989-4543  
 Web Coordinator: Dave Collins (661) 406-7689  
 Youth Activities: Muriel Kotin (310) 457-5796

## SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Conservation Banquet: OPEN  
 Malibu Creek Bird Walk: Muriel Kotin (310) 457-5796  
 Art Langton (818) 887-0973  
 O'Melveny Bird Walk: Carolyn Oppenheimer (818) 885-7493  
 Photo of the Month: Jackie Wollner (818) 989-4543  
 Recycled Water Advisory Grp: Mark Osokow unpublished  
 Sepulveda Bird Walks: Kris Ohlenkamp (747) 444-9683  
 Young Birders Group: Rose Leibowitz (818) 990-5405

For Chapter leaders' e-mail addresses, see our website:

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

Follow us on  and  Twitter  
 @sfvaudubon and #sfvaudubon

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Become a member of the  
**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Mail the form below, and include a check made payable to SFV Audubon Society:

P.O. Box 7769  
 Van Nuys, CA 91409

Attn: Membership

## SFVAS MEMBERSHIP

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership...\$25 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

1-yr Chapter Membership (No paper copy of *Phainopepla*).....\$20 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Student 1-yr Chapter Membership...\$10 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Deductible Contribution to SFVAS \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about SFVAS?  
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The *PHAINOPEPLA*, published six times a year, is the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409. 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 newspapers should include the source and date. Copy for the *PHAINOPEPLA* should be in the hands of the editor by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

Membership in the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:

**National Audubon Society, Inc.**  
 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor  
 New York, NY 10014

Attn: Chance Mueleck

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 Lynn Maddox at (818) 845-4688 or e-mail her at [Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org).

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# Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
PO Box 7769  
Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769

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### New T-shirts for Sale!

Three new T-shirts are now available for sale. The shirts come in three colors: Army Green (Adult sizes), Dark Teal (Ladies cut), and Indigo Blue (Adult Long Sleeve). All three shirt styles have the "Heron Tracks" design and come in sizes S-XXL. Our chapter logo is imprinted in matching ink at the top of the left sleeve.

The "Heron Tracks" design shows a sketch of a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) on the back of the shirt. The front of the shirt has a line of heron tracks running up one side! The short sleeve shirts cost \$20.00 and the long sleeve shirt is \$25.00.

The Heron Tracks shirts will be available for purchase at our monthly General Membership meetings and at the Bird Fest at King Gillette Ranch on December 5. If you need more information about the shirts, contact Diana Keeney at [diana.keeney@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:diana.keeney@sfvaudubon.org).

Support our chapter and show your spirit with a Heron Tracks T-shirt!

