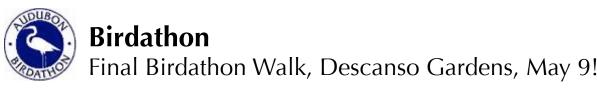


PROGRAM NOTES

John Garrett to speak at Thursday May 27, 7:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting.

John Garrett, our SFVAS 2009 scholarship winner, will present a PowerPoint slide show titled, "My Trip to the Cascades." This will be an account of his experiences in the summer camp. John is an eleventh grader and avid birder. This will be preceded by the election of our 2010–2011 board members. See Calendar Section for directions. ψ



As we head into May, we are almost finished with our Birdathon. Thank you to all the people who have sent in pledges and to all the leaders who have led Birdathon walks. We still have one walk to go—join Nancy Herron Knode at Descanso Gardens on May 9 (See Calendar section for directions and time.) If you have not yet made a pledge, (or now wish to add to it!) there is still time. Send your contributions made payable to SFVAS, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769. The drive ends at the end of May. Thank you again for your support. If you did not receive a pledge form, please e-mail me at rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org and I will be happy to send you a form. ψ





The Nominations Committee is pleased to announce the following slate of candidates to serve on the Board of Directors of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society for the 2010–2011 program year. The election will be held at the May 27 General Membership meeting at the Encino Community Center and installation of the officers will take place at the June 24 meeting.

President: Dave Weeshoff 1st VP: Mike Van Norman 2nd VP: Rose Leibowitz Treasurer: Ann Ohlenkamp Corresponding Sec: Heather Medvitz Recording Sec: Diana Keeney 3rd Year Board: Mark Osokow 2nd Year Board: Donna Timlin 1st Year Board: Aurelio Albaisa 1st Year Board: Lynn Maddox

The committee would like to thank all SFVAS members who have served the chapter in any capacity. We invite those of you with an interest in becoming more active in chapter activities to let us know.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Nominations Committee Ψ

Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

Our Morro Bay Weekend was March 20 & 21, with some of us arriving a day early to bird. Our threeday species tally was 114.

We had learned that a Harlequin Duck and some Marbled Murrelets were being seen up the coast north of Cayucos. Using tips on the general locations of the birds, various members of our group took search trips and were able to find the duck and two murrelets. The Harlequin was seen on all three days of our stay and murrelets on two of the days.

Again this year we saw Pigeon Guillemots, Chestnutbacked Chickadees and Peregrine Falcons target birds for us here. We missed Canyon Wren but did see a Rock Wren. All three cormorant species were on hand and we saw Common and Red-throated Loons. Our shorebird list totaled seventeen species with Dunlin, Black Turnstone, Ruddy Turnstone, Surfbird, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew, American Avocet and Black Oystercatcher probably being the most noteworthy. We saw fifteen duck species including all three teal, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Northern Pintail, Red-breasted Merganser, Surf Scoter and of course the Harlequin. Brant were in good numbers as expected. We found the usual five species of grebe. The gull contingent included a Herring Gull this year but surprisingly no Glaucous-winged. Our terns were Forster's and Caspian.

Eurasian Collared-Dove is fairly common in the area now. Brown Creeper and Purple Finch sightings sparked considerable interest. Several Pacific-slope Flycatchers were heard and a Western Tanager was seen. Our warblers were Orange-crowned, Wilson's and Yellow-rumped (including one "Myrtle"). Other species of note on the trip were Band-tailed Pigeon, Belted Kingfisher, Western Bluebird, Wrentit, Hermit Thrush, California Thrasher, Savannah Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Western Meadowlark. ψ

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Special Upcoming Event

Bird Walk at Tejon Ranch, Saturday, May 22

Leader Jim Moore. This will be a joint venture between SFV Audubon and Los Angeles Audubon. Tejon Ranch is open only by special arrangement with escort, as one could easily get lost on the web of dirt roads covering this huge property. We will visit Big Sycamore Canyon and Los Alamos Creek, probably amounting to a few miles of easy hiking up the future realignment of the Pacific Crest Trail through the south-central portion of Tejon Ranch. We will see magnificent oak woodlands, stunning sycamore riparian woodlands, late wildflowers, and diverse chaparral vegetation communities, as well as the birds that call these canyons their home. Take Interstate 5 north to Quail Lake Rd. (Hwy 138). Continue east for 8.7 miles to 300th Street West. Turn north and continue on the paved road until it curves to the left. At this point, leave the paved road and continue on the dirt road until you come to the Tejon Ranch gate. Registered participants meet here at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch, as we will be out most of the day. Those wishing to carpool can meet at the McDonald's on the east side of Interstate 5 at Lake Hughes Road at 6:45 a.m. High clearance vehicles recommended; we will carpool into these at the ranch. Rain cancels. Please advise Jim Moore, at jim. moore@sfvaudubon.org of your intention to participate at least two weeks before the event so we can advise the ranch staff of the number of participants.

Late Winter Tour Through Chatsworth Nature Preserve by Art Langton

Eight chapter members and guests joined with the Southwest Herpetologists Society last March 14 on a four-hour birding tour through the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. Approximately 50 plus species were recorded on a clear, cool, and breezy morning. The near normal rainfall for the date filled the seasonal pools and ponds turned dark with western toad tadpoles and attractive to yellowlegs, Killdeer, and a variety of puddle ducks including Shovelers, Gadwalls, Mallards, Wigeon, as well as Cinnamon and Greenwinged Teals.

Additional highlights included the sighting of nesting Red-tailed Hawks, two Orange-crowned Warblers, a leisurely look at a cooperative Merlin, brightly plumaged American Goldfinches, an Osprey over the permanent pond, and dozens of Western Meadowlarks and Red-winged Blackbirds. Hoped for but missing were Lawrence's Goldfinches, kingbirds, and the Rufous-crowned Sparrow.



Early spring wildflowers were in bloom including lupine, fiddleneck, California encelia, and brodiaea. Herpers found a California slender salamander, tree frogs, eastern toads, western skinks, two gopher and rattle snakes, a night snake, and Northern Harrier.

The Chapter thanks and is most appreciative of the cooperation and assistance of the LA DWP and Southwest Herpetologists Society for their assistance in arranging this tour. ψ





Saturday, May 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, jim.hardesty@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, May 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, then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff.

Sunday, May 2. 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 onehalf mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. For more information contact him at kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org or (818) 986-7785.

Saturday, May 8. Monthly Field Trip to Walker Ranch. 7:30 a.m. Note second Saturday and earlier meeting time. Meet at the Walker Ranch entrance. We will look for Costa's Hummingbird, Lazuli Bunting, flycatchers, warblers, orioles and much more. Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the Antelope Valley (14) Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon Road. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and proceed for about two miles. Notice but do not stop at the signed entrance to Placerita Canyon Park. Continue for about 1.5 miles to the dirt parking area for Walker Ranch. After birding Walker Ranch, we will picnic in Placerita Canyon Park and bird there in the afternoon. Bring water and lunch. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342. (Adventure Pass is NOT needed for Walker Ranch parking.)

Saturday, May 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, May 9. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. A BIRDA-THON EVENT. 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: Olga Clark or Nancy Herron Knode. For more information, contact Dottie Ecker, (818) 790-0659.

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Tuesday, May 11. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m. NOTE: SECOND TUESDAY. 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, with any questions (before 7 p.m.) or carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, May 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) 252-6187.

Sunday, May 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 \$12 per car. Leader (s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796, muriel.kotin@ sfvaudubon.org and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

Saturday, May 22. Bird Walk at Tejon Ranch. This will be a joint venture between SFV Audubon and Los Angeles Audubon. Directions: Take Interstate 5 north to Quail Lake Rd. (Hwy 138). Continue east for 8.7 miles to 300th Street West. Turn north and continue on the paved road until it curves to the left. At this point, leave the paved road and continue on the dirt road until you come to the Tejon Ranch gate. Registered participants meet here at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch, as we will be out most of the day. Those wishing to carpool can meet at the McDonald's on the east side of Interstate 5 at Lake Hughes Road at 6:45 a.m. High clearance vehicles recommended; we will carpool into these at the ranch. Rain cancels. Please advise Jim Moore, at jim.moore@sfvaudubon.org of your intention to participate at least two weeks before the event so we can advise the ranch staff of the number of participants. See article on page 3 for more information.

Sunday, May 23. Chatsworth Nature Preserve. 7:00 a.m. Chapter members will join members of the Southwest Herpetologists Society for a tour inside the Preserve. Meet at the Plummer-Valley Circle gate on the north side of the Preserve approximately .9 miles west of the intersection of

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Plummer and Topanga Canyon Blvd. and past three "STOP" signs. Call Art Langton, (818) 887-0973, and leave name and telephone number to be admitted. As the gate will be locked behind us, please bring drink, snack, and be prepared to stay until 12:30 p.m. Facilities limited and primitive. RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Art Langton.

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

Monday, May 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, May 27. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING. 7:00 p.m. Everyone welcome. 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. We will hold our annual elections for new Board Members. And our guest speaker, John Garrett, will present a PowerPoint show about his trip to the Cascades. See "Program Notes", page 1, for more information. **Tuesday, June 1. Antelope Valley Audubon Bird Meeting. 6:30 p.m.** The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve in the Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center, at 43201 35th Street, Lancaster. Contact Bob or Bonnie Weatherman at (661) 269-2051. www.avaudubon.com.

Saturday, June 5. Last Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk until October. 8:00–11:00 a.m. See May 1 for details.

Saturday, June 5. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. See May 1 for details.

Sunday, June 6. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See May 2 for details.

Future Field Trips: (Details later) June 12. Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve (second Saturday) July 17. Mt. Pinos Aug 21. Chilao \checkmark

Audubon-at-Home Mailbox by Alan Pollack

A reader asks how to solve a problem she is faced with in her garden. Over the years she has had the pleasure of having many songbirds visit her garden but since a hawk has built a nest in her olive tree, the only evidence of bird life is the feathers she finds on the ground.

Coopers Hawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks often feed on songbirds, but it puzzled me why a hawk had built a nest in an Olive tree, which is a small tree and not one which is a likely nesting site for a hawk. It turns out that our reader lives in Santa Clarita and she reports that a lot of the tall trees are being chopped down because of damage they are doing to concrete roads and structures, so the hawks, apparently, are having trouble finding nesting sites. New trees are being planted, but they are very young and not suitable yet for nest sites.

Well, I knew she didn't want to hear what I had to say, which was: hawks are part of our precious biodiversity and they need to eat, just like songbirds do. By allowing the hawk's nest to remain in your yard, you are aiding Mother Nature maintain ecological balance. Hopefully, in time, there will be more mature, tall trees available elsewhere for nest building and the hawk will prefer them. She said she'd try to look at it that way. Not easy when you're 85 years old!

Please e-mail Alan Pollack, our Audubon-at-Home Chair, with any questions you have with regards 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. ψ

THE LEAST SANDPIPER Photo and Article by Mathew Tekulsky



If there is such a thing as heaven, it must be sitting on the banks of the lake at the Andree Clark Bird Refuge in Santa Barbara and photographing the delightful Least Sandpiper. One August, I happened upon a group of 15-20 juveniles of this species, which had recently hatched on the sandpiper's breeding grounds in Alaska, and were on their way to their over wintering grounds in southern California, Mexico, and even northern South America. (The Least Sandpiper also over winters in the southeastern U.S. and along the Gulf Coast.)

In the literature, I have seen references to the "confiding," "unsuspicious," and "gregarious" ways of the Least Sandpiper, and I can attest to this. As I sat on my stool and swiveled my camera back and forth on the tripod, or held the camera in my hand, this tiny bird allowed me to photograph it from as close as a foot or so away. If I remained relatively still, the whole group would gravitate in my direction, poking into the dirt or the water for insects, crustaceans, mollusks, marine worms, and other aquatic invertebrates. When they reached my feet, they would turn around and walk with those little steps in the opposite direction. Then, a couple of minutes later, they would all walk back toward me again. Click, click, click would go the shutter.

Sometimes, an individual would twist its head backwards and bury its bill in its mantle feathers, and sometimes, one of these birds would stand on one leg, pulling its other leg up into its belly feathers. They did this no doubt to rest and to conserve body heat, but it endeared me to them nonetheless. Upon a disturbance on the shore, these birds would all lift off from the ground as one entity, peeping to each other as they went, and would circle out over the water like a moving fan, their white bellies glistening in the sunlight as they banked this way and that. Finally, sensing that the coast was clear, the whole troupe would land en masse on the banks of the lake and take up the poking into the dirt and the water in which they had been engaged before they were so rudely interrupted—and as if nothing had happened in the first place.

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Now, the Least Sandpiper, along with other shorebirds such as the Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Marbled Godwit, is very dependent on the salt marshes, mudflats, and other wetlands that exist in the Pacific Flyway linking Ensenada, Mexico, to the sandpiper's final breeding destinations along the Yukon Delta.

Major stopover areas for the sandpiper north of Los Angeles include the San Francisco Bay, Grays Harbor in Washington State, the Fraser River Delta and the Stikine River in Canada, and the Copper River Delta in Alaska. Since the Least Sandpiper needs to rest and build up its fat reserves at a series of these sites on its way north and south, it is critical to the bird's long-term survival that enough of these quality areas be preserved and maintained in a healthy condition.

This tiny strip of lakeshore on which I was sitting reminded me of how fragile the balance is these days for the birds, and for the rest of wildlife in general. The sandpiper was sharing the shoreline with a Snowy Egret, a group of Great-tailed Grackles, a juvenile Ring-billed Gull, as well as the Western Gull and the Heermann's Gull. I took a few photographs of the other birds, but I always redirected my attention to the sandpipers. I was trying to catch the bird with the sunlight glistening in its eye, but I would have to wait a few hours for the sun to move around enough in the sky to give me that opportunity. Finally, I got my "money shot"—the bird standing in the shallow water, in full profile, feet plainly visible, and that gleam in its eye!

A day well spent! ψ



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 \$_____ Student 1-yr Chapter Membership....\$10 \$_____ Optional First-Class Postage......\$5 Contributions to SFVAS..... \$____ Total..... \$ New Member ____ Renewal ____ School ____ Name Address _____ City, State, ZIP Phone _____ Email

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SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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(661) 298-1130 (818) 618-1652 (818) 378-1084 unpublished (818) 341-9354 (818) 222-4430 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 Rose Leibowitz at (818) 990-5405

or e-mail her at rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org.

(661) 298-1130 Hospitality: Carol Johnso (818) 618-1652 Layout & Design: AM Mail Plus

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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 Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769

Please visit our website to see this issue in full color! www.sfvaudubon.org

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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 Rose Leibowitz, Membership Chair, with any questions at rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org.

Local: Alice Adams Shaghig Agopian Sharon Ahearn Gabriel Anderson Edward Bader Cynthia Baker Kenneth Ballan Jayne Barbera Christina Berio Thelma Black **Diane Bohlcke** Margie Bourne Todd Bowers Marshall Brauer Nancy Britton Elsbet Broshv Nancy Brothers Marvin Brown Doris Bruner Irene Budworth Benjamin Calanag **Beverly Calloway** Janelle Calsvn Elaine Casillas Brigitte Chamberlain Joe Chenier

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