

# Phainopepla



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**San Fernando Valley Audubon Society**  
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society



June/July 2011

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## MONTHLY PROGRAMS:

**Thursday, June 23, 2011, Annual Photo Night and Potluck. 6:30—7:00 p.m. setup and social time. Meeting and program begins at 7:00 p.m.**



Members and guests are invited to bring a dish to share at our annual potluck. Please bring one of the following: a main dish, salad, rolls, or dessert to serve 6–8 people. Bring your own plate, cup and eating utensils. Beverages will be provided.

Following dinner we will have the installation of officers for 2011–2012 and program. If you want to you can share your photos. Perhaps you've gone to a special place to bird this year or want to put together a selection of a limited number of your best photos. If not, you can relax and enjoy what others have brought.

Bring 1–15 photos in .jpg format on a CD or flash drive. Give them to Jim Moore who will run the projector, giving you time to say a little something about each photo such as the species, location, any special background story that goes with your photo, or the type of camera and/or other equipment you used.

If internet access is available to us at the Encino Community Center, Jim Moore will give a 15 minute introduction to using e-bird. E-bird is now set up to accept all listings from around the world and can be a useful tool to any birder who likes to keep track of their birding trips while also sharing this information with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. A great deal is learned about migration patterns and changes in bird population from this information. (Photo: Greater Roadrunner by Richard Medvitz, Sierra Vista Park, June 5, 2010) ♪

**San Fernando Valley Audubon's monthly  
General Meetings and Program  
Presentations are held on the fourth  
Thursday of the month (except July and  
August.) We meet at the Encino Community  
Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd. Encino. See June  
23 under Calendar of Events for directions.**



## Monthly Fieldtrip Report by Richard Barth

On April 23 we met in the high desert north of Palm Springs to bird the Big Morongo Canyon area and then Black Rock Campground in Joshua Tree National Park. This trip doubles as a SFVAS Birdathon and we welcome sightings by participants from any time during the weekend for our list.

Morongo notables on Saturday morning were White-winged Dove(!), Vermilion Flycatcher, Costa's Hummingbird, Virginia Rail (heard), Verdin, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lazuli Bunting and Pine Siskin. Ten species of warblers were tallied including Yellow-breasted Chat (heard), MacGillivray's and Nashville. We did well with Black-headed Grosbeak but missed Blue Grosbeak. Two of our favorites, Summer Tanager and Brown-crested Flycatcher, had not yet returned for the spring.

We saw both Ladder-backed and Nuttall's Woodpeckers and discussed how to tell them apart. Other species of interest were Lincoln's and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Hooded Oriole, Gambel's Quail, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Warbling Vireo, Phainopepla, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Hammond's Flycatcher and Western Bluebird. We were directed to a Red-tailed Hawk nest with three young birds, and later saw an adult headed for the nest carrying a snake.

Our afternoon visit to Black Rock Campground produced target birds Scott's Oriole, Black-throated Sparrow and Cactus Wren. Trip participant Claire Englund added Pinyon Jay on Sunday morning in nearby Black Rock Canyon.

Our species total was sixty-two. ♪

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## Early April in Chatsworth Nature Preserve by Art Langton

Seven Chapter members along with those of the Southwestern Herpetology Society enjoyed a gorgeous and productive Sunday morning, April 10, touring inside Chatsworth Nature Preserve, a welcome break from the previous week of cool unsettled weather. Sixty-seven species were recorded including two rarely seen within the Preserve, the increasingly common Eurasian Collared Dove and a first time Canyon Wren. Good looks at Rufous-crowned Sparrows, male Bullock's Orioles along with numerous newly arrived Western Kingbirds along with some fourteen Great Egrets added to the enjoyment of the day.

A scattering of ducks and Greater Yellowlegs remained on the still extensive seasonal marshes now teeming with Western Toad tadpoles in various stages of development were observed. Several pairs of Mallards with numerous ducklings were also utilizing the ponds and added delight to the morning. Both Canyon and Rock Wrens along with Lincoln's Sparrows were found along the cliff face of the hill over the flood control tunnel. Other highlights included a late season Merlin, a Green

Heron on the seasonal marshes, a roadrunner, and a hard to recognize Great Horned Owl found just prior to departure time. Nesting Red-winged Blackbirds occupied the bulrushes in their most favored portion of the Preserve as did one Sora which was heard calling.

The morning was also a fine day for snakes. The junior herpetologists uncovered a Western Rattlesnake, a Red Racer or Whipsnake, a California King Snake, Gopher Snake, and a Blackheaded Snake. The real prize find of the day was not a snake but the now rarely seen Western Spadefoot Toad which has not been seen in the Preserve in nearly 20 years according to the herping experts on the scene.

The Chapter is grateful for the assistance and cooperation of DWP personnel who made this field trip possible.

Note: There will be no Chatsworth tours in June, during the summer months, or early fall. ♪





## 2011 BIRDATHON — Submitted by Rosemary Leibowitz



Birdathon 2011 is over (apart from a few pledges still to come in.) Thank you to all who participated! I was fortunate enough to participate in four this year and thoroughly enjoyed them all!

Art Langton and group found 44 species at Malibu Creek State Park. For his solo trip he saw 80 species.

Dick Barth's group in the Morongo Valley spotted 62 species.

Jim Moore and group did a long day in the Antelope Valley and desert areas, and saw 130 species (a record.)

Jim Hardesty's Big Day netted 97 species.

Carolyn Oppenheimer and group found 33 species at O'Melveny Park.

Kris Ohlenkamp at Sepulveda basin led a group that saw 60 species.

Nancy Herron-Knode at Descanso Gardens found 42 species

Our other two groups' pledges are specifically for our Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP) outreach.

Muriel and Allan Kotin did a 24-hour birding day all over LA County and saw 102 species.

John and Andrew Willis birded in the Malibu area for a day, saw many species of warblers in El Dorado Regional Park and totaled 79 species.

Thank you to all birders, supporters, donators and pledgers! The "mean team" our average bird count was 73, a little down from last year. The Youth and Children's events have not happened at the time of going to print; neither do I have a dollar total. I am again overwhelmed by the generosity and good feeling I get from our membership. Thank you all! ♣

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## Audubon-at-Home Mailbox by Alan Pollack

E-mailer JH writes about a not uncommon problem: birds colliding with windows and either temporarily stunning themselves or injuring themselves, sometimes fatally. In this case it's the same bird, a robin, which is back for a second year of window whacking.

If one finds a bird who is lying on the ground stunned after a collision, place it in a box in a dark, warm, quiet space and it will likely recover in a short period of time and can be released.

Birds fly into a window because they see a reflection of the garden it faces and assume they can fly in that direction, so anything that will minimize reflection will help to prevent such collisions. Inside the house, closed curtains, shutters and blinds will reduce reflection. Windows can be etched or frosted. Houseplants can be kept away from problem windows.

Outside the house, again one can use shades or shutters, lattice work, window screens, one-way transparent films, awnings, hanging and swaying objects. A somewhat dirty window will also reflect less and tall plants in front of the window will obstruct the bird's flight path. Feeders and bird baths should be either very close to the house or more that 12 feet away from it. A combination of strategies is often successful in preventing needless bird deaths from window collisions. ♣



# Calendar of Events

## June

**Saturday, June 4. Last Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk until October. 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, Jim.Hardesty@sfvaudubon.org, (818) 346-6712.

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

**Sunday, June 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: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at (818) 986-7785 or kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org.

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

**Saturday, June 11. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Dockets' Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and continue about 1.5 miles to the park entrance. Turn right and park at

the Nature Center. Leader: Bob Fischer. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

**Sunday, June 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 Dottie Ecker, (818) 790-0659.

**Saturday, June 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) 252-6187.

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

**Tuesday, June 21. O'Melveny 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, with any questions (before 7 p.m.) or carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org.

**Thursday, June 23. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. Annual Potluck and Photo Show. 6:30–7:00 p.m.** setup and social time. Meeting and program begins at 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. The evening's program will include the installation of new officers for the 2011–2012 year. It will also feature presentations from our own talented photographer members sharing their best slides, DVD's etc. All are invited to participate. Limit the number of images to 15 or less. Presenters must narrate. Possibilities are birds, nature, vacations, field trips, or backyard natural wonders.

Don't miss this always-enjoyable annual get-together of friends, food, and photos as our activity year draws to a close. For more information see "Monthly Program", page 1.



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

## July

**Saturday, July 2. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** See June 4 for details.

**Sunday, July 3. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See June 5 for details.

**Saturday, July 9. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m.** See June 11 for details.

**Sunday, July 10. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See June 12 for details.

**Saturday, July 16. Monthly Field Trip to Mt. Pinos 7:30 a.m.** Please note the new, earlier meeting time. Join us for summer montane species such as Fox Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Dusky Flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, Hairy Woodpecker and Clark's Nutcracker. Meet in the parking lot at Iris Meadows. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, insect repellent and lunch. Directions: From the San Fernando Valley, take I-5 north to the Frazier Park exit. Go west through Frazier Park and continue for about 20 miles up Mount Pinos Road to the end (and parking lot.) Your vehicle must exhibit a National Forest "Adventure Pass" or Golden Age Passport in order for you to park and bird in this area. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, July 16. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** See June 18 for details.

**Sunday, July 17. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See June 19 for details.

**Tuesday, July 19. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m.** See June 21 for details.

**Sunday, July 24. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See June 12 for details.

**NO General Membership Meetings in July or August. Have a great summer. See you September 22!**

**Future Field Trips:**

**August 20. Angeles Crest spots as available**

**September 17. Huntington Central Park/Bolsa Chica** ♪



## PHAINOPEPLA PHOTO OF THE MONTH by Mike Muller



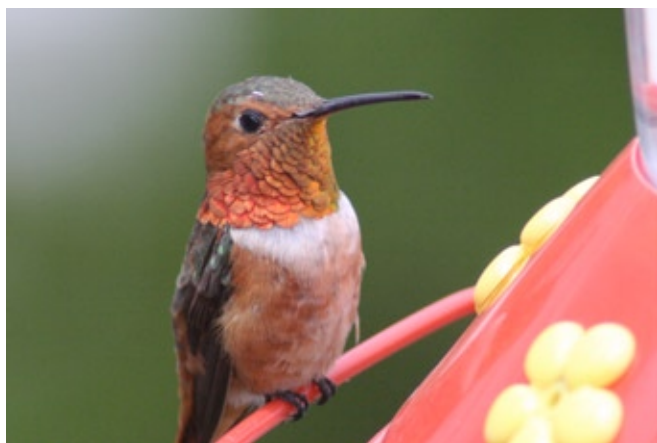
**Black-crowned Night-Heron.** I am an amateur photographer enthusiast and enjoy doing nature photography. I pay more attention to composition and subject matter than the technical intricacies of the camera. I largely do local photography within the Sepulveda Basin which I find suitable for my personal interest because I can combine it with my daily walking exercises. I normally use a Fujifilm Finepix HS10 camera which has a built-in superzoom lens with an equivalent 135mm framing size from 24 to 720mm (4.2mm to 126 focal length), and is remarkably light which makes it convenient to carry around. Camera Settings: Black-crowned Night-Heron: Shutter Speed: 1/750 sec, program mode, f/6.4, ISO speed 400. (4/16/10) The image was zoomed in at around 720mm.

Please submit your photos to [rose.leibowitz@sfaudubon.org](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfaudubon.org). Only one picture per photographer per month please! Ideally, the picture will be taken within our area and the information will include the location and the date it was taken, what camera and lens was used, a short account of how the picture was taken, and profile of the photographer. Good shooting! Thanks, Rose. ♪



## THE ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD ON SANTA CATALINA ISLAND

- article and photo by Mathew Tekulsky



In the spring of 2004, I spent six weeks or so in Santa Monica watching an Allen's Hummingbird chick grow from a hatchling to a fledgling, and in early July, I decided to visit Santa Catalina Island and check out the subspecies of the Allen's Hummingbird that lives there. Unlike the nominate *Selasphorus sasin sasin*, which migrates from Mexico to the west coast of the United States (from southwest Oregon to southern California) in the spring and returns to Mexico in the fall, the aptly named *Selasphorus sasin sedentarius* has been overwintering in the California Channel Islands (including Catalina) for thousands of years—and has recently increased its range to include not only the Palos Verdes Peninsula (where it has occurred for at least a generation),

but parts of Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, and San Diego Counties. This expansion of *sedentarius*' range is probably due to the proliferation of non-native plant species such as eucalyptus, tree tobacco, bottlebrush, and cape honeysuckle, from which the hummingbird extracts nectar and which it pollinates in return, as well as to the increased numbers of hummingbird feeders and gardens in the area.

Anyway, I arrived on Santa Catalina Island and immediately headed for a hamlet of houses just past Pebbly Beach, where I had observed a Bald Eagle nest a few years earlier. While I didn't see any Bald Eagles there this time, I noticed a hummingbird feeder at one of these houses, so I set up my tripod and waited for a hummingbird to show up...and waited. In the tree to my left, a pair of Pacific-slope Flycatchers had tucked a nest into the bark, and they were bringing insects back to the chicks. I took a few photos of the flycatchers and wondered where the hummingbirds were—and then I heard a familiar buzzing of wings, and in a flash, there was an Allen's Hummingbird at the feeder. I clicked off a few shots, and then the hummingbird flew away. But I did notice that he was indeed a bit larger than *sasin*, and his bill seemed longer too—an example of natural selection on this island as on the Galapagos!

My next encounter with the Allen's Hummingbird occurred the following afternoon, on the west-facing slope of the Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel, where I was staying. At the base of the slope, where it meets Chimes Tower Road, there stood two tall century plants, awash with yellow flower clusters—and also awash with six or seven Allen's Hummingbirds, all fighting for the best nectaring spots on these bowl-shaped flower heads. But that was not all. Just as avid about the nectar in these flowers was the Acorn Woodpecker and the Hooded Oriole. Somehow, these three species managed to share the abundance of this plant—but they were never far off. Indeed, this plant produced a frenzy from the birds, and thus it must have prodigious, if not great-tasting nectar.

The following morning, I observed the Allen's Hummingbirds on the century plants, and then I got a lucky break, as happens sometimes in the field. A local resident offered his deck to me, including two hanging hummingbird feeders—and, yes, an Allen's Hummingbird male, in all his glory.

I spent the better part of an hour photographing that hummingbird (I took about 100 shots), and I was able to get some close-up images of the bird's coppery-red gorget, the feathers of which had a shingled appearance.

The bird showed little fear of me, and spent most of his time chasing off rivals and then returning to the feeders for a victory sip. The Allen's Hummingbird male is relentless in his pursuit of intruders into his territory, and perhaps this is because he is the smallest hummingbird that breeds in the United States and Canada, with the exception of the Lucifer Hummingbird.

Perhaps the bird makes up for what it lacks in size with persistence. Not too unlike human beings. ♪



**JOIN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON**  
**To get started with your membership,**  
 use the following form and mail to:  
 SFV Audubon Society  
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**SFVAS Membership**

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership....\$20      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student 1-yr Chapter Membership....\$10      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Optional First-Class Postage.....\$5      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contributions to SFVAS..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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 How did you learn about SFVAS? \_\_\_\_\_

**Save a tree! I DO NOT** want to receive a hardcopy of the *Phainopepla*; I'll get my news online

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 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Be sure to write "C1ZC120Z" 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](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org).

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For Chapter leaders' email addresses, see our web site:

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



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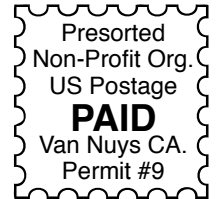




## Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
PO Box 7769  
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### Dated Material



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**Phainopepla** June/July 2011



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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](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org).



**Local:** Winnie Davis, Lynda Elkin, David Gibson

**National:** Jodee Arnold, Ronald Basteyns, Lee Berger, Megan Birmingham, William Blankenship, John Carver, Cynthia Chapman, Ruth Cole, Julia Corliss, Arnold Fogelman, Suzanne Garofalo, Debbie Gibson, Marlyn Goldenberg, Jerry Goren, Alan Green, Carol Harrison, Niki Hashimoto, Eeva Johnson, Rodney Johnson, Eric Johnston, Ed Kames, Ann Kindberg, Florence Kyler, John Laing, John Lee, Karen Lee, Dennis Miller, Joanne Nagy, Chris Nelson, Lauralee Oster, Greta Pruitt, Patricia Quinn, Odile Robinson, Helen Schiff, Duncan Sinclair, Mildred Tacker, Lydia Takeshita, Peter Taylor, Juan Torruella, Martha Trejo, Carlton Vales, Connie Wilson, Bill Woodmancy, John Yeminez ♪