



Phainopepla

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April / May 2014

Monthly Programs

SFVAS General Membership Meetings

Encino Community Center

7:00 p.m. Social time; 7:30 p.m. Meeting

Thursday, April 24, 2014

Presenter: Kelly M. O'Reilly, Environmental Scientist, Calif. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

Topic: Threatened and Endangered Birds of Bolsa Chica, Post Restoration

The reserve manager for a large restoration project at the Bolsa Chica Wetlands that was completed in 2006 will describe how wetlands habitat was enhanced for birds. The main focus of this talk will be on three listed species: The California Least Tern, the Western Snowy Plover, and the Belding's Savannah Sparrow. To illustrate population trends at Bolsa Chica, survey results will be presented for each of these three species. Finally, examples of other birds that inhabit the Bolsa Chica Wetlands will be presented.

A Southern California native, Kelly O'Reilly, first became involved with Bolsa Chica during the mid-1990s when she was an undergraduate at Cal State Fullerton. At that time, Kelly was part of a research team analyzing the diets of large terns and skimmers that nest on Bolsa Chica's North Tern Island. Through that work, she became knowledgeable about Bolsa's sea and shore birds as well as its fishes. During her college years, Kelly's focus was on marine biology. In 2000, she completed a Master of Biological Science at Cal State Fullerton and was hired by the California Department of Fish and Game [now Wildlife] as a marine fisheries biologist. During her early years with the Department, Kelly participated in marine invertebrate surveys at Vandenberg and on San Miguel Island, and she co-authored management plans for the recovery of abalone and white sea bass. Kelly has represented the Department as a speaker at several scientific conferences and is one of only a few DFW scientists who have traveled outside the USA to speak. In December 2006, Kelly switched from fisheries management to

land management and has been the on-site reserve manager for the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve for the past eight years.

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Presenter: Daniel S. Cooper

Topic: Coastal Cactus Wren: A Species on the Edge

The Cactus Wren is a species that maintains distinct, non-desert populations on the coast of southern California and is highly vulnerable to local extinctions. In 2013 Dan Cooper, along with the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo, coordinated a volunteer effort to map and monitor all Cactus wrens in Ventura County. That work will be published in the journal *Western Birds* in spring 2014.

Daniel S. Cooper grew up in the San Gabriel Valley, and is an authority on bird identification and distribution in southern California. He is the author of *Important Bird Areas of California* (Audubon California 2004) and of more than a dozen peer-reviewed papers on California natural history. After working for five years as the Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon California, he incorporated his own environmental consulting business in 2005, and since then has overseen numerous multi-year studies documenting the flora and fauna of the region for a variety of clients. He is frequently called in by larger consulting firms to help develop and review biota sections of EIRs (environmental impact reports). Most recently, he completed *A Conservation Analysis* for the Santa Monica Mountains "Coastal Zone" in Los Angeles County for the L.A. County Department of Regional Planning to identify and map biodiversity hotspots and provide conservation recommendations for L.A. County Department of Regional Planning. In 2007, Dan helped organize the Griffith Park Natural History Survey, and has since then, been coordinating multi-taxa surveys in the area each year for the City of Los Angeles and local neighborhood groups. Dan is a graduate of Harvard University (1995) and the University of California, Riverside (M.Sc., Geography, 1999) and lives near Agoura Hills with his wife and two young children.

Photo: *Cactus Wren* by Richard Medvitz.





Birdathon 2014 — It's Go Time! *By Diana Keeney & Lynn Maddox*

The countdown is over, and it's time to take off on our annual SFVAS Birdathon. Held each year during April and May, the Birdathon is a unique fundraiser that not only brings in needed donations for our important activities but also whips up some spirit among Birdathon leaders and participants. Which leaders will top their own species counts? Which group will persevere in poor weather? Which group will see the most unusual birds?

Anyone can participate by pledging sponsorship to one or more of the team leaders listed on the Pledge/Contribution form, page three, and submitting your donations to SFVAS. You can also join in on as many Birdathon events as you want, lending your eyes and ears to up the species counts. Leaders welcome your participation at events from the Simi Hills to the Sepulveda Basin and the Malibu coastline to the Antelope Valley. There's a Big Sit again this year for relaxed birding at the first viewing area of the Wildlife Lake at Sepulveda Basin. Even Orange County will be explored! See the Pledge/Contribution form and the Calendar of events for a complete list of events and leaders.

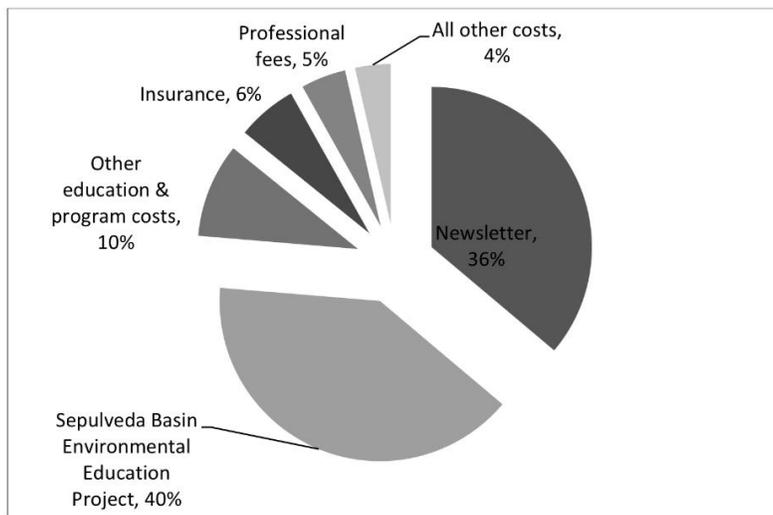
There is a separate form for the Children's Birdathon on page four. Junior birders and their families are welcome and asked to RSVP to Diana Keeney at (818) 998-3216 or diana.keeney@sfvaudubon.org.

The funds generated by the Birdathon enable SFVAS to host thousands of schoolchildren in the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program, support the San Fernando Valley Bird Observatory, contribute to habitat conservation efforts and continue our mission to increase public awareness and broaden appreciation of wildlife and the natural environment. Please contribute as generously as you can! You can donate several ways: send in the enclosed envelope; use the sponsor form by tearing it out, making as many copies as you wish and mailing it in; or donate online at www.sfvaudubon.org.

Thank you for your support!

SFVAS Expenses fiscal year ended 6/30/13 – Submitted by Pat Bates, SFVAS Treasurer

How your donations are used:



The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (SFVAS) is an all-volunteer §501(c)(3) organization. We rely on donations received in the Birdathon to fund the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP), as well as providing funds for other education and environmental programs.

The amount of revenue SFVAS receives from the National Audubon Society only covers about 46% of the cost of preparing and mailing our newsletter, the *Phainopepla*. The cost of printing and mailing the *Phainopepla* is significant, and only partially mitigated by receipt of local dues. That said, the *Phainopepla* is a very important source of Chapter information including bird walk and other event schedules, information on local conservation and environmental issues, and other items of interest to the community.

Your donations help fund this valuable community resource. SBEEP is a wonderful program, providing local students in grades 4-6 with field trips led by trained naturalists. The students receive hands-on instruction in observation of wildlife and environmental issues, using binoculars and microscopes provided by SFVAS. Each year, approximately 2,000 children (and their teachers) participate in this program. The annual Birdathon is the primary source of funding for SBEEP—we thank you for your donations!

Birdathon 2014 Pledge/Contribution Form

1. Place an X in front of the team leader(s) you wish to support.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carolyn Oppenheimer | April 15, O’Melveny Park | Probable Species: 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John & Andrew Willis | April 19, Malibu Coastline | Probable Species: 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Moore | April 23, Antelope Valley | Probable Species: 125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allan & Muriel Kotin | April 25-26, LA & Orange Counties | Probable Species: 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dick Barth | April 26, Morongo Valley | Probable Species: 65-70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Langton Family | April TBD, Highway 33 | Probable Species: 70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Osokow | May 2, Simi Hills/Santa Susana Mts. | Probable Species: 65-70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Linda Jones | May 3, Sepulveda Basin “Big Sit” | Probable Species: 35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kris Ohlenkamp | May 4, Sepulveda Basin | Probable Species: 60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art Langton | May 18, Malibu Creek State Park | Probable Species: 45 |
- Your Family Team Ask your family and friends to support your birding day! Sign up sponsors on the pledge form, have a “Big Day,” and send in the pledges you collect.
- The “Mean” Team Don’t like picking a favorite? We can let you know the average or “mean” number of bird species from all the Birdathon teams.

2. Choose your per species pledge.

25 ¢ 50 ¢ \$1 dollar \$2 dollars Other amount _____

3. How may we contact you?

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

4. OR send us a contribution now. You can designate it to a team leader if you wish. Make checks out to San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (SFVAS).

5. Send the completed pledge/contribution form to SFVAS, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769.
6. You can also DONATE to the Birdathon online at our website www.sfvaudubon.org on the Annual Birdathon page.
7. To take part in a Birdathon Event check the Calendar Section, pages 5–6, for dates and meeting information.

For information about this Charitable Appeal please see our website at www.sfvaudubon.org

Pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code, Chapter IV, Article 4, Philanthropy

For information about this appeal, call (818) 998-3216

- THIS IS NOT AN ENDORSEMENT - FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION ONLY -

INFORMATION CARD NO. **V4462**

Issued Pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code, Chapter IV, Article 4, Philanthropy

CALIFORNIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
aka SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409
Person in charge of appeal: **Diana Keeney**
Telephone number: **(818) 998-3216**

Activity: "Bird-a-thon Pledge Drive through May 31, 2014
Solicitation Dates: April 1, 2014 to May 31, 2014
Purpose: Net proceeds to support operations and environmental education for Los Angeles schools and the general public.
Previous Activity: 2013 activity collected a total of \$11,291, of which \$72 (0.6%) was applied to expenses and \$11,219 was used for charitable purposes.
DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLICITATION RESTRICTED TO THE HOURS OF 8 A.M. – 8 P.M.
This Information Card must be displayed or presented to all prospective donors, and should not be altered in any manner.

Date issued: 2/07/14

Cardholder registered with the Los Angeles Police Commission
 Charitable Services Section, Commission Investigation Division
 Telephone: (213) 998-1260
 E-mail Address: info@sfvaudubon.org
 Web Site: www.ljphdonline.org

Join in the 2014 Children's Bird-a-thon—May 10, 2014

1. Sign up sponsors to pledge a donation for each species you see.
2. Then walk with your family and an experienced birder from 9:00—11:00 am on Saturday, May 10, 2014. You can record your sightings on the checklist we will provide. We may see 30—40 species!
3. After the Bird-a-thon, collect the money from your sponsors and send it to **San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, PO Box 7769, Van Nuys, 91409-7769** by May 24, 2014. Please include your name, address and e-mail!
4. The family collecting the most money will receive a \$20 gift card to Target! Second place will receive a \$10 Target card. A tie will be decided by lottery. Winners will be notified on June 1, 2014.



For directions to the Sepulveda Wildlife Reserve, see Calendar of Events, page six. We will meet at the Amphitheater. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will have a few to loan.

Please RSVP for this event to insure we have enough leaders!

E-mail: diana.keeney@sfvaudubon.org or call: (818) 998-3216

Name of Sponsor	Amount pledged per species	Money owed

Student Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Calendar of Events

April

Saturday, April 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, April 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@sfvadubon.org or (747) 444-9683.

Saturday April 12. Clean-up of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area. 8:00–11:30 a.m. JOIN US! Volunteers needed for our annual clean-up of Haskell Creek and the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. The Wildlife Area is on the east side of Woodley Ave. about a half mile north of Burbank Blvd. Turn east at the sign for the Japanese Garden (6100 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys, CA. 91406), stay to the right, and follow Wildlife Way toward the archery range for about a half mile to the last parking area. Meet at the amphitheater. See page eight for more information on clothing and supplies.

Saturday, April 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.

Tuesday, April 15. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m. Probable species: 30. 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@sfvadubon.org.

Saturday, April 19. *New!* Young Birders Group Bird Walk at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve. 9:00 a.m. Young Birders join us for our 1st walk introducing leaders Alexander and Olivia. 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 right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant/Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. For more information about this **NEW** program see page seven. Please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at SFVAudubonSociety@gmail.com.

Saturday, April 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, April 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.

Wednesday, April 23. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Butterbredt Springs, Galileo Hills, and Piute Ponds. Probable species: 125. Meet at 5:30 a.m. at the McDonalds on Crown Valley Road in Acton, or 6:00 a.m. at the park-n-ride lot on the east side of Avenue S in Palmdale. We will then stop in Palmdale for a brief search for LeConte's Thrasher, then to Butterbredt Springs and onward to Galileo Hills, Piute Ponds and finish at Apollo Park in Lancaster. Leader: Jim Moore. Please advise Jim by e-mail, jimmoore@socal.rr.com if you plan to join him.

Thursday, April 24. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Social time; 7:30 p.m. Meeting. PRESENTER: Kelly M. O'Reilly, Environmental Scientist, Calif. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife. TOPIC: Threatened and Endangered Birds of Bolsa Chica, Post Restoration. 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. For more information see Monthly Programs, page one.

Saturday, April 26. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Monthly Field Trip: Morongo Valley. 8:00 a.m. Probable Species: 65–70. This desert oasis offers great birding in the spring. Warblers, flycatchers, hummingbirds and orioles are among the birds expected. At least one pair of Vermilion Flycatchers has been seen every April in memory. Directions: Allow 2.5 hours to drive from the San Fernando Valley. Take Interstate 10 east to Route 62, which is past the Palm Springs turnoff. Go north to the tiny town of Morongo Valley and turn right on East Drive to the Big Morongo Preserve. Bring lunch and drinks. In the afternoon we will drive to Joshua Tree National Park to look for wildflowers, Scott's Orioles, Pinyon Jays, Brewer's and Black-throated Sparrows. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

May

Saturday, May 3. A BIRDATHON EVENT. The "BIG SIT." Probable species: 35. Please join Linda Jones at the first viewing area at the Wildlife Lake from 9–11 a.m. Bring a chair and join us at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve to help raise money for youth activities. 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 right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant/Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Pledge form can be found on page three.

Saturday, May 3. 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, May 4. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Probable species: 60. 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 or (747) 444-9683.

Saturday, May 10. Monthly Field Trip: Walker Ranch. 7:30 a.m. Meet at the Walker Ranch entrance. We will look for Costa's Hummingbird, Lazuli Bunting, flycatchers, warblers and much more. Directions: take the 405 Freeway or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon Road. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and proceed 3+ miles to the dirt parking area for Walker Ranch. We will bird until about 11:30 a.m. Leader: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342. (Adventure Pass is NOT required for Walker Ranch.)

Saturday, May 10. CHILDREN'S BIRDATHON EVENT. 9:00—11:00 a.m. Learn to identify birds and help support Audubon Youth Activities at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve! 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 right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant/Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Prizes will be given to the family/group that raises the most money. Pledge form and more information can be found on page four.

Saturday, May 10. 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.

Saturday, May 17. 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 18. A BIRDATHON EVENT. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Probable species: 45. 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: Art Langton.

Monday, May 19. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Wild Wings Nature Store, 4337 Woodman Ave. Sherman Oaks, (818) 995-0022. Please bring your own chair.

Tuesday, May 20. 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 (before 7 p.m.), or carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org.

Thursday, May 22. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Social time; 7:30 p.m. Meeting. Presenter: Daniel S. Cooper. Topic: Coastal Cactus Wren: A Species on the Edge. We will also hold our election for new board members. 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. For more information see Monthly Programs, page one.

Saturday, May 31. Young Birders Group Bird Walk. Young Birders, for walk time and location please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405.

Future Field Trips (details later):

June 14. Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve

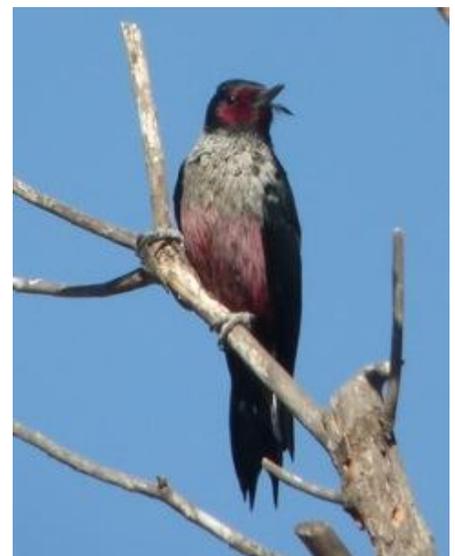
July 19. Mt. Pinos

August 16. Chilao

Phainopepla Photo of the Month by Aurelio Albaisa

San Fernando Valley Audubon member Aurelio Albaisa shot this photo of a Lewis's Woodpecker last November in Cheeseboro Canyon in the Agoura Hills area. He used a Panasonic DMC-ZS25 with a built-in 20X zoom. Aurelio added that "there were at least two Lewis's flying around 'flycatching' and trying to avoid harassment by local crows and Acorn Woodpeckers." Thanks, Aurelio!

Please submit your photos to Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org. One picture per photographer per month, preferably of a native bird in our local area. Please include location, date, camera and lens info, a short account of how the photo was taken, and a profile of the photographer. Let us see your bird photos! Thanks, Lynn



SFVAS Fledges Young Birders Group—by Rose Leibowitz

Nearly all the expert birders I have met started birding as children or young adults. They share stories of being the youngest person in a birding group. Some found it awkward, while others welcomed the mentorship of adult birders.



The average age of people on SFVAS bird walks is inclined to skew towards the older ages, but sometimes a young birder comes. And comes again and again! I want to introduce two of them (pictured): Alexander, who carries his scope and who spots and

identifies birds with increasing accuracy, and Olivia, who has a keen eye and whose knowledge is growing by each walk. Alexander and Olivia have agreed to lead the first bird walk for our new Young Birders group!

A Young Birder is a young person who is serious about birding, knows some birds, pesters family and friends to go and see them,

and is willing to learn. We plan to have activities for Young Birders on the last Saturday of each month in various places. Our first foray will be at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve on Saturday April 19, at 9 a.m. and will last about an hour. (The Young Birder walks are distinct from our Family and Beginner Bird Walks, although a young birder who has attended a Beg/Family walk is welcome to join us.)



If you are interested in participating in the SFVAS Young Birders Group, either as a Young Birder (YB) or on behalf of one, please e-mail me at SFVAudubonSociety@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405. Reservations are not necessary, although it would be helpful for us to anticipate the attendance for this pilot program.

Adults accompanying YBs are welcome at the back of the group, and there will be adult members of SFVAS present at all times!



Monthly Field Trip Reports by Richard Barth

We visited Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary on January 18. Our species tally was good but the total number of birds seen was disappointing. We found fourteen species of waterfowl including Redhead, Northern Pintail, the three teals, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck and Bufflehead. Notable on our list of thirteen shorebirds were Black-bellied Plover, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Greater Yellowlegs, Whimbrel and Long-billed Curlew. Forster's Tern was tallied and a small flock of Black Skimmers made an appearance. White-faced Ibis and Clark's Grebe are always good finds. The raptor list included Osprey (a nest-building pair), Northern Harrier, rufous-morph Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel and Turkey Vulture. Other species of interest on the day: Belted Kingfisher, Hutton's Vireo, Marsh Wren, Downy Woodpecker, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Hermit Thrush, Spotted Towhee, Lincoln's Sparrow and Savannah Sparrow.

February 15 marked our trip to the Ventura County Game Preserve. We enjoyed a very successful day, with our highlight bird being a rare Sandhill Crane. Other special finds included a male Vermilion Flycatcher and three Snow Geese. We found ten species of ducks and thirteen species of shorebirds. Notable on the shorebird list were Dunlin, Long-billed Curlew, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, American Avocet (abundant) and Wilson's Snipe. Our rails were Sora and Virginia, both heard only. The raptor list featured Peregrine, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk (at least 30 seen) and Cooper's Hawk. We found Loggerhead Shrike, Belted Kingfisher, White-faced Ibis, Marsh Wren, American Pipit, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow and Yellow-headed Blackbird.



Board Nominations—Submitted by the Nominations Committee: Carolyn Oppenheimer, Dottie Ecker, Rebecca LeVine, and Muriel Kotin, Chair

Because of time constraints with the publishing of the *Phainopepla*, the Nominations Committee is unable, at this time, to announce the full slate of candidates to serve on the Board of Directors of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society for our 2014—2015 program year which begins on July 1, 2014. Currently, we have confirmed the nomination of Rose Leibowitz for President. The

remaining officers will be announced on our website www.sfvaudubon.org.

Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor at the April 24 General Membership Meeting, provided such nomination receives the approval of the nominee and is supported by a written petition signed by five members of the Society. The election will be held at the May 22 meeting and installation will take place at the June 26 potluck meeting. We thank all SFVAS members who have served the chapter and invite those of you with an interest in becoming more active to let us know.



HELP PROTECT LOCAL WILDLIFE! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE RESERVE SPRING CLEAN-UP

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2014

8:00-11:30AM

Haskell Creek, where it runs through lovely Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area, hosts many riparian trees and shrubs, such as cottonwoods and willows. Songbirds forage and nest in the trees, while egrets and herons fish in this heart of the Wildlife Area. Sadly it is infested with trash, especially plastic bags, foam cups and food containers. At the Wildlife Lake, abandoned fishing line and hooks create lethal hazards for birds.



Equipment and Clothing: You will get muddy and maybe wet. Please wear rugged clothing and shoes or rubber boots. If you have them, bring work gloves and long-handled tools to reach trash.

Directions: The Wildlife Area is on the east side of Woodley Ave. about a half mile north of Burbank Blvd. Turn east at the sign for the Japanese Garden (6100 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys, CA. 91406), stay to the right, and follow Wildlife Way beyond the archery range for about a half mile to the last parking area.

Meet: At amphitheater behind the rock-faced buildings.

More Information: The event is appropriate for adults and older students. Students can get certificates and earn community service hours. Rain cancels.

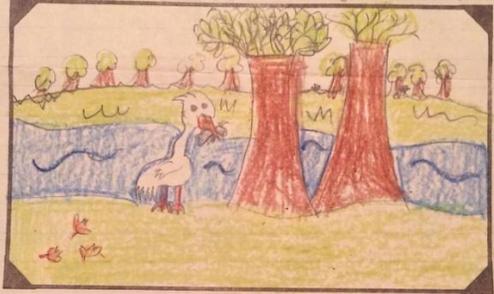
Questions: 310.457-5796 (Muriel) or 818.998-3126 (Diana).

Sponsored by San Fernando Valley Audubon www.SFVAudubon.org
In conjunction with Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Photos this page: By R. LeVine, 3/8/14, Sepulveda Basin

Below is a wonderful drawing and reflections of a Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve Field Trip taken by Dali-Maude Gaudette.

Field Trip Reflections # 2

Name Dali-Maude Gaudette Date 2/12/14
Location Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve
My Favorite Part was seeing an egret eating a cattail



What I learned...
I learned that phytoplankton can actually give oxygen. I also learned that phytoplankton got a virus that makes them make 2 times more oxygen. The phytoplankton is too small to see even with microscopes. Something else I learned is that when there is cotton it doesn't naturally mean that they're cotton plants but seeds are in it so it does seed dispersal. The white pelicans scoops for its fish while brown pelicans dive for their fish. The coot's legs are not webbed like original duck's feet but they are separate and clawed. The cormorant is a big black bird that builds big nests. I saw many birds including white pelicans, cormorants, coots, goldfinch, and mallard ducks. I liked going to Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve.



Spring Has Sprung!

Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack

“Home, home on the range...”

Like humans, wildlife needs shelter from the elements, protection from predators, and places to raise their young. Recall your last visit to a wilderness area, and what you likely saw were tall, mature trees, smaller trees and tall shrubs, dense foliage and some smaller plants providing some ground cover. Additionally, you may have seen rock piles, brush piles, leaf litter and dead trees, either standing or fallen. All of these provide homes and/or temporary shelters for wild critters, whether it is the great blue heron nesting at the top of a large tree or the creepy-crawly insect under the leaf litter. By planning your garden with these elements, you are imitating Mother Nature’s design, which is to provide shelter at all elevations. Notice that Mother Nature is not a neat and tidy housekeeper, so if you have a meticulous, manicured yard, it is a wildlife unfriendly yard. (Please note: if you live in a fire zone, you need to ignore much of what I am recommending here.)

Notice the inclusion of dead trees. Those who study such things have observed that dead trees are as important to a balanced ecosystem as live trees. As they age and die, they attract insects which feed on them and, in turn, these insects are food for other species. In the process of dying, cavities may appear in the tree, sometimes aided in formation by a hungry woodpecker. These cavities then become shelters and/or nesting places for various bird or mammal species. Finally, when the tree falls and rots, its nutrients are returned to the soil for recycling. So, rather than removing that dead or dying tree in your yard, have a tree trimmer remove only the large limbs that may pose a danger to someone walking close to the tree and let the remainder stay in your garden. One can also provide birdhouses to supplement the housing for cavity nesting birds.

Some species have needs not mentioned above. Frogs and amphibians, of course, need wetlands or a water garden. And if

you want butterflies to live in your garden and not just visit, you will need to plant those species of plants that are specifically a host plant for that butterfly. Each butterfly species has either one or just a few host plants on which it will lay its eggs and the larvae (caterpillars) will feed.

The kind of gardening described above is called “naturalistic”—it is an effort to restore natural habitat. I find that my naturalistic garden requires far less work to maintain than my neighbors’ meticulous yards. Leaf and needle litter remains where it falls (providing nature’s mulch), except if it hides a path. Plants are allowed to grow to their natural size and shape and are only pruned if they obstruct in some way or annually if it is required for growth. By using native plants, feeding is eliminated. Mulching keeps weeds at bay (no herbicides are needed). Some insect-caused leaf damage is tolerated and the good bugs and insect-eating birds visiting in the garden keep the bad bugs under control (no pesticides are needed).

This kind of gardening does, however, have its risks. These are mostly in the form of complaints from those who don’t understand why such a garden looks so different than all the others in the neighborhood—they confuse naturalistic with neglect. Complaints have been known to reach the courts in some cases. There are ways to mitigate such risks. This is what I did: I invited all the neighbors to an open garden party/tour, explaining what naturalistic gardening is all about. By creating paths, adding places to sit, and garden art, the garden appears designed rather than neglected. By having the yard certified by the National Wildlife Federation as an official wildlife habitat site and posting certificate signs in the garden where passerby can see them, they are informed and, perhaps even inspired to make some landscaping changes of their own.

How about your yard? Neat as a pin or inviting to wildlife? 

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.

eBird Your Way to the Phainopepla Club



Don’t forget to record your Los Angeles County bird sightings from July 2013 to June 2014 on eBird (www.eBird.org) and progress to the **Phainopepla Club!**

The first 50 species you record on eBird puts you at Swallow level. Reaching 100 species is Finch level, 150 is Vireo level, 200 is Avocet, and 250 is Phainopepla Club! The upcoming spring migration and the Birdathon events in April and May are sure to put you over the top—or at least into the next higher category!

Phainopepla Club awards will be given at the general membership meeting in June. 

We now have **686** people who receive notification by e-mail when the *Phainopepla* is online, **165** of them have opted to only receive it online and save us the paper and postage. **317** people are following us on Facebook. If you wish to be notified when the *Phainopepla* is online, please e-mail us at sfvaudubonsociety@gmail.com. *NOTE: Membership cards are being sent out to local members and National members who opt not to get a paper copy of the newsletter.*

Accipiters: The Agile Hunters of the Bird World—by Heather Medvitz

Distinguishing accipiter species presents the greatest identification challenge among our hawk species. Accipiters are quick, agile hawks of the forest. They are bird catching hawks with rudder-like tails and short rounded wings, designed to maneuver around bushes and trees with a few rapid wing beats. They are often seen hunting around houses and bird-feeders.

The three California accipiters from largest to smallest are the Northern Goshawk (pronounced Gos'-hawk), the



Cooper's Hawk and the Sharp-shinned Hawk. The females are noticeably larger than the males in all three species.

Photo: Adult Cooper's Hawk with Rock Dove in the Wild Wings parking lot. By Scott Logan

When perched, accipiters present the greatest identification challenge. There can be a small overlap in size, with the Sharp-shinned Hawk measuring 10-14" long and the Cooper's Hawk 14-20". The Northern Goshawk is large enough, 21-26" to not be so easily misidentified. A few structural features can help differentiate these hawks from one another. The Sharp-shinned Hawk has a smaller, rounder head compared to a larger, blockier head on the Cooper's, which shows a squarish rear profile to its crown. Because of its deeper head, the Cooper's eyes are closer to the front of the head, whereas the Sharp-shinned's eyes are more centrally positioned. The Cooper's Hawk has a larger bill and longer neck compared to the small bill and short neck of the Sharp-shinned Hawk. An adult Cooper's will often show a head that is blacker than the dark gray back and wings. This feature is most prominent in the male Cooper's Hawk.

There is an obvious size difference in the legs of these birds as well, with the stockier legs and feet on the Cooper's Hawk comparing with the smaller stick-like legs and smaller feet of the Sharp-shinned. In the hand or by comparison, this difference is very obvious, but a single bird in the field

presents a much greater challenge. Bear in mind that the 10-14" Sharpie is the same size or just a bit larger than our Western Scrub Jay.

The tail of the Cooper's Hawk is longer and uniformly



wider with a rounded tip whereas the slender, longish tail of the Sharp-shin has a narrower base and a squared tip. The wing beats of the Sharp-shinned are quick and choppy whereas the Cooper's Hawk has stiff wing beats.

Photo: By Richard Medvitz

There are prominent differences between the adult and immature hawks in both species. Both juvenile species show a white breast with brown vertical streaks. The Cooper's Hawk has thin dark brown streaks whereas the Sharp-shinned's streaks are broader. Adult hawks show many rufous horizontal streaks on a white background.

The Northern Goshawk has a much bulkier body with thicker legs and talons and relatively longer wings than the two smaller accipiters. It shows thicker dark streaks off the under parts that extend into the lower belly and there is a buffy wash on the chest as opposed to the white background found on the smaller accipiter species. A distinctive feature unique to the juvenile is its streaked undertail coverts, contrasting with the white undertail coverts of the Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks.

The best field marks of the Northern Goshawk are the wedge-shaped tail and the long wings that are tapered when soaring and appear pointed when flapping. The adult's dark head and white superciliary (eyebrow) are good marks as well.

The year round range of the Northern Goshawk includes parts of Northern California and parts of the western states and all of Canada. It is uncommon to rare and prefers tall conifer forests with some open areas. Its diet includes Snowshoe Hare and Ruffed Grouse and it is the size of



a buteo but still able to hunt with the skills of an accipiter.

Photo: Juvenile female Cooper's with juvenile male Sharp-shinned Hawk. Difference would be less pronounced if the sexes were reversed. Note the flatter head of the Cooper's.



SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Birdathon:	Lynn Maddox/ Diana Keeney	(818) 845-4688 (818) 998-3216
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For Chapter leaders' e-mail addresses, see our website:

www.SFVAudubon.org



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

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Attn: Membership

SFVAS MEMBERSHIP

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership...\$25	\$ _____
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How did you learn about SFVAS?

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 3rd 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
P.O. Box 420235
Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235

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.



Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

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Membership

A big thank you to the National Members who responded to last month's article by becoming local members too!

Whether you belong to National or Local or both, remember you are always welcome on any of our activities and we have plenty to get involved in! Please contact Rose Leibowitz, Membership Chair, with any questions at rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org.

Local:	John Blue	Winnifred Glimm	Eileen Lau	Stephanie Nefas	Rachael Steele
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Sushil Bikhchandani	Irving Gittelman	Greg Larson	Neil Nash	Nancy Spillman	

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 and view our sales table; program begins at 7:30 p.m. We meet at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd. Encino. See Calendar of Events, pages 5-6, for directions.

ADDENDUM:

BOARD NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED

The Nominations Committee is pleased to announce the following slate of candidates to serve on the Board of Directors of San Fernando Valley Audubon Society for our 2014–2015 year which begins on July 1, 2014.

Officers (2-year terms):

- President: Rose Leibowitz *
- 1st VP: Heather Medvitz *
- 2nd VP: Diana Keeney *
- Corresponding Secretary: Becky Arntzen *
- Treasurer Pat Bates and Recording Secretary Lynn Maddox will serve the second year of their terms.

Board Members at Large:

- 3rd Year Board: Scott Logan (cont.) and Paula Orlovich (cont.)
- 2nd Year Board: Dave Collins (cont.) and Jackie Wollner *
- 1st Year Board: Jim Houghton * and Jeanne Kolasz *

* Names followed by an asterisk (*) will be elected this May.

Officers are elected for two year terms, with a limit of four continuous years in one office. The term of a first-year board member at large is three years, second-year is two years, and third-year is one year.

The election will be held at the May 22 meeting and installation will take place at the June 26 potluck meeting.

We 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 the officers or nominating committee know.

Nominations Committee: Dottie Ecker, Rebecca LeVine, Carolyn Oppenheimer, and Chair Muriel Kotin