



Phainopepla

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Monthly Programs

General Membership Meetings

San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center

18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana
(818) 697-5525

SFVAS General Membership Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (except July, August, November, and December.) EVERYONE IS WELCOME to join us at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments; program begins at 7:20 p.m. See Calendar of Events, pages 7–9, for directions.

YOU ARE INVITED

to the

SFVAS Annual Awards Luncheon at Franklin Canyon Park, Saturday, March 3, 2018

Join us as we honor Conservation Award

Recipients: **Marne Treves, Dennis Hagen-Smith, and Robert Ishii**, and Service Awardee, **Richard Barth**.

See page two for more information.

Any questions contact paulaorlovich@yahoo.com.

Where: San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, 18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana.

Thursday, February 22, 2018

Speaker: Karen Schuenemann

Topic: How to Compose Better Bird Photos

Have you ever wondered HOW to improve your photography while on one of your birding adventures? Karen Schuenemann of Wilderness At Heart will present tips on how to make and compose better bird photos.

Karen started in digital photography about ten years ago. She's made all the mistakes you could make, and then some, and has learned to compose some wonderful imagery.

Her work was awarded in 2017 and got the National Audubon Professional Photographer of the Year Honorable Mention, one of the top five awards in this venerable contest. Her images have been shown in Europe, in magazines, and blogs, and throughout museums and galleries in Southern California. She's excited to share her passion for wildlife and bird photography with all of you.



Thursday, March 22, 2018

Speaker: Richard Schulhof

Topic: Role of Plants in Sustaining Life

Richard Schulhof has served as CEO of the Los Angeles County Arboretum since 2009. He previously served as deputy director of Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, and as executive director of Descanso Gardens, having worked in botanic gardens for over thirty years.

With a special interest in science education, Richard collaborated with public schools in Boston and Los Angeles to develop teacher training programs and life science curricula. Work with the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Park Service has launched programs preserving and interpreting historic landscapes. Field research investigated the ecological impacts of invasive organisms on the forests of the Northeast, and assessed associated management strategies. Schulhof holds degrees in landscape architecture from U.C. Berkeley, botanic garden administration from the University of Delaware, and in forestry from Harvard University.

At the Arboretum, Richard focuses on sustainability and water conservation, preserving the Arboretum's rich history, and making known the essential role of plants in sustaining life on Earth. He is an avid amateur birder, though his responsibilities at the Arboretum make it hard for him to spend much time on the birding trail. Richard is an enthusiastic and amusing speaker; his talks are full of fascinating facts and colorful illustrations. Join us for an informative evening! 🐦



Rustic Awards Luncheon

Exciting News!! You are invited to our Annual Conservation Awards Luncheon on **Saturday, March 3**, at Franklin Canyon Park, in the event room next to the Sooky Goldman Visitor's Center.

Our Conservation Awards this year, recognize three dedicated Los Angeles Unified School teachers who have attended the San Fernando Valley Audubon's Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP) for many years and have provided instruction enhancing education in the areas of research, science, art, and writing. The teachers to be recognized are **Marne Treves** (Mar Vista Elementary), **Dennis Hagen-Smith** (Toluca Lake Elementary), and **Robert Ishii** (Danube Elementary). Our Service Award will be presented to **Richard Barth** who has been leading our chapter field trips for more than 20 years.

The luncheon will be held at 1:00 p.m. There will be two optional bird walks around Franklin Canyon Park. Experienced birders meet with Dick Barth at 11:00 a.m. and beginners join Muriel Kotin at 11:30 a.m. Meet up in the parking area.

The luncheon, catered by Harvest Moon, will feature delicious sandwiches, savory salads, and scrumptious desserts. We will have our traditional basket raffle featuring Carolyn Oppenheimer's colorful themed creations along with a silent auction of our centerpieces (from WildWings) sure to attract birds to your yard, and music by Steve McCroskey.

Signage will be posted to facilitate access to the venue. Handicapped parking will be available as well as drop off areas for attendees as needed. Please contact Paula Orlovich to reserve a handicapped parking space at paulaorlovich@yahoo.com. For directions access our website at SFVAudubon.org.

The cost is \$35.00 for adults and \$15.00 for children. Payment may be made on our website <https://www.sfvaudubon.org/event/luncheon/> or by check mailed to P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409. RSVP by February 25. Casual Attire!

Conservation Corner *by Dave Weeshoff*



– Why Birds Matter

The National Audubon Society, National Geographic Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and BirdLife International have joined forces to celebrate 2018 as the “Year of the Bird.” The “what” and “why” of such a partnership can be summarized in the quotes below:

“The Year of the Bird will celebrate the importance of birds in our lives: the wonder and passion and Internet memes (so many memes) that they inspire, and the roles they play in the web of life. The Year of the Bird collaboration gives us all an opportunity to recommit to our promise to protect birds and the places they need for the next century.” David Yarnold – President and CEO, National Audubon.

“What bird populations usefully indicate is the health of our ethical values. One reason that wild birds matter – ought to matter – is that they are our last, best connection to a natural world that is otherwise receding.” “There is, however one critical ability that human beings have and birds do not: mastery of their environment. Birds can't protect wetlands, can't manage a fishery, can't air-condition their nests. They have only the instincts and the physical abilities that evolution has bequeathed to them.” Jonathan Franzen in January 2018 *National Geographic Society* magazine.

I invite everyone to read the January 2018 NatGeo magazine – it is full of wonderful articles, photos of birds by Joel Sartory (of NGS Photo Ark), insightful descriptions of birds (behavior, characteristics, etc.) and thought-provoking ideas on conservation.

I will alert you to subsequent articles from the four partners throughout 2018 in this column of the *Phainopepla*. Please call me at (818) 618-1652 or e-mail dave.weeshoff@sfvaudubon.org with conservation issues.

2017 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) by Jim Moore



I hope by the time you are reading this we will have enjoyed some rain. This season, up to count day, Saturday, December 16, we have had virtually no rain and the natural landscape was very dry, however our parks were green. Otherwise, weather was good, making perfect conditions to count birds. This year, we saw more birds and bird species than we have the last three years. Forty-nine counters covered 48 locations, netting 134 species and 15,198 individuals. Our 20-year average is 128 species and 15,412 individuals. Applying the rules of National Audubon, we added just two additional species during count week, observed by our counters or by eBird reports of others who did not participate in the count, bringing our total for the week to 136. Count week includes the three days before and after count day.

The primary objective of the Christmas Bird Count is to assess the health of the bird population by comparing the total number of individuals of all species seen in a count circle with earlier counts. However, diversity is also an important factor, comparing the total number of species seen with past years. This is National Audubon's 118th count and much to our credit, our 61st successive CBC, which started in 1957.

We counted most of the large parks and natural areas in the circle, plus the three well known and well birded areas including Sepulveda Basin, Chatsworth Nature Preserve, and Hansen Dam.

There were some highlights, including two new species never before recorded in the count circle. This is exceptional, considering we've been at it so long. A **Dusky-Capped Flycatcher** was spotted at Runnymede Park by Dick Norton and a **Sage Thrasher** was seen by Jim Moore and Debbie Drews in the upper slope of Wilbur Tampa Park, and a **Hammond's Flycatcher** seen for the first time last year was seen again at Valley Plaza Park by Dick Barth.

Other uncommon bird sightings include:

- A **Greater White-fronted Goose** seen at Reseda Park.
- A **Northern Pintail** seen at Sepulveda Basin. Last seen on count day in 2009.
- A **White-faced Ibis** seen at Sepulveda Basin. Only the third time in count history.
- An **Iceland (Thayer's) Gull**, seen at Sepulveda Basin. Only the third time in count history.
- A **Williamson's Sapsucker** seen at Veterans Park, marking only the fifth time in count history.
- Two **Gray Flycatchers** seen at Woodley Park and Bee Canyon Park. Only the 11th time in count history and the first time two birds were seen.
- Two **Vermillion Flycatchers**, seen at Woodley Park and Bull Creek. This is the 8th time and also the first time two birds were seen.
- Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were seen at El Cariso Park. This is an irruptive species, seen one year then missing for perhaps several years. This marks the 11th sighting in count history.
- A **Brown Creeper** also seen at El Cariso Park. Only the 6th time it has been seen in count history.
- A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** seen at Hansen Dam. Seen with a large group of Ruby-crowned Kinglets. This is the 4th time it has been seen in count history. One-hundred eleven Ruby-crowned Kinglets were counted at Hansen Dam.
- A **Hooded Oriole** was seen in Sepulveda Basin, marking only the 5th time it has been seen during the count.

Where have the ducks, raptors, and shorebirds gone? Habitat hasn't changed that much, but many have gone missing, some for some time now.

- **Cackling Goose**, seen almost every year since the species was split from Canada Goose has virtually left the territory. We counted 26 in 2010 and 25 in 2011.
- **Wood Duck**, seen on 37 previous counts, hasn't been seen for two years.
- **Gadwall**, seen on 45 counts was not seen on count day.
- **Cinnamon Teal**, seen on 35 counts hasn't been seen since 2011.
- **Canvasback**, seen on 51 counts hasn't been seen since 2013
- **Hooded Merganser**, seen on 37 previous counts was missed this year.
- **Common Merganser**, seen on 27 previous counts, but virtually out of sight since the early 90s.
- **Eared Grebe**, seen on 52 of the 61 counts was missed for the first time since 2008.
- **Western and Clark's Grebes** were missed. Western has been missed only once since 1999.
- **White-tailed Kite**, seen on 39 previous counts, but not since 2013.

(CBC Continued)

- **Northern Harrier**, wow! Seen in all but six counts, but seen only once since 2013.
- **Greater Yellowlegs**. Missed this year, but seen on 40 previous counts.
- **Least Sandpipers**. A big miss. We counted 40 last year and they've been seen on 55 counts.
- **Western Sandpiper**, seen on 40 previous counts, but not since 2013.
- **Long-billed Dowitcher**, seen on 30 previous counts, but only once since 2005.
- **Wilson's Snipe**, seen on 47 previous counts. These birds are really good at hiding, but we haven't seen as many in the past few years. In 1993, 48 were counted.

Also missing are:

- **Spotted Dove**, seen on 43 previous counts, but not since 2002. Blame Cooper's Hawks and Eurasian Collared-Doves for their disappearance. But they're not natives.
- **Greater Roadrunner**. These birds are usually encountered with luck, but we've seen them 45 times, but only once since 2013.
- **Horned Lark**. Used to be here, seen 28 times, but only in small numbers since the early 80s.
- **Mountain Chickadee**, seen 32 times, but only off and on the last few years. We recorded 41 back in 1987.
- **Marsh Wren**, recorded 36 times, but not much and only in low numbers recently.

Loggerhead Shrike numbers remain low. Three were seen this count, a continuing downward trend. Seventy were counted in 2000 and they have been recorded in the 10's before then.

The same can be said for Horned Larks. They have not been recorded since 1997, but seen on 28 earlier counts including 570 individuals in 1970. These are not birds in trouble. Thousands can be seen in the Antelope Valley during winter, but the San Fernando Valley no longer represents suitable habitat.

This year's winner for the highest count was American Coot with 1480 individuals. Honorable mention goes to Canada Geese (811), American Wigeon (579), Rock Pigeon (534), Mourning Dove (501), White-throated Swift (549), Yellow-rumped Warbler (1249), White-crowned Sparrows (947), Western Meadowlarks (559), and House Finch (505).

Most White-throated Swifts were seen flying over the Pacoima Spreading Grounds. The total marks the highest ever number of individuals in the history of the count. Forty Yellow-chevroned Parakeets were seen at the Sepulveda Basin, also the highest count for this species.

We didn't lose any of the 34 species that have been recorded on all 61 counts. These include Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Mallard, Pied-billed Grebe, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, California Scrub-Jay, American Crow, Oak Titmouse, Bushtit, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Mockingbird, American Pipit, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

Sepulveda Basin won the award for the most species and most individuals. Kris Ohlenkamp, who has led this sector continuously since 1982, reported 86 species with 2713 individuals, with 12 unique species not seen in any other sector. Kimball Garrett counted 82 species with 1784 individuals, including three unique species at Hansen Dam. And, once again this year we were granted access by the Department of Water & Power to count the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. This area, led by Art Langton and Mark Osokow yielded 48 species with 1905 individuals.

The importance of covering all birding areas in the circle is confirmed by the number of locations where sighting a unique bird not seen elsewhere in the territory. This year was exceptional with nine such locations.

Unique Birds Seen	Location	Sector leader
Greater White-fronted Goose	Reseda Park	Pat Bates
Snow Goose	Sepulveda Basin	eBird report on count day
Ross's Goose	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Mute Swan	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Eurasian Wigeon	Paicoma Spreading Grounds	eBird report on count day

Unique Birds Seen	Location	Sector leader
Northern Pintail	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Green-winged Teal	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Redhead	Hansen Dam	Kimball Garrett
White-faced Ibis	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Osprey	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Spotted Sandpiper	El Cariso Golf Course	Brian Biefelt
Iceland (Thayer's) Gull	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Glaucous-winged Gull	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Belted Kingfisher	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Williamson's Sapsucker	Veteran's Park	Scott Logan
Red-naped Sapsucker	O'Melvany Park	Tracy Drake
Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Hammond's Flycatcher	Valley Plaza Park	Dick Barth
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	Runnymede Park	Dick Norton
Tree Swallow	Sepulveda Basin	eBird report on count day
Red-breasted Nuthatch	El Cariso Park	Brian Biefelt
Brown Creeper	El Cariso Park	Brian Biefelt
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Hansen Dam	Kimball Garrett
Sage Thrasher	Wilbur Tampa Park	Jim Moore
Myrtle's Warbler (Yellow-rumped)	Hansen Dam	Kimball Garrett
Townsend's Warbler	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Wilson's Warbler	Hansen Dam	Kimball Garrett
Slate-colored Junco (Dark-eyed)	Hansen Dam	Kimball Garrett
Tri-colored Blackbird	Hansen Dam	Kimball Garrett
Hooded Oriole	Sepulveda Basin	Kris Ohlenkamp
Purple Finch	Veteran's Park	Scott Logan
Pine Siskin	Hansen Dam	Kimball Garrett

For bird nerds who would like to see more detail, Excel spreadsheets of this year's count, and our historical count are on the chapter's website <https://www.sfvaudubon.org/2017/12/28/christmas-bird-count-results-2017/>.

Thanks to the sector leaders and counters who gave several hours of their holiday season to participate.

Thanks to all 2017 count participants

Becky Arntzen	Bob Doxsee	Muriel Kotin (I)	Wendy Morgan
Dick Avery	Nicole Duftschi	Mei Kwan	Dick Norton (I)
Pat Avery	Ruth Doxsee	Art Langton (I)	Kris Ohlenkamp (I)
Dick Barth (I)	Tracy Drake (I)	Brett LeVine	Carolyn Oppenheimer
David Barton (I)	Debbie Drews	Rebecca LeVine	Mark Osokow (I)
Kathy Barton	Polly Ehler	John Lobel (I)	Wendy Panikker
Pat Bates (I)	Randy Ehler	Scott Logan (I)	Ted Schwartz
Debbie Beckett	Cliff Fenneman	Judy Matsuoka (I)	Donna Timlin
Brian Bielfelt (I)	Lynda Fenneman (I)	Becky McDonald	Helene White (I)
Carla Bollinger	Kimball Garrett (I)	Dan McDonald	Olivia White (I)
Yvonne Burch-Hartley	Wendy Gladstone	Heather Medvitz (I)	(I) = Sector leader
Teri Carnesciali	Barbara Heideman	Jim Moore (I) (c)	(c) = Compiler
Alexander deBarros	Allan Kotin	Justine Morgan	

2017 Christmas Bird Count Summary

1	Greater White-fronted Goose	501	Mourning Dove	75	Western Bluebird
1	Snow Goose	5	Great Horned Owl	36	Hermit Thrush
2	Ross' Goose	549	White Throated Swift	100	American Robin
811	Canada Goose	110	Anna's Hummingbird	16	California Thrasher
2	Mute Swan	40	Allen's Hummingbird	1	Sage Thrasher
6	Egyptian Goose	9	Hummingbird species	72	Northern Mockingbird
cw	Gadwall	1	Belted Kingfisher	353	European Starling
1	Eurasian Wigeon	46	Acorn Woodpecker	20	American Pipit
579	American Wigeon	1	Williamson's Sapsucker	58	Cedar Waxwing
440	Mallard	2	Red-naped Sapsucker	3	Phainopepla
7	Northern Shoveler	11	Red-breasted Sapsucker	9	Orange-crowned Warbler
1	Northern Pintail	28	Nuttall's Woodpecker	20	Common Yellowthroat
3	Green-winged Teal	7	Downey Woodpecker	1249	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audbn)
3	Redhead	37	Northern Flicker (red-shafted)	3	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)
67	Ring-necked Duck	8	American Kestrel	2	Black-throated Gray Warbler
51	Lesser Scaup	3	Merlin	1	Townsend's Warbler
38	Bufflehead	3	Peregrine Falcon	45	Spotted Towhee
72	Ruddy Duck	40	Yellow-chevron Parakeet	9	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
75	California Quail	2	Gray Flycatcher	150	California Towhee
23	Pied-billed Grebe	1	Hammond's Flycatcher	108	Chipping Sparrow
62	Double-crested Cormorant	168	Black Phoebe	13	Vesper Sparrow
47	American White Pelican	58	Say's Phoebe	273	Lark Sparrow
15	Great Blue Heron	2	Vermillion Flycatcher	347	Savannah Sparrow
18	Great Egret	1	Dusky-capped Flycatcher	17	Fox Sparrow
27	Snowy Egret	59	Cassin's Kingbird	85	Song Sparrow
2	Green Heron	3	Loggerhead Shrike	42	Lincoln's Sparrow
27	Black-crowned Night-Heron	5	Hutton's Vireo	947	White-crowned Sparrow
74	Turkey Vulture	199	California Scrub-Jay	32	Golden-crowned Sparrow
1	Osprey	296	American Crow	400	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)
1	Sharp-shinned Hawk	196	Common Raven	1	Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)
10	Cooper's Hawk	cw	Northern Rough-wing Swallow	7	Sparrow species
6	Red-shouldered Hawk	2	Tree Swallow	53	Red-winged Blackbird
40	Red-tailed Hawk	12	Oak Titmouse	2	Tricolored Blackbird
1480	American Coot	524	Bushtit	559	Western Meadowlark
26	Killdeer	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	476	Brewer's Blackbird
1	Spotted Sandpiper	26	White-breasted Nuthatch	48	Great-tailed Grackle
68	Ring-billed Gull	1	Brown Creeper	48	Brown-headed Cowbird
455	Western Gull	13	Rock Wren	505	House Finch
54	California Gull	4	Canyon Wren	16	Purple Finch
1	Iceland (Thayer's) Gull	4	House Wren	183	Lesser Goldfinch
1	Glaucous-winged Gull	43	Bewick's Wren	53	American Goldfinch
208	Gull species	15	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	110	House Sparrows
534	Rock Pigeon	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet		
23	Band-tailed Pigeon	163	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	136	Total Species
57	Eurasian Collared-Dove	23	Wrentit	15198	Individuals

Calendar of Events

February

Saturday, February 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. Turn right and park in the front lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff at (661) 257-4050.

Sunday, February 4. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org or (805) 727-5007.

Saturday, February 10. Nature Walk. 9:00–11:00 a.m. Come out for a fun bird walk at the Sepulveda Basin! This popular walk is designed for beginning birders and school-age children. Binoculars are available for loan. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Diana Keeney, (818) 998-3216. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. Rain cancels. For more information, visit our website, www.sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, February 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.

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

From I-5/Golden State Fwy. S: Take EXIT 146A toward Verdugo Ave. Turn left onto S. Front Street, which will become E. Verdugo Ave. Turn left at the first light onto S. 1st Street then take the 3rd right onto E. Olive Ave.

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

Friday, February 16–19. 21st Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Join in counting the birds you see for as little as 15

minutes, in your neighborhood or anywhere in the world! Submit your sightings to <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

Saturday, February 17. Monthly Field Trip: Ventura County Game Preserve in Oxnard. Meeting Time 7:45 a.m. An excellent spot at which to observe a wide variety of birds including waterfowl, wetland birds and raptors. We will be birding the preserve entirely on foot. Covering the circuit will probably require 4+ hours. We will leave our cars on the left (north) side of the paved road outside the preserve compound. Directions: From the 101 Freeway take the Las Posas Road exit south (left), then Hueneme Road west (right) to Casper Road. Turn south (left) on Casper Road and continue to where the road eventually turns left through a large entrance gate and leads to the compound. We'll meet at the entrance gate at 7:45 a.m. and wait for the preserve manager to open up for us at approximately 8:00; we'll then drive to the compound. Bring lunch and drinking water. Allow one hour and fifteen minutes driving time from the Valley. Leader is Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, February 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 front lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 252-6187.

Sunday, February 18. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

Tuesday, February 20. 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, February 22. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Have you ever wondered HOW to improve your photography while on one of your birding adventures? Karen Schuenemann of Wilderness At Heart will present tips on how to make and compose better bird photos. For more information, see Monthly Programs, page one. **Location: San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, 18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana, CA. (818) 697-5525.** Directions: Located between White Oak and Reseda Blvd. In order to park, it is recommended to go on Etiwanda Avenue and turn into the parking area up the alley behind the center. ALL are welcome!

Saturday, February 24. Hansen Dam Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. We will walk along a dirt road at the base of the dam—exploring promising sites along the way and sometimes go in a different direction to the lake. Meet at the lower parking lot, Dronfield Entrance. Directions: Take Osborne exit from Golden State (5) Freeway. Go northeast about two miles passing Glenoaks Blvd. Turn right on Dronfield to enter the park. Turn right at the end of Dronfield and then take a quick left and proceed downhill to the

large parking lot. Alternate directions: Exit Osborne from the eastbound Foothill Freeway (210). At the off ramp, turn right onto Foothill. After a short distance, turn left on Osborne and then left on Dronfield. Follow above directions to the lower parking lot. Rain cancels. Leader: Pat Bates (818) 425-0962, pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, February 24. Young Birders Group Bird Walk: Sepulveda Basin. 9:00 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(s) Alexander and/or Olivia. For more information on meeting location please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at roselbirds@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405.

March

Saturday, March 3. Rustic Awards Luncheon. 1:00 p.m. Join us as we honor our Conservation Award Recipients: LAUSD teachers Marne Treves, Dennis Hagen-Smith, and Robert Ishii, and our Service Honoree Richard Barth. Experienced birders are invited to join Richard for a bird walk at 11:00 a.m. and beginners can join Muriel Kotin at 11:30 a.m. Location: In the event room next to the Sooky Goldman Nature Center at Franklin Canyon Park. 2600 Franklin Canyon, Beverly Hills, 90210. Order tickets at <https://www.sfvaudubon.org/event/luncheon/>.

Saturday, March 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. Turn right and park in the front lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff at (661) 257-4050.

Sunday, March 4. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org or (805) 727-5007.

Saturday, March 10. LAST Nature Walk of the SEASON! 9:00–11:00 a.m. Come out for the final nature walk at the Sepulveda Basin! This popular walk is designed for beginning birders and school-age children. Binoculars are available for loan. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Diana Keeney, (818) 998-3216. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. Rain cancels.

Saturday, March 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.

Sunday, March 11. Wildwood Canyon Bird Walk, Burbank. 9:00–11:00 a.m. For more information and directions see February 11. Extra binoculars are available. Leader: Mike McHorney, (818) 845-0166.

Saturday–Sunday, March 17–18. Monthly Field Trip: Morro Bay Weekend! The first day, **Saturday, March 17**, we will meet at 8:00 a.m. on the near (inland) side of Morro Rock. Park along the main road just before it swings around the side of the Rock. The second day, **Sunday, March 18**, we will meet at the Montana de Oro State Park Headquarters/Visitor Center at 8:00 a.m. Our species tally is usually very high on this trip. Pigeon Guillemot and Chestnut-backed Chickadee are expected. Directions from the San Fernando Valley: Take the 101 Freeway to San Luis Obispo and then follow Route 1 north to the town of Morro Bay. Allow at least four hours driving time from the Valley. Bring lunch and drinks. Be prepared for possible inclement weather, and remember that the central coast can be quite chilly in the mornings. Make camping or motel reservations as soon as possible. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, March 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 front lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 252-6187.

Sunday, March 18. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin (310) 457-5796 and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

Tuesday, March 20. 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, March 22. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Richard Schulhof, CEO of the Los Angeles County Arboretum, will speak about the essential role of plants in sustaining life on Earth. For more information, see Monthly Programs, page one. **Location: San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, 18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana, CA. (818) 697-5525.** Directions: Located between White Oak and Reseda Blvd. In order to park, it is recommended to go on Etiwanda Avenue and turn into the parking area up the alley behind the center. ALL are welcome!

Saturday, March 24. SFVAS Hansen Dam Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. We will walk along a dirt road at the base of the dam—exploring promising sites along the way and sometimes go in a different direction to the lake. Meet at the lower parking lot, Dronfield Entrance. Directions: Take Osborne exit from Golden

State (5) Freeway. Go northeast about two miles passing Glenoaks Blvd. Turn right on Dronfield to enter the park. Turn right at the end of Dronfield and then take a quick left and proceed downhill to the large parking lot. Alternate directions: Exit Osborne from the eastbound Foothill Freeway (210). At the off ramp, turn right onto Foothill. After a short distance, turn left on Osborne and then left on Dronfield. Follow above directions to the lower parking lot. Rain cancels. Leader: Pat Bates (818) 425-0962, pat.bates@sfaudubon.org.

Monday, March 26. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m. San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, 18323 Oxnard St., Tarzana. It is located between White Oak & Reseda. It is recommended to approach on Etiwanda Ave. and turn into the parking area up the alley behind the center.

Saturday, March 31. Young Birders Group Bird Walk: O'Melveny Park. 9:00 a.m. 17300 Sesnon Boulevard, Granada Hills, CA 91344. The Young Birders Group walks are for young birders who are serious about birding, know some birds, and are willing to learn. All are welcome to join! Directions: 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. Leader(s) Alexander and/or Olivia. For more information, please e-mail Rose Leibowitz at roselbirds@gmail.com, or call (818) 990-5405.

Future Field Trips (details later):

April 21. Morongo Valley

May 12. L.A.River (Willow Street) and DeForest Park 🐦

***Phainopepla* Photo of the Month by Rose Leibowitz**

Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*)

Morro Bay

Canon 60D

100-400 zoom lens

This month's featured picture is by Rose Leibowitz, our Chapter's President, and an avid photographer, as well. She reports that this Nuttall's Woodpecker was seen in Morro Bay last March during the Chapter's annual field trip there, led by Dick Barth, who has been leading field trips for the Chapter for over 20 years! Dick leads this field trip every year over a weekend: Saturday is spent exploring the bay and on Sunday the group reconvenes at Montana Del Oro State Park. "It is a very enjoyable trip with a high species count," says Rose. Join us in March when we honor Dick with the Chapter's Service Award at our annual Conservation Awards Luncheon at Franklin Canyon Park on Saturday, March 3, 2018. Details and signups on the website. And/or join Dick for this year's Morro Bay Weekend on March 17-18, see Calendar, page 8, for more information.

Do you have an interesting photo of a bird taken in/near the San Fernando Valley? Please submit your photos to kathy.Barton@sfaudubon.org. Or you can post to our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sfaudubon. Please include location, date, camera and lens info, a short account of how the photo was taken, and a profile of the photographer. 🐦



November Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

On November 18 we visited Ventura Harbor, the Ventura Water Treatment Ponds and afterwards the nearby Marina Park area. Beautiful autumn weather prevailed. Ruddy Turnstone, Surf-bird, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover, Willet, Spotted Sandpiper, Black Oystercatcher and a rare hybrid Black X American Oystercatcher were interesting shorebird sightings. The number of ducks present was down again this year as was the number of duck species, but among those on hand were Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, Bufflehead, Surf Scoter, Lesser Scaup and significantly a Greater Scaup. We had four grebe species including Horned Grebe. We saw the three expected cormorants and both Brown and American White Pelicans. Forster's Terns were seen and a distant small group of terns appeared to be Royals. American Pipit is a nice find along the coast and we saw a Belted Kingfisher fishing in the harbor channel. A few of the other species tallied were Say's Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Marsh Wren (heard) and Common Yellowthroat. A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron had been reported at the ponds but we couldn't locate it. 🐦

BIRDATHON 2018 by Pat Avery

Our annual Birdathon will take place during April and May of 2018. Birdathon, our primary fundraising event of the year, involves activities that focus on spotting as many species of birds as possible and collecting donations from our generous donors. Funds generated by Birdathon enable SFVAS to host over 2,000 school children in the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP), allow us to contribute to efforts to conserve habitat and to continue our mission of increasing public awareness and appreciation of wildlife and the natural environment.

Birdathon activities will include many of our regularly scheduled monthly bird walks in addition to several once-a-year marathon events, known as "Big Days." Birdathon leaders compete with each other and with themselves to improve their previous years' tallies! Everyone wins when SFVAS has funding to continue its important functions! Watch for details in the April/May *Phainopepla*. Please plan to participate in one or more Birdathon events! Instead of a separate mailing, all information, sponsor forms, and donation envelopes will be included in the newsletter and on our Website at www.sfaudubon.org. 🐦

Audubon-at-Home by Alan Pollack

Although my goal is to encourage folks to make their gardens wildlife friendly, I realize that wildlife causes problems for some homeowners and they struggle to keep our wildlife friends away. If that is your need, I suggest you do the opposite of what I usually encourage: remove plants that provide food and avoid putting dog, cat, or bird food outside; plant sparsely rather than densely; provide no water sources; keep your garden meticulously manicured; keep small pets indoors and lock pet doors at night; close off all possible entries into your home; remove tree limbs that overhang your home; install tall fencing, motion sensor sprinklers and/or lighting. (Thanks to Anna Reams/Wildlife Care of SoCal for her suggestions added to mine.)

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. 🐦

Duck Thieves by Jim Moore

At our Birds and Beer wrap-up we learned that Pat Bates, while counting in Reseda Park, happened upon two duck thieves. I expect, considering their behavior and equipment that this is a continuing operation that has occurred before in other parks and wildlife areas. Pat observed a man with a tarp, feeding bread to ducks. Once a few gathered on the tarp, he folded it up and ran to a nearby pickup truck where his henchman was waiting, together they stuffed several American Wigeons into cages and drove off. Pat was bold enough and alert enough to chase after the kidnapper and got a picture of the henchman and his truck with the caged ducks. He was clever enough to wear sunglasses and had the gate down on the pickup so his license was not visible. Authorities have been alerted. Let's hope they're nabbed.



and enhance the natural habitat within our territory, to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of bird life and the natural environment, and to create a social environment that encourages individual development and participation. Please phone me at my home: (310) 457-5796 or email me at akotin@earthlink.net.

Photo: California Scrub Jay, Caballero Canyon, 2017 CBC, by Brett LeVine

Nominating Committee by Muriel Kotin

The Nominating Committee (Kathy Barton, Felipe Lepe, and Muriel Kotin) is looking for volunteers who are interested in participating on our board of directors or committees. Most board members start their service as chairs of a committee or as elected board members at large. Serving on a committee can also be a great way to become more involved with and contribute to SFVAS.

Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a member of the team, whether as an elected board member, committee chair, or committee member. We are volunteers, so you don't have to have prior experience. It is a wonderful opportunity to expand your knowledge and expertise while helping SFVAS work to fulfill our mission: to preserve



Karin Flores

We were saddened when Karin Flores, a valued member of the chapter died suddenly in October. Her life passion was the environment and in particular the Los Angeles River. She worked for many years for Friends of the Los Angeles River as Outreach Coordinator and volunteered for the non-profit, Save LA River Open Space, where she worked on their social media.

Her untimely death has left a void in the local environmental community. As local organizations working for the environment we often reach out and work in collaboration. However, we were humbled and grateful to receive a donation from Save LA River Open Space for \$500 in her memory.

Karin was a participant in our clean-ups of Haskell Creek and in her honor we intend to spend the money on new implements to make that job both easier and more efficient. We will buy new strong pool nets to 'harvest' the floating trash, rakes to pull it in, cutting tools, grabbers, and will replenish our supplies of gloves, trash bags etc. We will also put some aside to public education about trash and the harm it does. We feel that Karin would be pleased that her memory will live on this way.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President:	Rose Leibowitz	(818) 990-5405
1 st Vice President:	Paula Orlovich	(818) 728-9838
2 nd Vice President:	Diana Keeney	(818) 998-3216
Treasurer:	Jim Houghton	(818) 784-4077
Corresponding Secretary:	Lynn Maddox	(818) 845-4688
Recording Secretary:	Kathy Barton	(818) 929-2516

DIRECTORS

Teri Carnesciali	(818) 892-5029
David Barton	(818) 981-1418
Becky Arntzen	(818) 761-6692
Felipe Lepe	(818) 536-2060
Barbara Heidemann	unpublished
Joanne Millius	(818) 335-5331

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Bird Boxes	Carolyn Oppenheimer	(818) 885-7493
Bird Observatory:	Mark Osokow	unpublished
Community Outreach:	Sharon Ford	(818) 780-5816
Conservation:	Dave Weeshoff	(818) 618-1652
Editor <i>Phainopepla</i> :	Rebecca LeVine	(818) 776-0881
Finance:	Pat Avery	(626) 840-8226
Youth Activities:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Audubon-at-Home:	Alan Pollack	(818) 340-2347
Birdathon:	Pat Avery	(626) 840-8226
Christmas Bird Count:	Jim Moore	(661) 298-1130
Conservation Banquet:	Paula Orlovich	(818) 728-9838
	Becky Arntzen	(818) 761-6692
Education Classroom:	Dave Weeshoff	(818) 618-1652
Education-SBEEP:	Paula Orlovich	(818) 728-9838
Field Trips:	Richard Barth	(310) 276-0342
Hansen Dam Rep:	Dave Weeshoff	(818) 618-1652
Hansen Dam Walks:	Pat Bates	(818) 425-0962
Hospitality:	Teri Carnesciali	(818) 892-5029
Malibu Creek Bird Walk:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796
	Art Langton	(818) 887-0973
Membership:	Lynn Maddox	(818) 845-4688
O'Melveny Bird Walk:	Carolyn Oppenheimer	(818) 885-7493
Photo of the Month:	Kathy Barton	(818) 929-2516
Programs:	Joanne Millius	(818) 335-5331
Recycled Water Advisory Grp:	Mark Osokow	unpublished
Sales & Service:	Diana Keeney	(818) 998-3216
Scholarships and Grants:	Jim Houghton	(818) 784-4077
Sepulveda Bird Walks:	Kris Ohlenkamp	(805) 727-5007
Sepulveda Basin Steering:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796
Social Media:	Jackie Wollner	(818) 989-4543
SSFL Public Participation Grp	Mark Osokow	unpublished
Web Coordinator:	Jim Houghton	(818) 784-4077
Young Birders Group:	Rose Leibowitz	(818) 990-5405

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

www.SFVAudubon.org

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Found and injured animal? Call Wildlife Rescue Center at (818) 222-2658

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SFV Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 7769
Van Nuys, CA 91409

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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, 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 to National Audubon is separate and can be initiated on the website www.Audubon.org.

If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Lynn Maddox at (818) 845-4688 or e-mail her at Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org.

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Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

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Wisdom the Oldest Known Albatross Returns to Midway, Best Gift Ever! USFWS Pacific Region - Submitted by Linda Jones



Wisdom, a Laysan Albatross and the world's oldest known breeding bird in the wild, has returned to Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway National Memorial. The approximately 67-year-old Wisdom flies thousands of miles each year to return to Midway Atoll. Her arrival is overshadowed only by the news that she has also laid an egg. Each year millions of albatross return to Midway Atoll in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument to nest and raise their young. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge staff spotted Wisdom and her mate, Akeakamai, near their nest in late November, and on December 13 staff confirmed that Akeakamai was on the nest incubating an egg. Wisdom and her mate return to the same nest site on Midway Atoll each year. Since 2006, Wisdom has successfully raised and fledged at least nine chicks and traveled millions of miles in her lifetime.

Photo right: As Wisdom forages offshore for food, her mate, Akeakamai, shares the responsibility of caring for their egg. This photo captured on December 13th is the first images of Akeakamai and Wisdom's egg since their return to Midway Atoll. Photo credit: Jodie Spross/USFWS Volunteer.

"An albatross egg is important to the overall albatross population" explained Bob Peyton, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Project Leader for Midway Atoll Refuge and Memorial. "If you consider that albatross don't always lay an egg each year and when they do they only raise one chick at a time – each egg is tremendously important in maintaining the survival of a colony."

Midway Atoll is home to over three million seabirds, including the largest colony of albatross in the world. Over 70% of the world's Laysan Albatross population and 29 species of birds rely on the Refuge as a safe place to breed and rear their chicks. Albatross face a myriad of threats – from involving longline commercial fishing and marine debris to invasive species and shrinking habitat. Throughout the vast expanses of ocean, remote atolls and islands like those found in the Monument are critical refuges for seabirds, like Wisdom.

Need More Wisdom and Midway?

For more adorable photos and videos of Wisdom visit [Wisdom's Flickr account](#).

Read more stories about Midway Atoll and the Laysan Albatross

[My Month at Midway](#)

[The Return of Midway's Albatross](#)

[The Laysan Albatross: A Lovesong](#)

Learn more about the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service addresses threats to the world's largest albatross colony at:

[Removing Threats from Midway Atoll](#)

[A Future To Count on at Midway Atoll](#)

[Midway's Albatross: A New Threat Puts the World's Largest Colony at Risk](#)

Source: <http://usfwspacific.tumblr.com/>

