



Drawing by
Guy Coheleach

THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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*To bring the excitement of birds to our community through birding,
education and the conservation of bird habitats.*

February-April 2014



Photo by Mark Scheel
Looks much better in color! Check out
www.pasadenaaudubon.org

Red-crowned Parrot

Arguably one of our most conspicuous birds, Red-crowned Parrots are a frequent sight in the San Gabriel Valley where thousands of these birds now live. Red-crowned Parrots are native to northeastern Mexico where they are now endangered due to habitat destruction and excessive captures for the pet trade. Considered rare in this area only 40 years ago, they are now abundant.

Red-crowned Parrots are highly social, gregarious, intelligent, and colorful. They mate for life and can live for decades. They are thriving on a diet of fruits and nuts, mostly from non-native trees. They have zygodactyl feet, as is also true of owls, and regularly use them to dangle upside down on power lines, walk sideways along branches, and to grasp food while they attack it with their beaks.

Red-crowned Parrots are bright green with prominent red foreheads, purple napes, and massive beaks. They look very similar to Lilac-crowned Parrots, another non-native species that lives in this area, albeit in far smaller numbers. Red- and Lilac-

crowned Parrots are closely related but their ranges do not overlap in their native Mexico. Red-crowned Parrots are cavity nesters and there are documented cases of breeding in suburban neighborhoods of Pasadena.

Red-crowned Parrots are among the loudest local birds. They make a variety of very loud harsh screams that carry for a considerable distance. At dusk in the fall and winter, when thousands of them gather to roost in parts of Arcadia and Temple City, the noise can be deafening. The sight of so many parrots, often intermingled with Red-masked and Mitred Parakeets, is one of this area's most dramatic bird spectacles.

Their origin in Los Angeles County has long been a puzzle, but it's undoubtedly related to the fact that many are kept as pets. Releases, escapes, or both; however they got here, their numbers are growing and they're impossible to ignore.

Lance Benner

President's Perch

If 2014 is anything like 2013, we are headed for a banner year!! Some of the amazing things we accomplished last year: reached out to the Longfellow Elementary School, mentored kids from all over the L.A. area via the S.M.O.R.E.S. program, raised funds at Birdathon, inducted new members into the Wrentit Club, awarded numerous grants to deserving candidates, increased our membership by 40 new chapter-only members, and became very active in the effort to save the riparian habitat in the Hahamongna watershed.

Big thanks to: Mark H, Grace W, Ron C, Susan G, Frank G, Luke T, Dessi S, Norm V, Beatrix S, Judy B, Elaine M, Amber B, Diego B, Lorenzo B, Liz C, Jared K, Sylvia S, Mickey L, and Julia R. All these PAS members got involved with the various outreach efforts since September 2013. I hope you enjoy your GOLDEN BINOCULARS (and if you didn't get your pair, come see me.)

I hope you are enjoying all the field trips and meetings as well as getting to know some of the great birders here at Pasadena Audubon! The Board extends an open invitation to come to one of our upcoming Board Meetings: February 5th or April 2nd. See the inner workings of PAS—maybe you would like to be part of our leadership. Happy Birding,

Deni Sinnott

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February Program

Birds of the Sierra Nevada

Wednesday, February 19, 2014

7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Ed Pandolfino

Ed Pandolfino will take us on a virtual transect of the Sierra Nevada from the oak savanna in the west, through serene conifer forests of the west side, up into the majestic alpine regions, and down the steep eastern escarpment to the pinyon/juniper woodlands and open steppes of the Great Basin.

Along the way we'll see and hear the stunning diversity of birds that make the Sierra their home. We'll learn about which birds are in decline and which are expanding and increasing. We'll address some mysteries surrounding some of those species and discuss how birders can help to solve them. Please join us as we learn about the natural history, status and distribution of birds of the Sierra Nevada.

Ed will bring copies of his new book, *Birds of the Sierra Nevada*, for sale prior to the program.

General meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (address on back cover). Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

March Program

A Year of Birds in Los Angeles County

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

7:30 pm—9:00 pm

David Bell

In 2013 David Bell and several other birders set out to see as many birds in Los Angeles County as possible. Dave crisscrossed just about every portion of the county and ended the year seeing 354 species (7 of which are introduced species).

Dave will share photos and discuss the most compelling birds for each month of 2013, including some of the "birds that got away." This is sure to be a fun and motivating program as you continue your quest to see all the birds!

April Program

Friends of Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

7:30 pm—9:00 pm

John Fitch

The Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge is part of the extensive San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex and is located within the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station. The Refuge's tidal salt marsh, 965 acres, serves as a sanctuary for resident wildlife, as well as providing a critical migration stopover and wintering habitat for thousands of birds that migrate up and down the Pacific flyway each year.

Join us as John Fitch, bird specialist with Friends of Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge, presents a program focusing on the formation of the refuge, the creatures that live there and what the Friends do to improve the habitat.

Conservation

Hahamongna Sediment Removal Update

Now we wait. On January 21st, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works closed its public comment period on the Draft EIR of their massive sediment removal project. We do not know how long it will be until we get a response to our questions and comments, but we're hoping by next summer or early fall. The PAS Board strongly objected to all of the alternate plans offered by the County, saying they were too toxic, noisy, disruptive, and destructive, and we also pointed out the lack of supporting evidence or scientific argument that showed this project was even necessary.

Instead, we asked the County to follow the Go Slow Plan: Go Slow, Go with the Flow, Let the Habitat Grow, and Keep Costs and Impacts Low. This plan suggests that we take 20 years instead of five, which means we don't need to have diesel trucks driving through neighborhood at the rate of one an hour for five years. The Go Slow plan also argues for using the water that flows through the Arroyo (assuming it ever rains again!) to move the sediment through the channel. The County already does this—we want them to do more of it. If they really do need to move sediment out, all they have to do is move more out than comes in. The Go Slow Plan also urges the County to let the habitat return to its natural state rather than turning most of

Hahamongna into a giant maintenance yard. Lastly, the Go Slow Plan will cost less and cause much less impact in the local neighborhoods, the 210 freeway, and all of Pasadena. We hope that the County sees the light and learns to work with nature and stakeholders instead of against us.

If you sent in a comment, thank you very much!

Laura Garrett

Development in Sierra Madre

The 88-acre Mater Dolorosa Monastery is planning to sell 15-20 acres of its property to a developer who plans to build several houses there. This is potential Spotted Owl territory. CA Fish & Wildlife has already been apprised of the situation. A coalition of Sierra Madre folks, including the Sierra Madre Mountain Conservancy, has begun the work of trying to stop this project. If you are interested in learning more, please visit www.stopmonasteryhousingproject.com.

Laura Garrett

Christmas Bird Count Recap

Pleasant weather and some nice surprises marked the 2013 Christmas Bird Count for Pasadena. We're fortunate to have many local participants and thus the long-standing tradition of our count night dinner where we get a good feel for how the count went. And it went quite well this year.

In spite of the continuing drought, after all the reports filtered in we had found 162 species on count day. That's about a half dozen below our highest ever count, but certainly a respectable number. Birds missed on count day but seen during count week added another four species.

Conditions were dry however- very dry. Not only on count day, but for the entire year. We now know that 2013 was the driest year ever recorded in the state. At least in part because of this, most observers commented on less activity and fewer numbers of birds.

The lack of precipitation was clearly evident in many natural areas such as the San Gabriel foothills, river channels and Santa Fe Dam. The San Gabriel River in particular was in poor shape; virtually no water in the stream channel coupled with a lack of rain rendered this normally very productive area quite unremarkable this year.

On the plus side, many parks and other recreation areas in the count circle receive adequate artificial "rainfall" from regular watering. With the inclusion of bodies of water such as Legg Lake, the Livingston-Graham gravel pits and Peck Water Conservation Park these areas combined to produce a number of rare birds and many expected ones.

While many species are seen in similar numbers on each count, the abundance of others can vary widely from year to year. Just 173 Cedar Waxwings and a mere six Purple Finches were especially low numbers on the 2013 count. Last year there were good numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches dispersing into the lowlands with a number of them found on the count; in 2013 we found none at all.

While no unexpected waterfowl turned up, there was a Ross's Goose at Lincoln Park and fifteen Canvasbacks- a species often missed- at Peck Water Conservation Park. A Least Bittern was recorded at Legg Lake where they are likely resident, but usually difficult to find.

The shrinking lake at Peck Water Conservation Park in Arcadia produced excellent habitat for seedeaters last fall and some decent shorebird habitat as well. Four of the Semipalmated Plovers that have persisted there for many weeks remained to be recorded on count week- a very good bird for the Pasadena count.

In addition to our expected gull species, a remarkable forty-three Herring Gulls were found, with most of those at the Livingston-Graham gravel pits. It's remarkable that Herrings nearly outnumbered Western Gulls.

Eight species of parrots and parakeets were recorded as were six other established non-native species, thus nearly ten percent of count birds fell into this category.

Owling efforts offered up the usual Great Horned and Western Screech-Owls in double-digit numbers, plus two Barn Owls, two Spotted Owl in Big Santa Anita Canyon and a very nice count week Northern Saw-whet Owl at Mt. Wilson.

Though it was a decent year for Lewis's Woodpeckers in southern California- with at least two seen in the count area prior to December 14- none were recorded on count day or week. But unusual woodpeckers did include a Red-naped Sapsucker and a Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flicker at Lacy Park. Legg Lake hosted an interesting and rather confusing hybrid Red-naped/Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker and counters also found three Hairy Woodpeckers- a good number for a bird that we can easily miss.

A Western Flycatcher- presumably a Pacific-slope, but impossible to differentiate from Cordilleran when not vocalizing- was along the Rio Hondo near Rush Street. The other flycatcher of note on the count was a Tropical Kingbird returning to Legg Lake for its third winter.

The only swallows that turned up were three Rough-winged Swallows split between Legg Lake and the San Gabriel River. Quite rare on the count was a continuing Pacific Wren in Big Santa Anita Canyon. Likewise was a Varied Thrush in the Whittier Narrows area. A Black-and-white Warbler was back for another winter at Legg Lake and four Yellow Warblers were found along the San Gabriel river.

A Swamp Sparrow at Legg Lake was found on count day, while a continuing Clay-colored Sparrow at Lacy Park in San Marino and a White-throated Sparrow in the Whittier Narrows area had been discovered a few days prior to the count. Often an elusive species on the count, a single Northern Cardinal was near the Whittier Narrows Nature Center.

Quite unexpected was a male Orchard Oriole at the LA County Arboretum. With its presence unknown prior to the count, it attracted many birders in the following days. Far less rare in winter but still a good bird for our count was a Bullock's Oriole at the Huntington Gardens.

There weren't many expected birds that were missed. Greater Yellowlegs and Eared Grebe were two surprising ones, but there are a few like that on every count.

The Pasadena count has spanned seven decades since its inception and the circle has time and again demonstrated its ability to produce not only vagrants, but a species count of over 160. That's pretty decent for an inland count circle.

While those vagrants are always fun and add a bit of excitement to each count, every Eurasian Collared-Dove, Cedar Waxwing and Savannah Sparrow tells its own part of the story of bird distribution in the area. And all too often the common birds of today are the rare birds of tomorrow. Consider the fate of declining Spotted Doves and Loggerhead Shrikes. On the flip side, Great-tailed Grackles and Allen's Hummingbirds are both species have gone from unknown to common on the count. Of course that's the main reason we do the count in the first place; to find out what's there and what's changing.

There aren't too many things you can do that are both fun and contribute to the scientific record. And it's great that the CBC is one of them. As always a big thank-you to all the participants for their efforts for making the Pasadena count a great success. We'll do it all over again in ten short months.

Jon Fisher

Reports and Sightings

SMORES, continued

Birding was just one of the elements of a fantastic two-day event that also included Day and Night Hiking, Learning to Fish, Entomology, Astronomy, Outdoor Cooking, Kayaking, and Overnight Camping. Birding therefore had some pretty tough competition in the fun stakes! The kids (aged between 4 and 18) had come in from all across the county: from as far as the Antelope Valley to just up the road in Duarte. Only a few of the kids had ever used a pair of binoculars before and even fewer had ever done any birdwatching.

Our first goal was to get the kids to grips with their loaned binoculars. In my experience, much of the problem with getting beginner birders hooked is trying to actually get them on some birds. I find it usually helps to get them focused on something inanimate, so that they can get everything aligned on their binoculars, before they aim them at a flitting warbler or a skulking sparrow. Everyone seemed to get the grasp of how to use them fairly quickly and even better yet a few birds were cooperative enough that we could even view them naked eye.

The walk itself quickly added a few species to the participants nascent 'life lists' in the shape of some ubiquitous White-crowned Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers before a Northern Mockingbird barged in and stole the show. The mockingbird was both accommodating and vocal but almost as importantly resonated with many of the older kids who recognized the name from Harper Lee's book. Of course, the real scene stealers of the event were a perched Red-tailed Hawk, some soaring Ravens, and a couple of Ospreys that were working the nearby lake. To my mind (and biases) it just goes to show the importance of cool birds like raptors in getting kids (and adults) excited about birds. I like grappling with hybrid gulls as much as the next person, but that's just not likely to be the game changer the way a hawk, owl, or eagle might be, though I must admit the California Quail were a pretty big hit, too.

Though I have led tours and spoken to adults about birding a number of times, it's always more frightening to talk to kids about it. Firstly it almost feels more important to leave a good impression and it also strikes me that they are less likely to sit quietly and nod politely if they are bored out of their minds! Overall the day felt like a real success and I really enjoyed taking out the different groups as they rotated through their assorted activities. The personal highlight of my day was definitely the little kid who said, "I thought birdwatching was going to be boring, but wow that was really fun!" As far as I'm concerned that is pretty much job done.

It was an incredibly rewarding day for me personally and I hope it was equally so for the kids too. Obviously I hope that they all take some continued interest in the birds around them but, if they got hooked on fishing or hiking or just enjoying nature in some way, shape, or form, then that's all good too. Making sure that everyone gets the opportunity to share in the enjoyment that we get from being outdoors is surely the key.

As a member, it's really great to see PAS taking an active role in helping to extend these opportunities to "underserved communities". Perhaps the next step for the organization is to find a good way to encourage and develop the interests of those kids that really connected with the birding element of the event?

The next SMORES events are at Kenneth Hahn: April 12-13 and at Whittier Narrows: May 18-19.

Luke Tiller

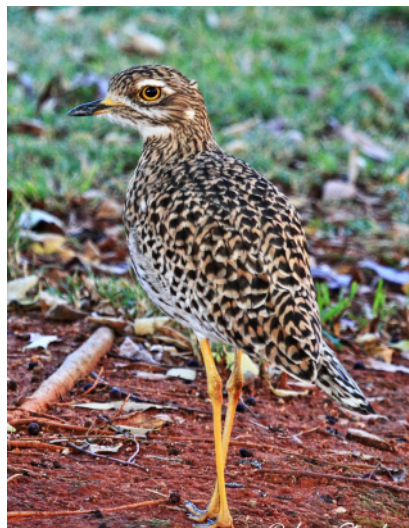
A Trip to the Motherland, Part 2

South Africa, 2013

Here is the continuing journal of Cecilia Lowenthal's trip to South Africa. The first part of this journal ran in the September 2013 issue of The Wrenit.

The real highlight of my trip came when I went to visit an old friend I have known since elementary school, in the Western Cape at Velddrif, which is a small town situated on the Berg River and is also a favorite birding spot. That particular morning we birded the local salt marsh, or Berg River Estuary, after which I was excited to enter my sightings on eBird. Only then did I realize the extreme diversity that was there! I decided there and then that I had to inform my fellow PAS members about this golden opportunity to see so many new birds and, well... needless to say, the idea dissipated after a few minutes. Most birders wouldn't travel so far.

An application to declare the Berg River Estuary as a RAMSAR site (The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat) is currently being prepared. On this day I saw scores of Lesser Flamingoes and



Spotted Thick-knee. Photo by Leon Strydom

thousands of Cape Cormorants (usual count is 32,000-36,000 per day). The count is directly dependent on the amount of fish in the ocean. I also saw African Darter, Gray Heron and Purple Heron, Little Egret, Blacksmith Plover and Pied Kingfisher.

In Gauteng, much further north near Johannesburg in a more rural setting, I delighted in discovering the nocturnal Spotted Dikkop/Thick-knee (never saw it fly), Gray Lourie and Mouse Bird. The Spotted Thick Knee will sometimes act similar to a Killdeer and fake injury. While visiting friends on the hills of Johannesburg, I saw the Green Wood Hoopoe, an African passerine bird that is non-migratory. Yet fossils attributed to this family have been found in Miocene rocks in Germany. It's a very ancient-looking bird with a huge, red decurved bill.

Writing about my birding experience is a first attempt, and

Continued on page 9

Field Trips

Legg Lake & San Gabriel River

Saturday, February 1, 2014

7:30 am — 11:30 am

These trips will cover some consistently good lake and park birding areas. Legg Lake has lots of water and scattered trees and has produced good waterfowl numbers and varieties as well as an impressive list of migrants and wintering birds. Time permitting we'll include the Pico Rivera spreading grounds or some other river locations, based on what's around. An excellent trip for beginning and young birders.

Meet in the Santa Anita Ave. parking lot, closest to the 60 freeway. Take the Santa Anita exit and turn south from the off-ramp (going south). The lake and parking lot will be on your right.

Ed Stonick

Bonelli Regional Park

Saturday, February 8, 2014

7:30am — noon

Come join us for a morning of birding in Bonelli Regional Park. The habitat has some of the last remaining coastal sage scrub. There's also a big reservoir, Puddingstone, that supports wintering waterfowl. We'll be on the lookout for Bonelli specialty species such as California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Bald Eagle, Osprey and Greater Roadrunner, as well as over-wintering vagrants.

Carpooling is encouraged as there is a \$10 per vehicle admission fee. We will assemble at the East Shore Parking Lot near Bathroom 11. From Pasadena, take the 210 East to the 57 South. Exit at Via Verde and turn east on Via Verde. Enter the park on Via Verde and follow the road to East Shore Drive. Turn left and follow East Shore Drive approximately one-half mile and find a large parking lot adjacent to the lake. Look for

Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk

Sunday, February 16, 2014

Sunday, March 16, 2014

Sunday, April 20, 2014

8:00 am — 11:00 am

Pasadena Audubon and Eaton Canyon Nature Center are cosponsoring monthly walks at Eaton Canyon. The walks are led by Hill Penfold, who has been leading them at ECNC for many years. Hill is wonderful with birders of all levels and Eaton Canyon is one of the best locations to learn the birds of the Pasadena area.

The walks are held on the third Sunday of each month. Meet at the flagpole: bring water, binoculars, hats, but no dogs.

Hill Penfold

Hahamongna Monthly Walk

Saturday, March 1, 2014

Saturday, April 5, 2014

7:30 am — 11:30 am

This monthly bird walk is for birders of all ages and experience. A good variety of birds should be in residence. Bring binoculars, birding guide, water and wear walking shoes. No dogs.

Exit the north 210 at Berkshire and make a right, then a left at Oak Grove. The Hahamongna Watershed Park entrance is on the right at the next stop light. Take the first left after entering Hahagmongna, and park by the ballfield.

Ron Cyger

Huntington Library Monthly Walk

Sunday, February 23, 2014

Sunday, March 23, 2014

Sunday, April 27, 2014

8:00 am — 11:00 am

A special benefit for Pasadena Audubon Society members is the chance to bird the Huntington Library grounds. Attendance is by reservation only and limited to 15 participants. Members may bring one non-member guest, space permitting. We thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible.

For reservations contact me (see page 7) by email (preferred), or by phone. Trip leaders vary.

Mark Hunter



birders! A detailed map can be found here:

<http://www.bonellipark.org/wwwroot/pictures/Park%20map%20updated%20June%2008.pdf>

A spotting scope will be very helpful. Bring lunch and water.

Frank & Susan Gilliland, Darren Dowell

Parrot Chase

Saturday, February 15, 2014

4:30 pm — dark

Join Larry Allen in a search for the parrots and parakeets as they come into their roosts in Temple City. Meet at Temple City Park, 9701 Las Tunas Dr in Temple City (between Kauffman and Golden West). We will scan for flyovers, and towards dusk head in whichever direction we hear the loudest squawking.

Larry Allen

Quail Lake and Vicinity

Saturday, February 22, 2014

7:30 am — 2:00 pm

Join us for a trip to the extreme northwest corner of LA County, where we will look for waterbirds, raptors, and other winter visitors that are hard to find elsewhere in the county. Both Scaup species are usually present, along with Common Goldeneye and Common Merganser. Both Bald and Golden Eagles are possible, as are Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon. Rarities seen on this trip in 2013 include California Condor, Long-tailed Duck, and White-winged Scoter. We will bird Quail Lake and then move to other hot spots in the area.

Field trips continue on page 7!

WC = Wrentit Club!

Calendar

Submit material for the next Wrentit by March 1

WCC = Wrentit Club
Count Circle!**February 2014**

1	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WCC	Legg Lake	Ed Stonick
5	Wed	7:00 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Deni Sinnott
8	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Bonelli Regional Park	The Gillilands & Darren Dowell
9	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
15	Sat	4:30 pm	Field Trip	WCC	Parrot Chase	Larry Allen
16	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
18	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WCC	Eaton Canyon	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
19	Wed	7:30 pm	General meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Birds of the Sierra Nevada
22	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Quail Lake	Mark & Janet Scheel
23	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Huntington Library & Gardens	Mark Hunter

*(PAS members only)***March 2014**

1	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WCC	Hahamongna	Ron Cyger
8	Sat	7:00 am	Field Trip	WC	The Urban Core	Jon Feenstra
9	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
16	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
18	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	San Dimas Canyon Park	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
19	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	A Year of Birds
22	Sat	7:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Castaic Lake	Jon Feenstra
23	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Huntington Library & Gardens	Mark Hunter

*(PAS members only)***April 2014**

2	Wed	7:00 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Deni Sinnott
5	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WCC	Hahamongna	Ron Cyger
12	Sat	Early morn	Field Trip	WCC	Tejon Ranch	Ron Cyger
13	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
16	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Friends of Seal Beach Refuge
19	Sat	6:30 am	Field Trip	WCC	Big Santa Anita Canyon	Lance Benner
20	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
22	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Rancho Santa Ana	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
27	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Huntington Library & Gardens	Mark Hunter

*(PAS members only)**** Trip Leader Information**

Mark Scheel (chair)	(626) 765-5408	scheel@tapir.caltech.edu
Larry Allen	(626) 288-2701	larryallen@earlymusicla.org
Lance Benner	(626) 791-1187	lbenner@charter.net
Ron Cyger	(626) 449-3625 (before 9:00 pm)	ron@cyger.org (preferred)
Darren Dowell	(626) 344-4003	dowell.darren@yahoo.com
Kathi Ellsworth	(626) 564-0652	pandionsky@yahoo.com
Jon Feenstra	(626) 319-4723	feenstra@alumni.caltech.edu
Jon Fisher	(818) 800-2776	jonf60@hotmail.com
Frank & Susan Gilliland	(626) 441-8487	gillilandsusan@gmail.com
Sid Heyman	(626) 571-5991	sidheyman@sbcglobal.net
Mark Hunter	(818) 369-6627	mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org
Mickey Long	(626) 285-8878	mlongbird@charter.net
Hill Penfold	(818) 352-4954	hpenfold@gmail.com
Julia Ray	(818) 314-5127	jraymusic@att.net
Ed Stonick	(626) 796-0595	edstonick@earthlink.net

Field Trips, continued

...Quail Lake, continued

Meet in the parking lot at the west end of Quail Lake at 7:30 am. Take the I-5 Freeway north, then take the Hwy 138 off-ramp east for about a mile. Quail Lake is on your left. Bring food and water, and a scope if you have one. Bring an FRS radio if you have one. It can be cold and windy, so don't forget warm clothes. It takes about 1.25 hours to get to Quail Lake from Pasadena, so please don't drive alone. Also keep in mind that there are no gas stations in the area.

Mark and Janet Scheel

The Urban Core

Saturday, March 8, 2014

7:00 am — 11:00 am

Far from the natural beauty of the local mountains, the space and solitude of the desert, and the tranquility of the scenic coastline, right in the middle of the crushing hard-scape of Los Angeles lies one of the city's few urban parks, the only park within walking distance for thousands of Angelenos. While birding is hardly what most people associate with MacArthur Park, it is quite possibly the best place in the County to observe gulls. Thayer's Gull is a regular winter visitor, and various and mysterious hybrids are also often present. Further, as the only park around it attracts a surprising diversity of waterfowl and passerines. The morning of birding will begin here then continue at Echo Park Lake, another urban refuge a few miles away, and maybe some scoping of Silverlake Reservoir, if we've still got time.

Meet at the Levitt Pavilion in the northwest corner of MacArthur Park at 7:00AM. Metered parking there costs \$2 for two hours.

Jon Feenstra

Castaic Lagoon

Saturday, March 22, 2014

7:00 am — noon

As one of the large, deep mountain reservoirs in northwestern LA County, Castaic Lake attracts a wide variety of waterbirds: diving birds like loons and grebes, diving and dabbling ducks, and gulls. The list of rarities is also impressive (Yellow-billed Loon comes to mind). The manicured picnic/recreation area on its western shore can be good for a number of wintering and migrant species and always worth a walk around. We'll bird the park and lake shore and maybe take a detour to a few other points on the lake to scope out any ducks we may have missed.

Parking is \$10/vehicle. Enter the recreation area through the gate on Castaic Lake Drive, make a left and park in the last parking lot.

Jon Feenstra

Tejon Ranch

Saturday, April 12, 2014

Early morning — early afternoon

The Tejon Ranch, at 422 contiguous square miles, is the

largest piece of privately held property in California. The Ranch reached an agreement with major environmental organization (including the National Audubon Society) and is now available for guided field trips.

A quick eBird check for the Ranch lists California Condor, Burrowing Owl, Lewis's Woodpecker, Scott's Oriole, and Lawrence's Goldfinch among the many species we may see.

If you would like to visit the Ranch on this trip, please send an email to ron.cyger@pasadenaaudubon.org with the following information for each person: name, address, telephone number, and email address. I will then send further information on meeting place, time, etc.

The trip will be limited and is open to Pasadena Audubon members only. Hope to see you at the Ranch!

Ron Cyger

Big Santa Anita Canyon

Saturday, April 19, 2014

6:30 am — noon

Santa Anita Canyon is one of our most gorgeous local canyons. We're going to explore it at a time of year when the spring migrants have arrived and many of the birds are most active. This is a particularly good trip for American Dippers and we'll make a special effort to find them.

We're going to hike down into the canyon to Fern Lodge Junction, along the trail above Sturtevant Falls, through the slot canyon, back south along the Stock Trail, down into the main canyon again, and then back up to the parking lot for a total of about six miles.

Meet at Chantry Flat at 6:30 AM. We're starting early to beat the heat and to avoid the crowds. Parking can be limited, so please carpool. Bring water, food, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, a hat, bug repellent, and an Adventure Pass. We'll return to Chantry Flat by about noon.

Lance Benner

Chilao Visitor Center

Second Sunday of every month

8:00 am — 10:00 am

The Chilao Visitor Center walks will continue each month, weather and road conditions permitting. (If things look rainy, snowy or brush fire-y, check first.)

Chilao is a good place to see woodpeckers and we often see four or more species on a walk. Mountain Quail are somewhat elusive but still seen or heard about half the time. You can also expect Purple Finches, Steller's Jays, Dark-eyed Juncos and several species of nuthatches and others totaling about 30 species during the 2-hour walk.

Hill Penfold

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 14-17, 2014

Have fun and conduct citizen science, along with more than 100,000 other folks. This massive simultaneous bird count yields highly valuable data for ornithologists. Go to www.birdcount.org for complete details and participation.

Education

Robert Stebbins 1915-2013

This obituary was originally submitted to The Wrentit just after the November issue had gone to print.

Throughout California and indeed the Western United States all the lizards, all the salamanders, frogs and snakes felt the ground tremble on September 23, 2013. And the humans called herpetologists, who love and study these animals, felt it as well. For that morning Robert C. Stebbins passed.

He was the premier student of herpetology for the West and worked in this field all his long life. He attended UCLA and studied Herpetology under Dr. Raymond Cowles, whose list of students who went on to be successful biologists is a long one. Born in Chico, California, Stebbins lived for a time in San Fernando Valley and traveled to the nearby Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains seeking out reptiles and amphibians and keeping his extensive field notes on their distribution and natural history that would later be incorporated into his many books and papers. He recorded amphibians in our local Millard Canyon along with Charles Lowe (who also was to become a noted herpetologist/ecologist at the University of Arizona) on a visit in June 1950, and described the canyon, vegetation, and stream width and depth (*Amphibians of Western North America*, 1951). Stebbins went on to become Professor of Zoology and Curator of Herpetology in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at University of California, Berkeley where he continued to inspire students and colleagues with his field studies and publications.

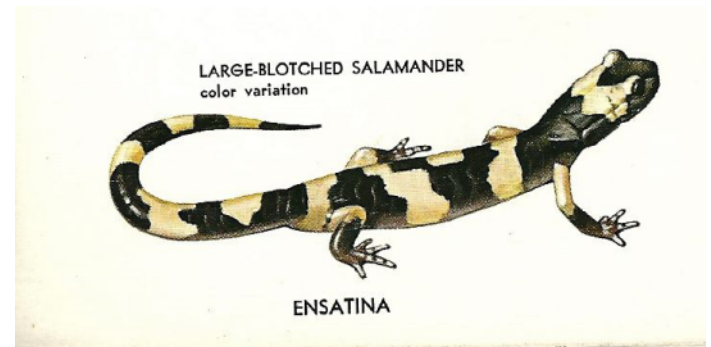
He authored numerous books on reptiles and amphibians, none more important than the three editions of *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians* that led so many naturalists to the correct identification, distribution and ecological information on these animals. An outstanding artist, he produced all the illustrations as well as the text for his guides. I had a personal correspondence relationship with Dr. Stebbins from the 1960s, when I asked for information about Mountain Kingsnake eggs through his field guide revision in 1985, when he'd asked for updates on the local status of the California Newt in our foothills.

Shortly before his death, at age 98, he completed and coauthored the major revision of *A Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of California*, an outstanding new book for this and the next generation. Far less known was a book he wrote on the critical importance of getting children and young students involved in a hands-on way with nature (*Connecting with Nature*, 2009).

A staunch conservationist, Dr. Stebbins extended his efforts to protect the Desert Tortoise and to document the quiet study uses of the deserts to counter the Off Highway Vehicle onslaught. Pasadena Audubon and Eaton Canyon were participants when the then President and Center Director, Arden Brame, a herpetologist himself, spearheaded a Chapter compilation and we sent field trip records to document our bird and plant study in desert areas along with hundreds of other biologists and naturalists statewide.

Dr. Stebbins' major study animal was the salamander genus *Ensatina*, which displays seven distinctive subspecies in a

ring distribution pattern from Oregon to northern Baja. He worked throughout the *Ensatina*'s range to tediously document the intergradation and contact points of the subspecies and tell the fascinating evolutionary and biogeography story, now used in many text books.



Kind, gentle, and somewhat shy, but with formidable knowledge and ever willing to share it with anyone expressing interest, Dr. Robert Stebbins will remain a giant on whose shoulders all Western naturalists stand.

Mickey Long

Grants

At the January 2014 Board meeting the Pasadena Audubon Society awarded funds to eight organizations/individuals to carry out projects to “to bring the excitement of birds to our community through birding, education, and the conservation of bird habitats”.

The San Diego and Los Angeles Audubon societies were each awarded funds to help in Light-footed Clapper Rail and Snowy Plover conservation projects, respectively. The Southern California Bluebird club was funded to help cavity nesting birds (such as bluebirds) by preserving woodlands and Norm Vargas and associates were supported to build and monitor bluebird nesting boxes. Also, funds were provided for setting up a bluebird nesting box with a webcam for educational purposes (Gary Kinsley). Finally, two graduate students from UCLA received support for their current research projects. Richard Hedley is trying to link winter ecology of Cassin's Vireo populations in the U.S. and Canada with wintering populations in Mexico. Jeffrey Lee will study how artificial light and noise pollution affects bird communities in urban areas in Los Angeles County. The next round of grant applications is due by March 15, 2014. Instructions for applying can be found on the PAS web site under Grants.

Norm Arnheim



North East Trees, with funding from PAS, begins tree plantings at Ascot Hills Park to improve bird habitat.

Education

Birding 101

Sponsored by Pasadena Audubon Society and Eaton Canyon Nature Center

Birding provides enjoyment and challenge throughout life. Birding gets you outdoors in your neighborhood or around the world. Birding increases your ability to observe and appreciate the world around you. And finally, Birding is just gosh darn fun! So, why would you put off learning how to be a better birder any longer?

This class is designed for beginners, but all are welcome. We will cover identification, optics, field guides, note-taking, habitats, birding ethics, and many other topics. Class size is limited so don't delay!

Classroom sessions: March 4, 11, and 18, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Field trips: March 8 and 15, 2014 from early morning to early afternoon.

Location of the class and field trips will be sent to the class participants.

Cost: \$50 for Pasadena Audubon members, \$70 for non-members (but will include membership in Pasadena Audubon Society). This fee will cover all three classes and two field trips. Payment is payable to "Pasadena Audubon Society" and is due at the first class session.

For questions or to make reservations, contact leaders Ron Cyger and Mark Scheel at Birding101@pasadenaaudubon.org.

Magpie Bird Study Group

The group meets the third Tuesday of each month. We bird 9:00 am to about 11:30 am, have a sack lunch, and have a short business meeting. All PAS members welcome!



**Tuesday, February 18, 2014
Eaton Canyon**

**Tuesday, March 18, 2014
San Dimas Canyon**

**Tuesday, April 15, 2014
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic
Garden**

Trip leaders: Sid Heyman, Julia Ray

South Africa, continued

an exercise in careful analysis of facts. One is forced to think of taxonomy, habitat, characteristics, etc., in a more focused manner. E.g. I wondered what species the Thick Knee is. (It is nocturnal and doesn't like to fly; a stone curlew belonging to the family Burhinidae.)



Green Wood Hoopoe. Photo by Leon Strydom

Finches are seedeaters, yet they like to pick fruit? Why are the South African birds so large in comparison with U.S. birds? These are perhaps silly questions for an experienced birder, but for a novice birder not so!

Cecilia Lowenthal

DONATIONS TO PAS

These PAS members and friends have recently made donations to our chapter: Margaret Adams & Joel Edstrom, Denise Gellene Bates, Denise Castillo, Sydney Feeney, Susan Gilliland, Don & Scarlett Hibner, Cecilia Lowenthal, Stacey Masci, Beverly McKenzie, Audrey Parmiter, E.J. Remson, Sheila Riddell, Deni Sinnott, Jan & Bob Stull, David Weeshoff. Thank you for your generosity!

Become a Chapter-only Member of PAS

Local chapters of the National Audubon Society, such as Pasadena Audubon, receive only a small share of NAS membership dues. In order to finance our programs and services, including publication of *The Wrenit*, PAS offers Chapter-only memberships.

When it's time to renew your National Audubon membership, we invite you to instead become a Chapter-only Member of the Pasadena Audubon Society, or make a donation to our Chapter to support our programs. Chapter-only dues are \$20 per year or \$15 for seniors and students, all of which remains with our local chapter to fund our programs. We thank you all for your support!

Chapter-only Membership Application

Name Phone
Address
City State ZIP
Email

If this is a gift, please also provide donor's information below:

Name Phone
Address
City State ZIP

Yearly dues:

- \$20 (regular) \$15 (senior, or full-time student)
- \$35 (T-shirt or Birding Guide, plus a PAS pin)
- \$_____ (donation)

Make checks payable to, and mail to:

Pasadena Audubon, 1750 N Altadena Dr, Pasadena, CA 91107

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SMORES Beginner Birding

On October 19, 2013 I was lucky enough to be involved as a volunteer with the SMORES Program at Santa Fe Dam. To quote their own publicity material: ‘SMORES is an overnight camping program designed to provide youth of Los Angeles County the opportunity to make personal connections to nature.’ The program is organized by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation and Habitat Conservation Fund funded. Staff and volunteers at Eaton Canyon Nature



Center were heavily involved on the day and the Pasadena Audubon Society helped to provide the expert birding guides for the event.

Luke Tiller, in a photo by Helen Wong. Story continues on page 4.

New Members

ALHAMBRA: Helen Harazmisz; ALTADENA: Bonnie Bishop, Harold Bishop, Luke Tiller, Craig Wisher;
 ARCADIA: Denise Gellene Bates, Joan Sander, Stanley Sander, Steven Sander; COUER D’ALENE, ID: Nancy Mertz; LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE: Grace Wu; LOS ANGELES: Jerry Forrest; MONROVIA: Feather Flores;
 MONTEREY PARK: Victoria Brothers; MONTROSE: Sheri Adams; PASADENA: Emily Allen, Jose Arribas, Susan Bartow, Rudd Brown, Tamyke Edwards, Tracy Fontenot, Diane Fujitani, Margaret Hansen, Lauren Hill, Virginia Jannetty, Joyce Locatell, Zia Saylor, Charlotte Torres, Josephine Wilson; PINE MOUNTAIN: Chris & Linda Gardner; ROSEMEAD: Julie Gamant; SAN GABRIEL: Patricia Apodaca, Kimberlee Hicks, Fredric Kroesche, Fr. Bruce Wellems, Valerie Wood; SAN MARINO: Joan Gamberg, Paul Gamberg, Louis Jones; SHADOW HILLS: Diane Dennis; SIERRA MADRE: Valerie Loughton, Carolyn Halpern; SOUTH PASADENA: Phyllis Marling; TEMPLE CITY: Joy Matyear, May May; YORBA LINDA: Carole Bush, George Lee Bush