



Drawing by  
Guy Coheleach

# THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

**Pasadena Audubon Society**  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 66 — No. 3

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

February - March 2018

## Cactus Wren

Wandering the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains' north side on a beautiful morning, I suddenly heard a harsh "Wraaaaak Wraaaaak Wraaaaak Wraaaaak Wraaaaak." This raucous sound instantly overtook me and the silence. I'd been surrounded by Cactus Wrens (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*), a shrubby skulker and noisy denizen of the American Southwest. Large for a Wren (8.5 inches) they are heavily barred and streaked. The bold, white supercillium and banded tail can make them stand out in the muted colors of their desert/chaparral habitats. The coastal California subspecies *C.b.sandiegensis*, however is less densely spotted. Not shy, they show no fear as they search the desert plants for various insects and small lizards with their thick bills. At times berries, seeds and nectar will augment their diet.



© Javier Vazquez

At home in this spiny, sere world, they rarely drink from standing water. They are most active in late morning and afternoons are spent seeking cooler areas, while panting helps them keep cool. These wrens live their seven to ten years of life in the same general area and do not migrate.

Male and female are indistinguishable, however, the juveniles tend to be paler and have a brown eye, while the adults' eyes are red. Commonly mating for life and defending their territory, both sexes will build football-shaped, multi-chambered nests with the males building extra decoy/roosting nests that are occasionally used for sleeping during the non-breeding season. The nest's bulky construction consists of grasses, twigs, and brush lined with feathers and placed into a thorny

*continued on page 3*

## President's Perch

Welcome to 2018 and the Year of the Bird! This is the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a law passed to stop the decimation of birds due to the hat trade. Great Auks, Carolina Parakeets, and many others were extinct by the early 20th century, and outrage over this led to the MBTA and the formation of the first Audubon societies. Our own chapter was formed in 1904 because locals were concerned by the large number of Mourning Doves being killed. Clearly, birds have needed our help for a long time!

And they still do. Sadly, the MBTA is under threat. In 2017, Congressman Liz Cheney (R-WY) introduced an amendment to the SECURE American Energy Act that would mean corporations would not be held accountable if birds are harmed or killed by their actions. Please contact your Representatives to ask them to vote against any legislation that weakens the MBTA. The birds needed us in 1918, and they still need us today!

Besides protecting the MBTA, I urge you to find a new way to celebrate birds. Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (February 16-19). Join the Wrentit Club by birding more than you did last year. Volunteer to help at one of our outreach projects to help us educate the public about the fun and excitement of birds. Join us at Peck Road Watershed Park for our spring cleanup. Or join our coffee club and order bird-friendly coffee. It's delicious, and you'll be supporting bird-friendly coffee farms.

We're Pasadena Audubon, and we are for the birds!

Laura Garrett

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**MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**


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## The Sandia Rosy-Finch Project

**February 21, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm**  
**Michael Hilchey**

The three Rosy-Finches must rate as some of the the most beautiful and enigmatic bird species to be found in the United States. The Sandia Rosy-Finch Project is a long-term winter ecology study of the Rosy-Finches at Sandia Crest just outside of Albuquerque, NM. As one of the primary investigators of the project for over 10 years, Michael will present an overview of the project including the origin of the work, what they have learned about these birds, and what they hope to learn in the future.

Michael has been a avid birder and researcher since a young age, having worked on projects from Mexico to Alaska and beyond! Currently he spends most of his time running BRANT Nature Tours, a international birding and wildlife travel company.

*Monthly chapter meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (1750 N. Altadena Drive in Pasadena). Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Programs for youth begin at 6:45 pm.*

## Recording Bird Sounds

**March 21, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm**  
**Lance Benner**

Birds produce an incredible variety of sounds that can be remarkably intricate, hauntingly beautiful, and most of which are crucial for their survival. This talk will make extensive use of recordings and sonograms; discuss why recording bird vocalizations is important; and provide suggestions for how to get started. We will discuss how to obtain recordings with cell phones, cameras, and dedicated sound recorders; how to use external microphones; fundamentals of sound editing software; and how to upload recordings to eBird.org and Xeno-Canto.org online databases.

Lance has been recording bird sounds since 2009. His recordings have been used in research papers, books, educational nature programs, smartphone apps, and for development of sound recognition software.

## Young Birder Club

Young people interested in birds and nature are invited and are encouraged to bring their parents.

Monthly meetings are held just before the monthly chapter meetings, September through May, see below. Field trips are organized regularly.

To find out more about the Young Birder Club meetings and upcoming events, please email Susan Gilliland at [gillilandsusan@gmail.com](mailto:gillilandsusan@gmail.com).



*PAS Young Birders at Hopper Mountain NWR  
 © Susan Gilliland*

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## CONSERVATION

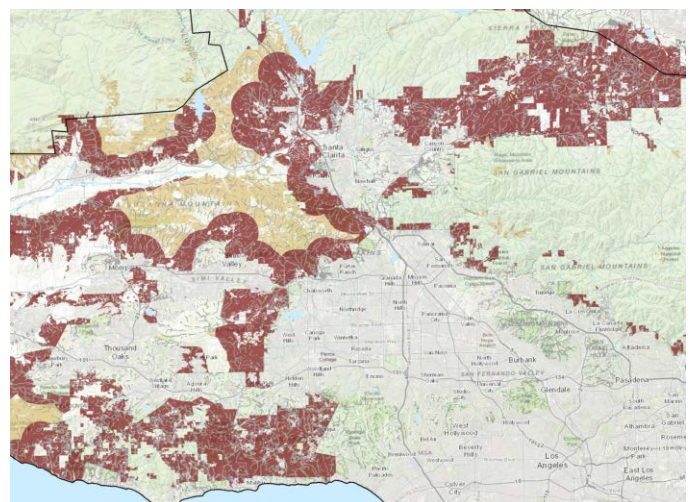
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### Habitat Equals Fuel

That's the takeaway from the Vegetation Treatment Plan from Cal Fire (California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention). The environmental impact report for this massive long-term plan was available for public comment until January 12, and many Audubon chapters expressed opposition. The VTP targets native habitats like chaparral for clearing by mechanical grinding, herbicides, and prescribed burns. It anticipates clearing 60,000 acres per year, perpetually, in a statewide area of 23 million acres, in the name of reducing wildfire severity. As the map of the affected areas near Pasadena shows, it's a recipe for habitat loss on a major scale.

This poorly conceived plan ignores the latest science and ignores the advice and recommendations of the California Fire Science Consortium, a group of advisers that was formed by Cal Fire itself. It exempts individual clearance projects from complying with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), so there is little or no oversight and recourse for concerned citizens and organizations.

Although the comment period is now past, Pasadena Audubon will continue to partner with other organizations to resist this environmentally harmful plan, and to recommend less harmful and more effective alternatives.



In red: modeled Wildland Urban Interface treatment area  
 In tan: modeled Ecological Restoration treatment area  
 From Cal Fire's Vegetation Treatment Program Environmental Impact Report, Appendix A, available online at [bofdata.fire.ca.gov](http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov)

*Mark Hunter*

## A BIRD FROM AFAR

## The Citreoline Trogon

I took my first birding trip to Mexico last month. Several Pasadena Audubon members had recommended the San Blas area in the state of Nayarit, about 90 miles north of Puerto Vallarta on the Pacific coast. It is known as the most birded area of Mexico, with a wonderful mixture of habitats, including mangrove swamps and jungle, foothills overlooking the coast and a peak at 6000 ft with open meadows in an ancient caldera. Coconut palms and banana trees alternated along the road we took up to San Blas from the airport. Magnificent Frigatebirds, sleek soaring machines with long angular wings and forked tails, were present everywhere along the coast. They were mesmerizing, circling endlessly overhead with Black and Turkey Vultures, in an ominous aerial ballet.

A couple of the birds I was most excited to see were Trogons, the Citreoline and the Elegant. They are part of a distinct order of birds, the Trogoniformes. Present in tropical zones throughout the world, the majority of the 43 species which comprise the order are in the Americas. These birds are fairly large at around 10 inches, and remarkably beautiful, full of rich color. They are also unique in that they have the first and second toes pointing backwards while the third and fourth toes point forwards. This is known as heterodactylous.

The Elegant Trogon is on our ABA list, but can only be found in south east Arizona and as a rare visitor to Texas and New Mexico. The Citreoline, however, is a Mexican endemic, present along the Pacific coast from the state of Sinaloa through Oaxaca to the northern edge of Chiapas. The birds are plentiful in their range and not considered threatened.

Lots of tropical birds are vibrant and colorful and trogons are no exception. We first got a glimpse of the Citreoline Trogon when we arrived at the house where we were staying. He was perched high in a pear tree at the edge of the yard, his plump lemon yellow breast spilling forth over the branch, his head cocked to one side, looking slightly bored. He never budged

### Cactus Wren, continued from page 1

Cholla or another even larger cactus' cavity. An average nest is three feet off the ground and protected by the many needles. Between two and five eggs are laid. Females incubate but both parents tend to the young, who remain near for some time.

An unsuspecting Cactus Wren may get attacked and be eaten by hawks, roadrunners, or desert mammals, such as foxes, coyotes, and bobcats. Snakes can get into the nest and prey upon the eggs or young. While declining along the southern and Baja California coasts they are not listed as threatened or endangered but protected by the Migratory Bird Act. Habitat fragmentation, due to fire and urbanization, has especially hurt the coastal populations.

When I'm in suitable habitat my ears are always perked-up in anticipation of an encounter with the noisy, frisky and inquisitive Cactus Wren. "Wraaaaak Wraaaaak Wraaaaak Wraaaaak Wraaaaak."

*Javier Vazquez*

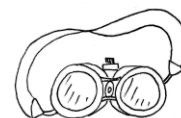


from that comfortable perch and I didn't see his gorgeous back until a few days later when we saw a pair fly into a large fig tree in the foothills. The male's gray head and wings framed a magnificent metallic green mantle which faded to a violet-blue rump and tail. Quite a collection of color for one bird!

As the week unfolded, we were fortunate enough to see these beautiful birds on multiple occasions. They weren't very active. Once perched they didn't move for long periods, as though posing for photos. Trogons feed on a mix of fruit and insects at this time of year, and both were plentiful. I can personally attest to the latter, which fed with gusto on me!

Several species of trogons, including the Citreoline, nest in arboreal termite nests. These large dark mounds were visible in the trees in many of the locations we visited, but we never saw a bird excavating one. It must have been too early in the season. Oh well, next time. San Blas is certainly worth a second visit and we are lucky it's so close to LA.

*Lois Brunet*



If there's a Bird from Afar, that you saw and loved, we'd love to hear about it. Send your text and photos to the Editor at [pas.wrentit@gmail.com](mailto:pas.wrentit@gmail.com).

## FIELD TRIPS

### Salton Sea

**Saturday and Sunday, February 3 and 4**

The Salton Sea Trip is a great way to get your year-list cookin'! The sea is one of the premier birding areas in North America, but is in major transition at this time. On the weekend we usually end up with over 100 species and a few surprises. We will bird all day on Saturday and through lunch on Sunday.

This trip is limited to 12 PAS members (it's easy to become a member on our website). Preference is given to those who were not on the trip the previous year and can do the entire weekend. Please email me to for more information or to make reservations ([ron@cyger.org](mailto:ron@cyger.org)).

*Ron Cyger*

### Pelagic Trip from Marina del Rey

**Sunday February 11, 7:30 am to noon**

Join us for a fun and family-friendly Pelagic! In addition to some exciting pelagic birds, we might see dolphins, sea lions, and even whales. This year we are going with a bigger boat to accommodate more people, and a longer trip so we can go farther and hopefully see more. The cost will be **\$30 per person paid in advance**. We will have renowned birder Bernardo Alps as well as some of our own excellent field trip leaders on board to help call out species and make sure everyone has a great time.

**You must RSVP and pay in advance.** Email Kym at [kym.buzdygon@pasadenaudubon.org](mailto:kym.buzdygon@pasadenaudubon.org) to reserve your spot(s). You can pay via PayPal on our website (there is a 3% processing fee) or by sending a check to PAS, Attn: Feb 11th Pelagic, 1750 N Altadena Dr, Pasadena, CA 91107

If you come the day of the trip without a reservation, you may be turned away. There are no refunds, but substitutions are permitted.

*Luke Tiller*

### Quail Lake and Vicinity

**Saturday, February 24, 7:30 am to 2 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. We will bird Quail Lake and then move to other hot spots in the area. If people are especially enthusiastic, we can bird past 2 pm.

Meet in the parking lot at the west end of Quail Lake at 7:30 am. Take the I-5 north, then take the Hwy 138 off-ramp east for about two miles. Quail Lake is on your left. Bring food and

water, and a scope and an FRS radio if you have them. Note that we will be walking the entire length of Quail Lake, which is slightly more than a mile each way on level gravel. It can be cold and windy, so don't forget warm clothes. Keep in mind that there are no gas stations in the area.

*Mark and Janet Scheel*



*Red-Crowned Parrot at the Arboretum © Kathy Degner*

### Parrot Chase (or Sit, depending)

**Saturday, March 3, 4:30 pm to nightfall**

The famous "Temple City parrots" have moved to Pasadena, and their pre-roost staging areas are generally discernable from La Pintesca Park in Pasadena. Expected species include Red-crowned, Lilac-crowned, Red-lore, and Yellow-headed Parrots; other parrot and parakeet species are possible. Bring scopes if you have them.

Meet at La Pintesca Park in Pasadena, at the northeast corner of Fair Oaks Ave. and Washington Blvd.

*Larry Allen*

### Anza-Borrego: Hawkwatching and more

**Saturday, March 17, 7:00 am - 3:00 pm**

Anza Borrego is the second largest State Park in the U.S. and is home to Borrego Springs Hawkwatch. Here we will hope to find migrating Swainson's Hawks in large numbers. Desert habitats can also hold a variety of interesting birds including LeConte's and Crissal Thrasher, Scott's Oriole and Verdin. As well as the migrating hawks, we hope to find early passerine migrants and, depending on winter rains, a profusion of blooming wildflowers and cacti as well as an interesting lizard or two.

Participant numbers are limited for this trip. Please email Luke Tiller at [streatham2003@aol.com](mailto:streatham2003@aol.com) to reserve your place on this tour.

*Luke Tiller*

*Field trips continued on page 7*

## FIELD TRIPS: REGULAR MONTHLY WALKS

### Legg Lake and Hahamongna

**First Saturday or Sunday of the month, check calendar for specifics**

**7:30 am — 11:30 am**

February's Legg Lake trip is excellent for beginning and young birders. Time permitting we'll include the Pico Rivera spreading grounds. Meet at the Santa Anita Ave. parking lot. From the 60 freeway, take Santa Anita south a short distance to the lake and parking lot on your right.

March and April will be at Hahamongna, a wonderful trip for birders of all ages and experience. Bring binoculars, water, walking shoes but no dogs. Enter the park at Oak Grove and Foothill Blvd. Take the first left and park by the ballfield.

*Ed Stonick or Darren Dowell*

### L.A. County Arboretum

**Second Saturday of every month**

**8:00 am — 10:00 am**

This easy walk is for birders of all ages and experience levels. Meet on the steps leading to the entrance of the Arboretum. Admission is \$5 – free for members of the Arboretum or Audubon, and free for children under twelve.

*Katy Mann*

### Chilao Visitor Center

**Second Sunday of the month, starting in March**

**8:00 am — 10:00 am**

The Chilao Visitor Center walks resume in March, weather and roads permitting. If things look rainy, snowy or brush fire-y, check the website first.

Chilao, 26.5 miles north of I-210 on Angeles Crest (State Hwy 2), 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*

### Magpie Bird Study Group

**Third Tuesday of most months**

**9:00 am until about noon**



**February 20, Bonelli Park.** Meet in first parking lot, first left after the Via Verde park entrance.

**March 20, San Dimas County Park.** Meet in first parking lot on Sycamore Canyon Road, off San Dimas Canyon Road.

**April 17, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.** See admission policy at [www.rsabg.org/visit](http://www.rsabg.org/visit).

We bird until 11:30 and then have a sack lunch and a short meeting. All PAS members welcome!

*Julia Ray, Sid Heyman*

### Eaton Canyon

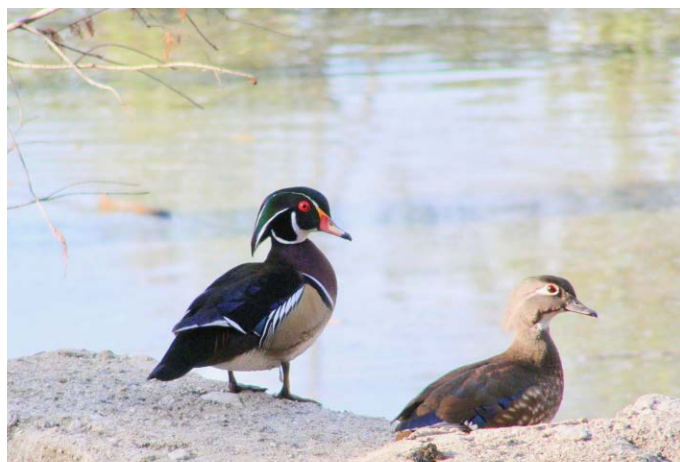
**Third Sunday of every month**

**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 Eaton Canyon for many years. This is a wonderful walk for 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*



*Wood Ducks at the Arboretum © Julia Ray*

### Huntington Library

**Fourth Sunday of every month**

**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.

To reserve contact Mark at [mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org](mailto:mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org).

*Mark Hunter*

## CALENDAR

## February 2018

3 & 4	Sat/Sun		Field Trip		Salton Sea	Ron Cyger
4	Sun	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Legg Lake	Ed Stonick
7	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garrett
10	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
11	Sun	7:30 am	Field Trip		PAS Pelagic	Luke Tiller
14	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 11
18	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
20	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Bonelli Park	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
21	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Michael Hilchey
24	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Quail Lake	Janet and Mark Scheel
25	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

## March 2018

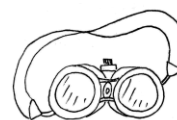
3	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Hahamongna	Darren Dowell
3	Sat	4:30 pm	Field Trip	WC	Parrot Chase	Larry Allen
10	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
11	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
14	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 11
17	Sat	7:00 am	Field Trip		Anza-Borrego	Luke Tiller
18	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
20	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	San Dimas County Park	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
21	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Lance Benner
25	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

## April 2018

4	Wed	7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Garrett
7	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Hahamongna	Darren Dowell
8	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
11	Wed	5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Lucky Baldwin's, Pasadena	see page 11
14	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
14	Sat	7:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Bob's Gap	Kathi Ellsworth, Lance Benner
15	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
17	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
18	Wed	7:00 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	
21	Sat	6:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Big Santa Anita Canyon	Lance Benner
22	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter
29	Sun	8:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Tejon Ranch	Susan and Frank Gilliland

## Trip Leaders

Mark Scheel (chair).....	(626) 765-5408	scheel@tapir.caltech.edu
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Ed Stonick .....	(626) 796-0595	edstonick@att.net
Luke Tiller.....		streatham2003@aol.com



## WC Wrentit Club

The Wrentit Club is a special distinction for members who've seen 250 birds or more in L.A. County within the calendar year. The field trips designated WC are within L.A. County. Any birds seen on these trips count towards the Wrentit Club distinction. See our website for a listing of current and past members.

## FIELD TRIPS CONTINUED

## Bob's Gap

**Saturday, April 14, 7:00 am to 1 pm, heavy rain will cancel**

Found in the southern Mojave Desert not far from Valyermo, Bob's Gap Road goes through a gap in the desert foothills. This is one of the best and least disturbed areas for many of the desert elements in the San Gabriel Mountains. Spring wildflowers can be spectacular depending on rain. We will look for Mountain Quail, Scott's Oriole, Black-throated Sparrow, Black-chinned Sparrow, Prairie Falcon, Black-chinned Hummingbird and many others. Bob's Gap is historically important as a Gray Vireo breeding spot but, unfortunately, it has been many years since the last report. We will check previous locations, just in case! Please notify the leaders if you plan to attend but just show up if you forget.

Meet at Pearblossom Park: 121st St. East and Ave V-14 in Pearblossom. From there we will carpool/caravan to Bob's Gap which is south of Pearblossom Hwy, 165th Street becoming Bob's Gap Road. We will park near the Limekiln ruins on the east side dirt road.

*Kathi Ellsworth & Lance Benner*

## Big Santa Anita Canyon

**Saturday, April 21, 6:30 am until 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. We will 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, and then back up to the parking lot, about six miles in all.

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.

*Lance Benner*

## Tejon Ranch

**Sunday, April 29, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm**

At 422 contiguous square miles, or 240,000 acres, Tejon Ranch is the largest piece of privately held property in California. Tejon Ranch is a hotspot of biological diversity and lies at the confluence of four major biogeographic regions. Birds and wildlife abound.

Trip requirements: a) be a PAS member b) sign up with [gillilandsusan@gmail.com](mailto:gillilandsusan@gmail.com) c) pay Tejon Ranch \$20 fee. Details and directions will be provided to registered participants.

*Frank & Susan Gilliland*

## The Great Backyard Bird Count

**February 16 through 19**

Pasadena Audubon Society's Great Backyard Bird Count is happening this February 16th thru 19th. This four day event is for birders of all ages. Counting our local birds gives us a snapshot of where the birds are. You can bird in your own yard or you can come and join us at the Eaton Canyon Nature Preserve on Sunday, February 18, from 8:00 am to noon.

We will have bird feeders up as well as accomplished birders who can answer questions and help identify birds we will see and/or hear. There will also be a bird walk through the Eaton Canyon Nature Preserve led by an expert birder who can identify our local bird population and teach what to look and listen for in identifying birds you will spot as you walk.

If you do a bird count in your own yard, after you identify and count as many as you can over a defined period, (even as little as fifteen minutes or a half hour) please enter your numbers at [BirdCount.org](http://BirdCount.org), under the Submit Observations tab, and become part of the nationwide Great Backyard Bird Count sponsored by the National Audubon Society.

This is a great way for parents to encourage younger children to become citizen scientists and have fun doing it!

*Carolyn Murphy*



**How many birds will you find?**

**21st Annual Great Backyard Bird Count**  
February 16-19, 2018

**Join in!** Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

[birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org)

Cedar Waxwing  
Photo: Jane Tomer/CBBC



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 WORKSHOPS, CLASSES AND MORE
 

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## Birding 101: Learn from the Pros

Birding provides enjoyment and challenge throughout life, getting you outdoors on your street or around the world. Birding knowledge is also a great cocktail party topic and this is a great opportunity to explore the world of Birding in a classroom environment.

This class is designed for beginners, but all are welcome. We will cover the basics of identification (sight, sound, behavior), optics, field guides, habitats, birding ethics, and many other topics. Our goals are to help class participants become familiar with local birds and to be comfortable on birding field trips. Class size is limited so don't delay!

**Classroom sessions: Tuesdays, February 27, March 6 and 13, beginning at 7:00 pm**

**Field trips: Saturdays, March 3 and 10, early morning to about noon**

Participants should plan on attending all classes and field trips. Location of the class and field trips will be sent to the class participants.

Cost: \$60 for Pasadena Audubon members, \$80 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 (there are scholarships available for young birders).

Sponsored by Pasadena Audubon Society and Eaton Canyon Nature Center. For questions or to make reservations, contact Mark and Ron at [Birding101@pasadenaaudubon.org](mailto:Birding101@pasadenaaudubon.org).

*Mark Scheel and Ron Cyger*

## Bird Banding in the San Gabriel Valley

Some PAS members have visited Walt Sakai's banding operation at Zuma Canyon in Malibu. For those who would like to observe and participate in bird banding, there is now a closer location, in the eastern San Gabriel Valley. This is a new site, so we don't have as many volunteers, don't use as many nets, and don't catch as many birds as Walt does, but it is still an opportunity for a "hands on" experience with songbirds.

I have been banding in Marshall Canyon in La Verne about three times a month since July. Weather and health permitting, I'll be banding on the second Saturday of every month (as well as some weekdays, on a less predictable schedule). I've caught more than 200 birds of more than 30 species. The most common birds are Bewick's Wren, Oak Titmouse, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee, and Wrentit.

Although banding and birding have something in common, there are some differences:

- The goal is not to catch as many species as possible.

## March Workshop: Owls of SoCal

**Workshop Tuesday, March 27,  
from 7 pm to 9 pm**

**Field trip Saturday, March 31  
from 6 pm to midnight**



*Northern Saw-Whet Owl*  
© Lance Benner

Due to its geography, Southern California hosts one of the highest concentrations of owl species in the country. Twelve owl species occur in here and at least ten of them breed here.

This workshop will discuss Southern Californian owls, their adaptations, biology, vocalizations, geographic distributions, and where to find them. The talk will make extensive use of range maps from eBird and owl recordings and sonograms of our local species.

The workshop includes an owling field trip in the San Gabriel Mountains. The trip is scheduled at the peak time of year for hearing Northern Saw-Whet, Northern Pygmy, and Spotted Owls and also offers a good chance for finding Western Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Common Poorwill.

The field trip will concentrate on searching for owls along the side of the road but may be expanded to include a hike depending on current conditions and the weather. Attendance at the workshop is mandatory in order to attend the field trip.

Limit: 12. Cost: \$40 for Pasadena Audubon members, \$60 for nonmembers (but will include membership). Contact Kym at [kym.buzdygon@pasadenaaudubon.org](mailto:kym.buzdygon@pasadenaaudubon.org) to reserve your spot.

*Lance Benner*

Although we enjoy variety, that is not our main goal. The goal is to keep track of individual birds from one date to another.

- We examine each bird and keep records of age, sex, size, and weight. We don't rush on to see what's next.
- We visit the same places again and again, several times each day, to check the nets.
- You don't have to be a good birder to help with banding. You don't even have to identify the species, though that helps. You need good finger dexterity and patience.
- On the downside: We start at sunrise, and stay in the same place for five or six hours. Sometimes it's slow.
- The trails are steep, narrow and slippery in a few places.
- Sometimes the birds bite. Sometimes they soil your clothes.

The exact location changes from month to month. If you are interested in participating, please send me a message at [lavernebirds@gmail.com](mailto:lavernebirds@gmail.com) or call 626-636-6730.

*Mike Morrison*



## BOOK REVIEW

### New 7th edition of National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America

Jon L. Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer, 2017. National Geographic, Wash. D.C. \$29.99

Yes, yet another new edition of this top field guide just appeared in Fall 2017 and we ask: “Did we need another revised edition?” The 6th edition came out in 2011. There have been new species sighted in North America north of Mexico and a number of taxonomic changes have occurred in the last six years so, a revision seems warranted.

In a snapshot, here’s a comparison of the last edition with the new.

	6th Edition (2011)	7th Edition (2017)
Pages	574	591
No. of Species	990	1023
Weight	heavy	heavier
Illustrations		330 new

A thumbing through of the pages reveals that most color plates remain unchanged but the changes in artwork, 330 newly painted illustrations, including new species shown, are important and well-done.

Taxonomically Ridgeway’s Rail is right up-to-date as is the Scrub-Jay group. Bell’s vs. Sagebrush Sparrow (the old Sage Sparrow complex) is clarified by illustrations and range maps. The just-named Cassia Crossbill (Idaho) alas does not get separate treatment but is mentioned in the text under Red Crossbill. Same goes for the very recent Thayer’s Gull lumping as a type of Iceland Gull, but illustrating Thayer’s separately (and the text also mentions the upcoming lump) is good for west coast birders. The sequencing of families and orders follows the latest decisions of the American Ornithologist’s Society, as difficult as it is to get used to our beloved House Sparrow being moved back well before the orioles, for example.

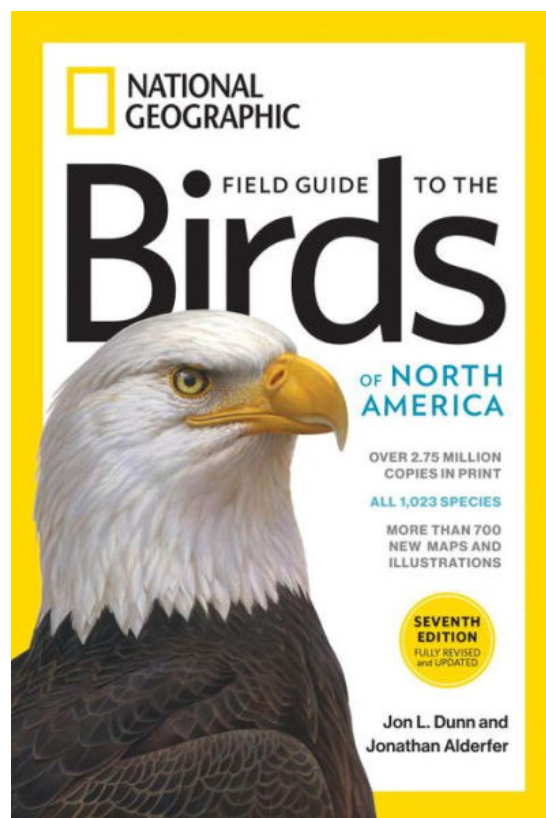
The Allen’s vs. Rufous Hummingbird dilemma is clarified (but not solved) with more illustrations and detail on the amount of green allowed on the back of a male Rufous, helping beginning birders exercise caution in calling out every *Selasphorus* seen. In fact, virtually all the hummingbirds get improved or more detailed illustrations.

Pelagics like murrelets especially have more detailed illustrations. Our coastal Cactus Wren is illustrated for the first time alongside the desert subspecies and Fox Sparrow groups are treated with greater clarity in new illustrations. Appreciated by us Southern Californians is the addition of illustrations for several more of our exotics that are becoming more common or established in our grassy-weedy lowlands. Pin-tailed Whydah, male and female, is illustrated for the first time in a North American field guide. Munias and Mannikins are improved with the addition of Tricolored Munia and Bronze Mannikin.

Sixteen more maps of subspecies of many birds are now added so that one can work on studying this level of taxonomy. Another new feature is providing the four-letter banders code for each species. The text has more detail for many species but I didn’t review extensively to fully appreciate yet.

Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer, along with Kimball Garret as one of the major reviewers, are to be commended on continuously improving a great field guide. My Sibley Guide will stay right at arm’s reach near my computer or in the car, but don’t we all want to check a bird’s details in more than one guide? This is a really nice new book and will find its way into the hands of every serious birder, whether beginning or experienced. You can get it for the cost of skipping one trip to the Mexican restaurant.

*Mickey Long*



## CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER MUSINGS

### Would It Have Died?

*Julie Parker, Altadena and Vermont*

A thud. Two fluffs of feathers on our picture window. I glance outside in time to see a bird spiraling downward in a frenzy, feet spasming, tail and back arched as if broken.

I hurry downstairs to see it land, wondering whether it might just be a House Finch. Looking down through the window I see its breast spots, thin bill and brown touched with a rust wash at the tail. Sickened, I know it is a Hermit Thrush, the regular winter visitor we love to watch, shy, hesitant, hiding behind the rose branch to sip at our wall fountain.

I watch it on its side, bill gasping, opening, closing. Its eyes begin to slack, lower. They close. The arched tail relaxes. The bird is dying. Its eyes open a little, then close again. Its sides are still heaving, but the movement tapers. The eyes are now closed as the two points of the bill also draw together. Resignation. A sadness creeps over me for this poor little visitor, dying alone as its name might suggest. I decide to ease its passing. I go outside, stand by the bird and make calming coos. Bending down I gently stroke the warm little head and back to the tail. Stroke after stroke. The eyes seem at peace but the sides keep expanding and contracting. I try the Hermit Thrush song, with its long first note, so beautiful echoing through our Vermont woods in June. A poor rendition admittedly. But suddenly the thrush's eyes open. Poor thing, struggling for one last peek at earth it seems.

Then my tiny victim opens its eyes wide for a moment and

flips onto its feet, sides heaving. It sits on its legs, quiet, breathing, head lowered. Three minutes pass. I have an appointment. The vigil has made me late already. Suddenly, the Hermit Thrush takes flight, landing on the garden wall beneath Chinese elm branches. Perfect. Safe. I watch it for a moment longer.

Before leaving, I approach the thrush one last time. I shouldn't have. It flies off, from what was a very safe perch where it could have rested another hour. Perhaps it has flown to safety. Who will ever know? But I have participated in a small miracle this morning.

**Editor's Note:** Collisions with glass windows pose a significant threat to birds. A 2014 study estimated that up to one billion birds die from window strikes in the U.S. each year. Sadly, according to researcher Daniel Klehm, who has studied this topic since the 1970s, birds who hit windows often die from head trauma even when they are able to temporarily fly away like the bird in this story ([allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)).

Luckily, there are many steps you can take to safeguard your windows and reduce or prevent collisions! Check out American Bird Conservancy's website ([abcbirds.org](http://abcbirds.org)) for lots of great ideas. If you do find an injured bird, the best thing to do is gently place it in a small box or paper bag, and keep it somewhere warm, quiet, and dark until you can transport it to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for treatment. Pasadena Humane Society accepts all species of wild birds. See: [pasadenahumane.org/animal-control/wildlife/](http://pasadenahumane.org/animal-control/wildlife/).

## Thanks to all who made a year-end donation to our Chapter!

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CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER NEWS

Wondering what we learned from the **Christmas Bird Count**? Sit tight! We'll have a full report from Jon Fisher in the next edition of the *Wrentit*.



Diego Blanco, participating in the Christmas Bird Count at Santa Fe Dam  
© Susan Gilliland

**Land Use Pass Now Required at Bolsa Chica and Other Hotspots**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is now requiring Land Use Passes at San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve (Big Canyon Unit only) and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve among others.

You can purchase online at the CDFW website: [wildlife.ca.gov](http://wildlife.ca.gov), by phone at (800) 565-1458, or in person at the CDFW office in Los Alamitos. Annual passes are \$25.10 and daily passes are \$4.32.

**Omission:** Blanca Garcia & Bas Van Schooten should have been included in the Golden Eagle section of the 2016-2017 Impact Report. We thank them for their generous contribution and apologize for the omission.



Lance Benner led a workshop for our Young Birders about recording bird sounds. Here they are, all smiles, after the event.  
© Susan Gilliland

**Birds 'n Beers**

Good food, good beverages, and good bird talk at this casual monthly gathering led by Luke Tiller, Catherine Hamilton, and David Bell. Everyone is welcome! 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, the second Wednesday of each month, at Lucky Baldwin's at 1770 E. Colorado Blvd. in Pasadena.

**Peck Pit Sparkles**

OK, that's an exaggeration. But by lunchtime on November 12th, the shorelines and thickets at the north end of the lake were far cleaner than they were at sunrise. A bird walk preceding the cleanup netted 50 species, including a kettle of four late-migrating Swainson's Hawks. Watch for another cleanup event in the spring, and join us!  
*Mark Hunter*

**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 Wrentit*, PAS offers Chapter-only memberships.

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

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## Thanks to our Hospitality Volunteers

September, October and November general meeting volunteers who brought cookies, distributed raffle tickets and helped set-up and pack-up: Chrysti Watson, Deni Sinnott, Diane Sipieler, Doug Farr, Gary Bennett, Jill Haskin

CBC dinner volunteers who brought Christmas cookies, chocolate dipped strawberries, manned the wine bar, helped set-up, assisted with clean-up & pack-up, manned the RSVP table and much more: Carolyn Murphy, Diane Sipieler, Doug Farr, Grace Wong, Jan Long, Jeanene MacLean, Joy de los Santos, Kathy Degner, Kathleen Linowski, Learden Matthies.

## Welcome to our New Members

ALHAMBRA: Richard Sanchez; ALTADENA: Susan Andres, Albert Stephens; AZUSA: Richard McKee; CLAREMONT: Mario Mariotta; LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE: Michael Jensen; LOS ANGELES: Mellissa Berry, Sherra Fermino, Graham Hamby; MONROVIA: Dashrath Panchal, Britta Lee Shain; MONTEREY PARK: John Hallin; PASADENA: T.A. Brown, Charlotte Cantrell, Joan & Robert Cathcart, Priscilla & Jim Gamb, Tony & Mindy Golden, Joseph Kountzman, Jodie Rhoades, Katya Shaposhnik, Laura York; SAN FRANCISCO: Jeannene Przyblyski; SAN GABRIEL: Jon Imamura, Jeffrey Ma, Heather Pearson; SAN MARINO: Robert Shaddy; SOUTH PASADENA: Randi Burke-Aguiar, Gerald Craft; TEMPLE CITY: Jane Mills; WOODLAND HILLS: Shelley McCune

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