

Drawing by
Guy Coheleach

THE WRENTIT

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 2019 - March 2019

American Pipit

As I bike to school in the morning, I often see a flock of streaky brown birds, vigorously pumping their tails. When my bike passes them, they take to the air, giving several high, thin, ‘sip-it’ notes and showing white outer tail feathers. These are American Pipits (*Anthus rubescens*), a widespread wintering bird in our region.

Formerly known as Water Pipits, which were found around the world, American Pipits were split from the species and live in North America and east Asia, with scattered records elsewhere. In our area, pipits are in their wintering plumage; both sexes are brown above and streaked below, with a clear white throat, eyering, and pale eyebrow. They have thin bills and long tails (which they are constantly bobbing), giving them a more elegant look than sparrows. While foraging, they walk instead of hop like most other passerines. In flight, they show white outer tail feathers. Pipits were named for the call that they give, which sounds like ‘pip-it’, or any number of ‘ip-it’ combinations.

Pipits migrate to Alaska and higher elevations to breed in alpine and arctic tundra, where they nest on the ground and can often be seen displaying. In their breeding plumage, they are gray above and a buffy-orange color below. In migration, they are widespread across the continent in a variety of habitats. In our region, pipits can be found in open fields eating insects and foraging for kelp flies in the wrack line on our beaches. American Pipit populations seem to be on a downward trend, but they are still very common.



American Pipit

© Calvin Bonn

Calvin Bonn, age 12

President’s Perch

As I write this, my mind’s eye is still focused on the bird activity I saw in my garden this morning: Dark-eyed Juncos vying with White-crowned Sparrows and Mourning Doves for the seed left on the ground by the voracious House Finches, Lesser Goldfinches pruning the Hooker’s Evening Primroses to get at the seeds and Bewick’s Wrens gleaning insects from my overgrown roses. They are just as busily eating as they were yesterday and the day before that. They are happily unaware that 70 acres of habitat have been lost in Hahamongna Watershed Park. They don’t know that the federal government is gutting laws that protect clean air, clean water and endangered species. We humans are not so lucky! We know. Boy do we know!

Is it just me or does it feel like we’re facing a huge number of threats to our environment right now? It seems as if I can’t go a day without reading about some new attack. It gets exhausting just to read the newspaper or skim through my Facebook newsfeed. It is far too easy to allow ourselves to fall into despair when we seem to be losing such enormous battles. As a lifelong environmentalist, however, I know that this is our normal state. We are always in a process of protecting nature. So long as people can make money from it, Nature will never be permanently saved.

This can feel overwhelming when we are faced with so many issues. To help us focus, I recommend that we follow the sage advice of the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle. I admit that when I studied him in college, I understood very little of what he wrote, but one phrase has always stayed with me: “Do the Duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a Duty!” Or in the words of ice cream magnates Ben and Jerry, “No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.”

What can you do to help birds? Lots! Do you like gardening? Plant an oak tree or a California Buckwheat. The pollinators and therefore the birds will thank you. Do you like people? Become a volunteer with Pasadena Audubon! We need lots of help with our burgeoning education program, and we always need help with outreach events. Keep your eyes open for our next volunteer training session. Do you like coffee? Join our coffee club to enjoy delicious coffee while helping to preserve and restore habitat. Do you like to write? Send emails, postcards, and Tweets to officials who can help birds. If you have a desire to help birds, we can find a place for you here! Be like those sparrows, finches and wrens and focus on what lies before you. You’ll know what to do! We’re Pasadena Audubon, and we fight for the birds!

Laura Garrett

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MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS

The Importance of the Los Angeles Urban Forest to Resident and Migratory Birds

February 20, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Eric Wood, Wood Lab

This presentation will address the role street trees play in providing habitat for feeding birds, as well as an in-depth view on bird diversity patterns throughout L.A. In addition to detailing other research projects in the Wood Lab, this presentation will also focus on ways in which citizen scientists and the birding public can contribute to bird conservation.

Eric Wood is the principal investigator of the Wood Lab of Avian Ecology and Conservation at Cal State L.A. Eric earned his PhD at the University of Wisconsin, where he studied the effects of climate change on migratory warblers. The Wood Lab is researching the biodiversity of local urban forests and revealing how L.A. can better support resident and migratory birds.

All You Wanted to Know about Bird apps

March 20, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
David Bell and John Garrett

Smartphones are a key part of birding these days, giving you the capability of finding, recording and identifying birds. Join Pasadena Audubon members David Bell and John Garrett for an evening that will show you how to get the most out of three of the biggest birding and natural history apps: eBird mobile, Birdseye and iNaturalist. They will also suggest others apps worth your while. Come find out how to get the most out of your phone when it comes to birds and nature.



Vermillion Flycatcher

©Mickey Long

Fantastic Flora of California

April 17, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Adam Searcy

California boasts a higher list of native plants than any other state, many of which are found nowhere else on earth. Join us as we take a brief tour covering some of California's floral wonders and discuss ways to experience, identify and document your own observations as well as to contribute to important research. Adam Searcy is a field biologist who grew up in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. He has been studying the flora and fauna of California for the last 20 years. His interests include hunting down rare birds, Calochortus lilies, Monkeyflowers, fungi, beer, herbs and strange weeds.

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

CONSERVATION

The Destruction Continues

In November, bulldozers from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works began destroying riparian habitat in Hahamongna Watershed Park. To date, they have transformed most of the 71 acres on the floor of the basin to bare dirt. Excavation of sediment will commence on April 15 and last through December 31, and this pattern will repeat for four years, the projected time required to remove 1.7 million cubic yards of sediment.

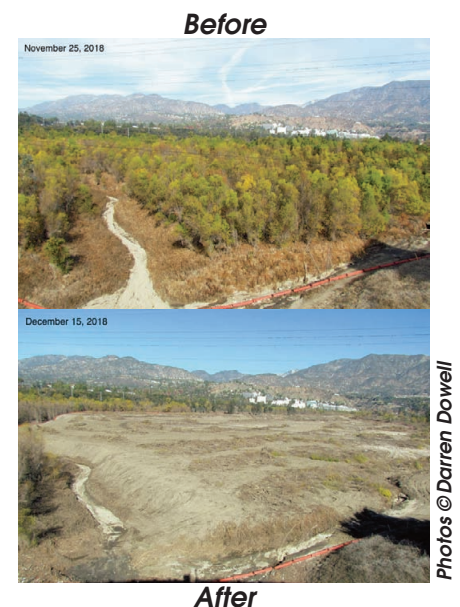
During and after this time, mitigation efforts will add native plants to areas surrounding the floor of the basin. But those activities will be dwarfed by the ongoing clearance of a 51-acre "maintenance yard" in the center of the basin, which will be scraped to bare dirt each fall.

These are tragic times for Hahamongna. But our reaction must be two-fold. First, we must act as watchdogs on the County's activities. Already, they have bulldozed mature oak trees – trees that were supposed to be protected under the project plan. The County has many other restrictions on their activities in Hahamongna, and those of us who spend time there must be aware of those restrictions and must report any violations.

For guidance about this, refer to the documents at

www.pasadenaaudubon.org. Second, we must prepare for the time, five years ahead, when the major sediment clearing is complete. Riparian habitat grew in the basin before, and it will grow again, unless the County is successful in their plan to scrape bare 51 acres each fall.

That will be the next battle, and Pasadena Audubon will need your help and support as we fight that battle. For now, mourn for what we have lost, and prepare yourself to continue to fight.



Mark Hunter

A BIRD FROM AFAR

The Tahitian Monarch and Polynesian Swiftlets by the Hundreds

There are many reasons to go to Tahiti, but birding is not one of them. The islands of French Polynesia are, on the geological scale, very young volcanic islands, whose biodiversity is low. There were no mammals at all on these islands until the first Polynesians came around 200 ADE, and brought with them rats, pigs and dogs. The extinction of some of the endemic birds began then and was accelerated with the arrival of the European explorers. Thirteen species that the first European explorers documented are now gone, including three which disappeared in the 20th century. Our stay in French Polynesia was only a week and we spent most of our time on Moorea, a small island just 40 miles from Tahiti. Most of the land birds that we saw were non-native and are some of the same which are commonly seen in Hawaii: the ubiquitous and cocky Common Myna, the delicate Zebra Dove and the Red Junglefowl. Lovely Chestnut-breasted Munia from Australia and the Red-vented Bulbul from India were also common on Moorea. Like Hawaii, Moorea has no gulls, but we really enjoyed the constant presence of elegant Brown Noddies and the spectacular aerial displays of White-tailed Tropicbirds, with their long white streamer undulating against the sky

We did a half day of guided birding on Moorea and were delighted by the beautiful Grey-green Fruit Dove, which we saw in the upper branches of a tree as we hiked up to one of the highest points on the island. The forest was lush and quiet, except for the calls of the Society Kingfisher, another endemic. We were fortunate to see a pair perched on a twig in the shade of the trees and then witnessed a copulation. The male flew off, but the female remained on the spot for a good ten minutes, affording us wonderful views.

The highlight of our trip was the last day. We took a ferry back to Tahiti Island from Moorea and met with Anne Rocca and later Alain Petit and his wife, all volunteers from Manu, the Polynesian Ornithological Society. Anne and Alain devote hours to maintaining the reserve where the last of the Tahitian Monarchs live. This bird is critically endangered due to a combination of threats, from habitat loss to predation by introduced birds and rats to invasive plants. Manu has been closely monitoring the population which dipped to 12 individuals in 1998 and is leading conservation efforts focused on rat and invasive plant removal. School children are taught which plants are natives, which are non-threatening non-natives and which plants are invasive, and are encouraged to pull out invasives whenever they see them.

Anne and Alain drove us out of the humid heat of Papeete, the tiny capital city, into a protected valley. As soon as we began to walk up the path into the tropical forest, we felt the relief of a cooling breeze. As we walked, Alain announced that we would have to cross a stream a few times, but that we shouldn't have water much above the mid-calf. I thought he was joking, but soon enough we found ourselves trudging through the running water making no attempt at all to avoid soaking our hiking boots. It turned out to be wonderfully cooling.

Then to everyone's delight, the Monarch began to call and soon fluttered into sight. The adult is all black with black eyes, not the most exciting bird to see, but an important species, given its status.

It flew about in the mid-canopy and gave us good looks from the upper branches. We kept heading up the hillside, criss-crossing the small stream multiple times,

and then a light tropical rain began to fall just as we found an occupied nest. What a delightful sight given the fact that there are less than 100 of these birds alive.

A Pacific Swallow also showed up as we waited for the rain to let up, but instead it turned into a downpour. Alain, undeterred, announced that about 15 minutes up the trail we could see the nest of a Polynesian Swiftlet colony. Now who could resist. Thoroughly drenched at that point, we went for it and were not disappointed. The trail soon became steep and led to a narrow gorge where the light was only coming from above. The swiftlets were everywhere, flying in their erratic way and calling incessantly. The noise was incredible, between the bird calls, the rushing stream and the sound of the rain smashing through the foliage. And there, in a narrow spot between the rock walls was a huge honeycomb structure and hundreds of swiftlets flying in and out of the nests and calling like mad.



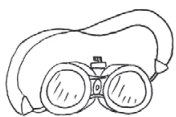
Tahitian Monarch on nest © Alain Petit



Tahitian Monarch © Alain Petit

We were set to fly out at midnight that night, so we changed in the airport bathroom and stuffed our wet clothes and boots into our suitcases, still shaking our heads at our Indiana Jones adventure. We may not have seen a lot of different birds in Tahiti but we came away impressed by the dedication of the folks we met to conserving their endemics, and with some unforgettable birding memories.

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.

FIELD TRIPS

Pelagic Trip from Marina Del Rey

Sunday, February 10, 7:00 am - 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 Alpis 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 Lois at lbrunet@pasadenaaudubon.org to reserve your spot(s).

Luke Tiller

Tracking the Parrots of Temple City to Pasadena and Beyond!

Saturday, February 16, 4:30 pm until 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-lored, 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 W. Allen

Quail Lake and Vicinity

Saturday, February 23, 7:30 am - 2:00 pm

Join us for a trip to the extreme northwest corner of LA County, where we will look for water birds, 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. Past rarities seen on this trip include Barrow’s Goldeneye, California Condor, Long-tailed Duck and White-winged Scoter. We will bird Quail Lake, then move to other hot spots in the area. If people are especially enthusiastic, we can bird past 2pm.

Meet in the parking lot at the west end of Quail Lake at 7:30 am. To get there, take the I-5 Freeway 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. 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 & Janet Scheel

Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park

Sunday, March 3, 7:30 am - 11:30

Come join us for a morning of birding in Bonelli Regional

Park. The habitat is primarily coastal sage scrub with some chaparral, mixed woodland, riparian, park land and a big reservoir, Puddingstone, that supports wintering waterfowl and, OK, maybe some gulls, too. We’ll be on the lookout for Bonelli specialty species such as California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Bald Eagle, Greater Roadrunner and Mountain Bluebird, as well as over-wintering vagrants. Rain cancels but showers will not keep us away. 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 210E to the 57S. 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 birders!

Kathi Ellsworth, Lance Benner

West Fork San Gabriel River

Birding by bike

Saturday, March 16, 2019 7:30 am - noon

The West Fork of the San Gabriel River features a 7-mile paved road that’s closed to automobile traffic. This outing takes place by bicycle: a gentle uphill to Glenn Trail Campground and a relaxing glide back. The road follows the canyon of the West Fork the entire way, making for gorgeous scenery. This trip is timed to search for American Dipper during the time of year that they sing. We will also look for riparian resident bird species and western pond turtles.

Drive about 12 miles north on Hwy. 39 from the 210 freeway in Azusa, past two reservoirs, an off-road vehicle area, and East Fork Road. Continue on and park in the large lot on the left just after Hwy. 39 crosses the West Fork (look for the West Fork signpost on the bridge); a Forest Adventure Pass is needed to park. Walk your bike across the bridge to the south bank and the gate for Forest Route 2N25. Bring snacks, water, binoculars and a bike helmet. A mountain bike is not needed for this trip, and just about any bike can handle the paved road. A limited number of loaner bikes may be available, first come first served — contact the trip leaders in advance.

After the bike ride, we will look for nesting Bald Eagles along the San Gabriel River downstream from the West Fork.

Rain cancels the entire field trip.

Lance Benner, Darren Dowell

Anza-Borrego: Hawkwatching and More

Saturday, March 23, 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 luke.tiller@gmail.com to reserve your place on this tour.

Luke Tiller

FIELD TRIPS AND MONTHLY BIRD WALKS

Ye Olde Santa Fe Damme

Saturday, March 30, 7:30 am - noon

This park in eastern L.A. County contains a lake surrounded by trees and chaparral habitat. In the winter, a diverse group of waterfowl, gulls, and songbirds are attracted to the water and surrounding vegetation. We'll bird coastal sage scrub, a man-made lake, riparian and grassy park areas planted with many non-native trees. This variety of habitats attracts many birds. In winter, waterfowl, sparrows and a variety of raptors are the specialties here. Cactus and Rock Wrens are also present. Cassin's Kingbirds, Cedar Waxwings and American Robins regularly spend the winter feeding on the dense berry trees. Wintering rarities are occasionally found.

From the 210 Freeway, take Irwindale Ave. south 1.5 miles and turn right on Arrow Highway, and watch for the park sign and entrance on your right in half a mile. After paying the entry fee at the kiosk, continue straight through the intersection and head west to the parking at the furthest, western end of the lake.

Kathi Ellsworth

Tejon Ranch

Saturday, April 6

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 c) pay Tejon Ranch \$20 fee.

Details and directions will be provided to registered participants.

Frank & Susan Gilliland

Bob's Gap

Saturday, April 13, 7:00 am - noon. Heavy rain will cancel.

Found in the southern Mojave Desert not far from Valerme, 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. 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 leader if you plan to attend but just show up if you forget. Meet at Pearblossom Park: 121st St. East and Ave V14 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

Birds and Blooms Walk

Sunday, April 14th

Saturday, 7:00am - 12:00pm

Adam Searcy will lead a walk where he will share some of his favorite plants and flowers of Los Angeles County with us from the interesting and rare to common and beautiful. As well as being a great time to seek out blooming plants, it's also peak season for spring bird migration too, so we'll be pointing out both the plants and the birds that utilize them. Please email Luke Tiller at luke.tiller@gmail.com to reserve a spot and to receive directions on where and when to meet.

Adam Searcy

Antelope Valley Migrants

Saturday, April 27, all day

Join Luke Tiller for an Antelope Valley Birding Adventure during the peak of spring songbird migration. We will explore all the weird and wonderful desert oases that provide rest and refueling stops for hungry northbound migrants in and around Lancaster. This week is generally regarded as the peak for both numbers and diversity of western migrants, so should promise a nice mix of migrating birds. As well as seeking out the migrants, we will also keep our eyes open for desert denizens like LeConte's Thrasher, Scott's Oriole, Bell's and Black-throated Sparrows.

Please email Luke Tiller at luke.tiller@gmail.com to reserve a spot and to receive directions on where and when to meet.

Luke Tiller

Peck Road Water Conservation Park

**First Saturday of the month, March to November
7:30 am - 10:30 am**

For the time being, the walk on the first Saturday of the month from spring through fall will be at Peck Road Water Conservation Park, which boasts a high species count (250+ over the years) due to its combination of lake, landscaped park, riparian and weedy habitats. This walk will start with easier terrain in the main park area, then may visit some of the areas within Peck that are more distant or more difficult to access later on. Depending on the season, we'll look for ducks, gulls, shorebirds, hawks, warblers, sparrows, exotic species and/or other passerines. Meet in the main parking lot off Peck Road in Arcadia (at the boundary with El Monte). The leader will bring one scope, and it would be helpful to have one or two more.

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

CALENDAR

February 2019

6	Wed 7:30 pm	Board meeting		Eaton Canyon	Laura Garrett
9	Sat 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
10	Sun 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	PAS Pelagic	Luke Tiller
13	Wed 5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Sena on Myrtle, Monrovia	L. Tiller, C. Hamilton, D. Bell
16	Sat 4:30 pm	Field trip	WC	Parrot Chase	Larry Allen
17	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
19	Tues 9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Bonelli Park	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
20	Wed 7:00 pm	General meeting		Eaton Canyon	Eric Wood
23	Sat 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	Quail Lake	Mark and Janet Scheel
24	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

March 2019

2	Sat 7:30am	Field trip	WC	Peck Rd. Water Conserv. Park	Darren Dowell
3	Sun 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	Bonelli Park	Kathi Ellsworth, Lance Benner
5	Tues 7:00 pm	Workshop		Owls of Socal	Lance Benner
6	Wed 7:30 pm	Board meeting		Eaton Canyon	Laura Garrett
9	Sat 6:00 pm	Field trip	WC	Owls of Socal	Lance Benner
9	Sat 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	West Fork San Gabriel River	Darren Dowell
9	Sat 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
9	Sat 9:00 am	Workshop		Raptors	Bill Clark
10	Sun 9:00 am	Field trip	WC	Raptors	Bill Clark
12	Tue 7:00 pm	Workshop		Birding 101	Ron Cyger, Mark Scheel
13	Wed 5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Sena on Myrtle	L. Tiller, C. Hamilton, D. Bell
17	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
19	Tue 9:00 am	Magpie Study group	WC	San Dimas County Park	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
19	Tue 7:00 pm	Workshop		Birding 101	Ron Cyger, Mark Scheel
20	Wed 7:00 pm	General meeting		Eaton Canyon	David Bell, John Garrett
23	Sat 7:00 am	Field trip		Anza-Borrego	Luke Tiller
24	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter
27	Tue 7:00 pm	Workshop		Birding 101	Ron Cyger, Mark Scheel
30	Sat 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	Ye Olde Santa Fe Damme	Kathi Ellsworth

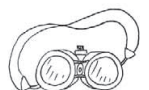
April 2019

3	Wed 7:30 pm	Board meeting		Eaton Canyon	Laura Garrett
6	Sat 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	Peck Rd. Water Conserv. Park	Darren Dowell
6	Sat 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	Tejon Ranch	Susan and Frank Gilliland
10	Wed 5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Sena on Myrtle	L. Tiller, C. Hamilton, D. Bell
13	Sat 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
13	Sat 7:00 am	Field trip	WC	Bob's Gap	Kathi Ellsworth
14	Sun 7:00 am	Field trip	WC	Birds and Blooms	Adam Searcy
16	Tue 9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Rancho Santa Ana Garden	Julia Ray, Sid Heyman
17	Wed 7:00 pm	General meeting		Eaton Canyon	Adam Searcy
21	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
27	Sat 7:00 am	Field trip	WC	Desert Migrants	Luke Tiller
28	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

 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. Good birding!



MONTHLY BIRD WALKS AND MORE - CONTINUED

Magpie Bird Study Group**Third Tuesday of most months****9:00 am until about noon**

February 19, Bonelli Park

Meet in first parking lot, first left after the Via Verde Dr. entrance.

March 19, San Dimas County Park

Meet in first parking area on Sycamore Canyon Rd. off San Dimas Canyon Rd.

April 16, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

See admission policy at www.rsabg.org/visit*Julia Ray, Sid Heyman***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 nonmember 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*Mark Hunter***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. 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

Trip Leaders

Mark Scheel (chair)	(626) 765-5408	scheel@tapir.caltech.edu
Larry Allen	(626) 797-1810	larryallen@earlymusicla.org
Lance Benner	(626) 791-1187	lbenner@charter.net
Ron Cyger	(626) 840-2566	ron@cyger.org (preferred)
Darren Dowell	(626) 344-4003	dowell.darren@yahoo.com
Kathi Ellsworth	(626) 524-0652	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	
Mark Hunter	(626) 344-8428	mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org
Mickey Long	(626) 285-8878	mlongbird@gmail.com
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Luke Tiller		luketiller@gmail.com

TRIP REPORT**North Slope of San Gabriels****Nov 17, 2018**

We met at Pearblossom Park on a beautiful day at the southern end of the Antelope Valley, the starting point of a field trip that would take us from the foothills up to the mountains and back to the Antelope Valley. This trip is known for a large variety of birds, but especially woodpeckers and raptors. This route also can potentially yield four birds with "Mountain" in the name, two of which aren't found in the mountains despite the name.

Among the birds we found at our starting point, Pearblossom Park, were Red-breasted Sapsucker and Verdin. This is an area where Nuttall's and Ladder-backed woodpeckers are both possible, but we saw only the former.

Our next stop was St. Andrew's Abbey, a monastery on the San Andreas Fault. The best bird there was...a Bobcat. After photographing the friendly feline, we focused on flying feathered fellows, finding both Williamson's and Red-Breasted Sapsuckers, and witnessing an aerial duel between a Sharp-shinned and a Cooper's Hawk. A White-headed Woodpecker made an appearance as well. The Junco flock included a slate-colored and a possible "Cassiar" Junco.

We then ascended to higher altitude, where we saw mountain birds like Steller's Jay, Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, and Hairy Woodpecker. We had a picnic lunch at Grassy Hollow, surrounded by Pygmy Nuthatches.

We then descended back to the Antelope Valley and to a dirt field hosting 22 Mountain Plovers. We look for Mountain Plovers every year on this trip, and on those years that we manage to find them we usually get only distant scope views. This time the birds weren't very shy and were close enough for photos.

Our last stop was an agricultural field well-known for raptors. Besides the seven Red-tailed Hawks in the area (including a dark morph), we found eight Ferruginous Hawks, two White-tailed Kites, a Prairie Falcon, Merlin, American Kestrel and both male and female Northern Harriers. Among the hundreds of Horned Larks on the ground were a few Mountain Bluebirds, one of which perched on a wire near the group. Some of us stuck around until it started getting dark, and we found two Great Horned Owls and a third owl (in flight, distant and in fading light) that was either a Short-eared or Long-eared.

We ended the trip with 67 species, including seven species of woodpecker and eleven species of raptor (including owls). Special thanks to Dessi Sieburth for co-leading the trip!

Mark Scheel*Mountain Plover* © Mark Scheel

SPECIAL EVENT

SoCal Raptor ID Workshop with Bill Clark

Saturday – Sunday, March 9 – 10

Workshop, Eaton Canyon Nature Center, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Pasadena Audubon is proud to be able to host a one-off raptor class with renowned author and raptor expert Bill Clark. Bill is author of such essential field guides as Peterson's Hawks of North America, Raptors of Mexico and Central America and African Raptors. This two-day course is open to all levels of birders and includes a day of classroom instruction and a day-long field trip. The workshop will cover the identification of raptors to be found in Southern California including vagrants like our recent Zone-tailed Hawk.

The workshop will start with six hours of classroom instruction starting 9:00am Saturday and a similar length field trip on Sunday. The class will be kept to a small size for an intimate setting with Bill--register today before it fills! Cost \$170. Please note, priority will be given to members who have not taken a class in the prior year. To register or for more information, contact Lois Brunet: lbrunet@pasadenaaudubon.org



Swainson's Hawk

©Luke Tiller

WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES AND MORE

Owls of Southern California

Workshop, Tuesday, March 5, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Field Trip, Saturday, March 9, 6:00 pm - midnight

Instructor: Lance Benner

Twelve owl species occur in southern California annually, and at least ten of them breed here. Due to its geography, southern California hosts one of the highest concentrations of owl species in the country and is near the southern edge of the ranges for several species. In addition to the species well known to breed here, barred owls are approaching ever more closely from the north and have recently been documented as far south as Kern County.

This workshop will discuss the owls that live in southern California, 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 a field trip to look for owls 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: 10.

Price: \$45 Pasadena Audubon members, \$65 non-members

Please note: Priority will be given to members who have not taken a class in the past year.

Please contact kmann@pasadenaaudubon.org to sign up.

Katy Mann, Lance Benner



Long-eared Owl ©J. Vazquez

Birding 101

Instructors: Ron Cyger and Mark Scheel

Classroom sessions: Tuesdays, March 12, 19, 26, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Field trips: Saturdays, March 16 and 23, early morning to about noon.

Classroom and field trip locations will be provided to workshop participants

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! Participants should plan on attending all classes and field trips. Cost: \$75 for Pasadena Audubon members, \$95 for non-members (but will include membership in Pasadena Audubon Society). This fee will cover all three classes and two field trips. Check payable to "Pasadena Audubon Society" and is due at the first class session. There are scholarships available for young birders accompanied by a paying adult.

For questions or to make reservations, contact Mark or Ron at Birding101@pasadenaaudubon.com.



Savannah Sparrow ©Jeff Bjork

CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER NEWS

The Pasadena San Gabriel Valley CBC - A Brief History

The 2018 Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley Christmas Bird Count just concluded its 73rd year, and by all accounts it was a great success. One hundred and seventy-two species were recorded on count day, a record high. The full report will be published in the April issue of the Wrentit, but for this issue, I thought it might be interesting to take a brief look back at the beginning of the count. The first Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley CBC took place on December 28, 1946. World War II had ended just 16 months earlier and fewer than four million people lived in Los Angeles County.

In order to edify first time readers, the count circle is fifteen miles in diameter (as are all land-based CBCs) and centered at the intersection of San Gabriel Boulevard and Duarte Road. It ranges from Mt. Wilson on the north end to Santa Fe Dam on the east. The entire Whittier Narrows area is included and Lincoln Park represents the southwest border of the circle.

Twenty-eight birders participated in 1946, which seems a pretty decent number for that era. It's obvious that the San Gabriel Valley area has had an active birding community for many decades. On count day, the group recorded one hundred and twenty-one species. I found it notable that those counters found ninety-five Spotted Doves, thirty-two Loggerhead Shrikes and thirty-three Northern Cardinals. To put that in a contemporary perspective, on the 2018 count those numbers were zero, three and one, respectively.

Also in the mix were three Ring-necked Pheasants. Long time count participants will remember the small population of these birds established through hunt club releases in the Whittier Narrows area. They are now long gone.

In part, it's been the introduced species that have seen big changes, be it a decline (as in the case of Spotted Doves), or an introduction and increase of various parrots and parakeets, Eurasian Collared-Doves, Scaly-breasted Munias and Northern Red Bishops. None of those now common species were present in the early decades of the Pasadena CBC.

As far as declining numbers, native species too have felt the pinch of increasing development and urbanization. The aforementioned Loggerhead Shrikes, as well as Horned Larks and other open country birds, have either declined greatly or are now essentially absent from the count area. That said, many species are doing well and their numbers have not changed significantly over the years. Red-tailed Hawks, Anna's Hummingbirds, Mourning Doves, Northern Mockingbirds, House Finches and others are adaptable and tolerate human activity well. Also, for the most part, the birds of the San Gabriel Mountains have not been much affected by the changes in the flatlands.

Look for my full report in the April issue of the Wrentit.

Jon Fisher

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

PAS Bird Science Program Kicks Off!

January 22nd was a beautiful morning at Peck Park. As Western Meadowlarks and White-crowned Sparrows sang in the distance, a group of PAS members waited eagerly for the arrival of a large, yellow bus. We greeted our enthusiastic first-grade teacher and twenty-one first graders from Washington STEM Magnet School, as well as a handful of chaperones, and prepared to embark on a birding adventure.

There were a lot of "firsts" involved: one first-grade class, a first birding excursion for many young folks and the first time Pasadena Audubon has brought a class to Peck Park as a part of the new Bird Science Program. The Bird Science Program is a two-part program, with the first being two in-class lessons involving birds in alignment curriculum standards appropriate for the grade level. The second part takes place the following week with an outdoor adventure exploring nature, viewing educational birds brought by Wild Wing and learning how to bird at Peck Park.

For the outdoor field trip, we demonstrated birding basics, how to use binoculars and how to best look for birds. Each student was assigned a local bird species during the in-class portion of the program, so we tried our very best to help the students find representatives of their birds in the wild. Wild Wings brought three of their non-releasable educational birds: Honey the Barn Owl, Odie the Western Screech-owl and Bruce the Great-horned Owl. Thanks to Wild Wings, we were able to provide a close-up look at some beautiful birds and opportunities for kids to learn about owls. We finished the day with a nature scavenger hunt where we found spiders, leaves of different sizes and potential nesting spots for birds.

The Bird Science Program is off to a great start, with one first-grade participant commenting that the day of the field trip was "the best day ever." A huge thank you to everyone involved!

Taylor Paez



Fifth graders enjoy a close encounter with Honey the Barn Owl © Mako Koiwai



Happy first graders along with parents, teacher and PAS volunteers at Peck Park

© Mako Koiwai

DECEMBER ISSUE OF WESTERN BIRDS JOURNAL FEATURES PAPERS BY TWO PAS MEMBERS

Congrats to Young Birder Dessi Sieburth and Mickey Long on the publication of their papers, *Evidence of Intergradation within the Golden-Cheeked Woodpecker* (Sieburth, DeRaad, Maley), and *Green Heron Preys Upon Hummingbirds* (Long, Garrett), summarized here.

Green Heron Preys Upon Hummingbirds

The December Issue of Western Birds Journal features an article by member-at-large Mickey Long, first author, and Kimball Garrett on an encounter between a Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) and its hummingbird prey. The event was photographed by Dr. William Peebles at the Los Angeles County Arboretum in February 2017. Peebles, according to the report, noted several hummingbirds hovering around a Green Heron, which was standing on a waterfall on the grounds of the arboretum. Positioning himself to get a better view of the action, Peebles noted that the heron had captured an Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), which then escaped. The heron then captured a second hummingbird, an Allen's (*Selasphorus sasin*), which the heron then consumed.

According to the authors, there are few records of a Butorides heron feeding on birds; the event at the Los Angeles County Arboretum is only the second case involving the Green Heron or involving hummingbird prey. It is not clear, the authors add, whether the heron was actively hunting the hummers or was reacting to their apparent harassing behavior.



Figure 1 : Green Heron capturing Anna's Hummingbird, which later escaped, Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia, February 5, 2017. Photo William Peebles



Figure 2: Same Green Heron capturing, consuming Allen's Hummingbird, Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia, February 5, 2017. Photo William Peebles

THANKS TO ALL WHO MADE A YEAR-END DONATION TO OUR CHAPTER!

CALIFORNIA CONDOR (\$1000-\$1999): Chris Dean & Rose Veniegas, Heather Bacon-Shone, David Kauper

GOLDEN EAGLE (\$500-\$999): Darren Dowell, Heidi Hood, Marvin Nelson

RAVEN (\$250-\$499): Carol W. Lynch, Katie Porter, Kathleen Linowski, in honor of Deni Sinnott and Lois Brunet for help with the Coffee Club, Ira Blitz, Michele F. Carter, Elizabeth Cordero, Christina Honchell, Reilly Moss, Janet Owens, Doris M. Popoff

ORIOLE (\$100-\$249): Hannah Carbone, Mark Hunter, Charles Kohlhase, Ellen Osheroff, Lee Zuckerman, Larry Allen, Cynthia L. Null, Lucy Pliskin, Naresh Satyan, Ninarose Mayer, Ing-Yih Cheng, Kirk Dawson, Carolyn Eberhard, Susan A. Frank, Laura Garrett, Garry George, Margaret Gonder-Odell, Marcia Homiak, M Kolesnik, Mary S. Kyropoulos, Richard A. Luczynski, Hwei-Li & Kenneth E. Miller, Cynthia Null, Dennis & Margaret Page, Thomas & Cheryl Palfrey, Jeannene M Przyblyski, in honor of Javier Vazquez who runs the Wednesday Birding Group, Don & Susan Riechel, Beth Roth, Vicki Salmon, Loretta Selinger, Sylvia Stachura, Lois M. Tandy, Brian Tomikawa, Joanne Weigel, Dorothy Weiss

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We apologize to those we may have inadvertently left off this list. An update will be included in the April Wrentit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call For Volunteers

Help us find Nests!

Pasadena Audubon’s Conservation Committee and Advocacy Committee are teaming up to improve Pasadena’s tree-trimming practices so that fewer nesting birds are harmed. We’re looking for volunteers who want to be trained in nest detection and trimming practices, and to spend some time finding nests on the streets where trimming is about to take place. We’ll use your findings to work with the City to bypass trees with active nests. And you’ll be able to follow “your” birds through a season of nesting and fledging. To get on the interest list for training (tentatively scheduled for March 7 and March 9), contact Mark Hunter at mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org or 626-344-8428. We look forward to seeing you then!

Birds ‘n Beers—Change of Venue (until further notice)

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 Sena on Myrtle: 409 S. Myrtle Ave, Monrovia



L: PAS Young Birders, Aaron, Calvin, Jasmine, Jonathon and Juan Isidro, watching Condor Recovery biologist Joseph Brandt releasing a California Condor after a work-up. R: PAS Young Birders, Juan Isidro and Sam, watching California Condors soar above Bitter Creek NWR

The Young Birder Club

Young people interested in birds and nature are welcome to join the Young Birder Club with their parent.

Monthly meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month from September through May (though not December). Meeting convenes at 6:45pm in Classroom 1 at Eaton Canyon Nature Center.

To learn more about the Club please contact Susan Gilliland at gillilandsusan@gmail.com, and see our website:

<http://www.pasadenaaudubon.org/?q=youngbirders>



Ruby-crowned Kinglet © Adriana Kleiman

Join the Pasadena Audubon Society Increase in Membership Dues

The Board voted recently to move forward with a small increase in annual dues, the first since 2004. These additional funds will help support all of the programs and activities that you enjoy. They will also help support our new Bird Science program, so that we are able to offer it free of cost to students at Pasadena public schools.

New Membership dues are listed below.

Join the Pasadena Audubon Society

Pasadena Audubon Society Chapter-only Membership provides important support for our conservation, education and outreach efforts. You'll also be the first to hear about our programs and field trips, and you'll receive a one-year subscription to our newsletter, *The Wrentit*.

Membership dues: \$25 for individuals, \$30 for families, \$15 for seniors/senior family/student. Lifetime membership with a \$2,000 donation.

Your information is never shared.

Make checks payable to PAS, 1750 N. Altadena Dr. Pasadena CA 91107

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I want to go paperless and read *The Wrentit* online.

Or join online and pay through PayPal at pasadenaaudubon.org.

If you'd like to provide a gift membership, please contact our membership chair, Lois Fulmer, at willo2001@earthlink.net.

We thank you for your support!

Pasadena Audubon Society Board

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Publicity	Carolyn Murphy	(909) 754-3335
Website	Janet Scheel	(626) 817-6322
Coffee Club	Kathy Linowski	(818) 957-6210

Members at large: Lance Benner, Susan Gilliland (Young Birders), Mickey Long, Katy Mann

Program Manager: Lois Brunet, lbrunet@pasadenaaudubon.org

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See chapter-only dues on previous page.
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paperless@pasadenaaudubon.org

You'll receive an email and link to the newsletter when each issue comes out. You'll also have our gratitude, as this will allow us to reduce our paper use and printing expenses. Plus, photos will be in living color, just like the birds we love!

PAS Gear Now Available at Zazzle.com

Let the world know you're with Pasadena Audubon. Go to www.zazzle.com/pasadena_audubon for T-shirts, water bottles, luggage tags and more, all featuring our lovely wrentit logo.

Welcome to our New Members

ALHAMBRA: Gisela Adams, Edward Avila, Argyl Houser, Thomas Smith; ALTADENA: Barbara Ackerman, Suzanne Arnold, Peter Mott, Hani Shafran; Arcadia: Maureen Flaherty, Julio Hinojosa, Tony Wang; AZUSA: Emiliana Esparza, David Munn; CLAREMONT: Kimberly Dillbeck; DUARTE: James Dunn; GLENDALE: Dawn Fratini, Jerry Grenard, Allen Mulch; LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE: Gloria Ashton, Benjamin Bishop; LA CRESCENTA: Dale Gertsch; LOS ANGELES: Pedro Ramirez, Anna Sickler; MONROVIA: Diane Danton; MONTROSE: Pamela Land; PASADENA: Joseph Belloli, Joshua Chiang, Susan Dewitt, Carol Gignoux, Tiffany Goble, Meagan Gourley, Greg Harrison & Nichole Mihara, Cameron Hoover, Jan Hunt, Robyn Kamimura, Michael Kinman, Shake Mamigonian, Giovanni Mejia, Nancy Milton, Jessica Niblo, Cullen O'Neil, Alida Rojas, Liza Soderlind, Alexandra Wilcox; PORTLAND, OR: Gary Banker; SAN GABRIEL Teresa Calderon, Dolores Cruz; SAN MARINO: Beth Roth, Lucile Norberg; SHERMAN OAKS: Robert Brown; SIERRE MADRE: Anna Li Kleindorfer, Danielle Poulsen, Karen Ruckert, Christine Taylor, Michelle Tremblay; SOUTH PASADENA: Michael Alpaugh, Germaine Defendi, Kathleen Edmundson, River Muench, Dawn Muench-Pace, Sudipta Roy, Susan Serrano; TEMPLE CITY: James Poedy; WESTMINSTER: Polina Souza; WEST TOLUCA LAKE: Nora Greer