



Drawing by
Guy Coheleach

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Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 68 — No. 2

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

November 2019 - January 2020

Townsend's Warbler - A Study in Motion

Looking up at an oak tree, I caught a glimpse of some yellow. With the help of fellow birders, I located a warbler flitting around amongst the branches. It hung around long enough for me to snap a few quick pictures before foraging deeper into the foliage. Constantly in motion, this colorful bird continued to go about its day seemingly paying us no mind.

The Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) is a winter resident in our area and likes to spend its time among oaks, conifers, chaparral and in parks. This sparrow-sized bird breeds in coniferous and mixed forests of the Pacific Northwest, from Washington all the way up to Alaska. It is a winter resident in California, though its wintering territory also includes parts of Mexico and Central America, and it migrates across western North America. Sporting a yellow body with black streaks and a white belly, males have a stark black cap, throat and stripe along the side of their face, apart from a spot of yellow directly beneath their eyes. Females and juvenile birds have a less intense shade of black and more yellow on their head and throat. Luckily for us, both sexes retain their colorful plumage year-round. Its call is a soft chip, while it sings songs consisting of either a 'weazy weazy weazy weazy twea' or 'dee dee dee-dee.' Being insectivorous, it gleans larval insects from branches and sallies to snag insects from the air. Less often, it feeds on berries, nectar and honeydew in Central America.



Townsend's Warbler

© Fletcher Friesen

The Townsend's Warbler is named after the naturalist John Kirk Townsend, who was the first to describe this species of bird. It is a member of the Setophaga genus, more commonly known as wood warblers, colorful warblers that spend most of their lives among the treetops. Genetically, its closest relative is the Hermit Warbler (*Setophaga occidentalis*) with which it can and does hybridize where their ranges overlap. During the breeding season, females build cup nests after scouting several locations while males sing to defend their territory. A clutch size from three to five eggs hatch after an incubation period of about twelve days, with both parents feeding their young as they develop.

Story and photos by Fletcher Friesen

President's Perch

Plant an oak. Or if you can't do that, plant a ceanothus. Or a buckwheat. Plant something that will feed caterpillars so that the birds will have something nutritious to feed their young. Autumn is the best time to plant native plants. Go for it.

Take a child birding. Show them how to use binoculars and how cool birds are so they can get excited too. Once they care about birds, which takes about a minute, show them how bad trash is for birds and how important it is that we clean it up. Model being a good steward of the earth by using less plastic. Have them help you plant your native plants.

Write to your city or state legislator. Ask them to introduce legislation that will protect birds. Ask them to ban the widespread use of rodenticide because that kills a lot of raptors. Ask them to avoid trimming street trees in the spring and summer and to plant trees that feed birds. Let them know that you care about birds.

If you have a cat, keep it indoors. Cats kill many birds, so if we want to protect birds, we need to keep our cats indoors.

Don't use pesticides in your garden. They kill the insects that birds eat. No insects = no birds. Poisoned insects = poisoned birds.

Join our Birds and Beans coffee club. It's good for the planet and good for birds. And it's delicious!

This all may seem like blunt talk. I know it is. But birds are in crisis so there is no time for gentility and politesse. We've lost 2.9 billion (that's with a B) in the last 50 years, and the newly released report from National Audubon on the effects of climate change (or climate crisis or even climate catastrophe) shows that we will lose far more unless we do something NOW.

So do something. Find a way to help birds. You'll be making positive change, and you'll feel better for it. Find a way to help. And if you don't know what to do, ask me. Pasadena Audubon is here to help.

We're Pasadena Audubon, and we are bringing back birds.

Laura Solomon

MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS

North American Sparrows

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Presenter: Rick Wright

Renowned sparrow authority Rick Wright will discuss his recently published book, 'Peterson Reference Guide to North American Sparrows' and provide some insight into the world of these 'little brown jobs.'



Fox Sparrow

©Javier Vazquez

CBC Prep

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Presenter: Jon Fisher

The traditional pre-count meeting will introduce the Christmas Bird Count to newcomers and alums alike. Jon will present an overview of the count methods, procedures and checklists. Count areas will also be assigned.

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

CBC Dinner

Saturday, December 14, 2019

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Eaton Canyon Nature Center**Presenter: Jon Fisher**

After the count, we join together to celebrate with a catered dinner and drinks. You'll also hear about what turned up and how it compares to past years. The dinner is \$20 per person. Please RSVP by December 9th by sending a check to Pasadena Audubon Society, 1750 N. Altadena Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107, or make an online payment on our website. Be sure to mention CBC.



Black Oystercatcher ©Kathy Degner

On the road:**A "Dirtbag" Big Year**

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Eaton Canyon Nature Center**Presenter: Taylor Paez**

A big year is a personal challenge among birders who attempt to identify as many species as possible by sight or sound within a single calendar year and within a defined geographic area. In 2017, Taylor Paez did just that, traversing the lower 48 United States looking for birds while living out of her 2002 Ford Ranger. She birded 44 states, drove over 50,000 miles, and ultimately saw 643 species of birds by the end of 2017. Join us as Taylor recalls the highs and lows of life birding on the road: from "dipping on mega-rarities", to the great successes of a life well-traveled. Taylor is from just down the street in Monrovia and is the Publicity Chair of PAS's Board.



CONSERVATION

Win Some, Lose Some

This is a season of mixed successes and setbacks. Birds did not win every time in Sacramento. AB1788, the ban on second-generation rodenticides, died in the Senate Appropriations Committee. We will likely see it reintroduced in the next legislative session. Governor Newsom vetoed SB1, the bill that would reestablish endangered species protections and would safeguard the species that need the Sacramento Delta. Environmentalists characterized his veto as "stubborn" and "mystifying."

On the plus side, newspapers and other media are starting to note the pointlessness of the widespread clear-cutting proposed by Cal Fire in its Vegetation Treatment Plan. And recent land acquisitions in the San Rafael Hills, by the Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy, reinforce the Hahamongna-to-Tujunga wildlife corridor championed by AFC.

National Audubon has sobering essays about the significant decline in bird numbers in the past 50 years, and about the serious threat of extinction for two-thirds of North American bird species because of climate change. We all have serious work to do, just like always.

Mark Hunter, Chair, Conservation Committee

A BIRD FROM AFAR

Hiking -- and Birding -- the Andes Mountains

This summer, I had the amazing opportunity to visit the Andes Mountains in Peru with a group from my school, learning about Peru's history and modern-day culture and ultimately hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.

While this wasn't strictly a birding trip - I was the only birder present - I was incredibly excited to see Peru's birdlife while there. Although fairly small, Peru has the second-most recorded bird species of any country in the world, including many endemic species. Much of Peru's incredible biodiversity is due to its range in habitats: the coast is dry while the eastern edge of the country is part of the Amazon rainforest, and the Andes mountains alone provide everything from alpine tundra to isolated, wet, intermontane valleys. In fact, throughout the Andes, individual species may be endemic to a single river valley.



Rufous-collared Sparrow.

We hiked the trail over four days, starting at about 9,000 feet, climbing up to 14,000 feet and finishing at Machu Picchu. It was a great chance to see Peruvian birds because the trail also goes through many distinct ecological zones, including rainforest, alpine cloud forest and puna, a kind of scrubby Andean habitat just below the tundra. During those four days, I saw (and heard) many incredible birds. Some notable species were Inca Wrens singing their robotic-sounding song, a Giant Hummingbird - the largest hummingbird species in the world - and many Moustached Flowerpiercers (whose calls reminded me of bushtits) along the trail. At the Machu Picchu ruins themselves, I saw Blue-and-white Swallows, Mitred Parakeets and more Rufous-collared Sparrows.



Moustached Flowerpiercer

is home to several species of caracara (as well as other non-typical falcons such as Forest Falcons, which recall accipiters). Mountain Caracaras are aptly named; they live throughout the high Andes from Ecuador to Argentina. This caracara was smaller than I had expected and sitting on a distant rock, but through binoculars its stark black and white plumage, and even its bright red face, were clearly visible. I passed around my binoculars so that others could get a closer view. After a few more minutes, it flew down the slope and away, briefly displaying its striking black and white wings before disappearing. Aside from being an exciting new species for me, the Mountain Caracara was also an example of all the diverse groups of birds who live mostly or entirely south of the United States' border. But most importantly, I think, the caracara provided an opportunity for our group to come together for a moment in wonder and excitement about the natural world.

Story, photos and illustrations by Molly Hill, age 16, Young Birder Club.

Readers, 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.



A view from the trail.

We spent the first half of the trip in Cusco, a city located 11,000 feet high in the Andes that was built as the capital of the Inca Empire. While exploring the ruins of Saqsaywaman, an Incan religious site built of massive boulders fitted precisely together without any mortar, I saw some of my first Andean birds: Rufous-collared Sparrow and Andean Lapwing. Andean Lapwings are odd, grayish and brown shorebirds with flashy black and white wings. In the same genus as White-crowned Sparrows, Rufous-collared Sparrows are most distinctive for their orangey collar and were quite common at all the places we visited.

After a few more days of exploring the Cusco area and acclimatizing to the high altitude, our group was excited to finally start hiking the Inca Trail.



Mountain Caracara

One of my favorite birds of the trip was a Mountain Caracara. Among birds, I especially love raptors, so I had been looking forward to the trail's many vistas as chances to spot some Andean hawks. However, the first two days of our hike were chilly and misty - good weather for the challenging hike, bad for spotting distant raptors.

Therefore, I was determined to make up for lost time on the relatively clear third day. That afternoon, we stopped for lunch with a 360-degree view of the surrounding mountains - and a Mountain Caracara! Despite broad, round wings that look similar to those of hawks, caracaras are more closely related to falcons. Only one species extends its range into the US, and not into California, but South America

FIELD TRIPS & MONTHLY BIRD WALKS

Cleanup at Peck Road Water Conservation Park

Sunday, November 10, 2019 8:00 am - noon

Join us for our now traditional fall cleanup of beloved Peck Park, field trip destination for the Bird Science Program and one of the best birding spots around.

We'll start with a bird walk at 8 am. At 10 am we'll roll up our sleeves and see how much trash we can remove. Finally at noon, we'll enjoy some pizza together under the trees. Wear closed toed shoes, hats, and bring a reusable water bottle, gloves, buckets and pickers if you have them. We want to make this a zero-waste event.

Hope to see you there.

Lois Brunet

North Slope San Gabriels

Saturday, November 16, 2019, 7:30 am -- all day

We will explore areas on the northern slope of the San Gabriel Mountains, such as Grassy Hollow Visitor's Center, Jackson Lake and locations in Valyermo. We will search for high-altitude species as well as wintering raptors. Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon and Golden Eagle are possible, as are Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsuckers. Unusual species (e.g. Lewis's Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Swamp Sparrow) have been found in some years. Time permitting, we may look for Mountain Plovers or longspurs in the nearby Antelope Valley.

Although we will get to higher elevations, all locations on this trip are accessible by car, and there is no strenuous hiking involved. We will be out most of the day, but anyone who needs to leave early will be able to do so.

It may be cold, especially at higher elevations, so bring warm clothes. Also, bring lunch. We will meet at Pearblossom Park, which is at the corner of 121st st. East and East avenue V14 in Pearblossom, just south of Hwy 138 (Pearblossom Highway).

Mark & Janet Scheel; Dessi Sieburth

Pocket Parks of Pasadena

Saturday December 7th, 2019, 7:00 am - 12:00 pm

Join Luke Tiller as we warm up for the Christmas Bird Count by exploring some of the small parks and microhabitats that can hold birds during the winter period. We will seek out interesting species that are overwintering in our suburban landscape and hope to uncover a few gems for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count.

Please email Luke Tiller at streatham2003@aol.com to reserve a spot and to receive directions on where and when to meet.

Luke Tiller

Big Santa Anita Canyon

Sunday, December 8, 2019, 6:30 am - noon

Join us for a fall hike into Big Santa Anita Canyon as we search for Pacific Wren, Canyon Wren, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and if we're really lucky, American Dipper.

We're planning to hike past Sturtevant Falls for a total of about five miles. Parking at Chantry Flat is often crowded on weekends so please carpool.

Bring sturdy shoes, plenty of water, some food, sunscreen, a hat, warm clothes and an Adventure Pass for your car. Heavy rain cancels but drizzle does not.

Lance Benner

It's Time for the Christmas Bird Count!

Saturday, December 14, 2019

It's hard to believe another bird year is coming to an end. Fall migration is winding down and winter birds are settling in. It's the time of year when many birders start thinking about Christmas Bird Counts. Our own Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley CBC began in 1946, so this year marks the 73rd anniversary of the count.

The 2019 Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 14, the first day of the count period. If you're new to birding or just new to Christmas Bird Counts, this is a great opportunity to learn more about the avifauna of the San Gabriel Valley area and to meet others who share the same interest in birds. You'll also be participating in a very worthwhile citizen science project.

The intersection of San Gabriel Boulevard and Duarte Road is the center of our count. The count circle extends seven and one half miles in every direction from that spot to create the standard fifteen mile diameter count area. We're fortunate to have a lot of habitat diversity in the count circle, and this is one reason why we regularly record over 160 species on the CBC.

Over the years, some bird populations have remained stable, some have increased and others have declined. Introduced species, range expansions of native birds, habitat loss and predation are just a few of the factors behind these changes. If you're familiar with Eurasian Collared-Doves, Spotted Doves, Loggerhead Shrikes, Great-tailed Grackles, Scaly-breasted Munias and our non-native parrots and parakeets, you're already aware of some of these trends.

On count day we'll record every bird that participants can identify by sight or sound within the circle. Over the long course of the count we've documented bird populations over many decades. Our mid-December CBC produces a snapshot of early winter birdlife in the San Gabriel Valley and local foothills with over 280 different species recorded over its history.

If you're new to the count and want to join other participants on count day, plan on attending the pre-count meeting on December 11, at 7:30 pm. You'll get the rundown on the Christmas Bird Count, count methods, procedures and checklists. This meeting is a great place to meet others and decide on an area to count. If you can't make the meeting you can coordinate via e-mail.

Also, be sure not to miss the post count dinner and wrap-up on count night. Not only will we have a nice dinner after a long day in the field, but we'll be among the first to find out what good birds were found.

For more information, contact count coordinator Jon Fisher at JonF60@hotmail.com.

FIELD TRIPS & MONTHLY BIRD WALKS

The Urban Core

Saturday, January 18, 2020, 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Far from the natural beauty of the local mountains, the space and solitude of the desert and the tranquility of the scenic coastline, right in the middle of the crushing hardscape of Los Angeles, lies one of the city's few urban parks, the only park within walking distance for thousands of Angelenos. MacArthur Park is hardly a hotspot on par with other field trip destinations in this newsletter, but it is one of the best places in the county to observe gulls. Iceland Gull is a regular winter visitor, and various and mysterious hybrids are also often present all allowing close study and debate. Further, as the only park around it attracts a surprising diversity of waterfowl and passerines. The morning of birding will begin here then continue at Echo Park Lake, another urban refuge a few miles away, and maybe some scoping of Silverlake Reservoir, if we've still got time.

Meet at the Levitt Pavilion in the northwest corner of MacArthur Park at 8:00 am. You can take public transit, or there is free parking on Wilshire Blvd and metered parking on S. Park View St. (\$1/hour)."

Jon Feenstra

Ventura County Game Preserve

Sunday, February 9, 2020, 7:45 am - noon

The Ventura County Game Preserve in Oxnard, California, is an excellent spot at which to observe a wide variety of birds including waterfowl, wetland birds and raptors. We will be birding the preserve entirely on foot. Covering the circuit will probably require 4+ hours. We will leave our cars on the left (north) side of the paved road outside the preserve compound. Bring lunch and drinking water. Allow one hour and fifteen minutes driving time from Pasadena. Contact the leader Doug Farr, 818-957-0845 home, 818-437-8806 cell, doug@dmfarr.com, for directions to the preserve.

Doug Farr

Peck Road Water Conservation Park

First Saturday of the month, November 2

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

Legg Lake

First Saturday, January and February, 2020

8:00 am to 1:00 pm

These trips will cover several consistently good lake and river birding areas. Legg Lake has lots of water and

wintering birds. From there, we'll head for either the Pico Rivera Spreading Grounds or Peck Road Park, depending on water levels and bird reports. Both often host a wide variety of water birds, including grebes, ducks, gulls, terns, egrets and shorebirds.

Driving Directions (from Pasadena): Take the 210 freeway east to the 605 south to the Pomona (60) freeway going west. Exit at Santa Anita Ave. Turn left and take Santa Anita south (about one-half mile), and enter the first parking lot on your right.

Ed Stonick

Magpie Group

Third Tuesday of most months

9:00 am until about noon

November 19, 2019, Almansor Park, Alhambra. We plan to move on to Lincoln Park and Debs Park as time permits. Meet at the parking lot near the ball fields and the pond.

December 17, 2019, Los Angeles Arboretum. Tickets are now required for entry on free day. There is no charge. The leader will get tickets in advance and have them for the group at the entry. The entire group MUST enter together at 9 AM. Do not be late or you will not be allowed free entry if you are coming after 9 AM without a ticket. All PAS members welcome!

Ed Stonick

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

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

Huntington Library

Fourth Sunday of every month, except for July and August

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

CALENDAR

November 2019

2	Sat 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	Peck Rd. Water Conserv. Park	Darren Dowell
6	Wed 7:30 pm	Board meeting		Eaton Canyon	Laura Solomon
9	Sat 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
10	Sun 8:00 am	Cleanup	WC	Peck Rd. Water Conserv. Park	Lois Brunet
13	Wed 5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Sena on Myrtle	L. Tiller, C. Hamilton, D.Bell
16	Sat 7:30 am	Field trip	WC	North Slope San Gabriels	The Scheels, Dessi Sieburth
16	Sat 9:00 am	Planting Event		Washington STEM Elementary	Lois Brunet
17	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
19	Tue 9:00 am	Magpie Group	WC	Almansor Park	Ed Stonick
20	Wed. 7:30 pm	General meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Rick Wright
24	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

December 2019

4	Wed 7:30 pm	Board meeting		Eaton Canyon	Laura Solomon
7	Sat 7:00 am	Field trip	WC	Pocket Parks of Pasadena	Luke Tiller
8	Sun. 6:30 am	Field trip	WC	Big Santa Anita Canyon	Lance Benner
11	Wed 5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Sena on Myrtle	L. Tiller, C. Hamilton, D.Bell
11	Wed. 7:30 pm	CBC Prep		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Jon Fisher
12	Thurs. 7:00 pm	New Members Reception			Laura Solomon
14	Sat. All day	Christmas Bird Count	WC		Jon Fisher
14	Sat. 6:00 pm	CBC Dinner		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	PAS Audubon
17	Tues. 9:00 am	Magpie Group	WC	L.A. County Arboretum	Ed Stonick
22	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

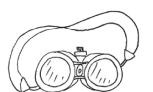
January 2020

TBD	Wed 7:30 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Laura Solomon
4	Sat 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Legg Lake	Ed Stonick
8	Wed 5:00 pm	Birds 'n Beers		Sena on Myrtle	L. Tiller, C. Hamilton, D.Bell
11	Sat 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	County Arboretum	Katy Mann
15	Wed. 7:30 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Taylor Paez
18	Sat 9:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Urban Core	Jon Feenstra
19	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Eaton Canyon	Hill Penfold
26	Sun 8:00 am	Field trip	WC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

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. Good birding!



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Kern National Wildlife Refuge

A small group of us visited the Kern Wildlife Refuge on October 13, 2019. We picked that date as it was the weekend before hunting season and therefore a better time to view birds undisturbed. Although the trip to KNWR in the month of October was well worth the time, only two of the six ponds were flooded. The flooding begins in August, and all the ponds are full by January, which serves hunters rather than birders. It appears that the Department of the Interior gives more priority to hunters and agriculture, rather than birders, judging from the chilly reception we received at the visitor's center when we mentioned we were with Pasadena Audubon. In fact, while on the auto tour, we were almost run off the road by a fast-moving farm tractor!

In spite of the obstacles the trip to Kern was a great experience. We saw hundreds of the ubiquitous American Coot, White-faced Ibis-es, Northern Shovelers, Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, as well as Greater Yellowlegs.

Doug Farr, Carl Huang and Yuan-Ning Chu
Photos by Carl Huang



Snowy Egret

Loggerhead Shrike

CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

Sparrow Workshop

Pasadena Audubon Society is excited to have Rick Wright, author of the recently published *Peterson Reference Guide to North American Sparrows*, join us for a deep dive into the world of 'little brown jobs.' This two-part workshop will help birders of all capabilities polish their skills with this potentially difficult group of birds. The workshop will cover everything from identifying birds using shape and structure to tips on aging birds and identifying them to subspecies. The workshop will include an indoor class on Saturday and a field trip to some sparrow hotspots on Sunday.



Lark Sparrow

© Mark Scheel

Class: Saturday, November 23, 9:00 am – 11:00 am Location will be announced to participants

Field trip: Sunday, November 24, 7:00 am – 1:00 pm. Location will be announced in class.

PAS Members: \$55; Non-members: \$65.00 Additional information can be found here.

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



ADVOCACY

The PAS Advocacy Committee is continuing its goal of working with the City of Pasadena to create an updated tree trimming schedule that will be much more protective of our bird nests during key nesting months. Several members of our committee recently met with four Pasadena city employees who are tasked with the five-year trimming cycle of our 60,000 local trees including our street trees as well as those in our parks and open spaces.

At our meeting the city committed to providing us with their data on all their tree species and locations. We in turn are committed to contacting a number of tree experts who have a working knowledge of the area trees with the goal of implementing an updated trimming schedule. We believe that this plan will greatly assist Pasadena in perpetuating much more habitat-friendly trees for our birds and other wildlife.

We also discussed presenting a plan to the city for replacement trees and native plants that are more likely to thrive within the reality of our changing climate. The city representatives were very receptive to our working together to make this very large undertaking happen in the coming months and years.

Carolyn Murphy, Chair, Advocacy Committee

THREE BILLION BIRDS – WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

In less than a lifetime, the North American continent has seen the precipitous decline of hundreds of species of birds, according to a study published recently in the journal Science. The study’s authors, who include scientists from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the U.S. Geological Survey, Canada’s environmental agency and the American Bird Conservancy, used decades of tallies compiled by citizen scientists including the Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count and the annual North American Breeding Bird Survey as well as data gathered from 143 weather radars. The results of this data collection show that the bulk of these declines center around a dozen or so bird families we normally see in our backyards, such as sparrows, warblers, finches and blackbirds. Researchers found a 53% decline in grassland bird populations; more than a third of shorebirds has been lost.

While this study doesn’t address why this is happening, it is thought that loss of habitat due to agriculture intensification as well as the widespread use of pesticides have contributed to this loss. However, the increase of some bird populations such as raptors, ducks and geese show us that concerted conservation efforts, whether by recreational hunters or federal laws banning DDT, can reverse, or at least halt, some of these declines. To that end, many researchers and environmentalists are calling for a shift in the focus of our efforts away from single-species conservation to a much broader, holistic strategy.



Black Phoebe

© Jeff Bjork

Jane Glicksman

PLANTING DAY CELEBRATION

Planting Day Celebration

Join us as we celebrate the new Native Plant and Pollinator Garden at Washington STEM Elementary Magnet!

1520 N. Raymond Ave, Pasadena
Saturday, November 16, 2019
9:00am to 12:00pm

Featuring:

- All-ages planting and gardening in the new outdoor classroom
- Story Time for kids
- Water conservation themed giveaways from Pasadena Water and Power
- Native plant workshop by the Theodore Payne Foundation
- Food, music, and fun for the whole family!

Sponsors: Audubon, National Audubon Society's California Native Plant Center, Catalist, SGV, Pasadena Water & Power, California Native Plant Society.

Pasadena Audubon Society has brought nature into the schoolyard with a native plant and pollinator garden at Washington STEM Elementary Magnet School! Join us as we add the finishing touches on our garden with our inaugural planting day, November 16th, from 9 to noon. There will be fun activities including workshops from Pasadena Water and Power and the Theodore Payne Foundation. This event is open to all members of our community. Hope to see you there!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS TO PAS

- WARBLER (\$5-\$99):** Edwina M. Berg, Mary Anne Lower, Tom & Becky Lynn, Susan McCurdy, Diane Sipieter, Lois Tandy, Elaine Tietjen, Dave Weeshoff, Karina White
- ORIOLE (\$100-\$249):** Tracey Alsobrook, Rummel Bautista, Jerry Ewing, Viveca Sapin
- RAVEN (\$250-\$499):** Wendy Clough, Graham Hamby
- GOLDEN EAGLE (\$500-\$999):** Darren Dowell, Doug Farr

BOOK REVIEW

A review of *An Expedition to Ramsey Canyon: The 1896 Field Journal of Ornithologist Harry S. Swarth*, by Christopher W. Swarth

By John McCormack

In 1886, with Geronimo's final surrender and the finishing of the railroad line connecting Los Angeles to Chicago, the floodgates opened on movement West. It was the end of the era of the soldier-ornithologist, men like Charles Bendire whose charge was to protect western conduits, but who seemed to spend just as much time collecting and describing new bird species.

Christopher W. Swarth's new book *An Expedition to Ramsey Canyon: The 1896 Field Journal of Ornithologist Harry S. Swarth* from Yaqui Gulch Press captures a journey that started a decade later, as regular ornithologists began to venture into this newly secure terrain. On Bendire's urging, four young men, including Harry S. Swarth (1878-1935)—whose family had moved to Los Angeles on one of those first trains from Chicago—went east, on foot with horse-drawn wagon, and thus became some of the first to venture into the bird-rich mountains of southeastern Arizona.

The book's author-editor is Swarth's grandson. A biologist himself, Christopher Swarth found his grandfather's journal among inherited documents. And for the most part, he allows his grandfather to speak for himself. The bulk of the 88-page volume is a verbatim transcript of the travel journal, decorated with paintings by Allan Brooks, the venerable bird artist and Swarth contemporary. Somewhat dry in tone, and mostly eschewing personal flair in favor of the day's ornithological findings, the journal nonetheless recounts many interesting nuggets: condors spotted near the San Bernardino Mountains; first encounters with the birds of the Huachuca Mountains. Birders might shrink at the thought of Swarth scouring Ramsey Canyon with shotgun in hand. Here the author steps in to educate on the importance and methods of collecting and preparing scientific specimens over several text boxes that together form a modern version of Eliot Coues' (1874) *Field Ornithology*—practically a religious text to Swarth the elder and his companions.

An Expedition to Ramsey Canyon will especially interest birders who have visited southeastern Arizona and aficionados of the history of the West. For those craving a good mystery, the book delves into the odder specimens collected on the trip: two Bumblebee Hummingbirds, a species never again recorded in the United States! Author Swarth updates the story with new scientific details and covers a few of the other curious findings over several short essays that follow the travel journal. The Swarth duo never got a chance to meet in life, but they combine in the book to capture an important moment in Western ornithology.

John McCormack is the Curator of the Moore Laboratory of Zoology, the world's largest Mexican bird collection at Occidental College



Swarth house at 1815 North Raymond Ave., Pasadena, California, 1907. The family lived there with George Morcom, another important figure in early southern California ornithology.



Present Day Ramsey Canyon and historical cabin.

YOUNG BIRDERS



The Young Birders Club offers an opportunity for young birders to connect with other like-minded youth. The purpose of the Young Birders Club is to allow young birders (and their parents) to meet, learn and bird together while developing skills in leadership, peer mentoring, community involvement and conservation ethics. Young Birders Club meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of every month (September – November and January - May). Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center Nature Center from 6:45 PM to 7:30 PM. To find out more about the Young Birders Club meetings and upcoming events, please email the club leader, Susan Gilliland, at gillilandsusan@gmail.com

GRANT FUNDING REQUESTS

Pasadena Audubon Society is Soliciting Grant Funding Requests. In support of our missions, Pasadena Audubon Society funds grants with an annual budget of up to \$10,000. We are now accepting proposals. The deadline for submissions is December 17, 2019, and applicants will be notified by March 18, 2020.

Three categories of requests for funds will be considered by PAS:

- Scholarships to help support Pasadena area birders, teachers and others to attend conferences, classes and workshops or to study ornithology.
- Research grants for collecting data on birds, birding, habitat conservation and education. Preference will be given to projects in Southern California, but national and international studies will also be considered.
- Grant awards for specific projects may also be awarded to organizations that have missions similar to those of PAS. More detailed information is available on our website at: <http://www.pasadenaudubon.org/?q=grants>



Apparently Bruce has a request!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PAS Coffee Club

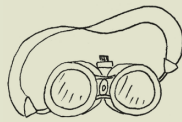
Hey Auduboners, did you know that Birds & Beans offers six kinds of shade-grown bird-friendly roasts? In order from lightest bean to darkest, they are:

- American Redstart (Light Roast)
- Wood Thrush (Medium Breakfast)
- Chestnut-sided Warbler (Medium Vienna Roast)
- Scarlet Tanager (French Roast)
- Baltimore Oriole (French Roast Decaf)
- Kingbird (Espresso)

The good folks at Birds & Beans didn't know me yet, so they never had the chance to ask me for suggestions about which bird names should go with which coffee. See, I would have thought Vienna Vireo had a good ring, or maybe French Finch, or Espresso Estarling. Some alliterative names sure would have helped me to remember which bird name goes with which roast.

Kidding aside, the PAS Coffee Clubbers keep telling me how much they are enjoying the Birds & Beans coffee, so don't you miss out any longer. Give these roasts a try. If you have any questions, please send them to coffeeclub@pasadenaudubon.org.

Kathy Linowski
Manager,
PAS Coffee Club

**The PAS Board Needs YOU!**

Interested in fundraising? Consider joining the PAS Board

The PAS Board will be accepting applications for the position of Development Chair. Fundraising is key to the success of our chapter. If you're interested in getting more involved with Pasadena Audubon and have the ability to cultivate relationships to support charitable contributions, we want to hear from you! Please contact Board President Laura Solomon at purplecow@jps.net for more information.

Trip Leaders

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New Member Reception

If you joined Pasadena Audubon in 2019 as a new member, we'd like to meet you!

Please join us for a New Member Reception on Thursday, December 12, from 7 pm to 9 pm at the home of Laura and Gavin Solomon, 711 South Mentor Ave in Pasadena.

Wine and light refreshments will be served. Meet other members, old and new, and hear about the many things that are going on at our chapter and how you can get involved.

RSVP to Lois Brunet lbrunet@pasadenaudubon.org. We look forward to seeing you then.

**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 Sena on Myrtle: 409 S. Myrtle Ave, Monrovia

Join the Pasadena Audubon Society**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.

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Your information is never shared.

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

Or join online at pasadenaudubon.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!

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See chapter-only dues on previous page.
National Audubon Society membership fees—\$35.
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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.



Least Bell's Vireo

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Welcome to our New Members

ALTADENA: Kathleene Deagon, Michael Farquhar, Linda Harris, Paul McConnell Family, Mary Vaughan; ARCADIA: Sharrel Agosta, Jerold Haserot, Gwen Roche; DUARTE: Carol Askin, Bonnie Bair; GLENDALE: Carlos Garcia; LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE: Pauline Goldfinger Family, Bridget Hana, Gail Lowe; LA CRESCENTA: John & Sheri Gray; Ted Zehfuss; LOS ANGELES: Taylor Beia, Phillip Curry, Jadine Lee, Valerie Richards; MANHATTAN BEACH: David Howard; MONROVIA: Helene Kristensen, David Marshak; MONTEREY PARK: Mali Chen; PASADENA: Nora Artine, Brian Biery, Dorothy Danziger, Carl Huang, Luminita Ibric, Susie Kasielke. Maria McGloin Family; Kirstin McLatchie, Adriane Rothstein, Vivian Yeh; ROSEMEAD: Eliseo Martinez; SIERRA MADRE: Ark Odell; SOUTH PASADENA: Sonja Lovelace, Judy Martinez, Diane Mgrublian