



THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 55 – No. 1

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

January-February 2007

January Program

The Arroyo: Past, Present and Future

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Jeff Chapman

The Arroyo Seco has drawn wildlife and people to the region for thousands of years. It is a canyon, a watershed, an urban natural refuge, a water source, and home to thousands of people. How can these competing uses be reconciled?

Jeff will talk about the natural and social history of the Arroyo, what is happening to improve it, and the forces that are shaping its future. He will also highlight ways we can participate in protecting, restoring, and conserving the Arroyo. The Arroyo Seco Foundation balances the conflicting needs of nature and people in the Arroyo.

Jeff Chapman has been working with ASF for two years as watershed coordinator, focusing on water quality, water conservation, and bringing together organizations interested in improving the Arroyo. Previously, he worked for the Audubon Center at Debs Park and the Catalina Island Conservancy.

General Meetings held at:

**Eaton Canyon Nature Center
1750 N. Altadena Drive, Pasadena**
7:00 pm Social
7:30 pm Program

President's Perch

Join us in the Tenth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count!

National Audubon Society and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology are again hosting an open-to-all, no-fee count of the birds you see in your own backyard, or local park, during the period February 16-19, 2007. The whole thing is done through their Internet website:

WWW.BIRD SOURCE.ORG/GBBC.

This bird count is a little different from our Christmas Bird Count which covers birds in PAS's area and is monitored for accuracy and compiled before it

February Program

Butterflies of So. California

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Fred Heath

Join Fred Heath, author of "An Introduction to Southern California Butterflies" in this slide-illustrated presentation showing many of our local butterflies. You will find out where, when, and how to find these beautiful creatures as you learn about their habitats, food plants, life cycles, and behavior. Discover answers to questions such as, how long do they live or what is the difference between a butterfly and a moth?

An avid birder since his early teens in New York City, Fred Heath became fascinated by butterflies 30 years later in Southern California. This, in turn, has led to an overall interest in the natural world. He has lectured, led field trips, and written many articles about birds and butterflies and co-authored "National Audubon Society Field Guide to California". Fred holds or has held positions on the board of directors of Los Angeles Audubon Society, North American Butterfly Association (NABA) and the Los Angeles Chapter of NABA (LANABA).

After the talk, Fred Heath, the author (and maybe Herb Clarke, the photographer) of "An Introduction to Southern California Butterflies", will be on hand for a book signing of their beautiful and informative book.

is sent on to National Audubon.

The Backyard Bird Count is less formal. It allows you to join fellow birders all over the USA to share information on which birds you can see in your own neighborhoods. It's fun to see what birds are in cities that you may want to visit – and did I mention – it's a free program!

I invite you to visit
WWW.BIRD SOURCE.ORG/GBBC and join in the Backyard Bird Count.

Will

March Program

Birding on \$4.00 a Gallon

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Kimball Garrett

Whether gas is \$2 a gallon or \$5, long drive "Birding Assault Vehicles" are hardly defensible environmentally or economically these days. The allure of traveling to distant birding sites will always remain, but this talk emphasizes the benefits of birding on the county level, and especially of local "patch" birding around Los Angeles. We'll discuss how to keep good records about the birds of your "patch", and how such data can reveal fascinating things about our local birds.

Kimball Garrett is a long-time local birder and has the advantage of being able to see 5,000 bird species within 100 feet of his desk at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

Kimball will be signing his newest book, "Birds of the Los Angeles Region", by Kimball L. Garrett, Jon L. Dunn and Bob Morse. Copies will be available for sale.

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Conservation

Change for the Arroyo Seco

The City of Pasadena has been debating what to do with the 5.1-acre Desiderio Army Reserve Center under the Colorado Street Bridge, scheduled to be closed by the federal government.



Eleven proposals have been before the Planning Commission, addressing needs such as open space, art, the environment, and affordable housing.

The Commission has narrowed the field to four finalists: the Arroyo Center for Art and the Environment, Habitat for Humanity's affordable housing, Moule & Polyzoides' housing and art/civic space, and a City of Pasadena fire and police training facility.

For birders, one proposal stands out: The Arroyo Center for Art and the Environment.

According to the Arroyo Center website, the **Arroyo Center for Art and the Environment (ACAE)** will provide:

- A park landscaped in native plants and incorporating the best principles of watershed management and low-impact development
- Renovated buildings in keeping with the rich architectural legacy of the Arroyo
- A small Art Museum featuring California Impressionism
- An exclusive Art Academy providing traditional art training
- A California Art Research and Archival Library as well as a special Arroyo Library
- An Arroyo Visitors Center
- A Watershed Center to provide classroom and field instruction in environmental education
- Scenic viewing areas and trail access to the Arroyo Seco stream zone

Union Station Foundation's proposal and six others were rejected, although Commissioners left open the possibility that rejected proposals might be integrated into the final proposal.

To learn more, visit the Arroyo Center website at www.ARROYOCENTER.ORG/

If you would like to support this bird-friendly proposal, contact your Pasadena City Council Representative before January 24th.

*Laura Garrett
PURPLECOW@JPS.NET*

Down to the Wire with the Salton Sea

The State of California is about to decide what to do with the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea Coalition, made up of Audubon California and the Sierra Club, among others, has been working hard to save the sea and has been following the process very closely. They are not in favor of any of the alternatives presented to the state, and they ask us to send letters to the California Department of Water Resources to that effect. Below you can find both a long version and short version of letters to send. Please feel free to copy them, but remember that the more personal your letter, the more effective. Even if you choose to write the short version of the letter, you may wish to read the long version to get a clearer understanding of the problems with the current alternatives. For more information, please visit [HTTP://CA.AUDUBON.ORG/SALTON_SEA.HTML](http://CA.AUDUBON.ORG/SALTON_SEA.HTML) or [HTTP://WWW.SALTONSEACOALITION.ORG/](http://WWW.SALTONSEACOALITION.ORG/).

Letters must be received by January 17, 2007, so time is of the essence. To use e-mail, send your letter to SALTONSEACOMMENTS@WATER.CA.GOV Or fax your letter to (916) 654-4925

[Short Version]

Attn: Dale Hoffman-Floerke
Salton Sea PEIR comments
CA Department of Water Resources
Colorado River & Salton Sea Office
1416 9th Street, Room 1148-6
Sacramento, CA 95814

[Date]

Dear Ms. Hoffman-Floerke:

I am writing regarding the Resources Agency's Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program (PEIR). While I agree that the State of California must take action in order to prevent health problems from dust and to save the Sea, the current proposals are not acceptable because each one would in turn cause massive health problems and/or environmental degradation. I would ask that instead, the State implement the "evolved alternative" that combines the best of the proposals. This alternative has been outlined in letters from the Salton Sea Coalition, Audubon California and other environmental groups, and I support it as well.

As someone who loves birds and visits the Salton Sea regularly, I urge you to support this "evolved alternative." Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Long Version]

[Same salutation as above]

Re: Comments on Draft PEIR for Salton Sea

Dear Ms. Hoffman-Floerke:

I am writing [on behalf of XX organization] to offer my/our comments on the Resources Agency's Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program (PEIR).

There is no question that the State of California must take action at the Salton Sea. The 'no action' scenarios described in the PEIR and in the Pacific Institute's *Hazard* (posted at [HTTP://WWW.PACINST.ORG/REPORTS/SALTONSEA/INDEX.HTM](http://WWW.PACINST.ORG/REPORTS/SALTONSEA/INDEX.HTM)) clearly demonstrate that the health of children and adults in the Imperial and Coachella valleys would be harmed by the hundreds of additional tons of dust that would blow, each year, off the land exposed by the shrinking Salton Sea. A smaller, saltier Sea would also be of little or no value to many of the 400 species of birds – sometimes numbering in the millions of individual birds – that currently use the Sea. With the loss of nearly 95% of California's wetlands, many of these birds will have no other place to go, leading to catastrophic losses that will be felt up and down the Pacific Flyway. Clearly, we must act to protect the Salton Sea.

The question is how. Unfortunately, that question has not been fully answered by the PEIR. None of the alternatives presented in the PEIR satisfies the legal requirements to maximize wildlife habitat, air and water quality protection in a reasonable timeframe. (Pursuant to the Quantification Settlement Agreement ("QSA"), state and federal law require restoration of the Salton Sea because of its importance for fish and wildlife, air quality, recreation and local economic development. See California Fish and Game Code Sections 2930, *et seq.*)

Most proposed alternatives suffer from massive construction and permitting requirements that would slow implementation, degrade air quality, and impose additional, unacceptable impacts over a wide area. In light of California's commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, it makes no sense to implement a project that requires massive amounts of energy to pump (and in some instances, treat) water. It also makes no sense to build massive dams or dikes that require thousands of truck trips each day, to move the tens of millions of cubic yards of rock needed for construction.

Fortunately, the PEIR contains the
(see Conservation, page 8)

Panama Memories

In mid October, eleven of us flew out of LAX on a red-eye to Panama City. The flight left at 1:00 a.m. and arrived in Panama at 9:30 the next morning. We were all sleepy and tired, but that didn't prevent us from getting our first lifer just



outside the terminal, a Fork-tailed Flycatcher! It's amazing how birding can get your adrenaline going!

But our initial enthusiasm was crushed as we found out just how hard life can be. Between the hot coffee while watching a beautiful dawn and the cool glasses of wine in the evening while listening to Howler Monkeys we put in some hard hours of birding.

My favorite memory is the unbelievable excitement of the first afternoon – running from window to window trying to take it all in, from sloths and monkeys to a gorgeous pair of Green Honeycreepers – and then running downstairs to check the hummingbird feeders. Although it's the least colorful, the Long-tailed Hermit will stand out as the coolest looking hummer I've ever seen.

Judy and Steve Bass (mostly Judy)

Hawks, hawks everywhere! We were in the middle of fall migration!

Watching the raptors fly over the Canopy Tower by the thousands was the most memorable part of our Panama experience. We saw them kettle above us and then move southward while others came streaming in from the northern horizon like a flowing "river". It was just breathtaking.

All that and more – birds at our windows, birds outside in the parking lot, birds down the road. It was overwhelming and yet an exhilarating experience. Another memorable image was the one from the top of the Canopy Tower one early morning. The view of undulating green hills rising above white mists after a night of heavy rain was spectacular.

Pam and Wilbur Dong

Arrival day at the Canopy Tower: after getting limited sleep on the red-eye flight to Panama City, we arrived at Canopy Tower full of excitement and anticipation. We were rewarded by spending three hours birding the parking lot! The colors, the sounds, the shapes... wow!

Susan and Frank Gilliland

Photos by
Ron Cyger

Having the hikers at the front of the line suddenly stop and yell Fertile Ants! How can they tell they're fertile, I wondered? Later I found out that they yelled Fer de Lance, one of the most poisonous vipers around!

Ron Cyger

Getting up early and heading up to the top of the tower to watch the sun rise over the misty rain forest. Sipping on steaming cups of coffee while listening to the dawn chorus with Motmots and Green Shrike-vireos, with Keel-billed Toucans flying in and Howler Monkeys screaming in the background.

Susan and Frank Gilliland



One of the days we drove into Gamboa. My favorite memory is of "the crazy place." We were on our way to a pond to look for a Crake when, right in the middle of a little village, we spotted some exotic looking tanagers and shouted for the driver to stop. It turned out to be an explosion of birds in several different trees alongside the road. Golden-hooded Tanager, Blue-gray Tanager, Clay-colored Robin, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Black-cheeked Woodpecker. All at once.

We birders actually got a little hysterical not knowing which way to look as people shouted out names of life birds appearing in small trees and bushes in every direction. Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, Crimson-backed Tanager, Tropical Kingbird, Great Kiskadee, Baltimore Oriole, Green Honeycreeper. When we finally stopped to get back in the vehicle, we were literally breathless.

A crazy, magical place, indeed.
Tom Harrison

Surely one of the natural wonders of the world! Words cannot describe the streaming masses of raptors as they make their biannual journey across the land bridge of North and South America. The awe of this event is something that must be experienced to truly appreciate the wonder of migration.

Susan and Frank Gilliland



Standing in the rain watching the incredible tanager show at the feeders in Gamboa, as the Agoutis stuffed themselves on Wonder Bread.

Judy and Steve Bass

Walking down a steep and muddy jungle trail from the mountain-top retreat in Cerro Azul in search of the White-tipped Sicklebill (hummingbird). Waiting under the canopy of heliconium for the hummingbird to return on its feeding rounds. Having him return, buzzing over our heads and feeding on these splendid tropical flowers.

Susan and Frank Gilliland

Tiptoeing down the path to see the Spectacled Owl.

Judy and Steve Bass

How can I describe our Panama trip in only one paragraph!? From the Fork-tailed Flycatcher at the airport when we arrived to the army ant swarm (complete with attending antbirds) a few hours before we left, any one day (heck, any one hour) of the trip was birding heaven. We

(see Panama Memories, page 4)

Panama Memories (*continued*)



saw 15,000 Broad-winged Hawks fly over in 30 minutes, watched a host of Tanagers, Honeycreepers, Parakeets, and even a Motmot descend on a fruit feeder, and we wandered off the trail to find a Streak-chested Antpitta and a Black-faced Antthrush. The wildlife in Panama was spectacular; certainly the birds, but also the monkeys, sloths, ants, and reptiles. There were moments of elation (the little White-throated Crake finally poked its head out of the reeds!), conflict (someone called out "Greater Ani" but I don't want to leave the Trogans!) and even sadness (we eventually had to leave). It was a fantastic trip, and it was a pleasure to spend the week with such a fun group of people. So when are we going back?

Mark Scheel

And finally...

I was all alone for a few moments in the early morning on the observation deck of the Canopy Hotel. I could see the outline of the tall buildings of Panama City against the skyline. The Panama Canal was silver-blue strip cutting through the green forest. As I looked up, there were hundreds or perhaps thousands of Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned Hawks migrating with Black and Turkey Vultures; a Green Shrike-vireo had replaced the Keel-billed Toucan at the top of the Cecropia Tree in front of me. The Howler Monkeys were calling, or perhaps roaring would be a better term, in the distance.

The day was just beginning and already it was full of magic and promise of spectacular birds, perhaps some exotic mammals and the great companionship of my fellow Pasadena Audubon adventurers.

Larry Johnson

Please join us at the May 2007 general meeting of the Pasadena Audubon Society to see the pictures that go along with these memories!

Field Trip Reports

North Slope of the San Gabriels

November 11, 2006

We met at Lake Palmdale in the howling wind, trying to steady our shaking scopes to get a decent look at whatever was floating, diving, and swimming in the lake. And right from the start we found a Common Loon,

Western and Clark's Grebes, and Lesser Scaup. Fortunately, the wind subsided somewhat as we left the lake and headed towards Valyermo and the mountains.

Raptors were the stars of the morning. In a field near the Valyermo post office, we were treated to a Prairie Falcon and a Ferruginous Hawk, as well as a supporting cast of Western Bluebirds, Lark Sparrows, and Western Meadowlarks.

Then up to the mountains we went. It was relatively warm for the altitude, and there was no snow. At Grassy Hollow Visitor Center we were greeted by many California Quail at the feeders, and had nice looks at White-headed and Hairy Woodpeckers, Brown Creepers, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Golden-crowned



PAS members turn to higher authority for raptor ID.

photos by Mark Hunter

Shouldered Hawk, and two flyover



Brown Creeper

Mark Scheel

Parrot Chase

November 18, 2006

As a follow-up to his November meeting presentation on Parrot ID, Larry Allen led a group of intrepid birders through the wilds of South Pasadena and Temple City in search of the numerous psittacids resident in the area.



A short search in South Pasadena provided good views of Mitred Parakeets, although trip participants had to avoid a film crew setting up for a Disney commercial. A

stop at Temple Park in Temple City did not yield any of the expected parakeet species there, so the group commenced chasing the numerous *Amazona* parrots flying to their roosts a few blocks away.

After short stops to view Red-crowned and Lilac-crowned Parrots lined up on power lines, we moved to the main roost area. Our arrival, however, coincided with that of a Red-tailed Hawk. All the parrots lifted up *en masse*, and flew eastward. The chase was on! By the time the next roost was located, daylight was fading, but silhouettes allowed identification of Rose-ringed Parakeets flying in to join the thousand-plus parrots present. The near-deafening din of squawking and screeching as this huge flock settled into its evening roost was perhaps the highlight of the trip.

Larry Allen

Sparrows. Black-capped Chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches taunted us from the treetops but declined to come nearer.

But the highlight of the trip was Jackson Lake, where a Lewis's Woodpecker was flycatching from the tops of the pines, a Golden Eagle flew overhead, far above the Lewis's, and a Golden-crowned Kinglet

appeared briefly on the south side of the lake. Eating lunch there was tricky because the birds kept coming: many cooperative Juncos, several Brown Creepers, two Fox Sparrows, a Red-breasted Sapsucker, two (yes, only two) Cedar Waxwings, and a friendly flock of Pygmy Nuthatches.

We finished the trip at St. Andrew's Abbey, where we found Red-breasted Sapsuckers, a Red-

Field Trips

Hahamonga Monthly Walk

Saturday, January 6, 2007

Saturday, March 3, 2007

8:00 am – noon

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

Exit the northbound 210 Freeway at Berkshire and make a right, then a left at the light. The park entrance is on the right at the next stop light. Take the first left after entering Hahamonga Watershed Park and park by the ballfield.

Ron Cyger

Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk

Sunday, January 21, 2007

Sunday, February 18, 2007

Sunday, March 18, 2007

8:00 am – noon

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

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

Hill Penfold

Huntington Library

Birdwalks (PAS Members only)

Sunday, January 28, 2007

Sunday, February 25, 2007

Sunday, March 25, 2007

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. We have enjoyed the family of Great Horned Owls in the non-public area we are allowed to visit. We thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible. As his schedule allows, Dan will join Elaine MacPherson as co-leader. If you are lucky enough to be on those trips, you can expect some interesting Huntington lore along with the birding and the botany.

Contact Elaine by email (preferred) or phone, putting "Huntington" in the subject line to avoid inadvertent deletion.

Elaine MacPherson & Dan Lewis

Bolsa Chica

Saturday, January 13, 2007

8:00 am – noon

Bolsa Chica Reserve is a coastal estuary that has great birding any time of year! In winter the reserve is filled with waterfowl, herons, and shorebirds. This area has recently undergone a large habitat restoration project and expansion, and new trails have opened up.

Bolsa Chica Reserve is located in Orange County, on the Pacific Coast Highway (Highway 1) between Warner Ave. and Seapoint Ave. Exit the 405 freeway south on Golden West. Take Golden West south all the way to the ocean, and turn right (northwest) on Highway 1, Pacific Coast Highway. Continue past Seapoint Ave., and there will be a traffic light at an entrance to beach parking. Just after the traffic light, turn right (away from the beach) into a small (free) parking lot.

Mark Scheel

Carrizo Plain

Sat.-Sun., January 27-28, 2007

8:00 am Saturday – noonish Sunday

Possible Sandhill Cranes, Mountain Plover, Mountain Bluebird, LeConte's Thrasher, Tricolored Blackbird, lots of raptors including Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks. Definite close-up looks at the San Andreas Fault. We'll also hope to see Chumash Rock Art, Pronghorn, Tule Elk, Brine Shrimp, Kit Fox, Giant Kangaroo Rat.

Meet at 8:00 Saturday morning in Maricopa at the intersection of Hwys 166 and 33. Start from Pasadena early Saturday morning, or spend Friday night in Taft or Maricopa (check AAA book for motels). We'll spend Saturday night at the 13-room California Valley Lodge, with dinner and breakfast at the Lodge. Information on how to register will be sent to you when you sign up.

Please bring FRS radios if you have them. Have a full tank of gas, also lunch, water and snacks for two days when we meet – there are no services on the Plain. Car-pooling is encouraged. Prepare for any kind of weather – hot, cold, windy, etc. Rain will definitely cancel this trip, so please send Judy your phone number for notification the day before if necessary.

Leader: Roy van de Hoek

Organizer: Judy Bass

*(626) 798-7442 before 9:00 pm
email (preferred) JUDYBASS@EARTHLINK.NET*

Bird Banding at Zuma Canyon with Professor Walter Sakai

Saturday, March 10, 2007

early morning – 11:00 am

Come join us for a morning of bird banding with Professor Walter Sakai from Santa Monica College. Walt is a master bander who operates a banding station in Zuma Canyon near Point Dume in Malibu. He bands 1000-1500 birds each year at Zuma and other sites in Southern California.

Walt will introduce us to banding techniques, provide very close looks at numerous chaparral species, and give an overview of the contributions that banding makes to ornithology.

Walt invites us to join him when he starts banding at sunrise (6:10 am!), which is when bird activity peaks, but later arrivals are also OK. Walt prefers that guests remain for the entire banding session. Additional information on Walt's banding research is available online at: HTTP://HOMEPAGE.SMC.EDU/SAKAI_WALTER/BANDING.HTM

Limited to twelve people; sign-up is required. This event is being organized by Lance Benner. Please contact Lance (LBBENNER@CHARTER.NET, 626-791-1187) to reserve a spot and for information on where to meet and other logistics.

Lance Benner

San Jacinto Wildlife Area

Sunday, February 11, 2007

8:00 am – mid-afternoon

The San Jacinto Wildlife area is a major southern California location for wintering raptors and waterfowl.

This is a good trip for raptors such as Ferruginous Hawk, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, Osprey, eagles (both Bald and Golden are possible), Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, and Burrowing Owl. We will visit a nearby owl roost, with a chance to see Great Horned, Barn, and Long-eared Owl. This area can also be good for Mountain Bluebirds, Sage Thrashers, longspurs, sparrows, and, in some years, Mountain Plovers. Unusual species occur in the area with regularity.

As of early December two Eastern Phoebes and a Vermilion Flycatcher are present and a Zone-tailed Hawk is being seen intermittently.

From I-215, take the Ramona Expressway east to Davis Road, turn left (north), and meet at the the parking lot at 8:00 am. There's a modest entry fee. Bring lunch. Please note that acssing the wildlife area along Davis Road from the north is no longer possible.

If road conditions deteriorate substantially, an updated meeting site will be posted on the Pasadena Audubon listserv during the week prior to the trip.

Lance Benner

(see Field Trips, page 8)

Calendar

Submit material for the next Wrentit by February 1st

January 2007

| Date | Day | Time | Event | Location | Leader* |
|-------|-----|---------|---|------------------------------|---|
| 6 | Sat | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Hahamongna Watershed Park | Ron Cyger |
| 10 | Wed | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting | Pasadena Presbyterian Church | 585 E. Colorado (at Madison) |
| 13 | Sat | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Bolsa Chica | Mark Scheel |
| 17 | Wed | 7:00 pm | General Meeting | Eaton Canyon Nature Center | Program: The Arroyo: Past, Present and Future |
| 21 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Eaton Canyon Nature Center | Hill Penfold |
| 24 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip <i>(PAS Members Only)</i> | Huntington Library Gardens | Elaine MacPherson & Dan Lewis |
| 27-28 | S-S | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Carrizo Plain | Judy Bass (See page 5) |

February 2007

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----|---------|---|------------------------------|---|
| 3 | Sat | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Legg Lake/Peck Pit | Ed Stonick |
| 11 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip | San Jacinto Wildlife Area | Lance Benner |
| 14 | Wed | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting | Pasadena Presbyterian Church | 585 E. Colorado (at Madison) |
| 16-19 | Fri | All Day | Backyard Bird Count | Your Backyard! | See HTTP://WWW.AUDUBON.ORG/GBBC/INDEX.SHTML |
| 18 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Eaton Canyon Nature Center | Hill Penfold |
| 21 | Wed | 7:00 pm | General Meeting | Eaton Canyon Nature Center | Program: Butterflies in So Cal. |
| 24 | Sat | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Santa Fe Dam | Mickey Long |
| 25 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip <i>(PAS Members Only)</i> | Huntington Library Gardens | Elaine MacPherson & Dan Lewis |

March 2007

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----|---------|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 | Sat | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Hahamongna Watershed Park | Ron Cyger |
| 10 | Sat | Sunrise | Field Trip | Malibu Bird Banding | Lance Benner |
| 14 | Wed | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting | Pasadena Presbyterian Church | 585 E. Colorado (at Madison) |
| 18 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip | Eaton Canyon Nature Center | Hill Penfold |
| 21 | Wed | 7:00 pm | General Meeting | Eaton Canyon Nature Center | Program: Birding on \$4.00 a Gallon |
| 24-25 | S-S | 7:00 am | Field Trip <i>(PAS Members Only)</i> | Salton Sea | Ron Cyger |
| 25 | Sun | 8:00 am | Field Trip <i>(PAS Members Only)</i> | Huntington Library Gardens | Dan Lewis & Elaine MacPherson |

***Trip Leader Information**

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mark Scheel (Chair) | (818) 366-7343 | scheel@tapir.caltech.edu |
| Larry Allen | (626) 288-2701 | larryallen@earlymusica.org |
| Lance Benner | (626) 791-1187 | lbenner@charter.net |
| Ron Cyger | (626) 449-3625 (before 9 pm) | ron@cyger.org (preferred) |
| Jon Feenstra | (626) 792-4346 | feenstra@its.caltech.edu |
| Nick & Mary Freeman | (818) 247-6172 | mnmfreeman@earthlink.net |
| Sid Heyman | (626) 571-5991 | |
| Dan Lewis | (626) 398-4805 | danelewis@earthlink.net |
| Mickey Long | (626) 398-5442 | mlongbird@charter.net |
| Elaine MacPherson | (626) 355-9412 | birdergrrl@aol.com |
| Hill Penfold | (818) 352-4954 | hpenfold@bigfoot.com |
| Ed Stonick | (626) 796-0595 | edstonick@earthlink.net |
| Madeline West | (626) 574-0429 | west226@adelphia.net |

Q&A with Jon Dunn

(Part I)

Jon Dunn is the chief consultant for the National Geographic Society's "Field Guide to the Birds of North America", and the author or coauthor of many other birding books. He also acts as a guide for Wings, the bird tour company. A native of Southern California, Dunn now lives near Bishop, but we caught up with him as he was passing through on the way to a birding trip in Cuba, two days before the release of the fifth edition of the Field Guide.

What's different about the fifth edition, compared to the fourth?

It has thumb tabs. It has some new artwork. It has foldout panels on the cover for bird topography and a map of North America. The individual maps are a lot bigger, so it's easier to see them. The text has been completely gone over. There's a number of new plates and new figures. So virtually every family has had some work done on it.

How many artists work on this book?

Originally, if you looked at every piece of artwork, there were probably a dozen or so. These days we're working with a smaller team of artists to make the revisions, including my co-chief consultant Jonathan Alderfer. We work together pretty much on the entire book – look at every plate. They're already working on the next edition, which will be 2010; a major revision, looking at replacing fifty plates.

Do the artists go into the field for every bird that they paint?

Sometimes, and that helps. But these days, so many photographers have their work online that you can get a whole bunch of photo references. When we first did this book in the early 1980s, it wasn't available. The first edition was 1983.

How busy does this book keep you?

I worked a lot last year, from about the end of October through March. When I wasn't in the field or doing tours, I was working on this.

So how much of the time are you ordinarily in Bishop?

Well, less than half this year. But normally about half.

You got into this for the love of it. Did you think, when you were young, that you would end up spending your time this way?

Well, birding was an obsession. And I did think about law school when I was in college, but figured I'd never be . . . to be a really good attorney you have to be



pretty devoted to your profession. Gradually in college I had the opportunity to lead tours, and I was working on the "Birds of Southern California" with Kimball [Garrett], which came out in 1981 – the "Status and Distribution" book. And then Geographic's Claudia Wilds quit her position as chief consultant for the field guide they were working on. She recommended me to replace her. And so I took over as the chief consultant for the Geographic guide. I've been involved with all of their subsequent editions. And actually Geographic wants to get more into this bird business, so they have other books on birds, too.

You mean, go so far as to organize tours?

I don't think they want to do that, but they want to have a full book program. Be at festivals and things promoting their bird products.

I got my start in organized birding at Descanso Gardens in '66. San Fernando Audubon had a walk every Tuesday, and the second and fourth Saturdays. So Art Langden Sr. led my first bird walk – I suppose it would have been the fourth Saturday in March. At that point I went with the first people who were actually interested in birds, so I started doing more San Fernando trips. The second time I was with Chuck Bernstein, the second Saturday in April. My dad would drive me out and at that point, I was completely hooked. He had a lot of optics around, and I grabbed the best pair of binoculars in the house.

Two years later, in '68, Madera Canyon... you could stay there; they would pick you up at the airport. A friend and I hiked all over the Santa Rita Mountains. We hired a local guy to drive us to Patagonia one day and I got sixty life birds. My maternal grandmother lived in Davenport, Iowa. That year I was there for the fall migration, birded in the cemetery, got to see a whole bunch of extra birds. I was thrilled. I'm sure birding was a major

distraction from my schoolwork at times.

We have a member, Jon Feenstra, who's like that. I don't know how he did a big year and research at Caltech at the same time.

I know Jon. He's a very good, careful birder. A good birder will have his birds re-found. These days more and more people get photos of what they see. But it used to be, a lot of the stuff wasn't photo-documented. So it was sort of your reputation. If you have a reputation that none of your birds are ever re-found, you tend to be treated skeptically.

You're on the records committee. Is reputation a factor?

It's a factor. Sort of unspoken, but you do evaluate the credibility of the observer to some degree.

What do you do when you're traveling to an area where you've never spent any time with the native birds? How do you get ready?

Most of these areas have books available. Increasingly these things are online. Kids are so adept at getting every morsel online. Most birds of the world these days have photographs online, so you can look at what the actual live birds look like. The Europeans travel everywhere. The Dutch, the English, the Swedes are all very keen birders. The Germans are getting very active.

Bird books always try to describe the calls. As a beginner, I've always wondered: What's the point? It never seems to resemble the bird's call until you've already heard the actual call.

That's right. It's still good as a reference. If you've seen it, you can go back and say, "All right, that's what it sounded like." Or the book will say, "call similar to such and such," and you know that one.

Is "Status and Distribution" ever coming out again? Are you going to reprint it?

I don't know. I talk about it with Kimball. I think we both would, if we had the time. L.A. Audubon published 2500 copies; some of those they lost to the flood; then they lost more when the fire occurred at Audubon House. [Editor's note: the plates were also destroyed in the fire.] But if we figured out a contract or something and had the time, I think it's something we would both want to do again.

It would need quite a bit of updating, eh?

Wow, yeah. It would be a very different-looking book. A lot thicker.

(to be continued next issue)

Conservation (*continued*)

information and components necessary to piece together a successful plan from the proposed alternatives. Alternatives 1 and 2 provide important habitat to support many of the birds that currently use the Salton Sea. Alternative 4 offers a relatively low-cost, low-impact method to distribute water around much of the present shoreline and would provide additional habitat, shoreline protection and opportunities for recreation. The concentric lakes plan would provide direct air quality benefits, and would also offer a ready source of water for managing air quality problem areas that might arise in the future. And components of the larger north lake alternatives (Alternatives 5-7) provide recreation and economic development opportunities, enjoying the broad local support necessary for funding and implementation.

Therefore, I/we urge that DWR combine the following features from the proposed alternatives into a final, preferred alternative that would meet the legal requirements for restoration and provide opportunities for recreation and development in Imperial and Coachella Valleys:

- Between 25,000 – 50,000 acres of Shallow Saline Habitat Complex, as described in Alternatives 1 and 2, at the southern and northern ends of the Sea to provide habitat for shoreline species;
- Create concentric rings using geotubes or other dirt-filled barriers, as described in Alternative 4, to provide additional shallow habitat, deeper marine habitat, shoreline and view protection, air-quality protections, and recreation;
- Similar to the lakes found in Alternatives 5-7, provide a large (approximately 10,000 acre) North Lake, which would be the largest recreational lake in Southern California, fed by the Whitewater River to provide recreation and development opportunities without the costs and risks associated with a major mid-Sea barrier or the costs of pumping water from the southern end of the Sea;
- Provide at least one-half acre-foot of water per acre of exposed Seabed, as stipulated by the Salton Sea Advisory Committee, to prevent dust pollution caused by exposed playa, as described in Alternatives 1-3, 5-6 and 8;
- Construct shallow saline habitat (known as “early start habitat”) immediately to provide resources for birds during the long permitting and construction process, as described in all of the proposed alternatives;

• Develop a plan that provides water for habitat and air quality mitigation first, in case of possible shortages or system malfunctions, as described in Alternatives 1-3.

A Final Preferred Alternative that contains all of these components, each of which is present and analyzed in one or more of the draft alternatives, would best meet the legal requirements to maximize habitat, air quality and water quality, while also providing substantial recreation and development opportunities. I/we urge, therefore, the State to select the Preferred Alternative with the components and features outlined above. Such an “Evolved Alternative” would best meet the needs of local communities, fish and wildlife, and the people of California.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

[Name & Organization, if appropriate]

Laura Garrett

PURPLECOW@JPS.NET

[Copies of these letters can be downloaded from our website.]

Christmas Bird Count

A Short Report

The Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley Christmas Bird Count was held on December 16th. In spite of the occasional showers and what most felt was a low level of bird activity, we managed to tie the previous species record of 161. This is very good considering the weather undoubtedly dampened spirits and total party hours spent in the field.

We found nearly all the expected species and had two standout birds. The first was a nominate/eastern Bell's Vireo. This bird was discovered and documented by our own John Garrett in his backyard. The other highlight was a female Black-throated Blue Warbler spotted in another Pasadena backyard, this one belonging to Susie Frank. Both of these birds are extremely rare anywhere in Southern California at any time, but especially so in winter. It's obviously a good idea to keep your binoculars handy even while mowing the lawn!

Other good birds included a juvenile Northern Goshawk near the Nature Center at Whittier Narrows, a Thayer's Gull along the San Gabriel River, a Common Ground-dove at Hahamongna Watershed Park, a female Williamson's Sapsucker at Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena, and a Tropical Kingbird at Lincoln Park. Look for more highlights in the complete results in the next issue of *The Wrentit*.

Jon Fisher

Field Trips (*continued*)

Legg Lake, Peck Pit, et al

Saturday, February 3, 2007

7:30 am – 1:00 pm

This trip will cover several consistently good lake and river birding areas. Legg Lake has lots of water and scattered trees and has produced good waterfowl numbers and varieties as well as an impressive list of migrants and wintering birds. We'll then make a quick stop at the San Gabriel River just below Peck Rd. This is where a Fulvous Whistling-Duck showed up this past winter (on Christmas Count day!). Peck Road Park contains a huge lake that often hosts a wide variety of water birds, including grebes, ducks, gulls, terns, egrets, and shorebirds. The Livingstone-Graham Reservoir usually contains hundreds of ducks and gulls. There are almost always one or two Ospreys present. Other raptors are often seen at all these locations.

The parking lot at Legg Lake is accessed from Durfee Avenue between Rosemead Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue. The 60 Freeway exits for Rosemead, Santa Anita, and Peck Rd. all lead south to Durfee.

Ed Stonick

Salton Sea

Sat.-Sun., March 24-25, 2007

All day Saturday and until Noon Sunday

The trip has been a traditional way for PAS members to begin their year list! We usually find over 100 species for the weekend and over the years we have seen the following numbers of species: 27 geese & ducks, 13 hawks, 15 waders, 8 gulls, 6 terns, 11 flycatchers, 10 warblers, and 16 sparrows. This is one of the premier birding spots on the continent! We will bird all day Saturday and half a day on Sunday, heading home after lunch.

This trip is only for Pasadena Audubon members and is limited to 12.

Ron Cyger

New Members (*continued*)

Margaret Bradt, Belinda Faustinos, Maxine McLain, Trang Nguyen, Lois Ottesen; **SAN GABRIEL**: John Barnes, Barbara Bartle, Lita Fuzy, Joseph Govea, Alice Moffitt, Clesta Roylance; **SAN MARINO**: Kenneth Oder; **SIERRA MADRE**: Bret Wagner; **SOUTH PASADENA**: Barbara & John Bonk, Peter Connolly, Nancy Gower, Pedro Marenco, Leslie Niccolaiades, Victor Shen, Dr. & Mrs. Harry Yamahir; **TEMPLE CITY**: Mr. & Mrs. Will Enid, Deborah Kolodji, George Kuc, Bonnie Nelson; **TUJUNGA**: Joan Graham.



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Salton Sea

American White Pelicans
Black-tipped flight feathers
Skimming just above
The deep-blue waters

They come in single file
Leisurely beating their great wings
Nine-foot spans glide effortlessly

One hundred, two
hundred, three hundred sailing, sliding
North along the water past the point

Another hundred birds appear
Following the line
Part of the majestic company

In the distance, the line breaks and
Flows in a wave. Up and down
Undulating on the thermals
Soaring above the water

by Pat Garcia



Magpie Bird Study Group

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

Tuesday, January 16, 2007
San Dimas Canyon
Meet at the Nature Center

Tuesday, February 20, 2007
Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area

Take 210 freeway east to Irwindale Ave. Turn right (south) on Irwindale and go just over one mile to Arrow Highway. Go Right (west) on Arrow Highway about .5 mile to Azusa Canyon Road, turn right. We will meet about a block up on Azusa Canyon Road, before you enter the park.

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
Peck Pit

Meet in the parking lot.

Tuesday, April 17, 2007
Rancho Santa Ana

Meet in the parking lot.

*Sid Heyman
Madeline West*

PAS on the WEB

Website

[HTTP://WWW.PASADENAAUDUBON.ORG](http://WWW.PASADENAAUDUBON.ORG)

ListServe

[HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/PASADENAAUDUBON/](http://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/PASADENAAUDUBON/)

Become a Chapter-only Member of PAS

Policy changes by the National Audubon Society have severely reduced the share of NAS membership dues returned to local chapters, funds which Pasadena Audubon has used to finance its programs and services. To make up for the loss of funds from National Audubon, Pasadena Audubon, like many other National Audubon chapters, now offers *Chapter only* memberships.

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

We thank you all for your support!

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Donor's address for gift membership:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Yearly Membership for Individual or Family

PAS Chapter Only \$20 \$35* Other _____

* Plus Chapter Pin and Tee Shirt or PAS Birding Guide

\$15 Senior/Full-time Student

Donation _____

Make checks payable and mail to:

Pasadena Audubon Society, 1750 N. Altadena Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107

Kid's Corner

The Heartbreak and Victory of Twitching

twitching

noun

1. a sudden muscle spasm; especially one caused by a nervous condition
2. the act of pursuing rare birds, near or far, on short notice

The Heartbreak:

Sunday, November 19, 3:30 am: My dad and I were still half-asleep when we left for the Salton Sea to look for that once-in-a-lifetime bird, the hyper-rare Ross's Gull. We arrived at the birder-packed Red Hill Marina at about 6:45 and bumped into Ron Cyger. He said that he had just glimpsed the bird fifteen minutes before, but he was going to see if it came back. That was good news.

Unfortunately, with a crowd of other frustrated birders, we waited for *six whole hours*, and the Ross's Gull *still* did not

return. I did get two other life birds (Lesser Black-backed and Yellow-footed Gulls) but they were nothing compared to seeing the Ross's. What made it so frustrating was the thought that if we had left home fifteen minutes earlier, we would have seen it! However, my dad and I went to IHOP on our way back home, and the pancakes, syrup, and bacon helped make up for the mega-disappointment.

The Victory:

On Friday, November 24, my mom and I were at the Ballona Wetlands, on the middle jetty, where the Rock Sandpiper had last been seen. We saw Jon Dunn and asked him if the bird was still around. He apologized, saying that it had just flown to the northern jetty, a fifteen-minute drive away! He said that if we waited, it might return but we might have better luck if we drove to that other side. We thanked him and walked out onto the jetty. A few other birders scoped the far jetty. All we could see was a large flock of sleeping Surfbirds

and Black Turnstones. The birds obviously were not coming over here, so my mom and I drove over to the northern side. Just as we were walking up that jetty, a couple of birders happily informed us that we had just missed the bird, and it had just flown over to the southern jetty. My mom and I sighed and drove back to where we had started. There were more birders now. One of them said that he had better see this bird, since he had missed the Ross's Gull by three hours. "Try missing it by fifteen minutes," I sighed. Just when everyone was about to give up, I suddenly exclaimed, "I got the bird!" Everybody jumped and asked where it was. Eventually everyone saw it, though it was running around quickly. Soon my mom and I went back home. Although I had missed the Ross's Gull, I was definitely satisfied with the Rock Sandpiper.

John Garrett

JOHNGARRETT@JPS.NET

New Members

PAS is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope you will get involved in our many activities.

ALHAMBRA: Graciela Cuevas, Joe Hudgens; **ALTADENA:** Eugene Alpeter, Swami Anandanugit, Linda Bowen, Todd & Elena Creamer, Chris & Anita David, Victoria Davis, Keith Edwards, Laura Gloster, Charles Jones, Arden Lichty, Laura Anne Rowell, Andrew Stokes,

Patricia Savoiehn Tarbell; **ARCADIA:** Cyrena Hellman, Abu & Sadia Israel, Lloyd Johnson, Bradford King, Barbara McKinnon, Sikuan Sutanto, Barbara & Stan von Mayrhauser; **AZUSA:** Lester Kau, David Lane, Betty Thomas; **LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE:** Russell Guiney, Kathleen Kenna, Robert MacMillan, Peter Nisotis; **LA VERNE:** Peter & Beth Smart; **LOS ANGELES:** Christian Schulmann, Marie Vester; **MONROVIA:** Barbara Fabin, Hanna

Wojciechowski; **MONTEREY PARK:** Joy Hudspeth, Helen Lew, Hu Shih; **MONTROSE:** Lisa Lashaway; **PASADENA:** Margaret Adams, Elva Aiken, John Phillip Blum, Sue Cummins, Maria Doerfler, Pat & Bob Garcia, Justine Garvey, Lynn Jennings, Leslie Lamberson, Charles Lewis, Elena Owens, Bert Potter, Robert Raymond, Carlotta Richardson, A. Seeley, Joy Steinmeier, Norman Thomas; **ROSEMEAD:** (see New Members, page 8)

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