What Gull Is That?  
**Wednesday, March 18, 2009**  
**Larry Allen**

Of course you know the names of the gulls you look—at least the English names as found in your field guides. But the scientific names have been changed recently, and the sequence in which the birds are listed (a reflection of the chronological order in which each species is thought to have appeared) has been altered as well. Larry will use the scientific results supporting these changes as a stepping stone to explore the variation among some of our local gulls, and will provide some identification hints as well.

Larry Allen is Project Coordinator for, and co-author of, the forthcoming Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas, has conducted gull identification workshops for local Audubon Chapters and the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, and has had a longtime fascination with gulls. Larry will lead a gull-watching field trip on March 21.

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The Top of Down Under  
**Wednesday, April 15, 2009**  
**Denise Goodfellow**

Denise, former classical music teacher and buffalo shooter, gained a position of trust in the indigenous Kunwinjku (Freshwater People) of the Darwin area of Australia after her arrival in 1975. In 1983 Denise began working as a specialist birdwatching guide, mainly with Americans. She was also a biological consultant and surveyed birds, and other fauna and flora, across the Top End. In 2000 Denise’s adopted Kunwinjku sisters asked her to help them start tourism in their country, and the Baby Dreaming tourism project was born.

Denise is now doing a PhD on American birdwatchers. She has fought for habitat conservation and for including the indigenous peoples' relationship with nature in school curriculums. She is the author of several books, including some used as university textbooks. Come listen to her numerous and wide-ranging tales.

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Cape May  
**Wednesday, May 20, 2009**  
**Jon Feenstra et al**

In September of 2008, Jon Feenstra led a group of PAS Board members on a birding field trip to Cape May, New Jersey. Cape May is a world-renowned hotspot for observing bird migration. Every fall millions of waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, and passerines funnel through the peninsula. Waves of migrants are pushed by passing autumn weather systems and settle to rest on the Point before long flights over the ocean. Their staging and passage coincidently supplies an excellent opportunity for the birder. Jon and company will present a report of the trip with natural history, bird pictures, stories, and other interesting and amusing highlights.

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**President’s Perch**

**Way Out of Town**

Lois and I just returned from a 17-day birding trip to India—it was awesome! In addition to a visit to the beautiful Taj Mahal and three encounters with tigers (we were on elephants), we saw almost 300 species of birds, of which 200 were “life” birds, including the elusive Black Bittern, the majestic Sarus Crane and the beautiful Greater Flameback Woodpecker. We found the people of India very friendly but the traffic was unbelievable. It was a mix of people, cars, trucks, cows, bikes, scooters (and our small bus), all trying to occupy the same piece of road. Somehow, with much horn-honking, we were able to keep moving to our destination—slowly. I really enjoyed the trip except for the food (too much curry and hot spices on the veggies, and meat was seldom offered) but we survived. I recommend India.

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Conservation

2008 Christmas Bird Count

Forty-two birders participated in the 2008 Pasadena Christmas Bird Count, the annual census of early winter birdlife in the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding areas. With only a couple of exceptions we were able to cover all regular count areas. The weather also cooperated, being pleasantly cool with no rain. The last time we had significant precipitation on the count was in 2003. With heavy rain in the afternoon the total number of birds counted dropped forty percent below average.

While a high species count isn’t the primary goal of the CBC, it’s usually the first figure we look at. This year we managed to reach a very respectable 160—the third highest total ever. This indicates effective coverage of the count circle and a good ability to find the birds that are present. The most important data are the actual numbers of each species. Using this information we can track population trends and gather valuable information about local bird life over a significant span of time.

Variations in the count, in combination with a variety of vagrants, make each year interesting and different. The 2008 count was no exception, with some interesting low counts, a handful of good rarities and just a few misses of expected birds. Irruptive and invasive species were largely absent this year.

The count data sometimes illustrates the downside of conducting the census on a single calendar day; it’s easy to miss a few relatively common birds or get unusual numbers depending upon coincidences of bird and observer movements. Even taking this into account, over the years we generate a pretty accurate picture of birdlife within the circle.

This year many waterfowl were present in unusually low numbers, though this was not necessarily the case elsewhere in the county. As an example we had only one Northern Pintail and three Cinnamon Teal for the entire count, but the lower LA River simultaneously hosted good numbers of both of these species.

On the other hand, thirty-five Canvasbacks was a very good count and the most recorded on the Pasadena CBC since 1985. An ongoing turnover of birds in combination with the quantity and quality of available habitat accounts for some of the variation in numbers from year to year.

Other notable waterfowl this year included a long present Ross’s Goose at Legg Lake, a Cackling Goose at the Arboretum and a Common Goldeneye at Lincoln Park.

Three Northern Harriers were the most found since 2000, but White-tailed Kites were missed for the fourth time in the last five years. Three Merlin was average and a single Peregrine Falcon, now regular on the count, was also tallied. (Between 1977 and 1997, there were only three records of Peregrines on the count, while in the last ten counts sixteen have been recorded.)

Shorebirds were generally in expected numbers and variety, but one highlight was twenty-nine Wilson’s Snipe along the San Gabriel River, the most by far since 1998.

Gulls are becoming a bigger story each year on the Pasadena count. Western Gulls have been increasing dramatically inland since the start of this decade and 675 of them this year more than doubled any previous count. Glaucous-winged Gulls also increased, with seventy-nine recorded. The previous high count? A mere twelve in 2004.

We also had two Thayer’s Gulls and eighteen Herring Gulls. Most of these gulls were recorded along the San Gabriel River near the Valley crossing... a definite gull hotspot and one well worth checking throughout the winter months as long as water is present.

Eurasian Collared-Doves are also spreading through the county. With the first count records being single birds counted in 2006 and 2007, we had five this year. I suspect that next year their numbers will really take off... no pun intended.

Counts of Red-crowned Parrots, Mitred Parakeets and Yellow-chevroned Parakeets were also higher than normal. Two of the now rare Yellow-headed Parrots were also recorded. This species was once much more common in the San Gabriel Valley, but has declined markedly since the 1970s.

A Spotted Owl was found in the early morning hours on count day in Big Santa Anita Canyon for only the second count record in the last three decades. The other was found in 2007 during count week.

Allen’s Hummingbird wasn’t recorded on the count until the late 1980’s, but over a hundred are now regularly recorded on the CBC. These counts are indicative of a major range expansion of this bird on LA County’s coastal plain. The highest concentrations are at the Arboretum and Huntington Gardens, but they can readily be found in suburban areas and parks throughout the coastal slope.

Woodpeckers included a Hairy Woodpecker and White-headed Woodpecker at Mt. Wilson; both are species that can be hard to find elsewhere. A single Red-naped Sapsucker was found along with two of the more expected Red-breasted Sapsuckers.

(continued on page 4)

Victory at Annandale Canyon

On February 9, the Pasadena City Council voted to purchase 20.6 acres of open space in Annandale Canyon. This project has been almost ten years in the making, and demonstrates amazing cooperation between City staff, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the neighborhood association, the neighbors who voted to tax themselves a Benefit Assessment District, and the developer, John Head. This land will be developed with trails, and will be open to the public for birding, hiking and enjoying.

Laura Garrett

Open Space Update

The Open Space and Conservation Advisory Committee for the City of Pasadena needs your input. The Committee will be sponsoring a follow-up workshop to its February 28th Open Space and Conservation Fair on Saturday, May 2. You are all invited to attend a workshop and share your ideas about open space and conservation in the City of Pasadena. You do not need to be a Pasadena resident to participate; all are welcome. Time and location are TBA.

The Open Space and Conservation Advisory Committee meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 in the basement of City Hall. All are welcome. For more information, please contact Laura Garrett at purplecow@jps.net or (626) 564-1890.

In the Next Issue

Pasadena Audubon Society issues grants to worthy individuals and organizations. In the May issue we’ll talk about how the Board evaluates grant applications and decides who will get our money. The Board invites your comments about our grant policy.
Trip Reports

Bolsa Chica

We had a very fun and birdy trip at Bolsa Chica on January 17. This location not only hosts a great variety and large numbers of water birds (we found 70 species Saturday), but also allows extremely close looks at many of the birds. Right from the start, Brown Pelicans dove for fish a few meters from the boardwalk, and Ruddy Ducks, Bufflehead, and Horned Grebes swam and dove almost underneath us. For those of us used to looking at Ruddy Ducks magnified through 8 power binoculars or 30 power scopes, it was fascinating to see how small they really are when up close.

Bolsa Chica can sometimes host rarities, and Saturday was no exception. If a single Reddish Egret isn’t enough for you, on this trip we had two! At one point both of them jumped and danced together in front of us, stepping over Red-breasted Mergansers, and watched by a Great Blue Heron and Great and Snowy Egrets. An American Bittern also made an appearance, and was first seen stretched out, bill pointing at the sky, in the pickleweed. It then crouched back down, walked around the outside of the pickleweed clump and disappeared inside.

Besides the Surf Scoters that are often found at Bolsa Chica, there was also a White-winged Scoter that spent most of its time either underwater or in a crowd of Ruddy Ducks. But often patience pays off in birding: eventually it flapped its wings, showing the bright white secondaries. And of course there were shorebirds: Two Red Knots mingled with Dowitchers and Dunlin, and both Least and Western Sandpipers foraged just below the path, allowing close comparison. Long-billed Curlew and Marbled Godwits also came very close to the path, and Snowy, Black-bellied, and Semipalmated Plovers picked in the mud.

There was no shortage of action as well: Besides the antics of the Reddish Egrets, we also watched a Peregrine Falcon repeatedly dive at ducks, gulls, American Avocets, and even a Northern Harrier (which looked like it was flopping around in slow motion compared to the Peregrine).

And for those who like a challenge, we picked out a few Greater Scaup from the many Lesser Scaup present, and we found 5.5 species of Gulls (the 0.5 is for Western x Glaucous-winged hybrids) of various ages.

The best non-countable bird we had was a male Zebra Finch, presumably an escapee, that tried briefly to land on our scopes, sat on the ground for some time allowing approach within three feet, and finally flew off over the estuary.

Bolsa Chica is one of my favorite places to bird, and last Saturday’s trip is a prime example of why.

Mark Scheel

Santa Fe Dam

Eight of us turned out on January 24 to brave the morning drizzle for the trip to Santa Fe Dam. The main objective for much of the morning seemed to be keeping our binocular lenses dry, but we managed find a nice mix of birds in the process.

Geese were well represented, with Canada, “Aleutian” Cackling, Greater White-fronted, Snow and Ross’s all offering a good chance for study and comparison among the motley crew of domestic waterfowl. There were also a handful of Common Mergansers and several Canvasback mixed in with the usual assortment of ducks, herons and egrets. A single Glaucous-winged Winged Gull, a species that is staging a remarkable inland invasion this winter, was also seen.

In the open areas west of the lake, a pair of White-tailed Kites gave us good scope views. Other raptors included Cooper’s, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, Osprey, American Kestrel and a probable Peregrine Falcon off in the distance. Sparrows included White-crowned, Lincoln’s, Song, Lark, Savannah, Chipping and of course a few Dark-eyed “Oregon” Juncos. Other birds included Cassin’s Kingbirds (which seemed to be everywhere) and two Tree Swallows over the lake.

In spite of the persistent misty rain, it was a pleasant morning that showcased the variety of birds to be found in the Santa Fe Dam basin. The variety of habitats here is the key to the diversity of birdlife. While summer is to be avoided, anytime from September through May can be productive. Also, since the distances are often substantial, a spotting scope is very helpful for raptors, waterfowl and sparrows.

Jon Fisher

Salton Sea

Rain was predicted for February 7th. Usually we don’t believe the forecasters, but this time they were right. We woke up on Saturday morning to rain. That meant mud, sticky, slippery mud. It also meant that we may not be able to get to some locations and certain target birds may be hard to find.

We made our first stop in the rain looking for the Bendire’s Thrasher that had been reported in Calipatria, no luck. At the Wister unit we had a Vermilion Flycatcher and Phainopepla along with other expected birds. From there we made a try for pipits and longspurs, but as we drove on the muddy roads, we started to slip and slide and worried about being stuck in the mud. So we headed over to the SBSSNWRHQ for grebes, gulls, geese and terns. We didn’t find the Cave Swallow, but had a great time walking out to Rock Hill (the rain had stopped by now). We took a chance and drove the sea wall at Lindsay and then over to Unit #1, where we had many more geese, Sandhill Cranes, a White-tailed Kite, and a couple of Tundra Swans.

The next morning we began with a trip to Fig Lagoon and picked up a lot of American White Pelicans, a Ferruginous Hawk and a Peregrine Falcon. From there we covered some back roads and found Mountain Bluebirds. At Cattle Call (continued on page 4)
Salton Sea (continued)

Park we had some Inca and Common Ground Doves, a Cactus Wren and a Great-Horned Owl (thanks Rob). After lunch we made one more stop at the sea and picked up some Stilt Sandpipers, Brown Pelicans and Long-billed Dowitchers.

All in all we had 116 birds for the trip. Not bad for a rainy weekend. And we all got a good start on our 2009 year lists!

Ron Cyger

Christmas Count (continued)

Two Gray Flycatchers were recorded, one at Lacy Park in San Marino and the other at Hahamonga Watershed Park. Quite rare in winter was a “Western” Flycatcher—the first since 2004—at the Huntington Gardens. Presumably the birds that occur in winter here are Pacific-slope Flycatchers, but non-vocalizing birds are not separable from the nearly identical Cordilleran Flycatcher which may also occur as a vagrant.

In addition to five of the resident and expected Hutton’s Vireos, other vireos included a single Plumbeous Vireo and two Cassin’s Vireos.

A pair of Chestnut-sided Warblers were found along San Jose Creek producing the third count record. There were several record high counts for warblers; these included Yellow Warbler (eleven), Townsend’s Warbler (forty-three) and Wilson’s Warbler (eight).

Two Western Tanagers—one at the Huntington Gardens and the other at Occidental College—was less than usual, though this species has been declining on the count over the last two decades.

In addition to all the expected sparrows there were two Vesper Sparrows at Santa Fe Dam. This marks the third year in a row that this rather rare winter visitor has been recorded.

With the advantage of photos to review, a female grosbeak at the Arboretum was eventually identified as a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Any grosbeak in winter is quite rare and this nice find was the first Rose-breasted on the count since 1982.

Twenty Tricolored Blackbirds were counted at their long time reliable location at Legg Lake. This is the only count circle location I’m aware of where they can regularly be found.

Along with average numbers of Purple Finches, a mere two Pine Siskins was the total for the entire count and a single Cassin’s Finch was just inside the count circle at Mt Wilson—first since 1992.

Round out the count were a couple of exotics; eleven Red Bishops were the first since 2002 and a single Nutmeg Mannikin was below the recent average number.

Despite changes in both habitat and birdlife, some things have remained remarkably unchanged. Most raptors, waterfowl, herons and egrets have actually been surprisingly consistent over the past few decades. The same holds true for such migrants as Cedar Waxwings and White-crowned and Chipping Sparrows. Warblers both rare and regular have been on the increase, and that may largely be due to birders getting better at finding them, though an increase in exotic and non-native plantings may also be a factor.

Even though our count circle is landlocked, mild winters and varied habitats have made the Pasadena CBC a productive one. As it has been for many years, we’re fortunate to have groups of dedicated participants who cover the same areas from year to year.

A perennial favorite statistic of mine is how many species were represented by just one individual. This year that number was twenty-two. How easily could many of those single birds been missed, and how many other single birds did we just miss seeing?

And what expected birds did we miss entirely? Aside from the aforementioned White-tailed Kite, birds that we at least had a good chance of getting but didn’t included White Pelican, Spotted Dove, Costa’s Hummingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Cactus Wren and the “Slate-colored” race of Dark-eyed Junco. Not much really, especially given how difficult it’s becoming to find both shrikes and Spotted Doves in the San Gabriel Valley.

One other interesting statistic is the total number of birds found. While this normally fluctuates, the last five years have all generated numbers between 23,043 and 25,042; a range of just 2,000 and less than a ten percent variance.

Organizing and compiling the count over the last two decades has been a very informative and enjoyable experience. I’d once again like to give a sincere thank you to all the birders who make the count possible each year, and to those who helped with the traditional count night dinner. The Pasadena CBC has been running for over sixty years and that can’t happen without a lot of dedicated volunteers.

Jon Fisher

In the Next Issue

The Fulmers underwent a Passage to India with jet lag as the only aftereffect. See Will Fulmer’s photo of an Indian Gray Hornbill, at left.

Also, reports from the Great Backyard Bird Count. (Our Birdathon will happen too late in April to make it into the May issue.)
Field Trips

Fish Canyon Private Access
Sunday, April 5, 2009
8:00 am - noon

Fish Canyon is a lovely little canyon near Duarte with a permanent stream and a tall cul-de-sac waterfall. Although it's very close to civilization, it's seldom visited because a quarry completely blocks access to the canyon mouth. Hikers must take a long and steep detour over a thousand-foot ridge to drop into the canyon bottom upstream of the quarry. However, the quarry owner, Vulcan Materials, occasionally escorts private guests across its property, making trail access simple and easy.

PAS has made special arrangements for a visit. Our vehicles will be convoyed across the quarry to the trailhead on the far side. Be punctual and be prepared to carpool for the brief drive across the quarry. We’ll see winter migrants and permanent residents in a pristine setting without the dogs, bicycles, and noisy folks usually experienced in our suburban canyons. Contact Mark Hunter (see page 10) to make a reservation.

Gull Chase
Saturday, March 21, 2009
8:00 am – noon

This field trip complements the gull ID information that Larry Allen will present at the March general meeting. Meet at the San Juan Creek mouth at Doheny State Beach. From the San Gabriel Valley, take any route to the I-5 Freeway, and continue south to the Pacific Coast Highway exit in Dana Point. Proceed west on PCH, turn left on Dana Point Harbor Dr, and left at the first signal into the state beach. Park in the lot on the right just before the bridge over San Juan Creek.

Piute Ponds
Saturday, April 11, 2009
7:00 am - 2:00 pm

Few locations in L.A. County can offer the species count, or sheer number of birds, found at Piute Ponds and nearby sites. This slightly surreal marsh in the middle of the Mojave Desert attracts thousands of migrating ducks and shorebirds, and many desert species (possible Le Conte's Thrasher) live next door. It is located on Edwards Air Force Base and access is strictly controlled - early reservations are mandatory and trip size is limited to 12 participants. Contact the trip leader for reservations. Other sites to be visited include a private ranch, Apollo Park, and the inimitable Lancaster Sewage Ponds. Possibly Rosamond Lake. Meet at the park-and-ride lot in Palmdale, off Avenue S at Route 14, to carpool for the trip.

Big Morongo Reserve
Saturday, May 9, 2009
8:00 am - 1:00 pm

This desert oasis and migrant trap offers great birding in the spring. Warblers, flycatchers, hummingbirds and orioles are among the birds expected. At least one pair of Vermilion Flycatchers has been seen every April in memory. Join us as we walk the trails in Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and into adjoining Covington Park, where you will enjoy one of the finest birding locations in the world, with over 250 species of birds making stops at the Preserve annually. Directions: Allow 2 hours drive from Pasadena. Take Interstate 10 east to Route 62, which is past the Palm Springs turnoff. Go north to the tiny town of Morongo Valley and turn right on East Drive to the Big Morongo Preserve at 11055 East Drive. Meet at the Information Kiosk at the south end of the parking lot. Bring lunch and drinks. Rain in Pasadena cancels.

Kathi Ellsworth

Owens Lake
Saturday, May 2, 2009
7:30 am – 2:00 pm

This is a repeat of the successful field trip on 4/26/2008 where we observed over 10,000 shorebirds of 18 different species. While May 2 is slightly past peak of migration we can expect to see big number of shorebirds, gulls and waterfowl. Thanks to the efforts of the Los Angeles DWP, the Owens Valley Committee, and other environmental organizations, we will observe the continued recovery of this amazing wildlife resource after nearly a century of being a dried up dust bowl. Time permitting, we will also visit the Cartago salt works, Dirty Sock springs and other locations around the lake.

Meet at the Ranch House Café parking lot in Olancha. Driving time from Pasadena is about 3.5 hours. There are good hotels and restaurants, including a Best Western, in Lone Pine. Information on the history and some of the biology of the region is at: WWW.OVCWEB.ORG/OWENSVALLEY/OWENSVALLEY.HTML. A checklist of the birds is also available at this web site.

Spotting scopes recommended. Trip is limited to 12 persons. Reservations required; contact the trip leader.

Mike San Miguel

Find the House Finch and Win!

Somewhere in this issue of The Wrenlit, we have hidden an image of a House Finch. Can you find it? If you can, tell us where it is and win a valuable prize!

Winners will be announced April 1st.
# Calendar

*Submit material for the next Wrenlit by April 1st*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Magpie Study Group</td>
<td>Santa Fe Dam</td>
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<td>Rancho Santa Ana</td>
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<td>Birdathon!</td>
<td>America's Birdiest County!</td>
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*PAS members only*

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### *Trip Leader Information*

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<tr>
<td>Mark Scheel (Chair)</td>
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<td>(626) 355-5058</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Stonick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madeline West</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:WEST266@ADELPHIA.NET">WEST266@ADELPHIA.NET</a></td>
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**Pasadena Audubon Society BIRDATHON 2009**  
**Friday, April 24 through Sunday, April 26, 2009**

It's time again for the fun-raiser and fund-raiser we call Birdathon! This event is always timed for the maximum of avian diversity: some wintering birds are still present, many summering species have arrived, and migrants are everywhere.

Here's the idea: you ask people to sponsor you by pledging some amount of money (see the pledge form below), for example 20 cents per species. You can ask friends, family members, co-workers (maybe even your boss if you have the nerve), or anyone you think might be interested in supporting Pasadena Audubon Society. Then you go birding on April 24, 25, or 26, and try to find (by sight or sound, as long as you have a solid identification) as many species of bird as possible. When you report the results to your sponsors, they make donations to PAS based on what you've found.

You should feel free to explore variations on this theme: for instance, you might wish to bird only within Pasadena city limits, or travel only by foot or bicycle, or bird only in your backyard. And you can spend as much or as little time and effort as you want, from watching your feeders out the window for an hour to embarking on a 24-hour long manic quest on a finely-tuned precision birding route.

Teams are encouraged; you can even give your team a birding name like 'The Raven Loonatics', 'Team Fecal Sac', or 'No Tern Unstoned' (sorry, these names are taken). With teams, each bird species should be identified by at least two team members and 95% should be identified by everyone.

In addition to supporting PAS, sponsors also learn a little about birds and bird habitat. In particular, non-birding sponsors are often amazed at the number of bird species that can be found here (but don't surprise them too much: please give your sponsors an estimate of how many birds you expect before they pledge!). Along with a thank-you note, I always send my sponsors a species list and a description of how the day went, including surprising birds or surprisingly-missed birds, and any amusing anecdotes.

This year the proceeds from Birdathon will support our home (Eaton Canyon Nature Center) and our grant fund (more about our grant process in our next issue.) Please turn in donations by June 1. Results will be announced at the Annual Dinner in June.

Birdathon is a lot of fun, supports PAS, and educates non-birders about birds and the importance of habitat. So give it a try, or please consider being a sponsor.

*Mark Scheel*

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**Participant Information:**

Name: ___________________  Day phone: _______________  Night ___________________

Street Address: ___________________  Species count: ________________

City, State, ZIP: ___________________  Total donations: ________________

Make checks payable to PASADENA AUDUBON SOCIETY, 1750 N Altadena Dr, Pasadena, CA 91107

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**Birdathon Coincides with America's Birdiest County Competition**

Pasadena Audubon members are preparing for another Birdathon on the weekend of April 25th with an ulterior motive this year: Win the title of America's Birdiest County. In the past these two events have been held on separate weekends, but by combining them PAS hopes to give an extra boost to the "A.B.C." count. Los Angeles County was a winner in 2007, but fell short in 2008 due to a combination of bad luck and fewer counters in the field. With a little work and luck we can win this title again in 2009.
Book Review

Birds in Flight: The Art and Science of How Birds Fly
Carrol L. Henderson, Voyager

“I’ve wandered the world in search of life: bird by bird I’ve come to know the earth...”
Pablo Neruda, Art of Birds

In this lavishly illustrated volume, wildlife biologist and extraordinary photographer Carrol L. Henderson takes the reader on a journey that is filled with both the poetry of movement and the practical principles of aerodynamics.

As the author notes, one need not be a prize-winning poet to appreciate the beauty of birds in flight. Henderson has provided a selection of approximately 150 photographs that alone would be worthy of any coffee table tome. The book is divided into three parts with the introductory section dedicated to the artist aspects of flight.

While giving the reader ample opportunity to appreciate the esthetic aspects of birds, in Parts II and III Henderson explains and illustrates the scientific principles of flight and basic laws of aerodynamics. It is in these sections that Henderson’s knowledge and abilities as a naturalist shine.

Part II focuses on aerodynamics and the author manages to make the principles of physics accessible enough to allow the careful reader to amaze her colleagues with a new-found understanding of Bernoulli’s Principle, aspect ratio, and wing loading, not to mention thrust, drag and wingtip vortex!

My favorite segment of Part II includes a detailed discussion of the types of feathers, wing shapes and tails and how they function in the complicated task of flight. Do you know that slotted wingtips, so conspicuous on hawks and vultures, also commonly occur on some migratory songbirds? More to the point, do you know why? Until reading that this characteristic helps reduce turbulence at the wingtip and make flight more energy-efficient, I didn’t.

Part III completes the discussion of flight with a discussion of take-offs and landings and a very interesting explanation of the difference between soaring and gliding. After reading the author’s segment on the principles of dynamic soaring you will come to understand how the wandering albatross is able to wander! This lovely book is a fine addition to any birder’s library and is an accessible resource for anyone interested in the relationship of bird physiology to the physics of flight.

Karen L. Mateer

Field Trips (continued)

Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk
Sunday, March 15, 2009
Sunday, April 19, 2009
Sunday, May 17, 2009
8:00 am – 11:00 am
Pasadena Audubon and Eaton Canyon Nature Center are cosponsoring monthly walks at Eaton Canyon. The walks are led by Hill Penfold, who has been leading them at ECNC for many years. Hill is wonderful with birders of all levels and Eaton Canyon is one of the best locations to learn the birds of the Pasadena area.

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

Hill Penfold

Hahamongna Monthly Walk
Saturday, March 7, 2009
Saturday, April 4, 2009
Saturday, May 2, 2009
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 north 210 at Berkshire and make a right, then a left at Oak Grove. The Hahamongna Watershed Park entrance is on the right at the next stop light. Take the first left after entering Hahamongna, and park by the ballfield

Ron Cyger

Huntington Library Monthly Walk
Sunday, March 22, 2009
Sunday, April 26, 2009
Sunday, May 24, 2009
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 thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible.

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

Elaine MacPherson

Thank You for Your Donations to PAS
These PAS members have recently made donations to our chapter: Ellen Rennick, Gayle Hackamack, Bob & Jan Stull. Thank you!
For Educators: Picturing John James Audubon

Audubon was America’s first renowned printer and nature writer. Full-time K-12 teachers, school librarians or administrators who want to find out more about Audubon are invited to apply to a Summer Institute, “Picturing John James Audubon”, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Institute takes place from Monday, July 6 through Friday, July 31, 2009, on the beautiful campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Participants selected for the Institute are eligible for a stipend.

For more information about the Institute, including setting, multi-disciplinary approach, and faculty, check out the Institute’s website, http://www.iub.edu/~engweb/picturingjohnjamesaudubon.html. You may also send an email to ahornick@indiana.edu or call 812-855-8226.

PAS Annual Elections

Nominations for Pasadena Audubon officers will be (enthusiastically) accepted at the April 15th general meeting. Elections will be held during the May 20th general meeting, and the new slate of officers will be presented at our annual dinner in June. Consider supporting PAS by serving as an officer (President, Vice-president, Treasurer, or Secretary.)

Sea & Sage Annual Dinner

Paul Lehman, avid birder, senior range-map researcher and biogeographer, will be the guest speaker at Sea and Sage Audubon’s Annual Dinner on March 20th. He will speak on “Migrant and Vagrant Traps in North America.” The evening's program will also include the presentation of their chapter's Fern Zimmerman Conservation Award and Letters of Commendation, the Gallagher Award, and Silent Auction. On the following morning, Paul will conduct a workshop on “Weather and Bird Migration.” For full details see: www.seaandsageaudubon.org or contact Nancy Kenyon at nancykenyon@cox.net or (949) 786-3160.

New Members, continued

Chapman; Joanne Clopper; John Craig; Erika Esau; Natalie France; Richard Frank; Donald Freshwater; Sharon Jackman; Maggie Johnson; Joyce Kavanagh; Ellen Knell; Frances McCann; Eris Migliorini; Nicole Mokryj; Doyle Phillips; Kathleen Raygoza; Gary Salazar; Mary Schander; Peggy Shafer; Nancy Ware; Matthew Willis; SAN GABRIEL: Jim Donald; C. Russell; SAN MARINO: Grant Cambridge; Carolyn Johnson; Margaret Fulmer; Michael Levine; Barbara Quinn; SIERRA MADRE: Jerry Truman; SOUTH PASADENA: Hilary Bradbury; Richard Elbaum; Philip Regan; TEMPLE CITY: Mark Shostrom

PAS on the Web:
www.pasadenaaudubon.org
and
groups.yahoo.com/group/PasadenaAudubon

Magpie Bird Study Group

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

Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Santa Fe Dam
Meet at the Nature Center

Tuesday, April 21, 2009
Rancho Santa Ana Gardens in Claremont
Meet at the entrance

Tuesday, May 19, 2009
Lower Arroyo
Meet in the parking lot directly back of the casting pool

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, PAS, 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!

Chapter-only Membership Application

Name ___________________________ Phone __________________
Address __________________________
City ___________________ State ______ ZIP ______

If this is a gift, please also provide donor's information below:
Name ___________________________ Phone __________________
Address __________________________
City ___________________ State ______ ZIP ______

Yearly dues:
[ ] $20 (regular) [ ] $15 (senior, or full-time student)
[ ] $35 (T-shirt or Birding Guide, plus a PAS pin)
[ ] ______ (donation)

Make checks payable to, and mail to:
Pasadena Audubon, 1750 N Altadena Dr, Pasadena, CA 91107
John's Corner

Where to Bird: Lacy Park

Although I’ve known about Lacy Park in San Marino for many years, it wasn’t until last autumn after I started “bigbying” (an acronym for Big Green Bird Year; basically a big year without carbon fuels) that I’ve been birding it regularly. I was surprised at some of the species of birds I could find here, and, along with the Lower Arroyo Seco, Lacy Park is now one of my birthing “patches”.

The park lies between St. Alban’s Road and Virginia Avenue, just north of Huntington Drive. There are two parking lots – one on the St. Alban’s side and one on Virginia. Note that on weekdays, there is no cost to enter the park, but on weekends, the cost is four dollars, and you must park in the Virginia side parking lot.

My personal birdlist for the area is sixty-five – not particularly impressive. However, this is only since last October, and this total is bound to increase. Also, what perhaps matters more than quantity is quality. Some fairly interesting wintering birds have turned up here: Red-naped Sapsucker, Gray Flycatcher, Hermit Warbler, Western Tanager, Bullock’s Oriole, and Purple Finch namely. Other birds that are more regular here include several ravens, parrots and parakeets, Western Scrub-Owls, nesting Allen’s Hummingbirds, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Hutton’s Vireos, Mountain Chickadees, Red-whiskered Bulbul, and several warblers and sparrows. Hermit Warblers can be surprisingly common in fall amongst the Townsend’s and Black-throated Gray Warblers.

Most of these birds are easiest to find in certain parts of the park, even though it is a very small park. The Gray Flycatcher currently wintering here, for example, is usually in the southwest corner of the park on a small lawn, separated from the main lawn. The Hermit Warbler also wintering here this year is pretty reliably found in a clump of conifers on the St. Alban’s side parking lot. Parrots and parakeets – including Red-masked Parakeet and Yellow-headed Parrot – tend not to stick around, and are usually flying over. For owls, come at night; the park closes at 10pm.

Lacy Park isn’t particularly distinctive, proving that not much is required to attract a wide variety of bird species. Try finding a park close to you, and make it a habit to visit it regularly; you never know what you’ll find.

John Garrett

New Members

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

ALHAMBRA: Judith Gilbert; Jason Hansen; Linda Huettink; Tri Huynh;

James Rojas; Yvonne Tsai;

ALTADENA: Gordon Arnold; Theodore Clarke; Dave Taylor; ARCADIA: Yvonne Asusen; Lael Blocker; David Godden; Henriette Wymar; AZUSA: Karen Longman; DUARTE: Lois Rupp; LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE: Teresa Dvoracek; Robert MacMillan; Alden Galbraith; Daniel Wu; LOS ANGELES: Carolyn Gurnan; MONROVIA: Mary Bonner; Kathleen Dwyer; June Pytel; Wendy Raymond; MONTEREY PARK: Rick Chang; Patricia Vazquez; PASADENA: Richard Bergman; Gene Burt; Marilyn Catrantzos; Nicholas ...continued on page 9