High Country Visitor: Flammulated Owl

They always look bigger in the tree than they do in the hand, don’t they? The photo at left is a Flammulated Owl that was captured during a banding session with Lance Benner and Dr. Walt Sakai in July 2011. Unlike many owls, this species is migratory, spending winters in northern Central America. It migrates to our local San Gabriel Mountains to breed in summer. By June, they are firmly established in higher-elevation Douglas Fir forest. They require tree cavities, often former woodpecker nests, to build their own nests.

This small owl hunts at night, mostly for insects, particularly moths and butterflies. It will occasionally take a small mammal.

"Flammulated" refers to the flashes of rufous color among the predominantly grey plumage. Like other screech-owls, this species spends the day in a camouflage posture with an erect, slender body, ear tufts raised, tail down, looking as much like a piece of tree bark as possible.

By the time the September Wrentit is published these owls will be gone, headed back to their southern wintering grounds. Go find them while you can.

Mark Hunter

[No President's Perch for this issue. Will be fishing and birding in the Eastern Sierras — Ed.]

Brand New Web Site!

Please visit our new web site at www.pasadenaaudubon.org. It looks great already, but there’s even more to come in the next few months. Stay tuned!

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</table>
**June Annual Dinner**

**Eat, Drink, Applaud**

June 9, 2011
6:00 pm—9:00 pm

The Annual Dinner is always a good time. The awards for the Wrentit Club will be handed out, and other honors and treats will be bestowed. The newly elected slate of officers will be installed. Raffles for door prizes? Silent auctions for uncommon birding books? Probably. There's always the chance of a photo show, too, but don't let that stop you! (You can bring along a USB drive with your top 10 or 15 photos to share.) Enjoy free-flowing beer and wine, and a delicious catered meal. The venue, as usual, is Eaton Canyon Nature Center. Tickets are $20 per person. Send checks payable to PAS by June 3 to "PAS June Dinner" at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (address on the last page). Questions? Contact Mary Jane Macy at mjmac@aol.com or (626) 355-7678.

**September Program**

**Birds You Thought You Couldn’t Identify**

Wednesday, September 19, 2012
7:30 pm—9:00 pm

Jon Fisher and Mickey Long

While many birds can be identified with certitude at a glance, there are a daunting number of similar looking species that may tempt birders to simply throw up their hands and move on. This is a fact of birding that may seem to be a downside to some beginners, but in fact it's the opposite. It's part of what makes birding a never-ending challenge.

Often, breaking birds down into look-alike "species pairs" makes the task easier. We'll begin with a quiz showing some of these species pairs and then take a close look at the often subtle details that separate them. We will also review identifiable subspecies of our local birds.

You may well find that the birds you thought you couldn't identify aren't as difficult as they appear.

**October Program**

**Six Legs Good**

Wednesday, October 17, 2012
7:30 pm—9:00 pm

Robb Hamilton

When you think of flying creatures what comes to mind? I would guess that birds are right up there near the top. Though often overlooked due to their smaller size and lack of vocalization, don't count out our insect friends. They're tremendous flyers, and come in colors that make many a bird pale in comparison.

Robb takes us on a pictorial tour of our local insect world. As a extra bonus he will provide tips on how to take fantastic pictures of birds and insects using a relatively inexpensive Lumix F40 camera.

Robb is President of Hamilton Biological, Inc. which has been providing biological consulting services in southern California since 1988. He is also a recognized authority on the status, distribution, and identification of birds in California.

General meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (address on back cover). Socializing begins at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

**Brown Pelican Banding Program**

Do you like to bird at the beach? Have you stopped paying attention to Brown Pelicans because they're so common? The folks at International Bird Rescue have a favor to ask of you. When you go to the coast, keep your eyes open for Brown Pelicans with a blue band on their legs. These are birds that have been rescued and released by the IBR, and the IBR people would like to know how the birds are doing. If you see a pelican with a blue band, note the number on the band (it will be a letter and a two-digit number) and the location and condition of the bird. Then please contact the IBR with this information. You can report your findings on the website (www.Bird-Rescue.org) or by calling 707.207.0380 ext. 7. Sounds like a fun summer project to me!

_"Florence," voted Most Congenial of the group of Brown Pelicans recently released by the International Bird Rescue center. Photo by Dave Weeschof._

Conservation continues on page 6!
Accidental Birding

Two PAS members separately found themselves at standstills on local mountain roads in May, both with cameras at hand, and these photos are the result. Hill Penfold was delayed on Big Tujunga Canyon Road, waiting for an accident scene to be cleared, when out the car window he spotted these two local residents.

Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Raul Roa was on assignment, shooting photos at a crime scene that closed Angeles Crest Highway a few miles above La Cañada, when this aerial acrobat zoomed by. Raul was quick enough to get this nice shot of a Peregrine Falcon.

America's Birdiest County

Our final total for America's Birdiest County this year is 263. Our total of 263 in 2012 was slightly above our average of 259 for the last ten years but below the high-water mark of 277 that we set in 2011. What accounts for the difference relative to 2011? I think there are several reasons:

1. We conducted the count a week later in 2012 and missed a number of wintering and/or unusual species that had been reported within about a week of when the count started. For example: Common Goldeneye, Solitary Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Mew Gull, Rhinoceros Auklet, Tropical Kingbird, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Northern Parula, Palm Warbler (although this one might have been seen during the count—but it wasn't seen well enough to accept), Grasshopper sparrow, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

2. Our results in 2011 were just plain exceptional: we had a lot of luck, and had no "bad" misses. In 2011 we found every species we had previously found in at least half of the counts. In 2012 we had a more "normal" count.

3. In 2012 we missed some species that we usually get. For example, in the previous eight counts, we had missed Pink-footed Shearwater, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Wilson's Phalarope only once. In six of the eight previous counts, we found Common Merganser, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaeger, Inca Dove, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Red Crossbill. We didn't find any of those species in 2012.

4. We didn't have as much coverage in the Antelope Valley this year at places like Quail Lake, Lake Elizabeth, Lake Hughes, Lake Palmdale, the Piute Ponds, and Lake Los Angeles (our only place for Inca Dove). Piute Ponds were partially closed during the ABC weekend; it was possible to go in, but apparently only with an escort, and that hampered coverage.

5. Coverage in some other areas was down such as San Clemente Island and Castaic Lake. We had good coverage with seawatches but the species were down somewhat.

One surprise in 2012 was the fact that we still found five new species for the count despite the fact that our total was down relative to last year. Here are the new species in the order that they were reported: Field Sparrow, Ann Brooks et al, Kenneth Hahn Recreation Area; Vesper Sparrow, Brian Daniels, Antelope Valley; Vermilion Flycatcher, Jon Fisher, Antelope Valley; Orchard Oriole, Dick Barth, Dills Park; Common Murre, Kimball Garrett, Point Dume.

Thank you very much to everyone who participated in 2012; your expertise, energy, and hard work are amazing!

Lance Benner
Mt. Pinos & Environs

Saturday, June 2, 2012
7:30 am — early afternoon

Mt. Pinos is one of the best places in Southern California to enjoy a wide variety of montane birds. We'll hear singing Yellow-rumped Warblers along with many other species of warblers, thrushes, raptors, woodpeckers, flycatchers and finches. We will visit Iris Meadows and several other nearby areas.

Take the Golden State Freeway (I-5) north to the Frasier Park turnoff and continue west for about 5 miles to the small city park in Frazier Park and take a left at the only stop sign into the park. We will meet at the park. Don't forget lunch, water and sunblock.

Larry Johnson and Ron Cyger

San Gabriel Mountains: Buckhorn

Saturday, June 9, 2012
7:30 am — 11:00 am

At an elevation of 6,300 feet, Buckhorn Campground is a beautiful and comfortable retreat from the hot, smoggy valleys below. There is a small shaded stream, tall evergreens of several varieties, and some open dry slopes. This is an excellent mixture for montane species, including several species of woodpeckers, nuthatches, and flycatchers, Cassin's and Purple Finches, Green-tailed Towhees, Fox Sparrows, and MacGillivray's Warblers. Occasionally other mountain birds, such as Brown Creepers and Pine Siskins may be found.

From the 210 freeway, go north on Angeles Crest Highway for about 34 miles. The campground entrance is about one mile past Cloudburst Summit, at mile marker 58.3. Proceed through the campground, following signs for the Burkhart Trail. Allow at least 1 hour and 15 minutes for the drive from Pasadena.

Ed Stonick

No outings at Eaton Canyon in July and August. No outings at Hahamonga or Huntington Library in June through August.

Throop Peak

Saturday, June 30, 2011
8:00 am — 2:00 pm

Join us as we explore one of the highest altitude trails in the San Gabriel Mountains during the peak time of year for montane bird activity. We'll hike at a leisurely pace to the summit of Throop Peak (elevation: about 9100 feet) as we search for montane specialties such as Williamson's Sapsucker, Townsend's Solitaire, Clark's Nutcracker, Dusky Flycatcher, White-headed Woodpecker, Red Crossbill, and Cassin's Finch.

Meet at Dawson Saddle at mile 69.6 on the Angeles Crest Highway, about 45 miles from I-210 in La Cañada. Bring plenty of water, lunch, sunscreen, bug repellent, a coat, and sturdy shoes. The hike is about 5 miles round-trip, with possible snow patches; a few sections are steep, and all of it is at altitudes in excess of 7900 feet.

Please carpool and plan for about 90 minutes to drive up from Pasadena.

Lance Benner

Field trips continue on page 6!

Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk

Sunday, June 17, 2012
Sunday, September 16, 2012
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

Hahamonga Monthly Walk

Saturday, September 1, 2012

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 Hahamonga Watershed Park entrance is on the right at the next stop light. Take the first left after entering Hahamonga, and park by the ballfield.

Ron Cyger

Huntington Library Monthly Walk

Sunday, September 23, 2012
8:00 am — 11:00 am

A special benefit for Pasadena Audubon Society members is the chance to bird the Huntington Library grounds. Attendance is by reservation only and limited to 15 participants. Members may bring one non-member guest, space permitting. We thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible.

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

Elaine MacPherson
**Calendar**

*Submit material for the next Wrentit by August 1st*

=Wrentit Club!

### June 2012

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<th>Event</th>
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<td>Mt Pinos</td>
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<td>Sat</td>
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<td>Field Trip</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Sat</td>
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<td>Annual Dinner</td>
<td>Eaton Canyon Nature Center</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Tue</td>
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<td>Magpie Study Group</td>
<td>Descanso Gardens</td>
<td>Madeline West &amp; Sid Heyman</td>
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See also "Birding 201" on page 8.

### August 2012

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<td>Plaiute Ponds</td>
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<td>25</td>
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### September 2012

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<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<td>Will Fulmer</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Field Trip</td>
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*(PAS members only)*

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*Trip Leader Information*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline West</td>
<td>(626) 574-0429</td>
<td><a href="mailto:west266@adelphia.net">west266@adelphia.net</a></td>
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</table>
Sediment Management

Not as Sexy as it Sounds

Since the Arcadia Woods disaster of January 2011, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works has been working on a 20-year strategic plan to manage sediment. For the last 15 months, several local environmentalists, including Tim Brick from the Arroyo Seco Foundation, Rebecca Dryase from Tree People, Shelley Luce from the Santa Monica Bay Restoration commission, and Laura Garrett from the Pasadena Audubon Society, have met monthly with DPW officials to provide an environmental perspective and help the County connect with local resources. The County released a draft of its 20-year plan in April, and it demonstrates how difficult it is to manage sediment and how slowly change comes to the County; what looks radical to them looks glacial to us. But we are making progress.

We are teaching the County that all habitats are valuable, from the grassy meadow behind Eaton Dam, to burned chaparral. We have taught them that a pond is better for wildlife than permanently scraped earth. They will try a pilot that uses water to move sediment. Most importantly, we are teaching them that all these areas they manage ARE habitat, and support flora and fauna. We have much work to do, but I have reason to hope.

To see the 20-year strategic plan in all its glory, please visit www.LASedimentManagement.com.

Laura Garrett

Coastal Orange County
Saturday, July 14, 2012
7:00 am — noon

Orange County has some of the best preserved and most accessible salt marsh estuaries in Southern California. As such, these estuaries are not only the last local holdouts of species like Light-footed Clapper Rail and Belding’s Savannah Sparrow, they are also major stop-over areas for migrant shorebirds. Beginning in July, adult shorebirds leaving their Arctic breeding grounds and heading south to stop to feed in the mud. In addition to some great birding in cool coastal weather, it’s also a nice venue for comparing shorebirds in worn breeding plumage before the juveniles arrive… and maybe finding a vagrant. We’ll be birding Bolsa Chica, Harriet Wieder Regional Park, and the Newport Back Bay, time permitting.

Bring a scope if you’ve got one.

Meet in the main Pacific Coast Highway parking lot of Bolsa Chica at 7:00 am and we’ll start from there.

Jon Feenstra

Pliute Ponds
Saturday, August 4, 2012

What do you find in August in a wetland oasis in the desert? Shorebirds! Join us for a hot day at the Pliute Ponds and other nearby Antelope Valley locations where every year thousands of sandpipers and plovers stage during their southbound migration. We should find over a dozen shorebird species, and may see rarities such as Baird’s or Semipalmated Sandpipers. We will also look for desert birds such as Sage Sparrow, and we may have a chance for LeConte’s Thrasher.

Note: Pliute Ponds are located on Edwards Air Force Base, which has restricted entry. Please email Mark Scheel if you would like to attend. The meeting time and place will be arranged.

Mark and Janet Scheel

The Big Dipper (Trip)
Saturday, July 21, 2012
7:30 am — noon

The West Fork of the San Gabriel River features a 7-mile paved road that’s closed to ordinary traffic. This outing takes place by bicycle, along a consistent mild uphill on the trip to Glenn Trail Campground and a relaxing glide back. The road follows the canyon of the West Fork the entire way, making for gorgeous scenery. American Dipper is a likely sighting, along with some of the usual riparian migrants and residents, and western pond turtles.

Drive about 12 miles north on Hwy 39 from the 210 freeway in Azusa, past two reservoirs, an off-road vehicle area, and East Fork Road. Continue on and park in the large lot on the left just after Hwy 39 crosses the West Fork (look for the West Fork signpost on the bridge). Walk your bike back across the bridge, to the south bank and the gate for Forest Route 2N25. Bring snacks, water, and a tire repair kit. You don’t need a mountain bike for this trip — just about any bike can handle the paved road and 500-foot elevation gain over 7 miles.

Lance Benner

Ballona Freshwater Marsh
Saturday, September 8, 2012
7:30 am — noon

The Ballona Freshwater Marsh was officially protected in 2003. Since then, the marsh has blossomed with wildlife! We will cover the public and more sensitive areas of the marsh. Along the way we’ll see returning ducks and other wintering species along with the usual marsh-avian specialists. And who knows, maybe some surprises, too! If time permits, we’ll head over to the creek, also.

The Ballona FWM is at the corner of Lincoln and Jefferson in Playa Vista. From Pasadena, get to the 90 west (towards Marina del Rey) from the 405. Get off at Culver Boulevard and turn LEFT. Drive past Lincoln, and when you get to Jefferson Boulevard, take a sharp LEFT. As you head back to Lincoln, the marsh will be on your right. Park along Jefferson at the first curbside area that is allowed on your right. Warning - No toilet facilities!

Ron Cyger

One more field trip! See page 7.
Los Angeles River
Saturday, August 25, 2012
7:00 am — noon

The Los Angeles River is the best place in coastal Los Angeles County to see a great variety of shorebirds. Join us for a walk up the Los Angeles River to see what we can find. We can expect large numbers of migrant sandpipers and maybe something rare, such as Solitary, Baird’s, or Semipalmated Sandpipers, any of which may show up this time of year.

Take the Willow St. exit east off the 710 Freeway in Long Beach, go across the river, and turn north at Golden Ave. Take an immediate left (west) on 26th and then a right on De Forest. Meet at the bike path entrance on De Forest near 26th.

Mark and Janet Scheel

Birdathon Results

Four teams fanned out across Southern California for the PAS Birdathon fund-raising event on the weekend of April 27-28. They raised thousands of dollars and had a blast.

The Green Team, led by Darren Dowell & Brendan Crill, and accompanied by Ron Cyger, completed their outing using muscle power only (hiking and bicycling) and spotted 130 species.

The Tejon Tanagers, led by Ron Cyger (he gets around) spotted 67 species during a visit to Tejon Ranch, a rare opportunity. Others on the trip included Larry Allen, Pam & Wilbur Dong, Wendy Gordon, Marilyn & Jim Hildebrandt, Mark Hunter, Gary Kinsley, Marilyn Morgan, George Phelps, Carol Robertson, John Rodgers, Beatrix Schwartz, Dessi Sieburth, and Grace and George Wong.

The Big Sit: team, led by Laura Garrett (if you can call sitting down “leading”) spotted 47 species while camped on a scenic lawn at Legg Lake. Also there were Linda Donato, Cecilia Lowenthal, Elaine MacPherson, and Deni Sinnott.

Team Irritable Owl Syndrome, the commandos of PAS, were led by Mark and Janet Scheel. With the help of equally enthusiastic birders Susan and Frank Gilliland, they spotted 185 species. Congratulations to all!

PAS Member Appointed to City Commission

Pasadena City Councilmember Terry Tornek has appointed Laura Garrett, Pasadena Audubon’s Conservation Chair, to the City’s Environmental Advisory Commission. This nine-member commission “advises the City Council and makes policy recommendations in support of the goals and objectives of the City’s Environmental Charter and Green City Action Plan.” When reached for comment, Ms. Garrett said she was “looking forward to serving Pasadena and helping the City follow its own policies regarding sustainability and open space.”

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, June 19, 2012
DeCanso Gardens
September 18, October 16
Contact trip leaders Sid Heyman and Madeleine West

DONATIONS TO PAS

These PAS members and friends have recently made donations to our chapter: Lance Benner, Denise Castillo, Harlean Carroll, William Freeland, Lew Hastings, Judy Howell, Carol Robertson & George Phelps, Gordon & Joan Sasaki, Norm Vargas. Thank you, and special thanks to all our 2012 Birdathon leaders and sponsors!

Become a Chapter-only Member of PAS

Local chapters of the National Audubon Society, such as Pasadena Audubon, receive only a small share of NAS membership dues. In order to finance our programs and services, including publication of The Wren, PAS 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. We thank you all for your support!

Chapter-only Membership Application

Name ........................................... Phone .........................
Address ..................................................
City ................................ State .... ZIP ........
Email ....................................................

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
Birding 201

Birding 201 is a set of classes for those who have completed Birding 101 or are knowledgeable beginners. This series is for those looking for more instruction on identification and its many related topics. We will cover sight and sound identification, habitat, and migration, among other aspects related to birding.

The class sessions are on July 11, 18, and 25, 2012 (all Wednesdays) at 7:00 p.m. with the field trips on July 14 and 21, 2012. You should plan to attend all sessions. There will be a pre-assignment and required reading/listening throughout the class.

Cost is $60 for the three classes and two field trips and will include membership in Pasadena Audubon Society. It is only $40 for those who are already members of Pasadena Audubon Society. You must register prior to the class and bring payment to the first class. Checks should be payable to “Pasadena Audubon Society.” You can register at Birding201@PasadenaAudubon.org.

The class location will be emailed to all who register for the class.

Class leaders are Ron Cyger and Mark Scheel. If you would like to register or have any questions, feel free to email us at Birding201@PasadenaAudubon.org.

This class is sponsored by Pasadena Audubon Society and Eaton Canyon Nature Center.

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New Members