



Drawing by  
Guy Coheleach

# THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

**Pasadena Audubon Society**  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 63 — No. 3

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

February–April 2015

## Hermit Thrush

The Hermit Thrush is a winter visitor to the Pasadena area. They begin arriving from their nesting habitat in the boreal forests of upper North America at the end of September and clear out of our area by May. They love to winter in our foothills and canyons where you'll often find them around thickets, in bushes, and around partially open areas in forests. They are shy, and really don't stand out. So, you have to be aware as you bird through their areas. You may hear their whistled, ethereal song; but you're more likely to hear the "chuck and rhee" call as you bird.

Interesting fact: Hermit and Swainson's Thrush look similar, but only the Hermit winters in the Pasadena area. So, if you see one of these thrushes in December or January, it's probably a Hermit. (Also, this fall/winter has seen a huge influx of Varied Thrushes in our area, which usually winter farther north.)

Thrushes are a large family of birds including in our area: American Robins, Western Bluebirds, and Townsend Solitaires. Hermit Thrushes can be found on many of our local walks in the winter including the Arboretum, The Huntington Gardens, Hahamonga Watershed Park, Descanso Gardens, Chantry Flats, and even in local parks that have wooded areas.



Ron Cyger



**B**irdathon is Pasadena Audubon's major annual fundraiser. This year, the funds raised will go to No Big Dig, protecting Hahamongna Watershed Park from an environmentally disastrous plan for sediment removal. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works intends to run 400 double dump trucks per day into the basin over five years, permanently scouring 52 acres of prime habitat. Please donate so that PAS, in partnership with the Arroyo Seco Foundation, can achieve a settlement that includes a more reasonable plan and permanent protection for much of the basin.

See the next issue of *The Wrentit* for full details of how you can get involved with Birdathon, happening April 24-26. Also see [www.SaveHahamongna.org](http://www.SaveHahamongna.org).

## President's Perch

Happy New Year, birders! This time of the year I always like to think where my birding will lead me and how this year will be even better than the last. Members can increase their personal birding efforts by becoming part of the Wrentit Club – all levels of birders can participate with the ultimate goal of seeing 250 species of birds in L.A. County. In February there is an opportunity to participate in the nationwide Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) held on Feb 13-16. GBBC is always a fun way to contribute data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology with this national citizen science effort. This spring, participate in Birdathon (April 24-26), Earth Day events, our ever-growing young birders group, and a hands-on conservation project at Peck Pit.

We had a very successful volunteer dinner in the fall and a few folks have already started to help with the business that is PAS. We hope you continue to step forward! Our monthly board meetings are open to anyone. I encourage you to drop in to see how we work together, and how you can become more involved. Board meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at 7:15 pm at Eaton Canyon.

Happy Birding,

Deni Sinnott

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## February Program

### Protecting Our Local Birds

Wednesday, February 18, 2015

7:30 pm—9:00 pm

Dessi Sieburth

The ABA Young Birder of the Year Contest is an annual competition for birders aged 10 to 18 who like to draw or take photos of birds, write about them, or get involved in bird conservation. Dessi, 5th grader and PAS member, will present the projects he carried out during the contest. Many local birds are declining because of habitat loss, cats, window crashes, lead waste, and rat poison. Dessi decided he can make a difference! He did a Big Photo Day fundraiser, brought bird conservation to his school, monitored Bluebird nest boxes, led field trips for young birders, and wrote several articles on bird conservation covering topics such as the threats that California Condors face. The audience also will learn about the behaviors and field marks of local birds Dessi documented in his field notes and sketched during the contest.

## March Program

### On the Road, Drawing Birds

Wednesday, March 18, 2014

7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Catherine Hamilton

Catherine Hamilton grew up in Altadena with a paintbrush in hand and a love for the birds and beasties that call Eaton Canyon home. After living on the east coast for a couple of decades, Catherine left her life as a contemporary artist in NYC in 2010 to become a full-time bird bum. Combining her two passions, this adventure turned into four crazy years of birding, painting in the field and in temporary studios, and visiting museum ornithological collections.

After driving across the country ten times, joining field expeditions in Costa Rica and Belize, giving keynote presentations in places like Brazil, and representing the U.S. in Portugal for the optics company Zeiss, she has some stories to tell, all illustrated with drawings, sketches, and paintings.

## April Program

### Hawkwatching from Every Angle

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

7:30 pm—9:00 pm

Luke Tiller

The mass migration of diurnal raptors rates as one of the most magical birding spectacles in North America and for that reason it draws its own special brand of devotees. Join professional hawkwatcher Luke Tiller for a virtual tour of the nation's hawkwatch platforms. His talk will touch on places to visit, the history of hawkwatching, some of the pitfalls of trying to identify a bird in flight and most importantly how to get the best out of a hawkwatching experience. James Fisher once said that "The observation of birds may be a superstition, a tradition, an art, a science, a pleasure, a hobby, or a bore; this depends entirely on the nature of the observer." Luke hopes that his talk fulfills a little of all but the last category!

*General meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (address on back cover). Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Occasionally programs for kids begin at 7:00 pm; check the announcements.*

## Conservation

### No Big Dig

#### PAS Sues L.A. County Dept. of Public Works

On December 11, 2014, Pasadena Audubon Society joined with the Arroyo Seco Foundation to sue the LA County Department of Public Works over their five-year plan to remove over two million cubic yards of sediment from behind Devil's Gate Dam in Hahamongna Watershed Park (LASC Case No. BS 152771). Our two attorneys are Mitch Tsai and Christina Caro and the case is assigned to Judge Luis Lavin of the Los Angeles Superior Court, based in Downtown Los Angeles. According to Mr. Tsai, the lawsuit alleges that the Los Angeles County Flood Control District violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by:

- failing to adequately describe the proposed project
- failing to consider a reasonable range of alternatives
- failing to adequately respond to public comments on the project
- failing to analyze the project's impact based upon existing environmental conditions in the environmental documents for the Devil's Gate Reservoir Sediment Removal Project
- deferring critical details of mitigation measures for the project

- improperly basing its analysis on unenforceable mitigation measures
- failing to adequately analyze the Project's impact to hydrology and water quality, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, aesthetics, land use and planning, and transportation.

In other words, the County did not look at alternate plans, they did not adequately respond to comments from the community, they are not mitigating the effects of the project, and they are not thinking of Hahamongna as a riparian habitat that supports a lot of wildlife and provides much recreation.

Our lawsuit asks for a plan that takes out less sediment over a longer time, uses fewer trucks for fewer hours a day, and leaves behind a smaller footprint than 52 permanently denuded acres.

Of course, this costs money, and we are asking for your donations. PAS and the Arroyo Seco Foundation have already contributed \$10,000 each, but we need to be ready with more funding because the County has deep pockets. Please visit [SaveHahamongna.org](http://SaveHahamongna.org) to learn more about the lawsuit and to donate to the cause. You can choose a tax-deductible donation or, if we win, you can get some or all of your money back. One or the other! But either way, please give what you can. It's for the birds!

## 2014 Christmas Bird Count

## Citizen Science

Not to give away the end at the beginning, but the 2014 Christmas Count was another very successful one. We ended up with 163 species, which is excellent for a non-coastal count.

Why do we get such consistently good results? There are several reasons that together help to ratchet up the number of species we're able to find. The first might be the most obvious: the birds have to be there. And they are. The circle encompasses a wide variety of habitats that are capable of attracting and supporting a greater variety of birds.

The mild winter climate of coastal southern California means that introduced parrots and parakeets and others can not only survive but also find food sources in the many exotic plantings in the area. Insectivores—including a few vagrants—happily find plenty of bugs to snap up when temperatures rarely dip to the freezing mark.

Our counters are another important reason we do so well. While living in densely populated Los Angeles County may have its drawbacks, it means that a lot of birders live here, too. Each year we have a large number of participants, ranging from beginners to the experienced. Our regular counters also know how and where to find birds, particularly specialty species such as owls.

Given these advantages, coordinating the count is a relatively easy task. We had participants assigned to nearly every area we regularly count. Another factor in our favor this year was the nearly perfect weather: not too cold overnight, but cool and mostly overcast all day with no rain or wind.

The past few years have seen irruptive species such as Lewis's Woodpeckers, Mountain Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches appear in above average numbers. This year, however, such birds were virtually absent. In their place were Varied Thrushes. It became obvious by late November that 2014 was a flight year for this species—perhaps the most pronounced since the late 1970s. Good numbers of these birds were present in much of the southern half of the state. As expected, they were well represented on the count. How many were actually in the circle? We'll never know. But we managed to find 20 of them, which is in line with the numbers recorded on neighboring CBCs.

Here's a look at the highlights...

Waterfowl included a Greater White-fronted Goose at Legg Lake and a Red-throated Loon found there prior to the count that cooperatively lingered through count day.

The most remarkable bird of the count was a Red-necked Grebe found on count day along the San Gabriel River. This was the first ever for the count for a species that is remarkably rare on the coastal slope in general. Most LA County records are from the immediate coast or interior bodies of water such as Castaic and Quail Lakes.

A Golden Eagle near Mt. Wilson was a nice find. This species is surely in the count circle every year, but being in the right place at the right time to see one is the trick.

Unusual for us were both a Mew Gull and a Bonaparte's Gull at Legg Lake. Otherwise though, the gull showing was

hardly noteworthy this year. The often excellent gull-watching spot along the San Gabriel River below Valley Blvd. was anything but rewarding this year.

The usual variety of parrots and parakeets numbering in the hundreds were found, with Red-ored Parrot and Turquoise-fronted Parrot being among the more unusual species recorded this year.

Rare for the count was a Northern Saw-whet Owl near Mt. Wilson. This species may be present annually, but finding them takes a targeted effort as well as a bit of luck.

Moving on to passerines, flycatchers included a Gray Flycatcher continuing at Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena, a quite rare in winter Pacific-slope Flycatcher at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino and the continuing Tropical Kingbird at Legg Lake in South El Monte.

A California Gnatcatcher was found near the Whittier Narrows Nature Center by a birder not actually participating in the count. But can it still be counted? You bet.

This year we had just a few rare warblers. A Black-and-white Warbler persisted at Legg Lake, a Palm Warbler was along the Rio Hondo in El Monte, and a Painted Redstart found before the count continued in Sierra Madre.

Sparrows of note included a Vesper Sparrow near the Rio Hondo in El Monte, a Swamp Sparrow continuing at Legg Lake, and a White-throated Sparrow at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena.

Always possible but rarely found on the count was a Cassin's Finch at Mt. Wilson. This highest point within the count circle is one of the few spots that offers a chance for higher-elevation mountain birds like this one.

In another two years we'll celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Pasadena CBC; thus this count has compiled a substantial record of local birdlife.

One has to wonder what that first count in 1946 was like. How many participants were there and who were they? What areas were covered and what birds did they find? How much different was the composition of the count circle? Fortunately the Audubon Christmas Bird Count website offers a time machine of sorts that can answer at least some of these questions.

That first count was held on December 28, 68 years ago. Coincidentally there were also 28 birdwatchers ("birder" is a term that came into vogue later) who participated. They managed to find 112 species, with another four recorded during count week. I found a number of differences between that count and current ones that were interesting, though for the most part not surprising.

On that first count, 95 introduced Spotted Doves were tallied, with this species now being virtually absent in the count circle. Predation by both the increasing suburban population of Cooper's Hawks and non-native Fox Squirrels are suspected in the stunning decline of this species.

Three Ring-necked Pheasants were also found. These were introduced as game birds for hunt clubs and a few

**Continued on page 4**

## Christmas Bird Count, continued

persisted into the 1980s. I fondly recall occasionally seeing them in the Whittier Narrows area during my early years of birding.

The 32 Loggerhead Shrikes and 100 Horned Larks on the 1946 count give some indication of how much open space we've lost in the intervening decades. Today shrikes are rare on the count and larks are unheard of. Both require extensive open habitat, but parking lots don't count.

33 Northern Cardinals were also impressive. First introduced along the San Gabriel River in the Whittier Narrows area around 1920, this population appears to have declined significantly over the past few decades.

Completely absent from the 1946 count were the common non-natives of today: parrots, parakeets, manikins, bishops, and bulbuls. All were introduced to the area much more recently. I was also struck by the very small numbers of waterfowl recorded on the first Pasadena CBC, even though it was not a period of drought.

Loss of habitat can be implicated in many of the changes between that first count and contemporary ones, and habitat loss remains the single greatest threat facing birds in today.

Yet in spite of this, contemporary counts typically produce far more species. But today we have far more participants and over the years we've gained much knowledge about the identification and distribution of birds.

Thus another count has been completed. It's been nearly a quarter of a century since I began coordinating and compiling the Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley CBC, and it's an event I look forward to every year. We've added plenty of good data, all of which is available to anyone for research or to satisfy simple curiosity.

As always, a very big thank you goes out to all the participants, without whom the count wouldn't exist. Every year your enthusiasm and dedication to finding every bird possible continues to impress. Of course I hope to see all of you back for the 2015 count... who knows what we'll find.

*Jon Fisher*

## Birds 'n Beers

**Thursday, February 5, 2015**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2015**

**Wednesday, April 8, 2015**

**5:00 pm – 8:30 pm**

**A** continuing series! David Bell, Catherine Hamilton, and Luke Tiller invite birders, and anyone who can tolerate birders, to a very casual session of food and drink. Occasionally we even talk about birds!

The venue will once again be the Lucky Baldwin's, 1770 E Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91106 near Colorado Blvd and Allen Ave. This is the one near the City College, not in Old Town.

## Los Angeles County Shorebirds Survey

**L**os Angeles County is not exactly known for its year-round shorebird habitat, yet thousands of shorebirds winter there. Thus was the motivation for PAS members to contribute to the first L.A. County count for the Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey. PFSS is a multi-nation, multi-year effort studying winter-time habitat usage, coordinated in 2014 by Point Blue biologist Khara Strum. Encouraged by Ms. Strum's presentation



at the PAS general meeting in November 2013, and enabled by a PAS donation to Point Blue, six PAS members and four other area Audubon Society members attended a training workshop in advance of surveys in November and December 2014. Covering sites such as Piute Ponds/Lake Rosamond, Ballona Wetlands, and L.A. River, the surveyors counted over 6000 shorebirds representing 20 species – and had a rewarding time doing it. Since the PFSS continues for the next few years, and with the logistics and pilot surveys worked out in 2014, we may recruit additional help for fall 2015. Please contact me (contact info. on p. 6) if you are interested.

*Darren Dowell*

## Unsurveyed Shorebird

**B**et they didn't look here! Marnie Gaede reports that in November 2013, her sister in suburban La Canada was surprised to find a Wilson's Snipe on her back lawn. It remained for over a month, devouring worms, sheltering in fallen leaves, and "rocketing" over the roof when startled. Kind of far from the shoreline, eh?



**Frank G. Bonelli Park****Field Trips****Saturday, February 7, 2015****7:30 am – noon**

Come join us for a morning of birding in Bonelli Regional Park. The habitat is primarily coastal sage scrub, with some chaparral, mixed woodland, riparian, park land, and a big reservoir, Puddingstone that supports wintering waterfowl and, OK, maybe some Gulls, too. We'll be on the lookout for Bonelli specialty species such as California Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Bald Eagle, Greater Roadrunner, and Mountain Bluebird, as well as over-wintering vagrants. A spotting scope will be helpful. Bring lunch.

**Carpooling is encouraged** as there is a \$10 per vehicle admission fee. We will assemble at the East Shore Parking Lot near Bathroom 11. From Pasadena, take the 210 East to the 57 South. Exit at Via Verde and turn east on Via Verde. Enter the park on Via Verde and follow the road to East Shore Drive. Turn left and follow East Shore Drive approximately one-half mile and find a large parking lot adjacent to the lake. Look for birders! A detailed map can be found

at: <http://bit.ly/1bJjKkt>

*Frank & Susan Gilliland*



the westbound 210). Turn left on Eldridge, then make a right on Sayre. Follow Sayre until it ends at Veteran's Park. Turn right and park. We'll meet near the building at the southeast area of the park..

*Brittany O'Connor, Mark & Janet Scheel*

**Parrot Chase****Saturday, February 21, 2014****4:30 pm — dark**

The former Temple City parrots seem to have abandoned roosting in that locale in favor of our very own Pasadena. The majority of the hundreds of Amazona parrots present will be Red-crowned, but Lilac-crowned, Red-lore, and Yellow-headed should be present, with others possible. We will convene at La Pintoresca Park, at the northeast corner of Fair Oaks Ave. and Washington Blvd. in Pasadena. Exit on Fair Oaks from the eastbound 134 Freeway or westbound 210 Freeway in downtown Pasadena and go north about 1-1/4 mi. We may be able to walk to some of the pre-roost staging areas but might have to drive.



*Larry Allen*

**Saps and Suckers in Sylmar****Saturday, February 14, 2015****8:00 am — 11:00 am**

What could be more romantic than looking for sapsuckers on Valentine's Day? Let's not find out!

Veteran's Park in Sylmar is known for having several different species of sapsuckers during the winter, and we'll try to find all of them! We'll also be on the lookout for Varied Thrushes, Mountain Chickadees, and maybe Golden-crowned Kinglets or a Plumbeous Vireo if we're really lucky.

From the 210, exit Hubbard St. and go north (a right from

**Quail Lake & Vicinity****Saturday, February 28, 2015****7:30 am — 2:00 pm**

Join us for a trip to the extreme northwest corner of LA County, where we will look for waterbirds, raptors, and other winter visitors that are hard to find elsewhere in the county. Both Scaup species are usually present, along with Common Goldeneye and Common Merganser. Both Bald and Golden Eagles are possible, as are Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon. Past rarities seen on this trip include Barrow's



**Field trips continue on page 7!**

**Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk****Sunday, February 15, 2015****Sunday, March 15, 2015****Sunday, April 19, 2015****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, 2015****Saturday, April 4, 2015****7:30 am — 11:30 am**

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.

*Leaders vary; see calendar*

**Huntington Library Monthly Walk****Sunday, February 22, 2015****Sunday, March 22, 2015****Sunday, April 26, 2015****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.

For reservations contact me (see bottom of calendar page) by email (preferred), or by phone. Trip leaders vary.

*Mark Hunter*



WC = Wrentit Club!

**Calendar**

Submit material for the next Wrentit by January 1

WCC = Wrentit Club  
Count Circle!**February 2015**

4	Wed	7:15 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Deni Sinnott
7	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Bonelli Regional Park	Frank & Susan Gilliland
8	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
13	Fri-Mon	Daily	Citizen Science	WC	<b>Great Backyard Bird Count</b>	www.birdcount.org
14	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	County Arboretum	Julia Ray
14	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Veteran's Park, Sylmar	Brittany O'Connor, M&J Scheel
15	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
17	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Hansen Dam	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
18	Wed	7:30 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Protecting Our Local Birds
21	Sat	4:30 pm	Field Trip	WCC	Parrot Chase	Larry Allen
22	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip*	WCC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter
28	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WC	Quail Lake	Mark & Janet Scheel

**March 2015**

3	Wed	7:30 pm	Birding 101		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Ron Cyger, Mark Scheel
7	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WCC	Hahamongna	Darren Dowell
8	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
14	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	County Arboretum	Julia Ray
15	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
17	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	San Dimas Canyon Park	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
18	Wed	7:30 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	On the Road, Drawing Birds
21	Sat	7:00 am	Field Trip	WC	San Gabriel Mountains	Lance Benner
22	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip*	WCC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

**April 2015**

1	Wed	7:15 pm	Board Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Deni Sinnott
4	Sat	7:30 am	Field Trip	WCC	Hahamongna	Darren Dowell
11	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	County Arboretum	Julia Ray
11	Sat	8:00 am	Field Trip		Tejon Ranch	Frank & Susan Gilliland
12	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Chilao Visitor Center	Hill Penfold
15	Wed	7:30 pm	General Meeting		Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hawkwatching: Every Angle
18	Sat	7:00 am	Field Trip	WC	Placerita Canyon	Brittany O'Connor
19	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip	WCC	Eaton Canyon Nature Center	Hill Penfold
21	Tue	9:00 am	Magpie Study Group	WC	Rancho Santa Ana	Julia Ray & Sid Heyman
24-26	Fri-Sun	all day	<b>Birdathon</b>		See April issue of <i>Wrentit</i>	
26	Sun	8:00 am	Field Trip*	WCC	Huntington Library	Mark Hunter

**\* Trip Leader Information**

Mark Scheel (chair)	(626) 765-5408	scheel@tapir.caltech.edu
Larry Allen	(626) 288-2701	larryallen@earlymusicla.org
Lance Benner	(626) 791-1187	lbenner@charter.net
Ron Cyger	(626) 449-3625 (before 9:00 pm)	ron@cyger.org (preferred)
Darren Dowell	(626) 344-4003	dowell.darren@yahoo.com
Kathi Ellsworth	(626) 524-0652	pandionsky@yahoo.com
Jon Feenstra	(626) 319-4723	feenstra@alumni.caltech.edu
Jon Fisher	(818) 800-2776	jonf60@hotmail.com
Frank & Susan Gilliland	(626) 441-8487	gillilandsusan@gmail.com
Sid Heyman	(626) 571-5991	sidheyman@sbcglobal.net
Mark Hunter	(626) 344-8428	mark.hunter@pasadenaudubon.org
Mickey Long	(626) 285-8878	mlongbird@charter.net
Hill Penfold	(818) 352-4954	hpenfold@gmail.com
Julia Ray	(818) 314-5127	jraymusic@att.net
Ed Stonick	(626) 796-0595	edstonick@earthlink.net

\* - reservations required, PAS members only

## Field Trips, continued

Goldeneye, California Condor, Long-tailed Duck, and White-winged Scoter. We will bird Quail Lake and then move to other hot spots in the area. If people are especially enthusiastic, we can bird past 2:00 pm.

Meet in the parking lot at the west end of Quail Lake at 7:30 am. To get there, take the I-5 Freeway north, then take the Hwy 138 off-ramp east for about two miles. Quail Lake is on your left. Bring food and water, and a scope and an FRS radio if you have them. Note that we will be walking the entire length of Quail Lake, which is slightly more than a mile each way on level gravel. It can be cold and windy, so don't forget warm clothes. It takes about 75 minutes to get to Quail Lake from Pasadena, so please don't drive alone. Also keep in mind that there are no gas stations in the area.

*Mark & Janet Scheel*

## San Gabriel Mountains

**Saturday, March 21, 2015**

**7:00 am — midafternoon**

This is a trip to find montane species at the end of winter when some of the resident species are most vocal and active. We will devote special effort to finding Mountain Quail and the dark subspecies of Bell's Sparrow, which actively sings in March. We'll make several stops along the roads and do some short walks. There won't be any long or steep hikes.

We're going to stop along the Mt. Wilson Road, Upper Big Tujunga Canyon Road, Charlton Flats, Cloud Burst Summit, and perhaps elsewhere if time permits.

Meet near the base of the Angeles Crest Highway in La Canada-Flintridge. Exit 210 at Angeles Crest Highway, go north, and turn right onto Milmada Drive, which is the second street up from the freeway. Then turn left *immediately* onto Flanders Road and park on the west (left) side of the street. We'll organize a carpool and then head up.

Bring an Adventure Pass, warm clothes, sturdy shoes, a hat, sunscreen, water, and lunch. Rain or snow cancels.

*Lance Benner*

## Fish Canyon Trail

Not a formal field trip but... Scenic, secluded Fish Canyon can now be accessed by a new, *much easier* trail through the Vulcan quarry, open 7:00 am – 5:00 pm October through March, 7:00 am – 7:00 pm April through September. Parking lot and trailhead are at the Vulcan quarry at 3901 Fish Canyon Rd in Azusa.

*Mark Hunter*

## L.A. County Arboretum

**Second Saturday of every month**

**8:00 am — 10:00 am**

This easy walk is for birders of all ages and experience levels. Meet on the steps leading to the entrance of the Arboretum. Even non-Arboretum members get in for free!

*Julia Ray*

## Tejon Ranch

**Saturday April 11, 2015**

**8:00 am — mid or late afternoon**

At 422 contiguous square miles, or 240,000 acres, Tejon Ranch is the largest piece of privately held property in California. Tejon Ranch is a hotspot of biological diversity and lies at the confluence of four major biogeographic regions.

“California Condors soar above rolling hills carpeted with wildflowers. Black bears, mountain lions and pronghorn roam free. Some of California's largest oaks grow here.”

Be one of the lucky 20 PAS members to enter Tejon Ranch. (What?! You're not a member? See page 9.) Sign-up is required. To reserve your space contact Susan at gillilandsusan@gmail.com before April 7, 2015 and provide the following information: Name (first, middle initial, last), address (street, city, state, zipcode) and home phone number and email address.

*Frank & Susan Gilliland*

## Placerita Canyon

**Saturday, April 18, 2015**

**7:00 am — 11:00 am**

Placerita Canyon is on the northwest end of the San Gabriel Mountains. The Walker Ranch portion of the canyon has a small creek—that might have water in it—that attracts many expected migrants. Expect to see a few different species of warblers, at least three hummingbird species, and perhaps some flycatchers.

We'll be hiking a fairly easy trail, but with a couple of moderately steep inclines and a couple of sets of uneven wooden stairs. It may start out cool in the morning and heat up later, so wear layers!

From the 14 north, exit Placerita Canyon Road and turn right. In about 1.5 miles, there will be an entrance to the Nature Center—go *past* this for 1.5-2 miles. On the right, there will be a small parking lot with a sign saying "Walker Ranch." Parking is free, but limited, so carpool if you can.

*Brittany O'Connor  
ba.oconnor@hotmail.com*

## Chilao Visitor Center

**Second Sunday of every month**

**8:00 am — 10:00 am**

The Chilao Visitor Center walks continue each month, weather and roads permitting. (If things look rainy, snowy or brush fire-y, check first.)

Chilao, 26.5 miles north of I-210 on Angeles Crest (State Hwy 2), is a good place to see woodpeckers and we often see four or more species on a walk. Mountain Quail are somewhat elusive but still seen or heard about half the time. You can also expect Purple Finches, Steller's Jays, Dark-eyed Juncos and several species of nuthatches and others totaling about 30 species during the 2-hour walk.

*Hill Penfold*

## PAS Awards Grants to Worthy Projects

Twice a year, PAS solicits and reviews grant applications. In its November meeting, the Board of Directors of Pasadena Audubon Society granted financial support to five projects that support the PAS mission statement. Here are the recipients.

Gillian Martin, Program Director, **Southern California Bluebird Club** (SCBC). The SCBC promotes the wise selection and safe management of dead trees for cavity nesting birds, emphasizing urban areas where these trees are especially lacking. PAS will support their educational outreach program (called The Wonderful Life of a Dying Tree) that connects school life (grades 3-7) with real life and seeds the next generation to be better stewards. SCBC provides volunteers to talk to schools and generates educational resources (for teachers and students) both online, see [www.cavityconservation.com](http://www.cavityconservation.com), and as printed material (eg. Quick Wildlife Tree Kit).

Joe Rosenthal, **El Dorado Audubon Society**. The El Dorado Audubon Society is sponsoring and funding a conservation study for the Los Cerritos Wetlands located on the border between Los Angeles and Orange Counties in the cities of Long Beach and Seal Beach. The main purpose of the study is to evaluate what has been accomplished in the past and to propose what should be done in the future to protect and preserve the wetlands and the associated flora and fauna. This project was envisioned to provide some guidance to the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority's Restoration Plan, to protect, restore and, if possible, recreate the wetlands environment that existed before the area was developed for oil drilling and transportation. It is hoped that this current effort will identify and recommend those parts of the restoration plan that will enhance the area for the birds and animals that are known to occur at the site or could become established.

**Carolyn Merchant**, University of California, Berkeley. The goal of this project is to complete a book entitled, "Spare the Birds! George Bird Grinnell's Audubon Society: History, Gender, and Sources." This book recounts the history of the first Audubon Society, republishes Grinnell's biography of Audubon, and reprints Grinnell's featured John James Audubon's birds and descriptions. When explorer and conservationist George Bird Grinnell (1849-1938) founded the first Audubon Society in 1886 and a year later in 1887 began publishing Audubon Magazine, he introduced each issue with an editorial that he wrote himself about. Grinnell's Audubon Magazine, which lasted only 2 years from 1887-1889, constituted one of the first efforts to preserve birds that were being decimated by the women's hat trade, hunting, and loss of habitat.

Carol Babeli, **Los Angeles Audubon Society**. The Los Angeles Audubon Society (LAAS) sponsors the LAAS Ballona Wetlands Education Program. They provide bus scholarships for under-served schools. Without these scholarships, many schools in the LA Unified School District simply could not participate in the wetlands outdoor education program. The program includes providing students with binoculars and access to microscopes, studying small marine invertebrates and learning about other creatures important in the food web. This program was started in 1989 to introduce students to the wonders of wetland

ecosystems. The target audience is grades 3-5, with an emphasis on outreach to underserved, mostly inner city schools who have zero budgets for field trips. This past school year, over 2800 students from 30 different schools in the Greater Los Angeles area were hosted.

**Dessi Sieburth** is a 12-year-old birding enthusiast who is very active in PAS. He attended several birding workshops, including 2 warbler identification courses and one sparrow workshop. He has also attended many PAS fieldtrips and been mentored by many PAS members, including his mother, Beatrix Schwarz. His grant request asked for funds to attend the 2015 Western Field Ornithologists Conference. Dessi plans to attend lectures, field trips, and the banquet. His goal is to learn more about bird conservation, to enhance his bird identification skills and to make connections with other birders, both older and younger. His future goal is to be an ornithologist and attending the WFO conference brings him one step closer to his goal.

*Norm Arnheim*

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## Successful Local BirdFest

Last October 18th, the first Santa Monica Mountains BirdFest came into being. Invited and led by Sophia Wong of the Western National Parks Association, the three Audubon chapters that border the Santa Monica Mountains came together. They are San Fernando Valley, Santa Monica Bay and Conejo Valley. We collaborated and created an amazing day! We had nearly 900 visitors. The first indication that things were going to go really well was at 9:00 am, when 50 people with binoculars streamed past the presenters setting up in order to go on the first bird walk. The numbers were similarly high on the other morning walks. Meanwhile, back at base, the little amphitheater was full all day long as six different presenters spoke and the outdoor Live Bird show had seating for 100 which was almost full.

The tables covered a wide range of areas, from Heal the Bay through the three Audubon groups to our local bird stores and artisans.

Feedback so far has been 100% positive (although we will have more bird walk leaders available next year). However, the best thing from my point of view was the chance to collaborate with our neighboring chapters. We can teach each other so much; we all work in a slightly different way and are all so successful. I feel some links have been made and hope we can continue to benefit from them. We would be open to working with our neighbor to the east as well... Pasadena Audubon Society.

*Rose Leibowitz, President, San Fernando Valley Audubon*

## 12th Annual Olympic Birdfest

April 10-12, 2015

Sequim, WA

A bird watching vacation for beginners to experts in northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders. BirdFest program information and registration can be found at [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org).

## Young Birder Activities

Walks and meetings designed especially for young birders and families will continue this spring. Check the web site at [www.pasadenaudubon.org](http://www.pasadenaudubon.org) for the latest event schedules.



### Birding 101

**Begins Saturday, March 3, 2015**

(Sponsored by Pasadena Audubon Society and Eaton Canyon Nature Center.)

Birding provides enjoyment and challenge throughout life. Birding gets you outdoors in your neighborhood or around the world. Birding increases your ability to observe and appreciate the world around you. And, finally, birding is just gosh darn fun! So, why would you put off learning how to be a better birder any longer?

This class is designed for beginners, but all are welcome. We will cover identification, optics, field guides, note-taking, habitats, birding ethics, and many other topics. Class size is limited, so don't delay!

Classroom sessions: March 3, 10, and 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Field trips: March 7 and 14 2015 from early morning to early afternoon.

Location of the class and field trips will be sent to the class participants. Cost: \$50 for Pasadena Audubon members, \$70 for non-members (but will include membership in Pasadena Audubon Society). This fee will cover all three classes and two field trips. Fee is payable to "Pasadena Audubon Society" and is due at the first class session.

For questions or to make reservations, contact leaders Ron Cyger and Mark Scheel at [Birding101@pasadenaudubon.org](mailto:Birding101@pasadenaudubon.org).

## Announcements

### Great Backyard Bird Count

This huge, global citizen science event generated 144,000 checklists last year and returns February 13-16 for its 18th year. It's good for science and it's good fun, too. To see how to participate in this free event, go to [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).



### Magpie Bird Study Group

The group meets the third Tuesday of most months. 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, February 17, 2015**

**Hansen Dam**

Meet in the parking lot off Foothill Blvd.

**Tuesday, March 17, 2015**

**San Dimas Canyon Park**

**Tuesday, April 21, 2015**

**Rancho Santa Ana**

*Trip leaders: Sid Heyman, Julia Ray*

### DONATIONS TO PAS

These PAS members and friends have recently made donations to our chapter: Joel Edstrom & Margaret Adams, Susan Kosar Beery, Mary Louise Blackstone, Frank Burrows, Darren Dowell, Hannah Dvorak-Carbone, Don & Scarlett Hibner, Mark Hunter, Victor Levine, Cecilia Lowenthal, Beverly McKenzie, Marcia Miller, Elena Seto, Bob & Jan Stull, Norberto Sugui, Amy Williamson, Daniel & Grace Wu. Thank you all!

### 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 Wrentit*, 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, per family, 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 (individual or family)     \$15 (senior or 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**

**Pasadena Audubon Society Board**

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Magpie Bird Study Group	Julia Ray	(818) 314-5127
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**The Mother of All Field Trips**

On January 17, 105 guests (mostly members of PAS but also including a youth contingent from Debs Park and members of other Audubon chapters, and a few civilians) boarded the *Voyager* in Redondo Beach for a 3-hour whale-watching trip that was quickly and firmly transformed into a pelagic birding trip.

The weather and the viewing were excellent. Let's just get the mammals out of the way (Humpback Whale, Gray Whale, Long-nosed Common Dolphin, Pacific White-sided Dolphin, Sea Lion) and get to the birds! Notable were Ancient Murrelet, not seen at all in this area in most years, and Scripps's Murrelet. Cassin's Auklet, Rhinoceros Auklet, and Common Murre rounded out the five alcids. Great views abounded for nearly all of the 14 other species seen offshore, plus the 16 species seen in the harbor.

Kudos to Lance Benner for coming up with the idea and bringing the ever-expanding trip to fruition, and to Jon Feenstra for expert guide services.

Mark Hunter



**New Members**

**ALTADENA:** John Angus, Chelsea Heneise, Jeff Herring;  
**ARCADIA:** Donivee Nash, Tanya Salof; **DIAMOND BAR:** Terence Hoban; **FRAZIER PARK:** Rick Lanes;  
**MONROVIA:** Andrae Matton;  
**MONTEBELLO:** Chris Vargas; **PASADENA:** Kyle Adams, Lois Brunet, Karen Freeburg, Brooklyn Harris, Miriam Hartman, Sarah Hilbert, Judy Ostrom, Caitlin Silberman, Lynne Vernon; **SEATTLE, WA:** Christopher Rennick;  
**SILVERADO:** Sherry Meddick; **SOUTH PASADENA:** Begum Ozel;  
**TUJUNGA:** Roxanne Correa