



CHAPARRAL NATURALIST

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Pomona Valley Audubon Society

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A Tale of Two Chickens

by Lawrence Korn

It was the best of times...*

The Attwater Greater Prairie Chicken National Preserve was open for viewing the weekend of April 9 and 10 and the Milnesand, NM, Lesser Prairie Chicken Festival was on April 15 to 17. I could easily do both and have the days in between to meet the PVAS group at High Island. It was extremely hot and humid when I arrived in Sealy, Texas, so I got a motel room and watched the Masters' tournament. On Sunday I drove 15 miles to the preserve. It's open all year round but visitors are only allowed to view the Greater Prairie Chicken one weekend out of the year. Rangers used six passenger vans to shuttle visitors to the elevated viewing area where one could observe the birds. The lek was an open grassy area about 40' wide and 20' deep. I

saw only two birds displaying and stayed about ten minutes. I was going to take a tour of the other parts of the preserve, but it was so hot and humid that I went back to the motel. On Monday I should have gone to High Island but it was misty, rainy and hot and I didn't feel like driving through Houston, so I headed west - that was a mistake. A cold front blew in and I'm sure I missed some great birding.

Texas, west of the hill country, was on fire! Thousands of acres of grassland were burning and smoke was everywhere. Winds were blowing at 20-40 miles an hour and it was very hard to breathe. I eventually got to Odessa, TX, then to Hobbs, NM, where I was told that Milnesand had been evacuated because of the fire - that was an error. The fire had come within a few miles and burned some fencing, but it spared farm buildings and the town. Milnesand, which we were told is pronounced by the locals as Mill-in-sand (named after a windmill in the sand), is truly only a crossroads in the middle of nowhere. There were three buildings: a community center, a post office and a church. The festival began with dinner Friday night for one hundred participants. If one didn't want to view the birds Saturday, there were other activities and another viewing opportunity on Sunday. On Saturday we left at 5:00 a.m. for one of eight leks. Each was an old oil drilling and pumping site, flat and open, about 100' wide, sandy and covered with pebbles and rocks. This particular lek had a water tank which the females drank from. We arrived in pitch darkness and as it slowly got lighter, we could make out dark forms moving in the distance. Then the squawking and cackling started. (Remember these are chickens and they cackle) Once the sun came up, we counted about 25 birds, mostly males. There was a lot of false fighting and a lot of prancing with their air sacs blown up - it was all very interesting. We stayed in the van for 2 1/2 hours during which

we were not allowed out. We then returned to the community center for other trips and talks during the day. All meals were included in the festival fee of \$100. I went on an archeology tour Saturday afternoon and Sunday after breakfast birded locally. All in all, I saw three new birds: Greater Prairie Chicken (Attwater sub-species); Lesser Prairie Chicken; and Northern Bobwhite.

I highly recommend this trip. It isn't the only way to see the Prairie Chickens, but it is certainly the easiest.

**courtesy of Charles Dickens.*

IN THIS ISSUE...

A Tale of Two Chickens.....	Pg. 1
PVAS Annual Appeal Update.....	Pg. 2
America's Birdiest County Recap.....	Pg. 3
Silent Auction Donations.....	Pg. 3
Summer Field Trips.....	Pg. 5
June Potluck Information.....	Pg. 6



Welcome New Members

We extend a warm welcome to all new members. Subscribers to Audubon Magazine from our area are automatically enrolled in our chapter and receive the Chaparral Naturalist at no additional charge. You are welcome to all our events.

Alta Loma: Joann McMillan, and Deborah Monroe

Claremont: Jeffrey Burkhart, Judith Peairs, and Raymond Willenborg

Corona: Ron Brouillette and Alice Hibbard

Covina: Eugenio Rodriguez and Patricia Ulloa

Diamond Bar: Linda Martinez

La Verne: Betty Ritter and Kevin Truong

Pomona: Kaete Elliott and William Plank

Rancho Cucamonga: Dina Alvarado, Constance Pohlman, and Mary Rogers

Upland: J.R. Coker, and Ann Cajilog

Walnut: Kathleen Maxted

West Covina: Irene McKibbin, Clifford Mount, and Bill Norse

2011 Claremont Earth Day Celebration Report

by Dan Guthrie



On this second annual Earth Day Celebration, Pomona Valley Audubon, along with Wild Wings, had a booth. Lots of people stopped by to photograph the birds (great horned owl, screech owl, Harris hawk and red-shouldered hawk) all very photogenic, on good behavior, and used to large crowds, including children and dogs! We gave away many owl pellets to kids and got some requests for more from some teachers for their classes.

All in all, a good day. We will be at Village Venture in October doing the same thing, so please drop by.

PVAS Fund Appeal

by Dan Guthrie



Our fund raising appeal letter was sent out recently and already we have received a very generous response from you, our members. Of our 1000 or so names on the mailing list we regularly see only a couple of hundred of you at our meetings, field trips or events such as Village Venture and Earth Day. Sometimes we wonder whether our activities and newsletter are appreciated. Our fund raiser brought in donations from many members who we never knew existed outside of our mailing list. One member wrote “we are pretty much house-bound but we do watch birds in the yard – 4 quail yesterday.”

It’s notes like these that keep us going, so again, thank you for all your support.

Report those Squirrels!

by Dan Guthrie

Once again this year I am tracking the replacement of our own native gray squirrel (all grey above, big fluffy tail, white belly) with the imported Eastern Fox Squirrel (reddish hue) Please email me any sightings of the grey squirrel. They are becoming increasingly scarce in our local communities.



Los Angeles (County, that is) Is A Great Place for Birding!

by Dan Guthrie

The challenge for America's Birdiest County is just concluding and I suspect Los Angeles will once again rank number one!! My apologies to you who live in San Bernardino County, but you simply cannot compete – no ocean, no shoreline for sandpipers, and hardly any marshes. But Los Angeles has mountains, ocean, coastal estuaries, and deserts. From April 22-24, several of our members joined with other birders from the county searching for as many species as could be found. Steve and Becky Turley and Nancy Strang found the Tropical Kingbird and Chestnut-sided Warbler, still at Whittier Narrows. Cathy McFadden and Paul Clarke visited Blue Ridge Campground and found Evening Grosbeaks. This was especially commendable as, instead of being able to drive to the campground (as one can do in the summer) it involved a 6 mile round trip walk, including crossing a ski run full of snow boarders! In addition to Grosbeaks, also found at Blue Ridge were Williamson's Sapsucker and Golden-crowned Kinglet. In all, a total of 277 species were found in Los Angeles County, and this was all from land! To be sure, some birders with spotting scopes searched the seas from coastal promontories and, to be fair, San Clemente Island is part of L.A. County!

Of interest (I hope) to us are some of the species missed. Most notable to me are Summer Tanager (they nest at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden but have not yet returned) and Vermilion Flycatcher. Given the large number of this species at Prado Park off Euclid in south Chino, there must be one somewhere in south Pomona, perhaps at one of the cemeteries?? Things to look for next year.



Photo ©Jerry Acton, NY

Great Backyard Bird Count Results

by Dan Guthrie

The 2011 Great Backyard Bird count occurred Feb. 18-21. Nationwide, over 60,000 participants turned in 92,000 lists and counted 11.4 million birds in 596 species!

Claremont had seven lists turned in with a total of 55 species, including a Brown Creeper!! (where did someone see a Double-crested Cormorant??)

California has 310 species and about 2300 lists, with House Finch winning top honors for appearing on most lists. Other species on at least 1000 lists were Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Black Phoebe, Western Scrub Jay, American Crow, Oak Titmouse, White-crowned Sparrow, California Towhee, Dark-eyed Junco, Lesser Goldfinch and, our old friend, House Sparrow.

Our Christmas Census rivals, Pasadena, had 64 species and over 20 lists turned in. Let's see if we can best their numbers next February 2012.



Donations Needed for our June Silent Auction!

by Karlene Campo

Pomona Valley Audubon is currently accepting donated items for our June Potluck Silent Auction. Donated items are often bird watching or nature related, but they don't have to be. In the past, we have auctioned bird books, bird houses, bird prints, duck decoys and decorative items. Last year, thanks to the generosity of our members, over \$380 was raised at this event.

Come and enjoy the delicious food brought by our members, and bid on the items of your choice. It's a fun evening, and we hope to see many of you there.

If you have something to donate, please call Karlene Campo at 909-627-8191 to arrange for pick-up before the June meeting.

Don't forget to bring your recyclables to the meeting!

Field Trips

Pomona Valley Audubon field trips are open to all individuals. Please call trip leader if you plan to attend and for starting time & meeting location. Sunday Beginning Bird Walks meet at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Bonelli Park trips meet at park headquarters on Via Verde, just off the 57 freeway. It is recommended to bring a snack (lunch if recommended), plenty of water, sun protection, and bug spray to all trips.

Sunday, May 22, 2011

Bonelli Park Monthly Bird Walk

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Bonelli Park headquarters on Via Verde near the 57 Fwy. for our monthly walk (4th Sunday, about 2 hours) at Bonelli Park. **Leader: Rod Higbie 909-599-6526**

Sunday, June 5, 2011

Beginner's Bird Walk

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

Join us for our monthly (September-June) bird walk. Family friendly, the walk is flat and lasts approx. two hours. (Bring binoculars if you have them) Meets 8:00 a.m. at the front entry gate (north end of College Ave. above Foothill Blvd. 1500 N. College Ave.) **Leader: Fraser Pemberton 909-624-6451.**

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

Carbon Canyon Regional Park

A mid-week trip for oak woodland and coastal sage species. Leave Memorial Park at 7:30 a.m. **Leader: Dan Gregory 909-944-2259.**

Saturday, June 18, 2011

Grassy Hollow Visitors Center

A trip to the visitor's center above Wrightwood for mountain birds. Meet at Memorial Park at 7:00 a.m. for car pooling. **Leader: Dan Guthrie 909-607-2836.**

Saturday & Sunday, June 11&12, 2011

Big Bear Weekend

A two-day trip for mountain species. Saturday we'll visit Bluff Lake and the Champion Lodgepole Pine. Sunday visit the Arrastre Creek and Green Canyon Trail. Lodging is on your own, but day trippers are also welcome (please call for Sunday meeting place). Bring plenty of food, water, and sunscreen. Saturday meet at 6:00 a.m. at Memorial Park or 7:30 a.m. at Aspen Glen Picnic Area (Hwy 18, right on Tulip Lane) **Call if you plan to attend. Leader: Pam Kling 909-240-7604.**

Saturday, June 25, 2011

Angeles National Forest Owling Trip

A trip for owls and other nocturnal species along Hwy. 2. **Call if you plan to attend. Leader: Pam Kling 909-240-7604.**

Sunday, July 3, and Saturday, August 13, 2011

Wrightwood Area

Our two annual summer trips to Grassy Hollow, Blue Ridge Campground, and Table Mtn. Meet at Memorial Park at 6:00 a.m. Bring plenty of food, water, and sunscreen. **Leader: Pam Kling 909-240-7604.**

Sunday, September 4, 2011

Beginner's Bird Walk

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

Join us for our monthly (September-June) bird walk. Family friendly, the walk is flat and lasts approx. two hours. (Bring binoculars if you have them) Meets 8:00 a.m. at the front entry gate (north end of College Ave. above Foothill Blvd. 1500 N. College Ave.) **Leader: Fraser Pemberton 909-624-6451.**



2011 SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

MAY

Sunday, May 22 - Bonelli Park Bird Walk
8 a.m. Leader: Rod Higbie

JUNE

Sunday, June 5 - Beginner's Bird Walk
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 8 a.m.

Wednesday, June 8 - Carbon Canyon Regional Park
7:30 a.m. Leader: Dan Gregory

Saturday & Sunday, June 11-12 - Big Bear Lake Area
6:00 a.m. Leader: Pam Kling

Saturday, June 18 - Grassy Hollow 7:00 p.m. Leader:
Dan Guthrie

Saturday, June 25 - Owling Trip 5 p.m. Leader: Pam
Kling

JULY

Saturday, July 3 - Grassy Hollow & Wrightwood
6:00 a.m. Leader: Pam Kling

AUGUST

Saturday, August 13 - Grassy Hollow & Wrightwood
6:00 a.m. Leader: Pam Kling

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 4 - Beginner's Bird Walk
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 8 a.m.

Pomona Valley Audubon field trips are open to all individuals. Please call trip leader if you plan to attend and for starting time & meeting location. Sunday Beginning Bird Walks meet at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Bonelli Park trips meet at park headquarters on Via Verde, just off the 57 freeway. It is recommended to bring a snack (lunch if recommended), plenty of water, sun protection, and bug spray to all trips.

PVAS OFFICERS 2010-2011

President..... Dan Guthrie 909-607-2836
Vice-President..... Bruce Strang 626-332-2354
Secretary Pam Kling 909-240-7604
Treasurer..... Neil Gilbert 909-626-0334
Board Member Ken Burgdorff ... 626-962-9702
Board Member Jim Herman..... 909-240-8547
Board Member Pat Higbie 909-599-6526
Board Member Rod Higbie 909-599-6526
Board Member Nancy Strang 626-332-2354

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation Available
Education..... Dan Guthrie 909-607-2836
Field Trips Dan Guthrie 909-607-2836
Membership Dan Guthrie 909-607-2836
Publications Neil Gilbert 909-626-0334
Publicity Shirley Harris..... 909-982-9727
Door Prizes Karlene Campo.. 909-627-8191
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CHAPARRAL NATURALIST

Editor..... Pam Kling 909-240-7604

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Chapter only memberships with subscriptions to the newsletter are available for \$20 per year. **Make checks payable to PVAS and mail to W. M. Keck Science Center, 925 N. Mills Ave., Claremont, CA 91711.**

National Audubon Membership / Membership Information Update

Annual membership in the National Audubon Society is \$30 per year. **New membership dues are \$20.** Members receive the Audubon Magazine and Chaparral Naturalist newsletter. Renewals of membership are computerized by National Audubon and should not be sent to PVAS. However, a new membership may be sent directly to PVAS. Checks should be made payable to National Audubon Society. Mail payment with membership form below and mail to: **PVAS, W. M. Keck Science Center, 925 N. Mills Ave., Claremont, CA 91711.** (Please note chapter code **COZC080Z** on your check.)

Information such as mailing address, email address and telephone numbers are used for sending email notifications, electronic versions of the newsletter, and are published in our membership directory. Membership information may be updated by filling out this form and turning it in to any board member. This information will be distributed only to members and will not be sold to other organizations.

Yes, Please sign me up as a new member!

Yes, I am renewing my membership.

Please send me the Chaparral Naturalist electronically.

Do not publish my information in the chapter directory.

Name _____

Chapter Code COZC080Z

Address _____

Telephone _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

PVAS Annual Potluck Dinner

Friday, June 3, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
Alexander Hughes Community Center

Join us for our annual Potluck on Friday, June 3, 2011 to be held at the Alexander Hughes Community Center at 1700 Danbury Rd., Claremont. (Danbury Rd. is south of Scripps Dr., between Towne and Mountain Avenues) Admission will be \$5 at the door.



Our evening will feature a Silent Auction, the annual Election of Officers, the presentation of the 2011 Flock Leader Award and the famous member's digital photo show. **If you would like to make a presentation, please contact Pam Kling at 909-240-7604 or at pamtone@verizon.net.** Presentations should be limited to 30 images per person and should be provided on a cd or flash drive.

6:00 to 7:00 p.m. – Happy Hour & Silent Auction

Enjoy appetizers, wine, beer, soft drinks, coffee and tea while bidding on one-of-a-kind items!

7:00 to 7:45 p.m. – Potluck Dinner

7:45 p.m. – Meeting and Program

The Silent Auction ends and the winners will be announced at the end of the meeting. (Those lucky winning bidders can pay for and pick up their treasures by the front door. All items should be picked up at the end of the evening.

Please bring a favorite dish that serves 8 (see item list below), serving utensils, plates and dining utensils. Beverages will be provided.

Last names beginning with:

- A-F Salads**
- G-K Appetizers (by 5:30 p.m., please)**
- L-R Entrees**
- S-Z Desserts**

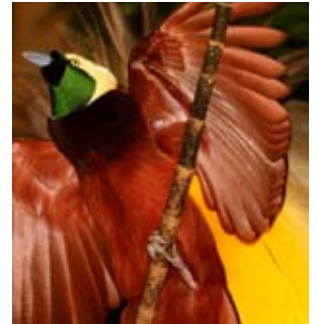
If you have items of a birding or nature interest you'd like to donate for Silent Auction, please see page 4.

Upcoming General Meetings

Thursday, September 1, 2011

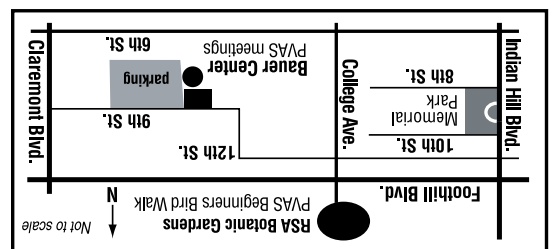
Chuck and Lillian Almdale "Papua New Guinea: Birds and People"

Papua New Guinea is a land of huge diversity, in terrain, birds and people. Almost half of its 750 avian species are endemic. Of its 830 indigenous languages, half have fewer than 1,000 speakers. In 2008, the Almdales visited six locales in three weeks. Their



multi-media presentation features many endemic birds especially the birds-of-paradise as well as the fascinating people of New Guinea, including the Huli Wigmen of the central highlands and the Yukoim cannibal-headhunters of Konmei Village on the Karawiri River in the east Sepik lowlands. Come and remind yourself why you really want to go there.

Chuck & Lillian Almdale have been active on the Board of Santa Monica Bay Audubon for over 20 years. When not birding internationally, they lead local field trips, maintain records of Malibu Lagoon birds, census Snowy Plovers, comment on local and national bird blogs and chatlines. They both are retired accountants.



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