

Chaparral Naturalist

A Publication of
Pomona Valley Audubon Society

www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

MAY/JUNE 2014 / Volume 53, No. 5

Tricolored Blackbirds and Audubon

Dan Guthrie



The tricolored blackbird is almost California's only endemic species as more than 90% of the population breeds here.

It is also the most colonial landbird which can cause problems. There are today about 300,000 tricoloreds but this number is small compared to those in the past. Further, a colony can contain up to 50,000 birds, with the biggest concentration of birds in the central valley.

Lately volunteers, including some of our members, have participated in statewide nesting surveys each April. We have very few nesting tricoloreds in southern California, with major colonies (a few hundred) near Lake Perris and in Chino. A major problem for the birds is that they tend to nest in weedy fields, such as thistle. Most of the world's population nests in three or four large colonies in the Central Valley and each year pick a different location based on conditions. In a drought period, such as this year, there is little in the way of weedy fields. The result is that the blackbirds pick irrigated crop fields such as wheat or sorghum in which to nest.

A colony of some 40,000 birds was recently found in a farmer's hay field in the central valley, a field that the farmer planned to mow to provide feed for his cattle. California Audubon put out a call to its member clubs to raise the money required to allow the farmer to purchase feed for his cattle and leave the field unmowed until later in the year. I have not yet heard whether this was successful or not, but our chapter made a generous contribution to the cause. Continuous monitoring is necessary for this species so we can locate colonies and determine whether or not they are safe from dangers such as mowing or burning before the young have fledged.

A new catch basin area on the south side of Kimball and east of Euclid was created as mitigation for some of the housing tracts being built on old dairyland. Tricoloreds have used this area in the past, and it is protected from people, dogs and disturbance. Whether a food supply from remaining dairies and feed lots is sufficient to support the birds remains to be seen.



**3 MILLION in 1930
in California**



**ONLY 259,000 in 2011
Tricolored Blackbirds**

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Enjoy the baby birds fledging now... and remember,

KEEP ON BIRDING!!!

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: **Georgia Martinez, Leora Milam, Charles Uhalley**

Chino: **Millie Davis**

Chino Hills: **Frances Grove, Sandra Lozano, Betty Martin**

Claremont: **Jack Acosta, Anne Anderson, Linda Arndt,
Sonia Blackman, Paula Carmona, Fern Ebertz,
Lucille Hobart, Carrie Knoll, Leah Light,
Velma McKelvey, Janice Montgomery, Mina Oak,
Helen Salemi, Andreas Salomon, Jan Shebesta,
Erica Tyron**

Corona: **Hans Boesch, Andree Clayton, Burt Hogue,
Lolly Janoski, Patriicia Mooney, Jan Mentink,
Richard Morandi**

Covina: **Kay Turner**

Diamond Bar: **Charles Chow, Elma Graham, James Hocking,
Valerie Knights, Samuel Pastucha**

Glendora: **David Bernal, Annie Choi, Kathryn Duran,
Jackie Kephart, Mary Landman, Bess Mechalas,
John Mulholland, Renus Vanzee, Susan Yarberr**

La Verne: **Carrie Coolbaugh, Susan Rogers, Kathy Wimbish**

Mira Loma: **Shirish Harry**

Montclair: **Dolores Murphy**

Ontario: **Larry Baker, David Murillo, Deanna Tunstall**

Norco: **Rebecca Furlong**

Pomona: **Fely Belen, Beverly Carter, Zeta Takem**

Rancho Cucamonga: **Katherine Bergreen, John Brendon,
Carol Entler, Marta Escobar, Ann Krauter, L. Loper,
Deborah Martinez, Dianna McNair, Michele Roth,
Elizabeth Ugalde**

San Dimas: **Mary Holloway, Barbara Wilkinson, Vida Wong**

Upland: **David Garcia, Louise and David Gish, Denise Jimenez,**

**Geoffrey Kawabata, Ann Marie Shepard,
Maureen Thomas, Eldon Winterbourne**

Walnut: **Wilma Coy, Sharon Miller, Virgilio Soriano**

West Covina: **Emily Acosta, Frank Ebner, Irene Fleck,
Marcial Hellebuyck, Kevin Thornburgh**

THE LIVING DESERT

by Beryl Williams

It was with great pleasure that we spotted a Verdin during a February visit to The Living Desert in Palm Desert. We hadn't seen one for years, but their beauty and delicate features are always a welcome sight. Verdins work dexterously through thorny desert vegetation in pursuit of their insect prey. They also probe for nectar at flowers and consume fruits.

We've enjoyed Greater Roadrunner sightings on many occasions, although we've never been able to keep them in view for more than five seconds. Once we were on a tour in Baja California, being bused between the city of La Paz on the Sea of Cortez and Magdalena Bay on the Pacific Ocean. Someone yelled: "ROADRUNNER – RIGHT SIDE OF THE BUS". Everybody raced to the right side until the bus appeared to tilt slightly. We were the only Californians on that trip and none of the Easterners had ever seen a Greater Roadrunner.

There is an aviary at The Living Desert that provides a home for "rescued" birds that cannot be released. This gave us the chance to study apparent courting behavior between two Greater Roadrunners. Initially you see intermittent periods of sky pointing followed by the male moving his tail back and forth. The second step of courtship involves the male offering a twig or other piece of nest-building material to the female. He may drop this at her feet and she may pick it up in her beak. The male that we were watching scampered into a mid-sized bush where he waited patiently for the female to join him on his perch. The time elapsed was 5-10 minutes. When she made her way to his side, he immediately dropped his offering at her feet, where the leaves fluttered through the branches to the ground. We couldn't stay any longer, but were enchanted by what we'd already seen. The final step in the courtship process involves the male bringing a vertebrate animal to the female. This must be a lizard, snake, small bird or rodent. Only when such an offering is presented will the female finally consent to mating. Facts in this paragraph are excerpted from the chapter, Ensuring Descendants, in the book "The Roadrunner", by James W. Cornett.

Field Trips - Summer 2014

Pomona Valley Audubon field trips are open to all individuals. **Remember to call the trip leader if you plan to attend and to confirm starting time & meeting location.** Sunday Monthly Bird Walks meet at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Bonelli Park trips meet at park headquarters on Via Verde, just off the 57 freeway. Most other trips meet at Memorial Park in Claremont. It is recommended to bring a snack (lunch if recommended), plenty of water, sun protection, and bug spray to all trips. Car pooling is usually possible.

First Sunday of each month ----

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden Bird Walks--

Join us for our monthly bird walk. Family friendly, the walk is slow paced 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.

Sunday, May 4, 2014

Sunday, June 1, 2014

Fourth Sunday of each month ----

Bonelli Park Monthly Bird Walks---

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, April 27, 2014

Sunday, May 25, 2014

Day & weekend PVAS trips---- Check webpage for any changes.

Saturday, April 26, 2014 Lake Elsinore Wetlands

Join us on a new adventure to the Lake Elsinore Wetlands led by Julie Szabo, a docent for the project. The project consists of a 3-mile long levee along the eastern shoreline of the lake and an adjacent large riparian area of willow, cottonwood and mule fat and several large ponds. We will drive the levees and well graded dirt roads stopping along the way for easy short walks for viewing. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen and scope if you have one. Note that only 10 cars will be allowed into the area so carpooling is a must. We can consolidate the cars at the parking area at the entrance if needed. Meet at Memorial Park at 6:45 am. **Leader: Hank Feilen, henry.feilen@verizon.net or 909-627-8191.**

Sunday, April 27, 2014 BOLSA CHICA

Eric will take us to the coast for nesting terns and migrating shorebirds. Meet at memorial Park at 7 a.m.. **Leader: Eric Smith 909 477-7976 or bird4life28@yahoo.com**

Saturday, May 3, 2014 Big Morongo Canyon

Timed for the height of western migration for transient and returning species, this trip should find Summer Tanager, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat and lots of orioles. Meet at Memorial Park at 6:00 a.m. and bring a lunch. **Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259.**

Saturday & Sunday, May 31 & June 1, 2014

Big Bear Weekend

A two-day trip for mountain species, many of them nesting. Saturday we will visit Bluff Lake and the Champion Lodgepole Pine. Possible on Sunday are the Arrastre Creek and Green Mtn. Trail. Lodging is on your own, but day trippers are also welcome. Bring lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. Wear sunscreen. and dress in layers as weather can vary greatly. **RSVP to pamtone@verizon.net by May 24 for meeting location, time, etc.. Trip will be cancelled if**

fewer than six persons each day. Leader: Pam Kling, (909) 240-7604.

Thursday, June 12, 2014 Carbon Canyon Regional Park

Oak woodland should a pleasant 1/2 day trip for nesting residents. Entrance fee. Meet Memorial Park 7 a.m. for carpooling. **Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 home or 909 456-4994 cell.**

Saturday, July 5, 2014

Wrightwood Area

Our annual summer trip to Grassy Hollow, Blue Ridge Campground, and Table Mtn. Meet at Memorial Park at 6:00 a.m. Bring lunch and sunscreen. **RSVP if you plan to attend. Leader: Pam Kling, pamtone@verizon.net or (909) 240-7604.**

PVAS OFFICERS 2013-14

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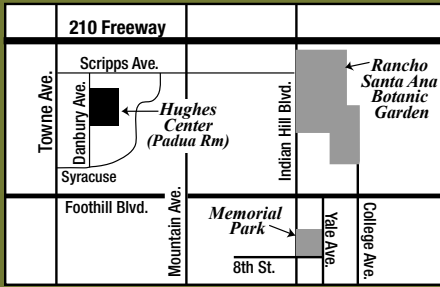
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CHAPARRAL NATURALIST NEWSLETTER

EditorJudy Sugden dguthrie@jsd.claremont.edu
The **Chaparral Naturalist** is published bimonthly, except July and August by the Pomona Valley Audubon Society. Copy deadline is the last Thursday of the month. Articles may be reprinted without permission, however we require the author and **Chaparral Naturalist** be credited. We encourage members to submit articles and photos by email at **dguthrie@jsd.claremont.edu**. Photos should be saved at 300 dpi and in jpg format. Articles should be provided in .doc, .rtf, or .xls format. Sorry, we cannot retype your copy.

Chapter only memberships are available for \$20 per year. Make checks payable to PVAS and mail to:

Pomona Valley Audubon
2058 N Mills Ave., PMB426
Claremont, CA 91711



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Return Service Requested

General Meetings are held in the **Padua Room** in the **Alexander Hughes Center, 1700 Danbury Drive, Claremont.** From Foothill Blvd., head north on Mountain or Towne Ave. and turn onto Scripps Drive. Turn south on Danbury, the Alexander Hughes Center will be on the east side. Our meetings begin with a bird identification session at 7 p.m. followed by refreshments, a short business meeting, and our evening program.

Bring a friend?

Non-members are welcome!

Weekend Fee Birding Class offered at Joshua Tree National Park

Date/ Time: Friday, May 2, 6 pm – 8 pm www.joshuatree.org
 Saturday, May 3, 7:30 am – 4
 Sunday, May 4, 7 am – 1 pm

PVAS Membership Meetings

FRIDAY, June 6, 2014

PVAS Annual POT LUCK Dinner

FOOD and drink, friends, Silent Auction, the annual Election of Officers, the presentation of the 2014 Flock Leader Award and the now famous **Member's Powerpoint Photo Show. Admission will be \$5 at the door.**

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

Please bring your favorite dish that serves 8, the necessary serving utensils and your own plates and dining utensils. Beverages will be provided.

Last names beginning with:

- A - G** Entrees
- H - L** Desserts
- M - S** Salads /side dishes
- T - Z** Appetizers (by 6:00, please)

To present photos of your best bird pictures, birding spots or something fun, please contact **Dan Guthrie (909) 239-5124 or dguthrie@jsd.claremont.edu** Presentations should be limited to 30 images per person and be provided on flash drive. In past years we have earned as much as \$500 from the silent

.....Thursday, May 1, 2014

South Africa and Madagascar

Members Laura and Chuck Burt recently spent three months in **South Africa and Madagascar.** They had the good fortune to do birding in wetlands, savannah and coastal areas in South

Africa and the diminishing rain forests of Madagascar. Included in their presentation Travel and Birding in South Africa and Madagascar, will be slides of their travel experiences, interesting anecdotes and observations of the cultures in those two countries.



auction. If you would like to donate items such as bird books, bird houses, bird prints, duck decoys or other decorative or interesting items, please contact **Hank Feilen, henry.feilen@verizon.net or 909 627-8191.**

Our PVAS Potluck will be held at the Alexander Hughes Community Center at 1700 Danbury Rd. Claremont. (Danbury Road if off of Scripps Dr., between Towne Ave. and Indian Hill Blvd. Take the Towne Ave. exit from the 210 Freeway and go south to Scripps then east to Danbury.)