



# Chaparral Naturalist

A Publication of  
Pomona Valley Audubon Society

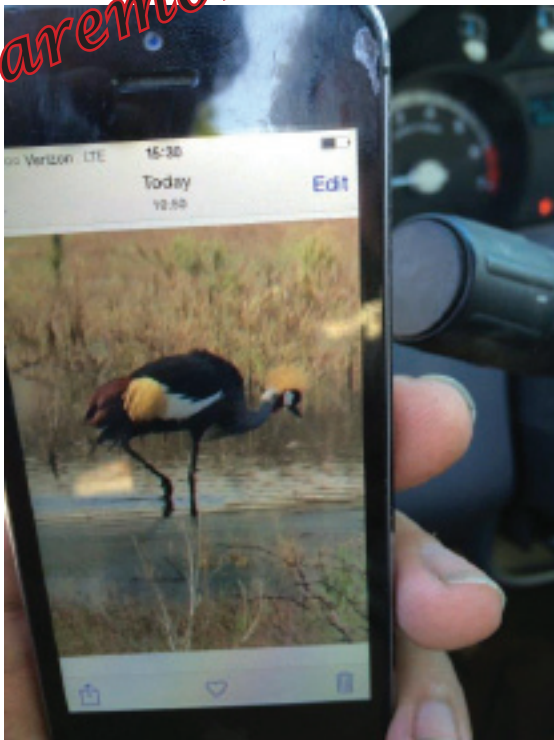
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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2015 / Volume 55, No. 2

## Seeing 'Weird' Birds Around???? by Dan Guthrie

A member of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency recently reported a crane in the settlement basin at the 15 freeway and Victoria (See the forwarded photo of an African Grey-crowned Crane). Kimball Garrett says this is one of the commonest crane species in captivity. Someone apparently forgot to clip its wings so it wouldn't be able to fly away. Let us know if you see it or any other out of place species. My best several years ago was a Hyacinth Macaw flying down First Street near Harvard Ave in Claremont.

*What???*  
*In Claremont???*



### Out of place fall warblers?

This fall southern California has been blessed with a large number of non-western warblers. Black and white, Chestnut-sided, American Redstart, Prairie, Pine, Worm eating, Blackpoll and Prothonotary have all been reported. What should we expect? Some information comes from Cape May Bird Observatory in southernmost New Jersey. On September 14, they counted 56,636 warblers passing through, an amazing flight promoted by good weather patterns. Here are a few numbers:

estimated American Redstart	40,729
estimated Black-and-white Warbler	4,346
estimated Northern Parula	2,544
Worm-eating Warbler	2
Northern Waterthrush	45
Black-and-white Warbler	505
Prothonotary Warbler	1

Species from the north woods are fairly common while species from the southeast (worm-eating and prothonotary) are rare. This is similar to what we are seeing in California. Northern species if they make a mistake in migration might end up here while it is rare for a southeastern species to make a much larger mistake. Of course it also helps if some 'eastern' warblers range extends into Alaska (Blackpoll, Redstart) and they try to take a shortcut south instead of flying to the east of the Rocky mountains.

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PVAS TRIP REPORT: October 3, 2015

## Prado Park and Chino Creek Wetlands - by Dan Gregory

It was a wonderful trip down to the Chino area starting at the boat launch area of Prado Regional Park. Almost immediately after getting out of the cars we found a bright Vermillion Flycatcher in one of the cottonwood trees. Many Great-tailed Grackles, a pair of Black Phoebes, and a great gaggle of domestic geese greeted us noisily before we even got to the docks. While scanning the lake for ducks, grebes, and cormorants, we spotted young Clark's Grebes swimming with their parents and then found a Clark's Grebe seemingly sitting on a nest with its mate tending to her. Walking north along the eastern shore of the lake, we found Song Sparrows, Common Yellow-throats and a couple more Vermillions. After a couple of female Green-winged Teals ---and to our great surprise--- we found the ever difficult Least Bittern. It was very cooperative, giving anyone the opportunity to look at and photograph for as long as they wanted. We ended up walking away from it before it walked away from us! We then searched the marshy area across the road from the lake where we had a whole family of Common Gallinule. Along the road by the ball fields the warblers (almost all Yellow-rumps) were plentiful and a Red-breasted Sapsucker appeared. Listing many of the usual suspects (birds that is) on the way back to the cars we could not help but stop for more crippling views of the Vermillions around the campground.

Next stop - Chino Creek Wetlands. We lunched in the parking lot behind the buildings of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency where we were entertained by a Common Yellow-throat feeding in the rose garden close to the picnic area. In the noon sun then we walked along the trails not finding much--- until we stopped in a shady area looking quietly for a good long while. There we found more Yellow-rumps, but also a Nashville Warbler, a pair of Orange-crowned warblers and a Black-throated Grey Warbler. It was a warm day, but a very satisfying day of bird watching.



PHOTO: Tina Stoner

### The Annual Christmas Census: Good Birds, Good People n' even some Science

Christmas censuses, held throughout this country and in most Central and South American Countries, provide one of the very few annual "snapshots" of bird populations and distributions (breeding bird censuses in May are the other major national census effort). As such, they are invaluable for the information that they provide. We tend to emphasize the number of species we find, but just as important are numbers of individuals. West Nile Virus has been found in a chicken in north Claremont. Crows and other corvids, including our jays, are also particularly vulnerable. Have their populations declined, or are most crows now survivors of the virus, with antibodies from past infections? Numbers of common birds such as these will tell us something about the virus's effect. Are there more Fox Sparrows and woodpeckers? Have they moved out of mountain burn areas and into our valley? How successful was the breeding season this past summer? Are there more or fewer White-crowns and Yellow-rumps? And how has the drought affected bird populations? Are the Allen's hummingbirds starting to replace or live with the Anna's Hummingbirds? Christmas census data, taken from across the nation and from southern California can help answer these questions. So please come out and participate. It's not only fun, but can provide valuable data about the status of our birds.

An hour or all day on Saturday, December 19th, at your feeder or driving and looking, you can help put numbers to those wintering birds in our area. Contact **Neil Gilbert or Dan Guthrie** for groups or localities and other participation information. See officer list for contact information.

### 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 a digital copy of the Chaparral Naturalist newsletter. **Renewals of membership for National 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, 2058 N. Mills Ave., PMB426, Claremont, CA 91711.** (Please note chapter code C08 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.**
- I would like the print version of the Chaparral Naturalist.
- Do not publish** my information in the chapter directory.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter Code C08**

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## North Etiwanda Preserve Survey Fieldtrip Report:

# PVAS Lends Willing Eyes and Expertise by Tina Stoner

The first day of October and eleven excited birders met in the parking lot of the North Etiwanda Preserve (NEP) in Rancho Cucamonga. We were joined by four staff members from the NEP; 2 volunteer Conservation Stewards, Ron and Ralph, a volunteer biologist, Tina Kuo and Erin Oplinger, District Services Coordinator for the Special Districts Department of the County of San Bernardino. We were all there at Erin's invitation for our first semi-annual NEP bird population survey field trip. With the NEP's budget and staffing being extremely limited, and the need for biological monitoring far outweighing their ability to provide it, the Special Districts Department was thrilled to have the assistance of the Pomona Valley Audubon Society.

After being cautioned by Ron about the location of recent rattlesnake sightings, our day got off to a great start. As we started our counter-clockwise hike of the standard loop trail we quickly encountered a Loggerhead Shrike just north of the main kiosk. Our luck continued and we spotted a second one north of the settler's cabin. California and Spotted Towhees as well as Bewick's and Rock Wrens were seen and heard all along the trail. Several Wrentits entertained us with their distinctive song, but never showed themselves. We saw Bell's, Rufous-crowned, Chipping, and White-crowned Sparrows and even got a good look at a cooperative Lincoln's Sparrow. A pair of Bell's Sparrows were singing back and forth across the trail from one another; a behavior we usually encounter in springtime. Northern Flickers were out in force; we counted seven of them, but the high count of the day went to the Common Raven at 32 individuals, 25 of which were in a single group spiraling above Day Creek. Brian Elliott spotted a mule deer and many of us got a quick look at the lovely doe before she slipped into the brush. Our total for the day was 33 species of birds, only two less than our spring field trip. Based on eBird data, we saw 6 species not previously reported in the last 5 years during fall migration in the preserve.

This field trip was a perfect example of how 'citizen scientists' can help make a big difference. I received an email from Tina Kuo saying, "Thank you for the wonderful work you and other PVAS members have done at the preserve." According to Tina, our data will be, "...incorporated into the geodatabase of our biological monitoring program for the seasonal avian population of the site." Erin Oplinger said, "It was truly a pleasure to meet you in person and to work with all the wonderful people from the Pomona Valley Audubon Society late last week. I want to thank you and your group again for visiting the North Etiwanda Preserve and providing your observations for that day. The data you have produced will be invaluable to our biological monitoring program and will serve as baseline data for the seasonal avian population of the site. While I was only able to join you for a short while, I was excited to learn from you and observe your group in action. I truly do hope to we are able to meet up again and share our knowledge."

**Our next survey field trip at the preserve will be on Saturday, April 23, 2016 with Dan Gregory.** See PVAS Field Trips for contact. Be aware this is not a 'walk in the park.' The trail is a 3.3 mile loop over a mixed rocky terrain with a 700+ foot elevation gain (which is gradual because we move slowly to maximize bird viewing.)

Bring enough water for a 5.5 hours. Join us and help make a difference.

North Etiwanda Preserve (NEP) in Rancho Cucamonga.

<http://web.sbcnep.org/index.aspx?page=192>



**PHOTO: Bell's Sparrow**  
by Tina Stoner.



**PVAS birders helping to census the North Etiwanda Preserve in October, Join us if you are reasonably fit for such a 3.3 mile hike.**  
PHOTO: Brian Elliott.

## Project Feederwatch:

### Do YOU Watch your Feeder Birds Anyway? Keep Track and Report Dan Guthrie

Another year of Project Feederwatch is fast approaching, with reporting starting November 14<sup>th</sup> and continuing until April. For those not aware of this project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, participants are asked to record the maximum number seen at any one time of each species coming to their feeders for two consecutive days each week or every two weeks. Data provided is useful in determining bird population trends and the health of our avifauna.

There are 932 sites reporting in the southwest and California. House Finch is the most commonly reported species with an average flock size of seven. The data show that Cooper's Hawks have increased in percentage of sites visited over the last 15 years from 15% to almost 60%. Lesser Goldfinches have also increased in sites visited from about 15% to 30%. To participate (it is FREE), contact the Feederwatch website at [feederwatch@cornell.edu](mailto:feederwatch@cornell.edu). It's fun and worthwhile.

# PVAS Field Trips --- 2015-2016

Pomona Valley Audubon field trips are offered at no cost (unless otherwise specified) and open to all individuals. ALWAYS call the trip leader if you plan to attend and to verify start time, meeting location, and confirm trip status. In case of rain, call the trip leader the night before. For your comfort and enjoyment, participants should plan to bring the following item

- **Binoculars/spotting scope/camera** (as desired)
- **Water**
- **Snacks and lunch**
- **Dress in layers** (Bring extra clothing in case of unexpected weather changes)
- **Walking/Hiking shoes**
- **Sunscreen**
- **Hat**
- **Full tank of gas**

**Cedar waxwings  
in a tight little flock  
with pointy wings.**



## **First Sunday Birdwalk----**

### **at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens**

Join us for our monthly bird walk. Family friendly, the walk is slow paced and lasts approximately 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.) . Entry fee waved for all participants.

**Leader: Fraser Pemberton (909) 624-6451.**

**Sunday, November 1, 2015**

**Sunday, December 6, 2015**

**Sunday, January 3, 2016**

**Sunday, February 7, 2016**

**Sunday, March 6, 2016**

**Sunday, April 3, 2016**

**Sunday, May 1, 2016**

**Sunday, June 5, 2016**

## **Fourth Sunday----**

### **Frank G. Bonelli Nature Walks---**

Join us for a monthly nature walk at Frank G. Bonelli Park. This is an easy, two-hour walk for beginners as well as experts. The diverse habitat makes this a great place to find Greater Roadrunner, Cactus Wren, and California Gnatcatcher, along with raptors and wintering waterfowl. Meets at 8:00 a.m. at the Bonelli Park headquarters on Via Verde near the 57 Fwy. Entry fee waved for all participants.

**Leader: Rod Higbie (909) 599-6526.**

**Sunday, October 25, 2015**

**Sunday, November 29, 2015 *Note date CHANGE***

**Sunday, December 27, 2015**

**Sunday, January 24, 2016**

**Sunday, February 28, 2016**

**Sunday, March 27, 2016**

**Sunday, April 24, 2016**

**Sunday, May 22, 2016**

## **Day & Weekend PVAS trips----**

Check with leader for any additions or changes.

Saturday, November 7, 2015

### **Mt. Baldy Village and Vicinity**

Join Dan for a trip to the Mt. Baldy area for species such as White-headed Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, nuthatches, Mountain Chickadee, American Dipper, and Townsend's Solitaire. Meets 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park (we'll carpool from there) and trip is limited to 12 persons. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Call the trip leader if you plan to attend and to check trip status.

Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Saturday, November 21, 2015

### **Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden**

Join Eric for a fun day at the botanic garden. This varied habitat plays host to a variety of species. There is a \$9/person entrance fee (free for RSABG members!). Meets 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park (we'll carpool from there) and trip is limited to 12 persons. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Call the trip leader if you plan to attend and to check trip status.

Leader: Eric Smith (909) 477-7976 or bird4life28@yahoo.com.

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

### **Bonelli Park Pre-Christmas Trip**

Meet near room 8 off Via Verde in West Picnic Valley at 7:00 a.m. for a morning search for goodies prior to our Christmas Census. Participants should bring water and snacks. Trip is limited to 12 participants. Call the trip leader if you plan to attend and to check trip status.

Leader: Eric Smith (909) 477-7976 or bird4life28@yahoo.com.

Saturday, December 19, 2015

### **Annual Christmas BIRD CENSUS**

The more eyes the better! Join a group or be your own group. Some are mostly by car, some are easy walking, and one could be your own backyard or block. To choose your group and coordinate count areas (so as not to count the same birds twice), please contact Dan Guthrie at dguthrie@jsd.claremont.edu or 909 239-5124. The tally gathering will be at the home of Neil Gilbert at 5 pm.

Saturday, January 9, 2016

### **Orange County Area**

A tour of coastal migrant traps and hot spots for wintering specialties and a New Year start with a big list.

Leader: Eric Smith (909) 477-7976 or bird4life28@yahoo.com

Saturday, January 16, 2016

### **Whittier Narrows/Legg Lake**

Join Dan as we search for wintering waterfowl, sparrows, and flycatchers. This is a great place to find winter vagrants.

Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Saturday, February 13, 2016

### **Lake Perris and San Jacinto Wilderness**

A walk for wintering waterfowl, gulls, raptors, and sparrows. Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, and Sage Thrasher are not uncommon.

Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

### **Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden**

Join Eric for a walk at this botanic garden as we search for early spring migrants. Leader: Eric Smith (909) 477-7976 or bird4life28@yahoo.com.

## Where Do Barn Owls Roost?? Dan Guthrie

We collect and give barn owl pellets to grade school teachers (free on request) for use in the classroom. Teachers use them to let students do hands on work and learn about food chains and ecology. Barn owls tend to roost in favorite places and regurgitate their owl pellets there. We don't have any barns locally but sometimes the owls roost in hay storage areas in Chino. Locally, a favorite roosting spot is in the dead palm frond skirts on palm trees. Such a roost is at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and rat bones can be seen on the ground beneath these trees. There are plenty of rats in the suburbs. They clean out bird feeders at night and travel along power lines. Barn owls help keep their population down. So – **I need more barn owl pellets!** If you have any palm trees skirted with dead fronds in your area, check underneath them for rodent bones and owl pellets, and let me know of the location. School kids and their teachers will be most grateful. Dan Guthrie (909 239 5124 or dguthrie@jsd.claremont.edu).

Setup of owl pellets in situ by Judy Sugden.



Fun takeoff photo of Lesser Goldfinch by Ken Damon

## PVAS Field Trips --- *continued...*

Saturday, March 12, 2016

### Peck Road Water Conservation Park

This hidden gem in Arcadia boasts a surprising variety of year-round and migrant species.

Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net



Saturday, April 16, 2016

### San Dimas Canyon

Join Eric for a moderate walk in the canyon to look for local species and migrants. Leader: Eric Smith (909) 477-7976 or bird4life28@yahoo.com.

Saturday, April 23, 2016

### North Etiwanda Preserve

PVAS will conduct a semi-annual bird survey at the NEP. Enjoy a great day of local birding knowing you contributed to citizen science at its finest. Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Saturday, May 7, 2016

### Big Morongo Canyon

A famous desert oasis at the height of western migration. Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net.

Saturday, June 4, 2016

### Big Bear Lake Area

A trip to the Big Bear Lake area during breeding season. Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 944-2259 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net.

### PVAS LEADERS 2015

President .....Neil Gilbert..... Neil.Gilbert@twc.com  
 Vice-President .....Ed Babcock..... ed.babcock@icloud.com  
 Secretary .....Angie Verma ..... rosegoddess@prodigy.net  
 Treasurer .....Chuck Burt ..... chuckburt6@hotmail.com

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Board Member .....Jim Herman .....jhfinwing@msn.com  
 Board Member .....Tina Stoner ..... tinastoner@earthlink.net  
 Board Member .....Nancy Strang..... bstrang51@aol.com

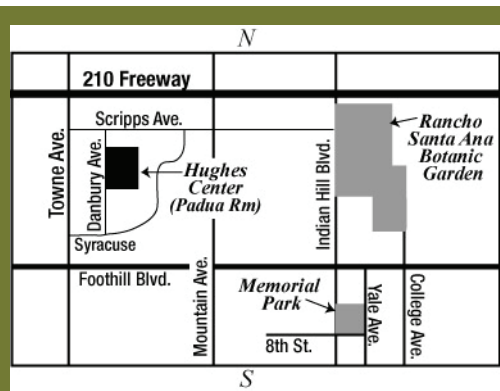
### CHAPARRAL NATURALIST NEWSLETTER

Editor .....Judy Sugden ..... eeyaa@uia.net

The **Chaparral Naturalist** is published bimonthly, except July and August by the Pomona Valley Audubon Society. Copy deadline is the second to 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 to Judy, **eeyaa@uia.net**. 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.

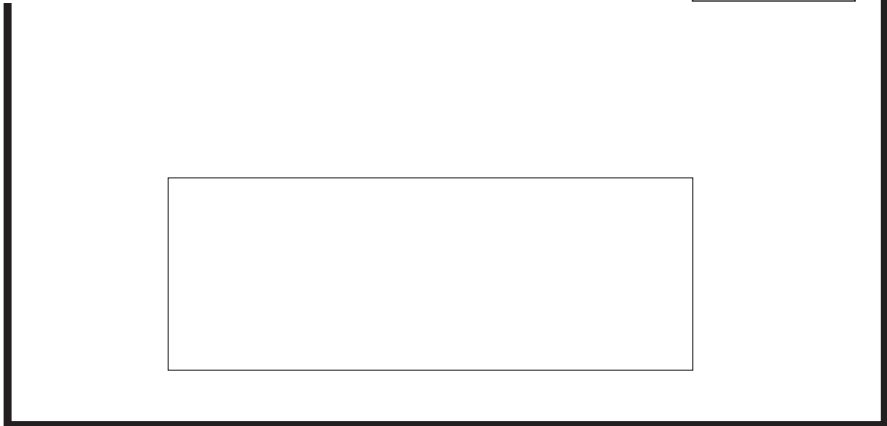
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**General Meetings** are held in the **Padua Room** in the **Alexander Hughes Center, 1700 Danbury Drive, Claremont.** From Foothill Blvd., head north on Mountain or Towne Ave. and turn onto Scripps Drive. Turn south on Danbury, the Alexander Hughes 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!*

**PVAS General Membership Meetings**

**Allen's hummingbird**  
 by Dan Guthrie



**Thursday, November 5, 2015**

**Jewels of Nature - Hummingbirds in Your Garden**  
 by Monique Rea

Monique Rea will present a program "Jewels of Nature, Hummingbirds in Your Garden." Monique has worked with and rehabilitated hummingbirds, for the past 20 years in South Orange County and is a volunteer for Songbird Care and Education Center. She will share pictures of rescued hummingbirds and the hummingbirds that have nested in her yard. There will be examples of nests demonstrating some of the different materials female hummingbirds have used.

**Thursday, December 3, 2015**

**California Condor Recovery Project - The San Gabriel Mountains as a Historic Part of Condor Country**  
 by Katie Chaplin and Martin Fletcher

Katie Chaplin is a former Condor Program member. She was instrumental in setting up the nest-cam equipment, involving solar run batteries and repeaters to get the information back to the ranch house where the data could be stored on a computer. She also helped with health checks, finding missing birds, and a host of other condor duties including spending a night in a condor nest while the chick was being treated at the zoo.

Martin Fletcher is the President of the Friends of the California Condors Wild and Free. He has given many tours of the refuges. He has participated in outreach events throughout southern California, teaching folks about the condors. A favorite is to go to schools and teach the kids about the condors. He has set up work parties at the refuges, getting the Friends group to help the refuge staff complete a variety of projects.



**Thursday, January 7, 2016**

**Birding Zambia and Botswana** by Brian Elliott