



# Chaparral Naturalist

A Publication of  
Pomona Valley Audubon Society

[www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org](http://www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org)

FALL 2018 | SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

## PVAS Burrowing Owl Conservation Project: Eyes and Ears on Owls

By Suzanne Thompson

My first view of a Burrowing Owl was near the Salton Sea where the birds are easy to spot, perched beside their burrows close to the road or peeking up from the burrow to keep an eye out for insects, lizards, and small rodents. They are alert little owls, heads swiveling from side to side or cocked at a slant to get a better look. Their heads frequently dart up to the sky on the lookout for raptors who might like a little owl snack.

Burrowing Owls, once common in the Pomona Valley, have sadly lost most of their habitat due to development. There are still owls nesting here, but they are in danger of disappearing from our area entirely. PVAS has a plan to prevent that.

In 2017, our chapter started a Burrowing Owl conservation project, Eyes and Ears on Owls, to take an informal census of the birds and find out where they nest in Pomona Valley. For two years, volunteers have searched for and monitored the owls during the nesting season which is roughly March through mid-August.

Three main nesting sites have been found in the Chino and Ontario areas, as well as a few places with an owl or two. All three main sites had a successful season with at least 27 juveniles spotted at the most productive area. This is good news, but unfortunately there are threats to the owls at each of these sites. The dangers vary by site, but include planned development, human disturbance in nesting areas, and rodent bait stations (which poisons their food and the owls themselves.)

To address these concerns, PVAS funded a biological survey by a

Burrowing Owl expert to recommend strategies to improve the success of the Burrowing Owl Preserve in Chino. In addition, we are working with local governments to reduce human disturbance to the owls, planning for ways to keep nesting areas intact even if nearby land is developed, and educating involved parties about the danger of rodenticides.

### Who Knew?

*Cowboys used to call Burrowing Owls "howdy birds" because they seemed to bob in greeting when the cowboys approached.*

*Source: National Audubon Society website  
Sketch by Anna Georges*



Many thanks to all our volunteers who use their eyes and ears to locate the owls and keep track of their nesting outcomes and to the members of the Burrowing Owl Conservation Committee who use their expertise and passion for birds to plan protection for the owls.

What can you do to protect Burrowing Owls in the Pomona Valley? There is a spot for everyone who wants to help:

- Become a B Owl observer
- Join the B Owl Conservation Committee
- Volunteer to help with the Chaffey College Chino/PVAS Fall Burrowing Owl Festival
- Meet to plan implementing suggestions for improving the Chino B Owl Preserve

- Compile observations from the B Owl observers
- Use your skills to create your own involvement such as taking video or pictures for our media outlets, or create a B Owl exhibit for PVAS outreach.

E-mail Suzanne Thompson at [sthompson@pomona.edu](mailto:sthompson@pomona.edu) to volunteer. ■

### COMING SOON!

**"Meet the Birds"** at the Thompson Creek Trail Bird Oasis.  
**Saturday, October 6, 9-11 a.m.**  
Bring a scope or binoculars and help introduce our local birds to trail walkers. More info on the PVAS website.



## President's Message

### What Does it Mean to be an Advocate for Birds?

That's a question with answers as varied as the people asking it. Which is why your PVAS Board of Directors, and many member volunteers, have been working hard to make it easier for all of us to be

better advocates for the birds we love and the habitats they need to thrive. But how you ask? Let me answer that question, with another question. What does being an advocate for birds mean to you?

Perhaps it means introducing new people to the wonderful world of birds and nature? How long has it been since you invited someone to join you on one of our bird walks or field trips? Have you thought about asking someone to expand their knowledge of birds at one of our meetings? And here's an important one, how long since you encouraged a child to get outdoors and learn about the birds around them? To help you invite others to join in our activities, PVAS has some new tools, including a new beautiful full-color brochure for you to share with others and, for the first time, we have business cards (our miniature eco-friendly brochure). Easy to carry and pass out, be sure to pick up some business cards (and brochures) at our next meeting or event. (A printable pdf version of the new brochure is also available on our website.)

If you're the type who likes to share their knowledge of birds with others, PVAS has a variety of opportunities for you to get involved, including our Meet the Birds event at our Bird Oasis on the Thompson Creek Trail (see page 1). Other public outreach opportunities include our new collaboration with Chaffey College – Chino Campus's Burrowing Owl Festival, as well as old favorites, Village Venture and Earth Day Claremont. Upgrades to our booth and new educational aids are helping us be better bird educators. If you prefer a younger audience, you can help children learn about birds and nature by participating in Things That Go Bump in the Night and the Family Bird Festival at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Also, as our relationship with the Girl Scouts at Camp La Casita in Claremont continues to grow, there will be four dates next June and July to 'go to camp' in the morning and take scouts on a bird walk.

Maybe when you hear the expression advocate for birds, you think of political advocacy. Our Conservation chair, Brian Elliott recently attended Advocacy Day in Sacramento (see page 5) He has also been giving us periodic updates on legislation of interest to Audubon at our meetings. Please contact Brian if you'd like to get involved.

Is hands-on conservation through citizen science your preferred way to advocate for birds? Our Burrowing Owl conservation project Eyes and Ears on Owls (see page 1) needs your help. Perhaps you'd like to monitor bluebird or tree swallow nest boxes, or survey birds. Our fall survey of the North Etiwanda Preserve is October 11 and the annual Christmas Bird Count is December 15, 2018.

We can all do our part to advocate for birds, and PVAS will continue to strive to improve opportunities for our members to be the best advocates they can. ■

## Field Trip Basics

**Pomona Valley Audubon Field Trips** are offered at no cost (unless otherwise specified) and are open to all. ALWAYS call the trip leader if you plan to attend and to verify time, location and 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 suggested items:

- Binoculars/spotting scope/camera (as desired)
- Water
- Snacks/Lunch
- Appropriate clothing (Dress in layers and be ready for unexpected weather changes.)
- Walking/Hiking shoes
- Sunscreen/Repellant
- Hat
- Full tank of gas

**PVAS Field Trip Difficulty Levels** – Trips rated Easy through Strenuous involve walking and standing for several hours.

**Minimal** – Little or no walking, option to exit car and walk short distances over relatively level terrain. Example: Birding By Car series.

**Easy** - Walking on relatively level terrain, paved or maintained dirt roads (many locations wheelchair accessible.) Example: Artificial wetlands and botanic gardens.

**Moderate** – Some elevation change, stairs, walking on sloped grass, rolling hills, open fields or groomed hiking trails with mild trip hazards (tree roots, rocks, etc.) Example: Regional Parks with lakes and hiking trails.

**Strenuous** – Irregular or rocky terrain, > 500ft. elevation change, some off trail walking. Example: Natural areas and preserves (North Etiwanda Preserve.)

## PVAS Board of Directors 2017 – 2018

**PRESIDENT** - Tina Stoner - tinastoner@earthlink.net

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**MEETING LOGISTICS DIRECTOR** - Maryanne Strehlow - aco50sig@gmail.com

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**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** - Tina Stoner - tinastoner@earthlink.net

Pomona Valley Audubon Society

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Local PVAS phone number: (909) 625-5510



# Field Trips

Chaparral Naturalist

www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

## September 8, 2018 – Saturday

### Oak Glen Preserve

39611 Oak Glen Road, Yucaipa, CA 92339

*Difficulty: Moderate*

New Location This Year! Nestled mile-high in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains lies the 2,180-acre preserve, home of the Wildlands Conservancy's So. Cal. Montane Botanic Garden a great place to look for montane species. (The trip leader can probably be persuaded to stop for fresh apple cider.) Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day trip. (Est. drive 98 miles)

**Trip Leader:** Dan Gregory, (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net



## September 15, 2018 – Saturday

### BBC Ontario Burrowing Owls

Multiple locations

This is a Birding By Car trip with very little if any walking and radio communication between the cars. Depart from Memorial Park in Claremont at 8 a.m. and return by noon. We will visit some of the sites our chapter has been monitoring. Burrowing Owls are best observed from the cover of the car and many burrows are very close to the road with good photo opportunities. (Est. drive 22 miles)

**Trip Leaders:** Dan Guthrie and Judy Sugden, (909) 239-5124

## October 6, 2018 – Saturday

### Huntington Central Park

18000 Goldenwest St., Huntington Beach, CA 92648; and

### Bolsa Chica Ecological Preserve

Bolsa Chica, Hwy 1, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

*Difficulty: Easy*

There is always something fun to see at Huntington Central Park between its resident exotic species and frequent surprise vagrants. Then we'll visit the wetlands at Bolsa Chica for shorebirds, waterfowl and local specialties. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day trip. (Est. drive 100 miles.)

**Trip Leader:** Dan Gregory, (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

## October 11, 2018 – Thursday

### North Etiwanda Preserve Fall Survey

4890 Etiwanda Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

*Difficulty: Strenuous*

This will be the first of two bird population surveys for the NEP this birding season and a great opportunity to give back to the community by doing what we love – birding! It will be a long, but fun day. Bring enough water for a 6 hour walk on rocky terrain, snacks, and a portable lunch. Sun protection and appropriate shoes recommended. Recent parking issues make it more essential that you contact the trip leader if you plan to attend. (Est. driving 16 mi.)

**Trip Leader:** Tina Stoner, (909) 292-3900 or tinastoner@earthlink.net



## October 18, 2017 – Thursday

### BBC Prado Regional Park

16700 Euclid Ave, Chino, CA 91708

*Difficulty: Minimal*

This is a Birding By Car trip with very little if any walking and radio communication between the cars. Depart Memorial Park in Claremont at 8 a.m. and return by noon. A good trip for wintering ducks, gulls and Vermillion Flycatchers. (Est. driving 35 mi.)

**Trip Leaders:** Dan Guthrie and Judy Sugden, (909) 239-5124

## November 2-4, 2018 – Friday through Sunday

### Bishop/Eastern Sierras Weekend Trip

*Difficulty: Easy to Strenuous (up to 4 mi./day.)*

Eric has a new route this year with less driving (and maybe more species?) We'll have an opportunity to go owling in a new spot near Bishop on both Friday and Saturday evenings. By day, we'll be birding by car, feeder watching and walking/hiking (which is always optional.) Target species include Tundra Swan, Prairie Falcon, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch and other area specialties. Once again, participants will be treated to a delicious complementary dinner Saturday night at the Copper Top BBQ in Big Pine. Lodging is on your own in either Big Pine or Bishop. RSVP with trip leader before October 19th. (Est. 520 miles round trip to Bishop, plus touring.)

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

## November 10, 2018 – Saturday

### Grassy Hollow Visitor's Center

CA-2, Valyermo, CA 93563 and Glen Helen Regional Park

*Difficulty: Moderate (up to 5 mi.)*

We'll look for montane species at Grassy Hollow Visitor Center and perhaps other spots in the Wrightwood area before heading down the pass to Glen Helen Regional Park. \$8 vehicle entry fee. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day trip. (Est. driving 102 mi.)

**Trip Leader:** Dan Gregory, (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net



## November 15, 2018 – Thursday

### BBC Mojave Narrows Regional Park

18000 Yates Rd., Victorville, CA

*Difficulty: Minimal*

This is a Birding By Car trip with very little if any walking and radio communication between the cars. Depart Memorial Park in Claremont at 8 a.m. and return by noon. MNRP is a great place for grassland and riparian species as well as water birds. \$8 vehicle entry fee. (Est. driving 105 mi.)

**Trip Leaders:** Dan Guthrie and Judy Sugden, (909) 239-5124





**Thursday, September 6, 2018**

**Julie Skoglund**  
**International Bird Rescue**

Julie Skoglund, Operations Manager at International Bird Rescue will give a special presentation on their Blue Banded Pelican Project. She'll tell us how the program works and what it has taught us about Brown Pelicans through the years. International Bird Rescue is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to mitigating the human impact on aquatic birds. It operates two full-time wildlife centers in California and maintains an emergency response center in Alaska.



**Thursday, October 4, 2018**

**John Trammell**  
**Wildlands Conservancy**

The Wildlands Conservancy stewards the largest nonprofit nature preserve system comprised of fifteen preserves encompassing 143,000 acres. All the preserves provide free access to diverse landscapes ranging from ocean fronts, deserts, mountains, rivers, and more. Meet John Trammell, Project Manager for The Wildlands Conservancy, to learn about the conservancy's preserve system and large-scale conservation projects that have or are taking place across California.



**Thursday, November 1, 2018**

**Brian Elliott and Gary Charlton**  
**Birding the 2018 Spring Migration from Gulf Coast Texas to Ohio and Michigan**

PVAS members Brian Elliott and Gary Charlton birded the 2018 spring migration starting in April at the Texas Gulf Coast hotspots of High Island and Sabine Woods. They followed that up in May with trips to the world-famous Magee Marsh of northwest Ohio and the Tawas Peninsula on Lake Huron in Michigan. Warblers, tanagers, vireos, and orioles were the main attractions, but many other species were encountered as well. Each of the locales they visited had a unique and different birding "flavor". Come enjoy Brian and Gary sharing their images from the trips and discuss their experiences birding this great spring migration.

## Bird Walks

### First Sunday Bird Walk

#### Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

1500 N. College Ave. Claremont,  
CA 91711

Meet at the entrance at 8:00 a.m. for free admission. This family-friendly bird walk is approximately 2 hours long and is perfect for beginners and experienced birders alike. No binoculars? No worries! Loaner binoculars are available (limited number so first come first served.) You will receive instructions on their use as well. PVAS volunteers will lead the walk.

**September 2**

**October 7**

**November 4**

### Fourth Sunday Nature Walk

#### Bonelli Regional Park

120 E. Via Verde Dr., San Dimas,  
CA 91773

New Meeting Instructions for  
Bonelli Park

Effective with the September 2018 Bonelli Park bird walk we will meet at the Equestrian Staging Area on the west side of the park. To reach this area take the 57 freeway north or south exiting at the Via Verde exit. At the end of the ramps turn left toward the park. At the first stop sign, turn left on Raging Waters Drive (Do not enter the park at this point). After you turn onto Raging Waters Drive (disregard the "Raging Waters Traffic Only" sign since they are not operating when we are there) continue

on Raging Waters Drive to the first stop sign (do *not* cross the dam even if the gate is open). At this point turn left and follow the paved road down the hill to the large parking lot. We will meet at the parking lot between 7:30 am and 8 am and caravan into the park for the walk.

**Trip leader:** Rod Higbie,  
warblerod@verizon.net, (909) 599-6526

**September 23**

**October 28**

**November 25**

# 2018 Audubon Advocacy Day at the California State Capitol

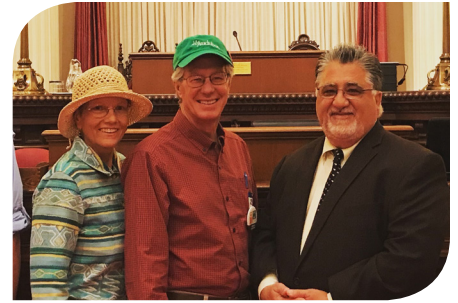
By Brian Elliott

Audubon California hosted the 2018 Advocacy Day in Sacramento on June 21. Audubon members from across California assembled in Sacramento to lobby state legislators on pending legislative bills that are important to birds and the environment.

The day gave Audubon members an opportunity to meet with other Audubon members and with the leadership of

Audubon California, including Sarah Rose, the new executive director of Audubon California.

PVAS members, Brian and Janice Elliott, represented PVAS and were teamed up with a group of volunteers from other chapters to speak to legislators in their districts. Brian and Janice's group spoke personally with State Senator Portantino and with aides to Assembly member Laura Friedman and Assembly member Chris Holden's office.



Janice and Brian with Senator Portantino.

Audubon members thanked the legislators for their support of AB 2627 that requires that best practices be adopted on all projects that might come under the "incident kill" provisions of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Trump administration is trying to alter rules pertaining to the Federal Migratory Bird Act Treaty regarding "accidental or incidental kills".

Audubon members also lobbied legislators on behalf of a few other bills before the legislature that help maintain or enhance protections for birds. Audubon members were reminding legislators that we are watching them and paying attention to how they vote on legislation relevant to birds and the environment and that California should continue to lead the country in environmental legislation.

Audubon members, staff and consultants in front of the Capitol building.



## Time to Sign up for Project Feederwatch

By Dan Guthrie

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. It is sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

Anyone interested in birds can participate. FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. You can count birds as often as every week, or as infrequently as you

like: the schedule is completely flexible. All you need is a bird feeder, bird bath, or plantings that attract birds.

New participants are sent a research kit with complete instructions for participating, as well as a bird identification poster and more. You provide the feeder(s) and seed. Then each fall participants receive a 16-page, year-end report, Winter Bird Highlights. Participants also receive access to the digital version of Living Bird, the Cornell Lab's award-winning, quarterly magazine.

There is an \$18 annual participation fee for U.S. residents (\$15 for Cornell Lab members). Canadians can participate

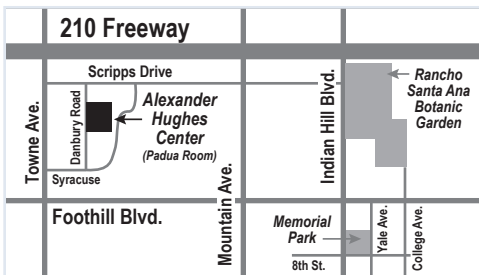
by joining Bird Studies Canada for CAN\$35. The participation fee covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and the year-end report (Winter Bird Highlights). Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of our

participants, this project wouldn't be possible.

You can find additional information at <https://feederwatch.org/>

The website has lots of information about bird feeder visitors, including information on House Finch eye disease and proper cleaning of feeders. There are tips on tricky bird IDs and lots of photographs. We'd love to see more PVAS members participate. Won't you consider signing up for Project FeederWatch today?





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Return Service Requested

**General meetings**

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Room:** Padua Room  
**Address:** Alexander Hughes Center  
 1700 Danbury Drive  
 Claremont, Ca 91711

**Directions:** From Foothill Blvd., head north on Mountain Ave. or Towne Ave. and turn onto Scripps Drive. Turn south on Danbury, the Alexander Hughes Center will be on the east side.

**Meetings begin with a bird identification session, followed by refreshments, a short business meeting, and our evening program.**

PVAS CHAPARRAL NATURALIST | FALL 2018

**Join PVAS at These Two Fall Community Events:**

- **Things That Go Bump in the Night at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden**  
 Friday and Saturday  
 October 12 and 13, 2018 from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.  
 Volunteers are needed to handle the education ambassador birds from Wild Wings of California.
- **37th Annual Village Venture – on First Street in the Claremont Village**  
 Saturday  
 October 27, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Many of you attend Village Venture anyway, why not consider spending a couple hours in our booth as well? Volunteers are needed to work our booth and/or handle the birds from Wild Wings.

Public outreach at community events like these is a wonderful way to share our love and knowledge of birds with others. No previous experience needed as training will be provided. Contact Tina Stoner to sign-up. [tinastoner@earthlink.net](mailto:tinastoner@earthlink.net)



**A NEW Look for the Chaparral Naturalist**

PVAS would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Judy Sugden for her many years of service to our chapter, most especially in her recent role as our newsletter editor. Although she's retiring as our editor we will still see Judy on our Birding By Car series field trips.

We hope you like the new updated look for the Chaparral Naturalist. The center pull-out is designed as a calendar you can post at home as a quick and easy reference.

Let us know what you think. Send your comments to [pomonavalleyaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:pomonavalleyaudubon@gmail.com)

**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY (NAS) AND POMONA VALLEY AUDUBON (PVAS) MEMBERSHIP**

We invite you to become a member of both NAS and PVAS. You also have the option of joining just PVAS. For either option, a yearly individual or family membership is \$20.

Check one:

- JOIN  Join both NAS and PVAS ONLINE. . . . . On the PVAS website, click on "Membership" and then on link to NAS. Make a \$20 donation to NAS. Check Chapter Code: C08
- Join both NAS and PVAS BY CHECK. . . . . Make out a \$20 check to NAS. Mail to PVAS with address slip below.
- Join PVAS only, not NAS. . . . . Make \$20 check to PVAS and send to PVAS with address slip below.
- RENEW  Renew your joint membership in NAS and PVAS ONLINE. . . Use the renewal notice you receive from NAS or make a \$20 donation to NAS on the NAS website. \*Use the same name as your membership.
- Renew your joint membership in NAS and PVAS BY CHECK. Make \$20 check to NAS and send to NAS with address slip below.
- Renew your PVAS only membership. . . . . Make \$20 check to PVAS and send to PVAS with address slip below.

NAS mailing address: **NAS, PO Box 97194, Washington DC 20090**  
 PVAS mailing address: **PVAS, 2058 N. Mills, PMB246, Claremont, CA 91711**

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

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