



Chaparral Naturalist

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Pomona Valley Audubon Society

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FALL 2020 | SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

A Tree Swallow's Best Friend (Part one of two)

Story and Photos by Sheila Bolka

One morning in mid-June I had the opportunity to join Hank Feilen on his weekly check of the Tree Swallow nest boxes at the Chino Creek Wetlands. Working as a citizen scientist, Hank has been collecting data for the Orange County Water District for six years about how Tree Swallows use

create and an annual report prepared by the water district that helps with management of the wetlands.

I smiled when he unloaded a "Homer" bucket from his vehicle and showed me the tools issued to him on his first day as a volunteer. They included a clipboard, a photo chart for estimating the age of the chicks, a brush and a spatula to clean the boxes, a spray bottle of vinegar and some Tanglefoot® insect barrier for ants and clippers for



the 25 post-mounted nest boxes. (He also monitors nest boxes in the trees at Prado Regional Park, but that's a story for another day.) The water district provides the birds nesting habitat and in turn, the Tree Swallows

(with their voracious appetite for flying insects) provide natural pest control in this recreation and educational setting. The nest boxes also create an interpretive learning tool for visitors of the wetlands. Hank's volunteer work pays him with fulfilling opportunities for learning and for meeting interesting people. It's also rewarding to know that the data he collects is used to



cutting back foliage. Hank also uses a telescoping inspection mirror and flashlight to look into boxes without disturbing the nest. Tree Swallows nest from March to July and Hank is there every week to witness and record the amazing cycle of nesting activities. Tree Swallows usually lay 4-7 eggs which are incubated 11-20 days. The nestling period is fairly short, just 15-25 days. Hank says he's very careful opening the boxes when the chicks have been hatched about two weeks because they may panic and jump out of the box. Many swallow pairs raise two clutches per season.

Part two continues next issue.

What's Up? Owlets!

By Suzanne Thompson

What could be more appealing than a little round head with big yellow eyes popping up out of a hole in the ground? Maybe 6 little heads popping up one after another, all wide-eyed and curious about what is going on above ground. Yep, it must be Burrowing Owl nesting season.

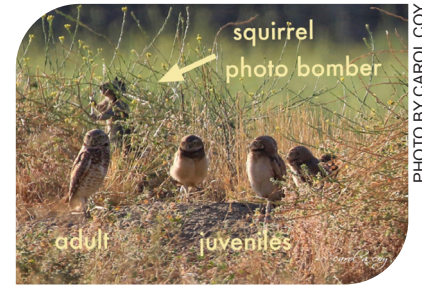


PHOTO BY CAROL COY

The Eyes and Ears on Burrowing Owl monitors have been out since March counting owls, owlets, and burrows. Several active burrows were discovered at the Chino Airport and owlets were plentiful in the south Chaffey College fields in Chino—up to 18 owls spotted on one visit. Nesting in the Ontario fields got off to a slow start, but in July two new families of late-nesters were discovered with a bounty of owlets.

Unfortunately, bad behavior on the part of some photographers at the Ontario site put the owlets in danger by crowding around the burrow entrances to get good shots. We now have a card to hand out with information on ethical guidelines for wildlife photography and how to report offenders.

The future for the Ontario owls is up in the air as Ontario Airport plans to develop at least some of owl nesting land they own. We are in conversation with them and hope to have input on decisions about development in that area and the fate of the owls who live and nest there. The best outcome would be to have some of the land where they currently nest set aside for a Burrowing Owl Preserve.

You can help the owls and the project by joining the Friends of the Pomona Valley Burrowing Owls. Membership is free and you will receive updates on the owls and opportunities to volunteer, if that interests you. See the invitation on back page to become a Friend.

Fall Meeting Speakers via Zoom

You will receive the meeting links via email, IF we have your address! If you've never received an email from PVAS, send your address to pomonavalleyaudubon@gmail.com.



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Thursday – September 3, 2020 at 7 pm

Benny Jacob Schwartz – From Sea to Summit: The Marvelous Hummingbird



From Alaska to the high Andes of South America, join us as we explore the magic of hummingbirds! With 360 species

recognized globally, we'll discuss their remarkable biology, expansive range, ecological significance and the best way to attract them to your yard! Mouth-watering media and local hummingbird ID section included! Benny Isaac Jacobs-Schwartz owns and operates a

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bird guiding business and lifestyle brand called BIRDS by BIJS (pronounced Bee-jus). Working seasonally as a naturalist guide, expedition trip leader, and international bird guide, Benny works in a variety of locations. Most recently bringing him to such exotic places like coastal Alaska, Trinidad and Tobago, and

the Ecuadorian cloud forest. Seasonally Benny or BIJS, is based in Los Angeles, where he leads public and private birding adventures to urban hotspots. Benny hopes his love of the natural world will inspire others to conserve the open spaces around them and look up more often from their phones!

Thursday – October 1, 2020 at 7 pm

Brian Elliott – Southeastern Arizona, America's Unique Birding Hotspot



PVAS's own conservation chair, Brian Elliott, has been birding SE Arizona at least once a year since 2004 and considers it one of his favorite places in the world to go birding. The region includes the northern most range of many birds associated with the tropics that cannot be seen anywhere else in the

United States. Birders from around the world to come to visit the sky islands of the Chiricahua, Huachuca, and Santa Rita Mountains whose variety of habitats offer year-round birding with an impressive variety of species including Mexican Chickadee, Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Elegant Trogons, and the greatest diversity of hummingbird species in the US.

Brian taught AP Environmental Science and AP Physics at San Dimas High and retired in 2015. Besides being a passionate birder, Brian is an accomplished rock climber and wilderness adventurer who travels frequently around the U.S. and abroad (over 20 different countries) to follow these passions. Whether he is on a dedicated birding trip to Mongolia, rock climbing in Tasmania, or on a month-long canoe adventure on Alaska's north slope, he always takes time to observe and photograph birds.

Thursday – November 5, 2020 at 7 pm

Dr. Pablo Weaver, PhD - The Coevolution of Cowbirds and Their Hosts



We think of cowbirds as the bad guys, but are they really? Dr. Weaver will share with us his research involving the coevolution of cowbirds and their hosts with case studies from the Dominican Republic and Montana.

Dr. Pablo Weaver is an assistant professor at the University of La Verne and the director of the Bob and Mary Neher Field Station in Western Montana. His broad research interests

include biogeography, ecology, evolutionary biology, and science pedagogy. He has several active areas of research, including breeding bird behavior and aquatic ecology in Montana and the West Indies.

An Invitation to Join Friends of Pomona Valley Burrowing Owls



To join Friends of PV Burrowing Owls, send an email to Pomona Valley Audubon Society at pomonavalleyaudubon@gmail.com with your name, contact information, and any other information you would like to share about your experiences with Burrowing Owls.

THANKS, FRIEND!