



Chaparral Naturalist



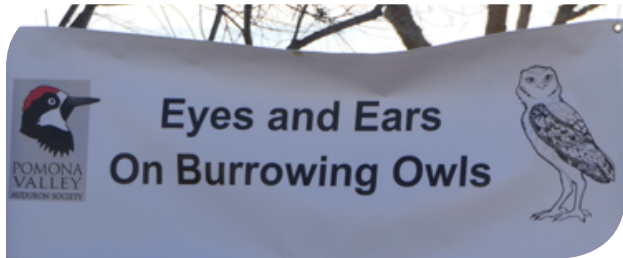
A Publication of
Pomona Valley Audubon Society

www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

SPRING 2020 | MARCH - JUNE

Preserving a Home for Burrowing Owls in the Pomona Valley

Photos from Sherry Schmidt and Suzanne Thompson; Captions by Suzanne Thompson



(Left) What a great two days at the College Park Burrowing Owl Preserve in Chino! Thanks to over 55 volunteers, eight burrow boxes with their tubing, buckets, and poultry netting were finished and



(Left & below) The wooden boxes were built by students at Los Osos High School in Rancho Cucamonga and finished by Seth Thompson and volunteers at the site.



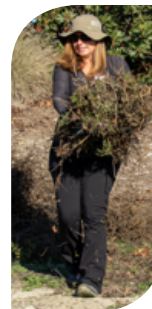
(Left & below) We are especially grateful to Kara Donahue who recruited the Southern California Edison volunteers. Six trenches were dug with the speedy and skillful work of the mini-excavator operators, Jason and Randy. After

trenches were dug, the box and tubing were installed and covered with poultry netting. Then the trench was back-filled by shovel.



(Left & below right) The eight burrows have two entrances each and are now available for occupancy. It's open house for the owls.

(Above & right) The slope was too steep for two installation sites, so those trenches were dug by shovel. Robin Ikeda and her team dug, pick-axed, and sledge-hammered their way through concrete-hard ground. What an amazing job to get two trenches dug and installed in two days in this super difficult terrain.



(Left & above left) The toyon wranglers made significant progress getting clippings off the slopes, and weeders cleared several large plots on both slopes. Those areas are now ready to be seeded with CA native plants prior to the next big rain.

2019 Christmas Bird Count Results

By Seth Thompson

The Pomona valley was shrouded in heavy, damp fog on the morning of Saturday, December 14th. The fog hung on all day, turning into a fine mist every once in a while for variety's sake. The thermometer read 55° at 7:00 am and struggled to get to a high of 59° for the day. That did not stop 73 PVAS observers in 19 different teams from conducting the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. This marked the 120th national bird count and the 47th time PVAS has participated.

The idea of a Christmas bird census began in 1900 in reaction to a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." Hunters would choose sides and go afield with their guns. The winner brought in the most quarry. "Count 'em; don't shoot 'em" became the guiding philosophy of what has become one of the longest running wildlife censuses in the world. This new holiday tradition spread to Canada, Central and South America and now occurs in 17 counties. Observers are assigned to an established counting circle and endeavor to count as many individuals of each species as possible.

This year the PVAS teams counted 122 species and 12,521 individual birds. You can see the detailed list at http://www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org/uploads/3/4/9/5/34958940/cacm-report-2019_cbc.pdf.

One would expect that the reduced visibility from the persistent fog and gloom would make it more difficult to spot and identify species and count individuals. And there were 12 fewer species identified in 2019 than the preceding year, but the total number of individuals counted was almost exactly the same (only 24 more birds in 2020). A remarkable irruption of Cedar Waxwings may be the explanation: in 2018 only 359 were counted; in 2019 there were 1,003 birds, most in two very large flocks. And Starlings were also far more prevalent, accounting for 192 individuals in 2018 and 1,022 this year. Perhaps yet another reminder of the importance of being in the right place at the right time in birding.

Our nineteen team leaders deserve special recognition. They recruited additional team members, organized and deployed them in the field on Saturday, then filled out and submitted the tally sheets. Many of them made one or more scouting trips in the preceding week to locate the best viewing spots in their area. Tina and Matt Stoner graciously hosted the wrap-up party on Saturday. Sheila White tackled the challenge of compiling the final statistics and submitting them to National Audubon. Many thanks to all the participants. See you Saturday, December 19, 2020!

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**
- **Walking/Hiking shoes**
- **Sunscreen/Repellant**
- **Appropriate clothing** (Dress in layers and be ready for unexpected weather changes.)
- **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: Drive-through wetlands.

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.)

Our Mission: To promote the protection, appreciation and enjoyment of birds and other wildlife through recreation, education and conservation.

PVAS Board of Directors

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Local PVAS phone number: (909) 625-5510

Bird Banding in La Verne

By Mike Morrison

I've been banding birds in La Verne two or three times each month since 2017. Last year there were 879 captures of 47 species. The most commonly netted birds were Bewick's Wren, Anna's Hummingbird, Bushtit, Oak Titmouse, Allen's Hummingbird, Spotted Towhee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Wrentit, California Towhee, and White-crowned Sparrow. There were also a few more exciting captures like Cooper's Hawk and Yellow-breasted Chat. Complete results can be seen at <https://sites.google.com/view/birdbanding/2019-summary>.

In the summer of 2019, I began participating in a nationwide program

called Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS), coordinated by the Institute for Bird Populations. In this program, banders use a standardized methodology so that results are comparable from one site to another and nationwide trends can be detected. Although there had been more than 1,200 MAPS sites across the USA and Canada, there had never been one in the San Gabriel Valley before. The MAPS project requires banding three times per month during the breeding season. Between May 10 and August 10, we had 351 captures of 25 species.

Data is being collected throughout the year as part of a long-term study of bird movements in the Marshall Canyon

Conservation Corridor, which is almost surrounded by housing developments. In 2019, one bird was reported from outside of the banding site: a Bewick's Wren banded east of Marshall Creek was killed by a cat in the housing development west of the creek. I was also able to publish an article in North American Bird Bander with data I collected in 2017-2018: "Capture Efficiency of Three Mesh Sizes of Mist Nets."

Several volunteers have helped on one or more banding days: John and Linda Baker, Vincent Baker, Marcy Clements, Caitlyn Flores, and My-Lan Le. More volunteers are welcome. If you'd like more information, or you'd like to observe or help or just hold a bird in your hand, contact Michael Morrison at lavernebirds@gmail.com.

From 50 Years Ago – More Stories from 1970 Editions of the Chaparral Naturalist

By Tina Stoner

On March 24, 1970 PVAS became incorporated as a non-profit organization and in our last issue we featured a few 50-year old stories from our newsletter. The response was so positive, we thought it'd be fun to highlight a few more. Enjoy these stories from the Spring of 1970.

"Audubon Center of Southern California, 1000 N. Durfee Avenue, El Monte, is having an "Open House", Sunday, April 19, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., and extend an invitation to members and friends to come for a farewell. The Center will close permanently June 30, 1970. It is hoped

that a permanent center may soon be established at some suitable place. Bring lunch. (3-16-70 Vol. XI No. 7)

"REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING in Room 108, Seaver Laboratory, 6th and College, Claremont. The speaker for the evening will be Dr. Velma J. Vance, Associate Professor at California State College, Los Angeles. Dr. Vance will speak on "The Significance of Temperature Regulation in Lizards; or What Sunbathing Means to a Lizard." ...

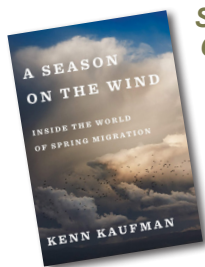
There will be a short ceremony of presenting certificates to children of the Junior Audubon Society who have

completed their course at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden." (5-25-70, Vol. XI, No. 9)

And from the same issue, here's a portion of a narrative by newly elected president, Bill O. Wirtz, II.

"I believe that significant solution of our environmental problems will come only after education of the public as to the complexities of this ecosphere we call earth. Not only appreciation of nature, but also technical understanding, are required of every American citizen. I am totally committed to this goal, especially with our young people, for it is they who will inherit today's problems."

Seems some things have changed while others haven't changed much in 50 years.



SHARING OUR LOVE OF BIRDS and GREAT BIRD BOOKS

PVAS has selected **Ken Kaufmann's A Season on the Wing: Inside the World of Bird Migration** as our bird book of interest for our 2019-2020 season. We think you will love this beautifully written account of migration through the Americas. Copies of the book will be available to check out at meetings or can be obtained at local libraries.

Members who read the book will have an opportunity to share some reactions (if they want). In keeping with our migration theme, Professor Nina Karnovsky will give us additional background on this amazing twice-yearly bird journey during our April 2020 meeting. More information will be available at our monthly meetings or contact Suzanne Thompson at sthompson@pomona.edu.

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Pomona Valley Audubon Society is now registered to receive donations from Amazon through their amazonsmile program. Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to PVAS. There is no added cost to you as the prices will be the same as those on the regular amazon site. If you have not registered on Amazon smile or if you want to change the recipient of your smile donations, go to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7050215>. Thank you and happy shopping!



Field Trips

Chaparral Naturalist

www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

March 13-15, 2020 – Friday through Sunday Anza Borrego Desert State Park Weekend

Difficulty - Moderate (up to 5 mi./day.) Limited to 12 people.

We'll be heading for the desert the second weekend in March to look for spring migrants, desert specialties and if we're lucky, maybe a Le Conte's Thrasher and Long-eared Owl. Our birding adventure will begin on Friday morning at the State Park Visitor Center at 200 Palm Canyon Dr., Borrego Springs, CA 92004 at 11 a.m. Option to caravan down with the trip leader by meeting in Chino Friday morning. Lodging is on your own in Borrego Springs with camping options. Vehicle Entry fee \$10, additional minor fees may apply. (Est. driving 260 mi. plus touring.) For full details and hotel recommendations please contact **Trip Leader:** Hank Feilen (909) 325-2154 henry.feilen@verizon.net.

March 21, 2020 – Saturday

Prado Regional Park - 16700 Euclid Ave., Chino, CA 91708

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate (up to 4 mi.) So close, yet so diverse. Visiting this popular park in Chino will increase our chances of seeing Vermillion Flycatchers, hawks and wintering vagrants. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring water, snacks, and lunch for a full day trip. \$8 vehicle entry fee. (Est. driving 31 mi.) **Trip Leader:** Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

April 4, 2020 – Saturday

Huntington Central Park - 18000 Goldenwest St., Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate (up to 4 mi.) There is always something fun to see at Huntington Central Park between its resident exotic species and frequent surprise vagrants. 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

April 17, 2020 – Friday

Hidden Valley Wildlife Area - 11401 Arlington Ave. Riverside, CA 92505

Difficulty: Moderate (2 mi.) Hidden Valley Wildlife Area is located within the Santa Ana River Valley globally Important Birding Area (IBA). We will walk the Santa Ana dry riverbed for riparian specialties, Common Ground Dove, water birds, raptors and more. Over 220 species have been recorded at this eBird hotspot. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont and return about noon. Bring water and snacks for a half day trip. Vehicle entry fee \$5. (Est. driving 52 miles) **Trip Leader:** John Baker (909)240-1474

April 23, 2020 – Thursday

North Etiwanda Preserve Spring Survey - 4890 Etiwanda Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

Difficulty: Strenuous (3.5 mi.) This will be the second of our 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 30 mi.) **Trip Leader:** Tina Stoner (909) 292-3900 or tinastoner@earthlink.net

May 2, 2020 – Saturday

Big Morongo Canyon Preserve - 11055 East Dr, Morongo Valley, CA 92256

Difficulty: Moderate (up to 4 mi. but optional feeder watching only.) A famous desert oasis at the height of western migration with lots of local nesting activity, too. Great photo opportunities during our lunch stop at the bird feeders. Meet at 6:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont (Note earlier start time!). We'll also visit Covington Park next door. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day trip. (Est. driving 167 mi.) **Trip Leader:** Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

May 9, 2020 – Saturday

Prado Wetlands – 14980 River Rd, Corona, CA 92880

Difficulty: Moderate (up to 4 mi.) Normally closed to the public we are fortunate to have Bonnie Johnson, Orange County Water District biologist, conduct a private tour of the Prado Wetlands for PVAS. 45 shallow ponds provide ideal habitat for wading and shore birds, waterfowl, raptors and more, including its large population of endangered Least Bell's Vireo. Walk from 7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. with option to picnic lunch there. Meet at Prado Wetlands. Trip is limited to 12 people so please contact trip leader to reserve your spot and discuss the need for carpooling. (Est. driving 38 mi.) **Trip Leader:** Tina Stoner (909) 292-3900 or tinastoner@earthlink.net

May 15, 2020 – Friday

Mill Creek Wetlands – Chino Corona Road and Discovery Park Ave., Eastvale, CA 92880

Difficulty: Easy (up to 2 miles) Mill Creek Wetlands provides wonderful habitat similar to Prado Wetlands so if you missed that trip, this is a great alternative. We'll look for spring arrivals like Blue Grosbeak, baby water birds with their parents, raptors, shorebirds and more. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont to carpool and return about noon. Bring water and snacks for a half day trip. (Est. driving 34 mi.) **Trip Leader:** John Baker (909)240-1474

May 26, 2019 – Tuesday



Chino Hills State Park - 4721 Sapphire Rd, Chino Hills, CA 91709

Difficulty: Minimal. We will be primarily Birding By Car with options to walk, and have radio communication between cars. Depart Memorial Park in Claremont at 8 a.m. and return by noon. A trip for grosbeaks, buntings, tanagers, vireos and flycatchers as well as spring migrants, and raptors. \$5 State Park vehicle entry fee (\$4 if 62+) (Est. driving 37 mi.) **Trip Leaders:** Tina Stoner (909) 292-3900 or tinastoner@earthlink.net and Hank Feilen (909) 325-2154 or henry.feilen@verizon.net

June 6, 2020 – Saturday

Big Bear Lake Area – (multiple locations)

Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous (up to 4 mi.) Beat the summer heat and head up the mountain. Enjoy birding the Big Bear Lake area during the breeding season of montane species. Meet at 6:00 a.m. (Note earlier start time!) at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day of birding. (Est. driving 150 mi.) **Trip Leader:** Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Remember this tip – If the trip name is “Big” (Big Morongo and Big Bear) we start at 6:00 a.m.



Thursday, March 5, 2020

Dr. Cathy McFadden and Paul Clarke – Endemic Birds (and a few Mammals) of The Philippines

The Philippines is home to about 700 species of birds, one-third of which are found nowhere else on earth. Many of these endemic species are critically endangered, including the Philippine Eagle, one of the world's largest and rarest raptors. Some very unusual mammals, such as the Colugo (or Flying Lemur) and the Philippine Tarsier, the world's second-smallest primate, are also found only in the Philippines. PVAS members Cathy McFadden and Paul Clarke will give a multimedia presentation on these and the many other species they observed during visits to five of the Philippines' main islands last year. Dr. McFadden is a professor of biology at Harvey Mudd College and has special research interests in the evolutionary relationships of marine organisms, especially soft corals. She and her husband Paul Clarke enjoy international travel and birding the world.



Thursday, April 2, 2020

Dr. Nina Karnovsky – Marvelous Migrations

Want to get an insider's look at migration from someone who studies it right here in Claremont? Professor Nina Karnovsky, Pomona College, will facilitate a discussion of Kenn Kaufman's book *A Season on the Wind*. She will also provide an overview of how birds navigate and the hazards they face during their marvelous migrations. In addition, students in her Avian Ecology class will present their findings from their study of migratory birds at the Bernard Field Station. This study has been carried out for the past 15 years by students in Professor Karnovsky's classes. Nina Karnovsky is a Willard George Halstead Zoology Professor at Pomona College where she has taught for 15 years. She teaches (as she puts it) "many different flavors of ecology" but really enjoys her Avian Ecology class.



Thursday, May 7, 2020

Dr. Ashley Heers – From Baby Birds to Feathered Dinosaurs: Locomotor Development and the Evolution of Avian Flight

Birds are the Olympic athletes of the animal world. Flight is the most physically demanding mode of locomotion especially during hovering, long distance migration, high altitude flight, or even "flying" underwater. Birds can accomplish these feats due to specialized anatomical features, including unique skeletons, muscles, and wings. But birds didn't start out with these specializations. Most hatchlings are flightless with very rudimentary anatomies: small or nonexistent wings, underdeveloped muscles, less specialized skeletons. This transition from flight-incapable hatchling to flight-capable adult is extremely dramatic. The evolutionary beginning of birds was equally dramatic as they evolved from theropod dinosaurs millions of years ago. How do birds function during these major developmental or evolutionary transitions? In other words, what do birds with rudimentary or transitional anatomies do? Dr. Ashley Heers will explore the functional relevance of rudimentary wings in baby birds and their extinct dinosaur ancestors. She is an Asst. Professor at CA State University, Los Angeles. She teaches Anatomy and Physiology and Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy and has been fascinated by birds since high school — when she discovered that birds are living dinosaurs.

Thursday, June 4, 2020

Annual Meeting and Party – starts at 6 p.m. not 7 p.m.!

Bird Walks

First Sunday Family Friendly 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 Ed Babcock, Gloria Slosberg, Ken Burgdorff and others will lead the walk.

March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7

Fourth Sunday Nature Walk

Bonelli Regional Park

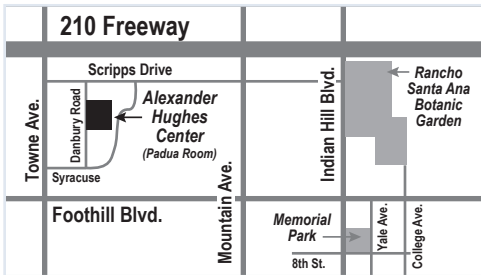
1615 McKinley Ave., La Verne, CA 91750

NEW Meeting Place for Bonelli Nature Walks for 2020!

As of January 26, 2020, the meeting location for the walk will be the Brackett Field Terminal parking lot at 1615 McKinley Ave. in La Verne. (You may know it as the parking lot for Norm's Hanger Coffee Shop.) To reach the parking lot take McKinley Ave. west from Fairplex Drive to the parking area on the right at the end of the road. Please arrive at 7:45 a.m. to caravan into the park at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars and wear comfortable shoes for this approximately 2 hour walk.

Trip leader: Rod Higbie, warblerod@yahoo.com

March 22, April 26, May 24



Pomona Valley Audubon Society
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Return Service Requested

General Meetings

Date: First Thursday in Sept.-June
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 | SPRING 2020

Celebrate Earth Day's 50th Anniversary

Saturday, April 18, 2020

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Memorial Park, 840 N. Indian Hill Blvd., Claremont, CA 91711

PVAS and Wild Wings will share a booth at this annual event. Please contact Tina Stoner to volunteer to work our booth or handle the birds from Wild Wings: tinastoner@earthlink.net (909) 292-3900

Annual June Meeting and Party

Thursday, June 4, 2020

Starts at 6 p.m. (not 7 p.m.)

- Enjoy tasty food
- Socialize and shop the silent auction
- Member slide shows - Enjoy the photography of fellow chapter members
- Elections

\$5 entry donation. If you'd like to donate to the silent auction, contact Laura Jaoui at 909-706-7031 or lijaoui01@gmail.com. If you'd like to present 15-20 of your best photographs, contact Seth Thompson at sthompson@lmu.edu.

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

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____