



Chaparral Naturalist

A Publication of
Pomona Valley Audubon Society

www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

FALL 2022 | SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

A Close Look at the Life of Pomona Valley Burrowing Owls

By Suzanne Thompson

Our PVAS monitors get a good look at the lives of Burrowing Owls, at least the part that occurs above ground. They do a wonderful job of creating a record of the number and age of the owls (juvenile or adult), burrow site, and the behavior they observed. If the behavior is especially interesting, that might be expanded on in the narrative of their reports, as you can see in the examples below.

Bob Holcomb, June 2022:

"I went out to observe this morning and found our owl families pretty much in their usual places.

One highlight was seeing the juvenile at the burrow at 10m, 3m N of F2 literally eject the parent who had just emerged at

the entrance in order to get out. The parent did fly to a position south of the burrow, but I would say that the parent was 6-10 inches in the air before it started flying. It really seemed to get a strong push from the juvenile.

The other highlight was at our very interesting burrow at 4mW,6m S off K3. I found the feeding really amazing. The adult outside did not appear to bend down at all in the way you might expect if offering food. It stood upright. In a way, it reminded me of a person holding a biscuit up for a dog to jump up and take. There was no hesitation. One moment the adult was standing there with something relatively small in its beak. Then, the other bird shot out of the burrow, straight up, took the food, and dropped straight back down. It could have been a circus act! It was all the more amazing, of course, since I couldn't see the owl in the burrow and had no inkling this was going to happen. The owls always seem to be doing something interesting. I wonder what it will be next week."

Tricia Gleeson, May 2022:

"After days of seeing only ravens patrolling the field and no owls in sight, on May 13 there were no ravens. I did see one adult Burrowing Owl (probably the dad) and four babies. Dad fed the owlets when they popped up out of the burrow, running to him for breakfast. After they ate, they returned back to stand beside the burrow."



Bob Holcomb Monitoring with Lexi

PHOTO BY ALAN DAVIS



Trail Cam Crew: Hanna, Philip, Zora

PHOTO BY NINA KARNOVSKY

Tricia Gleeson, April 2022:

"The Burrowing Owls were very actively hunting and running to catch insects. One owl ran and hopped over a bush as he hunted. One pair in the middle of the field was interesting. The female owl would hunt and duck back into the burrow. The male would occasionally return to the burrow and transfer food into her mouth. It made me think she was feeding hatched chicks in the burrow. I returned the next day to see if the frenzy of hunting activity continued but there was not a Burrowing Owl in sight."

Paul Clarke, May 2022:

"The two owlets at Burrow B looked like they were recently hatched. One adult from Burrow B was across the road and the other was at the burrow until they were chased off by a slow-moving maintenance truck. The adult owl at the burrow was very antsy and flew over a photographer sitting in the median and then flew up and back for every passing vehicle. I told the woman in the median that the owls were stressed and she left shortly after."

Hanna Kim from Nina Karnovsky's Burrowing Owl Camera Crew, July 2022:

"For every burrowing owl photo we have, we have a hundred photos of California ground squirrels, lizards sunbathing on top of the burrows, Northern Mockingbirds stopping by to chill, and the occasional roadrunner coming by to show off its

continued on next page



Juvenile Owl Posse in Ontario: Hanging Out, Looking Cool

PHOTO BY PAUL CLARKE

Bird Walks

First Sunday Family-Friendly Bird Walk

California 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 volunteer Ken Burgdorff (gwrencaps@gmail.com) and others will lead the walks. NEW – Please RSVP with the botanic garden’s reservation site by using the DATE SPECIFIC links below.

September 4 - Please RSVP using this link to the [Botanic Garden’s reservation site:](https://bit.ly/3owiWbu)
<https://bit.ly/3owiWbu>



October 2 - Please RSVP using this link to the [Botanic Garden’s reservation site:](https://bit.ly/3RXL4lc)
<https://bit.ly/3RXL4lc>



November 6 - Please RSVP using this link to the [Botanic Garden’s reservation site:](https://bit.ly/3vbjbwj)
<https://bit.ly/3vbjbwj>



Fourth Sunday Bird Walk

Bonelli Regional Park
Meeting place: Brackett Field airport parking lot - 1615 McKinley Ave., La Verne, CA

Join us on the fourth Sunday of the month (Sept – May) for a bird walk at Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park. Whether a beginner or experienced birder we know you’ll enjoy the great variety of bird species at Bonelli. Please meet in the parking lot of Brackett Field (airport) at 1615 McKinley Ave., La Verne, CA (better known as the Norm’s Hanger Coffee Shop parking lot.) To reach the parking lot, take McKinley Ave. west from Fairplex Drive to the parking area at the end of the road on the right (look for people wearing binoculars). Meet at 7:45 a.m. to caravan into the park at 8 a.m. Admission to the park is free if you enter with the group. The location within the park to be visited (and the entrance that will be used) is selected by the trip leader for that day based on recent interesting bird sightings in the area. Therefore, the locations we visit will vary from month to month. The walks are usually 2.5-3 hours in length (and you can leave anytime you need to). Bring binoculars and water. Wear comfortable shoes. Please RSVP with the walk leader listed below:

Sept 25 - Ken Burgdorff
(gwrencaps@gmail.com)

October 23 - Scott Marnoy
(gopherus2@gmail.com)

Nov 27 - To be announced

A Close Look

continued from front page

reflective feathers and its striking orange stripe on the side of its head. Seeing so many animals show up in the camera trap photos only emphasizes the importance of the Burrowing Owl reserve; not only is it providing a home for the vulnerable burrowing owl, but it is also housing many other species.”

The Eyes and Ears on Burrowing Owls Project is possible because of our dedicated monitors who go out in good weather and bad to observe weekly or more often at one of the five sites we protect. Sometimes there are no owls visible and sometimes the monitor observes and deals with threats to the owls at that site by directly addressing the problem (if that is safe and feasible) or by reporting the incident to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or another entity that can address the problem.

A big thank you to our 2022 Burrowing Owl Monitors: Donna and David Bedell, Maria and Joe Bennett, Paul Clarke, Alan Davis, Lori Galloway, Tricia Gleeson, Bob Holcomb, Robin Ikeda, Nina Karnovsky and her trail camera crew, Stephanie and Cade Klem, and Kyra Saegusa.

If you are interested in becoming a monitor, please contact me at sthompson@pomona.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 _____

The Crows Did It

By Seth Thompson

Shortly after retiring from his OB-GYN practice and looking for new horizons, Mike Klein noticed a band of crows on his street and wondered what they were up to. After reading a book and discovering how intelligent and cooperative crows were, he also got curious about the little yellow and red birds he saw on his daily jogs. That curiosity led him to the PVAS monthly bird walks at the California Botanic Garden where he immediately felt welcome. And when someone pointed out a Lesser Goldfinch and then a House Finch, Mike happily realized those were the birds he had been seeing. That initial good time led to many more PVAS field trips and meetings.

When then PVAS President Dan Guthrie mentioned the need for someone to help out with the society's early and skeletal website, Mike answered the call. Undeterred by a lack of experience with web design, he thought it would



be a fun and interesting challenge to learn something new and to contribute to the birding community.

As the first real PVAS Webmaster, Mike has been through several iterations of the website, making it more user-friendly and responsive to the needs of the organization. His web responsibilities also landed him a spot on the PVAS Board as Communications Director and for several pre-pandemic years he graciously hosted the monthly board meetings. Along the way Mike received the annual Flock Leader Award for outstanding service.

Thank you, Mike, for all your years of service to PVAS. While Mike has finished his career on the PVAS board of directors and is not as mobile as he used to be, he is still an avid backyard birder. Now he'll have more time to feed the goldfinches and House Finches and keep an eye on those crows.

The Ambassadors and the Owls

By Suzanne Thompson

We wish you all could meet our first three Burrowing Owl Ambassadors, Cassie, Maria, and Lexi. Thanks to PVAS, these dedicated Chaffey College students are getting a crash course in owl behavior, outreach to the public, and conducting scientific field surveys.

At a recent PVAS "Meet the Owls" event in Chino, the ambassadors were helping kids and visitors of all ages use binoculars and scopes to observe the charming little owls. Their work in the field with our experienced Burrowing Owl monitors and research on the owls gave them the knowledge to answer questions and talk knowledgably about the owls to event attendees.

Retired biologist, Robin Ikeda, is using the habitat assessment protocols she developed to find ways to improve the Burrowing Owl Preserve in Chino. You might see one or two ambassadors with Robin hard at work in the field collecting data on owl habitat or doing an owl population survey.

PVAS volunteers have also been involved in the Ambassador Program by helping to test Robin's survey protocols, sharing their mentoring expertise with the volunteers, or helping out at the Meet the Owls or Prado Park Birdwatching events.

The Ambassador Program is part of the National Audubon Society grant PVAS received to fund our work protecting Burrowing Owls. It allows us to offer avian research and outreach experiences to two-year college students, along with birding quality binoculars and a stipend. It is a win-win for all. The students engage in meaningful avian field research and learn outreach skills. The

Burrowing Owls get improved habitat for nesting and raising their families. PVAS gets a welcome opportunity to spread the wonder of birds and birding to people who did not yet know how fascinating and fun both are.

Cassidy Setting Up a Line Transect to Measure Vegetation Height in the Preserve



PHOTO BY ROBIN IKEDA



PHOTO BY TRICIA GLEESON

Lexi and Jeff Getting Ready for Meet The Owls



PHOTO BY TRICIA GLEESON

Maria and April are ready to talk all things owls

Field Trips

COVID Considerations: We recommend that carpooling be restricted to members of the same household or fully vaccinated individuals who agree to carpool. You have the option to meet at Memorial Park in Claremont and caravan to the site or you can meet at the site. Based on your comfort level (and possible guideline changes in the future) please have a face mask available. Note some trips may be listed as vaccinated only.

Saturday September 10, 2022

Bolsa Chica Ecological Preserve and adjacent Harriett Weider Park

18000 CA-1, Huntington Beach, CA 92648 and 19251 Seapoint Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Difficulty: Easy (up to 3 miles)

We'll enjoy a morning at Bolsa Chica looking for shorebirds, waterfowl and local specialties such as Reddish Egret and Elegant Tern. Then we'll drive next door and enjoy lunch at Harriett Weider Park where we can observe some of the back ponds of Bolsa Chica from the park fence line. Meet at 7 AM at Memorial Park in Claremont or meet at Bolsa Chica about 8 AM. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day trip. (Est. driving 100 miles.)

Please RSVP with Trip Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Saturday October 8, 2022

North Etiwanda Preserve

4890 Etiwanda Ave, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

Difficulty: Strenuous (rocky, uneven terrain, 3.5 miles 800+ ft elevation gain)

Twice a year we gather bird population data for the County of San Bernardino by doing what we love - birding! Join us for all or part of the day. Specialties include Bell's Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike and other open country species. We will be taking our usual counterclockwise route on the main trail making us easy to find, so feel free to join us at any time. Meet at Memorial Park in Claremont for a 7 AM departure to the preserve. This is a hike and not a walk, please bring sturdy footwear, a portable lunch, water, snacks, and layered clothing for about 6-7 hours in the field. (Est. driving 30 miles.) Please RSVP with Trip Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

November 4-6, 2021 – Friday - Sunday

Bishop/Eastern Sierras Weekend Trip

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

By day, we'll be birding by car (especially at Owens Lake) and driving to local hotspots with some walking/hiking (optional). By night, we'll be looking for owls. Target species include Tundra Swan, Prairie Falcon, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch and other area specialties.

In Memoriam

PVAS lost a good friend and active member with the passing of Charles "Chuck" Antoniak, husband of our former treasurer, Jenny on April 21 of this year. Chuck and Jenny rarely missed a meeting and would most often be found side by side, whether on Zoom or, when attending in-person meetings where they were typically seated together in the first row. Chuck will be remembered as a bird handler for Wild Wings, a Burrowing Owl monitor with Jenny and for helping with the Dan Guthrie Bird Oasis on the Thompson Creek Trail. Our hearts are with Jenny and their family.

Final itinerary based on weather and birds in the area that weekend. Lodging is on your own (in Big Pine or Bishop). Limited to 8 vaccinated participants. RSVP with the trip leader before October 9th. (Est. driving 520 miles to Bishop RT, plus touring.)

Please RSVP with Trip Leader: Eric Smith (909) 477-7976 or bird4life28@gmail.com

Friday November 11, 2022

Yorba Regional Park

7600 E. La Palma Avenue. Anaheim, CA 92807

Difficulty: Moderate (up to 2 miles)

Join trip leader John Baker to look for Wood Ducks, Mandarin Ducks and other waterfowl and wintering birds. Meet at Memorial Park at 8 AM or at the park entrance at 9 AM for a 2-3 hour walk through the park and the adjoining Santa Ana River – two habitats in one trip! Entry fee \$5.00 per vehicle. (Est. driving 62 miles)

Please RSVP with Trip Leader: John Baker and leave a message at (909)240-1474 or jbaker4053@aol.com.

Saturday November 12, 2022

San Joaquin Marsh

Parking Lot, 5 Riparian View, Irvine, CA 92612

Difficulty: Easy (up to 2.5 miles)

An Orange County gem consisting of a series of reclaimed freshwater ponds. Species may include herons, rails, ducks and raptors. Meet at 7 AM at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a half-day trip. Please RSVP with Trip Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

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/Repellent**
- **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.)

Meetings

No recycling please until a new volunteer is found. Thanks.



Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 7 p.m.
Brian Elliott and Gary Charlton – “Andes to the Amazon Rainforest: Birding in Peru”

More than 1,850 species of birds can be found in Peru. Considered second in bird species only to its neighbor

Columbia, Peru has a vast diversity of habitats and consequently a vast and varied biodiversity of bird species including more than 100 endemics. PVAS conservation director, Brian Elliott, along with his friend and fellow PVAS member, Gary Charlton, have taken two recent birding trips to Peru; in February of 2019 and this past October 2021. They traveled from sea level along the Pacific coast up to more than 14,000 ft in elevation in the Andes, along the famed Manu Road, and then down to the Amazon rainforest. More than 750 bird species were seen during the two trips. They will share their experiences with a focus on the 2021 trip featuring the high Andes near Cusco, the Manu Road, and finally the Amazon rainforest along the Tambopata and Madre de Dios Rivers. Brian and Gary are both retired high school teachers with a passion for birds and international travel.



Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 7 p.m.
Keri Dearborn - “The Island Fox - Surviving in a Changing World”

From 1998–2000, island foxes faced extinction on four of California’s Channel Islands. Their historic recovery, in conjunction with the return of the bald eagle to the Channel Islands, has become a model for other endangered species. Island

fox populations are stable for now, but continue to face challenges including biosecurity, climate warming (and resulting changes in health, behavior and reproduction), geographic isolation and genetic bottlenecks. These rare foxes are raising new ecological questions which have conservation implications for other species. Friends of the Island Fox is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a joint effort of conservationists and citizens striving to create public awareness about the Channel Island fox, and raise funds to support education, research and conservation measures to ensure the island fox’s survival. Friends of the Island Fox Education Director Keri Dearborn has an MA in Environmental Education and has been with the organization since its founding in 2005. She is an avid birder, a STEM curriculum developer, and a nonfiction author.

Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 7 p.m.
TBA

Black Swifts

By Scott Marnoy, MD

One of the most fascinating natural histories is that of the Black Swift, a bird whose biology has only recently been brought to light in the past 30-40 years. I owe my first and only sightings of these birds to Claremont birder Tom Miko.

Tom has worked out the optimal conditions for finding swifts from his late afternoon perch in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park. It turns out that the hotter, more stifling, and bugger it is, the greater your chances of finding Black Swifts. There is science behind these empiric observations. Swifts are completely dependent on flying insects for food which they glean from the skies on the wing. Insects tend to concentrate aloft when winds are low and temperatures are high.

Thanks to research done by Foerster and Collins, Black Swifts are known to nest in the San Gabriel Mountains in only two locations. They build nests behind waterfalls or on sheer cliffs. The waterfalls may serve to regulate humidity and temperature for the single chick that is reared in the nest with long parental absences. Research has shown that Black Swift natural history more closely resembles that of pelagic birds in that adults make long sorties that last for hours before returning to the nest with food. This leads to only two feedings per day for young chicks and one nighttime feeding for older chicks closer to fledging. In Southern California, 90% of the food provided to nestlings consists of winged ants. This is a patchy but high-fat resource that requires covering great distances to gather sufficient food. With a staggering metabolic rate, Black Swifts have been documented to lose 7.9% of body weight overnight! Long sorties allow the adult to gain the weight necessary to make the long migration to the Amazon Basin.

In fact, relatively little was known of their behavior on their wintering grounds until the advent of geolocators. Recent studies in the Amazon Basin have shown that Black Swifts can feed at night with flights correlating with the phase of the moon and that they use the moonlight to locate prey. An eclipse of the moon forced the birds to change their foraging patterns. With a severe reduction in numbers in recent years, these kinds of discoveries can serve to inform future conservation efforts for this amazing flyer.

Watch the PVAS field trip calendar for late spring-early summer 2023. Perhaps you’ll have a chance to see our local Black Swifts.

1. Foerster, K.S. and Collins, C.T. (1990). Breeding distribution of the Black Swift in Southern California. *Western Birds*, 21(1), 1-9.
2. Levad, R. (2007). The coolest bird: A natural history of the Black Swift and those who have pursued it. American Birding Association. 1-152.
3. Hedenström, A., et al. (2022). Moonlight drives nocturnal vertical flight dynamics in black swifts. *Current Biology* (32), 8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2022.03.006>

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



Pomona Valley Audubon Society
2058 N. Mills Ave., PMB426
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www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

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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 | FALL 2022



In Person Meetings Are Back!

Starting September 1st, we will be returning to the Padua Room at the Hughes Community Center in Claremont for our monthly meetings!



PVAS Christmas Bird Count 2022
Saturday December 17

join a team
come count with us

email:
pomonavalleyaudubon@gmail.com

New Board Members - The Board of Directors would like to welcome two new members to the board, Scott Marnoy: Field Trip Chair and Patty Anis, our new Treasurer. Thank you for answering the call to help! We still have two positions open, Programs and Communications.

Dr. Henry E. Childs, Jr. Flock Leader Award

2021 Flock Leader Award recipient Jenny Antoniak passes on the perpetual plaque to 2022 Flock Leader award recipient Patty Nueva Espana. Thank you both so much for your "commendable and outstanding service" to our chapter.




Volunteer Opportunity!

Volunteers are needed to work the PVAS booth during the 40th Annual Village Venture Arts and Crafts Faire in the Claremont Village on October 22, 2022. The Faire is open from 9 to 5. Come spend some time in our booth educating the public about the wonderful world of birds and what everyone can do to help save them, and you can get some holiday shopping done all on the same day! Please e-mail Tina Stoner at tinastoner@earthlink.net if you are interested in helping in our booth.

PVAS Board of Directors

PRESIDENT - Tina Stoner - tinastoner@earthlink.net
VICE-PRESIDENT - Seth Thompson - sthompson@lmu.edu
SECRETARY - Patty Nueva-Espana - nuspain@icloud.com
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EDUCATION - Laura Jaoui - ljaoui01@gmail.com
COMMUNICATIONS - available (Tina Stoner)
CONSERVATION - Brian Elliott - brianelli@aol.com
FIELD TRIPS - Scott Marnoy - gopherus2@gmail.com
MEETING LOGISTICS DIRECTOR - Maryanne Strehlow - aco50sig@gmail.com

Committees & Contacts

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OWL PELLETS FOR EDUCATORS - Kathy McPherson - kathleenamc@yahoo.com
NEWSLETTER EDITOR - available (Tina Stoner)

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