



Chaparral Naturalist

A Publication of
Pomona Valley Audubon Society

www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

SPRING 2023 | MARCH - MAY

PVAS 50th Annual CBC

By Seth Thompson

Shortly before sunrise on Saturday, December 17, 2022, the first of some 80 volunteers began to fan out across the PVAS counting circle as the 50th PVAS Christmas Bird Count (CBC) got underway. By the time the sun went down, our volunteers had spotted 134 species and counted almost 11,000 individual birds.

The first CBC was held on December 25, 1900. Frank Chapman, from the American Museum of Natural History, proposed counting birds as an alternative to the custom known as the "side hunt", a competition to see who could shoot the largest number of birds (and mammals) on Christmas Day. After all, nothing says "Merry Christmas!" like a pile of several hundred avian corpses.

Chapman and 27 dedicated birders from Toronto, Canada to Pacific Grove, CA conducted 25 counts and saw 89 species and approximately 18,500 individual birds.

It's interesting to compare the numbers from that first CBC to our 50th CBC. 89 species vs. 134 species. 27 people across the continent vs. 80 people across our 15-mile diameter counting circle. The number of individual birds counted is certainly

consistent with the overall trend of population declines. Our 2022 numbers were close to our average of approximately 140 species and 11,000 individual birds. The numbers reflect both the wealth of birds who winter or live year-round in our area and the vagaries of birding – some days are just better than others.

The 50th PVAS CBC also marked the inaugural use of the eBird Mobile phone app to record sightings in the field. Very few clipboards and tally sheets were used this year. Overall, I'd have to say the switch was a great success, streamlining the compilation process and creating a trip report that all can view in eBird. Here's the link <https://ebird.org/tripreport/90598>. Thanks to Brian Elliott who conducted eBird Mobile training for participants on Zoom. The live class was well attended and even more watched the recording on YouTube.

I asked participants to send in their thoughts about the CBC.

Sheila White:

I now help PVAS by compiling the count results, but I've also enjoyed my time counting birds in the field. I found it not only fascinating but extremely joyous. On one CBC several years ago I had the pleasure of watching a Peregrine Falcon circle a small pond more than 6 times. Prior to that I had seen only one, and for just a moment. Once I had this special look at this magnificent falcon, I was even more hooked on birding. It seemed that every time I went on a bird watching outing, my love for the activity just grew. My closest encounter with a Peregrine Falcon came this last fall when I had the distinct pleasure of exhibiting one to the public at Village Venture educating the public and inspiring the next generation of potential bird-lovers.

Dan Stoebel:

My first birding experience 30 years ago was on a CBC. I participate to keep the tradition alive, to collect data in this continuing community science project, and to help involve others in birding.

Marcy Clements:

I'm not sure when we started participating in the Christmas Bird Count. In the early 80's both our girls had gone off to college. My husband, Rick, and I looked at each other and said, what now? We decided to do some things together and joined the meetings for Audubon. We started going on the birding outings. And when December rolled around, we started doing the CBC. I remember 5 am jaunts in our old white van, windows rolled down, cruising Baseline to listen for owls. Then hitting Pixie Donuts for a cuppa and a sinfully delicious fritter.



**50th PVAS
Christmas Bird Count**
(A Gold Star for our Golden Anniversary)
Saturday, December 17, 2022

80 Volunteers

134 Species

11,000 Individual
Birds Counted

A very successful
inaugural use of the
eBird Mobile App to
record the count.

Many thanks to ALL our
volunteers!

See you December 16, 2023



PHOTO BY KATHRYN MCGIFFEN

Hooded Mergansers and Crayfish

By Scott Marnoy

When I saw a line of photographers loitering on the side of a pond, it didn't take long to figure out that the object of their interest was the small group of Hooded Mergansers at the Los Angeles County Arboretum in Arcadia. These ducks are a memorable sight with their stunning white crests offset by black in males or a dense bustle of brown feathers in the female. They tend to prefer ponds, lakes and rivers. I well remember the eye-popping appearance of a flock on a woodland pond one frosty morning as a teenager in Massachusetts.

Here in SoCal, the dietary preference of the "Hoodie" intersects well with the artificial ecology of the man-made ponds and lakes which comprise nearly all the fresh water in our vicinity. Southern California has seen an invasion of *Procambarus clarkii*, the Red Swamp Crayfish, introduced in California in the 1930's. These aggressive animals have been shown to displace both native and other introduced crayfish species and even rid streams of dragonfly larvae. I've seen them in the creek at Big Dalton Canyon and many artificial ponds harbor them as they can escape when used as bait by fisherman. Hooded Mergansers feed heavily on crustaceans including crayfish which they crush in their gullets. Crayfish, more than fish, are the targets that support the wintering Hoodies in our area.

Other interesting features of their biology concern their breeding pattern. Like all ducks and shorebirds, the young mergansers are precocial. They emerge from the egg after 30 days, fully equipped to swim and feed themselves. Clutches of up to 15 eggs are laid in cavities. The first challenge for the chicks is to emerge from the nest cavity and jump to the ground, sometimes as much as 75 feet. Imprinting drives them to follow the hen to a body of water where they grow until fledging. Ducks are the frequent objects of nest parasitism by other ducks because precocial young easily imprint on a parent. I once saw a Common Merganser chick following a long line of mallard chicks, in tow behind a mallard hen.

Fortunately, despite the premium placed on nest cavities, Hooded Mergansers are considered a Species of Least Concern. They can be seen in the winter here in Southern California at such sites as Rancho Jurupa Park, Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park, and Lake Perris. Some of these are destinations of future PVAS field trips!

For more about Hooded Mergansers and Crayfish:

Peter Moyle <https://californiawaterblog.com/2020/09/20/crawdads-naturalized-californians/>

American Bird Conservancy <https://abcbirds.org/bird/hooded-merganser/>

Annual Report to members of the Pomona Valley Audubon Society

7/01/2021 – 6/30/2022

Income

Recycling	139.00
Annual Appeal	8,020.00
NAS Baseline Funding	3,336.25
PVAS Chapter Memberships	558.93
National Audubon in Action Grant for Burrowing Owls	4,600.00
Lawrence Foundation Grant for Burrowing Owls	2,500.00
Member donations for Burrowing Owls	348.79
Miscellaneous donations	495.16
Promotional items sold	226.00
D. Guthrie estate bequest	<u>5,673.49</u>

Gross Income: 25,897.62

Gross Income 25,897.62

Gain (loss) on Investments (12,923.30)
12,974.32

Less total expenses: -17,372.72

Net Income (loss) (4,398.40)

Assets

Cash in Bank	26,472.19
Investments	<u>98,647.71</u>

Total Assets: \$125,119.90

Operating Expenses

Insurance	2,190.00
Postal Permit #240	245.00
PMB #426	240.00
Annual Appeal	1,206.87
Membership Expenses	33.00
Business Expenses	199.53
Marketing/Promotional Items	269.00
Website	<u>1,655.93</u>

Total Operating Expenses: \$6,039.33

Program Expenses

Speaker Honoraria	1,200.00
Wild Wings Support	2,400.00
International Bird Rescue	250.00
CA Botanical Gardens, disaster recovery	200.00
K. Garrett Ornithology Fund	500.00
Dan Guthrie Bird Oasis	324.11
Education/Community Outreach	410.35
Communications	3,281.21
Field Trips	532.30
NAS Burrowing Owl Grant project expenses	2,070.42
Other Burrowing Owl project expenses	<u>165.00</u>

Total Program Expenses: \$11,333.39

Total Expenses: \$17,372.72

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

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 AM 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. Based on your comfort level (and possible guideline changes), please have a face mask available. PVAS volunteer Ken Burgdorff (gwrencaps@gmail.com) and others will lead the walks. Please RSVP with the botanic garden's reservation site by using the DATE SPECIFIC links below.

Sunday March 5, 2023

RSVP: <https://bit.ly/3DB7DXs>



Sunday April 2, 2023

RSVP: <http://bit.ly/3wMjYnB>



Sunday May 7, 2023

RSVP: <http://bit.ly/3JvCkz>



Fourth Sunday of the Month

Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park San Dimas, CA 91773

Difficulty: Moderate

Look for wintering species including waterfowl as well as nesting residents at one of the richest birding sites in Southern California on our fourth Sunday of the month Bonelli Bird Walk. We meet in the parking lot of Brackett Field (airport) at 1615 McKinley Ave., La Verne, CA 91773 (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. Meet at 7:45 AM to caravan into the park for free entrance and an 8:00 AM walk. 2-3 hours. Don't forget your binoculars and comfortable shoes.

Sunday March 26, 2023

Contact Trip Leader: Dan Stoebel

dstoebel@mac.com

Sunday April 23, 2023

Contact Trip Leader: Keith Condon

catbird117@yahoo.com

Sunday May 28, 2023

Contact Trip Leader: Ken Damon

psanah@yahoo.com

Sunday June 4, 2023

RSVP: <http://bit.ly/3l0ZtkF>



Field Trip Levels

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.)

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 NAS 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 _____

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.

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. Driving mileage estimates are round-trip from Memorial Park in Claremont. 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**

Saturday, March 4, 2023

Prado Regional Park

16700 Euclid Ave., Chino, CA 91708

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate (up to 3 miles.)

Entry Fee: \$10 per vehicle. So close, yet so diverse, visiting this popular 2,000-acre park in Chino is one of the most reliable places to see and photograph Vermilion Flycatchers, as well as a variety of raptors (Bald Eagle, Peregrine, Harrier), waterfowl, wintering vagrants and sometimes long-tailed weasels! Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont. (Est. driving 35 mi.)

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

Saturday, April 8, 2023

Hahamongna Watershed Park – New Location!

4550 Oak Grove Dr., Pasadena, CA 91103

Difficulty-Easy to Moderate (walking up to 3 mi.)

This 1300-acre park in the Arroyo Seco of Pasadena extends north from the Devil's Gate Dam and boasts an extensive Coast Live Oak forest and riparian area, conducive to a nice variety of migrant and resident birds. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring snacks, water, and lunch. Contact Trip Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Friday, April 14, 2023

North Etiwanda Preserve

4890 Etiwanda Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

Difficulty: Strenuous (rocky, uneven terrain, 3.5 miles 800+ ft elevation gain) New: A shorter moderate option to survey the gentler south border will be available.

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: Tina Stoner tinastoner@earthlink.net

Saturday, April 29, 2023

Prado Wetlands

14980 River Rd., Corona, CA 92880

Difficulty: Moderate (up to 4 mi.)

Normally closed to the public, we are fortunate to have David McMicheal, Principal Environmental Specialist for the Orange County Water District, 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 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Meet at Prado Wetlands. Trip is limited to 12 people so please contact trip leader to reserve your spot and discuss any needs for carpooling. (Est. driving 38 mi.)

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

Saturday, May 6, 2023

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 ops 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

Saturday, June 3, 2023

Big Bear Lake Area – multiple locations

Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous (up to 4 mi.)

Beat the summer heat and head up to the mountains with us. Enjoy birding the Big Bear Lake area and Bluff Lake 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.

Sunday, June 25, 2023

Black Swifts in the Claremont Hills

4031 N Mills Ave. #1406, Claremont, CA 91711

Difficulty: Strenuous (Fire Road, 0.91 miles, 243 ft gain)

Search for Black Swifts in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Preserve with leader Tom Miko. The Wilderness Park is unique as a reliable spot to see Black Swifts as they return to their mountain roosts, deep in the San Gabriel Mountains. Plan on a one-mile walk with appropriate foot wear, ample water for afternoon heat and insect repellent. The trail ascends through a canyon shaded by ancient Coast Live Oaks, reaching the overlook where a bench is conveniently located. Black Swifts may be seen with cliff swallows as they pass above the overlook. In addition, the usual suite of chaparral birds and other creatures are expected. Meet at the gate on Mills Ave at 5:00 PM. Parking is free with a Claremont City Pass in the South lot and metered \$7.00, no cash, credit card only for those without a pass. RSVP to trip leader Tom Miko tgmiko@gmail.com.

Meetings

Meeting details, location and a map can be found on the back page.



Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 7 pm

Nina Karnovsky and her Students – Common Terns in Maine, Camera Monitoring in the College Park BUOW Preserve and Plastics Consumption by Albatross in the Pacific

Come hear about the bird research carried out by students in Prof. Nina Karnovsky's lab at Pomona College. *One Stop Shop? Foraging Decisions of Common Terns in the Gulf of Maine*—Jacob Ligorria - Common terns foraging in the Atlantic bring back a wide diversity of fish to their chicks. Do they go to different places for different fish or return with different fish from the same place? Jacob Ligorria '23 will tell us about his research on common terns that he carried out with Audubon's Project Puffin on an island in the Gulf of Maine. *Using Social Attraction Techniques to Restore Burrowing Owls*—Hanna Kim - For the past two years, Pomona College students and volunteers (PVAS and others) have used social attraction techniques to attract burrowing owls to a preserve in Chino, CA. Hanna Kim '23 will present the results of this restoration work. *Plastic Pieces and Prey: the Diets of Laysan Albatrosses breeding in Hawaii*—Bella Ah-Moo, Eli Taub, Lucas Florsheim, Eliana Prosnitz Laysan albatross breeding in Hawaii make long foraging trips in the Pacific to gather food for their chicks. When they return to the colony they regurgitate boluses of the hard parts of their prey. What natural and unnatural stuff are they eating? Bella Ah-Moo '25, Eli Taub '25, Lucas Florsheim '24 and Eliana Prosnitz '24 will present the results of their investigation into the diets of Laysan albatross in a study done in collaboration with Pacific Rim Conservation.



Thursday, April 6, 2023 at 7 pm

Sherry Schmidt - Some Birds and Beasts of Africa

Part I of Sherry's two-part program will focus on a trip she took to Kenya in 2019 to experience the wildebeest migration. She will explain why wildebeests migrate and the impact migration has had on savanna ecology. Her beautiful images will allow you to feel what it is like to be in Masai Mara during this spectacular event. Part II: Some Cool African Birds. Sherry will share some of her favorite birds from two different trips to Botswana and explain some of the conservation issues facing some birds in this region. Vultures are the victims of both accidental and deliberate poisoning while other raptors face habitat loss, poison laced carcasses, drowning in farm reservoirs and being shot by farmers.

Sherry Schmidt is a Professor Emeritus at Mt. San Antonio College. She retired after 33 years of service. She received her B.A. at University of Montana and her M.A. at C.S.U. Fullerton. She still teaches Conservation Biology during the winter intersession. Her love of nature and travel have taken her to the world's 7 continents. She considers herself a conservation photographer and hopes that her images will stimulate an interest in nature and concern for the world's vanishing species.

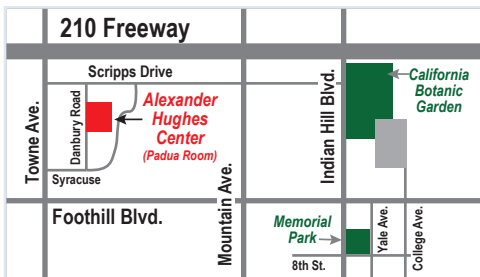


Thursday, May 4, 2023

Dana Stangel – Backyard Wildlife and Pet Safety – There's More Than Birds Out There

Dana will discuss the natural history and behaviors of our local native wildlife as well as humane vs. inhumane backyard wildlife deterrents. But what about rats? Learn about the dangers of rodenticide use and the proper use of alternate humane traps. Worried about your small pets? There are a humane hazing devices and safe enclosures, such as "cacios" that are useful alternatives to poison, traps and guns. Come and see these devices and learn how they might work in your backyard.

Dana Stangel, a credentialed Biology teacher, is the founder and executive director of Teranga Ranch (TR), a wildlife education organization that educates Californians about local wildlife and teaches them how to coexist. TR teaches community classes about local wildlife, presents workshops, and hosts field trips. Education also occurs at schools and homeowners' association meetings especially when there is a perceived wildlife issue, like coyotes. TR provides opportunities for anyone to get outside and involve themselves with wildlife, nature, and science.



Pomona Valley Audubon Society
2058 N. Mills Ave., PMB426
Claremont, CA 91711
www.pomonavalleyaudubon.org

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Return Service Requested

General Monthly 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 2023



Thank You Maryanne!

The Board of Directors would like to recognize Maryanne Strehlow for her years of service to our chapter. Maryanne recently retired as our Meeting Logistics Coordinator where she was responsible for making the reservations for the Padua Room at the Alexander Hughes Community Center and coordinating the refreshments at the monthly meetings as well as the Annual Meeting and Party in June. Prior to the pandemic, she also made sure there was plenty of good food and drink for our new member receptions. Maryanne's history of assisting with refreshments goes back to helping Gloria Schlosberg before she retired.

A change in her night vision coupled with moving to Orange County means that Maryanne can no longer drive to our meetings after dark. But she hopes to be able to join us during the day on bird outings just as soon as her recent knee replacement revision (re-do) is healed and she is walking well. The board will certainly miss Maryanne at our meetings and perhaps even more at our monthly meetings where she was sure to get things tidied-up before 9 p.m. so the chapter would not suffer a late fee.

Thank you, Maryanne. We are grateful for your active leadership and volunteerism. We look forward to seeing you on a bird outing soon.

PVAS Board of Directors

PRESIDENT - Tina Stoner - tinastoner@earthlink.net

VICE-PRESIDENT - Seth Thompson - sthompson@lmu.edu

SECRETARY - Patty Nueva-Espana - nuspain@icloud.com

TREASURER - Patty Anis - pattyanis@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP - Suzanne Thompson - sthompson@pomona.edu

PROGRAMS - available (Tina Stoner)

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 - available

Committees & Contacts

WEBMASTER - Seth Thompson - sthompson@lmu.edu

OWL PELLETS FOR EDUCATORS - Kathy McPherson -

kathleenamc@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR - available (Tina Stoner)

Pomona Valley Audubon Society

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email us at: pomonavalleyaudubon@gmail.com

Local PVAS phone number: (909) 625-5510