



# WESTERN MEADOWLARK

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## PRESERVE THE PLATEAU

## Free Opportunity for Bird Education

The San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society is very concerned about the proposed and inappropriately named "Mid-County Parkway" in western Riverside County. (It really should be called the "Mid-County Extra-Wide Freeway.") The project calls for a freeway wider than the 91 that would run from San Jacinto west to the I-15 a few miles south of its junction with the 91. The proposed freeway will destroy, damage, or impinge upon rural open space and areas used by wildlife, particularly the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, the Harford Springs Reserve, and the El Sobrante Wildlife Preserve.

The Harford Springs Reserve and the El Sobrante Wildlife Preserve are in the area known as **the Gavilan Plateau** (the plateau is most of the area between the I-15 and I215 south of Lake Matthews). SBVAS has joined with a coalition of other groups called **Preserve the Plateau** to educate the public and public officials about the actual impacts of the proposed freeway in that area. Other groups in this coalition include the San Geronio chapter of the Sierra Club, Inland Waterkeepers, the Residents Association of Greater Lake Mathews (RAGLM), the California Native Plant Society, and Inland Waste Management (managers of the El Sobrante Wildlife Preserve).

SBVAS has established a separate bank account for donations to Preserve the Plateau. The mailing address is below. **Checks must be made out to SBVAS but indicate on the memo line of the check or on an enclosed note that the donation is for Preserve the Plateau.** All donations will be used for an education campaign to demonstrate the environmental and ecological damage and the degradation and loss of habitat which would be caused by the proposed freeway.

As a 501(c)3 corporation, donations to SBVAS *should* be tax-deductible, but check with your tax attorney or accountant before making such a claim.



This is an image of the proposed Mid-county Parkway, with Perris Blvd. on the top right.

Anyone interested can receive bird pictures recently taken with educational commentary on and off as you like, and nobody will get your e-mail address. Simply e-mail galorn-soc@earthlink.net and ask to be included on the email list.

You will receive low resolution images, about three to four per week, and your name will be suppressed. It's free and nobody will ever know you are on their rolls.

Galveston Ornithological Society supports itself through trips and sales, but you can stay with them forever and never pay a dime.

Many of the e-mails will be birds from a certain place, and the *gps* coordinates will be given. This is very neat, because you can see these places from five hundred feet up by entering them into Google Earth, top left box. Google Earth is a free download from your browser and is lots of fun in many ways.

Below is a sample of the post from May 9. All commentary and pictures are from Jim Stevenson.

I went out Friday morning looking to take some shots for a weekend lesson that explained more about the order Charadriiformes, the mega-order of shorebirds. There are four big groups of this great order, and they are just as impressive this time of year as the songbirds. For me, this is a very large e-mail. Field guides list plovers as the first of the four groups of shorebirds. They are big-headed, large-eyed, and have relatively short bills. They must see very well, as they pick up morsels off the beach or mud substrate. There is a large genus dominated by this Black-bellied Plover, and a small genus with little ringed plovers like this Piping Plover. Yes, *\*that\** Piping Plover... Sandpipers are a very large and diverse group of Charadriiformes, with sizes ranging from the tiny, hard-to-distinguish peeps to the huge godwits and curlews. Two peeps which are only here in Texas around this time are the White-rumped Sandpiper and the Semipalmated Sandpiper. The first has fine streaking on the breast, and the latter has a short bill. But also, you can actually see the "partial webbing" (semi-palmated) on the toes, much like the Semipalmated Plover (for walking on soupy mud). Our most frequently seen sandpiper is the Sanderling, and I shot winter and breeding plumage pictures for you. Most plumage change in sandpipers is subtle, although the next bird, the Dunlin, attains a red back and black belly for the Arctic summer. This allows them (and others) to use the Arctic sun (low on the horizon 24 hours) to warm their belly and incubate their eggs faster. Cool, eh? egrets, ibis and pink stuff. ;)

(Continued, page 2, , shorebirds)

(shorebirds, continued)

Terns are also shorebirds, but they procure their food by diving out of the air and spearing surface-feeding fish and other aquatic animals. Here you see our two deep-water feeding male terns, both bring food to females in exchange for sexual favors. The Royal has a White Shrimp and the Sandwich a Blue-spotted Goby. The Black and Common Terns (see pair) don't nest here, but are late migrants. Lastly, gulls are the avian garbage cans of the beaches. They have rather striking plumage changes, and this Ring-billed Gull has attained his "adult" back, but still have "immature" wings. Gull's mantle always change first. True to their nature, this bird has a mullet approximately the same freshness as what you buy in Captain D's. Shorebirds are very different from what we call "wading birds," like this Tri-colored (note bill color in late spring). Waders are herons, egrets, ibis and pink stuff. ;)



Royal Terns



Common Terns



Piping Plover



White-rumped Sandpiper

Tri-colored Heron



Semipalmated Sandpiper

Dunlin



Sandwich Tern with fish



Terns



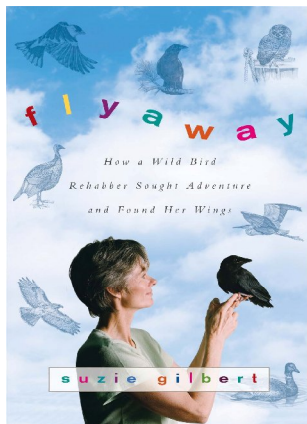
## Book Review: Flyaway: How a Wild Bird Rehabilitator Sought Adventure and Found Her Wings

If you're looking for a good read in the months with few field trips, this may be just the book for you. The author has been a bird rehabilitator for almost twenty years. In addition to helping birds, she has always tried to raise awareness about the beauty and mystery of birds, highlight the dangers they face, and suggest ways to help them. She claims the best way to connect people with wild birds is to describe some of the more fascinating parts of their natural histories, then relay facets of their personalities that she has been lucky enough to observe.

The book tells the story of chaos involved in rehabilitating birds while at the same time raising a family. In addition to providing in depth information about the craft of wildlife rescue, the author expresses a love of birds, nature, and wild places. Gilbert writes what many of us feel. She also identifies some of the concerns birders have, including the issue of predation by free-roaming cats. She identifies the dilemma many of us have knowing that caring for something can be awe-inspiring, exhilarating, and stress-inducing.

Often funny, sometimes painful, Gilbert's encounters with these beautiful creatures reveal profound truths not only about animals but also about our own lives—lessons of birth and death, suffering and empathy, holding on and letting go.

Original, lyrical, and highly entertaining, Flyaway will forever change the way you see this amazing member of the animal kingdom.



These are some pictures of Suzie and her patients.



## Veracruz Ecotour October 10-18, 2009



Join **Pronatura Veracruz** and **HawkWatch International** for the 2009 River of Raptors ecotour to Veracruz, Mexico and witness the world's largest concentration of migratory raptors!

Price per person: \$2,400. A \$500 deposit will reserve your spot.  
Optional 3 day extension to Catemaco: \$550

Call 1-800-726-HAWK ext. 101 or visit [www.hawkwatch.org](http://www.hawkwatch.org) for more information or to register.



**REGISTER EARLY! SPACE IS LIMITED!**

### New Officers, Field Trip Meeting Set

A new slate of officers for SBVAS was elected at the May general meeting and installed at the June meeting. Dori Myers will serve as President and Program Chair, Drew Feldmann will be First Vice-President and Conservation Chair, Check out the complete list of changes on page 5.

Normally, the board meets the first Wednesday of every month, with possibly one exception in the summer. This year, that exception will be the month of July, when the board will not meet. Regular activity will resume on August 5, with the **Field Trip meeting at 5:30 at Marie Calendar's restaurant in Redlands.** Information from the Field Trip meeting will then be delivered to the board at a meeting at the museum that will begin at 7:00.

## The Impact of Cats on Wildlife

Cats are the most popular pets in the United States with an estimated number, in 1999, of about 66 million. Many of those cats, and estimated 40 million, are allowed to roam outside unsupervised. Add to that the estimated 60 million stray and feral cats, and the depth of the problems caused by cats becomes staggering.

The American Bird Conservancy recently reported that scientists believe free-roaming cats kill hundreds of millions of birds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians each year. Another study suggested a death toll of fourteen creatures per cat per year. Small examples of these deaths are seen in every wildlife rescue and care facility where 50% of all birds brought in were attacked by cats. These deaths are an additional stress to species already struggling to survive habitat loss, pollution, pesticide, and other human impacts.

Predation by cats is not the only issue faced by wildlife, but it is certainly an important one, and one that has a solution. In an article titled "What Kills Birds?", Curry and Welinger listed the following list ranking bird deaths:

- ▶ Glass windows—100 to 900+ million deaths yearly
- ▶ Hunting—100+ million deaths yearly
- ▶ House Cats—100 million deaths yearly
- ▶ Automobiles—50 to 100 million deaths yearly
- ▶ Electric Transmission Lines—174 million deaths yearly
- ▶ Pesticides—67 million deaths yearly
- ▶ Communication Towers—4 to 10 million deaths yearly
- ▶ Oil and Gas Extraction—1 to 2 million deaths yearly

One of the complications of cat attack is noticed by wildlife rehabilitators. Even a small puncture wound can be fatal for a bird because of the bacteria and viruses in a cat's mouth. Because much a bird's respiratory system is on the outside of their skeletal structure, and because birds have a very fast metabolism, they are extremely vulnerable to introduced bacteria.

Pet owners need to become aware of the impact their free-roaming pets may have, not only to protect birds and wildlife, but to protect the cats themselves. Free-roaming cats are exposed to injury, disease, parasites, getting hit by cars, or becoming lost, stolen, or poisoned. Cats can also transmit diseases and parasites to other cats, wildlife, or people. One estimate suggested free-roaming cats have an average life expectancy of only three to four years compared with twelve or more for indoor cats.

Cats are carnivores and hunting is an instinctive behavior for them. Since they are non-selective predators, they are killing many species which are federally protected. Even well-fed cats will hunt and kill wildlife.

One way to solve the problem is to educate cat owners, decision makers, and the general public about the risk to wildlife. It's also important to encourage cat owners to keep their cats indoors. The American Bird Conservancy has a packaged campaign called "Cats Indoors! To involve conservation groups, humane societies, veterinarians, animal control agencies, and wildlife agencies. Finally, there should be strong advocacy for laws, regulations, and policies that protect both cats and birds.



**Jim Kern (founder of the FloridaTrail) and Rich Kern (wildlife film-maker) are looking for additional conservation-minded partners to buy 486 acres of virgin cloud forest in the Savegre Valley adjacent to the new Los Quetzales National Park.**

**Prime nesting habitat for the quetzal. 170 bird species. Botanical paradise. Hiking, fishing, horseback riding in the valley. Elevation 8,000 ft.**

**A house for use by the 22 partners will be built on a small, cleared portion.**

**Total Cost: \$27.5K per partner**

**For more info contact:  
JimKern@thekernco.com**



**Backyard Habitat***By Doreen Cubie***Create a Dog-Friendly Wildlife Garden**

Is it possible to share your life with rambunctious dogs and still garden for wildlife? Yes, says Kim Winter, National Wildlife Federation's habitat programs manager, who owns three mixed-breed dogs ranging in size from 30 to 80 pounds. "It's trickier to maintain habitat," she says. "Dogs do destroy plants." At her home in northern Virginia, Winter takes the "divide and conquer" approach to landscaping: Her pets roam and romp in the backyard while most of her wildlife garden goes in the front.

But you can also successfully mix pups and plants, says Elizabeth Bublitz, a landscape designer and owner of Paw-friendly Landscapes in Golden, Colorado. "Create a Fort Knox effect," she says, locking up and protecting your plants with raised beds. "Dogs see things differently from humans," Bublitz explains. "We can use that to our advantage. Most of them see elevated beds as a big wall."

"Raised beds do keep dogs out," agrees Jill Martini, horticultural manager for The Oregon Garden, a botanical sanctuary located 45 miles south of Portland in Silverton. Among the more than 20 demonstration plots at this nonprofit organization is a "Pet Friendly Garden." Martini says placing mulched or grass pathways between raised beds will help guide dogs away from the flowers. And she suggests putting in an arbor for vines. Not only will most of the plants be out of harm's way, the pathway created by the trellis will direct your dog's movement. "Work with your animal's instincts," says Martini. "Dogs like to patrol borders. If you leave room around the perimeter of your yard, you can often avoid having your fence-line shrubs trampled."

Sturdy plants are a must for a joint dog and wildlife habitat. Native viburnums are hardy shrubs that provide lots of berries for songbirds and can withstand canine assaults. Flowering trees, such as fringe tree and redbud, are also good choices. And look for ground covers that can tolerate some foot traffic, such as speedwell, a butterfly-attracting native.

Tough perennials like coneflowers and liatris are other possibilities. Bublitz has found deer-resistant native plants work well. She also recommends using junipers and other evergreens. "Most dogs hate juniper," she says, even though wildlife love it for winter cover, nest sites and food. Thorny plants will also deter dogs. "Usually one little poke and they leave it alone," Bublitz says. Anything with weak stems will probably be trampled by dogs, says Martini. In her demonstration garden, she places decorative stakes around fragile flowers. Bublitz often uses cobble to keep pets away from delicate plants. This large round rock is very awkward for dogs to walk on. Her favorite pet barrier combines cobble, a retaining wall and thorny bushes.

*(continued, page 6, dogs)***SBVAS Officers 2009/2010**[www.sbvas.org](http://www.sbvas.org) &[www.inlandplanet.org](http://www.inlandplanet.org)

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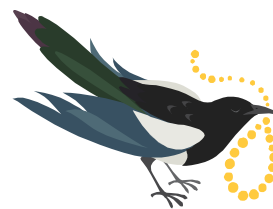
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537-3309 or [tbenson@csusb.edu](mailto:tbenson@csusb.edu)**CALENDAR****No Board Meeting or General Meeting in July****August 5, 2009 Board Meeting****No General Meeting in August**

All meetings are in the San Bernardino County Museum, 2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands. Board meetings are the first Wednesday of the month, and General Membership meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month. To reach the museum, take the California St. exit off I-10, go north one block to Orange Tree Lane and turn right. The museum will be on your left. Meetings, except potlucks, start at 7:30 and doors open at 7. Potlucks begin at 6:30.





A group of twenty-five strong enjoyed Gene Cardiff's field trip to the San Gabriel Mountains on June 6. It was a cool day for June with clouds that occasionally threatened rain, but the day started with a Peregrine Falcon. Here, the group is focused on a pair of California Towhees flitting around the area near Mormon Rocks station.

*(dogs, continued)*

When selecting plants for your yard, in addition to durability it is also important to make certain they are not poisonous to dogs. Do some research before heading to the garden center, because nurseries seldom have this information available. Veterinarians are one possible source. In addition, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) offers a database of toxic plants online at [www.asPCA.org/toxicplants](http://www.asPCA.org/toxicplants).

The ASPCA list is lengthy and includes some unexpected plants, many of them natives. Holly berries, for example, can be toxic to pets, and so can buckeye seeds. Yews can be deadly. "Milkweed is poisonous to just about everything except monarch butterflies," says NWF's Winter. Several exotics, including English ivy, Chinese wisteria and European bittersweet, can also be harmful, providing another good reason not to grow them. "Stay away from invasive species," she cautions, pointing out that wildlife is already losing much of its native habitat to these out-of-control alien plants.

Winter also says dog owners should not try to attract squirrels, chipmunks or other mammals because a wild animal encounter might injure a pet. In her own wildlife habitat, Winter gardens mostly for birds and butterflies. "You should also keep bird feeders clean to avoid attracting pests such as rats and other scavengers," she adds.

When gardening for wildlife, it is always a good idea to curb the use of pesticides and baits, and it is doubly important when you own a dog. If you

must use them, look for products labeled "pet safe." Be especially careful with snail and slug bait. It often contains metaldehyde, which is appealing and tasty to most mammals but also highly toxic. For less harmful ways to control pests, go to [www.beyondpesticides.org/alternatives](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/alternatives).



A Stephen's Fox Sparrow politely posed and sang for Gene's field trip group in the San Gabriel Mountains on June 6.

**Please Note Change of Date!****Saturday-Sunday, July 18-19, 2009  
Weekend trip - South Fork Kern River &  
the Greenhorn Mountains****Steve Myers** (760) 843-4009

This is a joint trip with the Mojave Desert Bird Club. Meet at 5:00 am at the Victorville Park & Ride at I-15 and Bear Valley Road for car-pooling. Exit I-15 at Bear Valley Road, turn left, and left again onto the frontage road (Amargosa Road). The park and ride is another left, almost immediately. We will arrive at the South Fork Kern River Preserve around 7:00 am, and will look for specialties such as the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Summer Tanager, Brown-crested Flycatcher, and the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. As the day heats up, we will head up into the relatively cool Greenhorn Mountains. The Greenhorns are at the southern end of the Sierra Nevada, and offer extensive coniferous forests, wet meadows, and spectacular views. We expect to see many of the typical high mountain birds, and the Greenhorns are the southern range limit of birds such as the Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Goshawk, and Winter Wren (note that these are not guaranteed!). On Saturday night we will be camping at a primitive campground (no water or toilets of any kind) in the Greenhorns. This trip can be terrific for both birds and butterflies.

**Calendar for Field Trips for 2008/2009****July 18-19:** Greenhorns—Steve Myers (this date is tentative)**August 22:** Insane Jaunt/Salton Sea—John Green**Field Trip Checklist**

Comfortable shoes or hiking boots, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent..

A good Road Map,

Full fuel tank, drinking water, snacks and lunch, binoculars and or a scope, field guide

**Saturday, August 22, 2009 - 5:30 am  
Insane Jaunt to the Salton Sea  
John Green (951) 686-2956**

How would you like to see birds like Wood Stork, Stilt Sandpiper, Laughing and Yellow-footed Gulls, Gull-billed and Black Terns, Burrowing Owl, Gila Woodpecker, and Bronzed Cowbird? All those and more may be yours at the mere price of 110 degree average daily highs in the pungent glory and spectacle of the Salton Sea in summertime. With luck, perhaps something like an Anhinga, Tricolored Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, or Magnificent Frigatebird will appear (or is it just the heat?). Highlights on last year's trip included Reddish Egret, Ruff, and Gray Flycatcher.

**DO NOT COME ON THE TRIP WITHOUT:**

**LOTS OF WATER, a large ice chest, lots of ice, lunch, and snacks, a hat and sunscreen, a working air conditioner, and a full tank of gas (top off in Indio).**

Meeting place will be at the Wister Unit of the Imperial Wildlife Area. Going south on Hwy 111 along the east shore of the Sea, turn right at Davis Road which is signed for the Wister Unit. Proceed to the parking lot on your left. If you reach the town of Niland on Hwy 111 you have gone 5 miles too far. We'll meet at 5:30 am, just before sunrise to beat the heat as much as we can, and we'll bird until we've had enough. Our route will be determined by where the Wood Storks are and where other birds of interest are being seen.

Motels are available in Calipatria, Brawley, and Indio for those wishing to spend Saturday night in the area.



**THE WESTERN MEADOWLARK**

c/o San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society  
P. O. Box 10973  
San Bernardino, CA 92423-0973

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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**National Audubon Society (NAS):**

- ☐ NAS Introductory Membership\* \$20
- ☐ NAS Regular Membership\* \$35
- ☐ NAS Gift Membership \$20.
- ☐ Senior/Student (with id) Membership \$15

Please make check payable to **National Audubon Society**

Includes chapter membership & Meadowlark if in SBVAS area

Also includes the National issue of Audubon magazine

SBVAS Chapter  
C97C110Z  
January 2010

**San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society (SBVAS):**

- ▶ SBVAS Membership & WESTERN MEADOWLARK only \$16
- ▶ Subscription to WESTERN MEADOWLARK only \$16
- ▶ First class subscription to WESTERN MEADOWLARK \$21.00
- ▶ SBVAS Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to **SBVAS**

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MAKES A GREAT GIFT



All meetings in the San Bernardino County  
Museum 2024 Orange Tree  
Lane, Redlands  
**Board Meetings are the 1st  
Wed.**

**General meetings are the 3rd Wed.  
SBVAS Membership currently at  
1,795**

To reach the Museum, take the California Street exit off the 10 Freeway and go north 1 block to Orange Tree Lane—turn right. The museum will be on your left...

**Feed Your Yard Birds and Help SBVAS**

Wild bird seed will be sold at all general meeting of SBVAS as a regular fundraiser for the organization. The seed is a good blend for the area and will be available in 25 pound bags for \$22.

To get your seed and help SBVAS maintain a regular monthly fundraiser, please pay at the sales table and get a receipt. Then see Kirk Stitt in the parking lot to load your seed.

**Bearpaw Ranch**

is SBVAS's 70 acre nature sanctuary, operated by the San Bernardino Audubon Society and may be visited 7 days a week from dawn 'til dusk by members of Audubon and their guests. Bearpaw Ranch is nestled on the north slope of scenic Mill Creek Canyon at 4,500 feet elevation, surrounded by the towering peaks of the San Bernardino National Forest. To reach Bearpaw Ranch, take Highway 38 to the Forest Falls turnoff. Go only a few car lengths on Valley of the Falls Dr. and look for our small wooden sign on the right. We have a new paved road, the entry is easy for almost all normal passenger cars. There is an electronically operated entry gate. Members who wish to visit the Sanctuary should call ahead for the security code. Access to the code may be had by calling—Bearpaw at (909) 794-0509. Bearpaw Sanctuary, 38801 Valley of the Falls Drive P.O. Box 88; Forest Falls, CA 923396

