



San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society WESTERN MEADOWLARK



Madagascar: A Biodiversity Hotspot Presented by Sherry Schmidt January 20, 2010

Sherry Schmidt will present a PowerPoint presentation that includes photographs taken during a three week trip to six different national Parks in Madagascar. Madagascar is an island in the Indian Ocean east of Africa. It is known for its lemurs, chameleons and baobab trees. Some biologists consider Madagascar to be the single highest biodiversity conservation priority on earth, yet only about 3% of Madagascar's land area is protected.

This presentation will include information on why Madagascar's flora and fauna is unique and why there is such a high number of species found in Madagascar that cannot be seen anywhere else in the world. The talk will include some information on the threats to animals that inhabit Madagascar.

Sherry is an instructor in the biology department at Mount San Antonio College. She has taught there over 25 years. She received her B.A. at University of Montana and her M.A. at C.S.U. Fullerton. Sherry's primary interests today are in the natural history of desert and mountain ecosystems and in conservation biology. She also loves photography and travel. Her recent trips include trips to the Galapagos, Madagascar, Antarctica, and Peru.

Looking for Sparrows — 1 Year, 21 States, 21,000 Miles Presented by Donelda Warhurst February 17, 2010

Donelda Warhurst is a second grade teacher in the Placentia-Yorba Linda school district where she has her summers off to look for birds. With her travel trailer, dog, her cameras and recording gear, she has spent the last six summers on the road.

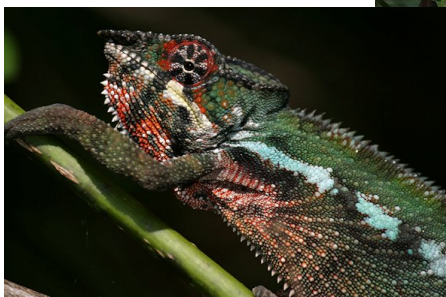
Donelda started out not "doing" sparrows. She began Sylvia Gallagher's Sparrow Class in 2007 with a very small sparrow life list. However, following the class that all changed. She spent a total of eleven weeks on the road in the trailer and two additional airline flights spread over the year to complete her goal. Donelda ended up seeing all the sparrows that are regular in the ABA area, except one. Come and hear about her adventures, view some of her pictures, hear some of her recorded sounds of the sparrows and find out which sparrow she did not see. Donelda will focus on close up shots of the sparrows with a few other birds and animals thrown in. Most of the sightings and shots were taken on the breeding grounds or where the birds regularly spend their winters. This accounts for the 21,000 miles. She went to them rather than waiting for them to come to her.



Giant Coua



Ruffed Lemur



Chameleon

Get Audubon Information On Line

If you would like to get current email alerts regarding SBVAS activities, date or schedule changes, requests for volunteers, etc., you need to email your contact information to Brad Singer at bsinger@gmail.com. This service will keep you in touch with current San Bernardino Valley Audubon efforts and needs and could save some board members a considerable amount of time spent making phone calls.

Brad can also connect you to a service that will allow you to receive the Western Meadowlark in electronic form. When you receive it, you will be able to see all the pictures in color. If you prefer a printed copy, you can print the newsletter from the emailed version. You will also receive your version of the Meadowlark before the post office can deliver it to you. Of course, your choice to receive the newsletter in electronic form will also help our organization's budget by making it less costly to print and mail fewer copies of the Meadowlark.



SBVAS Plans FUNdraising Bird-a-thon!

San Bernardino Valley Audubon is planning a birdathon as a fundraiser. This should be an entertaining event that puts the fun back in fundraising. The bird-a-thon is scheduled for April 25 from 6 AM to 6 PM. There are several ways you can help with this fundraising event.

Team Leaders: These should be our most competitive birders—someone who doesn't mind the early hours, the cold, or the lack of food or services as long as it results in a soul-satisfying look at a good bird. Team leaders will plan the strategy for their team, including where to start, the order of birding sites to visit, transportation, and any other logistics that involve their team. In the spirit of competition, we are encouraging hardy, competitive birders to be single team leaders rather than try to stack a team with only regular birding acquaintances.

Team Members: Every team will need four to six members. These need to be people with good birding skills who can work with others under sometimes difficult circumstances. This will be a long day, and, once committed to a team, members will need to continue with that team until the event closes at 6 PM. Team members will be asked to pay an entry fee of \$5 to join a team. This will help cover the expenses of providing pledge sheets and awards.

Pledges: Everyone involved will be asked to solicit pledges from the community. This is the key fundraising aspect of the event. To be successful, everyone will have to do a great job of contacting friends, neighbors, and colleagues to pledge support. A formal pledge sheet will be available.

General Rules: Teams must not start birding before 6 AM and may not bird after 6 PM. Every member of a team must be in voice contact with other members of the team all day. In other words, one member cannot bird the mountain areas while others bird the desert. Records must be kept on an official bird list, and all records and pledges must be turned in at the county museum by 6:30 PM, April 25th.

Prizes: An award will be given to the team recording the most species of birds and to the team turning in the most pledges. All teams and birding records will be recognized at the following general meeting in May and in the following edition of the Western Meadowlark.

If you are interested in being a part of this event, either as a team leader or a team member, please contact Linda Stitt at 909 886-5513 or at linda-stitt@usa.net. The competition is already brewing, so be sure to circle the date on your calendar and plan for a fun day of birding and philanthropy.



The insufferable arrogance of human beings to think that Nature was made solely for their benefit, as if it was conceivable that the sun had been set afire merely to ripen men's apples and head their cabbages.

—Cyrano de Bergerac

SBVAS Sponsored Christmas Bird Counts



Please note change in date and start

Joshua Tree National Park: Friday, January 1, 2010

Compiler: Joe Zarki (760)367-5520 (work) (760)366-8913 (home) lutzarki@roadrunner.com

Group 1: Meet the group leader at **7:00a.m.** at the Indian Cove Ranger Station on Indian Cove Rd. This is off Hwy. 62 on the western side of Twentynine Palms at the entry of the park leading to Indian Cove Camp Ground. After covering Indian Cove, the group will go to parts of Twentynine Palms, the Oasis of Mara (the park headquarters), Luckie Park and the 29 Palms Inn. Group 2: Meet the group leader at 7:30a.m. at the West Entrance of the Park. Take Park Blvd. from the town of Joshua Tree, parking is just behind the entry station. This group will cover the campgrounds in the interior of the park, Hidden, Lost Horse, and Queen Valleys. This part of the park is 3,000-5,000 ft. with an abundance of rocks and Joshua Trees. And we hope to see a bird or two. The daily use fee for the park will be waived for the Christmas count participants. The Joshua Tree National Park Association will cover the count participant fees. We can't make it any easier than that! Bring layers of clothing, it can be cold and windy or it can be warm and clam, we've had everything from 78 deg. To snow blowing straight at you. Also bring snacks, good walking shoes, lunch and drinks, or you can pick up lunch in Twentynine Palms if you choose group 1. Group 2 will have to rough it, no phones, no restaurants, but just beautiful country. We will meet about 5:30p.m. at a restaurant in Twentynine Palms to compile the results.

Salton Sea North : Saturday, January 2, 2010 6:30a.m.

Compiler: Chet McGaugh (909)781-3699 (home) or (951)369-8060 (work) chetmgaugh@earthlink.net

We will meet at 6:30a.m. at the big ARCO just off of the expressway near Mecca. Dress warmly. It can be cold in the early morning hours. We will form six or seven groups and spread out over the count circle for a day of counting the multitudes of birds that spend the winter around the north end of Salton Sea. Bird identification skills are helpful but not a prerequisite; the group leaders will handle any identification problems. Counting ability is a prerequisite. Each group leader needs people to count common birds (like Eared Grebes, Ruddy Ducks, American Coots, gulls), and someone to record the numbers, so that he/she can concentrate on finding the unusual and hard-to-find species. If you want a mellow day of birding at Salton Sea, save yourself \$6 and we'll see you in January on the field trip. If you want a rather intense day of birding, and would like to contribute to the ever-growing (since 1969) data bank, come on out. You will see lots of birds. We typically record 130-140 species. After the count we will compile our results at a local restaurant.

Thank You to Donors and Volunteers

San Bernardino Valley Audubon thanks and honors the following donors for their generous gifts.

Eve McCulloh
Gene Cardiff
Ruth Frederick
Jane Russell, in honor of her 90th birthday
Charles and Valerie Zecca
Jeanne Burke Hoskins
Nelda Rankin
Dori Myers

San Bernardino Valley Audubon would also like to thank the nine representatives of our chapter who manned our table at Wildlife West at the San Bernardino County Museum November 21-22. Thank yous for time and efforts are owed to Gene Cardiff, Julie Cook, Drew Feldmann, Dave Woodward, Diana Kriger, Dori Myers, Brad Singer, Kirk Stitt, and Linda Stitt.

I do not think the measure of a civilization is how tall its buildings of concrete are, but rather how well its people have learned to relate to their environment and fellow man.

—Sun Bear

Federal Appeals Court Protects Joshua Tree National Park From World's Largest Dump

November 10, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals handed environmentalists a major victory by ruling that the federal Bureau of Land Management's approval of what would have been the world's largest dump adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park is unlawful. The appellate court turned back an appeal filed by BLM and the project proponent, Kaiser Eagle Mountain, Inc., who challenged a 2005 ruling by Federal District Court Judge Robert Timlin overturning BLM's approval. Kaiser's Landfill project would have received 20,000 tons of garbage per day, 5 days a week, for up to 16 hours per day. Kaiser would have received 3,481 acres of public lands in exchange for 2,846 acres of private land and \$20,100. The thousands of acres of undisturbed canyons that would have been covered with trash presently provide habitat for the threatened desert tortoise and sensitive Bighorn sheep, and provide a spectacular visual backdrop for those hiking and camping in Joshua Tree National Park's remote wilderness areas.

Writing for the majority, Ninth Circuit Judge Harry Pregerson ruled that BLM's Environmental Impact Statement for the project failed to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the project including other sites, failed to give adequate consideration to the public's needs and objectives in balancing ecological protection with waste management, and failed to adequately address the dump's impacts on the desert's sensitive ecological system. The Court also ruled that BLM undervalued the value of the public lands to be traded because it failed to consider their value for the proposed landfill use. The environmental plaintiffs had pointed out the BLM's failure to give adequate consideration to the extraordinary resource values that would be sacrificed to accommodate the dump violated several federal environmental laws.

The environmental coalition that filed the first of the two lawsuits that were consolidated in this appeal praised the Ninth Circuit's ruling. Speaking on behalf of the Desert Protection Society and the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, plaintiff Donna Charpied stated that "This proposed dump would have become an ecological nightmare. Not only would more than 2,000 acres of fragile desert habitat be buried under millions of tons of trash, but the desert's vulnerable ecosystem would have been degraded for miles in all directions by the air, noise, and visual pollution, lowered water tables, incessant rumble of huge dump trucks, and the thousands of rats, ravens, buzzards, coyotes, and other scavengers who would prey on the threatened desert tortoise and other imperiled wildlife that have no natural defenses against such intruders" explained Ms. Charpied.

The plaintiffs' lawyers stressed their appreciation for the Court's steadfast enforcement of federal environmental laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Land Policy Management Act. "The land trade BLM approved here would have literally "trashed" a spectacular national park whose outstanding natural values have earned it designation as a World Biosphere Reserve. "Shy of Yosemite Valley, I cannot think of a worse place to dump LA's trash for the next century than the fragile desert wilderness adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park," stated Stephan Volker, counsel for Donna and Laurence Charpied, Desert Protection Society, and Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice.

Grassroots Activists Work to Protect California Desert

Conservation Conversation by Garry George

Environmental global warming campaigns and government policies calling for more renewable energy have stimulated a "green rush" of renewable energy in California. The Governor's steroidal Executive order calls for 33% of energy to be renewable in California by 2020.

The President's stimulus package calls for "shovel ready" renewable energy projects by December 2010 to qualify for billions in federal stimulus money. But, grassroots activists and conservation organizations are pushing back at the "green rush" as projects come online that will destroy the very thing they are designed to protect, and they are using sophisticated political advocacy powered by conservation technology that goes beyond the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) opposition of the past. This new grassroots advocacy might just bridge the current Green vs. Green split in the environmental community over renewable energy where organization leaders call for more wind and solar, and grassroots call for protection of pristine habitat and threatened species.

Case in point: California's Mojave, Sonora, Colorado, Joshua Tree, Big Morongo Valley, and Antelope Valley deserts, the epicenter of solar energy.

The Wildlands Conservancy's acquisition of more than 487,000 acres of desert lands in Southern California began in 1999, cost around \$40 million, and is the largest nonprofit land acquisition donated to the American people in U.S. history. It includes over 85,000 acres in Mohave National Preserve, over 20,000 acres in Joshua Tree National Park, over 210,000 acres in 20 BLM wilderness areas, and hundreds of thousands of acres of important habitat. The over 587,000 acres were donated to the U.S. Department of the Interior and National Park Service.

But after passage of the 2005 Energy Policy Act, the Bush administration said the land could be used for solar energy projects. The Conservancy discovered that the Bureau of Land Management was taking applications for large scale wind and solar projects on the land to meet renewable energy goals. In February 2009, Bruce Pavlik reported in the LA TIMES, that there were application for large scale wind and solar projects on 1.4 million acres of public lands in California, mainly in the pristine, unrestorable desert, a "green rush" fueled by federal stimulus and federal and state tax breaks which environmental organizations had fought to achieve.

Alarmed, local activists pressured their state organizations and the grassroots pushed the agenda.

In spring 2009, grassroots activists and top policy leaders from Wildlands Conservancy, Defenders of Wildlife, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, NRDC, Audubon California, California Wilderness Coalition, California Desert Coalition, National Parks Conservation Association, and a host of local desert conservation organizations and land trusts, met in a summit to compare GIS layers of maps and biological data as well as "ground truthing" of personal testimony on desert sites. In a few weeks, the group developed a criteria for siting of projects in the desert to inform federal and state agencies and energy developers of areas where their projects might meet the fewest environmental obstacles, and encourage developers toward industrialized areas near already existing roads, cities that need jobs, transmission centers and lines, and away from pristine areas and wildlife corridors. The goal was to protect pristine lands while also closing the gap on renewable energy portfolio standards through solar and wind development in the desert. This was a surprising moment when local and state conservationists and environmentalists worked for habitat protection as well as energy development.

This new balanced movement is having results and shows the power of a marriage of overarching policy and local "ground truth."

AB920 from Assemblyman Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael), is intended to boost the Million Solar Roofs initiative. That package of rebates and other incentives includes selling electricity back to the utility grid, currently prohibited in California. The bill aims to raise the number of solar homes in California from 25,000 in 2006 to 1 million in 2016.

Power (pun intended!) from the grassroots!



Field Study of Birds: Winter

To enroll online, go to: https://www.extension.ucr.edu/enroll/catalog/olr_course_details.php?crisd=459

To enroll by phone, call: 800-442-4990 (note: to receive a discount for couples and family members, registration must be done by phone.

UCR Extension: A Field Study of Birds: Fall Course: Bio X405

An introduction to the wintering birds of Southern California with special emphasis on identification and natural history of waterfowl, gulls and birds of prey. Many of the prime wintering areas are visited on the field trips.

Note: This course may be taken twice for credit toward the Specialized Study Program in Field Ornithology. Visitors are not permitted. Enrollment is limited. Vertebrate course for Certificate in Field Ecology Elective for Specialized Study Program in Field Ornithology.

Instructor: Eugene A. Cardiff, B.A., retired Curator of Natural History, San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands. Cardiff is Extension's longest-standing instructor. He has taught over 100 ornithology classes since 1968

Credit: 2 units

Dates/Times: Tues., 7:30-9:30 p.m., Jan. 12. Field trips all day Sat. Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 13 and 27. (6 meetings)

Location: SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY MUSEUM

Text: "Field Guide to the Birds of North America," 5th edition, Jon L. Dunn and Jonathan K. Alderfer ISBN 0792253140

Fee: \$219/\$199 each for couples and family members/ \$185 each with PINE discount (all SBVAS members)

Reg #: 093-SCF-F23

Yellow-Billed Magpie Named Audubon California's 2009 Bird of the Year

California bird garnered nearly 26 percent of online votes

Emeryville, Ca.—A bird well known to bird enthusiasts, but perhaps not to most Californians, today was named the 2009 Audubon California Bird of the Year after it received nearly 26 percent of votes cast during an online poll this fall. The Yellow-billed Magpie lives only in California's Central Valley and coastal ranges, and may be enjoying a comeback after experiencing major declines due to habitat loss, West Nile Virus and pesticide use.

Audubon California created the designation this year to highlight the state's remarkable birds and the conservation challenges many of them face. The recognition specifically sought to recognize bird species that were of significant conservation interest in 2009, but that also had a compelling story and rallied the public around it.

"This is a terrific bird to feature as Audubon California's first Bird of the Year," said Graham Chisholm, executive director of Audubon, California. "First of all, it's a dynamic bird that people enjoy watching. Moreover, as Californians, it's our bird, and it could really benefit from us knowing more about it and taking care of it."

The Yellow-billed Magpie is one of California's most striking birds, popular among birders and compelling among conservationists. Aside from its yellow bill, the bird is easily recognizable from its white, black and iridescent body and wings.

Nearly 3,000 votes were cast in Audubon California's online poll, which began Oct. 21. Voters had the choice of selecting one of six birds nominated by the Audubon California Board of Directors, or writing in their own candidate. The Yellow-billed Magpie was one of the six nominated birds along with the California condor, Brown Pelican, Western Snowy Plover, Peregrine Falcon and Acorn Woodpecker. The California Condor came in second place with about 18 percent of the vote, while the Western Snowy Plover came in third with about 16 percent.

I couldn't be more pleased to see the Yellow-billed Magpie get this recognition, said Holly Ernest, who directs the Wildlife Population Health and Ecological Genetics Unit at the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory at UC Davis. "This is a wonderful bird that faces a number of challenges to its survival."

According to research by Ernest and others, the Yellow-billed Magpie declined at a slow but steady rate from 1995 to 2003, when the total number of magpies was estimated at 180,000 birds. Then the onslaught of West Nile Virus made the decline even steeper. Breeding Bird Survey and Audubon Christmas Bird Count data showed the decline as somewhere between 22 percent and 42 percent through 2006.

Between 2004 and 2006, over 12,000 magpie carcasses were reported to the California Dept. of Health Services and 78 percent of the magpies tested were West Nile Virus-positive," said Ernest.

The last year brought hope that the Yellow-billed Magpies were coming back..



(Yellow-billed Magpies cont.)

"Lots of anecdotal evidence suggests a rebound in birds," says Gary Langham, director of bird conservation for Audubon California. "People are reporting them in their yards after a few years absence and you can see it for yourself as you drive through the valley. The magpies are back."

This past year, Audubon California sought to bolster the work of Ernest and other researchers by conducting a pilot survey of Yellow-billed Magpies in California. The survey identified 1,829 birds across 18 counties. Audubon California is anxious to expand its efforts when it conducts the survey again in June 2010.

Audubon California also has plans to support Yellow-billed magpie conservation through public education and landowners and ranchers who steward the oak woodlands and farmland where the bird makes its home.

While the Yellow-billed magpie wins the designation of 2009 Bird of the Year, Chisolm emphasized that its work on behalf of other California birds, nominated or not, will continue apace.

"Each of the six nominated birds was a major focus of conservation in 2009 although not all in the same way," said Chisolm. "It's our hope that the attention that this draws to the magpie will help build support for bird conservation across the state."

Court Ruling Threatens Farms-to-City Water Transfer

By Janet Zimmerman, The Press Enterprise

The nation's largest farm-to-city water transfer will continue for now, despite a judge's ruling that the pact between suppliers was invalid, officials said Friday.

The Imperial Irrigation District was authorized to transfer up to 90 billion gallons of water per year to San Diego county and the Coachella Valley under the Quantification Settlement Agreement. The water comes from the idling of cropland. Water officials said they are unclear how the decision will affect the transfer and the future restoration of the Salton Sea, which was to be funded in part selling the transferred water to residential customers.

"I don't think it has any immediate effect. It doesn't mean the water will quit moving tomorrow," said Steve Robbins, general manager of the Coachella Valley Water District, which gets about a third of the water. "I don't see this as the death of the QSA. We might have to revise it."

Kevin Kelley, spokesman for the Imperial district, said water will continue to flow at least until the district's board and attorneys meet to discuss the tentative ruling.

The judgment is expected to be made final after the parties meet with Superior Court Judge Roland L. Candee on Thursday in Sacramento, where the trial was held.

The decision caps years of legal wrangling and more than a dozen lawsuits challenging various aspects of the agreement.

Candee's 22-page ruling focused on the constitutionality of the state committing to an open-ended financial obligation to restore the sea. The state's portion would have kicked in after the \$133 million cap that the water districts would have paid to mitigate the effects of the water transfer.

The California Constitution prohibits the state from taking on unfunded debts or liabilities over \$300,000. The state put no limits on repairing the sea.

"He ruled that the agreement ran afoul of constitutional debt limits and because he found that part of the agreement was deficient, he ruled that all the rest of the contracts were deficient because they relied so heavily on...state obligations," Kelley said.

Robbins said the groups may be able to keep the agreement by having some of the involved parties pick up the excess funding.

"It is a setback, absolutely...but I think it's something that can be dealt with," he said.

The Salton Sea, California's largest lake, is fed primarily by agricultural runoff. Since about 17,000 acres have been taken out of farming production, the Imperial district is sending some water directly to the sea, where high salinity threatens fish and migratory birds.

The 75-year agreement was designed to keep California from exceeding its allotment of Colorado River water, which it shares with six other western states. It was signed in 2003 by the Imperial and Coachella district, San Diego County Water Authority, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and the state and federal governments.

Many Imperial Valley farmers were unhappy with the deal, because they

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www.inlandplanet.org

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CALENDAR

Board Meetings: Jan. 6, Feb. 3

General Meetings: Jan. 20, Feb. 17

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.

Feed Your Yard Birds and Help SBVAS

Wild birdseed 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 \$20.

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.



Sunday, January 3, 2010 - 8:00-10:00 am
Beginning Bird Walk at [San Jacinto Wildlife Area](#) ([map](#))

Doug Karalun (909) 425-5355

Visiting the wildlife area in winter allows great opportunities to view waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. For those of you who are just beginning the wonderful pastime of bird watching, please join us for a fun, slow-paced morning of birding in one of our local wildlife habitats. Our goal will be to teach you enough basic birding techniques and identification skills so that you will feel comfortable birding on your own or joining our longer birding trips throughout the year. We will introduce you to some of our local bird species. You may be surprised at what wonderful birds can be seen! Wear comfortable walking shoes, hats and sunscreen and bring water and binoculars. The walk is free and no reservations are needed. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday, February 7, 2010 - 8:00-10:00 am
Beginning Bird Walk at [San Jacinto Wildlife Area](#) ([map](#))

Contact: Cathy Tobin (951) 684-9613

Leaders: Jennifer and Michelle Tobin

Visiting the wildlife area in winter allows great opportunities to view waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. For those of you who are just beginning the wonderful pastime of bird watching, please join us for a fun, slow-paced morning of birding in one of our local wildlife habitats. Our goal will be to teach you enough basic birding techniques and identification skills so that you will feel comfortable birding on your own or joining our longer birding trips throughout the year. We will introduce you to some of our local bird species. You may be surprised at what wonderful birds can be seen! Wear comfortable walking shoes, hats and sunscreen

Morro Bay Bird Festival

Hard to believe, but we're coming up on our 14th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival! We realize that we owe much of our success to the support we've gotten from Audubon chapters throughout the country, and the Morro Coast Audubon Society thanks all of you for reading about our Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival notices in your newsletters. Every year, well over a third of those responding to our evaluation questionnaire say they heard about the Festival through their Audubon newsletter. Over half of our participants have been to the Festival more than once and an impressive number have attended every year!

Come Celebrate Our 14th Annual Festival!

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, January 15-18, 2010

Get more information at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org or call (805) 772-4677.

Saturday, January 9, 2010 - 7:00 am
Salton Sea Goose & Crane Trip
[Chet McGaugh](#) (951) 781-3699 & [John Green](#) (951) 686-2956

This trip at times has been called the "waterfowl trip," the "goose trip" and "a wonderful trip." It is all of that, and more. Perhaps a glimpse at last year's list will help stoke the fires of desire: American White Pelican (hundreds), American Bittern, White-faced Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Snow Goose (thousands), Ross's Goose (hundreds), Greater White-fronted Goose, Bald Eagle, four falcon species, Sandhill Cranes, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Burrowing Owl, Mountain Bluebird, and American Redstart. We tallied over 100 species, and didn't have to count individuals (for an opportunity to count every single bird on and around the sea, join us at the Salton Sea North Christmas Bird Count on January 2.) We will meet at the Wister Unit of the Imperial Wildlife Area at 7:00 am ([map](#)). Exit Highway 111 at Davis Road and look for us in the parking lot there. We will bird around the south end of the sea; also the surrounding agricultural lands looking for raptors, Mountain Plovers, and the always entertaining Sandhill Cranes.

Saturday, February 13, 2010 - 8:30 am
Torres-Martinez Ponds/Salton Sea
[Dave Goodward](#) (909) 783-2417

We will meet at the west gate to the Whitewater River delta. Come down Highway 86S from Indio, turn left at the Arco Station where the sign says Mecca/Hwy 111. Take the first right after the Arco Station, which is Lincoln Avenue, just before you get to Mecca/Hwy 111. Follow Lincoln to where it ends. Cross the Whitewater River, and turn left into the Torres-Martinez Reservation, immediately after the levee. Park along the right side of the road, in front of the gate.

The Torres-Martinez Ponds are on the west side of the Whitewater Delta. They were recently created by the Torres-Martinez Tribe, and have been generally off-limits to the public. Now that the riparian vegetation is growing and the birds have discovered the ponds, the tribe has generously agreed to allow scheduled field trips. Expect to see many of the usual duck and grebe species, maybe a scoter, a smattering of shorebirds, hopefully a Peregrine Falcon or Merlin, and nesting Great Blue Herons. Expected land birds include Marsh Wren, Abert's Towhee, and Common Ground-dove. Rarities seen here in the past include Red-necked Grebe and American Tree Sparrow. The stroll around the ponds should take about two hours. Energetic birders can then take the half mile hike out to the Whitewater delta, for hordes of gull, terns and pelicans. This is a great chance to visit what is becoming a great birding location at the north end of the Salton Sea. Bring sunscreen, hats and water.

Habitat is not only removed quietly from a generation of man, but from multiple generations of wildlife, who unknowingly adapt to less, and become distorted by a change they never even feel.

—Dick E. Bird

Calendar for Field Trips 2009-2010

Saturday-Sunday, February 20-21, 2010 Weekend in San Luis Obispo & Santa Barbara [Brad Singer](#) (909) 838-7951

Arrive each day with a full tank of gas, lunch, your binoculars, and anything else you'll need for a full day of birding. The leaders will have scopes, but more scopes are always welcome! Some of the places we visit may charge parking or entry fees, so be prepared for that as well. This year's field trip will start at the southwestern corner of San Luis Obispo County on Saturday at the Oso Flaco Preserve ([map](#)). We will meet at 7:30 am in front of the entrance gate. To get there, exit Highway 101 at Main Street (Highway 166) in Santa Maria and drive west approximately 9 miles to Highway 1. Turn right (north) and drive for about 3 miles to Oso Flaco Road (sign). Turn left and the Preserve is at the end of the road. We will bird there, then work our way north to Oceano, Shell Beach, Montana de Oro SP, and Morro Bay. We will bird until everyone has had enough, or until it is dark, whichever comes first.

On Sunday we will start in the northern end of Santa Barbara County at Waller Park in Santa Maria. We will work south, birding Los Alamos County Park, Gaviota State Park, Lake Los Carneros, Coronado Butterfly and Bird Garden, Devereaux Slough, Campus Lagoon, Santa Barbara Pier, and if time permits, Carpinteria State Beach. Our route will be determined by where our target birds are, and where other birds of interest are being seen. IF YOU ARE COMING ON SUNDAY ONLY call Brad's cell phone (909-838-7951) on Saturday evening to find out where and when we will start on Sunday.

You will need to arrange your own accommodations for Friday and/or Saturday nights. It would be best to stay both nights in Santa Maria. There are plenty of motels in Santa Maria, and a few campgrounds, but reservations are always a good idea. If you'd like to prepare for your visit, online resources including bird checklists, seasonal distribution, and links to other resources and more are on the Santa Barbara County Birding web pages.



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 turn-off. 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

The variety of life in nature can be compared to a vast library of unread books, and the plundering of nature is comparable to the random discarding of whole volumes without having opened them, and learned from them. Our critical dependence on the great variety of nature for the progress we have already made has been amply documented. Indifference to the loss of species is, in effect, indifference to the future, and therefore a shameful carelessness about our children. — Peter Matthiessen

-  **January 3:** Beginning Bird Walk, San Jacinto Wildlife Area—Doug Karalun
-  **January 9:** Salton Sea Goose and Crane Trip—Chet McGaugh and John Green
-  **February 7:** Beginning Bird Walk, San Jacinto—Jennifer and Michelle Tobin
-  **Feb. 13:** Torres-Martinez Ponds—Dave Woodward
-  **February 20 and 21:** Weekend in Santa Barbara—Brad Singer
- March 7:** Beginning Bird Walk, Hidden Valley—Jennifer and Michelle Tobin
- March 13:** Bolsa Chica—Dori Myers
- April 4:** Beginning Bird Walk, Rubidoux Nature Center—Jennifer and Michelle Tobin
- April 10 and 11:** East Mojave—John Green
-  **April 10 and 11:** Owens Valley Grouse Trip—Gene Cardiff (**Please note change in dates**)
- April 24:** Salton Sea—Chet McGaugh
- May 1:** Big Morongo—Chet McGaugh
- May 2:** Beginning Bird Walk, Fairmount Park—Doug Karalun
- May 2:** Box Springs—John Green
- May 8:** White Water Canyon—Steve Myers
- May 29:** Baby Birds at Bear Paw—Cin Grayraven
- June 5:** San Bernardino Mountains—Brad Singer
- June 12:** Wrightwood—Gene Cardiff
- June 26 and 27:** Greenhorns—Steve Myers
- July 17:** Hummingbirds at Bear Paw—Cin Greyraven
- August 7:** Insane Jaunt/Salton Sea—Tom Benson



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
Come and Enjoy. Call Field Trip Leader for last minute cancellations,

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

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San Bernardino, CA

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Everyone is always welcome!

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 Cali-
fornia Street exit off the 10 Freeway
and go north 1 block to Orange Tree
Lane—turn right. The museum will
be on your left...



Chapter Only Membership Application
San Bernardino Valley Audubon

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

____ SBVAS Membership @ \$16/year (includes subscription
to *The Western Meadowlark*)

____ I wish to receive the *Western Meadowlark* **only** elec-
tronically _____

Email Address _____

Please enclose a check payable to SBVAS



Membership Application
National Audubon Society (NAS)

____ NAS New Member/ Gift Membership \$20 (renewal will be
\$35, includes 1 year of *Audubon* magazine, 1 year Chapter membership, 1
year subscription to *Western Meadowlark* if in SBVAS area)

____ NAS Regular/Renewal Membership \$35 (includes 1 year of
Audubon magazine)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society

SBVAS Chapter
C97C110Z

Please clip and mail all memberships to: SBVAS Membership Chair
P.O. Box 10973
San Bernardino, Ca. 92423-0973

DATED MATERIAL - Please Expedite