



# WESTERN MEADOWLARK



## Salton Sea Recovery Process

In October, after three years of preparation, the state of California released the *programmatic draft environmental impact report* (PDEIR) for the recovery of the Salton Sea. This PDEIR lays out 8 alternative solutions to save something of the Salton Sea, before it evaporates into a saline soup unable to support life. The decisions that are made in the next few months will determine the fate of the Sea for at least the next century.

### *Why Is The Salton Sea Important? And Isn't It Artificial Anyway?*

**I**n the last century and a half, California lost over 90% of its wetlands. There used to be several large lakes in the Central valley, such as Tulare Lake, once the largest freshwater lake west of the Great Lakes, which were lost mostly to agriculture. Coastal wetlands were similarly lost, and are still being lost, to residential and industrial uses. Before many of the Sierra rivers were dammed and other rivers in the state were channelized, riparian wetlands in California were much more extensive. The Salton Sea is perhaps the only area in California where wetlands have actually increased when compared to the late nineteenth century.

The current Salton Sea began to form in 1905 when the then-flooding Colorado River broke through a levee as a result of excavation for a canal, and flowed into the area between Indio and El Centro, which lies below sea level and has no outlet to the ocean. While the 1905 incident was partially human caused, the river had done this many times before without help, including at

*(Salton Sea...Continued on page 2)*

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

**California Birds  
in Motion  
presented by Larry Arbanas  
Wednesday,  
January 17, 2007  
7:30 p.m.**

If you like your birds up-close, you'll really like this presentation. Bay Area bird/nature filmmaker Larry Arbanas has whipped up a bevy of bird "mini-movies" to watch at our January meeting.

His presentation, "California Birds in Motion" is an intimate look at White-tailed Kites, Burrowing Owls, Clapper Rails, Pygmy Nuthatches, "dancing" Western Grebes, Mono Lake birds, the amazing "water ouzel"-better known as the American Dipper-plus a close-up look at our national symbol, the Bald Eagle. We'll also see birds of Southeast Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. Wait a minute...what's the name of this pres-

*(California Birds...Continued on page 10)*

**2nd Annual Dinner  
&  
Conservation Awards  
Invitation**

Date:  
Saturday Evening  
March 31, 2007

Speaker:  
Allan Schoenherr

Location:  
San Bernardino County Mu-  
seum, Redlands

Program:  
"California Public Lands  
Wild and Beautiful"

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**Birds of Puerto Rico  
by Lance Benner  
Wednesday,  
February 21, 2006  
7:30 PM**

Puerto Rico is a Caribbean island about the size of Connecticut that has been isolated geographically since its formation millions of years ago. About 350 bird species have been recorded there and roughly 130 species breed there. Due to its isolation, Puerto Rico is home to about sixteen endemic bird species. One species, the Elfin Woods Warbler, was discovered only 35 years ago, and another, the Puerto Rican Parrot, is among the most endangered birds in the world. This talk will describe Puerto Rico's endemic and non-endemic birds, their geographic and seasonal distributions, birding locations, and tips for traveling to and within the island.

Lance Benner is a Research Scientist at

*(Puerto Rico... Continued on page 3)*

*(Salton Sea... Continued from page 1)*

least seven times between 1840 and 1905.

Therefore the Salton Sea, while precipitated in part by an accident, formed as part of a recurring and completely natural process. As the Salton Sea rose to its current level, it came to replace, in a sense, some of the wetlands that had been lost to development elsewhere in the state. The Salton Sea is currently the largest lake in California, and is used by some 400 species of birds. It is a vital stopover on the Pacific Flyway and bird bandings have shown that birds using the Salton Sea can be found all over North America. Bird populations using the Sea include as many as 3,000,000 eared grebes (90% of the North American population), 30,000 American white pelicans, 2,000 brown pelicans, 40,000 ruddy ducks, and 25,000 snow and Ross' geese. The Sea hosts the largest breeding colony of gull-billed terns in western North America and substantial breeding populations of Caspian terns and black skimmers. It is one of the principal habitats of the endangered Yuma Clapper Rail. Now, but for the Salton Sea, many of these birds would not have places to go.

Why Does Anything Need to Be Done?

There are two basic problems.

First, the Sea is getting saltier. The levee break that started the current Sea was patched in 1908, and the Salton Sea is now fed primarily by the New and Alamo Rivers to the south. They in turn are fed primary by runoff of irrigation waters that originate in the Colorado River. The Sea is land-locked, but has stabilized at the current size because evaporation has balanced inflows. Current inflows run about 1,300,000 acre feet a year, all of which is lost to evaporation because of the desert climate. Since the current area of the sea is 230,000 acres (about 360 square miles), that means that a column of water about 6 feet deep evaporates from the Sea each year. All of the salts in the water are left behind. Currently the sea is saltier than the ocean, and in about a decade (estimates vary), the Sea will no longer be viable for fish, except for limited habitats at river and creek mouths. Soon after that, only brine shrimp and brine flies will be able to live in the Sea, and by about 2038, even they will be killed off. The bottom of the food chain will be gone.

Second, the Sea is going to shrink because it will be getting a lot less water than it used to. For decades, California took more water from the Colorado River than it was entitled to under various compacts and laws. In 2003, Interior Secretary Gail Norton forced a series of agreements by which California's share will gradually be reduced to its legal entitlement. The big losers of the water will be the farmers of the Imperial Valley and ultimately the Salton Sea, because Imperial Valley irrigation runoff currently supplies most of the Sea's water. For the next few years, inflows should be somewhat stable, but starting in 2018, there will be a major drop in water inflows, and the Sea will start to shrink as a result. Shoreline could quickly recede several miles along the shallow south shore, where the wildlife refuge is, and the resulting smaller Sea will get saltier even faster. The many square miles of exposed lake bed will be a major source of par-

ticulate air pollution in an area that already has the highest childhood asthma rate in the state.

What is the PDEIR For?

In 2003, as a result of the new water agreements, the California legislature passed Salton Sea restoration legislation that required the Department of Water Resources to determine ways to save three aspects of the Sea: wildlife habitat, air quality, and water quality. Plans were to be developed to carry the Sea through 2078 and a report made to the legislature with a preferred alternative. A consulting firm, CH2M-Hill, was hired to write the report and a Salton Sea Advisory Committee was formed, so that stakeholder organizations could have a voice in the drafting of the report. As a result of litigation, California Audubon won a seat on the committee and has been ably represented by Director of Policy Julia Levin. Meetings have been held every few months since 2003, and this writer has been able to attend some of the recent meetings. The PDEIR is the draft of the report to the legislature. It presents 8 plans with evaluations of each, but does not yet recommend a particular plan. Comments will be accepted through January 19, 2007, then a final EIR will be issued in the spring, which will recommend a solution to the legislature. The recommended solution could be a combination of different types of plans. The legislature will then have to decide what to do.

***What is Going to Happen?***

***I wish I knew.***

As mentioned, the PDEIR lays out 8 possible alternative solutions to save something of the Salton Sea. These alternatives use different combinations of channels, dams, and pumps to form different environments ranging from shallow marine habitat to deeper marine lakes to saline sinks. Exposed lake bed will be planted with salt-tolerant plants in some plans, but fresh water marsh habitat is not included in the options. Given that the inflow of water is going to be cut drastically, **all alternatives envision a considerably smaller Sea.** Some involve terraces, so that there would be concentric rings of water at different levels, with a reduced volume. Other plans would dam off parts of the Sea and allow other parts to go dry. Whatever choice is made or not made, the Sea will change dramatically. There is no getting around this, short of San Diego giving up a large share of its water to support the Sea, which is about as close to impossible as political possibilities are likely to get.

The alternatives have been given evaluations in the PDEIR that may or may not hold up under close scrutiny. The chapter has the opportunity to make comments, and will be making them, but environmentalists have not yet come to a clear consensus as to the alternatives, as there are problems or potential problems with all of them. Since the final EIR could recommend different parts of different plans, we are free to support parts of different plans.

*(Salton Sea... Continued on page 3)*

## SAVE THE DATE: AUDUBON'S BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS TRAINING JAN.28-31, 2007 ENDANGERED SPECIES TRAINING FEB 24-27

**WHEN:** January 28-31, 2007 or February 24-27, 2007

**WHERE:** Washington, DC

**WHO:** People passionate about protecting birds and their habitat.

People who want to learn how the federal budget process works, and participate in making sure  
conservation funding is a priority.      People like YOU!

**WHAT:** Two days of education and advocacy training on the federal budget and appropriations process, followed by a day on Capitol Hill to meet with your Senators and Representatives.

**HOW:** Please join Audubon activists from around the country for our Budget and Appropriations Advocacy Training in Washington, D.C. January 28 – 31, 2007.

This event will include working sessions on conservation funding as it impacts a variety of Audubon priorities – from large-scale ecosystem restoration projects (Everglades, Great Lakes, Long Island Sound, Mississippi River, San Francisco Bay) to many bird specific programs (National Wildlife Refuge funding, Endangered Species Recovery funding, etc). As important will be training on how to communicate effectively with your elected officials.

You will learn how the Congress annually sets its' spending priorities and then go to Capitol Hill to meet with your Members of Congress or their staff to express your concerns for the best funding levels possible for wildlife and habitat.

Feb. 24-27-Endangered Species Act-we spent much of the 109th Congress successfully defending its integrity, now in the 110th we will likely have the opportunity to strengthen it or at least positively influence the legislative approach to any proposed amendments, or changes.

Audubon's Budget & Appropriations Training will feature guest speakers, informative sessions, and skill-building - including tips for effectively delivering your message to lawmakers. You'll put your improved advocacy skills to good use when you hit the halls of Congress.

For more information, contact Brian Moore, 202-861-2242 x 3028 or <mailto:bmoore@audubon.org>.

Thank you for your interest and dedication to birds, wildlife, and our shared natural environment!

*(Salton Sea... Continued from page 2)*

*The San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society seeks input from its members on this issue.*

*For further information, see the following websites:*

*California Audubon: <http://www.audubon-ca.org/>*

*Salton Sea Coalition (SBVAS is a member):*

*<http://www.saltonseacoalition.org/>*

*State Dept. of Water Resources:*

*<http://www.saltonsea.water.ca.gov/>*

*has the PDEIR*

*Comments or concerns can be sent to me at [Drew-f@att.net](mailto:Drew-f@att.net), which I would prefer,*

*or at 909-881-6081,*

*if you do not have email.*

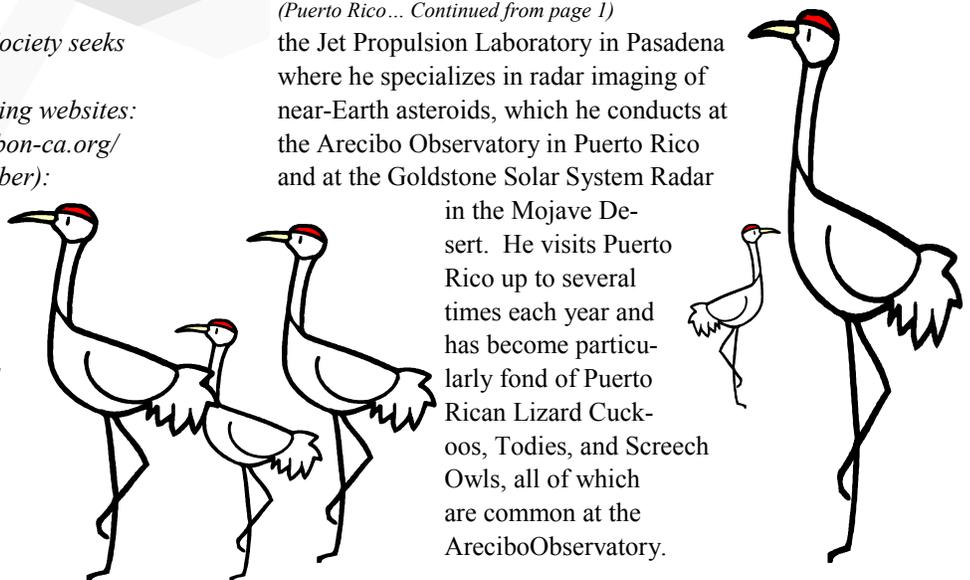
**Thanks, Drew Feldman**

**SBVAS, President**

*(Puerto Rico... Continued from page 1)*

the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena where he specializes in radar imaging of near-Earth asteroids, which he conducts at the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico and at the Goldstone Solar System Radar

in the Mojave Desert. He visits Puerto Rico up to several times each year and has become particularly fond of Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoos, Todies, and Screech Owls, all of which are common at the Arecibo Observatory.



## AUDUBON Wins Court Victory Against Controversial Mountain Development Project

By Peter Jorris Dec. 11, 2006

Agreeing with San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society about mountain fire hazard concerns, a San Bernardino County judge on November 30th overturned the Board of Supervisors approval of the proposed Hawarden subdivision project in Lake Arrowhead.

The court challenge was led by the Audubon, the Center for Biological Diversity, Save Our Forest Association, and the Sierra Club. This is the second court victory by the coalition of conservation organizations in the past year and a half.

Judge John P. Wade ruled that the County General Plan was "unambiguous" in its requirement that an evacuation route be completed before approval may be granted for any development projects in the Blue Ridge area of Lake Arrowhead near Santa's Village. For over seven years Audubon and others urged the County to ensure that evacuation capacity in the mountains be more realistically assessed. Unfortunately fire danger in the forest does not receive the proper concern that it warrants from urban-oriented supervisors.

### High Risk Area

The subdivision, known as Blue Ridge Estates or Hawarden Development, was planned for an area of Lake Arrowhead that is considered a high risk for fire and was almost burned by the catastrophic Old Fire in 2003. The San Bernardino County General Plan contains a requirement specific to this area that Cumberland Road (a "Primary Evacuation Route for the Community of Lake Arrowhead" according to County plans) be completed before nearby subdivisions can be approved. The County interpreted this provision as requiring that the developer only build his "share" of the road, and approved the project without any plans for the road's completion.

"Fires are a fact of life in southern California's forests, but over-development in highly fire-prone areas, such as the Hawarden site, impedes the natural fire cycle," said Adam Keats, co-counsel for conservation groups. "This threatens the health of the entire ecosystem, which includes the plants, animals, and human beings who call the mountains home."

"This ruling underscores the importance of proper planning for fire safety. The County General Plan has numerous interlocking policies that are designed to ensure the safety of residents and firefighters by restricting subdivisions in the fire-prone urban/wildlands intermix zone and ensuring there is adequate emergency access for them," said lead attorney Douglas Carstens, of Chatten-Brown and Carstens. "The County must stick to these fundamental, mandatory policies. Indeed, in light of recent fires, the County should strengthen its restrictions."

## FROM: Project FeederWatch Electronic Newsletter - October 25, 2006

Since mycoplasmal conjunctivitis was first observed in House Finches in 1994 the bacterial disease has caused eye infections in several other species of wild birds including American Goldfinches, Purple Finches, Evening Grosbeaks, and Pine Grosbeaks. The same bacteria is suspected of causing this conjunctivitis in House Sparrows, too.

In October 2006, the Lab of Ornithology received information that there may be an emerging epidemic of conjunctivitis in House Sparrows in the Chicago area. In order to determine if an epidemic is beginning in House Sparrows we are asking citizen scientists across the continent to report sightings of House Sparrows with eye infections.

Learn how to report sick House Sparrow sightings here:  
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/News/houspa.htm>

*More information  
on mycoplasmal conjunctivitis in  
House Finches can be found at the  
House Finch Disease Survey  
website: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/hofi/>  
To join Project Feeder Watch go to  
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>*

### San Diego Bird Festival February 7 - 12, 2007

#### Keynote Speaker Kevin Karlson Co-Author of "The Shorebird Guide"

San Diego is famous for the variety of birds attracted to the area's diverse habitats. Last year 186 species were recorded during the festival. In addition to the ever-popular trips to the desert, mountains, seashore and pelagic trips this year there will be two overnight opportunities to bird in northwestern Baja California. There will be a behind-the-scenes tour of San Diego Natural History Museum's avian collection and a bonus bird walk in Balboa Park with Phil Unitt, the museum's curator of birds and mammals. Fourteen workshops will include Birding by Ear, Shorebird ID with Kevin Karlson, and Butterfly ID with Mike Klein, Gardening for Birds and the very popular Raptor Rap. A day-long digiscoping workshop with Clay Taylor including in-field application is featured. The optic and vendor fair will be Friday thru Sunday. For information and registration go to [www.sandiegoaudubon.org](http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org) or call 619-682-7200.

**Marian Village Mission Bay Trips to the Seashore, Mountains, Desert, Wetlands and Mexico,  
Pelagic Adventures, 14 workshops, 3 days optic and vendor exhibits. All day Digiscoping in depth  
Information and Registration  
[www.sandiegoaudubon.org](http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org) - 619-682-7200**

**Annual Dinner  
&  
Conservation Awards  
Invitation**

Date: Saturday night, March 31, 2007

Speaker: Allan Schoenherr

Location: San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands

Program: "California Public Lands Wild and Beautiful"

## **ALLAN SCHOENHERR- OUR CONSERVATION AWARD DINNER SPEAKER**

Dr. Allan Schoenherr is a Professor of Ecology at Fullerton College in southern California. He also has taught a variety of ecology classes at the University of California, Irvine, and California State University at Fullerton. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Southern California, and his Ph.D. from Arizona State University.

His academic interests are in ecology, biogeography, and endangered species. Among his scientific writings are articles on the ecology of amphibians, reptiles, and freshwater fishes. He is an authority on the desert pupfish. He is the author of *THE AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS* and *ENDANGERED PLANT COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA*.

A recognized authority on California, he is the author of two major books on the state. *A NATURAL HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA* (University of California Press, 1992) is a 772-page compendium on the plants, animals, and geology of California. His more recent publication, *NATURAL HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS OF CALIFORNIA* (University of California Press, 1999), is a 491 page discussion of all the islands of California including those in San Francisco Bay. An accomplished nature photographer, he has provided the photographs to illustrate his books and he has received two awards for his images of California Gray Whales.

Most of all, Dr. Schoenherr is a lover of the outdoors. He has traveled, hiked, and photographed all over the world. He has lead month-long hiking excursions in the Sierra Nevada of California and he worked for the Yosemite Association as a loop trip leader to the high sierra camps in Yosemite National Park. He has been the naturalist on many shipboard excursions including trips to Iceland, Greenland, Russia, Alaska, the Arctic and the Antarctic, the lagoons of Baja California, the South Pacific, and the Caribbean. As a biology professor on the Semester at Sea program sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh he has twice traveled around the world teaching marine biology and ecology.

Allan Shoenherr is an articulate and engaging speaker and enjoys sharing his passions with others. He is also a long time supporter of both Audubon and The Sierra Club and he is pleased to be part of an evening honoring conservation efforts made by The San Gorgonio Chapter of the Sierra Club.

### 2nd Annual Dinner and Conservation Awards

Date: Saturday at 6:00 in the Evening, March 31, 2007  
Speaker: Allan Schoenherr  
Location: San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands  
Program: "California Public Lands Wild and Beautiful"

Our guest speaker for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dinner and Conservation Awards is Dr. Allan Schoenherr, who will speak about California's wild and beautiful public lands. Dr. Allan Schoenherr literally wrote the book on California's habitats and is a dynamic speaker, gifted photographer, dedicated environmentalist and consummate outdoorsman. He promises to entertain us with his stunning pictures and fascinating program.

For the second time San Bernardino Valley Audubon will present our chapter's Conservation Award. This meritorious service award honors a group or individual that has helped protect, conserve and preserve the environment in our area. This year we honor the San Gorgonio Chapter of the Sierra Club whose mission is to enjoy and protect our natural heritage, scenic beauty, and wildlife and their natural habitats, as well as to provide means to experience the great outdoors.

Dinner: 6:30 PM  
Program and Awards: 7:30 PM  
Tickets: \$20.00 per person

Our dinner will be held at the San Bernardino County Museum in the Fisk Auditorium in Redlands. The museum is located one block north of the I-10 at 2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands, CA 92374. Directions: From Interstate 10 take the California exit. Go north, proceed to Orange Tree Lane, make a right on Orange Tree Lane and follow the signs. The museum will be on your left.

Please mail your reservation forms to Dori Myers, Annual Dinner, 6011 Saddletree Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92886. You can also deliver your form to her at our monthly general meeting or send it to SBVAS's mailing address. Dinner is \$20.00 per person. Reservations may be made until the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. Please reserve early since our meeting room has limited space and can accommodate no more than 60 for dinner. Questions call Dori at 714 779-2201.

#### Annual Dinner Reservation Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a vegetarian? Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Email address or phone number (In case we need to contact you) \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner will be a self serve buffet with meats, salads, vegetables, rolls and butter, Beverages; punch, coffee, tea or decaffeinated coffee and cake for dessert.

If you are a vegetarian please indicate on this reservation form.

Make your check payable to SBVAS or San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society.

Mail or give to:

Dori Myers  
Annual Dinner  
6011 Saddletree Lane  
Yorba Linda, CA 92886

## Fall to Winter Fieldtrips

### SALTON SEA GOOSE & CRANE TRIP

Saturday, January 13, 2007— 7:00 am

Leaders: Chet McGaugh (909) 781-3699

John Green (951) 686-2956 or e-mail [bewickwren@earthlink.net](mailto:bewickwren@earthlink.net)

Gene Cardiff (909) 875-5358 e.[cardiff@worldnet.att.net](mailto:cardiff@worldnet.att.net)

This trip at times has been called the “waterfowl trip,” the “goose trip,” and “a wonderful field-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, white-faced ibis, snow goose (thousands), Ross’ goose (hundreds), surf scoter, white-winged scoter, peregrine falcon, prairie falcon, sandhill crane (hundred), mountain plover (hundred and a half), and gila woodpecker. We tallied twenty species of waterfowl, and we didn’t have to count individuals. (For an opportunity to count every single duck on the Sea, see Salton Sea - North CBC blurb elsewhere in this issue.)

We will meet at the Wister Unit of the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge at 7:00 a.m. Wister is on Highway 111, east side of the Sea, several miles before Niland. The turn-off is Davis Road.

We will bird around the southern end of the Sea, then go south into "ag" lands to look for raptors, mountain plovers, and the always entertaining sandhill cranes.

### SANTA BARBARA AREA FIELD TRIP

Saturday - Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>

Leaders: John Green: phone (951) 686-2956, e-mail [bewickwren@earthlink.net](mailto:bewickwren@earthlink.net) and

Steve Myers: phone (760) 843-4009, e-mail [stephenmyers@earthlink.net](mailto:stephenmyers@earthlink.net)

This is a nice time of year to visit the Santa Barbara area. The full contingent of wintering regulars and rarities should be present and accounted for. Our coastal target birds will include a lot of gulls, including Glaucous-winged, Thayer’s, and Mew; Royal Terns, lots of shorebirds including Snowy Plover, Black Oystercatcher, Whimbrel, both Turnstones, and Wandering Tattler; Wood Ducks, Surf Scoter, Pacific, Common, and Red-throated Loons; Brandt’s and Pelagic Cormorants, and much more. We’ll expect plenty of landbirds along the way too. We’re starting further north this year, so will have an opportunity to see Chestnut-backed Chickadee and Yellow-billed Magpie as well.

The Santa Barbara area always has some fine rarities as well. We can’t be sure what will be on hand, but last year at this time, rarities in the area included Cackling, Ross's, and Snow Geese; Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Long-tailed Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Laughing Gull, Zone-tailed Hawk, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Tropical Kingbird, Winter Wren, Brown Thrasher; Palm, Lucy's, Black-and-white, and Grace's Warbler; White-throated Sparrow, and Baltimore Oriole. We’ll plan on getting 100 or more species during the weekend.

Arrive each day with a full tank of gas, lunch, your binocular, and anything else you’ll need for a full day of birding. The leaders will have scopes, but more scopes are always welcome! We may be using FRS radios, so bring yours if you have them. 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 northwestern corner of Santa Barbara County on Saturday. We will meet at 8:00AM at the Santa Maria River Estuary (Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Preserve). Exit Highway 101 at Main Street (Highway 166) in Santa Maria and drive west 11 miles to the entrance of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Preserve. Continue past the kiosk 2 miles to the parking lot. We will bird there, then work our way south birding until everyone has had enough, or until it is dark, whichever comes first.

Then on Sunday we will start in Santa Barbara at the Andree Clark Bird Refuge. Coming from the north, exit Highway 101 on the left at Cabrillo Blvd (exit 94b) toward Coast Village Road / Hot Springs Rd. Make a sharp right onto East Cabrillo Blvd / CA-225. Turn right on Los Patos then left into the parking area at the edge of the lake. Coming from the south, exit Highway 101 on the left at Cabrillo Blvd (exit 94C). Turn left onto E. Cabrillo Blvd, then right on Los Patos as above.

We’ll bird there then head out and. 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 John’s cell phone: (951) 751-0733 on Saturday evening to find out where and when we will start on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

You will need to arrange your own accommodations for Friday and/or Saturday nights. Friday night would be best in Santa Maria, Saturday in Santa Barbara. There are plenty of motels in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara and the surrounding communities, 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 Pages at <http://mysite.verizon.net/res0d1yq/>

**BOLSA CHICA, ORANGE COUNTY COAST**

Saturday, March 11, 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Tom Benson and Dori Myers

Please join us for what should be a great day of birding in the wetland areas of Orange County. Expect to see a large variety of wintering birds including ducks, shorebirds, grebes, herons, egrets, terns, cormorants, etc. We ought to find gulls and raptors and some song birds. With any luck we will see 50 or more species just in the morning. After birding Bolsa Chica (until around noon) we will go to Newport Back Bay or the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary to eat our lunch and finish the day.

To reach Bolsa Chica, take the 91 freeway south to the 55 (Newport freeway). Continue on the 55 to the 405 and go north towards Long Beach. Exit at Beach Blvd. (south) and continue to Pacific Coast Highway. Turn right and head north on PCH, past Huntington Beach. We will meet in the parking lot of the Ecological Preserve (Bolsa Chica) on the inland side of Pacific Coast Hwy at the only signal between Goldenwest and Warner.

*Please bring a lunch if you intend to stay for the day. Also bring binoculars, bird book and a scope if you have one. It can get cold along the coast in winter so dress in layers.*

**EVERY OTHER YEAR-----2006-2007****LAKE CROWLEY / OWENS VALLEY (for Grouse)**

Saturday and Sunday, April 16-17

Leader: Gene Cardiff, (909) 875-5358 - e.cardiff@worldnet.att.net

Participants should meet on Saturday at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast at PJ's in the center of Lone Pine (approximately four hours from San Bernardino). From there we will caravan to Big Pine Creek to look for American dipper, Clark's nutcracker, northern goshawk, and blue grouse (of course). Along the way, we hope to see nesting osprey, tule elk, and black-billed magpie.

On Sunday, we plan to regroup at 5:30 a.m. at the corner of Whitmore Hot Springs Road and Highway 395, just south of the Convict Lake turnoff and about 30 miles north of Bishop. Look for the little church at this corner as a landmark.

From this point, we will caravan to the sage grouse strutting grounds, in order to arrive before break of day. The grouse are active just a short time after dawn.

After viewing the sage grouse, our next stop will be Mammoth Village for warm-up and breakfast. The remainder of the day will be spent birding different areas on the way home, looking for sage thrasher, bald eagle, whistling swan, gray-crowned rosy finch, or a common loon in breeding plumage.

The sage grouse do their strutting and dancing in cleared areas of the sagebrush (called leks) at this time, regardless of weather. There is a possibility of snow, so it might be wise to consider making a reservation (well in advance) at a nearby motel in Bishop. Do plan to join us. □

**VERY BEGINNING BIRD WALKS... EVERYONE IS ALWAYS WELCOME****VBBW****SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA**

Sunday - 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M.

Leaders: Doug Karalun (Jan 7)

Jennifer and Michelle Tobin (Feb. 4)

We will meet at the main parking lot at the wildlife headquarters. From Riverside go south on 215 then east on Ramona Expressway. Turn north (left) on Davis Road which soon becomes dirt. The entrance to the wildlife area is approximately 3 miles down Davis Road on the right. Turn here and the parking area will be on your left. You can no longer enter the wildlife area from the north.

Please contact: Cathy Tobin (951) 684-9613 or Doug Karalun (909) 425-5355 or dkaralun@adelphia.net for further information. Rain or other conditions may cause last minute changes. You may call ahead to confirm location and time.

**VBBW HIDDEN VALLEY WILDLIFE AREA**

Sunday, March 4, 2006 - 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M.

Leaders: Jennifer and Michelle Tobin

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!

Binoculars and bird guides will be provided for use during the walk. However, please bring your own if you have them. Wear comfortable walking shoes, hats and sunscreen and bring water.

The walk is free and no reservations are needed. Everyone is welcome and student lists will be signed.

We will meet at the wildlife area's nature center. To get to Hidden Valley from the 91 freeway, take the Arlington Ave. exit and go west just over seven miles to the entrance, which is a signed.



Class Notes: Arctic Bird Spotted Inland

Photo by H. R. Spindelov Jr.

## A Field Study of Birds: Winter Course: BIO X405.1 (2 units)

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 not permitted. Vertebrate course for Certificate in Field Ecology Elective for Specialized Study Program in Field Ornithology.

**Instructor:** Eugene Cardiff, BA, Retired curator of Natural History, San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands

**Date/Time:** Tue. 7:30-9:30 pm, Jan. 9. Field trips all day Sat. Jan. 13, 20, Feb. 3, 17, Mar. 3. (6 meeting/s)

**Reg #:** 063-SCF-F23

**Fee:** \$219 ( / \$199 each for couples and family members / \$180 each with PINE discount )

**Location:** San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands

*(California Birds...Continued from page 1)*  
entation again?

In 1989 the Exxon Valdez oil spill motivated Larry to migrate from the commercial video world to pursue what has become his life's passion—bird and nature filmmaking. Shortly thereafter, he was shooting footage and producing finished pieces for Earth Day celebrations, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and wildlife rehabilitation centers.

Today Larry lives and works throughout California, Arizona and Oregon, where he shoots high-definition footage of bird behavior for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library, his primary "gig". He believes strongly in the mission of bird/nature festivals and produces films for their "parent" organization, Watchable Wildlife, as well as organizations and individuals involved in avian/environmental study, research and education. Recently, Larry's work appeared in the "Audubon's Aviary" exhibit at the New York Historical Society and will soon be part of the new "Bird Gallery" at the Canadian Museum of Nature.

Please come enjoy the evening with us. We meet at the San Bernardino County Museum. Come early to browse our book tables, visit with friends and enjoy refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

The Press-Enterprise -(November 24, 2006)  
Arctic bird spotted Inland  
SALTON SEA: About 100 enthusiasts converge at the site. Experts call the sighting a rare event.

By: By JENNIFER BOWLES

It was a happy coincidence that Gene Cardiff was taking a UC Riverside extension class to the Salton Sea last weekend.

A call from a scientist friend the night before gave the Rialto birder a tip not to be taken lightly: A Ross's gull -- a small, dovelike bird rarely seen outside of the Arctic -- was observed on the south shore of the desert lake.

The news was akin to someone seeing Elvis at a fast-food restaurant, or Halley's comet zooming across the night sky, which happens once every 76 years.

"Oh no, it's better than that," Cardiff said. "Halley's comet is much more predictable."

After all, Cardiff had gone to Alaska seven times to see if he could spot the bird, and only once, in 1972, did it happen. So like a child on Christmas Eve, Cardiff was full of excitement about the possibility of seeing the gull in his own backyard.

"I didn't sleep well that night," said Cardiff, 77, a retired curator of biological sciences at the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands.

At 8 a.m., he got to the lake, which straddles Riverside and Imperial counties. He had to wait for 10 of his students to arrive and then headed to the last known sighting of the gull.

An hour had passed and he didn't know if the gull would still be there.

When the group got to Red Hill Marina on the Imperial County side of the lake, it was crowded with 100 bird enthusiasts peering through their spotting scopes.

Cardiff's class shared their four scopes and watched the foot-long bird for an hour as it walked and swam.

"We got to see the rosy breast on it ... you could see every detail," he said.

Theories abound as to how the gull, known to breed in Siberia and Greenland and to nest in high Arctic marshy tundra, arrived at the desert lake -- a magnet for migratory birds. Cardiff blamed it on global warming that's melting the Arctic's ice too fast.

"A lot of birds depend on that contact between ice floes and water, a lot of the plankton grows in that contact zone," he said, explaining that besides insects the gulls feed on the plankton.

The news is the talk of Cardiff's group, the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society. Drew Feldmann, the club's president, said that millions of birds pass through the Inland region on migratory routes, and only a few really ever get lost, making the Ross's gull an extremely rare sighting.

For many birders, Feldmann said, the sighting will be considered a "life bird," meaning it's a once in a lifetime in the world. From what Cardiff heard, the gull stayed another night and then flew eastward.

"I just feel sorry for the students who couldn't make it that day," Cardiff said, saying three stayed behind because of illness or other reasons.

## Birding in Belize and Tikal Tour Features Jungles, Ruins, and Reefs

San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society offers a birding tour of Belize and Tikal February 3-13, 2007. Participants may see Tinamous, Hawk-eagles, Forest-falcons, four varieties of Trogons, and three kinds of Toucans. Nearly 550 species of birds are found in Belize with 350 recorded at Tikal alone.

The trip originates in Belize City. Bird in the tropical rain-forest amid howler and spider monkeys; explore the ancient Mayan ruins of Lamanai and Tikal in Guatemala; and snorkel near the world's second largest barrier reef. This is a tour for birders of all levels and is suitable for folks who enjoy a moderate level of activity.

The trip price is \$3299 per person and includes a \$150 tax-deductible donation to San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society, all accommodations, meals, guides, emergency medical trip insurance, and transportation from Belize City.

*Lodging is at comfortable inns and jungle lodges.*

*Maximum group size is 12.*

*For more information contact Rochelle Gerratt at (520) 696-2002, or go to [www.naturetreks.net](http://www.naturetreks.net).*

### CALENDAR OF FIELD TRIPS FOR 2006-2007

[www.sbvas.org](http://www.sbvas.org) for updates

VBBW—Very Beginning Bird Walks

SJWA — San Jacinto Wildlife Area

Jan 7/Sun/ VBBW at SJWA - Doug Karalun

Jan 13/Sat/ Salton Sea Goose & Crane Trip -  
Chet McGaugh & John Green

Feb 4/Sun - VBBW at SJWA - J & M Tobin

Feb 10 & 11/ Weekend in Santa Barbara -  
Steve Myers and John Green

Feb 25/Sun/ Pancake Breakfast at SJWA - Tom Paulek

Mar 4/Sun/ VBBW at Hidden Valley - J & M Tobin

Mar 10/Sat/ Bolsa Chica Dori Myers & Tom Benson

Apr 1/Sun VBBW -Robidoux Nature Center - J & M Tobin

Apr 14 & 15 / Weekend trip /

Grouse Trip to the Owens Valley – Gene Cardiff

Apr 22/Sun/ Mojave Narrows - Steve Myers

May 5/Sat/ Big Morongo - Chet McGaugh

May 6/Sun/VBBW - Fairmount Park - Doug Karalun

May 6/Sun/ Box Springs Mountain - John Green

May 12/Sat/ Pancake Breakfast at

Cal State San Bernardino - Tony Metcalf

May 19/Sat – Baby Birds at Bear Paw – Cin Grayraven

Jun 9/Sat/ Wrightwood Field Trip – Gene Cardiff

Jun 16/Sat/ Owling in San Bernardino (evening - night)

Dave Goodward

Jul 21 & 22 / Weekend trip /

South fork of the Greenhorns – Steve Myers

Aug 26/Sun/ Insane Jaunt to the Salton Sea – John Green

## SBVAS Officers 2006/2007

[www.sbvas.org](http://www.sbvas.org) &  
[www.inlandplanet.org](http://www.inlandplanet.org)

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### RARE BIRD ALERT:

**Kirk and Linda Stitt**

at [secalrba@earthlink.net](mailto:secalrba@earthlink.net) or call (909) 793-5599 option 3

to leave a report on the RBA phone machine. ✍

**B**earpaw 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 92339

### Faster More Colorful Western Meadowlark

Help us reduce the use of our natural resources by signing up to receive the Western Meadowlark newsletter by email.



To sign up, send an email to [crisrendon@earthlink.net](mailto:crisrendon@earthlink.net)

Include you name as it appears on your newsletter label.

San Bernardino County Museum  
2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands  
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...

All meetings in  
the San Bernardino County Mu-  
seum  
2024 Orange Tree Lane, Red-  
lands  
**Board Meetings are the 1st**



### SBVAS Calendar

\*\*\*\*\* January 10 ..... 7:00 Board Meeting

January 17 ... ..... 7:30 General Meeting

February 7 ... ..... 7:00 .Board Meeting

February 21 . ..... 7:00 General Meeting

*If you have questions please call or go on line to check  
current detail. [www.sbvass.org](http://www.sbvass.org) Thanks*

\*\*\*\*\* NOTE: date change to the 2nd Wednesday

Our Programs begin at 7:30 PM but  
the doors open at 7:00 PM so plan to  
come early to the

San Bernardino County Museum to  
visit with friends, shop at our book ta-  
bles and enjoy refreshments.  
Everyone is always welcome.

*Program Chair Dori Myers*



#### 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

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

- SBVAS Membership &  
WESTERN MEADOWLARK only \$16
- Subscription to WESTERN MEADOWLARK only \$16
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