



San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society

# WESTERN MEADOWLARK

Volume 66— Number 4  
March/April 2016

## SBVAS GENERAL MEETING March 16, 2016

### Show and Tell

We have talented and remarkable photographers in San Bernardino Valley Audubon and this month we will have a chance to see and experience some of their very best photographs. Most of their pics will be of birds and all of them will either celebrate natural beauty or interesting moments that they have captured in time.

Some of you might remember that we had problems showing pictures at our December meeting. We will show those missed photos along with any you might want to bring to share with us. So please bring 15 or so of your best shots to show and share. We look forward to seeing you at our meeting.

Our doors open at 7 PM and the meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Refreshments are served. Come early to visit with friends. Everyone is always welcome.

Dori Myers  
Program Chair

## SBVAS GENERAL MEETING April 20, 2016

### The Okavango Delta and Namibia: Birds, Mammals, and Natural History of African Wildlife Presented by Sherry Schmidt

Sherry Schmidt will give a PowerPoint presentation that includes photographs taken on her trip (March 2016) to the southern part of Africa. Sherry will be exploring several locations in the Okavango Delta in Botswana and desert regions in Namibia. Sherry will share images from these two countries which will hopefully include commonly seen animals and birds such as leopards, lions, elephants,

fish eagles, cranes, bee-eaters, rollers, and kingfishers.

Sherry is a professor in the biology department at Mount San Antonio College. She currently teaches general biology, marine biology, and conservation biology. She received her B.A. at University of Montana and her M.A. at C.S.U. Fullerton. The research she did for her master's degree was conducted in the Cottonwood Basin of the southern Sierra Nevada. She looked at water relations and micro-habitat distribution of two species of shooting star, (*Dodectheon*).

Sherry's primary interests today are natural history of desert and mountain ecosystems and conservation biology. She also loves photography and travel. Her most recent trips have been to Malaysia, the Pantanal in Brazil, Patagonia, and India.



Photo Credit: Sherry Schmidt

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Dori Myers  
Program Chair

**Local Sightings: Winter 2015-16  
by Tom Benson**

This issue of local sightings covers the end of fall migration and the beginning of winter from December through early February. RED CROSSBILLS continued to be seen at scattered locations throughout the coastal slope of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Most of the ones recorded were determined to be Type 3 (Western Hemlock) Red Crossbills; these are the smallest of the crossbills in North America with their core range extending from coastal Oregon to Alaska.

The highlight of the season in San Bernardino County was a RED-NECKED GREBE on Lake Havasu (Dec 30). Rumor has it one of the observers used his alien-derived telepathic powers to coax the bird into California waters from Arizona. The truth is out there, but we may never know it. Also of note from the Colorado River region were up to 14 TUNDRA SWANS (Dec 9-21) and a BROWN PELICAN (Dec 5) on Lake Havasu, the continuing CURVE-BILLED THRASHERS at Black Meadow Landing, and a pair each of SHORT-EARED OWLS (Dec 19



Red-necked Grebe Photo Credit: Johnny Bovee



Sprague's Pipit Photo Credit: Matt Grube

-Jan 17) and LARK BUNTINGS (Jan 24-25), and up to 10 MOUNTAIN PLOVERS (Dec 20-30) at Fort Mohave in addition to the continuing SPRAGUE'S PIPITS, MCCOWN'S LONGSPURS, and LAPLAND LONGSPUR there. Another LARK BUNTING was at the Helendale sewage ponds Dec 12-Jan 28. An adult LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL at nearby Silver Lakes (Dec 31) provides only the third county record. Up to 20 MOUNTAIN PLOVERS were seen at scattered locations around Newberry Springs Dec 12-Jan 17, while a TUNDRA SWAN was seen there on Dec 18. Yet another TUNDRA SWAN was in Victorville on Dec 27, as was a PYGMY NUTHATCH. Three SANDHILL CRANES in Chino (Dec 31-Jan 10) may have included one seen there in the fall. And the wintering TROPICAL KINGBIRD continued at Prado Regional Park through the period.

In Riverside County, a fish farm in Oasis at the north end of the Salton Sea was particularly productive. Notable birds here included a wintering BRONZED COWBIRD continuing from fall, an immature male ORCHARD ORIOLE (Jan 20-23), and a BELL'S VIREO (Jan 20-Jan 23; probably *V. b. arizonae*). A NORTHERN PARULA (Jan 2) and up to three SANDHILL CRANES (Jan 2-8) were good finds on the Salton Sea North CBC, as was a LONG-TAILED DUCK at the Salton Sea SRA on Christmas day. A GLAUCOUS GULL was at North Shore (Feb 3). In the San Jacinto Valley, at least five MCCOWN'S

LONGSPURS (Dec 6-Jan 30) were found in Nuevo for the second year in a row. A juvenile TUNDRA SWAN initially seen at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) later settled in at SkiLand (Dec 15-Jan 19). The LEAST FLYCATCHER continued at SJWA through Dec 28. A FRANKLIN'S GULL was an exceptional find in winter at Lake Perris during the CBC on Dec 22, and a RED-THROATED LOON was there Jan 18. Finally, a CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was wintering in a backyard in Moreno Valley (Jan 10-30).

The clear highlight in Imperial County was the one-minute wonder PHILADELPHIA VIREO on the Salton Sea South CBC (Dec 15). It could not be refound despite much searching. A TUNDRA SWAN was also found on the CBC at the IID Wetlands (Dec 15). A PLUMBEOUS VIREO was in Brawley on Dec 21. Two RED-THROATED LOONS were on Fig Lagoon Dec 4, with one there Jan 21, and another at Brock Reservoir Dec 21. Along the Colorado River, a CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (Dec 21-Jan 23) and a PURPLE FINCH (Dec 21) were in Bard, and a SURF SCOTER and a BARROW'S GOLDENEYE were at Senator Wash Reservoir (Dec 21-Jan 23).



Clay-colored Sparrow Photo Credit: Anthony Metcalf

**Bird of the Month:**

By Steve Myers

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON**

For beginning birders there is often identification confusion brought about by differences between juvenal and adult plumages of some species. A classic example is the White-crowned Sparrow, where novice birders can see wintering flocks containing birds with the striking black-and-white striped crowns of adults, accompanied by young birds with duller, brown and tan stripes on the crowns. Similarly, Black-crowned Night-Herons have juvenal plumages that may lead novices to think they are looking at two different species (see photos).

The Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) occurs on every continent except Antarctica and Australia. It breeds across the entire United States, in all but the driest habitats. Some populations migrate, or at least disperse short distances, but birds nesting in California are mostly sedentary. In those populations in the U.S. that migrate, many simply move farther south in the U.S., while others winter as far south as Mexico and Central America.

In southern California, Black-crowned Night-Herons are known (or suspected) to nest at localities such as the Salton Sea, many sites along the coast, Lake Mathews, Lake Norconian, San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Mojave Narrows, and the Prado Basin. The species nests in colonies that can number as high as 500 pairs, but in southern California it is not unusual to find nesting sites that have only a few pairs. Nests are most often in trees, but can be in large shrubs or marsh vegetation. The majority of nests are at heights of 20 to 40 feet, but some can be only a few feet from the ground. Like most herons, the nests are platforms of sticks.

Clutch sizes vary from 1 to 6 eggs per nest, with most studies showing averages of 3 to 4. Eggs have a smooth, matte finish, and are greenish-blue. Both sexes incubate the eggs, which hatch in about 23 days. Following hatching, the young leave the nest after about 30 days, but cannot fly. Rather, they move through vegetation on foot. At about six weeks of age they are able to fly, and then begin to accompany adults to feeding areas.

Most food is aquatic, such as fish, crayfish, clams, mussels, squid, and aquatic insects, but they also take terrestrial prey such as snakes, lizards, small mammals, and birds. As their name implies, they feed from early evening hours to morning.

Even during winter the Black-crowned Night-Heron exhibits colonial habits. It is common during Christmas Bird Counts in our area to find day-roosting birds in groups. In the area that I count for the Salton Sea North CBC there is an area surrounding ponds at a hunting club that routinely contains from 50 to 100 roosting Black-crowned Night-Herons.



Photo Credit: Steve Myers



Photo Credit: Steve Myers

**A Field Study of Birds: Spring  
Course Number: BIOL X406  
2 units**

Through field trips to Mystic Lake, Imperial Beach, Salton Sea, Imperial Valley, Morongo Valley, High Desert, and San Jacinto Mountains, you will learn how to identify birds during the spring migration and in their breeding territories. Emphasis is on identification of birds in their breeding plumages.

Instructor:	<u>Eugene Cardiff</u>
Schedule:	Tue 7:30 pm-9:30 pm Apr 19, 20161 Session Sat 8:00 am-5:00 pm Apr 23 - Jun 4, 20167 Sessions (Field trips all day Sat., Apr. 23, 30, May 7, 21 & Jun. 4)
Textbook:	"Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 6th Edition" Jon L. Dunn, Jonathan Alderfer
Credit:	2 units
Fees:	\$255 Tuition
	\$255.00 Total Fees

**Olympic BirdFest 2016  
Come Bird With Us  
Sequim, Washington, April 15-17, 2016**

Grab your binoculars and join the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Olympic BirdFest 2016 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 15-17, 2016.

The stage is set...quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca; wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The players are ready ... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons, Barred and Pygmy owls will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours; and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker this year is noted artist Tony Angell, "Revealing the Secret Lives of Owls".

Come bird with us and experience with others the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula ...you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings by going online ([www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org)).

Precede your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding cruise of the spectacular San Juan Islands on April 12-14, 2016. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands, and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort. Get cruise information and register online at: [www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon](http://www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon).

Extend your Birdfest weekend with the Neah Bay post-trip, April 17-19, 2016: two days exploring north-west coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders.

Contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076, E-mail us at [info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org), Dungeness River Audubon Center P.O. Box 2450 Sequim, WA 98382

**APRIL BIRDING NEWS**

**Gulls Lumped**

The American Ornithologist's Union Checklist Committee has voted to lump the gulls into two species, as detailed in the April 1 issue of *The Auk*. Members of the family Laridae, formerly divided into 11 genera representing 57 species, will now be placed into a single genus *Larus*, containing two species: *Larus major*, the Large Gull, and *Larus minor*, the Small Gull. *Larus major* will include all the 4-year gulls and some others such as the taxon formerly known as Yellow-footed Gull (*Larus livens*), and *Larus minor* will include the rest.

The decision came in the wake of new DNA evidence indicating that nobody could ever tell gulls apart anyway.

"You wouldn't believe how many times people send me photos of strange-looking gulls and ask me what they are", said Kimball Garrett, Ornithology Collections Manager at the Natural History Museum



Large Gull (*Larus major hyperboreus*)

of Los Angeles. "I just don't know. I receive photos of gulls with yellow legs that should be pink, with large bills that should be small, with dark eyes that should be pale. They're all the same; they're all just gulls and you can't tell them apart. And don't even get me started on hybrids".

"This lump simplifies the identification of gulls to species", said well-known author and tour leader Jon Dunn, who starred in two three-hour long videos on gull identification that were presciently titled "The Small Gulls" and "The Large Gulls". Some individuals are still best left unidentified."



Large Gull (*Larus major livens*)

*Continued on p. 5*

Bearpaw Ranch



Small Gull (*Larus minor canus*)

Gull article, continued from p. 4

Dunn emphasizes that his videos are still useful for those attempting to identify gulls to subspecies, and notes that the videos will be reissued without any changes except the omission of the trailing "s" in their titles. "Gull ID is now easier", declared Dunn, "Small Gulls are generally smaller than Large Gulls. Except there are a few Small Gulls that are quite large gulls, and some Large Gulls are reasonably small gulls. A small Large Gull can even be smaller than a large Small Gull.

But the AOU vote was not applauded by all experts. "Yes, the lump was decades overdue", said author and birding guide Steve Howell, "but what an unfortunate choice of English names! Some gulls are intermediate in size, so should they be 'Large' or 'Small'? And there's the uppercase-lowercase problem too. Jeez, first they come up with 'Pacific Wren', which is neither peaceful nor found in the ocean, and now this! I was pushing for 'Dusky-backed Gull' and 'Sooty-backed Gull', but nobody listened. Again."



Small Gull (*Larus minor sabini*)

However, the reaction by most birders has been positive. "I'm really pleased with the decision", declared birder Anita Bettascope, who we encountered at Malibu Lagoon. "It used to take me 3 hours to bird this place, now it takes only 45 minutes!", said Bettascope as she quickly scanned past both species of Gull and settled on some shorebirds. "Hey, do you think the bill on that Dowitcher looks long or short?"

This article originally appeared in Pasadena Audubon Society newsletter The Wrenit in April 2012. It was written by Ma Scheel and is reprinted here with permission.

Gull photo credit: Tom Benson.

Bearpaw Ranch is a 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 several car lengths on Valley of the Falls Dr. and look for our small wooden sign on the right. Our driveway is on the right, marked 38801. The driveway is paved and unpaved road that meanders across Mill Creek wash and up the bluff to an electronically operated entry gate. *Members* who wish to visit the Sanctuary should call any board member in advance to get the gate code. It is not a requirement that the caretaker is at home for you to visit. If the gate does not open because of mechanical failure, you are welcome to walk in or stop for birding along the creek bed.

Bearpaw Sanctuary, 38801 Valley of the Falls Drive P.O. Box 88; Forest Falls, CA 923396  
 Bearpaw Sanctuary is on Facebook; message us with questions and comments. If you type "Bearpaw Sanctuary" into the SEARCH function, you'll find us. Bearpaw visitors are encouraged to report interesting wildlife sightings and share their favorite nature photos from their Bearpaw visits.

SBVAS Officers 2015/2016

[www.sbvass.org](http://www.sbvass.org)

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 First Vice-President, Program Chair: Dori Myers (714) 779-2201  
 Second Vice President: Dave Goodward (909) 783-2417  
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Conservation Chair: Drew Feldmann (951) 212-2467  
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 SBVAS BOOKSTORE AND GIFT SHOP: Nancy Manning (909) 337-9401

CALENDAR

**Board Meetings:** First Tuesday of the Month, March 1, 2016 and April 5, 2016, 7 pm

**General Meetings:** Third Wednesday of the Month, March 16, 2016 and April 20, 2016

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. General meetings, except potlucks, start at 7:30 and doors open at 7. Potlucks begin at 6:30.

**UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS - March/April 2016**

**Saturday, March 5, 2016 - 8:00 am**  
**Bolsa Chica & Orange County Coast**

**Dori Myers (714) 779-2201 (h) or (714) 336-1420**

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. We will meet at the PCH parking lot of Bolsa Chica at 8:00 am (map). 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 signal between Seagate 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.

**Sunday, March 6, 2016 - 8:00-10:00 am**  
**Beginning Bird Walk at San Jacinto Wildlife Area**  
**Matt Grube (909) 253-3867**

Visiting the wildlife area 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. We will meet at the main parking lot at the wildlife headquarters. From Riverside go south on I-215 then east on Ramona Expressway. Turn north (left) on Davis Road which soon becomes dirt. The entrance to the wildlife area is approximately three 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. Rain or other conditions may cause last minute changes. You may call ahead to confirm location and time.

**Sunday, April 3, 2016 - 8:00-10:00 am**  
**Beginning Bird Walk at Glen Helen**  
**Dave Goodward 909-783-2417**

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 species. The walk is free, but there is an entry fee for the park; see below. No reservations are needed. Everyone is welcome. We will meet at the Ash Cove parking lot at the north end of the park. If you do not have a San Bernardino County Regional Parks pass, you will have to pay the \$10 daily entry fee for the park. Please contact Dave Goodward for further

information. Rain or other conditions may cause last minute changes.

**Saturday-Sunday, April 9-10, 2016**  
**East Mojave**  
**John Green (951) 686-2956**

We will be visiting the Mojave National Preserve in early spring with the goal of seeing the sought-after specialty breeding birds of the area. These include Gilded Flicker, Juniper Titmouse, and Bendire's, Crissal, and Le Conte's Thrashers. Sage Thrashers may still be moving through, offering the possibility of a four thrasher trip. Other expected desert breeders should also be present: Black-throated Sparrow, Cactus Wren, Greater Roadrunner, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Scott's Oriole, and more. The wintering season will be ending and migration will be getting started, so we will expect some species that are non-breeding visitors to the area as well. Wildflowers will be blooming, and we should see mammals, reptiles, butterflies and more. Hopefully a Desert Tortoise will grace us with its presence. We will meet at 6:00 am on Saturday at the Denney's, 72415 Baker Blvd in Baker. Arrive in Baker early enough to top off your gas tank before the meeting. You MUST have a full tank of gas when we depart on the trip. Make sure your car, spare tire and jack are in good shape before you leave for the desert. All roads that we will go on are passable for passenger cars, but many are unpaved. We will be far from services. Bring FRS radios if you have them, cell phone service is sporadic. Bring more water than you can imagine needing and ALL of the food and supplies that you will need for the trip, including camping gear. Once we leave Baker we will probably not see gas or stores again until the end of the day on Sunday. If you want to spend Friday night somewhere close, lodging of sorts is available in Baker, but read the online reviews and you might choose Barstow instead. We will camp Saturday night and bird Sunday for as long as the leader and/or participants have interest in continuing. We may go on a couple of hikes, so bring appropriate walking shoes. Questions? Please send them by email ([bewickwren@earthlink.net](mailto:bewickwren@earthlink.net)), not by phone, if possible. Also, it is not required, but if you're thinking of coming, please email me so I have an idea of who and how many to expect. You are welcome, though, whether or not you have emailed me in advance. See you in Baker!

**Saturday-Sunday, April 16-17, 2016**  
**Eastside Sierra Grouse Trip**  
**Brad Singer (909) 838-7951**  
 Details forthcoming.

**Saturday, April 23, 2016 - 7:00 am**  
**Shorebird Migration at the Salton Sea**  
**Chet McGaugh (951) 781-3699 and Tony Metcalf (951) 242-7038**

Tony Metcalf and Chet McGaugh will be leading back-to-back San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society field trips on the weekend of April 19-20, 2014 - to the north end of the Salton Sea (Saturday) and the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (Sunday). As we both are big fans of the shorebirds, and the date is excellent for a good migration experience, we intend to spend most of the weekend searching mudflats, marshes, slop ponds, wet fields, barnacle beaches, and open sea and sky. It is our hope that we can provide some knowledge about this fascinating bunch of birds, stimulate appreciation and interest in them, and mitigate some of the phobias. And have fun. As usual, the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society field trips are open to all.

## Western Meadowlark

We will meet at 7:00 am on Saturday at the "Big Arco" on the corner of 66th Avenue and the 86S Expressway in Mecca. Pick this trip, the one scheduled for the next day at San Jacinto Wildlife Area (see below) or both. There will be different species seen at the Salton Sea and at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The study of shorebirds is greatly enhanced by the use of spotting scopes so we hope there will be plenty besides our own. Though not necessary, we suggest having rubber boots for those hard to get to spots, particularly at the Salton Sea (short wades, slogging through deep mud, barnacles). Bring lunch and snacks and drinks. Weather is likely to be excellent, and there will be many birds to see besides the waders.

**Sunday, April 24, 2016**

**Shorebird Migration at San Jacinto Wildlife Area  
Tony Metcalf (951) 242-7038 and Chet McGaugh (951) 781-3699**

Tony Metcalf and Chet McGaugh will be leading back-to-back San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society field trips on the weekend of April 19-20, 2013 - to the north end of the Salton Sea (Saturday) and the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (Sunday). As we both are big fans of the shorebirds, and the date is excellent for a good migration experience, we intend to spend most of the weekend searching mudflats, marshes, sloop ponds, wet fields, barnacle beaches, and open sea and sky. It is our hope that we can provide some knowledge about this fascinating bunch of birds, stimulate appreciation and interest in them, and mitigate some of the phobias. And have fun. On Sunday will meet at 7:00 am at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area headquarters on Davis Road, a few miles north of Lakeview and the Ramona Expressway. Pick one trip or the other or both. There will be different species seen at the Salton Sea and at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The study of shorebirds is greatly enhanced by the use of spotting scopes so we hope there will be plenty besides our own. Though not necessary, we suggest having rubber boots for those hard to get to spots, particularly at the Salton Sea (short wades, slogging through deep mud, barnacles). Bring lunch and snacks and drinks. Weather is likely to be excellent, and there will be many birds to see besides the waders.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

March 2016 - August 2016

**Saturday, March 5, 2016 - 8:00 am  
Bolsa Chica & Orange County Coast**

**Sunday, March 6, 2016 - 8:00-10:00 am  
Beginning Bird Walk at San Jacinto Wildlife Area**

**Sunday, April 3, 2016 - 8:00-10:00 am.  
Beginning Bird Walk at Glen Helen Regional Park**

**Saturday-Sunday, April 9-10, 2016  
East Mojave**

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March/April 2016

**Saturday - Sunday, April 16-17, 2016  
Eastern Sierra Greater Sage Grouse Trip**

**Saturday, April 23, 2016 - 7:00 am  
Shorebird Migration at the Salton Sea**

**Sunday, April 24, 2016 - 7:00 am  
Shorebird Migration San Jacinto Wildlife Area**

**Saturday, April 30, 2016 - 7:00 am  
Big Morongo Preserve**

**Sunday, May 1, 2016 - 8:00 am  
Box Springs Mountain**

**Saturday, May 7, 2016 - 8:00 am  
Whitewater Canyon**

**Saturday, May 14, 2016 - 9:00 am  
Baby Birds at Bearpaw Ranch**

**Sunday, May 22, 2016  
Palm Springs Aerial Tramway/San Jacinto Mountains**

**Saturday, June 4, 2016  
San Bernardino Mountains**

**Saturday, June 11, 2016 - 7:30 am  
Wrightwood & Blue Ridge**

**Saturday-Sunday, July 9—10, 2016  
Greenhorn Mountains & the Southern Sierra**

**Saturday, August 2016—TBA  
Insane Jaunt to the Salton Sea**



Purple Finch and Fox Sparrow  
Photo Credit: Pam Quittmeyer

## March 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 SBVAS board meeting	2	3	4	5 Bolsa Chica/Orange County Field Trip
6 Beginning Bird Walk San Timoteo Canyon	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 SBVAS General Meeting	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## April 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Beginning Bird Walk Glen Helen Regional	4	5 SBVAS Board Meeting	6	7	8	9 Eastern Mojave Two Day Trip
10 Eastern Mojave Two Day Trip	11	12	13	14	15	16 Eastern Sierra Two Day Sage Grouse Trip
17 Eastern Sierra Two Day Sage Grouse Trip	18	19	20 SBVAS General Meeting	21	22	23 Shorebird Migration Salton Sea Trip
24 Shorebird Migration San Jacinto WA Trip	25	26	27	28	29	30 Big Morongo Field Trip

Dates are subject to changes for weather and unforeseen circumstances. Please check our website - [SBVAS.net](http://SBVAS.net) for updates.

## IMPORTANT CONSERVATION NEWS

### **Creation of desert national monuments safeguards vital bird habitats**

**Presidential action creates three new national monuments, protecting 1.8 million acres -- but really, you had us at Elf Owl.**

San Francisco, Calif. – Millions of California birds will be among the beneficiaries of three new national monuments created by executive order today. At the request of California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Pres. Barack Obama carved out three areas totaling approximate 1.8



Greater Roadrunner Photo Credit: Matt Grube

million acres for monument status, linking the San Bernardino National Forest to Joshua Tree National Park, and wrapping around the Mojave National Preserve to the Nevada border.

“Some areas are too important to develop, and these areas of the California desert – home to more than 250 species of birds – are among them,” said president and CEO of the National Audubon Society David Yarnold. “Since Congress won’t act to protect this natural treasure, it’s up to President Obama to keep safe the places these birds call home.”

Six years ago, Feinstein introduced the California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act, which would designate these three areas as national monuments. But recently, as her legislation became mired in Congress, she reportedly asked Obama to use his power under the Antiquities Act to designate the three desert monuments, bypassing Congress.

“California’s deserts are natural treasure right alongside our beaches and mountains, full of remarkable vistas, birds and other wildlife,” said Audubon California Executive Director Brigid McCormack. “These desert habitats are worth fighting for – and I want to thank Sen. Feinstein for her tireless advocacy on behalf of California deserts, and the President for recognizing that they need to be protected.”

Habitats within these new monuments range from coniferous to riverine forest to desert scrub and host a multitude of migratory and breeding birds. Many unique and rare bird species have adapted to survive in this desert ecosystem, and can be found nowhere else. Riverine



Juniper Titmouse Photo Credit: Matt Grube

habitats provide nesting grounds for the rare Least Bell’s Vireo and other songbirds and provide a vital migration corridor for songbirds to feed and rest during migration through this arid landscape from Mexico to points north. Desert specialty species, such as the Elf Owl, are found breeding in unique desert woodlands of the valley floors



Desert Tortoise Photo Credit: Matt Grube

in the Mojave Desert and Golden Eagles and Prairie Falcons breed in the canyons and cliffs within the mountainous landscapes. Swainson’s Hawks, migrating from South America, use this region as a critical corridor during their annual spring migration. Birders are attracted from around the world to many hotspots within these monuments to observe rare desert dwelling birds and witness spectacular spring migrations.

The three new monuments will be the Sand to Snow National Monument, the Mojave Trails National Monument, and the Castle Mountain National Monument.

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