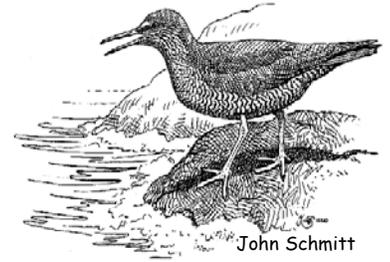


Wandering Tattler

June, July, Aug. 2009
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The Voice of SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON, an Orange County Chapter of the National Audubon Society

The Year That Was

by Jay Miller, President

This has been a busy, productive, and transformational year for Sea and Sage Audubon and I thought it would be fitting to give a brief overview.

Our Outdoor Adventure program enrolled 71 classes (2, 326) students. Our Director of Education, Trude Hurd, continues to contact new teachers to get more classes to participate in the Outdoor Adventures Program. We have six new naturalists in training and five more are finishing training from last year. In our Art meets Science program in which 4th graders visit the Irvine Museum and the Marsh, we enrolled 13 classes (358 students). Our successful Summer Camps are operating at near capacity, with many children returning year after year. In addition, the Junior Naturalist program had 16 teenagers participating in monthly educational field trips this year.

Regarding adult education, Sylvia Gallagher offered a Beginning Birding Skills class this year and, for the first time, an intermediate Bird Sounds class. Sylvia continues to educate both veteran and new birders.

Our Conservation Director, Scott Thomas, had a great year. Sea and Sage joined a coalition of environmentalists to prevent what we considered to be an unnecessary and environmentally damaging Toll Road. Scott launched a monthly 4th Tuesday Conservation Lecture Series that has been well attended and often attracts people who do not attend our monthly chapter meetings. It is great getting new folks involved with Sea and Sage. Around 40 chapter members and friends are involved in the pilot Cactus Wren Survey program at four different locations in Orange County. Scott is also actively involved in a Raptor Research project.

This has also been the year of the expansion of our physical facilities. Thanks to the IRWD and the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary Board and their staff, the Blue House was finished. With the help of a number of hard working Sea and Sage people, the house was furnished and made operational as an administration office for our education, camp and conservation programs. We now also have use of a new Education Center building for our education and our chapter meetings.

Audubon House has been remodeled and we are close to deciding how it will be set up.

When one adds to this numerous field trips, bird surveys, a very successful Summer BBQ and Fall Pancake Breakfast, a wonderful Annual Dinner, Bat Walks, Spring Brunches, Seasons of Nature tours, Birding Skills Workshops, a successful nature bookstore, and keeping Audubon House open daily, we have much to be proud of!

General Meeting

Friday evening, June 19th

"Bird Brains"

presented by the Junior Naturalists

Sea and Sage Audubon is the only Audubon Chapter in Southern California to have a naturalist program for teens. This is an outgrowth of the wonderful camps we run throughout the summer. The Junior Naturalist program started in the fall of 2001 as a response to enthusiastic students from Advanced Camp who wanted to continue their nature studies throughout the year. The program was started by Sally Menzel and Irene Perry, naturalists from the Education program, and continues today with the same format. Kate Grabenstein has been interim coordinator for the past three years. She loves to see these teens together and appreciates their passion for birds and nature. Kate teaches high school and feels our Junior Naturalists are in a league of their own.

Their presentation will give a brief history of the Junior Naturalist program, as well as an overview of a typical year in the program. The Junior Naturalists have monthly field trips and they participate in our Sea and Sage Christmas Bird Counts and Birdathon. Many of the teens work in various conservation projects such as monitoring Western Bluebird and Tree Swallow nestboxes, and became involved in opposing the Toll Road extension at San Onofre.

There are many able and committed birders in this group and it will be an enjoyable evening to hear from these energetic teens about their activities. We hope you will join us for this special program.

The doors open at 7:00 and the meeting starts at 7:30. We meet in the new Education Center building at 5 Riparian View in Irvine. For those who like to come early, Audubon House and its popular Bookstore will be open before the meeting (from 6:30 to 7:15 pm). See directions to our meeting location on page 11 in this issue.

—Marquita Miller, Programs Chair

Audubon House Gets a Face Lift and a New Lease on Life

by Susan Sheakley, Chair of Audubon House Transition Team

With the transfer of many Chapter and Marsh Education administrative functions from Audubon House to a new building at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, new possibilities and challenges are opening up at Audubon House. An Audubon House Transition Team was formed to discuss about the possibilities and to oversee their implementation. Our work is still in progress, but here is a report on the changes to date.

To remodel Audubon House, on April 29, we temporarily transferred the bookstore, the bird sighting board and Audubon House functions to the Audubon Offices (the Blue House). After much hard work, on May 22 we were able to open a light and airy Audubon House. Countless tasks had to be performed by a number of people in order to do this. The library books were cleaned and sorted, and along with about everything else in Audubon House, packed up and moved into a storage container placed onsite. The house was cleaned from floor to ceiling, the floors refinished, walls repainted, and new blinds installed. We made Audubon House more spacious by taking down the inside wall of Trude's old office. The bookstore will occupy this new space for now, in a temporary setup, then once we complete its design, in its more permanent configuration. The main room will be devoted to outreach, interpretive displays and the library. With the removal of the volunteer cubby and some cabinetry, the entry now permits easier flow of traffic, as well as some outreach and books for sale. The new volunteer command center is in the main room. Over the next few months we will plan and implement interpretive displays.

The new Audubon House will focus on chapter outreach and public activities. The focus will include the library, the bookstore, interpretive displays and public relations. We want to keep the homey, pleasant atmosphere but use the latest technology to provide information. We want to introduce people to Sea and Sage Audubon, the Marsh Education Programs, and to the excitement of discovering wildlife - at the Sanctuary, in Orange County, and beyond. We want people to visit Audubon House and above all, to get out on the trails and experience the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary firsthand.

The remodel of Audubon House was a team effort, requiring the help of many people. Special thanks to the Irvine Ranch Water District, San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, Trude Hurd, Scott Thomas, Debby Thyssen, Joan McCauley, Steve Jelnick, Dan Trinidad, Hal Sheakley, Cheryl Thomas, Judy Fritts, Al Baumann, Nancy Kenyon, Lois Jones, Betty Purdy, Jay Miller, Phil Brobst, Deborah Brin, Rebecca Craft, Gretchen Mavrovouniotis, Donelda Warhurst, the naturalists and volunteers who provided suggestions, and the Audubon House volunteers for working out of the temporary quarters in the Audubon Offices.

As said earlier, the new Audubon House is still a work in progress. We welcome your comments and suggestions for changes to it and for other activities you would like to see. Send your comments by email to me (susansheakley@cox.net) or Nancy Kenyon (nancykenyon@cox.net) or put them in the visitor log or suggestion box at Audubon House.

4th Tuesday Conservation Lecture Series - June 23

by Scott Thomas

4th Tues. Conservation Lecture

**"Chaparral, Wrentits, and Fire:
A different Way to see Orange County"**
presented by Richard W. Halsey

June will be our last Lecture for the 2008/09 season as we take a break for summer. But, before we go we have one very special guest and presentation lined up. You may have read about Richard Halsey, or heard about one of his very interesting presentations. His talks have become very popular and the topic couldn't be more fitting for us.

Of all the distinct, natural communities in California, only one is found throughout the state that can be said to represent the state's most characteristic wilderness: the chaparral. Join us as we explore the chaparral's unique natural history, discuss its highly territorial bird populations, reveal the truth concerning its relationship to fire, and why it represents such a vital link to nature for all Californians.

Richard W. Halsey is a chaparral ecologist, writer, and director of The California Chaparral Institute.

Our Conservation Lecture will be held in the new Education Center in the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, Irvine, the large gray building which is down the path from the Duck Club. (See full directions on page 11).

Stay up to date on Conservation Issues during the summer

Audubon Action Center (current advocacy campaigns from Audubon Action)
<http://audubonaction.org/audubon/home.html>

CA State Parks Foundation (updates on stopping the closure of over 200 state parks)
<http://www.calparks.org/>

Audubon California Action Alerts
Get the most recent news on potential policy changes that impact CA birds, wildlife, & habitat.
<http://audubonaction.org/California/join.html?r=Q7xWmoSq8hX0E&>

SUMMER BARBECUE

at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary

Sat., July 25th, 5:30 to 10:00 p.m.

Bring the family and join us for this special occasion: dining under the stars, evening walks around the marsh, and a great program on Orange County Raptors presented by Dr. Joe Platt.

Dr. Platt is an ecologist with over 30 years in environmental research and consulting. Raptors have been a passion since his youth. His Master's thesis at Brigham Young University was a telemetry study of nesting Sharp-Shinned Hawks in Utah and his doctoral research at Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology was a study of Gyrfalcon nesting behavior on the North Slope of the Yukon Territory. Raptor study took him to the Arabian Gulf where he worked for 20 years in Bahrain and Dubai as wildlife advisor to the Ruling Families.

Joe's Sea and Sage presentation will be an illustrated talk on Southern California Birds of Prey - who they are and what they do. Development in California has brought with it a loss of raptor habitats and a decline in species, but they can still be found. Some, like Cooper's Hawks and White-tailed Kites, now nest in our suburban spaces. Sharp-shinned Hawks, Merlins and Peregrine Falcons have become regular winter residents in our Orange County parklands and open spaces. Come and enjoy this wonderful program on raptors following the meal at our Summer Barbecue.

Advance reservations are essential so that we know how much food to buy (see form below). Those with e-mail or a stamped, self-addressed envelope will be sent their reservation confirmation and tickets; all others can pick them up when they check in at the barbecue on July 25th.

Though we will not be barbecuing the meat this year, everything else on our menu will be pretty much the same. Our menu will include chicken, salad, beans, chips, fresh fruit, dessert, lemonade, and coffee. A vegetarian entree will be offered for those who specifically request it on their reservation form.

Tickets for the barbecue and program are \$20.00 for adults, \$7.00 for children under 5; tickets for the BBQ workers are \$15.00. Your ticket will include your meal & beverage, evening marsh walk, and program. (Wine and soft drinks are included with the meal.) Activities begin at 5:30 pm, dinner will be from 6:00 to 7:00 pm, followed by the program (as soon as it is dark). The first marsh walk will take in the sights and sounds as the marsh life settles in for the evening. The post speaker marsh walk will focus on the sounds of the wildlife that frequent the Sanctuary at night. (We will also be having a used nature book sale.)

This event is staffed entirely by chapter volunteers. If you can help us out in any capacity, we would really appreciate it! A signup sheet for volunteers is at Audubon House and will be circulated at the General Meeting; it is also posted on our chapter webpage. For information on volunteering, contact Nancy Kenyon at (949) 786-3160 or nancykenyon@cox.net

—Jay Miller, BBQ Coordinator

Summer Barbecue - Will YOU Be There?

Name _____ Number in your party: _____

Do you want a vegetarian entree? _____ If, so, how many? _____

E-mail Address or Phone _____

Do you want to go on one of the evening nature walks? _____

Amount enclosed _____ (\$20 per person; children under 5 are \$7)
(\$15 for BBQ workers)



Make your check payable to Sea & Sage Audubon and mail it with this form to:
Barbecue, c/o Nancy Kenyon, 32 Almond Tree Ln, Irvine CA 92612

Chapter News



For more information on Sea & Sage events & activities, check out our schedule of activities at: <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/Chapter/ChapterSchedule.html>

Audubon House Volunteers

We would like to thank the following people for helping to staff Audubon House in May and June: Sonia Appell, Donna & Mike Augustine, Charlie Austin, Pat & Dick Cabe, Constance Cassidy, Barbara Chidester, Deana Collins, Carolyn Cooper, Pam Degarimore, Tom Drouet, Fresia Escalona, Judy Fritts, Pat Heilig, Sarah Jayne, Steve Jelnick, Lois Jones, Nancy Kenyon, Donna Krebs, Laurretta Kyle, Joan McCauley, Sally Menzel, Bobbie Miller, Eunice Morita, Shirley Price, Betty Purdy, Roberta Ray, Barbara Reber, Mary Shandy, Hal Sheakley, Bev Spring, Betty Swift.

Audubon House is open daily from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Our Volunteers greet visitors, answer the phone, sell merchandise, answer questions about birds, check out binoculars, etc. It's fun to be an Audubon House Volunteer and it's a great way to support our chapter. If you are interested in helping at Audubon House, please contact Judy Fritts at 949-551-4513.

Those Yummy Cookies...

Thanks to our great cooks, we had a delicious and plentiful supply of cookies at our General Meetings this past year. We'd like to thank these generous people for bringing their goodies to share with us: Maryette Beers, Pat & Dick Cabe, Deana Collins, Mary Joseph, Nancy Kenyon, Gretchen McCausland, Jackie McPheeters, Sally Menzel, Bobbie Miller, Lorelei Metildi, Diane Ryan, Nancy Ryder, Pat Sculati, Barbara Sentovich, and Debbie Sugg. Thank you Merri for organizing our meeting refreshments!

SJWS Photographs Needed

Sea and Sage Audubon is going to produce a 2010 small desk calendar. The theme will be "Birds and Mammals of the San Joaquin Marsh". Each month will feature a different photo, and a different photographer. We are inviting all digital photographers to submit up to 3 of their photos which should be emailed to Donelda Warhurst at doneldaw@gmail.com by Aug. 1, 2009. Photos should be 72 dpi and the actual size that you want them to appear on a computer monitor. After the 12 photos for the calendar have been selected, we will contact you in late August so that you can email us a high quality file of the selected picture. There will not be any payment for the photos but your name as the photographer will be listed on the calendar. The photos must be taken at the SJWS or show a bird or animal that frequents the marsh. Please keep in mind that the finished size will only be about 3.5" x 3", so close ups are best. We look forward to highlighting your work and the wonderful wildlife viewing opportunities the marsh can provide. More details will follow .

Planning ahead for Sylvia's Birding Skills Workshops — *Sylvia Gallagher will be offering the following workshops during the coming year:*

• BIRDS of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: An Introductory Visual Workshop

This 10-week workshop covers the common birds of various local habitats as well as a variety of other topics, such as families of birds, plumages & molts, bird topography, distribution and habitat preferences, behavior, birding ethics and etiquette. It is designed for beginning birders and also for relatively inexperienced intermediates who are searching for some organization to their bird knowledge. Starts the week of Nov. 11-12 (Full info on the website now.)

• OBSERVING BIRDS:

5 workshops which can be done as a series or separately, for birders of all levels of experience except total beginners. Topics: Parts of Birds, Sounds of Birds, Shapes of Birds, Colors of Birds, Behaviors of Birds. Starts Nov. 14. (See website)

• LEARNING CALIFORNIA BIRD SOUNDS: an Introduction to Aural Birding

Covers the sounds of about 60 common birds that are frequently heard, but not seen. Also lectures on the nature and meaning of bird sounds. Designed for people who have visual familiarity with the common local birds, such as that provided in the INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP described above. Starts Feb. 10. (See website)

Bookstore News

The bookstore is moving! Come check out the new bookstore, around the corner from the old one. You'll find new and exciting items for sale along with our best sellers like t-shirts (all styles and sizes now hanging up for easy viewing) and stockings (new designs and colors), our Sea and Sage logo items (new caps, shirts and more) plus a larger selection of books. Keep watching all summer long for the many changes to come!

Live Hummingbird Cam & Wildlife Videos

Those of you who enjoy watching wildlife should check out the live Black-chinned Hummingbird cam and the wildlife videos on the Starr Ranch website. Earlier this year, they had a live cam focused on a Barn Owl nest, but the owls have now fledged. There's always something new to see; check it out at: <http://www.starranch.org/>

Chapter News



For more information on Sea & Sage events & activities, check out our schedule of activities at: <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/Chapter/ChapterSchedule.html>

Thanks for a Great Job!

As you know, a program of varied field trips depends solely on the dedicated leaders who willingly give of their time and expertise to lead our chapter outings. Not only must they carefully scout out their trip(s) ahead of time, but they also need to be very familiar with the birds in the area and be able to guide a group of diverse birders toward identifying any birds they find. Field trips are a vital part of our chapter activities and the following people helped to make our field trip program a success this year: Bruce Aird, Steve Alter, Bob Barnes, Steve Brad, Pete Bloom, Slader Buck, Pat & Dick Cabe, Tom Croom, Pete DeSimone, Jon Feenstra, Beverly Hargrove, Curtis Johnson, Paul Klahr, Donna Krucki, Linette Lina, Vic Leipzig, John McKeever, Sally Menzel, Dick Newell, Chuck Nichols, Chris Obaditch, Linda Oberholtzer, Kaaren Perry, Roy Poucher, Susan Sheakley, Steve Sosensky, Scott Thomas, Jerry Tolman and Dick Zembal. —*Nancy Kenyon*

Science Fair Awards

On April 23rd, the Chapter was pleased to honor 2 Special Awardees at the 52nd Annual Orange County Science and Engineering Fair with \$50 Barnes & Noble Bookstore Gift Cards. In supporting the Science Fair, we seek to reward projects which contribute to the importance of habitat enrichment in urban environments. This year the awards went to 2 students in the junior high school category. The first, Aveesh Sharma, is in 8th grade and a student at Fairmont Preparatory Academy. His project "Does the Wetlands Water Treatment Reduce River Nitrate Levels?" was completed by working with the Irvine Ranch Water District and the University of Irvine and studied the San Diego Creek water sources. The second, Josh Van Driesen, is in 7th grade at Saint Francis of Assisi School. His project "The Attack of the Bark Beetle and Its Impacts on Our Local Mountains" was conducted in the San Bernardino National Forest. Our best wishes for these young students in their future education and career.

—*Cathy Glasgow*

Spring Brunches

The remaining brunches on May 17 and June 6 are now fully subscribed. If you did not have the good fortune to attend one of the spring brunches, you did miss something scrumptious. So to be sure that you are not left out in spring 2010, mark your March 2010 calendar. Registration for spring 2010 will begin in early March. Thanks to all who came and expressed their appreciation. Lois Taylor and I certainly enjoyed meeting all of you and introducing you to "our" marsh. Do come back and bring your friends. They'll be sorry if you don't! —*Helen Nicholas*

Brief Report on the Great Marsh Bird Count and the Birdathon

The first Great Marsh Bird Count was lots of fun. There were 8 teams and a total of 19 participants. The early bird gets the first worm and the team out in the field at dawn's first light got the most species. Jan Gaffney, Donelda Warhurst, Barbara Sentovitch, and Carolyn Noble, members of the top team, counted 83 species. So far, the team of Susan Hankey and Susan Sheakley has the most sponsors and has raised the most money for the Great Marsh Bird Count. The total number of species identified during the Great Marsh Bird Count was 102 and the total amount of money raised so far is \$850.83.

Birdathon numbered 4 teams with 13 participants and **183** species. As the Tattler goes to press, the species list is being compiled and the donations tabulated. The results will be announced at the summer BBQ.

Twenty-three Birdathon and Great Marsh Bird Count participants gathered on the Blue House porch for the celebration pizza party on Sunday, April 26. Everyone talked about how much fun they had birding.

On behalf of Sea and Sage Audubon, we wish to thank everyone who took part in Birdathon and the Great Marsh Bird Count this year, both birders and donors. Next year we hope to see you at Birdathon, the Great Marsh Bird Count, and/or the celebration party!

Susan Sheakley and Scott Thomas

Can You Lend a Hand?

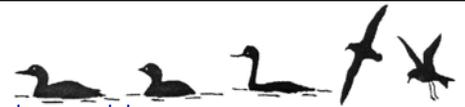
At both sessions of Marsh Bird Camp this year, we will be building wooden bird feeders. Since this involves work with hammer & nails by 9-12 year olds, we need extra adults on hand. Please give me a call or email me if you can help us with this project from 12:30 - 2:00 on Friday, July 10th or Friday, July 17th. Thanks.

—*Bev Spring* 714-505-9980; gpsyb@aol.com

Camp Scholarships Needed

We are looking for chapter members who would be willing to make donations, or sponsor a full scholarship or even a partial scholarship, for a child who wants to attend our summer camp this year but needs financial assistance in order to do so. For questions or information about our camp and its scholarship program, please contact Bev Spring (714) 5050-9980. See our chapter webpage for information about our summer camp program: <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/Education/Camp/NatureDayCamp.html>

June, July, August Field Trips



For trip updates & additional trip information, visit the chapter webpage at <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org>. Trips marked with a ® require advance reservations. If you have any questions about the field trips or would like to make trip reservations, contact Field Trip Chair, Nancy Kenyon, at 949-786-3160, or nancykenyon@cox.net

Santiago Oaks Regional Park Sunday, July 5, Aug. 2, Sept. 6 at 7:30 a.m.

Join Linette Lina for a monthly bird walk at Santiago Oaks on the 1st Sunday morning of each month at 7:30 am. It's summertime, and breeding season is in full swing. The park is teeming with bird families nesting, feeding, and fledging their young. Come see the fascinating interactions among the parents and their young as the kids learn to fly
Directions: Take the 55 freeway to Katella Ave in Orange. Exit and drive east on Katella 3.2 miles to Windes Dr. Turn left on Windes Dr. and follow the signs to the park. **OR**, take Jamboree towards the mountains, all the way to its intersection with Santiago Cyn. Rd; turn left and follow Santiago to Windes Dr. Turn right on Windes and follow it to the park. Be prepared to pay the \$5 entrance fee if you don't have a county parks pass. Meet in the upper end of the parking lot. —*Linette Lina, Leader*

Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS Sunday, June 14, July 12, Aug. 9 - 8:00 a.m.

Join Chris Obaditch for a monthly bird walk around the ponds of the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine at 8:00 am on the 2nd Sunday morning of each month. Join us to watch the Mallards with their duckling families in tow, the avocet & stilt chicks in the shallow water, and the returning shorebirds, some still in breeding plumage. (See directions on page 11.) The walk, which is open to interested birders of all ages, will meet by the front door of Audubon House. Children under the age of 11 must be accompanied by an adult. —*Chris Obaditch, Leader*

Bolsa Chica Saturday, July 11th - 8:00 a.m.

Bolsa Chica is one of the best wetlands areas in Southern California. Though many of the shorebirds and waterfowl are not back yet from their breeding grounds up north, there is still a lot of bird activity at the reserve, especially on the nearby tern island, and a trip there in the summer is always full of surprises. We will meet in the parking lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve at 8 am on Sat. morning, July 11th. Bring binoculars, scope if you have one, and a field guide. Dress in layers. It can be cool and breezy there in the morning—even in the summer—but it usually warms by mid morning. **Directions:** Meet in the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve parking lot on the inland side of Pacific Coast Highway at the only signal between Seapoint Ave and Warner in Huntington Beach. —*Pat & Dick Cabe, Leaders*

Antelope Valley Shorebird Search ® Sunday, August 9th at 7:00 a.m.

The main focus of this trip will be to observe shorebirds at the Piute Ponds and other west Mojave “hot spots” (literally and figuratively) in the Antelope Valley of northern Los Angeles County. Thousands of sandpipers and plovers stage at these isolated wetlands during their southerly migration and we will be there to meet them. Baird's Sandpiper is nearly guaranteed to be present and Semipalmated Sandpiper is possible. In addition to a variety of shorebirds, some still in breeding plumage, (if this weren't enough), the surrounding desert can produce Prairie Falcon, LeConte's Thrasher, and lots of Horned Larks and Sage Sparrows. The Piute Ponds are located on Edwards Air Force Base which has restricted entry. Our leader, Jon Feenstra, has a permit to take our group into the area. He will be leading a similar trip for Pasadena Audubon the previous day, so he'll have a good idea of where to find the most interesting birds. Directions to the meeting place will be provided to those with reservations.

—*Jon Feenstra, Leader*
Nancy Kenyon, Trip Reservations
nancykenyon@cox.net; 949-786-3160



Monthly Boat Trips at UNB ® 3rd Wed. morning of each month - 8 :15 a.m.

June, July, August trips are already full. Contact Nancy Kenyon for reservations. (see above)

New Field Trip Schedule

As new field trips are scheduled for the coming year, they will be posted on our chapter webpage. The complete trip schedule will be posted in the Sep. Tattler. Suggestions for new areas to go to on our trips would be really appreciated.

—*Nancy Kenyon, field trip chair*
nancykenyon@cox.net; 949-786-3160

WFO Conference in Boise, Idaho September 10-13, 2009

Western Field Ornithologists are holding their 34th annual meeting this year in Boise, Idaho September 10 - 13, 2009. The meeting will include science sessions, expert identification panels, half and full day field trips, field skills workshops, social events, and the annual membership meeting and banquet with this year's keynote speaker Dr. Craig Benkman. Dr. Benkman's research into Crossbills (*Loxia*), particularly those of Idaho, has been very exciting. Beginners and seasoned birders are all welcome.
<http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php>

Rarities in Orange County

by Doug Willick

To report a RARE or UNUSUAL bird, or to receive the current RBA report for Orange County, call the OrCoRBA at (949) 487-6869.



A variety of expected spring migrants were moving through the county in April, although that month was relatively routine as far as highlights were concerned. Typically, the more atypical "out-of-the-ordinary" spring migrants begin to appear during May, and this year was no exception. To begin with, however, we'll recap a few interesting winter period discoveries that continued to linger well into the spring.

At Tri-City Park, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** first found Jan. 31, was still present Apr. 25 (Bruce Aird). A **Plumbeous Vireo** known to be wintering at Yosemite Park was refound Apr. 25. Single Plumbeous Vireos reported at Serrano Community Park, Apr. 20 (Jon Feenstra), and at Huntington Central Park, Apr. 28 (Jim Roe), were away from areas where wintering individuals were known to be present. However, it is quite possible these birds wintered locally, as spring migrants are considered extremely rare in California. The **Pine Warbler** wintering at Estancia Park (for its third consecutive year), was last reported on Apr. 6. Lingering winter rarities at Mason Regional Park included an **American Redstart** till Apr. 28, and a **White-throated Sparrow** till Apr. 25. The **Reddish Egrets** wintering at Bolsa Chica appeared to have left the area in late March, although on May 14-22 (Terry Hill), another (or the same?) adult was again present.

Although most spring migrant rarities in the county occur from late May to mid-June, there has been a nice variety of early surprises so far this season. For example, a **Brant** seen flying over Peters Canyon Regional Park, Apr. 24 (Neil Gilbert) was exceptional; there are perhaps as few as only a half-dozen records for the interior of the county (all migrants in spring). Above average numbers of Brant were seen regularly at Bolsa Chica (BC) during April and early May (many observers), with as many as eight being seen here, Apr. 2 (Bill Sauer). Eleven Brant flying north off Crescent Bay Point, May 10 (Robert McNab), and one still at BC, May 23 (Brian Daniels), were towards the end of the spring movement period for this species. A male **Long-tailed Duck** at BC, Apr. 11 (Martin Meyers, Chris Brady), was a nice find. This bird was presumably on the move as it was soon seen flying out to sea and not reported again. Other interesting BC birds this period included a late **Horned Grebe** in breeding plumage, May 9 (B. Daniels), a **Red Phalarope**, May 14 (Steve Smith, Terry Hill, et al.), an adult **Pomarine Jaeger**, Apr. 10 (S. Smith), adult **Franklin's Gulls** on Apr. 18 (Peter Knapp, S. Smith) and May 17 (Leo Ohtsuki), and up to two **Gull-billed Terns** through approximately mid-May (P. Knapp, et al.). An adult **Franklin's Gull** also seen Apr. 18, at Talbert Marsh (Dave and Sharon Telford, Dick Cabe), was quite likely the same bird seen later in the day at BC. A second-year **Common Tern** at BC, May 23 (B. Daniels), was on the early side.

Least Bitterns were reported from two locations: a family group (including two adults and three young) was at Laguna Niguel Regional Park (LNRP), Apr. 16 (Paul Klahr), and a single bird was in San Diego Creek, below Michelson, 28 Apr. (B. Daniels). At the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve (UNB), an **Osprey** pair again (for the fourth consecutive year) was attempting to breed near Shellmaker Island. On Apr. 15, three chicks were reported to be in the nest (Nancy Kenyon et al.). A **Merlin** at Aurora Park in Mission Viejo, Apr. 10 (R. McNab), was fairly late. In addition to the **Gull-billed Terns** at BC (as discussed above), at least one was seen regularly at UNB from May 16 to 23+ (Doug Willick, et al.). This is the second consecutive year that this species has had an increased presence in the county. An adult **Black Tern** was at the Burris Basin in Anaheim, May 9 (D. Willick). Also at Burris, from May 1 to 16, were up to five **Least Terns** with a nesting colony of up to 100 Forster's Terns; four **Black Skimmers** were here on May 9 (D. Willick).

An alternate plumaged **Pigeon Guillemot** seen flying by Crescent Bay on May 10 (R. McNab), was approximately the county's eighth. A male **Calliope Hummingbird** was in Laguna Canyon, Apr. 28 (Robb Hamilton). A **Gray Flycatcher** was identified in LNRP, Apr. 19, where a **Summer Tanager** was found Apr. 10 (both R. McNab). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** at Huntington Central Park (HCP) May 23-24 (B. Daniels, L. Ohtsuki), was amazingly the *tenth* to be recorded at this location (since the first occurrence in the early 1980s). Other HCP highlights included a **Green-tailed Towhee**, Apr. 20 (J. Roe), and a very late **Varied Thrush**, May 15 (John Fitch). A **Bank Swallow** was recorded at the Talbert Marsh, Apr. 25 (B. Aird). An **Ovenbird** in a Huntington Beach backyard was a nice surprise, May 15 (Dick and Pat Cabe).

Northern Cardinals were recently reported from two county locations; these included one from the Talbert Preserve, Apr. 7 (John Bovaird), and one in a residential area near UNB, Apr. 26 (Janis Marashlian). Away from the lower Colorado River Valley, Northern Cardinals in California are generally considered escapes from captivity. Most exceptional was a male **Evening Grosbeak** that appeared briefly at a private residence in Silverado Canyon, May 10 (Melanie Oxley). The only other records of Evening Grosbeak for the county were a series of four that occurred in November of 1996, when this species underwent a significant fall and winter "invasion" throughout Southern California.

OrangeCountyBirding is a yahoo group for birders. Most birders send in their emailed reports about bird sightings to this group and then, if the bird is really unusual, they send in a report to the OrCoRBA also. Website directions will tell you how to join. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OrangeCountyBirding/>. Be sure to sign your name and city with any report you send in.

More Chapter News



For more information on Sea & Sage events and activities, check out our Schedule of Activities on our chapter webpage at: <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/Chapter/ChapterSchedule.html> or our Special Events page at: <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/SpecialEvents/SpecialEvents.html>

Seasons of Nature

SUMMER COMES TO THE MARSH

Sunday, July 19th - 9 am to 12 noon

Discover a haven of nature in Irvine. Enjoy an easy walk around the beautiful ponds of the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Our friendly naturalists will share the secrets of the marsh with you. Be amazed at the variety of birds, insects and plants. Participants will use binoculars, microscopes, and magnifiers to learn what goes on at the marsh in the summer.

The nature walk starts at 9:00 am and will last about an hour and a half. Everyone is welcome since there's no age limit on the fun of being out in nature. Please RSVP to Audubon House at 949-261-7963.

Summer Bat Walks



All seven of the bat walks that were scheduled for this summer are now full. Names will be taken for a waiting list because people do cancel their reservations. But, there is another alternative that gives you near perfect assurance of getting a place on a bat walk this summer. There is no free ride, of course, but we'll trade you bats for brawn and a smile on your face for the evening. It is necessary for a few people to come early to set up the room, and stay a little late to put the room back together. The process will take much less time than in the past because we have everything in the new Education Center where the oral and slide presentation will be made. The balance of your responsibility will be to keep track of equipment and participants when we're out on the walk. All dates are available for volunteerism, except June 26. Check the website for this summer's dates and give me a call. I'll be expecting you! See you on the walk!

—Helen Nicholas 949-726-0858

Tree Trimming Packets

We are often asked when is the best time to do tree trimming. Our recommendation is that you avoid doing any trimming of shrubbery or trees during the nesting season. This means tree trimming should be done between Sept. and Jan. (Raptors begin nesting in February.) At Audubon House as well as on our chapter webpage, we have Tree Trimming packets. Pick up a packet if you want to help spread the word about bird-friendly tree trimming practices. The packet includes information about protecting nesting birds and a letter on Sea and Sage Audubon stationery with tree trimming suggestions that you can send to your homeowners association, local school, golf course, or other organization. Help us keep our birds safe and our trees healthy. <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/Conservation/conservationtree.htm>

Join our Audubon Naturalist Team!

Each one of us should share what we love and pass it on to the next generation. If you think educating children about nature is vital and you love being around others who care about nature, then join our naturalist team. Anyone interested in becoming a part of our Education program is invited to attend a one-day orientation training class at the SJWS. Please contact Trude Hurd, Project Director of Education, for more information. (949-261-7964)

Our Summer BBQ

Be sure to mark your calendars for July 25th, the date of our annual Summer Barbecue. Since this issue of the Tattler is coming out later than usual, we will not be sending out a reminder postcard. Don't miss out on the fun; send in your BBQ reservations right away — before you forget! See our chapter webpage for photos of past barbecues. Join the fun and volunteer to help with this event. You'll make new friends and you'll even save 5 dollars on your ticket! (BBQ volunteers get a \$5 discount off the regular price of the barbecue.)

Our Nature Day Camp: there's still room!

There are still a few openings left in Fledgling Camp, our popular Summer Nature Day Camp for 7-8 year olds (June 22 to 26). Attending one of our camps will add a new dimension to your child's summer vacation. Full information is on our chapter webpage or pick up a camp brochure at Audubon House today. Help make this summer special for your child! Call Bev Spring (714-505-9980) before sending in your reservation, to find out if openings are still available. www.seaandsageaudubon.org/Education/Camp/NatureDayCamp.html

New Field Trip Schedule

As new field trips are scheduled for the coming year, they will be posted on our chapter webpage and the complete schedule will be posted in the September Tattler. A few of the trips will require advance reservations because of limited trip space. Any trip listed on the webpage field trip schedule can be reserved for right away. If you have any suggestions for new field trips or would like to lead one, please contact Nancy Kenyon, FTChair. (949-786-3160)

Label Your Birding Gear!

Have you ever stopped to think what would happen if you lost your birding field guide, your knapsack, your binoculars, or some other vital piece of your birding gear? Make sure you have your name or some sort of identifying information on your gear. That way, if you lose or misplace it, the finder can notify you!

Mockingbirds in Fickle Climates Sing Fancier Tunes

This is the time of year when mockingbirds are heard singing during all hours of the day and night, so I thought this news release on their singing, which we received from Pat Leonard at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, would be appropriate. It details some fascinating mockingbird research.

DURHAM, N.C. -- Why are some birds simple singers and others vocal virtuosos? Researchers at the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center (NESCent), the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and McGill University suspect that inconsistent climates may play a role.

A large-scale study of mockingbirds in diverse habitats reveals that species in more variable climates also sing more complex tunes. "As environments become more variable or unpredictable, song displays become more elaborate," said Carlos Botero, a postdoctoral researcher at NESCent in Durham, NC. NESCent is an NSF-funded collaborative research center operated by Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University.

Local climate patterns are good indicators of how challenging life is in a given location, Botero said. "Survival and reproduction become more complicated when weather patterns are unpredictable because you don't know when food will be available or how long it will be around," he explains. What's more, the consequences of picking a mediocre mate are magnified in harsher climates.

"In really difficult or demanding environments you would expect females to be choosier," he said.

Male mockingbirds sing primarily to impress mates, said Botero. Superior singing skills are a cue that a male is a good catch. "Complexity of song display - how many song types a bird sings, how hard the songs are - is a good predictor of the quality of the individual," said Botero. "Males that sing more complex songs tend to carry fewer parasites, and have offspring that are more likely to survive."

Songbirds aren't born knowing their songs, however they have to learn them over time. Since birdsong is a learned behavior, Botero and colleagues suspect that song-learning ability may also be a display of learning ability in general. The bird equivalent of sparkling conversation, complex songs may indicate which males have not only brawn, but also brainpower. "Birds that sing better are telling others, at least indirectly: Hey, I'm a good learner," said Botero.

More importantly, singing skills may be a sign that males are clever enough to cope with iffy environments. "Individuals that are more intelligent tend to be better able to compensate for the difficulties of unpredictable climates. For example, if some individuals are able to invent new foraging techniques, then they are going to be better at surviving harsh winters than the poor guys who

only know one way to forage," Botero said. "The more intelligent you are, the more resourceful you are, and the more curve balls you're able to handle."

To see if there was a correlation between climate and song, Botero searched sound archives around the world and embarked on a solo tour of the southern hemisphere to record bird songs in the wild. Armed with supersensitive recording equipment, Botero trekked his way through desert, jungle, scree and scrub in search of mockingbirds in song. Botero's recordings - nearly 100 tracks from 29 mockingbird species - will enhance pre-existing sound archives by filling in gaps for species for which high-quality recordings weren't previously available.

Back in the States, Botero used computer programs to convert each sound recording - a medley of whistles, warbles, trills and twitters - into a sonogram, or sound graph. Like a musical score, the complex pattern of lines and streaks in a sonogram enables scientists to see and visually analyze sound.

Botero and colleagues then painstakingly analyzed each snippet of song and compared their patterns to a database of temperature and precipitation records. The researchers found that species subject to more variable and unpredictable climates had more elaborate song displays.

The connection between birdsong and climate is new and somewhat surprising, Botero explains. "We're connecting two dots that were far away before."

For Botero and his colleagues, the next step is to see whether this pattern holds true for other animals. By studying animal communication, Botero ultimately hopes to shed light on how language evolved in humans. "You can't help but wonder what is it about humans that made our vocal communication so incredibly complicated compared to other animals," Botero said.

"What we have now is a nice arena - outside of humans - where we can test these ideas and start understanding processes that are fundamentally important for our own species."

The team's findings were published online in the May 21 issue of the journal *Current Biology*.





Sea & Sage Audubon

Bird Embroidery Class

PRESENTED BY SYLVIA GALLAGHER



Many people have enjoyed looking at Sylvia Gallagher's embroidered birds—on quilts, pictures, and shirts—and wondered how she does it. For eight Saturday mornings, July 11 through Sept. 5, 2009 (no meeting Aug. 22), 9:00 a.m. to noon, she will teach a workshop, sponsored by SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON, on how to do this sort of embroidery. Participants will learn how to select a bird picture, transfer it to cloth, select thread colors, and do the stitches to bring the bird to life. The stitches involved are mostly satin stitch and a version of long-and-short stitch quite different from that described in most western embroidery books. (It is used in Asian embroidery; the Chinese call it "shan tao.") Occasionally other stitches such as French knots, outline stitch, and blanket stitch are used for accents. Individualized instruction will allow the class to accommodate all levels of embroidery skill--beginner to expert--and all will find themselves learning new techniques. You will be taught how to do any stitches you are unfamiliar with--and maybe even a better way to thread a needle. The cost for the class is \$80.00 for new students, \$50.00 for continuing students, who will need less assistance. Repeaters are welcome.

At the first session, beginners will learn and practice two stitches and learn how to get started on their choice of one of the class projects. Continuing students should come ready to work on and receive help with a project.

At the second session, Sylvia will present a slide-illustrated program, which has been presented to several embroidery clubs. In this program she will take you step-by-step through the entire process of converting to stitches a painting or photograph of a bird. (This process is fully applicable to subjects other than birds.)

The class will be limited to 15 participants and will be cancelled if fewer than eight people enroll. Please do not sign up if you expect to miss more than two meetings. (Exceptions may be made if there is room; call Sylvia after July 3.) If you have not seen the introductory slide lecture, you must attend the second meeting (July 18). There will be a number of additional spaces for those who just want to attend the July 18 slide lecture (cost \$10.00).

The class location is the Gallagher residence in Huntington Beach. Send your reservation form, a check for the fee, and a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) to Sylvia Gallagher, 21562 Kaneohe Ln., Huntington Beach, CA 92646. Reservations must be postmarked no earlier than June 15 (2-day penalty for early reservations). Confirmations and further information will be mailed July 12, along with a map to the meeting place.

Sylvia will be away until early July; if you have questions, put them in writing and send them with your reservation. After she gets home, she'll get in touch with you—or you can phone her at 714-962-8990.

Reservation Form - Bird Embroidery Workshop 2009

Names of all participants _____

Address(es) _____

City & Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Check one: Entire series, new student (\$80) _____

Entire series, continuing student (\$50) _____

July 18 lecture only (\$10) _____

Check for \$ _____ to SAGE AUDUBON enclosed.

SASE enclosed? _____



Receiving the Tattler

Directions to Audubon House, Chapter Meetings and the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary

Your Membership Payment

Tattler Delivery

We post the Tattler on our chapter website. Members who wish to receive monthly e-mail notification that the latest issue of the tattler is online, should send an e-mail to nancykenyon@cox.net. This method of Tattler delivery not only helps cut our costs and conserves resources, it also is much faster since the Tattler is posted immediately after it has been delivered to the printer. You can read it online, or print out the pages you want to keep.

Tattler Subscriptions

Non-Audubon members, or members from other Audubon chapters, who wish to subscribe to our chapter newsletter, may do so for \$12.50 per year for regular mailing. Those who wish to receive their newsletter faster, by 1st class postage, may do so for an additional \$6.00. Make check payable to "Sea & Sage Audubon" and mail to: Tattler Subscriptions, 32 Almond Tree Ln, Irvine CA 92612.

Remember Us in Your Will or Trust

Please remember to include "Sea and Sage Audubon Society" by name (tax ID#23-7003681) in your will or trust.

DIRECTIONS

From the San Diego Frwy. (405), exit on Jamboree south toward Newport Beach. At the 1st signal, Michelson, turn left. Continue on Michelson to the 4th signal which is Riparian View; turn right toward the Irvine Ranch Water District plant. Follow the signs directing you to Audubon and the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Continue down the road to a short hill into a parking lot. The first building you see will be Audubon House; parking is ample. Between Audubon House and the Duck Club is a path which will take you to the Education Center where our meetings are. Beyond this area are the ponds and marsh mitigation areas of the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary which are open every day from dawn until dusk.



Audubon House
Open 8 am - 4 pm daily
(949) 261-7963

Stop by Audubon House for a trail map; browse through our bookstore & gift shop; look at our taxidermy birds and check our reference library. Be sure to stop by; we're there to help

Your Audubon Membership Payment and Donations

If you are signing up as a new Audubon member be sure and use the application in the Tattler or on our website that has the C9ZC150Z in the lower right hand corner. This tells National Audubon who to credit for your recruitment. Sea & Sage gets 100% of the first year's dues of new members (even if you give more than the minimum membership fee). When renewing your membership and you pay more than the standard renewal fee (\$35 for regular and \$15 for senior/student membership), the extra you contribute goes to National Audubon; the chapter does not get any of the contribution back. So, if you are feeling generous at renewal time and you want Sea & Sage to benefit, you should send your renewal fee to National and a separate check with your donation to the chapter. If you have any questions please contact Phil Brobst at (949) 261-7963.



Audubon Membership Application

Membership: We invite you to become a member of the National Audubon Society and the Sea & Sage Audubon chapter. **To join:** *Please pay by check only; do not send cash.* Make your check payable to: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, complete this form, and mail it along with your payment to: Sea & Sage Audubon, PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616-5447.

National Audubon Society Membership: Check one

NEW MEMBERSHIP: \$20 - Individual or Family members RENEWAL: \$35 - Regular Membership

NEW MEMBERSHIP: \$15 - Senior Citizen or Student RENEWAL: \$15 - Senior Citizen or Student

Members receive: AUDUBON magazine as well as the WANDERING TATTLER newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail address _____



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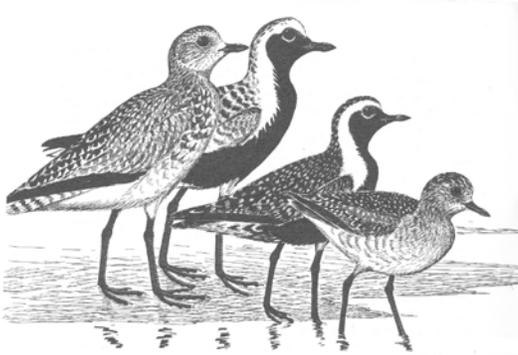
2009 chapter code

Sea and Sage Audubon Society

Chapter Mission Statement: Sea and Sage Audubon is a leader in creating an understanding of nature in Orange County, through conservation, research and environmental education programs for children and adults. This is accomplished with classes, field activities, publications and volunteer opportunities.

Sea & Sage Audubon Society
PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616

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Bird Information.....	Sylvia Gallagher.....	714-962-8990
Christmas Bird Counts.....	Curtis Johnson.....	714-739-5373
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Audubon House..... 949-261-7963

Marsh Education Project Director	Trude Hurd	949-261-7964
Marsh Education Project Dir. Assist	Deborah Brin.....	949-261-7964
Conservation Director Orange Co...	Scott Thomas.....	949-293-2915
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Chapter Website.....	http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org	

Contacts:

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OC Rare Bird Alert Hotline....	Joel Weintraub.....	949-487-6869
Slide Lending Library.....	Claudine Casey.....	714-968-3463

June 2009

02 Tues	Conservation Committee Meeting.....	6:30 pm
07 Sun	Santiago Oaks Monthly Bird Walk.....	7:30 am
09 Tues	Board Meeting.....	7:30 pm
14 Sun	SJWS Monthly Bird Walk.....	8:00 am
17 Wed	UNB by small boat (full).....	8:15 am
19 Fri	GENERAL MEETING.....	7:30 pm
22-26 M-F	Fledgling Camp.....	9:00 am
23 Tues	4th Tues. Conservation Lecture.....	7:00 pm

July 2009

05 Sun	Santiago Oaks Monthly Bird Walk.....	7:30 am
6-10 M-F	Marsh Bird Camp I (full).....	9:00 am
11 Sat	Bolsa Chica.....	8:00 am
12 Sun	SJWS Monthly Bird Walk.....	8:00 am
13-17 M-F	Marsh Bird Camp II (full).....	9:00 am
15 Wed	UNB by small boat (full).....	8:15 am
17 Fri	No General Meeting in July.....	
19 Sun	Seasons of Nature walk.....	9:00 am
20-24 M-F	Advanced Camp week I (full).....	9:00 am
25 Sat	SUMMER BARBECUE.....	5:30 pm
27-Aug. 1 M-F	Advanced Camp week II (full).....	9:00 am

August 2009

02 Sun	Santiago Oaks Monthly Bird Walk.....	7:30 am
09 Sun	Antelope Valley Shorebird Trip	7:00 am
09 Sun	SJWS Monthly Bird Walk.....	8:00 am
11 Tues	Board Meeting.....	7:30 pm
19 Wed	UNB by small boat (full).....	8:15 am
21 Fri	No General Meeting in August.....	