Wandering Tattler November 2020 Volume 70, Number 3



The Voice of SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON, an Orange County Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Why Do Birders Count Birds?

Gail Richards, President

Populations of birds are changing, both in the survival of each species and the numbers of birds within each species. In California, there are 146 bird species that are vulnerable to extinction from climate change. These fluctuations may indicate shifts in climate, pollution levels, habitat loss, scarcity of food, timing of migration or survival of offspring. Monitoring birds is an essential part of protecting them. But tracking the health of the world's 10,000 bird species is an immense challenge. Scientists need thousands of people reporting what they are seeing in their back yards, neighborhoods, parks, nature preserves and in all accessible wild areas.

Even though there are a number of things we are unable to do during this pandemic, Sea and Sage volunteers are committed to continuing bird surveys (when permitted, observing Covid-19 protocols).

MONTHLY SURVEYS: Volunteers survey what is out there, tracking the number of species and their abundance.

San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary
UCI Marsh
University Hills Eco Reserve
Upper Newport Bay by pontoon boat

SEASONAL SURVEYS AND/OR MONITORING:

Threatened Western Snowy Plovers
Endangered California Least Terns
Tree Swallow Nest Boxes at SJWS

WEEKLY SURVEYS:

Backyard Bird Count

<u>Bird Seasons</u> (phenology and seasonal studies) A team of volunteers is monitoring a select group of 8 species at the SJWS to look for shifts in behaviors, bird sounds, food sources, breeding success & survival adaptations.

ANNUAL SURVEYS:

Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey
Spring Bird Count
Christmas Bird Counts

So, this is where you come in. No matter what aspect of bird watching you love most, there's a bird survey project that can use your help. Information regarding participation in these surveys, can be found on our website, or contact Darrell Wilson, our Bird Survey Coordinator: darrellwilson@cox.net

General Meeting - Online Presentation Friday, November 20th - 7:00 PM Via Zoom

"Motus – an exciting new method to track the movements of birds, bats, & insects" presented by Kristie Stein, MS



Kristie Stein is a Wildlife Biologist with the Southern Sierra Research Station (SSRS) in Weldon, California. Her research interests include post-fledging ecology, seasonal interactions and carry-over effects, and movement ecology. Currently, at SSRS, Kristie is assisting with many ongoing research projects as well as leading a movement study of Tricolored Blackbirds, a state endangered species, using automated telemetry towers that are part of the Motus wildlife tracking system.

In this presentation, she will explain the ins and outs of the automated telemetry system, introduce the Partners in Flight Western Working Group's initiative to expand the network in the west, and provide information on how you can get involved with this effort. Additionally, she will present findings using Motus to determine the seasonal movement patterns and habitat associations of the Kern River Valley Tricolored Blackbird population.

Our Meeting Room opens at **6:30 PM**, join us for some **optional social activities** prior to the 7:00 PM meeting. Here is the link you will need to join the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88523715920

Jonathan Aguayo, Programs Chair

Conservation News

Susan Sheakley, Conservation Chair

Our next '4th Tuesday' Conservation Lecture will be presented virtually on November 24th. Please join us!



'4th Tues.' Conservation Lecture
Tuesday, Nov. 24th - 7:00 pm
by Zoom
Doors will open at 6:30

"Finding Wisdom on Midway Atoll"

JD Bergeron, Executive Director, International Bird Rescue

Join JD Bergeron, International Bird Rescue's Executive Director, on a visual journey to Midway Atoll to learn about the albatross species that nest there and the challenges they face.

Midway Atoll is the site of the world's largest albatross nesting colony and home to numerous other globally important species such as the federally endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal and Laysan Duck.

Each year, a census is conducted of the Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. Since 1991, the work of the nesting albatross census team (aka "Bird Counters"), provides vital information found few places on earth to researchers, managers, conservation groups and the global community interested in preserving and protecting oceanic seabirds and their nesting habitats.

Please join us to learn about the importance of "Finding Wisdom on Midway Atoll", as JD shares information and amazing visuals from his participation in the annual census.

Instructions to join the Nov. 24th Zoom meeting will be posted November 1st on our home page at www.seaandsageaudubon.org (Under Conservation, look for '4th Tuesday')





CLIMATE CORNER: California Takes an Important Step on the Climate Crisis

by Chris Byrd

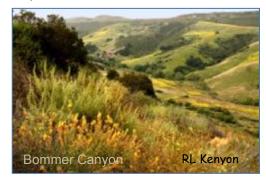
Just Received from Audubon California – "30 by 30" Is Now an Executive Order!

On Wednesday, October 7, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order that implements a "30 by 30" goal that has been strongly supported by Audubon California and by Sea and Sage Audubon – protecting 30% by 2030. The order reads, in part:

"To support the global effort to combat the biodiversity and climate crises, it is the goal of the State to conserve at least 30 percent of California's land and coastal waters by 2030."

The order, titled "Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategies," calls for nature-based climate solutions in forests, urban green spaces, wetlands, and soils. It includes farmer-and rancher-led solutions, and it addresses a wide diversity of stakeholders as well as issues of equitable access to the outdoors, economic sustainability, and food security.

Audubon California issued a press release the same day praising the executive order as "an emphatic commitment that California will lead to protect our shared natural resources."



Let's find opportunities to control climate change!

Social Get-Togethers with Zoom

You are invited to join in online social get-togethers designed as opportunities to chat about topics of mutual interest. Many of us are missing occasions to talk informally with friends during this time when we're avoiding group events. Sylvia Gallagher initiated the idea of Sea and Sage hosting social get-togethers, and she wrote about it in the Oct. Wandering Tattler. Here is an excerpt from Sylvia's article:

"...Let's open a Zoom get-together for an hour or two to a reasonable number of people and just have a good conversation. Since Zoom is such a foreign medium, and all those faces — including your own (!) — in squares staring at you might be sort of off-putting, I thought maybe each get-together ought to have one announced subject to start it out and a leader to keep some semblance of order among the talkers."

The chapter will be hosting virtual discussions on a wide range of subjects using Zoom technology. Several sessions have already been scheduled for October and November, and more sessions will be added as details are finalized. Check on the chapter website seaandsageaudubon.org for the updated schedule as new sessions will be added frequently. Click on a session link to register for a session on Zoom. You will receive an immediate email confirmation of your registration from Zoom, including the Zoom link needed to join the session.

Session coordinators are: Kim King & Chris Byrd

Questions?

Contact seaandsagezoom@gmail.com

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE SESSIONS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING – See website for links

→ Photo Sharing – CA Bird Photos

Hosted by Sandrine Biziaux-Scherson Sunday, October 25 - 5:00 PM

Join a virtual session to share up to five of your favorite photos of birds taken in California and enjoy and talk about other participants' photos. (No, you don't have to send in photos to join this session!)

→ Reading Group

Hosted by Kim King
Wednesday, October 28th - 10:00 AM
Looking for your next good book to read?

Join in to both; share your favorite books about birds, nature, conservation and/or general science, and get some great, new recommendations from fellow birders.

→ My Most Memorable Birding Experience

Hosted by Sylvia Gallagher Friday, November 6th - 7:00 PM

Join us online to share your most memorable birding experience and to hear about the experiences of others. If you're a new birder, it could be the one that interested you in birds in the first place.

→ What Can We Do About Plastics and Trash?

Hosted by Susan Sheakley & Kate Grabenstein Thursday, November 12th - 3:30 PM

Are you concerned about the growing mountains of trash, throw-away plastics everywhere, and all the impacts on wildlife? Join this session to hear what others are doing to minimize their trash output and share what you're doing.

→ Favorite Places to Bird in SoCal

Hosted by Roy Poucher Sunday, November 15th - 7:00 PM

Share your favorite Southern California places to bird (especially ones that are less well known). Join us, share, and learn about great local places you can experience.

→ Attracting Birds to Your Back Yard

Hosted by Mary Ellen Wynn Tuesday, November 17th - 7:00 PM

Whether you're an expert or a novice, come share your experiences with the various do's and don'ts of attracting birds to your yard via such topics as landscaping, native plants, water sources, nest boxes, feeders, food, etc.



Pick up tips on native plants from the OC CNPS at our Oct. 27th '4th Tues.'!

Orange County Rarities by Doug Willick

To report a RARE or UNUSUAL bird, or to receive reports from other birders about rare or unusual bird sightings here in Orange County, send an email to: OrangeCountyBirding+subscribe@groups.io

September is often one of the best months of the entire year in Southern California for experiencing the largest diversity of birds. A high percentage of these are birds moving through our area on their way to wintering grounds that may be as close as Mexico, or as far off as Argentina. And of course some of these migrants will also be spending the winter as close as our own backyards (e.g., Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows). So, since the past month has had an exceptional variety of birds showing up in Orange County, we'll jump right in.

We'll start off with the biggest event of the past month, that being another first county record: this being an "Arctic-type" Warbler that was discovered in the Nature Area of Mile Square Regional Park on Sept. 20! This was unfortunately one of those "one-day-wonders". Interestingly, we may never know exactly what this new first county record is to the *species level*. We at least know it's part of a complex of three closely-related species within a very diverse group commonly referred to as Old World warblers (formerly in the family Sylviidae). Of all the Old World warblers, only one is known to breed in North America, that being Arctic Warbler (whose North American breeding range is restricted to western/central Alaska). However, Arctic Warbler is part of a complex who's breeding range extends west across much of Russia to Scandinavia, and in Asia south to portions of Mongolia. China and Japan. Fairly recently, the Arctic Warbler complex was broken up into three full species, including (besides Arctic Warbler) Japanese Leaf Warbler and Kamchatka Leaf Warbler. Of these latter two, Kamchatka Leaf Warbler is known to occur during migration in the Aleutian Islands, as well as islands in the Bering Sea. Experts with this complex feel that Kamchatka Leaf Warbler and Arctic Warbler are so similar as to not be separable in the field (unless vocalizations are recorded; unfortunately, migrants of these two species, during fall migration, are apparently rarely heard). Based on breeding ranges, Arctic Warbler is certainly considered the species most likely to "stray" during migration and come south along the Pacific coast of North America—even though the Alaska breeding population of Arctic Warbler is assumed to winter in southeast Asia. In California there has been at least nine or ten records of birds identified as "Arctic type warblers" accepted by the California Bird Records Committee. However, all of them are accepted to the species pair of Arctic/Kamchatka Leaf Warbler, due to their extreme similarity, and the potential that Kamchatka Leaf Warbler may conceivably also occur as a "stray" to Alaska and the Pacific coast of North America during migration. So, a somewhat complicated record, but nevertheless an exceptional one!

Fortunately, the following rarities that turned up over the last month were much less complicated! A White-

winged Dove was observed flying by, and landing very briefly, at Harriett Wieder Regional Park (HWRP), Sept. 28. Three Pacific Golden-Plovers appeared at the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station (SBNWS) during mid-Sept; this location has been reliable as a wintering site for this species (from just a few to well over a dozen) going back almost 40 years! As reported last month, the Ruff



returned to the upper Santa Ana River (SAR), near the mouth of the Santa Ana Canyon, though it was apparently last seen Sept. 16. Three juvenile **Stilt Sandpipers** were quite cooperative

at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary (SJWS), Sept. 23, though were gone the next day: this was possibly the largest group of Stilt Sandpipers (i.e., seen together at one time) recorded in Orange County. There was a good showing of **Baird's Sandpipers** in Sept., with birds appearing at SJWS, Peter's Canyon Creek (PCC), and the upper SAR (where a flock of six were present on Sept.11). As many as four **Pectoral Sandpipers** were at SJWS during Sept. 20-23, with others reported here Sept. 25-27, and up to three on Oct. 6. Single juvenile Sabine's Gulls were reported offshore (where a regular migrant) on Sept. 9 and 18. Two species of boobies were reported during the last month, with a **Brown Booby** seen offshore, Sept. 18, and a **Masked Booby** first reported off Crescent Bay Point, Sept. 13-17, and later presumably the same individual present on the jetties at the mouth of Newport Harbor (between Sept. 28 and Oct. 4). An adult Neotropic Cormorant continued at the SJWS through Sept. 7, along with a continuing second-year type bird felt to most likely be a Neotropic. A juvenile Little Blue Heron was carefully identified on San Diego Creek (a few miles upstream of SJWS), where it was known to be present Sept. 15-23. A juvenile Tricolored Heron turned up at the



Bolsa Chica Ecological
Reserve, Oct. 2-4. Yellowcrowned Night-Herons
(including adults and
immatures) have continued to
increase at various coastal
locations around the county
(e.g., BCER, Upper Newport
Bay, Talbert March, and Dana
Point Harbor). In addition, one
continued a short distance
inland, at SJWS through
Sept. 5.

Orange County Rarities by Doug Willick



To report a RARE or UNUSUAL bird, or to receive reports from other birders about rare or unusual bird sightings here in Orange County, send an email to: OrangeCountyBirding+subscribe@groups.io

Adult Zone-tailed Hawks have been seen over the Villa Park Flood Control Basin (Sept. 7), the Orchard Hills area (Sept. 30) and over the El Toro Memorial Park (also Sept. 30); these birds are possibly individuals returning to winter in the area. Swainson's Hawks (which are rare but increasing as migrants in the county) included one over San Diego Creek, Sept. 16, and up to two lingering in the area of the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Center and nearby SBNWS, Sept. 28-30. A Red-naped Sapsucker at O'Neill Regional Park (ONRP), Oct. 2, was slightly on the early side. A Tropical Kingbird was photographed at HWRP, Sept. 18. Single Plumbeous Vireos were at Mile Square Regional Park (MSRP), Sept. 26, and at Gilman Park, Sept. 27. From five, to as many as ten Purple Martins at the SJWS, between Sept. 6 and 9, was exceptional (and perhaps unprecedented in recent decades). At least one or two Bank Swallows were also at SJWS, Sept. 7-13. A Gray Catbird was a nice find at

Gray Catbird

Edison Park (in Huntington Beach), Oct. 6-7.

Rare sparrows were almost anything BUT rare this past month, especially for

two Spizella species. Clay-colored Sparrows were MSRP, SJWS (up to two), at BCER, at Mason Regional Park, at Bart Spendlove Park (Mission Viejo), and at John Baca Park (Huntington Beach), just between Sept. 25 and Oct. 6, for a total of about seven! During Sept. and early Oct. there has been an unprecedented number of Brewer's Sparrows, with a total of roughly 17 to 20, up through Oct. 8!! These have been reported from San Juan Capistrano, Moulton Meadows (Laguna Beach), HWRP, ONRP, Round Canyon, MSRP, SJWS, BCER, and the UC Irvine Ecological Reserve (and wouldn't be surprised if I missed one or two). Other rare sparrows seen in the county during the last month included three more Blackthroated Sparrows, which included singles at BCER, HWRP and SJWS (three were also found in late Aug., as reported in last month's Rarities column). Vesper Sparrows included one at HWRP, Sept. 16; two at SBNWS, Sept. 17; and singles at SJWS, Sept. 24 and Oct. 5-7. A **Grasshopper Sparrow** (rarely found during migration) was at MSRP, Sept. 10. Green-tailed Towhees were at Huntington Central Park (HCP; at least one, Sept. 5-12); at MSRP (one or more between Sept. 11 and 25); at HWRP (one or more between Sept. 17 and Oct. 1), and at ONRP, Oct. 1-2. Numbers of Yellowheaded Blackbirds were reported from a good number of locations, with singles along the upper SAR, on Sept. 3

and 11; at Harvard Community Park, Sept. 7; at SJWS, Sept. 12; and at HCP, Sept. 17.

September just wouldn't be right without some warbler rarities, and this was definitely a good month for numbers of the more expected warbler rarities. For example, Black-and-white Warblers were at Vista Point Park (Laguna Beach), at HCP, and at Gilman Park; American Redstarts were at Pinecrest Park, Gilman Park, HCP, and North Park (Irvine); Blackpoll Warblers were at MSRP, Gilman Park and HCP; and Tennessee Warblers were at MSRP, at HCP and at Yorba Regional Park. In addition, a



Northern Waterthrush was at HCP, Sept. 7-11; a Virginia's Warbler was at MSRP, Sept. 18-25, with another in a Huntington Beach residential area, Oct. 3; at least two Lucy's Warblers were at MSRP, between Sept. 13 and 28, and another Lucy's was at Gilman Park, Sept. 13. A Northern Parula continued at MSRP, Sept. 8 through 28, and another

was in residential area of Huntington Beach, Sept. 5. At least one **Blackburnian Warbler** at HCP, Sept. 18-30; a

Chestnut-sided Warbler at MSRP, Sept. 12-14; and a Canada Warbler at HCP, Sept. 21, were all nice discoveries.

And last, but certainly not



least(!), were several **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**, with two males at HCP (an adult male, Sept. 20, and a hatchyear male, Sept. 23); one at MSRP, Sept. 21; and one at Gilman Park, Sept. 25. And fall isn't over yet—stay tuned for October!

Photographs by Don Hoechlin

Autumn at the Marsh

Trude Hurd, Project Director of Education







Flame Skimmer Dragonfly

Sycamore Leaf

Cedar Waxwing Eats Toyon Berry

Fall is the season of CHANGE at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. In autumn, days transition to cooler temperatures and shorter hours of daylight. It feels great to be out and about on the trails! You may notice that the water level is lower than usual in some ponds. This is so the Irvine Ranch Water District landscapers can go in and cut back any overgrown plants like bulrush. Bulrush spreads by underground roots (rhizomes) and can quickly cover a pond but IRWD makes sure this doesn't happen.

As you walk the trails, notice the tall trees overhead. Stop and listen to the sound of their leaves rustling in the wind. Western sycamore has hand-shaped leaves, Fremont cottonwood has heart-shaped leaves, and Arroyo willow has long narrow leaves. These deciduous trees make their own food through photosynthesis but in November start to go dormant. The abundant green-colored pigments in the leaf cells start to degrade so that the yellow and orange-colored pigments are no longer masked. We notice the leaves have turned yellow and begin to drop off the tree, a sure sign of fall at the wetland!

Another sign of fall is the slow return of waterfowl from their northern breeding grounds. By November, the numbers of ducks have increased in the ponds. There's Northern Shovelers circling in small flocks with their oversized bills dipping below the water surface to strain macro-invertebrates. Cinnamon Teal and Green-winged Teal are common and you might be lucky to spot a Blue-winged Teal. Ruddy Ducks have lost their breeding red feathers and blue bill but not their jaunty tail and quick diving habits.

A wildlife photographer's favorite is the Cedar Waxwing, a fruit-eating bird that supplements its diet with protein-rich insects in summer. To find this bird at the marsh, just locate a toyon shrub whose green berries have turned to bright red in fall. Cedar Waxwings travel in small flocks and descend with high-pitched whistles onto the toyon. They proceed to grab the red berries, one by one, and swallow each one whole. It's a photographic treat to capture the bird with a red berry in its bill! Have you seen one this fall?

Another visitor favorite is the Vermilion Flycatcher. This small, bright red bird breeds in local deserts and then heads to the coast for fall and winter. We eagerly await its arrival at the wetland, usually an adult male and female with an occasional immature male. The Vermilion Flycatcher perches high on a snag (bare branch), looking for insect prey, then flies out to capture the insect and returns to its perch. Snap goes its beak while snap, snap, snap go the photographers' cameras!

Dragonflies are abundant in fall as they fly along the trails above and beside us. They are predators that catch flying insects with their legs and help to keep the mosquito and midge fly populations under control. We have documented 16 species at the marsh including common green darner, flame skimmer, and black saddlebags. How many do you notice on your walk?

The Audubon naturalists and I encourage you and your loved ones to take a safe walk in November to enjoy the autumn sights and smells at this beautiful freshwater wetland.

Directions and Membership

Sea and Sage Audubon Society's mission is to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through education, citizen science, research, and public policy advocacy.



Tattler Subscriptions

Non-Audubon members or members from other Audubon chapters who wish to subscribe to our chapter newsletter, may do so for \$14.00 per year. Make check payable to "Sea and Sage Audubon" and mail to: Tattler Subscriptions, 32 Almond Tree Ln, Irvine CA 92612

Go Paperless!

Sign up to receive your newsletter via email — get your issues faster, help save natural resources, reduce waste, and help our chapter save money! You can read it online or print out the pages you need to refer to more frequently. It is in pdf format and will look and print exactly like the original ones. Photos will be in color. Send an e-mail to nancykenyon@cox.net to start your paper-free Tattler delivery today! (offer good only for chapter members in good standing)

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

to the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary (5 Riparian View, Irvine) Our entrance is from Campus Dr., not Michelson

From the San Diego Fwy (405): Exit on Jamboree, south toward Newport Beach. At the 1st signal, Michelson, turn left. Continue on Michelson (past the old entrance to the SJWS) to the 5th signal which is Harvard and turn right. Drive to University & turn right. Drive to Campus Drive & turn right. Stay in the far right lane and immediately turn right onto Riparian View which will enter the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. The entrance road is marked by a green sign. If you miss the turn and reach Carlson, turn right and go around the block again to Harvard. The sanctuary is open every day from dawn until dusk.

Audubon House

AH is closed at the present time because of Covid-19. However the restrooms, trails, and parking lots are open.

Your Membership Payment

Do you want to join National Audubon and Sea and Sage? Use the membership form at the bottom of this page. An Individual Membership or a Family Membership is only \$20. Sea & Sage receives 100% of a chapter generated new member's dues for the first year. Mail the form and your check - payable to National Audubon Society - to Sea and Sage Audubon. PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616. If you want to use a credit card for your membership payment, go online to: http://www.audubon.org/membership If you have questions, please contact Membership Chair, Jim Kissinger, at membership@seaandsageaudubon.org

Temporarily Away or Moving?

Please notify Jim Kissinger of your new address if you are temporarily, or permanently, moving from your current address; or, let him know if you do not want to continue to receive the Tattler. This will save us postage.

Jim Kissinger, Membership Chair membership@seaandsageaudubon.org

Audubon Membership Application

We invite you to become a member of the National Audubon Society and the Sea and Sage Audubon chapter. Members receive the AUDUBON magazine as well as the WANDERING TATTLER newsletter. **NEW MEMBERSHIP is \$20 for an individual or for a family.** (The membership is good for one year.)

<u>To join</u>: Complete the form below & mail it along with your payment to: Sea and Sage Audubon, PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616 *Make your check payable to:* NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY. *Please pay by check only; do not send cash.*Or, go online to: http://tinyurl.com/hyeaw67 (Our chapter code is C15)

To renew membership: renew directly with National Audubon by direct mail or online: (Renewals are \$20 per year.) http://tinyurl.com/zjbs5tt

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C15

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BIRDS CAN'T VOTE, BUT YOU CAN. BE SURE TO VOTE!

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OTHER CONTACTS

Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center – for injured or sick birds and other native wild animals in need of help (corner of Newland & PCH in HB) 714-374-5587. http://www.wwccoc.org/

Call Songbird Care & Education Center for injured or sick native songbirds. 714-222-6814. www.songbirdcareandeducation.org

SCHEDULE of CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

November 2020:

03	Tues	Conservation Committee Mtg. via Zoom6:45 pm
10	Tues	Board Meeting via Zoom7:00 pm
		GENERAL MEETING via Zoom7:00 pm
24	Tues	4 th Tues Conservation Lecture via Zoom7:00 pm

Bookstore News:

Six titles published by the Sea and Sage Press are now available for purchase by mail order.

- The Birds of Orange County, Status & Distribution
- Atlas of Breeding Birds, Orange County, CA
- Learning CA Bird Sounds packet
- · Learning More CA Bird Sounds packet
- Western Mountain Bird Sounds packet
- · Learning Desert Bird Sounds packet

Information on these books and packets can be found on our chapter webpage at:

https://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/AudubonHouse/natureshop.htm

To place an order, contact Jan Hoidge who is our Bookstore Manager, at:

store.manager@seaandsageaudubon.org