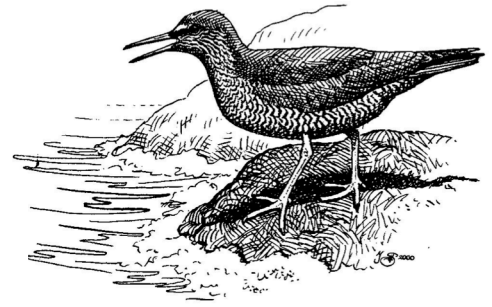


Wandering Tattler

October 2020
Volume 70, Number 2



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

Fall Migration

Gail Richards, President

Fall migration is here. What an exciting time to enjoy the spectacle of birds. Peak fall migration occurs from mid-August to mid-October, but may continue through December. Such a long migration season provides all of us plenty of opportunities to make every walk a treasure hunt. According to the Cornell Lab, 200 million migrants were aloft in the US, on the evenings of September 3-4. With migrants on the move, our local birding sites become transformed with a flood of new species to identify. From beginners to experts, you never know what you might find. We realize some of our best birding days center on being at the right place at the right time. I have been asked by new members, "Where are the best places to go birding around here?" We are so fortunate to have so many. Here is the eBird data (with species counts) from the most recent visits to some of the best birding hotspots in Orange County. Notice that San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary is at the top of the list:

- San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary (63);
- Bolsa Chica Eco Reserve (36);
- Upper Santa River (40);
- Laguna Niguel (17);
- Mile Square Regional Park (37);
- Huntington Beach Central Park (48).

Perhaps some of the fall migrants will make an appearance in our very own backyards! After a summer hiatus, our Backyard Birding flock is gearing up for a fall relaunch. To join the yard squad and participate in our upcoming challenges, visit our website for information on how to register:

(https://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/SpecialEvents/Backyard_Birding.html) Don't forget to share your checklists with "OC Backyard Count".

Mark your calendars for October Big Day — **OCT. 17th**

Big Days are a 24 hour opportunity to celebrate the birds both near you and around the world. The goal of Global Bird Weekend is to make October 17-18 the biggest ever birding weekend and support BirdLife International's appeal to end illegal bird trade. One of Global Bird Weekend's aims is to have more than 25,000 people submit eBird checklists on 17 October—will you be one of them?

So many birds, so little time, so grab your binoculars, take a walk and see what you can find.

General Meeting - Online Presentation
Friday, October 16, 2020 - 7:00 PM
Via Zoom

"Coexisting with Local Wildlife"
*presented by Carly Padilla with the
San Diego Humane Society*

Living in San Diego, we are considered a hotspot for



biodiversity. With all the different habitats and open corridors, we usually come across wildlife on a daily basis. Unfortunately, our interaction with our wild neighbors is not always positive. Wild

animals have adapted to living in our urban environments. Join Project Wildlife Education Specialist, Carly Padilla, as she discusses ways we can co-exist with our native wildlife, things we can do to help, and ways to gently encourage their departure if they have taken up residence. Our wildlife is very beneficial to our ecosystems, playing very important roles for us. Let's learn ways to help so that they will be here for many more years to come.

I grew up here in San Diego and went to college at the University of Hawaii where I received a Bachelors in Zoology. After graduation, I got my dream job as a dolphin trainer at a small park on Oahu. I worked with sea lions, dolphins, penguins and sea birds. After 10 years on the island, I returned home to San Diego where I got a job working with exotic animals. I worked with cheetahs, wallabies, snakes, porcupines and much more. Wild Wonders is a hands-on educational facility, where I presented many informative programs and tours. After 4 years there, I got my job working at Project Wildlife. I've realized that my passion is for conservation education through interaction. Now I present locally, to teach people how to co-exist with our local wildlife and why it is so important!

Here is the link you will need to join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83464786664>

The link will also be listed on the home page of our website: <https://www.seaandsageaudubon.org>

Meeting room opens at 6:30 PM. Join us for some optional social activities prior to the 7:00 PM meeting.

Jonathan Aguayo, Programs Chair

Conservation News

Susan Sheakley, Conservation Chair



Sea and Sage is presenting its '4th Tuesday' Conservation programs virtually! Our next virtual '4th Tuesday' will be on October 27th.
Let's find opportunities to control climate change!

'4th Tues.' Conservation Lecture

Tuesday, Oct. 27th - 7:00 pm

by Zoom

Doors will open at 6:30

"Wildland Plants for Urban Nature Gardens"

Brad Jenkins, California Native Plant Society

Fall is the best season for California native plant gardeners to plan their gardens and the best time to plant, as the weather is cooler and the plants will enjoy any fall and winter rains. With that in mind and to make our yards more bird-friendly, we are excited that Brad Jenkins of the Orange County Chapter of the California Native Plant Society will share his knowledge of native plant gardening.

This talk and slide show covers why local wildland plants are beneficial in our gardens and parks. Of course, the bird connection is one of the vital support points. Also presented are sample plants, where to get them, and tips for design!

Brad Jenkins is currently president of the Orange County Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and was a former statewide board of directors president.

Instructions to join the Oct. 27th Zoom meeting will be on our website at www.seaandsageaudubon.org

Please Note - If you've had trouble getting in to our Zoom meetings, please be aware that we have increased our capacity, which should help.



CLIMATE CORNER:

League of Women Voters of Orange Coast - Climate Change Task Force

Grace Winchell, former mayor of Huntington Beach and long-time OC environmental activist

The League of Women Voters has built a broad national program focused on promoting an environment beneficial to life. It has a long record of advocacy for environmental protection, including water and air quality, energy conservation, renewable resources, nuclear & solid waste management, and the greatest environmental challenge of our generation: climate change.

The League of Women Voters of Orange Coast (LWVOC), which represents 16 cities in Orange County's southwest - the largest of which are Huntington Beach and Irvine - recently formed a Climate Change Task Force with the goal of developing a plan for climate change action/advocacy. The Climate Change Task Force elected to focus on determining what climate actions their sixteen cities have already taken.

As few of the sixteen cities chose to create a Climate Action Plan (CAP) to deal comprehensively with climate action measures, the Task Force is reviewing general plan elements, city ordinances, resolutions, and other documents to discover the climate action or inaction of each city. It is also acquiring information about what local jurisdictions can or must implement, and information about various climate action strategies and best practices. A survey will be sent to planning directors, mayors and city council members for their input about the actions their city has taken. The survey will provide current information for the Task Force and hopefully motivate city leaders to focus on climate action.

Many local groups, like the Sea and Sage Conservation Committee, are advocating for climate change action. The Task Force plans to contact these groups to discuss mutual goals and possible coordination.

The ultimate goal of the Task Force is an advocacy plan consistent with the League's national environmental position. The immediate goal is to assess the existing situation in the LWVOC area.

For information please contact climatechange@lwvorangeoast.org

Social Get-Togethers With Zoom

Sylvia Gallagher



Remember when you used to go on Sea and Sage field trips or informal outings with friends and then go find picnic tables and sit around and eat lunch and just talk about birds and birding?

Remember when you went early to the monthly meeting and congregated around the refreshment table and munched and chatted with each other?

Remember the wonderful Annual Dinner, Summer Barbeque, Pancake Breakfast, all of which involved shared meals and casual conversation—all of which were canceled this year?

Now who do you have those conversations with? Maybe you live alone and just talk to your dog (or cat or bird) who listens politely. Or maybe you live with other people, and their eyes glaze over, not so politely, when you bring up birds once too often.

Being confined at home except for necessary, usually uninteresting excursions to the store or the doctor is becoming harder and harder for all of us as the months go by. Studies have shown that some people are even suffering from actual depression. Humans have been social animals since antiquity and truly need to interact face to face with others.

I came up with an idea to help us all connect with people who actually want to talk about birds, birding, conservation, education about nature, and other things that are part of Sea and Sage's mission.

In this age of the internet, Zoom (and other such services) has come along to help us get together remotely if we have a computer or tablet and a decent internet connection.

Ever since the pandemic started last March, Sea and Sage has been providing access to our monthly General Meetings and 4th Tuesday Conservation Lectures via Zoom. You listened to the speaker, and that was it—no interaction with other attendees.

My idea is just the opposite of this. Let's open a Zoom get-together for an hour or two to a reasonable number of people (I'm thinking 8 to 18) 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. If the conversation diverges from the announced subject after a while and everyone is having fun, that's just fine.

What might we discuss? It should be a question which everyone can talk about easily for a few minutes. Of course, we all love to talk about ourselves! So maybe it could be *"How I got interested in birds"* or *"What is my favorite bird?"* or any of several other personal subjects.

Another suggestion, which will probably be one of our first meetings because we already have leaders for it is, *"What good book about birds or nature have you read recently? Tell us a little bit about it and why you liked it."* This could even lead to regular monthly(?) get-togethers for which everyone reads a particular book, and then you all get together and talk about it.

Lots of people are photographers. *Maybe we could have photo-sharing sessions.*

There are other creative hobbies besides photography. People could show the bird-related products of whatever craft or art form they enjoy, such as drawing, painting, embroidery, wood carving, even making bird figures out of scrap metal and driftwood. (Don't laugh. I know someone who's doing just that.)

A get-together might be combined with a socially distanced field trip. Instead of all going together to a particular park or refuge, everyone would go on their own or with a household mate during a defined week to, say, Mile Square Park or Upper Newport Bay. Then everyone would get together at the end of the week and talk about the birds they saw and where in the refuge they found them. You might even be introduced to a part of the park you weren't familiar with or told about a bird you could go back and hunt for.

A get-together might attempt to find ways to solve challenging problems, such as how to attract more young adults or members of underrepresented ethnic groups to Sea and Sage membership.

You might want to play some sort of trivia game in which each person brings a question and others try to answer it. The questions could either be ones of opinion (*"What is the ugliest bird?"*) or those with right or wrong answers.

And on and on: gardening for birds, bird feeding tips, birder behavior (good and bad), travel, games of various types, etc.

Will this work out? The only way to find out is to schedule a few get-togethers and see if there's interest and how they go. Since this idea was only approved by the Board three days before the *Wandering Tattler* deadline, nothing is scheduled yet. However, our webmaster will be posting meeting subjects, leaders, and times as they are scheduled. They will start in early October. So take a look at our website (the link will be on the home page) near the end of September, and keep looking at it frequently; the meetings (get-togethers) will be added as we find leaders. The procedure for signing up will be on the website, too.

We're still in the process of organizing this whole project. We have a coordinator and may get a second one. We envision a wide variety of topics and many different leaders. *How about you?* Pick a topic that interests *you* and schedule it with a coordinator. Then meet your group on Zoom and get the conversation going. It should be fun!

Orange County Rarities

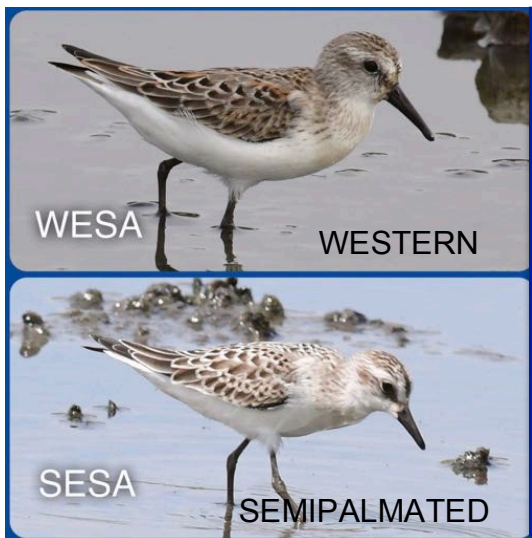
by Doug Willick



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

Although August sure doesn't feel like Fall to most of us in Southern California, for many species of migrant birds it's a time when many have finished their nesting activities, and already begun moving south. Fall migration for shorebirds is typically in full swing in August, and therefore it is this group of birds that tend to get a high percentage of birder attention at this time. (Fall migration for landbirds won't typically reach its peak for another month or more). There was a nice variety of avian highlights in the county this past month, and not surprisingly, shorebirds were responsible for a number of them.

The biggest discovery of the month was unfortunately only present for a few minutes. On Aug. 17, a "peep" mixing in with Least and Western sandpipers at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary (SJWS), showed features of an alternate plumaged **Little Stint**. Photos of the bird were obtained and will be reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Although this species breeds in arctic Europe and Asia, and winters as far south as Africa and southern Asia, it strays very rarely to North America. If accepted by the CBRC, this would be the second record for Orange County (the first record also occurring at SJWS, in July 1992); there are roughly a few dozen accepted records of Little Stint being found in California. Other shorebird highlights from SJWS included a **Snowy Plover**, Aug. 4; at least one lingering **Solitary Sandpiper** during early Aug.; a **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, Aug. 23-24, (in addition to as many as two in July);



comparison of Western & Semipalmated Sandpipers

a **Pectoral Sandpiper**, Aug. 23; and at least two cooperative **Red Phalaropes**, Aug. 15-22.



Elsewhere, there was at least one **Pacific Golden-Plover** at the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station, between Aug. 25 and Sept. 2. The **Ruff** along the upper Santa Ana River (SAR), in east Anaheim (continuing from last month) was still being seen at least through the end of August.



Two **Baird's Sandpipers** were at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve (BCER), Aug. 25, with one still present Aug. 28. Another **Solitary Sandpiper** was along the Peter's Canyon Creek (PCC), in Irvine, Sept. 7. Additional **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were at the BCER, Aug. 25, at PCC, Aug. 29-30. Additional **Pectoral Sandpipers** were along the upper SAR, Aug. 28, and at PCC, Sept. 4.

Orange County Rarities

by Doug Willick

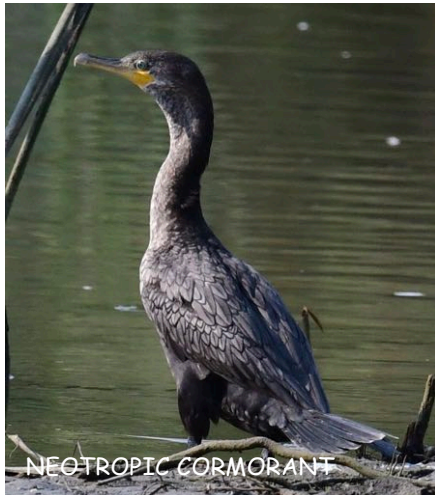


To report a RARE or UNUSUAL bird, or to receive reports from other birders about rare or unusual bird sightings here in Orange County, send an email to: OrangeCountyBirding+subscribe@groups.io

A **Mew Gull** at Crystal Cove State Park, Aug. 20, had undoubtedly been summering locally (one of very few summer records for Orange County); this species doesn't normally appear in the county until November.

An adult **Sabine's Gull**, seen well off Newport Beach, Aug. 2, was early for this offshore migrant. The discovery of an adult **Red-billed Tropicbird** resting on the beach in Newport Beach, in late August was quite a surprise; being apparently injured or sick, the bird was taken to the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center. This is a rare summer or fall visitor to pelagic waters off Southern California, and only a few have been recorded in Orange County waters.

One or more subadult cormorants that appeared to show features of **Neotropic Cormorant** were at the SJWS, or the adjacent San Diego Creek, during August.



NEOTROPIC CORMORANT

As these also seemed to show some features of Double-crested Cormorant, it was unclear if these may have been hybrids. However, an adult cormorant at SJWS, Aug. 25 to at least Sept. 4, appeared to be a straightforward Neotropic Cormorant; possibly the same individual which

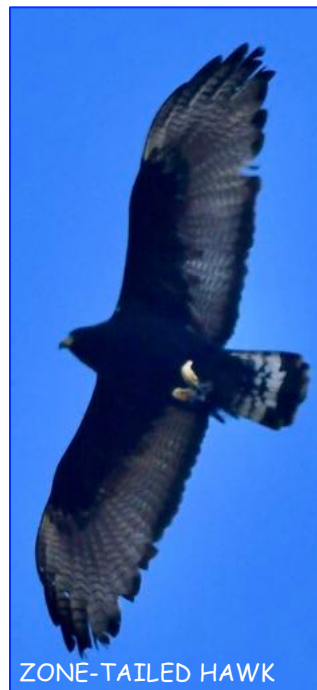
was encountered at Mason Regional Park on Aug. 29. This species continues to extend its range into Southern California. A **Cattle Egret** was at SJWS, Aug. 5, where a juvenile **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was found, Sept 2+.

Another juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was at BCER, Aug. 14-19, and four additional birds (including one adult, a subadult, and 2 juveniles) were at Dana Point Harbor, Aug.13-17.



juvenile YELLOWCROWNED NIGHT-HERON

Nine **Swainson's Hawks** flying over the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station, Aug. 31, was an unusual concentration, especially for fall; this species is one of few "special status" birds in California that has actually increased in both its breeding population and the number of migrant individuals seen throughout the state. Other Swainson's Hawks were subsequently reported from the nearby Joint Forces Reserve Center base, in Los Alamitos. An adult **Zone-tailed Hawk** along the Oso Creek trail in Mission Viejo, Aug. 31, was very close to where one has wintered during the last five years along the Arroyo Trabuco.



ZONE-TAILED HAWK

Other birds of interest include as many as three juvenile **Black-throated Sparrows**, with individuals near Curtis Park (Mission Viejo), Aug. 21; at the Fullerton Arboretum, Aug. 26, and at Ralph Clark Regional Park, Aug. 30. This migratory, otherwise desert-dwelling sparrow occasionally turns up in coastal Southern California counties. A female type **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found in PCC, Aug. 27. Although it's still early for most of the fall vagrant warblers to appear in Southern California, a few have already been present in the county. A **Virginia's Warbler** at Huntington Central Park, Aug. 22, was one of the earlier fall warbler rarities to appear in the area.

However, it's unclear what a few warblers were up to at Mile Square Regional Park (MSRP). After one **Lucy's Warbler** was initially found at Mile Square Regional Park on July 23, at least two were known to be present there Aug. 3-4, with at least one lingering until at least Sept. 2. This desert-breeding warbler nests quite early, and a few post-breeding individuals seem to regularly wander to the coast. A **Northern Parula** was also present at MSRP, Aug. 17 to at least Sept. 2. A male **Summer Tanager** was discovered in Gilman Park, Aug. 17-23.

Photography by Don Hoechlin

Education News

Trude Hurd, Project Director of Education

Turtles at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary



Western Pond Turtle



Red-eared Slider



Spiny Softshell

Our education staff are frequently asked “What’s that turtle in the creek or pond?” With only three turtle species common in Orange County, you can learn them easily by a few field marks. **Red-eared slider** has a large red stripe behind its eye (but this mark may be faded in larger, older sliders.) **Spiny softshell** is very flat and smooth with a pointy nose. **Western pond turtle** (the only native of the three species) has a light-colored head with dark speckles. There’s a fourth species, the snapping turtle, but it is rarely seen.

Turtles are active on warm, sunny days from late February to October. They are **ectotherms** which rely on nature’s temperature instead of internal metabolism to keep them warm. They do not hibernate because they may come out on a warm winter day. Turtles **bask** in the sun, often on top of each other!

A turtle’s shell is made of bone covered by hard plates or leathery skin. When threatened, they retract their head and legs inside the shell for protection. Despite what cartoons depict, turtles cannot turn around inside their shell because their vertebrae are fused to the shell. Algae may grow on the upper shell which helps camouflage.

Locally, turtles eat aquatic plants, snails, insects, crustaceans, fish, frogs and tadpoles. Predators are raccoons, foxes, coyotes, large wading birds like egrets and herons, and of course humans.

Turtles breathe air with lungs like we do, and you may see their little noses sticking out of the pond water as they take a breath. They can stay underwater from a half hour to several hours!

We sometimes observe turtles crossing the road or walking on trails at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in spring. These are usually females looking for a suitable nest site on land. Turtles mate in spring and lay eggs that hatch in 2½ months. They can lay 1-3 clutches of 2-25 eggs; that’s high **fecundity**!

In folklore, turtles are a symbol of longevity, protection, and good fortune. Native Americans believe the turtle represents Mother Earth and sometimes refer to North America as “Turtle Island.” People my age remember The Tortoise and the Hare, Dr. Seuss’s Yertle the Turtle, and Touché Turtle, while kids today are more familiar with the Ninja Turtles and the sea turtle Crush in Finding Nemo. What others do you know?

Although common in the pet trade, red-eared sliders are not good pets because they carry Salmonella bacteria, need large enclosures as they grow, and can live to 20 years. When tired of them, irresponsible owners released the turtles to the wild so this non-native turtle now over-populates our waterways. Red-eared sliders negatively impact native Western pond turtles by introducing unfamiliar diseases and competing for food, habitat and basking sites.

When visiting the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, remember to slow down on Riparian View along the San Diego creek so you don’t hurt native wildlife like Western pond turtles.

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 the Corona virus. 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.)

To join: 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.)

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**Learn about Wildland Native Plants
for urban gardens at our 4th Tues.
Conservation Lecture via Zoom on
Oct. 27th.**

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Administrative Aide	Rebecca Craft	949-261-7963

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

October 2020:

06	Tues	Conservation Committee Mtg. via Zoom.....	6:45 pm
07	Wed	Birds of So CA Birding Skills Workshops begin via Zoom.....	
13	Tues	Board Meeting via Zoom.....	7:00 pm
16	Fri	GENERAL MEETING via Zoom.....	7:00 pm
17	Sat	October Big Day (Birding Day).....	
17-18	SS	Global Bird Weekend (see info on page 1 of Tattler)	
27	Tues	4 th Tues Conservation Lecture via Zoom.....	7:00 pm

November 2020:

03	Tues	Conservation Committee Mtg. via Zoom.....	6:45 pm
10	Tues	Board Meeting via Zoom.....	7:00 pm
20	Fri	GENERAL MEETING via Zoom.....	7:00 pm
24	Tues	4 th Tues Conservation Lecture via Zoom.....	7:00 pm

December 2020:

01	Tues	Conservation Committee Mtg. via Zoom.....	6:45 pm
08	Tues	Board Meeting via Zoom.....	7:00 pm
No General Meeting or 4 th Tues Conservation Lecture in Dec.			
20	Sun	NE (Inland) Christmas Bird Count.....	
27	Sun	San Juan Capistrano (South County) CBC.....	

January 2021:

03	Sun	Coastal Christmas Bird Count.....	
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