

General Meeting - Online Presentation

January 19, 2024 - 7:00 PM

Via Zoom

“Dark-eyed Juncos: Adaptations to the Urban Environment”

Presented by Ellie Diamant and Samuel Bressler

Ellie Diamant is a behavioral ecologist and evolutionary biologist interested in the interaction between human-caused environmental change and wildlife response, particularly birds in the built environment. She is currently a Zuckerman Postdoctoral Scholar at Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Previously, she conducted her doctoral research at UCLA with Pamela Yeh. She explored how populations respond to multiple stressor interactions, with an emphasis on the pattern and process of behavioral and morphological adaptation in an urbanizing songbird, the dark-eyed junco, across Southern Californian cities.

Samuel Bressler is a Biological Consultant with LSA Associates, Inc., specializing in the birds of Southern California. He received his Master’s in biology in 2020 from UCLA, where he studied nesting behavior in dark-eyed juncos. He is also a long-time volunteer and former board member of Sea and Sage Audubon Society, and compiles the organization’s Puente-Chino Hills Christmas Bird Count.

Dark-eyed Juncos are a model species to study urban adaptation and response in California. Together, Ellie Diamant and Samuel Bressler will discuss their 6 years of research into how juncos are being shaped by the urban environment, and the patterns and processes underlying their adaptation to the urban environment. Dark-eyed juncos exhibit differences and similarities in morphological evolution across Southern California, potentially in relation to behavioral innovation. Behaviorally, urban juncos have lower fearfulness across cities and novel nesting behavior. The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to explore how these behaviors are shaped by human activity, demonstrating key insights on behavioral adaptation to city living.

Please join us for this fun filled program. Meeting room opens at 6:30 PM, join us for some virtual games prior to the 7:00 PM meeting. Here is the link you will need to join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89485412380>

(If this link isn’t working for you, try Meeting ID: 894 8541 2380)

Need Help? Email Christine Kim at [chrislakim@gmail.com](mailto:chrislakim@gmail.com).