



Conservation Committee

Fern Zimmerman Conservation Award



Photo by Sandrine Biziaux

The Sea and Sage Audubon Society Fern Zimmerman Conservation Award is presented each spring at our Annual Dinner to recognize individuals or organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation of birds and their habitats. Honorees of the award are nominated and selected by the members of the Conservation Committee.

Award Recipients

2024	Melissa Borde: for leadership and resources protection at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve and initiation of the collaborative, volunteer Reserve Watch Program
2023	Spence Porter: for his support of the study and protection of raptors and other wildlife through countless contributions of his expertise, personal time and the donations of specialized, custom-built electronic communications and tracking equipment.
2022	Robert (Robb) A. Hamilton for decades of tireless work in southern California in the protection of birds and their habitats and for his generosity in sharing his vast knowledge of birds with others.
2021	Vic Leipzig for his long and wide-ranging role as a leader and influence in the local conservation community

2020	Celia Kutcher for more than three decades of unwavering effort to protect and conserve Southern California's native plants and natural habitats
2019	Penny Elia , unsung hero and dedicated activist for protection of wetlands and coastal natural resources.
2018	The Banning Ranch Conservancy for their work and persistence over the last twenty years, and recent milestone successes, toward the preservation of the important natural resources of Banning Ranch
2017	The Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy in recognition of its dedication and success in the acquisition, restoration, and continued maintenance of wetlands in Huntington Beach Certificate of Appreciation to Sam Berry Special Acknowledgement of Dan Silver
2016	Sandy DeSimone for connecting people of all ages to conservation, science and nature through research and education at Starr Ranch
2015	Susan Sheakley for her commitment to conserving birds and their habitats through many years of service as Chair of the Sea and Sage Audubon Society Conservation Committee
2014	Jean Watt for her lifetime commitment to conservation, and including founding and leading the Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks
2013	Diane Bonanno and Angela Lindstrom for a successful referendum in the City of Fullerton and for dedication in the continuing battle to save West Coyote Hills
2012	Melanie Schlotterbeck for her success in protecting critically important open spaces in Orange County through the Measure "M" process
2011	David Pryor for his devotion and dedication to the conservation of California Least Terns, Snowy Plovers and other shorebirds, with State Parks and volunteer projects such as the Least Tern Colony Natural Preserve
2010	Trish Smith for her commitment and dedication to the protection of Coastal Cactus Wren populations and development of the statewide working group for recovery of the Coastal Cactus Wren
2009	Richard (Dick) Zembal for the study and conservation of the Light-footed Clapper Rail and the protection of the Santa Ana River Watershed
2008	Mark Bixby and Julie Bixby for the conservation and preservation of uplands at the Bolsa Chica in Huntington Beach
2007	Peter Knapp for his commitment and dedication to the conservation and care of Snowy Plovers, habitats, and shorebirds at Bolsa Chica
2006	Rick Derevan , Legal Counsel pro bono for Sea & Sage Audubon, for his many contributions to Audubon and success in defending open-spaces in Trabuco Canyon
2005	Tim Miller for his dedication to conservation, as Director and Superintendent of Parks with OC Harbors Beaches and Parks
2004	Garry Brown for conservation of the ocean through Orange County Coastkeeper

2003	Marilyn Ganahl, Teresa Sears, and Shirley Grindle for preservation of Barham Ranch in the City of Orange
2002	Members of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica and Members of the Bolsa Chica Land Trust for the protection and restoration of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands
2001	Claire Schlotterbeck for the preservation of Coal Canyon
2000	Scott Thomas and Susan Gallagher for leadership on the Conservation Committee and Raptor Research Projects
1999	Paul Carlton for his work creating and manging the Friends of the Foothills and Santa Ana Mountains Conservation Campaign
1998	John McCaul , Audubon California Legislative Lobbyist, for his commitment to chapters and conservation
1997	Sylvia Gallagher for conservation of birds through adult education <i>Sylvia was the first recipient of the Conservation Award after it was renamed Fern Zimmerman Consorvation Award to honor Fern Zimmerman, a lifelong advocate of conservation in Orange County and beyond.</i>
1996	Elisabeth Brown, PhD for the protection of Laguna Beach open spaces
1995	Peter Bloom for the advancement of our understanding and conservation of raptors in Southern California
1994	Kaaren Perry and the Sea and Sage Education Committee for their outstanding efforts to educate youth about birds, science and nature
1993	Dr. Jack and Nancy Skinner for the protection of Newport Bay Dan Silver for the work completed by the Endangered Habitats League on behalf of open spaces and the California Gnatcatcher
1992	Pete DeSimone for leading the effort to protect Las Flores
1991	Ray Chandos for the protection of Trabuco Canyon
1990	Cameron Cosgrove for support of conservation in the City of Irvine
1989	Walton W. Wright for habitat protection and conservation of natural open space in Orange County
1988	Loren Hays for his unending work on behalf of Huntington Beach Central Park
1987	Gary Gorman for establishing the Huntington Beach Wetlands
1986	Connie Spenger for her efforts to preserve the Tecate Cypress
1985	Amigos de Bolsa Chica for their efforts to preserve Bolsa Chica
1984	Kenneth S. Croker , Orange County Sierra Club, for his 20 years of conservation leadership Gordon B. Ruser for his contribution to the preservation of Weir Canyon and Tecate Cypress in Coal and Gypsum Canyons Special awards to Carolyn Honer and Sylvia Ranney for their direction and production of the Birds of Southern California films
1983	Ferne Cohen for her efforts and success in the protection of Weir Canyon
1982	Dave Bontrager for Irvine Regional Park Oak Tree Preservation
1981	Judy Rosener for outstanding service as Coastal Commissioner Dave Myers for efforts to protect Chino Hills
1980	Margaret Carlberg for efforts to protect Bolsa Chica
1979	Hal Thomas for work with the Environmental Coalition

1978	Chuck Greening for protection of environment through Hills for Everyone
1977	Shirley Grindle , Orange County Planning Commissioner, for the Tin Cup Campaign Reform
1976	Dale Secord for establishing the Environmental Coalition of OC
1975	James Dilley for work to protect Laguna Greenbelt
1974	Rod Sackett , Santa Ana Greenbelt Coordinator, for his able direction of the first two years of the Santa Ana Greenbelt Plan
1973	Fern Zimmerman for her lifelong interest and activity in conservation in Orange County
1972	Donald Shipley , Mayor of Huntington Beach, for his efforts to secure parkland for the City of Huntington Beach
1971	Frank and Frances Robinson , Defenders of the Bay, for their efforts to preserve Upper Newport Bay as an ecological preserve
1970	William Fitch , Orange County Air Pollution Control Officer, for his dedicated fight against air pollution in Orange County
1969	Adaline Walker for her work with garden clubs throughout Orange County
1968	John W. Johnson , high school biology instructor in Corona del Mar, for his work with students and fostering their interest in conservation
1967	C.M Featherly , Orange County Supervisor, for his efforts toward adding parkland to Orange County