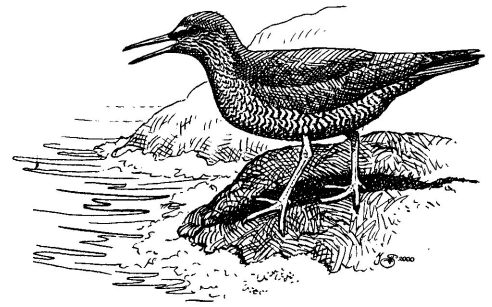


Wandering Tattler

September 2026
Volume 76, Number 1



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

Summer Highlights

Melissa Rapp, President

This summer has been one of growth, innovation, and advocacy as we continue to support our mission to protect birds, wildlife, and their habitats through education, science, outreach, and conservation. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, members, donors, and community partners.

Education: Our Marsh Education Project concluded another successful season of Nature Day Camps, inspiring children to connect with nature. This fall, Outdoor Adventures will once again welcome hundreds of students to the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.

Science: We celebrated the installation of a new Motus Wildlife Tracking Tower at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. This tower receives signals from tiny transmitters attached to migratory birds, bats, and insects, allowing scientists to better understand migration routes and critical habitats. The Marsh tower is the first Motus station providing coverage for inland Orange County. This project was made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor honoring Doreen Johnson, together with support from Sea and Sage Audubon, the Irvine Ranch Water District, Pasadena Audubon, and the Southern Sierra Research Station.

Outreach: I am delighted to welcome Hope Ludwig as our new Community Outreach and Digital Education Coordinator. This new position will expand our ability to engage the community through events, educational programs, our website, and social media. Creating this position has been nearly a year in the making, and after reviewing 21 highly qualified applicants, Hope emerged as the ideal candidate. Reaching people where they are—in our communities and online—is one of the most effective ways to inspire conservation and broaden support for our mission.

Conservation: Our conservation work has faced significant new challenges in recent months. Changes to the interpretation of the Endangered Species Act, proposed reductions in conservation agency staffing, and the ongoing federal review of the California Coastal Commission all have the potential to weaken protections for birds and other wildlife. Sea and Sage continues to work with conservation partners, engage elected officials, participate in advocacy efforts, and ensure that the interests of birds are effectively represented.

As we look ahead, I encourage each of you to continue supporting Sea and Sage Audubon through volunteering, education, advocacy, and financial support.

General Meeting - ZOOM Presentation Friday, September 18 - 7:00 PM

The Motus Revolution: Tracking Bird Migration

Presented by Chris Spurgeon

As long as there have been humans, we've wondered why some birds are present during certain seasons but absent during others. Slowly, we've uncovered many of the secrets of bird migration, but there is still a tremendous amount to learn. A little more than a decade ago, researchers devised a revolutionary new method of tracking birds during their annual migrations: the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. This innovative network combines ultra-tiny radio transmitters with a continent-wide network of receiving stations. It's no exaggeration to say that, thanks to the Motus system, we've learned more about bird migration in the past ten years than we did in the previous hundred.

Now, Sea and Sage is part of the Motus revolution! Join us as Motus advocate Chris Spurgeon explains what



Motus is, how it works, what it has taught us, and how you can get involved.

Photo: Here's a Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) wearing a Motus transmitter.

Chris Spurgeon is a board member of the Southern Sierra Research Station and the Pasadena Audubon Society, where he leads their Motus program. He has helped install numerous Motus stations throughout



Southern California, including Sea and Sage's new Motus station at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Meeting is by Zoom only and
meeting doors will open 6:30 pm.**

**Join us at 6:45 pm. for a Sea and Sage project
highlight; meeting starts at the 7:00.**

Zoom meeting ID: 841 9842 3399

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84198423399>

Need help? Email Melissa Rapp at
programs@seaandsage.org

Conservation News

Susan Sheakley, Conservation Chair



Join us at our September Meetings

Cons Committee TU **Sep 1** 6:45pm; Tackling Climate & Trash TU **Sep 15** 4pm, S Warriar; Bird Collisions Wed **Sep 16** 7pm, H Ludwig; Leg & Advocacy SU **Sep 27** 4:30pm, V Leipzig; Coastal Issues TBA S Thomas; '4th Tues.' **Sep 22** 7pm
Contact us at conservation@seaandsage.org

'4th Tues.'

Conservation Lecture

Tuesday, September 22nd – 7:00 pm

Zoom Doors will open at 6:30 pm

"Trash Talk - Reducing, Recycling, and Composting"

Presented by Patty Oh, Executive Director of Cool OC

Today's consumerism and fast-paced lifestyle have created a throwaway culture with real consequences – overflowing landfills, methane emissions, and wasted resources.

This talk explores the scale of the waste problem and the three most effective ways to tackle it:

- reducing consumption at the source,
- recycling correctly to avoid contamination, and
- composting food waste to divert organics from landfills and cut emissions.

We'll discuss practical steps you can start using today. - **Patty Oh, Cool OC**



Advance Registration is required for this event and will be available through the Sea and Sage website under "What's New" and "Conservation".
Please join us!!

Sea and Sage BBQ Reduces Landfill Waste

The chapter simplified the BBQ clean-up process and dramatically reduced waste to the landfill. Food and drinks were served using *reusable* chapter or rental flatware, plates, and drinks cups; *recyclable* aluminum cans and a small number of No.1 plastic cups; and *compostable* dinner napkins. As a bonus, the food waste and compostable napkins went into the organic waste bucket, which went off to the waste hauler's facility to be turned into rich compost for use in gardening and to enrich the soil in our yards! **Win-Win!**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Review of Coastal Protections.

On May 20, 2026, NOAA, directed by the Secretary of Commerce, announced an unscheduled review of California's Coastal Protection Program's compliance with the federal Coastal Zone Management Act (despite a favorable review in 2024 – 2025) and alignment with the federal government's desire to increase offshore oil drilling, SpaceX launches, and construction of desalinization plants. California has a long record of balancing coastal protections with the vast economic opportunities and has approved many projects when they are environmentally and economically responsible. This review may threaten California's autonomy to protect our coast and could also result in federal funding cuts. The Conservation Committee will attend NOAA hearings in August, as well as submit written comments in support of California's Coastal Protection program. More details will be on our website under "Conservation".

November Ballot Initiative, Prop 45. The California Building Industry, California Chamber of Commerce, and others have put Proposition 45 on the November ballot. Prop 45 would weaken the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and reduce public input and engagement in the environmental review processes. Sea and Sage and many of our partner conservation organizations are urging **No on 45**. More information will be available on our website and in future newsletters.

Chapter News & Announcements



For more information about Sea & Sage activities, check the CALENDARS on our chapter webpage at seaandsageaudubon.org



Audubon House Volunteers

We would like to thank all of our Audubon House volunteers who staff Audubon House and keep it open to the public..

Our volunteers greet visitors, answer the phone, sell merchandise, answer questions about birds, check out binoculars, etc. If you are interested in helping at Audubon House, please contact our Audubon House Volunteer Coordinators at ahvolcoor@seaandsage.org.

Holiday Boutique Returns this Nov!

Join us on Sunday, November 29. The Audubon House and the Duck Club will come alive with holiday spirit as we gather for seasonal treats and beverages, holiday shopping, and time spent with friends old and new.

The Nature Store will feature a wonderful selection of unique, thoughtfully chosen gifts for the bird and nature lovers on your list - and perhaps a little something for yourself. More details about the day's festivities will be shared as the event gets closer, but for now, mark your calendar.

We hope you'll join us as we welcome back this special holiday tradition!

Reading Group: Tues, Sept. 15 – 2:30

Quilt Stories – by Sylvia Ranney Gallagher
QUILT STORIES is fundamentally a memoir of a woman who has the heart, soul, and determination of an avid birdwatcher & recordist, an explorer, a passionate artist, disciplined scientist, and dedicated teacher. Zoom link: info@seaandsage.org

Summer Barbecue; were you there?

If you missed this year's Summer BBQ, you missed a good one! Gail Richards did a great job organizing the event and it ran like clock-work. The food was delicious, the BBQ volunteers did a great job, the event ran on schedule, and the weather was pleasant! We'd like to thank all the volunteers who helped with this event. Next year's Summer BBQ will be July 31. Hope to see you there!



Your Donation Brings Santa Ana Students to the Marsh

In 2026-27, we will bring 50 Santa Ana classes to the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary for our exciting Outdoor Adventures science program. According to one Santiago Elementary School teacher, "the impact extends beyond our classroom, as students share what they've learned with their families and begin to see themselves as caretakers of the environment they will one day inherit."

If you support nature experiences for local school children, then please consider sending a school bus donation this fall. All donations are helpful: \$300 for 30 students (one bus), \$150 for 15 students (half bus), \$100 for 10 students, \$50 for 5 students, \$10 for 1 student. They all add up and make a positive impact on children. Send your check to **School Bus, Sea and Sage Audubon, PO Box 5447, Irvine, CA 92616**.

Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

- The California Coastal Commission announces the 27th annual California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest to pay tribute to the state's spectacular coast and ocean.
- This annual contest is free and open to all amateur photographers. An amateur photographer is defined as someone who earns less than 50 percent of their income from photography.
- Enter photos until September 30, 2026 (5PM)
- To see previous winners, rules, and categories visit www.coastal.ca.gov/photo

Share nature with children as an Outdoor Adventures Naturalist!



**Help children connect with nature.
Make new friends.
Learn about common wildlife of wetlands.
Be part of a worthwhile project.**

You will do all these as a volunteer Outdoor Adventures Naturalist at the beautiful San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. Together, we lead small groups of 4-5th graders through a two-hour nature program: one-hour Bird Walk around the wetland, half-hour Pond Study with microscopes, and half-hour Bird Adaptations with bird specimens.

Training begins in early September.

- 4 classes (Sept-Oct) and 9 practice sessions (Oct-Feb).
- Tuesday and/or Thursday mornings from 9 AM to 12:30 PM with make-up dates.
- Minimum age 18 years old and physically able to walk at a quick pace.
- You don't need to be a bird expert, just be flexible, patient and kind with children. Retired teachers a plus!

Volunteer commitment.

- After graduation, you volunteer only 2 days per month on Tuesday or Thursday mornings depending on your schedule; you choose your own dates!

To get the Fall Training Schedule of exact dates and talk with our Project Director, contact Trude Hurd by email EducationDirector@seaandsage.org

Field Trip Schedule for 2026-2027

For detailed information and registration requirements for these trips, go to our website seaandsageaudubon.org and select Birding / Field Trips. For questions regarding field trips and reservations, email fieldtrips@seaandsageaudubon.org

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sun 13 Bird Walk at the SJWS
Wed 16 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Thurs 17 Bolsa Chica Bird Walk
Sun 20 Carbon Canyon Bird Walk
Wed 23 Irvine Regional Park Bird Walk
Sun 27 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

OCTOBER 2026

Sat 03 Fall Pelagic Trip out of Dana Point (\$)
Sun 11 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Tues 13 Quail Hill Open Space Preserve Walk
Thurs 15 Dana Point Harbor Bird Walk (P)
Sun 18 Bi-monthly Anaheim Coves Bird Walk
Wed 21 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Sun 25 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

NOVEMBER 2026

Sat TBD OC Bird of Prey Center (\$)
Sun 08 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Sun 15 Bi-Monthly Carbon Canyon Bird Walk
Wed 18 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Thurs 19 Bolsa Chica Bird Walk
Sun 29 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

DECEMBER 2026

Tue 08 Quail Hill Open Space Preserve Bird Walk
Sun 13 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Wed 16 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
TBD Northeastern (Inland) CBC
TBD Chino Puente-Hills CBC
Sun 27 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

JANUARY 2027

TBD San Juan Capistrano CBC
TBD Coastal CBC
Sun 10 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Sun 17 Bi-Monthly Carbon Canyon Bird Walk
Wed 20 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Thurs 21 Bolsa Chica Bird Walk
Sat 23 Winter Pelagic Trip out of Dana Point (\$)
Sa-Su 23/24 Salton Sea Weekend Trip (\$)
Sun 24 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

FEBRUARY 2027

Sat 06 Caspers Wilderness Park
Tues 09 Quail Hill Open Space Preserve Bird Walk
Sun 14 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Sun 14 San Jacinto Wildlife Area Bird Walk (\$)
Wed 17 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Sun 21 Bi-Monthly Anaheim Coves Bird Walk
Sun 28 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

MARCH 2027

Sun 14 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Wed 17 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Thurs 18 Bolsa Chica Bird Walk
Sun 21 Bi-Monthly Carbon Canyon Bird Walk
Sun 28 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

APRIL 2027

Sa-Su 10-11 Eastern Sierra Weekend Trip (\$)
Sun 11 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Tues 13 Quail Hill Open Space Preserve Bird Walk
Sat 17 James Dilley Preserve (Laguna Beach)
Sun 18 Bi-monthly Anaheim Coves Bird Walk
Wed 21 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Wed 21 Irvine Regional Park Bird Walk
Sun 25 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

MAY 2027

Sat 01 Spring Pelagic Trip out of Dana Point (\$)
Sun 09 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Wed TBD Starr Ranch Field Trip (Loop Trail)
Sat TBD Starr Ranch Field Trip (Bell Canyon Rd)
Sat 15 Big Morongo Canyon Preserve
Sun 16 Bi-Monthly Carbon Canyon Bird Walk
Wed 19 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Thurs 20 Bolsa Chica Bird Walk
Sun 30 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

JUNE 2027

Tues 08 Quail Hill Open Space Preserve Bird Walk
Sat 12 Least Tern Natural Preserve ®
Sun 13 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Sun 20 Bi-Monthly Anaheim Coves Park Bird Walk
Sun 27 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

JULY 2027

Sun 11 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Thurs 15 Bolsa Chica Bird Walk
Sun 18 Bi-Monthly Carbon Canyon Bird Walk
Sun 25 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

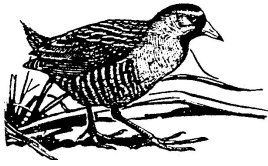
AUGUST 2027

Sun 08 Monthly Bird Walk at the SJWS
Sat 14 Big Bear Valley (\$)
Sun 15 Anaheim Coves Park Bird Walk
Wed 18 UNB by pontoon boat (\$)
Sun 29 Monthly Bird Walk at UNB

(P) - Parking spaces have meters

(R) - Space limited; reservations necessary
See field trips webpage

(\$) - Pay in advance – see webpage for event



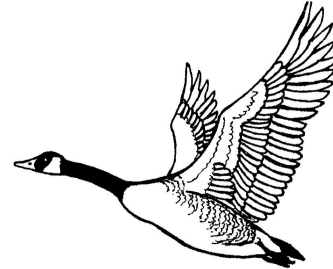
Sea and Sage Audubon Society 2026
Birds of Southern California
An Introductory Birding Skills Workshop
presented by Sylvia R. Gallagher



Sea and Sage Audubon Society is again offering a ten-week workshop on bird identification for beginning birders or those with a small amount of knowledge, which is most likely disorganized and lacking in unifying principles. Professional biologists whose expertise is not in ornithology or whose studies have been confined to just a few species or places, will find this workshop helpful, too. Each session will feature about 15 common birds of a particular local habitat on the coastal side of the mountains. With the use of printed worksheets and photos from the Sea and Sage Library, Sylvia Gallagher will help you to learn to identify those birds. In the process, you'll also be introduced to a variety of other topics, such as bird families, plumages and molts, bird topography, distribution and habitat preferences, behavior, vocalizations, the birding literature, birding ethics and etiquette, etc.

The topics to be covered in the series are:

1. Birds of neighborhoods.
2. Birds of playing fields and parking lots.
3. Birds of mudflats and shallow water.
4. Birds of the ocean shore.
5. Birds of the open country.
6. Birds of prey.
- 7,8. Birds of the streamside woodland (in 2 parts).
9. Birds of bays, lakes, and marshes.



Each person will attend ten weekly meetings via Zoom. For these, you'll need a computer and good internet access. Although sharing computers is possible, for best results, each person should have his/her own computer in a separate room.

You will choose one of these three sections to attend:

- Tues. mornings: 9:00 a.m. – ca. noon, Oct. 6 – Dec. 15 except Nov. 24
Wed. evenings: 7:00 – ca. 10:00 pm, Oct 7 – Dec. 16 except Nov. 25
Thurs. evenings: 7:00 – ca. 10:00 pm, Oct. 8 – Dec. 17 except Nov. 26

Four half-day field trips to Orange County locations will be scheduled, and each time you may choose Saturday or Monday. They are on the weekends following the 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th workshop sessions. Participants will be divided into small groups of 5 -10 people with an experienced leader. The places will be Huntington Central Park (Oct. 14, 26), Crescent Bay Point & Upper Newport Bay (Nov. 7, 9), Irvine Regional Park (Nov. 21, 23), and Yorba Regional Park (Dec. 12, 14), all Orange County locations. Except for FT #2, which depends on the tides, the trips will run from 8:00 am till around noon. The workshop class sessions will be presented remotely using Zoom to accommodate people who don't live close by and also meet popular demand.

Mail (not email) your reservation (see form below) for this workshop, **postmarked no earlier than Sept. 8** (2-day penalty for early reservations), to "Introductory Workshop, Sylvia Gallagher, 21562 Kaneohe Ln, Huntington Beach CA 92646." Priority for placement in sections will be based on postmark date. **Enclose a LONG (4" x 9½") self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE).** If you can afford it, also please enclose a workshop donation of \$130 (check, cashier's check, or money order) made out to Sea and Sage Audubon Society. **Confirmations will be mailed Sept. 28**, including further information. The donation may be paid in 2 installments, half with your reservation and the other half by Nov. 7.

The maximum enrollment for each section is 21. If any section does not have at least 12 people enrolled by Sept. 24, it will be canceled. Reserve early though, because some sections may fill quickly.

The required book for the workshop is the **7th edition** (no other!) of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* by Dunn and Alderfer. This book is out of print, but used ones are available. Recommended, but not required, is *Birds of Southern California* by Garrett, Dunn, and Small. These books are available in the book section of the Sea and Sage Audubon House Nature Store, open daily from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Shortly after the confirmations are mailed, you will also receive, this time via email, an access code to a portion of Sea and Sage's Dropbox, where you will find the workshop's introductory pictures plus the printed material in pdf form.

YOU WILL HAVE TO PRINT OUT THE TEXTUAL MATERIAL. Read first the Dropbox document entitled "READ FIRST" for further information.

If you have questions, contact Sylvia at sjrgallagher@yahoo.com (preferred) or 714-962-8990. If you phone and get no answer, don't leave a message; write an email instead.

Enrollment Form for Workshop

Print VERY neatly!!! Be sure no symbol is ambiguous.

Enrollment Form – Introductory Birding Skills Workshop (FALL, 2026)

Names of all participants _____

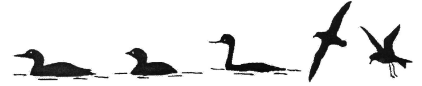
Address(es) _____

City _____ ZIP _____ Phone(s) _____

E-mail(s) _____

Check (or rank) your choice of section for the Zoom **workshop meetings**:

TUES. am _____ WED. pm _____ THURS. pm _____



Rank your level of birding experience. This will help us plan the field trip leadership.

TOTAL beginner _____ In between _____ Some experience, perhaps patchy _____

SASE enclosed? _____ Workshop donation enclosed? _____ Amount now _____

MAIL TO: Introductory Workshop, Sylvia Gallagher, 21562 Kaneohe Ln, Huntington Beach CA 92646

Early Reminder!!

- Pancake Breakfast at the Marsh – Saturday, October 31

On Saturday morning, Oct. 31, we will once again host the Sea and Sage Annual Pancake Breakfast at the Marsh (San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine). As always, the Breakfast menu will include pancakes, sausages, fresh fruit, orange juice, hot coffee, milk for the kids, and a morning of fun activities.

It's not Just Pancakes! This event is more than just a pancake breakfast! Participants can browse through nature books at our famous Used Book Sale, spend some time and visit Audubon House and also shop at the Nature Store, visit the Wild Birds Unlimited and Optics4Birding booths, and check out our many chapter exhibits.

Complete information, including Reservations and Ticket Sales, will be included in the October issue of the Tattler and on our website, www.seaandsageaudubon.org by mid-September. We hope to see you there!

Artzy Birders

Join Sea & Sage Audubon for Artzy Birders, a monthly craft-and-learn experience for adults (18+) who enjoy nature, creativity, and community. Held on the first Friday of every month from 6:00-8:00 PM at The Learning Center, each event features a short nature talk followed by a guided, hands-on craft inspired by the evening's theme. No art experience is necessary. Every month offers a different topic and project, making each Artzy Birders event a unique experience. Visit our website to learn more and sign up for an upcoming session. We look forward to crafting with you!

Bloom-Hays Research Grants

Students who were awarded research grants



2026 Bloom-Hays Ecological Research Grant & Zembal Wetland Research Grant:

In this era of reduced funding available for research science, Sea & Sage Audubon received a record-number of applications compared to previous years! Applicants requested a total of over \$138,000 of funding in 2026. Thanks to our members who donated to the grant funding, the Sea & Sage Student Grants Committee was able to fund eight excellent student proposals.

The objective of the **Bloom-Hays Ecological Research Grant** is to advance ecological research, particularly research related to avian species and the natural communities upon which they depend, by providing funds or supplies to support research activities benefitting native species and habitats in Southern California.

- **Claudia Sandell**, California State University, Long Beach (Undergraduate). \$1,730.
Applying Passive Acoustic Monitoring to Study Threatened Bird Communities in Southern California Estuaries
- **Kinley Renger**, University of California, Santa Barbara (Undergraduate). \$1,500.
Avian Response to Riparian Fire Disturbance
- **Charlie Dees**, University of Colorado (PhD). \$4,700.
A Conservation Genetic Framework for Evaluating ESA Listing Status in Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- **Madison Elowitt**, University of California, Riverside (PhD). \$3,475.
Scaling Up our Understanding of How Conservation Grazing Alters Habitat Heterogeneity in Southern California Landscapes
- **Marlene (Mars) Walters**, University of California, Los Angeles (PhD). \$2,500.
Capturing Real-time Evolutionary Processes in a Currently-establishing Songbird Population on Santa Cruz Island, California
- **Katie Smith**, University of Nevada, Reno (MS). \$2,500.
The Toll of Terminal Lakes, Toxins, and Travel
- **Metzli Cadena Soto**, Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada, Baja California (MS). \$1,000. *Vireo bellii pusillus Breeding Habitat in Baja California*

Zembal Wetland Research Grant: The objective of the Zembal Wetland Research Grant is to advance ecological research related to coastal wetland habitats of Southern California, including habitats that support shorebirds and seabirds.

- **Melissa Baldino**, University of California, Berkeley (PhD), \$4,790. *Estimating Ecosystem Function and Avian Biodiversity in Carbon Restored Wetlands Through Remote Sensing*

Orange County Rarities

by Braxton Landsman



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

Besides the first half of June, when it is prime time to find many eastern vagrants coastally, the summer months of June and July encompass some of the slowest overall birding of the year in coastal Southern California. Landbird migration has mostly gone, shorebird migration is just underway, and breeding activity is in a steady decline after late June. That said, there are a number of solid options during mid-summer, most notably pelagic birding and shore birding, both of which can produce stellar rarities.

An **American Oystercatcher** continued on the jetties at Dana Point Harbor throughout the summer. Additional rare shorebirds included an ultra rare **LITTLE STINT** at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on June 14 and 15. A juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was also at Bolsa Chica on July 19, with another at San Joaquin Marsh on July 27. A long overdue first county record **GUADALUPE MURRELET** was photographed only a couple miles off Newport Beach on August 1.

An adult **Laughing Gull** was photographed in Dana Point on June 28. A **Black Tern** was seen at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on July 30. A much rarer **Arctic Tern** was also at Bolsa Chica on June 15, as well as a **Common Tern** only a week later. A dead **Red-billed Tropicbird** was found floating offshore on July 18. Also on July 18 was the 5th Orange County record **Laysan Albatross** a handful of miles off Newport Beach. A **Manx Shearwater** was among Black-vented Shearwater rafts off Newport Beach on July 25.

Two **Red-footed Boobies** were reported from the county on August 1, one off Dana Point and one well-photographed off Newport Beach. **Coco's Boobies** were off Newport Beach on July 25 and August 2. Three **Nazca Boobies** were photographed off of Newport Beach from mid July through August 2. Photo analysis reveals these are likely three separate individuals, a remarkable total likely influenced by the warm El Niño waters. **Neotropic Cormorants** continued along the Upper Santa Ana river in Anaheim, with more birds at San Joaquin Marsh and Mason Regional Park in Irvine. Additional birds were at Laguna Niguel Regional Park in mid-July, and another at San Juan Creek Mouth in Dana Point on July 26.

Adult **Little Blue Herons** were along the Upper Santa Ana River in Anaheim in late June, as well as Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in July and early August. **Western Cattle-Egrets** were at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge on June 23, as well as San Joaquin Marsh in Irvine on June 24 and July 7.

An **Eastern Kingbird** was photographed at Aliso Woods Canyon Wilderness Park on June 11. A **Red-eyed Vireo** was in residential Laguna Niguel on June 9. Two **Bank Swallows** were at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on July 16, while another was at Anaheim Coves Park on July 22. An alternate plumaged **Tennessee Warbler** was at Huntington Central Park on June 5. **Northern Parulas** were at Huntington Central Park on June 5, and at Bartlett Park in Huntington Beach on June 13. An **American Redstart** was at Huntington Central Park on June 7. The expected annual **Lucy's Warbler** was at Mile Square Regional Park on July 19. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were present at Shipley Nature Center on June 26, and Mile Square Regional Park on June 21.

Year Listing – by Braxton Landsman

The Case For Discovery

Have you ever stopped to consider why you go birding? For some, it's the beauty of the birds themselves. For others, it's simply to get outside. For many, those initial motivations serve as the framework for a much deeper relationship with the hobby. Often, or perhaps, too often, this includes the competitive side of birding: the relentless pursuit of year lists, county lists, and ever-growing totals. But what are the true benefits of this method? Are there better, equally exciting ways of going about birding?

When I began birding around the age of 10, I was teaching myself the foundations of the hobby. As a result, I usually found myself taking it slow, exploring parks and trails off the beaten path close to my home. While it helped me learn the birds themselves, it did not teach me about the so-called “game” of birding. I quickly realized that I wanted more excitement, more rarities, and longer lists. Little did I know that I would later long for this early method of discovery.

As I began to enter the world of eBird Rare Bird Alerts, I soon discovered county needs alerts, and then county yearly needs alerts, and then chasing, and then the eBird top 100, and so on... Before I knew it, I was chasing a million birds for my county list, and even some for my year list. Checking my place in the yearly top 100 was fun, for a while. Soon, nearly all of my outings were simply to chase one target species. At some point I realized that after each failed chase, I was visibly upset that I had struck out, even deflated and quiet during the car ride home. I wish I'd known then, at age 11 or 12, what I know now.

Over the next year or two, my love for birding only grew, while my desire to chase every bird lessened. At the time, I couldn't tell you why. Looking back, I think the increased knowledge and skill I had begun to acquire motivated me to embrace it more. Instead of looking for other peoples' finds, I would use it to try to find my own birds, my own rarities, and my own experiences. I didn't actually make this decision—it just kind of happened. It wasn't because I lost some of my ever-present competitive drive, but maybe because I realized that my style of birding isn't the greatest place for competition. My place in the top 100 slowly declined. My name showed up in the Rare Bird Alerts less and less. When it did show up, it felt much better. I learned to go birding with friends, explore new places, and find new birds. My enjoyment level rose, my skills increased, and my desire to go birding became stronger than ever before.

To this day, I chase far less, explore more, and find more of my *own* rarities. I can't even remember the last time I cared about my Top 100 ranking. Occasionally people ask me how I find so many rarities. I tell them that I go looking for rare birds. They tell me they do too, but never find anything new, and that I'm a much better birder than them. I respond by saying that this isn't necessarily true, and that sometimes you have to go birding in places off the beaten path and search for your own rarities, not ones found by others. The key is to try to explore, and be willing to accept that it may not always produce what you're looking for. But when it does, it's the greatest feeling in the world.

And when it doesn't produce what you're after, I strongly believe the “failures” that come from exploration are far more enjoyable than the failures that come from chasing and striking out on the target bird. Personally, when the goal is one target bird, if I don't see it, I feel as if I've achieved essentially nothing. When you explore unknown ground, simply finding out what is actually there, enjoying the often-beautiful scenery, and embracing the quest for greatness is incredibly rewarding.

Instead of allowing your year list to be the primary motivator, I hope you might consider a different approach. Try to find your own rare birds, explore new places, and bring a sense of discovery and wonder into the field. By doing so, you can improve your birding skills and gain the benefits provided by self-exploration and discovery that year listing and chasing cannot fully match.

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.



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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 large 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 open daily from 8 AM to 4 PM. The restrooms, trails, and parking lots are open daily from dawn until dusk. Call 949-261-7963 for information.

Temporarily Away or Moving?

Please notify Gail Richards of your new address if you are moving from your current address; or, let her know if you don't want to continue to receive the Tattler. This will save us postage. Gail Richards, Membership Chair, at membership@seaandsage.org

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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.)



C15

To join or renew your membership, do so with a donation of at least \$20 using a credit card; follow the links below. (When you join National Audubon, you will also be joining Sea & Sage.)

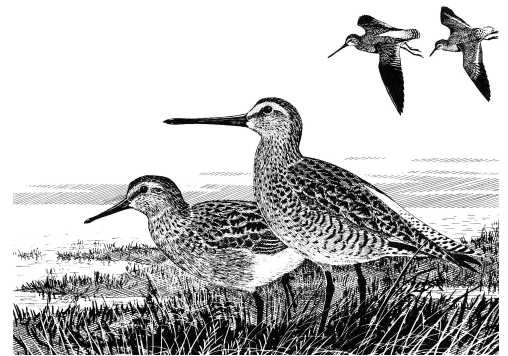
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If you need assistance with completing this membership process, please contact an Audubon House Volunteer at 949 261-7963. Leave your phone number so Gail Richards, our membership chair, can contact you.

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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.wccoc.org/>

September 2026:

01	Tues	Conservation Com Mtg via Zoom..	6:45 pm
04	Fri	Artzy Birders ...	6:00 pm
08	Tues	Reservations open for Fall Birding Skills Workshop	
08	Tues	Board Meeting via Zoom	7:00 pm
13	Sun	SJWS bird walk ®	8:00 am
16	Wed	UNB by pontoon boat (\$)..	8:15 am
17	Thurs	Bolsa Chica bird walk.....	8:00 am
18	Fri	GENERAL MEETING via Zoom.....	7:00 pm
20	Sun	Carbon Canyon bird walk	8:00 am
22	Tues	4 th Tues Conservation Lecture.....	7:00 pm
23	Wed	Irvine Regional Park bird walk	8:00 am
27	Sun	Upper Newport Bay bird walk ®.....	8:00 am

October 2026:

02	Fri	Artzy Birders ...	6:00 pm
03	Sat	Fall Pelagic Trip out of Dana Point (\$)	6:30 am
06	Tues	Fall Birding Skills Workshop begins today	9:00 am
06	Tues	Conservation Com Mtg via Zoom..	6:45 pm
11	Sun	SJWS bird walk ®	8:00 am
13	Tues	Quail Hill Open Space Preserve bird walk.....	7:00 am
13	Tues	Board Meeting via Zoom	7:00 pm
15	Thurs	Dana Point Harbor bird walk (P)	8:00 am
16	Fri	GENERAL MEETING via Zoom.....	7:00 pm
18	Sun	Anaheim Coves bird walk	8:00 am
21	Wed	UNB by pontoon boat (\$)..	8:15 am
25	Sun	Upper Newport Bay bird walk ®.....	8:00 am
27	Tues	4 th Tues Conservation Lecture.....	7:00 pm
31	Sat	PANCAKE BREAKFAST ®.....	8:30 am