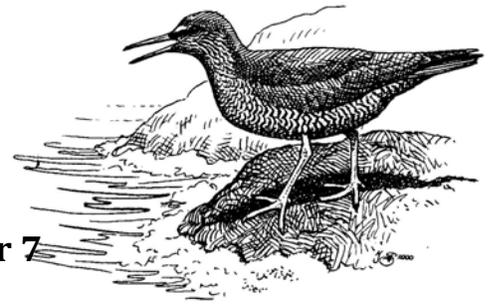


Wandering Tattler

April 2026
Volume 75, Number 7



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

“Every Bird Counts — Observations Matter” Sea & Sage Earth Day Celebration — April 26

Sea & Sage Audubon will host its 3rd Annual Earth Day Celebration on April 26, 2026 at San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, highlighting the 2026 World Migratory Bird Day theme: “Every Bird Counts — Your Observations Matter.” This Earth Day, Sea & Sage Audubon is thrilled to welcome Pete Bloom, Ph.D., one of our own, a renowned biologist who has dedicated more than 50 remarkable years to conserving endangered species and protecting critical habitats.

Pete’s story began in 1958, when a five-year-old boy arrived in Orange County from the East Coast and discovered a southern alligator lizard in his backyard. That moment of wonder sparked a lifelong journey as a naturalist. His mother soon introduced him to National Audubon and to the Sea and Sage chapter, and he’s been associated with us ever since.

Pete earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Cal State Long Beach and his Ph.D. from the University of Idaho. Over his four-decade career, he has banded more than 55,000 birds and published 90 peer-reviewed articles focused primarily on ecology and conservation biology. In 1979, he partnered with the Bureau of Land Management in a statewide status study of Swainson’s Hawk, leading to its listing as endangered in California in 1983. He worked as part of the California Condor team in the 1980’s, contributing to bringing this iconic species back from the brink of extinction. His advocacy also helped conserve large areas of Tejon Ranch, the Irvine Ranch, and Rancho Mission Viejo.

From teaching and leading field trips to mentoring students and banding raptors, Pete Bloom has consistently emphasized that community participation strengthens science. At this year’s Earth Day celebration, he will reflect on how his Orange County upbringing, volunteerism, and professional career combined to produce tangible conservation results, and he will also address some of the challenges currently facing raptors and other sensitive species. He will reflect on the profound influence that members of Sea & Sage Audubon have had on his career, and how partnerships like ours continue to create meaningful conservation opportunities for the future.

Join us on April 26th to hear this inspiring speaker and to discover more about Community Science.
*Your observations matter. Your participation matters.
Every bird counts.*

Melissa Rapp, President

General Meeting - ZOOM Presentation
Friday, April 17th - 7:00 PM

“Birds of Huntington State Beach: Sharing the Shore”

presented by Brittany Poloni

Discover the remarkable birds that call Huntington State Beach home! This engaging and light-hearted presentation explores the lives of the **California Least Tern, Western Snowy Plover, Black Skimmer**, and other species that nest, forage, and roost along one of California’s most popular shorelines.

From endangered beach-nesters to striking coastal specialists, learn how these birds survive and thrive alongside millions of annual visitors. “**Sharing the Shore**” is the heart of this talk—highlighting how beachgoers, birders, and wildlife photographers can recreate responsibly while helping protect sensitive coastal species.

Whether you’re a seasoned birder or simply curious about local wildlife, you’ll gain a deeper appreciation for the vibrant birdlife of Huntington State Beach and the conservation efforts that support them

Brittany Poloni is a biologist and Environmental Scientist with California State Parks. She brings more than a decade of experience in natural resource management and is proud to be an active member of the local conservation community.

Brittany holds a M.S. in Environmental Studies from Cal State Fullerton and a B.S. in Environmental Biology from Cal Poly Pomona. Her specialty is working with avian species and citizen science programs.

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?
Contact Melissa Rapp at programs@seaandsage.org

Melissa Rapp, Programs Chair

Conservation News

Susan Sheakley, Conservation Chair

Meetings, PM: *Join us!* Cons Com TU Apr 7 6:45; Tackling Climate & Trash TU Apr 21 4; Bird Collisions W Apr 22 7; Leg & Advocacy SU Apr 26 4:30; '4th Tues' Program Apr 28 7; **Contact us** at conservation@seaandsage.org



'4th Tues.'

Conservation Lecture

Tuesday, April 28th – 7:00 pm

Zoom doors will open at 6:30 pm

"The State of the Bolsa Chica"

presented by **Melissa Borde, Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve Manager**



This month, we are pleased to welcome Melissa Borde, Environmental Scientist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Manager of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.

Melissa will provide an overview of the Reserve, including: recent management successes and ongoing challenges, highlights from the most recent nesting season, and updates on current projects and research efforts.

She will also discuss the importance of the Bolsa Chica as a critical coastal wetland, upcoming project needs, and the wide-ranging collaborations with partner organizations and volunteer groups that make this work possible.

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



Sea and Sage Audubon Members take Action to Make Communities Safer and Healthier for Birds and People by Supporting Recently Introduced Local Communities & Bird Habitat Act (HR 3276)



Each year in spring and fall, billions of birds migrate thousands of miles across the United States to reach the food, water and other resources of their wintering or breeding grounds. Along the way, they will need food, water and shelter. With urbanization and land fragmentation in our changing world, they may need help from us. The recently introduced bipartisan *Local Communities & Bird Habitat Act* (HR 3276) can help us with those efforts.

HR 3276 would provide \$1 million annually for a competitive grant program to protect or increase urban bird habitat, reduce hazards such as bird collisions, and promote community engagement. HR 3276 funds would permit communities to invest in a range of local projects – including greenspace or habitat restoration – that will provide benefits for people and birds.

Sea and Sage collected postcards of support for HR 3276 at our February General Meeting. We will collect additional postcards of support at the Annual Dinner in March, after which, the completed cards will be mailed to National Audubon for delivery to our Senators and Representatives.



**SEA & SAGE EARTH DAY
CELEBRATION**

Sunday, April 26, 2026

10 AM TO 2 PM

**San Joaquin Wildlife
Sanctuary**

**Every Bird Counts
Your Observations Matter**

SCAN QR CODE
TO REGISTER



Enjoy brunch and explore the educational tables

Learn about Dr. Peter Bloom's extraordinary contributions to raptor research and conservation

Participate in a Junior Naturalist led Merlin workshop & nature walk

Catch the OC Birds of Prey Presentation

Free Admission - Reservations Required by 4/19/26

Limited Space, First-Come, First-Served

Thanks For Your Donation!

Sea and Sage depends on your financial contributions to support our conservation and education programs. Your donations help make us a strong chapter. The following is a list of Annual Direct Mail Appeal and Education Donors whose donations were received prior to February 28.

Evelyn Airey
Georgina Albi
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Mary Luckhowec
Verne Lusby

Chapter News & Announcements



For more information about Sea & Sage activities, visit our chapter webpage at seaandsageaudubon.org

Audubon House Volunteers

We would like to thank the following people for helping



to staff Audubon House in March and April: Debbie Ball, Julie Byers, Rowan Corpus, Bettina Eastman, Leslie El Sayad, Greg Figge, Jade Goodman, Ann Harmer, Mary Harward, Sue Henry, Sarah Jayne, Emma Jefferson, Mary

Meister, Kelly Morgan, Steve Munzinger, Dagmar Muthamia, Barbara Reber, Jen Reed, Paul Saiki, Dev Sellin, Susan Sheakley, Hsini Shyu, Art Strauss, Monte Taylor, Barb Wasbin, Pat Wells, Phil Weston, Irene Wotta

We need more volunteers! Our volunteers greet visitors to the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, answer the phone, sell merchandise, answer questions about the sanctuary and birds, etc. You do not need to be a bird expert - just someone who likes people and nature! Training is provided, and scheduling is flexible; you choose either a morning or afternoon shift on whatever days work for you. If you are interested, call Dev Sellin at 714-943-3682 or Barb Wasbin at 949-433-3889. *We look forward to hearing from you.*

Orange County Spring Bird Count

The OCSC (Orange County Spring Count) is part of a nationwide migration count, similar to a Christmas Bird Count, but timed to the opposite half of the migration cycle. Sea & Sage is encouraging birders to participate any time during the months of April and May. This will allow us to see and count more of the species that migrate through the county to focus on the best areas for birds, since comprehensive coverage of the entire county is not a realistic goal. **How you can participate:** It is simple to participate. Many of you already use eBird. You can enter your Spring Count data directly into eBird for any birding that you do during April and May. All that is needed is to share your eBird checklist with the Sea and Sage Audubon eBird account. The eBird user name is **sea_sage_aud**. For more info, please check our OCSC webpage.

<https://seaandsageaudubon.org/home-sas/bird-surveys/#OCSC>

Reading Group

Tues, April 14 – 1:00 to 2:30 pm

Tenacious Beasts: Wildlife Recoveries That Change How We Think About Animals by Christopher Preston
Email info@seaandsage.org for info on the next book.

Sign-up Children for Nature Day Camp

If your child or grandchild loves birds and nature, then send them to our Nature Day Camp! We offer separate camps for ages 7-8 (June 15-19), ages 9-10 (June 22-26) and ages 11-12 (July 6-10). Activities are on a two-year cycle so you can enroll in the same camp for two years. Only a few spots remain, so enroll today on Eventbrite! See Eventbrite, our camp flyer 2026 on our website, or email coordinator Deborah Brin at camp@seaandsage.org. Scholarships are available. Hope to see your youngster in camp at the marsh this summer



News from the Nature Store

Spring has arrived, and it's one of the most exciting times of year to get outside and go birding! As migration picks up and birds become more active, it's the perfect season to grab your binoculars and head out on the trails. The Nature Store has everything you need to welcome the season, whether you're a longtime birder or just beginning your birding journey. We carry bird guides for all levels of experience, bird-embroidered hats, and beautifully embroidered field bags that are sturdy and made of 100% cotton.

We also have something for bird lovers of every age. From sturdy board books that introduce toddlers to birds, to bird journals for recording sightings and water bottles to bring along on your outdoor adventures, the store is full of thoughtful items that make birding even more enjoyable. Stop by the Nature Store, inside Audubon House, and explore our collection—you may find just the thing to inspire your spring birding adventures.

Education News for April

By Trude Hurd, Project Director of Education

SPRING MIGRATION OF BIRDS

Listen? Do you hear birds singing? It's like someone switched the volume knob to high! Birds know spring is coming, so they sing to establish territory and/or attract mates. In my yard, sudden loud singing of the White-crowned Sparrows is the cue that they will soon head north. But they don't all leave at the same time. Adults go first while the immatures ("first winter") remain behind to finish their molt into adult plumage. I have fun photographing their crown stripes molting from brown and gray to black and white in March-April. It's an interesting transition.

How do birds know to migrate? There's no guesswork, it's all science! Birds have a pineal gland in their brain that detects the changing daylength ("photoperiod"). Sunlight penetrates their skull onto this pineal gland, and the bird's body interprets that light is increasing, therefore it's nearing spring. This stimulates their reproductive organs ("gonads") which increases territorial behavior, the urge to migrate ("zugenruhe"), and molting into breeding plumage ("alternate plumage") for some species.



There are other migration cues besides daylength changes. Earth's magnetic field affects the magnetite crystals in bird's heads. Positions of the sun, stars, and prominent landmarks like the ocean and mountain ranges help birds navigate once they're on their way.

Migrating through unfamiliar territory involves physical endurance, finding enough food and water, and encountering poor weather, potential predators, distracting lights from human sources, and potential collisions with windows. It's up to us to make changes to our urban landscape so no birds are harmed. See our website for how you can help migrating birds!

New technology such as radio tags and Motus towers have emerged to document migrating birds. Researchers contribute to migration knowledge, but you and I can help, too. **Share your bird sightings during Orange County Spring Count in April and May.** See information in this month's Tattler, and enjoy birds during spring migration!

HAVE FUN VOLUNTEERING FOR CAMP

We understand that children benefit from our camp programs, but did you know the adult leaders and helpers also benefit?



Stephanie who has a business and librarian background likes taking campers for walks in the morning. "It is rewarding to connect with the campers and share their love of nature." **Darrel**, who retired after 33 years of law enforcement, enjoys seeing nature through the eyes of the young campers. "What better way to help young people than to share in a summer camp experience dedicated to learning and developing responsible individuals. It is not just fun but truly fulfilling."

Debbie, a retired finance professional "with no experience with teaching children and minimal knowledge of birds" got involved with the Tree Swallow nest monitoring program, then Outdoor Adventures, and now camp. She feels ready and comfortable leading groups of children thanks to the training. "I continue to expand my skills in birding and teaching through my interactions with fellow volunteers. It is a very rewarding experience."

Babs was a university librarian "but raising 5 curious children is what prepared me to volunteer." She helps plan educational activities, leads bird walks, and orders the camp shirts. **Judi**, who spent 33 years in the medical device industry, also helps with bird walks and is responsible for developing content and activities. "When it's done, you will leave exhausted and enriched!"

Deborah was a genetic counselor and researcher in New York City before she was my Education Assistant for twenty years. She helps camp in all capacities. "We all have so much fun, it feels like we are going to camp ourselves! If you are considering helping, it will be a magical week or two of birding, learning, and having fun alongside some remarkable young people."

To learn more about volunteering for camp, contact Deborah (camp@seaandsage.org) and then attend an orientation on Thursday, April 9 at the marsh.

Orange County Rarities

by Samuel Bressler



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

Relatively few rarities were documented in February compared to earlier in the season; whether this is due to birder ennui or rarities from earlier in the winter is difficult to say. Most new vagrants were found in very small and rarely birded parks in the margins of the county. With any luck March will bring a push of late winter vagrants moving on their way north.

This report is dedicated to Jim Pike, a fixture of Orange County birding for decades, and a one-time writer of this column.

Up to two **Little Blue Herons** and one **Tricolored Heron** continued at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve through the end of the month, while a second Tricolored Heron at Talbert Marsh was last seen February 10. A **Zone-tailed Hawk** continued at Irvine Regional Park, February 21. A **Crested Caracara** was reported at the Magnolia Wetlands in Huntington Beach, February 28; subsequent efforts to find the bird were unsuccessful. This would be Orange County's third record if confirmed. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at Tustin Heritage Park February 1-21.

A **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Hiltcher Park on February 24 was presumably a continuing bird from earlier in the winter. The continuing **Eastern Phoebe** at Harriett Wieder Regional Park was last seen, February 12, while the continuing **Tropical Kingbird** at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve was last seen, February 15. An additional Tropical Kingbird was found at Concordia University on February 11. At least 9 **Plumbeous Vireos** continued throughout the county in February, well above typical numbers. A continuing **Bell's Vireo** at the Fullerton Arboretum was last seen on February 14. **Brown Creepers** continued at UCI and Gilman Park through the end of the month. Wintering **Grasshopper Sparrows** were only observed at Quail Hill Preserve in February. **Vesper Sparrows** continued at Irvine Regional Park through February 15, while a new individual was at Limestone Canyon on February 14.

A continuing **White-throated Sparrow** was in residential Orange through February 14, while new birds were found at O'Neill Regional Park on February 1-12 and Ramakrishna Monastery on February 14-21. A continuing **Clay-colored Sparrow** in residential Buena Park was last seen on February 23. A **Scott's Oriole** at Ramakrishna Monastery was notable; historically this was one of the more reliable spots in the county for this desert species, however this was the first record in over ten years. **Baltimore Orioles** continued at Pepperwood Park in Irvine and Emery Park in Fullerton through February 18 and 19, respectively.

The only new warbler highlight for February was a **Black-throated Green Warbler** at Brenner Park in Fullerton on February 13-28. The continuing **Pine Warbler** at Good Shepherd Cemetery in Huntington Beach continued through February 8. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was in residential Laguna Woods on February 14-22, while a **Tennessee Warbler** was at Tustin Heritage Park on February 1-3. Continuing **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were last seen at Rossmoor Park on February 20 and at Gibbs Park on February 25, while continuing **Northern Parulas** were last seen at Huntington Central Park on February 23 and Manzanita Park and in Cypress on February 21. The wintering **American Redstart** at Huntington Central Park was last seen February 2. Both grosbeaks put in appearances in February, with a continuing **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Laguna Beach through February 5 and a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Riverdale Park which continued through the end of the month.

Donors – continued from page

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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, PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616

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 newsletter.editor@seaandsage.org 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 take the 1st right turn 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 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The restrooms, trails, and parking lots are open daily from dawn until dusk. Call 949-261-7963 for information.

Your Audubon Membership Payment

The fastest and easiest way to join Audubon is with a donation of at least \$20 using a credit card. When you join National Audubon, you are also joining Sea & Sage. Go online to <https://act.audubon.org/a/chapter-membership?chapter=C15> Write in at least \$20 in the box that shows \$0.00. If you want to donate an additional amount to Sea & Sage, you'll need to make an electronic donation on our website or mail a separate check to our Sea & Sage address below. Another way to join or renew your membership is to print and mail the form below with your \$20 check (payable to NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY) to: Membership, Sea & Sage Audubon, PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616.

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 no longer want to receive the Tattler by mail, but prefer email. This will save us postage. Gail Richards, membership@seaandsage.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.)

The fastest and easiest way to join or renew your membership is with a donation of at least \$20 using a credit card; use the links below. When you join National Audubon, you are also joining Sea & Sage.

To **Join**: <https://act.audubon.org/a/chapter-membership?chapter=C15>

To **Renew**: <https://act.audubon.org/a/renew>

Another way to join or renew your membership is to print and mail the form below with your \$20 check (Payable to National Audubon Society) to: Membership, Sea & Sage Audubon, PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616.

If you want to donate an additional amount to Sea & Sage, you'll need to make an electronic donation on the Sea and Sage website or mail a separate check to our Sea & Sage address below.

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 Administrative Aide.....admin.aide@seaandsage.org

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/>

April 2026:

4-5 Sa-Su Eastern Sierra weekend trip ®..... 7:00 am
 07 Tues Conservation Com Mtg. via Zoom..... 6:45 pm
 12 Sun SJWS bird walk..... 8:00 am
 14 Tues Quail Hill open space..... 7:00 am
 14 Tues Board Meeting via Zoom..... 7:00 pm
 15 Wed UNB by pontoon boat ® (\$)..... 8:15 am
 17 Fri GENERAL MEETING via Zoom..... 7:00 pm
 19 Sun Anaheim Coves Park..... 8:00 am
 22 Wed Irvine Regional Park (P)..... 7:30 am
 25 Sat James Dilley Preserve..... 8:00 am
 26 Sun Earth Day Celebration ®..... 10:00 am
 26 Sun Upper Newport Bay bird walk..... 8:00 am
 28 Tues '4th Tues' Conservation Lecture via Zoom.. 7:00 pm

May 2026:

02 Sat Spring Pelagic Trip ® \$..... 6:30 am
 05 Tues Conservation Com Mtg via Zoom..... 6:45 pm
 10 Sun SJWS bird walk..... 8:00 am
 12 Tues Board Meeting via Zoom..... 7:00 pm
 13 Wed Starr Ranch – Loop Trail ® \$..... 9:00 am
 15 Fri GENERAL MEETING via Zoom..... 7:00 pm
 16 Sat Starr Ranch – Bell Canyon ® \$..... 9:00 am
 17 Sun Carbon Canyon (P)..... 8:00 am
 20 Wed UNB by pontoon boat ® (\$)..... 8:15 am
 21 Thurs Bolsa Chica ... 8:00 am
 26 Tues '4th Tues' Conservation Lecture via Zoom.. 7:00 pm
 31 Sun Upper Newport Bay bird walk..... 8:00 am