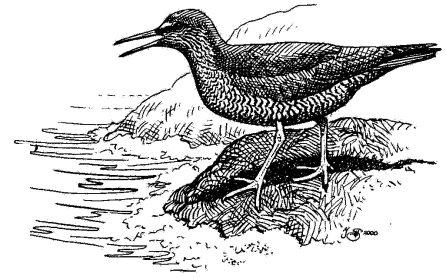


Wandering Tattler

May 2026
Volume 75, Number 8



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

“Celebrating Half a Century of Coastal Conservation” - by *Melissa Rapp, President*

2026 marks a remarkable milestone: the 50th anniversary of the California Coastal Act, which created the California Coastal Commission (CCC) and ensured public access to the California coast while protecting it for future generations. For five decades, the Commission has worked to safeguard beaches, wetlands, and wildlife habitats. These spaces are not only beautiful—they are essential ecosystems that sustain both wildlife and our communities. Sea & Sage is proud to have played an active role in this legacy. Through advocacy, education, and community engagement, our members have helped protect coastal habitats, promote bird-friendly policies, and ensure that local conservation voices are heard.

The California Coastal Act is a visionary law that set the standard for resource protection when it was implemented in 1976. Proposition 20 paved the way for the Act and was largely grassroots-driven. Along with the creation of the California Coastal Commission, it has been instrumental in preserving the state's coastline. Through an ongoing partnership among residents and state and local governments, the Act provides a legal framework that balances protection of natural resources, iconic beaches, and public access while supporting a \$51 billion coastal and ocean economy.

The success of the Coastal Act depends on continued public participation, including from groups such as Sea and Sage Audubon. In partnership with organizations including the Endangered Habitats League, Orange County Coastkeeper, and Surfrider Foundation, we advocate for birds such as the Western Snowy Plover and California Least Tern, as well as broader coastal resources. Recently, we helped advance protection of the critically endangered Pacific pocket mouse on the Dana Point Headlands. Thanks to thoughtful, unanimous decisions by the Coastal Commissioners at the March 2026 hearing, we are closer to achieving these goals.

As we celebrate this milestone, we are reminded that caring for our coast is a shared responsibility. We encourage members to stay engaged in conservation efforts, reflect on the impact of advocacy, and enjoy the natural wonders protected through these efforts. Thank you to our Conservation Committee for their contributions.

Here's to the next 50 years of coastal stewardship!

General Meeting – ZOOM Presentation

Friday, May 15th - 7:00 PM

“Photographing the Spirit of Bird”

by Krisztina Scheeff/KS Nature Photography

There's a thrill in capturing a Grebe skimming the water or a baby bird peeking from its nest. Renowned nature photographer Krisztina Scheeff of KS Nature Photography captures these moments expertly. In this talk, she will share the stories behind her favorite birds, from Southern California Grebes and Scotland's Atlantic Puffins to Sandhill Cranes at Bosque del Apache and the vibrant birds of Costa Rica and Ecuador. Each photo tells a story—join her on a photographic journey into the world of birds!



Based in San Diego, CA, Krisztina Scheeff is an award-winning nature photographer. Recognized by the National Audubon Society and as a finalist in Bird Photographer of the Year and Wildlife Photographer of the Year.

Check out KS Nature Photography at www.KSNaturePhotography.com to see more photos.

Meeting is by Zoom only; meeting doors will open 6:30 pm. Join us at 6:45 pm. for a Sea and Sage project highlight; program 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



Meetings, PM: Please join us! Leg & Advocacy: SU May 2 4:30; Cons Com TU May 5 6:45; Tackling Climate & Trash TU May 19 4; Bird Collisions W May 20 7; '4th Tues' Program May 26 7; **Contact us** at conservation@seaandsage.org

'4th Tues.' Conservation Lecture

Tuesday, May 26th – 7:00 pm Zoom
Doors will open at 6:30 pm

“My Coastal Journey: from local activist to Coastal Commissioner to coastal advocate”

Mel Nutter, Retired Lawyer and Former Coastal Commissioner

At our annual dinner in March, Sea and Sage proudly presented the Fern Zimmerman Conservation Award to Mel Nutter for his lifelong work to protect California's Coastal Resources. We are excited that Mel will join us again this month to share more about his experiences along his Coastal Journey.

Mel's journey includes working on the 1972 Proposition 20 campaign that led to the California Coastal Act of 1976; serving on both the South Coast Regional Coastal Commission and the State Coastal Commission between 1977 and 1985; and leading the Sierra Club Coastal Committee and the Amigos de Bolsa Chica. The success of the Coastal Act and the protection of miles of accessible coastal open spaces are attributable in part to Mel's lifetime of dedication and hard work.



Advance Registration is required for this event, which will be available by the first of May through the Sea and Sage website www.seaandsageaudubon.org under “What's New” and “Conservation”.

Please join us!

Sandy DeSimone – Conservationist, Environmentalist, Scientist, Mentor, Friend

In late March 2026, Sandy DeSimone passed away quietly in her home of nearly 40 years at Starr Ranch Audubon Sanctuary (the Ranch). Sandy came to Starr Ranch in 1988 with her husband, Pete



DeSimone, and together they changed the Ranch and Orange County's natural habitats in significant ways. Sandy was a very good friend of Sea and Sage Audubon and the entire conservation community in Southern California

Following the completion of her doctorate at UC Berkeley in 1997, Sandy took on the role of Director of Research, Education, and Land Management at Starr Ranch, where she pioneered innovative habitat restoration practices and founded the Starr Ranch Ecology Programs. Sandy was a consummate scientist, an avid conservationist and environmentalist, and a leader in understanding and protecting Southern California's Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) habitats. She was a well-published scientist, especially regarding southern California plant communities. Most of all, she was a cherished mentor to many young biologists and ecologists, helping to foster many successful conservation and biological careers. Sandy's contributions to conservation and education will be lasting.

Sandy launched a nonchemical restoration project to eradicate invasive plants on the Ranch, particularly artichoke thistle, by developing hand and small-tool-based removal methods. Many programs rely on herbicides, such as glyphosates, to tackle artichoke thistle invasions in CSS habitats, but Sandy could not bear the potential environmental damage to nature at Starr Ranch from chemicals or the risk to the humans who would have to apply them. By going nonchemical, her efforts eventually resulted in 95% containment of the artichoke thistle on the Ranch, all done naturally.

We knew Sandy as a sincere friend, with a warm heart and contagious laugh, and a passion for nature and education. Our community has suffered an immeasurable loss. We will miss Sandy.

- *Scott Thomas*



Summer Bats 2026

San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, Irvine, CA

Experience the marsh at dusk and after dark when bats arrive in small numbers to feed on flying insects. Participants take an outdoor evening walk along the ponds in search of two species of bats. We will use our eyes and bat sonar detectors to find the bats which frequently fly over our heads! We will also learn about their interesting lives.

ON-LINE EVENTBRITE REGISTRATION OPENS - June 1st

The following link becomes active beginning June 1:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/summer-bat-walks-2026-registration>

Choose from one of these dates:

Saturday, August 01 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM
Saturday, August 08 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM
Saturday, August 15 7:45 PM - 9:00 PM
Saturday, August 02 7:45 PM - 9:00 PM
Saturday, August 29 7:30 PM - 8:45 PM
Saturday, September 05... 7:15 PM - 8:30 PM
Saturday, September 12... 7:15 PM - 8:30 PM

- This is a pre-paid event with on-line registration for adults and children ages 10 years and older.
- Program fee is \$25 for adults and \$15 for children ages 10-12 (there is an additional on-line Eventbrite registration fee that is non-refundable.) Children must be accompanied by an adult.
- Participants should be able to walk at a moderate pace up to a mile on flat, unpaved ground using ambient night-time light.
- A liability release form must be signed by each participant. Information will be emailed.
- Due to the presence of disease-carrying insects, there is a strict clothing requirement of long sleeves and long pants. For your safety, failure to comply with the clothing requirement means you cannot participate in this event.

For answers to your questions, email: summerbatwalks@gmail.com



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, April and May:



Debbie Ball, Julie Byers, Rowan Corpus, Bonnie David, Leslie El Sayad, Greg Figge, Jade Goodman, Mary Harwood, 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, Catherine Steinberg, Art Strauss, Barb Wasbin, Pat Wells, Phil Weston and 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.

Nature Store News

May in the bird world is something to behold. Nests are tucked into branches and hidden in plain sight, chicks are hatching, and attentive parents are busy caring for their young as fledglings prepare for their first flights. It's the perfect time to slow down, look up, and reconnect with the natural world.

Feeling inspired? If all this spring activity has you paying a little more attention to the birds around you, the Nature Store has a few fun ways to take it a step further. New this month are watercolor painting kits for beginners (just add water!) featuring birds and native blooms, along with a "How to Draw Birds" kit perfect for young children. And if painting isn't your thing, we also carry 100 Birds to Fold & Fly—beautifully illustrated papers that turn into flying bird-themed planes, a fun activity to make and share with kids or grandkids.

Stop by the Nature Store and say hello; we're always happy to see you!

Reading Group

Tues, May 12 – 1:00 to 2:30 pm

The Nature of Oaks – by Douglas W. Tallamy

Nature magazines are needed!

More birding magazines are needed at Audubon House. Please deliver them to the AH volunteer inside Audubon House. Thanks!

Some Sad Bird News

The SJWS resident female Osprey was found dead in March at age 18 years old. Many thanks to naturalist Sue Henry for removing the bands for us to use in educational programs.



Photo by Trude Hurd

What is the OCSC?

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. 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`.

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

The lengthy month of March brings exciting change to the birding year. Early migrant warblers, with their dazzling colors and sweet songs launch us into spring. Many resident species are in various stages of their breeding season, with some juvenile birds already having fledged. Many wintering birds have departed, headed back north for the summer and ultimate return in autumn. Still, migration is just underway, and many exciting species have yet to arrive!

Greater White-fronted Geese were at Doheny State beach on March 13 and at San Joaquin Marsh on March 29. The wintering **Stilt Sandpiper** was last seen on March 19 at the backside of Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Both of the wintering immature **Little Blue Herons** continued at Bolsa Chica this month, as did **Tricolored Herons** at Bolsa Chica and the Santa Ana River Mouth. A **Western Cattle-Egret** continued at Bolsa Chica through March 28, while a second bird was at Mile Square Regional Park March 13.

A **Zone-tailed Hawk** was seen flying overhead at San Joaquin Marsh on March 6. A **Dusky Flycatcher** at Veeh Ranch Park in Laguna Hills March 21-25 was likely to have been a returning bird, expect these were the first positive reports of it since October 2025; its whereabouts in the interim period are unknown. A **Tropical Kingbird** was at Fairview Park in Costa Mesa on March 26. A total of five **Plumbeous Vireos** were in the county this month, several being continuing birds. A **Brown Creeper** continued at the University of California, Irvine on March 5.

Two **Brewer's Sparrows** at Fairview Park on March 19 were presumably early spring migrants. Five **White-throated Sparrows** were present in the county in March, with at least one being a continuing bird. The only **Swamp Sparrow** of the winter period was photographed at the backside of Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on March 11. A possibly returning **Green-tailed Towhee** was at Harriett Weider Regional Park on March 12, while another was reported at Bommer Canyon in Irvine on the 8.

March brought several new reports of vagrant warblers. Some of these may represent early spring migrants while others may have been overlooked earlier in the season. A **Northern Waterthrush** found March 1 at Bartlett Park in Huntington Beach through March 14. The sole **Black-and-White Warbler** this month was at the east side Huntington Central Park in Huntington Beach. A **Tennessee Warbler** was at West Coyote Hills Tree Park in Fullerton on March 2. The wintering male **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Edison Park in Seal Beach was last seen 3 March. Both the **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Gibbs Park in Huntington Beach March 29 and the **Hermit Warbler** at Columbus Tustin Park were last seen March 29. A **Palm Warbler** was at Aliso & Woods Canyon Wilderness Park March 12-24, while another was at Irvine Regional Park on March 10. A very rare **Black-throated Green Warbler** in Brenner Park in Buena Park was last seen on March 1.

An impressive total of four **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were throughout the county, with new individuals in Laguna Beach 20-26 March and at Santiago Oaks and Irvine Regional Parks on 23 March and 23-28 March, respectively; a continuing bird at Riverdale Park was last seen 19 March. A wintering **Black-headed Grosbeak** continued in Laguna Beach through March 21.

~ Accessible Birding at the SJWS ~

Friday, May 8th - 9:00 am

Our spring event will be on May 8th at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. The bird walk will be led by Doug Lithgow. This is a slower paced walk on unshaded, flat, hard-packed trails. Anyone who prefers a slower paced walk is welcome. Bring your lunch to enjoy together afterward at the shaded picnic tables. This will be the last event before summer so don't miss it! The event is free but please email Sharon Rockwell at srockwell@writeme.com to reserve your space.

Chapter Financial Report – 2025

	Chapter Operations (Excluding Education Project)	Marsh Education Project	Combined
BALANCE SHEET			
Assets			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash & Equivalents	213,185	163,648	376,833
Investments	1,504,371	104,575.65	1,608,946
Other Current Assets	24,323		24,323
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,741,879	268,223	2,010,102
FIXED ASSETS			
Furniture & Equipment, etc.	519		519
TOTAL ASSETS	1,742,398	268,223	2,010,621
Liabilities and Equity			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Restricted Funds and Payables	81,067	72,862	153,929
TOTAL LIABILITIES	81,067	72,862	153,929
EQUITY			
Endowment Fund	915,246		915,246
General Fund	684,203		684,203
Conservation Fund	61,883		61,883
San Joaquin Marsh Fund		195,361	195,361
TOTAL EQUITY	1,661,331	195,361	1,856,692
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	1,742,398	268,223	2,010,621
INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT			
Income			
Chapter Transfer to Marsh Education Project		36,000	*see note
Dues Split	10,190		10,190
Direct Mail Appeal	99,161	11,025	110,186
Other Donations	143,207	80,332	223,539
Grants	15,000	50,000	65,000
Birding Skills Workshops	11,935		11,935
Merchandise Sales - Bookstore	62,976		62,976
Other Income	56,241	50,385	106,626
TOTAL INCOME	398,710	227,742	590,452 *
Expenses			
Chapter Transfer to Marsh Education Project	36,000		*see note
Education Program Expenses		162,808	162,808
Newsletter Publication	23,557		23,557
Committee Expenses	71,706		71,706
Cost of Sales – Bookstore	61,735		61,735
Other Chapter Expenses	138,571		138,571
TOTAL EXPENSES	331,569	162,808	458,377 *
NET ORDINARY INCOME	67,141	64,934	132,075
INTEREST AND INVESTMENT INCOME (LOSS)	162,781	3,635	166,416
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	229,922	68,569	298,491

*Note: Internal transfer of \$36,000 not shown in combined totals

Coastal CBC Report - 1/4/26

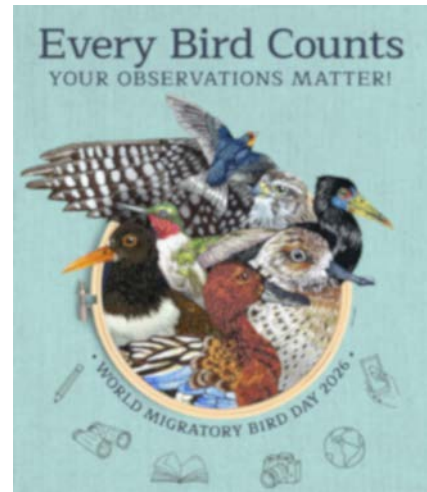
This count was coordinated and compiled by Bettina Eastman. (Participants - 135; Species - 186)

SPECIES	Total	SPECIES	Total	SPECIES	Total	SPECIES	Total
Snow Goose	1	Long-billed Dowitcher	54	White-tailed Kite	12	American Robin	33
Brant	294	Wilson's Snipe	14	Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Cedar Waxwing	2088
Canada Goose	1229	Spotted Sandpiper	18	Cooper's Hawk	21	House Sparrow	268
Blue-winged Teal	70	Lesser Yellowlegs	4	Northern Harrier	11	American Pipit	352
Cinnamon Teal	73	Willet	711	Red-shouldered Hawk	32	House Finch	1421
Northern Shoveler	1270	Greater Yellowlegs	44	Red-tailed Hawk	66	Lesser Goldfinch	338
Gadwall	445	Ruddy Turnstone	8	Barn Owl	4	American Goldfinch	163
Eurasian Wigeon	2	Red Knot	28	Great Horned Owl	10	Chipping Sparrow	20
American Wigeon	1682	Sanderling	43	Belted Kingfisher	21	Lark Sparrow	23
Mallard	1179	Dunlin	101	Red-breasted Sapsucker	2	Fox Sparrow	4
Northern Pintail	266	Least Sandpiper	218	Downy Woodpecker	18	Dark-eyed Junco (Ore.)	228
Green-winged Teal	142	Western Sandpiper	1552	Nuttall's Woodpecker	71	White-crowned Sparrow	750
Redhead	77	Bonaparte's Gull	590	Northern Flicker	24	Golden-crown. Sparrow	16
Ring-necked Duck	9	Heermann's Gull	25	American Kestrel	32	White-throated Sparrow	2
Greater Scaup	2	Ring-billed Gull	1054	Merlin	8	Savannah Sparrow	48
Lesser Scaup	525	Western Gull	465	Peregrine Falcon	6	Song Sparrow	672
Surf Scoter	153	American Herring Gull	2	Turquoise-fronted Parrot	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	10
Bufflehead	324	California Gull	400	Black Phoebe	372	California Towhee	107
Common Goldeneye	18	Glaucous-winged Gull	1	Say's Phoebe	77	Spotted Towhee	114
Hooded Merganser	22	Black Skimmer	29	Vermilion Flycatcher	30	Western Meadowlark	147
Red-breasted Merganser	34	Caspian Tern	39	Cassin's Kingbird	116	Bullock's Oriole	7
Ruddy Duck	454	Forster's Tern	12	Hutton's Vireo	17	Red-winged Blackbird	479
California Quail	12	Royal Tern	13	California Scrub-Jay	16	Brown-headed Cowbird	54
Rock Pigeon	659	Pied-billed Grebe	66	American Crow	6010	Brewer's Blackbird	266
Band-tailed Pigeon	4	Horned Grebe	4	Common Raven	19	Great-tailed Grackle	130
Eurasian-collared Dove	66	Eared Grebe	83	Mountain Chickadee	1	Orange-crowned Warbler	203
Mourning Dove	348	Western Grebe	280	Horned Lark	35	Nashville Warbler	1
Greater Roadrunner	1	Clark's Grebe	12	Tree Swallow	1	Common Yellowthroat	256
White-throated Swift	18	Red-throated Loon	1	No. Rough-winged Swallow	7	American Redstart	4
Anna's Hummingbird	193	Pacific Loon	1	Barn Swallow	44	Yellow Warbler	4
Allen's Hummingbird	535	Common Loon	3	Bushtit	767	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1603
Ridgway's Rail	25	Black-vented Shearwater	5	Wrentit	42	Black-throat. Gray Warbler	4
Virginia Rail	4	Brandt's Cormorant	8	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	167	Townsend's Warbler	49
Sora	21	Double-crested Cormorant	959	Brown Creeper	1	Wilson's Warbler	10
Common Gallinule	8	White-faced Ibis	503	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	76	Western Tanager	1
American Coot	2612	Least Bittern	1	California Gnatcatcher	15	SPECIALTIES:	
Black-necked Stilt	111	Yellow-crown. Night-Heron	27	Rock Wren	1	<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	1
American Avocet	125	Black-crown. Night-Heron	107	Northern House Wren	42	<i>Northern Parula</i>	1
Black Oystercatcher	1	Reddish Egret	9	Marsh Wren	35	<i>American Redstart</i>	1
Black-bellied Plover	946	Snowy Egret	218	Bewick's Wren	48	<i>Tennessee Warbler</i>	1
Killdeer	77	Green Heron	7	Cactus Wren	4	<i>Neotropic Cormorant</i>	1
Semipalmated Plover	471	Great Blue Heron	78	European Starling	978	<i>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</i>	1
Snowy Plover	12	Great Egret	52	California Thrasher	16	<i>Hammond's Flycatcher</i>	1
Whimbrel	24	American White Pelican	75	Northern Thrasher	16	<i>Little Blue Heron</i>	1
Long-billed Curlew	79	Brown Pelican	120	Northern Mockingbird	43	<i>Western Cattle Egret</i>	1
Marbled Godwit	337	Turkey Vulture	120	Western Bluebird	220	<i>Tricolored Heron</i>	1
Short-billed Dowitcher	161	Osprey	23	Hermit Thrush	50		

EXOTIC SPECIES: Egyptian Goose 69, Domestic Duck 7, Muscovy Duck 1, Mitered Parakeet 2, Red-crowned Parrot 84, Lilac-crowned Parrot 21, Red-lored Parrot 16, Turquoise (Blue)-fronted Parrot 1, Yellow-headed Parrot 1, Rose-ringed Parakeet 1, Swinhoe's White-eye 836, Scaly-breasted Munia 73, Pin-tailed Whydah 2.

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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.wwccoc.org/>

May 2026:

02 Sat Spring Pelagic Trip @ \$ 6:30 am
05 Tues Conservation Com Mtg via Zoom... 6:45 pm
08 Fri Accessible Birding at the SJWS @. 9:00 am
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 bird walk..... 8:00 am
26 Tues '4th Tues' Conservation Lecture via Zoom 7 pm
31 Sun Upper Newport Bay bird walk @ 8:00 am

June 2026:

02 Tues Conservation Com Mtg via Zoom... 6:45 pm
09 Tues Board Meeting via Zoom 7:00 pm
14 Sun SJWS bird walk @ 8:00 am
14 Sun Least Tern Natural Preserve @ 8:00 am
21 Sun Anaheim Coves Park 8:00 am
28 Sun Upper Newport Bay bird walk @ 8:00 am