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## HARBOR PARK WORKSHOP

By Jess Morton

Bright sun and a balmy Columbus Day morning provided the perfect setting for a public workshop at Harbor Park. The birding earlier, on the second Sunday birdwalk, had been good, and the tables set outside the boathouse invited participation. The purpose of the workshop was to help familiarize park visitors with its many values and to assess public perception of park needs. The results will be used in shaping final plans for the park.

Two dozen people attended the day's activities. Many were new to the park, or had little knowledge of it. However, all were impressed, and most took an active part in the workshop. San Pedro High School's Audubon YES! student contingent, led by Earth Club President Maya Sharif, was especially appreciated as it reminded all present that one of the most important things that can be achieved at Harbor Park is to connect young people with nature. Audubon's Martin Byhower, Jess Morton and Kathleen Schwallie led the walks and discussion sessions, while Linda Chilton and Bob Shanman provided support and refreshments.

After an introductory overview of the park's natural history and of the various programs under way to

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## A MAGICAL AFTERNOON BIRDING IN PV

By Martin Byhower

If you think this is another of my articles ranting about squirrels or feral ducks or the despoilment of Harbor Park, don't fear. I want to share a few mental snapshots of the kind of day that recharges my energy and inspires me to keep fighting all those messy and often depressing environmental battles.

It was already around noon on November 1, way too late for any conventional birder to begin his day, but I had gotten all my errands done, my wife Eileen was at work, and, most importantly, the first significant rain of autumn had hit the coastal lowlands the night before (read on to find out why I have found that this portends well for exceptional birding!)

I called Kevin Larson to see where he'd been to that point and what he'd seen. Kevin takes very seriously the patrolling of his territory for his column (north to the 105, east to the LA River, and west and south to as far offshore as his acute vision will allow). If there is anything around, Kevin finds it. I knew he was trying to see how many species he could tally in this area in a year, and my challenge was seeing if I could find for him any species he hadn't caught sight of yet...and get some walking, fresh air, a bit of exercise, and my own type of spiritual fulfillment along the way.

Kevin said he had already hit a bunch of the usual spots and told me he was going to Banning Park and Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, then maybe to Magic Johnson Park. I said what the heck, I would check the South Coast Botanic Garden, which is conveniently close to me. We could compare notes by cell phone as the day went on.

SCBG is where I cut my birding teeth with Eric Brooks and Mark Kincheloe decades ago. I still love birding there. It was a beautiful sunny morning with

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## Debs Parks Center Opens

By Jess Morton

The Debs Park Audubon Center had its official opening on Nov. 6. On hand for the gala were Center Director Elsa Lopez, LA City Mayor James Hahn, Audubon President John Flicker, and hundreds of school children and community supporters. But the day really belonged to Melanie Ingalls, the Audubon visionary whose dream this center was and whose seven years of dedicated effort has made it possible.

Debs Park is located just north of downtown LA on the east side of the Pasadena Freeway, in Highland Park. Like our own Harbor Park, it is one of the largest elements on the city's open space register. Also like Harbor Park, it has seen little development of its potential benefits, even though it lies in the midst of a highly urbanized, ethnically-diverse part of the city. With the establishment of this Center, Audubon and the LA Department of Recreation and Parks has created a partnership that will provide communities throughout the region with similar facilities. Nature must not be something that is thought of as existing only on television.

The buildings that make up the center are "green." All power is generated from solar panels. Water use is a fraction of what other buildings this size would use, and all waste water is treated on site. Recycling is a given.

Funding for the Debs Park Center has come from many sources, especially the David and

Lucille Packard Foundation and its board members, as individuals, from Toyota and the State of California.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Debs Park Center is that it did not end up being a museum, as so many nature centers either start out to become or devolve into. The buildings, although attractive in themselves, lead the visitor outdoors, where nature is. They are arranged beside an open patio that gives way to the hillsides and trails beyond. Even if the tour books tout the Audubon Center as a destination, those who come will find in it the beginning, not the end of the road. Discovery carts show visitors things to look for, and adventure backpacks and binoculars can be checked out for use on the trails.

It's a great model for what we hope to accomplish at Harbor Park.

## Notes from the Fires

The fires that dominated the news this Fall affected Audubon directly, as the following email exchange shows.

On November 6, Robert Waters broadcast the following email:

"Hi, All. The following excerpt comes from Melissa Culley of San Bernardino Audubon:

"Bear Paw Sanctuary, the wildlife sanctuary owned and operated by San Bernardino Audubon had to evacuate, fortunately the weather came in for the rescue...Bear Paw is just fine...Our mountains will never be the same...They look as if someone shaved them, so so—hot, nothing is left in many, many areas...Very humbling..."

Wayne Harmon, President of San Diego Audubon, responded:

"Thanks for forwarding this to us. It's good news to hear that the Bear Paw Sanctuary survived. Unfortunately, San Diego Audubon's 728 acre Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary burned completely, including all three residences. Fortunately, our resident managers were either out of town or were safely evacuated. We are trying to be positive, and considering this as a phase in chaparral and oak woodland, but it's sad to see something that we love go up in flames."



**Workshop, continued from page 1**

address park issues, three breakout groups outlined their ideas of needs and opportunities. A broad range of matters was brought into the discussion. These can be divided loosely into three classes: the park as part of a living system, public perception and usage of the park, and long-term needs.

Harbor Park can be viewed as the present avatar of a dynamic natural system. Today's Machado Lake is the collection point for a 20-square-mile watershed that for millennia has changed its shape, drainage patterns, wildlife resources and use by human beings. At one time or another, it has been the main channel of the Los Angeles River, a brackish marshland, an ocean beach, or a vernal-pools wetlands and willow-riparian forest. At times, it has probably been one of the most productive ecosystems on Earth. What it will be tomorrow is largely up to us. Therefore, some things we need to keep in mind in planning are this dynamism and the richness of both heritage and potential benefits for the future.

A subject that came up repeatedly is the link between perceptions of park safety and its use. There is a common belief, supported by visual cues of trash, graffiti, off-leash dogs and loitering, that the park is not a safe place to go. There is little policing in the park, nor is park staffing adequate. And the constant slashing of budgets because of inadequate tax revenues is only making matters worse. What money there is goes, of course, to the parks where the most people are, which only exacerbates problems in Harbor Park.

One theme that ran through the day's discussion was the many ways in which our proposed Audubon Natural Heritage Center could effectively address many of the park's long-term needs. The Center would bring large numbers of people to the park and teach them about its values, and why and how these may be protected. On-site staff would be able to

provide constant monitoring of lake and natural area conditions, which is now very much hit and miss. The Center would also involve the local community through family activities, educational programming, and volunteer opportunities.

The workshop was a great success. It served to bring new people into the park as "owners". It also reinforced many of the ideas that have been brought out in the Master Plan, which is making its way through the approval process. Perhaps most important, though, was that it got all the participants out of doors on a glorious morning to appreciate first hand the beautiful place that Harbor Park is.



## Open House and Silent Auction of Wildlife Art at IBRRC

International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBRRC), a leading authority in the rescue and rehabilitation of seabirds, will be having an open house on Sunday, December 7, from 2:00 to 5:00 PM at their center in San Pedro's Fort MacArthur. The open house will benefit their pelican rehabilitation program and raise public awareness of their work.

Festivities will include an unveiling of a new mural of flying pelicans painted by local artist, Jill Sitterer, a silent auction of wildlife art and photographs, live music by Stucco Rainbow and tours of the 10,000 square foot center. Guests will get a behind the scenes "up close and personal" look at of this state-of-the-art facility and the birds being rehabilitated.

Refreshments will be served, and special edition t-shirts featuring pelicans will be available for sale.

The center is located at 3601 South Gaffey next to the Marine Mammal Center. For more information about IBRRC visit their website at [www.ibrrc.org](http://www.ibrrc.org).

If you have artwork that features birds, wildlife or the environment that you would like to donate to the auction, please contact Nieves Monge at 310-514-2573 or 714-488-4806.



## BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

September and October 2003

by Kevin Larson

The fall migration of small land birds was well underway at the beginning of September, and slowed markedly in late October. The numbers of the regularly occurring migrants that were observed during this period were surprisingly low. A good variety of vagrant species were found, however, including a few that were exceptional.

The heat of August continued into the beginning of September. Cooling marine influence dominated the weather from 9 Sep to 10 Oct. Marine layer clouds occurred daily during this stretch, at times penetrating well inland. High pressure and an offshore flow was generally in control 11-28 Oct, with periods of very warm and dry weather. An early winter storm brought rain to our area and snow to the local mountains on the evening of 31 Oct. A wildfire originating in the foothill area of western San Bernardino County near Rancho Cucamonga started on 21 Oct. This fire grew to substantial size by 26 Oct. Driven by Santa Ana winds, it merged with another fire to the east, and reached L.A. County to the west; the eastern fire later reached Lake Arrowhead. The Palos Verdes Peninsula was blanketed with thick smoke and ash from this fire on 26 Oct. By this time, large and uncontrollable wildfires were burning in a number of locations in So. Cal., including the Simi Valley area and large portions of San Diego County. There is a possibility that some of the birds displaced by these fires will occur in our area.

Cattle Egrets that were found locally included one at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 17 Sep (Daniel S. Cooper-DSC), one at Harbor Park (HP) on 23 Sep (Jess Morton), two at the L.A. River (LAR) in Paramount on 5 Oct (many observers-m.ob.), one at the South Coast Botanic Garden (SCBG) on 15 Oct (Eric and Ann Brooks), two at LAR in Long Beach on 18 Oct (Kevin Larson-KL), and one at BFM on 24 Oct (Richard Barth-RB). At least three or four White-faced Ibises were seen at BFM from 5 Sep to at least 21 Sep; the peak count

there was seven birds on 20 Sep (m.ob.). Single White-faced Ibises were also seen at LAR on 13 Sep and 5 Oct (KL) and at BFM on 18-24 Oct (Martin Byhower-MB). The twelve large Canada Geese at LAR on 11 Oct were assumed to be early southbound migrants from wild stock since a non-migratory population is not known to occur at this location (KL). Hooded Mergansers were on the move at the end of October; one was seen by David Moody (DM) at Madrona Marsh (MM) on 31 Oct and two were seen at BFM the same day (KL). A migrant Northern Harrier seen by Mitch Heindel (MH) over his residence in Torrance on 17 Sep was the only one reported. Two migrant **Broad-winged Hawks** were seen: one was over SCBG on 5 Oct (KL), and another was over Torrance on 11 Oct (MH). Two **Swainson's Hawks** over Hermosa Beach on 15 Oct (Lori Conrad-LC) were also migrants that are rarely seen here.

Infrequently recorded in our area away from LAR, two American Avocets were at MM on 28 Sep (DM), and one was at BFM on 24 Oct (RB). Single Solitary Sandpipers were found by RB at LAR 4-6 Sep and at BFM 7-9 Sep; seven individuals were recorded this fall migration season beginning with one on 22 Jul. A juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper at LAR on 11 Sep (Kimball L. Garrett-KLG) is one of few that have been found there after the first week of September. Counts of three to four juvenile Baird's Sandpipers were recorded at LAR 4-13 Sep (RB, KL, KLG); seven Baird's there on 17 Sep (RB) was a high total. The last Baird's Sandpiper seen at LAR was on 20 Sep. Counts of one to five juvenile Pectoral Sandpipers were recorded at LAR from 7 Sep to 11 Oct (KL, KLG, RB); the peak count of five individuals came on 16 Sep (RB). A Pectoral Sandpiper at Alondra Park (AP) on 16 Sep (DM) was the only one recorded away from LAR. Two juvenile **Stilt Sandpipers** at LAR were outstanding shorebird finds; one was near Rosecrans Ave. 4-7 Sep (RB) and another was found by Andrew Lee near Willow St. on 7 Sep. These sightings were part of a notable influx of migrant Stilt Sandpipers into the state this fall. A juvenile **Ruff** was at LAR 20-27 Sep (KL). The 131 Wilson's Phalaropes recorded along LAR on 13 Sep was a high total (KL). Six Common Murres flew past Pt. Vicente on 18 Oct (MB and Steve Dexter).

A Band-tailed Pigeon was seen at Banning Park (BP) on 27 Sep (KL). A White-winged Dove was at MM on 3 Sep (DM); either the same or a different individual was seen there on 9 Sep (Jon Feenstra-JF). Ted Winters reported that another White-winged Dove was in San Pedro 13-19 Oct. A Common Poorwill was present in the Lawndale yard of Brad and Amy Henderson (B&AH) from 11 Oct through at least 3 Nov. Concentrations of approximately 1,200 migrant Vaux's Swifts in the vicinity of the Willow St. crossing at LAR on 1 Oct, and 800 at LAR near Deforest Park (DP) on 5 Oct, were remarkable (KL). It appears that the lower Los Angeles River is the preferred stopover of this migrant in our area. A migrant Costa's Hummingbird was at MH's residence in Torrance on 14 Sep; another was at SCBG on 14 Oct (KL). Russell Stone (RS) described a **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** that visited his feeder in Westchester 11-18 Oct. One of the marvels this fall was the occurrence of a large number of **Acorn Woodpeckers**—a species which is not a resident here—in our area. There were 14 sightings involving 17 individual Acorn Woodpeckers in the area from 9 Sep to 14 Oct. Wandering Acorn Woodpeckers were noted widely in CA this fall; it was reported that this irruption was undoubtedly related to poor acorn production in the state this year.

An Olive-sided Flycatcher at Sand Dune Park (SDP) 12-13 Sep (KL, RB) was surprisingly the only one reported in the area this fall. A Least Flycatcher was at SCBG 14-19 Oct (KL). Five Hammond's Flycatchers was an above average total for a fall season; singles were at AP on 20 Sep (DM), at SDP on 24 Sep (KL), at MM on 5 Oct (DM), at Sur La Brea Park (SLB) on 9 Oct (MB), and at SCBG on 1 Nov (KL). Gray Flycatchers were found by John Ivanov at SDP on 2 Sep and by DM at Wilderness Park (WP) on 1 Oct. Unless a late or wintering individual is found, the only Dusky Flycatcher recorded in the area this year was one at SDP 29-31 Aug (KL). Two Tropical Kingbirds were found: one was at HP on 4 Oct (KL) and another was in Playa del Rey on 11 Oct (Josh Engel-JE and JF). A **Bell's Vireo** seen by JF on 26 Oct and by MB on 1 Nov at SCBG may have been attempting to overwinter. An overwintering Bell's Vireo was found at this location ten years ago on 23 Oct 1993. Two Plumbeous Vireos at HP on 12 Oct (KL) may have

been returning winterers; another at DP 17 Oct-2 Nov (RB) was probably attempting to overwinter. Single Cassin's Vireos were seen at AP on 20 Sep (JF) and 19 Oct (MB); amazingly, this species was otherwise unreported in the area this fall. A migrant Hutton's Vireo was found at MM on 10 Sep (DM). Exceptional was a **Yellow-green Vireo** found by Gjon Hazard at SCBG on 13 Oct; this species is a casual visitor to our area from Mexico in fall. Five Bank Swallows were spotted: one at HP 13 Sep (KL), two at LAR 13 Sep (KL), one at BFM 14 Sep (DSC), and one at LAR 5 Oct (KL). Single Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen on 10 Sep in Rolling Hills and on 16 Sep in Rolling Hills Estates (KL). A migrant Golden-crowned Kinglet was at DP on 18 Oct (KL). Up to 12 **Western Bluebirds** were present at Highridge Park in RHE from early Sep to at least 11 Oct (Dave Young). There have been a few records in the area since the winter of 1994-5, when this species was first recorded in the PV count circle. Single Swainson's Thrushes were at SDP on 14 Sep (Tom Miko-TMi) and 4 Oct (KL); one at WP on 30 Oct was late (DM).

An accidental vagrant to CA from northeastern Asia, a **Black-backed Wagtail** was found by RB at LAR in Paramount on 10 Sep; the bird was last reported on 3 Oct. This bird generated the most excitement, and at times, the most frustration for area birders this fall since it visited the river channel only briefly on an unpredictable schedule. The Black-backed Wagtail, which was previously unrecorded in Los Angeles County, is currently given full species status. However, it may once again be officially considered a subspecies of the White Wagtail, which has been recorded once in the county. Outstanding were two **Red-throated Pipits** found by Don Sterba at BFM 4-5 Oct. This very rare vagrant, which breeds in the north mostly west of the Bering Strait and generally migrates south on the other side of the Pacific, was widely reported in CA this fall. Single Phainopeplas seen by B&AH in Lawndale on 3 Sep and by TMi at SDP on 14 Sep were the only ones reported.

The only species of the regularly-occurring fall vagrant warblers that was not found during the period was the Tennessee Warbler. Only a few warbler species of the rarervariety were found. Single Virginia's Warblers were at DP on 6 Sep (KL) and in Lawndale on 13 Sep (B&AH); another

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**Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 5**

found by RS in Westchester on 11 Oct was a bit late. Lucy's Warblers were found at MM 7-10 Sep (DM), at Friendship Park (FP) in San Pedro on 12 Sep (Bob Beckler-BB), and in Playa del Rey on 11 Oct (JF and JE). The very high total of **nine** Lucy's Warblers found in the area since 13 Jul is unprecedented for a fall migration season here. The presence of a Northern Parula at Torrance Park was reported by John Small on 14 Sep. Chestnut-sided Warblers were at BFM 20-27 Sep (Larry Schmah), at AP 11-19 Oct (DM), and in Torrance on 19 Oct (MH). A Magnolia Warbler was at SDP 22-25 Sep (Harold Bond). An outstanding warbler find was a male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at SDP 13-15 Oct (TMi and Ron Cyger). DM found a Palm Warbler at MM on 13 Oct; what appeared to be a different Palm Warbler was seen there by DM on 26 Oct. Two Palm Warblers were present at BFM from 30 Oct until at least 2 Nov (RB). Single Blackpoll Warblers were at SLB 2-3 Oct (MB), at BFM 3-6 Oct (Barbara Courtois, fide-DSC), and in Torrance on 10 Oct (MH). One Black-and-white Warbler was at SDP from 25 Sep to at least 28 Oct (LC); a second one joined it 13-15 Oct (TMi). Other Black-and-white Warblers were at BP 17-19 Oct and at HP 18 Oct (KL). Single American Redstarts were at SDP 24-28 Sep (KL), at SLB on 2 Oct (MB) and at AP on 6 Oct (DM). A Northern Waterthrush was found by Ron Melin and DM at WP on 1 Sep.

A first-fall male **Scarlet Tanager** was at BP on 24 Oct (KL). A Clay-colored Sparrow at Entradero Park (EP) on 9 Oct (KL) was the only one found. A Brewer's Sparrow was reported at BFM on 20 Sep (TMi); others were at EP on 26 Sep (KL) and at MM on 8 Oct (DM). Single Vesper Sparrows were found at BFM on 12 Sep (RB) and at MM 19-20 Sep (DM). Single Lark Sparrows were seen at MM 7-10 Sep and 22-25 Sep (DM), and at SCBG on 28 Sep (KL); two were at HP on 12 Oct (KL). A Lark Bunting at MM 10-12 Sep (DM) was a rare find. After JF identified a female-type **Painted Bunting** at SDP on 27 Sep, the bird flushed and was not seen again. A Bobolink was at EP 10-11 Oct (JF); what may have been a different individual was there on 19 Oct (JF). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at BFM 14-21 Sep (DSC). Baltimore Orioles were at Charles Wilson Park in Torrance on 9 Oct (KL) and at Loyola Marymount University in Westchester on 11 Oct (RS).

Following are the earliest dates on which these fall migrants were encountered this year: Eared Grebe—5 Sep BFM (KL); American Wigeon—5 Sep BFM (Jean Pickus, fide-DSC); Blue-winged Teal—6 Sep LAR (KL); Canvasback—31 Oct AP (DM); Ring-necked Duck—9 Oct AP (DM); Bufflehead—26 Oct BFM (Barbara Johnson); Sharp-shinned Hawk—23 Sep MM (DM); Merlin—28 Sep BFM (DSC); **Dunlin—13 Sep** LAR (KL); juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher—7 Sep LAR (KL); Bonaparte's Gull (adult)—11 Oct LAR (KL); Herring Gull (juvenile)—11 Oct LAR (KL); Vaux's Swift—10 Sep Rolling Hills (KL); Northern Flicker ("Red-shafted")—23 Sep MM (DM); Olive-sided Flycatcher—12 Sep SDP (KL); Say's Phoebe—3 Sep BFM (RB); Ruby-crowned Kinglet—27 Sep SDP (JF) and BFM (DSC); Hermit Thrush—28 Sep SDP (JF); American Pipit—27 Sep LAR (KL); Cedar Waxwing—28 Sep Rolling Hills Estates (KL); Yellow-rumped Warbler ("Myrtle")—12 Oct HP (KL); Yellow-rumped Warbler ("Audubon's")—12 Sep FP (BB); Fox Sparrow—5 Oct BFM (Conley Day, fide-DSC); Lincoln's Sparrow—17 Sep BFM (DSC); White-crowned Sparrow—18 Sep BFM (RB); Golden-crowned Sparrow—7 Oct (KL); Dark-eyed Junco ("Oregon")—5 Oct DP (Carol Selvey); Purple Finch—25 Oct SCBG (RB).

Following are the latest dates on which these fall migrants were encountered this year: Lesser Yellowlegs (2)—11 Oct LAR (KL); Wilson's Phalarope—20 Sep LAR (KL); Black-chinned Hummingbird—4 Oct WP (KL); Western Kingbird—9 Oct HP (MB); Warbling Vireo—17 Oct SCBG (KL); No. Rough-winged Swallow—28 Sep LAR (KL); Cliff Swallow—1 Oct LAR (KL); Blue Grosbeak—5 Oct LAR (Andy Birch); Lazuli Bunting—13 Oct MM (DM); Hooded Oriole—29 Sep AP (DM).

Thanks to all who reported sightings during the period. Please send your sightings to me at [cbirdr@comcast.net](mailto:cbirdr@comcast.net) for the Palos Verdes/South Bay and vicinity, including areas east to the L.A. River, north to about the 105 fwy, and along the coast up to Marina del Rey.



*A Bird Outing, continued from page 1*

clear skies and big white cumulus clouds, but unlike the usual post-cold front day, there was very little wind. Very auspicious, I thought.

Walking around the lake, I spied a Black-throated Gray Warbler—maybe a very late migrant, more likely a wintering bird. This is not an exceptionally rare species. But, its beautiful black and white pattern with the distinct yellow lore spot, set against the azure blue sky behind the green cypress in which he perched, put a smile on my face. I walked on, along the back side of the lake, and spied, just for an instant, a little gray job. My first thought was ‘Bell’s vireo’. My next thoughts, realizing how rare that would be, was:

A. Find the bird again

B. Run through why it WASN’T any of the other little gray jobs—Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Lucy’s Warbler, Warbling or Hutton’s Vireo, etc.

After following the bird (and the flock of white-crowns, bushtits and others with which it was loosely associating) I found the bird again. Closer and closer I approached, until I was ridiculously close to this normally shy species. At 15 feet, I was able to study details of the bird’s marking, such as its faint wingbar, the faint spectacles, the gray (with a little green) back, the long tail—yup, a definite Bell’s!

I wasn’t sure if Kevin had seen a Bell’s this year. So, I called him. He had just seen a Tropical Kingbird and some other good stuff at Harbor and

Banning, and was heading up to Magic Johnson Park. He was excited to hear about the Bell’s, which he hadn’t yet seen.

Moving on, I spied a beautiful male Townsend’s Warbler (never get tired of that striking yellow, black and white gem!) and then heard a sound that caused me to do a double take. It HAD to be one, no TWO, acorn woodpeckers! (The next day Eileen and I counted FIVE at the same place!) I had never seen an Acorn Woodpecker in the South Bay, though several had irrupted into our area this year. Apparently, long-term drought led to a disastrous failure by oaks to produce acorns in the local mountains,



causing hungry woodpeckers to disperse widely.

Seeing these birds in the South Bay was a real thrill for me, and I had to call Kevin again. Apparently, he had decided to turn around and was on his way back to the Garden; the Bell’s Vireo was too tempting to resist.

We met not far from the entrance, then started hunting for the Bell’s or whatever would show up next. Lots of Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s Hawks were competing with us in our search, but there were birds to spare. We came upon one of my favorite and rare phenomena, which generally only happens after the first rains of the fall. As the ground warms up, the winged form of subterranean termites come streaming up out of cracks in the ground by the thousands, and set skyward, like a reverse rain shower.

And the birds love it! Phobes and Audubon’s Warblers are pros at hawking them as they ascend, and some crafty Audubon’s and Scrub Jays were on the ground, picking them off as they emerged. The Kinglets (some flashing the Ruby Crown for which they are named), Bushtits, and others were making valiant efforts to keep up. The sound of bills clacking on winged termites was reminiscent of strings of tiny firecrackers.

Amid this frenzy Kevin picked out a Hammond’s Flycatcher. This is not what most people would call a “pretty” bird, but this freshly molted individual looked clean and sharp, his gray head contrasted with his greenish back, his neat little wing bars, sharp eye ring, and orange lower mandible. I thought he was beautiful, certainly for an “empi”!

We then spotted movement across the streambed. Kevin had picked out a brilliant mustard-colored female Summer Tanager. It had to be one of the eastern Rubra race, a type I had never seen! We simultaneously saw a Red-breasted Sapsucker. Having already seen large numbers of Flickers, I remarked that we only needed to see a Downy Woodpecker to make it a four-woodpecker day. This would be a rare event for the Garden, and Kevin reminded me it would be rare for the entire peninsula! (I had to wait until the next day to spot a Downy at the Garden.)

At some point, we both started realizing that this day was becoming very special. And then came the orioles. Bullock’s Orioles sometimes winter in the area, hanging out in the coral trees, some of which always seem to be flowering at any time of the year. But as we scanned the orioles and kept counting

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## THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSAULT CONTINUES

By Lillian Light

Barbara Kingsolver, one of my favorite authors, stated the following in a recent article (Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, *The Nation*):

“Most of our populace and all our leaders are participating in a mass hallucinatory fantasy in which the megatons of waste we dump in our rivers and bays are not poisoning the water, the hydrocarbons we pump into the air are not changing the climate, overfishing is not depleting the oceans, fossil fuels will never run out, wars that kill masses of civilians are an appropriate way to keep our hands on what’s left, we are not desperately overdrawn at the environmental bank and, really the kids are all right.”

These remarks are in line with the constant barrage of destructive anti-environmental actions taken by this Administration and this Congress.

The forest fire legislation just passed by Congress, falsely dubbed the “Healthy Forests” initiative, gives lumber companies \$760 million a year to remove the largest fire-resistant trees deep in the middle of our national forests. The legislation does not protect large diameter old growth trees, and guts the National Environmental Policy Act by stripping environmental reviews, citizen appeals, and judicial review from the whole process. Under this legislation, no one must interfere with cutting down the trees in 20 million acres of our national forests.

Jay Watson, of the Wilderness Society told the L A Times, “It’s searing in its ruthlessness and irresponsibility. The “Healthy Forests” initiative would have nothing to do with chaparral fires in Southern California, because no money is being made available to treat that or do brush removal near threatened communities.

On October 30<sup>th</sup> the McCain –Lieberman Climate Stewardship Act, which sought to make real

cuts in greenhouse gas pollution, failed to pass by a vote of 43 to 55. According to a recent Gallup Poll, 75% of Americans favor mandatory pollution controls to reduce the Global Warming threat. However powerful special interests have a stranglehold on reform.

According to the National Resources Defense Council’s 2002 year – end report “The Bush Administration’s Assault on the Environment”:

“This onslaught is being quietly coordinated through the White House. The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) ... has been busy identifying environmental safeguards that industry finds most objectionable, strong- arming agencies to review and weaken these programs and promoting changes in scientific and economic assumptions that twist the regulatory process to favor industry.”

The “hit list” of targeted environmental safeguards compiled by the OMB in 2001 included the clean air new source review, the roadless area forest rule, forest planning rules, and snowmobiles in National Parks.

One casualty of this policy is described in excruciating detail in the November 9<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Los Angeles Times*. This article describes the Rocky Mountain Front, a 140 - mile stretch of largely unbroken country along the Rockies, from Helena, Montana north to Canada, as unspoiled wilderness where mountain sheep, elk, and grizzly bears roam. The front is part of the largest complex of U S wild lands except for Alaska, and is the only haven for Grizzly bears in the “lower 48”. Although this area was placed off limits to energy activity in 1997 by the Clinton administration, “[W]ith the Bush administration making a determined push to open wild lands to energy exploration, dormant leases on 400,000 acres of the front could spring to life.”

Three companies are preparing to drill for natural gas deep inside the protected area, encouraged by pending energy legislation that gives oil and gas companies tax breaks and other

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*A Bird Outing, continued from page 7*

more of them amid the familiar but always lovely Waxwings, Lesser goldfinches, Allen's hummingbirds, and hordes of Yellow-rumps, we saw and heard something different.

There was an all-green oriole with them, which then flew off. So, we chased this bird around, back and forth, from tree to tree. Two grown men with binoculars and cameras, it must have looked silly to other park visitors, but this was serious business! Kevin had to remind me how rare a Hooded Oriole would be in November, and this bird was going "chuck!" which is a typical Orchard Oriole call, instead of "wink!" like good Hooded's do. It was even singing "under its breath" between "chucks". It had to be an Orchard Oriole! But this is a call with which you need to be careful. A female Orchard Oriole is basically a scaled down, almost warbler-sized Hooded. We chased her all over, noted the small bill and size, and finally decided, yup, we got an Orchard here.

Amid all of our chasing around after the orioles, four Common Loons (a species I don't generally associate with the Botanic Garden!) flew over— (Kevin said they often "cut across" the peninsula in migration. We also spotted an unusually late (or wintering) Nashville Warbler.

As we walked out to the parking lot, all smiles and a bit bemused as we realized what we had just seen, in just a few hours, on a lovely autumn afternoon. It doesn't get any better!

**Averill Park**

1970

Hummingbirds nest in his hair  
and high in the nodding deodars  
robins and blackbirds sing to him.

When he spreads his hand to the sun  
the green of his fingers  
lifts up the fig tree and the oak.

His thought is the blue sinuosity  
of water coursing under the baldcypress  
where yellow birds lace the branches.

1985

Worldly below the moonlit promenade  
by the shadowed stream she woos him  
in the long and dangerous dark.

His passion is delivered to him  
drawn down into the civil shrubbery  
the brittle shed leaves reflect his eyes.

Her men move along his sloped shoulders  
shearing the proliferus foliage  
and uproot his cathedral of trees.

2000

Following the cackles of materfamilias  
obedient ducklings line after  
in the sparse shade of thinned elms.

Alien birds and squirrels run wild  
on bare hillsides, and crows  
cast through the ghosts of the deodars.

Sunday intent couples pass the stonework  
of the bridge and walls he still knows  
their brisk steps hauling them far away.

### List the Western Burrowing Owl as a Threatened Species

Santa Clara Audubon and Audubon California request letters in support of listing the Western Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia hypugaea*, as a Threatened species in California. It appears we may be headed towards a split decision at the Fish and Game Commission, who will make the final determination... so it is IMPORTANT to get letters from chapters AND individuals on this.

If you have any questions, please write or call Craig Breon - (408) 252-3748 or Judd Klement, Regional Grassroots Coordinator, Audubon's Public Policy Office, (415) 222-9246 office, 415.999.9563 mobile Send your letters to:

California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

### CORRECTION

The editor received this helpful note from Donald G. Rogers of Pasadena Audubon Society:

"In checking your on-line newsletter, I saw a note about the founding of the Pasadena Audubon Society. 'The chapter was founded virtually in sight of the new Debs Park Audubon Center.'

"I have been researching the founding of PAS and the location was the Board of Trade of Pasadena. One of the founding members, Harriet Williams Meyers, lived in the Garvanza area of Highland Park. She appears to have founded the Garvanza Audubon Society later that year. This group later became LA Audubon."

### Environmental Assault, continued from page 8

incentives that reduce the financial risks of exploration. This is the same energy bill that is proposing to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling, and will offer \$119 billion in corporate subsidies to destroy our national forests. An Audubon E mail described the bill as "loaded with big-dollar sweetheart-style deals for key lawmakers and outrageous benefits to politically powerful special interests." The bill contains language that would exempt oil and gas drillers from Clean Water Act requirements! Other provisions would delay the deadline for large cities to come into compliance with the Clean Air Act. No energy -saving issues are addressed.

By the time you are reading my words, this travesty of an energy bill may already be law. If not, please call your Congressperson to vote against it and urge your senators to filibuster it.

This attack on our natural world will continue until all of us take action to stop it. Our Environmental Priorities Network, and our Audubon Conservation Committee are working to stop these frontal assaults. We invite you to help us, Please contact me at 310-545-1384 or [lklight@verizon.net](mailto:lklight@verizon.net), and let me know how you feel about these issues.

*Hummin'* is published six times per year by the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society. Authors' opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Society. Send articles and suggestions to [MLeoWeber@aol.com](mailto:MLeoWeber@aol.com).

Editor.....Michael Weber, 316-0599  
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### GIFT & NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

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--Harbor Regional Park..... \_\_\_\_\_  
--Audubon YES! (high school)..... \_\_\_\_\_  
--Sharing Nature with Children..... \_\_\_\_\_  
--Audubon Adventures (grade school)..... \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOTAL ENCLOSED**..... \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information on how to make a bequest to PV/SB Audubon.

MAKE CHECK TO: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
MAIL TO: P.O. BOX 2582, PALOS VERDES, CA 90274

7XCH/C43

## Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Saturday, Dec. 6, 10:00-12:00 PM: Friendship Naturalists classes for 6-13 year-olds at Deane Dana Friendship Park, San Pedro. \$10 per session. Call Connie Douglas, 310-519-6115.

Saturday, Dec. 6, 10:00 AM: **Nature Walks through the Canyon**, George F Canyon Nature Center, Corner of Palos Verdes Drive North and PV Drive East in Rolling Hills Estates.

Sunday, Dec. 7, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**, 26300 Crenshaw Bl., Palos Verdes. Leader: Ollie Coker or Margaret Hoggan. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation, and you can join at the entrance. (Also Jan. 4.)

Sunday, Dec. 7, 9:00-12:00 PM: **Restoration of PV Blue Habitat**, Defense Fuel Support Point, 3171 N. Gaffey, San Pedro. If you plan to attend, call or email Jess (310-832-5601, [jmorton@igc.org](mailto:jmorton@igc.org)). (Also, Jan. 4.)

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. 3201 Plaza del Amo (west of Madrona Ave.); Bob Shanman, leader. (Also Jan. 14.)

Saturday, Dec. 13, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Deane Dana Friendship Park**, San Pedro. Meet at the Nature Center classroom. Contact: Connie Douglas, 310-519-6115.

Sunday, Dec. 14, 8:00 AM: **Bird and Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park**. Leader: Martin Byhower. Meet in parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim St. above the boathouse, about 1 mile west of 110 Freeway on Anaheim St.

Sunday, Dec. 14, 9:00 AM: **Volunteer Weeding at Forrestal Nature Preserve** sponsored by the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy. Meet at the end of Forrestal Drive by the Ladera Linda parking lot. (Also, Jan. 11.)

Wednesday, Dec. 17, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See Dec. 7 for directions.)

Saturday, Dec. 20, 9:00-12:00 PM: **Harbor Park Clean-up**. Leader: John Popoch, 310-548-7728. (See Dec. 14 for directions.)

Saturday, Jan. 3, 10:00 AM: **Nature Walks through the Canyon**, George F Canyon Nature Center, Corner of Palos Verdes Drive North and PV Drive East in Rolling Hills Estates.

Sunday, Jan. 4, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden** on Grandparents' Day. Leader: Ollie Coker or Margaret Hoggan. (See Dec. 7 for directions.)

Sunday, Jan. 4, 9:00-12:00 PM: **Restoration of PV**

**Blue Habitat**, Defense Fuel Support Point. (See Dec. 7 for directions.)

Saturday, Jan 10, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Deane Dana Friendship Park**, San Pedro. (See Dec. 13 for directions.)

Sunday, Jan. 11, 8:00 AM: **Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park**. Leader: Martin Byhower. (See Dec. 14.)

Sunday, Jan. 11, 9:00 AM: **Volunteer Weeding at Forrestal Nature Preserve**. (See Dec. 14 for directions.)

Wednesday, Jan. 14, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. (See Dec. 10 for directions.)

Saturday, Jan. 17, 9:00-12:00 PM: **Harbor Park Clean-up**. Leader: John Popoch, 310-548-7728. (See Dec. 14 for directions.)

Wednesday, Jan. 21, 8:00 AM: **Bird walk at South Coast Botanical Garden**. Leader is Georgene Foster. (See Dec. 7.)

Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7:30 PM: **"Invasive Species and Habitat Preservation: The Good, the Bad, and the Unwanted,"** Martin Byhower. South Coast Botanic Garden, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula. For information, call Martin (310-539-0050).

### San Diego Bird Festival February 4-8, 2004

The eighth annual San Diego Bird Festival spotlights the natural diversity of the region with birding trips to the Anza-Borrego Desert, Cuyamaca Mountains, San Elijo Lagoon home of the California Gnatcatcher, San Diego Bay, Coronado Islands and San Felipe in Baja California.

The Festival highlights include: Friday night mixer with Adrian Binns and his amusing talk on Origin of Bird Names; Saturday night dinner with Kenn Kaufman; field trips including a two night trip to San Felipe, pelagic trips, kayaking along San Diego Bay, and a variety of classes.

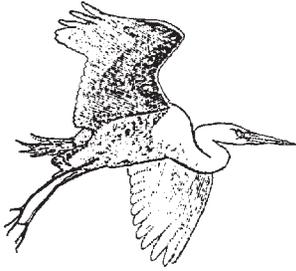
Space, as usual, is limited so register early on line at: [www.sandiegonaturefestivals.org](http://www.sandiegonaturefestivals.org) If you wish to receive a brochure e-mail: [registration@sandiegonaturefestivals.org](mailto:registration@sandiegonaturefestivals.org) and list your name and address.

# CALENDAR

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**VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!**

**Restoration of South Bay Habitats:** We can use your energy and some more equipment! If you are prepared to dig and pull and plant, join PV/SB Audubon's restoration of PV Blue Habitat (every first or second Sunday, 9-noon, at the Defense fuel Support Point, 3171 N. Gaffey, San Pedro). See Calendar for details. Also, Coast Week Cleanup takes place on Saturday, September 20. For more information, call Jess, 310-832-5601.

**Audubon YES!:** If you are already active with a school or youth group in the area, consider becoming a chapter liaison with Audubon YES! Audubon YES! students are the backbone of local restoration projects, and assist with Sharing Nature with Children. They attend Audubon field trips and walks. Students with 50 hours of service receive an Audubon YES! award. Volunteers encourage participation in Audubon's youth-oriented programs.