



HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY FEB/MAR 2004 Vol. XXVI No. 1

UCLA ISSUES ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The UCLA Institute of the Environment has released its sixth annual *Southern California Environmental Report Card*. Since 1998, the Institute's report cards have addressed 24 environmental topics from storm-water pollution to greenhouse gas emissions. The 2003 edition grades the efforts of public agencies to address invasive species, marine conservation, smart growth, and air quality.

The 2003 report card leads with an evaluation of government efforts to address the growing problems caused by invasive species of plants and animals. According to the report, local streams are now widely populated by invasive plants, crayfish, mosquito fish, large-mouthed bass, and other species intentionally or unintentionally introduced. Such invasive species have been implicated in the decline of the California Newt and the Red-legged Frog.

Although the report card notes increasing attention by government agencies to invasive species, recent efforts have been halting, partly due to opposition by public groups concerned about the use of non-toxic chemicals. In the end, Professor of Biology

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SORRY TO BE LATE!

You have received this issue of *Hummin'* rather late. For this, I apologize. The sudden need to move to a new apartment diverted time from putting *Hummin'* together early in January.

The version of the previous issue of *Hummin'* that appears on the web page cannot be searched as most other issues can be. This problem will be resolved soon.

--Mike Weber

CALIFORNIA ROCKS!

by Allen Franz

What is the common link between biological diversity, the gold rush, the nation's most productive agricultural regions, fossils, petrified forests, and petroleum in California? Each of these phenomena, like many others in the remarkable landscape and history of the Golden State, is rooted in California's geology and geography. Even here in the South Bay, we have a more complex mix of geological features than in many entire states (and even countries). And, across the state, the foundation of every ecosystem, and all human adaptations, is the land itself.

The Audubon Society is known for its concern for wildlife, and the survival of wild species depends on their ability to adapt to the landscapes in which they live. California has the most diverse array of wildlife of any of the 49 continental states precisely because it has such a complex geological makeup—mountain ranges, basins, hills and plains in seemingly random juxtaposition.

California has 14,000 foot peaks formed by intrusive igneous batholiths and faulting (Mt. Whitney), by volcanic extrusion (Mt. Shasta), and by uplift of sedimentary rock (White Peak). The state also boasts a bewildering assortment of lower features—from Death Valley to Sutter Buttes to the Channel Islands—that have challenged wildlife in many ways. Among the results:

- Ancient bristlecone pine trees that can live more than 4,000 years in thin, dolomitic soils atop 12,000 foot mountains, with only inches of precipitation a year;

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THE PRESIDENTS' CORNER

by Bob Shanman

Hello! Welcome to 2004 and another exciting year for Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon. And yes, you read the above title correctly—the apostrophe comes after the 's' this year, as three of us try to fill Jess Morton's shoes. Fran Spivy-Weber, Martin Byhower and I will share the duties of President. Martin's focus will continue to be on Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park; Fran and I will try our hand at doing everything else Jess did as president. And, as always, Jess did a marvelous job. We are all indebted to Jess for the work he does for the chapter and the community. Our heartfelt thanks, Jess, for another marvelous turn in the President's chair.

Ah, but we are not letting Jess get away! He is taking over my duties as treasurer. He will continue to be active on the Harbor Park Advisory Committee. And, most importantly, he will continue to lead the Audubon "YES!" program. We are always looking for adults interested in working with high school ecology clubs by serving as liaisons between the schools and the Chapter. I find working with the students invigorating, especially when they connect with the importance of maintaining a healthy environment. Their energy is infectious, and gives us hope for the future. If you would like to assist in this program, please contact Jess at 832-5601. Jess will also continue to lead the butterfly count in July, and keep Fran, Martin and me from going too far astray!

With Martin's leadership, the Chapter will move forward on several fronts this year at Harbor Park. First and foremost, an intense planning stage to develop the "framework plan" for the Audubon Natural Heritage Center at Harbor Park has begun. Kathleen Schwalie will head a committee working on the plan details. The goal is to develop a working document that will be our guide as we move toward the ultimate goal of having a real building for the Center to support our nature and education programs at the park. Martin will share more of those details when he writes this column. (We'll be sharing this space).

Parallel with the planning for the Center, we need to be focused on serious fundraising this

year. Our initial goal is to raise \$100,000 in order to fund a program director for the Center Project. We had a good start this past year, raising about \$8,000 just from the Bird-A-Thon. My goal is to see us raise at least \$10,000 this year from Bird-A-Thon. We'll provide more details on Bird-A-Thon in the next issue. If any of you have expertise in fundraising and have the time to write grants or to sponsor events, please contact Fran or me (e-mail addresses below). Having a lead fund-raiser to work with the Harbor Park group is crucial to the success of this campaign. We know that you are out there, so please step forward and identify yourself! Yes, it's a lot of work, but the ends will justify the pain. It is fun working with the board, and you will know that you had a key role in the development of this Audubon project.

Speaking of counting: plan on participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count between February 13th and 16th. It's free, it's fun, and most importantly, you are contributing to furthering our knowledge about the habits of wintering birds. (Did you know that most of the information about bird distribution comes from the birdwatching community?) The count is co-sponsored by National Audubon and Cornell University. For teachers or parents involved with your children's schools, this is an event that the kids can participate in at school on Friday, February 13, and then at home for the President's day weekend. To learn more about this event and have access to the Internet, go to birdsource.cornell.edu, and click on the GBBC link.

One item that is very important to Fran, Martin and me is your involvement with the chapter. We want to hear from you. Let us know what Audubon activities are important to you, and what subjects you would like addressed at our regular meetings. Tell us how you can get involved with the chapter and its activities, and where would you like us to focus our energies besides Harbor Park? This is your organization, and our desire is to get you involved by providing opportunities that are of interest to you. You can contact us most easily by e-mail. We look forward to hearing from, and serving you this coming year. Happy New Year.

Bob Shanman: audubonbob@cs.com

Frances Spivy-Weber: frances@monolake.org

Martin Byhower: MBRinBC@aol.com

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Philip Rundel gives the region a Grade of D in controlling existing invasive species and preventing new invasions.

Jonathan Zasloff, a Professor at the UCLA School of Law, gives the City of Los Angeles a Grade of B- for its efforts at smart growth. Although Zasloff compliments LA's efforts to increase the stock of affordable housing, he notes a failure to address underlying housing problems.

Gregor Hodgson, Visiting Professor at the Institute's Coastal Center, evaluates government and public efforts at marine conservation in southern California. Although Hodgson applauds the designation of 132-square miles of marine reserve around the Channel Islands, he reduces his grading for current efforts to a Grade of B- due to the opposition that the reserve designation generated among commercial and recreational fishermen, and the desirability of their support for future efforts.

Finally, the 2003 report card reports on efforts regarding air pollution. The 1998 report card gave the region's air pollution efforts a Grade of A for previous efforts and a Grade of C looking into the future, but forecast that progress on cleaning up southern California's air would stall and begin to reverse. In her review for the 2003 report card, Suzanne Paulson, Professor of Atmospheric Sciences at UCLA, does find some signs of progress, but concludes that current efforts will fall short of the goals that have been set. As a result, she gives the region's efforts on air pollution a Grade of C-.

The complete report card is available at the Institute's web page at <http://www.ioe.ucla.edu/>. Hard copies may be ordered by calling 310-825-5008 or by sending an email to dfletche@ucla.edu.



Western Tanager

Starr Ranch Bird Observatory Programs for Audubon Chapters

Gail Hall, the new Biologist-Educator for Bird Programs at Starr Ranch, has arranged a series of programs about the Starr Ranch Bird Observatory for Winter/Spring 2004. Chapter members may attend one or more programs for free. For reservations, call Gail at 949-858-3537.

Program 1: Introduction to the Starr Ranch Bird Observatory (SRBO): General introduction to the new SRBO, our mission, education programs, research, and future plans. Two programs will be presented on March 4. At 9 am-11 am, there will be a slide program followed by a bird walk. At 7 pm-9 pm, there will be a slide program followed by a Screech Owl survey down Bell Canyon.

Program 2: Winter Migrant Monitoring: Visit the Starr Ranch banding station to observe the techniques we use to produce estimates of monthly, overwintering, and annual survival rates of birds that spend the winter at Starr Ranch. Saturday, March 6, 8:00 am-10:00 am.

Program 3: Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS): Learn how SRBO contributes to one of the most innovative and important bird monitoring programs in North America. The MAPS program monitors vital rates of more than 200 species of birds across the continent. See results from the first five years of monitoring at Starr Ranch and visit our banding station to see the MAPS protocol in action. Saturday, May 15, 8:00 am-10:00 am.

Program 4: Breeding Bird Walk: Identification, Behavior, and Sign: This walk will focus on the breeding birds of Starr Ranch, from hawks to hummingbirds. Thursday, May 27th, 7:30 am-9:30 am.

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.

Editor.....Michael Weber, 310-316-0599

Hummin' subscriptions for non-PV/SB Audubon members are \$7.50 per year.

For back issues and chapter info, go to www.LMconsult.com/pvaudubon

BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

November and December 2003

by Kevin Larson

The appearance of a number of vagrant species in early November caused considerable excitement, the most notable of which was an American Tree Sparrow. The occurrences of a Magnolia Warbler and a Blackburnian Warbler—along with a few other vagrants—in the first week of November were unusual since ‘waves’ of vagrant warblers do not occur after the end of October in most years. A few rarities were found at the end of November, including the outstanding find of a very late vagrant Scarlet Tanager. After a lull in early December, the action picked up again later in the month. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Christmas Bird Count (CBC) recorded 159 species on 21 December. An additional ten species were found during the count week period. The count day total was average for the history of the count, but was below average for recent years. The impressive number of rarities that were seen during count week—including a Gray Catbird and a Prairie Warbler—more than made up for the lower species total.

Thanks to good area coverage by many birders, we had a very good year. During the 2003 calendar year, 302 species were recorded in the area normally covered by this article. Species that have occurred annually or near-annually in recent years that were missed in 2003 include: Franklin’s Gull, Black Tern, Chimney Swift, Red-naped Sapsucker, Tennessee Warbler and Indigo Bunting. Also, no storm-petrels, Barn Owls, or Pine Siskins were reported this year.

Precipitation occurred on several dates during November and December, though most of these weather systems produced little in the way of accumulated rainfall totals.

The exception was a huge thunderstorm that parked itself over the Compton/Willowbrook area on 12 November. Over five inches of rain fell in just 3 hours in this area, causing severe flooding. The accumulation of hail in one area of Watts was enough to make vehicles immovable through the next day. Undoubtedly, few storms of this magnitude have ever occurred in the L.A. Basin.

Northern Fulmars were present in our coastal waters during the period; sightings of one to fifteen individuals were recorded on a number of dates from 8 Nov to 30 Dec. One or two Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen from Pt. Vicente (PtV) on 20 Dec (Kevin Larson-KL), and two were seen from Flat Rock Pt. on 21 Dec (Curtis Johnson). A Short-tailed Shearwater was seen very close to shore from Redondo Beach on 29 Nov (KL) during the occurrence of a large seabird feeding frenzy involving more than 10,000 Black-vented Shearwaters in the inshore waters just south of King Harbor. Two Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen from Dockweiler State Beach (DSB) on 11 Dec (Jon Feenstra-JF).

An American Bittern flew across the lake for Martin Byhower (MB) and his bird walk participants at Harbor Park (HP) on 9 Nov. Renaldo Espinosa (RE) reported the presence of a Least Bittern at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 10 Dec.

Single Cattle Egrets were at BFM on 8 Nov (Richard Barth-RB), at Pt. Fermin on 23 Nov (Bernardo Alps), and at the mouth of the L.A. River (LAR) on 21 Dec (KL). White-faced Ibis sightings continued into the period; nine were at BFM on 9 Nov (KL), four flew over Torrance on 5 Dec (KL), and one was at BFM on 10 Dec (RE). A Turkey Vulture that flew north over Ballona Cr. on 31 Dec was probably an early migrant (KL).



A small Canada Goose of the race *minima* was at the El Segundo Golf Course pond that is visible from Sepulveda Blvd. 16-30 Dec (KL). Four Brant flew north past PtV on 22 Nov (KL) and six flew north past the Hermosa Beach pier on 8 Dec (David Moody-DM). Seventeen Blue-winged Teal along the upper Dominguez Channel in Carson 13-21 Dec was a large number to be found away from LAR (KL). A White-winged Scoter was at DSB 9-11 Dec (RB). An adult male Black Scoter was at DSB 24 Nov-11 Dec (RB); a female joined it 7-11 Dec (Tom Miko-TM). A Long-tailed Duck was a nice find at King Harbor on 15 Dec (DM). A female Common Goldeneye was at the mouth of Ballona Cr. on 7 Dec (TM). A Hooded Merganser was seen in the sump at Madrona Marsh (MM) from 31 Oct until at least 3 Jan (DM). Two Hooded Mergansers were at BFM 14-18 Nov (Jean Pickus), and up to four were at the same location 28-30 Dec (Daniel S. Cooper-DSC). A male Hooded Merganser seen on 18 Nov (DM) was the first known record for Alondra Park (AP). Mark Conrad (MC) saw a Virginia Rail at BFM on 30 Dec. Rare inland, a Heerman's Gull was at HP on 3 Nov (MB). A very large concentration of 100+ Royal Terns was seen in the vicinity of the Hermosa Beach pier on 8 Dec (DM). A Common Murre that flew north past PtV on 22 Nov (KL) was the only alcid reported during the period.

Flocks of ten Band-tailed Pigeons in Rolling Hills on 11 Nov (KL) and of eleven at Sand Dune Park (SDP) on 12 Nov (RB) were unusual since this species rarely occurs—normally only singly—in our area. These acorn specialists were likely wandering for the same reason as the many Acorn Woodpeckers seen in our area this fall—an apparent shortage of acorns in their normal range. A Burrowing Owl seen by RB on the jetty that separates Ballona Cr. from the Marina del Rey harbor 12-13 Dec was in an unlikely spot, although there is plenty of nearby habitat in which this bird could winter. There is also a possibility that this bird was a migrant that was grounded by the very strong winds that occurred on 11 Dec. Rarely seen in winter in our area, 2-3 Vaux's Swifts were over AP on 12 Dec (DM). A Costa's Hummingbird found by Dave Roelen in the Portuguese Bend area on 21 Dec was the first to be seen locally since 14 Oct.



This fall's irruption of Acorn Woodpeckers continued into November; there were five sightings involving eight individuals in the area from 1 Nov to 29 Nov. Three Acorn Woodpeckers present at Pacific Crest Cemetery in Redondo Beach 2 Dec-3 Jan (DM) were the only ones reported in December. A casual visitor to our area, a male **Williamson's Sapsucker** was found by Andrew Lee (AL) at Banning Park (BP) 8-9 Nov; the last known sighting of this species in our area was at the P.V. Country Club 31 Oct-8 Nov 1986 (Brian Daniels, fide-Mitch Heindel). Hybrid Red-naped X Red-breasted Sapsuckers were at the South Coast Botanic Garden (SCBG) on 9 Nov and at Leland Park on 28 Nov (KL). Uncommonly seen in our area, a Nuttall's Woodpecker was in Westchester on 28 Dec (DSC).

The Hammond's Flycatcher found at SCBG on 1 Nov (KL, MB) was still present on 14 Nov (MB). The Pacific-slope Flycatcher that was present at Wilderness Park (WP) from 6 Nov until at least 21 Dec (DM) was attempting to overwinter. An immature male Vermilion Flycatcher at Columbia Park in Torrance 21 Dec-3 Jan was a nice winter find (RB). A Tropical Kingbird at BP on 1 Nov (KL) was the third sighting of this species in our area this fall. Very rare as a winterer in CA, a **Bell's Vireo** was seen at SCBG on 26 Oct (JF), 1 Nov (MB), 23 Dec (MB), and 4 Jan (KL). Plumbeous Vireos that were likely wintering included one bird still present at Deforest Park on 2 Nov (RB, KL), one at the El Segundo Library (ESL) on 12 Nov (RB), one at Chadwick Canyon on 17 Dec (MB), two still present at HP on 21 Dec (Don Sterba-DS, Bob Beckler-BB),

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Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 5

and one at SCBG on 24 Dec (KL). A Cassin's Vireo at the north end of HP on 21 Dec was likely a returning winterer (DS). A Hutton's Vireo was seen at SCBG on 30 Nov (KL). A vireo that was seen briefly at BP by AL on 8 Nov was reported as either a Yellow-green or a Red-eyed Vireo.

Exceedingly rare in winter in CA, a **Cliff Swallow** was at BFM on 29 Dec (KL). Unseasonable Barn Swallow sightings included two at BFM on 22 Nov (DSC), one along the upper Dominguez Channel in Carson on 13 Dec (KL), one at King Harbor on 21 Dec (DM), five at Earvin Magic Johnson Rec. Area (EMJRA) on 28 Dec, and up to four at BFM 28-30 Dec (DSC, KL). A Red-breasted Nuthatch was found on 21 Dec (D. Bradley, R. Landry, R. Scalf) in Rolling Hills, where there is apparently now a small resident population. Now rare on the peninsula, a Rock Wren was seen by BB at White Point/Royal Palms County Beach on 8 Dec. A non-calling bird seen in flight between bushes on the bluffs in northern Westchester on 16 Nov was undoubtedly a Winter Wren (DSC). DS recorded a Winter Wren for the 21 Dec CBC at the north end of HP; the bird was present through at least 1 Jan. First discovered in early September, Western Bluebirds were present in the vicinity of Highridge Park in RHE through the period; three were seen on 14 Dec and four were noted on 3 Jan (KL). Once again, MC found the first Varied Thrush of the season at SDP 4-7 Nov, but this time the bird did not remain to spend the winter at the park. A **Gray Catbird** found by MB at the Gardena Willows (GW) 22 Dec-4 Jan is our second local record; the only other sighting was 16-18 Oct 1987 at the Forrestal Quarry in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Two Nashville Warblers were seen: one at SCBG on 1 Nov (MB, KL) and one at ESL 12 Nov (RB). A few Yellow Warblers were wintering in typical haunts such as HP, LAR, MM, and EMJRA. A Chestnut-sided Warbler found by MB was in the southeast section of HP 20 Dec-4 Jan. A Magnolia Warbler at SDP 3-9 Nov (MC) was a late vagrant. Rare in winter, a Hermit Warbler was at WP 15-21 Dec (DM). Another late vagrant surprise was a Blackburnian Warbler found by DM at WP 5-9 Nov. A **Prairie Warbler** at GW 21 Dec-4 Jan (KL) is our first record of this vagrant warbler in winter; the previous seven records of this species in our area



were of fall transients. The two Palm Warblers that were found by RB on 30 Oct at BFM were last seen on 7 Nov (RB). Since there was intensive coverage at BFM after 7 Nov, a Palm Warbler found there on 15 Nov by Todd McGrath was likely a new migrant. A female Black-and-white Warbler present at SDP 25 Sep-9 Nov was not seen again until 20 Dec (MC). A Black-and-white Warbler seen at HP on 16 Nov (MB) and 21 Dec (DS) may have been the same one that was found there on 18 Oct (KL). Other Black-and-whites were at Recreation Park in El Segundo on 17 Nov (RB) and at GW 21 Dec-1 Jan (KL). First found as a first-year male on the CBC in 1998, an adult male American Redstart found at HP by DS on the 21 Dec CBC had, remarkably, returned for its sixth winter; the bird was present through at least 4 Jan. The 4-5 Wilson's Warblers wintering locally were well below the high number encountered last winter.

Summer Tanagers were found at SCBG on 1 Nov (KL, MB), and at BP 8-9 Nov (AL). Exceptional was a male **Scarlet Tanager** found by DSC at Loyola Marymount University on 29 Nov; only a few have been recorded on later dates in CA. Exceedingly rare in coastal So. Cal., an **American Tree Sparrow** found by RB at BFM 8-9 Nov was well to the south of this species' normal range. The only other sighting of this species in our area was at SCBG 6-9 Nov 1974 (Shirley Wells). Uncommon in winter here, Chipping Sparrow sightings included seven in the vicinity of

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California Rocks, continued from page 1

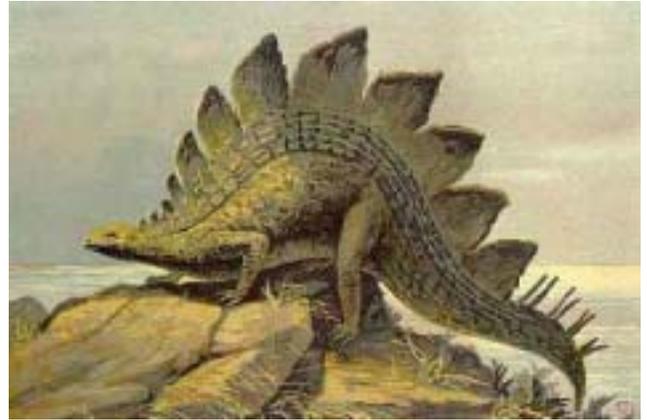
- lupine species specially adapted to serpentine and other rare geological substrates;
- carnivorous plants like *darlingtonia* thriving in nutrient-poor bogs;
- miniaturized island kit foxes, and jumbo-sized island scrub jays;
- and a long list of other novelties, from giant sequoias and condors to desert pupfish and poisonous Mt. Lyell salamanders.

California's landscape has been constructed over the millennia—and continues to evolve—because of the interplay of geological processes that we began to comprehend only during the last half century, with the advent of the theory of plate tectonics. The San Andreas Fault, a remnant of a seafloor spreading center that moved beneath the edge of North America during the last 25 million years, divides California between the North American plate to the east, and the Pacific plate to the west. The land west of the San Andreas is plowing irrevocably to the northwest; this has produced such curious features as a volcano split in two, with one part in northern Los Angeles County (east of Gorman) and the remainder in San Benito County (east of Monterey), 200 miles to the northwest.

Mountains and basins fold and fault upward and downward under the influence of tectonic stretching and compression. New rock formations have been stitched onto the state—such as Santa Catalina Island—when rock masses grind past one another. As the land moves, plants and animals find themselves transported north or west, upslope or downslope, to new settings with different conditions of soil, climate, and other ecological variables.

Happily, there is a growing assortment of books, periodicals, and brochures to help make sense of the rocks and minerals around us. One simple starting place is James Kavanagh's inexpensive *Geology: An Introduction to Familiar Rocks, Minerals, Gemstones & Fossils*, which puts a good deal of general information in a convenient, weather-resistant folding brochure.

For a more detailed discussion of rocks and minerals, focused on California, *Rocks and Minerals of California* by Vinson Brown and other authors is an informative source. Along with clear descriptions and illustrations of different rocks and minerals, *Rocks and Minerals of California* provides textual information and a series of maps indicating where to find examples of different rocks and ores.



For those interested in unraveling the story of how California's landscape has evolved, readily-available references include John McPhee's *Assembling California*—part of his fascinating and literate series on the formation of major regions in North America. While *Assembling California* is perhaps my least favorite of McPhee's regional geology essays, it remains an extraordinary feat, and is particularly instructive in explaining how geologists' think about landscapes. Sadly, it focuses upon northern California.

Other useful guides include David Alt and Donald Hyndman's *Roadside Geology of Northern California*, and Robert Sharp and Allen Glazner's *Geology Underfoot in Southern California*. The *Roadside Geology* and *Geology Underfoot* books are essentially field trip guides, providing explanations of selected geological features readily accessible from good roads.

The most comprehensive tome on California geology as a whole is Deborah Harden's college-level textbook, *California Geology*. Harden summarizes basic geological methods and materials, and then provides a region-by-region summary, along with separate chapters on special topics including water, earthquakes, and long-term landscape evolution; the text is supplemented with abundant drawings, photographs and maps, many in color.

For those with more specialized regional interests, there are a number of volumes that can provide a foundation for understanding the geology of our local area, or of your next vacation destination. Most local libraries have access to copies of Martin Reiter's slender but informative *The Palos Verdes Peninsula: A Geologic Guide and More*.

Among the more intriguing topically-specialized books relating to California geology is Richard

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CONSERVATION CORNER

by Lillian Light

On the Monday before Christmas, I received a survey on the Bush administration's 2003 environmental record. The survey, which was sent out by Sierra Club RAW (the uncooked facts of the Bush assault on the environment), listed 16 egregious assaults on the nation's air, water, and lands. I was asked to choose the top three actions most damaging to the nation's environment.

Here are the three issues that received the most votes. (If you would like to read their list contact <http://www.sierraclub.org/lists/terms.asp>.)

1. Mercury Rising – Issued public health warnings to pregnant women and children about mercury after announcing policy changes to triple the amount of mercury pollution allowed from power plants.

2. Super Duped – Became the first administration to support shifting the burden of Superfund toxic waste cleanups from polluters to taxpayers.

3. Sooty Santa: - Dismantled the "new source review" provisions of the Clean Air Act requiring that the oldest, dirtiest power plants and refineries curb soot and smog pollution when they expand production

I would love to conduct my own survey and find out which actions by this government bother you the most. Let me know about any anti-environment act that has been omitted from this article. (Contact: lklight@verizon.net or 310-545-1384.)

One of the most alarming acts by the Bush administration was its push to resume research, production, testing, and use of nuclear weapons. In September of 2003, the Senate approved Bush administration plans to research new battlefield uses for nuclear weapons and to improve the nation's capacity to make and test them. Congress also repealed the ten-year ban against research and development of "low-yield" nuclear weapons, and approved funding for research and testing of nuclear "bunker busters". These weapons have only limited effectiveness against buried targets, but disperse radioactive contamination into the atmosphere and on the ground. This kind of research could well open the door to a new

nuclear arms race among nations. We would be promoting national security more effectively by ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, joining the 89 other nations that have already done so.

I strongly condemn the Bush plan to replace 11,000 federal Park Service employees, more than two thirds of the National Park Service's permanent workforce, with private contractors. Positions that may be privatized include operations and maintenance staff, park biologists, archeologists, environmental specialists, and interpretive park rangers.

Similar outsourcing efforts are beginning in the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Environmental Protection Agency. It stands to reason that private consultants will minimize inconvenient findings or shade conclusions to match the contracting agency's interest. The corporations running environmental agencies will have no use for committed environmentalists trying to protect the nation's natural heritage.

In a recent Los Angeles Times interview, Bruce Babbitt, who served in the Department of the Interior for two terms under Clinton, said: "A radical ideological group is behind the outsourcing plan. Ultimately, proponents of privatization would hand over the national parks to private companies."

Another very disturbing Bush initiative was his attack on our wild forests and the wildlife that depend on forest habitat, by proposing to fight fire with logging. On December 3rd, Bush signed legislation that guts environmental protections under the guise of fighting fires and increases commercial logging of our national forests, regardless of environmental consequences. On the same day, the administration adopted a rule that will expedite timber-thinning projects by removing a safeguard for endangered species, and will exempt forest plans from environmental impact studies.

These dangerous and destructive forest proposals call for the thinning of 25 million acres of national forest land in the next ten years, at a cost to taxpayers of nearly \$4 billion. Forestry experts have long known that commercial logging increases the risk of forest fire, so the administration strategy could actually increase the likelihood of

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Conservation Corner, continued from page 8

wildfires. But our rulers have succeeded in weakening environmental law, limiting public involvement, and avoiding judicial oversight. They seem determined to open our national forests to more quick-profit exploitation by lumbermen, oilmen, and leaders of industrialized recreation.

This administration has failed to crack down on air and water pollution from large factory farms, has weakened protections for wetlands, and has changed regulations to enable the continuation of mountain-top removal of coal. In late December, the Environmental Protection agency caved into industry pressure and proposed relaxing national sewage-treatment standards. The proposed rules would allow treatment plants to skip critical sanitation measures when it rains, and would allow pathogen-filled sewage to be pumped directly into lakes, rivers, and coastal waters.

Whether it's opening pristine wilderness to recreational vehicles, increasing snowmobile use in Yellowstone, allowing counties and states to claim national wilderness roads, or undermining dolphin-safe tuna labeling, our president is attempting to dismantle environmental safeguards that have been established over the last few decades. We must all play our part in responding to each of these new attacks on our environment!

In 2004, we now face a Senate vote on an anti-environmental energy bill that could provide \$119 billion in corporate subsidies. The bill also rolls back environmental safeguards on public lands, consumes more wildlife habitats, and stokes more global warming emissions by encouraging the burning of fossil fuels.

The bill would weaken the Clean Water Act by granting exemptions for oil and gas companies from the act's requirements. Construction at oil and gas sites causes the release of toxics such as benzene, toluene and heavy metals into our drinking water supplies. Oil and gas companies should be required to control this pollution.



Please contact your senators and tell them not to vote for this energy bill because it is too expensive, too dangerous and destructive for the environment, and too threatening to the health of the American people.

Senator Dianne Feinstein
senator@feinstein.senate.gov
Washington: 202- 224 3841
Local: 310- 9147300

Senator Barbara Boxer
senator@boxer.senate.gov
Washington: 202- 224 3553
Local: 213- 894 5000



American Bittern

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Hilton's recent offering, *Dinosaurs and other Mesozoic Reptiles of California*, which describes and maps the distribution of Mesozoic fossil sites and discoveries across California. No *T. Rex*'s here, but an impressive assortment of pterosaurs and marine reptiles, along with a smattering of duckbill dinosaurs, carnosaurs, crocodilians, turtles and other scaly-skinned creatures.

A fun companion book to Hilton's dinosaur book is John Montroll's "Prehistoric Origami", which contains instructions for making more than twenty prehistoric creatures—from pterosaurs and archaeopteryx to *T. rex* and triceratops—from folded paper. Creating dinosaurs from paper is not for the easily-frustrated; creating a paper *T.rex*, for example, requires 56 steps, and Stegosaurus 60. This is a book with a very distinct market niche!

For internet surfers, there is a growing range of on-line sources and materials on California geology. Among the most compelling are video animations of plate tectonic movements and faulting process;

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Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 6

Highridge Park 14 Dec-3 Jan (KL), one at BFM on 15 Dec (DSC), and one at MM 21-26 Dec (DM). A Clay-colored Sparrow was seen briefly at MM on 24 Dec (DM). A Vesper Sparrow was at BFM on 8 Nov (RB). Single Swamp Sparrows were present at HP from 9 Nov until at least 1 Jan (MB) and at BFM from 30 Nov until at least 18 Dec (DSC). A White-throated Sparrow was seen by Dave Pomerantz at BFM on 25 Nov. The first "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Junco of the season—seen at BP on 1 Nov—was right on schedule, matching last year's earliest arrival date (KL).

Single Orchard Orioles were at SCBG 1-2 Nov and at Leland Park, San Pedro on 28 Nov (KL); very rare here prior to 1999, this oriole has now been found locally in five consecutive fall seasons. Very rare after early October, an adult male Hooded Oriole was at MM 21-23 Nov (DM) and an immature male was at SCBG on 27 Dec (KL). The only Purple Finch reported during the period was a calling bird that flew over Rolling Hills on 11 Nov (KL).

Thanks to all who reported sightings during the period. Please send your sightings to me at 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.



The Californian Partridge

California Rocks, continued from page 9

search "tectonic movies" or "tectonic animations", and look in particular for the web sites of Tanya Atwater of UC Santa Barbara.

Given humankind's growing capacity to transform the landscape—and our recurrent failure to anticipate the consequences of our actions for us, for other species, and for the functioning of the ecosystems in which we live—it's high time we were more aware of the geological foundations of the world we inhabit. There is an abundance of informative and entertaining resources to help us.

Report on the Nation's Ecosystems

"Tracking changes in the condition and use of our nation's precious ecosystems is as important as annual medical checkups," said Thomas E. Lovejoy recently. Lovejoy is President of The Heinz Center, which just released its first annual update to its landmark 2002 report *The State of the Nation's Ecosystems: Measuring the Lands, Waters, and Living Resources of the United States*.

The annual update presents recent information regarding 25 environmental indicators, providing insights into changes in such key ecosystem characteristics as the area of the nation's forests and farmlands and contamination in coastal waters.

The 2003 update includes data for one indicator—recreation in forests—for the first time. In 2001, walking and nature-viewing accounted for about two-thirds of all outdoor activities, according to the report. Americans walked outdoors or took part in bird-watching or other nature-viewing activities nearly 30 billion times—13 billion times in forests.

See www.heinzctr.org/ecosystems/.

GIFT & NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

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AND/OR CONTRIBUTIONS to chapter projects:

--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

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Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Sunday, February 1, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**, 26300 Crenshaw Bl., Palos Verdes. Leader: Ollie Coker. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation; you can join at the entrance. (Also March 7.)

Sunday, Feb. 1, 9:00 AM - noon: **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, or jmorton@igc.org). (Also, March 7.)

Saturday, Feb. 7, 10:00 AM -noon: **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, Feb. 7, 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, Feb. 8, 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, Feb. 8, 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, March 14.)

February 13 – 16: **GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**. Contact Bob Shanman at Wild Birds Unlimited, 310-326-2473.

Saturday, Feb. 14, 8:00 am: **Bird Walk at Deane Dana Friendship Park**, San Pedro. Meet at the Nature Center classroom. Contact: Connie Douglas, 310-519-6115.

Wednesday, February 18, 8:00 am: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See Dec. 7 for directions.)

Saturday, Feb. 21, 9:00 AM - noon: **Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park Clean-up**. Leader: John Popoch, 310-548-7728. (February 8 for directions.)

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 7:30 pm: **AUDUBON CENTER WORKSHOP**, with Jess Morton, Martin Byhower, city and city park officials, Audubon California representatives, South Coast Botanic Garden, (see Feb. 1 for directions).

Saturday, March 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, March 7, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**.

Leader: Ollie Coker. (See Feb. 1 for directions.)

Sunday, March 7, 9:00 AM - noon: **Restoration of PV Blue Habitat**, Defense Fuel Support Point. (See Feb. 1 for directions.)

Wednesday, March 10, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. (See Feb. 11 for directions.)

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

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

Sunday, March 14, 9:00 AM: **Volunteer Weeding at Forrestal Nature Preserve**. (See Feb. 8 for directions.)

Wednesday, March 17, 8:00 AM: **Bird walk at South Coast Botanical Garden**. Leader is Georgene Foster. (See Feb. 18.)

Saturday, March 20, 9:00 am - noon: **Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park Clean-up**. Leader: John Popoch, 310-548-7728. (See Feb. 8 for directions.)

Tuesday, March 30, 7:30 pm: **"Audubon YES!"** a presentation on environmental issues by Audubon Youth in Environmental Service (YES!) volunteers. South Coast Botanic Garden, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula. For information, call Jess (310-832-5601).

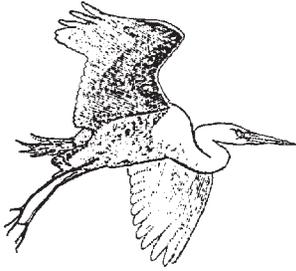
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The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society, of which PV/SB Audubon is the local chapter, are dedicated to the understanding and preservation of our natural heritage.

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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. Help clean up Harbor Park each third Saturday of the month, 9:00 am to noon. Some volunteers cruise the lake in canoes!

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 and education projects. 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.