



# HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY FEB/MAR 2005 Vol. XXVII No. 1

## DECLINE IN BIRD POPULATIONS DOCUMENTED - AGAIN!

The National Audubon Society has released the first national "The State of the Birds" report documenting the health and abundance of North America's birds. Appearing in the October issue of *Audubon Magazine*, "The State of the Birds" paints a disturbing picture. Almost 30 percent of North America's bird species are in "significant decline." The overall state of the birds shows:

- 70 % of grassland species are in statistically significant declines;
  - 36 % of shrubland bird species are declining significantly;
  - 25 % of forest bird species are declining significantly;
  - 13 % of wetland bird species are declining significantly;
- and
- 23 % of bird species in urban areas are declining significantly.

According to the "State of the Birds," these declines are abnormal. Not part of the natural cyclical rise and fall in bird populations, "statistically significant declines" are due to outside factors such as loss of native grasslands, over-grazing of grassland and shrubland, development of wetlands, bad forest management, invasive species, pollution, and poor land use decisions.

"Like the canary in the coal mine warning the miner of danger ahead, birds are an indicator of environmental and human health," said Audubon President John Flicker. "Birds signal that we are at risk next." Flicker went on to say, "People created these problems and people can solve them if we act now."

Compiled by Audubon Scientist Greg Butcher, the "State of the Birds" analysis makes the case for private and public action, especially in strengthening, not weakening, existing environmental protections and more rigorously supervising their enforcement. Based on the report's findings, Audubon is advocating for improved grassland, forest, and wetland

### HARBOR PARK ALERT

by Martin Byhower

Dear Audubon members and readers, here is a one-time opportunity to voice your concerns and take action to help save and improve habitat in your Chapter's top priority site: Machado Lake in Ken Malloy/Harbor Regional Park. Recently, the City hired a company by the name of URS to complete the process of developing a master plan for the park, together with a blueprint for improvements, modifications, and management.

URS is now soliciting public comment on its products. I am asking you to do two things:

First, please write a letter with your comments and suggestions for improving the quality and recreational uses of Machado Lake. Please send your letter to:

Machado Lake Integrated Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Program  
c/o URS Corporation  
attn: Mr. Tom Wall  
2020 E 1st St., Suite 400  
Santa Ana, CA 92705-9536

In sending your letter, please include your address, telephone number, and email address.

Second, please attend the second of two meetings on March 22 at Harbor Community College Music Auditorium, 1111 Figueroa Place in Wilmington, from 6 to 8 PM.

This opportunity is time-sensitive and urgent, as your input will directly affect the course of events and management at KMHRP.

Although a mailing sent by Councilwoman Hahn emphasizes habitat protection, it also asks for suggested improvements in recreational uses of Machado Lake. Among recreational uses under consideration are paddle boat

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## VICE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by **Martin Byhower**

*It ain't easy being green...*  
-Kermit the Frog

Today is my birthday and it is raining in Southern California. One of the preceding gives me comfort.

I wish that this rain could “green up” collective consciousness the way it is greening up the hillsides in the Coastal Sage Scrub and the Chaparral Foothills, which have suffered a prolonged drought. It is washing away the chemicals that suppress germination and scarifying the hardened seed coats by tumbling them down torrents of life sustaining water, prompting renewal, continuance, sustenance of life. I wish it were so easy to bring suppressed, dormant or overwhelmed connection with the natural world to the surface of human souls, distracted by the trappings of material existence in a world often remote from nature. Or to plant the seeds of love, respect and stewardship for the wonderful other spirits and genomes that accompany *Homo sapiens* on our 200 million year cycle around the Milky Way aboard this tiny living spaceship.



I didn't choose to care this much. Maybe my connection started when my parents carried me into the surf as an infant, suspended above the waves in wide-eyed wonder. Maybe it strengthened when my grandparents took me to local tidepools, or to Marineland, where I was transfixed by the amazing and colorful seashells and animated aquatic creatures I saw and touched.

Or maybe it solidified years later, when working as a contracted aquaculturist in the corporate world, my illusions were shattered when I realized I was becoming a “biostitute,” whose job it was to find or produce biological data that would somehow “offset” or justify (they called it “mitigation”) the damage that was being done to my beloved ocean.

Anyway, I came to realize that my seemingly logical desire, bordering on passion, to enjoy and protect the life

that shared my home world and a good portion of my DNA, and upon which my own existence depended, was not universally shared. In fact, it was, it seemed, a minority mindset at best. Actively seeking to learn about the natural world, where it needed help, how to protect it from harm, and actually working to do so were progressively rarer characteristics among the other members of my species.

I was shocked, saddened, but ultimately became resolved by this realization. It can be a lonely job being an environmental activist. It is no fun to make enemies, and I seem to have accumulated my share. It becomes inevitable when one becomes outspoken and empowered. Yet I have learned to accept that there are perspectives different from mine, often well-meaning ones, ones that might even be “correct,” depending upon whose Truths one accepts. I have no illusions that I have all the answers, just an inescapable obligation to act upon my conscience.

In most cases, however, my views and actions tend to be consistent with the philosophy and policies of this group, the PV/South Bay Chapter of Audubon, to which I was recently re-elected co-president (along with my venerable colleagues, Fran Spivy-Weber and Bob Shanman.) I could hardly be in better company. And although my views may occasionally diverge from my peers (at which time I speak independently, as an individual, not representing this Group) I cherish the influences of democracy and independent thought in our political system that allows me to arrive at my own conclusions and express them, even if they are met with angry opposition.

So, the peaceful, undemanding, life-affirming rain is one of the best birthday presents for which I could ask. Another would be for you, reader, to consider to renew your commitment to your planet that led you to this organization and to read this article. Even if we remain a minority, there is power in commitment and activism! One thing you can do is check out the accompanying article about the upcoming meetings soliciting public input regarding management of Lake Machado at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, and see if any of my suggestions resonate with you



## THE FUTURE OF FAMILIAR BIRDS

The Neotropics are that part of the Americas that extends south of the Tropic of Cancer--the imaginary east-west line that passes just south of La Paz near the tip of Baja California.

Birds of different species ignore the precision of that line, but many do prefer spending their winters south rather than north of it. These birds are neotropical birds.

Among the world's birds, many neotropical birds are some of the most familiar and, unfortunately, some of the most threatened. For them, humans are changing the Earth entirely too quickly and too broadly.

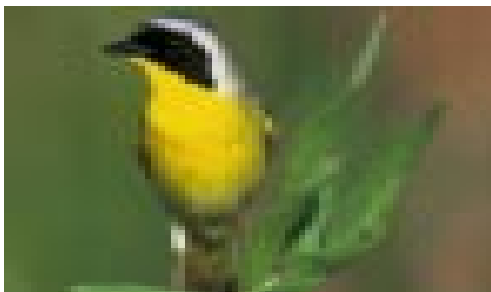
Dr. Robert Ridgely is a leading ornithologist in the study of endemic and endangered species of birds of the Americas. On March 19, Dr. Ridgely will discuss the changing face of conservation of neotropical birds at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History at 7:00PM.

Tickets for Dr. Ridgely's lecture can be purchased for \$50 (tax deductible) by mailing a check or money order payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society with a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
West Hollywood, CA 90046

There is a 15% discount on groups of ten or more. Checks should be made out to LA Audubon. Tickets include a reception, catered by Wolfgang Puck, in the Museum's Grand Foyer after the program. Fruit, cheese, cookies and coffee will be served with a cash bar serving wine, beer and soft drinks.

Dr. Ridgely's lectures will raise funds for PV/South Bay Audubon and four other local Audubon chapters. Six sponsors are underwriting most of the out-of-pocket expenses. They include Wild Birds Unlimited Palos Verdes and Woodland Hills stores, Audubon California, Brunton optics, Tropical Birding, and American Bird Conservancy.



**Common Yellowthroat**  
(Dave Menke, USFWS)

### *State of Birds, continued from page 1*

protection, stronger pollution controls, partnerships with private landowners, and backyard habitat programs for homeowners.

Birds not only serve as reliable indicators of environmental conditions, they also contribute greatly to the U.S. economy. Keeping birds – and their home habitats – in good condition is not only a good conservation policy, it is also good business.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, 69 million Americans – one-third of all adults in this country – call themselves birdwatchers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service notes that they contribute at least \$32 billion in retail sales, \$85 billion in overall economic output, and \$13 billion in state and federal taxes, creating 863,406 jobs. An analysis of expenditures is available on a state-by-state breakdown.

“Birds also contribute to the bottom line in more subtle ways, providing free pest and weed control, distributing seeds, and pollinating flowers and crops,” continued Flicker. “We simply cannot afford to ignore the state of the birds.”

Audubon's “State of the Birds” summarizes the status of nearly 700 birds species native to the continental United States, focusing on the condition of species in each of five habitat types: grasslands, shrublands, forests, wetlands, and urban areas (the fastest growing habitat type in the U.S.).

A digest of the report was published in the October issue of Audubon magazine. Further analysis is available on the Audubon website, <http://www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds>.

### **California's WatchList Birds**

Nearly half of all the birds on Audubon's WatchList occur regularly in California. Each fall, thousands upon thousands of birds migrate south along the Pacific Flyway and coastward from the Great Basin to spend the winter in California's marshes, riparian areas, and verdant grasslands. Over millennia, the state's mild climate and wealth of habitats has resulted in many distinct species and races of plants and animals, and birds are certainly no exception. Though only Yellow-billed Magpie and Island Scrub-Jay have never been recorded outside the state's borders, others like Allen's Hummingbird, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Oak Titmouse, California Thrasher, Wrentit, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and Tricolored Blackbird are found primarily within California, spilling over into adjacent states during the winter.

## BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

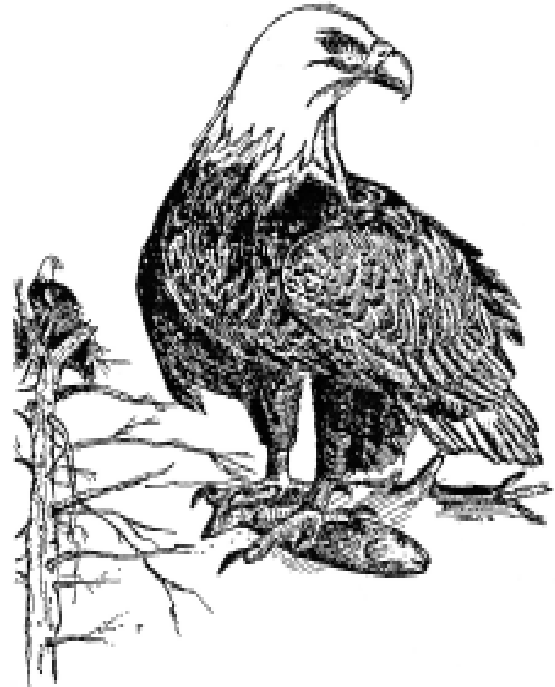
November and December 2004

by Kevin Larson

Late fall birding produced several sightings of interest; a number of these birds would remain into winter. As this winter's birding began to take on its own unique character, it seemed improbable that last year's large assortment of rare and unusual winter visitors would be matched. These thoughts were forgotten after many observers scoured the area and found an array of notable birds during the Palos Verdes Peninsula Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The CBC recorded 170 species on 26 December. An additional seven species were found during the count week period. A number of irruptive-type or mountain species were found in the area during November and December; these included a Hairy Woodpecker, three species of nuthatches, Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Townsend's Solitaire and Red Crossbills.

Thanks to good area coverage by many birders, we had another very good year. During the 2004 calendar year, 303 species were recorded in the area normally covered by this column. Remarkably, this total is identical to that of the previous year (one species was added to the 2003 total when the Cackling Goose was split from Canada Goose this year). Fewer of the expected species were missed this year, but a somewhat lackluster fall vagrant season was probably the reason we did not increase our total over the previous year. Again this year, no storm-petrels or Black Terns were seen locally. The occurrence of eight species of woodpeckers in the area in 2004 was exceptional since only three commonly occur (i.e., Red-breasted Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker and Northern Flicker); nine species have been seen since November 2003.

It was unusually cool in late November and early December. Warm daytime temperatures were enjoyed during a predominantly offshore flow pattern 10-20 December. Light showers occurred on four dates during November, but the accumulated total at LAX amounted to only about one-tenth of an inch. Rainfall on 5 and 7 December amounted to 0.65 inches at LAX. A storm 27-29 December was nothing short of a deluge, dropping nearly seven inches of rain on Downtown Los Angeles and over five inches on LAX. The 5.55 inches of rain at Downtown Los Angeles on 28 December was the third highest total for any calendar day since records began in



*American Bald Eagle*  
(Tom Kelley, USFWS)

1877; the total was very close to the record of 5.71 inches on 26 January 1956. Significant rainfall came again on 31 December.

Extremely rare locally in recent years, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Del Rey Lagoon 8 Nov-4 Jan (Daniel S. Cooper-DSC) is surprisingly the fourth record of this species in the area this year. A Cackling Goose was at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area (EMJRA) in Willowbrook 4-30 Dec (Kevin Larson-KL). Very rare anywhere in L. A. County, an adult **Tundra Swan** at Madrona Marsh (MM) in Torrance 18-22 Dec was a spectacular find (Tracy Drake). What was undoubtedly the same swan was seen by DSC at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 23 Dec; the MM bird was seen flying away to the west the day before. The first Canvasbacks—four at Alondra Park (AP) on 15 Nov (David Moody-DM)—arrived later than usual; twenty-eight were counted there by late December. One White-winged Scoter was at Dockweiler State Beach (DSB) on 9 Nov and 3 Dec (Richard Barth-RB); two were at the Marina del Rey Harbor mouth (MdR) 13 Nov-9 Dec (David Bell-DB), and four were reported there on 23 Dec (Linda Zhang). Two Black Scoters were at DSB on 22 Nov; one remained there through 11 Dec (RB). A Long-tailed Duck was at MdR 12 Nov-16 Dec (DB). An adult male Hooded Merganser was at BFM on 2 Nov (KL); a female at MM 17-26 Dec was likely the same individual

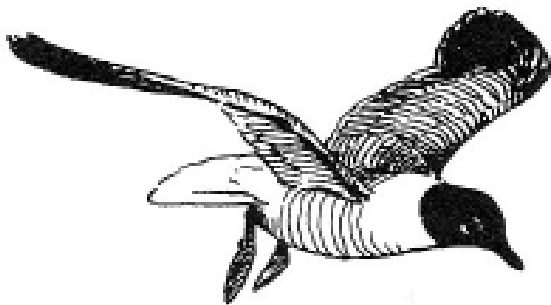
present last winter (DM).

Single Northern Fulmars seen from Pt. Vicente (PtV) on 6 Nov and 13 Nov were the only ones reported (KL). An American White Pelican was at EMJRA on 20 Dec (RB). The American Bittern found at BFM on 23 Oct was present through at least 11 Dec (RB); another was discovered at MM 29-30 Dec after a heavy rainfall flooded the marsh (DM). A Least Bittern was seen at BFM on 3 Dec (RB). The only Cattle Egrets found were two at EMJRA 13-30 Dec (RB).

A wing-tagged Bald Eagle was seen along the L. A. River (LAR) in South Gate on 28 Oct and in Long Beach near Deforest Park on 3 Nov (RB). This eagle, wearing orange patagial tag number 13, was fostered into a nest on Catalina Island in 2001. Another sighting of a wing-tagged Bald Eagle at PtV on 31 Dec was likely of this same individual (Stephanie Bryan). One Northern Harrier was seen in the Ballona area through at least 4 Dec (RB), and two were spotted by Sal Trupiano at Friendship Park in San Pedro on 26 Dec. A Ferruginous Hawk in the Ballona area fields near Culver and Lincoln Blvds. 8 Dec-2 Jan (RB) generated excitement among locals; another was found at the Navy Fuel Depot (NFD) in San Pedro on the 26 Dec CBC (Martin Byhower-MB).

Rarely recorded locally away from LAR, a single American Avocet was at BFM on 27 Nov (RB). Two Red Knots were in the Ballona Wetland area 7 Nov-17 Dec (KL). Up to seven Red Phalaropes were seen from PtV on 6 Nov and 13 Nov and twenty-nine storm-blown individuals were seen there on 29 Dec (KL). A first-winter **Laughing Gull** at LAR just south of Anaheim St. on 26 Dec was the first ever recorded on the PV CBC (KL). Very rare was an **adult** Thayer's Gull at the same location on 26 Dec (KL).

A Common Murre flying north past PtV on 13 Nov was the only one reported (KL). Cassin's and Rhinoceros



**Laughing Gull**  
(Robert W. Hines, USFWS)

Auklets were seen on most visits to PtV; sixty-three Cassin's on 6 Nov and fourteen Rhinoceros on 25 Dec were the highest counts of each species (KL). A White-winged Dove at the Lunada Bay residence of Ray De Long 9-10 Nov was documented by photographs. Unusual was a Burrowing Owl seen on the rocks along the north side of the Marina del Rey Harbor channel 27 Nov-9 Dec (Lorna Brown). Sightings of Vaux's Swifts included one over Playa del Rey on 14 Nov (DSC) and five over EMJRA on 4 Dec (KL).

A Nuttall's Woodpecker and a **Hairy Woodpecker** were found in Rolling Hills on the 26 Dec CBC (Dave Bradley, Rusty Scalf, and Ross Landry); there are only a few records of the latter species—none are recent—from the area. A pure male "Yellow-shafted" Northern Flicker was on the bluff north of Loyola Marymount University on 7 Nov (KL). A Hammond's Flycatcher at BFM on 18 Nov (RB) was quite late, as was a Pacific-slope Flycatcher at Wilderness Park (WP) on 9 Nov (DM). The returning male Vermilion Flycatcher at Columbia Park in Torrance was present 14 Oct-26 Dec (DM). An immature female Vermilion Flycatcher at EMJRA 13-30 Dec (RB) was long overdue at this seemingly perfect wintering location.

A Bell's Vireo at Deforest Park on 3 Nov was either an exceptionally late migrant or an individual that was attempting to overwinter (RB). A Cassin's Vireo at WP 3-9 Nov (DM) was surprisingly the only report of an individual of the *Vireo solitarius* complex during the period. Sightings of single Hutton's Vireos this fall continued at Sand Dune Park (SDP) 3 Sep-3 Dec (KL), at WP 18 Sep-3 Nov (DM), and at Harbor Park 2 Oct-26 Dec (KL); one was at the Gardena Willows on 26 Dec and up to three were in the Malaga Creek area 11-26 Dec (KL). Very scarce here in recent years, five Horned Larks flew over BFM on 14 Nov (KL). Seven Barn Swallows were over BFM on 12 Dec (KL).

Many Red-breasted Nuthatches remained in the area from this fall's invasion. A White-breasted Nuthatch found at Chadwick School on 16 Oct was seen again in the area on 10 Dec (MB); another was found in Palos Verdes Estates on the 26 Dec CBC (James E. Pike-JEP). Remarkably, a flock of **Pygmy Nuthatches** was found independently by Ray De Long and Sally Moite at or near Highridge Park in Rolling Hills Estates circa 2 Nov; Up to nine individuals were seen there through 1 Jan. One Brown Creeper was at Highridge Park on 5 Dec; another was found at a condo complex in Torrance on 19 Dec (KL).

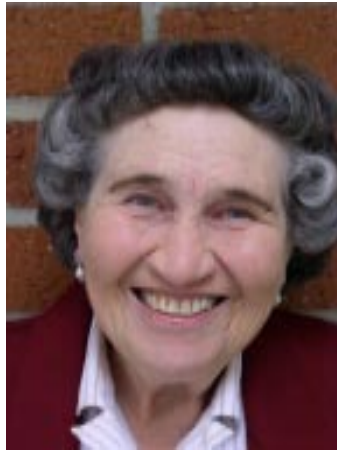
*Continued on page 8*

## CONSERVATION CORNER

by Lillian Light

My first wish is for Peace on Earth and peace in your hearts in 2005. My second wish is that you make a New Year's resolution to take action to protect our environment as often as you can.

You can start by letting your Washington legislators know that you oppose CAFTA because it allows trade agreements that threaten environmental, labor laws as well as public health. In May, the Bush Administration's trade representatives signed the Central America Free Trade Agreement. Now it must be approved by Congress to become official.



CAFTA includes controversial "investor" rules that empower foreign corporations to sue the U S government over environmental and health protections. In a notorious case, the Canadian company Methanex is suing the U S for \$970 million because California enacted a law that banned the gasoline additive MTBE, which has severely polluted drinking water in many California communities. This trade agreement provides corporations with powerful tools to overturn or waive environmental and other public interest laws. The threat is all the more serious since U S companies would be able to open a subsidiary in another country with weaker environmental protections, in order to sue the U S and California over laws that interfere with their profits.

The following quotation from a California League of Conservation Voters offers more details about this harmful trade agreement. Here is what CAFTA would do.

- 1) Allow foreign investors to challenge hard-won environmental law and natural resource agreements, such as oil, gas, and mineral leases.
- 2) Permit foreign investors to demand large mon-

etary compensation for the implementation of legitimate environmental protections.

- 3) Give foreign corporations greater rights than local citizens, and will allow them to completely bypass domestic courts, therefore undermining democratic self- government

- 4) Discourage food safety and other sanitary standards that would be adequate to protect public health and safety.

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### Your Political Representatives

#### U.S. Congress

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Senator Barbara Boxer<br>112 Hart Building<br>Washington, DC 20510<br>202-224-3553 | Senator Diane Feinstein<br>331 Hart Building<br>Washington, DC 20510<br>202-224-3841 |
|--|--|

Congresswoman Jane Harman  
2400 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-8220

#### California Legislature

Senator Alan Lowenthal, District 27  
State Capitol, Room 5066  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-445-6447

Senator Debra Bowen, District 28  
State Capitol, Room 4040  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-445-5953

Assemblyman Mike Gordon, District 53  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249  
916-319-2053

Assemblywoman Betty Karnette, District 54  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249  
916-319-2054

Assemblywoman Jenny Oropeza, District 55  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249  
916-319-2055

## Groundwater Guardian Program Coming to Los Angeles County

by Swati Yanamadala, Chadwick School Freshman

In conjunction with the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD), we, the Audubon YES! Council, are planning to create a Groundwater Guardian program throughout Los Angeles County. The goal of this nationwide program will be to educate local people about groundwater protection and conservation through teaching and hands-on activities.

While attending the Youth Groundwater Congress (held in conjunction with the Groundwater Foundation's annual meeting) as a delegate this November, I was surprised to find out about this national program, and more surprised to learn that we do not have this program locally. It is essential that people know where their drinking water is coming from and why it is important to protect it. It appears that few people are even aware of what groundwater is.

We have proposed this program to the WRD, and they seem genuinely interested in following through with it. If launched, we think this program has great potential to make a difference in our community.

Groundwater protection is a very important issue in this day and age. It is essential that we educate people about this vital resource so that they will take action. We hope that this program will instill a sense of conservation in the people of Los Angeles County.



### *Water Replenishment District of Southern California*

The WRD manages groundwater for nearly four million residents in 43 cities of southern Los Angeles County. The 420-square-mile service area uses about 250,000 acre-feet of groundwater per year, which equates to nearly 40% of the total demand for water. The WRD ensures that a reliable supply of high quality groundwater is available through its clean water projects, water supply programs, and effective management principles. For more information, see the WRD website at [www.wrd.org](http://www.wrd.org).

## Peninsula High Students and their Involvement in Nature

By Alicia Lee & Catherine Kim (co-presidents of Palos Verdes Peninsula Audubon YES! club)

At Peninsula High School, the environment is an important issue that is recognized by everyone. Throughout the school, many large trashcans and recycle bins are stationed in accessible areas, and teachers continuously encourage students to preserve the school campus and the natural world in general.

In addition, there are many clubs in Peninsula High School that are dedicated to the environment. Of these organizations, Audubon YES! is widely popular among the students because of the activities that it offers and the incentive of the Audubon YES! award. Over fifty enthusiastic students asserted their interests in helping the environment by joining Audubon YES! during the three days of club sign-ups.

Even though these high school students have rigorous schedules and numerous time-consuming extra-curricular activities, they still set aside time to share with nature. Of the various events offered by the monthly Audubon YES! activities list, most students have voiced interest in the program "Sharing Nature With Children." This is an event in which high-school students sign up as docents to help young children examine and enjoy nature out in the wild. It is truly a delight to see younger generations so intimate with nature, and it confirms hope for the future of the environment.

Another volunteer option that is popular among students involves the numerous events at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium located in San Pedro (Cabrillo Beach). On weekends, Audubon YES! Club members are invited to assist in the tidepool walks. While serving as tidepool walk docents who assist visitors to the aquarium, the students can enjoy a wonderful opportunity to witness and interact directly with their environment. An anticipated upcoming event at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium is the Whale Fiesta on January 16th, in which student volunteers can become involved in the festival by helping children with crafts.

Every month, Audubon YES! active members in Palos Verdes Peninsula High meet to share memorable moments and interesting experiences they had the previous month. The last meeting was held on Wednesday, January 5, 2005. As in every meeting, the students confirmed their desire of improving and giving back to our environment by expressing zealous dedication and enthusiasm in the club.

*Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 5*

Sightings of Rock Wrens included one at PtV 10 Oct-26 Dec (KL et al), one in the Forrestal Nature Preserve on 18 Dec (KL) and another on the coast in Palos Verdes Estates below Epping Rd. on 26 Dec (Bruce Aird). A Winter Wren in the Abalone Cove area of Rancho Palos Verdes on 7 Dec was a deserved reward for an enterprising birder checking this infrequently covered area (Mike San Miguel).

Surprisingly, DM found Golden-crowned Kinglets present in the area in late December; up to eight were in the pines along Camino del Campo near El Retiro Park in Torrance 26 Dec-1 Jan and two were at WP on 29 Dec. Outstanding were up to nine **Mountain Bluebirds** at NFD in San Pedro 27 Nov-1 Jan (MB) and two at Torrance Airport 24-26 Dec (Ann and Eric Brooks-A&EB). A **Townsend's Solitaire** in Rancho Palos Verdes 29 Dec-1 Jan is only the second PV area record since 1984 (KL). A Phainopepla was at BFM on 11 Nov (RB) and another was found on the 26 Dec CBC in Palos Verdes Estates (Curtis Johnson and Bruce Aird).

Single Nashville Warblers were found at SDP on 9 Nov (RB), at AP on 3 Dec (DM), at Sur La Brea Park on 19 Dec, and in Palos Verdes Estates on 26 Dec (JEP). A Yellow Warbler at EMJRA on 4 Dec had returned for its third consecutive winter (KL); other individuals were at MM 13 Nov-30 Dec (DM), at BFM 12-17 Dec (KL), at Harbor Park on 26 Dec (MB), and along LAR near Hill St. on 26 Dec (KL). A Hermit Warbler was at WP 3 Nov-29 Dec (DM). A Palm Warbler at BFM on 6 Nov may have been the same individual present 13-23 Oct (RB); one was also seen in the Ballona area near the 90 freeway crossing at Ballona Creek on 9 Dec (Jonathan Coffin) and another was found at MM on 17 Nov (DM). A Black-and-white Warbler was at the El Segundo Library park on 7 Dec (RB) and another was found in Palos Verdes Estates on the 26 Dec CBC (JEP). Seven Wilson's Warblers were found in the PV count circle 7 Nov-26 Dec and another was in Marina del Rey on 12 Dec. Thirty-three Western Tanagers found at eleven locations in the PV count circle 11-29 Dec is an unusually high total at this season.

Lark Sparrows were recorded in unusually high numbers; a flock at MM through December numbered as high as twenty-four (DM) and a total of nineteen was found at eight other locations 31 Oct-26 Dec. For the seventh consecutive winter, a "Large-billed" Savannah Sparrow was present on the jetties at the mouth of Marina del Rey Harbor; one was there 21 Nov-1 Jan (Jon Feenstra). Amazingly, JEP found a White-throated Sparrow while he was trying to relocate and photograph the **Harris's**

**Sparrow** that he had just seen at the Palos Verdes Golf Club (PVGC) on the 26 Dec CBC; both were still present on 1 Jan. A "Gray-headed" Junco in Palos Verdes Estates on 26 Dec was a rare find (JEP). A Swamp Sparrow was spotted in the Ballona Wetland area on 27 Nov (DB). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in the Malaga Creek area at the end of Via Tejon was yet another winter rarity found by JEP on the 26 Dec CBC.

Up to two Bullock's Orioles at Peck Park in San Pedro 11-26 Dec (Andrew Lee) and one in Palos Verdes Estates on 26 Dec (JEP) were the only ones found. Purple Finches were seen at the South Coast Botanic Garden on 26 Dec (A&EB), at MM on 28 Dec (DM) and at PVGC on 1 Jan (KL). Two **Red Crossbills** perched at MM on 16 Nov were quite a surprise (DM); these birds flew off shortly after discovery. Many Pine Siskins moved through the area from about the last week of October through the first week of November; one at MM on 8 Dec (DM) and two at Highridge Park on 2 Jan (MB) were the only ones reported after 6 Nov. Rarely encountered here, a calling Lawrence's Goldfinch flew over BFM on 3 Nov (DSC).

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 freeway, and along the coast up to Marina del Rey.

**Acronyms in Birds of the Peninsula**

A&EB: Ann and Eric Brooks  
 AP: Alondra Park  
 BFM: Ballona Freshwater Marsh  
 CBC: Christmas Bird Count  
 DB: David Bell  
 DM: Dave Moody  
 DSB: Dockweiler State Beach  
 DSC: Daniel S. Cooper  
 EMJRA: Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area  
 JEP: James E. Pike  
 KL: Kevin Larson  
 LAR: L.A. River  
 LZ: Linda Zhang  
 MB: Martin Byhower  
 MM: Madrona Marsh  
 NFD: Naval Fuel Depot  
 PtV: Pt. Vicente  
 PVGC: Palos Verdes Golf Club  
 RB: Richard Barth  
 WP: Wilderness Park



## TSUNAMIS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA?

by Allen Franz

The mega-thrust earthquake that struck off the coast of Sumatra on December 26, 2004, triggered a tsunami that may rank as the most destructive natural disaster of the new millennium. There have been several more powerful and deadly earthquakes (exceeding 9.0 on the Richter Scale) over the past century. But, this recent event appears to have shattered the record for destructive tsunamis in terms of loss of life and property damage—previously attributed to the Krakatoa explosion of 1883. Since we live in a coastal region with a history of earthquakes, a question that springs to mind is, what is our risk of a comparable event here?

Fortunately, our local tsunami risk is comparatively low—but not negligible. Since 1812—when a major quake struck Southern California—there have been perhaps a couple dozen tsunamis, the great majority of them barely noticeable. Still, the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have suffered tsunami damage as recently as 1964, when the massive Anchorage/Prince William Sound quake generated a tsunami that swept down the West Coast, killing 11 in Crescent City, in California's northwest corner and causing roughly \$10,000,000 in damage along California's coast.

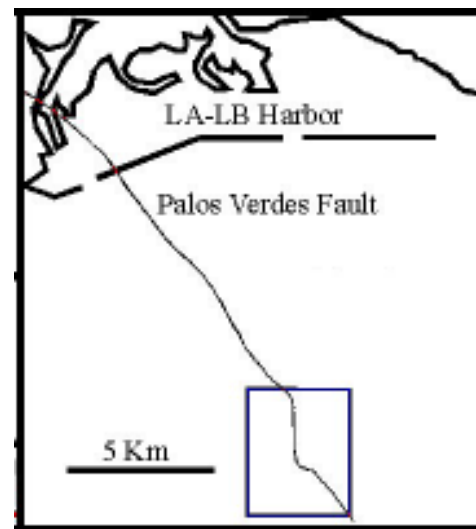
The first step to understanding our tsunami risk is a clear definition of a tsunami. It is not in any direct way linked to tidal effects—which depend basically on the gravitational influences of the sun and the moon—so the term “tidal wave” is a misnomer. Tsunamis are generated by the vertical displacement of water by either an earthquake or a submarine landslide.

Only thrust-type earthquakes, in which a slab of the earth's crust is jacked upward or downward, will generate tsunamis. The worst tsunamis, like the recent Sumatra event, appear to be associated with thrust faulting in tectonic subduction zones, where one slab of the earth's crust plunges under another. Fortunately, the great majority of geological faults in Southern California and off our coast are lateral faults, in which the two sides of a fault zone move past each other horizontally. The only significant thrust faults in Southern California are in the Transverse Ranges, the east-west strip associated with the Santa Ynez and Santa Monica Mountains, the Santa Barbara Channel, and the northern Channel Islands. These faults are not believed to be capable of generating temblors powerful

enough to trigger dangerous tsunamis.

We are also potentially vulnerable to tsunamis from mega-thrust earthquakes generated in tectonic subduction zones elsewhere around the Pacific. The nearest such threat source is off the coast of Oregon and Washington. The Pacific “ring of fire” includes a number of subduction zones, but we are at relatively low risk locally because of distance and local seafloor topography.

Submarine landslides—which can occur along the continental shelf, or on steep volcanic islands such as the Hawaiian Islands—are another potential source of tsunami



*Palos Verdes Fault  
(CSULB)*

risk. Geologist H. Gary Greene of the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories near Monterey has recently explored a major submarine landslide of undetermined age off the Santa Barbara coast, measuring six miles wide and nine miles long. The collapse apparently occurred in three major blocks, each of which could have generated a substantial tsunami.

Even closer to home, Jacques Locat of Laval University in Quebec has recently calculated that there is a potential for a three hundred foot thick block of the Palos Verdes Peninsula to slide off a 2000 foot marine escarpment, which could theoretically generate a 100 foot high local tsunami—which would threaten low-lying areas of Long Beach and the ports.

Two recent books by Susan Elizabeth Gough of the U.S. Geological Survey in Pasadena provide an accessible entry into the study of earthquakes and their role in California.

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*Harbor Park Alert, continued from page 1*

rentals, sales of food at snack bars, remotely powered motorized planes and boats, mountain or motorized dirt-biking courses, running of unleashed pets, formalized feeding of park animals.

PV/South Bay Audubon believes that passive uses compatible with wildlife preservation and enhancement (such as improving the Boy Scout Camp and Exercise Course Stops) should be encouraged.

Here are some suggested recommendations for your consideration, when writing your letter or speaking at the March 22 meeting.

1. Establish a Natural Heritage Center that serves as a gateway to exploring the park and facilitates interpretation of the rich ecological features, wildlife, and historical aspects of the Park.

2. Reactivate educational programs that center on the Lake at the Park, including employment of a Park Naturalist to interpret natural history for park visitors and monitor ecological health of the park/lake.

3. Thoroughly investigate the possibility of using reclaimed water or water from other sources to supplement and/or replace the existing water sources. Carefully consider impacts on ecosystem of such waters based on their characteristics.

4. Regular schedule habitat restoration and cleanups of natural habitat areas by volunteers as well as park staff, including removal of invasive plant and animal species on a regular basis.

5. Ban, by enacting specific LA city ordinances if necessary, all feeding of animals, wild or domestic, at the Lake and Park, and enforce the existing ban on illegal dumping of animals. Relocate feral animals (ducks and geese) that are presently there.

6. Explore options for relocating the Day Labor Center, with better monitoring of activities in the interim.

7. Improve park security and safety, including preventing vandalism, protecting natural/restoration areas and park facilities, regularly patrolling for illegal or mischievous park occupants.

8. Establish permanent on-site facilities for staff.

9. Improve facilities, including restrooms, installation of lakeside benches, improvements to campground area.

10. Establish a network of local and regular park users to monitor and report instances of illegal behavior or other problems to authorities.

*Conservation Corner, continued from page 6*

5) Increase the number of lawsuits that would freeze the adoption of environmental standards.

Investor provisions in NAFTA are already being used to discourage countries from adopting badly needed protections for the environment.

Please contact our Senators and your Congressperson, and urge them to oppose CAFTA because it would give corporations dangerous powers to undercut our hard-won labor and environmental safeguards.

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## Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Wednesday, Feb. 2, 7:00PM: **Audubon Board and Members meeting**, Whole Foods Community Room, Crenshaw & Pacific Coast Highway.

Sunday, Feb. 6, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**, 26300 Crenshaw Bl., Palos Verdes. Leader: Ollie Coker. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation, and you can join at the entrance. (Also March 6 and April 3)

Wednesday, Feb. 9, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. 3201 Plaza del Amo (west of Madrona Ave.) in Torrance.

Sunday, Feb 13, 9:00AM: **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 13.)

Wednesday, Feb. 16, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See Feb. 6 for directions.)

Saturday, February 19, 8:00AM: **Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park** with Martin Byhower. Meet in parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim St. above the boathouse, about one mile west of 110 Freeway on Anaheim St.

Sunday, March 6, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Ollie Coker. (See Feb. 3 for directions.)

Wednesday, March 9, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. (See Feb. 9 for directions.)

Wednesday, March 16, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See Feb. 16 for directions.)

Saturday, March 19, 8:00AM: **"Best Birding Spots in Southern L.A. County—Upper George F. Canyon"** with Martin Byhower. Meet at Martingale trailhead. Take Bronco Dr. west from PV Drive East until it turns into Martingdale, then watch for trailhead sign on the right).

SATURDAY, March 19, 7:00PM: Dr. Robert Ridgely, **"The Changing Face of Conservation of Neotropical Birds."** \$50/person (tax deductible); LA County Museum of National History Auditorium, 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. (See ticket purchase information below.)

Wednesday, April 6, 7:00PM: **Audubon Board and Members meeting**, Whole Foods Community Room, Crenshaw & Pacific Coast Highway.

Sunday, April 3, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. (See Feb. 6 for directions.)

Wednesday, April 13, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. 3201 Plaza del Amo (west of Madrona Ave.) in Torrance.

Sunday, April 10, 9:00AM: **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.

April 23, all day: **Earth Day Celebration at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium**. PV/South Bay Audubon Awards and Audubon YES! Awards in the afternoon.

### *Tsunamis, continued from page 9*

*Earthshaking Science: What We Know (And Don't Know) About Earthquakes* (Princeton University Press, 2002) provides an overview of the study of plate tectonics and earthquakes, including explanations of the measurement and mapping of seismic hazard.

*Finding Fault in California: An Earthquake Tourist's Guide* (Mountain Press, 2004) offers a region-by-region summary of California's seismic history, including a chapter on Los Angeles with at least limited discussion of the Palos Verdes and Newport-Inglewood faults. Both books are illustrated with black and white photographs and helpful diagrams.

The internet is another rich source of information, including a growing number of animations of tectonic movements; highly recommended is [www.geol.ucsb.edu/~atwater/Animations/Animations-FR.html](http://www.geol.ucsb.edu/~atwater/Animations/Animations-FR.html), produced by Tanya Atwater's group at UC Santa Barbara.

# CALENDAR



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**HELP NEEDED!**

**Audubon YES!:** Contacts with South Bay schools and teen youth groups are wanted. If you are a teacher looking for extra-credit opportunities for your students, or if you are an adult advisor to a teen group looking for volunteer activities, become an active part of Audubon YES!, our Youth Environmental Service program. Audubon wants to work with you and your kids! For more information, call Jess Morton at 310 832-5601 or visit us online at [www.AudubonYES.org](http://www.AudubonYES.org)

The Chapter also would welcome a **volunteer** to assist in talking with participants in our various outings regarding **membership** in the local Audubon Chapter. If this opportunity seems attractive to you, please see page 10 for details.

Pick up postage-paid envelopes at Wild Birds Unlimited at PCH and Crenshaw to **recycle your HP or Lexmark Inkjet cartridges**. For each cartridge sent in these envelopes, \$2.50 is donated to our Chapter or to South Bay Wildlife Rehab. This is a great way to reduce waste and to support your favorite organizations.