



HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY APR/MAY 2004 Vol. XXVI No.2

DOMINGUEZ WATERSHED PLAN EMERGES

By Jess Morton

The Management Master Plan for the South Bay's Dominguez Watershed has been released. The product of three years of hard work by the Dominguez Watershed Advisory Council (DWAC), the plan is now out for public review. The plan will provide official guidelines for the County of Los Angeles in its dealings with water issues throughout the South Bay. Because of the broad participation by cities, industry, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations, it is likely the plan will be used by all concerned.

The purpose of DWAC is to: "Create and support implementation of a comprehensive watershed management master plan (WMMP), which will address current and potential problems and issues, potential solutions, prioritization of projects, funding opportunities, restoration/enhancement measures, and monitoring programs within the Dominguez Watershed."

The vision statement was even more ambitious: "An urban industrial watershed in balance with the environment." Whether this vision and the plan's purposes can be met only time will tell, but it never hurts to aim high and in the right direction.

From the start, Audubon has played a key role in DWAC. This was essential because the Harbor Park watershed, which makes up about 15% of the Dominguez Watershed could easily have been shortchanged during the planning process, unless it had strong advocates. PV/South Bay Audubon has been the lead non-profit organization, and has had an influential role in all decision making.

El Dorado Audubon's Suzanne Carota has also been a regular contributor, and she was featured in Michael Weber's media scoop in the Oct/Nov 2001 issue of *Hummin'*. Many readers were introduced to

AUDUBON AWARDS

Please join your fellow members of the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society on Saturday afternoon, April 24, at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro to honor the following outstanding individuals:

- Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal and Councilwoman Janice Hahn for Environmental Leadership;
- Jesse Marquez, Wilmington Coalition for a Safe Environment, for Conservation;
- Katie Moore for Youth Conservation; and
- Mitch Heindel with the Shirley Wells Lifetime Achievement Award.

Youth from Palos Verdes and South Bay schools will receive YES! Awards for providing at least fifty hours of service to the community's environment.

The program will begin at 4:30 PM. Hors d'oeuvres will be served at 4:00 PM. There is no charge for the event, but contributions are welcome.

this amazing watershed in that article, where it was disclosed that the Dominguez Channel had been illegally dammed for a bridge construction project.

It may well have been that project which convinced all parties how necessary DWAC and its WMMP were. Since then, there has been a remarkable unanimity of purpose to bring in a good plan—and on time. The result has surpassed expectations, thanks to the absolute dedication of Karen Green and her MEC team, which served as consultants to DWAC in drafting the plan.

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Martin Byhower

I am one of your three acting Presidents; Jess Morton's shoes are quite difficult to fill! Yet I am honored and a bit humbled to be sharing this position with such capable, esteemed and effective individuals as Fran Spivy-Weber and Bob Shanman. In fact, in my 30+ years as an active environmentalist, I have never felt like I was in the company of a more capable and environmentally astute Board of Directors than that of the current PV South Bay Audubon Chapter. With your participation, we can stop the movement of mountains!

Yet, to stretch the "mountain moving" metaphor a bit further, on occasions it may actually be in the best interest of the nearby communities of plants and animals, including humans, to move a mountain once in a while. At the very least, all those affected should be consulted and/or considered, and the impacts carefully weighed before decisions are made. Nature is full of tricks, and humans, in our attempts to outsmart her, have often erred on the side of hasty responses nearly as often as we have made the mistake of non-response. And that is why I have chosen to become involved in this Audubon Chapter. Your Audubon Chapter is the organization that is looking out for your bioregion, not with hastily construed responses, nor with tied hands (or tongues). We ask the questions that need to be asked and have the credibility and reputation to get them answered. We have the people with the skills and knowledge to act when others won't. As a Board, we don't always agree, but we nearly always achieve a consensus. By engaging a critical mass of knowledgeable and insightful individuals, working toward common goals, we stand a chance of saving the things that make this planet special to all of us. We keep our local environment an issue on the table for those individuals who have the power to affect it, positively or negatively.

You, as a member of Audubon, have entrusted us to represent you. We take this responsibility seriously. We try to speak for you. But we want to hear what you know and feel so we don't have to guess or assume! Please alert us to your

concerns and get involved with us by coming to our meetings, events, and walks.

We all know that it is important to "think globally and act locally." (I have heard from informed sources that The Audubon Society actually created that "Planetary Mission Statement"!) There is certainly no shortage of local issues to act upon. In this newsletter is an article I wrote, partly for my seventh grade students and partly for you, about the imminent arrival of West Nile disease this summer.

In my view, the Los Angeles County Vector Control District and the media have inflated and exaggerated the threat and the impacts of the disease. Such attitudes may lead to drastic but only partially effective control measures, while causing significant harm to natural aquatic habitats and the wildlife that inhabit them.

Moreover, the virus, like so many other vector-borne diseases, will eventually become endemic no matter what measures are taken, and we will have to learn to live with it. My fear is the irreversible damage that can result from trying to overcome an irresistible force. But in this, as in any other issue, your Audubon Board will initiate dialogue, ask questions and provide input when, where, and to whom it will be most effective. As an Audubon Chapter we may not even establish a Board Policy on this issue, but you can be certain that we will do our best to get the necessary information out there so that informed decisions can be made.

There are numerous other local issues and no shortage of controversy as to their resolution, from coyotes to fox squirrels, peacocks to gnatcatchers, Forrestal Canyon mountain biking to preservation and restoration of the last local sizable swath of habitat in the PV landslide area, golf courses and, well, more golf courses. The struggle to improve the situation at the Wilmington Drain Ken Malloy/Harbor Regional Park will keep us busy for a good while, and even when we eventually get an Audubon Natural Heritage Center there, we will celebrate, but we will probably only rest momentarily.

There is no shortage of controversy and there never will be. Your Audubon is a democracy, and like any democracy, we function best when the citizens are engaged. In fact, we can't function without you!

The Shirley Wells Lifetime Achievement Award

by Jess Morton

The inaugural Shirley Wells Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Mitch Heindel at our Audubon Conservation Awards celebration this year.

Only old timers among *Hummin'* readers will have known Shirley Wells. But they will remember her.

Shirley Wells was one of those remarkable people who move at the center of a universe. In Shirley's case, it was a universe of birds. Not just things with feathers, but BIRDS—make that all caps!

Shirley cared for what they are, where they live, what they do. She wanted to make the world a better place through birds, by caring for them, protecting their habitats, recording their activities, and communicating their essential nature to other people. And she did.

A generation of birders—from teenagers to adults—grew up in the South Bay as a result of her ability to teach people about BIRDS. Mitch was one of them. I was another. Just two of many.

Each of us has favorite memories. I remember her counting quail on a bird walk. Another time she was ready to abandon a tram tour she was leading to chase a Lewis' Woodpecker.

My wife Donna remembers the hummingbird dangling by its bill from Shirley's lips. Darnedest thing, too. It didn't try to fly away, just hung there. Shirley was one of the few permitted to band hummingbirds, her specialty. Gordie Wells had just brought another bird into their home office banding station. All the holding bags were full and so were Shirley's hands. What to do? What to do?

Shirley's legacy is, in part, our Audubon chapter. She did not live to see its formation. Indeed, when she died, the void left in the South Bay was so huge that only something as big as Audubon could begin to fill it.

Another part of Shirley's legacy is the natural channel entering Harbor Lake. When the county decided to make what's now called the Wilmington Drain a concrete channel, Shirley asked why? And everybody scratched their heads. Good thing, too, because Shirley's 'why?' meant 'no way!'

It's still a beautiful place. A better name would be Shirley's Way.



Then there's Mitch. From Shirley, Mitch learned how important it is to watch the bird. Not birds in a general way, but each individual. He learned that ears are as important as eyes. He learned that it is essential to keep records. He learned that there is an ethic to this business that simply boils down to a matter of caring.

And for forty years now, Mitch has done that.

This inaugural award is in recognition of Mitch's years of dedicated work on behalf of birds and their habitats, especially at Harbor Park. His meticulous observation records are invaluable for those of us working to preserve local wildlife habitat. Anyone who has read his "Birds of the Peninsula" column can't but know how deeply Mitch cares. Shirley would be proud.

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

BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

January and February 2004

by Kevin Larson

We enjoyed the continuing presence of a generous bounty of wintering rarities during January and February. A good number of California birders came to see these birds during this period. Several local rarities were found in January that were either not present or not detected earlier in the winter. The appearance of certain species during the period—such as the five species of swallows seen in the area 6-19 February—heralded the onset of spring migration.

The amount of rainfall in January was a small percentage of the normal value. February's rainfall total was boosted to well above average after a series of storms late in the month.

The occurrence of three **Greater White-fronted Geese** at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) 25 Jan-3 Feb (Richard Barth-RB) was exceptional since there are very few records of this species in our area. The timing of this occurrence indicates that these geese were northbound spring migrants. The presence of a Ross's Goose at the Ocean Trails Golf Course ponds was reported to Martin Byhower (MB) by one of his Harbor Park bird walk participants; first seen circa 7 Feb, the bird was still present on 22 Feb. The small Canada Goose of the race *B. c. minima* continued at the El Segundo Golf Course pond through at least 31 Jan (Kevin Larson-KL). Four Brant flew north past Pt. Vicente (PtV) on 17 Jan (KL). A White-winged Scoter flew north past PtV on 17 Jan (KL). The Long-tailed Duck found in King Harbor by David Moody (DM) on 15 Dec continued through at least 21 Feb. Since the Common Goldeneye is a fairly rare and somewhat irregular visitor to our area, one at BFM 14 Jan-28 Feb (RB) was notable. An exciting find was a female **Common Merganser** at Alondra Park (AP) 14-20 Jan (DM); there are very few records of this species in our area. What ap-

peared to be the same immature male Hooded Merganser that was at Madrona Marsh (MM) from 31 Oct-3 Jan (DM) was seen at AP 18-25 Jan (MB, DM); a female Hooded Merganser was seen at MM 6-21 Feb (DM). Up to three Hooded Mergansers were at BFM 16-18 Jan (KL).

Northern Fulmar sightings continued into the period; one or two were usually seen during several visits to PtV (KL), and seven were seen on the 28 Feb Los Angeles Audubon Society (LAAS) pelagic trip out of Marina del Rey that covered the waters south to the PV area. Three Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen from PtV on 18 Jan (KL). A Sooty Shearwater seen about five miles off Manhattan Beach on the 28 Feb LAAS boat trip was the only one identified with certainty in the area this winter (Todd McGrath-TMcG). A Short-tailed Shearwater flew south past PtV on 3 Jan; another dark shearwater seen at this location on 17 Jan was likely also this species, but was left identified as a Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwater (KL). The LAAS boat trip participants enjoyed excellent views of Short-tailed Shearwater about seven miles west of El Segundo on 28 Feb (TMcG). A **Manx Shearwater** was seen by Bernardo Alps 2.4 miles south of Angel's Gate on a whale watch trip on 31 Jan. Unrecorded here prior to 2000, this species has now been seen in the vicinity of the P.V. Peninsula in four consecutive years. All four sightings have come in late winter, from 31 Jan to 17 Mar.

A Least Bittern was seen at BFM on 2 Jan (KL). Up to two Cattle Egrets were present at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area (EMJRA) 11 Jan-15 Feb (Carol Selvey). A migrant Turkey Vulture was seen by Daniel S. Cooper (DSC) on 4 Jan at BFM; a few more were seen in the ensuing weeks. A Northern Harrier at BFM on 4 Jan (DSC) was the only one seen in the area this winter. A Virginia Rail was seen by RB at BFM on 6 Feb. Two Red Phalaropes spotted by Michael J. San Miguel, Jr. off Redondo Beach on the 28 Feb LAAS boat trip were the first ones seen in the area this winter.

An adult **Laughing Gull** that I watched from PtV for 35 minutes on 24 Jan was an unexpected

surprise. Another Laughing Gull was also present along the coast of San Luis Obispo County at this time. Normally very rare along the coast of CA, an unusually high number of this species occurred during the previous winter and spring from San Diego County north to San Luis Obispo County. The entirely white-plumaged (leucistic) California Gull that was seen at Hermosa Beach and AP in the previous winter was seen again this winter at AP on 10 Jan (KL). Thayer's Gulls were unreported this winter until February: a first-year bird was at the L. A. River on 1 Feb (KL) and a second-year individual was at Ballona Creek on 7 Feb (KL, RB). An immature **Glaucous Gull** was seen flying south along the L. A. River at Willow St. on 11 Jan (KL). One Black-legged Kittiwake seen flying north past PtV on 1 Feb, two seen from a whale watch boat off the southern portion of the peninsula on 6 Feb (Mike Bowen), and one seen seven miles off El Segundo on the 28 Feb LAAS boat trip were the only ones recorded in the area this winter as of the end of February. Two Ancient Murrelets were spotted by TMcG on the 28 Feb LAAS boat trip: one was about five miles off Redondo Beach and one was four miles off PtV. A Cassin's Auklet was seen in the L. A. Harbor from the Cabrillo Beach pier on 30 Jan (KL). One Rhinoceros Auklet flew north past PtV on 17 Jan (KL). Seven Cassin's Auklets and five Rhinoceros Auklets were seen from PtV on 21 Feb (KL). Three Rhinoceros Auklets were seen on the 28 Feb LAAS pelagic trip (TMcG).

The three Acorn Woodpeckers present at Pacific Crest Cemetery since 2 Dec were seen through at least 18 Feb (DM). The wintering Pacific-slope Flycatcher first noted at Wilderness Park



(WP) on 6 Nov was present through at least 16 Jan (DM). The wintering immature male Vermilion Flycatcher first found by RB on 21 Dec at Columbia Park in Torrance was enjoyed by numerous observers through at least 21 Feb. The wintering **Bell's Vireo** at the South Coast Botanic Garden (SCBG), first seen on 26 Oct, was present through at least 19 Feb (MB, KL). At least four—possibly up to six—Plumbeous Vireos were wintering in the area; records included two at Harbor Park (HP) 12 Oct-17 Jan (KL), one at Chadwick Canyon 17 Dec (MB), and one at SCBG 24 Dec-19 Feb (KL). Single Plumbeous Vireos found at Deforest Park 17 Oct-2 Nov (RB) and at the El Segundo Library on 12 Nov (RB) were likely wintering as well. A Cassin's Vireo found at AP on 9 Jan (DM) was wintering, as was one at HP that was seen again on 1 Jan (KL). One Hutton's Vireo was in upper George F Canyon in Rolling Hills on 10 Jan, and two were along Malaga Cr. at the end of Via Tejon on 8 Feb (KL).

A few Tree Swallows were wintering in the vicinity of BFM; one to six individuals were noted there from 6 Jan to 7 Feb. Twenty-five Tree Swallows there on 10 Feb were certainly spring migrants (KL). The first Violet-green Swallow of the season was seen at Ernie Howlett Park on 19 Feb; up to three were seen at BFM 20-24 Feb (KL). Two Northern Rough-winged Swallows and one Cliff Swallow at BFM on 6 Feb were the first migrants of these species noted in the area this year. Last year, a number of Barn Swallow sightings during this period made it difficult to determine on which date the winter-occurring individuals gave way to spring migrants. This year, the latest of the several winter Barn Swallow sightings in the area was on 9 Jan. Barn Swallows were not encountered again until two were seen at BFM on 13 Feb (KL); these were apparently the first true spring migrants.

A Red-breasted Nuthatch seen in RHE on 3 Jan (KL) was likely part of a small resident population that is now occurring on the hill; one to two birds were seen at this location during the past year. A rare sight away from the mountains, a Brown Creeper was at Deforest Park in Long

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Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 5

Beach on 11 Jan (KL). Encouraging was a Rock Wren seen in the Forrestal Quarry (FQ) area 25-28 Jan (Jess Morton). FQ has been the most reliable place on the peninsula to find the Rock Wren in the past, but none have been seen there in a few years. A Rock Wren seen at nearby Ocean Trails on 18 Feb (Bob Beckler) may have been the same bird that was seen earlier at FQ. The Winter Wren found at HP on 21 Dec (Don Sterba-DS) was present through at least 7 Feb. Western Bluebirds continued in the vicinity of Highridge Park in RHE; four were seen there on 3 Jan (KL). Another two Western Bluebirds seen at AP on 11 Feb (DM) were surprising since this species is still quite rare in this area. The wintering **Gray Catbird** that was first found at the Gardena Willows (GW) on 22 Dec (MB) was seen by several observers through at least 7 Feb. The California Thrasher present in the FQ area last year was seen and heard singing there again on 17 Jan (MB) and 24 Jan (KL).

The wintering Chestnut-sided Warbler at HP, first found on 20 Dec by MB, was present through at least 10 Jan. Rare in winter, single Hermit Warblers were seen near Sand Dune Park (SDP) in Manhattan Beach on 1 Jan (Steve Sosensky-SS) and at WP through at least 27 Jan (DM). The wintering **Prairie Warbler** at GW—first found on 21 Dec (KL)—was seen by many birders through at least 16 Feb. Five wintering Black-and-white Warblers was a bumper crop: individuals were at SDP 25 Sep-20 Dec (Lori Conrad), at HP 18 Oct-17 Jan (KL, MB), at Recreation Park in El Segundo 17 Nov-19 Feb (RB), at GW 21 Dec-15 Feb (KL), and in Marina del Rey Dec-Feb (TMcG). The wintering male American Redstart found at HP by DS on 21 Dec was seen by a number of observers through at least 17 Jan.

A wintering female Summer Tanager at Banning Park on 1 Feb (KL) was likely the same bird that was seen there 8-9 Nov (Andrew Lee). About 20 Chipping Sparrows were wintering at the PV Landfill; these birds were seen on 25 Jan (KL). For the sixth consecutive winter, a “Large-billed” Savannah Sparrow was present on the jetties at the mouth of Marina del Rey harbor; this year, one

Old Chestnut

There's no return to Beacon Hill's old streets.
Green elms have turned another season's hues.
Gold touches them by long gone rendezvous
where workmen once returned to snug retreats.
Came rattling up toward Joy Street in cheap cars
shouting hellos, fighting, drinking in the bars.

Repairmen visit now in tree-lined malls
to pave the rough spots over, back and fill
for betters who have struggled up the hill.

I walked one passageway between brick walls
and found there, towering over a blind tee,
an ancient, solitary chestnut tree.

Ripe chestnuts lay untouched, littering the lane,
in a hopeless, but unceasing, wait for rain.

--*Jess Morton*

individual was seen from 1 Jan to 5 Feb (SS, RB). The Swamp Sparrow at HP that was first found on 9 Nov (MB) continued through at least 7 Feb; one present at BFM since 30 Nov (DSC) was seen through at least 21 Feb. A **Common Grackle** present at EMJRA 11 Jan-7 Feb (KL) was a returning winterer. One immature male Hooded Oriole was seen at SCBG in late Dec; two individuals—both immature males—were seen together at this location 4 Jan-18 Feb (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 freeway, and along the coast up to Marina del Rey.

Mosquitoes, Malaria, and the West Nile Virus

by Martin Byhower

(The first of two articles.)

As summer approaches, the news media will be carrying stories about mosquitoes, standing water, and West Nile Virus. Potential problems caused by mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus are as complex as they are serious.

How do we respond to such a situation that can have serious repercussions for humans and wildlife?

Addressing these problems need not damage wildlife and our local environment, if we tailor our responses to the specific problem and setting and don't simply follow tradition.

A review of mosquito-borne disease and our responses to them may help guide our response to this new "crisis."

Female mosquitoes carry and transmit malaria by biting a host containing the *Plasmodium* protist and then biting an uninfected individual who becomes infected. Malaria is incurable and only partially preventable with chemical medications called antimalarials. These agents work only for a short time and can have serious side effects for most people.

The intense chills of malaria are caused by the shock of the rapid simultaneous release of the reproduced *Plasmodium* organism into the body. The intense fever that follows is the body's reaction to the toxins produced by the organism. Over time, and with some relief from medication, victims of malaria build up some immunity to the disease, but relapses can occur throughout life.

Malaria is not present in the United States. This fortunate situation could change if global warming causes the *Anopheles* mosquito, which is the vector for that disease, to move northward. Some diseases for which mosquitoes are the vector are endemic in this country. These include St. Louis and Western Equine encephalitis, both of which occur in Los Angeles County. Others, including Dengue Fever and West Nile Virus, are increasing and spreading throughout the country. West Nile is expected to arrive in full force in Los Angeles County in the summer of 2004.

West Nile, like many related vector-borne viruses, can cause encephalitis (swelling in the tissue sur-



rounding the brain). Most victims dismiss the headache and mild fever, if any occur, as a mild to moderate flu. Elderly and immune-compromised individuals are at greater risk and are the populations in which fatalities generally occur. Most people exposed to the West Nile virus show no symptoms at all. Encephalitis symptoms occur in less than 1% of exposed and infected individuals.

Birds in the Corvid family, especially crows and ravens, are very susceptible to the disease and are often the first indicators of its presence. The West Nile virus can only be transmitted to humans by mosquitoes that bite an infected bird and then bite a human. Recent incidents of dead crows at Whittier Narrows on the San Gabriel River suggest that West Nile is imminent.

There is no cause for panic. In fact, if significant numbers of crows succumb, it would be beneficial to other native wildlife in our area. Human activities have contributed to an overpopulation of crows, which now pose a threat to songbirds in our region. However, unabated, the West Nile virus could eventually be a problem for other, less-problematic species of birds.

There are dozens of mosquito species that carry the disease. They live in a variety of habitats. Some are nocturnal while others are diurnal. All of them require water to reproduce. Stagnant and polluted water host the species that travel farther and thus are more likely to carry West Nile to populated areas. Flowing water in healthy ecosystems is much less likely to breed mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in water and can complete their entire life cycle in as little as a week in

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BIRD-A-THON! ONE CRAZY DAY IN MAY

What could be better? A group of friends, all birders. Meeting at 4:45 AM on May 1. Breakfast (aka fried grease) at Poly's on the Pier to start. Then, Hermosa Beach, Long Point, Forrestal Canyon, Cabrillo Beach, donut time, Harbor Park, Banning Park, L.A. River, Alondra Park. Are you still with us? Madrona Marsh, Wilderness Park, Ballona Wetlands. Sunset! Dinner! 139 species. 15 hours. 100 miles. WOW!

Why? Why, to help raise funds for Palos Verdes Audubon.

In last year's Bird-A-Thon, three teams from the Chapter raised a combined \$8,000. The money has been set aside for use on the Chapter's primary project-a Natural Heritage Center at Harbor Park. This year, our goal is to raise \$10,000 or more. You can help.

Here's how it works. The teams go out during a 24-hour period (May 1 this year) and identify as many species as possible. If you pledge \$1.00 per species and your team sees 120 species, you will be sent a list of the birds that the team saw in exchange for your check for \$120.00, made out to PV/South Bay Audubon. Again this year, most of the money will be set aside for the Natural Heritage Center Project. All Birdathon contributions/donations are tax deductible.

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Wirdbotchers includes Bob Shanman, Jess Morton, Dave Moody, Ron Meline, and Connie Day. The Wirdbotchers expect to see 105-125 species. Call 310-325-BIRD (2473) if you have questions. Bob and his Wild Birds Unlimited staff will take pledges over the phone, too.

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Wild Bunch are led by Lillian Light and Ollie Coker. The wild bunch expects to see 80 species. For more information, contact them at lklight@verizon.net or 310-545-1384.

The PV/South Bay Bush-Whackers are led by Martin and Eileen Byhower, Steve Dexter, Kevin Larson, and Carol Selvey. They expect to see 120 species. Contact Martin at MBinRBC@aol.com or 310-539-0050.

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM

Mail pledges or fixed-amount checks to PV/South Bay Audubon, P.O. Box 2582, Palos Verdes, CA 90274.

I pledge \$_____ per species or a fixed amount of \$_____

Please credit my pledge to the Birdathon Team indicated below:

The Wirdbotchers _____ The Bush-Whackers _____ The Wild Bunch _____

Your name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Email _____

NEW ATLAS OF BIODIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

By Allen Franz

The Resources Agency of California has recently published a concise, well-illustrated volume on the state's living resources, titled *Atlas of the Biodiversity of California*. In just over 100 pages, the Atlas provides a blend of full color maps, charts, photographs, drawings, and text. The atlas, which was prepared by 28 employees of the California Department of Fish and Game, provides a broad sense of the status of biological diversity in early 21st century California.

The work is organized in six sections: A Definition of Biodiversity; A Remarkable Geography; Measures of Biodiversity: Richness, Rarity, and Endemism (addressing major life forms, such as plants and freshwater fishes); Samples of Biodiversity: Habitats and Species From Throughout California (addressing major habitat types such as kelp forests and oak woodlands); Pressures on Biodiversity; and, Sustaining Biodiversity. Each section contains at least ten pages of information, supplemented by a glossary and references at the end of the volume.

Although we have lost scores, perhaps hundreds, of species over the past 150 years of rapid development, nonetheless California still remains the most biologically diverse of the 48 contiguous states—thanks to its complex patchwork of habitats. Absent an active commitment to conservation and preservation, however, there is no guarantee that our remarkable reservoir of rare and endemic species and rich ecosystems will still be here for our descendants to enjoy in a few more generations.

As the state's population has swelled and become increasingly urban, fewer and fewer Californians have a sense of place or of sharing a landscape shared with a community of other creatures. Instead, those other creatures are increasingly dismissed as pests to be eliminated, or, like their habitats, designated as resources for our consumption. In either case, they lose. Ironically, many thousands of people consider themselves "environmentalists" because they enjoy outdoor activities, even when

those activities contribute directly to the degradation and destruction of land and habitat.

In the current perilous circumstances, the *Atlas of the Biodiversity of California* provides a clear and sober overview of the status of our natural resources, and some of the strategies aimed at addressing the challenges confronting the state's biodiversity. You may order a copy by sending a check for \$22.50, payable to the California Department of Fish and Game to the following address:

California Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife and Habitat Data Analysis Branch
1807 13th Street Suite 202
Sacramento, California 95814
Attn: Information Services Unit

For those seeking other books on the status of biodiversity in California, among the options are *Life on the Edge: A Guide to California's Endangered Natural Resources* (Biosystems Press 1994), a beautifully presented, 550-page inventory of California's endangered species. Unfortunately, this valuable book is now out of print.

For those who prefer to pursue workable solutions rather than simply to bemoan the problems, Daniel Press' *Saving Open Space: The Politics of Local Preservation in California* (University of California Press 2002) offers a constructive historical overview of strategies for preserving open space habitat across the state.

Technology has given humankind the power to dominate the rest of nature, and our hubris is virtually unconstrained. We would do well to remember conservationist Aldo Leopold's advice: that the first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces. Extinction is forever.



White-fronted Goose

Dominguez Plan, continued from page 1

The master plan has five goals:

- * Protect and enhance water quality.
- * Conserve, reuse, and recharge water supply.
- * Protect, enhance, and restore native habitats and biological resources.
- * Promote public awareness and involvement in watershed management.
- * Implement stewardship of the watershed in balance with economic and environmental impacts.

Without doubt, these goals fit Audubon's mission to preserve and understand our natural heritage. Granted, we are starting with a badly degraded system here in the watershed, but there seems to be a genuine willingness on the part of all DWAC participants to realize the WMMP goals.

It will certainly require a great deal of money to carry off the dozens of ambitious projects proposed in the plan. Not least of them will be the proposals for Harbor Park, which incorporate and broaden those that were included in the Harbor Park Master Plan. However, the participation in DWAC by all relevant parties, greatly expands the resources we can draw on as we pursue improvements within the park. In addition, planning now specifically includes the Wilmington Drain, a critical part of the Harbor Park puzzle that could not be adequately addressed before.

The Dominguez WMMP is a marvelous base on which to build our future. Its stress on the need to retain and then enhance the South Bay's remaining natural assets is very encouraging.

Let's all make sure that future watershed projects "go by the book."

The entire document is available on-line on the LA County Department of Public Works website at <http://www.ladpw.org/wmd/watershed/dc/>.

Mosquitoes, continued from page 10

warm weather. The eggs hatch into larvae ("wigglers" or "wrigglers"), which feed on microorganisms in water and can often be seen near the surface of stagnant water. The larvae metamorphose into pupae, called tumblers. These do not feed but are connected by breathing tubes called siphons to the surface of the water. Tumblers metamorphose into adult mosquitoes.

Adult male mosquitoes feed only on plant juices, if at all, and live only to mate with females. By biting humans, adult female mosquitoes obtain protein from blood, which helps them produce viable eggs and the next generation.

(Part II in the June/July issue of Hummin'.)

EFFECTS OF HABITAT RESTORATION ON WILDLIFE COMMUNITIES

Audubon's Starr Ranch Sanctuary invites adults to participate in a pilot study examining techniques for monitoring birds, small mammals, and invertebrates in coastal sage scrub restoration sites. Participants will learn about the Sanctuary's artichoke thistle control and restoration efforts. Students will also compare the diversity and abundance of wildlife in habitats invaded by artichoke thistles with pristine and restored coastal sage scrub habitats.

Workshop sessions will be held May 2, 9, 16, and 23 from 8 AM to noon. The cost for the series is \$80. Participants must be at least 16 years old.

For more information, contact 949-858-0309 or www.starr-ranch.org.

GIFT & NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

- FAMILY MEMBERSHIP.....\$35
 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

7XCH/C43

Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Saturday, April 3, 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, April 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, April 4, 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, and you can join at the entrance. (Also May 2.)

Sunday, April 4, 9:00-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, jmorton@igc.org). (Also May 2.)

Saturday, April 10, 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, April 11, 8:00 AM: **Easter 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, abt 1 mile west of 110 Freeway on Anaheim St.

Sunday, April 11, 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, May 9.)

Wednesday, April 14, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See April 4 for directions.)

Saturday, April 17, 9:00-noon: **Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park Clean-up**. Leader: John Popoch, 310-548-7728. (See April 11 for directions.)

Wednesday, April 21, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. 3201 Plaza del Amo (west of Madrona Ave.) in Torrance.

Saturday, April 24, 8:00 AM-3:00 PM: **EARTH DAY** at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, 3720 Stephen White Drive, in San Pedro. Free to the public. Beach clean-up 8:00-10:00; demonstrations, activities, films, and more 10:00-3:00.

Saturday, April 24, 4:00-6:00 PM: **AUDUBON ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP and AUDUBON YES! Awards** at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. Hors d'oeuvres will be served. No charge.

Tuesday, April 27: **NO AUDUBON MEETING**, see April 24.

Saturday, May 1, 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, May 2, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Ollie Coker. (See April 4 for directions.)

Sunday, May 2, 9:00-noon: **Restoration of PV Blue Habitat**, Defense Fuel Support Point. (See April 4 for directions.)

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

Sunday, May 9, 8:00 AM: **Mother's Day Bird and Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park**. Leader: Martin Byhower. (See April 11.)

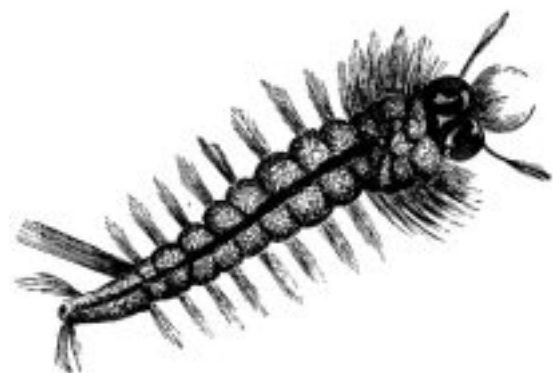
Wednesday, May 12, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See April 4 for directions.)

Saturday, May 15, 9-12 AM: **Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park Clean-up**. Leader: John Popoch, 310-548-7728. (See April 11 for directions.)

Wednesday, May 19, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. (See April 21 for directions.)

Tuesday, May 25, 7:30 PM: **Natural and Cultural History of the Peninsula and South Bay**, Allen Franz and Bart Tendick (organizing). South Coast Botanic Garden, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula.

CALENDAR



A mosquito wiggler.

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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.