



# Hummin'

[www.lmconsult.com/pvaudubon/index-f.html](http://www.lmconsult.com/pvaudubon/index-f.html)

Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

April/May 2008 Vol. XXX No. 2

## Looking back and looking forward

By Jess Morton

Thirty years! Gone in a blink. Or so it seems, as I sit here today, looking back to the first days of the (then) Palos Verdes Peninsula Audubon Society. Looking back, remembering the one who was our Audubon chapter's most important formative force, Shirley Wells — birder, teacher, bander. Shirley, who never had a chance to attend a meeting but whose memory coursed through all of us who attended the first exploratory meeting in January 1978 that led to the chapter's formation.

Bob and Thelma Carr were there, and still with us. Bob running the microscopy lab at Madrona Marsh, still teaching. Eric Brooks, master birder now, as he was then. Georgene Foster, bird walk leader for 30 years. Linda Gordon, Shirley Wells' daughter. Bob and Carolyn Bowlus. Kirby Davis. Susan Curran. Mary Lou Steinmetz. Shirley Turner! Our other remarkable Shirley, who has played nursemaid to Madrona Marsh and its habitats since its inception. Grace Nixon, who first pulled us all to-

gether and now birds her base in Estes Park. And others no longer with us, but fondly remembered for the great human beings they were. Betty Shaw. Goldie Otters! What a cast of characters.

So much has happened since then. So it cannot have just been the blink of an eye, though it seems so today. From the first, our interests were broader than just birds. Early chapter programs included sea life, wildflowers and Mono Lake, as well as birds. We had scheduled a talk on earthquakes for May 1980, which ended up a very timely program on Mount St. Helens. I can remember a program I gave sometime in 1986, standing in for a last-minute cancellation, where I talked about the hydrology of the lower Mississippi basin and the devastation a hurricane could all too easily bring to New Orleans.

But our Audubon was not just about meetings. Bird walks and Christmas Bird Counts dotted our landscape. In 1981, the chapter became the first in the nation to sponsor a Fourth of July Butterfly Count. What an incredible

amount we have learned about local butterflies from having carried these counts out for nearly 30 seasons.

Ken Malloy received our first Audubon Conservation Award back in 1980. Since then, we have been able to recognize and honor the conservation and education achievements of dozens of good people who might not have been so honored otherwise. This year, as you can read elsewhere in this issue, we will honor many more on B(Earth)day, April 19, at Madrona Marsh.

Lillian Light, whom we will honor this year at that event, brought young people into our activities first through a cooperative venture with students at Redondo High to put on an Earth Day celebration, and then with her innovative Sharing Nature With Children program. Since then, a dozen students have served on our chapter's board of directors. And AudubonYES!, our youth environmental service program, has generated thousands of hours of volunteer community service in support of our

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## President's Column

# Clear Conscience Birding

By Martin Byhower



Most birders I know are listers. Life lists, year lists, state lists, county lists, yard lists ... the lists go on! I have a friend who keeps a dream list (birds that appear in his dreams), and there are some lists that are scarcely appropriate to name in this family column. Non-listing birders are typically

(and often jokingly) either a bit defensive of that fact ("I don't need to keep a list, I just enjoy seeing the birds, and that's enough for me"), or critical of listers ("All they do is mark ticks on their list and hardly stop to look at the bird").

I believe, however, that those of us for whom birding is at least in part a sublimation of our hunter-gatherer-collector instinct are inclined to find some satisfaction in recording, sharing, comparing and sometimes bragging about our various lists. The problem for me has been that, in order to accrue any meaningful (in terms of sheer size) list, I needed to travel. Traveling usually involves utilizing fossil fuels, whose combustion produces carbon dioxide emissions that result in climate effects that may threaten the very birds I seek. This has taken nearly all the fun out of listing, at least for me, in recent years. In fact, aside from "life birds," I had pretty much abandoned the practice. Until now.

Around last December or so I heard about this Canadian guy, Richard Gregson, who has a Web site on which he formalized an idea that had been floating around for a while. He calls it BIGBY (Big Green, Big Year) birding. The idea is to shift the listing focus (or challenge, depending upon how you look at it) to species that can be accessed by foot or bicycle\*; in other words, where the mode of transportation produces no more carbon dioxide than is released by the cellular respiration of the participant. (\*Using public transportation is sort of a gray area at this point.)

This is a brilliant idea. I immediately ran with it. I wrote him and said that, during my waking hours, I was likely to see more birds from work than home (I have a pretty decent Chadwick canyon-campus list). Why not include birding from a place you would have had to drive to anyway? He said this was a great idea and added it to his site suggestions that very day! (I do ride to work when I can, but the hill is killer!) I highly recommend going to

the site ([www.sparrowworks.ca/bigby.html](http://www.sparrowworks.ca/bigby.html)) to check it out. You might want to register the city you live in, if it isn't already there (between Dan Lee, Nancy Feagans, Ron Melin and others locally, we already have Lomita, Torrance, Redondo Beach and RPV covered!). You can send in your list(s), check out those from folks around the world or talk to other bigbyers on the site blog.

An interesting thing happens when you bird sans internal combustion; you see and hear more. I read somewhere that if you are traveling faster than 20 mph, your brain can't really process what you are seeing (not to mention hearing.) For me it has been like starting all over again. I am thrilled to find birds that in the past might have seemed "routine." In one day, without driving, I am in range of everything from Pacific Loons, Black Skimmers and Ospreys to California Gnatcatchers, Wilson's Warblers and Dark-eyed Juncos. An extra bonus is that I am guaranteed to have had an aerobic workout after a day's birding, something that was by no means guaranteed in the bygone days of "surgical strike" birding by car to distant locations.

My birdathon team (whose modified name is now the Bigby BushWhackers) is going to try something completely new this year; a carbon neutral birdathon! I am already feeling the burn of the 60 or so miles we will travel in order to cover, by bicycle and starting from our homes, the L.A. River as far north as DeForest Park (Long Beach Boulevard) south to Banning Park and KMHRP, then to Cabrillo and around the Peninsula! We probably won't see the numbers we have gotten on past birdathons, but we are shooting for more than 100 species. What we lose in numbers, we hope to make up for in increased pledges. We know that at least one of our other chapter teams will involve some bigbying too (see accompanying article). I hope you will be inspired to sponsor one or more of us, as well as give bigbying a chance.

During the period from Jan. 1 to now, as I write this in the first week of March, my green bike list is 101; add in the additional species I have seen in my home, neighborhood or from work and the list grows to 109. And migration has hardly begun yet! If you don't bike, why not rent one and try it out? At the very least, get out and walk, meet your neighbors, target some new destinations, get in shape and feel good about getting to really know and appreciate the birds that come to you!

*Sponsor one or more teams in order to support their chapter's conservation and education efforts. See Page 9.*

## Conservation Corner

# Saving Energy to Save Our World

By Lillian Light



In a recent communication from Lester Brown of the Earth Policy Institute, he discussed the alarming loss of sea ice. Last summer an area of Arctic sea ice almost twice the size of Britain disappeared in a single week. The Greenland Ice

Cap and the West Arctic Ice Sheet are also melting faster than predicted. Mr Brown states: "If we cannot curb carbon dioxide emissions quickly enough to save these two huge ice sheets, sea level will rise 39 feet, inundating many of the world's coastal cities and creating over 600 million rising sea refugees."

Will our Los Angeles area residents be among them?

Raising energy efficiency is the key to preventing irreversible climate change, while reducing energy use is the fastest and most cost-effective way to control global warming pollution. The Environmental Priorities Network is organizing its third annual Energy Fair to inform Palos Verdes and Beach Cities residents how best to consume less gasoline and use less electricity even while they save money and gain convenience. This fair will take place on Saturday, May 10 at the Pacific Unitarian Church, 5621 Montemalaga Drive in Rancho Palos Verdes, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration will start at 9:30 a.m., and the Energy-saving Smackdown will start at 10 a.m.

Environmentalists are all agreed that it is necessary to hold world temperature rise to a minimum. But there is disagreement on how best to accomplish this. Which non-petroleum fuels are most effective? Should economic investment and government efforts be expended on electric cars or on plug-in hybrids? We hope that the arguments will not get too raucous, but this Smackdown will include some fiery rhetoric from four dynamic speakers. Doug Korthof, who was featured in the big-screen documentary "Who Killed the Electric Car," will hold forth on solar installations and electric cars. Dency Nelson, whose ecological home was a highlight of last year's Solar Homes Tour, will tout the virtues of plug-in hybrids. Two other speakers will

push for the use of biodiesel and/or ethanol. Hydrogen-powered cars will also be evaluated. You must hear this discussion to be well informed about how best to achieve carbon reductions.

Inasmuch as a tremendous amount of energy is used pumping and delivering water, Debbie Cook will speak about water conservation and energy usage. Cook is the mayor of Huntington Beach and has been actively involved in water and energy issues for two decades. Visitors will be invited to sign up for the June 7 Solar Homes Tour at the Environmental Priorities Network booth.

The most exciting part of the Energy Fair is the wide variety of the vendors who will have interesting displays and will suggest specific ways to reduce energy consumption, save money, gain personal convenience and moderate the dangers of global warming. You can find out how to obtain cost-cutting federal and state rebates on solar panel installations and on high-efficiency vehicles. Marilyn Lyon, program manager of the South Bay Energy Savings Center, will offer information on quick and easy ways of saving energy as well as how to get rebates on energy-saving appliances. You will be able to pick up a complementary compact fluorescent light bulb at her booth.

Electric vehicles, hybrid cars, plug-in hybrids, electric bicycles and ultra fuel-efficient motor scooters will be on display. Learn about the advantages of using biodiesel and where to purchase it in our area. Architects will promote green home design and retrofits, while information on the ease of public transit will be available. Find out about the advantages of tankless hot water heaters, or make plans to have solar panels heat your water or provide you with low-cost electricity.

The Pacific Unitarian Church Social Justice Committee, the South Coast Interfaith Council and the Palos Verdes-South Bay Group, Sierra Club are co-sponsors of this outstanding event. A \$5 donation is appreciated, but no one will be turned away. For more information about the Energy Fair or the Solar Homes Tour, please contact Lillian Light at (310) 545 1384 or [lklight@verizon.net](mailto:lklight@verizon.net), or David Dutra at (310) 530 0846 or [dutra\\_david@hotmail.com](mailto:dutra_david@hotmail.com). More information is available on our Web site at [www.southbayenergyfair.com](http://www.southbayenergyfair.com).

# Birds of the Peninsula

## January and February 2008

By Kevin Larson

It was difficult to see the spectacular birding year of 2007 come to a close, but a number of surprising finds in the first two months of the new year gave hope for a promising 2008. The top birding headline was a Dusky-capped Flycatcher found in El Segundo in mid-January. Other mid-winter finds included a Winter Wren, a Black-and-white Warbler, a Summer Tanager and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Many birders came to our area to enjoy views of the Thick-billed Kingbird spending its third winter at Banning Park. The appearance of elevated numbers of Cinnamon Teal and a few swallow species in the first half of February marked the onset of spring migration locally.

The weather during January and February was generally cool and often wet. Rainfall recorded on 19 dates at LAX and Downtown Los Angeles came almost exclusively during three extended rainy periods in early and late January, and in the third week of February. Seasonal (July through June) rainfall totals at the end of February were running a little above normal at LAX and well above normal at Downtown Los Angeles. Average daily temperatures at LAX were cooler than normal on a majority of dates, but there were a few brief warm

spells during periods of offshore flow.

A young Greater White-fronted Goose and an "Aleutian" Cackling Goose present at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh since 18 Nov and 22 Oct, respectively, moved to the area of Ballona Creek and Del Rey Lagoon around the first of the year (Kevin Larson-KL, Dan Cooper); both were still present on 23 Feb. A Greater White-fronted Goose was at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook 30 Oct-29 Jan (Richard Barth) and a high count of eight was in the Walteria Sump 5-13 Feb (David Moody). A second "Aleutian" Cackling Goose wintering in the area was at Alondra Park 23 Dec-23 Jan (Tracy Drake). Two Snow Geese at the Los Angeles River near Atlantic Avenue in Long Beach on 7 Jan (Mike San Miguel) and one at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area 29 Jan-23 Feb (Richard Barth) were the first reported in the area since 2006. A White-winged Scoter sighting at Dockweiler State Beach on 26 Jan (Tom Wurster) came after a Black Scoter was spotted there on 18 Jan (Richard Barth). The female Long-tailed Duck found by Larry Allen in the Marina del Rey Harbor entrance channel on 29 Dec was still present on 29 Feb. It appeared at least four Common Goldeneyes were wintering in the Playa del Rey and Marina del

Rey areas; these birds spent time between Ballona Creek, Ballona Lagoon and Washington Lagoon (KL, Dan Cooper). Up to four Hooded Mergansers were at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh 1-28 Feb (Richard Barth, Don Sterba).

The only Cattle Egrets wintering locally in recent years have been at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area; this winter, up to two were present 29 Jan-23 Feb (Richard Barth). More than 5,000 Bonaparte's Gulls off Point Vicente on 2 Feb was a good count (KL). Since adult Thayer's Gulls are rare here, one at the L.A. River near Atlantic Avenue on 7 Jan was notable (Mike San Miguel). A temporary influx of Black Skimmers included 196 at Cabrillo Beach on 29 Jan (David Ellsworth) and 13 south of the Redondo Beach Pier on 1 Feb (Tommye Hite). A Common Murre flew past Point Vicente on 2 Feb (KL). Cassin's Auklet sightings at Point Vicente included two on 22 Jan (KL) and 18 on 13 Feb (Mike San Miguel). Rhinoceros Auklets seen from Point Vicente included two on 22 Jan, four on 2 Feb and two on 13 Feb (KL, Mike San Miguel). Twenty-five Eurasian Collared-Doves at Victoria Park in Carson on 13 Feb was a high count of this colonizing nonnative (Richard Barth). A Burrowing Owl continued at White Point Nature Preserve on 7 Jan (David

Moody). Sightings of single male Costa's Hummingbirds along the northern bluffs of Playa del Rey on 12 Jan (KL) and at Loyola Marymount University across Lincoln Boulevard to the east on 19 Jan (Russell Stone) may have involved the same individual. Single Red-naped Sapsuckers continued at Harbor Park 11 Nov-17 Feb (Martin Byhower) and at the Palos Verdes Golf Club 23 Dec-17 Feb (Jim Pike).

A "Western" Flycatcher was at the South Coast Botanic Garden 16 Dec-13 Jan (KL). Outstanding was a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**, a very rare visitor from Mexico, discovered at Recreation Park in El Segundo 18-26 Jan (Richard Barth). The **Thick-billed Kingbird** spending its third winter at Banning Park was present 23 Nov-10 Feb (KL). Single Hutton's Vireos were away from breeding areas at Washington Lagoon in Marina del Rey 14 Dec-27 Jan, at Loyola Marymount University in Westchester on 16 Feb and at Harbor Park 27 Oct-17 Feb (KL). This winter's Brown Creeper invasion continued with up to two at Polliwog Park in Manhattan Beach 14 Dec-26 Feb (David Moody), one at Recreation Park in El Segundo 18 Jan-2 Feb (KL) and two at Alondra Park on 23 Jan (David Moody). A Winter Wren near the southwest corner of the Palos Verdes Golf Club on 10 Feb was apparently a returnee since one was found there in the previous two winters (KL). Up to four Golden-crowned Kinglets were at Loyola Marymount University in Westchester

8 Jan-16 Feb (Richard Barth). Single pairs of Western Bluebirds were at the Palos Verdes Golf Club on 10 Feb (KL) and at Harbor Park on 10 Feb (Martin Byhower); two to three were at Ernie Howlett Park on 15 Feb (David Moody).

Wintering Yellow Warblers included singles at Harbor Park through at least 9 Feb (Martin Byhower), one at the Westchester



**Dusky-capped Flycatcher**

*Photo by Richard Barth*

Recreation Center on 8 Jan (Richard Barth) and a female at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area on 21 Jan that had returned for its second winter (KL). Single Black-and-white Warblers were at Banning Park 28 Oct-2 Feb (Steve Sosensky) and at Loyola Marymount University 8 Jan-10 Feb (Richard Barth). A male American Redstart returned in adult plumage for its second winter at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area 1 Oct-21 Jan (Richard Barth). A Summer Tan-

ager was a nice find at Ernie Howlett Park 15 Jan-15 Feb (David Moody, Tommye Hite). The Green-tailed Towhee found by Stephanie Bryan and Margaret Hoggan at the South Coast Botanic Garden on 23 Dec was still present on 13 Jan. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in the Malaga Creek area above the end of Via Tejon in Palos Verdes Estates on 10 Feb (KL); I wonder if this could be a returning winterer since Jim Pike found one at this exact location on 26 Dec 2004.

*Thanks to all who reported sightings during the period. Please send your sightings to me at [cbirdr@ca.rr.com](mailto:cbirdr@ca.rr.com) 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

AL: Andrew Lee  
 BFM: Ballona Freshwater Marsh  
 BP: Banning Park  
 DM: David Moody  
 DP: DeForest Park  
 DSC: Daniel S. Cooper  
 EMJRA: Earvin Magic Johnson Rec. Area  
 HP: Harbor Park  
 JSB: Jeffrey S. Boyd  
 KL: Kevin Larson  
 KSG: Karen S. Gilbert  
 LAR: Los Angeles River  
 MB: Martin Byhower  
 MM: Madrona Marsh  
 RB: Richard Barth  
 RPV: Rancho Palos Verdes  
 SDP: Sand Dune Park

# Coastal Commission Affirms Its Role

By Jess Morton

The California Coastal Commission affirmed its purpose, on Feb. 6, by turning down the ill-conceived extension of the Foothill toll road through San Onofre State Park. In doing so, the commission faced down strong political pressure to approve the project, one that would have gutted California's park system and effectively ended the commission's role as advocate for the public interest on coastal development issues. When the deciding vote was cast at 11:30 p.m., the thousand people still in attendance, some of whom had arrived early in the morning, erupted in gleeful celebration.

The toll road extension has been pushed for decades by a single-purpose Orange County entity (TCA) engaged in creating privately controlled toll roads in Southern California. No matter that these toll roads have been economic and transportation failures from the beginning, the roads must go in. Or so says the toll road authority. Fortunately for us, and for the future of the entire state, the Coastal Commission chose to say no!

While strong arguments were put forth against the toll road by a coalition of nonprofit groups, including Audubon, and devastating critiques by several commissioners, including Rancho Palos Verdes City Councilman Larry Clark, cast doubt on the project's sanity, the most remarkable statement of the day was made by the Coastal Commission's own Executive Director Peter Douglas. Douglas, who was present at the creation, when the Coastal Act created the commission in 1972, gave an impassioned plea — a *cri de coeur* — that brought breathless silence to the packed and then-raucous meeting hall. It was an unprecedented statement of purpose that lays out the principles of the entire environmental movement and what they mean to our future. As such, Douglas' statement is a Declaration of Interdependence that should be heard by every decision maker. It deserves to be repeated in its entirety. So here it is:

"Mr. Chairman and members of the commission, this is the most significant project to come before this commission since the San Onofre Nuclear power plant

in 1974. It is most significant because of the large area of environmentally sensitive habitat, wetlands and other public resources it will destroy; the fact it is unmitigatable under the law; that it so clearly fails to meet so many Coastal Act policies; that it raises profound questions about our environmental and societal future in coastal California; and the glaring negative precedent it would set by, among other things, destroying a heavily used state park whose principal infrastructure improvements were installed as commission-required mitigations for lost public beach access in front of the nuclear power plants.

"Since passage of the Coastal Act in 1976, I know of no other coastal development project so demonstrably inconsistent with the law that has come this far in the regulatory review process. This toll road project is precisely the kind of project the Coastal Act was intended to prevent along with new coastal nuclear power plants, new offshore oil and gas leases, coastal freeway projects abandoned long ago and new commercial ports that also never came to be. This project is the embodiment of the central driver that motivated California voters to enact the citizens' coastal protection initiative that created the Coastal Commission in 1972: That prime driver was overwhelming public opposition to rampant industrialization and destruction of the coast by massive new development projects — actual and imminent at the time.

"This toll road project is not only inconsistent with the law: It also raises fundamental questions about what kind of environmental and social future we want for our coastal communities, our families, our children and theirs. We, especially those privileged few of us entrusted with grave responsibilities for making momentous decisions today that affect generations to come, must ask these questions in the context and larger perspective of where we as a society are heading. This is a context that includes a burgeoning population; the exponential loss of environmentally sensitive and critical natural habitat; the loss of affordable and accessible public recreation areas and opportunities; massive disruptions of global climate with

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*Thirty Years, from Page 1*

shared environment, and, as a consequence, we have been able to recognize more than 250 young people for their commitment to conservation with the Audubon YES! Award.

Our newsletter, *Hummin'*, is also something to look back on with pride, and to look forward to with great expectations. Mike Weber and Chris Boyd deserve many thanks for that. Our Birds of the Peninsula column, edited in turn by Eric Brooks, Dave Roelen, Mark Kincheloe, Mitch Heindel and, now, Kevin Larson, contains an amazing base of data on birds and their occurrence in the region. Invaluable! Joe Slap produced wonderful articles on all sorts of topics — at a cost of some ghastly puns. My own column, This Unknown Peninsula, has contained dozens of portraits of the inhabitants of our natural world. First Cathy and Virgil Hanson wrote about conservation issues, and, now that they are gone, the cudgel has been most ably picked up by Lillian.

We are fortunate, too, to have a whole new generation of leaders to guide us into the future. Martin and Eileen Byhower, Connie Vadheim, Evi Meyer. The amazing Tracy Drake! Dozes of others. Some vets, like myself, some still in their teens, like Swati Yanamadala, who will continue on this great tradition that is Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon. We are so lucky. And the future looking forward looks so bright.

## Happy Birthday to Our Chapter!

Can you believe that the PV/South Bay Audubon chapter is turning 30 this year? How many great opportunities for learning about wildlife and its preservation we have had over the years. How many exciting hours of bird walks we have logged in. Thank you to all the members of our chapter who have given tirelessly of their time and effort to make this all possible.

If you would like to show your appreciation for our chapter and celebrate its milestone birthday, how about considering a monetary donation to the chapter or a gift membership for a friend in honor of Earth Day this April? What better contribution to Earth Day could you make than to contribute to an organization that is dear to your heart anyway?

For gift memberships, please contact Vicki Peterson at (310) 375-3150. Monetary donations should be made payable to PV/South Bay Audubon and sent to P.O. Box 2582, Palos Verdes, CA 90274.

Happy 30th Birthday and many more to follow.

### Gift and New Member Application

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP (*chapter only or national*—circle one) ..... \$25

(your contribution supports local programs) *and/or*

GIFT ... \$20\_\_\_ \$50\_\_\_ \$100\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED ..... \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

7XCH/C43

# Your Backyard Habitat



By Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSUDH

## Nodding & Foothill Needlegrasses

*Nassella cernua & lipida*



Few plants improve your garden habitat better than native grasses. You can convert your lawn to a native, unmowed prairie — or just include a few native ornamental grasses in your garden. Either way, your yard will immediately become more welcoming to birds, butterflies and other insects. Fortunately, some of the more beautiful native grasses grow naturally in our own south coastal area of Southern California.

The Needlegrasses (*Nassella* species) are particularly decorative native grasses. Their common name, needlegrass, refers to the long projections (awns) found on their seeds (see above photo). It's hard to describe the beauty of these native needlegrasses, their seed heads nodding gently in the breeze. Nodding and Foothill Needlegrasses rival the non-native "ornamental grasses" currently invading the South Bay with their blowing seeds. Plant a native ornamental grass and you will be making a sound environmental choice while beautifying your garden.

Needlegrasses are cool season bunch grasses, which means they begin growing as soon as the fall rains begin. They flower in spring and the seeds ripen in late spring to summer — so spring/summer is the showy

season for these grasses. The leaves turn an attractive red/golden in fall, only to green up again with the winter rains. Very water-wise, they thrive on occasional summer waterings. In fact, they are very long-lived plants (50-plus years) as long as they are not over-watered.

Nodding and Foothill Needlegrasses are bunchgrasses, growing in clumps (like other ornamental grasses) rather than spreading like a sod lawn. They grow quickly into 2- to 3-foot mounds of fine, light green blades. Needlegrasses can be planted close together — and even mowed to 4 to 6 inches — to form a lawn-like groundcover. Or they can be planted individually, as ornamental grasses. They look nice in large pots or planters, so can be used in even a small garden, porch or balcony. They also are great for erosion control on slopes.



Needlegrasses are very easy to grow. They do well in just about any local soil and thrive in full sun to part-shade, even under trees. Unlike sod lawns, needlegrasses need no fertilizer. They should only be watered (deeply) when the soil dries out — even in summer. While needlegrasses can be mowed several times a year, they look best if only cut back (to about 4 inches) in fall. You can collect the seeds or let the plants re-seed naturally. Dig up unwanted seedlings when small, and give them away as welcome gifts!

*For more information about growing and purchasing this plant, visit the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. You can also learn about local native plants at the "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" series on the first Saturday of each month at the center.*



*Commission, from Page 6*

devastating consequences; the inevitable congestion of new or expanded freeways everywhere whose projected carrying capacities were exceeded even before they were completed; a context where demand for mobility must and can ultimately only be met by mass public transit infrastructure; and in a context wherein the decisions we make today are guided by individual conscience and our own inner moral and ethical compass and not by the power of politics and monetary profit for others.

“We as staff in public service and you as commissioners are keenly aware of our sworn duty to objectively and fairly apply the requirements of law to the facts before us. While bound by law, we are also individual beings whose judgment is obviously informed by social, environmental and moral imperatives of our time. It is not hyperbole to suggest that this project raises a paramount question in this pivotal moment of human history that each of us must ask and answer in the conduct of our own lives: Are we as a people wise enough, and willing to muster the courage of our convictions to stand firm for what is right and actively embrace a future that does not repeat failed practices of the past? Can we focus our foresight on an environmental future clearly in the best collective long-term interest of human and natural communities, a future that will require sacrifice and will be costly to achieve but one whose worth as proud legacy is beyond measure. These are questions we must ask.”

## ***This Year's Birdathon Teams Go for the Green***

Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon's annual fund-raiser will consist of two bicycle-only and two conventional auto/walk teams. Either way the teams are expecting to spot 80 to 120 bird species and cover 60 to 70 miles in 12 to 16 hours. Stats only a true birder and/or bicyclist would long for! The money raised from sponsors will further the good work of the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society.

The teams consist of:

**The Palos Verdes/South Bay Wirdbotchers**, led by Bob Shanman. Phone (310) 545-2867 or send an e-mail to [wildbirdbob@gmail.com](mailto:wildbirdbob@gmail.com). Sched-

uled for May 3.

**The Palos Verdes/South Bay Wild Bunch**, led by Lillian Light and Ollie Coker. Phone (310) 545-1384 or send an e-mail to [lklight@verizon.net](mailto:lklight@verizon.net). Scheduled for April 26.

**The PV/South Bay Bicycle Bush-Whackers**, led by Martin Byhower. Phone (310) 539-0050 or send an e-mail to [avitropic@sbcglobal.net](mailto:avitropic@sbcglobal.net). Scheduled for April 26.

Another, as yet unnamed, bicycle team will be led by **Ron Melin**. Send an e-mail to [rdmelin@utla.net](mailto:rdmelin@utla.net).

## **YES! Now in Its 13th Year**

Audubon YES!, our chapter's youth environmental service program, is in its 13th year, offering a wide array of community service projects for high school students and others. Through the program, participants earn credits toward the Audubon YES! Award, which acknowledges each individual's dedication to environmental betterment, and is useful on college and scholarship applications. Through the years, more than 250 YES! Awards have been earned.

This year, our chapter will award YES! credits for projects at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, Gardena Willows, Harbor Park, Madrona Marsh, White Point and other locations around the South Bay. Credits will also be awarded for work on school campuses, principally for habitat restoration and recycling. Credits are also given for student leadership and individual projects.

Chadwick, Environmental Charter High School, Mira Costa, Peninsula High, PV High, South High and Vistamar are some of the schools we expect to see most active with Audubon YES! this year. However, students from other schools throughout the region are urged to participate. Adults, either educators or parents, can volunteer to help with the YES! program, too, by serving as coordinators with schools not listed above. For more information about the YES! program, see our Web site at [www.audubonyes.org](http://www.audubonyes.org), or call Jess Morton at (310) 832-5601.

# Calendar

## *Meet Learn Enjoy Restore*

### Events

(See Calendar locations and information box for directions)

**Wednesday, April 9 at 7 p.m.:** PV/South Bay Audubon board meeting at Madrona Marsh. All Audubon members and friends are welcome to attend.

**Saturday, April 12 from 9 to 11 a.m.:** Second Saturday Habitat Restoration Project at KMHRP. Led by Geffen Oren, Martin Byhower and others. Cleanup and restoration of this important wildlife area offers a hands-on opportunity to learn about invasive species removal, native planting, effective debris removal and much more while earning community service credit. All ages, but folks under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. Bring water, snack, sun/bug repellent and, if possible, work gloves. Questions? Contact Martin Byhower at (310) 541-6763, ext. 4143.

**Tuesday, April 15 at 7 p.m.:** Audubon Third Tuesday Get-together. Our speaker, Roy Poucher, will be talking about birds of Kenya. Come to Madrona Marsh and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes

from Wild Birds Unlimited. **Saturday, April 19 at 1 p.m.:** Audubon Award Ceremony and Earth Day Celebration at Madrona Marsh. We will also celebrate the chapter's 30th birthday. For Earth Day morning activities, check the Madrona Marsh calendar. Award Program highlights include 1 p.m. birdwalk, 2:45 p.m. talk by Connie Vadheim on the history and significance of Earth Day and 3 p.m. awards ceremony. All Audubon members and friends are welcome to attend.

**Saturday, April 26:** PV/South Bay Annual Bird-a-thon. For details, see article in this issue of *Hummin'*. Please support this event with your pledges.

**Saturday, May 10 from 9 to 11 a.m.:** Second Saturday Habitat Restoration Project at KMHRP. Led by Geffen Oren, Martin Byhower and others. Cleanup and restoration of this important wildlife area offers a hands-on opportunity to learn about invasive species removal, native planting, effective debris removal and much more while earning community service credit. All ages, but folks under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. Bring water, snack, sun/bug repellent and, if possible, work gloves. Questions? Contact

Martin Byhower at (310) 541-6763, ext. 4143.

**Tuesday, May 20 at 7 p.m.:** Audubon Third Tuesday Get-Togethers. Our speaker will be David Weeshoff from International Bird Rescue in San Pedro. Come to Madrona Marsh and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

*For a complete list of events at Madrona Marsh, go to [www.southbaycalendar.org](http://www.southbaycalendar.org) and click on Friends of Madrona Marsh.*

*For a complete list of Audubon YES (Youth Environmental Service) program activities, go to [www.AudubonYES.org](http://www.AudubonYES.org).*

### Fieldtrips

(See Calendar locations and information box for directions)

**Tuesday, April 1 at 8:30 a.m.:** "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody & friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

**Sunday, April 6 at 8 a.m.:** Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden with Audubon leader Stephanie Bryan. Charge for non-

members of the SCBG Foundation; you can join at the entrance.

**Wednesday, April 9 at 8 a.m.:** Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leader Bob Shanman.

**Saturday, April 12 at 8 a.m.:** Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy Natural History walk, Linden H. Chandler Preserve. Park at the Empty Saddle Club. See Web site for details: [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org).

**Sunday, April 13 at 8 a.m.:** Second Sunday Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Join Audubon leaders and explore this important natural area in the South Bay. See meeting locations for directions.

**Tuesday, April 15 at 8:30 a.m.:** "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody & friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

**Wednesday, April 16 at 8 a.m.:** Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

**Sunday, April 27 at 12:30 p.m.:** Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Tour, Ocean Trails at Trump National Golf Course. Meet in parking lot at end of La Rotunda Drive.

**Tuesday, April 29 at 8:30 a.m.:** "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody & friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

**Sunday, May 4 at 8 a.m.:** Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden with Audubon leader Stephanie Bryan. Charge for non-members of the SCBG Foundation; you can join at the entrance.

**Tuesday, May 6 at 8:30 a.m.:** "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody & friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

**Saturday, May 10 at 8 a.m.:** Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy Natural History walk. See Web site for details: [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org).

**Sunday, May 11 at 8 a.m.:** Second Sunday Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Join Audubon leaders and explore this important natural area in the South Bay. See meeting locations for directions.

**Wednesday, May 14 at 8 a.m.:** Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leader Bob Shanman.

**Tuesday, May 20 at 8:30 a.m.:** "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody & friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

**Wednesday, May 21 at 8 a.m.:** Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

**Saturday, May 24 at 10 a.m.:** Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Tour, Forrestal Nature Preserve.

## Meeting Locations and Information Sources

**KMHRP:** Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, Harbor City; parking lot near the intersection of Anaheim Street and Vermont, west of the 110 Freeway. Park opposite of old boat house.

**Madrona Marsh Preserve:** 3201 Plaza Del Amo, Torrance. Between Maple and Madrona Avenues. Park at Nature Center.

**South Coast Botanic Garden:** 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes.

Eric and Ann Brooks organize birding fieldtrips that are co-sponsored by PV/South Bay Audubon. Suggested donations: \$5 for day trips (\$4 if carpooling). Weekend trips Saturday are \$10 (\$8); Sunday \$5 (\$4). Contact them directly for details at [motmots@aol.com](mailto:motmots@aol.com) or at (323) 295-6688.

Martin Byhower provides field guided trips. For updates and details on all trips, go to [www.birdingsocal.com](http://www.birdingsocal.com) and click on "Updated calendar of events."

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy sponsors walks and other activities on the Peninsula. For more information, consult the website at <http://www.pvplc.org>, contact the conservancy by e-mail at [info@pvplc.org](mailto:info@pvplc.org) or call (310) 541-7613.

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Editor ..... Chris Boyd

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For back issues and chapter info, go to [www.LMconsult.com/pv Audubon](http://www.LMconsult.com/pv Audubon)

## 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). Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon also is looking for a volunteer with **grantsmanship experience** to help our board apply for grants for projects of interest; a member to serve as **volunteer coordinator** for restoration and other projects; and donations of **native plants** (or money for the purchase of native plants) for our restoration projects.