



HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY JUN/JUL 2005 Vol. XXVII No.3

HOORAY FOR THE IVORY-BILLED...

Woodpecker! What more wonderful news could we have received. I was working at home. My wife called and said go to npr.org and read the first story. "You'll like it" she told me and hung up! I finished what I was doing, went to the site and like to died. THE Ivory-billed Woodpecker had been sited. Unbelievable! I quickly read the story, then sent an e-mail to over 700 folks. The response was immediate. The excitement has been electric. THE Ivory-billed Woodpecker was alive. WOW! I'm excited all over again just thinking about it.

Here's a bird that has not had a confirmed siting in North America for over 60 years. Several years ago there was a huge hunt for it in Louisiana—purportedly without success. Possibly heard, but the recording was more like gunshots. Then it is found in southeast Arkansas, and kept secret for 14 months while 14,000 acres of land is secured. Forty folks spent 14 months in this hardwood forest, and had seven sightings. One bird 7 times or several birds several times. Who knows. What we do know is that in the first 40-50 years of this bird's apparent extinction, breeding was taking place (Their average life span is about 15-20 years.)

What does this event say to us. For me, it says that the struggles—fights—to save habitat are worth all the sweat equity we put into it. Remember, the loss of a species is more than just the critter; it means that the supporting habitat has been lost. I truly believe there is a balance in nature (in spite of man). I cannot imagine how fast the insect world would overrun us if it were not for the birds and other critters that feed on insects. And the loss of habitat, locally and worldwide, could eventually lead to this. What an awful war it would be, man and his chemicals vs. insects, if we lost a majority of the insect-eaters because we did not have the vision, and courage, to protect natural habitats from destruction.

On a more positive note, consider some local successes: Madrona Marsh, the Ballona Wetlands, and hopefully in the near future, Heart Park in Redondo. It took 25 years, but

Continued on page 2



The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

The April 2005 report in *Science* magazine regarding recent sitings of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker in the "Big Woods" of eastern Arkansas in 2004 and 2005 grabbed headlines and created a stir among birders and conservationists, the likes of which has not been seen for many years.

Before 2004, the last confirmed sighting of an Ivory-Billed Woodpecker was in 1944 in a stand of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in northeastern Louisiana, just before the land was clearcut. In this, the Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers of northeastern Louisiana suffered the same

Continued on page 2

Hooray for the Ivory-Billed..., continued from page 1

Madrona was saved. Over 200 species of birds have been recorded on this 42-acre parcel with its wide diversity of habitat. This year, we have nesting Say's Phoebes at the Marsh—the first breeding record ever for the South Bay. In 1977, the Friends of Ballona Wetlands set out to save about 360 acres of the remnant wetlands, and in 2004, the State took possession of that amount of acreage, protected in perpetuity. The developers (several owners over the past 30 years), ultimately designed and constructed a stormwater retention/

treatment system in the form of a 15-acre freshwater marsh. They had 28 different consultants work on this, as a team. Today, at three years old, the marsh discharges naturally cleaned-up water to Ballona Creek, AND over 200 species have been seen here in that time. Two years in a row, a Least Bittern was observed; the last known bittern in the area was an



American, seen by my wife and I in the saltwater marsh over 20 years ago.

To all the folks who will be working on Heart Park, remember these successes. There is much work to be done, and the effort will be worth it as a piece of the coast is restored to more natural conditions. It may be a long haul; just keep that vision in front of you.

For the rest of us, we can help by volunteering time to teach, to restore, to write letters, and to take an active part in the efforts of Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon and other local groups interested in saving our natural heritage. Do your thing; in the long run, we, our children, and our grandchildren, will all be winners.

Hooray for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker!

--Bob Shanman

*Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, continued from page 1*

fate of other Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers, whose virgin tall forests were felled across the southeastern United States between the 1880s and 1940s. Hunting for museum collections further reduced the number of these extraordinary birds.

So, just what is an Ivory-Billed Woodpecker? And how did they escape the eyes and binoculars of ornithologists for decades? The following summary is excerpted from a report on *Science Express* (www.sciencexpress.org).

The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*), one of six North American species of birds thought to have gone extinct since 1880, is also one of the world's largest woodpeckers. Its resemblance to the Pileated Woodpecker has led to numerous, but false sightings in the southeastern United States.

In 1999, a graduate student at Louisiana State University reported seeing a pair along the Pearl River in Louisiana. This unconfirmed sighting triggered renewed efforts to find Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers. (A subspecies of Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers resided in tall forests in Cuba, and was seen as recently as 1987.)

On February 11, 2004, while kayaking in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas, G. Sparling spotted what turned out to be an Ivory-Billed Woodpecker. On April 25, M.D. Luneau captured the image of a very large woodpecker with his videocamera.

Ornithologists later confirmed that the woodpecker on the videotape was an Ivory-Billed Woodpecker based on five diagnostic features: size, wing pattern at rest, wing pattern in flight, white plumage on dorsum, and black-white-black pattern of the perched bird. Despite continued surveying, researchers have been unable to determine whether there is more than one such bird in the area.

Although somewhat fragmented, the forests of the Big Woods cover roughly 860 square miles and are the second-largest contiguous area of bottomland forest in the Mississippi River basin. Cypress trees in the bottomland forests of the southeastern United States may reach 1,200 years in age.

Researchers believe that as surrounding lands recover from logging, even more habitat for breeding and population growth will become available. Crucial to this possibility is the need for large, very old trees and substantial dead and dying timber.

The primary food of Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers is wood-boring insects that the bird uncovers by using its powerful bill to strip the bark from trees that have recently died.

—Michael Weber

THIS UNKNOWN PENINSULA

Rove Beetles

by Jess Morton

These things can't possibly fly! That's what I thought after seeing a rove beetle for the first time. But I was wrong. And that was just one of many things I didn't know about these curious insects.

Rove beetles are slim, rather flat hunters that live in leaf litter and other vegetated haunts. They feed on small creatures in out-of-the-way places, so are not often noted. Yet, there are more kinds of rove beetles in California (and the United States) than of any other family of beetle. The devil's coach horse is the only one that is commonly known—and that "common" is a relative term! When it comes to beetles, not many folks can identify anything but lady bugs, which they don't think of as beetles, anyway.

Even the largest of rove beetles is not especially large, perhaps an inch and a half long. But they can still intimidate, which I suspect is the only reason the devil's coach



horse is named. They open their formidable mandibles and rear the back half of their abdomen up over their backs, as if about to sting. Not that they can, but it's a good enough threat to shoo away most potential predators long enough for the beetle to make an exit.

The threat behavior may explain why it seems rove beetles should not be able to fly. In beetles, the front pair of wings, called elytra, has evolved into a hard protective covering not used for flight. In rove beetles, the elytra are short, which allows the abdomen to curl up into the threat posture. But these short elytra do not seem large enough to hide wings for flying.

Not to worry, though, like a parachute, a rove beetle's flight wings fold up very neatly into their "cases" under the elytra. Rove beetles, for the most part, are very capable flyers, thank you very much!

Like most animals, rove beetles are fastidious where it matters. They keep their antennae and facial parts clean with regular brushing. The forelegs sweep away matter that could impair vision and each antenna is carefully groomed by drawing it through the mandibles.

Most rove beetles are small enough to escape notice by any but the most attentive observer. They scurry about, doing what rove beetles do, just as oblivious of us as we are of them. When we disturb them—picking up a rock or stirring leaf litter under some plant—they are part of the little hordes fleeing the light.

But now that I know they are there, I expect to spend more time with them, putting one more piece of the puzzle together that is this unknown peninsula.



Noel Park of the San Pedro Homeowners Coalition received the 2005 Audubon Conservation Award. See page 8 for more award winners.

BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

March and April 2005

by Kevin Larson

While many wintering species remain in our area during the months of March and April, an influx of northbound migrants becomes evident in March. Though some birds such as waterfowl and swallows are already on the move in February, it is the migrant land birds such as flycatchers, vireos, warblers, and orioles that bring the welcome feeling of spring after a long winter. Among this spring's passerine migrants, orioles made an early appearance. Three adult male Bullock's Orioles and three adult male Hooded Orioles were found at well-worked locations 4-12 Mar. Other passerine migrants recorded during the first half of March included a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Western Kingbirds and Black-throated Gray and Wilson's warblers. As is usually true, land bird migration did not shift out of first gear until mid-April or after; very good numbers were seen during the last days of the month. Migrants were reported in fallout numbers following an overnight rainstorm on 28 Apr; besides many common western birds, a few rarities such as a Northern Parula and a Palm Warbler were picked out by local birders lucky enough to get out that Thursday. Red-throated Loons—scarce locally as winterers this year and last—were numerous as migrants moving north past coastal promontories such as Pt. Vicente beginning in early



Sage Thrasher
(Gary Menke, USFWS)

March, only to be eclipsed by staggering numbers of migrating Pacific Loons in April. Many other coastal-migrating species' paths bring them near Pt. Vicente in spring, making it one of the premier birding spots in the area.

Rain was recorded on several dates during March. Amounts were generally low, but accumulation was significant on a few dates. An amount of 1.08 inches on 22 Mar increased this rainfall season's (1 July-30 June) total at Downtown L. A. to 35.89 inches—the second highest since records began. A bout with morning or all-day coverage of marine layer 6-14 Mar was the most we had to endure. Warm weather was enjoyed 30 Mar-7 Apr during a generally offshore pattern. A late-season storm brought record amounts of rain for the date of 28 Apr at both Downtown L. A. and LAX. At the end of April, this season's rainfall total at Downtown L. A. stood at 37.06 inches—just a little short of the record of 38.18 inches set during the 1883/4 season.

A Greater White-fronted Goose at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 4 Mar was a northbound migrant (Kevin Larson-KL); a very late-lingering winterer at Del Rey Lagoon, first found on 8 Nov, was still present on 5 May (Daniel S. Cooper-DSC). The "Aleutian" Cackling Goose (*B. h. leucopareia*) present at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area (EMJRA) in Willowbrook since 4 Dec was last seen on 24 Apr (KL); another individual of this race was at Cabrillo Beach 24-30 Apr (Martin Byhower-MB, KL). The wintering Canvasback flock at Alondra Park (AP) peaked at 34 in number on 11 Feb; this winter, individuals were present 15 Nov-13 Mar (David Moody-DM). A White-winged Scoter flying north past Pt. Vicente (PtV) on 3 Apr was the only one reported (KL). Migrant Black Scoters were in evidence this spring; seven northbound birds were tallied at PtV 20 Mar-23 Apr (KL), and a group of four flew north past Playa del Rey on 26 Apr (David Bell-DB). The wintering female Hooded Merganser at Madrona Marsh (MM) remained through at least 18 Mar (DM).

A singing male California Quail was at the Forrestal Nature Preserve (FNP) 3-24 Apr (KL); this species has not been reported there since December 2003. Numbers of northbound Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters were first noted at PtV on 16 Apr (KL). American Bittern sightings at BFM came on 5 Mar (DB) and 19 Apr (DSC). A Least Bittern at BFM 22 Mar-4 May was the first to be heard singing at this location; breeding has not been confirmed there (DSC). The L. A. Rare Bird Alert

received a report of a **Reddish Egret** at the L. A. River (LAR) near Anaheim St. on 10 Apr (Rose Powder). One wintering Cattle Egret remained at EMJRA on 19 Mar (KL); single transients were at BFM on 29 Mar and at Harbor Park (HP) on 16 Apr (DSC). An adult White-faced Ibis at BFM on 12 Apr was a rare spring record (DSC).

A female Northern Harrier at Friendship Park in San Pedro 13 Mar-2 Apr (KL) had likely been present all winter; two were seen there on 26 Dec (Sal Trupiano). A Swainson's Hawk was seen migrating north over Redondo Beach on 2 Mar (KL). A Virginia Rail at BFM on 19 Apr was the last report (DSC). A Black-necked Stilt was found on a nest at MM during the second week of April; this breeding attempt failed soon after. Four pairs of American Avocets were attempting to breed at LAR near Willow St. during April; gull predation caused one nest's demise and two others were washed out by high water from rain on 24 April. A Lesser Yellowlegs at MM on 12 Mar was an uncommon spring migrant (DM). Rare in spring, a Solitary Sandpiper also chose MM as a stopover on 15 Apr (DM). A Red Knot flying north within a line of migrating Surf Scoters at PtV on 20 Mar was an unusual sight (KL).

Two adult Franklin's Gulls flew north past PtV during the morning of 23 Apr (KL). Very unusual inland, a live Royal Tern at MM 20-21 Mar was found dead on 22 Mar (DM). Another rare inland tern record was of an Elegant Tern found dead at AP on 20 Apr (DM). Three Ancient Murrelets were seen flying together in a southward direction from PtV on 26 Mar (KL). A Eurasian Collared-Dove was at BFM on 18 Mar (Richard Barth-RB); what may have been the same individual was seen in flight at Playa del Rey on 1 Apr (DSC). A Barn Owl defending a cliff hole against Ravens at FNP on 30 Apr may have been at a nest site (DM et al). A few Costa's Hummingbirds at FNP 24-30 Apr were the only ones reported, as were two Rufous Hummingbirds at the South Coast Botanic Garden (SCBG) on 19 Mar (KL). Four Vaux's Swifts at MM 18-19 Mar may have been regional winterers (DM); one northbound bird over Playa del Rey on **1 Apr** was undoubtedly an early migrant (DSC).

DM found a Gray Flycatcher at Wilderness Park (WP) on 25 Apr. A Dusky Flycatcher identified by Lori Conrad (LC) at Sand Dune Park (SDP) on 26 Apr was still present on 27 Apr (KL). Monumental news was the **first known nesting of Say's Phoebes** in the Palos Verdes/South Bay area; a pair at MM was still incubating a nest in the eaves of the adjacent Nature Center at the end of



Tree Swallow
(James C. Leopold, USFWS)

April (DM). A pair of Say's Phoebes along the Playa del Rey bluffs which adjoin the Ballona Wetland on 16 Apr may have been prospecting for a nest site (KL). The male Vermilion Flycatcher at Columbia Park in Torrance—a returning winterer—was last seen on 7 Mar (DM). Nearly unheard-of as a **spring vagrant** along the coast of Southern California, an adult female **Vermilion Flycatcher** was in the Ballona Wetland area of Playa del Rey on 10 Apr (DSC). Though coverage of all possible breeding areas was scanty at best, no Loggerhead Shrikes were reported in the area during March or April; the last report of a wintering individual was on 27 Feb in the Ballona area (Jonathan Coffin-JC).

The wintering Bell's Vireo found by RB on 3 Nov at Deforest Park (DP) in Long Beach was heard singing on 5 Mar, and remained present through at least 20 Mar (KL). A singing Bell's Vireo in the same row of nonnative trees on 21 Mar 2004 (KL) was believed at the time to be a migrant, but it now appears probable that this sighting was of the same individual wintering in the previous year. The wintering Plumbeous Vireo found at the El Segundo Library (ESL) on 21 Jan was still present on 17 Apr (RB). What was apparently the same Hutton's Vireo seen over the winter at the north end willows of HP—first found on 28 Aug—was still present, and singing in late April; it remained through at least 5 May (KL). Another Hutton's Vireo in lower George F Canyon on 2 Apr was likely an individual that was seen farther up the canyon during the winter (KL).

One pair of Tree Swallows had produced a nest with

Continued on page 7

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Lillian Light

Our world is facing unimaginable change to human and natural ecosystems as a result of the three to eleven degree Fahrenheit increase in air temperatures predicted by scientists. Global warming is an issue of critical importance to our health, our economy, and our environment and demands action now.

Carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping emissions from passenger vehicles and trucks are responsible for much of the problem and will increase 50% by 2020 if automakers do not clean up our nation's vehicle fleet.



Our state legislature passed the "Clean Car Law" authored by Assemblywoman Fran Pavley and signed by Governor Gray Davis, seeking to cut emissions in cars and trucks. The

law calls for cutting emissions by as much as 25% beginning with the 2009 model year, with cuts accelerating to about 30% in 2016.

California's new air quality regulations to reduce exhaust pipe emissions were adopted unanimously in September by the state's Air Resources Board, and are the nation's first-ever rules to lower emissions linked to global warming. Many other states are set to follow our lead, and eight states have passed similar laws. Canada and the European Union are also tightening regulations to cut global warming pollution from automobiles.

Unfortunately, all of the world's major automakers have joined in a federal lawsuit against California's new global warming regulations. If the companies prevail, they could effectively hijack the future of clean cars for years to come. In March the same automakers signed an agreement with the government of Canada to improve the fuel efficiency of all cars sold in Canada 25% by 2010, after senior Canadian officials threatened to copy our landmark California law. This led an NRDC official to quip, "Americans shouldn't have to cross the border to buy cleaner cars like prescription drugs."

Automobile manufacturers reached a similar voluntary agreement with the European union. However, they have argued that making such reductions to the U.S. vehicle fleet, which is larger and thirstier because of the popularity of sport utility vehicles, would be too costly. They also argue that states do not have the authority to set fuel economy standards. They seek to perpetuate the disgrace that the United States with 5% of the world's population causes 25% of the world's global warming pollution, a figure that is constantly increasing. This administration and this Congress refuse to take any action to reduce the world's increasing temperatures, and to avert the catastrophe that will be the result.

The car companies are ignoring the will of the more than 80% of Californians who support our clean car regulations. Instead, the major automakers are pursuing backward litigation that will exacerbate the climate change problem.

Let us all send a message to the auto industry to withdraw from the effort to block urgent efforts to cut global warming pollution. Tell them to innovate rather than litigate. Automobile emission-reduction technologies are already mainstream. There are no major engineering hurdles preventing car companies from incorporating technologies such as cylinder deactivation, continuously variable transmissions, and gas – electric hybrid power into more of their vehicles.

Write to the presidents of the two automotive alliances that filed the lawsuit and tell them that "green" slogans and limited introductions of hybrid vehicles cannot replace a fleetwide commitment to cleaner vehicles.

You can send an email from the online UCS Action Center at www.ucsaction.org or mail letters to the following CEOs. Help to avert the "collapse" of our world's climate.

Frederick L. Webber, President
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers
1401 Eye St NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005

Timothy C. MacCarthy, President
Association of International Automobile Manufacturers
1001 19th St North, Suite 1200
Arlington, VA 22209

Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 5

six eggs at BFM by 28 Apr (RB). Why Violet-green Swallows are usually so rare in our area is a curiosity; one knocked down by a rainstorm on 22 Mar at BFM was the only migrant reported in our area this spring (KL). Many could move through our area nonstop and undetected, or possibly this species' migratory path is generally inland of our area. A Bank Swallow at MM **3-4 Mar** was early (DM); other singles were at BFM on 22 Mar (KL), 5 Apr (DSC), 15 Apr (DB), and 30 Apr (KL). Lingering Red-breasted Nuthatches from this winter's invasion included one at DP on 30 Apr, and five at WP on 3 May (DM).

A Rock Wren was singing incessantly near a hole in a cliff at FNP on 27 Mar, but was not found on subsequent visits (KL). A pair of Western Bluebirds was in the vicinity of Ridgecrest Intermediate School in RPV during April, where they bred the last two years (Sally Moite, KL). A migrant Hermit Thrush at SDP on 17 Apr obviously differed in appearance from our normally-occurring subspecies (KL); its small size, pale gray crown and back, and lightly-spotted breast were suggestive of the race *C. g. slevini*. A singing **Sage Thrasher** at FNP on 13 Mar was extraordinary since all recent records are from fall (KL). The California Thrasher at FNP was heard singing on 13 Mar (KL), and was seen by Edmond Griffin on 10 Apr. Four Phainopeplas were at SDP on 26 Apr (LC).

A wintering Nashville Warbler first found on 2 Jan at DP remained present in the same small area of the park through at least 2 Apr (KL). A **Virginia's Warbler** at MM on 30 Apr was a very rare spring vagrant (KL). MB found a Northern Parula at MM during an impressive migrant wave on 28 Apr. A male Yellow Warbler spent its third consecutive winter at EMJRA; favoring a few small trees, it remained as late as 1 May (KL). A singing Yellow Warbler was on territory at the north end willows of HP as early as 16 Apr (KL). The wintering Palm Warbler found by JC along Ballona Creek near the 90 freeway crossing on 9 Dec



Lesser Yellowlegs
(USFWS)

was seen through 14 Mar (RB). Normally rare, spring migrant Palm Warblers are being recorded with increasing regularity in recent years. Three or more have now been found in three consecutive years; this year, singles were at MM 19-26 Apr (DM), at ESL on 25 Apr (RB), and at AP on 28 Apr (DM). A Black-and-white Warbler at Recreation Park in El Segundo 29 Mar was likely the same wintering individual seen intermittently at nearby ESL 7 Dec-8 Feb (RB). Another Black-and-white Warbler at Loyola Marymount University in Westchester on 19 Mar was wintering locally (Russell Stone); it is the third found in this article's coverage area this winter. A Wilson's Warbler singing on territory at the north end willows of HP 26 Mar-1 May was likely the same individual present the last two summers; breeding was confirmed last year (KL). A migrant Yellow-breasted Chat at Burton Chace Park in Marina del Rey on 15 Apr was at an unexpected location (RB).

Migrant Lark Sparrows included three at Cal State U. Dominguez Hills in Carson on 4 Mar (Tracy Drake), one singing at MM on 19 Mar (DM), another singing at WP on 25 Mar (DM), and five at MM on 8 Apr (DM). Eileen Byhower spotted a **Black-throated Sparrow** at FNP for our 24 Apr birdathon team. A calling "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow of an undetermined subspecies at FNP on 13 Mar was suspected of being a migrant (KL); the depth of its bill appeared extreme and the lower mandible was entirely gray. First found on 27 Nov, the wintering Swamp Sparrow in the Ballona Wetland near the Playa del Rey bluffs remained through 26 Mar (DB). Yellow-headed Blackbird sightings at BFM included four on 5 Apr, seven on 15 Apr, one 23-24 Apr, and one on 1 May (DSC, KL, DB); apparently, all sightings were of briefly-visiting migrants. Single calling Lawrence's Goldfinches flew over Playa del Rey on 1 Apr (DSC) and FNP on 10 Apr (KL).

Summarized here are some first arrival dates of spring migrants: Short-billed Dowitcher—12 Mar Del Rey Lagoon (DSC); Elegant Tern—19 Mar PtV (KL); Least Tern—**19 Apr** BFM (DSC); Black-chinned Hummingbird—2 Apr DP (KL); Western Wood-Pewee—19 Apr WP (DM); Hammond's Flycatcher—3 Apr FNP (KL); Pacific-slope Flycatcher—13 Mar FNP (KL); Western Kingbird—12 Mar Westchester (DSC); Cassin's Vireo—27 Mar SCBG (KL); Warbling Vireo—27 Mar SCBG (KL); Swainson's Thrush—27 Apr AP (DM); Yellow Warbler—14 Apr Torrance (KL); Hermit Warbler—19 Apr SDP (KL); Black-throated Gray Warbler—12 Mar Ballona Creek at McConnell Ave. (DSC); Wilson's Warbler (2)—11 Mar MM (DM); Chipping Sparrow—27 Mar FNP (KL); Black-headed Grosbeak—30 Mar Playa del Rey (DSC); Lazuli

Continued on page 9

More 2005 Audubon Award Winners



Alison Diaz, Founder of the Enviornmental Charter High School in Lawndale, receives the 2005 Audubon Education Award from Jess Morton.



Chapter Vice President Martin Byhower presents the 2005 Youth Conservation Award to Chadwick High School's Swati Yanamadala.



YES! Award recipients for 2005 (left to right): Andrew Combs, Martin Gomez, Kimberley Ho, Dennis Keen, Daniel Voldman and Patty Yeh. In background: Jess Morton and Lynn Hiel, President of the YES! Council. Not shown: YES! awardees Ingrid Chang and Philip Gant.

A QUIZ OF VENERY

by Michael Weber

Ever wonder about the origin of such expressions as “a gaggle of geese” or “an exaltation of larks”?

Intrigued by a brief article in *Phainopepla*, the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, I did a quick search on the Internet and found a brief history of the centuries-old tradition of identifying groups of animals with a collective term--a practice called venery. (I didn't have time to read James Lipton's authoritative *An Exaltation of Larks*, published by Penguin Books in 1991.)

Conjuring up collective terms for animals began among hunters hundreds of years ago. The term “venery” derives from the Latin word for hunting game: “venari.”

By the 1320's, venery was well enough developed that Edward II's master of the hunt, William Twici, wrote the earliest known summary of such terms—*Le Art de Venery*. The first English collection of collective terms appeared in 1476 as *The Horse, the Sheep, and the Goose*.

The practice of this kind of venery, and not the kind that derives more directly from Venus, the goddess of love, has at times been a popular parlor game, whose subject has spread far beyond animals to music and other topics.

Have you heard of “a hum of hymns” or “a parenthesis of cellists”?

But now the fun really begins. Match the collective term in the left column with the appropriate bird in the right column. See page 10 for the answers.

Exaltation	Lapwings
Unkindness	Nightingales
True love	Turtledoves
Spring	Larks
Hill	Sparrows
Cover	Ravens
Skein	Teal
Host	Penguins
Cast	Snipe
Flight	Ruffs
Tiding	Goshawks
Mutation	Swallows
Watch	Coots
Nye	Pheasants
Deceit	Magpies
Siege	Hawks
Company	Hérons
Walk	Geese
Parade	Thrushes

Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 7

Bunting 13 Apr BFM (RB); Blue Grosbeak—13 Apr MM (DM); Hooded Oriole (adult male)—6 Mar Del Rey Lagoon (KL); Bullock's Oriole (adult male)—4 Mar AP (DM)

Here are some late dates of migrants or winterers: Sharpshinned Hawk—17 Apr SCBG (KL); Mew Gull—16 Apr LAR Willow St. (KL); Herring Gull—23 Apr LAR Willow St. (KL); Red-breasted Sapsucker—26 Mar Banning Park (KL); Ruby-crowned Kinglet—19 Apr SDP (KL); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher—10 Apr FNP (KL); American Pipit—30 Apr MM (Bob Shanman).

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.

Acronyms in Birds of the Peninsula

AP: Alondra Park
 BFM: Ballona Freshwater Marsh
 DB: David Bell
 DM: David Moody
 DP: Deforest Park
 DSC: Daniel S. Cooper
 EMJRA: Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area
 ESL: El Segundo Library
 FNP: Forrestal Nature Preserve
 HP: Harbor Park
 JC: Jonathan Coffin
 KL: Kevin Larson
 LAR: L. A. River
 LC: Lori Conrad
 MB: Martin Byhower
 MM: Madrona Marsh
 PtV: Pt. Vicente
 RB: Richard Barth
 SCBG: South Coast Botanic Garden
 SDP: Sand Dune Park
 WP: Wilderness Park

Jessamine's Dance

After the rough work of morning
sun-sleek weeds grappled from hillsides
lush as these springtime youths playing
at slaptail and braggadocio

a music ripened within her
as if a flushed wind had its will
of the jungle, the sway of trees
ripe mangoes, heat and insect trill

crossing its undulant river
drifts the cuckoo's lost song of songs
and somewhere in the undergrowth
the jaguar lengthens awake

these are our things that persist
the dance, the knowledge of dance

—*Jess Morton*

**Answers to
A Quiz of Venery**

- An exaltation of larks.
- An unkindness of ravens.
- A true love of turtledoves.
- A spring of teal.
- A hill of ruffs.
- A cover of coots.
- A skein of geese.
- A host of sparrows.
- A cast of hawks.
- A flight of goshawks.
- A tiding of magpies.
- A mutation of thrushes.
- A watch of nightingales.
- A nye of pheasants.
- A deceit of lapwings
- A siege of herons
- A company of swallows.
- A walk of snipe.
- A parade of penguins.

House Finches Need You to Watch Them!

The Whittier Area Audubon Society's newsletter also reports that the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is seeking help in studying the prevalence of a debilitating form of conjunctivitis that is afflicting House Finches.

No experience is necessary to participate in the study. Participants simply observe their feeders and submit data on the presence or absence of healthy or diseased birds. Data can be submitted on paper or via the Internet.

Instructions are available at the following web address: www.birds.cornell.edu/hofisignup/nestsignup.html.

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the mucus that lines the outer surface of the eyeball and the inner surface of the eyelids.

Hummin' is published six times per year by the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society. Authors' opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Society. Send articles and suggestions to MLEoWeber@aol.com.

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

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

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

GIFT & NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP (*chapter only* or
national--circle one).....\$25
GIFT\$20___\$50___\$100___Other___

TOTAL ENCLOSED..... _____
(all contributions are tax-deductible)

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

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

7XCH/C43

Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Wednesday, June 1, 7:00PM: **Audubon Board and Members meeting**, Whole Foods Community Room, Crenshaw & PCH, 7:00pm

Sunday, June 5, 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 July 3)

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

Saturday/Sunday, June 11&12, 8:30AM: **Field trip to Big Bear**. Meet in parking lot of Motel 6 in Big Bear. For information contact Eric & Ann, motmots@aol.com, 323-295-6688.

Saturday, June 11, 9:00AM to noon: **Land Conservancy Nature Walk** at Three Sisters, panoramic views of the Pacific, wildflowers and excellent habitat. Strenuous. RPV, Take Highridge Rd. south across Crest Rd., turn right on Ocean Terrace Dr., park along street at the end.

Sunday, June 12, 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, July 10.)

Wednesday, June 15, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See June 5 for directions.)

Saturday, June 18, 8:00AM: **Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park** with Martin Byhower. Spring will have sprung! Meet in parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim St. above the boathouse, about 1 mile west of 110 Freeway on Anaheim St.

Sunday, July 3, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**, 26300 Crenshaw Bl., Palos Verdes. Leader: Ollie Coker. See June 5 for directions.

Saturday, July 9, 4:00-6:30PM: **Land Conservancy Nature Walk** at Peacock flat/Rattlesnake Trail. Explore Altamira Canyon open space. RPV, park along the street at the south end of Crenshaw Blvd.

Sunday, July 10, 9:00AM: **Volunteer Weeding at Forrestal Nature Preserve** sponsored by the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy. See June 12 for directions.

Wednesday, July 13, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. (See June 8 for directions.)

Wednesday, July 20, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See June 5 for directions.)

Saturday, July 16, 8:00AM: **BEST BIRDING SPOTS in SOUTHERN LA COUNTY** with Martin Byhower. LA

River shorebird migration. Mett on the east side of the Willow St. crossing in Long Beach. From the 710, take the eastbound Willow St. offramp, make the first left at Golden, a quick left on 26th and go to the end, turn right and park immediately, then walk up the paved bank to the river. Contact avitropic@sbcglobal.net.

BIRDERS SEEKING BIRDERS

If swinging singles can use the Internet to find their kind, why can't birders?

Well, birders can! At least now that Knud Rasmussen decided to give birders a way to find local birders when they travel.

At his Birdingpal website, Rasmussen has assembled 2,000 birding contacts in 177 countries, states, and Canadian provinces. Next time you're heading off into the broader world looking for birds, try www.birdingpal.org.

Thanks to the Whittier Area Audubon Society newsletter, *The Observer*, for this tip!

CALENDAR

Kelp Restoration Planned Off Palos Verdes

The Santa Monica Baykeeper's Kelp Restoration Project has selected two areas off Palos Verdes for replanting of kelp in the next year and a half.

The two areas, which are off Point Vicente and Long Point, have been overgrazed by excessively large populations of sea urchins. As a result, the areas now are bare rock, rather than the marine equivalent of tropical rainforests with which healthy kelp forests are often compared.

Nutrient pollution and the reduction of urchin predators, such as fish called sheephead, contributed to the increase in urchins.

For more information, go to www.smbaykeeper.org, or call 310-305-9645.

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 2582
PALOS VERDES, CA 90274

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PALOS VERDES, CA
PERMIT NO. 172

**Time-sensitive material--
please deliver promptly.**



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.

OFFICERS 2004/2005

Presidents

Martin Byhower, 539-0050

Bob Shanman, 326-2473

Frances Spivy-Weber, 316-0041

Secretary..... Linda Chilton, 548-7562

Treasurer.....Jess Morton, 832-5601

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eileen Byhower

Bob Carr

Ollie Coker

Tracy Drake

Allen Franz

Julie Greer

Liz Kennedy

Lillian Light

John Nieto

Kathleen Schwallie

Dennis Weyrauch

COMMITTEES

Birds & Habitat: Allen Franz.....832-1671

Conservation: Lillian Light.....545-1384

Finance: Fran Spivy-Weber.....316-0041

Harbor Park: Martin Byhower...539-0050

Programs: Bob Carr.....325-4402

Membership.....vacant

Outreach: Liz Kennedy.....547-1320

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

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 contact Frances at 310-316-0041.

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.