



HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY AUG/SEP 2004 Vol. XXVI No.4

Steps Forward at Harbor Park

By Jess Morton

Audubon's work at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park continues on several fronts. Martin Byhower is wrapping up the annual bird survey at the park; Kathleen Schwallie and Fran Spivy-Weber have been hard at work grant-writing, while Julie Greer, myself, and others have been active with public outreach. Included with this latter is Audubon's active participation on the City of Los Angeles' Harbor Park Task Force and the park's Public Advisory Board.

Much of this work is invisible to the general public, but it is all part of Audubon's ultimate objective to establish a Natural Heritage Center in the park. One of the most encouraging items in recent months is the excellent possibility we have now to fund a facility, even if it is likely to be temporary structure! During the next few weeks, Auduboners will be working with LA City Councilwoman Janice Hahn's Office, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Coastal Conservancy to prepare a proposal to the Conservancy for this funding.

The building we expect to place here will house City park staff, including Amber Johnson, the new full-time Recreation Director for the park. It is wonderful to see that the Department has been able to resolve enough of its budgeting problems so that we can have a person at the park who does not have to deal with a dozen other parks, as well. The building will also provide space for maintenance staff and security, which should lead to far more park protection than is possible now. In addition, Audubon will have a place to base its educational work in the park, something we had to suspend last year because of logistical difficulties.

On the bird front, Martin's survey on the nesting birds around the lake will be released by the time you get this issue of *Hummin'*. This survey is a continuation of the invaluable work Mitch Heindel did during his years studying the wildlife of KMHRP. The survey results will

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Council Moves toward Bond on Local Water Pollution

On July 8, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously requested the City Attorney to prepare a measure for the November ballot that would dedicate \$500 million to cleaning up water in the city's rivers and lakes and to reducing the flow of pollution into Santa Monica Bay.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, \$60 million to \$70 million would be allocated for improving water quality in four city lakes, including Lake Machado in Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Trash and other types of pollution flowing from residential and commercial developments for miles around have seriously degraded water quality and the esthetics of Machado Lake and others.

The bond measure, which would have to be approved by two-thirds of voters in the November election, is a response to new requirements placed on cities in the Los Angeles Basin to implement decades-old standards of the federal Clean Water Act. Initially, the City of Los Angeles joined with other cities in fighting the requirements through the courts. However, several recent court decisions persuaded the city to invest its efforts in compliance.

Funds would also be used to divert bacteria runoff at Ballona Creek and the Los Angeles River, to install screens, covers, and deflective devices to control trash and sediment flowing into the Los Angeles River, and for wetlands restoration.

Under Clean Water Act rules, cities in the Los Angeles Basin must reduce trash in the Los Angeles River by 20% by 2006, and eliminate trash in the river by 2015.

Financing the water bond will cost owners of a median-priced home worth \$350,000 about \$56 per year for the next 20 years, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

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VICE PRESIDENTS CORNER

By Martin Byhower

It is often said that a key to individual success and accomplishment is to visualize the desired outcome and then work as if it is inevitable. Nearly 20 years ago, I was among a small group of individuals who had heard (if not remembered) what a haven for wildlife diversity within Ken Malloy (then simply "Harbor") Regional Park (KMHRP) had once been. We felt that Our Park could still support abundant wildlife, while accommodating most of the needs and desires of its human visitors; indeed, preserving the wildlife as well as providing access to observing it would also enhance the experience for such visitors.

For years, I was among a handful of individuals, mostly those affiliated then and now with your PV/South Bay Audubon, who were busy "putting out fires" to try to save habitat and nature at the park. KMHRP represents a microcosm of all the challenges a beautiful and rich wildlife area confronts when surrounded by dense urbanization. The park was incrementally losing habitat, experiencing the effects of pollution, and ironically, suffering simultaneously from neglect and overuse. If it wasn't a clear-cut through the willow forest it was a botulism outbreak, illegal dumping or vandals destroying fences and facilities. The current biggest challenge is managing West Nile at the park without destroying crucial tule wetland habitat.

Several years ago, first with a group headed by Frank O'Brien and later with funding acquired by State Senator Debra Bowen's office, Audubon and other local groups and individuals formulated a vision that took into account the needs of both the human and wildlife communities who used the park. At the same time, inspired by Jess Morton's vision of an Audubon Natural Heritage Center at the park, I headed up a committee to begin brainstorming such an entity at the Park.

Fast forward to the present. Hazy visions are starting to crystallize. I believe that short-term measures to control mosquitoes can be accomplished in ways that will ultimately enhance both wildlife potential and enjoyment by park visitors. Longer-term measures in the works may lead to more permanent solutions in both regards. With additional advocacy provided by the State Coastal Conservancy and continued assistance from Senator Bowen's office as well as support from Councilwoman Janice Hahn's office, our vision of a healthy

park ecosystem seems within reach. And we have fixed our sights tenaciously on The Audubon Natural Heritage Center at Ken Malloy/Harbor Regional Park.

Picture walking on elevated boardwalks through a lush willow forest full of the sounds and smells of a healthy ecosystem, then emerging into reeds bordering a beautiful blue lake. You try to sort out the songs of Yellow Warblers, Bell's Vireos, Marsh Wrens, and Red-winged and Tricolored Blackbirds, all nesting successfully at the lake. You see a pied-billed grebe with a chick on her back on one of the nesting platforms made by a local Eagle Scout.

You observe a group of students on a field trip from a local elementary school, led by a docent from the Audubon Center, learning to use binoculars, while high school students take water samples to observe and monitor the physical and biological properties of the lake water. College students receive instruction in habitat restoration in the seasonal wetlands below the dam. The cool, shady campground area, Camp Machado, is used regularly by scout groups and schools as well as by local residents.

Families picnic on the lawns or watch their kids frolic on the swings and slides in the play area, while joggers, photographers, birders, artists, young (and old) lovers and scientists enjoy the park, each in their own way. There are clean restroom facilities, lakeside benches, and Least Bitterns calling from the reeds.

A Park Ranger strolls by just in time to answer your question about a turtle you just saw dive off the bank as you approached the lake. He suggests that you visit the Interpretive Center at the Audubon Center and then pick up a checklist of the reptiles, amphibians and mammals of the park at the small Book/Gift shop. You find out from the Park Recreation Director about a scheduled canoeing adventure that will carefully observe wildlife with a naturalist guide (perhaps, yours truly??)

Vision allows one not only to observe reality but to create it. Binoculars bring distant birds into focus, but talented and dedicated people as well as an informed and vocal citizenry are needed to turn intentions into reality. Now, more than ever, we need your help, support and participation because now, more than ever, a framework and mechanism for attaining our vision at KMRHP seems within reach.

Come on our walks, come to our workshops, get your community group interested in the park, and enlist the support of your local elected officials. And please come to the park soon to view what is special about it now as well as to envision how truly wonderful it will soon be!

Steps at Park, continued from page 1

be used to guide the City's tule-cutting plans for the coming months.

The short-term prospects for wildlife in the park are not so rosy. The advent of West Nile Virus in the LA basin has lent a note of unprecedented urgency to control of mosquitoes and vegetation in the lake. As of early July, no specific tie of the virus to Harbor Lake had been established. A dead jay and a mosquito that tested positive for WNV were found near the lake. But, the mosquito was the common house mosquito, a species not closely associated with lake habitats. Based on Audubon's long experience with the park, Martin prepared a list of park management improvements that the City has adopted. These will help reduce mosquito populations, especially of the house mosquito, most likely to be LA's major WNV vector.

Biweekly spraying by County Vector Control with a controllable ground fog of insecticide has been under way for some weeks and will continue through September. Although the chemicals used are relatively specific to adult mosquitoes, there does seem to be a noticeable drop in insect abundance at the park this summer. What effect spraying will have on nesting birds is not known, but, since many feed insects to their young, it could be substantial.

On a brighter note, the final round of long-term planning for Harbor Park has begun. The basic work Parsons initiated in 2002 has now been supplemented by a two-year water-quality study by the City's Sanitation Dept.. This study will be combined and extended to cover both Harbor Park and Wilmington Drain by URS, a consulting firm hired by the City using Proposition K and Coastal Conservancy funds. By the end of URS' contract, in March 2006, we expect to have a City-approved plan for park improvement work that has gone through the necessary public environmental impact review process.

Audubon's Natural heritage Center is still a ways off, but it is no longer an impossible dream.

City Council action, continued from page 1

In separate action, the City Council also approved funding for a study to determine how to manage 31 undeveloped acres of Peck Park. According to the *Daily Breeze*, the design firm of Mia Lehrer and Associates is to work with a 15-member steering committee "on ways of addressing the remaining open space" in Peck Park canyon. The study is due in November.

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BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

May and June 2004

by Kevin Larson

The flood tide of spring migrant land birds at the beginning of May began to ebb soon after. Few migrants were seen after the third week of May. Moderate numbers of migrants were seen this spring; no spectacular waves were noted. Rarities were not easily found during this mid-May through June spring vagrant season, but a fair number was amassed through collective effort. A Bronzed Cowbird in Portuguese Bend in May was the highlight of the rarities found in the area this spring. Rare to uncommon breeders in the area during the period included Tree Swallows, Wilson's Warblers, Western Bluebirds, Red-breasted Nuthatches, House Wrens, Western Kingbirds and Loggerhead Shrikes.

May and June were dry; the last measurable precipitation came on 17 April. An offshore flow brought record high temperatures to the area 1-3 May. High pressure with clear skies dominated the weather until mid-May. During the night and morning, a marine layer of variable extent prevailed from mid-May through the end of June. The "June gloom" lasted for most or all of the day at times; otherwise, there were many sunny afternoons and even a few clear mornings.

A small Canada Goose—a little larger than a Mallard—seen by Richard Barth (RB) at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 14 Jun was intriguing. This goose had a very wide white neck-ring, suggesting that it belonged to the Aleutian race, *B. c. leucopareia* (*B. c. minima* can occasionally show a white neck-ring to a limited extent). If this was a wild migratory individual of the Aleutian race, it is difficult to explain its presence in June. One Brant and two Red-breasted Mergansers on the lake at Harbor Park (HP) on 4 May were unusual since these species are rarely recorded inland from the coast locally (Martin Byhower-MB). Two Brant at the L. A. River (LAR) south of Del Amo Blvd. 12-20 Jun—also inland—were late (Kevin Larson-KL). A pair of Blue-winged Teal was at LAR near Willow St. on 17 Jun (KL), and one male was at BFM on 28 Jun (RB); none had been seen locally since early May.

Northern Fulmars continued along the coast in small numbers; counts ranged from one to seven during

weekly visits to Pt. Vicente (PtV) 1 May-19 Jun (KL). Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters were seen with regularity from PtV. Approximately five hundred Pink-footed Shearwaters attracted to feeding dolphins off PtV on 23 May, and 2747 Sooty Shearwaters moving north past PtV on 19 Jun were notably high counts (KL). Black-vented Shearwaters are normally absent from our waters mid-May through June, having departed to their breeding areas to the south. This year, very few were present during April and early May, then numbers increased from late May through the end of June. Morning counts of Black-vented Shearwaters at PtV were: 12 on 23 May; 58 on 30 May; 73 on 6 Jun; 257 on 17 Jun; 423 on 19 Jun; and 300+ on 26 Jun (KL). Rare inland, a young Brown Pelican circled over HP on the afternoon of 31 May (KL).

A Least Bittern at BFM on 12 May (RB) is one of a few sporadic sightings at this location since 24 Jul 2003. Two White-faced Ibises at BFM on 2 May (Russell Cummings) might best be considered a rare spring record. Remarkable was the very early (fall) arrival of White-faced Ibises at LAR. One juvenile seen near Willow St. on 6 Jun was joined by another 12-20 Jun. Three adults in breeding plumage were also there on 17 Jun. Another early White-faced Ibis was at Playa del Rey on 21 Jun (RB). A Virginia Rail seen at BFM on 5 May (RB) was either a migrant or a late sighting of a wintering individual. An adult Common Moorhen was at BFM on 4 Jun (RB); about two months had passed since one had been seen at this location.

Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets were enjoying good breeding success along the concrete-bottomed LAR channel due to stable low water levels. Of the 265 pairs of nesting stilts counted during a 12-17 Jun survey of the river from Willow St. to Rosecrans Ave., 49 pairs were raising young, and 216 pairs were incubating nests (KL). Seven pairs of avocets had



Red-breasted Merganser

raised, or were raising young by 20 Jun, while seven more pairs were still on nest (KL). Fall migrant Greater Yellowlegs arrived early; one was at LAR near Del Amo Blvd. on 13 Jun, followed by five on 17 Jun (KL). An alternate-plumaged Western Sandpiper at LAR 16-23 May (KL) was a spring straggler. A Western Sandpiper in alternate plumage on the south jetty at the mouth of Ballona Creek on 16 Jun was undoubtedly a remarkably early fall migrant (Barbara G. Johnson-BGJ). A Least Sandpiper in partial alternate plumage at LAR on 12 Jun may have been a summer wanderer. Often missed in spring locally, two Wilson's Phalaropes were at LAR on 1 May (KL) and one was at BFM on 3 May (RB).

Two adult Franklin's Gulls were seen flying north together past PtV on the morning of 15 May (KL); this species was missed in our area last year. An Elegant Tern sitting in the river channel at LAR near Del Amo Blvd. on 17 Jun was unusually far inland—about six miles from Long Beach Harbor (KL). It was another big year for breeding Least Terns at their Port of LA nesting site; a 27 June *Daily Breeze* article reported that over 950 nests—monitored by Kathy Keane—were present. A **Pigeon Guillemot** in breeding plumage flying south past PtV on 17 Jun was unexpected; one was seen last year at this location on 1 Jun (KL).

Remarkable was a **White-winged Dove** in Hermosa Beach on **22 Jun** (Lori Conrad-LC); this species is very rare at this time along the So. Cal. coast. Two early Black Swifts over Hermosa Beach on 2 May (LC) were the only ones reported. Single Chimney Swifts were in Long Beach on 29 May over Deforest Park (DP) and on 20 Jun over LAR near Willow St. (KL). Well below average numbers of migrant Vaux's Swifts were recorded in the area this spring.

The **eighth** Gray Flycatcher found locally this spring was photographed by Bill and Karen Plourde at Madrona Marsh on 5 May. A partially-white (leucistic) Ash-throated Flycatcher at DP on 16 May was an unusual sight (KL). Nesting Cassin's Kingbirds appear to be on the increase in our area—e.g., two pairs fledged young at Alondra Park (AP) by 11 Jun (David Moody-DM), and one pair fledged young in the Ballona Valley area near Loyola Marymount University in Westchester by 19 Jun (KL). Rare locally as nesters in recent years, a pair of Western Kingbirds was feeding young at the nest on 19 Jun in the Ballona Valley along the edge of the bluffs in northern Westchester (KL).

Declining locally as breeders in recent years, a pair of Loggerhead Shrikes was seen feeding a fledgling at



Tree Swallow

LAR south of Del Amo Blvd. in Long Beach on 16 May (KL). A Bell's Vireo was singing at HP from 8 May to at least 1 Jul (MB); we could not find evidence that it had found a mate. A singing **Yellow-throated Vireo** was at HP on 31 May (MB). Remarkably, this rare vagrant to CA has been recorded in our area eight times since 1996—six times in spring and twice in fall.

Big news was the first **successful Tree Swallow nesting** in the area in modern times. Breeding in one of the nest boxes at BFM, adults were seen carrying nesting material as early as 3 May (RB). RB found four recently hatched young in the box on 1 Jun. Last seen at the nest box hole on 18 Jun, the young fledged 19-20 Jun (RB). A Bank Swallow at BFM on 17 May was the only one reported (Mark Conrad). A small resident population of Red-breasted Nuthatches has been noted on the PV Peninsula since 2000; a pair seen feeding young in Rancho Palos Verdes 19-26 May (Jan Stewart) establishes another breeding record.

Although House Wrens have been suspected of breeding a number of times in the Palos Verdes/South Bay area, the only confirmation I am aware of was in 1994 at HP (Mitch Heindel). This year, adult House Wrens were seen feeding young at DP in Long Beach 16-23 May and at the Ocean Trails Golf Course in Rancho Palos Verdes on 22 May (KL). Other House Wren sightings during the period included one singing at Long Point on 23 May (KL), a pair in Rolling Hills in late May (MB), and three singing along Malaga Creek on 6 June (KL).

Western Bluebirds nested successfully for the second consecutive year in the vicinity of Ridgecrest Intermediate School in Rancho Palos Verdes—our only two area breeding records. This year, the pair nested in a street light enclosure, and fledged young by late June (Sam Bloom). The pair of Western Bluebirds present at HP since 13 Mar was last seen on 9 May (MB). A Swainson's Thrush was singing at the north end willows of HP 2 May-13 Jun; one in the nearby Wilmington Drain on 1 Jul may have been the same individual (MB). Up to three Swainson's Thrushes were singing in upper

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CONSERVATION CORNER

by Lillian Light

Readers of this column are aware of the myriad ways that the current administration has recklessly undermined, sold out, and gutted the laws that protect our air, water, land, and public health. "Strategic Ignorance" by Carl Pope, a dramatic and brilliantly argued expose of the Bush administration's environmental record, not only documents the swiftness, scope, and severity of this attack, but is a galvanizing call to arms to save America's priceless natural heritage. The book outlines what must be done to restore the environmental stewardship consensus on natural resource policy that developed from the time of Theodore Roosevelt through the end of the Clinton era.

When Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich introduced measures that would shred our environmental safety net, their efforts did not succeed because our citizenry rallied in opposition to these policies. Because of public apathy and disinterest, this administration has succeeded beyond its wildest expectations in replacing environmental protection with public resource exploitation. This book reveals that the results of environmental apathy have been lethal. Reading it should revitalize and reinvigorate the opponents of those who are trying to dismantle a century of environmental progress.

The last chapter, under the title "Reclaiming America's Future", starts with the following quotation:

"Biologists have a term for species whose habitat or gene pools are so diminished that extinction is only a matter of time: "the living dead". The Bush administration has banished many of our most important environmental protections to this limbo. The Clean Air Act is still on the books but is not being enforced. The national forests that Teddy Roosevelt mapped out with Gifford Pinchot still show green on the map, but on the ground chainsaws are converting them into clearcuts and tree farms. The Clean Water Act still boldly calls for swimmable streams and fishable rivers, but its jurisdiction no longer includes the huge factory feedlots or 60 percent of the nation's wetland habitat. In only three years of Bush oversight, one-tenth of our nation's surface area – 234million acres- has been stripped of the environmental designations that protected these lands from exploitation and destruction."

In such clear and colorful prose, Carl Pope documents the harm that has been done, another example of which was shifting the burden of cleaning up toxic waste dumps from polluters to taxpayers by doing away with the Superfund Tax. He considers Global Warming the world's most pressing and intractable problem, and has an interesting and informative chapter on it.

In his opinion the decline of the world's fish stocks is the second most serious problem afflicting our environmental commons, since a recent United Nations report estimated that nearly 30 percent of the world's marine fisheries are either overharvested or in actual collapse. As part of its drive to end the era of environmental treaty-making, the administration stopped an international effort to restore fisheries during the UN Conference on the Environment in 2002.

The Administration's record includes our withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, refusal to take part in the multilateral mercury convention, and opposition to the Montreal Protocol that banned the use of ozone-depleting chemicals. The United States is demanding that the phaseout of ozone-destroying methyl bromide be halted so that it can be used for growing strawberries and maintaining putting greens on golf courses. In its nefarious effort to root out each and every enforceable international environmental treaty, our government has even proposed permitting trade in endangered species in clear violation of the decades-long prohibition by the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species, which has been trying to protect the world's biological inheritance. Although I have spent a lot of time tracking Bush policies, I was not aware of how much they impacted the whole planet until reading this book.

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New Treasure Trove Of Beetle Memorabilia

By Allen Franz

The Beatles may have ruled pop culture for a generation of humans, but the *beetles* have a much stronger claim to enduring success. Fossil evidence indicates that beetles—the insect order *Coleoptera*—have been around for at least 230 million years, and have been so successful that one in five of all scientifically described species (including *all* animals, plants, fungi, protists, and bacteria) are beetles! At least 8,000 species of *Coleoptera* are found in California, as described in *Introduction to California Beetles*, by Arthur V. Evans and James N. Hogue (University of California Press 2004).

James Hogue is the second generation of Hogues associated with entomological studies at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. The late Dr. Charles Hogue authored the delightful *Insects of the Los Angeles Basin*. Arthur Evans, of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, is also co-author with Charles Bellamy of the much-praised *An Inordinate Fondness for Beetles*. (The book derived its title from renowned biologist J. B. S. Haldane's reported response when asked what insights his career in biology had given him into the mind of the Creator!)

Introduction to California Beetles does not catalog every species of beetle found in California. Instead, it offers informative summaries of 23 major families of beetles, from whirligigs to scarabs to fireflies to lady beetles (*not* lady bugs!). These descriptions make up less than a third of the book, which also includes chapters addressing the history of beetle studies in California, the forms, diversity, and classification of California beetles, their life cycles, the geographical distribution of major groups, and tips on observing and collecting beetles. There is also a chapter on beetles of special interest, including pests and invasive species.

The volume is attractively illustrated with color photographs and drawings, and includes a checklist of North American beetle families, a roster of collections, societies, and other resources, ten pages of annotated references, and a very thorough index.

Modern studies of California beetles began in 1815, when German naturalist Johann Freidrich Eschscholtz—namesake of our state flower *Eschscholtzia californica* (the California poppy)—began collecting specimens during a visit to the Russian colony at Fort Ross, north of San

Francisco. The first professional entomologist to visit California, Ilya Gavrilovich Vosnesensky, collected specimens from Fort Ross to Sacramento in 1840-1841, under the patronage of the Imperial Russian Navy. The California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco now has the largest collection of California beetles, numbering around 12 million. The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is a strong second, with 8 million specimens.

Why do these folks bother with beetles? The sheer numbers and diversity of beetles suggest their importance. Beetles play vital roles in most ecosystems, from pollinating flowers to decomposing waste and detritus. While a small percentage are carnivorous predators, the great majority are herbivores or detritivores who help recycle nutrients both through their own activities and as a food source for other creatures. Beetles exhibit a range of adaptive strategies in their anatomy, physiology, and behavior, from predation and defense to mimicry and symbiosis. To top things off, they are often models of good parenting; in most species, both parents cooperate in feeding and caring for their young as larvae. Beetles have developed an array of survival tactics. A number of different species actually domesticate and "farm" fungi, in the manner of leaf-cutter ants. Another beetle, the milkweed borer, has acquired the ability to sequester toxins from its digestive system and transfer them to its body wall, where the toxins produce a noxious taste that protects the insect from predators—a remarkable parallel to the monarch butterfly!

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Goliath Beetle

Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 5

George F Canyon 4-26 Jun (MB, Jess Morton-JM). Steve Dexter spotted a Phainopepla at the Forrestal Quarry (FQ) on 1 May; up to six seen in upper George F Canyon 30 May-26 Jun (MB, JM) were summering.

A Tennessee Warbler found by Andrew Lee at Banning Park (BP) on 15 May was a rare spring vagrant. A Northern Parula was singing at the north end willows of HP from 12 Jun to at least 1 Jul (KL). Up to two Yellow Warblers singing at HP through May and June were the only ones known to be on territory in the area this year (KL, MB). A spring vagrant Black-and-white Warbler was found by DM at El Nido Park in Torrance on 14 May. An Ovenbird found by RB at Sand Dune Park (SDP) on 23 Jun was a late record of this rare spring vagrant. A Northern Waterthrush at BFM on 19 May was a nice spring find (RB). **Wilson's Warblers bred** at HP this year. A male—known to be present since May—was singing on territory at the north end willows of HP again this year. Two young Wilson's Warblers seen foraging closely together in the area on 26 Jun—while the adult male was singing nearby—indicated that one brood had fledged; it is possible that a second nesting was being attempted at this time (KL).

The status of an adult male Western Tanager at DP on 27 Jun is difficult to categorize (KL). A singing Black-chinned Sparrow was in the FQ area on 8 May (KL). Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks was a good showing: a female made a brief appearance at BP on the morning of 16 May (KL); adult males were recorded in Manhattan Beach circa 26 May (Nancy Harris, fide-Bob Shanman) and at Wilderness Park on 28 May (DM). Several Black-headed Grosbeaks were on breeding territory through June in George F Canyon again this year (MB).

Tricolored Blackbirds were returning to known wintering locations as early as May—e. g., three adult males were at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook on 8 May (KL), and 7 adult males were at AP on 13 May (DM). A wave of approximately 25 migrant Yellow-headed Blackbirds at BFM on 5 May (RB) was the latest local sighting this spring. A photographically documented **Bronzed Cowbird** in Portuguese Bend 6-11 May is our first—and Los Angeles County's third—record (Madeleine McJones). An adult male Baltimore Oriole at SDP on 11 May was a rare spring vagrant (KL). Rare locally, a female Lawrence's Goldfinch was at FQ on 8 May (KL).

Following are the earliest dates on which these spring migrants were noted this year: Willow Fly-

catcher—18 May SDP (KL); Swainson's Thrush—2 May HP (MB).

Following are the latest dates on which these spring migrants or winterers were noted this year: Ring-necked Duck—8 May LAR (KL); Eared Grebe—**4 Jun** BFM (RB); Sora—11 May BFM (KL); Dunlin—**23 May** Del Rey Lagoon (DSC); Willow Flycatcher—8 Jun SDP (KL); Hammond's Flycatcher—14 May SDP (KL); Cassin's Vireo—13 May SDP (RB); Ruby-crowned Kinglet—1 May SDP (KL et al); Nashville Warbler—**17 May** AP (DM); Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)—6 May Torrance (KL); Hermit Warbler—23 May BP (KL); MacGillivray's Warbler—**28 May** Playa del Rey (DSC).

Following are the earliest dates on which these fall migrants were noted this year: adult Greater Yellowlegs—**13 Jun** LAR (KL); adult Western Sandpiper—**16 Jun** Playa del Rey (BGJ); adult Least Sandpiper—30 Jun BFM (Daniel S. Cooper); adult Short-billed Dowitcher—27 Jun Del Rey Lagoon (BGJ); adult Wilson's Phalarope—25 Jun BFM (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.



Beetles, continued from page 7

Beetles are important, too, as pests. Weevils are just one, well-known example of beetle pests. Many beetle pests have been introduced as a result of expanding trade, beginning in the Spanish colonial era and extending through such well-known examples as the Japanese beetle. Recent examples include three different eucalyptus pests: the eucalyptus longhorn borer (1984), the eucalyptus snout beetle (1996), and the eucalyptus tortoise beetle (1998).

Lady beetles are perhaps the best-known example of beneficial beetles. While we tend to think of them simply as cute and colorful little creatures, any aphid could tell you that they are ruthless and insatiable predators! The earliest documented application of biological pest control occurred right here in California, where beginning in 1889, vedalia beetles (a variant on lady beetles) were distributed to control cottony cushion scale. Over the years, these beetles have saved billions of dollars worth of agricultural crops and gardens in California. Unlike chemical pesticides, these beetles are non-toxic and self-replicating.

On a tangent from the subject of lady *beetles*, what's the difference between beetles and "bugs"? Basically, beetles—*Coleoptera*—share two features: a stiff, chitinous exoskeleton—including a rigid forewing (or elytron), covering the more delicate hindwing—and mouth parts adapted for biting and chewing. True bugs—*Heteroptera*—in contrast, have mouth parts adapted for sucking, like aphids, and *can't* bite.

For those whose grasp of Greek and Latin has atrophied, the name of the beetle's order—*Coleoptera*—means "sheath-winged." The "ptera" part means "wing" or "feather", and is found in most insect orders; butterflies and moths, for example, are *Lepidoptera*, grasshoppers are *Orthoptera*, ants, bees and wasps are *Hymenoptera*, etc. You may also recognize "ptera" in a range of other words, from helicopter to pterodactyl.

THANKS FOR READING

The editor wishes to thank alert reader and Audubon member Mary Jo Jackson for noting that the last issue of *Hummin'* included photos that did not identify the subject.

As a result of Mary Jo's telephone message to the editor, this issue, and future issues, will identify species where identification will help readers enjoy their birdwatching experiences.

OPERATING STATEMENT

In 2003, PV/South Bay Audubon concentrated on building reserves for future operations at Harbor Park, which had been completely drained in previous years by its highly successful, but inadequately funded, educational program in the park. We are especially pleased by the continuing success of our Birdathon fund drive each spring, which has regularly netted around \$7,000. These funds are generally earmarked for our work in Harbor Park.

Special thanks are owed to Bob Shanman and Martin Byhower for their astounding efforts on behalf of Birdathon. Special thank yous are also due to our principal donors (\$200+), Eloise Barnett, Alison and Frank Davis, Dave and Shannon Moody, Donna and Jess Morton, Lucy Morton, Fran and Mike Weber, Fay Woodruff, Sita and Srin Yanamadala, the South Bay Bird Society and Dow Chemical. At the end of the year, the Chapter had a cash balance of \$9,617, and no liabilities.

Operating Statement for 2003

Income

Membership Receipts	\$1,090
National Audubon Dues Sharing	\$2,211
Birdathon Contributions	\$7,027
Other Donations	\$4,591
Services — Hummin', misc other	\$140
Dividends and Interest	\$42
<i>Total Income</i>	\$15,101

Expenses

Funds to National Audubon	\$585
Non-Audubon Donations	\$ 95
Insurance	\$1,426
Postage	\$977
Printing	\$2,891
Rent	\$1,092
Taxes	\$20
Telephone	\$429
Refreshments	\$113
Speakers' honoraria	\$150
<i>Total Expenses</i>	\$7,778

Net Income \$7,323

KNOW YOUR SKEETERS

The Chapter recently received a publication by scientists at the University of California at Davis regarding mosquitoes that may carry West Nile virus. Since mosquitoes, West Nile virus, and Harbor Park are likely to be in the news over the next several months, we are passing along what we gleaned from the UC report.

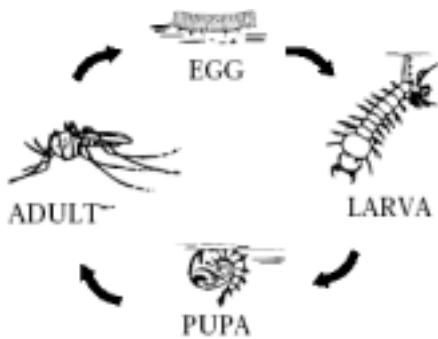
There are three species of mosquito at Harbor Park that may carry the virus.

The encephalitis mosquito (*Culex tarsalis*) is the most efficient vector* for the virus. This species seems to be the most common species at Harbor Park.

The tule mosquito (*C. erythrorhox*) keeps to reed beds, where there are high numbers of roosting birds. As a result, this species also is a vector for the virus.

The house mosquito (*C. pipiens*) is a less effective vector, in epidemiological talk, than the other species. However, because it can breed in any stagnant water, including drains, bird baths, cans, or over-watered lawns, it too is a possible vector.

***Vector:** 3. *Biol. a.* an insect or other organism that transmits a pathogenic fungus, virus, bacterium, etc.



Conservation Corner, continued from page 6

Protecting our health, our land, our children, and our world is a fundamental moral test of our time, Eternal vigilance is the price of a healthy living planet, and we must unite to protect it. You are invited to join the Conservation Committee of the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society or the Environmental Priorities Network (EPN) to work for this kind of protection.

You can find out more about what needs to be done at an exciting meeting on September 14th when John Quigley will speak about the environmental record of the present administration. John is a producer, director, educator, and environmental activist who saved from destruction a 400-year-old oak tree in Santa Clarita, called Old Glory, by sitting in it for 70 days.

This event will take place at the Pacific Unitarian Church, 5621 Montemalaga Drive in Rancho Palos Verdes. An assortment of snacks and light foods will be available at 6:30 PM, and the charismatic Mr Quigley will speak on Earth, Environment, Economics, and the Election at 7:30 PM. A five-dollar donation is requested, but no one will be turned away. Organizations are invited to set up tables and displays. For more information, please contact Lillian Light at 310-545 1384 (lklight@verizon.net) or Ed Hummel at 310-541 6986 (edjohummel@dslextreme.com)

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

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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

Sunday, August 1, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**, 26300 Crenshaw Bl., Palos Verdes. Leader: Ollie Coker. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation; you can join at the entrance. (Also Sept. 5)

Saturday, Aug. 5, 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.

Sunday, August 8, 8:00 AM: **Bird and Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park**; Leader: Martin Byhower. Meet in parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim St. above the boathouse, about 1 mile west of 110 Freeway on Anaheim St.

Sunday, August 8, 9:00 AM: **Volunteer Weeding at Forrestal Nature Preserve** sponsored by the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy. Meet at the end of Forrestal Drive by the Ladera Linda parking lot. (Also, Sept. 12.)

Wednesday, Aug. 11, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh.** Leader: Bob Shanman. 3201 Plaza del Amo (west of Madrona Ave.) in Torrance.

Wednesday, August 18, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Georgene Foster. (See August 1 for directions.)

Saturday, Aug. 21, 9:00-3:00 PM: **CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING** at Whole Foods Community Room. Contact Fran (frances@monolake.org or 310-316-0041) if you wish to join us.

Tuesday, Aug. 31: **NO AUDUBON MEETING.**

Saturday, Sept. 4, 10:00 AM: **Nature Walks through the Canyon.** (See Aug 5 for directions.)

Sunday, Sept. 5, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Ollie Coker. (See Aug. 1.)

Wednesday, Sept. 8, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh.** Leader: Bob Shanman. (See Aug. 11.)

Sunday, Sept. 12, 8:00 AM: **Bird and Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park.** Leader: Martin Byhower. (See Aug. 8.)

Tuesday, Sept. 14, 7:30 PM (6:30 refreshments): **John Quigley of Los Angeles Earth Day and "Old Glory" oak protection fame** speaking at Pacific Unitarian Church, 5621 Montemataga Dr., RPV. For more information contact Lillian, 310-545-1384.

Wednesday, Sept. 15, 8:00 AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Georgene Foster. (See Aug. 18 for directions.)

Saturday, Sept. 18, 9-12 AM: **COAST WEEK CLEAN-UP**, Pot Luck Picnic, and Nature Walks. Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. (See Aug. 8 for directions.)

Tuesday, Sept. 28., 7:30-9 PM: **AUDUBON PROGRAM.** "An Overview of Prehistoric and Historic Sense of

"Place in the South Bay" by Allen Franz, Professor, Marymont College, South Coast Botanic Garden. (See Aug. 1)

Thank You, from page 3

Robert Johnson
Sunhee Kim
D. Knopke
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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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Outreach: Liz Kennedy.....547-1320

HELP NEEDED!

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!: We're seeking contacts with South Bay schools and teen youth groups. If you are a teacher looking for extra credit opportunities for your students, or an adult advisor to a teenager's group looking for volunteer activities for your kids, 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