



HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY AUG/SEP 2005 Vol. XXVII No.4

PORTUGUESE BEND OPEN AREA AT RISK

Many of us take the natural splendor of the Peninsula for granted and think that the untouched land in Portuguese Bend is forever protected by a landslide moratorium against building in the area. Well, think again! There is an imminent threat that this open space will soon be developed.

These lands are actually owned by two developers, and soaring real estate prices, scarce land and new ways to stabilize the slide area have led to enormous pressures to develop these spectacular properties - and the development effort is already underway. The geotechnical consultants for the City of Rancho Palos Verdes have now determined that an 85 home development project in the landslide moratorium area could be approved for development.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is working to purchase most of the remaining private land to complete a 1500-acre nature preserve that will include more than 20 miles of public trails. After years of hard work all the pieces are finally coming together. The regulatory agencies have approved the nature preserve plan; we have a purchase agreement with one landowner and are negotiating with the other to sell the land at low open space prices. Government agencies have committed to fund more than 75 percent of the \$27 million land acquisition costs.

So now we are down to one last and all-important step, to raise the remaining \$6 million locally, with \$4 million needed by September 15 to complete the first acquisition.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy has launched the Community Campaign to Preserve Portuguese Bend to meet this goal. If we fail, on September 15th the agreement with the developer will expire, the government funding will be diverted to other competing projects and this one-time window of opportunity will close - and once this open space is gone, it is gone forever and cannot be brought back.

To donate now or get more information, please contact: Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy at (310) 541-7613 or www.pvplc.org or info@pvplc.org

AUDUBON YES! BEGINS 12TH YEAR

Our chapter's youth environmental service program, Audubon YES!, is entering its twelfth year! Since its start in 1994, the YES! program has introduced thousands of young people in the South Bay area to local projects where they can help improve the environment. And have fun with their schoolmates in doing so.

School teachers, service club or ecology club sponsors and student group presidents are asked to enroll their school classes or groups in Audubon YES! Participating students receive a monthly Audubon YES! Activities Calendar, via e-mail, which lists dozens of projects that need volunteer assistance. Despite every student's hectic schedule, there will be one or more projects each month that can be squeezed in. This calendar is also available on the Audubon YES! website at www.AudubonYES.org.

One of the neat things about Audubon YES! is that many of the projects give participants a hands-on experience with nature in a non-academic atmosphere. Students earn recognition for the community environmental service projects they do. Students who put in 50 hours or more of these services earn the Audubon YES! Award. Since 1995, more than 200 Audubon YES! Awards have been presented.

Audubon members are also needed for this program. Adults are needed to talk to students about the ways they can make a difference, solving environmental problems where they live. If you are a high school teacher working with student volunteers, Audubon YES! is an ideal program for you. Call Jess Morton at 832-5601, or e-mail jmorton@igc.org for information on the Audubon YES! program.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Martin Byhower

WOULD YOU COME to a general meeting of our Audubon Chapter if we provided:

- Lots of fun things to eat?
- Great presenters talking about interesting birding, natural history and conservation topics, of local and global interest?
- A great meeting location: warm atmosphere, easy to enter (and find), interesting in and of itself (maybe lending itself to a little pre-meeting bird and nature study)?



- People who know you, who are glad you came, and with whom you have time to socialize before and after?

- A fun, 15 to 20 minute audio-visual bird quiz, to challenge and sharpen your skills, prior to the main presentation?

- Door prizes, raffles, contests, the latest cool nature items and books for sale?

- An active conservation

committee that could either meet separately before the meetings or on an alternate date to discuss and act on important local and global issues?

Why do I ask? Well, I have been giving a number of presentations in the last year, to many southern California Audubon Chapters, and it has made me realize that we—that is you, the members of our chapter, and I, a member of your elected board—lack something that they have. And this bothers me.

Now to our great credit we DO have, in my view, some of the best resources of any of these chapters. We have incredible conservationists, one of (if not the) best chapter newsletters around, more monthly trip offerings than just about anyone, some of the best birders and birding locations anywhere in southern California, an amazing youth conservation program, and much more.

Yet we lack something the others have: monthly programs for members, and consequently, a sense of community and even “self” that is reinforced and enriched by regular real-time contact with one another. The

other Audubon Chapters with whom I have visited all have well-attended meetings and a wonderful camaraderie among chapter members that I believe is our Chapter's single greatest missing component.

You see, a while back, we discontinued having monthly meetings, mainly due to low attendance. Possibly related to this, speaking from personal experience, I have noticed a substantial drop-off in the number of participants on my monthly walks, even as I changed the dates and varied the locations in order to try to encourage new and returning participants to come. (Other chapters' walks I have attended seem to get good attendance.)

I noticed some common threads when I visited the other chapter meetings, ones that I believe forged and cemented a strong and active birding/conservationist community, which includes members of all ages. I mentioned some them above, and my wife Eileen (a new Chapter Board Member) and I am hereby making a commitment to you: we will try to implement as many of the suggestions above as it will take so that we can meet you, get to know you, and make you feel a sense of identity with this great organization.

What I am asking you to do in return in order to enable us to provide you this service is to give me some feedback that I can pass along to and discuss with our chapter's board of directors. Specifically, which of the factors I mentioned above matter to you? For example, new chapter board Member Traci Drake, who is also the director and manager at Madrona Marsh, graciously offered to let us hold our PV/South Bay Audubon Chapter meetings at the Madrona Marsh Interpretive Center, which is a big step up from the little room at the Botanic Garden (no offense SCBG!) in terms of access, comfort, and indoors interest level.

We could have walks beforehand, potlucks with rotating people responsible for bringing goodies. I can put together a monthly pre-speaker bird quiz.

Maybe I can talk my co-President into offering up a few raffle items from his shop.

We could have dynamic (or at the very least interesting) speakers and programs (any requests?). If we knew you better maybe we could figure out what you would like to see in the way of bird and nature walks that would get you to come on the ones that we offer more often. (I am sending out a separate email survey to those on my monthly walk announcement list, but I also want YOU to come to, so please reply!).

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LAND PURCHASE DOUBLES SIZE OF AUDUBON'S KERN RIVER PRESERVE

In April, 25 years after conservationists started acquiring and restoring land on the South Fork Kern River, The National Audubon Society announced the purchase of the Sprague Ranch. This acquisition doubles the size of Audubon's Kern River Preserve, adding 1,662 acres of rare cottonwood willow forest to this mecca for birds and birders.

"Audubon's Kern River Preserve draws visitors from all over California, particularly in the spring during the height of spring migration," says Debbie Kiggins, a local businesswoman, "The Preserve has been a good neighbor in our community."

The Sprague Ranch purchase occurred through a unique partnership bringing federal, state, and private partners together to help secure important cottonwood willow forest, one of California's most threatened natural area with more than 90 percent lost in the past two hundred years.

Audubon's Kern River Preserve now encompasses 3,462 acres, including 5 miles of frontage on the South Fork Kern River. "The addition of the Sprague Ranch is critical to conserving this valley's natural heritage, and I can't thank the Sprague Family enough for working with us over the past several years to complete this transaction," said Reed Tollefson, Audubon's Kern River Preserve Director.

"By preserving undeveloped land and native forest, we allow the Kern Valley to retain some of its rural setting and natural beauty – an important asset to a community that relies upon tourism," said Glenn Olson, Audubon California's Executive Director.

Tens of thousands of visitors come to the Kern Valley for recreation, including an increasing number who come to enjoy the valley's diversity of nesting and migratory

birds.

"Audubon's work makes it possible for California's families to enjoy this jewel of the southern Sierra," said Al Wright, Director, California Wildlife Conservation Board.

The Sprague Ranch acquisition not only secures key habitat for the Willow Flycatcher, it also benefits more than a dozen other sensitive bird species, including the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. The 15-mile-long riparian corridor that makes up the South Fork Kern River has been identified by Audubon as an Important Bird Areas because it holds a globally significant population of Southwestern Willow Flycatchers.

The Sprague Ranch purchase will also provide other public benefits by increasing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flexibility in operating Isabella Reservoir for water storage and hydropower production.

Funding for the acquisition was provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with funds secured by Congressman Bill Thomas, California Wildlife Conservation Board through funds from Proposition 40 approved by California voters in 2001, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Conserving California's Landscapes Initiative, and the National Audubon Society.

"Audubon is pleased to have worked with a broad range of partners on the Sprague Ranch purchase and to be part of the community in the Kern River Valley," said Olson.

It's important to note that funds from Proposition 40 bond, passed overwhelmingly by voters in 2001, were vital to making this acquisition possible," said Glenn Olson, Executive Director of Audubon California. "California residents should be applauded for their role in this important conservation effort."

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So please let me know! You know how to reach me. I prefer email, but any communication is, well, communication, and that's the whole point, right?!

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BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

May and June 2005

by Kevin Larson

It was a spring to remember. Birders along the south coast of Los Angeles County had the good fortune to find a significant portion of Southern California's spring vagrants this year. Because of our western location, spring rather than fall is normally the weaker season in numbers of vagrants. This spring, the rarity list reads more like a good fall season. Los Angeles County's first Gull-billed Tern and seventh Golden-winged Warbler topped the list of highlights; a good variety of other vagrants was amassed. The majority of the regularly-occurring migrant land birds—they pass generally before the lost birds discussed above—moved through the area during the last week of April and first two weeks of May. Numbers of these western birds seemed average, though satisfying for the birder in the field. Several species were found that are unexpected here during their breeding periods. A number of these birds were not here for the purpose of breeding, but a few—most notably Say's Phoebes—were. Sadly, one formerly expected nesting species, the Loggerhead Shrike, was not found in the area from March through June this year. As usual, fall's migration comes quickly on spring's heels—two Wilson's Phalaropes in the area on 10 Jun were southbound migrants.

Small rainfall amounts on 5, 6 and 9 May were the last drops this very wet rainfall season could wring out. At the end of the 1 July-30 June season, Downtown L. A.'s total of 37.25 inches fell just short of the record of 38.18 inches set during the 1883/4 season. The persistent marine layer 23 May-16 June, typical of this period, was a little less extensive and long-lasting than in the past two years. There were otherwise many pleasant clear days, moderate in temperature and humidity.

The apparently healthy adult Greater White-fronted Goose at Del Rey Lagoon (DRL), first reported by Daniel S. Cooper (DSC) on 8 Nov, chose not to migrate; still present on 3 Jul, it is one of few ever recorded during summer in Southern California. A pair of Gadwalls with four young at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 16 Jun, and later a second pair seen with eleven young on 22 Jun furnished the first breeding records for this location (Richard Barth-RB). Summer Blue-winged Teal



Gadwall Duck with duckling
(Dave Menke, USFWS)

sightings included three at the L. A. River (LAR) near Willow St. on 4 Jun, and a pair there on 25 Jun-3 Jul (Kevin Larson-KL). A pair of Green-winged Teals at BFM one day only on 21 Jun was a rare summer record (KL). A Red-throated Loon in breeding plumage flying north past Pt. Vicente (PtV) on 21 May was late (KL). More than 15,000 Sooty Shearwaters moving south past PtV in **one hour** on 11 Jun was an impressive spectacle; the next day, many birds were seen going north past the point (KL). A single Black-vented Shearwater off PtV on 21 May was the last one seen (KL).

Up to two Least Bitterns were singing at BFM through at least 21 May (DSC, David Bell-DB); sightings there included an adult on 20 Jun and a bird briefly seen in flight on 1 Jul (RB). A Least Bittern at the saltwater-tidal Ballona Lagoon on 26 May was away from the cover of marsh reeds, where most unexpected (DB). Six to eight pairs of Snowy Egrets nesting along Admiralty Way in Marina del Rey this spring was noteworthy (DB). A Cattle Egret in the Ballona area 4-6 May was the only one reported (RB, DSC).

Three White-faced Ibises (two very dull, one brightly colored) were at BFM on 12 May (DB); eight unaged birds were seen in flight near the mouth of Ballona Creek on 23 May (Robert van de Hoek-RvdH), thirteen adults were at LAR near Willow St. 28-29 May (KL), and two presumed juveniles were at DRL on 30 Jun (RvdH). It is now difficult to categorize May White-faced Ibis records. Fall or post-breeding transients have apparently been arriving on earlier dates recently. Astonishingly-early juveniles arriving along Santa Barbara County's coast at Goleta Slough on 1 Jun 2005 (Dave Compton) and at

LAR on 6 Jun 2004 (KL) could be considered fall migrants since local breeding is unknown. In light of this, some ibises older than juveniles arriving in May (some may be failed nesters) could conceivably be fall transients.

A worn adult Osprey at LAR near Willow St. on 18 Jun may have been an exceptionally early fall transient (KL); another was seen along Ballona Creek on 3 Jul (Jonathan Coffin). Not detected during the breeding season locally in modern times, a calling **Virginia Rail** was heard at Madrona Marsh (MM) on 12 Jun (KL). Numerous Black-necked Stilts were breeding along several miles of LAR's concrete-bottomed channel during June. Seven of the thirteen pairs of American Avocets that attempted to breed at LAR in the vicinity of Willow St. had success in raising young by 2 Jul (KL). A Red Knot was at DRL 8-12 May (Jon Feenstra-JF). A Wilson's Snipe at Harbor Park (HP) on **28 May** was very unusual since the latest migrants or winterers are normally seen during the last half of April (KL).

A sub-adult Parasitic Jaeger flying north past PtV was unexpected on 25 Jun (KL). An adult Franklin's Gull at DRL on 16 May was a welcome aside to Larry Schmahl's lunch break; additionally, two were seen from PtV on 21 May (KL). By far the most notable sighting this spring was of **Los Angeles County's first Gull-billed Tern** at Venice City Beach on 19 May. While monitoring the Least Tern colony just north of the Marina del Rey Harbor entrance, Lyann Comrack



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
(Gary Kramer, USFWS)

and Tom Ryan saw and heard the bird as it was flying north along the beach. Since it has been recorded in other southern coastal counties, it was on the list of species most overdue here. A Black Skimmer just north of the Willow St. crossing at LAR 7-14 May was inland, where rare (KL). A Common Murre in breeding plumage flew south past PtV on 25 Jun; none have been seen locally since 13 Nov 2004 (KL). Recent sightings of adult Pigeon Guillemots raise suspicion of local breeding. This year, one flew south past PtV on 12 Jun; on 4 Jul, one landed to feed off PtV shortly after another flew by going north. Single adult Pigeon Guillemots were also seen from PtV on 17 Jun 2004 and 1 Jun 2003 (KL).

A northbound Eurasian Collared-Dove flew over BFM on 24 Jun (KL). Very rare in spring, a **White-winged Dove** was photographed by Walter Lamb at Sand Dune Park (SDP) on 3 May. A downy Barn Owl nestling was seen at the entrance of its nest hole on a cliff at the Forrestal Nature Preserve (FNP) on 22 May (KL). A *Chordeiles* species was flushed and briefly seen at SDP on 24 May (RB). The Lesser Nighthawk was likely the species seen; a Common Nighthawk occurring away from its normal migration route on this somewhat early date would be extraordinary.

Seven Olive-sided Flycatchers reported 1-11 May illustrated this migrant's typical early May timing. A Gray Flycatcher was at SDP on 11 May (KL). Single Dusky Flycatchers were identified at Alondra Park (AP) on 10 May (David Moody-DM) and at Banning Park (BP) on 11 May (KL). A Dusky Flycatcher at DeForest Park (DP) on **4 Jun** was exceptionally late (KL). Unknown locally

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Swamp Sparrow
(J. and K. Hollingsworth, USFWS)

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Lillian Light

For over three decades, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has provided a vital safety net for America's wildlife on the brink of extinction. In 1973 it was passed by congress with virtually no opposition, and was signed into law by President Nixon in December of that year. This legislation was enacted to prevent species from becoming "extinct as a consequence of



economic growth and development", and to preserve their "aesthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people". The Act mandates the creation of a list of imperiled species, protects them from direct harm, and safeguards habitat critical to their survival.

The California Condor, Bald Eagle, Grizzly Bear, Gray Wolf, and many other species of plants and animals have been saved from extinction by the ESA.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there are now 518 species of animals and 746 species of plants listed as threatened or endangered in our nation. This is a 35% increase since 1992. Declining air and water quality, urban sprawl, and dwindling natural areas are causing these losses. Their decline is a warning to us that we are damaging the very environment that supports us too. We cannot live successfully in a world in which one set of living things after another is exterminated. When other living things suffer, people will suffer next if they do not heed the warnings that nature has provided.

Not only has this administration eviscerated many environmental protection laws, it has also listed far fewer species than any previous administration. It is the first in history to refuse to list species unless mandated by court order. Now, legislation has been introduced in both the Senate and the House that would drastically weaken the Endangered Species Act. Representative

Richard Pombo (R, CA) and Senator Mike Crapo (R, ID) have been resorting to lies and distortions about the ESA in order to push bills that make it more difficult to list species and that undermine critical habitat protections. They are claiming that it does not work, and that it is hurting the economy. Even some Democrats like Dianne Feinstein are listening to these falsehoods. The truth is that the act has put many species on the road to recovery without stopping development projects or damaging the economy in any way.

It is very important to let our elected officials know that we want the ESA strengthened, not weakened; they need to hear the following message quoted from a World Wildlife Fund publication: "If mankind allows whole species to perish, when does their peril also become our own"

Please contact the following legislators, and urge them to fully fund a strong ESA and to reject the so-called reforms being pushed by Representative Pombo and Senator Crapo.

Senator Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202 – 224 3841 Local: 914 7300
FAX 202 – 228 3954
senator@feinstein.senate.gov

Representative Jane Harman
229 Cannon House Office Bldg
Washington, D C 20515
202 – 225 8220 Local: 643 3636
jane.harman@mail.house.gov



Least Tern
(S. Maslowski, USFWS)

THIS UNKNOWN PENINSULA

by Jess Morton

When I see the word cosmopolitan associated with the distribution of a species, I suspect it means that the species has some special affinity with people. This is almost certainly the case with a spider I call the wall jumper. It's a common species, and I always see them on vertical man-made surfaces. Usually walls, but sometimes fences fit their needs.

The wall jumper, like all jumping spiders, does not use silk to trap its victims. Rather it uses its excellent eyesight to stalk insect prey. When close enough, it anchors a safety line of silk to the wall, then pounces. Flies seem to make up the bulk of the wall jumpers' catches. Yum!

The wall spider is easy to identify, but the males and females are quite different in appearance. The half-inch long female is gray with dark markings along the sides of the abdomen, while the smaller males are much darker, with a prominent burnt sienna or blackish, lengthwise stripe

down the middle of the back.

Though wall jumpers are skittish when surprised, they are curious animals. A slow approach, especially if you hold something relatively small toward them, will have them peering up at you in a highly entertaining manner. Hmm? What is going on here, they seem to be thinking? Is it edible???

My guess is that these spiders were native to North Africa or the Middle East, and spread from there with sailing vessels. Their original haunts were the same kinds of cliffs and rock faces pigeons used for nesting. They would easily have adapted themselves to life in towns, where both habitat and food were plentiful. No lack of flies around people! Once humans began traveling to distant places by sea, wall jumpers would have gone with them. Willing passengers. The ships would have provided good vertical surfaces on which to hunt. And food was certainly present—a sampling of the vermin those long-ago sailors had to put up with. If anything, wall jumpers were welcome aboard.



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as nesters prior to this year, a pair of **Say's Phoebes** was feeding young at a nest under the railroad bridge that crosses LAR south of Del Amo Blvd. in Long Beach on 4 Jun (KL). The Say's Phoebes at MM failed in their breeding attempt; their second nest was abandoned by mid-June (DM). Single juvenile Say's Phoebes at HP on 14 May (KL) and at AP on 15 May (DM) may have fledged from local nests. A singing adult male **Vermilion Flycatcher** at MM on **2 Jun**—far from its breeding range on a late date—was completely unanticipated (DM). A westbound **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** flew over Thomas Miko (TMi) at BP on 15 May; the only previous record for the PV count circle was of one photographed in Torrance on 7 Jun 1989 (Mitch Heindel).

A Bell's Vireo was singing in the southeast section of HP from 19 Apr through at least 19 Jun (Robert A. Hamilton-RAH); there was no evidence that it found a mate. A singing **Plumbeous Vireo** was at the Village Green residential area in Baldwin Village on 12 Jun (JF); though north of this article's coverage area, the record was too extraordinary not to mention. A Cassin's Vireo at MM on **1 Jun** was unusually late; it is likely in contention for the title of latest spring migrant ever found in Southern California (DM). A Hutton's Vireo feeding a fledgling in lower George F Canyon on 22 May was a rare local breeding record (KL). A singing Hutton's Vireo in the north end willows of HP through at least 11 Jun was unusual; it is presumed to be the same individual present since 28 Aug (KL). A singing **Red-eyed Vireo** at MM on 8 Jun was an exciting spring find (DM, RB); a second singing bird was found at DP on 19 Jun (KL).

Two breeding pairs of Tree Swallows had fledged young by 2 Jun and 22 Jun from nest boxes; the earlier-nesting pair was incubating a second nest on 3 Jul (RB). Wintering or migrant Red-breasted Nuthatches from this winter's invasion were recorded as late as 18 May in El Segundo (RB), and 17-30 May at Wilderness Park in Redondo Beach (DM). Breeding House Wrens have apparently colonized some area locations in recent years. A number of families were found in the environs of upper George F Canyon in Rolling Hills on 12 Jun (MB), and a pair bred again this year at DP (KL). For the third consecutive year, Western Bluebirds bred in the vicinity of Ridgecrest Intermediate School in RPV (Sam Bloom). The nest box contained three nearly fledged young on 12 Jun. Some mishap apparently occurred around the time of fledging; the adults were feeding alone 19-20 Jun, and the young could not be found. A singing Swainson's Thrush in upper George F Canyon on 12 Jun was the only one



Hermit Thrush
(Dave Menke, USFWS)

detected on breeding territory (MB). A Hermit Thrush at DP on 11 May was of a large, gray-backed, boldly spotted form (KL); an apparently similar individual was seen by John Ivanov at FNP on 7 May. The California Thrasher at FNP was seen again on 4 Jun (Martin Byhower-MB).

Twenty warbler species recorded in the area 28 Apr-14 Jun was a very good spring showing. A singing male **Golden-winged Warbler** at DP 28-29 May (KL) is the seventh record for Los Angeles County; the county's only other spring record was of a male at BP on 27 May 1994. Astonishing was a **Lucy's Warbler** found at HP on **22 Jun** (RAH). Since some Lucy's Warblers have been known to depart their breeding grounds in early June (e. g., in the Borrego Valley area of eastern San Diego County), it seems reasonable that a fall migrant could reach the coast on this date. Recent early fall arrivals of 10 Jul 2004 and 13 Jul 2003 seemed exceptional enough. A female Northern Parula was found at MM on 14 Jun (DM). Two to three pairs of Yellow Warblers were nesting at the north end willows of HP; fledglings were first seen on 18 Jun (KL). A pair of Yellow Warblers bred in the lawn section of DP; fledglings were seen with the adult male on 19 Jun (KL). A singing **Magnolia Warbler** at MM on 8 Jun was a great spring find (DM). Very rare as a spring vagrant to California, a singing male **Black-throated Green Warbler** was seen by many at SDP 20-21 May (KL). Exceptional also was a singing **Blackpoll Warbler** at DP on 30 May (Mark and Janet Scheel); the last local spring sighting was on 19 May 1994 at BP. A

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female Black-and-white Warbler was at BP on 29 May (Andrew Lee), and a singing first-spring male was at MM on 12 Jun (Carol Selvey, KL). A singing **Hooded Warbler** moved through a neighborhood in Palos Verdes Estates on 23 May; more than ten years have passed since this vagrant was last recorded in spring in the area (KL). A Wilson's Warbler was singing on territory for the third consecutive year in the north end willows at HP through 2 Jul (KL); nesting evidence was not obtained, but its territory was difficult to access. Breeding was confirmed last year by the sighting of two juveniles on 26 Jun. Only three Yellow-breasted Chats were reported in the area this spring; all were transients occurring 15 Apr-12 May.

An apparent adult male Summer Tanager was seen flying across the 405 freeway in Carson by MB while driving north on 21 May; a first-spring male was found at DP by Andy Lazere on 18 Jun. Unexpected during the last half of June, a singing male Western Tanager was at DP 18-19 Jun; two females were there on 25 Jun (KL). A **Black-throated Sparrow** above the coastal cliffs at the end of Hawthorne Blvd. in RPV on 28 May was the second found in the area this spring (Sally Moite). A singing **Swamp Sparrow** at BFM on **15 May** was a spring vagrant; it and one at Playa del Rey 20 May 1975 are among the few recorded in May in coastal Southern California. A late White-crowned Sparrow singing at HP 11-14 May was of the subspecies that commonly occurs in winter, *Z. l. gambelii* (KL). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak photographed by Laurie Szogas in RPV on 8 May was notably early for a spring vagrant; another was singing at DP on 18 Jun (KL). Several Black-headed Grosbeaks were on territory during May and June in the upper and lower sections of George F Canyon, where they have bred in recent years (KL, MB).

An adult male Tricolored Blackbird at AP on 28 May was the first reported in the PV/South Bay area since December (KL). A few Tricolored Blackbirds were seen at HP on 4 Jun, including a female seen carrying nesting material into the reeds (MB). Two late Yellow-headed Blackbirds were in the Ballona Wetland area on 18 May (DSC). A report of three **Scott's Orioles** at BP on 15 May was amazing since they are extremely rare along the coast in spring (TMi).

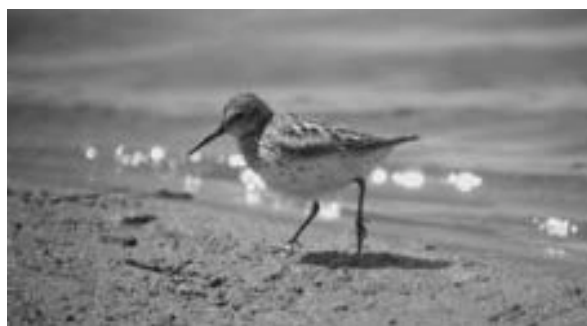
Summarized here are some first arrival dates of spring migrants: Willow Flycatcher—**11 May** DP (KL).

Here are some late dates of migrants or winterers: Wilson's Snipe—**28 May** HP (KL); Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)—**1 May** MM (DM); Dusky Flycatcher—**4 Jun** DP (KL); Cassin's Vireo—**1 Jun** MM (DM); Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)—13 May MM (DM);

Savannah Sparrow (northern/interior subspecies)—**11 May** PtV (KL).

Following are the earliest dates on which these fall migrants were noted this year: adult Greater Yellowlegs—27 Jun DRL (RB); adult Western Sandpiper—28 Jun DRL (RB); adult Short-billed Dowitcher—28 Jun DRL (RB); adult Wilson's Phalarope—10 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.



Western Sandpiper
(Lee Karney, USFWS)

Acronyms in Birds of the Peninsula

AP: Alondra Park
 BFM: Ballona Freshwater Marsh
 BP: Banning Park
 DB: David Bell
 DM: David Moody
 DP: DeForest Park
 DRL: Del Rey Lagoon
 DSC: Daniel S. Cooper
 FNP: Forrestal Nature Preserve
 HP: Harbor Park
 JF: Jon Feenstra
 KL: Kevin Larson
 LAR: L. A. River
 MB: Martin Byhower
 MM: Madrona Marsh
 PtV: Pt. Vicente
 RAH: Robert A. Hamilton
 RB: Richard Barth
 RPV: Rancho Palos Verdes
 RvdH: Robert van de Hoek
 SDP: Sand Dune Park
 TMi: Thomas Miko

AUDUBON CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERSHIP IS FUN!

If you are interested in serving on the Audubon Board, please contact frances@monolake.org. There is no better way to keep up with what is happening in the South Bay on wildlife and habitat issues, and you have the opportunity to make an environmental contribution to your community.

The Board meets at Whole Foods Community Room every other first Wednesday of the month for 2+ hours in the evening.

If you want to see what goes on, join us August 3 at 7:00 p.m. You are welcome to attend the Board's planning meeting on August 6, too, whether or not you join the Board (See calendar for details.)

AUDUBON PLANNING SESSION

Join your fellow Auduboners at the August 6th chapter planning session. We will be setting our agenda and priorities for the coming year, and would love to have your ideas. Among the matters to be discussed are general membership meetings (when, where, what subjects and how to promote them), the Christmas Bird Count, Audubon YES!, and place involvement (prioritizing efforts, building partnerships, setting achievable goals).

The session will be held at Madrona Marsh, from 9AM to 3PM. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

If you can come, please contact Fran Spivy-Weber at 316-0041.

MORE ON THE BEND

On July 13, the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council approved a contract with the state for the use of \$10 million in voter-approved bonds for the purchase of 420 acres at Portuguese Bend. Final approval by the State Wildlife Conservation Board is expected on August 25.

The state bond funds will make up more than half of the total \$17 million cost of the acquisition of land from developer Barry Hon. The city has contributed \$400,000 and the County of Los Angeles has allocated \$1 million in bond money. According to the *Daily Breeze*, California State University at Dominguez Hills provided \$120,000 as mitigation for construction of a parking lot. Much of the balance is expected from the California Coastal Conservancy. In March, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy kicked off a fund-raising drive to raise \$4 million for the purchase.

Once all 1,300 acres are acquired, the Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve will be the largest contiguous natural area between Bolsa Chica wetlands near Huntington Beach and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

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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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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
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7XCH/C43

Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Wednesday, Aug. 3, 7:00PM: **Audubon Board and Members meeting**, Whole Foods Community Room, Crenshaw & PCH

Saturday, Aug. 6, 9-3PM: **Audubon Program Planning**, Madrona Marsh. All are welcome! Contact frances@monolake.org.

Sunday, Aug. 7, 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 Sept. 4.)

Wednesday, Aug. 10, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. 3201 Plaza del Amo (west of Madrona Ave.) in Torrance.

Saturday, Aug. 13, 9-11:00AM: **Land Conservancy Nature Walk at West Bluff Preserve**. Park in the public lot at bottom of LaRotonda Drive off of Palos Verdes Drive South. For up-to-date information, call 310-541-7613.

Sunday, Aug. 14, 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, Sept. 11.)

Wednesday, Aug. 17, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See Aug. 7 for directions.)

Saturday, Aug. 20, 8:00AM: **Nature Walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park** with Jess Morton (Martin Byhower will be in Hungary!). Meet in parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim St. above the boathouse, about 1 mile west of 110 Freeway on Anaheim St.

Sunday, Sept. 4, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**, 26300 Crenshaw Bl., Palos Verdes. Leader: Ollie Coker. See Aug. 7 for directions.

Saturday, Sept. 10, 9-11AM: **Land Conservancy Nature Walk** at Wilder Annex looking for pygmy blue butterflies. In San Pedro, meet on the grass on the ocean side of Paseo del Mar at Barbara St.

Sunday, Sept. 11, 9:00AM: **Volunteer Weeding at Forrestal Nature Preserve** sponsored by the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy. See Aug. 14 for directions.

Wednesday, Sept. 14, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh**. Leader: Bob Shanman. (See Aug. 10 for directions.)

Saturday, Sept. 17, 9-11:00AM: **COAST WEEK CLEAN-UP** at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Meet in the lot at Anaheim and Vermont; bring gloves, hat, old shoes, water, and sunscreen.

Sunday, Sept. 18, 8-10:30AM: **Lower George F Canyon**

walk with Martin Byhower. Park at dirt trailhead lot on PV Drive East, just south from PV Drive North intersection in Rolling Hills Estates. Check birdingsocal.com to confirm.

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**. Leader: Georgene Foster. (See Aug. 7 for directions.)

Recycling Art

Eco-Artware features gifts from recycled, reused and natural materials by more than two dozen artists. The group also offers instructions for creating gifts, book reviews, recycling tips, and an illustrated newsletter, *Recycling Rag*, which focuses on the relationship between recycling and the arts. Go to www.Eco-Artware.com for more information.

CALENDAR

Diesel

The Department of Energy estimates that diesel fuel is used to transport 94% of all domestic freight and provides power for most heavy-duty vehicles and equipment in the country. Each year, roughly 50 billion gallons of diesel are sold.



Greater Yellowlegs
(Donna Dewhurst, USFWS)

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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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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.Audubon YES.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.