



HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY FEB/MAR 2006 Vol. XXVIII No. 1

PORTUGUESE BEND PROTECTION IN REACH

by Barbara Dye

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

In late 2005, the community came together to preserve the Portuguese Bend area and set it aside as permanent open space. More than 460 acres of land zoned for development was purchased by the City of Rancho Palos Verdes for \$17.1 million. The City immediately placed a conservation easement in favor of the Land Conservancy on the property, guaranteeing that it will be public open space forever. The city also engaged the Conservancy to begin immediate management of the new Preserve.

Many different groups participated in making the acquisition possible. Two state agencies, the Wildlife Conservation Board and the California Coastal Conservancy contributed state bond funds. The Wildlife Conservation Board provided \$10 million, and the California Coastal Conservancy \$1.5 million. Supervisor Don Knabe allocated \$1 million of County bond funds to the enterprise. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes contributed \$400,000 and the City of Rolling Hills \$220,000, also from bond funds.

The Land Conservancy committed to contributing \$4 million. A community campaign was kicked off in March, and donations built up slowly. A real boost to the campaign was the contribution in August of a \$1 million challenge grant from the Annenberg Foundation. With that extra incentive, the community came together and made the goal.

The next steps are to complete the Natural Community Conservation Plan, the regional multis-species plan that has been in process since 1996. A Public Use Master Plan will address trail locations and uses, access points, and other management issues. The Conservancy will complete and begin implementation of a habitat restoration plan, and a

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Chapter Get-Togethers

In February and March, the Chapter is hosting two outstanding speakers in its Chapter Get-Togethers.

On February 21, Dr. William "Bill" Ailor, founder and current President of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, will provide insights about how the Conservancy succeeded in setting aside the large track of land that will be known as the Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve. We will learn about future plans for the Preserve and necessary steps ahead to procure additional land in order to secure what is now in danger of becoming part of a large housing development.

On March 21, Ann Lynch will describe the extraordinary work that she and her volunteers carry out in rescuing wildlife. Ann is a wildlife rehabilitator, licensed by Federal and State agencies, with over 30 years of experience. She founded South Bay Wildlife Rehab (SBWR) in 1993. Each year, her organization cares for more than a thousand sick, injured and orphaned birds and land mammals for return to the wild. The group answers more than 50 calls for help each day and more than 14,000 calls each year. SBWR provides educational services to schools and community groups throughout the area. The presentations often include bringing some non-releasable birds of prey, including Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Great Horned Owlets, Kestrels, Merlin, a burrowing Owl, or a Western Screech Owl.

The Chapter Get-Togethers begin at 7:00PM at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. Come and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle, and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Bob Shanman

As I sit here writing this article, Tracy Drake of the Madrona Marsh Preserve and I are completing the Rare Bird Report form for the recent Christmas Bird Count (CBC). It brings to mind my beginning days of birding, taking Arnold Small's classes at UCLA. In one of those long-ago classes, Arnold noted something unique about the science of Ornithology: A preponderance of the field data for bird observations comes from folks like you and me—the bird-watching community. Since those days in



the late 70's, Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology has tagged us as Citizen Scientists.

Yes, you and I, casual birders, provide much of the observation data to the scientific community. One of my customers "found" the Western Bluebirds that have now been on the Hill for over two years. This led to others observing the birds and documenting the first known nesting of

Western Bluebirds on the Hill.

On the CBC, we saw Merlin, Bullock's Oriole, Western Tanager (female), Northern Parula (look that one up—it's a beautiful warbler), and Vermillion Flycatcher. Folks on the count observed about 163 species in all, down from 170 last year. All of this information will be sent to National Audubon and Cornell University, where scientists will add it to data from past CBCs. This information will help them analyze the health of bird populations throughout the Americas. And we help provide the data.

I find this very meaningful, and just one more reason that birding is so much fun.

Cornell has a number of programs that casual birders, backyard birdfeeders and others can participate in. For instance, there's Project FeederWatch, a winter-long survey of birds coming to feeders. This program has provided the scientific community with data on irruptive species and strength of wintering populations. It has also helped track the spread of disease among birds.

Cornell and Audubon co-sponsor the Great Backyard

Bird Count, held each year on President's Day weekend (Friday-Monday). This is the ninth year for this event. (I have to add that Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc. is an underwriter!). This program was originally intended to be a fun weekend event, but has turned into a valuable deep winter survey of birds across North America. It's fun, it's interesting, and it's LIVE ON-LINE! Check out Cornell's programs at www.birdsource.org. More information about National Audubon can be found at www.audubon.org.

Where am I going with all of this?

I'm trying to share my enthusiasm for a hobby that I fought getting into. I had great teachers, including Arnold Small, Herb & Olga Clark, and all the great folks we have birded with over the years. I (we) have visited places we otherwise would not have visited; we love to bird at sewage treatment plants! And, we have made life-long friends along the way.

Our birding has also been a family activity. It has gotten us outdoors. It's helped put the workaday world behind us for short, restful periods of time. And along the way, we have contributed to science and had fun doing it. I would like to see more of us out there looking for birds, having fun together as a community, and contributing to science along the way.

You can still participate in Project FeederWatch this year, and the GBBC is coming up this month.

Go for it! Have fun, and, uh, oh—Good Birding!

Milestone

With a January 6th sighting of five Gray-winged Trumpeters at Junglaven camp in Venezuela's Amazon region, Carol "Kiwi" Donovan finally achieved her goal of seeing all the world's 203 bird families, according to the Clements 5th Edition World Checklist. She has also seen an additional 17 birds that may gain or have already been given family status by other authorities.

Carol, who works part-time at Wild Birds Unlimited in Torrance, did her own research, logistics and searching. Carol appears to be the first woman, if not the first person, to complete this feat in such a way.

In achieving her goals, Carol visited at least 25 countries. As a solo travel/birder Carol had to search carefully in all habitats, put up with much discomfort and inconvenience, avoid injuries, diseases, political unrest and danger, as well as respectfully negotiate with the people of many cultures.

Brava, Carol!

BOND FUNDS SOUGHT FOR PARK

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society Harbor Park Committee, under the leadership of Martin Byhower with lots of help from Julie Greer and Jess Morton, has done an outstanding job in seeking funding for critical water quality projects in and around Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park (KMHRP).

The committee worked tirelessly with the LA Parks Department and the Proposition O Advisory Group to make sure the needs of KMHRP are firmly embedded in City Parks' proposal for funding from the \$500 million City of LA bond passed by the voters in late 2004.

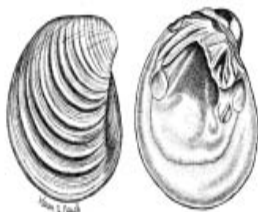
In addition, the proposal and its importance to the South Bay were the subject of a high profile article in the January 9, 2006, *Daily Breeze*. The article reminded City leaders that KMHRP and the Harbor City/Wilmington communities around the Park will benefit from a cleaner, safer approach to managing storm water in the Wilmington Drain and at the Park.

We will know the outcome of the grant proposal in a few months. Keep your fingers crossed.

AUDUBON CALIFORNIA CHAPTER ASSEMBLY 2006

March 19-21, 2006, Audubon California is hosting a Chapter Assembly at Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove. Chapter leaders, volunteers, fellow birders, scientists, and old and new friends will gather for two days of workshops, birding, and an exclusive evening at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

This year's theme is Saving the Endangered Species Act. Sign up now. The registration form is available on line: www.ca.audubon.org/AsilomarRegistration.pdf.



Palos Verdes Protection, continued from page 1

plan for the removal of non-native plants. There will be many opportunities for volunteer help.

There remains one more acquisition to be completed to finalize the full Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve, and the Conservancy is working hard to negotiate a purchase agreement for the remaining land. Building on the success of the past year, the Preserve will be an important part of Peninsula life for generations to come.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT February 17-20

February 17-20, 2006, the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology are hosting the Ninth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Visit www.birdsource.org/gbbc for easy-to-follow instructions about how to count and report on the birds you see in your backyard, your neighborhood, or from your balcony. The website includes local checklists, too.

During the 2005 Great Backyard Bird Count, tens of thousands of people had a great time counting birds, provided some fascinating information, and broke a few records. During the four-day count of February 18-21, birders across North America reported more than 6.5 million birds, shattering the previous record of 4.8 million set in 2002. Participants submitted nearly 52,000 checklists, up 22 percent from last year, and tallied 613 bird species, surpassing the previous record of 567. More than 1,000 photos were considered for the new online photo gallery, which features birds seen from around the continent during the count.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is open to all. There is no need to pre-register. It is free. And fun!

Other Audubon California News

- **Claudia Eyzaguirre** is the new Chapter Coordinator. Welcome, Claudia! She can be reached at 510-601-1866, extension 3 or at ceyzaguirre@audubon.org
- **Job Opening:** Debs Park Audubon Center Director. Debs Park is located in East Los Angeles, on the border of Highland Park and Montecito Heights between Dodger Stadium and South Pasadena. If you are interested in the details, contact Yolanda Adra, yadra@audubon.org.

BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

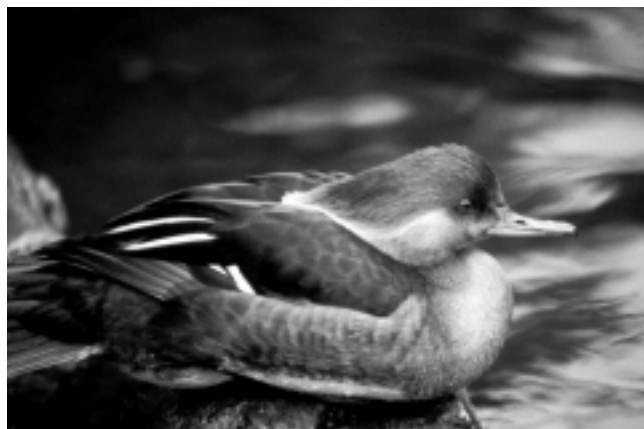
November and December 2005

by Kevin Larson

The big story was the occurrence of our first ever Thick-billed Kingbird. Discovered at Banning Park on 10 November, it remained to be tallied on the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and two Scarlet Tanagers were other notable November finds. The Palos Verdes Peninsula CBC tallied 158 species on Monday, 26 December. An additional ten species were seen during the count week period. Drizzle and thick fog on the peninsula made for challenging conditions on count day. Among the good number of rarities found on the CBC, the most surprising was a Northern Parula at the Gardena Willows. Thanks to good area coverage by many birders, we had another very good year. During the 2005 calendar year, 302 species were recorded in the area normally covered by this column. This total is nearly identical to those of the previous two years. The Common Goldeneye stands out as a species that was missed in the area this year.

High pressure frequenting the Great Basin area generally had the greatest effect on our weather during November and December. A dry offshore flow 15-22 November brought coastal temperatures well into the eighties. Low pressure systems generally moved onshore well to our north, or were weakened by the time they reached our area. A cut-off low managed to drop 0.43 inches of rain at LAX 9-10 Nov. A little cold front brought about one-quarter of an inch to LAX on 2 Dec. A more potent cold front came on 31 Dec, bringing 0.67 inches to LAX.

A Ross's Goose seen on 19 Nov at the L. A. River (LAR) near Willow St. (Kevin Larson-KL) was the only local sighting in 2005. A male Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal hybrid was at LAR near Willow St. on 3 Dec (KL). Difficult to explain was a striking male hybrid duck in the same area 19 Nov-4 Dec (KL). Its bill and other features clearly made the Northern Shoveler a parent species; there were obvious features of both Blue-winged and Cinnamon teals as well. The arrival of Canvasbacks at Alondra Park (AP) was a little later than usual. The first two were seen on 16 Nov; twenty-eight were present by 23 Dec (David Moody-DM). Seven Redheads at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 25 Nov was a high count (Richard



Hooded Merganser Hen
(Glen Smart, USFWS)

Barth-RB, Don Sterba). A White-winged Scoter was at Dockweiler State Beach (DSB) 13 Nov-9 Dec (RB). Up to two Black Scoters were at DSB 21 Nov-12 Dec (RB), two were at Redondo Beach on 4 Dec (KL), and one was seen from Pt. Vicente (PtV) on 27 Dec (Mike San Miguel-MSM). A Long-tailed Duck was seen off DSB 25 Nov-12 Dec (RB). Two Hooded Mergansers were at Ballona Lagoon on 11 Nov (David Bell-DB). A female Hooded Merganser at Madrona Marsh (MM) on 12 Nov (DM) may have been the individual present the past two winters; it did not remain because of dry conditions. A pair of Hooded Mergansers was seen at BFM and nearby ponds in mid-December (Daniel S. Cooper).

Northern Fulmars were seen with regularity; the highest count was eighteen at PtV on 27 Nov (KL). One Pink-footed Shearwater was seen from PtV on 27 Dec (MSM), and two were seen there on 30 Dec (Todd McGrath-TMcG). Single Short-tailed Shearwaters flew past PtV on 27 Nov, 25 Dec (KL), and 30 Dec (TMcG). Outstanding was a **Manx Shearwater** spotted from PtV during a large movement of Black-vented Shearwaters on 30 Dec (TMcG); it is the sixth recorded in the vicinity of the Palos Verdes Peninsula since 2001, and second seen from shore.

Six American White Pelicans were sighted over Banning Park (BP) on 14 Nov (Tori Collender); one was at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area (EMJRA) in Willowbrook on 20 Nov (Carol Selvey), followed by two on 10 Dec (KL). A juvenile Northern Harrier in the Ballona Area on 3 Dec was the only report (Jonathan Coffin-JC). A Lesser Yellowlegs at LAR south of Willow St. on 19 Nov was unusually late (KL). Remarkable was a flock of eight Red Knots at LAR north of Del Amo Blvd. on 26 Nov (Andrew Lee-AL). For the fourth consecutive winter, an entirely white-plumaged (leucistic)

California Gull was seen at AP; DM spotted the bird on 24 Nov. A Black-legged Kittiwake seen from PtV on 27 Dec was the only one recorded in the area in 2005 (MSM).

A Rhinoceros Auklet seen from PtV on 25 Dec was the only alcid reported (KL). A Burrowing Owl was observed in the Ballona Wetland area south of Ballona Creek from 30 Oct through at least 28 Dec (Barbara G. Johnson); one seen north of Ballona Creek on 29 Oct may have been the same, or a second, individual (JC). A Burrowing Owl roosting in the courtyard of an apartment building at the coast in south Redondo Beach on 26 Nov was likely a migrant forced down by the passage of a cold front the night before (Linda Church).

A Black-chinned Hummingbird at MM on **2 Nov** was unusually late (DM). Present since 12 Sep, the immature male Costa's Hummingbird at DeForest Park (DP) was last seen on 12 Nov (KL); its departure coincided with the end of the Salvia bloom in the area. A female Costa's Hummingbird was also at DP 22 Oct-5 Nov (KL). Single Costa's Hummingbirds in San Pedro on 24 Dec (KL) and in Rolling Hills on 26 Dec (Richard A. Bradley-RAB) were the only others found. An immature male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** found at BP on 10 Nov remained through 17 Dec (KL). Mark and Lori Conrad found a Red-naped Sapsucker at Pacific Crest Cemetery on the 26 Dec CBC. A female Nuttall's Woodpecker was at DP 3 Sep-18 Dec (KL).

A Gray Flycatcher was adjacent to LAR south of Wardlow Rd. 18 Dec-5 Jan (KL). Ann and Eric Brooks found a Gray Flycatcher at the PV Landfill for the CBC on 26 Dec. A Dusky Flycatcher was at the South Coast Botanic Garden (SCBG) on 11 Dec (KL). A Western Flycatcher at Sand Dune Park (SDP) 9 Nov-12 Dec was likely attempting to overwinter. Surprisingly, three



Yellow Warbler
(Donna Dewhurst, USFWS)

Western Flycatchers were found on the 26 Dec CBC; singles were in Rolling Hills (RAB), in Palos Verdes Estates (James E. Pike-JEP), and at Harbor Park (HP) (John Ivanov-JI). The male Vermilion Flycatcher spending the third winter of its life at Columbia Park in Torrance was present from 28 Sep through at least 26 Dec (DM). A female Vermilion Flycatcher in its second year returned to EMJRA in Willowbrook; it was present from 17 Oct through at least 5 Jan (RB). A **Thick-billed Kingbird** at BP in Wilmington 10 Nov-3 Jan+ is about the sixteenth ever found in California (KL). Spending its third winter at DP, a Bell's Vireo was present 11 Oct-5 Jan+ (RB). Plumbeous Vireos were found at DP 25 Oct-19 Nov (RB), at the PV Landfill on 20 Nov (KL), and at the Gardena Willows (GW) on 27 Dec.

A single calling Horned Lark flying over the Chandler Preserve on 25 Nov was the only one reported locally in 2005 (KL). Historically a local nester, and a common winter visitor until two decades ago, it appears the Horned Lark should now be considered a local rarity. Up to three Northern Rough-winged Swallows were along LAR south of Del Amo Blvd. 12 Nov-18 Dec (KL, AL). Five Barn Swallows were at HP on 26 Dec (Martin Byhower-MB). Though not an invasion winter for Red-breasted Nuthatches in the region, one was present at Wilderness Park in Redondo Beach 21 Nov-26 Dec (DM). A Brown Creeper in Lunada Bay on 4 Dec was another great yard bird for Nancy and Ray De Long; in 2004, they recorded a White-winged Dove and an American Redstart. Five Winter Wrens constituted a local invasion. Singles were at DP 19 Nov-3 Dec (KL), at SDP on 25 Nov (Jon Feenstra), in Rolling Hills on 25 Nov (KL), in Palos Verdes Estates on 4 Dec (KL), and at



White Pelicans
(Gary Kramer, USFWS)

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EMPTY SKIES: WORLD'S BIRDS AT RISK

by Janet Larsen

Even before canaries were brought into coal mines to alert miners to the presence of poisonous gas, birds were giving us early warning calls signaling the earth's deteriorating environmental health. Worldwide, some 1,212 of 9,775 bird species—one out of every eight—are threatened with extinction. Destruction and degradation of habitat is the number one danger, threatening 87 percent of these vulnerable birds. Since 1500, 150 species of birds are believed to have disappeared entirely.

As an ever-expanding human population has altered natural places around the globe—wetlands, grasslands, and forests—bird numbers have fallen. Global bird populations have shrunk by up to 25 percent since pre-agricultural times, largely because of conversion of habitat to farms. Over the past 300 years, farmland has expanded from 6 percent of the earth's surface to nearly a third.

Today three quarters of threatened bird species depend on forests as their principal habitat; each year, however, some 13 million hectares of forests are destroyed, an area the size of Greece. Nearly half the forests lost are relatively undisturbed primary forests that are home to a number of sensitive birds and other creatures.

The sharpest declines in avian populations in recent years have come in Asia, particularly in Borneo and Sumatra, where lowland moist tropical forests are disappearing at an astonishing rate. Overall, some 118 of Indonesia's bird species, including several endemic parrots and cockatoos, are threatened with extinction—the highest number of any country.

Close behind in numbers is Brazil, where 115 bird species are threatened. Both the Amazonian rainforest and the savannah-like cerrado are being cleared for ranches and farms, most recently for large-scale soybean production for feed, food, and fuel. In addition, Brazil's Atlantic rainforest has shrunk by 90 percent, squeezed by growing cities and farms. This fragmented forest is home to some 950 kinds of birds, 55 of which are endemic and threatened.

Direct exploitation, including hunting for food and capture for the pet trade, is the second greatest danger after habitat loss, affecting nearly a third of threatened bird species today.

The intentional or accidental introduction of non-native species is the next greatest danger, affecting 28 percent of the world's threatened birds. As people travel to all parts of the globe, so too do the pests and pets that prey on, out-compete, or alter the habitat of native wildlife. Introduced rats and cats alone have led to the extinction of 50 bird species. In the Hawaiian Islands, introduced predators and diseases have compounded problems of habitat loss and knocked out more than half of the 100-plus endemic bird groups.

Pollution poses an additional risk, affecting 12 percent of the threatened bird species. Populations of common Western European farmland birds dropped by 57 percent between 1980 and 2003, with much of the decline attributed to the intensification of agriculture. In addition to direct poisoning from fertilizer and pesticide applications, runoff of chemicals contaminates the wetlands that migrating waterfowl rely on.

Climate change is a relatively new threat to birds and other wildlife. Over the last three decades, global temperatures have risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius (1 degree Fahrenheit), bringing changes to the migration, breeding, and habitat ranges of some birds. For example, as spring has come earlier in the Netherlands, so too has the emergence of the caterpillars that great tit birds need to feed to their nestlings. Unfortunately, the birds' egg-laying date has not shifted, putting the hatching of the chicks out of sync with their food supply.

Birds that spend all or part of their lives at the earth's poles are particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures. The migratory waterbirds in the Arctic will lose out as warming alters this vulnerable ecosystem. In the Southern Hemisphere, where 10 of the world's 17 penguin species already are threatened, conditions will not improve as global temperatures increase by a projected 1.4–5.8 degrees Celsius (2.5–10.4 degrees Fahrenheit) during this century.

In addition to these looming threats, 7 percent of threatened bird species are at risk from incidental mortality. A rapid decline in seabird populations over the last 15 years corresponds with the growth in commercial longline fisheries. Each year these operations kill some 300,000 seabirds that are tempted by bait and then ensnared. All 21 species of albatross are now threatened or near-threatened because of run-ins with the fishing industry. Birds also fall prey to industrial development, which endangers more than half of the threatened birds in eight Latin American and Caribbean countries. And hundreds of millions of birds in

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OUR ENDANGERED VALUES

By Jimmy Carter

Reviewed by Jess Morton

“One of the most prevailing bipartisan commitments during the past 150 years has been America’s enhancement and protection of the environment. This has included the formation, protection, and expansion of our national parks and wilderness areas; the initiation and strengthening of laws to ensure the purity of air and water; and efforts to protect citizens in all countries from the threats of pollution and toxic wastes.”

So opens Chapter 15 of Jimmy Carter’s latest book, “Our Endangered Values” In this wide-ranging book, America’s 39th President examines many of the fundamental issues facing our nation from a perspective that is both authoritative and straight to the point. While this review will center on Carter’s knowledge and observations of US environmental policy, the book is a must read for anyone looking for a simple book that clearly explains today’s issues of America’s responsibilities to its heritage, its future and to other nations.

In many ways, this book reminds me of one by Owen Lattimore, who, writing in 1949, laid out his fears for possible ill-judged American engagement in southeast Asia. By 1967, when I read the book, every event he had forecast for the region had come to pass, and all possible mistakes had been made by US leaders. Lattimore’s book left me in no doubt as to why I should work to change US Viet Nam policy. Similarly, this book should be read by anyone who is unclear as to the ill-judged nature of US leadership today, in environmental matters as elsewhere.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and global warming, with their attendant environmental issues, dominate Carter’s discussion in Chapter 15, “Where are the Major Threats to the Environment.” First established as a goal by President Eisenhower, ANWR did not become a reality until the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act was passed during the Carter administration. Under the Act, the size of our national park system doubled. Despite broad bipartisan support, only the “last-minute

opposition of Alaska’s senators, heavily influenced by the oil industry, blocked the inclusion of full wilderness status for the refuge.”

Carter’s disappointment (one must read between the lines to hear the outrage) with the current administration’s attempts to open up the refuge to oil drilling are clear, noting that he had negotiated with automotive manufacturers an agreement to raise fuel efficiency from 12 mile per gallon, the average when he took office, to 27.5 mpg. That effort has been abandoned, as we all know. To put the issue in perspective, Carter notes that the maximum oil output 15 years from now, when ANWR exploitation would reach full production, might just offset the fuel wasted by SUVs simply because they are not required to meet the fuel efficiency standards of other vehicles. He is also clear that

this abandonment of fuel efficiency standards will have dire consequences for America’s auto industry as its cars cease to be competitive in the world market.

Carter’s outline of the global warming issue is equally straightforward. “So far as I know,” he says, “this issue first came under serious discussion while I was president, when scientists in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Nation Academy of Sciences began to express concern about the adverse effects of carbon dioxide building up in the atmosphere.” Their conclusion was that temperatures would increase five degrees Fahrenheit with a doubling of

atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. Later presidents negotiated the Kyoto Protocol, the first significant international effort to deal with the issue. While other nations have adhered to the Kyoto agreements, the current administration has abrogated them, as it has done with many other important international agreements

“This pattern of carelessness or disregard also applies to America’s own environment. Under original provisions, landmark legislation dealing with clean air and water, mining, grazing, forestry, toxic wastes, and the protection of endangered species has been reauthorized regularly, with higher standards expected to be imposed at each step as technology improved. With anti-environmentalist Republicans dominating the key congressional committees, all of the relevant laws are long overdue for reauthorization and



Former President Jimmy Carter

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Birds of the Peninsula, continued from page 5

HP on 26 Dec (MB). Two Western Bluebirds continued in the vicinity of Highridge Park 7 Nov-3 Jan (Sally Moite, KL).

A Virginia's Warbler along the LAR bike path north of DP 24 Nov-10 Dec was notably late (KL). A **Northern Parula** at GW 26 Dec-5 Jan was a nice CBC surprise (KL); remarkably, I found one there on count day in 2001. Returning for its fourth winter, a male Yellow Warbler was at EMJRA 12 Nov-10 Dec+ (KL). Other Yellow Warblers were wintering at MM, at HP, in Carson, and in San Pedro (DM, MB, KL). Rare in winter, a Hermit Warbler was in pines at the Palos Verdes Golf Club on 4 Dec (KL). A Palm Warbler was at BFM 4-6 Nov (RB); one present at MM since at least mid-November was joined by a second individual through December (DM). Five Black-and-white Warblers were found: one at MM 1 Nov-3 Dec (DM); one at the El Segundo Library on 13 Nov (RB); one at Peck Park on 17 Dec (KL); and two at HP on 26 Dec (MB, JI). A young male American Redstart at Ralph C. Dills Park adjacent to LAR in Paramount 18 Dec-4 Jan was the only one found in this article's coverage area in 2005 (KL).

JEP found a Summer Tanager in Palos Verdes Estates on the 26 Dec CBC. Two female **Scarlet Tanagers** were found: one was at BP 12-13 Nov (Thomas E. Wurster), and another was at SCBG on 13 Nov (KL). A very good find in fall or winter locally, a Green-tailed Towhee was at Entradero Park in Torrance on 6 Nov (KL). A White-throated Sparrow was at White's Point Nature Preserve



White-crowned Sparrow
(Jess Morton)

on 6 Nov (DM); one found at MM on 17 Nov was joined by a second individual 10 Dec+ (DM). Up to two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks visiting Randy K. Harwood's backyard feeder in Rolling Hills Estates from 30 Nov through at least 27 Dec were documented by photographs. A female-type Orchard Oriole at Ballona Lagoon on 14 Nov was well-described (DB). A Baltimore Oriole was at SCBG on 11 Dec (KL); another was found at HP on 26 Dec (MB). A Lesser Goldfinch fledgling being fed by an adult male at DP on 12 Nov was the product of a late nesting (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.

Acronyms in Birds of the Peninsula

AL: Andrew Lee
 AP: Alondra Park
 BFM: Ballona Freshwater Marsh
 BP: Banning Park
 CBC: Christmas Bird Count
 DB: David Bell
 DM: David Moody
 DP: DeForest Park
 DSB: Dockweiler State Beach
 EMJRA: Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area
 GW: Gardena Willows
 HP: Harbor Park
 JC: Jonathan Coffin
 JEP: James E. Pike
 KL: Kevin Larson
 LAR: Los Angeles River
 MB: Martin Byhower
 MM: Madrona Marsh
 MSM: Mike San Miguel
 PtV: Pt. Vicente
 RAB: Richard A. Bradley
 RB: Richard Barth
 SCBG: South Coast Botanic Garden
 SDP: Sand Dune Park
 TMcG: Todd McGrath

YOUR BACKYARD HABITAT

by **Dr. Connie Vadheim,**
California State University at Dominguez Hills

This is a new column that will appear in future issues of Hummin'. The series will feature South Bay native plants that provide important habitat for birds, butterflies and other insects. We hope you will be inspired to include some of these plants in your own Backyard Habitat.

Mule Fat – Baccharis salicifolia

If I had to choose one native shrub for its backyard habitat value I might well choose Mule Fat. It blooms nearly year-round, providing nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects. Additional insects eat the leaves and birds use the fluffy seeds to line their nests. Hummingbirds perch on the upper branches, while butterflies sun on the sturdy leaves. And the dense foliage provides a perfect nightly roost or nesting site for a wide array of birds. In short, plant Mule Fat in your yard, then sit back and enjoy the show!

Many people are surprised to learn that that Mule Fat is in the Sunflower Family. But look at the flowers, and you'll be convinced that Mule Fat is a large, woody sunflower. The plant is dioecious – male and female flowers occur on separate plants (see picture above for male flowers; female flowers are more fluffy).

Mule Fat grows as a multi-stemmed, erect woody shrub to 10 ft. tall and 8-10 ft. wide. It is found from California to Texas, and south to Central and South America, grow-



ing in canyon bottoms and along stream banks. Like many of our local riparian (streamside) plants, it is adapted to seasonal variations in water availability – flooding in winter and drought in summer.

Mule Fat is extremely adaptable to common garden conditions. It is not particular about soil pH or soil texture - anything from clay to sand is fine. It does best in a sunny location and has a high heat tolerance; consider it for the hotter areas of your garden. Mule Fat tolerates alkali and salty soils, so it is a perfect choice for near the coast. This species is adapted to our nutrient-poor local soils, so you don't need to give it any fertilizer.

Mule Fat is very drought tolerant once established. If you want to keep it green year-round, you can water occasionally during the dry season. Mule fat also does very well in wet areas of the garden.

Mule Fat is extremely versatile. It can be pruned to shape and trained to grow along walls and fences. It does fine on slopes, and is great for erosion control.

Learn more about South Bay native plants at the "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" series on the second Saturday of each month at Madrona Marsh Nature Center, Torrance. Plant Information Sheets are also available at the Nature Center.

Great Backyard Bird Count Stats for 2005

- Most frequently reported birds: Northern Cardinal (29,456), Mourning Dove (28,745), Dark-eyed Junco (24,029)
- States reporting the most species: Texas (376), California (285), Florida (275)

Birds at Risk, continued from page 6

the United States die each year from collision with windows, the number one cause of U.S. avian mortality.

If birds disappear, so do the economically valuable services they provide. Birds pollinate flowers, disperse seeds, and help to eliminate rodents, insects, weed seeds, and other pests. Scavenger species recycle nutrients and clean up dead and decaying animals that might otherwise be sources of disease.

Preventing the decline and extinction of additional bird populations depends largely on protecting the world's remaining wild spaces and preserving the health of our natural and altered ecosystems. For species that are critically endangered, more-intensive management may be needed if population numbers are to return to a viable level. This may include captive breeding and re-introduction, and the active removal of invasive predators to the extent possible. To prevent the spread of avian disease, more stringent biosecurity is needed to limit contact between infected domestic flocks and wild birds. Diverting birds away from artificial structures—buildings, towers, and turbines—and siting new construction outside of migratory paths also could prevent avian fatalities.

Reports this past spring that the ivory-billed woodpecker, long thought to be extinct, is still with us thrilled birdwatchers and others, but this sort of second chance seldom occurs in nature. Even with continued habitat protection, once wildlife populations drop dramatically, a rebound is far from guaranteed. And without stabilizing climate and human numbers, putting fences around all the parks in the world will not be enough to protect threatened species.

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Carter, continued from page 7

there is little apparent enthusiasm from the White House or any other source to address these issues.” While Carter condemns these actions, he is careful to acknowledge the efforts of noted Republicans, like Senator McCain, whom he quotes, “There’s no justification for not taking action now, but we have a tough task ahead in convincing the administration.”

Carter ends his chapter with the following observations, “America is by far the world’s leading polluter, and our government’s abandonment of its responsibilities is just another tragic step in a series of actions that have departed from the historic bipartisan protection of the global environment. Our proper stewardship of God’s world is a personal and political commitment.”

No other human being has the moral authority, practical experience, dedication to the welfare of all, and spiritual sense of rightness that are combined in Jimmy Carter. Indeed, few people match him in any one of these spheres, let alone all. In this book, we hear the voice of a career military commander, able politician, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, devout born-again Christian and innovative international problem solver speaking directly from his heart to ours. No polemics here. No polished diamonds of wit. No great looping analysis of massed data that show off mental cleverness. Jimmy Carter just writes things as he sees them. And they are not pretty.

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

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Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

See Meeting Locations Box below for directions.

Saturday/Sunday, Feb. 4/5, 8:00AM: **Carizzo Plain Field Trip.** Leaders: Eric and Ann Brooks.

Sunday, Feb. 5, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Ollie Coker. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation, and you can join at the entrance.

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh** with Bob Shanman.

Sunday, Feb. 12, 8:30AM: **Field Trip to Doheny State Beach, Dana Point.** Leaders: Eric and Ann Brooks

Wednesday, Feb. 15, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Georgene Foster. See Feb. 5 for more information.

Friday-Monday, Feb. 17-20: **Ninth Great Backyard Bird Count.** (For details see *Hummin'* article, this issue).

Saturday-Monday, Feb. 18-20, 8:30AM: **Field Trip to San Jacinto, Cibola and Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuges.** Leaders: Eric and Ann Brooks.

Saturday, Feb. 18, 8:00AM: **Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park Walk** with Martin Byhower.

Tuesday, Feb. 21, 7:00PM: AUDUBON MONTHLY GET-TOGETHERS featuring **Dr. William Ailor, founder/President of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy.** Come and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited. Madrona Marsh Preserve.

Sunday, Mar. 5, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Ollie Coker.

Wednesday, Mar. 8, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh.**

Wednesday, Mar. 15, 8:00AM: **Bird Walk At South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Georgene Foster.

Saturday, Mar. 18, 8:00AM: **White's Point Park Walk** via Royal Palms Beach with Martin Byhower. Meet in the Royal Palms Beach parking lot. (Take Western Blvd. to its terminus, turn left on Paseo del Mar, and immediately right into the lot.)

Sunday – Tuesday, Mar. 19-21: **Audubon California Chapter Assembly** at Asilomar, California. For details, see article in this *Hummin'*.

Tuesday, Mar. 21, 7:00PM: AUDUBON MONTHLY GET-TOGETHERS featuring **Ann Lynch of the South Bay Wildlife Rehab** and her live birds. Come and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited. Madrona Marsh Preserve.

Thursday, Mar. 23 through Sunday, April 2: **San Blas, Nayarit Mexico Field Trip.** Leaders: Eric and Ann Brooks.

CALENDAR

MEETING LOCATIONS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

- George F Canyon Preserve: 27305 Palos Verdes Drive East, Rolling Hills Estates. Southwest corner of Palos Verdes Drive East and Palos Verdes Drive North.

- Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park: Harbor City, parking lot near the intersection of Anaheim St. and Vermont, west of the 110 Fwy.

- Madrona Marsh Preserve: 3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance. Between Maple and Madrona Avenues.

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

- Eric and Ann Brooks organize birding classes in the South Bay and field trips throughout the region and statewide. Contact them directly for details: motmots@aol.com.

- Martin Byhower also provides guided field trips. See his birding website at <http://birdingsocal.com>. Or contact him at avitropic@sbcglobal.net.

- Palos Verdes Land Conservancy sponsors walks and other activities on the peninsula. For information, consult their website at <http://www.pvplc.org/>, or contact them by email at info@pvplc.org or by telephone at 310-541-7613.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
(Tom Kelley, USFWS)

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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.