



HUMMIN'

www.pvsb-audubon.org

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Meet Audubon Program Manager Jazmin Rios

Greetings Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon community, I am María Jazmín Rios, and I am delighted to be joining you, both as a member and as your new Program Manager. This position has opened at a unique time. Just as it is new for Audubon and for me, we all find ourselves adjusting to the new realities and uncertainties associated with COVID-19.



However, whether you are a long-time member or new to the PV/SB Audubon community, I am here to continue the great work this chapter has been doing for the local community for over 40 years. You can be sure projects I tackle will be done in a safe and meaningful manner.

I am excited to be leading both old and new projects, including the YES! Program, the creation of a Snowy Plover enclosure at Hermosa Beach, and habitat restoration for both the Palos Verdes Blue Butterfly and Malaga Dune flower-loving fly. I am committed to building upon already strong foundations by creating new connections and helping engage the evolving youth and nearby communities so that we can continue conservation of the peninsula for many years to come!

I was born in Culiacan, Sinaloa, and moved to Los Angeles at the age of six. We moved around a bit during the first few years, but my family was able to set roots in Bellflower. From a young age, my parents exposed me and my two sisters to numerous cultural and natural spaces throughout

Los Angeles, including its many parks, gardens, and museums. Two of my favorite places to visit were the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and Angels Gate Park, both of which introduced me to the beauty of the natural world in a highly urbanized setting. My interest in the environment and conservation stems in large part from these memories. As I got older, I expanded my curiosity about the natural world by taking coursework on the natural history of Southern California at Cerritos College and participating in a project studying the western fence lizard at CSU Long Beach.

I recently relocated back from Chicago, where I worked for the Urban Wildlife Institute leading a number of local urban wildlife programs including managing the only documented population of Illinois-endangered black-crowned night heron. That's me in the photo at right with one of my birds. I was naturally drawn to the PV/SB Audubon Society, an organization that seeks and implements ways to preserve local flora and fauna while providing educational tools. During my short time in this position, I have had the privilege to learn about both the history of this chapter and continue to learn the natural history of this region from Tony Baker, Jess Morton, and Stacey Vigallon. I have also had the opportunity to meet with a few volunteers at Vicente Bluffs Reserve thanks to Ann Dalkey, and have signed up to volunteer my time every Tuesday.



I look forward to meeting every one of you in the coming months and engaging with you during future events, whether they be virtual or in-person!

The Editor's Corner

All That Jaz

By Jess Morton

With this issue of Hummin', we introduce a new member to our staff of writers, Jazmin Rios. Our chapter has been privileged through the combination of a generous bequest and fortuitous timing, to hire Jazmin as our first Program Manager. Although only part-time for now, she will greatly extend the reach of our work in the community by expanding existing youth and educational programs, such as Audubon YES, and exploring new frontiers.

Many of you who are long-time members of PV Audubon will remember Marcos Trinidad, who managed our Audubon YES program so successfully for many

years. He is still carrying on similar efforts, but now does it for the National Audubon Society as Director of the Audubon Center at Debs Park in Highland park. Marcos oversees center operations and all educational programs based in the center. As he did here, he and his Debs Park Center serves a heterogeneous community.

Fortunately, we now have Jazmin, not as a replacement, but as an enhancement, who will not only continue with our programs that connect young people with the environment in which they live, but also develop the means to take on projects that have lingered undone for far too long. Around the peninsula are natural gems that time, neglect, under-appreciation and financial constraints have tarnished. When those are overcome, such

as they were at Harbor Park, a place we spent decades advocating and working for, the outcome and public benefits can far exceed all expectations.

The local projects so far envisioned do not require the massive resources that were needed for Harbor Park's restoration, but they do require the same kinds of advocacy and persistence. For those, we think Jazmin is ideally suited to provide the leadership and imagination that will be necessary to carry them out. Right now, Jazmin is getting acquainted with the chapter, both its membership and the biogeography of its territory. I hope you will soon have a chance to meet and work with her. If you haven't read her greetings to us on the front page yet, please do so now. And then, with me, say welcome to our chapter, Jazmin!

Election 2020: One for the Birds

By Jess Morton

Predictions of the future are seldom accurate beyond generalities and most often far wide of the mark. Thus, the predictions I made four years ago of the environmental consequences of Trump's election seriously underestimated the environmental damage that has been done. What will ensue as a result of a Biden Administration's policies is beyond my capacity to predict, but it will be better for the birds. I do expect an attempt to address climate change will be made, but the chance there will be significant investments made beyond mitigating some of the worst effects appears small. Still, I am cautiously optimistic that Congress will be willing to work with the new Administration rather than against it. If so, over the next four years we may finally be able to poke our noses up out of the environmental hole we have spent the last four decades digging.

Climate change, the environment and birds will be well down the list of priorities for the Biden Administration. First will be installing top level administrators who actually support the purposes

of the departments they head, rebuilding depleted leadership teams within those departments and cancelling those ill-conceived policies that can easily be nullified, such as weakening the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Second will be creating an effective response to the challenges posed by the coronavirus and, third, tackling a floundering economy. Even if those are dealt with, climate change may not be the next problem the Administration takes on, dire as the situation is. However, the United States can be counted on to take part next year in drafting the Glasgow Accords, a far more serious attempt to deal with the matter than the Paris Accords were. Looming over every one of these matters, though, is the political divide in this country.

While the majority of people see eye to eye on general solutions to most of the issues facing us when asked about them in a way that takes them out of the political sphere, that ceases to be the case as soon as party affiliation is introduced into the question. As bizarre as that is, it is a differentiation driven by the spread of misinformation and the introduction of false equivalences into problem solving by a minority that sees some personal

(Election continued on p. 11)

A Chucantí Update

By Paul Blieden

A year ago, Guido Berguido gave a highly entertaining program for Audubon. He told his story: how a young birder became a passionate conservationist. All he had wanted to do was see all the birds of his native Panama. Then, fifteen years ago, he began taking birders to a remote mountain top in which he had been finding birds never before reported from that part of the country. Each time he went, there was less and less forest to explore. Guido realized that unless something was done, the cloud forest of that sky island, Cerro Chucantí, would disappear—and that it would be up to him to save it.

Chucantí became his life's work. With no money, but youthful energy and passion, and the will to succeed, Guido has managed to bring funders and conservation-minded people to his side, including Rainforest Trust and our Audubon chapter. Through Adopta, the Panamanian non-profit he created for Chucantí, he acquired the first 1500 acres of what he hopes will become a 50,000-acre national park. He has built a research field station at the edge of his preserve and brought scientists of many disciplines to study the flora and fauna. To date, more than 40 new species have been found,

among them snakes and coffee plants. Many await the funds to describe them formally. And because of the constant threat of illegal logging and burning, Guido has hired rangers to protect the preserve.

In early 2019, Guido led a group of birders on an adventure to Panama that was organized by our treasurer and long term board member Jess Morton. A highlight of the trip was an unforgettable visit to the field station on Chucantí. As a result, our chapter became a strong advocate for Guido's efforts, with our donors giving more than \$15,000 in support of Adopta's work..

Recently Guido brought us up to date via Zoom from his home, in Gamboa, Panama. He said that to thank us for our critically needed financial help, we would have the honor

of naming one of the many new species discovered on Chucantí, a calla lily in the genus *Dieffenbachia*. The lucky person to name it was drawn by Guido from among the donors to Adopta through PV Audubon. In the drawing, held via Zoom on Saturday, October 3rd, he picked Evi Meyer, a long-time chapter member.

When asked about winning the drawing, Evi said, "Sure. I was happy to hear that I was the winner, but really, the person who is the winner is Jess Morton. Without him we never would have gone to Panama to meet and bird with Guido. Jess was also instrumental in setting up Guido's visit to Southern California and several of its Audubon chapters to report and inform on Chucanti and Adopta. For all those reasons it was a no-brainer for me to have the flower named after Jess and not myself. It represents a big thank you to Jess for all he does for conservation and our natural environment."

Publication of this new species will establish its scientific name, a highly important designation. Its known range is limited to the Chucantí Preserve. Thus it is extremely vulnerable, but once named, it will be eligible for the "Critically Endangered" status Guido will be seeking for it. The naming could save a species from extinction!



Dieffenbachia sp. Nova Photo by: Guido Berguido

BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

September/October 2020

by Vincent Lloyd

September and October saw record-breaking fires all over California, with devastating impacts on birds. Locally, the Bobcat Fire in the San Gabriel Mountains burned over 180 square miles, including some of the best montane habitat in Los Angeles County. It is no surprise that mountain birds seldom seen in the South Bay have started showing up here in the lowlands. Cathy and Jim in Rolling Hills



had a **Yellow-breasted Chat** in their birdbath on September 16th; another Chat was seen at Sand Dune Park on Sept. 5th. If you're unfamiliar with the Chat, it is a bird like no other. It looks like a big fat yellow warbler. It inhabits streamside thickets and is famous for its incredible variety of long, loud bird songs. Long classified with the wood warblers, the Parulidae, genetic evidence shows that it is not closely related to any other passerine, so they have thrown it into its own family. Since its generic name is Icteria, the family name is Icteriidae, which has nothing to do with the Icteridae, the family

of blackbirds and orioles! Cathy and Jim had another unusual visitor on November 3rd, when a



Mountain Chickadee appeared in the same birdbath. Earlier, on Sept. 6th, another Mountain Chickadee dropped by Sand Dune Park (Mark and Janet Scheel).

Dick Barth found a **Green-tailed Towhee** in DeForest Park in Long Beach on Oct. 20th. (Others were seen at Ballona, El Dorado Park, and along the San Gabriel River.) This bird is similar to its congener the Spotted Towhee in shape but unlike it in coloring, being grey overall with green in the wings and tail, a white throat, and a reddish crown. Its usual habitat is brushy mountainsides and sagebrush desert. **Pine Siskins** were spotted at Wilderness Park (Dessi Sieburth), Hemingway Park in Carson (DB), and a home in Palos Verdes, all on Halloween. Pine Siskins look like a cross between a finch and a goldfinch; as their name suggests, they usually occur in pine forests. Speaking of finches,

Purple Finches were seen at Wilderness Park, Shoshonean native plant garden in San Pedro, Madrona Marsh, Malaga Dunes, and Pt. Vicente during the last two weeks of October and into November, while **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were seen at 22nd St. Park on Sept. 30th (Jonathan Feenstra) and Madrona on Oct. 27th (Raymond Burket).

Meanwhile, the fall migration was at its height. This year's standout migrant was a **Great Crested Flycatcher** discovered by Kiera Cavalho at Columbia Park on Oct. 24th. This is an eastern bird similar to the Ash-throated Flycatcher, but brighter yellow below. (All the flycatchers of the genus Myiarchus look pretty much alike; their identification often involves careful observation of the tail feathers.) Its normal migration is south across the Gulf of Mexico, so it has to be way off course to end up in California. There is on average about one sighting per year in the state, always in the fall; they appear to all be first-year birds. They are notorious as the "One-day wonder" as they never hang around for more than a day or two — nor did the one in Columbia Park. Another unusual



eastern migrant was the **Broad-winged Hawk** photographed at Harbor Park on Sept. 26th; the

same or another Broad-wing flew over Randy Harwood's house in Rolling Hills Estates on Oct. 7th. Meanwhile, on Sept. 27th, Graham Montgomery had found



a rare visitor from Asia, a **White Wagtail** that hung out along the Los Angeles River at Willow the first three weeks of October — the first wagtail in the South Bay since 2012. Wagtails belong to the pipit family. The White Wagtail is widespread across Europe and Asia (the first bird the author saw when he visited the Alps was a White Wagtail).

Unusual North American



sparrows included a **Lark Bunting** at Alta Vicente on Sept. 8th (Jonathan Nakai), the three **Brewer's Sparrows** found at

Madrona Marsh on Sept. 10th, and the **Pink-sided Junco** also at Madrona on Oct. 30th (Tracy Drake). Ann and Eric Brooks had a **Painted Bunting** in their yard on Sept. 17th. Among this fall's vagrant eastern warblers, the



adult male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Wilderness Park on Oct. 12th was outstanding (Mark Rubke). Dinuk Magamma had an **Ovenbird** in his yard on Oct. 4th. A female **Blackburnian Warbler** was admired by many at Madrona Marsh in late September, when it hung around in the parking lot. A few days later, Dessi found a **Northern Waterthrush** at DeForest Park in Long Beach. **American Redstarts** popped up at Sand Dune Park on Sept. 12th (Sara Boscoe) and Madrona on Sept. 22nd. A **Palm Warbler** was at Columbia Park at the same time as the Great Crested Flycatcher (JN). An unusual western warbler was the **Virginia's Warbler** at Madrona in early September (TD); no, they're not from Virginia, but from the Southwest.

Notable western migrants were the **Short-eared Owl** flying over Entradero Park on Oct. 27th (SB) and the **Long-eared Owl** at Harbor Park on

Oct. 28th (Johnny Ivanov) and the **Poorwill** he found at Sand Dune Park on Oct. 3rd. A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was at Madrona on Sept. 26rd (JN).

White-winged Doves were seen all over: at Madrona Marsh, the L.A. River, Lago Seco Park in Torrance, 22nd Street Park in San Pedro, and Dominguez Gap in Long Beach. The immature **Little Blue Heron** at Cabrillo Beach at the end of October was the second that Bobby T. has found this year (or was it the same one he saw in August at Averill Park?). Remarkable were the three **White-faced Ibises** Dave Moody found at AES Wetland in Redondo Beach on Sept. 8th. Back on the L.A. River, the team of Jeff Boyd and Dick Barth found nine **Baird's Sandpipers** in mid-September, a single **Solitary Sandpiper** on Sept 15th, six **Pectoral Sandpipers** on Sept. 22, as well as an out-of-place **Blue-footed Booby** on Sept. 20th.

Tropical Kingbirds at Entradero Park and Harbor Park appear to be winter visitors returning from last winter. Other possible returnees are the **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Madrona Marsh and the **Black-and-white Warblers** at Madrona and at Banning Park. Madrona also had a **Tropical Kingbird** on Oct. 20th (Diane Wood).

Please send reports of unusual birds in the South Bay. Send to stephenvincentlloyd@gmail.com.

Photo credits

White Wagtail, Broad-winged Hawk, Lark Bunting— Jonathan Nakai; Yellow-breasted Chat, Mountain Chickadee — Jim Aichele; Black-throated Blue Warbler — Kim Moore

Surf's Up

By Evi Meyer

Snowy Egrets are well known for many reasons. First up they are the poster child for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, without which they might have gone extinct by falling victim to a very lucrative feather trade at the turn of the last century. Secondly, they are famous for their array of feeding techniques, all of which

I thought I had seen at some point during my years of birding. However, in early September, on a trip to Bolsa Chica in Huntington Beach, I was both stunned and amused by what I saw.

Snowy Egrets are easy to recognize and very common in our area. As a bird photographer I often just observe them with my eyes or binoculars and rarely pick up the camera to shoot what I see. After all, I have thousands of Snowy Egret photos and do I really need another one? I was proven wrong on that September day when I went

on rapid shoot within seconds of realizing what was going on.

The common feeding strategies of Snowy Egrets are almost all high strung and hyperactive. They can be seen racing energetically with abrupt, jerky movements



as they pursue their prey. They almost look like marionettes directed by someone without much experience of controlling the strings. They are also known to create rapid movements in the water with their bill, tongue or feet to cause ripples attracting fish. Quick shuffling of their feet can kick up any soft substrate and releases invertebrate prey. Occasionally they can also be seen stalking or simply standing with a still neck, but ready to pounce when something tasty swims by. But no matter what strategy they employ, they always feed

in shallow, standing water, or so I thought.

The water level at Bolsa Chica is controlled by a dam with locks that allow it to come and go as desired. When this happens, small eddies are created along the dam wall. I usually don't pay much attention to these little water turbulences, but I can imagine that they concentrate fish in some areas of deeper water.

On that September afternoon, though, I did notice a 2-ft long piece of a washed-out 2x4 floating in a small eddy over water that was perhaps four or five feet deep. It was going around in a slow, 4-ft circle, travelling the same path over and over. I also did see that I was not the only one noticing the floating device. There was a Snowy Egret standing on the dam wall eyeing it float over a depth of water that was definitely out of hunting range for this bird. This was where cormorants or grebes would feed, but not egrets.

I just wrote this scene off as another piece of trash in the Bolsa Chica channels, but



what looked like trash to me was treasure to this egret. As I approached the dam wall, it jumped off with wings spread and landed on the moving piece of wood, catching its balance amazingly fast for standing on a swaying float. I have no way of knowing whether this was the first attempt at this maneuver or whether it had been doing it all along. What I do know is that it led to a pretty astounding ride on the eddy, providing the bird an opportunity to hunt fish surfacing from deeper water. This egret definitely hit the jackpot. In the twenty minutes I stood there, it caught five good size fish that would have been out

of its reach had it not resorted to the use of a tool. That is what I call a smart bird with a strategy. All I could do was just smile in amazement and pick up my camera to capture

what was happening in front of my eyes. Huntington Beach had long been known for surfing, but what I saw put a whole new spin on the “Surf’s Up” experience.





ASK ALLEN

by Vincent Lloyd

Hummingbirds

Vincent: Allen, help me! I can't tell one hummingbird from another!

Allen: Tell me about it. Once I started flirting with a cute female who turned out to be an Anna. Boy was she mad!

Vincent: I read that there are 14 hummingbird species that regularly breed in the U.S. and Canada — 13 in the west and 1 in the east (the Ruby-throated Hummingbird). Even the great Roger Tory Peterson, who was an easterner, was a bit overwhelmed by the number of Western hummingbirds, about which he wrote in the Field Guide to Western Birds, "The brilliant throat feathers or 'gorgets' are the best aid in identifying males. Females lack these, and are mostly greenish above and whitish below, often presenting a very difficult identification problem. Some females are not safely distinguishable in the field... At certain seasons the countryside is full of young hummers that are just about impossible for even crack field experts to identify. It is important to realize this and not worry too much about them."

Allen: Fortunately, there are only four hummingbird species that nest in Los Angeles County: the Anna's Hummingbird, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, and my species, Allen's Hummingbird. Two others are regularly seen during migration, the Rufous Hummingbird and the Calliope Hummingbird. Winter is a good time for beginning to study hummingbirds, because they all go south except for Anna's, Costa's, and Allen's.

Vincent: Allen's Hummingbird was named after Charles Andrew Allen, an amateur ornithologist and collector from Massachusetts who moved to California in 1873 for his health. After spending a few weeks in Los Angeles, he settled in Marin County, where he spent the rest of his life. It was there he collected a hummingbird specimen closely similar to the Rufous Hummingbird but with distinctive

tail feathers. He sent the specimen to William Brewster at Harvard, where it was declared a new species that was named after Allen. Later, however, it was found that the bird had been previously described by the French ornithologist Lesson, so the scientific name he used had priority, *Selasphorus sasin*. I haven't been able to find out who Sasin was.



Allen: My species is a California specialty, much sought after by

birders from elsewhere in North America. We are an interesting species in that although we are found only in a rather small area, we are divided into two separate populations, one migratory and one sedentary. The migratory population breeds along the coast from Santa Barbara to southern Oregon. It is closely tied to the distribution of a favorite food source, the Orange Bush Monkeyflower, *Mimulus aurantiacus*, a common semi-deciduous perennial of open areas in California, with pretty pastel orange flowers whose nectar is sweet. The sedentary population was originally confined to the Channel Islands. Around 1960 they started breeding on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and have since spread all over the urban area from Ventura to San Diego. The reason is that we like the nectar of introduced eucalyptus trees, as well as other garden flowers.

Vincent: The spread can be seen in the counts of Allen's Hummingbirds from the early PV Christmas Bird Counts:

CBC YEAR	# OF ALLEN'S
1966	5
1967	12
1968	25
1969	64
1970	110
1971	180

Allen: Our rival, Anna's Hummingbird, also occurs mostly in California, although its range has expanded northward as far as Vancouver, B.C., where in winter it is the world's northernmost hummingbird. They are partially migratory; while many remain in the winter, others winter in the deserts of Baja California and Sonora. Personally, I wish they would all go south and stay there!

Vincent: Costa's Hummingbird breeds in the deserts of southeastern California, southwestern Arizona, Sonora, and Baja California. In winter, they spread out a bit and that's when we see a few in the L.A. Basin. Costa's Hummingbird was named after the 19th-century European collector Pantaléon Costa, the Marquis of Beauregard. Anna's Hummingbird was named after the wife of another collector, the Count of Rivoli, whose own



name is attached to an Arizona hummingbird.

Allen: It's easy to tell an Allen's Hummingbird from an Anna's or Costa's Hummingbird. Those two are ugly!

Vincent: Really, Allen! You are all beautiful birds! The males are fairly easy to distinguish. If seen together, Anna's is a little larger than Allen's, whereas Costa's is a little smaller. The males are distinguished by their gorgets, those colorful throat patches. Normally they are dark, but when they catch the sunlight, they burst into color. Allen's gorget is distinctly orange; Anna's is red, and Costa's is purple. Costa's gorget extends quite a way back onto the neck. Anna's has red on the forehead, while Allen's forehead is green. The male Anna's likes to sing while perched high up in a tree; it's surprisingly loud, but its song is hard to describe.

It's the females I have trouble with. They all look alike!

Allen: Here are some things to look for. Allen's Hummingbird has a

more compact shape; when perched, it looks like its head is tucked in. Immature male and female Anna's and Allen's are similar; they lack the colorful throat gorget of the adult males, but may have dark spots or bits of color in the throat. The female Allen's has buffy flanks and orange in the tail; the female Anna's has greenish-grey flanks and lacks orange in the tail. Both females have white tips to the outer tail feathers.

Vincent: The female Anna's and Costa's are quite similar. They both lack any orange.

Allen: At a feeder, Costa's Hummingbird pumps and wags its tail

continuously; Anna's tail is held steady. If the bird is perched, you may notice that Costa's bill is slightly curved downwards; Anna's is always straight. Costa's has a more or less distinct whitish eyestripe (supercilium) that wraps around a grey cheek patch. Costa's upperparts are a brighter green and its underparts are much whiter than Anna's. If you get a good look, you may see that Costa's wings are longer; the wing tips extend all the way to the tail tip, while Anna's wingtips fall short.

Vincent: Once I saw a male that had a lot of orange. Could it have been a Rufous Hummingbird? I know the Rufous is very similar to Allen's, but the adult male usually has a mostly orange back. I read that the Rufous hummer breeds farther north than Allen's, from southern Oregon to coastal Alaska. In summer, it's the



northernmost hummingbird in the world.

Allen: The Rufous Hummingbird migrates through our area in spring, but winters in Mexico. It rarely, if ever, occurs here in winter. Don't report a Rufous in winter unless you have a good photo showing a back with no green at all! Otherwise, differentiating between the two is a notoriously difficult problem involving precise measurements of the tail feathers. The females and immature males cannot be safely distinguished in the field. A Rufous/Allen's type seen in December is almost assuredly a non-migratory Allen's Hummingbird. However, the Rufous is an early migrant and starts moving through L.A. toward the end of January.

Vincent: The first sign of spring!

Image credits:

Allen's and Costa's Hummingbirds: *Birds of California* (1923) via the Biodiversity Heritage Library.
Anna's and Rufous Hummingbirds: *Audubon's Birds of America*, via the University of Pittsburgh library digital collections.



MEET, LEARN, RESTORE, ENJOY

Chapter Calendar

Please note that these activities are subject to all Covid-19 restrictions.

Visit pvsb-audubon.org for cancellations, meeting location, or live streaming instructions.

EVENTS

January 19th, at 7PM at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center or online via Zoom, Jim Cox, Director of Donor Relations for Western Rivers Conservancy presents "Sometimes To Save A River You Have To Buy It."

FIELD TRIPS

January 3rd and 17th, and February 7th and 21st.

First and third Sunday bird walks at 8 at Harbor Park. Meet in the parking lot above the ranger station, located between Anaheim Street and Vermont Avenue.

January 12th and February 9th.

Second Wednesday bird walk at Madrona Marsh, led by Bob Shanman

January 10th and February 14th.

Second Sunday bird walks at the South Coast Botanic Garden led by David Quadhamer. Meet in the parking lot at 8. There is an entrance fee to the garden for people who are not SCBG Foundation members.

January 17th and February 21st.

Third Sunday bird walks at Ballona Wetlands led by Bob Shanman. See Bob's website <[www.wbu.com/redondo beach](http://www.wbu.com/redondo%20beach)> for details.

Every Tuesday morning: Tour de Torrance with Tommye Hite. Meet in the Madrona Marsh Nature Center parking lot at 8:30.

Site notes: Harbor Park, Madrona Marsh and most birding locations are open, but restrictions may apply. Please follow the guidelines at each location when there on your next birding expedition. The South Coast Botanic Garden is open by appointment. For tickets go to: <<https://southcoastbotanicgarden.org/buy-garden-entrance-tickets/>>

2020 Christmas Bird Count

The 55th annual Palos Verdes Peninsula Christmas Bird Count will take place on Sunday, December 27, this year. The object is to count as many birds as possible on that day in the count area. Our count area is a circle, 15 miles in diameter, centered roughly on the Palos Verdes Reservoir, in an area that extends from the L.A. River to Santa Monica Bay and from Alondra Park to the Catalina Channel. It is one of over 2500 CBCs in North America, South America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. The CBCs provide a long-running census of winter bird populations counted using consistent protocols going back to the first CBC in 1900. Last year our 62 observers tallied 166 species and 18,301 individual birds.

Whether you are an experienced birder or a beginner, we can use your help. Participants can either count on their own, or join an established group. In light of the ongoing epidemic, participants will be asked to wear masks and observe social distancing. Interested birders please contact Vincent Lloyd (stephenvincentlloyd@gmail.com) to participate.



American Oystercatcher -- CBC 2019 *Photo: Jess Morton*

(Election continued from p. 2)

benefit in spreading mistrust and inciting chaos. For example, one need only consider the controversy in this country over wearing a mask to reduce the spread of Covid-19. The rest of the world thinks we are nuts to make this a political issue—and they are not wrong.

Misguided as that way of dealing with problems is, that is what we have to deal with. It has created a polity with little heart to make major changes, and the overall results of the 2020 elections are evidence of that. Even without taking into account the caution likely to be built into the new Administration’s policies, Congress is unlikely to approve any legislation authored by the Democrats that seriously addresses climate change.

Fortunately, the incoming Biden Administration is committed to dealing with climate change. Even acknowledging the crisis at that level of government is a welcome event. At the very least, the US will reengage with the Paris Accords and go on to Glasgow. However, just mitigating the catastrophic effects of climate change will stretch both Congress and the Administration to their limits. It is too soon to tell whether either entity will have the flexibility to go even that far.

Birds will filter into all of this as they always have, usually in a peripheral role politically. The MBTA football will go back into the closet, we can hope. Some of the other policies of the outgoing administration that adversely affect birds will also be repealed. Whether the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, home to an incredible array of birds, can be kept intact is unknown, but threats to its integrity should be on hold for at least another four years.

So, the birds have come out ahead for now, but a longer term prognostication is far outside my level of competence. If the most pressing problems can be gotten under control in significantly less than four years, and if Congress will work with the Biden Administration, and if the public at large supports that cooperation, then progress can be made on how to deal with climate change. That’s too many ifs to give confidence in any prediction I might make. Let’s just leave it at a cautious optimism overall, and a victory for the birds!

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. Within the framework of National Audubon Society policies, we seek and implement ways to preserve indigenous flora and fauna, especially that of our local area, and provide educational services to the region's communities with respect to birds, wildlife, ecology and conservation.

Executive Officers and Staff

- President: David Quadhamer, 310 833-3095
- Vice-Pres.: Ann Dalkey
- Treasurer: Jess Morton, jmorton@igc.org
- Secretary: Vincent Lloyd, vincent@sabik.org
- Directors: Paul Blieden, Tracy Drake
- Program Manager: Jazmin Rios, 562 896-3369

Committees:

- Calendar: Evi Meyer, evimeyer@cox.net
- Christmas Bird Count and
- Field Trips: Ann and Eric Brooks, motmots@aol.com
- Hospitality: Alene Gardner,
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Jim Cox, Director of Donor Relations for Western Rivers Conservancy will make a presentation on January 19th titled "Sometimes To Save A River You Have To Buy It." The conservancy has worked for more than thirty years protecting riverlands for the benefit of fish, wildlife and people. Jim will present many of his stunning photographs showcasing some of the more than 170 rivers and streams in the West that have been conserved by the WRC. California's Mojave and Klamath River systems are just two examples of where it works.



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