Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

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Honoring Our Legacy, Dimbracing Our Future By Jazmin Rics

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon L Society's mission has always been steeped in the love for birds, wildlife, and the diverse ecosystems they inhabit. Our name, carrying the legacy of John James Audubon, reflects a longstanding tradition of exploration, education, and conservation. Mixed with this, is the record of his personal life two centuries ago, which has drawn criticism and cast doubt on the value of using the name Audubon for the National Audubon Society and its affiliated chapters. As we continue into a future that holds promise for greater inclusivity and understanding, we have decided to retain "Audubon" in our name as a tribute to the enduring positive values. meanwhile embracing a necessary dialogue along with concomitant actions that foster a community both welcoming and affirming to all.

We acknowledge the complex historical narrative surrounding John James Audubon. It's a narrative that, as with many historical figures, includes both remarkable contributions to ornithology and aspects that conflict with our present-day ethos of equality, respect, and inclusivity. The decision to retain our name follows a thorough and thoughtful discussion, recognizing that the name "Audubon" has grown to symbolize a collective effort to protect and appreciate avian life and natural habitats that transcends the life of one individual.

(See Audubon, continued on page 3)

The ABCs of Native Bees is community scientist and conservation photographer **Krystle Hickman's** subject for our November 21st meeting at Madrona Marsh, at 7 PM.



Krystle Hickman is a National Geographic speaker. Explorer artist, scientist, and photographer based Los Angeles, California. Through artful photography, Krystle strives increase awareness of the decline in native bee populations, highlight their biodiverse ecosystems and emphasize

the endangered state of many bee species. Her photography has appeared in The LA Times, children's books, and scientific journals.

Krystle works gardens such with as the Los Angeles County Arboretum and the Arlington Garden, regularly photographing and documenting their native habitats. She also collects data on rare bee species in the



Mojave Desert, Joshua Tree, Anza-Borrego, the Santa Monica Mountains, and yards with native gardens.

Krystle is the proprietor of BeeSip. Visit www.BeeSip.com for more information about our native bees and what you can do to help them thrive.

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From the President All the Latest

I'll be the first to admit that I'm not a birder. Instead, I function more on the level of an ecologist. However, on vacation late this summer, I expected to see lots of birds that would be new to me. My husband and I visited six New England States (plus New York) where I discovered that there were lots and lots of trees (strange for this native Californian). Beautiful to look at they are, but I only heard unfamiliar voices coming from within the trees' canopies and could not see much by way of feathers.

Fortunately, our PV/SB Audubon Chapter offers many opportunities to see and learn about our local species! With fall and winter on the horizon, the diversity of bird species will increase as migrants fly through or stop to enjoy our mild winters. Fall arrivals are evident now, for as I write this a house wren is noisily fussing in the larger shrubs, while Anna's hummingbirds hover over our fall-blooming, red California fuchsia flowers.

Looking for birds is fun and all can join in through our programs, as shown on the website https://pvsb-audubon.org/bird-walks/. chapter is looking at habitat enhancement programs that will increase the value and quantity of local habitat through programs in the coming months.

A few years ago, PV/SB Audubon signed onto an effort to nurture butterfly habitat for the Endangered Palos Verdes Blue butterfly. Our chapter is responsible for holding volunteer efforts to maintain the habitat of this little blue. But caution here--remember insects are an important food source for birds, even if they are endangered!

This summer, we initiated an effort to increase habitat for Western snowy plovers, another endangered species. Western snowy plovers prefer beach habitats with little vegetation, but

lots of room to nest and raise their young. This is an exciting project and hopefully, we'll see the little fuzzballs that are snowy plover chicks next year on our beaches. Stay tuned for info on this next year.

Along with the changing seasons, we have experienced a change in the Chapter's Board Members. Jonathan Nakai stepped down as Secretary due to his new, demanding job. Don't worry, Jonathan will continue to run the Christmas Bird Count! The vacant Secretary position was immediately filled by Jazmín Rios who resigned as Program Manager due to her new job. We also have a vacancy for Vice President.

We are currently advertising for a new Program Manager. We also expect to add a new Vice President, who will work closely with the new Program Manager on our habitat expansion project for the Palos Verdes blue butterfly and especially with the snowy plover program through the coming years.

Happy Holidays!



A New Chapter Begins

By Jazmin Rios

Greetings fellow bird enthusiasts! As we gather for another edition of "That Jaz," I have some news to share that marks a significant transition in our journey with the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Chapter. After much contemplation and consideration, I've made the decision to step down from my role as the project manager of the chapter. It's been an incredible experience to serve in this capacity, contributing to the conservation efforts and witnessing the vibrant birding community grow and thrive.

But fear not, my fellow bird lovers! This isn't a farewell, but rather a shift in focus. Starting with the next chapter of our journey, I'll be transitioning into a new role within the chapter - that of the PVSB Audubon Chapter secretary. While I may be stepping away from the project management role, my dedication and enthusiasm for our cause remain steadfast.

I am truly excited about this change, as it presents an opportunity for me to further contribute to our chapter's initiatives from a different perspective. As the secretary, I'll be working closely with the rest of the board to

ensure smooth operations, efficient communication, and continued collaboration among our members.

I'm immensely grateful for the support and camaraderie that we've shared throughout my time as project manager. Together, we've achieved remarkable milestones, from insightful talks at our program meetings and engaging bird walks, to restoration efforts that have made a lasting impact on our local bird and wildlife populations.

While this transition marks the end of one chapter, it's also the beginning of another - a chapter that promises fresh perspectives, new collaborations, and continued dedication to our shared love for birds and the environment.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey, and I look forward to continuing our work together as we embark on this new adventure. Stay tuned for more updates and exciting announcements in

the coming months!

Until next time, keep your binoculars close and your passion for birds even closer.

Happy birding!

(Audubon continued from page 1)

As we affirm the name "Audubon," we are We are excited about the journey ahead—a also committed to continue fostering our journey of continuous growth, learning, chapter's culture that reflects the rich and collaboration. Together, we will strive diversity within our community, espe- to deepen our understanding, broaden our cially as exemplified in the YES (Youth horizons, and create a harmonious envi-Environmental Service) program. Our ronment for both our human and avian promise is to continue engaging in mean- communities. We invite you to join us in this ingful dialogue, learning from one another, endeavor, share your insights, and be a part and by taking steps that ensure every of the vibrant, inclusive community we are member, regardless of background, feels continually striving to build. valued, heard, and empowered to contribute to our shared mission.

From the Editor's Desk By Jess Morton

A Wall of Birds

Sapsucker Woods! This was last summer. I attended a conference at UC Davis and was considering whether to attend the next one this year. It was an interesting group, the American Arachnological Society, but I was ambivalent about future meetings until it was announced that the conference for 2023 would be at Cornell. My ears pricked up. Cornell is the home of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and its legendary birding grounds, Sapsucker Woods. I was not about to miss this combo—the spider and the flycatcher, so to speak.

I was not disappointed. I learned much during the conference about some animal groups with which I am not familiar, had a chance to spend time on the Erie Canal, and go birding at Sapsucker Woods. For the purposes of this short note, I'll skip the first two of those stories and concentrate on the Cornell Lab, an amazing facility. Its offices and visitor center

are located in Sapsucker Woods, the 200-acre site full of trees, ponds and wildlife Cornell owns and is working to restore. The Lab runs eBird, the world's premier bird database and the go-to website for all birders. The Lab is also a core research facility, and over the decades has worked closely with National Audubon on projects for conservation and education about birds. What I had not expected, though, was the Wall of Birds.

Upon entering the visitor center, one sees a huge glass front to the building looking out over a lily pond full of birds and insect life. To the right is the information desk and beyond a Wild Birds Unlimited shop.

Binoculars are available for loan and visitors are encouraged to sit and watch what is going on. Around the corner, though, is what for me, was the show-stopper—the Wall of Birds, an enormous mural depicting the evolution of birds, with one member of every bird family in the world painted at life size and placed on a map of the world in an appropriate locale. Painted by Jane Kim at the request of Cornell's director John Fitzpatrick, it is an exquisite work and the product of three years of research, detailed study, and assisted with critical eyes of dozens of ornithologists to make sure all the birds are presented as they might appear in the wild. No museum specimens, these. In addition, some bird families known to have gone extinct at the hand of man are shown in gray, as are life size representations of evolutionary links between dinosaurs and birds. And lurking in a corner by a downstairs doorway is a cayman, the closest living link between today's reptiles and birds.

The story of the mural and how it came to be is wonderfully presented in a book, also titled "The Wall of Birds," by Kim and her partner Thayer Walker. All the birds are there. It is a great read, and will leave you with an urge to travel to Cornell yourself to see it and, not quite so incidentally, Sapsucker Woods. May the birds be with you!



Of Washboards and Ratchets

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It sounded as if the hillside were hiding a washboard orchestra. Short clattering noises rose from the scrub all around me as I walked along the sun-bright edge of Convict Lake, high in the Sierras a few weeks ago. The sound was somewhere between a rapidly whirled ratchet and thimbles and blunt sticks being rubbed over the rugose surface of an old-time washboard. What a racket!

I was being introduced to Blue-winged Grasshoppers on the make. It was mating season in the mountains, and these little creatures were doing their best to be noticed with short, noisy advertising flights announcing, "Here I am!" They didn't get far off the ground, but then there was no need to do that. The noise itself was what mattered, and that came during these short flights, the thin membranes between the stout veins of their blue and black-banded hind wings snapping taut with each wingbeat.

These grasshoppers are pretty nondescript on the ground—not surprising since they have little defense against predators other than invisibility. The Blue-winged Grasshopper is one of the band-winged grasshoppers, a subfamily of grasshoppers in which its members share a characteristic hind wing color scheme, usually with a black band bordering a yellow or red swath on the back portion of wing. The front part of the hind wing is usually clear. These hind wings, however, are kept hidden under the cryptically marked fore wings, which may themselves show distinct light or dark banding.

We do have band-winged grasshoppers here along the coast, and they will, at times, be heard as they fly off from virtually under your feet as you walk our hillside or parkland trails. As with so much wildlife, they see you long before you see them. But we don't have blue-wings here. So you'll have to dig that



washboard out of the garage, don a couple of thimbles, and make your own grasshopper chorus as you while away another glorious Southern California day wandering our sagescrub-lined trails.

A Rare Butterfly for PV Reakfrt's Blue



While I have written a lot about the rare and endangered butterflies of the PV-South Bay region, there are species that, at least locally, are rarer still. Reakirt's Blue is one example. On October 8th, David Quadhamer noticed this one at Harbor Park in a small patch of weedy growth at the north end of the park. Two other records date back to 1982 and 1989.

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Puffins have always held a special place in my heart. Their quirky blend of parrot, diving bird and oversized bumble bee simply makes me smile every time I see one or even think of one. What captivates me even more are the incredible adaptations these birds have evolved to thrive in their unique habitats.

My encounters with small groups of Horned and Tufted Puffins during trips to coastal Oregon and Alaska were memorable. My first sighting of Atlantic Puffins in Maine put me on the list of birders who have seen all three species of puffins. But my encounter with Atlantic Puffins on a recent trip to Iceland left me awe-struck. It was simply astounding to be in a place where six million Atlantic Puffins nest and don't seem to care about humans observing them.

Iceland's rugged landscape boasts towering bird cliffs adorned with Kittiwakes, Razorbills, Murres, Fulmars and Gulls, their collective vocalizations creating a deafening cacophony. However, only cliffs crowned with grassy patches suitable for burrow nesting become the realm of puffins. With oversized bills for digging and feet adept at kicking back loosened soil, these cliffs become their sanctuaries. Some of these bird cliffs are very easy to get to, some require a long drive on dirt roads and directions from locals to find them. Once there, the chainsaw-like sound reveals the puffins' whereabouts.

(See Puffins Everywhere continued on page 11)



Birds of the Peninsula By Vincent Hoyd August - September 2023

Temperatures in August and September were close to average but seemed cool in comparison with the torrid summer of 2022. The big surprise was the rain unleashed by the remains of Hurricane Hilary, which struck Southern California on Aug. 20–21. Torrance received nearly 3 inches of rain.

Dickcissel

Photo: Teresa Palos

Seldom seen in the South Bay is the **Dickcissel** that came to Teresa Palos's feeder in El Camino Village on Oct. 7. The Dickcissel, whose name recalls the male's rough song, is a peculiarly American bird, as it breeds almost entirely in the United States between the Rockies and the Appalachians. It winters mainly in Venezuela, where flocks sometimes number in the millions. The male looks like a smaller version of a meadowlark, while the female resembles a female House

Sparrow with a little vellow on its breast and a reddish patch on the wing. The species has long been a taxonomic riddle, having been placed variously with the New World sparrows, the finches, and the New World orioles until it finally ended up grouped with the Cardinalidae, the group that includes the Red Cardinal, the Western Tanager, the Indigo Bunting, and the Black-headed Grosbeak. The Dickcissel is a rare fall migrant along the West Coast. In the South Bay, the Dickeissel pops up every other year or so during late September and October. Last year one was seen at White Point; others were spotted in 2018 and 2014.

Signal Hill has been a vagrant trap for fall migrants as it was for spring migrants earlier this vear. Rare warblers included Virginia's Warbler. Magnolia Warbler, and Blackpoll Warbler. The hill, which you see just to the south as you drive through Long Beach on the 405, rises 365 feet over the surrounding terrain, and is a natural rest stop for migrants. Not surprisingly, most fall migrants

have been spotted on the north side of the summit. Meanwhile, our regular wintering birds have been arriving. An early Yellow-rumped Warbler was spotted at Magic Johnson Park on Aug. 1, while the main wave began with a bird seen at Harbor Park on Aug. 27. The first White-crowned Sparrow appeared at Madrona Marsh on the fall equinox, Sept. 22. An unusual invasion of Red-breasted **Nuthatches** resulted in widespread sightings from Sand Dune Park to Pt. Fermin in September.

Jeff Boyd had a spectacular find at Golden Shores on Sept. 10: a Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher. This

> flycatcher breeds in mountain woodlands from southeastern Arizona to Costa Rica, and winters in the Andes. Migrants appear every other year or so along the California coast, usually in late September or early October. Don Sterba spotted one in Harbor Park on Oct. 8, 1983; another attracted a lot of attention in Long Beach in Oct. 2020.

> Manuel Duran spotted a Tropical Kingbird at Harbor Park on Sept. 1; another hung out at the Willow Street crossing of the L.A. River from Sept. 16 to the end of the period

(Dick Barth). David Quadhamer saw a Vermilion Flycatcher at Harbor Park on Sept. 9. Jonathan Nakai had a **Grav Flycatcher** at High Ridge Park on Sept. 10. Brad Dawson spotted a **Brown-crested** Flycatcher in Willow Springs Park, just outside our area in Long Beach, on Oct. 5.

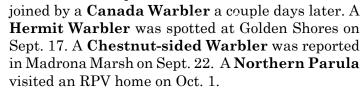
A migrating group of eight Purple Martins dropped by Alta Vicente on Sept. 11 (JN, Naresh Satyan). A pair of Yellow-headed Blackbirds visited Harbor Park on Sept. 17-19; Dick Barth had another along the river on Sept. 29. I saw a wandering, rather than migrating, Oak Titmouse at Harbor Park on Sept. 23. A Vesper Sparrow appeared at Agua Amarga Canyon on Oct. 5 (NS). Seldom seen in the area these days, a Lapland Longspur visited the Willow Street crossing on Oct. 6 (DB, JB).

Fifteen species of warblers have been observed in the area this fall. A wandering Lucy's Warbler was seen at the Willow Street crossing an Aug. 4. An early male **Townsend's Warbler** appeared

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Melody Haughton). The female **Black-and-White** Warbler returned to Madrona Marsh for the ninth year in a row on Sept. 13. The oldest Black-and-White Warbler on record was more than eleven years old. Other B&W Warblers were spotted at Sand Dune

were seen at Sand Dune Park, PV Intermediate School, Madrona Marsh, and Harbor Park. A



Cardinalids included the Painted Buntings seen at the Willow Street Crossing on Aug. 19, one at a home in Manhattan Beach on Sept. 7, and one at Harbor Park on Sept. 24 (Johnny Ivanov). Summer **Tanagers** were at PVE on Sept. 11 (JN, NS), and Harbor Park on Sept. 23 (Bobby T).

at Alta Vicente during the period. were reported, but California **Gnatcatchers** popped at Bluff-top Trail, Pt. Vicente, Alta Vicente,

Terranea, Ocean Trails, and White Point.

The **Tundra Bean Goose** at Magic Johnson Park continued into October near the north pond. Two Band-tailed Pigeons showed up at Madrona Marsh on Sept. 19 (Karen Gleason). White-winged Doves were seen at the top of the hill along Hawthorne Blvd. (Pete Major), at the Korean Bell (Rick Fisher), at a bird feeder in Torrance (Eileen Eriksen), as well as at Willow Springs Park (Becky Turley). Kevin Kosidlak found a Virginia Rail

at Madrona Marsh on Aug. 15 (Jeanne Bellemin, at Ocean Trails on Sept. 29. Also at Ocean Trails, Matthew Rice discovered a Costa's Hummingbird on Oct. 1.

Several good sandpipers paused in the area on their southbound migration. One or two Semipalmated Sandpipers were at the Willow Street crossing Park and a home in RPV. American Redstarts from Aug. 8 to Sept. 2. Derek Hameister espied an

> unusual Baird's Sandpiper in the same place on Aug. 18, while upstream at Wardlow there was a Solitary Sandpiper on Aug. 16 (JB). Kevin Lapp found a **Dunlin** at Dockweiler Beach on Sept. 27.

> Meanwhile, out in the ocean a Manx Shearwater hung around Redondo Canyon on Aug. 17 (Jonathan Feenstra). Kim Moore, on a whale-watching boat out of Long Beach on Aug.

30, was astonished by thousands of shearwaters, including Sooty, Black-vented, and Pink-footed Shearwaters. Naresh Satyan came upon two Parasitic Jaegers and a rare Long-tailed Jaeger at the Palos Verdes Escarpment in the San Pedro

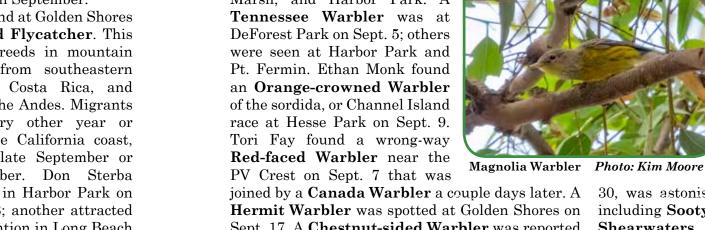
> Channel on Sept. 2. Chef Ito spotted another (or possibly the same) Long-tail on Sept. 25 from the shore. Kimball Garrett identified a Franklin's Gull at the PV Escarpment on Oct. 8.

> A Neotropic Cormorant continued to hang out at the Willow Street crossing on the L.A. River through Sept. 20; another was seen at Polliwog Park on Aug. 16 (Lee Pace). An Acorn Woodpecker popped up at Polliwog Park on Sept. 15. A juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Heron was fishing on the Cabrillo pier on Sept. 16. No

White-tailed Kites were seen in the local area, but kites caroused at Ballona Creek and at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge.

Vincent seeks reports from readers about unusual birds found in the South Bay area (the area west of the Los Angeles River and south of I-105.)

> Send reports to: stephenvincentlloyd@gmail.com







MEET, LEARN, RESTORE, ENJOY

Chapter Calendar

Bird walks and other in person events are limited to people who have been vaccinated. Masks are recommended.

Sunday, Nov. 5, at 8 AM: Bird walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Meet in the parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim above the ranger station.

Sunday, Nov. 12. Field trip to Ballona fresh water marsh. Ann and Eric Brooks leaders. Email motmots@aol.com to take part.

Tuesday, Nov. 21, at 7, in person at Madrona Marsh and via Zoom. Our program is "The ABCs of Native Bees" presented by Krystle Hickman. See page 1 for program details.

Saturday, Nov. 25, at 9. Birding For Kids at Madrona Marsh. Leader: Jazmín Ríos.

Sunday, Nov. 26. Field trip to Upper Newport Back Bay and Muth Interpretive Center. Ann and Eric Brooks leaders. Email motmots@aol.com to take part.

Sunday, Dec. 3, at 8 AM: Bird walk at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Meet in the parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim above the ranger station.

Saturday, Dec. 23, at 5, in person at Madrona Marsh for the Christmas Bird Count potluck and wrap-up. The preliminary count data for the day's effort will be tallied and rarities found celebrated.

Saturday, Dec. 30, at 9 (tentative, check on line for details). Birding For Kids at Madrona Marsh. Leader: Jazmín Ríos.

CBC 2023 December 23

The 58th annual Palos Verdes Peninsula Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Saturday, December 23 this year. Our count area is a circle, 15 miles in diameter, centered on the intersection of PV Drive North and PV Drive East—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 count, known to its devotees as the CBC, provides a long-running census of winter bird populations counted using consistent protocols going back to the first CBC in 1900. The first Palos Verdes CBC took place on December 31, 1966, when 22 hard-working observers tallied 166 species. Over the years, the average number of species seen is 162; the maximum was the 187 species seen in 1994.

To take part in this important survey of local wintering birds, get in touch with Jon Nakai at



Puffins Everywhere

(Continued from page 6)

My time in Iceland in early June coincided with the return of monogamous puffin pairs from a year at sea, reuniting on land. Many pairs reclaimed previous nest sites, a testament to their loyalty. Courtship and copulation occur mostly at sea but other interactions between couples are vividly apparent. The constant head flicking and wing fluttering punctuated their presence outside the burrows. Among these the "billing" display stood out, where both genders approach each other in a low-profile walk, swinging their bills from side to side, culminating in a loud broadside clash. Another intriguing behavior involved a bowing posture, where heads were swaying side to side, often directing towards the ground. Whether these behaviors are part of the courtship that happens on land is unclear to me, but I suspect that it has something to do with it.



The grand prize, however, took the birds arriving from the sea, mouths full of fish meticulously arranged in their large bill and secured by spines on tongue and palate. Often, one puffin would flaunt its catch to another, perhaps its mate. I even witnessed some returning to their burrows with mouths filled with fish-perhaps sustenance for early offspring.

Though I encountered thousands of puffins scattered along Iceland's western, eastern and southern coasts, each individual puffin evoked the same thrill and elation. Their behaviors were endearing and captivating, their personalities seeming to shine through. Admittedly, my affection for puffins colors my perspective, inviting a hint of anthropomorphism, yet the feeling of having entered puffin paradise, where these enchanting creatures reigned, was unmistakable.

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: Ann Dalkey Vice-Pres.: Vacant

Treasurer: Julian Chasin Secretary: Jazmin Rios

Directors: Prevail de Rox, Tracy Drake,

Jess Morton, Jonathan Nakai,

David Quadhamer

Committees:

CBC: Jonathan Nakai, pvbirder@gmail.com Field Trips: Ann and Eric Brooks, motmots@aol.com

Hospitality: Alene Gardner,

alene.gardner@sbcglobal.net Hummin': Jess Morton, jmorton@igc.org

Mailing List: Ann Dalkey

Programs: Jan Gardner, janet.gardner800@gmail.com

Webmaster: Prevail De Rox

kprevailderox@gmail.com

YES: Jazmín Ríos

mjazminrios@pvsb-audubon.org

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Chapter Support

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Please make checks to PV/SB Audubon and mail to: PO Box 2582, Palos Verdes, CA 90274 or donate on line at pvsb-audubon.org/donate-join/



"The A, B, C's of Native Bees" is speaker Krystle Hickman's topic for the chapter meeting on November 21st. She is a National Geographic Explorer Speaker, Artist, Community Scientist, and Photographer based in Los Angeles, California. Through artful photography, Krystle strives to increase awareness of the decline in native bee species as well as highlight their biodiverse ecosystems. Her photography has been featured in The LA Times, children's books, and scientific journals.



Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society P.O. Box 2582 Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

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