

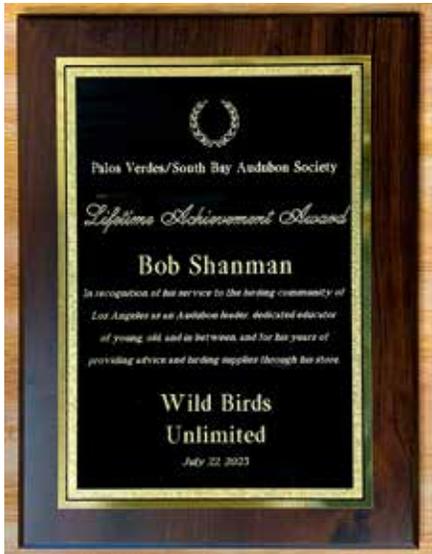


HUMMIN'

www.pvsb-audubon.org

Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

Vol. XLV #5 Sept./Oct. 2023



Bob Shanman - A Lifetime of Achievement

Pick your topic: Advocacy, Birds, Conservation, Education, Field Trips, International bird tours, NGO Leadership, Walk Leader, Wild Birds Unlimited and, of course, Audubon. No one over the last fifty years has done more to advance each of these topics in the South Bay than Bob Shanman. In recognition of all this and more, on July 22nd as customers lined his Redondo Beach store, PV/South Bay Audubon presented Bob with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

The award is named for Shirley Wells, a person who exemplified these same qualities. She was birder extraordinaire. If the East Coast had Roger Tory Peterson, we had Shirley! Her death, in 1977, left a hole in the birding world that this chapter has worked to fill. For more on the award, see page 10.



“The Color of Small” is speaker **Jess Morton**’s topic for the chapter meeting on September 19th, at 7PM, at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. For those not attending in person, a Zoom link to join the program can be found on the website noted above. Nature writer and photographer, poet, bird

walk leader and one of the chapter’s founding members, Jess will combine his many interests in this program to explore what it means to be a small creature, and how that places few limits on what such creatures may look like or do. Ours is a world full of color at every scale. Nature and its denizens exploit them all! It’s up to us to pause once in a while in our busy lives to stop and take notice.

“From **Arachnophobia to Arachnophilia: My Journey through the Spiderverse**” is naturalist, artist and photographer **Kim Moore**’s topic for the October 17th program at Madrona Marsh, at 7 PM, to be held in person and via Zoom.



Just in time for Halloween! Kim will share her photographs of local Spiders and discuss their stories. Of course, a few bird photos will appear in context, too.

Since retiring from a career in information technology, Kim has pursued her interests in nature, photography, and art. A certified naturalist, she participates in environmental education and citizen science activities including butterfly surveys, bird counts, biodiversity studies, and is host for Lorquin Entomological Society and local Bug Chat Zoom meetings.

From the President Siting Lines for the Birds

By Ann Dalkey

It's September, so the White-crowned Sparrows will soon be scuttling about. I've noticed in the past that when they return in fall they are quieter than in spring. Not so some resident birds that always make themselves heard. Just the other night the Great Horned Owls were hooting. It sounded as if they were teaching a juvenile how to hoot, for one voice only produced a low pitched, slightly prolonged hoooot. No change in pitch or additional notes, unlike the other owls. Does that make sense?

Black Phoebes make a living at our house by launching off the wire cages supporting the growing and ripening tomatoes. It's always fascinating to watch these little birds clad in their tuxedo plumage as they snag insect after insect, each time returning to their original launch point. Meanwhile



American Crows and Mourning Doves make their presence known, often raucously. Sometimes the doves make a nest in a hanging basket, at least until the crows make off with their eggs. So far, I've mentioned five bird species, each pursuing its unique life strategy. A fully robust ecosystem requires a full

suite of naturally occurring prey and predators, so necessary for a healthy bird population. In our heavily developed Palos Verdes and South Bay region, we may not have the optimal diversity found in a larger system, but we still have a diverse bird population in our preserves and local native gardens. The native plantings in our urban area demonstrate that any patch is readily utilized by some local fauna.

Our next three program meetings will feature the small fauna that serve as prey for birds and other animals. Following our Summer Vacation in August, Jess Morton's September presentation "The Color of Small" will feature his fascinating photographs of birds and small creatures, some of which may or may not be insects. October's program meeting will feature spiders by Kim Moore, an appropriate topic for that month. Finally, thanks to Krystle Hickman, native bees will be on the program in November in a joint session with the Friends of Madrona Marsh.

Remember, we post notices on our website about future program meetings. There is also a calendar of activities you are welcome to attend. Should you miss a program meeting, they are archived on our website so that you can hear past presentations conveniently at home.

Finally, I would like to mention that the PV/SB Audubon website is being revised. The goal is to have a colorful and easy to use website. We expect it to be up later this year. Three of our chapter members have contributed bird photographs for use on the new website in addition to those already featured on the current website. We hope you enjoy these wonderful photos.

All Things Audubon

In the previous newsletter, I cited the stunning statistic that North American bird populations have dropped by 2.9 billion since 1970. As with any big problem, big solutions are required to address the situation and Audubon provides them in its recent report on power transmission. As our society moves to clean energy, more transmission lines will be needed, but these pose threats to birds if not properly designed.

Also needed is better management of existing facilities. Audubon's plan is described in the Birds and Transmission Report which contains a well laid out discussion, clear and numerous graphics, and, of course, beautiful bird photos (<https://media.audubon.org/2023-08/BirdsAndTransmissionReport.pdf>).

Currently between 8 and 57 million bird deaths are estimated to occur annually in the US due to power line collisions. This sad statistic can be addressed by structuring transmission lines in more bird-friendly ways. For example, configuring the lines horizontally decreases the space and minimizes the potential for bird collisions (see adjacent image). New transmission routes can be planned to limit the amount of land required while avoiding degrading quality habitat areas.

Collision-related bird mortality is related to morphological characteristics such as vision and flight in addition to behavioral characteristics. Not all birds have eagle eyes, many can suffer from poor vision that increases their risk of collisions. Each species has its unique way of foraging and flying, so care is needed to make transmission lines more identifiable. Building horizontally placed lines and providing ultra-violet, infrared, and even LED lighting on the transmission towers, will help birds spot and avoid the transmission lines.

The report includes an example of a Clean Energy Initiative that describes a new 550-mile and 525 KV transmission line located in New Mexico and Arizona called the SunZia transmission project, scheduled to begin construction this year. Its purpose is to deliver clean energy from a 3GW renewable energy from wind farms in New Mexico to Arizona. The route was adjusted to avoid impacts to endangered Rio Grande breeding bird species (Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Southwest Willow Flycatcher). An ultraviolet light-based system was included to make transmission lines more visible to reduce collision mortality.

I hope that you download the report and take a look at it, for this illustrates that positive work can move forward for a better life for birds.

ROUTE PLANNING

Building new transmissions lines on the same rights-of-way as existing lines minimizes the overall transmission footprint— leaving more habitat intact and reducing the chances of transmission line collisions.

LINE CONFIGURATION

Orienting multiple transmission lines horizontally rather than vertically dramatically decreases the amount of space the lines take up—minimizing the potential for bird collisions.

Summer Butterfly & Dragonfly Counts

By Kim Moore

The Summer Palos Verdes Butterfly/Dragonfly Count was held Saturday, July 8th. It was a perfect day, with temperatures in the mid-70s, clear skies, and light breeze. We had twenty-one people surveying at fourteen locations within the PV count circle. A couple of our regular counters were unavailable, and we missed a couple of our usual spots (probably why no Fatal Metalmarks are on the list as they are often found at Gardena Willows). Jess Morton did a yeoman's job of covering five sites. We also had a couple of backyard counters, though not on count day. While those observations will not be recorded in our count data, it is always rewarding to follow butterflies and dragonflies in one's own yard.

A seldom seen Reakirt's Blue was found by Mark Rubke in his yard a couple of days before the count. While it doesn't "count", it's nice to know they are around. Perhaps one will cooperate next year. Janet Gardner is researching a mystery butterfly she found just after count day. While these may not be in our data (and NABA database), such records can always be added to iNaturalist to contribute to community science.

In total we had twenty-four identifiable species and five hundred and fifty individual butterflies. At Madrona Marsh Jeanne Bellemin's team found twenty-four Sandhill Skippers. The Sandhill Skippers were all over the white flowering plant in the fields around the sump. Interestingly, few had been found there since 2015, the last year with reports of good numbers. Now they are back. Other skippers, however, were fewer than usual. Even normally abundant White

Checkered Skippers and Fiery Skippers were hard to find this year.

There was a Ceraunus Blue at Madrona Marsh. They have only been seen in the count circle a few times, so that was a nice sighting. Vincent Lloyd found that the El Segundo Blues were thriving at Torrance Beach. Jess Morton also had a good count of them at Point Vicente.

We noted that the vegetation at Ken Malloy Regional Park (Harbor Lake) was quite dried out. With fewer flowering plants, butterfly numbers there were down. Mike Bell went to Linden Chandler Preserve and noted, "I thought the rainy winter would lead to an abundance of species. What it seemed to bring, was heavy growth of many non-native plant species that crowded/shaded out many host plants, and remain as dead stickups, still impeding native species and presenting a fire hazard." When you go out to the same place repeatedly, you get a good sense of changes in conditions.

Odes (dragonflies and damselflies) were also counted at some locations. While nothing out of the ordinary showed up, Flame Skimmers, Spot-winged Gliders, and Common Green Darners were seen at several sites.

Our butterfly results are entered into the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) database. Their annually published reports provide a tremendous amount of information about the geographical distribution and relative population sizes of North American butterfly species.

Thank you to all the counters. For a complete list of butterflies and dragonflies seen in the summer count, as well as checklists, links to field guide aids, and historical results, visit the website at: <https://pvsb-audubon.org/butterfly-count/>

For more information, contact Kim Moore at kims.sight@verizon.net



American Lady

Photo: Diane Smith



Spot-winged Glider
Photo: Vincent Lloyd

A Tribute to the Rasof Family

By Ann and Eric Brooks

Bea Rasof was a longtime member of Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon, and an energetic participant in our Bird Class and on our field trips. She was an amazing woman, getting her PhD in Child Psychology while in her forties. She worked in Child Abuse programs and after "retiring" developed and implemented conflict resolution programs in grade schools in Carson. In her 80s, she became a docent at the Point Vicente Interpretive Center.

Bea also knew how things were to be organized. On one of her early field trips with our group, lunch did not occur at an acceptable time. Thereafter, she would pointedly remind us when it was getting close to lunch time.

Bea loved traveling, birdwatching, folk dancing and eating. Often at the end of a long day of birdwatching she'd ask if anyone wanted to go dancing. And we think she would have if she could have found a dance hall! Her enthusiasm for folk dance carried over even after a stroke ended her active birding. She had her caregiver take her to the folk dances, with the result he became a dancer himself! (Until the end, she also attended South Bay Chamber Music Society concerts, her wheelchair stationed up front where she could watch the musicians. Perhaps her caregiver is now a chamber music aficionado as well as a dancer.-Ed.)

Bea left us in December of 2012. Her only child, Henry, passed away in April 2022 in his adopted hometown of Denver Colorado. Henry generously left a provision in his will to PV/SB Audubon in his mother's name because he knew how fond she was of birding. We thank the family for the donation and for our lasting memories of the petite dynamo that was Bea Rasof.

Western Flycatcher Returns

By Vincent Lloyd



The North American Classification Committee (NACC) of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) has announced the latest updates to the official checklist of North American birds. The only major change affecting California birds is the reversal of the split of the Western Flycatcher. The Western Flycatcher is one

of the several closely similar birds of the genus Empidonax, which have long been one of the big challenges for amateur birders to identify. The exception was the Western Flycatcher, with its almond-shaped eye ring, yellowish underparts and distinct whistle-like call. That was until 1989, when the bird was split into the Cordilleran Flycatcher of the Rockies and the awkwardly-named Pacific-slope Flycatcher of the west coast. Recently, a large area in the northern Rockies has been studied where these two populations seem to blend together, so NACC has had to admit the error of its ways. The good news is that we no longer have to worry about the identification of these flycatchers when seen in the winter, when they could be either subspecies; the bad news is that many of us have to lower our species count by one. With this change, the Western Flycatcher lives up to its scientific name *difficilis* ("difficult").

The only other change affecting California birds is the split of the Eurasian and North American populations of Northern Goshawk. The North American species will be called American Goshawk (*Accipiter atricapillus*).

White on White
(In five herons and six stanzas)

Brushed with silence
morning's scrim of mist
rises across the lake

a sunshaft charges
the water hyacinth
with a still white bird

wary hieroglyph
the snowy egret
unlocks his wings

think of the white
as the least feather
rotates through light

feel how the stabbed air
has limped close to heal
the frog's empty bed

white against white
the circles spread outward
over the taut canvas

*By Jess Morton
from Shorelines*



Clockwise from left: Great White Heron, Great Egret,
Little Blue Heron (im.), Snowy Egret, Cattle Egret

Birds of the Peninsula

By Vincent Lloyd
June - July 2023

The Bird of The Year in Los Angeles county is undoubtedly the **Bean Goose** that Jon Feenstra found at Piute Ponds in Antelope Valley on March 6. For a while, it flew back and forth between Piute Ponds and the Lancaster Sewage Ponds; later it moved to nearby Apollo Park. For weeks, birders flocked from all parts to see this rarity. It disappeared around the beginning of July, until Chris Dean came upon it sixty miles south at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook, on the northern edge of our area, where it hangs out with the Canada Geese around the north pond along East 120th Street. (If you go there to see it, keep an eye out for the Neotropic Cormorant.) The Bean Goose is a Eurasian species that is accidental in western Alaska but rare in the lower States. This bird is only the eighth record in California. The first occurred in November 2010, surprisingly at the Salton Sea at the southern end of the State. Five sightings have occurred within the last three years. (I suppose it's possible that not all of these sightings were different individuals.)

The Bean Goose has long been considered to consist of two distinct populations, one inhabiting the taiga of northwestern Eurasia and the other breeding in the tundra of northeastern Eurasia. In 2007, the AOU checklist committee split these two populations into separate species.



Bean Goose Photo: Vincent Lloyd



Rose-breasted Grosbeak Photo: Randy Harwood

(The British Ornithological Union, however, has yet to adopt this change.) The two populations are nearly identical and not always distinguishable in the field, but the experts have id'd this year's bird as a **Tundra Bean Goose** — the species most often seen in Alaska. (The Salton Sea goose couldn't be positively identified to species.)

Also at Magic Johnson Park a family of four **Vermilion Flycatchers**, first noticed in April, continued through the end of July. A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** that ought to be in the mountains this time of year, hung around Sofie Shen's backyard in RPV in June. Jonathan Nakai and Naresh Satyan came across a **Phainopepla** at Rancho del Mar High School on July 2. Ellen Tull had a single **Lawrence's Goldfinch** at Friendship Park on July 23. Catherine

Steinberg and Sandrine Biziaux-Scherson from Sea and Sage Audubon found an unusually far south **Yellow-billed White-crowned Sparrow** at Point Fermin on June 5; possibly the same individual was spotted by Adam Johnson at White Point on June 14. This subspecies is resident along the central coast. Nick Ramsey happened upon a single **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Magic Johnson Park on July 14. **Yellow-breasted**

Chats were found by Rob Hamilton at Ocean Trails on June 29 and by Lisa Day at South Coast Botanic Garden on July 22. Ed Griffin had a lost immature **American Redstart** at Ken Malloy Harbor Park on July 29, evidently an early fall migrant. Deanna and Randy Harwood were surprised by a beautiful male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at their feeder on June 13.

Tracy Drake found a handsome male **Indigo Bunting** along the Los Angeles River at 19th Street on July 15; a couple weeks later Jeff Boyd and Dick Barth found both a male and a female 1/4 mile upstream close to Willow Street. They believe this pair are different from Tracy's bird. Jeff spotted a female **Northern Red Bishop** in the same area on Aug 6.

Cactus Wrens were found at Abalone Cove, Filiorum Preserve, Ocean Trails, and near the Portuguese Bend Beach Club. **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** occurred at Pelican Cove.

California Gnatcatchers were spotted at several locations along the south shore of PV from Vicente Bluffs Reserve to White Point.

In the duck department, a pair of **Ruddy Ducks** bred at Madrona Marsh in June. For weeks they proudly swam around followed by nine adorable ducklings. You never know where you might run into a **Greater Roadrunner** in the South Bay, but you probably wouldn't expect to meet one in the parking lot next to the battleship Iowa, as Ethan Pasternak did on June 23. **Costa's Hummingbirds** were seen at Harbor Park, South Coast Botanic Garden, and a home in Lomita.

One of the largest birds on the planet is the **Magnificent Frigatebird** with its 8-foot wingspan. The name "frigatebird" was given by French mariners who conjured up an image of a large warship in the sky; the British similarly called it the "Man-o-War Bird". Frigatebirds are easily recognized by their large size, long black angular wings, and long forked tails. The five species of frigatebirds are all closely similar in appearance; however, only the Magnificent Frigatebird is likely in California. Birds of New

World tropical waters, **Magnificent Frigatebirds** are occasionally seen on the southern California coast in summer (a pair of juveniles was seen at Malaga Cove last September). Recently, Bob Schallman spotted a juvenile frigatebird in Alamitos Bay in Long Beach on July 2, causing a frenzied rush of birders to chase it around the city. In our area, this bird or another was seen from a distance at King Marina on July 24 (Roger Carlson). Another tropical seabird, a **Red-footed Booby**, was spotted off Redondo Beach on July 15 (Henry Chiu and Henry Witsken).

The first migrating **Wilson's Phalarope** was noted on the L.A. River at Dominguez Gap on June 25. The first **Red-necked Phalarope** showed up a month later on Aug. 6 (JB). Kim Moore, Becky Turley and friends had an unusual **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Dominguez Gap on June 23. Jeff Boyd spotted a **Solitary Sandpiper** at Willow Street on July 24; he had another at the Spring Street crossing on Aug. 6.

Barn Owls, resident in the area but seldom seen, were reported near SCBG (Adrian Vilca) and on Challenger Street in Torrance (Chezy Yusuf). An **Acorn Woodpecker** continued at Willow Street. **Nuttall's Woodpeckers** were seen on the Lower Willow Springs Trail in Rolling Hills (JN, NS) and at Harbor Park (Meryl Edelstein, Becky Turley).

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.



Indigo Bunting

Photo: Tracy Drake

Bob Shanman A Life of Achievement

By Jess Morton

Bob Shanman's Lifetime Achievement Award marks only the fourth time the award has been presented over the half century of our chapter's existence. For all of that time, and more, Bob has been a steadfast worker, bettering the environment for birds, both around thousands of homes locally through his Wild Birds Unlimited store, and throughout the greater Los Angeles region as an educator, field trip leader, and steersman for a dozen groups.

Bob was president of Los Angeles Audubon before taking a leadership role with PV/South Bay Audubon, where he served on the board of directors for years, took on the role of treasurer and then became president. He has also played leading and founding roles in other important conservation organizations, especially Friends of Ballona Wetlands, the Friends of Madrona Marsh and South Bay Wildlife Rehab, fundraising for each through special events often associated with his Wild Birds store. His weekly and/or monthly walks at Madrona Marsh and the Ballona Wetlands have introduced hundreds to the delights of birding. How could one not respond to Bob's enthusiasm for the bird in view, whether common or a rarity? Bob's mentorship of young birders has nurtured several of the brightest lights of recent years, giving us a new corps of expert birders to carry on his work.

It is no surprise that customers lined the walls of Bob's store waiting to make a purchase when I arrived. These and hundreds of others had benefited from Bob's birding knowledge and his store's products for decades. Bob had decided to close the store. It was time to retire—and then some. This was a final special closing sale. It looked like all of his fans had come in to say goodbye and pick up a last round of bird feeding supplies.

I felt privileged to stand with Ann Dalkey and our chapter's board of directors to give this Lifetime Achievement Award to Bob. His wife Roberta joined us while Bob regaled all with the story of how he and I and Roberta had met 45 years ago on a foggy morning at the South Coast Botanic Garden. The fog cleared to reveal a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Bob's enthusiasm for that bird is as strong today as it was then. Some things do not change. Fortunately! Daughter-in-law Elise and others took photo after photo as Bob reminisced—and then mugged for the camera with his granddaughter Aviv in his arms.



PV/SB Audubon chapter President Ann Dalkey looks on as Bob Shanman receives his Lifetime Achievement award. Granddaughter Aviv, in his arms, checks things out. Photo: Julian Chasin

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, Sept. 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.

Tuesday, Sept. 19, at 7, in person at Madrona Marsh and via Zoom. Our program is "The Color of Small" presented by **Jess Morton**. See page 1 for program details.

Saturday, Sept. 23, at 9. Birding For Kids at Madrona Marsh. Leader: Jazmín Ríos.

Saturday, Sept. 30. Field trip to Huntington Beach Central Park and Bolsa Chica. Ann and Eric Brooks leaders. Email motmots@aol.com to take part.

Sunday, Oct. 1, 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, Oct. 8. Field trip to Sycamore Canyon (Pt. Mugu State Park) and the Oxnard Plain. Ann and Eric Brooks leaders. Email motmots@aol.com to take part.

Sunday, Oct. 15. Field trip to San Joaquin Marsh. Ann and Eric Brooks leaders. Email motmots@aol.com to take part.

Tuesday, Oct. 17, at 7, in person at Madrona Marsh and via Zoom. Our program is "From Arachnophobia to Arachnophilia: My Journey through the Spiderverse," presented by **Kim Moore**. See page 1 for program details.

Saturday, Oct. 28, at 9. Birding For Kids at Madrona Marsh. Leader: Jazmín Ríos.

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, pvbird@gmail
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

Photos by the author unless stated otherwise.

Chapter Support

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Your donation is tax-deductible \$ _____

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 Color of Small” is speaker **Jess Morton**’s topic for the chapter meeting on September 19th. In this program, Jess combines his many interests to explore what it means to be a small creature, and how that places few limits on what such creatures may look like or do.

“From Arachnophobia to Arachnophilia: My Journey through the Spiderverse” is naturalist, artist and photographer **Kim Moore**’s subject for the October 17th program. Just in time for Halloween, Kim shares her stories and photos of spiders--and birds, of course!



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

Time-sensitive
material
Please deliver promptly

AVIANTICS

By Evi Meyer

