



HUMMIN'

www.pvsb-audubon.org

Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

October/November 2016 Vol. XXXVIII No. 6

'Birds and Other Critters in Florida'

Presented by Dr. Randy Harwood
Tuesday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.
Madrona Marsh Nature Center



American White Pelican

Photo by Randy Harwood

Florida has many places where birders can get good looks and photos of endemic and migratory birds in relative ease. Speaker Randy Harwood will present a few of the best places to see wildlife and birds close-up and in all their glory. Some images of representative animals and birds will be shown as well.

In addition to the birding side, Randy will also share about an unusually productive underwater spot in the heart of the Palm Beach urban scene. Hopefully this short presentation will stimulate questions and feedback for an interesting evening.

Randy has been fortunate to travel with his wife and friends to many wonderful countries for more than 40 years. For the first 25 years, he was primarily visiting

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'Point Vicente Interpretive Center'

Presented by Michael Friedman
Tuesday, Oct. 18, 7 p.m.
Madrona Marsh Nature Center

This month Michael Friedman will present a program on the Point Vicente Interpretive Center: what it is, what it does, and what we anticipate in the future. The beautiful park, located adjacent to the Point Vicente Lighthouse in Rancho Palos Verdes, offers recreational as well as educational opportunities.

The Interpretive Center opened in 1984 with a mission to present and interpret the unique features and history of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The nearly 10,000-square-foot newly expanded Interpretive Center features exhibits on the natural and cultural history of the Peninsula, with a special



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Eared Grebes

Record Setters of the Bird World

By Evi Meyer

Eared Grebes are the most abundant grebes in the world. Not only are they found in the Americas, but their distribution includes Europe, Asia and Africa as well. For that reason alone one might think that there cannot be anything interesting and exciting about this species. But these feisty little water birds hold several world records other than just being the most numerous.

This past summer Jess Morton and I had a chance to participate in field seminars run by the Mono Lake Committee, where we were able to learn interesting facts about these marvelous creatures while observing their arrival in the breeding grounds.

Eared Grebes spend their spring and early summer in the northern and central parts of North America, from where they leave for their wintering grounds in the southern U.S. and Mexico. Along their fall migration route they stop communally at shallow freshwater ponds where they use emergent vegetation to build mating platforms and floating nests to brood their offspring.

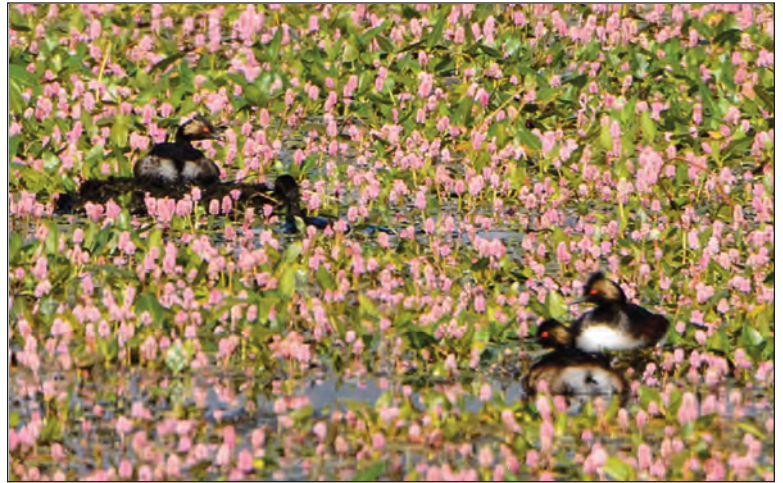
Immediately after breeding, they move on to high-saline staging lakes, such as Mono Lake, for molting and excessive eating. Their main food sources there are brine shrimp (90%) and alkali flies (10%). Due to the length of this staging period, the fall migration of Eared Grebes is the latest of any bird species in North America. Record number one.

It is estimated that about 1.6 million Eared Grebes descend on Mono Lake during their southbound migration in any given year. Trillions of brine shrimp await them as a very nutritious food source. All they have to do is sift them out of gulps of brine with their large tongues, similar to the way baleen whales strain plankton.

They gorge themselves on such masses of food that their body weight doubles. The size of their digestive organs increases dramatically and their flight muscles atrophy. Similar cycles to that of the fall staging area occur three to six times per year, rendering Eared Grebes essentially flightless for a total of nine months each year. This amounts to the longest flightless period of any volant bird in the world. That would be record number two.

When the food supply runs out, the final stage of their fall migration is induced. They prepare for departure by catabolizing much of the deposited fat. Their digestive organ mass is reduced, while their flight muscles and heart size are increased in preparation for flight. These extreme anatomical changes in size and proportion make for another world record in the bird world.

While our trip to Mono Lake was too early in the year to



Eared Grebes on nests in Mono Lake

Photo by Jess Morton



Eared Grebe

Photo by Evi Meyer

see the millions of Eared Grebes staging on the lake, our birding group did visit some nearby freshwater lakes where many were in the process of constructing nests. It was amazing to witness them diving for vegetation and heaping it onto their floating nests.

On those same lakes we also saw grebes that had arrived early in migration and were already done with breeding. We delighted in watching those parents carry their offspring on their backs while the other parents fed them small fish. Unfortunately for the young, this luxurious lifestyle is very short lived. After seven to ten days on their parents' backs the youngsters are jettisoned, and together with the adults, they must fly on to the staging lakes. But those have their own rewards with an abundance of food.

Eared Grebes are aquatic marvels. Their adaptations to survive and thrive in the harsh brine conditions are both exquisite and crazy. I am thrilled to have had the opportunity to learn more about their biology while attending the field seminars. As a result I have gained a deep appreciation for these critters and will look at them differently when they show up in our neck of the woods.

Mono Lake and Aquabats

By Jess Morton

An unimpressive pillar was all that marked the border. On the east side, in vertical letters was “Nevada,” and on the west, “California.” It was a long time ago, and somewhere in my archives there’s a photo of this young fellow with dark hair and beard sitting beside it. Then, I got back in my old black Ford and continued through the high mining country of the eastern Sierras on my way to Los Angeles, where I would spend the rest of my life.

It was high summer, the country dry and hot, the road (395 these days) dusty and incredibly long. Cresting a rise, the road began a precipitous descent into a valley far below with a sight I will never forget. Blue filled the valley, an astonishing sheet of water thousands of feet above sea level, plunked down where only forest and rocky hillsides ought to be. It was, and still is, Mono Lake.

The lake is much smaller than when I first saw it because of water diversions to slake the thirst of Angelenos like myself, but its level has been stabilized (more or less) through a combination of conservation and public action. That is a story for another time, part of it told in the earliest issues of *Hummin’* and all of it available from the Mono Lake Committee (www.monolake.org) which you should know if you don’t already.

There are now boardwalks leading to both the north and south sides of the lake, making access to the lake much easier than it once was. There are markers along the boardwalks showing dates and corresponding lake levels. The first you come to is for 1941, when the lake level was at 6,817 feet and diversions by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power began. By a quirk of timing, the lake level stood at exactly 6,800 feet above sea level when I first saw it. Markers on each boardwalk show where it was at the time. I now have photos of me standing by each. Far in the background and scarcely visible is the Mono Lake of today.

But Mono Lake still astonishes me. As a birder, I have known bits about its ecosystem for years. It is not highly diverse, but it is incredibly productive. Brine shrimp and alkali flies form the base of a system that supports a huge nesting colony of California gulls and in fall, most of the eared grebes in the world gather on the lake to fatten up before their long migratory flights south. There are many other birds here, too. Osprey, even great horned owls, nest in or on the tufa towers around the lake. Shorebirds gather here in migration, working along the shoreline or, in the case of phalaropes, feeding in the lake.

I was with a group of birders when one of them, who knows my interest in

insects, pointed out a strange small gray creature sitting on the water near the clouds of alkali flies swarming the shoreline, foam and bits of emergent tufa close to shore. In fact, it was not alone. A few others like it were on the water too, and judging from the way the alkali flies avoided them when they came too close, they were all potential predators. They were clearly insects, their six long legs stretching out flat against the surface keeping them afloat, but what kind was a mystery.

My first impression was that they were flies, but then decided that flies don’t behave this way, skating over the surface of a lake. They acted and looked somewhat like tiger beetles, not that I know of any tiger beetle that hunts on water either. Those just seemed to me a bit more likely than some sort of fly.

I was not able to get a really good look at these insects, whatever they were, through my binoculars to tell for sure. This is one place where a camera comes in handy, though I must say trying to get one in focus through the viewfinder was even more frustrating than through the binoculars. Nevertheless, I took a bunch of shots and hoped some would turn out. They did, and they were clearly flies. Amazing flies, as it turns out. Aquabats!

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emphasis on the Pacific gray whale. This premier whale watch site provides spectacular opportunities to view the annual migration of the Pacific gray whale from December through April.

Michael, a 45-year Peninsula resident, works as a docent and serves on several committees at the Center. After working as an attorney for 40 years, he retired and joined Los Serenos de Los Point Vicente in 2015 as a docent. Besides conducting school tours, he is serving on the Speakers Committee, Junior Docent Committee, and Finance Committee.

"I have always had an interest in nature, especially animals, prehistoric to the present, which includes those that fly in the sky," Michael said.

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warm-water locales for SCUBA diving and underwater photography. When he took a group of wildlife enthusiasts to East Africa in 2003, he attempted to shoot with "long" lenses above water. Africa also got him hooked on birding as well as the presence of almost any wild thing.

Randy has been organizing "adventure and dive" travel excursions for 30-plus years. He recently visited Machu Picchu, the Ballestas Islands and the Peruvian Amazon.

**Royal Terns***Photo by Randy Harwood**LAKE, from Page 3*

I still don't know all the details of their biology, but what I have learned—once again—is that whatever you can imagine something doing, nature does it already and often in a fashion you could not even have dreamed of. So here are these flies living on the surface of this highly saline Mono Lake, poaching the occasional alkali fly or brine shrimp and probably more often, scavenging small critters that have drowned, of which there are plenty. But these are, well, flies. And fly they do. However, considerable skill is required here because they are not waterproof. Their legs spread their weight enough that they don't penetrate the meniscus while they are moving or sitting on the lake surface. Getting airborne and landing is another matter.

That's where the aquabatics comes in. They use a combina-

tion of jumping and delayed wing flapping so that neither wing touches the surface where it would get wet, and the legs, if they do penetrate the surface, don't go so deep the body gets wet. Landing on the water is more bizarre—here the fly arrives onto the water listing to one side or the other so that three legs on one side spread out onto the surface

**Aquatat of Mono Lake***Photos by Jess Morton*

to help cushion the landing as the other three legs descend to the surface. Aquabat flies, indeed!

All this is irrelevant to the gull that comes along the shore, mouth open to scoop up as many insects as it can. That's a pretty bizarre sight, too—gulp, gulp, as it charges into the next mass of bugs. Mostly this gull is stuffing itself with alkali flies, but there's probably the occasional tiger beetle (lots of them on shore) and maybe even, here and there, an aquabat fly.

Life and death go on at Mono Lake as they have done for half a million years or more. Soon the grebes will be in for their time. Then, next year, the gulls will be back to nest. And the brine shrimp will flourish, alongside the alkali flies and all this incredible richness of Mono Lake. Maybe you'll be there, too. It's an amazing place.

Salton Sea — A Vanishing Bird Haven

By Garrison Frost
Director of Marketing & Communications, Audubon California

Located about 130 miles east of San Diego, the Salton Sea is a study in contradictions. It is massive, yet practically unknown to most Californians. The landscape is barren and apocalyptic, but full of life. It is natural, but man-made. The environment puts birds at risk, but it is also vital for their survival.

More than 300 bird species rely on the deep water, shoreline, mudflats, and wetlands at the Salton Sea, as well as the river channels and agricultural drains leading into it. Tilapia live in the deeper waters, providing essential food for many species, including California Brown Pelican, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, and Caspian Tern.

Perhaps the sea's greatest value for birds is its ability to support very large numbers of waterbirds during the winter months, including up to 90% of North America's Eared Grebes, 50% of Ruddy Ducks, and 30% of the American White Pelicans. The mudflats and shorelines are also essential for hundreds of thousands of shorebirds.

The Salton Sea has hosted two Christmas Bird Counts for decades, and the lake draws thousands to birding festivals and other events.



Salton Sea birds

Photo by T. Patel

Beginning in 2018, thanks to a 2003 agreement between the State of California and Southern California water districts, the Salton Sea will get a lot less water from the Colorado River, eventually up to 40 percent less. The shrinking sea will also expose up to 64,000 acres of the lakebed and result in massive dust storms that could create the worst air pollution crisis in North America. Tens of thousands of acres of habitat will disappear.

The State of California hasn't fulfilled its promise to pay for habitat restoration and dust mitigation in advance of the 2018 deadline. But in the last year, the state named an assistant secretary for Salton Sea policy to build stakeholder support for a new management plan for the sea. Gov. Jerry Brown included \$80 million in his budget for Salton Sea restoration.

Audubon California and a number of other conservation groups believe that now is a rare opportunity. "There's just no way that you can talk about doing flyway-level bird conservation in California and not throw your weight into finding a solution at the Salton Sea," said Audubon California Executive Director Brigid McCormack. "The challenges are daunting, but there hasn't been a better time to make real progress than right now."

Audubon California is fully participating in the state process, offering testimony before the State Water Resources Control Board and the many subcommittees created as part of the management planning process. Audubon California is also working with Point Blue Conservation Science to provide the state with detailed habitat map and develop a monitoring program to measure change in the sea to bird populations.

"Ultimately, the State of California is going to need to make a substantial, sustained investment in restoring the Salton Sea," McCormack said. "Our engagement now will help ensure this is done right—that critical bird habitat is protected, and the toxic dust no longer threatens local communities."



Great Blue Heron

Photo by theiir (on Flickr)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Birds Facing Many Challenges

By David Quadhamer

Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon and the Environmental Priorities Network are co-sponsoring a public forum on climate change and its effects on wildlife. The forum will take place on Oct. 22 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pacific Unitarian Church located at 5621 Mon-

temalaga Drive in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Environmental groups will be hosting tables from 9 to 10 a.m. Dave Weeshoff, the conservation chair of San Fernando Valley Audubon, and Tracy Drake, manager of the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, will be giving presentations. Dave will talk about the 2014 National Audubon report on birds and climate change. Tracy will talk about her own local observations on the impacts of climate change on wildlife. For more information, please contact Conservation Chair Lillian Light at lklight@verizon.net or (310) 545-1384.

* * *

Climate change isn't the only threat to birds and their habitats. The Coastal California Gnatcatcher recently survived an effort by development groups in Southern California to delist it from the protections of the Endangered Species Act. It was designated as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1993. The California Gnatcatcher was once thought to be a local form of the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher.

The California Gnatcatcher relies on coastal sage scrub habitat. Development and habitat conversion have significantly reduced the amount of coastal sage scrub habitat. Some estimates say that as little as 10% of the original coastal sage scrub habitat in California remains today. If you haven't seen a California Gnatcatcher, they can be found locally along our coast.

California Gnatcatchers are small, blue-gray songbirds about 4.5 inches long. They have darker feathers on their backs and lighter, grayish-white feathers on their undersides. Male California Gnatcatchers have a black cap during the summer. They have long, mostly black tails with white outer tail feathers. They have a white eye ring. Their diet consists of mainly insects and occasionally spiders. The gnatcatchers nest from late February to mid-July and each nest typically contains three to five eggs.

* * *

The Salton Sea in southeast California is facing a looming crisis. The Salton Sea is a critical stopover for birds in the Pacific Flyway. The water level could drop by 20 feet in the next 15 years, exposing 100 square miles of lake bottom. This

would not only be a significant loss of bird habitat, but strong winds would create toxic dust clouds making the air quality in the surrounding areas even worse than it already is. The salinity of the Salton Sea is also increasing. If it gets high enough, fish in the Salton Sea will not be able to breed. It is almost to that point.

Audubon California is working to help preserve the Salton Sea and it is looking to get people informed about the issues facing the Salton Sea. Audubon California is also looking to get Audubon chapters involved. Thus, it will be working on comprehensive bird data collection, detailed mapping, public education and policy advocacy. There is more information about the Salton Sea in the article that Garrison Frost from Audubon California wrote on page 5 in this issue .

* * *

As the school year starts up again, we are getting a lot of interest in our Audubon YES program. Students volunteer at local habitat restoration events to earn credits to qualify for an Audubon YES award. They help to restore and preserve habitat for our birds and other wildlife. You can help at these events as well and see what our Audubon YES volunteers are accomplishing.

There is ongoing habitat restoration at the Madrona Marsh. Volunteers are needed to pull weeds on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Additional habitat restoration work is done on Saturdays from 8:45 a.m. to noon. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy also has volunteer opportunities for habitat restoration. They are held most Saturdays at locations around the peninsula and are from 9 a.m. to noon. Check their website (www.pvplc.org) for more details on where they are working.

We are looking for help preparing our newsletter for mailing. We have a small group of dedicated volunteers that meet at Wild Birds Unlimited, typically on a weekday morning, and get *Hummin'* ready for mailing. It is a lot of work, but more volunteers will help get the job done a lot faster. Please let me know if you're interested in helping with this.

We offer a number of bird walks each month throughout the South Bay. Our walk leaders are very knowledgeable and are happy to help with bird identifications. Our bird walks are a great opportunity to potentially see some of these threatened or endangered birds.

At our October meeting, Michael Friedman will give a presentation on the Point Vicente Interpretive Center and the History of Palos Verdes. In November, Dr. Randy Harwood will talk about "Birds and Other Critters in Florida." In January, Garry George from Audubon California will give a presentation on the Salton Sea. The calendar in this newsletter has a list of our meetings and bird walks. Please join us!

Butterfly Count Results In

By Tracy Drake & Madrona Staff

Most people listen with silent wonderment when we talk about how we track and count our local butterfly population. The two things that amaze them most are that we can identify them and we can count each individual. It takes persistence to learn the types of butterflies; it is an amazing process as well as hard work. You have to know the butterflies of the summer season, understand their flight behavior and their preferred habits.

Some of our local butterflies are tiny, the size of your little fingernail (Western Pygmy Blue), and some are huge, nearly double the size of a hummingbird (Western Tiger Swallowtail). Because we have so many devoted staff and volunteers associated with Madrona, who know and understand the lives of butterflies, we again hosted the annual Palos Verdes South Bay Butterfly Count on July 10.

The day was warm and sunny — ideal for butterflies. Fourteen people volunteered, 24 locations were covered across a 15-mile area that comprises our official count circle. The center of the circle is the Palos Verdes Reservoir located near the corner of Palos Verdes Drives North and East. The circle extends south to include San Pedro and Palos Verdes and part of Long Beach, west though Torrance, Redondo and Hermosa Beach, north through Gardena just past the 91 freeway, and east through Carson to the L.A. River where it crosses the 710 Freeway.

It is a lot of area to cover, but 14 staff and volunteers managed to do so. This year, being the fourth year of drought, we had very low expectations because the last couple of years the counts were low. This year we observed, 1,032 individuals representing 29 species including one sub-specie and the only endangered species in our count area — the El Segundo Blue Butterfly. This is one of the highest number of species ever counted in our area. On average,

spanning the last seven years, we usually observe about 27 species and average seeing 1,110 individual butterflies. Looking at the numbers, it appears as if butterfly populations are doing well. In fact, this is true. What is interesting is *where* we are now seeing the greatest numbers.

According to past data, areas that host a lot of species include native plant gardens, large demonstration gardens, parts of the count circle under restoration, and canyons where there are an abundance of native plants that had water in winter. They host more species and more individuals than do parks, sumps, open space on hillsides, and residential yards.

While in the past we saw more species and individuals in gardens, restored areas and canyons than other places described, the count difference between the types of locations was not significant. This year the difference in observations between these types of locations was very significant.

This year, 60 percent of both the different types of species and the number of individuals observed were seen at Madrona Marsh Preserve and Native Plant Garden, the Gardena Willows, and the South Coast Botanic Garden — only 4 of 24 locations. Add to that the data from the canyons and the numbers jump another 12% — up to 72%.

The rest of the count circle, comprising 17 different parks, sumps, and unrecovered open spaces, accounts for only 5 percent of the species seen and only 17 percent of the individuals counted. An average of 4.9 different species were seen in these areas.

In the past 35 years of the count we can say with certainty that butterfly populations are very dynamic and ebb and flow according to many variables. Some we know and understand, such as the abundance of food for the caterpillar and



A Marine Blue

Photo by Tracy Drake

the adult butterfly will be reflected in population size and range. Also, wind direction, speed and duration play a role in what we observe. The amount of time the butterfly spends in each phase of its life cycle is an unknown variable possibly due to weather. It is possible that we saw a lot of species because we happen to count on a day when a lot of adults recently emerged from their chrysalises. Certainly predators play a role too but we are uncertain to what extent. Yet this year, some butterflies were largely absent, even in areas where food was still abundant. For example, in years past we have counted more than 100 Acmon Blues, but this year we counted only 12 individuals although the food sources were plentiful in multiple locations.

In summary, this year shows a new trend. The importance of our local gardens and preserves to butterflies is incredibly significant, especially during times of drought. Maybe you have a native plan garden — and if you can observe more than five species, your garden also is very important habitat for our local butterflies.

Thank you very much to all of the people who assisted us with this count. We have learned a lot this year and hope to continue to in the future, with your help. Our next count will be held in late March or early April 2017 — hope to see you then!

Your Backyard Habitat



By Dr. Constance M. Vadheim
CSU Dominguez Hills

California wood mint *Stachys bullata*

Ah, the warm dry days of fall! In some gardens, butterflies, pollinators and birds are having a hard time finding things to eat. Fortunately, several native plants in the Sunflower family are at their peak right now. Among the prettiest is the California goldenrod.

California goldenrod grows in many Southern California plant communities, in places that are moist — or at least seasonally so. It's a perennial with medium gray-green leaves, many of which are at the base of the plant. Like many wetland perennials, California goldenrod spreads via underground stems (rhizomes), allowing it to spread in wet years. That's why some gardeners prefer to grow it in a contained area.

California goldenrod is a fantastic habitat plant. It produces thousands of small, sunflower heads along its wand-like stalks. The flowers attract everything from hummingbirds and butterflies to fall flying pollinators and beetles. Blooming from late summer through fall, the flowers add a fantastic golden note to a garden

that otherwise lacks fall color.

The plant, with other goldenrods, is used medicinally; the dried powdered leaves are used to disinfect skin sores. The whole plant makes a wonderful yellow dye and the leaves can be used for tea.

Goldenrods are easy to grow. They like sun and will bloom best in full sun. They particularly like clays, but will grow just fine in most local soils. While quite drought tolerant, they look best with occasional summer water. Cut the plants back to the



ground in early winter, once birds have eaten their fill of seeds.

Goldenrods are great around fountains, in rain gardens and dry swales, in mixed beds, planters or pots. They are fairly tall (up to 4 feet) and may need staking. That's all they require to provide you with food, dyes, medicine and hours of enjoyment.

To learn more about this plant, please visit: <http://mother-natures-backyard.blogspot.com/2014/09/plant-of-month-september-california.html>



For more information on growing and purchasing this plant, visit the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. You can also learn about local native plants at the "Out of the Wilds and Into Your Garden" series on the first Saturday of each month at the center.

MEET, LEARN, RESTORE, ENJOY

Chapter Calendar

Events

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 7 p.m.:

PV/South Bay Audubon board meeting at Madrona Marsh. Audubon members and friends are welcome.

Tuesday, Oct. 18, 7 p.m.: Audubon Third Tuesday Get-Togethers. Our speaker for the night will be Michael Friedman. Michael will be presenting a program on the Point Vicente Interpretive Center. Come to Madrona Marsh to socialize with friends and to enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Tuesday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.: Audubon Third Tuesday Get-Togethers. Dr. Randy Harwood will report on "Birds and Other Critters in Florida." Come to Madrona Marsh to socialize and enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Field Trips

PLEASE NOTE: Due to construction at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, all second Sunday bird walks there are cancelled indefinitely.

Tuesday, Oct. 4, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Ron Melin and friends on a ramble around a great local birding area. Meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

Wednesday, Oct. 5: Birding with Bob. Bob Shanman leads bird walks to different destinations every first Wednesday of the month. For details, visit www.torrance.wbu.com and click on "Birding with Bob."

Saturday, Oct. 8, 9 a.m.: PVPLC Natural History Walk to Lower Portuguese Bend Reserve. Follow Sandbox Trail ascending through grasses and low shrubs for nice views

of the Pacific Ocean. Easy. For details, visit www.pvplc.org.

Sunday, Oct. 9, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.

Audubon leaders Steve Dexter, Manuel Duran and Ed Griffin will lead this walk in the garden, located at 26300 Crenshaw Blvd. in PV. There is a minimal charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation, or you can join there.

Tuesday, Oct. 11, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See Oct. 4 for details.

Wednesday, Oct. 12, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leader Bob Shanman. Meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

Saturday Oct. 15, 3 p.m.: Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Walk to Switchback Trail at Trump National Golf Club. Walk the switchback trail to the beach. Learn about local geology and fall blooming habitat. Watch the sunset from beautiful Founders Park. Moderate. Visit www.losserenos.com/pvic.htm.

Sunday, Oct. 16, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at Ballona Wetlands with Bob Shanman. Visit www.torrance.wbu.com.

Tuesday, Oct. 18, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See Oct. 4 for details.

Saturday, Oct. 22, 8:30–10:30 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leaders Tracy Drake and Dinuk Magamma. Meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

Tuesday, Oct. 25, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See Oct. 4 for details.

Tuesday, Nov. 1, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See Oct. 4 for details.

Wednesday, Nov. 2: Birding with Bob. Bob Shanman leads bird walks to different destinations every first Wednesday of the month. Visit www.torrance.wbu.com.

Wednesday, Nov. 9, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh. See Oct. 12 for details.

Saturday, Nov. 12, 2 p.m.: PVPLC Natural History Walk to Portuguese Bend Reserve. Walk through an area of beautiful coastal sage scrub habitat regrown after the 2009 fire and later refreshed by rain. Moderate to strenuous. For details, visit www.pvplc.org.

Sunday, Nov. 13, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. See Oct. 9 for details.

Sunday Nov. 13, 1 p.m.: Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Walk to Abalone Cove Shoreline Park. Tour the tide pools teaming with fascinating marine life. Visit www.losserenos.com/pvic.htm

Tuesday, Nov. 15, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See Oct. 4 for details.

Sunday, Nov. 20, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at Ballona Wetlands with Bob Shanman. Visit www.torrance.wbu.com.

Saturday, Nov. 26, 8:30-10:30 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leaders Tracy Drake and Dinuk Magamma. Meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

Tuesday, Nov. 29, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See Oct. 4 for details.

NOTE: PV/SB Audubon field trips are generally free, but donations are appreciated. Visit www.pvsb-audubon.org or www.southbaycalendar.org.

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South Coast Botanic Garden: Steve Dexter, Manuel Duran and Ed Griffin
Bluebird Nest Project: Open
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Christmas Bird Count: David Moody, compiler;
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