



HUMMIN'

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Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

August/September 2011 Vol. XXXIII No. IV

The Eastern Fox Squirrel: The Battle in Our Backyards

By Martin Byhower

Often I am asked questions like, “What do I do about all the crows that are chasing away the songbirds?” or “Where did these squirrels come from and what can I do about them?” Here are some musings regarding the latter.

Despite the fact that the tree squirrels that have moved into your neighborhood during the last decade or so are inarguably cute, clever and (for some) fun to watch, they are not welcome to those with backyard fruit trees. However, the non-native, invasive Eastern Fox Squirrel is far more than a backyard crop menace; it is a ravenous predator on the eggs and fledglings of any bird nests it can reach (and it is very good at reaching most nests). Although there is no ecological harm done when the squirrels eat the nestlings of the equally invasive European Starling or House Sparrow, the squirrels lack a discriminating palate.

Unfortunately, most non cavity-dwelling native species are vulnerable. (Fortunately, folks who are trying to help native birds like Western Bluebirds recolonize the area build boxes for that species that are designed with a small enough hole and deep enough bottom that the squirrels can't reach in and pull out the babies.)

About 10 years ago, I did battle with a local paper over the squirrel issue. The

See Squirrels, Page 2

Recovering the Blues

By Jess & Donna Morton

Good things have continued to happen with coastal habitat restoration for the El Segundo blue (ESB) butterfly since the discovery of this species at the Point Vicente Interpretive Center was reported in *Hummin'* three years ago. Not only has habitat quality and extent grown, but occupied territory has continued to expand. Strong populations now exist at Torrance beach and Terranea at the northern and southern ends of the range, with smaller colonies know in between.

On June 6, 2011, we found exceptionally early butterflies in the Torrance Beach restoration area, where extensive plantings of dune buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*) have become well established in recent years. The caterpillar of the ESB feeds on only this one plant and the pupa, into which the caterpillar turns, lives in the soil at the base of the plant. When the winged adult — to us, the butterfly — emerges from the pupa, it will spend what time it has close to dune buckwheat. Typically, the adult lives only a few days before succumbing to a predator or the battering of nature, just enough time to carry out the essential task of reproduction. The flight period for the entire population is a

See Blues, Page 3



El Segundo Blue Butterflies have migrated to Palos Verdes. Above is a mating pair and, below, a male.

Photos by Donna Morton



See Blues, Page 3

Squirrels, from Page 2

paper's information source was (ironically) a local animal control official who insisted that the squirrels were a native species from further north, called the Douglas Squirrel. What I believe was in fact happening at the time, and what I am convinced is the real reason for the explosion in squirrel populations is that well-meaning animal rescue people (to whom some refer as "Humaniacs") were collecting and "rehabilitating" injured squirrels from the scattered location in which they occurred at the time, and then giving them to animal control agencies to release in "appropriate locations." Unfortunately, as with all invasive species, releasing them anywhere simply spreads the problem.

What is commonly believed to be the original source of the Eastern Fox Squirrel in Southern California is an old Civil War Veterans home in Los Angeles. The squirrels were ostensibly brought in to make the vets feel "at home" (either because they grew up watching their cute antics or because they used to hunt and eat them.)

However, during the 1970s and 1980s, I recall seeing the squirrels in a smattering of locations such as the South Coast Botanic Garden and other parks, golf courses, etc. Mitch Heindel has told me that during and prior to that period it was possible, and in fact a common practice, for cemeteries and parks to actually "mail order" the squirrels and release them onto their facilities to give folks a more "at home" feeling in Southern California. In other words, having squirrels was a business investment. I don't believe that the magnitude and pattern of the expansion of the squirrels can be explained by the expansion of a single veterans home population. I think that at some point, the "squirrel rehabbers" helped the squirrels reach "critical



A fox squirrel eats a bird at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park.

Photo by Tom Underwood. Reprinted with permission.

mass", and they started migrating along telephone lines faster than even telemarketers could use them.

The only early concern that was expressed about the invasion of the fox squirrels was that they may compete with the native Gray Squirrels of the foothills and local mountains (to whom native birds in that region have adapted). Whether this is an issue is still open to debate, but the bigger problem is this; there was previously no arboreal predator quite like the fox squirrel in the coastal lowlands. (Perhaps the closest niche was that of the gray fox, which is nearly extinct locally). Our native ground squirrel doesn't climb trees. So, many native tree-nesting birds are taking a real hit, along with backyard gardeners. A lot of people who think they are wildlife lovers deliberately feed the squirrels, exacerbating the problem.

There are many ironies in this story. Our native squirrel, the "Beechey" California ground squirrel, is harmless and even beneficial. It naturally irrigates compacted areas so water can penetrate more deeply, it digs the holes valued by the seriously imperiled Burrowing Owl, and it is an important food source for large local raptor species. Yet it is the species that is pursued and exterminated by local businesses and municipal gov-

ernments, while the "cute little tree squirrels" remain unpersecuted. The difference? Well, the ground squirrels have the annoying habit of burrowing, which messes up pretty lawns but more importantly, opens cities and businesses up for liability suits if someone trips in one of their holes while in their park or on their golf course. You will hear unfounded excuses like, "They are a public health nuisance because they can carry the plague!" So they are gassed, trapped and perhaps worst of all, poisoned by chemicals that

cause internal bleeding and a slow death, not only to the squirrels but also to the scavengers and predators that prey upon them. All the while, the Eastern Fox Squirrels sit with impunity in their arboreal perch.

The fox squirrels are very easy to trap with a "Have-a-Heart" live trap; however, euthanizing them is another matter (relocation is a lofty goal but not a real option). Municipal animal control departments formerly did the "dirty work" of accepting and disposing of live fox squirrels if residents trapped them, but as far as I know, none of them will do this any more, which also exacerbates the problem with exploding populations of raccoons, possums and even feral cats. All of these overpopulated "meso-predators," native or not, are here, expanding, and upsetting the natural balance, precisely because humans have created the ideal conditions for them and wiped out their larger predators and competitors like bobcats, coyotes and mountain lions, to name a few.

The fox squirrels may pose a particular challenge since they don't even have a natural predator in our region. I have seen Cooper's Hawks take them, and I have heard that Red-tails will do likewise; however, raptor rehabbers have

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Report from the National Audubon Board of Directors

By Jess Morton

Chapters and flyways! That is the simple message I took away from Audubon's May National Board of Directors meeting in Pasadena. Chapters lie at the heart of the grassroots network that defines Audubon's unique place in the forefront of America's conservation movement. Audubon's ability to protect birds and the things that make them possible—clean air, clean water, diverse habitats—depends on the Chapters network, a grass roots that reaches out to touch every aspect of this nation's natural heritage. If that power has lain dormant within Audubon for the past few years, it has clearly come to the forefront of the new strategic planning effort now under way.

A second theme from the meeting is an emphasis on flyways. While the name Audubon is always associated

with birds, flyways offer a dynamic and readily understood concept around which to organize Audubon's conservation work, suggestive of wide-ranging coverage and big objectives. Conservation programs already under way, such as the Barrow to Baja seabird campaign and the Mississippi River and Atlantic Flyway initiatives fit neatly, but so do distributed place-based programs. The network of Chapters, each with their local conservation programs, and Audubon's IBA program, offer nationwide protection of the resources that birds and other wildlife in these flyways need.

The trick, of course, is to put all of these elements into a coherent framework that maximizes Audubon's effectiveness. That is the aim of the strategic plan being developed now. The plan will have a clear conservation focus, and because birds and Audubon are insepara-

ble, we will let birds lead us to our work. While birds and their conservation will provide the context for what we do, Audubon's long-term effectiveness will depend on how well the public understands that the resources we advocate for and protect are exactly the same clean air, clean water and healthy environments the public depends on, too.

All parts of Audubon are involved in this effort. Though staff is doing most of the work in drafting the plan, the Steering Committee includes Board and Chapter representatives, and several task forces are pulling in ideas from the disparate parts of Audubon. I have the privilege of being on both the Steering Committee and Chapters Task Force to help assess the state of Audubon as it is and where it should go in the next few years, ensuring its effectiveness as the leading conservation organization in America.

Blues, from Page 1

mere two or possibly three months.

By July 4, dozens of the blues could be found at both Torrance and Terranea, as seen in the photos accompanying this article. While males dominated the early part of the flight period, females made up a majority of the butterflies we have found in July. A check of the Interpretive Center's native garden showed that the ESB is still in residence there, though in very small numbers.

It is the male butterfly that has blue on the upper surface of the wing. The females are a rich brown. Both show orange bands on upper and lower wing surfaces and the lower wings are marked with bold black spots on a light ground. The pattern of orange, black and white is characteristic of ESB, though we have a close relative elsewhere on the Palos



A female El Segundo Blue Butterfly

Photos by Donna Morton

Verdes Peninsula that has very similar markings. One thing that we have noticed about the ESB is that the female often shows a narrow extension of the orange hind wing band onto the forewing.

Over the past three years, the value of the habitat at Terranea has increased dramatically where fine stands of dune buckwheat have developed all along the bluffs. Much of this new habitat has not yet been occupied by El Segundo blues, but the original colony has expanded, with a big population now well established around the parking lot adjacent to the Fisherman's Access and good numbers of butterflies are to be found all the way down to Nelson's Restaurant. It is only a matter of time until the blues round Long Point and start colonizing

eastward toward Terranea's small beach.

The PV/SB Audubon Bird Quiz

By Martin Byhower

Last month's birds included some passerine birds that are fairly commonly seen here, but only one is a regular resident. Typically, when someone asks me to identify a bird that was seen, my first response is, "Did you get a photo?" Fortunately, many of you are much better at bird photography than I am. But getting a good photo is not always easy. However, almost *any* photo can narrow down identification surprisingly well: certainly much better than memory, in most cases.

But, to be honest, I initially mis-called one of the IDs because I made assumptions and didn't look closely enough at key details. The way my brain works, I am far better at identification in the field, when I have habitat, context, behavior and sound cues.

The birds in the pictures are all yellow to yellow-green. Proportions and bill size and shape on the birds on the top and left scream "insectivore" and thus suggest the birds are warblers (though they certainly don't rule out other groups). The top bird, however, is easiest. Lemon yellow, it *could* be a bright goldfinch, but the bill immediately rules out that group. With the



black eye, the only likely possibilities are Yellow, Wilson's or *possibly* one of the brighter migrant races of Orange-crowned Warbler. But the cap is a giveaway, so look closely. The black, clearly visible "yarmulke" (or, if you are Irish, Tam O'Shanter; if Catholic, skullcap) is diagnostic for **Wilson's Warbler**.

That was easy. The guy on the left is a bit trickier, but not much. In my mind, I can identify the bird because of what it isn't. No other bird could be that overall dull olive green and have streaking on the flanks, an indistinct eye line and that combination of bill shape and overall appearance. Our local breeding race of **Orange-crowned Warbler** is the *sordida*, or Channel Island subspecies. He sticks around all year and even breeds here. In winter and during migration,



These photos were both taken at Harbor Park during June and July: Are the birds the same or different? What are they?

Left photo by David Ellsworth

Right photo by Jose Sandoval

he is joined by his various cousins, some having brighter yellow plumage, and some even having an all-gray head. The only bird he might be confused with is a Tennessee warbler, a very rare spring migrant here, but that bird would show a more distinct eye line and more white underneath, especially in spring.

The last bird got me at first! I rushed to judgment and called it a female Lesser Goldfinch. When prompted to take a second look, I realized a few things. Watch out for foreshortening in photographs! The body looks deceptively stubby, and the bill deceptively short. A goldfinch is proportionately smaller in both respects. The light makes it tricky, but a Lesser Goldfinch wouldn't have such a pale bill or the hint of an eye ring seen on this bird. A goldfinch *could* share the white edgings on the scapulars and tertials, as well as a hint of white wingbars, all of which are seen on this bird. But the blocky rather than dainty head is what really made me look again at this female **Western Tanager**. In the field, the size, calls and behavior would have been instant giveaways.



Your Backyard Habitat



By Dr. Constance M. Vadheim
CSU Dominguez Hills

Alkali Sacaton *Sporobolus airoides*

Most local native grasses grow and flower in the winter or spring — the so-called “cool season” grasses. By summer, such grasses are turning golden or silvery brown. These lovely summer dry grasses are increasingly used in California gardens. But there are other native grasses that are green — and flowering — in summer. With a little bit of water, our native “warm season” ornamental grasses will provide months of summer beauty as well as excellent habitat value.



Alkali Sacaton (Alkali Dropseed) is a good choice for the home garden. Native to western North America from Canada to Mexico, it grows in meadows and prairies, usually in moderately saline soils in California. Locally, it was once found in Redondo Beach. Like all native grasses, its seeds are eaten by birds and smaller animals. In addition, it provides important cover for ground-foraging birds, lizards and other small creatures. Finally, its foliage is the larval food for Skipper butterflies. In short, native grasses provide

good garden habitat!

Alkali Sacaton is a medium-sized bunchgrass that grows in a 2- to 3-foot mound of narrow, medium-green leaves. It is one of our showiest grasses (the pictures really don't do it justice). The flowering stalks grow 4 to 5 feet tall from June through summer. The flowering stalks are open and feathery, with a hint of pink-purple. The flowers seem to float in a waving cloud above the foliage, which is truly spectacular in the sunlight. The leaves turn dormant gold in fall and winter.

Like most native ornamental grasses, Alkali Sacaton is easy to grow. It likes full sun but can take some shade. It loves well-drained sandy soils but succeeds in clays. It is very forgiving in its water requirements. It likes plenty of water in winter and spring (good for very damp or flooded areas). In summer, provide occasional to regular water, decreasing in late summer. Cut grass back to 4 to 6 inches in the fall when it becomes raggedy, about every other year. And that's it.



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.

2011 Butterfly Count Tallies 28 Species

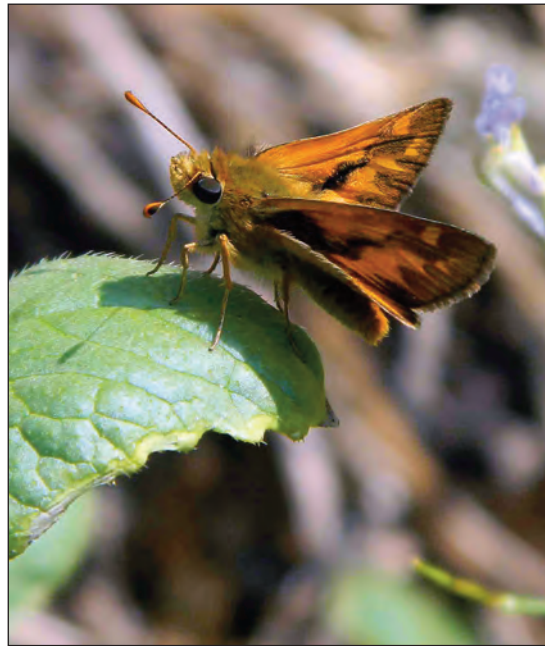
By Jess Morton

Thanks to all who participated in the 31st Palos Verdes Butterfly Count, on July 16. We had a total of 28 species, which is at the upper range of totals for the last half dozen years. The days of counts ranging up into the thirties, last seen in 2005, when we had 32 species, are now going to be few and scattered one per decade or two unless significant changes are made to urban planting schemes. Even then, perfect weather conditions will have to prevail on count day and for a few days prior.

While the total number of butterflies (1,376) was high relative to counts of the past few years, my general impression is that actual populations have gone way down in recent years. The count, which specializes in a few butterfly-rich places, gives a false picture in that respect. One of our counters, Dave Faulkner, a professional lepidopterist who studies distributions in the San Diego area, says the same low flight numbers hold there, too.

Our species list for the day was, as follows: Anise Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Tiger Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Orange Sulphur, Cloudless Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, Western Pygmy-Blue, Marine Blue, Square-spotted Blue (including El Segundo Blue), Acmon Blue, Fatal Metalmark, Gulf Fritillary,

Mourning Cloak, American Lady, West Coast Lady, Red Admiral, Common Buckeye, Monarch, Funereal Dusky-wing, White Checkered-Skipper, Northern White-Skipper, Fiery Skipper, Sandhill Skipper, Sachem, Woodland Skipper, Umber Skipper and Eufala Skipper.



Woodland skipper

Photo by Jess Morton

The biggest miss of the day was painted lady — also missed last year. There were some unidentified ladies, so perhaps we did have one that could not be counted. But the lack of painted ladies is indicative of the general lack of open space/grassland species typified by buckeyes, monarchs, queens and all four Vanessa species. This time, we missed two of these seven species and had a total of 20 individuals overall.

The last few years of local counts have not been any more productive for this group of species. Where have all the butterflies gone? Perhaps the answer is that they have not gone anywhere. Rather it is that habitat loss and pervasive use of pesticides have left them with little room in which to thrive.

Help the PV/South Bay Audubon Plan for Our Future

What is Audubon doing and where should our local chapter of Audubon be going? These are the important, challenging questions only you can help us answer in full! Please join your fellow chapter members at Madrona Marsh on Saturday, August 6, when we will take from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. to plan our future. Lunch will be provided.

This is a great time to become more deeply involved in Audubon. The national organization is taking a fresh look at chapters across the country, just as we will be taking a fresh look at our place in the community. You can help guide Audubon



into a fuller role within the local bird and conservation milieu as we take existing programs like Audubon YES! and regular nature walks to wider audiences and more sophisticated outcomes.

Audubon is also open to your talents! New faces are always welcome in committees and even on the Board of Directors. Please join in, whether you have an hour each month — or even more spare time — to devote to working with us in Audubon to conserve birds and their habitats for the mutual benefit of our wildlife, ourselves and future generations.

Different Environments Yet Similar Natural Wonders

By Evi Meyer

This summer I spent two weeks in Israel and Switzerland, where I had a chance to explore the local flora and fauna. Given the difference in the habitats I encountered, I was struck by how similar some of the adaptations for survival were to the ones we find in our local coastal sage scrub.

In Israel I spent several days in the Golan Heights, a beautiful hilly landscape along the Syrian border overlooking the Sea of Galilee. There I had many exciting sensory experiences. Inhaling the enthralling fragrant Mediterranean vegetation we associate with invasive plants on the Palos Verdes Peninsula had a liberating legitimacy. Fennel never smelled so good!

Hearing and observing birds I had never encountered before awakened my curiosity and made me very aware of how much of a beginning birder I am. I was particularly attracted to a bird I kept seeing when out on early morning outings, camera and binoculars strapped around my neck. This bird fed on nectar from deep flowers similar to our hummingbirds. It had a long, thin, downward-curved bill, but there was no hovering at all. It sucked up the nectar from a skillfully balanced standing position, keeping balance with its long muscular-looking legs. When the sun hit it just right, the male displayed beautiful blue and green iridescent colors on its body and tail, similar to the iridescence of the gorges of our hummingbirds. I spent hours admiring these critters.

Later I learned that this species was called Palestine Sunbird (Nectarinia osea) and was, of course, not related to our hummers at all. It lives in dry, high temperature climates of that region from sea level to about 9,000 feet. Apparently it can hover occasionally to sip nectar but prefers to eat standing up. Seems like a much more reasonable and energy conserving adaptation to nectar sucking than those energizer bundles of humming birds we have in our area. Either one of them is exhilarating to watch, though, and makes me feel like a slug.

On to the Swiss Alps. Even though Switzerland is my home country and I have spent every summer of my childhood hiking in the Swiss Alps, it has been many years since I have had the time to walk through the beautiful Swiss Alpine meadows. I have always been fascinated by Alpine flowers or “Alpenblumen,” as they are called in German. Many of them have developed adaptations to survive in a harsh climate where dangers of evaporation and freezing temperatures are a constant. High winds and dry air in the Alps can easily lead to desiccation, which is why some of those plants have developed adaptations to preserve moisture similar to the ones our coastal sage scrub plants display. Stunted growth, rolled-up leaves, hair-like structures or a waxy layer covering the leaves are all adaptations to reduce loss of moisture and are found in Alpenblumen as well



The Palestine Sunbird, above, of Israel resembles native PV hummingbirds. Below are Frühlings Enzian blooming in the Swiss Alps.

Photos by Evi Meyer



as coastal sage scrub plants. The stunted growth of many Alpine flowers also helps them stay close to the ground where the temperature is always slightly warmer. As an additional way to preserve warmth given off at ground level, many Alpine flowers use basal leaf formations to trap heat radiated by the earth, like some members of the Gentian (Enzian) family. Even though the reasons for potential desiccation in Alpine meadows and coastal sage scrub are very different, the adaptations for survival are often very similar.

The climates of the Golan Heights, Swiss Alps and Palos Verdes may be vastly different, but they share some of the same characteristics and stress factors that have led to similar adaptations in local flora and fauna. Survival of the species always depends on the effectiveness of the necessary adaptations no matter what the location. So, all habitats are related to each other and evolution is really the only way to survive constant changes. Are there really still people who believe that this is just a theory?

CALENDAR

Meet, Learn, Enjoy, Restore

Events

Saturday, August 6, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.: Natural history walk at Bixby Marsh. Explore the new 17-acre Bixby Marshland after a half-hour introductory walk with Audubon leaders Jess Morton and John Nieto. Walks begin on the hour at the parking lot welcome table. Learn about how the marsh came into being, see the results of this restoration and view the many birds that make their home here. Located in Carson, Bixby Marshland is on the west side of Figueroa Street just south of Sepulveda Blvd. The marsh is managed by the L.A. County Sanitation District: www.lacsd.org/education/.

Saturday, August 6, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.: PV/South Bay Audubon Annual Strategic Planning Meeting at Madrona Marsh. We will brainstorm the next year and have lunch together. Bring your ideas, creativity and passion for Audubon and its causes. Join us for a bird walk at the marsh at 7:30 a.m. prior to the meeting.

Thursday, August 11, 7:35 – 9:45 a.m. Bird survey on a habitat restoration site. In collaboration with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC), our chapter will be monitoring the bird population on the Three Sisters habitat restoration site. Volunteers are needed. They will be trained in identification and the methods used in the survey. To participate, contact Ann Dalkey at adalkey@pvplc.org or 310-541-7613, ext. 208.

Saturday, August 13, 9 – 11 a.m.: Second Saturday Habitat Restoration Project at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park (KMHRP). Come take

part in Audubon's important partnership with the Chadwick Ecommunity and the City of Los Angeles to restore habitat in Harbor Park. Led by Chadwick students and their teacher, Martin Byhower, this is a hands-on opportunity to learn about invasives removal and native species planting. Students earn community service credits. Wear closed-toe shoes, long pants and a hat. Bring water, a snack, sunscreen, bug repellent and work gloves. Harbor Park is located at 25820 Vermont Ave. Call Martin at 310-541-6763, ext. 4143.

Saturday, August 20, 7:35 – 9:45 a.m.: Bird survey on a habitat restoration site. See August 11 for details.

Saturday, September 3, 8 a.m. – Noon: Bixby Marshland open to the public. See August 6 for details.

Thursday, September 8, 7:50 – 10 a.m.: Bird survey on a habitat restoration site. See Aug. 11 for details.

Saturday, September 10, 9 – 11 a.m.: Second Saturday Habitat Restoration Project at KMHRP. See August 13 for details.

Saturday, September 17, 8:05 – 10:15 a.m.: Bird survey on a habitat restoration site. See Aug. 11 for details.

Tuesday, September 20, 7 p.m.: Audubon Third Tuesday Get-Togethers. Our speakers for the night will be Tracy, Ron and Tommie. They will be reporting on a rare bird sighting in central California. Come to Madrona Marsh to socialize with friends and to enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes

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from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Field Trips

Tuesday, August 2, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around a great local birding area. Meet at Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

Sunday, August 7, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. Audubon leader Stephanie Bryan will lead this walk through the garden, located at 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes. There is a minimal charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation, or you can join there.

Wednesday, August 10, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leader Bob Shanman. Meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

Saturday, August 13, 9 – 11 a.m.: PVPLC Natural History Walk to Lu-nada Canyon. Walk the trail in this quiet neighborhood canyon in the Agua Amarga Reserve. A gift from the Zuckerman Family, this is one of the first lands owned by the conservancy. Moderate. For details, visit www.pvplc.org.

Sunday, August 14, 8 a.m.:
Second Sunday Walk at KMHRP. Join Audubon leader Martin Byhower to explore this important natural area of the South Bay. See August 13 event on page 8 for directions.

Tuesday, August 16, 8:30 a.m.: “Tour de Torrance.” See Aug. 2 for details.

Wednesday, August 17, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. See August 7 for details.

Sunday, August 21, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at Ballona Wetlands with Bob Shanman. For details, visit www.torrance.wbu.com.

Saturday, August 27 10 a.m.: Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Walk to Oceanfront Estates/PVIC. Join us for a tour of the museum, the native plant garden and a walk along the spectacular bluff top at Oceanfront Estates. Easy. Visit www.losserenos.com/pvic.htm.

Tuesday, August 30, 8:30 a.m.: “Tour de Torrance.” See August 2 for details.

Sunday, September 4, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. See August 7 for details.

Tuesday, September 6, 8:30 a.m.: “Tour de Torrance.” See August 2 for details.

Saturday, September 10, 4 – 6 p.m.: PVPLC Natural History Walk to Portuguese Bend Landslide. Hear about the history and future of this infamous landslide and take a close look at various formations caused by the slide. Moderate. Visit www.pvplc.org.



This Green Heron was spotted during the 2011 Birdathon.

Photo by Martin Byhower

Sunday, September 11, 8 a.m.: Second Sunday Walk at KMHRP. See August 14 for details.

Wednesday, September 14, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh. See August 10 for details.

Saturday, September 17, 9 a.m. – Noon: Natural History Walk and International Coastal Cleanup Day. Bring family and friends to this walk from Point Vicente to Abalone Cove Shoreline Park and then help rid the

beach of litter. Gloves and trash bags will be provided, and refreshments served. Moderate. Visit www.losserenos.com/pvic.htm.

Sunday, September 18, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at Ballona Wetlands with Bob Shanman. For details, please visit www.torrance.wbu.com.

Tuesday, September 20, 8:30 a.m.: “Tour de Torrance.” See August 2 for details.

Wednesday, September 21, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. See August 7 for details.



For more information on local events, please visit the Chapter Web site at www.pvsb-audubon.org. For a complete list of events at Madrona Marsh, visit www.southbaycalendar.org and click on “Friends of Madrona Marsh.” For a complete list of activities for Audubon’s Youth Environmental Service (YES!) program, visit www.AudubonYES.org.

Squirrels, from Page 2

told me that the fox squirrels can inflict crippling and even mortal wounds on the legs of raptors that attempt to take them as prey.

It is sadly ironic that those who most love nature and animals but who also study and try to understand it become seen as “animal haters” when they advocate reducing or eliminating the invasive species, even though the latter do far more harm to our native animals than anything else. Fox squirrels are cute, intelligent and not evil, and those that are killed in the name of ecological balance don’t “deserve” their fate — which is strictly a function

of ignorance on the part of those who encourage their populations to expand in the first place.

If it is truly that important to them, maybe the squirrel rescuers could raise enough money for an enclosed “squirrel sanctuary” system where the objects of their affection could be fed and pampered and live out their natural lives without either doing or receiving harm. Of course, unless these squirrels are neutered, the population would require periodic culling. Maybe this might eventually help even the staunchest defenders to begin to understand the consequences of overpopulation of any species? No, probably not.

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY
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The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society and National Audubon Society, of which PV/SB Audubon is the local chapter, are dedicated to the understanding and preservation of our natural heritage.

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Vice President: Connie Vadheim, jconroth@hughes.net
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COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Audubon at Home: Tracy Drake, tdrake@torranceca.gov
Audubon So. Cal. Council Rep.: John Nieto, johnnieto@pvsb-audubon.org
Birdathon Teams: Martin Byhower, avitropic@sbcglobal.net
Tracy Drake, tdrake@torranceca.gov
Lillian Light, lklight@verizon.net
Jess Morton, jmorton@igc.org
Birds of the Peninsula: Kevin Larson, cbirdr@ca.rr.com
Bird Walks—KMHRP: Martin Byhower, avitropic@sbcglobal.net
Madrona Marsh: Bob Shanman, wildbirdbob@gmail.com
Out of Area: Eric & Ann Brooks, motmots@aol.com
Tour de Torrance: Dave Moody, dsmoods@verizon.net
South Coast Botanic Garden: Stephanie Bryan, SCBryan@aol.com
Blue Bird Nest Project: Dan Lee & Nancy Feagans, nancy@pvsb-audubon.org
Christmas Bird Count: Ann & Eric Brooks, motmots@aol.com
Community Outreach: John Nieto, johnnieto@pvsb-audubon.org
Conservation: Lillian Light, lklight@verizon.net
Education: *Vacant*
Field Trips: *Vacant*
Hospitality: Eileen Byhower, leniak@sbcglobal.net

Hummin' Editor: Michelle Fisher
Hummin' Calendar: Evi Meyer, evimeyer@cox.net
KMHRP: Martin Byhower, avitropic@sbcglobal.net
Membership: Vicki Nishioka
Programs: John Nieto, johnnieto@pvsb-audubon.org
Publicity: Shirley Borks
Restoration—Harbor Park: Geffen Oren, gefbofef@yahoo.com
Science Advisory Committee: Candy Groat, groat99@aol.com
Surveys—Coastal Cactus Wren: Ann Dalkey, adalkey@pvplc.org
Three Sisters Restoration: Ann Dalkey, adalkey@pvplc.org
Snowy Plover: Ron Melin, rdmelin@utla.net
South Bay Birds: Dave Moody, 310-803-0396
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