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Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

April/May 2013 Vol. XXXV No. III

Annual Banquet Takes Flight This June

By Jess Morton

An invitation is winging your way to the 2013 PV/South Bay Audubon banquet on June 8 at Ports O' Call Restaurant. We have David Lindo, the "urban birder" and a dynamic speaker, on tap and great musical entertainment for your cocktail and dining pleasure. The weather should be perfect, and we promise you great evening panoramas of our busy L.A. Harbor and a chance to mingle with some new and interesting people. The party will be grand.

While the emphasis is on camaraderie, we will take this opportunity to honor some of our fellow citizens for their good work. For more than 30 years, our chapter has recognized the outstanding contributions of individuals and groups who better our environment.

This year, we will honor three individuals and one group for their accomplishments. Our 2013 Conservation Award recipient is Dave Weeshoff, past Chairman of the Board and tireless volunteer for International Bird Rescue, who played a pivotal role in keeping birds a signif-

icant element in the development of California's Marine Protected Areas.

Our Conservation Education Award goes to Stacey Vigallon, director of interpretation for Los Angeles Audubon, who has done wonders involving young people with least tern and snowy plover protection, while coordinating L.A. County's snowy plover survey, in which our chapter participates.

The Youth Conservation Award will be given to Rachel Dokko, a senior at Palos Verdes Peninsula High School, who has spearheaded many projects, including habitat improvement for the Palos Verdes blue butterfly.

This year, we will present the 2013 Group Conservation Award to the International Environmental Service Club (IESC) of Torrance. A Lions Club affiliate, IESC is a parent and student effort by the local Korean-American community to better the environment. This group has been involved with the Audubon YES program and been the backbone of restoration efforts at Harbor Park, working with Martin Byhower and Marcos Trinidad.

Take the Plunge!



Royal Tern

Photo by Jess Morton

All We're Asking Is a 'Bill a Bird'

Please pledge to this year's Bird-a-Thon in support of Audubon YES (Youth Environmental Stewards) and other PV/South Bay Audubon programs. Four supercharged Bird-a-thon teams are planning to take to the field in search of all the bird species that can be found in a single 24-hour period in the greater South Bay. Team leaders are Martin Byhower, Lillian Light, Jess Morton and David Quadhamer, and each of them needs your sponsorship for their team. Based on past experience, these teams are likely to find 120 to 140 species each.

So, please send a quick e-mail with your pledge to any (or all) of the team leaders, including Martin Byhower, avitropic@sbcglobal.net; Lillian Light, lklight@verizon.net; Jess Morton, jmorton@igc.org; and David Quadhamer, dquadhamer@earthlink.net; or mail a check, made out to PV/South Bay Audubon to [Team Leader Name], c/o PV/South Bay Audubon, 787 West Fourth St., San Pedro, CA 90731.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Celebrate the Earth



By Lillian Light



On April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day rallied over 20 million Americans to build community awareness of the need to protect and care for our natural environment. It was the largest organized environmental event in human history. Since then, this earth's

birthday has been celebrated throughout the world in more than 150 countries.

While many environmental problems have been addressed by the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, there are still serious dangers confronting the planet. The latest data on the climate crisis, ocean pollution and the serious problems caused by fracking remind us that the environment is under grave assault, and is facing problems that threaten the future of human life on the planet.

Concerned citizens are planning Earth Day 2013 to educate the public, to involve people in seeking solutions to our problems and to keep the spirit of Earth Day alive. You are invited to take part in two local events that will tell you what you can do in your personal life and in your community to avoid ecological disasters and the threat of catastrophic climate change. Be assured that these fairs are not all gloom and doom; you are sure to enjoy the entertainment, music, and good food that you will find there.

On Saturday, April 27, between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., you may enjoy the Earth Day Celebration and Concert at Polliwog Park on Manhattan Beach Boulevard in Manhattan Beach. The event will feature live music and events all day as well as children's activities like Eco-quiz, which awards prizes. There will also be great food, eco-friendly shopping, alternative fuel vehicles and booths featuring many environmental organizations like our Environmental Priorities Network (EPN).

You can find out about the Sierra Club campaign to shut down dirty coal plants, and how cleaning up the air can promote economic growth. For more information about this event, call the VOICE message center: 310-226-2927, contact Kaye Sherbak at greenervoice@gmail.com, or access www.greenervoice.org.

One week earlier, on Saturday, April 20, the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium is holding its annual Earth Day Fair on aquarium grounds to celebrate our ocean planet and its natural communities. Again, many environmental organizations

will highlight their work to preserve and improve our environment. You will find displays, demonstrations, brochures, educational materials and membership information available.

The day's events start with a beach cleanup from 8 to 10 a.m. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. there will be demonstrations, live entertainment, a raffle for eco-friendly products, displays and hands-on activities, all at no charge. In the Exploration Center, there will be a family activity area with puzzles and books. An eco-scavenger hunt is also planned for children. For more information about the CMA Earth Day event, contact Alfonso Montiel at alfonso.montiel@lacity.org or at 310-548-7562, ext. 203.

On Earth Day, you will be reminded that the biggest threat to the survival of animals, plants, and people is the climate crisis. What can we residents of sunny Southern California do to avert this looming catastrophe? We can use the sun to produce our electricity!

Attending the EPN Solar Homes Tour on Saturday, May 11 will inform you about the advantages of solar power and the rebates available that make such installations much more affordable. At our EPN table, you can pick up the list of homes that will host visitors on that day. You can also pick up flyers listing the different things you can do to shrink your carbon footprint. Don't forget to consider the appealing electric cars that will reduce your consumption of fossil fuels.

Did you know that you can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by drinking tap water rather than bottled water? The production of bottled water in 2006 alone, released 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to exacerbate global warming. Of the 30 billion bottles that end up as litter each year, those that go unrecycled can take 1,000 years to decompose.

As clean water becomes scarcer, corporations are buying up water supplies and putting the water in bottles. Their successful marketing campaigns resulted in Americans buying 31.2 billion liters of bottled water in 2006 (a liter is about a quart). Since public water supplies undergo more testing and more restrictions than bottled water, it is good environmental policy to make it a habit to drink water from the tap.

What can you do to honor the environment when you vote, purchase, consume, and invest? Pick up the fact sheets discussing these issues at one of the Earth Day fairs, and become better informed about the problems and solutions. Join with tens of millions of people in more than 150 countries, and renew your commitment to building a safe environment and a sustainable planet.

“Birding Your Local Patch: Cabrillo Beach”
Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m.

Bernardo Alps will share the joys of getting to know an area intimately. One of his “patches” is Cabrillo Beach and the adjacent habitats, including the Coastal Park and the Salinas de San Pedro, which have produced their share of rare birds including a White Wagtail last December. Bernardo’s other favorite stomping grounds include the nearshore and off-shore waters of the Southern California Bight and Baja California.

Bernardo is a field technician with PRBO Conservation Science and conducts seabird and marine mammal foraging surveys as well as nesting and roosting transects on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. He is also a research associate with the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and is responsible for weekly bird surveys. Bernardo is quite passionate about wildlife photography and will show some of his favorite images.



**“Restore It and They Will Come:
 Bringing Nature Back to Harbor Park”**
Tuesday, June 18, 7 p.m.

Martin Byhower is a past president and current board member of the PV/South Bay Audubon Chapter. He leads the monthly bird walks at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park (KMHRP), which have turned up some remarkable species over the years. Martin heads up a Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) restoration project there with his students and other volunteer groups, as well as a 12-acre CSS restoration in Chadwick Canyon at Chadwick School, where he has taught science for nearly 30 years. He has also been instrumental in the planning of the \$117 million “Prop. O” project that will by all accounts begin soon and that will result in a “nature makeover” at KMHRP and the Wilmington Channel that feeds it.

Martin will discuss all of this and how the return of native habitat benefits avian populations. Of course, he will include a number of photos of the birds and wildlife of KMHRP. When not teaching or working to bring nature back to the South Bay, Martin is a private birding guide. For his chapter on local birds, checklists, photos and links to groups like the PV/SB Chapter of the Audubon Society, visit <http://birdingsocal.com>.



**Upcoming PV/South Bay
 Audubon Programs**

March 19

Don Desjardin, Presenter
 “Search for the Jocotoco Antpitta”

April 16

Bernardo Alps, Presenter
 “Birding your Local Patch:
 Cabrillo Beach”
(details at left)

May 21

Madrona Marsh Walk

June 18

Martin Byhower, Presenter
 “Restore It and They Will Come:
 Bringing Nature Back to Harbor
 Park”
(details at left)

July 16

Photo Night
Bring your best nature photos!

Sept. 17

Steve Kaye, Presenter
 “Local Birds”

Oct. 15

Drs. Thomlinsons, Presenters
 “Aquatic Habitat and Birds”

Nov. 19

Daniel V. Chavez, Presenter
 “Dominguez Adobe”

Dec. 17

Steve Wolfe, Presenter
 “Birding in the Owens Valley”

All programs start at 7 p.m. at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance, CA; please visit www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.

BIRDER'S DIARY

Jess Morton

You would think by now that no report of an unusual bird would surprise me. But when the call came in about this White Wagtail down on the rocky shore not more than three miles from my house, I was surprised. There are rare birds, and then there are *rare* birds, and this was one of those. An Old World species, common enough there, and even not so rare in Alaska, but here? Virtually around the corner? No way!

However, birds are like that, each surprising in one way or another. Even the common ones have their mysteries. The rare ones though, are enigmas. How did this bird from another universe get here? By the weird genetic variation that takes a few nestlings each year off their intended migratory course? By storm that blew this poor lost soul ill — and a few of us birders good? What possible hyperspace bypass got this bird to my doorstep? I'll never know, but at least I do have a few photos, as do many other birders who got to see this Wagtail during its several-day stay. The only complaint I heard about this cooperative fellow was that it did not stick around for the Christmas Bird Count, which would have made it one of the nation's premier birds of the 2012 count.

White Wagtails bear a general resemblance to mockingbirds, though they are not closely related. Overall gray in appearance, with white wings and tail, and generally sleek, a White Wagtail could quite easily be overlooked by a casual birder who would quite naturally expect to see a mockingbird around Cabrillo Beach, where this Wagtail hung out during its stay. But the habits are not the same, nor many details of its appearance, such as the black bib and distinct wingbars.



White Wagtail

Photo by Jess Morton

The biggest distinction between the two species is in behavior. For this bird, *wagtail* means just that. The tail bobs up down and around constantly. Even Rock Wrens and Spotted Sandpipers are no match for this bird in the tail waggery business! The Wagtail is also a bird of open places, especially rocky shores and beaches, not the suburban-urban interface of our yards and parks where mockingbirds are a dominant part of the avifauna. Their flight and call is quite different, too, undulating more than direct in flight, and with a whistling call unlike the varied song of a mocker.

Credit for this sighting goes to Bernardo Alps, who posted the find on the rare bird alert list: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LACoBirds/>.



Great Horned Owl

Photo by Evi Meyer

Evi Meyer

Building a nest can be a laborious process for birds. Nests of smaller birds are quite delicate and are often destroyed by adverse conditions after the breeding season, whereas the nests of bigger birds like raptors can be reused several times.

Red-tailed Hawk pairs typically visit nests from previous years and repair some of them before making a final selection. The RTHA pair at Point Vicente chose to reuse last season's nest situated deep inside a cliff. This pair had struggled with nest location and construction last year. Only after they changed the location on their third attempt were they able to successfully raise their brood. This year, they simply lined this last nest with some greenery and eggs were laid. They should hatch around the end of March.

Great Horned Owls may have a wider range of nest sites than any other bird in the Americas. According to experts, they often use free nests of other species, but they also use cavities in trees and cliffs, deserted buildings, or lay their eggs on the ground. The GHOW pair at Forrestal is currently reusing the same cavity that served as their nest last year. With little visible nesting material present, an indication of egg brooding might lie in the fact that one owl was sitting in the cavity each time I visited. I will keep an eye on these nests and hopefully see "little" raptor chicks hatch soon.

PV/South Bay Audubon Bird Quiz

By Martin Byhower

Last time I gave you an easy one. This guy (well, you can't tell if it is a guy or a gal, actually, since this species shows no dimorphism) is big, brown, fairly nondescript, tame and almost always on the ground. This species is found in canyons and lowlands all over the peninsula, and in suburban areas as long as they are adjacent to some Coastal Sage Scrub or coastal bluff habitat.

You will often hear them in the bushes, sounding like a much larger animal lurking just out of sight, as they scratch the surface and hop backwards, looking for tasty morsels. Also, you pretty much never see just one of these guys; they almost always seem to be hanging out with their mate.

When they are apart from their mate for a while and re-join, the pair duets in a unique little rapid squealing song, as if to say, "Where were you, how was your day, glad you're home, honey!" Highly territorial, they will often, for days on end, spy their reflection in one of your windows and peck at it repeatedly during the spring. Maybe not the brightest birdie in the nest, but endearing, nevertheless.

OK, why all this information before the inevitable winnowing of the possibilities using physical features? Well, for one, to emphasize how important behavioral clues are to bird identification. But you may not even care about the identification of a species, but closely observing our feathered friends can

help us bond with, and ultimately care about them.

Our bird is one of those numerous "LBJ's" (Little Brown Jobs, or maybe, in this case, a BBJ, since it is fairly large?). Long tail and near uniform upperparts rules out most sparrows, even though our bird has a typical triangular-shaped sparrow/finch bill — adapted in large part for eating seeds, but flexible enough for a generalist species who

might like to toss in a few greens, berries, and bugs once in a while.

If you are looking at the online photo, you can see the dark eye and a hint of the orange throat (the bird is uniformly pale underneath except for a distinct orange-brown vent (pre-undertail) area. The bill rules out California Thrasher (which doesn't quite make it to our area anyway). The solid brown color rules out Spotted Towhee. Aside from one other species (this month's quiz bird, in fact!), the only bird left is the California Towhee.

This species was first named as a separate species in 1839. Towhee, as far as anyone can tell, is onomatopoeic in nature, although I don't know a species of towhee that says anything resembling "towhee." This species was combined with the Canyon Towhee found in far eastern California and Arizona in 1886, but mitochondrial DNA studies resulted in them being separated again. And a group of towhees is called a "tangle" or "teapot"! Pretty

cool species, even though we often tend to take towhees for granted!

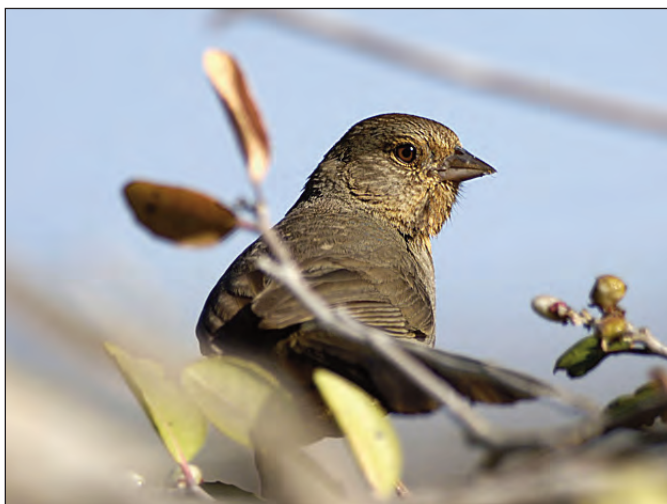
Here is a bird that, without a good look, you might mistake for a California Towhee. However, there are some noticeable and distinctive differences that you will see if you take a close look. There are several subspecies of this bird that may someday be split into separate species), but any of them that occur in our area is a wintering or migrant bird.

See you next month!



There are several subspecies of this bird, but any of them that occur in our area is a wintering or migrant bird.

Photos by Steve Wolfe



Have you guessed correctly about our last quiz bird?

CALENDAR

Meet, Learn, Enjoy, Restore

Events

Wednesday, April 3, 7 p.m.:
PV/South Bay Audubon board meeting at Madrona Marsh. All Audubon members and friends are welcome.

Wednesday, April 3, 7 p.m.: **Eric and Ann Brooks' birding class (TBD)** at South Coast Botanic Garden. Walks in the garden before class start at 6 p.m. as long as daylight permits. The fee for this four-week session is \$23 for SCBG Foundation members, \$33 for nonmembers. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

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

Thursday, April 11, 7:50 – 10 a.m. **Bird survey on a habitat restoration site.** In collaboration with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, our chapter is monitoring the bird population on the Three Sisters habitat restoration site. Volunteers are needed to be trained in identification and survey methods. To participate, contact Ann Dalkey at 310-541-7613, ext. 208 or adalkey@pvplc.org.

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

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

Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m.: **Audubon Third Tuesday Get-Togethers.** Our speaker for the night will be Bernardo Alps. Bernardo will give a presentation entitled "Birding your local patch: Cabrillo Beach." Come to Madrona Marsh to socialize with friends and to enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Wednesday, April 17, 7 p.m.: **Eric and Ann Brooks' birding class (TBD)** at South Coast Botanic Garden. Walks in the garden before class start at 6 p.m. as long as daylight permits. The fee for this four-week session is \$23 for SCBGF members, \$33 for nonmembers. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

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

Saturday, April 20, 9 – 11 a.m.: **The Stories of Birds**, a beginner's guide to birds, bird life and bird behavior at Madrona Marsh. Tracy Drake will be giving a short presentation in the Nature Center about "Three Thrilling Thrushes and Two Terrific Tanagers," featuring Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes, Robins, Western and Summer Tanagers. The second part of the program will be outdoors, using the newly learned skills at the marsh. No previous birding knowledge required.

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Saturday, May 4, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.: **Bixby Marshland open to the public.** See April 6 for details.

Wednesday, May 8, 7 p.m.: **Eric and Ann Brooks' birding class (TBD)** at South Coast Botanic Garden. Walks in the garden before class start at 6 p.m. as long as daylight permits. The fee for this four-week session is \$23 for SCBGF members, \$33 for nonmembers. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Thursday, May 9, 7:20 – 9:30 a.m.: **Bird survey on a habitat restoration site.** See April 11 for details.

Saturday, May 11, 9 – 11 a.m.: **Second Saturday Habitat Restoration Project at KMHRP.** See April 13 for details.

Saturday, May 18, 7:05 – 9:15 a.m.: **Bird survey on a habitat restoration site.** See April 11 for details.

Saturday, May 18, 9 – 11 a.m.: **The Stories of Birds**, a beginner's guide to birds, bird life and bird behavior at Madrona Marsh. Tracy Drake will be giving a short presentation in the Nature Center on "The Beauty of Blackbirds" featuring Red-winged, Tricolored and Brewer's Blackbirds, and Hooded



Monthly Marsh Walks

Story & photos by Candy Groat

Every month the Palos Verdes/South Bay Chapter of the Audubon Society meets at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center in Torrance for our programs. So why not come to our May meeting to visit the Marsh and see what's out there? Please join us at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21 at the nature center for an evening stroll on Madrona Marsh.

The stroll, which will be led by Tracy Drake (see photo at right), should last about one hour. At the end, we will return to the nature center meeting room for refreshments and a Q&A session.

For our stroll, everyone wear long pants, shirts with long sleeves, and have sturdy walking shoes for uneven terrain. You may wish to wear a hat and a light jacket, and bring binoculars. There should be plenty of light until at least 8 p.m. However, if you feel that you need extra light, please bring a *red* light as this does not create glare for anyone else, whereas white lights will blind other people.



The chapter's Tracy Drake, who is manager and naturalist at Madrona Marsh Preserve & Nature Center, leads many of the walks.

and Bullock's Orioles. The second part of the program will be outdoors, using the newly learned skills at the marsh. No birding knowledge required.

Tuesday, May 21, 7 p.m.: Audubon Third Tuesday Get-Togethers. Our program for the night will be an evening walk at Madrona Marsh led by

Tracy Drake. Enjoy a leisurely stroll through the last vernal marsh in the area. Bring your binoculars.

Wednesday, May 29, 7 p.m.: Eric and Ann Brooks' birding class (TBD) at South Coast Botanic Garden. Walks in the garden before class start at 6 p.m. as long as daylight permits.

The fee for this four-week session is \$23 for SCBGF members, \$33 for non-members. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Field Trips

Tuesday, April 2, 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 Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

Wednesday, April 3: 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.

Sunday, April 7, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.

Audubon leader Dinuk Magamma 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.

Sunday, April 7, 8 a.m.: Fieldtrip to Charmlee Park and Pt. Dume with Eric and Ann Brooks. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Tuesday, April 9, 9-12 p.m.: Fieldtrip to Pt. Mugu NAWS with Eric and Ann Brooks. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

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

Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m.: PVPLC Natural History Walk to Forrestal Reserve. Appreciate some of the best wildflower viewing and dramatic geological formations on the cliffs of this former basalt quarry. See the faults, folds and igneous intrusions visible in the sedimentary bedding. The three-

See Calendar, next page

Calendar, from prior page

hour walk is moderate to strenuous. For details, visit www.pvplc.org.

Sunday, April 14, 8 a.m.: Second Sunday Walk at KMHRP. Join Audubon leader Martin Byhower and explore this important natural area of the South Bay. See the April 13 event for park location.

Sunday, April 14: Fieldtrip to Prado Dam Wetlands or Prado Park, Chino with Eric and Ann Brooks. Time and location TBD. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Tuesday, April 16, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See April 2 for details.

Wednesday, April 17, 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.

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

Sunday, April 21, 8 a.m.: Fieldtrip to Huntington Beach Central Park and Bolsa Chica with Eric and Ann Brooks. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Tuesday, April 23, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See April 2 for details.

Sunday, April 28, 8 a.m.: Return Fieldtrip to Tejon Ranch with Eric and Ann Brooks. Sign up is mandatory by April 18. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Sunday, April 28, 3 p.m.: Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Walk to Western Bluff Hike. Walk the "western bluff" of the Ocean

Trails Reserve at Trump National Golf Course to observe endangered Gnatcatchers while enjoying the beautiful vistas of the coastline. Easy level. For details, visit the PVIC site: www.losserenos.com/pvic.htm

Tuesday, April 30, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See April 2 for details.

Wednesday, May 1: 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.

Friday – Sunday, May 3 – 5, 1 p.m.: Fieldtrip to Whitewater (North end of Salton Sea, Morongo and Joshua Tree) with Eric and Ann Brooks. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Sunday, May 5, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. See April 7 for details

Tuesday, May 7, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See April 2 for details.

Wednesday, May 8, 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh. See April 10 for details.

Saturday, May 11, 3 p.m.: PVPLC Natural History Walk to Linden H. Chandler Preserve. Experience this impressive restored 28-acre nature preserve with its lush oasis of rare riparian habitat and a new home for the rare Palos Verdes Blue Butterfly. This two-hour walk is moderate. For details, visit www.pvplc.org.

Sunday, May 12, 8 a.m.: Second Sunday Walk at KMHRP. See April 14 for details.

Sunday, May 12, 8 a.m.: Mother's Day Fieldtrip to Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden with Eric and Ann Brooks. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Tuesday, May 14, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See April 2 for details.

Wednesday, May 15, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. See April 17 for details.

Wednesday, May 15, 8:30 a.m.: Fieldtrip to Galileo Hill and the Silver Saddle Resort with Eric and Ann Brooks. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Saturday, May 18, 8 a.m.: LAAS Fieldtrip to Kenneth Hahn Park with Eric and Ann Brooks. For details, e-mail motmots@aol.com or call 323-295-6688.

Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Walk to Forrestal Nature Reserve. Walk through coastal sage scrub habitat. Learn about the local geology. Moderate. For details, visit www.losserenos.com/pvic.htm.

Sunday, May 19, 8 a.m.: Bird walk at Ballona Wetlands with Bob Shanman. For details, visit www.torrance.wbu.com.

Tuesday, May 21, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See April 2 for details.

Tuesday, May 28, 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." See April 2 for details.



NOTE: PV/South Bay Audubon field trips are generally free, but donations are much appreciated to support programs of the chapter.

For more information, visit the Chapter website at www.pvsb-audubon.org, or www.southbaycalendar.org. Area youth who would like to learn more about Audubon's YES program may visit www.AudubonYES.org.

Your Backyard Habitat



By Dr. Constance M. Vadheim
CSU Dominguez Hills

California Bush Sunflower *Encelia Californica*

The Sunflower Family (*Asteraceae*) provides great all-purpose native habitat plants. Their cheerful flower heads also make them nice additions to the home garden. One of our earliest — and longest blooming — sunflowers is



the California Bush Sunflower or California Encelia.

Encelia Californica grows along the California coast from Santa Barbara County to Baja. Once common in the Coastal Strand, Coastal Prairie and Coastal Sage Scrub communities, you can still see it in its natural setting on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, South Bay Beach Bluffs, Madrona Marsh Preserve and Heritage Creek Preserve (CSU Dominguez Hills).

The Bush Sunflower provides good habitat much of the year. It begins blooming in late winter/early spring, providing needed nectar and pollen to early insects. It attracts a variety of pollinator and other insects including bees, flies,

butterflies and beetles. Later, seed-eating birds and animals eat the seed from late spring through fall. The foliage is a larval food source for the Fatal Metalmark butterfly (*Calephelis nemesis*). The shrub also provides good cover for birds and lizards.

California Encelia is a half-woody shrub that is 2 to 4 feet tall and 3 to 5 feet wide at maturity. The leaves are medium green and have a sunflowery scent. Plants are very drought tolerant after the first year. With no summer water they drop their leaves, becoming summer dormant; with a little water, you can keep them green until late summer.

The flower heads include yellow ray flowers (petals) and dark red central disk flowers. A mature plant will have hundreds of flowers through spring.

California Encelia is easy to manage. It is generally pest and disease free. It likes a sunny spot or one with afternoon shade. It also does best if pruned back in fall. To learn more see: <http://mother-natures-backyard.blogspot.com/2013/03/plant-of-month-march-california-bush.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.



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Community Outreach: John Nieto, johnnieto@pvsb-audubon.org
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E-mail announcements: Jan Gardner, Janet.Gardner@ngc.com
Field Trips: Eric & Ann Brooks, motmots@aol.com

Hospitality: Alene Gardner, Alene.Gardner@sbcglobal.net
Hummin' Editor: Michelle Fisher
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