



# HUMMIN'

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY

DEC/JAN 2007 Vol. XXVIII No.6

## REPORT FROM THE NAS BOARD

By Jess Morton

National Audubon's Board of Directors met in Hawaii at the Turtle Bay Resort, on Oahu's north shore, and at the nearby Waimea Valley Audubon Center. Although not yet a member of the board, I was present and treated as a welcome guest. I attended most functions and meetings, using my time to renew old acquaintances, make new friends, and familiarize myself with board routines.

There were many subjects under discussion. A first, and very positive one, is that NAS operations have moved toward fiscal stability after some years in the red. Carol Browner and a strong NAS board committee, led by Treasurer Allen Model, have done a great job. Second, NAS is establishing policies on global warming and wind energy, which will be posted to the NAS web site for everyone's use. Both are desperately needed. Other topics included reviews of Audubon Centers and state office operations, and the introduction of new donor/member management software systems. I know our own newsletter mailings will be simplified by this.

Overall, I was very pleased with my introduction to the NAS Board. It is an impressive board, with all members dedicated to conservation, but with a wide range of

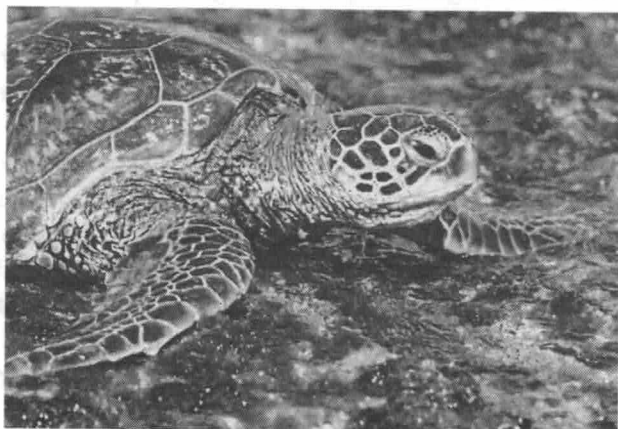
strengths. I have high hopes for what it will accomplish over the next few years. However, there are some things that clearly need to be addressed, especially with respect to chapters as the underpinning of what NAS can achieve. Chapters need to be made a natural part of the Board's discourse in a way they are not now, and I will make that a priority of mine.

### UPCOMING CHAPTER GET-TOGETHERS

The Chapter has organized Third Tuesday Get-Togethers for January 16 and February 20 at 7:00PM at the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Besides listening to the speakers, you will be able to test your knowledge of birds in a bird quiz, and test your luck with a raffle, with prizes for both contests from Wild Birds Unlimited.

In January, Tracy Drake, Manager/Naturalist, will update us on the goings-on in the Marsh and Nature Center at the Madrona Marsh Preserve. She will tell us of the exciting programs and visits the Center has sponsored. The Marsh has had a good deal of success in attracting bird species during fall migration and we will hear of this and other great things happening at the Marsh and plans for the future.

In February, Carol "Kiwi" Donovan will speak of her extraordinary achievement: In January 2006 "Kiwi" achieved her goal of sighting all the bird families in the world, according to Clements Checklist, Birds of the World, 5th Edition. She will show us photos of her 18 years on the road, traveling with no reservations or set schedule. An expert in survival skills and bush medicine this self-described "budget birder" has endured searing heat, tribal conflict, dangerous animals and lived to tell the tale.

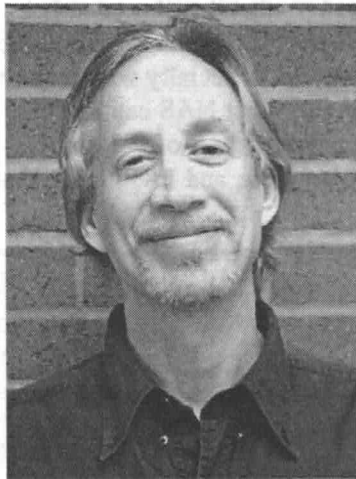


Green Sea Turtle at Turtle Bay, Hawaii  
(Jess Morton)

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Martin Byhower, Chapter Co-President

Do you love birds? Do you love birding? Some may perceive these to be identical questions. I do not. And because you are reading this column, I suspect that you may understand the difference. We are all aware of the birders who go out on their weekend or even trans-



continental quests to pick up a few new or rare species, and aside from a case of poison oak or Montezuma's revenge and the carbon dioxide emissions that may be generated by our chosen mode of transportation, the personal and ecological consequences of this level of bird appreciation is less than many other pursuits. These people love birding, but they may not love birds, and, as Jerry Seinfeld

would say, "Not that there's anything wrong with that..."

I don't know where it comes from, but I have this rather burdensome at times notion that if it is something worthwhile, it is not only worth paying for, it *necessitates* that I pay for it. And by "paying" I mean, in addition to the monetary costs of gas, field guides, and binoculars, putting in some community service time. When birding, I thrill at finding something rare, unusual, out of season, or exciting to a client or trip participant. Sometimes I just like getting out to see the common birds who, like old friends, help me affirm that life, including mine, goes on. Doing so is an inspiration for and affirmation of the work I do to try to defend and preserve our biodiversity. But there aren't enough conservationists to go around, even to manage the issues that Fran Spivy-Weber addressed in this space last issue.

Simply by renewing your membership in PV/South Bay Audubon each year, you are amplifying our voice, which helps us when decisions are made regarding the places we love to bird. But many such places are being

underserved. There aren't enough informed, committed activists to go around, and sometimes I just don't get it. That is why I am passing on the following note, with the author's permission. It was forwarded to me by a friend who receives periodic mailings from a gentleman named Jim Stevenson, a birding guide who lives in Galveston, TX. It resonated strongly with me, on several levels, and I hope it does with you as well. I have made only slight modifications to the original text.

**From:** Jim Stevenson

**To:** Jim Stevenson

**Sent:** Saturday, November 04, 2006 2:50 PM

**Subject:** Reflections

Today is the 15-year anniversary of the death of my ornithologist-father. It is always a tough day for me, but I think I had a breakthrough today, and hopefully for future 11/4's.

I spent the morning with a large group at Seabrook, Texas, leading a bird walk and talking to them afterwards about conservation and such. These are neat people – my kind of people – and maybe some stuff like tree planting will come from it!

On the way home, I was mulling over the events of 15 years ago, the way I was in complete denial of my first real loss, and the way I wandered around bewildered for several days.

What I most vividly remember was almost a week later, when several Sandhill Cranes flew past my house on the Florida Panhandle coastline (uncommon there), and having my first thought be, "Oh, I'll call my dad to tell him." That was the first time reality hit.

As I drove into my prairie-like neighborhood here on Galveston today, I smiled bittersweet when a trio of cranes flew past, rattling and showing their impressive proportions.

At that moment, I pondered the fact that life on Earth has been here several billion years, and we – my dad, me and you – will occupy only the tiniest of specks in that continuum.

Regardless of what happens in the afterlife, or not, we are part of the seemingly never-ending tapestry of organisms making their mark on this ecosphere. And I'm wondering, what will that mark be?

Yesterday, I planted a tree on my property in memory of our recently departed friend, Susan McGuffey. How many thousands of plants did she place in the ground

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# BIRDING TAIWAN

By Dave and Carol Roelen

**HUGS!** Hugs all around, for we just saw the absolutely magnificent Formosan Magpie, a long-tailed blue bird with striking red bill and legs. What a sight! In the low mountains of central Taiwan, we share our sighting in Simon Liao's customary fashion of enthusiastic hugs. Simon is our guide from the "Birding In Taiwan" organization and brought us to a site known for this endemic bird. After some searching, we find a small group of the birds at close range ... and this is only the beginning!

Having just arrived at Taipei's Chiang Kai Shek International Airport, we find ourselves traveling south along the west coast toll road through small towns and up towards the cooler central mountains. We are on a very brief, 48-hour layover, and Simon is taking us on a whirlwind birding trek. Climbing from sea level, we stop at sites near Wufong for lower level birds. Within our first two hours in Taiwan, we find a Collared Finchbill, Black Bulbul, and Light-vented Bulbul near a clump of bamboo that usually hides the endemic Fairy Pitta. Simon hears a pitta call, but nothing comes into view. Other birds move in and out, but we must move on to the mountains for any chance of seeing the Taiwan endemics that escape the hotter, humid lowlands during summer in favor of cooler climes.

Our first evening's destination is the Chingjing Resort, an active farm with comfortable lodgings for tourists, both foreign and domestic. Checked in, we set off in the early afternoon for the famous Blue Gate Trails just a few kilometers north of Wushe and the Farm, both of which lie in the center of the island. The Blue Gate Trails are legendary for birders hoping to see Taiwan's endemic pheasants and partridges. Wearing Wellington's, we walk the muddy track, as Simon leads in his passionate pink boots. We definitely can't misplace our leader. We have already seen several common species including Crested Myna, Red Collared-Doves, Ashy Wood-Pigeon, Black-naped Monarch, White-throated Laughingthrush, when suddenly endemics start appearing. Taiwan Barwings are seen well and often, then Taiwan Yuhinas in noisy groups, followed by secretive Steere's Liocichla and the striking White-eared Sibia ... all Taiwan endemic species.

But then suddenly hugs are happening again as we spy a special endemic subspecies: An Island Thrush. We see the thrush clearly on this, our first venture in Taiwan. Simon has only seen this bird infrequently over the years. He is ecstatic and so are we. This white-headed thrush is a



**Taiwan Blue Magpie**  
(Dave Roelen)

beautiful and cooperative bird that appears to be nesting. It moves back and forth below us in the dense, wet forest. Hugs!

Our birding day now over, we drive towards Chingjing Farm. We stop along the way to sample fresh mountain peaches from a roadside fruit stand. That evening, we enjoy a typical and excellent Chinese meal while recounting the day's events before retiring. Sleep comes easily. We've been on the go since 6:30 a.m. local time, after a 13-hour flight from Los Angeles.

Early morning finds us again at the Blue Gate Trail entrance. The trail (also known locally as the "water trail") is made muddy as water leaks from the jumble of black plastic pipes paralleling the path. The pipes deliver fresh mountain water to the villages below. The wren sound we hear is actually water escaping through a small hole in a pipe. Closely together now behind Simon we walk slowly and quietly hoping for a glimpse of either a Mikado or Swainhoe's Pheasant. These birds are secretive and highly skittish. Silently Simon motions us forward. Ahead, skirting the mud is a Swainhoe's Pheasant! We have nice views of the bright, but camouflaged female as she tries to outpace us. After much searching we fail to see a male. More birding along the Blue Gate produces Vivid Niltava, Rufous-faced Warbler, Ferruginous and Snowy-browed Flycatchers and then it is time to move further up the mountain.

*Continued on page 9*



## BIRDS OF THE PENINSULA

September and October 2006

by Kevin Larson

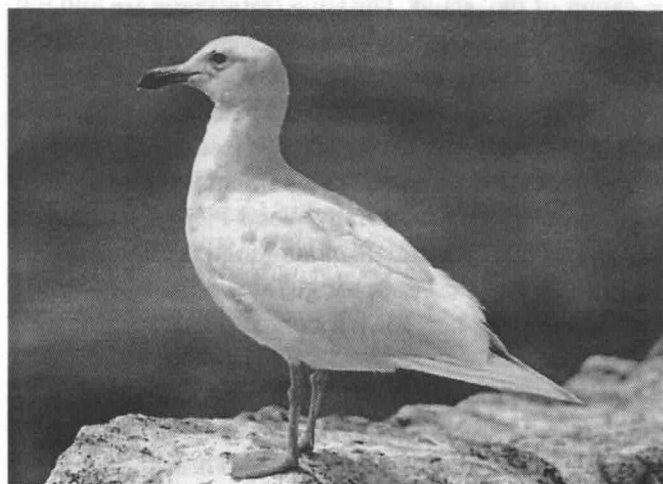
What will this fall bring? I ask this question with great anticipation each year. Hoped for is a good assortment of the rarer warblers, vireos and other land birds. This year was a little different. We did well to find all of the expected rare-but-regular vagrant warblers. A Grace's Warbler, one of the rarest that can be found locally, was the only one of the rarer varieties recorded. Among the other vagrant land birds having very rare status in our area, a Scarlet Tanager and two Lapland Longspurs were the only representatives. What will make this fall memorable were a shorebird and two seabirds. The bird of the year was Los Angeles County's first Upland Sandpiper in September. That this denizen of grassy prairie areas alighted to rest along the bank of the Los Angeles River for a day was a fluke. Another event that seemed to beat million-to-one odds was when a single observer found both Masked and Red-footed boobies around the Palos Verdes Peninsula on a single day in mid-October. A Short-eared Owl in the Ballona area in late October was exciting news. Please note my new e-mail address given at the end of this article.

The skies did not produce any extraordinary events during September or October, but the weather was varied and changed often. Warm humid air during the first week of September was the last gasp of the summer monsoon flow. The nine days of generally light night and morning marine layer 7-15 September was the longest any particular weather pattern would last through the end of October. It felt like fall when intervals of warm, dry offshore flow began to alternate with onshore influence beginning on 17 September. A trough produced trace amounts of precipitation at LAX 1-2 October. A cut-off low brought widely scattered showers to the area 13-14 October. Though only trace amounts of rain were recorded at LAX during these two days, a third of an inch fell at Downtown L. A. on 13 October.

An adult Greater White-fronted Goose flew over the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 1 Oct (Kevin Larson-KL), and an immature was at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area (EMJRA) in Willowbrook on 25 Oct (Richard Barth-RB). An "Aleutian" Cackling Goose at BFM on 28 Oct was later seen nearby on the

wildlife corridor ponds along the bluffs in the Playa Vista area on 31 Oct (RB). Kimball L. Garrett has seen just about everything during his many years of Los Angeles County birding, but a magical day on 14 Oct will surely rank among his most memorable. On the boat *Seawatch* out of Los Angeles Harbor, he found a subadult **Masked Booby** on the breakwater at Angel's Gate. Having just observed a county rarity that is hard to top, he did just that. A one year old **Red-footed Booby** flew around the boat as it reached Redondo Canyon off the northern edge of the peninsula! Three Cattle Egrets flew over Sand Dune Park (SDP) on 17 Sep (KL).

A crippled adult Pacific Golden-Plover present at the Los Angeles River (LAR) in Long Beach since 27 Aug was last seen on 14 Sep (RB). There were three American Oystercatcher reports in the San Pedro area this fall. Since intergrades between American and Black oystercatchers occur with regularity, it is difficult to judge the specific purity of any observed individual without an exhaustive description of many plumage details. Approximately 50 Black Oystercatchers on the breakwater at Queen's Gate on 20 Aug was a high count (Bernardo Alps-BA). One or two Solitary Sandpipers were found along LAR 4-13 Sep (RB); an individual at LAR near Willow St. on 19 Oct was late (RB). Our first **Upland Sandpiper** was discovered at LAR near Willow St. on 23 Sep by Larry Schmahl with group from Whittier Audubon. Many birders alerted by the network saw the bird before the end of the day. At least nineteen juvenile Baird's Sandpipers visited LAR in Long Beach and Paramount 11 Aug-20 Sep (RB et al); a high single-day count of nine was tallied on 9 Sep (KL). One juvenile



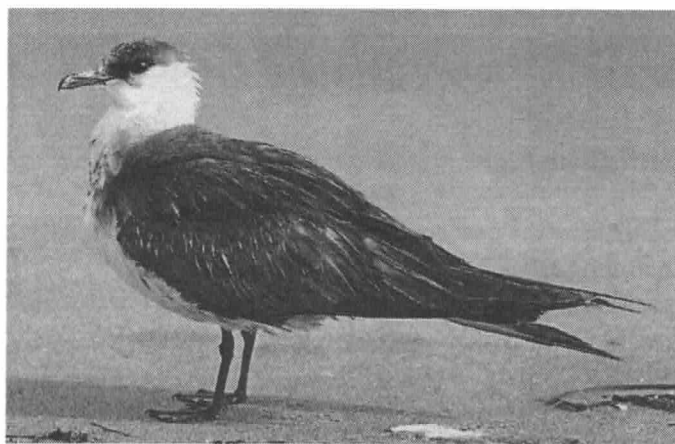
**Leucistic Western Gull**  
(Bernardo Alps)



Baird's was along Ballona Creek 8-11 Sep (Don Sterba-DS). About fifteen juvenile Pectoral Sandpipers were found along LAR in Long Beach and Paramount 26 Aug-19 Oct (RB et al). A continuing juvenile female Ruff at LAR was last seen on 10 Sep (RB); a juvenile male Ruff was at LAR near Willow St. 25 Sep-22 Oct (RB).

Since Parasitic Jaegers are rarely found resting on local beaches, an individual photographed on Cabrillo Beach (CB) on 29 Sep was unusual (BA). A white-plumaged (leucistic) Western Gull at CB on 8 Sep was an unusual sight (BA). A Sabine's Gull was observed from a boat about one mile south of Angel's Gate on 20 Aug (BA). A Eurasian Collared-Dove flew north past Pt. Vicente on 3 Sep, and another was over Harbor Park (HP) on 28 Oct (KL). Jonathan Coffin photographed a White-winged Dove in Playa del Rey on 4 Sep. A migrant Burrowing Owl was found at White's Point Nature Preserve on 16 Oct (David Moody-DM). A **Short-eared Owl** that hunted the fields west of BFM 28-30 Oct seemed like a ghost from the past (RB, DS). For the eighth consecutive fall, a Common Poorwill found refuge in Brad and Amy Henderson's Lawndale yard; it was present on and after 23 Oct. Another migrant poorwill was reported from Madrona Marsh (MM) on 27 Oct (Ron Melin-RM). An immature male Costa's Hummingbird at the South Coast Botanic Garden (SCBG) 8-29 Oct was the only one reported (KL). An adult male Rufous Hummingbird at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) on 21 Oct is a very late record (Russell Stone-RS).

Single Hammond's Flycatchers were found at SDP on 21 Sep (RB), at BFM on 6 Oct (RB), and at Wilderness Park (WP) on 15 Oct (KL). Three Gray Flycatchers found locally included one at SCBG on 17 Sep, one at Banning Park (BP) on 29 Sep, and one at SDP on 29 Sep (KL). A Dusky Flycatcher at SCBG on 1 Oct was the only one reported (KL). First noted on 25 Oct, a female Vermilion Flycatcher had returned for its third winter at EMJRA (RB). Single Tropical Kingbirds were at BP on 4 Oct and HP on 14 Oct (KL). Returning for its fourth winter, a Bell's Vireo was at DeForest Park (DP) 24 Sep-27 Oct (RB). One Plumbeous Vireo was at DP on 23 Sep, and a second was discovered there on 29 Sep (RB, KL); both remained through the end of October. Other Plumbeous Vireos were at HP on 30 Sep (KL), at SCBG on 8 Oct (KL), and at the El Segundo Library (ESL) on 14 Oct (RB). A Cassin's Vireo was at DP 2-4 Sep (KL), and up to two were there 12-14 Oct (RB); another was at HP on 8 Oct (KL). The Hutton's



**Parasitic Jaeger**  
(Bernardo Alps)

Vireo found at WP on 29 Aug was still present on 22 Oct (DM); another was at HP on 8 Oct (KL).

Scarce locally in recent years, four Horned Larks flew over BFM on 28 Oct (KL). A Purple Martin was over DP on 16 Sep (KL). Rare locally in fall, a sighting of about thirty Violet-green Swallows over HP on 15 Oct coincided with the movement of a low pressure system to the east (Martin Byhower-MB). A Bank Swallow at LAR in September was the only one found (Karen S. Gilbert-KSG). There were several reports of White-breasted Nuthatches in the lowlands of southern California this fall; one at Highridge Park in Rolling Hills Estates on 4 Sep was the only one found here (Sally Moite). A Brown Creeper was present one day only at DP on 1 Oct (KL).

Golden-crowned Kinglet sightings included two at SDP on 15 Oct, and singles at different locations in RPV on 17 Oct and 31 Oct (KL). An adult male Mountain Bluebird at MM was a spectacular sight for RM and DM on the morning of 25 Oct. Five migrant Swainson's Thrushes were observed in the area this fall from 9 Sep-11 Oct (KL, DM). A Hermit Thrush at DP on 2 Sep was weeks earlier than expected (KL). Its fairly dark back and buff-washed breast with bold black spotting is suggestive of the race breeding in coastal mainland British Columbia, *C. g. vaccini*, though the races *C. g. guttatus* and *C. g. nanus* are similar. A Sage Thrasher at MM 9-15 Oct was a nice find (RM). Twelve Phainopeplas found at five locations 17 Sep-3 Oct comprised a much better showing than in recent falls (MB, Tracy Drake, Edmond Griffin, KL).

Single Tennessee Warblers were at DP on 2 Sep and 29 Sep; another was at WP 14-15 Oct (KL). A Virginia's

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## CONSERVATION CORNER

By Lillian Light

During the past summer, the LA Times published five alarming articles giving the lurid details about the continuing human destruction of the world's oceans. The series, "Altered Oceans" described the terrible conditions under the following titles: July 30, *The Rise of Slime*; July 31, *California's Invisible Killer*; August 1, *Florida's Toxic Sea Breezes*; August 2, *Trashing the*

*World's Oceans*, and

August 3, *The Acid Test*.

Our Environmental Priorities Network members were so appalled at the plagues afflicting our oceans, that we decided to have our next public forum in March, 2007, on how to help our ailing oceans to recover. (For more information about this event, call me at 310 - 545 1384.)



A November 3<sup>rd</sup> LA

Times article revealed the even more disturbing news that "The world will run out of seafood by 2048 if steep declines in marine species continue at current rates." Fourteen marine scientists from five countries, including the United States, conducted a four-year study of catch data and fisheries collapses, and concluded that 29% of all fished species had collapsed by 2003—the last year for which data were available. The scientists project a 61% collapse by 2025, and a 100% collapse by 2048, unless immediate corrective measures are taken.

The authors of this report state that "Overfishing is almost certainly the most important factor, but marine habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change may also contribute." As wetlands, reefs, and the animals that filter pollutants disappear, water quality is worsening, and fish kills, toxic algal blooms, dead zones, invasive exotic species, beach closures, and coastal floods are increasing. Since we have used the world's oceans as dumping grounds for sewage, chemicals, disposable plastics, as well as radioactive waste, we have pushed our ocean systems to the brink of collapse.

After reading these dismal prognostications, I was dismayed at receiving an Email on November 9<sup>th</sup> from

the Marine Fish Conservation Network warning that some U.S. Senators are proposing to relax or roll back longstanding safeguards that protect our marine ecosystems and fish. The message asks us to urge our Senators to oppose any effort to weaken protections for our ocean fish. These proposals also seek to bar the public from any participation in fishery management decisions. We must insist that public participation in fishery decisions continue, so that local communities can have a say in federal actions that affect their lives and their livelihoods. Let's contact our senators to assure strong fishery management policies that promote the long term health of our marine life.

We need to tell our Senators that even more aggressive policies are needed to restore the sustainability of our oceans, and to prevent further collapse of our ocean fisheries. They need to legislate against reopening long protected offshore waters to oil drilling, a sure prescription for catastrophic oil spills. The Senate needs to find forward-looking solutions to the worsening problem of global warming, such as making cars go farther on a gallon of gas by increasing fuel economy standards, or increasing our use of clean renewable energy.

It is important to phase out coal-burning power plants which release sulfur dioxide, a cause of acid rain. Coal plants also release nitrogen oxides that contribute to algae blooms, as well as mercury that poses a health risk to marine life and to the seafood consumer. The most effective way to protect our oceans is to legislate for the creation of Marine Protected Areas to create protected zones along our coasts, much like our national parks protect our natural wonders on land.

Let us ask our senators to make the protection of our oceans one of their highest priorities. Remind them that our oceans are home to more than 97% of all life, and are critical to the survival of life on our planet.

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
331 Hart Office Building  
Washington, D C 20510 202 - 234 3841  
Local: 310 - 914 7300  
[senator@feinstein.senate.gov](mailto:senator@feinstein.senate.gov)

Senator Barbara Boxer  
112 Hart Office Bldg  
Washington, D C 20510 202 - 224 3553  
Local: 1 - 213 - 894 5000  
[senator@boxer.senate.gov](mailto:senator@boxer.senate.gov)

## YOUR BACKYARD HABITAT

### Toyon/California Christmas Berry (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

by Dr. Connie Vadheim

Toyon is a large woody shrub that was once common in the South Bay lowlands and on the Palos Verdes peninsula. While best known for its red winter berries – Toyon is the “holly” of Hollywood – Toyon has many other features that make it a welcome addition to our nature preserves and local gardens.

Toyon, a member of the Rose Family, is truly an “all season beauty.” In spring, bright new leaves contrast with the darker mature leaves. Summer brings clouds of small white flowers that attract native bees and butterflies like a magnet. And in fall/ winter, Toyon’s bright red berries rival those of the non-native *Pyracantha* and *Cotoneaster*. The berries are a particular favorite of doves, migrant songbirds and Cedar Waxwings. So if you want to attract winter



birds to your yard, Toyon is a good shrub to consider.

Toyon is found in Coastal Sage Scrub and Chaparral, back dune areas, canyons and Oak Woodlands from Oregon to Baja California. It grows as a stiff, multi-branched shrub, although it can be trained to grow as a tree. It usually grows 6-10 ft. tall and 4-8 ft wide, although



it may grow to 30 ft and taller under ideal conditions. It has a strong, branching root system which allows it to grow on steep slopes and makes it ideal for erosion control.

In the garden, Toyon makes an excellent large shrub or small tree (be sure to locate it where you can enjoy it). It is very adaptable and can be sheared for a large hedge or espaliered against a wall or fence. Substitute Toyon in any situation where you might consider planting *Pyracantha* or *Cotoneaster*. Toyon looks particularly nice paired with *Ceanothus* and Coastal Live Oaks.

Toyon is remarkably tolerant of garden conditions. It does well in any well-drained soil, including soils that are sandy/rocky or slightly salty (near shore). It tolerates some watering, although it is drought tolerant once established.

Unlike many shrubs, Toyon grows well in full sun to full-shade, so it can be grown under large trees and in other shady areas. Prune Toyon in Feb.-Mar. to shape. It is readily available from local native plant sources.

**Note: berries eaten raw can be toxic**

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 second Saturday of each month at the Madrona Marsh Preserve Center. (See Calendar page for directions.)





*Birds of the Peninsula, continued from 5*

Warbler at DP 13-14 Sep was found in the middle of the roughly month-long period of this vagrant's normal occurrence (KSG). Lucy's Warblers were found at DP on 2 Sep (KL) and at MM on 22 Sep (DM). The rare warbler of the year was a Grace's at DP on 12 Oct (RB); KSG was lucky enough to see it shortly after, but unfortunately it could not be relocated after mid-morning that day. A Palm Warbler was at MM 14-15 Oct (DM). Single Blackpoll Warblers were at ESL on 21 Sep (RB), at DP on 7 Oct (KL), and at BFM on 20 Oct (DS). Different Black-and-white Warblers were at SDP on 17 Sep (KL) and 9 Oct (Lori Conrad); one was at the Lunada Bay residence of Ray De Long on 28 Sep, and another was at LMU on 7 Oct (RS). In contrast with last fall's total of zero, American Redstarts made a good showing this year: different individuals were at SDP on 15 Sep and 22-23 Sep (KL); singles were also at ESL on 21 Sep (RB) and at DP on 12 Oct (RB). A Northern Waterthrush was at MM on 17 Sep despite dry conditions at the marsh (KL).

Very rare in California, an adult male **Scarlet Tanager** was enjoyed by DM and a few other birders at WP on 17 Oct. A Green-tailed Towhee was at LMU 30 Sep-1 Oct (RS). Clay-colored Sparrow sightings included one at SDP on 5 Oct (RB), one at MM 14-15 Oct (DM), and up to two at BFM 22-28 Oct (KL, DS). Five Brewer's Sparrows were found at four locations in the area 22 Sep-7 Oct (KL, RM, DM). Two Vesper Sparrows were at Entradero Park in Torrance on 22 Sep (KL). Migrant Lark Sparrows were found at HP on 17 Sep (MB) and at MM 30 Sep-14 Oct (Tracy Drake). A **Large-billed**

**(Savannah) Sparrow** photographed at CB on 8 Sep is one of few recorded in the PV Count Circle in recent decades (BA). A White-throated Sparrow in the Nature Trail section of DP on 29 Oct is undoubtedly the same individual that spent the previous winter there (Carol Selvey). The summering Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco found at Columbia Park in Torrance on 21 Aug was still present on 17 Sep (RM). Two calling **Lapland Longspurs** over HP on 21 Oct appeared interested in alighting, but continued off to the south (KL).

Single Bobolinks appeared at BFM on 15 Sep (Robert A. Hamilton) and at MM on 29 Sep (RM). DM found a Baltimore Oriole at Alondra Park on 18 Sep. A Purple Finch at MM on 6 Oct is the only report in the area so far this year (DM). Single calling Lawrence's Goldfinches flew over RPV on 13 Oct and PVE on 15 Oct (KL).

Following are the earliest dates on which these fall migrants or winterers were noted in 2006: Green-winged Teal—2 Sep LAR Long Beach (KL); Canvasback (2)—26 Oct Alondra Park (DM); Horned Grebe—11 Oct Cabrillo Beach (BA); Bonaparte's Gull—29 Oct LAR (KL); Vaux's Swift—7 Sep LAR Long Beach (RB); Red-breasted Sapsucker—23 Sep HP (MB); Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)—24 Sep DP (RB); Ruby-crowned Kinglet—22 Sep DP (RB); Cedar Waxwing—16 Sep DP (KL); Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)—17 Sep SDP (KL); Fox Sparrow (Sooty group)—28 Sep MM (RM); White-crowned Sparrow—22 Sep SCBG (Edmond Griffin) and RPV (Sally Moite)

Following are the latest dates these fall migrants were noted in 2006: Solitary Sandpiper—19 Oct LAR Long Beach (RB); Black-chinned Hummingbird—1 Oct SCBG (KL); Olive-sided Flycatcher—10 Oct SDP (RB); Western Wood-Pewee—19 Oct PVE (DM); Willow Flycatcher—14 Oct SDP (KL); Ash-throated Flycatcher—28 Oct Westchester (KL).

Thanks to all who reported sightings during the period. Please send your sightings to me at [cbirdr@ca.rr.com](mailto:cbirdr@ca.rr.com) for the Palos Verdes/South Bay and vicinity, including areas east to the L.A. River, north to about the 105 freeway, and along the coast up to Marina del Rey.



**Large-billed (Savannah) Sparrow**  
(Bernardo Alps)

*Birding Taiwan, continued from page 3*

Climbing the narrow two-lane Hehuan Shan (Hehuan Mountain) road takes us to an elevation of 10,750 feet and a rest stop turnout where birds and refreshments greet us. Vendors sell food and liquid refreshments in the crowded parking lot. An endemic White-whiskered Laughingthrush walks apparently unconcerned between and below the vending vehicles. After a sausage and drink we travel on and find the small, kinglet-like Flamecrest and Collared Bush Robin, both endemics, and a Eurasian Nuthatch, all in the coniferous forest. While we missed these on our brief mountain visit, the Alpine Accentor, Spotted Nutcracker, Yellow Tit, Mikado Pheasant, and Taiwan Partridge (plus others) are all possible (and some assured) with a little more time.

Reversing direction and heading downhill and north toward CKS International Airport for tomorrow's Borneo flight, Simon takes us to several "secret" sites for missed species. Simon must have missed hugging as we soon have in our binocular views the much sought after Formosan Whistling Thrush as it seeks food amongst rocks along a narrow turbulent stream. This is a large, blue-black

thrush with red eyes that fans its tail ... striking! Striking too was a Steak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, male and female Plumbeous Water Redstart and a Black-browed (Muller's) Barbet. In our brief Taiwan visit we saw 10 of the 15 endemic species and 50 regularly occurring birds.

Birding now over we drove late in the day into evening towards our hotel in Taoyuan west of Taipei. But birding isn't everything! En route Simon took us to a roadway rest stop that was a mix of Chinese and western culture with games, drinks, food, gifts, all in a brightly lighted and happy carnival atmosphere ... a happening, where the Taiwanese come for an evening out. Lots of fun. Simon and "Birding In Taiwan" were perfect hosts (they are more than bird guides) for visitors to the friendly island of Taiwan. Food was wonderful, conversation great, and the "no worries" logistics spot on.

The International Taiwan Birding Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to bird conservation and the preservation of the varied habitats of Taiwan. Visit their extensive website at [www.birdingintaiwan.com](http://www.birdingintaiwan.com). International Taiwan Birding Association leads birding tours at different times of the year. If you wish to join a birding tour or desire more information contact Jo Ann MacKenzie at [j.a.mackenzie@telus.net](mailto:j.a.mackenzie@telus.net).

Once in Taiwan, be prepared for friendly people, beautiful birds, and good food. And, of course, HUGS!

### Acronyms in Birds of the Peninsula

BA: Bernardo Alps  
 BFM: Ballona Freshwater Marsh  
 BP: Banning Park  
 CB: Cabrillo Beach  
 DM: David Moody  
 DP: DeForest Park  
 DS: Don Sterba  
 EMJRA: Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area  
 ESL: El Segundo Library  
 HP: Harbor Park  
 KL: Kevin Larson  
 KSG: Karen S. Gilbert  
 LAR: Los Angeles River  
 LMU: Loyola Marymount University  
 MB: Martin Byhower  
 MM: Madrona Marsh  
 PVE: Palos Verdes Estates  
 RB: Richard Barth  
 RM: Ron Melin  
 RPV: Rancho Palos Verdes  
 RS: Russell Stone  
 SCBG: South Coast Botanic Garden  
 SDP: Sand Dune Park  
 WP: Wilderness Park

### *President's Column, continued from page 2*

during her lifetime? Her legacy seems assured.

Planting a tree is a wonderful thing, for these patriarchs of their plant kingdom gobble up carbon dioxide at a time when this function of life is needed the most. But there are endless other ways to honor life on Earth out there. A gift, or additional gift, of time or money, to an environmental organization that is doing work that reflects your concerns and values. Volunteering to do nature programs for school kids. Offering yard birds food and drink. Purging our environment of invasive plants and animals that threaten our native species. The list goes on.

Legacies take many forms: Statues, paintings, future generations, books, organizations founded, song composition, etc. That list goes on, too. But how much better would our planet be if those of us who hold birds dear became convinced of the need to work for the plants and animals of this planet, multiplying their good fortune because we lived and cared.

It is the gift that keeps on living.

## STAN TEKIELA'S BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA

Book Review by Allen Franz

Stan Tekiela's 2003 field guide, *Birds of California*, has come out in its third and largest printing, offering California birders a well-illustrated small book (4-3/8 by 6 inches) covering over 180 of the more common species found in the state.

The most distinctive feature of the volume is its plan of organization, which groups birds by color rather than by kinship. Thus, the Cliff Swallow turns up between the Lazuli Bunting and the Bewick's Wren, rather than with the Barn Swallow and Tree Swallow. While this may make it more difficult to discern relationships among different bird species, it makes it easier to identify individual birds that you may encounter. If you see a mystery blue bird (or yellow, or whatever), you can scan through a sequence of blue birds, without having to skip back and forth between different sections of the book (or, worse, having to go through the entire book to track down all the blue birds!).

Each entry in *Birds of California* is illustrated with a high-quality color photograph to facilitate field identification. Where relevant, smaller boxed photos illustrate male/female, adult/juvenile, or seasonal plumage variations. Entries also include small distribution maps and concise descriptions of each species' size, male/female/juvenile features, nest, eggs, incubation period, fledging period, migration, food, a list of similar species, and "Stan's Notes," which describe distinctive behaviors and other features.

In addition to the bird species entries, there is a clear, concise introduction and a checklist/index.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT December 23, 2006

Hard core fun, in the name of science. Sunup to sundown, we will comb a 15-mile radius area locally and identify and count every individual and species we see. Not for the faint of heart, you can always help out by joining a team for a half day or even sit at home and watch your feeder! You don't need to be an expert, and in fact, this is a good way to learn birding skills. You may get asked to record data and pick up a pack of Diet Coke, however. Contact Ann Brooks at 310-913-2798 if you want to be on a team. Contact me if you wish to sponsor my team, the BushWhackers.

—Martin Byhower

## APOLOGIES

...to those of you who received the last issue of *Hummin'* quite late. Work demands, a hospital visit, and schedule conflicts of our volunteer team delayed delivery of the newsletter to the Post Office. The Post Office, in turn, did not deliver the newsletter to some of you for weeks.

*Hummin'* is published six times per year by the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society. Authors' opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Society. Send articles and suggestions to MLeoWeber@aol.com.

Editor.....Michael Weber, 310-316-0599

*Hummin'* subscriptions for non-PV/SB Audubon members are \$7.50 per year.

For back issues and chapter info, go to  
[www.LMconsult.com/pvaudubon](http://www.LMconsult.com/pvaudubon)

## GIFT & NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

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☐ Please send me information on how to make a request to PV/SB Audubon.

7XCH/C43

MAKE CHECK TO: AUDUBON SOCIETY  
MAIL TO: P.O. BOX 2582, PALOS VERDES, CA 90274



## Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

(See Calendar Locations and Information box below for directions and other information.)

**Sunday, Dec. 3, 8:00AM: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden**, 26300 Crenshaw Bl., Palos Verdes. Leader: Stephanie Bryan. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation; you can join at the entrance.

**Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7:00PM: PV/SoBay Audubon HOLIDAY PARTY and Board Meeting** at Madrona Marsh. All Audubon members and friends are welcome to attend! The party will also replace the Third Tuesday Get-Together.

**Saturday, Dec. 9, 8-11:00AM: Gardena Willows Wetlands Preserve**, Leader Martin Byhower. Meet in the lot at South Park, 1200 W. 170<sup>th</sup> St. in Gardena. The entrance to the Park is between Normandie and Vermont, one block N. or Artesia. See Martin Byhower, box below.

**Saturday, Dec. 9, 9-10:30AM: PV Peninsula Conservancy Nature Walk** at Ocean Front Estates Bluff Trail. Park along the north end of Calle Entrado, off

Palos Verdes Dr. West near intersection with Hawthorne Blvd.

**Wednesday, Dec. 13, 8:00AM: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh** with Bob Shanman.

**Tuesday, Dec. 19, 7:00PM: NO AUDUBON THIRD TUESDAY GET-TOGETHER:** Not this month. See you January 16, 2007!

**Wednesday, Dec. 20, 8:00AM: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

**Saturday, Dec. 23, Sunup to Sundown: Christmas Bird Count.** Hard core fun, in the name of science. Teams will comb a 15-mile radius locally. Contact Ann Brooks 310-913-2798 if you want to be on a team. Contact Martin Byhower (information below) if you wish to sponsor his team.

**Sunday, Jan. 7, 8:00AM: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

**Wednesday, Jan. 10, 8:00AM: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh.** Leader: Bob Shanman.

**Saturday, Jan. 13, 9-10AM: PV Peninsula Conservancy Nature Walk** at George F Canyon Preserve. Located on PV Drive East, park in the lot just south of the Nature Center near the intersection with PV Drive North in Rolling Hills Estates.

**Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7:00PM: AUDUBON THIRD TUESDAY GET-TOGETHERS** featuring Tracy Drake giving us the "inside scoop" on all that is happening at Madrona Marsh. Come and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited. At Madrona Marsh Preserve.

**Wednesday, Jan. 17, 8:00AM: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden.** Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

**Sunday, Jan. 21, 8-11AM: "Best of the South Bay"** PV/Audubon birding/natural history trip at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Leader: Martin Byhower. Check out the latest in restoration activities and learn what is planned. It is very, very exciting. See Box below.

CALENDAR

### MEETING LOCATIONS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

**Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park:** Harbor City, parking lot near the intersection of Anaheim St. and Vermont, west of the 110 Fwy.

**Madrona Marsh Preserve:** 3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance. Between Maple and Madrona Avenues.

**South Coast Botanic Garden:** 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes.

**Eric and Ann Brooks** organize birding classes in the South Bay and field trips throughout the region and statewide. Contact them directly for details: [motmots@aol.com](mailto:motmots@aol.com).

**Martin Byhower** also provides guided field trips. For updates and details on all trips, go to [www.birdingsocal.com](http://www.birdingsocal.com) and click on "updated calendar of events."

**Palos Verdes Land Conservancy** sponsors walks and other activities on the peninsula. For information, consult their website at <http://www.pvplc.org/>, or contact them by email at [info@pvplc.org](mailto:info@pvplc.org) or by telephone at 310-541-7613.

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### **HELP NEEDED!**

**Audubon YES!:** Contacts with South Bay schools and teen youth groups are wanted. If you are a teacher looking for extra-credit opportunities for your students, or if you are an adult advisor to a teen group looking for volunteer activities, become an active part of Audubon YES!, our Youth Environmental Service program. Audubon wants to work with you and your kids! For more information, call Jess Morton at 310 832-5601 or visit us online at [www.AudubonYES.org](http://www.AudubonYES.org)

The Chapter also would welcome **two volunteers** to assist the outreach chair for the Chapter. If this opportunity seems attractive to you, please contact Frances at [Frances.Weber@gmail.com](mailto:Frances.Weber@gmail.com).

Pick up postage-paid envelopes at Wild Birds Unlimited at PCH and Crenshaw to **recycle your HP or Lexmark Inkjet cartridges**. For each cartridge sent in these envelopes, \$2.50 is donated to our Chapter or to South Bay Wildlife Rehab. This is a great way to reduce waste and to support your favorite organizations.