



# HUMMIN'

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Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

Vol. XLVII #5 Sept.-Oct. 2025

## Audubon YES Volunteers By Nina Su'a

Audubon YES, our Youth Environmental Stewards program that brings young energy to conservation and invigorating spirit to the chapter, has been active for three decades now. At a recent community garden project, I met a West High School volunteer who is excited to be part of this YES Program. We are thrilled that Tania is to be an intern with our webmaster & social media team. Her energy and enthusiasm in supporting our educational initiatives will help us make a real difference for birds and the natural world we all cherish.

Tania says, "I'm a proud sophomore with a lifelong passion for giving back to my community. Volunteering has always been close to my heart, and I'm driven by the belief that even small actions can make a big difference. Currently, I'm a Digital Intern/Volunteer with the Audubon Society, where I combine my creativity, technical skills, and love for nature to support their mission through social media, design, and community outreach. With a strong

interest in technology and innovation, I enjoy finding creative ways to solve problems, share stories, and inspire others. Whether I'm volunteering, learning new skills, or working on a project, I'm committed to making a positive impact and growing as a leader and change maker!"



## Monthly Meeting Programs

Please join us on September 16th for our regular monthly meeting when naturalists and photographers **Randy Harwood** and **Jess Morton** give us the low down on the

### Peregrines of

PV, a look at Points Fermin and Vicente,

homes to the most photographed Peregrine Falcons in the world! But peregrines are not the only raptors to call the peninsula home. We'll get an overview of

many of the other hawks and owls that find place in the hills and canyons of the peninsula to thrive. And we will look at a couple of exotics, too. It's a program not to be missed.

*Meetings are at 7 PM at Madrona Marsh, or can be joined via the Zoom link on our website.*

**Mike Clark**, retired director of the Los Angeles Zoo's Condor Center visits Madrona Marsh on October 21st to present "Condor!" a review of the success of the nation's Endangered Species Act in bringing the California Condor back from the brink of extinction to the point where birds are flying free and reproducing throughout the Southwest and the northern parts of Mexico.





## Presidential Update

### By Ann Dalkey

Our cool summer has finally warmed up! As one who grew up in Southern California, I naturally associate high summer temps with summer's later months. In elementary school, September meant the hottest month. We began each new school year sweltering in non-air conditioned rooms. Now, living close to the ocean, those toasty days are not nearly as hot for me, but the increased temperatures in late summer are certainly noticeable—and they are increasing!

Also increasing is good change within the Chapter. Nina Su'a, our new Vice President, joins the Board of Directors as does Shari Morrow, who takes over as Hospitality Chair. Our Web Team is quite robust now with Dianna Kim in the lead. Helping out are Shari, Treasurer Julian Chasin, and Brad Waller, who has had to move more into the background since being elected last fall to the Redondo Beach City Council. Of special note, Nina has introduced us to Tania Ralhan, a remarkable high school student who has now joined our media group as a volunteer. You can read about her on the front page.

We have an excellent line-up of speakers for the remainder of 2025 and are now booking speakers for 2026. I look forward to learning about a variety of topics from speakers, those both locally based, and others located a continent's distance from the South Bay. An exemplar of the latter was Guido Berguido's presentation about ADOPTA Bosque Panamá last month. Remember, if you have missed that, or any other past presentation, you can find its recording on our website. Of course, you are always welcome to

attend these Program Meetings at Madrona Marsh in person or, alternatively, via Zoom, though then you will have to provide your own coffee, tea and delicious snacks.

I must note that our Palos Verdes/South Bay Chapter supports ADOPTA by providing funding for critical habitat protection and its scientific work. We recently learned that the National Audubon Society is thrilled with this sponsorship since it fits perfectly with NAS's hemispheric goals. For us, it is a win-win venture in which our chapter contributes to staffing that protects and cares for the forest and all its dependent birds and other wildlife. ADOPTA Bosque Panamá also brings students and professionals to its Cerro Chucantí Research Station to work within the forest. Dozens of species previously unknown to science have been described, and others are being worked up to be formally described by researchers. PV/South Bay Audubon and ADOPTA, two sides of the same conservation coin!



## Fall Festivities

### By Keith Haney



With the return of kids to school, comes the excitement of autumn's approach. For many of us, the shortening days, harvest holidays, and the changing color of foliage evoke nostalgic and folksy imagery of Americana. It may also evoke the innate sense of urgency to

prepare for the coming of winter, or nowadays to complete the personal and work goals you set for 2025!

Additionally, at Audubon we anticipate the southward migration of birds for winter, and the opportunity to see many species which are just passing through on their way to warmer climes. Fortunately for us, we enjoy a population of Western Snowy Plovers, including those pictured below, that chooses to stay the winter with us. Already our tiny, feathered friends have begun arriving!



On that note, science-based decision making is a value held by the Audubon Society, and our chapter supports that value by providing many opportunities each year for our members to participate in surveys to collect data for use by researchers to inform the conservation plans made by the agencies responsible for protecting our natural resources. Snowy Plover counting, one of these community science activities, begins in September. I hope you will join.

The return of students to the classroom also brings the need for community service hours for many – especially high school students. Our work to restore much needed coastal sage scrub habitat to former naval housing property in San Pedro is ongoing and help from you or your student is welcome! The habitat is home to the endangered Palos Verdes blue butterfly. It is also home to many other creatures including the threatened California Gnatcatcher.

This fall we will continue removing non-native and invasive plants (eg. statice and iceplant) while also taking the opportunity to admire the Red-tailed and Red-shouldered hawks that call the area home. We may also be lucky enough while we work to spot an endangered Crotch's bumble bee or, more likely, a Sonoran bumble bee, a species now being considered for listing.

Perhaps a casual stroll at the Madrona Marsh or along Machado Lake to observe our resident birds or look for fall migrants is more your style? If so, please join one of our regularly scheduled monthly bird walks – 1st Sundays at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, and 4th Saturdays at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. Our walks and community science and habitat restoration activities are great ways to meet fellow birders while enjoying a little exercise during this wonderful fall season.

If you're interested in learning more about joining our chapter's conservation initiatives, send me an email at [ProjectManager@PVSBAudubon.org](mailto:ProjectManager@PVSBAudubon.org). We also welcome your no longer needed gardening tools such as shovels, loppers, gloves, and/or a financial donation to support these efforts.



## Birds of the Peninsula June-July 2025 By Vincent Lloyd

The weather was benign, even monotonous, during June and July. Day after day the forecast was the same: moderate temperatures, fog in the morning, clearing in the afternoon. The high temperature was 86°F on four days in June and one in July; the low was 59° on Jun 22 (oddly, the summer solstice). There was scarcely a trace of rain during the period. This serene situation contrasts with last summer, when North America was engulfed in an historic heat wave and even in the South Bay the temperatures soared into the nineties. Like the weather, bird life this time of year is usually quiet — but not this year.



Sooty Tern  
Photo: Chezy Yusuf

The big surprise of the period was the **Sooty Tern** that visited Dockweiler Beach for one spectacular day, Jul 22 (Chris Dean). This tern of the tropical seas was spotted at Bolsa Chica in Orange County the day before, and vanished into the vastness of the Pacific the next day. In the U.S. it is seen most often in Florida and Hawaii. In California, it hadn't been seen since 2014. It is a handsome bird, with its black cap, white forehead, and dark upperparts. The Sooty Tern spends most of its life in the open sea, where it can spend months or years at a time. It comes ashore normally only to breed on islands in the tropical seas. The nearest

breeding sites are on islands off the coast of Baja California. Otherwise, they are not often seen along the western coast of North America, perhaps because of the cold California Current.

Meanwhile, the **Swallow-tailed Kite** that appeared at Harbor Park on Jun 3 settled in for the summer, becoming an attraction for birders all over southern California. As of early August, it is still there, but probably will depart soon for its wintering grounds in South America, as in Florida they are mostly gone by the middle of August. At the same time, a somewhat



Swallow-tailed Kite Photo: Vincent Lloyd

neglected **White-tailed Kite** also hung out at Harbor Park; another visited the Willow Street crossing of the Los Angeles River during the last week in July (Dick Barth). Cory Chen photographed a juvenile **Bald Eagle** flying over Alta Vicente on Jul 11. **Turkey Vultures** soared over South Coast Botanic Garden and Harbor Park, as well as the Los Angeles River, where they are more commonly seen than in Torrance and the Peninsula. The **Burrowing Owl** first spotted on May 4 at the Fish Docks in San Pedro was still there as of this writing, having adopted an abandoned switching vault beneath the railroad tracks as eminently affordable housing. A **Belted Kingfisher** fished at Harbor Park at the end of July (Mark Harris). A couple of Acorn Woodpeckers hung out nearby from Jun 4 to Jul 16 and then went away. Another couple continued at the Willow Street crossing into August.



Burrowing Owl Photo: Jess Morton

Two **Vermilion Flycatchers** continued at Magic Johnson Park through at least Jul 11. **Loggerhead Shrikes** were spotted at Harbor Park on Jul 22 (Christine Castano) and Madrona Marsh on Jul 31 (Patty Drew). As many as three **Bell's Vireos** were at the Boy Scout Camp at Harbor Park from Jun 14 into August. Another pair were at Willow Springs Park in Long Beach. Back at Harbor Park, a **Purple Martin** buzzed Bernardo Alps on Jul 25, while David Bell reported six **Oak Titmouses** on Jun 12. On Jun 21, Jim and Cathy at the top of the hill in Rolling Hills found a male **Red-breasted Nuthatch** bathing in their ant water trap. Lone **California Thrashers** were reported from Madrona Marsh on Jul 1 and from a South Torrance neighborhood on Aug 3, but no details were provided. The nearest report of a **Phainopepla** was in the Baldwin Hills.

In the finch department, **Purple Finches** were seen at both Harbor Park and Madrona Marsh during the first week of July. Rob Hamilton espied a single **Lawrence's Goldfinch** flying overhead at White Point on Jul 21. In the sparrow department, Brad Dawson came upon a couple of lost **Chipping Sparrows** at Willow Springs Park on Jul 27; these birds belong in the mountains in the summer. Another sparrow that used to be confined to the mountains in summer, the **Dark-eyed Junco**, has adapted to life in the city and now is breeding all over the Los Angeles coastal plain.

The **Yellow-breasted Chat** at Harbor Park was last seen Jul 16. This species, which was long placed in the New World warbler family, is the subject of a proposal to move it from its own family, the confusingly named Icteridae, into the Icteridae, the New World oriole family. Such an odd bird! Also in the Icteridae is the **Tricolored Blackbird** which was reported at Harbor Park the last week of June. Yet another unusual Icterid appeared, when two **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were seen by many at HP during late June and early July. Speaking of New World warblers, Melody Haughton, reporting from Madrona Marsh, saw a **Wilson's Warbler** on the way north on Jun 3 and another on its way south on Aug 2. Similar observations were made at Sand Dune Park. It turns out that the nearest major breeding grounds for Wilson's Warbler are in the southern Sierra, just one night's flight away, so it's possible the June birds and the August birds were the same ones. Another late migrant of note was the male **Chestnut-sided Warbler** Tori Fay spotted at the Top of the Hill on Jun 10. Two days later at Ocean Trails, Rob Hamilton came upon 21 resident **Orange-crowned Warblers** of the local sordida race, which breeds only on the Peninsula and the Channel Islands. (He also counted 58 **Spotted Towhees**!) Not expected at this time of year were the **Yellow-rumped Warblers** seen at Harbor Park, Madrona Marsh,



Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Photo: Vincent Lloyd

(Birds of the Peninsula continued on page 8)



Cooper's Hawk



Lesser Goldfinch



California Towhee



Cactus Wren



Allen's Hummingbird



### Common Birds of our Coastal Sage Scrub

Photos: Jess Morton

Mourning Dove



California Gnatcatcher



Northern Mockingbird



Anna's Hummingbird



House Finch



Spotted Towhee





(Birds of the Peninsula continued from page 5)

and a Lomita home in early July. Turning to the Cardinal family, a late **Lazuli Bunting** was at Ocean Trails on Jun 12 (Rob Hamilton), while at least one of the many seen at Harbor Park in the spring continued into August. A single **Blue Grosbeak** hung out at Harbor Park from Jun 4 to Jul 10 (Chef Ito); another was at the Willow Street crossing the last two weeks in July (DB).

**Cactus Wrens** jumped around at Alta Vicente, Shoreline Park, and Ocean Trails. On Jun 12, Rob Hamilton found three **California Gnatcatchers** in a survey of Ocean Trails, where last year he had 33. On the north side of the Peninsula, gnatcatchers were seen at Harbor Park and Linden Chandler Preserve. **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** were spotted at Ocean Trails and Terranea.

Turning to the duck family, four **Brant** were on Redondo Pier on Jul 25 (Janine Choi, Gary Clayton). **Hooded Mergansers** breed mainly in the northwest, so it's a little surprising that one immature male has spent the summer in Machado Lake at Harbor Park. (Although it turns out that a pair of Hooded Mergansers bred on the Salinas River in San Luis Obispo County this year, while a few pairs bred in the Central Valley.) **Band-tailed Pigeons** are common in the San Gabriel Mountains but rare in the lowlands, yet up to five of them frolicked in Harbor Park in June; another was in Redondo

Beach on Jul 13 (Gail Johnson) and three visited South Coast Botanic Garden on Jul 9 (Ross Todd). A couple of **White-winged Doves** visited Dominguez Gap in July (Christine Jacobs). A couple of **Costa's Hummingbirds** (a desert bird) wandered to the South Bay, one at Harbor Park on Jun 19 (Jerry-Brenda Grenard) and a second at Golden Shores on Jul 21 (Dennis Wolter). The only **Common Gallinule** seen in the area spent July at Dominguez Gap (Shannon Hughes).

A pair of **Long-billed Curlews** flew over Harbor Park on Jun 17 (David Tomb, Derek Heins). A couple of **Semipalmated Sandpipers** attracted much attention at the Willow Street crossing the last few days in July (Mark and Janet Scheel); Jonathan Nakai had another at Lunada Bay on Aug 3. Phalaropes, which breed in the high arctic, start migrating south early: the first **Wilson's Phalarope** was spotted at Willow Street on Jun 20 (DB), the first **Red-necked Phalarope** on Jul 11. A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** turned up at Dockweiler Beach on Jul 3 (Logan Kahle); it was seen into August. Up to four **Black Skimmers** skimmed over Machado Lake in June. Brian Daniels had a single **Least Tern** at Cabrillo Beach on Jul 31; another was on Manhattan Beach on Jul 22 (Christina Black).

On Jul 6 Dennis Deal photographed a **Laysan Albatross** in the San Pedro Channel while crossing to Catalina Island. The only other eBird record of this beautiful tubenose in near waters is from Dec 2021. The **Neotropic Cormorants** at AES Wetland and the Willow Street crossing continued through the end of the period. Jeff Boyd spotted an adult **Reddish Egret** at the Willow Street crossing early in the morning of Jul 22. At the end of July, juvenile **Yellow-crowned Night Herons** were seen at Willow Street as well as Bixby Marshland, Royal Palms Beach, and King Harbor. They are unusually numerous this year. Presumably they have wandered from their nearest breeding grounds at Ballona Creek and Sim's Bio Pond in east Long Beach. The Yellow-crowned Night Heron is a permanent resident in coastal areas of tropical



Hooded Merganser Photo: Manuel Duran



Juvenile Night Herons  
Photo: Jonathan Nakai

North and South America and the Caribbean and a summer breeder in the southeast U.S. Prior to this century, the nearest breeding area was in the Gulf of California, but its range has been gradually inching northward. Around 2007 it appeared at the Naval Base at Point

Mugu and at Bolsa Chica; since then it has spread throughout coastal southern California. While the adult is easily distinguished from the adult **Black-crowned Night Heron**, the juveniles are very similar. Jonathan Nakai has taken a nice photo of a juvenile Yellow-crown (right) standing next to a juvenile Black-crown (left). Compared with the Black-crown, the upperparts of the Yellow-crown are darker and the bill is stubbier and darker. The legs are a bit longer and the spots on the back look like tiny triangles rather than elongated tear-drops.

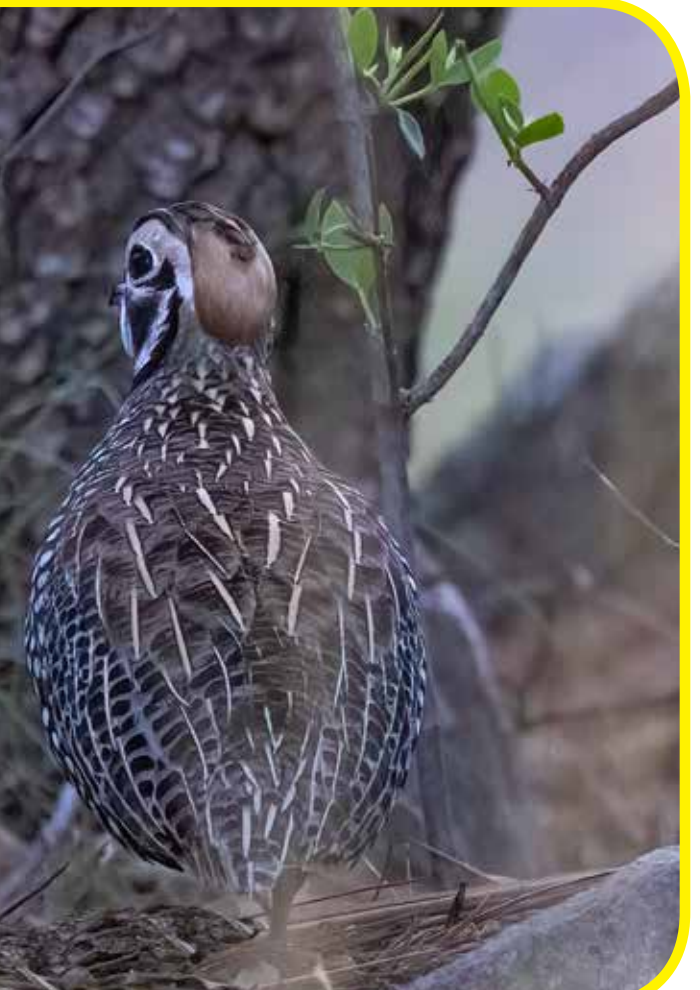
Vincent welcomes reports from readers about unusual birds found in the South Bay area (west of the Los Angeles River and south of I-105.)

Send reports to:  
stephenvincentlloyd@gmail.com.

### Montezuma Quail

*From the brush downhill  
her feral eyes  
touched one rock  
on the edge of our stubborn  
rugged road  
it, rising up short legged  
with his head a scalloped startle  
while our car skids, stops  
and us out scrambling  
as the bird becomes  
scrub, stone, down slope  
saying not now  
only those eyes again, briefly  
turned away, then gone*

Poem by Jess Morton  
Photo: Evi Meyer





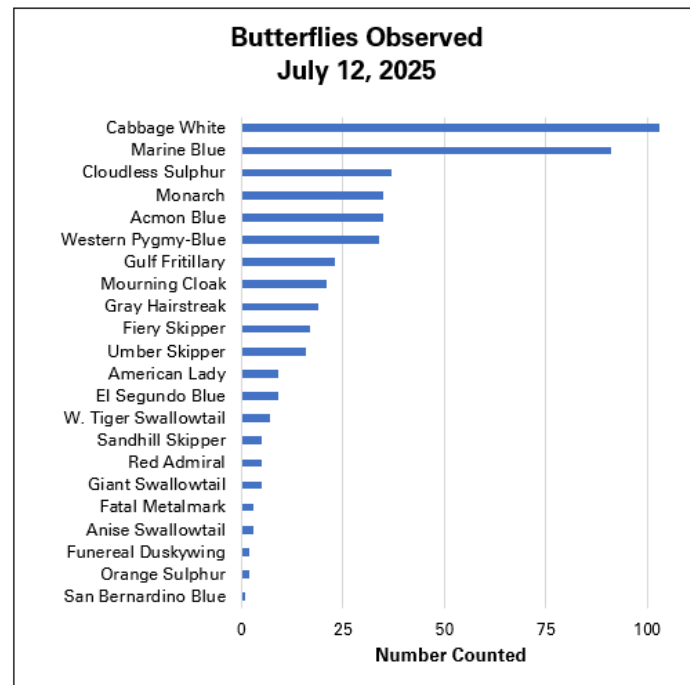
## Summer Butterfly Count Results

### Butterfly Conservation is Bird Conservation

By Keith Haney

If you love birds, then you love butterflies. In addition to being beautiful fliers, they both depend on the native plants found in healthy habitats, and flying insects (including butterflies) are an important food source for many birds. Our annual butterfly counts are one of the community science initiatives we conduct to support Audubon's mission of protecting birds and the places they need.

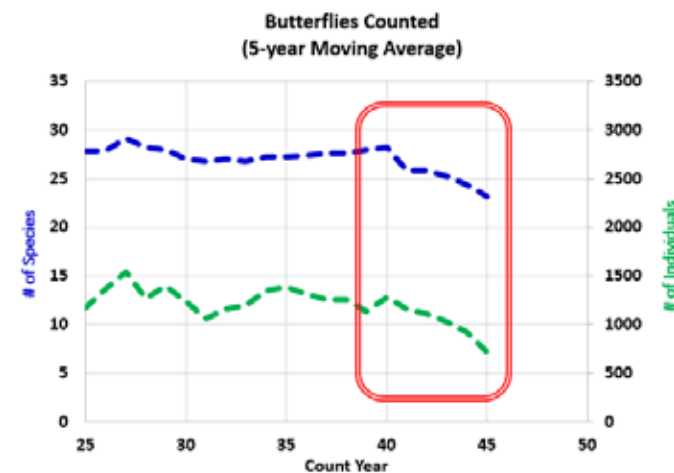
Twenty-five of you came out on July 12th to canvass the South Bay and Peninsula for butterflies in our 45th Summer Butterfly Count. Fifteen locations were explored yielding 22 species. Our top three in numbers were the cabbage white (AKA small white), marine blue, and cloudless sulfur. The chart below lists the species we observed by their abundances.



The cabbage white (*Pieris rapae*), introduced to North America in the latter half of the 19th century, has spread across the continent. Its ability to survive in a wide range of habitats and on many plants explains its significance as an agricultural pest and why it is the most abundant butterfly every year.

The marine blue (*Leptotes marina*), on the other hand, is native to North America. It is found primarily in the southwestern U.S., but ranges to the upper Midwestern states, New England, and south into Central America. It has adapted well to urbanization in Southern California, boosted by the use of blue plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*) for landscaping.

Recent articles in Science (06 March 2025) and Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (04 August 2025), however, have documented the overall decline of butterfly populations in America over the past few decades and our local count data reflect this. Our summer counts, especially in recent years confirm the trend (boxed in red below).



So, what can we do to help reverse this trend? Start by eliminating the use of traditional insecticides and herbicides around your home as butterflies are especially sensitive to these. Consider installing native plants in your yard and consult sites like calscape.org to see which plants support pollinating insects and will do well in your area. You are also encouraged to join our chapter's efforts to restore habitat for both birds and butterflies.

One of the beneficiaries of habitat restoration in our community has been the El Segundo blue butterfly (*Euphilotes battoides allyni*). When listed in 1976, this endangered species only occurred in a few coastal dunes near LAX. Thanks to the hard work of our members in partnership with local conservation organizations, this butterfly's range has been extended along the coast through the Beach Cities and onto the Peninsula. Although still endangered and very limited in distribution, the El Segundo blue has been a regular star of our counts, especially over the past 20 counts.

## MEET, LEARN, RESTORE, ENJOY

### Chapter Calendar

Sunday, Sept. 7th, at 8 AM: **Bird walk** at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Meet in the parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim above the ranger station.

Sunday Sept. 14th. **Bird Walk** at Kenneth Hahn Park. Email **Ann and Eric Brooks** at motmots@aol.com for meeting place.

Tuesday, Sept. 16th, at 7, at Madrona Marsh. **The Peregrines of PV** is the subject of the evening's talk by Randy Harwood and Jess Morton.

Saturday, Sept. 27th, at 9. **Meet the Birds!** with **Keith Haney** at Madrona Marsh. Birding for all ages and levels of knowledge in a biologically blessed place. Come on out!

Sunday Sept 28th, at 8:30. **Field trip** to Malibu Lagoon and Sycamore Canyon. State Parks fee applies, though there is some limited parking outside gates. Allow extra driving time for getting past the fire zone. Email **Ann and Eric Brooks** at motmots@aol.com to register.

Sunday, Oct. 5th, at 8 AM: **Bird walk** at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Meet in the parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim above the ranger station.

Sunday Oct 5th. **Shorebird Walk** at Ballona Creek. Email **Ann and Eric Brooks** at motmots@aol.com for meeting place and time.

Tuesday, Oct. 21st, at 7, at Madrona Marsh. **The California Condor** is the subject of the evening's talk given by legendary Condor Keeper **Mike Clark**.

Saturday, Oct. 25th, at 9. **Meet the Birds!** with **Keith Haney** at Madrona Marsh. Birding for all ages and levels of knowledge in a biologically blessed place. Come on out!

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society, of which PV/SB Audubon is the local chapter, are dedicated to the understanding and preservation of our natural heritage. Within the framework of National Audubon Society policies, we seek and implement ways to preserve indigenous flora and fauna, especially that of our local area, and provide educational services to the region's communities with respect to birds, wildlife, ecology and conservation.

#### Executive Officers and Staff

President:	Ann Dalkey
Vice-Pres.:	Nina Su'a
Treasurer:	Julian Chasin
Secretary:	Nina Su'a (Interim)
Project Mgr:	Keith Haney projectmanager@pvsbaudubon.org
Directors:	Tracy Drake, Dianna Kim, Shari Morrow, Jess Morton, Jonathan Nakai, David Quadhamer

#### Committees:

CBC:	Jonathan Nakai, pvbird@gmail.com
Field Trips:	Ann and Eric Brooks, motmots@aol.com
Hospitality	Shari Morrow
Hummin':	Jess Morton, jmorton@igc.org
Social Media:	Nina Su'a, Tania Ralhan (intern)
Webmaster:	Dianna Kim
YES:	Keith Haney

Photos by the author unless stated otherwise.

## Audubon Membership

To **join or renew** PV/SB Audubon membership, go to [Audubon.org](https://audubon.org) and select the link to Membership & Giving. Members receive Audubon Magazine and Hummin', your chapter's newsletter.

To get Hummin' by email (and /or print), send your preference to [info@pvsbaudubon.org](mailto:info@pvsbaudubon.org).

## PV/SB Audubon Chapter Support

Support your local chapter's work with checks made to PV/SB Audubon and mailed to: PO Box 2582, Palos Verdes, CA 90274 or give on line at [pvsbaudubon.org/donate](https://pvsbaudubon.org/donate).

## THIRD TUESDAY PROGRAMS

7 PM AT MADRONA MARSH

3201 PLAZA DEL AMO, TORRANCE



On **Sept. 16th**, **Randy Harwood** and **Jess Morton** mine their photo archives for a tour around the Peninsula to find the **Peregrines of PV**. Don't be surprised if a few hawks and owls sneak into the presentation, too.

**Mike Clark**, retired head of the Los Angeles Zoo's condor breeding program, will speak on October 21st about the successes and failures of the US Condor Recovery Program and prospects for its future.



Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society  
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Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

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Please deliver promptly

## AVIANTICS



By Evi Meyer

Maybe I should  
have eaten  
a different  
breakfast?