



HUMMIN'

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Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

Vol. XLVII #6 Nov.-Dec. 2025

Preserving Harbor Park By Jess Morton

Harbor Park has been central to our Audubon chapter's activities from the outset, so an LA City Council action to add new protections for the park's natural areas is most welcome. Initiated by Tim McOsker, member for the 15th District, the City District Attorney has been asked to prepare an ordinance making it a trespass to leave designated trails, walkways or recreation areas and enter into designated Protected Areas for Wildlife without authorization. In addition, McOsker's motion directs the planning department to make recommendations for implementing further protections of sensitive biological resources in both the park and the greenway between PCH and Lomita Boulevard.

Harbor Park (in photo at right) has a 350 bird species "life list." More than a hundred species in a day have been counted here many times, with 117 for a Christmas Bird Count thirty years ago perhaps tops. This park is the South Bay's single most important resource for wildlife—at least potentially. About \$120,000,000 from Proposition O bond funds went into recovering the combined park and greenway's habitat values, particularly in its water quality. But vandalism, improper usage of forested areas and lack of adequate management funds have seriously limited what the park could be, both for wildlife and for people. The proposed regulations will be up for public comment in the near future before final adoption. Now is our time, both as a chapter and individuals, to make suggestions assuring the new regulations will be of the most benefit to birds, wildlife and everyone that uses this amazing place.

Monthly Meeting Programs

Please join us on November 18th, at 7 PM for our regular monthly meeting at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. Our speakers for the evening,

Madrona Marsh Preserve Manager **Liz Evans** and Miriam **Taeubel**, will talk about the relationship between the City of Torrance, which operates the Madrona Marsh Preserve, the Friends of Madrona Marsh, its support group, and our Audubon chapter. This will be an opportunity to learn about the Madrona Marsh Preserve, how it is managed, its history, and how our chapter works with the Preserve.



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



Presidential Update

By Ann Dalkey



Here I sit, watching the neighborhood squirrel attempting to sneak into the garage to escape the wind. Perhaps she's aware that a storm is approaching, bringing much needed rain to Southern California. With reluctance, I acknowledge that

summer has passed, while wistfully hoping we will have a few more days filled with warm sunshine before the year's end.

Alas, it is time to face reality. We have one last program meeting this year when we'll host Liz Evans, Manager of Madrona Marsh, and Miriam Taeubel, who regularly helps out with meeting logistics. Together, Liz and Miriam work with our Chapter to coordinate our many activities at the marsh, especially the Program Meetings held on the 3rd Tuesdays throughout the year. They bring a deep knowledge of the Marsh and its inhabitants, both flora and fauna. Please join us for a fascinating November 18th Program Meeting. And I would love to talk to you there about your ideas for the forthcoming year. What topics would you like to hear about? Birds, wildlife, conservation, a travel program about a place you have been or would like to see?

I've learned much from the various partners our Audubon Chapter has. It underscores how important different ideas are in creating and/or maintaining a robust organization. They have helped me be a better President. And, all suggestions from members are considered! I look forward to hearing from you. Just log onto our website: pvsbaudubon.org and send your

comments via info@pvsbaudubon.org! By the way, did you know that our meeting programs are recorded? If you have missed a meeting, just go to the program recording's link on our chapter's website at www.pvsbaudubon.org.

Meanwhile, the holiday season is approaching. We will not hold a regular Program Meeting in December. Instead, the December 21st Christmas Bird Count (our 60th & National Audubon's 126th) followed by a pot luck at Madrona Marsh will serve that purpose. To be part of this great tradition, get in touch with count coordinator Jon Nakai at pvbirder@gmail.com. Then, relax and enjoy the holidays followed by another fabulous year of Southern California birding in 2026!

At a Premium!

By Julian Chasin

INSURANCE: what a fun topic! Don't we all enjoy this part of adulthood the most! Anyone? OK, seriously - did you know that all nonprofits need it: for their operations, on behalf of their board, employees, and volunteers, and protection of the public?

Your PV/SB chapter allocates a significant part of our budget to this necessary item, which costs more each year. According to our insurance carrier, price increases can be the result of many factors, including inflation, changes in risk, changes in the environment, increases in certain types of claims, and increases in claims handling costs. Increasingly aggressive litigation plays a large role also. One factor that doesn't contribute: our chapter has never submitted a single claim.

Why excite you with this news? We would love to find a bird-loving supporter to make a giant contribution by covering our insurance premiums for one year. If you would consider such a significant request, please write to me at treas@pvsbaudubon.org for further details. On the other hand, if you have experience as an insurance agent or underwriter and would consider reviewing our coverage, I would love to connect.

Does Your Membership Matter?

By Keith Haney



As the value of a dollar continues to shrink, you may wonder if your Audubon membership is making a difference in the world? Let's take a look at what your membership in the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon chapter supported in our community for 2025.

More than likely, you joined Audubon because birds hold a special place in your heart whether it be for the beauty of their plumage and song or the natural wonder of their flight. Your membership allowed us to lead two bird walks each month creating opportunities for the public to learn about and appreciate our local birds and for existing birders to commune in their hobby. You'll find our bird walk schedule in the Calendar of this newsletter. We also broadly shared Audubon's mission by hosting a booth or speaking at five different community events this year – each an opportunity to educate the public about the declining populations of our feathered friends.

Connecting the next generation with birds is a priority for our chapter ensuring they will have conservation allies well into the future. We taught elementary students the need for nest boxes and how to build them, middle and high school students the importance of our native coastal sage scrub plant community for

bird survival, and provided college students an introduction to our local shorebirds.

Monthly, we gather as a flock either in-person or online for our chapter meeting to greet new faces, enjoy a cup of coffee and a treat, and to hear about the latest trends in bird research and conservation topics. In my opinion, it's worth the cost of an annual membership for the opportunity to engage with these leading experts from universities, public agencies, and the community alone!

For our members who like to roll up their sleeves and do fieldwork, Audubon values science in action and in 2025 we provided several ways to participate. We removed invasive plants and trees from an acre of habitat occupied by threatened California Gnatcatchers and endangered Palos Verdes blue butterflies. Our chapter participated in

four surveys of the threatened Western Snowy Plover generating data to inform recovery plans, and also joined the nation's longest-running community science bird project – Audubon's Christmas Bird Count. Keeping in mind that pollinators are an important food source for many birds and an indicator of ecosystem health, we also conducted two local butterfly counts – the summer count for the 45th year! By sharing our data with the North American Butterfly Association, we contributed to 2 research articles published in Science and the Proceedings of the

National Academy of Sciences in 2025.

Wow, I hope you are as proud as I am of the local impact your Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon membership has made this year! Would you enjoy becoming more engaged with our chapter's activities in 2026? Send me an email and I can share the many ways you can support your chapter with even as little as one hour per month. ProjectManager@PVSBAudubon.org.



Birds of the Peninsula August - September 2025 By Vincent Lloyd

Warm but not hot weather prevailed over the South Bay in August and September. The high temperature was 90° F on Aug 22; the low was 60° on Aug 3 and 4. A mass of humid tropical air hung over southern California in the middle of September that seemed to deter southbound migrants. The muggy airmass dissipated around the equinox on Sep 22; afterwards wintering birds started arriving in large numbers. Tori Fay spotted the first **White-crowned Sparrow** of the season on Sep 7 at Harbor Park; Riley Daniels saw the first returning **Yellow-rumped Warbler** in his yard in Palos Verdes Estates on Sep 15.

The **Swallow-tailed Kite** that spent the summer at Ken Malloy Harbor Park departed



Bald Eagle
Photo: Manuel Duran



Swallow-tailed Kite Photo: Vincent Lloyd

on its southward journey back to South America on Aug 17. Adrian Hinkle saw two rare seabirds from the Catalina Ferry on Sep 17: a **Flesh-footed Shearwater** and a **Red-footed Booby**.

A **Bald Eagle** was at the Hermosa Pier on Sep 12 (Philemon Friesen); another was at Harbor Park on Sep 23. The **Northern Harrier** that was at Ernie Howlett Part on Sep 24 was early (Janine Choi, Gary Clayton). **White-tailed Kites** hunted at Harbor Park and the Willow

Street crossing of the Los Angeles River. The **Burrowing Owl** at the Fish Docks in San Pedro continued through Sep 21; another was at the LAX Dunes on Sep 30. **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** sought sap at Magic Johnson Park on Sep 11 (Alli Robinson) and El Segundo on Sep 29 (Sara Boscoe). **Acorn Woodpeckers** continued at Roosevelt Cemetery in Gardena and at the Willow Street crossing.

The most reliable spot in these parts for **Tropical Kingbirds** is the Willow Street crossing, where one showed up on Oct 3 (Dick Barth); another was on Signal Hill on Oct 5 (Dwight Mudry). Aaron Gyllenhaal found a **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Sand Dune Park on Sep 30. This little park in Manhattan Beach is a prime spot for finding seasonal migrants. A **Vermilion Flycatcher** appeared at Entradero Park on Sep 23 (Charlie Keller); a second was at Dominguez Park on Oct. 5 (Matt Brady). **Loggerhead Shrikes** were at Sand Dune Park, Dockweiler Beach, and Harbor Park.

There was a nice variety of vireos this period. **Cassin's Vireos** were seen at Banning Park in

Wilmington, DeForest Park in Long Beach, and Hopkins Wilderness Park in Redondo Beach. Wilderness Park also had a **Plumbeous Vireo** on Sep 29 (Chezy Yusuf). Not so long ago, these two similar species, both with prominent white "spectacles" around the eyes, were considered to be the same species, the Solitary Vireo. The Plumbeous Vireo is pure gray above ("plumbeous" comes from the Latin word for "lead") and white below; Cassin's is greenish above with a faint yellowish tint on the flanks. Cassin's breeds in the Pacific States and the Plumbeous in the Mountain West. **Bell's Vireos** were spotted at Harbor Park and Willow Springs Park in Long Beach (Brad Dawson). This bird is similar to the Plumbeous but has less distinct spectacles and wing bars. **Bank Swallows** swooped by Point Fermin on Aug 22 (Brian Daniels) and the Willow Street Crossing on Aug 25 (Johnny Ivanov). This swallow, common in the East but uncommon in the West, is marked by a dark band crossing the chest. Sofie Shen had a **White-breasted Nuthatch** in her yard in Rancho Palos Verdes on Sep 1; another was at Alondra Park on Sep 22 (Jillian Safarik).

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was photographed at Wilderness Park on Oct 2. This species breeds high up in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains; they move to lower elevations in the winter but are uncommon at sea level. Chef Ito came across another mountain bird, the **Green-tailed Towhee**, on Signal Hill on Oct 1. The only **Phainopepla** seen in the area was a female at Madrona Marsh on Aug 26 (Brian Mason, Michael Grossman).

A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** took up winter residence at Harbor Park on Sep 28 (Ed Griffin). **Vesper Sparrows** made rare appearances at Point Vicente (Brian Daniels) and Three Sisters (Chef Ito) around Oct 1. Hopefully they will stay for the winter, too. **Brewer's Sparrows** were spotted on the L.A. River and at Madrona Marsh in early September; this is a bird of the desert mountain ranges. Adam Johnson spotted a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Harbor Park on Sep 13. **Yellow-headed**

Blackbirds visited Willow Street in August and Harbor Park in September. This species breeds in scattered locations throughout the State in marshy lakes and wildlife refuges.

Fall is the time for migrating and wintering warblers. **Black-and-white Warblers** showed up at Point Fermin, DeForest Park, and West Torrance. The female Black-and-white that spent the last dozen winters at Madrona Marsh has not been seen as of this writing. Mark Scheel had a **Palm Warbler** at Ernie Howlett Park on Oct 5. Sofie Shen was surprised to find a **Grace's Warbler** in her



Grace's Warbler
Photo: Sofie Shen

yard in RPV on Oct 2. This species breeds in the mountains of Arizona and New Mexico and winters in Old Mexico; Sofie's bird got its directions 90° off! **Nashville Warblers** were seen at Point Fermin (Calvin Bonn) and at the Top of the Hill (Tori Fay) at the end of August. This species, as well as the **Hermit Warbler**, breeds in the Sierra Nevada, winters in Mexico, and is a regular migrant and occasional winter visitor in our area. Hermit Warblers were spotted at Sand Dune Park and Point Fermin in mid-September, while Tory Fay found one at Chadwick School and another at the Top of the Hill at the end of the month. **MacGillivray's Warblers** were at Signal Hill, Sand Dune Park, and the Top of the Hill. This is another species that breeds in Western mountains and

(Birds of the Peninsula continued on page 8)

Black-vented Shearwater

Short-billed (Mew) Gull

White-crowned Sparrow

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Hermit Thrush

Audubon's Warbler

Winter Visitors

A sampler of common seasonal birds

Photos: Jess Morton

Red-breasted Sapsucker

Belted Kingfisher

Ring-necked Duck

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Sanderling

Red-shafted Flicker

(Birds of the Peninsula continued from page 5)

winters in Mexico. The **Blackpoll Warbler**, on the other hand, breeds in Canada and Alaska



Blackpoll Warbler
Photo: Randy Harwood

and normally migrates through eastern North America, so Randy Harwood was pleasantly surprised to find one in his yard in Rolling Hills Estates on Sep 14. Another eastern vagrant was the **Blackburnian Warbler** that Tracy Drake had in her yard in Long Beach on Oct 3. If we add the regularly occurring warblers (the Orange-crowned, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, Wilson's and Black-throated Grey Warblers plus the Yellowthroat), that makes fifteen warbler species seen during the period.



Blackburnian Warbler Photo: Tracy Drake

A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** visited Wilderness Park on Sep 18; three days later another was on Signal Hill. This species is the eastern counterpart to the Black-headed Grosbeak; their normal migration is across the Gulf of Mexico to Central America. The **Blue Grosbeak**, in comparison, breeds all across the southern half of the United States. Blue Grosbeaks were seen at Madrona Marsh, on Signal Hill, and along the L.A. River. They, too, are on their way to Central America.

Chef Ito photographed three **Cactus Wrens** at Three Sisters Preserve on Oct 3; one other was seen during this period at Alta Vicente. **California Gnatcatchers** were seen in the Point Vicente area, at Ocean Trails, and at White Point. No Rufous-crowned Sparrows were reported during the period.

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.



Christmas Bird Count

December 21st
to take part, email Jon
at pvbirders@gmail.com

Audubon
christmasbirdcount.org

Snowy Southern California By Keith Haney

We count our blessings as Southern Californians when winter approaches – no need to winterize our homes, pull parkas from the deep recesses of our closets, or worry about sliding into that troublesome “ditch” on the side of the road due to slushy conditions. But perhaps most of all, as birders we’re grateful for our snowy beaches!

Federally listed as threatened in 1993, the Western Snowy Plover builds its nests directly on sandy beaches found between Southern Washington and Baja California. Increasing human disturbance and loss of nesting habitat to development has caused their numbers to decline significantly. It had been 68 years since Snowy Plovers nested on the beaches of L.A. County when nests were discovered at Malibu, Santa Monica, and Dockweiler beaches in 2017. The breeding population of Snowy Plovers has increased since 2007 but has remained at approximately 2,000 individuals on the entire Pacific Coast since 2019.

Snowy Plover
Photo: Greg Hachigian



Our chapter participates in the Western Snowy Plover recovery plan by conducting surveys 4 times per year on local beaches and reporting results to L.A. Audubon which compiles the data for Los Angeles and Orange Counties. These data will be used to support the proposal for a local nesting enclosure in hopes of adding an additional Snowy Plover nesting site to L.A. County beaches!

We will have January and March surveys in the first quarter of 2026 and would love your participation. No prior experience is necessary and training will be provided. Please send me an email if you’d like to join us! ProjectManager@PVSBaudubon.org

The birds explode from the lake with flailing feathers that take them scattering through the air as death-dark wings wheel, then flare ending an eagle’s first pass into that panicking mass

This raptor’s circling return puts a blinding sun astern honing its second sortie for the gull that did not flee and narrowing now consists of orange onrushing fists



Fists by Jess Morton

Taxonomy Changes 2025

By Vincent Lloyd

In August, the American Ornithological Society (AOS) announced the latest updates to its official checklist of North American birds. This is the most authoritative checklist, as it is the one that professional ornithologists use. Cornell Labs, which administers eBird, generally conforms their checklist to the AOS checklist. The only major change affecting California birds is the split of the Warbling Vireo into two species, the Western Warbling Vireo (*Vireo swainsoni*) and the Eastern Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*). Although these two populations look nearly identical, they differ in their songs, molts and migration patterns. There are regular genetic differences as well. This change is not altogether unexpected: both the Sibley Guide and The National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America already illustrate both species and remark, "Apparently does not interbreed where the two subspecies come together in Alberta." The dividing line between the two ranges runs just to the east of the Rocky Mountains. The two species are common breeders in deciduous forests all over the U.S. north of 35° North and as far as 60° North in western Canada. They winter in Mexico and Central America. In places where both species occur, it's going to be a tricky business to distinguish them. In spring, the Eastern birds are generally yellower than the Western birds and their songs are distinctive, but in fall both species are yellowish. It's not clear to me that they can be reliably distinguished by sight in fall.

The AOS also confirmed the split, adopted last year by eBird, of the Herring Gull into four species: European Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), American Herring Gull (*L. smithsonianus*), Vega Gull (*L. vegae*), and Mongolian Gull (*L. mongolicus*). (This last species doesn't occur in North America.) One other interesting revision involves only a change of genus, not species. Two common California birds that are notoriously tricky to distinguish are Cooper's Hawk and the Sharp-shinned Hawk. These two birds, along with the Goshawk, have long been assigned to the same genus, *Accipiter*. It turns out, however, that the two species are not closely related! Consequently, Cooper's Hawk, as well as the American Goshawk and the Eurasian Goshawk,

have been moved into a resurrected genus, *Astur*, created by Charles Lucien Bonaparte in 1828 with the Eurasian Goshawk as the type species. The Sharpie remains in the old genus *Accipiter*. Take that, Cooper!



Above: Western Warbling Vireo at Madrona Marsh

Below: Eastern Warbling Vireo at Maumee Lodge (Ohio); Photos by Jess Morton



MEET, LEARN, RESTORE, ENJOY

Chapter Calendar

Sunday, Nov. 2nd, at 8 AM: **Bird walk** at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park. Meet in the parking lot between Vermont and Anaheim above the ranger station.

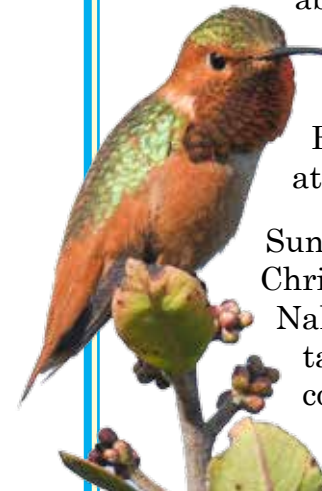
Sunday Nov. 9th. **Bird Walk** at Kenneth Hahn Park. Email **Ann and Eric Brooks** at motmots@aol.com for meeting place.

Tuesday, Nov. 18th, at 7 PM, at Madrona Marsh. Preserve Manager Liz Evans and Miriam Taeubel will give a program about the marsh and its Nature Center, and the history of how the community came together to rescue the marsh's natural values.

Saturday, Nov. 22nd, 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 Nov 30th, 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, Dec. 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.



Sun., Dec 14th. **Bird Walk** at Kenneth Hahn Park. Email **Ann and Eric Brooks** at motmots@aol.com for details.

Sunday, Dec. 21st, all day, Christmas Bird Count. Email Jon Nakai at pvbird@gmail.com to take part. There will be a post-count pot luck at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center at 5 PM.

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 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.

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.

THIRD TUESDAY PROGRAMS

7 PM AT MADRONA MARSH

3201 PLAZA DEL AMO, TORRANCE

On Nov. 18th, Madrona Marsh Preserve Manager **Liz Evans** and **Miriam Taeubel** will talk about the relationship of the City of Torrance's Madrona Marsh Preserve with its support group, the Friends of Madrona Marsh, and with PV/SB Audubon Society. This will be an opportunity to learn about the Madrona Marsh Preserve, how it is managed, its history, and how our chapter works with the Preserve.



Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society
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AVIANTICS

By Evi Meyer



You go to
Southern Arizona
and this is what
happens to you!

