

# Phainopepla



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## PROGRAM NOTES

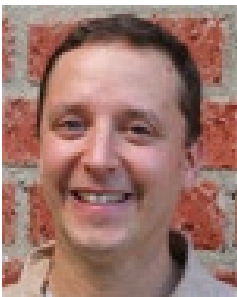
**SFVAS Annual Awards Banquet**

**Friday, March 13, 2009**

**Airtel Plaza Hotel, 6:00 p.m.**

Mail in your reservation form (on back page) TODAY!

## 2009 Conservation Award Recipient: Seth Shteir



Seth Shteir first became intrigued by the natural world after his father took him on a trip to Southern Arizona at age ten. Clambering up saguaro strewn bajadas and down washes filled with coatamundis instilled in him a desire to protect wildlife and special places. Seth feels honored to be receiving the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society's Conservation Award because SFVAS works hard to protect wildlife, invests in its members and does a wonderful job teaching youth about the natural world. Moving to the desert to work for the National Parks Conservation Association has been a great adventure for Seth. Now that he lives in Joshua Tree, California, Seth welcomes SFVA members to drop by and do some birding! ♪

## Featured Speaker: Tom Kaminski



Avian Video Center Producer Tom Kaminski, sponsored by The Hummingbird Society, recently traveled to Isla Robinson Crusoe (a Chilean possession) to film the endemic and critically endangered Juan Fernández Firecrown Hummingbird (*Sephanoides fernandensis*). Tom Kaminski has combined his experience in broadcast journalism, aerospace communications, and college teaching to create nature programs that are uniquely educational and entertaining. His presentation will feature his new DVD entitled "Hummingbirds! Beauty and the Beast." We will learn that it is not true that hummingbird beauty is more than feather deep;

that they are little beasts that live by the law of the jungle. They are deadbeat dads, single moms, and teenage chicks. Find out what hummingbirds want and how they get it. ♪



## **PART 1: A LIFETIME OF RECOLLECTIONS CONCERNING NATIVE BIRDS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY** By Don Mullally, Edited by Art Langton

Obsessions cause vivid memories. A few of Mullally's date back to the 1930s. Some animals imprinted on him during those years were not identified for years. Being an early geek, by the age of eleven he started reading animal books in libraries to determine the names of birds.

Though Los Angeles was sizeable and well developed in the 1930s, opportunities existed for observing birds. One consisted of city blocks of original old houses erected before 1925. Another consisted of large and small open spaces in the valleys, hills, and canyons covered in native forms of vegetation. Most of these were at least partially enclosed by houses and other developed properties. Further removed from cities and towns were nearly vacant areas of wilderness in deserts, ranges of hills and mountains. Changes in the composition of bird populations have occurred in all three types of environments in the last seventy years. However, native birds have not disappeared from any of the three.

The year Mullally was born, 1929, the family lived in a western part of Hollywood administered at the time by the County. Property lines on the sides of houses often had low wood or wire fencing and rows of shrubbery. Block walls were not present. Trees varied in number. In front yards, most trees were on parkways. The back half to two-thirds of backyards were usually bare soil and leaf litter. Many of the bird species present from the 1930s to the early 1950s preferred to forage among the litter and on the bare ground rather than grass lawns.

Birds of the neighborhood during these early years were the progeny of survivors from the native habitat demolished by the first developers or home builders. Widely scattered native trees included the western sycamore, coast live oak, holly-leaved cherry and Mexican elderberry indicating that the former native environment included woodlands. Openings between the native trees were dominated by grassland, chaparral, or scrub.

The presence of such non-native trees as cypress, juniper, walnut, and various fruit trees may also have helped to support the native bird populations. From 1935 to circa 1950 birds remembered as living or visiting his backyard included orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, small woodpeckers and sapsuckers, bushtits,

Oak Titmouse, Western Scrub-Jay, Northern Mockingbird, House Finches, Anna's Hummingbirds, Cedar Waxwing, California Towhees, Western Kingbirds, Hermit Thrushes, cowbirds, White-crowned Sparrows, wrens, juncos, Black Phoebes, Song Sparrows, warblers, vireos, California Thrashers, and Spotted Towhees. A colony of Brewer's Blackbirds roosted and multiplied south of his home in a long row of acacia trees where they subsisted on worms and insects foraged in front lawns. Most of these species declined in abundance after 1950 and were absent by 1975–1980. Losses are attributed to increased numbers of apartments, condominiums, block walls, cats, and the use of herbicides and pesticides. Shrubbery along property lines was also going out of style.

Away from home and the immediate neighborhood, creeks flowed south from the Santa Monica Mountain canyons including ones named Laurel, Nichols, Cahuenga, and Bronson and supported forest and woodlands of riparian growth south to Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards and possibly as far south as Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard. The subsurface flow of water of these intermittent creeks sustains trees of the riparian zone during the dry season and droughts. (to be continued) ♪





## Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

We visited Upper Newport Bay and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary on January 17. Our twenty participants enjoyed a beautiful day and saw some terrific birds. One measure of success on this trip is finding California Gnatcatcher and Clapper Rail, and we scored on both species. The trip produced seventeen species of waterfowl (including feral escapees Mute Swan at Upper Newport Bay and Egyptian Goose at San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.) We had both Redhead and Canvasback on the day for a nice comparison study. Heading our list of fifteen shorebird species were Dunlin, Long-billed Curlew, Whimbrel, Semipalmated Plover and American Avocet (we missed Red Knot again this year.)

Other birds of interest on the trip were Sora, Common Moorhen, Black Skimmer, American White Pelican, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Caspian and Forster's Terns, Belted Kingfisher, Marsh Wren (heard), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and American Pipit. Notable sparrows were Savannah, Lincoln's and Golden-crowned. ♪

## Membership

SFVAS is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope you will get involved with our many field trips and activities. Please contact Rose Leibowitz, Membership Chair, with any questions.

National:	Pam Garvin	Kathy Magone	Robert Tooley
Anna Alcaez	Karen Glass	Namati family	Robert Vaccarino
Richard Ambrose	Susan Grant	Alice Nassimian	Len Weed
Julie Avnit	Amy Gross	Sally Nichols	Carol Weisburg
Barbara Blalock	Debra Heintz	Phyllis Norlund	Norma Wishingrad
Ronald Bosinoff	Gamik Hokassians	Wayne Ostrander	Rilla Wolfe
Sterling Branton	Luisa Hudson	Roger Pasarow	David & Pamela Wood
Richard Brickman	Tara Iglesias	Judy Pink	M.I. Yoo
E. Brunsch	Barbara Iverson	Paula Quasarano	Anne Young
Lisa Butler	Michael & Wendy James	Magda Reagan	John Young
Sandra Carlson	C. C. Jeffries	Linda Reuter	Manka Zaharkiv
Dan Chambers	Judy Katz	Molly Risnik	Roberta Zaharris
Chris Chesney	Rebecca Kaufman	Joseph Rohr	
Christopher Covault	Melvin Kelechstein	Peder Rude	Local:
Edith Cracker	Yoom Kim	Jay Russell	Nadene Minear
Michael Dee	Diane Lang	Betty Saltman	Jacqueline Sevaraid
Dare Doolittle	Thomas Layman	Donna Schraider	Laura Stotler
Claudia Ferguson	Michele Legrand	Ann Sewell	Harry Thomas
Deborah Furlan	Michele Longona	Mavis Shafer	David Townsend
F. Gallenbergzieve	Donna McRae	Russell Swartz	

## A Note about Membership

Several members have asked me about the difference between the local membership, which has a membership application form in the Phainopepla, and the National Membership. You are free to enjoy either and a little money is sent to the local chapter by the National Audubon Society when you renew your membership. However, if you join locally you have the option of first class postage and all your money is used to help our chapter. With either membership, we look forward to seeing you on our walks and at our meetings. —Submitted by Rose Leibowitz ♪



# Calendar of Events

**Sunday, March 1. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. For more information contact him at (661) 229-6986 or kris.ohlenkamp@sbcglobal.net.

**Tuesday, March 3. Antelope Valley Bird Meeting. 6:30 p.m.** The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve in the Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center, at 43201 35th Street, Lancaster. Contact Bob or Bonnie Weatherman at (661) 269-2051. Speaker: Kris Ohlenkamp. Topic: Summer birding jobs in the mountains of California and Idaho.

**Saturday, March 7. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–11:00 a.m.** Directions: Exit the Ventura Freeway (U.S. 101) at Las Virgenes Canyon Road and proceed north to the trailhead parking area at the end of the road. Please bring plenty of water and wear proper shoes. No toilets are available on site. Leader: Jim Hardesty (818) 346-6712, jnhardesty@att.net.

**Saturday, March 7. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** Directions: Take closest freeway to I-5 North and exit at Parker Road. Turn right and proceed to stop sign (Castaic Road), proceed to next stop sign (Lake Hughes Road), proceed to next stop sign (Castaic Lake Drive) and turn right. Entrance to the park is on the right. Parking is in Lot 4, so make a right turn after the kiosk, then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff of LA Co Parks at (661) 257-4050.

**Sunday, March 8. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Meet at the first wide place after entering the gardens. Admission is free for early birders. Located at 1418 Descanso Drive, La Cañada. Leader: Karen Johnson or Nancy Herron Knode. For more information, contact Karen at (818) 790-1687 or lv2bird@aol.com.

**Friday, March 13. SFVAS Annual Awards Banquet. 6:00 p.m. Cocktails, 7:00 p.m.** Dinner. Featured Speaker: Tom Kaminski. 2009 Conservation Award Recipient: Seth Shteir, former SFVAS Conservation Chair. Location: Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Avenue, Van Nuys. Send in your reservation form today (located on back page.) For more information, contact Chairperson Jeanne Polak-Recht, at (818) 360-1438.

**Saturday, March 14. Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 8:30–11:00 a.m.** Join us for the final Family walk of the season at the Sepulveda Basin! These popular walks, designed for beginning birders and school-age children, have resumed for the current cool season. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leaders: Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 and Linda Jones, (818) 831-6061. RAIN CANCELS.

**Saturday, March 14. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m.** Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and continue about 1.5 miles to the park entrance. Turn right and park at the Nature Center. Leader: Bob Fischer. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

**Sunday, March 15. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$10 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796, aKotin@earthlink.net and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

**Tuesday, March 17. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 8:30 a.m.** Directions: Take the 118/Ronald Reagan Freeway and exit at Balboa Blvd. Turn north, driving two miles to Sesnon, turn left going west .6 mile, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. RAIN CANCELS. Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at, (818) 885-7493, with any questions (before 7 p.m., please) or CarolOpp@sbcglobal.net.

**Saturday, Sunday, March 21–22. Monthly Field Trip: Morro Bay Weekend!** The first day, Saturday, March 21, we will meet in the parking lot on the near (inland) side of Morro rock at 8:00 a.m. The second day, Sunday, March 22, we will meet at the Montana de Oro State Park Headquarters/Visitor Center at 8:00 a.m. Our species tally is usually very high on this trip. Pigeon Guillemot and Chestnut-backed Chickadee are expected. Directions from the San Fernando Valley: Take the 101 Freeway to San Luis Obispo and then follow Route 1 north to the town of Morro Bay. Allow at least 4 hours driving time from the Valley. Bring lunch and drinks. Be prepared for possible inclement weather, and





remember that the central coast can be quite chilly in the mornings. Make camping or motel reservations as soon as possible. Leader is Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, March 21. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** Directions: Go north on I-5 through Santa Clarita, exit Calgrove and turn west (left) under the freeway and then left again on the Old Road. Watch for the sign, “Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon.” Turn right and park in the back lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 255-3606.

**Sunday, March 22. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See March 8 for details.

**Monday, March 23. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Balboa Mission Town Hall, 16916 San Fernando Mission Blvd., at Balboa (southeast corner) in Granada Hills.

**Thursday, March 26. NO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING. See you Thursday, April 23.**

**Sunday, March 29. Chatsworth Nature Preserve. 7:00 a.m.** Chapter members will join the Southwest Herpetologist Society on a tour inside the Preserve. We will divide

according to interest, birds or herps. Meet at the Plummer/Valley Circle gate on the north side of the Preserve approximately .9 miles west of the intersection of Plummer and Topanga Canyon Blvd., past (3) “STOP” signs and opposite 9439 Valley Circle. Phone (818) 887-0973 and leave your name and number with Art Langton one week in advance to be admitted. As the gate will be locked behind us be prepared to stay until noon. Bring drink, snacks. Facilities are limited and primitive. RAIN CANCELS. Leaders: Art Langton, Stuart Wells.

**Saturday, April 4. Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–11:00 a.m.** See March 7 for details.

**Saturday, April 4. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** See March 7 for details.

**Sunday, April 5. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See March 1 for details.

Future Field Trips: (Details later)

**April 25.** Morongo Valley (fourth Saturday)

**May 9.** Placerita Canyon Park (second Saturday)

**June 13.** Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve (second Saturday)

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## Audubon at Home

by Alan Pollack

### FOOTFALLS

The mountain path twines  
round boulder, stump and scree.  
Only a few will see.

“Full speed ahead” I used to say.  
The end of the race.....dead.

Now, cobweb, fern and footfall,  
pinecone, scent, dried leaf,  
beetle, blossom and twitter  
slow me down. I am late.

My faster trail mates are worried.  
But then, they may have missed  
what I have found.

## Do You Have a Question About How to Create a Wildlife Friendly Garden?

Alan Pollack would love to hear from you. Please e-mail him with any questions you have regarding creating a wildlife friendly garden that can be used for publication.

Alan also offers free consultation/landscape design to help you make your yard wildlife friendly. He also gives a free, PowerPoint slide show/lecture to community groups, high school and college classes on attracting wildlife to your garden and sustainable gardening practices. He can be reached at [alpat62@aol.com](mailto:alpat62@aol.com) or (818) 340-2347 or at [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org). ♯



# SEPULVEDA BASIN 2009 WILDLIFE RESERVE CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 8:00 A.M. - NOON**

Haskell Creek, where it runs through the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area, hosts many riparian trees and shrubs, such as cottonwoods and willows. Songbirds forage and nest in the trees, while egrets and herons fish in this heart of the Wildlife Area. Unfortunately it is infested with trash, like plastic bags and Styrofoam.

Please help restore the creek's beauty!

**Equipment and Clothing:** You will get muddy and maybe wet. Please wear rugged clothing and shoes or rubber boots. If you have them, please bring work gloves and long-handled tools to reach items.

**Directions:** Take Woodley Avenue (which is 1/2 mile west of the I-405 Freeway) north from Burbank Boulevard. Go 1/2 mile north to the signs for the Wildlife Reserve and Japanese Gardens. Turn east (right). Bear right where the road forks. Continue east 1/2 mile to the end of the road. Sign in at the amphitheater, just beyond the large rock monuments and rock-faced buildings.

**More Information:** The event is appropriate for adults and older students. Students can earn **community service hours**. It is **not appropriate for young children but OK for older elementary school students if they are closely supervised**.

**Rain cancels.**

**Questions:** 310.457-5796 or 818.831-6061.

*Sponsored by San Fernando Valley Audubon  
[www.SFVAudubon.org](http://www.SFVAudubon.org)*



**JOIN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON**

To get started with your membership,  
use the following form and mail to:

SFV Audubon Society  
Attn: Membership  
P.O. Box 7769  
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Make all checks payable to SFV Audubon.

**SFVAS Membership**

Regular 1-yr chapter membership....\$20      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Student 1-yr Chapter Membership...\$10      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional First-Class Postage.....\$5      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions to SFVAS.....      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total.....      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New Member \_\_\_\_    Renewal \_\_\_\_    School \_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about SFVAS? \_\_\_\_\_

The PHAINOPEPLA, published ten times a year, is the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409, 818-347-3205. San Fernando Valley Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, a non-profit conservation/education organization, and is dedicated to "the conservation of wildlife and natural resources."

Articles, letters, drawings, and photographs concerning conservation, the science and ecology, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for publication in the PHAINOPEPLA.

Material from other newsletters or newspaper should include the source and date. Copy for the PHAINOPEPLA should be in the hands of the editor by the 3rd of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

An introductory membership to the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:  
National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 52529, Boulder, CO 80322. Be sure to write "C12" on the form to assure assignment to our chapter. For renewals, use the form in the National Audubon magazine, "Audubon".

If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Rose Leibowitz at (818) 990-5405 or e-mail her at [rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org).

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

President:	Jim Moore	(661) 298-1130
1st Vice President:	Dave Weeshoff	618-1652
2nd Vice President:	Chris Van Beveren	998-3122
Treasurer:	Mark Osokow	unpublished
Recording Sec'y:	Donna Timlin	341-9354
Corresponding Sec'y	Margie Maseda	880-2002

**DIRECTORS**

John Dietz	222-8180
Sara Huang	947-2877
Dave Weeshoff	618-1652
Heather Medvitz	222-4430
Michael Van Norman	(661) 263-2958

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Antelope Valley Chair:	Bob and Bonnie Weatherman	(661) 269-2051
AV Newsletter:	Linda Edwards	(661) 948-3524
Audubon-at-Home:	Alan Pollack	340-2347
Birdathon:	Rose Leibowitz	990-5405
Christmas Bird Count:	Art Langton	887-0973
Community Outreach:	Sharon Ford	780-5816
Conservation:	Kris Ohlenkamp	(661) 299-6986
Coordinating Council Rep:	Jim Hardesty	346-6712
Descanso Bird Station:	Dottie Ecker	790-0659
Descanso Bird Walks:	Nancy Herron Knode	unpublished
Descanso Bird Walks:	Karen Johnson	790-1687
Education Classroom:	Dave Weeshoff	618-1652
Education-Sep. Basin:	Carolyn Oppenheimer	885-7493
Field Trips:	Richard Barth	(310) 276-0342
Finance:	Allan Kotin	(310) 457-5796
Hospitality:	Carol Johnson	981-8457

Layout & Design:	AM Mail Plus	787-6415
Malibu Crk. Bird Walk:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796
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Phainopepla Editor:	Rebecca LeVine	776-0881
Programs:	Jeanne Polak-Recht	831-2438
Publicity:	Margie Maseda	880-2002
Sales & Services:	Carolyn Oppenheimer	885-7493
Scholarship:	Linda Jones	831-6061
Sepulveda Bird Walks:	Kris Ohlenkamp	(661) 299-6986
Web Coordinator:	Jim Hardesty	346-6712
Youth Activities:	Muriel Kotin	(310) 457-5796

*All Phones are area code 818 unless otherwise noted.*

For Chapter leaders email addresses, see our web site:

**[www.SFVAudubon.org](http://www.SFVAudubon.org)**

**CHAPTER PHONE (818) 347-3205**

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## Phainopepla

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Phainopepla March 2009



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#### San Fernando Valley Audubon Society Awards Banquet

Friday, March 13, 2009 \_ 6:00 p.m. No Host Bar \_ 7:00 p.m. Dinner  
Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Avenue, Van Nuys

**Featured Speaker:** Tom Kaminski

**2009 Conservation Award Recipient:** Seth Shteir.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check (\$50.00 / person) for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Names \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable to: San Fernando Valley Audubon Society.**

Mail to: Jeanne Polak-Recht, 11002 Garden Grove Avenue, Northridge, CA 91326

The buffet-style dinner will also include selections for vegetarians. The cost is \$50.00 including tax and tip. Reservations must be made in advance. Please list names of all guests in your party and mail in this form by March 6, 2009. THERE IS NO RESERVED SEATING. Reduced parking fee at Airtel or street parking is FREE. You will not receive a confirmation of your reservation. Reservations will be held at the door. For further information call Jeanne Polak-Recht, Chairperson, at (818) 360-1438.