

# Phainopepla



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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society



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## PROGRAM NOTES

**Erica Stutz and William Shore to speak at Thursday, September 23, SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:30 p.m.**

**TOPIC: Expressions of Nature through Photography and Words**

Erica and William, long-time members of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, will present a program of their own bird photography for the September General Meeting. Erica is a published author who has previously had poems published in the Phainopepla as well as by publishing companies. See Calendar Section for directions.



## Conservation Award Donation

Carolyn Oppenheimer, this year's recipient of San Fernando Valley Audubon Society's Conservation Award, has selected the International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBRRC) as her charity of choice to receive the full \$500 of the award. Each year, the Society chooses someone who has made an outstanding contribution to conservation during the year, and donates the award to a charity selected by them. The IBRRC plays a critical role in rescuing birds that have been injured by accidents, illegal hunting, oil spills, etc. It is currently actively rescuing birds oiled as a result of the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. —Submitted by Mark Osokow ♪

Photo: Male Phainopepla on Canada Larga Rd. in Ventura, May 07, 2010.  
Taken by Alexander Viduetsky, SFVAS member.

**NO General Membership Meeting in August.  
Have a great summer. See you September 23!**



## Late Spring Tour into Chatsworth Nature Preserve by Art Langton

Ten members and guests of the Chapter joined members of the Southwest Herpetologist Society on an early morning field and birding trip through the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. Sunday, May 23, was extremely pleasant with broken cloud cover and no wind. Even the forecasted sprinkles held off until the conclusion of the visit at noon. Fifty-eight species, either seen or heard, made up the combined total for both groups with the herpers finding two Barn Owls during their hunt for scarce lizards and snakes.

Birds sighted were typical of the season with all the expected swallows, phoebes, orioles, herons, hummingbirds, kingbirds plus White-throated Swifts, a migrating wood pewee, and an Orange-crowned Warbler. Highlights included several Blue Grosbeaks,

Lark Sparrows, Western Bluebirds, Western Tanager, meadowlarks, a covey of young quail, and undoubtedly newly fledged Red-tailed Hawks. Say's Phoebes were observed using the inside of an abandoned DWP building as a nesting site.

Among the expected but missing species were Rufous-crowned Sparrows despite attempts to attract them by playing song records, Oak Titmouse, and Nuttall's Woodpeckers. Also missing were the White-face Ibis and Cattle Egrets seen the previous month on April 18.

The Chapter extends its thanks and appreciation to the LA DWP for granting access to this nearby and always most interesting birding location. ♪

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## The Future of Birding by Ted Floyd

The following appeared on BirdChat on July 1, 2010. Ted Floyd is editor of Birding, the magazine of the American Birding Association.

I was privileged to spend the past several days with close to 20 excellent young birders attending the 2010 Young Birders' Camp of the American Birding Association. Here are some things I observed:

1. Young birders are fanatical about eBird.
2. They geo-reference everything.
3. They count birds.
4. They are way into butterflies.
5. They're even into tiger beetles.

I would say that 4 or 5 of the young birders appear destined to become famous birding greats by any reckoning. Two or three of them were just casually interested (which is great!) and the rest were solidly into birding. My point is: These young birders are a good sampling of where birding is headed in the second decade of the 21st century.

Here's an anecdote that really struck me. We stopped in the middle of the afternoon at a site in the beautiful high desert of Colorado's San Luis Valley, where we found several singing Sage Thrashers and Sage Sparrows. These species were life birds for most of the young birders. I know that, because I took a poll. But that wasn't the point, for them. Instead: "Did you count 4 Sage Sparrows or 5?" And: "Hang on a second...I'm waiting for a signal for the lat/long." And: "Oh cool! Check out that robberfly!"

Key point: It wasn't just the super-intense young birders. It was pretty much all of them. To the extent that organized birding is going to remain relevant in the years ahead we can look forward to two basic developments:

1. Increased emphasis on quantitative study of bird populations abetted by electronic gadgetry.
2. Insects.

Seriously, if you don't do eBird and if you don't do butterflies (and other "bugs" as they say) then you're a relic of the 20th century.

Submitted by Linda Jones

Printed by permission of Ted Floyd ♪



# BIRDATHON

Submitted by Rosemary Leibowitz

A big thank you to all the generous members who donated to our Birdathon this year. At the time of going to press we raised just under \$10,000!

The following people contributed to our total:

- |                             |                              |                         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
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| Steve & Leslie Hartman      | Marilyn Molnari              |                         |
| Susan Haugland              | Jim Moore                    |                         |
| Lois Havick                 | Alvy Moore                   |                         |



# Calendar of Events

## August

**Sunday, August 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 (818) 986-7785 or kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org.

**Saturday, August 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.

**Sunday, August 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: Olga Clark or Nancy Herron Knode. For more information, contact Dottie Ecker, (818) 790-0659.

**Saturday, August 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, August 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 \$12 per car. Leader (s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796, muriel.kotin@sfvaudubon.org and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

**Tuesday, August 17. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 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 0.6 miles, 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.) or carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org.

**Saturday, August 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) 252-6187.

**Saturday, August 21. Monthly Field Trip to Chilao. 7:30 a.m.** Birding the San Gabriel Mountains along the Angeles Crest. We will look for Hairy and White-headed Woodpeckers, Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch and many other montane species. Bring lunch and water. Note these different directions to Chilao this year, as Hwy 2 is closed north of La Canada-Flintridge due to the storm damage: From the 210 Fwy, exit Sunland Blvd, proceed east into Sunland and turn left on Oro Vista. Oro Vista becomes Big Tujunga Canyon Road. Continue until the road ends at Angeles Forest Hwy. Turn left on Angeles Forest Hwy and proceed about 4 miles to Upper Big Tujunga Canyon Road. Turn right and go approx 10 miles to Angeles Crest Hwy (Hwy 2). Turn left and proceed to the Chilao Visitor Center.

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

**NO General Membership Meeting in August. Have a great summer. See you September 23!**

## September

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

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

**Tuesday, September 7. Antelope Valley Audubon's General Meeting and Lecture. 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. Program posted on [www.avaudubon.com](http://www.avaudubon.com).

**Saturday, September 11. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 9:00 a.m.** See August 14 for details.

**Sunday, September 12. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See August 8 for details.



**Saturday, September 18. Monthly Field Trip to Huntington Central Park and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve (in Huntington Beach). 7:30 a.m.** Meet at the Slater Avenue parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Directions from the San Fernando Valley: Take the San Diego Freeway (405) south and exit at Golden West. Go south approximately three miles on Golden West to Slater. Turn left on Slater to the parking lot on the right. Bring lunch. We will picnic at the park and afterwards caravan to Bolsa Chica. Leader: Richard Barth, (310) 276-0342.

**Saturday, September 18. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m.** See August 21 for details.

**Sunday, September 19. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See August 15 for details.

**Tuesday, September 21. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 8:30 a.m.** See August 17 for details.

**Thursday, September 23. General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino. Located between Moorpark and Ventura Blvd., on the west side of Balboa, just south of the Presbyterian Church. Welcome back. Hope you had a great summer! Come early for social hour. Our speakers, Erica Stutz and her husband, William Shore will present "Expressions of Nature through Photography and Words." See "Program Notes" on page one.

**Sunday, September 26. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m.** See August 8 for details.

**Monday, September 27. SFVAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.** Balboa Mission Town Hall, 16916 San Fernando Mission Blvd., at Balboa (southeast corner) in Granada Hills.

Future Field Trips: (Details later)

October 16. El Dorado Park (Long Beach)

November 20. Ventura Harbor and Water Treatment Ponds ✕

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## Monthly Field Trip Report by Richard Barth

On May 8 we visited Walker Ranch in Placerita Canyon and then checked nearby Whitney Canyon. Placerita Canyon Park was hosting some sort of event so we decided to forego trying to bird there (the overflow parking lot was full of cars). The day produced an excellent variety of birds, with a Barn Owl at Walker Ranch probably considered the most interesting find. We did well with warblers: Hermit, Yellow, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, and Common Yellowthroat. Olive-sided Flycatchers and Western Wood-Pewees offered valuable comparative views. Other species of note seen were Costa's Hummingbird, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lazuli Bunting, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Hammond's Flycatcher, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Warbling Vireo and Phainopepla. A good number of Swainson's Thrushes, Black-headed Grosbeaks and Western Tanagers were scattered about. House Wrens popped up everywhere. One small flock of California Quail was observed. Also included on our trip list were Western Kingbird, Oak Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, California Thrasher, Spotted Towhee, Bullock's Oriole and Hooded Oriole.

June 12 found us at Rancho Sierra Vista Preserve in Ventura County. Beautiful, cool weather made for a pleasant walk. We missed seeing or hearing Grasshopper Sparrows despite reports that they had returned to the preserve again this spring. A highlight of the day was watching an adult Greater Roadrunner feeding a begging fledgling that was following it around on the brushy hillsides. Blue Grosbeaks were tallied as expected, with territorial males singing from conspicuous perches and one female popping up and offering a good view. For the second straight year we spotted a Yellow-breasted Chat here. A Violet-green Swallow was in one of the Cliff Swallow flocks. The raptors on hand were White-tailed Kite, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel. Western Bluebird, Bullock's Oriole, Wrentit, California Thrasher and Lark Sparrow are always notable. Other species of interest were Cassin's Kingbird, Oak Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, House Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Spotted Towhee, Song Sparrow and Lesser Goldfinch. We had one distant view of a female Lazuli Bunting. No luck with Costa's and Black-chinned Hummingbirds. After the walk three of us did a little extra birding and picked up California Quail and Hooded Oriole. ✕



## Schlitz Audubon Nature Center —Submitted by Jeanne Polak-Recht



Have you been looking for the perfect venue for a wedding?, a big anniversary party?, a sweet sixteen party?, or a 75th birthday event? If you are seeking such a place I know where you can find the ideal location. The perfect spot is located in a wooded area, at the edge of a lake, surrounded by a large city, where in spring wildflowers bloom in white and lavender. Next to the lake in a clearing appears a large square gazebo for outdoor activities: for example, wedding ceremonies, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs or just sitting and soaking up nature and the outdoors. Alas, this venue is not located in California but in Wisconsin on the shores of Lake Michigan just 15 minutes north of downtown Milwaukee. Partnered with the Schlitz Brewing Company, National Audubon Society built this great facility for meetings, exhibits, bird rehabilitation, and events for the public and educational programs for children and adults.

Schlitz Audubon Nature Center's five miles of trails take visitors through 185 acres of unspoiled natural beauty. Year-round visitors can hike, jog, stroll along the beach or find a quiet haven to commune with nature. In the winter the landscape becomes a perfect winter wonderland for snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

About 25 yards from the clearing stands a large, log cabin type building surrounded by a large open-air veranda. This building includes a full service kitchen and catering area which can accommodate guests both inside and on the veranda. For visitors to the nature center all of the wildlife exhibits are kept in glass-enclosed cases, which are on wheels and can be rolled out when the interior is used as a dining area for special occasions.

In addition to all of the indoor and outdoor facilities there is a raptor rehabilitation center next door to the main building. Staffed by volunteers its inhabitants include kestrels, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, an Osprey, a Peregrine Falcon, a Barred and a Screech Owl, and a vulture. Outside of the Center were Wild Turkeys in an enclosure and many bird feeders attracting many different passerines.

The Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, an award winning green building which opened in 2003, incorporates energy efficient design and technology, water conservation systems, and sustainable materials and processes. What an asset it would be for our community and city if we could realize such a center for the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. ♣

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## Audubon-at-Home Mailbox by Alan Pollack

I recently received an email from a neighbor asking me about the frequency of Peregrine Falcons nesting in his Woodland Hills neighborhood. He reported he had a pair nesting in a tree in his backyard making life miserable for the songbirds that usually visit there.

I checked with Jim Hardesty and Art Langton, both of whom agreed that such sightings were rare here in the West Valley and they reminded me that peregrines do not nest in trees but rather on cliff faces or on buildings that resemble cliff faces. Some have been sighted nesting on a tall, office building in Warner Center. A subsequent photo of the neighbor's bird was of a Coopers Hawk, not a Peregrine Falcon...a common visitor to our bird-attracting, West Valley gardens. ♣

Please e-mail Alan Pollack, our Audubon-at-Home Chair, with any questions you have with regards to creating a wildlife-friendly garden that can be used for publication. Alan 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 contacted at (818) 340-2347 or at [alan.pollack@sfvadubon.org](mailto:alan.pollack@sfvadubon.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      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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 How did you learn about SFVAS? \_\_\_\_\_

**Save a tree! I DO NOT** want to receive a hardcopy of the *Phainopepla*; I'll get my news online

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).

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For Chapter leader's email addresses, see our web site:

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

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

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## Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
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## 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 at [rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org).

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