



# Phainopepla

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## February

**Zoom Program: From Mono Lake to Mar Chiquita: Working for the Future for Phalaropes**  
**Speaker: Ryan Carle**

**Thursday, February 27, 2025, 7:00—8:00 p.m.**



Saline lakes are shrinking around the world, threatened by water diversion and climate change. Great Salt Lake and other large, iconic saline lakes have reached the brink of ecosystem collapse in recent years threatening both toxic dust storms and loss of essential bird habitat. Phalaropes are tiny but charismatic swimming shorebirds that specialize on saline lake habitat in both North and South America and need a hemispheric network of living saline lakes to survive. Since 2019, Ryan



*Photo by Ryan Carle*

has been working with an international network of collaborators from Canada to Argentina to bring attention to the conservation needs of saline lakes, through the story of Phalaropes. Ryan will discuss the many-faceted program including new research on tracking Phalarope migrations with tiny transmitters, coordinated population surveys across the Americas, international artistic collaborations, and how the Wilson's Phalarope could help save the Great Salt Lake through the Endangered Species Act.

Ryan Carle is the Science Director of Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge, a conservation science non-profit focused on protecting imperiled ecosystems. Ryan has a special connection to Mono Lake because he grew up there, raised by park ranger parents. With Oikonos, Ryan has worked in the U.S. and Chile for the last 15 years on conservation research for a variety of bird species, including auklets, shearwaters, and hummingbirds. Ryan is also a lecturer at UC Santa Cruz where he teaches experiential natural history courses. Ryan's work focuses on finding collaborative and community-based conservation solutions and sharing a passion for the wonder of the natural world. Ryan graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in Environmental Studies and Moss Landing Marine Labs with a master's degree in Marine Science. 🐦

## March

**Hybrid Program: Conservation of the Salton Sea-A Stopping Point For Many California Bird Species**  
**Speaker: Andrea Jones**, Interim Executive Director/Senior Director of Conservation for Audubon CA

**Thursday, March 27, 2025, 6:30 (for in-person social time) 7:00—8:00 p.m. (Zoom presentation)**

**Location: Tarzana Community and Cultural Center, 19130 Ventura Blvd., Tarzana**

Andrea Jones' presentation will focus on the Salton Sea, an inland saline lake covering 35 square miles in Southern California. It is a critically endangered Important Bird Area that hosts two-thirds of California's bird species. The future of the lake, and the effect on all its wildlife, is very much uncertain. Andrea will describe which species are most threatened by a changing Salton Sea. Learn about what is being done by Audubon and our partners to preserve this unique resource. She will also talk about the State of California with regard to the future of the sea.

For the past 12 years, Andrea Jones has led conservation programs and worked with staff and the network of Audubon chapters across the state to implement conservation projects at high priority Important Bird Areas. She oversees Audubon's efforts in priority bird species and serves as the



*Photo by Liliana Grieco*

spokesperson for bird conservation across California. She received her M.S. in Wildlife Conservation/Ornithology and her B.S. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. 🐦

## 2024 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RECAP by Alexander deBarros

The end of the year is a time of joy and celebration for many people across many cultures. In the United States, most people celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah, but birders also have the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Started by the Audubon Society in 1900, it is the world's longest running community science project. With nearly 2,700 count areas spread across the Americas and the North Pacific, CBC data is influential in tracking the rise and fall of bird populations and species diversity on both local and international levels. San Fernando Valley Audubon has been contributing to the CBC since 1957, and we were eager to continue for our 68th CBC. On December 14, 2024, 58 counters covered 89 locations, totaling 143 species and 19,142 individuals. This is our third highest species count ever, and our highest individual count since 2009. For reference, last year's totals were 129 species and 14,733 individuals, and our 20 year average is 131 species and 15,985 individuals. This year's results are even more spectacular considering the complete lack of rain leading up to count day and really speak to the skill of our counters.

The rules of National Audubon allow us to note species seen during count week, the three days before and after count day. Thanks to our counters and eBird reports made by others who did not participate in the count, we added six additional species (and one intergrade) during count week, bringing our total for the week to 149 species. These six species include:

- **1 Eurasian Wigeon**, found by Oscar Rodriguez at Hansen Dam. This duck normally breeds in Russia and winters in China and Japan, but every year a few cross the Bering Strait into Alaska and migrate down the wrong side of the Pacific. We have recorded them on count day 17 times, most recently in 2019.
- **3 Least Sandpiper**, found by Rebecca Marschall at the Sepulveda Basin. Our most common Sandpiper, it has only been missed on count day six previous times. The lack of rain probably contributed to their absence, although their numbers have been declining for a while due to climate change affecting their arctic breeding grounds.
- **5 Ring-billed Gull**, found by James Strzelinski, Brandy Price, and Wolfgang Oesterreich at the Sepulveda Basin. Once our most common Gull (and our most numerous bird on the 1985 CBC, with 2230 individuals), they have been slowly declining for the last 60 years, and has been our least common Gull for the last four years.
- **2 Tree Swallow**, found by Daniel Tinoco again at the Sepulveda Basin. Most of our Swallows migrate to central Mexico for winter, but a handful stick around all year.
- **2 Mountain Bluebird**, found by Oscar Rodriguez at Pierce College. Normally wintering in open spaces in the high mountains and the desert, this is the 4th consecutive year that a handful have strayed into the San Fernando Valley.
- **2 Black-throated Gray Warbler**, one found by Joey Di Liberto at Rudy Ortega Park, the other found at the Sepulveda Basin by Jerry and Brenda Grenard at the Sepulveda Basin. A few Black-throated Grays always winter in the area, although finding them is usually quite tricky. Despite this, they've been found on count day 24 times, including the last two years.
- **1 Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle x Audubon's Intergrade)**, found by Alexander deBarros at the Woodland Hills Rec Center. The two distinctive subspecies of Yellow-rumped Warbler, Myrtle and Audubon's, occasionally hybridize where they overlap in British Columbia. An intergrade was recorded on count day for the first time last year.

On count day this year we found several species that haven't been seen in a very long time, and several more that have only been seen once or twice before. These highlights included:

- **3 Indian Peafowl** (commonly known as the Peacock), one found by Brad Rumble at Stonehurst Rec. Center, and two found by Robin Share, one at Chatsworth Park North, and the other at Chatsworth Oaks Park. Native to India, and commonly kept in captivity, this species now has established populations in the western San Gabriel Valley, Palos Verdes, and parts of Orange County. There are also many small escapee populations, including the Sunland—Hansen Dam area, and the Chatsworth area, where our birds were counted.
- **2 Long-billed Dowitcher**, found by Rebecca Marschall at the Sepulveda Basin. Once common in the area, being found on 26 counts before 2000, its population has declined sharply, and this is only the 5th count day record since 2000. It is also the first CBC record in ten years, and somehow the highest count since 2003.
- **1 Solitary Sandpiper**, found by Eric Shaphran at Hansen Dam. Normally just found here on fall migration, this one was probably very late leaving. This is the second time it has ever been recorded on count day, having previously been seen at Hansen Dam in 2022. (Continued next page)



Indian Peafowl  
Stonehurst Rec. Center  
Brad Rumble

- 1 **Common Loon**, found by Otto Mayer at the Encino Reservoir. While many winter out to sea, Loons are extremely rare in our area, as we largely lack the large, deep-water lakes they prefer when not on the ocean. This is the 13th count day record, the first one in ten years, and the second Loon of any species since 2014 (a Pacific Loon was found at the Encino Reservoir in 2022).
- 2 **Neotropic Cormorants**, one found by Rebecca Marschall at the Sepulveda Basin, the other found by Gabriel Wiltse at Hansen Dam. Widespread from eastern Texas and central New Mexico through Central and South America, this smaller relative of the Double-crested Cormorant is rapidly spreading north due to climate change. It has been seen regularly around Hansen Dam since 2019 and at Sepulveda since 2020, and it was first recorded on count day last year.
- 1 **Least Bittern**, also found by Rebecca Marschall at the Sepulveda Basin. This incredibly elusive relative of the Green Heron lives in dense reeds and is rarely seen, although Ballona Wetlands and San Joaquin Marsh are usually good places to try. Two are occasionally seen at the north end of Sepulveda's Wildlife Lake, and one has been particularly visible this year, so I'm glad it decided to come out on count day. This is the second count day record, having previously been seen in 2002.
- 2 **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, found by Joey Di Liberto at Veteran's Memorial Park. It is primarily an east coast species, but a few stray west every year. This is the 3rd consecutive CBC record at Veteran's Memorial Park, having been seen in count week last year and on count day the year before. These are all probably the same adult male, who may continue wintering here the rest of his life. The other bird seen this year was a juvenile. This is the 6th confirmed count day record, and the first record of two individuals, although data is limited for this species as it and the Red-naped Sapsucker (expected in our area but missed for the last three years) were considered the same species until 1990, and our older records are counted for Red-naped.
- 1 **Prairie Falcon**, found by Eric Shaphran at Hansen Dam. Commonly found in the desert, this species largely disappeared from the San Fernando Valley as it shifted from an agricultural area to a suburban one. While this is the 22nd count day record, it is the first one in ten years (although in that time it has been found thrice in count week, usually around Hansen Dam).
- 6 **Horned Lark**, again by Rebecca Marschall at the Sepulveda Basin. Another common desert species that all but abandoned the San Fernando Valley when it became suburban, a few small groups occasionally pop up in open fields like the agricultural area along the L.A. River, where a group has been seen consistently since September. This is 30th count day record, but only the second since 1997, with the other being a flock at Hansen Dam in 2020.
- 1 **Pine Siskin**, found by Terry Saucier and Care Felix at the Knollwood Country Club. This relative of Goldfinches is very nomadic in winter, with this being the 26th time it has showed up on our CBC.
- 1 **Grasshopper Sparrow**, found by Dan Cooper, Sage Bylin, and their team at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. A bird of open grasslands, it is found here in small numbers during summer (although it is probably more common than we think it is because it normally lives in near-inaccessible areas), and on rare occasions they miss the memo about migration. This is the 3rd count day record, having previously been found in 1995 and 2016.



Western Meadowlarks  
Hjelte Sports Center  
Daniel Tinoco

Other noteworthy bird sightings include:

- 1 **Snow Goose**, found at CSUN. One of the most common Geese in the country, most Californian birds winter in the Central Valley, with only a few straying into Los Angeles. This is the 39th count day record, and the first one since 2020.
- 1 **Greater White-fronted Goose**, found at the Encino and Balboa Golf Courses. Another species that mainly winters in the Central Valley, this is its 29th count day record. None were seen last year, but the year before was a record high.
- 1 **Cackling Goose**, found at Reseda Park. This smaller relative of the Canada Goose was found on every count from 2005 (when it was split from the Canada Goose) to 2013, but this is only the 4th record since then. It was most recently found on the 2021 count.
- 1 **Wood Duck**, found at the El Cariso Golf Course. Somewhat regular here in small numbers, it has declined a bit in recent years. This is the 40th count day record, but only the 4th in the last ten years.
- 2 **Blue-winged Teal**, also found at the El Cariso Golf Course. This species is common on the L.A. River just outside of our count area, and this is only the 17th count day record.
- 3 **Canvasback**, another species found at the El Cariso Golf Course. Once common here, its population has declined since the 1990s. While it has only been missed 15 times, nine of those misses have been in the last decade. (Continued next page)

- **5 Redhead**, two found at Hansen Dam, three at the Encino Reservoir. Redheads are very hit-or-miss, but they have been found pretty consistently in recent years, having been found on all but three of the last ten counts, usually at Hansen Dam.
- **6 Sora**, two each found at Sepulveda, the Encino Reservoir, and the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. Another species that hides in dense reeds, the Sora is heard far more often than it is seen (to the point that it was named after one of its calls). This is the 30th count day record, and the 2nd highest total ever, with the record being seven birds in 1994.
- **5 White-faced Ibis**, four found at the Sepulveda Basin and one found at Hansen Dam. This species winters here in small numbers, but usually stays in the Glendale Narrows, outside of our count area. However, a flock decided to winter at Sepulveda this year, and fortunately they were found on count day. This is only its 5th count day record, and the first time it has been seen two years in a row.
- **1 American Barn Owl**, found at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. Common in flat, open areas, Barn Owls are difficult to find since they are nocturnal. This is only their 20th count day record. Note: in 2024, the Barn Owl was split from one species found worldwide into three species, one in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, one in Southern & Southeastern Asia and Australia, and one in the Americas.
- **18 Great Horned Owl**, found at ten locations across the San Fernando Valley, four during the day and 14 during owling surveys. Recorded on all but 11 counts, we usually just find a few Great Horned Owls each year, even with owling surveys, with an average of seven birds being found the last five years. This year's spectacular total is the 5th highest ever, and the highest since 2009.
- **6 Phainopepla**, one each found at Bull Creek, Corbin Canyon, Caballero Canyon and Moonshine Canyon, and two at Serrania Park. Common here in summer, most migrate south in winter, but a few stick around all year, feeding on Mistletoe and Toyon berries. They have been wintering here more frequently in recent years, having only been missed thrice in the last 20 years. This is their 30th count day record overall, and their second highest total ever.
- **1 Yellow Warbler**, found at the Hjelte Sports Center. Our most common Warbler in summer, it normally migrates to Colombia and Venezuela, but the warming climate has resulted in a few staying all year along the L.A. River. First recorded in 1993, it has now been seen on count day four times and in count week once.
- **1 Western Tanager**, found at CSUN. Another summer bird that failed to migrate, it now regularly winters in San Diego, the San Gabriel Valley, and the south slope of the Santa Monica Mountains. Despite being fairly regular on adjacent CBCs, it has only strayed into the San Fernando Valley on count day eight times, including last year.



Yellow Warbler  
Hjelte Sports Center  
Daniel Tinoco

With so many species found, we only missed a few that are difficult to find anyway. Three I want to highlight are:

- **Greater Roadrunner**, found on 49 previous CBCs, including five of the last ten, but not for the last two years. It is normally located in open grassland areas, so almost all our sightings are from the Chatsworth Nature Preserve.
- **Williamson's Sapsucker**, found at Veteran's Memorial Park on count day or count week almost every CBC since 2016. It prefers higher mountains, so it's unusual to find them at our elevation anyway, but the bird at Veteran's has been so consistent that this miss is actually somewhat surprising.
- **Plumbeous Vireo**, found on count day or in count week almost every year since 2015, this species has basically defined count week since the protocol was first implemented in 2013. While not a common bird in the area, it is somewhat odd for it to not be seen at all.

The main point of the CBC is to track bird population trends. Several notable trends that are being tracked by SFVAS are:

- **Vermilion Flycatcher**: The Vermilion Flycatcher population continues to increase, with a record high of 14 seen on count day. This largely tropical species was first recorded on our CBC in 1973 and has been seen almost continuously since 2017. Many birds are now resident and breeding throughout L.A. County, with large concentrations in the San Gabriel and Antelope Valleys, particularly around golf courses and cemeteries. Their increasing population is an effect of climate change, with L.A. now being warm enough to sustain them. This year, Vermilion Flycatchers were found at the Sepulveda Basin, Bull Creek, El Cariso Park, El Cariso Golf Course, Sheldon-Arleta Park, and CSUN.
- **Loggerhead Shrike**: Formerly abundant in the San Fernando Valley, the Loggerhead Shrike population declined significantly from the mid 90s to the 2000s. Since then, it has stabilized at about four individuals, which are usually seen at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve, Pierce College, and Sheldon-Arleta Park, as *(Continued next page)*

they all have the open grassy fields that the Shrike prefers. While it was missed at Pierce College this year, it was found at its other usual haunts, as well as the Sepulveda Basin and Hansen Dam.

- **Shorebirds:** Once common and diverse in the 1960s, Shorebirds as a whole are now quite rare in the San Fernando Valley, with many species reaching record lows or disappearing outright in the early 2000s and only barely coming back since then. Most of our shorebirds breed on the Arctic Tundra, so they are particularly susceptible to climate change. Add in the loss of seasonal wetlands to agriculture, and unfortunately their declines make sense. National Audubon and Audubon California are working with farmers to turn their fields into temporary wetlands during migration season, but climate change is still a major threat. The big exception to the overall decline is the Killdeer, one of the few shorebirds to breed in the San Fernando Valley. Its numbers have held steady at around 140 since our first CBC, with the exception of the 2010s when it declined to about 20. With 189 seen this year, it's safe to say their population has bounced back.
- **Sparrows:** Last year showed a marked decline in Sparrow numbers, with five of our 13 regular species dropping by over 50% (see the Feb/Mar 2024 article for more details). I'm happy to say that Sparrow numbers are back to normal this year, with Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Spotted Towhee reporting an average number, and Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and California Towhee showing noticeable increases. Chipping, Lark, and Savannah Sparrows did not increase as much as expected, with Chipping being the only Sparrow to have its numbers go down from last year, but populations naturally fluctuate over time, and this year's totals are what I'd expect from natural fluctuation compared to two years ago.
- **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** The harbinger of winter in Southern California, Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers shot up significantly in 2020 and have remained high ever since, with five of the ten highest totals ever being the last five years. If you feel like you're seeing more Yellow-rumps, it's not just you, they're actually getting more common, as are many of our other Warblers. The Orange-crowned Warbler has gotten much more common since 2000, the Common Yellowthroat had a massive irruption this year, and the Townsend's Warbler has been averaging higher since 2018, the first step towards a massive population increase.



Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Caballero Canyon  
R. LeVine

The winner for highest count this year was the Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's), with a record 2,670 individuals counted. The rest of the top ten are American Crow (1349), American Coot (1256), White-crowned Sparrow (1045), Canada Goose (932), House Finch (855), Rock Pigeon (718), Bushtit (704), Common Raven (625), and Mourning Dove (585).

Record highs were achieved by Muscovy Duck, Allen's Hummingbird, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Nanday Parakeet, Black Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Common Raven, and Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's). Second-highest totals were achieved by Sora, Cassin's Kingbird, Phainopepla, California Towhee, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Common Yellowthroat, and third-highest totals by Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bushtit, Canyon Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Song Sparrow.

Despite declines in many species, we did not truly have any record lows. Species that are "hit-or-miss" don't qualify for this statistic, nor do regular species that are missed on count day but found in count week.

For the first time since 2005, we lost a species that had been recorded on every count, with Ring-billed Gull not being found on count day (although it was seen in count week). The remaining 33 species that have been found on all 68 counts are Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Mallard, Pied-billed Grebe, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, California Scrub-Jay, American Crow, Oak Titmouse, Bushtit, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Mockingbird, American Pipit, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

We managed to find one species that has never been recorded on our CBC before, bringing the total number of species recorded across all our CBCs to 259 species, plus one count week only, four probable escapees, 20 other taxa, and five questionable reports.

- **1 Black-chinned Sparrow**, found by Alexander deBarros at Devil's Canyon. Found in high mountains and recent burn areas in summer, our birds normally winter in Baja California Sur (other populations winter from Southern Arizona to Central Mexico). This is the 12th December record for California, and the 7th in the last decade.

(Continued next page)



Nanday Parakeet  
Caballero Canyon  
R. LeVine

Hansen Dam won the award for most species, and Sepulveda Basin won the award for most individuals. At Hansen Dam, Eric Shaphran counted 80 species and 1323 individuals, while at Sepulveda, Kris Ohlenkamp and Rebecca Marschall reported 78 species and 2240 individuals. Third place in both categories went to the Chatsworth Nature Preserve, which we were granted access to count at by the Department of Water and Power, and where Dan Cooper and Sage Bylin counted 69 species and 1114 individuals. Other spectacular lists came from the Encino Reservoir where Otto Mayer counted 57 species and 826 individuals, Bull Creek where Rujin Yu and Valeree Catangay counted 49 species and 668 individuals, and Reseda Park where Pat Bates counted 29 species and 672 individuals.

Thirteen locations reported a total of 33 unique species, reminding us of the importance of counting every location.

Species	Location	Sector Leader
Wilson's Snipe	Hansen Dam	Eric Shaphran
Spotted Sandpiper	Hansen Dam	Eric Shaphran
Solitary Sandpiper	Hansen Dam	Eric Shaphran
Northern Harrier	Hansen Dam	Eric Shaphran
Hairy Woodpecker	Hansen Dam	Eric Shaphran
Prairie Falcon	Hansen Dam	Eric Shaphran
Cinnamon Teal	Chatsworth Nature Preserve	Dan Cooper and Sage Bylin
Northern Pintail	Chatsworth Nature Preserve	Dan Cooper and Sage Bylin
Grasshopper Sparrow	Chatsworth Nature Preserve	Dan Cooper and Sage Bylin
Vesper Sparrow	Chatsworth Nature Preserve	Dan Cooper and Sage Bylin
American Barn Owl	Chatsworth Nature Preserve	Alexander deBarros
Lesser Scaup	Encino Reservoir	Otto Mayer
Eared Grebe	Encino Reservoir	Otto Mayer
Western Grebe	Encino Reservoir	Otto Mayer
Common Loon	Encino Reservoir	Otto Mayer
Long-billed Dowitcher	Sepulveda Basin	Rebecca Marschall
Least Bittern	Sepulveda Basin	Rebecca Marschall
Horned Lark	Sepulveda Basin	Rebecca Marschall
Wood Duck	El Cariso Golf Course	Joey Di Liberto
Blue-winged Teal	El Cariso Golf Course	Joey Di Liberto
Canvasback	El Cariso Golf Course	Joey Di Liberto
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Veteran's Memorial Park	Joey Di Liberto
Mountain Chickadee	Veteran's Memorial Park	Joey Di Liberto
Snow Goose	CSUN	Natalie Beckman-Smith
Western Tanager	CSUN	Natalie Beckman-Smith
Violet-green Swallow	L.A. River: lower	Jordan Ellison
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	L.A. River: lower	Jordan Ellison
Lawrence's Goldfinch	Devil's Canyon	Alexander deBarros
Black-chinned Sparrow	Devil's Canyon	Alexander deBarros
Greater White-fronted Goose	Sepulveda Golf Courses	Daniel Tinoco
Yellow Warbler	Hjelte Sports Center	Daniel Tinoco
Cackling Goose	Reseda Park	Pat Bates
Pine Siskin	Knollwood Country Club	Terry Saucier and Care Felix

## 2024 CBC Summary

1	Snow Goose	1	Least Bittern	4	Marsh Wren
1	Greater White-fronted Goose	20	Black-crowned Night Heron	59	Bewick's Wren
53	<i>Domestic Goose Sp</i>	20	Snowy Egret	432	European Starling
1	Cackling Goose	5	Green Heron	38	California Thrasher
932	Canada Goose	23	Great Egret	85	Northern Mockingbird
12	Egyptian Goose	9	Great Blue Heron	88	Western Bluebird
42	Muscovy Duck	51	American White Pelican	cw	Mountain Bluebird
1	Wood Duck	114	Turkey Vulture	22	Hermit Thrush
2	Blue-winged Teal	2	Osprey	8	American Robin
4	Cinnamon Teal	3	Sharp-shinned Hawk	134	Cedar Waxwing
82	Northern Shoveler	19	Cooper's Hawk	6	Phainopepla
14	Gadwall	1	Northern Harrier	405	House Sparrow
cw	Eurasian Wigeon	15	Red-shouldered Hawk	176	American Pipit
422	American Wigeon	106	Red-tailed Hawk	855	House Finch
380	Mallard	1	American Barn Owl	10	Purple Finch
24	<i>Domestic Mallard</i>	18	Great Horned Owl	1	Pine Siskin
1	Northern Pintail	5	Belted Kingfisher	489	Lesser Goldfinch
20	Green-winged Teal	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	8	Lawrence's Goldfinch
3	Canvasback	3	Red-breasted Sapsucker	10	American Goldfinch
5	Redhead	64	Acorn Woodpecker	1	Grasshopper Sparrow
60	Ring-necked Duck	3	Downy Woodpecker	67	Chipping Sparrow
10	Lesser Scaup	53	Nuttall's Woodpecker	1	Black-chinned Sparrow
36	Bufflehead	1	Hairy Woodpecker	265	Lark Sparrow
13	Hooded Merganser	26	Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)	4	Fox Sparrow
127	Ruddy Duck	17	American Kestrel	388	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)
73	California Quail	5	Merlin	5	<i>Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)</i>
3	Indian Peafowl	3	Peregrine Falcon	1045	White-crowned Sparrow
718	Rock Pigeon	1	Prairie Falcon	23	Golden-crowned Sparrow
19	Band-tailed Pigeon	12	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	5	Vesper Sparrow
53	Eurasian Collared-Dove	36	Nanday Parakeet	144	Savannah Sparrow
585	Mourning Dove	354	Black Phoebe	126	Song Sparrow
71	White-throated Swift	58	Say's Phoebe	29	Lincoln's Sparrow
217	Anna's Hummingbird	14	Vermilion Flycatcher	285	California Towhee
172	Allen's Hummingbird	98	Cassin's Kingbird	21	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
16	<i>Hummingbird sp.</i>	4	Hutton's Vireo	40	Spotted Towhee
6	Sora	6	Loggerhead Shrike	272	Western Meadowlark
1256	American Coot	207	California Scrub-Jay	82	Red-winged Blackbird
189	Killdeer	1349	American Crow	82	Brown-headed Cowbird
2	Long-billed Dowitcher	625	Common Raven	155	Brewer's Blackbird
1	Wilson's Snipe	1	Mountain Chickadee	30	Great-tailed Grackle
1	Spotted Sandpiper	40	Oak Titmouse	16	Orange-crowned Warbler
1	Solitary Sandpiper	6	Horned Lark	68	Common Yellowthroat

cw	Least Sandpiper	cw	Tree Swallow	1	Yellow Warbler
cw	Ring-billed Gull	1	Violet-green Swallow	2670	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)
183	Western Gull	10	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	6	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)
15	California Gull	1	Swallow sp.	cw	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Intergrade)
2	Gull sp.	704	Bushtit	cw	Black-throated Gray Warbler
60	Pied-billed Grebe	64	Wrentit	8	Townsend's Warbler
22	Eared Grebe	131	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Western Tanager
7	Western Grebe	24	White-breasted Nuthatch		
1	Common Loon	33	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<b>143</b>	<b>Total Species (count day)</b>
162	Double-crested Cormorant	4	Rock Wren	<b>151</b>	<b>Total Species + other taxa</b>
2	Neotropic Cormorant	5	Canyon Wren	<b>149</b>	<b>Total Species + count week</b>
5	White-faced Ibis	6	Northern House Wren	<b>19142</b>	<b>Individuals (count day)</b>

\*cw - count week

### Thank you to all 2024 CBC participants

Chelsea Abrahamian (L) (O)  
 Richard Armerding (L)  
 Dick Avery  
 Pat Avery (L)  
 Danielle Awad via eBird  
 Dave Barton (L)  
 Kathy Barton (L)  
 Pat Bates (L)  
 Natalie Beckman-Smith (L)  
 Catherine Bourne (L)  
 Amanda Bueno-Kling via eBird  
 Sage Bylin (L)  
 Teri Carnescali (F)  
 Valeree Catangay (L)  
 Liz Chaneske (F)  
 Alex Coffey via eBird  
 Dan Cooper (L)  
 Ari Cuellar

Alexander deBarros (C, L, O, W)  
 Joey Di Liberto  
 Alex Dopp (L)  
 Jordan Ellison (L) (F) (O)  
 Care Felix (L)  
 Roz Gibson  
 Barbara Heidemann (L)  
 Nurit Katz (L)  
 Kristen Kraus via eBird (F) (W)  
 Soham Kulkarni  
 Bill Lepler (L)  
 Rebecca LeVine (L)  
 Henry Marschall (W)  
 Rebecca Marschall (L) (W)  
 Will Marschall  
 Otto Mayer (L)  
 Heather Medvitz  
 Steve Morris via eBird (F)

Brandon Mukogawa via eBird  
 Dick Norton (L)  
 Wolfgang Oesterreich via eBird (W)  
 Stella Oganessian  
 Kris Ohlenkamp (L)  
 Carolyn Oppenheimer (F)  
 Paula Orlovich (L)  
 Mark Osokow  
 Caleb P. via eBird  
 Molly Peña (O)  
 Emma Peterson via eBird  
 Brandy Price via eBird (W)  
 Oscar Rodriguez (L) (W)  
 Brad Rumble (L)  
 Dolores Ruzicka  
 Terry Saucier (L)  
 Eric Shaphran (L)  
 Robin Share (L)

Gwen So via eBird  
 Daniel Stockel via eBird  
 James Strzelinski via eBird (W)  
 Daniel Tinoco (L) (W)  
 Pat Turner  
 Lauren Verity via eBird  
 Rachel Verity via eBird  
 Larry Walker  
 Susan White  
 Carolyn Wilcox  
 Charlie Wilken (L) (O)  
 Gabriel Wiltse via eBird  
 Amy Worrell  
 Rujin Yu (L)  
 five other participated but didn't  
 release their names

(C): CBC Compiler

(L): led a field team on count day

(F): counted birds at their feeder or yard

(O): participated in an owling trip on count day

(W): reported species on eBird during count week that weren't seen on count day

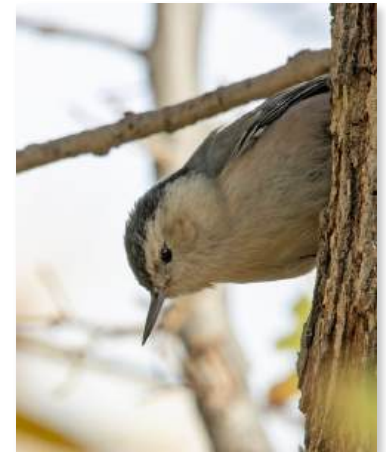
- via eBird: did not join an official CBC team, but reported species on eBird that were included in CBC data



California Scrub Jay  
 Holleigh Bernson Memorial Park  
 Richard Armerding



California Thrasher  
 Deervale-Stone Canyon Park  
 David Barton



White-breasted Nuthatch  
 O'Melveny Park  
 Susan White



## Calendar of Events

To reach an event leader you may call our message forwarding service at (747) 237-3720

### FEBRUARY 2025

**Sunday, February 2. Sepulveda Basin. 8:00—11:00 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. Park in the lot and walk past the low, rock-faced buildings to our meeting place on the other side of the buildings. Leader: Alexander deBarros, [Alexander.deBarros@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Alexander.deBarros@sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, February 8. Beginner Bird and Nature Walk. Sepulveda Basin. 9:00—11:00 a.m.** This tour is perfect for families with school-age children, beginning or first-time birders, and people who want to learn more about the Wildlife Reserve. Directions: Driving on Woodley Ave. north from Burbank Blvd. or south from Victory Blvd., go .5 miles and turn east at the sign for the Japanese Garden. Continue straight (don't turn into the garden) and drive past the Cricket Fields and around the tree in the middle of the road, continuing to the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet at the amphitheater. This tour will meet on 2nd Saturday's of the month October—March. Leader: Muriel Kotin, [muriel.kotin@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:muriel.kotin@sfvaudubon.org). Heavy rain cancels.

**Thursday, February 13. Bird Sit with Nature Journaling, O'Melveny Park. 10:00—11:45 a.m.** If you would like to mindfully connect with birds



and all of nature, join us at O'Melveny Park—at the picnic tables near the bathrooms. (Rain cancels and moves it to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday.) What to bring: a cushion or a comfortable chair, a beverage/snack, binoculars, a journal, and something to write/draw with. This event is limited to 10 people. To reserve a spot, contact Teri Carnesciali at [teri.carnesciali@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:teri.carnesciali@sfvaudubon.org). Co-leader: Mary Lou Sharp.

**February 14—17. Great Backyard Bird Count.** Spend time in your favorite places watching birds—then tell us about them! In as little as 15 minutes notice the birds around you. Identify them, count them, and submit your counts to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world. If you already use eBird or Merlin, your submissions over the four days count toward GBBC. [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)

**Sunday, February 16. Malibu Creek State Park. 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. Leaders: Katheryn Barton and David Barton. [kathy.barton@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:kathy.barton@sfvaudubon.org).



**Tuesday, February 18. Weekday Wander at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00—11:00 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. Leader: Paula Orlovich, (747) 237-3720.

**Saturday, February 22. Hansen Dam Birding 8:00—11:00 a.m.** 10965 Dronfield Ave., Pacoima, CA. Dronfield Ave. intersects Osborne St. approximately ½ mile south of Foothill Blvd. Turn into the park on Dronfield, and meet near the ranger station. Accessibility is good for this site which is mostly on a packed dirt road. Leader: Pat Bates, [pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org).

Reminder as we head into the winter season, that RAIN CANCELS birding events.

**Sunday, February 23. NEW Eagle Eyes Young Birders Club. King Gillette Ranch, Calabasas. 9:00—11:00 a.m.** Join us and become part of a fun, supportive community where your passion for nature and birds can soar. Directions: US-101 North. Exit 32 for Las Virgenes Rd. toward Malibu Canyon. Turn left onto Las Virgenes Rd. for 3.3 miles. Turn left onto Mulholland Hwy. then right. 26800 Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas. We will have binoculars to loan and journals available for children who sign up. Check out our website for more information and to secure your spot.

**Thursday, February 27. General Membership Zoom Meeting. 7:00—8:00 p.m.** Program: **From Mono Lake to Mar Chiquita: Working for the Future for Phalaropes** Speaker: **Ryan Carle**. To join via Zoom [click here](#), to sign up and receive a link prior to event.

### MARCH 2025

**Sunday, March 2. Sepulveda Basin. 8:00—11:00 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. Park in the lot and walk past the low, rock-faced buildings to our meeting place on the other side of the buildings. Leader: Alexander deBarros, [Alexander.deBarros@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Alexander.deBarros@sfvaudubon.org).

**Saturday, March 8. Beginner Bird and Nature Walk. Sepulveda Basin. 9:00—11:00 a.m.** This tour is perfect for families with school-age children, beginning or first-time birders, and people who want to learn more about the Wildlife Reserve. Directions: Driving on Woodley Ave. north from Burbank Blvd. or south from Victory Blvd., go .5 miles and turn east at the sign for the Japanese Garden. Continue straight (don't turn into the garden) and drive past the Cricket Fields and around the tree in the middle of the road, continuing to the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet at the amphitheater. This tour will meet on 2nd Saturday's of the month, October—March. Leader: Muriel Kotin. [muriel.kotin@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:muriel.kotin@sfvaudubon.org). Heavy rain cancels.

**Thursday, March 13. Bird Sit with Nature Journaling, O'Melveny Park. 10:00—11:45 a.m.** If you would like to mindfully connect with birds and all of nature, join us at O'Melveny Park—at the picnic tables near the bathrooms. (Rain cancels and moves it to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday.) What to bring: a cushion or a comfortable chair, a beverage/snack, binoculars, a journal, and something to write/draw with. This event is limited to 10 people. To reserve a spot, contact Teri Carnesciali at [teri.carnesciali@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:teri.carnesciali@sfvaudubon.org). Co-leader: Mary Lou Sharp.

**Sunday, March 16. Malibu Creek State Park. 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. Leaders: Katheryn Barton and David Barton. [kathy.barton@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:kathy.barton@sfvaudubon.org).

**Tuesday, March 18. Weekday Wander at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00—11:00 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. Leader: Paula Orlovich, (747) 237-3720.

**Saturday, March 22. Hansen Dam Birding. 8:15—11:00 a.m.** 10965 Dronfield Ave., Pacoima, CA. Dronfield Ave. intersects Osborne St. approximately ½ mile south of Foothill Blvd. Turn into the park on Dronfield,

and meet near the ranger station. Accessibility is good for this site which is mostly on a packed dirt road. Leader: Pat Bates, pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org.

**Sunday, March 23. Eagle Eyes Young Birders Club.** 9:00–11:00 a.m. Join us and become part of a fun, supportive community where your passion for nature and birds can soar. We will have binoculars to loan and journals available for children who sign up. We will meet at a different location each month. Check out our website for more information and to secure your spot.

**Monday, March 24. Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, March 27. Hybrid General Membership Meeting. 6:30 p.m.** (for in-person social time) **7:00–8:00 p.m.** (Zoom Presentation) Program: **Conservation of the Salton Sea—A Stopping Point For Many California Bird Species** Speaker: **Andrea Jones**, Interim Executive Director/Senior Director of Conservation for Audubon CA. Location: Tarzana Community and Cultural Center, 19130 Ventura Blvd., Tarzana. Come early for social time. To join via Zoom [click here](#), to sign up and receive a link prior to event.



**Sepulveda Basin Walk Recap** by Alexander deBarros



Belted Kingfisher by Alexander deBarros

The December walk at the Sepulveda Basin ended the year with a bang! We found 71 species of birds, the most of any walk at Sepulveda this year. Many of the birds were elusive species, not usually seen in the area, such as Least Bittern, Sora, Loggerhead Shrike, Eared Grebe, Wrentit, Long-billed Dowitchers, a flock of White-faced Ibis, and three Marsh Wrens. We also saw the usual fan favorites like Belted Kingfisher, Osprey, and 32 American White Pelicans, as well as cool birds like American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Buffleheads, and surprisingly active Common Yellowthroats. Fortunately, we had a large group to see all of these birds. Many people picked up lifers on this trip, including several visitors from the East Coast who picked up Cassin’s Kingbird, Nuttall’s Woodpecker, and Oak Titmouse. With so many birds to show so many people, the walk went way over time, but it was still an incredible day. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S204225064>.



**Bird Sit Bulletin** by Teri Carnesciali



Belted Kingfisher & Great Blue Heron by Paula Orlovich

At the beginning of our monthly gatherings, participants are invited to share with the group any nature journaling they may have done since our bird sit the previous month. Sometimes these journal entries were done at O’Melveny Park, the same park where we meet, and other times they’re from another location, even out of state.

Paula Orlovich shared with us these pages from her journal, one highlighting birds she observed on an island in Puget Sound and the other a Peregrine Falcon at O’Melveny. Crows and mockingbirds always seem to have plenty to say as did these that Mary Lou Sharp saw in her backyard. The Western Grebes are two that I had the pleasure of seeing one afternoon at the harbor in Ventura.

Keeping a nature journal helps us savor our observations. We hope you’ll join us and see for yourself.

**Newcomers are always welcome at our bird sit.**  
**You can find the details in the events section of our chapter’s website.**



Peregrine Falcon by Paula Orlovich



Western Grebes by Teri Carnesciali



American Crows by Mary Lou Sharp

## Hansen Dam Raptors Galore & Master Plan by Pat Bates



Northern Harrier

Our 4th Saturday November and December 2024 birding trips to Hansen Dam have resulted in a cornucopia of raptors - Cooper's, Red-shouldered and countless Red-tailed Hawks. American Kestrels, Prairie Falcon, White-tailed Kite and Northern Harrier round out the list. We have had good access to the wildlife lake due to lack of any significant precipitation. Unlike Sepulveda Basin, the Hansen Dam reservoir is allowed to retain floodwater which can make some areas inaccessible. We do hope some rain comes our way. There have been instances where the entire lower parking lot and lawn at Hansen was submerged and filled with an amazing variety of waterfowl including Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, and more!



Prairie Falcon

Revision of the US Army Corps of Engineers Master Plan for the Hansen Dam Basin will begin in 2025, with the public comment period extending from 2/10/25 to 3/25/25. Comments about future land and recreation management may be made in an email message to [splops@usace.army.mil](mailto:splops@usace.army.mil). There is also a comment form that may be filled out on the USACE Hansen Dam Basin webpage, and you can view the 2011 Master Plan. There are areas at Hansen Dam that could be enhanced by removal of invasive vegetation supplanted by appropriate native plants. The habitat damage from frequent fires could be mitigated by enforcing our existing laws and prohibiting encampments in the park. Stay tuned for more information.

## Native Plants, Burrowing Owls, and Legislation by Pat Bates



It was a very exciting and wonderful morning at the east side of the Sepulveda Basin wildlife lake with FOLAR, CNPS and SFV Audubon! Lots of volunteers made and threw native plant seed balls, planted, watered, mulched, weeded and bird watched - and in the process found a Burrowing Owl!! The restored area is rapidly increasing in size and is impressive. The little owl pictured below was apparently surprised by the flying seed balls, one of the volunteers got its photo with his mobile. I suspect these little guys really like the open area which was burned last summer.

CD 6 Councilmember Imelda Padilla, with a second from CM Rodriguez, has made a motion recommending removal of invasive plants from the Sepulveda Basin and increasing the quantity of native plants ([CF 24-1533](#)). While I imagine some modifications to the request would be desirable or necessary, this gives a significant boost

to the quest to restore all the basin habitat. Thank you! The same could be applied to Hansen Dam which is in CM Rodriguez' district. Get your comments in and let's go—remember native plants are for the birds! We have a lot of work to do in 2025.

As I reflect on another of my many trips around the sun, I am heartened by and thankful for the dedication of so many people to preserving and restoring our environment for generations to come.

## Volunteers are needed for the LA Raptor Study by Pat Bates

Interested in learning more about raptors in LA and helping with community science? The LA Raptor Study is looking for volunteers to monitor nests in the San Fernando Valley area. The study engages volunteers all across Los Angeles to monitor raptor nests (hawks, owls, and falcons) to learn how these birds are adapting to the urban environment. We will provide training and it is a limited number of hours, nest checks are every two weeks. You can learn more and apply at <https://friendsofgriffithpark.org/raptor-study>. The 2025 season is kicking off, with virtual training the evening of January 30, and field training in the Sepulveda Basin on February 1, so please apply ASAP if you are interested. If you have any questions you can contact Nurit Katz at [nkatz@fm.ucla.edu](mailto:nkatz@fm.ucla.edu) or 818-384-9493.

## Christmas Bird Rescue by Alexander deBarros



Photo by Carolyn Wilcox

When you spend enough time birding, you should amass some fun stories, like a rare bird appearing out of nowhere or turning around and seeing a lifer or stumbling upon a Hawk as it dismembers its prey. On the CBC, most counters spend the day in the field and end up with a fun story or two. My team at Devil's Canyon ended up with our greatest. Devil's Canyon is a little known but very beautiful trail in Chatsworth, running five miles from the 118 Fwy. up to the ridge. The first half of it falls within our CBC circle and hosts about 150 Yellow-rumped Warblers. This year, Molly Peña, Carolyn Wilcox, and I covered it for the CBC, counting 37 species and 490 individual birds, including the CBC's only Lawrence's Goldfinches and first ever Black-chinned Sparrow.

At about 1:15 pm, as we were on our way out of the canyon, Carolyn spotted a Great Horned Owl caught in

a kite line halfway up the steep slope. The Owl had not been there when we passed that spot three hours earlier. We weren't sure if it was alive or dead, but we knew it didn't deserve to be dangling there. Leaving behind my binoculars, scope, and camera, I took Molly's hiking sticks and scrambled up the slope, where I discovered to my delight that the Owl was alive. I had a small utility knife with me and managed to cut the Owl (determined to be a female by her large size) down from the string. She attempted to fly as I freed her, but she was not going anywhere. I have volunteered at several bird banding stations over the last six years, and I know how to hold birds safely and securely. Even if I wasn't holding her, she still wouldn't have been able to get far. The kite string had cut deeply into both her wings, with her right wing bleeding and her left wing possibly dislocated at the wrist. I carefully brought her down to the trail, and we decided to take her to a wildlife rehab center.



Photo by Carolyn Wilcox

The nearest one was the California Wildlife Center, half an hour away from the car. Unfortunately, the CWC was closed because it was right next to the 4,000 acre Franklin Fire. The next closest spot was the Ojai Raptor Center, an hour and a half away. During the mile walk back to the cars, we managed to get in touch with the Ojai Raptor Center, and confirmed that they'd be ready for our Owl, whom we named Fuzzball because she was so soft and fuzzy. All Owls have incredibly soft feathers, which allow them to fly silently as they hunt. While they usually target small rodents, Great Horned Owls are top predators and have been known to take down massive prey like Skunks and Great Blue Herons. Their nearly two inch talons and powerful feet can deliver a crushing force of 300 psi, more than strong enough to crush my arm. Luckily for me, Fuzzball was incredibly calm throughout the adventure.



Photo by Carolyn Wilcox



Photo by Carolyn Wilcox

Once we got her to the car, I wrapped her up in my jacket, partly to keep her warm and calm, partly to keep her from flapping. Great Horned Owls have a 4 foot wingspan, and while she had only attempted to fly twice during the hour long walk back to the car, we didn't want to risk her spreading wings inside the car. During the drive, Fuzzball went from calm to curious, and spent most of the time staring out the window like a small (Continued next page)



Photo by Molly Peña



Photo by Molly Peña

child. I'm sure as far as she was concerned, she was being abducted by aliens and taken to a distant planet, but she did seem to enjoy watching everything go by out the car window.

When we finally reached the Ojai Raptor Center, I unwrapped Fuzzball from my jacket and handed her off to the vets. They covered her in a blanket and put her in a box so they could get her inside easily. We filled them in on where we found her and the extent of her injuries, and they told us they'd do everything they could, and that they'd keep us updated. By this point, it was 4:00 pm, so we stopped at the first restaurant we saw because none of us had eaten since breakfast.

During the long drive home, we realized that everything had gone wrong

for Fuzzball in the best way possible. As stated earlier, Devil's Canyon is a poorly known trail. During the six hours we spent on the CBC, we only encountered one other group of people, and I've never encountered more than two, so the odds of someone else finding Fuzzball were slim to none. She was very lucky that the one group of people who could've found her that day consisted of people who knew where to take her to get help and included someone who knew how to handle her safely. We were very lucky to have been there to help.



Photo by Alexander deBarros

Sadly, even our help wasn't enough. The vets at the Ojai Raptor Center determined Fuzzball's injuries were more severe than we had realized, and she was facing a long recovery with a very slim chance that she could be released. Her condition rapidly deteriorated a few days later, and she ended up having to be euthanized. Molly, Carolyn, and I held a small memorial at Devil's Canyon to say goodbye to the Owl that touched our hearts. The Ojai Raptor Center saves thousands of birds every year and has received numerous grants from SFVAS to help in their work, but they are not gods, and there's always a small percentage that don't make it. It just sucks that Fuzzball was in that small percentage.



Photo by Molly Peña

If you find an injured bird, don't hesitate to help.

- Hawks, Falcons, and Owls: Ojai Raptor Center, 370 Baldwin Rd Ojai, (805)-649-6884, 9:30-5
- Waterbirds: International Bird Rescue, 3601 S Gaffey St San Pedro, (310)-514-2573, 8-5
- Everything: California Wildlife Center, 26026 Piuma Rd Calabasas, (310)-458-9453, 8-6
- Questions, call the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, (747)-237-3720. Leave a message, and someone from our Board will get back to you.

Also, if you find kite string or fishing line abandoned in a tree, please take it down and properly dispose of it. It can sit there for years without issue and then turn deadly in an instant. Over the years, abandoned fishing line at Sepulveda Basin has cost the lives of many Cormorants and even a few Pelicans, and a kite getting swept off by the wind, "never to be seen again" ended up costing Fuzzball everything. Even a small, insignificant act like ♻️ picking up the right piece of trash can save an animal's life.

**Holiday Toy Drive** Submitted by Katheryn Barton and Patricia Turner



Santa's Helpers made an appearance at the Van Nuys office of City Councilmember Imelda Padilla in early December. In response to a holiday toy drive for the children of City Council District 6, the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society came through in a big way with a sleigh-full of toys, books and games featuring themes of animals, nature and science. Chapter President Katheryn Barton and Treasurer Pat Bates delivered the goodies to Rosie Avetsyan, Field Deputy to the Councilmember,



Andres Sandoval, Area Director and intern Ruby Zaragoza. Councilmember Padilla represents the area containing the Sepulveda Basin and the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve, and is an ally to the Chapter in advocating for our natural areas. Our chapter wanted to show our tangible support for the Councilmember and her young constituents with our donation. By shopping for the gifts at the excellent gift shop at the King Gillette Ranch Visitors Center, Santa's Helpers also supported the important work of the National Park Service.

**MEMORIAM FOR LOCAL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER GARY PARK**

By Carolyn Oppenheimer



Throughout my many years leading bird walks at O'Melveny Park, Gary Park was always the first to arrive with his giant camera. He was an excellent birder and outstanding bird photographer, using his long lens and extensive knowledge to make the call when I had trouble identifying a distant bird. He was a steadfast companion, one I looked forward to seeing on every excursion.

Gary had been battling lung cancer for several years and was given extra time in this world thanks to modern medicine. Sadly, he succumbed to his illness in October.

Gary was the owner of [GaryParkTookThese.com](http://GaryParkTookThese.com), a website showcasing his best bird pictures. He mentioned that he was arranging for the site to remain active for some time after his passing. Hopefully, it is still up when you read this, and you can view his beautiful photographs. Gary didn't maintain his

website as a business; his pictures were, and may still be, available for everyone to use. He only asked to be credited for his work.

SFVAS gifts a small booklet to children who participate in our Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program. The newest version of this booklet, developed by myself and Muriel Kotin, features most of its photos from Gary's website. His pictures are also used for educational purposes by the Placerita Nature Center. The photo of Gary above is from their newsletter, "The Rattler."

**Memories of Gary shared by other birders in our chapter:**

Pat Turner commented that, "I was such a beginner when I first did walks with SFVAS and he was always so generous with ID information and photography tips."

Pat Bates related that she had many adventures with Gary at Hansen Dam. She added that in the Sepulveda Basin "We even put out a small brush fire together by Haskell Creek."

Paula Orlovich said she always thought of Gary as a "very unassuming and intelligent gentleman."

Gary Park will be deeply missed by us all.

**Announcing the NEW San Fernando Valley Audubon Eagle Eyes Young Birders Club**

Join us and become part of a fun, supportive community where your passion for nature and birds can soar. Our next birding event will be a walk on Sunday, February 23, 2025 at King Gillette Ranch, 9 - 11am. We will have binoculars to loan and journals available for children who sign up. Check out our website [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org) for more information and to secure your spot.

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

NEW Chapter Phone Number

To reach a board member or event leader you may now call our forwarding message service at **(747) 237-3720**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

President: Katheryn Barton  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Rebecca LeVine  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Paula Orlovich  
 Treasurer: Patricia Bates  
 Corresponding Secretary: Teri Carnesciali  
 Recording Secretary: Barbara Heidemann

**AT-LARGE DIRECTORS**

Natalie Beckman-Smith  
 Jolene Herz  
 Patricia Turner  
 Charlie Wilken  
 Bill Lepler  
 Oscar "Rod" Rodriguez

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Birdathon: Richard Davis  
 Bird Boxes: Carolyn Oppenheimer  
 Christmas Bird Count: Alexander deBarros  
 Classroom Education (SMC): Katheryn Barton  
 Programs: Joanne Millius  
 Publicity: Marianne Davis  
 Sales & Service: OPEN  
 Youth Activities: Muriel Kotin

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS/PROGRAMS**

Annual Awards: Paul Orlovich  
 Birdability/Signage: Richard Davis  
 Bird Sit w/Nature Journaling: Teri Carnesciali  
 Mary Lou Sharp  
 Conservation Investments: Richard Davis  
 Conservation/Sustainability: Co-Chair: Patricia Bates  
 Co-Chair: Joanne Millius  
 Eagle Eyes Young Birder Club: Paula Orlovich  
 Editor *Phainopepla*: Rebecca LeVine  
 Field Trips: Alexander deBarros  
 Finance: Joanne Millius  
 Franklin Canyon Birding: Paula Orlovich  
 GO Native SFV: Patricia Bates  
 Hansen Dam Birding: Patricia Bates  
 Hospitality: Teri Carnesciali  
 Malibu Creek Birding: Dave & Katheryn Barton  
 Membership: Lynn Maddox  
 O'Melveny Wander: Paula Orlovich  
 Outreach: Charlie Wilken  
 SBEEP: Paula Orlovich  
 Scholarships and Grants: Marianne/Richard Davis  
 Sepulveda Basin Steering: Muriel Kotin  
 Sepulveda Basin Birding: Alexander deBarros  
 Social Media: Jolene Herz  
 Strategic Planning: Marianne Davis  
 Web Coordinator: Jolene Herz  
 Website/Technical: Heather Mims

To become a member and/or renew online go to <https://www.sfvaudubon.org/membership/>  
 It is fast, secure, saves time, and paper!

Or mail this form and include a check made payable to:  
 SFV Audubon Society  
 Attn: Membership  
 P.O. Box 7769  
 Van Nuys, CA 91409

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership.....\$25 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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The *PHAINOPEPLA*, published six times a year, is the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409. San Fernando Valley Audubon Society is a non-profit chapter of the National Audubon Society, and is dedicated to "Nature Education and the Conservation of Wildlife."

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

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

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If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Lynn Maddox at (818) 425-0962 or e-mail her at [Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org](mailto:Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org).

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## Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
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**B**irds from the San Fernando Valley Audubon Chapter collection on display December 13, 2024 at Willow Community School, Culver City. Photos and arrangements by Ann Istin in cooperation/collaboration with San Fernando Valley and Pasadena Audubon Societies.  
—Submitted by Art Langton



Dave Weeshoff, Pasadena Audubon