



Phainopepla

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For Nature Education and the Conservation of Wildlife

Vol. 76 No. 3

June / July 2025

General Membership Programs

We hope you will join us for our informative programs.
[CLICK HERE](#), to signup and receive a link prior to all events.

—Reminder—

No General Membership Meetings
 June–August
 See you in September!

Birdathon: It's not too late to donate!

DONATE ONLINE AT
WWW.SFVAUDUBON.ORG
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To reach an event leader or board member call our
 Chapter Phone Number
 (747) 237-3720
 Number is a Message Forwarding Service

Annual Awards Luncheon Celebrating Our Volunteers and Partners

Saturday, June 14, 2025

Noon–3:00pm

\$45 (reserve by June 7)

Braemar Country Club, Tarzana



Honorees:

Muriel Kotin, Service Award

Lynn Maddox, Service Award

California Native Plant Society, Conservation Award



Photo by
 Gary Park

Muriel Kotin joined the SFVAS board in 1992 and since then she has been a driving force in our development. As our representative on the Sepulveda Basin Steering Committee she has influenced governmental agencies to protect and improve the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve. Her influence led SFVAS to assume the responsibility for the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program. This has given thousands of school children an opportunity to enjoy and learn about nature on field trips. She organizes and leads nature walks for beginning birders, families, and special walks for other organized groups. Muriel has served as SFVAS President and many other board positions. Many of us improved our birding skills via the walks she led at Malibu Creek State Park. Muriel Kotin has done so much for our community we are proud to honor her with our Chapter Service Award.

Lynn Maddox is the recipient of our second chapter service award this year. Lynn has volunteered her time as our Membership Chair for the last ten years but will be retiring from the position after this year. We will miss Lynn and greatly appreciate all the work she has done for us. Lynn remarked, "When I retired 16 years ago, I began my adventure with Audubon. Jobs have included board member, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, and finally membership chair person. Along the way, I have met wonderful people and been inspired by what SFVAS has accomplished!"

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a volunteer organization that began in 1965 when a group came together in Berkeley, California to save a native plant garden. That effort grew into CNPS which now has 36 chapters across the state. Their mission is to protect California native plants and their natural habitats, today and into the future through science, education, stewardship, gardening, and advocacy. Their local chapter's activities include plant sales, field trips, and education. They also sponsor conservation and restoration projects. In the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve dedicated volunteers arrive at dawn and weed out non-native plants for hours. They also plant native plants and seeds on a monthly basis. For these effort we honor CNPS today and encourage you to visit CNPS.com to learn more.



Birdathon 2025 at Malibu Creek State Park

By David J. Barton

Kathy and I regularly lead SFV Audubon's monthly bird walk at Malibu Creek State Park, and we did so again in May 2025. As in prior years, we dedicated one of our regular spring bird walks to a very special event: Birdathon 2025! The chapter's major annual fundraiser for its environmental education programs, Birdathon creates the opportunity for donors to pledge funds for these programs in different ways—not only in a designated total amount, but also by pledging a specified amount per bird species observed by their selected team of birders.



Birdathon always gives Kathy and me an extra added incentive to find as many species as possible at Malibu Creek State Park, and this year was no exception. Fortunately, this year's terrible fires did not damage habitat at the park and, just as fortunately, Las Virgenes Road is currently open from the Ventura Freeway all the way to the park, so that access would be unimpeded.

We arrived at the park shortly before 8 a.m. on May 18. The weather promised to be lovely, with mid-morning scattered clouds across a blue sky. The clouds soon burned away, leaving warm sun and clear skies.

Our count group met at the usual spot in the parking lot, near the party trailhead. Team Barton was eleven strong, including both regulars like Femi Femu, Chris and Ruth Tosdevin, and Karen Ellis and some newcomers, including first-time birders. Some were chapter members; others not. Their ages ranged from early twenties to retired "senior citizens." All were eager to hit the paths through the chaparral and riparian oak woodland of this gem of the Santa Monica Mountains.

After introductions, announcements, and safety instructions, we got started. Avian activity was vigorous from the outset.



Blue Grosbeak

Among our first sightings was a lovely male Blue Grosbeak singing at the top of a sycamore. Cliff Swallows, American Crow, Acorn Woodpecker, Nanday Parakeet, and Ash-throated Flycatcher were ticked before we even left the parking lot!

We first tackled the fields near the campground. There, we were treated to crushing views of a pair of Lazuli Buntings feeding on grass seed and breaking off grass stalks for nest building. The birds were surprisingly unconcerned by our presence, and the photographers among us quickly started to fill their memory cards with stunning images in the brilliant



Lazuli Bunting



Nuttall's Woodpecker

morning sun. Nesting Red-tailed Hawks, singing Spotted Towhees, a Common Yellowthroat perched atop a bush, and Western Bluebirds, House Wrens and a couple of warblers added to our delight. California Quail, House Finch, and California Towhees also were easily seen.



Hutton's Vireo

We then returned to the trailhead after a brief restroom break, and headed down the path to Crag's Road, where we enjoyed nice views of Yellow Warbler. After some work, the group was successful in coaxing out a very territorial Hutton's Vireo. There are 12 generally recognized subspecies of Hutton's Vireo, which have been described in two major groups: the "Pacific" group (found from British Columbia to Baja California) and the "Interior" group (found in Arizona, Texas and interior Mexico). Interestingly, preliminary biochemical work suggests that these two groups may warrant full species status.

Descending to the water's edge at the creek, we sighted Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Snowy Egret, Gadwall



Black-headed Grosbeak

and Red-winged Blackbird. An American Kestrel perched atop a tall tree across the creek gave us our first and only falcon.

We continued along Crag's Road to the Visitor's Center. There, we enjoyed freshly baked banana bread, courtesy of Chris Tosdevin, while we tallied up the species count. Stunningly, in under four hours Team Barton had logged a whopping 61 species, smashing Kathy's and my previous Malibu Creek Birdathon record of 57!

Kathy and I were proud of our crack team of birders, and excited to have broken a personal record, but most importantly we were pleased to have raised cash for the worthy cause of environmental education.

For a full list of the birds observed at Malibu Creek State Park during the 2025 Birdathon even, as well as photos of many of the birds we saw, we invite you to take a look at our eBird checklist. You can find it by entering <https://ebird.org/checklist/S239876547> on your browser. We also invite you to join us on the third Sunday of any month for our regular bird walk at the park. Details can be found at <https://sf Audubon.org/event/malibu-creek-state-park/2025-06-15/>.

Photos by David Barton



Calendar of Events

To reach an event leader call our message forwarding service at
[\(747\) 237-3720](tel:(747)237-3720)

JUNE 2025

Sunday, June 1. 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.



Thursday, June 12. 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 3rd 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. Co-leader: Mary Lou Sharp.



Saturday, June 14. Annual Awards Luncheon. Braemar Country Club, 4001 Reseda Blvd., Tarzana. Noon—3 p.m. Please join us as we celebrate our Honorees: Muriel Kotin and Lynn Maddox, Chapter Service Awardees and California Native Plant Society, Conservation Award. Tickets are available through June 7—don't miss out! Tickets are \$45 and may be purchased [here](#).



Sunday, June 15. 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.

Sunday, June 22. 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. To secure your spot contact Paula at the SFV Audubon Chapter at (747) 237-3720.

No General Membership Meetings June–August

Have a great summer!

Saturday, June 28. 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,

Reminder: RAIN CANCELS birding events.
Groups of six or more, please contact the leader.

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.

Saturday, June 28. Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve Habitat Restoration. 8:00–11:00 a.m. SFVAS is continuing to work with our partners, the Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) on the ongoing Habitat Restoration efforts in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve (SBWR). This group gathers every Fourth Saturday morning to work and weed. If you would like to get involved and get your hands dirty, this is for you! SFVAS offers an Audubon guided walk after the work. (Volunteer Walk Leaders always needed.) What is this all about? Please check the [FoLAR](#) website for latest details and sign up before attending this event.

JULY 2025

Sunday, July 6. 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.

Sunday, July 20. 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.



Saturday, July 26. 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.

Saturday, July 26. Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve Habitat Restoration. 8:00–11:00 a.m. SFVAS is continuing to work with our partners, the Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) on the ongoing Habitat Restoration efforts in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve (SBWR). This group gathers every Fourth Saturday morning to work and weed. SFVAS offers an Audubon guided walk after the work. (Volunteer Walk Leaders always needed.) NOTE: Start time may be subject to change. Please check the [FoLAR](#) website for latest details and sign up before attending this event.

A Mother Who Loved Birds



Ilma with Johnny Jay



Broken Beak



Broken Beak with Richard (above)

And Marianne (below)



As Mother's Day approached, I was busy rescheduling a family get-together as we have many mothers in our group. As I recalled all the good things my mother did, I realized that she provided some of the "spark bird" thoughts that pushed me to appreciate birds. Specifically, we kept a canary (named "Hiyah", since that was what his chirp sounded like), who was a yellow roller and sang his heart out every day. My mother took care of him, making sure he was well fed, hung him outside every day so he could sing to other birds, bringing him in at night and covering his cage so he would have peace through the night. I got used to hearing his song every day and it made me smile.

She also appreciated wild birds. She was one of those folks who encouraged the local scrub jays to accept peanuts, and soon Johnny Jay was perched on her outstretched hand, taking the nut and burying it somewhere in the yard. When Richard and I moved to Encino, a "wild" scrub jay suddenly landed on Richard's hat out in the yard, and we knew we had a trained bird in our lives. This bird, who had a crossed bill, lived to raise her young and encouraged them to also regard us as a food source. We enjoyed her presence for a long time, and while we're not hand-training them, our local jays are at our feeder every morning, impatient for us to arrive with peanuts in the bird feeder tray.

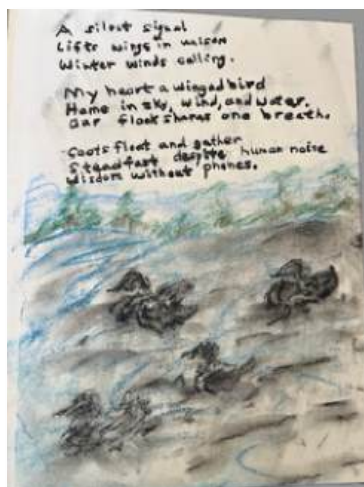
Thank you, Ilma Gruner White, for so much love and nurturing during our lives. Birds are an important part of that gift.

—Marianne White Davis



Bird Sit Bulletin by Teri Carnesciali

O'Melveny Park, our usual meeting place, was closed for a while due to the January wildfires. We held our February Bird Sit with Nature Journaling at Lake Balboa instead, and we enjoyed seeing the water birds that we don't see at O'Melveny.



It was a windy day and the water was choppy as Sue Shachar's depiction of the coots on the lake conveys. Participants are welcome to record their reflections and observations in whatever way they prefer. Sue chose to write a few haiku.

David Yanowitz tells us he has had little experience in drawing, but he could have fooled us. We love how his sketch captures the proportions and posture of a Canada Goose.

Typically after we spend an hour or so individually watching the birds and making entries in our nature journals, we come together to share what we've seen and heard.

We won't be holding the Bird Sit in July and August, but we'd be happy to have you participate any other month of the year. Please see the events calendar for details.





Birdathon 2025 It's not too late to donate!

Click [HERE](#), Or scan the QR code



By Richard Davis – Email:
birdathon@sfvaudubon.org

A poster for the Chatsworth Nature Preserve Summer Solstice event. The background is a warm orange and yellow gradient with a stylized sun at the top and a silhouette of a landscape at the bottom. The text is white and yellow. It lists the date and time, activities, and contact information.

Chatsworth Nature Preserve
Summer Solstice

SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2025
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Opening Ceremony with Native American Blessing

Guided Nature Hikes • Storytelling
Live Animal Exhibitions • Environmental and
Community Resource Fair • Food Trucks

Bring hats, refillable water bottles, sunscreen and
comfortable walking shoes. No dogs, drones,
smoking, bikes or scooters.

Location & Parking: bit.ly/2naHjvT
Entry gate on Valley Circle Blvd, west of Plummer St.
Street parking available with limited on-site parking.

ladwp.com/CNPevent

Los Angeles
Department of
Water & Power

Sign Language interpreters, Assistive Listening Devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. Due to difficulties in securing Sign Language interpreters, five or more business day notice is strongly recommended. To request accommodation, please call 213-367-1076. TDD: 800 HEAR DWP (800 432-7397).

A poster for Friends of the LA River Habitat Restoration Day. It features a background image of people working in a field. The text is in white and blue. It lists the event name, partners, and location.

**FRIENDS OF THE
LA RIVER**

**HABITAT
RESTORATION DAY**

W/ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
& SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON
SOCIETY

SEPULVADA BASIN WILDLIFE RESERVE

Go to the FoLAR.org website for
more information and to register
before attending.

With the help of the California Native Plant Society, volunteers will remove invasive mustard and learn about its impact on the ecosystem and why its removal is vital to restoring California's native habitat. Afterward, join San Fernando Valley Audubon Society as they lead nature-filled walks around the Nature Reserve, binoculars provided!

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter Phone Number

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

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1st Vice President: Rebecca LeVine
2nd Vice President:
Treasurer: Paula Orlovich
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Recording Secretary: Pat Bates

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Charlie Wilken
Bill Lepler
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Susan White
Ryan Carter

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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
GO Native SFV: Patricia Bates
Hansen Dam Birding: Patricia Bates
Hospitality: Teri Carnesciali
Malibu Creek Birding: Kathryn & Dave Barton
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Web Coordinator: Jolene Herz
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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

New Member _____ Renewal _____

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership.....\$25 \$ _____

Student (K-PhD) 1-yr Chapter Membership...\$10 \$ _____

School _____

Lifetime Chapter Membership.....\$500 \$ _____

[____] Do not mail newsletter, I will read it online

Tax Deductible Contribution to SFVAS \$ _____

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E-mail (PLEASE INCLUDE) _____

How did you learn about SFVAS? _____

If you want to join or renew by check, please be sure to include your e-mail address if you want to receive an acknowledgment. We can no longer thank you by regular mail. If you do not have an e-mail address, please know how much we appreciate your involvement with, and support of, SFVAS.

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 3rd of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

Membership to National Audubon is separate and can be initiated on the website www.Audubon.org.

If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Bill Lepler at (747) 237-3720 or e-mail him at membership@sfvaudubon.org.

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For Chapter leaders' e-mail addresses, see our Website: www.SFVAudubon.org



Follow us @sfvaudubon

Found an injured animal? Call Wildlife Rescue Center at (818) 222-2658



Phainopepla

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
PO Box 7769
Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769

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To SFVAS:

I wanted to share some exciting news: I've been accepted to a 1-year MSc program in Biodiversity and Conservation at Trinity College Dublin, starting this September! My fellowship at Richardson Bay Audubon will wrap up in early August, and then I'll begin preparing for the move. Most of the program will take place in Ireland, but it also includes a field research component in South Africa, which I'm especially looking forward to.

I truly appreciate all the support you've shown me; the SFVAS scholarship and the connections I've formed within Audubon over the last two years have played a meaningful role in my journey, and I am so grateful! I hope all is well on your end with the SFVAS chapter and otherwise.

--

Best,

Mia Rosati (she/her)

Community Conservation Fellow, Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary
UCLA '24 | B.S., Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution