



vol. 50, no. 9

California Least Tern

Newsletter of the El Dorado Audubon Society

Founded 1969

May 2018

Thoughts from the President - Mary Parsell

Bird LA Day and World Migratory Bird Day

The mission of the El Dorado Audubon Society is the conservation of native birds and their habitats. The society provides leadership in conservation and educates its members and the community, so that they may appreciate birds and participate in the society's conservation efforts.

El Dorado Audubon Society is a California chapter of the National Audubon Society serving the communities of Artesia, Avalon, Bellflower, Carson, Cerritos, Cypress, Hawaiian Gardens, La Palma, Lakewood, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Paramount, Rossmoor, San Pedro, Seal Beach and Sunset Beach.

"Never Give Up Listening to the Sounds of the Birds." Audubon

The 5th Annual Bird LA Day is Sat., May 12th. It is also World Migratory Bird Day celebrated since 1993 coordinated by the Environment of the Americas and sponsored by organizations dedicated to birds and bird conservation. (formerly called International Migratory Bird Day) fws.gov/birds/education

April was a glorious month for field trips including great looks at birds at Rancho Los Cerritos along the Los Angeles River. In May, we continue our spring field trip series at Whittier Narrows Nature Center on the San Gabriel

River which promises good looks at song birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. In June, we visit Yorba Regional Park on the Santa Ana River.

I encourage everyone to investigate the upcoming activities of our chapter and consider volunteering on behalf of birds and wildlife.

Thanks to each and every one of you. You step forward by being a member of Audubon (national and/or chapter) with your time and encouragement. Consider bringing a friend to a program or field trip. Most of all, have fun looking at and listening to the sounds of birds!

See you on the birding trail. 

Now you can support your Chapter 2 ways:

Buy from AmazonSmile:
<http://smile.amazon.com/>
or

Donate through **PayPal** on our website:
www.eldoradoaudubon.org

May 17th, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m., El Dorado Nature Center
Birds of Madrona Marsh

Madrona Marsh Preserve in Torrance is a type of wetland called a vernal marsh, meaning spring or green. Madrona Preserve's wetlands do not have a built-in water source. When the winter and spring rains fall, enough water accumulates to sustain the marsh and offer a resting spot for migrating birds becoming an "urban oasis", providing valuable habitat for birds, insects, spiders, frogs, reptiles, and small mammals. There are 260 bird species recorded at Madrona Marsh.

Tracy Drake will share her fifteen years of experience as the preserve's manager and naturalist. She currently serves as Park Services Manager, City of Torrance and holds a degree in Recreation from CSULB and a Master's degree in Outdoor Resource Management from Indiana University. She is active in Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon.. 

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Chapter Happenings

Field Trips, Jeff Moore, Field Trip Chair

Colorado Lagoon, Hellman Lowlands, El Dorado, Whittier Narrows, Refuge, Zedler Marsh

Bird Walk/Colorado Lagoon

Sun., May 6th 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

(In conjunction with FOCL, Friends of the Colorado Lagoon.)
Contact Harriet Bennish at 562.621.9734, see page six or email: alinkletter@yahoo.com for info.

LCW: Hellman Lowlands

Sat., May 12th, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Celebrate Bird LA Day with a walk on the wetlands! Meet at PCH and First St, on the border of Seal Beach/Long Beach. Turn inland; park off asphalt. This is a locked gated area and one of two chances to enter the property. We will be looking for Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Hooded Oriole, Common Yellowthroat, herons, egrets and more. Help us document the avian species of this Audubon IBA. Bring binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen. Closed-toed shoes required. Rain or shine.

Bird Walk El Dorado Nature Ctr.

Sun., May 13th, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Celebrate Mother's Day with a morning of easy birding in the shady Nature Center. No prior birding experience is necessary: all skill levels are welcome. Suggest binoculars, field guide, hat, sturdy shoes, water. Rain or shine. 

Whittier Narrows Field Trip

Sat., May 19th, 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Join us for a morning walk at Whittier Narrows. We'll meet at El Dorado Library parking lot at 7:30 a.m. for those who want to carpool or caravan. Alternatively, you may meet us at the Whittier Narrows Nature Center at 8:30 a.m., 1000

Durfee Ave, South El Monte.

Below, a description of the birds found at Whittier Narrows, from the Whittier Narrows Nature Center website at wnnca.org/:

"More than 300 bird species have been observed in the park, including the protected White-tailed Kite, the endangered Least Bell's Vireo, and the California Gnatcatcher. Northern Cardinals released nearby in 1923 still thrive in the area and can be spotted regularly on the grounds."

Also see the Whittier Narrows Nature Center birds webpage at wnnca.org/birds/.

Recommend bringing water, snacks, binoculars, sunscreen and hat.

LCW: Zedler Marsh

Sun., May 27th, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Celebrate a close to sunset walk on the wetlands! Meet at PCH and First Street, border of Seal Beach/Long Beach. Turn inland, park off asphalt. It is one of two chances to enter the locked gated property. This small tidal marsh off the San Gabriel River is a good place to look for herons, egrets, shorebirds, Belding's Savannah Sparrow, and Hooded Orioles. Enjoy native plants. It will be a beautiful walk; help us document the birds! Bring binoculars, water, hat, and sunscreen (probably not needed.)

Closed-toed shoes required. Rain or shine. 

Newsletter Mailing

By Eleanor Palmer

Shout out to the committee mem-

bers who put on the "wafers" and address labels and to Carolyn Vance who organizes the entire operation.

Committee members are Lee Edgecomb, Betty Rainey, Jerry Millett, Elaine Layne, Ramona Glass, Patty Benoit, Jane Smith, Kathy Hodges, Miguel, and Tobi Kjer. 

Birds in Flight

From National Wildlife, April-May 2017

Using new tools such as telescopes with laser range finders, weather surveillance radar and visualization software, scientists have made some surprising discoveries about bird behavior during spring migrations.

Swedish scientists documented that the size of the flock affects the speed of flight: the larger the flock, the faster they fly. Although their study was of two tern species, they infer this may apply to all birds.

In a recent study, Oklahoma ornithologist Kyle Horton reported that birds flying north in the spring fly much faster and stay on course better, whereas those flying south in the autumn fly on average 39% slower. Researchers speculate that northern flying birds are racing to claim the best nesting spots to therefore attract fitter mates and raise more chicks.

Great Lakes researchers discovered that birds increase their elevation at dawn to gauge the distance to the nearest shoreline rather than fly north in the daytime, stressing the importance of our protecting shoreline habitats for transits for migratory birds. 

Our Environment

Conservation News

By Mary Parsell, Conservation Chair

Bluebird Nest Box Monitoring

Due to loss of habitat, specifically cavities in dead trees, the Western Bluebird wouldn't be very abundant in our area without a little help. Every year from February to July, volunteers hang nest boxes and monitor the boxes during nesting season. Bird boxes are good countermeasures for the lack of tree cavities for this cavity nesting species. Volunteers check boxes, record number of eggs, hatchlings and fledglings produced in each box. At the end of the nesting season, the data is submitted to the California Bluebird Recovery Program. I had my first experience last year in El Dorado Park, and it was fun! People walking, riding bikes, and having picnics often stopped to ask us about what we were doing.

Urban Nature: How to Foster Biodiversity in World's Cities, by Richard Conniff

"As the world becomes more urbanized, researchers and city managers from Baltimore to Britain are recognizing the importance of providing urban habitat that can support biodiversity. It just may be the start of an urban wildlife movement". This is a very interesting article quoting a number of scientific findings. The author notes, "cities capture about 20 percent of the world's avian biodiversity" and that "scientists have assessed not just which trees characterize a neighborhood, but how good they are as a bird habitat. Native plants are not only a good food source for birds, but many species are

drought and bug tolerant.

See eldoradoaudubon.org/conservation/ to find helpful links like this one from National Audubon : audubon.org/plantsforbirds).

Let's help grow one million bird-friendly plants together!

Los Cerritos Wetlands Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP)

The CRP has been in the works since 2011. As part of the EIR process, the first public workshop took place on March 28th. To find out more, see intoloscerritoswetlands.org

Los Cerritos Wetlands Oil Consolidation and Restoration Project

You can make a difference for the resident and migratory birds and wildlife of Pacific Flyway. It is an Audubon California Important Bird Area and part of the "string of pearls" along our coast: SBNWR, Bolsa Chica, Huntington Wetlands, Banning Ranch and Upper Newport Back Bay.

Please send individual letters in support of restoration of Los Cerritos Wetlands to the California Coastal Commission at: loscerritoswetlands@coastal.ca.gov.

Background information

The project was approved by the LB City Council on Jan. 16th. We have provided comments and suggestions throughout the CRP process. From our letter to the city "In general, per our mission, we are in support of good restoration efforts not only the preserve but to restore habitat whenever possible. We have prepared a list of concerns. It is important to note many of our concerns have been addressed, and some are topics of

ongoing communications. In conclusion, we believe that with careful planning and some modifications, the restoration of LCW would be of great benefit to the birds, wildlife and the public."

If you need further information, please contact our committee at mfp2001@hotmail.com or 562.252.5825 (voice and text). 🐦

Refuge Update:

By Carolyn Vance

Eyes on the Colony (EOTC), the Least Tern predator monitoring program, needs your help! Last year was not as successful as it could have been with no more than 16 fledglings ever seen at one time out of 120+ chicks. This was primarily due to all the predation by Peregrine Falcons and Red-tailed Hawks. After battling Great-horned Owls and Kestrels the last couple of years, and having a great 2016 year, we were dismayed with last year's results.

We need to document any predation to the terns. Permitting standards require that we thoroughly document and identify avian predators which are taking Least Terns before requesting their removal. So, the Refuge needs more help observing avian predators at times when they are active.

If you can commit to a **minimum** of four hours a week to EOTC, or just want more information, please contact Refuge Manager Rick Nye via email at: Richard_nye@fws.gov. Historically, we watched in four hour shifts from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. You must obtain a badge from the Navy to access the Refuge by filling out some background paperwork and must be a U.S. Citizen.

(continued on page four)

Refuge Update (cont.)

Training and equipment are provided.

I adore doing EOTC! A car is the best birding blind, and besides watching our wonderful Least Terns going back and forth, you get up close looks at Belding's Savannah Sparrows, swallows, and all the other birds and critters that call the Refuge home and/or breed here.

Birds of Note: Speaking of Least Terns, they were seen in Orange County at the end of March, several weeks early. Our four Burrowing Owls are all gone; none stuck around to nest. Bummer.

Our two Red-tailed Hawk mamas have been sitting on their nests since late February. Our 9th St. nest had three large chicks in it on April 8th. Our Nature Center nest mama is sitting to the side, so I think she also has chicks but much smaller. Speaking of Red-tails, I saw a banded one the end of March. He/she had an orange band on the right leg and a metal one on the left. This bird has a very white chest and liked to sit on the ground, behind vegetation. I think this is the Red-tailed Hawk that was mistaken for a Ferruginous during some of our Special Birding Tours.

I think the Ospreys gave up at their nest over the shipyard. It got blown down three times, and now it's only half-built. I didn't see anyone sitting on it in early April. Another Bummer.

Nominating Committee

By Elaine Layne

Election of officers will be held at

our May meeting. Those nominated are the incumbents or this year's officers. See roster on page 5.

Bird Watch Report

By Roger Kneeland

Here it is spring already, my favorite time of year. The birds are visiting, and my plants are blooming and looking good.

The male Hooded Orioles came back to my hummer feeders on March 8th, and I'm going through sugar water like nobody's business. I already had three 16 oz. First Nature hummer feeders up for the winter, but they are emptied quickly when the orioles show up, so I added three more at first sighting. The reasons I like these feeders are they have ten oversized feeding holes and are very easy to clean and fill.

We also have many hummer plants in addition to butterfly and bee feeding plants on our property because my wife Joan and I enjoy watching hummers.

I went to check my 20 bluebird boxes this morning, April 2nd, in Area III. Only two had nests, but several were being guarded by pairs that had staked out that territory. When I got back home, I checked my records, and most years' activity didn't really get started until the end of April.

I was really pleased that the Park maintenance crews had a big portion of Areas II and III cleaned after the Easter holiday. Some years after a big holiday, a box or two goes missing; this year no problems yet. Also, I didn't see any Easter basket grass, a first. Most years the birds use the grass as nesting material and volunteers have found birds tangled and

dead in the Easter grass.

It's always rewarding when people stop me to ask what I'm doing. I view it as an opportunity to educate the curious public about Audubon's goals for preserving bluebirds in CA.

I will be checking my nest box trail again in a couple of weeks and hope there is lots of activity by then.

Speedy Vision

(from the August-September 2016 edition of *National Wildlife, News of the Wild*)

Researchers from three universities in Sweden have for the first time determined that passerines, or perching birds, have the fastest eyesight of any vertebrates in the animal kingdom. In laboratory tests of three species, the Blue Tit, Collared Flycatcher, and Pied Flycatcher, the researchers measured the number of changes per second that each bird can perceive. Though passerines do not have the powerful visual acuity common to eagles and other birds of prey, the small birds' vision, twice as fast as human eyesight, allows them to track flying insects then predict the insects' next moves in order to capture them. This ability to do "forward planning," say the researchers, also helps the birds fly through thick shrubbery while escaping from predators.

Essentially, the Swedish group observes in *PLOS ONE*, passerines "see the world in slow motion compared to how people see it," a skill that generally may be more typical in birds than visual acuity.

Website to Visit

See nestwatch.org: and help scientist collect data on nesting birds by state.

El Dorado Audubon Society
Website: www.eldoradoaudubon.org
E-Mail: ElDoradoAudubon@yahoo.com

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Help support the Chapter by buying at AmazonSmile. Go to: <http://smile.amazon.com/> and search for El Dorado Audubon. A portion of your purchase comes directly to us! Donate directly on our website through PayPal!

El Dorado Nature Center: 562-570-1745
Seal Beach NWR: 562-598-1024

To sign up for **Rare Bird Alerts** for L.A. or Orange County, go to www.yahoo.com, scroll to the bottom to "Groups" and follow instructions.

Officers

President	Mary Parsell 562.252.5825
1st Vice President	Elaine Layne 562.431.7448
2nd Vice President	Leah Young 562.715.8084
Secretary	Carol Furutani
Treasurer	Larry Lee 562.597.7491

Chairpersons

Audubon Adventures/Education	Anne Maben afmaben@gmail.com
Bluebird Boxes	Jerry Millett 562.860.7880
Christmas Bird Count	Cindy Dunbar 562.331.1163
Conservation	Mary Parsell 562.252.5825
Digital Communications	Cindy Crawford 562.508.1369
Field Trips	Jeff Moore 562.397.2667

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Hospitality	Mary Parsell 562.252.5825
Labeling Volunteers	Elias Zuniga
Members-at-Large	Jane Smith
Membership	Patty Benoit 562.438.3183
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Outreach	Eleanor Palmer 562.596.0832

Programs

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Seal Beach NWR	Grace Earl 562.598.5345
	Lyn Kraatz 562.433.8280
	Elaine Layne 562.431.7448
	Patty Benoit 562.438.3183
	Cindy Crawford 562.508.1369
	Leah Young, Cindy Crawford
	Debbie Ketcham 562.598.8400
	Carolyn Vance 562.594.7589

El Dorado Audubon Society holds its monthly meetings in the El Dorado Nature Center 7550 E. Spring Street, Long Beach. The public is welcome to attend meetings and field trips. El Dorado Audubon Society, Inc. assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending meetings or on field trips sponsored by the society.

California Least Tern, the newsletter of the El Dorado Audubon Society, is produced monthly, September through June. The deadline for all submissions is the second Thursday of each month. The editor reserves the right to edit all contributions to meet space or deadline requirements.

Persons who are not members of the National Audubon Society, or who are from chapters other than El Dorado, may receive this newsletter. Simply submit your name, address, and a yearly fee of \$10.00 to the treasurer at the chapter address.

If you need to check your membership status or request changes to your name or address with the National Audubon Society, please call 800.876.0994 or email: Audubon@emailcustomerservice.com.

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Bird Rescue Centers:

For sick or injured wildlife, call:

Long Beach Animal Hospital
562-434-9966

South Bay Wildlife Rehab
310-378-9921

International Bird Rescue Center
(San Pedro)
310-514-2573

Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center
(Huntington Beach)
714-374-5587 

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El Dorado Audubon Society Chapter
-Only Membership: you will become an important part of our dynamic chapter and receive a one-year subscription (10 issues) to our newsletter. All funds stay with El Dorado Audubon. Your information is private. \$20 (self/family), \$15 (student/senior). Name, address, phone or email below:

Make check payable to: El Dorado Audubon Society, P.O. Box 90713, LB, 90809 or join through chapter web site. or
NAS New Member/Gift Membership \$20 (renewal is \$35; includes one year of Audubon magazine, one year Chapter membership, one year of *California Least Tern* newsletter)
Name, address/email below:

Please make check payable to:
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May Calendar of Events

2	Refuge Volunteer Work Day Wed., 8:00 a.m. to noon. To sign up, call 562.598.1024. For more info, go to: sealbeachnwrfriends.org .	13	Bird Walk: Sunday 8:00 a.m. at El Dorado Nature Center. Meet in the parking lot. Parking fee: \$7 Five or more? Contact Jeff at 562.397.2667. (See page two for details.)
6	Bird Walk: Colorado Lagoon Sun., 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Meet at the Science Center near the bridge on Appian Way: 5119 E. Colorado St. LB (See page two for details.)	17	Program Meeting: El Dorado Nature Center, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Birds of Madrona Marsh with Tracy Drake, sharing 15 years of experience as the preserve's manager. (See page one for details)
7	Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	19	Field trip: Whittier Narrows Sat., 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. (see page two for details.)
12	Field Trip: Hellman Lowlands Sat., at Los Cerritos Wetlands. 8:00-10:00 a.m.. Rain or shine. (See page two for details.)	26	Refuge Tour: Sat., 8:30 a.m. at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge. Reservations required at least four days in advance: 562.598.1024. Photo ID (adults only) required. All ages welcome.
12	Bird LA Day and World Migratory Bird Day Sponsored by organizations dedicated to birds and bird conservation. (See thoughts from the President, page one).	27	Field trip: Zedler Marsh/Los Cerritos Wetlands Sunday, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. (see page two for details.)
13	Mother's Day	28	Memorial Day

