

California Least Tern

Newsletter of the El Dorado Audubon Society

Founded 1969

March 2018

Thoughts from the President - Mary Parsell **Celebrating the Year of the Bird**

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.

2018 is the Year of the Bird. The National Audubon Society, National Geographic, BirdLife International and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are joining together in a yearlong celebration of birds in commemoration of the 100-year anniversary of the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). This Act regulates the taking, possession, transportation, sale, purchase, barter, exportation and importation of migratory birds, their parts, nests and eggs. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for enforcing the MBTA. The 1026 bird species native to

the US and its territories are protected.

The MBTA was one of Audubon's first major victories. See audubon.org/yearofthebird for complete information.

Congratulations to Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon members who celebrated the 40th anniversary of their chapter this February!

Thanks to all who participated in this year's CBC with 186 species observed for our count circle. Total species seen always amazes me!

See you on the birding trail! 🐦

March 15th, 7:30 (program) eBird Workshop with Robb Hamilton

Robb Hamilton will speak about the website eBird. Birders are increasing using eBird to keep bird lists, becoming a website that engages the global birding community, and thus a tool gathering unprecedented volumes of information on where and when birds occur in the world. Half a billion bird observations have been contributed so far. Thanks to these contributions, this growing database is an unparalleled information resource on birds.

In the Year of the Bird, Audubon is asking us to be proactive, to make a contribution to protecting birds and their environment to ensure their continuation into the next century. This is something we can do to help. Come discover the wonders and secrets of eBird!

As always, Nature Center doors open at 7:00 p.m. and close at 9:00 p.m. Parking is free. Light refreshments will be served. Please bring recyclable cans and bottles with caps removed to support chapter activities. 🐦

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Chapter Happenings

Field Trips, Jeff Moore, Field Trip Chair

Recap Rancho Los Cerritos; Colorado Lagoon, Hellman Lowlands, El Dorado, Zedler Marsh

Recap of February Walk at Rancho Los Cerritos

By Carolyn Vance

Another great walk at the Rancho! We started the day with a pair of Ravens flying over the parking lot, calling to each other. Our next bird was a nice Hermit Thrush, followed by a small flock of Cedar Waxwings flying over. A pair of California Scrub Jays flashed their blue wings at us as did the Western Bluebirds. A Northern Mockingbird stood silent watch over us, unusual for this bird. Luckily, the Black Phoebes and Allen's Hummingbirds weren't silent as they zipped back and forth across the Rancho.

Our other fly-over birds included three Great Blue Herons and 43 California Gulls. A Red-shouldered Hawk, heard several times, finally landed in the large oak tree nearby, then took off again, calling. The best part of the day, for me, was the small group (21) of Bushtits in a low, open bush, feeding. It looked as though the bush were alive, swarming with birds in constant motion, going branch to branch. Then leaving it, one-by-one, as Bushtits do, going to their next feeding spot. The last bird of the day was the California Towhee that we had been hearing, but couldn't find, until he popped up on an open branch of the Toyon tree at the top of the drive.

Many, many thanks to Kim Moore, our bug expert; Merryel Edelstein, Rancho Garden Docent; Jerry Millett, member of El Dorado Audubon's monthly survey here and Rancho Horticulturist Marie Barnidge-

McIntyre for all their help! At the end of the walk, we had seen 19 species of bird. Our next walk will be on Thursday, April 12th, from 8:00 - 9:30 a.m. Come join us! 🐦

Birdwalk/Colorado Lagoon (in conjunction with FOCL (Friends of the Colorado Lagoon))

Sun., Mar. 4th 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Contact Harriet Bennish at 562.621.9734, see page six or email: alinkletter@yahoo.com for info.

Los Cerritos Wetlands Hellman Lowlands

Sat., Mar. 10th, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Meet at PCH and First St, on the border of Seal Beach/LB. 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 Belding's Savannah Sparrow, Allen's Hummingbird, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret and more. Help us document the avian species of this Audubon IBA. Bring binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen. closed-toed shoes. Rain or shine.

Bird Walk El Dorado Nature Center

Sun., Mar. 11th, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Welcome the coming of spring with a morning of easy birding in the Nature Center. Over 200 bird species have been documents at our urban nature park. No prior birding experience is necessary: all skill levels are welcome. Suggest binoculars, field guide, hat, sturdy shoes and water. Rain or shine.

Los Cerritos Wetlands Zedler Marsh

Sun., March 25, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Meet at PCH and First Street, bor-

der of Seal Beach/LB. 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 songbirds. Bring binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen; closed-toed shoes required. Rain or shine. 🐦

Recap of Christmas Bird Count

Info from Cindy Dunbar, Carolyn Vance

We had a very successful CBC year with a count of 186 species seen, exceeding the previous year's count of 174 species, and putting us in 23rd place overall in the U.S. and Canada. This next year, we hope again to advance in the ranking!

Most common seen: Canada Goose (3,638), Western Sandpiper (2,714), American Coot (1,373), Rock Pigeons (811), American Wigeon (683), and Mallards (681).

Unusual species seen: Tricolored Heron, Tropical Kingbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Phainopepla, Palm Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee (all 1). 🐦

Nominating Committee

The committee nominating chapter officers for fiscal year 2017-2018 has been formed. The members are Grace Earl, Leah Young, Elaine Layne, and Lee Edgcomb. If you would like to nominate someone, please contact Grace at ge720@aol.com or 562.598.5345, Leah Young at leahyo@aol.com or 562.715.8084, or Elaine at flutetootsie2u2@verizon.net. 🐦

Our Environment

Conservation News

By Mary Parsell, Conservation Chair

3rd Annual Citizen Science Symposium – Sat., Mar. 24th, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Aquarium of the Pacific.

Cost is \$20 which includes a light breakfast and appetizers at the afternoon reception. Anyone involved or interested in citizen science is invited and encouraged to attend. Audubon's Christmas Bird Count and the Great Backyard Bird Count are examples of citizen science. This year's keynote speaker is Darlene Cavalier, founder of SciStarter and Science Cheerleader. Learn more at aquariumofpacific.org/events/info/cscscs/.

Los Cerritos Wetlands Environmental Impact Report

The LCW Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP) has been in the works for some time now. As part of the EIR process, the first public workshop will take place on March 28, 6:00 p.m. at the Mary Wilson Library, 707 Electric Ave., Seal Beach. intoloscerritoswetlands.org/lcw-eir.

El Dorado Audubon field trips on the Los Cerritos Wetlands are part of the stewardship program of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA). Find more walks and restoration events at intoloscerritoswetlands.org/.

Sarah Rose Named Executive Director of Audubon California

Selecting one of California's strongest conservation leaders to head a premiere state program, the National Audubon Society today announced that Sarah Rose has been named executive direc-

tor of Audubon California. Rose will also serve as vice-president of the National Audubon Society. "With so many challenges facing California's communities and natural treasures, this is an exciting time to join AC," Rose said. "With its record of accomplishments across policy, on-the-ground conservation and community engagement, AC is positioned to help make a real difference when it matters most."

Conservation Committee: write us via email mfp2001@hotmail.com or call 562.252.5825 (voice or text) if you are interested in participating.

Refuge Update

By Carolyn Vance

The *Belding's* (Savannah sparrow) are singing, the Red-tailed Hawks are on their nests, the egrets are growing their beautiful long, wispy feathers, the Osprey's are courting as I saw him bring her a fish at their nest over the boat yard, and Great Blue Herons are carrying twigs up to the tall trees, – nesting season is beginning. With that in mind, we finally finished pulling all the weeds (aka: non-native plants) out at NASA Island, our Least Tern nesting site, in preparation for their arrival. There is still some work to be done to get the Island ready for them, but we've made a good start. Terns will be arriving mid-April but won't start breeding / nesting until May. Let's hope this year will be better than 2017.

The tagged Turkey Vulture I told you about last month has been identified by the Bird Banding Laboratory. He was banded on

6/24/2017 by Pete Bloom in Anaheim, CA. The sex is unknown, but he/she was hatched in 2015 or earlier. I saw the same bird on the Refuge again on February 2nd and reported him/her again.

We had a fourth Burrowing Owl reported, and on Feb. 1st, I finally saw all four of them. Two are hanging out together in the same burrow, so we don't know if they are a pair. My owl book (*Field Guide to Owls of California and the West* by Hans Peeters), says that in the West, they mostly lay eggs in late March to late April, but Orange County birds have been known to wait until August. Burrowing Owls usually just winter here at the Refuge (we're at their northern-most range), so time will tell if they stay and lay eggs. What a treat if they do decide to stay!

Also seen in early February, were two Loggerhead Shrikes sitting (sort of) next to each other on top of fencing. I had seen a juvenile shrike in the Refuge last year, and they have been documented as breeding on the Refuge, so hopefully, love is in the air for this species of special concern.

On a sad note, John and Lindsay Fitch discovered the body of one of the wintering Prairie Falcons underneath a pole at Case Street Pond. Per Navy biologist, Bob Schallmann, there were no signs of trauma to the bird.

Website to visit:

See celebrateurbanbirds.org. Activities include visual arts, container gardening, bird feeding, and more.

Feathered Colonizers

By Charles T. Collins

As humans moved around the world, they often took with them some of the flora and fauna from home. Sometimes this had disastrous consequences for native ecosystems. We've all heard about the problems caused by rabbits introduced into Australia as well as cats, rats, toads and goats on oceanic islands. Introduced birds are also numerous. Many species of cage birds have escaped or been released. In both New Zealand and Hawaii there are numerous urban and city park birds, all introduced! In one park in Honolulu I saw birds from Asia, Australia, North America, South America and Europe. I had to get into remnants of the native forests to see the endemic honeycreepers.

North Americans are just as guilty of avian introductions as anyone else. A recent review reported that more than 200 avian species have been introduced into the U.S. including 84 found in the western states and Hawaii of which 43 appear to have established sustained breeding populations. Some of these species, (House Sparrow, European Starling, Rock Pigeon and Ring-necked Pheasant) were introduced well over 100 years ago and have been in CA, in numbers, since at least the late 1930's. Today we tend to forget they are in not native. Parrots of at least a dozen species are now so common in various parts of greater Los Angeles that they don't elicit any surprise when encountered on field trips. A population of over a 100 Mitered Para-

keets currently inhabits east Long Beach, roosting in the Belmont Shore area and spreading out to forage during the day.


Invasions by additional exotic species continue today. At first, there are perhaps only casual sightings and later we find established breeding populations. Field guides reflect this and have included some of these newcomers in the plates and species accounts. Nutmeg Mannikins and Orange Bishops arrived here sometime in the early 1990's. They are prime examples of currently expanding species in our immediate area including El Dorado Park.


Thankfully, not all introduced birds have been successful in establishing a self perpetuating breeding population. European Goldfinches and Skylarks were introduced in the New York area but soon died out. Introduced Skylarks, however, have maintained a breeding population on Vancouver Island, B.C.. The Crested Myna, was also introduced to the Vancouver region in 1894-1897 and flourished there. Unlike its close relative, the Common Myna which is a widespread alien in many parts of the world including Hawaii, the Crested Myna never spread out from the Pacific Northwest and its numbers declined and appeared close to extinction when only two were found on the Christmas Bird Count in 2002.

Closer to home, the Spotted Dove, an Asian species, was introduced to L.A. in the early 1900's. It flourished in urban and suburban areas, including east Long Beach. For undetermined reasons

its population declined in the 1980's and it was gone by the mid 1990's. The cause of this extinction is not known. It still thrives in Hawaii and on nearby Catalina Island.

A number of bird species have been introduced for sport hunting including Ring-necked Pheasants, Chukar and Grey Partridges and are now widespread in the western states and southern Canada. Only recently the White-tailed Ptarmigan was introduced to the Sierra Nevada from Colorado, and their population seems to be established and spreading. On the other hand, the Himalayan Snowcock has only maintained a very limited breeding population in northeastern Nevada.

Changes in abundance and distribution of both introduced and native species are to be expected. However, environmental changes often greatly accelerate them. The impact of introduced species has been mostly neutral or mildly negative with some notable exceptions. think European Starling. On the bright side, newcomers do offer a chance for us to observe and study the dynamics of expanding bird populations. Better it would be if such studies involved native species and not feathered colonists. 

Suggestion: If you participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count and were not satisfied with the results, here's one thing you can do: provide water. (We're still/back in drought.) It can be as simple as a bird bath or as creative as a small pool if you have the space. It's always good to have a tree or bush nearby where bathing birds can dry off and preen in safety. 

El Dorado Audubon Society
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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

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	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:

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March Calendar of Events

4	Bird Walk: Colorado Lagoon Sun. , 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Meet at the Science Center located near the bridge on Appian Way: 5119 E. Colorado	11	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.)
5	Board Meeting: Mon. @ 7:00 p.m.	15	Program Meeting El Dorado Nature Center 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Robb Hamilton with a workshop on eBird. (See page one for details)
7	Refuge Volunteer Work Day Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. to noon. To sign up, call 562.598.1024. For more info, go to: sealbeachnwrfriends.org .	17	St. Patrick's Day
10	Field Trip: Hellman Lowlands Sat., 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. at Los Cerritos Wetlands. Rain or shine. (See page two for details.)	20	Vernal Equinox: 9:15 a.m. PDT
10	Passport to Planet Earth, Lakewood Sat., 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This free Earth Walk event held at rustic Monte Verde Park (4624 N. Shadeway Rd.) is an interactive activity for kids and adults along landscaped walking trails and the San Gabriel River Parkway. Focus: protecting the environment.	25	Field trip: Zedler Marsh/Los Cerritos Wetlands Sunday, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. (see page two for details.)
11	Daylight Savings time begins: Get up with the birds!	31	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.

