



vol. 50, no. 8

# California Least Tern

Newsletter of the El Dorado Audubon Society

Founded 1969

April 2018

## Thoughts from the President - Mary Parsell **Celebrating Earth 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." - John James Audubon

This year we can listen to the birds on our Los Cerritos Wetlands field trip to Zedler Marsh which falls on April 22: Earth Day! We are also taking part in "City of STEM" on our 2nd Saturday field trip to LCW, Hellman Lowlands. "City of STEM" is about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. We take part with Science with Christmas Bird Counts, Great Backyard Bird

Counts, eBird, bird walks and field trips as we enjoy birding and help contribute to knowledge of birds at the same time.

I encourage everyone to investigate upcoming spring chapter activities and consider your interest and role in our efforts on behalf of birds whether being co-leaders for field trips, newsletter labeling or greeters at our meetings.

See you on the birding trail! 

**April 19th, 7:30 p.m. (program)**

### **Chasing a Desert Apparition: LeConte's Thrasher with Jay Sheppard**

LeConte's Thrasher is a shy, poorly-known, and little-studied species found in the hottest and driest deserts of the American Southwest and northwestern Mexico. Mr. Sheppard has spent years studying this enigmatic bird. He will be providing some of the results of his study and some insight into the daily life of this thrasher. This is a well-illustrated presentation that includes the thrasher's ecology and a summary of its general biology. He studied 350 color-marked thrashers near Maricopa, CA, which resulted in a better understanding of their daily lives, territories and movements.

Other fascinating aspects of this shy bird's life include reproduction, behavior, vocalizations, feeding and prey preferences.

Western Field Ornithologists is publishing Jay's monograph on this species, expected to be out this spring. Jay is a retired ornithologist of the US Fish & Wildlife Service and now lives in Laurel, Maryland.

Nature Center doors are open from 7:00 to 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. 

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](http://www.eldoradoaudubon.org)

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# Chapter Happenings

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Field Trips, Jeff Moore, Field Trip Chair

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

### **Starr Ranch Sanctuary**

by Elaine Layne

On Feb. 17th, thirteen EDA members were welcomed by Director of Research and Education, Sandy De Simone at Starr Ranch Sanctuary. The Ranch lies in unincorporated South Orange County, bordered by the Cleveland National Forest. Starr Ranch is used for various types of ecological research.

Kim Geissler, Ranch Ornithologist, has been Lead Bander at University of Utah Bonderman Field Station, banded birds at University of Montana Bird Ecology Lab Station and Point Blue Conservation Science in NorCal. The day of our visit she netted a Hutton's Vireo, Ruby Crowned Kinglet, and a Lesser Goldfinch. The birds were assessed for fat proportion, age, disease, and weight then released.

Following the demonstration, Kim led our group on the Roc Burrell Lookout Trail for a spectacular view of the property. Acorn Woodpeckers and numerous other species were seen. See a nesting Barn Owl with eight eggs in a high eucalyptus cavity on the Starr Ranch video cam ([Starranch.org](http://Starranch.org)).

Members and staff picnicked under the trees, ending another glorious day with the birds. 

### **Birdwalk/Colorado Lagoon**

**Sun., Apr. 1st 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.**

Contact Harriet Bennish at 562.621.9734, see page six or email: [alinkletter@yahoo.com](mailto:alinkletter@yahoo.com) for info.

### **Bird Walk El Dorado Nature Ctr.**

**Sun., Apr. 8th, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.**

Welcome spring with a morning of

easy birding in the Nature Center. No prior birding experience is necessary: all skill levels are welcome. Suggest binoculars, field guide, hat, sturdy shoes, water. Rain or shine.

### **Bird Walk, Rancho Los Cerritos Thurs., Apr. 12th, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m.**

Leader: Carolyn Vance

The first two bird walks at Rancho Los Cerritos have proved to be very popular, especially with novice birders. Welcome to the wonderful world of birds and birdwatching! Our final walk of the fiscal year is on Thurs., Apr. 12th, at 8:00 a.m.

Meet in the parking lot of the Rancho; no reservations required. If you don't have binoculars, the Rancho has some to loan. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended as we will be going up and down dirt slopes and some staircases.

The winter birds should be gone by now and the garden in bloom. We may see some nesting birds, possibly Common Raven and/or Red-shouldered Hawk. Hummingbirds should abound, as well as Black Phoebes, and Bushtits. With spring migration on, we should also see several different species of warblers and swallows.

Don't know your birds? No problem. Here's some homework to get you ready for our April walk. Go to the Rancho's website ([ranchoLosCerritos.org](http://ranchoLosCerritos.org)) and click on "Things to Do" on the top. Click on Bird Watching, then download the bird checklist. Look for the birds with a letter (A, C, U) in the "Sp" column (for Spring). Those are the birds you want to study. You can easily find photos on-line or in a field guide.

Look at size, color, and bill shape. That way, you'll be ahead of the game by knowing what to look for in the bushes, on the ground or in the air. I call it playing hide and seek: the birds like to hide, and I love seeking them out, watching their amazing behaviors.

### **LCW: Hellman Lowlands Sat., Apr. 14th, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.**

Celebrate "City of Stem" with a walk on the wetlands! 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 Red-tailed Hawk, Common Yellowthroat, Allen's Hummingbird, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, shorebirds and more. Help us document the avian species of this Audubon IBA. Bring binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen. Closed-toed shoes required. Rain or shine. (See City of STEM article page three.)

### **LCW: Zedler Marsh Sun., Apr. 22nd, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

Celebrate Earth Day with a walk on the wetlands! Meet at PCH and First Street, border of Seal Beach/LB. Turn inland, park off asphalt. 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. It will be a beautiful walk; help us document the birds! Bring binoculars, water, hat, and sunscreen. Closed-toed shoes required. Rain or shine. 

# Our Environment

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## Conservation News

By Mary Parsell, Conservation Chair

### Los Cerritos Wetlands Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP)

The LCW Conceptual Restoration Plan (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 check out [intoloscerritoswetlands.org](http://intoloscerritoswetlands.org)

### LCW Oil Consolidation and Restoration Project

You can make a difference for the resident and migratory birds and wildlife of Pacific Flyway. The bird species checklist is extensive, at least 120 species. It is an Audubon California Important Bird Area. It is 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](mailto: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 to 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 modifica-

tions, the restoration of LCW would be of great benefit to the birds, wildlife and the public."

See list of concerns at [eldoradoaudubon.org/2018/02/04/edas-comments-on-los-cerritos-wetlands-project/](http://eldoradoaudubon.org/2018/02/04/edas-comments-on-los-cerritos-wetlands-project/).

See the video "Lost Jewel of the Coast" at [eldoradoaudubon.org/conservation/](http://eldoradoaudubon.org/conservation/).

If you need further information, please don't hesitate to contact our committee at [mfp2001@hotmail.com](mailto:mfp2001@hotmail.com) or 562.252.5825 (voice and text.) 

## Refuge Update

By Carolyn Vance

Work continues on NASA Island in preparation for the return of our mascot, the California Least Tern, due up here the middle of this month. The Least Terns winter somewhere in Central or South America; no one has ever found where they go when they leave here. Last year's nesting was a dismal failure, but it seems every colony had problems last year also. So, here's hoping they can bounce back this year. Eyes on the Colony (EOTC), the Least Tern predator monitoring program, will be starting back up in May. For now, all we can do is make the site as welcoming as possible for their return. EOTC starts when we have eggs/chicks and runs through July. If you are interested in helping monitor our terns, call the Refuge Manager, Rick Nye, at 562.598.1024. More information on how to volunteer will be in next month's newsletter.

With spring migration on, not only will we be seeing the terns return but also swallows and Hooded Orioles to the Refuge to

nest. We already have an Allen's Hummingbird nest in the tree in front of the Nature Center, whose nestlings photo I posted on the Chapter's Twitter site [@edaudubon.com](https://twitter.com/edaudubon). Check it out for other information and photos. We also have a couple of American Avocets going into breeding plumage, their faces and necks turning a deep rust-color.

Our tagged Turkey Vulture is still being seen on and over the Refuge. He has a couple of new friends he's hanging out and feeding with, so I need to look extra closely to make sure its him.

Our Ospreys are still working on rebuilding their nest, and someone has built a platform on top of the pole for their use. We don't know who, but we thank them.

I have only been seeing two of the Burrowing Owls, and not the pair that was together in the berm. At press time, I don't know if they've left or just moved to a different spot. More information next month. 

## El Dorado Audubon is Part of City of STEM

By Leah Young and Mary Parsell

City is STEM is a month-long, community focused celebration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), composed of numerous events for all ages taking place throughout Los Angeles County from dozens of partner organizations such as SpaceX, Aquarium of the Pacific, Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL), The Natural History Museum and the L.A. Zoo.

El Dorado Audubon, Hellman Lowlands walk will be part of City of STEM. (see page two and page six for more information on how to participate.) 

## Bluebird Boxes

By Jerry Millett

We are now in the process of putting up Bluebird nest boxes for the new nesting season. Over 50 have been put up so far. Many bluebirds have been seen in the park...waiting for spring, trees with new leaves and sufficient insects to support birds. 

## More on Bluebird Boxes

By Roger Kneeland, Los Alamitos

We put our nest boxes up Feb. 28th in Area III. I have a new volunteer this year, Barbara Sentovich. I'm hoping she will be able to take over part of my 20-box trail this season. Along with Camille Dull and Candy Jennings, Area III supports 36 boxes total. I'm hoping there will be an adequate food supply this year because the drought can cause a drop in insects as a food source.

We expect to fledge around 230 baby bluebirds in Area III again this season, which lasts until August. Most of the bluebird pairs will have two clutches in a season, but we do deal with predators (rats, or house sparrows or bees taking over nest boxes.)

We monitor the nest boxes every couple of weeks and compile the results in a itemized report that is tallied at the end of the season. We, along with Jerry Millett and the volunteers from Area II send our compiled results in to the California Bluebird Recovery Program. From there it is formed into a report by counties. Los Angeles County is second to Orange County in total number of bluebird fledglings in California.

We are still hoping to entice new volunteers to help keep El Dorado

Audubon nest box program going. If you are interested, email me at [mylaway3473@gmail.com](mailto:mylaway3473@gmail.com).

As for the nest box in my parkway, the bluebird pair have kicked out their progene from this territory, and seem to be getting serious about nesting. We keep a worm feeder nearby filled year round with freeze dried meal worms. Then when the hatchlings emerge, we supplement with live meal worms.

I'm often asked where I get my worms and bird feed. I've been doing business with Magnolia Bird Farm since the '60s. They sell in both bulk and smaller quantities. We go through lots of niger (gold and house finch) and sunflower seeds (doves, white crown, yellow rump warblers). Magnolia Bird Farm is in Anaheim at Magnolia and Cerritos Avenue. It looks like I'm going to have to make another trip soon, my niger is getting low, and the number of gold finches is getting up there again. Last year I counted 70 at four feeders outside our kitchen window. 

## Website to Visit

[Feederwatch.org](http://Feederwatch.org) was started in 1987 by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. To date more than 40K people from every state/province have contributed 1.5 million checklists letting scientists identify species of concern, track changes in distribution and abundance of native/non-native species, and gain an understanding of how new pathogens affect bird populations. 

## Year of the Bird

Although at Audubon, every year is the year of the bird, this

year, they are teaming with National Geographic, Bird Life International, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and 150 (at press time) other environmental organizations including the CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the L.A. Zoo to celebrate birds.

It is significant that this year is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of the first environmental protection acts anywhere in the world. At the time the Act was proposed, bird populations were being decimated by the millinery trade's voracious appetite for plumes.

Currently that same Act is under attack. Audubon is asking us each to do one simple task every month to contribute to the Year of the Bird, whether volunteering as Mary suggests (page one) or Carolyn (page three), taking part in bird walks/field trips (page two), putting up feeders as Roger does (page four), planting native plants, or visiting websites to contribute info. See [audubon.org/yearofthebird](http://audubon.org/yearofthebird) for other great (monthly) suggestions.

It's our job to ensure that birds can be enjoyed by future generations. They're doing the best they can. We have to help. 

## Nominating Committee

By Elaine Layne

Elections are coming this May! Currently, those nominated are the incumbents, or this year's officers. (See roster on page five.)

If you would like to nominate someone for an office, please contact Grace Earl at [ge720@aol.com](mailto:ge720@aol.com) or 562.598.5345, Leah Young at [leahyo@aol.com](mailto:leahyo@aol.com) or 562.715.8084 or Elaine at [flutetootsie2u2@verizon.net](mailto:flutetootsie2u2@verizon.net).

Thank you. 

**El Dorado Audubon Society**  
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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](http://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 <a href="mailto:afmaben@gmail.com">afmaben@gmail.com</a> |
| 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                                             |

#### Greeters

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

#### Programs

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Publicity      | Erin Kellogg                |
| 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](mailto: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 🐦

### Join El Dorado Audubon Society!

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:  
National Audubon Society, 225 Varick St, 7th Flr., NY, NY 10014; Attn: Chance Muehleck, or join through the NAS website:  
[Audubon.com](http://Audubon.com)



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### April Calendar of Events

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Easter Sunday</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>14</b>    | <b>Field Trip: Hellman Lowlands Saturday, at Los Cerritos Wetlands. 8:00-10:00 a.m.. Rain or shine.</b><br><br>(See page two for details.)                                                                                  |
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Bird Walk: Colorado Lagoon</b> in conjunction with Friends of Colorado Lagoon (FOCL) <b>Sun. , 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.</b><br>Meet at the Science Center located near the bridge on Appian Way: 5119 E. Colorado<br><br>(See page two for details.) | <b>19</b>    | <b>Program Meeting: El Dorado Nature Center, Thursday 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.</b><br>"Chasing a Desert Apparition: LeConte's Thrasher" with Jay Sheppard (See details on page one.)                                               |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Board Meeting: Monday @ 7:00 p.m.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>22</b>    | <b>Earth Day and Field Trip: Zedler Marsh/Los Cerritos Wetlands, Sunday, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.</b><br><br>(See page two for details. )                                                                                          |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Refuge Volunteer Work Day Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. to noon.</b><br>To sign up, call 562.598.1024. For more info, go to: <a href="http://sealbeachnwrfriends.org">sealbeachnwrfriends.org</a> .                                                     | <b>27-29</b> | <b>Owens Lake Bird Festival, Lone Pine, CA</b><br>Experience the environmental success story of Owens Lake as thousands of migratory birds return.<br>(See <a href="http://friendsoftheinyo.org">friendsoftheinyo.org</a> ) |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Bird Walk: Sunday 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. at El Dorado Nature Center.</b> Meet in the parking lot. Parking fee: \$7 Five or more?<br>Contact Jeff at 562.397.2667.<br><br>(See page two for details.)                                               | <b>27</b>    | <b>Arbor Day.</b> Plant a native tree for the birds.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Bird Walk: Rancho Los Cerritos Thursday, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m.</b><br>Good walk for novices!<br><br>(See page two for details.)                                                                                                                    | <b>28</b>    | <b>Refuge Tour: Sat., 8:30 a.m. at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge.</b> Reservations required at least four days in advance: 562.598.1024. Photo ID (adults only) required. All ages welcome.                           |



