

# Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society

A Chapter of the

Volume XXIXJanuary-FebruaryEditorNo. 52015Arne Christiansen

## PALOMAR AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S POSITION ON TWO CONSERVATION ISSUES

(The PAS Board voted unanimously on these issues at their November 2014 meeting. The positions were submitted by the PAS Conservation Committee).

## Oak Creek Development Project Summary of Issue:

ak Creek is a proposal for a 65-home gated residential development on the Homeland and 'Duck Pond' property adjacent to Felicita Park. The property is a 40 acre parcel that is currently open space and farmland bisected by Felicita Creek and bordered by mature live oaks. The development poses significant impacts to wildlife if not reduced in footprint and density. The area is heavily used by birds, especially raptors, egrets, and herons. There is a high level of concern about the impact of dense development along the riparian corridor and the effect on water quality and flooding of the creek on-site and downstream. The site should be re-planned and the density and footprint should be reduced to expand the buffer areas along the creek. The window wall needs to be removed.

#### **Status of Project:**

The DEIR has been issued and comment period is closed. The next action will be a Planning Commission Hearing estimated for December and a City Council meeting estimated to occur in January.

#### **Palomar Audubon's position:**

The Board is **opposed** to the **project as proposed** for the following reasons:

- The buffers between the proposed home sites and the creek are far too small, a 5-feet minimum in some cases. We are recommending that there be a 100-foot buffer between the high-water line on both sides of the creek and the development areas. This is needed to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Trails and bike paths should be routed to reduce the loss of Oak trees, but should not be routed through the buffer zones.
- The proposed use of a 6-foot wall, (1-foot masonry and 5-feet of transparent glass) outer fence along a riparian zone is unnecessary and will have a significant collision impact on bird species.
- Private Street A should be rerouted from Hamilton Lane and the bridge over the buffer zone eliminated to further protect the buffer zone.

#### **PAS Action:**

- Conservation committee member will attend Planning committee and City council meetings.
- · Conservation committee will respond to final EIR report if wildlife issues are not addressed in satisfactory manner.
- PAS members will be notified of public meetings and are encouraged to attend them.
- Our position will be shared with other environmental groups.

#### Escondido Creek and San Dieguito Creek Water Quality Improvement Plans

#### **Summary of issue:**

The State Regional Water Board, the issuer of storm water permits to governmental agencies in the region, is working with these agencies to upgrade water quality through the development of Water Quality Improvement Plans (WQIPs) that will be implemented over the next five years. There are two areas that are very important to the wildlife we protect and to our membership- the San Dieguito and Escondido Creek watersheds. There already is significant discussion about Alternative Compliance Projects for storm water permits that could be important restoration tools—if done correctly. The first step in this direction is a detailed hydrology study for the Escondido Watershed and a designation of Lake Hodges and Felicita Creek as a priority focused area in the WQIPs. Escondido and the County are also currently soliciting project ideas for potential restoration areas and future projects.

#### **Status of Project:**

Government agencies such as Escondido are currently developing the strategies they will use to achieve water quality. There are potential opportunities to support and secure restoration of creeks and habitat areas. There will be a public comment period open in December to comment on the strategies used in each watershed and by each governmental agency. There are Consultation Committees that advise on development of the plans that include industry, building, environmental groups, and residents

SEE POSITION, Page 3

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## A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Penny Hernandez, President

ope you all had the Merriest Holiday ever and that you did a lot of birding, maybe at the Christmas Bird Count, maybe on our field trips on Saturdays. Did you travel during the holidays? If you birded a new area and saw some new birds why not let us know. The



Newsletter Editor would welcome receiving from you any appropriate article. Just send them to <a href="mailto:arnec@juno.com">arnec@juno.com</a>. He'll do any needed editing, so don't be bashful.

Some news from Audubon California. They are asking us to email our members of Congress to vote NO on H.R.5781. If successful the bill will divert water away from wildlife refuges, take away water

from bird-friendly farms and undermine the Endangered Species act. Read more on page 6 of this issue of Band Tales or at <a href="mailto:auduboncalifornia@audubon.org">auduboncalifornia@audubon.org</a>.

Now for some fun. This quiz is from "The Bird Watcher's Quiz Book" by Henry Hill Collins, Jr. under "Bird Names – Color"

1.	Black	13. Indigo
2.	Blue	14. Ivory
3.	Blue-gray	15. Lazuli
4.	Brown	16. Purple
5.	Cinnamon	17. Red
6.	Glaucous	18, Ruddy
7.	Golden	19. Rusty
8.	Gray	20. Scarlet
9.	Great Blue	21. Snow
10.	Great Gray	22. Snowy
11.	Great White	23. Sooty
12.	Green	24. White
		25 Vallow

Bring your answers to the quiz to the January meeting and I will reveal and/or confirm the answers.

See you at January's general meeting.

Renny

## **CONSERVATION NOTES**

Richard Fowler, Conservation Chair

## RIDGWAY'S RAIL RECOVERY

The Ridgway Rail, formerly a sub-specie of the Clapper Rail, appeared near extirpation in Southern California in the early years of the twentieth century. Commercial hunting, dikes, expansion of agriculture, as

well as urban development all took their toll on a bird whose habitat was primarily coastal salt marshes. When it was listed as an endangered species in 1970 its major range appeared limited to marshes in the San Francisco Bay area.



Although the rail's situation in Southern California was serious, small populations survived in local pockets. At the time of California's State Department of Fish and Wildlife first census of Ridgway's Rail in 1980 there were a total of 203 breeding pairs in Southern California, including 59 pairs in San Diego County. Then, as now, the largest San Diego population (26 pairs in 1980) were in the Tijuana Estuary.

In the 1980's recovery programs were begun by Federal, State, and local agencies. These included restoration and expansion of coastal marshes, predator control, and captive breeding programs. The outcome of these efforts has been monitored by yearly counts of breeding pairs by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The total breeding pairs in Southern California in 2013 were 525, more than doubling the number in 1980. San Diego County did relatively better reporting 261pairs, more than quadrupling the count in 1980.

The San Diego results are encouraging and may even be a low estimate as birds were counted only by their call. While it may not be entirely accurate, it has been done in a consistent manner over the past 34years. The methodology of these counts is fascinating and is well summarized by Zembal.\*

A great example of progress in this recovery is Batiquito's lagoon. In the 1980's there were no documented rails in the lagoon. In 1994 major dredging began to reopen tidal flows to the lagoon. This work was not completed until 1997. There may have been additional work in removing alien flora and controlling predation, though I don't have specifics for Batiquito. The rail was re-introduced from captive breeding programs and this has continued on a regular basis through July 2014 when seven additional rails were introduced. As of 2013 there were 45 breeding pairs, making it the second highest population in San Diego County after the Tijuana Estuary. Similar success has been seen at the San Dieguito lagoon where no rails were noted in the 1980's but 37 pairs were counted in 2013. Nonetheless, it is a site by site struggle. Other sites in San Diego have been less successful. Overall, there are now

15 breeding sites in San Diego County compared to only 8 in 1980.

Ridgway's Rail remains endangered and there are continuing challenges. The total coastal habitat remains small and is vulnerable to severe weather changes as happened in 2008. Natural predators such as Northern Harriers and Peregrine Falcons as well as raccoons and rats will prey on the birds and/or their eggs. Will the Rail maintain its current population once the captive bird programs are terminated? There is reason for optimism. Local conservation groups have formed at some of these sites and are working with scientists to meet these threats. The marshes are dynamic environments that require continuous monitoring and adjustments. Resources are now available that were not present in the 1980's.

\*Zembal,R., et.al. Light-footed Clapper Rail Management, Study, and Propagation in California, 2013. California Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Management, Nongame Wildlife Unit Report, 2013-02. Sacramento, CA



**POSITION**, from Page 1

#### **PAS Board Recommendation:**

- 1. **Support** a hydrology study for the Escondido Creek Watershed as a first step in a process of watershed restoration. We will work with other groups like the Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) to promote changes that will create a more natural Escondido creek from Lake Wolford all the way to the San Elijo Lagoon.
- **2. Support** the designation of Lake Hodges and Felicita Creek as priority areas for water quality improvement projects.

#### **Proposed PAS Actions:**

- Submit comment letters when the public comment period is opened.
- Submit letters to the City of Escondido and the County to encourage adoption and support of these actions.
- Identify areas to propose to be included in the list of restoration sites.
- Work with TECC and other environmental groups to support these goals.

## **PROGRAMS**

Please join us for our interesting monthly program and refreshments at the <u>Remington Club</u>, 16916 <u>Hierba Drive</u>, <u>Rancho Bernardo</u>. There is a social period beginning at 7:00 pm with the meeting and program getting under way promptly at 7:30 pm.

# Thursday, January 22, 2015 Ryan Andrews & Trysten Loefke "Our Camp Colorado Adventure"

Palomar Audubon Society has a multifaceted mission, including a community outreach program with several special initiatives. One of these initiatives is our scholarship program. In 2014, we provided two 100% scholarship awards for a week-long educational summer camp on birding conducted by the American Birding Association at Colorado Springs, Colorado. The recipients of these Young Birder scholarships were Ryan Andrews and Trysten Loefke. Both boys are 15 yrs. old and are regular PAS field trip participants. They are excellent birders. Mark your calendar for this presentation and come hear all about what Ryan and Trysten did last summer!



Thursday, February 26 **Jeff Lemm** 

"Snakes, Lizards, and Frogs in San Diego County"

Jeffery Lemm is a herpetologist at the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research. Jeff has traveled the world in search of reptiles and amphibians and has won awards for his photography of these amazing creatures. He is the author of the "Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of the San Diego Region". This presentation gives us an opportunity learn something about those other animals that we often see, when out and about, exploring our local environment.



## FIELD TRIPS

Jim Beckman

Whether a seasoned birder or a beginner, you are welcome to join us. For more information call the trip leader shown below. Heavy rain cancels trips. Locations in Thomas Guide Coordinates are shown in parenthesis as (Page-Column Row). Ratings: 1=easy, suitable for all levels, 2=moderate, a bit more walking and possibly some hilly terrain, 3=challenging, longer hikes and may involve some steep terrain.

### Saturday, January 3, 8:30 a.m.

## Dixon Lake

Escondido

#### (1110-C3) Rating: 2

From I-15 in Escondido, exit at El Norte Parkway and drive east approximately 3 miles. Look for the "Daley Ranch/Dixon Lake" signs and turn left (north) on La Honda Drive. Continue toward Dixon Lake and the Daley Ranch free parking area on your left. Meet at the east end of this parking lot, adjacent the Dixon Lake entrance.

Leader: Jim Beckman 858-205-2819

#### Saturday, January 10, 8:30 a.m.

#### **Sweetwater River/Bonita**

**National City** 

#### (1310-C4) Rating: 2

Take I-15 south to I-805 south and take the Sweetwater Road exit in National City. Turn right at Sweetwater Road and then right at Plaza Bonita Road. You will see the Plaza Bonita Shopping Center parking area on the left. Meet at the far west corner of the parking lot near the Outback Steakhouse. Our walk will be along the Sweetwater River where we should see a good variety of waterfowl and other birds.

Leader: Jeff Ebright 858-484-3932

#### Saturday, January 17, 8:30 a.m.

#### Dos Picos County Park & Rangeland Rd. Ramona

#### (1171-H5) Rating: 2

From I-15 in Rancho Bernardo go east on Rancho Bernardo Road, which turns into Espola Road (S5), and continue to Poway Road (S4). Turn left and drive east to Highway 67. Head north on Highway 67 and just before you reach Ramona, make a hard right on Mussey Grade Road (heading southwest). Continue on Dos Picos Park Road ½ mile to the park entrance on the left. There is a San Diego County Park parking fee, but free with a County senior pass.

Leader: Hal Benham 858-679-7904

#### Saturday, January 24, 8:30 a.m.

**Guajome Regional Park** 

Oceanside

#### (1067-D7) Rating: 2

From Highway 78 in Oceanside, exit north on College Boulevard, and drive 4.4 miles north to Highway 76.

Make a right turn on Highway 76 and continue east about ½ mile to Lake Guajome Rd. Turn right (south) and drive up the hill past the park entrance, which does not open until later, and park on the street.

Leader: Doug Walkley

310-387-8190

#### Saturday, January, 31, 8:30 a.m.

#### Oak Hill Memorial Park

Escondido

#### (1130-F1)) Rating: 1

From I-15 exit east on Via Rancho Parkway, which becomes Bear Valley Parkway, and drive 5 miles north to Glen Ridge road at Orange Glen High School. Turn right on Glen Ridge Road and proceed approximately 1 mile east to the cemetery gate. Turn left to parking area.

Leader: Jim Beckman

858-205-2819

#### Saturday, February 7, 8:30 a.m.

San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary

5 Riparian View, Irvine, CA 92612

#### (Thomas Guide to Orange County, page 859 J-7) Rating: 2

Take I-5 north to the San Diego Freeway I-405, then exit on Culver and turn left. At the first signal, which is Michelson, turn right. Continue west on Michelson and then turn left on Harvard. Continue south on Harvard and then turn right on University Drive. Continue on University to Campus Drive and turn right again. Stay in the far right lane and immediately turn right on to Riparian View which will enter the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. (There is a dark green sign by the turnoff, identifying this as the route into the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary) At the end of the road, you will make a sharp left turn down a steep driveway and into the parking lot. The first building you see will be the Sea & Sage Audubon House. Beyond the Audubon House are the ponds of the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary and many trails for us to explore. Allow 50 minutes from Oceanside. Leader: Sally Sanderson

760-749-6995

#### Saturday, February 14, 8:30 a.m.

**Tecolote Canyon Park** San Diego

(1268 F2) Rating: 2

Depending on your starting location, travel to the I-5 freeway. From the I-5 in San Diego, exit east at the Seaworld Drive/Tecolote Road off-ramp — away from Mission Bay. Continue on Tecolote Road. to the end and park at the visitor's center. This is a great spot for finding both resident and migrating birds. Rarities often show up here

Leader: Jack Friery 619-218-7342

## Saturday, February, 21, 8:30 a.m. Santee Lakes Santee

(1231-A5) Rating: 2

From I-15 go east on Highway 52. Exit at Mast Boulevard Continue east on Mast Boulevard to Fanita Parkway. Turn right and continue south to the entrance to Santee Lakes on your right. Car entry fee is \$5. **OR** from Mast Boulevard turn left on Fanita Parkway, and continue north to Lake Canyon Drive. Turn right, park and walk in the open gate for **free**. Meet in the parking lot by the General Store between lakes 4 & 5.

Leader: Tom Trowbridge

760-743-1052

Saturday, February 28, 8:30 a.m.
Caspers Wilderness Park (New Location)
33401 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA
Rating: 2

Allow 1hr travel time from Escondido. Travel west on Highway 78. Take I-5 north in Oceanside to San Juan Capistrano and exit east on Highway 74 Ortega Highway. Go about 7.5 miles to Caspers Park Road and turn left. There is a required day-use fee at the entrance. Meet at the day-use parking lot. Bring a lunch for an after birding picnic.

Leader: Doug Walkley

310-387-8190

San Diego Bird Festival – No Scheduled Field Trip

## **OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2015**

Dates: April 10-12, 2015 Location: Sequim, WA

Description: The festival with the most spectacular setting! Visit the rain shadow of the *Olympic Peninsula* to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker is Lynsy Smithson Stanley: "Climate change as a 'Bird Issue'." Join the Birdfest Pre-trip on April 8-9, 2015, two days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders.

Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 12-14, 2015. Cruise registration: separately at:

www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

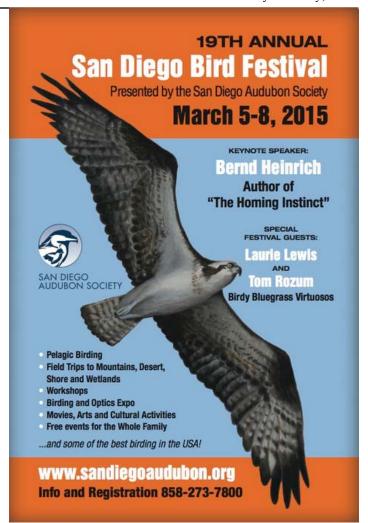
Birdfest website address: www.olympicbirdfest.org

E-mail address: info@olympicbirdfest.org

Contact name: Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society,

360-681-4076







### STOP THIS NIGHTMARE FOR BIRDS

s you read this, a bill being touted as "drought response" – but which is actually a grab-bag of attacks on environmental protections for birds and nature – is being fast-tracked through the U.S. Senate.

#### We need your help to stop this bill in its tracks.

This summer, the Senate approved a bill from California Sen. Dianne Feinstein to facilitate water transfers and water storage in California in response to the drought. Negotiations with the House of Representatives have made the bill more favorable to agricultural and urban water users at the expense of wildlife.

The latest version of the bill is a nightmare for birds and nature. It will undermine Endangered Species Act protections and weaken environmental review and public participation in dam construction projects. It could leave thousands of acres of important wetlands in the Sacramento Valley dry while water is sent south, and it will take water away from the Central Valley wildlife refuges that millions of birds need to survive.

We are disappointed that this bill benefits agricultural and urban interests while rewriting major provisions of important environmental laws—without any hearings or an opportunity for public input.

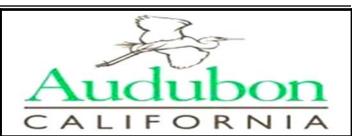
This bill is moving fast and we don't have much time. Please send an email to your California senators right now. You can make your voice go even further if you call them:

Sen. Dianne Feinstein: Washington, D.C., office: (202) 224-3841

Sen. Barbara Boxer: Washington, D.C., office: (202) 224-3553

Tell them that birds and nature in the Central Valley are important to you, and that you DO NOT support this water grab by agricultural and urban water users at the expense of birds and nature.

Photo by Bill Gracey.





Thank you for bringing your love of birds with you to the polls this year. While we may disagree on specific measures, we can make a better home for California birds when we take action. While we are happy to know that birds from the Klamath to Pixley Wildlife Refuge to the Salton Sea will benefit from the results of this election, we also know that our work is far from done.

Now that Proposition 1 has passed, it is vital that we work hard to make sure that these funds are spent responsibly. Funding for conservation and restoration must be allocated to priority projects, and the state should favor water storage strategies that have the least impact on habitat. As Peter Gleick of the Pacific Institute so intelligently put it, "the ultimate value and effectiveness of the bond will depend on how it is implemented and how the funds are spent."

Audubon California will be there, watching the implementation, and we know we can count on you, our bird heroes, to be there to make sure that Californian politicians keep their promise to our state's birds and wildlife. We look forward to seeing what we can accomplish next.

Sincerely,

Audubon California





## **ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD** NAMED AUDUBON CALIFORNIA'S 2014 BIRD OF THE YEAR

December 15th, 2014 · by Garrison Frost



ne of California's most beloved birds today was named the 2014 Audubon California Bird of the Year. The Allen's Hummingbird – which lives exclusively along the Pacific Coast from Mexico to Oregon – received the designation after totaling nearly 30 percent of votes cast during an online poll this fall.

The Allen's Hummingbird migrates between wintering grounds in Mexico and breeding ground in California and southern Oregon, though some birds will stay in the Golden State year-round. The Allen's Hummingbird prefers coastal areas with trees and shrubs, and is commonly seen taking nectar from flowers. It is also a popular visitor to backyard feeders.

"Every one of the nominated birds is beloved by Californians, but I'm not surprised to see the Allen's Hummingbird come out on top," said Brigid McCormack, executive director of Audubon California. "Everybody loves hummingbirds. It's so small and delicate, but also remarkably hardy."

An adult Allen's Hummingbirds is about 3.5 inches long, with a wingspan of about 4 inches. It has an iridescent red throat and a shiny green back, and it weighs about the same as three or four paperclips.

While the Allen's Hummingbird is not considered to be of a conservation concern, Audubon researchers fear that could change in the coming years as development and non -native plants continue to chip away at its coastal habitat. Global warming is also predicted to have an impact on the Allen's Hummingbird. By 2080, the species could lose up to 90 percent of its breeding range, forcing it to find more hospitable areas elsewhere. To those who love watching the Allen's Hummingbird at their feeder, this could be a

More than 8,800 votes were cast in this year's Bird of the Year poll. The Allen's Hummingbird finished with 29.4 percent of the vote. The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo came in second place with 23.2 percent, followed closely by the Brown Pelican at 23 percent.

"Every species nominated was a focus of our conservation work over the last year," said McCormack. "Our hope is that the attention this award brings to the Allen's Hummingbird will help raise awareness of the conservation needs of all birds throughout the state. We encourage everyone to go outside or look out their window for the Allen's Hummingbird. It is a state treasure."

(photo of Allen's Hummingbird by Dan Levinson)

#### PALOMAR AUDUBON SOCIETY **WELCOMES** NEW AND RENEWING **CHAPTER-ONLY MEMBERS:**

Roberta Moss/Patrice Berena Louise Cannon **Orval Carter** Al & Grav Church Deanna Clatworthy Joan Comito Jo Daughterty Trudy Florence Elinor Foulke Jim & Marjorie Freda Ron & Delores Grant Robert Hoover Susan Hunter Linda & David Jablin Bert & Sharon Kersey Robin Kohler Al & Donna Przecha Linda Rasmusson Elizabeth Rose Helen Rosser Gail Smith Deanna & James Stephens Byron Swift Otto & Ruth Talle Vinca Valdivia Doug Walkley **VERY MUCH!** 

## AND WE APPRECIATE OUR DONORS

Mikael & Sonia Beeve Al & Grey Church Al & Gray Church Jeffrey & Pamel Derler Schwab Charitable Fund Jane Hall Wallace Rick William & Miriam Sherrard Mary Smith John & Nan Thomas Anna Trunnell Doug Walkley 

## Band Tales

## January-February, 2015

The Bano Tales is an official publication of the Palomar Audubon Society; it is issued bi-monthly and sent to all members as a part of their National Audubon Society membership or Palomar Audubon Society Chapter-only membership.



#### Band Tales Palomar Audubon Society P.O. Box 2483 Escondido, CA 92033-2483

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Field Trips...Jim Beckman....858-205-2819
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Programs...Committee....xxx-xxxx
Publicity...Open......xxx-xxxx
Scholarship...Jim Beckman....858-205-2819

Web Page: http://www.palomaraudubon.org Webmaster: Jeff Ebright: 858-484-3932 palomaraudubon@gmail.com

## Board of Director's Meeting Thursday, January 8th

Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>
Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup>
7:00 p.m. at the Remington Club
16916 Hierba Drive
Rancho Bernardo

Note: All Palomar Audubon Society members are welcome at <u>all</u> Chapter Board meetings.

## **QUICK CALENDAR**

		QUICK CALENDAR
Ianuary	3	Dixon Lake Walk
January	8	Board of Directors' Meeting
January	<i>10</i>	Sweetwater River/Bonita Walk
Ianuary	<i>17</i>	Dos Picos County Park & Rangeland Road Walk
January	2	General Meeting: "Camp Colorado Adventure"
January	24	Guajome Regional Park Walk
January	31	Oak Hill Memorial Park Walk
February	5	Board of Directors' Meeting
February	7	San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary Walk
February	14	Tecolote Canyon Park Walk
February	21	Santee Lakes Walk
February	26	General Meeting: "Snakes, Lizards, and Frogs"
February	28	Caspers Wilderness Park Walk (New Location)
March	7	San Diego Bird Festival (no local walk scheduled)