



Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society
A Chapter of the
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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2016

Editor
Arne Christiansen



WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS WFO 2016 Conference, Humboldt County, California 28 September — 2 October, 2016 Youth Scholarship Recipient

The WFO Youth Scholarships are made possible by the generous contributions from the Pasadena Audubon Society honoring the memory of Mike San Miguel, the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, the Buena Vista Audubon Society, and individual contributions from WFO members.

Max Leibowitz has won a youth scholarship to the Annual Western Field Ornithologist's Conference to be held Sept 28 – Oct 2 in Humboldt County, California.

As you know, Max is the recipient of Palomar Audubon's 2016 Young Birder scholarship. He recently attended the ABA Young Birder Conference at Camp Colorado. Congr



Max Leibowitz

Age: 17

Grade: 12th

From: San Diego, California

About Me: I am an enthusiastic birder who loves the outdoors and nature.

Essay Excerpt: I became even more interested in my birding because I got my first digital camera, and it gave me the ability to make life memories of what I saw. As I started to photograph all the birds I chased, I realized I loved the challenge of capturing them in their natural setting, whether it be an ocean, bay, marsh or grassland.

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see AMAZON, Page 3

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ANOTHER BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Penny Hernandez, PAS President

Vacations taken, new birds added to your life lists and great field trips during the summer, what is next? More great field trips and interesting programs, and perhaps an away trip somewhere out of state? Who knows what your Board has planned for you. Please speak to us and let us know what your interests are.

As you may remember the chapter gave its scholarship to Max Leibowitz. I can't wait to hear about his experiences at the weeklong session this summer in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Our other winners have come back with great stories of new friends and new birds; hopefully Max will also do so. The American Birding Association has provided great locations and great leaders for young birders. Hopefully we can continue our scholarships.



Two positions are in need of volunteers. The first one is someone to organize the refreshments at the meetings. That simply consists of finding someone to bring refreshments to general meetings. It's nice to provide water and a nice looking table. If you would like to help please let me know. The second job is to put the Band Tales in Kit Carson Park, Escondido every other month. Again, if you will help please let me know.

Hope to see you in September,

Penny

HEY, ALL YOU PAS BIRDERS!

Arne Christiansen, Editor

Do you have any "WOW!" moments in your birding life? Maybe a "Wish I could share this!" or "Nobody would ever believe what I just saw!?" The majority of this edition of **Band Tales** consists of articles gleaned from non-PAS sources; most of the rest of the articles are submitted by Board members.

None of us is likely to win a Pulitzer Prize in journalism, but—hey, come on, folks—share some of your birding (or for that matter non-birding) experiences with the rest of us. Should you not feel comfortable writing an article just send me whatever you have; we'll fix it up "real purty," making you happy that you have agreed to share with the rest of us.

I took this space because some more copy was needed to fill out YOUR newsletter. It could have been yours to share; **PLEASE!!** I'm here at arnec@juno.com or by mail to 26739 Red Ironbark Drive, Valley Center, CA 92082

CONSERVATION NOTES

Richard Fowler, Conservation Chair



On July 20th eleven birders gathered at Lake Hodges for another bird count on the south side of Bernardo Mountain. The birders were volunteers from the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy and Palomar Audubon Society members. The Audubon group included Gail DeLalla, Paul Jeffs, Rustom Jamadar, and Richard Fowler. It was great to have the extra eyes and the camaraderie of the SDRVC volunteers and their leader Jess Norton. To date we have identified 61 species on Bernardo Mountain. We will continue bimonthly counts there for the remainder of the year.

This is the second year of bird counts with the SDRVC. Last year we did bimonthly counts at the park headquarters off Sycamore Creek. Next year we will do bimonthly counts on Volcan Mountain, the start of the San Dieguito River Valley watershed. I will keep you posted.

Richard



**REMINDER:
DEADLINE FOR THE
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER ISSUE IS
OCTOBER 15th.
SUBMIT COPY TO
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AMAZON, from Page 1

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FIVE ACTIONS**THAT WILL PROTECT BIRDS WHERE YOU LIVE:**

- 1) Reduce or eliminate pesticide and herbicide use. By using fewer chemicals in and around your home you will help keep birds, pets and your family healthy.
- 2) Help keep ALL water clean: patch bare areas in your yard with native grasses to prevent erosion, sweep sidewalks and driveways instead of hosing them down, and use a funnel when you fill your lawnmower. The pollution that flows from your yard into local streams can have a harmful impact on the environment.
- 3) Let your yard get a little messy! Leave snags for nesting places and stack downed tree limbs to create a brush pile, which is a great source of cover for birds during bad weather.
- 4) Attract hummingbirds with sugar water, made by combining four parts hot water to one part white sugar, boiled for one to two minutes. Never use honey, artificial sweeteners, or food coloring. Clean humming bird feeders with a solution of one part white vinegar to four part water once a week.
- 5) Make your windows visible, to birds to prevent collisions. Put up screens, close drapes and blinds when you leave the house, or stick multiple decals on the glass (decals need to be no more than two to four inches apart to be effective).

Find many more ideas at AudubonAtHome.org

PROGRAMS

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

Thursday, September 22, 2016

Mike Matherly

"Nature's Ambassadors: The Birds of the San Diego Garden"

This fast-paced program illustrates the most common birds in a typical Southern California garden and how to keep them there to add song, color, and animation to your flowered slice of heaven. Audiences will learn their names and how to identify them. Some of the best bird photography in Southern California is the highlight of the show, along with natural history explanations of why each bird is special and why it is drawn to your home. Like an old friend, who is the most faithful bird to visit your garden each day of its life? Which birds only visit seasonally, from far away as the Arctic and Central America? Who's the most fearless, at the top of the pecking order? Which relentless hunter uses your greenery to maximize stealth and chances for an easy meal?

This is an informative and entertaining glimpse at a world we often can't see because of the trees (and flowers and shrubs and ...). Mike is a retired professional geographer, working for over 35 years at Grossmont College, where he taught in the Earth Sciences Department specializing in urban growth and resource issues. He has been a birder and bird photographer since 1996, when he discovered that the search for birds gets you to some of the wildest places on earth.

Thursday, October 27

Neil Solomon

"The Birds of Belize"

From wetlands to lowland jungle to low-lying mountains, Belize provides a variety of habitats for almost 600 bird species. Although most of the species are tropical birds, many are northern birds that winter in Southern Mexico and Belize. Neil would like to share his experiences traveling through Belize and of course present images of many birds in the various habitats. Neil has been photographing birds for the past sixteen years or so. He is a long time resident of San Diego and a member of the Photo Naturalists Camera Club. Neil enjoys photographing birds wherever he can find them but particularly enjoys traveling to out-of-the-way places. This is Neil's eighth PAS presentation, and like his previous programs, you can count on it being very interesting and informative.

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.

Please Note: Summer birding can be very warm so be sure to bring sunscreen and sufficient water on walks.

Saturday, September 3, 8:00 am

Kit Carson Park

Escondido

(1150-C1) Rating: 1

From I-15 in Escondido, exit east on Via Rancho Parkway and drive about one mile northeast on Bear Valley Road to the Park Road entrance at the stoplight. Turn left, and proceed on Park Road about ¾ mile to the Amphitheater parking lot on the right. Woodland, riparian, and open-area habitats will usually get us a nice list of resident birds. Expect warm weather.

Leader: Jeff Ebright

858-484-3932

Saturday, September 10, 8:00 am.

Oak Hill Memorial Park (New Summer Location)

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. Expect warm weather

Leader: Jim Beckman

858-205-2819

Saturday, September 17, 8:00 am.

Batiquitos Lagoon

Carlsbad

(1127-A7) Rating: 1-2

From I-5 in Carlsbad, exit east on Poinsettia Lane. Turn right on Batiquitos Drive, drive about ½ mile to Gabbiano Lane, turn right and continue to the end. We will look for ducks, waterfowl, and riparian birds. Expect warm weather.

Leader: Michael Beeve

290-247-5237

Saturday, September 24, 8:00 am.

Kumeyaay Lake

Mission Trails Regional Park,
Santee

(1230-G6) Rating: 2

From North County, take I-15 south to CA-52 east. Take exit 13 (Mast Boulevard) and turn left on to Mast. Take the first right onto West Hills Pkwy. Take another right onto Mission Gorge Road and then make a very slight right onto Father Junipero Serra Trail. At the 4-way stop sign, make a right onto Bushy Hill Drive, and turn right

just past the campground entry kiosk into the free Day Use parking area. Expect warm weather.

Leader: Jim Beckman

858-205-2819

Saturday, October 1, 8:00 am.

Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve & Huntington Central Park

Huntington Beach, Orange County

(O.C. 857-C3) Rating: 1-2

Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve is the largest coastal salt marsh preserve in the Los Angeles/Orange County metropolitan region. Its 300 acres are a vital oasis for resident shorebirds and millions of migrating birds traveling between the Arctic and South America along the Pacific Flyway. At Huntington Central Park we will see locals and possibly vagrant migrants. We will bird at the Reserve first and then drive to Huntington Central Park.

Directions: Take I-5 north past San Juan Capistrano. Continue on I-5 to I-405. Take I-405 north (towards Long Beach). Exit on Warner Avenue West. Continue west approximately 6 miles to Pacific Coast Highway. Turn left (south) and drive about 1 mile (making a U-turn) to the Reserve parking lot on the east side of Pacific Coast Highway. It's about 70 miles from Oceanside and should take about 75 minutes. Meet at the boardwalk entrance.

VERY IMPORTANT: Arrive extra early for the best parking spots. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy at the Huntington Central Park picnic tables.

Leader: Sally Sanderson vcwillow@aol.com

760-749-6995

Saturday, October 8, 8:00 am.

Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary

Oceanside

(1066-F7) Rating: 2

From Highway 78 west, exit north on El Camino Real and continue to Douglas Drive. From I-5 north exit east on Highway 76 and continue to the Douglas Drive exit. Take Douglas Drive north approximately 1 mile and turn left on North River Road. Continue west on North River Road to the entrance gate at the end. NOTE: Greg has again offered to have the gate open at 7:30 am for Early Birds and leave it open until 8:45 to accommodate latecomers. From the gate proceed straight ahead on the less traveled road to the Sanctuary. Disregard the "No Trespassing" Signs. For those interested in lunch, we will be dining at "The Pitstop", located beside the police station, at 3825 Mission Avenue, Oceanside 92058, just a couple of blocks west of Douglas Drive. It's loaded with 50s atmosphere, automobile memorabilia, and serves at least twenty different styles of burgers, all at reasonable prices.

Leader: Doug Walkley

310-387-8190

Saturday, October 15, 8:00 am.

Lake Hodges

Del Dios

(1149-E2) Rating: 2

From I-15 in Escondido exit at Via Rancho Parkway and drive west to Lake Drive. Turn left and drive about 1/2 mile. Meet at Del Dios Park across the street from the Country Store. We should see waterfowl, shorebirds and a whole host of local resident birds

Leader: Hal Benham
858-679-7904

Saturday, October 22, 8:00 am.

La Jolla Coastline

La Jolla

(1227-E6) Rating: 1

From Highway 52 driving west exit at La Jolla Boulevard West (formerly Ardath Road). Continue on this road, which will merge with Torrey Pines Road for about 3/4 mile, then turn right on Prospect. Continue on Prospect to Coast Boulevard Meet on the ocean-side in front of the Bridge Club and restrooms. Parking is all along Coast Boulevard and adjacent residential streets. **Arrive extra early for the best parking spots.** Park at the first available parking space located. We will be looking for shorebirds, gulls, and seabirds.

Leader: Jack Friery
619-218-7342

Saturday, October 29, 8:00 am.

Mission Bay Flood Control Channel & Famosa Slough

San Diego

(1268-C4) Rating: 1

Take I-15 south to I-8. Go west on I-8 and exit north on I-5. Take the first off-ramp, Sea World Drive west to South Shores Park Drive (stop light). Turn left and proceed to our meeting place along the frontage road adjacent to the Flood Control Channel. We will be looking for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds in the channel and bay areas and then drive to near-by Famosa Slough.

Leader: Jeff Ebright
858-484-3932

Saturday, November 5, 8:30 am.

(NOTE: New Fall/Winter Start Time)

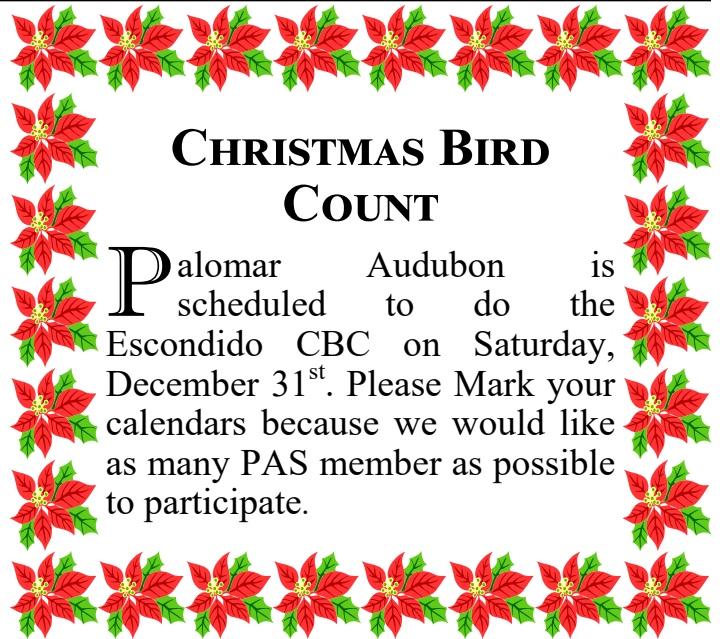
Daley Ranch

Escondido

(1110-C3) Rating: 2-3

From I-15 in Escondido exit at El Norte Parkway and drive east approximately 3 miles. Look for the “Daley Ranch” sign and turn left (north) on La Honda Drive. Continue up the hill toward Dixon Lake and on to the Daley Ranch free parking area on your left. Meet at the trail-head kiosk.

Leader: Tom Trowbridge
760-743-1052



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Palomar Audubon is scheduled to do the Escondido CBC on Saturday, December 31st. Please Mark your calendars because we would like as many PAS member as possible to participate.

THE SECRET SUPERPOWER OF BIRDS, REVEALED

Researchers have figured out how some species of birds deploy UV vision.



Yes, rainbows are glorious—but from a bird's perspective, they're even more intense. Many avian species have the ability to see a brighter version of the world, filled with a whole range of colors that we literally can't imagine. While scientists have long known that birds like Zebra and House Finches are capable of ultraviolet (UV) vision, they haven't entirely understood how.

A new study, published earlier this month, sheds a little more light on this ability. Researchers from the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have identified the features that enable, and even correct, birds' super-sensory powers: a combination of self-calibrating cone cells and metabolically altered pigments.

First, let's recap the basic anatomy. In both birds and humans, there's a thin lining of tissue in the back of the eye called the retina, which allows the brain to receive and process images. The human retina is a mosaic of three

SUPERPOWER, from Page 5

different kinds of photoreceptors, also known as cones that are named for the colors of light they absorb: red, green, and blue. Avians have an extra, UV-sensitive cone that unlocks a huge spectrum of light hidden to human eyes. All birds have this fourth “violet” cone - but they’re split into those that can see UV wavelengths and those that have “violet vision.” No species can do both.

Birds with UV vision boast a number of advantages. They’re better at foraging for food and are able to spot waxy fruits and berries that reflect UV light. They’re also better at wooing mates. The plumage of some UV-sensitive species—European Starlings, Blue Grosbeaks, and American Goldfinches, to name a few, reflect UV light differently in males than in females, helping the birds distinguish between the sexes. On the other hand, nocturnal birds such as owls retain violet vision because there’s no need to see additional colors at night.

The spectrum of light visible to the human eye includes wavelengths between 400 and 700 nanometers (nm). This covers the longer wavelengths of red (620 to 750 nm), to the shorter blue (450 to 496 nm), to the even shorter violet (380 to 450 nm). Humans aren’t able to see to the very ends of the spectrum, but birds with violet vision can, making them more able to discriminate shades of violet light. Meanwhile, UV light has even shorter wavelengths, measuring from 355 to 380 nm. Birds that can detect UV have one weakness: They have a “blind spot” that leaves them far less sensitive to light in the violet range, making it difficult for them to discern colors that fall between UV and blue. This is a major disadvantage, given how strongly birds depend on their capacity of sight, says Matthew Toomey, the paper’s lead author and a postdoctoral fellow at the Washington School of Medicine.

But the new analysis found that birds solve this problem through a number of different adaptations. To figure out how they compensate for the blind spot, the researchers created computational models of avian vision, using data collected from previous studies on 21 violet-sensitive species and 24 UV-sensitive species. They then homed in on light-filtering pigments called carotenoids, which color birds’ feathers and eyes, and classified them as either violet- or UV-sensitive in each species. These stats were plugged into a model to predict how pigments affect the number of colors birds actually see.

The researchers found that species with UV vision can shift the range of their so-called blue cones to detect the shorter wavelengths of the blind spot. The violet cones also move in sync, revealing a surprisingly coordinated relationship between the two structures. “This finding is exciting because it shows this trait of UV vision relies on a complex set of adaptations, not just shifting the sensitivity of one cone,” Toomey says.

To toggle the wavelengths of their blue and violet cones, birds rely on a specialized organelle called a cone oil droplet. These droplets are pigmented with carotenoids that are picked up from food; depending on how they decide to metabolize their carotenoids, avians can absorb

longer or shorter wavelengths. Think of them like that let birds see the world in colors of their choosing.

UV vision does come at a cost though. “One of the reasons we think we see this variation among bird species is that UV light is damaging to the retina,” Toomey says. Plus, as the wavelengths moves through various media, they can end up with chromatic aberrations, leading to distorted or fuzzy images. Toomey says this pitfall might explain why most UV-enabled birds have small eyes - the bigger the surface, the more room for error.

Eventually, Toomey wants to identify the enzymes that are responsible for generating the “filters.” From his point of view, avian eyesight is the perfect model to answer the fundamental questions of evolution. His vision for the field is looking bright - even if he’s only got three cones.

EXTINCTION CAUSED BY MAN

Elizabeth Kolbert (author of THE SIXTH EXTINCTION) postulates, along with others*, that we are entering a period of mass extinction for our fauna (the sixth extinction). The five prior mass extinctions occurred in prehistory, the last (famous for the extinction of the dinosaurs) occurred more than 60 million years ago. The current period, which may date back 500 years, has the distinction of being the only period to occur during the existence of Homo sapiens.

Whether or not the current period will be a major mass extinction, the relationship between Man and the extinction of specific species appear very close, and obvious in some cases. In the latter category is the Passenger Pigeon which was reputed to once be the most commonly occurring bird in North America before hunting rendered it extinct in the early 20th century. The Great Auk suffered the same fate in the early 1800’s. The Great Auk was a large flightless bird that in its heyday ranged over Scandinavia and beyond. Unfortunately, the bird was easy to catch and apparently tasty. With the coming of human settlers its range was reduced to a few rocky outcroppings in the North Atlantic. When mariners located these sites, the Auk was a goner. The last one was shot near Iceland in 1821.

The lack of a written record makes man’s relationship to other extinctions less clear, however, human settlement timelines and the lack of other plausible explanations make humans suspect. The Moa of New Zealand (more large flightless birds) were known to have been hunted by New Zealand’s native people (the Maori), and were probably extinct by the time Europeans arrived.

Today, large animals, or mega-fauna, are threatened on many fronts by human activity. Elephants and rhinos are hunted for their tusks and horns as well as suffer habitat loss. Large cats, apes, and bears are also losing habitat in many parts of the world and continue to be preyed upon by humans. Protective breeding programs and large reserves may be slowing the loss of some, but survival in the wild remains uncertain for others.

In addition to these negative direct interactions between humans and animal species, there is the role of human activity in climate change. This is a very serious worldwide threat that the Audubon Society and other groups are actively studying. Hopefully, we will be able to mitigate the effects of climate change and protect vulnerable species over time. In doing this we should not lose sight of other extinction threats. These include the continued exploitation and destruction of mega-fauna, the loss of natural habitats, and the introduction of alien species that threaten native plants and animals. Palomar Audubon has a distinguished history in fighting for habitat preservation in San Diego County. These include the Society's role in land purchases that are now part of the San Dieguito River Park. Our Board of Directors remains committed to continuing this fight. We also welcome input from our membership as to where else we can direct our conservation efforts.

*Dirzo, Rudolfo, et.al. "Defaunation in the Anthropocene" *Science*: vol. 345, 401-406 (2014)

THE RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT (HR 5650)



Several states have identified the Short-eared Owl as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need that would be helped by the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. (Photo: Duke Coonrad/

Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives that would provide \$1.3 billion in funding for states to help proactively conserve and recover at-risk birds and other wildlife throughout the nation.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (HR 5650), introduced by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Don Young (R-AK) would support state efforts to implement wildlife conservation plans. All fifty states and the District of Columbia have developed State Wildlife Action Plans, but current funding is far from sufficient to meet the needs of imperiled birds and wildlife.

Last year, representatives from conservation groups including Audubon, along with sportsmen groups, businesses, and former elected officials, came together to discuss solutions for this urgent problem, by forming the

Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources. In a report released in March, the panel recommended a funding level of \$1.3 billion to address the needs of wildlife across the country by effectively implementing the state plans. In recent years, state plans have been funded through a federal grant program at about \$60 million in total per year. The funding would come from existing federal revenue derived from mineral and energy development that would otherwise go to the U.S. Treasury. This model is similar to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, so that if resources are depleted through development, habitat and wildlife can be conserved in return.

The bill from Reps. Young and Dingell directs states to help their designated Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Conserving species before they reach critical levels is more effective, and more cost-efficient, and could help hundreds of species of birds throughout the country. Since 2002, more than one-third of federal funds to implement state wildlife plans have supported bird conservation.

Look out for an opportunity to take action on this important legislation with Audubon in the coming weeks.

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

Heidi Mar-Arele
Karen Matthews
Barbara Raab

**AND WE APPRECIATE OUR
DONORS VERY MUCH!**

Joyce Anderson
Arne and Sunny Christiansen
Karen Matthews
Dale Silimperi

Hey, All You Birders!

If you have Internet access and haven't yet visited the PAS website, www.palomaraudubon.org, you are missing out on some FREE, WHOLESOME FUN! (Cain't hardly git none o' that online NO HOW no more!!)

For example, if you are now reading a hard copy of this issue of Band Tales you probably think all those grey boxes are boring. WELL, visit us online and you just might be pleasantly surprised! I kid you not, "it's a beautiful thang when y'all see it in COLOR!"

Signed, yer friendly editor

Band Tales

September-October, 2016

The *Band 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.



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BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

Thursday, September 1st
Thursday, October 6th
7:00 p.m. at the Remington Club
16916 Hierba Drive
Rancho Bernardo

*Note: All Palomar Audubon Society members are welcome
 at all Chapter Board meetings.*

QUICK CALENDAR

- September 1** Board Meeting
- September 3** Kit Carson Park Walk
- September 10** Oak Hill Memorial Park Walk (New Summer Location)
- September 17** Bataquitos Lagoon Walk
- September 22** General Meeting: "The Birds of the San Diego Garden"
- September 24** Kumeyaay Lake Walk
- October 1** Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve & Huntington Central Park Walk
- October 6** Board Meeting
- October 8** Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk
- October 15** Lake Hodges Walk
- October 20** General Meeting: "The Birds of Belize"
- October 22** La Jolla Coastline Walk
- October 29** Mission Bay Flood Control Channel & Famosa Slough Walk
- November 5** Daley Ranch Walk