



Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society
A Chapter of the
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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September-October
2017

Editor
Arne Christiansen

ESCONDIDO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT WILL BE ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2017

Each year between December 14th and January 5th, thousands of birders and nature enthusiasts participate in one or more of the 2000+ Christmas Bird Counts held annually in the United States, Canada, and many other Western Hemisphere countries. This year will mark the 118th year for this event.

This holiday season please join with the other birders for this important citizen science effort sponsored by the National Audubon Society. The one-day bird counts provide valuable data about the number of bird species and numbers of each species occurring within a set geographical area.

Palomar Audubon Society would like to extend an invitation to all birders to participate in the annual Escondido Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 30, 2017.

The count circle incorporates mostly rural areas near Escondido, Valley Center, and Ramona. Fantastic birding skills are not a requirement – an extra pair of eyes is always helpful.

The after-birding compilation meeting will be held in the early afternoon at Kit Carson Park's covered picnic shelter. The highlight of the day will be the deli-style lunch provided, courtesy of Palomar Audubon Society.

Please check your next Band Tales newsletter (Nov/Dec) for sign-up details.

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On your first visit to AmazonSmile (<http://smile.amazon.com>), you need to select a charitable

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BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Penny Hernandez, PAS President

One would think after all these years, writing the President's letter would have become easier. Well, it hasn't!

I hope you all have had a great summer. I follow a few of you on Facebook. Sandy and Walt Bates have been all over the U.S.A. Doug Nail has been all over the world. Dianne and Hal Benham have been at the beach with their grandchildren. What have you done? Why not share with us by sending an email to the Editor, just a few words about the best places to visit, the best birding spots, the best deals.



A project we started working on this summer was "Save a 1,000 acres". If you have any questions about location, or who The Escondido Creek Conservancy is, or anything else regarding this endeavor please speak with Richard Fowler, our Conservation Chair. This project will go through the end of the year. If you give \$100 PAS matches with a \$100 donation.

Remember we start meetings again in September, no meetings in November or December. Of course our weekly walks continue all year. Hopefully I will be able to join in on the field trips again.

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

GIVE A HOOT

In 2014 the Audubon Society released its study projecting the fate of 588 species of North American birds over the coming decades. Of these, 126 species were at risk of severe decline of habitat by 2050 (endangered) and another 188 species will suffer a similar decline of habitat by 2080(threatened) if global climate change continues on its current trajectory. Numerous extinctions are possible during this time frame. The species data was based on Christmas and breeding counts as well as the habitats needed for the individual specie.

Of the 314 species at risk, 170 are resident or migrant species regularly seen in California. They include shore birds such as the Clark's, Western, Eared, and Horned Grebe as well as the American White Pelican, Brown Pelican, and Western Gull. The Golden and Bald Eagle are both endangered as is the Allen Hummingbird, Hutton's Vireo, and Burrowing Owl.

A critical step in ameliorating the threat to species is the protection of core habitats. In arid Southern California this means protecting coastal habitats as well as riparian habitats, whether it is our few running streams, inland ponds, or the Salton Sea. This is not to ignore species, such as the California Gnatcatcher, that has lost habitat because of development. Though it did not make the list, it remains threatened.

This year The Palomar Audubon Club's Board of Directors committed to supporting The Escondido Creek Conservancy's "Save 1000 Acres" Campaign. This project will protect the Escondido Creek watershed from north of Escondido almost all the way to Lake Wolford. You have already received a mailing regarding this effort and you now have a chance to make a difference. If you give directly to TECC, tell them you are a member of Palomar Audubon and PAS will match your contribution. The campaign will continue through December 2017. Remember to "give a hoot" and contribute what you can.



Richard



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 6:30 pm with the meeting and program getting under way promptly at 7:00 pm.

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Rustom Jamadar

“Birds of India – Western and Southern Regions”

During January & February of this year, PAS member Rustom Jamadar, traveled to India to visit friends and family. While there he birded in Western India, including the Sasan-Gir National Park, the sanctuary for the last remaining Asiatic Lions. He also birded in Southern India, including the Nilgiri Hills. He found the birding there to be very rewarding (nearly 200 species), so he will share photos from those trips and will be happy to answer questions about birding in India.

Rustom grew up in India (although, we're not sure he has ever grown up). After completing his undergraduate studies in Electrical Engineering, he came to the USA for graduate studies. While at the University of Texas at Arlington, he was introduced to birding, and was fortunate to accompany the Biology class on birding trips to the Rio Grande Valley. He has maintained an interest in birds and birding ever since. He has been a member of the National Audubon Society and a Life Member of the Bombay Natural History Society for over 35 years. Over the past 5 years, Rustom has joined the local chapters - San Diego, Palomar, and Buena Vista and participates in the weekend field trips. He has also birded in Trinidad, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador. When on business trips, Rustom pens accounts of his travel experiences and shares them with family and friends.

Thursday, October 26 2017

Trysten Loeffke

“My Summer Camp at Hog Island, Maine”

Palomar Audubon Society has a multifaceted mission, including a community outreach program with several special initiatives. One of these initiatives is our youth scholarship program. In June, we provided a 100% scholarship award for a week-long educational teenager birding camp conducted by the National Audubon Society at Hog Island, Maine. The recipient of this Young Birder scholarship was Trysten Loeffke. The week was filled with birding, seabird research, bird banding, instructional lectures, and a great family atmosphere. He also learned about the famous Project Puffin, and got to see the actual Puffins in the field. Trysten is excited to get to tell everyone about the camp, and how these camps aren't just for teens, but about all of the adult programs they offer that PAS members could attend.

Trysten is 17 years old and has been an active member of PAS since age 11. Trysten is an excellent birder and is very active on eBird. He is looking forward to sharing his good time and great photos with the generous members of PAS who support our scholarship programs!

Mark your calendars. Don't miss this one!

promotions that increase the donation amount on one or more products or services or provide for additional donations to charitable organizations. Special terms and restrictions may apply. Please see the relevant promotion for complete details.

Can I receive a tax deduction for amounts donated from my purchases on AmazonSmile?

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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 2, 8:00 am.

Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Rancho Peñasquitos

(1189-C7) Rating: 2

We will meet at the Rancho de los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House parking lot and explore trails through grasslands and riparian woodland. Take I-15 and exit at Mercy Road going west. Turn right onto Black Mountain Road and drive a short distance to Canyonside Park Drive (first stop light). Turn left and continue west to the Adobe Ranch House parking lot. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Jeff Ebricht

858-484-3932

Saturday, September 9, 8:00 am.

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. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Jim Beckman

858-205-2819

Saturday, September 16, 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: Sally Sanderson vcwillow@aol.com

760-749-6995 Saturday, September 23, 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 Blvd.) 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, September 30, 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 ½ 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. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Hal Benham

858-679-7904

Saturday, October 7, 8:00 a.m.

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 shall 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 14, 8:00 am.

La Jolla Coastline

La Jolla

(1227-E6) Rating: 1

From Hwy 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 ¾ 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 21, 8:00 am.
Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary
 Oceanside

(1066-F7) Rating: 2

From Hwy 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 50's atmosphere, automobile memorabilia, and serves at least twenty different styles of sandwiches, all at reasonable prices.**

Leader: Doug Walkley
 310-387-8190

Saturday, October 28, 8:00 am.
San Diego River Estuary & 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 shall be looking for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds in the channel and bay areas and then drive to nearby Famosa Slough.

Leader: Jeff Ebright
 858-484-3932

Saturday, November 4, 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



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

**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 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

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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.



For Immediate Release, August 11, 2017

Contact: Michael Robinson, (575) 313-7017,
michaelr@biologicaldiversity.org

New Study Shows Lesser Prairie Chicken Decline Continues

Endangered Species Protection Would Buffer Rare Birds Against Climate Change, Habitat Loss

SILVER CITY, N.M.— A study released today by the U.S. Geological Survey found that lesser prairie chickens — rare grasslands dancing birds — continue to decline and will be threatened with extinction as climate change worsens and more habitat is lost. The study was part of a review of the species for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The USGS study is the first to incorporate the effects of global warming on lesser prairie chicken survival. The bird has already declined to just 1 percent of its historic abundance, living in isolated grasslands in eastern New Mexico, southeastern Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and the Texas panhandle. The study’s authors found that incorporating higher temperatures and lower precipitation into future models for this species of grouse shows lower survival rates — and for some populations, near-term extinction.

“This is a blinking red light on the dashboard warning us emergency action is needed to save these birds,” Michael Robinson, conservation advocate at the Center for Biological Diversity. “Prairie chickens should be granted endangered species protection immediately.”

Lesser prairie chickens are celebrated for their unique, colorful springtime courtship rituals. But habitat destruction has eliminated almost all the birds and confined the survivors to tiny portions of their original habitat.

To try heading off Endangered Species Act protections for the bird, the five states where they live created a range-wide plan for conserving the prairie chicken. But in 2014 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acknowledged that the voluntary plan failed to reduce threats to the lesser prairie chicken and placed it on the “threatened” species list.

The following year, however, through litigation, oil and gas interests and counties in New Mexico induced the Service to delist the prairie chicken and to reconsider the voluntary plan. Yet despite the voluntary plan, habitat destruction continues apace, isolating the birds in smaller populations as their numbers continue to drop. Global warming will make that worse, suggesting that “threatened” status is no longer sufficient and that “endangered” would be a more apt classification.

“Scientists have now made clear that we’ll have to pull out all the stops to save the lesser prairie chicken from extinction,” said Robinson. “It’s time to use the Endangered Species Act to halt habitat loss for this beautiful bird and past time to dramatically reduce the emissions that are cooking us and the prairie chicken



Lesser Prairie Chicken

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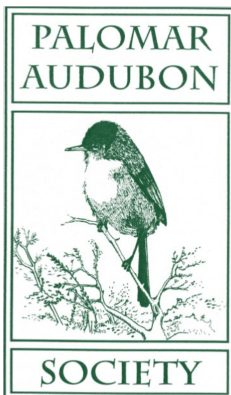
***AND WE
APPRECIATE OUR
DONORS VERY
MUCH!***

Bill and Myrna
Eastwood
Sam and Sandy Farrow
James Hall
Teri Nitta
Cheryl Simon

Band Tales

September-October, 2017

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BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

Thursday, September 7th

Thursday, October 5th

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

<i>September</i>	<i>2</i>	Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Walk
<i>September</i>	<i>7</i>	Board Meeting
<i>September</i>	<i>9</i>	Oak Hill Memorial Park Walk
<i>September</i>	<i>16</i>	Bataquitos Lagoon Walk
<i>September</i>	<i>23</i>	Kumeyaay Lake Walk
<i>September</i>	<i>28</i>	General Meeting: "Birds of India – Western and Southern Regions"
<i>September</i>	<i>30</i>	Lake Hodges Walk
<i>October</i>	<i>5</i>	Board Meeting
<i>October</i>	<i>7</i>	Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve & Huntington Central Park Walk
<i>October</i>	<i>14</i>	La Jolla Coastline Walk
<i>October</i>	<i>21</i>	Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk
<i>October</i>	<i>26</i>	General Meeting: "My Summer Camp at Hog Island, Maine"
<i>October</i>	<i>28</i>	San Diego Estuary & Famosa Slough Walk
<i>November</i>	<i>4</i>	Daley Ranch Walk