



Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society
A Chapter of the
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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2020

Editors
Jill & Fred Weber



Welcome Summer! We hope everyone can get out and enjoy our pleasant California weather as some of the Covid restrictions begin to loosen. Read about this beautiful Coastal Cactus Wren in Ranger Dave's article beginning on page 2.

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A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Penny Hernandez, President

Will this ever be over?? Actually being in quarantine has not been much different than my normal retired life, sad! I have been working on my back yard and even clearing out stuff inside.

Besides the scrap books and extra PAS event



pictures I've found, I also found all kinds of newspaper articles on birds, flowers, nature, etc., that I have saved. One I found interesting was an article from February 2006. It was in the San Diego Tribune, and was about CROWS. Besides others, Phil Unitt, from the Natural History

Museum, was interviewed. Phil said that until 1985 crows were never seen in central San Diego, and only small flocks in the back county. From 1985 to 2005 the count per the Escondido Christmas bird count, went from 571 to 2194. On 12/28/2019, we had 855 crows on the Escondido count, per Ken Weaver count organizer. People in the Rancho Bernardo at the time of this article, were not happy with the crows. Every evening the crows would, at dusk, start staging in their yards, before flying off to roost at Lake Hodges. One of our members, Dick Barber, who was a birder for 60 years, loved to watch the crows. To quote Dick "crows are less an annoyance, than fun creatures to observe." He also said "they're great scavengers – and they're downright obnoxious." I have to agree with Dick as far as the crows being obnoxious. In my area the crows are working on their second batch of babies. The babies are busy, starting as the sun comes up, squawking for food. It's amazing how loud they are. I also like watching the crows in large groups as they play with each other. Take time to watch them sometime. They dive, roll, and chase each other like little kids.

I was sorry that we had to cancel the picnic. Hopefully we will be back to normal come September. We will keep you informed when meetings and bird walks can start up again. Watch our website which is beautifully maintained by Jeff Ebright at palomaraudubon.org for all the latest news.

See you soon - Stay healthy and happy.

Penny

CONSERVATION NOTES

Ranger Dave, Conservation Chair

The finer points of conservation. Coastal Cactus Wren at Lake Hodges

No matter how many birds I have come across within the San Dieguito River Parks corridor the Cactus Wren is still by far my favorite! Maybe it's the seemingly inhospitable environment in which they live that has drawn me to this uniquely Southern California bird. Whatever it is the Cactus Wren of the San Dieguito River Park have been a delight to observe, take photos of and provide interpretation for over the last decade. Its story continues to unfold.



Recently the Cactus Wren have had a small boost in their numbers within the park and things are starting to look a little better for their future. Like most conservation stories this was not always the case. Cactus Wren depend on mature stands of cactus for their survival, these mature stands provide shelter from the heat of the day, foraging opportunities, nesting areas and protection from predators. Loss of habitat is a key factor in whether or not any given species will succeed in the future. This loss can take many forms, clearing of habitat for development, continuous drought or in the case of the San Dieguito River Park by wildfires.

In 2007 the San Dieguito River Park experienced the largest wildfire it had seen to date. Most of the coastal sage scrub habitat that included large stands of native prickly pear cactus that the wrens use to nest in were destroyed leaving only fragmented refuges. The Cactus Wren in this area were already seeing a gradual decline and the fire only helped to exacerbate the issues they faced.

Seeing these factors play out the SDRP started an initiative shortly after the 2007 fire to try and restore the Coastal Cactus Wren habitat that was burned. The project would focus to restoring the 67 acres of habitat around the Bernardo Mountain area of Lake Hodges.



(Continued from page 2)

At the time the project was started only 3 pairs of Cactus Wren were observed. Volunteer groups ranged from regular park volunteers, scout groups, high school students, local corporation volunteer programs and many many others. Hundreds of park staff and volunteer hours along with many colorful words given after been poked several times have resulted in the planting of around 6,500 cacti on the slopes of Bernardo Mountain since that time.

In another effort to try an address the fact that these Wren populations were literally living on islands of habitat an additional plan was developed by the SDRP in 2015 (Coastal Cactus Wren Action Plan) to establish a general strategy and framework for managing the remaining Coastal Cactus Wren on Bernardo Mountain. One primary element of the plan was to establish cactus scrub habitat in the Bernardo Bay Natural Area directly across the lake from Bernardo Mountain. At this time in partnership with the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department and the San Diego Zoo Global Institute for Conservation Research with the help of even more volunteers planted an additional 4,350 cacti in that area bringing the total cacti planted to help facilitate the survival of the Coastal Cactus Wren at Lake Hodges to around 10,850. Hopefully your beginning to see those fine points now.

While the newer habitat in Bernardo Bay is still a number of years away from providing a viable nesting habitat it is hoped that once established birds from the existing Bernardo Mountain habitat will make the short journey across and establish new nesting sites.

The park will continue our efforts going forward into this year in hopes of again recreating what was historically always there. This year researchers will look at how well the Bernardo Mountain Coastal Cactus Wren are doing in order to try and establish their needs moving towards the future. If you would like to join us in this conservation effort please feel free to contact me.



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

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THANK YOU

The response to the PAS mailing asking for donations has been terrific, especially considering the stifling Pandemic affecting all of our lives. So thank you to those who have mailed in a donation and a reminder to those who have not. As you know, these donations are used to support only local birding, education and conservation activities sponsored by Palomar Audubon Society. Please mail your donation to PAS at P.O. Box 2483, Escondido, CA 92033 and mark your check "donation." **Stay safe and good birding!**

Palomar Audubon Society Chapter-only Membership

Mail your application to:

**Palomar Audubon Society
P. O. Box 2483
Escondido, CA 92033-2483**

Membership in the Palomar Audubon Society includes a subscription to **Band Tales**, Palomar Audubon's bimonthly newsletter, and an invitation to our monthly programs and weekly field trips.

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*100% of Chapter Membership dues supports
projects locally.*



Global Big Day2020: Birding's biggest team

By Team eBird



Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens* © Melissa James Macaulay Library eBird

Birds always give us an opportunity to keep looking up. In every corner of the world, on every day of the year, birds are migrating, building nests, raising young, and inspiring people everywhere. On May 9th more than 50,000 people around the globe stood up, scanned the skies, watched their gardens, and strolled through their local patch to take pleasure in the joy of birds and birding. This is Global Big Day.

This year's Global Big Day brought more birders together virtually in a single day than ever before in history—more than 50,000 people spent part of the day watching birds and sharing what they saw with eBird and the world—32% more than Global Big Day 2019! This is a new world record for a single day of birding. What's even more amazing is that almost 9,000 people joined eBird for the first time to participate in Global Big Day. Welcome to Team eBird, we couldn't be more excited to have you as a part of the global team.

In addition to the biggest number of birders joining together, we also broke another world record—the most information collected on biodiversity in a single day: eBirders around the world submitted a staggering 120,000 checklists in a single day! These checklists contain more than 2.1 million observations of birds in a single calendar day. Global Big Day 2020 collected more information on birds than the first 2.5 years of eBird's existence!

Global Big Day by the Numbers

50,072 people went birding

120,000 checklists submitted

6,479 species recorded

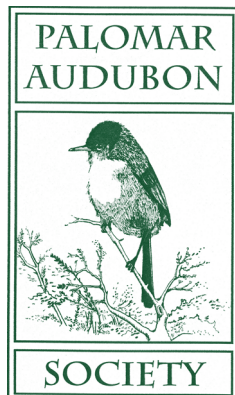
62,296 photos were shared with the Macaulay Library

1,922 audio recordings were shared with the Macaulay Library

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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 Palomar Audubon Society Chapter membership.



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Board of Director's Meeting

No Meetings for July- August

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

**NO MEETINGS OR WALKS
 SCHEDULED AT THIS TIME DUE TO
 COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS.**