



Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society
A Chapter of the
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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March-April
2022

Editors
Jill & Fred Weber



Western Tanager photo By Aedyn Loeffke

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A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Penny Hernandez, President

I am so glad things are starting to get back to normal.

Sounds like the Saturday walks have been well attended and have seen lots of birds. I'm having a great time with the birds at Hide Away Lake. Every



day the 13 Canada Geese walk themselves down the middle of the road from the lake to the grassy area where there are acorns and bugs to eat. You don't want to be on that road if you are in a hurry. We have had Mallards, Wigeon, Shovelers, Ruddy, Bufflehead, and Ring-necked. I have also seen White-

Faced Ibis, plus many other species. I am also hoping things continue to improve so that we can get back to our meetings. I really miss seeing everyone. I am also going to miss Jill and Fred Weber. They are moving soon, but will continue to be members. Distance means they won't be coming on field trips or attending meetings, but we hope to see them occasionally.

Anyone want to take on the newsletter and /or bring goodies to the meetings? The Weber's have been an important part of our chapter and I thank them for their hard work. Well, back to planning my trip to Alaska. I

am planning on taking my son, David, on what will probably be the last Mother/ Son only vacation we will have. Besides fishing I am hoping for lots of wild life viewing, as well as lots of good sea food. Stay healthy and enjoy seeing as many species as you can.

P.S. Has anyone else gone to see the Rock Garden in Encinitas? What a wonderful experience. Wonderful plants along with over 7000 painted rocks. It's on the corner of 2nd and B street.

Penny



CONSERVATION NOTES

Trysten Loeffke

There is power in coming together. Let's think about that statement for a moment. There is a power that comes with unity. That power helps not only our causes but also us as individuals. Last month we started our weekly field trips again. At the time of writing this, I have just returned from my first PAS field trip in over two years.

What a long time it has been! It was wonderful to be back together, enjoying the birds and each other's company again. There were many old familiar faces that have been with us for decades and there were some brand new faces that I have never seen



before, but we all had something in common. We were coming together to bird.

When we meet together and come together, things seem clearer and more purposeful. The way things are accomplished is by people coming together and sharing a vision. When we come together, we can accomplish incredible things.

A wonderful example of this comes from across the globe, where I lived for a time, in Ireland. A neighborhood came together for the purpose of bringing nature back to their community. They began with the alleyway that lay between their two rows of houses. What was once a dingy back alley, full of dumped trash and frequented by less-than-savory characters, has been transformed into a brilliantly colored bonanza of life. Butterflies and bumblebees buzz to and fro, vibrantly colored wildflowers spring forth, and birds sing there once again. All of this was achieved by people coming together. Each resident of what has now become known as Wildflower Alley had their own unique interpretation that they expressed in their little section of the project, but

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Avian Obsession

I recently read an article in the August-September issue of National Wildlife magazine entitled "Avian Obsession." The author Jacqueline Gray Miller says that whether a person is a novice birder or a hard core, advanced birder, we all have a story to tell about the one bird that first caused us to fly into "Avian Obsession." She calls these our "Spark Birds." I had never considered this but I believe she may be right. She included 6 fun stories about people she had interviewed about their "Spark" bird and I thought it might be fun to include stories like this from our members in our Newsletter. My story follows.

More than 30 years ago my sister Penny Hernandez and I used to meet at Kit Carson Park in Escondido to walk for exercise before work each morning. We were a lot younger then and walked at a decent clip and over a period of time expanded our walk to include the entire perimeter of the park until one day we noticed a lot of trash which seemed to have blown into one of the ponds that borders the shopping mall. It looked like white plastic bags some of which were lodged in the trees above the pond. The next day we brought binoculars to investigate further. It turns out the white plastic bags were (drum roll please) Black-crowned Night-Herons. There were 20-30 birds roosting in the trees and bushes near the pond. Months later I believe they relocated to Lake Hodges but we were hooked! We never again went walking without binoculars and the rewards were great. As most of you know, Kit Carson Park is a wonderful place for bird watching for migrating birds and year round residents including the Endangered California Gnatcatcher. So enjoy and bring your binoculars!

P.S. I hope some of you will tell us about your "Spark" bird by sending a write up to Jill and Fred Weber

At fred17hmr@gmail.com or
jillweber55@hotmail.com.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sunny



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

***Sharel Andrew
Edgar & Linda Canada
Richard Cuthbertson
Marion Flores
Steve Ellis
Ed & Jan Hall
Bert & Sharon Kersey
Maryann Khan
Peggy Kiefer
Heidi Marc-Aurele
Tsaiwei Olee
Janet Peyton
Leslie Ricketts
Eleanor Schubert
Gilbert Siegel & Teresa O'Malley***

AND WE APPRECIATE OUR DONORS VERY MUCH!

***Sharel Andrew
Joyce & Norman Buller
Sunny & Arne Christiansen
Marion Flores
Barbara Fowler
Karole Gustafson
Ed and Jan Hall
Eleanor Schubert
Gilbert Siegel & Teresa O'Malley***

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they were all doing it with a grand purpose in mind. This simple alleyway re-wilding project has become the archetype for a plethora of similar projects across the nation, all with the purpose of bringing back a little of the wild that we have lost. And how did they do it? By coming together and inviting and encouraging each other.

We, too, can accomplish our own local re-wilding successes. That could be as a community or it could just be in your own backyard. Whether you have endless acreage or you have nothing more than a balcony. It could take almost any form. You could start your own neighborhood re-wilding project, encourage your neighbors to have a wildlife-friendly yard, or simply invite your friends to one of our weekly bird walks. Large-scale conservation projects that required land and funding aren't always possible, but community conservation always is. If there is one thing that covid did, it was isolate us. It kept us apart from one another and kept us from coming together. Now we are back, and there's no stopping us. We will see you out there in the field!

**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.

☐ **New Member - \$20**

☐ **Renewal - \$20**

☐ **New Family Member - \$25** ☐ **Renewal - \$25**

(payable to Palomar Audubon Society)

☐ **Contribution** _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

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

SPECIES PROFILE

Western Tanager *(Piranga ludoviciana)*

By Aedyn Loeffe

When we think of spring, we often think of warmer weather, new leaves and flowers, baby birds, and of course migration! And one of our most colorful spring visitors is the Western Tanager.

Recently, a good number of Western Tanagers have begun overwintering here in Southern California, but Spring and Summer still remain the best time of year to see their flashy red heads, vibrant yellow bodies, and contrasting black wings. Unlike most of our familiar birds, such as House Finches, who obtain their red coloration from a group of pigments known as carotenoids that they obtain by eating plants and seeds, Western Tanagers are one of just a few birds that obtain their red coloration from a pigment called rhodoxanthin which they can only obtain by eating insects. The term Tanager is actually quite misleading, as the four regularly oc-



curing tanagers we have in the U.S. (Scarlet, Summer, Hepatic, and Western), as well as the rarer Flame-colored Tanager, aren't actually true tanagers at all! They are in the same family as our Cardinals and Grosbeaks and are known as the Piranga Tanagers. The True Tanagers is an incredibly diverse family of birds that live throughout the neotropics whose members range from

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the tiny Bananaquits and Honeycreepers to the robust Seedeaters and Saltators. If you ever want to see an extraordinary array of colors, look up the tropical tanagers. As you might suspect from their name, Western Tanagers are North America's most westerly tanager, but they also happen to be our most northerly Tanager as well, with their breeding range extending all the way up into the Northwest Territories in Canada. They are often found in small groups feeding on small fruits and berries, which, along with insects, are their favorite foods. Hopefully this migration season you can get out and enjoy seeing some of migrations' most colorful birds. And who knows, you may just find a rare one while you're at it!



WELCOME BACK BIRDERS!

February 2022 brought the first official PAS birding outings in two years! Participants were delighted to see so many old faces and several new ones as well.

February 6th found twenty-three birders at Guajome Regional Park. Led by Jeff Ebright, 62 species were recorded which is a new club record for this location. The closest a PAS group ever came to this was in 2014 when 57 species were spotted. Highlights were a Red-bellied Sapsucker and a Zone-tailed Hawk.

On February 12th Jim Beckman led a group of thirty-six birders around Oak Hill Memorial Park in Escondido which is always a favorite with our birders. It was a warm, pleasant day and 37 species were found. Highlights were a flock of Pine Siskins, an unexpected small flock of wild Turkeys and the always reliable sighting of the Great Horned Owl.

February 19th found a group of nineteen PAS birders, led again by Jim Beckman, at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. Reportedly, the weather was perfect and an amazing 74 bird species were spotted including a good amount of waterfowl and a nice mix of riparian and chaparral birds.

It is such a pleasure to be able to bird together again after so long. See the list of upcoming walks on pages 6&7 and plan on joining one soon!



FIELD TRIPS

Jim Beckman

Saturday, March 5, 8:00 am.
A Fallbrook Adventure!

**Live Oak County Park/Los Jilgueros Preserve
 Fallbrook**

(1028- C5) Rating: 1

Take I-15 north to the Fallbrook/E Mission Exit 51. Cross over the freeway and turn left on to Old Highway 395 located at the stoplight immediately after the I-15 South Freeway exit. Proceed 1 mile south to Reche Road. Turn right and proceed 2.2 miles up Reche Road to Live Oak County Park located immediately after Gird Road. Meet in the parking lot. There is a small parking fee at all SD County Parks, but free with a County Senior Parking Permit. Our target birds here are the Band-tailed Pigeons and Wood Ducks. Lewis's Woodpeckers have also been seen here at this time of the year. Afterwards, we travel to Los Jilgueros Preserve for winter riparian species. Continue up Reche Road until it dead-ends onto Old Stagecoach Road. Turn left and proceed until it dead-ends into S Mission Road. Turn right, proceed through the next traffic light and within 100 yards, turn right into Los Jilgueros Preserve.

Leader: Doug Walkley 310-387-8190

Saturday, March 12, 8:00 am.
**San Jacinto Wildlife Area
 Riverside County**

(RC 749-B4) Rating: 2

From San Diego County take I-15 north through Temecula and take the I-215. Continue north on the I-215. Exit at the Ramona Expressway right (east). Continue east to Lakeview (a small town) At the stoplight, turn left (north) on Davis Road. Proceed on the asphalt and gravel road for two miles to the SJWA headquarters parking lot on the right. From Escondido allow 75 minutes drive time. Bring a lunch. Always a PAS favorite!

Leader: Sally Sanderson 760-749-6995

Saturday, March 19, 8:00 am.
**Lake Hodges
 Del Dios**

(1149-E4) Rating: 2

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

Leader: Hal Benham 858-679-7904

Saturday, March 26, 8:00 am.
**San Pasqual Agricultural Trail
 Escondido**

(1151-B1) Rating: 2

Meet at the Ysabel Creek Rd. trailhead at the intersection Ysabel Creek Rd. & Bandy Canyon Rd. This intersection can be reached from Highland Valley Rd. east off of Pomerado Rd & I-15, or from Hwy 78 east of the Wild Animal (Safari) Park. We hope to see local residents, which include Cactus Wren, Greater Roadrunner, and a few raptors, possibly the Zone-tailed Hawk. Bring a lunch for an after-birding picnic. Expect warm weather.

Leader: Jim Beckman 858-205-2819

Saturday April 2, 8:00 am
**Old Mission Dam
 San Diego**

<http://www.mtrp.org/park.asp>

(1230-F6) Rating: 2

Take Highway 52 east to the Mast Blvd. exit in Santee. Turn north/east onto Mast Blvd. and then right at the 1st traffic signal (West Hills Parkway). Take West Hills Parkway to Mission Gorge Road and turn right. Take Mission Gorge Road 0.2 miles and merge right onto Father Junipero Serra Trail. Proceed 0.7 miles down Father Juniper Serra Trail to the Old Mission Dam parking lot, located on the right. Arrive extra early to avoid parking on the street. This should be prime time for spring migrants.

Leader: Jeff Ebright 858-484-3932

Saturday, April 9, 8:00 am.
**Dairy Mart Pond/Tijuana River Valley
 San Diego**

(1350 – D5) Rating: 2

From North County, take the I-15 south and merge with the I-5 south to the Dairy Mart Road Exit. Turn right on Dairy Mart Rd. (south). Continue a very short distance and meet at the dirt parking lot on your right just before the concrete bridge and next to the large "TJRV County Park" sign with the pond on the west side of Dairy Mart Road. We will also drive a short distance to the TJRV Park Headquarters (public restroom and bird feeders) and then visit the nearby Bird & Butterfly Garden where there is a chance of seeing the elusive Black-throated Magpie Jay.

Leader: Jack Friery 619-218-7342

**Saturday, April 16, 8:00 am.
Tijuana Estuary
Imperial Beach
(1349-F1) Rating: 2**

Travel south on I-5 from San Diego and exit west on Coronado Avenue, which becomes Imperial Beach Blvd. Continue west and turn left on 3rd Street to Caspian Way, turn left again and then turn right into the Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center parking lot.
Leader: Gerry Baade 858-231-9876

**Saturday, April 23, 8:00 am.
Wilderness Gardens Preserve
Pala**

(409-E6) Rating: 2

This small wilderness area represents a fine example of oak woodland habitat. Meet in the Wilderness Gardens parking lot, which is about 10 miles east of I-15 on Hwy. 76, on the south side of the highway. Look for the "Wilderness Gardens Preserve" sign. Parking fee required, but free with Senior County pass. Bring a lunch for an after-birding picnic. Expect warm weather.

Leader: Jim Beckman 858-205-2819

**Saturday, April 30, 8:30 am. (NOTE: Later Start
Time due to travel distance)
Big Morongo Canyon Preserve
Morongo Valley, San Bernardino County
<http://www.bigmorongo.org/>
(SB 616-J5) Rating: 1**

NOTE: This is a day trip or an alternate Saturday/Sunday Outing.

Day Trip to Big Morongo: 8:30 am Saturday, April 30, 2022: Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is always a spring hotspot and a favorite PAS field trip. In the caretaker's yard, several hummingbird and seed feeders attract many bird species for your enjoyment. Birds often found here are Western and Summer Tanagers, Vermilion Flycatchers, Yellow-breasted Chat, and several other more uncommon species. Picnic tables and restrooms are available. Bring a lunch for an after-birding picnic at the bird feeders.

Directions to Big Morongo: (for GPS Users the address is 11055 East Dr, Morongo Valley, CA 92256): From Escondido, proceed north on I-15 approx. 36 miles to the I-15/I-215 split in Murrieta. Change to I-215 north and continue about 30 miles to Hwy 60 east. Take Hwy 60 east approx. 18 miles and merge with the I-10. Then continuing east on I-10

approximately 40 miles to Hwy 62. Go north on Hwy 62 about 12 miles to Morongo Valley (a small town). About a mile or two into town, look for signs for Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Turn right (south) on East Drive, a dirt road, to the Preserve. The parking lot is just beyond the caretaker's house. Allow 2+ hours travel time from Escondido.

For those staying over Saturday night, we are recommending the Best Western Joshua Tree Hotel & Suites at 56525 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley 92284 (760) 365-3555 at the upper price range (NOTE: this is not the Best Western Gardens Hotel in the city of Twentynine Palms) or we are also recommending the Super 8 at 57096 29 Palms Hwy Yucca Valley CA (760) 228-1773 for about \$60 less. Note, due to music festivals, rooms are expensive and in high demand so book early. We will assemble in the lobby of the Best Western at 2:00 pm on Saturday, for a tour to Black Rock Canyon Campground in search of the Scott's Oriole, the Pinyon Jay, and Gambel's Quail. We will return to our motels in time to scrub up for a 5:00 pm happy hour in the breakfast area, followed by a 7:00 pm dinner at La Casita located at 57154 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley, CA 92284. At happy hour, we can decide on the best destination for our Sunday morning birding, before heading back home.
Leader: Doug Walkley 310-387-8190

**Saturday, May 7, 8:00 am.
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/Dixon Lake" signs and turn left on La Honda Drive. Continue north toward Dixon Lake and on to the free Daley Ranch parking area on your left. Meet at the trailhead kiosk.

Leader: Trysten Loefke 760-749-5898

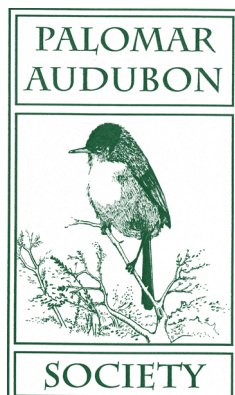


**REMINDER:
DEADLINE FOR THE
MAY-JUNE ISSUE IS
April 15th.
SUBMIT COPY TO
fred17hmr@gmail.com**

Band Tales

March-April 2022

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palomaraudubon@gmail.com

Board of Director's Meeting

No Meetings for March-April

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

March	5	Live Oak Park/ Los Jilgueros Preserve Walk
March	12	San Jacinto Wildlife Area Walk
March	19	Lake Hodges Walk
March	26	San Pasqual Agricultural Trail Walk
April	2	Old Mission Dam Walk
April	9	Dairy Mart Pond/ TJ River Valley Walk
April	16	Tijuana Estuary Walk
April	23	Wilderness Gardens Preserve Walk
April	30	Big Marongo Canyon Preserve Walk
May	7	Daley Ranch Walk