



Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society
A Chapter of the
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume XXVI
No. 5

March-April
2012

Editor
Arne Christiansen

FROM PAS INBOX

Jeff Ebright

We received two questions concerning Barn Owls in regard to rodent control. One was if the use of poison to control rodents would harm Owls (most likely) and if perches would attract Barn Owls (not likely, nest box is better option). Following are a couple of good websites for more information on owls:

<http://www.barnowlvideo.com/contact.html>

<http://www.owlpages.com/index.php?file=faq>

We received a photo of some bird feathers and asked if we could identify the bird (could not) and a photo of a possible Bald Eagle (looked like a juvenile Red-tail Hawk to me). These photos can be viewed at our new Photo Gallery at our website in the folder "Can You ID the Bird". See if you can do a better job than I did.

As always send you questions, comments, stories, and photos to palomaraudubon@gmail.com.

IN MEMORY OF MICHELLE MATSON

Our dear friend, Michelle Matson, passed away on Tuesday, February 21st, in Trinidad after a brave fight with cancer. At least she fulfilled her dream of one more birding trip in Paradise.



OLYMPIC BIRDFEST SEQUIM, WASHINGTON, MARCH 30-APRIL 1

Grab your binoculars and join the Olympic BirdFest 2012 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, March 30 through April 1. The stage is set ... quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca; wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The players are ready ... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons, and Pygmy Owls will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours; and a gala banquet.

For more information, you can contact us at info@olympicbirdfest.org

PAS WEBSITE IMPROVED

Jeff Ebright

If you haven't visited the Palomar Audubon website (www.palomaraudubon.org) lately, I think you will be pleased with the recent changes. Kemer Thomas, our webmaster, enhanced the overall appearance and menus. There is now an RSS feature that will show you when changes have been made at the website. We have added a gallery of photos taken by our members. We have organized the photos by bird walk locations, your backyard, your favorite bird photo taken anywhere and "Can You ID the Bird". We have also added a page of articles that might be of interest to our membership such as presentations from past PAS programs and general information on birds. Send your photos and articles to palomaraudubon@gmail.com that you would like to have added.



PAS PICNIC'S A-COMIN'!

The Annual Palomar Audubon Society Picnic is fast approaching. Put **Sunday, June 10th** on your calendar now so you don't miss this year's bash. Additional information will be included in the next issue of Band Tales, but save this date NOW!

Inside this Band Tales

<i>A Birds-Eye View</i>	page 2
<i>Conservation Notes</i>	page 2
<i>Field Trips</i>	pages 4,5
<i>Programs</i>	page 5

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Jeff Ebright

I want to start this issue with a big "Thank You" to several of our members. Doug and Mickey Nail put together a fantastic birding trip to Salton Sea in January. Doug was a great leader, finding 107 species of birds for us. The trip was so well organized and planned that the only thing those of us on the trip had to do was have fun. Kemer Thomson has been our webmaster for many years and has volunteered his time to provide us with a valuable service. I'm very pleased with the recent enhancements he has made to our website (see article in this issue on changes). Finally, Jim Beckman has been our Field Trip Coordinator for many years and while other local Audubon groups have scaled back field trip offerings, Jim is able to schedule enjoyable weekly walks. Many of our members have joined because they enjoyed going on walks with Palomar Audubon. If you would like to join this list of outstanding volunteers, check out the opportunities at <http://www.palomaraudubon.org/volunteer.html>.



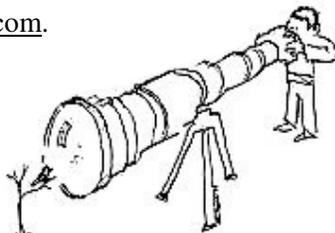
This month begins our annual appeal for donations. With your support we can continue to serve our membership and community. Remember, that only a third of our income is from membership dues and without your donations we would not be able to remain active. I want to thank all of you that decide to support Palomar Audubon with your donations.

For those who attended our program in January, you got to hear about the good work of The Escondido Creek Conservancy. As you know, Palomar Audubon has formed a partnership with them to work on joint conservation projects. They own a wonderful visitor center at Elfin Woods that I would encourage you to visit. I would also ask that you consider volunteering some of your time to be a docent at Elfin Woods. They will provide all the training you need. Doug Nail has volunteered and finds it rewarding. Our goal is to increase the number of docents so the visitor center can be open more than 3 days a week.

As always, I would like to hear your thoughts. Feel free to talk to me or one of your other board members when you see them on bird walks, at programs or other Palomar events. Or send an email to palomaraudubon@gmail.com.

JE

Good Birding!



CONSERVATION NOTES

Doug Nail

The American grasslands represent a habitat that has been declining constantly over time. From the beginning of the early land-grabs man has continued to replace grasslands with agricultural, industrial and residential development. Only recently have we begun to realize the uniqueness of these grasslands. Like many habitats here in California the grasslands attract a unique group of plants and animals. Many species like the Stephen's kangaroo rat, the San Diego fairy shrimp and the Arroyo toad rely on this habitat to sustain their kind.



We, as Palomar Audubon Society members, realize the importance of this habitat to the raptors living here year-round as well as wintering Ferruginous Hawks. Recently San Diego County has opened a new four-mile trail in the Ramona Grasslands Preserve. This new trail covers 480 acres recently purchased jointly by The Nature Conservancy and the County. The trails provide access to the land and, hopefully, give folks a better understanding and appreciation of why these habitats are important and must be sustained. There is some concern, however, that opening this preserve with extensive trails to the public may jeopardize the habitat by reducing the "openness" of the area and so reduce the numbers of wintering raptors. I personally think this is a valid concern and it is something of which we all need to be aware. These grasslands have been maintained by agricultural interests and have at the same time provided hawks, eagles, Burrowing Owls, Western Meadowlarks, Mountain Bluebirds and other birds with a wintering area they have been returning to for eons. We need to make sure they can continue to do so.

So what can we do? Well, first go out and explore the area. See what it has to offer. See if you have concerns over the encroachment of this area to the public. If you do, then we need to make sure the county understands what these concerns are. The open range of the grasslands may just be being compromised by those who think they are sustaining it.

The area in question is located in the southwest portion of the 3,500 acre Ramona Grasslands Preserve which winds through several ecosystems of grasslands, oak woodlands and chaparral. Access is off Highland Ranch Road just east of Archie Moore Road and before Highlander Drive. It is open daily between 8 am and 7 pm.

Check it out and let me know what you think.

Doug



Palomar Audubon Society

P.O. Box 2483
Escondido, CA 92033-2483

Dear Members and Friends,

This has been a great year for Palomar Audubon Society! **What has made it great is the support of our members and friends.** We look forward to an even more successful year in 2012. For this, **we need your continuing help.** As an organization, we would like to encompass additional events, projects and people. The best way to do this is to present programs that will appeal to the interests of a wide variety of members.

Some of our accomplishments in 2011 and plans for 2012 are:

BIRD WALKS – We had 48 Saturday bird walks with over 900 participants. On average over 50 bird species were observed on each walk and all areas of San Diego County were visited. We continue to look for new areas to bird and to develop new walk leaders. Palomar Audubon is building a positive reputation for the variety, quality, friendliness and encouragement of new birders on its bird walks.

PROGRAMS – We had 7 programs on a variety of subjects presented at monthly membership meetings. Presenters ranged from experts in their field to PAS members. We have expanded the scope of the meetings to now include birding identification education at each program.

SCHOLARSHIP – Cody Fluck was the recipient of the PAS 2011 Scholarship Award. Cody attended the week long ABA Young Birders' Conference in April in Southeast Arizona. Cody found the conference enriching and will be sharing his experience with our membership at an upcoming program. We plan on continuing the scholarship and are seeking deserving candidates.

BIRD COUNTS - We participated in the Escondido Christmas Bird Count to gather yearly census information. The count in December was very successful with a high level of participation. PAS provided lunch for all the participants. We work to promote participation in The Great Backyard Bird Count and the recording of bird sightings in eBird.

PUBLICATIONS - We continue to publish "Band Tales", our newsletter, which keeps our membership informed of our meetings, programs, weekly bird walks and items of environmental interest. We are now providing an online copy of "Band Tales" at our website. We have made improvements to our website to add links and articles of interest to our membership.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT - We donated to the following organizations in 2011: Wildlife Research Institute (WRI) in Ramona, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, and The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC). For the Wildlife Research Institute, we sponsored the purchase of a GPS device to track a Golden Eagle. We are actively working in partnership with TECC on joint conservation projects. Palomar Audubon's stuffed birds are now on display at the Elfin Forest Visitor Nature Center. For 2012 we plan to grow this support for TECC and provide support to WRI in rerouting a planned trail that would disturb a Golden Eagle nest site. .

BIRDING TRIPS OUTSIDE COUNTY – We plan to continue offering these birding trips to our members. We had a very successful trip to Salton Sea in January and have scheduled a trip to Magee Marsh in Ohio this May for spring migration (Openings still available).

We are successful as an organization only with your help. The **MAJOR** support for all of our programs and activities comes through your generous donations. If each one of our members donates only \$20 we would meet our financial goals and be able to continue to provide a vibrant and interesting organization for your enjoyment. We hope we have made our case and you will respond using the enclosed envelope. Please make your check to Palomar Audubon Society. We are a 501(c)3 organization, so your gift qualifies as a charitable donation.

Thank you for your support.

The Board of Directors, Palomar Audubon Society

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, March 3

San Diego Bird Festival – No Field Trip

Saturday, March 10, 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 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: Sally Sanderson

760-749-6995

Saturday, March 17, 8:30 a.m.

San Jacinto Wildlife Area

Riverside County

(RC 749-B4) Rating: 2

From San Diego County take I-15 north to 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 three miles to the SJWA headquarters parking lot on the right. From Escondido allow 75 minutes drive time.

Leader: Sally Sanderson

760-749-6995

Saturday, March 24, 8:30 a.m.

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 to the entrance gate at the end.

NOTE: Arrive no later than 8:15 a.m. Park, and we will wait for the caretaker to open the locked gate. We will then enter the Bird Sanctuary as a group. Don't be late!

Leader: David Mathis

760-754-5215



Saturday, March 31, 8:30 a.m.

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 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: Jeff Ebright

858-484-3932

Saturday, April 7, 8:30 a.m.

San Pasqual Agricultural Trail

(Back by popular demand!)

Escondido

(1151-B1) Rating: 2

Meet at the Ysabel Creek Road trailhead at the intersection Ysabel Creek Rd. & Bandy Canyon Rd. This intersection can be reached from Highland Valley Rd. east off of Pomerado Road and I-15, or from Highway 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.

Leader: Jim Beckman

858-205-2819

Saturday, April 14, 8:30 a.m.

Old Mission Dam

San Diego

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

(1230-F6) Rating: 2

Take Highway 52 east to the Mast Boulevard. exit in Santee. Turn north/east onto Mast Boulevard. 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. This should be prime time for spring migrants.

Leader: Penny Hernandez

760-746-8315

Saturday, April 21, 8:30 a.m.

Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Morongo Valley, San Bernardino County

<http://www.bigmorongo.org/>

(SB 616-J5) Rating: 1

From Escondido, proceed north on I-15 for approximately 36 miles to the I-15/I-215 split in Murrieta. Change to I-215 north and continue about 30 miles to Highway 60

FIELD TRIPS, from Page 4

east. Take Highway 60 east, then continue east on I-10 to Highway 62 approximately 40 miles. Go north on Highway 62 to Morongo Valley (a small town), about 12 miles. 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. Picnic tables and restrooms are available. In the caretaker's yard, several hummingbird and seed feeders will attract many birds for your enjoyment. This location is always a spring hot spot and favorite PAS field trip. Bring a lunch for an after birding picnic at the bird feeders. Allow 2 hours travel time from Escondido.

Leader: Doug Nail
760-451-9370

Saturday, April 28, 8:00 a.m.

(Note new Spring/Summer start time)

Dairy Mart Pond/Tijuana River Valley

San Diego

(1350 – D5) Rating: 2

From North County, take I-15 south and merge with I-5 south to the Dairy Mart Road Exit. Turn right on Dairy Mart Road (south). Meet just past the concrete bridge next to the large "TJRV Park" sign and the pond on the west side of Dairy Mart Road. We will also caravan 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: Jim Beckman
858-205-2819

Saturday, May 5, 8:00 a.m.

Daley Ranch

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 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: Jeff Ebright
858-484-3932



**REMINDER:
DEADLINE FOR THE
MAY-JUNE ISSUE IS
APRIL 15TH.
SUBMIT COPY TO
arnec@juno.com**

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.

March 22

Neil Solomon

"Birds of Alaska"

Well-known local bird photographer, Neil Solomon, will share with us his fantastic photos of some of the birds found in Alaska. Highlights of this presentation include up-close photos and a discussion of the Bald Eagles of Homer, Alaska, where 150-200 eagles are found each winter. Arctic Terns travel 12,000 miles to reach their breeding grounds in the tundra surrounding Nome, Alaska during the Alaskan summer. Only here can one observe shorebirds in their full breeding plumage or pelagic species nesting in the tundra before their return to the oceans.



Thursday, April 26

Lynne Baker

**"San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy—
An Update"**

Lynne Baker, as the new Executive Director of the SDRV Conservancy, brings training and experience in managing floodways and watershed function for clean water. She is a recognized smart growth advocate and has directed habitat restoration projects for the San Diego River Conservancy and Endangered Habitat League.

Lynne will discuss current and future projects at the SDRV Conservancy, including the removal of the giant reed, tamarisk and other non-native plants along the San Dieguito River in San Pasqual Valley and removal of eucalyptus and other non-native species in the Del Dios Gorge area. Riparian trees and shrubs will be planted to restore the habitat for birds and pollinators – 180 species of birds are there now.



Band Tales

March-April, 2012

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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 2011-2012**

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Jim Beckman.....	858-205-2819
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Barbara Dunn	760-846-6867
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Penny Hernandez	760-746-8315
Doug Nail.....	760-451-9370
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Publicity	Mickey Nail
Scholarship.....	Jim Beckman.....

Web Page: <http://www.palomaraudubon.org>
 Webmaster: Kemer Thomson:
kemer.thomson@gmail.com

Board of Director's Meeting

Wednesday, April 4th May 2nd
 7:00 p.m. at the Remington Club
 16916 Hierba Drive
 Rancho Bernardo

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

QUICK CALENDAR

March	3	San Diego Bird Festival – No Field Trip
March	—	<u>NO BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING</u>
March	10	Santee Lakes Walk
March	17	San Jacinto Wildlife Area Walk
March	22	General Meeting: “Birds of Alaska”
March	24	Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk
March	31	Lake Hodges Walk
April	4	Board of Director's Meeting
April	7	San Pasqual Agricultural Trail Walk
April	14	Old Mission Dam Walk
April	21	Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Walk
April	26	General Meeting: “SDRVC – An Update”
April	28	Dairy Mart Pond/Tijuana River Valley Walk
May	2	Board of Director's Meeting
May	5	Daley Ranch Walk