



Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society
A Chapter of the
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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2010

Editor
Arne Christiansen

SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY CONSERVANCY PARTNERS TO RESTORE CACTUS WREN HABITAT

by Leslie Woollenweber,
SDRVC Conservation Programs Manager

Thousands of acres of riparian and upland habitat were burned in the San Dieguito River corridor in the 2007 fires, particularly affecting coastal sage scrub and cactus scrub habitat in San Pasqual Valley and around Lake Hodges. These locations were some of the largest areas of high-quality habitat occupied by coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis*) and federally-threatened California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica*) in San Diego County. The coastal race of the cactus wren was already in decline before the fires, magnifying the effects of any further loss of habitat. A permanent loss of the amount of habitat burned in the fires would have implications for both species' populations on a regional scale.

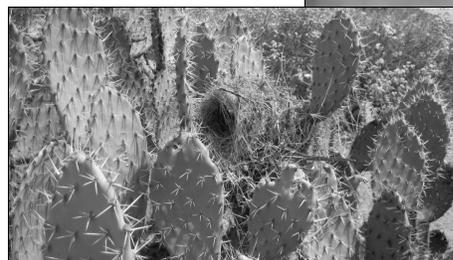
In the months after the fires, the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy partnered with the Conservation Biology Institute to conduct an assessment of burned and unburned cactus scrub in the San Pasqual/Lake Hodges area. This information was used to determine the best strategy for restoring cactus wren habitat in locations so severely burned they would most likely not passively recover to a state that would be able to support the species again. Three areas totaling ~130 acres were chosen for restoration as a result of the habitat assessment: Bernardo Mountain on the north shore of Lake Hodges and the south side of San Pasqual Valley. These locations were selected due to the proximity of good quality unburned habitat of the same type and/or historical habitat value for the two bird species of focus.

In 2008, the Conservancy received a \$186,000 grant from The San Diego Foundation's After-The-Fires fund as well as \$68,465 in awards from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to fund the restoration projects. Our heartfelt thanks go out to **Palomar Audubon** for \$1,000 in contributions toward this important effort as well! Work began in Summer 2008 and continued through this Spring, consisting of invasives control, seeding and planting of locally-collected prickly pear and coastal sage scrub species. Hundreds of pounds of native seed were distributed, and thousands of container

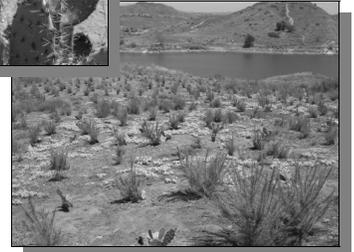
plants were put in. In addition, temporary irrigation was installed in some areas. The generous rains this past Winter definitely helped, too. The projects were designed and carried out by San Dieguito River Park rangers with assistance from Urban Corps of San Diego County and American Conservation Experience as well as River Park volunteers.

While the plants are still too small this year to encourage nesting by either gnatcatchers or wrens, both species have been observed visiting and foraging in the Lake Hodges restoration area. The newly-planted cacti are expected to reach a suitable height for nesting (~1 meter) in 4-5 years, while gnatcatchers may be able to use the planted coastal sage scrub shrubs for nesting within another season or two. We also hope the establishment of new cactus scrub habitat on the south side of San Pasqual Valley will allow the larger population on the north side, near the Wild Animal Park, to expand and survive long-term. Special thanks to our supporters at **Palomar Audubon** who helped make these critical projects happen!

(Right: Cactus Wren @ Bernardo Mtn.
Below: Cactus Scrub @ Bernardo Mtn.)



(Below: Cactus scrub restoration @ Bernardo Mtn.)



(Editor's note: this year PAS donated \$1,000 to the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy.)

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A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Doug Nail

San Diego is having a nice start to our shorebird migration. We had a Pectoral Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit and a Solitary Sandpiper show up already...along with our regulars: Western and Least Sandpipers, Marbled Godwits, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Long-billed Curlews and Whimbrels. Lots of terns too! There are many good birds at the San Diego River mouth at Robb Field and on the beaches around Ocean Beach... all the way down to the border. If you aren't out there looking, you're missing some good birds and nice birding weather...cooler than normal and that isn't all bad.



As I write this letter I am also trying to pack for the upcoming Southeast Arizona trip that the Hal and Dianne Benham have put together. The trip filled up fast so I'm glad to be going along and rooming with my British friend Brian Coleman, who said he wouldn't miss this trip!

Remember, we do have room on the upcoming Trinidad Tobago trip in January. That is a wonderful venue for those folks who aren't interested in too much walking and hiking but want to see lots of birds. You can check out the details on the PalomarAudubon.org website. We'd love to have you come along!

As most of you know, Palomar Audubon sponsors a young birder each year to a week at the ABA Young Birders Camp and it has proven to be a great place for young birders to build their skills and confidence. We are always looking for young folks who can attend this great camp. I want to challenge you to help us find good young birders (they don't have to be good birders now but need to show an interest in birding) between the ages of 14 and 18 years to "cue up" for this great experience. I personally am "growing" a young birder here in Fallbrook (Kody Fluck) and it has proven to be as beneficial for me as it has for him. I will have invested some great times with Kody and the best thing about it is we'll all have a great birder in our midst with young eyes and ears! I encourage you to give it a try...you'll get a million questions and the answers can be a real challenge for you. You, too, will become a better birder!

We're putting some good programs together for the monthly meetings starting up again in September. Look at the website or this newsletter to see what is coming up in September and October. Bring a friend and join us...it's free!

Jim Beckman is busy working on local field trips so we can all get together and do some local birding. Check out

the field trip schedule in the newsletter or go to the PalomarAudubon.org website. We'd love to have you along.

Good birding!

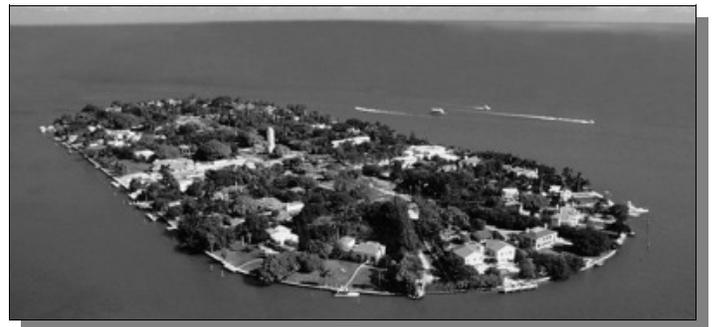
TRINIDAD-TOBAGO TRIP STILL HAS ROOM

This coming January, PAS members will be traveling to Trinidad & Tobago for an exciting birding experience. The trip will run from January 6-15 and is described in detail on the PAS website at:

<http://palomaraudubon.org/news.html>.

Trinidad and Tobago is a small island in the southern Caribbean northeast of Venezuela. It hosts over 450 species of birds, including all the families of South America. Highlight birds include scarlet ibis, oilbird, bell birds, boobies, manakins and an array of hummers. The group will spend 5 days at the Asa Wright Nature Center, in the mountains of Trinidad's northern range. The center has been recognized by Audubon Magazine as one of "the world's ultimate outposts." Covering 1500 acres in the Arim and Aripo Valleys includes excellent accommodations and birding opportunities. We will transfer by air to Tobago where we will stay at the Blue Waters Inn tucked away in it's own secluded bay on 46 acres of lush tropical grounds. All the rooms face the ocean and feature a balcony or porch for relaxing.

The trip is limited to twelve participants and will be filled on a first-come-first-served basis. Drop an email to Hal or Dianne Benham at davinci@san.rr.com if you have questions.



CONSERVATION NOTES

Char Glacy

It is summer in San Diego and a few interesting visitors have arrived at Lake Hodges. Hopefully some of you have seen the Solitary Sandpiper and the Spotted Sandpiper just east of the Pedestrian/Bike Bridge. Other birds of interest are also being seen there including White-faced Ibis, Western Sandpipers, Avocets, and Black-necked Stilts. If you have not been over there lately, now is a great time to go birding there.

There is an important measure that will be on the November ballot that concerns our State Parks.

California's state parks are falling apart because of decades of chronic under-funding. Budget cuts are causing them to fall severely behind in needed maintenance and repairs --a backlog of more than \$1 billion already exists. Twice in the past two years, state parks were on the brink of closure. Only a last-minute budget reprieve kept them open, however because of budget cuts, nearly 150 state parks have been shut down part-time or suffered deep service reductions. California's parks are becoming less available to the public and are at serious risk of irreversible damage. It's clear that the powers that be in Sacramento aren't riding to the rescue for state parks.

On November 2, 2010, California voters will have the opportunity to save state parks by approving Prop 21, which would create the State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010. Rather than living on a budget roller coaster, the fund would provide a stable, reliable and adequate source of funding for the state park system, for wildlife conservation and for increased and equitable access to those resources for all Californians.

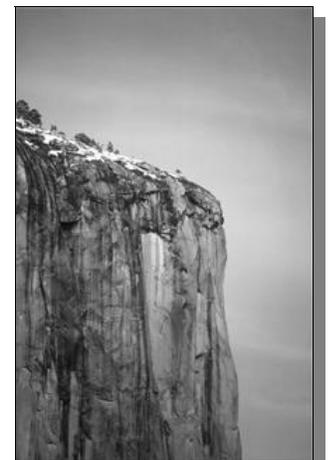
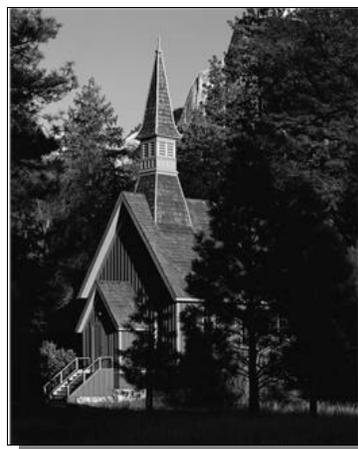
Outline below are some of the basics of the initiative:

- The Trust Fund revenues could only be spent on state parks, wildlife, natural lands and ocean conservation programs.
- The Trust Fund would be funded by an \$18 annual State Park Access Pass surcharge on all California cars, motorcycles and recreational vehicles that would be collected by the Department of Motor Vehicles as part of the annual vehicle license fee. Larger commercial vehicles (those subject to the Commercial Vehicle Registration Act), mobile homes and permanent trailers would be exempt.
- Vehicles subject to the surcharge and all occupants of those vehicles would have free day use admission to all state parks throughout the

year.

- Trust Fund revenues would amount to approximately \$500 million each year (based on about 28 million registered vehicles) and 85 percent would be allocated to state parks and 15 percent to other state wildlife and ocean protection agencies.
- With a new dedicated revenue stream in place, approximately \$130 million of General Fund dollars—that provide a portion of overall state parks funding—would now be available for other vital needs, like schools, health care, social services or public safety.
- The Trust Fund would be subject to an independent audit by the State Auditor and a Citizens' Oversight Committee would be created to ensure funds are spent appropriately. Audit, oversight and administrative costs of this measure would be limited to one percent of the annual revenues.

How can help the campaign? Spread the word and stay updated! VOTE!



FROM CALIFORNIA AUDUBON

AUDUBON AND THE SALTON SEA

Since the late 1990s, Audubon and Audubon California have been involved in helping shape policy regarding the Salton Sea, California's largest lake and a key stopover for millions of birds each year. Southern California Audubon chapters – particularly the San Diego Audubon Society – initially drove this involvement and continue to be active promoting conservation concerns at this important site.

The Salton Sea is one of the state's most important bird habitats, and it has long been a vexing conservation issue. As water has been siphoned off for agricultural and urban use, dust emissions have increasingly threatened public health and dramatically altered the quality of the water that migrating shorebirds rely upon for survival.

Salton Sea is home to at least 19 sensitive species including Brown Pelican, Least Bittern, White-faces Ibis, Wood Stork, Clapper Rail, Long-billed Curlew, and many others.

The conservation issues at Salton Sea are several. Increased salinity of the water regularly depletes food for birds. Disease, contamination and human encroachment are other major concerns. There have been several major die-offs of birds at the location, with major recent kills including 150,000 Eared Grebes in 1992, 9,000 White Pelicans in 1996, and more than 11,000 waterbirds in 1998.

Making matters worse has been decades of inaction on the part of policymakers. A 2003 agreement with the federal government to allow California to use the Salton Sea to transfer Colorado River water from Imperial Valley to San Diego complicated the issue tremendously. Although California agreed to provide for habitat restoration and dust mitigation, the state has yet to follow through on these promises, and the situation at Salton Sea has only gotten worse.



AUDUBON AND MIGRATORY BIRDS

California's migratory birds are a vital part of the state's natural identity. Each year, millions of birds stop over on the Pacific Flyway – a superhighway for birds migrating between Alaska and Patagonia – making California one of the most important areas for migratory birds on the west coast of the Americas.

Coming together to protect migratory birds

Audubon California is part of an innovative partnership that combines the experience and expertise of three leaders in bird conservation – Audubon California, PRBO Conservation Science, and The Nature Conservancy – to create a better California home for migratory birds. This Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership seeks to protect, restore, and enhance lands that support bird populations in California. This partnership is working to:

- Enhance the value of agricultural lands as migratory bird habitat
- Encourage better public and private land management
- Secure reliable water for wetlands
- Apply the best science to our efforts
- Promote policy solutions that will help bolster migratory bird populations and protect and restore their habitat.

Even though California continues to be a haven for migratory birds, the state has seen a steep decline in habitat over the past 150 years. Less than 10% of the state's original wetland habitat remains today, and the threat of losing more habitat persists. By enhancing the places where these birds rest, feed, and breed – and creating new ones – we can honor our natural legacy and reverse the declines that many of these populations have been experiencing.

The Partnership is currently working in three areas. Ultimately, we will apply the lessons learned in these three initial regions to other areas around the state that are important to migratory birds. The result will be a better California, not just for birds, but for Californians as well.

San Joaquin Valley. The recent San Joaquin River settlement offers an unprecedented opportunity to help migratory birds in this 32,000-square-mile habitat area. We're working with farmers to protect and restore bird habitat while maintaining the area's agricultural productivity.

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 sufficient water on walks.

Saturday, September 4, 8:00 a.m.

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 to the Park Road entrance at the stop light. 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.

Leader: Sunny Christiansen
858-487-0731

Saturday, September 11, 8:00 a.m.

Penasquitos Canyon Preserve

Rancho Penasquitos

(1189-C7) Rating: 2

We will meet at the Rancho de los Penasquitos 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.

Leader: Jeff Ebright
858-484-3932

Saturday, September 18, 8:00 a.m.

Bataquitos Lagoon

Carlsbad

(1127-A7) Rating: 1

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

Leader: Penny Hernandez
760-746-8315

Saturday, September 25, 8:00 a.m.

Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve & Huntington Central Park

Huntington Beach, Orange County

<http://www.huntingtonbeachevents.com/conserv.html>

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

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 and then take Highway 73 (toll road), north to I-405. (Or 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 to the Reserve parking lot on the left. It's about 70 miles from Oceanside and should take about 75 minutes. Meet at the boardwalk entrance. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy at the Park picnic tables.

Leader: Doug Nail
760-451-9370

Saturday, October 2, 8:00 a.m.

Tijuana Estuary/7th Street

Imperial Beach

(1349-F1) Rating: 2

Travel south on I-5 from San Diego and exit west on Coronado Avenue which becomes Imperial Beach Boulevard. Turn left on 3rd Street to Caspian Way, turn left and then right to the Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center parking lot.

Leader: Jim Beckman
858-792-5526

Saturday, October 9, 8:00 a.m.

Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary

Oceanside

<http://www.bvaudubon.org/whelan.htm>

(1066-F7) Rating: 2

From I-15 take Highway 78 west and exit north on El Camino Real and continue to Douglas Drive. From I-5 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. Continue west on the dirt road to the caretaker's house and the parking lot.

Leader: David Mathis
760-754-5215

Saturday, October 16, 8:00 a.m.

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 residents.

Leader: Jim Beckman
858-792-5526

see FIELD TRIPS, Page 6

FIELD TRIPS, from Page 5

Saturday, October 23, 8:00 a.m.

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 Rd for about ¾ mile, then turn right on Prospect. Continue on Prospect to Coast Blvd. Meet in front of the Bridge Club and restrooms. Parking is all along Coast Blvd and adjacent residential streets. Arrive early for the best parking spots. We will be looking for shorebirds, gulls, and seabirds.

Leader: Jack Friery

619-218-7342

Saturday, October 30, 8:30 a.m.

(Note Fall/Winter Start Time)

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" sign and turn left (north) on La Honda Drive. Continue toward Dixon Lake and on to the Daley Ranch parking area on your left. Meet at the trailhead kiosk.

Leader: Sally Sanderson

760-749-6995

Saturday, November 6, 8:30 a.m.

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 Famosa Slough.

Leader: Doug Nail

760-451-9370



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 23

Doug Nail

"Arizona: Places and Birds"

Doug Nail will present a program on Palomar Audubon's recent bird watching trip to Southeastern Arizona. Doug will discuss and show slides on the places we visited and the birds we saw. You'll be treated to some great birding! These birds and places aren't far away but many of the species are either indigenous to this area or are casual visitors from Mexico...and they're legal! Come and bring a friend...it's free!

Thursday, October 28

Bert Kersey

"Birds of California"

Bert Kersey will show and discuss his new video on the birds of California. You'll be amazed at the great number of birds Bert has captured on video and his very friendly manner of giving you some great insights into our local birds. Bert and Sharon Kersey are already "famous" for their Barn Owl video. This video is a must for young and old who want to get a great basic look and feel for the birds of California...most of the birds you may have seen and not recognized. Come listen and see this great video and bring a friend...it's free!

MIGRATORY, from Page 4

flooding of more than 300,000 acres of rice lands offers many benefits for these birds, and we're working with rice and other growers to maximize the conservation value of these lands.

Klamath Basin and Modoc Plateau. As we seek policy changes to pave the way for massive river restoration in the Klamath Basin, we are conserving birds by working with private landowners to employ compatible agricultural practices and through conservation easements.

Help us conserve California's migratory birds

For further information about Audubon California's efforts to help migratory birds, contact us at:

auduboncalifornia@audubon.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 bi-monthly 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.

Please check here if you are interested in National Audubon Society membership.

Please check here if you are a member of National Audubon Society.

(Chapter Affiliation)

JOIN THE "E-COMMUNITY"

Palomar Audubon Society has had a friendly e-mail message list since October 2000. This list is focused specifically on the needs and interests of PAS members and is used to post important messages, including announcements, and last minute changes to events, trip reports, with an occasional comment, boast, or query from members. Unlike many e-mail lists, this has been a "low volume" list that averages only a few messages per week - so it doesn't fill up your mailbox.

How to sign up: This e-mail list is administered through Yahoo! Groups. There are essentially two ways for you to participate:

- **As an unregistered user.** In this case, all you get are the messages when they are sent. To join the email list this way send messages to:

Kemer.Thomson@gmail.com with your name and e-mail address. You will receive a confirmation e-mail. Don't reply to that confirmation email or you will immediately be taken off the list. Quit the group at any time by sending a message from the receiving e-mail address to:

PalomarBird-unsubscribe@yahoo.com

- **As a registered Yahoo! user.** If you have a Yahoo! mail account or belong to any other Yahoo! Groups as a registered user, this is the easiest and most powerful option: it allows you to read the archive of previous postings (seven year's worth) and to change your personal settings. To join the group this way, go to: **http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PalomarBird/** and click on the "Join This Group!" button.

... and while you're at it, you may want to consider visiting these sites if you aren't already familiar with them:

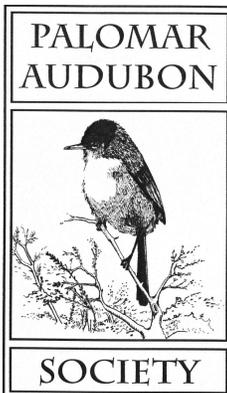
- **Audubon California:** **http://ca.audubon.org/** for lots of news which may be relevant to your life as a California-oriented birder.
- **Audubon National:** **http://www.audubon.org/** for news that is relevant to birders nationwide.



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 - Programs Doug Nail..... 760-451-9370
 - Publicity Dianne Benham 858-679-7904
 - Scholarship..... Jim Beckman..... 858-792-5526
- Web Page:** <http://www.palomaraudubon.org>
Webmaster: Kemer Thomson:
kemer.thomson@gmail.com

Board of Director's Meeting
Thursday, September 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	
<i>September</i>	2
<i>September</i>	4
<i>September</i>	11
<i>September</i>	18
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<i>September</i>	25
<i>October</i>	2
<i>October</i>	9
<i>October</i>	16
<i>October</i>	23
<i>October</i>	28
<i>October</i>	30
<i>November</i>	6

- Board of Directors' Meeting**
- Kit Carson Park Walk**
- Penasquitos Canyon Preserve Walk**
- Bataquitos Lagoon Walk**
- General Meeting: "Arizona: Places and Birds"**
- Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve/ Huntington Central Park Walk**
- Tijuana Estuary/7th Street Walk**
- Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk**
- Lake Hodges Walk**
- La Jolla Coastline Walk**
- General Meeting: "Birds of California"**
- Daley Ranch Walk**
- Mission Bay Flood Control Channel & Famosa Slough Walk**