



# Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society  
A Chapter of the  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume XXIV  
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March-April  
2016

Editor  
Arne Christiansen

## SPRING BIRDING CLASS

Palomar Audubon Society is again offering a novice-intermediate birding course consisting of four consecutive Tuesday classes starting April 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 P.M. at the Rancho Bernardo-Glassman Recreational Center at 18448 RB Community Center Drive off West Bernardo Drive in Rancho Bernardo (the location is subject to change). In addition, there will be two Saturday morning field trips, the first after the first two classes and the second at the end of the course. The course will cover the classification of birds, field markings of local birds, bird behavior, vocalizations, tracking, and the different habitats in San Diego County. Cost for entire course is \$60.

The course will be led by Phoenix Von Hendy, a long time birding leader in north San Diego County and a Certified Tracker Naturalist. For questions about the course contact Audubon Conservation Chair, Richard Fowler at [rcfowl@cox.net](mailto:rcfowl@cox.net). To register complete the form below and send with check to Palomar Audubon, P.O. Box 2483, Escondido, Ca. 92033-2483 by April 5, 2016.

## 2016 PAS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Palomar Audubon Society has a multifaceted mission, including a community outreach program with several special initiatives. One of these initiatives is our scholarship program. This year we will provide a 100% scholarship award for a week long educational summer camp on birding conducted by the American Birding Association at Colorado Springs, Colorado. The recipient of this year's Young Birder Scholarship is Max Leibowitz.

Max is 17 yrs old and became interested in birds when he studied penguins in kindergarten. He read books about them and went to Sea World to see them. Later, he became interested in birds of prey and at that point he was really hooked on birds. When vacationing with his family he would look for birds that could be found in that part of the region. Max saw California Condors in Big Sur and Common Eiders in Maine.

Max is a regular PAS field trip participant. He is an excellent birder and frequently posts his sightings on the local San Diego birding discussion groups as well as the national eBird website. Congratulations Max!

## REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Registration(s) @ \$60.00 each

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form and check to Palomar Audubon, P.O. Box 2483, Escondido, CA, 92033-2483. Check must be received by April 5, 2016.



### Inside this Band Tales

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## A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

*Penny Hernandez*

Let me start out by apologizing to those of you who did not receive your January/February newsletter.



The Board is looking into what the problem may be to see whether we can remedy it. We have new volunteers printing and attaching labels so we need your patience until they get fully used to the process. If you want to go back and see any old or current issue, you can go to our website which is masterfully hosted by Jeff Ebright, WWW.PALOMARAUDUBON.ORG and read many years' copies of the newsletter.

I don't know how many of you know your Board Members, but they are very hard working individuals. Jim Beckman, Vice President, takes care of the great programs we have been having and plans all the field trips. He is also extremely knowledgeable when we have questions about any Audubon business. Jeff Ebright, Secretary, not only takes the minutes at the board meetings, but helps Tim Burr prepare labels for the newsletters. He also helps with any computer questions we may have and is our Web Master. Sunny Christiansen, Treasurer, helps with the Christmas Bird Count, yearly picnic and snacks at the meetings. She also serves as the ultimate proofreader for the newsletter. Jan Behrhorst, Director, puts labels on the newsletters and takes them to the Post Office. Dianne Benham, Director, plans our great trips to The Kern River, Salton Sea and other fascinating birding adventures. She also helps with the Christmas Bird count and the picnic. Richard Fowler is our Conservation Chair and has organized terrific birding classes. Alice Holmes is our Membership Chair. Doug Walkley leads many of our field trips and last but not least is Tom Trowbridge, who leads walks and participates in special bird counts.

I also want to thank all the other members who volunteer their time to lead walks and contribute snacks, and help Jan prepare the newsletter. We also thank Arne Christiansen, Editor of the Band Tales.

Thank you all for being members.

*Penny*



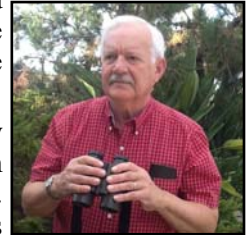
Let's hear it for the Salton Sea PAS-ers!!  
(photo courtesy of Dianne Benham)

## CONSERVATION NOTES

*Richard Fowler*

### SALTON SEA BIRD TRIP

On January 29<sup>th</sup> twenty-seven PAS birders descended on Brawley California for another Salton Sea adventure. Led by Brawley native and veteran bird guide Bob Miller we enjoyed seeing 104 species over the next day and a half.



Our first destination on Saturday morning was the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge Unit 1. This is an area with fresh water ponds and fields planted with crops that provide food for migrating water fowl. Immediately, we were witness to huge flocks of Snow Geese (estimates in the thousands) as well as large numbers of Sandhill Cranes. Initially the geese were grazing on the grass lands, but took flight and circled overhead calling loudly, which was truly an awesome sight. It was also impressive to see large numbers of both Brown and White Pelicans flying nearby.

We then moved on to the observation tower on Unit 1. This provided us with a great view of a marshy area with reeds and cattails. There were lots of birds including a family of Hooded Mergansers, though the most impressive sight to this observer were the hundreds of Tree Swallows perched on the power lines and darting over the marsh. In spite of the chilling morning there was food to be had.

Along the road to the Sea Bob pointed out a Stilt Sandpiper on a mud flat next to a pair of Dowitchers. Most of us got a good look at this bird and its downward tilt when feeding.

Upon reaching the Sea we drove along the dike on it's southern border. Birds were plentiful, but especially noteworthy was an immature Glaucous-winged Gull and a Neotropic Cormorant. The latter was spied in a large colony of Double-crested cormorants.

We finally arrived at the Visitor's Center where we were greeted by some of the regulars of the Salton Sea, namely the Abert's Towhee, Gambel's Quail, Verdin, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and Burrowing Owl. The Owl was seen at several locations along the roads and could be spotted by the yellow signs next to their tubular homes, another environmental success!

In the afternoon we went in search of the Mountain Plover. It had been spotted that morning in a large field. After several stops and many Killdeer sightings, several Mountain Plovers were identified by Bob. They were not easily visualized even with the most powerful scopes, but most of us got a look. Another fantastic sight in this area was a long string (over a mile long) of Red-winged Blackbirds making their way from the cattle yards back to their perches near the Sea.

An early start on Sunday took us to a local dump site off Carter road in search of the Crissal Thrasher. This was to



no avail. The site is not to be recommended to anyone not familiar with the back roads of Imperial County.

Our next stop was the Alamo Wetlands Project located along the Alamo River which flows out of Mexico. This project was started over ten years ago by a coalition of groups committed to cleaning up the water flowing into the Salton Sea. So far it has been a success in greatly reducing bacterial counts as well as other pollutants. It consists of a series of ponds planted with reeds and other marsh plants that help purify the river water before it runs into the Sea. Two similar projects are planned for the New River. These projects will not be affected by the cut off of the flow of Imperial irrigation water to the Salton Sea which is scheduled for next year. The site had an abundance of wildlife including a muskrat, Least Bittern, Soras, and several Neotropical Cormorants.

Our final stop was Brawley's River Park off Cattle Call Drive where a Gila Woodpecker and Great-horned owl were spotted.

Kudos to Diane and Hal Benham for organizing this trip. Our guide was great, as was the Brawley Inn and Assagio's restaurant. From the environmental perspective I was left with optimism that progress is being made to clean up the water flowing into the Salton Sea as well as progress in providing food for migrating water fowl. Whether more will be needed to protect this special habitat in the future remains to be seen.

*Richard*



(photos courtesy of Joan Comito)

## 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, March 24<sup>th</sup>

**Phil Unitt**

**“A Century Later: Resurveying the San Jacinto Mountains”**

In 1908, two teams of biologists from the University of California spent five months in the San Jacinto Mountains of Riverside County conducting an extensive survey of the flora and fauna. Led by Joseph Grinnell, the biologists were almost continually in the field from May through September. In 2008, 100 years later, the San Diego Natural History Museum embarked on an equally ambitious project to meticulously replicate the 1908 study. The team was led by Phil Unitt a native San Diegan, who has spent his entire professional career in the San Diego area, and few people know the avifauna of the region as well as he does. Phil serves as the Collections Manager of the Birds and Mammals Department of the San Diego Natural History Museum and was the guiding force and author behind the San Diego County Bird Atlas. He has led the San Jacinto Mountain resurvey project since its inception, and will share with us the fascinating history of this project and it's many interesting findings to date. Mark your calendar for this one. Don't miss it!

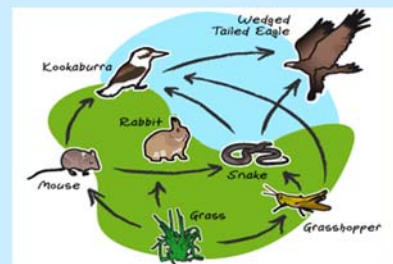


Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>

**Char Glacy**

**“The Birds of Australia”**

Local birder and PAS member, Char Glacy, recently spent seven weeks birding in each of Australia's important geographic regions including the environs of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, southwest Australia, and Alice Springs. She then flew on to Darwin and continued to Queensland (Cairns, Atherton Tableland, Outback Queensland, and O'Reilly's Guest House). Her presentation will also feature the endemics and mammals of Tasmania. Wow! Quite an adventure! It should be fun to hear her story!



## 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 5

### San Diego Bird Festival – No Field Trip

Saturday, March 12, 8:30 a.m.

#### 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, 8:30 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. Continue west on North River Road to the entrance gate at the end. **Proceed to the Sanctuary on the dirt road. Disregard the “No Trespassing” Signs. Park at the parking area next to the caretaker's house overlooking the lake.**

Leader: Doug Walkley  
310-387-8190

Saturday, March 26, 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 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: Jeff Ebright  
858-484-3932



Saturday, April 2, 8:30 a.m.

### San Pasqual Agricultural Trail

Escondido

**(1151-B1) Rating: 2**

Meet at the Ysabel Creek Road trailhead at the intersection Ysabel Creek Road & Bandy Canyon Road. This intersection can be reached from Highland Valley Road east off of Pomerado Road & 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. Bring a lunch for an after-birding picnic. Expect warm weather.

Leader: Jim Beckman  
858-205-2819

Saturday, April 9, 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 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. This should be prime time for spring migrants.

Leader: Jack Friery  
619-218-7342

Saturday, April 16, 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 east. Take Highway 60 east then continuing east on I-10 approximately 40 miles to Highway 62. Go north on Highway 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. 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 a favorite PAS field trip. Bring a lunch for an after birding picnic at the bird feeders. Allow two hours travel time from Escondido.

Leader: Doug Walkley  
310-387-8190

Saturday, April 23, 8:30 a.m.

**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 Road (south.) Meet at the dirt parking lot on your right just before the concrete bridge next to the large “TJRV County Park” sign and 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: Michael Beeve  
209-247-5237

Saturday, April 30, 8:00 a.m. (Note new earlier Spring/Summer 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/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: Tom Trowbridge  
760-743-1052

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

**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 Highway 76, on the south side of the highway. Look for the “Wilderness Gardens Preserve” sign. A parking fee is required, but free with senior County pass. Bring a lunch for an after-birding picnic. Expect warm weather.

Leader: Jim Beckman  
858-205-2819

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

- Michael & Sonja Beeve
- Arne & Sunny Christiansen
- Steve & Patti Ellis
- Ed & Janice Hall
- Martha Hayes
- Tracy Henchbarger
- Penny Hernandez
- Bonnie Packert
- Linda Rasmusson
- John Top
- Anna Trunnell
- Doug & Diane Walkley
- Ken Weaver
- Sharon Wellborn

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

- Michael & Sonja Beeve
- Ed & Janice Hall
- Martha Hayes
- Alice Holmes
- Rustom & Meher Jamadar
- Seabury Mcgown
- Sharon Wellborn





# Band Tales

## March-April, 2016

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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 Escondido, CA 92033-2483

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Richard Fowler.....	619-252-3767
Alice Holmes.....	925-212-8165
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**Webmaster:** Jeff Ebright: 858-484-3932  
[palomaraudubon@gmail.com](mailto:palomaraudubon@gmail.com)

### Board of Director's Meeting

*Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>*  
*Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>*  
**7:00 p.m. at the Remington Club**  
**16916 Hierba Drive**  
**Rancho Bernardo**

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

### QUICK CALENDAR

<b>March</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Board of Directors' Meeting</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>San Diego Bird Festival - No Field Trip</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>San Jacinto Wildlife Area Walk</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>General Meeting: "A Century Later: Resurveying the San Jacinto Mountains"</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Lake Hodges Walk</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>San Pasqual Agricultural Trail Walk</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Board of Directors' Meeting</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Old Mission Dam Walk</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Walk</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Dairy Mart Pond/Tijuana River Valley Walk</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>General Meeting: "The Birds of Australia"</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Daley Ranch Walk</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Wilderness Gardens Preserve Walk</b>