



Band Tales

Palomar Audubon Society
A Chapter of the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume XL
No. 5

September-October
2024

Editor
Jack Peterson

Thank you Jeff and Vicki Ebright!!

Jeff Ebright and his wife Vicki are leaving us and moving to Arkansas near Eureka Springs. Jeff has been a key cog in the life of PAS. They will be missed! Below is Jeff's synopsis of his and Vicki's time with PAS:

My daughter got Vicki and I interested in birding in 1999. We joined Audubon and was assigned to the San Diego chapter. After going on several of their led walks, we tried a Palomar led walk and we were hooked by the friendliness and acceptances of new birders. Vicki was asked to take over the membership duties, which she accepted and I assisted. Over the years I have served as President, Treasurer, Secretary, and on the Board of Directors. When our Webmaster notified the board that he was leaving his position, I volunteer to take over. With help from my daughter, we redesigned the website and converted the software to something that was easier to support. That was the start of a trend that when someone was needed to take over a function or task, I filled the gap. Over the years, I took on support of generating USPS labels for our newsletter, writing annual reports to National Audubon, finding new insurance, maintaining the member mail rosters, donation thank you letters and other forgotten tasks. As webmaster, I added other online sites for Palomar; Facebook, YouTube channel for member videos, site for sharing member photos, and group email. Though I grumbled at times, I've have been grateful that I have been able to help a great organization. If it was not for Vicki developing Alzheimer's, most likely, I would still be supporting Palomar. We plan to move to Eureka Springs, Arkansas to live near our daughter. I'm grateful for her support as we age. Interesting development, she stopped birding years ago, but with this move, we have rekindled her interest.



PAS has initiated a new way of partaking in the wonderful world of birding via our organization. Donations \$30.00 and greater to the Palomar Audubon Society includes a subscription to **Band Tales**, (if desired) Palomar Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter, and an invitation to our monthly programs and weekly field trips. See page 5 of this newsletter for an application/donation form and you can also register online at palomaraudubon.org.

Note: A bit of helpful information on how to tell when your renewal is due is that there is a date on the mailing label of the newsletter that lets you know.

PAS WELCOMES THESE NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS AND THANKS OUR DONORS SO VERY MUCH!

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- Tzung Yang,*
- Perren Yang*

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A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Beth Pearson, President

Greetings!

I am deeply honored and grateful for the trust you have placed in me as your new president. It is with great respect for our past leadership and their vision that I step into this role. I am impressed by the work our chapter has done and I am committed to upholding the values and intentions that have guided our society for so many years.



Our work in conservation is more crucial than ever, and I am eager to continue that work. We have partnered with many organizations in our corner of San Diego County that allow us to expand our reach and make an even greater impact on the conservation of our natural world. I am committed to working closely with those organizations to find ways we can help.

One of my key goals as president is to create more opportunities for each of you to get involved in our work. Whether it's through conservation projects, educational programs, or community outreach, there will be numerous ways for our members to contribute. I encourage all of you to reach out to me if you are interested in becoming more involved or if you have ideas on how we can enhance our efforts. I also want to explore ways to get students involved with our organization and plan to capitalize on my connection with Palomar College to make progress on that goal.

Together, I know we can continue to make a difference and inspire others to join us in protecting the birds and habitats we all cherish.

Thank you again for your confidence in me. I look forward to working with all of you as we embark on this exciting journey together.

CONSERVATION NOTES

Mary Jo Hayes

California Biodiversity Day is September 7, 2024! As birders, we can participate by sharing our eBird checklists, submitted during September 7-15, with the username, "CaliforniaBiodiversityDay". For more information, please go to the website, <https://cabiodiversitynetwork.org/news-events/>.

Another rewarding and attractive way we as individuals can contribute to increasing biodiversity and wildlife in our area is to maintain or plant California native plants. Basically, preserving or establishing habitat that is or once was in the area. Our native plants are adapted to local climate and soil conditions and naturally occur in this county's habitats which mostly consist of chaparral, oak woodland, mixed conifer forest, riparian forest, coastal sage scrub, grassland, and vernal pools. These plants are generally recognized as being here on the continent prior to European settlement.

California has a diverse climate which can support a wide variety of plants from around the world. Most often water-intensive exotic plants that do not support the local ecology take the place of California native plants in gardens, while our state's unique and beautiful native plants are often overlooked in garden design.

A garden of native plants helps create functioning ecosystems by attracting the native insects and wildlife that depend upon these plants. Native animals and plants have developed relationships with each other over the past centuries, and research shows that native wildlife prefers native plants over non-native plants. Native plants provide food sources of nectar, pollen, berries and seeds to native birds, butterflies, insects, and other animals. Native fauna help improve fruit and vegetable production and are beneficial in managing many pests such as mosquitos, ticks, and aphids. Several other benefits can be enjoyed while bringing the beauty of California into your own garden by using native plants. Additional benefits include water conservation once the plants are established along with the reduction of maintenance, pesticide use, and landfill waste. Each native garden, large or small, becomes part of a collective effort to sustain and nurture our living habitat.

Many of us may already be California native gardeners. Many of us may be interested but intimidated to move forward with native gardening or do not have space for a garden.

If the latter reasons are the case, consider starting small by planting one or two plants that have similar maintenance requirements; oftentimes these plants can be found in the same type of natural habitat.

**REMINDER:
DEADLINE FOR THE
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ISSUE IS
OCTOBER 15.
SUBMIT COPY TO:
*Jackdpete@gmail.com***

Creating a container garden is another option. Container gardens are relatively easy to design and maintain. They are mini habitats. There are many online resources which have great ideas to get started such as; calscape.org, californianativeplants.com, audubon.org and cnps.org.

Another even simpler idea to do, ideally in the late fall before winter rains, is to scatter some California native wildflower seeds in a container of potting soil. Then cover with soil usually no deeper than 1/2". Seasonal rains are normally sufficient to germinate the seeds, but if the winter is dry, some hand-watering may be needed. Hopefully you will have your own super bloom come springtime.

Finally, if you have California native plantings, consider registering your area on the Homegrown National Park Biodiversity Map (HNPark.org) if you haven't already. It is estimated that 78% of the land in the lower forty-eight states is privately owned, and we can be a part of the largest National Park when we plant natives and remove invasives, all while regenerating biodiversity. Homegrown National Park currently tracks the total area of private property occupied by native plants in the United States and Canada. **Check it out!**

Species Profile: Western Bluebird

Tsaiwei Olee

When I was growing up in Taiwan, I read a fairytale that took me to a faraway Europe, where a little boy and his sister embarked on a journey to search for a blue bird of happiness. That small blue-colored bird left quite an imprint in my mind. Years later in San Diego when I saw a Western Bluebird for the first time, the brilliant azure feathers evoked such a wonderful memory from the imaginary world of my childhood.

Male bluebirds are particularly eye-catching, with bright blue wings, tail, and head, contrasted by a rusty orange breast and throat. The females are more toned down, being predominantly gray, with a little blue on their tail and wings. The fledglings look quite different from their parents: they have gray with spots on their backs and chests, with variable amounts of blue in the wings and tail. But their eyes do remind us of their parents.



We are lucky to have Western Bluebirds here year-round. They are cavity nesters, but their bill structure is not built to make holes on their own. So they resourcefully rely on existing cavities like natural holes in trees, old woodpecker holes, or artificial nest boxes, which have become increasingly important due to habitat loss. The female usually lays a clutch of 4 to 6 pale blue or sometimes white eggs. Bluebirds hatch out blind, with only a few tufts of down. Both parents are involved in raising the young, with the male often seen bringing food to the female while she incubates the eggs.



During summer Western Bluebirds eat mainly ground-dwelling insects; in winter they switch to eating mostly fruits and seeds. The photo at left was taken in September, while the photo at right was in January. Fortunately the Western Bluebird is not endangered. But it is on the covered bird species list of the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Due to habitat losses, the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) was set up to encourage the



conservation of Western Bluebirds. It's a program supported by the National Audubon Society-California and affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society. If you are interested in joining this effort, such as by setting up nests for bluebirds and/or monitoring their activities, please read more on the CBRP website:

<https://www.cbrp.org/>

Dedicated bluebird conservation will allow everyone to enjoy this symbol of joy, hope, and good fortune for many years to come.

FIELD TRIPS

Jim Beckman

Whether a seasoned birder or a beginner, you are welcome to join us. Our field trips are free and open to the public. For more information call the trip leader shown below. Heavy rain at the meet-up location 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.

September - October 2024 Field Trips

PLEASE NOTE: Late Summer and early Fall birding in San Diego County can be very warm. So, be sure to bring sunscreen and sufficient water on walks.

Saturday, September 7, 8:00 am.

Los 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 end of the road at the Adobe Ranch House parking lot. Park near the trees that are close to the Ranch House. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Jim Beckman
858-205-2819

Saturday, September 14, 8:00 am.

Batiquitos Lagoon

Carlsbad

(1127-A7) Rating: 1-2

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

Leader: Beth Pearson
760-716-6804

Saturday, September 21, 8:00 am.

Oak Hill Memorial Park

Escondido

(1130-F1) Rating: 1

From I-15 exit east on Via Rancho Parkway, which becomes Bear Valley Parkway, and drive 5 miles north to Glen Ridge road at Orange Glen High School. Turn right on Glen Ridge Road and proceed approximately 1 mile east to the cemetery gate. Turn left to the parking area. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Gerry & Linda Baade
858-231-9876/858-231-9500

Saturday, September 28, 8:00 am.

Kumeyaay Lake Campground
Mission Trails Regional Park,
Santee

(1230-G6) Rating: 2

From North County, take I-15 south to CA-52 east. Take exit 13 (Mast Blvd.) and turn left on to Mast. Take the first right onto West Hills Pkwy. Take another right onto Mission Gorge Rd. and then make a very slight right onto Father Junipero Serra Trail. At the 4-way stop-sign, make a right onto Bushy Hill Dr., and turn right just past the campground entry kiosk into the free Day Use parking area. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Mary Jo Hayes
760-505-6675

Saturday, October 5, 8:00 am.

Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve & Huntington Central Park

Huntington Beach, Orange County

18000 Pacific Coast Hwy, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

(O.C. 857-C3) Rating: 1-2

Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve is the largest coastal salt marsh preserve in the Los Angeles/Orange County metropolitan region. It's 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. Continue on I-5 to I-405. Take I-405 north (towards Long Beach). Exit on Warner Ave. West. Continue west approximately 6 miles to Pacific Coast Hwy. Turn left (south) and drive about 1 mile (making a U-turn) to the Reserve parking lot on the east side of Pacific Coast Hwy. It's about 70 miles from Oceanside and should take about 75 minutes. Meet at the boardwalk entrance. **VERY IMPORTANT: Arrive extra early for the best parking spots. Very limited parking.** Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy at the Huntington Central Park.

Leader: Gerry & Linda Baade
858-231-9876/858-231-9500

Saturday, October 12, 8:00 am.
La Jolla Cove & Coastline
 La Jolla

(1227-E6) Rating: 1

From Hwy 52 driving west exit at La Jolla Blvd. West (formerly Ardath Road). Continue on this road, which will merge with Torrey Pines Rd for about 3/4 mile, then turn right on Prospect. Continue on Prospect to Coast Blvd. Meet on the ocean-side in front of the Bridge Club and restrooms. Parking is all along Coast Blvd and adjacent residential streets. **Arrive extra early for the best parking spots. Make sure to park at the first available parking space located.**

We will be looking for shorebirds, gulls, and seabirds.

Leader: Hal Benham
 858-386-6911

Saturday, October 19 8:am
Kit Carson Park
 Escondido

(1150-C1) Rating: 1

From I-15 in Escondido, exit east on Via Rancho Parkway (which becomes Bear Valley Parkway) and drive about 1 mile north to the Park Road entrance on your left – at the fire station. Proceed on Park Road about 3/4 mile to the Amphitheater parking lot on the right. Woodland, riparian, and open-area habitats usually get us a nice list of resident birds.

Leader: Jim Beckman
 858-205-2819

Saturday, October 26, 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” sign and turn left (north) on La Honda Drive. Continue up the hill toward Dixon Lake and on to the Daley Ranch free parking area on your left. Meet at the trail-head kiosk. Note: there is also free senior parking area after driving a short distance inside the Dixon Lake entrance.

Leader: Tom Trowbridge
 760-743-1052

Saturday, November 2, 8:00 am.
San Diego River Estuary
 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.

Leader: Beth Pearson
 760-716-6804

Palomar Audubon Society
Membership

Mail your application to:
Palomar Audubon Society
P O Box 2483

Escondido, CA 92033-2483 or
Email to: palomaraudubon@gmail.com

Donations \$30.00 and greater to 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.

Donation Levels:

- Membership, \$30**
- Support, \$60**
- Sustainer, \$100**
- Benefactor, \$250**
- Patron, \$500**
- Other _____**

(payable to Palomar Audubon Society)

Paper copy of Band Tales? Yes No

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

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100% of Donations supports projects locally.

FIELD TRIP CHECKLIST

- ◆ Comfortable shoes or hiking boots
- ◆ Hat, sunscreen, insect repellent
- ◆ Road map, Full fuel tank
- ◆ Drinking water, snacks and lunch
- ◆ Binoculars/Scope, field guide and notebook
- ◆ Call leader for last minute cancellations or changes

Birds in Focus: Capturing Stand-Out Bird Photographs in Any Light

By Linda Baade

We're thrilled to introduce a new column in Band Tales showcasing bird photography. Our goal is to offer helpful tips and inspiration that are valuable no matter what camera or brand you use. We encourage subscribers to suggest topics for future articles and invite guest authors to share their photography tips. Today, we're excited to discuss a fundamental aspect of photography: light.

Light plays a huge role in photography. It can make or break a photo. The way light illuminates the subject will create shadows and highlights, altering the nature of the image. Light also affects viable camera settings that impact focus and image quality. Planning mindfully for the lighting conditions, including direction and strength, will help successfully capture a prized bird photo.

Light Direction and Characteristics

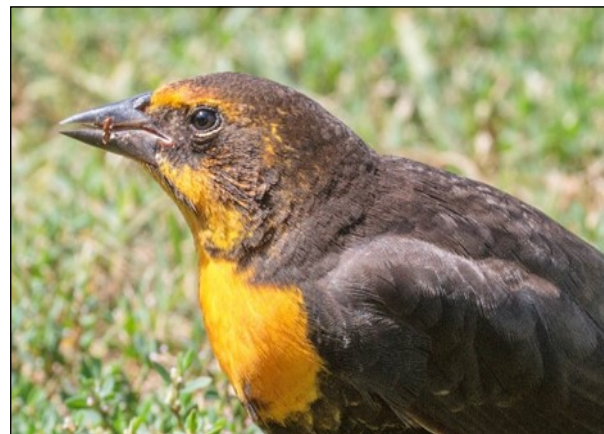
The angle and properties of light are influenced by the time of day. Early morning and late in the afternoon, (the "golden hour") are most favorable for creating stunning photos. During this time-of-day shadows are elongated and more defused. Light during this time takes on an aesthetically pleasing hue. While planning your bird photography outings during these times is a recommended practice, there are tips you can deploy when photographing subjects during a less favorable time of day.

Tip: Keep the sun at your back unless you intentionally want to capture a silhouette or you are using exposure compensation.

Tip: Take photos in shaded areas to avoid harsh shadows that are typical on a sunny day.

Tip: Capture the bird from different angles to avoid harsh shadows caused by the beak/head when taking pictures in strong sunlight. A profile shot may eliminate this issue.

Tip: Eyes that look alive have "catchlights", which are reflections of light in the eye. Pay attention to the glint in the eyes as the subject moves, considering the location and head direction. Striving for catchlights can energize photos. The more pleasing light angle can also reduce harsh shadows, improve detail, and eliminate hot spots.



Same Yellow-headed blackbird and location. Notice how the bird's head is turned in the photo on the right, creating a catchlight and well-illuminated bird without the harsh shadows seen in the photo on the left.

Lights' impact on Camera Settings

The amount of light entering the camera lens impacts image quality. Too much light, images will be overexposed washing out highlights. Not enough light can create dark and noisy images, affecting detail. When photographing moving subjects, like birds in flight, in subdued lighting conditions, understanding how to compensate for the lack of light will help you to freeze action. Without going into too much detail, the following are some tips that can help determine necessary camera adjustments to adapt to available light conditions.

Tip: Under all lighting situations, ensure your shutter speed is set high enough to freeze the motion of bird and achieve sharp images. While the swiftness of the subject will impact the optimum settings, general guidance is to opt for a shutter speed of at least 1/1000 of a second or higher.

Tip: To achieve a faster shutter speed without impacting the depth of field, (plants that are in focus), increase your ISO setting. The trade-off, higher ISO levels lead to more graininess in the image. Remember, you can reduce the

appearance of grain in post-processing, but you can't readily fix a blurry image. Therefore, it's better to go for a higher shutter speed when needed using the lowest ISO possible to freeze the action.



Whimbrels in flight taken with a shutter speed of 1/1600 freezing action. In this photo of a snowy egret, a shutter speed of 1/2000 is enough to capture this strolling bird but not adequate to achieve the full focus of the runner.

Conclusion

Light adds depth, texture, and mood to images and influences camera settings which can be manipulated to freeze or blur action. Light is a tool, using it to your advantage can create dynamic compositions. Unlike the days of film when every frame came at a hard cost, digital images afford the opportunity to experiment. Above all else, have fun in the process.

PROGRAMS

Please join us for our very interesting monthly program and refreshments at the Remington Club II Retirement Center, 16916 Hierba Drive, Rancho Bernardo. This location is very near and south of Carver's Steak & Chops Restaurant. There is a social period beginning at 6:30 pm with the meeting and program getting underway promptly at 7:00 pm.

Thursday, September 26, 6:30 pm Rustom Jamadar "Birds Of Vietnam"

For our September Program, we will have a presentation on the "Birds of Vietnam", presented by our Board Member, Rustom Jamadar. Vietnam is likely not a destination that many members have visited, so the species presented are likely to be mostly new to us. Rustom has given several presentations to the Palomar Audubon Society in the past, ranging from birds of India and Sri Lanka, to Ecuador; and most recently, he presented the Birds of Magee Marsh, Ohio. Come join us and bird vicariously.

Mark your calendars! Don't miss this fantastic presentation!

Thursday, October 24, 6:30 pm

Faith Barton "My Camp Colorado Adventure"

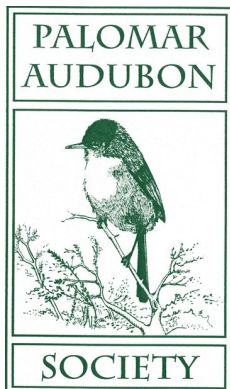
Palomar Audubon Society has a multifaceted mission, including a community outreach program with several special initiatives. One of these initiatives is our teen Scholarship program which PAS has sponsored since 2004. This year, we provided a 100% scholarship award conducted by the American Birding Association at Camp Colorado. The 2024 Young Birders Camp Colorado was located at Allenspark, Colorado, which is near the Rocky Mountain National Park. The recipient of our 2024 PAS Scholarship Award was Faith Barton. Faith Barton is 16 years old, lives in Spring Valley, and is a junior at Liberty University Online Academy. She really got hooked on birds five years ago when she was just 11 years old. During the pandemic restrictions, she was doing some backyard birding and saw a nice bright-colored male Hooded Oriole. The Hooded Oriole has become her "spark bird". Her main interest now is avian photography. In 2023, three of Faith's photos were selected by the National Audubon Society's annual Photography Top 100 awards. Also, Faith has formed a faith-based birding group through her Jamul Community Church called the Early Birds. Once a month, Faith leads the Early Birds on a local San Diego County field trip. Faith has also led several paddle boarding birding field trips with the annual San Diego Bird Festival.

Mark Your Calendars! Don't miss this one!

Band Tales

September-October, 2024

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-only membership.



Palomar Audubon Society

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palomaraudubon@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

*Saturday, October 19th at 11:45 AM
Following the Kit Carson walk*

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

QUICK CALENDAR

September	7	Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve Wal
September	14	Batiquitos Lagoon Walk
September	21	Oak Hill Memorial Park Walk
September	26	"Birds of Vietnam" Presentation
September	28	Kumeyaay Lake Campground Walk
October	5	Bolsa Chica ER & Huntington Central Park Walk
October	12	La Jolla Cove & Coastline Walk
October	19	Kit Carson Walk
October	19	Board of Directors Meeting (see above)
October	24	"My Camp Colorado Adventure" Presentation
October	26	Daley Ranch Walk
November	2	San Diego River Estuary Walk