

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Beth Pearson, President

Learning to Love the Birds Next Door

Dear Palomar Audubon Society members,



On nearly every Saturday somewhere in San Diego County, there is a group of people led by a dedicated Palomar Audubon volunteer standing mostly quiet beside a lagoon, a grassland, or a neighborhood park. Undoubtedly, they will be looking up, then sideways, then at a bush no taller than a coffee table. You might hear

them whisper “gnatcatcher,” and suddenly ten pairs of binoculars pivot in perfect choreography.

This is how conservation often begins.

This is why Palomar Audubon Society offers public bird walks every Saturday, children’s education programs, and birding classes because of a simple truth expressed by conservationist Baba Dioum in 1968: *“In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.”*

San Diego County is one of the richest bird regions in North America and within a single morning you can encounter pelicans gliding just above ocean waves, wrens scolding from chaparral, hawks circling inland valleys, and sapsuckers drilling holes in pine trees nestled in the mountains. But biodiversity is not permanent. Habitat loss, light pollution, window strikes, pesticides, and climate change steadily chip away at these living neighborhoods. Palomar Audubon is committed to combat the loss through education.

Our bird walks bring people together in the valuable natural places we need to protect; our children’s programs plant the seeds of passion for the natural world; and our birding classes give people the tools to recognize and value the different species of birds we have in our region.

Recently we announced our Spring 2026 Birding Classes, and we hope you will help us spread the word. We have evening classes for all levels of birder beginning March 11, 2026, including guided field trips. In our **Beginning Birding Class** – attendees will learn

field marks and identification basics. In our **Intermediate Birding Class** – attendees will learn about behavior, seasonal plumages, and differences between similar species. And in our **Advanced Birding Class** – attendees will learn vocalizations, tracks, and refined identification skills. The field trips include locations such as Lake Hodges, Ramona Grasslands, Crown Point, and Kit Carson Park, giving students exposure to multiple habitats. Please consider joining us and help spread the seeds... I mean word.

Because every new birder expands the circle of people who notice seasonal change, support habitat protection, and advocate for responsible lighting and development. Education multiplies conservation faster than any single restoration project ever could.

Beth Pearson
Professor of Biology
Palomar College

CONSERVATION NOTES

Mary Jo Hayes

California Breeding Bird Atlas

San Diego County is one of only fifteen counties in the state of California that has produced a breeding bird atlas. Most of our state’s county atlases are concentrated along the coastline. This limited amount of data in a 58-county state is about to change through a collaborative effort that was launched January 1 of this year. The California Breeding Bird Atlas will be a 5-year project in which the fieldwork phase will run from 2026 through 2030.

Anyone who submits eBird sightings in California can contribute to the data collection during the 5-year timeline. Project checklists will be accepted year-round since breeding occurs during every month of the year in California. This data will be used to better the understanding of breeding bird status, distribution, and phenology.

If you are interested in additional project information or haven’t joined the project and would like to, here is some information, references, and links that should help.

Atlas website:

<https://www.californiabirdatlas.org>

EBird website atlas page:

<https://ebird.org/atlascalifornia/home>

Under the above page, the “Quick Start Guide”, “FAQs”, and “Breeding Codes” contain valuable information. See links below.

<https://ebird.org/atlascalifornia/about/start>

<https://ebird.org/atlascalifornia/about/faqs>

<https://ebird.org/atlascalifornia/about/breeding-codes>

REMINDER:
DEADLINE FOR THE
MAY –JUNE ISSUE IS APRIL, 15.
SUBMIT COPY TO:

Jack Peterson at jackdpete@gmail.com

Each checklist submitted needs observations to be within a single atlas block. A new checklist with location must be started when moving from one block to another.

Blocks across California will not only be surveyed by volunteer citizen scientists but also by paid field technicians in an effort to record the presence of birds and their behaviors that indicate breeding. There are some blocks that have never been birded. These are usually remote areas of the state with few to no inhabitants, maybe rugged, or arid. Paid field technicians may be assigned to conduct surveys in these areas.

There are three standardized breeding categories. The eBird app designates the categories with a color. See below:

- **Possible (light purple):** singing birds or presence in suitable habitat
 - **Probable (purple):** courtship, territorial behavior, and more
 - **Confirmed (darkest purple/black):** carrying nesting material, feeding young, attending active nests, and more
- If there is no evidence of breeding, a behavior code or no code would be appropriate:
- **Observed (lavender):** flyover or no code

Familiarity with these codes and their ranking will be valuable for this project.

For the California Breeding Bird Atlas to be successful, California's community of active birders is highly encouraged to participate. eBird statistics show that from 2020 through 2024, greater than 76,000 eBirders logged more than 3.5 million hours birding in California. If some of this effort is redistributed towards terrain where bird surveys are less frequent or lacking (targeted atlas), coverage hours could be more evenly spread out and may eventually ensure that all blocks at least meet the common metric of 20 hours of coverage.

Not every square inch of the state needs to be surveyed. Extrapolations of some block data can be used to generate accurate models for mapping and tracking bird populations. Strategies are being developed to ensure adequate coverage encompasses the full range of the state's complexities. Additionally, a dynamic mapping tool for volunteers will be developed to help identify areas where surveys can provide the most valuable data such as sites vulnerable to rapid change or areas needing coverage.

After the five years of fieldwork concludes, researchers will analyze the data for four years to produce the final conclusions, much of which will be published in the first statewide atlas.

Easy, right? List sightings as usual using eBird; add breeding codes when appropriate; stick to one checklist per block. Ready? Let's Go!

Think about adopting a block near you that needs data and regularly submit a checklist to the project. Here is the eBird atlas Effort Map page.

<https://ebird.org/atlascalifornia/effortmap>

Let your out-of-state visiting eBirding friends and relatives know that they can join the project during their stay in

California.

Here are a couple of useful Youtube videos, "California Bird Atlas: Quick Start Tutorial" and "Adding an Existing eBird Checklist to the California Bird Atlas Project":

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/8Z3kbqiO9rw>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dG0BB_c_mDU

The above sites can also be found by searching [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) for the titles listed.

By participating in the project, you become part of a permanent historical baseline. Your observations directly support conservation and can influence real-world decisions. Data is important in identifying declining or at-risk species, it can guide land management and habitat protection, plus inform environmental policy and planning.

Another highly impactful way to support this initiative is by making a donation at <https://www.californiabirdatlas.org/>

SPECIES PROFILE

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Tsaiwei OLEE

Key Features for Field Recognition: Olive green tiny songbird, with white wing bar followed by a dark band. Small beak, prominent white broken eye-ring. Females identical to males but lack red crown patches. Red cap on male is usually concealed, shown only when agitated. Famously hyperactive foragers that constantly flip their wings while searching for insects in trees and shrubs.



Similar Species:

Hutton's Vireo and Golden-crowned Kinglet



At the end of our recent Palomar Audubon birding trip to Morro Bay, some of us decided to take more photos of Chestnut-backed Chickadees,

(continued on page 9)

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.

FIELD TRIPS
March– April 2026

Saturday, March 7, 8:00 am.

San Joaquin Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary
 5 Riparian View, Irvine, CA 92612

(Thomas Guide to Orange County, page 859 J-7)

Take I-5 north to the San Diego Freeway I-405. Continue north on the I-405 a short distance and then take the Culver exit and turn left (south). At the first signal, which is Michelson, turn right. Continue west on Michelson and then turn left on Harvard. Continue south on Harvard and then turn right on University Dr. Continue on University to Campus Dr. and turn right again. Stay in the far right lane and immediately turn right on to Riparian View which will enter the San Joaquin Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary. (There is a dark green sign by the turnoff, identifying this as the route into the San Joaquin Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary) At the end of the road, you will make a sharp left turn down a steep driveway and into the parking lot. The first building you see will be the Sea & Sage Audubon House. Beyond the Audubon House are the ponds of the San Joaquin Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary and many trails for us to explore. Allow 50 min. from Oceanside. **NOTE:** The leader for this field trip will be Jennifer Falconer, who lives close-by, and frequently birds at this location.

Leader: Jennifer Falconer, 949-278-1630

Saturday, March 14, 8:00 am.

Lindo Lake
 Lakeside

(1232-B3) Rating: 2

From North County, take I-15 south to Hwy.52 then east to Hwy 67. Head north, and take the Winter Gardens Blvd. Exit. Turn left on Woodside Ave (into Lakeside) and continue northeast to the Lindo Lake County Park. Stay on Woodside a short distance, turn right on Chestnut St. which then becomes Lindo Lane. Park in the small parking lot on the left, next to the VFW hall at 12650 Lindo Lane.

Leader: Beth Pearson, 760-716-6804

Saturday, March 21, 8:00 am.

Borrego Springs Hawk-watch

We will meet near the bathrooms in the park in the center of the large Palm Canyon Drive Round-about of Borrego Springs. It is called Christmas Circle. We are meeting at 8 am, so allow at least an hour and a half from Escondido. From there we will travel to the Borrego Springs Hawkwatch location. The fastest way to get there is to take Hwy 78 east to Santa Ysabel and turn left on Hwy 79 (north) towards Warner Springs. Before you get to Warner Springs turn on S2 (San Felipe Rd) and go a

few miles, then turn left on Montezuma Valley Rd. At the bottom of the hill (lots of sharp curves) turn right on Palm Canyon Dr. and proceeded to the Palm Canyon Dr. Round -About, near the south side.

Leader: Steve Ellis 619-380-3981

Saturday, March 28, 8:00 am.

Sweetwater River Gorge
 Rancho San Diego

(1271-J6) Rating: 2-3

From I-5, I-805, or I-15, take Hwy 94 east; stay on Hwy 94 as it becomes Campo Road. Turn right, on Campo Rd. and then turn right again on Singer Lane, and then an immediate left, onto the dirt parking area near the old steel bridge. This area is a rich stream habitat surrounded by native chaparral and sage scrub. There are no restrooms or drinking water available, so plan accordingly. Expect warm weather. **It's a PAS tradition to eat lunch at close-by Rubio's Coastal Grill after birding.**

Leader: Gerry & Linda Baade, 858-675-9875/858-231-9500

Saturday April 4, 8:00 am.

Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve
 Murrieta, CA

(Thomas Guide to Riverside County, page 957-C30)
Rating: 2

Allow 1hr. from Escondido. Travel north on I-15 through Temecula, continuing north on I-15 to Clinton Keith Rd. Exit Clinton Keith Rd. on the right, then go back under the highway and travel southwest on Clinton Keith for about 4 miles to the Reserve Visitor Center on your left. There is a parking fee. We will meet here and bird briefly around the center, then we may carpool to the vernal pools (if there is any water there), and then possibly walk to the historic Adobe Ranch House.

Leader: Beth Pearson, 760-716-6804

Saturday, April 11, 8:00 am.

Wilderness Gardens Preserve
 Pala

(409-E6) Rating: 2

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

Leader: Jim Beckman, 858-205-2819

Saturday, April 18, 8:00 am.
El Monte County Park (New Location!)
 Lakeside
Rating: 2
 15805 El Monte Rd.

From San Diego, travel 21 miles east on I-8 to the Lake Jennings Park Road exit. Then go 1.5 miles north to El Monte Road. Then travel another 4 miles east to the park entrance. There is a **San Diego County Park parking fee, but free with a County senior pass.**
 Leader: Vince Plourde, 619-874-9622

Saturday, April 25, 8:30 am.
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 Temecula. Change to I-215 north and continue north to Hwy 60 east. Take Hwy 60 east then continuing east on I-10 approximately 40 miles to Hwy 62. Go north on Hwy 62 about 12 miles to Morongo Valley (a small town). About a mile or two into town, look for signs for Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Turn right (south) on East Drive, a dirt road, to the Preserve. The parking lot is just beyond the caretaker's house. 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 2 hours travel time from Escondido.
 Leader: Gerry Baade, 858-675-9875

Saturday, May 2, 8:00 am.
La Jolla Coastline
 La Jolla
(1227-E6) Rating: 1

From I-5 take the La Jolla Parkway exit west. Continue on this road, which will merge with Torrey Pines Rd at about ¾ 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.** Park at the first available parking space located. Don't pass up an available parking spot! We will be looking for shorebirds, gulls, and seabirds.
 Leader: Jim Beckman, 858-205-2819

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

Donations & Membership in Palomar Audubon Society (PAS)

All donations of \$30 or more qualify for membership in PAS

Membership benefits include:

- Bi-monthly newsletter – Band Tales
- Monthly Programs and Presentations on birds around the world
- Invitation to Birding Trips outside our region, including International
- Invitation to Annual Summer Picnic and Christmas Bird Count Picnic
- Invitation to bird classes

Note that PAS membership is separate from membership in National Audubon, and we rely on donations from our members to offer the benefits.

Donation Levels: Member (includes spouses) \$30
 Supporter \$60 Silver \$125 Gold \$250
 Platinum \$500 Legacy \$1000

Palomar Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit and an all-volunteer organization. Your donations are tax deductible.

Donations and/or Payments can be made using a check or by using Zelle.

Checks: When mailing a check, fill in your details below and send via USPS to:
 Palomar Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2483,
 Escondido, CA 92033

Donation amount: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Tel: _____

Please indicate if you would prefer a paper copy of Band Tales: Yes ___ or No ___
 (Band Tales is available on our website:
www.palomaraudubon.org)

Zelle: Make your donation to palomaraudubon@gmail.com
 In the memo line indicate: "Donation from *your name address, and email*"

Also indicate if you would prefer a paper copy of Band Tales: Yes or No

For Payments other than Donations such as trip costs or classes.

These can also be made via Zelle or USPS Mail as above. Please be sure to indicate the reason for the payment in the memo line of your check or Zelle submission.

BIRDS IN FOCUS

Linda Baade

Beat the Grain- Tips for Cleaner, Crisper Bird Images

Have you ever headed out extra early—or slipped outside just before sunset—finally spotting the bird you hoped to see? Gleefully, you fire off frame after frame. But once you are home reviewing your images, the excitement fades. The photos are nice, but not quite what you hoped for. Excessive grain, referred to as “noise”, has crept in, turning great moments into merely fair ones. While overcast days and the soft light of dawn and dusk are ideal for finding and photographing birds, those same low-light conditions can easily lead to noisy images. So how do you combat this? This article provides a quick look at why noise happens and practical tips to reduce it— saving you from spending excessive time cleaning up images in post-processing.

What is Noise?

In photography, noise is the visual “graininess” or speckled texture that shows up in an image—especially in the darker areas. It reduces visual sharpness and detail.

It’s Cause

The imaging process begins when light passes through the camera’s lens and strikes the sensor. The sensor contains millions of light-sensitive receptors, called photosites, which convert incoming light into an electrical charge. The more light packets (photons) a photosite collects, the stronger the charge it produces. In low light, the camera must compensate for the weak data by amplifying it, which boosts both the signal and the variations in it, making noise more visible. In short, a primary cause of noisy images is a lack of light reaching the sensor.

Actions to Reduce Visible Grain (Noise)

To reduce visible noise at the moment of capture, increase the amount of light reaching the sensor. You can do this by using a wider aperture (a lower f-stop) or a slower shutter speed. You can also minimize noise by reducing how much the camera must amplify the signal, using the lowest ISO that still gives you a proper exposure.

Strategies for Success

Guard against using a faster shutter speed than necessary for the situation. For slow-moving birds in flight, panning can allow you to use a lower shutter speed. For fast moving subjects, instead of freezing motion at 1/3200 or more, you might drop to 1/2000—or even lower—while smoothly tracking the bird through the frame. A perched bird often can be captured at a much slower shutter speed with good technique and stable support. Using the lowest shutter speed appropriate for the moment helps keep ISO as low as possible for proper exposure.

Shoot Wide-Open Using the widest aperture available on your lens let’s more light reach the sensor, reducing the need for amplification to produce an image. Shooting wide-open also creates a shallow depth-of-field, which softens and blurs the background, making the subject stand out.

Experiment with Exposure Combinations Test different combinations of shutter speed, aperture, and ISO to find the best settings for both proper exposure and your creative intent. Whether you use Auto ISO or set it manually, the goal is the same: prioritize the shutter speed and aperture needed for the shot, then let ISO rise only as much as necessary.

Shoot in RAW Format to gain Flexibility Shooting in RAW preserves maximum detail and provides greater latitude for lifting shadows, correcting exposure, and recovering highlights in post-processing when your in-camera settings are not perfect.

Mastering noise control begins with understanding how light, shutter speed, aperture, and ISO work together. By maximizing the light that reaches the sensor and choosing exposure settings intentionally, you can capture cleaner, sharper images in even the most challenging conditions.



Cedar Waxwing in shade, shot wide-open to blur the background; ISO 2500 kept noise reasonable while allowing a 1/2000 shutter to freeze action.

Trip Report-Morro Bay, California January 8-10, 2026 By Doug Walkey



A party of 29 birders hit Morro Bay running and by the end of just three days, they had observed 142 species, 12 more than observed two years prior! Here are the details of the list: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/46097>.

We again very much appreciated Gjon and Barbara Hazard, who spent a weekend earlier casing out all the likely spots to find us lots of interesting birds. Their step-by-step itinerary was a huge help in keeping us all organized and together. The impressive Morro Rock never fails to deliver the Peregrine Falcon and gave us long looks as he searches below looking for an unsuspecting target. And, although not birds, the coast near the Hearst Castle produced hundreds of Elephant Seals: the bulls fighting for dominance over each other, and the females suckling young, one just five days old, and another female trying to herd her offspring out of the route of an aggressive male. Then there are the playful sea otters, some breaking shells on their stomachs, another with a young one on her tummy.

For me, it is not the birds (or the animals), it is the birders: seeing the joy and happiness in their faces and watching the bonding and camaraderie that occurs on such outings: travelling together, resting together, socializing together and sharing meals together. Our group was a large group, so much so that our two chosen restaurants for dinner turned us down. Nonetheless, Diane and I spent the day of arrival checking out substitutions and based on so many favorable comments, we will choose these establishments again. We all felt special about what we had seen at Morro Bay and how, through a reasonable registration fee, we were able to reward ourselves with a nice meal.

PAS Field Trip eBird Statistics for 2025

- 647 species seen
- 36,703 birds counted
- 195 checklists
- 134 locations birded
- 452 miles traveled while birding

Once again another very active year for PAS!



What's Up at PAS

Linda Baade spearheaded an outreach to the San Diego County Libraries starting with Mission Hills and then Scripps Miramar Ranch Library to bring the wonderful world of birds to the children and parents of the local community. They were both considered a great success and the desire is to continue to have these programs at more county libraries. Many thanks to the PAS members who helped bring this to fruition; Linda Baade, Tina Kafka, Penny Hernandez, Tsaiwei Olee, Dave Fortner and his daughter Cindy.



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

Michael & Sonja Beeve, Thomas & Denise Boran, Paul Cheng & Li Tai, Gordon Comeau, Robert & Toni Crisell, Steve & Patti Ellis, Patricia Fallon, Harlynn Geisler, Monica Giotta, Tracey Henchbarger, Maryann Khan, Dorothy Kraus, Max Leibowitz, Katherine Lord, Mary Marquis, John & Connie Moore, Nathan Schneider, Nicole Helm & Stephen Ryder, Ann Van Leer (ECC), Ken Weaver, Margaret Yorio, Yvonne Yragui

PAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Please join us for our very interesting monthly programs and refreshments at the **Remington Club II Retirement Center, 16916 Hierba Drive, Rancho Bernardo**. There is a social period beginning at 6:30 pm with the meeting and program getting underway promptly at 7:00 pm.

Mark your Calendars! Don't miss these interesting Presentations!

Thursday March 26, 6:30 pm

Sharyl Massy (Sky Hunters – Raptor Education and Rehabilitation)

“Remarkable Raptors”

Sky Hunters is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating local communities about the diversity of raptors native to San Diego County, in addition to caring for sick, injured and orphaned raptors.

MEET LIVE RAPTORS, and learn about their diversity, taxonomy and their amazing adaptations! We'll also discuss what's involved in raptor rehabilitation and our goal of releasing rehabilitated birds back into their habitats.

Wildlife Conservation and Environmental Education have been Sharyl's passion for over 35 years. She graduated with a BS in Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University and a MA in Environmental Science Education from Sonoma State University. She has had a diverse career working as a naturalist, with outdoor education schools on Palomar Mountain and in the Cuyamacas, an Interpreter with CA State Parks, served as a Peace Corp Volunteer in the Dominican Republic and worked for The Nature Conservancy as the Education Coordinator on a 100,000-acre Bison ranch in Colorado. Over the years she has volunteered for various conservation organizations, most recently having served on the Board of Directors with the Volcan Mountain Foundation in Julian. She recently retired and continues to volunteer with Sky Hunters, spends time working on habitat restoration and native plant gardening projects.



Bring The Kids! They Will Enjoy This One!

Thursday April 23, 6:30 pm

Phil Unitt

San Diego: An Environmental History

San Diego County is renowned for its great biodiversity, and correspondingly high number of threatened species. Understanding how to conserve what remains means understanding not only how we've lost what we've lost but how we've gained what we've gained, how evolution is keeping pace with urbanization. So in this presentation the Natural History Museum's curator of birds and mammals Philip Unitt will address the environmental history of San Diego, integrating how human history is interlocked with the biological. Even life-long residents of San Diego are sure to find some surprises in this unique perspective.

Bird Trivia

1. What bird is known for “hopping” on the ground instead of walking?
2. Which Bird is famous for flying backwards?
3. Which bird's distinctive “laugh” led to its name?
4. Which bird is known for its strikingly colorful plumage and tail feathers that can be fanned out in a display?
5. Which bird is famous for being able to “dance to music”?

Answers: 1. Robin, 2. Hummingbird, 3. Kooaburra, 4. Peacock, 5. The lyrebird

SPECIES PROFILE

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Cont. from page 3)

a species rarely seen in the San Diego area. Mary Jo Hays suggested Oso Flaco Lake State Park. It turned out to be a great scenic birding spot, with a tree-lined green tunnel at the beginning, boardwalk on a lake, and trail ending at a sand dune beach. Upon arrival at the park entrance, we were greeted right away by our target bird. In addition to the small Chestnut-backed Chickadee, quite a few even smaller birds caught our attention: the non-stop Ruby-crowned Kinglet. They flicked their wings jumping from one tree to another, then from one branch to the other, and we had to turn our binoculars and cameras constantly to follow them. A few similar sized Golden-crowned Kinglets were also spotted.

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet is a North American bird. It arrives here in San Diego in September for the winter, and leaves in April, returning to Canada during the breeding season. It is one of San Diego County's most widespread winter visitors. Not particularly choosy of the habitat, it can be found many places—from urban eucalyptus trees to mountain pines and firs to desert oases. Even in the high elevation of 4000 to 6000 ft, Ruby-crowned Kinglets can be observed.

Though a tiny bird, it can lay up to 12 eggs, which is the largest clutch of any North American passerine for its size. But we don't get to see these nests often because they are usually high above ground hidden in the spruce-fir forests.

In the field, the Ruby-crowned can be easily confused with Hutton's Vireo. They are similar in size and color, and both share the broken prominent eye-ring. I have labeled the differences to look for in the above photos: Hutton's Vireo has a thicker bill with a tiny hook at the end, blackish feet instead of pinkish, and lacks the black band next to the white wing bar. And behavior-wise Hutton's is not as jumpy and rarely flicks its wings. The other kinglet, Golden-crowned, is about the same size, but it's easier to tell them apart because the Golden-crowned has black-and-white facial stripes and bright yellow crown patch. Genetic analyses have shown that these two kinglets are not particularly related.

Conservation status of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet is currently listed as Least Concern. The population in western North America is increasing despite the negative impact of logging. On the other hand, the population in eastern North America is decreasing. We need more long-term monitoring of this species to evaluate these

Save this date for the Annual PAS Picnic! June 14th at Adams Park in Valley Center. More details in the next newsletter.



Species Spotlight: Trumpeter Swan

The trumpeter swan is the largest species of waterfowl, and both the heaviest and longest native bird of North America. A 2015 survey assessed trumpeter swan abundance and productivity throughout the entire breeding ranges of the three recognized North American populations: the Pacific Coast (PCP), Rocky Mountain (RMP), and Interior (IP) populations. From 1968 to 2010 the population has increased from 3,722 to approximately 46,225 birds, in large part due to re-introductions to the species' historic range.

The breeding habitat of trumpeter swans includes large and shallow ponds, undisturbed lakes, pristine wetlands, wide and slow rivers, and marshes in northwestern and central North America. The largest numbers of breeding pairs are found in Alaska.

Information from; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trumpeter_swan



Book Corner



Books that you may find enjoyable if you have not already:

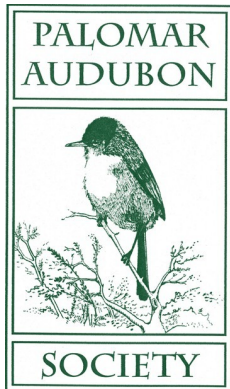
From the author:

- *Listen to the Songbirds: Meditation on Beauty and Survival* by Sepala Weliwitigoda is a bird-themed poetry collection that blends lyrical poems with full-color illustrations and gentle natural-history reflections. The book invites readers to slow down, listen, notice birds and wildlife more deeply, and develop a closer relationship with the living world. Designed to be both educational and contemplative, it appeals to adults, as well as children and youth who are beginning to explore birds and nature.
- *Birding Under the Influence* by Dorian Anderson, Cycling across America in search of Birds and Recovery.

Band Tales

March-April, 2026

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

Band Tales

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Note: Members may contact any of the PAS Officers or Directors at the email address below.

Web Page <http://www.palomaraudubon.org>
palomaraudubon@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Saturday, March 14th at 12:00 PM

Location: Club II Retirement Center, 16916 Hierba Drive, Rancho Bernardo, CA 92128

QUICK CALENDAR

March	7	San Joaquin Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Walk
March	14	Lindo Lake Walk
March	14	Board Meeting (see above)
March	21	Borrego Springs Hawk Watch
March	26	Presentation-"Remarkable Raptors" by Sharyl Massy
March	28	Sweetwater River Gorge Walk
April	4	Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve Walk
April	11	Wilderness Gardens Preserve Walk
April	18	El Monte County Park Walk
April	23	Presentation-San Diego: An Environmental History by Phil Unitt
April	25	Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Walk
May	2	La Jolla Coastline Walk