



Band Tales

**Palomar Audubon
Society**
A Chapter of the
**NATIONAL AUDUBON
SOCIETY**

**Volume XLII
No. 5**

**September-October
2026**

**Editor
Jack Peterson**

PAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS ARE BACK AFTER OUR SUMMER HIATUS

*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 September 24, 6:30 pm

Coleen Wisinski

The Ecology and Conservation of Burrowing Owls in Southern California



Colleen Wisinski serves San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance as a Conservation Program Specialist in Recovery Ecology. In this role, she has worked with golden eagles and cactus wrens and is currently the field team leader for the burrowing owl program. She is interested in conservation biology, population dynamics, and habitat use of birds. Colleen's main research focus is the ecology and conservation of burrowing owls in Southern California, particularly of the breeding population of burrowing owls in San Diego County. She is responsible for overseeing the field team, managing and analyzing the data, and working with colleagues to make recommendations about management of the species to local land and wildlife managers. Using direct observations, camera traps, GPS transmitters, and color banding, she and the team are learning about survival, reproduction, and movement of the owls in the region. One of Colleen's favorite parts of the project is capturing, banding, and blood-sampling the owls for genetic analysis. (Description taken from her Colleen Wisinski, M.S. | San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance website).

Thursday October 22, 6:30 pm

Dottie Marron

Iceland-Birding the Ring Road



Dottie is going to share with us her nine day birding trip on the Ring Road in Iceland. This is Iceland's most important road, completed in 1974, and serves as the primary route for both locals and tourists traveling around the country. It forms a complete loop around Iceland, excluding the Westfjords, and is fully paved, mostly two lanes wide, with some single-lane bridges and tunnels in rural areas. Driving the entire road non-stop takes roughly 15–16 hours, but most travelers plan a multi-day trip to explore scenic stops. We will hear Dottie's experience of this famous road and the birds that were accessible from it. Dottie Marron is a long-time member of the Palomar Audubon Society.

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A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Beth Pearson, President

THE FARM BILL IS A BIRD BILL

Dear Palomar Audubon Society members,



When most of us hear the words *Farm Bill*, birds probably aren't the first thing that comes to mind. But this massive piece of federal legislation is actually one of our country's most important tools for protecting bird habitat.

Nearly half of the land in the United States is used for agriculture, so the future of many birds depends not only on parks and wildlife refuges, but also on farms, ranches, and privately owned forests. Farm Bill conservation programs help landowners restore grasslands and wetlands, improve forests, conserve water, and provide habitat for wildlife.

That matters because many of our birds are struggling. Grassland birds in particular have declined dramatically over the past 50 years. Programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program help by providing incentives for landowners to restore or maintain grasslands, wetlands, streamside buffers, and other wildlife habitat. Other Farm Bill programs support ranchers, farmers, and forest owners who want to manage their lands in ways that benefit both their livelihoods and wildlife.

And this isn't just an issue for birds somewhere else. Many of the birds we enjoy here in San Diego County spend part of their lives hundreds or thousands of miles away. A bird we see during migration may depend on a Central Valley wetland, a Great Plains ranch, or farmland elsewhere along its journey. Protecting migratory birds means protecting all the places they need throughout their lives.

As Congress works on the new Farm Bill, the National Audubon Society is asking Congress to maintain strong funding for conservation programs and strengthen protections for grasslands, wetlands, forests, and migratory bird habitat.

I encourage Palomar Audubon members to join that effort. Contact your representatives in Congress and let them know that conservation needs to remain a strong part of the Farm Bill.

**REMINDER:
DEADLINE FOR THE
NOVEMBER–DECEMBER ISSUE IS OCTOBER, 15.
SUBMIT COPY TO:
Jack Peterson at jackdpete@gmail.com**

Those of us who spend our Saturday mornings looking for birds know just how important habitat is. A ranch, farm field, wetland, or patch of grassland may not look like a wildlife preserve, but to a migrating or nesting bird, it can be just as important.

The Farm Bill may have an agricultural name, but it's also a habitat bill, a conservation bill, and very much a bird bill.

Happy Trails,
Beth



What's Up at PAS

A Reminder about the PAS Bird Photography contest. Entries are to be submitted by 1:59 PM, Oct 15, 2026 at palomaraudubon@gmail.com. See the Palomar Audubon

Society Website (<https://palomaraudubon.org>) for further details.

Birding for Kids: PAS Partners with San Diego Public Libraries to Inspire Young Naturalists

In October 2025, Palomar Audubon Society began a new partnership with the City of San Diego Library System to bring **Birding for Kids** programs to families across the region. The goal is to spark curiosity and appreciation for local birdlife through fun, age-appropriate activities.

Each free session includes a short presentation with photos and recordings of neighborhood birds, followed by a bird-themed craft. Children then head outdoors for a scavenger hunt using binoculars and flash cards of local species. The flash cards enrich the experience on days when few live birds are present, ensuring every child can practice identifying common birds. Exhibits—including owl pellets, photo-rich posters, feathers, and a hummingbird nest—along with bird-themed prizes, add to the excitement.

The inaugural program took place at the Mission Hills–Hillcrest/Knox Library on January 24, 2026. PAS has since been invited to multiple branches, most recently Carmel Valley on July 9, 2026, where 51 participants, about 30 children, joined in. Parents expressed sincere appreciation for the educational and family-friendly experience.

PAS thanks the dedicated volunteers and Education Committee members whose efforts make Birding for Kids possible and help young learners discover the joy of birding.

Upcoming Trips:

South Texas–November 2026, Trip Filled
Salton Sea–January 2027, Trip details TBA
International Trip–March 2027, Trip details TBA
Magee Marsh–May 2027, Trip details TBA
Maine–July 2027, Trip Filled
Southeast Arizona, August 2027, Trip details TBA
New Mexico Sandia Crest & Bosque del Apache–December 2027, Trip Details TBA

SPECIES PROFILE BALD EAGLE

Tsaiwei OLEE



Key features for field recognition: Bald Eagle is a large fish-eagle with a dark brown body and a distinctive white head and tail. Juveniles take four to five years to mature into adults, and during that time they look very different: mostly brown from head to tail, with mottled white on the wings, body, and tail.



Similar species: The adult Bald Eagle is usually easy to distinguish from other large raptors because of its striking white head and tail contrasted with a dark body. Telling a Golden Eagle from a juvenile Bald Eagle can be more challenging, since young Bald Eagles are also primarily dark brown. Two quick clues help separate them:

1. Legs: Golden Eagles have fully feathered legs; juvenile Bald Eagles do not.
2. White markings: Bald Eagles show irregular, messy white splotches, while Golden Eagles have more distinct and concentrated white patches.

Why is it called “bald”?

I have always been puzzled by the Bald Eagle’s name: why call it “bald” when it has a full head of striking white feathers?

Many online sources, including respected references such as Encyclopedia Britannica and National Geographic, explain that the name Bald comes from an old word meaning “white” or “white-headed.” However, I could not find a clear Old English dictionary reference for “balde” with that meaning. Birder Rick Wright has also pointed out that it seems unlikely that European settlers in North America would have used an Old English term to name an eagle found only in North America. For now, though, I am content to accept the name without feeling that I have found a completely satisfying explanation.

Range and food

Bald Eagles are found only in North America, from Canada through all 49 continental U.S. states, Alaska and into northern Mexico.

Fish is their preferred food, but Bald Eagles are opportunistic foragers. They will also take birds, mammals, carrion, and other available prey.



Bald Eagles build the largest tree nests of any bird in North America. Made of sticks and lined with grass and other softer material, these nests are reused year after year. The adults add new material each season, and over time the nest can become an enormous structure. You can find two adults and two juveniles in the huge nest in the above photo.

America’s national bird

Charles Thomson, the Secretary of Congress, selected the Bald Eagle for the Great Seal of the United States in 1782. However, the Bald Eagle did not receive formal status as the official national bird of the United States until December 24, 2024, when Joe Biden signed legislation granting it that designation.

Conservation comeback

The federal Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940, along with the banning of the insecticide DDT in the 1970s, helped Bald Eagle populations recover dramatically. In the San Diego area, Bald Eagles are now a nesting species. Birders regularly encounter them around several local lakes and wetlands, including:

- Lake Wohlford
- Lake Hodges
- San Elijo Lagoon
- Otay Lake
- Lake Henshaw
- Poway Lake
- Lake Cuyamaca

There are more than 50 Bald Eagle nest cams across the U.S. Through these live streams, we get to observe Bald Eagles in their natural habitats.

A personal note

A few years ago, while strolling through a park in Japan, I stopped at a local crafts exhibition and was drawn to a pair of Bald Eagle earrings delicately made by a young jewelry artist. A handwritten tag described them as “bold eagle” — probably a simple misspelling, but somehow a fitting name for our majestic national bird. “Bold eagle” may not be correct, but it captures the spirit of the Bald Eagle rather well.

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**September– October 2026**Saturday, September 5, 7:30 am.

Robb Field/San Diego River Tidal Mud Flats
San Diego

(1267-J5) Rating: 1

We will visit two locations along the San Diego River Floodway to look for early migrant and returning shorebirds, often still in breeding plumage, and post-breeding dispersal Elegant Terns. From North County, take Hwy. 163S to I-8W and drive toward Ocean Beach. Make a slight left at Sunset Cliffs Blvd. and then stay in the right lane. Turn right onto W. Point Loma Blvd. and then right at Bacon St. Drive straight ahead and on to the Robb Field parking area near the tennis courts at the east end. Bring a scope if you have one. We will also visit the nearby Famosa Slough.

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

Saturday, September 12, 7:30 am.**Palomar Mountain State Park**

San Diego County

(409-G7) Rating: 2

This field trip will start from the parking lot at Doane Pond. Leave the Escondido area before 6:30 am. From I-15, take Highway 76 east to Highway S6, north to Palomar Mountain. Or from Escondido, take Highway S6 to Palomar Mountain. At the mountaintop, at the S7 intersection stop sign, turn left and continue for 3 miles on State Park Rd. to the Palomar Mountain State Park entrance. **Note: The State of California has recently increased the day-use parking fee. Carpooling is highly recommended.** After paying the parking fee, proceed 1.5 miles to the Doane Pond/School Camp Area parking lot. Bring a lunch for an after-walk picnic.

Expect warm weather.

Leader: Beth Pearson, 760-716-6675

Saturday September 19, 7:30 am**Live Oak County Park**

Fallbrook

(1028- C5) Rating: 1-2

Take I-15 north to the Fallbrook/E. Mission Rd. Exit 51. Cross over the freeway and turn left on to Old Highway 395 located at the stoplight immediately after the I-15 South Freeway exit. Proceed 1 mile south to Reche Road. Turn right and proceed 2.2 miles up Reche Road to Live Oak County Park located immediately after Gird Road. Meet in the parking lot. There is a small parking fee (\$3) at all SD County Parks, but free with a Senior Parking Permit.

Leader: Mac West, 949-800-9243

Saturday, September 26, 7:30 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: Gerry & Linda Baade, 858-675-9875/858-231-9500

Saturday, October 3, 8:00 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 ¾ 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 10, 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. After entry, turn left to the parking area. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Jim Beckman, 858-205-2819

Saturday, October 17, 8:00 am**Lake Wohlford**

Escondido

(1110-H3) Rating: 2

Birders will follow the southern and eastern shoreline of Lake Wohlford from the parking lot on Oakvale Road. Bald Eagles and Ospreys might be seen, among the resident birds along with fall and early winter visitors. To get to Lake Wohlford from Escondido, travel east on Valley Parkway. At Washington Avenue, Valley Parkway becomes Valley Center Road. Continue another 0.8 mile to Lake Wohlford Road and turn right. Drive 1.9 miles uphill to Oakvale Drive, and it's again a right turn. Drive 0.7 mile on Oakvale Drive. NOTE: (This road may be under construction) to a gated dirt road on the left, that leads to our parking area for public access to the south shore of Lake Wohlford.

Leader: Mary Jo Hayes, 760-505-6675

Saturday, October 24, 8.00am

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 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. **No restrooms here. 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: Beth Pearson, 760-716-6675

Saturday, October 31, 8:00 am.

Santee Lakes

Santee

(1231-A5) Rating: 2

From I -15 go east on Highway 52. Exit at Mast Blvd. Continue east on Mast Blvd. to Fanita Parkway. Turn right at Fanita Parkway and the entrance to Santee Lakes is on the right. Car entry fee is \$7. **OR** from Mast Blvd, turn north on Fanita Parkway and continue north to Lake Canyon Dr. Turn right, and park on the street, and then walk in the Santee Lakes open gate for **FREE!** Meet in the parking lot by the General Store between lakes 4 and 5. **Expect warm weather.**

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

Saturday, November 7, 8:00 am.

Lake Murray

La Mesa

(1250 E6) Rating: 1-2

Take I-8 east to Lake Murray Boulevard. Exit with right turn at light, and proceed 1 mile north to Baltimore Drive. Turn left and drive about 1 mile to Jackson Drive. Turn left again, proceed ¼ mile and make another left turn on Golfcrest Drive. Continue about 1 mile on Golfcrest Drive to the Mission Trails Regional Park entrance on the left. Meet in the parking lot near the softball field bleachers. This location is on the northwest end of Lake Murray. **Expect warm weather.**

Leader: Jim Beckman, 858-205-2819

FIELD TRIP CHECKLIST

- ◆ Comfortable shoes or hiking boots
- ◆ Hat, sunscreen, insect repellent
- ◆ Drinking water, snacks and lunch
- ◆ Binoculars/Scope, field guide and notebook

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 Weekly Walks and 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

Practical Strategies for Successful Bird Photography

Photographing birds can be challenging. They move fast, tolerate little human presence, and the environment rarely cooperates. Joggers, dogs, and cyclists—any sudden activity can send birds scattering. Even other birds can disrupt a perfect moment; a hawk or Peregrine Falcon can clear an entire scene instantly. Still, there are practical strategies that improve your chances of coming home with the images you are after.

Timing: Many locations get busy quickly, so heading out early helps you avoid disruptions. Morning light is ideal and free of harsh midday shadows. Atmospheric conditions, like fog or warm diffused rays, can add striking drama to your shots.

Studying Bird Behavior: Quietly observing a bird's movement patterns can help you anticipate where an interesting moment might occur or where your subject will be positioned in favorable light. Many species repeat flight paths and return to the same perch, reed, or patch of ground. By watching a bird's movements over time, you can predict its likely location, pre-compose your shot, and be ready the moment it returns. On a recent trip to Central California, observing the flight pattern a Pigeon Guillemot followed each time it returned to its young allowed me to predict its approach and identify the exact spot where the sun would illuminate the bird. That preparation made it possible to capture the adult's return with a squid in its bill (photo #1).

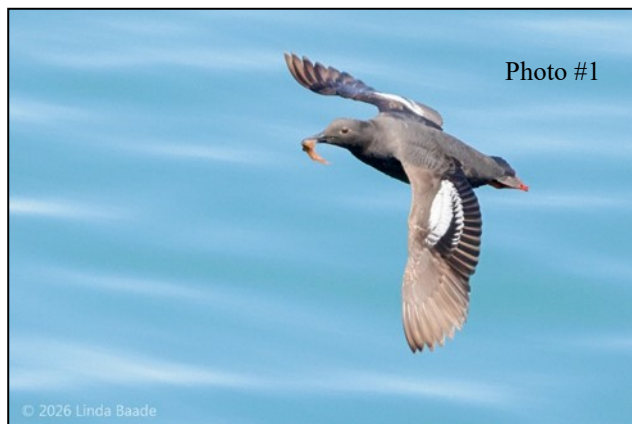
Visiting the Same Location Repeatedly: Returning to the same habitat over several days reveals which species frequent the area and where you're most likely to find them. It also helps you predetermine the best time for directional light. For example, repeated visits to Imperial Beach made it possible to pinpoint where Least Terns were consistently present. Returning during their breeding season to the location where I would likely find pairs provided the opportunity to photograph their courtship and mating behavior (photo #2).

Practice Patience and Stillness: Move slowly and minimize noise to avoid spooking birds. Staying in one spot long enough allows them to acclimate to your presence and resume normal behaviors. A low posture can also reduce your visual profile and helps birds settle more quickly after a disturbance.

Position Yourself Strategically: Place yourself with the sun behind you or at an angle that brings out the eyes or feather detail. Adjust your height or shooting angle to avoid cluttered backgrounds. Expect joggers, dogs, and cyclists, and plan for how their approach might influence bird movement. Studying the wind and anticipating the direction birds are likely to fly can also help you capture in-flight moments triggered by disturbances.

Use Selective Settings Thoughtfully: Choose focal lengths that let you maintain distance while preserving detail and separating the subject from the background. Preset your camera with a shutter speed fast enough to freeze motion and capture unexpected moments. Noise from a higher ISO can be managed later; motion blur cannot. If your camera offers custom modes, set them up so you can instantly switch to the right settings for the light and type of shot you're aiming for.

Practice: The more time you spend in the field, the better you become at anticipating behavior and increasing your chances of capturing dynamic photos. Regular outings build intuition about timing, light, and movement, and help you learn which camera settings work best for subjects under various conditions so you're ready when that fleeting moment appears.



TRIP REPORT-Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park, Maine

July 18–23, 2026

By Dianne Benham



Ten members of the Palomar Audubon Society gathered in Maine for six unforgettable days exploring one of the Northeast's premier birding destinations—the Schoodic Peninsula and Acadia National Park. Under the expert leadership of naturalist Seth Benz, our small group experienced spectacular coastal scenery, productive birding, fascinating natural history, and plenty of classic Downeast hospitality. With just ten participants, the trip offered a relaxed pace, personalized guidance from Seth, and countless opportunities to ask questions and share in one another's discoveries.

Our home for the week was the Schoodic Institute, located within Acadia National Park. Comfortable cottages nestled among spruce and fir forests provided the perfect base for early morning bird walks, hearty meals, and evening discussions reviewing the day's sightings. The dining hall and lecture hall were just a short walk away along

peaceful wooded trails. White-tailed deer, including several mothers with spotted fawns, grazed around our cottages morning and evening, adding to the feeling of being immersed in nature. As if to welcome us, a porcupine greeted us from a tree just outside the lecture hall as we left our orientation on the first evening.

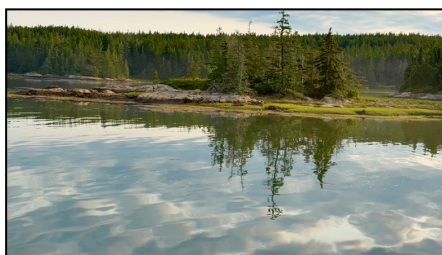
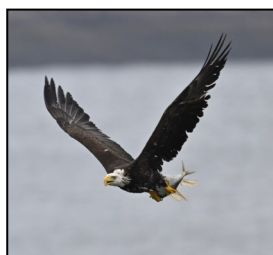
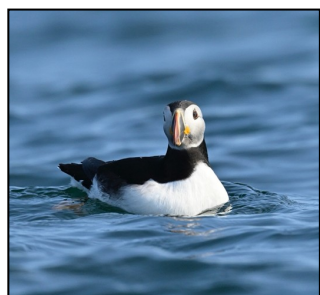
Each day brought something different. We searched blueberry barrens for grassland species, scanned rocky shorelines for seabirds and shorebirds, watched a Common Loon tending her six-week-old chick, visited the summit of Cadillac Mountain, explored picturesque fishing villages, and crossed into Canada's Campobello Island in search of northern specialties.

One of the week's most memorable experiences was our puffin cruise to Petit Manan Island, where Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills, Great Black-backed Gulls, Black Guillemots, and Arctic Terns could all be enjoyed at remarkably close range. Watching Atlantic Puffins fly overhead, their bills packed with fish to feed their chicks, was an unforgettable wildlife experience that will remain with us for years to come.

Each evening around 8:30, we gathered hopefully beside the dining hall to scan the twilight sky for Common Nighthawks. Seth assured us they appeared every evening during a brief window, but night after night they eluded us. Finally, on our second-to-last evening, our patience was rewarded when a male and female Common Nighthawk appeared overhead, engaged in an aerial courtship display that delighted everyone.

One evening we enjoyed a traditional Maine lobster dinner—bibs and all! The lobsterman who had caught our meal cooked the lobsters, demonstrated how to crack the shells, answered our many questions, and had us laughing as we tried our hand at extracting every last morsel.

The birding was outstanding, with each of us adding a double handful of new species to our life lists. We returned home with wonderful memories, incredible photographs, lasting friendships, and a deep appreciation for one of America's most beautiful national parks. <https://ebird.org/tripreport/550448>



Where The Hummingbirds Are by Vince Plourde

The first thing one thinks of when talking about Southeast Arizona in August is heat, heat and more heat. But Southeast Arizona brings something else in August, the monsoon rains, and along with it a second spring season. The arid landscape transforms into a lush, active ecosystem and with it peak hummingbird diversity. Species ranging from Violet-crowned, Lucifer, Rivoli and Blue-throated Mountain Gems can be spotted throughout the region. With a little planning and patience, you should be well-rewarded. For the Violet-crowned hummingbird check out the Paton Center for hummingbirds located on the outskirts of Patagonia. Here you'll find a multitude of feeders. Located in Cave Creek Canyon at an elevation of 5400 feet within the Chiricahua mountains you'll find the Southwest Research Station, and possibly a Blue-throated Mountain-gem. If it's the Lucifer's hummingbird you're after, try Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. This residential yard is in a residential neighborhood with multiple birdfeeders and is located roughly 20 minutes south of Sierra Vista. Don't let the Arizona heat discourage you, traveling there in August may not be on the top of your list, but it is where the hummingbirds are.



The Wonderful World of Spotting Scopes– A Short Guide

A spotting scope is a powerful, tripod-mounted optical tool that delivers far greater magnification than binoculars, revealing fine details of distant birds and making identification easier.

Key Features to Consider

- **Magnification:** 20×–60× is ideal for most birding situations, balancing detail with brightness.
- **Objective Lens Size:** Larger lenses (60–99 mm) gather more light, producing brighter images in low light or cloudy conditions, but add weight.
- **Field of View:** Wider views (100–150 ft at 1000 yd) make locating birds easier.
- **Lens Coatings:** Fully multi-coated optics reduce glare and improve color fidelity.
- **Build & Weatherproofing:** Waterproof, fog-proof, and often rubber-armored scopes handle field conditions.
- **Straight vs. Angled:** Angled scopes are popular for mounting on tripods and for use by multiple people; straight scopes offer a more natural viewing posture.

Practical Tips

- **Tripod Use:** Stability is key; a quality tripod minimizes shake and improves image clarity. Carbon fiber legs are lighter than aluminum and a tripod head with a handle is a lot easier to use.
- **Eye Relief:** Ensure the scope's eye relief matches your comfort and vision needs.
- **Testing:** Try different models at birding festivals or optics shops before buying.

Maintenance: Clean optics regularly and store the scope in a protective case.

Key Considerations for Birding Tripod Heads

1. Head Type and Movement Control:

- **Gimbal heads** are ideal for heavy scopes, allowing effortless tracking of birds while keeping the lens balanced and reducing arm fatigue.
- **Ball heads** provide quick, fluid adjustments, perfect for following birds and adjusting rapidly.
- **Pan-tilt heads** offer precise control for slower, deliberate tracking and are often lighter and more budget-friendly.

2. Load Capacity and Stability:

- Choose a head that supports at least **1.5 times the weight of your scope** to prevent sagging and vibration.

3. Smoothness and Damping:

- Smooth panning and tilting are essential for finding birds. High-quality heads minimize jerky movements and vibration transfer.

4. Quick Release Systems:

- Fast setup and adjusting are essential in the field. Look for heads with **quick-release plates** compatible with your tripod and optics.

In Summary

A well-chosen spotting scope and tripod/head can transform your birding experience, from confirming rare species to enjoying the details of plumage and behavior. Focus on 20×–60× magnification, a quality multi-coated lens, and a stable tripod; and if possible, consider higher-end optics with modular designs (Kowa and Swarovski Optik are examples) for versatility. The results are well worth it.

From Our Members

A note from concerned PAS member Jean Spence who wrote in about the extremely large number of birds that are killed by both domestic and feral cats, estimated to be 1.3 to 4 billion birds. It is a good reminder to keep domestic cats indoors to help keep the birds safe. She mentioned that crows get a lot of blame for attacking baby birds but that is nothing compared to what cats can do. For all you cat lovers do what you can do to reduce the predation numbers. Thanks Jean for that reminder.

Bird Trivia

1. Which bird is known for its elaborate courtship dance?
2. What bird species is the most common in the world?
3. Which bird species is capable of recognizing themselves in a mirror?
4. What bird is known for its 'tinkling' song?
5. What bird is the smallest species of owl?

Answers: 1. Sage Grouse, 2. Chicken, 3. Magpie, 4. Bellbird, 5. Elf Owl

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

Donovan Ackley, Larry & Kathi Alameda,
Joyce Anderson, Curt & Barbara Asman, Meredith Austin,
Barbara Barnes, Fred & Colleen Battaglia, Jim Beckman,
Hal & Dianne Benham, Leslie Blair, Allen Bond,
Monica Border, Thomas & Denise Boren,
Carol Bosman-Anderson, Nancy Burnham, Miriam Carr,
Sean & Joy Chao, David Clark, Kelly Clark,
Thom & Maryann Clark, Joan Comito, Jerry Deex,
Linda Deife, Yvette Durham, Rob Farber & Eve Martin,
Julie Frank, Harlynn Geisler, Rosalind Gillet,
Monica Giotta, Char Glacy, Emily Gudmundson,
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Karen Keener, Anna Marie Lea, Corrine Lines,
Shelley Lundborg, Kathleen Marvel, Stacy McCline,
Kellie Mecham, Electra O'Mara, Scott & Marline Pallais,
Ken Parson, Pat Pawlowski, Patrick Pearce, Scott Penwell,
Louise Peterson, Gwen Poole, Denise Riddle, John Rogers,
Rosa Romero, John & Sally Sanderson, James Schafer,
Jon & Fay Scrivner, Dana Seaton, Kathy Secan,
Ameet & Audrey Shah, William Sherrard,
Daniel Sivalingam, Jeff & Ann Skinner, Ann Spector,
Dee Stephens, Jitze & Batol Stienstra, Susan Stiver,
Doug & Diane Walkley, Cynthia Walters



PAS Members On The Loose

While PAS birders were in Maine looking for Atlantic Puffins 3 incredibly brave PAS travelers, were on the Oregon Coast in search of the Tufted Puffin. They found what they were looking for at Haystack Rock, Cannon Beach at a very low tide. A site to behold. That is the birds, not the birders.



Book Corner



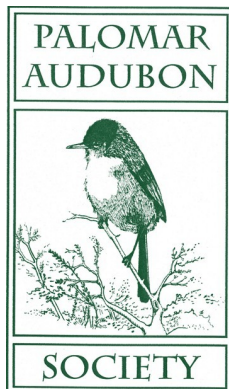
Books that you may find enjoyable if you have not already:

- *The Crested Caracara: A Visual Journey of a Majestic Raptor*: A coffee table size book for bird watchers and nature lovers alike.
- *Birdwatching Guide for Beginners*: A practical guide to attract, identify, and photograph birds in your backyard

Band Tales

September-October, 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

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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, October 10th at 12:00 PM

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

QUICK CALENDAR

September	5	Robb Field Walk
September	12	Palomar Mountain Walk
September	19	Fallbrook Live Oak Park Walk
September	24	Presentation-Coleen Wisinski, Burrowing Owls
September	26	Batiquitos Lagoon Walk
October	3	Kit Carson Park Walk
October	10	Oak Hill Memorial Park Walk
October	10	Board of Directors Meeting (see above)
October	17	Lake Wohlford Walk
October	22	Presentation-Dottie Marron, Iceland
October	24	Bolsa Chico & Huntington Beach Central Park Walk
October	31	Santee Lakes Walk
November	7	Lake Murray Walk