



Drawing by  
Guy Coheleach

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Founded 1904

**Pasadena Audubon Society**  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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*To bring the excitement of birds to our community through birding,  
education and the conservation of bird habitats.*

November 2022- February 2023

## PAS Bird Science Program Is Really Taking Off

Oh what joy! We just wrapped up docent and intern training for the Bird Science Program! This is our 3rd roll-out and we must be doing something right. We've attracted a wonderful group of folks, ages 22 to 80. They bring a wealth of perspectives, knowledge, and passion. Some, like Jerry Ewing and Wendy Panniker, are birders and longtime PAS members who've also put in hours of gardening at the Habitat Garden at Washington. There are educators, botanists, birders, historians, artists and more! Quite a treasure trove of talent.

Elizabeth Jean Younce is brand new to PAS. As a professional artist and printmaker, Elizabeth came with a wonderful new idea for PAS swag. Keep your eyes peeled for organic cotton tea towels, featuring Englemann Oaks and Toyon with some beautiful local birds. They'll be ready for the holiday season!

Our 5 new interns, Danna, Giselle, Jose, Jimena, and Giovany are all bilingual and will no doubt be wonderful role models for the students in the program.



New BSP intern Giovany Bernardino and Odie the Western Screech Owl share a moment © Lois Brunet

*continued on page 4*

### PRESIDENT'S PERCH

As president I want to thank our members for their generosity in supporting our recent educational fundraising drive and for those who have attended our Hahamongna volunteer event or signed on to volunteer at one of the myriad of events that PAS are involved in.

As we head into late fall and early winter it's time to start thinking about the Christmas Bird Count. The count is one of my favorite birding events of all time and if it didn't exist already someone would have to invent it. As well as being the longest running citizen science project in the country it combines almost everything that I think is great about birding: collecting important data on local bird populations, the discovery of unexpected birds in unexpected places and the camaraderie of joining with a group of fellow birders for the day to share the enjoyment of birding.

My first Christmas Bird Count took place during my second winter in Connecticut, and as a birding unknown I was thrown into a not particularly sexy inland portion of the Westport Christmas Bird Count. After filling up on pancakes at the local diner post owling, our group launched into the day with gusto, turning up several interesting birds including our only Bald Eagle for the count (and treated as heroes at the count dinner later that day for doing so). Better than the birds, however, was

cementing a wonderful friendship on the day with someone who is still a good birding friend (Penny Solum). Though we'd run into each other before, it was that day together that really solidified our friendship and led to many birding adventures. That was the start of many great CBC adventures too: from bringing our whole count to a standstill by finding Connecticut's first chaseable Ross's Goose to the time we birded all day only to realize that every other count team, bar one, had quit or not even started thanks to the terrible weather that had hit every other section of the count outside of Wilton.

If you've never joined a Christmas Bird Count, I would highly encourage you to do so. You don't need to be an expert to join in the fun, as beginners can team up with experienced leaders or groups - so there's no pressure to be the next David Sibley. I also like to note that the first count held in the Westport area in 1901 identified exactly five species on the day and of those only three to exact species. Even if you just feel like counting birds in your yard on the day, instead of going out with a group, there is a way to be involved that way too.

We wrap up the day with a count compilation and a dinner, which is a great time to share stories, meet fellow PAS members, and see what interesting birds did or didn't appear on the day. I do hope you will join us this year.

*Luke Tiller*

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**MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS**


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**Pigeon Watching: The Surprising Wonder of a Boring-seeming Bird**
**November 16th, 7:00 pm**
**Rosemary Mosco**
**Note: This is a Zoom meeting only**

Rock Pigeons are everywhere. For most of us, they're a dull sight; they poop on our cars or clutter our eBird lists. But these birds are worth a second look. They have a 5000+ year history as companions to people, and that surprising relationship makes them fascinating to observe. With humor, research, and plenty of odd facts, author and cartoonist Rosemary Mosco of *A Pocket Guide to Pigeon Watching* will take you into a pigeon's world and help turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Rosemary Mosco makes books and cartoons that connect people with the natural world. Her *Bird and Moon*

nature comics won the National Cartoonists Society's award for Best Online Short Form Comic, were the subject of an award-winning museum exhibit, and are collected in a 2019 American Literary Association Great Graphic Novel for Teens. She co-wrote *The Atlas Obscura Explorer's Guide for the World's Most Adventurous Kid*, a New York Times Best Seller, and wrote many other books for kids and adults.

**76th Annual Christmas Bird Count Orientation**
**December 14th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm**
**Jon Fisher**
**Note: This is a Zoom meeting only**

The CBC is the oldest citizen science project in the country! Become a part of this grand tradition by birding a patch of Pasadena Audubon's designated count circle. The count falls on Saturday the

17th of December this year.

To orient the newer folks, organizer and compiler Jon Fisher will talk about the history of our count, notable species trends over the years, and which uncommon birds we're most hoping to encounter. Count areas will be assigned. There will be time set aside for Q&A at the end.

**76th Annual Christmas Bird Count Recap and Dinner**
**December 17th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm**
**Eaton Canyon Nature Center**

Part of the CBC tradition is to meet for an official species tally at the end of the day. Big gathering at Eaton Canyon Nature Center on December 17th. Be there, will be wild!

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**CONSERVATION**


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**Avian Influenza Has Reached LA County**

In mid-July, 2022, volunteers and staff at International Bird Rescue, where I volunteer two days a week, were advised of new protective protocols for our two wildlife rehabilitation centers in the realization that HPAI – Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – was now in California and working its way southward. As of mid-October it has now arrived in Los Angeles County.

Also known as H5N1 or Bird Flu, this most recent variant has been closely watched as it moved from Europe, to Canada, to Northeast US, across the country to Washington, Oregon and now California. HPAI can decimate commercial poultry facilities (chickens, turkeys, ducks), requiring euthanizing every bird and deep sanitization of the facility, threaten family flocks, and kill many species of our wild birds.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife is monitoring the global path of the infections, and has proposed protective protocols for avian veterinarians, rehabilitators, educational institutions, hunters and anyone who comes in contact with live wild birds or has captive domestic birds. These stringent protocols are to minimize any opportunity for HPAI to infect any bird populations, wild or domestic. Infection is through direct contact with infected bird's saliva, secretions, feces or any contaminated surface or water.

An estimated minimum of 50 million birds have succumbed in commercial poultry operations and unquantifiable numbers of wild birds. The most vulnerable wild species thus far are eagles, hawks, vultures, owls, cormorants, pelicans, gannets, penguins, geese, corvids, gulls, herons and shorebirds. Mallards, teal and other dabbling ducks, and snow geese may be asymptomatic but actually infected. Young birds and chicks are more susceptible than adults. Crowded colonies during breeding season are very vulnerable and may cause mass mortality events. Other stressors on individual birds which can increase their susceptibility to any disease include exhaustion, prolonged anorexia, weather events, crowding into sparse habitats, etc.

The incubation period for the disease is between 2 and 21 days, and presents as sudden death, tremors, weakness, confusion, disorientation, head-tilt, sneezing, coughing, eyelid swelling, green feces, weight loss, and lethargy. The prevalence of these clinical signs and the susceptibility of each species is largely unknown.

It would seem that since HPAI is here now, the immediate removal of feeders and water features is called for, as declared by the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and L.A. County Department of Public Health, Veterinary Public Health & Rabies Control. I will be closely monitoring HPAI issues regarding our local birds and other evolving topics and will report as more information is available. ~Dave Weeshoff

**Upcoming PAS Board Meetings**

November 9th, 2022

December 14th, 2022

January 11th, 2023

The PAS Board meets 7:00 pm-8:30 pm on the second Wednesday of the month, between September and June. Contact Lois Brunet at [LoisB.PAS@gmail.com](mailto:LoisB.PAS@gmail.com) if you would like the Zoom link to attend.

## PAGE THREE BIRD

## Hooded Merganser

Starting in latter half of October, some rather unusual ducks return to our area. They've flown south from their breeding grounds in Washington and British Columbia to overwinter in sunny SoCal. Though never a common bird around here, they can be seen regularly between now and mid-April in local ponds and reservoirs, along Ballona Creek, and on the navigable stretches of the Los Angeles River.

Birders tend to remember the first time they lay eyes on a "Hoody". Drakes are dapper, adorned with an impressive black and white crest which they're wont to unfurl like a hand fan, especially during courtship. Wings and neck are also patterned black and white; chesnut flanks complete the aesthetic. Females are not as ostentatious, but are just as lovely, with cinnamon crests and various shades of brown and grey rounding out their profiles above the waterline. Eye color may be a way to differentiate non-breeding males from females when the male's plumage is not at an intermediate stage. In decent light the contrast between the female's light brown irises and the male's bright yellow ones is quite obvious.

Mergansers are members of the family Anatidae, the diving ducks, a group that also includes Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, and Canvasbacks. The slim, hooked, serrated bills of Mergansers set them apart from their broad-billed cousins and hint at a somewhat meatier diet. They subsist on fish, amphibians, and aquatic invertebrates, snacking on plants supplementally.

Hooded Mergansers are classified in their own genus, *Lophodytes* (meaning "crested diver"), separate from all the other Mergansers. Taxonomists have determined that Hooded

Mergansers are phylogenetically between goldeneyes and other mergansers, and they are known to hybridize with both.

Hooded Mergansers are distinct in other ways. They are the only mergansers exclusive to North America (Common Mergansers and Red-Breasted Mergansers are found in Europe and Asia as well). And at about a foot-and-a-half long, they are roughly two-thirds the size of the Common and Red-Breasted Mergansers. Among the six merganser species worldwide, only the Smew is smaller.

Like all predatory birds, Hooded Mergansers are visually-oriented. In the hunt for fish, crawdads, and other underwater critters, they are aided by a special ocular adaptation. The muscles around their eyes are not only able to change the shape

of the lens (as ours do) but of the cornea, allowing the eyes to accommodate to the different refractive index of water. It's like having a built-in pair of swim goggles!

When spring arrives and it's time to pair up and continue the line, breeding males put on a pretty good show. Courtship consists of choreographed croaking—truly, they sound much more like frogs than they do like typical ducks—head swivelling to show off their hoods, and rearing up from the water like wild stallions. This ritual often occurs in groups, giving the impression of a synchronized swimming routine.

A subset of the diving ducks are cavity nesters, and Hooded Mergansers are among them. They seek out old woodpecker nests, or strategically placed nest boxes, about ten to fifty feet off the ground and close to water. Chicks fledge just one day after hatching, and if you've watched one of the adorable slo-mo videos of flightless ducklings taking a leap of faith from a knothole only to bounce harmlessly on the leaf litter two stories below, there's a good chance they were lil' Hooded Mergansers.

Last issue's Page Three Bird, the Brown-headed Cowbird, is an obligate brood parasite: their eggs are always laid in another species' nest. Hooded Mergansers are what's known as facultative brood parasites, which means they are known to

deposit eggs in another bird's nest, often that of another Hooded Merganser, under certain circumstances, as when suitable nest sites are scarce. The "egg dumping" strategy can get out of hand. A normal Hooded Merganser clutch is 5-13 cueball-sized eggs, yet

nest box monitors occasionally come across nests containing dozens of eggs, the majority of which were furtively laid by other moms in the neighborhood.

Drought, water pollution, and deforestation pose serious problems for any bird that relies on freshwater denizens for food and tree cavities for nests. Hooded Mergansers are not presently a species of concern. However, the state's protracted drought, and the climate change that ushered it in, could push the winter range of these delightfully distinctive ducks northward. As ever, good stewardship of bird habitat is a big part of good stewardship of the birds.



A male Hooded Merganser prepares to ingest a crayfish at the LA Arboretum. © Kathy Degner



This fine-feathered female Hooded Merganser likewise made the LA Arboretum its winter home. © Ira Blitz

Carl Matthies



## PROGRAMS

## BIRD SCIENCE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Our first field trip brought more joy. The BSP expects to reach 800 children this year, and though this outing was only 17 children, one class of 4th graders, these kids were raring to go. They remembered so much about last year's field trip and were eager to scope out the nest where we were surprised by amazing views of a nesting Great Horned Owl. They looked for the hillside of yellow flowers, but that was spring and this is fall. A good lesson on just how much our subtle seasons shape the environment. And of course, they greeted Bob's owls like old friends. "Is Honey here?" "How is Odie doing?"

It truly fills my heart to see how much the kids are impacted by their adventures with us. One little boy, tripping along the trail ahead of me, quipped "I love nature".

"Me too," I said. "Me too".

*Lois Brunet*



Docent Mayra Sanchez with Honey the Barn Owl, who is said to be as sweet as her name. © Lois Brunet



Pasadena Audubon's Bird Science Program is growing, and that is all good. © Lois Brunet

## PAS Young Birders Look for Warblers, Owls

Fall is arguably the best season for birding, and the PAS Young Birders have been taking full advantage. Led by Lois Brunet, Kathy Degner, and PAS President Luke Tiller—who has made post-pandemic field trip revival a cornerstone of his administration—the young birders went in search of migrating songbirds in September and owls in October.

It's never a bad idea to see what's happening at Peck Road Water Conservation Park, so that's where the field trip convened at 7:30 on a pleasant Saturday morning. They logged forty-one species, including a Pectoral Sandpiper, a Warbling Vireo, and a few Wilson's Warblers, but not any vagrant warblers the group was hoping for. So at around nine o'clock they drove a few miles northwest to Arcadia County Park, where they saw a normally shy Virginia's Warbler bathing in the puddle around a leaky sprinkler!

A few weeks later the young birders were at it again, this time meeting at dusk in Millard Canyon to seek out owls. Owling is often a mostly aural experience, and this occasion was typical. Great-horned Owls, Western Screech Owls, and Common Poorwills made their presence known through vocalizations, but none were seen. It's still a special experience. Young Birders Club parent Tarta summed it up: "I enjoyed it very much, twilight to nearly full moon, the smell of the San Gabriels, their immense abruptness. The birds calling."



Virginia's Warbler can be mighty shy, but this Arcadia County Park visitor was expertly captured on film whilst flitting through the Sycamore branches. © Marky Mutchler



Sundown overlooking Millard Canyon. Cup your ears with your hands to better hear the natural nightlife! © Sean Doorly



## WING BEAT

*Latest in an occasional series of vignettes about weird, wonderful, perilous, poignant, and profound events that can transpire when we venture into the field...*

### *Salton Sea Misadventure*

It's funny how your mind can wander while waiting to be saved. For instance, about half an hour into my particular situation, I remember clearly thinking "When I die I'm going to be the only person in history with their official cause of death listed as "Yellow-footed Gull".

For the longest time the Yellow-footed Gull was at the top of my list of California birds I had yet to see. While its range is quite restricted in the U.S., there's one spot in U.S. to see the bird that's close to a sure thing -- the Salton Sea in summer. A couple of Julys ago I had a Friday off from work, so I decided to head out to the Sea and try to find one. First, I made a quick check on the weather forecast for the area, and it read:

WARNING: EXTREME HEAT EVENT. DAYTIME HIGH TEMPERATURES PREDICTED IN THE 120 - 125 DEGREE RANGE. ALL ARE ADVISED TO STAY INDOORS, AND ARE PARTICULARLY ADVISED TO AVOID SPENDING PROLONGED TIME IN THE SUN.

Perfect! I wasn't about to let a little hot spell spoil my fun. I packed a hat, plenty of water and sunblock, and hit the road.

A few hours later I parked my car at the end of a long dirt road, along the northwest shore of the Salton Sea. Or, more precisely, what used to be the shore of the Salton Sea. The Sea has been shrinking in recent decades, as the amount of water that evaporates out of it every year far outstrips the amount coming in. As a result, the water's edge has been receding, and now a couple hundred yards or so of salt pan stood between me and the water. I grabbed my binoculars and telescope, and started walking out.

The ground -- bright white from the dried salt crystals, and spotted here and there with shriveled and desiccated tilapia (the only fish that can live in the hyper-brackish waters) -- absolutely reeked. The whole place smelled like a fish sauce factory that hadn't been paying its sewage treatment bill. Once in a while my foot would break through the salt layer -- like breaking through crusty snow in winter-- and I'd squish into a few inches of the thick and stunningly fragrant mud beneath.

The water's edge had a great variety of birds -- ibises, terns, a million Black-necked Stilts, and a Gull-billed Tern -- but no Yellow-footed Gull. It was about 11 AM and the temperature was already touching 120°, so after a few minutes of searching I decided to head back to the car and try somewhere else.

I had taken about a dozen steps back toward the car when my left foot broke through the salt pan and sank ankle deep into the muck. Before I could stop myself I staggered forward and my right leg plunged into the mud, all the way up to mid thigh. That popped my left leg free again but when I brought it back down it sank all the way to my crotch. By the time I came to a stop I was waist deep in the mud. GROSS!

When I tried to take a step to get out of there the realization hit me -- I was seriously stuck. The mud was unbelievably thick and clingy. Any attempt to raise a leg only caused the other leg to bury itself down even deeper. When I tried to haul myself out by my arms, they just started to sink down into the mud too. In less than a minute I realized the truth -- I was going precisely nowhere.

(A brief digression here for those of you who might be thinking "this sounds just like being stuck in quicksand!" It wasn't. I've actually been in real, honest to God quicksand -- I once stepped in a pocket of it that had formed when a hurricane scoured deep trenches along a beach in New Jersey. The trenches filled with the exact mix of ultra-fine sand particles and water that quicksand consists of. A minute or two of slow steady pulling and I popped right out. Comparatively, that was nothing. This Salton Sea stuff was a thousand, a million, a zillion times thicker, clingier, and nastier).

I realized I had two options. Option 1: Continue to flail and strain and struggle in an attempt to extricate myself. If I did that I would almost certainly end up dangerously dehydrated and overheated. I had had the foresight to bring plenty of water. But it was in the car, 150 yards away. It might as well have been on the moon. I quickly went for Option 2, and took out my cell phone...



*The author, calm and collected, if not cool, despite the imminent danger of baking under the brutal Imperial Valley sun.*

*9-1-1 operator. What's your emergency?*

Hi. This is going to sound weird, but I'm stuck in the mud on the edge of the Salton Sea, and I can't get out.

*Not weird at all sir, it happens all the time.*

Really?

*All the time. Just tell me your vehicle's location, and we can get a tow truck out to you.*

No, you misunderstand. My car is fine, I'm stuck in the mud. Me.

*Wait. What?*

I'm standing here, waist deep in the stuff, and I can't move.

*Hmm, that is a new one. Do you need an ambulance?*

Nah, physically I'm fine. What I could use is some folks to help pull me out.

*Contacting the fire department -- they're going to love this one! Stand by...*

Fire departments out by the Salton Sea are volunteer affairs, so it can be a little while before they respond to birder-stuck-in-the-mud calls. They pulled up about 45 minutes after my call. Not a moment too soon. I was getting hotter by the minute (it

## WING BEAT (CONTINUED)

didn't help that the mud I was in was hot as hell, too) and it might not have taken that much longer for my situation to go from ridiculous to medical emergency.

The firefighters strode out toward me, all grins and cocksure attitude. But after a few dozen steps one of them busted through the salt and sank in up to his ankles. Taken aback, they huddled together for a quick strategy meeting, and came up with the idea of grabbing a bunch of backboards and laying them down end to end. Walking on the backboards they were quickly able to reach my position, grab me under the armpits, and pop me out of the mud like a stuck cork from a wine bottle.

Back at my car the firefighters double checked that I didn't need any medical attention, tossed me a bunch of bottles of ice cold water, told me to stay out of the mud, and drove off, looking forward to that night in the bar when they'd be able to tell everyone the story of the crazy birdwatcher.

I watched them drive off. MAN, did I feel funky. But, amazingly, I had a change of clothes in my car. I stripped down buck naked, dumped some of the water over myself to knock off some of the mud, threw on my spare clothes, got in the car, turned the AC on full blast, and... what else?... went back to birding. I found a Yellow-footed Gull a few miles down the road.

*Chris Spurgeon*



*Chris Spurgeon was determined to see a Yellow-footed Gull or die trying. He saw the bird, but it could easily have gone the other way.*



### Dave Jokes



A duck walked into a convenience store and asked the cashier for some Chapstick. The cashier asked, "Well, how are you gonna pay for it?"

The duck replied, "Just put it on my bill."

## CLASSES

### Intro to Birding Is Back!

*with Mickey Long and Jon Fisher*

Looking for a worthwhile New Year's resolution? Birds are fascinating, varied, beautiful, and can be found almost anywhere. They make great subjects for nature study. The phenomenon of migration and vagrancy only adds to their appeal.

That said, stepping into the world of birding can be daunting and overwhelming. There is a lot to learn. If you're interested in birds and birding but don't quite know how to get started, this course is for you. And if you're not quite a neophyte, but still in the early stages of your birding journey, this course will offer a wealth of useful information.

Beginning birders face a steep learning curve and have many questions. Where should I go to watch birds? What equipment do I need? How do I start to build my birding library? How do I begin to learn to identify over 400 species? How can I get the most out of my birding?

With decades of birding experience between them, Mickey and Jon will answer these questions and many more. They will offer insights, tips and information about all things birding.

Among the topics covered will be books, birding optics, cameras, clothing, eBird, habitats and birding locations. The identification of local birds will also be a major focus, both in the classroom sessions and on the field trips.

This course aims to provide all the information you'll need to enjoy birding while keeping it entertaining and fun.

Intro to Birding will meet in person from 7-9:30 pm on January 12th, 19th, and 26th, location TBD. There will also be two field trips from sunrise to noon on January 21st and 28th.

Register on the website ([pasadenaudubon.org](http://pasadenaudubon.org)) beginning on November 1st!

### Save the Date! Basic Diurnal Raptor Field Identification



*with William S. Clark*



Learn field marks, vocalizations, flight patterns, and terminology for North American Accipiters, Buteos, and Eagles from the guy who literally wrote the book on raptor ID (more than one book, actually)!

The class will meet from 9am-4pm (with breaks every hour) on Saturday, February 25th, location TBD, and there will be an all-day field trip to the Antelope Valley on Sunday, February 26th.

Opening of registration will be announced via email blast to members.



## A BIRD FROM AFAR

When my partner Sherra filmed a commercial in Perú in early August, we decided to take advantage of the opportunity to continue the Bins to Perú project and do some birding ourselves. COAP (Club de Observadores de Aves del Perú), PAS's partner in the Bins to Perú project, and its director Saturnino Lactahuaman are based in Cuzco. This was perfect because, while Perú's borders contain some of the greatest variety of habitats on Earth, I've long been attracted to the high-Andes. Instead of criss-crossing the country in pursuit of a long list of species, we decided to base in one place and really focus on the high-altitude specialists.

Taking a couple of small duffle bags that included used binoculars and scopes donated by Pasadena Audubon members, an anonymous donation of three new pairs of Nikon binoculars, two practically new tripods (often the hardest equipment to come by) and a scope provided by Celestron, Sherra, myself, and my dad met Saturnino early on the morning of our third day just outside the ancient Incan city and archaeological spectacle of Ollantaytambo. Saturnino was thrilled with PAS's contribution to COAP's efforts to bring the joy of birds and birding to Peruvians across the country through their field trips, events, and workshops. Good optics are difficult to find and are expensive in this region, PAS-donated binoculars and scopes will immediately impact COAP's gifted young birders. COAP is also looking forward to participating in the four-day XI Feria de Aves de Sudamérica in Cuzco in October. Optics donated by PAS will help give participants there a chance to see birds as never before and hopefully create new birders and conservationists in the process. Your past donations have helped COAP expand its reach and build networks for birding and conservation across Perú.

After taking care of business, packing Barry Walker's excellent *Field Guide to the Birds of Machu Picchu*, we spent the following days chewing coca leaves and hiking up to 15,500 feet in search of high-altitude endemics like the Ash-breasted Tit-Tyrant, Giant Conebill, Royal Cinclodes, and the White-browed Tit-Spinetail. Birds of this type are highly restricted to remnant groves of *Polylepis* forest that grow in the high Andes. The 45 species of trees in the *Polylepis* genus are characterized by multi-layered, paper-like bark, marvelously twisting trunks and branches, and dense clusters of small green, sometimes silvery leaves. Due to deforestation caused by the historical

exploitation for firewood and building material, overgrazing by domestic livestock and climate change, *Polylepis* woodlands are highly fragmented and patchily distributed. Not surprisingly, many of the species dependent on the insect-rich *Polylepis* for food and nesting material are classified as endangered and, in the case of Royal Cinclodes, critically endangered. Not all the news was bad, we did learn that there are several local and international initiatives to replace the exploitation of *Polylepis* with alternative materials and support for reforestation projects. There is also evidence that some species, previously thought to be entirely dependent on *Polylepis*, may shift their foraging strategies in the face of diminished preferred habitat.

Birding here was challenging due to the steep terrain, cold mornings, altitude, and the dense foliage. However, the dry-season weather was perfect and the views of the icefields and hanging glaciers of Apu Veronica plunging into the dense cloud forests far below were stunning.

While these forests were a primary focus for us, we did spend time in other habitats as well. The high plateaus and rolling Puna grasslands also provided lots of fantastic birding. While exploring a relatively underbirded area we found Junin Canastero, Puna Tapaculo, Slender-billed Miner, Andean Ibis, Puna Thistletail, Andean Hillstar, and a host of ground tyrants and mountain finches. A full day was also spent birding three lakes in the Cusco area where we saw Plumbeous Rail, White-tufted and Silvery Grebe, Many-colored Rush Tyrant, and Andean Lapwing. Travels to slightly lower elevations saw dramatic changes in habitat and bird communities. As Puna grasslands shifted to cloud forest, we were afforded looks at Cuzco Brushfinch, Unstreaked Tit-tyrant, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, and Red-crested Cotinga.

Close to our lodgings and not to be missed, were the hummingbird feeders at Ensifera Camp run by Cesar Bollatty Bedregal. Located in a side valley high above the town of Yanahuara and the Urubamba River, only here

did we see the Giant Hummingbird (largest in the world and bigger than a Black Phoebe!), Green-tailed Trainbearer, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, and Blue-capped Tanager. In addition to the native plant landscaping and feeders there, Ensifera is located at the gateway to the Mantabay conservation area higher above. Cesar is a fine guide in his own right and can help locate the great variety of birds in



Sherra and Saturnino scan the terraces above Laguna Millpo. The hillside is the site of a *Polylepis* reforestation project. © Graham Hamby

## A BIRD FROM AFAR (CONTINUED)

the *Polylepis* habitat above.

A grinding, hour-plus 4x4 ride through montane-scrub and elfin forest habitats took the five of us to the end of the Yanahuara valley and some of the largest *Polylepis* forest tracts in the area.

Picking our way across the steep forested slopes and past the glacial lakes and boggy basins of the Mantarray protected area, we enjoyed White-tufted Sunbeams, calling Creamy-crested

Spinetails,

Rufous-webbed Bush-Tyrants (kiting in pairs, no less), practically tame Stripe-headed Antpittas, and the aforementioned, highly elusive Royal Cinclodes. The thousands of well-tended *Polylepis* saplings laid in vast tracts here inspired hope that the utterly fascinating and entirely unique biodiversity of this region could be preserved.

I'm looking forward to seeing how PAS can continue fostering relationships, building networks, and sharing resources with regional partners in the near future. Stay tuned!

*Graham Hamby*

More info can be found here...

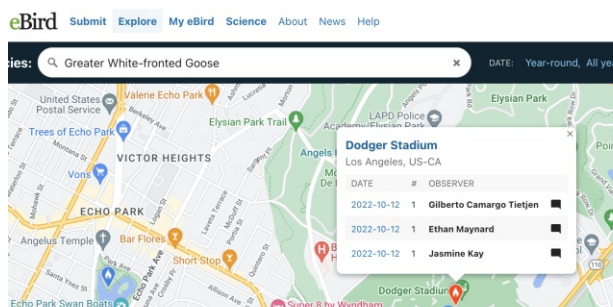
COAP: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/238844609987051/about>

*Polylepis* Overview: <https://phytokeys.pensoft.net/article/83529/>

ECOAN: <https://www.ecoanperu.org/cuscoeng.html>

XI Feria de Aves de Sudamérica: <https://www.birdfair.net>

Ensifera Sanctuario de Colibríes: <https://www.facebook.com/Ensiferacamp/>



*The Greater White-Fronted Goose's fateful visit to Dodger Stadium was recorded for posterity by ebirders © Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

## AVIAN WORLD NEWS

### Did a Disoriented Goose Doom the Dodgers?

Birds have always had powerful symbolic and spiritual significance. To some, they are creatures of ominous portent, particularly around Halloween. A hooting owl is said to be a harbinger of death, Poe's Raven was the very embodiment of grief and loss, and one popular superstition holds that a bird that flies into your house is likewise an omen of death, or at least of dramatic misfortune.

On Wednesday, October 12th, a bird flew into the Dodgers' house during the National League Divisional Series (NLDS).

The Dodgers, as sportsfans are well aware, had an historic regular season in which they won 111 games (for non-sportsfans, 100 wins is an outstanding year). Their opponents in the NLDS were the long-suffering San Diego Padres, who have of late been busily acquiring marquee players to be more competitive. And yet, the Dodgers had won fourteen of their nineteen regular season meetings and prevailed in their first playoff contest.

But late in game two, with the Padres leading 5-3, a Greater White-fronted Goose, confused by the bright lights, descended into the stadium and settled in shallow right field. The daft commentators, who knew even less about birds than baseball, called it a duck for about a minute before someone in the booth corrected them. Play continued for a time, and the animal got a great view of Dodger second baseman Gavin Lux's single before the grounds crew went after it (yes, there was a brief wild goose chase), swaddled it in a towel, and, according to a Dodger spokeswoman, released it safely at an undisclosed location.

The Padres would go on to win game 2...and game 3...and game 4 to claim the best of 5 series. It would be a massive understatement to say that this outcome was improbable, given the recent history between the two teams.

Plenty of fans think the goose turned the tide. After the game 2 defeat, Dodger devotees took to social media expressing worry that the wayward bird had cursed the team. One even compared it to the stray black cat that found its way into the Chicago Cubs' dugout in 1969, presaging decades of woe. Meanwhile, the Padres faithful have elevated the goose to unofficial mascot status, donning hats, t-shirts, and other accoutrements bearing its likeness.

What does the future hold for the Dodgers? Who can say for sure. Superstition aside, the team's shockingly short postseason was a stark reminder that no one's destiny is completely under their control. Surely the Greater White-fronted Goose, who migrates the length of North America twice a year, already knew this.

*Carl Matthies*



## WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY GARDEN

**THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL DONORS!**

Heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to our Birds, Bins and Bear Divide fundraiser this Fall, raising important funds for our educational programming.

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Kathy Degner donated in memory of Harry and Georgene Degner.

Gail Gibson donated in memory of Molly.

Jody Gunn donated in memory of Eddy Rogers- Cape Breton Fiddler Extraordinaire.

Elaine Macpherson donated in memory of "the best Washington Elementary teacher", Mr. Kane.

Deborah Tammearu donated in memory of Carole Hamilton.

Kate Wolman donated in memory of Lewis J. Hastings.

Lois and Pascal Brunet donated in honor of Diane Cuellar.

Ingrid Gibson donated in honor of Charlotte J. Gonzalez.

Sok Tng donated in honor of past PAS Board Member Darren Dowell, whose precision and questions are always appreciated!

Laura and Gavin Solomon donated in honor of Mickey and Jan Long, to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary!

**DAWN CHORUS:** Martin Bern, Lois Brunet, David Campbell, Hannah Carbone, Kathy Degner, Gail Gibson, Sarah Hilbert, Jared Knickmeyer, Alice Lewin, Kristen Ochoa, Taylor Paez, Laura Solomon, Chris Spurgeon, Elaine Tietjen, Patrick Walling, Dave Weeshoff

**Become a Part of the Dawn Chorus**

Consider joining our monthly donor program to provide ongoing support for all our programs and events. Sign up at [pasadenaaudubon.org/donate](http://pasadenaaudubon.org/donate). Dawn Chorus donors receive a beautiful enamel pin designed by PAS' own Patrick Walling and Graham Hamby!



Students at Washington Elementary STEM Magnet School peruse donated birding magazines. PAS is happy to take old birding magazines off your hands if you bring them to the monthly meeting. © Evellyn Rosas



"Look what we drew!" © Evellyn Rosas

Coffee

Club



"Only half a cup? Cutting back on caffeine, eh?"

"No, I love caffeine. It's just that...I found out countless birds rely on tropical forests that are being cut down to meet global coffee demand."

"Relax. This is shade-grown Birds & Beans coffee. It's certified bird friendly, USDA organic, and Fair Trade."

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"Thanks. [Slurp] It's so delicious, too!"

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## The PAS 2022 Grants Cycle Has Officially Begun

Pasadena Audubon Society is once again pleased to offer grants of up to \$3000 in three categories:

1. Research Grants, with preference to projects based in Southern California;
2. Scholarships for Pasadena birders, teachers, and others to attend conferences, classes, and workshops;
3. Funds to support specific projects of mission-aligned organizations

Submissions are due December 15th, 2022. See [pasadenaudubon.org/grants](http://pasadenaudubon.org/grants) for details and the link to the application. Good luck!