



Drawing by
Guy Coheleach

THE WRENTIT

Founded 1904

Pasadena Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 72 — No. 1

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

September 2023- October 2023

A Hummingbird Holiday in the Heat

Last July I attended my first bird festival, driving eight hours each way to spot new species of my beloved hummingbirds in sweltering Arizona. The Grand Canyon State is the best place in the US to see these tiny bundles of energy, and I was thrilled to add a few lifers to my modest collection without too much difficulty.

The occasion was the ninth edition of the *Sedona Hummingbird Festival*, organized by the International Hummingbird Society. The three-day event attracted a thousand people from as far afield as Indiana and Alaska, as well as plenty of folks from Southern California.

Even with the relentless 100-plus degree weather, the trip was *charm*-ed, to use the collective noun for a group of hummers. I saw the Rivoli's (formerly called Magnificent but still magnificent), heard a lecture about an endangered species on a remote Pacific island, held a Black-chinned in my palm, and bought way too much merch.



A freshly-tagged female Black-chinned Hummingbird is released at the home of Rich Armstrong during the 9th Sedona Hummingbird Festival.
© Fernanda Ezabella

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PRESIDENT'S PERCH

The next couple of months are probably my favorite months of the birding year. While spring brings the allure of northbound migrants in their breeding finery, fall promises more cryptically colored birds but with them the chance of rare waifs and strays. The combination of different migration routes and juvenile birds' higher propensity to get off track means that the chance of finding interesting vagrants is infinitely more likely in fall. In fact, we were lucky enough to have already found at least one interesting wanderer on the latest Pasadena Audubon walk that I led to the LA River: a beautiful Painted Bunting.

Speaking of migration, Pasadena Audubon is involved in sponsoring numerous activities at the Bear Divide Migration Count including some research that banded Tania Romero was undertaking this spring on Yellow Warbler migration using Motus tags. You may have heard that one of the tagged birds was picked up again by a Motus tower near Oroville in NorCal about 400 miles away, which is pretty exciting. Even more exhilarating though is that a second bird was picked up by a tower in Churchill Manitoba over 2000 miles away a month later!!! This important research is all supported by wonderful members and supporters like you, so thank you!

We hope to use our grants program and other resources going

forward to support more of these migration focused projects. Birds face an incredible (and growing) number of challenges during their travels, ranging from natural elements like inclement weather to man-made ones like confusing city lights, window and buildings strikes. The more we can understand the problems that they face and define the routes that they take the more we can do to help these migrant birds, either by preserving important stopover habitats or by supporting initiatives that reduce some of those risks: bird-friendly glass, lights out initiatives etc.

Our conservation chair Dave Weeshoff has been looking at the window collision problem here in Pasadena through feedback from our members. We hope to have more projects for members to get involved with as we head into fall, so please keep an eye out for these volunteer opportunities to collect important bird data. As well as the birds themselves, one of the other things I like most about birding is the opportunity it affords for community scientists to get involved in making important observations! We hope you can join us for some of these projects.

Good Birding to you all!

Luke Tiller

CALENDAR

Mickey & Jon's Bird ID Quiz

September 20th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Eaton Canyon Nature Center & Zoom

Continuing a fall tradition (about year twenty-one!), Mickey Long and Jon Fisher will present the September Pasadena Audubon program on Bird Identification. They will display photos of mystery birds and closely related, look-alike birds for challenging discussion. Using field marks, seasonal occurrence, geographical distribution, habitat preferences, behavior and other



Is this the best look you got at a bird? Mickey and Jon might be able to help.

criteria, Jon and Mickey will pass along tips for bird identification. Their goal is to present identifications that inform beginning birders and seasoned field ornithologists alike.

Big Years

October 18th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
David and Tammy McQuade
(Zoom only)

For many birders, doing a Big Year is a once in a lifetime dream. For the husband and wife team of David and Tammy McQuade, it's downright commonplace. They're doing a Big Year right now. They also did one last year. And the year before that. And the year before THAT. Join the McQuades for a lively presentation of some of the wildest and most memorable moments from their years chasing birds.



Tammy and David McQuade let go of the bins just long enough to pose for a quick photo.

TBD

November 15th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm



*"Who'll speak to you, who'll speak to you all?"
Find out in the next Wrentit.*

© Marc Sole, Macaulay Lab ML606549131

Upcoming PAS Board Meetings

September 12th, 2023
October 10th, 2023
November 14th, 2023

The PAS Board is now meeting 7:00pm-8:30pm on the second **Tuesday** of the month, between September and June. Contact Lois Brunet at LoisB.PAS@gmail.com if you would like the Zoom link to attend.

CONSERVATION & ADVOCACY

How Many Local Birds Die From Window Collisions?

We need your help. We know that hundreds of millions of birds die each year in North America by colliding with windows. Currently, we don't know how many birds die this way in our local area, and we'd like to find out. Once we get enough information we can put together a program to address when, where, and why the deaths occur and provide specific solutions.

That's where you come in. There is a very user-friendly website called dBird.org for reporting window collisions and other bird deaths or injuries. Just go to dBird.org and follow the simple steps. If you take a photo of the bird it's easy to attach, and very helpful, especially if you don't know the species (we'll fill it in). While you may add your name and Email information at the end, it is not essential, just hit

"Submit". The whole process will only take a minute or two.

We need as many reports as possible to help our Team focus on preventable deaths. We also need volunteers to help analyze the data and canvas locations or types of buildings which appear to be most responsible.

If dBird.org is not your thing, you can call or text 818-618-1652 or email weeshoff@sbcglobal.net to report bird window collisions and I'll do the dBird.org reporting. Remember, it may occur at a residence, condo complex, commercial building or high-rise. I can offer advice regarding dead or injured birds and window collision prevention while collecting data to enlighten our conservation and advocacy activities.

PROFILES IN BIRDING

Going Native

In America, and perhaps in Tinseltown most of all, memorable movie quotes become enduring pop culture references. The disembodied whisper compelling Ray Kinsella to put a baseball field on his Iowa farm, an act that ultimately reconnects him with his estranged father in 1989's *Field of Dreams*, is one of those lines. In common usage, it's typically pluralized to, "If you build it, *they* will come," as encouragement to undertake a project with mass appeal.

It's a fitting line to describe the garden of Pilar Reynaldo, who, with her husband Noel, has created her own patch of passerine paradise in Northeast Los Angeles. *Wrentit* recently paid her a visit to talk about it.

Wrentit: Last issue we asked readers to tell us about their Spark Birds, the sightings that stoked their interest in the avian world. Did something stimulate your interest in native plant gardening, or has this been a passion from the word go?

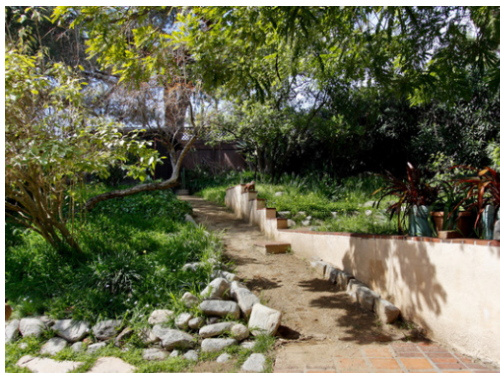
Pilar: When I purchased my first home, I did what everyone does, I started planting things that I liked and had no idea what I was doing.

Some plants would live, some would die shortly after being planted. One day I read about the master gardening program and decided to spend a summer learning everything I could about gardening.

Our instructor, the amazing Yvonne Savio, set up field trips for our class. One of them was to a garden which was planted with a majority of natives, the yard smelled and sounded differently than anything I had ever



Before: *Agapanthus*, native to Southern Africa, dominated the front yard ground cover of Pilar and Noel's North LA home when they first moved in. © Pilar Reynaldo



Before: The backyard was mostly invasive weeds and grasses, with *Oleander* lining the privacy hedge. A stucco wall lined the garden path. © Pilar Reynaldo

experienced, that was it I was hooked. I have now taken hundreds of native plant classes with all of the rockstars of native gardening, who continue to teach me and challenge the way I think about the landscape.

One of the amazing by-products of gardening with natives is all the *birds*, which are attracted to the drying seeds pods, acorns, grasses.

Wrentit: You have a beautiful old oak tree on your property that I know has remained constant, but tell our readers about how you've changed the landscaping?

Pilar: Yes, the giant oak tree, which is estimated to be over 200 years old, is what attracted us to this home. Many of our friends thought we were crazy because the main house was not really inhabitable and the street is busy, but all we could see was the fabulous oak. In the time we waited to find out if we had won the bidding war I was thinking about freeing the tree from the invasive ivy wrapping around it, and removing the



After: Pilar and Noel, standing by the same California Laurel tree, which is now set about with Dwarf Pigeon Point. © Carl Matthies

lawn and spider plants surrounding it.

We got the house of course, and now the property is completely free of exotic Palm trees, grasses, ivy, and the hundreds of tropicals plants which

once called this property home. The property is now home to Raptors, bats, owls, and so many birds.

I have always been a nature lover. When I was a kid I was not a Girl Scout, I was a woodcraft ranger. We went on various camping trips and learned about the native flora and fauna. My desire is to make this property feel like we are in nature. I am



After: Looking out the back window, *Bee's Bliss* and *Pigeon Point* carpet the ground by the *Pomegranate* Tree, opposite an arroyo rock wall. The *Oleander* was replaced with *Catalina Ironwoods* and *Tecate Cypress*. © Pilar Reynaldo

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PROFILES IN BIRDING (CONTINUED)

incredibly fortunate my husband is a gifted builder and artist who is always bringing new ideas for natural decorative elements to add to the garden.



An Orange-crowned Warbler (top) and a Cooper's Hawk (bottom) perch amid the mixed-color *Clarkia* blooms.
© Pilar Reynaldo

Wrentit: I want to promote native gardens for all the reasons you've mentioned, but have there been any unforeseen challenges with maintaining one?

Pilar: So far the only pitfall has been my desire to water the natives when it's scorching hot, which proved to be a very bad idea. I lost two beautiful huge Frosty blue *Ceanothus*. Lesson learned. I now water deeply every month during the hot months.

Wrentit: What are some of the resources available to people who will undoubtedly want to follow in your footsteps?

Pilar: Today there are so many resources for native gardeners that did not exist when I started years ago. I recommend everyone start

by visiting calscape.com. Once you enter your zip code a list of native plants appropriate for your area will appear.

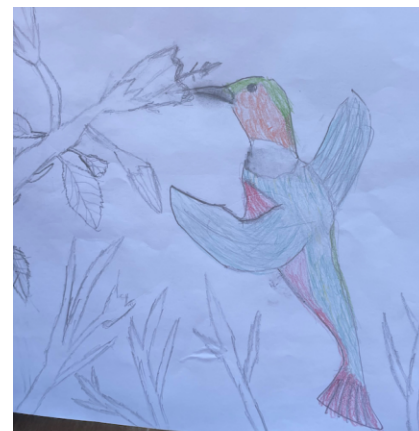
I think it's important to visit established gardens as they give you a good idea as to how large plants will grow and the space you will need to provide for them. *California Botanical Garden* in Claremont, probably the largest native garden in SoCal, is worth a day trip. If you choose to make the drive east other gardens to visit are the native garden at the *Sam Maloof Foundation* and the demonstration garden designed by Scott Kleinrock for the *Chino Basin Conservation District* in Montclair. It's amazing. Closer to home, *Barbara Eisenstein's Nature Park* in South Pasadena is a lovely place to stroll. Leigh Adams & John Latsko's *Crescent Farm* is magical. I visit it several times a year, and it never disappoints. Theodore Payne's annual tour is a great opportunity to see numerous LA-area private gardens. Last but not least, Carol Bornstein's *Nature Gardens*, at the LA County Natural History Museum, is also a magical space.

There are several local nurseries with knowledgeable staff as well. The first stop for me is *Hardy Californians*, with locations in Sierra Madre and Arcadia. I also recommend *Artemisia Nursery* in L.A., and *Plant Material* in Altadena and Glassell Park. The mother ship is *Grow Native Nursery* in Claremont.

PROGRAMS

Summer: A Great Time to Get Kids Into Birds

Why do I spend hot summer mornings crafting bird stuff with elementary students? First, I have never outgrown my love of cutting and pasting, and secondly, I get to share my love of our feathered friends with such eager participants! And with our great volunteers, a smoothly running team to put on a production to entertain (teach) the kids something about birds, and the environment that they share with us humans.



The work of a camper who "drew" inspiration from Allen's Hummingbird, as so many of us have. © Lois Brunet

When the kids pick up markers and scissors and craft something bird-related, I know they are exercising their expressive skills and their own curiosity and wonder of the natural world. Making nests from grass and shredded documents, or drawing field marks on a bird they spied on the initial bird walk, they are building a history of joyful experiences in the natural world.

Another of my favorite parts of our program is teaching the kids how to use binoculars. When a kid who has assured us that s/he has 'got it', there are no black moons, you say ok, and five minutes or half an hour later you hear a cry of "I see it!" They have made this heavy piece of professional equipment actually work!

And the true wonder in their voice and on their faces! Melts my heart!



Campers and counselors birdwatch at a PAS summer outreach event. © Evellyn Rosas

Our program is partnered by Pasadena Summer Day Camps at La Pintoresca Park and Washington Park, Summer Camp for Kids at Kidspace and Summer Camp at Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center

(hosted by Debs Park). Some of the staff and interns even surprised themselves by getting a kick out of birding and crafting!

Annabelle Aylmer

WINGBEAT

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

Chance Meeting with a Shortleaf Fig

On the south bank of a small lake in Highland Oaks Park, Miami, there sits a Shortleaf Fig tree my family and I had the immense good fortune to come across one late afternoon last April.

We had traveled to the tip of Florida hoping to see, among other eastern birds, some early migrants on the Atlantic Flyway. A quick check of ebird told us Highland Oaks Park was a good place to look.

Shortleaf Figs are members of the genus *Ficus*, which any botanist will tell you is a gigantic group, some 900 species strong. Small wonder then that the plant ID app on our phones initially misclassified the tree as an Indian Banyan (*Ficus benghalia*). We had little reason to doubt its verdict, either, because Florida is beset upon by a rogue's gallery of invasive species: Burmese pythons, Lantana, Cane toads, feral hogs, Snakehead fish, Green Mussels, Tegus lizards, Iguanas, Skunk vines, Kudzu, and yes, Indian Banyan.

In its native land, however the Indian Banyan Tree holds great cultural significance, even though its fruit, like that of the Shortleaf Fig, is unpalatable to people. It is the national tree of India. Hindus believe the Banyan tree represents the Trimurti, the three supreme deities of the pantheon. Brahma the Creator is said to dwell in its roots, Vishnu



A Cape May Warbler is about to enjoy the fruits of a Short Leaf Fig after crossing the Straights of Florida.
© Lisa Phelps, Macaulay Library ML564623291

HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL (CONTINUED)

I signed up for a field trip with ornithologist Tim Weber, and he took us down a lovely road along the Oak Creek River with the dramatic red rocks of Sedona as a background. The destination was the Cave Springs Campground, located in the Coconino National Forest, where the site's manager had set up two sugar-water feeders. I bet you can hear the "ohhhh!" when the huge Rivoli's showed up.

The Rivoli's is nearly as big as the Blue-throated, the largest hummingbird in the US. Without a view of his iridescent green and purple feathers, the Rivoli's looks all black, hence a nickname someone told me - the Darth Vader hummingbird.

To get an intimate look at my favorite bird, I went to a banding demonstration at the home of popular birder Rich Armstrong. He has an impressive collection of homemade feeders, including an upside-down soy sauce dispenser. Some of them were enclosed within cages, and the certified bander would quickly march their captives to a table where a tiny numbered band was wrapped around its leg. When it was time to be released, the visitors would provide the launching pad. Placed on our palm, the hummingbird would take a moment to gather its thoughts before escaping. Magical few seconds!

Eventually I had to flee the scorching sun, so I retreated to the cool theater of the Sedona Performing Arts Center to learn from the experts. Rich Armstrong talked about the birds of Arizona, Kate

the Preserver in its bark, and Shiva the Destroyer in its branches. Jains and Hindus alike believe that the banyan tree grants wishes. To my knowledge the Shortleaf Fig is not so venerated. Perhaps it should be.

A soft *tseet* call from a warbler flying overhead led us to the tree. Once under its spreading boughs, we found the bird easily, a pretty male Prairie Warbler, and we saw why he had paid this particular tree a visit. Every branch bore clusters of ripe figs, and this diminutive songbird was really tucking in.

Moments later another warbler arrived, this time a gorgeous Black-throated Blue who commenced to eating fruit just like his predecessor. And then came another, and another, and another until the Shortleaf Fig verily shimmied with snacking songbirds. In a span of less than ten minutes, we saw six species of eastern warblers all in this one tree, as Palm Warblers, Northern Parulas, Cape May Warblers, and a Yellow-throated Warbler joined the party.

The curtain fell on the idyllic scene of the feasting flock as the sun dipped below the horizon behind us. I wondered how many times this mutually beneficial meal, exquisitely timed to spring migration, had played out over the eons. And months later,

I'm still marveling about our brief encounter with that tree, and how, just like its Indian relative, it had the power to grant a wish.

Carl Matthies

McLaughlin shared her experience banding Anna's in Alaska, and Dr. Peter Hodum discussed his work preserving habitat for the Juan Fernandez Firecrown, a bright rufous hummingbird endemic to Robinson Crusoe Island, 700 km off the coast of Chile. "It is the easiest critically endangered species to see," said Hodum, explaining the bird shows up everywhere on the island, from gardens and forest edges to groves of non-native trees.

Already planning a trip to Chile in my head, I drove to the southeastern part of the state to complete my hummingbird education. Curiously, I ended up in Patagonia, 65 miles from Tuscon and also the name of a touristic region in Chile. At the Paton Center for Hummingbirds, I saw a frenzy of birds at the feeders, getting a last sip before the storm. I was glad to see some lifers: Broad-billed and Violet-crowned. The next day I went to Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, another property started by bird enthusiasts that is today operated by a non-profit organization, full of feeders and comfortable viewing spaces. Here, at last, I saw the Lucifer Hummingbird.

Back home in Hollywood, the Anna's and Allen's on my balcony seemed jealous of my trip. Or maybe they were just angry the feeders were empty. But thanks to the Sedona festival I brought them two new feeders, and also a pair of hummingbird earrings for me.

Fernanda Ezabella

AVIAN ART

Colluding to Trick the Eye: Birds in the Paintings of Mary Kay West

An Orange-breasted Bunting perched on a blue-and-white Chinese porcelain vase overflowing with hydrangeas, a Blue Flycatcher eyeing some ripe persimmons from atop a silver goblet, and a dazzling pair of Hooded Orioles investigating some pomegranates bursting open and releasing ripe ruby seeds. These are some of the characters I encountered early this summer at an art opening in Pasadena. The gallery was American Legacy Fine Arts on Linda Vista Avenue, and these lively birds populated the paintings of North Carolina-born artist Mary Kay West, whose paintings are so masterfully rendered with realistic detail that I instinctively stood very still as I gazed at these paintings – so as not to scare the creatures off!

For me, West's work was a double treat. Professionally, I am an art historian specializing in Asian art and was a curator at Pacific Asia Museum for almost a decade. Personally, I have recently become a bird enthusiast and photographer, sparked when I moved back to Pasadena in August 2020 and failed to capture pictures of Red-whiskered Bulbuls on my phone. I soon broke down and bought myself a "proper camera" and joined the Pasadena Audubon Society. Increasingly, I find my passion for art and birds colliding, as when I discovered West's paintings.

Mary Kay West apprenticed with renowned artist Benjamin F. Long IV. Long, who opened an atelier in her hometown of Asheville in the early 1990s to carry on the classical realist tradition. She completed her studies in 1994 and then moved to Santa Barbara, and has lived and worked in California since then, showing her work extensively. Her still lives, often painted in oil on panel in a classical realist manner are infused with a delightful playfulness. Her trompe l'oeil ("fool the eye") paintings, such as *The Cabinet*, use familiar household items as a recess or inner space for the three-dimensional effect required to fool the eye. In many of these paintings, birds play a key role in this artistic trickery. "The bird is a male Red-headed Fody," West explains. "He is included in the story not just to add life to the stillness, but as a dimension that is coming forward towards the viewer."



Pomegranates and Orioles by Mary Kay West, oil on panel, 24" x 16.875"
Courtesy of American Legacy Fine Arts and the artist

The realism, cleverness and presence of exquisite and often

exotic birds in West's paintings charmed many guests at the exhibition. I saw several people stepping back and forward and then to the side to view the paintings from different angles. "Looking at a Mary Kay West trompe l'oeil painting brings immense joy and instantly uplifts one's spirit," says Elaine Adams, Director of American Legacy Fine Arts. "The depiction of beautiful birds thriving and contentedly inhabiting our interior space evokes a strong sense of connection, allowing us to empathize and share in their freedom."



The Cabinet by Mary Kay West, oil on panel, 18" x 14"
Courtesy of American Legacy Fine Arts and the artist

Meher McArthur

Mary Kay West's work can be viewed at American Legacy Fine Arts on their website (<https://www.americanlegacyfinearts.com/artist/mary-kay-west>) and in person by appointment (626.577.7733).

CONSERVATION & ADVOCACY, PART 2

Help ProjectPhoenix Understand the Effects of Wildfire Smoke on Birds

In the age of megafires, people and wildlife are increasingly exposed to hazardous smoke. Although birds are highly sensitive to any air pollution, we know very little about how smoke affects them. Science-based information is critical to inform bird conservation efforts in a rapidly warming world.

ProjectPhoenix engages community scientists across California to monitor birds during the fire season (August–October), providing valuable data on bird activity when wildfires are likely to impact air quality. Community volunteers conduct weekly, 10-minute, stationary surveys at a location of their choosing and submit their observations to eBird (see below). Data collection is ongoing through October 31, 2023. This information will be shared with decision makers in our state to inform wildlife conservation policy.

Collecting data for ProjectPhoenix is very easy! First, choose your monitoring site. Your site could be a yard, park, or city street – any space that is accessible and convenient for you. We encourage our volunteers to choose sites they find personally meaningful, such as their home or community center. Your site

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CONSERVATION (CONTINUED)

does not have to be outside. You are welcome to monitor birds indoors from a window if you would prefer. Then, sign up as a volunteer (see below). The website sign-up form asks you to provide basic information about your monitoring site. Next, start monitoring birds! Conduct a 10-minute survey of the birds at your monitoring site, ideally once a week. Here's how:

1. Pick a spot to sit or stand during your survey. (This spot should be consistent from week to week).
2. Record all the birds you see and/or hear for 10 minutes.
3. Submit your observations to eBird. Tag your checklist by adding #ProjectPhoenix to the comments.
4. You might not be able to survey your monitoring site every week, but conduct the survey whenever you are able. ProjectPhoenix is open to all birders and bird enthusiasts – regardless of previous birding experience.

The program is a joint partnership between the UCLA La Kretz Center for California Conservation Science and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. For additional information and to sign up, visit their website <https://www.project-phoenix-investigating-bird-responses-to-smoke.org/get-involved>.

Please call or text me, Dave Weeshoff, at 818-618-1652 or email at weeshoff@sbcglobal.net for assistance and questions about ProjectPhoenix, eBird, or our other conservation or advocacy programs.

Dave Weeshoff

Field Trip Musings

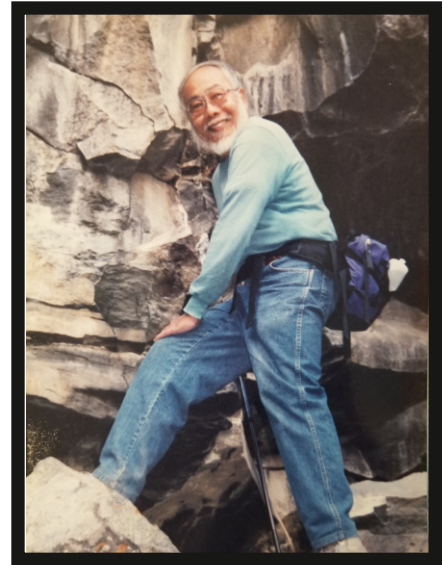
It's great to be back on the PAS Board, this time serving as Field Trip Chair. Corey Husic (now Dr. Husic, and starting a new job in Michigan) and Luke left things in great shape, and we have some exciting bird-focused field trips planned for the months ahead. To our trip participants: We appreciate and thrive on your enthusiasm!

I'd like to share some of the inside experience of organizing field trips, and perhaps suggest a way you can help us out a bit. You'll notice that some of our field trips have limits on participants, and some don't. The limits a while back, and now, are based on the number of birders that we can legally (think parking) and safely get to and through a venue. We had more limits in place for the Covid pandemic, but those have been discontinued. Demand for PAS field trips is at an all-time high, and we realize this leads to frustration when you don't get on the trip that you wanted. The best solution we have is to schedule more trips to match the demand, and we are trying.

When we can, we schedule a field trip with no participant limit. Still, we ask you to sign up for the trip, which is very helpful to us to estimate the number of people coming so that we can decide how many co-leaders to have on hand. However, our estimate is only as good as the input data, and sometimes we are seeing trip turnout as low as 40%.

IN MEMORIUM**Wilbur Dong and the Birds**

In 2000, after Wilbur retired from Raytheon/Hughes, we went on our first birding trip to Finland with Kimball Garrett. Being non-birders we wondered at the excitement the group had upon visiting the 'local sewer ponds'. Little did we know until a Snowy Owl appeared. We were hooked. This was a beautiful bird with personality. Seeing phalaropes, King Eiders, Ptarmigans, a myriad of owls, gulls, captivated us. Birding allowed Wilbur to explore the many tools of the hobby, from the early days of spotting scope photography, learning to record and analyze bird sounds from Lance Benner, and bird sketching from the likes of David Sibley, Keith Hansen, John Swartz and our own Catherine Hamilton. Wilbur enjoyed the camaraderie of the Pasadena Audubon birding community.



From Pam Dong, in memory of her husband Wilbur, who passed away peacefully on July 24th.

For the limited-participation, no-cost field trips, Corey instituted a lottery system which I think is a great idea. One advantage is that there is no rush to be the first few to sign up for the trip, since the first and last persons on the list have the same chance to be on the trip. So here is where you could help us out. Instead of feeling pressure to sign up first, and think later, instead take the time to check that you'll be free on field trip day before you sign up. (Note, however, that the field trips with a fee, like the upcoming Pelagic trip, will continue to operate as first-come, first-served). We know that circumstances change after signing up, and we appreciate those prompt messages letting us know you can't make it.

Have you been wondering if we actually do a lottery? We do. We use the Google random number generator to assign the participant slots. (Much easier than looking for a 47-sided die to roll.)

I hope you found this insightful into what our field trip volunteers are up to. If you have any feedback on the process, some ideas for new field trips, or interest in becoming a field trip leader, please contact me at fieldtrips@pasadenaudubon.org. No matter what, we sincerely look forward to seeing you on the next trip!

Darren Dowell

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