



ROADRUNNER

Founded 1968

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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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General Meeting December 3 7:30 pm Western Foundation

Over the years you have probably noticed a change in your average birder. Technology has crept into our beloved natural hobby and now smartphones are as common as field guides, people are playing bird songs all over the place, and everyone keeps talking about that elusive 'E' bird. If you are feeling left behind or confused by it all, fear not! Frank DeMartino, our very own webmaster, will be our field guide through the labyrinth that is technology assisted birding.

Frank will combine his passions for birding, the internet, and sarcasm to cover such topics as email (it's not dead yet), smartphone applications, social networking, bird identification sites, youtube, and eBird. Bring your questions and concerns, keep your hands and feet inside the cart at all times, and enjoy a feather filled flight through the vastness of cyberspace.



Conservation Column By Dee Lyon

REAL OR ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREE?

Next year when you think about real versus artificial Christmas Tree, remember this: Environmentally, real is better.

50 years ago all Christmas Trees were either firs or pines. A toilet brush maker created a tree from brush bristles and the rest is history. Many find that an artificial tree is more convenient and in the long run, cheaper. There is no watering an artificial tree, less fire hazard, and no pine needles all over the carpet.

Some folks really hate to chop down a living tree. BUT: That artificial tree is non-biodegradable; and will eventually lay in a land fill for eternity. It's usually made in China (under who knows what awful circumstances) and then transported many thousands of miles.

On the other hand: 93% of real Christmas trees are recycled after Christmas. The real tree industry employs over 100,000 Americans, and those trees are sustainably farmed and carbon neutral (about 3 are planted for each one that is cut). So get that wonderful smell of fresh pine in your house next year, even if it's just a 2 footer.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT NOTICE

Please participate in the CVAS Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 22nd. See page 3 for further discussion.

CALENDAR

December

1	7:30 am	Field Trip: Saticoy Ponds Work Shop
3	5:15 pm	Pre meeting Dinner: Ottavio's
3	7:30 pm	General Meeting Western Foundation
9	6:00 am	Field Trip: Piute Ponds
13	9:00 am	Field Trip: Beginner's Bird Work
16	8:00 am	Field Trip: Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge
22	TBD am	Field Trip: Christmas Bird Walk

Pre meeting Dinner

Ottavio's in Camarillo at 5:15 pm

Call **Nobuko McClure**

For Reservations **(805) 482-0411**

Reservation Deadline: 9:00 am

Day of General Meeting

CVAS Events

Everyone is welcome to attend any CVAS meeting or field trip. CVAS assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending a society- sponsored activity and will not be held liable for such accidents. One attends at one's own risk.

Board Meeting Notice

The November Board Meeting will be held on Monday January 21. All CVAS members are invited to attend monthly CVAS Board Meetings. Meetings start at 7:00 pm and are held in the home of a board member with meeting locations varying monthly. Please contact CVAS Secretary, **Gary Evans** at **(805) 231-5692** or GaryE@ConejoValleyAudubon.org for meeting location and directions.

Field Trips

The times specified are departure times – **be sure to arrive 15 min earlier**. Try to carpool whenever possible and don't forget to offer the driver gas money!
RAIN CANCELS!

Saturday, December 1st

Saticoy Ponds - Beginner Bird Workshop

Join Bill and Carol Langford and learn to identify ducks, geese, shorebirds, and other wintering species.

We should see many species of ducks, including teals, Bufflehead, Shovelers, and possibly Pintail. Geese could include Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, Snow, and Ross's Goose. There will likely be grebes and shorebirds to learn, as well. Meet the Langfords at the entrance to Saticoy Ponds, at the intersection of Los Angeles Avenue (118) and SP Milling Road at 7:30 am. Leaders: **Bill and Carol Langford, (360) 742-6059.**

Sunday, December 9th Piute Ponds

Piute Ponds in northern Los Angeles County is one of the premiere birding sites in Southern California for wintering water fowl, grebes, and shorebirds and raptors. Trip leader is **Matthew**

Page (805) 990-6534. Meet at the Erringer Avenue Park and Ride in Simi Valley at 6:00 am. We will carpool to the ponds together. We may bird other locations in the Antelope Valley, depending on conditions and reports of notable birds. Bring a picnic lunch and water.

Thursday, December 13th Beginner's Bird Walk

Second Thursday of each month. Call **Angie Kobabe (818) 991-4055** between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm to let her know you are coming and to find out where it will be held. Rain or temperatures above 90 degrees will cancel.

Sunday, December 16th Seal Beach NWS

The Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge, part of the Naval Weapons Station, is open to visiting groups by appointment, under the guidance of the base biologists. Many shorebirds including Pacific Golden Plover, Raptors, Clapper Rail, and wintering Nelson's (Sharp-tailed) Sparrow inhabit this prime wetlands site. Conejo Valley Audubon has arranged a tour there Sunday Dec. 16, from 8 AM to noon; any birder may sign up. We will meet in the main public lot at 800 Seal Beach Blvd. ready to carpool within the base before 8 AM (The base has a big van, plus we will use some of our vehicles). Take Seal Beach Blvd exit from the 405 (just past the 605 interchange) and head south about two miles (past Westminster Blvd.), turn left into the base at the Forrestal Lane light, then left into the parking lot. Group is limited to 25, US citizens only. Bring photo ID, scopes. Trip leader is Michael Zarky, Sign up with Michael at mzarky@earthlink.net; include your phone number in your email.

Saturday, December 22 Conejo Christmas Bird Count

Please sign up and help us with the 38th annual Conejo Christmas Bird Count! Details and sign up will be announced at the December meeting.

Christmad Bird Count

by David Pereksta

If you are looking for an easy way to contribute to understanding the status of wintering birds in North America, please join us for the National Audubon Society's 113th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on **Saturday December 22, 2012**, and help cover the Conejo Valley Audubon Society's "Thousand Oaks" CBC circle.

This is our 38th CBC, and we're hoping to top last year's count of 182 species. That was good enough for 21st place (after finishing 14th the year before) for CBCs held north of the Mexican border (2,149 total CBCs). Highlights included Black Scoter, Common Goldeneye, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Crested Caracara, Red Knot, Black Skimmer, Burrowing Owl, Vermilion Flycatcher, Mountain Chickadee, California Gnatcatcher, Summer Tanager, Clay-colored Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Birds recorded within a few weeks of the count, but missed on count day included Tundra Swan, Western Screech-Owl, and Tropical Kingbird. Notable misses for the count period were Wood Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Long-tailed Duck, American White Pelican, Pelagic Cormorant, Cattle Egret, Golden Eagle, Wandering Tattler, Caspian Tern, Common Ground-Dove, Red-naped Sapsucker, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Lark Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, and Purple Finch. However, when all was said and done, we recorded 27,900 individual birds! We hope to do even better this year, but need hardy CVAS members to close out the year right by getting up early and being ready to bird.

The National Audubon Society's web-based pre-registration program is up and working, so just go to <http://birds.audubon.org/get-involved-christmas-bird-count> (The Conejo Valley's four-letter CBC code is CATO). This system allows you to register for as many CBCs as you wish, and this year for the first time there is no registration fee! Your name and contact information is forwarded to me, so I have a better idea of how many people are going to participate, and can plan accordingly. You can also register on-line, which simplifies my life during the post-count dinner. For those who prefer to contact me directly, please send an e-mail to pereksta@pacbell.net, call (805) 659-5740, or sign up during the December meeting at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology.

As we did last year, we will cover the area from Westlake to the Oxnard Plain, and from Leo Carrillo State Park to California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks. As always, we need people to cover the Santa Monica Mountains, La Jolla Canyon, Big Sycamore Canyon, Leo Carrillo State Park, Camarillo Regional Park, the CSU

Channel Islands campus, Mugu Lagoon, Camarillo Springs Park, Thousand Oaks Botanic Garden, Los Robles Golf Course, Hill Canyon, Wildwood Park, Calleguas Creek, Revelon Slough, the Oxnard Plain, Hidden Valley, Satwiwa, and many other areas. Please pre-register as soon as possible, and let me know where you are available to bird or who you want to bird with.

You can also help by "staking out" unusual or hard to find species such as American White Pelican, Cattle Egret, Wood Duck, Redhead, Hooded Merganser, Osprey, Band-tailed Pigeon, Common Ground-Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Western Screech-Owl, Burrowing Owl, Common Poorwill, Lewis's Woodpecker, Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsuckers, Yellow Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Tricolored Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Pine Siskin, and Lawrence's Goldfinch. In addition, we often come close to missing a few common species including Hutton's Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Townsend's Warbler, so keep an eye out for them prior to the CBC.

The CBC began over a century ago when 27 conservationists in 25 localities, led by ornithologist Frank Chapman, changed the course of ornithological history. On Christmas Day 1900, this small group initiated an alternative activity to the "side hunt." Participants in the "side hunt" would split up into teams and see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals in a day. Dr. Chapman proposed instead to identify, count, and record the birds they saw, thus founding what is today considered the most significant citizen-based conservation effort in the USA. The CBC is open to birders of all skill levels. If you do not wish to go out and count birds, consider "feeder watching" in your back yard. You might attract an unusual hummingbird to your feeder, find an uncommon sparrow or finch, or keep an oriole around for us to include.

We will gather to tally up the Christmas Bird Count totals, compare notes, and socialize beginning at 6:00 pm at Nobuko McClure's home. We will have pizza and other potluck goodies. If your last name begins with A – M please bring hors d'oeuvre or munchies to share; N – Z, a finger food type dessert which is easy to serve. Paper goods, plastic utensils, coffee, and tea will be provided – or bring your own beverage.

To cover the cost of the pizza and paper goods etc. we will be asking for a \$5/person donation. If you plan on attending please call **Nobuko at (805) 482-0411** so she can plan accordingly and provide directions to her house.

