



ROADRUNNER

Founded 1968

Published by the Conejo Valley Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

VOL. 39

February 2008

NO. 6

General Meeting February 4 7:30 pm Western Foundation

From Black Gold to the Black Oystercatcher: Challenges and Opportunities in Alaska



Alaska is the largest of our states, encompassing more than 600,000 sq. miles of rugged mountains, grinding glaciers, endless tundra,

diverse temperate rainforest, and winding coast lines. From the Spectacled Eider and Yellow-billed Loon found in America's Arctic to the Black Oystercatcher and the Kittlitz's Murrelet found on the southern coastline, Alaska's birdlife diversity is astounding. Alaska also has an abundance of other iconic wildlife species including grizzlies, caribou, Bald Eagles, humpback whales and wolves, many of which are endangered elsewhere. The current administration and some members of congress have advocated vastly accelerating the extraction of oil, gas, and mineral deposits in this important ecological area. Audubon seeks a balance between resource extraction and protecting internationally critical habitat.

Taldi Walter joined the National Audubon Society's Public Policy Office in Washington DC as the Alaska Outreach Coordinator, after the completion of her Masters degree in Biology. Taldi's research took her to Brazil where she studied the exotic invasive plant species,

Lonicera japonica. During her first year with National Audubon Taldi traveled throughout the country taking Audubon members on a virtual tour to some of Alaska's most stunning natural treasures through her multimedia presentation focused on top Alaska conservation issues. Taldi will present an informative slideshow showcasing some of the important natural areas and brilliant birds found in wild Alaska. The presentation will explore some of Alaska's natural treasures set aside decades ago for the benefit of wildlife and the American public. She will highlight the imminent and compelling challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Tongass National Forest, Chugach National Forest, and National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.



CALENDAR

February

2	7:15 am	Field trip	Rustic Canyon
4	7:30 pm	General meeting	Western Foundation
10	4:15 pm	Field trip	Owling at Circle X Ranch
14	9:00 am	Field trip	Beginner's Bird Walk
16	7:45 am	Field trip	Malibu Lagoon
24	7:15 am	Field trip	Santa Barbara Hotspots

*** Pre meeting Dinner ***

Ottavio's in Camarillo at 5:15 pm

Call Nobuko Mc Clure
for reservations

24 hours in advance of the monthly
general meeting (805) 482-0411.

CVAS Events

The public 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. Please call the trip leader in advance to learn of any changes to the field trip plans.

Field Trips

The times specified are departure times - **be sure to arrive 15 min earlier.** Try to car pool when ever possible and don't forget to give the driver gas money!
RAIN CANCELS!

Saturday, February 2 Rustic Canyon

Leave at Las Posas to carpool at 7:30 am or meet at the entrance to Rustic Canyon at 8 am. Hope to find Cactus Wrens, possible California Gnatcatcher, sparrows, Blue-birds etc. Leader is **Tom Halpin (805) 746-4598.**

Sunday, February 10 Owling at Circle X Ranch

Hope to see some owls this year; looking for Western Screech Owl and No. Pygmy Owl. **Limit of 10 people.** We will leave at 4:30 pm from Rancho Park and Ride or you can meet us there at 5 pm. Bring jacket and flashlight. To get on the list call **Dee Lyon (805) 499-2165.**

Thursday, Feb 14 Beginner's Bird Walk

Second Thursday of each month. Call **Angie Kobabe (818) 991-4055** between 9 am and 9 pm to let her know you are coming and find out where it will be. Rain cancels.

Saturday, Feb 16 Malibu Lagoon

Leave Rancho Park and Ride at 8 am to carpool. Looking for an assortment of ducks, water birds, shorebirds, and possible Virginia Rail or Sora. Leader is **Richard Congersky (805) 381-291.**

Sunday, February 24 Santa Barbara Hotspots

Where we go depends upon the Hotline. Leave Las Posas Park and Ride at 7:30 am. Leader is **Linda Easter (805) 482-7537.**

Shutterbugs by Don Williamson

The February 11th meeting will be in the multipurpose room at Leisure Village at 7:30 PM. The topic will be determined at the January 14th meeting. The picture theme for February will be "Emotions".

If you are interested in attending the Shutterbugs meetings, contact Jerry Spector at (805) 384-9039 or jerbear007@yahoo.com to be put on the access list for Leisure Village.

Save the Date

February 15 - 18, 2008 Great Backyard Bird Count

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society need your help in spreading word about this event.

Choose your level of involvement - from putting up posters in your neighborhood to contacting newspapers or leading workshops. Visit www.birdcount.org and see the "Get Involved" section for more information.

Help make this year's Great Backyard Bird Count the best ever! <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>

March 8, 2008 CVAS annual Dinner/Auction

Fill out the form on page three and mail to Rich Congersky before Feb 24th for the early bird special

Bird Festivals

April 4 - 6, 2008 Olympic Bird Fest 2008

Contact: Dungeness River Audubon Center
P.O. Box 2450
Sequim, WA 98382
360-681-4076
info@olympicbirdfest.org
www.olympicbirdfest.org

April 16 - 20, 2008 Yuma Birding & Nature Festival

Yuma Visitors Bureau
202 South 1st Avenue Ste 202
Yuma, Arizona 85364
1(800) 293-0071
Birding@visityuma.com
www.visityuma.com

You are cordially invited to join
Conejo Valley Audubon Society

on

March 8, 2008

at

Sterling Hills Golf Club
901 Sterling Hills Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010

Exit the Ventura Freeway (101) at Central Avenue in Camarillo.
Go north on Central (0.8 mi) to Beardsley Road and turn RIGHT.
Continue on Beardsley (0.75 mi) until you reach Sterling Hills Drive and turn RIGHT.
On the left you will see the golf course parking lot.

for

Cocktails, Dinner and Auction

No-host cocktails 5:30 PM - Dinner 6:30 PM

Ticket price per person \$40.00 (early-bird special \$35.00 - before 2/24/08)

5-FREE raffle tickets for each 1st time guest

We ask that everyone kindly bring an item for the raffles.

All types of donation items are acceptable and are not limited to those with an avian theme.

Anyone interested in donating items for the silent or live auctions please contact Rich Congersky at:
(cell) 805-558-2297 or (work) 805-381-2691

All are tax deductible!

Dinner selections: All plated and served with Camarillo Baby Greens Salad, Rolls and butter, and Dessert.

- (1) Sautéed Breast of Chicken served with Lemon Herb sauce
- (2) Poached Salmon with Classic Dill Beurre Blanc Sauce
- (3) Veggie Stack – Garlic mashed potatoes topped with delicious fresh grilled vegetables

Please fill out this reservation form, tear it off, and mail it with your check (payable to CVAS) to:

Rich Congersky, 5807 Topanga Canyon Blvd. # I-306, Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Print your name(s) as you would like it to appear on your place card and select an entrée by number

Name _____ Dinner # ____ Phone # _____
 Name _____ Dinner # ____
 Name _____ Dinner # ____
 Name _____ Dinner # ____
 Name _____ Dinner # ____

Thank for your support!!!

Birding in Ecuador

by Ron and Audrey Watkins

Ecuador is a fabulous birding destination. About the size of Colorado with a bird list of 1,600 species. A land of dazzling bird species, from the coast in the west up to the spectacular spine of the Andes in the center on down to the sprawling Amazon lowlands of the east. Ecuador without a doubt has one of the highest biodiversities in South America. The excellent lodges and metropolis of Quito on the Equator make for a unique experience.

Destinations for the birder include the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation in the Choco area of Northwestern Ecuador, the slopes of Quito's Pichincha Volcano. The sanctuaries of Milpe and Rio Silanche. Guango & San Isidro Lodge. Tandayapa Valley & lodge. Tandayapa Lodge was noted as having the Best Feeders in the World in July/August 'Winging It' 2007. In the tropics we found SACHA Lodge with its 1000 ft. long canopy walkway an incredible experience.

American Birding Association held its international conference on Sept 1. Tropical Birding was the guide group responsible for all our outstanding trips including the eastern Ecuador extension. We tallied 284 life birds. We saw 26 new hummers of the 103 species listed. A few of the 97 Tanagers, numerous Dacnis, Euphonias & Honeycreepers added to the brilliant array of birds.

The bizarre prehistoric looking **Hoatzin** was a target bird. Turkey sized large cracid found in trees around lakes in the lowlands. A shaggy crest, extensive bright blue facial skin, broad buff tail tipping. Grunting and quite tame, seemingly befuddled at any disturbance. We learned that it smells and tastes terrible so animals and natives avoid it as a food source.



Among the hummers the **Sword-billed hummer** (5-5 1/4") was incredible. Its range in the 8000 to 9000 ft level. His bill is (3 1/2 to 4"). Scarce. Perched birds rest with the bill sharply upraised, as if to balance its excessive length. Unmistakable even at a distance.

The Long-tailed Sylph (7 1/4") is gorgeous, mostly shining green, crown glittering (blue at certain angles). Tail very long and extremely deeply forked, upper side shimmering green (blue at certain angles).



Mountain Velvetbreast female hummingbird with a decurved bill. Chest is thickly spotted with green, white in tail and black below.



Toucan Barbet. A colorful and hefty barbet. Iris is red, bill very heavy. Throat, chest and sides of neck bluish gray. Breast & belly red. Multicolored with under parts greenish yellow and orange-yellow rump conspicuous in flight.

Ron was able to photograph the shy secretive Chestnut-crowned Antpita. Like the Jocotoco Antpita discovered in 1997 they are some of Ecuador's most endangered birds. Recently they have been enticed out at dawn with calls from a known voice feeding them worms.

Squirrel Cuckoo. A spectacular large, long-tailed cuckoo in the lowlands has a yellowish bill.

Andean Cock of the Rock. Bright red chunky, its loud raucous call gave it away. (Photo on page 6)



Silver-throated Tanager. Bright lemon yellow with opalescent throat.

We were able to hear a presentation by Robert S. Ridgely and Paul J Greenfield who produced the *Birds of Ecuador Field Guide*. Later we were fortunate to take a tour with Robert Ridgely.

We would heartedly endorse any birder to put Ecuador on their 'must go & see' list for a absolutely amazing birding experience. <http://www.tropicalbirding.com>

Photography by Ron Watkins.



by David Pereksta

The 33rd Thousand Oaks Christmas Count was held on December 29, 2007. Approximately 60 birders covered as much bird habitat as they could find in the count circle, which includes the Oxnard Plain, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the coast from Leo Carillo to Point Mugu. When the day was finished, the teams had collectively found 184 species. The addition of "count week" birds may push the total to 188 or higher. Highlights included a Red-necked Grebe, Reddish Egret, Wood Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Long-tailed Duck, four Black Scoters, two Common



Goldeneyes, Burrowing Owl, and Short-eared Owl at Point Mugu (138 species there alone); Tropical Kingbirds at Lake Sherwood and CSUCI; a Eurasian Wigeon and Ferruginous Hawk at Lake Sherwood; a Williamson's Sapsucker at CSUCI; a Red-naped Sapsucker at Camarillo Regional Park; a Grasshopper Sparrow at Satwiwa; a Rhinoceros Auklet and Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers off Mugu Rock; a Prairie Falcon on the Oxnard Plain; and two Wood Ducks at Hill Canyon. Notable misses were White-winged Scoter, American Bittern, Osprey, Black Oystercatcher, Black and Ruddy Turnstones, Hairy Woodpecker, Vermilion Flycatcher, Purple Finch, and Pine Siskin. In addition, we did not find any warblers, tanagers, or orioles (other than the usual warblers). If you saw any of those species on count day or within 3 days of it (before or after), please let David Pereksta know as soon as possible.

Thanks to everyone who participated and to Nobuko McClure for hosting the compilation in the evening.

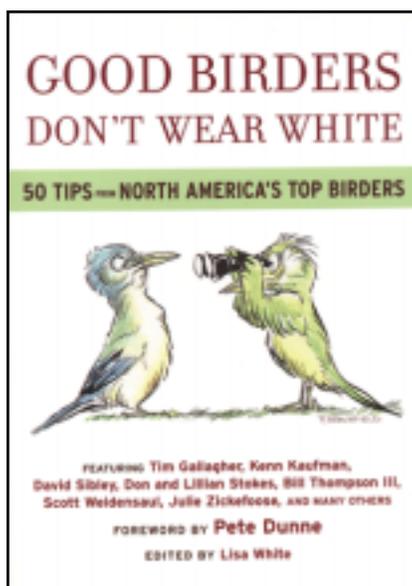
Book Reviews

Did you get a gift card to a book store this holiday season or do you just like to read? Here are two suggestions to start off your reading year. If you have read a book that you think we'd enjoy feel free to send me your review - Editor.

Good Birders

Don't Wear White

Forward by Pete Dunn



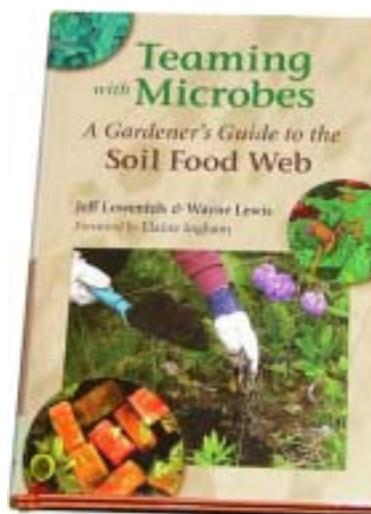
This book is both funny and serious. It's a group of essays by some of the finest birders on topics like feeding birds, cleaning your binoculars, birding at night, taking field notes and birding in bad weather. It's an easy and enjoyable read. Apparently, sometimes it is OK to wear white!

Don Williamson

Teaming with Microbes:

a Gardner's Guide to the Soil Food Web

by Jeff Lowenfels and Wayne Lewis.



For those of us who are trying to protect the environment and create wildlife habitat by going organic in our gardens, this is a real eye-opener. In a very readable way, it explains how the complex communities of life in the soil interact to nourish each other, and how detrimental things like rototilling and chemical fertilizers (let alone insecticides and fungicides) are to those communities.

It's a whole new insight into just how beautifully Nature works. I highly recommend it.

Chrystal Klabunde