



ROADRUNNER

Founded 1968

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

VOL. 42

January 2011

NO. 5

**General Meeting January 3
7:30 pm Western Foundation**

**Conservation Column
By Dee Lyon**

20 Years of Tree Swallows—a Retrospective



Tree swallows are endemic to Southern California, but for many years were practically extirpated from the area. In 1991 **Jan Wasserman** took over a project that had started in 1980, but had been dormant for several years. Nest boxes were placed at the Ventura Sewage ponds, and at the United Water Conservation District diversion ponds in Saticoy. There were about a dozen boxes in Ventura, and three in Saticoy. At that point there were approximately 10 pairs of Tree swallows along the Santa Clara River in Ventura and L. A. Counties. Over the past 20 years the project has gone from those 10 pairs to several thousand birds hatched and fledged in Ventura County. The project has expanded and contracted many times over. Jan will talk about the last 20 years and what will be happening next with these amazing and beautiful birds.

Fresno Audubon Success Story. They are getting together with farmers in a win-win situation. \$500,000 worth of irrigation system was being chewed up by gophers, so Fresno Audubon helped a farmer with wooden nesting boxes at the top of tall poles. Soon more than a dozen families of barn owls were feasting on gophers. Federal scientists estimate that an average family of barn owls can kill 1,500 to 3,000 rodents a year.

The problem was that without trees, the owls needed a place to call home.

The San Joaquin Valley now sports owl boxes in many locations. The boxes are about 2 feet high, 2 feet wide and about 18 inches deep, made of wood, plastic or aluminum.

Waste Management, in Simi Valley, has had similar success with Barn Owls. Let's encourage the farmers and the golf courses in Ventura County to manage their rodent pests in this sustainable manner.

Vanishing Plastic! Swinburne University of Technology in Australia is supporting research projects investigating bioplastics from renewable sources. They are testing chitin-based polymers - the world's second-most abundant natural polymer which is mostly derived from shellfish waste, but also includes the exoskeletons of crustaceans, insects and spiders.

Fungi from compost have grown on the chitin-based biopolymer, proving that this material is bio-

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CALENDAR

January

2	Assigned	Christmas Bird Count
3	5:15 pm	Pre meeting Dinner: Ottavio's
3	7:30 pm	General Meeting Western Foundation
8	8:00 am	Field Trip: Sierra Vista
13	9:00 am	Beginner's Bird Walk
16	8:00 am	Field Trip: Santa Clara River Estuary
21	7:45 am	Field Trip: Pt. Mugu Navy Base
23	8:00 am	Field Trip: Seal Beach Nat. Wildlife Refuge

***** Pre meeting Dinner *****

Ottavio's in Camarillo at 5:15 pm

Call Nobuko McClure

For Reservations (805) 482-0411

Reservation Deadline Before!

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 January Board Meeting will be held on Monday, January 17. 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, January 8th Sierra Vista / Satwiwa

Meet at Sierra Vista at 8:00 am in the main parking lot. Take Wendy to Lynn Road; turn right, go to the entrance to National Recreation Area / Sierra Vista and proceed to main parking lot. Leader is **Thelma Williams (805) 492-2796**

Thursday, January 13th 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 to find out where it will be held. Rain or temperatures above 90 degrees will cancel.

Sunday, January 16 Santa Clara River Estuary

Meet at the Las Posas Park & Ride at 8:00 am. Look for ducks, herons, sandpipers, terns, plovers, phalaropes, turnstones, moorhens, pipits, ospreys, etc. A spotting scope is very useful. Leader is **Chrystal Klabunde (805) 522-8023**.

Friday, January 21st Pt. Mugu Navy Base

This trip for CVAS members only requires pre-signup at least 3 weeks prior to trip and is limited to

25 people. Contact **Don Williamson** at **(818) 889-4498** to check on availability. US citizenship required as well as a picture ID. No cameras or video equipment permitted. Meet at base parking lot (corner of Mugu Rd and Navel Air Road) at 7:45 am. Trip Leader is **David Pereska**.

Field Trip Added Sunday, January 23rd Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge

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. **Michael Zarky** has arranged for us to tour there Sunday Jan 23, 2011, from 8 AM to noon. Moderate high tide around 11 AM. Meet in the main public lot at 800 Seal Beach Blvd. ready to carpool before 8 AM (the base has a big van). 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. Sign up with Michael at mzarky@earthlink.net; phone number required. Bring photo ID, scopes. No cameras or video equipment allowed.

Conservation Column

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degradable. It is suitable for food packaging and is derived from raw materials that do not compete with food crops. The best use for these plastics is for food and beverage packaging because it can simply be thrown into the compost.

Save That Date

CVAS Annual Dinner
Friday, March 18th
Sterling Hills Golf Club
901 Sterling Hills Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010
For
Cocktails, Dinner and Auction

See the February Roadrunner Newsletter
For Dinner Selections & Reservation Forms

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Laguna Tams by *Bets Buchanan* Saturday, September 12th

Around 14 of us searched the Tams on Laguna Road for early warblers, but found Warbling Vireos, Common Yellowthroat, Orange Crowned Warbler and House Wren, along with Juncos, Starlings, Hammon's Flycatcher, CA Towhee, Brewer's Blackbirds, and sundry unidentified chips. Probably 2 weeks too early. We found Greater Yellowlegs, LB Dowitcher, Least and Western Sandpipers, and Kildeer, in the Wood Road flood control, then American Wigeon, Pied Billed Grebe, Gt Egret, Gt Blue Heron, Crows, Yellow Rump Warbler, Tree Swallow, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Song, House and Savannah Sparrow, Eur Collared Dove, Semi Palmated Plover, Red Tailed Hawk, Kestrel, TV, Mallard, Pintail, Cowbird, CA Thrasher, Mockingbird and 65 Black-bellied Plovers along Casper and Arnold Road.

Pt. Mugu Lagoon by *Carol Langford* Saturday, September 18th

Into the gloaming the intrepid explorers tentatively ventured as they explored the "wild coast", the south coast of California. Yes, it was very foggy as CVAS members started the Sept field trip to Mugu Lagoon and the "Rock". The tide was low so we had nice scope views of curlews, whimbrels, and willets. The treat of the day was the hundreds, yes, hundreds or more of common dolphins off shore at Mugu Rock. An exciting sight.

Malibu Lagoon by *Carol Langford* Saturday, October 2nd

Malibu Lagoon is a very popular place. Bird-watchers, surfers, more surfers, families, photographers, birdwatchers, researchers, snowy plover surveyors contribute to enormous pressure on the small lagoon and marsh. Nevertheless, on our field trip to the Lagoon the birds were numerous and varied. We saw 60 species! Forster's and Common Terns in close proximity provided study opportunities. The 40 plus snowy plovers were the subject of both researchers and surveyors. Although only two were present the Pectoral Sandpipers were the subject of much study and attention, both from CVAS birdwatchers consulting guides to confirm identity and a cruising hawk. State Parks has plans to

remodel the Lagoon in hopes of improving water quality and bird habitat. I'm crossing my fingers the Lagoon remains a popular place with the birds.

Camino Real Park by *Linda Easter* Saturday, October 16

Six of us braved a misty, drizzly, overcast morning to bird Camino Real Park in Ventura. When we arrived, Dee Lyon was already there and had already seen a Blackpoll Warbler. Then she sighted a male Black-throated Blue Warbler foraging in a pine tree. We were all able to see the bird clearly, and also saw two Hermit Warblers, several Orange-crowned Warblers, many Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a few Townsend's Warblers. Although we only spent about 2 hours at the park, we also saw at least three Red-breasted Nuthatches, a couple of Downy Woodpeckers, a couple of Golden-crowned Kinglets, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cooper's Hawks, and a Western Wood-Pewee. The usual suspects were also there, so all in all, it was very rewarding birding morning.

Hill Canyon by *Jean Hulberg* Sunday, October 24th

The sun came out in Hill Canyon and so did the birds. All 40 species of them. Thanks to all the sharp eyes in the group, we spotted, among others, a Shrike, Kingfisher, Green Heron, Harrier, both Towhees, Nuttall's and Downey Woodpeckers, Canyon and Bewick's Wrens and welcomed back the Say's Phoebes. After we left, the clouds rolled in and the rain returned. Lucky us.



The image above was made by Don Williamson at Roy Dunn's High-speed Flash Hummingbird Workshop in July 2010 at Roy's house in Westlake Village.

ROADRUNNER

Conejo Valley Audubon Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 4782

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January, 2011



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President	Carol Langford	805-987-2721	president
Vice Pres			
Secretary	Gary Evans	805-231-5692	GaryE
Treasurer	Ron Barns	818-991-9967	rtbarns@netscape.net
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Webmaster	Frank DeMartino		webmaster
CVAS Web Site	http://www.ConejoValleyAudubon.org		
Send E-mail to	username@ConejoValleyAudubon.org		



The Bald Eagle in the image above kept getting closer and closer to Don Klabunde on his recent 2010 trip to the Pacific Northwest. The image sequence of the eagle's flight as it approached the camera was one of the highlights at our September "Show & Tell".

Regular meetings are held on the first Monday evening of each month at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted. **Everyone is welcome.** Take Pleasant Valley Road or Lewis Road to where they cross south of the 101 Freeway. Go west to the second street, Calle San Pablo. Turn right. The Foundation is the fifth building on the left.

The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology is a non-profit organization founded in 1956 to promote the study and conservation of birds and other vertebrates. The organization makes contributions in the areas of natural history collections, original research, and conservation.

The *Roadrunner* is published monthly except July and August by the Conejo Valley Audubon Society. It is sent to paid CVAS members only. Members are invited to submit articles, announcements, letters, photos, and drawings for publication consideration. Copy deadline is the 5th of the month. Send items to Charlie Lucas, 465 Havenside Ave., Newbury Park, CA 91320, or by E-mail: newsletter@ConejoValleyAudubon.org.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

C1ZC230Z

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society. I have enclosed \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students), payable to **National Audubon Society**, for an introductory membership.

Mail it to: National Audubon Society, P. O. Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

Renewing memberships should be sent to National Audubon with the renewal form and envelope you receive.

For questions regarding national membership status call: National Audubon Customer Service 1-800-274-4201

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

CONEJO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of Conejo Valley Audubon Society. I have enclosed \$20, payable to CVAS, for a family membership. Mail to: CVAS, P.O. Box 4782, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359 __ Please send my newsletter by E-mail.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____