January General Meeting

Wednesday, January 21

Southern California Bobcats

with Megan Jennings and Lisa Lyren

6:30 p.m. Social—7 p.m. Program

Bobcats are wide-ranging carnivores, found in many habitats across North America. Despite the extent of their range and their acceptance of varied habitats, they are sensitive to habitat fragmentation and human development. As a medium-sized predator, they play an important role in the ecosystem by keeping prey populations in check. It is both their status and their sensitivity that make them an excellent indicator species for landscape connectivity and ecosystem condition in the fragmented areas of coastal southern California, where larger predators have dropped out of the system.

Wildlife ecologists Lisa Lyren of the United States Geological Survey and Megan Jennings from San Diego State University’s Institute for Ecological Monitoring and Management will give a feature program on the bobcats of southern California for the BVAS January meeting.

Lisa Lyren, who earned an M.S. at Cal Poly Pomona, has been studying southern California carnivores, including bobcats, coyotes, and mountain lions, for over 15 years. She has primarily worked in coastal areas of Orange County, overseeing studies on carnivore response to urbanization in the San Joaquin Hills, the former El Toro Marine Base, and along the SR-71 and SR-91 highways in both Orange and Riverside counties. Megan Jennings began working with carnivores in northern California in 2001 and recently earned her Ph.D. at San Diego State University studying the effects of fire on mammalian carnivores in Southern California. She is currently studying wildlife movement along SR-67 between Ramona and Lakeside. The two researchers recently collaborated on a project in San Diego County. It focused on studying wildlife movement through corridors, or linkages, across the Multiple Species Conservation Plan preserve network, using bobcats as the focal species. Jennings and Lyren will be talking about the natural history of bobcats, the challenges the species faces in Southern California’s urban environments, and how their bobcat research has been used to understand landscape connectivity across networks of protected areas in San Diego and Orange Counties.

Please join us for a look at our nation’s beautiful wild cat.

Leroy—one of the research team’s radio-collared bobcats.

Ready—Set—Build! The Birdhouse Auction is Coming—March 21!
What a View!

Have you seen it yet? The new view deck is finally completed, and except for a few finishing details, the Nature Center is open for business again. The panoramic overview of the lagoon from the deck is very impressive; the perfect spot to gaze out over the lagoon, take in the sights and sounds of the birdlife, and to enjoy the fresh, salty smell of the ocean breezes. The Center was closed for almost six months during the remodel, but we think you’ll agree the wait was worth it. The Nature Center now has a new and exciting look, with a few more exciting improvements planned for the months ahead. Be sure to stop by and check out your new Center!

A Sad Loss

The BVAS family was saddened with the news that one of our special friends and volunteers, 29-year-old Amaranta Kozuch, was killed in early December in a car accident in Oceanside. Amaranta was a research biologist working on the San Diego Zoo’s pacific pocket mouse captive breeding program. She was scheduled to give a talk about her pocket mouse project at the BVAS General Meeting in February. Amaranta was a regular host at the Nature Center, a valued Nature Guide, and a volunteer at many BVAS special events. Most recently, she was helping classify the assorted mammal bones on hand at the Nature Center. She was a friendly, happy soul who was helping make this world a better place.

“Her philosophy of life was about respect for every living thing,” said Amaranta’s mother, Jeanne Kozuch.

BVAS Migrating Birders

Florida Trip Still Available!—Two spots have opened up on the BVAS Migrating Birders “Spring in Southern Florida” trip scheduled for next April 19-29. The exclusive trip is limited to only six birders—four spots have been taken and two are now available as a result of a cancellation. This promises to be a memorable trip. We’ll cover all the birding hotspots in south Florida with Steve Shunk as our personal guide. The 10-day trip includes an exciting day-long float plane trip to the Dry Tortugas.

Canada trip in late June—The “Summer in Northern Alberta” trip will go from June 24-July 5 and will highlight the breeding birds of Canada’s Rocky Mountains and boreal forest. The trip will be on the hunt for more than 20 species of “eastern” warblers and up to 20 different sparrows. The trip will be a full-service package led by Steve Shunk of Paradise Birding.

More information available—Trip flyers for the Florida and Canada trips are at the Nature Center or on the Paradise Birding website (www.paradisebirding.com). For questions, call Janine Free (760-908-7334), or Steve Shunk (541-408-1753). Space is limited, so don’t delay!

Camp Pendleton Family Strikes Birding Gold

Amy Saye learned to appreciate birds when Madeline, her teenage daughter, became fascinated by them herself a few years ago. For the last two years, the Sayes have been rewarded for their interest by a bird that has chosen to build its nest and raise its young inside the Saye’s garage. What bird? It was her namesake—a Say’s phoebe, of course! Pretty neat, and highly unusual. But that’s not all. In October this year, after the phoebes had fledged, a beautiful golden bird showed up in the front yard. Amy and Madeline finally puzzled out its identity—a rare prothonotary warbler! Amy shared her discovery with BVAS, and invited others to come to her yard to see this special bird.

The remarkable story of the garage-nesting Say’s phoebes and the first-ever recorded sighting of a prothonotary warbler on Camp Pendleton is included as a special supplement to this month’s digital edition of the Lagoon Flyer. If you aren’t a subscriber to our digital edition of the newsletter (and why aren’t you?), you can still read the Saye’s story on the BVAS website: www.bvaudubon.org.

San Diego Bird Fest
March 5-8—2015

Workshops, bird trips, speakers, trade show.
Information and Registration:
858-273-7800; www.sandiegoaudubon.org
South Bay Salt Works Bird Walk
Sunday, January 11—8 a.m. with Steve Brad
The South Bay Salt Works has over 20 salt ponds used to extract salt from seawater by evaporation. It is a critically important breeding site for several species of terns, and a wintering area for thousands of shorebirds.
Our bird trip through the Salt Works will be by car, with frequent stops and minimal walking. Pre-registration required.
NOTE—Reservations Required: This area is normally closed to the public. We have arranged special access for a limited number of cars and participants. Please call Steve Brad to reserve your spot and receive special instructions.
Directions (for those who have pre-registered): Take I-5 south to Chula Vista and exit on Palomar St. Go west to the T-intersection at Bay Blvd. and turn left. Drive 0.3 mile and park on the right, outside the gated fence.
Co-Leaders: Robert Patton; Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.
Day-of-trip cell phone, 760-274-5256.

San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk
Saturday, January 17—8 a.m. with John Haddock
The January walk will meet at the San Andres Dr. trailhead east of I-5. This is an especially convenient birding site for people with mobility issues. The elevated trail provides an excellent vantage point for views of the wintering shorebirds and waterfowl.
San Andres Dr. Trailhead—From I-5, take Via de la Valle east; turn right (south) on San Andres Dr. and go to end of road.
Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Basic Birthing Workshop and Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count
with Joan Fountain and Tom Troy
Saturday, January 31—8 a.m.
Join the BVAS birders for our basic birthing workshop and bird count at Buena Vista Lagoon. No experience necessary. We meet at the Nature Center at 8 a.m. and then caravan around the lagoon to a series of selected stops for some friendly, informal, no-pressure birding.
Directions: Meet at the Nature Center parking lot, 2202 South Coast Hwy., Oceanside.
Leaders: Joan Fountain, 760-729-1379.
Tom Troy, 760-420-7328.

Birding with BVAS

Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk with John Haddock Saturday, January 3—8 a.m.
Wintering at Whelan—We’ll check out all those exciting birds we surely found on our extensive survey at the sanctuary during the Christmas Bird Count.
Directions: 1-5 to Hwy. 76 East; turn left at Douglas Dr.; continue to the light at North River Rd.; go left on North River Rd. Pass through the entrance gate and follow the signs to the lake.
Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Second Thursday Surprise Walk with Steve Brad Thursday, January 8—8 a.m.
Join our weekday surprise-location bird walk on the second Thursday of each month. Where we go is based on recent reports and Steve’s personal surveying. If you’d like to get on the Second Thursday Walk notification list, please send an e-mail with your name, phone number and e-mail address to: stevebrad1@earthlink.net.
Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.
Day-of-trip cell phone, 760-274-5256.

2015 BVAS Pelagic Bird Trips
The 2015 schedule of BVAS-sponsored pelagic bird trips will be finalized soon. Look for an update in the February newsletter. If you can’t wait, the schedule will first be posted on the BVAS pelagic bird trip website: www.socalbirding.com.
For schedules, fees, and all pelagic birding info, visit:

Birding in January—This is an ideal month to look for wintering shorebirds and ducks at our coastal lagoons. Wherever you look you see large numbers of our most common winter species, yellow-rumped warblers and white-crowned sparrows. San Diego’s breeding raptors will be beginning their courtship. Early nesting hummingbirds can sometimes be found. Check out unruly clumps of honeysuckle, ivy, and other tangled thickets for over-wintering warblers, vireos, and an occasional oriole. Toyons and other winter berry bushes are haunts for thrushes, thrashers, mockingbirds, and other fruit lovers. Folks may be shoveling snow around the nation, but in San Diego, it’s just another good month to go birding!
**Ridgway’s Rail Society**

**Membership Appeal**—The early response to the Ridgway’s Rail Society appeal letter sent to BVAS members in October was overwhelming. By mid-November, BVAS Ridgway’s Rail Society membership had grown to 150 individuals and couples. In its campaign to purchase and restore two wetlands parcels in Oceanside, the Society has now received almost $50,000 from the community in individual donations. Recent gifts were received in memory of Gary Herskowitz, Ruth Meluh, Joyce Paige, and Dave Rorick, and in honor of Hailey Marie Butler, and “Stella and Sue.” Thank you all for your support.

All donations are matched by pledges from Preserve Calavera and North County Advocates, and all go directly toward the purchase price of these properties.

*Recent Contributions:*

$1,000-$2,499—Betty & Joanne Butler (in honor of Hailey Marie Butler); Paige DeCino.

$500-$999—Cornelius Bouscaren (in memory of Dave Rorick); Donald Orahood; Howard & Elizabeth Randol; Michael & Sally Dickerson; Jerry Body; Laurie & Steve Bradley; Leslie Budai; Steve Calender; Mary S. Capadonna; Sharon Clark; Norma Cooper; G.J. & Margaret Crask; Joan Earl; Dorcas Edge; Michael & Judith Eiseman; Vali Flynn; Roger & Betty Fox (in memory of Joyce Paige); June Ginger; Marilyn Hendron; Marla H. Hess; Sandra J. Jorgenson; Martha Kinsella-Shaw; Juhee & Michael Kline; Richard Kohl; Cathrine Krogder-Diamond; James & Crystal Langford; Muriel Lo; Julia Marine; Gerda Meurs; Ruth Anne Miller; Danyce Mills; Bruce & Patty Montgomery; Marc Ordman; Knud & Suzanne Pedersen; Iris Peterson; Gervais Pimentel; Stephanie Pino; Arlene R. Rath (in memory of Ruth Meluh); Richard Reynolds; Keith D. Rogers; Alan Russell; Susanna Samaniego; Judy Schramm; M. Lynette Smith; Rosemary Stafford; Anne-Marie & Dieter Steinmetz; Emily de la Tierre; Ruth Thomas; Melody Wagner; Cara Lou Wicks; Timothy Wilbur; Scott & Stephanie Witte; Michael Wittmer; Jackie Wrench; Sandra & Aristides Yayanos.

*Includes donations processed through November 15.

**BVAS OFFICERS, BOARD*, AND CHAIRS**

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Dave Billings*</td>
<td>760-753-7925</td>
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<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Dennis Huckabay*</td>
<td>760-757-6437</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Kathy Billings*</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Sandy McMullen*</td>
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<td>Bird House Auction</td>
<td>Kelly Deveney</td>
<td>760-721-2441</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Jacques Domoerq*</td>
<td>760-583-1961</td>
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<td>Center Manager</td>
<td>Annette Schneider</td>
<td>760-945-8891</td>
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<td>Christmas Bird Count</td>
<td>Andy Mauro*</td>
<td>760-753-1266</td>
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<td>Susie Martin*</td>
<td>760-580-9440</td>
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<td>Migrating Birders Trips</td>
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<td>760-908-7334</td>
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<td>Nature Storytime</td>
<td>Mary Ellen Marquand</td>
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<td>760-753-1266</td>
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<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Bob Crowell*</td>
<td>760-207-3884</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webmaster</td>
<td>Larry Spann</td>
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**Ridgway’s Rail Society News**

**Progress Made on Resource Agencies’ Grants**—The Board of Governors of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Group has placed the BVAS campaign to acquire a 3.5-acre parcel of lagoon land on its 2015 Action Plan. As a result, a number of individual Wetlands Recovery Group members will be touring the site this winter to evaluate it for funding grants from their various agencies.

**Location:**
2202 South Coast Hwy.
Oceanside, CA
(East side of street on north shore of lagoon)

**Mailing Address:**
P.O. Box 480
Oceanside, CA 92049

**Phone:**
760-439-2473

**BVAS Website:**
www.bvaudubon.org

**Pelagic Birding Website:**
www.socalbirding.com

**E-mail:**
bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
**I want to preserve sensitive habitat in North County. Please designate my contribution to the Ridgway’s Rail Society.**

**FRIENDS OF BUENA VISTA AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

As a Friend of BVAS, I will receive the chapter newsletter, be invited to special events just for Friends and receive a discount on BVAS Gift Shop purchases. The BVAS Nature Center and its programs will receive 100% of my contribution.

Minimum donation suggested: $25. My donation: $ 25 ___ $50 ___ $ 100 ___ Other: ___

Name____________________________________
Address__________________________________
City, State, Zip  ___________________________
Phone______________
*E-mail______________

*Please send me the digital edition of the Lagoon Flyer by e-mail each month. It’s a week earlier, in full color, has extra features, and saves BVAS and the environment the cost of printing and postage. Sign me up!*  

Thank You!

BVAS Yearend Appeal
Your generous gift will help support the many programs and special activities planned for the Nature Center throughout 2015.

“Neither (lack of) Rain, Nor Sleet, Nor Nature Center Remodeling…”

**Dedicated Teams Handle the Newsletter and Other Business**

In late October, the yearend Lagoon Flyer was mailed off to almost 2,000 households without a hitch, just like a normal month. But in fact, it required some determined maneuvering by a dedicated team of volunteers to pull it off.

The Nature Center was closed in October, just as it had been for most of the previous three months. But that wasn’t going to stop the mailing team. Six ladies—Tina Dawson, Elaine Harding, Elsie Hill, Irish Jones, Peggy Owens, and Kathy Taub—and one man—BVAS circulation coordinator Harvey Hart—with all their supplies and boxes of newsletters in tow, met at Woodland Village in San Marcos to fold, label, and sort all the newsletters. Then Harvey hauled the newsletters off to the post office. It was just another in a series of late-season, winning touchdowns for this team. They must be getting used to the roar of the crowd!

Not having the Nature Center for the summer was a hardship for many of us. Events had to be cancelled, making for antsy volunteer hosts and Nature Guides, and disappointed members of the public. Some things still had to happen. The Board met each month at the outside picnic tables. The garden crew parked offsite and trekked to the Center to keep the gardens and trail neat and tidy. Others worked mainly at home to advance various BVAS programs, including a real challenge—oversight of the Nature Center remodeling project itself. Now we can celebrate—project accomplished!

**BVAS Native Plant Club**

Support Group—Third Sunday of Each Month
January 18—2 p.m.

Garden Work Party—Every Monday—10 a.m.

The Buena Vista Native Plant Club support group regularly meets at the Nature Center at 2 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month. Everyone’s welcome, regardless of their native plant knowledge or gardening expertise. Club members answer your questions and help solve your gardening issues, as well as offer tips for native gardening activities appropriate for the season. We always spend time among the native plants in the gardens or along the trails.

**Preschool Nature Storytime**

Monday, January 26, 10 a.m.

What bird has wings but cannot fly, lays eggs but builds no nest? It’s a penguin! A penguin has VERY short feathers over its body, and short, stubby wings. At our January Storytime we’ll learn more about these delightful birds and their antics. Hope to see you at the Nature Center at 10 a.m. for a story, songs, and craft. And don’t forget to try to guess what is in our Surprise Box that morning. Questions? Call Mary Ellen: 760-918-6622.

**Kids’ Corner At the Nature Center**

Joey’s and Johnny’s Clubhouse

Kids and parents are invited to stop by the Nature Center for some informal nature fun.

Third Sunday of Each Month
January 18—1-4 p.m.
BVAS Quick Calendar

Fri. Jan. 2—Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sat. Jan. 3—Whelan Lake Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Thur. Jan. 8—Second Thursday Surprise Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Fri. Jan. 9—Nature Guides Meeting—9:30 a.m.
Sun. Jan. 11—South Bay Salt Works Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Sat. Jan. 17—San Dieguito Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Sun. Jan. 18—Joey’s and Johnny’s Clubhouse—1 p.m.
Sun. Jan. 18—Native Plant Club—2 p.m.
Wed. Jan. 21—General Meeting and Program—6:30 p.m.

“Southern California Bobcats”
Sat. Jan. 31—Basic Birding and Lagoon Bird Count—8 a.m.

Coming Attractions

*San Diego Bird Festival—March 5-8

*Fifth Annual
BVAS Birdhouse Auction
Saturday, March 21

Marbled Murrelet in Mission Bay

The sighting of any species of murrelet in Mission Bay would be exciting news for San Diego birders, so you can imagine the reaction when a super rare marbled murrelet showed up on the first day of December. There had only been three previous sightings of marbled murrelets in San Diego County prior to this December gift. The species is listed as “threatened.”

Marbled murrelets have an unusual nesting habit, which was only discovered by accident just a few decades ago. Marbled murrelets lay a single egg on a bed of moss or other debris high up in the canopy of old-growth rainforest in the Pacific Northwest. They feed their chick up to eight times a day, flying back and forth between the ocean and their nest site. Nests have been documented as far as 50 miles inland.

—Photo by Steve Brad
Camp Pendleton Family Strikes Birding Gold

By Andy Mauro

Discovering Birds—Amy Saye and her family live in a tidy new neighborhood on Camp Pendleton. Amy’s teenage daughter, Madeline, became interested in birds several years ago, and her enthusiasm was quickly picked up by her mom. Before long, a bunch of bird-feeders were hanging in the front yard, and Amy and Madeline were happily recording the comings and goings of scores of new yard birds. Early in 2013, things got really interesting.

A Case of Kismet—It was spring, and a bird had decided to build a nest in the next door neighbor’s garage. The shocked neighbor removed the first bits of nesting material, and closed her garage door. Amy identified the bird as a Say’s phoebe, and showing a soft spot for a namesake, decided to leave open the side door to her garage. Sure enough, the phoebe flew into Amy’s garage, found a rafter just inside the door, and began building its nest. Say’s phoebes don’t normally nest this close to the coast, and certainly not inside a garage. But this was different. Some might say the Say’s phoebe and the Saye’s family had a cosmic connection.

Say’s Success!—Amy rigged up a remote camera to keep track of her bird cousins. She and Madeline kept close watch as eggs were laid, nestlings fed, and baby birds fledged. The male phoebe helped care for the fledglings, guiding them to a safe nighttime roost under the porch eaves of another neighbor’s house across the street. A second clutch of hatchlings followed, with equal success.

Year Two Crisis—With the arrival of spring in 2014, the Say’s phoebe couple returned to Amy’s garage for another year of housekeeping. Three more baby phoebes were hatched and fledged, and the phoebe pair again prepared for their second clutch. Everything was going normally until one day, just after a second egg had hatched, the female phoebe didn’t return to the nest. Amy became worried about 11 p.m. that night. She could see the nestlings were not being fed or kept warm, and feared for their health. Unsure she was doing the right thing, she took them out of their nest and into the house. She warmed the birds under the heat lamp Madeline uses for her pet lizard, and the little nestlings eagerly ate the mashed up bit of cat food she fed them from the tip of a pair of tweezers. After another feeding the next morning, Amy drove them to a Project Wildlife center on Palomar Airport Road, where she knew they would be properly cared for.

A Second Chance—The loss of mama phoebe and the absence of the baby birds was distressing to everyone. The male phoebe returned to the garage for several days to check out the empty nest. Finally, Amy noticed that the nest looked like it had been refurbished. Amy watched as the male flew into the garage. He was making a chipping call, and was followed by another female phoebe. He hopped around showing off the empty nest, and she came over to take a look. Over the next few days she put her own finishing touches on the nest and settled in.

It wasn’t long before eggs appeared in the nest. This second adult female wasn’t as relaxed as her predecessor—perhaps a first-timer thought Amy. She was less tolerant of the humans on the scene. Amy would get scolded and sometimes dive-bombed when she went into the garage. The family tried to keep their distance, and things settled down. The new chicks fledged and began hanging out with their older step-siblings at their proud daddy’s favorite roost across the street.

—Photos this page by Amy Saye. (Continued on next page.)
Gold Rush—By mid-October, the phoebe breeding season was over and scores of goldfinches had begun showing up to forage on the seed-laden evergreen elms on Amy’s street. One day, amidst all the yellow flashes of the goldfinches, a much larger and brighter nugget of gold suddenly appeared in the Saye’s front yard. It was a new bird, and Amy and Madeline puzzled over its identity. After exhausting all the expected species, they turned to those considered rare for our area. And there it was, its image practically leaping out from the pages of the field guide—a prothonotary warbler!

Amy posted a photo of her special find on the BVAS Facebook page, and a team of BVAS birders came out to see the warbler. Word quickly spread. For the rest of the week, the warbler was especially cooperative, returning throughout the day and seemingly unconcerned with all the fuss it was causing. Many birders were able to come by and enjoy the sight. Then, just as suddenly, it was gone, presumably heading further south.

Kismet Redoux—Prothonotary warblers appear in San Diego perhaps once every 3–4 years. It’s believed that this represents the first time a prothonotary warbler has been recorded on Camp Pendleton. Others, no doubt, have occasionally passed through the county, unnoticed and unrecorded. But this bird chose to visit the Saye’s front yard, and thanks to Amy and Madeline, earned its spot in the record book.

October, 2014, proved to be a special month for birders at Camp Pendleton. Among the highlights was the first county record of a neotropic cormorant in San Diego, plus a number of exciting birds that only show up in small numbers each year. But for sheer beauty and excitement, the gold medal went to the prothonotary warbler that Amy and Madeline spotted, identified, and then shared with all of the rest of us. We tip our cap, and eagerly await Amy’s 2015 report!