

Lagoon Flyer

B u e n a V i s t a A u d u b o n S o c i e t y



Jón Baldur Hlíöberg

First Get the News...

Thursday, January 24

San Diego Pelagic Birding

How, What, When, and Why!

General Meeting Program, with Stan Walens

Pelagic (i.e. ocean) birding represents the last frontier to many local birders. We may have finally figured out how to sort out crows from ravens, but what about the Northern Fulmars from the Pomarine Jaegers? How does one go about pelagic birding anyway? What are we looking for, and how can we improve our odds of success?



Northern Fulmer, by S. Streit

Fortunately, our January meeting promises to be a simple primer on all we need to know about pelagic birding. Noted San Diego County pelagic bird expert Stan



Pomarine Jaeger, by G. Tepke

Walens will talk us through a virtual pelagic birding trip, showing us the birds we can expect to see off the coast of San Diego, teaching us the sometimes subtle clues that lead to a positive identification, offering tips on what to wear,

what to bring, and where to position ourselves on the boat. The evening promises to be an informative and inspirational look at the challenges, joys, and rewards that await the San Diego birder who is willing to cast off in search of new birds and new adventures.

Come join us on Thursday evening as we take that first step in expanding our birding horizons. Then join us two days later for our second step as we go on a special pelagic birding trip out of Oceanside Harbor.

**New Year's Resolution for 2008:
Go Pelagic!**

...Then Do the Cruise

Saturday, January 26

Pelagic Birding Boat Trip

(and Whale Watching Excursion)

Oceanside Harbor

Join us on board a special charter boat out of Oceanside Harbor and head out to sea on a Saturday morning cruise in search of a wide variety of marine wildlife. Expert guides will be on board to help us with identifications of birds and mammals. Last year we were treated to an amazing spectacle of dolphins and sea birds feasting on millions of anchovies. This year we've added another hour to the trip and limited the number of participants to make it easier for everyone to see all the sights. Cost of the trip is \$35/person.



2007 Pelagic Trip — Photo by Bob Drew

This trip sold out last year. Get your reservations in early to guarantee your spot. See p. 4 for more details.

TARGET SPECIES

Expected Birds:

Pomarine Jaeger
Parasitic Jaeger
Sooty Shearwater
Pink-footed Shearwater
Black-vented Shearwater
Red Phalarope
Cassin's Auklet
Rhinoceros Auklet
Bonaparte's Gull
Herring Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Northern Fulmar
Red-breasted Merganser
Common Loon
Pacific Loon

Surfbird

Wandering Tattler

Possible Birds:

Short-tailed Shearwater
Leach's Storm-petrel
Xantus' Murrelet
Black-legged Kittiwake
Common Murre
Mew Gull

Expected Mammals:

Bottlenose Dolphin
Common Dolphin
Gray Whale
White-sided Dolphin
California Sea Lion
Harbor Seal

Conservation Corner

Why We Should Care about the Least Bell's Vireo

by Fred Roberts

The Least Bell's Vireo is a small songbird with a big beautiful voice that says something like: "You pick it up for me; I'll pick it up for you." Along the San Luis Rey River you may have heard it during the late spring and early summer months. This song and others add to our quality of life. Some people even watch birds with as much interest as those who watch football games!

There are practical reasons to have birds, beyond the beauty and quality of life enhancements they bring us. Vireos live on insects like mosquitoes and flies. In a healthy ecosystem, vireos are an important link in a vast ecological web. Endangered species like the vireo are like canaries in coal mines, and their presence indicates a healthy riparian forest. If the vireo goes, the hawks decline, mosquitoes increase, and the impacts ripple throughout Southern California.

Due primarily to habitat loss and cowbird invasion, fewer than 700 vireos remained in California in 1986. Imagine if the number of people filling the Regal Theaters in downtown Oceanside on a good night represented all the people left in Southern California. That was the vireo's population twenty years ago, when only about a dozen vireos were left on the San Luis Rey River.



Today over 220 vireos live along the river, and the statewide population has rebounded to over 4,000 vireos. This remarkable recovery is a testament to the possibility of saving a species by human intervention. The San Luis Rey produces new pairs of vireos to spread out and repopulate other patches of riparian habitat that still remain in our county. If we clear all native vegetation from the river, we lose these birds as well as this source of future populations. Many of the small islands of habitat that still exist in our community are not big enough to sustain a healthy population

of vireos without the fresh breeding stock provided by the San Luis Rey River population. If the river's vireo habitat were to be eliminated, the overall recovery of the vireo in our region would certainly stall, probably retreat, and possibly fail. For this reason it is important we manage the river in such a way that it improves safety while allowing the vireo to thrive.

We needn't sacrifice the vireo to safeguard homeowners along the San Luis Rey River. The fire department says that selectively clearing out dense stands of non-native plants like giant reed and pampas grass will eliminate much of the fire hazard. In its present state the river channel still provides protection against a 120-year flood, better than many other California watersheds. Clearing the center of the river while leaving native forest on the margins would result in even greater protection from fire and flood, and the birds would still have habitat to use. We should stop thinking in terms of "us or the bird" and start thinking in terms of "us and the bird". We are smart enough, and should be compassionate enough, to have both.

—Fred Roberts is a member of Buena Vista Audubon and an Oceanside citizen.

*"You must have the bird in your heart
before you can find it in the bush."*

—John Burroughs



Least Bell's Vireo

—Photo by G. Tepke

The Least Bell's Vireo is a federally listed endangered bird that nests in the willow thickets in the San Luis Rey River channel in Oceanside. Recent calls for extensive brush-clearing in the channel raise concerns among conservationists that a core vireo population might be severely impacted.

January Field Trips

Sat—Jan. 5—8 a.m.—Whelan Lake Monthly Bird Count. Freshwater lake and riparian edge habitat. Directions: I-5 to Hwy. 76. East on Hwy. 76. Turn left at Douglas and continue to light at North River Rd. Turn left and meet at the cul-de-sac at the end of the road by the entrance gate. Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Sat—Jan. 12—9 a.m.—San Elijo Lagoon. Join BVAS members and San Elijo Lagoon docents on the regular monthly nature hike at this ecological reserve featuring tidal mudflats, coastal wetlands, and five other distinct plant and animal communities. Directions: I-5 to Lomas Santa Fe. West to N. Rios Ave. Right to cul-de-sac at end of road. No facilities.

Sun—Jan. 20—8:30a.m.-2p.m.—San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Brad Schram, author of *A Birder's Guide to Southern California*, refers to this 19,000 acre reserve as "a birder's paradise". Ponds brimming full with reclaimed water, marshes, wetlands, and grasslands combine to support a wide variety of bird species. We'll be driving through the reserve and stopping at selected spots, so very little walking will be required. On a late November day Steve Brad and Andy Brumbaugh visited the area. Among many great sightings for the day were five Greater Roadrunners, a dozen or more Northern Harriers, and great views of a Bald Eagle. We'll begin the day at the entrance kiosk at 8:30 a.m. Directions: Take I-15 North to 215 heading toward Riverside. Exit at Ramona Expressway-go right (east) to Davis Rd. Go left to kiosk on the left. For car pooling, meet at the Nature Center at 7 a.m. Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639. Call Steve or Andy, 760-434-3334, for further information. Bring a lunch. Picnic restrooms facilities.

Sat—Jan. 26—9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.—Oceanside Pelagic Birding Trip. (See page 1) This 3.5-hour boat trip out of Oceanside Harbor promises to get us up close and personal with a wide variety of pelagic birds and marine mammals. To increase our chances of seeing a large number of birds and mammals, we've added an hour to the length of our trip, increased our number of expert guides, and reduced the maximum number of participants. Last year's trip was a sell-out, so please make your reservations early! Call the Nature Center at 760-439-2473, or e-mail Andy Mauro at akamauro@cox.net to reserve your spot. Cost of the trip is \$35/person. BVAS will set up a sign-in table at the dock on the day of the trip. Please arrive at least 30 minutes prior to departure. Location: Helgren's Sportfishing, 315 Harbor Drive S., Oceanside. (Take Oceanside Harbor exit off I-5.) Free parking.

Sat—Jan. 26—8 a.m.—Buena Vista Lagoon Monthly Bird Count. Freshwater coastal lagoon. Directions: I-5 to 78 East. Exit Jefferson. Turn right and take another immediate right onto Lagoon View Dr. Go to end of road. Leader: Joan Fountain, 760-729-1379.

Sat—Jan. 26—8:30-10:30 a.m.—Basic Birding Class at the Buena Vista Lagoon Landing. Directions: I-5 to Hwy. 78. Exit Jefferson. Turn right and go to stoplight. Turn right and park in Landing parking lot on the right hand side of road. Contact person: Tom Troy, 760-967-6915.

May Birding Trip to Baja

May 16-19—Birding in Baja. BVAS is offering a special four-day trip to condor country in Baja California, Mexico, this May. In 2002, a condor release site was established in a remote region of Baja: The Sierra San Pedro Matir. The protected area lies within the boundary of a large Mexican national park. We will be spending three nights at the historic Meling Ranch. Accommodations are rustic but comfortable. A spring-fed swimming pool is a recent addition, so bring your bathing suits!

Itinerary:

Day 1—Depending on our arrival times (the ranch is about a six-hour drive from North County) we will do some birding at the ranch and relax in the ambiance of "Old Mexico". There is a pond and a flowing stream running through the property.

Day 2—We will drive up onto the mountain ridge to an observatory, doing some birding along the way. With the blessing of the "birding gods" we'll be treated to the sight of California Condors soaring in the wild. (See article in Nov./Dec. *Lagoon Flyer* by Dennis Huckabay). Dennis and Andy Brumbaugh were fortunate in seeing four condors in flight at this site. We'll plan on spending several hours on this endeavor.

Day 3—Depending on our success the prior day, we will either go back to the observatory for another chance at seeing the condors, or spend the day at the ranch birding, relaxing at the pool, and enjoying ourselves away from cell phones, computers and the TV!

Day 4—After a hearty breakfast participants can head for home at their leisure.



California Condor — N. Snyder, USFWS

Cost of the trip is \$300.00 per person. This includes three nights of lodging at the Meling Ranch and all meals, from dinner on Friday to breakfast on Monday. A \$100.00 deposit is required by Feb. 1st with the balance due on April 15th. Checks can be mailed or dropped off at the Nature Center. The ranch has a limited number of rooms so get your deposit in early to insure a spot. Remember, passports are required. If you plan on going, call Andy Brumbaugh, 760-434-3334, so rooms can be assigned according to your preferences. For further information, call Andy or Dennis Huckabay, 760-757-6437.

Preschool Nature Storytime

Brrr! It's January and the long nights are cold. We think Little Bear might be getting ready to hibernate again!

Our nature storytime this month will be about Little Bear and all his bear cousins. We'll read some stories, do some group activities, and make a special craft. Come join us at the Nature Center for our next nature storytime on Monday, January 28th, at 10 a.m. —Mary Ellen 760-918-6622



Ruddy Duck Club

Ken Fry Associates Joins the Club

Ken Fry Associates has been installed as our newest member of the Ruddy Duck Club. The Board recognizes Ken Fry for his significant donation of time, talent, and software in updating the Nature Center's computer system. The system crashed Thanksgiving week just as we were trying to produce and send out our annual appeal letter to the membership, and it was time to call in the professionals. Ken completely rebuilt our system and expanded our capabilities by adding new disk drives and memory, and he solved our crisis by making it all happen during a busy holiday week. In the end, after Ken's herculean efforts, our bill was zero. Ken said he thought of BVAS as the "good guys" and was more than happy to help. Isn't it nice to have good friends for the holidays!

Ken Fry Associates
858-755-8398
(Computer Specialists)

*Thank you, Ken. We are truly grateful
for all your hard work on our behalf.*

Support our Ruddy Duck Club members with your patronage. For more information about joining our local business "Friends" group and becoming a "Ruddy Ducker", please contact Tom Troy at 760-967-6915.

New Year's Resolution:

VOLUNTEER AT THE CENTER!

We hope your New Year's resolutions will include volunteering as a host/receptionist at the BVAS Nature Center. It's a fun way to get involved, meet new friends, and do something special for Audubon and the community. A short training session is all you need to earn your flight feathers—no special experience necessary. Make this a satisfying and rewarding new year! Please call Mary Ellen at 760-918-6622, and ask her to get you started.

BVAS OFFICERS, BOARD* AND CHAIRS

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| Native Plant Garden | Joan Bockman* | 433-9401 |
| Newsletter | Andy Mauro* | 753-1266 |

E-mail: akamauro@cox.net

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|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Programs | Dennis Huckabay* | 757-6437 |
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| Ruddy Duck Club | Tom Troy* | 967-6915 |
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| Webmaster : | Larry Spann | E-mail: larry@spannweb.net |

Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center

Tue-Sat 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sun 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

Closed Monday

760-439-2473

2202 South Coast Hwy., Oceanside, CA
East side of street just north of lagoon bridge

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 480
Oceanside, CA 92049-0480

Website: www.bvaudubon.org

E-mail: bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net

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. 100% of my contribution will go to support the BVAS Nature Center and its educational programs. Minimum donation required: \$20.

I would like to donate \$ 25 ___ \$50 ___ \$ 100 ___ Other: ___ Friends Membership: New ___ Renewal ___

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Please bill my VISA or MC

Card Number _____

CRN # _____

I would like to make a special donation to the BVAS Conservation Fund to help support land conservation and the fight against ill-conceived development projects.
Amount: \$ _____

Make Checks Payable to:
Buena Vista Audubon Society
P.O. Box 480
Oceanside, CA 92049

Please Support our Chapter's Many Programs with a Generous New Year's Donation. Thank You!



Wallflower

**BUENA VISTA
NATIVE PLANT CLUB**

Propagating Native Plants

January 20th, 2 p.m.

Plant propagation can be complicated or simple depending on your expectations of success. We'll try some different techniques and fill our nursery with pots. Bring your questions!



Matilija Poppy

Join us for the Buena Vista Native Plant Club meeting on the 3rd Sunday of the



Catalina Cherry

month at the Nature Center.

Need more information? Go to www.bvaudubon.org, contact us by e-mail at BVNPC@sbcglobal.net, or call the Nature Center at 760-439-2473.

El Corazon Hike Report

In December, six birders and planters hiked the proposed trail routes on the El Corazon property. El Corazon is the future 450-acre city park bounded by El Camino Real, Oceanside Blvd, Rancho Del Oro Drive, and Mesa Drive. The rain stopped long enough for us to walk along two different wetland habitats, hike on petrified sand dunes and wander across rolling hills. Despite the wet weather and time of year, the group saw evidence of the exciting potential of this new urban park as a place to come to experience the beauty and wonder of nature. Among the birds on hand were horned larks and several species of sparrows actively foraging for seeds, red-winged blackbirds checking out the cattails at the large quarry pond, and red-tailed hawks soaring overhead. The willows and mulefat in Garrison Creek made a peaceful place, and the deerweed blooming on the hillsides was beautiful.

BVAS plans to be an active participant at the park, leading walks and helping improve the nature trails once all the final planning documents are adopted in the spring.

—Joan Bockman

Pot Recycling at BVAS

Everybody has a pile of old plant pots. Bring your one or two gallon plastic pots to the Nature Center. We will take them to Las Pilitas Nursery to get credits toward native plants for our Nature Center garden! (Sorry, no five gallon or larger pots are needed.)

Monthly Nature Center Grounds Cleanup

Join us on the first Saturday of the month from 8-10 a.m. as we tend the gardens at the Nature Center. Bring work gloves and gardening tools.

Saturday, January 5th



February 6-11, 2008

Featuring Kenn Kaufman

Keynote Speaker, Trip Leader, and Workshop Presenter

Hurry—Trips and classes are filling up!

sandiegoaudubon.org 619-682-7200

Lagoon Flyer



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Oceanside Pelagic Boat Trip January 26th

QUICK CALENDAR

Fri. Jan. 4—Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sat. Jan. 5—Whelan Lake Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Jan. 5—Nature Center Garden Clean-up—8 a.m.
Mon. Jan. 7—Nature Guides—10 a.m.
Sat. Jan. 12—San Elijo Walk—9 a.m.
Sun. Jan. 20—San Jacinto Wildlife Area—8:30 a.m.
Sun. Jan. 20—Native Plant Club—2 p.m.
Thurs. Jan. 24—General Meeting—7 p.m.
Sat. Jan. 26—Pelagic Birding Boat Trip—8 a.m.
Sat. Jan. 26—Buena Vista Lagoon Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Jan. 26—Basic Birding at BVL Landing—8:30 a.m.
Mon. Jan. 28—Preschool Nature Storytime—10 a.m.

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The Printery, Carlsbad, CA



Oceanside Pelagic Boat Trip

January 26, 8 a.m.

(See Page 3)



San Diego Pelagic Bird Talk

January 24, 7 p.m.

(See Page 1)

Why We Should Care About The Least Bell's Vireo

(See Page 2)