February General Meeting

Wednesday, February 19

Then They Were Gone:
Passenger Pigeons and Carolina Parakeets in America
with Mike Matherly

6:30 p.m. Social—7 p.m. Program

San Diego County is considered one of the world’s great biological hotspots, known for its wonderful diversity of plant and animal life. In the midst of this natural bounty, we sometimes forget we also lead the nation in the number of endangered and threatened species that can be found here. Think back to the start of the 19th century—one in every four birds in North America was a passenger pigeon. Large, raucous flocks of parakeets filled the forests from Florida to Wisconsin. Then, within just a handful of years, every single passenger pigeon and Carolina parakeet was gone, simply swept from the face of the earth. In 1914, as news spread of the death of the last remaining passenger pigeon, a great remorse swept across the country. People finally realized that their individual actions had collectively extinguished a living part of the American landscape. And it all happened in a single generation, in the blink of an eye.

Our February program will be the cautionary tale of how America lost two of its most iconic birds. We’ll discuss recent theories on why they disappeared, and explore their role in U.S. history. Not coincidentally, the founding of the national parks and conservation movement in America occurred as our two most common birds were becoming extinct. Did we learn our lesson, or could it happen again?

2014 Birdhouse Auction!

Saturday, February 22, 5-8 p.m.

The fancy birdhouses are starting to roll into the Nature Center again, as BVAS gears up for its Fourth Annual BVAS Birdhouse Auction. This year’s auction promises to be another major event, with a happy party mix of fine wine, cold beer, fancy food, good music, free prizes, and, of course, beautiful birdhouses galore! Our favorite NPR personality, Martha Barnette, will again be on hand to personally encourage our bidding. The real fun is strolling around the tables and marveling at the imagination and creativity that goes into some of the most fanciful creations. So much excitement, and it’s all for a great cause. The $10 entry fee and all auction proceeds help support the Nature Center and its programs throughout the year.

Entry applications are available at the Nature Center or on the BVAS website: www.bvaudubon.org. Need a head start on your house? A few hand-built wooden birdhouses just waiting to be decorated, are available for sale at the Nature Center for the special price of $8. Whether or not you build and donate a house, we hope you’ll attend the auction in February. It wouldn’t be a party without you!
Christmas Bird Count Recap

Birders on the 2013 Oceanside Christmas Bird Count, held on December 21, recorded a total of 195 species, the same number reported on last year’s count. This marked the 67th annual Oceanside CBC, now sponsored by Buena Vista Audubon Society. The total number of birds reported was 45,611, down only slightly from the 47,772 reported on the 2012 count. Twelve species were recorded that were not seen in 2012, and twelve species were missed from last year’s count.

The number of participants was up significantly for the 2013 count, with 125 birders, and ten additional volunteers helping out at the Nature Center. Center manager Annette Schneider again served up her famous chili luncheon to a very appreciative and spirited crowd of birders.

To Flush a Thrush—The most significant find of the day was a Swainson’s thrush discovered by noted visiting LSU ornithologist Van Remsen. The thrush was found just across the lagoon from the Nature Center at Maxton Brown Park. It was a late discovery, coming after the park had been searched earlier in the day, and was the result of a very determined effort. An old, dusty and feather-worn stuffed owl mount that Van Remsen had brought with him on his trip from LSU, was placed in a small tree in the park. He then played a tape of an eastern screech-owl being raucously mobbed by a bunch of eastern bird species, immediately attracting the attention of a number of curious birds in the area. It wasn’t long before the Swainson’s thrush popped up from a nearby thicket to check things out, much to the delight of Van and his companions. Only a few valid winter records exist for California or anywhere else in the U.S. or Canada for this species.

Other Goodies—A swamp sparrow photographed by Steve Brad at Aviara golf course was another exciting new find in this year’s count. A rare glaucous gull at the mouth of the San Luis Rey River was a good bird that attracted a large number of viewers. Dave Povey’s pelagic team spotted single pink-footed and sooty shearwaters, two species missed in 2012. A single northern rough-winged swallow at Whelan Lake and 7 barn swallows, unusual sightings in winter, were additions to this year’s list, as were 6 merlin, a Thayer’s gull, 4 red-naped sapsuckers, and a mountain bluebird. Add to that list a common merganser at La Costa golf resort that came in for a brief stay on count day. Last year’s abundance of red-breasted nut-hatches and pine siskins was notably absent from this year’s list. Also missed were the common murre, parasitic jaeger, bald eagle, Baltimore and Bullock’s orioles, plumbeous vireo, green-tailed towhee, tri-colored blackbirds, red crossbills, and red-headed parrots seen in 2012. Other noteworthy observations during the 2013 count were repeats from 2012, including a hooded oriole, the 4 male vermilion flycatchers seen on the San Luis Rey golf course, a returning white-throated sparrow at B.V. Lagoon, a coastal cactus wren and 3 loggerhead shrikes on Pendleton, an Eurasian wigeon at Batiquitos Lagoon, and summer and western tanagers at Buddy Todd Park. Hummingbirds of the Selasphorus genus continue to increase their presence on the Oceanside count, with a total of 287 Allen’s and Allen’s/rufous sightings reported in 2013, up from a count of 222 in 2012. Finally, the 8,000 black-vented shearwaters recorded in this year’s count won the title for “most abundant species,” topping the 5,028 American coots listed on the 2012 count. As is normal, a number of expected species were missed on count day, offering possibility and hope for even greater success on a future Oceanside CBC.

Thank you to all the participants.

--Andy Mauro

San Diego Bird Festival—February 27—March 2
Marina Village Conference Center Mission Bay Park

Birding, Workshops, Talks, Trade Show

For info and registration materials: www.sandiegoaudubon.org.
Birding with BVAS

Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk with John Haddock—Saturday, Feb. 1—8 a.m.

Directions: I-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. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy at the picnic tables after your walk.

Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk with John Haddock—Saturday, Feb. 15—8 a.m.

John leads this bird walk on the third Saturday of each month. The location rotates from month-to-month between the wetland area at the San Andres trailhead and the lagoon overlook and upland coastal sage scrub habitat at the Crest Canyon trailhead.

Directions: Crest Canyon Trail—From I-5, take Via de la Valle west; turn left on Jimmy Durante Blvd., left on San Dieguito Rd.

Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

2014 BVAS Pelagic Birding

BVAS has scheduled six pelagic birding trips for 2014, with the possibility of a seventh trip still being discussed. The full-day trips will run either 8 or 12 hours, and are spread throughout the year to maximize the chances of seeing a wide variety of species. The full schedule with trip details, prices, and reservation information is available at the BVAS pelagic birding website: www.socalbirding.com.

For reservations on specific trips, call Point Loma Sportfishing at 619-223-1627. Significantly reduced fees for early sign-ups.

2014 New Year’s Resolution—Go Pelagic!

Pamo Valley Bird Walk with Steve Brad—Sun., Feb. 9—8 a.m.

We’ll head inland this month to scenic Pamo Valley in search of raptors (golden eagle), woodpeckers (Lewis’s), riparian and grasslands birds (mountain bluebird). Creek-side picnicking for those interested in packing a lunch.

Directions: We’ll meet at 8 a.m. at the San Diego Archaeological Center at 16666 San Pasqual Rd, Escondido (just past Wild Animal/Safari Park) and form our caravan. Carpoolers—meet at La Costa/I-5 Park and Ride at 7:15 a.m.

Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

Day-of-trip cell phone, 760-274-5256.

Second Thursday Surprise Walk with Steve Brad—Thurs., Feb. 13—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: stevebrad11@earthlink.net.

Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

Day-of-trip cell phone, 760-274-5256.

Basic Birthing Workshop and Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count with Joan Fountain and Tom Troy—Saturday, Feb. 22—8 a.m.

Join the BVAS fledging 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.

Springtime in Texas

April 22-May 3, 2014

Spring migration and Texas specialty birds with Steve Shunk and Paradise Birching

Enjoy this BVAS MBA tour to eastern and central Texas and experience some of the best birding in North America. We’ll visit the East Texas Pineywoods, the migrant traps on High Island, and the Hill Country in search of the most sought-after specialty birds of Texas.

Fee—$2,705/person dbl. occupancy, includes 11 days of Texas lodging, food, guides, entry fees, and local transportation.

Info Contacts—Steve Shunk: steve@paradisebirding.com; or BVAS MBA coordinator Janine Free: janinefree@gmail.com.

Only one space left!

BVAS Migrating Birders Association

BVAS "MBA" trips go to birding hotspots across the U.S. The trips feature small, friendly groups, expert guides, and very competitive fees. We generally offer two MBA trips each year. Trips can fill up fast, so please reserve your spot ASAP.

For information about upcoming trips, to suggest a future trip destination, or to place your name on a future trip early notification list, please contact our BVAS Migrating Birders Association coordinator:

Janine Free, at: janinefree@gmail.com, 760-753-8336.
Preschool Nature Storytime
Monday, February 24, 10 a.m

What do some of our animals do when it gets too cold for them in the winter? We know that bears like to find a cozy cave just right for snuggling up and falling asleep. What about some of the other animals, like squirrels, snakes, butterflies? Come to Nature Storytime and find out all about their hibernation. We’ll read a special story, sing a song, and make a take-home craft. Questions? Call Mary Ellen: 760-918-6622.

Old Groundhog stretched in his leafy bed.
He turned over slowly and then he said,
"I wonder if spring is on the way, I’ll go and check the weather today."
—Anon.

Nature Center Improvements
An exciting renovation of the Nature Center is planned for this summer. A second-story observation deck will be built above the entrance to the Nature Center, with access provided by an inside stairway and lift. The observation deck will offer unobstructed views over the lagoon and out toward the ocean. Visitors to the Center will walk beneath the new loft as they enter a redesigned lobby area. The project will also include a much-needed refurbishment of several of the nature displays that have been a part of the building since its opening in 1987. Work is expected to begin in early summer, with the Nature Center remaining open during construction. The project is being funded by a grant of approximately $250,000 from the State of California.

BVAS was also recently awarded two grants totaling $50,000 from the City of Carlsbad. Scheduled to be undertaken later in the year, those projects will include repainting the Nature Center, restoring the sign kiosk near the picnic tables, and installing new interpretative signage for the lagoon nature trail. Thank you, Carlsbad!

Enjoy a Class Visit to the Nature Center
Our Education Chair, Ellen Kindsvater, handles scheduling for all groups or classes wishing to visit the Nature Center. For questions or to request a docent-led tour and program at the Nature Center for your group or classroom, please contact Ellen by e-mail at: ckindsvater1@gmail.com.
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 educational programs will receive 100% of my contribution. Minimum donation suggested: $25. I would like to donate $ 25 ____ $50 ____ $ 100 ____ Other: ___

Name_______________________________________
Address_____________________________________
City, State, Zip  ______________________________
Phone______________  E-mail__________________

*I choose to receive 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!
*Please send me my newsletter by e-mail. →

Donate That Old Clunker
Have an old car to get rid of? Call Cars 4 Causes at 1-800-766-2273 (or follow the link on our webpage) and tell them you want to support BVAS. They take care of everything—simple and fast!

Please bill my credit card:
Card #:___________________
Exp. Date:_______ CRN____

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

BVAS Native Plant Club
Support Group: Sunday, Feb. 16—2 p.m.
Garden Work Party:  Every Monday— 9 a.m.

Winter is really spring! During the cool rainy season in Southern California, the plants start growing again. This year, the rains have been delayed but spring has sprung anyway. Now is the time to spread seed for May blooms.

The Buena Vista Native Plant Club support group meets at the Nature Center 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.

Monday Morning with the Natives—Interested gardeners are invited to join the gardening group at the Nature Center every Monday at 9 a.m. for some casual gardening and friendly chatter.

Ruddy Duck Club
This special group of local businesses and organizations supports the nature education and recreation programs offered at the Nature Center with an annual donation of $100 or more. To request your “no obligation” Ruddy Duck Club packet of membership information and benefits, please call Kelly Deveney at 760-721-2441.

Help Wanted—BVAS Gift Shop Manager
Do you harbor a secret desire to open up a cute little retail shop? We bet you’d know exactly what to stock to delight all the happy customers that would soon be flocking to your door. We’ve got just the position for you! We’re looking for a new volunteer to take over the job of gift shop manager at the BVAS Nature Center.

The gift shop at the BVAS Nature Center offers a nice selection of field guides, children’s nature books, stuffed singing Audubon birds, hand-crafted birdhouses, tee shirts, and other nature-oriented gift items. You’ll be responsible for keeping track of the inventory, ordering new items you think might appeal to our visitors, and pricing the goods. It’s a fun job. Just think how satisfied you’ll feel as you see all your birdy merchandise flying off the shelves!

Call our Volunteer Coordinator at 760-207-3884 for all the details.

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
February 16
1-4 p.m.
BVAS Quick Calendar

Sat. Feb. 1—Whelan Lake Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Fri. Feb. 7—Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sun. Feb. 9—Pamo Valley Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Thur. Feb. 13—Second Thursday Surprise Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Fri. Feb. 14—Nature Guides Meeting—10 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 15—San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Sun. Feb. 16—Joey’s and Johnny’s Clubhouse—1 p.m.
Sun. Feb. 16—Native Plant Club Meeting—2 p.m.
Wed. Feb. 19—General Meeting—6:30 p.m.

“Then They Were Gone”
Sat. Feb. 22—Basic Birding & Lagoon Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 22—Birdhouse Auction—5-8 p.m.
Mon. Feb. 24—Preschool Nature Storytime—10 a.m.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow

The onset of high winter tides each year is a signal to San Diego birders to begin looking for the elusive Nelson’s sharp-tailed sparrow. This is a species of the eastern U.S., but a few individuals typically winter in coastal California marshes. Finding one in San Diego can be a real challenge. This year, for the first time, Nelson’s sharp-tailed sparrows have been discovered in Solana Beach in the pickleweed along the edge of the San Elijo Lagoon, near the Rios Avenue Trailhead. The birds generally keep hunkered down and well-camouflaged in the autumn hues of the winter pickleweed. But for an hour or so at very high tides, the birds will occasionally pop up into view as they forage for seeds. As many as three were being seen at San Elijo Lagoon in late December and through January this year. It’s a great bird to add to your San Diego County list!

—Photo of Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow by Tom Lindner.
Buena Vista Audubon Society

Fundraiser and Open House
Feb 22, 2014 • 5-8:00PM
Buena Vista Audubon Society Nature Center
2202 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside
FOURTH ANNUAL

BIRD HOUSE AUCTION

BVAS is soliciting donations of decorative or functional birdhouses, bat houses & feeders for the auction. A limited number of undecorated bird houses are available at the Nature Center for $8.00. Deadline for dropping off bird houses is February 16. Prizes will be awarded for the top 3 vote getters. Go the www.bvaudubon.org for more information.

• Silent auction of unique, handcrafted birdhouses, feeders and bat-houses
• Guest Auctioneer, Martha Barnette from the KPBS program "A Way With Words"
• Hosted bar with specialty beers from Stone Brewing Co.
• Live music by "The Endangered Speciez Project"
• Wine, cheese and other gourmet treats
• $10 donation for all this and more

bvlagoon@gmail.com  760-439-2473  www.bvaudubon.org

All proceeds benefit the Buena Vista Audubon Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to fostering an appreciation for the plants and animals of our community.