Peru is a birder’s paradise. It is home to over 1,800 bird species, including 120 species which can only be found within its borders. Peru’s dramatic natural beauty and timeless archaeological treasures might seem a bit out of reach to those of us whose idea of adventure involves a two-hour car trip up to LA. On the other hand, there’s reason to believe that the adventure of our lives is out there waiting for us. Just ask John Top and Lesley Marples.

John Top and Lesley Marples spent a wonderful month in SE Peru during July and August of 2007. Their trip involved some self-guided birding of the hot spots south of Lima, a flight to Cusco and group birding along the famous Manu Road descending the Eastern slope of the Andes, a motorized canoe trip down the Madre de Dios River deep into the Amazon Jungle, including a visit to the famous Blanquillo Macaw Lick, birding in the high country around Abra Malaga at 14,500 feet, and a visit to the fabulous Inca ruins at Machu Picchu. The group listed 690 birds during the trip, with many endemics, including a hummingbird, a species of the tapaculo family of birds, and an owl, each of which have not yet been described to science. Kind of beats LA, doesn’t it?

John will be sharing some of the pictures he took, along with his discussion of their truly extraordinary adventure. He is a member of BVAS who moved to San Diego in 1978 when he retired from the Army. He and Lesley have only been birding since 2003 and are trying to make up for lost time by sampling as many of the world’s premiere birding spots as possible, including two trips abroad each year.

Join us on the 20th of May for what promises to be a truly entertaining evening. Perhaps it just might be the inspiration we need to seek our own fabulous adventures.

BVAS Nature Center Undergoing a Few Changes

It may not be a major makeover, but the Nature Center is getting a little spruced up for the summer. With money left over from an earlier grant, the City of Oceanside is helping BVAS replace the original doors and windows of the Nature Center. The Center is also scheduled for a termite treatment this spring. Perhaps more exciting, the new boardwalk trail connector and observation deck project is now moving forward with an anticipated fall completion. The project, which will complete the loop nature trail through the cattails, was recently approved by the Oceanside Planning Commission.

Photo: Shawn Nicastro of Kyle’s Glass helps install the new front windows at the Nature Center.
Celebrating International Migratory Bird Day, May 9

Spring Birdathon and Nature Center Open House

BVAS Birdathon—The annual BVAS Birdathon will take place on May 9 this year, a day also being celebrated as International Migratory Bird Day. Bird migration will be in full swing for this year’s Birdathon. As in recent years, participants will gather at the Nature Center at 7 a.m., break off into teams headed up by designated leaders, and fan out to cover a number of birding hotspots within the City of Oceanside. Birders of all skill levels are invited to participate. We’ll gather back at the Nature Center later in the morning to compare notes and tally up lists.

Birding Workshop and Field Trip—A special birding workshop for new and renewing Friends members will be a featured activity during this year’s Birdathon. The field class will be led by Tom Troy and Steve Brad, and is designed to give beginning birders some tips and field experience on bird ID and behavior. The moving workshop will include a “lagoon loop” tour of Buena Vista Lagoon, starting at the Nature Center at 8 a.m. The group will carpool around the lagoon, stopping at five different locations. The group will end up back at the Nature Center around noon, just in time to join in on the Open House festivities and add its bird list to the official Birdathon tally.

The goal for the workshop is 50 species and 20 new or renewing Friends members. The suggested donation is $25 per person, which provides a 1-year Friends membership and a subscription to the Lagoon Flyer. Space is limited—call the Nature Center at 439-2473 to reserve a spot.

Nature Center Open House—The BVAS Nature Center will be a hubbub of activity on May 9, with walks, talks, special exhibits, nature crafts, live animals, and other fun stuff for the whole family. Those interested in getting outdoors and doing a little birding can start their day by participating in the Birdathon or the Birding Workshop. A “Raptors in the Wild” program will be held at 10 a.m. in the Nature Center classroom, featuring photos and discussion about all the hawks and eagles that can be found in San Diego County. A break for lunch is scheduled for 11:30 a.m., with some light snacks and refreshments provided by BVAS. The afternoon will feature activities especially geared for families, with a children’s nature walk at 1 p.m. and a children’s nature craft workshop at 2 p.m.

Free Hummingbird Feeder for New Friends

The BVAS Birdathon coincides with our spring fundraising campaign. Please consider a generous donation in May to help maintain the Nature Center and support the chapter’s many programs. We have a special enticement for those who haven’t donated directly to BVAS in the past. Every new Friends membership of $100 or more will receive a free hummingbird feeder courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited in Carlsbad, in addition to all the usual benefits of membership. Now that’s a deal! You can make your donation in person at the Open House on May 9, or clip out the donation form on Page 5 and send it in with your check.

Grunion Utilize Proposed “Dog Beach” for Summer Spawning Runs

BVAS Grunion Hunt—About 16 intrepid souls participated in the BVAS Grunion Hunt at the end of March. We met on the beach at the mouth of the San Luis Rey River, the target site for a controversial off-leash dog beach proposal. We were quickly joined by several black-crowned night herons. It’s uncertain which of us, humans or herons, were more anxious for the evening to unfold. It turned out to be a modest grunion run that night, with somewhat less than 100 of the little fish choosing to come ashore. That was still enough for the BVAS contingent to claim victory, however, and for the herons to gather up a few midnight snacks.

Grunion Greeter Workshop—The Grunion Greeter Workshop at the Nature Center in April attracted almost 90 participants, each eager to become trained and qualified in monitoring grunion runs on our southland beaches as part of a long-standing research project. The group included a number of MiraCosta College students who had been encouraged to participate by their teacher, BVAS president, Dennis Huckabay. After their training, the students checked out the same beach we had monitored on the night of our earlier hunt, the mouth of the San Luis Rey River, and were rewarded with the sight of hundreds of grunion spawning on the beach in the moonlight. A good time was had by all.

—Andy Mauro
**Upcoming Trips—May**

**Sat.—May 2—8 a.m.—Whelan Lake Monthly Bird Count.** Whelan Lake is a bird sanctuary with a freshwater lake and riparian edge habitat. Directions: I-5 to Hwy. 76, east on Hwy. 76, left at Douglas and continue to light at North River Rd., left on North River Rd. Meet at the cul-de-sac at end of road by the entrance gate. Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

**Sat.-Mon.—May 9-11—Pterodroma Deepwater Weekend (Pelagic Trip).** Join BVAS on board the Grande as we embark on a 2-night deepwater pelagic trip in search of pterodroma (petrel species), tropicbirds, and a host of other far-out specialties and potential new life birds for your list. We’ll cruise all the way out to the Continental Shelf. As usual, we’ll also expect to see an exciting variety of marine mammal species along the way. The boat departs from San Diego on Sat. at 6 a.m. and returns to dock at 6 a.m. on Mon., May 11. Cost of the trip is $265. For reservations, call Point Loma Sportfishing at 619-223-1627, and tell them you’re interested in the May 9-10 BVAS birding trip on board the Grande. Visit www.socalbirding.com for more information.

**Saturday, May 9—BVAS OCEANSIDE BIRDATHON AND BIRDING WORKSHOP**

—7 a.m.-noon—BVAS Oceanside Birdathon. Meet at the Nature Center at 7 a.m. to divide into teams and bird a variety of Oceanside hotspots. Each team will have an assigned leader and will carpool or caravan to its assigned birding area. Participants will gather back at the Nature Center by noon to share stories, compile the bird list, share some light refreshments, and participate in the rest of the day’s Open House activities. For more information: Andy Mauro, 760-753-1266.

—8 a.m.-noon—Birding Workshop and Field Trip. Meet at the Nature Center and join Tom Troy and Steve Brad for a 4-hour traveling bird workshop. Emphasis will be on learning how to identify the birds of Buena Vista Lagoon, and how to recognize and interpret common bird behaviors. We’ll sort out the birds who might be breeding at the lagoon from those who are passing through in migration. Suggested donation for the workshop is $25, which includes a 1-year BVAS Friends membership. See Page 2 for more details. Leader: Tom Troy, 760-967-6915.

Sun.—May 10—8 a.m.—Lower San Dieguito Park and Eastern San Elijo Lagoon Reserve. We’ll start in Lower San Dieguito Park, where the combination of park and native habitats attracts a large variety of birds—perfect for practicing our “birding by ear” skills. We’ll then move to nearby La Orilla Trail at the eastern end of the San Elijo Lagoon Reserve. The eastern Reserve trails offer excellent birding in a different habitat mix and a more private setting than what we find west of the freeway. Directions: From I-5 Fwy. go east on Lomas Santa Fe Dr. Turn left on El Camino Real and proceed about 1/2 mile to the Lower San Dieguito Park entrance (on the left). Park in the spaces outside the gate and meet at the entrance. Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

Sat.—May 16—7 a.m.-4 p.m.—Nine Mile Bank and Los Coronados Islands. Join BVAS on board the Grande as we cruise out to the bird-rich waters around the Nine Mile Bank, and then move over to the Coronados Islands for close looks at the extensive cormorant, gull, and brown booby breeding colonies. For reservations, call Point Loma Sportfishing at 619-223-1627, and tell them you are interested in the May 16 BVAS birding trip on board the Grande. Visit www.socalbirding.com for more information.

Sat.—May 30—8 a.m.—Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count. Freshwater wetland. Directions: I-5 to 78 East, take Jefferson St. exit, turn right and take another immediate right on Lagoon View Dr. Leader: Joan Fountain, 760-729-1379.

Sat.—May 30—8:30-10:30 a.m.—Basic Birding Class at Buena Vista Lagoon Landing. Directions: I-5 to Hwy. 78, take Jefferson St. Exit, turn right and go to stoplight, turn right and enter Landing parking lot on the right hand side of road. Leader: Tom Troy, 760-967-6915.

**SDBIRDS**

**Your Link to Birding San Diego**

BVAS members interested in the birding scene in San Diego County might want to investigate SDBIRDS. Over 1,000 area birders currently participate in this free listserv. Subscribers post their interesting bird observations via e-mail to SDBIRDS, and receive the daily postings of other members. It’s a great way to learn which birds are being seen locally, and where to see them. Interesting birding questions and observations are also discussed.

Check out the rules and learn how to subscribe by google-searching “SDBIRDS” on the internet.

**Saturday, May 16**

**BioBlitz at the San Elijo Lagoon**

The natural diversity of the San Elijo Lagoon Reserve will be highlighted in a “BioBlitz” survey of plant and animal life as part of Lagoon Day festivities on Saturday, May 16. The free community event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the new San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center, 2710 Manchester Ave. in Cardiff. Family activities will include a nature treasure hunt, live animals on display, wildlife walks, nature-oriented booths, children’s games, and nature crafts.

For more information visit: www.sanelijo.org.
**Two Committee Chairs Available**

BVAS is looking to fill a couple of key committee chairs in time for our June general meeting.

The **Membership Chair** maintains the membership database, prints mailing labels, and tracks financial donations. This position requires a degree of computer skills, including familiarity with Excel basics and Word Mail Merge.

The **Publicity Chair** writes and distributes press releases regarding chapter news and events. We thought this position had been filled last month, but unforeseen circumstances caused Sue Castle to reluctantly change her mind. This position requires a willingness to explore and develop relationships with the various local media, utilizing basic computer skills.

The former heads of these committees have both pledged to ease the transition by helping the newbies get settled into their new chairs, and other members of the board stand ready to help as well. Please call Dennis Huckabay at 760-757-6437 to offer your services or get more information. Thank you!

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**Ruddy Duck Club News**

Sunny Goodwin of Sunny Day Tutoring Services is our newest Ruddy Duck Club member. Based in Oceanside, Sunny offers a variety of learning enhancement opportunities for local students. This summer might be a good time to chat with Sunny about a young person you know who might benefit from a little extra help. Sunny’s local number is 439-0136.

Thanks also to Terry Cross and crew at Harbor Fish and Chips for their recent Ruddy Duck Club renewal. Check them out at their Oceanside Harbor location for the best fish sandwiches in town.

For more information about the Ruddy Duck Club, please call Tom Troy at 760-967-6915.

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**Preschool Nature Storytime**

Springtime is in abundant evidence at our Nature Center and in the community.

This month we’ll explore the wonderful world of caterpillars and butterflies. Are they one in the same?

**PLEASE NOTE:** We’ll have Storytime on May 18, the third Monday this month, because of the Memorial Day holiday.

Bring your preschool children on **MONDAY, MAY 18, 10 a.m.,** for a fun morning of songs, crafts, and stories at the Nature Center. Please call with any questions.

—Mary Ellen, 760-918-6622

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**Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center**

Tue.-Sat.  10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sun.  1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Closed Mon.

760-439-2473

2202 South Coast Hwy., Oceanside, CA
(East side of street just north of lagoon crossing)

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 480
Oceanside, CA  92049-0480

Website:  www.bvaudubon.org
E-mail:  bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
Field Trip Hot Line:  760-688-0660
Native Plant Club Meeting
Sunday, May 17, 2 p.m.

Is it time for a little tough love for your yard? May is the perfect month for a lawn intervention. Why not get a head start on your water conservation plan by ripping out that thirsty old grass once and for all. The decision to replace some or all of your lawn opens the door to a wonderland of new gardening opportunities. Come to the Nature Center and learn the best techniques for lawn replacement. We’ll also discuss some interesting classes now available on native gardening, and talk about a local school that is going water-wise.

For more information, check out the BVAS website at: www.bvaudubon.org.

Jalisco Trip Report
The April BVAS birding trip to Jalisco, Mexico, resulted in a trip list of 157 species, including many exciting tropical species like this pale-billed woodpecker (photo). Subscribers to the digital edition of the May Lagoon Flyer received a six-page trip report with color photos. You can also access the report on the BVAS website: www.bvaudubon.org.

Memorial Gifts
BVAS recently received special donations in memory of David Danville, from Muneyasu and Michiyo Urano, Deneen LeRoy, and Elizabeth Kaufman. We thank our donors for their kind remembrances in honor of David. The gifts will be used to help fund our children’s nature programs at the Nature Center.

I think the environment should be in the category of our national security. Defense of our resources is just as important as defense abroad. Otherwise, what is there to defend?
—Robert Redford

Summer Fun at the Nature Center
Buena Vista Lagoon Nature Camp

Camp Crawdad: Ages 7-10; July 6-10; 9 a.m.-noon
Camp Tadpole: Ages 5-6; July 13-17; 9 a.m.-noon

Camp fee: $75/child for each 5-day session

- Walks & Talks
- Plants & Animals
- Crafts & Games
- Music & Stories
- Indian Lore

Class size is limited, so reserve your space early.

All classes taught by BVAS Nature Guides and special guests.
Birdathon and Nature Center Open House
Saturday, May 9

The fun starts at 7 a.m. and goes on all day!

(See Page 2.)
"Hey, let's go eat at Rosita's again!"

What a wonderful place to relax and see interesting new birds. Pleasant weather, good food, relaxing surroundings, and good company all helped to make our trip one to remember. This trip was a club trip arranged for Buena Vista Audubon with the help of Andy Brumbaugh. Three cheers for him and his efforts!

Our very pleasant group consisted of David Allen, Mona Baumgartel, Jeanine Dreifuss, Charlotte Gumbrell, Ann Holt-Harris, and David & Jayne Lesley.

We traveled each day to different locales that featured different habitats and encountered a wonderful suite of birds. We visited habitats ranging from mangroves and ocean coast through thorn scrub, tropical deciduous forest, tropical riparian, pine-oak, and pine forest. Weather was quite cooperative with pleasant temperatures throughout our visit. Daytime highs were a lot lower than April can give, and the cool mornings were very refreshing.

As usual, each trip I lead here is different in our birding results. We totaled about what I'd expected, but the mix of species was unique. We found three species on the ranch grounds that hadn't been seen on previous trips - quite a feat after ten others! Our total bird triplist came in at 157 species seen and 6 heard for a total of 163 species. Not bad, team! In our voting for best bird sighting, for the first time ever a three-way tie resulted with the winners being Squirrel Cuckoo, Military Macaw, and Pale-billed Woodpecker - all wonderful birds. Honorable mentions go to the other candidates. In order nominated they were: Mexican Hermit, Varied Bunting, Elegant Trogon, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Happy Wren, Citreoline Trogon, Fan-tailed Warbler, Rufous-capped Warbler, West-Mexican Chachalaca, Roseate Spoonbill, Streak-backed Oriole, Vermilion Flycatcher, Northern Beardless Tyran, Gray Hawk, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Common Black-Hawk, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Russet-crowned Motmot, Blue Mockingbird, Bright-rumped Attila, and Rose-throated Becard. We won't be seeing any of these in our back yards I believe!
The most surprising miss was only hearing the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls - but Pat's idea that they were tired of a number of birding groups' whistles and couldn't be bothered to come out when we tried to get them to. I normally do more owl whistles to bring in birds (and sometimes owls), but since there were plenty of birds usually evident I thought it would be nicer to just take what nature was giving. Too much whistling or playing of recordings tends to give the trip an unnatural feel. On the positive front I particularly enjoyed those three bird species seen for the first time on the ranch grounds: both flying and perched scope views of a Mexican Hermit half-way to the ponds, a Gray-crowned Woodpecker on our first day's outing just past the bottom of the driveway, and great views for about four of us of a Fan-tailed Warbler picking at the leaf litter near the horse pond by the corral. None of these are "gimme" species, particularly the warbler which had only been seen once prior.

One other fun non-sighting for me was finding out that the calling Vermiculated Screech-Owls I'd heard so often on the ranch were actually frogs! The sounds are nearly identical to the owl recordings. I had a good laugh at myself then!

Favorite activities mentioned by the group included our frequent visits to the Rancho Santa Monica ponds, Rancho Primavera itself, a number of votes for the Botanical Gardens, visiting the turtle project, going up into the pines above Provincia, and visiting the estuary at Aquiler Serdan where the plovers scooted around the mudflats. Not getting votes but getting good comments previously was the Divisidero restaurant/Riscilla factory visit. Negative votes were cast for the Agua Caliente waterfall visit and, of course, our lunch at Rosita's. I will say that when the food finally arrived there, at least it was pretty tasty.

Day 1: With Ann cruising around Mexico beforehand and the Lesley's flying to Puerto Vallarta from LA, that left Mona, Jeanine, and Charlotte for me to find in the Phoenix airport. Not so surprisingly I could guess which of the people there were birders! We had a straightforward flight down, met Ann and I got the van squared away, then when Jayne & David arrived we headed south for El Tuito and Rancho Primavera.

We met Pat and Bonnie and got rooming figured out, then headed to the Rancho Santa Monica ponds for some pre-dinner birding. It was birdy! In an hour and a half we barely got to the first pond! A real surprise was the Gray-crowned Woodpecker in a mango tree - a first on the ranch property. Another nice standout were three Military Macaws flying high overhead and calling on our return. We saw about forty species before heading back for the first of many great meals. The dinners all start with Pat's homemade soup and Bonnie's homemade bread. Yumm! A main course followed by interesting homemade desserts and lemon-grass tea completes them. You can't beat a good meal to recharge you for another day's activity!

Day 2: On our first full day in the area, we set out early to an area that seems to always have lots of birds - the road to Bioto. We parked the van, got out, and didn't
really move for over half an hour! We walked down the road eventually and ended up at a river crossing where White-throated Magpie-Jays were nesting. Both Pale-billed and Lineated Woodpeckers were perched right in front of us, plus a female Elegant Trogon, bathing Orange-breasted Buntings and a Happy Wren made that a great stop. Other birds seen that morning included Gray Hawk, West-Mexican Chachalaca, Orange-fronted Parakeet, flyby Lilac-crowned Parrots, a beautiful perched Squirrel Cuckoo, Citreoline Trogon, Russet-crowned Motmot, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, Rufous-capped Warbler, Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, Blue Bunting, and Yellow Grosbeak. Whew!

Lunch was next as we went to Pat and Bonnie's local favorite - Valle Azul. Good Mexican food (served quickly!). Soon enough we were back at the ranch for siesta, followed by our first visit to the ponds overlooked by Bonnie & Carlos's house. Lots of water-loving birds were there, including Roseate Spoonbill, Northern Jacana, and one of my favorites - Sinaloa Martin.

Back to dinner and sleep and getting ready for another day. During the night I took a look at the night sky in the wee hours. It was carpeted with stars and sections of the summer Milky Way were visible with the naked eye - always a pleasure! The next morning we looked at Jupiter and its moons in the spotting scope and later in the trip viewed Venus just past inferior conjunction where it appears as a crescent just like a relatively new moon.

I should mention the ranch hummingbirds somewhere in here. Most were viewable any time one stayed out front longer than twenty minutes or so, and included Broad-billed, Berylline, Cinnamon, Violet-crowned, Black-chinned, and Ruby-throated. Newly common on the ranch are the Plain-capped Starthroats, with three of them present!

**Day 3:** Down to the coast! This day we drove down to the little fishing village of Tehuamixtle, passing through some different habitats on the way. Our first scheduled stop had some interesting birds. Bright-rumped Attila and Northern Beardless Tyrannulet came in to recordings, chachalacas gave us views (a gimme spot for them), plus a Citreoline Trogon and a few buntings were evident.

Further down the road we passed through a little town that has a pink house just at its edge. As usual, Orange-breasted Buntings were in the back yard, along with a pair of Orchard Orioles.

Further towards the coast, a large batch of Vaux's Swifts were coursing above the road at one point so we got out to view them and got a number of bonus birds. The biggest surprise was a soaring Crane Hawk high overhead. A difficult sighting with the bright overcast sky, it still showed the telltale white "knuckles" and extra-long banded
tail. Also seen right there were a male Blue Bunting and a group of White-throated Magpie-Jays.

Aquiler Serdan was next, with its brackish estuary attracting lots of shorebirds and some waterfowl, along with one of the area's specialties - collared Plover. Though this shorebird's range extends to Argentina, it doesn't go further north than central Nayarit, about 200 miles north of Puerto Vallarta. Other plovers, sandpipers, waders, and ducks were present, and we had an interesting talk with a local Mexican man who talked about three and four meter crocodiles that are here in the rainy season when more water is present.

Afterwards we headed over to Tehuamixtle for lunch, seaside views, and some birding. Fish with diablo sauce was wonderful as usual, and all enjoyed their meals. We usually see one or two Blue-footed and Brown Boobies, but none were present - possibly due to it being later in the year. I like watching the crabs creep around on the rocks. We don't see birds or other creatures trying to catch them, but maybe when people aren't around some herons might try.

After lunch we visited the nearby sea turtle project. Activity varies on our visits. On this trip one of the researchers was kind enough to dig up some turtles that were ready, and we got to hold them and watch them motor about. There are a number of sites like this where the turtles' eggs are protected from predators and released into the surf at night. It takes about fifteen years for them to reach maturity and that's about how long the projects have been operating. Hopefully signs of the increased survival of them will show up with more females coming back to lay their eggs. On this visit we got to see Olive Ridley Turtles. They routinely get three different species and five of the seven sea turtles have been here. I love this beach. It has virtually no development and stretches with beautiful sand for at least fifteen miles to the north. What a view!

On our return we stopped at one spot that had been productive in the past and were instantly rewarded with a couple of new species. A Nutting's Flycatcher was very cooperative and gave nice views, while a surprise Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush perched up for a short bit (our only sighting of this bird). Varied Buntings ignored the recordings if they were there, but that's the breaks! David A would find a nice male at the gardens for us later in the trip.

Up the hill and back to the ranch we went, ready for relaxing and more yummy cooking!

Day 4: Today we took it easy and spent the morning at the ranch, giving us a relaxing time to enjoy the grounds and bird the trails. Good birds we saw included Bright-rumped Attila, two male Rose-throated Becards, White-throated Robin, a secretive Sinaloa Wren
for some, a close Blue Mockingbird, and a really quick male Painted Bunting that might have been missed by most. We lunched at Divisidero down the road a bit, which included a tour of their riscilla factory. Nice food in beautiful surroundings. While eating, an Ivory-billed Woodcreeper stopped in a nearby tree!

After lunch we had a tour of the factory, though their chopping tool was out for repair and no product was being processed. Samples were available though - that stuff sure packed a punch and some of us bought some to take home.

After siesta back at the ranch, we took a walk on the Secret Trail, hoping for a Rosy Thrush-Tanager. This species eluded many of us, though some got head views later in the trip, and on a pre-scout I had a pair in full sunny view! Oh well, you can't push the rewind button in birding. I always say that if it were easy it wouldn't be as much fun. We did see that local Common Black-Hawk high in a tree overhead.

Day 5: After a pre-breakfast owl walk, today we were off headed north halfway back to PV to the Botanical Gardens of Vallarta. A nice place to spend the day, there are beautiful plants everywhere, forest trails, a river walk, lots of birds, and a good restaurant. While there we viewed the forest area behind the banos, took a walk on their nice trail through a tall tree forest, checked out the newly expanded orchid house, had a fine meal at the restaurant, walked down to the river and sat a bit (lucky it was pretty - no birds there!), then drove back to the ranch with a walk on the Secret Trail and over to the ponds. Birds we noted at the gardens included Groove-billed Ani, close though quick views of Mexican Hermit, Elegant Trogon, Greenish Elaenia (high overhead), our only Black Phoebe, Happy & Sinaloa Wrens, our only Golden Vireo, Western Tanager, Varied Bunting, White-collared Seedeater, and nice close-up views of Black-headed Siskin. We also saw a batch of daddy long-legged spiders on the cutback in the parking lot. Supposedly, researchers do not know just why they congregate in this manner. On the ranch on our way from the Secret Trail to the ponds we scored a wonderful Mexican Hermit hawking insects in the shade. It decided to perch and we had scope views - nice! The ponds added some nice birds, and on our way back for supper had our only Black-throated Magpie-Jay come by. It was alone - unusual for this species.

Day 6: After breakfast we drove through town, headed north, and took the dirt road uphill to the little town of Provincia. We stopped at a couple of spots that had been productive in the past, seeing Rufous-capped Warbler, Bright-rumped Attila and Elegant Trogon among others, then drove past the town into pine forest and walked back down. Jayne scored multiple spotting points as we rounded up a number of birds that don't prefer lower elevations. Coming in to recordings nicely were Flame-colored Tanager and Pine Flycatcher. Other nice ones included Grace's Warbler, Hepatic Tanager, and Red-headed Tanager. Hungry for lunch we sure missed Valle Azul being closed, but
eventually we returned to the ranch for (shortened) siesta and more ranch birding. We mostly dipped on the Thrush-Tanagers, only getting iffy head shots, but scored mightily with a nice motmot and right below it a Fan-tailed Warbler in classic view - acting like a thrasher and throwing its tail around. Birds that do this such as Rock Wren, Painted & Slate-throated Redstarts, and dippers are supposedly trying to get prey items to flinch as they do this and move - alerting the predator bird to notice them and snatch them up for a meal. I guess it must work as these species reliably repeat this behavior. Interesting!

Day 7: We started the day with another pre-dawn owl walk, this time allowing more time to get in place with darkness still about. We hiked up into the forest behind the ranch to a trail crossroads. We were hearing two Mottled Owls calling, and one ended up tantalizingly close to us as the day started getting light, but we didn't get any views. Pat thought the owls were tired of birders doing this and couldn't be bothered to get excited enough to fly in. Oh well.

We returned for breakfast then had casual feeder-watching birding, which is a nice way to spend the time before the hassles of returning home. We drove back to Puerto Vallarta, had a nice lunch in town, returned the van and flew back to the states.

What have I missed? Did I mention the Least Grebe(s) in the little pond along the driveway? Or how about Ann's huge green iguana or Mona's snake? We also saw crawdads at the waterfall, white-tailed deer, maybe a Deppe's Squirrel (small and dark), plus someone saw a skink somewhere. We all loved Pat & Bonnie's soups, breads, and deserts - one could fill up with just those! I love the quiet of the ranch compared to most hotels in Mexico, plus of course the birding on the ranch beats out many birding destinations. No coffee outlet (?) in the square, but all in all a nice, smooth trip. Hope you all enjoyed it! I look forward to seeing you all again sometime. Hasta pronto!

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Pictures:
P1: Ranch feeders. Pictured L to R: male Streak-backed Oriole, Plain-capped Starthroat, Cinnamon Hummingbird, male Broad-billed Hummingbird
P2: Black-vented Orioles
P3: Pale-billed WP on Bioto Rd; Venus just past inferior conjunction (both taken through spotting scope)
P4: Tehuamixtle; Olive Ridley sea turtles
P5: Pitcher plants at Botanical Gardens of Vallarta
P6: Maito Beach

- 6 -