Reluctant Neighbors—
The Golden Eagles of Southern California

“Eagles hate people,” said Robert Fisher to reporter Marty Graham. “They hate dogs. They don’t mind vehicles; but as soon as a door opens and a person steps out, they take off and don’t come back for a week. If at all.”

While the verb “hate” might sound like we are trapped in a fable, it’s fair to say that golden eagles find us aversive, at least inside an 800-meter buffer. That poses a problem for both conservationists and researchers such as Dr. Fisher. Nevertheless, since 2014, he and his team have managed to trap, tag, and monitor golden populations from San Diego, Riverside, and Orange counties. The data are adding up, both giving us a clearer picture of golden eagle behavior and informing habitat conservation decisions.

Few biologists have such familiarity with so elusive a species. It takes grit and patience to study the golden eagle and this month’s speaker is the one to lead us through this emerging story. Travel to the mountainous terrain west of the desert; no roads, no trails, no easy way in. Hear first-hand the data and intricate patterns that just might save one of our most majestic birds. Dr. Fisher will help us make sense of it all and understand what must be done.

Put on your lab coats. Science is in the building.
Hooded Orioles —

Coming Home to Roost

The typical Southern California neighborhood suits few birds better than it does hooded orioles. They occur along palm-lined streets and in eucalyptus stands in much higher numbers than they do in their historical habitats of desert palm oases and riparian sycamores and cottonwoods.

An adult male hooded oriole’s yellow-orange body and hood, black face, and bib make him pretty much unmistakable. Featuring olive green and yellow, the female shows considerably less flash. The male’s song is quiet, easily overlooked; but both sexes’ distinctive chatter announces their presence to a tuned-in listener.

In California hooded orioles practically cohabit with humans, having expanded their range considerably as we urbanized new areas. Yet hooded orioles likely have been affected by the spread of American crows, which commonly depredate hooded oriole nests. The brood-parasitic brown-headed cowbird also uses oriole nests for her eggs; her young hatch sooner, develop more quickly, and outcompete the orioles’ young. Also, nesting in lower fronds of an urban palm leaves the nest vulnerable to tree trimming during the nesting season. (Please don’t trim any trees or bushes during breeding season! Many species of birds nest in trees and bushes and you just can’t know who might be trying to raise a family there. Wait until September, if you can.) Despite these challenges, San Diego County’s local population appears to be thriving, eagerly colonizing new habitat as soon as it becomes available.

Hooded orioles rarely occur in San Diego County until the first half of March. By early April, though, these beauties become common. They remain here until the males begin to leave for Mexico in August, with the females and this year’s youngsters mostly gone by mid-September. So keep your eyes open for flashes of bright yellow and black swooping through your neighborhood and tune your ears for chatter emanating from the tops of palms or eucalyptus. Hoodeds are in the hood!

For a more detailed version of this article, please visit bvaudubon.org. Click on News/Newsletter.

“A special thank you to Steve Brad and all the birders who helped raise $3,766.61 in Steve’s February Annual Birdathon. To quote Steve, “We did good!”

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

— Margaret Atwood, Bluebeard’s Egg
BIRDING LEO CARRILLO
Thursday, April 5 — 8 a.m.
We will be walking the trails and exploring inside Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park. Don’t miss this fun walk!
Location: Meet at the trail head west of Carrillo Elementary School parking lot (off Poinsettia Lane, west of Melrose Ave. and turn south on Paseo Escuela). Trail parking is available in the lot to the right (west) of the school parking lot.
Leaders: Eve Martin, Patti Koger, Chris K. Smith, and Jane Mygatt (janemygatt@me.com)

WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY WALK
Saturday, April 7 — 8 a.m.
Come along with John, Denise, and friends for our regular monthly walk and bird survey at this beautiful sanctuary for resident and migratory waterfowl.
Directions: From I-5, take Hwy 76 east; turn left at Douglas Drive; continue to the light at North River Road; go left on North River Road. Pass through entrance gate and follow signs to the lake. Feel free to contact the leader for directions.
Leader: John Haddock (760-941-7824)

SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK BIRD WALK
Saturday, April 21 — 8:30 a.m.
San Andres Drive
Join John and friends as we look for the many waterfowl and shorebirds that come to spend the winter at North County’s coastal wetlands.
Directions: San Andres Drive — From I-5, take Via de la Valle east; go right on San Andres Drive to end of road.
Leader: John Haddock (760-941-7824)

OAK RIPARIAN PARK, OCEANSIDE
Sunday, April 8 — 7:30 a.m.
April is a great month to visit this community park. We expect to see warblers, raptors, waders, and the many species of birds found in woodlands, grasslands, and coastal sage scrub. We will also visit nearby Calavera Lake.
Location: Meet in the parking lot at the intersection of Lake Blvd. and Ridge Road.
Leader: Steve Brad (760-633-1639)

COASTAL 101 BIRDING
Saturday, April 28 — 9 a.m.
Meet Tom and Susie for a casual combination birding workshop and bird count around Buena Vista Lagoon. We visit Maxton Brown Park, walk to the ocean and weir, and return to the Nature Center along Coast Highway. We should see waders, songbirds, and shorebirds. After the walk, we tally the birds and finish by 11:30 a.m.
Location: Buena Vista Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Highway, Oceanside. Meet in the parking lot.
Leaders: Tom Troy (760-420-7328) and Susie Martin

EL CORAZON GARRISON CREEK BIRD WALK
Wednesday, April 11 — 7:30 a.m.
Eve will be substituting for Denise this month for our 2-mile walk along El Corazon’s Garrison Creek Trail. In addition, Joan Bockman will share her knowledge of the local flora and the history of El Corazon.
Directions: From the intersection of El Camino Real and Oceanside Blvd., go east on Oceanside Blvd., turn left (north) into the first gate. Veer to the left and park.
Leader: Eve Martin (eve@acousticpie.com)

THE UNIQUE HUMMINGBIRD
Hummingbirds (family Trochilidae) have evolved a remarkable variety of adaptations in both anatomy and physiology. A few characteristics that define this family are their long, slender bills and ability to feed while hovering. They are called hummingbirds because of the distinct hum created when they beat their wings.
Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly up, down, backwards, and even upside down for short distances. Since the shoulder joint is a ball and socket, the wings can rotate in a circle. Hummingbirds do not flap like most birds, instead they move their wings in an oval pattern. When hovering, their wings move in a figure-eight motion.
Hummingbirds are among the smallest birds, but they have the highest metabolism rate of any warm-blooded vertebrate. Compared to their body size, their brains, hearts, and flight muscles are proportionally larger than any other bird.
Hummingbirds are found only in the Western Hemisphere. They are specialized nectarivores, feeding on flower nectar; but they also feed on small insects. Just about every feature of a hummingbird is unique, and that goes for their feet as well. A hummingbird’s feet are so small and weak, it cannot walk; they can only be used for perching. In addition, their legs and feet are covered in skin, not scales (or scutes), as in nearly all other birds.
The two most common species found in our area are Anna’s and Allen’s hummingbirds.

STEVE’S SURPRISE THURSDAY WALK
Thursday, April 12 — 8 a.m.
Come along on 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. It is always great fun! Send Steve an email if you are interested in participating.
Leader: Steve Brad (stevanbrad@gmail.com)
**A Little Respect**

San Diego County’s majestic natives aren’t feeling the love. Golden eagles require large territories and more than a little privacy to thrive. When not nesting on a preferred cliff, they are usually resting high on treetops or hunting in chaparral, grassland, and safe scrub communities — land increasingly taken over by development.

Unfortunately, this native bird species is highly sensitive to human disturbances. Golden eagles have been known to abandon nest sites too close to hiking/biking trails or near rock climbing areas. These birds tend to nest near where they were born. Therefore, if a nesting pair leaves due to the presence of humans, lost is the potential for offspring to return and nest in the same spot.

Recreational activities are not the only threat impacting golden eagles. Power lines regularly electrocute these birds; and with many miles of new power lines springing up in San Diego County, this hazard increases the chance of golden eagle mortality.

What can you do? We encourage you to continue exploring nature. However, please respect closures for sensitive nesting areas and be aware of the golden eagle’s habitat and nesting season (February-June). You can find out more information and donate to the Respect the Eagle campaign at [http://www.sandiegoeco.org/educate/respect-eagle-campaign/](http://www.sandiegoeco.org/educate/respect-eagle-campaign/).

BVAS hopes that you will consider signing up at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and designating Buena Vista Audubon as your favorite charity. It’s like Amazon.com in every way, except that a half percent of most purchases is donated to BVAS and its work. It may be just pennies, but a mountain of pennies really adds up.

**MEMBERSHIP / DONATIONS**

- [ ] I would like to become a member.
- [ ] I’m already a member, but want to help out more.

Friends of BVAS receive the chapter newsletter. The BVAS Nature Center and its programs will receive 100% of all contributions. All donations of $25 or more will automatically qualify as membership dues.

- [ ] Nature Center & Program
- [ ] Ridgway’s Rail Society Land Acquisition/Management Fund

Amount $ _____
- [ ] Check
- [ ] Credit Card

Credit Card # ____________________________ Exp. Date _____ CVR _____

Make checks payable to Buena Vista Audubon. Mail to BVAS; P.O. Box 480; Oceanside, CA 92049.

*Full-color newsletters are normally distributed by email attachment as a conservation measure and to save printing and mailing costs.

- [ ] Please check this box if you have no Internet access or would prefer a mailed copy of the monthly newsletter.

Name: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________

*Email: ____________________________ Mailing Address: ____________________________

- [ ] I am interested in volunteer opportunities.
KIDS’ CORNER AT THE NATURE CENTER
Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse
Sunday, April 15
from 1:00-4:00 p.m.
This month we’ll be creating paper-plate birds. We’ll provide materials. Come and join the fun!

Preschool Nature Storytime
Monday, April 23 at 10:00 a.m.
Bring your little ones to the center to learn and read about butterflies. Questions?
Call Sally at 760-525-2351.

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**BVAS QUICK CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. April 2</td>
<td>Garden Club</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. April 5</td>
<td>Birding Leo Carrillo</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. April 6</td>
<td>Nature Guides Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. April 7</td>
<td>Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. April 8</td>
<td>Oak Riparian Park Walk</td>
<td>7:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. April 8</td>
<td>Native Plant Tour</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. April 9</td>
<td>Garden Club</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. April 11</td>
<td>El Corazon Garrison Creek Walk</td>
<td>7:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. April 12</td>
<td>Steve’s Surprise Thursday Walk</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. April 15</td>
<td>Joey &amp; Johnny’s Clubhouse</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. April 16</td>
<td>Garden Club</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Wed. April 18</td>
<td>Program: “Reluctant Neighbors- The Golden Eagles of So. CA” with Dr. Robert Fisher</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. April 20</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. April 21</td>
<td>San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk</td>
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<td>Sat. April 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. April 30</td>
<td>Garden Club</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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**Buena Vista Audubon**

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
2202 S. Coast Highway  Oceanside, CA 92054
760-439-BIRD (-2473)
email: bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
website: [www.bvaudubon.org](http://www.bvaudubon.org)

*Photo by Steve Brad*

Come learn about golden eagles. See page 1.

**Center Hours**
Sunday: 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday - Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
16th Annual California Native Plant Garden Tour

Sunday April 8th 2pm

Over 18 Native Plant Gardens in the Historic Seaside Neighborhood in Downtown Oceanside!

Free guided 1.5 mile walking tour. Donation Requested for map.

Meet at St. Mary’s School, 515 Wisconsin Avenue, (one block east of the 101 Café, Coast Highway and Wisconsin St)

Buena Vista Native Plant Club
BVAudubon.org
Oceanside Coastal Neighborhood Association OCNA101.org