Sea & Sage Audubon Society

Learning California Bird Sounds
An Intermediate-Level Birding Skills Workshop
presented by Sylvia Gallagher

Accomplished birders depend on their ears much more than their eyes for detecting and identifying many types of birds, especially when they are in wooded or brushy habitats. These people walk along and only try to see the bird if they are uncertain about the identification of a vocalization they hear. Usually more than 90% of the birds they find are identified first by the sounds they make. If you are still bird-watching most of the time, here’s a chance to start bird-listening. A series of Birding Skills Workshops, sponsored by Sea and Sage Audubon and presented by Sylvia Gallagher at her home in Huntington Beach, will serve as an introduction to LEARNING CALIFORNIA BIRD SOUNDS (LCBS).

Around 60 common species of the California lowlands west of the mountains, that are most frequently detected first by voice, will be covered. In addition, there will be a short lecture each week on the nature and meaning of bird sounds.

If you have a fairly good knowledge of the appearance of the common birds, you should be well prepared for this ten-week workshop series. (The 10-week Sea and Sage series of Introductory Birding Skills Workshop is the level of experience presumed for this series.) Those who have done LCBS before are welcome to repeat the series as many times as they wish.

Five sections will be offered, but be aware that there is a possibility that one or more of them will be cancelled if enrollment is insufficient. Be sure to list as many choices as you can. The dates (including holidays) and times are as follows:

MON. evenings, 7:00 - 10:00 pm, Jan. 6 – March 9 - CANCELED
TUES. mornings, 8:30 - 11:30 am, Jan. 7 – March 10
WED. evenings, 7:00 - 10:00 pm, Jan. 8 – March 11
THURS. mornings, 9:00 am -12 noon, Jan. 9 - March 12 – WAIT LIST
THURS. evenings, 7:00 - 10:00 pm, Jan. 9 - March 12

The series will be accompanied and followed by MANY field trips, led by current and former workshop members who are expert field trip leaders. We’ll try to have a couple of them scheduled every week, some on weekends, some on weekdays. In order to get full benefit from this workshop, plan to spend at least three hours every week listening to birds in the field in a variety of locations; these trips are designed to help you do this.

The maximum enrollment for each section is 22. If any section does not have at least 12 people enrolled by Dec. 26, it will be canceled. Reserve early though, because some sections frequently fill rapidly. A donation of $140 or more is requested, if you can afford it. (Bring money to first meeting.)

The required “textbook” for the workshop series is LEARNING CALIFORNIA BIRD SOUNDS (4th ed., 2016, available at Audubon House), a package containing worksheets and a flash drive with introductory and practice slides ($39). Older editions will not be acceptable. (If you last did the workshop in Jan. – March 2016, and only have the preliminary version of the workshop package used then, you must purchase the final version which became available in summer 2016.) If two people in the same household plan to share the sounds, each one must have a copy of the worksheets. Make your own copies of the ones that come in the package. The required worksheet package must be obtained far enough in advance of the first session, so you will have time to do a little homework prior to the first meeting. This will be outlined in your confirmation letter.

In addition, these commercially available packages are recommended:

- Bird Songs of CA by Keller (Cornell Lab of Ornithology, formerly available on CDs, but now must be purchased online)
- Western Bird Songs (Peterson Field Guides series)
- Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs, Western (same sounds on Sibley app)
- iBirdPro app

Your workshop experience will be greatly enhanced if you install Raven Lite sonogram-making software on your computer — and you must have a computer (PC or Mac) in order to use the flashdrive. This free service from the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology is available online from “RavenSoundSoftware.com”. You will be seriously handicapped if you try to do the workshop without Raven Lite! For problems with installation or use, contact Doug Lithgow (dmlithgow@aol.com).

To reserve a space in the workshop, please send the form below, postmarked no sooner than Dec. 2 (two-day penalty for early reservations), to: LCBS Workshop, Sylvia Gallagher, 21562 Kaneohe Ln, Huntington Beach CA 92646. Enclose a long (4”x9 ½”) self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE). Confirmation, further information, and a map to the house, will be mailed Dec. 28. For further information, contact Sylvia at sjrgallagher@yahoo.com (preferred) or 714-962-8990.

Enrollment Form for Learning CA Bird Sounds (LCBS) Workshop (2020)

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<td>Check or rank at least 2 choices of section (three if one is a morning and one is an evening):</td>
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