President’s Message

I am excited to begin my tenure as your president. I have enthusiastically accepted the challenges and responsibility of this role, however, following in the footsteps of Doug Lithgow is humbling. I want to take this opportunity to thank Doug for his three years of service as president. He has graciously given his time, talent and seemingly boundless energy to every committee and program that Sea and Sage Audubon Society offers. He has promised to continue his involvement in all of this, in addition to being our audio-visual technician. I know I will rely heavily on his support and expertise.

The arrival of Covid-19 is having an impact that we could not have imagined. Sea and Sage is taking this pandemic very seriously and has had to cancel all its scheduled group activities until further notice. The best news is that Irvine Ranch Water District continues to keep the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary open to the public during daylight hours as long as they maintain social distancing.

In the meantime, our work continues through Zoom meetings of our Board, the Conservation Committee, and the Education Committee. Our Conservation Committee participated in a virtual Advocacy Day, with our state legislators, supporting legislative solutions to protect birds and the environment. They continue to monitor our bird populations through annual counts and ongoing surveys. They will conduct their 4th Tuesday meetings with our members through Zoom webinars. Our education leadership provided outreach to all of our “safer at home” students through prepared lessons and videos and kept all of the Naturalists engaged through “Pondside Chats”. They are now planning a virtual Coastal Camp for the summer. Virtual General Meetings will start in September.

The Wandering Tattler will continue to keep you informed as to when and how we will resume our all-important chapter activities, field trips, and volunteer opportunities. Until then, stay safe.

Gail Richards
President, Sea and Sage Audubon

Coastal Birding Without Getting Wet

When I was growing up in Southern California, I loved going to the ocean. There was something about the powerful waves, regularity of tides, and all the sensory stimulants that really spoke to my soul. After becoming a marine biologist, my love and protective attitude grew even more. So I was overjoyed years ago when our Camp Committee decided to offer week-long Coastal Camp programs for pre-teens and teens. We all enjoyed the off-site trips to Bolsa Chica wetlands and Crystal Cove State Beach. Then with COVID-19 limitations this year, we cancelled all our camp programs….until Education Assistant Deborah Brin suggested we offer Coastal Camp virtually. This was a big step for our chapter but campers have learned about birds with us for 27 years and we didn’t want them, and us, to miss out this year!

Coastal birds are a diverse group that have adapted to the changing tides and buried prey items of coastal beaches and wetlands. Some like the plovers use their large eyes to spot prey using a “look, run, stop, pick, repeat” technique of foraging. Some have sensitive tips on the ends of their long beaks to catch prey by touch as they probe deep into mud or sand. The turnstones forage among rocks and wrack (stranded algae), flipping and turning over items to uncover prey. Such interesting behaviors to watch!

Virtual Coastal Bird Camp 2020 will feature 3 lessons. Each is self-paced and can be completed in a week. Each lesson includes an informative bird identification presentation, bird sounds presentation, sketching activity, Further Adventures (watch a video and record your observations), and Mystery Bird quiz to challenge new knowledge. We designed lessons for 9-14 years old but encourage any beginning birder to participate. See enclosed flyer for how to enroll. And please share the flyer with any youth you know!

This virtual camp is free but there is a $25 suggested donation to help with staff time and materials costs.

Most shorebirds are in the Arctic now increasing their populations. By next month, many will make their long migration south to spend the winter along our shores. Will you be ready to watch and identify them with confidence?

Trude Hurd, Project Director of Education
Climate Challenge: protect birds, people, and the planet by holding global warming to 1.5°C!

Legislation Watch

Each spring, California Least Terns arrive to breed and nest at the Least Tern Natural Preserve on Huntington State Beach. Because these endangered terns nest on open beaches, they are projected to experience catastrophic loss of coastal nesting habitat as sea levels rise with climate change. According to Audubon’s 2019 report Survival by Degrees, two-thirds of birds in North America are at risk of extinction due to climate change, but more than 75% of those species can be helped through climate action. Now more than ever, legislative advocacy to address climate change is critical to our conservation efforts if we are to protect species like the California Least Tern.

Climate and Conservation

Sea and Sage’s Conservation Committee is working, in partnership with Audubon California and National Audubon, to identify and support state and federal legislation that addresses climate change and ways to reduce our carbon emissions. In addition to key climate legislation, the Conservation Committee continues to identify legislation that would move the state and the nation forward on conservation issues.

State legislators returned to Sacramento on May 4 after being on hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, committee hearings and bills will be limited for the rest of the year as attention is focused on responding to the fallout of the pandemic. Because budget cuts are expected to significantly reduce government spending on natural resources this year, Audubon California has consolidated its legislative priorities to the following bills and issues.

Audubon will focus on:
- Mitigating the budget cuts to natural resources
- Defending against rollbacks of environmental regulations

Audubon supports the following bills:
- AB 3030, Resource conservation: land and ocean conservation goals. Sets goals for California to protect 30% of its land and ocean waters by 2030, and to support regional, national, and international efforts to do the same.
- AB 2619, Coastal resources: program for coastal resilience, adaptation, and access. Establishes a program that would help the state prepare for sea-level rise and climate change.

The Conservation Committee will be tracking the progress of these bills through the legislature and identifying any areas where we can lend our support this year. Our challenge is to be sensitive to the needs of people at this time, while reminding our state and federal representatives that the environment and human welfare are ultimately connected. Developing climate resilience and protecting habitats and biodiversity will benefit not only birds but also people.

Climate Corner Tip: You can be an advocate for birds and their habitats! Sign up for Audubon California’s Action Alerts to receive the latest policy information and let lawmakers hear your concerns (https://ca.audubon.org/sign-email-action-alerts). You can also join National Audubon’s Action Network (https://www.audubon.org/takeaction).

Audubon California’s Virtual Advocacy Day

Each year, Audubon California sponsors Advocacy Day, an opportunity for chapter members from all over the state to join together and meet with their state representatives to speak up for birds and their habitats. Because in-person meetings were not possible this year, Audubon California organized its first-ever Virtual Advocacy Day. A webinar series was held in May to help participants prepare to protect birds and address climate change, and more than 300 participants registered to attend video appointments with state legislators on June 21! Several members of the Conservation Committee participated and were proud to support Audubon’s mission to speak up for birds and connect people with Nature.
Although the latter half of the 2020 spring migration period in Orange County (OC) seemed a bit below average, to downright poor at times, especially in terms of numbers of our more regular migrants, there were some nice surprises that popped up here and there. The following paragraphs highlight some of the county’s more noteworthy migrants (as well as some rare residents, out-of-season species, etc.).

The vast majority of the county’s waterfowl species occur during the winter months, and are usually gone by April, if not before. Consequently, a Lesser Scaup at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve (BCER) on May 25, and a Bufflehead in Rancho Santa Margarita, May 23, were quite late. A Sora at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary (SJWS), May 27, was also quite late. A White-winged Dove in Silverado Canyon, May 1, was unexpected. There were several late spring shorebird occurrences of note; these included up to four Black Turnstones at BCER (where uncommon at best) through May 24 (a late date for these in OC); three Solitary Sandpipers along the lower Santa Ana River, Apr. 24, with one at SJWS, May 5; and a Pectoral Sandpiper at SJWS, June 11 (exceptionally rare in spring, with nearly all SoCal records occurring during April and May). A juvenile Brown Booby was reported off the coast of Newport Beach, May 1. Single Cattle Egrets were well-seen at SJWS, May 5, and at Huntington Central Park (HCP), May 19. An adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron photographed in flight over the U.C.Irvine campus, May 6, was a bit out-of-place. Even more out-of-place was a Golden Eagle photographed over SJWS, June 11 (a banded, apparent adult bird).

Three occurrences of Red-eyed Vireos were undoubtedly the most the county has ever had during one spring; these included singles in a Huntington Beach neighborhood, May 29; at HCP, June 2-3; and in a Laguna Woods neighborhood, June 3. A Bell’s Vireo heard singing at Blue Jay Campground, in the Santa Ana Mountains, April 25, was at a most unexpected location and habitat for this species. Single Bank Swallows were reported from SJWS on May 1 and 4. The distribution and abundance of nesting Blue-gray Gnatcatchers has noticeably increased in the county during the last 30 to 40 years. During the 1970s and 1980s, the breeding population appeared to be primarily restricted to the Santa Ana Mountains and interior foothills. In recent years, however, increasing numbers have been found during summer in various woodland habitats of the county’s lowlands. Not too surprising then were up to a half-dozen in the Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, during mid to late May; at this date these would undoubtedly be breeders at this relatively coastal location.

Territorial Bell’s Sparrows continue to be found in the Coal Canyon area of north OC, with the latest reports including two on Apr. 26 and again on May 24. An individual of one of the migratory races of Savannah Sparrow, which winter throughout much of the southwestern U.S., was detected at Mile Square Regional Park on the very late date of June 7 (undoubtedly the latest OC record by as many as three or four weeks!). At least seven Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported in the county between Apr. 23 and May 4, including up to three along the lower Santa Ana River, one in Huntington Beach, one at Harvard Community Park, one at BCER, and one at SJWS. A wintering male Orchard Oriole continued in Bartlett Park through at least Apr. 27.

Several rare warblers occurred in the county during the last month. Exceptional was a male Bay-breasted Warbler reported from a Santa Ana residential area, May 31; there are possibly as few as only three spring records for the county, and less than a dozen overall. A singing Hooded Warbler was in HCP’s Shapley Nature Center, May 16-20. HCP also hosted a few other warbler rarities, including a Magnolia Warbler on June 3 (one of only a handful of spring records for OC), and a Palm Warbler, Apr. 23-25. An American Redstart was in a Fullerton neighborhood, May 28. At least two Summer Tanagers were in Huntington Beach, with one at a private residence, May 30, and at least one at HCP, between June 3 and 8. At least six Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in the county, between May 14 and June 5, were remarkable; these included a male at SJWS, a male and female at a private residence in Irvine, a male in Rancho Santa Margarita, and a male and female at HCP.
Chapter News & Announcements

Sea and Sage Audubon Society’s mission is to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through education, citizen science, research, and public policy advocacy.

Entrance to the SJWS is now from Michelson
Due to extensive road work on Campus Drive between Jamboree and Harvard in Irvine, the usual entrance to the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary from Campus Drive is now closed. You can enter the sanctuary from the Michelson entrance on to Riparian View which is located between Harvard and Carlson. (This is the entrance we used to use prior to Oct. 2010.) The Michelson entrance is marked by a signal with a prominent sign for the Irvine Ranch Water District. Once you turn off on Riparian View, go straight down it, past the windmill, until you reach the entrance to Audubon House, the Duck Club, and the regular parking lot.

Upcoming Chapter Events
Those of you who like to plan ahead for chapter events such as birding skills workshops and programs, please keep an eye on our chapter webpage. More information will be in the September Tattler. Virtual General Meetings will start in Sept. on the 3rd Friday night. Virtual 4th Tues. Conservation Lectures are planned for July and the fall on the 4th Tuesday night. And Sylvia’s Virtual Intro Birding Skills Workshop will start in October.

Wildlife Photographers & Birders, BEWARE!
Wildlife photographers and birders, BEWARE, you are being watched by thieves at Bolsa Chica, Crystal Cove and elsewhere. Thieves are watching you and then following you to a nearby store or even your home where they do a quick Smash and Grab of your equipment. Do not leave your equipment in your car unattended! It’s up to us to be alert! Watch out for any cars that are following you when you leave there; be vigilant to protect yourself and your hobby!

Orange County Spring Count (OCSC) Count Results for April 2020
The Orange County Spring Count, held each spring in April and May, was a huge success this year despite the Covid-19 restrictions. Darrell Wilson, Chair of the Bird Surveys reported, “This year we had 1364 check lists submitted with 263 species reported. This is an increase of 730 checklists and 5 more species over 2019. These increases happened even though some locations were closed during much or all the Spring Count period. People explored new locations and also submitted checklist from their backyards. I guess it takes more than a virus to slow down the Orange Country birders. I want to thank the Backyard Birders because your checklists were submitted and played a part in this count. – Darryl Wilson

In Memoriam
Frank Feller: 1936-2020
Frank was a highly valued volunteer with Sea and Sage Audubon’s nature programs at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. He joined our Audubon Naturalists in 2001 and for twelve years served as a naturalist, leading our Outdoor Adventures science discovery programs for elementary school children. For a short time, Frank was the coordinator for our Naturalist Meetings. He believed continuing education was significantly important for our naturalists.

In addition to his role as a naturalist, Frank was co-chair of our Education Committee with Carolyn Noble in 2010. For a few years, he participated in the Christmas Bird Count. He volunteered for numerous shifts at the Audubon House and always enjoyed being a cook at the annual Pancake Breakfast!

We will all miss Frank’s gentle smile, compassion, and leadership. He was an inspiring role model for the children he led around the sanctuary…and for the rest of us. He was a true friend!

Our Busy Exhibits Volunteers
From the first of July 2019 to the end of February 2020, our active Exhibits Volunteers represented our chapter at the following events under the very capable leadership of Mary Joseph, Exhibits Committee Chair: Urban Living Education Expo, OC Children’s Book Festival, University Hills Holiday Boutique, Festival of Whales, and Ocean Awareness Day.

We’d like to thank these active volunteers: Linda Daily, Kate Grabenstein, Beverly Hargrove, Ann Harmer, Debbie Hays, Star Howard, Mary Joseph, Vic Leipzig, Doug Lithgow, Eva Lydick, Claire, Readey, Susan Sheakley and Cheryl Thomas.
Virtual Coastal Bird Camp 2020

Although we cancelled our youth camps at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, this doesn’t mean that your children should stop watching and learning about birds. Some of our favorite local bird-rich habitats are our county’s coastal wetlands and beaches. With such a diversity of coastal birds that often look alike, it can be hard to identify them. To help participants, we are offering a Virtual Coastal Camp for you to have fun with! We have three different lessons:

July 13    Lesson 1: Coastal Shorebirds
July 27    Lesson 2: Endangered Coastal Birds
Aug. 10    Lesson 3: Surprise Lesson

Each lesson will feature a coastal bird identification presentation with beautiful shorebird photographs; a coastal bird sounds presentation including how to learn their unique calls; Further Adventures activities such as a video scavenger hunt or mini-birdathon; sketching activity (including frameable art project for Lesson 1); and Mystery Bird quiz to challenge your new knowledge. Discover coastal bird behaviors, field marks and sounds with the Audubon Naturalists! Each lesson is self-paced and its activities can be completed during one week.

Ages: 9-14 years old and up but we encourage any beginning birder to participate.

Fee: Free but $25 suggested donation (make check payable to Sea and Sage Audubon and send to Camp, Sea and Sage Audubon, 5 Riparian View, Irvine, CA 92612).

Prerequisite: Lessons utilize Google classroom. Participants will need a personal Google/gmail account. Please let us know if you need additional information.

To enroll: Send your email with participant name and age (youth or adult) to camp coordinator Bev Spring at gpsyb@aol.com. You will then receive an enrollment packet that includes the link to Google classroom for the lessons plus dates at San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine to pick up your complimentary shorebird field guide (while supplies last) and other materials.
Chapter News & Announcements

Sea and Sage Audubon Society’s mission is to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through education, citizen science, research, and public policy advocacy.

Making Birding More Just

The events of the past month have required all of us to reflect on the role that racism plays in our communities and our lives. We would like to share some of the statements that have been released by Audubon leadership and other organizations.

**National Audubon Society, David Yarnold, CEO:** “Black lives matter. Our nation is in turmoil because our governments, our institutions (including Audubon), and private individuals haven’t done nearly enough to act on that fundamental truth. Audubon is choosing action. Instead of using vaguer words, we’re going to talk about how Audubon can become antiracist in everything we do, internally and externally. That’s going to be a long conversation.”

**Audubon California, Sarah Rose, Executive Director:** “The events of the week have cast in sharp relief the fact that for Black Americans many day-to-day experiences can be unsafe, unwelcoming, and dangerous. Audubon and our conservation community have a critical responsibility, one that we have not historically addressed, to actively create an anti-racist society. We need to explicitly say that everyone should feel welcome and safe in the Audubon family, and we need to help change the laws and practices that perpetuate injustice. That’s part of our conservation mission.”

**American Birding Association:** “Like so many in the birding community, ABA staff and board were inspired by last week’s #BlackBirdersWeek, and greatly appreciate the effort to not only celebrate Black faces and voices in birding, but to draw attention to the unique difficulties birding can pose to Black people in terms of accessibility, safety, and community. Black lives matter and Black birders matter. And as any birder knows, the best dawn choruses have many voices. We believe acting is imperative and we are ready to increase our efforts to grow our organization and our membership so that the voices in birding will continue to be varied, robust, and welcoming to all who enjoy and protect wild birds.”

**Sea and Sage Audubon:** We stand in support of the sentiments and actions expressed in these statements. We embrace diversity, support the Black community, and are committed to making birding safe and accessible for all individuals. We want to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to inclusion and equity. We recognize that birding and bird conservation historically occurs in predominately white communities. Yet, as birders, we are intimately familiar with the value and importance of diversity. Moving forward, we are committed to listening and learning and we resolve to begin a period of self-reflection. We will soon share new initiatives and resources to promote equity and inclusivity and to help build a diverse coalition of those who participate in the enjoyment and protection of wild birds and their habitats.

On behalf of the Sea and Sage Board
Gail Richards, President

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2020 Bloom-Hays Ecological Research Grant:
Six excellent student proposals were selected for funding by the Sea and Sage Science Committee. The objective of the Bloom-Hays Ecological Research Grant is to advance ecological research, particularly research related to avian species and the natural communities upon which they depend, by providing funds or supplies to support research activities benefitting native species and habitats in Southern California.

**Timothy Brown, University of California, Santa Cruz (PhD) Climate Change and the Continent’s Highest-elevation Birds: North America’s Rosy-Finches on the Escalator to Extinction.**

**Alexandra Gresham, California Polytechnical University, Pomona (MS) Lead Toxicity and its effects in the California Turkey Vulture.**

**Amanda Martinez, California State University, Long Beach (MS) Prey Availability as a Correlate of Nesting Success for the California Least Tern.**

**Janine Fischer, University of California, Los Angeles (PhD) Effects of Competitor Familiarization on Pacific Pocket Mouse Reintroduction Success**

**Kaleigh Russell, University of California, Riverside (PhD) Pollinator Diversity in the Southern California Desert.**

**Racine Rangel, University of California, Irvine (PhD) Do climate conditions affect host-parasite relationships in marine snails?**

For more information on these research grants, see our webpage under the heading of Conservation - 2020 Bloom-Hays Grant Recipients.
Hospitality at our General Meetings
Peggy McGlone and Carol Freund, Co-Chairs of the Hospitality Committee, did a wonderful job organizing the refreshments for our monthly meetings – prior to March when we had to cancel due to the Covid-19. Their helpers were Doreen Johnson, Phyllis Anderson, Bev Krassner-Bulas and Nancy Kappelmann who brought home-baked goodies, fruit, cheese and crackers. Doug Lithgow was there before anyone else to set up the tables and his AV equipment, and help Carol Freund unload her car and carry in the supplies. His son Joshua took over his dad’s responsibilities for one meeting as did Bettina Eastman for another meeting. Carolyn and Matt Biller set up the chairs and made sure they were put away again afterwards. Jan Gaffney greeted everyone at the welcome table, and Kathleen Moddali, Mike McGlone, Doreen Johnson and Phyllis Anderson assisted with cleanup after the meetings.

We Appreciate the Help of Our Field Trip Leaders who gave of their time and expertise to lead, or planned to lead, our field trips this year.
• Audubon Naturalists, • Jeff Bray & Garrett Lepper,
• Mark Kincheloe, • Darrell Wilson & Sally Menzel,
• John McKeever & Gary Meredith, • Vic Leipzig,
• Jon Dunn, Tom Benson, Bruce Aird, Jeff Bray,
Robert McNab, Steve Morris, • Kaaren Perry,
• Jeff Bray & Bruce Aird, • Bruce Aird & Vic Leipzig,
• Pete DeSimone, • Pete Bloom, • Robert Snowdon.

Audubon Membership Application
We invite you to become a member of the National Audubon Society and the Sea and Sage Audubon chapter.
Members receive the AUDUBON magazine as well as the WANDERING TATTLER newsletter.

NEW MEMBERSHIP is $20 for an individual or for a family. (The membership is good for one year.)

To join: Complete the form below & mail it along with your payment to: Sea and Sage Audubon, PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616
Make your check payable to: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY. Please pay by check only; do not send cash.
Or, go online to: http://tinyurl.com/hyeaw67 (Our chapter code is C15)

To renew membership: renew directly with National Audubon by direct mail or online: (Renewals are $20 per year.)
http://tinyurl.com/zjbs9tt

Name ____________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip ____________________________________________________
Phone __________________________________________________________________
E-mail ____________________________________________________________
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Director 2022 ………… Martin Fee ………………. 714-508-0630
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OTHER CONTACTS

Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center – for injured or sick birds and other native wild animals in need of help (corner of Newland & PCH in HB) 714-374-5587. http://www.wwccoc.org/

Call Songbird Care & Education Center for injured or sick native songbirds. 714-222-6814. www.songbirdcareandeducation.org

Membership Information

Do you want to join National Audubon and Sea and Sage? Use the membership form on page 7. An Individual Membership or a Family Membership is only $20. Sea and Sage receives 100% of a chapter generated new member's dues for the first year. Mail the form and your check - payable to National Audubon Society - to Sea and Sage Audubon, PO Box 5447, Irvine CA 92616. If you want to use a credit card for your membership payment, go online to: http://www.audubon.org/membership

If you have questions, please contact Membership Chair, Jim Kissinger, at membership@seaandsageaudubon.org

Go Paperless!

Sign up to receive your newsletter via email — get your issues faster, help save natural resources, reduce waste, and help our chapter save money! You can read it online or print out the pages you need to refer to more frequently. It is in pdf format and will look and print exactly like the original ones. Photos will be in color. Send an e-mail to nancykenyon@cox.net to start your paper-free Tattler delivery today! (offer good only for chapter members in good standing)