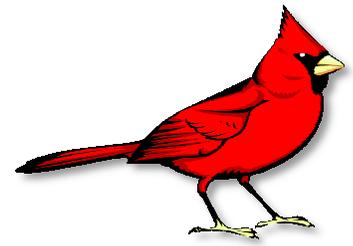


Final 3 Paper
Newsletters!

THE OBSERVER



Calendar

April 11. Beginner bird walk at Sycamore Canyon. Meet at the Sycamore Canyon trailhead at **8:00 AM**. The trail is located adjacent to Rose Hills Cemetery gate 17, but note that the trail is **not** in the cemetery! The entrance to Sycamore Canyon is a driveway just southwest of the entrance to the cemetery. Steve Huber leads. Rain or recent rain cancels.

April 16. Monthly meeting and program. Beverly Hargrove presents, "Oh the Places He went and the Birds He Saw..." Meeting starts at 7:30 PM at the Whittier Community Center. Details on page 3.

April 17-19. Weekend field trip to the Eastern Sierras. See page 3 for details.



whittieraudubon.org

2015 GREAT BACKYARD BIRDCOUNT RESULTS

[The Great Backyard Birdcount is a fun event that has been around for a long time now. With eBird making it really easy to submit bird counts online the event has lost a bit of its "specialness," but it's still interesting to look at the data that is collected. — ed]

PARTICIPANTS FROM MORE THAN 100 COUNTRIES submitted a record 147,265 bird checklists for the annual Great Backyard Bird Count and broke the previous count record for the number of species identified. The 5,090 species reported represents nearly half the possible bird species in the world. The four-day count was held February 13-16, the 18th year for the event which is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society with partner Bird Studies Canada. The information gathered by tens of thousands of volunteers helps track the health of bird populations at a scale made possible by using the eBird online checklist program.

A sampling of species found by intrepid counters include Ibisbill in India, Bornean Bristlehead in Malaysia, and Magellanic Plover in Chile, complete with amazing photos. GBBC participants even reported two birds, Millpo Tapaculo and Santa Marta Screech-Owl that have not yet been described in the scientific literature as new species.

Bitter Weather

The bitter cold, snowy weather in much of the northeastern United States and in Canada was a major factor in this year's count. Across the Northeast, Sunday was particularly frigid and windy, and the number of reports showed an obvious dip as some counters were forced indoors. As one participant in Québec noted, watching birds came with a price as wind chill temperatures rarely topped -20 degrees Celsius (zero degrees Fahrenheit).

For those who did brave the cold, the GBBC data will help scientists better understand the impact of the cold on bird populations. For example, scientists will be able to compare the abundance of some so-called "half-hardy" species, such as Carolina Wren and Yellow-rumped Warbler, to see if this cold winter has affected their populations.

Last year's cold drove many waterfowl inland (particularly White-winged Scoters and Red-necked Grebes) in the United States, but that has not been happening much this year. Comparing the ice cover in different regions of Canada and the northern United States be-

(Continued on page 2)

END OF THE PAPER NEWSLETTER

Just a reminder that at the end of this chapter year in June we will cease sending out a paper newsletter unless you specifically request one. See the form on the back of this issue for instructions if you wish to continue receiving a paper Observer. Given our goal of being a conservation organization it is unconscionable for us to send out hundreds of paper newsletters each month. You can find the newsletter on our website at <http://whittieraudubon.org/newsletter/>. Note that we'll also save a bunch of money on printing and mailing, money that can be put to better use by the chapter.

(Continued from page 1)

tween last winter and this will give insight on the origins of these species and the potential impact to populations with last year's freezout.

GBBC Top 10 Lists

Surprisingly, a Eurasian species, the Brambling, appears on the Top 10 list of most reported species for the first time ever. Since November, some of these birds have been spotted on the West Coast and others strayed even farther by turning up in Montana, Wyoming, and Ontario, with one 2015 GBBC record in North America from Washington state. But the Brambling's appearance among the Top 10 can be traced to one checklist from Germany reporting a flock estimated at one million birds. Up to three million Bramblings have been known to gather at that site.

In North America, California sits atop the leader board with the most checklists submitted and the greatest number of species, followed by Pennsylvania and New York. Ontario, Canada, is in the Top 10 for the second year in a row, nudging past Ohio and Georgia. Ontario sent in the highest number of checklists in Canada (4,218) but British Columbia reported the highest number of species (197).

Outside of the U.S. and Canada, India was once again a star performer, nearly doubling the number of checklists submitted to more than 6,800 and reporting the greatest number of species with 717.

Top 10 most frequently reported species (number of checklists reporting this species):

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Checklists</u>
Northern Cardinal	59,083
Dark-eyed Junco	59,074
Mourning Dove	48,313
Downy Woodpecker	45,399
Blue Jay	41,671
American Goldfinch	39,880
House Finch	39,241
Tufted Titmouse	38,191
Black-capped Chickadee	36,363
House Sparrow	34,564

* All Top 10 species are North American, reflecting high participation from this region.

Top 10 most numerous species (sum of how many individuals were observed across all checklists):

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Individuals</u>
Snow Goose	1,494,937
Canada Goose	1,110,946
Brambling	1,000,047
European Starling	630,610
Mallard	579,330
American Coot	501,152
American Robin	488,063
Dark-eyed Junco	465,939
Red-winged Blackbird	432,513
American Goldfinch	364,963

APRIL MEETING AND PROGRAM

BY LINDA OBERHOLTZER

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to do a Big Year in birding?

If so, come to our April 16, 2015, Whittier Area Audubon program, "Oh the Places He went and the Birds He Saw.." where Beverly Hargrove will give a lively illustrated account month by month of the 2012 Big Year of her husband, John. The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. at the Whittier Community Center, 7630 Washington Ave., Whittier, CA. The Community Center is on the corner of Washington Ave. (not to be confused with Washington Blvd.) and Mar Vista Sts, across the street from the Whittier Public Library and next to a softball field.

Beverly and John Hargrove began birding on their honeymoon in 1985. They have birded on all seven continents. Beverly is a superb storyteller and the bird photography by John is stunning. Come to see and hear the sometimes hilarious journey John embarked on, the preparation for the journey, the planning, the misadventures, and successes.

The program is free. Light refreshments will be served.

APRIL FIELD TRIP TO THE EASTERN SIERRAS

BY LINDA OBERHOLTZER

Our April field trip will be a weekender to the Eastern Sierras. The plan is to stay Friday night in Lone Pine, CA. We will be meeting in the Diaz Lake parking lot, which is south of the suggested motel, at 7:00 a.m.

We will bird Diaz Lake and proceed up Highway 395, stopping at the Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery for birding, then continuing up to an area near Big Pine turnoff called Glacier Lodge, which is home to the elusive Sooty Grouse. We will lunch there with scenic background of the snowcapped mountains and continue to Aspendell to look for the Gray-crowned Rosy Finches and other mountain species.



We will end for the evening in Bishop, CA. We will stay overnight in Bishop. On Sunday we will be birding with a local birder named Ken Wells who will show us around the Lake Crowley area. We will end around noon on Sunday. The traditional Sage Grouse lek is closed until the end of April. We will try to see the Grouse either from above the lek through scopes or see if we can see some in an alternate area. Morning meeting time not set yet.

Please email me that you are coming. I will give you more details via email. lindaoberholtzer@gmail.com

Suggested lodgings:

Friday, April 17: Best Western Lone Pine
1008 S. Main, Lone Pine, CA. (760)876-5571

(Serves a complimentary great breakfast starting at 5:00 a.m)

Saturday, April 18: Best Western, Bishop, CA
1025 N. Main St., Bishop, CA (760)873-3543

Ask for AAA rate

WHITTIER AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY YOUR 2014/2015 OFFICERS

President Jennifer Schmahl 562-695-0152
Jens2grant@aol.com

1st V.P. Steve Huber 562-217-1886
stevekhuber@hotmail.com

2nd V.P. Linda Oberholtzer
lindaoberholtzer@gmail.com

Recording Secretary Bruce Seelt

Corresponding Secretary Joan Powell
Joan.Powell@att.net

Treasurer Caralie Scott
sweetsongbird@verizon.net

Hospitality Cathy Flicker
n2thewho@aol.com

Mailing Diana Jimenez

Field Trips Larry Schmahl 562-695-0152
LarSchmahl@aol.com

Education Letty Brooks
bobletty1@gmail.com

Editor Jeff Allison 562-694-1833
Jeff.Allison@amate.us

Membership Diana Jimenez 562-698-7010

Publicity Susana Guerrero
mexecua4@aol.com

Conservation Joan Powell

Bluebird Monitoring Steve Huber

Ways & Means TBD

Programs Linda Oberholtzer
562-699-9738

Historian Kathleen Barry

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JOIN WHITTIER AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY!

EVERY MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS AUDUBON'S VITAL EFFORTS to protect birds, wildlife, and natural habitats. For \$30 per year you can support Whittier Area Audubon, receive 10 issues of our chapter newsletter, *The Observer*, and support our local projects and events.

To join our **local** chapter, make your check payable to Whittier Area Audubon and send it to Whittier Area Audubon, P.O. Box 548, Whittier, CA 90608-0548.

You can find your membership expiration date on the mailing label on your *Observer*.

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE! WHITTIERAUDUBON.ORG

We are moving away from a dead trees newsletter with the launch of an electronic newsletter and a fresh, new website. The most recent newsletter will be placed on our website whittieraudubon.org every month, with previous newsletters saved and archived for your enjoyment. If you wish, we will email you a copy of the newsletter directly to you. Simply go to our website and click GIVE AND JOIN and select Email List.

Printing and mailing costs have steadily risen over the years, and as advocates for wise stewardship of our natural resources, we cannot in good conscience continue to send out paper newsletters.

IF YOU WISH TO CONTINUE RECEIVING A PAPER NEWSLETTER IN THE MAIL YOU WILL HAVE TO REQUEST IT WITH THIS FORM. Detach and mail to Whittier Audubon, PO Box 548, Whittier, CA 90608-0548.

YES, Please continue sending me a paper newsletter through the mail.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Beginning in June 2015 we will no longer send out paper newsletters unless you opt in by mail.