



# THE OBSERVER

WHITTIER AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Visit our website [www.whittieraudubon.org](http://www.whittieraudubon.org)

Condolences to the Nakamura Family. Long time member of our chapter, **Grace Nakamura** passed away in late May. Wife of Yosh, and mother of Linda Oberholtzer, Grace was a force of nature when she took on a cause. **See more info Page 2.** Thanks to our members that are serving as board officers for the next year: President: Chris Huber First Vice President: Larry Schmahl Second Vice President: Linda Oberholtzer Corresponding Secretary Joan Powell Recording Secretary: Steve Huber Treasurer: Elizabeth Huber Our chapter takes a short summer hiatus July and August, so the next newsletter will be coming to you in September. Have a great summer of birding. *Jennifer Schmahl*

## Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Under Attack

*From National Audubon:*

In a one-two punch for Arctic-dependent birds, two recent actions threaten vital Arctic habitat. First, the President's budget blueprint proposed opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. Then, a week after the budget was released, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed an order that could threaten 11 million acres to the west of the Refuge, in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, including the vital Teshekpuk Lake area.

The budget proposal, released in May, outlines the White House's requested funding levels for programs and agencies to Congress. As part of this proposal, the Administration called for raising federal revenue by opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil development. This troubling action could set the stage for Congress to include a similar plan in their own budget proposals, known as budget resolutions. If included, it presents a serious threat to the Arctic Refuge and the millions of birds that depend on it, since a House-passed budget resolution allows the Senate to skirt the filibuster and make it easier to push through Congress through backdoor tactics. **You can ask your Members of Congress to keep the Refuge out the budget**

## process through our Action Center.

The following week, Secretary Zinke signed an order that puts at risk another critical Arctic landscape for birds—Teshekpuk Lake in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, also known as the Western Arctic or the Reserve. At 23 million acres, the Reserve is located just a few hundred miles to the west of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and has its own vast coastal plain and wetland habitat. The critical Teshekpuk Lake area provides a safe haven for molting Brant and nesting grounds for Yellow-billed Loons, Spectacled Eiders, and countless shorebirds. Audubon was instrumental in advocating for the protection of Teshekpuk Lake and 11 million acres in the Reserve as part of its management plan—the Integrated Activity Plan. Now, Secretary Zinke has called for a review of this plan, which could begin a process to undo critical protections that birds need and lead to oil development in places like Teshekpuk Lake. **Please write to Secretary Zinke and ask him to uphold these protections and keep this plan in place.**

## KIDS SPACE

Our long time Education Chair, Letty Brooks is planning on stepping back from actively recruiting new teachers interested in using Audubon Adventures. She has been a fantastic

- **Editor's note: Condolences, Officers, Hiatus**
- **California Audubon: Humboldt Bay**
- **Kids Space: Thanks, Letty!**
- **General meeting info**
- **Nesting Snowy Plovers!**
- **Field trip schedule**
- **May Field Trip report**

resource for our chapter and the community. Sincerest thanks, Letty! Are you a teacher, administrator, teaching coach that can find teachers that would like to add Audubon Adventures to a classroom, afterschool or out of school program? Let us know!



# Audubon

We are a chapter of National Audubon

## General Meeting for June

June's General Meeting will be our **Annual Potluck and Photo Sharing Night**, Bring a dish to share and your own mess kit (plate & utensils, we'll have cups and napkins) Set up is 6:00pm. Picture show will start around 6:30. Please limit your show so as many members as possible can share photos.

If you are sharing photos please come early to make sure your photos and our computer and monitor like each other.

Thursday, June 15, 2017 at the Whittier Community Center, 7630 Washington Ave., Whittier, CA.

## Looking ahead:

The first meeting of the new chapter year will be September 21<sup>st</sup>. Our speaker will be Steve Kay on How to Photograph Hummingbirds

## Exciting news from Los Angeles County Beaches

Snowy Plovers have been observed successfully nesting in at least 5 LA County locations. **From Santa Monica Audubon's blog:**

For the first time since 1949, when they last nested in Manhattan Beach, Western Snowy Plovers have nested on Los Angeles beaches. Not just one nest or even one location, but several nests at three different locations! Needless to say, this caused great surprise, excitement, and some consternation among the volunteers and professionals who have worked with these birds for so long.



*Dad & 3 chicks (1 is hidden under dad) on Dockweiler Beach (Grace Murayama 5-14-17)*

*Surprise*, because it had been so long since they last nested here, there had been virtually no nesting attempts in earlier years, and no one thought there was a chance it would happen.

*Excitement*, because it signaled that we humans had actually changed our behavior sufficiently to permit these birds to make these nesting attempts.

We need to educate people and encourage them to: 1) back off from the birds, including not observing them too closely; 2) keep their boisterous pets and children away from the birds; 3) reduce potentially litter on the beaches. With the local governmental authorities we need to: 1) make sure they know where the winter roosting and summer nesting areas are located, especially because these areas are so small (about 0.6%) in comparison to the entire county coastline; 2) get them to reduce or eliminate beach grooming and wrack removal in these nesting and roosting areas; 3) set aside areas near winter roosting locations where native beach plants can re-establish themselves

(they do it naturally); 4) stop issuing permits for dog parks, volleyball courts and beach parties in the nesting and roosting areas.

Nearly all changes suggested above merely ask that humans cease from doing harm, rather than doing something costly and proactive. [smbasblog.com/nesting-snowy-ploversofLA](http://smbasblog.com/nesting-snowy-ploversofLA)



### Mailing address:

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### Field Trip Schedule:

**7:00am Sycamore Canyon Beginning Bird Walks**, meet at the Sycamore Canyon Trailhead. Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August, rain or recent rain cancels). 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 and Chris Huber lead. Rain cancels.**

### Saturday June 17 Mountain Birding

#### Steve Huber leads.

Plans are to wander along Angeles Crest Highway and pull out to see what birds are spending their summer in the San Gabriel Mountains. If you are driving, you will need a National Forest Adventure Pass. Bring lunch and plenty of water. We will leave the Community Center parking lot at 6:00 am. We should be back in Whittier between 3:00 and 4:00.

## Passings: Grace

**Nakamura**, beloved Audubon member, passed away on May 30, 2017 from complications of pneumonia. She and her husband Yosh had been given the Whittier Area Audubon Lifetime Achievement Award. She was instrumental in getting a viewing platform installed at the Whittier Narrows Nature Center and started a native plant greenhouse project at La Serna High School through an Audubon YES! grant.

A Celebration of Life ceremony will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, July 16, 2017 at the Hillcrest Congregational Church, 2000 West Road, La Habra Heights, CA.

She is the wife of Audubon member, Yosh Nakamura and daughter of Audubon Vice President, Linda Oberholtzer.

Donations can be made to the Whittier Area Audubon Society with a note: in memory of Grace Nakamura.

### Field Trip Report: Saturday, May 20, 2017 Big Morongo Preserve and Covington Park

It seems we that we often choose to visit Big Morongo Preserve in May. I think it's because, by May, the birds the preserve is known for have arrived. This year's trip did not disappoint. We saw and heard Summer Tanager and Brown-crested Flycatcher before we even left the parking lot. We had a good group of sixteen birders, ready to walk the trails and see and hear whatever else the preserve had to offer. We found Hooded Orioles, a Green-tailed Towhee, many hummingbirds including Black-chinned and a few Costa's. Yellow-breasted Chats were singing in all areas of suitable habitat but they were very difficult to see. We had some good views of Lawrence's Goldfinch, Western Tanager, Western-wood peewee and Olive-sided Flycatcher. We were also lucky to find a pair of Vermillion Flycatchers with young in a nest.

All told, we tallied about 43 species. Many of which are difficult to find in California outside of Big Morongo Preserve. It's a good bet you'll find us there again next Spring. *Larry Schmahl*