



Whittier Area Audubon Society

- **General Meeting: Steve Kaye**
- **Bird Walk: Sycamore Canyon 9/9, 7am**
- **Field trip: 9/23 Bolsa Chica**

We are a chapter of National Audubon Society



Audubon

Visit our website
www.whittieraudubon.org

Welcome to a new Volume of The Observer. Consider Lights Out Fall to protect migrating birds. Happy birding!

Steve Kaye shows people who care about birds how small actions can make a difference.

He has been taking photos casually since 1954 and professionally since 2011. He has conducted photo classes, led photo walks, and judged photo contests.

And he has shown his photos at Bird Festivals, Audubon Chapter meetings, Sierra Club meetings, Nature Center programs, plus many other events.

He has published 70 articles plus 166 blog posts (which appear on his web site) about birds, life skills, and photography. And he has created 6 self-published books containing his photos.

As you might expect, he follows an eco-friendly lifestyle and he talks to birds.

Find photos and more at:
www.stevekaye.com



Sept Field Trips

Beginning Bird Walk, Sycamore Canyon

Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August,) **Sept 9, 2023, 7:00am**

Join us in Sycamore Canyon for our Beginning Bird Walks! The entrance is on Workman Mill Rd. just south of Rose Hills Gate 17. Be prompt as we are required to lock the gate behind us. Larry Schmahl leads.

Bolsa Chica Field Trip

Sept 23, 2023

6:30 AM 3:30 PM

We will start at Harriet Wieder Park before heading over to Bolsa Chica. Bolsa Chica is one of the great local birding spots. Ducks, shorebirds, and waders can be found in abundance. Gulls, terns, and pelicans are regular, as are raptors

We will convene in the parking lot of the Whittier Community Center and carpool/caravan, leaving at 6:30 AM sharp. We should be back in Whittier around 4:00.

Bring your usual birdwatching stuff, sack lunch, water, hat and a thirst for adventure. **Trip Leader:** Jim McNamara

Mailing Address:

Whittier Area Audubon Society
P.O. Box 548
Whittier, CA 90608-0548

GENERAL MEETING

September Program

Thursday, September 21,
2023 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

What Birds Want to Tell Us

Steve Kaye

Birds have much to tell us. So they helped create a presentation. Then they asked Steve Kaye to include his photos and add a few words. Now they're sending you an invitation to attend this meeting on September 21, 2023.

Please join us for a uniquely entertaining and provocative experience filled with stories, solutions, inspirations, and (of course) photos.

This is an excellent program for anyone who wants to know more about how they can help birds. And it's a wonderful reminder of the extraordinary beauty that we have outdoors. So bring a friend.

If you have yet to attend a meeting, this program is for you.



August 2023 Update on the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety Modification Project

From Dr. Kathleen Berry

Just as a reminder about the project, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is modifying the current Whittier Narrows Dam to reduce the potential for and consequences of catastrophic flooding resulting from Dam failure. The project includes modifications to eliminate or minimize the probability of Dam failure and to reduce the consequences of these flood events. It is a massive USACE project costing somewhere around a \$500 million. It is expected to be completed in several more years.

This project has been ongoing for the past several years.

- Final Environmental Impact Statement submitted in May 2019.
- Dam project will cause direct impact on critical habitat for the California gnatcatcher (federally threatened) and loss of territories for the least Bell’s vireo (federally endangered).
- Consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as per the law of the Endangered Species Act.
- USFWS issued biological opinion in July 2019. 24 conservation measures

were to be implemented by the USACE to avoid, minimize and offset effects to the listed species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

- The US Army Corps created the habitat restoration plan for the Whittier Narrows natural area. 51 acres devoted to coastal sage scrub to support the gnatcatcher and 54 acres of riparian habitat to support the vireo. 241 acres will undergo removal of exotic/invasive plant species in perpetuity.
- A great part of 2022 was spent preparing the WN Natural Area areas for planting. Weed eradication has been done and is ongoing. Non-native trees and shrubs were removed. LA Co Parks and Rec did debris clean-up.
- Significant work has been done to remove the homeless encampments and relocate those individuals who accepted services. By February 2023 nearly all of the encampments were gone.
- Installation of irrigation for the restoration area was completed. Container planting of natives was completed,

as was the 90-day establishment period.

- Nesting bird surveys were done from April 10-July 30, 2023.
- Cowbird trapping was done April 10-July 30, 2023 (during nesting season).
- Seeding of native seed mix scheduled for November 2023 – depending on adequacy of weed control.
- Whittier gate off of Durfee Avenue is constantly being broke/cut so gate is always open.

A draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment by the Corps was submitted in December 2022. A substantial change includes a plan to utilize the Santa Fe Dam area as a borrow site for the supply of dam construction materials. There are nesting least Bell’s vireos there. USFWS was consulted about this, and an additional conservation measure was instituted - that surveys for the vireo will be done prior to construction. WAAS is in receipt of the 2022 survey of the Santa Fe Dam area birds and have reviewed it. WAAS submitted comments on the draft SEA and we are awaiting a reply from the Corps to our concerns.