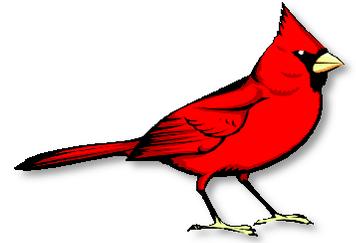


# THE OBSERVER

www.whittieraudubon.org



## Calendar

**April 9.** 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. Jeff Allison leads. Rain or recent rain cancels.

**April 21.** Monthly meeting and program. Robert Siow will speak on the Hopi Indians and how they use birds in their ceremonies. See page 3 for details.

**April 23.** Our field trip will consist of helping out the Habitat Authority by running bird walks at their Earth Day event in Powder Canyon. Meet at the Powder Canyon horse ring at 8:00 AM. See page 3 for details.

## California Condors Achieve a Happy New Milestone

After more than 35 years of flirting with extinction, the California Condor is finally due for a success story. This week the California Condor Recovery Program announced that 2015 was the

pink-faced beauties are on a steady track to recovery.

Condors may be the largest birds in North America, but they were, and still are, scarce. The bird was among

lead poisoning continued to plague the condor, and ultimately, the species was reduced to a mere 23 individuals by the 1980s.

That's when the U.S. Fish



first year in decades in which the number of chicks hatched and raised in the wild outweighed the number of wild condor deaths—14 births to 12 deaths: a sign that these

the first animals to be protected by the Endangered Species Act in the 1970s—thanks to pressure from Audubon members. But habitat loss, hunting, DDT contamination, and, above all,

and Wildlife Service and their partners decided they had to step in. In 1987, all of the remaining wild condors were captured and put into a cap-

*(Continued on page 2)*

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**“Chicks that were hatched in captivity and released into the wild are now producing their own wild chicks”**

tive breeding program. A few years later the hatched juveniles were released into the wild in California, Arizona, and Baja California.

Chicks that are hatched in captivity are typically released into the wild before the age of two, says Eric Davis, coordinator for the recovery program. He says that anywhere from 20 to 40 condors are freed each year. But reproduction can be slow among the species—females only lay one egg per nesting season. (Remember this gawky little guy that hatched on camera last spring, thanks to the loving care of two mommies?) In 2008, however, there were more condors soaring through the skies than there were in captivity—a huge landmark for the program. The popula-

tion is now close to 270, with another 150 or so in captivity.

So what was the turning point for the species?

“Chicks that were hatched in captivity and released into the wild are now producing their own wild chicks,” says Davis. “That’s a major milestone in the march to recovery.”

The program is now focusing on managing and maintaining the wild populations so that the endangered birds can become self-sustaining. Unfortunately, lead is still everywhere in their environment. Since condors are notorious carrion scavengers, they often end up ingesting poison while feasting on animals that have been shot. Two of the twelve wild birds that died last year were killed by

lead poisoning. To combat this tragic trend, Audubon California is directing a campaign to help the state achieve its goal of going lead-free by 2019.

“Many groups have fought hard to keep the California Condor wild, and we are thrilled to witness a time when the condor’s survival has been improved to this level,” says Andrea Jones, Audubon California’s director of bird conservation. “Just a few weeks ago, I saw seven condors flying free in Big Sur. [It was] such an amazing sight.”

## *April Field Trip*

For our April field trip we will be helping out the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority with their Earth Day celebration. Whittier Area Audubon will be doing some community outreach by leading a bird walk (or walks) at the event.

Meet at the horse ring in Powder Canyon at 8:00. Steve Huber and Letty Brooks will be leading, but everyone is welcome to come and share their birding knowledge and experience with the people attend-

ing the event.

To get to the horse ring, take the dirt road entrance off of Fullerton Road. This is just west of Harbor Boulevard in La Habra Heights.

Bring the usual birding gear: binoculars, water, sunscreen, hat. Also, you might want to consider bringing an extra pair of binoculars to share with attendees if you have some old ones that you’ve retired. Same goes for field

guides. You don’t want to weigh yourself down, but it would be great to loan guides to novice birders to let them practice some identification skills on common birds.

It’s a good time to be in Powder Canyon. There should be migrant warblers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, woodpeckers, towhees, and plenty of other birds.

**“You might want to consider bringing an extra pair of binoculars to share with attendees”**

## *Moving: Every Bird a Yard Bird*

Over the years I've written in this space a number of times about birding at home and the birds I've seen there. We recently decided to move, primarily due to wanting to find a flatter yard for our kids. We're still in La Habra Heights, but clear over on the east side now. It's a somewhat more "traditional" suburban location, and I'm interested in seeing how that'll affect my yard bird list.

I'm not a compulsive lister, but I do keep a life list, year lists, and a yard list for birds I see in my yard. For list purposes if I can see it from my yard, it's a yard bird. So while I've never actually had an American White Pelican *in* my yard, it's on my yard list due to flyovers.

We lived at our old home for a little over fifteen years, plenty of time to accumulate a pretty good yard list. By the time we moved out I had 110 birds on my yard list. I'll run down some highlights, in no particular order:

Great Blue Heron. Not too surprising as a flyover bird, but on a few occasions we had one stake out our front yard pond looking for fish. Fun to see from the office window.

White-winged Dove. Came to the feeders along with the Mourning Doves, and it was interesting to compare side by side.

Red-naped Sapsucker. Drilled holes into the carotwood tree in the front yard. Those holes were visible for years after, but the bird was a one-day wonder in the yard.

Pacific-slope Flycatcher. Not a remarkable bird, really, but I had one overwinter a couple time. I reported this and was questioned on it, but I actually got a pretty good photograph.

MacGillivray's Warbler. Spotted a couple different years, migrants moving through in spring.

Green-tailed Towhee. Saw this guy in the brushy slope

alongside our house. I was pretty surprised as I don't see these often in any event and never expected one at my house.

Northern Cardinal. Came to our feeders for a few days in June, 2011, then never appeared again.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Probably the winner of the "best yard bird" award. A female — likely the same one, I assume — overwintered in our yard in 2001/2002 and 2002/2003. I recall being grilled by Kimball Garrett about underwing coloration...I think I convinced him in the end that this really was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

I look forward to seeing some notable birds in our new home. Lacking, at least for now, is a pond. I found the pond to be a fantastic attractant for birds. Lots of folks put out feeders, but water and cover are at least as important in getting birds into your yard.

## *Slate of Officer Candidates for the 2016-2017 Chapter Year*

Per our chapter by-laws, a committee was formed to deliver a slate of candidates to fill officer positions in our chapter for the next chapter year. Here is the list provided by the committee:

**President:** Chris Huber

**1st Vice President:** Steve Huber

**2nd Vice President:** Linda Oberholtzer

**Recording Secretary:** Bruce Seelt

**Treasurer:** Kathleen Berry

## *April Meeting and Program*

Robert Siow will speak on the Hopi Indians and how they use birds in their ceremonies at our April monthly meeting.

The meeting will take place at 7:30 PM at the Whittier Community Center, located at 7630 Washington Ave in Whittier.

Admission is free, the public is welcome, and light refreshments will be served.

## Whittier Area Audubon

Whittier Area Audubon  
PO Box 548  
Whittier, CA 90608-0548

Whittier Area Audubon's web site is located at <http://www.whittieraudubon.org>. Our Yahoo group is called whittieraudubon. And we're on Facebook...search for Whittier Area Audubon!



YAHOO!

### *Bring Your Cans!*

Reminder: Bring your aluminum cans to our monthly meetings. We can raise funds by recycling your cans.

## *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 and 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.

To join National Audubon, make your check payable to Audubon and send to National Audubon Society, PO Box 42250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Please include a letter with your name, mailing address, and any other personal contact information you wish to share (e.g., email address, phone number) along with Whittier Area Audubon Society's code, C4ZC170Z. As a member of National Audubon, you will receive Audubon's bimonthly magazine.

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