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Editor's note: KEEP THE DATE!

Our annual Conservation Dinner will be March 16, 2017. Join us as we honor Bob Henderson and his many years of dedication to Whittier and its environmental causes. Check our website for ticket info.

Proceeds are used to place Audubon Adventures into classrooms. See our Kids Space section for exciting news. *Jennifer Schmahl*

BIRDERS MAKE "BIG YEAR" HISTORY. Four break 2013 mark of 749.

From ABA Blog by Nate Swick (blog.aba.org)

Congratulations to John Wiegel (780) Olaf Danielson (776) Laura Keene (759) and Christian Hagenlocher (750) who all broke the seemingly unbreakable one year bird count of 749 species. Traveling all over the North American continent to spy and document hundreds of bird species in one calendar year, a birder must have time, money, dedication and a vast knowledge of bird species to succeed in this personal challenge. The official ABA checklist includes 993 species. Who will be the first to get them all? Here's the link to the checklist: <http://listing.aba.org/aba-checklist/> See how many you have. Maybe one of the students enjoying Audubon Adventures will grow up to be the next champion. See Kids Space for exciting news about potential new birders.

WAAS Honors Councilman Bob Henderson with Conservation Award

March 16, 2017 is our next annual Conservation Dinner, at which we will present the WAAS Conservation Award to Whittier City Councilman Bob Henderson. Mr. Henderson has been a major force behind the formation of the Habitat Authority and the preservation of the Whittier Hills as a wilderness and wildlife corridor. Serving on our city council for two stints over the course of five decades, working with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and area politicians to secure funds to purchase sensitive lands, and heading negotiations with oil corporations and developers to get the best value for taxpayer dollars, Bob Henderson is a Whittier treasure.

Please help us honor his work March 16.



KIDS SPACE

We are very happy to announce we are providing Audubon Adventures to five afterschool programs in the Norwalk/La Mirada Unified School District.

We have been emphasizing our commitment to educational outreach for the past several years. So this year our go getting Education Chair, Letty Brooks, has succeeded in interesting Michelle Centeno, the Coordinator for Supplemental Education Services for NLMUSD.

In another successful education outreach, we have provided 10 beginning binoculars for board member Cathy Fricker's afterschool class to use in their afterschool birding club. Cathy has been using Audubon Adventures for two years and relates many anecdotes describing her kids' excitement in learning about birds they can see right in their neighborhoods.

This is an exciting chance for our chapter to get a whole new generation interested in birding and bird conservation. Your support of our Conservation Award Dinner is what makes this possible

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE INVOLVED!

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General Meeting for December

A fascinating illustrated program on insects, "Six Legs Good", will be given by Robb Hamilton at the January 19, 2017 meeting of the Whittier Audubon Society at 7:30 p.m.

Ever wonder what cool bugs are hanging out with the birds? Learn about the birds that are in our own Whittier Hills and in other places that we go birding. Robb is a sought-after speaker by Audubon Chapters.

Robb Hamilton is the President of Hamilton Biological, Inc. Mr. Hamilton is a recognized authority on the status, distribution, and identification of birds in California. He is the lead author of two standard references describing aspects of the state's avifauna: "*The Birds of Orange County: Status & Distribution*" and "*Rare Birds of California*."

Hamilton has been providing biological consulting services in southern California since 1988. His consultancy specializes in the practical application of environmental policies and regulations to land management and land use decisions in southern California.

The Whittier Area Audubon Society meets on the third Thursday of each month from September through June at the Whittier Community Center, 7630 Washington Avenue, Whittier, California. (*Not to be confused with Washington Blvd.*), on the corner of Mar Vista St. and Washington Ave., in the City of Whittier. Meetings start at 7:30 pm

Admission is free and light refreshments will be served

Field Trip Schedule:

8:00am Sycamore Canyon Beginning Bird Walks, meet at the Sycamore Canyon Trailhead. Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August, rain or recent 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. **Larry Schmahl leads. Rain cancels**

Saturday and Sunday, January 21st and 22nd Salton Sea Overnight

Fearless Leader Jay Oberholtzer leads us in an excursion to the admitted armpit of California.

We are going to the Salton Sea! This is a great wintering spot for just about every bird there is. Between flooded fields, a huge, foul-smelling body of water, acres of disgusting mud, all surrounded by a desert hell-hole, anyone can see that it is a great place for birds. We will meet, and leave promptly from the Townhouse Inn & Suites 135 Main Street, Brawley, CA 92227 (formerly known as the Brawley Motel) at **7:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, January 21**. We will caravan through a bunch of places, stopping for lunch when the time is right. We will

definitely have our traditional wine and cheese party, so bring something for that. We will try for a spot where we can watch the Sandhill Cranes come in to roost. Sunday, we will leave at the same time and bird our way in the general direction of home.

This area in winter is great for raptors, shore birds and all kinds of migrants. It is just south enough that all kinds of rarities show up. Because the ecology is so varied, we can expect to see a lot of species. Some of the roads will be unpaved, but should be fine for passenger cars with average clearance. It is probably best to leave the Ferrari at home.

Mailing address:

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

January Halk Walk recap (Jan 7)

As this newsletter is going out late (as usual), we have already had our trip to the Antelope Valley to chase Winter residents and raptor vagrants, led by Field Trip Chair Larry Schmahl. The atmospheric river had its way with us, but stopped dropping that wet stuff by the time we made our way to the fields of Palmdale/Lancaster. Our first stop after human refueling at the Carl's Jr at Ave. K out to Ave L and 50th St. E where we saw Red-Tailed Hawks and our first Ferruginous Hawk. Going west on Ave L to 40th St, we found Mountain Bluebirds, a Prairie Falcon, and lots of Killdeer and American Pippets moving through the agricultural fields. Reversing course back to 50th we found a field with 80+ Mountain Plovers. Then proceeding past the end of pavement to a dry wash crossing the road, we called out a few Bell's Sparrows (formerly Sage) and a distant look at a Great Horned Owl. On 10th St E between J and I were more Ferruginous and Red-tailed Hawks. We stopped for hot coffee and lunch at the Rancho Sierra Golf Club. After getting permission to bird the outskirts, we found a Cedar Waxwing keeping company with some American Robins, Slate colored Juncos mixed with Oregon Juncos, Ladderback Woodpeckers, Red-shafted Flickers, Hermit Thrush, and Common Mergansers and a Great Egret hanging out on a water hazard. A juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk was trying to hide in a deciduous tree so we left him believing he was hidden. Off to Nebeker Ranch where we caught glimpses of Snow Geese in a distant field. While traversing around the ranch we found a serious patch of mud that almost derailed our outing, but with some slipping and sliding and human powered pushing we continued along to a spot that had the motherload of Blackbirds, Red-winged and Tri-colored. A Vesper Sparrow popped up on the barbed wire fence just long enough to ID him, then continuing on the varying dirt/mud road until we found pavement again we headed to our last stop at Apollo Regional Park. Along with the assorted park ducks and geese we found a Snow Goose, a Ross' Goose and a Greater White Fronted Goose. The temperature ranged from 36° to 47° and mud was the substance of the day, but a good day birding all around

FIELD TRIP NOTES:

December's field trip was our annual Bulmer Memorial Bird Walk at Whittier Narrows Nature Center. This event was first conceived by Aggie Owens and Tim (Thelma) Bulmer to show Whittier Daily News readers what kinds of birds can be found right here in Whittier, even in Winter. This year the walk was led by our President, Chris Huber. The weather was beautiful and most of our usual avian friends showed up. We saw lots of White crowned Sparrows, several Red-tailed Hawks, Turkey Vultures and had a white pelican fly-by.