



THE OBSERVER

WHITTIER AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Visit our website www.whittieraudubon.org

It seems as if every time I open a news feed or check a blog, another corner of the natural world is being threatened by development, extractive industries, pollution and the like. BUT there are many groups and organizations fighting the good fight, through appeals to public opinion, letter campaigns to politicians and court action. This all costs money. When considering your holiday and/or year-end giving, please give thought to our conservation-centric organizations. Consider Audubon, ABA and Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

- **Editor's note: Holiday giving**
- **Night Light Migration**
- **General Meeting:**
- **Kids Space**
- **Field trips**

NIGHT LIGHTS AND MIGRATION City lights setting traps for migrating birds *Birds are drawn to artificial light pollution in urban areas*

From National Audubon:

Every year, billions of birds migrate north in the spring and south in the fall, the majority of them flying at night, navigating with the night sky. However, as they pass over big cities on their way, they can become disoriented by bright artificial lights and skyglow, often causing them to collide with buildings or windows. While lights can throw birds off their migration paths, bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste flying around and calling out in confusion. The exhaustion can then leave them vulnerable to other urban threats.

Dozens of species are affected, including priority species—those we have identified as most in need of and most likely to benefit from our help— such as the Allen's Hummingbird, Varied Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, and Seaside Sparrow. Just one building can cause major problems for birds in the area; within one week in 2017, nearly

400 passerines (warblers, grosbeaks, etc.) were caught in the floodlights of a 32-story Texas skyscraper and killed via window collisions.

Audubon's Lights Out program is a national effort to reduce this problem. The strategy is simple: by convincing building owners and managers to turn off excess lighting during the months migrating birds are flying overhead, we help to provide them safe passage between their nesting and wintering grounds.

Additionally:

A study done by Jeff Buler of the University of Delaware has examined how light pollution lures birds into urban areas during fall migration, a trend that poses risk for the fowl that often fly into buildings and has increased with the addition of brighter LED lights. The researchers were interested in seeing what factors shape the birds' distributions and why they occur in certain areas. (cont on page 2)

GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

December 20^h at 7:30 pm

PHOTO SHARING!

Many of our members are very fine amateur photographers. Our December general meeting is traditionally a photo share evening. Bring some of your favorite photos on a thumb drive or CD and Jay Oberholtzer will perform computer magic to put your picture on the big screen. When choosing your offerings, remember that we want the time to see everyone's pictures, so limit accordingly.

Thursday, December 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Whittier Community Center, 7630 Washington Ave., Whittier, CA. at the corner of Washington Ave.(not to be confused with Washington Blvd.) and Mar Vista St. It is across the street from the Whittier Public Library Central Branch and next to a softball field. The event is free and light refreshments will be served.

KIDS SPACE:

Now is a great time to make homemade bird feeders to welcome our winter visitors. The easiest feeder is a empty toilet paper roll, smeared with peanut



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We are a chapter of National Audubon

butter and rolled in bird seed. Attach a colorful piece of yarn to the top and hang near a window to enjoy the show. This is also the season to point out visiting birds. Most kids do not realize that Whittier might be the South-for-the-Winter for many species.

Do you know a teacher or afterschool coordinator that would be interested in having a readymade curriculum for their students? All our proceeds from the Conservation Dinner go towards educational outreach. We'd love to introduce the world of birds to more kids!

December Field Trips

Beginning Bird Walk, Sycamore Canyon:

Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August,) **December 8, 2018 8:00am Sycamore Canyon Beginning Bird Walks**

Meet at the Sycamore Canyon Trailhead. The trail is located adjacent to Rose Hills Cemetery gate 17. Rain or recent cancels the Canyon Walk, but we will choose another location. **Leader Steve Huber.**

BULMER MEMORIAL BIRD WALK, Whittier Narrows Nature Center

December 22 at 8:00 am

Larry Schmahl, our Chapter's President, will lead our yearly bird walk from the Whittier Narrows Nature Center. This tradition began with an invitation to a local journalist, the late Bill Bell, from his neighbor, the late Thelma Bulmer, a past chapter president, as a way to show our city that yes, indeed, Whittier has wild

birds. Let's see who is in town for the winter.

Light refreshments will be served at the Center after the walk.

CONSERVATION AWARD AND DINNER

Due to scheduling conflict with our usual location, Hillcrest Congregational Church, we are changing the date of the Conservation Dinner to **TUESDAY MARCH 19, 2019.**

Night Lights and Migration

From page 1

"Shortly after sunset, at around civil twilight, they all take off in these well-synchronized flights that show up as a sudden bloom of reflectivity on the radar," Buler said. "We take a snapshot of that, which allows us to map out where they were on the ground and at what densities. It basically gives us a picture of their distributions on the ground."

The researchers were interested in seeing what factors shape the birds' distributions and why they occur in certain areas.

"We think artificial light might be a mechanism of attraction because we know at a very small scale, birds are attracted to light," Buler said. "Much like insects are drawn to a streetlight at night, birds are also drawn to places like lighthouses. Especially when visibility is poor, you can get these big fall-outs at lighthouses and sports complexes. Stadiums will have birds land in the stadium if it's foggy at night and the lights are on."

Original written by Adam Thomas. James D. McLaren, Jeffrey J. Buler, Tim Schreckengost, Jaclyn A. Smolinsky, Matthew Boone, E. Emiel van Loon, Deanna K. Dawson, Eric L. Walters. **Artificial light at night confounds broad-scale habitat use by migrating birds.** *Ecology Letters*, 2018

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Jan 5, 2019 Raptor trip. An all-day drive around Antelope Valley in search of winter hawks. Expect cold and wind. Larry leads.

Jan 19-20 Salton Sea overnight trip. Agricultural fields, wine and cheese, Brawley Inn. Jay will be leading.

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November Field Trip Report

On Nov. 17, Steve and Liz Huber led a morning walk through the Legg Lake area of the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. Great-tailed Grackles and Brewer's Blackbirds greeted us in the parking lot. On the shore of the North Lake Cathy Fricker spotted Double-crested Cormorants and Black-crowned Night Herons and Larry Schmahl found a Greater White-fronted Goose. Towards Center Lake and Legg Lake Larry found three Cackling Geese mixed in with a group of Canada Geese. Wintering Ducks have begun to arrive: American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck and Northern Pintail were in Legg Lake. Jennifer Schmahl spotted a Green Heron on the shore and Jim MacNamara found our first American White Pelican. One Clark's Grebe was found with some Western Grebes allowing us to clearly see them side by side. Cathy and Larry were able to see a Peregrine Falcon flying overhead. Some pishing in the trees flushed out several Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Townsend's Warblers and a Black-throated Gray Warbler. At the western end of Center Lake, we found Hutton's Vireo, American Goldfinch, Wilson's Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler and others. We then walked over to the beach area of North Lake to see up close several Tri-colored and Red-winged blackbirds feeding on the ground with some Brown-headed Cowbirds. Circling back, we saw Nuttall's Woodpecker, Common Raven and White-throated Swift overhead. Altogether, 62 species were recorded.